

**Supporting Accessible, Streamlined and Transparent  
Land Use Planning Processes**

# **Halton Region's Updated Environmental Impact Assessment Guideline**

Latonnell Conservation Symposium - October 18, 2022



halton.ca ☎ 311



# HALTON'S NATURAL HERITAGE SYSTEM



ESAs - 1980



Greenlands System - 2006



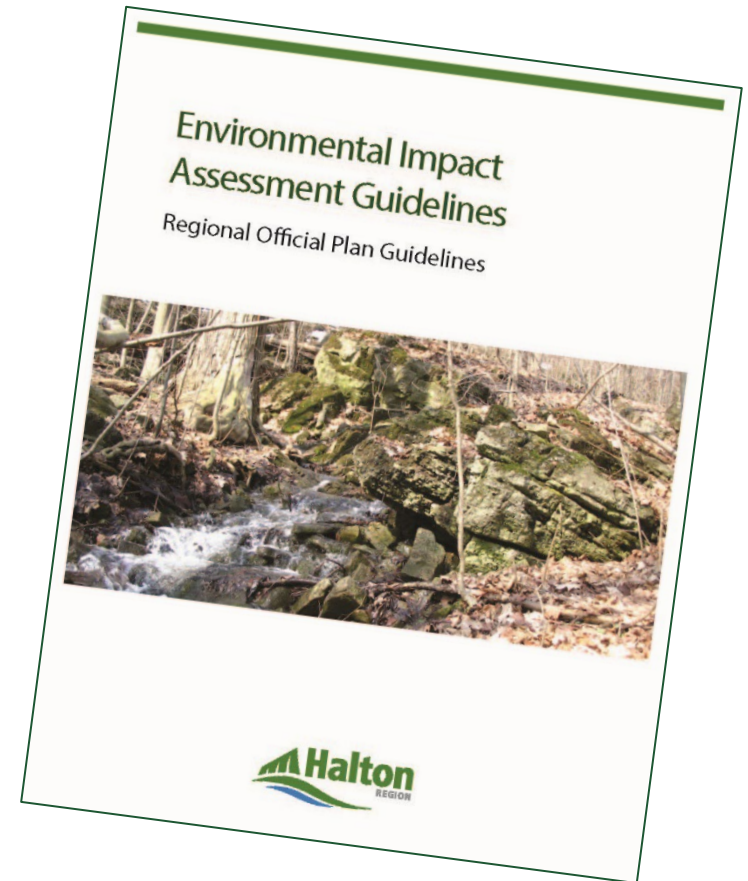
Halton's NHS - 2009

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) GUIDELINE

- What is the EIA Guideline?
  - Explains what an EIA is, when one is needed and the process through which one is completed;
  - Provides specific direction and tools for the EIA process;
  - Provides technical direction for preparing an EIA.
- Who is the Guideline for?
  - Landowners
  - Industry
  - Municipalities & Agencies
  - EIA practitioners

# THE 2014 EIA GUIDELINE IN PRACTICE

- Positive Feedback
  - Good technical content
  - Some practitioners use to guide EIA preparation
  - Trigger diagrams are very helpful
  - Process diagram assists in understanding the EIA process



# WHY UPDATE THE EIA GUIDELINE?

- 2017 Development Services Review recommendation;
- Compliance with current provincial plans and guidance;
- Integrate applicable Minutes of Settlement (MOS);
- Conformity / alignment with the current in-force Regional Official Plan;
- Improve the quality and consistency of submitted EIAs;
- Improve the EIA process (review timelines, inter-agency coordination);
- Provide clarity on what triggers an EIA and waiving criteria.

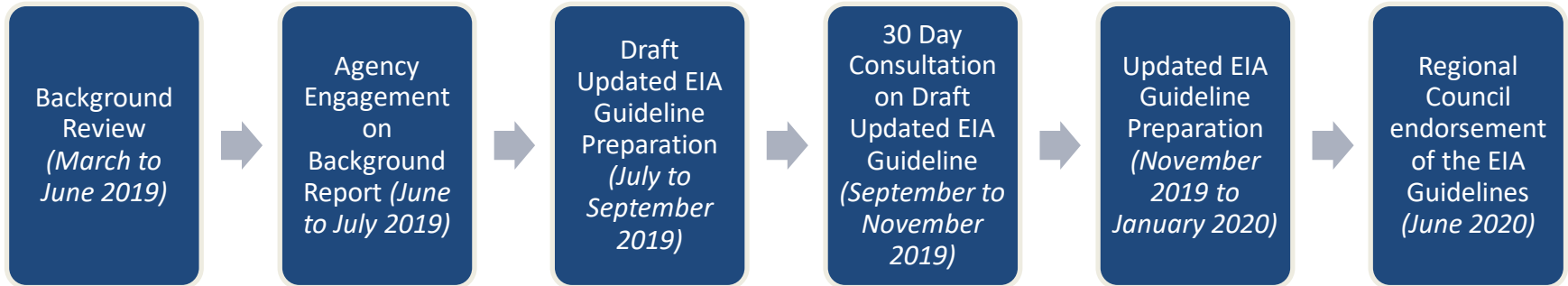
# UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF HALTON'S EIA GUIDELINE

1. Landscape permanence of Halton's natural heritage;
2. No negative impact to Halton's Natural Heritage System;
3. Halton has a valued agricultural land base that can coexist with Natural Heritage features and functions;
4. Support sustainable development.



Halton's NHS - 2009

# EIA GUIDELINE REVIEW PROCESS



- Online consultation webpage on Halton.ca
- Public Information Session
- Meetings: Provincial Ministries, Local Municipalities, Conservation Authorities, Regional Citizen Advisory Committees
- Presentations: Agricultural Organizations, Halton's Developer Liaison Committee

# UPDATES TO THE EIA GUIDELINE

Divided into 3 sections:

- Part 1: EIA Primer
- Part 2: EIA Process
- Part 3: EIA Content

EIA process flow chart

Agency roles & general responsibilities in the EIA process (Table)

Language, terminology updates

Consistent with Regional Official Plan, Provincial Plans and Guidelines

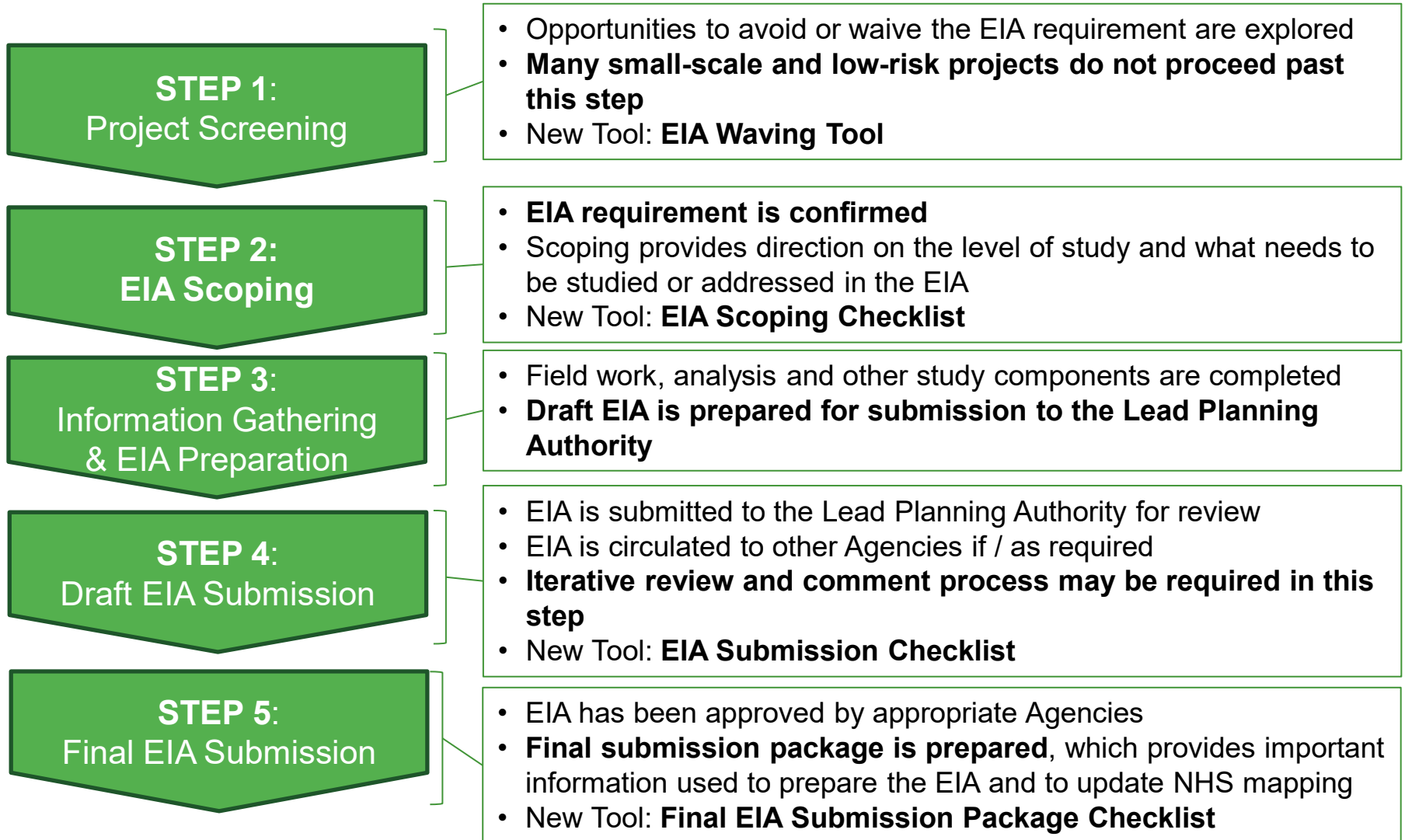
Potential environmental impacts & mitigation measures

