TETRA TECH

TECHNICAL MEMO

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To:	Mr. Grant Woodbury Manager, Transportation Planning, Government of Nunavut	**Date:**	December 10, 2025
c:		**Memo No.:**	
From:	Tetra Tech Canada Inc.	**File:**	704-TRN.VHWY03353-01
Subject:	Proposed Sealift Improvements, Hamlet of Sanikiluaq, Nunavut		

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Hamlet of Sanikiluaq (the Hamlet, Sanikiluaq), located on the Belcher Islands in Hudson Bay, is the southernmost community in Nunavut (Figure 1, attached). The Hamlet is serviced by sealifts and typically receives two to three shipments of cargo per year between mid-July and mid-October. The current sealift area is functional but is limited by space and a relatively short tidal operating window. Proposed improvements to the sealift area are described below.

2.0 PROPONENT AND REPRESENTATIVE INFORMATION

Contact information for the proponent and supporting representatives are provided in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: Contact Information

Primary Applicant: Government of Nunavut (Transportation and Infrastructure)	
Applicant Name	Government of Nunavut (Transportation and Infrastructure) c/o Mr. Grant Woodbury Manager, Transportation Planning
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3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1 Project Location

The Project is located in the Qikiqtani (Qikiqtaaluk, Baffin) Region within the municipal boundaries of the Hamlet of Sanikiluaq, at approximately 56°32.4' N and 79°15.0' W (NPC 2025[1]). Sanikiluaq is not covered by an approved land use plan, but community members were involved in meetings held in 2013 with the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC) regarding the broader Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan (NPC 2025[1]).

3.2 Project Scope

Improvements to the current sealift area (the Project) involve the following components:

- Expansion, gravel and fill placement, and grading of the current sealift and laydown area
- Widening, gravel and fill placement, and grading of the existing ramp/barge landing area
- Upgrades to entry/exit points and adding signage

The sealift area is shown in Photo 1. The general layout of the Project is presented in Figure 2 (attached), with conceptual design drawings provided in Appendix A. The Project will not require new supporting infrastructure such as roads, borrow sources, or quarries, as current access to the sealift area is sufficient and deposits developed by the Hamlet of Sanikiluaq will be utilized for granular material and riprap. Aggregate sites are available both to the east and west of Sanikiluaq (Beauregard 2022[2]) and are relatively close to the Project site (e.g., within 5 km).

Photo 1: Current Sanikiluaq sealift area shown generally in red; proposed area for sealift improvements shown generally in yellow.

[1] Sanikiluaq | Nunavut Planning Commission
[2] Beauregard, M. 2022. Nunavut Community Aggregate Resources Report Series – Sanikiluaq. Report prepared by the Government of Nunavut – EDT.

Construction of the proposed improvements would occur ideally during the summer of 2026 but may require additional time in the summer of 2027 to complete. Work within the sealift area would be carried out in anticipation of the 2026 sealift schedule with the timing and storage of cargo planned accordingly. Construction activities would also take into consideration restricted activity timing windows established for Nunavut for the protection of fish and fish habitat.

3.3 Current Sealift Operation

The Hamlet of Sanikiluaq receives between two to three shipments of cargo per year via sealift between mid-July and mid-October. Barge landings are optimal at high tide, with an operating window generally available for 2 - 2.5 hours before and after high tide. Barges tend to wait for higher tides to offload as access to the sealift area during lower tides is challenging.

Cargo is typically offloaded using front-end loaders and operators supplied by the ships. Cargo is typically stored at the laydown area for short periods of time, until it is claimed. When cargo and empty shipping containers are stored at the laydown area for extended periods, it results in congestion and an inefficient use of limited space.

3.4 Improvements to the Sealift and Laydown Area

The Hamlet of Sanikiluaq as well as sealift operators (NEAS, Desgagnés Transarctik) have provided feedback on the current configuration and operation of the sealift and laydown area. A recurring theme is that the harbour is quite shallow and ground conditions in the vicinity of the barge landing are soft (sandy) and muddy which makes access difficult, particularly by heavy equipment such as loaders.

The sealift area also has limited space and a tight configuration. During busy times the area tends to get congested which makes offloading and storage more challenging. This feedback has been incorporated into the proposed Project design which would improve the efficiency and safety of the sealift operation.

3.5 Project Components

Components of the Project are described in the Sections below. The estimated size of the current laydown area is approximately 0.4 ha (4,200 m^2). The total Project footprint, including the expanded laydown area, widened barge landing ramp, and riprap armouring would be approximately 1.1 ha (10,925 m^2), adding approximately 0.7 ha or 6,725 m^2 of area to the current space used for the sealift and laydown.

