

**2003 Community Strategic Plan
Essa Economic Development Update**

Planning For Growth	
Action Items	Activity
Develop and implement sound land use planning practices for both rural and urban development	Completed, Official Plan 2001, Province providing direction to all municipalities
Provide a wide range of housing opportunities (including affordable housing for seniors, low and moderate income residents)	Essa Council and Staff have encouraged a range of housing projects
Establish a broader-based community planning committee; create a citizen advisory group to identify appropriate types of development to maintain a rural atmosphere	Essa Economic Development Committee has eight community members & two staff and encourages community participation
Create a committee with representation from each community of Essa to work with the municipal planner	Essa Economic Development Committee has both rural and urban representatives with various backgrounds in small and large business owners
Identify the gaps and assets that currently exist in the community; work with future development to address them	Essa Community Strategic Plan 2003 www.nottawasaga.com
Identify growth areas in conjunction with the water pipeline	Completed, Official Plan 2001
Connect new residential development to greenbelts and waterways	Completed, Official Plan 2001. Completed a Natural Heritage Plan 2004 showing Essa's environmentally sensitive lands. Policies are being developed
Develop an infrastructure plan (growth projections, housing needs, water and sewers, transportation); incorporate it into the Official Plan	Plan completed by the Township Planning Department until 2016
Recognize that affordable rental housing is required and incorporate it into the Official Plan	Completed, Official Plan 2001
Plan for and develop more apartments and cooperative housing projects including affordable accommodation for seniors	Completed, Official Plan 2001. An affordable housing model and business plan are being developed by Nottawasaga Futures
Plan an aesthetic and efficient housing development with diversified housing needs	Completed. Various housing projects being developed
Identify needs of specific groups (seniors, retirees, tourists)	Township of Essa has developed an Accessibility Committee. Tourism initiatives being developed i.e. Essa Salmon Festival & Riverbank Derby and a Tourist Information Centre being developed.
Develop a rural retirement subdivision	Completed, Official Plan 2001
Establish a central point for development of all facilities (recreation, youth facilities, shopping, daycare, senior programs) to create stability and uniform accessibility	Township of Essa has focused on the arena site in Angus and Thornton – new community buildings and meeting rooms are being constructed
Liaise with the Community Facilities & Services Group	On-going
Lobby the school boards for a local high school	Provincial and regional jurisdiction. Letters have been sent to both school boards and a special public meeting was held in Angus June 2004
Hold Community Meetings	Annual public forum meetings are conducted by Mayor Guergis once per year in each municipal urban area of the municipality
Leading In Environmental Protection	
Action Items	Activity
Create an environmental action committee	Completed Natural Heritage Plan 2004. Additionally 3 public meetings were held in 2004
Create user-friendly educational centres (e.g. Tiffin Centre) to promote the significance of the natural environment	Policy is now being developed
Initiate a compost/green waste pickup (spring/fall) to deter dumping	Simcoe County jurisdiction with yard waste pick-up

