



IGNACE AREA TRANSPORTATION & EMERGENCY RESPONSE STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NORTHWEST COMMUNITY STUDIES

WSP, NOVEMBER 2022



1. Study Objectives

This study describes the existing characteristics and operating conditions of the roads, traffic, and the emergency response services in the Township of Ignace and area; summarizes the potential changes that the Project could have on the roads, traffic, and the emergency response services; and proposes options that respond to Project impacts, needs, and/or opportunities.

Key Planning Assumptions: During the lifetime of the Project, the population of Ignace is expected to nearly double from approximately 1,200 to 2,260 people.

Traffic on the roads outside the Deep Geological Repository (DGR) site will be mostly staff and contractors commuting to work. During peak hours (i.e., when hourly traffic volumes are the highest), the added number of vehicles are expected to be between 80-125 per day for the construction phase, and 70-110 per day for the operations phase. Less than 10% of these trips will be by heavy vehicles, during both construction and operations.

The Project will have on-site emergency services such as: a fire hall, decontamination room, nursing station, first aid area, and permanent and portable refuge stations.

Ignace Transportation and Emergency Response Aspirations¹:

- Maintain or improve the existing transportation infrastructure and emergency response resources, to meet community needs.
- Where new infrastructure is needed, especially along Highway 17, consider complementary nodes and modes of transportation (e.g., vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians).

¹ Adapted from InterGroup Consultations Ltd. (2020), Ignace Project Visioning Community Conversations



2. Key Findings

Baseline

- Daily traffic levels on Highway 17 between Ignace and Dryden were consistent between 2006 and 2016.
- Between 2017 and 2021, the number of collisions on Highway 17 decreased by 7%.
- The area is served by the Ontario Provincial Police and the Northwest Emergency Medical Services (i.e., ambulance services).
- The Ignace fire hall is staffed by volunteers and should be replaced by a new facility in a better location. Dryden has two fire halls that are staffed by a combination of paid staff and volunteers.
- The Dryden Regional Airport manages 10,000 to 12,000 aircraft movements per year. The Ignace Municipal airport is used infrequently. The Dryden Airport use includes passenger services, and air traffic related to forest fire fighting, search and rescue, and medical evacuation.

Forecast without the Project:

- Approximately, 70% of Ignace's road network is in fair condition whereas nearly 60% of the network has a remaining service life of 6 to 10 years.
- There are almost 1,500 annual service calls for the Dryden OPP detachment (Dryden + Ignace).
- In Ignace, there are also 300 annual service calls for emergency medical services and 55 for fire service.
- Police and emergency medical services have capacity to meet the future needs of the community, while the fire department may require additional volunteers.

Forecast with the Project:

- The Highway 17 corridor (to/ from the DGR and throughout Ignace) has the capacity to handle additional traffic volumes.
- Population growth will result in greater traffic volumes, increased road maintenance, continued traffic congestion, and more pedestrian-traffic interactions along Highway 17 (Main Street) in Ignace.
- Less than 10% of the traffic leaving the Project site will be heavy vehicles, during both construction and operations. Since most collisions in the area are caused by the weather, lighting/ visibility (darkness) and wildlife on the highway, safety improvements such as fencing, increased enforcement, lighting, or road modifications could be considered.
- Monitoring call volumes and other activities of the police, fire, and ambulance should be used to ensure the ongoing health and safety of the community.



3. Next Steps

- The NWMO should provide timely information on the DGR site (west of Ignace) and the Centre of Expertise (in Town), to the Township and the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO), to ensure compliance with safety standards or policies. Safety measures that could be implemented in Ignace include lighting, turning lanes or other road modifications, pedestrian crossovers, an expanded Community Safety Zone, and improved snow removal.
- The Township, and NWMO, should ensure emergency responders are informed about the needs of the Project; and identify related capacity building and training needs to ensure there are no service shortfalls.
- As the population increases in Ignace, consideration should be given to hiring 1 or 2 full-time staff, and to recruiting additional volunteers for the Fire Department.