

TOWNSHIP OF ESSA OFFICIAL PLAN

DRAFT 1 October 2025

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Township of Essa acknowledges that we are situated on land within the area of Treaty 18, also known as the Lake Simcoe-Nottawasaga Treaty, signed on October 17, 1818 between the Government of Upper Canada and the Anishinaabe Indigenous peoples. The Anishinaabe include the Ojibwe, Odawa and Pottawatomi Nations collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy. We are dedicated to honouring Indigenous history and culture and committed to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and respect with all First Nation, Metis and Inuit People.

We honour the treaty relationships and responsibilities that continue to guide how we share and care for the land, water and resources. The Township is committed to building respectful and meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities through reconciliation, dialogue, and mutual understanding.

1 INTRODUCTION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE OFFICIAL PLAN

The Township of Essa is a dynamic, diverse and growing community within the County of Simcoe, uniquely defined by its blend of rural landscapes, small-town character, agricultural heritage and growing *settlement areas*.

The Township of Essa Official Plan is the Township's primary land use policy document, helping to guide how Essa will grow and evolve to the year 2051 while enhancing its existing character and promoting complete, healthy and resilient communities.

The new Official Plan replaces the 2001 Official Plan to reflect current Provincial and County policy direction, as well as best practices and updated direction for new growth and development. The Official Plan has been developed through a collaborative process to lay the foundation and respond to critical issues including legislative and policy frameworks, residential growth and housing supply, economic development, cultural identity, agricultural preservation, environmental protection, *infrastructure* capacity and climate change and sustainability. Ultimately, the Official Plan reflects the community's collective values and vision of a **Rural, Natural, Growing, Resilient and Connected** Essa.

The Official Plan provides policies and schedules that will guide land use decisions, development approvals and municipal initiatives. It is intended to be interpreted and implemented in partnership with residents, developers, public agencies, Indigenous communities and other levels of government.

1.2 VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1.2.1 The Township Today

The Township of Essa is a unique and growing community in central Ontario, located just south and west of the City of Barrie within Simcoe County. Positioned between major transportation routes—County Roads 90 and 27, and Ontario Highway 89—Essa is within commuting distance of Toronto and the Greater Golden Horseshoe, but maintains a distinctly rural identity. The Township comprises a rich tapestry of communities including Angus, Thornton, and Baxter, as well as smaller hamlets such as Egbert, Utopia, Ivy, and Elmgrove. Angus, the largest settlement, provides key services and serves as

the gateway to Canadian Forces Base Borden, contributing to the Township's strong military connection, including a significant Francophone population. The Township is also known for its long-standing agricultural roots, especially in potato and cash crop farming, and continues to be shaped by rural values, small-town character, and a strong sense of community.

Essa is more than a pass-through municipality—it is a destination in its own right, valued by residents and visitors alike for its unique blend of natural beauty, recreational amenities, and cultural identity. The Nottawasaga River winds through the Township, anchoring environmental stewardship and community events such as the popular Salmon Derby. Residents and tourists enjoy access to the TransCanada Trail, the readapted BCRY rail corridor, and the Tiffin Conservation Area, which supports weddings, public gatherings, and seasonal festivals. The Township's rural character is complemented by tree farms, farmers' markets, golf courses, off-road trails, snowshoe paths, and scenic roads, all contributing to Essa's appeal as a recreational and lifestyle destination. Community landmarks such as the Utopia Grist Mill, Thornton's historic main street and ice cream shops, and the Essa Agriplex further enrich the Township's identity and economic diversity.

As Essa plans for growth to the year 2051, this Official Plan sets a path for sustainable development that protects agricultural land, supports complete and resilient communities, and enhances Essa's role as a well-connected rural destination. Growth will continue to be directed to serviced areas like Angus, while preserving the character of small villages and protecting environmental features and farmland. Through this Plan, the Township affirms its identity as a welcoming and connected place—not just a thoroughfare, but a proud community that celebrates its land, people, and future.

1.2.2 Vision

The Essa Official Plan has been structured around the key themes of **Growing Essa, Rural Essa, Natural Essa, Connecting Essa and Resilient Essa**. These themes, together with their associated opportunities and constraints, have contributed to the following vision statement for the new Official Plan:

To foster a thriving community of neighbourhoods that balance growth, evolve character, and minimize impacts by protecting agricultural functions,

preserving natural environments, establishing good urban design, promoting resilient development, and enhancing transportation connections. Essa will be an inspired and cohesive community with residents connecting through better public spaces with social connections that foster resiliency and Essa's identity for future generations.

1.2.3 **Guiding Principles**

The following guiding principles are established under each key theme of the Official Plan to direct and implement planning and development in the Township:

1.2.3.1 Growing Essa

- a) Focus growth to existing *settlement areas* based on available and planned services to preserve agricultural and rural lands.
- a) Support balanced and appropriate growth that provides for a range of housing options in tandem with commercial, employment, *infrastructure* and recreational growth.
- b) Implement the County of Simcoe's identified growth numbers for the Township of Essa.
- c) Enable local economic opportunities that support local businesses, attract and improve service offerings and serve the rural community.

1.2.3.2 Rural Essa

- a) Promote and protect the agriculture system as an important part of the Township's economy and identity.
- b) Support diversification of agricultural uses, a robust agri-food network and agricultural related uses including agri-tourism and on-farm diversified uses.

1.2.3.3 Natural Essa

- a) Protect environmental areas from development effects and incompatible land uses while improving access and connection to natural areas for passive recreational purposes.

- b) Promote sustainable and climate resistant approaches to growth, *infrastructure* and facilities.

1.2.3.4 Connecting Essa

- a) Improve mobility options for all residents by providing active transportation connections within neighbourhoods and between communities complemented by public transit.
- b) Promote a transportation network, informed by master planning, that safely and efficiently moves people and goods over the long-term, both for Essa and its adjoining municipal partners; and
- c) Strengthen digital connectivity by encouraging opportunities for internet *infrastructure*.

1.2.3.5 Resilient Essa

- a) Support healthy, complete and vibrant communities through quality design, active transportation and meaningful local places to live, work, and play.
- b) Improve access to community services and facilities, including childcare, health care and recreational facilities.
- c) Build on a community identity that embraces a small town feel with rural heritage.

1.3 Consistency and Conformity

- 1.3.1 This Official Plan has been prepared in accordance with applicable Provincial and County policies, as well as other applicable policy documents and guidelines
- 1.3.2 This Official Plan conforms to and incorporates policies of the Simcoe County Official Plan, which remains in effect until it transitions and becomes the Township's Official Plan if planning authority is removed from the County.

1.4 HOW TO READ THIS PLAN

1.4.1 The policies of this Plan (sections 2 to 8) should be considered in their entirety when making decisions.

1.4.2 The Township's Official Plan is structured as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Guiding Principles- sets out the planning context for the Official Plan.

Chapter 2: Growing Essa - describes policies for managing long-term growth in the Township. This Chapter includes populations, household and employment forecasts, as well as policies for accommodating growth in the urban and rural areas.

Chapter 3: Rural Essa - sets out the policies for the land use designations within the rural and agricultural areas of the Township. These designations are intended to help support growth of the agricultural sector and protect the rural character.

Chapter 4 Natural Essa- provides policy guidance for the protection and conservation of lands within the natural environment and permitted uses.

Chapter 5 Connecting Essa - sets out direction for expanding the Township's parks, open space and recreational opportunities, as well as facilitating a multi-modal transportation system.

Chapter 6 Resilient Essa - provides policies for protecting cultural heritage resources and supporting vibrant public spaces.

Chapter 7 Implementation - sets out the approach and mechanism that the Township will utilize to manage development. It also sets out the powers of the municipality to achieve its vision.

Chapter 8 Interpretation and Administration as well as definitions.

The schedules form part of this Official Plan and should be interpreted with the applicable policies of this Official Plan.

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2 GROWING ESSA

The Township's growth management approach is to direct growth to lands within its designated Urban Area *Settlement Areas* and identified expansion areas, where full municipal water and sanitary services are available or planned. The Township recognizes limited growth will continue to occur within the Agricultural and Rural Areas, that is compatible and appropriately serviced through rural services.

This strategy supports the efficient use of *infrastructure*, the facilitation of complete communities, and the protection of both agricultural lands and the environmental system.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1.1 Direct growth to lands located within the existing *Settlement Areas* of Angus, Baxter, and Thornton as set out in the Township Structure.
- 2.1.2 The Township will identify appropriate areas for urban expansion with a focus on lands adjacent to Angus, Baxter and Thornton.
- 2.1.3 To ensure a full range of housing types and targets are established for *affordable housing* options.
- 2.1.4 Encourage *intensification* in appropriate areas with existing municipal services.
- 2.1.5 To preserve *prime agricultural lands* and direct rural growth to existing developed rural areas.

2.2 TOWNSHIP STRUCTURE

2.2.1 Structure

The Township's Official Plan provides a land use vision for complete communities, supported by a resilient agricultural sector, a growing employment sector and a robust natural heritage system. The Official Plan's structure assists in achieving the Township's vision by implementing a range of local, county and provincial policies, plans and strategies to the year 2051.

2.2.2 Settlement Areas and Rural Settlement Areas Hierarchy

The Township's Primary and Secondary *settlement areas* will be the focus of all urban development, as these lands are already serviced or will be planned to be serviced to accommodate growth to the year 2051. The supply of land to

accommodate this growth includes both existing *Settlement Areas* and *Designated Greenfield Areas*, as shown on Schedule A.

2.2.3 Most growth in Essa will be directed to the Township's *Settlement Areas* where development and a mix of land uses are concentrated. It is anticipated that a small amount of growth will be accommodated in the Township's Rural *Settlement areas*, limited by servicing. The Township of Essa's Settlement Area hierarchy consists of:

1. Primary Settlement Area
 - a. Angus
2. Secondary Settlement Areas
 - a. Baxter and Thornton
3. Rural Settlement Areas
 - a. Utopia, Ivy, Colwell and Egbert

2.2.4 **Angus** functions as the Township's Primary *Settlement Area* within the Township of Essa and plays a central role in accommodating residential and employment growth to the year 2051. As the largest and most urbanized community in the Township, Angus is the focal point for complete community planning, offering a growing mix of housing, commercial services, *community facilities*, parks and schools. Located adjacent to Canadian Forces Base Borden and close to the City of Barrie, Angus benefits from full municipal water and sanitary services, making it the most appropriate location for directing higher-intensity development, mixed use nodes and new neighbourhoods. The community is also well-positioned to accommodate *intensification* and *Designated Greenfield Area* development, with planned *infrastructure* improvements and access to County transportation corridors. While there is existing sewer capacity for the further expansion of Angus, additional water storage is required for short term larger scale development. Both sewer and water upgrades will be required to accommodate the projected 2051 population.

2.2.5 The role of Angus will continue to evolve as a place that balances urban opportunity with rural character, offering residents and businesses a high quality of life within a strong and resilient community framework.

2.2.6 Baxter is identified as a Secondary *Settlement Area* within the Township of Essa and plays an important role in supporting modest, well-managed growth while maintaining its small-town and rural village character. It is primarily a small residential community located centrally within the Township, providing homes for people that work outside the community. Besides Baxter Central Public

School, there are limited services to meet the day-to-day needs of residents. While not fully serviced by municipal *infrastructure*, Baxter has limited potential for growth and future *settlement area* expansions, based the absence of planned *infrastructure* expansions. Growth in Baxter will be modest and context-sensitive, contributing to a more complete community with non-residential uses and the Township's overall growth management strategy, while supporting the surrounding agricultural and rural area. Baxter is the closest Secondary Settlement Area to large employment uses in Alliston and therefore should leverage this location for supporting Township employment opportunities.

2.2.7 **Thornton** is identified as a Secondary Settlement Area within the Township of Essa. With its distinctive heritage streetscape, compact form and role as a long-established rural village, Thornton represents a stable, low-growth community that will continue to evolve in a manner that respects its unique character and scale. Located near major transportation routes and surrounded by agricultural and natural lands, Thornton functions as a local service and residential centre for surrounding rural residents. Traffic on County Roads 21 and 27 have a significant impact on the main street functions and character of the village. While the *settlement area* benefits from municipal water and wastewater services, Thornton is not intended to accommodate significant population growth or large-scale development due to the lack of planned water and wastewater services.

2.2.8 **Utopia, Ivy, Colwell and Egbert** are identified as Rural *Settlement Areas* as they are located in the Rural Areas of the Township with **no** municipal services. These Rural *Settlement Areas* provide limited opportunities for growth due to the limited municipal services. Growth will generally occur through infill and but also provide neighbourhood retail/commercial functions for local residents and the surrounding community.

2.3 GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

2.3.1 The Growth Management Strategy Objectives are to direct growth to lands located in Settlements Areas as set out in the hierarchy of Policy 2.2.3.2, primarily to Angus, as well as preserve *prime agricultural land* and direct rural growth to existing rural *settlement areas*.

2.3.2 **Population Forecasts**

The Official Plan's structure and land use designation policies are based on accommodating a minimum population growth of 10,930 by 2051, reaching a population of 34,740 by 2051, consistent with the County's growth forecasts. In the absence of better data or more specific Provincial data, this Official Plan seeks to implement the County's targets. (Source COPA7).

2.3.3 **Employment Forecast**

The Township's minimum employment growth is 13,350 jobs by 2051, an increase of 3,720 jobs from the year 2021 (Source COPA7).

2.3.4 **Land Supply**

Based on the Township's population and employment forecasts of this plan or any future by the Province, the Township will maintain, at all the times the ability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 15 years through lands within *Settlement Areas* for *intensification* and *Designated Greenfield Areas*.

2.3.5 **Intensification Target**

The Township will plan to meet its local minimum *intensification* target of 20% as recommended by the County (COPA 7). This means that 20% of all development should occur within the Primary and Secondary *Settlement Areas*.

2.3.6 **Achieving the Intensification Target**

The Township's strategy for achieving the *intensification* target will include:

- a) Directing *intensification* to the Township's Primary *Settlement Area* followed by the Secondary *Settlement Areas*;
- b) Designating lands with *intensification* potential as Residential Multiple and Mixed-use;
- c) Supporting infill development within the *Settlement Areas*.

2.3.7 **Monitoring the Intensification Target**

The Township may create and maintain an inventory of *intensification* sites within the *Settlement Areas* to monitor its *intensification rate* annually set out in Policy 2.3.5.

2.3.8 **Implementation of Intensification Target and Compatibility**

The Township may prepare Urban Design Guidelines to ensure the *intensification* of sites is compatible with the existing area.

2.3.9 **Phasing of Intensification**

The Township will work with the County and other agencies to integrate growth targets with the required *infrastructure* to establish a phasing plan for municipal services that balances *intensification*, the Township's financial position, and servicing provided by *Designated Greenfield Areas* developments.

2.3.10 **Designated Greenfield Development**

The Township will plan to meet its minimum *Designated Greenfield Area* overall density target of 32 residents and jobs per hectare as set out by the County (COPA 7). It understood, not every site will achieve the minimum target, however the Township will coordinate and may require individual densities to achieve the overall target.

2.3.11 **Achieving the Designated Greenfield Areas Target**

The Township will support the minimum *Designated Greenfield Areas* density target by:

- a) Enforcing the minimum densities set out in this Official Plan;
- b) By designating areas residential low, residential multiple and mixed use in *Designated Greenfield Areas*, where appropriate; and
- c) Using the following minimum densities as guidance for lots of varying sizes:
 - 1 gross hectare or less: 20 dwellings/units per gross hectare
 - Between 1 to 2 gross hectares: 25 dwellings/units per gross hectare
 - Between 2 to 3 gross hectares: 37 dwellings/units per gross hectare

2.3.12 **Monitoring the Designated Greenfield Areas Target**

The Township will work with the County to develop and monitor the density of *developments* and housing mix within *Designated Greenfield Areas* and in the context of the south Simcoe region.

2.3.13 **Implementing of Designated Greenfield Area Target and Compatibility**

The Township may prepare area specific Urban Design Guidelines to ensure greenfield development supports the Township's overall and preferred character.

2.3.14 **Phasing of Designated Greenfield Areas**

Designated *Greenfield Area* development will be phased to ensure orderly *development* occurs that balances the *Designated Greenfield Areas* density target, municipal services, the Township's finances, while intensifying within the *Settlement Areas*.

2.3.15 **Settlement Area Boundary**

The Township's *Settlement Areas* are delineated on Schedule A. When an Official Plan Review is undertaken, the *Settlement Areas*' boundaries will be reviewed and updated accordingly to the Township's population and employment forecasts.

2.3.16 **Settlement Area Boundary Expansion**

Existing *Settlement Area* Boundaries of Township's *settlement areas* may be expanded at any time in accordance with the policies of this Section and the Provincial Planning Statement.

2.3.17 **Settlement Area Boundary Expansion Criteria**

In determining the appropriateness of a Settlement Area Boundary Expansion request, the following criteria must be met to the satisfaction of the Township:

- a) That there is a need to designate and plan for additional lands to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses while not exceeding the planning horizon of this plan based on a Township-wide comprehensive review;
- b) There is sufficient capacity in existing and municipally planned *infrastructure* and *public service facilities*, informed by applicable master

- plans and/or environmental assessments under the Environmental Assessment Act, as appropriate.
- c) The expansion area is located where development would support achievement of the Township's density targets and meet the policy intent of the Township's Official Plan.
 - d) The expansion area should be located immediately adjacent/contiguous to Angus - Essa's Primary *settlement area*.
 - e) The expansion area is located where it can support a range and balance of housing (including *affordable housing*).
 - f) The expansion area will contribute to achieving compact, walkable, sustainable and healthy communities that enhance a sense of place.
 - g) The expansion area provides an appropriate rural interface.
 - h) *Prime agricultural areas* are avoided where possible by considering and evaluating alternative locations. Where *prime agricultural areas* cannot be avoided, consider lower priority agricultural lands.
 - i) The expansion area complies with the minimum distance separation formulae (MDS).
 - j) It should be demonstrated how any adverse impacts on the agricultural system including agricultural operations from expanding *settlement areas* will be avoided, and if avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated, through an agricultural impact assessment or equivalent analysis, based on provincial guidance.
 - k) The expansion area would be located to maximize the use of existing *infrastructure* and *public service facilities*. The *infrastructure* and *public service facilities* needed would be financially viable over the full life cycle of these assets.
 - l) The expansion area has appropriately considered matters related to sustainability and climate change.
 - m) The expansion area adequately protects and avoids development within natural heritage and water resources, in accordance with the Township of Essa Official Plan, Simcoe County Official Plan, and provincial and federal requirements.
 - n) The expansion area will avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate any potential negative impacts on watershed conditions and the water resource system including the quality and quantity of water.

