Future Transmission Line Development on the East Side

Summary of Key Perspectives From Introductory Meetings With Leadership of East Side Communities

Prepared by Manitoba Hydro December, 2002



1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF MEETINGS

This paper summarizes key perspectives identified by community leaders and Manitoba Hydro in a series of introductory meetings held with the leadership of communities on the east side of the province (the East Side) from May to October 2002. The meetings were intended to introduce Manitoba Hydro's plans for future transmission development on the East Side, including Bipole III, and begin the process of building relationships with communities in regard to such development. The meetings were requested by Manitoba Hydro to:

- Inform Chief and Council/Mayor and Council about the status of the Corporation's planning for future transmission, including Bipole III, on the East Side, and
- Get initial feedback from Chief and Council/Mayor and Council about the Corporation's intentions.

The meetings follow up on a commitment made by Mr. Bob Brennan, President and Chief Executive Officer of Manitoba Hydro, to inform East Side communities about the Corporation's transmission development plans for the area. They are the beginning of a multi-year process to involve East Side communities in planning and environmental assessment of future transmission lines, beginning with Bipole III, a new HVDC line which would run from the Nelson River through the East Side to the outskirts of Winnipeg.

1.2 COMMUNITIES VISITED

In this first round of community involvement meetings about future transmission lines on the East Side, Manitoba Hydro has sought to meet with the leadership of all First Nations and the larger Northern Association of Community Councils communities on the east side of the province between the Nelson River and Winnipeg. Some smaller Northern Association of Community Councils communities were sent copies of presentation materials and asked to provide feedback on what they received.

At the time when this document was produced, meetings had been held with the following 18 First Nations and 5 Northern Association of Community Councils communities:

 First Nations – Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, Sagkeeng First Nation, Hollow Water First Nation, Bloodvein First Nation, Berens River First Nation, Poplar River First Nation, Little Grand Rapids First Nation, Pauingassi First Nation, Norway House Cree Nation, Garden Hill First Nation, Wasagamack First Nation, St. Theresa Point First Nation, Red Sucker Lake First Nation, God's Lake First Nation, Manto Sipi Cree Nation, Bunibonibee Cree Nation, York Factory First Nation, Fox Lake Cree Nation. Northern Association of Community Councils – Seymourville, Manigotagan, Bissett, Island Lake, God's Lake Narrows.

Manitoba Hydro is endeavouring to arrange meetings with the leadership of five remaining communities to complete this round of meetings: Little Black River First Nation, Tataskweyak Cree Nation, War Lake First Nation, Ilford, Gillam.

Copies of the introductory presentation were sent to the following Northern Association of Community Councils communities: Aghaming, Loon Straits, Berens River, Little Grand Rapids, Princess Harbour, Red Sucker Lake, Oxford House.

1.3 MEETING PROCESS AND FOLLOW-UP

A similar process was used for each meeting:

- After introduction of the participants, a Manitoba Hydro representative made a presentation on the
 Corporation's current plans for future transmission line development on the East Side and the
 importance of involving potentially affected local communities in the planning process from the
 outset. A copy of the presentation was provided to each person in attendance. Manitoba Hydro
 noted that it considered the meeting to be strictly an informational session.
- Following the presentation, an open discussion took place in which:
 - Attendees offered their views and perspectives about future transmission/Bipole III planning and raised other Hydro or East Side related issues
 - Manitoba Hydro's representatives attempted to respond to questions raised by attendees, endeavoured to determine the community's interests related to future transmission/Bipole III planning, and offered perspectives on items raised.
- Manitoba Hydro representatives left several examples of base maps for use by the community.

Manitoba Hydro produced meeting notes soon after each session. The notes captured the key points made by attendees and Manitoba Hydro representatives. They included a list of commitments for follow-up action. A copy was sent to the Chief or Mayor and Council for their records and future reference. Meeting notes have also been shared with the Project Manager of the East Side Lake Winnipeg Broad Area Planning Initiative, as part of a commitment to keep this Initiative apprised of East Side transmission public participation activities.

Manitoba Hydro officials tracked commitments they had made and followed up with appropriate actions.

1.4 OUTLINE OF PAPER

The remainder of this paper summarizes key perspectives brought out at the meetings. It follows the sequence in which these perspectives tended to emerge at the community leadership meetings.

