



TOWNSHIP OF ESSA 2004 SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

In accordance with Section 300 of *The Municipal Act, 2001*, each municipality must provide public notice on improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery by the municipality and its local Boards, and to identify barriers which may prevent achieving improvements.

The Township of Essa is pleased to provide the following information for 2004.

ROADS/PUBLIC WORKS

Fleet:

A tandem snowplough/sander combination unit was purchased which will reduce repair and maintenance costs for aging equipment. In addition, it will be assigned to a ploughing route in the winter season that was previously ploughed by a grader, thereby improving on the response time for both ploughing and sanding operations.

Road Reconstruction/Paving:

The municipality reconstructed/paved 3.6 km of roads in 2004, leaving 55.4 km of gravel roads to maintain. It is the municipality's goal to eventually reconstruct/pave all of our road system subject to budget approval. Although properly reconstructed/paved roads have a high up-front cost compared to gravel roads, they are more cost effective to maintain over the long term.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Service Improvements

The Tree Top Soccer Park was expanded to include a third soccer pitch to support the expanding soccer program in Essa Township.

The Utopia Community Park conversion into a soccer park was completed and now hosts three regulation $\frac{3}{4}$ size pitches.

An irrigation system was installed at the Angus Community Park baseball diamond to improve and maintain a safe playing surface.

The Lions Park and Bush Diamond underwent major renovations to the baseball field playing surface to support the expanding minor baseball program in Essa Township.

The Thornton Arena reaped the benefits of a major renovation to the flooring in the front entrance, including a wheelchair accessible ramp to the warm viewing area and improvements to the change room washrooms.

A new covered outdoor pad was erected to permit year round activities.

The Essa Recreation Centre improved accessibility by installing ramps to all entrances/exits and automatic front doors.

Barriers

The *Safe Drinking Water Act* significantly impeded the rental of various community facilities due to new requirements/standards which proved to be unattainable without extensive upgrades. After acquiring engineering reports it was evident that the buildings did not generate sufficient revenue to support the required upgrades.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Service Improvements and Efficiencies

New signs were purchased for posting **Committee of Adjustment** application notices, which are larger and brighter in order to make identification of properties easier.

Planning Department

Site plan review has been expanded to include the Clerk and the Engineering Technician, saving external consultant review and associated costs.

A Planning and Development Technician was hired to assist with the coordination of circulations, review building permit applications for zoning compliance, to assist lawyers in getting information and answers for real estate transactions, computerized mapping and computerized building permits and tracking.

Building Department

The Building department has acquired new septic inspection tools, and other tools, enabling staff to better serve contractors and carry out inspections more efficiently.

Water connection inspections were incorporated into the Building Inspector's routine to save time and money, and the Inspectors also read water meters when requested.

By-Law Enforcement / Canine Control

Accessibility to disabled parking has been improved by increased enforcement of disabled parking in plazas and increasing the fine from \$50 to \$300 per offence.

Large numbers of Untidy Lot notices were issued, resulting in many properties being cleaned up. Legal fees have been averted by having the MLEO prepare Informations and summons' and organize evidence on her own.

New computers and property information software have improved the efficiency of the MLEO and Building Inspectors.

Economic Development

The Economic Development Committee was instrumental in raising funds toward riverbank restoration and conservation through the annual Salmon Festival. Savings were achieved through partnerships with Nottawasaga Futures and other South Simcoe municipalities on a Business Attraction study.

The Economic Development office provides residents with an alternate location to purchase burn permits, garbage vouchers, blue boxes and respond to general enquiries.

TREASURY / UTILITIES

New financial software was installed to improve efficiency.

Barriers

The Township lacks human resources and there is no dedicated Information Technology staff to assist in developing the use of new software for reporting and potential for on-line applications for use in e-commerce.

ADMINISTRATION

In accordance with Provincial legislation, a Hiring Policy was developed and approved to ensure consistency, transparency and equity in the recruitment and hiring process.

A newsletter was developed for circulation to staff following Council meetings so that front line staff are aware of Council decisions and can respond to directly to simple resident enquiries, alleviating the need for Department Head intervention.

Development of a new Business Licensing program began in 2004 to ensure that licenses are required by any business where there may be a concern regarding health and safety, consumer protection or nuisance control.

The Essa Accessibility Committee toured Township facilities and made a number of recommendations for removing barriers in both library branches and both arenas. Virtually all of these recommendations have been put into place.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

The **Essa Fire Department** has entered into a joint purchase agreement with two neighbouring municipalities for the purchase of a Fire Safety House to facilitate public education such as public safety, life safety, fire safety, fire prevention, severe storm and emergency preparedness. The Fire Safety House can convert into an emergency command post with communication capability for emergency or disaster management.

To comply with **Emergency Measures** legislation, a fully automated emergency power generator has been installed as an addition to the Township office, allowing the municipality to continue to operate during emergency or power outage conditions and provide a functional Emergency Management Operations Center.

The Township of Essa completed the Essential Level Emergency Plan and met the first of three mandates by Emergency Management Ontario in the development and planning for emergencies or disaster.

Barriers

No outside funding has been provided to assist the municipality with the financial impact of meeting mandatory requirements of the *Emergency Measures Act*, development of programs, job specific Community Emergency Management Coordinator costs, staff development, special equipment, training, and public information needs. These costs add to an already over burdened municipal tax base.

Lack of provincial funding for the provision of fire and emergency services, leaving all funding to come from the municipal property tax base. The administration, training, equipment replacement and special equipment needs for specific hazards and emergencies will continue to place extreme pressure on the municipal tax base, unlike other emergency services which receive annual or set funding from the Province. Lack of stable government funding will detrimentally affect every municipal fire service and restrict a municipality from providing better service.

Failure of the Provincial Government to enact legislation to protect full time firefighters who are volunteer firefighters in their own municipality. Without legislation to protect these volunteers, full time positions may be eliminated by the union resulting in shortages of fire fighters, emergency and first-response personnel, and highly trained individuals who provide an essential service in their communities.

ESSA CENTENNIAL LIBRARY

Service Improvements

The Library continued with the Automation Project to develop an automated library system which will improve public access to the collections and better utilize staff resources. Service improvements included:

- ✓ Additional public seating and shelving in both branches improving accessibility and promoting greater use of Library materials.
- ✓ Facility improvements were made to comply with requests from the Township's Accessibility Committee.
- ✓ Various consortia/charitable pricing agreements enabled the library to purchase products and a computer at a very competitive price.
- ✓ Partnerships with neighbouring municipalities and libraries provides a number of programs and rotating collections of videos, DVDs and specialized products.
- ✓ Dog Licenses and garbage bag tags are now sold at both library branches, improving access to these items for all residents.
- ✓ A Procurement Policy was approved to govern purchasing practices, ensuring best value for money spent.

Barriers

Barriers to adequate promotion of the Library services include:

- the loss of the Angus newspaper,
- staff and space constraints make it difficult to bring in school groups, visit local schools, and offer programmes that attract users to the Library;
- difficulties reaching/communicating with rural residents of the Township.

There is no secured public programme space that can be used for studying or for community meeting space if staff are not available to supervise.

The current facility is not large enough to house the appropriate size of collection for the population served.

Current staff hours cannot accommodate the growing collection and do not allow for proper maintenance of current information in the Community Information Database.

Programming for pre-school and school-aged children needs to be expanded but is limited by the amount of time staff have to contribute to it.

In order to provide information, a comprehensive reference collection and trained staff are required who can devote the time needed to provide effective information services.