



South Niagara Falls Wastewater Solutions 'Schedule C' Municipal Class Environmental Assessment

Public Information Centre No. 3: Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we need a new wastewater treatment plant? And why in South Niagara Falls?

Niagara Region is planning ahead with the Cities of Niagara Falls and Thorold. Based on the province's Places to Grow Act, Niagara Region's Niagara 2041 Municipal Review and the 2016 Master Servicing Plan Update, significant growth is coming to the region and specifically to the South Niagara Falls area. Our current sewer system and capacity to treat wastewater will not be enough to meet the growing demand coming from new communities, businesses and facilities (like the planned new hospital). Putting a plant near a growing community makes sense. It makes collecting the wastewater easier and lowers costs.

How will a new plant benefit the region?

A new wastewater treatment plant will be an asset to our community in many ways.

- Protects the environment
 - Reduces pollution into rivers and the environment
 - Enhances treatment technologies
- Provides flexibility for the future
 - Ensures the facility has the ability to respond to changing regulations and needs
 - Frees up capacity in existing infrastructure such as the Stanley Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Accommodates growth
 - Increases system capacity
 - Supports economic development
 - Builds communities

Why can't you just expand the current Niagara Falls plant?

The option to expand the existing plant (Stanley Avenue) in Niagara Falls was considered under the 2016 Master Servicing Plan. Through the detailed evaluation process, it was decided a new plant was preferred for several reasons: it will support growth, specifically in South Niagara Falls; it will address the challenges of increased capacity on the existing system and plant; and, it will help us better manage increased flows during wet weather.

How will this project benefit the environment?

This project will benefit the environment in several ways:

- New technology will be used where appropriate to enhance environmental protection.
- System overflows are targeted to be reduced, minimizing the risk of contaminants entering nearby creeks and streams.

How much land do you need for the new plant?

The potential size for a new treatment plant is approximately 400m x 400m (16 hectares) or equal to almost 30 Canadian football fields worth of land.

Won't the plant be an eyesore in the neighbourhood?

Many wastewater treatment plants built today fit within their communities. Not only is a new plant an asset to a community, we will endeavour to design and construct it in a way that is aesthetically pleasing. We will consider the architecture, landscaping and more to ensure the new plant fits visually within the surrounding community.

How will the Region ensure the natural environment is protected by this new infrastructure?

Protecting the environment is an important consideration when evaluating a site, outfall location and determining a new sewer system. Along with the social and cultural impacts, environmental impacts are weighted the highest in the evaluation criteria.

As part of this Class Environmental Assessment (EA), the project team created an inventory of environmental features in the study area. This inventory was used to identify protected areas and help eliminate sites where the new wastewater strategy could have a negative environmental impact.

As part of next steps, we will conduct further environmental testing on the specific preferred site. This testing will give us a deeper understanding of potential impacts. It will also help inform the actions and measures we'll need to put in place to protect and preserve the environment during design, construction, and operation.

When will construction start and how long is it expected to last?

Following completion of this Class EA in early 2021, design of the sewers is anticipated to start in 2022 and design of the new plant is anticipated to start in 2023. Construction of all necessary works is anticipated to start in 2024, and the plant should be in-service in 2027. There will be a phasing plan developed as part of this Class EA to determine optimum timing.

How will noise, odour, traffic, and construction be managed?

Firstly, a key factor in the selection of the treatment technology will be its ability to avoid generation of odours. Ability to buffer surrounding land use to the potential impacts of any noise, odour, traffic, and construction impacts are criteria used in the evaluation of the alternative solutions.

Following confirmation of the preferred plant site, outfall location, and sewer collection strategy, further detailed investigations to better understand any potential impacts will be undertaken. The results of these investigations will allow better design and construction approaches to safeguard and protect the environment. Items such as noise, odour, and traffic mitigation are requirements for agency permits and approvals that the Region will need to secure prior to construction.

Will neighbourhoods or access to parks and water be impacted during construction?

A review of potential impacts to neighbourhoods, public space, and water access was considered in the evaluation and preliminary selection. Following confirmation of the preferred

servicing solution, the next step in the Class EA study is to identify, evaluate, and select the preferred design concept. During this stage a range of alternatives will be evaluated against criteria to assess their potential impact and the need for mitigating measures.

