

Welcome to Public Information Centre #1

Section 2 of the Highway 17 Four-Laning between Highway 673 and Rush Bay Road
Route Planning and Preliminary Design Study, G.W.P. 6053-03-00

 **Please sign in here** 

Do you have a question or want to provide feedback?

Members of the Project Team are available to answer your questions today.

Fill out a comment sheet today, or send your comments to the Team by

October 20, 2023

Highway 17 Four-Laning between the Manitoba / Ontario Border and Kenora

Route Planning and Preliminary Design Study, G.W.P. 6053-03-00



Public Information Centre #1

Section 2 – between Highway 673 and Rush Bay Road

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

Welcome to Public Information Centre #1 for Section 2 of the Route Planning and Preliminary Design Study for the Highway 17 Four-Laning between Highway 673 and Rush Bay Road.

This Public Information Centre presents the study purpose, existing environmental conditions and alternatives being considered for Section 2.

In 2009, a preferred alternative route for Section 2 was selected, documented and filed in a Transportation Environmental Study Report (TESR). During the TESRs 30-day review period, concerns were received and the Ministry of Transportation decided to put the Study on hold until a resolution was reached. The previous preferred alternative route (shown below) will not be carried forward for further evaluation as it has significant impacts to Indigenous communities.

In 2018, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) placed a priority on the Highway 17 Four-Laning between the Manitoba / Ontario Border and Kenora Route Planning Study. The planning, preliminary design, environmental assessment and detail design phases for Section 1 was completed in 2019 and documented in a TESR.

Section 2 is now undergoing re-evaluation.



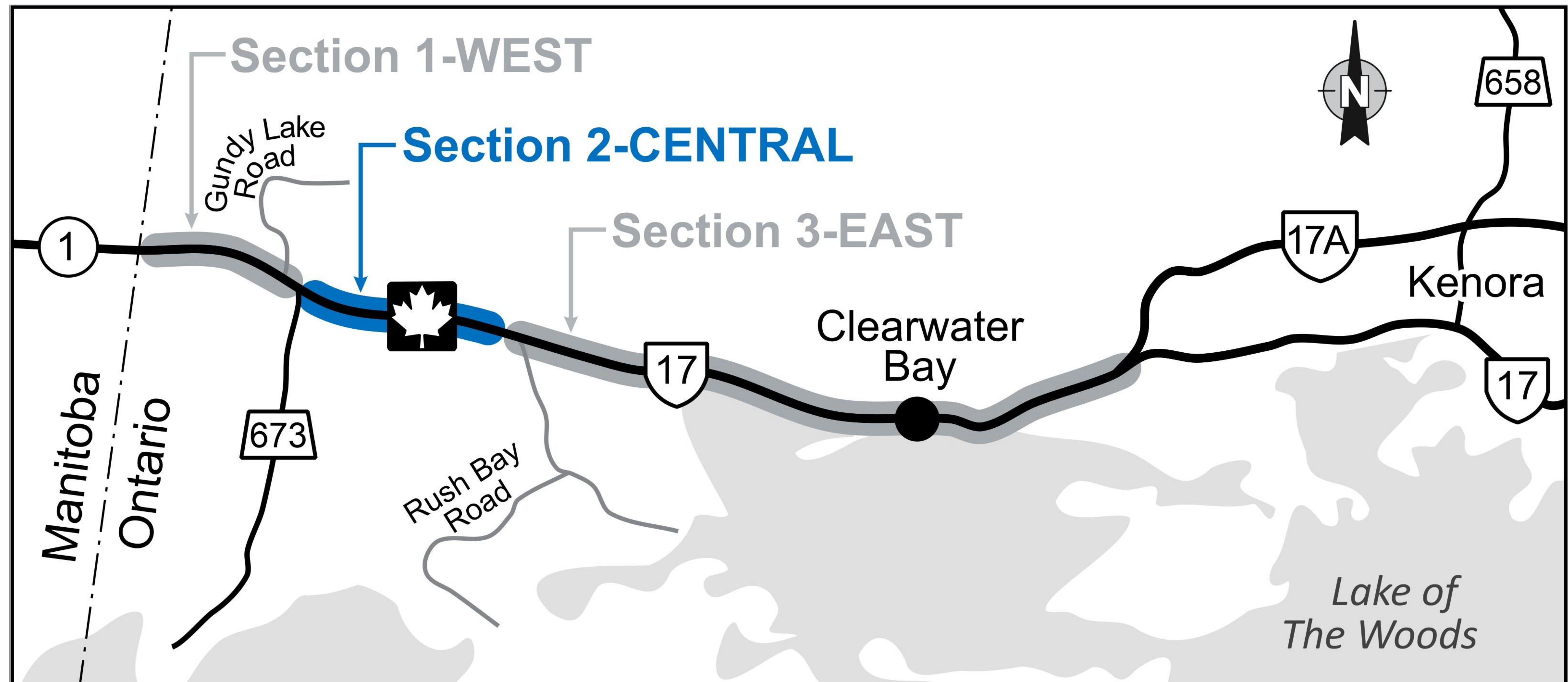
If you have any accessibility requirements to participate in this project, please speak to one of the Project Team members.



Reminder: please sign it at the front desk.



The study is being carried out in 3 sections:



Section #1:
Environmental Assessment (EA)
complete, under construction
 Manitoba border to Highway 673
 (6.5 kilometres)

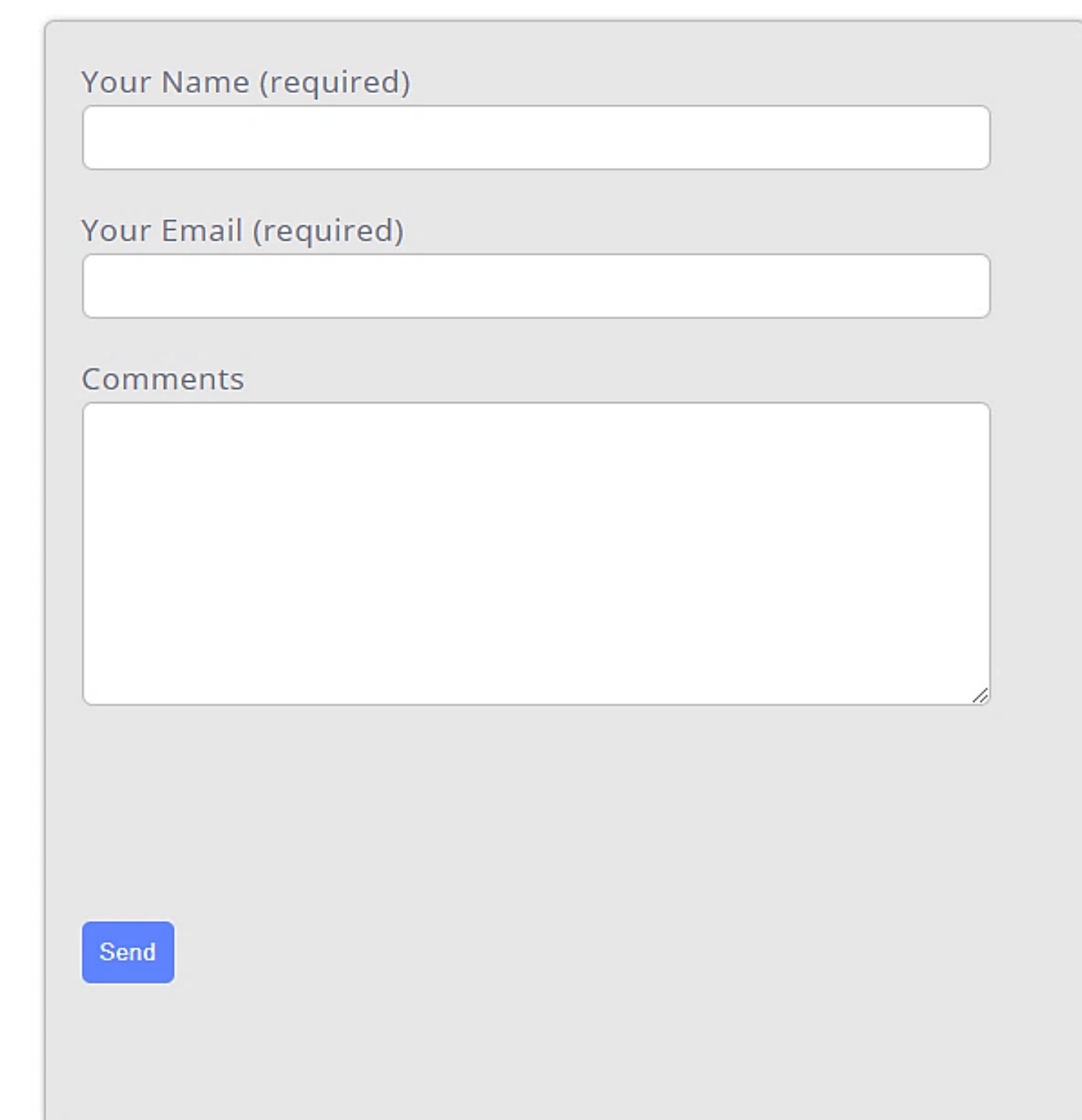
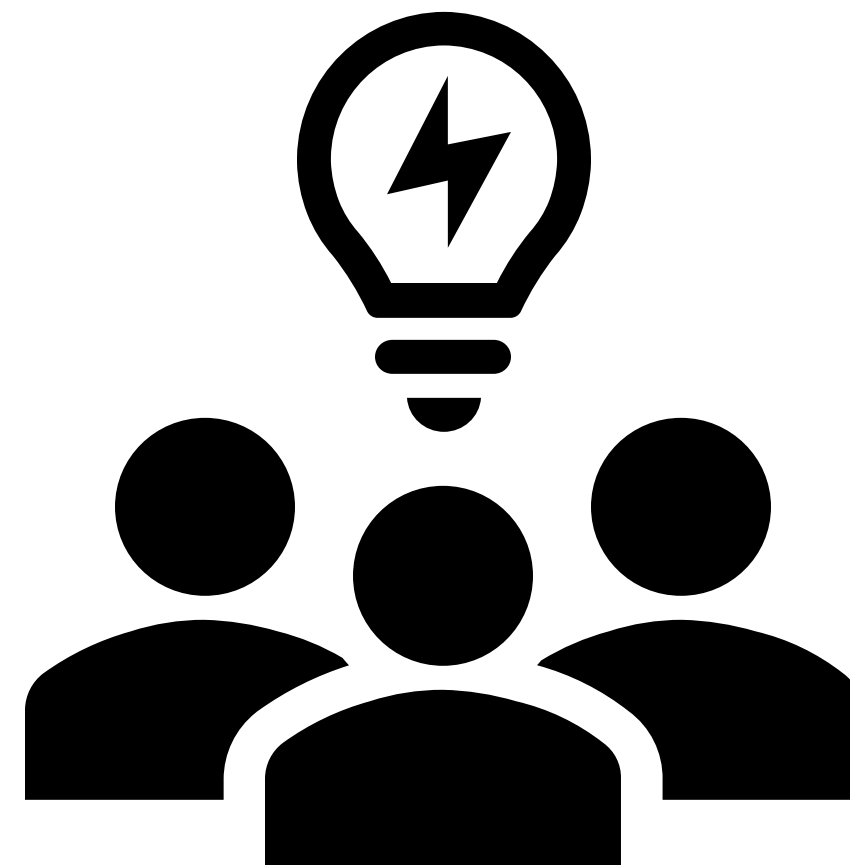
Section #2:
EA undergoing re-evaluation
 Highway 673 to Rush Bay Road (8.5
 kilometres)

