

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is NextBridge?

NextBridge Infrastructure brings together the extensive resources of three partners – NextEra Energy Canada, Enbridge, and Borealis Infrastructure – for development, financing, construction, operation, and maintenance of the East-West Tie Transmission Project (the Project). NextBridge is committed to safely increasing the competitiveness and cost-effectiveness of providing reliable transmission service to the ratepayers of Ontario, and building lasting relationships with our stakeholders and nearby communities. Once complete, the Project will also be owned and operated by NextBridge.

What is being proposed?

The Project is an approximately 446km, double-circuit, 230-kilovolt transmission line connecting the Wawa Transformer Station to the Lakehead Transformer Station in the Municipality of Shuniah, near Thunder Bay, with a connection at the Marathon Transformer Station. Hydro One Networks Inc. will be responsible for modifying each transformer station to accommodate the new line.

Why is the Project important?

The Project is required to ensure the long-term reliability of the electricity supply in northwestern Ontario, accommodating forecasted electrical load growth from industrial activities (particularly in the mining sector) over the next decade. The Project is also intended to increase transfer capability, and provide system and operational flexibility.

On December 3, 2015 the Ontario Government passed Bill 112. This new legislation introduces a provision to the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998* that allows Cabinet to issue an Order in Council declaring that a transmission line is needed as a priority project.

The Project, with an in service date of 2020, was declared needed as a priority Project by Order in Council 326/2016.

Were other alternatives considered?

Yes, the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) looked at various alternatives, including additional transmission and generation for the area. The IESO conducted a technical and economic analysis of the options, and recommended the expansion of the East-West Tie as the preferred alternative.

What approvals are required?

Environmental Assessment and Leave to Construct applications must be approved before construction of the Project can proceed. The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change will review the Environmental Assessment. The Leave to Construct will be submitted to the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) for review. The OEB reviews the material and provides an opportunity for interested parties, including First Nations and Métis communities, to provide input relevant to its jurisdiction. The review and approval process considers the impacts the Project may have on consumers with respect to prices, as well as the reliability and quality of electricity service. The OEB will approve projects they consider to be in the public interest.

When will this Project be built?

Construction is anticipated to commence in 2018 and take two years to complete. The expected in-service date is 2020.

Why was the Project deferred?

In 2014, the IESO proposed the development schedule for the Project be extended to work toward a 2020 in-service date and that opportunities for cost reductions be explored across all aspects of the project. The IESO believes this extended timeline will not undermine overall project benefits or impact system reliability, as mining and other infrastructure developments in northwestern Ontario progress slower than originally expected.

Will access to property be required?

Yes. Our land optioning and permitting program is underway. NextBridge Land Agents are in the field consulting with property owners, Crown interest holders, and Ministries on the preferred route and the preliminary construction and access plans.

Will I be compensated?

NextBridge will seek land rights for the footprint of the Project including right-of-way (ROW), temporary workspace, stockpiles, additional lands for laydown areas, and access requirements on Crown and private land. The NextBridge Compensation Principles document available on our website provides an overview of what you can anticipate receiving as compensation. NextBridge Land Agents will also be available to discuss the compensation particular to your property.

How will I be compensated if my trapping activities are disrupted by the Project?

NextBridge will consult with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to confirm which trappers, if any, may be affected by the Project. Registered active trappers will be consulted and provided compensation if impacted by the construction of the Project. This will include damage to trapper assets, general disturbance, adverse effects, and impacts to trapping operations.

Are you building the new line through Pukaskwa National Park (the Park)?

No. Parks Canada reviewed the details of the proposed Project and determined that access to the Park for the purposes of studying a route through the Park would not be allowed. The proposed route has been revised, and now bypasses the Park. As a result, the preliminary preferred route now passes through the White River area.

Will our electricity rates change because of the Project?

The cost of new network transmission facilities are split among all Ontario ratepayers. Costs to develop and construct the Project are anticipated to have a minimal impact on electricity bills.

How are you increasing competitiveness and cost effectiveness for ratepayers?

The Project is the first competitive bid transmission project in Ontario and NextBridge believes that competition brings the best value to the electrical ratepayers of Ontario.

What will the towers look like?

Towers are planned to be primarily steel, guyed "Y" lattice structures and self-supporting lattice towers. These structures are preferred based on foundation size, smaller surface disturbance, cost and safety features when compared to traditional structures. Guy wires will be large in diameter, and will be marked with high-visibility plastic markers from ground-level to well-above anticipated winter snow levels, ensuring safety for trail users like snowmobilers and off-road vehicles. Towers are planned to be approximately 43 metres (140 feet) tall.

Is the new line going to be safe?

Above all, NextBridge is committed to the safety of people and the environment. Our concern for safety includes everyone – landowners, employees, contractors, Aboriginal communities, and any others working or living in close proximity to the line. The Project will be designed to maximize safety, but it is extremely important that everyone exercise caution when working around transmission lines.

We want to hear from you

We encourage you to visit our website at www.NextBridge.ca, or send us an email at info@NextBridge.ca to ask questions, provide feedback, or get on the Project mailing distribution list for newsletters and updates.

You can also give us a call, toll-free, at **1-888-767-3006**. We will listen carefully and promptly respond to your questions and concerns throughout the Project.