



Newmarket

Town of Newmarket – Strategic Priority Setting Final Report

April 8, 2019



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1. Executive Summary

Since Fall 2018 the Town of Newmarket has been actively engaged in a strategic priority setting initiative designed to guide and inform Council on key areas of focus over the current term to 2022. Beginning with a Citizen Satisfaction Survey and expanded to include a highly interactive process involving staff and members of Council, a range of strategic themes and priorities emerged and formed the foundation for Council’s strategy priorities to 2022.

As part of this project, Council and staff also had an opportunity to revisit the current Community Vision for the Town of Newmarket. The refreshed Community Vision set the tone for all strategic priorities and helped to define the major strategic goals that Council has chosen to pursue in a quest to achieve that Vision.

The Strategic Pillars and Priorities identified for the 2018-2022 term of Council represent a more targeted focus and a commitment to transparency and open government through updated measurement, evaluation and reporting frameworks.

Driving the priority-setting process was a desire to be exceptional; to foster a Newmarket that is truly ‘Well beyond the ordinary’ in terms of lifestyle, economic opportunity, quality of place, and good governance. Embedded in the Strategic Pillars and Priorities is the desire to deploy innovative tools and tactics towards the attainment of the Vision, and for Newmarket to be seen as a leader within the region and across the province.

Vision
Well beyond the Ordinary

Mission
Making Newmarket Even Better

Values
Courage & Creativity
Accountability & Accessibility
Respect & Integrity
Excellence

1.1 Strategic Pillars

Strategic pillars form the foundation from which the Vision is achieved. Each pillar reflects an area of priority that will advance the Town of Newmarket towards its desired future state. For the 2018-2022 Council term, six pillars have been identified.

Long-term Financial Sustainability

Maintaining long-term financial sustainability while ensuring a thriving community

This pillar reflects a focus on ensuring that the Town is operating as effectively and efficiently as possible and that there is a continued focus on planning and preparing for future financial demands.

Extraordinary Places and Spaces (priority focus on the Mulock park)

Creating the environment for an engaged, accessible, inclusive community



Place-making is seen to be an important priority under this pillar because of the role it plays in contributing both economic and social vibrancy. The concept of place-making is expanded to include a focus on creating spaces that are inclusive and welcoming to all members of the community.

Safe Transportation (Streets)

Providing exceptional transportation experiences across all modes through continuous improvement of accessibility, safety and speed reduction

A key tenet of this pillar is a focus on supporting safe shared use of roadways, trails and other transportation systems so that all users and all modes of transport can coexist effectively.

Economic Leadership and Job Creation

Attracting, retaining and expanding jobs through innovation, collaboration and urbanization

The concept of urbanization recognizes that, as the population grows, the composition of Newmarket will evolve and reflect change patterns relating to development and density. The Town of Newmarket intends to move forward in a way that maximizes both economic opportunity and liveability.

Vibrancy on Yonge, Davis and Mulock

Supporting enhanced access to diverse housing, office and retail options

This pillar recognizes that Newmarket's growing population and shifting demographics are creating demand for varied housing options accessible to families and individuals at all points on the economic spectrum.

Environmental Stewardship

Leading proactive planning and action related to climate change and other environmental initiatives

This pillar informs all planning, program design, and service delivery undertaken by the Town.

1.2 Moving to Implementation

Under each of the Strategic Pillars, a series of Strategic priorities were identified for the 2018-2022 term of Council. These are not an exhaustive list of all actions and activities that the Town will undertake, rather they serve to focus energy, attention and resources toward the primary initiatives that will be advanced by staff over the next four years.

The Town of Newmarket has also undertaken a phased approach to the implementation of standardized performance measures to support both internal reporting and planning as well as external reporting on progress to the community. In essence, effective performance measures report on what gets done and focuses on results and the efficient use of resources.



