



# Municipal Class Environmental Assessments 101

TOWNSHIP OF PERTH SOUTH - MAY 2022

# The Lingo

- ▶ EA = Environmental Assessment
- ▶ MCEA = Municipal Class Environmental Assessment
- ▶ Proponent = who is undertaking the project or will have control of it.
- ▶ Schedule = categories of projects. Each schedule has specific requirements that must be met under the MCEA in terms of consultation, evaluations and documentation.

# Environmental Assessments in Ontario

Under the Environmental Assessment Act (EA Act), there are two processes for determining the impacts associated with undertakings or projects:

Individual Environmental Assessments

Class Environmental Assessments



Class EAs are a standardized planning approach for groups of related projects. There are Class EA processes for:

**Municipal infrastructure projects**

Provincial parks and Conservation Areas

Waterpower projects

Go transit, etc.



# Municipal Class EA Process

- ▶ MCEA is the planning and approval process for municipal road, water, wastewater, stormwater and transit projects.
- ▶ The MCEA document sets out the process for how municipal infrastructure projects are planned and evaluated (i.e. how to do a Municipal Class EA)
- ▶ Municipalities must follow the MCEA process for municipal infrastructure projects to meet the requirements of the EA Act.
- ▶ Class EA approach deals with projects that have the following characteristics: they are recurring, similar in nature, limited in scale, have a predictable range of environmental effects and are responsive to mitigation measures

# Why Complete a Class EA?

- ▶ Easy answer – because municipalities are obligated to under the EA Act for municipal infrastructure works.
- ▶ Better answer – because it allows for the systematic evaluation of potential alternatives and will identify potential impacts associated with a project and ways those impacts can be mitigated. Consultation with residents, review agencies and indigenous communities is also incorporated into the decision making process.

# Key Principles of Municipal Class EAs

The Municipal Class EA process incorporates:

- ▶ Consultation
- ▶ Consideration of alternatives
- ▶ Identification of effects and impacts
- ▶ Systematic approach for groups of similar projects
- ▶ Documentation/transparency of the decision-making process

# Municipal Class EA Schedules

A

Increase pumping station capacity by adding or replacing equipment where new equipment is located within an existing building or structure

A+

Establish, extend or enlarge a sewage collection system provided all facilities are in an existing road allowance

B

Increase pumping station capacity by adding or replacing equipment where new equipment is located in a new building or structure.

C

Construct new sewage system, including outfall to receiving water body.

