NUCLEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION
SOCIÉTÉ DE GESTION DES DÉCHETS NUCLÉAIRES

Community Well-Being Assessment

TOWN OF BLIND RIVER, ONTARIO

APM-REP-06144-0096

DECEMBER 2014

This report has been prepared under contract to the NWMO. The report has been reviewed by the NWMO, but the views and conclusions are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the NWMO.

All copyright and intellectual property rights belong to the NWMO.

For more information, please contact:
Nuclear Waste Management Organization
22 St. Clair Avenue East, Sixth Floor
Toronto, Ontario M4T 2S3 Canada
Tel 416.934.9814
Toll Free 1.866.249.6966
Email contactus@nwmo.ca
www.nwmo.ca



Preliminary Community Well-Being Assessment: BLIND RIVER, ON

December 22, 2014

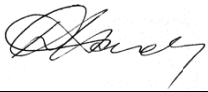
HARDY STEVENSON AND ASSOCIATES

PRELIMINARY COMMUNITY WELL-BEING ASSESSMENT

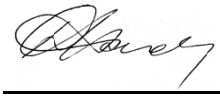
Consultants:

Signature 

Prepared by Danya Braun

Signature 

Reviewed by Dave Hardy

Signature 

Approved by Dave Hardy

Document History

Title:	Community Well-Being Assessment –Blind River Analysis		
Revision:	0	**Date:**	May 26, 2014
Prepared By:	Danya Braun and Dave Hardy		
Approved By:	Dave Hardy		
Revision:	1	**Date:**	July 30, 2014
Prepared By:	Danya Braun and Dave Hardy		
Approved By:	Dave Hardy		
Revision:	2	**Date:**	September 12, 2014
Prepared By:	Danya Braun and Dave Hardy		
Approved By:	Dave Hardy		
Revision:	3	**Date:**	October 2, 2014
Prepared By:	Danya Braun and Dave Hardy		
Approved By:	Dave Hardy		
Revision:	4	**Date:**	December 22, 2014
Prepared By:	Danya Braun and Dave Hardy		
Approved By:	Dave Hardy		

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction 1

2.0 The APM Project 4

3.0 Values and Aspirations of Blind River 6

4.0 Summary of Community Assets – Key Issues, Aspirations, Capabilities and Capacities 9

5.0 Community Well-Being Assessment 13

5.1 Implications for Human Assets in Blind River 13

5.2 Implications for Economic Assets in Blind River 18

5.3 Implications for Infrastructure in Blind River 25

5.4 Implications for Social Assets in Blind River 29

5.5 Implications for Natural Assets in Blind River 33

5.6 Community Well-Being Summary 36

6.0 Criteria to Assess Factors, Beyond Safety - Summary 39

7.0 Relationship Building and Engagement Summary 45

7.1 Overview of Engagement 45

8.2 Summary of Issues and Questions Raised 46

8.2.1 Key Challenges, Issues and Comments 46

8.2.2 Summary of Key Interests/Questions 46

8.2.3 Ongoing Engagement 48

8.0 Key Questions in the Site Selection Process - Summary 49

9.0 References 52

1.0 Introduction

This Community Well-Being Assessment Report aims to provide a summary of the expected influences that the Adaptive Phased Management (APM) Project will have on the overall community well-being of the Town of Blind River. The Town is located in Algoma District on the North Channel of Lake Huron along Trans-Canada Highway 17, approximately 144 km east of Sault Ste. Marie and approximately 164 km west of Sudbury. It is also located in proximity to the Mississauga First Nation.

The Report answers fundamental questions intended to assist the NWMO and the community in understanding the suitability of Blind 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.

Work has been completed to understand the overall community profile of Blind River, and also to understand and summarize the ways in which the APM Project might affect the community and the surrounding areas. In 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 a visioning exercise, engagement activities, community visits and tours, 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 to understand the potential implications of the APM Project on 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 APM 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[1]:

[1] NWMO, 2010. Moving Forward Together: Process for Selecting a Site for Canada's Deep Geological Repository for Used Nuclear Fuel.

- Potential social, economic and cultural effects during the implementation phase of the APM Project;
- Potential for enhancement of the community's and the region's long-term sustainability through implementation of the APM 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 the 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 APM Project, understanding how the community may be affected were the APM Project to be implemented in the area, and identifying opportunities to leverage the APM 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 project.

The framework is designed to encourage exploration of the APM 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 APM 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 implementing 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 the 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 the NWMO at the outset of the site selection process.

Ultimately, the potential effect of the APM 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 effects on well-being and judgements about the magnitude of these effects. 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 still in early stages of design. Thus there remains flexibility in the nature and scope of its implementation. This flexibility 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 surrounds. In doing so, some basic assumptions are required 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 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[2]. 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: APM Job Estimate for Blind River[3]

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

2. Realization of employment benefits 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.

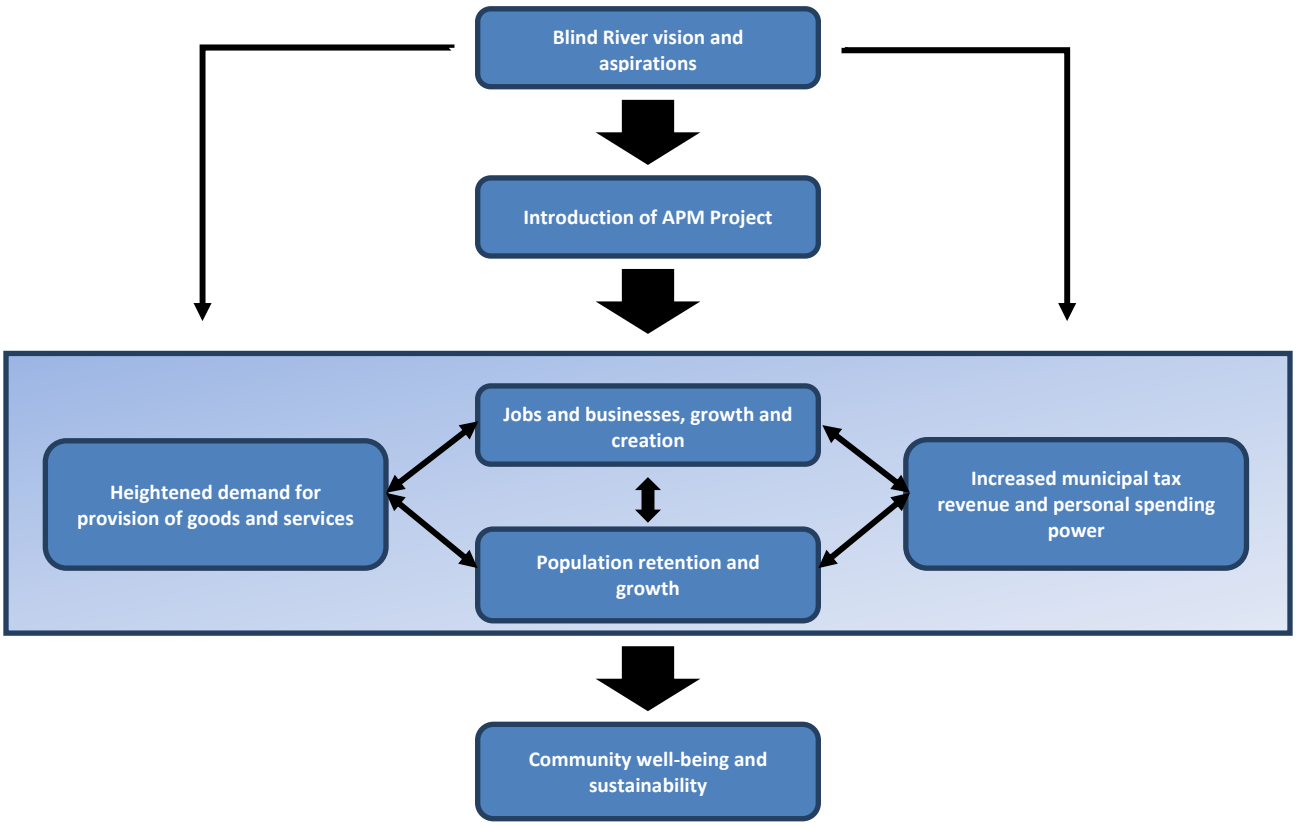
[2] NWMO, 2012. Description of Canada's Repository for Used Nuclear Fuel and Centre of Expertise.
[3] NWMO, 2012. Description of Canada's Repository for Used Nuclear Fuel and Centre of Expertise. Pg 33

The APM 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 illustration purposes only, employment opportunities could be in the order of hundreds of new jobs (direct, indirect and induced) within the local area[4]. 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 that will positively contribute to the overall well-being of the area.

Figure 1 provides a graphical representation of the direct and indirect effects that may result from the siting of the APM Project. The figure illustrates how the project could be the impetus for growth in population, business activity and municipal finances.

Figure 1: Direct and Indirect Results of the APM Project



[4] AECOM, 2010. A Preliminary Assessment of Illustrative Generic Community Economic Benefits from Hosting the APM Project.