2. Introduction

This report is intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the strategic priority setting process and the results of that process; the strategic pillars and priorities that have been identified for the 2018-2022 term of Council. The strategic pillars and priorities represent the extensive engagement with Council, staff and the community. The strategic pillars and priorities are a reflection of Council's understanding of Newmarket's strengths, opportunities, challenges, and values. They are the result of extensive public engagement on the part of Council as well as staff and key stakeholder input. They are intended to reflect both the issues and priorities that matter most to residents as well as best practices in municipal governance.

The strategic priorities that have been identified will serve to guide Town operations and service delivery over the next four years. They will inform the development of departmental business plans and individual work plans throughout the corporation. This alignment supports effective and efficient allocation of resources and clarity of focus for all Town employees.

This report is intended to be used to guide planning, resource allocation, and performance measurement to 2022. It is also intended to support community engagement and communication efforts by providing insight into the intent behind each of the strategic pillars. Not only is it important to understand which priorities have been identified, but it is equally important ensure all staff, stakeholders, and members of the community have a clear understanding of how these priorities contribute to creating a Newmarket that is Well beyond the Ordinary.

3. Methodology

3.1.1 Background Review

An extensive background review was conducted at the outset of the project to inform the approach for identifying the strategic pillars and priorities. Background documentation consulted included:

- 2014 – 2018 Council Strategic Priorities and accompanying tracking/reporting documents
- 2018 Citizen Satisfaction Survey Results
- Urban Centres Secondary Plan
- Recreation Playbook
- Cultural Master Plan
- Economic Development Strategy 2016-2020
- Smart City Framework
- Innovation Strategy
- Asset Management Strategy (2016)
- Capital Financing Sustainability Strategy



- Central York Fire Services Master Plan
- Municipal Energy Plan
- Official Plan (2006)
- Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan
- Secondary Plan - Yonge & Davis (Official Plan Amendment #10)
- Yonge and Davis Streetscape Master Plan

3.1.2 Council & Key Stakeholder Interviews

Following the completion of the background review, a series of 30-minute telephone interviews was conducted with members of Council and key stakeholders within the community in order to begin to identify emerging priority themes for consideration in the strategic priority setting process. These themes were summarized and reflected in presentation to Council at the outset of Strategic priority Setting Workshop #1.

The interviews further provided an opportunity to achieve clarity with respect to the need to potentially amend or update the existing vision statement for the Town of Newmarket. Interview participants had an opportunity to indicate whether they felt that the current vision should remain unchanged, be adjusted or updated, or be completely re-developed. The responses served to enable the consultants to scope the next steps of the visioning process.

3.1.3 Council Strategic Priority Setting Workshops

Council had an opportunity to participate in three facilitated workshops aimed at identifying the strategic pillars and priorities that would ultimately guide the Town operations for the 2018-2022 term of Council. The first workshop provided Council with a summary of the themes that had emerged as a result of the background review, initial interviews and feedback from senior staff. Using the Queen's Executive Decision-Making Centre technology, Council members were guided through a process of identifying and narrowing the emerging themes to arrive at a list of potential strategic pillars and priorities.

The second workshop focused on refining the proposed pillars and priorities. The strategic pillars and priorities that emerged from this workshop were then validated by staff to ensure that there were no significant operational concerns that might impair the ability of staff to deliver on the stated priority objectives.

The third workshop provided Council with an opportunity to provide clarification that would support staff in scoping various initiatives related to the priorities and to ensure that the wording of each pillar and priority accurately reflected Council's intent. Council also had an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed approach to the vision statement.

The culmination of this third workshop was the development of a final version of the Strategic Pillars and Priorities and confirmation of the proposed approach for the community vision.



3.1.4 Senior Staff Workshops

Members of the Corporate Management Team and Operational Leadership Team had an opportunity to participate in a series of facilitated workshops throughout the strategic priority setting process. Their input served to validate the pillars and priorities and ensure clear alignment with existing initiatives that are currently underway. Regular input from senior staff allowed for an operational lens to be applied, ensuring that the stated strategic objectives were achievable and could be reasonably supported by available resources.