Fewer or more predictable impacts

Greater potential for impacts

Less complex, fewer alternative solutions to consider

More complex project, more potential alternative solutions

Pre-approved

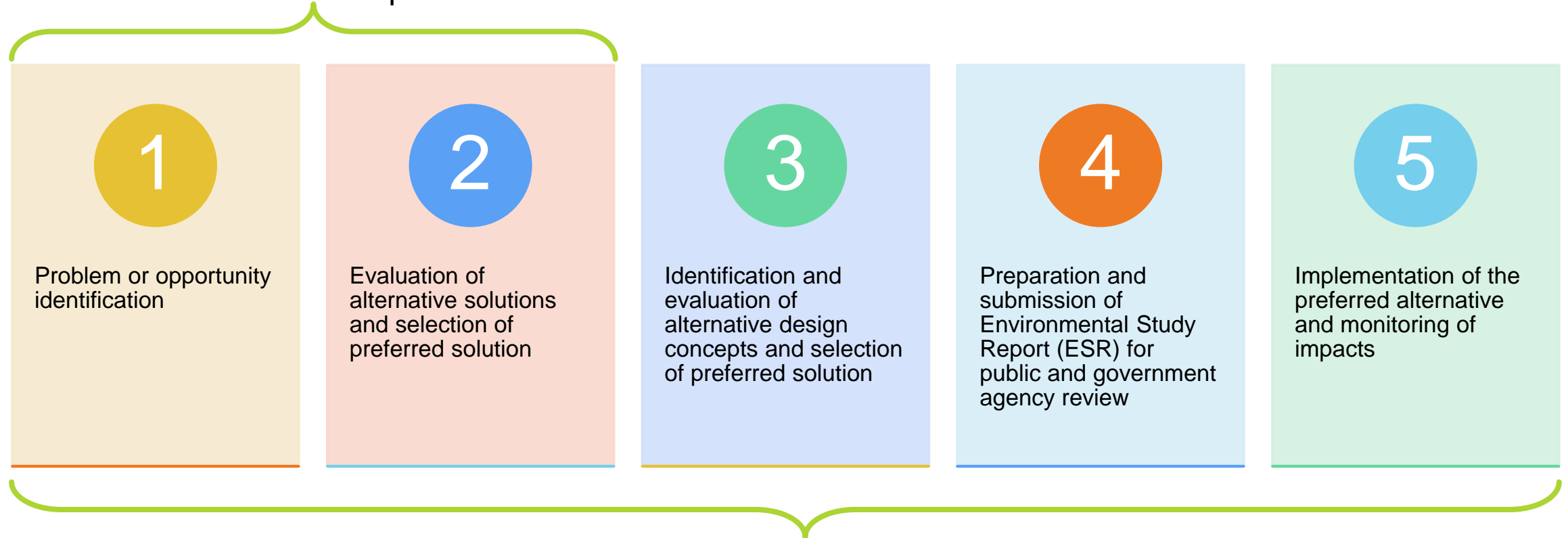
Requires Public Notification

Requires Project File

Requires Environmental Study Report

# Municipal Class EA Process

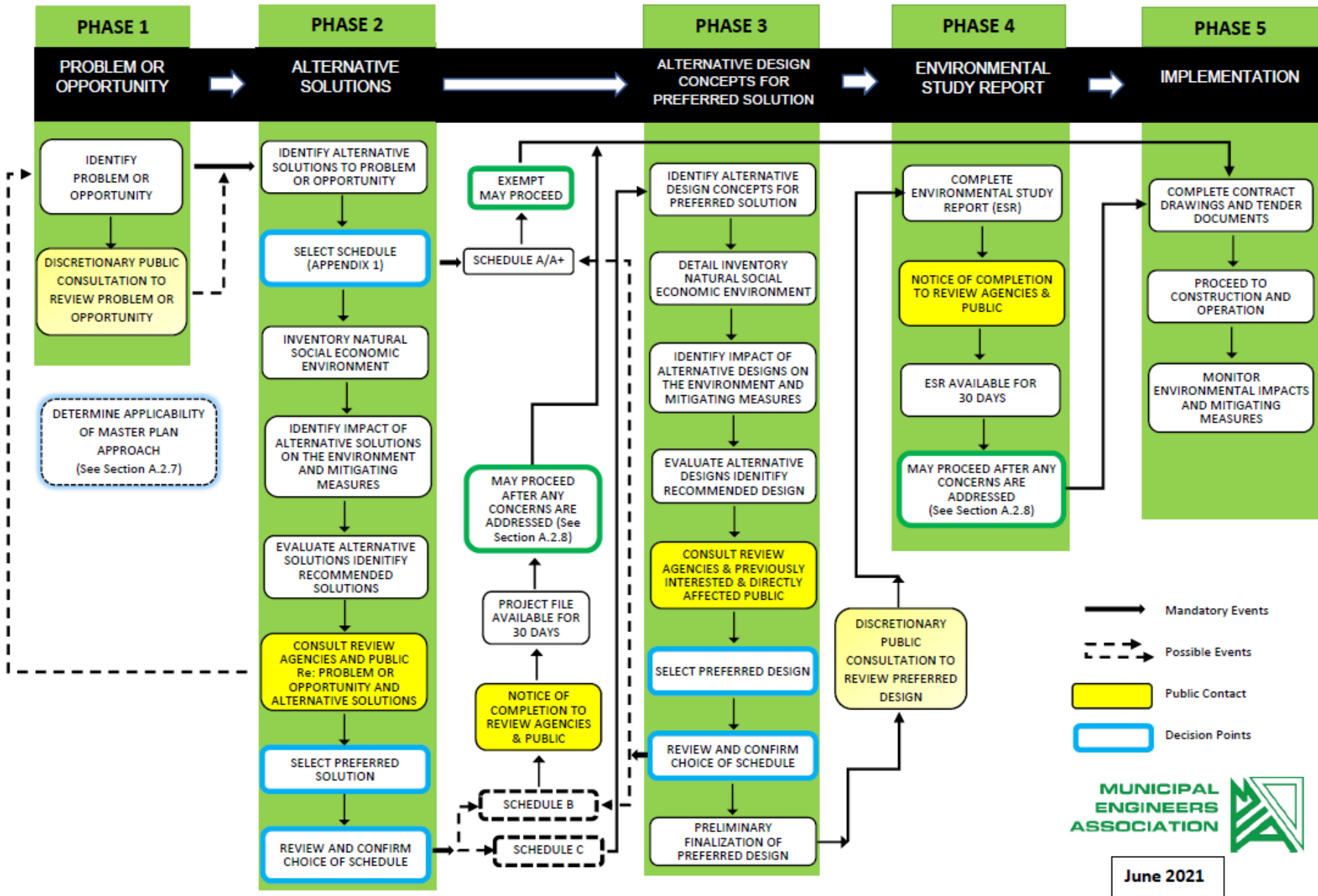
Schedule B EAs must complete Phase 1 and 2



