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5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

5.1 Overview

The Environmental Assessment Engagement Program (EAEP) is considered a fundamental and influential component of the project's planning process as it intends to comprehensively engage multiple parties in all phases of project development and for the duration of the project life cycle.

This section documents the framework for which the EAEP was devised including the overarching goals and expectations of the program and the engagement initiatives which have been completed to date. It also includes continued efforts to adequately involve interested and affected parties¹ in this project. The EAEP is separated into the following stages:

- Stage 1: Engagement Activities Preceding 2001;
- Stage 2: Engagement Activities 2001-2005; and
- Stages 3: Current Engagement Activities.

Appendix 5.0: Environmental Assessment Engagement Program contains supporting documentation for this section.

5.1.1 Purpose and Objectives

The main objective of the EAEP is to provide meaningful opportunities to engage in dialogue and exchange information about the project with interested and affected parties. The interested and affected parties are generally comprised of First Nations and communities belonging to the Northern Affairs Communities (NAC), other interested parties such as Aboriginal organizations, government agencies, and non-government organizations (NGOs) as well as members of the general Manitoban public. The information exchanged is factored into project design and the EIA. The EAEP is independent of the Crown's Duty to Consult under Section 35 of the Constitution, but may help to frame and inform consultation between the Crown and Aboriginal Communities.

The EAEP, aims to achieve the main objective in the following ways:

¹Interested and affected parties – Interested parties is defined as aboriginal and/or non-aboriginal peoples of Manitoba which may be interested in participating or learning about the project. Affected parties refer to aboriginal and/or non-aboriginal parties which may be directly or indirectly affected by the development of the project.

- Provide meaningful opportunities for the early involvement of interested and affected communities in order to ensure their continued participation throughout all stages of the Project;
- Utilize a variety of mechanisms to provide information, receive feedback, and engage with participants in a consistent and transparent manner;
- The EAEP will be flexible such that it can be revised in response to expressed issues and concerns;
- Effectively use feedback gained through the EAEP to assist with decision-making with respect to project design and schedule, and to help avoid or minimize potential adverse effects and maximize Project benefits; and
- Communicate how community, stakeholder or public input and information provided were used.

5.1.2 EAEP Approach

The adopted approach for the EAEP is centered on:

- Providing participation and opportunities for all interested and affected parties in the EAEP;
- Addressing relevant biophysical, social or cultural concerns. These will be addressed in the impact analysis section of the EIA and considered in relation to valued ecosystem components (VECs);
- Respecting and recognizing community and traditional knowledge for its importance; and,
- Conducting communication between proponent and interested and affected parties in a culturally sensitive and comprehensible manner. Where appropriate, interpreters and translation of EAEP material will be provided.

5.1.3 EAEP Methods

The provision of information and the way in which information is communicated; transmitted and shared is the foundation for the proper functioning of an engagement program. Table 5-1 outlines engagement and coordination methods utilized in the EAEP:

Table 5 - 1: EAEP and Coordinator Techniques

EAEP and Coordination Techniques	
Method	Description of Techniques
Invitation / Introductory Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation / introductory letters were utilized at the beginning of the EAEP to establish contact and introduce the project with communities ** that may be potentially directly or indirectly affected by the project and to the general public. • Project Notification Letters were sent to appropriate provincial and federal government agencies to solicit interest in reviewing the environmental assessment report and to determine the government agencies which are required to review the environmental assessment report.
Leadership Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters of introduction and leadership meetings were organized by ESRA to introduce the project and to discuss specific benefits and opportunities of the project for individual communities. • Leadership Meetings were organized in each community of the study area. Preceding the community meeting / open-house. The chief objective of these meetings was to introduce the East Side Road Authority (ESRA) as the project proponent, the study team, the project and anticipated work, in addition to requesting permission to hold a community meeting / open-house with leadership and residents in the community.
Community Meeting / Open House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Meeting / Open-houses were organized in each of the communities of the study area. Two rounds of meetings were organized. The first round (Round 1), conducted in April-July 2009 was intended to provide a forum to introduce the East Side Road Authority (ESRA) as the project proponent and the EIA component of the Project, and to obtain input on issues/concerns relating to the EIA process, including the identification and evaluation of routing alternatives between Bloodvein and Berens River. • The second round (Round 2), will be conducted after filing of EIS, will present results of the evaluation of routing option alternatives, as well as predicted benefits, environmental effects and mitigation measures associated with the proposed routing alternative (preferred alignment).
Public Open-house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Public Open-House provided information and feedback opportunities to a wide range of interested and affected parties including community members living off-reserve, organizations representing interested and affected party interests, such as resource users (trapping, mining, wild rice harvesting, transportation, etc.), NGOs, as well as the general public to be involved in the EAEP.
Display Board Exhibits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display Board Exhibits such as maps and text boards were utilized as a visual presentation aid during community meetings / open-house, meeting with community leadership and public open-house meeting to aid in information exchange with individuals

EAEP and Coordination Techniques	
Method	Description of Techniques
Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power point presentations were utilized as visual aids during the community meetings / open-houses, meetings with community leadership and public open-house meetings.
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Announcements, community meeting / open-house and the public open-house were publicized in the Winnipeg Free Press, CBC Radio, CBC TV, Native Communications Inc. (NCI) radio and other local/regional media. Internet websites were developed so that all interested and affected parties have access to project information, project updates and schedule and all other relevant data. Internet websites were designed to obtain feedback from interested and affected parties with respect to the project.
Printed Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newsletters, project description fact sheets, comment sheets, gift maps, and presentation print-out were distributed during community meeting / open-houses and public open-house. Printed material was also sent to resident's homes when requested.
Established Communication Channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established Communication Channels such as ESRA website, ESRA contact email address, and telephone and fax number have been secured for interested and affected parties to use for communicating feedback or soliciting project information.
Surveys and Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel surveys were conducted with communities in the study area to understand inter-community and long-distance travel behaviour. The survey was designed to also allow respondents to express their personal views of the project. Traditional Knowledge Surveys were also utilized to gather local knowledge on current and historic land and resource use patterns, the cultural/spiritual implications of such activity, biophysical and topographical features of the land etc. The survey was designed to also allow respondents to express their personal views of the project and to identify potential impacts that the project may have on the each of the communities and natural environment.
Community Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Coordinators were employed to assist with public diffusion processes, organization and coordination of community meeting / open-houses and leadership meetings. One community coordinator was employed for Berens River First Nation and Berens River NAC; one for Little Grand Rapids / Little Grand Rapids NAC; one for Bloodvein First Nation, one for Pauingassi First Nation; one for Poplar River First Nation and one for the communities of Hollow Water First Nation, Manigotagan NAC, Seymourville NAC, Aghaming NAC, Princess Harbour and Pine Dock. Local publication of project related material was posted by Community Coordinators within each community.
<p><i>**The timing of Round 2 will occur after initial submission of the EIA for public and regulatory agency review.</i></p>	

5.2 Overview of Engagement Activities

Engagement of interested and affected parties has occurred in three stages over the past fifteen years. These stages can be characterized as follows:

- Stage 1: Engagement Activities Preceding 2001;
- Stage 2: Engagement Activities 2001-2005;
- Stages 3: Current Engagement Activities.

Stages 1 and 2 were not undertaken directly by ESRA; but, are considered fundamental past engagement activities as they pertain to the development of this Project.

5.3 Stage 1: Engagement Activities Preceding 2001 (proposed East Side of Lake Winnipeg All-Weather Road Transportation Network)

The East Side Planning Initiative (ESPI) was launched in 2000 to bring together local communities, First Nations, industry and environmental organizations to develop a vision for the East Side of Lake Winnipeg.