Formalized waiving process

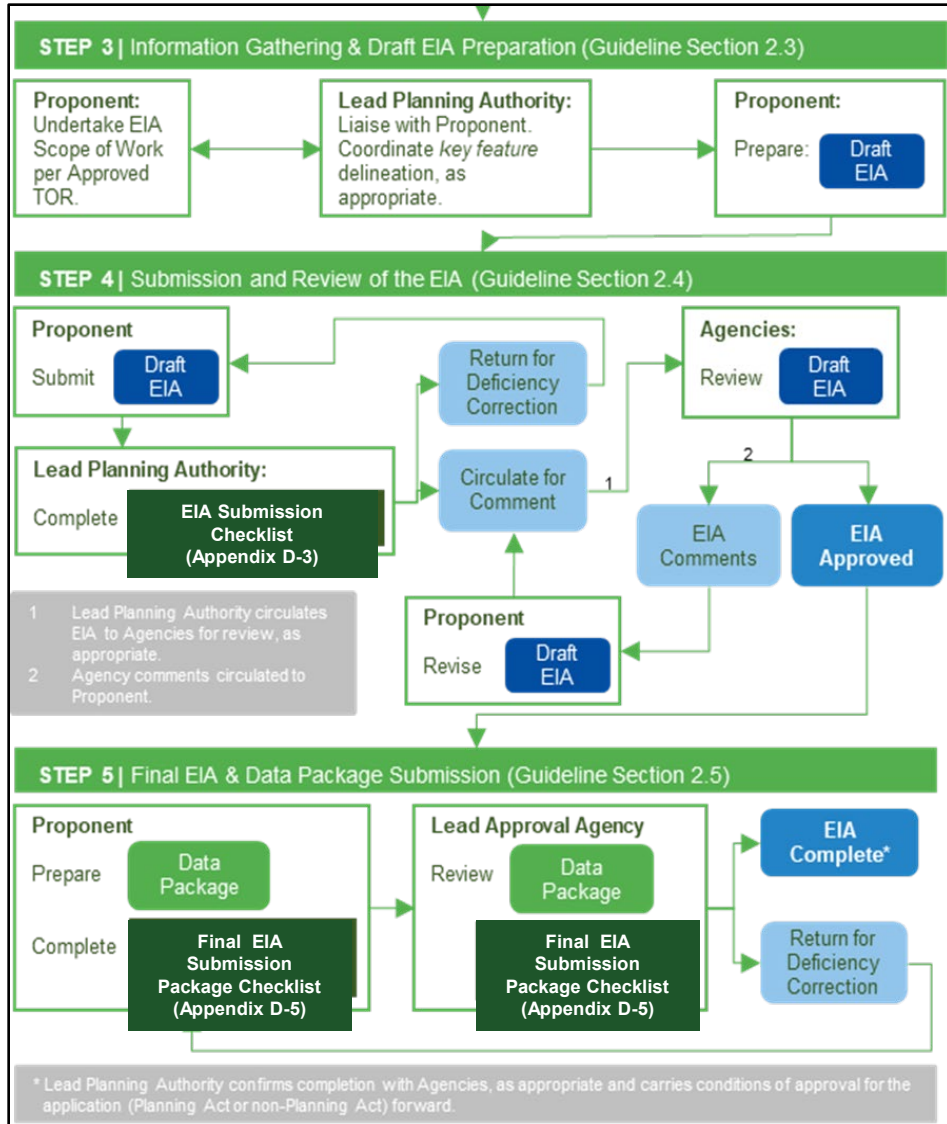
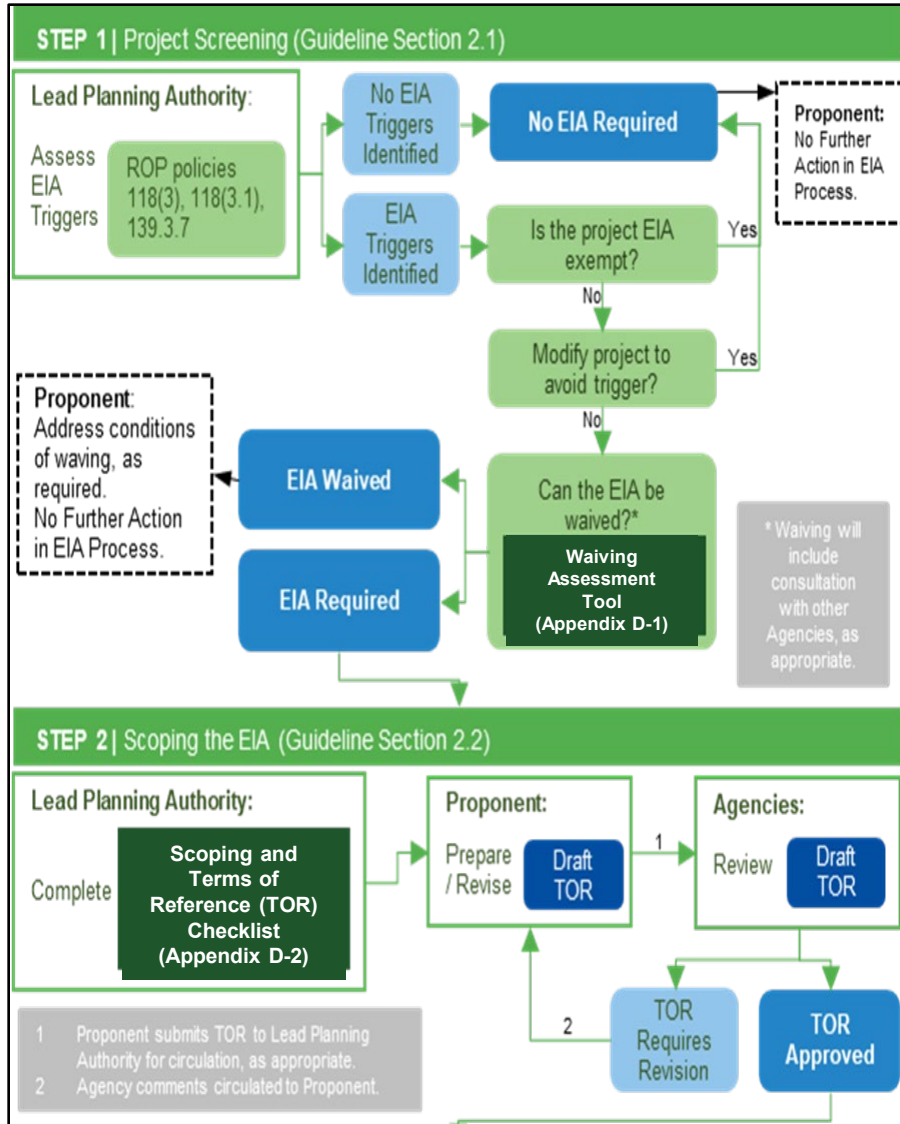
Tools & Checklists

