# **Highway 11/17 Four-Laning**

from Pearl Lake, Easterly to 2.8 km West of CPR
Overhead at Ouimet

Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) Study



# **Public Information Centre #2**

For more information and updates, please visit the project website at:

www.Hwy11-17Four-Laning-PearlLake

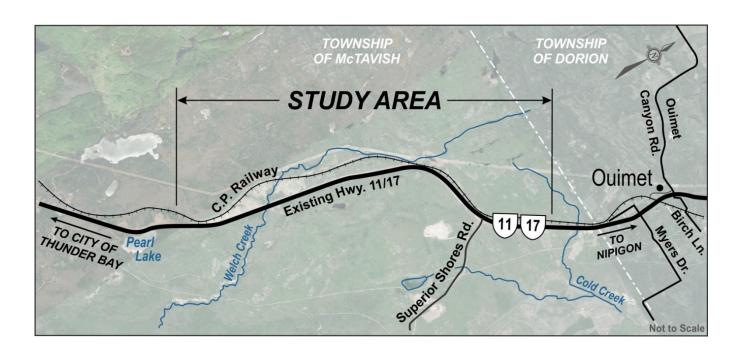




#### Welcome

Welcome to the second Public Information Centre (PIC) for the Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) Study for Highway 11/17 four-laning from Pearl Lake, easterly to 2.8 km west of CPR Overhead at Ouimet, for 7.6 km. The purpose of this study is to finalize design parameters and secure approvals for the design and construction of the project.

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) acknowledges that the proposed project is located on lands traditionally occupied by Indigenous Peoples. We acknowledge the Anishnaabe people of the Robinson Superior Treaty area, the long history of First Nations and the Métis in Ontario, and would like to show respect to them today. Indigenous People continue to care for this land and they continue to shape Ontario today - the Ministry wishes to show its respect. Hundreds of years after the first treaties were signed, they are still relevant today.







## **Virtual Engagement**

The first Public Information Centre (PIC #1) was held virtually in July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and the PIC displays were published on the project website. The second Public Information Centre (PIC #2) for this study is being held virtually in a consistent format with PIC #1. You are encouraged to review the PIC displays and ask questions or provide comments to the Project Team by email or phone.



Comments may be easily submitted using the online comment form on the project website at

https://hwy11-17four-laning-pearllake.ca/

MTO and WSP staff are also available to discuss the project and any questions that you may have at anytime. Contact information is provided on the last panel and the Project Team will respond to all comments received.





## **Background**

- In 1989, the Province made an announcement to four-lane Highway 11/17 from Thunder Bay to Nipigon.
- In 1997, the Planning and Preliminary Design Study for the Four-Laning of Highway 11/17 from 8 km west of Ouimet easterly 36 km to the Red Rock Township West Boundary was completed. An Environmental Study Report (ESR) was filed in September 1997.
- In 2018, MTO retained WSP to undertake an Environmental Assessment (EA) Update for the project.
- The original Commencement Notice for this project was issued in August 2018.
- In July 2021, Public Information Centre (PIC#1) for the study was held virtually through similar PIC display slides available through the project website.
- Since PIC #1, the Project Team has continued to undertake the preliminary evaluation of the two alternative alignments, determined the Preferred Alignment and organized virtual PIC #2 to present and seek input on the evaluation and Preferred Alignment.
- As part of this study, an Addendum to the 1997 Environmental Study Report (ESR) will be prepared to document any changes to the existing environmental conditions from 1997 and any proposed changes to the previously approved plan, along with the proposed mitigation measures. The Addendum will be available for a 30-day public review period at the end of the study process.



**Existing Highway 11/17** 





## Purpose of the Study and PIC #2

The purpose of this study is to build upon the Planning and Preliminary Design completed in 1997.

