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DES DÉCHETS  
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# Community Well-Being Assessment

TOWNSHIP OF WHITE RIVER, ONTARIO



**APM-REP-06144-0088**

**DECEMBER 2014**

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# Preliminary Community Well-Being Assessment: White River, ON

DECEMBER, 2014



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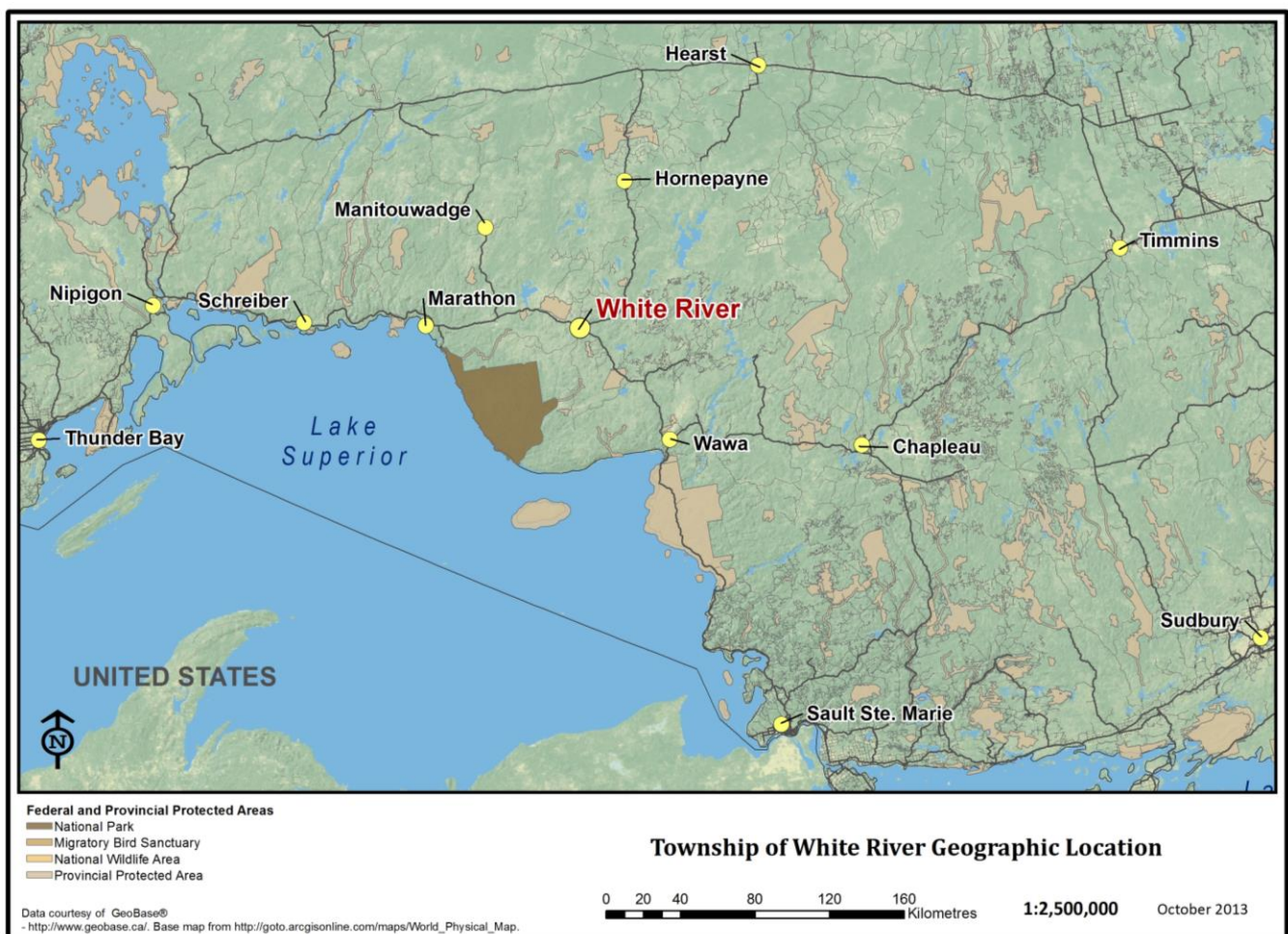
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Preliminary Community Well-being Assessment Report aims to provide a summary of the expected influences that the implementation of the Adaptive Phased Management (APM) Project would have on the overall community well-being of White River, Ontario (see Figure 1). This report also seeks to answer some fundamental questions to assist the NWMO and the community in understanding the suitability of White River to move forward in the siting process. While each of the communities currently participating in the ‘Learn More’ process will likely benefit in many ways from the APM Project and the economic development and employment opportunities associated with it, there are certain unique uncertainties and priorities to be managed for each community.

**Figure 1: White River, Ontario**



Source: DPRA Canada, 2013.

Work has been completed to understand the community profile of White River<sup>1</sup>, and also to understand and summarize the ways in which the APM Project might affect the community and the surrounding areas. In

<sup>1</sup> DPRA Canada. December 2014. *Community Profile, White River Ontario*. Prepared for the Nuclear Waste Management Organization.

concert with the community, NWMO worked to develop an understanding of the community today and its goals and aspirations for the future. To this end, information has been assembled and studied through a variety of means including, engagement activities, community visits and tours, one-on-one discussions, Community Liaison Committee meetings, open houses and the development of a community profile. All of this research and study, along with professional judgement, is used in this report to understand the potential implications of the project to the community's well-being and gain insights into the unique uncertainties and priorities that need to be managed.

As outlined at the inception of this step in the site selection process, the objective of the social, economic and cultural assessment is to assess both the potential to foster the well-being of the community and surrounding area and the potential to create the foundation for community and surrounding area confidence and support needed to implement the Project. In Phase 1 of this assessment, which is the focus of this report, the intent is to explore the potential to foster the well-being of the community and, for this reason, the subset of factors and considerations related to the community are addressed at this time. Regional considerations are noted where early insight is available, however more detailed work would be conducted in Phase 2 should the community be selected to proceed to this phase of work and agree to do so.

A number of factors were identified as minimum criteria to consider in the site selection process in assessing the potential to foster well-being:<sup>2</sup>

- Potential social, economic and cultural effects during the implementation phase of the Project;
- Potential for enhancement of the community's and the region's long-term sustainability through implementation of the Project;
- Potential to avoid ecologically sensitive areas and locally significant features;
- Potential for physical and social infrastructure to adapt to changes resulting from the Project; and,
- Potential to avoid or minimize effects of the transportation of used nuclear fuel from existing storage facilities to the repository site.

In order to ensure that a broad, inclusive and holistic approach is being taken to assessment in these areas, a 'community well-being' framework was identified to help understand and assess the potential effects of the APM Project. This includes exploring the project, understanding how the community may be affected were the Project to be implemented in the area, and identifying opportunities to leverage the Project to achieve other objectives the community considers important. The framework is also used to explore the relative 'fit' of the APM Project for the community and the potential to create the foundation of confidence and support required for the implementation of the APM Project.

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<sup>2</sup> NWMO. 2010. *Moving Forward Together: Process for Selecting a Site for Canada's Deep Geological Repository for Used Nuclear Fuel.*



The framework is designed to encourage exploration of the project through five different ‘lenses’:

- **People or Human Assets** – How might the implementation of the project affect people?
- **Economics or Economic Assets** – How might the implementation of the project affect economic activity and financial health of the area?
- **Built Environment or Physical Assets** – How might the implementation of the project affect infrastructure and the physical structures which the community has established?
- **Society and Culture or Social Assets** – How might the implementation of the project affect the sense of belonging within the community, and among residents, and the services and network of activities created to serve the needs of community members?
- **Natural Environment or Natural Assets** – How might the implementation of the project affect the natural environment and the community’s relationship with it?

This report begins with an overview of the basic assumptions about the Project and potential effects used for the preliminary assessment. The community’s priorities/key issues, aspirations, capabilities and capacities are described. Next, the report explores the implications of the implementation of the APM Project on the well-being of the community in terms of the five ‘lenses’ or asset categories. The preliminary findings are also considered in terms of the ‘criteria to assess factors beyond safety’ identified by NWMO prior to the initiation of the siting process. A summary of relationship building and engagement activities, and the issues and questions raised to date, is provided. The report concludes by addressing key questions framed by NWMO at the outset of the site selection process.

Ultimately, the potential effect of the Project on the well-being of a community needs to be identified and assessed by the community itself. This includes identifying the broad range of factors that need to be considered, the approach to measuring potential effect on well-being and judgements about the magnitude of this effect. It is also recognized that more detailed studies and further investigations of community specific risks and uncertainties will be required if the community continues in the siting process.

This report reflects the insight from desktop research and professional judgement, as well as reports shared by the community, insight provided by Community Liaison Committee members through their regular meetings, and individual discussions with community leaders and residents and others in the surrounding area. In preparing this report, we have been welcomed into the community and community members have graciously shared their time. We are extremely grateful for their time and participation.

## 2.0 THE APM PROJECT

The APM Project is currently in early stages of design thus there remains flexibility in the nature and scope of its implementation. This provides an opportunity for the project to be structured and operated in a manner that suits the conditions and aspirations of the host community and surrounding area. However, it is important at this early stage of the preliminary assessment to understand the potential implications of the Project on the community and its surroundings. This requires some basic assumptions about the project and initial effects. The starting assumptions for this preliminary assessment include the following:

1. The on-site labour workforce required by the APM Project (see Table 1) is in the range of 400 – 1,200 jobs and further jobs (indirect and induced) and community wealth creation will result from project spending for goods and services and employee income spending.<sup>3</sup> The following table summarizes the estimated number of direct, on-site jobs throughout the life of the APM Project, which spans over 150 years.

**Table 1: Estimate of On-Site Labour Workforce Required by APM Project**

APM Phase	Number of Years (approx.)	Direct Jobs per Year (approx.)	Primary Skills Required
Construction	10	400-1,200	Mining, engineering, geoscience, safety assessment, manufacturing, construction, trades, project management, social science, engagement, communication, transportation
Operation	30 or more	700-800	Mining, engineering, geoscience, safety assessment, manufacturing, trades support, project management, social science, engagement, transportation
Extended Monitoring	50 or more	100-150	Geoscience, safety assessment, mining
Decommissioning and Closure	30	200-300	Mining, construction trades, geoscience, safety assessment, regulatory affairs
Long term monitoring	100 or more	25-50	Environmental and health and safety monitoring

Source: NWMO. 2012. *Description of Canada's Repository for Used Nuclear Fuel and Centre of Expertise*.

2. Realization of employment benefits within a community will depend on a variety of factors such as:
  - A. Preference for local hiring and sourcing from local businesses;
  - B. Training of local residents for positions in the project or in supporting services; and,
  - C. Planning to prepare for and leverage future opportunities.