Definitions

# EIA PROCESS

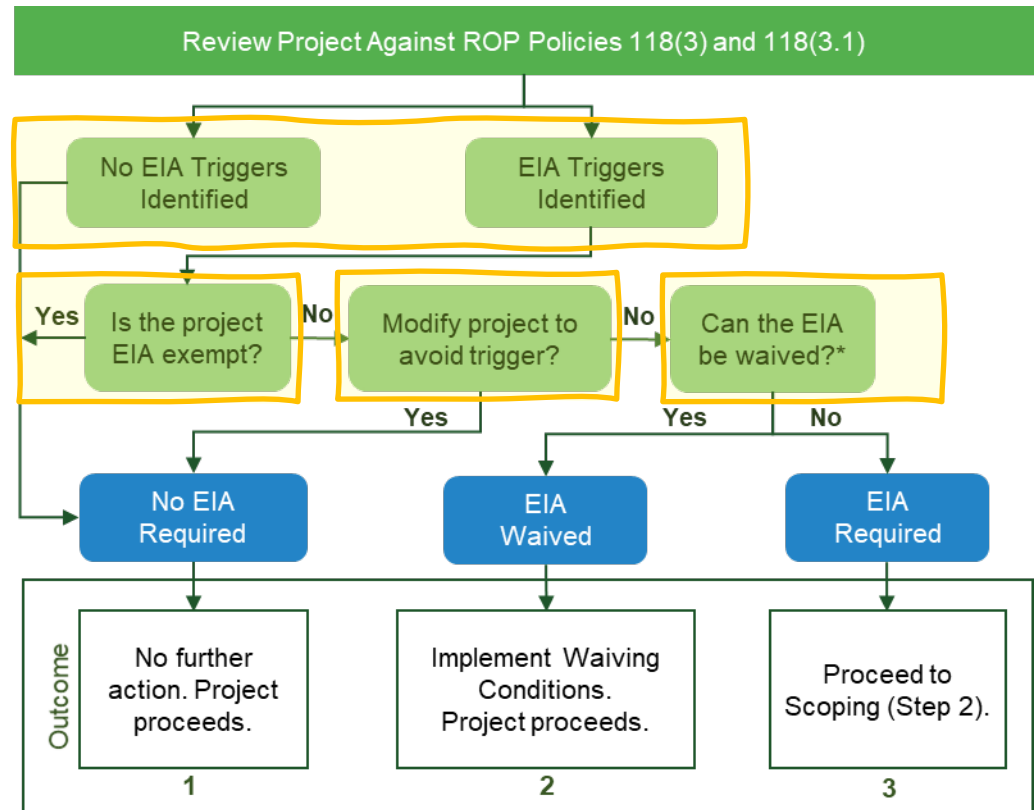


# EIA PROCESS (APPENDIX C) – CURRENT



# STEP 1: PROJECT SCREENING

- Important step in the EIA process.
- Figure added to clarify the screening process, decision points and possible outcomes.
- Approximately half of projects will not proceed past this step of the EIA process.



\*Waiving may be achieved through plan modification.

# EIA TRIGGERS: NON-AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS (FIGURE 2.4, PAGE 16)

## Does the Development or Site Alteration Trigger an EIA?

The "house" symbol in the figures below is an illustrative representation of any *development* or *site alteration* project. It does not represent a specific type, scope, or scale of project. Similarly, its placement on the illustrative images does not indicate that the *development* or *site alteration* would be supported; it is intended to illustrate when an EIA would be triggered only.

= EIA Not Triggered

Located over 120 m (398 ft) from the Region's Natural Heritage System.

Single detached dwelling on an existing lot located over 30 m (98 ft) from the Key Features.

= EIA Not Triggered

Located over 120 m (398 ft) from a Key Feature in the Greenbelt's Natural Heritage System.

= EIA Not Triggered

Not located within or adjacent to sensitive surface or groundwater features.

= EIA Triggered

Located within 120 m (398 ft) of the Region's Natural Heritage System.

Single detached dwelling located within 30 m (98 ft) of the Key Features.

= EIA Triggered

Located within 120 m (398 ft) of a Key Feature in the Greenbelt's Natural Heritage System.

= EIA Triggered

Located within or adjacent to sensitive surface or groundwater features.

**The EIA process stops.**  
An EIA is not triggered and the Guideline does not apply.

**Proceed to next stage in the EIA process under Step 1 - EIA Screening.**  
Determine whether the development or site alteration is exempt, or the EIA requirement can be avoided or can be waived.

*Note: Development or site alteration should consider the policies of the Growth Plan, 2019.*



# EIA TRIGGERS: AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS (FIGURE 2.5, PAGE 17)

## Does the Development or Site Alteration Trigger an EIA?

The "building" symbol in the figures below is an illustrative representation of any *development* or *site alteration* project. It does not represent a specific type, scope, or scale of project. Similarly, its placement on the illustrative images does not indicate that the *development* or *site alteration* would be supported; it is intended to illustrate when an EIA would be triggered only.

### = EIA Not Triggered

New building is:

- Smaller than 1,000 sq. m (10,764 sq. ft); and
- Located over 30 m (98 ft) away from a Key Feature.

New building is:

- Over 1,000 sq. m (10,764 sq. ft); and
- Over 30 m (98 ft) away from the Region's Natural Heritage System.

### = EIA Not Triggered

New building is within an existing farm building cluster surrounded by woodlands and no tree removal is occurring.

### = EIA Not Triggered

If a minimum 30 m vegetation protection zone is provided from a Key Feature

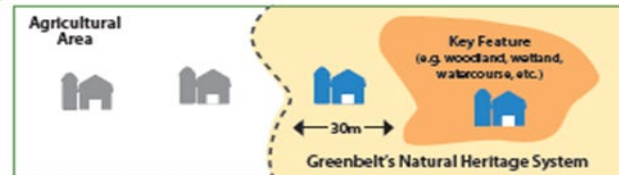
### New Building within the Region's Natural Heritage System



### New Building within the Region's Natural Heritage System



### New Building within the Greenbelt's Natural Heritage System



### = EIA Triggered

New building is:

- Smaller than 1,000 sq. m (10,764 sq. ft); and
- Located inside or within 30m (98ft) of a Key Feature.

New building is:

- Over 1,000 sq. m (10,764 sq. ft); and
- Inside or within 30 m (98 ft) of the Region's Natural Heritage System.

### = EIA Triggered

New building is within an existing farm building cluster surrounded by woodlands and tree removal is occurring.

### = EIA Triggered

A minimum 30 m vegetation protection zone is not provided from a Key Feature

The EIA process stops.

An EIA is not triggered and the Guideline does not apply.

Proceed to next stage in the EIA process under Step 1 - EIA Screening.

Determine whether the development or site alteration is exempt, or the EIA requirement can be avoided or can be waived.

Note: Development or site alteration should consider the policies of the Growth Plan, 2019.