#### PIC #2 provides information on:

Analysis and Evaluation of Alternatives

Present the Preferred Highway Alignment Anticipated
Environmental
Effects and Proposed
Mitigation Strategies



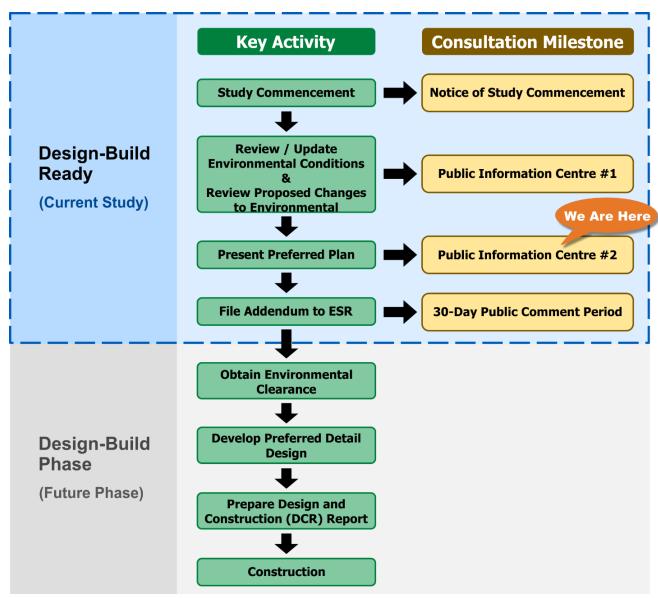
**Highway 11/17** 





# **Study Process**

This project is being conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Transportation's (MTO) Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Transportation Facilities (2000) as a Group 'B' undertaking. Throughout the study process, input will be sought from the Indigenous Communities, public and external agencies.







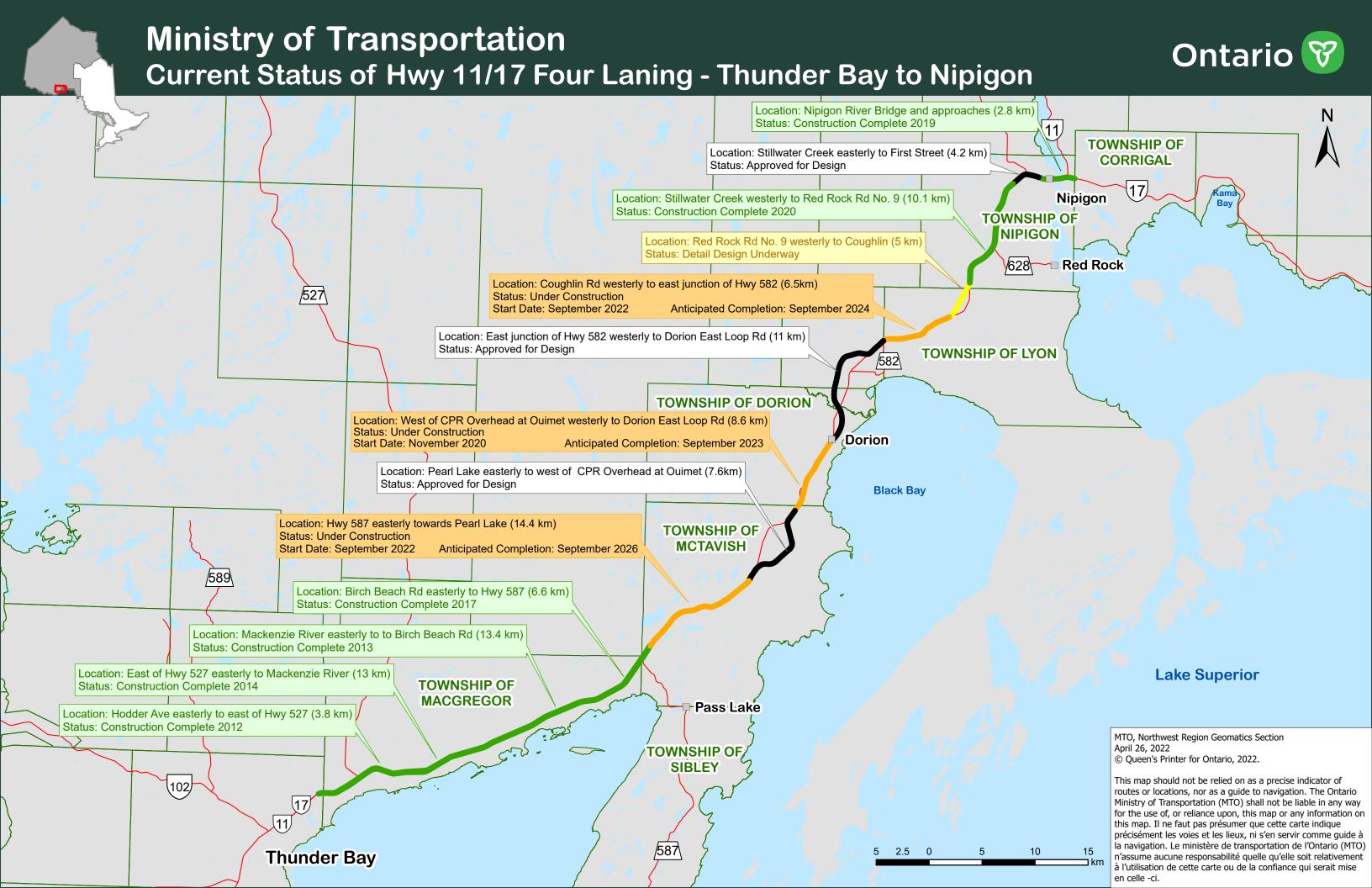
# **Highway 11/17 Four-Laning Project Benefits**

