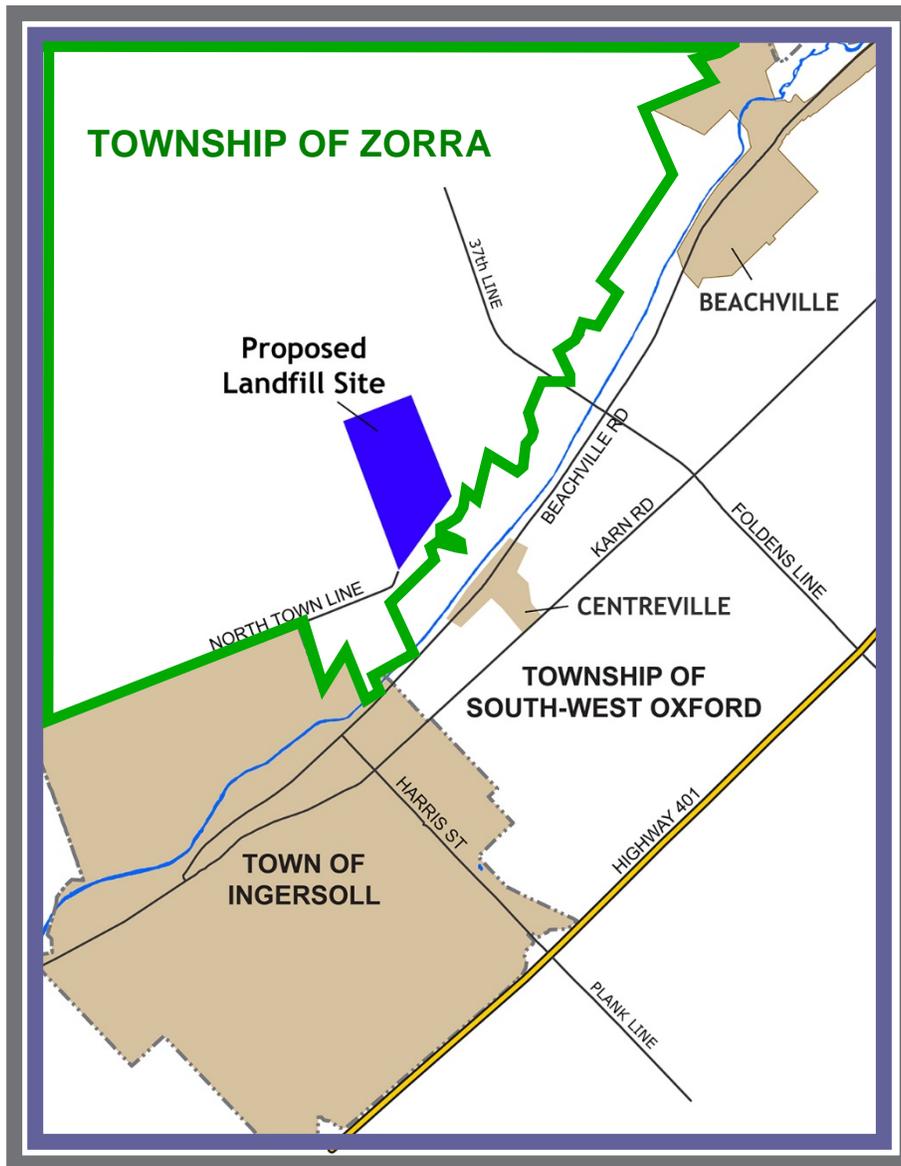
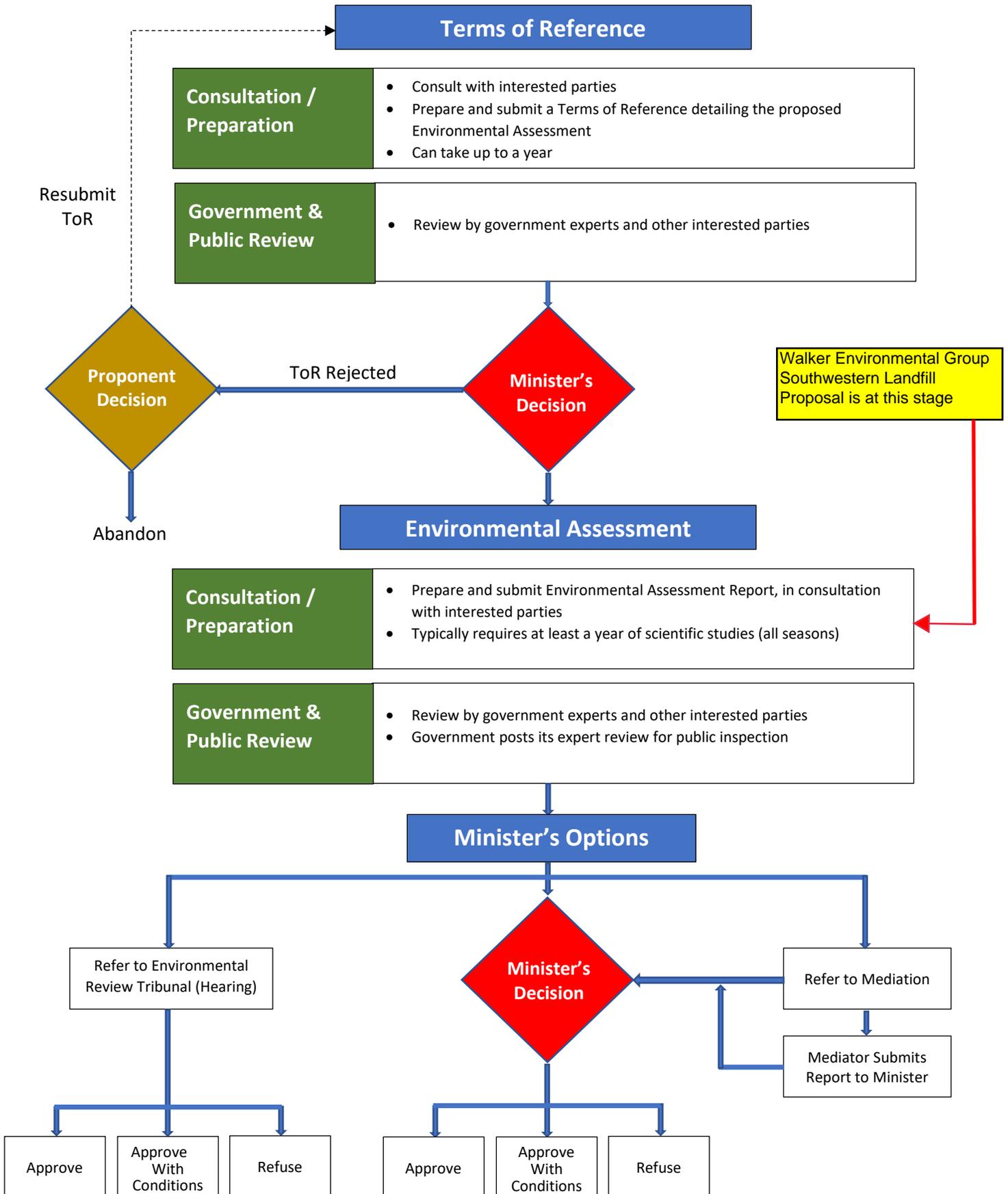