The current sealift area is characterized by a gravel pad and with an undulating surface. There is one main access point though other access points are also used, particularly by ATVs (Photo 1). The intertidal zone is an extension of the gravel surface leading to a sloped beach composed of soft sands and gravels. The shallow subtidal zone is characterized by smaller cobbles and rocks. The area appears to be relatively unproductive due presumably to freezing and ice scour conditions that occur annually as well as the regular access by vehicles (largely trucks and ATVs).

3.5.1 Sealift Laydown Area

The area both to the west and east of the Northern Transportation Company Ltd. (NTCL) barge pushout is generally used as part of the sealift laydown (Figure 2, attached). Proposed improvements to the laydown area would focus on the NTCL pushout and areas situated to the east, with storage space extending toward the waterfront (Photo 1; Figure 2, attached).

The surface of the existing laydown is uneven with limited space. Areas would first be filled with locally-sourced pit run granular material to establish a more uniform, level surface. Lifts of granular fill and surfacing gravel would then be placed and graded to finish the surface. Riprap armouring would be installed along the outside perimeter of the marine interface to protect against erosion and particularly ice scour in winter. At the longest point (adjacent to the barge landing area), riprap would be placed into the shallow subtidal zone, approximately 20 m beyond the current lowest low tide level (Figure 2, attached).

3.5.2 Barge Landing Area

The current barge landing is approximately 30 m wide and can accommodate a single barge (optimally during high tide). Improvements to the barge landing would increase the ramp width to approximately 50 m which could accommodate two barges simultaneously while still allowing equipment to safely operate (e.g., loaders). The barge landing would be sloped to approximately 10% to allow for access during low tides as well. The ramp would be resurfaced with aggregate. Upon completion, the barge ramp would extend into the shallow subtidal zone approximately 25 m beyond the current lowest low tide level at the longest point (Figure 2, attached).

3.5.3 Signage and Access

Two entry/exit points would be installed around the upland perimeter of the laydown area to improve access. Signage would be installed at the junction of the sealift area and roadway and would include standard road signs and caution signs at the entrance. Signage would be both in English and Inuktitut.

4.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Initial concepts for the sealift improvement were developed in 2021. Tetra Tech has since furthered the engineering design and has had informal discussions with community members, the Senior Administrative Officer, and sealift operators during the summer of 2025 with respect to current sealift operations and suggestions for improvements.

More formal community engagement occurred on November 25, 2025 in Sanikiluaq that included the following:

- Presentation and meeting with Sanikiluaq Council (8 members present)
- Presentation and meeting with the local Hunters and Trappers Association (5 members present)
- Open House including a presentation and discussions with community members (10 members present)

Posters announcing the Open House were displayed at the Co-Op and Northern Store in advance of the planned date, though only in English (translation to Inuktitut was not completed due to lack of available staff).

5.0 LAND USE AND PERMITTING

Land use and anticipated permitting requirements for the Project are summarized below.

- Administrative Boundary – Qikiqtaaluk Region (Baffin) Region
- Land Use Designation – According to the Sanikiluaq Community Plan[3], the sealift area is within the "Institutional" land use designation, which aligns with the vision for the sealift improvement, as described.
- The sealift improvement activities could be categorized as a Transportation and/or Communications Corridor project.
- Land Ownership – Municipal

The project will require a conformity review conducted by the NPC and a screening by the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB). Given the anticipated work required in the intertidal and shallow subtidal zones, a Request for Review has also been prepared for review by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). The Project will likely also meet the requirements of a *Minor Works Order* under the Navigation Protection Program administered by Transport Canada. Transport Canada will also be notified of the project.

6.0 EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

Anticipated equipment and material requirements are presented in Table 6-1 below. Fuel dispensing, storage, and handling requirements will be sourced and administered by the Hamlet of Sanikiluaq. Hazardous materials and chemicals would largely consist of lubricants and oils required for vehicle and equipment maintenance. Inert waste generated by construction activities would be disposed of at the municipal landfill.

