# Federal Impact Assessment for the Eastern Bridge Project

Public Information Session – September 2026

Impact Assessment Agency of Canada
Agence d'évaluation d'impact du Canada
Canada

# Session Overview

- **Introduce the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada**
  - Who we are
  - What is the federal impact assessment process
  - How you can participate in the impact assessment process
- **Overview of the project**
- **Potential project effects in areas of federal jurisdiction**
- **Question and answer period**



# The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada and the Federal Impact Assessment Process

## Introduction

# Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

- Federal agency reporting to the **Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature**
- Conducts federal impact assessments on major projects in Canada under the ***Impact Assessment Act***
- Works with the support of other federal departments
- Conducts Indigenous consultation and meaningful public engagement
- Cooperates with provincial, territorial and Indigenous jurisdictions

Impact Assessment Agency of Canada | Agence d'évaluation d'impact du Canada

# What is an Impact Assessment?

- Impact assessment is a process that the federal government uses to make decisions on major development projects in Canada
  - Looks at the potential positive and negative effects of proposed projects
  - Aims to mitigate the projects' adverse effects and enhance their positive effects
  - Relies on scientific evidence and expertise, Indigenous knowledge and public/community knowledge



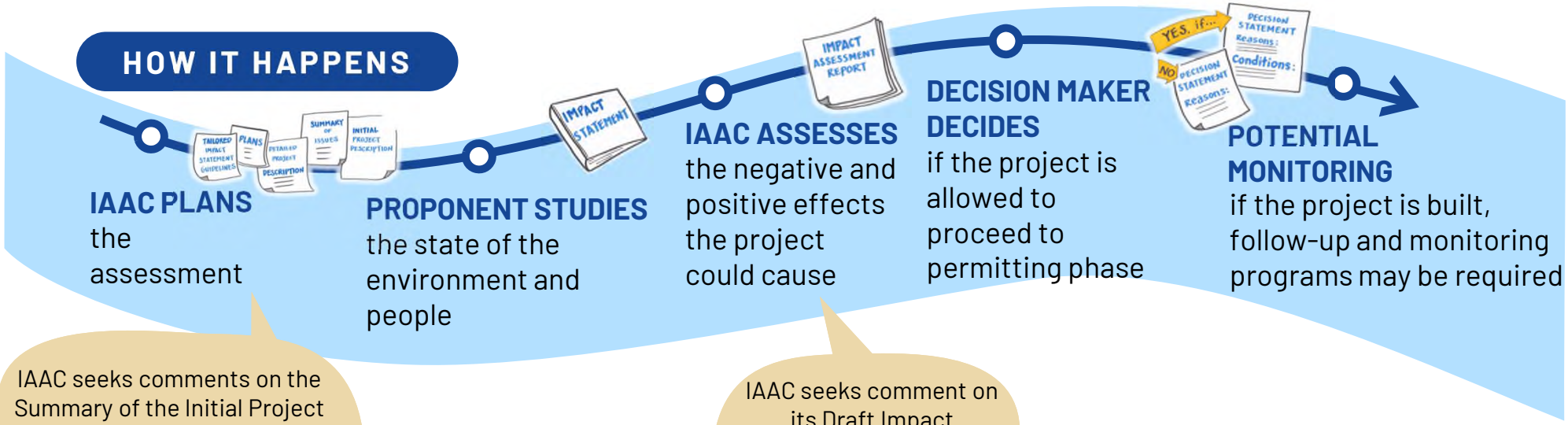
# Project Examples

Major projects can be found on the Project List (*Physical Activities Regulations*) organized by sector, such as:

- Transport (e.g., interprovincial bridges)
- Oil, gas and other fossil fuels
- Water projects
- Mining and metal mills
- Hazardous waste
- Electrical Transmission Lines and Pipelines



# Impact Assessment Process




IAAC seeks comments on the Summary of the Initial Project Description and the key issues for the project **(we are here)**

IAAC seeks comment on its Draft Impact Assessment Report

# Public Participation in the Impact Assessment Process

Why and how to participate in an impact assessment?

# Your Participation Matters

- Your comments and concerns can guide and influence the impact assessment process and inform the proponent and decision makers
- You can help:
  - **identify issues** that are important to you and your community
  - help us **understand the context** of the issue
  - provide important **local knowledge** about the project's potential effects
  - identify, prevent or mitigate possible **negative effects** in areas of federal jurisdiction
  - **influence the project design** early in the process
  - **inform the decision** on whether further assessment is required; and should an IA be required, inform the development of the guidelines and other plans