Highway 11/17 is being four-laned between Thunder Bay and Nipigon to provide the benefits listed below. The next display presents the current status of four-laning of Highway 11/17 between Thunder Bay and Nipigon.

- Improved traffic flow due to reduced delays caused by slower moving vehicles;
- Improved movement of goods and services which will have a positive economic impact on the area;
- Reduced risk of collisions and decreased severity of some types of collisions;
- Addressed future travel demand along the highway; and
- Allowed for a parallel, continuous, alternative route system in the event of roadway collisions, natural disasters or structural loss which could lead to the closure of the existing highway.



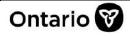




# **Summary of Public Information Centre #1**

The first Public Information Centre (PIC) #1 was held virtually on July 20, 2021 and the PIC displays were published on the project website. The following summarizes the five (5) comments received. No public comments were received.

Summary of key comments Received from PIC #1	MTO's Response / Action Taken
<ul> <li>Comments received from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS):</li> <li>Noted identifying Cultural Heritage and Archaeological Resources; Built Heritage Resources and Cultural Heritage; Landscapes; Bridges and Culverts and if the proposed work involves a culvert; and, EA Documentation, Mitigation and Future Commitments.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>A Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment (AA) is completed and entered into register with MTCS. A Stage 1 AA determined that a portion of the study area retains archaeological potential and therefore, a Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment (AA) is recommended and planned on the Preferred Alignment. The Stage 2 AA fieldwork has been scheduled in Fall 2022. Further noted that MTO will be following their heritage screening protocols to review the potential for cultural heritage resources within the study area.</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Comments received from Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA):</li> <li>Commented regarding the water crossings which may be subject to the Authority's Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulations.</li> <li>Requested for final water crossing drawings when completed for their records.</li> <li>Noted any work conducted by the MTO within the regulated area would not be subject to the Authority's Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulations, and would therefore not require an Authority permit.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>The Project Team recognizes that any work conducted by the MTO within the regulated area would not be subject to the Authority's development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulations, and would therefore not require an Authority permit.</li> <li>The Project Team will provide Lakehead Region Conservation Authority final water crossing drawings when completed for your records as requested.</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Comment received from Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF):</li> <li>Most of the land impacted by the study area is Crown lands and permitting needs to be obtained and also noted concerns regarding natural heritage, fisheries and wildland fire within the study area.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>As part of this project, detailed natural environmental investigations are ongoing to determine up-to-date existing conditions, provide input into the evaluation of alternatives, and undertake preliminary impact assessments. This study will also identify commitments for further environmental investigations and the potential need for any required permits and agreements in the subsequent Design-Build phase.</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Comment received from Hydro One:</li> <li>Noted that Hydro One would like to be involved in this EA as there are infrastructure assets in very close proximity to the existing highway. Furthermore, they are currently in the process of working with the MTO to relocate assets both to the east and west of this study area.</li> </ul>	As requested, we will continue to keep Hydro One Networks Inc. on our study mailing list and will ensure they are kept informed of study activities and future consultation events.
<ul> <li>Comment received from Infrastructure Ontario (IO):</li> <li>Noted that their initial scan indicates that property owned by the Minister of Government and Consumer Services is within and adjacent to the study area, so IO land may be required for this project.</li> </ul>	The Project Team is aware of the limits of Minister of Government and Consumer Services owned land and will ensure all required permits and agreements are obtained as part of the property acquisition process.



