

6.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS

6.1 EXTERNAL AGENCY PARTICIPATION

Review agencies, interest groups, and utility companies were notified at the beginning of the study by letter on July 15, 2009, informing them of the study, notifying of the Public Information Centre and soliciting their comments. Individuals and groups that expressed an interest in the project were kept informed throughout the project. The agencies that were contacted are as follows:

Federal & Provincial Government Agencies

- Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
- Environment Canada
- Indian & Northern Affairs Canada
- Transport Canada
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation
- Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs
- Ministry of Culture
- Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure
- Ministry of the Environment
- Ministry of Natural Resources
- Ministry of Northern Development and Mines
- Ministry of Tourism and Recreation
- Office for the Federal Interlocutor for Métis Nation of Ontario and non-status Indians
- Ontario Provincial Police
- Ontario Realty Corporation
- Local Member of Provincial Parliament

Municipality

- City of Kenora
- City of Kenora Chamber of Commerce

Utilities

- Hydro One Inc.
- TransCanada Pipelines
- Bell Aliant
- Bell Canada

Other Agencies / Stakeholders

- Keewatin - Patricia District School Board
- Kenora and District Chamber of Commerce
- Kenora Catholic District School Board
- Kenora District Services Board
- Local Roads Boards
- Ontario Cycling Association
- Tourism Kenora
- Weyerhaeuser Company Limited

Relevant External Agency correspondence is provided in **Appendix A**.

6.2 FIRST NATIONS INVOLVEMENT

First Nation communities, related organizations and government agencies were contacted by the Project Team at key milestones throughout the study process. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the Office for the Federal Interlocutor for Métis Nation of Ontario and non-status Indians were sent letters to identify any First Nations communities that may have an interest in the study. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Historical Research Directorate confirmed there are no comprehensive or special claims to the preliminary design study area. It has been determined that there are no First Nation communities located within or immediately adjacent to the study area, however, there are two First Nation communities who have an access from Shoal Lake Road within the Section 2 project area. Métis Nation of Ontario was contacted regarding the project.

Letters were also sent by MTO to notify of Study Commencement and the Public Information Centre (PIC) to the following First Nation communities:

- Iskatewizaagegan No. 39 Independent First Nation
- Shoal Lake No. 40 First Nation
- Grand Council Treaty 3

A comment form was submitted by No. 40 Shoal Lake First Nations indicating their areas of interest in the Highway 17 study include job-sharing opportunities, business opportunities and heavy equipment contract services.

The Chief of Iskatewizaagegan No. 39 Independent First Nation attended the PIC and provided his comments about the project, including project schedule, consultation, treatment of the Highway 17/Highway 673 intersection, and economic opportunities. Subsequently, the First Nation and MTO exchanged letters and phone calls for the purposes of establishing the Ministry's spokesperson and setting up a meeting to discuss the project.

MTO met with Iskatewizaagegan No. 39 Independent First Nation at their community on October 29, 2009. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the scope of work, project phases (i.e. planning, preliminary design, detail design, construction) and schedule. The meeting also provided an opportunity for Iskatewizaagegan No. 39 Independent First Nation to provide comments and input into the project.

The First Nation was provided with a plan of the four-lane highway and the public display material for their examination. MTO agreed to provide additional information as it becomes available. The First Nation was requested to provide MTO with any specific concerns or interests that are directly related to potential project impacts. MTO indicated they are available at the First Nation's convenience, to discuss project specific issues. MTO will continue to discuss issues with the First Nation in order to confirm project related impacts and work towards resolution and/or mitigation. A record of all First Nation correspondence is available in the MTO project correspondence file.

Some of the key concerns expressed were that the project may negatively impact traditional uses (i.e. sacred grounds, trap lines, traditional harvesting areas, trees and medicinal plants), concern about impact to abandoned highway alignments and negative impacts of increased traffic volumes.

MTO sent an additional letter to each of the above listed First Nation communities to inform of the filing of the Transportation Environmental Study Report. MTO will continue to meet with and seek involvement from First Nation communities in subsequent design stages.

During the study comments were received from government agencies and First Nation communities. A record of First Nation correspondence is summarized in **Appendix A**.