2.4 URBAN AREA LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

2.4.1 Residential Objectives

Orderly Growth - The Township will ensure there is appropriate distribution of residential areas provided throughout the *Settlement Areas* and that growth occurs in an orderly manner.

2.4.2 **Residential Designations**

2.4.2.1 **Residential Low**

2.4.2.2 Permitted uses: single detached, semi-detached, duplex and townhouses dwellings. Elementary schools, *Places of Worship* are permitted, as well as *Community Facilities* and all forms of *Affordable Housing*. Neighbourhood commercial uses may also be permitted, without requiring an amendment to this Plan. Home-based businesses may be permitted if it is accessory to the principal residential use and occurs entirely within the confines of the dwelling unit or accessory dwelling unit.

2.4.2.3 Scale and height: a maximum height up to 3-storeys is permitted and should be designed to minimize or mitigate potential adverse impacts on neighbouring properties related to shadow, views and privacy.

2.4.2.4 Floodplain: existing single detached dwellings and accessory structures within the flood and fill area of Angus, in accordance with Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority policies and regulated mapping.

2.4.2.5 All Residential Low developments shall be developed in accordance with the Township's Engineering Design Standards and Specification Manual, as well as any other applicable Township regulations.

2.4.2.6 **Residential Multiple**

2.4.2.7 Permitted uses: multiple dwellings, four-plex, all forms of townhouses, stacked townhouses, as well as low-rise and mid-rise apartment buildings. Elementary schools and *places of worship* are permitted, as well as *Community Facilities*. Neighbourhood commercial uses may also be permitted. Home-based businesses may be permitted if it is accessory to the principal residential use and occurs entirely within the confines of the dwelling unit or accessory dwelling unit.

2.4.2.8 Scale and height: shall accommodate low-rise (3-storeys) or mid-rise dwellings developments, and should be designed to minimize potential adverse impacts on neighbouring properties related to shadow, views and privacy. A maximum height of 8-storeys is permitted in Primary *Settlement Areas*, and 6-storeys in Secondary Settlements areas where:

- a) Buildings must be situated on lots with frontage and direct access to either a Collector or Arterial Road.
- b) The lot must be large enough to accommodate the proposed *development*, including the required off-street parking in accordance with the Zoning By-law .
- d) The *development* must demonstrate the ability to connect to the active transportation network, including trails and sidewalks.
- e) The *development* must provide outdoor amenity space on-site that is appropriate for the number of proposed residential units.
- f) The *development* must be designed to integrate sensitively with surrounding land uses and built forms, ensuring an appropriate transition to adjacent low-rise residential areas as follows:
 - Fit with neighbourhood character in scale, massing, height, and siting.
 - Maintain a human-scale form and provide transitions to surrounding uses.
 - Use setbacks, parking, and amenity areas as transition tools.
 - High-rise buildings:
 - Must transition sensitively to lower-scale buildings.
 - Should use design measures such as step-backs above the 4th storey and carefully designed balconies/amenity spaces to minimize overlook.
 - Provide landscape buffers and screening (e.g., fencing).
 - Must demonstrate compatibility with adjacent uses.
 - Must not negatively impact existing uses.
 - New *development* must not threaten the long-term viability of industry.
 - Additional mitigation measures may be required in design.
 - Feasibility studies may be required to assess impacts (odour, noise, vibration, emissions).

- Studies must recommend mitigation measures and ensure adequate separation distances. *Development* approval is contingent on effective mitigation.

2.4.2.9 Floodplain: existing single detached dwellings and accessory structures within the flood and fill area of Angus, are permitted to be redeveloped subject to the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority policies.

2.4.2.10 All Residential Multiple developments shall be developed in accordance with the Township's Engineering Design Standards and Specification Manual, as well as any other applicable Township regulations.

2.4.2.11 **Modular Home Residential**

2.4.2.12 Permitted Uses: existing *mobile home parks*, *modular homes*, and accessory uses such as related amenities, low-scale commercial uses and services.

2.4.2.13 Scale and height: low-scale buildings will be permitted up to 2-storeys.

2.4.2.14 Development and expansions: additional buildings or *development* on existing *mobile home parks* will require adequate services. Expansion of the existing uses outside of the lands designated Modular Home Residential shall be subject to an Amendment to this Official Plan

2.4.2.15 **Recreation**

2.4.2.16 Permitted uses: existing residential, recreational resorts, golf courses, and campgrounds. Accessory uses such as related amenities, low-scale commercial uses and services are also permitted.

2.4.2.17 Scale and height: temporary accommodations, and low-scale buildings will be permitted up to 3-storeys.

2.4.2.18 *Development* for existing buildings or expansions are permitted subject to:

- a) Servicing capacity on private services or can be upgraded in accordance with applicable approval agencies; and
- b) An agreement with the Municipality regarding access from unassumed or private roads.

2.4.2.19 New campgrounds or expansions are subject to the following:

- a) Sufficient recreational facilities are provided to not overburden existing recreational facilities of the Township;
- b) Access has been designed ensure safe ingress and egress for recreational **vehicles**, and supported by a Transportation Study, if required by Township Staff; and
- c) Confirmation of adequate water and sanitary services and shall be subject to approval of any applicable approval authority.

2.4.2.20 **Group Homes**

Group homes administered by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Community and Social Services, as well as not-for-profit and other agencies, are permitted in any residential designation.

2.5 DEVELOPMENT NEAR RAILWAYS

2.5.1 Sensitive land uses (such as residential, institutional, or similar uses) are generally discouraged adjacent to or near rail facilities. Any *development* in proximity to rail corridors must comply with the FCM/RAC Guidelines for New *Development* in Proximity to Railway Operations.

2.5.2 Rail facilities include rail corridors, sidings, train stations, inter-modal facilities, rail yards, and lands designated for future rail use.

2.5.3 *Development* in proximity to Rail Facilities shall consider the following:

- a) New sensitive land uses within 300 m of a railway right-of-way may complete a noise study, to the satisfaction of the Township and in consultation with the railway operator. Identified impacts must be mitigated.
- b) New sensitive land uses within 75 m of a railway right-of-way may complete a vibration study, also subject to Township and railway operator approval. Mitigation measures are required where impacts are identified.

2.5.3.1 **Setbacks & Safety Requirements**

- c) Sensitive uses must be set back 30 m from a principal main line and incorporate safety measures such as crash barriers, berms, and fencing.
- d) Industrial uses adjacent to a railway must provide a minimum 15 m setback from a principal main line along with berms and fencing.

- e) Reduced setbacks may be considered in special cases, provided additional studies and alternative safety measures are implemented to the satisfaction of the Township and railway operator/owner.

2.5.3.2 *Design & Screening*

- f) *Development* will be evaluated on its relationship to surrounding land uses and proximity to rail facilities.
- g) Measures such as berms, fencing, or landscaping will be required to provide adequate separation and to mitigate impacts of rail activity on nearby residential uses.

2.5.3.3 *Warning Clauses & Separation:*

- h) Residential or sensitive uses adjacent to railways must include warning clauses provided by the railway operator/owner.
- i) Where possible, grade separation of railways and major roads must be evaluated, prioritized, and secured in cooperation with Transport Canada and the railway operator/owner.

2.5.3.4 *Access, Fencing & Drainage:*

- j) Property access points must be located at least 30 m from at-grade railway crossings.
- k) A chain link fence of at least 1.83 m in height must be installed and maintained along shared property lines with railway rights-of-way.
- l) *Developments* must not discharge or direct stormwater onto railway lands. Any changes to drainage patterns affecting railway property require prior approval from the railway operator/owner.

2.6 RESIDENTIAL EXCEPTIONS

2.6.1 Utopia Mill

- 2.6.1.1 Located in part of Lot 29, Concession 6, the former Utopia Mill has been designated as a heritage site with the ultimate goal to restore the mill. Notwithstanding anything else contained within the Plan, the former mill may be used as a banquet hall and restaurant. Associated with this facility, outdoor recreational uses, tourist and gift shop merchandise and *camp sites* may also be permitted. The *development* of this site shall be subject to an amendment to the Zoning By-law and Site Plan Control.

2.6.2 **Commercial Objectives**

- 2.6.2.1 The Township will ensure there is an appropriate distribution of commercial areas throughout to support the residents' access to daily needs.
- 2.6.2.2 The Township will ensure there is sufficient supply of commercial land to meet the projected market demand and growth forecasts.
- 2.6.2.3 The Township will promote opportunities for forms of *intensification* of vacant or underutilized designated commercial sites to make efficient use of *infrastructure* and resources.

2.6.3 **Commercial Designations**

2.6.3.1 **Commercial**

2.6.3.2 Permitted uses: retail, office, service commercial uses, large format retail and wholesale, personal services establishments, *Places of Worship*, automotive commercial uses, hotels, motels, place of entertainment, restaurants, schools.

2.6.3.3 Scale and height: low-scale buildings will be permitted up to 2-storeys.

2.6.3.4 New commercial uses are subject to following:

- a) Shall be compatible with adjacent existing uses and where adjacent to a residential use, shall provide a landscaped buffer zone;
- b) Provide adequate parking and loading; and
- c) Demonstrate traffic generated and access is appropriate, through a Traffic Study and Swept Path Analysis, if required by Township Staff.

2.6.3.5 **Mixed-Use**

2.6.3.6 Permitted uses: All uses permitted within Policy 2.4.5.1 of this Official Plan, with Residential units permitted above commercial uses within these buildings.

2.6.3.7 Scale and height: Two storey commercial buildings shall be permitted, and mid-rise mixed uses buildings are encouraged with at grade commercial uses (minimum 50 % commercial uses on the ground floor) with a maximum height of 8-storeys in Primary *Settlement Areas*, and 6-storeys in Secondary Settlements areas. Where adjacent to low-rise residential neighbourhoods, mid-rise buildings should provide a transition in built form and meet the policies of 2.4.2.7 above.

2.6.4 **Commercial Exceptions**

2.6.4.1 Part Lot 32, Concession 1

- a) Notwithstanding anything else contained within this Plan, the lands designated Commercial located in part of Lot 32, Concession 11 adjacent to the Allandale Lake Algonquin Bluffs Wetland should only be developed after a Site Plan Agreement has been registered against the title of the lands. The site plan shall include site engineering measures designed by a qualified Engineer that will ensure that the *development* does not have an adverse impact on the wetland. These measures shall include the following:
- i. All surface drainage shall be managed such that there is no adverse impact on the Allandale Lake Algonquin Bluffs Wetland;
 - ii. A limit of work fence shall be erected not less than 10 metres from the limit of the wetland as determined by the Ministry of Natural Resources and/or the Conservation Authority;
 - iii. The proposed septic system shall be located no closer than 30 metres from the limit of the wetland;
 - iv. A 10-metre natural vegetation buffer shall be maintained between the developed portion of the site and the wetland;
 - v. Any measures to mitigate the impact of *development* on the Allandale Lake Algonquin Bluffs Wetland and Bear Creek as identified in the Stormwater Management Plan;
 - vi. No *development* shall be permitted on lands subject to more than 0.4 metres of flooding during a Regional Storm flood event. These lands shall be identified in the Stormwater Management Plan.
 - vii. These lands shall be zoned using a Holding Provision under the Planning Act. Council may pass a By-law to remove the Holding Provision when the following conditions have been satisfied:
 - viii. A Stormwater Management Plan has been completed to the satisfaction of the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority. This Plan shall describe best management practices and design guidelines to be incorporated into the site plan to ensure that the *development* has no adverse impact on Bear Creek or Allandale Lake Algonquin Bluffs Wetland;
 - ix. A Site Plan Agreement has been registered against the title of the land.

2.6.5 **Employment Objectives**

- 2.6.5.1 The Township will ensure there is an appropriate supply of Employment lands provided to accommodate the employment projections and planning horizon of this Official Plan
- 2.6.5.2 The Township will encourage new businesses to occupy available vacant space in existing developments and as well as encourage the appropriate *development* of vacant lands or *Designated Greenfield Areas*.
- 2.6.5.3 The Township will attempt to minimize adverse impacts associated with employment uses by requiring employment uses to be on employment designated lands where issues related to air quality, noise, vibration and odour are addressed in a manner which is consistent with Township and Provincial standards.

2.6.6 **Employment Hierarchy**

- 2.6.6.1 Employment *development* will be directed to three areas within the Township as shown on Schedule A. The three specific areas include:
- a) Baxter Employment: These lands are located to the south and west of Baxter in Lots 13 and 14, Concession 4. These lands also have direct access to County Road 10 and may eventually be serviced with municipal water. Rail access on the eastern side of the *development* also exists.
 - b) County Road 56 Employment: These lands are located adjacent to County Road 56 and Highway 90 in Lots 31 and 32, Concession 6 and 7. These lands represent the existing industrial area within the Township and have rail access along the westerly and southerly boundaries.
 - c) County Road 27 Employment: These lands are located on the west side of County Road 27, south of Ardagh Road.

2.6.7 **Employment Designation**

2.6.7.1 **Industrial**

2.6.7.2 Permitted uses: manufacturing, assembly, processing, fabrication, storage, repair, warehousing and research and *development*, laboratories, workshops, training facilities, food processing service shops, data centres (subject to a Zoning By-law Amendment), associated office and retail uses, and other similar uses, together with ancillary facilities.

2.6.7.3 Prohibited uses: Industrial uses that are noxious by reason of the emission of noise, smoke, odour and pollution are not permitted. In addition, institutional uses, commercial, including retail or office not associated with the primary employment use is not permitted.

2.6.7.4 Design and Landscaping: The use of good quality exterior building materials and landscaping will be encouraged. General Industrial Areas near sensitive land uses will incorporate buffering, massing, and screening, as well as controls for noise, vibration, odour, dust / debris, and light emissions which minimize impacts on the nearby sensitive uses. Small parking areas may be permitted in the front yard; however large parking areas should be located to the side or rear of the building incorporating appropriate landscaping and/or screening.

2.6.8 **Employment Conversion**

2.6.8.1 The Township may permit the conversion of lands within employment areas to non-employment uses, subject to demonstrating the following:

- a) There is an identified need for the removal of the lands from the industrial designation, and the land is not required for the employment area over the long term, based on the Township's employment forecasts, designated lands, and approved *developments*.
- b) The employment conversion will not affect the overall viability of the *Employment Area* by avoiding, or where avoidance is not possible minimizing and mitigation impacts to the planned *Employment Area*.

2.6.8.2 There is sufficient existing or planned *infrastructure* and *public service facilities*. The conversion of employment lands adjacent to rail facilities is discouraged and will require additional justification with respect to land use compatibility and

employment land supply in the Township that are able to promote complete communities and serve significant employers in nearby municipalities.

2.6.8.3 The Township has sufficient employment lands to accommodate the projected employment growth to the horizon of this Official Plan.

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3 AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL ESSA

Rural Essa is comprised of lands designated both Agricultural and Rural, which form the geographic and cultural foundation of the Township. Encompassing the majority of the Township's land base, Essa's agricultural and rural lands are characterized by active agricultural operations, natural features, farm and rural residences and small clusters of compatible non-agricultural uses.

This section of the Official Plan sets out the land use policies that guide the long-term protection of farmland, the evolution of rural communities and the sustainable integration of compatible rural-based uses. The Official Plan recognizes that agriculture is a key economic driver and cultural identity marker for Essa and that the preservation of a strong, connected agricultural system is vital for food security, environmental stewardship and economic resilience. Essa's rural areas will support limited and compatible *development* that maintains the open space character of the countryside, avoids fragmentation of agricultural land and preserves the function of rural servicing and transportation systems.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

- 3.1.1 To protect and enhance the agricultural system, including *prime agricultural areas*, rural lands, agricultural *infrastructure* and farm operations, as a cornerstone of the Township's economic vitality, cultural heritage and rural identity.
- 3.1.2 To support the long-term viability and flexibility of farm operations by permitting and encouraging on-farm diversified uses, agricultural-related businesses and agri-tourism activities that contribute to a resilient and innovative local agri-food network.
- 3.1.3 To limit fragmentation of farmland and manage rural *development* in a way that prevents conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses and maintains the open space character and environmental function through appropriate land use patterns, low density *development* and protection of natural features and groundwater resources.
- 3.1.4 To collaborate with Simcoe County, agricultural operators, Indigenous communities and rural residents to support sustainable land stewardship and economic *development* across the rural landscape.

3.2 GENERAL

3.2.1 Lot Creation and Consents

3.2.1.1 Lot creation on lands designated Agricultural shall be strictly limited and only permitted for the following purposes:

- a) Agricultural uses, excluding agriculture-related uses, and on-farm diversified uses, provided the lots are of a size appropriate for the type of agricultural use common in the area and are sufficiently large to maintain flexibility for future changes in the type or size of agricultural operations;
- b) Accommodates MDS requirements;
- c) Surplus farm dwelling severance, where a dwelling is rendered surplus as a result of a farm consolidation, subject to appropriate zoning to prohibit new dwellings on the retained farmland;
- d) Agricultural-related uses, provided any new lot will be limited to a minimal size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services;
- e) One new residential lot per farm consolidation for a residence surplus to a farm operation, provided that:
 - i. The new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services; and
 - ii. New dwellings and Additional Residential Units are prohibited on any remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance through a Zoning By-law Amendment, restrictive covenant and/or Provincial recommendation.
- f) *Infrastructure*, where the facility or corridor cannot be accommodated through the use of easement or rights-of-way.

3.2.1.2 Lot creation on lands designated Rural may be permitted where it:

- a) Accommodates MDS requirements;
- b) Surplus farm dwelling severance, where a dwelling is rendered surplus as a result of a farm consolidation, subject to appropriate zoning to prohibit new dwellings on the retained farmland;
- c) Maintains the rural character and open space function of the area;
- d) Is not adjacent to or in close proximity to a *settlement area* boundary in order to enable the efficient expansion of *settlement areas*;
- e) Does not adversely affect agricultural operations or environmental features; and

- o) Does not lead to strip or scattered *development*; and
- f) Where it is required for legal or technical reasons that do not result in a new buildable lot.

3.2.1.3 Lot creation on lands designated both Agricultural and Rural must:

- a) Be of a site and configuration suitable for the intended use;
- b) Demonstrate the ability to accommodate suitable private servicing;
- c) Be consistent with the minimum lot size requirements established in the implementing Zoning By-law and applicable Provincial guidelines.

3.2.2 **General Policies**

3.2.2.1 Uses in the Agricultural and Rural designations legally existing on the date of passing this Official Plan may be permitted, as recognized by an implementing Zoning By-law, and minor expansions of these uses may be considered. An implementing Zoning By-law may permit a change of use provided that the new use is more in conformity with the provisions of the Official Plan.

