

Groundwater Interference Policy and Process

Special Council | August 12, 2026



Region of Waterloo

AECOM Policy Review and Recommendation Process

- **Background Review** – conducted a detailed review of the Region's existing and past policies to understand their evolution, strengths, and limitations.
- **Jurisdictional Scan** – Reviewed well interference policies in Ontario, other Provinces and the US.
- **Stakeholder engagement** – included several in-person meetings, one virtual session and an online survey.
- **Technical and Regulatory Alignment** – look at technical analyses, requirements of the PTTW and other regulations.

Engagement Process

- Six engagement sessions held between June and August.
  - Three dedicated meetings with CSGW
  - One dedicated in person meeting with Area Municipal staff
- Two public information sessions (one virtual, one in-person)
- Feedback survey available online and in print

Summary of Themes throughout Engagement:

- Transparency and access to information are key priorities
- Strong support for an independent appeals process
- Residents want clearer communication and greater involvement
- Timely response and emergency water supply are essential
- Remedies should fully restore water supply
- Decisions should be science-based and independent
- Awareness and accessibility of the complaint process can be improved
- Trust and accountability remain important considerations

AECOM "Jurisdictional Scan" Overview

- Processes are accessible and transparent
- Have strong technical rigor with hydrogeological investigations
- No fixed compensation limits
- Wide variety of remedies, tailored case-by-case
- Multi-member, independent committee

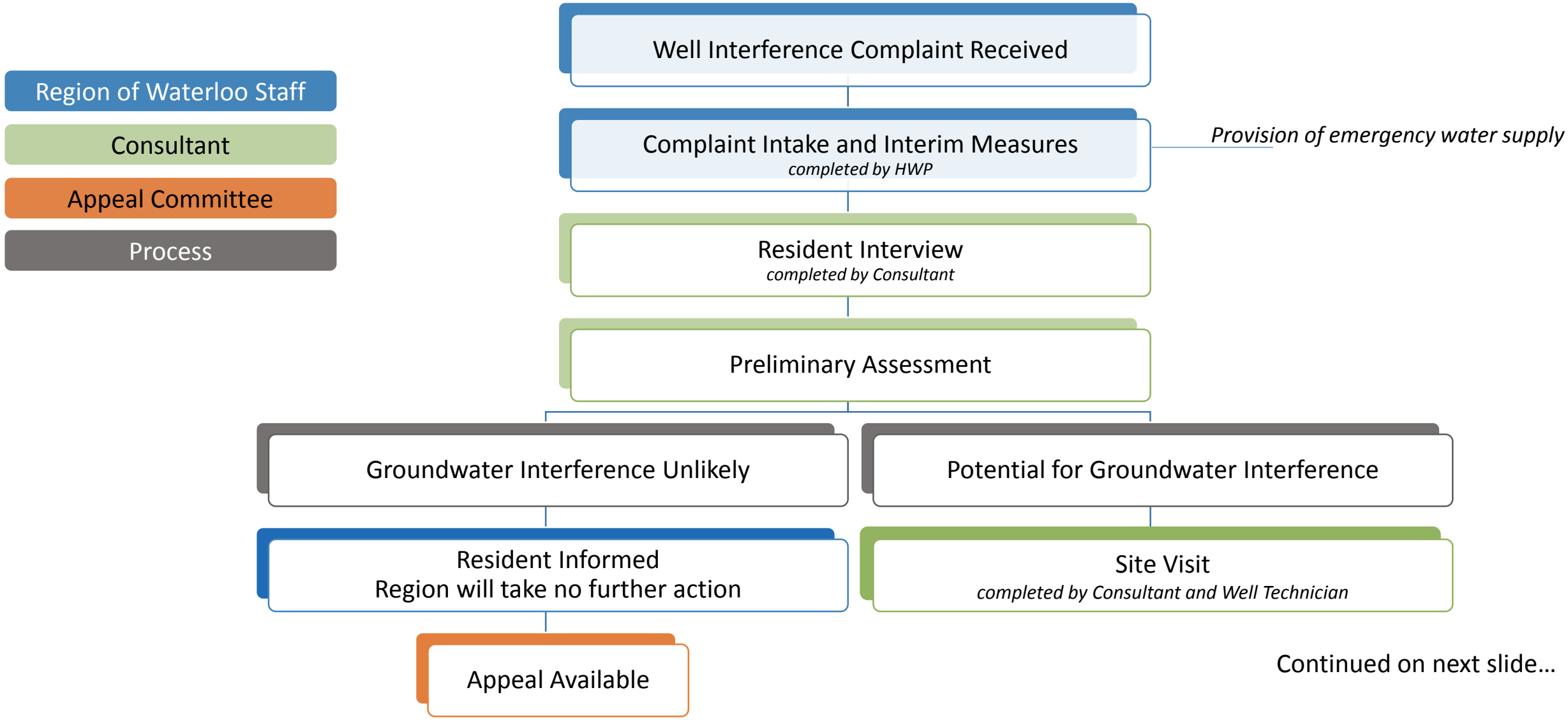


Recommended Improvements for New Policy

- ✓ Use flexible, science-based screening instead of fixed geographic boundaries
- ✓ Improve public understanding through plain-language materials, glossary, and outreach
- ✓ Require hydrogeological investigations for eligible complaints, with independent expert input where needed
- ✓ Tailor remedies to actual impacts, including temporary and permanent water supply solutions
- ✓ Establish an independent multi-member decision committee
- ✓ Review and update the policy every 4 years

Specific Policy Improvements

- ✓ Historic Compensation Zone and Groundwater Taking Area mapping removed.
  - Every complaint submitted under the new policy will have a preliminary evaluation on its own merit rather than location exclusively.
- ✓ Historic Compensation Zone amount of $4000 removed.
- ✓ Involvement of staff in technical decision making removed.
  - Site visit and evaluation completed jointly by Licensed Well Technician and Consultant.
- ✓ Clarity for availability and duration of emergency water supply.
- ✓ Timelines included to set expectations for the completion of each step.
- ✓ Development of a new Well Interference Appeal Committee.