Section #3:
Re-evaluation required, timing
to be determined
 Rush Bay Road to Highway 17A
 (24 kilometres)

We welcome any comments and questions you may have on the material presented.

After reviewing the displays, please complete a comment sheet or speak to one of the Project Team members to discuss any questions or comments you may have. You may also submit input using our website:

www.4lanehighway17kenora.ca.



Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Policy:

Information collected during this study will be used to assist the Ministry of Transportation in meeting the requirements of the Provincial *Environmental Assessment Act*. This material will be maintained on file for use during the study and may be included in the study documentation. Information collected will be used in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

- Highway 17, between the Manitoba-Ontario border and Kenora, is a strategic link in the Trans-Canada Highway System
- There are no alternate highway routes between Kenora and the Manitoba-Ontario Border for inter-provincial traffic. Four-laning will provide an opportunity for redundancy of travel lanes if one direction is closed
- Long distance traffic relies on this section of highway to bring goods and trade to the region and across Canada
- The highway provides access to many tourist and recreational areas in both Manitoba and Ontario
- Traffic volumes increase significantly during summer months, particularly during long weekends



Four-laning Highway 17 will improve road safety by:

- ✓ providing increased opportunities for passing
- ✓ physically separating opposing lanes of traffic
- ✓ reducing congestion
- ✓ reducing travel time
- ✓ minimizing impacts to traffic during maintenance activities

2009 – The study was initiated. Existing conditions were documented, alternatives were developed and evaluated and a preferred alternative was selected for Sections 1 and 2.

Transportation Environmental Study Reports (TESRs) were filed for Sections 1 and 2. **During the 30-day comment period, concerns were received and the Ministry of Transportation decided to put the Study on hold until a resolution was reached.**

2018 – The Ministry of Transportation recommenced the study and continues to work with stakeholders allowing the project to move forward. **As part of the study re-commencement, the Ministry of Transportation withdrew the previously issued Notice of Completion for each of Sections 1 and 2.**

2021 – A Notice of Completion of TESR was re-filed for Section 1 to document the Recommended Plan, alternatives development and evaluation/selection and the design implementation details (including the environmental effects and proposed mitigation measures).

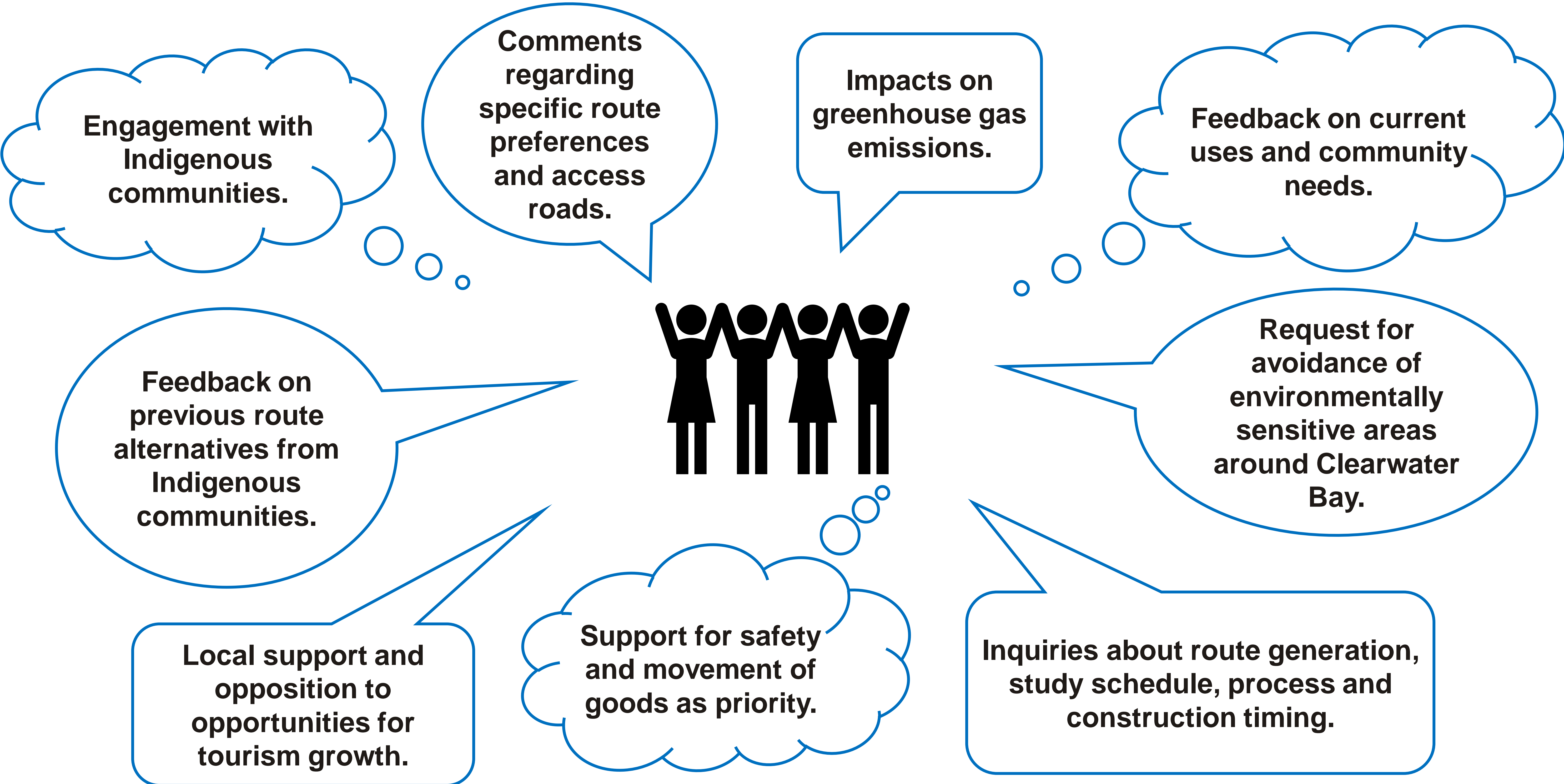
2022 – The Section 1 Detail Design was completed and is currently under construction (anticipated completion in 2024).

2023 – Section 2 is undergoing re-evaluation.

To date, consultation and engagement has included:

- ✓ correspondence with interested ministries and agencies at key milestones
- ✓ previous Public Information Centres (PICs) 1, 2 and 3 and public engagement opportunities
- ✓ engagement with interested Indigenous communities and interested stakeholders

Feedback received by the Project Team during previous Section 2 consultation and engagement sessions included:

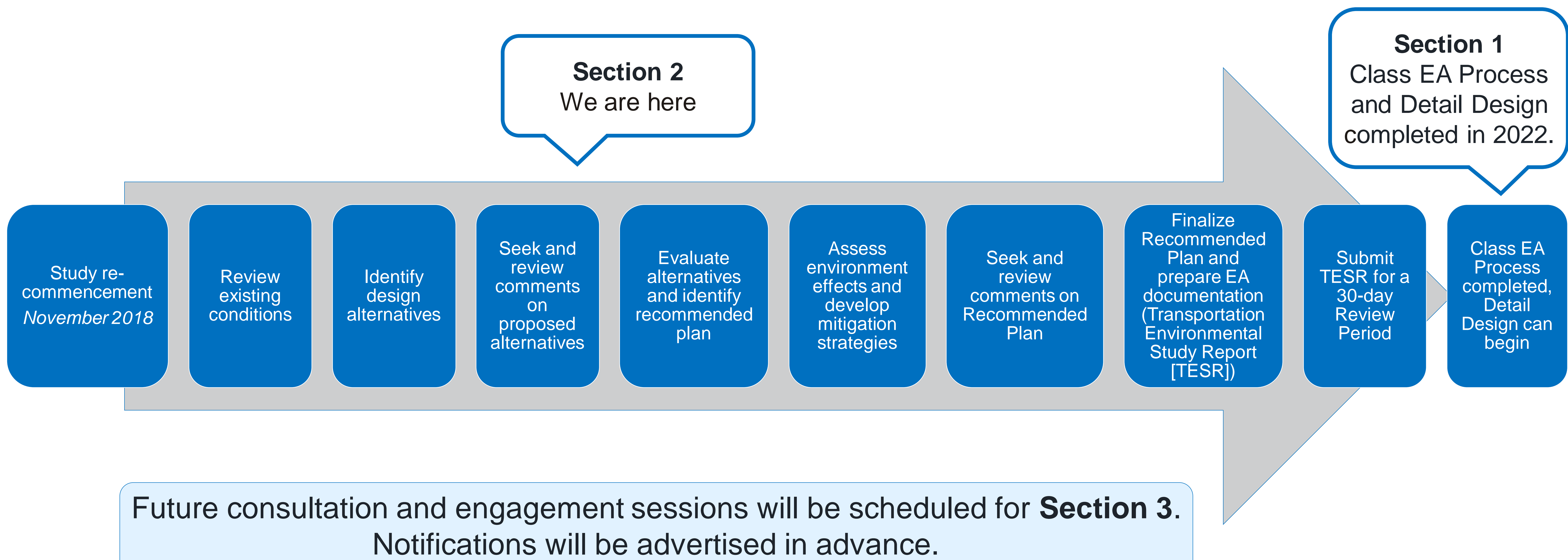


Based on this feedback, the Project Team is currently revisiting the alternatives for Section 2.

