

QEW Credit River Bridge EA



Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Transportation Facilities

ONTARIO ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW

The Ontario Environmental Assessment Act (OEAA) is a planning and decision-making process used to promote environmentally responsible decision-making. The OEAA applies to all public sector proponents, such as provincial ministries, municipalities, and designated public bodies and private sector proponents, who are proposing to carry out large scale infrastructure projects.

The purpose of the OEAA is to promote good environmental planning through the protection, conservation and wise management of Ontario's environment. The intent is to predict the environmental effects of proposed initiatives before they are carried out. To achieve this, the OEAA ensures that environmental problems or opportunities associated with the project are considered along with alternatives, and their effects are investigated and mitigated through the planning process, before construction/implementation takes place. Public consultation is key to the environmental assessment (EA) process and enables significant issues to be identified early in the project and to be addressed as the project proceeds.

The OEAA allows for the development of streamlined self-assessment planning processes for activities that are carried out routinely and the impacts are generally predictable or well understood. This allows for a planning process that is appropriate for the project which can be completed in a timelier manner. These processes are called Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) processes. A Class EA is an approved planning document that defines groups of projects and activities and the EA processes which the proponent commits to following for each of these undertakings. Once approved, a Class EA provides an environmental assessment planning framework which can be used by a proponent for all projects that falls within the approved class of undertakings.

Currently, there are 10 approved Class EAs in Ontario. One of which is the *Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Transportation Facilities* prepared by the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO).

CLASSIFICATION OF PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES UNDER THE CLASS EA FOR PROVINCIAL TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

As mentioned, projects and activities are classified into "groups" under this Class EA. Groups are characterized based on the type of consultation, environmental documentation required and for opportunities for Part II Order Requests ("bump-ups").

The Classification of Projects and Activities under the Class EA for Provincial Transportation Facilities are as follows:

- **Group A:** New provincial transportation facilities (e.g. new highways or transitways).
- **Group B:** Major improvements to existing provincial transportation facilities (e.g. widening or major modifications to existing facilities).
- **Group C:** Minor improvements to existing provincial transportation facilities (e.g. minor changes in access and localized improvements).
- **Group D:** Operation, maintenance, administration and miscellaneous work for provincial transportation facilities (e.g. general maintenance and emergency work and repair).

STUDY STAGES AND PHASES

Study Stages

Group A, B, and C projects involve a basic process of systematically examining alternatives and assessing environmental effects that is repeated with some variation in each of the following stages:

- **Planning** – development of the transportation plan to the design concept level of detail
- **Preliminary Design** – development of the transportation plan to the design criteria level of detail
 - A Transportation Environmental Study Report (TESR) is prepared to document the transportation engineering and environmental protection during Planning and/or Preliminary Design for Group A and B projects only.

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- **Detail Design** – development of the transportation plan to the design implementation level of detail
 - The Design and Construction Report (DCR) is used for documenting Detail Design and the development of the transportation plan to the design implementation level of detail for Group A and B projects.
- **Construction** – project implementation

Study Phases

Within each of the stages, there may be a number of phases:

- Generation and assessment of alternatives;
- Evaluation and selection of the preferred alternatives; and
- Development of the plan/design.

CONSULTATION



Consultation is an integral component of all Class EAs. Consultation takes place at significant milestones during the progress of a study. Throughout the study, any notification given to the public and potentially affected agencies and groups will stress the importance of discussing any concerns with the proponent *at the earliest possible opportunity*.

Public Information Centres are a commonly used method of consultation to share information and identify concerns through an informal setting. Visitors are encouraged to ask questions, share information about the study area, identify any support for and/or concerns with the project and discuss these with the project staff.

For all Group A and B projects, a Notice of Submission will be given at the time the TESR is published. This notice will announce the beginning of the 30 day public review period and will notify the public of their right to submit a request for a Part II Order (“bump-up”) to the Minister of the Environment when concerns cannot be resolved. All interested persons are encouraged to review the document and provide comments. If the Minister of the Environment decides to grant the “bump-up” request, then the project will be redesignated to an Individual Environmental Assessment (EA). An Individual EA report is subject to the formal review and approval process as part of the OEAA, including opportunities for a formal public hearing.

EA PROCESS FOR THE QEW CREDIT RIVER PROJECT

This project is a Preliminary Design Study categorized as a Group B project. Additional details on the Study Process, Schedule and Consultation Process can be found on the Project Website: www.qewcreditriver.ca.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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