

Township of Essa New Official Plan



WELCOME!

Join us for a conversation about the future
and how we plan for our communities to
grow and thrive

**Wednesday
November 12th
5:00-7:00pm**
Township of Essa -
Council Chambers

Township of Essa New Official Plan



What is an Official Plan?

A key document that lays out where and how we plan to grow into the future, and guides where we live, work, and play.

What is the Township doing?

DEVELOPING A NEW OFFICIAL PLAN!!

The project to update policies and develop a new Official Plan was started in 2020 and is ongoing

Why are we doing this?

The Township is required to develop policies to guide growth to 2051 and bring our Official Plan into conformity with the latest Provincial guidance.

Let's talk about the next 25 years

The Township is projected to grow more than 30% by 2051, adding close to 11,000 new residents and over 3,700 new jobs. Let's talk about how and where we plan to grow!
Your input will help shape the directions and policies for the New Official Plan.

Five Key Themes for the New Official Plan



Rural Essa – Farmland

Planning for the protection of farmland and growth of the agri-food industry in Essa



Natural Essa – Protecting the Environment

Protecting nature and directing development away from sensitive environmental areas



Growing Essa – Housing and Jobs

Providing support for a range of housing types and more opportunities for business and job growth



Resilient Essa – Services and places and spaces to play and gather

Planning for healthy, walkable communities, with a range of parks and open spaces, libraries, and recreational areas.