- Section 2 contains key perspectives provided by Manitoba Hydro representatives in their presentation.
- Section 3 presents key perspectives offered by the Chief and Councils / Mayor and Councils about
 the future East Side transmission line development and about aspects of existing Manitoba Hydro
 activities on the East Side.
- Section 4 contains responses from Manitoba Hydro representatives to notable questions and concerns raised at the meetings.
- Section 5 discusses the next step in the community involvement process a series of open houses.

2.0 KEY PERSPECTIVES ON FUTURE EAST SIDE TRANSMISSION FROM MANITOBA HYDRO'S PRESENTATION

Manitoba Hydro used the same presentation at all of the meetings. The presentation contained the following key information and ideas:

Future East Side Transmission Line Projects

- Manitoba Hydro has NO plans for damming rivers and developing hydroelectric generating stations anywhere on the East Side (south of the Nelson River).
- Manitoba Hydro indicated that future transmission line development on the East Side, would include:
 - New transmission or distribution lines to serve growing electricity needs of East Side communities and industries – particularly south of Poplar River, and
 - Bipole III a new high voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission line extending over 800 km from south of the Nelson River to east of Winnipeg.
- Bipole III would deliver power to the south from the Keeyask/Gull Generating Station on the Nelson River, if that project is built. Even without the Keeyask/Gull Generating Station, Manitoba Hydro needs Bipole III for system reliability purposes to provide separation from and back-up to the existing HVDC lines, called Bipoles I and II, which carry 70% of Manitoba's power on parallel HVDC lines from the Nelson River through the Interlake to the Dorsey converter station, Northwest of Winnipeg. Spreading the power currently flowing through the two existing DC lines out over three lines will significantly reduce line losses (i.e. loss of electricity that occurs when transmitting over long distances) and add the equivalent of over 70 MW to the amount of power reaching Dorsey.

Another possible development on the Nelson River is the Conawapa Generating Station. Hydro
continually reviews the economic and engineering aspects of this station as part of its on-going
power resource planning. If both Keeyask/Gull and Conawapa generating stations were ultimately
built, an additional DC transmission line, beyond Bipole III, would be needed to transmit the power.

Bipole III Status, Schedule and Activities

- Of the potential East Side transmission line projects, Manitoba Hydro is furthest advanced with the Bipole III project. Planning has not yet started for other potential East Side transmission projects while Bipole III is very early in the planning process.
- The Board of Manitoba Hydro has approved proceeding with the planning for a Bipole III project to meet a 2010 in-service date. A route for the line has not yet been evaluated or chosen and the environmental assessment has not started.
- The line will take about 4 to 5 years to construct. The time between now and the start of
 construction will be spent planning with communities potentially affected by the proposed
 transmission line, undertaking system studies and conducting an environmental assessment to obtain
 regulatory environmental approvals.



Construction of transmission lines in any particular location typically takes two winters. In the first winter, the right-of-way is cleared, while in the second winter, the towers and conductor are installed. Construction jobs and business opportunities associated with Bipole III will be modest and of short duration. Once the lines are built and in place, there are very few operating and maintenance job opportunities.

 Bipole III's DC current could not be tapped for use by communities or lodges along its route. The lines serving communities are alternating current (AC) lines.

Long Term Benefits and Community Participation in Future Transmission Line Development On The East Side

- Manitoba Hydro is committed to:
 - building respectful working relationships with East Side communities, and
 - having community residents actively involved in planning and development of Bipole III and other future transmission facilities on the East Side.
- Manitoba Hydro is considering ways of providing some form of long-term, enduring benefits to
 communities affected by transmission lines so that something is left behind after the project is built.
 The Corporation is looking at establishing a development fund as a means of creating an enduring
 benefit. Income from the fund would provide ongoing dollars for communities whose traditional lands
 are crossed by the line.

- Manitoba Hydro is prepared, early in the planning process, to jointly develop Principles of Participation with communities whose traditional areas might be crossed by future transmission line development on the East Side, including Bipole III. The Principles would clarify and formalize how the community could be involved with and benefit from project planning and development.
- Manitoba Hydro is exploring when and where it is most appropriate to work with communities on a regional or an individual community basis.
- Manitoba Hydro will take the time necessary to involve northern and aboriginal communities in planning and development of Bipole III and other future East Side transmission projects.

