

Route Planning and Environmental Assessment Study

Highway 11/17, between Kakabeka Falls and Shabaqua Corners

GWP 6054-03-00

Presentation to Kakabeka Falls Business Owners: December 1, 2010

Redeemer Lutheran Church, Kakabeka Falls

One Team. Infinite Solutions



Agenda

Highway 11/17 Route Planning and Environmental Assessment Study
between Kakabeka Falls and Shabaqua Corners, GWP 6054-03-00

- Provincial mandates
- Role of Highway 11/17
- Study Background
- Study Purpose and Process
- Public Consultation
- Business Impact Study
- Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park User Survey
- Feasible Route Alternatives (PIC 2)
- Evaluation of Alternatives
- Next Steps
- Questions

Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Mandate

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- Preserve the safety and efficiency of Ontario's provincial highway network and the Ontario government's investment in the highway infrastructure
- Responsible for the delivery program and maintenance of the highway network

Northern Highways Program (MNDMF) Mandate

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- Develop and maintain the necessary highway infrastructure that will promote economic growth, sustain an evolving industrial base, and meet the social needs of northern residents
- Provide funding and determine program priorities (with MTO) for the repair and expansion of the northern highway network

Role of Highway 11/17

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- Highway 11/17 in the Thunder Bay Area forms a strategic link in the Trans-Canada Highway system
- Trans-continental, regional, and local traffic rely heavily on this highway
- Provides access to local road networks and communities

Study Background

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- In the mid-70's the ministry determined that portions of the Trans-Canada Highway between Thunder Bay and Shabaqua Corners would require a four-lane controlled access highway
- A Route Planning Study for Highway 11/17 between Thunder Bay and Shabaqua Corners was completed in 1979
 - » A preferred route between the Thunder Bay and Kakabeka Falls was identified and subsequently designated
 - » A preferred route between Kakabeka Falls and Shabaqua Corners was not confirmed or designated, since the need was beyond the planning horizon

Study Background

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- The initial 13 km section of the new highway between Thunder Bay and Vibert Road was opened to traffic in August 2009
- The Rosehart Report (February 2008) recommended that route planning commence immediately for the four-laning of strategic sections of the Trans-Canada Highway in Northwestern Ontario
- In 2008 the provincial government announced a \$546 million investment in northern highways, including "Route planning studies for future four-laning for several sections of Highway 17"
 - » Highway 11/17 Route Planning Study between Kakabeka Falls and Shabaqua Corners (40 km)
 - » Highway 17 Route Planning Study between Kenora and Manitoba (40 km)

Study Purpose

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- The purpose of this study is to identify and designate property for a future four-lane Highway 11/17 between Kakabeka Falls and Shabaqua Corners
- A four-lane divided Controlled Access Highway is the appropriate standard for Highway 11/17 and the Trans-Canada Highway
- Four-laning will improve highway safety by:
 - » Separating eastbound and westbound traffic with a wide median
 - » Providing safe passing opportunities without the risk of opposing traffic
 - » Removing potential vehicle conflicts associated with high speed Trans-Canada traffic and local traffic, school buses, etc.

Study Purpose

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- This is a long-range planning study to identify and designate property for the ultimate Highway 11/17 transportation needs
- Typically, route planning studies are undertaken 10 to 25 years in advance of actual construction
- Designating a future four-lane highway now will assist the Ministry, local municipalities, utilities, the resource management industry, and private land owners with planning and development within the study area
- Construction timing has not been determined and there is no funding committed to the project


Environmental Assessment Process

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- This study is being carried out under the requirements of the Class Environmental Assessment (EA) for Provincial Transportation Facilities (2000)
- This study falls within the scope of a Group "A" project, which includes major realignments and by-passes to existing provincial highways and freeways
- Specific details about this study process are documented in the Study Design Report, which is available on the project website