Designate a green waste drop-off area for garden waste	Simcoe County jurisdiction with waste drop off at local landfills
Improve access to water and sewers to eliminate environmental concerns	Completed. Township of Essa has expanded water service to all homes in Angus
Encourage the Township to investigate and consider approval of alternative technologies to current water and sewage systems	Completed. Township of Essa is incorporating new technologies into its sewage treatment plant expansion
Maintain the level of water being returned to the community; return wastewater to the community after cleaning it up. Research alternate sewage treatment plans	Mandatory regulations, Ministry of Environment
Identify and establish a “bank” of baseline data (benchmarks) for: Water quality/ quantity; Landfill site locations (old and new); Biosolid spreading sites; Soil fertility; and habitat features	Completed. Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority collecting baseline data on water quality/quantity. Ministry of Environment is investigating bio-solids. Habitat features identified in the Natural Heritage Study 2004
Monitor water use realistically	Completed. Water meters installed and a flow meter at the waste water treatment facility
Improve water quality by restricting livestock access to waterways, developing manure storage facilities, and/ or minimizing cropland erosion	Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority’s Healthy Waters Program
Create a program to promote pollution awareness, provide an easily accessible telephone number to call to report problems/ concerns	Ministry of Environment has developed a SWAT team. 416-313-4278
Actively promote the implementation of Best Management Practices to producer groups and related industry	Completed. Ministry of Agriculture has held several workshops in the area in the last couple of years. Nottawasaga Futures in partnership with OFA and Christian Farmers host an Annual Agricultural Forum in January
Incorporate a Best Management Plan workshop or a speaker into Simcoe County Farmers Week days (beef, dairy, crop, swine)	
Promote the cost benefits of “new” Best Management Plans	
Encourage all “nutrient users” to prepare a Nutrient Management Plan	
Linking Parks and Open Spaces	Policy being developed as an outcome of the Flood Study and the Natural Heritage Study
Review the Official Plan for residential/ industrial/ green spaces	
Implement by-laws to protect parklands and green space from residential, industrial, and commercial development	Completed. Essa Parks & Recreation Department
Identify existing parks, their accessibility and who they serve	
Create a user-friendly “park linkage” system using the Nottawasaga River and its subsidiaries to guide the system; link with the CFB Borden system	Policy being developed as an outcome of the Flood Study and the Natural Heritage Study
Create an “Adopt-the-River” program; turn the Nottawasaga River into a true greenbelt/ tourist area	Pending – through recommendations of the Angus Flood Study and the Natural Heritage Study and with the efforts of the Salmon Festival Committee
Clean up rail lines	Trail Committee is active on this initiative
Improve the upkeep of the Centennial Park, Minesing Swamp, and other parklands	Essa Parks and Recreation department are developing this initiative
Establish fundraising efforts for improving parks and facilities	Essa Parks and Recreation department are developing this initiative
Integrating the Transportation Network	
Action Items	Activity
Establish a transportation committee	County of Simcoe Planning Department jurisdiction

Develop a feasibility study to identify the need for a regional public transportation service	Provincial and Simcoe County jurisdiction levels)
Solicit the Smart Growth Committee to promote public transportation	Being reviewed by the Province
Link railways to encourage tourism	Township of Essa have lobbied and sent letters to the Province, City of Barrie to encourage GO Transit in Essa
Create a train ride from Collingwood	
Work with the Township on future OSTAR funding application to upgrade roads	County of Simcoe jurisdiction to upgrade roads Have lobbied successfully
Continue to lobby the Township and County to remove axle weight limitations on key transportation arteries	County of Simcoe jurisdiction. Ongoing lobbying efforts (e.g., letters and deputations)
Develop an activity-based bus service for youth	
Create a business to help with the transportation of people within the community	Developing an initiative through Youth Group and local Taxi company
Promoting and Supporting Business Development	
Action Items	Activity
Create community councils to review and brainstorm community needs regarding business development	Essa Economic Development Committee holding regular <i>Meet & Greets</i> for business liaison
Increase awareness of the Essa EDC office and staff	Yes, ongoing
Promote activities of the Essa EDC through ongoing newspaper articles	Quarterly newsletter being issued
Encourage Essa EDC members to communicate with local businesses	Essa Economic Development Committee members communications through newsletters and <i>Meet & Greets</i>
Share results of the survey with businesses and government agencies	Information has been provided to all levels of government by the Nottawasaga Futures
Communicate with existing businesses and industry to identify expansion opportunities	Ongoing liaison with existing businesses and with Nottawasaga Futures in their business resource centre
Develop a clear strategy for business attraction and development that fits with the community's culture	In progress through the business plan and South Simcoe Economic Alliance www.southsimcoeea.ca
Investigate opportunities to host seminars or workshops with other communities in South Simcoe on customer service assistance, marketing and promotion	Offered in-part by Nottawasaga Futures www.nottawasaga.com
Develop a "Support Local" initiative	Essa Council resolved to support local businesses purchases
Encourage clean industry	Completed. Official Plan 2001
Make Essa an environmental attraction	Initiated the Essa Salmon Festival & Riverbank Derby developed in 2003 and supported in 2004 www.essasalmonfest.com
Develop a plan to attract "small town", family-run businesses	Completed. Official Plan 2004, South Simcoe Economic Alliance and Business Retention & Expansion study
Develop a commercial building that provides individual office space for entrepreneurs/ off-site workers and shared administration/ communication services	In progress through the private sector – property north of Tim Horton's in Angus
Recruit more shopping, entertainment, and banking facilities	Essa Economic Development Committee is working on this initiative