Table 6-1: Anticipated Equipment Requirements

Equipment Type and Quantity	Approximate Size/Dimensions	Proposed Activity
Excavator – 1	50 ton	Aggregate handling
Front-end loader – 1	20 ton	Aggregate loading
Rock truck – 3	30 to 40 tons	Aggregate hauling
Bulldozer – 1	20 to 40 tons	Aggregate spreading
Roller compactor – 1	12 ton	Surface preparation
Crusher – 1		Aggregate processing
Screener – 1		Aggregate processing

[3] Sanikiluaq Community Plan Poster https://downloads.cs-pals.ca/sanikiluaq/community_plans/community_plan.pdf

7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Anticipated environmental effects resulting from the Project are expected to be limited given that much of the area is already disturbed by the current sealift operation as well as by general public access. Of the total proposed footprint area (1.1 ha or 10,925 m^2), approximately 0.5 ha (5,425 m^2 or 50%) is within upland areas above the highest high tide level (Figure 2, attached). Approximately 0.4 ha (3,600 m^2 or 33%) of the proposed footprint is within the intertidal zone and approximately 0.2 ha (1,900 m^2 or 17%) is within the shallow subtidal zone (Figure 2, attached). A summary of potential environmental effects and proposed mitigation is presented in Table 7-1.

Table 7-1: Potential Environmental Effects and Mitigation

Environmental Effect	Effect Description	Proposed Mitigation
Terrestrial land disturbance	Terrestrial habitat will be disturbed within the Project footprint where material placement and grading will take place.	Efforts have been made through Project design to restrict activities to areas of existing disturbance. This includes borrow and quarry areas which will utilize existing sources. The sealift area is accessed regularly by people and vehicles (e.g., ATVs, trucks).
Aquatic/intertidal habitat disturbance	Aquatic/intertidal habitat will be disturbed as a result of the sealift expansion and materials (riprap and aggregates) will be placed into the shallow subtidal zone beyond the current lowest low tide level.	The intertidal and shallow subtidal aquatic habitat to be disturbed is generally of lower productivity, largely due to ice formation and scour during the winter months as well as regular access by people and vehicles (e.g., ATVs, trucks). The Project footprint has been optimized to limit the placement of materials in the shallow subtidal zone below the lowest low tide level. Efforts will be made to avoid placing materials in the shallow subtidal zone during the restricted timing window for fall spawning fish (August 15 to June 30). The riprap (rock) material to be used for shoreline protection may provide sheltered habitat for smaller marine organisms due to the protection offered against ice scour and the creation of spaces between rocks that present a refuge against predation.
Changes in ambient noise, dust, emissions	During construction, increases in ambient noise, dust, and vehicle emissions are expected as a result of Project activities. These effects, however, are anticipated to be of a short duration, lasting only as long as the construction period (e.g., a few months).	Notices advising the community of the upcoming construction activities will be placed around Sanikiluaq. Work hours will be set and adhered to. Speed limits will be slow to limit dust production, particularly with respect to the transport of materials between the Project site and quarry/borrow areas. Roads and the Project area may be watered to restrict dust production; calcium chloride (or similar) may also be applied to limit dust.
Risk of accidental leaks and spills	Construction activities and the use of heavy equipment can increase the risk of accidental leaks and spills.	Motorized equipment will be equipped with appropriately sized spill kits. The construction area will also be equipped with spill kits. Equipment will be in good repair prior to arriving on the construction site and will be kept in good repair for the duration of the Project. Refueling and repairs will be carried out at established facilities within Sanikiluaq (i.e., away from water).

Environmental Effect	Effect Description	Proposed Mitigation
Increased vehicular and heavy equipment traffic through community	Vehicular traffic in and around the Project site as well as between the Project site and the quarry/borrow areas is expected to increase during construction.	Speed limits will be slow to increase safety and limit dust production, particularly within the limits of Sanikiluaq proper.
Risk of sediment release into the marine environment	The handling and placement of aggregate materials has a low risk of sediment release into the marine environment.	Erosion and sediment control practices (e.g., silt fencing, stopping in periods of heavy rain etc.) will be practiced during Project implementation. The placement of riprap and aggregates will be carried out in the dry where possible. For areas where material will be placed in the shallow subtidal zone, placement will be slow and deliberate to avoid excess disturbance and sedimentation of the marine environment.

8.0 LIMITATIONS OF REPORT

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9.0 CLOSURE

We trust this memo meets your present requirements. Should you have any questions or comments, please contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,
Tetra Tech Canada Inc.

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/tp

Enclosures:
Figures
Appendix A Conceptual Design Drawings
Appendix B Limitations on the Use of this Document

FIGURES

LEGEND

★ Sanikiluaq

NOTES
Base data source: CanVec 1:50,000.