3.0 KEY PERSPECTIVES FROM COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

3.1 RELATED TO FUTURE EAST SIDE TRANSMISSION LINE DEVELOPMENT

In response to Manitoba Hydro's presentation, community leadership identified a wide range of interests and issues related to planning, development and distribution of benefits of future transmission lines on the east side, including Bipole III. Some perspectives were very specific to a particular community and were only raised once. Most, however, were brought out at several meetings and had wider relevance. Many of the perspectives referred to real and valid issues that will need to be addressed through the planning process. Other perspectives reflected the need for more accurate and complete information. Some of the relevant information was provided at the meeting by Manitoba Hydro representatives while the rest will be provided at future meetings once a project becomes more fully defined. The following, which is based on a detailed review of notes from the leadership meetings, summarizes perspectives from the community leadership that came up at more than one meeting. They are organized into four broad subject areas that cover the full range of interests and concerns identified:

- Community involvement process for transmission line planning and environmental assessment
- Sustainable community benefits from future transmission line development
- Project planning and environmental assessment, and
- Project employment and business opportunities.

Community Involvement Process for Transmission Line Planning and Environmental Assessment

The community leadership generally appreciated the opportunity to be informed and asked to share ideas very early in the East Side transmission line planning process. The timing, scope and meaningfulness of community involvement in project planning (in particular the choice of routes, and environmental assessment measures, including mitigation and compensation measures) was the most frequently raised subject in the leadership meetings. In many communities, the leadership expressed an interest in having

their community kept informed and involved in decisions that would affect the community throughout project planning and environmental assessment.

A frequent message was that community involvement had to extend beyond the leadership and include community membership. The leadership in most communities asked Manitoba Hydro to hold meetings with community members before going any further in its future transmission planning process. Members should be given the same information and opportunity to express their interests and concerns about future transmission line projects as was provided to the leadership. It was also mentioned that as the location of the project becomes clearer, a special effort should be made to involve local resource users whose activities might be affected by the project.

The leadership of several First Nations wondered how the meeting that was being held would be interpreted. They were concerned that the meeting might be construed as consultation, which has legal ramifications that could impinge on the rights of the First Nation. To avoid this problem, they requested that the meeting not be considered consultation. In a similar vein, several communities offered the perspective that the community involvement process would be a token process as the projects being introduced would go ahead regardless of the community preference.

Sustainable Community Benefits from Future Transmission Line Development

Another topic that received a great deal of interest was obtaining sustainable (enduring) financial benefits from future transmission line projects. Leaders often commented that job and business benefits from transmission line projects would be modest and of short duration and that a new transmission line would pass through their traditional areas without ongoing benefits to their communities. This view was particularly associated with a HVDC project such as Bipole III where power could not be tapped for local use. A related perspective was that the benefits of a project like Bipole III, which was moving power from the north to the south, would accrue solely to southern and export customers.

These perspectives prompted an interest in the idea raised in Manitoba Hydro's presentation of possibly providing sustainable (enduring) financial benefits from future lines that pass through traditional areas. The leadership in many communities wanted to see such benefits materialize and wanted the benefits to reach a large portion of the community population. A benefit of this nature was seen as providing an additional source of income or cost reduction to communities facing severe financial limitations.

Considerable interest was shown in the form that the sustainable financial benefits would take and in having an influence in determining that form. A variety of ideas and suggestions were put forward about the form of these benefits:

- They should take the form of reduced electricity bills, which would benefit all community members.
- Consider revenue and profit sharing, perhaps through issuance of preferred shares in the project.
- Need to be provided on annual basis, not just one time.
- Like idea of a trust where capital is protected.
- Concern about abuse of a development fund.
- Could be per cent of cost for every kW of power transmitted.

- In NACC communities, take form of provincial tax breaks for community members.
- Concern that arrangements about form of benefit were already made with other communities.

A few communities wanted to be partners in the transmission line project, similar to what was taking place with new generating stations for these leaders, an annual financial payment through a development fund or trust was not considered sufficient for use of local lands and resources. They also wanted a direct role in project decision making.