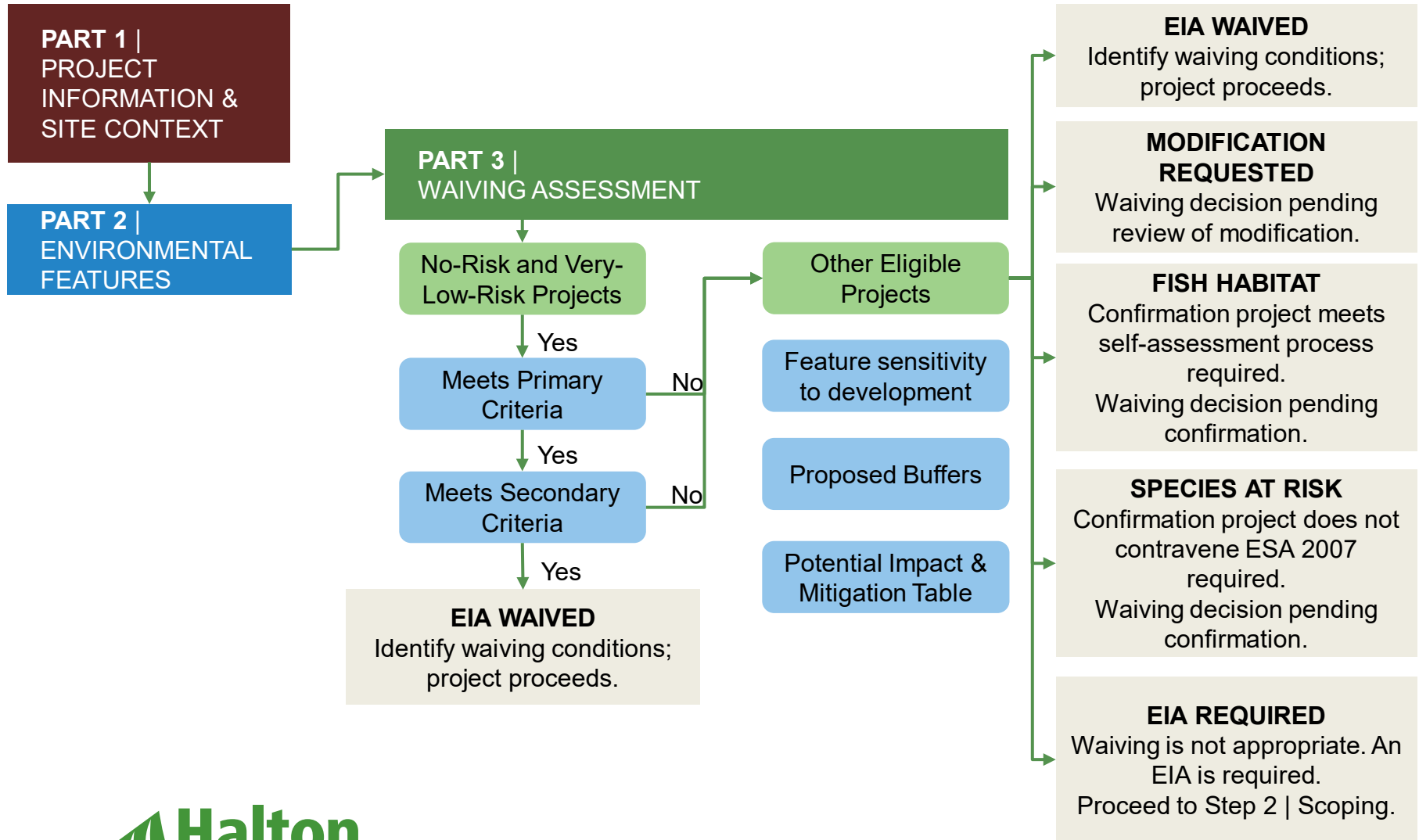
# EIA WAIVING

- Why formalize waiving?
  - Common types of projects and common scenarios
  - Transparent, repeatable and consistent process
  - Operationalize No and Low-Risk Projects
  - Provide tools to support process streamlining
  - Better for landowners, better for review agency resources
  - Support agricultural community
- What is eligible for potential waiving?
  - Small, Low-Risk Projects **Only**
  - Maintain precautionary approach that align with the underlying principles of the EIA Guideline
  - Goal, objectives and policies of the ROP NHS can be met

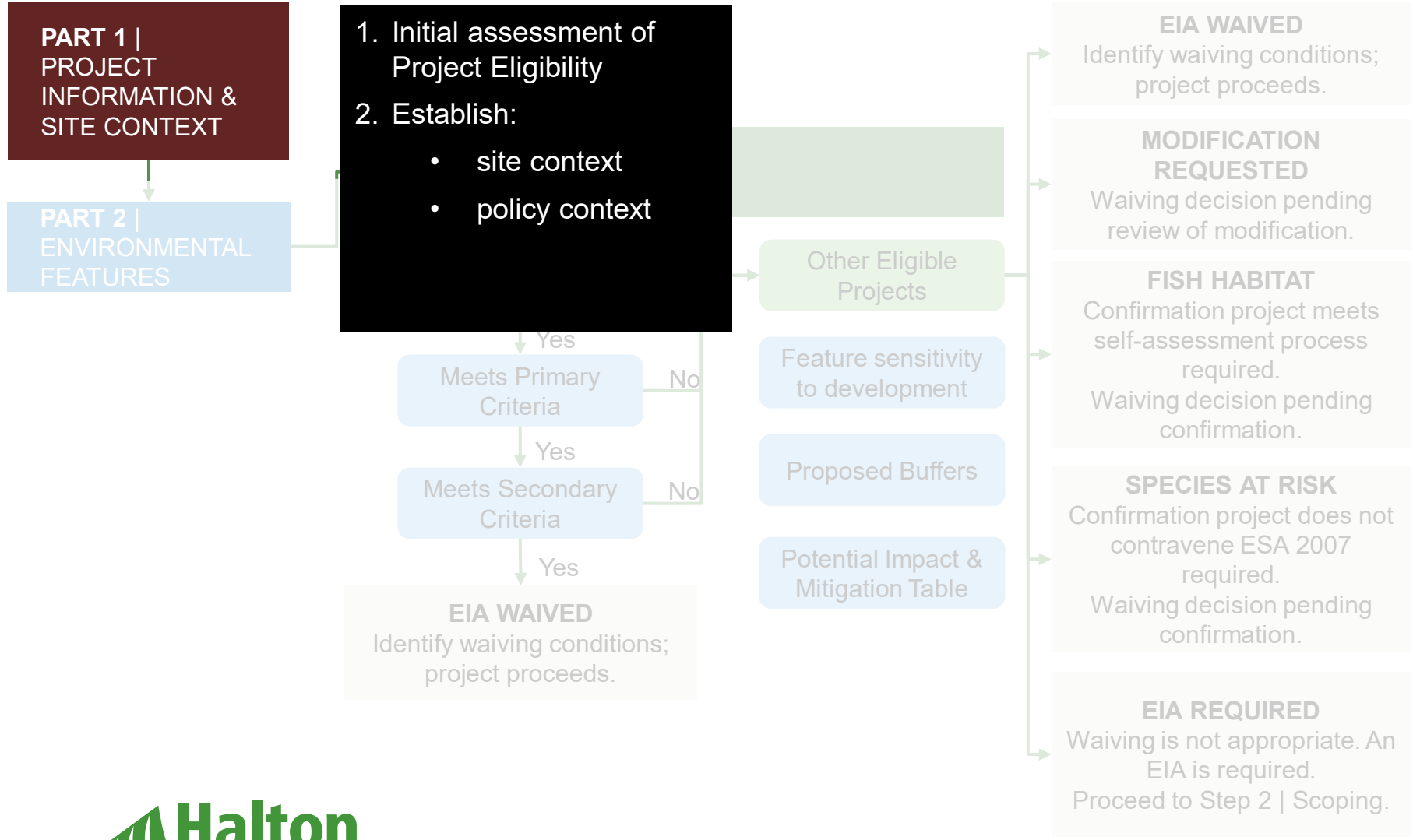


Go to the [Guideline](#) for text & further insights into the process and tool(s)