STATUS
ISSUED FOR USE

SANIKILUAQ SEALIFT IMPROVEMENTS

Site Location

PROJECTION UTM Zone 17			**DATUM** NAD83		**CLIENT** Nunavut
Scale: 1:1,000,000 — 20 10 0 20 — Kilometres					TETRA TECH
FILE NO. VHWY03353-01_Fig01_SiteLocation.mxd					
OFFICE Tt-VANC	**DWN** SL	**CKD** DS	**APVD** TP	**REV** 0	**Figure 1**
DATE November 18, 2025	**PROJECT NO.** TRN.VHWY03353-01				

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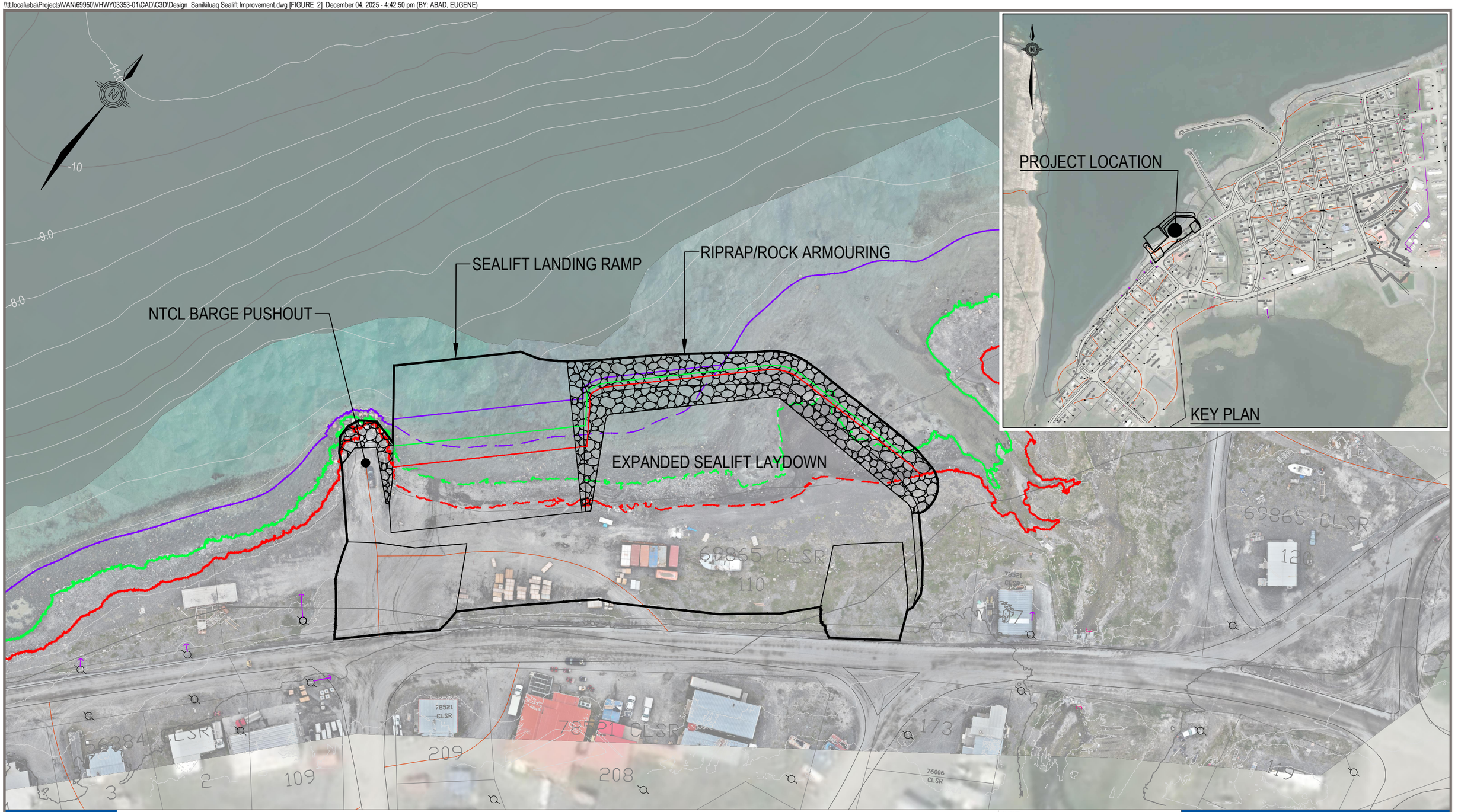

LEGEND

PROPOSED LAYDOWN TIDE LEVELS

- 0.60 m CVD28 ELEVATION - HHWLT (HIGHEST HIGH WATER LARGE TIDE)
- 0.01 m CVD28 ELEVATION - MWL (MEAN WATER LEVEL)
- -0.75 m CVD28 ELEVATION - LLWLT (LOWEST LOW WATER LARGE TIDE)