3.0 Values and Aspirations of Blind River

The Town of Blind River has expressed explicit values, aspirations and desires for its community. These have been documented in the Blind River Community Profile (based on statistical and interview data) and various other community reports. Key themes are summarized in this section. The preliminary assessment, which is the topic of this report, is measured against these values and aspirations:

1. **Economic Development:** Blind River would like to identify a diverse range of economic opportunities and achieve economic diversification, assist entrepreneurs, and attract and develop industries that provide stable and well-paying jobs. Any economic development should maintain the integrity of the pristine natural environment and respect French, English and Aboriginal and Métis culture within Blind River and its surrounding area.

2. **Retail and Facility Development:** Blind River would like to support its retail sector and encourage residents to spend locally. It would like to encourage more support for retail shopping outlets and attract large retail businesses to the community. In addition, the Town sees itself as the centre for arts and cultural development, services and facilities in the area.

3. **Provide Employment Opportunities:** Blind River would like to provide meaningful and equitable employment opportunities for local residents. It would like to encourage the younger population to live and work in the community.

These aforementioned values and aspirations are aligned with the community vision that was developed for the 1992 Strategic Plan entitled 'Our Town: Our Future'[5]. The Town's Mission Statement was developed:

> *"Blind River is a uniquely located, friendly, multicultural community, committed to developing its regional role through progressive and responsible management. The community vision is to:*
>
> - *Pursue well planned, moderate growth in cooperation with neighbouring municipalities and other governments;*
> - *Create a climate which promotes investment and provide local employment opportunities;*
> - *Promote its natural beauty and clean environment while ensuring their protection;*
> - *Responsibly manage its municipal infrastructure;*
> - *Foster a welcoming sense of community; and*
> - *Manage its resources in a fiscally responsible and effective manner."*

This Vision Statement was incorporated into the 2006 Official Plan. However, the Official Plan expands upon the Town of Blind River's vision by stating that:

[5] Town of Blind River, 1992. (Strategic Plan) Our Town: Our Future.

> *"Blind River sees a unique community located midway between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie which capitalizes on its geographic location on the north shore of Lake Huron and its pristine natural areas. The Town is proud of its small Town atmosphere and the ability of its French, English, and Native peoples to live and work together. This Plan intends to protect these strengths and also build on the Town's role as a regional centre for shopping, educational, health, social, and recreational activities. In addition, the Town sees itself as the centre for arts and cultural development, services and facilities in the area. The Town will build on its partnerships with local arts and cultural organizations and individuals and the Mississauga First Nation to become the artistic and cultural destination for the north shore of Lake Huron and beyond.*
>
> *The waterfront on Lake Huron and the Blind River, and the many smaller lakes and Provincial Parks within the new Town, are amenities to be enjoyed by residents and visitors to the municipality. Trail systems within the Town and connecting to the Town provide major recreational opportunities for Blind River. This Official Plan will ensure that Blind River's waterfront and open spaces are maintained and developed as important and strategic community assets"* [6].

The Official Plan also states:

> "*Polices related to design are an important component to the Plan. Blind River has been interested in developing and maintaining a consistent theme to the entrances to the Town, its parks and trail systems, and its commercial areas for some time. The Plan recognizes the importance of design issues and design control.*
>
> *The [2006] Official Plan assumes that the high quality of life now enjoyed by the Town's residents can be maintained and enhanced if Blind River's existing strengths and attributes can be promoted and developed. It is the intent of this Plan to provide Council with a set of policies to manage future growth and change while protecting Blind River's unique character, natural heritage features and ensuring its continued economic vitality"* [7].

The longevity of its Vision Statement, based upon its reaffirmation and use as a guiding vision in its 2006 Official Plan, indicates that the Town of Blind River has a very strong and proud sense of self. In 2010 Blind River commissioned the completion of a Community Economic Development Strategy. The Economic Development Strategy provides an action plan to stimulate growth and diversify the local economy with the overall outcome of increasing economic sustainability[8]. The Plan has four goals: creating a sustainable and enabling environment, supporting existing businesses for growth and community revitalization, encouraging new economic development activity, and fostering a healthy, effective and well-functioning corporation. The Plan includes specific actions related to five proposed

[6] Town of Blind River, 2006. Blind River Official Plan.
[7] Town of Blind River, 2006. Blind River Official Plan.
[8] Town of Blind River, 2013. Community Economic Development Strategy.

growth areas: marine tourism, destination tourism, filling the industrial park, Retirement Living and supporting existing businesses[9].

[9] Town of Blind River, 2013. Community Economic Development Strategy.

4.0 Summary of Community Assets – Key Issues, Aspirations, Capabilities and Capacities

As described in the Blind River Community Profile, Blind River has several priorities and key issues, 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 or 'lenses':

- **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 resources drawn 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 summarizes the priorities and key issues as understood through desktop research, review of municipal documentation and discussions with community leaders and residents. Table 3 sets out the aspirations of the community that were articulated by community leaders and representatives. Table 4 describes some of Blind 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 the preliminary assessment of community well-being and the potential implications of the APM Project.

Table 2: Summary of Priorities and Key Issues

Asset Category	Overall Priorities and Key Issues
Human	Key issues facing the Town of Blind River include the need to grow and diversify the local economy, as well as to retain and attract younger workers and families. In terms of mobility status, few people are moving in or out of the community. People are content with their current residences and there is a sense of permanence in the community. Expanding local educational and professional development opportunities is a priority.
Economic	Economic key priorities for the Town of Blind River are economic diversification, achieving economic growth and leveraging its natural setting to attract visitors and tourists interested in outdoor recreation. Priorities and issues in relation to economic assets in particular include strengthening its labour force, employment opportunities, retaining existing business and attracting new businesses. There is a desire to build on the Town's role as a regional centre for shopping, educational, health, social, and recreational activities. With a location on the shore of Lake Huron and an abundance of natural leisure opportunities such as boating, hiking, hunting, fishing and snowmobiling, the ability to attract visitors from both Ontario and the United States presents a significant economic opportunity. The Town of Blind River is well served by a number of economic development agencies that seek to improve and expand business in the area and enable residents to find quality employment and services within their community.
Infrastructure	The Town of Blind River envisions commercial, industrial and residential land expansion and is prepared for growth. The priorities include maintaining and upgrading existing infrastructure to ensure infrastructure life is extended and that services are efficient and safe. There is a mandatory land use legislative and regulatory system in place (e.g. Official Plan) with the required resources for administration. Water, waste water and waste management services are in place and require normal maintenance and periodic upgrading. Compared to other rural centres, The Town of Blind River has a range of housing types and both ownership and rental accommodations.
Social	Blind River has a mix of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents, as well as a strong Francophone community. The Town of Blind River has good social and seniors programs in place with some need for expanded youth services. If the population increases, day care, social services, youth services and seniors housing will need to expand. The Town sees itself as the centre for arts and cultural development, services and facilities in the area. The Town wishes to build on its partnerships with local arts and cultural organizations and individuals and the Mississauga First Nation to become the artistic and cultural destination for the north shore of Lake Huron and beyond.
Natural Environment	In regards to natural assets, the central priority of residents is to preserve and protect their local environment. With a significant portion of the Town of Blind River's economy based on wilderness recreation and tourism, ensuring the continued viability of local forests and watersheds is an important concern.

Table 3: Summary of Community Aspirations

Asset Category	Overall Community Aspirations
Human	Educational facilities in the Town of Blind River are capable of providing special education and French immersion schooling. There are online training programs available, however, there are no colleges in the Town of Blind River and students have to go to larger regional centres. A desire has been expressed by residents to attract post-secondary programs to the area, including both universities and college trade schools. The goal is to ensure that a variety of local opportunities exist for residents in all stages of life: from youth to working adults to retirees.
Economic	The Town of Blind River aspires to increase the diversity of local employment opportunities. While support for large scale economic growth exists, there is also a strong desire to ensure that the Town of Blind River's natural heritage and beauty are preserved in order to maintain its status as a tourist and outdoor recreation destination. There is a desire to attract employers and innovative businesses that can provide well-paying, secure employment for young people and families. In order remain economically viable for the long-term, the Town of Blind River aspires to expand the number of local opportunities for work and find ways to retain local residents, rather than have them migrate to larger cities such as Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, and southern Ontario. The Town of Blind River aspires to be a complete community with economic stability and solid prospects for future growth.
Infrastructure	The Town of Blind River aspires to have adequate services to support growth and development. They want to provide direction, but also have adequate controls on new industrial, commercial and residential development. The Town of Blind River recognizes that growth needs to occur responsibly, particularly as it pertains to financing new infrastructure.
Social	The Town of Blind River aspires to have a high standard of living supported by an arts, sports, outdoor activities, tourism and cultural scene. Blind River values volunteerism and encourages all members of their community to become involved to support the quality of life that all residents enjoy.
Natural Environment	The Town of Blind River values the intrinsic nature of their setting within northern Ontario. The Town of Blind River has rich natural heritage resources and aspires to strike a balance between preservation and development that will support the viability of the Town of Blind River while ensuring that the natural character of the area remains unchanged.

