

Welcome to the Public Information Centre

Niagara Escarpment Crossing - Comprehensive Environmental Assessment



Please sign in at
the registration
table upon arrival



Feel free to discuss
the project with any
team member



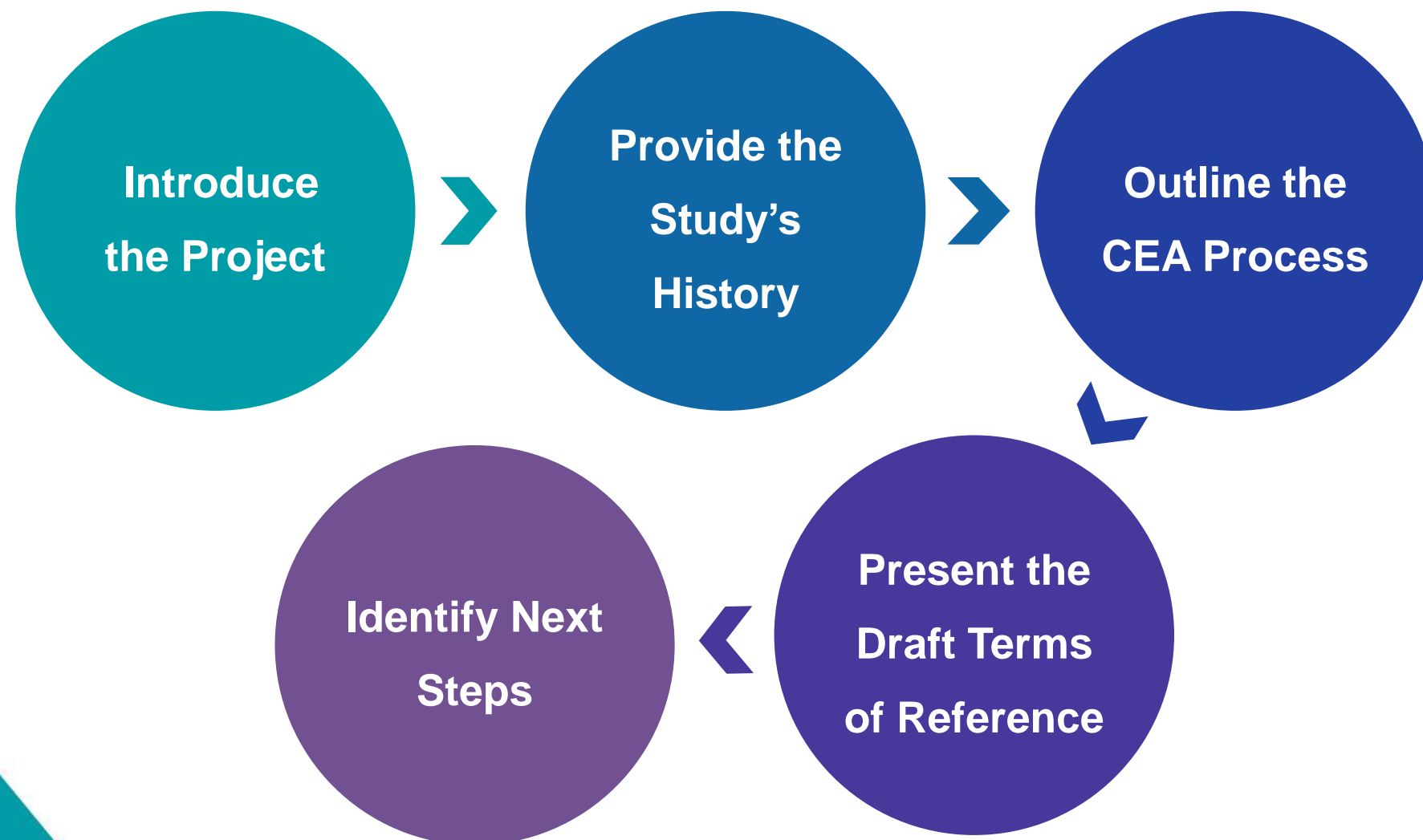
Please share your thoughts
with us by completing a
comment form

May 29, 2024 | 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm | West Niagara Fairgrounds

Purpose of the Public Information Centre

The purpose of tonight's event is to present the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) prepared for the Niagara Escarpment Crossing Comprehensive Environmental Assessment (CEA) and collect your comments.

