



TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Jo-Ann Facella, NWMO
Cc: Ron Mucklestone, Christel von Engelbrechten, DPRA
FROM: Vicki McCulloch and Peter Homenuck, DPRA
DATE: June 10, 2014
RE: Update on CWBA Findings to Date – Nipigon, ON

1. Introduction

At the request of the Township of Nipigon, NWMO has been asked to provide the municipality with an update on findings to date of the Community Well-Being Assessment (CWBA) that is being done as part of the Phase 1 work in Step 3. DPRA has completed a draft community profile (March 2014), and is preparing the CWBA report. This technical memorandum outlines emerging findings from this assessment. The technical memorandum is organized as follows:

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2. Scope of the CWBA

The CWBA report currently in preparation 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 at open houses and community events. In order to ensure that a broad, inclusive and holistic approach is being taken to assessment, a ‘community well-being’ framework was identified to help understand and assess the potential effects of the APM Project. This includes understanding how the community may be affected were the project to be implemented in the area, and identifying opportunities to leverage the project to achieve other objectives the community considers important. The framework is also used to explore the relative ‘fit’ of the APM Project for the community and the potential to create the foundation of confidence and support required for the implementation of the project. The CWB framework is designed to encourage exploration of the project through five different ‘lenses’ or asset categories:

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- **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?

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 be addressed.¹ These 'Factors Beyond Safety' explore the implications of the APM Project, were it to be implemented in the community, on various factors of well-being.

At the outset of the site selection process, the NWMO also 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.² The Phase 1 CWBA addresses and elaborates on a subset of these questions related to community well-being in the context of Nipigon.

All of the above are considered in the summary of findings to date for Nipigon.

3. Summary of Findings to Date

The findings to date of the Phase 1 CWBA for Nipigon are summarized below.

Values and Aspirations of Nipigon

The values and aspirations of the Township of Nipigon have been documented in the Nipigon Community Profile³ and other reports prepared by the community. The preliminary CWBA is measured against these values and aspirations.

Nipigon is situated at the junction of Highway 11 and the Trans-Canada Highway 17, otherwise called the 'Crossroads of Canada'. Given its location, Nipigon is a highway/eco-tourism focused community. There is a strong emphasis on outdoor activities and sports (i.e., boating, hockey, fishing and hunting, biking, walking, and extensive use of local trail systems). A number of initiatives underway are looking at options for enhancing tourism, including the 'Nipigon: A Natural Edge' rebranding campaign. Nipigon is also very integrated with the neighbouring Red Rock Indian Band and the Flying Post First Nation.

¹ NWMO. 2010. *Moving Forward Together: Process for Selecting a Site for Canada's Deep Geological Repository for Used Nuclear Fuel*. Available online at: <http://www.nwmo.ca/sitingprocess>.

² NWMO. November 2011. *Preliminary Assessment of Potential Suitability – Feasibility Studies*. Draft for Discussion with Communities Involved in the Site Selection Process.

³ DPRA Canada. April 2014. *Community Profile, Nipigon Ontario – Draft*. Prepared for the Nuclear Waste Management Organization.

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The Township of Nipigon is a resilient community, having faced significant social, cultural, and economic change. The greatest changes in the community in recent years included the changes in the local economy following the closure of two local mills – Red Rock Mill and Multiply Mill – in late 2006 and early 2007. The Nipigon community also faces an aging and declining population.

The Township of Nipigon has expressed clear values and aspirations for its community. Population growth (i.e., increasing the population to previous levels) and economic growth (e.g., in particular looking to eco-tourism) remain priorities for the community. Nipigon has very strong values in terms of the natural environment and water, with particular emphasis on Lake Superior, Lake Nipigon, and the Nipigon River. The Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area is also highly valued.