## **Existing Environmental Conditions**

This study includes reviewing and updating the existing environmental conditions within the study limits to determine if there have been any significant changes to the existing conditions since 1997 Environmental Study Report (ESR) that may affect the review of the Highway 11/17 four-laning. Existing environmental conditions have not significantly changed since 1997. Existing environmental conditions include:

- Confirmed presence of Brook Trout and other Salmonids species in some of the watercourses, potential in others— to be confirmed along Preferred Alignment
- Low potential for Silver Lamprey and Northern Brook Lamprey to be confirmed along Preferred Alignment
- MNRF is managing the watercourses throughout the study area as coldwater systems

Some initial fisheries and archaeological investigations have been undertaken along the existing highway corridor and where permission has been granted.

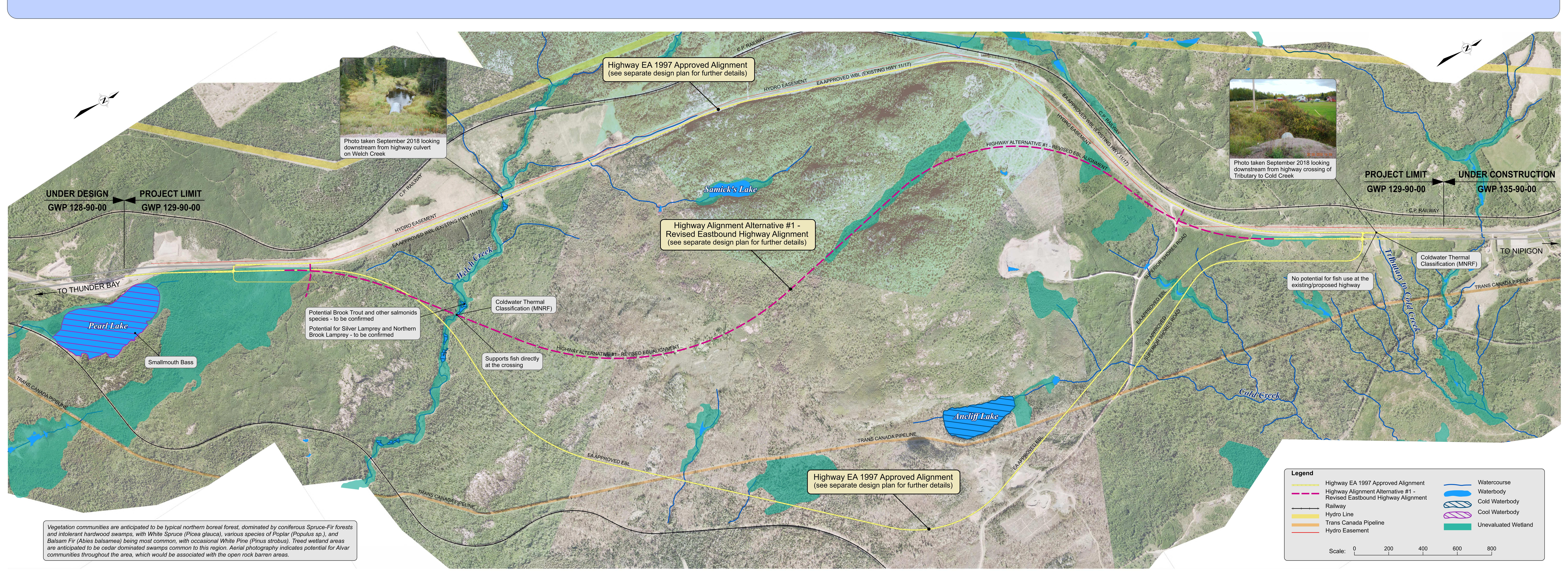
Further investigations such as Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment, detailed fisheries and terrestrial investigations, and geotechnical investigations will be completed on the Preferred Alternative to confirm existing environmental conditions and assess potential environmental impacts.