Public Consultation

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- Public Information Centre 1 – December 2009
 - » Present and seek input on the Highway 11/17 Corridor Alternatives
- Public Information Centre 2 - August 2010
 - » Present and seek input on the Feasible Route Alternatives
- Public Information Centre 3 - Winter 2011  We are Here
 - » Present and seek input on the Preferred Plan
- Transportation Environmental Study Report – Spring 2011
 - » 30-day Public Review Period
- Environmental clearance and right-of-way designation – Summer 2011

Public Consultation

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- Notice of Study Commencement - September 2009
 - » Newspaper (Thunder Bay Chronicle)
 - » Newsletters (Oliver Paipoonge News; Conmee Chronicle)
 - » Postal Code mailout (all addresses in P0T 1W0 and P0T 1X0)
- Notice of Public Information Centre 1- December 2009
 - » Newspaper (Thunder Bay Chronicle), TV news, radio broadcast
 - » Postal Code mailout (all addresses in P0T 1W0 and P0T 1X0) and direct mail
- Notice of Public Information Centre 2- August 2010
 - » Newspaper (Thunder Bay Chronicle)
 - » Postal Code mailout (all addresses in P0T 1W0 and P0T 1X0) and direct mail

Business Impact Study

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- Carried out by *urbanMetrics* from December 2009 to March 2010
- 17 of 43 (40%) identified businesses completed the survey
- Purpose of the Business Survey was to:
 - » Understand customers and suppliers
 - » Identify local and regional business conditions
 - » Identify safety and other concerns
 - » Understand how / where future access would best serve the majority of businesses

Business Impact Study

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Commercial

- Grocery, Banking
Generally do not rely on drive-by traffic
- Service centres
generally rely on drive-by traffic

Tourist

- Accommodation
- Campground
- Gift Shops
- Restaurant
- Rely, in part, on drive-by traffic

Industrial

- Construction
- Small manufacturing
- Generally do not rely on drive-by traffic

- Note: Results are based on the responses of the participating businesses

Business Impact Study

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Customer Visitation

- 50-70 % local
- 70-90 % tourist / passing motorist for hotels / motels
- Commercial truck activity
- 90-100 % of goods sourced locally

Seasonality

- Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park is a major tourist draw (300,000 visitors/yr)
- Economic activity is tied to the Park
- Largest volume of revenue from July to August
- 13 businesses closed during winter

Customer Orientation

- 50 % from northbound lanes
- 50 % from southbound lanes

- Note: Results are based on the responses of the participating businesses

Business Impact Study

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- The village of Kakabeka Falls can maintain an economically viable commercial cluster
- Factors that could minimize impacts to local businesses:
 - » Access provided via interchanges north and south of the village
 - » Maintaining visibility
 - » Improved traffic operations
 - » Improved signage to advise long-distance travelers of services available

Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park User Survey

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- Survey completed from May – October 2008 by Ontario Parks
- Approximately 86% of day visitors indicated that Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park (the Park) was either their primary destination or one of several destinations on a longer trip
- Approximately 83% of overnight visitors indicated that the Park was either their primary destination or one of several destinations on a longer trip
- Approximately 1% of day trips and 6% of overnight trips are unplanned stops that rely on drive-by traffic
- Visitors travel approximately 7.7 hours to the Park on average

Feasible Route Alternatives

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Section AB, between Shabaqua Corners and Highway 102

- Alternative AB1 – new alignment on north side of existing
- Alternative AB2 – twinning on south side of existing
- Alternative AB3 – new alignment on south side of existing

Section BCD, between Highway 102 and Kakabeka Falls

- Alternative BCD1 – new alignment on west side of existing
- Alternative BCD2 – twinning on west side of existing
- Alternative BCD3 – twinning and new alignment on east side of existing
- Alternative BCD4 – new alignment on east side of existing

