

Clean Environment Commission – Bipole III Transmission Project

8 November 2012

David A. Ennis, P.Eng.

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(Commission Secretary)

Thank you and good evening, Panel Members

As noted my name is David Ennis.

I am a retired professional engineer. My career was in Manitoba as a designer, a bridge contractor, and latterly as the Registrar and Executive Director of The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of the Province of Manitoba - APEGM.

I hold a Bachelors degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Manitoba, and last year I earned a Masters degree in Biosystems Engineering – formerly known as Agricultural Engineering.

I make this presentation as a private citizen and not on behalf of any organization or other person.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide some thoughts on the question of whether an Environment Act licence should be issued to Manitoba Hydro for the proposed Bipole III Transmission Project.

My understanding of your Terms of Reference requires that – **should** the Commission recommend the issuance of a licence for the project, it should also provide recommendations on measures to mitigate any potential adverse effects expected to result from the project within three categories – environmental, socio-economic, and cultural, and, where appropriate, to also make recommendations on managing residual effects.

My concern has to do with the socio-economic area of your assignment -- and in particular the fundamental adverse effect of the project and its on-going residual effects.

Effects that will interfere with the intensive agricultural operations along the proposed routing of the line in southern Manitoba.

I will have a suggestion on how much of that could be avoided – and I will get to that.

As you might have inferred, I am not a farmer.

While my birth certificate says that my place of birth is Section 32-23-15 West, i.e. I was born on a farm, it is still in the family but I haven't worked on a farm for over 50 years.

That being said, I am also not oblivious to the issues and risks inherent in farming operations – I don't think I am afflicted with that commonly occurring Winnipeg syndrome known as "perimeteritis".

My awareness of farming has continued – I have travelled through the agricultural areas of the Province for 50 years and I am struck by the extent of mechanization improvements and the integration and speed of technological change.

I first became interested in the issue of the routing of the proposed transmission line because I wanted to save my grandchildren from paying their share of the all too obvious extra cost of this extended line.

Now my focus has changed.

I have since come to realize that my grandchildren will eventually pay off their share of that extra cost – but that there is a much more serious issue.

The children and grandchildren of the farm families and landowners adversely and unnecessarily affected by the transmission line have it worse – they will be disadvantaged in perpetuity.

Farming is a high-risk business at the best of times, and farmers make business decisions to manage that risk on a daily basis. Farm families don't need the adverse effects from this to their lives piled on top of their already high-pressure existence.

The Panel has heard other presentations that clearly delineate the many adverse effects on agricultural operations – costs – losses – risks – diminished value of the asset – and last but not least, the mental anguish within multi-generational family farms from an arbitrary invasion of their existence.

That stress would be even harder to endure knowing that there are alternatives.

It is fundamental that you, as a panel, should be weighing those impacts on the socio-economic fabric of southern Manitoba in making your recommendation.

Think about how you would feel if it was your family. It ought not to – as my old mother would have said – depend on "whose ox is being gored".

It also begs the question of whether the proponent – and make no mistake the real proponent is the Government of Manitoba – has subjected the economic effect of these factors to any form of true-cost accounting.

Bottom line – this Panel and the Commission have a responsibility to defer any recommendation on the application unless and until there is evidence that the socio-economic well-being of affected Manitobans cannot be preserved – or at least minimized by an alternative – and I am not suggesting the east side.

The issue is how to connect to Riel without the risk of loss of service options from an extreme weather event or other natural catastrophe.

I believe that there are two alternatives.

Firstly – see Attachment A – it seems to me that there is an option, for a hybrid line, the dark blue line, routed just south of Lake Manitoba from roughly Gladstone, crossing Bipoles I and II using of underground cable – the circle – to eliminate the hazard of a weather-related catastrophe, then resuming with towers to the northeast of Winnipeg and then turning south to the Riel station. That would significantly reduce the line length and reduce overall adverse effects on agricultural operations.

Secondly, I think that Mr. Will Tishinski provided you with a well thought-out suggestion a week ago – namely establishing a southern inverter station to terminate Bipole III at a location in the southwest of Winnipeg in the vicinity of the current Laverendrye station.