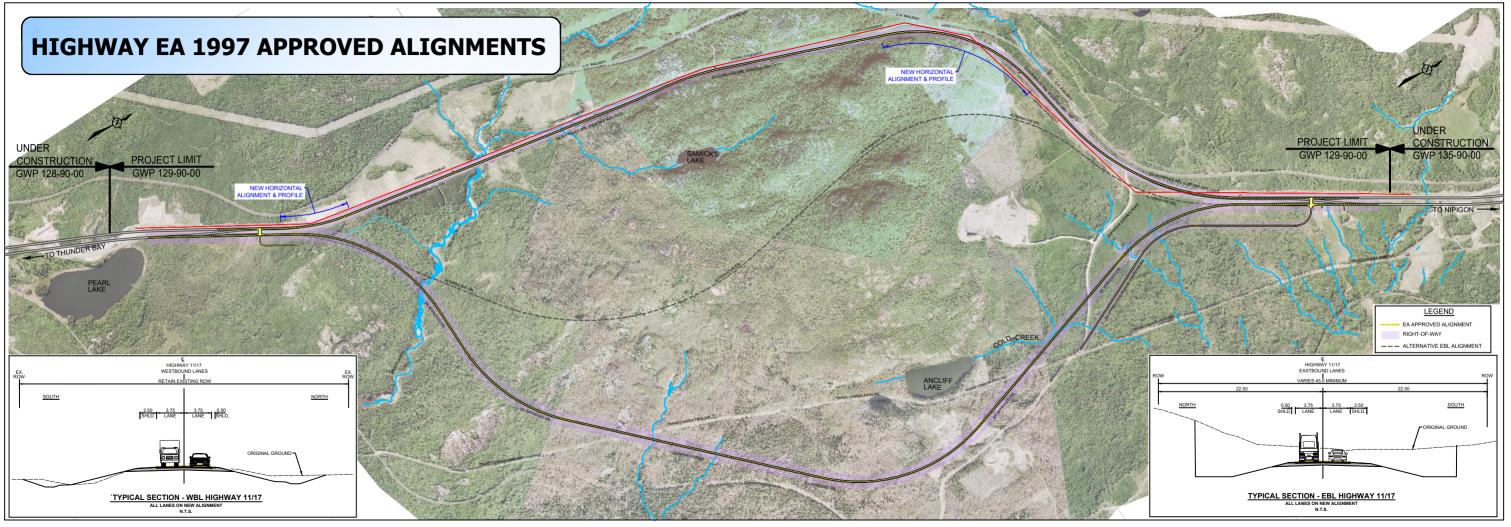
The mapping below presents the existing environmental conditions that have been determined as part of this study.