3.2.2.2 The planning and location of utility corridors, lines, towers and associated uses shall, wherever possible, respect the intent of the Official Plan which is to protect and preserve existing and potentially productive agricultural land to the greatest extent possible. Council will consider any specific siting guidelines as part of their Municipal concurrence responsibilities. Utility uses are encouraged to locate in areas having poorer soils and designed to minimize disturbance to existing farm operations. Such uses shall not require an amendment to the Zoning By-law.

3.2.3 **Home Occupations and Small-Scale Home Industries**

3.2.3.1 Home occupations and small-scale home industries may be permitted as on-farm diversified uses. A home occupation is a commercial use carried out within a dwelling unit, which does not change the character of the dwelling unit from that of a residence. A home industry is a small-scale industrial use which provides a service to the surrounding agricultural area and is carried on by the property owner as an accessory use to the main permitted use in an accessory building.

3.2.3.2 Home occupations and small-scale home industries permitted in the Agricultural and Rural designations shall be small businesses carried out as secondary uses to the main permitted uses and take place on the same property as a primary use.

3.2.3.3 Home occupations and small-scale home industries may be permitted provided they do not conflict with surrounding uses and do not remove large amounts of farmland from production.

3.2.3.4 The implementing Zoning By-law shall regulate the size and scale of home occupations and small-scale home industries.

3.2.4 **Short Term Accommodation**

3.2.4.1 Short Term Accommodation may be permitted as on-farm diversified uses, and shall be regulated by the Township's Zoning By-law and licensing.

3.2.4.2 Short Term Accommodation may be permitted in a single detached dwelling, and shall consider:

- a) The use occurs in a dwelling/structure that is structurally sound and of sufficient size to allow the creation of room temporary accommodations;
- b) The area around the dwelling/structure is of sufficient size without detracting from the visual character of the area;
- c) Adequate amenity area is retained on the lot for the use of the residents of the dwelling;
- d) Services are adequate to accommodate the short-term accommodation use.
- e) The exterior appearance of the building is not substantially altered and remains compatible with the surrounding context.

3.2.4.3 Short Term Accommodation are not permitted to occur within approved Additional Dwelling Residential Units.

3.2.4.4 The implementing Zoning By-law may provide regulations which limit the number of rooms allowed for rental purposes and which specify minimum lot area, frontage and floor area for the facility and each rental room in the facility.

3.2.5 **Agri-Tourism Uses**

- 3.2.5.1 The Township supports agri-tourism uses as an on-farm diversified use to promote the local food economy, agricultural awareness and rural economic *development*. Agri-tourism uses may include, but are not limited to farm tours, short term accommodation experiences, demonstration farms and educational experiences; pick-your-own operations, farm mazes and petting zoos; seasonal events or festivals related to local food or rural culture; on-site retail of farm-grown products; and farm employee accommodations.
- 3.2.5.2 Agri-tourism uses are permitted as on-farm diversified uses within the Agricultural and Rural designations, provided the use is:
- a) Secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property and contribute to the viability and diversification of farming operations.
 - b) Designed and operated in a manner compatible with surrounding land uses and rural character;
- 3.2.5.3 Located on a working farm, or hold an active Ontario Federation of Agriculture membership, or be a bona fide farmer, otherwise demonstrated to have a functional and locational relationship to agriculture; and
- 3.2.5.4 Where proposed agri-tourism uses involve permanent structures, significant site alteration, or increased traffic volumes, Council may require the application to demonstrate:
- a) Adequate on-site parking facilities are provided for the use, in addition to the parking required for the principal use on the property, and such parking is provided in locations compatible with surrounding land uses;
 - b) Proposed access to the site will not cause a traffic hazard;
 - c) The proposed use can be serviced with an appropriate water supply and appropriate means of sewage disposal;
 - d) The proposed use enhances the agricultural character of the Township through the preservation of historic barns and/or the establishment of a built form that is compatible with the agricultural surroundings while meeting minimum Building Code requirements; and
 - p) The building containing the proposed use is located within the existing farm-building cluster where possible and shall utilize a common driveway with the principal use of the property.

3.2.6 **Minimum Distance Separation Formulae**

- 3.2.6.1 All forms of *development* in the Agricultural and Rural designations shall be established in accordance with the Minimum Distance Separation Formulae, as established by the Province and implemented through the applicable MDS Guidelines, to determine appropriate separation distances for new or expanding livestock facilities and new or expanding non-farm lots or uses.
- 3.2.6.2 MDS I shall apply to the *development* of new non-agricultural uses, including residential lots, institutional uses, and other sensitive land uses, in proximity to existing livestock facilities or manure storage.
- 3.2.6.3 MDS II shall apply to the *development* of new or expanding livestock facilities or manure storage, ensuring adequate separation from existing sensitive land uses.
- 3.2.6.4 Council may consider a minor variance from MDS requirements only where it is demonstrated that:
- a) The intent of the MDS formulae is maintained;
 - b) There are no reasonable alternatives; and
 - c) The reduction would not result in land use conflicts or hinder agricultural operations.

3.3 LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

3.3.1 **Agricultural**

- 3.3.1.1 The Agricultural designation is intended to protect and promote the agricultural resource base of the Township.
- 3.3.1.2 Lands designated Agricultural generally include:
- a) Lands which have a high capability for the production of specialty crops due to special soils or climate;
 - b) Lands where soil Classes 1, 2, and 3, as defined in the Canada Land Inventory of Soils Capability for Agriculture; and/or form part of the Province's *Prime Agricultural Areas*.

- c) Additional areas where farms exhibit characteristics of ongoing viable agriculture.

3.3.1.3 Permitted Uses

- a) The Agricultural designation is intended to preserve the agricultural community by excluding non-agricultural or incompatible uses. Agricultural uses shall generally take precedence over all other uses.
- b) Permitted uses on lands designated Agricultural include agriculture and farm related uses including:
 - i. The raising of animals and birds;
 - ii. The growing of agricultural crops;
 - iii. Mushrooms and nursery stock;
 - iv. Small scale farm related commercial, and farm related industrial uses, directly related, and in proximity, to the farm operation;
 - v. Buildings and structures normally incidental to an agricultural operation, such as farm residences, barns and sheds and greenhouses;
 - vi. Single detached dwellings and Additional Residential Units;
 - vii. Retail sale of produce grown on the farm supplemented by locally grown produce, including farm produce stands;
 - viii. Short Term Accommodation;
 - ix. Agri-tourism uses and on-farm diversified uses;
 - x. Additional Residential Unit in accordance with Section 6;
 - xi. Home occupations;
 - xii. Home industries; and
 - xiii. Utility corridors and associated facilities.

3.3.1.4 Policies

- a) Generally, the minimum lot size for an agricultural use shall be approximately 40 hectares. In certain cases, such as intensive or specialized agricultural uses, farm size may be reduced and the appropriate size defined in the implementing Zoning By-law as justified by supporting studies.
- b) Agricultural equipment sales, repair and service outlets shall be subject to Site Plan Control.
- c) In reviewing *development* applications, Council may determine certain areas in the Township do not meet the criteria for Agricultural lands as set out in Policy 3.3.1.2 and should therefore be included in the Rural

designation. Such situations may occur only on properties adjacent to the boundaries between the Agricultural and Rural designations. In reviewing requests for the redesignation of lands, Council shall take into consideration the following:

- i. The history of agricultural activities on the subject lands;
- ii. The need for the proposed use in the Township;
- iii. The location and its impact on agriculture and the natural environment,
- iv. The Canada Land Inventory and Soil Capability for Agriculture classification of the land. Lands designated as Class 1, 2, or 3 shall generally be considered as good agricultural land;
- v. The availability of alternative locations on poorer quality agricultural soils,
- vi. A report from a professional agrologist describing the agricultural potential of the land;
- vii. The amount of land being removed is minimized;
- viii. Compliance with Minimum Distance Separation Formulae; and
- ix. Justification on why a location in a settlement or business park is not more appropriate.

3.3.2 **Rural**

3.3.2.1 The Rural designation applies to lands which exhibit a lower agricultural capability and generally include lands in Class 4, 5, 6 and 7 according to the Canada Land Inventory of Soil Capability for Agriculture and fall outside of lands designated Natural Heritage.

3.3.2.2 Permitted Uses

- a) The Rural designation is intended to protect the viability of any existing agricultural operations and retain the natural landscape and rural character by preventing any uncontrolled or scattered development. Non-agricultural uses which would interfere with or hinder existing or future agricultural operations are not permitted
- b) Permitted uses on lands designated Rural include those uses permitted in the Agricultural designation, in addition to following:
 - i. Forestry;
 - ii. Resource management;
 - iii. Resourced based recreational uses;

- iv. Single detached dwellings on existing vacant lots; and
- v. Additional Residential Units in accordance with Section 6.
- vi. Other rural land uses that are not appropriate in *settlement areas* provided they:
 - a. are compatible with the rural landscape and surrounding local land uses;
 - b. will be sustained by rural service levels;
 - c. iii. will not adversely affect the protection of agricultural uses and other resource-based uses such as mineral aggregate operations.
- c) Small scale agriculturally related commercial and industrial uses may be permitted subject to a Zoning By-law Amendment, such as but not limited to:
 - i. Farm implement dealers;
 - ii. Agricultural equipment repair and service outlets;
 - iii. Agricultural supply outlets;
 - iv. Feed mills; and
 - v. Agricultural product warehousing.
- d) The following minor non-agricultural rural uses are permitted subject to a Zoning By-law Amendment:
 - i. Highway and service commercial uses;
 - ii. Tourist commercial uses;
 - iii. Institutional uses; and
 - iv. Private clubs.
- e) A minor use shall be defined as a use having low traffic generation, no nuisance effects on surrounding uses, a scale consistent with existing uses and no negative environmental impact. There shall be recognition of the cumulative impacts of these non-agricultural uses to the surroundings.

3.3.2.3 Policies

- a) Agricultural uses which exist in the Rural designation shall be preserved and protected from incompatible uses and shall take precedence over all other land uses.
- b) In reviewing requests to permit non-agricultural uses, Council shall require the applicant to provide justification, to the satisfaction of the Township, confirming that the lands are not part of the *Prime*

Agricultural Area and why a location for the use in a *settlement area* or business park is not more appropriate, other than because of land value. The permission of non-agricultural and agriculturally related uses shall be subject to the following criteria:

- i. The use is located on poorer quality agricultural lands;
- ii. The use will have a minimum impact on agricultural uses;
- iii. Adequate buffers will be provided to adjacent uses;
- iv. Uses are consolidated into groups rather than scattered throughout the Township; and
- i. There is no other reasonable alternative location.

3.3.3 **Estate Residential**

3.3.3.1 The Estate Residential designation applies to existing low density residential clusters located outside of the Township's *Settlement Areas*, where municipal servicing is not available or feasible. These areas are intended to accommodate large-lot residential *development* in a rural setting, subject to compatibility with land uses, servicing constraints and environmental protection policies.

3.3.3.2 It is the intent of Council to maintain the rural nature of the Township, therefore this designation applies only to existing estate residential *developments*.

3.3.3.3 Permitted Uses

Permitted uses on lands designated Estate Residential include:

- a) Single detached dwellings on large lots;
- b) Home occupations and home-based businesses;
- c) Accessory buildings and structures;
- d) Additional residential units where adequate servicing can be demonstrated and in accordance with Section 6;
- e) Passive recreational uses and community features; and
- f) Small-scale institutional uses such as *places of worship* or private schools.

3.3.3.4 Policies

- a) *Development* within the Estate Residential designation shall maintain the rural character of the area and provide minimal disturbance to the natural environment.
- b) All *development* within the Estate Residential designation shall be on the basis of private wells and septic systems, unless otherwise permitted through a Township approved servicing strategy.
- c) Lands for estate residential proposals:
 - i. are not classified as *prime agricultural land* and avoid fragmentation of *prime agricultural lands*;
 - ii. are not designated as Greenlands;
 - iii. do not conflict with MDS requirements;
 - iv. are characterized with scenic rolling topography;
 - v. contain sufficient tree cover to screen *development* from abutting lands and roads;
 - vi. contain suitable building sites which can be developed without significant alteration to contours and vegetation;
 - vii. have access to a municipal road of a standard of construction and maintenance capable of accommodating the expected traffic, and where Council considers it appropriate, upgrade to adjacent boundary roads may be required from the *development* to a road of appropriate standard;
 - viii. are supported by soils and drainage studies prepared by the applicant which show that the land is suitable for the installation of a private sewage disposal system without the excessive importation of fill material and the installation of such systems shall not affect existing surface and groundwater systems;
 - ix. are supported by a Hydrogeological Report prepared by the applicant confirming that a sufficient supply of potable water exists to serve the *development* without affecting negatively the wells on abutting lands and also addresses the level of nitrate loading resulting from the *development*;
 - x. will not cause a negative impact on the environmental features and on their ecological functions;
 - xi. are not located adjacent to a *Settlement Area*, commercial or industrial lands, sanitary landfill site, pit or quarry or which would have an adverse effect on traffic or servicing due to the number of lots already created in an area; and

- xii. are not located within hazardous lands and sites including flood prone and steep slope areas.
- d) *Development* shall demonstrate no negative impacts on nearby environmental features, significant woodlands, wetlands or groundwater recharge areas. The applicant shall undertake an environmental evaluation of the impacts of the proposed *development* and where a proposed Estate Residential *development* is located adjacent to environmentally sensitive lands, an Environmental Impact Study will be required.
- e) Estate residential purposes shall:
 - i. Integrate with the natural landscape through setbacks, vegetation retention and rural road standards;
 - ii. Provide access to all lots from an internal public subdivision road only, designed and constructed to municipal standards;
 - iii. Design the road layout to provide convenient and safe access to each lot;
 - iv. Ensure the lots are well proportioned and of a regular shape;
 - v. Ensure the lots have sufficient table land to permit the installation of a private sewage system and a private well. Communal water systems will not be approved.
 - vi. Ensure erosion will not occur and the disruption to existing vegetation is minimized; and
 - vii. Maintain existing trees and contours to the greatest extent feasible.

3.3.4 **Rural Special Policy Recreation Area - Campgrounds**

- 3.3.4.1 The Rural Special Recreation Area designation includes those existing campgrounds which are intended to provide overnight recreational accommodation.
- 3.3.4.2 Permitted uses on lands designated Rural Special Recreation Area include:
 - a) Municipal and Public campgrounds;
 - b) Golf Courses;
 - c) Private campground for temporary overnight accommodations;

- d) Temporary parking of recreational **vehicles** and structures;
- e) Accessory recreational and commercial facilities;
- f) Accessory office;
- g) Accessory residence for park manager; and
- h) Park model homes, where permitted and subject to Section XX.

3.3.4.3 Policies:

- a) Any proposal for a new or expanded campground, the following shall meet the following criteria:
- b) All campgrounds shall cluster their *camp sites* in such a manner as to separate groups of campsites from one another. In addition, individual *camp sites* shall be sufficiently spaced to allow screening from other sites. A *camp site* is defined as a site for the parking of a recreational vehicle or the erection of a tent, and which would serve as a temporary homesite;
- c) Each campground shall include sufficient recreational facilities for the residents of the park so that those persons using the park on a temporary basis will not overtax the existing recreational facilities of the Municipality;
- d) All campgrounds shall have adequate ingress and egress to ensure the ease of entrance and exit of all recreational **vehicles** and to overcome any traffic hazards that may result from the added load on the traffic system and facilities
- e) All sanitary sewage services and solid waste disposal methods shall be adequate to accommodate the capacity of the park and shall be subject to approval of the appropriate approval authority.
- f) A report on the quantity and quality of the campground's water system shall be submitted to the Township and the appropriate approval authorities.
- g) Prior to consideration of the proposal, and Environmental Impact Study, as designated in Section 21.1.1(c), of the proposed campground and trails shall be required to be prepared and submitted to the Township and the appropriate approval authorities.

4 NATURAL ESSA

The Township of Essa is characterized with many unique and valued environmental areas to be preserved through a robust policy framework that ensures the wise management and stewardship of these environmental areas for the benefit of current and future generations.

This section of the Official Plan provides the policy framework to identify, protect and enhance the Township's environmental features and functions, which include the Nottawasaga River and its tributaries, streams, valley lands, wetlands, Environmental Sensitive Areas (ESA), Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI), hazard lands, threatened and endangered species and woodlands. As Essa grows, the Township is committed to managing *development* in a way that safeguards its ecological systems and promotes responsible environmental planning.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

- 4.1.1 To protect, maintain and enhance the Township's environmental features, ecological functions and system connectivity are considered critical for a healthy and resilient natural heritage system.
- 4.1.2 To ensure that land use *development* decisions avoid or minimize impacts on natural features and natural hazards and contribute to climate change adaptation and long-term environmental sustainability.
- 4.1.3 To promote environmental stewardship, education and natural heritage enjoyment by supporting restoration efforts and working collaboratively with conservation authorities, local partners and stakeholders.

4.2 GENERAL

- 4.2.1 Natural Heritage features are addressed and protected through the Greenland designation on Schedule I, together with the Natural Hazard Overlay in Schedule I, capture the following features:
 - a) rivers
 - b) streams
 - c) valley lands, wetlands
 - d) Environmental Sensitive Areas (ESA)
 - e) ANSIs

- f) hazard lands
- g) threatened and endangered species
- h) woodlands providing various ecological functions including the provision of fish and wildlife habitat of threatened and endangered species
- i) flood attenuation and/or erosion control
- j) the maintenance of water quality and quantity.

4.2.2 Flood prone areas which are comprised of the Nottawasaga River, streams and defined flood plain lands.

4.2.3 Defined and Undefined wetlands which address the major wetland areas within the Township:

4.2.4 Defined wetlands are those evaluated Class 1 to 7 according to the Provincial Wetland Classification System and include those of Provincial significance (Class 1, 2 and 3) and local significance (Classes 4 to 7);

4.2.5 Undefined wetlands are those that exist but have not been evaluated, classified and/or designated on Schedules I and will be protected and subject to these policies.

4.2.6 Environmental-Significant Areas which include the Nottawasaga River, ANSI and Allandale Lake Algonquin Bluffs ANSI.

4.2.7 The Township intends to protect these environmental features from the effects of *development* and incompatible land uses.

4.3 LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

4.3.1 Greenlands

4.3.1.1 The Greenlands designation is intended to identify, protect and restore the natural character, form, function and connectivity of the Townships' natural heritage system. The natural features and areas within the Greenlands designation shall be protected for the long term.