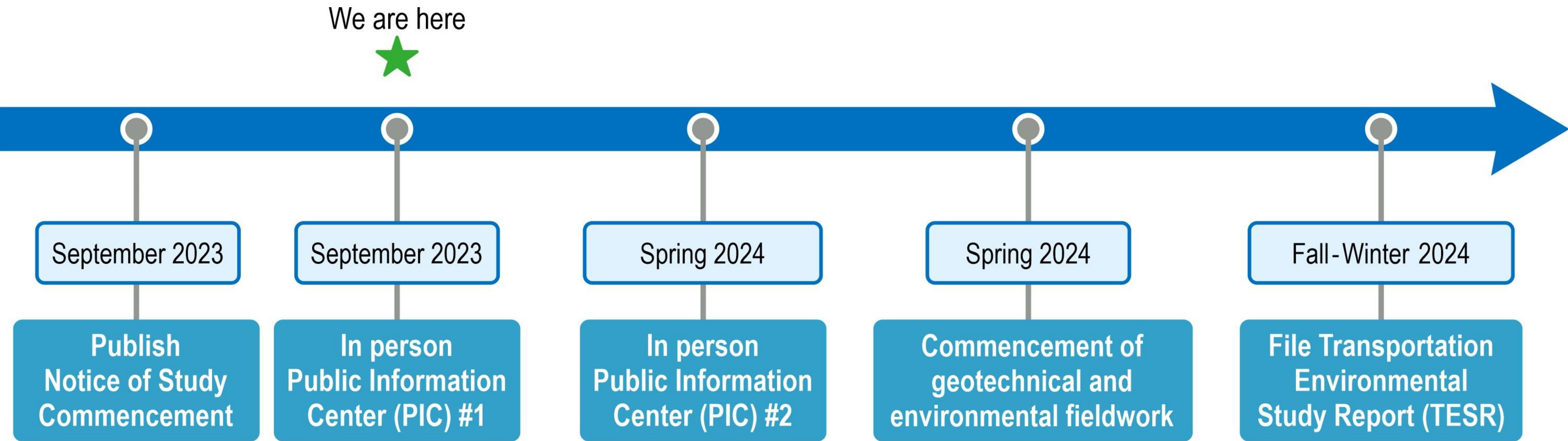
This study is being conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Transportation's *Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Transportation Facilities* (2000) for a Group 'B' project.

The Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) pre-approved the process for the planning and design of provincial highway projects. External agency, Indigenous community engagement and public consultation has, and will continue to, take place throughout the project to present study findings.

An overview of the Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Process is provided in the following figure:

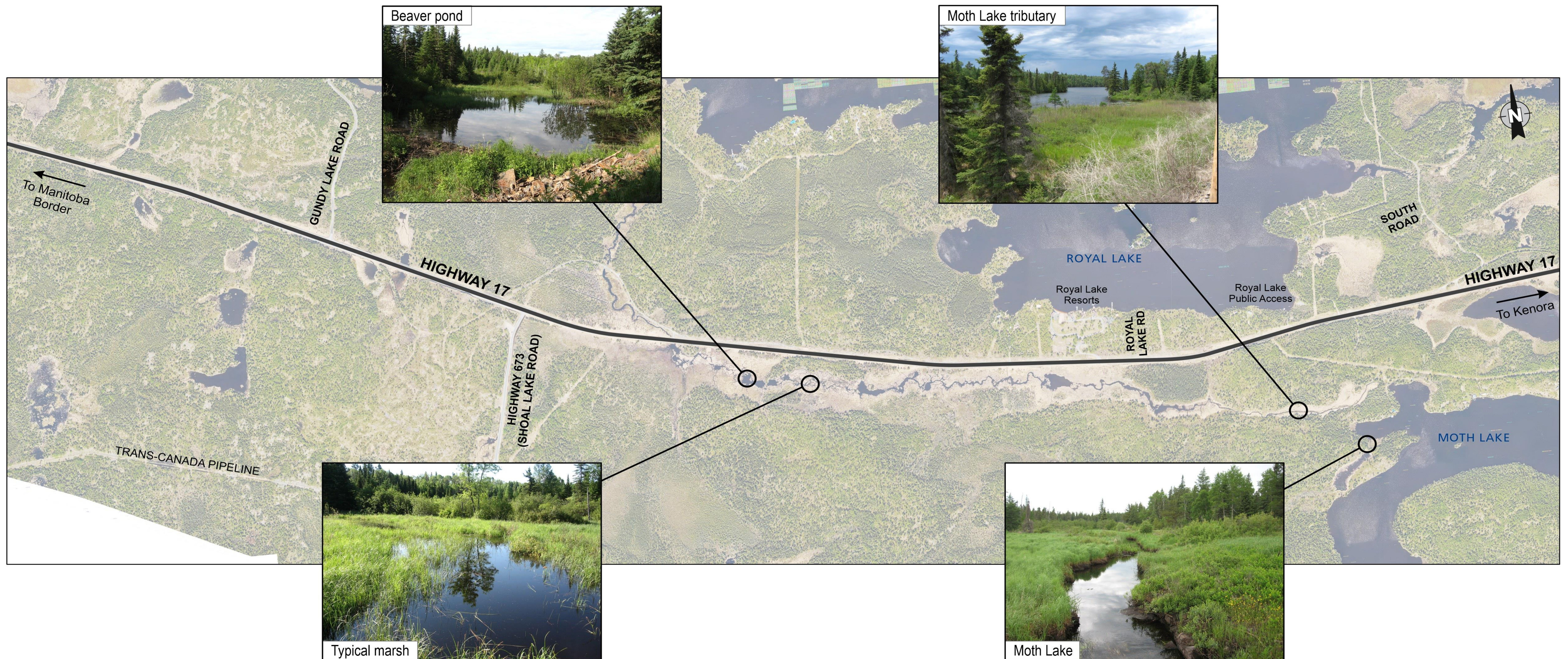


The tentative schedule for the Section 2 Environmental Assessment and related opportunities for consultation and engagement are illustrated in the figure below:



- There are numerous small lakes and beaver ponds in the area that support baitfish and spawning habitat for Northern Pike

- The area supports a range of wildlife species, such as: White-tailed Deer, Moose, Eastern Wolf sub-species and Bald Eagle
- Hunting, particularly for deer, is important to the local economy



- The area topography is variable, with frequent bedrock outcropping and in some areas, significant bedrock ridges
- Watercourses, marshes and wetlands occupy the low-lying areas

- The largest watercourse flows along the south side of Highway 17, draining between Moth Lake and Royal Lake

Highway four-laning is accomplished by **twinning** the existing highway and / or creating segments of **new highway alignment**.



Example where a new alignment can minimize impacting an environmental feature

Twinning:

- Two new lanes are constructed carrying traffic in one direction. The existing two-lane highway is retained, with both lanes carrying traffic in the other direction
- Transitions from one side of the existing highway to the other may be required to avoid local constraints
- Sections of the existing highway may be upgraded over the long term as appropriate (for example; horizontal / vertical alignment improvements)

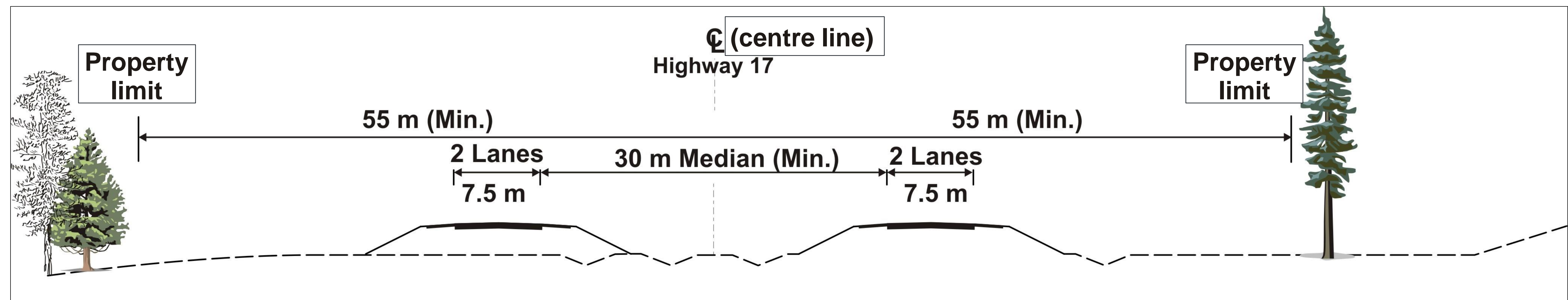
New highway alignment:

- Where segments of the existing highway alignment are not suited to twinning, due to geometry or local constraints, a new four-lane alignment would be required
- Existing highway may be maintained as a local access road