The Manitoba Government, through Manitoba Conservation, initiated development of a Broad Area Plan for the east side of Lake Winnipeg. The Plan was initiated recognizing the need for sustainable planning and also recognizing the uniqueness of the Region and the importance and abundance of natural resources in the Area. To address transportation concerns, a study was commissioned by the Department of Highways and Government Services (now Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation) to determine the Economic Justification for an All-Weather Road in this area.

The *East Side of Lake Winnipeg All Weather Road Justification and Scoping Study* (Dillon Consulting, August 2000) concluded that an all-weather road on the east side of Lake Winnipeg can be justified on the basis of long-term transportation costs and savings alone. The study area extended from Hollow Water in the south to Oxford House in the north; Lake Winnipeg in the west to the Ontario border. The small size of these communities in this area, their remoteness, and the lack of major economic enterprise resulted in a transportation system that had a modest capital cost, but provided an uncertain service to local residents (Dillon Consulting Limited, 2000, page 1).

5.3.1 Community Engagement Activities – East Side Lake Winnipeg All-Weather Road Transportation Network Study

The Study Team (Dillon Consulting, 2000) initiated a community engagement program with communities they considered interested or affected by the all-weather road network system. According to the Study Team, community support for and interest in the construction of an All-Weather Road network system was a central component of the justification and scoping study.

To identify the community position, the Study Team designed an engagement process to include a visit to each community potentially impacted by the development of a new road system. The purpose of the visit was to provide information on the study and study process and to identify community issues and concerns.

Engagements with individual communities consisted of three components:

- Initial community contact;
- Individual community meetings; and,
- Meeting minutes/follow-up consultations.

The format of each community meeting was at the discretion of the community. The Study Team presented an overview to the Chief and Council of each community visited, followed by a presentation and discussions to the community. In some communities, the presentation made by the Study Team was televised and discussions with individual members took place by phone.

Presented below is an overview of community input received by the Study Team to several issue areas. Because of the range of opinions expressed at any one community meeting, the Study Team thought it difficult and inappropriate to attempt to assign a broad geographic consensus to issues. The comments presented below should be reviewed with this in mind.

A generalized summary of community comments with respect to winter road/current transport system issues include:

- Winter road season is short and unpredictable;
- Rough winter road surface is hard on vehicles;
- Goods are often damaged in transit;
- Very long travel times;
- Air freight and passenger fares are expensive;
- No inter-community flights;
- Access to airports in some communities is inhibited by a requirement for over-water travel;
- Cost of air freight for perishable food items is very expensive;
- Barge system is near end of life; and,
- Personal boat travel on Lake Winnipeg is dangerous.

According to the *All-Weather Road - East Side of Lake Winnipeg Study Justification and Scoping Study* (Dillon Consulting, August 2000) major concerns about an All-Weather Road were centred on three themes: land use issues, potential social impacts and concerns about environment. Each of the issue areas was regarded as being

significant; suggesting that the issues need to be addressed in a substantive way if the road was to proceed.

Community members also expressed concerns with respect to land use issues, which include:

- Lack of control over natural resource development;
- Loss of traditional lands;
- Increased hunting and fishing pressure;
- Impacts to traplines;
- Social Impact Issues;
- Major change to lifestyle;
- Concern about drugs and alcohol;
- Concern about gang development and undesirable elements;
- Environmental Impacts; and
- Water quality and wildlife.

Despite various concerns voiced, community members expressed the following benefits of an all-weather road:

- Reduced cost of living;
- Improved diet and better health;
- Reduced cost of construction for housing and community infrastructure;
- Improved Inter-community contacts;
- Reduced isolation;
- Economic development opportunities;
- Reduced cost of transportation;
- Opportunities to visit children who are away at school;
- Opportunities to visit hospital patients; and,
- Reduced travel times.

The Study Team concluded from the community meetings that, while opinion differed between communities, in general there was support for the road. This general support is characterized as follows:

- Support varied from community to community from strong support to cautious;
- Support is qualified;

- Assurances are needed respecting control over local resources;
- Participation in highway construction and maintenance is important;
- Emphasis on maximizing community benefits; and,
- Need for in-depth community consultation on specific issues.

5.4 Stage 2: Engagement Activities 2001 – 2005 (proposed 0 km to 85 km)

There were a number of background reports prepared and presentations given in support of the Rice River Road environmental impact assessment activities. These activities were undertaken prior to the establishment of ESRA and are considered integral to the current EIA process. Some of these activities included:

- 2002 and 2003 involved presentations to and consideration by the Round Table and the First Nations Council of the East Side Planning Initiative;
- Preparation of the Functional Design Rice River Road Upgrading and Extension by UMA Engineering LTD. Submitted to Manitoba Transportation and Government Services during August, 2005, incorporated open houses and key person interviews; and,

5.4.1 Rice River Road Upgrade and Extension Functional Design Study - Environment Assessment

A socioeconomic study was initiated in 2002 by Manitoba Transportation and Government Services (MTGS) and undertaken by UMA Engineering Ltd. (UMA) as part of the Environment Assessment for Rice River Road Upgrade and Extension Functional Design Study (Study). As part of the Study, a public engagement program was undertaken to obtain feedback from residents of local communities and representatives of other interest groups affected by the Rice River Road upgrading and extension regarding social and economic issues and concerns, and route location preferences. Various individuals and groups also provided their local knowledge of UMA's study area and factors influencing the functional road design. The results of this public involvement process are included in UMA's Socio Economic Report provided in Appendix 5.

The engagement process for the study involved three major elements to solicit public involvement, including:

- Interested and Affected Parties Committee Meetings (dates);
- Key-person interviews with representatives of specific interest groups; and
- Community Meetings/Open Houses in four larger communities.

Interested and Affected Parties Meetings

Four meetings were held on the following dates:

- September 27, 2002;
- February 20, 2003;
- October 8, 2003; and
- April 21, 2004.

The study team for the Rice River Road Functional Design also consulted with the following individuals/organizations during the course of the study to obtain information and to assist in understanding the study area and issues for consideration:

- Nancy Whiteway, Chief - Berens River First Nation
- Larry Barker, Chief - Hollow Water First Nation
- William Young, Chief - Bloodvein First Nation
- Bob Yatowsky - Tembec Forest Products
- Garry Raven - Anishinabe Turtle Island Protectors
- Beth McKechnie - Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
- Gaile Whelen-Enns - Canadian Nature Federation
- Lyz Dykman - Manitoba Eco-Network
- Carl Smith - Manitoba Model Forest
- John Sinclair - T.R.E.E.
- Lorne Williams - Canadian Wild Rice Council
- Wade Munro - Manitoba Hydro
- Jimmy Johnson - Manitoba Lodges and Outfitters Association
- Ryan Cook - Manitoba Prospectors and Trappers Association
- Stu Jansson - Manitoba Trappers Association
- Carl Monkman - Manitoba Trappers Association
- Tom Lewis - Mining Association of Manitoba
- Dan Livingstone - Manitoba Recreational Canoeing Association
- Roger Venton - Manitoba Wildlife Federation
- Dawn Gratlon - SnoMan Inc.
- Greg Wood - Manigotagan Community
- Valdie Seymour - Seymourville Community
- Bob Bull - Aghaming Community
- Edgar Bruce - Loon Straits Community

- Myrtle & Frank Magnusson - Princess Harbour Community
- Henry McKay - Berens River Community
- Joe Courchene - INAC
- Ken Vipond - MANA
- Craig Maxwell - Manitoba Conservation
- Chuck Jones – Industry Trade and Mines Branch

The purpose of the first meeting was to review the objectives of the Rice River Road Functional Design, project organization, approach and methodology, identify the Committee Terms of Reference and discuss questions and comments regarding the development of an all-weather road. In addition, preferences were identified for an alternative northern route providing access to the Bloodvein River First Nation. Training opportunities, associated with the road design and construction, were also identified.