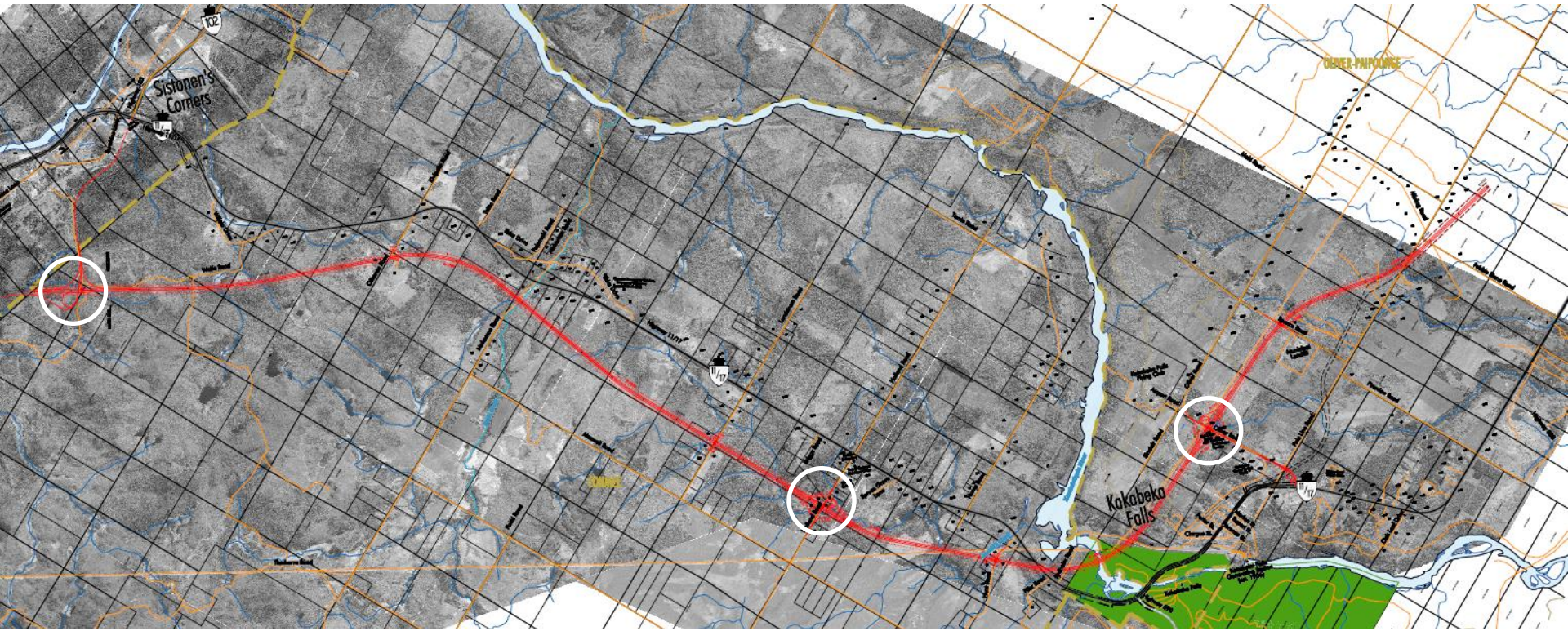
Feasible Route Alternatives

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- All routes connect to the previously designated corridor located east of Kakabeka Falls – four-laning through Kakabeka Falls is not feasible due to property impacts
- All routes direct provincial traffic around the village of Kakabeka Falls
- Expanding the existing highway through Kakabeka Falls does not meet the long-term provincial transportation needs
 - » Four-lane divided highway
 - » Controlled Access Highway (i.e. no entrances)
- When needed, widening the existing four-lane highway to five lanes through Kakabeka Falls will provide some short-term safety and operational benefits, and may delay the need for four-laning