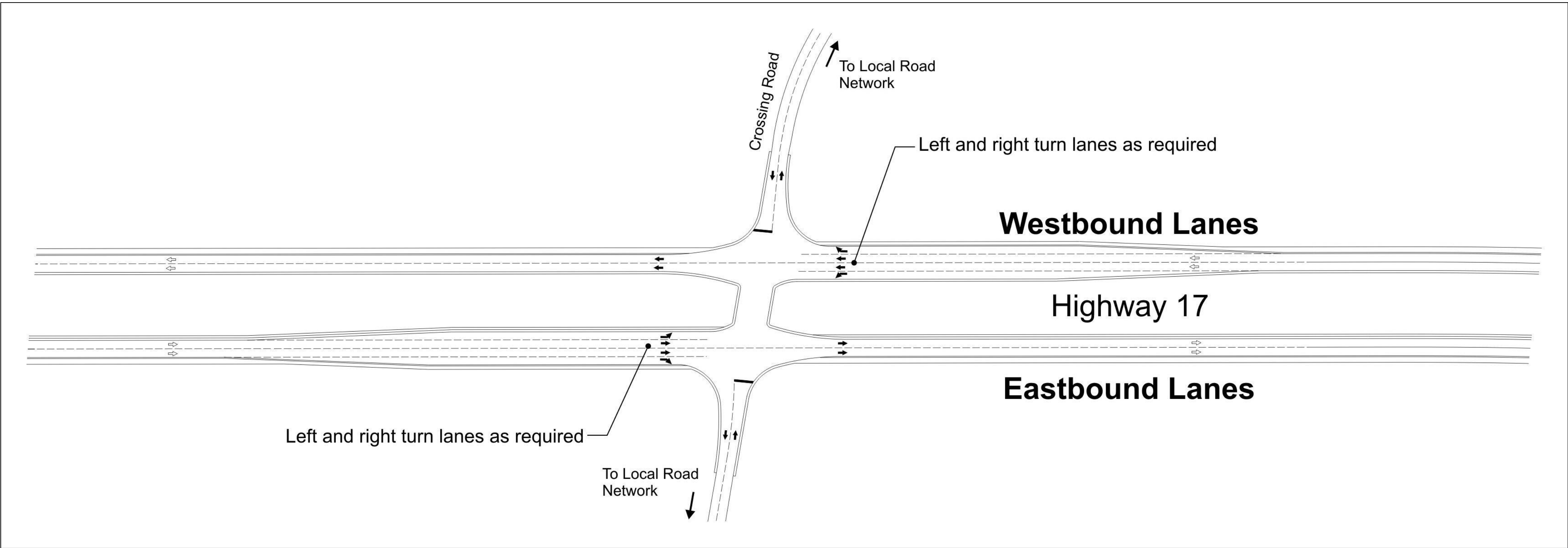
Highway 17 as a Four-Lane Highway would have the following characteristics:

- A minimum 30-metre median will separate two lanes in each direction
- a wider median will be used, where required, to address access, constructability and other considerations
- at-grade intersections after initial construction
- limited property access some entrances will become right-in/right-out and/or consolidated with others
- long-term improvements will include grade-separated interchanges

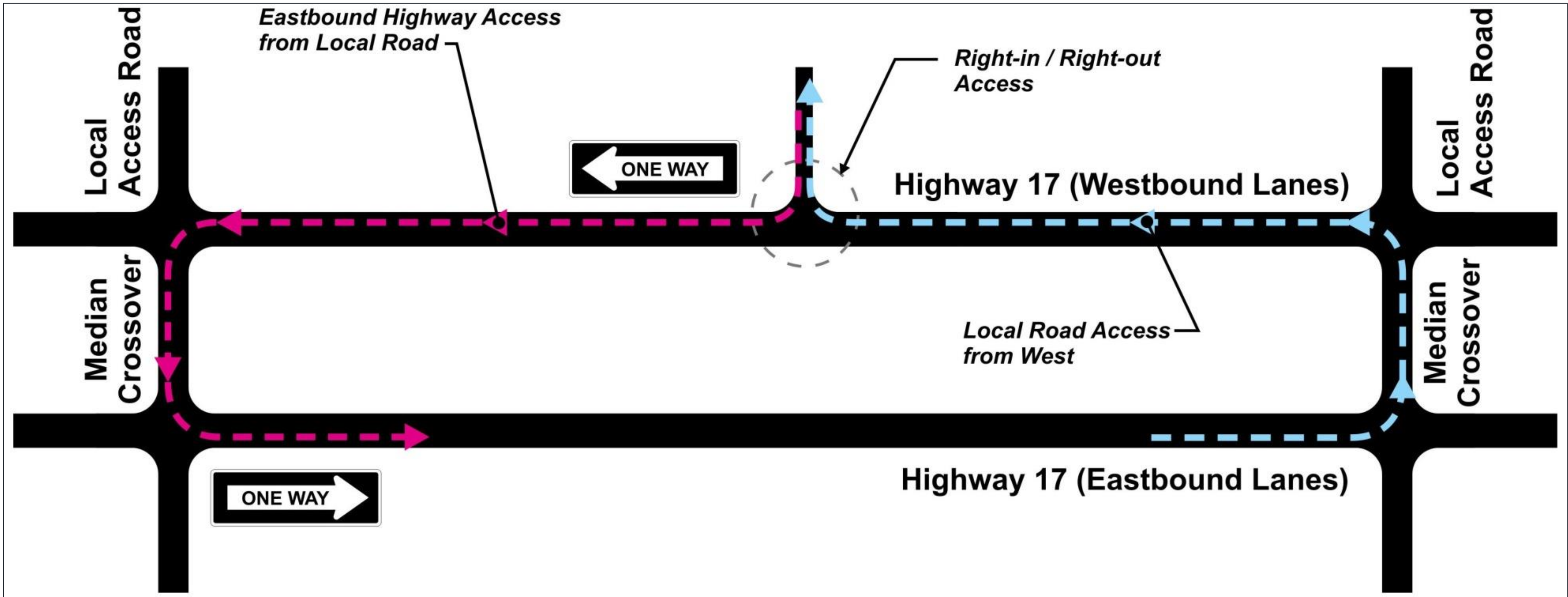
Typical Cross-Section



Typical four-lane intersection:



Typical right-in / right-out access:



Alternatives to the Undertaking

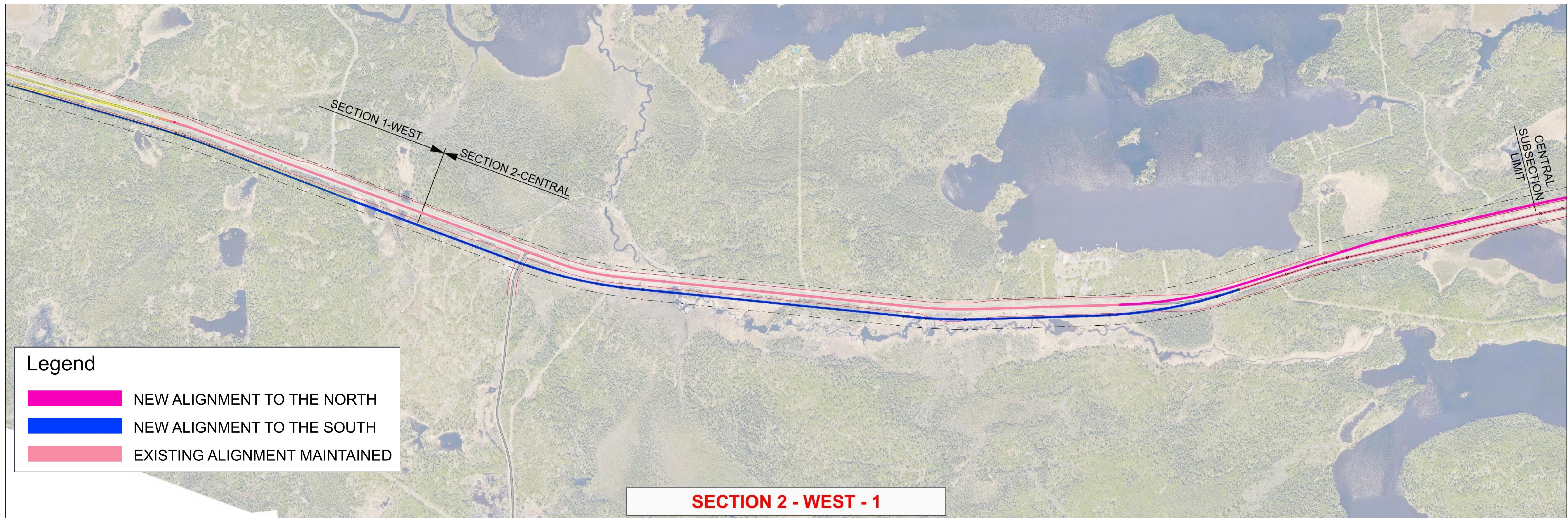
Criteria	Alternatives				
	Do nothing	Transportation demand management (reduce peak demand)	Non-roadway improvements (rail, air, transit)	Localized operational improvements (existing highway 17)	Highway 17 corridor capacity improvements
Long term needs					
Congestion decreased	Congestion will increase as traffic volumes increase over long term.	Congestion will not decrease significantly.	May result in small decrease in congestion over short term as alternative modes are used.	Congestion will increase as traffic volumes increase.	Congestion reduced with significant capacity improvements.
Road safety improved	Potential for collisions will increase as traffic volumes increase.	Safety will not improve.	Will not improve safety in existing highway corridor.	Minor safety improvements.	Safety improved with design / capacity changes.
Accessibility improved	Area access more difficult as traffic volumes increase.	Area access may not improve, may be more difficult.	May improve regional access. May not improve local access.	Minor effect on accessibility.	Area access improved with capacity improvements.
Serve local needs	Will not service local needs due to higher congestion.	Will not service local needs due to higher congestion.	Will not service local needs due to higher congestion.	Will not service local needs due to higher congestion.	Will serve local needs. Access changes may be required.
Can be staged	Not applicable.	Can be staged.	Cannot be staged.	Can be staged.	Can be staged.
Minimize impact					
Minimize economic impact	Existing highway may limit economic potential.	Shifting travel patterns may cause economic impact.	Minimal impact on highway businesses. Does not support area tourism focus.	Existing highway may limit economic potential.	Regional mobility is a positive impact however potential change to local business access.
Minimize environmental impact	No impact.	Minimal impact.	Minimal impact as existing corridors used.	Minimal impact.	Some impacts, most of which can be mitigated.
Minimize socio/cultural effects	Minimal impact.	High impact potential (for example, staggered work hours) .	Minimal impact.	Minimal impact.	Some impacts, most of which can be mitigated.
Consistent with existing systems					
Existing corridor available	The existing highway corridor is available.	The existing highway corridor is available.	Existing rail corridor and existing highway, air and marine corridors are available.	The existing highway corridor is available.	The existing highway corridor is available.
Required different modes	Possible modes include cars, trucks, buses.	Possible modes include cars, trucks, buses.	Requires other modes to access rail/marine/air facilities.	Possible modes include cars, trucks, buses.	Possible modes include cars, trucks, buses.
Cost effective	Cost-effective solution considering capital cost.	Cost-effective solution considering capital cost.	Not cost effective since significant additional infrastructure required to achieve local access.	Cost-effective solution considering capital cost.	More costly solution. Economic benefits to the area and improved highway safety and operation offset capital costs.
Comments					
	Will not meet the area's future needs. Minimal impact. Consistent with existing systems.	Will not meet the area's future needs. Potential impact on development. Consistent with existing systems.	Will not meet the area's future needs. Not consistent with existing systems. Does not address long term needs.	Will not meet the area's future needs. Minimal impacts. Consistent with existing systems.	Will meet the area's future needs. Some impact requiring mitigation. Consistent with existing system.
Recommendation					
	Eliminate from further consideration.	Eliminate from further consideration.	Eliminate from further consideration.	Eliminate from further consideration.	Carry forward for further analysis.

