Welcome to our public information meeting for the Access Review on Highway 17 at Echo Bay.

- The assignment will provide the Planning, Preliminary Design Study and Environmental Assessment to assess upgrading Highway 17 to a controlled access freeway at Echo Bay, east of the City of Sault Ste. Marie, to improve safety.
- We encourage you to provide your comments in writing. Comment sheets are available.
- Information will be collected in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.
Background

- Following the first Public Information Centre (PIC) held in the Fall of 2009 the Study Area was recommended to be extended easterly to Bar River Road, refer to the Study Area map.
- The Study Area was extended to include the entire community of Echo Bay.
- A second PIC will be held in the fall to present the information presented tonight, evaluation of alternatives and the Preferred Plan.

Aims and Objectives of this Public Information Meeting

- The goal of this meeting is to present:
  - Introduction and Study Area extension;
  - Review of Public Information Centre No.1;
  - Study Extension to Bar River Road
  - Project Update; and
  - Next Steps/Schedule.
Public Information Centre No.1

- PIC No. 1 was held on October 7, 2009 at the Echo Bay Community Centre, fifty-seven (57) people registered.
- The purpose of PIC No. 1 included presenting the following:
  - Purpose and Need for Access Control Upgrade;
  - Analysis of Alternatives to the Undertaking;
  - Preliminary Design Alternatives;
  - Existing Conditions; and
  - Next Steps.
- The most significant issues raised by the public include:
  - Number and severity of traffic collisions since 2008;
  - Negative effects on businesses;
  - Effect on response time for emergency services;
  - New location was identified west of Location 1;
  - Safety was confirmed by the public as an important issue; and
  - Poor visibility at Highway 638 due to snow and fog.

Study Area Extension to Bar River Road
Environmental Assessment Process

- The outcome of this study will be the Transportation Environmental Study Report (TESR). The TESR represents a preliminary step in the planning process and will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Transportation Facilities (2000).
- External agency and public consultation will take place throughout the study.

Problem and Opportunity Statement

- In October 2007, a new 4-lane freeway was opened from Bar River Road to Trunk Road east of Sault Ste. Marie.
- The ultimate plan continues to protect for a controlled access freeway.
- The current at-grade intersections have experienced collisions since the opening of the freeway. This study will assess the configuration of the ultimate controlled access design including the location of an interchange to service the local area while considering the natural, social and cultural environmental constraints in the study area.
- In addition, MTO will review the feasibility of providing a commuter parking lot.
Alternatives to the Undertaking

Alternatives to the Undertaking (Alternative Planning Solutions) represent different approaches or strategies to address the identified problem of the Study. This Study has considered the following solutions, subject to public review at this PIC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative Planning Solutions</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do Nothing</td>
<td>- Do Nothing approach does not address the collision experience to the travelling public.</td>
<td>Not Carried Forward (utilize as a baseline to compare other alternatives)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 2. Transportation Systems Management (TSM) | - Use technology and other strategies to increase the efficiency and safety of the existing transportation network. Typical TSM mechanisms may include:  
  - Signalized intersections  
  - Addition of turn lanes  
  - Increase storage of vehicles and accommodate heavy truck turning manoeuvres  
  - Signal efficiencies  
  - Changeable message signs  
  - Incident detection | TSM will not, as a stand-alone feature, address the required future travel demand of the study area and the objective of protecting for a controlled access facility. TSM should be considered part of an overall transportation strategy. |
| 3. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) | - Use travel demand management (TDM) strategies to reduce congestion. Typical TDM mechanisms may include:  
  - Shifting of the travel demand to non-peak hours  
  - Access into a restricted area  
  - Use of transit incentives to increase the transit modal share  
  - Implementation of parking costs and controls to discourage automobile use. | TDM will not, as a stand-alone feature, address the required future travel needs of the study area. TDM should be considered part of an overall transportation strategy. |
| 4. Construct Controlled Access using a new Interchange | - This option addresses specific operational and safety issues and meets the objective of defining an ultimate controlled access design in the corridor. | Carried Forward as part of a ‘Basket of Solutions’ |

Photo Inventory
Photo Inventory

Existing Conditions

Legend
- Residential
- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Utility Corridor
- Recreation Corridor
- Rail Corridor

Project North
Breeding Bird, Vegetation Surveys and Aquatic Habitat Assessment

- **Breeding Bird Survey:**
  - A total of 45 species were observed within a 100m radius of 22 monitoring stations.
  - A total of 17 species were confirmed breeding within the study area, 25 species were recorded as probably or possibly breeding within the study area, and 3 species showed no evidence of breeding activity.
  - No significant species were observed. All species noted were expected to occur in the habitat in which they were observed.

- **Vegetation Survey:**
  - A large percentage of the study area consisted of disturbed lands comprised of agricultural fields, pastures, and other areas that had undergone previous development.
  - Plant inventories were compiled and species lists were constructed.
  - Two significant plants species are known to occur in the vicinity of the study area: Greene’s rush (Juncus greenei) and needle grass (Stipa spartea). Neither these nor any other significant plant species were observed.

- **Aquatic Habitat Assessment:**
  - Watercourses have been channelized throughout the study area due to historic and current agricultural use.
  - Typically trapezoidal channels with minimal flow and silt-clay dominant substrates.
  - Fish community assessment identified 6 species of fish. These included creek chub (Semotilus atromaculatus), brook stickleback (Culaea inconstans), central mudminnow (Umbra limi), finescale dace (Chrosomus neogaeus), brown bullhead (Ameiurus nebulosus), and shiner species (Cyprinidae sp.).
  - No significant species or habitat was observed.

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Alternative Access Locations following PIC 1

[Map of possible access locations]
Location 3

Possible Access Locations
Possible Road Closures
Possible Service Roads / Road Realignment
Possible Roadway Connection

Location 4

Possible Access Locations
Possible Road Closures
Possible Service Roads / Road Realignment
Possible Roadway Connection

Project North
Location 7

Access Alternatives

Diamond  Parclo B2
Parclo A2  Parclo B4
Parclo A4
Evaluation of Alternatives

The evaluation of alternatives is a two-step approach.

- **Step 1**
  - Review and Confirmation of Planning Solutions (Alternatives to the Undertaking). The Assessment of Planning Solutions is shown on the next display boards.

- **Step 2**
  - Review of Alternative Methods of completing the project.

- These alternatives will assess what provides the best balance of highway operation and safety while minimizing any negative environmental effects.

Coarse Screening Access Locations
Draft Evaluation Criteria for Alternatives

- The following Evaluation Criteria may be used in the assessment of the preliminary design alternatives described in the previous displays:
  - Traffic and Transportation
  - Natural Environment
  - Cultural Environments
  - Socio-economic Environment
  - Land Use and Property
  - Cost

- If you feel that there are any other criteria that should be included, please indicate them on your comment sheet.

Next Steps / Schedule

- Following this Public Information Meeting we will:
  - Review all comments;
  - Confirm the assessment of the Alternative Planning Solutions;
  - Finalize Alternative Planning Solutions based on comments received;
  - Evaluate Highway 17 Access Review alternatives;
  - Conduct briefing meetings with external agencies, interest groups and individuals, if required; and
  - Hold PIC No.2 in the Fall of 2010.
How Can You Remain Involved In This Study?

- You can remain involved in the Highway 17 Echo Bay study by:
  - Requesting that your name be added to our study mailing list;
  - Providing a written comment sheet following this Public Information Meeting; and
  - Contacting consultant or MTO staff at any time during the study.

- Any of our representatives can assist you in completing the above activities.