Table 4: Summary of Community Capabilities

Asset Category	Community Capabilities
Human	The overall level of education among residents of the Town of Blind River is in keeping with the region as a whole and towns of a similar size. Schools and programs for youth are adequate for current populations. In addition, Blind River schools serve students residing in other north shore communities. The retail sector in the Town of Blind River is currently facing challenges as a result of demographic and economic pressures in the region and the location of main street business just off the Trans-Canada Highway. However the retail sector has strengths and would be attractive to an in-migrating workforce. As well, the quality and variety of outdoor nature based activities, the presence of the shoreline of Lake Huron, water access and cottage properties make a strong contribution to attracting skilled labour. With the presence of the Cameco uranium refinery, residents are familiar with uranium, radiation and the nuclear industry. Cameco has served as an excellent model of industry and community liaison. The health services in the Town of Blind River are very good, including the Blind River District Health Centre and for more complex treatment, the St. Joseph General Hospital in Elliot Lake and hospitals in Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury.
Economic	In relation to capabilities and capacities, the Town of Blind River has the ability to take on new enterprises. It is an entrepreneurial community with strong leadership. The Town of Blind River is receptive to economic development and supported by a number of economic development organizations. The Town of Blind River also has a good foundation for resource based industries, having all the amenities and secondary businesses required to maintain both local workers and the overall supply chain.
Infrastructure	The Town of Blind River has adequate municipal services to absorb new growth based on current growth projections and is proactively assessing its infrastructure requirements to ensure the community is serviced adequately into the future. While the housing stock in the Town of Blind River is aging, there is a good mix of housing choices and tenures relative to other rural centres. The current commercial land use capabilities in the area are adequate for the level of economic development.
Social	There are a high level of social support institutions and programs in the Town of Blind River, as well as ample indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities. The Town of Blind River has several day care facilities including private day cares. Due to the aging population and more services available cater to older residents. In addition, the Town Blind River has an array of service and social clubs. There are a variety of places of worship.
Natural Environment	In addition to natural resource extraction, the Town of Blind River offers an abundance of opportunities for tourists and residents to participate in outdoor activities.

5.0 Community Well-Being Assessment

In this section, the effect of implementing the APM Project on the well-being of the community is examined through each of five different perspectives or 'lenses'. These are referred to as 'assets'.

5.1 Implications for Human Assets in Blind River

This section provides an analysis of human assets and their implications for the APM Project in Blind River. For the purpose of this analysis, the human assets within a community are understood to include its inherent skills and knowledge 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 include:

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

Current Blind River Profile for Human Assets:

Blind River is one of the larger communities in the north shore area even though its population declined over the past 15 years. In most cases, the population loss is the result of the out-migration of skilled and young residents who typically are the most mobile. Since 1996, the population has been aging in the Town of Blind River. This is also a general characteristic of the north shore area. While there is a cross section of age groups including higher numbers of youth in Blind River, it is evident that the Town is not maintaining its younger population; a challenge facing many rural centres in Canada. In general, even with the decline, the Town of Blind River is relatively stable. There are few people moving in or out of the area.

The top occupations in Blind River in 2011 were sales and service; business, finance and administration; trade transport and equipment; and education, law and social, community and government services. Cameco Corporation is a local employer and employs local residents with skills as millwrights, welders, electricians and heavy equipment operators. It is often hard for smaller rural centres to source these labour sets and these skills are readily available in Blind River and the surrounding area.

Educational facilities in the City of Blind River are good with elementary and secondary schools available. There are specialized educational programs (e.g. French immersion) available for students. However, there are no post-secondary educational programs or training facilities and these students must go to larger centres such as Sault Ste. Marie or Sudbury.

The health care facilities and services in Blind River are good. There are clinics and a regional hospital that can provide a variety of services to residents as they also service residents across the broader north shore and North Channel area. Emergency services in Blind River are well equipped to handle most emergency situations.

The APM Project has the potential to have a positive effect on the human assets in Blind River for the following reasons:

Population Size and Demographics

The APM Project will attract workers as well as former out-migrants to the community thereby increasing population. The presence of the APM Project will maintain a broad demographic mix of the population by attracting and retaining a younger workforce as well as creating a more representative range of age groups in the region. People may continue to be attracted to the region in parallel to population increases due to the APM Project.

Skills and Labour Supply

Most occupations in the Town of Blind River relate to health care and social services. There are also uranium workers employed by Cameco. The APM Project will be able to utilize the available skilled labour force already found within the community. In addition, the APM Project will contribute to labour and skills diversification within the communities with the influx of workers who have training in many different areas related to facility construction, operations and maintenance. Notwithstanding the APM Project labour force requirements, mining, tourism and government services occupations will continue to characterize the skills and labour supply in Blind River. Some of these occupations may see an increase due to demands by the APM Project for certain services.

For illustration purposes only, employment opportunities could be in the order of hundreds of new jobs for current and new residents of Blind River and surrounding local communities including First Nations communities. These jobs will include a variety of professional as well as skilled labour occupations in mining, engineering, safety assessment, manufacturing, trade support, geoscience, project management, social sciences, engagement, communications and transportation. The communities have past experience in managing the expansion and contraction of the workforce.

The APM Project's new occupations may shift the skills available within the local labour pool. Increased diversity may occur when new types of occupations and skills required for the APM Project that are presently not available within Blind River, are introduced. The APM Project will also attract workers into the community from other local and regional locations.

Education

The APM Project may increase enrolment at day care facilities, public and separate elementary and secondary schools. Similarly, there may be increased demand for alternative programs (e.g. Montessori,

Waldorf), after school enrichment programs (e.g. clubs, activities, tutors), and for English as a Second Language programs. There may be increased demand for distance education or training at a university level, general interest and adult learning programs, as well as local training institutions. There may be a need to create training and post-secondary educational facilities in Blind River. Youth services would need to increase.

Health and Safety Facilities and Services

The APM Project will result in increased demand on all existing health and safety facilities and services due to the increased population. A broader range of medical specialists may be required in order to deepen the range of health services offered. Blind River health care and safety organizations may be expected to provide specialized equipment and staff training to accommodate the increased population's pressures on local facilities. Coupled with increased demand, there will be stimulus for planning and expansion of health care facilities and services.

Summary

In summary, it can be expected that the APM Project would bring positive net benefits to the human assets in Blind River were the project to be implemented in the area. The APM Project will help Blind River realize its aspirations and goals, and it would drive development and expansion of its community well-being.

Table 5: CWB Implications for Human Assets in Blind River

Criteria / Measures	Ideal CWB Condition	Current Blind River Profile		Possible Blind River Profile with APM Project		Observations
	HUMAN ASSETS:					
Population Size and Demographics	Stable or increasing population Retention of youth and young families	Slow decline in population but maintaining youth and there is age diversity	⬅	Growth in population and diversity	➡	▪ Blind River has experienced a decline in population. However, youth and other age groups balance out the demographic profile. ▪ Population increases in summer due to cottagers. ▪ Community has expressed a desire to grow and diversify its population. ▪ APM Project offers potential to create jobs and attract and retain a larger, younger and more diverse population. ▪ Blind River would require some assistance to plan for and manage growth.
Skills and Labour Supply	Presence of a diverse, skilled workforce	Varied skills in the community now that are suited to resource and uranium processing and associated activities	➡	Job creation and growth of a diverse, skilled workforce	➡	▪ Blind River has a stable workforce with skills in resource and uranium processing (e.g. Cameco). ▪ Other skilled workers include those involved in health care, lumber and administration. ▪ APM would attract a new skilled workforce. ▪ APM will offer diverse career opportunities for local residents in direct and indirect jobs. ▪ Blind River would require some assistance to train and engage local workforce.
Education	Access to education and training Increased enrolment and programming	Access to post-secondary training is not available locally Many north shore children go the schools in Blind River Primary and secondary education is good	➡	Increased enrolment and opportunities for education and training Broader range of programming and potentially facilities	➡	▪ Since 2001, the number of residents without a diploma is decreasing. ▪ Many occupations in the community do not require post-secondary education. ▪ There are some residents with advanced degrees. ▪ Blind River has excellent local elementary and high schools with stable enrollment, however no local post-secondary facilities or training facilities. ▪ A wide range of new local direct and indirect employment opportunities will occur with the APM Project. ▪ The APM Project will stimulate career aspirations, interest in project-related training and education, as well as demand for post-secondary education. ▪ Blind River would require planning and support to educate and train current workforce to take advantage of APM career opportunities. ▪ Blind River may require new training facilities in the local community or region.

Criteria / Measures	Ideal CWB Condition	Current Blind River Profile		Possible Blind River Profile with APM Project		Observations
Health and Safety Facilities and Services	Access to full range of health services 24/7 Fully serviced by emergency responders	The local health centre is in the main health and administrative centre for the north shore Emergency response needs are excellent		Increased demand on services and facilities Catalyst to broaden supply of services and facilities, particularly healthcare		▪ Blind River District Health Centre (24/7 Hospital and Family Health Team) is located in the community. ▪ Very good healthcare is available with a broad range of specialty healthcare services. ▪ District OPP Detachment is located in the community. Emergency services are excellent. Specialized health care service providers visit the community on a regular basis. ▪ With growth, demand for more complex and specialized health and safety services will increase. ▪ Population growth and economic investment may stimulate planning and expansion of health and safety facilities and services. ▪ With growth, demand for health and safety services will increase, and this may stimulate planning and expansion of local health and safety facilities and services. ▪ Potential for increased health and safety risks associated with population growth and Project activity.

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

5.2 Implications for Economic Assets in Blind River

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 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 include:

- Employment;
- Income;
- Business Activity;
- Recreation and/or Tourism;
- Economic Development and Services; and
- Governance and Municipal Finances.

