

# Halton Region Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guideline Update

## Public Information Center



# AGENDA

7:00-7:30	Open House & Feedback
7:30-7:50	Presentation
7:50-8:20	Moderated Question Period
8:20-9:00	Open House & Feedback

# Halton Region Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guideline Update

## Public Information Center

October 3, 2019



North-South Environmental Inc.  
*Specialists in Sustainable Landscape Planning*



halton.ca (311)



# PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER (PIC) OVERVIEW

- Purpose
- Your Role – Feedback
- Available Information Sources
  - Information Boards
  - Presentation
- Feedback Options

# THE NATURAL HERITAGE SYSTEM

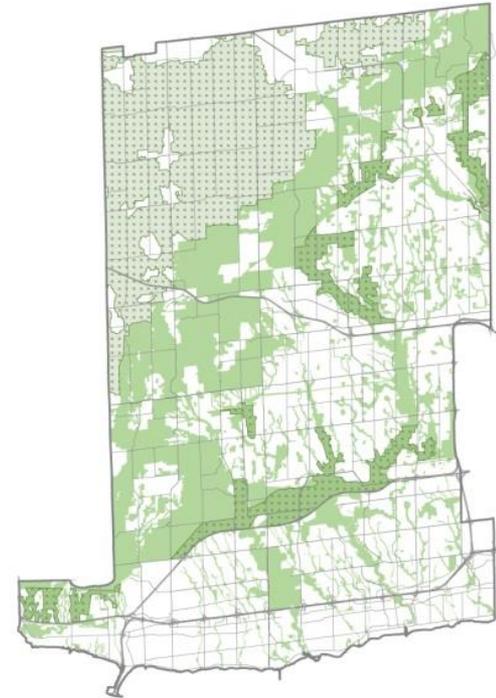
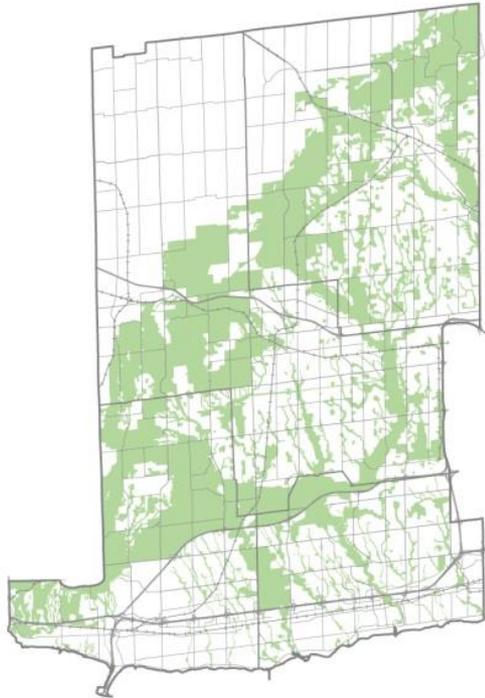
Regional NHS