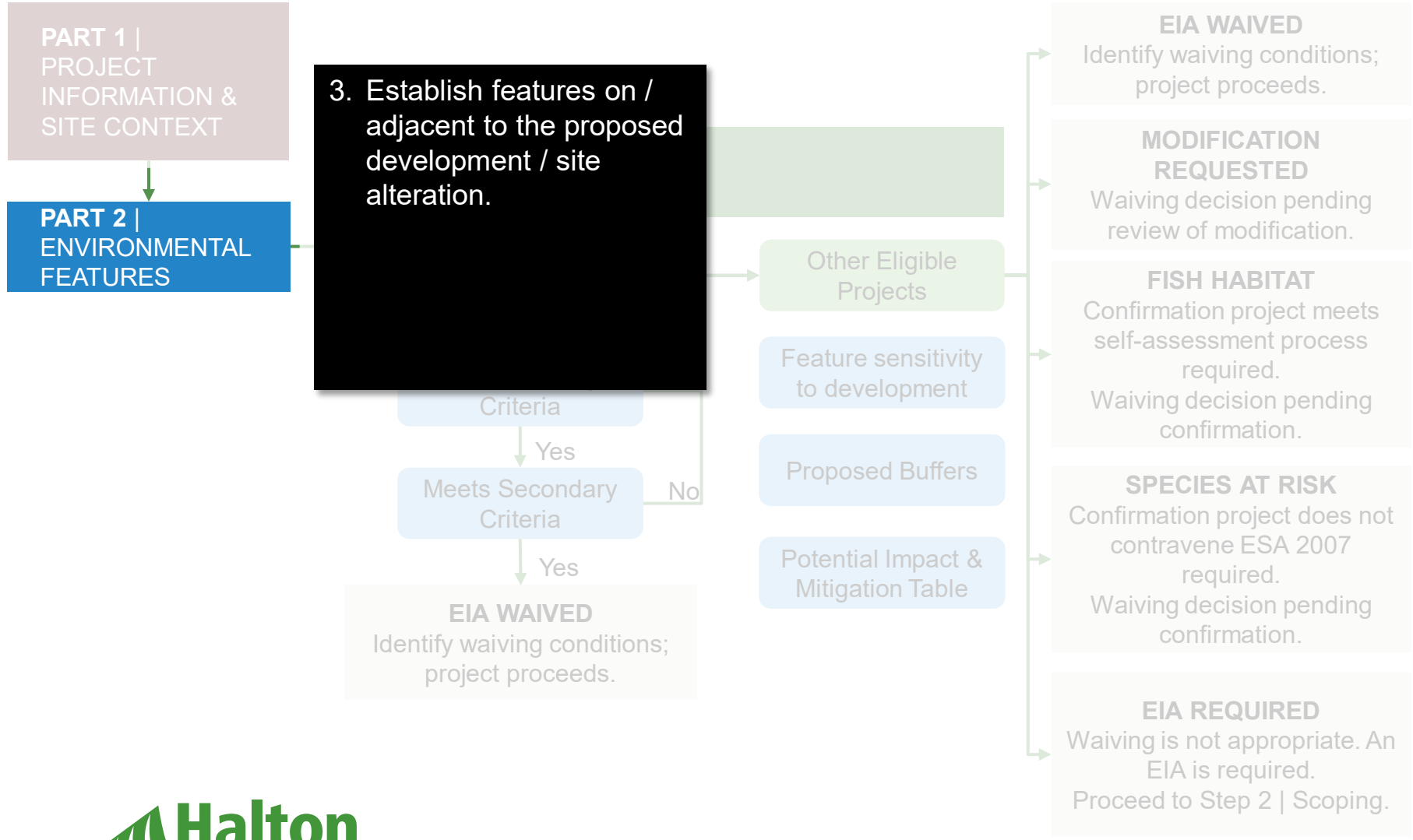
# WAIVING ASSESSMENT



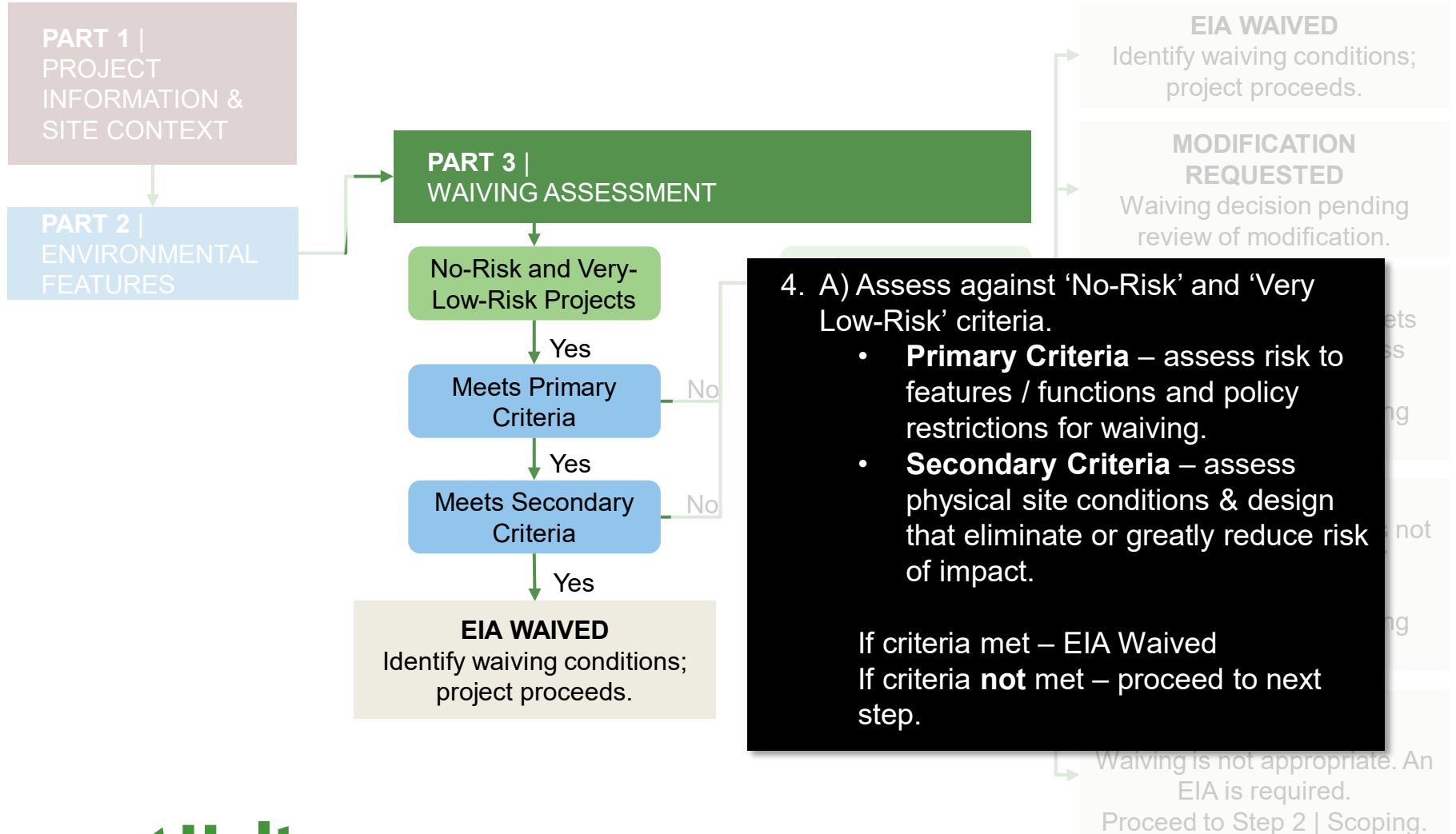
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