

2.0 Class EA Process

The Class EA for this project was planned according to the requirements defined by the Ontario Hydro *Class Environmental Assessment for Minor Transmission Facilities, Revision 6 April 1992*. The purpose of this document is to provide a basis for approval under the *EA Act* of a defined class of projects. The Class EA defines an environmental planning process which meets all the requirements of the *EA Act*. The proposed undertaking falls within the scope of a Class EA for Minor Transmission Facilities. The Class EA study process is illustrated in **Figure 2-1**.

2.1 Study Area Identification

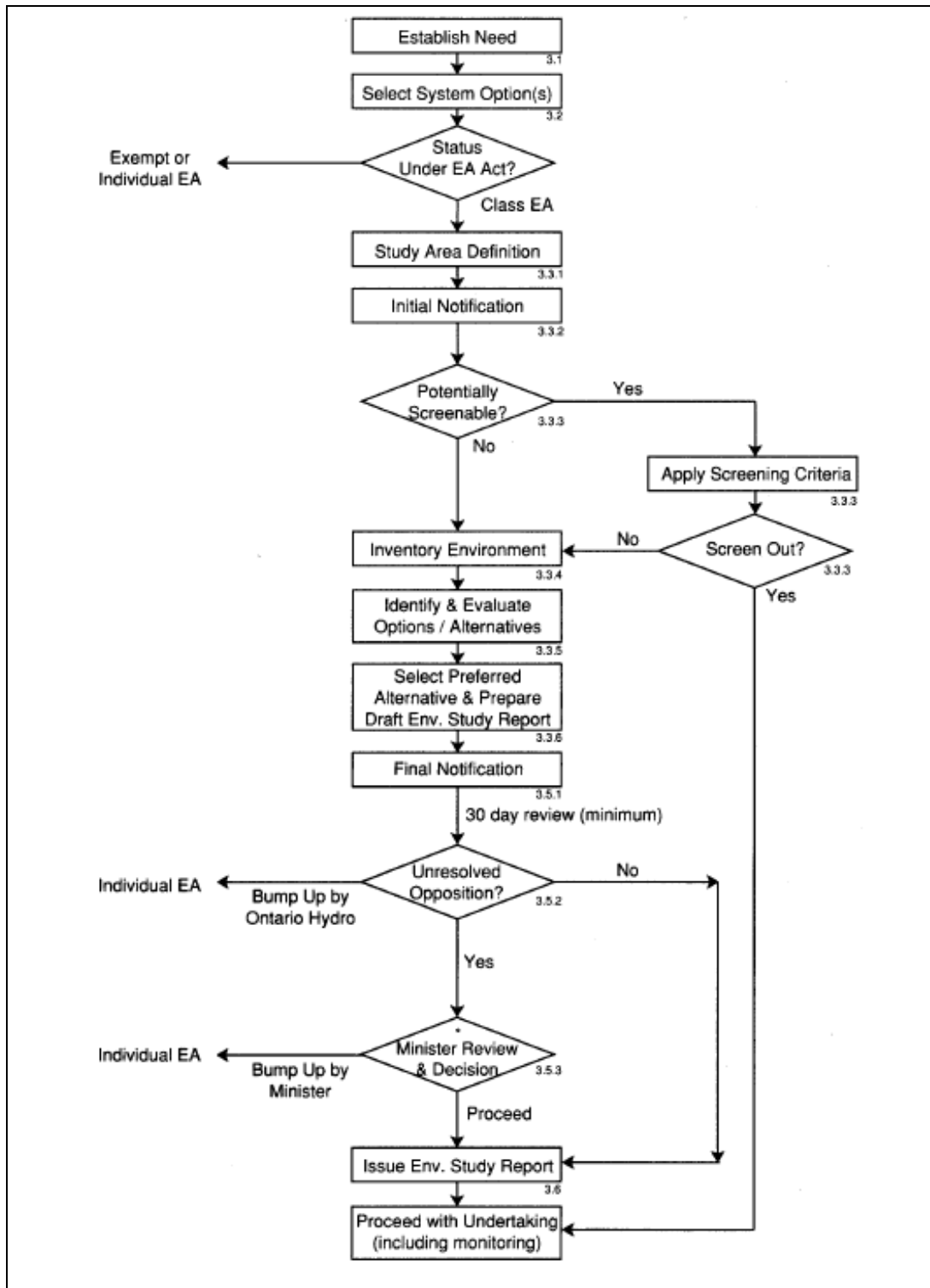
At the outset of the study, the technical specifications and system requirements for the new electrical facilities were determined and criteria and guidelines were established to assist in identifying alternative transformer station sites in the selected study area. The approach to TS site identification is explained in more detail in **Chapter 5.0** of this report.