Schedule C EAs must complete all the phases

# MUNICIPAL CLASS EA PLANNING AND DESIGN PROCESS

NOTE: This flow chart is to be read in conjunction with Part A of the Municipal Class EA



June 2021

# Consultation



- ▶ Key component of MCEA process.
- ▶ Required to consult with:
  - ▶ Provincial and federal agencies (depending on project)
  - ▶ First Nation and Métis communities
  - ▶ Adjacent property owners
  - ▶ Stakeholders and the general public
- ▶ At least two mandatory points of contact
  - ▶ Initial Project Notice
  - ▶ Notice of Study Completion
- ▶ Depending on the level of interest or impacts associated with a project, one or multiple public meetings may be needed.

# Associated Studies

-may be completed during the EA process to support the review of alternatives

Often site-specific studies are completed as part of the EA to identify impacts and mitigation measures



May include:

Archaeological Assessment	Natural Environment Assessments and/or Species at Risk Studies	Cultural Heritage Assessment	Transportation or Traffic Impact Studies	Air and Noise Impact Assessments
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# Phase 1 – Identification of Problem or Opportunity



A problem or opportunity statement is defined during this phase. Serves as a framework for identifying practical and feasible alternative solutions.



Issue Notice of  
Commencement

Two weeks in the local papers and on the municipal website  
Initial project letter sent to review agencies, Indigenous communities, stakeholder groups



Inventory local environmental conditions

# Phase 2 – Identify and Evaluate Alternatives



**Identify alternative solutions to address the problem/opportunity statement**



**Screen out solutions that are not feasible or practical**



**Evaluate the environmental impacts of the alternative solutions.**

Environment includes:

- Natural environment
- Economic environment – costs, operational costs, etc.
- Social environment – impacts to adjacent property, residents
- Cultural environment – archaeological or cultural heritage impacts
- Technical environment – compatibility with existing infrastructure, complexity