6.3 CONSULTATION WITH PROPERTY OWNERS AND THE PUBLIC

Consultation with adjacent property owners and the public is described in this section.

The Notice of Study Commencement and Public Information Centre was published at the beginning of the study in the following newspapers:

- The Kenora Daily Miner and News: Tuesday, July 14, 2009
Tuesday, July 21, 2009
- Kenora Lake of the Woods Enterprise: Saturday, July 18, 2009
Saturday July 25, 2009
- Sioux Lookout Wawatay News: Thursday, July 23, 2009

A poster-sized copy of the Notice was on display at the Ontario Travel Information Centre, situated in the Section 1 of this study area. Letter size copies were also available for the public to pick up.

The principles of consultation requiring notification at the beginning of the study and notification to those stakeholders most directly affected are achieved through this notification method. A copy of the Ontario Government Notice is included in **Appendix B**.

A study mailing list was created and updated throughout the study. This list includes individuals or interest groups who contacted the Project Team throughout the study, including those who attended the PIC.

Where required, meetings were held with specific property owners to engage them in the study and notify of potential property impacts.

A PIC was held during the study to ensure that the consultation plan provided timely, user-friendly opportunities for input by the public. The PIC that was held is discussed in greater detail in the following subsection.

Additional consultation was undertaken with property owners on Fire Roads 37 – 40 regarding access modifications and the proposed privately maintained road. Full access to Fire Roads 37 – 40 will be maintained through a combined highway access point. A notification letter and access modification plan was sent to the property owners identified on these roads to advise of the proposed change.

6.3.1 Public Information Centre

PICs are informal meetings where area residents and other interested parties are provided the opportunity to review planning and design plans. The PIC was part of the overall consultation program for this project and designed to involve stakeholders in the study to identify public concerns and assist in the selection of the preferred plan. The PIC also addresses the overall consultation principles identified in Chapter 5 of the MTO Class EA (2000).

The PIC was held on Tuesday, July 28, 2009 at the McKenzie Clearwater Fire Hall, at the junction of Highway 17 West and McConnell Lake Road in Clearwater Bay. External agencies, local property owners and the general public were invited to attend the PIC held from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This location was universally accessible as per the requirements of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

MTO representatives along with their consultant were available to answer questions and discuss any aspect of the study. The purpose of the PIC was to present:

- Study Process
- Study Background
- Alternatives to the Undertaking
- Evaluation Methodology
- Assessment and Evaluation of Route Alternatives
- Selected Route
- Next Steps in the Study

The PIC provided interested stakeholders, including municipal and external agency representatives, local residents, business owners and the public an opportunity to review the project and discuss with members of the Project Team.

Section 6.3 provides an overview of the dates the joint Notice of Study Commencement and Public Information Centre (Ontario Government Notice) was advertised. A copy of the Ontario Government Notice is found in **Appendix B**.

A PIC notification letter was distributed on Thursday, July 15th, 2009 to all representatives on the External Agencies List (see **Section 6.1**). In addition, a copy of the notice was sent through Canada Post bulk mail distribution to approximately 1500 addresses within the study area. The local provincial political representative was sent notification July 7, 2009.

The project website www.4lanehighway17kenora.ca provided details of the time and location of the PIC and provided a means to directly contact the project representatives via email.

It was estimated that approximately 61 people attended the PIC and signed the registration sheets. Attendance was a mix of permanent and seasonal residents.

An extensive amount of relevant and valuable project information was presented and feedback received. In addition, preferences for the alternatives under consideration were received. Overall, most people were pleased with the Public Information Centre. The four-laning of Highway 17 is welcomed in the community. There was general support for the selected route shown for Section 1 – West and Section 2 – Central. Significant interest was expressed for the planning of Section 3 – East.

The most frequent comments that were provided from the PICs included the following:

- Positive comments on the selected route for Section 1 – West and Section 2 – Central.
- Presence of survey markings in the Section 3 – East worried residents construction was already starting in this section. It was noted that this was only being completed to obtain survey data and did not represent a selected route.
- Concerns raised about the alignment of the four-laned highway in Section 3 – East, where most accesses are located.
- Interest shown in the next round of consultation (Section 3 – East) and timing of construction.