The study area identified for this project lies within the City of Woodstock and the Township of Norwich as shown in **Figure 1-3**. The study area is located near the forecast load growth, in the east part of the City of Woodstock. This allows for shorter distributions lines, hence improving reliability, reducing losses and optimizing the system. The study area for the TS was selected with regards to the proximity to the existing transmission line, and to minimizing disruptions to natural environmental and social features in the area. The study area is bounded on the north by the Canadian Pacific Railway, on the east and south by Highway 401, and on the west by the edge of the residential area and natural environmental features (e.g., wetland). The existing 115 kV transmission line to be upgraded runs east-west along Parkinson Road in the City of Woodstock and Towerline Road in the Township of Norwich, between Woodstock TS and Toyota Junction. An area potentially affected by the line upgrade was also included as part of this study, as shown in **Figure 1-3**. Any potential biophysical and socio-economic effects are not expected to extend beyond 1 km from the right-of-way. The study area is based on a conservative estimate of the area in which project effects could potentially be observed.

2.2 Initial Stakeholder and Public Notification and Ongoing Consultation

The project was formally announced to the stakeholders on December 13, 2007. Initial notification letters were sent to all relevant federal and provincial ministries, agencies, county and local municipalities, interest groups and local conservation authorities. Municipalities have been notified since January 29, 2008. A stakeholder consultation list is provided in **Appendix A1**. A copy of the notification letter is provided in **Appendix A2**.

A project presentation was also made to the City of Woodstock Council on February 7, 2008 (see **Appendix B**). Ongoing consultation was conducted throughout the project with government agencies, municipal officials and the local community. Details of the consultation process are provided in **Chapter 4.0**.



Source: *Class Environmental Assessment for Minor Transmission Facilities, Revision 6 April 1992.*

Figure 2-1: Class Environmental Assessment Study Process

2.3 Environmental Inventory

Information was collected and analysed for the relevant natural and social environment factors. This information is consistent with the requirements set out in Appendix G of the Class EA document and included the following:

- Biological Resources
- Forestry Resources
- Agricultural Resources
- Mineral Resources
- Recreational Resources
- Appearance of the Landscape
- Human Settlement
- Heritage Resources

The data was compiled from publications, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) files obtained from municipal and provincial agencies and discussions with the staff from these agencies. A listing of references can be found in **Chapter 10.0**. A site survey was conducted at the end of winter 2008 to confirm documented data and to get an up-to-date perspective on the local environmental inventory. The details of this inventory are provided in **Chapter 3.0**.

2.4 Identification and Evaluation of Alternatives Sites

The stages for identification and evaluation of alternative TS sites included:

- Definition of the study area;
- Consultation with municipal and provincial agencies;
- Consultation with area residents and other stakeholders;
- Identification of alternative sites within the study area;
- Consultation on the site selection criteria;
- Site comparison and evaluation;

- Final consultation with local stakeholders and governments.

Hydro One sought input on TS site selection from the community through the Public Information Centres (PICs) and through communication with local and agency officials and other stakeholders. **Chapter 4.0** provides more details on the consultation process.

Based on the input received during the consultation process, a number of alternative TS sites were identified within the study area. These sites were selected based on avoiding, as much as practical:

- Existing residences and businesses;
- Areas with sensitive biophysical and social features;
- Lands approved for commercial/industrial development;
- Agricultural lands.

Hydro One presented the selection criteria, the relative advantages and disadvantages of each alternative and the rationale for the final selection to stakeholders and interested parties. **Chapter 5.0** provides more detail on the TS site selection process.

2.5 Environmental Study Report and Final Notification

The potential short term and long term residual environmental effects were identified and corresponding mitigation measures were identified for the preferred TS site and associated facilities. A Draft ESR was prepared, and a notification was sent to the provincial ministries and agencies, and stakeholder parties that have indicated a continuing interest in the Project. A public notice was placed in the local newspapers announcing the start and end of the 30 day public review and comment period. The ESR was made available on the project website and at the following locations: Woodstock Public Library, Township of Norwich Clerk's Department, Woodstock Hydro, and City of Woodstock Clerk's Department.

At the end of the public review period, the comments received and the responses provided by Hydro One were documented herein.