Project Planning and Environmental Assessment

Various aspects of the project planning and the environmental assessment were addressed by the communities' leaders. Some leaders indicated that Manitoba Hydro should be obtaining the approval of local people whose territory is being crossed by a new line before securing provincial and federal approvals. Some favoured having a negotiated agreement with Manitoba Hydro that clarified how their community would be involved and benefit from future transmission projects passing through their traditional areas. A few communities wanted to start negotiating such an agreement immediately.

The impression that the Bipole III project and extension of the East Side road are interconnected came up many times.

The following were identified as impacts of future transmission lines that local communities would care about:

- Impacts on local water, land, wildlife, migratory birds, plants, soil, rock and minerals.
- Impacts on caribou migration and populations.
- Impacts on local trappers and adequacy of compensation.
- Impacts on neighbouring communities; do not want to create conflicts among communities; not comfortable if project adversely affects other FN communities.
- Impacts of electric and magnetic fields on the health of people, wildlife and vegetation.

Several suggestions were made for alleviating and managing project impacts, notably:

- Involve local resource users and their associations in working out mitigation and compensation measures for impacted traplines and other resource uses.
- Locate the line adjacent to existing roads, transmission lines and other already cleared and developed areas to minimize disturbance of the environment.

Several communities noted that they would prefer or are considering a regional approach to dealing with the Bipole III project.

Project Employment and Business Opportunities

In general, the leadership recognized that local job and business opportunities would be modest and of short duration during project construction and virtually non-existent during operations. Nevertheless, this was an important subject for some communities because of the scarcity of local jobs and business opportunities. Leaders in these communities expressed the desire to have their members get the jobs and contracts associated with work taking place in their area. A few asked that local residents be employed in the planning process, including:

- Planning and organizing community involvement activities
- The process of choosing a route for the project
- Obtaining and interpreting information needed for the environmental assessment.

Pre-project training was proposed to maximize local participation in construction jobs. It was noted that the training would have to be timely and effective to achieve greater local participation in project jobs. There was an interest in having local residents participate in the more skilled as well as entry-level jobs.

3.2 OTHER ASPECTS OF MANITOBA HYDRO ACTIVITIES

Community leaders also took the opportunity to offer perspectives about other aspects of Manitoba Hydro activities that affect or are of interest to their communities. Frequently raised issues included high electricity bills, frequent application of a late payment penalty to unpaid electricity bills, expectations regarding the North Central Transmission Line not met, use of outside contractors to do line maintenance clearing, need for more training for and employment of northern aboriginal residents in full time Hydro jobs, need to know educational and upgrading requirements to qualify for full time Hydro jobs, compensation for impacts of Winnipeg River generating stations and impacts on health of electric and magnetic fields from existing power lines.

4.0 MANITOBA HYDRO RESPONSES TO NOTABLE QUESTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

Manitoba Hydro representatives responded to many questions and perspectives about future east side transmission line development raised during the community leadership meetings. The following responses were given to the more notable and frequently expressed questions and perspectives.

Question or Perspective Raised	Manitoba Hydro Response	
by Leadership	rameoba nyaro kesponse	
Basic Project Features		
How wide will the right-of-way be?	Approximately 50 to 60 metres (200 feet) wide. This is 75-85	
	metres less than the rights-of-way for the Bipole I and II projects	
	that travel through the Interlake.	
What would the towers be like?	Towers would likely look similar to the existing HVDC line, i.e.38 to	
*	49 metres (125 to 160 feet) high, steel structures. Each tower is	
	anchored by four guy wires. There are typically be 3 to 4 towers	
940	per mile. This compares to 26 structures per mile for wood pole,	
What is the state of the state	community distribution lines.	
What is the cost of building	Approximately \$250 million to plan for and build the Bipole III	
Bipole III?	transmission line.	
Where will the Bipole III line be	Location of the Bipole III line remains to be determined. The	
located?	process of identifying possible alternative routes and selecting a	
	preferred route has not yet started. This process will likely begin in	
_1	the summer / fall of 2003. Discussion and collaboration with local	
	communities will play an important role in the routing process.	
Relationship to Proposed East Side Road Extension		
Will the line be located next to East		
Side road extension?	Bipole III does not have to be located near the East Side road.	
Side Foud Cateriaion:	Routing a transmission line is much more flexible than routing a	
	permanent road as transmission lines do not have to avoid certain	
Is the proposed East Side road	ground conditions such as deep swamps or steep slopes.	
extension needed to build Bipole	The transmission line will be built in winter. Access for construction	
III?	is best achieved by winter roads built along the right-of-way. For	
	this reason, an all-weather road is not required nor particularly	
	beneficial for building Bipole III.	