This Project will be implemented through a long-term partnership involving the community, neighbouring communities and Aboriginal peoples in the area and the NWMO. Only through engagement, dialogue and collaboration will the NWMO ensure that needs are addressed at each stage of the process, and determine the specifics of how a partnership arrangement would work. For

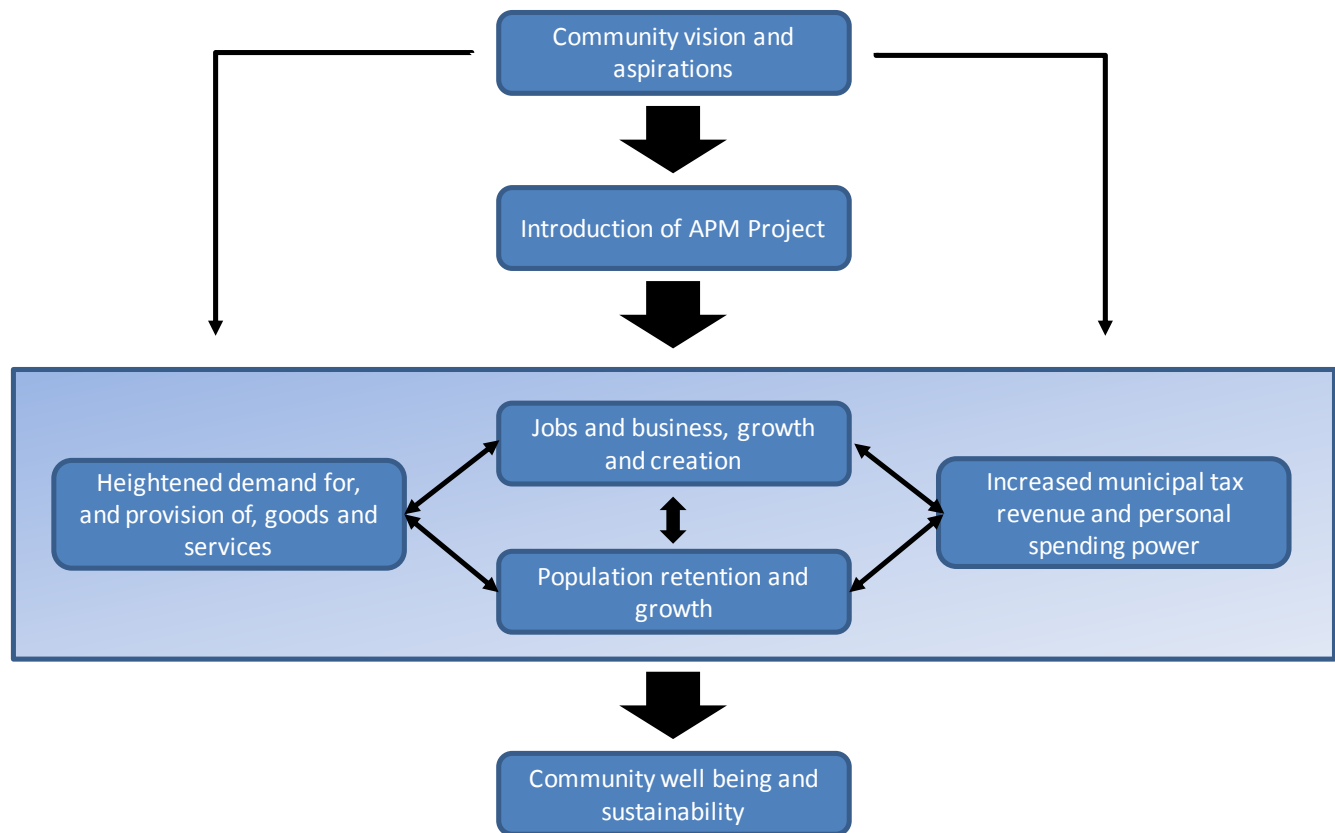
<sup>3</sup> NWMO. 2012. *Description of Canada's Repository for Used Nuclear Fuel and Centre of Expertise*. Available online at <http://www.nwmo.ca/brochures>.

illustration purposes only, employment opportunities could be in the order of hundreds of new jobs (direct, indirect and induced) within the local area.<sup>4</sup> However, it will be up to the community to determine the nature and scope of how it wishes to grow in discussions with the NWMO.

3. The NWMO is committed to working with communities and those in the surrounding area to optimize the benefits associated with the project in a manner that will directly and positively contribute to the overall well-being of not only the host community, but also other communities within the surrounding area, and as much as possible, drive future growth, capabilities and expertise that will sustain the community over a long period of time.

The following figure provides a graphical representation of the direct and indirect effects that may result from the siting of the APM Project (see Figure 2). The figure illustrates how the project could be the impetus for growth in population, business activity and municipal finances.

**Figure 2: Direct and Indirect Effects of APM Project in White River**



<sup>4</sup> AECOM. 2010. *A Preliminary Assessment of Illustrative Generic Community Economic Benefits from Hosting the APM Project*. Available online at: [http://www.nwmo.ca/uploads\\_managed/MediaFiles/1497\\_nwmosr-2010-09\\_preliminary\\_ass.pdf](http://www.nwmo.ca/uploads_managed/MediaFiles/1497_nwmosr-2010-09_preliminary_ass.pdf)

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## 3.0 VALUES AND ASPIRATIONS OF WHITE RIVER

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The values and aspirations of the Township of White River have been identified through discussions with community members and documented in the White River Community Profile<sup>5</sup> and other community reports. The preliminary assessment, which is the topic of this report, is measured against these values and aspirations.

The Township of White River is a resilient community, having faced significant social, cultural, and economic changes due to the various “boom and bust” cycles associated with the community’s transportation and natural resource-based economy. Perhaps one of the greatest recent changes in the community occurred when the White River Mill closed in January 2007. However, the White River Mill has since reopened in September 2013; a sign of forestry revitalization in Northern Ontario and the entrepreneurial spirit that exists in White River. The community’s population has declined over the last 20 years, as families and youth have had to move elsewhere for employment and educational opportunities. There is a desire to maintain, if not grow, the population to better support the school, community organizations, facilities and services. White River continues to explore ways to diversify their economy, provide local employment, and to address the out-migration of community members (particularly youth) in search of employment or education. Four targeted industry sectors have been identified by the Township – tourism, forestry, mining and energy - to provide new economic opportunities and support overall community aspirations. An improved municipal finance position is sought to redistribute the tax burden and increase revenues so that community facilities, programs and services can be maintained or enhanced. In general, White River aspires to grow its population via economic diversification, local employment and business opportunities.

White River’s vision for the future includes an increased focus on tourism. White River is the home of the original black bear cub that was the impetus of the character ‘Winnie-the-Pooh’. For almost 30 years, the community has celebrated this history with the Winnie’s Hometown Festival; held annually on the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in August.<sup>6</sup> Winnie’s Hometown Festival, the White River Museum and the Winnie-the-Pooh exhibit, as well as the Winnie-the-Pooh statue and park located at the tourist centre, have all been identified as strategic focus areas for the future of tourism development.

The White River Community Development Corporation is working towards a Strategic Economic Plan in partnership with the Township. One of the key activities of the Corporation has been the public/private partnership with the White River Forest Products.

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<sup>5</sup> DPRA Canada. December 2014. *Community Profile, White River Ontario*. Prepared for the Nuclear Waste Management Organization.

<sup>6</sup> Township of White River. 2013. *Winnie’s Hometown Festival*. Website: <http://www.whiteriver.ca/article/winnies-hometown-festival-140.asp>. Accessed: March 2014.

The Official Plan last updated in 1983, identified nine goals<sup>7</sup>:

1. To preserve and enhance those attributes that have established the quality of character of the Township.
2. To overcome existing servicing problems.
3. To provide physical services and community facilities to satisfy the needs of the population.
4. To promote a logical, orderly and economic pattern of development with clearly defined urban and rural areas.
5. To enhance the economic potential of the Township by protecting potential resource development areas and by promoting recreation and tourism.
6. To control municipal expenses by limiting development that would place a financial burden on the Township.
7. To encourage and provide the means for public participation in the planning process.
8. To encourage other levels of government to implement the policies of the Plan.
9. To adopt a positive and optimistic approach to planning and development by ensuring that sufficient land is designated for the maximum attraction of development.

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<sup>7</sup> Township of White River. (revised) September 26, 1983. *Official Plan for the Township of White River Planning Area*. Prepared by Proctor & Redfern Limited.

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## 4.0 SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ASSETS – KEY ISSUES, ASPIRATIONS, CAPABILITIES AND CAPACITIES

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As described in the Community Profile<sup>8</sup>, White River has several priorities, aspirations, capabilities and capacities that are most vital to the well-being of the community. These are organized to describe the characteristics of the community through five different perspectives:

- **Human:** Skills, knowledge and essential services supporting the well-being of the community;
- **Economic:** Monetary or financial resources supporting the well-being of the community;
- **Infrastructure:** Basic physical infrastructure supporting the well-being of the community;
- **Social:** Social and community activities in which people participate and the services and programs they draw upon to support well-being; and,
- **Natural environment:** Nature and the natural environment important to well-being.

The characteristics of the community are referred to as “assets” throughout the report. This is intended to highlight their importance and pave the way for a broad and holistic discussion of how the community may be affected by the APM Project, or other large projects which the community may consider.

Table 2 below summarizes the priorities and key issues as understood through desktop research, review of White River documentation, and discussions with community leaders and residents. Table 3 sets out the aspirations of the community that have been articulated in the community-specific documents and in discussions with community leaders and representatives. Table 4 describes some of White River’s capabilities to overcome key issues, address main priorities and achieve aspirations as understood through discussions with the community.

The findings in these tables provide the foundation for this preliminary assessment of community well-being and the potential implications of the APM Project.

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<sup>8</sup> DPRA Canada. December 2014. *Community Profile, White River Ontario*. Prepared for the Nuclear Waste Management Organization.