The purpose of the second meeting was to review the results of the terrain analysis and route selection and the results of the Public Involvement Engagement Process to date. Results of the Community Meetings/Open Houses, including a summary of perceived benefits and disadvantages of the upgrading and extension of Rice River Road, and preferred alternative routes were discussed. The results of key person interviews with representatives of relevant industries, recreation and environmental groups, Northern Affairs Communities and First Nations, were presented. A matrix was used to weigh each set of issues utilizing the engineering, environmental and socio-economic variables for the Northern and Southern Routes and these were described and discussed.

The purpose of the third meeting was to review the functional design for the Rice River Road, as well as to obtain approval of the location of the proposed road extension to the north and the alignment in the vicinity of the Hollow Water First Nation. Meetings were subsequently arranged with Chiefs Young and Barker to discuss the route alignments. Both Bloodvein River First Nation and Hollow Water First Nation agreed to provide Band Council Resolutions regarding the Rice River Road Upgrading and Extension.

The purpose of the fourth meeting was an update, as well as a discussion of route selection and functional design. Hollow Water First Nation discussed concerns about potentially losing maintenance contracts.

Committee Members

The interested and affected parties involved with the Committee for the Rice River Road Functional Design representatives included:

- Nancy Whiteway, Chief, Berens River First Nation;
- Larry Barker, Chief, Hollow Water First Nation;
- William Young, Chief, Bloodvein River First Nation;
- Bob Yatkowsky, TEMBEC Industries Inc.;

- Craig Maxwell, Manitoba Conservation;
- Ken Vipond, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs;
- Fred Mills/Ken Einarsson, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada;
- Joe Malcolm/Sid Seymour, South East Resource Development Council, and
- Valdie Seyrnour, Mayor of Seymourville.

Key Person Interviews

Identification of key interest groups and contacts was made through a review of the East Side Lake Winnipeg Advisory Committee database, and from suggestions made by MTGS and the Interested and Affected Party Members Committee. The following key sectors were identified:

- Industry;
- Recreation;
- Environmental; and
- First Nations.

Thirty-two organizations were contacted, a list of contacts is provided in Appendix 5.

The format was via telephone interviews that were conducted utilizing a standardized interview template as shown in Appendix 5. The purpose was to obtain background information on different interests; identify issues, concerns and benefits related to the road upgrading and extension; determine if there were preferences respecting route alternatives; and obtain additional socio-economic/environmental information.

Each contact was sent a letter with the background information sheet and map in advance advising that they would be contacted. Most of the contacts responded to the interview request. The First Nation representatives preferred to participate through the Committee process and indicated that their membership would respond through the Open Houses. All organizations were also notified of the Open Houses. Appendix 5 provides a summary of the interview results.

5.4.2 Round 1: Community Meetings/Open Houses

Four Community Meetings/Open Houses were held between January 17 and 22, 2003, in the Bloodvein River First Nation, Berens River First Nation, Pine Falls and Hollow Water First Nation. The Community Meetings/Open Houses in First Nation Communities generally took place in Band Halls, starting at 2:00 PM and lasting between 2 and 3 hours. The Public Open House in Pine Falls was held at the Manitou Lodge between 4:00 PM and 8:00 PM on January 21, 2003. In Pine Falls a short presentation was made and comments received from a number of those in attendance. In all locations

Manitoba Transportation and Government Services, and the consultant personnel answered questions and provided information on the Study.

The Community Meetings/Open Houses provided an opportunity for local residents and others to view 16 "storyboards" outlining the Study objectives, scope of work, information requirements, and timing; indicating the location of the Rice River Road and the alternative northern and southern route alignments, and noting potential issues and concerns. The storyboards also described the engagement process and the next steps.

The first round of Community Meetings/Open Houses was advertised in the Winnipeg Free Press on January 11, 2003, and in announcements posted prominently in local venues. They were well attended by a total of 116 persons. In all 72 people handed in or sent in comment Sheets to provide their opinions about the Study.

5.4.3 Round 2: Community Meetings/Open Houses

Three Community Meetings/Open Houses were held in the second round of public engagement, two in November 2003 at Pine Falls and the Hollow Water First Nation, respectively, and one in January 2004 at the Bloodvein River First Nation. The second Open House in Pine Falls was held at the Manitou Lodge between 4:00 PM and 8:00 PM on November 18, 2003. In Hollow Water the second Open House was held on November 19, 2003 between 1:00 PM and 4:00 PM in the Band Hall. A meeting originally scheduled for the Bloodvein River First Nation on November 20, 2003 was cancelled three times by the First Nation and eventually held on January 21, 2004 in the Band Hall between 12:30 and 3:00 PM. In all locations, MTGS and the consultant personnel answered questions and provided information on the Study.

The Community Meetings/Open Houses provided an opportunity for local residents and others to view "storyboards" outlining the Study objectives, scope of work, and timing; indicating the recommended northern and southern route alignments, and providing detailed route alignment maps on aerial photo mosaic backgrounds. The storyboards also described the engagement process and the next steps.

The second round of Community Meetings/Open Houses was advertised in the Winnipeg Free Press on November 14, 2003, and in announcements posted prominently in local venues. They were well attended by a total of 111 persons. In all 63 people handed in or sent in Comment Sheets to provide their opinions about the Study.

5.4.4 Summary of Results

This section represents a summary of all engagement activities that took place during the period between 2001 and 2005.

According to UMA, generally, residents of the East Side Lake Winnipeg communities perceived significantly more benefits than impacts deriving from upgrading and extension of the Rice River Road. More than half of the respondents attending the first round of four Community Meetings/Open Houses did not have any concerns related to the project. Overall, 83% of respondents attending the second round of Community

Meetings/Open Houses said they liked the recommended northern route and 67% liked the recommended southern route for the road. There was a strong majority of respondents in favour of the immediate development of an all-weather road.

Perceived Benefits

Overall, participants identified four principal benefits of the Rice River road upgrading and extension:

- improved access and less isolation;
- reduced cost of living;
- increased socio-economic opportunities; and
- improved road conditions and safety.

The most frequent comments included:

- easier access, freedom of movement and reduced isolation;
- improved access to health and education services;
- improved access to resources such as timber, wild rice, minerals;
- reduced cost of living by decreasing the transportation costs for goods and services;
- increased economic development opportunities;
- increased employment and training opportunities;
- increased opportunities for visiting other family members;
- improved road safety; and
- reduced travel risk by not having to cross Lake Winnipeg.

Perceived Impacts

Overall, there were perceived social and community impacts, local livelihood impacts, recreational impacts, and ecosystem and environmental impacts:

- concerns about gangs, criminal activity and the potential for an increase in drugs and alcohol brought into the communities;
- safety concerns around increased traffic and speeds;
- impacts on hunting and trapping;
- concerns about diminished wilderness experience;
- potential environmental degradation;
- potential impacts to the caribou herd; and

- concerns about the cost to develop the road.

5.5 Stage 3: Current Engagement Activities (proposed 0 km to 156km)

Current engagement initiatives for Stage 3 commenced in January of 2009. Stage 3 of the EAEP consists of the following components:

- Identification of Interested and Affected Parties;
- Community and Public Engagement Plan (CPEP); and
- Aboriginal Government and Organization Engagement.

5.5.1 Identification of Interested and Affected Parties

The document *Promises to Keep: Towards a Broad Area Plan for the East Side of Lake Winnipeg*, identified the interested and affected parties which are First Nations communities and communities belonging to the NAC on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. The people living within these communities (whether on reserve or off), are considered to be allied proprietors of all development activities or operations that may occur within this region.

