



Frequently Asked Questions

Dated: October 2023

Project Description and Need

Who is Marten Falls First Nation and what is their proposed All-Season Community Access Road?

Marten Falls First Nation (MFFN) is a remote First Nation community led by an elected Chief and Council, located in the Far North of Ontario at the junction of the Albany and Ogoki Rivers, approximately 170 km northeast of Nakina, Ontario and 430 km northeast of Thunder Bay.

The Community Access Road is a proposed all-season road that will connect MFFN to Ontario's provincial highway network in the south, increasing access and helping foster economic development and improve quality of life for community members. The proposed Access Road is anticipated to include the following features:

- 190 km to 230 km of two-lane gravel road;
- Quarries, borrow areas and aggregate sources;
- Bridges for river and stream crossings; and
- Temporary construction access roads, work areas and camps.

Why does MFFN need an all-season community access road when they can access the community by air and the existing winter road?

These options are unreliable for the future of MFFN. Air travel is expensive and the condition of the winter road varies making transportation of goods and people to and from the community unreliable; ultimately affecting the community's well-being.

How will the Community Access Road affect community members?

The Community Access Road to MFFN is intended to improve the lives of community members. It will offer MFFN the opportunity to grow as a community, while also being part of the social and economic fabric of the region and country.

A reliable road to the community would reduce transportation costs for goods and services; meaning more affordable food, fuel and other vital supplies and services. It will also allow increased opportunities for social interaction with friends and family outside of the community.





How is the Community Access Road different from the Webequie Supply Road and the Northern Road Link?

The Webequie Supply Road is a proposed 107 km road with the purpose of providing year-round movement of supplies, materials and people to mineral exploration activities and future mining developments from Webequie First Nation's airport. Webequie First Nation is the proponent for that proposed supply road.

The Community Access Road Project does not include a road to the Ring of Fire. There is a separate project called the Northern Road Link for this—a proposed 117 km to 164 km road. This proposed multi-purpose road to the Ring of Fire will travel between the proposed MFFN Community Access Road and the proposed Webequie Supply Road. Both MFFN and Webequie First Nation are co-proponents of the Northern Road Link.

How is the planning for the Community Access Road “community-led”?

The planning for the all-season community road is community-led; meaning that the MFFN community membership helps to develop solutions and advance decisions. MFFN has formed a Project Team that includes community members and acts with guidance, direction and input from Chief and Council, Community Member Advisors and membership. Throughout the EA process, MFFN—with support from technical experts—will engage with interested persons, including other Indigenous communities, so that input is considered when making decisions related to the design and development of the community's new road.

The Route Alignment and Segments

How were the two Route Alternatives (Routes 1 and 4) selected?

The potential route alternatives were discussed at the Terms of Reference stage of the provincial Environmental Assessment process with the community.

Feedback received from MFFN community membership, Community Member Advisors and Chief and Council during winter and spring 2019 led to a decision that the two route options within the East Corridor (Alternative 2 and Alternative 3) would not be considered further, leaving Alternative 1 and Alternative 4 for further consideration during the coordinated Environmental Assessment (EA) and Impact Assessment (IA). Alternative 1 and Alternative 4 within the West Corridor will continue to be assessed and evaluated through the EA / IA processes.

Both of these potential routes start at Painter Lake Road and run north before turning eastward toward the MFFN community; roughly following the west / north side of the Albany River.





The following five reasons demonstrate why Routes 1 and 4 are being considered instead of the eastern routes:

1. The bridge needed to cross the Albany River for the western alternatives would be further away from the community, reducing health and safety concerns, especially for children.
2. Industrial traffic would not need to pass through the community, giving MFFN greater control over who enters the community. Reducing traffic potentially reduces illegal substances entering the community and other risks caused by increased traffic.
3. Neither Alternative 1 or Alternative 4 will travel parallel the Ogoki River. This means potential effects on Indigenous value sites associated with this major waterway are largely avoided.
4. The western routes would enable better economic development opportunities in the region because they provide direct access to areas used by the mining and forestry industry, including potential areas of interest for future development.
5. The cost to construct and maintain a road along the western routes is expected to be lower than the eastern routes. The western routes are generally located on higher rocky ground and closer to the aggregate needed to build and maintain a road.

How will the two Route Alternatives be evaluated and selected?

When we evaluate the Alternative Routes, we will consider the pros and cons of each alternative route with the intent of selecting the best route possible. Alternatives 1 and 4 will be evaluated based on effects to the natural, socio-economic and cultural environments, and in consideration of Indigenous Knowledge, technical criteria / requirements and cost.

During the route evaluation, there are segments that are set or confirmed and others that have options to choose from. Where there are options to choose between, the evaluation criteria will be used to determine the best option for each segment.