**Table 2: Summary of Priorities and Key Issues**

Asset Category	Overall Priorities and Key Issues
<p><b>Human</b></p>	<p>White River’s population (approximately 607 in 2011) is lower than the peak of approximately 1,022 in 1996, but has stabilized in the past year – coinciding with the re-opening of the White River Forest Products Mill. The population is aging at a greater rate than either the Census Division or Ontario. Many residents have been forced to leave the community to seek employment following the closure of the Mill (2007); however, a number of families remain with a member ‘working away’ at mills or mines elsewhere in Northern Ontario, or Alberta. Between 2006 and 2011, the types of occupation in the community shifted away from those associated with processing/manufacturing (previously one of the top occupational categories in White River, other than trades and transport). With the re-opening of the Mill in 2013, this will have changed. Unemployment in Superior East, while high, is similar to that for the Census Division as a whole, indicating that job losses have resulted in out-migration from settlements in Superior East.</p> <p>In 2011, White River’s level of educational attainment, when compared to the Census Division and Ontario, was generally lower, with the exception of the apprenticeships and trades category. Enrollment in the community’s elementary school, as well as number of elementary/high school children who travel to Wawa for education, have been decreasing as population declines and families leave the community. White River is serviced by a Health Clinic, ambulance, police, and volunteer fire department.</p>
<p><b>Economic</b></p>	<p>The community of White River experienced high unemployment when the Domtar Mill and Co-generation Facility closed in 2007; many residents had to leave the community to find work. Between 2006 and 2011 the unemployment rate in White River increased from 7.6% to 15.4%; however, community representatives have noted that there currently seems to be little unemployment in the community. Since the White River Forest Products Mill (re)opened in 2013, many previous Mill employees and residents of White River returned to work at the Mill; other residents who could not find work locally after the Mill closed moved, or may commute elsewhere in the region (e.g., Richmond Mine, Barrick Gold Mines at Hemlo, or other mines in Northwestern Ontario) or beyond (e.g., Alberta), while choosing to keep their families in White River. The Co-generation Facility at the Mill is currently going through a permit approval process with the province. Community members hope the facility can be up and running in the near future.</p> <p>White River is situated on Highway 17, approximately half way between Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay, making it a service area for people travelling between these two centres. White River is centrally located in terms of its neighbouring communities: Hornepayne, Manitouwadge, Marathon, Dubreuilville, and Wawa. Forestry activity is returning to the region (e.g., several mills have reopened along the North shore); however, its role in the local and regional economy has diminished compared to years ago. The White River Forest Products Mill added a second shift in</p>

January 2014 and is working to commission the on-site Co-generation Facility. Many of the other businesses and employment are in the service sector or public service. Many residents travel outside of White River for services (i.e., health care, groceries, retail), which make it difficult for existing (and attracting new) businesses due to ‘out-shopping’ and competitive markets.

Tourism in White River has been linked to ‘Winnie-the-Pooh’; the community is the birthplace of the black bear that originated the stories. However, tourists do not tend to visit White River’s museum, which is partially dedicated to Winnie-the-Pooh. The community would like to enhance its potential to attract tourists, for example, by capitalizing on opportunities to develop Winnie-the-Pooh craft shops, a Pooh trail, and a community ‘100 Acre Wood’. Currently, economic contributions from tourism stem primarily from outdoor and natural area recreation activities, such as hunting and fishing, enhanced by the community’s location on the Trans-Canada Highway. These outdoors enthusiasts are the primary type of tourist motel renters in White River. The future potential for tourism in White River may be limited by broader trends in that sector (e.g., declining numbers of American visitors; less vehicle-based tourism).

In terms of municipal finance, liabilities have generally exceeded the community’s assets for the last decade. When the Mill was closed, the majority of the tax burden for the Township was placed on residential ratepayers; this has been accentuated by the declining population. With the recent return of the Mill, the tax burden felt by residents may subside; as the population is likely to increase and the return of a major employer and taxpayer.

**Infrastructure**

Residents have indicated that housing in White River is relatively inexpensive; however, the availability of housing is getting tighter now that the Mill is back in operation and the housing stock is reducing in size. The low cost of housing has attracted retirees and families on fixed income to the community.

White River recently constructed a new water distribution system. While infrastructure in White River is being improved, aging municipal infrastructure remains a challenge as the population base declines.

Public transportation is a limitation in White River. The Budd Car service operated by Via Rail links White River to Sudbury three time a week, offering residents an alternative travel mode to a major centre (especially during the winter months). However, there is uncertainty about the long term viability of the Budd Car service as rail lines servicing Northern Ontario are being cancelled. Residents can also drive to Hornepayne if they wish to travel to Sudbury, Toronto or Thunder Bay by rail. The train provides an alternative to driving in the winter, especially as road closures can be frequent due to weather.



<p><b>Social</b></p>	<p>The history of White River began with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR); and, in 1889 became an incorporated municipal entity. Today, White River remains a railway town with a functioning CPR rail yard and bunkhouse. In 1961, the Trans-Canada Highway 17 was constructed through White River. Tourism and forestry industries would soon follow the completion of the Trans-Canada Highway and in the 1970 the Abitibi Mill was established in White River.</p> <p>The current decline in population and tax base, further threatened by the volatility of the forestry industry, means it is becoming more difficult to maintain, let alone improve community facilities, programs, and events. While White River has a strong volunteer base, it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit new people to provide support for events and activities. Volunteer “burn-out” has been identified by residents as an ongoing issue in White River in recent years, especially as many residents work out of town.</p>
<p><b>Natural Environment</b></p>	<p>The natural assets of White River are valued by residents. White River is surrounded by wilderness, lakes, and rivers that provide outdoor recreational opportunities for residents and tourists alike. A national park and a number of provincial parks and conservation reserves are located near White River. Picnic Lake is used extensively by residents, many of whom have camps/cottages on the lake. Other residents have camps in the vicinity.</p>

**Table 3: Summary of Community Aspirations**

Asset Category	Overall Community Aspirations
Human	<p>Many residents expressed interest in White River’s population returning to its previous numbers, with the possibility/potential to double; not changing the overall small town-close knit character of the community. White River worked with partners to re-open the White River Forest Products Mill in 2013. The town’s Official Plan was last updated in 1983, and outlines nine Goals of Council. Many residents indicated that their future aspirations for White River include increasing the number of families and children, as well as retaining their current youth population. This would contribute to maintaining and/or increasing the current services and programs offered in White River, including: maintaining the recreation complex year round; opening a hospital and high school in town; and, re-establishing lost youth sports and extracurricular programs. For example, due to a lack of funding and capacity, the ice at the recreation complex is only maintained from January - March. The improvement of services for seniors is also a priority.</p>
Economic	<p>Many residents have expressed their desire for more local or regional employment opportunities, which might allow those residents working out of town to return, retain youth, and attract new people to the community. Entrepreneurship and diversification are viewed as essential components for growing White River’s economy in the future (e.g. to fill existing service gaps in the community). Four targeted industry sectors have been identified by the Township – tourism, forestry, mining and energy - to provide new economic opportunities and support overall community aspirations. White River is looking to strengthen their existing tourism sector, and many see Winnie-the-Pooh as a focus for the future and a foundation for growth. Other tourism opportunities in White River and the surrounding area include camping (e.g., at a national park and provincial parks) and outfitting (hunting, fishing). The need for additional tourism infrastructure to attract people either ‘passing through town’ or staying for a visit is seen as a priority. The future potential for tourism in White River may be limited by broader trends in that sector (e.g., declining numbers of American visitors; less vehicle-based tourism).</p>
Infrastructure	<p>Improving the municipal revenue stream for the continued maintenance or improvement of White River’s infrastructure, including improvements to water/wastewater management systems, the Tourist Centre and the Winnie-the-Pooh park, are objectives for the Township. Residents are hopeful that the Mill and other resource development projects in the area will increase housing sales and possibly result in new homes being built.</p>
Social	<p>Residents have indicated a desire to increase the number of families and children in the community. This would contribute to the ongoing viability of community facilities, culture and recreational programs, and community organizations.</p>
Natural Environment	<p>The protection and enhancement of the natural environment is a priority for the community. Many residents indicated that access to hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreational pursuits are important to the community.</p>

**Table 4: Summary of Community Capabilities**

Asset Category	Community Capabilities and Capacities
<b>Human</b>	The active volunteer core (in particular seniors), and the successful efforts of the White River Community Development Corporation with respect to the public/private partnership with White River Forest Products, demonstrate that although White River is small in population, there is an active capacity within the community.
<b>Economic</b>	There is currently no economic development plan for White River; however, the White River Community Development Corporation and the Township of White River are working together to finalize a community Strategic Economic Plan.
<b>Infrastructure</b>	The Township has a Flood Plain Master Plan, which can help facilitate future improvements. The Township has developed an Asset Management Plan in place to enhance existing transportation infrastructure and contribute to infrastructure management and development. The seniors housing complex is a valued community asset that residents hope will be enhanced with the addition of a long-term care facility.
<b>Social</b>	Community representatives have noted that there are linkages between Pic Mobert First Nation and the community of White River. A number of Pic Mobert First Nation members live in White River. Members living on reserve frequently shop in town and/or are patrons at the restaurants. Community facilities include the library and a recreation centre with an ice pad and curling sheet, as well as an exercise gym. The Legion Hall is used for a variety of community meetings and events.
<b>Natural Environment</b>	The White River 2008-2018 Forest Management Plan and the White River Co-Management Committee provide mechanisms for monitoring and managing various uses of the natural resources that surround White River.

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## 5.0 COMMUNITY WELL-BEING ASSESSMENT

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In this section, implications of the APM Project on the well-being of the community are examined through each of the five different perspectives or “lenses”. These are referred to as “assets”. Additional detail on these is provided in the White River Community Profile.<sup>9</sup>

### 5.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN ASSETS

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For the purpose of this analysis, the Human Assets within a community are understood to include the skills and knowledge inherent in it and the ability of a community to provide its residents with access to other skills, knowledge and essential services that are fundamental to maintaining community well-being, quality of life or a desired standard of living. In this analysis, the specific indicators examined included:

- Population Size and Demographics;
- Skills and Labour Supply;
- Education; and,
- Health and Safety Facilities and Services.

Table 5 summarizes observations with respect to the APM Project for the human assets of White River.

White River and many Northern Ontario communities have experienced major declines in population. White River’s population has declined from 1,022 in 1996 to 607 in 2011. Residents have recently observed a slight increase in the town’s population since the re-opening of the White River Mill in 2013. The community has expressed the desire to grow to at least double the current population. Currently, the population is aging and there are limited opportunities to attract residents to the community.

The APM Project has the potential to bring in a large enough population to achieve the community’s goal of increasing its population. This growth will rejuvenate retail options and community facilities and services. The APM Project would likely utilize any existing skilled labour force and attract a new skilled and diverse workforce as well as attracting new families. The APM Project offers the opportunity for local residents to obtain opportunities in direct, indirect and induced jobs.

In addition to experiencing a general decline in population trends over the past decade, White River has also experienced a noticeable reduction in the size of its labour force since 2006. There are limited local employment opportunities to attract a diverse and growing workforce.

White River has also experienced a decline in school enrolment, staffing, and a contraction in programming over the past 25 years. Students can attend the local elementary school or can be bussed to schools in Wawa. A wide range of new local employment/career opportunities with the APM Project would attract young families to the area, increasing school enrolment and potentially leading to additional school facilities and services in the community.

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<sup>9</sup> DPRA Canada. December 2014. *Community Profile, White River Ontario*. Prepared for the Nuclear Waste Management Organization.

White River has a health clinic and medevac services which provide basic health care in the local community. Specialty healthcare requires travel outside the community. With the increase in population associated with the APM Project, demand for health and safety facilities and services would increase in the community. This growth may also stimulate planning and expansion of health and safety facilities and services, and result in an increased ability to attract and retain highly qualified health-care professionals.

With the possible introduction of the APM Project and its associated local and regional economic opportunities there is the potential in the community for:

- Population growth;
- Creation of jobs; attraction and retention of a diverse and highly-skilled workforce;
- Diverse career opportunities for local residents in direct and indirect jobs;
- Stimulate career aspirations and interest in training and education; and
- Increased demand and potential resources for growth in health and safety, recreation, and education services in response to population growth and project activity.