That would shorten the line by 120 km and avoid many of the adverse effects on some of Manitoba's most productive farmland stretching from Riel all the way back to St. Claude, see Attachment B, again the dark blue line.

It would make sense to examine the feasibility of that option while keeping the capability for HVac customer service and sales with a connection to the present Riel location.

In that context - I am told that Hydro already owns right-of-way property, i.e. not just an easement but titled property, on the south side of Winnipeg starting in the vicinity of the Laverendrye station near Oak Bluff and then following a route parallel to but separated from the Perimeter Highway and the Floodway, and ending at the Riel station, see Attachment C – this time the brown line. That acquisition, the result of some good planning in earlier years, seems fortuitous. The vacant right-of-way could be used for a HVac connection from an inverter station near Laverendrye to the Riel distribution and transmission station.

Additionally, each of these alternatives would be much more in line with the over-riding purpose of *The Manitoba Hydro Act* referred to by Mr. Len Bateman on November 1st – namely to

“promote economy and efficiency in the development, generation, transmission, distribution, supply and end-use of power”.

As I said earlier – the bottom line is that this Panel and the Commission has a responsibility to defer any recommendation on the application, unless and until there is evidence that the socio-economic well-being of affected Manitobans cannot be preserved, or at least minimized, by way of an alternative.

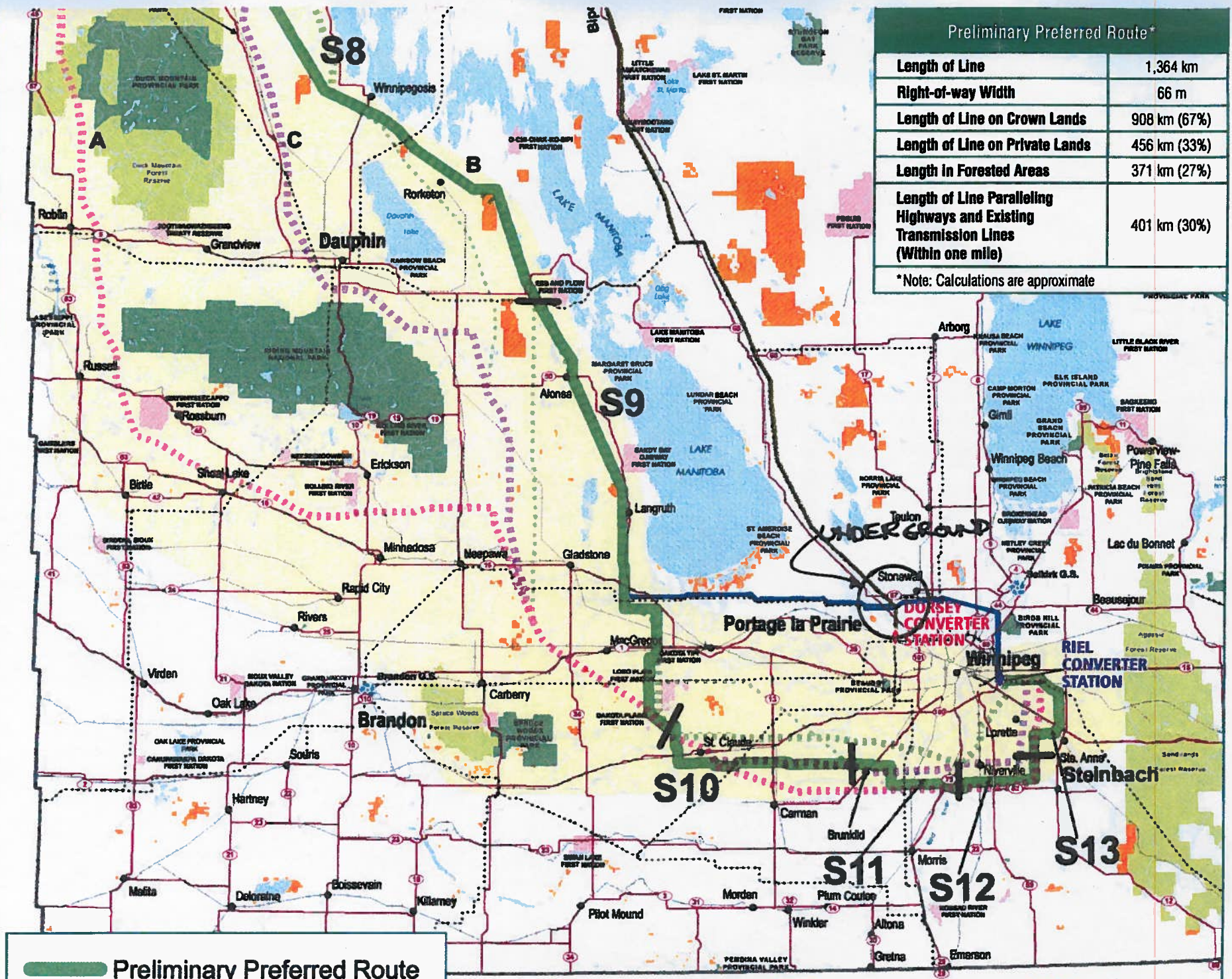
After you have deliberated the issues of the caribou, the moose, the wolves, the bears, the wolverine, The Prairie skink, the garter snakes, and the vegetation, there are still the human beings – and their life span is greater than any of the others.