Township of Zorra Role in the Review of the Southwestern Landfill Proposal



May 19, 2020





A Message From Mayor Ryan & Council

Walker Environmental Group (WEG) first approached Zorra Township in 2012 to advise that they were proposing the “Southwestern Landfill” in Zorra Township on Carmeuse property.

Zorra Council has had its eye on the proposed landfill and has worked to ensure the Township is engaged in the best interests of Zorra residents ever since. Upon learning of this proposal, Council retained one of Ontario’s leading environmental lawyers, Peter Pickfield, to provide guidance and assistance to the municipality. With Mr. Pickfield’s guidance, Council took a position on the landfill and former Mayor Lupton released this position in 2013. The statement released then, is still true today:

“First and foremost, the Township is concerned about the potential for serious long-term impacts on the Township and its residents. The Township will need to have the proposal carefully reviewed by independent experts and will seek public consultation on the proposal throughout the Environmental Assessment process. The Township will actively participate in the Environmental Assessment process with a team of experts that will assist Council and the residents. Once the Township has a full understanding of the proposal and its potential impacts and has fully consulted with the public, the Township will take an informed position on the proposal.”

Recently there is heightened interest in Zorra about Walker Environmental Group’s proposed landfill. This is a good thing, and the people who have raised public awareness of it have our thanks. Increased public awareness of all issues in the Township is good, we are all better for being informed, and Council is always better at its job when residents are engaged.

The Southwestern Landfill proposal would be one of the largest developments in the Township and one of the largest private landfills in Ontario. This project is receiving meticulous review by Zorra Council and its team of experts, and it is worthy of continued scrutiny by residents.

There is a process that any proponent must go through when proposing a development with potential environmental impacts. In order to proceed with their proposal WEG must first complete an Environmental Assessment (EA) that is governed by the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks (MOECP). For more information about the EA process you can visit the Ontario Ministry of Environment Conservation and Park’s website (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/environmental-assessments>). WEG has now published their draft EA and it is available for viewing and more importantly, public comment, at their website (www.walkerea.com).