Based on feedback received at the previous consultation and engagement events, the Project Team will be revisiting the alternatives for Section 2. An analysis and evaluation summary table of the potential advantages and disadvantages of each alternative will be prepared based on consideration of the following factors and criteria:

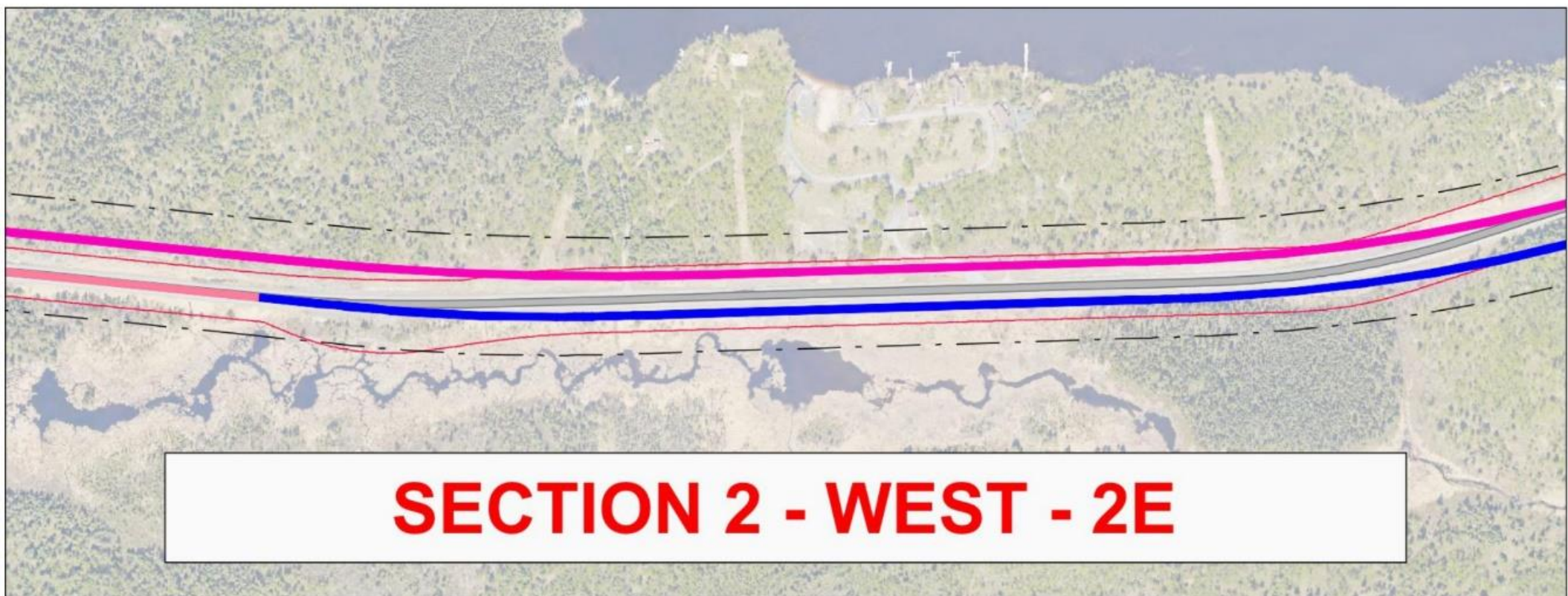
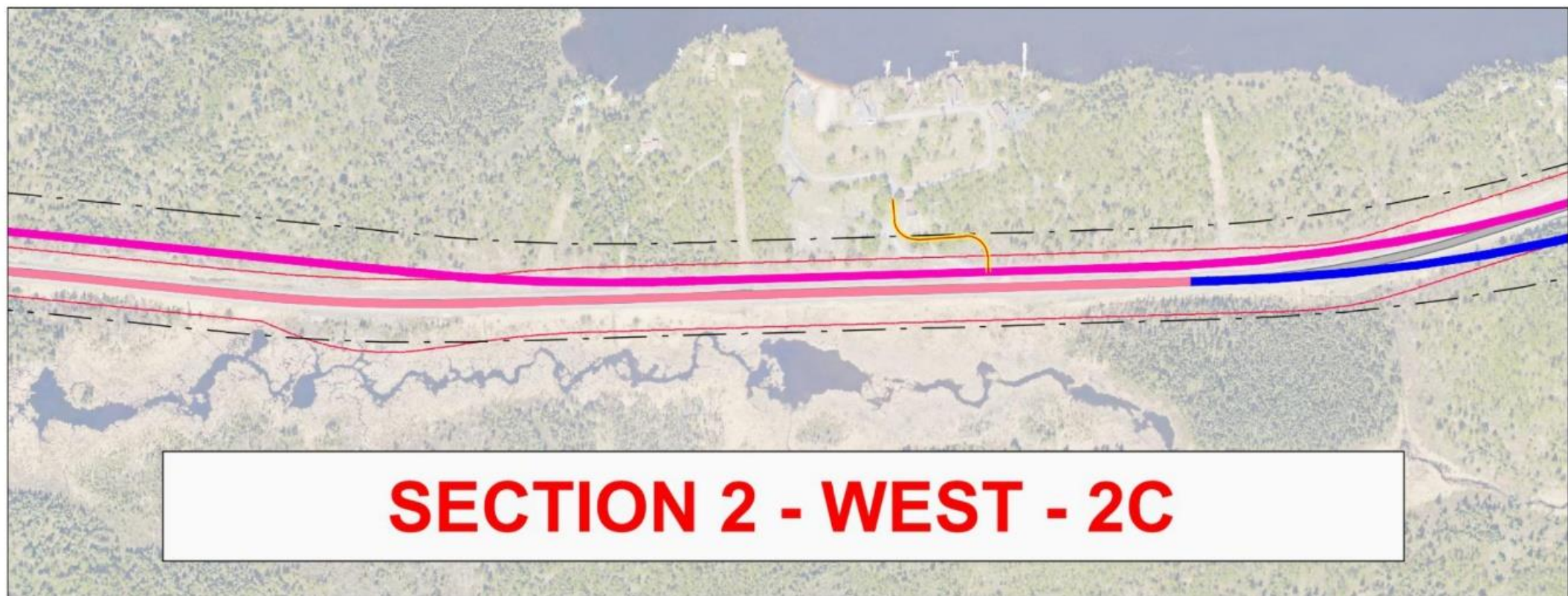
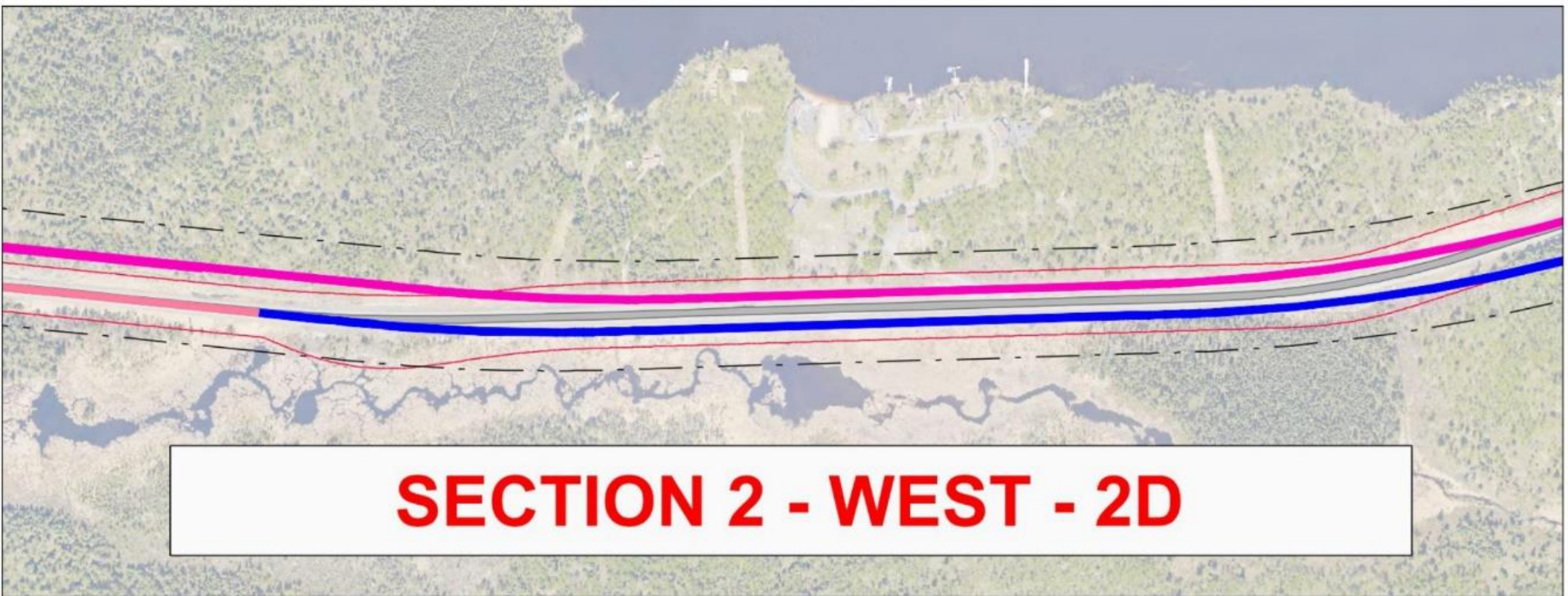
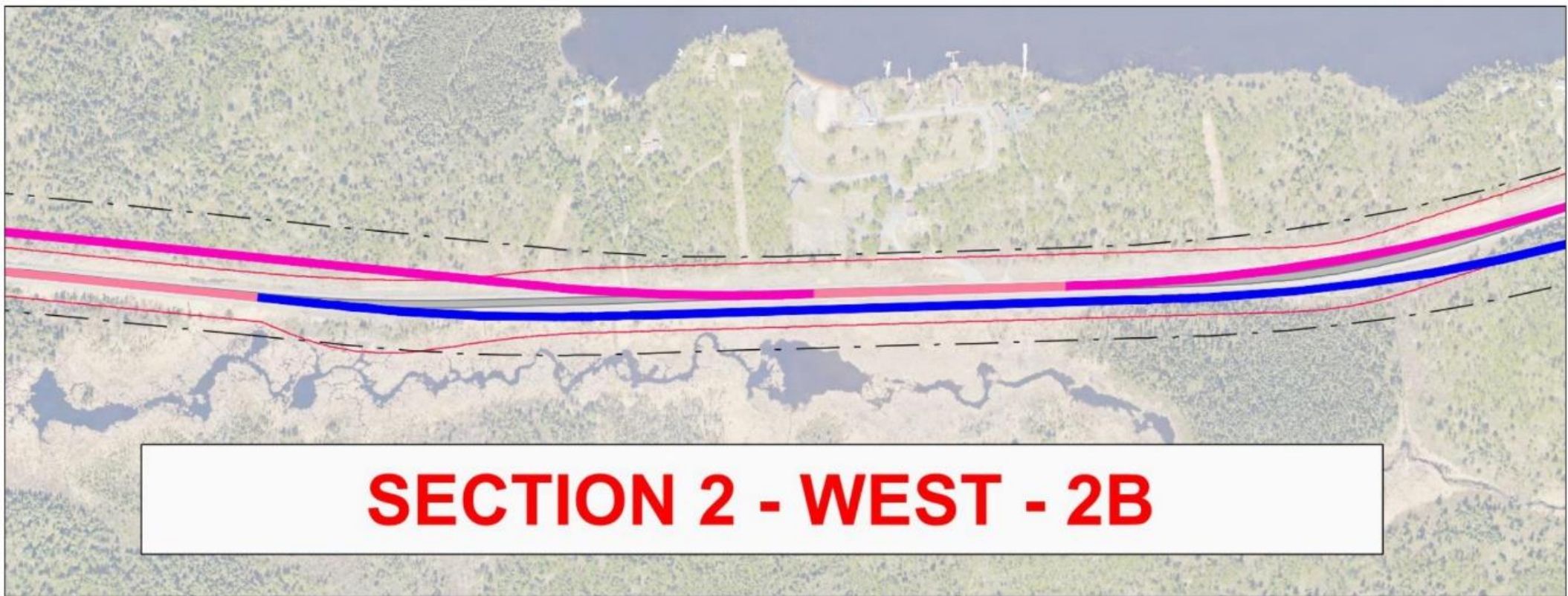
Evaluation factor	Criteria
Natural environment	Effect on fish and aquatic habitat
	Effect on terrestrial habitat & vegetation
	Effect on naturally significant areas
	Effect on surface water and groundwater
Socio-economic environment	Indigenous community impacts
	Residential property impacts
	Business impacts
	Recreational impacts
	Noise impacts
	Property waste and contamination
	Effect on natural resources
	Effect on aggregate extraction
	Effect on forestry