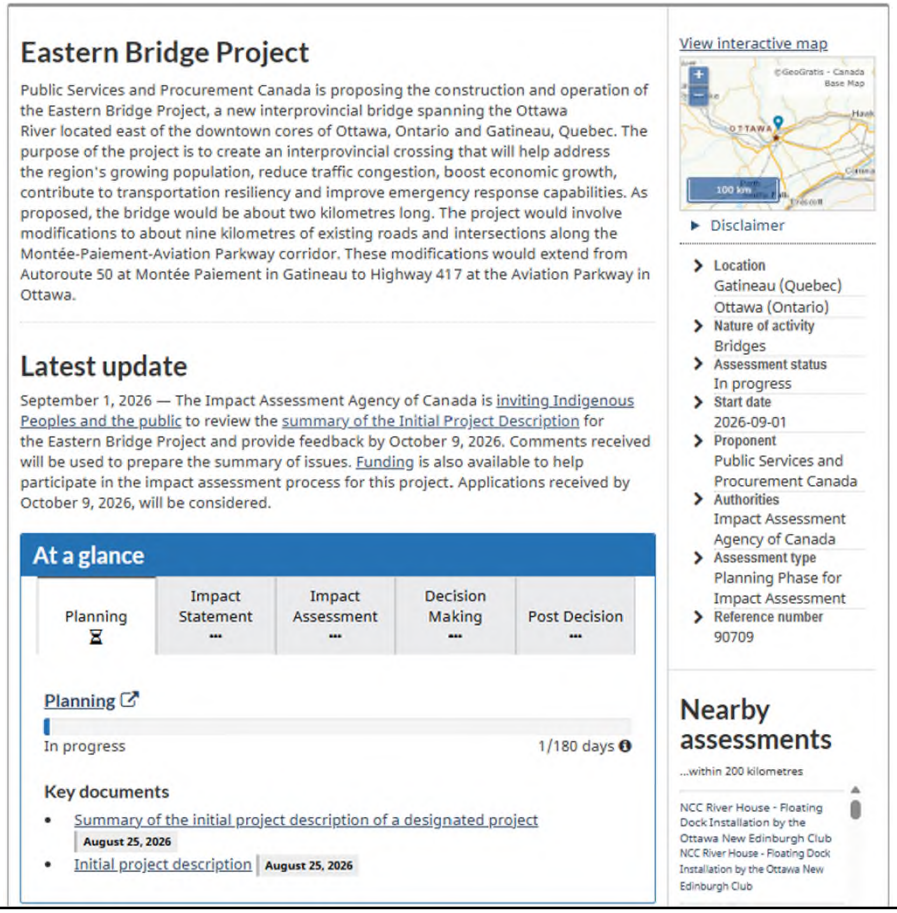
# How to Participate

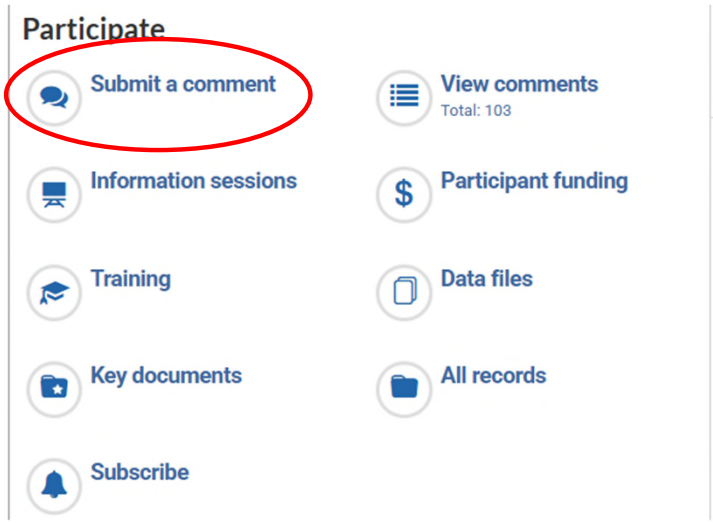
- Via the **Canadian Impact Assessment Registry** website
  - Use the "Submit a comment" feature on the project page: https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/90709?culture=en-CA
- By writing to IAAC at EastBridge-PontEst@iaac-aeic.gc.ca
- **Deadline for submitting comments: October 9, 2026**

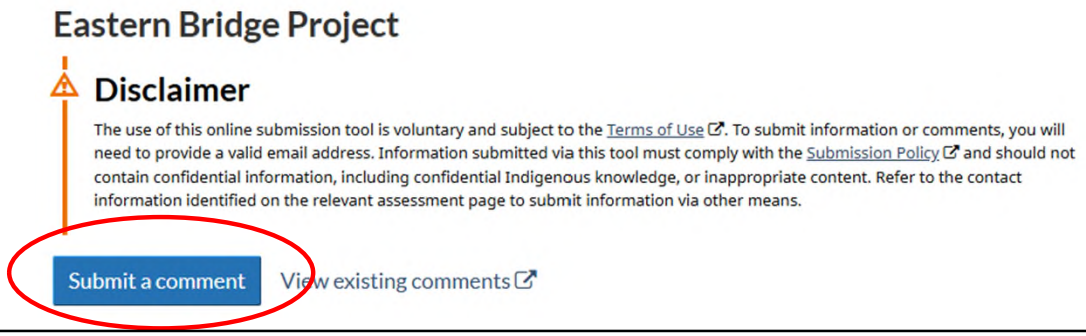
**To stay informed, subscribe to the project mailing list:**