Tonight, we will:



Comments

Please complete a Comment Form and submit your comments by:

July 12, 2024

You can also visit the project webpage to:

- Be added to the contact list to receive updates and notices
- Email the Project Team directly
- Learn more about the project



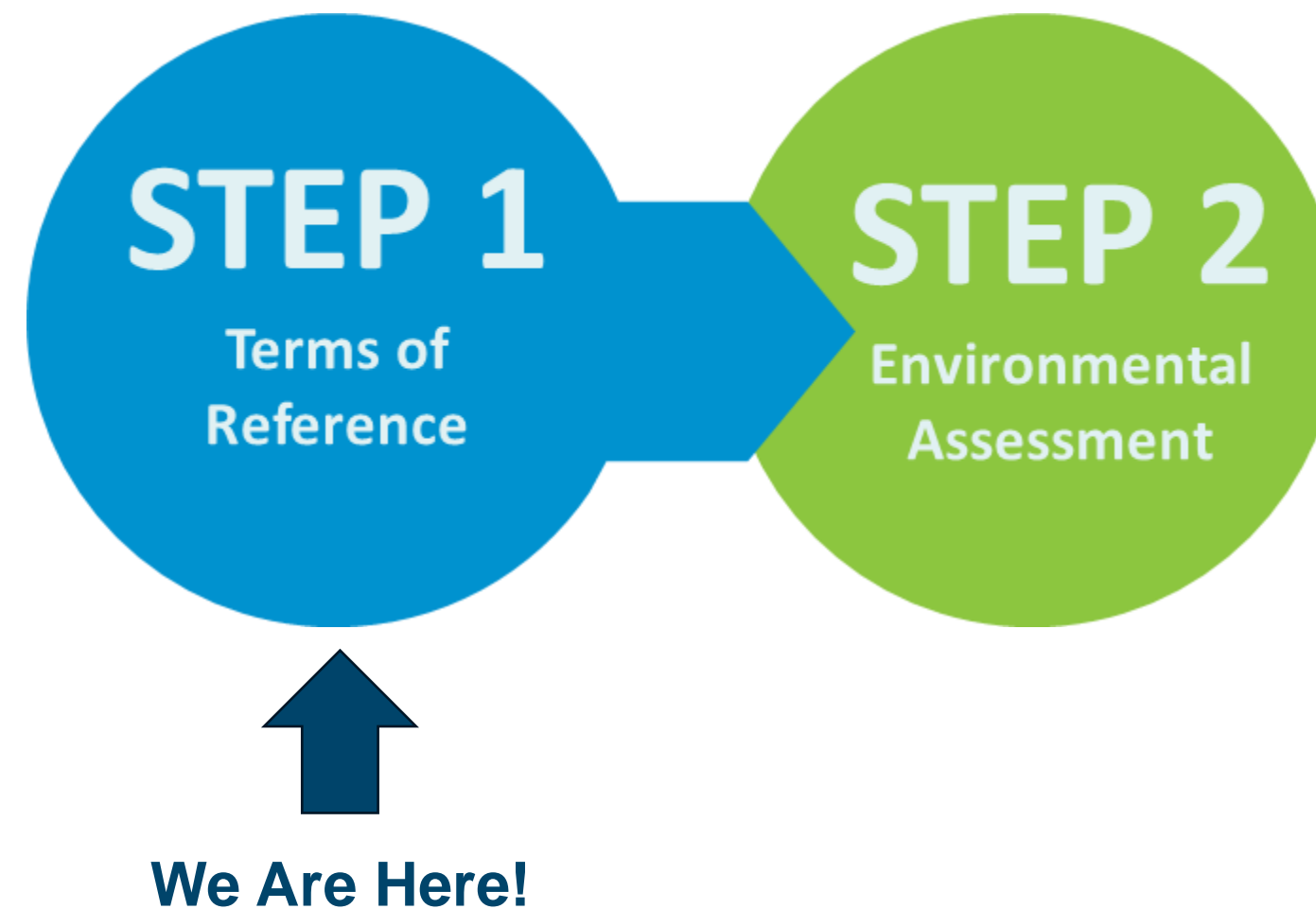
Study History

- Plans for a new north-south road in west Niagara have been explored before.
- This Comprehensive Environmental Assessment (CEA) represents a new planning initiative.
- Previous planning work and studies serve as important background information and contribute to the CEA.

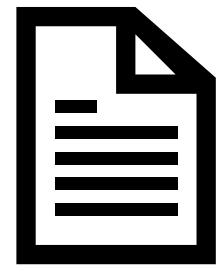
2016 NEC Transportation Study	2017 – 2018	2020 NEC Operations Study
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional Council recommended an extension of Bartlett Avenue, to be completed as a Municipal Class C EA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff identified risks that the Municipal Class C EA could not be completed.• A subsequent consulting assignment examined alternative EA process options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public Works staff informed Regional Council that a CEA is the recommended path forward (Report: PW 9-2020).

