



Marten Falls First Nation (MFFN) Community Access Road (CAR) Public Information Centre #5 (PIC #5) Summary Report October 25 and 26, 2023

This summary report has been prepared to provide an overview of the feedback captured at Public Information Centre #5 in Thunder Bay and Geraldton on October 25 and 26, 2023. The first hour of each meeting was reserved for Indigenous community members only.

Timing and Location

Best Western Plus Nor'Wester Hotel & Conference Centre
Thunder Bay, Ontario
October 25, 2023
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Geraldton Community Centre
Geraldton, Ontario
October 26, 2023
4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Introduction / Purpose

This was the third PIC held during the provincial Environmental Assessment / federal Impact Assessment phase (PIC #5) of the Marten Falls First Nation (MFFN) Community Access Road project. It focused on the Existing Conditions Reporting, Route Selection Milestone and Cumulative Effects Assessment. The purpose of PIC #5 was to provide updates on:

- What has happened since Public Information Centre #4, including what we have heard and how feedback is being considered;
- What we heard at the Aboriginal and Treaty Rights and Interests (ATRI) (February 2023) and plans for the next forum (November 2023);
- Existing conditions results for completed studies;
- How Indigenous Knowledge is used and how it informs the process;
- Achieving the next major milestone: Identifying the preferred route;
- How route alternatives have been assessed and recommended, and how a preferred route will be chosen;
- Cumulative effects and why it is important; and
- Next steps and future opportunities to get involved.



Notices and Promotion

A formal notice and invitation to PIC #5 was emailed to the project contact list and published on the Project website (www.martenfallsaccessroad.ca/documents/#notices) on October 10, 2023 and distributed in print, online and on the radio via multiple outlets, as outlined below. Notices in English, Cree, French, Ojibway and Oji-Cree were available for download on the website. Copies of the notice, in each language, are provided in **Appendix A**.

Print Advertisements (see Appendix B1)

- The Chronicle Journal: October 14, 2023
- Geraldton Times Star: October 18, 2023
- Thunder Bay Source: October 19, 2023

Online Advertisements (see Appendix B2)

- MFFN All Season Community Access Road Project Website (www.martenfallsaccessroad.ca/documents/#notices): October 10, 2023
- Northern Ontario Business: October 11 - 26, 2023
- Thunder Bay News Watch: October 11 - 26, 2023
- Windspeaker: October 11 - 26, 2023
- Wawatay News: October 11 - 26, 2023

Radio Advertisements (see Appendix B3)

- Wawatay Radio: three times per day October 16 - 26, 2023
- CFNO Radio: October 16 - 25, 2023

Social Media Advertisements (see Appendix B4)

- Facebook (MFFN CAR Public Page): October 11 and 23, 2022
- Facebook (MFFN Private Page): October 20, 2023
- Facebook (Geraldton Private Page): October 26, 2023

Reminders were also distributed to the electronic mailing list in the September 2023 E-Blast and a follow-up notice on October 19, 2023 (see **Appendix B5**).

Transportation

Complimentary transportation was offered to MFFN community members for the October 25 PIC#5 in Thunder Bay. Information on how to schedule the shuttle service was included in MFFN specific correspondence and available by contacting the MFFN Community Coordinator.



A shuttle service was also offered to Aroland First Nation for the PIC#5 in Geraldton. Aroland First Nation were in an election cycle at the time of the meeting and were unable to participate.

Format and Attendance

PIC #5 was held in an open house format and featured a series of display boards, and large printed maps showing the preliminary technically preferred route options and preliminary cumulative effects boundary, and plain language summaries of the Existing Conditions early findings. The preliminary list and associated map of projects being considered for inclusion in the cumulative effects assessment was shared to allow participants to review the information, ask questions and provide feedback. MFFN Senior Community Member Advisor, Project Team members and Consultants were available to guide attendees through the display boards and answer questions. Attendees were encouraged to review display boards and provide comments using the feedback forms, or by having one-on-one discussions with the Team members.

The following printed and online materials were made available to attendees:

- A hard copy of the open house boards;
- Frequently Asked Questions;
- Feedback form;
- Fall 2023 Field Notice;
- Existing Conditions reports (Plain Language Summaries); and,
- Maps of: Route Alternatives, Preliminary Technically Preferred Route recommendations, Individual Route Segments (1, 2, and 3), Cumulative Effects Inclusion Map, Study Area Maps.