Sign up on the Registry or send an email to EastBridge-PontEst@iaac-aeic.gc.ca

# The Canadian Impact Assessment Registry



# How to Provide Comments

Most Helpful



"I'm concerned the project will impact Lake Sturgeon in Ottawa River"

→ * Specific Concern
* Specific Request



"I want to learn more about how many full-time jobs the project will bring to my community"



"This project is very bad for species at risk in the area"

Least Helpful



"I support this project! It should move ahead immediately" or "This project is a horrible idea, stop ruining our environment"

→ General opinion with no details or request

* Comments with derogatory language or profanity are **not** accepted

# Participant Funding Program

**Deadline for submitting an application for funding during the Planning phase: October 9, 2026**

**Must meet at least one of the following criteria**:

- Have direct local interest in the assessment (living or owning property in the area)
- Have community knowledge or Indigenous Knowledge relevant to the assessment
- Have expert information relevant to anticipated impacts of the project
- Have interest in the potential impacts of a project on treaty lands, settlement lands or traditional territories, or related claims and rights

**For more information, visit the Participant Funding Program web site. For any questions, or to request help in filling an application form, communicate with the Funding Program team:**

- Phone: 1-866-582-1884
- Email: fp-paf@iaac-aeic.gc.ca

# Reference Questions

- What is your **interest** in the project?
- Do you have any **concerns** about the project?
- How could the Project **affect** you or your community, either positively or negatively?
- What **valued components** are important to you or your community and why are they important?
- Do you have any **specific knowledge** relevant to the assessment of this project?
- Are you aware of any **other potential issues** related to the assessment of this project?
- Are there any **economic, technical, linguistic or other** challenges that might prevent you from participating?

**Note:** An impact assessment may be required only if there are non-negligible effects in areas of federal jurisdiction (i.e., fish and fish habitat, aquatic species at risk, migratory birds, federal lands, impacts on Indigenous Peoples, and interprovincial, boundary, or international waters), direct or incidental effects, or effects related to a *federal work or undertaking*.