Senior staff also had an opportunity to provide input on the revised approach to the Community Vision statement. The consensus of senior staff was that the Vision required a refresh to add a sense of dynamism that would enhance engagement with the community. Senior staff also highlighted the importance of being able to align reporting functions with the Vision in order to be able to evaluate all program and service delivery in terms of how it supports the overall Vision.

3.1.5 Staff validation and Action Item Identification

Led by members of the Operational Leadership Team, members of staff were invited to provide feedback on the proposed Strategic Pillars and Priorities as developed by Council during their workshop on January 29, 2019. Specifically, staff were asked to validate the proposed strategic direction and to identify any areas of significant concern or 'red flags' that could significantly impact Council's ability to move forward as proposed.

Staff engaged in dialogue to identify specific tactics or action items that would support the strategic priorities as part of this process. These actions will form the basis of the departmental business plans.

3.1.6 Vision Statement Review

Building on input provided by senior staff, Council was provided with an opportunity to review and provide input on a refresh of the Community Vision Statement. Council endorsed the recommendation to adopt a more concise version of the existing statement, "Well beyond the ordinary" and shift the focus of the statement from 'well' to 'beyond the ordinary'.

Recommendations were based on Council feedback, staff and stakeholder input, as well as a review of existing best practices across Canada.

3.1.7 Alignment with Departmental Business Plans

As part of this project, MDB Insight was tasked with developing a business planning tool or template would support alignment of departmental business plans to the over-arching strategic pillars and priorities. The template was designed to identify relevant progress measures and key performance indicators that would support external reporting through the creation of a public-facing dashboard reporting system. The proposed Business Planning Template is included as Appendix A of this document.



4. Summary of Inputs

4.1.1 Council

Council's input reflected their understanding of emerging trends and opportunities, existing programs and initiatives, and the input received directly from constituents as part of the election process, and through their daily interactions with residents.

The input provided by members of Council and community stakeholders was initially assessed using a SOARR Analysis Framework. This framework analyzed the feedback to identify specific Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Risks and Results.

Aspirations or Values determine the over-arching approach and serve to define '*What we want Newmarket to be.*' A foundational understanding Newmarket's strengths, opportunities and risks helped to define the priority areas of focus or '*What we need to prioritize and do in order to become the community we aspire to be.*'

The Strategic Pillars that have emerged from this process are the product of thoughtful consideration of multiple potential priorities and are intended to reflect Newmarket's best opportunities for being a vibrant, innovative, sustainable community with an exceptional quality of life.

4.1.2 Staff

Staff input was informed by an understanding of existing plans and priorities. This helped to identify areas of potential resource alignment. The validation process allowed for clarification of scope and of the intent behind each proposed priority which, in turn, ensured that the strategic priorities were both consistent with existing efforts and achievable.

As part of the process, staff identified specific tactics or actions that could support the proposed pillars and priorities. This feedback will be used to inform the development of departmental business plans and can be used to support staff as they work to identify the specific actions and success measures that will operationalize the strategic objectives.

5. Community Vision

Early in the project it was determined through Council, staff and stakeholder feedback that the objective was to 'refresh' the existing vision as opposed to undertaking a complete re-write of the vision. The approach undertaken recognized that a Vision Statement is an aspirational description of what a community would like to achieve or accomplish in the mid-term or long-term future. It is intended to serve as a clear guide for choosing current and future courses of action. It further recognized that a strong Vision Statement would also serve to differentiate Newmarket from other communities.

While it was essential that the Vision Statement resonate with the community, it was also important that it helped to focus the efforts of all members of the Municipality on the core competencies needed to achieve its goals.



It was recommended that the Town of Newmarket adopt a more concise version of the existing Vision statement, “Well beyond the ordinary” and shift the focus of the statement from ‘well’ to ‘beyond the ordinary’. It was recommended that the corollary statements or the “well’s” no longer be used as part of the Community Vision. Shifting the focus from ‘well’ to ‘beyond the ordinary’ supports a focus on innovation, uniqueness and exceptional service delivery that is in keeping with the Town’s values and aspirations. It also infers the concept of ‘better, greater, more than’ the norm which serves to distinguish Newmarket from other communities.