4.3.1.2 Lands designated Greenlands primarily include:

- a) Habitat of endangered species and threatened species;
- b) Significant wetlands, significant coastal wetlands, other coastal wetlands, and all wetlands 2.0 ha or larger in area which have been determined to be locally significant, including but not limited to evaluated wetlands;
- c) Significant woodlands;
- d) Significant valley lands;
- e) Significant wildlife habitat;
- f) Provincially and Regionally Significant Earth Science Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs);
- g) Fish Habitat;
- h) Flood Prone Lands;
- i) Linkage areas that protect or enhance natural heritage functions.

4.3.1.3 Permitted Uses

- a) The predominant use of lands in the Greenlands designation shall be for preservation and conservation. Other permitted uses are to be limited and apply to:
 - i. Existing agricultural, agricultural related uses and on-farm diversified uses;
 - ii. Forestry in accordance with an approved management plan and sustainable forest practices and/or applicable Tree By-law;
 - iii. Flood and erosion control works;
 - iv. Mineral aggregate operations, if approved through a local Official Plan amendment;
 - v. Outdoor passive recreational uses; and
 - vi. Outside of the *Settlement Areas* and subject to demonstrating that the lands are not within a *prime agricultural area* or will affect nearby ecological functions, residential dwellings units on lots which were approved prior to May 9, 2016¹.

4.3.1.4 Policy

- a) This Plan may not have identified all of the natural features which exist within the Township. To determine if natural heritage features exist requiring *development* prohibition and/or protective measures, a scoped Environmental Impact Study ("EIS") shall be required for areas of natural vegetation communities and suspected habitat of endangered species or threatened species. Following the preliminary assessment, the Township

¹ Ontario Land Tribunal Case Number: PL091167

may determine that a full EIS is required, which is to be prepared by a qualified professional, to determine the extent of the feature(s) and demonstrate there will be no negative impacts on ecological functions from the proposed *development*.

- b) The mapping of the Greenlands designation on Schedule I is approximate and does not reflect all features and component that make up the natural heritage system, including certain features such as habitat of endangered species and threatened species, or new or more accurate information identifying natural heritage features and areas. Where features are identified through an EIS, hydrologic evaluation or subwatershed study, the Greenland designation policies shall apply. Any minor adjustment to the Greenlands designation as determined through more detailed mapping, field surveys, the results of an EIS, information received from the Province or Conservation Authority will not require an amendment to this Plan. Despite anything else in this Plan, if any lands are demonstrated to be of a feature type listed in Section 4.3.12, even if they are not mapped on Schedule I, those lands are to be protected in accordance with the policies of 4.3.
- c) Development and site alteration is not permitted in the following:
 - i. significant wetlands.
 - ii. significant woodlands, significant valley lands, significant wildlife habitat and ANSIs unless it has been demonstrated through EIS and/or hydrological study there will be no negative impact on the natural features or their ecological functions;
 - iii. fish habitat and habitat of endangered species and threatened species, unless in accordance with provincial and federal requirements.
- d) *Development* and site alteration shall not be permitted on lands adjacent to the Greenlands designation unless the ecological function of the adjacent lands has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions.
- e) For the purposes of this plan, *development* and site alteration on lands adjacent to components of the natural heritage system, in accordance with the distances set out in Table 4.3.1, shall demonstrate through an EIS and/or hydrological evaluation that there are no negative impacts on the

adjacent feature's ecological function or hydrologic function after mitigation.

f) Building setbacks and/or vegetative protection areas zones may be imposed from the boundary of a natural features as detailed in Table 4.3.1 and further determined through detailed study, such as an EIS and/or hydrologic evaluation, for the purpose of supporting a *development* proposal.

g) The following table identifies features and buffers associated with *development* applications:

Adjacent Lands and Minimum Setbacks with Vegetative Protection Zones		
Natural Heritage Features and Areas	Adjacent Lands (Where EIS is Required for <i>Development</i> Applications)	Minimum Setback with Vegetative Protection Zone
Significant Wetland	All lands within 120 metres of any part of the feature	30 metres of the feature
Significant Woodland	All lands within 120 metres of any part of the feature	30 metres of the feature
Significant Valley land	All lands within 50 metres of any part of the feature	30 metres of the feature
Significant Wildlife Habitat	All lands within 50 metres of any part of the feature	30 metres of the feature
Habitat of Endangered and Threatened Species	All lands within 50 metres of any part of the feature	As determined by EIS
Provincially and Regionally Significant ANSI	All lands within 50 metres of any part of the feature	As determined by EIS
Fish Habitat	All lands within 30 metres of any part of the feature	30 metres of the feature

Flood Prone Lands	All lands within 30 metres of any part of the feature	As determined by EIS and/or hydrologic evaluation
Linkage Areas	All lands within 30 metres of any part of the feature	As determined by EIS

- h) Outside of a settlement area, where all woodlots shall be considered significant until an EIS has been completed to demonstrate otherwise based on the requirements of this Plan, County, Provincial and federal requirements, ecological size and function and connectivity to other features in the natural heritage system.
- i) To work with landowners to identify opportunities for reforestation as appropriate through the development review process to contribute to Essa's objective of increasing woodland cover in the Township;
- j) Within a settlement area, the following criteria shall apply in determining if the woodlot is significant:
 - k) Attributes: the forest ecosystems contain attributes or values which are singly, or in combination, of importance including: wetlands; life science, ANSI's hydrological function; habitat of vulnerable, threatened, and endangered species; old growth forests; unusual or rare forest types; other important wildlife habitat.
 - l) Size, shape and linkages: Normally larger areas with shapes which offer greater amounts of forest area of greater value ecologically. Particularly important in most parts of the region will be the ability to link existing forest cover to provide larger units of "continuous" cover.
 - m) Function-Protection: Where existing or new forests are able to offer protection to other elements on the landscapes, this shall be given consideration. Examples include: areas of groundwater protection (springs, recharge areas, seeps); riparian areas: erosion control; and the

variety of natural heritage protection categories identified under “Attributes”.

- n) Condition: Woodlands in a healthy condition with mature trees and species composition and diversity and/or woodlands growing on sites capable of producing these conditions should be given a higher priority than degraded.
- o) Development pressure: Where it can be determined that development is going to intrude into a woodland area, it should be shown that there are no particular significant impacts on the attributes, functions and linkages to the woodlands. A priority would be placed on development that is directed to lower quality woodlands.
- p) Social, cultural and aesthetic attributes: Importance shall also be given to woodlands which possess attributes of significant cultural heritage, important recreational opportunities, or outstanding aesthetic.
- q) Legally existing uses within the Greenlands designation will be recognized and can continue in accordance with the applicable policies of this Plan. The intent of the Greenlands designation on an active farm is not meant to restrict the use or to reduce the economic viability of the use. Expansion of farm operation, agricultural-related uses and on-farm diversified uses can be expanded subject to an Environmental impact Study demonstrating no negative impact on natural heritage features.
- r) Infrastructure authorized under an environmental assessment process may be permitted within the Greenlands designation or on adjacent lands. Infrastructure not subject to the environmental assessment process, may be permitted within the Greenlands designation or on adjacent lands in accordance with Section 4.1.
- s) It is recognized that the Provincial Planning Statement directs that as much of the mineral aggregate resources as close to market as possible be made available. Therefore, new or expanded mineral aggregate operations within local natural heritage systems may be permitted within the Greenlands designation or on adjacent lands, subject to completion of a satisfactory EIS which demonstrates that impacts on any remaining components of the natural heritage system have been minimized and that

the proposed rehabilitation includes elements intended to contribute to the local natural heritage system.

- t) When considering a settlement area expansion within the Greenlands designation, and where expansion into the Rural designation is not a reasonable alternative, the location of the expansion shall be in accordance with the policies of this Plan. Section 4.3.1.5(f) [existing uses] shall not apply to settlement area expansions.
- u) If it is determined by the Township in consultation with other commenting agencies at the pre-consultation stage in the planning application process that the subject property does not contain any natural heritage features and areas on the subject or adjacent lands which could be impacted by the proposed development and that the lands are not required as a connection, linkage or providing an ecological function to the natural heritage system, no EIS and/or hydrological evaluation would be required to be submitted.
- v) When considering planning applications in the Greenlands designation and adjacent lands, more detailed mapping, field surveys, the results of an EIS, information received from the Province or Conservation Authority may be used to determine more precise boundaries of the Greenlands designation or individual natural heritage features and areas.
- w) Minor adjustments to the Greenlands designation as determined by this information will not require an amendment to this Plan and the land use designation abutting that portion of the Greenlands designation shall apply. A change to any other designation is subject to the policies of this Plan and shall require an amendment to this Plan if required by the applicable policies.
- x) Proposal to re-designate lands in the Greenlands designation shall not be permitted unless an EIS is submitted to the satisfaction of the Township demonstrating the applicable policies of this Plan are satisfied.
- y) Proposals to re-designate lands in the Greenlands designation are required to demonstrate if the lands are within a prime agricultural area. Re-designation proposals for lands within a prime agricultural area shall only be permitted to the Agricultural designation.

- z) The Greenlands designation does not imply that all lands within it are completely restricted from development and site alteration, or that a public agency must or will purchase any such land on which a planning application is refused or modified not to the applicant's satisfaction.
- i. If natural heritage features and areas or ecological functions within the Greenlands designation are damaged or destroyed after July 1, 2008, by causes within the control of the landowner, the designation of the affected lands in this Plan will not be changed as a result. Development will only be considered if it is a condition of approval that the damaged or destroyed features and functions be restored to the satisfaction of the Township.

4.3.1.5 **Water Resources**

- a) Land use planning and *development* within the Township shall protect, improve or restore the quality and quantity of water and related resources and aquatic ecosystems on an integrated watershed management basis.
- b) Water resource systems consisting of ground water features, hydrologic functions, natural heritage features and areas, and surface water features including shoreline areas which are necessary for the ecological and hydrological integrity of the watersheds within the Township shall be protected, improved or restored, including maintaining linkages and related functions.
- c) Aquifers, headwater areas, and recharge and discharge areas shall be identified and protected in this Plan and/or through the *development* and subdivision approval process. *Development* should generally be directed away from areas with a high-water table and/or highly permeable soils. In *settlement areas* or other *development* centres where this is not possible, potential environmental impacts shall be mitigated using all reasonable methods.
- d) Proposals for major growth and major *development* shall be reviewed on a watershed management basis where applicable and appropriate to ensure the watershed is maintained in an environmentally sustainable fashion.
- e) The Township will ensure that restrictions on *development* and site alteration are imposed as necessary to protect municipal drinking water supplies and designated vulnerable areas, and protect, improve or restore

vulnerable surface and ground water and their hydrologic functions. This will be demonstrated through a Risk Assessment Study for Ground and Surface Water where applicable.

- f) The improvement of water quality through remedial action and maintenance of remedial works that have been installed to enhance quality and protect water sources during construction may be made a condition of approval by the Township.
- g) The Township will ensure that significant wetlands and critical fish habitats are protected from any potential adverse impacts from *development*, shoreline alteration, or other impacts that could threaten or destroy such features and areas and their ecological functions, in accordance with the policies of this Plan.
- h) The Township will encourage the upgrading of existing private on-site sewage services where necessary.
- i) Stormwater management practices will match predevelopment stormwater flow rates and where possible, minimize flow rates, minimize containment loads, and where feasible maintain or increase the extent of vegetative and pervious surfaces.

4.3.2 **Natural Hazards**

4.3.2.1 Flooding Hazards

- a) *Development* and site alteration shall occur in a manner that will protect human life and property from water related hazards such as flooding and erosion. Flood plain management shall occur on a watershed management basis giving due consideration to the upstream, downstream, and cumulative effects of *development*.
- b) *Development* and site alteration shall generally be directed to areas outside of hazardous lands adjacent to river, stream and inland lake systems which are impacted by flooding and/or erosion hazards. Any *development* of site alteration permitted requires written approval from the Conservation Authority or appropriate authority, in consultation with the Township.
- c) The areas that may be at risk of flooding are generally reflected on the overlay mapping on Schedule I and, as detailed mapping becomes available, will be implemented through the Zoning By-law.

- d) Where there is a One Zone Concept in place as per 4.3.3.1i), the following uses may be permitted in the flood plain subject to the approval of regulatory agencies:
- i. open space for public or private recreation and related structures;
 - ii. agricultural uses and related structures, excluding dwellings;
 - iii. structural works for flood and erosion-sediment control;
 - iv. additions to existing structures;
 - v. replacement structures on existing lots subject to local official plan policies, and satisfactory engineering studies; and
 - vi. Aggregate *development* provided all requirements of the Aggregate Resources Act, and the relevant conservation authority are met.
- e) *Development* and site alteration shall not be permitted within areas that would be rendered inaccessible to people and **vehicles** during times of flooding hazards or erosion hazards, unless it has been demonstrated that the site has safe access appropriate for the nature of the *development* and the natural hazard. Safe access will be determined through flood levels provided by the Conservation Authority.
- f) Notwithstanding 4.3.3.1a), *development* and site alternation may be permitted in certain areas associated with the flooding hazard along river, stream and small inland lake systems within an approved Special Policy Area(s) according to their respective policies, or where the *development* is limited to uses which by their nature must locate within the *floodway*, including flood and/or erosion control works or minor additions or passive non-structural uses which do not affect flood flows. Notwithstanding 4.3.3.1a), *development* and site alternation may be permitted in certain areas associated with the flooding hazard along river, stream and small inland lake systems within an approved Special Policy Area(s) according to their respective policies, or where the *development* is limited to uses which by their nature must locate within the *floodway*, including flood and/or erosion control works or minor additions or passive non-structural uses which do not affect flood flows. Any change or modification to the official plan policies, land use designations or boundaries applying to Special Policy Area lands, must be approved by the Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Natural Resources and Forestry prior to the approval authority approving such changes or modifications.

- g) *Development* and site alteration shall not be permitted to locate in hazardous lands and hazardous sites where the use is:
 - i. An institutional use including hospitals, long-term care homes, retirement homes, pre-schools, school nurseries, childcare and schools;
 - ii. An essential emergency service such as that provided by police, fire, and ambulance stations and electrical substations; or
 - iii. Uses associated with the disposal, manufacture, treatment or storage of hazardous substances.
- h) Special Residential designation applies to existing residentially developed lands that fall within the flood and fill area. Existing single detached dwellings and accessory structures are permitted, however, all new *development*, accessory structures, or enlargement of existing buildings and structures shall be subject to flood proofing policies as established by the Conservation Authority and/or Township.
- i) The Township may establish a Special Policy Area reflective of a Two Zone Concept for floodplains to determine where *development* and site alteration may be permitted in the *flood fringe*, subject to appropriate flood proofing. These areas (if any) will be determined comprehensively at that time for the entire “reach” and will be termed the *Flood Fringe*. New *development* will be allowed within the *Flood Fringe* if it is adequately flood proofed to the level of the regulatory flood. The remaining portions of the flood plain will be termed the *Floodway* where *development* and site alteration are prohibited. Use of this approach for lands outside of the Angus *Settlement Area* will require an amendment to both the Official Plan and the Zoning By-law.
- j) Angus Two Zone Concept: the Urban *Settlement Area* of Angus is located at the confluence of three major river systems including the Nottawasaga, Pine, and Mad Rivers. Historically, *development* in Angus has occurred in the flood plain of these River systems. The Township establishes a Two Zone Concept as follows:
 - i. *Flood fringe*: lands above the 1:100 year flood level to the regulatory flood level where *development* may be permitted subject to appropriate flood proofing and meeting the minimum criteria of ensuring hazards can be safely addressed, new hazards will not be created and/or existing hazards aggravated, no adverse environmental impacts will result, **vehicles** and people have a way

of safely entering and exiting the area during times of flooding, erosion and other emergencies, and the *development* does not include institutional uses, essential emergency services or the disposal of hazardous structures; and,

- ii. *Floodway*: defined as those below the 1:100-year flood level to the regulatory flood level. *Development* and site alteration is prohibited and restricted in the *floodway* to those which by their nature must locate within the *floodway*, including flood an/or erosion control works or minor additions or passive non-structural uses which do not affect flood flows.
- iii. The features shown in Schedule I, apply to lands that may have already been developed but fall within the flood and fill area. Existing single detached dwellings and accessory structures are permitted; however, all new *development*, accessory structures, or enlargement of existing buildings and structures shall be subject to flood proofing policies as established by the Conservation Authority and/or Township.

4.3.2.2 Steep Slopes and Erosion Hazards

- a) *Development* or site alteration will be prohibited on slopes and ravines which could be subject to active erosion hazards or historic slope failure as identified in a supporting geotechnical study.

4.3.2.3 Wildland Hazards

- a) *Development* shall generally be directed to areas outside of lands that are unsafe for *development* due to the presence of hazardous forest types for wildland fire except where the risk is mitigated in accordance with wildland fire assessment and mitigation standards.

4.3.2.4 Human-Made Hazards

- a) *Development* on, abutting, or adjacent to contaminated sites, lands affected by mine hazards, oil, gas, and salt hazards, or former mineral mining operations, mineral aggregate operations, or petroleum resource operations may be permitted only if rehabilitation or other measures to address and mitigate known or suspected hazards are under way or have been completed. Sites shall be remediated as necessary prior to any activity on the site associated with the proposed use such that there will be no adverse effects.

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5 CONNECTING ESSA

The Township of Essa is supported by a network of systems and spaces that connect people to places, opportunities and services to support a complete and well-functioning Township. These include roads and trails, parks and open spaces, *community facilities*, utility corridors, water and wastewater. Together, these elements form the essential physical and social *infrastructure* that ensure Essa remains accessible, livable and well-connected into the future.

This Section of the Official Plan provides the policy framework to guide the planning, *development* and long-term management of a multimodal transportation network, the provision of parks and open spaces, support for institutional and employment uses, the delivery of water, wastewater and stormwater services and the protection of *infrastructure* corridors.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

- 5.1.1 To promote a safe, accessible and connected transportation network that supports walking, cycling and vehicular movement and links neighbourhoods to places of employment, commercial areas, schools, parks and *community facilities*.
- 5.1.2 To ensure that growth is supported by coordinated, efficient and sustainable *infrastructure* systems, including water, wastewater, stormwater, utilities and servicing in a manner that is fiscally and environmentally responsible.
- 5.1.3 To provide a well-distributed network of institutional and *community facilities*, including schools, health care, childcare, emergency services and recreational amenities that support the well-being of all residents.
- 5.1.4 To develop and enhance a linked system of parks, open spaces and trails that support active living, sustainability, placemaking and equitable access to recreational opportunities across urban and rural communities.
- 5.1.5 To protect and promote places of employment and *infrastructure* corridors that support economic *development*, goods movement and the delivery of essential services such as electricity, telecommunications and pipelines.