White River may require assistance to effectively manage implications of the APM Project. This could include:

- Assistance to plan for and manage growth;
- Assistance to train and engage any available local workforce; and
- Planning and support to educate and train any available workforce and future generations to take advantage of career opportunities; require investment for new training facilities in the community.

The APM Project has the potential to bring positive net benefits to the Human Assets of White River were the Project to be implemented in the area.

**Table 5: Implications for Human Assets**

Criteria / Measures	Ideal CWB Condition	Current White River Profile	Possible White River Profile with APM Project	Observations
<b>HUMAN ASSETS:</b>				
<b>Population Size and Demographics</b>	Increase population to 1,500+ Retention of youth and young families	Declining population between 1996 and 2011	Growth in population and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White River’s population has declined from 1,022 in 1996 to 607 by 2011.</li> <li>Aging population with limited opportunity to attract working population.</li> <li>White River is experiencing some population increase due to the re-opening of the White River Forest Products mill in 2013. The degree of change is not yet known.</li> <li>The community has expressed a strong desire to grow and to at least double its current population.</li> <li>APM Project offers potential to create jobs and attract and retain population.</li> <li>White River will require assistance to plan for and manage growth.</li> </ul>
<b>Skills and Labour Supply</b>	Presence of a diverse, skilled workforce	Constrained opportunities for employment in recent years. Presence of a diverse and skilled workforce with the influx of workers at the re-opened mill and construction of hydro-electric project that may be temporary	Enhanced job creation for youth, as well as opportunities for all other parts of the labour force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most residents worked in the jobs within the “trades, transport and equipment operations and related occupations” category.</li> <li>Limited local employment opportunities to attract a diverse and growing workforce.</li> <li>The local lumber mill has re-opened. In addition, construction at a nearby hydroelectric project has provided employment for local residents and brought in employees/contractors from beyond White River.</li> <li>APM Project would likely attract new skilled and diverse workforce and bring in new families.</li> <li>The APM Project offers diverse career opportunities for local residents in direct and indirect jobs.</li> <li>White River would require assistance to train and engage any available local workforce.</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	Access to education and training Increased enrolment and programming	Declining enrollment in local schools for the past 25 years No high school in White River No local post-secondary education Constrained programming	Increased enrolment and opportunities for education and training Broader range of programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2006, 31.7% of residents’ (aged 15 years and over) highest level of education was a high school diploma or equivalent; this decreased to 18.1% in 2011.</li> <li>The community has a day-care facility and a Catholic elementary school (local students are bussed to high schools, or to public schools in Wawa).</li> <li>White River has experienced declining school enrolment and declining staff and a contraction in programming over the past 25 years.</li> <li>Post-secondary education is available in regional centres such as Thunder Bay and Sault Ste. Marie.</li> <li>A Contact North distance education facility is located in the community.</li> <li>Wide range of new local employment/career opportunities with the APM Project will attract young families to the area, increasing enrolment.</li> <li>The APM Project will stimulate career aspirations and interest in project-related training and education.</li> <li>White River would require planning and support to educate and train its current workforce and future generations to take advantage of career opportunities.</li> <li>Increase in population will place more demand on existing education and skills training services but also further potential to expand services and facilities given additional resources and funding that would be available.</li> <li>White River may require investment for new training facilities in the local region or the community.</li> </ul>

Criteria / Measures	Ideal CWB Condition	Current White River Profile	Possible White River Profile with APM Project	Observations
<b>HUMAN ASSETS:</b>				
Health & Safety Facilities and Services	Access to full range of health services 24/7	Local health clinic not able to meet some local needs	Increased demand on services and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White River has a health clinic and medevac services which provide basic health care in the local community.</li> <li>Specialty healthcare requires travel outside the community. White River is serviced by an ambulance facility, the OPP and a volunteer fire department. With growth, demand for health and safety services will increase and may also stimulate planning and expansion of health and safety facilities and services.</li> </ul>
	Fully serviced by emergency responders	Specialty care not available within the community Emergency response needs adequately met	Catalyst to broaden supply of services and facilities, particularly healthcare	
Declining-Negative				
Neutral-Stable				
Increasing-Enhanced-Positive				
Uncertain				

## 5. 2 IMPLICATIONS FOR ECONOMIC ASSETS

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The Economic Assets within a community are understood to include the monetary or financial related resources that people use to achieve their well-being objectives. It includes cash or equivalents to individuals and/or their community, and the availability of financial and economic resources that allow the community and residents to manage their finances and wealth. In this analysis, the specific indicators examined included:

- Employment;
- Business Activity;
- Income;
- Tourism;
- Economic Development Services; and,
- Governance and Municipal Finance.

Table 6 summarizes observations with respect to the APM Project for the economic assets of White River.

In recent years, White River has experienced a number of local business closures, which has resulted in some declining employment and opportunities for residents. After the Mill closure in 2007, many residents who could not find work locally after the Mill closed moved, while others continue to commute elsewhere in the region (e.g., Richmond Mine, Barrick Gold Mines at Hemlo, or other mines in Northwestern Ontario) or beyond (e.g., Alberta), while choosing to keep their families in White River. Out-migration of youth in search of job and career opportunities is also prevalent. Until recently, employment in the resource sectors has been declining, but now, economic activity is again centred on forestry – particularly the White River Forest Products Mill. There are opportunities for those who have remained in the community (mill, construction, regional mining). With declining population, it has become more difficult to find workers for labourer and service positions. There is a reliance on the foreign workers program to meet service job needs.

Median incomes were rising prior to closure of the White River Mill, although there was a decline upon its closure. Incomes may be stabilizing or increasing with recent forestry, construction and mining activity in the area. Between 2005 and 2010, the proportion of income from government transfers more than doubled in the community.

Population decline has made it more difficult for community businesses, although those servicing construction and mining have been less affected since the recent economic downturn.

White River provides services to travellers along Highway 17. White River is the hometown of the original black bear that became the popular Winnie-the-Pooh character. This has become a central focus of the town's promotional efforts. One of the community's main tourist attractions is 'Winnie's Hometown Festival', which takes place annually. In addition, White River offers outfitting experiences for people interested in hunting and fishing. White River markets itself as a location for the outdoor adventure enthusiast. However, economic circumstances, nationally and internationally, have adversely affected the tourism market in White River and elsewhere in northern Ontario (e.g., declining numbers of American visitors; less vehicle-based tourism). As



such, the contribution of tourism to the economy of White River may continue to decline in the future. A few residents have expressed uncertainty about the alignment of the APM Project with community aspirations associated with Winnie-the-Pooh-themed tourism initiatives. While the APM Project may provide new markets for the local tourist industry, further work would be required to evaluate the potential to implement the Project in a manner consistent with the aspirations of the community regarding tourism.

Due to a lack of funding, White River does not have an Economic Development Officer. A Strategic Economic Plan for the community is currently being finalised. Economic development has been difficult given the overall economy; however, the Community Development Corporation has had recent success in terms of the mill re-opening. The successful efforts of the White River Community Development Corporation with respect to the public/private partnership with White River Forest Products, demonstrate that although White River is small in population, there is capacity within the community.<sup>10</sup>

Presently, the Township generates revenue primarily through taxes (property and payments in lieu of taxes), grants (conditional and unconditional) and user's fees/service charges. In terms of municipal finance, liabilities have generally exceeded assets for the last decade. The APM Project will also allow White River to increase the municipal tax base to support maintenance and growth of community infrastructure and services.

Should the APM Project locate in White River there will be direct and indirect job creation and a diversity of career opportunities. Further induced employment will also occur as a result of income spending by direct and indirect workers. Jobs and business opportunities will be created and incomes will grow, as will household expenditures. The presence of additional long term and stable job opportunities will change the economic complexion of the community. Out-migration of youth will slow and in-migration will occur as White River becomes a larger employment centre. More households and greater expenditures open up market opportunities for local businesses to service the expanding needs of a growing and more affluent population.

With the possible introduction of the APM Project in White River and its associated economic opportunities there is potential for:

- Growth in the number and diversity of stable employment and career opportunities in the community;
- Stimulation of growth in employment and household income and elevated revenues for the Township;
- Local market opportunities would present themselves which would stimulate business growth and diversity;
- New visitors travelling to the area who come to learn more about the APM Project; and
- Provision of a catalyst for economic development through its own presence and creation of associated business opportunities.

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<sup>10</sup> White River Forest Products is a partnership between the Town of White River Community Development Corporation, Pic Mobert First Nation, and two private investors.

White River may require assistance to effectively manage implications of the APM Project. This could include:

- Ensuring local residents are able to realize project direct and indirect employment opportunities;
- Planning, implementing and managing economic development;
- White River and tourism organizations may require assistance to manage the presence of APM Project constraints and opportunities;
- Planning and implementing a strategy that would realize the economic development opportunities presented by the APM Project;
- Further evaluation of the potential for changes in perceptions that may affect tourism;
- Assistance to understand the fiscal implications of the APM Project and to how best to manage its finances to ensure upside potentials are fully realized and downside risks are minimized; and
- Some residents may benefit from assistance and counselling regarding wealth and debt management.

Overall, it can be expected that changes in community well-being related to the Economic Assets of White River as a result of the APM Project would be positive.