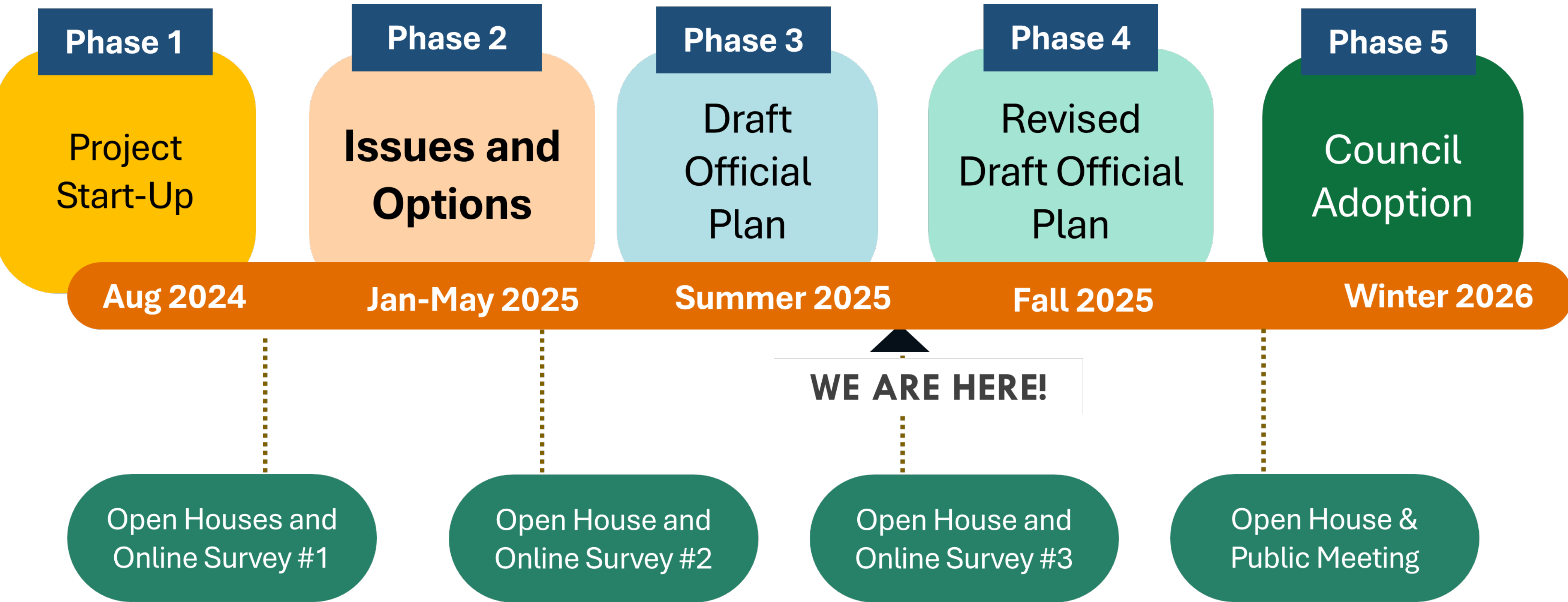


Connecting Essa – How we move through the community

Designing for streets to support different ways to travel through the community including by car, bus, walking, or rolling

Project Process and Key Steps

There are five main phases to the project, with community engagement and gathering of input planned at key milestones.



Exploring the Issues and Options

An Issues and Options Report (May, 2025) has been prepared to explore the key topics for the New Official Plan, and develop recommendations for two main topics:

Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

We are undertaking a technical review to determine how and where to expand the Essa growth boundary to accommodate the need for new community areas. The amount of land needed is guided by Provincial direction as well as the Simcoe County Official Plan and Municipal Comprehensive Review (2023).

New expansion areas would be on lands within Essa that can accommodate more growth based on established criteria.

Key Policy Directions

The New Official Plan will need to be updated to align with the latest Provincial guidance, and integrate policies from the Simcoe County Official Plan.

There are several key policy areas to be explored, including housing, employment, agricultural areas, rural areas, community design, natural heritage, sustainability, transportation, and infrastructure.

Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

Where could we grow?

To support future growth in Essa, some adjustments have been proposed to the Settlement boundary that guides where new development can be supported.

How did we make a decision?

To decide where new areas for growth will be allocated, we evaluated potential lands based on several considerations, including:

- The lands should be adjacent to Angus, Essa's principal settlement area.
- Opportunity for more density and complete communities on the expansion area lands.
- Opportunity for a range of housing types on the expansion area lands.
- The expansion area can be grown while allowing for rural areas in Essa to remain protected.
- No significant impacts on agricultural operations if the expansion areas are developed for growth.
- Impacts to natural heritage and water resources have been considered and can be reduced or managed.
- The growth aligns with sustainability and climate resiliency priorities for the Official Plan.

Expansion Areas Map – What do you think?

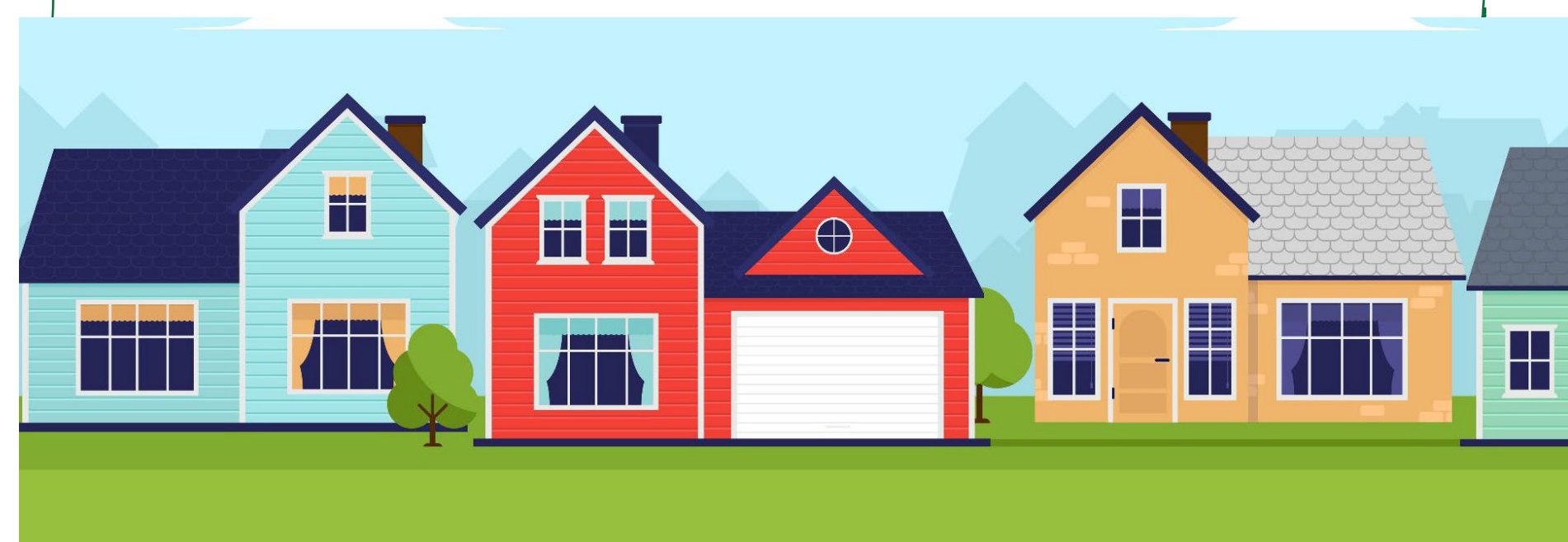
Please take a look at the map provided that shows where Settlement Area Boundary Expansion has been considered, and share your thoughts by adding a post-it note here.