# Overview of the Eastern Bridge Project

Public Services and Procurement Canada

# Project Context

## Why a new interprovincial corridor is needed

### Capacity

Current crossings are operating at or near capacity

### Growth

Population growth will add network pressure

**Facilitating Interprovincial Trade**

### Connecting Communities

No crossing east of Gatineau and Rideau Rivers

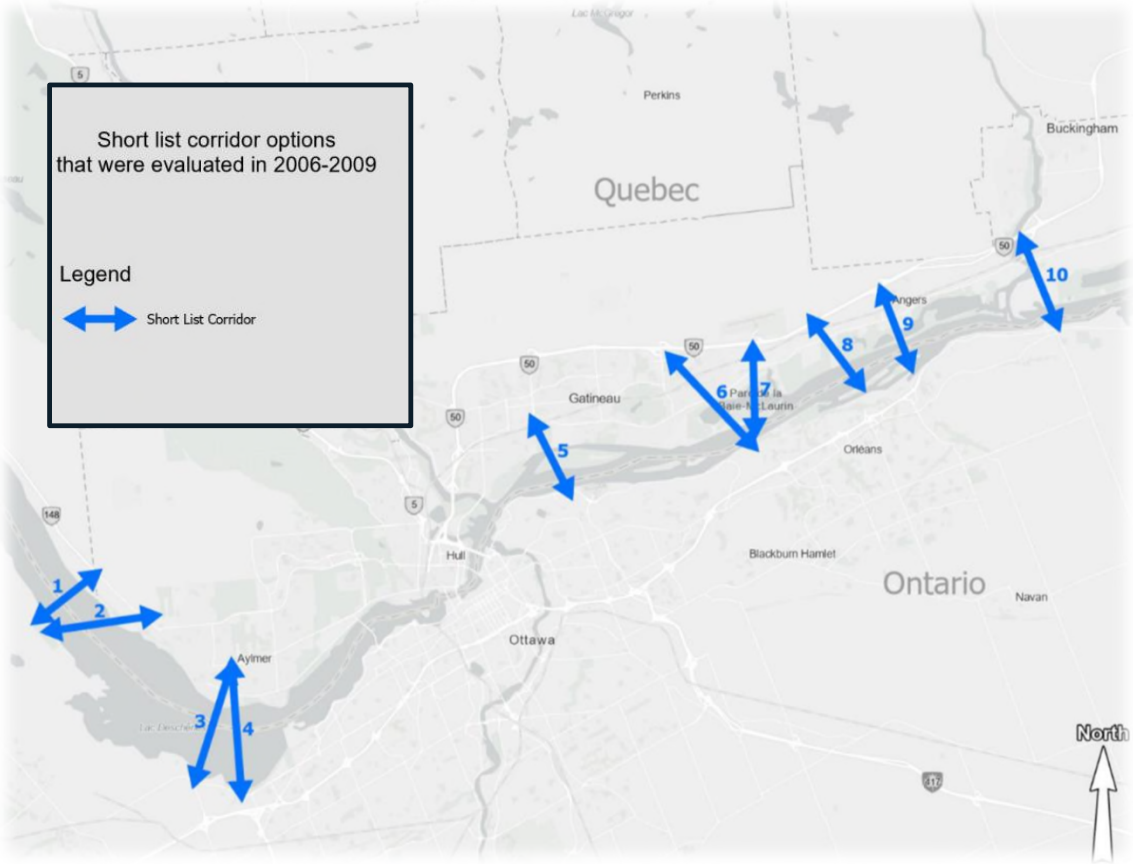
### Downtown

Opportunity to reduce downtown truck traffic



# Corridor Options Studied

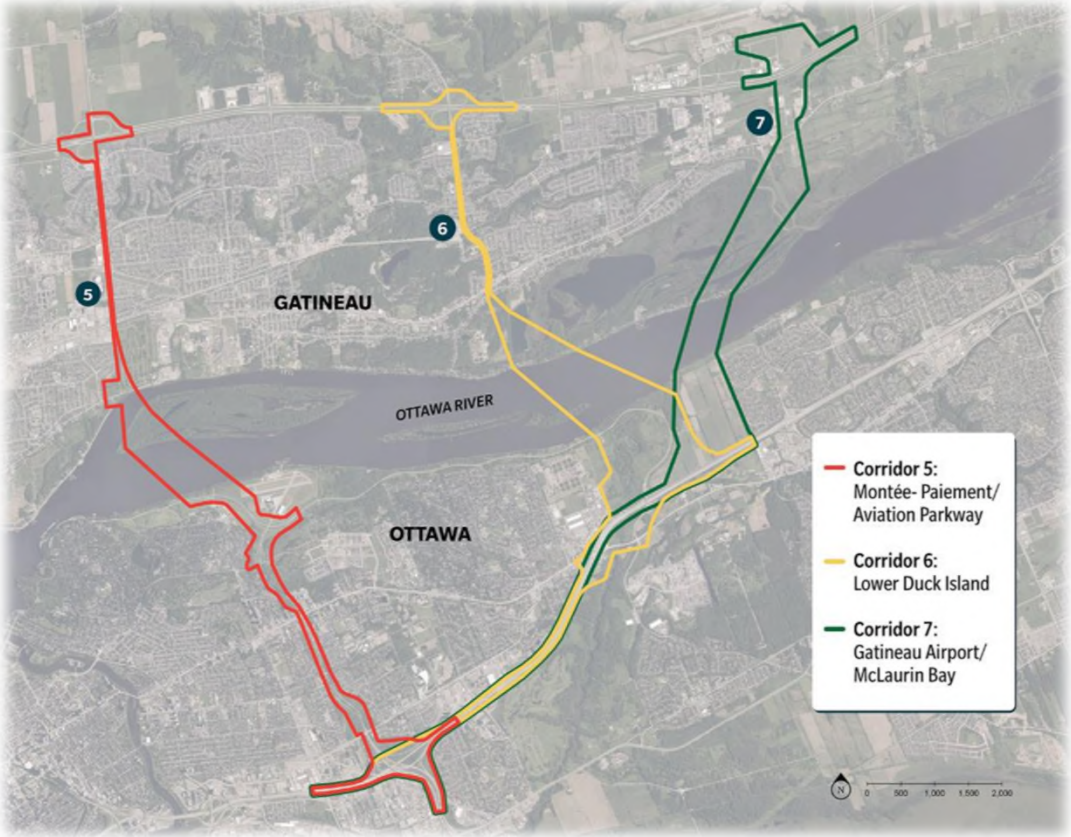
## The corridor reflects decades of study




**2006**

Environmental Assessment of 10 bridge locations + 2 tunnel options

# Project History




**2013**
Top 3 Eastern corridors studied in greater detail

**2019 - 2024**
Studies refreshed

**Corridor 5 – Montée-Paiement / Aviation Parkway**
Consistently identified as the technically preferred option

# Project Scope and Components

**Quebec Infrastructure**
- Connects Autoroute 50 / Montée Paiement to the new bridge corridor
- Includes Gatineau-side approach roads, interchange/interface works, and active transportation facilities
- Integrates the crossing into the Quebec regional transportation network