**Table 6: Implications for Economic Assets**

Criteria / Measures	Ideal CWB Condition	Current White River Profile	Possible White River Profile with APM Project	Observations
<b>ECONOMIC ASSETS:</b>				
<b>Employment</b>	Increasing employment for residents	Recent increased employment with opening of White River Forest Products Mill, hydro dam, construction and regional mining activity	Growth in the number and diversity of employment opportunities in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White River’s labour force participation rate has decreased over the past decade due to out-migration of residents looking for employment and an aging population.</li> <li>Between 2006 and 2011 the unemployment rate increased considerably. The local unemployment rate is likely to be lower as the mill recently re-opened in 2013 and there is a large hydroelectric project under construction.</li> <li>There are opportunities for those who have remained in the community since the previous mill closure (mill, construction, regional mining).</li> <li>White River is finding it difficult to find employees for labourer and service positions (restaurants, hotels, and stores).</li> <li>A number of workers residing in White River commute to jobs in the oil and gas/mining industry elsewhere in Ontario (e.g. Red Lake) or Alberta (e.g. Fort McMurray).</li> <li>Out-migration of youth in search of job and career opportunities is prevalent.</li> <li>APM Project would offer an increased and diverse range of employment opportunities and careers for new and existing community and regional residents.</li> <li>White River may require assistance to ensure local residents are able to realize project direct and indirect employment opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>Income</b>	Household income growth and diminished need for social assistance	Trend of declining incomes, might stabilize with opening of White River Forest mill	Growth and employment in good jobs will result in increased household incomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Median incomes were rising prior to closure of the Mill; although, there was a decline upon its closure. Incomes may be stabilizing or increasing with recent forestry, construction and mining activity in the area.</li> <li>APM Project would create local jobs and, as a result, this will stimulate growth in household income.</li> <li>Some residents may benefit from assistance and counselling regarding wealth and debt management.</li> <li>White River may require assistance to help residents realize employment opportunities and manage their finances.</li> </ul>
<b>Business Activity</b>	Business growth and increasing business diversity	Recent trend of business decline and closures New construction in the area is supporting existing businesses	Growth in business activity leading to growth in the number and diversity of businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The reopening of the White River Mill and the Hydro Project has had impacts on local businesses (e.g., motels and restaurants have noted an increase in business). Over the longer term, population decline has made it difficult for a diversity of community businesses to survive.</li> <li>Businesses servicing mining and construction industries such as restaurants and accommodations have maintained or grown their businesses.</li> <li>There is growth in mining exploration and in forestry with the reopening of the White River Mill which created over 100 employment positions. There is potential for new employment opportunities resulting from growth in mining and forestry industries.</li> <li>APM Project would create local direct and indirect jobs and stimulate business activity across the community.</li> <li>By reversing the population decline and raising incomes, local market opportunities would present themselves and stimulate business growth and diversity.</li> <li>White River may require assistance to plan, implement and manage economic development.</li> </ul>
<b>Recreation and/or Tourism</b>	Stability or growth in area tourism	Demographic, social and economic circumstances have affected the market	Potential decline in tourism as a result of negative perceptions and Project concerns Potential increase in tourism with niche market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White River provides services to travellers along Highway 17 and is a base for outdoor recreation.</li> <li>White River is the hometown of the original black bear that became the popular ‘Winnie-the-Pooh’ character; this has become a central focus of the town’s promotional efforts. One of the community’s main tourist attractions is the ‘Winnie’s Hometown Festival’ created in collaboration with Disney.</li> <li>White River also markets itself as a location for the outdoor adventure enthusiast.</li> <li>Economic circumstances, nationally and internationally, have negatively affected the tourism market, and the contribution by tourism to the economy of White River may continue to decline in the future.</li> <li>A few residents have expressed uncertainty about alignment of the APM Project with aspirations related to Winnie-the-Pooh-themed tourism initiatives.</li> <li>There is the potential for niche markets associated with the APM Project to increase tourism; further study is required to better understand the potential effects on visitor perception and use of the area. White River and tourism organizations may require assistance to manage the presence of APM Project constraints and opportunities.</li> </ul>

Criteria / Measures	Ideal CWB Condition	Current White River Profile	Possible White River Profile with APM Project	Observations
<b>ECONOMIC ASSETS:</b>				
<b>Economic Development and Services</b>	An active economic development organization that has demonstrated success in attracting businesses to the community	The Township has an economic development corporation, although no Economic Development Officer since 2010 due to budget cuts.  Some improvement due to the Mill re-opening and hydroelectric project, but unclear on the full impact.	Businesses will want to locate in the community to take advantage of the business opportunities directly and indirectly created by the APM Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic development services in White River were provided by the Economic Development Office. White River has not had an Economic Development Officer since 2010 due to lack of funding.</li> <li>A Strategic Economic Plan is being developed.</li> <li>Economic development has been difficult given the overall economy and the ongoing local attrition in businesses and jobs. However, the Community Development Corporation has had recent success in terms of the Mill re-opening.</li> <li>APM Project would provide a catalyst for economic development through its own presence and creation of associated business opportunities.</li> <li>White River may need assistance to plan and implement a strategy that will fully realize the economic development opportunities presented by the APM Project.</li> </ul>
<b>Governance and Municipal Finances</b>	Community is financially sustainable over short and long term	Recent population declines have added extra strain on residential tax base  Municipality partner in opening the Mill	An enhanced tax base with solid contributions from industrial and commercial properties  Additional revenues to cover operating and capital requirements associated with growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal liabilities have generally exceeded assets for the last decade. When the Mill was closed, the majority of the tax burden for the Township was placed on residential ratepayers; this has been accentuated by the declining population. With the recent return of the Mill, the tax burden felt by residents may subside; population may increase with the return of a major employer and taxpayer.</li> <li>APM Project by its presence would elevate revenues available to the Township.</li> <li>White River will need assistance to understand the fiscal implications of the APM Project and to how best to manage its finances to ensure upside potentials are fully realized and downside risks are minimized.</li> </ul>

Declining-Negative	
Neutral-Stable	
Increasing-Enhanced-Positive	
Uncertain	

## 5.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

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The Infrastructure or Physical Assets within a community is understood to include the basic infrastructure needed to support well-being and the tools or equipment that people use to function more productively. Infrastructure is a basic public good and improved access to it increases community well-being and quality of life. In this analysis, the specific indicators examined included:

- Housing;
- Municipal Infrastructure and Services; and,
- Transportation Infrastructure.

It should be noted that while these indicators are a subset of those included in the Community Profile, these are the key indicators that are thought to be most important to White River in terms of its Physical well-being.

Table 7 summarizes observations with respect to the APM Project for the physical assets of White River.

While housing in White River is relatively inexpensive, prices are beginning to rise. There are few homes available for purchase or rent. A vacant apartment building complex in the community is reported to have been recently sold and is undergoing renovation. White River also has a senior's housing complex in town. If the Project were to be implemented in White River, there is the potential to increase the cost of housing, depending on the size and rate of labour in-migration. Moreover, there may be instances where low-cost housing would be taken up by Project workers. Further study and management of housing issues would be appropriate to ensure effects on housing affordability are minimized.

The community has adequate municipal infrastructure to meet current needs of the population; however, there is a lack of funds making it challenging to properly maintain and operate much of the infrastructure. The new water plant is requiring more operational activity than was expected and the community's wastewater lagoon capacity appears to be something to monitor.

With the possible introduction of the APM Project and its associated local and regional economic opportunities there is the potential for:

- In-migration of individuals and families who will absorb the available housing stock;
- Increase in housing demand and prices if supply remains limited;
- Greater demand for a mix of housing types and tenure arrangements;
- Increased demands on existing infrastructure, as well as increased resources and funding to support facility replacement or upgrading;
- Generate municipal revenues (directly and indirectly); and
- Increased road and rail usage and this may necessitate upgrading and expansions along with additional potential funding and revenue streams to support new infrastructure.

White River may require assistance to effectively manage implications of the APM Project. This could include:

- Maintaining a supply/demand balance of housing to prevent excessive price escalation and ensure there is a strong supply of affordable housing and a supply of rooms available for tourists and general travelling public;
- Assistance planning, developing and maintaining a sustainable housing portfolio;
- Assistance planning, operating, and maintaining service demands associated with the APM Project; and
- Assistance from the community and relevant authorities to create a multimodal transportation plan.

Overall, the changes in community well-being related to the Infrastructure or Physical Assets of White River as a result of the APM Project would be positive.

**Table 7: Implications for Infrastructure**

Criteria / Measures	Ideal CWB Condition	Current White River Profile	Possible White River Profile with APM Project	Observations
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE OR PHYSICAL ASSETS:</b>				
<b>Housing</b>	<p>Sufficient housing stock to meet all needs and incomes</p> <p>Average house values increase over time in line with household incomes</p>	<p>There are few homes available for rent or purchase in the community</p> <p>House prices have started to rise.</p>	<p>Strong absorption of available housing and stimulus to housing prices</p> <p>New housing development</p> <p>Potential shortage of supply if development does not keep pace with demand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While housing in White River is relatively inexpensive, prices are beginning to rise.</li> <li>There are few homes available for purchase or to rent.</li> <li>A vacant apartment building complex (with approximately 40 units) in the community is reported to have been recently sold and is undergoing renovation, potentially contributing to additional rental stock.</li> <li>APM Project would see the in-migration of individuals and families who will absorb the available housing stock. As vacancy rates fall and housing supply becomes constricted, housing prices might increase.</li> <li>APM Project would create a demand for a mix of housing types and tenure arrangements.</li> <li>A supply/demand balance of housing would need to be maintained to ensure there is a strong supply of affordable housing.</li> <li>Those seeking accommodation may temporarily occupy motel rooms thereby reducing the supply of rooms available for tourists and general travelling public.</li> <li>White River will need assistance to plan, develop and maintain a sustainable housing portfolio.</li> </ul>
<b>Municipal Infrastructure and Services</b>	<p>Infrastructure assets are in good condition, well maintained and adequately sized to meet the short and long term needs of the community</p>	<p>Basic municipal services are present in the community</p> <p>Lack of funds for maintenance and ongoing operation</p> <p>Waste treatment system problems</p>	<p>Increased demand for infrastructure and services</p> <p>Enhanced opportunities for new and renewed infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community has adequate municipal infrastructure to meet current needs, although there is a lack of funds to properly maintain and operate.</li> <li>APM Project may place increased demands on existing infrastructure and may necessitate facility replacement or upgrading in some cases.</li> <li>APM Project would generate municipal revenues directly and indirectly that can be applied to facility operation and maintenance, upgrading and replacement.</li> <li>White River will need assistance to plan, operate, maintain, and build new as required to meet service demands associated with the APM Project.</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation Infrastructure and Services</b>	<p>A strong complement of transportation facilities and services to meet the needs of the residents and businesses within the community</p>	<p>Situated on the TransCanada Highway and Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) main line</p>	<p>Upgrading and rehabilitating rail yard, rail line and road infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White River is on the TransCanada Highway 17, and accessible from Highway 11 via Highway 631.</li> <li>The Canadian Pacific Railroad freight line runs through White River.</li> <li>'Budd Car' Passenger rail service is offered by VIA Rail connecting the community with Sudbury</li> <li>APM Project would increase road and rail usage and this may necessitate upgrading and expansions along with additional potential funding and revenue streams to support new infrastructure.</li> </ul>
Declining-Negative				
Neutral-Stable				
Increasing-Enhanced-Positive				
Uncertain				

## 5. 4 IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL ASSETS

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For the purpose of this analysis, the Social Assets within a community are understood to include the social and community activities in which people participate and the resources that they draw upon in pursuit of their well-being. These activities and resources create networks within and between communities, enhance cohesion and generate trusting relationships and community pride. In this analysis, the specific indicators examined included:

- Community Recreational Facilities and Programs;
- Social Services and Organizations; and,
- Community Character.

It should be noted that while these indicators are a subset of those included in the Community Profile, these are the key indicators that are thought to be most important to White River in terms of its Social well-being.

Table 8 summarizes observations with respect to the APM Project for the social assets of White River.

In White River, the Tourism and Special Events Department organizes events (i.e., Winnie's Hometown Festival). There are limited facilities and organized recreational and sporting activities in the community. An abundance of fresh water lakes and forests in the Township's vicinity provide residents and tourists with a number of different recreational activities including: hunting and fishing, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, hiking, touring, boating, and wildlife viewing.

White River has several organizations that provide limited social services to the community (i.e., White River Health Committee, Policing Committee, and the food bank). There have been mixed changes to social services and organizations in the community as some have opened and others have closed due to a lack of government funding. Overall, residents feel the community is friendly, safe, and tight-knit.

The APM Project will grow the population in White River, resulting in increased school enrollment, and revitalization of recreational and other programming, and community organizations. The Project would be expected to have a positive influence on community dynamics through a more stable population base and the retention of younger families and youth, and by providing the ability to support its middle-aged and senior populations.