**May have a public meeting at this point to get input on solutions/impacts**

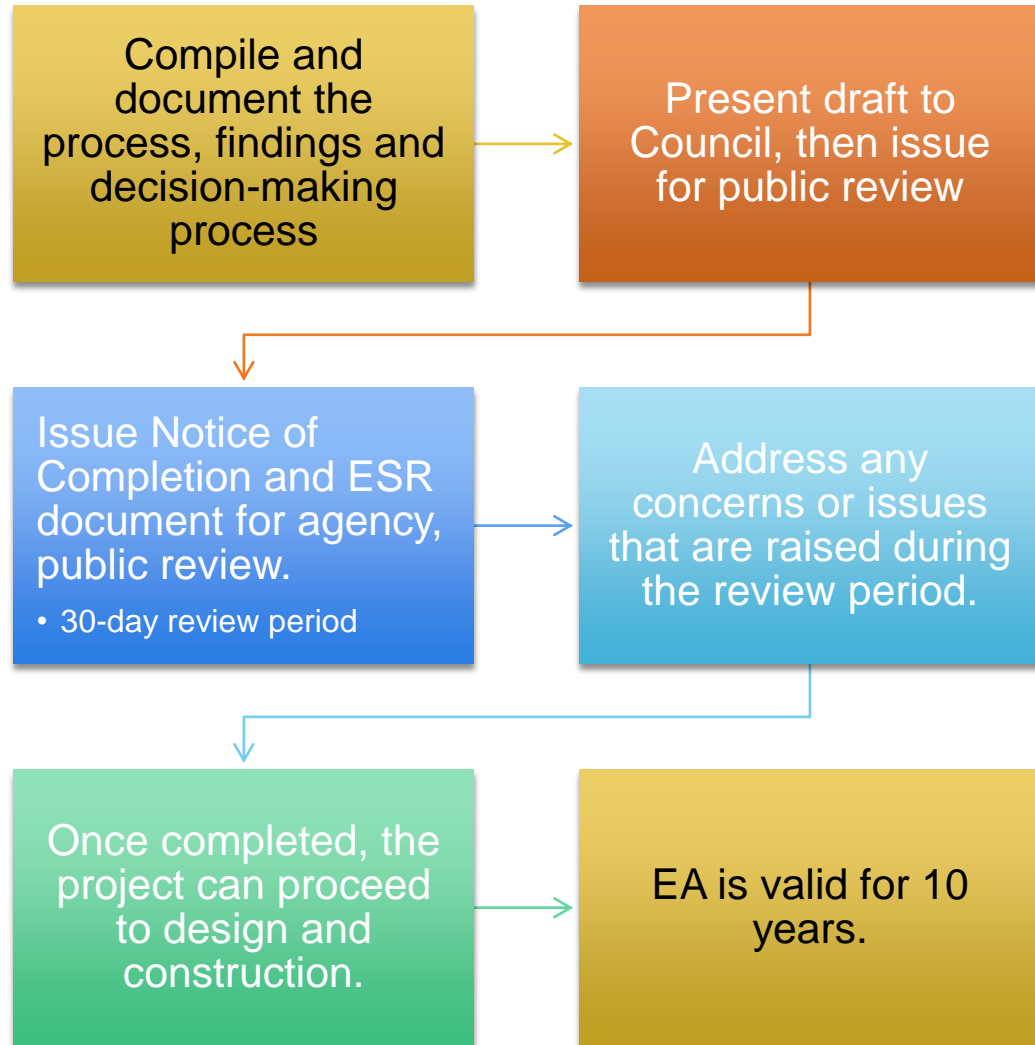


**Select a preferred alternative after the alternatives are evaluated and compared**

# Phase 3 – Identify and Evaluate Alternative Design Concepts

- ▶ Once a preferred solution is selected, identify and evaluate ways the preferred solution can be implemented.
  - ▶ E.g. if the preferred solution is 'Construct new sewage treatment plant', Phase 3 examines the type, size and location of a proposed sewage treatment plant.
- ▶ More detailed evaluations of the environment may be undertaken to support the review design alternatives.
- ▶ Evaluate the impacts of the alternative design concepts
  - ▶ May have meetings with approval agencies (e.g. MECP)
- ▶ Identify impacts and potential mitigation measures to mitigate or compensate for the activity
  - ▶ Identify approval and permit requirements at this point
- ▶ May have another public meeting or seek input at this stage
- ▶ From a technical standpoint – this phase may include some preliminary design to determine what is feasible.

# Phase 4 – Environmental Study Report



# EA Timelines – Can vary depending on scope

- ▶ Time to complete an EA can be impacted by

- ▶ Studies, e.g. if additional archaeological or environmental studies are required
- ▶ Technical/design investigations
- ▶ Public interest
- ▶ Agency requirements

- ▶ Typical EA Task List

- ▶ Phase 1 – Problem/ Opportunity Identification
- ▶ Initial Consultation Phase
- ▶ Phase 2 – Identification of Alternatives
- ▶ Complete Specialized Studies
- ▶ Public Meeting
- ▶ Phase 3 – Identify Detailed Design Alternatives
- ▶ Evaluate Design Alternatives
- ▶ Prepare ESR
- ▶ Finalize EA Process



Questions related to the Class EA process can be forwarded to Rebecca Clothier, CAO, Township of Perth South at [rclothier@perthsouth.ca](mailto:rclothier@perthsouth.ca)