**Bridge Crossing**
- New Ottawa River crossing, approximately 2 km within the broader corridor
- Multimodal structure supporting vehicles, active transportation, and future transit accommodation
- Core interprovincial link between Gatineau and Ottawa

**Ontario Infrastructure**
- Connects the bridge corridor to Aviation Parkway / Highway 417
- Includes Ottawa-side approach roads, highway interface/interchange works, and active transportation facilities
- Integrates the crossing into the Ontario regional transportation network



# Bridge Alignment and Options Analysis

An assessment will be undertaken to systematically evaluate design alternatives and inform selection of the preferred design concepts based on a weighted consideration of the following:


Biophysical Environment

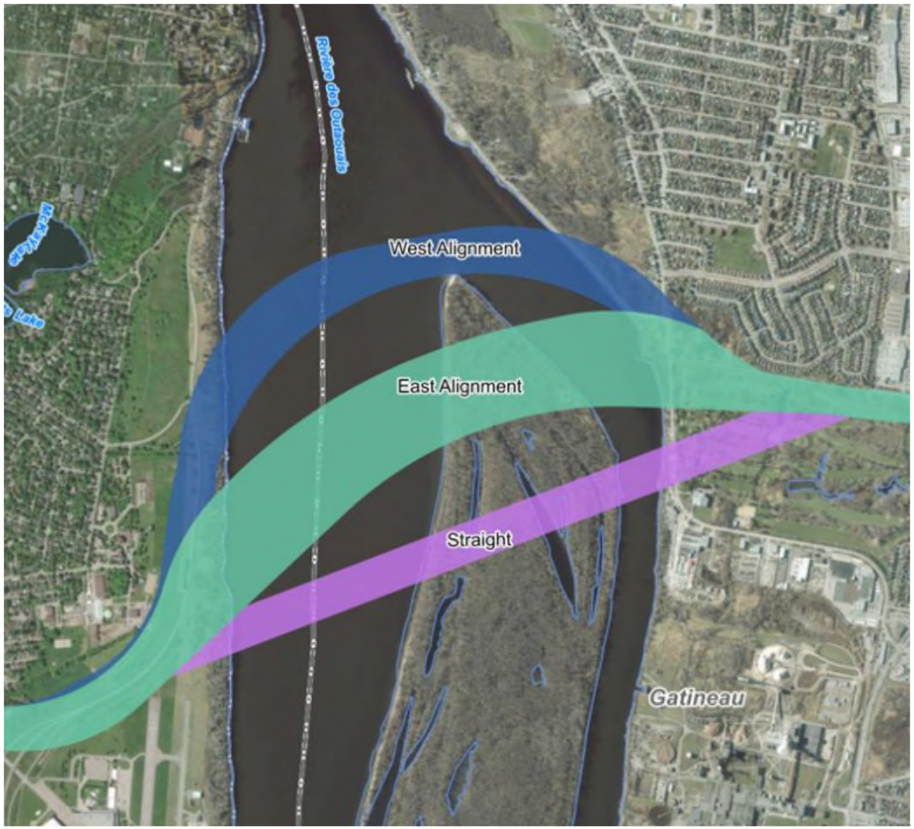

Social and Cultural Environment


Cost

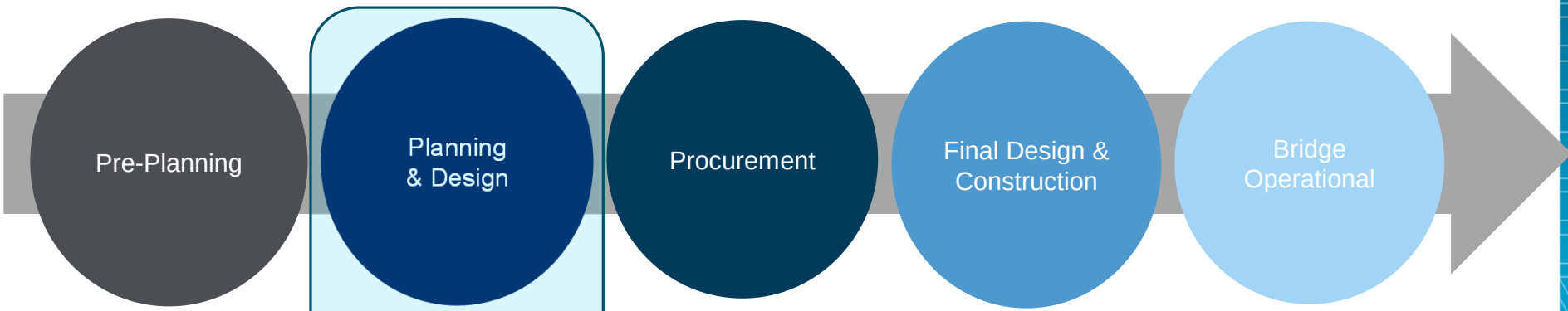

Design and Engineering


Maintenance and Operations


Schedule



# High-level Project Plan




**2019 - 2026**

- Functional requirements
- Initial concept designs
- Initial Project Description