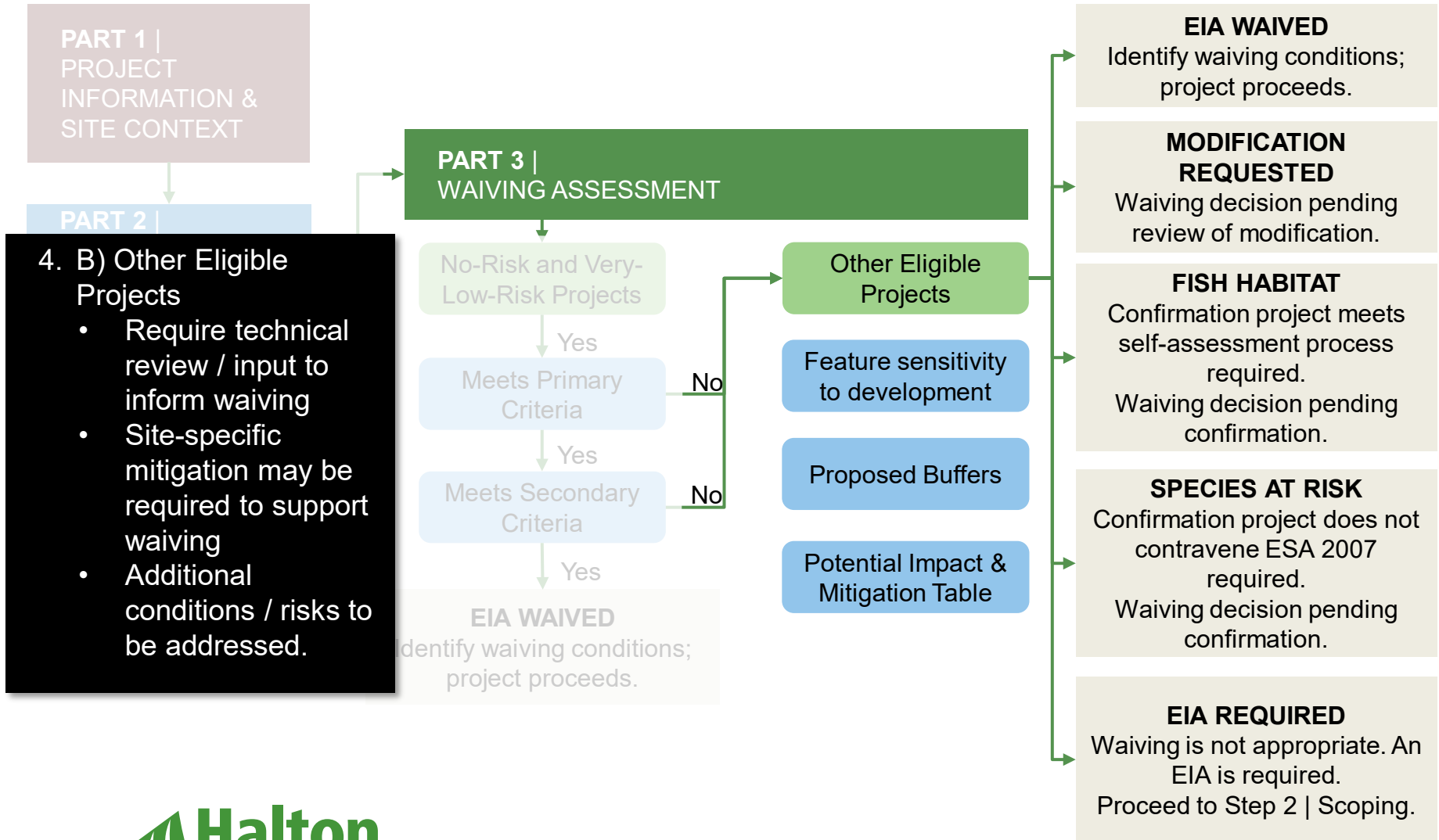
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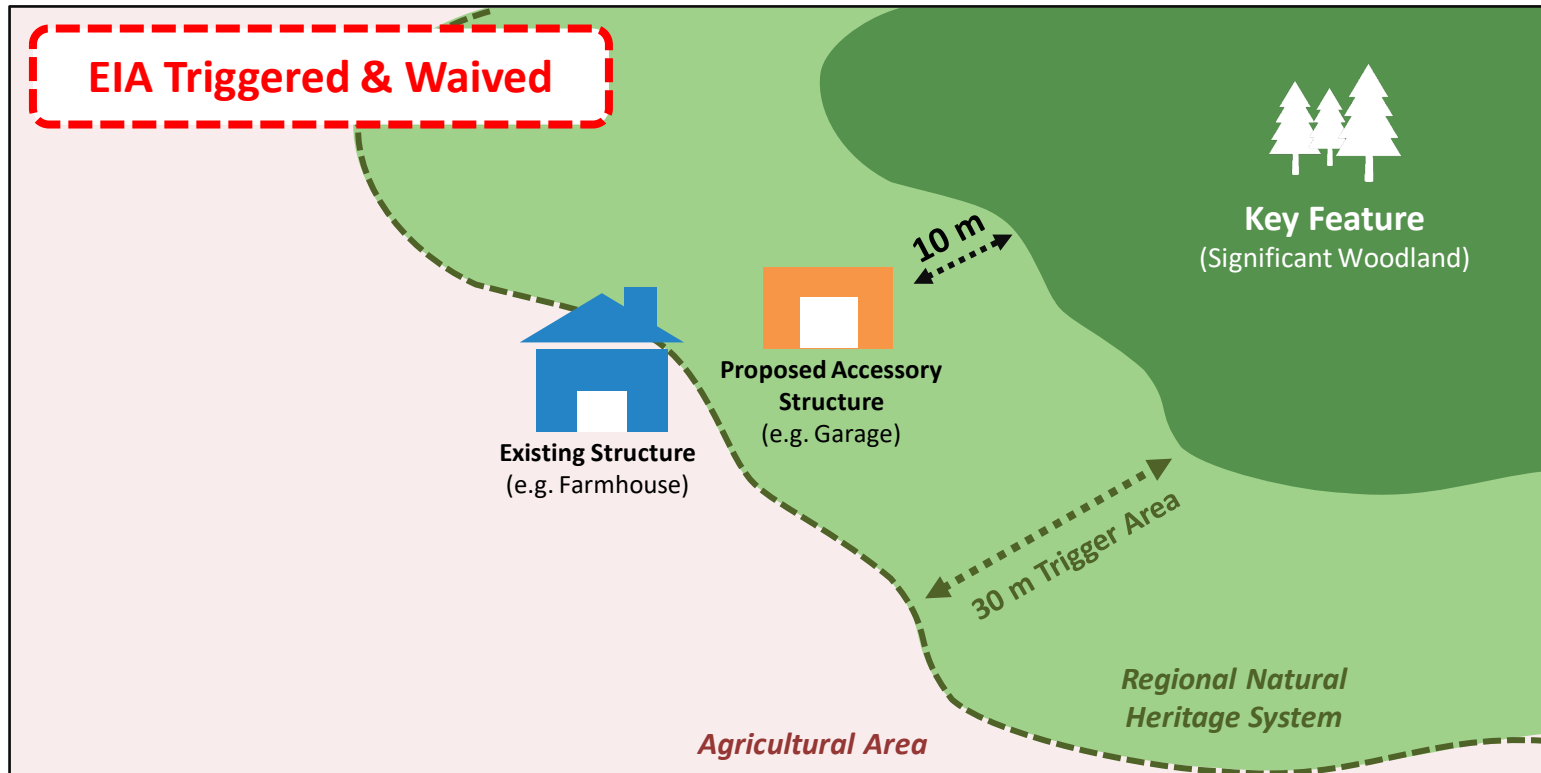
# WAIVING ASSESSMENT