6. Strategic Pillars

The Strategic Pillars that form the foundation of strategic planning efforts of the Town of Newmarket were identified (in no order of priority) as:

- Long-term Financial Sustainability
- Extraordinary Places and Spaces (priority focus on the Mulock park)
- Safe Transportation (Streets)
- Economic Leadership and Job Creation
- Vibrancy on Yonge, Davis and Mulock
- Environmental Stewardship

The pillars are defined in greater detail below.

6.1.1 Long-term Financial Sustainability

Maintaining long-term financial sustainability while ensuring a thriving community

This pillar reflects a focus on ensuring that the Town is operating as effectively and efficiently as possible and that there is a continued focus on planning and preparing for future financial demands.

6.1.2 Extraordinary Places and Spaces (priority focus on the Mulock park)

Creating the environment for an engaged, accessible, inclusive community

Place-making is seen to be an important priority under this pillar because of the role it plays in contributing both economic and social vibrancy. The concept of place-making is expanded to include a focus on creating spaces that are inclusive and welcoming to all members of the community.

6.1.3 Safe Transportation (Streets)

Providing exceptional transportation experiences across all modes through continuous improvement of accessibility, safety and speed reduction

A key tenet of this pillar is a focus on supporting safe shared use of roadways, trails and other transportation systems so that all users and all modes of transport can coexist effectively.



6.1.4 Economic Leadership and Job Creation

Attracting, retaining and expanding jobs through innovation, collaboration and urbanization

The concept of urbanization recognizes that, as the population grows, the composition of Newmarket will evolve and reflect change patterns relating to development and density. The Town of Newmarket intends to move forward in a way that maximizes both economic opportunity and liveability.

6.1.5 Vibrancy on Yonge, Davis and Mulock

Supporting enhanced access to diverse housing, office and retail options

This pillar recognizes that Newmarket’s growing population and shifting demographics are creating demand for varied housing options accessible to families and individuals at all points on the economic spectrum.

6.1.6 Environmental Stewardship

Leading proactive planning and action related to climate change and other environmental initiatives

This pillar informs all planning, program design, and service delivery undertaken by the Town.

7. Strategic Priorities

Under each of the Strategic Pillars, a number of Strategic priorities were identified for the 2018-2022 term of Council. These are not an exhaustive list of all actions and activities that the Town will undertake, but rather serve to focus energy, attention and resources toward the primary strategic goals for the next four years.

Table1 – Strategic Priorities

Long-term Financial Sustainability	
i.	Utilize ongoing community engagement to help inform program, services and financial planning.
ii.	Develop a multi-year operating and capital budget that aligns with Budget Policies.
iii.	Ensure ongoing continuous improvement and a service level analysis for consideration. Utilize both internal and external resources to complete an assessment of the Town’s overall financial health to support effective and efficient long-term planning.
iv.	Complete a comprehensive and up-to-date Asset Management Plan that reflects a Corporate Risk Strategy and continued investment into the Asset Replacement Fund.



Extraordinary Places and Spaces (priority focus on the Mulock park)

- i. Complete the design, planning and costing for Mulock park through a Master Plan, and advance construction enough for the public to enjoy.
- ii. Develop a Parks Master Plan focused on both new development and re-development opportunities; update the Recreation Playbook, as required.
- iii. Develop a new Cultural and Place-making Master Plan that integrates and reflects inclusivity and diversity within our growing community.
- iv. Design and implement a strategy to address municipal vacant properties (e.g. Fernbank Farmhouse, Old Fire Hall, and 449 Eagle St.).
- v. In partnership with the BIA, design a best-practice approach to the pedestrianization of main Street in order to enhance the economic and social vibrancy of the downtown core.