+

Greenbelt NHS

=

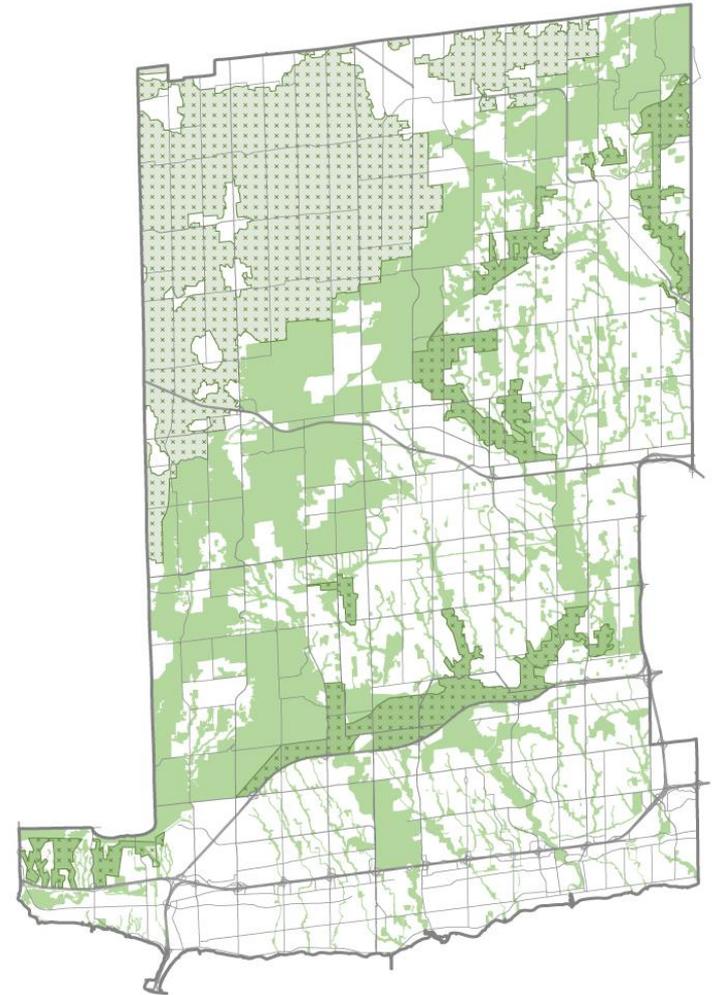
Halton's NHS



50.6% of the Region

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- What is an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)?
- Why is an EIA Needed?
- When is an EIA required?

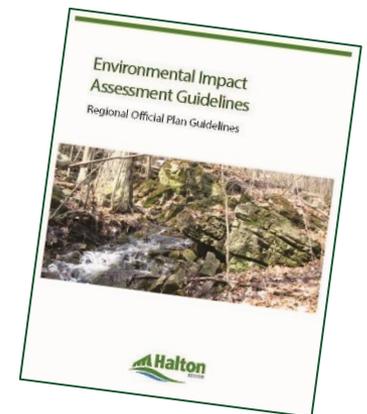
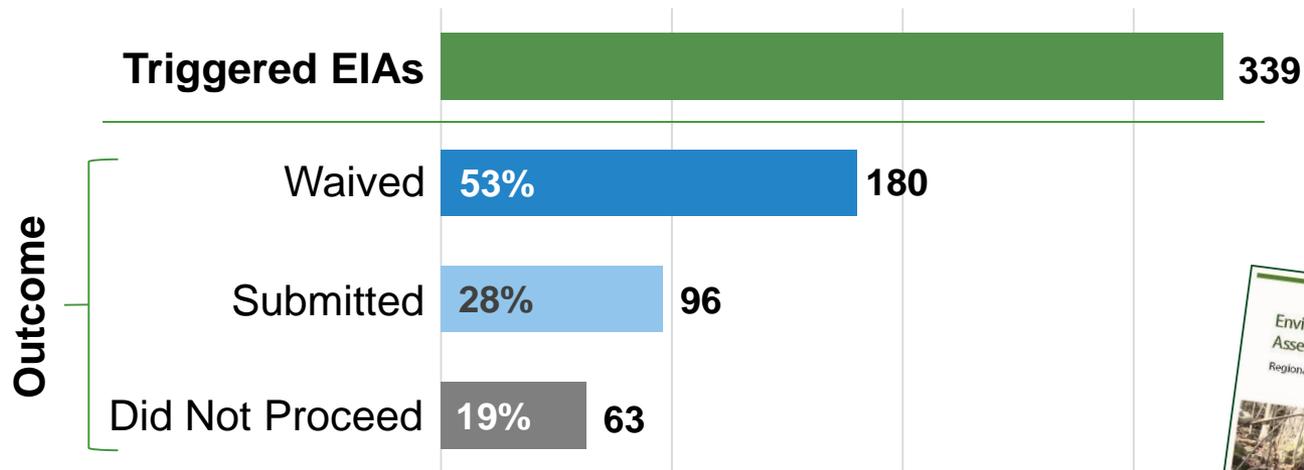


# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT GUIDELINE

- What is the EIA Guideline?
  - Current Guideline in use since 2014;
  - Explains what an EIA is, when one is needed and the process through which one is completed;
  - Provides specific direction and tools for the EIA process;
  - Provides technical direction for preparing an EIA.
- Who is the Guideline for?
  - Landowners
  - Industry
  - Municipalities & Agencies
  - EIA practitioners