Table 5-2 shows the communities which are potentially affected by the development and operation of the Project and its ancillary facilities:

Table 5 - 2: Study Area

Study Area	
First Nation	Northern Affairs Communities (NAC) ²
Berens River First Nation	Manigotagan NAC
Hollow Water First Nation	Loon Straits NAC
Bloodvein First Nation	Princess Harbour NAC
Little Grand Rapids First Nation	Seymourville NAC
Pauingassi First Nation	Aghaming NAC
Poplar River First Nation	Berens River NAC
	Pine Dock NAC
	Little Grand Rapids NAC

²The NAC is a “political” organization of the communities under the legal administration of the Manitoba Department of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs. These communities are legal communities and may or may not be Métis. The Métis community is in the broader social community context of Métis people within the geographic area who may or may not live within political boundaries of individual communities.

5.5.2 Community Engagement Plan (CEP)

An important aspect of the EIA process is to describe interactions between key components of the project (valued ecological components (VECs)) and the human environment. A key component of assessing these interactions is to identify the attitudes and perception of local residents concerning the Project.

The Community Engagement Plan (CEP) was developed with a focus on engaging the people who were most likely to be affected by the project – those living in the local communities, stakeholders with an interest in the area including resource users. The plan also provided for input from the public including the NGO community. The CEP has also included meetings and discussions with community leadership, elders, youth, hunters and trappers and resources associations to disseminate information about the Project, gather feedback, and identify issues, opinions and concerns about the Project. Members and leaders of the aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities listed in Table 5-2 were provided opportunities to participate in engagement activities during the EIA process.

The CEP for the Project consists of two rounds of community meetings/open-houses in addition to the incorporation of previous engagement or involvement initiatives and/or programs undertaken by the East Side Road Authority (ESRA) or predecessor agencies.

The CEP for the Project consists of two rounds of community meetings/open houses which build on previous engagement/involvement activities previously discussed in Sections 5.3 and 5.4. The format of the CEP consisted of a leadership meeting (Chief and Council) followed by a community meeting/open house.

Although community meetings have been scheduled in two rounds; the CEP provides opportunities for continuous dialogue with interested and affected communities, organizations and individuals throughout all phases of the Project (EIA review, permitting and approvals, design, construction, operation etc.).

Round 1 of Community Meetings / Open-Houses

Round 1 of the CEP was initiated in late March of 2009 and continued into July of 2009. All community meetings/open-houses were organized by SLI's community liaison coordinator. Chief and Council of each community within the study area were contacted to obtain permission to hold a community meeting/open-house on a date convenient for the community. The Community Liaison Coordinator also identified and utilized coordinators within each community to aid him in the facilitation of these meetings.

Table 5-3 outlines community visit details initiated by the East Side Road Authority (ESRA), and SLI, and its sub-consultants (AECOM and J.D. Mollard & Associates).

Table 5 - 3: Community Engagement Plan (CEP): Community Meetings / Open-house Schedule

Community Engagement Plan (CEP): Community Meetings / Open-house Schedule	
Date	Entity
Meetings Initiated by the East Side Road Authority (ESRA)	
February 24, 2009	Winter Road Tour and Berens River Community Visit with Chief Kemp
Meetings Initiated by SLI	
March 30, 2009	Manigotagan (including Seymourville, Loon Straits, and Aghaming)
March 30, 2009	Hollow Water First Nation
March 31, 2009	Bloodvein First Nation
April 2, 2009	Poplar River First Nation
May 5, 2009	Berens River First Nation and Berens River First Nation NAC
May 6, 2009	Little Grand Rapids First Nation and Little Grand Rapids NAC
May 7, 2009	Paungassi First Nation
July 6, 2009	Berens River First Nation and Berens River NAC

Chief and Council Meeting

The meeting with the Chief and Council (when available) preceded the community meeting/open-house and generally occurred in the morning with the community meeting/open-house in the afternoon/evening. The purpose of the community leadership meeting was to explain the Project and the EIA process, and the intent of meeting with the community. An important aspect of this meeting was to communicate to the leadership that the community meeting/open-house is as solely an “information session” intended to share information with residents and obtain community feedback. Permission to proceed with the community meeting/open-house was sought and granted by the leadership during this meeting. The locations of these meetings were generally held in the community Administration Office.

Community Meeting/Open House

The community meeting/open-house format consisted of holding a meeting within the community’s public school gymnasium or another large public room in the community. Exhibits such as text display boards, maps of the route options and photographs and drawings of typical all-season road design and construction, were posted. All of the meetings included a formal presentation to introduce the project and the EIA process, followed by a question and answer period. Lunch or snacks were provided by local caterers for meeting attendees and the project team as a “meet and greet” prior to the presentation. The meeting room was typically set up to accommodate approximately fifty attendees.

Presentation materials and format were consistent for each community meeting/open-house for all except that of the Berens River First Nation and Berens River NAC meeting which occurred on July 6, 2009. This was a re-scheduled meeting as the initial meeting on May 5, 2009 was shortened because of a funeral in the community. Due to the two month elapsed timeframe between May 05 and July 06, and due to the level of community interest in routing options, updated project information was presented to the leadership and the community, including identification of the recommended route option between Bloodvein and Berens River. This meeting was conducted at the Berens River Annual General Meeting (AGM) on July 06, 2009. At this meeting, ESRA also presented an economic development initiative between ESRA and the First Nation.

Specific details of each leadership meeting/open-house, including presentation materials, are provided in Appendix 5.

Input Received During Round 1 Community Meetings

Input received from community members in the Round 1 community meetings was predominantly utilized in the evaluation of alternative route options and selection of the recommended route option.

Round 1 community input included feedback from community members/residents expressed in the form of statements, questions, opinions, ideas, perspectives (both positive and negative) via community meetings, meetings of the WNO Chiefs and other personal communication related to the project. This input was used as a source of information when considering the route alignments in the following ways:

- Provided the project team with information that may not have otherwise been obtained prior to the assessment of route alternatives;
- Assisted in the identification of environmental, social, cultural and economic VECs and impacts and benefits;
- Provided the project team with an indication of community preferences for the various route alternatives; and
- Involved community members directly in the EIA planning process.

A summary of comments received during Round 1 community meetings are included in Table 5-4. It is important to note that the summary of comments, organized by community, shows input received by only meeting attendees. This does not suggest that these comments are representative of the entire community.

Furthermore, the table is organized by subject of the comment which indicated that one or more than one individual could have stated it. Individual responses are outlined in Appendix 5. Specific identities, such as names or specific positions or occupations of community members, were not provided in this table to respect individual confidentiality.

Comments continue to be received by email, fax and telephone by ESRA. Comments are also expected via the websites that were recently launched.

Table 5 - 4: Round 1 - Community Meetings / Open-Houses

Round 1- Community Meetings / Open-Houses	
Manigotagan NAC, Aghaming NAC*, Seymourville NAC**, Loon Straits NAC – March 30, 2009	
Route Identification / Preference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference for a shoreline route as it would have less impact on the environment. Residents already have access to the shoreline. An inland route would provide access to new areas.”
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the construction of the all-season road. Various community members inquired about whether the access road to Loon Straits would also be upgraded.
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Announcements, community meeting / open-house and the public open-house were publicized in the Winnipeg Free Press, CBC Radio, CBC TV, Native Communications Inc. (NCI) radio and other local/regional media.
Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that moose would migrate out of the Loon Straits area with the construction of the new all-season road as the residents had previously experienced with the construction of the Rice River Road. • Concern for environmental impacts due to the new section of road north of the Bloodvein River. • Concern about hunting occurring in land that was formerly inaccessible. • Concern for trap lines being negatively impacted as per the construction of the road. • Concern rose about potential impacts to the sturgeon in the Bloodvein River.
Hollow Water First Nation – March 30, 2009	
Route Identification / Preference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No clear consensus for any one of the route options.
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the road but a community member inquired about profit sharing agreements being forged between the First Nations and the government to control resource extraction after the construction of the road. • Inquiries for employment and training opportunities that would be made available to the local community members during road construction.
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Announcements, community meeting / open-house and the public open-house were publicized in the Winnipeg Free Press, CBC Radio, CBC TV, Native Communications Inc. (NCI) radio and other local/regional media.