**2026 - 2028**

- NCC Board concept design approval
- Indicative cost
- Impact Statement

**2027 - 2028**

- Procure owner's engineer
- Procure final designer / builder via Request for Qualification/ Request for Proposal

**2029 – 2034**

- Final design development phase
- Early works
- Construction

**2034**

- Substantial completion

# Planned Studies

## Technical Studies

**Until the end of the summer 2026**

- Geotechnical Drilling along the corridor
- Geotechnical Geophysics at A50

Required to fill geotechnical data gaps for all options under consideration in preliminary design development.

## Environmental Studies

**Conducted by Indigenous-owned firm between March 2026 and March 2027**

- Habitat characterization
- Rare and ephemeral spring plants and trees
- Amphibians, reptiles, birds, bats, other mammals, and insects
- Archaeology

Required to avoid sensitive areas, understand potential impacts and develop mitigation strategies



# Engagement – Next Phase



**Indigenous communities**
Rights, interests, studies, opportunities

**Partners**
Design Options feedback for other levels of government

**Public Advisory Groups**
Option assessment + design feedback

**Public online engagement**
IAAC process and broader public input

**Stakeholders + landowners**
Corridor-specific discussions

# Potential Effects in Areas of Federal Jurisdiction

As presented in the proponent's Initial Project Description

# Potential Effects on Fish and Fish Habitat

| Potential Effects | Examples of Assessment and Mitigation Approaches |
|---|---|
| • Permanent loss or alteration of fish habitat where the new bridge is built, including changes to the riverbed, shoreline vegetation and water flow | • Where feasible, refine bridge design to minimize the in-water footprint; maintain fish passage; protect riparian vegetation; implement DFO measures and applicable standards for in-water works |
| • Temporary disturbance of fish habitat during in-water construction activities, such as dredging and installation of temporary work areas | • Limit in-water work during appropriate fisheries timing windows; isolate work areas; restore disturbed riverbed and shoreline areas |
| • Fish injury or mortality during construction, including dewatering activities | • Relocate fish from isolated work areas, gradually dewater work areas, and use fish protection measures where appropriate; follow DFO standards and codes of practice |
| • Changes to water quality that could affect fish during construction and operation, including increased sediment, accidental spills and road runoff | • Implement erosion and sediment control measures; stabilize exposed soils; use settling basins or filtration where appropriate; prevent release of concrete wash water and other deleterious substances; implement spill prevention and response procedures |
| • Temporary disturbance to fish from construction noise and vibration | • Plan construction activities to reduce noise and vibration during sensitive periods for fish where feasible |
| • Temporary disturbance to smaller fish-bearing streams and ponds near Montée-Paiement and Aviation Parkway during construction | • Maintain fish passage where required, minimize disturbance to watercourses, and restore disturbed areas after construction |

# Potential Effects on Migratory Birds

| Potential Effects | Examples of Assessment and Mitigation Approaches |
|---|---|
| • Destruction of migratory birds, nests, or eggs resulting from construction activities<br>• Loss or alteration of habitat resulting from construction activities<br>• Disturbance to migratory birds from noise and light pollution generated during construction and operation<br>• Injury or mortality of migratory birds due to accidental collision with construction equipment and vehicles<br>• Harm to migratory birds potentially nesting on the new bridge structure from operational maintenance activities | • Avoid vegetation clearing and demolition during the nesting season; conduct nest surveys and inspections of work, staging and stockpile areas; establish setbacks around active nests; provide environmental awareness training and monitoring during construction<br>• Configure the project footprint, staging areas and stockpiles to avoid sensitive habitats where feasible; use field surveys and environmental studies to inform project design; apply avoidance and minimization measures before mitigation is required<br>• Apply NCC's Bird-Safe Design Principles; optimize lighting design; use directional and shielded dark-sky compliant lighting; minimize unnecessary lighting and follow international guidance on reducing light pollution impacts on migratory species |

