

SEIA Mitigation Engagement Summary

Mackenzie Valley Highway Extension Project

March 20, 2026

FINAL

PREPARED FOR:

GNWT Department of Infrastructure
c/o Patricia Coyne, Manager Mackenzie
Valley Highway Project

PREPARED BY:

DPRA Canada Inc.
4916-49th Street, Northway Building
Postal Address: P.O. Box 2335,
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P7



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Introduction

Between May 2024 and December 2024, DPRA Canada worked with community representatives to plan, organize and implement individual interviews, focus groups, and community meetings to present and discuss the Community Readiness Strategy (CRS) that has been proposed to mitigate adverse socio-economic effects and maximize positive socio-economic effects. An overview of the dates of community visits are shown in Table 1 below. For details on the numbers of participants and the groups met with, please refer to **Appendix A**.

Table 1: Summary of Community Visits to Discuss SEIA Mitigation Engagement

Date	Community
May 6-11, 2024	Norman Wells
May 13-16, 2024	Tulita
July 29-31, 2024	Fort Simpson/Łíídlı́ Kúé First Nation
December 2 & 3, 2024	Fort Hood Hope
December 4, 2024	Colville Lake

In addition to the above community visits, other engagement with representatives from Délı̨ne and with Pehdzeh Ki First Nation (PKFN) took place between October 2024 and July 2025. While this engagement was not focused specifically on the proposed CRS and mitigations for socio-economic effects, these discussions did include some coverage of proposed socio-economic mitigations. The relevant observations from these discussions or meetings have been included in this summary.

- **Délı̨ne¹** – meeting with technical consultant Todd Slack on October 30, 2024 to discuss outstanding IR responses, several of which were focused on the level of detail provided related to the proposed CRS.
- **PKFN²** – a community visit took place from June 16 - 20, 2025, which focused on gathering feedback and information on potential socio-economic project effects and to some extent, existing conditions in the community of Wrigley.

1.1 Methodology

To plan and implement in-person community engagement sessions, DPRA Canada worked to identify key contacts in each Local Assessment Area and Regional Assessment community that could support session planning and identify individuals and organizations to approach for participation in interviews and focus groups. The goal was to identify a cross-section of participants from across the community that

¹ While some preliminary efforts were taken to plan a community visit to Délı̨ne to discuss SEIA mitigation, due to budget constraints, GNWT directed in January 2025 that non-essential travel was to be curtailed, which included SEIA mitigation engagement.

² PKFN leadership and staff are currently reviewing a draft 'What We Heard' report, which provides a summary of engagement findings from the community visit. At this time, no edits or sign-off have been provided and any findings specifically attributed to PKFN should be considered draft only.

could provide feedback and perspectives on the proposed CRS. When requested by the community, DPRA Canada planned and implemented open community meetings.

DPRA prepared a series of material to support engagement, including:

- Posters describing the Community Readiness Strategy³
- A slide deck providing an overview of the Community Readiness Strategy
- Interview questions for individual or small group interviews
 - As needed and based on the interview questions, a series of discussion questions were identified to guide focus groups and community meetings – based on input and the nature of the groups being engaged with.

As needed, communications materials such as posters advertising meetings, engagement or focus groups were prepared by DPRA Canada and approved by the GNWT Department of Infrastructure (INF) and provided to community representatives for distribution in communities. Community meeting posters were also posted on the GNWT website by INF.

Engagement in each community was led by DPRA Canada representatives and supported by participation from the INF and the Department of Health and Social Services. Notes were taken at each interview, focus group and community meeting. Following community visits, copies of interview notes were sent to participants to review, along with follow-up material such as copies of posters or presentation materials.

³ Available from https://new.reviewboard.ca/sites/default/files/project_document/PR286%20-%20MVH%20Mitigation%20Posters%20from%20GNWT%201.pdf and https://new.reviewboard.ca/sites/default/files/project_document/PR287%20-%20MVH%20Mitigation%20Posters%20from%20GNWT%202.pdf

Summary of Engagement Findings

General

Most communities generally support the MVH and have expressed a desire for activities that will support community readiness to address the negative effects that may arise due to the MVH and enhance opportunities.

Most communities expressed a desire for the regulatory processes associated with the MVH to be accelerated, and for the construction of the road to be completed as quickly as possible.

- This was in part attributed to concerns related to increasing frequency and severity of wildfires, the effects of climate change, and low water levels on the Mackenzie River.

Proposed Focus and Timing of Community Readiness Strategy (CRS)

Participants generally reiterated socio-economic impact assessment findings that the potential impacts related to drug and alcohol access, use and misuse, and to public safety were likely to be the most serious negative effects.

- Participants indicated that most communities will require additional support and resources to address these effects.

Communities generally agree that the CRS working groups and proposed plans were focused on the appropriate issues:

- Mitigating potential negative effects on safety – both road safety and potential impacts on vulnerable populations (e.g., Indigenous women and youth);
- Mitigating negative impacts on community wellness due to increased access to and use of drugs and alcohol coming from the MVH; and
- Enhancing positive effects associated with education and employment.