Fostering Tourism Growth

Action Items	Activity
Establish a tourism development committee	Essa Economic Development Committee has initiated/participated in several tourism programs: Essa Salmon Festival & Riverbank Derby www.essasalmonfest.com and the Information Centre on County Road 90 Spring 2005. South Simcoe tourism initiative completed in 2004 by Nottawasaga Futures www.nottawasaga.com
Identify all tourism partners (eco-tourism, pick-your-own operations, farmers markets)	Tourism quarterly newsletter completed by Nottawasaga Futures
Liaise with other counties who have developed marketing programs for agri-tourism and eco-tourism, farm markets, farm tours, etc	Regional tourism program through Nottawasaga Futures www.nottawasaga.com
Build on the existing tourist attractions	Essa Salmon Festival & Riverbank Derby 2003 and 2004 www.essasalmonfest.com
Establish a tourism signage program to clearly identify attractions at key locations (Highway 400 and Highway 27)	Completed by the Province
Establish a tourism information centre	Essa Economic Development Committee developing office at Don Ross Property trailer 2005
Develop new opportunities (e.g. fishing industry)	Yes, Salmon and Trout fishing
Encourage bed & breakfast development	Part of Tourism initiative www.nottawasaga.com
Package local attractions for day trips, including farm tours	Created 1 st Annual Salmon Fest in 2003 & 2004 www.essasalmonfest.com
Create one large community event	Completed 2003 www.essasalmonfest.com
Organize a Salmon Festival	Unfortunately this is not possible with river water levels
Consider re-introduction of the Canoe Race	Essa Salmon Festival & Riverbank Derby promotes family
Establish a “Fish with Youth” week	Essa Salmon Festival & Riverbank Derby www.essasalmonfest.com
Host fly-fishing tournaments	Council is supportive of numerous ventures (e.g., Gibson Centre, Utopia Grist Mill Project)
Develop and expand cultural, heritage, and arts festivals	Essa Salmon Festival & Riverbank Derby 2003, 2004 www.essasalmonfest.com
Promote community events	Essa Salmon Festival & Riverbank Derby 2003, 2004 www.essasalmonfest.com
Encourage tourist attractions such as fairs and special theme festivals	Establish unique and inviting community events
Establish unique and inviting community events	Establish a committee to implement a high profile event (e.g. Nottawasaga River race, fishing derby, car show, studio tour, western rodeo, ethnic festivals)
Establish a committee to implement a high profile event (e.g. Nottawasaga River race, fishing derby, car show, studio tour, western rodeo, ethnic festivals)	Utilize local arts councils to promote the area as a tourist attraction
Utilize local arts councils to promote the area as a tourist attraction	Local art is displayed at the Township of Essa Municipal Office foyer

Supporting the Agricultural Community

Action Items	Activity
Create a committee to promote the preservation of agricultural land	Municipal Committee of Adjustment
Promote the mission and vision of the Ag-Industry Task Force	Encouraged through Official Plan, Ag funders forums held in 2003 and 2004 by Nottawasaga Futures
Develop and recruit new partnerships	Always being considered
Develop a position statement on the importance of providing support for agriculture and rural programs	Completed. Official Plan 2004
Develop educational programs and/ or opportunities for the public to learn about agriculture	Completed. Provincial government developed a public office and 800 number to assist the public attain information on agricultural issues
Investigate innovative techniques to identify new Best Management Practices	Done by the Province of Ontario
Boost educational programs in schools to increase the understanding of Best Management Plans	
Provide training programs on, and project the success of the following; eco-tourism, niche markets, pick-your-own, farm holidays with bed & breakfasts, and equestrian trails	
Develop programs to focus on food production and technology	
Lobby for independent-based agricultural research	