Safe Transportation (Streets)

- i. Incorporate technology / data-driven tools and tactics into engineering design and enforcement measures related to the safety of vehicles, pedestrians, and other transportation modes in order to enhance trail and street safety.
- ii. Continue to implement the traffic mitigation strategy and Active Transportation Plan and explore / advance an off-road Mulock multi-use path.
- iii. Continue efforts to build a strong network of community and subject matter experts (e.g. York Region, York Regional Police (YRP) in the implementation of initiatives (e.g. automated speed enforcement).
- iv. Design and implement an effective communication strategy that provides expanded opportunity for community consultation and emphasizes education, awareness and safe, respectful shared use among all users of road and trail systems.
- v. Develop a 'complete street' design and construction/reconstruction methodology to support ongoing safe street initiatives and continue to explore design options related to speed reduction, where appropriate



Economic Leadership and Job Creation

- i. Staff to support the success of the municipally owned broadband (ENVI) and leverage other technologies in job creation.
- ii. Increase downtown parking availability through additional spaces by leveraging Smart City solutions and other innovative options.
- iii. Focus on continued success of the downtown.
- iv. Review and re-refresh the Economic Development Strategy, with a focus on creating an environment for job attraction and economic growth; respond to changing community demographics with respect to attracting and retaining a skilled labour force for the future.
- v. Evaluate feasibility of SODA (South of Davis Drive Area) for concerted growth/re-development

Vibrancy on Yonge, Davis and Mulock

- i. Implement policy frameworks and practices that will more easily support the development of the corridors.
- ii. Transit Oriented Development: Implement Newmarket GO Station Mobility Hub Study and development of Mulock Station Area Secondary Plan.
- iii. Advance corridor growth through highly targeted, data-driven strategies that leverage enhanced relationships with developers and prospective investors.
- iv. Leverage Smart City technologies and municipally owned broadband (ENVI) to support corridor development strategies and business retention and expansion efforts.
- v. Consider development incentives to provide a range of housing options that meet the needs of current and future residents, including the pursuit of CIP to incent corridor development

Environmental Stewardship

- i. Continue to implement programs that make Newmarket a leader in the implementation of low impact design (LID).
- ii. Continue to explore and support solar power installations in place and investigate additional installations; explore options for battery storage opportunities in town buildings.
- iii. Continue to implement Community Energy Plan.
- iv. Support highly effective partnerships with LSRCA, MECP, York Region, NT Power, and others who provide funding and support for our numerous projects.
- v. Implement Private Tree Bylaw, Public Tree Policy, and tree canopy management.



8. Alignment with Departmental Business Plans

Alignment of the business planning process to the Strategic Pillars and Priorities ensures that all staff has an understanding of the objectives and activities required to achieve or support the Strategic Priorities. Not only does it ensure that all individual departments are moving in the same direction, but it also serves to ensure that individual staff members can see 'where they fit' and how their contributions impact the attainment of the overall strategic goals.

A Business Planning Template was part of the engagement scope and is currently under construction in collaboration with Town staff. It is intended to offer a consistent and user-friendly tool that supports the alignment of Departmental Business Plans to the over-arching Strategic Pillars and Priorities.

As part of this project, staff will have an opportunity to be trained on the use of the planning tool to ensure that it best supports them to manage effort and allocation of resources effectively.

9. Performance Measures

The Town of Newmarket has undertaken a phased approach to the implementation of standardized performance measures. Performance measures support both internal reporting and planning as well as external reporting on progress the community. In essence, effective performance measures measure what gets done and focus on results and the efficient use of resources.

The most effective performance metrics will:

- Align with Newmarket's Strategic Pillars and Priorities;
- Measure the impact of the Town's efforts on the residents it serves;
- Seek to tie outputs to outcomes;
- Engage staff and stakeholders in the identification and refinement of performance measures over time; and
- Leverage existing best practices.

These performance measures can be used to evaluate progress toward completion as well as effectiveness and impact.

Work on performance measurement and dash boarding is ongoing and will be subject to additional staff work and ongoing discussions and deliberations with Council.