Current Blind River Profile for Economic Assets:

The Town experienced an increase in labour force and participation rate between 1996 and 2006; with a slight decrease by 2011 (the employment rate dropped from 54.4 percent in 2006 to 53.1 percent in 2011 and the participation rate dropped from 59.9 percent in 2006 to 59.4 percent in 2011). When the uranium mines were operating in Elliot Lake, some suggest that approximately 40 percent of the employees lived in Blind River.

As of 2011 the greatest proportion of employees in the Town of Blind River were employed in industries within the following sectors: health care and social assistance; retail trade; manufacturing; other services; and public administration. A significant portion of the private sector jobs are directly or indirectly related to the uranium refining industry. The largest private sector employer in the Town of Blind River is the Cameco Refinery and the secondary economic effects for supporting the workers and their families are significant economic drivers. The North Shore Power Group, Crescent Engineering, Beamish Construction are also local industry employers. The Domtar Mill located in Espanola also indirectly employs Blind River residents. The largest public sector employer in the Town of Blind River is the Blind River District Health Centre. Various other government employers are also major employers. Health and social service sector employment will not be as affected by variations in the Provincial or National economy.

The City of Blind River is a fairly affluent community; however, there are residents on social assistance. Tourism is one of the main driving forces in the local economy. The Town of Blind River is on the shore

of Lake Huron and the developed lakefront including Lake Matinenda and other lakes, offer year round amenities. There are various hotels and restaurants that accommodate tourism activities in Blind River.

Blind River is able to take on new enterprises. The community is entrepreneurial and has strong leadership through membership in the ELNOS Corporation. It also has the Blind River Development Corporation. Local residents are able to undertake planning and access capital to implement a local power project. There is a sound governance structure in Blind River through the Mayor, Councillors and municipal staff.

The APM Project has the potential to have a positive effect on the economic assets in Blind River for the following reasons:

Employment

The APM Project will provide longer-term stability than resource sector employment and would supplement current nuclear related employment offered by Cameco. The APM Project will increase the number and diversity of skilled employment opportunities in the community. A greater variety of employment opportunities may offer more sustainable and diverse career paths for youth within the community and the surrounding region and further encourage youth to live and work in Blind River.

The APM Project will attract large numbers of workers to the community from the region, Province and other jurisdictions as well as increase the number of indirect and induced support industries and services. When the uranium mines were operating in Elliot Lake, Blind River was seen as an attractive location for miners and support workers to live. The APM Project would increase employment by advancing Blind River's role as a regional centre for shopping, education, health, social, and recreational activities. There may be continued stability and profitability for current industries with more demand for local business services from a growing population.

Income

Overall, the APM Project's income effects for local residents will be positive and help people to increase their current levels of disposable income. Rising household and individual incomes may be achieved when new residents begin earning higher incomes. Several of the larger employers currently offer higher income positions. Through the provision of new income opportunities, the APM Project may help to reduce overall reliance on government transfer payments to individuals and families.

Business Activity

The APM Project and worker related spending may increase the number and diversity of businesses in the community and create new business linkages, synergies and agglomerations. The APM Project and worker spending may also encourage people to spend more money in the community. This is especially important for the retention of existing retail and development of new retail businesses. Moreover, there may be some capture of the economic outflow of spending from residents shopping in other larger urban centres.

The APM Project may expand the employment base, business sales and profitability within the community. Community-based businesses may have greater certainty and other similar firms may be attracted to Blind River. Overall, room can be created for additional large businesses. Moreover, there is the potential for more hospitality services (e.g. additional restaurants and hotels) due to increased local demand.

As an indicator of the strength of the retail sector, local and area merchants are able to capture community spending although the opportunity exists for some updating of retail sector buildings. The new business and industrial activity from the APM Project will allow the labour force of some sectors to grow and expand (e.g. retail and service sector, resource-based supply chain types of industries). The APM Project may provide increased stability and potential expansion in the entertainment and cultural industries. However, there may be pressure on government services to address increased demands on facilities and services.

Recreation and/or Tourism

The APM Project may increase the number of travelers and tourists coming to Blind River. However, based on discussion with community members, negative 'perception' effects that could occur are expected to be reduced because the area is known for uranium mining and processing. The current uranium refinery has been well received by the local community. Thus a model exists to help further consider how to minimize potential negative effects. The tourist capacity is sufficiently large that the community can accommodate conventions.

Economic Development and Services

The APM Project will encourage new economic development initiatives across a wider variety of sectors. It may strengthen the community's economic development efforts through the ELNOS Corporation and the Blind River Development Corporation and allow entrepreneurs to invest with more certainty. The APM Project may provide a focal point for additional developments such as: transportation, post-secondary training and education, tourism, accommodations and other services. This may support a large construction, approvals and operations workforce.

Governance and Municipal Finances

The APM Project may offer an even more favourable ratio of residential to industrial/commercial taxes. Furthermore, increased funding may greatly increase Blind River's ability to support expenditure budgets for new infrastructure (such as roads, water, etc.) and services (e.g. recreation) to support a growing population.

Summary

The APM Project will provide Blind River with the potential for strong economic benefits through long term economic diversity and increased stability. Economic benefits will need to be carefully planned for and managed in order for the community to realise the full potential. In order for Blind River to optimize project benefits, it would be helpful to support education and training of the labour force,

enhance the capacity of the municipality and residents, and provide advice to businesses on project opportunities.

Table 6: CWB Implications for Economic Assets in Blind River

Criteria / Measures	Ideal CWB Condition	Current Blind River Profile		Possible Blind River Profile with APM Project		Observations
	ECONOMIC ASSETS:					
Employment	Increasing employment opportunities for residents	Stable employment and participation rate	→	Growth in the number of and diversity of employment opportunities in the community	→	▪ General labour trends in the community show stability for people participating in the workforce. Employment rate is also relatively stable. ▪ Cameco continues to be the dominant private employer in the area. ▪ Blind River District Health Centre and schools are also major employers. ▪ APM Project would offer a more jobs and a more diverse range of employment opportunities and careers for both community and regional residents. ▪ APM would build on Blind River's role as a regional centre for shopping, educational, health, social, and recreational activities thereby further increasing employment opportunities. ▪ Blind River may require some assistance to ensure local residents are able to realize project direct and indirect employment opportunities.
Income	Household income growth and diminished need for social assistance	Household incomes are increasing, although they are still below the national average	→	Opportunity for employment in more diverse labour market will yield potential for increased incomes	→	▪ Median personal income, household income and family income is increasing. ▪ Blind River's household income is below the national average. ▪ APM Project would create more local jobs and diversify the economy and as a result this will further stimulate growth in household income and wealth creation.
Business Activity	Business growth and increasing business diversity	Has a strong corporate anchor and diverse retail businesses	→	Growth in business activity leading to growth in the number and diversity of businesses	→	▪ Business activity in the area focuses on uranium processing and retail services. ▪ APM Project would diversify the economy and further create local direct and indirect jobs and stimulate business activity across the community. ▪ Would allow larger chain retailers to locate in the community. ▪ Blind River is part of the ELNOS Corporation and has the Blind River Development Corporation. ▪ Community is diversifying with North Shore Power owned by the Municipality.

Criteria / Measures	Ideal CWB Condition	Current Blind River Profile		Possible Blind River Profile with APM Project		Observations
Recreation and/or Tourism	Stability or growth in area tourism and recreation	Tourism related to fishing and other outdoor recreation	➡	Potential effects on tourism as a result of project Potential increase in recreation and tourism with niche market	➡	▪ Recreation is a contributor to the local economy and is focused on the natural environment. ▪ The current nuclear industry (Cameco) has not caused negative perceptions. ▪ Large number of motels can accommodate conferences (e.g. 2014 Trappers Convention). ▪ APM may provide new markets for local tourist industry through visitors coming to area to learn about the project. ▪ Algoma Provincial Tourist Centre is located in Blind River and could facilitate tourist development. ▪ Trans-Canada Highway location facilitates stream of visitors. ▪ Wilderness tourism may decline but will be offset by visitor tourism and there may be a transformation of the recreation and tourism industry.
Economic Development and Services	An active, economic development organization that has demonstrated success in attracting businesses to the community	Blind River has an active economic development organization The community has successfully attracted investment	➡	Businesses have support for locating in the community Blind River will take advantage of the business opportunities directly and indirectly created by the APM Project	➡	▪ Blind River is actively pursuing economic development opportunities. ▪ Blind River has the Blind River Development Corporation and an up to date recreation plan. ▪ Blind River has the ability to retain and attract businesses and is well equipped to capture increased economic development opportunities. ▪ Community has attracted investment, for example, North Shore Power. ▪ APM would provide a catalyst for further economic development through its own presence and creation of associated business opportunities.
Governance and Municipal Finances	Community is financially sustainable over short and long term	Strong local leadership and moderate fiscal strength	➡	An enhanced tax base with solid contributions from industrial and commercial properties Sufficient revenues to cover operating and capital requirements	➡	▪ Blind River has strong leadership and a healthy financial position although municipal taxes are under pressure to rise. ▪ The Town has adequate staff for departments, committees and services. ▪ Blind River has experience with the implementation of large projects (e.g. Cameco). ▪ APM by its presence would elevate revenues available to the municipality.

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

5.3 Implications for Infrastructure in Blind River

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

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

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 Blind River in terms of its physical well-being.