Impact to public space and water access during construction will be reviewed and results will be available and presented at PIC No. 4 (anticipated for Fall 2020). The preliminary preferred site was selected in part due to its ability to buffer against impacts to surrounding land uses.

How was the preliminary preferred solution (new plant, outfall location and sewer strategy) decided?

The preliminary preferred solution was selected using a rigorous evaluation process with the following weighted criteria: Environmental (25%); Social/ Cultural (25%); Legal/ Jurisdictional (10%); Technical (20%); and Financial (20%) factors. The preliminary preferred solution was based on a balanced result of the five criteria.

The evaluation process and criteria were presented to the public at PIC No. 2 in November 2019. Additional information can be found on the project website at niagararegion.ca/projects/south-niagara-falls-treatment-plant

Who has been involved in the decision making?

Deciding where to locate a new wastewater treatment plant, outfall location, and sewer collection system requires a great deal of testing and input from many experts, stakeholders, and the public.

For South Niagara Falls Wastewater Solutions, we are following the Class EA process, which is a decision-making process that Ontario municipalities are required to follow when building new infrastructure. Success of the Class EA process requires active public and stakeholder engagement.

The Region has directly consulted with: the City of Niagara Falls; the City of Thorold; the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; Ontario Power Generation; Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority; and property owners of short-listed sites for feedback to help inform the decision-making process.

Example of key stakeholders engaged to date include:

- Federal Ministries
- Provincial Ministries
- Local Municipalities
- Local Indigenous Communities
- Ontario Power Generation
- Public Service Providers
- Property Owners
- Communities (including businesses and residents)
- Rail / Transit
- Local Utilities

What level of detail has been completed to date?

For each of the sites considered, the Region has completed extensive reviews and investigations including: Natural Environment; Record Site Condition Review (Contamination); Stage 1 Archaeological; Cultural Heritage Screening; Agricultural Impact Screening; Geotechnical; Hydrogeological; Assimilative Capacity; and Conceptual Costing. There has also been consideration for public impact including: receptors (noise, odour, and air), traffic, transportation, and recreational activities.

In addition, we are listening to the public and key stakeholders as we consider how the community may be impacted by the project. We still have more work to do to before we come to a final decision.

What additional investigations will the Region be undertaking?

As the study enters into Phase 4 of the Class EA process, the Region will undertake further detailed investigations to support the decisions regarding design and construction concepts for the preferred solution.

These site-specific studies will include: a more in-depth analysis of the Natural Environment; potential for soil contamination through an Environmental Site Assessment; Stage II Archaeological; Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment; and Geotechnical/ Hydrogeological Field Investigations.

To support Provincial approvals, additional site-specific studies relating to: Noise and Odour Impact and Mitigation Assessment; Assimilative Capacity Detailed Modelling and Assessment; Traffic Impact Assessment; and detailed Costing Analysis will be undertaken.

When will the final decision be made?

Following PIC No. 3, the Region will consider the feedback we receive from the public, as well as stakeholder feedback. Feedback will be reviewed to validate the selection of the preliminary preferred solution. If there is no material impact to the assessment, the preliminary preferred solution will be selected for further refinement in Phase 4 of the Class EA process.

The preferred new wastewater treatment site and layout, outfall location, sewer alignments, and preliminary technology, and construction methods will be presented at PIC No. 4 (anticipated for Fall 2020). The Class EA study is expected to be complete in early 2021.

How can I have a say before the final decision is made?

Public Information Centres are a great way to provide direct feedback to the project team. Please provide feedback on the information presented at today's PIC No. 3. The next information centre (PIC No. 4) is anticipated for Fall 2020.

Comments are welcome anytime. You can fill out the feedback form on the project webpage, or you can provide comments or concerns by email to the project team at New.Treatment.Plant@niagararegion.ca

What is the timing of the project?

The Class EA study is planned to be completed in early 2021. Post Class EA design and construction is expected to start in 2023, with the plant being operational by 2027.