# Potential Effects on Federal Lands

| Potential Effects | Examples of Assessment and Mitigation Approaches |
|---|---|
| • Adverse effects on Rockcliffe Airport operations, users and regulatory compliance | • Coordinate with Transport Canada and airport stakeholders; consider aviation safety, navigable airspace and operational requirements in project design and construction planning |
| • Loss of and reduced access to green spaces, recreational trails and community facilities on federal lands | • Engage with affected facilities and land managers; consider access and operational requirements during construction planning; identify measures to reduce temporary disruptions |
| • Adverse effects on users of federal lands from changes in air quality, noise and vibration | • Conduct air quality, noise and vibration assessments and identify mitigation measures through project design and construction planning |
| • Adverse effects on terrestrial flora and fauna and their habitats (e.g., loss of habitat, biodiversity, ecological functions) resulting from construction activities on federal lands | • Minimize vegetation clearing and habitat disturbance; avoid sensitive habitats where feasible; implement species-specific mitigation where required |
| • Changes to hydrological and ecological functions of wetlands from construction activities on federal lands | • Avoid and minimize wetland impacts where feasible; conduct wetland studies; incorporate measures to maintain wetland functions through project design |
| • Adverse effects on archaeological resources due to construction activities on federal lands | • Conduct archaeological and heritage assessments; identify sensitive resources and implement avoidance, protection and management measures where required |

# Potential Effects on Indigenous Peoples

| Potential Effects | Examples of Assessment and Mitigation Approaches |
|---|---|
| • Damage or loss of archaeological sites, artifacts and areas of cultural significance on and around Kettle Island | • Archaeological and cultural heritage studies; identification of culturally significant areas; avoidance and protection measures where feasible |
| • Damage or loss of traditional fishing, harvesting, and gathering areas | • Environmental studies to assess traditional resources and habitats; consideration of Indigenous Knowledge where provided; follow federal and provincial regulatory guidance and permits to reduce effects |
| • Restricted travel and access to traditional land use areas and resources along the Ottawa River | • Work with Indigenous communities to understand access needs; assessment of land use patterns; consideration of measures to maintain access and reduce disruptions where feasible |
| • Adverse effects on species of cultural significance, including lake sturgeon and American eel | • Fisheries and aquatic habitat studies; assessment of culturally significant species; implement DFO measures and applicable standards to reduce effects |
| • Adverse effects on Indigenous health from reduced air quality and increased noise and vibration within traditional land use areas | • Air quality, noise and lighting assessments; consideration of Indigenous concerns and land use activities in the development of mitigation measures |
| • Adverse effects on drinking water, swimming and bathing areas from accidents and malfunctions during construction activities | • Water quality assessments; spill prevention, containment and response measures; consideration of Indigenous concerns related to water use and access |

# Potential Effects on Wildlife, Terrestrial Habitats and Species at Risk

| Potential Effects | Examples of Assessment and Mitigation Approaches |
|---|---|
| • Construction and operation activities could adversely affect SAR and their habitats (e.g., Butternut, Bank Swallow, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Chorus Frog, Hickorynut) on federal and non-federal lands<br>• Loss and alteration of terrestrial vegetation and habitats from clearing of vegetation, soil disturbance and introduction of invasive species from construction activities on non-federal lands<br>• Loss and displacement of terrestrial wildlife from habitat loss or fragmentation, disturbance from noise, vibration and lighting, and increased wildlife-vehicle collisions on non-federal lands | • Obtain applicable permits under the *Species at Risk Act*<br>• Species-specific surveys; avoidance of active nesting areas where feasible; seasonal timing restrictions and mitigation measures informed by field studies<br>• Avoidance and minimization of habitat disturbance where feasible; delineate critical habitat; implement best management practices for amphibian (e.g., exclusion fencing)<br>• Implement measures to reduce effects during in-water works to be informed by fisheries and aquatic studies<br>• Inspect construction areas for species at risk, including staging and stockpiling areas; stop work if species at risk observed and contact a qualified biologist before proceeding<br>• Provide environmental awareness and orientation for workers on site; train workers on species at risk recognition and how to proceed if encountered<br>• Install and maintain dark sky-compliant lighting which minimizes light pollution and reduces the potential for disruption to species at risk |

# Potential Effects on Health, Social and Economic Conditions

| Potential Effects | Examples of Assessment and Mitigation Approaches |
|---|---|
| • Adverse effects on human health, safety, and well-being due to construction activities and increased truck and vehicle traffic in residential neighbourhoods during operation (i.e., reduced air quality, increased noise, vibration and accidents) | • Air quality, noise, vibration and traffic studies; assessment of potential health and safety effects; mitigation measures identified through project design, construction planning and traffic management |
| • Adverse effects on commercial navigation and recreational use of the Ottawa River during construction and operation | • Ongoing engagement with Club de Golf Tecumseh; assessment of potential effects on access and operations; consideration of measures to reduce disruptions where feasible |
| • Contamination of Gatineau's drinking water supply from changes in water quality during construction | • Navigation studies and engagement with navigation authorities and river users; assessment of navigational clearances and potential navigation-related effects during construction and operation |
| • Adverse effects on the social and economic conditions of people that use and own the Club de Golf Tecumseh in Gatineau | • Monitor water quality before, during and after construction; implement erosion and sediment controls; develop spill prevention and emergency response measures |
| • Changes in property value, property taxes, access to businesses, and job competition along the project corridor | • Assess socio-economic effects; continue engagement with municipalities, businesses and property owners; identify measures to reduce disruptions where feasible |