5.2 LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

5.2.1 Institutional

The Institutional designation recognizes existing institutional uses and *public service facilities* throughout the Township.

5.2.1.1 Permitted Uses

- a) The predominant use of lands designated Institutional shall be for properties and buildings for public service uses which are public, semi-public and/or non-profit in nature.
- b) Permitted uses on lands designated Institutional include:
 - i. *Schools*;
 - ii. *Churches*;
 - iii. *Cemeteries*;
 - iv. *Service clubs*;
 - v. *Municipal buildings and facilities*;
 - vi. *Childcare facilities*; and
 - vii. *Other similar uses*.

5.2.1.2 Policies

- a) New institutional uses shall be subject to an amendment to the Official Plan and which shall ensure:
 - i. The mitigation of any impacts of the proposed use on adjacent uses respecting noise, traffic and visual appearance;
 - ii. Viability of the site to service the proposed use and where individual services are proposed, detailed analysis to substantiate the servicing method; and
 - iii. Generally, no new institutional uses shall be located on *prime agricultural lands*.
- b) Notwithstanding 5.2.1.3a), existing and future municipal buildings and facilities and publicly funded schools are permitted in all designations without amendment to the Official Plan.
- c) Institutional uses are encouraged to be planned and developed in accordance with the following criteria:

- i. Design all buildings and structures to reflect the natural and architectural characteristics of the area;
- ii. Ensure all parking areas, lighting, servicing and loading areas are buffered and/or designed to reduce impacts on adjacent uses;
- iii. Design buildings and sites to provide barrier-free access, safe pedestrian connections and inclusive facilities; and
- iv. Promote energy efficiency, green *infrastructure* and climate resilient design wherever feasible.

d) Institutional uses shall be subject to Site Plan Control.

e) The implementing Zoning By-law shall establish appropriate setbacks, parking, landscaping and buffering requirements for institutional uses.

5.2.2 **Parks and Open Spaces**

The Open Space designation recognizes lands intended to be used for recreation and community purposes such as municipal parks, conservation lands and forestry management.

5.2.2.1 Lands within the Open Space designation are intended to provide a range of opportunities for residents and visitors of the Township and are to be kept open and free except for buildings and structures which are incidental and accessory to the open-air recreation uses.

5.2.2.2 Permitted Uses

a) Permitted uses on lands designated Open Space include:

- i. Public parks, playground and sports fields;
- ii. Trails, walkways and open space linkages;
- iii. Community gardens and gathering spaces;
- iv. Recreation and cultural facilities; and
- v. Conservation lands and stormwater management facilities that are integrated with passive open space uses.

5.2.2.3 Policies

a) Parks and open spaces are encouraged to be planned and developed in accordance with the following criteria:

- i. Design parks and open spaces for universal accessibility and inclusive use by all age groups and abilities;

- ii. Connect parks and open spaces to the broader trail network, schools and neighbourhoods wherever feasible;
 - iii. Ensure parks are landscaped and maintained to support both recreation and ecological benefits; and
 - iv. Design parks with climate resilience features including shade, native plantings and natural stormwater infiltration.
- d) The Township shall require the dedication of land for parks or other public recreational purposes as a condition of *development* or redevelopment, in accordance with the Planning Act. The amount of land required and/or the cash-in-lieu component shall be determined by the Township in accordance with the following criteria:
 - i. For residential purposes, an amount not exceeding 5% of the land being developed, or if Council enacts a Parkland Dedication By-law permitting an alternative rate, 1 hectare per 600 dwelling units;
 - ii. Where using an alternative parkland dedication rate, for sites 5 hectares or less, no more than 10% of the developable land can be required for parks and other recreational purposes. For sites greater than 5 hectares, no more than 15% of the land can be required for parks or other purposes ; and
 - iii. For non-residential *development*, an amount not exceeding 2% of the land being developed.
- e) Dedicated parkland shall:
 - i. Be of a useable shape, size and location suitable for recreation purposes;
 - ii. Be free of environmental constraints, unless intended to be part of a passive open space or trail system; and
 - iii. Be integrated into the broader parks and trails network, where possible.
- f) The Township may accept cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication where:
 - i. The land is not suitable for park *development*;
 - ii. Existing or planned parks in the area are adequate; and
 - iii. The contribution would be better used to acquire or improve parkland elsewhere.

- g) The Township shall consider the *development* of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan to identify local needs and gaps, plan for a full range of park types and guide the acquisition, *development* and improvement of parkland through the planning and *development* process.
- h) The implementing Zoning By-law shall establish specific regulations pertaining to accessory uses and structures for lands situated within the Open Space designation.

5.3 TRANSPORTATION

5.3.1 Transportation Network

The Township seeks to facilitate a safe multi-modal transportation network that facilitates the use of active transportation, public transit, the movement of people, as well as an efficient goods movement network.

5.3.2 A Coordinated Transportation Network

The Township will coordinate with Simcoe County LINX Transit, the Province, agencies, and stakeholders in developing a coordinated transportation system.

5.3.2.1 The County of Simcoe's LINX Transit system provides critical inter-municipal connections that support access to employment, education, health care, and community services. Local land use planning will leverage the value of LINX by integrating transit considerations into community growth and development.

5.3.2.2 The Municipality will recognize the LINX Transit system as an essential regional service and support its continued expansion. *Development* applications shall be reviewed for opportunities to enhance or connect to LINX or local services, including safe pedestrian and cycling access to LINX stops.

5.3.2.3 Compact, mixed-use, and higher-density *development* will be encouraged in proximity to LINX routes and potential local transit routes, to promote transit use and reduce reliance on single-occupancy **vehicles**. New employment areas and institutional uses should be planned with direct or potential connections to existing or planned LINX or local transit routes.

5.3.2.4 The Township will collaborate with the County of Simcoe to identify local needs, support service expansion, and coordinate land use planning with

regional transit planning. Local transit or transportation demand management initiatives should integrate with LINX to create a seamless network for residents.

5.3.2.5 The Township will encourage *development* patterns and *infrastructure* improvements that support equitable access to transit and LINX services for all residents, including youth, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

5.3.2.6 The Township will be encouraged to dedicate appropriate capital resources, support transit oriented densities, and to seek partnerships for establishing an internal Township transit system, that connects to the LINX services.

5.3.3 **Roads Hierarchy**

All roads within the municipality are classified based on their function, which include arterial roads, followed by collector roads, local roads, and private roads as shown on Schedule J.

5.3.3.1 Arterial Roads, include the Provincial Highway 89 under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation, and all roads under the jurisdiction of the County of Simcoe.

a) Arterial Roads are intended to facilitate the movement of large volumes of inter-town and provincial traffic.

b) *Development* adjacent to arterial roads or new entrances shall require approval from the applicable approval authority and ensure no safety hazards are created.

q) Entrance Permits to Country Roads are subject to the County's applicable Entrance By-law and regulations.

5.3.3.2 Collector Roads, are intended to carry local traffic to the arterial roads or to distribute traffic to the local roads as well as to provide access to abutting properties although such access shall be avoided wherever possible.

5.3.3.3 Local Roads are intended to be used for land access and serving low volumes of traffic at low speeds.

5.3.3.4 Private Roads are roads that are not assumed by the Township. No responsibility of access, snow clearance, maintenance or use by school buses is accepted. *Development* on private roads will only be permitted on existing

lots of record in accordance with the provisions of this Plan and the Zoning By-law.

5.3.4 **Right of Way Widths**

The planned minimum right-of-way widths of municipal roads identified on Schedule J, will be:

- a) Arterial Roads: As per the County Official Plan
- b) Collector Roads: minimum 26 metres; and
- c) Local Roads: minimum 20 metres.

The minimum right-of-way widths referenced above and shown on Schedule J, indicate the amount of land which may be required by the Township as part of the *development* approval process in accordance with the *Planning Act*. Roads will be designed in accordance with Township standards and applicable Engineering Standards and Specifications Manuals.

5.3.5 **Active Transportation**

The Township will support the construction of transit and cycling *infrastructure* in line with a complete streets design approach when streets are being upgraded or new streets are being planned.

- 5.3.5.1 The Township will ensure active transportation *infrastructure* and amenities, such as bicycle racks and shelters, will be secured through the *development* approval process.
- 5.3.5.2 Roads shall be oriented in a grid of arterial roads, collector roads and local roads that organize *development* that is pedestrian and bicycle friendly and is highly connected and supports transit.
- 5.3.5.3 The Township's Transportation Master Plan will provide direction for creating a safe and convenient active transportation network. This will include facilitating connections from neighborhoods to strategic growth areas, transit stations, employment areas, tourism destinations, community services, institutions, and County connections through upgrades to existing roads and planned future roads.
- 5.3.5.4 The Township will undertake a program of sidewalk reconstruction to upgrade existing sidewalk and trails in established areas.

- 5.3.5.5 The Township may consider the provision of multi-use paths in lieu of sidewalks or on-street cycling facilities.

5.4 UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE CORRIDORS

5.4.1 **Objectives**

The Township will ensure there is a sufficient amount of land designated to accommodate *infrastructure* and utilities.

- 5.4.1.1 The Township will ensure issues related to land use compatibility are addressed.

5.5 SERVICING

5.5.1 **Servicing Hierarchy and Principles**

All servicing decisions shall align with the Township's growth management framework, master plans, capital budget and asset management plans. The Township of Essa shall manage growth and *development* in a manner that is efficient, financially sustainable and protects human and environmental health, guided by the following hierarchy of servicing:

- a) Municipal (centralized) water and wastewater systems: Preferred and required in serviced *settlement areas*;
- b) Municipally owned and operated communal systems: Permitted only in limited, site-specific circumstances where municipal servicing is not available or feasible in the long-term; and
- c) Private individual on-site systems: Least preferred, permitted only in rural and unserviced areas.

5.5.2 **Servicing in Angus**

All *development* within the Angus *settlement area* shall be fully serviced by municipal water and wastewater systems;

- 5.5.2.1 Development shall only proceed where sufficient capacity exists, or where capacity will be made available through expansion of the existing system;
- 5.5.2.2 Expansion of the municipal water and wastewater system is subject to the Township's servicing strategy, capital works planned and financial capabilities; and

- 5.5.2.3 Where necessary, the Township may permit servicing expansion to be funded or front-ended by the *development* industry, subject to agreement by Council and in accordance with the Township's capital and financial policies.

5.5.3 **Communal Services**

- 5.5.3.1 In locations where municipal servicing is not available or anticipated, the Township may consider municipally owned and operated communal water or wastewater systems;

- 5.5.3.2 All communal systems shall be:

- a) Municipally owned and operated;
- b) Designed and approved in accordance with all applicable Provincial and Township standards and requirements;
- c) Supported by detailed hydrogeological, hydrological, servicing, and engineering studies; and
- d) Consistent with long-term servicing and financial planning objectives.

- 5.5.3.3 All costs related to the design, approval, construction and commissioning of a communal system shall be borne by the *development* proponent;

- 5.5.3.4 Prior to final approval of new servicing to be assumed by the Township, the proponent will complete a Capital and Operating Impact Assessment to inform the Township as to the financial sustainability of the *development* proposal and ensure that the approvals being requested are in the Township's interest, including best efforts for reasonable servicing alternatives or funding arrangements.

- 5.5.3.5 Prior to Township assumption, the communal system must:

- a) Operate satisfactorily for a minimum of two years;
- b) Be subject to performance and financial securities; and
- c) Be governed by legal agreements outlining responsibilities for maintenance, monitoring, operation, and eventual municipal ownership.

5.5.4 **Private Servicing and Site-Specific Exceptions**

5.5.4.1 Private wells and septic systems shall only be permitted where:

- a) Municipal and communal services are not available or planned;
- b) The proposed *development* is located within a designated rural area or cluster;
- c) Within *settlement areas*, to allow for infilling and minor rounding out of existing *development* provided that site is suitable and there are no negative impacts; and
- d) Detailed hydrogeological studies confirm that private services can be safely accommodated without adverse environmental or cumulative impacts.

5.5.4.2 Private servicing is not permitted within designated serviced *settlement areas*, where connection to municipal *infrastructure* is available or planned.

5.5.4.3 Condominium, commercial or industrial *developments* using shared private systems under single ownership do not constitute communal services for the purpose of the Official Plan and shall be subject to additional performance, monitoring and risk management requirements.

5.5.5 **Servicing and Stormwater Management Facilities outside of Settlement Boundaries**

5.5.5.1 The Township may consider *infrastructure* outside of settlement boundaries that serves *development* inside the settlement boundary where:

- a) The *development* and supporting *infrastructure* are contiguous opposite a road from each other;
- b) The design of the *infrastructure* seeks to minimize the extent of land required;
- c) In the case of stormwater *infrastructure*, the proposed *development* incorporates low impact *development* measures with the settlement boundary to reduce *infrastructure* needs outside the settlement boundary.

5.6 EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIAL AND AGGREGATE POTENTIAL

The Township's objective is to ensure that mineral aggregate resources remain available to meet the needs of consumers and can be mined in a manner which

minimizes the disturbances to the community and the natural environment.

5.6.1 **Extractive Industrial**

5.6.1.1 The Extractive Industrial overlay applies to those lands which have been licensed for the extraction of sand or gravel or have potential aggregate resources.

5.6.1.2 Extractive Industrial permitted uses include mineral aggregate extraction operations, and accessory uses including but not limited to: stripping and storage of topsoil, the construction of berms, landscaping and planting, crushing, screening, washing, stockpiling, storage, loading, weighing stations, office facilities, storage repair and maintenance sheds and fuel depots, provided they are included in the site plan and licensing are permitted. Ancillary uses such as asphalt or concrete plants may be permitted

5.6.1.3 The expansion of an existing pit or the *development* of a new pit shall be subject to an Environmental Impact Study before consideration of a Zoning By-law amendment. Where a new extractive industrial use is proposed in an area not designated as Extractive Industrial or Aggregate Potential, an amendment to the Plan is required and must be supported by an Environmental Impact Study and any other requirements

5.6.1.4 Extractive operation and uses shall be subject to the following:

- a) Arrangements have been made for the specific rehabilitation of the subject lands after use, or in stages during use;
- b) A guarantee that the operation of the subject extractive industry will continue to be conducted in accordance with the latest and highest standard of the sand and gravel industry;
- c) The selection of the appropriate gravel haul routes and all financial arrangements with respect to the upgrade and maintenance of the routes to be used for gravel trucks have been agreed to by the Township and the appropriate approval authorities;

5.6.1.5 Timing of blasting operations (where applicable) is set out on an acceptable schedule;

- a) Arrangements for a tree buffer and/or berming to provide an effective visual buffer between any proposed excavations and any road, including unopened road allowances and adjacent residential uses have been made;

- b) Provision that no new excavation or other processing shall take place until such buffering has been effectively established;
- c) Provision that no polluted water from washing or screening operations shall be discharged into any creek or watercourse;
- d) Buildings and structures associated with an extractive operation shall be set back from property lines and adjacent uses. Such setbacks will be set out in the implementing Zoning By-law; and
- e) The mitigation measures of the approved Environmental Impact Study, as approved by the appropriate approval authorities, are to be implemented

5.6.1.6 Where two pits or quarries abut each other, the Township may allow relief of compliance which would waive the required setback from lot lines to permit the removal of all economically viable materials between the pits and quarries. Also, where two mineral aggregate extractive operations are separated by a municipal road, the Township may allow relief of compliance which would waive the required setbacks from the road, permit the road to be re-routed, permit the material under the road to be removed and provide for the replacement of the Municipal Road at a lower elevation. The Township must consider the provisions of the Aggregate Resources Act and its regulations when dealing with aggregate matters.

5.6.2 **Aggregate Potential and Adjacent Lands**

Uses which would not prohibit, restrict or interfere with the use of the land for aggregate extraction are permitted and can include uses such as forestry, agriculture, and outdoor recreation.

5.6.3 **Abandoned Pits and Quarries**

It shall be the policy of the Township to consult with the Ministry of Natural Resources and other appropriate municipal or provincial agencies to investigate means to identify and rehabilitate abandoned pits located within the Township, including sources of funding.

5.6.3.1 When a pit or quarry has been worked out and rehabilitated, the policies of this Plan with regard to the Rural land use designation shall apply to such lands, unless bounded on any side by an Agricultural designation. In this case, the Agricultural designation shall apply.

5.6.3.2 Where a development proposal is submitted where an abandoned pit or quarry form part of the subject properties, the applicant shall submit plans to the appropriate approval authorities setting out the proposed rehabilitation program for the abandoned pit or quarry.

5.6.4 **Rehabilitation**

Extractive Industrial operations shall be progressively rehabilitated in accordance with the approved site plans to a condition which permits the use of the lands for agriculture, the regeneration of natural conditions, or a rural use

- 5.6.4.1 Where an extractive industrial use occurs in a *prime agricultural area* on *prime agricultural lands*, it is considered as an interim use which requires that the site be rehabilitated returning substantially the same area and the same average soil quality to agriculture. Complete rehabilitation, however, is not required if:
- a. A substantial quantity of aggregate exists below the water table; or
 - b. The depth of the planned extraction makes restoration of pre-extraction agricultural capability unfeasible; and
 - c. Other alternatives have been considered by the applicant and found unsuitable by the appropriate approval authorities.

5.7 WASTE DISPOSAL

The purpose of the Waste Disposal designation is to provide for the disposal of solid wastes and to identify those lands previously used for waste disposal to protect future uses proposed for adjacent lands and land previously used for waste disposal.

5.7.1 **Permitted Uses**

Permitted uses are limited to waste disposal.

5.7.2 **Policies**

The County of Simcoe has been legislated the responsibility for the *development*, operation, maintenance, monitoring and rehabilitation of all municipal solid waste disposal facilities subject to the approval of the Province. Specifically, within the Township, the County landfill site is located in the west part of Lot 13, Concession 5 and the County Stump Dump is located adjacent

to the Township Works Yard in Lot 16, Concession 6. Two abandoned sites described as the Angus site, west half of Lot 28, Concession 3 and the Ivy Site, west half of Lot 26, Concession 9, have been identified on Schedule A.

- 5.7.2.1 New waste disposal facilities will require an amendment to the Official Plan and are subject to Provincial legislation.
- 5.7.2.2 *Development* proposals within 500 metres of an abandoned or inactive site, will be required to undertake compatibility studies, as determined by the Township.
- 5.7.2.3 No *development* may occur within 30 metres of an existing waste disposal site.