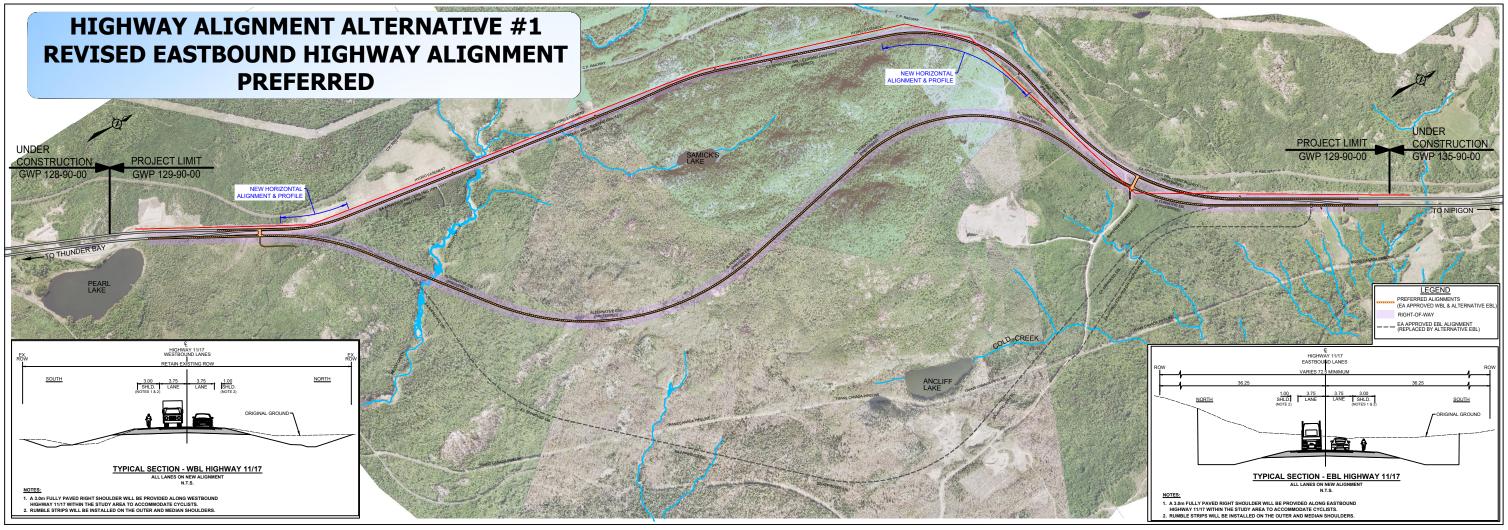




# EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS







#### **Evaluation Criteria**

There are no changes being considered for the Westbound Lanes (WBL) from the EA Approved Alignment. Both Alternatives being evaluated have the same WBL Alignment. The WBL generally follow the existing Highway 11/17 with two areas seeing minor improvements as noted.

The evaluation that took place in this Study is on the Eastbound Lanes (EBL). The following list of factors have been considered in the evaluation of the EBL EA Approved Alignment and EBL Alignment Alternative #1.

Factor	Indicator
Natural Environment	<ul> <li>Extent of Natural Habitat Fragmentation</li> <li>Extent of Impacts to Natural Features</li> <li>Extent of Vegetation Community Removal</li> <li>Potential Impacts to Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat</li> <li>Impact to Fish and Aquatic Resources</li> <li>Impacts to Climate Change</li> </ul>
Socio-Economic and Cultural Environment	<ul><li>Property</li><li>Noise</li><li>Archaeological Resources</li></ul>
Transportation/Engineering	<ul> <li>Flexibility to Accommodate Municipal Road Connections</li> <li>Highway Geometrics</li> <li>Intersection Spacing</li> <li>Flexibility to Accommodate Future Interchanges</li> <li>Complexity and Difficulty of Construction</li> <li>Geotechnical Suitability</li> <li>Impacts to Utilities</li> <li>Structures</li> <li>Future Maintenance</li> </ul>
Cost	<ul><li>Construction Cost</li><li>Utility Relocation Cost</li><li>Property Requirement Cost</li></ul>