The Township of Nipigon recently updated its Official Plan (December 2013 / January 2014), and has a Waterfront Development Master Plan (2013), and a Strategic Plan (2012). The Official Plan Vision statement is: *“Nipigon will become a destination for travelers, regional focus for services, recreation and culture and a sustainable, healthy and complete community”*.⁴ Nipigon’s waterfront and marina have played major roles in the community since the 1800s as one of the most northerly freshwater ports in North America.⁵ As such, the Waterfront Development Master Plan (WDMP) provides a framework for this area of the community. The mission statement in the Strategic Plan states: *“Nipigon will be a destination point for visitors, businesses and new residents while maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for the community”*.⁶

Community Well-Being Assessment – Five Asset Categories

- **Human Assets:** The APM Project has the potential to bring positive net benefits to the Human Assets of Nipigon were the project to be implemented in the area, and may help the Township realize some of its aspirations and goals, including those related to population growth, growth in the workforce, access to education/training, and improvement in health and safety facilities and services.
- **Economic Assets:** Overall, community well-being related to the Economic Assets of Nipigon would appear to be positive as a result of the APM Project, e.g., with respect to employment, income levels, business activity and municipal finances. However, there is uncertainty as to whether the APM Project is well aligned with the aspirations of the community with respect to eco-tourism.
- **Infrastructure/Physical Assets:** Overall, the changes in community well-being related to the Infrastructure or Physical Assets of Nipigon as a result of the APM Project appear to be positive (e.g., new housing development; enhanced opportunities for new and renewed infrastructure).
- **Social Assets:** The APM Project does align with many values and aspirations of the community, such as increasing the number of families and children, and contributing to the viability of community facilities, culture and recreation programs, social services, and community organizations. However, there is some uncertainty as to whether the APM Project aligns, from the community’s perspective, with some values and aspirations of community members related to the use of eco-tourism as a strategy for economic development in Nipigon. Overall, there is uncertainty about whether the APM Project will disrupt community cohesion, despite the potential for the APM Project to enhance many social assets.

⁴ MHBC Planning, Urban Design and Landscape Architecture. December 16, 2013. *Official Plan for the Township of Nipigon*. P. 6.

⁵ Township of Nipigon. 2014. *Nipigon Marina*. Website: <http://www.nipigon.net/visitors/attractions/nipigon-marina/>. Accessed: January 2014.

⁶ Township of Nipigon. January 2012. *Strategic Plan*.

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- **Natural Environment:** Initial studies on the potential environmental effects associated with the Project suggest that the APM Project is unlikely to have any significant negative effect on the natural environment. It is expected that through working with local communities and relevant authorities and clearly communicating with the public, any effects of the project on tourism can be mitigated.

Factors Beyond Safety

The CWBA also considers a number of ‘Factors Beyond Safety’ established early in the siting process⁷. There are many factors on which community well-being would be expected to be enhanced. However, there is uncertainty as to implications of the APM Project, were it to be implemented in Nipigon, on various aspects of well-being. Important areas of uncertainty are summarized below:

Factors Beyond Safety	Areas of Uncertainty	Discussion
Potential social, economic and cultural effects during implementation phase of project, including factors identified by Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge ⁸	Community administration and decision-making processes: <u>Uncertain</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some community leaders have demonstrated interest in the project while for others, there are uncertainties surrounding the suitability of the project. • There has been limited participation by community members in engagement to date.
	Balanced growth and healthy livable communities: <u>Uncertain</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nipigon has aspirations to grow its population and economy as platforms for its strategic plan. • There is some uncertainty as to the alignment of the APM Project, from the community’s perspective, with some elements of the community’s vision and values, which prioritize use of the surrounding natural environment and landscape for eco-tourism and community growth opportunities.
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 ⁹	Community administration and decision-making processes: <u>Uncertain</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of surrounding communities is at a preliminary stage and further dialogue will be required to explore decision making issues and capacities. There is a level of misinformation about the NWMO process/project in the community and surrounding area, including the RRIB. There is vocal concern, if not outright opposition by some individuals and more formal opposition by some organizations. Some individuals and organizations are not willing to ‘learn more’ about the APM Project.
	Balanced growth and healthy livable communities: <u>Uncertain</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of surrounding communities has been initiated and is coordinated and ongoing. • Surrounding area communities are collectively seeking economic development and growth in the region.

⁷ NWMO. 2010. Moving Forward Together: Process for Selecting a Site for Canada’s Deep Geological Repository for Used Nuclear Fuel. Available online at: <http://www.nwmo.ca/sitingprocess>.

⁸ Traditional knowledge work has not occurred or is very preliminary at this stage – further engagement and input is required.