All engagement materials shared at PIC #5 are included in **Appendix C**, maps are included in **Appendix D**.

Attendance

Approximately **35 individuals** attended PIC #5 (21 attendees in Thunder Bay on October 25, 2023, and 14 attendees in Geraldton on October 26, 2023). Attendees included Indigenous community members, provincial and federal agencies, members of the public / local residents, environmental groups and industry representatives. Attendees included members of:

- Marten Falls First Nation;
- Eabametoong First Nation;
- South Gillis residents;
- Jellico residents;
- Thunder Bay residents;
- Geraldton residents;



- North Superior Workforce Planning;
- Outland / Horizon North;
- Far North District MNR; and
- Representative for MPP Kevin Holland;
- Municipality of Greenstone; and
- Longlac-Greenstone Council.

Paul MacInnis and Lauri Cunningham from the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines were present at the Thunder Bay event to provide a brief update and assist in answering questions from attendees. Paul MacInnis also attended the Geraldton event.

Local Media

One journalist from Thunder Bay News Watch attended PIC #5 in Thunder Bay on October 25, 2023, and conducted an interview with Mark Wright, Greenstone CAO, Winnie Moonias, MFFN Band Member, Qasim Saddique, MFFN Project Team member. The interview is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=q7VtO3RUN1Q>

Highlights of Participant Feedback

Attendees were encouraged to share their feedback, concerns and pose questions throughout the meeting or provide them in writing using the available feedback form (see **Appendix C**). Key items of interest raised by the public are included below. Note that all questions are labeled with a 'Q', comments with a 'C' and answers with an 'A'. Questions were answered by MFFN Community Advisors and Project Team members. Two participants completed the feedback form that was available at the meeting and online.

Existing Conditions

C: A member of Eabemetoong First Nations noted that mining in Washi Lake was disruptive to their camp and trapline. The area was outlined for a Project Team member for their reference.

Cumulative Effects

C: Evelyn Brunner from Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry provided feedback on the cumulative effects inclusion list and suggested developing spatial / temporal boundaries. She noted that we should include the Wataynikenyap Powerline in the inclusions list.

C: A representative from Ring of Fire Metals noted that Black Label Mine and Black Thor Mine were not considered feasible at this time and their development, if it ever happened, was not contemplated for many decades or possibly 100 years. He indicated that we should consider removing them from the inclusions list.



C: Paul MacInnis from the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines noted that Eagles Nest is scheduled to begin development work in 2027. Information on what that work included or if it would be significantly advanced in time for us to include it in our inclusions list is not confirmed.

C: A meeting attendee was surprised with the list of projects identified for consideration in the cumulative effects assessment and asked where the list came from.

A: The preliminary list shown at the PIC was provided in Section 22 of the Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines.

C: Some of the projects are not feasible. Projects not included in the list include roads, power lines, mines biomass and broad band projects, Neskantaga Road, Marine Conservation Authority - Green Conservation Management project. It was also noted that there are preliminary plans for an air strip expansion and hotel at MFFN.

Land & Resources Use

C: Two attendees – one from MFFN and one from Eabemetoong First Nation made note on a map where they hold fishing licenses and traplines in the vicinity of Segment 2 west alternative.

A: The information was noted.

Q: Will you meet with outfitters?

A: The team would like to meet with outfitters and plan to do so before the season starts back up.

C: One of the biggest concerns we have is with enforcement of people going into remote lakes and areas.

C: The whole project will impact air services of Nakina as a whole.

Potential Impacts (construction / post-construction)

C: A Councillor of the Municipality of Greenstone commented that the municipality is going to be impacted by the construction and use of the road. The main road will be damaged, there will be people passing through, outfitters will be impacted. We do not benefit from the road. We are only impacted. The Ogoki crossing could also be impacted.

C: The Mayor of Greenstone commented that they have an interest in the Project as their main road will be negatively impacted by the construction of the road, similar to how the vehicles use the road to travel to and from the mine north of town. A request was made of the Project Team to meet with the Municipality once the route is selected to talk about potential impacts.

A: The request was noted.