5.8 CENTRE FOR ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH

The Centre for Atmospheric Research Experiments (CARE), a federal climate research facility, is located on the east half of Lot 11, Concession 7. Because CARE's research is highly sensitive to man-made emissions such as smoke, special policies apply to *development* in the surrounding area to ensure the continued success of its operations. This area is shown on Schedule A.

5.8.1 **To protect the integrity of CARE's research activities:**

- 5.8.1.1 The Zoning By-law will prohibit new residential dwellings within 500 metres of CARE's monitoring facilities. This restriction does not prevent the replacement or rebuilding of existing habitable buildings that are destroyed by fire or natural disaster.
- 5.8.1.2 Estate residential *development* will not be permitted within 1 kilometre of the boundaries of the CARE facility.
- 5.8.1.3 Environment Canada will be given notice of any proposed land use changes within the designated CARE Assessment Area shown on Schedule A. This includes proposed amendments to the Official Plan or Zoning By-law, and applications for subdivisions, condominiums, consents, or minor variances.
- 5.8.1.4 The provisions of 5.8.2 do not apply to the construction of one dwelling on each existing lot of record as of June 3, 1994, located in the west half of Lot 11, Concession 7.

6 RESILIENT ESSA

Resilience in the Township of Essa means building communities that are adaptable, inclusive, healthy and reflective of local identity. As the Township grows, planning must support a future where residents can thrive in the face of social, environmental and economic change.

This section of the Official Plan sets out policies that contribute to a resilient Essa, a place where people feel connected, supported and rooted in a strong sense of place through placemaking, housing that is inclusive and attainable, cultural heritage preservation and climate change adaptation and mitigation to ensure long-term sustainability.

6.1 OBJECTIVES

- 6.1.1 To create vibrant, people-centered places that foster a strong sense of community belonging and identity by integrating high-quality design, inclusive public spaces and the preservation of Essa's rural and small-town character.
- 6.1.2 To support a diverse and attainable housing supply that meets the needs of all residents, enhances community resilience and encourages gentle intensification that complements existing neighbourhoods.
- 6.1.3 To recognize, protect, and celebrate Essa's cultural heritage and rural roots, including Indigenous history, built heritage and landscapes of cultural significance, as a foundation for community identity and continuity.
- 6.1.4 To improve access to affordable, healthy, and locally grown food through support for urban agriculture, farmers' markets, community gardens, and the preservation of agricultural lands that contribute to food security and community health.
- 6.1.5 To strengthen climate resilience by promoting sustainable land use patterns, green infrastructure, low-carbon housing and mobility options, and the protection of natural systems that mitigate the impacts of climate change.

6.2 PLACEMAKING

- 6.2.1 **Purpose of Placemaking**

The Township will encourage the implementation of placemaking features, along main streets and within public spaces, entryways to the community, vistas and heritage areas that contribute to a distinct sense of place. Place making features include but are not limited to public art installations, unique paving, signage and banners, distinctive street furniture, street vendors, and special landscape treatment plantings

6.2.1.1 The Township will encourage the implementation of temporary public art, murals and interactive displays with the potential for these installations to become permanent at key locations within the community.

6.2.1.2 To protect the character of Essa's countryside while supporting the viability of farming, the Township will promote the protection of hedgerows, scenic views, and rural streetscapes, encourage the preservation of existing farm buildings, and support the re-establishment of roadside vegetation through the *development* review process.

6.2.2 **Complete and Connected Communities**

The Township recognizes the value of pedestrian-friendly streetscapes and connected vibrant neighbourhoods. As such the Township will consider preparing Urban Design Guidelines for the Primary and Secondary *Settlement Areas*.

6.2.3 **High-Quality Design**

The Township will ensure, where applicable, that urban design principles and guidelines are considered and a focus of land use planning decisions.

6.2.3.1 The Township will encourage a high quality and consistent level of urban design for public and private realms including but not limited to building design.

6.2.3.2 The Township will ensure community design practices are accessible, age-friendly and barrier-free to promote inclusivity, human health and well-being.

6.2.3.3 The Township will encourage human scale design and compact built form that is massed, designed and oriented to create well-defined, appropriately transitioned, comfortable, well-designed, functional, and attractive public spaces and streetscapes.

- 6.2.3.4 The Township will endeavor to ensure elements of public realm be designed to the highest quality possible and located to provide interest, safety, diversity and focal points within the community.

6.2.4 **Vibrant Public Spaces**

The Township will enhance its parkland system by providing for a range of recreational, social, cultural and community activities within its parks which create vibrant public spaces for all ages and abilities and enhance residents' sense of place within their community.

- 6.2.4.1 The Township will support urban agriculture through encouraging parks to be able to accommodate community gardens.

6.2.5 **Community Engagement and Co-Creation**

The Township encourages community-led placemaking and temporary activations, such as street closures and outdoor events, that empower residents to shape their public spaces.

- 6.2.5.1 Public engagement on public space design shall consider the needs of all residents, including children, seniors, youth, Indigenous communities and other marginalized groups.

- 6.2.5.2 Libraries are important community anchors. These civic spaces provide an inclusive, safe, welcoming environment and are an effective portal for newcomers finding their way in Essa. Seasonal events are encouraged including but not limited to: concerts, farmers' markets, arts and crafts fairs, and food festivals. Such events make the library a destination for both residents and visitors. Seasonal events are encouraged to be located near or be visible from main streets to help attract those passing through. Daily services, amenities and programs are encouraged to attract people and youth to these spaces. Complementary recreational features are also encouraged to draw young people and create opportunities for families to spend time in these shared spaces.

6.2.6 **Rural Placemaking**

Placemaking in rural areas shall focus on reinforcing small-town and rural character, supporting walkable mixed-use main streets and celebrating culture and the environment.

- 6.2.6.1 Public realm improvements may include trail enhancements, heritage signage, community gardens and traffic-calming streetscapes to create welcoming public spaces.
- 6.2.7 **Integration with Active Transportation**
The Township will ensure the active transportation system will be expanded, maintained and designed for all users and mobility needs, where possible.
- 6.2.7.1 The Township will promote active transportation connections between rural and urban areas.
- 6.2.7.2 The Township will promote and facilitate a complete streets design approach for new and existing streets that balance the needs of multiple modes of travel, as well as individuals of varying ages and abilities.
- 6.2.7.3 The Township will reinforce the role of the Trans Canada Trail and Barrie Collingwood Railway (BCRY) Active Transportation, wherever possible and explore multi-use trail connections to it to promote regional connections.
- 6.2.7.4 Hydro and gas corridors cross the Township and may offer opportunities to create safe, continuous routes for walking, cycling, and other forms of active transportation. Using these corridors can improve local connections between neighbourhoods, parks, schools, and community destinations while supporting healthy and sustainable travel.
- 6.2.7.5 Hydro and gas corridors may be used as multi-use trails or active transportation routes, subject to the approval of landowners, utility providers and compliance with safety requirements.
- 6.2.7.6 The Township will encourage the creation of continuous trails in these corridors to connect key community destinations. Trails should be designed to support year-round use for pedestrians, cyclists, and other forms of active transportation.
- 6.2.7.7 The Township will work with utility companies, the County, and neighbouring municipalities to explore opportunities for trail *development* in these corridors.

- 6.2.7.8 New *developments* located next to utility corridors should consider how to connect with or enhance planned active transportation routes within the corridors.
- 6.2.7.9 Corridor trails are encouraged as a way to support healthy lifestyles, reduce emissions, and provide equitable transportation options. Trails will be designed with safety in mind, including separation from utility *infrastructure*, adequate fencing where required, and good visibility.

6.3 URBAN DESIGN

- 6.3.1 Excellence in design is essential for creating accessible and attractive complete communities. The policies of this section seek to promote compatible development and the creation of vibrant public spaces through high quality urban design and architecture in order to enhance the comfort, safety, accessibility of both the public and private realms
- 6.3.2 The Township shall develop Urban Design Guidelines to guide the private development process and to ensure development and redevelopment provides for diversity, amenity, comfort, safety and compatibility with the existing community.
- 6.3.3 Development and redevelopment are encouraged to complement the surrounding context including natural heritage system, cultural heritage resources and existing or proposed built form, through the conceptual design of buildings, their massing, siting, exterior, access and public areas.
- 6.3.4 New development, and subdivisions shall aim to retain existing topography and vegetation by minimizing alterations to contours and by encouraging the use of native vegetation.
- 6.3.5 The Township shall encourage high quality site design and architecture for commercial, mixed use and public service facilities to facilitate a strong sense of place.
- 6.3.6 The Township will incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles into proposed and existing public realm projects

- 6.3.7 The Township is committed to environmentally sensitive building design and construction. Council will require the use of green building technologies.
- 6.3.8 The Township will encourage the implementation of temporary public art, murals and interactive displays with the potential for these installations to become permanent at key locations within the community.
- 6.3.9 Roadways and lanes should be enhanced through landscaping and streetscape treatments. The streetscape along roads and lanes can be improved through several features such as: sidewalk widths appropriate for the streetscape; trees and boulevard plantings; street furnishings and lighting; and Public Art.
- 6.3.10 The pedestrian environment should be comfortable, safe and secure in public places which include roads, parks and open spaces, schools, public transit routes and public activity areas of buildings. Measures that are necessary include:
- a) Siting of new buildings shall provide visibility and ease of access to adjacent roads, parks and open spaces;
 - b) Appropriate lighting and visibility shall be provided for all walkways, parking lots, garages and outdoor amenity areas;
 - c) Public-oriented spaces and activity areas shall be oriented toward public roads; and
 - d) A consistent level of landscape design shall be provided incorporating elements such as paving, planting, fencing, lighting and signage, as appropriate Design

6.4 HOUSING

6.4.1 **Range and Mix of Housing**

The Township shall ensure that land use planning and *development* approvals support the creation of a broad mix of housing types, densities and tenures including *affordable* housing options that meet the diverse needs of current and future residents.

6.4.1.1 The Township shall encourage gentle *intensification* and infill housing within existing neighbourhoods where compatible with surrounding character and servicing.

6.4.1.2 The Township shall encourage the *development* of age-friendly, barrier free and accessible housing options that meet the needs of citizens of all incomes, ages, and abilities, including special needs housing such as group homes, supportive housing and long-term care homes.

6.4.1.3 Innovative forms of housing such as co-housing, modular or prefabricated housing, tiny homes, cluster housing and ground-oriented seniors housing shall be supported by the Township, where compatible with the surrounding context.

6.4.2 **Housing Supply and Growth Targets**

The Township shall ensure that sufficient land is designated and available to meet projected housing needs for a minimum 25-year planning horizon, as required by the Planning Act and consistent with Simcoe County growth allocations.

6.4.2.1 Council shall promote the *development* of a full range of housing types and densities, including single detached, semi-detached, townhouses, apartments and shared and supportive housing forms.

6.4.3 **Affordable Housing**

The Township may support *affordable housing* through the following tools:

- a) Financial incentive programs such as grants, *development* charge deferrals, delaying application fees, and property tax reductions;
- b) Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) that provide incentives;
- c) Community Planning Permit Systems;
- d) Strategic reductions of *development* fees;
- e) Fast-tracking planning approvals for applications with a priority for *developments* receiving time-sensitive government fundings;
- f) Public land disposition or long-term leases for *affordable housing* providers; and/or
- g) Alternative site *development* standards (offered through the County or Township) that reduce the cost of construction and maintenance.

- 6.4.3.1 The Township will plan to achieve Simcoe County's target of ten percent (10%) of all new housing units created each year, or units created by conversion, to be affordable. To help achieve this target, the Township will require all new *developments* to provide a minimum of 5% of units as affordable.
- 6.4.3.2 The Township shall work with Simcoe County, the *development* community, non-profit and Indigenous housing providers and upper-tier agencies to support *affordable housing* supply and programming.
- 6.4.3.3 The Township encourages the provision of *purpose-built rental housing* and shall discourage the loss or conversion of existing *affordable housing* stock without suitable replacement.
- 6.4.3.4 The Township shall monitor housing needs and support the County in establishing and achieving *affordable housing* targets
- 6.4.3.5 The Township will work with the County to develop *affordable housing* strategies.

6.4.4 **Additional Residential Units**

Location

- a) Additional residential units (ARUs) shall be permitted in all residential designations within the Township's *Settlement Areas* where municipal water and wastewater services are available.
- b) Additional residential units may be permitted in the Rural designation, subject to confirmation of servicing capacity.
- c) Additional residential units (ARUs) may be permitted in the Agricultural designation within existing dwellings, subject to confirmation of servicing capacity and compatibility with existing farm operations.

6.4.4.1 Permitted Units

- a) The Township shall permit up to three residential units per lot, in accordance with current Planning Act provisions, consisting of:
 - i. One primary dwelling unit; and
 - ii. Two additional residential units (ARUs), which may be located:
 - Within the primary dwelling;

- One within an accessory structure; or
- One in each of the above (one attached and one detached).

6.4.4.2 Policies

- a) Additional residential units shall be planned and developed in accordance with the following criteria:
- b) Ensure compliance with minimum distance separation formula and compatible with/do not hinder any surrounding agricultural operations;
- c) Ensure compliance with the Ontario Building Code, Fire Code and applicable property standards;
 - i. Ensure compatibility with the character, scale and massing of surrounding buildings and neighbourhoods;
- d) Provide sufficient on-site parking for each unit; and
- e) Within the Agricultural designation, units are limited in scale, located within, attached and/or close proximity to the principal dwelling or farm building cluster and minimize land taken out of agricultural production.
- f) The implementing Zoning By-law may regulate matters such as height, setbacks, access, parking and landscaping.
- g) Prior to the construction and *development* of new single detached, semi-detached and townhouse dwellings, design options should be introduced that would allow up to two additional residential units per property to be accommodated.

6.5 CULTURAL HERITAGE

6.5.1 Cultural Heritage Resources

The Township will promote and encourage rehabilitation of Cultural Heritage Resources in a manner which incorporates the cultural and heritage resources in or adjacent to the site, including the conservation of significant cultural or heritage features, where practical.

6.5.2 Municipal Register

The Township will maintain an inventory of properties and buildings of architectural and/or historic interest. Non-designated properties may be listed if the property meets the required criteria as set out by the Ontario Heritage Act (Regulation. 9/06 Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest).

6.5.2.1 The Township will designate a property within the timeframe outlined in the Ontario Heritage Act and notify the County of newly listed features or properties.

6.5.2.2 A non-designated heritage property may be removed from the Register in accordance with the circumstances/criteria as set out in the Ontario Heritage Act.

6.5.3 **Cultural Heritage Landscapes**

The Township may consider preparing a cultural heritage management plan focused on Cultural Heritage Landscapes to assist in identifying sensitive areas, which may include:

- a) comprehensive mapping and inventories of significant Cultural Heritage Landscapes;
- b) identification and evaluation of these landscapes;
- c) strategies for their conservation and enhancement;
- d) programs to support interpretation and promotion; and
- e) initiatives for education and public participation in the conservation of Cultural Heritage Landscapes.

6.5.4 **Heritage Conservation District**

The Township may designate a Heritage Conservation District, if an area represents a group of significant sites, buildings, or structures pursuant to the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

6.5.5 **Archeological and Indigenous Cultural Heritage Resources**

The Township will work with Indigenous communities and the County to identify and protect known and potential Indigenous cultural heritage resources, including through:

- a) Archaeological assessments;
- b) Cultural heritage evaluations; and
- c) Municipal Heritage Registers, where applicable.

6.5.5.1 In areas of potential Indigenous archaeological significance, the Township will require proponents to undertake Stage 1 and 2 Archaeological Assessments in consultation with appropriate Indigenous communities.

6.5.5.2 *Development* and site alteration shall not be permitted on lands containing archaeological resources or areas of archaeological potential unless significant archaeological resources have been conserved or the land has been investigated and cleared or mitigated following clearance from the Province.

6.6 FOOD ACCESS

6.6.1 The Township will protect and conserve local agricultural food production capacity by restricting the fragmentation of agricultural lands, protecting areas of prime agricultural land and preserving rural and cultural landscapes.

6.6.2 Farmers' markets will be encouraged where appropriate in commercial areas, the Essa Agriplex, open spaces and public parks.

6.6.3 Community gardens shall be permitted where appropriate and encouraged within open spaces and public parks, including new residential and mixed-use plan of subdivision/condominium applications. They will also be encouraged in the common areas of new condominium and modular home development.

6.6.4 The establishment of community kitchens, food co-ops and/or at least one grocery store within each Primary and Secondary Settlement Area (Angus, Baxter, Thornton) shall be encouraged

6.6.5 The provision of green/cool roofs will be encouraged including roof top gardens for all commercial and multi-unit development applications.

6.7 CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

6.7.1 **Climate Mitigation**

Through the Official Plan, the Township commits to integrating climate mitigation and adaptation strategies into land use planning to build a sustainable and resilient community for present and future generations.

6.7.1.1 Land use decisions within the Township shall support compact, mixed-use, and active-transportation supportive *development* that reduces land consumption, vehicle dependence and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

6.7.1.2 The Township shall encourage growth within serviced *Settlement Areas*, where *infrastructure* capacity and community services can be used efficiently.

6.7.1.3 The Township shall promote the *development* of walkable neighbourhoods, with safe *infrastructure* that encourages a shift to active and low-emission modes of travel.

6.7.1.4 New *development* shall consider connectivity to trail systems, public transit routes (where available) and future active transportation networks.

6.7.1.5 The Township shall support better air quality by encouraging compact, mixed-use *development*, promoting transit and active transportation, and advancing forest management and reforestation initiatives.

6.7.2 **Greenhouse Gas Reduction**

The Township will support *development* that minimizes greenhouse gas emissions through:

- a) Energy efficient building design and construction;
- b) The use of renewable low-carbon energy systems, such as solar or geothermal;
- r) Transportation demand management (TDM) strategies for cycling *infrastructure*, carpooling, and electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, to the satisfaction of the Township staff.

6.7.3 **Energy Efficiency and Green Building**

The Township will encourage and support:

- a) Green building certificates such as Energy Star and LEED;
- b) Net-zero and carbon-neutral buildings; and

c) Adaptive reuse of buildings as a strategy to reduce embodied carbon.

6.7.3.1 Municipal facilities and capital projects should demonstrate leadership in energy efficiency and climate-conscious decisions.

6.7.3.2 The Township will promote energy conservation by encouraging compact, mixed-use *development*, supporting active transportation and transit, maximizing the use and production of renewable and alternative energy systems such as solar, wind, biomass, and geothermal where appropriate, and enhancing natural areas and vegetation to help reduce the urban heat island effect. Renewable and alternative energy systems will also be promoted where feasible, in accordance with provincial and federal requirements.