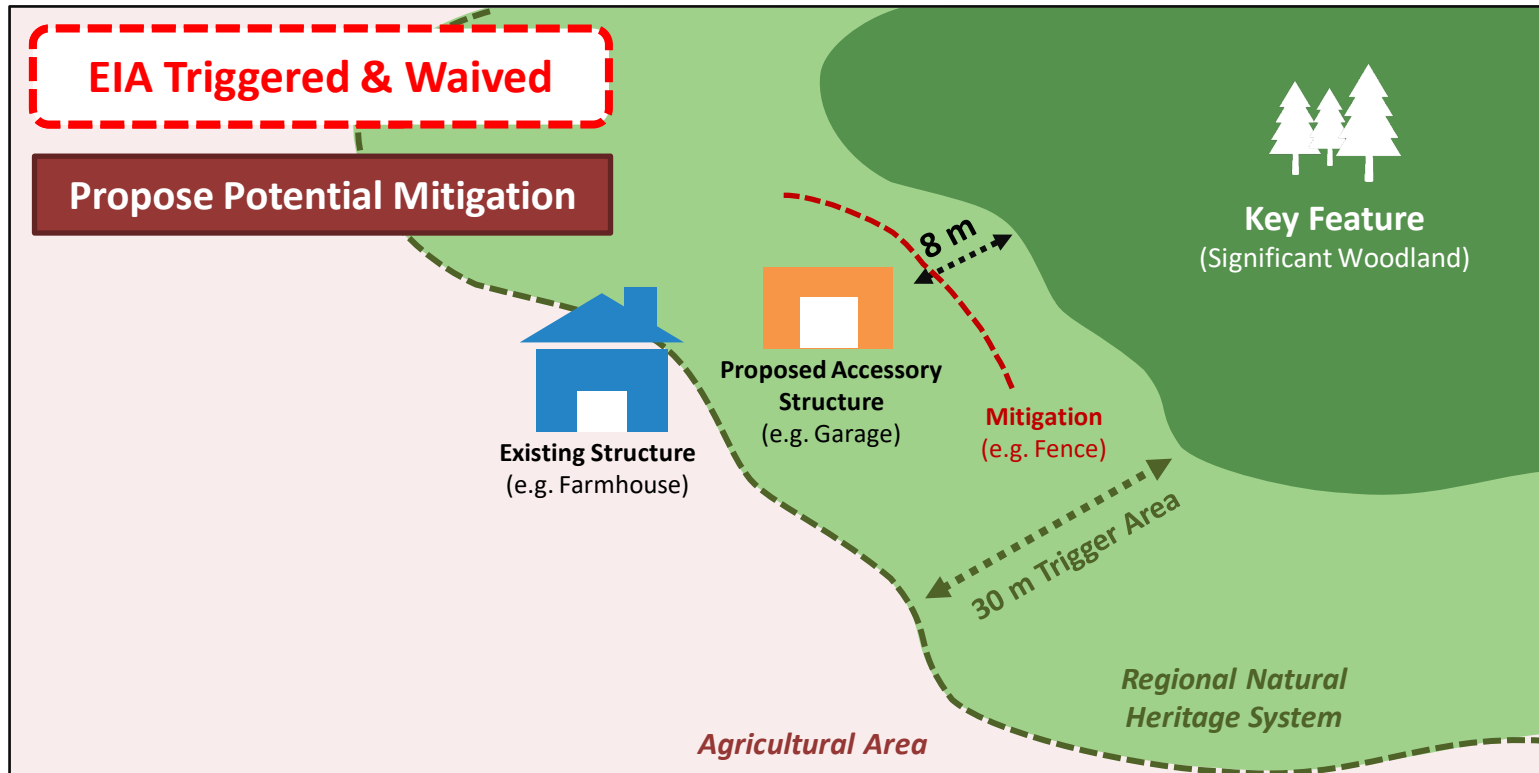
# EIA WAIVING EXAMPLES

- General samples / examples of how waiving could be applied using the 6-Step Assessment
- Agriculture-specific projects – structures & site alteration

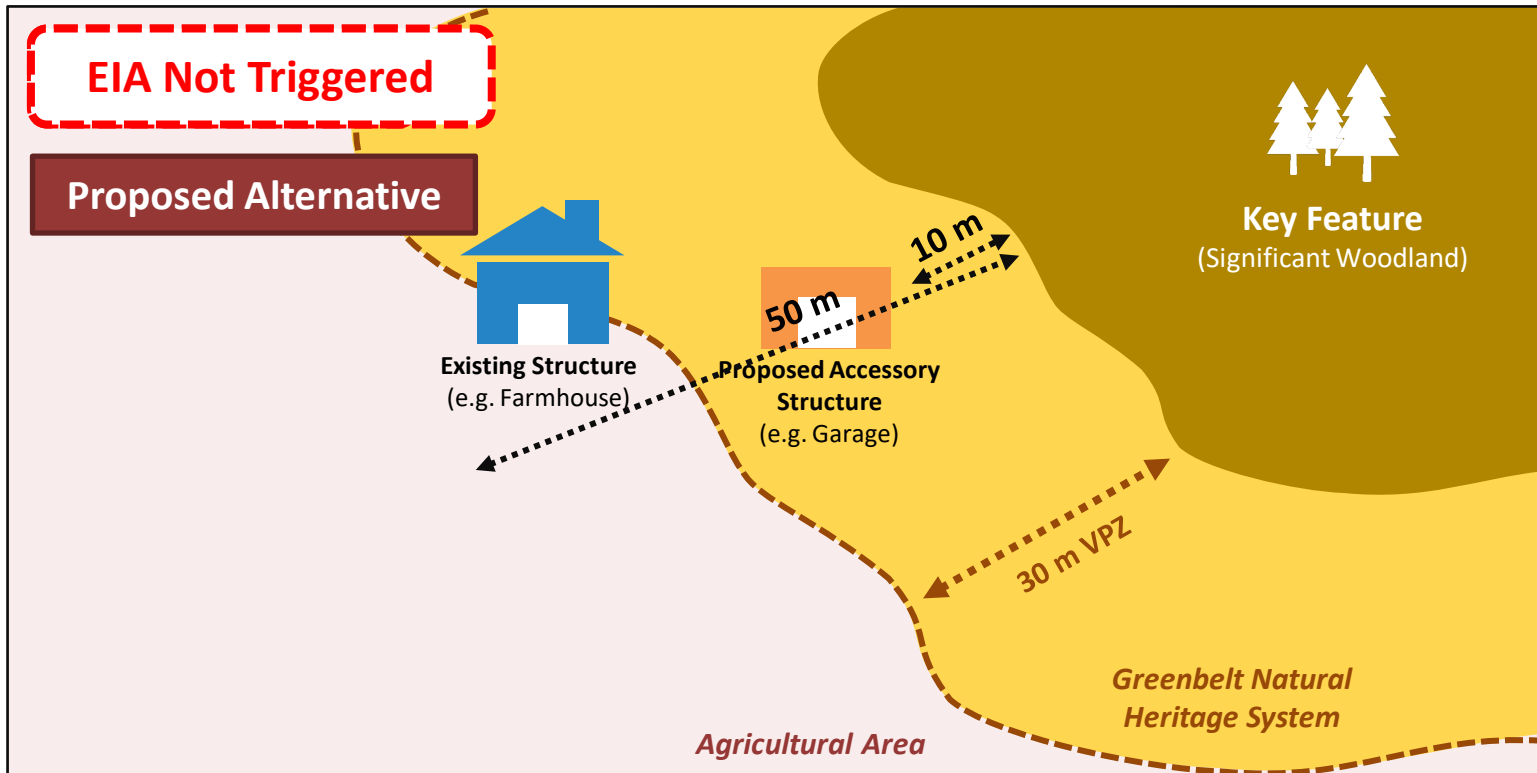
# New Accessory Structure (<50 sq. m)