Comprehensive Environmental Assessments

- A Comprehensive Environmental Assessment (CEA) is a planning and decision-making process defined in the *Ontario Environmental Assessment Act (OEAA)*.
- A CEA (formerly known as an Individual EA) applies to significant or large projects in Ontario.
- A CEA is composed of two steps – a ‘Terms of Reference’ and an ‘Environmental Assessment’.



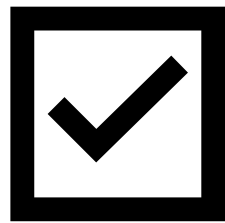
Step 1 - Terms of Reference



A Terms of Reference (ToR) is a document developed as part of 'Step 1' of a Comprehensive Environmental Assessment (CEA), which determines how the Environmental Assessment ('Step 2') will be carried out.



A ToR is submitted to Ontario's Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks for approval.



The Environmental Assessment can only start after the Minister approves the ToR.

Anticipated Next Steps

Spring 2024

- Presentations made to Grimsby, Lincoln and West Lincoln Councils (complete)
- Public Information Centre (today)
- Draft ToR made available to review agencies (including local municipalities), Indigenous Communities, and the public for comment (tomorrow)

Summer 2024

- Comments considered in proposed ToR
- Submission of proposed ToR to Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
- Proposed ToR made available to review agencies (including local municipalities), Indigenous Communities, and the public for comment

**Late 2024 /
Early 2025**

- Anticipated approval of ToR by Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks

**Step 2:
Environmental Assessment**

Draft Terms of Reference Components

Terms of Reference Components

The draft Terms of Reference for the Niagara Escarpment Crossing Comprehensive Environmental Assessment consists of:

- A main document
- Appendices

Key Components of a Terms of Reference	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project Purpose• Alternative To the Project & Alternative Methods of Carrying Out the Project• Types of Potential Effects to be Assessed• Preliminary Study Area & Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment & Evaluation Methodology• Commitments & Environmental Monitoring• EA Consultation Plan• Technical Work Plans• EA Commitments

EA Technical Work Plans

- The technical work plans define the "what" and "how" of the Environmental Assessment – describing what studies will be undertaken, what the study area will be, and what factors will be considered.
- The work plans are included as appendices in the Terms of Reference for approval by the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Types of Technical Work Plans in a Terms of Reference	
1. Air Quality 2. Agricultural 3. Archaeology 4. Built Heritage and Cultural Landscapes 5. Contaminated Property 6. Financial 7. Groundwater	8. Land Use 9. Natural Heritage 10.Noise and Vibration 11.Surface Water 12.Transportation Planning & Engineering 13.Traffic, Operations & Safety 14.Visual Impact

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the project is to provide a north-south transportation corridor crossing of the Niagara Escarpment between the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) and Regional Road 20 that:

- Provides for safe and effective commercial vehicle movements and operations
- Accommodates commercial vehicles and other transportation modes
- Provides greater safety for local communities
- Provides for additional transportation system capacity with redundancy and resiliency
- Improves the economy's vitality with the efficient movements of goods and people

Alternatives To the Project

1. Do Nothing

- No changes made to existing transportation crossings and no new transportation crossing between the QEW and Regional Road 20.
- Serves as a benchmark against which to assess other alternatives during the EA.

2. Implement Additional Traffic Management Measures

- Implement additional traffic management measures beyond those in place based on previous studies and the EA (e.g., improve road and shoulder widths, install guiderail and illumination treatments, add traffic control devices, install traffic calming measures, make active transportation enhancements, consider prohibitive restriction of truck movements on Regional roads, etc.).

3. Extend Bartlett Avenue Southerly & Utilize the Park Road Corridor

- View more information on the next display panel.

4. Construct a New North-South Corridor between Grimsby & Beamsville

- View more information on the next display panel.

Alternatives to the project are defined as functionally different ways of approaching and dealing with a problem or opportunity.

Alternative Methods No. 3 and No. 4

Alternative methods of carrying out the project are different ways of doing the same activity.