The APM Project will be compatible with White River's aspirations, including the desire to see growth and stability in the community. However, a few residents have expressed uncertainty about alignment of the APM Project with aspirations associated with Winnie-the-Pooh-themed tourism initiatives. White River does not appear to have a history of active community involvement on development issues, and has tended to defer to leadership on such initiatives. The lower level of engagement and interest in development issues by residents adds to uncertainty about alignment of the APM Project with community values, and what would be required to successfully implement the Project in White River.



With the possible introduction of the APM Project and its associated local and regional economic opportunities there is the potential for:

- Population growth, which may place demands on existing facilities and services and may create need for new facilities and services, as well as increased funding to support the growth; and
- Growth and stability if carefully managed to ensure community pride is maintained.

White River will require assistance to effectively manage implications of the APM Project. This could include:

- Assistance planning, developing and operating the recreational facilities and services needed in light of the APM Project;
- Assistance planning and developing social services and organizations; and
- Assistance planning for and accommodating growing population.

Overall, the changes in community well-being related to the Social Assets of White River as a result of the APM Project appear to be positive.

**Table 8: Implications for Social Assets**

Criteria / Measures	Ideal CWB Condition	Current White River Profile	Possible White River Profile with APM Project	Observations
<b>SOCIAL ASSETS:</b>				
<b>Community Recreational Facilities and Programs</b>	A strong complement of recreational facilities and programs to meet the needs of the residents	Limited facilities and programs; Lack of funding to maintain and operate arena	<p>Increased demand for and patronage of recreation programs</p> <p>Enhanced opportunities for new and renewed facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community events are organized by the Tourism and Special Events Department.</li> <li>With declining population and revenues, and changing age structure, the community and recreational programs offered by the Township have changed and declined over time.</li> <li>An abundance of fresh water lakes and forests in the Township's vicinity provide residents with a number of different recreational activities.</li> <li>Limited facilities and organized sports/recreational activities in the community.</li> <li>APM Project would bring population into the community and this population may place demands on existing facilities and services and may create need for new facilities and services as well as increased participation and funding to support growth of facilities and programs.</li> <li>White River may need assistance to plan, develop and operate the recreational facilities and services needed in light of the APM Project.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Services and Organizations</b>	A wide range of services, organizations and media outlets present to support the social fabric and needs of the community	Has some organizations and services present	<p>Increased demand for and use of social services and organizations</p> <p>Enhanced opportunities for new services and organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White River has several organizations that provide limited social services to the community.</li> <li>There have been mixed changes to social services and organizations in the community as some have opened and others have closed due to a lack of government funding. APM Project would bring population in to the community and this population may place demands on existing services and organizations and may create a need for new services and organizations, as well as increased participation and funding to support growth of services and organizations.</li> <li>White River may need assistance to plan, develop and resource the services and organizations needed in light of the APM Project.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Character and Cohesion</b>	<p>Strong sense of community identity</p> <p>Cohesive community</p> <p>Stability of population</p>	Strong sense of pride in community, history and natural environment	<p>Increased youth retention, population growth, and resources to strengthen pride in community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community capitalized on tourism as the hometown of Winnie-the-Pooh.</li> <li>Residents feel the community is friendly, safe, and tight-knit.</li> <li>The APM Project will be compatible with community aspirations, including the desire to see growth and stability.</li> <li>A few residents have expressed uncertainty about the alignment of the APM Project with aspirations associated with Winnie-the-Pooh-themed tourism initiatives</li> <li>The lower level of engagement and interest in development issues by residents adds to uncertainty about alignment of the APM project with community values, and what would be required to successfully implement the Project in White River.</li> <li>White River has a diverse population that includes a relatively large Francophone and Aboriginal population.</li> <li>The APM Project could bring growth and stability.</li> <li>To ensure community character is maintained, White River will need assistance to plan for and accommodate population associated with the APM Project.</li> </ul>
Declining-Negative				
Neutral-Stable				
Increasing-Enhanced-Positive				
Uncertain				

## 5.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

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For the purpose of this analysis, the Natural Environment within a community is understood to include a wide range of natural assets from intangible public goods (e.g., air quality and biodiversity) to resources that are “used” by people (e.g., water, trees, land and wildlife). In this analysis, the specific indicators examined included:

- Parks and Protected Areas; and,
- Natural Areas/Features of Significance.

As would be the case with any large project, natural areas, may be negatively influenced during the construction phase of the project (e.g. noise, dust). While it is expected that effective mitigation and environmental protection measures will be in place to ensure that the overall environmental integrity of the area is maintained, at this point, further studies are required to understand the extent and scale of any possible effects due to changes in the atmospheric, subsurface, aquatic and terrestrial environments during normal construction activity. It is understood at this point in time that no net negative environmental effects are likely during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the used fuel repository itself.

Table 9 summarizes observations with respect to the APM Project for the natural assets of White River.

There are several provincial and national parks, as well as conservation reserves located near White River. The natural environment is a source of pride in the community and is highly valued. The White River Forest 2008-2018 Forest Management Plan governs the use of lands in the surrounding area. Hunting and fishing are abundant in the area. Hunters have the opportunity to seek birds, small game, and large game such as moose.

With the possible introduction of the APM Project and its associated local and regional economic opportunities there is the potential for Increased demand on conservation reserves and parks

Initial studies on the potential environmental effects associated with the Project suggest that the APM Project is unlikely to have any significant effect on the natural environment which makes up the parks and protected areas near the community taking mitigation measures into consideration. In principle, there is the potential that visitation to the area may experience some decline as tourists might choose to avoid the area because of the presence of the facility. It is expected that through working with local communities and relevant authorities and clearly communicating with the public, any effects of the project on tourism can be mitigated. Further study is required to better understand and predict the potential effects of the Project on visitor perception and use of the area.

As would be the case with any large project, natural areas might be affected during the various phases of the Project. Effective mitigation and environmental protection measures will ensure that the overall environmental integrity of the area is maintained. It is understood at this point in time that no significant environmental effects are likely during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the used fuel repository itself.

The Project contains some flexibility with respect to on-site building designs and energy use to be consistent with broad environmental and social values. For example, the ability to use renewable sources of electric power, where feasible, coupled with energy-efficient building designs might limit the overall carbon footprint of the project.

**Table 9: Implications for Natural Environment**

Criteria / Measures	Ideal CWB Condition	Current White River Profile	Possible White River Profile with APM Project	Observations and Implications
<b>NATURAL ENVIRONMENT:</b>				
Natural Areas / Features of Significance	Areas and features are protected and contribute to pride of place	Residents are proud of natural areas and use features for passive and active recreation	Potential for increased demand and use of features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The area surrounding White River is covered by the White River Forest Management Plan 2008 – 2018.</li> <li>Residents and visitors value the recreation opportunities available in the area, including fishing and hunting.</li> <li>The APM Project has the potential to have a negative effect on the area’s natural environment and features of significance; however, it is understood at this point in time that no significant environmental effects are likely during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the used fuel repository itself.</li> </ul>
Parks and Protected Areas	Conservation reserves and parks are supported and maintained and also remain available for use	Protected areas and parks are available for passive and active recreational use	Potential for increased demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The natural environment is valued by residents.</li> <li>There are several provincial and national parks, and conservation reserves near White River.</li> <li>Potential for increased demand on conservation reserves and parks.</li> <li>With proper planning and dialogue, resources would remain protected and increased demand managed.</li> </ul>
Declining-Negative				
Neutral-Stable				
Environment – Integrity Maintained				
Increasing-Enhanced-Positive				
Uncertain				

## 5.6 COMMUNITY WELL-BEING SUMMARY

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Based on the foregoing discussion, the APM Project has potential to be a fit for the community of White River. Table 10 summarizes the overall community well-being implications for White River based on the five asset categories discussed above.

The APM Project would bring population growth and present significant opportunities for employment and economic development. Educational and healthcare services would be enhanced in White River. Increased funding through a wider tax base would provide White River financial resources to fund its infrastructure projects, educational developments, community and recreational facilities and programs and social services and organizations.

There is interest in learning about the APM Project and many residents are supportive. The APM Project will be compatible with White River's aspirations, including the desire to see growth and stability in the community. However, a few residents have expressed uncertainty about alignment of the APM Project with aspirations associated with Winnie-the-Pooh-themed tourism initiatives. White River does not appear to have a history of active community involvement on development issues, and has tended to defer to leadership on such initiatives. The lower level of engagement and interest in development issues by residents adds to uncertainty about alignment of the APM Project with community values, and what would be required to successfully implement the Project in White River.

The introduction of the APM Project to White River would create significant change. Positive changes could include:

- Increased number and diversity of employment and business/commercial opportunities (direct and indirect);
- Population growth due to in-migration of workers;
- Ability to retain youth/young families in the community Increased funding to improve and enhance; municipal services (e.g., infrastructure, education, community/recreational facilities and programs, health /social services and organizations);
- Improved education and training, development of a skilled work force;
- Enhanced self-sufficiency for individuals, families and the community as whole; and
- Improved tax base/municipal revenues.

Potential negative effects could include:

- Increased demands on some existing infrastructure and services (e.g., housing, water and waste water systems) along with additional resources and funding to support expansion of infrastructure and services; and
- Potential effects on visitor perception and use of the area - Further study is required for better understanding

Effective mitigation and environmental protection measures will ensure that the overall environmental integrity of the area is maintained. It is understood at this point in time that no significant environmental effects are likely during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the used fuel repository itself.