Draft Policy Directions

Housing and Residential

- Provide a range of housing types to support choices and affordable housing options for residents.
- Encourage new development to be located in existing neighbourhoods, and fit with existing types of housing.
- Provide age-friendly, barrier free and accessible housing options.
- Support innovative housing forms including co-housing, modular or prefabricated housing, tiny homes.
- A minimum of 5% of units in all new housing development is required to be affordable, to support the Township-wide overall target of 10% affordable housing stock.
- The Township will work with other municipal, non-profit and Indigenous housing providers and upper-tier agencies to support affordable housing supply and programming.
- The Residential Low designation will permit single detached, semi-detached, duplex and townhouses up to three storeys, as well as small-scale (neighbourhood) commercial uses.
- Home-based businesses may be allowed based on residential area policies, if located within the primary residence or accessory buildings (e.g. garage).
- The Residential Multiple designation will permit a range of multi-unit residential building types (e.g. townhouses, apartments, etc.).
- Some taller apartment buildings up to 6 to 8 storeys may be permitted, depending on access to main roads, access and lot size, neighbourhood fit, and ability to provide transitions to neighbouring low-rise areas.

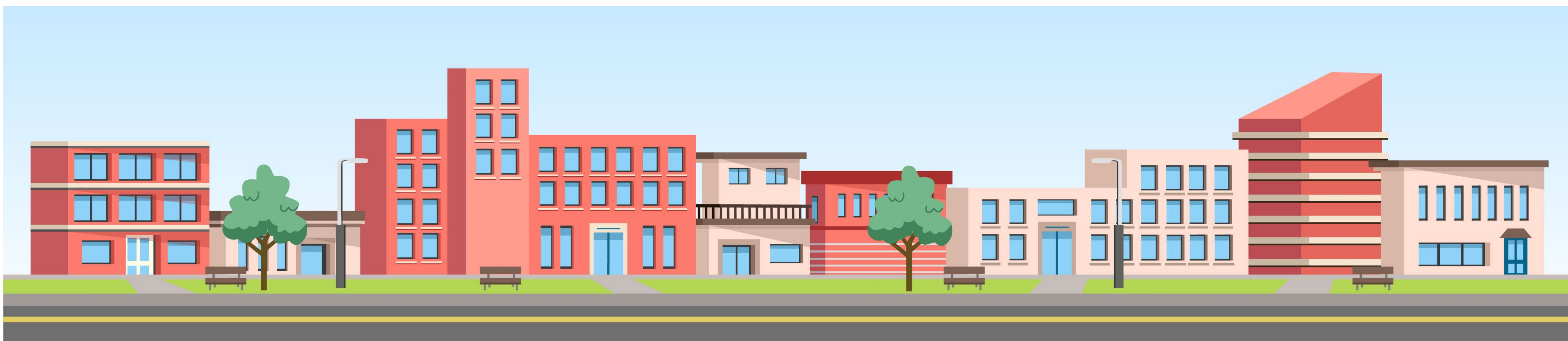
What else should we consider? Add a sticky note or use a dot sticker to tell us which of the policy directions on the board matters most to you.