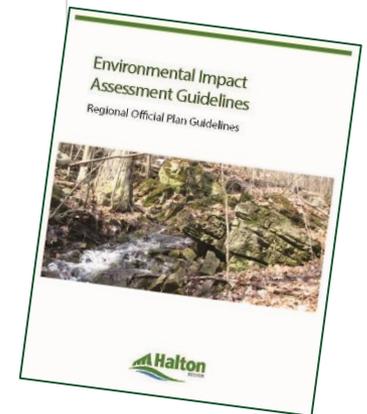
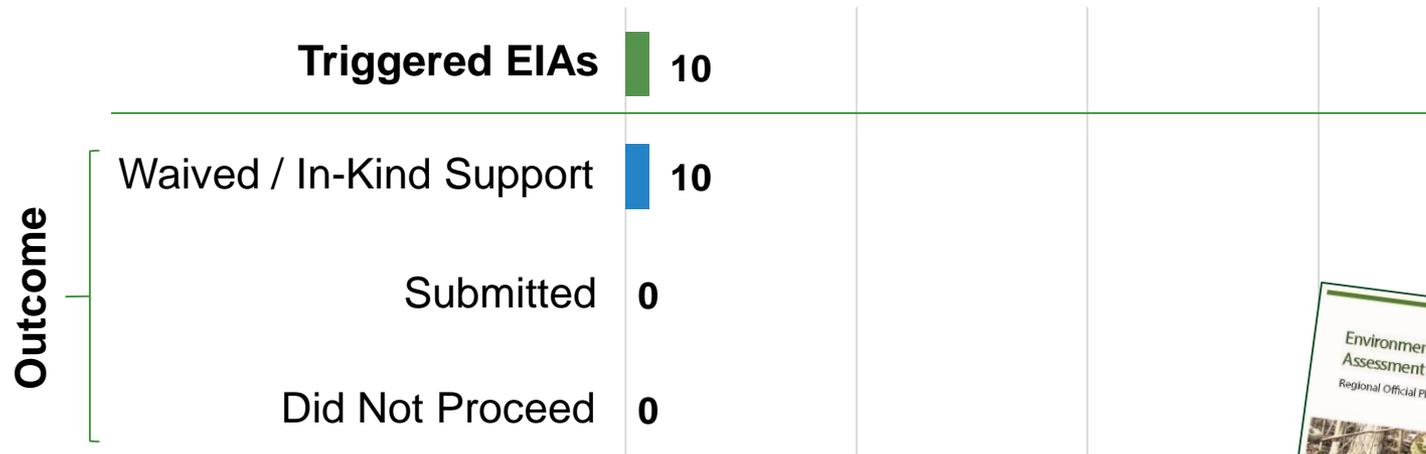
# THE 2014 GUIDELINE IN PRACTICE

- Since 2015:
  - Non-Agricultural EIAs



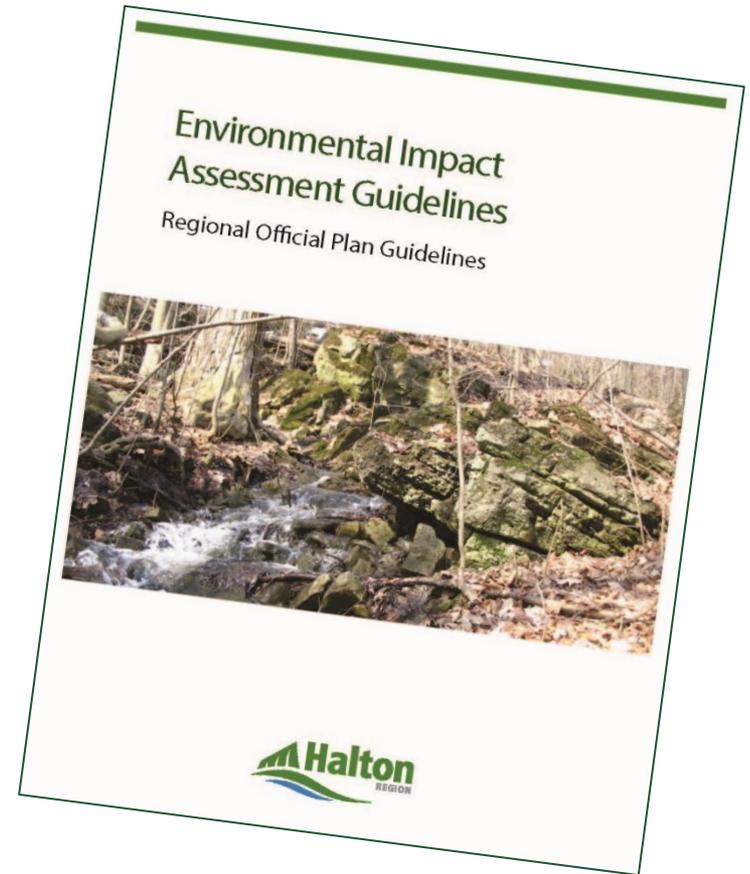
# THE 2014 GUIDELINE IN PRACTICE

- Since 2015:
  - Agricultural EIAs



# THE 2014 GUIDELINE IN PRACTICE

- Positive Feedback
  - Good technical content
  - Some practitioners use to guide EIA preparation
  - Trigger diagrams are very helpful
  - Process diagram assists in understanding the EIA process