Round 1- Community Meetings / Open-Houses	
Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern for increased access to traditional lands (and their resources) and for mineral, forestry or cottage development that may potentially occur without community control or compensation. • Concern for environmental impacts during road construction. • Concern about potential impacts to trapping and the collection of harvest of medicinal plants (traditional activities). Community members also inquired about compensation measures if the aforementioned impacts occurred.
Bloodvein First Nation – March 31, 2009	
Route Identification / Preference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference for a shoreline route from Bloodvein to Berens River as it has the least amount of environmental impacts and the least amount of impact on the community's traditional land. • Second preference for the shoreline Route from Bloodvein to Berens River as it does not destroy new land and forest.
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiries for employment and training opportunities – specifically heavy equipment training opportunities - associated with the construction and operation of the road. • Support for the road as it would enable inter-community travel and visiting. • Support for the road as the transportation of goods to and from the community is expected to reduce the cost of living in the community. • Support for the road because the road would better facilitate the transfer of patients. The road would also provide the community with better access to external health care facilities.
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Announcements, community meeting / open-house and the public open-house were publicized in the Winnipeg Free Press, CBC Radio, CBC TV, Native Communications Inc. (NCI) radio and other local/regional media.
Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern expressed by elders about drug and alcohol addiction and increased levels of crime that may occur in the community as a result of the road. However, other community members stated that these problems already exist without the road and that the road would make it easier for the RCMP to patrol and respond in the area. • Concern for the loss of communal and traditional land. • Concern as to whether or not the ferry service would be discontinued if the road was constructed. • Concern raised about the government potentially placing controls on local residents using the road to access hunting areas within their traditional lands (e.g. firearm controls). • Positive and negative impacts associated with road facilitating the development of tourism were mentioned. Community member felt that tourism could be a source of income for the community; however, it would bring about a larger presence of non-community members into the area. • Concern rose about the effects of dust settling on vegetation along side of the road; effects resulting from soil erosion; contamination from spills from accidents, and general vehicle travel.

Round 1- Community Meetings / Open-Houses	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern rose about impact to wildlife and their migration routes. • Concern for the impacts that the road would have to Lake Winnipeg (e.g. fuel spills).
Poplar River First Nation – April 2, 2009	
Route Identification / Preference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership suggested a more inland route along the Poplar River to capitalize on better drained ground (avoid the muskeg.) The leadership indicated that road should follow closely along the Poplar River as the ground would be better to facilitate for construction of a road (this refers to the East Side Transportation Study) –there are bogs surrounding the community that are very deep and would be difficult to fill. • Leadership stated that there are generally no objections to an all-season road and that the concept of an all-season road to their community had previously been discussed for too long. A councilor stated that negative aspects of the road (crime, drugs etc.) already exist in the community; they might as well have the road to bring the positive impacts. • Community’s land use officer stated that outlined in the community’s land use plan, community has a 2 km wide corridor along the existing winter roads set aside for transportation corridors (i.e. all-season road). He indicated that the leadership is flexible when considering placement of the road alignment
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the road as it would allow future developments to occur in the community thus allowing the community itself to become more self-sustaining. • Support for the road as it is expected that the road would decrease the food costs in the community. The road would also allow communities to travel south where food prices are more inexpensive. • Support expressed for the project as it would provide a means for community members to travel south. • Support for the road as it provides residents access to other communities and to Winnipeg; therefore, decreasing health affects of isolation. • Support for the road because it would allow an alternative and more frequent means to receive and transport goods to and from the community. • Support for the road as the road could bring about eco-tourism (fishing, canoeing, etc.) development in the area. • Support expressed for the road because it would provide better access to supplies and services for proper housing development to satisfy the community’s growing population. • Support for the road because community members believe it would provide youth with more opportunities as youth are currently not interested in hunting and trapping.
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Announcements, community meeting / open-house and the public open-house were publicized in the Winnipeg Free Press,

Round 1- Community Meetings / Open-Houses	
	CBC Radio, CBC TV, Native Communications Inc. (NCI) radio and other local/regional media.
Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern expressed for drug and alcohol (and its related impacts) entering the community as a result of the road. Concerns rose about the road impacting the band's control over community with respect to new business and tourism development. Concern rose about impacts to traditional land. Community members stated that controls need to be put in place to restrict access.
Berens River First Nation and Berens River NAC – May 5, 2009	
Route Identification / Preference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership stated that an all-season road should focus on the shortest stretch between Bloodvein to Berens River and that the right of way should follow the distribution line. A councilor expressed a need for the routes to be walked and that he doesn't believe too much in air photos and fly overs. He also felt that if the route was walked, then the study team would find that it is good ground, the route is shorter, more direct and that the route itself would make more sense. An individual noted that there is more rock along the shoreline route option than shown on the surficial geology map that the study team had brought. A member of the leadership indicated potential locations for quarry sites in relation to the existing work camp located at Pigeon River. A rough route was sketched out on an aerial photo in addition to identifying a potential site for a bridge crossing of the Pigeon River
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for the road because the road with an improved current ferry system could assist in promoting tourism in the area from those visiting Hecla Island. Support for a road as it would not negatively impact existing economic ties (for fishing) between Berens River and the Interlake area. Support for the road indicating that the road would not negatively impact animals as they are adaptive to natural surroundings. Support for the road as it is expected to decrease costs of good, fuel and freight Support for the road as it would enhance educational opportunities and opportunities for youth to pursue higher education. The road could also facilitate the expansion of current or new development of educational facilities in the community. Support for the road as it could bring about economic development for the community through tourism. Support for the road as it would decrease cost of services and transport of goods used for his own business. He noted that it is currently very expensive to sustain his business in the community without a road. Support from the leadership for the road because there is a potential for Berens River to become a hub or gateway to the east side area for other communities to visit or travel through. The NAC mayor also showed support for the road as it would foster new economic development opportunities in the region and would also provide an alternative means of transportation for community members.
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Announcements, community meeting / open-house and the public open-house were publicized in the Winnipeg Free Press, CBC Radio, CBC TV, Native Communications Inc. (NCI) radio and other local/regional media.
Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern for access to traditional lands by outsiders

Round 1- Community Meetings / Open-Houses	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern for potential for increase in drugs and alcohol within the community • Concern for potential for accidents • Concern for uncontrolled land use and resource development
Little Grand Rapids First Nation, Little Grand Rapids NAC – May 6, 2009	
Route Identification / Preference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community member stated that he “wanted a road to come here (to the community).” He stated that he preferred the Central Route Option.
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the road because it is expected that the road will decrease the cost of goods in the community. The road will also provide an alternative means of transportation for the community, also decreasing the cost of living. • Support for the road as it would bring employment opportunities and training opportunities (specifically safety training identified) that would be made available to community members.
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Announcements, community meeting / open-house and the public open-house were publicized in the Winnipeg Free Press, CBC Radio, CBC TV, Native Communications Inc. (NCI) radio and other local/regional media.
Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern for cottage development in the area as a result of the road being constructed. • Concern about the long term environmental impacts of the project and the impact the project would have on the traditional lifestyle. • Concerns raised about the road creating access to land that can be exploited by mineral exploration companies. • Concern about impacts to traditional land if the road was to come into the community. They community members want to ensure that they do not lose control of their traditional lands to non-community members and companies.
Pauingassi First Nation – May 7, 2009	
Route Identification / Preference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No clear preference for any of the alternative route options.
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widespread support for the road. When asked whether or not the meeting attendees wanted the road - approximately 26 people raised their hands, which represented the majority of meeting attendees. When asked why people wanted the road, the majority of people stated that they want to go to Winnipeg. When asked if any of the meeting participants travel to the northern communities, no one raised their hands. • Support for the road because the road would enable inter-community travel and access to familial trap lines.
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Announcements, community meeting / open-house and the public open-house were publicized in the Winnipeg Free Press, CBC Radio, CBC TV, Native Communications Inc. (NCI) radio and other local/regional media.
Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was concern raised about the road impact deterring animals from trap lines if constructed.