6.7.3.3 The Township will update Zoning By-law provisions and site planning standards to accommodate flexibility in building orientation, landscape design, lot coverage and other site or building characteristics to provide for increased energy efficiency and consideration for climate change impacts.

6.7.4 **Green Infrastructure and Low Impact Development**

The Township will encourage green *infrastructure*, such as green roofs, bioswales, permeable pavers and LEED practices, wherever possible.

6.7.4.1 Stormwater management planning and *development* adjacent to or within natural features shall integrate best practices in green *infrastructure*/Low Impact Development (LID) such as bioswales, permeable surfaces and rain gardens.

6.7.5 **Tree Canopy**

The Township will prioritize the protection of mature and healthy trees and encourage the expansion of the overall tree canopy. The Township may explore the use of a tree canopy target to ensure tree canopy is protected and enhanced.

6.7.5.1 To protect and preserve the character of the Township, while still ensuring the viability of farming, the Township will promote the protection of hedgerows and scenic views and scenic rural streetscapes and shall encourage the retention/preservation of existing farm buildings, and the re-establishment of vegetation along roads, through the review of *development* applications.

6.7.6 **Education, Community Engagement and Monitoring**

The Township will engage residents, landowners, businesses, and schools in climate literacy, energy conservation, and sustainability initiatives.

6.7.6.1 The Township may collaborate with Simcoe County, Indigenous communities and conservation authorities on awareness campaigns, incentive programs and climate action planning.

6.7.6.2 Climate change and sustainability goals shall be considered in all *development* applications including Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments, Draft Plans of Subdivision and Condominium, Site Plan Control and master planning exercises.

6.7.6.3 The Township may consider developing a climate action strategy or implementation framework, identifying measurable targets, priority actions and responsibilities.

7 IMPLEMENTATION

The policies of the Official Plan are intended to guide land use planning and decision making in the Township of Essa. This section of the Official Plan sets out the tools, processes and responsibilities that will be used to put the Official Plan into effect through powers under the Planning Act, Municipal Act, Building Code Act and other applicable legislation and policies.

This Plan may be supported by companion documents such as master plans, guidelines, and other studies as determined by the municipality. These documents must align with and reinforce the Vision, Guiding Principles, and goals of this Plan. For the purposes of evaluating planning applications, the policies of this Plan will apply. In cases of conflict, the Township will consider amendments to this Plan. Companion documents will be reviewed and updated regularly to maintain consistency with this Plan.

Implementation of the Official Plan also requires coordination with the Province, Simcoe County, Indigenous communities, conservation authorities and other stakeholders. Together, these tools ensure that the Official Plan remains a living document that is responsive to change, consistent with Provincial direction and rooted in the goals of a growing, rural, natural, connected and resilient Essa.

7.1 OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENTS

7.1.1 Official Plan Review

The Township will review this Official Plan within ten years of its approval and at least every five years thereafter, unless replaced by a new Plan. Recognizing that the Plan is a dynamic document, it will be monitored in the public interest for effectiveness and amended as needed to reflect changes in legislation, municipal priorities, or the community's physical, social, or economic conditions.

7.1.2 Amendments to this Official Plan

This Plan guides growth and change in the Township to 2051 in line with its Vision and goals, while recognizing that amendments may be necessary. The following policies outline how such changes will be addressed.

- 7.1.2.1 Amendments to this Official Plan will only be considered where policies, designations, or maps do not address specific issues, where site-specific proposals require comprehensive review, or where Provincial policy or legislation changes necessitate updates.
- 7.1.2.2 Applications to amend this Plan must include supporting documentation, to the Township's satisfaction, demonstrating:
- a) Consideration of the matters of Provincial Interest under Section 2 of the Planning Act;
 - b) Consistency with applicable Provincial plans and policies; and
 - c) Any other requirements the Town deems relevant.
- 7.1.2.3 Technical revisions or minor changes to the text or maps of this Plan may be made without public notice or a formal amendment, provided they do not alter the overall intent of the Plan. Such revisions may include:
- a) Correcting grammar, punctuation, typographical errors, or cross-references;
 - b) Renumbering, reorganizing, or rearranging text, tables, or maps without adding or removing content;
 - c) Rewording policies or re-illustrating maps to improve clarity and readability without altering their intent;
 - d) Updating measurements, legislative references, or reflecting changes in legislation; and
 - e) Revising or updating appendices.

7.2 SECONDARY PLANS

7.2.1 Purpose of Secondary Plans

The Township or applicant(s) may undertake a planning study and implement a Secondary Plan in order to guide the *development* or redevelopment of a specified area of the municipality. The Secondary Plan will provide a greater level of detail than provided by the Official Plan.

7.2.2 Scope of Requirements of Secondary Plans

The Township or applicant(s) shall prepare Terms of Reference in consultation with relevant agencies, where applicable to determine the required planning studies. Lands shown with a "Future" overlay on Map X, will require a comprehensive, integrated planning approach and must include the details

outlined in the relevant sections of this Plan for the applicable land use designation and/or variations thereof.

7.2.3 **Cost Sharing and Front Ending Agreements**

To advance the delivery of Secondary Plans and/or required *infrastructure*:

- a) Cost sharing agreements shall be entered into between landowners for the provision of public community and *infrastructure* facilities such as parks, collector roads, road improvements, internal and external services, stormwater management facilities, public/private utilities and school sites. Where a cost sharing agreement is in place for a specific area, the Township shall require that, as a condition of *development* approval, *development* proponents enter into one or more developers' group agreements to address the sharing of these costs.
- b) The Township may enter into Front Ending Agreements for the provision of public *infrastructure* in advance of Simcoe County or the Township's planned provision of the *infrastructure*, and such costs will be recuperated through Development Charges.

7.2.4 **Development Applications in Advance of Township Led Secondary Plan**

Where an adopted Secondary Plan is not yet in-effect and a *development* application is submitted within the Secondary Plan area, the *development* application shall demonstrate:

- Consistency with an adopted Secondary Plan or how the proposed *development* will be positively integrated with the overall plan area where the secondary plan direction is not available;
- The size and/or location of the proposed *development* will not adversely impact the remaining *development* area, or alternatively, is of a significance that it will assist in creating a positive vision for the *development* of the area;
- How the *development* contributes to:
 - a. Diverse mix of land uses and built forms;
 - b. High quality urban design and public realm;
 - c. Provision of park and open space;
 - d. Appropriate refinement of the Environmental features;
 - e. Adequate provision of *infrastructure*;
 - f. Planning approaches that support sustainability guided by this Official Plan;

- g. Co-location of public services facilities, where appropriate;
- h. How the *development* aligns with the requirements set out through the Pre-Consultation.

7.3 ZONING BY-LAW

7.3.1 Conformity with the Official Plan

The Zoning By-law is one of the primary tools for implementing the Official Plan. In accordance with the *Planning Act*, the Zoning By-law shall be updated for conformity within 3 years from the approval of this Official Plan.

7.3.2 Amendments to the Zoning By-law

The Township may consider site-specific Zoning By-law amendments where:

- a) The proposed use or structure is compatible with surrounding *development*;
- b) It does not create hazards for adjacent uses;
- c) It does not harm water, soil, the environment, or natural heritage features;
- d) It conforms to this Plan; and
- e) Adequate municipal services, including water and sewage capacity where applicable, are available.

7.3.2.1 Council may, by by-law, delegate approval of minor Zoning By-law Amendments—such as lifting Holding provisions, issuing temporary use permits, or other minor changes—to a Council committee, officer, employee, or agent of the municipality, in accordance with the Planning Act.

7.3.2.2 The scope of a Minor Zoning By-law shall apply to the extension of a zoning boundary where a property is dual zone or to reflect an addition of lands; and to permit a use not specified in the Zoning By-law but conforms to the Official Plan.

7.3.2.3 A Minor Zoning By-law Amendment is subject to the following criteria:

- a) The Proposal must conform the Official Plan; and
- b) A Draft Plan of Subdivision is not required.

Lands with legally existing uses at the time of this Plan's adoption may be recognized through appropriate zoning, with extensions or accessory buildings permitted subject to the applicable policies of this Plan.

7.3.3 **Minor Variances**

Applications for minor variances to the Zoning By-law shall be considered by the Committee of Adjustment, whose decisions must align with this Plan and meet the criteria for minor variances set out in the Planning Act.

- 7.3.3.1 The Committee of Adjustment may attach conditions to minor variance approvals to ensure consistency with this Plan, which may include, among other requirements, entering into a *development* agreement.

7.3.4 **Lot Deeming By-law**

The Township may determine that a lot, or multiple lots, within a registered Plan of Subdivision are not considered lots in a Plan of Subdivision if deemed to be in the public interest.

- 7.3.4.1 Lot Deeming By-laws may be applied to:
- a) Ensure lot sizes are suitable for servicing needs;
 - b) Address limited access;
 - c) Conserve environmental features in accordance with this Plan;
 - d) Support the goals and objectives of this Plan; or
 - e) Address other matters as deemed appropriate by the Township.

7.4 COMMUNITY PLANNING PERMIT SYSTEM

The Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) is a planning tool that allows for the replacement and combining of the Zoning By-law Amendment, Minor Variance and Site Plan Approval processes, as well as the regulation of vegetation removal and site alteration and other types of *development*. The CPPS offers opportunities to streamline the planning approvals process and clearly establish rules and criteria for *development* within the Community Planning Permit (CPP) By-law.

7.4.1 **Community Planning Permit By-law**

Council may identify one or more areas, including the entire Township, as a Community Planning Permit Area, through a Community Planning Permit By-law.

7.4.2 **Community Planning Permit By-law Transition**

Within an area for which a Community Planning Permit By-law has been enacted, the Township's Zoning By-law and Site Plan Control shall not apply.

- 7.4.2.1 Where existing site plan agreements are already registered on a property, those agreements may be amended, as long as such amendments comply with the applicable provisions of the Community Planning Permit By-law.

7.4.3 **Community Planning Permit System Process**

If a Community Planning Permit By-law is enacted, the use and *development* of land must comply with the permitted uses, standards and criteria set out in the Community Planning Permit By-law as demonstrated by the issuance of a Community Planning Permit unless the proposed use or *development* is expressly exempted from a permit as indicated in the Community Planning Permit By-law.

7.4.4 **Scope of Community Planning Permit System**

A community planning permit by-law will:

- a) Contain a description of the area to which the by-law applies, which must be within the boundaries of the area identified in the Official Plan;
- b) Set out and define permitted and discretionary uses;
- c) Set out *development* standards with specified minimum and maximum standards;
- d) Set out any internal review for permit decisions;
- e) Describe notification procedures for decisions;
- f) Set out criteria for determining whether a proposed use or *development* is permitted;
- g) Describe the process for amending *development* permits, *development* permit agreements and preexisting site plan agreements;
- h) Outline any conditions of approval that may be imposed; and
- i) Set out the scope of delegated authority, including any limitations.

7.4.5 **Implementing a Community Planning Permit By-law**

To permit passage of a Community Planning Permit By-law:

- a) A Community Planning Permit Area may include the entire Township or any area or areas identified on schedules attached to the Community Planning Permit By-law; and
- b) Where a Community Planning Permit Area includes the entire Township, the vision for the Official Plan, objectives of each designation and general policies for guiding growth and *development* in each designation, shall be implemented within the Community Planning Permit By-law to ensure any new *development* and use of land will conform to the Official Plan and address the matters identified in Policy 7.5.4.1.

7.4.6 **Community Planning Permit Application Review and Approvals**

Upon consideration of a complete Community Planning Permit application, the Township may:

- a) Approve the application and issue a permit with no conditions;
- b) Approve the application subject to conditions being met before the issuance of a permit;
- c) Approve the application and issue a permit with conditions attached;
- d) Approve the application subject to conditions being met before the issuance of a permit and with conditions attached; or
- e) Refuse the application.

7.4.7 **Community Planning Permit Application Delegation**

Council may delegate its decision-making authority respecting Community Planning Permit applications and its authority to execute and release Community Planning Permit agreements or pre-existing site plan agreements to a Committee appointed by Council or an employee of the Township in the identified area. Any limits on the criteria for such delegation will be established in the Community Planning Permit By-law

7.4.8 **Requirements for List of Studies, Criteria and Conditions**

To ensure the goals, objectives and policies of the Township's Official Plan, and the matters outlined in Policy 7.5.4.1 will be addressed to determine whether a *development* or use of land may be permitted by a Community Planning Permit, the by-law shall set out criteria to be considered in such circumstances, study requirements, and types of conditions that may be imposed on a permit.

7.4.9 **Community Planning Permit Application Criteria**

The criteria for determining whether a *development*, use of land, discretionary use or variation to by-law provision may be permitted shall be set out in the Community Planning Permit By-law and shall include demonstration of the following to the satisfaction of the Township:

- a) The proposal is appropriate for the lands;
- b) The proposal takes into account the unique characteristics of the property;
- c) The potential off-site and adverse impacts resulting from the proposal are identified and mitigated where appropriate;
- d) The proposal is compatible with the surrounding land uses;
- e) The proposal is consistent with any applicable urban design guidelines;
- f) The proposal conforms to the Simcoe County Official Plan and Township's Official Plan; and
- g) The proposal is consistent with and conforms to Provincial policies.

7.4.10 **Community Planning Permit Application Supporting Studies**

A list of studies that may be required to be submitted at the time of application of a Community Planning Permit application, such that it may be deemed complete, shall be set out in the Community Planning Permit By-law, or in an appendix thereto, and shall include the materials and technical reports that may be required at the time of application.

7.4.11 **Community Planning Permit Application Conditions**

A list of conditions that may be imposed on a Community Planning Permit shall be set out in the Community Planning Permit By-law, or in an appendix thereto, and shall include, but not be limited to, conditions:

- a) That may be imposed pursuant to Sections 34, 40, 41 and 42 of the Planning Act, in order to implement the vision and objectives of the Official Plan;
- b) To require the implementation of actions or recommendations in technical reports that have been submitted in support of a Community Planning Permit application;
- c) To require the submission of supplemental technical reports where deemed required through application review; and
- d) To require the owner of land to enter into an agreement with the Township respecting one or more conditions.

7.4.12 **Community Planning Permit Application Amendments**

Any amendments to a Community Planning Permit By-law shall be in conformity with the objectives and policies of the Official Plan and shall be considered in the context of the planned vision for all lands within the area or areas subject to the by-law. Further, an application to amend the Community Planning Permit By-law must be supported by a comprehensive planning rationale, a strategy for consulting within the public, and the studies and information.

- 7.4.12.1 A Community Planning Permit may allow, as a discretionary use, any use not specifically listed as a permitted use in the Community Planning Permit By-law, provided that the proposed use is similar to and compatible with listed permitted uses, would have no negative impact on adjoining properties, would meet applicable criteria within the by-law and maintain the intent, principles and policies of the Official Plan.

7.4.13 **Community Planning Permit Application Variation to Standards**

A Community Planning Permit may allow certain variations to the standards specified within the Community Planning Permit by-law. Such variations may be permitted only if they have satisfied the policies pertaining to applicable policies of the Official Plan.

- 7.4.13.1 Notwithstanding the maximum building heights established in this plan, for lands within a Community planning permit area, the Township may permit additional building heights with the provision of facilities, services and matters, in accordance with applicable regulations within the implementing Community Planning Permit By-law, without an amendment to this Plan.

7.5 OTHER BY-LAWS

7.5.1 **Temporary Use By-law**

If the general intent of the Official Plan is maintained, Council may pass By-laws to authorize the temporary use of land, buildings or structures for a purpose that is otherwise prohibited by this Plan, for renewable periods not exceeding three years, in accordance with the *Planning Act*.

- 7.5.1.1 In considering a Temporary Use By-law, Council shall consider:
- a) The proposed use's compatibility with the surrounding area;
 - b) Access is available to the proposed use;
 - c) Any requirement for temporary connection to municipal services;
 - d) The proposed use will include sufficient parking on site;

- e) The proposed use does not create any traffic issues within the surrounding area;
- f) Any potential adverse impacts associated with the proposed temporary use.

7.5.2 **Interim Control By-law**

Where Council has, by By-Law or Resolution, directed that a study be undertaken regarding its land use planning policies or Zoning regulations for the Township or any defined area, it may pass an Interim Control By-law prohibiting the use of land, buildings or structures within the area defined by the By-law, for a limited period of time as set out in the *Planning Act*.

- 7.5.2.1 Subject to provincial legislation, only one interim control by-law can apply to a property at any time.

7.5.3 **Site Alteration**

As a condition of *development* approval, the Township may require measures to conserve topsoil and reduce or mitigate soil erosion in accordance with the Site Alteration By-law.

- 7.5.3.1 Topsoil or vegetation removal, or other land disturbances related to a proposed land use change, must not occur until approvals are granted under the Planning Act. If such activities are done in advance to influence a *development* application, they will not be considered grounds for supporting the land use change.

7.5.4 **Community Benefits Charge By-law**

The Township may pass a Community Benefit Charge By-law in accordance with the provision of the Planning Act in order to cover the capital costs of facilities and services required as a result of *development* or redevelopment.

- 7.5.4.1 A Community Benefit Charge may apply to:
 - a) Approval of a Zoning By-law Amendment Application;
 - b) Approval of a Minor Variance Application;
 - c) Transfer of Land;
 - d) Approval of a Plan of Subdivision;
 - e) Approval of a Consent Application;
 - f) Approval of Plan of Condominium Application; and
 - g) Approval of a Building Permit.

7.5.4.2 Subject to Provincial legislation, a Community Benefit Charge may not apply to:

- a) *Development*/redevelopment or structure with less than five-storeys; or
- b) *Development*/redevelopment or structure with less 10 residential units.

7.5.5 **Holding Provision**

The Zoning By-law will include provisions for Holding Zoning which may be applied on lands that area pre-zoned for a use but must be satisfy conditions prior to *development*. Lands subject to Holding Zoning will be identified with an “H” symbol beside the Zoning symbol on the Zoning map.

7.5.5.1 The Holding Zoning can only be applied where there is a need for additional conditions but cannot be applied to pre-zone lands.

7.5.5.2 The lifting of the Hold will amend the Zoning By-law to remove the Holding symbol when it has been determined that the conditions requiring the Holding have been satisfied.

7.5.5.3 In addition to any site-specific holding provisions, the holding symbol may be removed by by-law to permit *development* in accordance with the applicable zoning once the following conditions are met:

- a) Adequate municipal services, including water and sewage capacity, are available (allocation occurs after the Holding symbol is lifted);
- b) Required service extensions are approved through a *development* agreement, if necessary;
- c) Site plan approval is obtained for commercial, industrial, mixed-use, and medium- or high-density residential *developments*;
- d) Phasing, timing, or staging of *development* is approved;
- e) All necessary approvals from regulatory agencies are secured; and/or
- f) The objectives and *development* criteria of the Official Plan are satisfied.