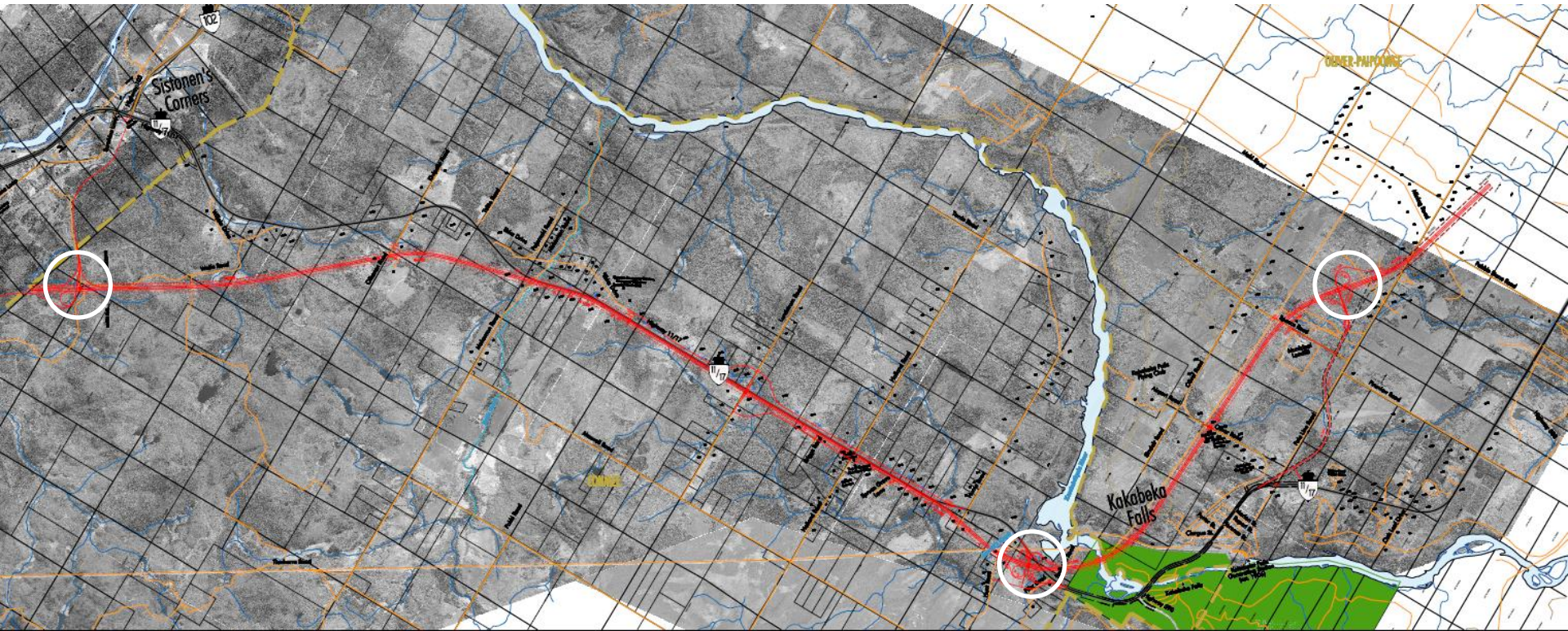
Alternative BCD1

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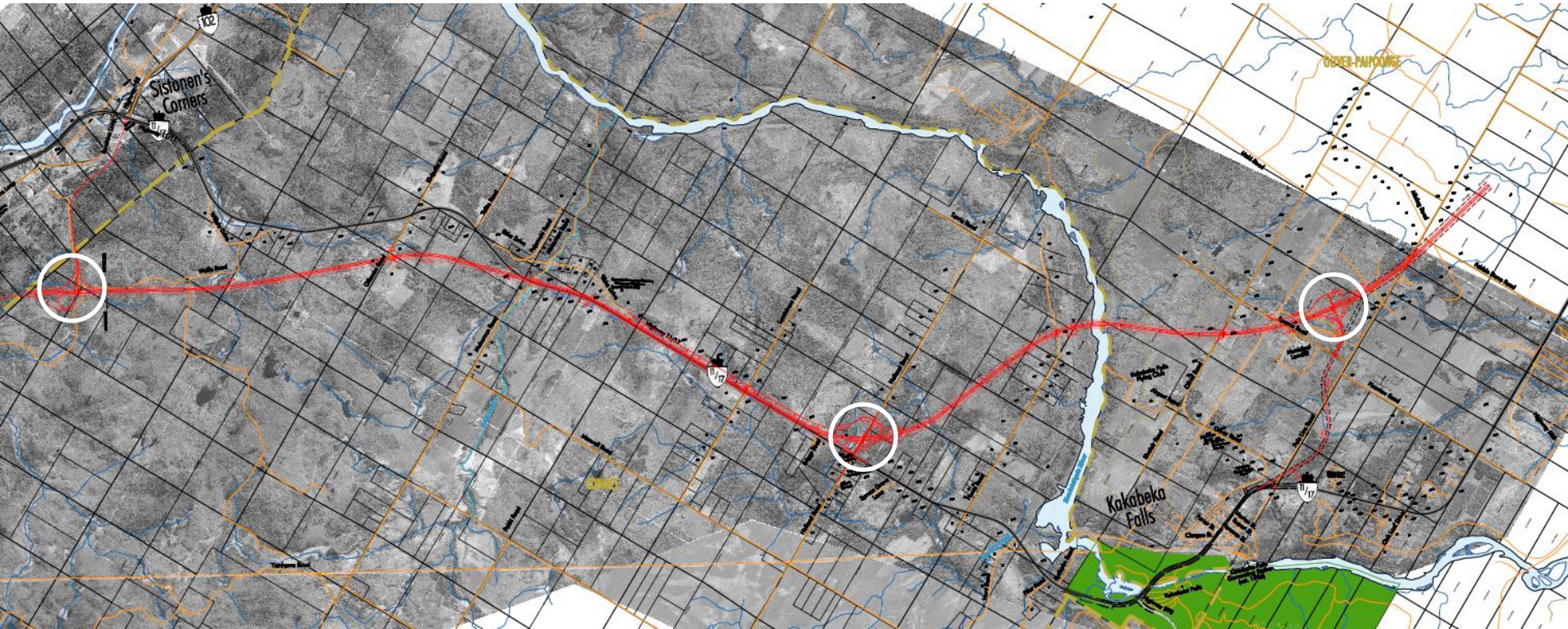