Round 1- Community Meetings / Open-Houses	
Berens River First Nation and Berens River NAC – July 6, 2009	
Route Identification / Preference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference for revised shoreline route option as it minimizes disturbance to previously undisturbed areas
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support as reduced costs for goods and services • Support because of improved access to health care facilities • Support for improved access to education • Support for increased chance of having an RCMP detachment located in the community • Support because of increased access to markets for community developed goods (e.g. commercial fish, forest products) • Support for potential for development of First Nation owned business and economic development • Support for potential increase to retain skilled workers
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Announcements, community meeting / open-house and the public open-house were publicized in the Winnipeg Free Press, CBC Radio, CBC TV, Native Communications Inc. (NCI) radio and other local/regional media.
Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern raised due to the potential for increased access to drugs and alcohol • Concern expressed for potential for accidents to occur • Concern for potential reduced on-reserve population as community members would have easier access to urban areas • Concern for increased access to traditional lands by outsiders • Concern for potential loss of traditional culture and values
<p><i>*This meeting combined residents from the communities of Manigotagan NAC, Aghming NAC, Seymourville NAC, Loon Straits NAC due to their close proximity to one another. Residents of Aghming were invited to participate in the meeting; however, no residents attended.</i></p> <p><i>***This meeting combined residents from the communities of Manigotagan NAC, Aghming NAC, Seymourville NAC, Loon Straits NAC due to their close proximity to one another. Residents of Seymourville were invited to participate in the meeting; however, no residents attended.</i></p>	

Analysis of Round 1 Community Input

Round 1 of the community visits identified a number of concerns, and helped the Project team understand some community preferences for routing alignment options and potential locations for bridge crossings.

Similar considerations were incorporated into evaluation of the routing alternatives (Section 4.0). A number of issues were raised that have been addressed in the evaluation of routing alternatives (e.g. potential effects on moose and woodland caribou; potential for previously undisturbed areas to be opened to access), and in road design (e.g. potential for noise and dust effects). Other comments pertaining to road construction and operation (e.g. land uses controls) have been addressed in the assessment of potential environmental effects. It is important to note that there may be concerns expressed that are outside the scope of the EIA and that of the East Side Road Authority. Responsible authorities / governing bodies will be mentioned where applicable.

Many meeting participants did not express a preference for a route alignment. However, the Project Team did identify general support for an all-season road in the communities within the study area among the community members that attended the meetings. In addition, many meeting participants expressed a strong desire for an accelerated construction date. There were a number of questions in the communities as to why the road had not already been constructed. In fact, there was general consensus in the community meetings that there has been too much discussion about the all-season road. Members of some communities stated that the road had been contemplated and even delayed by the provincial government for many years.

Opportunities or benefits that the communities identified as a result of the construction of an all-season are as follows:

- Decrease in cost of living on food, fuel, freight, services and supplies;
- Increase in employment and training opportunities;
- Increase in educational opportunities and educational infrastructure (construction/expansion of existent community educational facilities);
- Changes in current housing trends – gradual decrease in overcrowding and decrease of inadequate housing facilities;
- Decrease in cost of transportation of goods;
- Increased access to urban health care facilities;
- Increase in intercommunity travel; and
- Increased economic development within the region.

The project team heard a number of common concerns and opinions about an all-season road, including:

- Increased access to traditional land or land that was previously inaccessible for recreational or commercial purposes;

- Lack of control over access to and the use of traditional /community land;
- Decrease in traditional activities (hunting, trapping, fishing, berry gathering);
- Potential impacts to wildlife and the natural environment as a result of increased access into previously undisturbed areas;
- Decreased interest in the traditional lifestyle among youth;
- Potential for increase in drug and alcohol availability and abuse; and
- Potential for increase in criminal activity and gang related violence.

As previously stated, the majority of responses the project team received from each community did not indicate a preferred route alignment. It is noteworthy to mention that important information exchanges with respect to route selection did occur within various communities and many expressed urgency for construction of a road and that specific routing preference was not an issue. Any preferences that were revealed during the community meetings are outlined in Table 5-4.

During the community meeting in Bloodvein, there was a preference for a shoreline route from Bloodvein to Berens River as it is considered to result in the least amount of environmental impacts and the least amount of impact on the community's traditional land.

In Poplar River, various members of the Chief and Council also indicated support for a shoreline route alignment between Bloodvein and Berens River. The leadership also suggested a more inland route north of Berens River along the Poplar River, to capitalize on better drained ground (avoid the muskeg.) The leadership indicated that the road should follow closely along the Poplar River as the ground would be better to facilitate construction of a road (this also refers to the connection options for the East Side Transportation Study) due to the deep bogs that surround the community which would be difficult to fill. The community's land use officer stated that, outlined in the land use plan, the community has 2 km wide corridors along the existing winter roads set aside for transportation corridors (i.e. all-season road). He indicated that the leadership is flexible when considering placement of the road alignment. Route selection north of Berens River is outside the scope of this project and will be incorporated as part of the Large Area Transportation Planning Study.

In Berens River, the community leadership stated that an all-season road should focus on the shortest stretch between Bloodvein to Berens River and that the right of way should follow previously disturbed areas such as the winter road right-of-way and the existing distribution line right-of-way. A Councillor expressed a need for the routes to be walked and that he doesn't believe too much in air photos and fly-overs. He also felt that if the route was walked, then the study team would discover that the terrain is more favourable for construction and the route would be shorter than other alternatives. Similarly, a community member indicated that there is more rock along the shoreline route option than shown on the surficial geology map that the study team had brought as a visual aid.

The Berens River Chief indicated potential locations for quarry sites in relation to the existing work camp located at Pigeon River. A rough route was sketched out on an aerial photo in addition to identifying a potential site for a bridge crossing of the Pigeon River.

The community meeting at Little Grand Rapids First Nation identified a preference for the Central Route as the central route would be the closest connection point for the community. The community meeting at the Pauingassi First Nation did not reveal consensus for a preferred alignment. The community showed widespread support for the road.

Based on the feedback obtained from each community with respect to the selection of a preferred alignment, it can be concluded that the majority of meeting participants (including the leadership) favour the shoreline route or a route option that is located close to the lakeshore of Lake Winnipeg.

Summary of Findings

Based on an overview analysis of comments received during Round 1 community meetings, the residents appeared to express more concern than support, but there is a general consensus in favour of supporting the economic and social benefits of an all-season road being constructed within the study area. This was based on the understanding that environmental effects such as impacts to undisturbed areas, and controls on land use development and land access can be controlled. A number of the concerns that were expressed have been addressed in the environmental effects analysis through mitigation. Other concerns, such as land use controls will have to be addressed through on-going planning and development of regulation. Table 5-5 outlines the ways in which various concerns were addressed in the EIA.