Current Blind River Profile for Infrastructure Assets:

The Town of Blind River Official Plan identifies employment areas that include industrial, commercial and business uses. The Official Plan designations are advanced and the City is ready for development. Employment areas in the Town of Blind River are currently grouped into new and older industrial areas, retail strips and the downtown district. Commercial areas are located along Woodward Avenue and Trans-Canada Highway 17. Industrial uses are located at the waterfront on the North Shore at Industrial Road near the Marina, as well as on Industrial Park Road and the Trans-Canada Highway 17. Industrial land also exists on Eldorado Road where the Cameco uranium refinery is located. Development constraints in the Town of Blind River relate to Crown Lands.

Housing stock is generally kept in good shape but there has been little new housing recently constructed. There are limited types of housing options in Blind River with only a few apartment style dwellings. However, there are a range of moderate to executive style housing types available. Rental housing rates in Blind River are moderate.

Blind River's schools and recreational facilities are also in good shape, although some replacements and new facilities are needed. Blind River has adequate water and wastewater infrastructure. The most recent estimate conducted in 2009 indicated the life of the Blind River landfill facility to be six years meaning that capacity would be reached by 2015. The landfill is owned by the Mississauga First Nation in partnership with Blind River. The Town of Blind River has prepared a Waste Management Plan Environmental Assessment (EA) which will identify a preferred long-term solid waste management strategy.

Blind River is accessible by road, rail and water and is in proximity to larger centres such as Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie. From the Elliot Lake Airport, charter services to Toronto's Lester B. Pearson are one

hour. Moreover, Blind River's roads are in good condition and Blind River is directly on the Trans-Canada Highway. There is access to rail and a deep water port.

The APM Project has the potential to have a positive effect on the infrastructure assets in Blind River for the following reasons:

Housing

The APM Project has the potential to facilitate the expansion of the number of homes and the diversity of housing stock in Blind River. There is also potential to increase the cost of housing in Blind River depending on the size and rate of labour in-migration. Moreover, there may be instances of low cost housing taken up by workers. Additional rental housing may be needed for new residents when they first move to the community before they purchase homes, or for temporary residents. Further study and management of housing issues would help minimize effects on housing affordability.

Municipal Infrastructure and Services

With an influx of an increased population and increased activities with the APM Project, there will be an increased demand for new infrastructure. The APM Project will result in the overall growth of the community and despite the availability of additional capacity, may require some additional planning and improvements for water and wastewater and solid waste infrastructure.

Transportation Infrastructure and Services

With an increased population, there may be a greater demand for public transit within the communities and to larger centres. The development of public transit services may be important for further developing linkages between the local communities.

Summary

The community and the NWMO would need to work cooperatively to effectively ensure appropriate infrastructure is implemented in the area. Blind River would greatly benefit from the presence of the APM project if sited in or near the community.

Table 7: CWB Implications for Infrastructure Assets in Blind River

Criteria / Measures	Ideal CWB Condition	Current Blind River Profile		Possible Blind River Profile with APM Project		Observations
	INFRASTRUCTURE OR PHYSICAL ASSETS:					
Housing	Sufficient housing stock to meet all needs and incomes Average house values increase over time in line with household incomes	Current availability of housing supply and residential development meets needs of community		Stimulus to housing prices New housing development Housing available in surrounding area will be better utilized		▪ Blind River has housing stock available. ▪ APM would create a demand for a mix of housing types and tenure arrangements. ▪ Blind River is close enough to Elliot Lake and other north shore communities that workers can live in those communities and commute. ▪ There is a range of lower priced and executive priced housing available on Lake Matinenda and the Lake Huron shoreline. ▪ There are minimal amounts of multi-family housing available.
Municipal Infrastructure and Services	Infrastructure assets are in good condition, well maintained and adequately sized to meet the short and long term needs of the community	All environmental services are relatively new, in good condition and have capacity to accommodate growth		Increased demand for infrastructure and services Enhanced opportunities for new and renewed infrastructure		▪ Blind River's water and wastewater treatment facilities and servicing networks are relatively new and are serving the current population. ▪ Blind River has a joint use agreement for the Mississauga First Nation sanitary landfill site. The sanitary landfill site will need expansion in the future. ▪ A municipal waste management strategy Environmental Assessment has been completed. ▪ Blind River has a comprehensive land use plans. ▪ Infrastructure may need to be upgraded when it reaches the appropriate point in its lifecycle. APM would generate municipal revenues directly and indirectly that can be applied to facility operation and maintenance, upgrading and replacement. ▪ Local builders and engineering consultants currently support housing and infrastructure needs.

Criteria / Measures	Ideal CWB Condition	Current Blind River Profile		Possible Blind River Profile with APM Project		Observations
Transportation Infrastructure and Services	A strong complement of transportation facilities and services to meet the needs of the residents and businesses within the community	Provincial and regional roads in vicinity of community meet provincial standards		Enhanced opportunities for road improvements to meet a growing population and more diverse economic base		▪ Blind River is in proximity to the Elliot Lake airport as well as Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie airports. ▪ It is served by the Trans-Canada Highway and Huron Central Railway line. ▪ There are several Great Lakes ports in the vicinity. ▪ Provincial and regional roads meet provincial standards. ▪ APM may necessitate upgrading and expansions.

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

5.4 Implications for Social Assets in Blind River

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 include:

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

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 Blind River in terms of its Social well-being.

Current Blind River Profile for Social Assets:

Blind River has a good arts and cultural scene especially for a community of this size. There are arts events, festivals and an 'Entertainment Series'. Local hotel and resort owners host music events. The community hosted the 2014 Trappers Convention and they host a 'Colour Dash' and 'Easter Egg Hunt' that is attended by people from other communities in the area. New residents would typically volunteer and participate in arts and cultural activities. There is also a variety of sports clubs and social clubs. Volunteerism and community involvement is strong in Blind River with service clubs (e.g. Rotary Club, Lions, Knights of Columbus, etc.) actively participating in the community. Cultural heritage is also strong in Blind River which has a Timber Museum.

There are a number of recreational facilities in the Town of Blind River and on the Mississauga First Nation nearby some of which are supported through a joint use agreement. Major recreational facilities include the Huron Pines Golf and Country Club, the Blind River Marina, the Alain Bray Auditorium Theatre, skiing, biking and snow-mobile trails, and the Blind River Memorial Arena and Curling Rink. The Town of Blind River also has a recreational park including tennis courts, soccer fields, football fields, and more.

There are some seniors programs, facilities and care homes in Blind River. There are some social assistance households in Blind River and functional social housing programs. There is access to social services (e.g. employment support, addiction support centres, etc.). Youth mental health programs and services are areas of potential future effort.

The APM Project has the potential to have a positive effect on the social assets Blind River for the following reasons:

Recreational Facilities and Programs

With the expected increase in population and business activity in the community, there will be potential for expansion of recreational and social clubs and facilities as well as sports facilities (e.g. hockey arenas, curling pads, baseball diamonds, soccer pitches, etc.). With increased demand and a stronger economy, there may be greater potential to receive funds for new recreational centres as well as performance and meeting facilities. The Project may also support the expansion of children's activities (e.g. sports leagues, dance troupes, etc.) and library services with the influx of young families. In relation to sports leagues, new residents may serve as volunteers who may be able to organize sporting clubs and events.

Blind River currently supports a museum. Heritage resources are known and carefully managed. The APM Project may result in increased resources to support local art and cultural facilities.

Social Services and Organizations

The APM Project will increase demands on existing social service providers and programs, particularly child care services, due to an influx of people associated with the APM Project. There may similarly be an increasing demand for a broader range of health and safety services due to in-migrant expectations. Upgrades to existing facilities may be required and local hospitals and clinics may in some instances, need to hire permanent health specialists. The APM Project will also bring increased revenues and resources to support growth of social services and organizations.

Community Character and Cohesion

The community is generally cohesive in its support for learning more about APM. Due to the uranium mining history of the area and region, and the strong understanding of uranium mining due to family members being employed by Cameco, residents are generally open to learning more about APM. Tourists as well as residents spend plenty of time outdoors participating in various outdoor activities (e.g. fishing, hiking, etc.) and there is a sense of pride in the local natural environment. New residents associated with the APM project would be expected to continue to build on the existing community character. Increased population, employment and activity associated with the APM Project could help in realising the community's desires to build on its role as a regional centre for shopping, educational, health, social, and recreational activities. In addition, APM could help advance the Town's objectives to become an artistic and cultural destination for the area.

Summary

In summary, the APM Project would have a net positive benefit on the social assets of the community if it was to be implemented in the area. The APM Project would help further advance the community character Blind River has established for itself as a centre for shopping, educational, health, social, and recreational activities as well as an artistic and cultural destination for the area.

