



Changes to Municipal Class EA

**Development Services Committee Meeting
May 30, 2023**



Agenda

- Purpose
- Background on Recent EA Changes and Proposed Modernization
- Discussion
- Recommendations



Purpose

- To update the Committee on the recent approved amendment and proposed further changes by the MECP to the Municipal Class EA (MCEA) process.
- To provide information on the potential impacts of these changes on the City's capital project delivery protocol and practices.
- To provide staff recommendations and next steps.



Background

ERO # 019-5069:

- The Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) recently approved an amendment to the MCEA on March 3, 2023.
- The purpose of the amendment is to better align assessment requirements with potential environmental impacts, including conditional exemptions for certain low-risk projects.
 - Making some projects eligible for exemption;
 - Exempting projects that are needed because of an emergency;
 - Increasing cost thresholds for selection of EA Schedule;
 - Modernizing consultation requirements by allowing municipalities to develop their own custom notification procedures



Background

ERO # 019-6693:

- The MECP posted notice ERO-019-6693 (Evaluating MCEA Requirements for Infrastructure Projects) on March 10, 2023, for public consultation.
- As part of the overall modernization of the environmental assessment (EA) process, MECP is proposing to evaluate the requirements for municipal road, water and wastewater projects that are currently subject to the MECA. These changes are proposed to improve timelines for completing low-risk infrastructure projects such as municipal roadways.
- As a result of this proposed change, the Municipal Class EA could be revoked, and the Act and regulations would be amended as necessary.
- If the MCEA is revoked, municipalities would be required to develop, adopt and implement procedures & policies for their projects.



Discussion

- Staff consider the approved amendment (ERO#019-5069) and the proposed modernization (ERO#019-6693) are process improvements for municipalities in the delivery of capital infrastructure projects;
- Staff consider that the proposed changes will generally lead to reduced project design costs and significantly improved schedules. Emergency works such as operation and maintenance of linear paved facilities, cycling lanes/facilities & multi-purpose paths, sidewalks, parking lots and related facilities located within or outside existing rights-of-way can proceed without unnecessary process approvals, and projects can be prioritized with fewer constraints.



Recommendations

- Staff supports the amendment for modernization of the Municipal Class EA (MCEA) process by the MECP;
- Staff will continue to monitor any additional proposals and decisions related to the Environmental Assessment process and raise any concerns or potential negative impacts that may affect the City's capital project delivery.