Alternative Routes, Segments and Road Conditions

C: There is a gorge, approximately 100 feet deep, on Segment 2 Alternative 4 at the crossing below Caviar Lake.

A: The bridge crossing is 94 m, and therefore piers are needed in the water.



C: There is a lot of wildlife activity along the Albany River at Teabeau Lake, and the western segment (Alternative 1) would be more disruptive to wildlife. It was also noted that there are geese at Teabeau Lake Camp on Washi Lake, with the camp located at the west end of Washi Lake.

EA / IA Process

Q: Where are we in the process?

A: The Project is currently in the provincial Environmental Assessment and federal Impact Assessment process and preliminary design phase. We are in the next major milestone of selecting the preferred route. Marten Falls First Nation is expected to make the final route selection in early 2024. We have also shared some early findings from the Existing Conditions Reports at this PIC#5. The full reports will be available summer 2024 as part of the draft Environmental Assessment / Impact Statement.

Q: How long until construction begins?

A: A few steps have to be completed before construction can start. The combined provincial Environmental Assessment Report and the federal Impact Statement will be submitted in 2025 at which point the federal and provincial decisions will be made to approve or not approve. If approved, the Project moves forward to detailed design, permitting and tendering, and eventual road construction. It may take 5 -10 years before construction begins.

Field Studies

C: A MFFN community member commented that the Fort Hope community catches and uses the sturgeon population for consumption; they also noted that sturgeon have a different taste in the winter.

C: A Sturgeon Spawning license holder on the Albany River made some observations about overwintering behavior of sturgeon in the area and provided those to the Natural Sciences Team.

C: Wolves are eating a lot of beavers right now with low water levels forcing the beaver onto land more often.

C: There are Brook Trout in Gourlie Creek and Old Man River.

C: A MFFN First Nation community member noted that there was a lot of disruptive mining activity occurring around their camp on Washi Lake including prospectors checking rocks, leaving garbage, and making fires at their camp.

C: A MFFN community member remarked that they notice frequent helicopter flyovers that disturb their hunts, and suggested we warn field teams to limit air traffic in the area.

A: Field Notices for the Community Access Road are issued in advance of field activities and warn of helicopter use in the area. Field work is winding down, but we will continue to provide this notification when we are working in the area.



Engagement

Q: Can feedback be submitted after the PIC?

A: Feedback is welcome anytime throughout the Project. Participants may direct comments to the Project email address at any time or fill out the feedback form available in-person and online.

Other Road Projects

Q: How long will the Project be funded?

A: The Community Access Road will be fully funded for as long as it takes to complete the Project.

Q: Are you sharing information (studies and other data collected so far) with Northern Road Link (NRL)?

A: Studies have been completed and the data is owned by MFFN on both CAR and NRL; it is vital for the Team to have early conversations with the NRL before NRL start planning field studies.

Q: How is NRL and MFFN CAR linked? Will the MFFN CAR be affected by the NRL Terms of Reference decision coming up soon?

A: The MFFN CAR would not be affected by the NRL Terms of Reference decision as the MFFN CAR is a separate project from NRL and Webequie Supply Road. The MFFN CAR does not rely on the NRL Terms of Reference approval to be approved for construction.

Q: Where is the NRL expected to connect to the CAR?

A: The NRL would attach to the very north segment of the Alternative 1 route (see Route Alternatives map in **Appendix C**). If that route is not selected, a segment would need to be built by NRL.

Other

C: Community members are worried about the security of the road and noted that Terrier Lake has restricted access because it attaches to the winter road.

Q: Who will build the road? Will they be local?

A: We do not know at this point in the process. However, there are a lot of general and local contractors who are expected to bid on the road. A lot of construction and general contractors have been watching the Project and determining if it will go ahead or not. There is an interest expected from out of province contractors and their subcontractors as well.

Next Steps

The Community Access Road Team provided a six-month look-ahead to the attendees and advised that field studies, socio-economic studies, engagement with the MFFN members and other Indigenous communities, government agencies and interested persons would continue. The upcoming Aboriginal and Treaty Rights and Interests Workshop in November 2023 and webinar series for winter 2024 were highlighted. The Team will issue a community-specific Progress Milestone Report #2 to Indigenous communities and will be preparing for the next milestone: the Route Selection.