Table 8: CWB Implications for Social Assets in Blind River

Criteria / Measures	Ideal CWB Condition	Current Blind River Profile		Possible Blind River Profile with APM Project		Observations
	SOCIAL ASSETS:					
Recreational Facilities and Programs	A strong complement of recreational facilities and programs to meet the needs of the residents	Varied recreational facilities available Widespread participation in social/service clubs and community events	➡	Increased demand and support for recreation programs Enhanced opportunities for new and renewed facilities	➡	▪ There are a variety of clubs, events, social and recreational programs in Blind River and area oriented to families. ▪ The community has a theater. The Mississauga First Nation Recreation Centre has fitness facilities used by all residents and Blind River has an arena, community centre and marina with meeting facilities. ▪ The community centre doubles as a conference centre. ▪ For the most part, the community has capacity to serve a larger population. ▪ APM would bring population into the community and may create demand and support for existing programs and increase the need for new facilities and services.
Social Services and Organizations	A wide range of services, organizations and media outlets present to support the social fabric and needs of the community	Able to meet current needs, with some additional need for youth services	➡	Increased demand and support for social services and organizations Enhanced opportunities for new services and organizations	➡	▪ There are a range of non-profit and volunteer organizations offering social services to the community and other communities in the area. ▪ The APM Project would bring population in to the community and this population may place demands on existing services and organizations. It may also indirectly assist local organizations to fund these requirements. ▪ Blind River would need some assistance to plan, develop and resource the services and organizations needed in light of the APM Project. ▪ APM could provide the population support for new or enhanced services and programs.

Criteria / Measures	Ideal CWB Condition	Current Blind River Profile		Possible Blind River Profile with APM Project		Observations
Community Character and Cohesion	Strong sense of community identity Cohesive community, supportive of municipal leadership Stability of population	Strong sense of pride in history, community and natural environment Very supportive of municipal leadership	➡	Increased sense of community identity	➡	▪ Blind River has a strong sense of pride associated with community's history, arts and culture and natural environment. ▪ The community is cohesive and supportive of its municipal leadership as well as learning more about the APM siting process. ▪ Blind River is proud that its lumber mill was the largest in the British Commonwealth at one point in its history. ▪ Cameco has performed very well and provides a positive example for public acceptance of other industrial development. ▪ Diverse and cohesive population base present and cohesive (e.g. Anglophones, Francophones, Aboriginals and Métis). ▪ The APM Project would bring growth and stability. ▪ The APM Project would help further advance the community character Blind River has established for itself as a centre for shopping, educational, health, social, and recreational activities as well as an artistic and cultural destination for the area. ▪ To ensure community character objectives are achieved, Blind River would need some assistance to plan for and accommodate population and development associated with the APM Project.

Legend	
Declining – Negative	⬅
Neutral – Stable	▭
Environment – Integrity Maintained	▭
Increasing – Enhanced – Positive	➡
Uncertain	△

5.5 Implications for Natural Assets in Blind River

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). The specific indicators examined include: Natural Areas/Features of Significance; and Parks and Protected Areas.

Current Blind River Profile for Natural Assets:

There are three Provincial Parks within the Town of Blind River limits. Much of the spatial area of the Municipality of Blind River is characterized by the Matinenda and the Mississagi Delta Provincial Parks. The dominant feature of Blind River is its location on the shore of Lake Huron and the many lakes within town boundaries. Crown lands are located in the vicinity of the Municipality. The local and surrounding habitats include dense forest, muskeg swamps, numerous lakes, winding rivers and hills. The region has a diverse natural heritage. Local forests are a mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees. The Town of Blind River and the surrounding area are located in the St. Lawrence drainage area. The Town of Blind River's water source comes from wells. There are currently no operating mines within the Town of Blind River's municipal boundary.

The APM Project has the potential to have a neutral to positive effect on the natural assets in Blind River for the following reasons:

There may be population pressures on the natural environment with increased residential development, other urban growth and development. There may also be increased pressure on the natural environment due to worker desire for recreational activities. With additional people participating in recreational activities in lake areas and trails, more development may occur detracting from the natural environment which would require enhanced management practices. However, given effective mitigation and environmental protection measures, natural resources are not likely to be put at risk due to increased visitation.

Initial studies on the potential environmental effects associated with the project suggest that the APM Project is unlikely to have any significant negative effects on the natural environment. The presence of the local Cameco uranium refinery has not appeared to affect people's perceptions and their visitation to natural areas. It is expected that through working with Blind River and clearly communicating with the public, any negative perception effects can be mitigated, if not even leveraged to take advantage of increased population growth associated with the project. 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 negative environmental effects are likely during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the used fuel repository, taking into account mitigation that will be applied.

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

Table 9: CWB Implications for Natural Assets in Blind River

Criteria / Measures	Ideal CWB Condition	Current Blind River Profile		Possible Blind River Profile with APM Project		Observations and Implications
	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT:					
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 use	▬	▪ The Lake Huron shore and other natural areas have been attracting an increasing number of visitors and are a sense of pride for the community. ▪ Given effective mitigation and environmental protection measures, natural resources are not likely to be put at risk. ▪ It is understood at this point in time that no net significant negative environmental effects are likely during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the used fuel repository itself, taking into account plans to manage and mitigate effects.
Parks and Protected Areas	Conservation reserves and parks are supported and maintained and also remain available for use	Natural areas and parks are available for passive and active recreational use Reopening of Provincial Park	➡	Potential for increased demand Increased resources and abilities to address ongoing environmental issues	▬	▪ Parks, beaches, the Lake Huron shore and other natural areas have been attracting an increasing number of visitors and are a sense of pride for the community. ▪ Mississaugi Provincial Park has recently been reopened. ▪ Potential for increased visitation demand on parks and natural areas. ▪ With proper planning and dialogue, resources would remain protected and increased demand managed.

Legend	
Declining – Negative	⬅
Neutral – Stable	▭
Environment – Integrity Maintained	▬
Increasing – Enhanced – Positive	➡
Uncertain	△

5.6 Community Well –Being Summary

Human assets will be enhanced in Blind River with the introduction of the APM Project. The presence of the APM Project will increase population levels and maintain a broad demographic mix of the population. The APM Project may provide labour and skill diversification within the communities due to an influx of workers. Skilled uranium workers are already present in the community. The APM Project may also attract workers to the community from other local and regional locations including people from Aboriginal communities. Additionally, the APM Project will increase enrolment at local schools and will result in increased demand on all existing health and safety facilities and services due to the increased population. However, the health and education facilities are already very good.

Economic assets will be enhanced in Blind River with the introduction of the APM Project. The APM Project will increase the number and diversity of skilled employment opportunities in the community for residents. Through the provision of new and higher income opportunities, the APM Project may help to reduce overall reliance on government transfer payments to individuals and families. With the potential for increased recreation, there may be greater support for the establishment of recreation facilities, continuing to make Blind River an attractive place to live. APM would help build on the Town's role as a regional centre for shopping, educational, health, social, and recreational activities.

In general, infrastructure is in good shape and will be enhanced with the APM Project. APM Project enhancements can bring Blind River in line with its goals and aspirations to attract new businesses. With an increasing population and associated activities due to the APM Project, there will be more demands on existing infrastructure and increased resources to support infrastructure improvements.

Social assets have the potential to be enhanced in Blind River with the introduction of the APM Project. Local residents are familiar and somewhat comfortable with radiation related facilities (e.g. mines, refinery). The APM Project may positively change the character of the community and the surrounding region due to an influx of new skilled residents and their families. The arts and culture scene is already good. With the influx of APM workers and families, there may be more variety in arts and cultural activities and more participation in the local arts and cultural scene. Although there will be increased demands for recreational opportunities and social services, a stronger economy may provide greater potential to acquire funds for facilities and services. The APM Project would help advance the community character Blind River has established for itself as a centre for shopping, educational, health, social, and recreational activities as well as an artistic and cultural destination for the area.

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.

Table 10: Overall CWB Implications

Criteria / Measures	CWB is Enhanced When …	Current Blind River Profile		Possible Blind River Profile with APM Project		Observations and Implications
	OVERALL CWB IMPLICATIONS:					
Human Assets	Population growth occurs and youth are retained in the community	Maintained	➡	Enhanced	➡	▪ APM could grow the community and provide increased stability through economic diversity. ▪ Youth would be retained through increased and more diverse employment opportunities and new residents would be attracted to the area. ▪ Educational and healthcare resources would be enhanced and new facilities could be developed.
Economic Assets	More diverse and stable employment opportunities are available	Positive	➡	Enhanced	➡	▪ There will be further employment opportunities and a more diverse range of jobs. ▪ Increased funding through a wider tax base would provide more financial resources for Blind River to fund its infrastructure projects, educational developments, community and recreational facilities and programs and social services and organizations. ▪ The APM Project would provide for more jobs by building on the Town's role as a regional centre for shopping, educational, health, social, and recreational activities. ▪ The increased jobs from the APM Project would be the catalyst for Blind River to enhance its community well-being.
Infrastructure	Infrastructure is maintained or improved to meet the needs of the community	Maintained	➡	Enhanced	➡	▪ 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.
Social Assets	Opportunities exist for recreation and social networking. Community is cohesive, and community character is enhanced.	Positive	➡	Enhanced	➡	▪ The community would see an overall benefit to its Social Assets through increased participation and funding to its recreational facilities and programs as well as its social services and organizations. ▪ With proper planning and communication, no serious social divisions would be expected to occur in the community. ▪ Increased growth, employment and activity associated with the APM

Criteria / Measures	CWB is Enhanced When …	Current Blind River Profile		Possible Blind River Profile with APM Project		Observations and Implications
						Project could help in realizing community aspirations to build on the Town's role as a regional centre for shopping, educational, health, social, and recreation activities. In addition, APM could help advance the Town's objectives to become an artistic and cultural destination. ▪ Interest in learning about the project appears to be very positive and the community is largely cohesive on this issue.
Natural Environment	Natural areas, parks and conservation reserves are preserved and maintained for use and enjoyment	Maintained		Maintained		▪ 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 negative environmental effects are likely during the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases of the used fuel repository itself.