# Preliminary Analysis and Evaluation of EBL EA Approved Alignment & EBL Alignment Alternative #1

Factor	EA Approved Alignment	Alignment Alternative #1
Natural Environment	<ul> <li>Impacts on the fish and fish habitat in Welch Creek as well as an additional two watercourse crossings (unnamed tributaries)</li> <li>Vegetation removal is required; route is 0.5 km longer then Alternative #1 so more vegetation to be removed overall</li> <li>Will impact wetland features to be verified during field investigations and mitigation determined</li> <li>It is approximately 0.5 km longer then Alternative #1 which will result in the increase of greenhouse gas emissions</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>✓ Impacts on the fish and fish habitat in Welch Creek, no other watercourses being impacted</li> <li>✓ Vegetation removal is required; however, less removals overall compared to the EA Approved Alignment</li> <li>✓ Will impact a low-lying wetland feature. Impacts will be verified during field investigations and mitigation determined</li> <li>✓ It is approximately 0.5 km shorter than EA Approved Alignment which will result in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions compared to the EA Approved Alignment</li> </ul>
		Alignment Alternative #1 is slightly preferred from a Natural Environment perspective.
Socio-Economic & Cultural Environment	<ul> <li>★ Will impact accesses (Superior Shored Road) and bisects a licensed aggregate source</li> <li>✓ No significant noise impacts</li> <li>★ Archaeology potential is associated as such Stage 2 Archaeology Assessment work is required</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>✓ Will impact accesses (Superior Shores Road), the number of impacted properties and area is significantly less</li> <li>✓ No significant noise impacts</li> <li>× Archaeology potential is associated as such Stage 2 Archaeology Assessment work is required</li> </ul>
		Alignment Alternative #1 is slightly preferred from a Socio-Economic perspective.
Transportation/ Engineering	<ul> <li>Requires a 1.9 km realignment of the Superior Shores Road</li> <li>Has two median cross-overs near the east and west limit</li> <li>The EA EBL Alignment crosses the TC Energy Pipeline twice</li> <li>Additional crossing of Welch Creek is required</li> <li>Maintenance for the EA Alignment is approximately 0.5 km longer than Alignment Alternative #1</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>✓ Requires only a 0.2 km realignment of Superior Shores Road</li> <li>✓ Has slightly less distance between two median cross-overs near the east and west limit</li> <li>× The Alignment Alternative #1 requires some very deep rock cuts and very high rock fills</li> <li>✓ Does not cross the TC Energy Pipeline</li> <li>× Additional crossing of Welch Creek is required</li> <li>✓ Maintenance for the Alignment Alternative #1 is approximately 0.5 km shorter than the EA Alignment</li> <li>✓ Alignment Alternative #1 is preferred from a Transportation perspective.</li> </ul>
Cost	<ul> <li>✓ Construction Cost (major items only), Utility Relocation Costs &amp; Property Requirement Costs are slightly less than the Alignment Alternative #1</li> <li>The EA Approved Alignment is slightly preferred from a Cost perspective.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Construction Cost (major items only), Utility Relocation Costs &amp; Property Requirement Costs are slightly more than the EA Alignment</li> </ul>

# Based on the above EBL Alignment Alternative #1 is preferred.



# **Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation Measures**

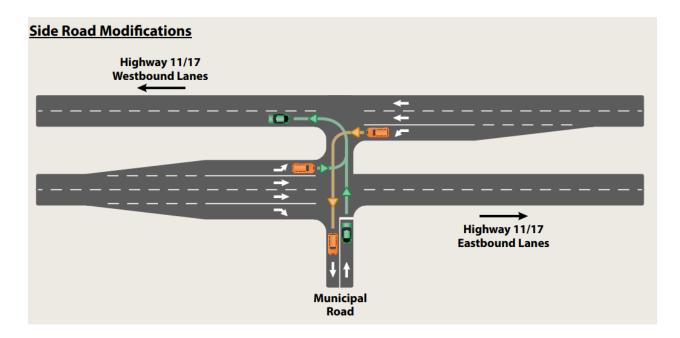
Detailed environmental field reviews of the Preferred Alignment will be completed following this PIC and continue further into the next design phase to confirm the following potential impacts and mitigation requirements:

Potential Impact	Proposed Mitigations Measures		
Vegetation & Wildlife	<ul> <li>Specific natural environment impacts will be determined once the detail design plan is developed. Further mitigation measures will be confirmed during the Design Build Phase.</li> </ul>		
	<ul> <li>Vegetation removals will be minimized and the boundary for vegetation removals will be clearly marked in the field prior to clearing to protect trees not slated for removal.</li> </ul>		
	<ul> <li>Appropriate timing constraints will be applied to vegetation removals to protect breeding migratory birds and their nests (in accordance with the Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA 1994)), and other wildlife (e.g. bats).</li> </ul>		
	<ul> <li>Vegetation within the new Right-of-Way will be cleared only to the extent required for construction purposes and in some cases, to improve driver sightlines and visibility. This will also assist with deterring wildlife movement across the highway.</li> </ul>		
	• Temporary erosion and sediment control measures will be installed in sensitive areas prior to construction and will be maintained during construction.		
Fish and Fish Habitat	• Specific fish and fish habitat impacts will be determined once the detail design plan is developed. Further mitigation measures will be confirmed during the Design Build Phase.		
	<ul> <li>All in-water work will be completed during the appropriate timing window and during the low flow period to protect fish.</li> <li>Any temporary stockpiled soil, debris or other excess materials, and any construction-related materials will be properly contained (e.g. within silt fencing) in areas at least 30 m from the watercourses.</li> <li>Sensitive areas (e.g. banks) disturbed by construction will be stabilized to prevent erosion and/or sedimentation.</li> </ul>		
Property	MTO will negotiate with individual owners for property purchase in accordance with standard MTO procedures.		
Water Resources	<ul> <li>All necessary water-taking permit(s), if required will be obtained from the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) prior to start of construction.</li> <li>Water well surveys will be completed prior to and during construction to establish baseline water quality and quantities, as required.</li> </ul>		
Archaeological Resources	<ul> <li>A Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alignment in Fall 2022.</li> <li>All impacted areas will be environmentally cleared of archaeological potential prior to the start of construction.</li> <li>During construction there is always a risk of encountering archaeological artifacts. If this occurs, all work in the area will stop and appropriate government authorities and Indigenous Communities will be contacted.</li> </ul>		
Noise	<ul> <li>A Noise Assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alignment in Winter 2023.</li> <li>MTO's standard mitigation to control construction noise will be implemented during construction.</li> </ul>		
Utilities	<ul> <li>Utility relocations will be completed in advance of construction.</li> <li>Utility Companies are responsible for identifying and obtaining any environmental permits or approvals that may be required to undertake their work.</li> </ul>		