CURRENT LAYDOWN TIDE LEVELS

- 0.60 m CVD28 ELEVATION - HHWLT (HIGHEST HIGH WATER LARGE TIDE)
- 0.01 m CVD28 ELEVATION - MWL (MEAN WATER LEVEL)
- -0.75 m CVD28 ELEVATION - LLWLT (LOWEST LOW WATER LARGE TIDE)

0 50
Scale: 1: 1000 (metres)

0 500
Scale: 1: 10 000 (metres)

NOTES

BASE DATA:
DATE TAKEN: JULY 25, 2025
PROJECTION UTM NAD83, ZONE 17
DATUM CVD28-HT2.0 (1997)

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Nunavut

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SANIKILUAQ SEALIFT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

GENERAL ARRANGEMENT

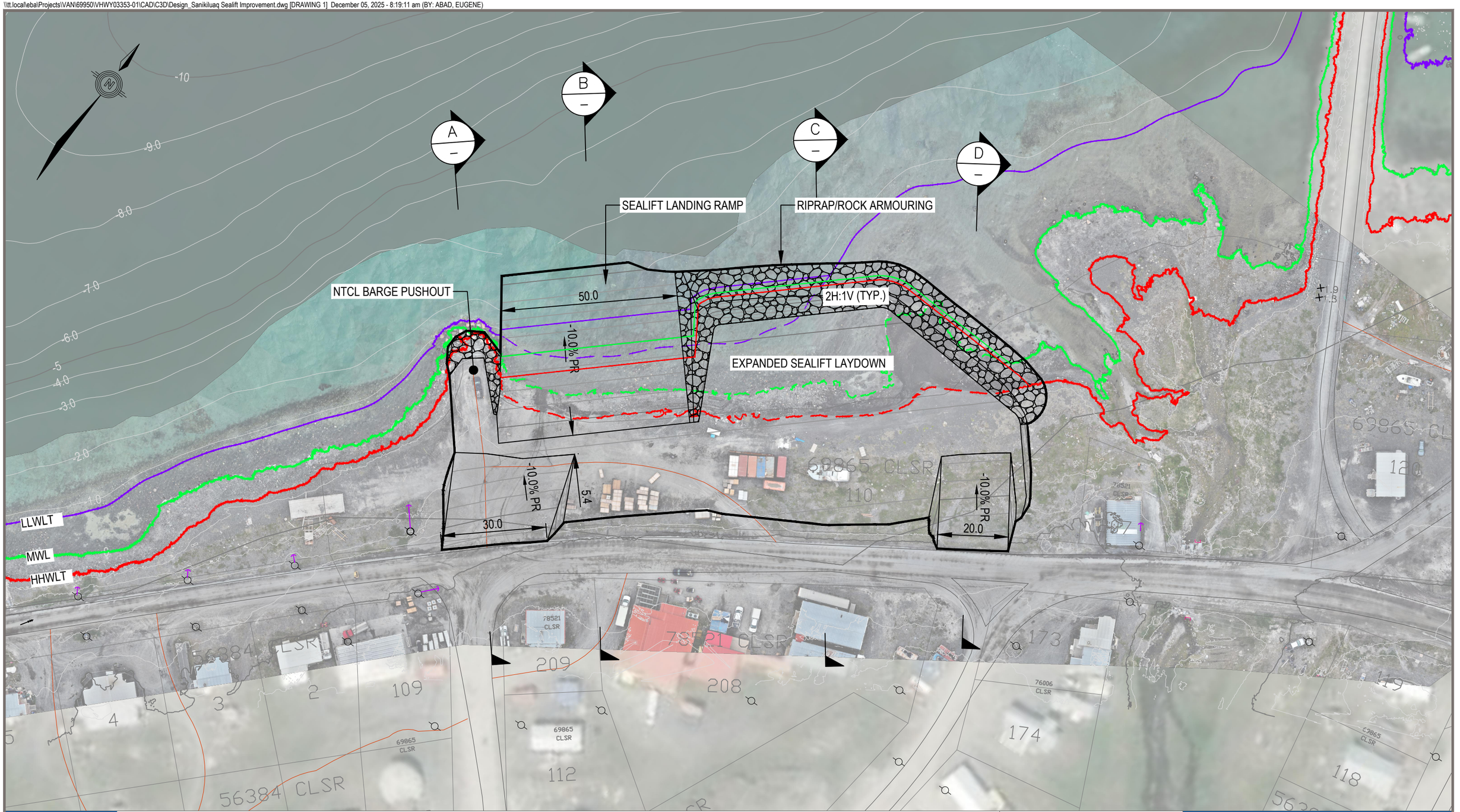
PROJECT NO.	DWN	CKD	REV
704-TRN.VHWY03353-01	EA	AH	0