Evaluation factor	Criteria
Cultural environment	Effect on known archaeological resources
	Effect on built heritage resources
	Cultural landscape resources
Technical considerations	Highway geometrics
	Access impacts
	Compatibility with existing transportation system
	Constructability
	Drainage
	Traffic operations
	Cost

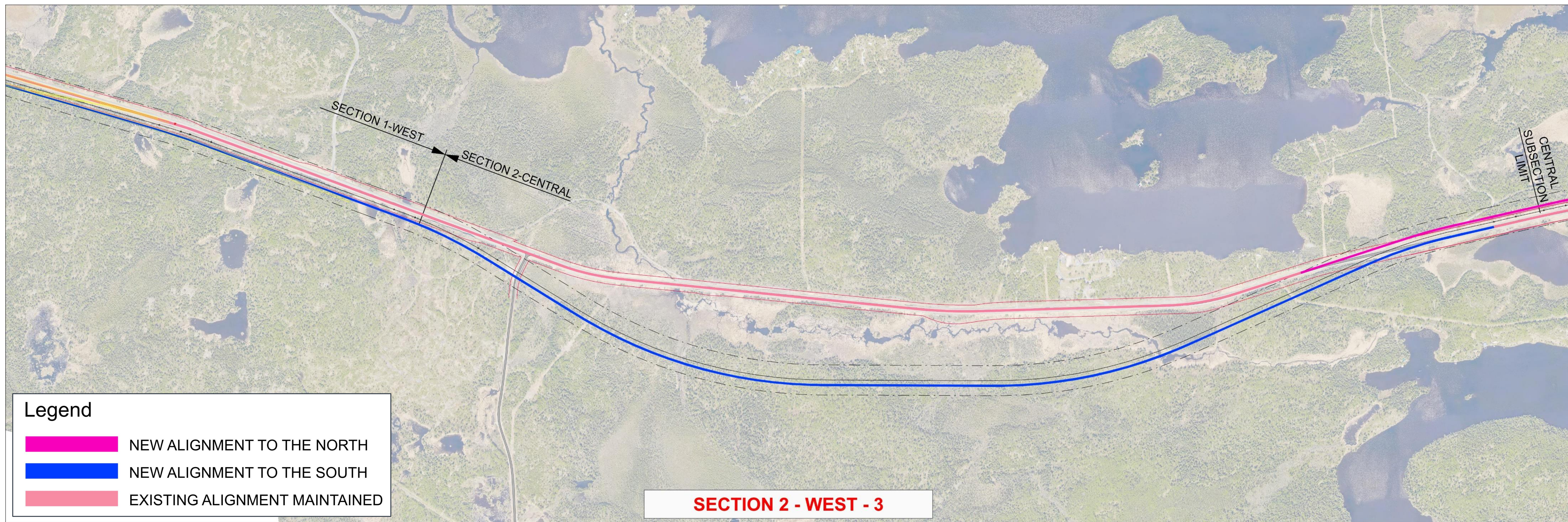
Note: this list is subject to change based on consultation and study area features.



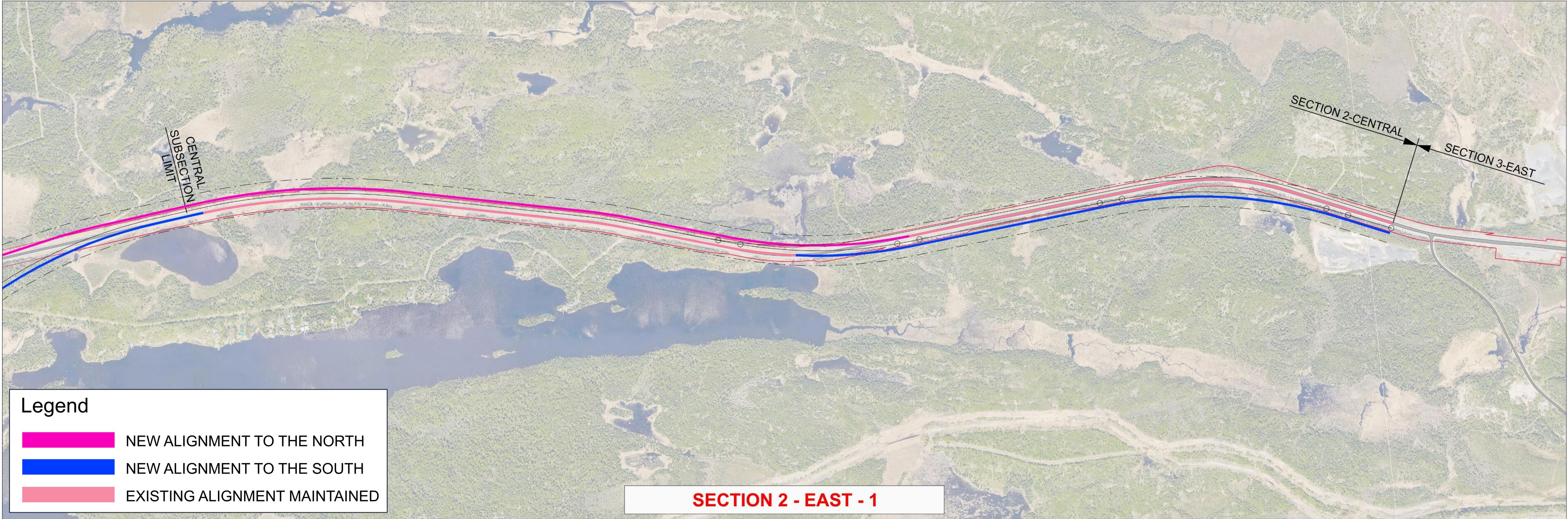
Section 2 – West – Alternative 1: Twinning to the South