Draft Policy Directions

Employment and Commercial

- The Commercial designation will allow a range of shopping, offices, businesses, Places of Worship, car and auto service uses, hotels, motels, place of entertainment, restaurants, and schools.
- Buildings of up to 2 storeys in height will be permitted in the Commercial designation.
- The Mixed-Use designation is being expanded to a wider area in Angus. This designation will allow buildings with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential above. It will also consider a variety of residential building types including apartments, townhouses, live-work units, and residential units above or behind office or commercial uses. Existing single detached homes will be allowed to remain.
- The Employment designation will permit a wide range of industry, storage, training facilities, data centres (subject to a Zoning By-law Amendment), associated office and retail uses, and other similar uses.
- Employment uses are encouraged in three main areas: Two existing areas in Baxter and on County Road 56, and a third new area on County Road 27.



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Draft Policy Directions

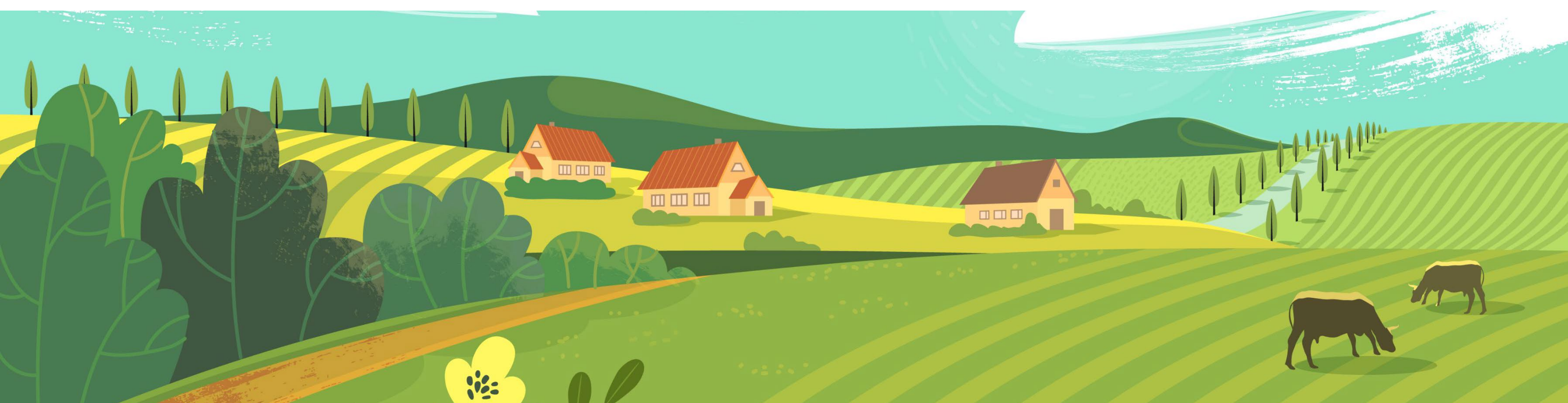
Agricultural Areas

- The Agricultural designation is generally intended to preserve the agricultural community by excluding non-agricultural or incompatible uses.
- Generally, the minimum lot size for an agricultural use shall be approximately 40 hectares. Exceptions to this will require supporting studies.
- On farm diversified uses are supported. These include wineries, bakeries, and recreational uses; home-based businesses such as bookkeeper or daycare; small-scale home industries like vehicle repair; and retail services like a farmers market, small cafés, etc.
- Short Term Accommodation may be permitted as on-farm diversified uses, and shall be regulated by the Township's Zoning By-law and licensing.
- Short Term Accommodation will need to be located within a single detached dwelling, and will not be allowed in an approved Additional Residential Unit.
- Agri-tourism uses are encouraged to promote the local food economy, e.g. short term accommodation, educational experiences; seasonal and visitor-oriented events, festivals, and farm employee accommodations.