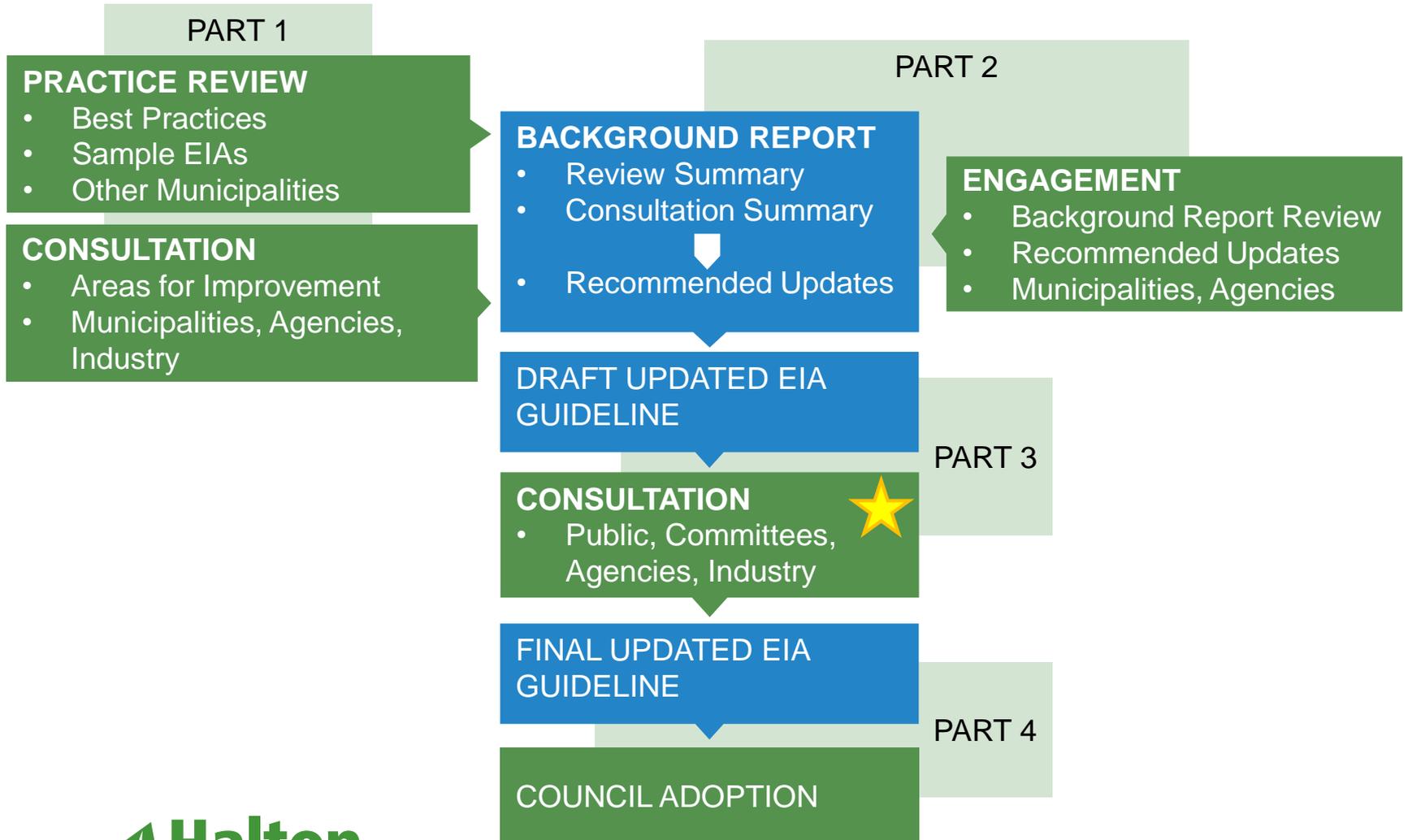
# UPDATING THE GUIDELINE

- Project Objectives
  - Compliance with current provincial plans and guidance;
  - Conformity / alignment with the current in-force Regional Official Plan;
  - Improve the quality and consistency of submitted EIAs;
  - Improve the EIA process.
- Independent of the Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR) process

# UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

1. Landscape permanence of Halton's natural heritage;
2. No negative impact to Halton's Natural Heritage System;
3. Halton has a valued agricultural land base that can coexist with Natural Heritage features and functions;
4. Support sustainable development.