7.5.6 **Conditional Zoning**

Section 34(16) of the Planning Act allows the Township, if in accordance with Provincial regulations, to impose conditions on Zoning By-law Amendments, either Township-wide or within specific areas. Where such conditions are applied, the property owner must enter into an agreement with the Township, register it on title, and the Township may enforce the agreement as provided under the Act.

7.5.7 **Inclusionary Zoning**

Inclusionary Zoning, if authorized by Provincial regulation, may be implemented by the Township through an Assessment Report and subsequent Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments. This tool would require certain residential *developments* to include *affordable housing* units and ensure their long-term affordability.

7.6 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

7.6.1 **Community Improvement Plans**

The *Planning Act* permits municipalities to identify Community Improvement Project Areas, prepare Community Improvement Plans, and provide incentive programs to stimulate redevelopment.

7.6.2 **Delegation**

The Chief Administrative Officer or their delegate may approve Community Improvement Plan application and enter into Community Improvement Plans, where Council has, by By-law or Resolution, delegated the authority to approve Community Improvement Plan application per the *Planning Act*, to the Chief Administrative Officer.

7.6.3 **Alternative Measure**

In accordance with the *Planning Act*, Council may by By-law or Resolution adopt alternative measures for informing and obtaining public input related to Community Improvement Plans.

7.7 PARKLAND DEDICATION

7.7.1 Required Dedication or Contribution

- 7.7.1.1 In accordance with the Planning Act, as a condition of *development* approval, the Township may require the applicant to dedicate up to 2% of the land for commercial or industrial *developments* and in all other cases 5% of the gross developable area of the land. The Township may use an alternative rate as set out in the *Planning Act*.
- 7.7.1.2 In accordance with the *Planning Act*, as a condition of *development* approval, the Township may require cash-in-lieu payment for the Township's reserve fund instead of land.
- 7.7.1.3 The Township may require conveyance of parkland over cash-in-lieu for *development* or *redevelopment* applications for larger sites including but not limited to Plans of Subdivision. Parkland dedication will also be required in areas of the Township, where it is determined there is a need for a park or other public recreation spaces.
- 7.7.1.4 Land dedicated for parks or trails must be free of encumbrances—such as steep slopes, natural or cultural heritage features, or municipal *infrastructure*—and must be fully accessible to the public, unless otherwise directed by the Planning Act.
- 7.7.1.5 Natural areas—such as hazard lands, creek valleys, and natural heritage features—will be preserved as permanent open space but may not count toward statutory parkland dedication. The Township may receive such lands where it serves the public interest, supports continuous open space corridors, or helps maintain community character.
- 7.7.1.6 Cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication may be required where the available land is too limited or unsuitable for acquisition.
- 7.7.1.7 For Consent applications, the Township may establish a fee schedule for land value to avoid the need for individual appraisals and streamline parkland cash-in-lieu dedications.
- 7.7.1.8 The Township recognizes the role of public and private schools in meeting community recreational needs and supports shared use, program expansion,

and access to open space. Wherever possible, parks and other recreational spaces will be connected through continuous open space corridors and multi-use trails to improve access and promote active transportation.

- 7.7.1.9 The Township may enter into an agreement with a developer to construct a park at the developer's expense, to be conveyed to the Township upon completion, with reimbursement provided through a reduction in Development Charges or other capital project funding.

7.8 SITE PLAN CONTROL

7.8.1 Site Plan Control Area

- 7.8.1.1 The Township shall utilize Site Plan Control to help implement the objectives of Official Plan. Therefore, all lands within the Township are designated as a proposed Site Plan Control Area under the provisions of the Planning Act.
- 7.8.1.2 As part of Site Plan Control, Council may require various plans, drawings and reports to be provided. Council may also require the dedication of land for widening municipal roads.
- 7.8.1.3 All properties subject to a Zoning By-law Amendment, where an exception to the normal provisions of the by-law are proposed, are subject to Site Plan Control.
- 7.8.1.4 As set out in the *Planning Act*, *development* subject to Site Plan Applications generally include:
- a) The construction, erection or placement of a building on land or alteration that increases the size;
 - b) The establishment of commercial parking lots or parking of three or more trailers;
 - c) Construction, erection or building of three or more land lease community homes, meaning permanent structure where the owner of the dwelling leases land.
- 7.8.1.5 Site Plan Applications will be evaluated in accordance with the *Planning Act* and the Township's Site Plan Control By-law.

- 7.8.1.6 A Site Plan Control application must include a site plan drawing, satisfactory to the Township, showing:
- a) The location of all proposed buildings and structures, including future phases;
 - b) Road widenings, access ramps, driveways, parking areas, loading spaces, fire routes, walkways, pedestrian access, and facilities for persons with disabilities;
 - c) Associated works and facilities such as curbs, lighting, directional signage, surface materials, and waste disposal storage; and
 - d) Easements, grading, and other required works or services.
- 7.8.1.7 The following lands and uses may be excluded from the Township's Site Plan Control area, subject to the Planning Act:
- a) Placement of Portable classrooms on a school site of a district school boards.
 - s) A building/structure for residential purposes with 10 residential units or less.
 - b) Minor renovations and extensions.
 - d) Licensed Mineral Aggregate Operations under the Aggregate Resources Act.
 - e) Agricultural buildings and structures associated with normal farm practices.
 - f) Accessory buildings and structures.
 - g) Other *development* as considered appropriately Council.
- 7.8.1.8 As a condition of Site Plan Approval, the Township may impose conditions through a Site Plan Control Agreement to be registered on title.

7.9 SUBDIVISION OF LAND

7.9.1 Purpose of Plans of Subdivision

- 7.9.1.1 Plans of Subdivision will be required for lot creation where lot creation by a consent application is not appropriate.
- 7.9.1.2 Plans of Subdivision will be evaluated based on the following:
- a) Conformity with the County Official, applicable Secondary Plans as well as any other applicable plans or policies;

- b) Availability of servicing without undue financial commitment to the Township;
- c) Suitable provision of municipal services including, but not limited to, streets, water, storm and sanitary sewers, waste collection, public and/or private utilities, fire and police protection, parks, schools, and other *community facilities*;
- d) Exposure to noise, air pollution and other negative impacts, along with suitable mitigation measures;
- e) Integration with surrounding land uses and transportation network;
- f) Impacts to, and mitigation of, negative impacts on the natural environment;
- g) Provision of appropriate urban design and landscaping for the proposed *development*;
- h) Compliance with applicable Township guidelines; and
- i) Stormwater Management.

7.9.1.3 The Township may require conditions to be satisfied prior to the final approval and registration of the plan within a prescribed time. If the conditions are not met within the prescribed timeline, the approval may lapse. To ensure conditions are met, the Township shall require the proponent to enter into a Subdivision Agreement.

7.9.1.4 The Township may consider requests for an extension of a Draft Plan of Subdivision approval, where appropriate.

7.9.1.5 The Township may a plan not registered and amend the site-specific designation where an existing plan of subdivision has been registered for eight years or more, with no construction of *infrastructure* installed on site and do not meet the growth management plans objectives of this Plan.

7.9.2 **Consent Applications**

7.9.2.1 A consent application may be allowed to create up to three additional lots in the Urban Area or in accordance with the applicable agricultural and rural policies of this Official Plan.

7.9.2.2 Consents are encouraged to take place by registered plans of subdivision, if one of the following apply:

- a) Where more than 3 new building lots, excluding the retained parcel, would be created;
- b) Where the extension of a public road or a new road allowance would be required; or

- c) Where the extension of municipal water or sewer is required.
- 7.9.2.3 Applications will be evaluated on the following minimum criteria:
 - a) Conformity with this Official Plan and any applicable Secondary Plans;
 - b) The prevailing size, configuration and lot patterns of the surrounding areas;
 - c) Access to the lots to roads and *infrastructure*;
 - d) Impacts to the natural environment
 - e) Adequacy of municipal services and utilities;
 - f) Protects and preserves *prime agricultural lands* and natural heritage features;
 - g) The minimum distance separation formulae; and
 - h) Applicable policies of the County of Simcoe Official Plan.
- 7.9.2.4 As set out in accordance with the *Planning Act*, the Committee may apply conditions of approval that the proponent will be required to satisfy.

7.10 NON-CONFORMING USES

- 7.10.1 Nothing in this Plan shall prohibit the continuation of land uses which legally existed on the date of the approval of this Plan, and have continued to exist without interruption, that do not conform with the provisions of this Plan. However, the Township will encourage applications to change the use of buildings or lands from legal non-conforming to be more consistent with the Official Plan.
- 7.10.2 Expansions to existing buildings and structures, accessory structures and existing uses, as well as conversions or redevelopment of legally existing uses that bring the legal non-conforming use more into conformity with this Plan, are permitted subject to demonstration of the following:
 - a) New municipal services are not required;
 - b) The use does not expand into the Natural Environment such as Environmental Significant Areas, Environmental Prone Areas, and Environmental Wetlands, unless there is no other alternative in which case any expansion shall be limited in scope and kept within close geographical proximity to the existing structure; and
 - c) Appropriate landscaping, buffering, setbacks are incorporated into the design.

7.11 INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

7.11.1 **Acknowledgement and Commitment to Reconciliation**

The Township is committed to advancing the principles of reconciliation and fostering respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through collaborative engagement and mindful understanding.

7.11.2 **Principles of Indigenous Engagement**

Engagement with Indigenous communities shall be:

- a) Early: Initiated at the outset of the planning process.
- b) Meaningful: Allowing for appropriate time, information sharing and respectful dialogue.
- c) Ongoing: Continuing throughout the planning, implementation and review of land use decisions.
- d) Reciprocal: Acknowledging Indigenous jurisdiction, traditional knowledge and priorities.

7.11.2.1 The Township will engage with Indigenous communities on:

- a) Updates or amendments to the Official Plan.
- b) Secondary plans, growth management and major development proposals.
- c) Identification and protection of archeological or cultural heritage resources.

7.11.3 **Procedural Approach to Engagement**

The Township will notify and consult with affected Indigenous communities in accordance with the Duty to Consult as established by the Crown and will facilitate opportunities for their input into Township-led land use planning initiatives.

7.11.3.1 The Township will explore opportunities to establish protocol agreements or memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with interested Indigenous communities to guide engagement procedures and expectations.

7.11.4 **Integration of Indigenous Knowledge and Stewardship**

The Township acknowledges the value of Indigenous traditional knowledge and stewardship principles, and will consider such knowledge in environmental planning, watershed management, and conservation strategies.

- 7.11.4.1 Where appropriate, the Township will work with Indigenous communities to co-develop environmental protection approaches, particularly near significant natural features or lands of cultural importance.

7.12 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

7.12.1 Complete Application Requirements

The Township requires all applicants to include a complete application checklist, as provided by the Township, with the completed necessary supporting information.

- 7.12.1.1 Prior to requesting a complete application checklist, the applicant shall submit:
- a) General location and municipal address of lands;
 - b) Current uses of land;
 - c) Summary of proposed application;
 - d) Conceptual Plan;
 - e) Proposed population and employment densities, if applicable;
 - f) Any known environmental, servicing and transportation issues; and
 - g) Any other information as required in accordance with the *Planning Act*;
- 7.12.1.2 If an application is submitted without the pre-application checklist, and adequate supporting information/reports, it may be deemed incomplete.
- 7.12.1.3 The Township will circulate applications and coordinate with the County of Simcoe, applicable public utilities, conservation authorities, as well as First Nations and Indigenous Communities.
- 7.12.1.4 The pre-application shall expire within one (1) year of date of issue, unless an extension is approved by the Chief Administrative Officer or their delegate.

- 7.12.1.5 Terms of References for specific reports and or studies may be prepared by the Township, where required.
- 7.12.1.6 The Township may have independent, qualified professionals conduct a Peer Review of any technical study submitted in support of a *development* application. The peer review consultants will be required to review the technical studies having regard to relevant Township, and Provincial policies and provide recommendations. The cost of the peer review will be the responsibility of the proponent for the subject *development* application.

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8 INTERPRETATION AND ADMINISTRATION

8.1 DEFINITIONS

Affordable Housing

a) In the case of home ownership, the least expensive of:

1) Housing for which the purchase price results in annual accommodation costs which do not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or

2) Housing for which the purchase price is at least 10 percent below the average purchase price of a resale unit in the regional market area;

b) In the case of rental housing, the least expensive of:

1) A unit for which the rent does not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or

2) A unit for which the rent is at or below the average market rent of a unit in the regional market area.

Camp Site: a camp site is defined as a site for the parking of a recreational vehicle or the erection of a tent and which would serve as a temporary seasonal homesite.

Community Facilities: include emergency services, libraries, schools, health care facilities, municipal buildings, and public recreation facilities.

Designated Greenfield Area: refers to land within *settlement areas* but outside of built-up areas that have been designated for *development* and are required to accommodate the forecasted growth of this Plan.

Developments: the creation of a new lot, a change in land use, or the construction of a building or structure, requiring approval under the Planning Act. It includes the construction of new, or significant expansion of existing, public utilities or *infrastructure* but does not include works subject to the Drainage Act.

Floodway: for river, stream and small inland lake systems, means the portion of the flood plain where *development* and site alteration would cause a danger to public health and safety or property damage.

Where the one zone concept is applied, the *floodway* is the entire contiguous flood plain.

Where the two zone concept is applied, the *floodway* is the contiguous inner portion of the flood plain, representing that area required for the safe passage of flood flow and/or that area where flood depths and/or velocities are considered to be such that they pose a potential threat to life and/or property damage. Where the two zone concept applies, the outer portion of the flood plain is called the *flood fringe*.

Flood Fringe: for river, stream and small inland lake systems, means the outer portion of the flood plain between the floodway and the flooding hazard *limit*. *Depths and velocities of flooding are generally less severe in the flood fringe* than those experienced in the *floodway*.

Infrastructure: physical structures (facilities and corridors) that form the foundation for *development*. *Infrastructure* includes: sewage and water systems, septage treatment systems, waste management systems, electric power generation and transmission, communications/telecommunications, transit and transportation corridors and facilities, oil and gas pipelines and associated facilities.

Intensification: means the *development* of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through:

- Redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites;
- The *development* of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas;
- Infill *development*; and
- The expansion or conversion of existing buildings.

Places of Worship: means premises used by a religious group for worship and related religious, social, and charitable activities, and may include a clergy residence

Prime Agricultural Area: means areas where *prime agricultural lands* predominate. This includes: areas of *prime agricultural lands* and associated Canada Land Inventory Class 4-7 soils; and additional areas where there is a local concentration of farms which exhibit characteristics of ongoing agriculture. *Prime agricultural areas* may be identified by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food using evaluation procedures established by the Province as amended from time to time, or may also be identified through an alternative agricultural land evaluation system approved by the Province.

Prime Agricultural Land: land that includes specialty crop areas and/or Canada Land Inventory Classes 1, 2, and 3 soils, in this order of priority for protection.

Public Service Facilities: Means land, buildings and structures, including but not limited to schools, hospitals and community recreation facilities, for the provision of programs and services provided or subsidized by a government or other body, such as social assistance, recreation, police and fire protection, health, child care and educational programs, including elementary, secondary, post-secondary, long-term care services, and cultural services. *Public service facilities* do not include *infrastructure*.

Purpose-built Rental Housing: means housing that is designed and built expressly as long term rental accommodation. It is different from other types of rentals, such as condominiums or secondary suites, which may be available in the rental market one year and not the next.

Settlement Areas: means urban areas and rural *settlement areas* within municipalities (such as cities, towns, villages and hamlets) where:

- *Development* is concentrated and which have a mix of land uses; and
- Lands which have been designated in the official plan for *development* over the long term planning horizon.

8.2 LANGUAGE

- 8.2.1 When interpreting the policies of this Plan, the specific wording used is critical. Each policy provides direction on how it is to be implemented, how it relates to other policies, and how it fits within the broader objectives of the Plan.
- 8.2.2 Policies may be expressed in different ways to reflect their intent:
- 8.2.3 Directive language (e.g., “shall,” “will,” or “must”) establishes clear requirements or prohibitions, such as “*development* and site alteration shall not be permitted.”
- 8.2.4 Enabling or supportive language (e.g., “should,” “promote,” or “encourage”) provides flexibility and guidance rather than strict direction.
- 8.2.5 The choice of language is therefore deliberate, distinguishing between policies that impose obligations and those that allow discretion in application.
- 8.2.6 Where this Plan references an Act or Regulation, the reference should be read to include any future amendments to, or replacement of, the cited legislation or Regulation.
- 8.2.7 Implementation of this Plan will occur over time. The use of directive terms such as “shall,” “will,” or “must” should not be interpreted as a commitment by the Township to carry out all actions immediately. Instead, undertakings will be phased in, subject to budget considerations and the availability of staff resources.

8.3 NUMERICAL INTERPRETATION

- 8.3.1 Numerical values in this Plan are intended as guidelines. Minor and limited deviations may be permitted where the overall intent of the Plan is upheld.

8.4 BOUNDARIES

- 8.4.1 The boundaries of land use designations and overlays are approximate and should be regarded as absolute only where they coincide with clear physical features such as rail lines, rivers, highways, or other defined geographical barriers. The location of roads, trails, and similar features shown on the Maps is also approximate.
- 8.4.2 The boundaries of Natural Features may be imprecise and are subject to refinement. Their exact extent shall be confirmed on a site-specific basis during the review of *development* proposals, in consultation with the appropriate agencies.
- 8.4.3 Where a land use designation or natural feature abuts a waterbody, the designation shall be deemed to extend into the waterbody, including any flooded lands or private water lots, subject to the policies of this Plan.
- 8.4.4 Minor adjustments to land use boundaries, road alignments, or natural feature locations do not require an amendment to this Plan, provided the general intent of the Plan is maintained.

8.5 TRANSITION

- 8.5.1 Applications or matters commenced prior to coming into force of this Plan shall be continued and disposed of under the former Township of Essa Official Plan, as it existed on the date the application was deemed complete, or the matter was initiated. Applications to amend the previous Official Plan that remain outstanding at the time this Plan takes effect shall be deemed to amend this Plan.

- 8.5.2 Where an application commenced under the former Official Plan has been deemed complete but is subsequently amended or modified prior to a decision being made, the revised application shall be reviewed under, and conform to, the policies of this Plan.
- 8.5.3 This Plan attempts to recognize the existence of approved *developments* that have not yet been constructed or completed. In cases where a conflict arises between such approvals and the policies of this Plan, the existing approvals shall prevail.