OFFICE	DATE
VANC	DECEMBER 04, 2025

FIGURE 2

APPENDIX A

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN DRAWINGS



LEGEND

PROPOSED LAYDOWN TIDE LEVELS
- 0.60 m CVD28 ELEVATION - HHWLT (HIGHEST HIGH WATER LARGE TIDE)
- 0.01 m CVD28 ELEVATION - MWL (MEAN WATER LEVEL)
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CURRENT LAYDOWN TIDE LEVELS
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- 0.01 m CVD28 ELEVATION - MWL (MEAN WATER LEVEL)
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NOTES

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SANIKILUAQ SEALIFT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

GENERAL ARRANGEMENT

PROJECT NO.	DWN	CKD	REV
704-TRN.VHWY03353-01	EA	AH	0
OFFICE: VANC	DATE: DECEMBER 05, 2025		

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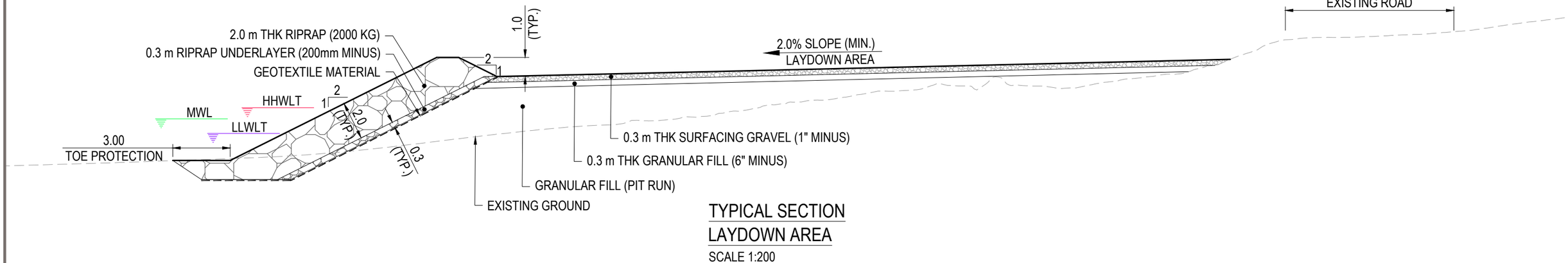

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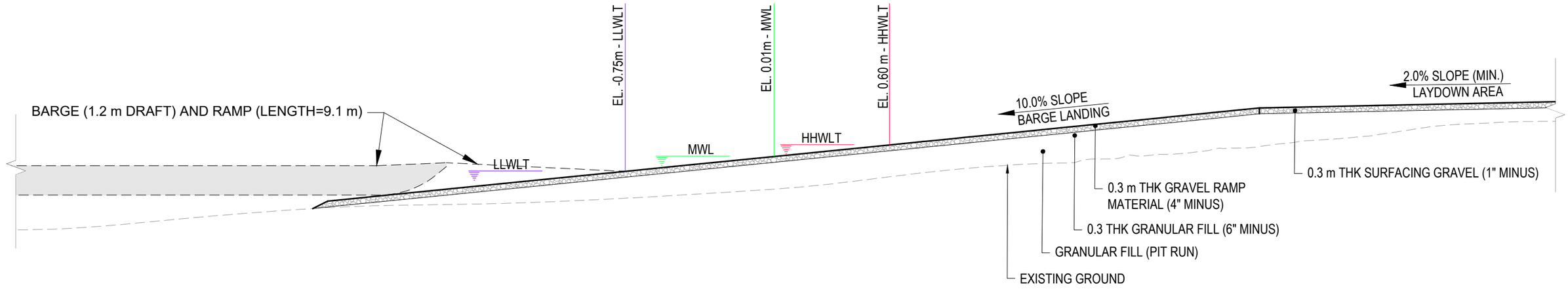

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BARGE LANDING
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LEGEND

- 0.60 m CVD28 ELEVATION - HHWLT (HIGHEST HIGH WATER LARGE TIDE)
- 0.01 m CVD28 ELEVATION - MWL (MEAN WATER LEVEL)
- -0.75 m CVD28 ELEVATION - LLWLT (LOWEST LOW WATER LARGE TIDE)