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Factors Beyond Safety	Areas of Uncertainty	Discussion
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is some uncertainty as to the alignment of the APM Project with neighbouring communities, in particular the nearby RRIB, but also the Township of Red Rock¹⁰, Dorion, and Hurkett.

Potential to Foster Sustained Interest in Exploring This Project

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

There is some misinformation about the APM Project in Nipigon and the surrounding communities/ municipalities. There is vocal concern and opposition by some individuals and more formal opposition by some organizations (e.g., petitions). The ‘Citizens Against Nuclear Waste in Nipigon’ was established in April 2014. However, some individuals and organizations have expressed they are pleased with the NWMO process and are willing to learn more about the APM Project. Many of the interests/questions about the APM Project and the siting process raised in Nipigon are similar to those in other communities.

During DPRA’s time in Nipigon, community leadership and residents have remarked that their interest in learning about the project and participating in the siting process is at least in part because other neighbouring communities have done so (e.g., Schreiber), and because of the community’s location at ‘Canada’s Cross-roads’ at the junction of Highways 17 and 11. Some remark that while the Project may not be suited for Nipigon, it may benefit the community if for example Schreiber (or another Northern Ontario community) was the host for the Project. Many wish to be engaged and involved in order to ensure the community is included in discussions about the implementation of the project, should a site be selected elsewhere in the broad region.

Overall, interest in the APM Project is mixed; some residents are neutral, some opposed, and some supportive. A number of residents expressed they are in the process to ‘learn more’, especially since neighbouring communities are in the process. Within the community, there is some uncertainty as to whether the APM Project aligns with some values and aspirations of community members, linked to building on the eco-tourism industry as a driver of economic development and community sustainability over the long term. This poses challenges to sustaining interest in learning about the project that would be required for the community to make an informed decision in the future.

There is uncertainty about whether the APM Project will disrupt community cohesion, despite the potential for the APM Project to enhance many social assets.

¹⁰ The Township of Red Rock was screened out in Step 2 of the NWMO process.

Key Questions in the Site Selection Process

1. *Is there the potential to foster the well-being of the community through the implementation of the project?* There is uncertainty regarding the potential for the APM Project to foster well-being in Nipigon as defined by the community as a whole.
2. *Is there the potential for citizens in the community to continue to be interested in exploring this project through subsequent steps in the site selection process?* There is some potential for sustained interest in the local community.
3. *Is there the potential to foster the well-being of the surrounding area and region, and establish the foundation to move forward with the project?* There is potential for sustained interest in at least some of the surrounding communities at this time (e.g., Schreiber), although there is uncertainty as to whether interest can be sustained in other surrounding communities (e.g., Red Rock Indian Band, the Township of Red Rock (screened from the NWMO Learn More process in Step 2), Dorion, and Hurkett. At this time, there is uncertainty with respect to the potential for the APM Project to foster well-being in the surrounding communities, as more work is needed to understand how the Project aligns with neighbouring communities.

Summary of Interim Findings

The interim results suggest that the APM Project may have some potential to be a fit for the community of Nipigon. The APM Project has the potential to bring positive net benefits to the community and may help the Township realize some of its aspirations and goals. These are related to population growth, growth in the workforce, access to education/training, and improvement in health and safety facilities and services. The Project would also have positive effects on employment, income levels, business activity, municipal finances and infrastructure.

However there is some uncertainty, from the community's perspective, as to whether the APM Project aligns with some values and aspirations of community members. There is uncertainty about whether the APM Project will disrupt community cohesion, despite the potential for the APM Project to enhance many social assets. There also appears to be substantial challenges to addressing misinformation about the Project in the area, and sustaining interest in learning about the Project that would be required for the community to make an informed decision in the future.

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References

DPRA Canada. March 24, 2014. Community Profile – Nipigon, ON. Preliminary Working Draft for Discussion Purposes Only. Prepared for the Nuclear Waste Management Organization.

DPRA Canada. May 27, 2014. Preliminary Community Well-Being Assessment: Nipigon, ON. Prepared for the Nuclear Waste Management Organization.

MHBC Planning, Urban Design and Landscape Architecture. December 16, 2013. *Official Plan for the Township of Nipigon.* P. 6.

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