Strengthening Downtown Cores

Action Items	Activity
Create a committee to identify high impact, low cost improvements to downtown cores	In progress through the Angus Business Improvement Association
Employ architectural controls to reinforce identity, complement heritage, and beautify retail areas	Municipal zoning by-law amendment passed to encourage vibrant downtown
Promote historical type developments and improvements	
Develop incentives to encourage owners to maintain and improve their properties	Municipal zoning by-law amendment passed to encourage vibrant downtown. Planning Department investigating a Community Improvement initiative
Create a focal point for Angus	Clock Tower built
Beautify downtown Angus	Developed by the Business Improvement Association and Horticultural Society
Encourage participation and support of Parks & Recreation	Beautifying downtown Angus with flowers and gardens by the Business Improvement Association and Angus Horticultural Society
Promote Earth Day	Local community group organized a clean up on Earth Day
Support the efforts of horticultural societies	Council and the Business Improvement Association is very supportive
Establish a number of special events, such as sidewalk shopping or midnight madness	Essa Economic Development Committee is facilitating the coordination of business activities

Meeting Health Care Challenges	
Action Items	Activity
Recruit more doctors, nurses, and dentists	Physician Recruitment Committee is active and recruited seven doctors into the area
Investigate Barrie's current "rural doctor" initiative to determine its suitability to Essa	Completed
Investigate if there is any existing government funding for medical services	Completed
Establish a walk in clinic	Completed. Angus Family Medical Centre
Investigate with CFB Borden the use of their medical facilities and hospital	This has been investigated and is not possible
Provide emergency medical services	Through existing health system facilities
Ensure adequate ambulance services	New Ambulance Station in Angus, will improve response times in Essa
Expanding Access to Culture and Recreation	
Action Items	Activity
Increase awareness of what facilities and services are currently available	Completed. Township of Essa website, Program Guides, and newspaper information www.essatownship.on.ca
Build a skate board park	Completed. Summer 2002
Build basketball courts with sign-out balls from the arena	Basketball courts are being built in Angus 2004
Rent gyms at no cost	Municipal Gym rental costs are very low
Better utilization of Centennial Park	Essa Salmon Festival & Riverbank Derby has accomplished this www.essasalmonfest.com
Build affordable, recreational facilities reflecting the community's needs	Completed e.g., basketball courts, ice pads etc
Build more outdoor recreational facilities	Completed e.g., basket ball courts
Expand and link the trails system across the region	In progress through the Essa – Innisfil Trans Canada Trail Committee. Clean-up days held in May 2004
Create an arts recreation program	Private individuals offers evening art classes at Township of Essa office
Promote art classes that local artists can sign up to teach	
Survey existing groups and develop a directory of services	Completed. Parks & Recreation publish directory through Program Guide. The South Simcoe Community Information Centre (CONTACT) has a complete listing of all community services, organization, and resources
Create an inventory of existing community services, organizations, and resources	

Working With Youth and Senior Populations

Action Items	Activity
Develop opportunities for youth education, including cooperative experiences	Co op programs in High School, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program OYAP (high schools), Job Connect Program - out of school youth (hands on training and learning with local employers), Various skills Link Programs (HRSD), Summer Jobs Services and Hire a Student Campaigns, Construction Craft Worker Pre-apprenticeship Program in 2004 (CCW) - 15 area youth gained hands on training in the construction industry including academic upgrading (Learning Centres), Pre-employment Preparation, Formal Hands on Instructional Training (Level 1 CCW Apprenticeship) at the Life Long Learning Centre, Placement with local construction businesses.
Offer a more diversified type of education	Ongoing - schools and board projects, Learning Centres in Alliston & Barrie, Correspondence and independent learning, and see Develop opportuities for youth education, including co-op education
Increase post-secondary educational facilities and opportunities	Regional jurisdiction. Letter sent to school board, encouraging facility development
Conduct a focus group to determine the youth perspective	Study on youth employment services is led by Focus Community Economic Development Corporation and is ongoing www.focuscdc.on.ca
Survey youth to determine their needs	

Recruiting Volunteer Participation

Action Items	Activity
Create a volunteer registry	Volunteer opportunities can be posted by community organizations with FOCUS www.focuscdc.on.ca and in a binder at the Essa Borden ERC (many Essa organizations are registered) perspective volunteers can view posting and contact agencies listed - users include students wishing to complete 40 hrs of community service, retirees, and general members of the community
Recruit volunteers to help beautify the Township	
Support existing organizations	
Facilitate increased volunteerism in the provision of community services	