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NOTES

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SANIKILUAQ SEALIFT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

TYPICAL SECTIONS AND DETAILS

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OFFICE	DATE
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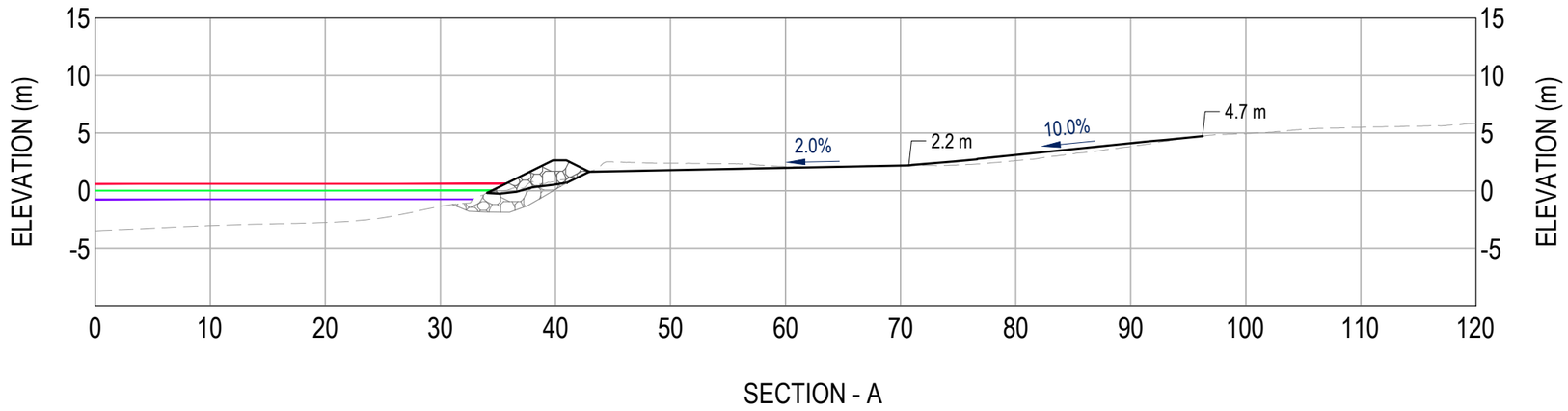

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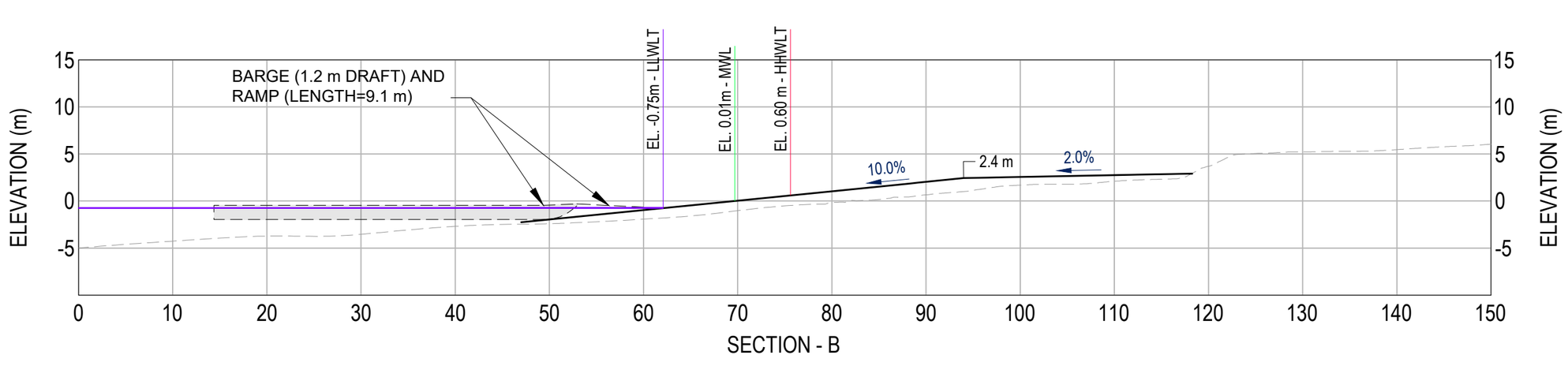

SECTION - B

LEGEND

- 0.60 m CVD28 ELEVATION - HHWLT (HIGHEST HIGH WATER LARGE TIDE)
- 0.01 m CVD28 ELEVATION - MWL (MEAN WATER LEVEL)
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0 25