Alternative BCD2

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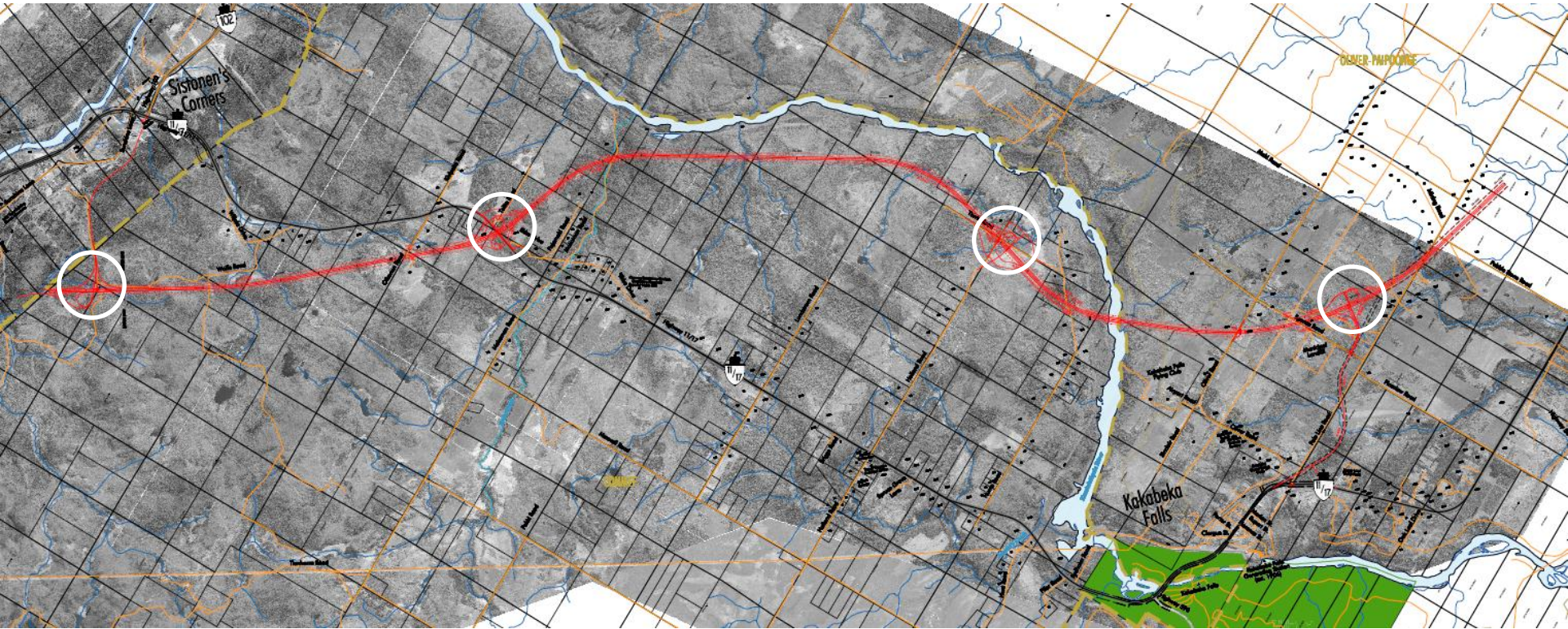
Alternative BCD3