Facilitating Open Communication

Action Items	Activity
Develop a public education strategy to address urban-rural co-existence issues	Provincial jurisdiction
Improve communication from Council	Mayor's Annual Public Forum
Update information on the municipal website	The new Town Hall style website (Nov. 2004) is being regularly updated www.essatownship.on.ca
Increase communication to inform the community of Township meetings	Yes through website and newspaper advertisements www.essatownship.on.ca
Create a newsletter	Quarterly Newsletters developed by the Essa Economic Development Committee are sent to businesses. A Municipal Newsletter is sent out with tax bills
Work with CFB Borden to facilitate the joint use of services	Pending. Negotiations on-going

Develop a website for residents to provide input on what they want to see in their community	Yes
Link community events to the municipal website	Yes
Use existing communications to promote the Township (e.g. Bob's Garden on the New VR)	Television and radio used to promote Salmon Festival 2003 and 2004
Establish a community kiosk to distribute community information	Essa Economic Development Centre located in Angus June 2002
Broadening Township Pride	
Action Items	Activity
Establish a "Promote Essa" committee	Yes promotion through Essa Economic Development Committee and South Simcoe Economic Alliance www.southsimcoeea.ca
Communicate, educate, and promote the Township's assets externally	
Promote the Township as an outstanding place to live, work and visit	
Communicate successes and infrastructure improvements in Angus and Thornton	Completed through web sites www.essatownship.on.ca , newsletters, and newspaper articles
Communicate growth in business and the community as a whole	Completed. Essa Economic Development Committee and South Simcoe Economic Alliance www.southsimcoeea.ca
Promote the slogan "Where Town and Country Meet"	Completed
Develop an adequately financed regional marketing strategy with relevant business and organization partners	Completed. South Simcoe Economic Alliance www.southsimcoeea.ca
Create a marketing strategy (including a video) to promote/ encourage a rural atmosphere	
Acknowledge changes that have taken place in the last few years	Angus Business Improvement Association and Horticultural Society working together to beautify Angus with gardens, planters and gazebo gardens
Create a one page map for tourist bureau	Being developed by the Essa Economic Development Committee
Create a business directory	Completed. Essa Economic Development Centre and Nottawasaga Futures www.nottawasaga.com
Develop a "recruitment" package that promotes the community's assets	South Simcoe Economic Alliance www.southsimcoeea.ca
Advertise the assets of Essa to other local municipalities	South Simcoe Economic Alliance and word of mouth www.southsimcoeea.ca
Encourage positive word of mouth within and outside of the community	Completed by Municipal Council and the Essa Economic Development Committee
Promote events for the community (e.g. a meet your neighbour picnic, town & country fairs)	Essa Salmon Festival & Riverbank Derby www.essasalmonfest.com www.essatownship.on.ca
Bring businesses together through such Township-wide events as a Thanksgiving Food Challenge	1 st Annual Business Challenge Food Drive 2002 and Business Food Drive Challenge at Christmas 2003 & 2004
Develop incentives to encourage owners to maintain and improve their properties	By-laws – fines for infractions, disincentives
Enforce current by-laws	Completed with full time By-law officer
Establish a beautification committee	Angus Business Improvement Association

Utilize groups already involved in community pride projects	Partnership development and sharing of resources ongoing through liaison with Essa Economic Development Committee
Include local businesses in beautification projects	Businesses are encouraged to assist with beautification projects
Develop Communities in Bloom contests throughout the Township to encourage community pride	Horticultural Society offers awards in Essa
Create awards of merit and grand winners for gardens (e.g best subdivision, most attractive farm, eco-landscaping, best landscaping for business)	
Create awards for urban and rural properties	
Tie into a festival with a garden theme	Discussion has taken place at the heart of Essa Salmon Festival & Riverbank Derby
Support local artists through joint advertising and access to municipal space at no cost	Local artists are encouraged to display their art in the Municipal Offices at no cost