### **Side Road Modifications**

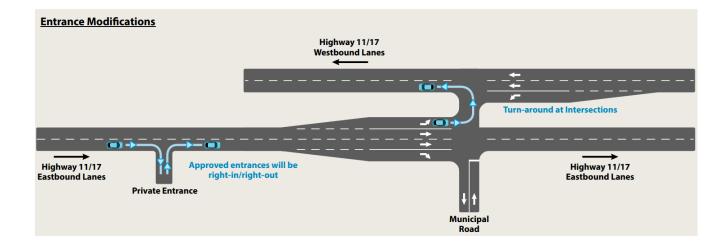
- All access to Highway 11/17 at intersections will be controlled with two
   (2) stop signs and include partial illumination
- Appropriate signs will be in place to identify one-way traffic
- Once in the median, the Side Road traffic will yield to Highway 11/17 traffic
- Under the Preferred Alignment, Superior Shores Road will remain on it's current alignment and provide full access to both eastbound and westbound lanes





#### **Entrance Modifications**

- As a result of the introduced median along the divided highway, property access will be limited to right-in right-out movements from driveways, unless located at a municipal road intersection
- Minor entrance modification details will be discussed with affected property owners prior to construction
- Appropriate signs will be in place to identify one-way traffic only
- Access to the opposite direction is at the nearest downstream intersection







## **Construction Staging and Traffic Management**

- Construction is anticipated to take place over 4 years
- No detours are required during construction one lane in each direction will be maintained at all times
- Access to sideroads, intersections and entrances will be maintained throughout the duration of construction
- Stakeholders and Emergency Service Providers will be advised two
   (2) weeks in advance of any changes to traffic flow and/or construction schedule





# **Next Steps**

# The Project Team will:

Activity	Anticipated Timeline
<ul> <li>Review the comments received for PIC #2 and respond to any questions</li> </ul>	Fall 2022
<ul> <li>Continue to update the existing environmental conditions on the Preferred Alignment via field investigations</li> </ul>	Fall 2022 – Spring 2023
Prepare the Addendum to the 1997     Environmental Study Report (ESR) to     document any proposed design changes and     submit for a 30-day public review period	Winter 2022/2023

Please visit the project website for updates at:

www.Hwy11-17Four-Laning-PearlLake





## **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy**

Information collected during this study will be used to assist the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) in meeting the requirements of the *Ontario Environmental Assessment Act*. This material will be maintained on file for use during the study and may be included in the study documentation.

Information collected will be used in accordance with the *Freedom of Information* and *Protection of Privacy Act*. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

#### **Contact Information**

You are encouraged to contact the Project Team members noted below if you have questions or concerns on the study.

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Tal. 907 627 0600

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**WSP** 

100 Commerce Valley Drive West

Thornhill, ON L3T 0A1 Toll-Free: 1-877-562-7947

Tel: 905-882-7225

E-mail: Rob.Kleine@wsp.com

Please feel free to email any comments or questions to either of the contacts listed above, or by visiting the project website at anytime during the study

www.Hwy11-17Four-Laning-PearlLake