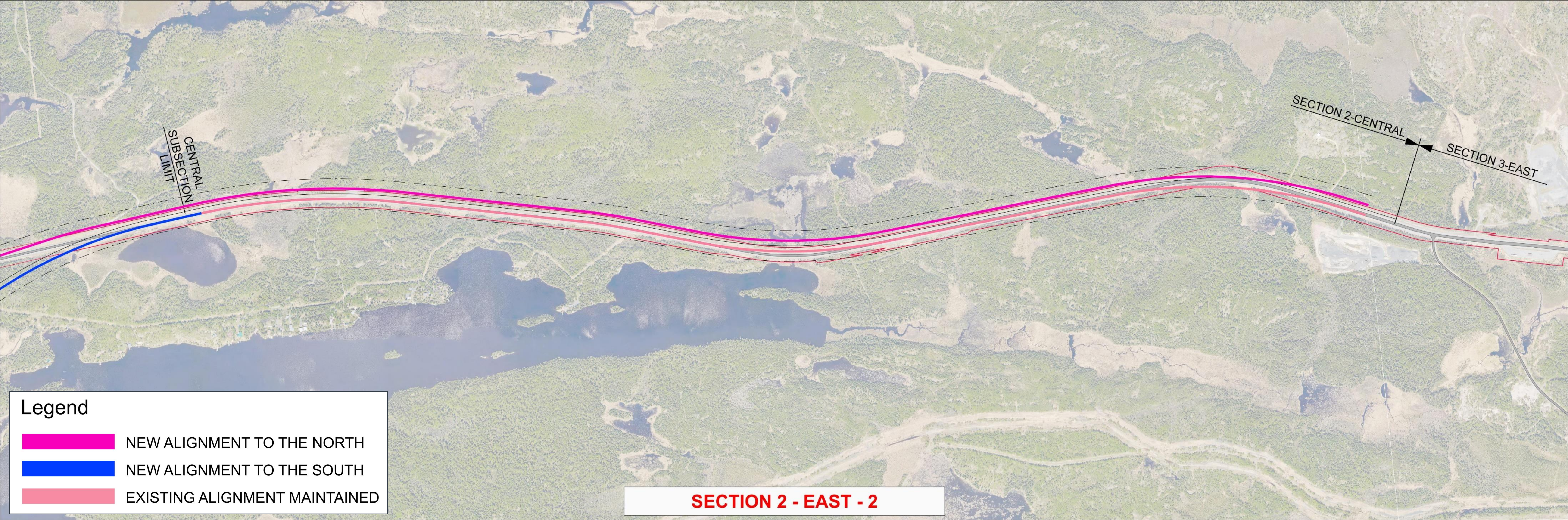
Section 2 – West – Alternative 2: Twinning to the North, w/ Variations near Royal Lake