Participants indicated a strong desire for work on the CRS to begin sooner than ‘1-year prior to construction’, as proposed.

- In particular, more time was identified as being needed for activities associated with education and training to ensure that needed activities were identified and implemented prior to construction, given education and training can often involve several years of work.

Structure of the Working Groups Associated with the CRS

The proposed structure of the working groups and the approach to the development of plans that include co-development and collaboration with communities as a foundation was generally viewed positively.

- However, participants shared a desire to know more about which groups or organizations in which communities would be part of the different working groups.
- Participants also expressed interest in wanting to have feedback and be able influence on this aspect of the CRS.

CRS Plans

Participants provided feedback that more information on the content of the proposed plans and the structure of the working groups would be beneficial. Additional details were highlighted as being important to understand how effects of the MVH would be addressed and by whom.

Appendix A –Listing of SEIA Mitigation Meetings

Number of Participants	Date	Location/Organization
One on One Meetings or Focus Groups – in-person and via virtual means (#)		
3 participants	May 7, 2024	Norman Wells/ Education Culture and Employment Service Centre Staff
9 participants	May 8, 2024	Norman Wells/Mayor and Town Council
2 participants	May 8, 2024	Norman Wells/Town Staff
2 participants	May 8, 2024	Norman Wells/Sahtu Secretariat Inc. Economic Development Staff
1 participant	May 9, 2024	Norman Wells/Fire Chief
1 participant	May 9, 2024	Norman Wells/Norman Wells Land Corporation
1 participant	May 9, 2024	Norman Wells/ Mental Heath and Addictions Services Staff
1 participant	May 9, 2024	Norman Wells/Arctic Energy Alliance
1 participant	May 10, 2024	Norman Wells/Norman Wells Health and Social Services Staff
1 participant	May 10, 2024	Norman Wells/Sahtu Secretariat Inc. Health Staff
1 participant	May 10, 2024	Norman Wells/Norman Wells Daycare Board Member
2 participants	May 10, 2024	Norman Wells/North-Wright Air
1 participant	May 11, 2024	Norman Wells/Ramparts Rentals
4 participants	May 13, 2024	Tulita/Tulita Health Centre Staff
1 participant	May 13, 2024	Tulita/Tulita Nurse in Charge
1 participant	May 13, 2024	Tulita/Fire Chief
1 participant	May 13, 2024	Tulita/Tulita Informal Daycare Operator
6 participants	May 14, 2024	Tulita/Tulita Dene Band Chief and Council
1 participant	May 14, 2024	Tulita/Tulita Income Support Staff
4 participants	May 15, 2024	Tulita/Sahtu Renewable Resources Board (virtual)
6 participants	May 15, 2024	Tulita/Tulita MVH Working Group
8 participants	May 15, 2024	Tulita/Tulita Hamlet Mayor and Council
5 participants	May 15, 2024	Tulita/Tulita Renewable Resources Council
1 participant	May 15, 2024	Tulita/Chief Albert Wright School Principal
1 participant	May 16, 2024	Tulita/Tulita Hamlet Councillor
3 participants	May 16, 2024	Tulita/Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area initiative Staff
2 participants	July 29, 2024	Fort Simpson/Łíídlıı Kúę First Nation Chief and Council
3 participants	July 29, 2024	Fort Simpson/Łíídlıı Kúę First Nation Councillors
1 participant	July 29, 2024	Fort Simpson/Łíídlıı Kúę First Nation Mayor

Number of Participants	Date	Location/Organization
1 participant	July 29, 2024	Fort Simpson/Łíídlıı Kúę First Nation Lands Director
1 participant	July 30, 2024	Fort Simpson/Łíídlıı Kúę First Nation Executive Director
4 participants	July 30, 2024	Łíídlıı Kúę First Nation Harvester and Guardians
1 participant	July 31, 2024	Fort Simpson/Łíídlıı Kúę First Nation Economic Development Officer
1 participant	August 2, 2024	Fort Simpson/Aurora College representative (virtual)
11 participants	December 2, 2024	Fort Good Hope/Fort Good Hope Chief and Council
1 participant	December 2, 2024	Fort Good Hope/Cassien Edgi Health Centre Mental Health Nurse
2 participants	December 2, 2024	Fort Good Hope/Fort Good Hope Land and Water Board
2 participants	December 3, 2024	Fort Good Hope/ Cassien Edgi Health Centre Staff
1 participant	December 3, 2024	Fort Good Hope/RCMP
23 participants	December 3, 2024	Fort Good Hope/Chief T'Selehye School Grade 10-11 students and Social Studies Teacher
1 participant	December 6, 2024	Fort Good Hope/ Cassien Edgi Health Centre Social Worker
Community Meetings (#)		
36 participants	May 14, 2024	Tulita Community Meeting
13 participants	May 15, 2024	Tulita Elders Community Meeting
4 participants	July 30, 2024	Fort Simpson Community Meeting
60 participants	December 3, 2024	Fort Good Hope Community Meeting
14 participants	December 4, 2024	Colville Lake Open House