

## TOWNSHIP OF ESSA OFFICIAL PLAN PROGRAM STATUS UPDATE

While the Township's Official Plan of 2001 is functioning well and provides appropriate policy direction to address growth and maintain the quality of life expected by the Township's residents, with the recent approval of the County of Simcoe's Official Plan it was expected that we could now move ahead with the Official Plan Program to bring the Official Plan in conformity with Provincial Policy Directions and the County Official Plan.

On July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, however, the Province brought into effect a new Growth Plan. The policy directions and Provincial initiatives of the Growth Plan will impact both the County and the Township Official Plan and once again it is necessary to place the Township's Official Plan program on hold.

The reasons for placing the program on hold are summarized as follows:

### 1) Provincial Initiatives

While the Growth Plan 2017 is in effect, several guidelines, manuals, mapping, etc. which will impact the Official Plan Program have not been released. These include:

- Land needs assessment methodology
- Climate change guidelines
- Watershed planning guidelines
- Low impact development technical manual
- Agricultural impact assessment guidelines
- Agricultural mapping
- Natural heritage mapping

The above are expected to be released by the end of 2017 and will proceed through a review and comment stage prior to being finalized.

### 2) County Official Plan

The County will be required to undertake a Municipal Comprehensive Review, County wide to address such things as:

- Hierarchy of settlements
- Intensification
- Employment
- Housing
- Density targets
- Climate change
- Watershed planning
- Agricultural mapping
- Natural heritage mapping

Once completed and approved by the Province, the Township's Planning Program will have to be brought into conformity. As you can see from the above it would be inappropriate to proceed with the Township's Official Plan Program only to have to redo our policy direction etc. within a year or two. In the interim we will monitor the progress of the Provincial initiatives and the County response thereto.

Please feel free to continue to provide comments to the Township to the following email address:

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