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SANIKILUAQ SEALIFT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

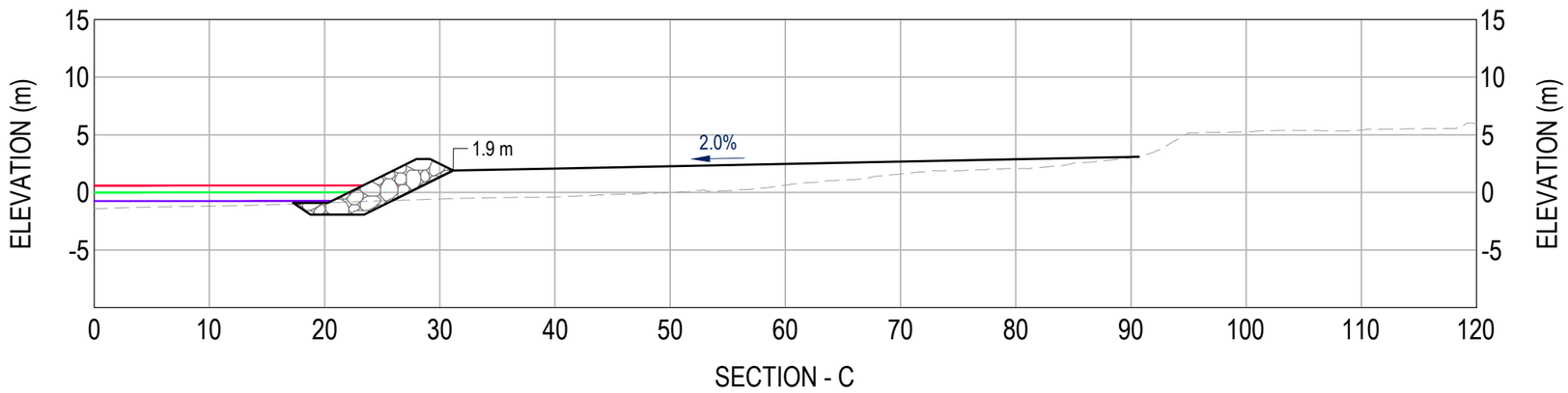
CROSS-SECTIONS

PROJECT NO.	DWN	CKD	REV
704-TRN.VHWY03353-01	EA	AH	0

OFFICE: VANC

DATE: DECEMBER 05, 2025

Drawing 3



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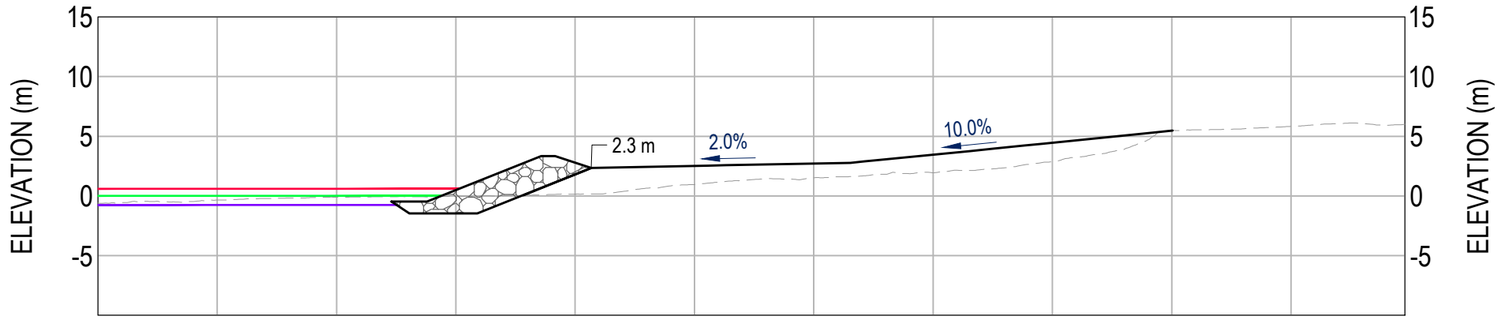

SECTION - D

LEGEND

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- 0.01 m CVD28 ELEVATION - MWL (MEAN WATER LEVEL)
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Nunavut

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SANIKILUAQ SEALIFT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

CROSS-SECTIONS

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704-TRN.VHWY03353-01	EA	AH	0

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Drawing 4

APPENDIX B

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LIMITATIONS ON USE OF THIS DOCUMENT

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