Environmental Process and Impacts		
Will there be an environmental	The fee started. Community involvement will be an	
assessment of the project?	important part of this process.	
Will electric and magnetic fields	In the past 15 years, numerous scientific studies have been carried	
around the line cause cancer?	out on this topic by health experts. The weight of scientific	
	evidence to date does not support a cause and effect link between	
	electric and magnetic fields (EMF) and human or animal health. The	
	Manitoba Clean Environment Commission recently issued an	
	"Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMFs) Health And EMF Experts' Consensus Statement" which agreed with this conclusion.	
	which agreed with this conclusion.	
Limitations on Project Benefits		
Can communities become owners	Manitoba Hydro is not prepared to share in ownership of the Bipole	
of part of the Bipole III project?	III project because the line will be a key part of its integrated	
	power system and must be managed and operated in conjunction with the rest of the system.	
	with the rest of the system.	
Could the enduring benefit from	Manitoba Hydro is not prepared to do this as it would create	
the project take the form of	inequities among customers. The same rates apply to all residential	
reduced power rates to the community?	customers with land line connections across the province. Reduced	
Will pre-project or on-the-job	rates have not been provided to any community in the province.	
training be provided to community	Transmission line construction projects do not provide pre-project or on-the-job training because of the short duration and seasonal	
residents?	nature of the work. In a given area, line construction involves two	
	winter construction seasons lasting approximately three months	
	each. Pre-project training cannot be justified for such a short period	
	of employment and on-the-job training is impractical because the	
Will construction contracting be	work has to be completed under a very tight schedule.	
nandled in the same way as the	No, the joint venture system used on North Central proved to be highly problematic for all involved. Future transmission contracts	
North Central project?	will be of an open tender type and invite competitive bids. This type	
	of tendering provides everyone with the opportunity to compete for	
	project work. Manitoba Hydro's Northern Purchasing Policy allows	
× ×	for evaluation of aboriginal content in tender packages.	

5.0 NEXT STEP - COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSES

The most frequent perspective offered by community leaders was that their residents be given the opportunity to meet with Manitoba Hydro to learn about and discuss the current status of future transmission line development on the East Side. Many pointed out it was not sufficient to deal only with the leadership in discussing future development plans. The leaders requested that sessions with community residents occur as soon as possible after the leadership meetings, before the Corporation proceeds any further with planning and assessment of the Bipole III project.

Manitoba Hydro proposes to respond to this frequently expressed request by conducting a series of open houses in most of the East Side communities contacted to date. These sessions are the next step in Manitoba Hydro's community relationship building process with these communities. As many as 25 open houses may be held. We envisage that:

- The open houses will provide community residents with an early opportunity to learn about Manitoba Hydro's plans for transmission line development on the East Side and to offer their perspectives about these plans to Manitoba Hydro staff.
- They will take place during a six month period between January and June 2003. Timing in individual communities will be determined jointly with community leadership.
- Information similar to what was presented to the community leadership in the first round of visits will be provided at the open houses.
- The community leadership will be contacted to confirm their interest in having an open house, work
 out details about the timing and location of the session and arrange for a community resident to
 assist with open house planning in their community.
- Staff involved with planning of future East Side transmission projects may also appear on local radio or television talk shows and participate in other community forums.
- Staff from Manitoba Hydro's customer service group will also be in attendance to deal with customer service questions.
- Manitoba Hydro will assume all costs associated with the open houses.

This next step would ensure that both community leaders and residents in aboriginal and northern communities on the east side have been provided with an early opportunity to learn about and offer comment on Manitoba Hydro's plans for future transmission line development on the east side of the province. The input received from the leadership meetings and community open houses will play an important role in defining how Manitoba Hydro proceeds with further planning of the first of these projects – Bipole III.