No. 3: Extend Bartlett Avenue Southerly & Utilize the Park Road Corridor

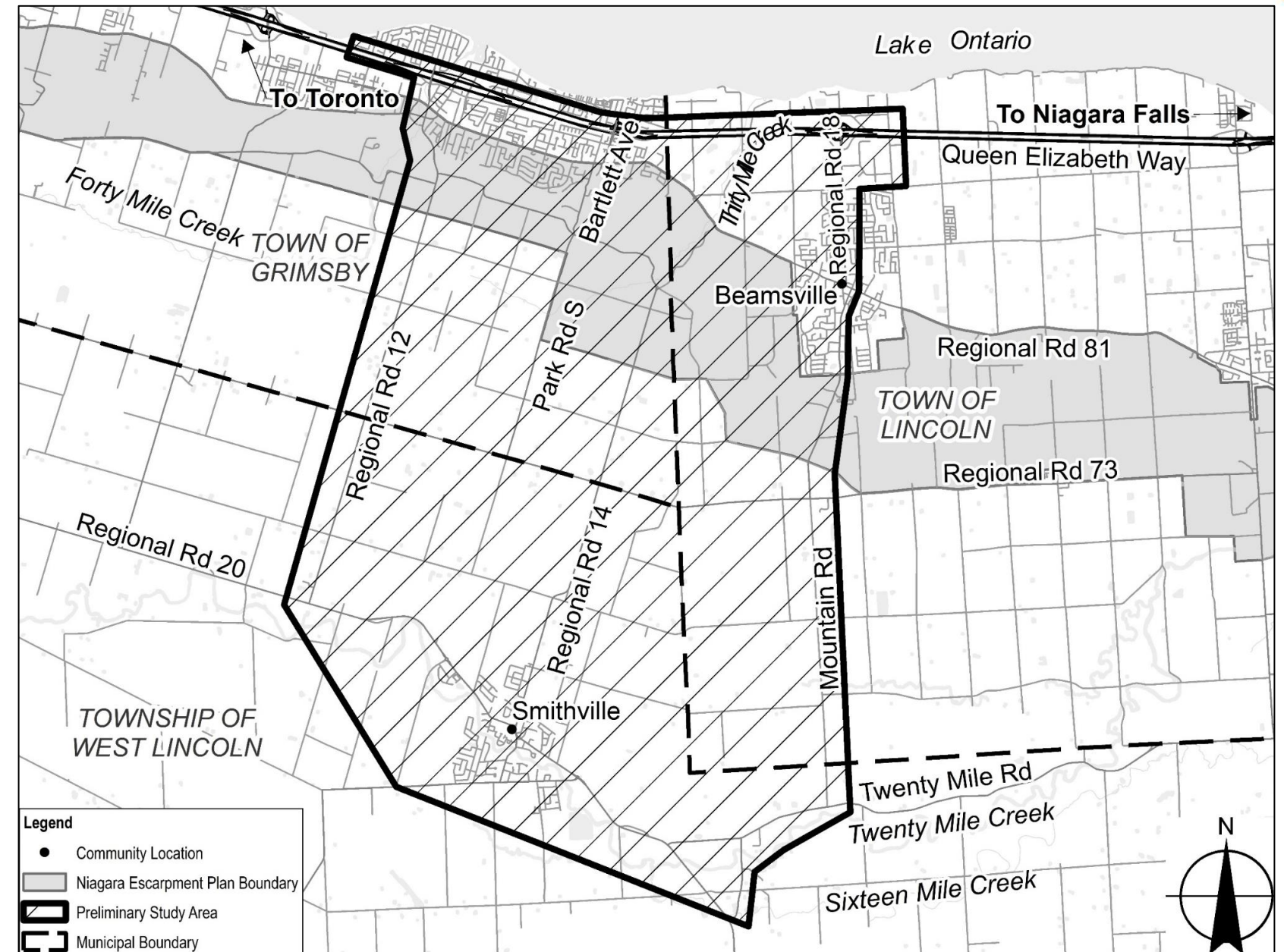
- Uses the preferred route from previous studies.
- Extends Bartlett Avenue southerly to Regional Road 20 via the Park Road South/South Grimsby Road 6 corridor.
- Accesses the QEW at Bartlett Avenue, which may need to be improved to facilitate traffic operations.
- Proposed corridor would be approximately 500 m wide, allowing for the development of several road alignments (alternative methods of carrying out the Project).

No. 4: Construct a New North-South Corridor between Grimsby & Beamsville

- A new transportation corridor consisting of existing roads, realignments of existing roads, and/or new road alignments to connect the QEW to Regional Road 20.
- A new interchange with the QEW and/or the significant reconfiguration of the existing Bartlett Avenue or Ontario Street interchanges.
- Proposed corridor would be approximately 2,000 m wide, allowing for the development of several road alignments (alternative methods of carrying out the project).