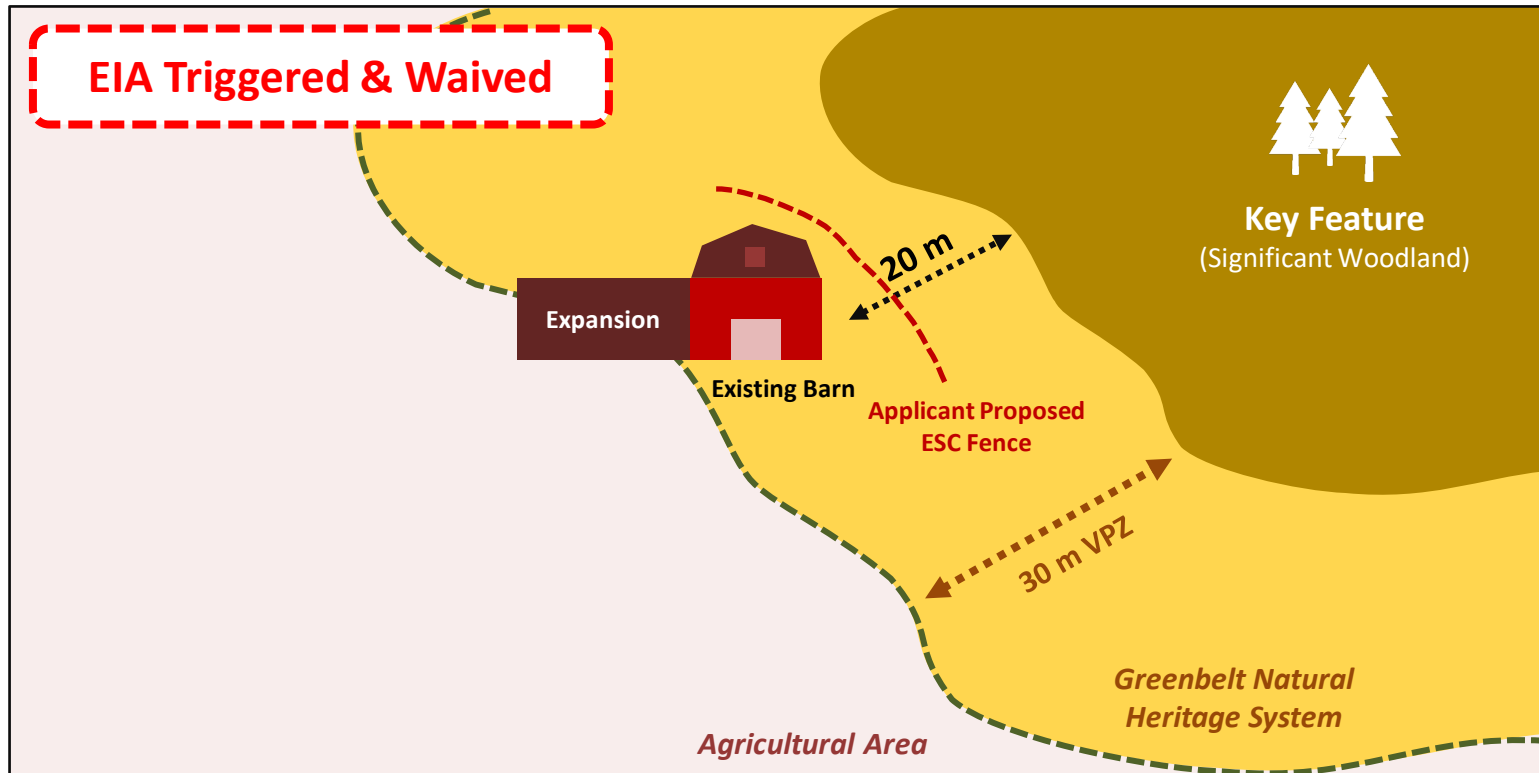
# New Accessory Structure (<50 sq. m)



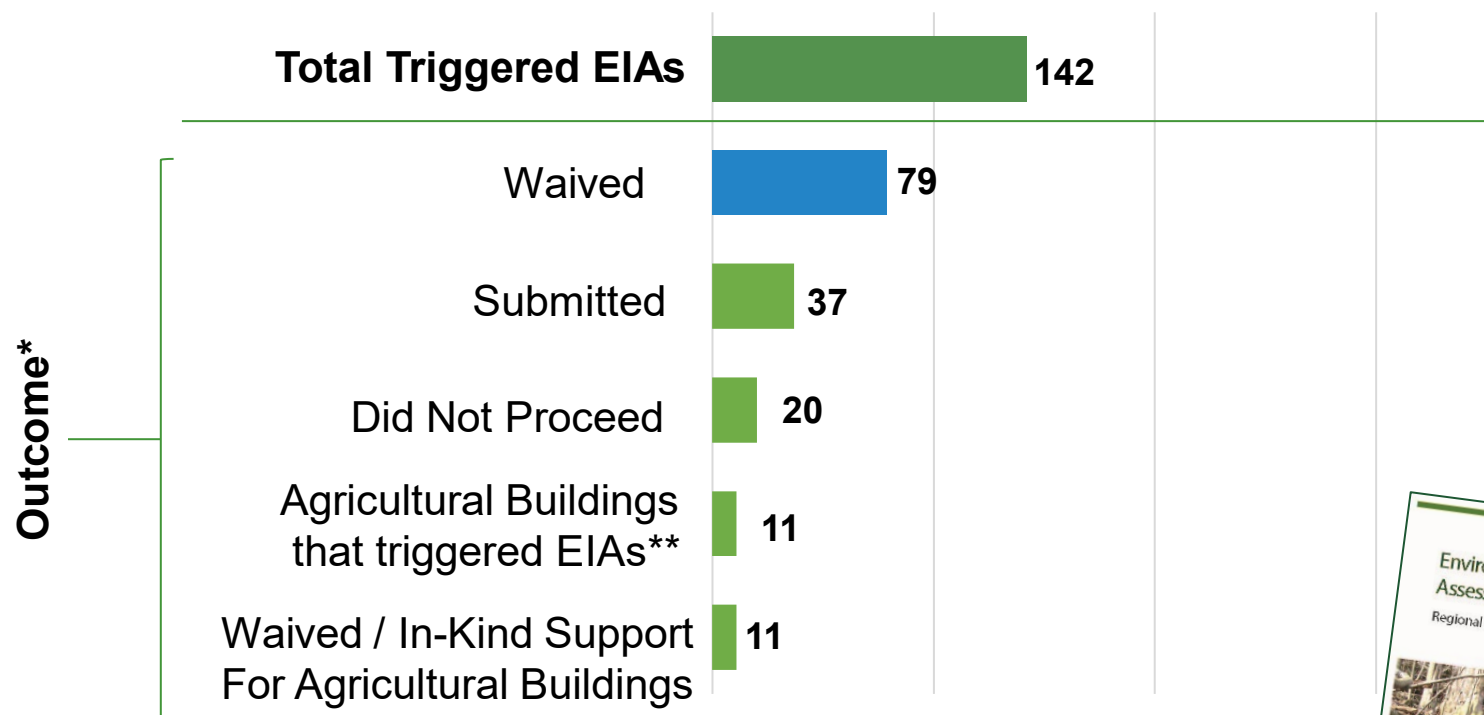
# New Agricultural Structure (<1,000 sq. m)



# Barn Expansion

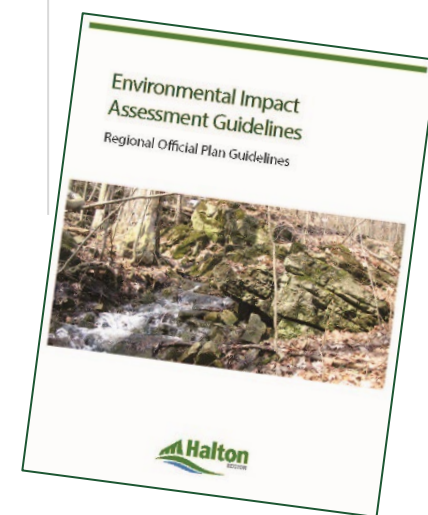


# THE 2020 EIA GUIDELINE IN PRACTICE



\*statistics are based on a monitoring period from June 2020 to June 2022

\*\* Agricultural Buildings that triggered EIAs are included in the total amount of triggered EIAs



# IMPLEMENTATION – 2020 EIA Guideline

## Successes

- Provided a clear understanding of the EIA Process
- Identified criteria for waiving
- Appendix D-2 Scoping and Terms of Reference Checklist has been well received. Review times and resubmission on Terms of References have been reduced.
- Complete EIA Submission Checklist can assist with the streamlining study submission to assist with Bill 109
- Receiving complete GIS data packages to track refinements to the Natural Heritage System mapping

## Potential Improvements

- Primary Criteria for waiving in the Appendix D-1 Waiving Tool for 'no' or 'very low' risk project can be clarified to assist with implementation
- Additional guidance should be provided to assist with implementation of 'other eligible projects' that can be waived
- An FAQ to assist landowners in completing the Appendix D-1 Waiving Tool

Please visit [Halton's Environmental Impact Assessment Guideline](#) to obtain a digital copy of the Guideline

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