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

6.0 Criteria to Assess Factors, Beyond Safety - Summary

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 acknowledges 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[10]. Table 11 draws on information outlined in the previous discussion to understand the potential to foster well-being in Blind River against these original factors. Table 11 summarizes preliminary findings about the implications of the APM Project, were it to be implemented in the community, on various factors of well-being. 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 chapter.

Over the course of discussions and conversations, the community identified a number of other important areas for consideration. The community expressed a strong desire to better understand how to engage neighbouring communities, communities on transportation routes and in particular, area Aboriginal communities. Blind River realizes that it would be essential to develop or enhance relationships with all of the foregoing groups to support the implementation of the project.

[10] NWMO, 2010. Moving Forward Together: Process for Selecting a Site for Canada's Deep Geological Repository for Used Nuclear Fuel.

Table 11: Criteria to Assess Factors Beyond Safety

Factors that Address the Well-Being of a Community	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	Health and safety of residents and the community	Maintained	▪ There is a strong safety case; however the community is eager to learn more about safety and health considerations to enhance their confidence in the safety of the project. The existing Cameco refinery has operated safely as an example for residents. ▪ Given the past uranium mining in the area, local residents along the North Shore have a higher knowledge of radiation related matters.
	Sustainable built environments	Enhanced	▪ Community infrastructure and built fabric may be enhanced through project activities and investments in the community.
	Sustainable natural environments	Maintained	▪ 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 negative environmental effects are likely during the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases of the used fuel repository itself.
	Local and regional economy and employment	Enhanced	▪ Significant employment and population growth will occur in Blind River and surrounding communities – hundreds of new jobs could be created in Blind River. ▪ With these jobs comes the potential to increase the current population of Blind River and surrounding communities. ▪ New opportunities would be created for local businesses to serve the project and a growing and more diverse population.
	Community administration and decision-making processes	Enhanced	▪ Local leadership has demonstrated interest in the project and it is expected that local leadership will ensure residents have opportunities to learn more and engage in community decision making.
	Balanced growth and healthy, livable communities	Enhanced	▪ Blind River has expressed a strong desire to diversity its economy and continue to provide stable employment opportunities for new and existing residents and build on its role as a centre for shopping,

Factors that Address the Well-Being of a Community	Evaluation Factors to be Considered	Potential Effect of APM Project	Discussion Based on Preliminary Assessment
			educational, health, social, and recreation activities as well as an artistic and cultural destination for the area. ▪ APM Project appears to be a good fit with community objectives and aspirations in this regard.
Potential for enhancement of the community's and region's long term sustainability through implementation of the project, including factors identified by Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge	Health and safety of residents and the community	Maintained	▪ There is a strong safety case, however engagement is at a preliminary stage and further dialogue would be required to understand and address questions and concerns about safety and health considerations related to the repository and transportation of used nuclear fuel. ▪ When the uranium mines were operating all regional communities benefitted and conversely experienced negative effects when the mines closed. Regional residents are familiar with radiation related health and safety matters.
	Sustainable built environments	Enhanced	▪ Infrastructure and built fabric may be enhanced through project activities and investments in the community. ▪ Regional communities have capacity to grow and their infrastructure accommodated workers and their families when uranium mines were operating.
	Sustainable natural environments	Maintained	▪ Further dialogue and effective mitigation and environmental protection measures would be required to ensure that the overall environmental integrity of the area is maintained.
	Local and regional economy and employment	Enhanced	▪ Substantial employment and economic development opportunities would extend to the surrounding region. ▪ The community has first-hand awareness of the employment effects of uranium mining and closure of the mines.
	Community administration and decision-making processes	Maintained	▪ Engagement of surrounding north shore communities is underway. All of the local municipalities in the 'learn more' process have demonstrated interest in the project and going forward. It is expected that they will be able to make informed and effective decisions. ▪ Engagement of communities further afield is at a preliminary stage.
	Balanced growth and healthy, livable communities	Enhanced	▪ Engagement of surrounding north shore communities is underway. Three of these communities have expressed an interest in learning more and are participating in the siting process as "interested

Factors that Address the Well-Being of a Community	Evaluation Factors to be Considered	Potential Effect of APM Project	Discussion Based on Preliminary Assessment
			communities". ▪ Surrounding area communities are collectively seeking economic development and growth in the area. The APM Project appears to be in alignment with these aspirations. ▪ Engagement of communities further afield is at a preliminary stage and further dialogue would be required to explore aspirations for growth and well-being. ▪ The APM workforce would assist in balancing the demographic characteristics of the area and support community livability.
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	▪ The area contains suitable sites for the project thus providing flexibility in selecting specific sites that can avoid ecologically sensitive areas and locally significant features.
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	▪ Blind River and the surrounding areas have multiple modes of transportation, social and economic support services, and capacity to absorb the anticipated growth in population and economic activity. ▪ Local roads, rail lines and dock infrastructure are generally in good shape and can accommodate some growth in population. ▪ Local communities were able to support a much larger population associated with uranium mines.
	Potential for social infrastructure to be adapted to implement the project	Yes	▪ Blind River appears to have the necessary core of social infrastructure in place to plan for and adapt to changes resulting from the project.

Factors that Address the Well-Being of a Community	Evaluation Factors to be Considered	Potential Effect of APM Project	Discussion Based on Preliminary Assessment
	The NWMO resources required to put in place physical and social infrastructure needed to support the project	To be determined	▪ Blind River would require some assistance in terms of planning, human and financial resources. ▪ Further studies will be required to explore the specifics of these requirements.
Potential to avoid or minimize effects of the transportation of used nuclear fuel from existing storage facilities to the repository site	The availability of transportation routes (road, rail, water) and the adequacy of associated infrastructure and potential to put such routes in place from a social perspective	To be determined	▪ The community and region have access to multiple modes of transportation which appear to have adequate capacity for this project. ▪ The accessibility of Blind River Lake to highways and roads is important to community well-being because it demonstrates connectivity between different transportation and community nodes. ▪ Blind River is accessible by road, rail and by water through local port facilities. ▪ Engagement of surrounding communities is underway. Engagement of communities further afield is at a preliminary stage and further dialogue will be required to help build understanding and address questions and concerns.
	The availability of suitable safe connections and intermodal transfer points, if required, and potential to put them in place from a social perspective	To be determined	▪ Rail and local port facilities and their location on the Trans-Canada Highway offer safe connections and intermodal transfer points. Raw and processed uranium is already transported by truck via the Trans-Canada Highway through the north shore communities most business days. ▪ Engagement of communities further afield on potential transportation routes is at a preliminary stage and further dialogue will be required to help build understanding and address questions and concerns.
	The NWMO resources (fuel, people) and associated carbon footprint required to transport used fuel to the site	780-1,140 tonnes of equivalent carbon dioxide emission is expected to be produced per year	▪ In a scenario of all road transport of 4.6 million fuel bundles from the interim storage sites to an APM facility near Blind River, approximately 1,140 tonnes of equivalent carbon dioxide emissions is expected to be produced per year. ▪ In a scenario of transport by mostly rail mode approximately 780 tonnes of equivalent carbon dioxide emissions is expected to be produced per year.

Factors that Address the Well-Being of a Community	Evaluation Factors to be Considered	Potential Effect of APM Project	Discussion Based on Preliminary Assessment
	The potential for effects on communities along the transportation routes and at intermodal transfer points	To be determined	▪ There is a robust technical safety case for the safe and secure transport of used nuclear fuel. Engagement of surrounding communities is underway. Engagement of communities further afield on potential transportation routes is at a preliminary stage and further dialogue will be required to understand and address questions and concerns.

7.0 Relationship Building and Engagement Summary

At the present time, based on the engagement program and activities, Blind River appears to show strong support for learning more about the APM Project and strong support for its leadership who have demonstrated proactive commitment to staying engaged in the siting process.

7.1 Overview of Engagement

NWMO has engaged with Blind River leadership and community members, as well as initiated dialogue in surrounding communities, First Nations and Métis organizations through a variety of means including:

- Several community open houses;
- Regular attendance at the Community Liaison Committee meetings;
- Informal and structured interviews with community members;
- Facilitating the Community Liaison Committee web page and newsletters;
- Preparation of written materials; and
- Informal tours and visits with local residents.

Initial discussions with a cross-section of community leaders, briefings and conversations with community groups, and conversations with residents during open houses suggest there is interest in the community to continue to learn about the project and consider hosting the project. To this end, opportunities for preliminary discussions were sought with:

- Local political leaders (e.g., Mayor and Councillors);
- Members of the Community Liaison Committee;
- Local business owners/operators;
- Local service providers (e.g. emergency services, social services, education);
- Community groups (e.g. clubs, associations and organizations);
- Surrounding community leaders (within the north shore area); and
- Residents.

Based on discussions with the above, there appears to be a strong and growing potential to sustain interest in the local community. There is also a strong and growing interest to continue and move forward with the siting process.

The community has taken steps to engage some of its nearest neighbours (including Aboriginal peoples), and has set the foundation for further constructive consideration of the project and opportunity to work collaboratively to explore the project and interest in the broader area. Three neighbouring communities (Spanish, the Township of The North Shore and Elliot Lake) have also volunteered to participate in Phase 1. They would be supportive of learning more about the potential associated with the APM facility being located in Blind River or any of the communities. More engagement with communities in the wider area is required to better understand implications for those communities.