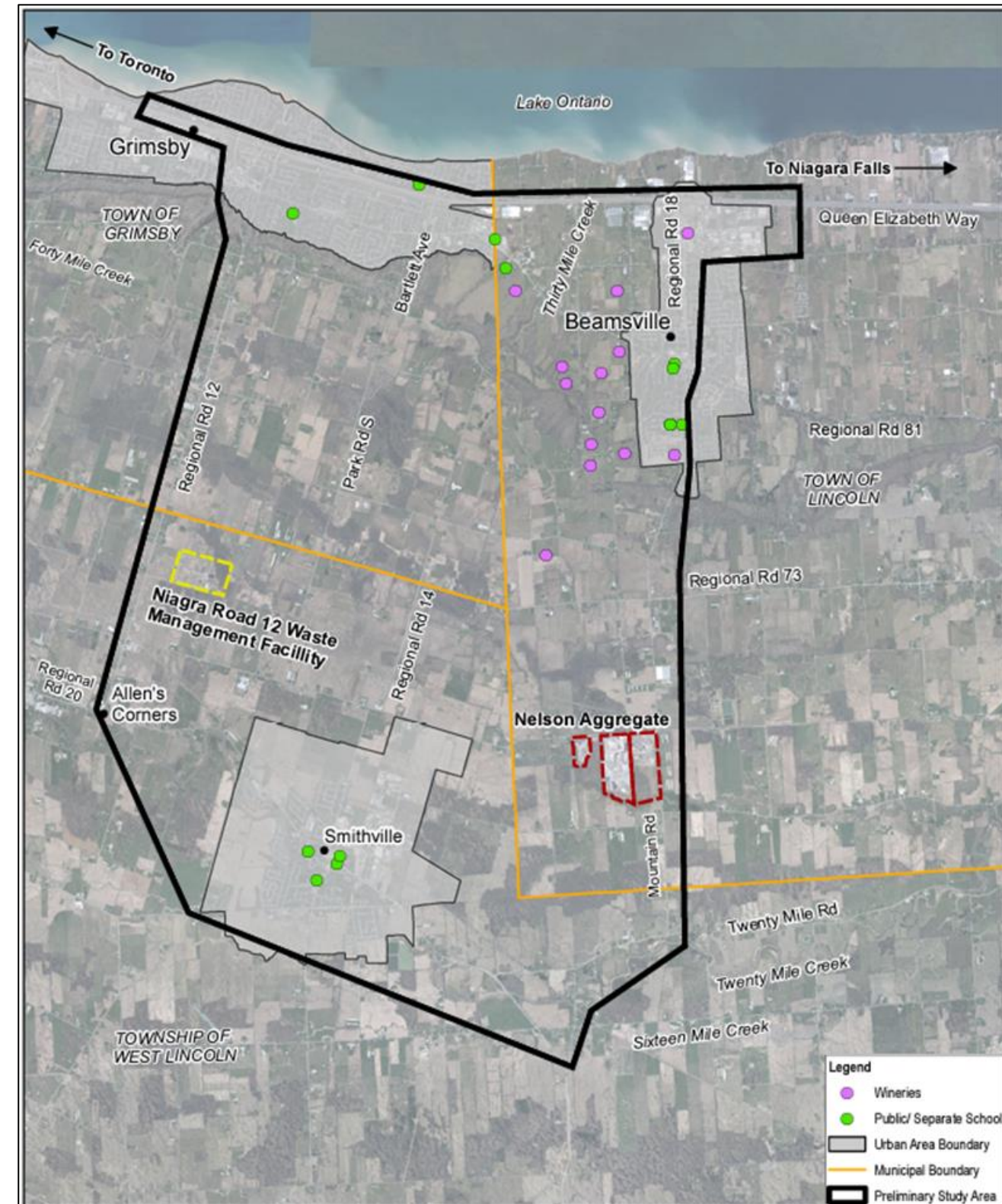
Preliminary Study Area

- Extends from just north of the existing QEW to south of the community of Smithville, and from just west of Mountain Road/Grimsby Road (Regional Road 12) to just east of Mountain Road/Ontario Street (Regional Road 18). Includes the area along the QEW from east of the Casablanca Boulevard (Regional Road 14) interchange to just east of the Ontario Street (Regional Road 18) interchange.
- Reflects the four alternatives to the Project being considered.
- It is the location where all Project activities are anticipated to occur; denotes the area where potential environmental effects will be studied.