6.3.2 Integration of External Consultation

The intent of holding the Public Information Centre (PIC) for this project was to ensure the public had an opportunity to identify their concerns and influence the outcome of the preferred plans while also addressing the consultation principles identified in the Class EA document. One of the consultation principles relates to showing how the input received in earlier stages affected the project.

Exhibit 6-1 highlights some of the key comments and concerns provided by the public and how they were addressed throughout the study.

Exhibit 6-1: Summary of Key Comments and Concerns

SUMMARY OF KEY COMMENTS	MTO RESPONSE
Concerns of maintaining access to Royal Lake properties and to minimize out-of-way travel.	To minimize out-of-way travel, it is being proposed that Fire Road 46 will be realigned to tie into the north side of the intersection with Shoal Lake Road, creating a four-leg configuration. This will be a two-way-stopped control median crossover intersection.
Concerns of maintaining access to Moth Lake properties and minimizing out-of-way travel.	Please note we have identified a need to combine the current accesses to Fire Roads 37 – 40. Access to all identified private properties within Section 2 will be maintained, however, some existing accesses will be closed and the private roadways will be realigned to a combined access point at Highway 17; this new access will feature an

SUMMARY OF KEY COMMENTS	MTO RESPONSE
	<p>intersection with a median crossover, allowing access to and from both east- and westbound Highway 17. The proposed unpaved private road will be constructed by MTO on Crown land, and will be privately operated and maintained.</p> <p>This new configuration will reduce intersection frequency on Highway 17, which will yield improvements to highway safety and operation; out-of-way travel will also be reduced. The proposed private road will reflect the following additional features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The revised intersection crossover is at roughly the midpoint of the 4 consolidated accesses, which serves to share out-of-way travel between the accesses. • As a result of the change, out-of-way travel for emergency services responding from the east is eliminated for Fire Roads 39 and 40, reduced for Fire Road 38, and increased by approximately 600 m for Fire Road 37. Out-of-way travel will be offset somewhat by improved operations on Highway 17 as a result of the four-laning. • The revised intersection is located at the centre of a tangent section of the highway; this will maximize the safety benefits of consolidating the accesses. <p>The details of the proposed access road modifications will be subject to further consultation as part of the subsequent detail design stage of this project.</p>
<p>Positive comments on the selected route for Section 2 – Central.</p>	<p>Thank you for submitting written comments regarding the Route Planning and Preliminary Design Study for Highway 17 Four-laning between the Manitoba / Ontario Border and Kenora.</p> <p>Please note you are on the project mailing list and will be advised of future study notifications as this project proceeds. In addition, the project website (www.4lanehighway17kenora.ca) will continue to be updated as the study progresses.</p> <p>During the next several months we will incorporate any refinements into the preliminary design of the selected route for Sections 1 and 2 based on public and external agency input. Route planning and preliminary design for Section 3 will be initiated with the development and evaluation of route alternatives, in consultation with the public and external agencies.</p> <p>A Transportation Environmental Study Report (TESR) will be prepared separately for each section. Notices will be published in local newspapers when each TESR is completed to explain the 30-day review process and identify the locations where the TESR is available for viewing.</p>
<p>Interest shown in Section 3 (East) of the study area, including inquiries about the alignment, the next round of consultation and construction timing.</p> <p>Suggestions to twin on the north side of the existing Highway.</p>	<p>Route planning and preliminary design for Section 3 will be initiated with the development and evaluation of route alternatives, in consultation with the public and external agencies.</p>

SUMMARY OF KEY COMMENTS	MTO RESPONSE
Presence of survey markings in the Section 3 – East worried residents construction was already starting in this section.	It was noted that this was only being completed to obtain survey data and did not represent a selected route.
Request that a 100km/h speed limit be implemented instead of 90 km/h.	Geometrics are to provide for 100 km/h on new highway sections but only 90 km/h on existing sections to re-use the recently completed improvements. Future planning may incorporate improvements to increase the posted speed limit to 100 km/h.
Concerned with the impact of construction on traffic delays along the Highway.	Construction staging will be finalized during the subsequent detail design stage. It is anticipated that traffic will be generally unaffected during construction through the use of construction staging and minor detours. From time to time, there may be lane closures but these will be infrequent and will be minimized to the extent possible.