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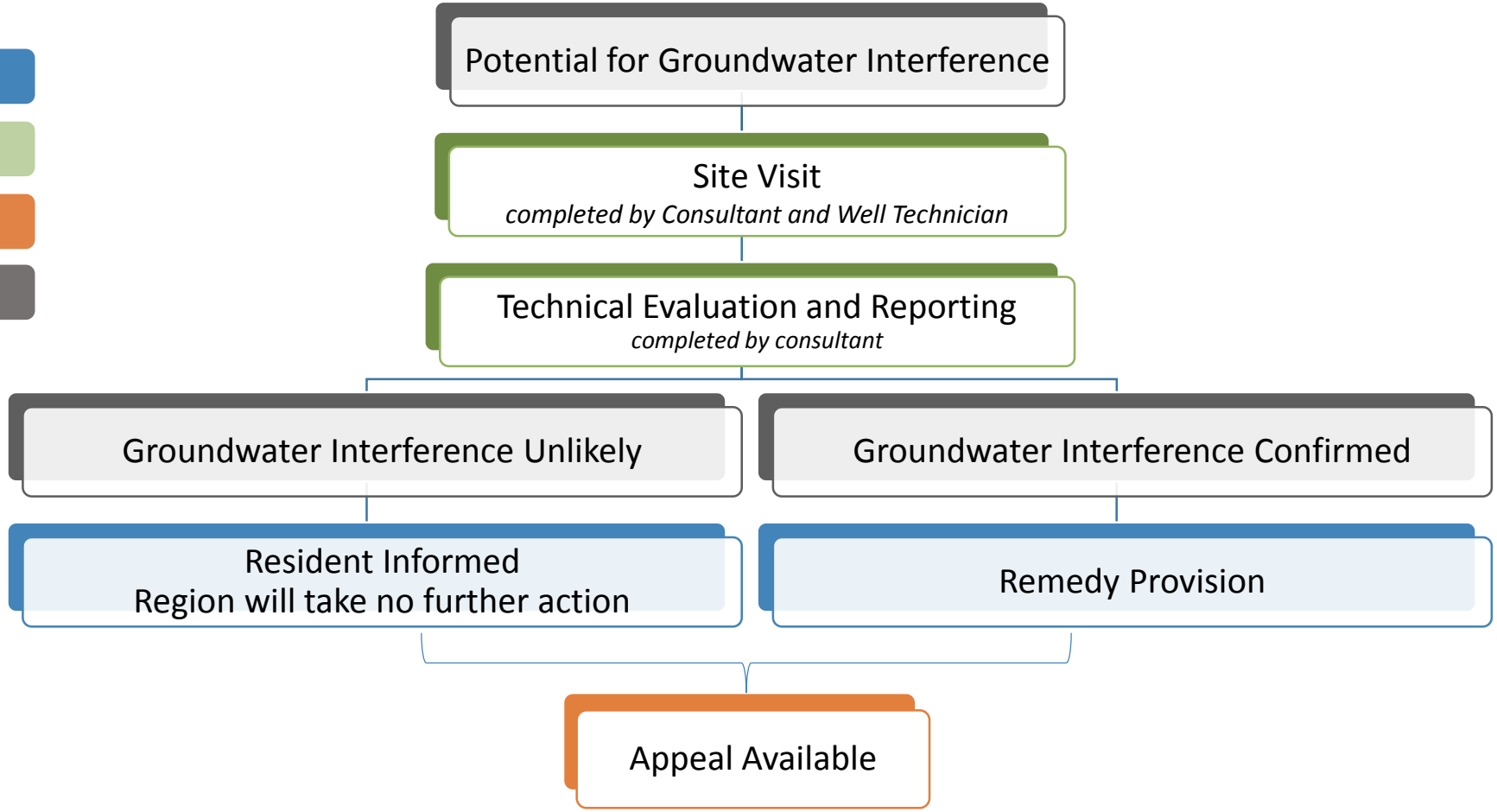
Region of Waterloo Staff

Consultant

Appeal Committee

Process



Well Interference Appeal Committee

Recommended Membership:

- Regional Chair
- Chair of the Sustainability, Infrastructure and Development (SID) Committee
- One Regional Councillor from the affected Area Municipality where the complaint originated, or their designated elected delegate
- Two Regional Councillors

Well Appeal Committee Process

- A closed hearing will be scheduled and relevant technical information provided to the Committee members in advance.
- The Resident and/or their representative may provide evidence and/or make submissions for consideration.
- Regional staff and the consultant will also be available to advise the Appeal Committee on technical content.
- The Appeal Committee will have the ability to ask clarifying questions of both parties.
- The Appeal Committee would be given the authority to make recommendations for Council endorsement. The decision* of Council is final.

*The decision is specific to the Appeal before them. Future complaints will be considered separately.

Next Steps

Carry out an additional in person public information session in August to review the draft policy and gather additional information/answer questions.

Finalize the Well Interference Complaint Policy and a Draft Terms of Reference for the Committee and bring back to Council on September 9th for endorsement.



Questions



Region of Waterloo