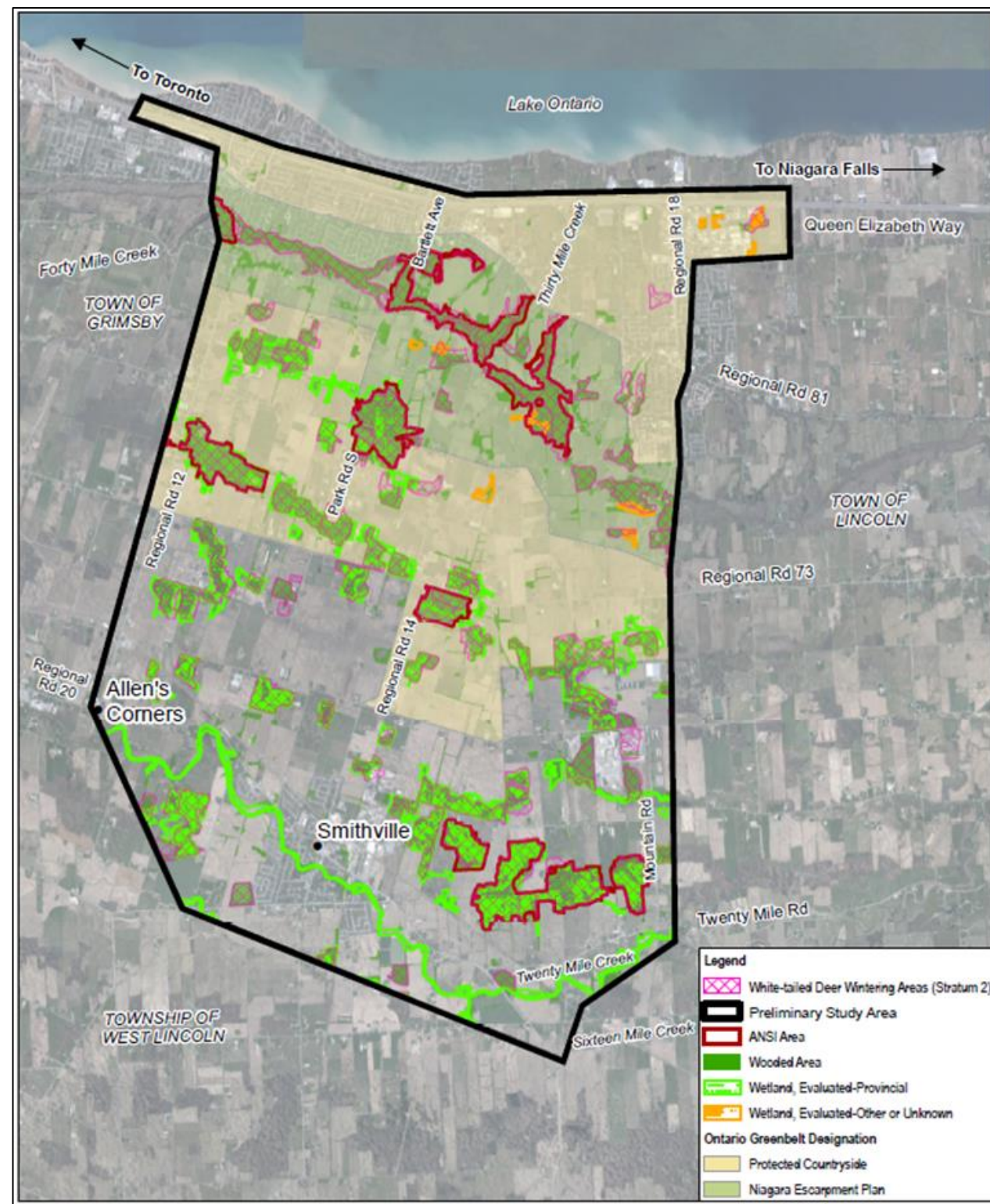
Description of the Environment

- The preliminary study area is largely rural, featuring agricultural land uses and the urban communities of Grimsby, Beamsville, and Smithville.
- The Niagara Escarpment Plan Boundary sits in the middle of the preliminary study area and encapsulates the Niagara Escarpment.
- Several Indigenous archaeological sites are within the preliminary study area, as well as 19th-century archaeological sites and modern cemeteries.
- Multiple known or potential built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes are within the preliminary study area.