# PROJECT PROCESS



# SUMMARY OF ISSUES & UPDATES

KEY THEMES / ISSUES	UPDATE
Audience, Layout & Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify text to address target audiences</li> <li>• Improve organization of information for ease of use</li> <li>• Provide clarity on overall EIA process</li> </ul>
Roles & Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify roles &amp; responsibilities for all involved in the EIA process</li> </ul>
Policy & Technical Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comply with the current in-force Official Plan, Provincial Plans and guidance documents</li> <li>• Minor technical updates to reflect current practices</li> </ul>
EIA Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly outline the EIA process</li> </ul>
Waiving Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide clear direction on the process for waiving the EIA requirement</li> </ul>
Tools & Templates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate tools and templates that:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamline portions of the EIA process</li> <li>• Improve quality and consistency of submissions</li> <li>• Create a clear &amp; repeatable process</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# AUDIENCE, LAYOUT & ORGANIZATION

- Guideline divided into three (3) sections:
  - Part 1: EIA Primer
  - Part 2: EIA Process
  - Part 3: EIA Content
- Audience-based content;
- Detailed components moved to appendices where possible.

# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Dedicated sections;
- Table with roles & general responsibilities in the EIA process.

# POLICY & TECHNICAL UPDATES

- Language, terminology updates;
- Consistent with ROPA 38;
- Provincial plans & guidelines:
  - Provincial Policy Statement (2014)
  - Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019)
  - Greenbelt Plan (2017)
  - Niagara Escarpment Plan (2017)
  - Technical guidance documents (e.g., Significant Wildlife Habitat)
- Minor updates to technical standards & practices.

# EIA PROCESS

## STEP 1: Project Screening

- Project compared against EIA triggers, exemptions, and waiving criteria.
- Process may include revisions to the proposed project to avoid triggers or facilitate exemption or waiving.
- **Key Outcome:** Determine if an EIA is required.
- **Who is Involved:** Lead Planning Authority (lead)
- **Supporting Sections & Tools:** S. 2.1, Figures 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5, Appendix D-1.

- Opportunities to avoid or waive the EIA requirement are explored
- **Many small-scale and low-risk projects do not proceed past this step**

## STEP 2: EIA Scoping

- Determine the requirements of the EIA.
- EIA requirements will vary based on project size, sensitivity of NHS features and functions, and risk of impact(s).
- **Key Outcome:** Approved Terms of Reference (TOR) for the EIA.
- **Who is Involved:** Lead Planning Authority (lead), applicable Agencies (contributor), Proponent\* (contributor).
- **Supporting Sections & Tools:** S. 2.2, Appendix D-2.

- **EIA requirement is confirmed**
- Scoping provides direction on the level of study and what needs to be studied or addressed in the EIA

## STEP 3: Information Gathering & Draft EIA Preparation

- Undertake field work, studies & reviews outlined in the TOR.
- Prepare the Draft EIA: existing conditions, impact assessment, recommended mitigation and monitoring (where required).
- **Key Outcome:** Draft EIA prepared
- **Who is Involved:** Proponent\* (lead)
- **Supporting Sections & Tools:** S. 2.3 and S. 3, Appendices D-2, E (all).

- Field work, analysis and other study components are completed
- **Draft EIA is prepared for submission to the Lead Planning Authority**

## STEP 4: Draft EIA Submission

- Draft EIA is submitted, circulated for review and comment by relevant agencies.
- Review may be iterative, and require multiple submissions.
- **Key Outcome:** Draft EIA submitted, comments prepared on draft(s).
- **Who is Involved:** Proponent (lead), Lead Planning Authority (coordination), Agencies (review & comment)
- **Supporting Sections & Tools:** S. 2.4, Appendices D-3, D-4

- EIA is submitted to the Lead Planning Authority for review
- EIA is circulated to other Agencies if / as required
- **Iterative review and comment process may be required in this step**