The draft EA is over 5 feet tall when printed and is available digitally on the WEG website, or in print at the WEG office, or at the Township office. An executive summary is provided for easier consumption and this I would encourage you to read.

The process can be confusing for those not familiar with environmental assessments. As you may have noticed, a flow chart for the EA process is on the previous page. This is a proponent driven process and although the Township is intimately involved as the host municipality, the official record of your input is with WEG, so please ensure you direct comments to them. Copies of your comments may also be provided to Zorra and I encourage you to provide us your input. But at this stage of the EA process the official record of your input is with Walker, so please ensure you contact them.

Zorra Township recognized early in this process that it was strategically important to bring neighbouring municipalities into the consultation process. In order to coordinate an effective and consolidated voice for residents in the municipalities potentially impacted by the Southwestern Landfill proposal, Zorra Township invited the Town of Ingersoll, the Township of South-West Oxford, and Oxford County to form the Joint Municipal Coordinating Committee (JMCC).

The JMCC operates independently of WEG and was formed to ensure a fair environmental assessment process that fully considers the economic, social, cultural, environmental, health and other impacts of the proposed landfill on all of our communities. The JMCC does this through education, advocacy, and by overseeing the work of an independent Peer Review Team (PRT) that will review the environmental assessment for the Southwestern Ontario Landfill proposal.

Members of the JMCC include the heads of Council and Chief Administrative Officers of Zorra Township, Town of Ingersoll, Township of South-West Oxford and Oxford County; as well as legal representation and the leader of our own Peer Review Team.

One of the primary functions of the JMCC was to retain its own independent team of scientists and experts to review the environmental assessment for us. This established the PRT. The PRT was requested by the JMCC to ensure that WEG's impact studies completely and correctly assess all the potential impacts on the people who live in the area, on the whole of Oxford County, and on the natural environment.

The questions to be asked and answered in an EA are known as the Terms of Reference (TOR) and one of the most important actions taken by the JMCC and PRT was to assess and make suggestions to the TOR. One of the first tasks of the JMCC's Peer Review Team was to conduct a review of the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Environmental Assessment. By way of explanation, under the EA Act, the proponent must first obtain approval from the Minister of the Environment for a ToR which sets out the method and approach to the environmental assessment study process. The JMCC and its PRT reviewed a draft of this document and provided detailed comments and recommendations for changes, most of which were accepted by WEG, and/or the Minister in his decision on the ToR.

From the outset, Council has held many meetings with various Ministers of Environment to establish open lines of communication. I have been very active in the past year and half and had several meetings with Minister Yurek and established an excellent working relationship. Former Mayor Lupton met with Ministers Bradley and Murray at Association of Municipalities of Ontario conferences and Rural Ontario Municipal Association conferences as well. In addition, Zorra staff have met with local Ministry of Environment officials and with senior bureaucrats at Queen's Park. The final decision on the Southwestern Landfill proposal lies with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, but you have a voice and so does your municipality.

If the Minister of the Environment approves WEG's EA, then WEG would be required to obtain an Official Plan Amendment from Oxford County Council and a Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan Approval from Zorra Township to allow the redevelopment of the existing limestone quarry into a landfill.

This is where your Zorra and Oxford Council's will have an official and important role to play. Under the Planning Act any applicant is entitled to a fair hearing as their planning application(s) proceeds. Council members must not take an opinion in favour of, or opposed to, any application in advance of rendering a decision on any planning matter. For a municipality to take a position before even considering a planning application would be considered "bad faith" and leave the Township, and any of its decisions, vulnerable to appeal or a court challenge.

If you wanted to build an addition on your home that exceeded the permitted height or size that the by-law permits, you would have the opportunity to come to council to request a Minor Variance to be relieved of these restrictions for your specific project and you would expect a fair and impartial hearing based on the facts of your application.

You would expect that Council did not make up its mind in advance. The law requires the same for all applicants. A landfill is physically, environmentally, and financially much larger, more significant, and impactful than an oversized addition, and so it is every bit as important that the rules be followed.

When Council members take the Oath of Office, they are swearing or affirming to "impartially exercise this office". Expectations of a municipal councillor are actually set out in the Municipal Act, and one of the responsibilities is "to represent the public and to consider the well-being and interests of the municipality".

When we hear planning applications we are governed by the Planning Act to give any "person a fair opportunity to make representation".

What can you expect from Council?

Your Zorra Council takes its job seriously.

We take our role to represent the public and to consider the well-being and interests of the municipality seriously.

We take our decision making seriously.

We will be making our decisions based on the evidence before us.