**Table 10: Overall Community Well-Being Implications**

Criteria / Measures	Ideal CWB Condition	Current White River Profile	Possible White River Profile with APM Project	Observations
<b>OVERALL CWB IMPLICATIONS:</b>				
<b>Human Assets</b>	Population growth occurs and youth are retained in the community	Declining	Enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White River’s 2011 population is decreasing and aging with limited opportunities to attract a working population.</li> <li>APM Project would bring population growth, which is a key priority and aspiration for the community.</li> <li>Youth would be retained through increased employment opportunities and new residents would be attracted to the area.</li> <li>Improved education and training, development of a skilled work force</li> <li>Educational and healthcare resources would be enhanced.</li> </ul>
<b>Economic Assets</b>	Employment opportunities are available and tax base increases to fund community services and facilities	Negative	Enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is little business diversification occurring in the community; however, there is recent growth in mining and forestry, and a local hydroelectric project is under construction. The full impact of this activity over the long-term is not yet known.</li> <li>A few residents have expressed uncertainty about the alignment of the APM Project with community aspirations related to Winnie-the-Pooh-themed tourism initiatives,</li> <li>There will be increased employment opportunities and a more diverse range of jobs.</li> <li>Increased funding through a wider tax base would provide the financial resources for White River to fund its infrastructure projects, education, community and recreational facilities and programs and health/social services and organizations.</li> <li>The increased jobs from the APM Project would be the catalyst for White River to enhance its community well-being.</li> <li>There is the potential for niche markets associated with the APM Project to increase tourism; further study is required to better understand the potential effects on visitor perception and use of the area.</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure Assets</b>	Infrastructure is maintained or improved to meet the needs of the community	Neutral	Enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While housing in White River is relatively inexpensive, prices are beginning to rise. There are few homes available for purchase or to rent.</li> <li>Facilities such as the waste treatment systems are costly to operate and maintain.</li> <li>The APM Project, while placing increased demands on some of the infrastructure and services, would, overall, provide increased funding to improve and enhance existing services.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Assets</b>	Opportunities exist for recreation and social networking. Community is cohesive, and community character is enhanced	Negative	Enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community would see benefit to its Social Assets through increased participation and funding to its recreational facilities and programs, as well as its social services and organizations.</li> <li>Initial indications are that the APM Project may be compatible with community aspirations, including the desire to see growth and stability. However, a few residents have expressed uncertainty about the alignment of the APM Project with community aspirations related to Winnie-the-Pooh-themed tourism initiatives, and the lower level of engagement and interest by residents adds to uncertainty about the alignment of the APM Project with community values, and what would be required to successfully implement the Project in White River.</li> </ul>
<b>Natural Environment</b>	Natural areas, parks and conservation reserves are preserved and maintained for use and enjoyment	Maintained	Maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective mitigation and environmental protection measures will ensure that the overall environmental integrity of the area is maintained.</li> <li>It is understood at this point in time that no significant environmental effects are likely during the construction and operation phase of the used fuel repository itself.</li> </ul>

Legend	
Declining – Negative	
Neutral – Stable	
Environment – Integrity Maintained	
Increasing – Enhanced – Positive	
Uncertain	



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## 6.0 CRITERIA TO ASSESS FACTORS BEYOND SAFETY - SUMMARY

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The previous discussion has taken a holistic approach to the assessment, taking into account the aspirations of the community and the implications of the Project for community well-being. The NWMO has acknowledged that the process of assessment of community well-being needs to be collaborative and reflective of the community. Before initiating the siting process, and beginning to engage interested communities in the assessment process to understand their aspirations, the NWMO identified five evaluation factors, which, at a minimum would need to be addressed.<sup>11</sup>

Table 11 draws on information outlined in the previous discussion to understand the potential to foster well-being in White River against these original factors. It summarizes preliminary findings about the implications of the APM Project, were it to be implemented in the community, on various factors of well-being. For many evaluation factors, four measures are used: maintained, enhanced, diminished or uncertain. For other evaluation factors, two measures are used: Yes, or No. The overall conclusion using these evaluation factors and the understanding that has emerged to date is consistent with that outlined in the previous sections.

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<sup>11</sup> NWMO. 2010. *Moving Forward Together: Process for Selecting a Site for Canada's Deep Geological Repository for Used Nuclear Fuel*. Available online at: <http://www.nwmo.ca/sitingprocess>.

**Table 11: Summary Table of Criteria to Assess Factors Beyond Safety – White River**

Factors Beyond Safety	Evaluation Factors to be Considered	Potential Effect of APM Project	Discussion Based on Preliminary Assessment
Potential social, economic and cultural effects during the implementation phase of the project, including factors identified by Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge <sup>12</sup>	Health and safety of residents and the community	Maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a strong safety case but the community wants to learn more about safety and health considerations to strengthen their confidence in the safety of the Project.</li> </ul>
	Sustainable built environments	Enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community infrastructure and built fabric would be enhanced through project activities and investments in the community.</li> </ul>
	Sustainable natural environments	Maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective mitigation and environmental protection measures would ensure that the overall environmental integrity of the area is maintained.</li> <li>It is understood at this point in time that no significant environmental effects are likely during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the used fuel repository.</li> </ul>
	Local and regional economy and employment	Enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant employment and population growth would occur in White River and surrounding communities – hundreds of new jobs might be created in White River.</li> <li>With these jobs comes the potential to significantly increase the current population of White River.</li> <li>New opportunities would be created for local businesses to serve the Project and growing population.</li> </ul>
	Community administration and decision-making processes	Uncertain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although a relatively small community, the White River Economic Development Committee has demonstrated success with the White River Forest Products public /private partnership</li> <li>Some local leadership has demonstrated interest in the Project while for others, there are uncertainties surrounding the suitability of the Project.</li> <li>There has been limited participation by community members in engagement to date, which may influence the community’s ability to make informed and effective decisions about the Project.</li> <li>Going forward it is expected that local leadership would engage the community in decision-making with respect to the APM Project.</li> </ul>
	Balanced growth and healthy, livable communities	Uncertain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The APM Project generally appears to be a fit with primary community goals and aspirations for economic development and population growth.</li> <li>A few residents have expressed uncertainty about the alignment of the APM Project with community aspirations related to Winnie-the-Pooh-themed tourism initiatives, and the lower level of engagement and interest by residents adds to uncertainty about the alignment of the APM Project with community values, and what would be required to successfully implement the Project in White River.</li> </ul>
Potential for enhancement of the community’s and region’s <sup>13</sup> long term sustainability through implementation of the project, including factors identified by Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge	Health and safety of residents and the community	Maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a strong safety case; however, engagement of surrounding communities is at a preliminary stage and further dialogue will be required to understand and address questions and concerns about safety and health considerations related to the repository and transportation of used nuclear fuel.</li> </ul>
	Sustainable built environments	Enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure and built fabric will be enhanced through project activities and investments in the community and surrounding areas.</li> </ul>
	Sustainable natural environments	Maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some natural areas may be affected during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Project.</li> <li>Effective mitigation and environmental protection measures will be required to ensure that the overall environmental integrity of the area is maintained.</li> </ul>
	Local and regional economy and employment	Enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substantial employment and economic development opportunities would extend to the surrounding region.</li> </ul>
	Community administration and decision-making processes	Maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement of surrounding communities has been initiated and is coordinated and ongoing.</li> <li>Surrounding communities participating in NWMO’s ‘Learn More’ process include Hornepayne, Manitouwadge and Schreiber.</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> As noted in S. 8 of the previous Step 1 CWBA reports, traditional knowledge work has not occurred or is very preliminary at this stage – further engagement and input is required.

<sup>13</sup> The neighbouring communities of Hornepayne and Manitouwadge are involved in the ‘Learn More’ process; Wawa was involved until Fall 2013.

Factors Beyond Safety	Evaluation Factors to be Considered	Potential Effect of APM Project	Discussion Based on Preliminary Assessment
	Balanced growth and healthy, livable communities	Enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engagement of surrounding communities has been initiated and is coordinated and ongoing.</li> <li>▪ Surrounding area communities are collectively seeking economic development and growth in the region; several participating in Learn More.</li> <li>▪ The APM Project generally appears to be in alignment with these aspirations.</li> </ul>
Potential to avoid ecologically sensitive areas and locally significant features, including factors identified by Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge	Ability to avoid ecologically sensitive areas and locally significant features	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The area contains potentially suitable sites for the project thus providing flexibility in selecting specific sites that can avoid ecologically sensitive areas and local significant features.</li> </ul>
Potential for physical and social infrastructure to adapt to changes resulting from the project	Potential for physical infrastructure to be adapted to implement the project	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ White River and the surrounding areas are rail and highway accessible, have some limited social and economic support services.</li> <li>▪ White River will need a lot of capacity building and support to absorb the anticipated growth in population and economic activity.</li> <li>▪ Investments would be required to accommodate growth and special project needs.</li> </ul>
	Potential for social infrastructure to be adapted to implement the project	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The community of White River has limited community capacity and social infrastructure in place to plan and adapt to changes resulting from the Project.</li> <li>▪ The NWMO would have to work with the community and social service providers to plan and implement needed measures</li> </ul>
	The NWMO resources required to put in place physical and social infrastructure needed to support the project	To Be Determined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ White River would require a high level of assistance in terms of planning, and human and financial resources.</li> <li>▪ Further studies will be required to explore the specifics of these requirements.</li> </ul>

Factors Beyond Safety	Evaluation Factors to be Considered	Potential Effect of APM Project	Discussion Based on Preliminary Assessment
<p>Potential to avoid or minimize effects of the transportation of used nuclear fuel from existing storage facilities to the repository site</p>	<p>The availability of transportation routes (road, rail, water) and the adequacy of associated infrastructure and potential to put such routes in place</p>	<p>To Be Determined</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ White River is on the TransCanada Highway 17 and accessible from Highway 11 via Highway 631.</li> <li>▪ White River is located on the CPR freight line.</li> <li>▪ The community and region have access to road and rail.</li> <li>▪ Project transportation will need to address community, logistical and regulatory matters across multiple provinces and multiple jurisdictions including: Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick.</li> <li>▪ Engagement of surrounding communities will be required to help build understanding and address questions and concerns.</li> </ul>
	<p>The availability of suitable safe connections and intermodal transfer points, if required, and potential to put them in place</p>	<p>To Be Determined</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engagement of surrounding communities and those on potential transportation routes is at a preliminary stage and further dialogue will be required to help build understanding and address questions and concerns.</li> </ul>
	<p>The NWMO resources (fuel, people) and associated carbon footprint required to transport used fuel to the site</p>	<p>1,740 tonnes of equivalent carbon dioxide emission is expected to be produced per year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All-road transport of 4.6 million fuel bundles from the interim storage sites to an APM facility near White River would produce approximately 1,740 tonnes of equivalent carbon dioxide emissions per year.</li> <li>▪ Transport by mostly rail mode would produce approximately 890 tonnes of equivalent carbon dioxide emissions per year.</li> </ul>
	<p>The potential for effects on communities along the transportation routes and at intermodal transfer points</p>	<p>To Be Determined</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is a robust technical safety case for the safe and secure transport of used nuclear fuel. However, engagement of surrounding communities and those on potential transportation routes is at a preliminary stage and further dialogue would be required to understand and address questions and concerns.</li> </ul>

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## 7.0 RELATIONSHIP BUILDING AND ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

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### 7.1 OVERVIEW OF ENGAGEMENT

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NWMO has engaged with White River leadership, community members, leaders in surrounding communities and First Nations/Aboriginal organizations through a variety of means, including:

- Several community open houses;
- Regular attendance at the Community Liaison Committee meetings;
- Both informal and structured interviews with community members;
- Facilitating the Community Liaison Committee web page and newsletters;
- Preparation of written materials;
- Informal tours and visits with local residents;
- Presentation to the White River Harmony Seniors Club;
- 'Ask the NWMO' columns in regional newspapers;
- Meetings/discussions with nearby First Nations and Métis Organizations;
- Attendance at regional meetings, conferences (e.g., Ontario West Municipal Conference, Good Roads Conference, and NOMA Conference);
- NWMO Used Fuel Transportation Exhibit (June 2014); and
- Nuclear waste management facility tours.

Initial discussions with a cross-section of community leaders, briefings and conversations with community members, and conversations with residents during open houses suggest there is some interest in the community to continue to learn about the Project and consider hosting the Project in the area. Discussions were held with:

1. Local political leaders (e.g., Mayor and Councillors);
2. Members of the Nuclear Waste Community Liaison Committee;
3. Local business owners/operators;
4. Local service providers (e.g. emergency services, social services, education);
5. Leaders in surrounding communities; and
6. Residents.