**Section 2 – West – Alternative 3: Realign EB Lanes
Approximately 250 m to the South**

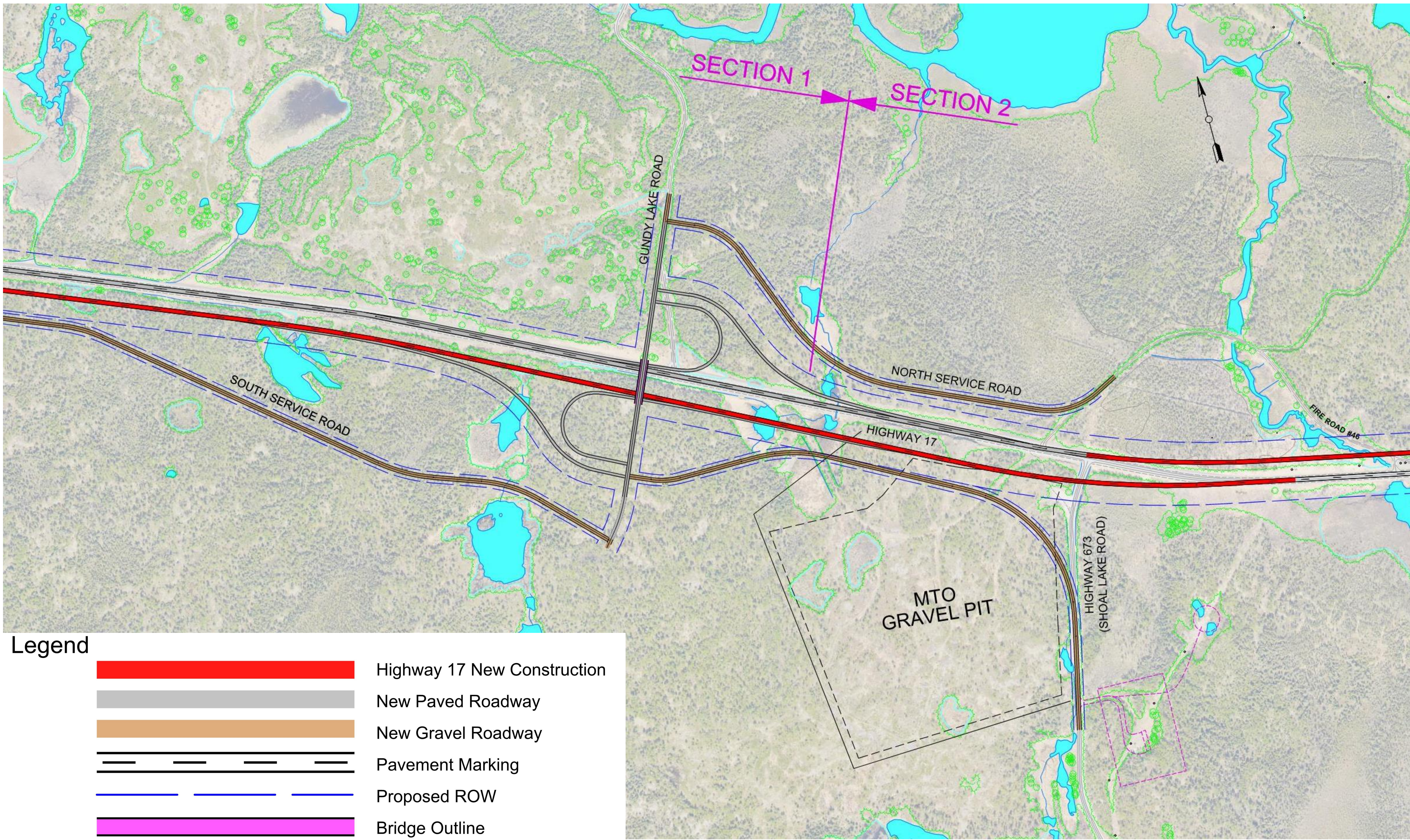


Section 2 – East – Alternative 1: Twinning to the North/South

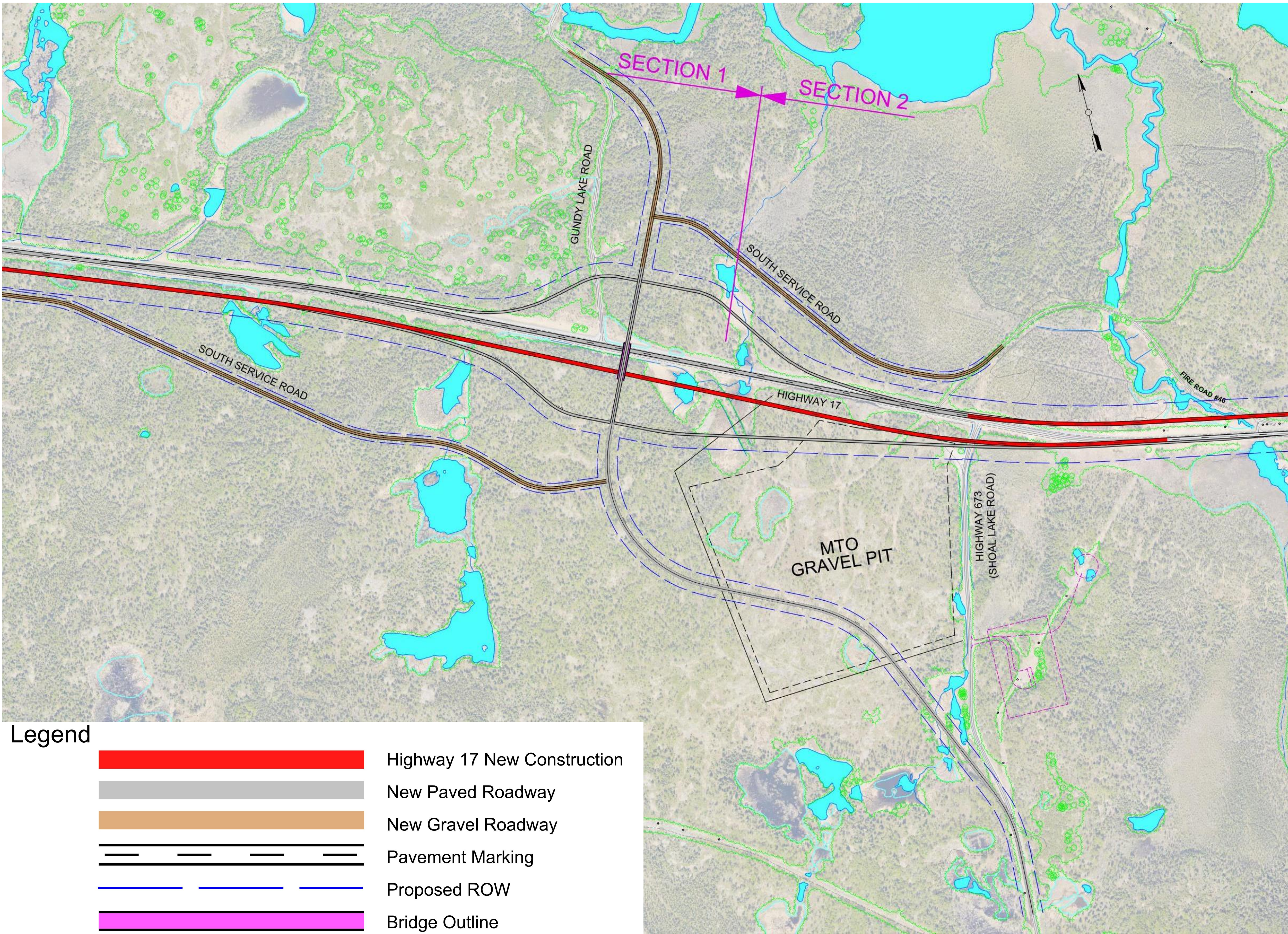


Section 2 – East – Alternative 2: Twinning to the North

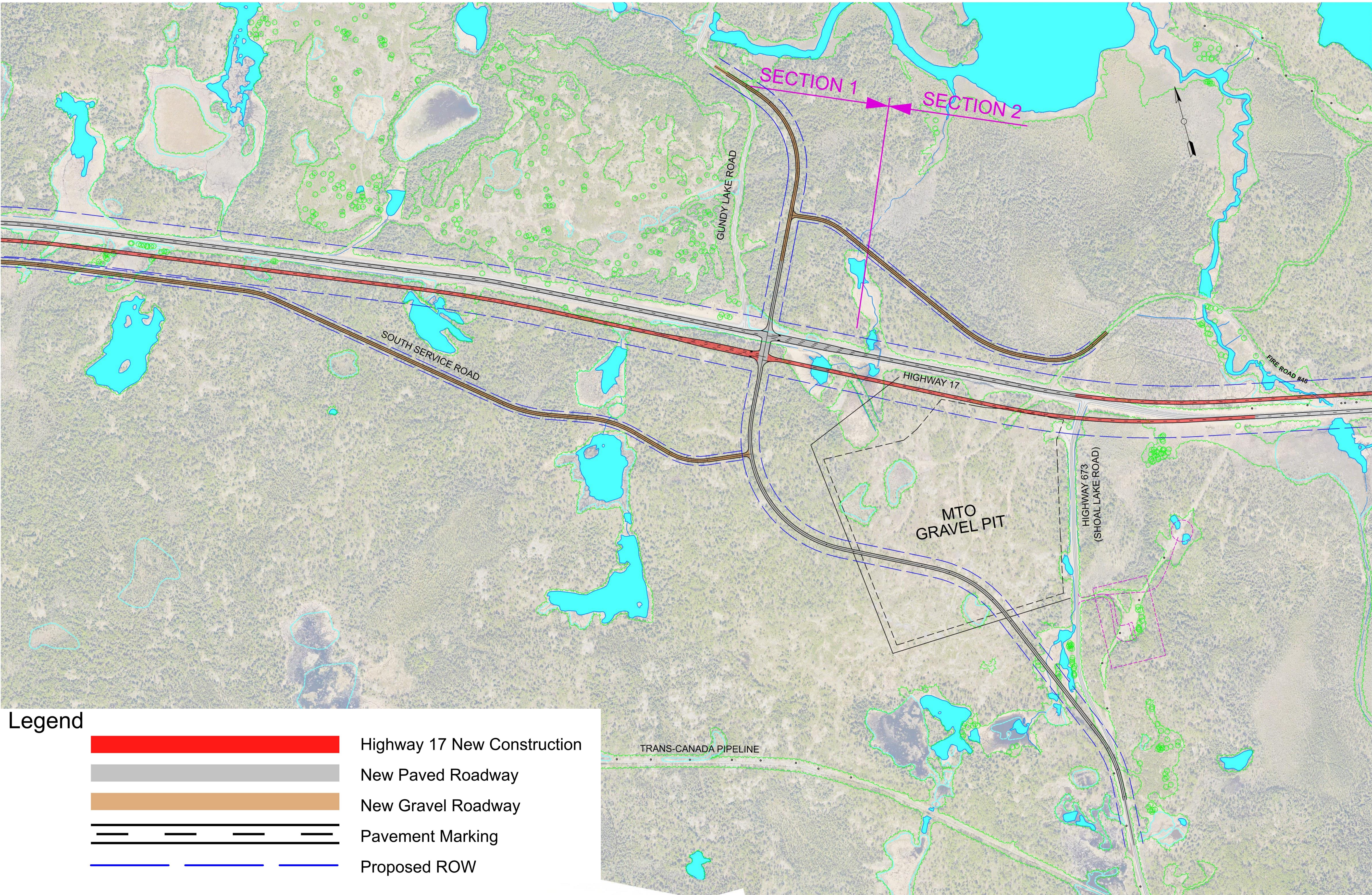
Highway 17 & Highway 673/ Gundy Lake Road alternatives:
Option 1 – Future Parclo A2 Interchange



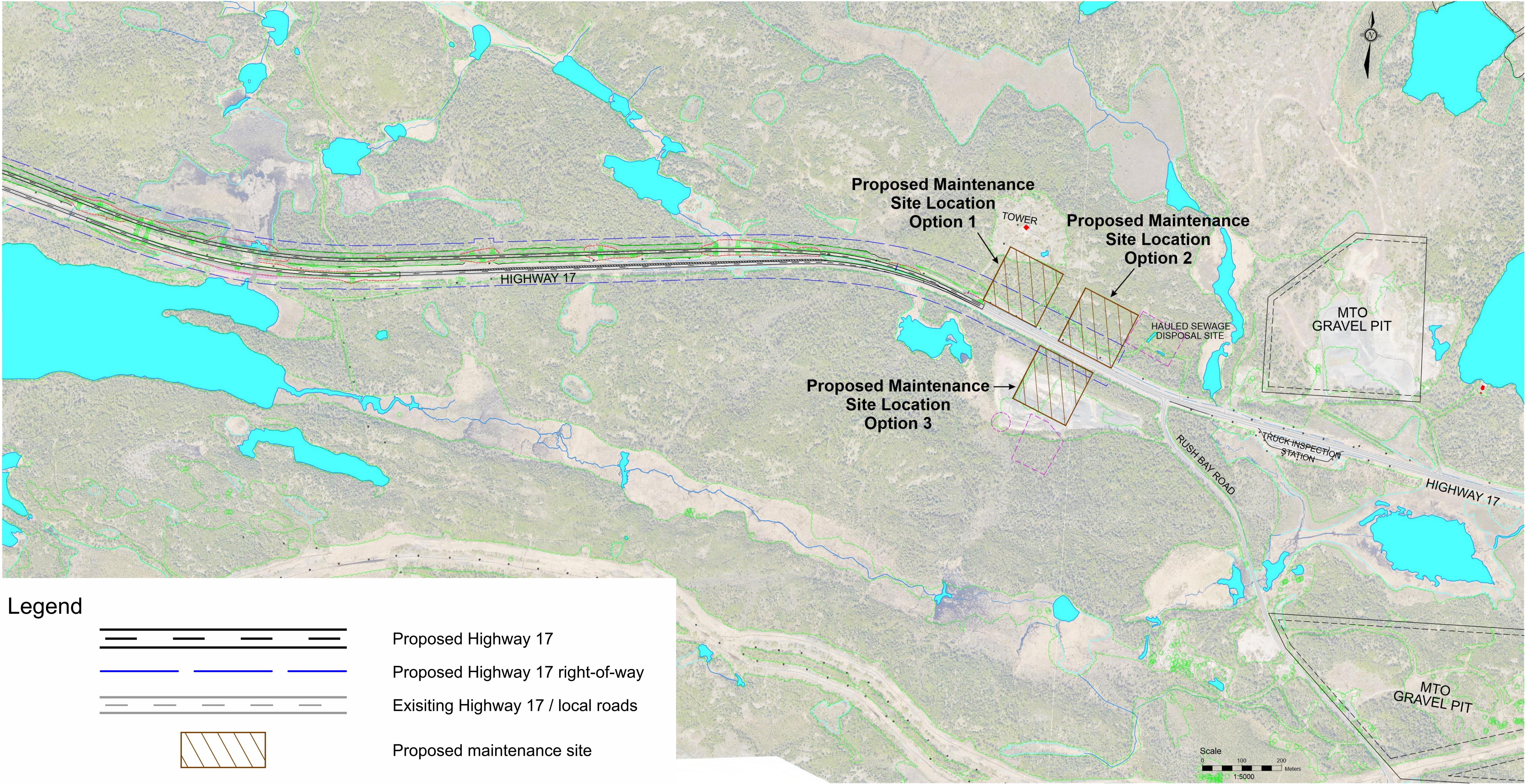
Highway 17 & Highway 673 / Gundy Lake Road alternatives:
Option 2 – Future Diamond Interchange



Highway 17 & Highway 673 / Gundy Lake Road alternatives:
Option 3 – At Grade Intersection



Proposed Maintenance Yards – Options 1, 2 and 3



The following activities will be carried out as part of the study for Section 2:

- review the comments received from today's Public Information Centre and respond to any questions or comments
- evaluate the alternatives presented at today's Public Information Centre
- ongoing engagement with interested Indigenous communities and interested stakeholders
- select a Preferred Route and present it at a future Public Information Centre
- confirm mitigation measures to address potential environmental impacts (natural, socio-economic, cultural)
- prepare the Transportation Environment Study Report (TESR) and complete the preliminary design

Separate Transportation Environmental Study Reports (TESRs) will be prepared for Sections 2 and 3.

Thank you for attending this Public Information Centre!

Please feel free to ask any questions before you leave.

We also welcome your comments on the materials that were presented today.

Please complete a comment sheet or submit feedback using our project website:
www.4lanehighway17kenora.ca.

We ask that comments are submitted to the Project Team by October 20, 2023

General comments regarding the study or requests to be added to the Project Contact List can be submitted through the following Project Team members at any time during the study:

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