In order to make decisions that are in the "interests of the municipality", and give every "person a fair opportunity to make representation", and have those decisions defensible against appeal, we will be consulting with our experts on the science and legal aspects of this issue.

We will be doing what is in the best interests of the residents of the Township of Zorra. We will be doing our part.

Additional Information

Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks (MOECP)

For more information about the EA process you can visit the Ontario Ministry of Environment Conservation and Park's website:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/environmental-assessments>

Walker Environmental Group (WEG)

Southwestern Landfill Environmental

Assessment www.walkerea.com

Joint Municipal Coordinating Committee (JMCC)

www.oxfordreviewteam.ca

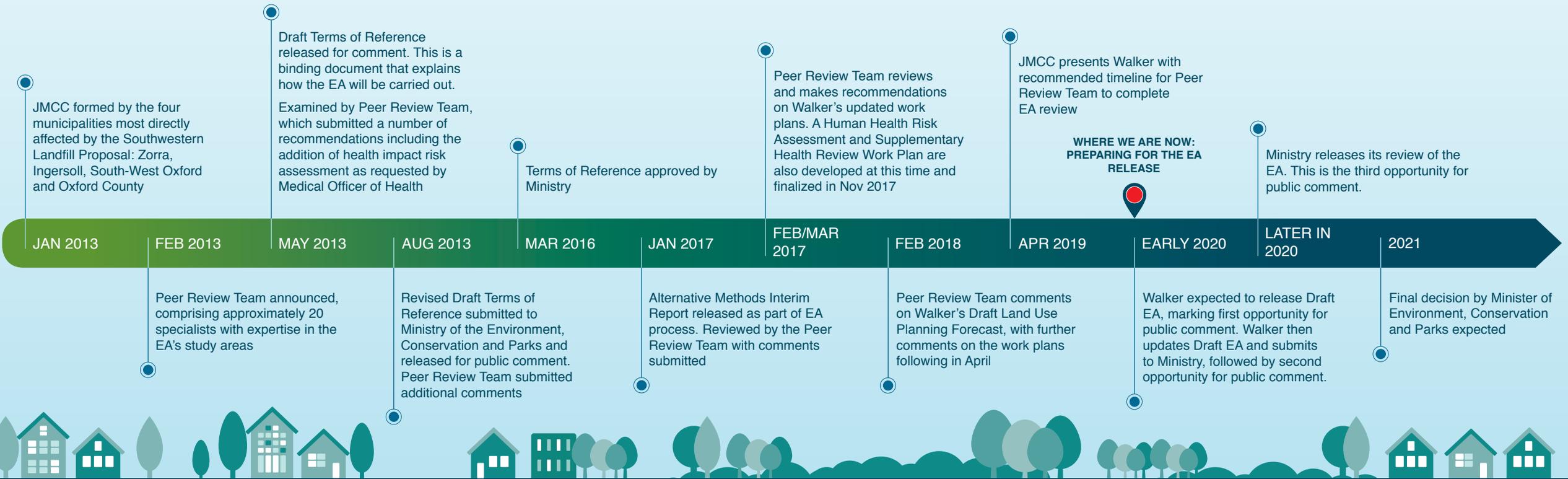
Township of Zorra

www.zorra.ca

WALKER'S SOUTHWESTERN LANDFILL PROPOSAL

The EA and JMCC Peer Review process

Walker Environmental Group is undertaking an Environmental Assessment (EA) to build and operate a 17 million-tonne landfill in Zorra Township in Oxford County. If approved, the Southwestern Landfill will be one of the largest landfills in Ontario. More information about the project is at www.walkerea.com.



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- A Government of Ontario process carried out under the authority of the Environmental Assessment Act
- Will render a final decision by the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to either approve or refuse the landfill
- Walker Environmental Group is responsible for carrying out the EA, which includes studies on the potential impacts of the landfill, including noise, air quality, water quality, traffic, land use, human health, culture and archeology, social wellbeing and more

PEER REVIEW

- Requested by the Joint Municipal Coordinating Committee (JMCC): Zorra Township, Town of Ingersoll, South-West Oxford Township and Oxford County
- Will make sure that Walker's impact studies completely and correctly assess all of the potential impacts on the people who live in the area, on the whole of Oxford County, and on the natural environment
- This work is funded by Walker and overseen by the JMCC, but is carried out by an independent team of experts

HAVE YOUR SAY

- Oxford County residents will soon have their opportunity to share their thoughts on the proposed private landfill.
- Check Walker's official Southwestern Landfill Proposal website to find out when and how you can comment on the EA: www.walkerea.com
 - Check for updates on the JMCC website: www.oxfordreviewteam.ca.
- It's important to get your comments in at the earliest opportunity.**