Rural Areas

- The Rural designation will allow a wide range of uses that retain the natural landscape and rural character of these areas.
- Lot creation may be permitted on Rural lands provided the criteria in the relevant Official Plan policies are met.
- Agricultural uses which exist in the Rural designation shall be prioritized and protected, to maintain their function.
- Non-agricultural uses would only be permitted with Council approval.

**What else should we consider?
Add a sticky note or use a dot
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Draft Policy Directions

Natural Heritage and Water

- The Draft Official Plan places a priority on protecting natural heritage areas, with development buffers providing some distance from natural heritage features and areas.
- Where development is proposed within the following distances from natural features, an Environmental Impact Study will be required (per Provincial direction).
 - Wetlands and Woodlands: 120 metres
 - Valley land, wildlife habitat, habitat of endangered and threatened species, and Provincially and Regionally Significant features: 50 metres
 - Fish habitat, flood prone areas, and linkages between natural features: 30 metres
- The Greenlands designation is intended to support preservation and conservation, forestry, erosion works, passive recreational uses, existing agricultural uses, and mineral aggregate operations where approved in the Official Plan.
- Development and site alteration are restricted on lands where natural hazards are present, including flooding, steep slopes and erosion, and wildland fire.

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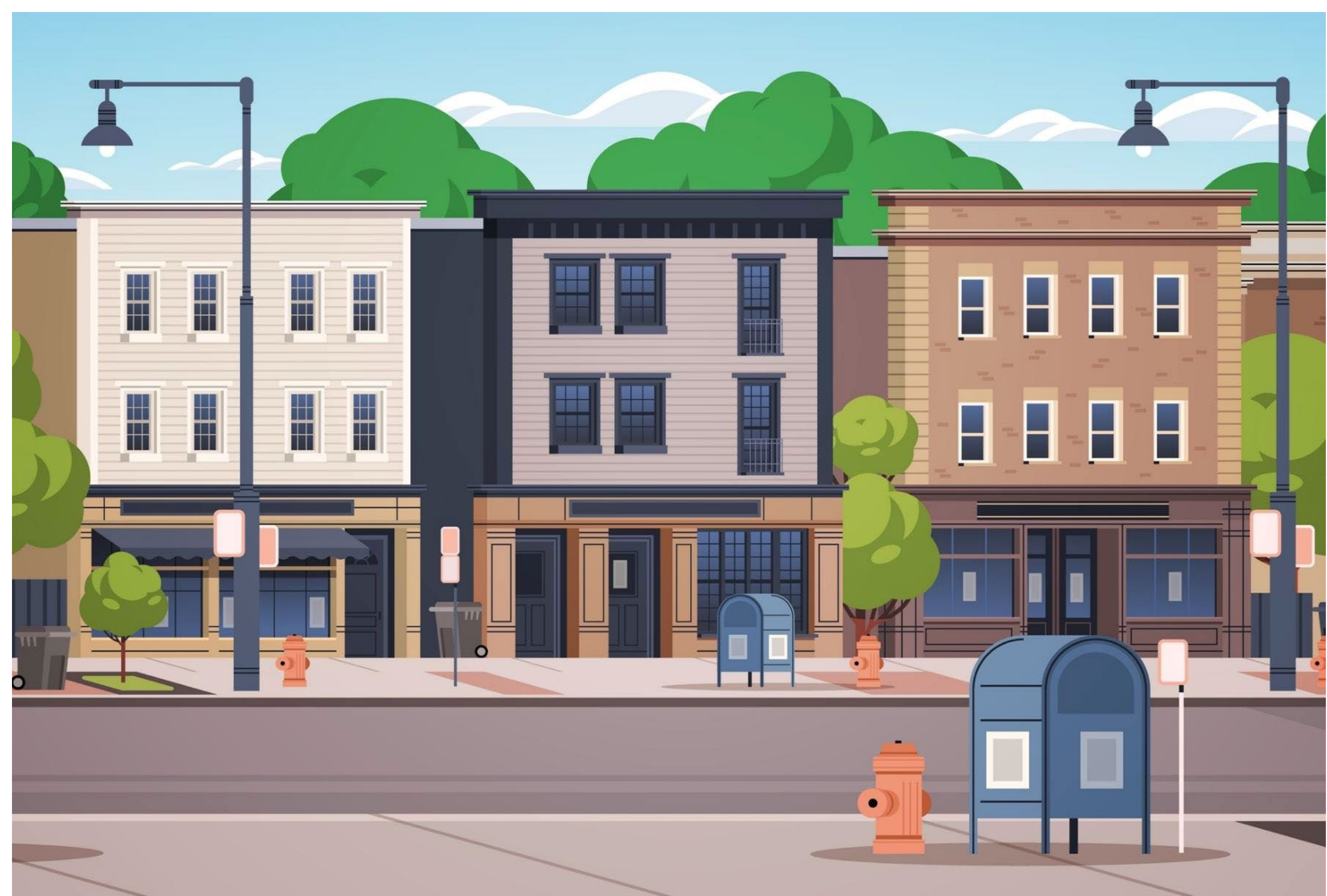