## STEP 5: Final EIA Submission

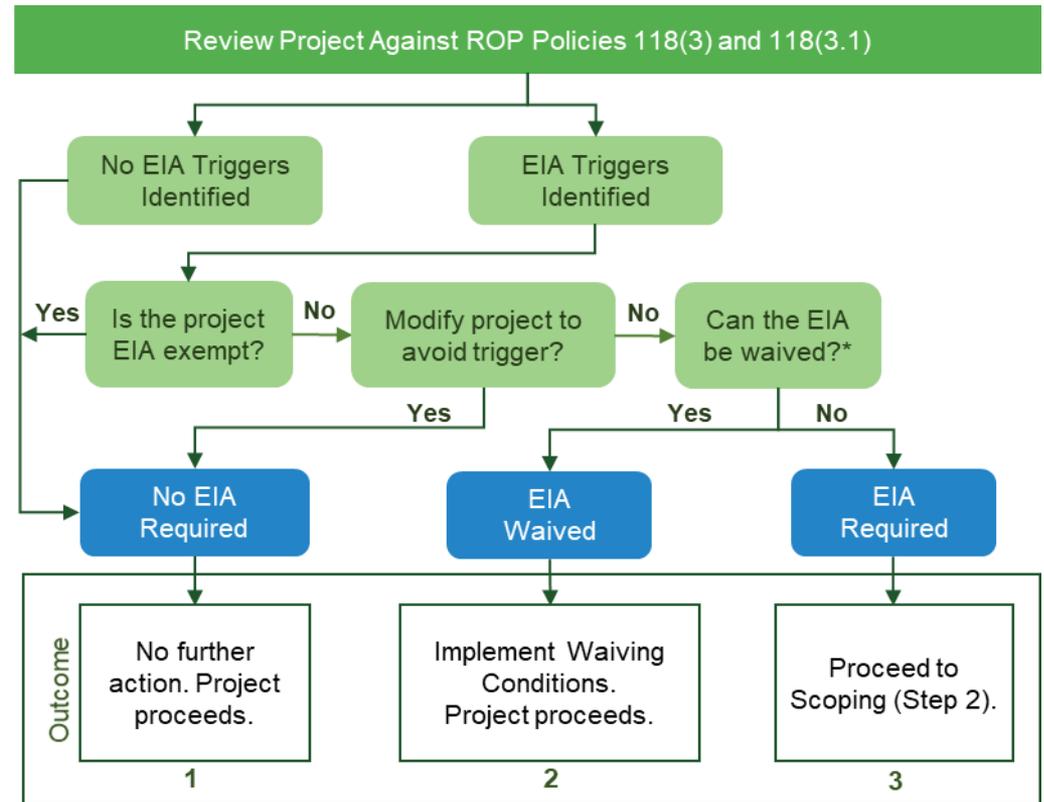
- All comments have been addressed through Step 4. EIA is finalized.
- Final EIA submission focuses on provision of all required data and identifying conditions or approval (as applicable).
- **Key Outcome:** Data submission package, EIA process complete.
- **Who is Involved:** Proponent\* (lead), Lead Planning Authority (coordination).
- **Supporting Sections & Tools:** S. 2.5, Appendix D-5

- EIA has been approved by appropriate Agencies
- **Final submission package is prepared**, which provides important information used to prepare the EIA and to update NHS mapping

\* Proponent may delegate to a qualified EIA practitioner, or similar.