Table 5 - 5: Incorporation of Community Concerns into EIA

Incorporation of Community Concerns into EIA	
Concern / Opinion	Incorporation into EIA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased access to traditional land or land that was previously inaccessible for recreational or commercial purposes; 	<p>Section 7.0: Environmental Setting (baseline conditions of the aquatic, terrestrial and socioeconomic environment).</p> <p>Section 8.0: Environmental Effects Assessment (impact analysis of the aquatic, terrestrial and socioeconomic environment).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of control over access to and the use of traditional /community land; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in traditional activities (hunting, trapping, fishing, berry gathering); 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential impacts to wildlife and the natural environment as a result of increased access into previously undisturbed areas; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreased interest in the traditional lifestyle among youth; 	<p>This is part of a larger trend that could or could not be occurring independently of the Project. It is also not limited to the study area and it is difficult to say how the Project will be an influence. However, the following sections discuss traditional harvesting practises and resource use: Section 6.0: Traditional Knowledge Study (baseline conditions of traditional harvesting practises and resource use and its cultural implications); Section 7.0: Environmental Setting (baseline conditions of the aquatic, terrestrial and socioeconomic environment). Section 8.0: Environmental Effects Assessment (impact analysis of the aquatic, terrestrial and socioeconomic environment).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for increase in drug and alcohol availability and abuse as a result of improvement in access to the communities; 	<p>This is part of a larger trend that could or could not occur independently of the Project. It is also not limited to the study area and it is difficult to say how the Project will be an influence. Control mechanisms to be implemented to ensure that an increase in drugs and alcohol and /or crime is not heightened as a result of the construction of the project are the responsibility of the road users, community leadership and RCMP.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for increase in criminal activity and gang related violence as a result of improvement in access to the communities. 	

Concerns and responses in addition to the ways in which these responses were addressed will be presented to community residents and leadership in Round 2 of the CEP.

Round 1 of CEP revealed that the majority of people that attended the EIA community meetings identified a preference for the shoreline route or a route option located close to the shore of Lake Winnipeg. The identification of this preference was factor in the comparison routing alternatives.

Round 2 of Community Meetings / Open-Houses

Round 2 will commence in October of 2009, concurrent with release of the EIA. Round 2 will present the findings of the EIA to communities within the study area as outlined in Table 5-2. Information to be presented will include:

- Findings of the Round 1 community meetings including how community input was utilized in the EIA;
- Summary of predicted biophysical, socio-economic, and socio-cultural related impact of the Project and proposed mitigation measures;
- Compiled results of the Traditional Knowledge Study; the process by which data will be returned to the community and the production of TK maps for the community;
- Upcoming Project activities and events; and
- Planned future community engagement initiatives.

Engagement Activities with the General Public

In addition to community engagement initiatives, members of the general public and specific groups or organizations potentially interested in the Project were invited to participate in the Project's planning process. Public involvement has been actively solicited by ESRA to help strengthen decision making by ensuring all relevant issues and concerns of the general public are considered and that public knowledge is shared. A website has been developed by ESRA to provide information to the general public about the Project. The general public is invited to provide comments via email, phone or mail and the contact information can be found at the following website: www.eastsideroadauthority.mb.ca

Meetings to involve the general public and specific special interest groups were also held as shown in Table 5 - 6.

Table 5 - 6: Public Interest and Stakeholder Engagement Activities

Public Interest and Stakeholder Engagement Activities			
Date	Entity	Focus of Discussions	Follow-up/Comments
June 25, 2009	Public Open-House in Winnipeg	Project engagement – PR 304 to Berens River ASR alignment options, TK studies and EIA process	Attendees from a wide variety of backgrounds attended the Winnipeg open house meeting. Concerns ranged from the public disbursement of funds to link communities with low population, to support of an all-season road network.
July 17, 2009	Meeting with Gord Jones, Project Manager for Pimachiowin Aki Corporation	Co-ordination with proposed UNESCO World Heritage Initiative	Agreement to ensure further coordination as both initiatives proceed.

The Winnipeg Public Open-House

The Winnipeg Public Open-House held on June 25, 2009 at the Winnipeg Convention Centre, was a large-scale meeting organized to provide a public forum to introduce the project for the general public residing outside of the study area. Public communications for this meeting are outlined below:

- A press release was issued on June 12, 2009 advising local media of the open house;
- Various advertisements were purchased in order to adequately inform the general public and specific special interest groups of the meeting. The meeting was advertized in the following newspapers:
 - Winnipeg Free Press – Saturday, June 13, 2009 and Saturday, June 20, 2009
 - Winnipeg Sun – Sunday, June 14, 2009 and Sunday, June 21, 2009
 - Grassroots News – Tuesday, June 16, 2009
 - La Liberte – Wednesday, June 17, 2009

In addition to the aforementioned notices, various special interest organizations were specifically invited to attend the meeting. A list of special interest groups is provided in Appendix 5. Organizations include: community and business development; environmental; recreational; local associations and academic institutions.

Approximately forty five (45) members of the general public and/or special interest organizations attended the public open-house. This meeting followed the same format as the community meeting/ open-houses to ensure that project information disclosed to all interested and affected parties remained consistent. However, during this meeting,

the preferred shoreline option was presented as this meeting corresponded with the conclusion of the meetings for Round 1.

Input Received During the Winnipeg Public Open-House

Input received from meeting attendees was derived from transcribed meeting notes by the project team members during the meeting and completed comment sheets which were distributed to meeting participants prior to the presentation component of the open-house.

Opportunities or benefits that were identified as a result of the construction of an all-season are as follows:

- Decrease in cost of living on food, fuel, freight, services and supplies in addition to providing an alternative and more efficient means of travel to communities within the study area; and
- Creation of employment and training opportunities for aboriginals from the immediate area to operate the heavy equipment on the construction of the road.

The project team heard a number of concerns about an all-season road, including:

- Magnitude of environmental effects to pristine area which would occur as a result of ASR construction;
- Progress in development of the employment training programs could be slow;
- Rivers along the Little Grand Rapids extension of the ASR should be protected as they could provide tourism for canoeists/tourists.

A number of general comments and questions were also expressed. Individual responses with respect to the public open-house are provided in Appendix 5.

Similar to that of input received from residents of the study area, meeting attendees of the Winnipeg Public Open-House did not show strong opposition to the project. Meeting attendees stated both benefits and concerns for the project. The general consensus among meeting participants was supportive; however, ensuring that environmental impacts of the road remain negligible.

Public engagement efforts will be continued throughout all phases of project development. All interested and affected parties will have the opportunity to review the Environmental Impacted Assessment document upon release in September of 2009.

5.5.3 Aboriginal Government and Organization Engagement

In addition to the formal CEP, ESRA has engaged national, regional and local leadership and organizations. This engagement has been framed by providing information the

project scope and schedule, creating opportunities for discussions around benefits and concerns including prospects for social and economic development. A summary of the meetings with representatives from a variety of aboriginal government tribal councils, committees and associations at the national, regional and local levels is described in the following sections.

National Aboriginal Government Organizations

A meeting the National Chief, Mr. Phil Fontaine, of the Assembly of First Nation, was held on February 13, 2009. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the East Side Transportation Initiative (ESTS) including proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project. Mr. Fontaine was very supportive of the project and indicated that this was a long-standing vision for the people of the region.

Provincial and Regional Aboriginal Organizations

Meetings with regional and local aboriginal government associations and organizations are outlined in Table 5-7. These meetings consisted of an overview of the proposed project and discussions regarding the project and its potential impact on communities.