8.2 Summary of Issues and Questions Raised

This section summarizes the key challenges, issues and comments as heard from the community and other persons engaged.

8.2.1 Key Challenges, Issues and Comments

The key challenge for Blind River, as identified through the various engagement activities, is to create diversification of the economy by adding additional industry. Although the health services industry (and uranium related activities with the Cameco facility) is prevalent in the region, there is a concern about being overly dependent upon health services activities and related administrative services. There is a desire to provide new opportunities that will provide new skill sets in the area, enable stability in the workforce and encourage professionals to live and work in the community.

Maintenance of the pristine natural environment while providing economic growth is a community desire. Ensuring access to recreational activities (e.g. boating and fishing) as well as maintaining the intrinsic natural attributes is a goal of the community. Moreover, the APM project would provide opportunities to partner and work with surrounding communities. The APM project is perceived as a possible means to attain the aforementioned goals and desires.

8.2.2 Summary of Key Interests/Questions

In Blind River, almost all of the people engaged were interested in learning more, were supportive of their community being involved in the siting process and look forward to next steps.

Core Key Interests

Several key interests were recurring and identify the areas which the community is most interested in learning more about. The ***core*** key interests expressed include:

- Community and infrastructure development;
- Economic benefit and opportunities for growth; and
- Health, safety and natural environmental risks.

Community and Infrastructure development

From discussions with community leaders and residents, many Blind River residents are supportive of learning more about the APM Project. There is a keen desire to learn more about the project, though it is recognized that there is potential for community well-being to thrive in the absence of the APM Project, given the presence of local public and private sector employers. Residents are interested in the potential community benefits the APM Project may bring to Blind River such as increased recreational and community facilities.

Economic benefits and opportunities for growth

Residents are also interested in the potential for the APM Project to bring economic diversity to the community. The potential for a wide variety of economic investment in the community is seen as a potential motivating factor for the APM Project. The project is seen as a positive means to provide long term economic stability for the community. They are keen to see business development in the area to support the APM Project, if located in the area as well as the development of additional and larger retail stores to service an increased population. This will help them reach their desire of better capturing local retail spending.

Health, safety and natural environmental risks

Community members raised questions about the potential effects of the APM Project and used nuclear fuel on the natural environment (e.g. contamination of water and land) over the lifespan of the facility. Questions were also raised on the transportation (e.g. logistics) of used nuclear fuel to the site, as well as the effects on tourism in the area. Given the presence of the Cameco uranium refinery, health risks are generally understood. Protecting the natural environment as well as preserving opportunities for recreational activities is an important desire of the interview respondents.

Secondary Interests

In addition to the core key interests, a number of ***secondary*** key interests were also expressed and include:

- Potential for successful siting in the area;
- Jobs directly related to the APM Project; and
- Relations with First Nations.

Potential for successful siting in the area

Community members are aware of the potential benefits the project will bring to the community. They are also interested in the potential for successful siting in the area and the potential opportunity for Blind River as a primary focus of project activity.

Jobs directly related to the APM Project

Blind River is keen about the potential to capture jobs related directly to the APM Project and specifically skilled and professional jobs. Questions may focus on what type of employment opportunities will be available. Many Blind River residents indicated they would be content in sharing the jobs available with surrounding communities. NWMO job training programs would also be desired.

Relations with First Nations

Blind River residents indicated that they work closely on various projects with Local First Nations. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families know each other and work together. First Nations children attend local schools and Blind River children and adults attend First Nations recreational activities. They want to ensure that First Nations in the surrounding area are involved and that they can work together on the APM project.

8.2.3 Ongoing Engagement

The municipalities in the north shore area, inclusive of Elliot Lake, Blind River, the Township of The North Shore and Spanish (hereafter referred to as the 'North Huron communities') function as a region. They are politically autonomous but they are also tied to one another through their political and administrative constituency as fellow neighbouring communities. Beyond their shared interest in learning about the APM Project, these communities are connected through government ties and shared planning.

As well, there are a variety of other linkages that further speak to the broader connections between the municipalities. They share facilities and services and have a common heritage with uranium mining. They come together for community events and have developed some relationships with surrounding Aboriginal communities. They have a willingness to share common opportunities to benefit from the APM Project which has encouraged cohesion across the North Huron communities. Engagement of these communities will need to continue.

Moving forward, engagement activities with interest groups within Blind River should continue with an emphasis on working together with surrounding communities and Aboriginal communities. Currently, the engagement process has focused on individual discussions, interviews, meetings, overviews, briefings and dialogue in the North Huron communities (Town of Blind River, City of Elliot Lake The Township of the North Shore and Town of Spanish). The engagement process should expand to include more information in the wider area as well as further dialogue with First Nations and Métis groups.

8.0 Key Questions in the Site Selection Process - Summary

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[11]. This section addresses and elaborates on a subset of these questions related to community well-being in the context of Blind River.

The preceding chapters have looked at implementation of the APM Project in Blind River and the implications this might have on the community well-being of Blind River. Additionally, key issues and concerns identified through engagement activities have been highlighted. Through desktop research, dialogues with community members and leaders and on-going analysis, it is understood Blind River has a strong interest in learning more about the APM Project to realize growth and development opportunities within the community and surrounding area.

There is a high potential for sustained interest in the local community. There is potential for committed support for the APM Project and desire to continue in the siting process. Formal and informal leadership is strong and supportive of learning more about the APM facility being located in Blind River and the North Huron area.

At this point in time, there is a high potential for sustained interest in the surrounding communities. Three surrounding North Huron communities are in support of continuing to learn about the APM project. Local community leaders have indicated that it is important to have the involvement of local First Nations as well as Métis groups. Blind River and Mississauga First Nation cooperate on infrastructure projects. Residents in both communities share the same recreation centre and shop in the same places. Surrounding community mayors in the North Huron area (e.g. City of Elliot Lake, Town of Spanish and the Township of the North Shore) are supportive of the APM process in their communities as well. There is a good working relationship among the local surrounding communities as demonstrated through the ELNOS Corporation. Neighbouring communities share community services, facilities and community assets. Further discussions will be required to gain a full understanding of the potential interest in surrounding communities.

There appears to be high potential for the APM Project to foster well-being in Blind River. Blind River's leaders have shown cohesion and work as a team. Blind River's vision and aspirations align with the APM Project and they are adaptable to taking on another project and growing their population. Blind River has previous experience with other industries and attracting and sustaining a large workforce. APM Project would help advance the community character Blind River has established for itself as a centre for shopping, educational, health, social, and recreational activities as well as an artistic and cultural destination for the area.

[11] NWMO, 2011. Preliminary Assessment of Potential Suitability – Feasibility Studies Draft for Discussion With Communities Involved in the Site Selection Process.

There is also a potential for the APM Project to foster well-being in the surrounding communities. Surrounding North Huron community aspirations align with those of Blind River, particularly when considering the APM Project as a broader regional initiative. They recognise the need for additional industry to provide economic diversification in order to reach area development goals and to maintain/increase quality of life. Preliminary discussions have revealed a strong interest in the economic development potentials offered by the project to the broader area.

There are some uncertainties associated with the proceeding 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 which should be reserved 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 Aboriginal communities is required, including Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge holders in the area. The NWMO acknowledges, respects and honours 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[12].

2. Project implementation (including engineering, logistics and/or community well-being) must align with specific community aspirations:

    a. An acceptable area and regional project implementation plan must be identified which aligns ultimate project configuration with area expectations.

    b. Effective implementation of project planning at a broader level, involving the surrounding communities and potentially affected Aboriginal peoples, will be important in successful implementation of the project.

3. Interest in the community for further learning about the project needs to be sustained:

    a. The site selection process spans several years and interest and conversation in the community and area needs to be sustained throughout this process, including multiple election cycles.

    b. The potential effects of the project on the community and area would be substantial and the community and area will need support to further explore their interest and take an active role in discussions of how the project should be implemented.

    c. Opposition groups may actively seek to influence community decision-making and community leaders will need to respond to these pressures. Local communities have some experience in addressing opposition groups and are articulate about radiation and uranium related matters. Blind River will require support to prepare for the next phases of the siting process if they are to proceed.

[12] NWMO, 2010b. NWMO Aboriginal Policy. Toronto, Canada.

4. Transportation routes and mode(s) need to be designed and configured, taking into account social values:

    a. Transportation considerations will need to be determined. 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 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.

9.0 References

AECOM, 2010. A Preliminary Assessment of Illustrative Generic Community Economic Benefits from Hosting the APM Project.

NWMO, 2010. Moving Forward Together: Process for Selecting a Site for Canada's Deep Geological Repository for Used Nuclear Fuel. (Available at http://www.nwmo.ca/uploads_managed/MediaFiles/1545_processforselectingasiteforcan.pdf).

NWMO,2010b. NWMO Aboriginal Policy. Toronto, Canada. (Available at http://www.nwmo.ca/uploads_managed/MediaFiles/1513_nwmo_aboriginalpolicy-2010en.pdf).

NWMO, 2012. Description of Canada's Repository for Used Nuclear Fuel and Centre of Expertise – Working Draft.

Town of Blind River, 2013. Community Economic Development Strategy.

Town of Blind River, 1992. (Strategic Plan) Our Town: Our Future.

Town of Blind River, 2006. Blind River Official Plan.