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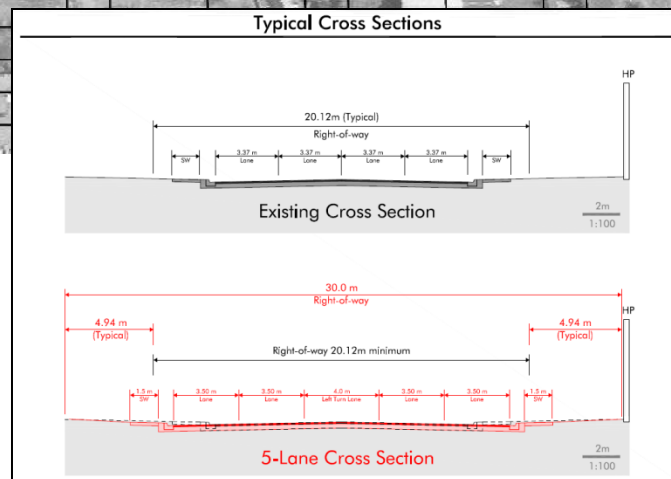
Alternative BCD4

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Possible Interim Improvement Plan (Kakabeka Falls)

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Evaluation of Alternatives

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Highway Engineering

- Geometrics and Safety
- Cost
- Constructability

Social and Cultural Environment

- Property
- Business
- Access
- Agriculture
- Noise
- Archaeology
- Land Use

Natural Environment

- Provincial Park
- ANSI
- Wetlands
- Aquatic
- Wildlife
- Vegetation

Next Steps

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- Evaluation of Feasible Alternatives (August 2010 to December 2010)
 - » Finalize detailed evaluation of Feasible Route Alternatives
 - » Select Preferred Plan
- Public Information Centre 3 (Winter 2011)
 - » Present and seek input on the Preferred Plan
- Preliminary Design of Preferred Plan (Winter 2011)
 - » Minor adjustments to Preferred Plan to mitigate impacts
 - » Confirm additional mitigation strategies required for Detail Design
- Document Recommended Plan (Spring 2011)
 - » Prepare Transportation Environmental Study Report
 - » 30-day Public Review Period

Summary of Key Points

Highway 11/17 Route Planning and Environmental Assessment Study
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- Highway 11/17 is a higher order provincial transportation corridor for long-distance travel and goods movement
- A four-lane divided Controlled Access Highway is the appropriate standard for Highway 11/17 and the Trans-Canada Highway
- Expanding the existing highway through Kakabeka Falls will provide some short-term benefits, but it does not meet the long-term provincial transportation needs
- This is a long-range planning study to identify and designate property for the ultimate Highway 11/17 transportation needs
- Construction timing has not been determined and there is no funding committed to the project
- The ministry is committed to working with stakeholders throughout the study

Discussion

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- Questions ???