# STEP 1: PROJECT SCREENING

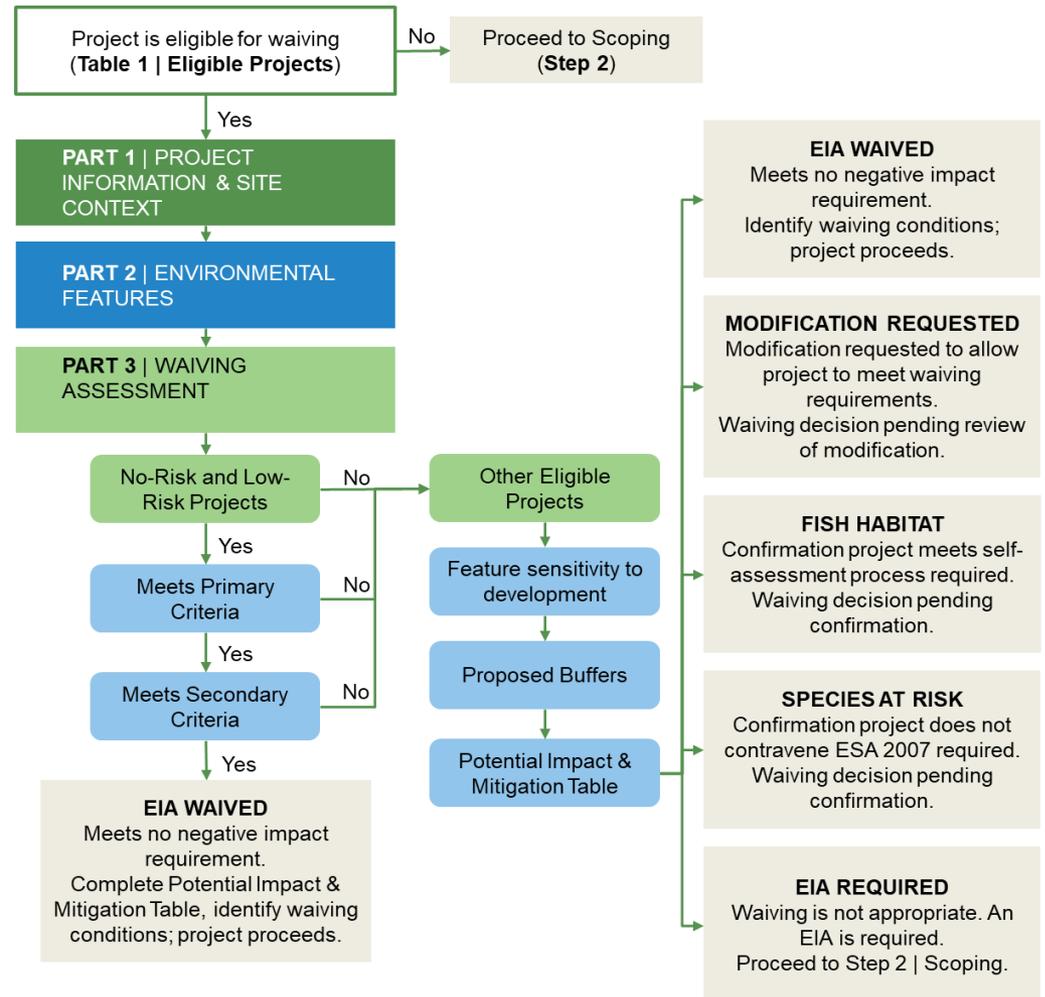
- Important step in the EIA process.
- Figure added to clarify the screening process, decision points and possible outcomes.
- Approximately half of projects will not proceed past this step of the EIA process.



\*Waiving may be achieved through plan modification.

# STEP 1: PROJECT SCREENING WAIVING ASSESSMENT

- Consistent direction for assessing projects;
- Tool developed to support documentation and waiving assessment process.



# STEP 1: PROJECT SCREENING

## WAIVING ASSESSMENT

### Part 3: Waiving Assessment

#### 3-A | No-Risk and Low-Risk Projects

Projects that meet the criteria below are generally those that pose no new risk or very low risk of impact to the Region's NHS. The conditions of both the primary and secondary criteria must be met. A field visit is not required for projects that meet the criteria below.

##### Primary Criteria

The development or site alteration meets all the following:

- Minimum Vegetation Protection Zone (VPZ) requirements of the Greenbelt Plan and Growth Plan do not apply;
- Adjacent features are one or more of the following: significant woodland, Provincially Significant Wetland, wetland or watercourse;
- Adjacent features are not key features of the Greenbelt Plan NHS.
- Does not occur within or directly encroach into the NHS;
- There is no known confirmed or candidate significant wildlife habitat within the development footprint;
- There are no Species at Risk<sup>1</sup> or their habitat known to occur or with a high potential of occurring within the footprint of the proposed development or site alteration.

##### Secondary Criteria

The development or site alteration meets at least one of the following:

- Is separated from the feature(s) by an intervening land use that effectively separates the project from the feature(s):
  - Road
  - Existing development
  - Other<sup>2</sup>.
- Is wholly contained within an existing building footprint (e.g., adding a second storey, re-development within existing footprint).
- Footprint of the proposed building expansion extends away from the feature(s).
- Proposed buffer(s) are a minimum of:
  - 10 m from the dripline of a significant woodland
  - 30 m from a Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW)
  - 10 m from other wetlands
  - 30 m from a watercourse

Note: Waiving of the EIA requirement does not waive, exempt or otherwise remove requirements for compliance with other applicable plans, policies, or legislation. It is the proponents responsibility to ensure that their project meets the requirements for the site and/or project.