Based on these discussions, there appears to be potential in the local community to sustain interest. There also appears to be interest to continue and move forward with the siting process. There is misinformation about the APM Project in White River.

## 7.2 SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND QUESTIONS RAISED

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### 7.2.1 KEY CHALLENGES, ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The key challenges for White River, as identified through the various engagement activities, is to grow the population and create community and economic growth for residents. The reopening of the White River Forest Products Mill (summer/fall 2013) has brought back approximately 100 jobs to the community. Mine exploration activities are also going on north of town at the Harte Gold mining property, and the Pic Moberg First Nation hydroelectric dam project has also begun construction (fall 2013). Approximately 200 workers will be employed during this two year construction phase. A possible challenge for White River is thought to be housing availability as the Mill continues operating over the longer term; it is anticipated that people will begin relocating/moving back to White River.

Economic growth in White River is necessary to address some of their most important challenges, such as:

- A declining population;
- A lack of retail and commercial/industrial services;
- Decreasing social and recreational programs;
- A lack of specialized medical services;
- Out-migration of youth in search of education and economic opportunities;
- Out-migration of the workforce in search of economic opportunities;
- Decreased tourism; and,
- Constrained municipal financial circumstances.

White River residents have identified a desire to rejuvenate its tourism industry. In recent years, tourism in White River has been in a general state of decline for various reasons – the most notable being a lack of tourist activities/attraction in town to entice people off the Highway. There is a Winnie-the-Pooh statue adjacent the Tourist Information Centre located on Highway 17; and a Winnie-the-Pooh museum located in the commercial area located off the Highway. Most tourism comes from people passing through town; generally they do not stay in town long or venture off the Highway. There is also a decrease in American clientele who come to the area seasonally for hunting and fishing as a result of recent market trends and global economic occurrences. While tourism does play a role in the local economy, it will not be an answer to ensuring the community's long-term sustainability.

The APM Project, however, is recognized as a potential means to ensure the long-term viability of White River. This can be accomplished by diversifying the town's dependency on the White River Forest Products Mill and other resource-based industries such as forestry and mining in the region.

## 7.2.2 SUMMARY OF KEY INTERESTS/QUESTIONS

Throughout the various engagement activities, interests and questions expressed by Community Liaison Committee members and community members were documented. In White River, the majority of people engaged were perceived to be supportive of the APM Project and were interested in learning more. The key interests expressed included the following:

- Economic challenges in the community;
- Health, safety, and environmental risk;
- Transportation;
- Preservation of the natural environment (e.g. clean air, hunting, fishing); and,
- Community Engagement and the NWMO Process.

### **Economic Challenges in the Community**

White River CLC discussions and community interviews identified several economic development issues in White River which included:

- Reduced taxation revenues/Tax debt problems;
- Access to services;
- Funding of programs and services;
- Lack of local employment opportunities;
- Ability to attract new businesses/entrepreneurs; and,
- Abandoned/derelict residential properties.

White River experienced a loss of economic opportunities with the closure of the White River Forest Products Mill in 2007. However, with the recent re-commissioning of the Mill and the potential for new regional mining operations and the APM Project, such projects can provide a means to long-term and diversified economic sustainability for the community.

Questions on the APM Project focused on the types of employment opportunities that would be available to residents and the number of jobs/workers required for different project/facility phases. Training and education for jobs and timelines for the APM Project's construction and operation phases were also discussed by community members.

### **Health, Safety, and Environmental Risk**

Given the nature of the waste (i.e., used nuclear fuel) questions arose regarding health and environmental risks associated to the APM Project and facility location. Contamination of lakes and groundwater and the detrimental effect that would have on natural resources (i.e., forests and wildlife), and hunting and fishing practices, is a major concern for residents.

Residents emphasized that safety of the APM Project is a source of concern for many White River residents. There is misinformation about the safety of the APM Project. Concerns are also focused on the fear of the unknown associated with nuclear materials and their safety, which may be hindering some public acceptance of the APM Project.

**Transportation**

To date, transportation questions and concerns have focused on how nuclear fuel materials would be transported (i.e., rail, boat, or truck) to the APM facility. Transportation safety concerns have also been expressed by some residents.

**Preservation of the Natural Environment**

Several residents commented that the natural environment and clean air are defining qualities that the people of White River enjoy. Many people in White River enjoy outdoor recreation activities such as hunting, and fishing.

**Community Engagement and the NWMO Process**

Several residents engaged have suggested that people are misinformed about the APM Project. Providing these people with the proper information and opportunities to learn more about the Project is key. It has also been expressed that some people in town who are against the Project are also not interested in learning more; and, these people will be hard to reach through the planned engagement activities. Interest has been expressed to have information materials or engagement methods that address the needs of community members, for example: plain-language, video/graphics, and displays or models. Transportation options for senior citizens also need to be provided to community events.

Many people engaged to date have been uninformed/misinformed about the 9 Steps of the APM process; however, there is keen interest expressed by some residents about Project timelines (construction, operation, etc.), as well as number of jobs.

**7.2.3 ONGOING ENGAGEMENT**

At this stage in the process, the primary focus of engagement in White River has been on conversations with community leaders, municipal staff, town councillors, CLC members, and other community residents; and, a presentation at the Harmony Seniors Club. Moving forward, engagement activities will continue throughout the community and surrounding area with emphasis on safety, transportation, the natural environment and economic development concerns.

It will also be important to expand and continue engagement with local and area Aboriginal leaders and organizations near White River to keep them up-to-date on APM Project details and obtain their views on the APM Project.

NWMO will continue dialogue with White River residents, sharing information on the Learn More process, the APM Project, transportation, and other details (e.g., timeframe for project phases, potential economic opportunities). Learning will continue via the CLC newsletter and webpage, and community engagement activities.



Efforts to contact and engage with regional communities and groups should continue to be pursued going forward. It will be important to engage with the Pic Mobert First Nation due to their proximity and interconnectedness with White River.

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## 8.0 COMMUNITY WELL-BEING SUMMARY FINDINGS

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At the outset of the site selection process, the NWMO framed four key questions respectively addressing safety, the well-being of the community, the well-being of surrounding area communities and the potential to foster sustained interest in exploring this project through subsequent steps in the site selection process.<sup>14</sup> The discussion which follows addresses and elaborates on a subset of these questions related to community well-being in the context of White River.

The preceding sections have looked at implementation of the APM Project in White River and the implications this might have on community well-being. Additionally, key issues and concerns identified through engagement activities have been highlighted. Through desktop research, dialogues with community members and leaders and ongoing analysis, it is understood that White River has interest in further exploration of potentially hosting the APM Project to realize growth and development opportunities within the community and surrounding areas.

The community of White River understands that this siting process, in partnership with the NWMO, will assist their community over time to get the information they require to reflect upon their willingness to continue in the site selection process and to decide whether or not they are interested in continuing to the next phase of studies.

There is potential for sustained interest in the local community. There appears to be community leadership support for learning more about the APM Project and some members of the community have expressed interest in learning about APM.

There is high potential for sustained interest in the surrounding communities. Nearby communities such as Manitouwadge and Hornepayne are all in various stages/phases of the NWMO Process. Through discussions with groups such as the Northeast Superior Mayors Group and others, White River has taken steps to engage its neighbours. White River is also part of the Nawiinginokiima Forest Management Corporation, which is in partnership with other nearby municipalities (Manitouwadge, Hornepayne, Marathon) and the Aboriginal communities (Ojibways of the Pic River First Nation, Pic Moberg First Nation and the Hornepayne Aboriginal community). Further discussions will be required to gain an understanding of the potential interest in surrounding communities.

There is potential for the APM Project to foster well-being in White River. The APM Project will be compatible with community aspirations, including the desire to see growth and stability. However, a small number of residents have expressed uncertainty about the alignment of the APM Project with community aspirations regarding tourism and the natural environment.

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<sup>14</sup> NWMO. November 2011. *Preliminary Assessment of Potential Suitability – Feasibility Studies*. Draft for Discussion with Communities Involved in the Site Selection Process.

There is potential for the APM Project to foster well-being in surrounding communities. Preliminary discussions with residents and officials from surrounding communities have revealed an interest in the potential economic benefits offered by the project. A number of surrounding communities (e.g., Manitouwadge, Hornepayne, and Schreiber) are in the NWMO Process. At this time, there is a need for further understanding from surrounding First Nation and Métis communities regarding the potential for the APM Project to align with their community aspirations.

There are some uncertainties associated with the analysis due to the preliminary nature of the work at this stage.

These uncertainties and challenges include:

1. Specific land areas that are socially acceptable would need to be identified:
  - a. Community input is required to identify areas that they wish to reserve for other uses or preservation. The remaining areas must overlap with potentially suitable siting areas identified through scientific and technical studies.
  - b. Further engagement with potentially affected communities is required, including Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge holders in the area, to understand the additional factors that will need to be considered in identifying and assessing the suitability of specific potential sites. The NWMO has stated that they acknowledge, respect and honour that Aboriginal peoples - Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada - have unique status and rights as recognized and affirmed in s.35 of the Constitution Act (1982). The NWMO is committed to respecting the Aboriginal rights and treaties of Aboriginal peoples.<sup>15</sup>
2. Project implementation (including engineering, logistics and/or community well-being) must align with specific community aspirations:
  - a. An acceptable community and regional project implementation plan must be identified which aligns ultimate project configuration with community expectations.
  - b. Effective project planning at a broader level, involving the surrounding communities and potentially affected people, will be important in successful implementation of the project.
3. Interest in the community for further learning about the project needs to be developed and sustained:
  - a. The site selection process spans several years and interest and conversation in the community and area needs to be developed and sustained throughout this process.
  - b. The potential effects of the project on the community and area would be substantial and the community will need support to further explore their interest and take an active role in discussions of how the project should be implemented.

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<sup>15</sup> NWMO. 2014. *NWMO Aboriginal Policy*.

- c. Opposition groups may actively seek to influence community decision-making and community leaders will need to respond to these pressures. White River will require support to prepare for the next phases of the siting process if they are to proceed.
4. Transportation routes and mode(s) need to be designed and configured taking into account social values.
  - a. Transportation will be spatially extensive from current interim storage sites to the repository. Regulatory matters along routes in several Provinces including, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario, would need to be addressed. Social questions and concerns would also need to be heard and taken into account.
5. Environmental and Safety evaluations need to be aligned with community input.
  - a. This requires regard for input from the community and surrounding communities.
  - b. This requires engagement by the NWMO and input from the host community and surrounding communities. This may require capacity building to enable this input, which could include Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge.
  - c. Input from transportation route communities will also need to be incorporated.

In summary, the Township of White River has some support to learn more about becoming a willing host to the APM Project, but some are opposed. Moreover, recognizing the strong inter-community ties in White River and the surrounding communities, some communities will be supportive in participating in a wider regional discussion about hosting the APM Project.

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## 9.0 REFERENCES

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