How will we assess potential effects of the Community Access Road?

An important component of the Environment Assessment / Impact Assessment process is to provide methods to identify, assess and evaluate the potential effects of the Project. The following is a high-level overview of the approach for the identification, assessment and evaluation of the potential effects:

- Identify a valued component and associated indicators
- Determine project activities that may interact with the environment.
- Determine the temporal and / or spatial boundaries for the valued component





- Describe existing conditions
- Assess project environmental effects
- Identify mitigation measures and any residual affects

Where can we see the routing options?

Large scale and zoomed in maps have been made available in person and on the Project website to show the proposed alternative route lengths and newly identified aggregate sites.

The Environment Assessment / Impact Assessment Process

What is the Environmental Assessment / Impact Assessment?

The Environment Assessment and Impact Assessment are processes that are designed to confirm that existing conditions are understood, proper field work is conducted, Indigenous Knowledge is gathered and considered, and that ultimately the positive effects of the road outweigh the overall negative effects. Completing the Environmental Assessment / Impact Assessment processes are just step one in a multi-year process which includes additional permits and study. There is currently no timeline for detail design and construction, however, we are optimistic that this will be available shortly following the conclusion of the Environmental Assessment processes.

Why is it taking so long?

The timeline of this work was stressed by the COVID-19 pandemic which led to delays in schedule, especially field programs, and made consulting and engaging with communities a challenge. Field programs were also impacted by forest fires during the summer of 2021 and heavy snow conditions in the winter of 2021/2022. Additionally, the provincial Terms of Reference took longer than originally expected to allow for an extended public comment period and additional time for the proponent and province to respond to comments and concerns raised. The coordinate Environment Assessment / Impact Assessment is expected to be completed in 2025.

Cumulative Effects

What are Cumulative Effects?

Cumulative effects are changes that are caused by the combined effects of multiple activities in the same area. This includes activities that have happened in the past, activities that are currently ongoing, and activities that are likely to occur in the near future.





How will the cumulative affect of the Community Access Road in combination with the affects of other relevant projects or activities be assessed?

Cumulative effects will be assessment through the Cumulative Effects Assessment process. The cumulative effects assessment focuses on assessing reasonably foreseeable projects that are not captured in the project existing conditions and effects assessments (because the projects have not yet happened) but have the potential to interact with the environmental and socio-economic effects caused by the Community Access Road. The assessment will be completed in steps including scoping (setting the parameters), analysis, mitigation, significance and follow-up. The Cumulative Effects Assessment for the Community Access Road will be undertaken once the preferred route is selected and the effects assessment is complete.

Construction

When will construction of the Community Access Road begin?

The Environment Assessment / Impact Assessment is expected to conclude in 2026. If the Project is approved, detailed design and construction would commence soon after a contractor is selected.

Construction could take from five to 10 years due to the complexity of the Project. Timelines will be made clearer once the detailed design work is completed, the annual capital funding program is understood and a contractor is on board.

Can you share more details about post-construction, including maintenance and access?

Maintenance (i.e., who will maintain the road, how will it be maintained during winter months) and access control issues have been flagged with the engineering consultants for future consideration. This level of detail is not available at this point in the planning stage.

Field Studies

When can we see the results from the studies that are being conducted?

Field programs are happening to better understand the existing conditions of the local environment and the potential effect of the MFFN Community Access Road Project on the social, cultural, economic, built and natural environments.

Field programs studying existing conditions and effects assessments for the following technical disciplines have taken place this past year:





- Groundwater and Geochemistry;
- Aquatics (surface water, fish and fish habitat);
- Physiography, terrain and soils;
- Vegetation;
- Wildlife;
- Birds; and
- Ungulates (atik and mooz / moose and caribou).

A summary of the 2022 Field Studies are available online:

martenfallsaccessroad.ca/documents/#notices. Field studies Factsheets for those studies completed in 2023 are available at PIC #5 and will be available online. Please note that full results from field studies will be ready to share during the Draft Environmental Assessment Phase in 2024.

Consultation Process

Is there enough time to consult / engage and incorporate feedback appropriately?

The schedule incorporates consultation and engagement throughout the Environmental Assessment / Impact Assessment and for every major deliverable including, but not limited to, the Effects Assessment Methods, Identification of Preferred Alternatives, and Review of the Draft and Final Environmental Assessment / Impacts Statement (the Impact Statement is a detailed technical document that meets federal requirements).

What will happen if major concerns with the effect(s) of the proposed road are identified during the consultation and engagement process?

There will be a rigorous evaluation of potential effects before any decision gets made about moving forward with the proposed road, including mitigation that would be used for potential effects. The next milestone of the Project (the Identification of Preferred Alternatives) will identify potential effects, including impacts of the Project on Aboriginal and Treaty Rights.