Thank you for taking the time at this late hour to listen to my concerns. I will do my best to respond to questions or to provide further information later if requested.

Preliminary Preferred Route*

Length of Line	1,364 km
Right-of-way Width	66 m
Length of Line on Crown Lands	908 km (67%)
Length of Line on Private Lands	456 km (33%)
Length in Forested Areas	371 km (27%)
Length of Line Paralleling Highways and Existing Transmission Lines (Within one mile)	401 km (30%)

* Note: Calculations are approximate

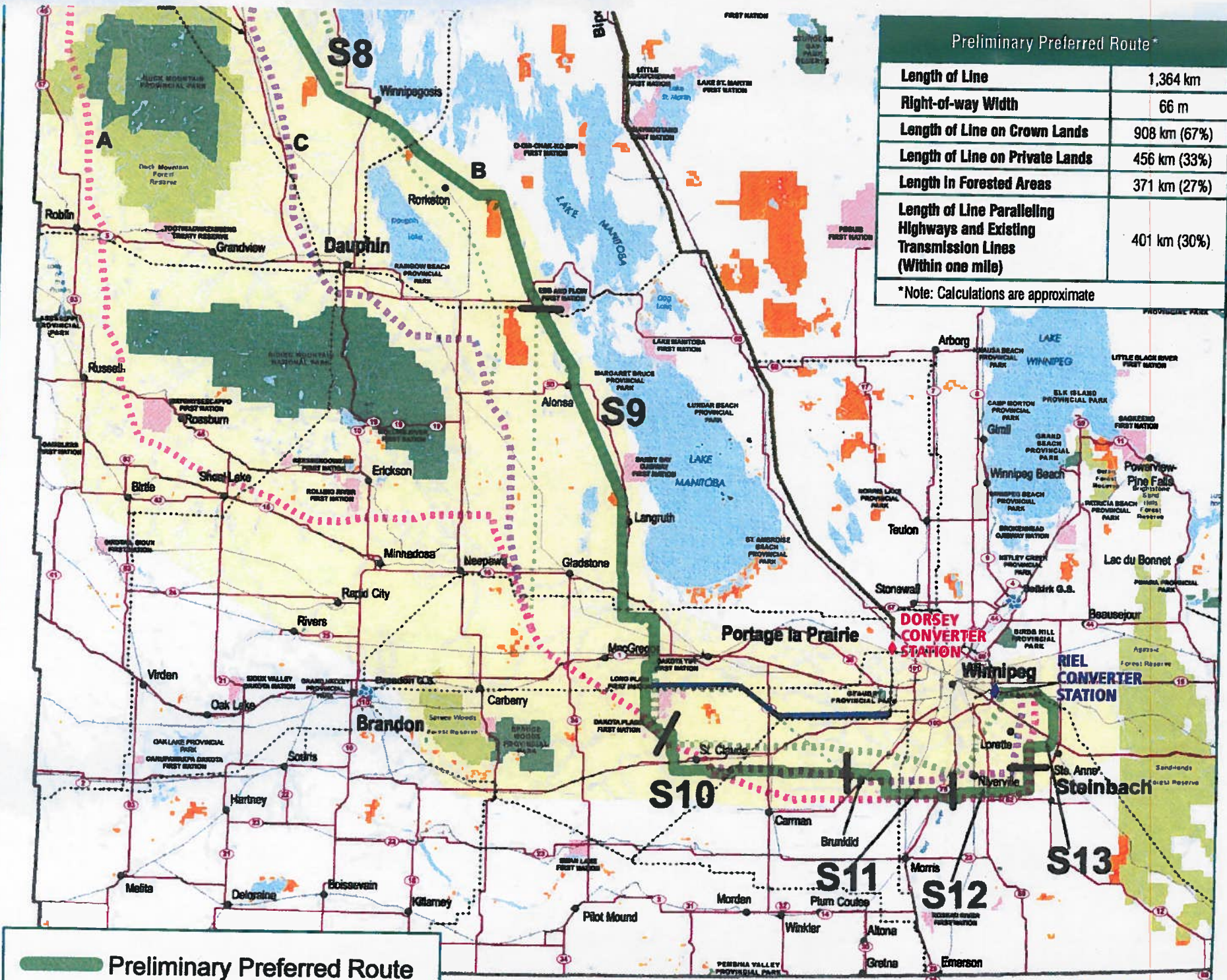



Preliminary Preferred Route

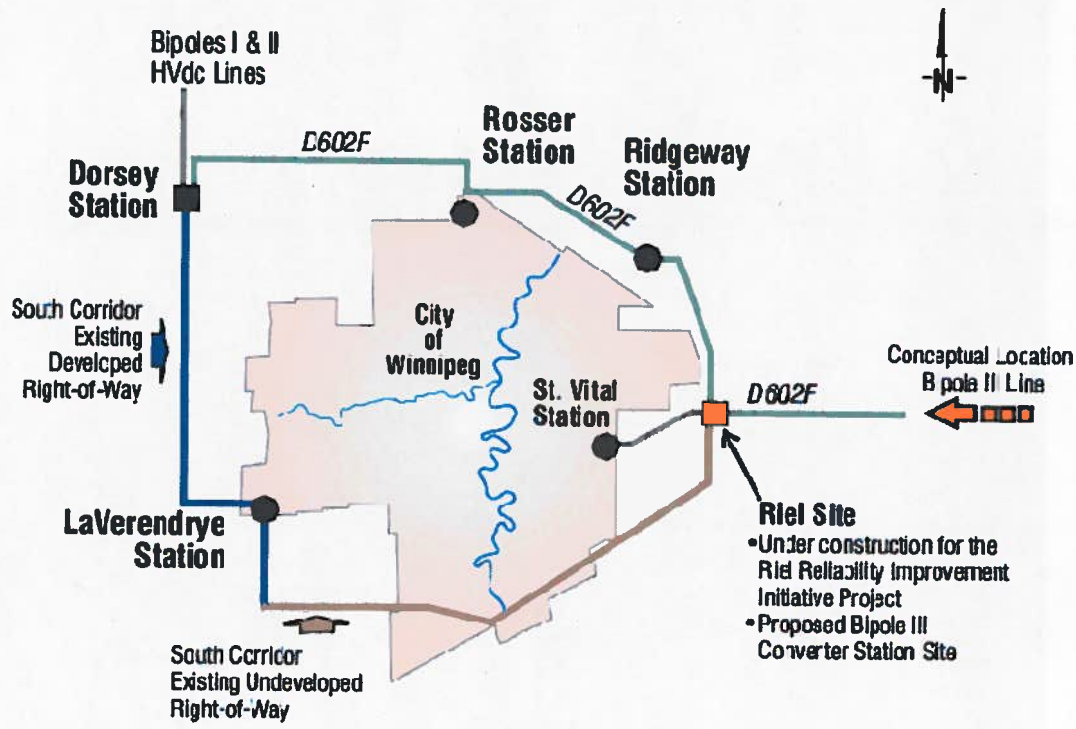
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 Preliminary Preferred Route



Attachment C – D. A. Ennis