# Next Steps

## Impact Assessment Process

# Next Steps in the Impact Assessment Process

1. IAAC prepares a **Summary of Issues**: summary of comments received during the engagement period
2. Proponent prepares a response to the Summary of Issues
3. IAAC determines whether an impact assessment would be required

*If IAAC determines that an impact assessment is required for the project, it prepares:*

- Tailored Information and Studies Guidelines
- Indigenous Engagement and Participation Plan
- Public Participation Plan
- Cooperation Plan
- Permitting Plan

# Reminders

Submit your comments on the project by **October 9, 2026**

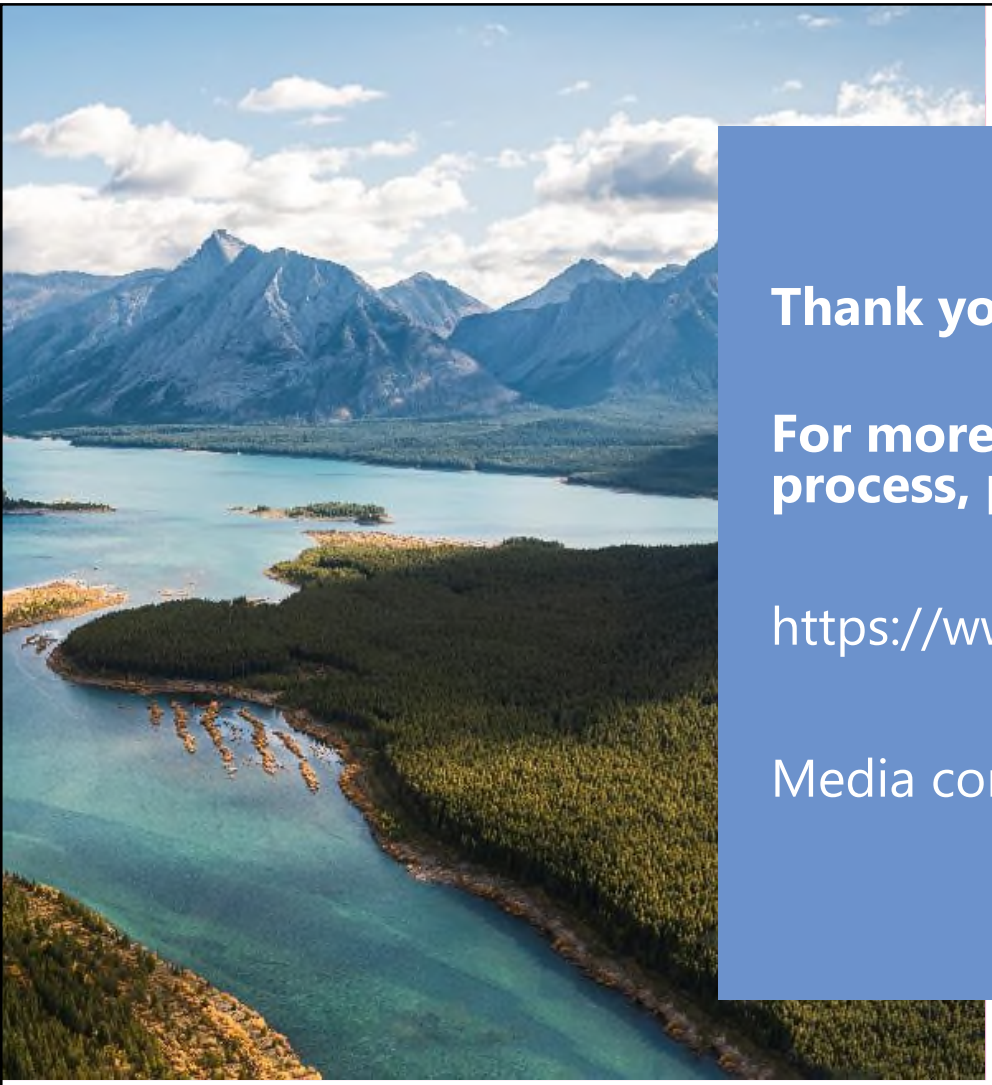
Submit an application for participant funding for the Planning phase by **October 9, 2026**

**Contact information :**

Impact Assessment Agency of Canada
EastBridge-PontEst@iaac-aeic.gc.ca

**Media relations :**
Media@iaac-aeic.gc.ca

# Question and Answer Period



**Thank you!**

**For more information on the impact assessment process, please visit the following web site:**

https://www.canada.ca/iaac

Media contact: media@iaac-aeic.gc.ca