Key Policy Directions

Community Design and Sustainability

- Apply high quality urban design, and create spaces and places that are inclusive and preserve Essa's rural and small-town character.
- Use a range of tools to support active, interesting and inviting spaces including public art, paving, signage, street furniture, and landscaping.
- Design public spaces to be accessible, age-friendly and barrier free.
- Consider community safety, diversity, and comfort in the design of public spaces.
- Libraries are a key community anchor, encourage their use and design them to be inclusive, safe, and welcoming.
- Cultural heritage is an important element of Essa's history, support heritage preservation and enhancement.
- Connect planning of public spaces with pedestrian and cycling infrastructure including pathways, trails, hydro and gas corridors, and any other cycling routes.
- Encourage community gardens, farmers' markets, community kitchens, food co-ops, and green roofs.
- Design compact mixed-use communities, reduce the need for car travel, encourage energy efficient building design, manage stormwater, protect and grow the tree canopy.
- Promote education and collaboration on sustainability and climate action.

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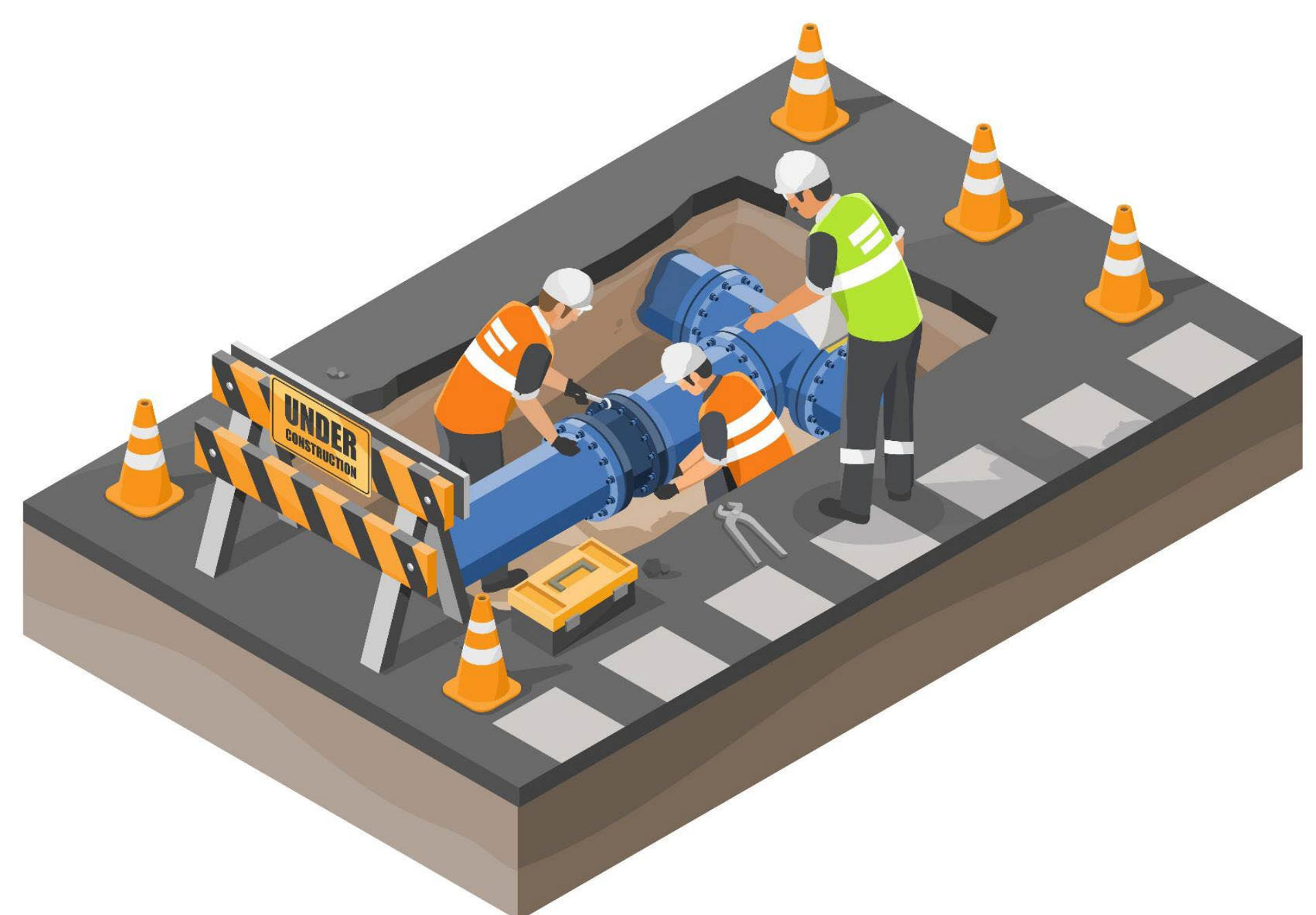


Key Policy Directions

Transportation and Infrastructure

- Coordinate with Simcoe County LINX Transit towards service growth within Essa and between/among neighbouring municipalities.
- Support transit and cycling infrastructure through complete street design for new/upgraded streets.
- Support cycling and walking between neighbourhoods, transit stations, employment and retail areas, tourism destinations, community services, and County connections.
- Protect lands around the railway corridor to allow for future expansion for freight or passenger rail service.
- Plan for improved transit connectivity particularly between key settlement areas like Angus, Thornton and Baxter.
- Plan for any settlement area boundary expansions only to areas with existing or planned servicing.
- Integrate sustainable stormwater management into new development to reduce the impact of flooding due to extreme weather.
- Plan for green infrastructure that integrates more trees and green spaces into development, streets, and public spaces.
- Development in Angus will only proceed where sufficient servicing capacity exists for water and wastewater, or where the Township has approved an agreement for a developer to fund or construct servicing.

**What else should we consider?
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matters most to you.**



Stay in Touch!



- Stay up to date with our progress and take the survey on our project website:
essatownship.on.ca/official-plan-review
- Your input will help shape the Final Draft Official Plan policies and mapping.



You can also share your ideas, input and concerns by email: **Officialplan@essatownship.on.ca**