#### OUTCOME

- The project meets the primary and secondary criteria set out above. Complete the "Potential New Impact Identification & Recommended Mitigation Measures(s)" Table (3-C) and set waiving conditions, as appropriate. Project Proceeds.
- The project does not meet the criteria set out above. Proceed through Waiving Process to determine if project can be waived.

<sup>1</sup>In the context of this assessment 'Species at Risk' includes species listed as Endangered or Threatened in Ontario and receiving protection under Sections 9 and/or 10 of the Endangered Species Act (2007).  
<sup>2</sup>Other land uses may include other forms of development that would act as a barrier to movement (plants, wildlife) and / or are a primary impactor at the interface with the natural heritage feature(s) and their functions. Natural, open space, agricultural lands (e.g., fields, grazing land, etc.) and other similar land uses do not qualify as land uses that act as an effective barrier.

#### 3-B | Other Eligible Projects

If an eligible project (Table 1) does not meet the criteria in the preceding section (3-A), proceed through the sections below. Individual(s) with an appropriate level of knowledge of natural heritage features, functions and potential impacts associated with development or site alteration will be required to complete the waiving assessment. The Lead Planning Authority's can consult the Region (or the delegates or assigns) to provide an appropriate individual to complete the assessment.

##### Site Visit

A site visit may be requested to inform the waiving assessment. This may include general review of the site, reconnaissance review of the feature(s) and/or confirmation of feature boundaries, if / as appropriate. A site visit may be requested by the Lead Planning Authority or other approval agency for the site.

##### A site visit was:

- Completed  Not requested

##### During the Site Visit:

- General site condition  Feature review  Feature delineation

##### Feature Sensitivity to Development

At the screening level, feature sensitivity to development is based on proxy indicators. Features with higher sensitivity may require additional consideration (e.g., site visit) to more accurately assess the feature, and / or may require increased buffers, enhanced mitigation, etc.

Based on current land use on-site (2-B) and on adjacent lands (2-C), it is anticipated that the feature(s) experience the following level of impact / disturbance:

- High  Moderate  Low

Based on feature type(s) (2-D) and information in A, above; it is anticipated that the feature(s) would be:

- Highly sensitive to the proposed development.  Moderately sensitive to the proposed development.  Less sensitive to the proposed development.

##### Proposed Buffers (Site-Plan)

Are buffers identified on the site plan?

- Yes – record the proposed buffer(s) width(s) below.  
 No – record the shortest distance between the extent of disturbance and the feature(s) below.

Do the minimum Vegetation Protection Zone (VPZ) requirements of the Greenbelt Plan or Growth Plan Apply?

Complete the column\*, as applicable.

- Yes  
 No

Feature #	Feature Type	Buffer / VPZ or Distance from Development / Site Alteration (m)	*Is the minimum VPZ distance met?

#### 3-C | Potential New Impact Identification & Recommended Mitigation Measures(s)

Identify all new or exacerbated existing impacts anticipated, or with a high potential to occur. Identify recommended mitigation measure(s) that should be implemented to address the impacts.

# EXISTING TOOLS & TEMPLATES

- Updated
  - EIA trigger diagrams
  - Contact information for planning approval authorities and agencies
  - EIA process flow chart
  - EIA methods & references
  - Potential environmental impacts
  - Potential mitigation measures
  - Definitions
- Replaced / Removed
  - Screening & Scoping Checklist for Agricultural Buildings
  - Maps from ROPA 38

# NEW TOOLS & TEMPLATES

- Process Tools & Templates
  - Waiving Assessment Tool
  - EIA Scoping Checklist
  - Project Tracking Sheet
  - Comment Matrix Template
  - EIA Submission Checklist
  - Final EIA Submission Package Checklist
- Technical Templates
  - Species at Risk Screening Table
  - Significant Wildlife Habitat Screening Table
  - Impact Assessment & Mitigation Table

# NEXT STEPS

## 1. Consulting on the Guideline

- Public Information Center
- Presentation to Regional Advisory Committees
- Review & comment by Local Municipalities, Agencies, Industry

## 2. Commenting on the Draft Guideline

- Complete EIA Guideline available online for review
- Comment sheets available here and online
- Comment Period Closes: November 3, 2019

# NEXT STEPS

## 3. Finalizing the Guideline

- Review and integrate feedback from consultation
- Finalize Guideline will be presented to Council for approval

## 4. Implementation

- Halton EIA Guideline (2019) comes into effect