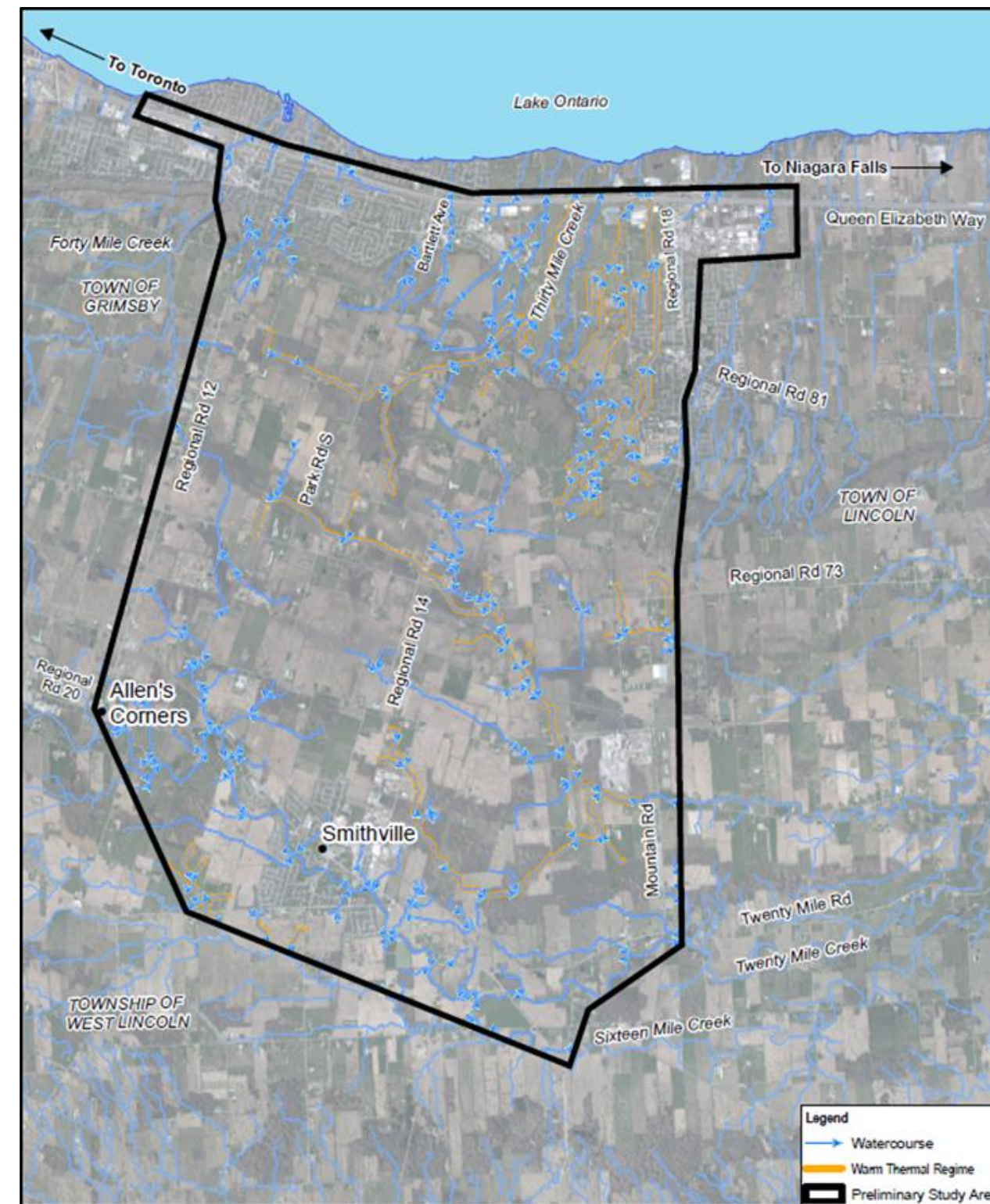


Urban Boundaries and Built Environment

Description of the Environment

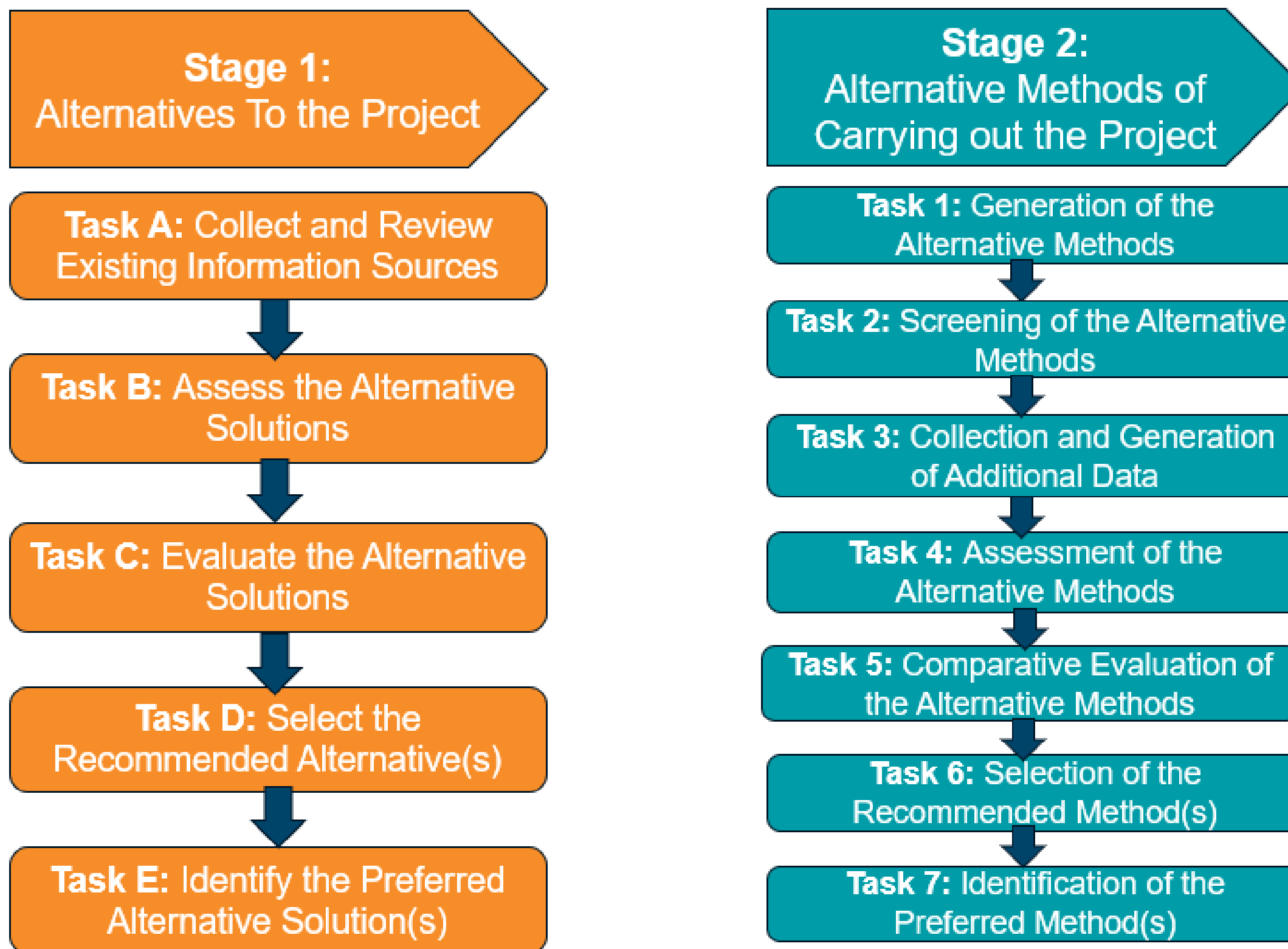


Wooded Areas & Natural Heritage Features










Watercourses & Aquatic Features

EA Assessment & Evaluation Methodology



EA Evaluation Categories & Considerations

The alternatives to the Project and alternative methods of carrying out the Project will be evaluated according to several ‘environmental’ categories, considering the broad definition of the environment as per the *Ontario Environmental Assessment Act*.

	Category	Example Considerations
	Transportation	Traffic safety & operations, constructability, design standards
	Natural Environment	Groundwater, watercourses, fish & aquatic species, aquatic habitat, wildlife, terrestrial habitat
	Built Environment	Land use, residences, businesses, property, infrastructure/utilities
	Social Environment	Air quality, noise & vibration, visual landscape, private wells
	Economic Environment	Provincial, regional, & municipal plans, proposed developments
	Cultural Environment	Archaeological sites, heritage buildings, cemeteries
	Financial	Construction costs, operation and maintenance costs

EA Consultation Plan

A consultation plan is planned for the Niagara Escarpment Crossing EA, building on what has been carried out during the Terms of Reference.

Proposed consultation activities



Project Webpage



Social Media



Project Notices



Letters



In-person and/or Virtual Meetings



Public Information Centres



Presentations to Councils, Boards & Committees

Obtaining input from interested participants

Input will be obtained through a variety of means from these three groups:

Review Agencies	Indigenous Communities	Public Members
Includes federal agencies and departments, provincial ministries and agencies, municipalities, conservation authority, school boards, utilities, and rail companies, etc.	Includes the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River, Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council, and Métis Nation of Ontario.	Includes individuals, groups or associations, property owners, residents, business owners, etc.

We want to hear from you!

Invitation for Participation

You are invited to be added to the Study contact list and provide comments by submitting a completed comment form in the comment box today or contacting one of the following Project Team members by **July 12, 2024**.

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Visit the Project webpage for more details:
niagararegion.ca/projects/Niagara-escarpment-crossing

Display boards will be available on the Project webpage after the Public Information Centre.