Table 5 - 7: Engagement Summary - Regional Aboriginal Government and Organizations - Project Discussions

Engagement Summary Regional Aboriginal Government and Organizations – Project Discussions			
Date	Entity	Focus of Discussions	Follow-up/Comments
January 13, 2009	Wabanong Nakaygum Okimawin (WNO) Chiefs	Introduction to East Side Transportation Initiative and proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project	Supportive of the Project but also wanted to ensure Project in undertaken in a way that meets the needs of local people
March 4, 2009	Presentation to the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) First Nations Safety Workshop	Proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project overview and Safety requirements for the Project	Discussion on safety requirements for the Project
March 20, 2009	Meeting with Chair of WNO, Chief Bailey Colon	Legislation update and status of the proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project	Chief Colon was pleased with the progress to date
April 1, 2009	Meeting with President Chartrand of the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF)	Proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project overview. Proposed process and how best to engage the Métis.	Supportive of the road Project as it would benefit Métis in the region
April 15, 2009	Presentation to the WNO Chiefs Committee	Status update on East Side Large Area Transportation Network Study with an overview of the proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project	Chiefs were pleased with the progress to date
April 21, 2009	Presentation to the WNO Regional Chiefs Committee of the Island Lakes First Nations	Update on Update on East Side Large Area Transportation Network Study with an overview of the proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project	The committee was interested in the various route options under consideration in the LATNS and the timing of the study.
April 30, 2009	Presentation to the WNO Chiefs Committee	Update on East Side Large Area Transportation Network Study with an overview of the proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project	
May 19, 2009	Meeting with Grand Chief Sydney Garrioch, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO)	Update on East Side Large Area Transportation Network Study with an overview of the proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project	Pleased with the progress to date and offered his assistance in engaging MKO communities, if required.

Engagement Summary Regional Aboriginal Government and Organizations – Project Discussions			
Date	Entity	Focus of Discussions	Follow-up/Comments
July 15, 2009	Meeting with WNO Chair, Chief Bailey Colon	Update on East Side Large Area Transportation Network Study with an overview of the proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project	
July 15, 2009	Meeting with Assembly of Manitoba Grand Chief and East Side Chiefs	Update on East Side Large Area Transportation Network Study with an overview of the proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project	
August 18, 2009	Meeting with MMF	Introduce the East Side Transportation Initiative, focusing on the Provincial Road 304 to Berens River All-season Road Project.	The discussion with the MMF mainly focused on understanding the Community and Public Engagement Program (CEP) and the work completed to date. The MMF expressed an interest for inclusion during Round 2, specifically targeting the Métis Nation in the study area. Dialogue with the MMF is currently ongoing.

Additional Local Aboriginal Governments and Organizations

Meetings held with local community leadership, outside of the CEP, and issues expressed are presented in Table 5-8.

Table 5 - 8: Engagement Summary - Local Aboriginal Governments and Organizations - Project Discussions

Engagement Summary Local Aboriginal Governments and Organizations – Project Discussions			
Date	Entity	Focus of Discussions	Follow-up/Comments
January 29, 2009	Chief George Kemp of Berens River First Nation	Introduction to East Side Transportation Initiative (first of series of ongoing meetings with Chief Kemp) including proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project	Supportive of the Project and wanted to determine how his community could be involved in the Project.
February 5, 2009	Chief Larry Barker, Hollow Water First Nation	Introduction to East Side Transportation Initiative (first of series of ongoing meetings with Chief Barker) including proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project	Supportive of the Project and wanted to determine how his community could be involved in the Project.
February 12, 2009	Meeting with Chief Larry Barker, Hollow Water First Nation	Follow-up discussion from February 5 meeting	
March 26, 2009	Meeting with Reg Meade, President of the Northern Association of Community Councils (NAC)	Benefits and opportunities of the proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project for NAC communities	Supportive of east side road and wanted to know how NAC communities could assist in the development.
April 2, 2009	Meeting with Grand Chief Ron Evans, AMC	Update on East Side Large Area Transportation Network Study with an overview of the proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project	Very supportive of the Project and wanted to know how he would assist in ensuring First Nations are engaged in the process
April 2, 2009	Meeting with Chief Frank Young of Bloodvein First Nation	Update on proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project and community involvement by Bloodvein (first of series of ongoing meetings with Chief Young)	Chief was supportive of the Project and wanted to know timing of construction and how his community could be involved.
April 16, 2009	Meeting with Chief Kemp, Berens River First Nation	Discussion on Community Benefits Agreement with respect to the proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project	

Engagement Summary			
Local Aboriginal Governments and Organizations – Project Discussions			
Date	Entity	Focus of Discussions	Follow-up/Comments
April 23, 2009	Meeting with Chief Kemp, Berens River First Nation	Discussion on Community Benefits Agreement regarding the proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project	
May 1, 2009	Meeting with Chief Kemp, Berens River First Nation	Discussion on Community Benefits Agreement	
May 25, 2009	Meeting with Chief Frank Young and Council in Bloodvein First Nation	Update on PR 304 to Berens River Road Project and Community Benefits Agreement	Interested in developing a Community Benefits Agreement for Bloodvein.
May 28, 2009	Meeting with Chief Frank Young	Update on PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project and discussion on Community Benefits Agreement	Positive Discussion
May 29, 2009	Meeting with Chief George Kemp	Update on PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project and discussion on Community Benefits Agreement	Positive Discussion
June 1, 2009	Meeting with Chief George Kemp	Update on PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project and discussions on Community Benefits Agreement	
June 2, 2009	Chief George Kemp	PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project Community Benefits Agreement	MOU Official Signing with Chief ESRA and Chief Kemp pleased with the signing of the MOU and both parties to arrange an announcement on the MOU
June 9, 2009	Meeting with Chief George Kemp	PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project - Discussion on implementation of Community Benefits Agreement	
June 17, 2009	Meeting with Chief Frank Young	Discussion on Community Benefits Agreement	
June 19, 2009	Meeting with Creditor for Berens River First Nation	Financing Discussion with creditor for Pigeon River Construction (Berens River First Nation) as per Community Benefits Agreement	

Engagement Summary			
Local Aboriginal Governments and Organizations – Project Discussions			
Date	Entity	Focus of Discussions	Follow-up/Comments
June 24, 2009	Meeting with Chief George Kemp	Implementation of PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project Community Benefits Agreement	
July 8, 2009	Meeting with Black River and Hollow Water First Nations	Meeting regarding the establishment of the Southern Regional Resource Management Board - Update on East Side Large Area Transportation Network Study with an overview of the proposed PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project	Protection of resources and allocation of resources identified as a key issue. The potential role of land use planning as a mechanism to address this issue was discussed.
July 29, 2009	Meeting with Chief Kemp and community representatives in Berens River	To discuss implementation of community benefits agreement and safety requirements.	Community visit

Since the initial round of engagement Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) have been signed with Berens River First Nation and Bloodvein First Nation. These MOU address training for local Aboriginal residents to create capacity and skills for employment opportunities associated with the construction and ongoing operation of the Project.

5.6 Conclusions

Engagement initiatives to date have been designed and implemented in accordance with the Wabanong Nakaygum Okimawin (WNO) (formerly the East Side Planning Initiative) Promises to Keep: Towards a Broad Area Plan for the East Side of Lake Winnipeg planning initiative document guidelines and recommendations, and founded on the values stated in Section 5.1.1. This broad area planning initiative outlines First Nations communities and communities belonging to the NAC on the east side of Lake Winnipeg which are to be considered allied proprietors of all development activities or operations that may occur within this region.

The proactive approach to community, government and public engagement has enabled:

- The early involvement of stakeholders, interested and affected parties within the project’s planning process;
- The identification of a preferred route alignment based on community local knowledge and expressed travel behaviour;
- The identification of potential environmental issues and concerns, providing opportunities to fully understand and address stakeholder perspectives, concerns and questions related to the proposed Project.

- Early discussions between communities in the Study Area and ESRA regarding project benefits;

5.7 On-going Engagement Initiatives

Ongoing engagement with all communities will continue throughout the EIA review process, the Second Round of community engagement and the Project design phase. ESRA is committed to continued communication with community members and stakeholders. Feedback from recent engagement initiatives has been reviewed by the Project Team and is regarded as critical for an enhanced understanding of the needs and concerns of the communities potentially affected by the project.

Communication with the communities, stakeholders and the public will continue by the following methods:

- ESRA website updates;
- Newsletters;
- Correspondence via email, fax, letters, telephone;
- Community Coordinators for the Project; and
- Round 2 of the CEP.