



# Phase 3 – Policy Directions Engagement Summary (DRAFT)

Town of Newmarket Official Plan Review and the South of Davis Area Study (SODA)

May 2025



**FUTURE NEWMARKET:**  
Planning OUR  
#NEWMARKET

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## 2 Introduction

The Official Plan Review (OPR) will result in a comprehensive update of the in-effect Official Plan, which was adopted in 2006 and approved in 2008. The new Official Plan will establish innovative, proactive, and contemporary policies that reflect the Town's changing demographics, manage growth to 2051, and address key issues like housing and employment while incorporating community values related to climate resilience and putting people first. Progressing in parallel with the OPR is the South of Davis Drive area study (SODA), which forms an important link between Main Street South and the Davis Drive Regional Corridor. The OPR and SODA studies were initiated in June 2022 (**Figure 1**) and involve a six-phase work plan.

Engagement in Phases 1 and 2 focused on setting a collective vision for the new Official Plan and SODA with stakeholders and the broader community. The OPR and SODA are currently at the end of Phase 3. The Phase 3 engagement program focused on presenting draft Policy Directions to stakeholders, the public, Indigenous communities, agencies, and Council. The final OPR and SODA Policy Directions reports represent a culmination of extensive collaboration and feedback across the first three phases of the OPR.



Figure 1: Official Plan Review Work Plan

### 2.1 Purpose and Objectives of Phase 3 Consultation

The purpose of the Phase 3 Engagement Summary Report (the “Report”) is to provide an overview of the engagement initiatives completed from September 2023 through April 2025. The engagement objectives for this phase were to provide an update on the project timeline and milestones, seek feedback on the draft vision and guiding principles for the OPR and SODA, and present draft Policy Directions for each study.

### 3 Engagement with Indigenous Peoples

As prescribed by the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, the Town recognizes the importance of engaging with Indigenous Peoples on planning matters that may affect their Section 35 Aboriginal or treaty rights in the *Constitution Act*, 1982. The OPR represents an opportunity to communicate and engage with Indigenous Peoples to build meaningful relationships and collaborate on the future vision of the Town.

In November 2022, letters to Indigenous communities with treaty rights in Newmarket were distributed from the Office of the Mayor. The purpose of the letters was to share information about the launch of the OPR and to invite their involvement in the project. A follow-up communication on Phase 3 of the project, including links to the 11 Discussion Papers on Policy Direction Theme Areas, was distributed in August 2023. Introductory meetings were held virtually on October 24, 2024, and October 29, 2024 with Indigenous communities who expressed an interest in meeting with Town staff, which included the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation and Alderville First Nation, respectively. The purpose of the introductory meetings was to provide an overview of the OPR process, including the timeline, key milestones, opportunities for input, and focus on areas of interest expressed by each First Nation. Participants asked questions of clarification about the project, shared their priorities related to each project theme and provided recommendations for First Nation and Local Indigenous engagement.

The Town also hosted a Virtual Workshop with the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation on March 14, 2025. The workshop began with a presentation that included an overview of the OPR process and the draft Policy Directions. The presentation was followed by a plenary discussion on opportunities to integrate Indigenous values into Newmarket's Official Plan, comments on the proposed 'Indigenous Values-Based Lens', and a best practice review of how municipalities in Ontario and other governments have integrated Indigenous perspectives and policies into their Official Plans.

## 4 Communications

### 4.1 Official Plan Review

The Town used various outreach methods to promote engagement events for both the OPR and SODA. These communications methods included:

- A dedicated project webpage at [www.heynewmarket.ca/newmarketop](http://www.heynewmarket.ca/newmarketop) which has received approximately 7,500 visits since the project page was created, to May 2025.
- Two media advisories were issued via MailChimp to promote the Public Information Centre and Public Open House.
- Social media posts on the Town's accounts on X, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram promoted the Public Information Centre and Public Open House. Posts about the Public Information Centre garnered 1,714 engagements and 46,701 impressions, while posts about the Public Open House received 908 engagements and 20,859 impressions.
- Two media articles were published by Newmarket Today regarding the in-person Public Information Centre in August 2024.



- One media article was published by Newmarket Today regarding the Council Workshop on December 2, 2024.

The social media campaign to promote the public open house meetings involved three ad versions, with the ads linked directly to the Eventbrite registration page for the virtual Public Open House in February 2025. Notifications and advertisements for the meeting were distributed through the Town's social media networks, local newspapers, mobile signs, and the OPR Interested Parties list (e-newsletter). A dedicated email address was made available to provide comments on the OPR ([newmarketop@newmarket.ca](mailto:newmarketop@newmarket.ca)) or for requests to be added to the interested parties list. Participants were advised that they could also sign up by registering for notifications on the project webpage.

## 4.2 SODA

The Town used similar outreach methods as the Official Plan Review to promote SODA:

- A dedicated project webpage at [heynewmarket.ca/soda](http://heynewmarket.ca/soda) received 2,300 visits from March 2023 to May 2025.
- Social media posts on Facebook, X, LinkedIn and Instagram on March 23 and April 16, with intermittent posts between. On March 31<sup>st</sup>, the Town also created a Facebook Event for the SODA Public Open House. These posts made 17,421 impressions and garnered 543 engagements.
- One media article was published in Newmarket Today covering SODA on April 18. The day prior, Newmarket Today published a survey which received 77 votes.

## 5 Phase 3 Policy Directions Engagement

The purpose of Phase 3 engagement was to share the Policy Directions with the community and stakeholders to gather feedback to support the refinement of the Policy Directions. Feedback from the engagement events outlined in this section of the Report has been summarized in ***What We Heard*** (Section 6 - [What We Heard](#)).

### 5.1 Project Website and Online Survey

The “Hey Newmarket” website is being used as a tool to promote and obtain feedback for the OPR on the Engagement HQ Platform. The website is updated regularly to highlight key project milestones and engagement opportunities throughout each project phase. During Phase 3, the Town released 11 Policy Directions Discussion Guides on the following theme areas:

Affordable Housing, Transportation, Parks & Open Spaces, Cultural Heritage, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Placemaking, Infrastructure, Complete Communities, Jobs, Growth Management, and Climate Change. To facilitate meaningful engagement during the pop-up events and ensure accessible communication of the Transformative Theme Areas to residents, the Town developed high-level Discussion Guides. Three online surveys were conducted to gather feedback on these topics.





Figure 2: Image of Policy Discussion Guides

## 5.2 Council Workshops

Four Council workshops were held in Phase 3. The first Council workshop was held on September 11, 2023, where the project team presented preliminary policy directions on key theme areas around Growth Management, Climate Change and Sustainability, Transportation, Employment, and Servicing Infrastructure. A second Council Workshop was held on September 18, 2023. At this workshop, the project team presented draft policy directions related to Housing, Placemaking, Heritage and Urban Design, Land Use, Natural Heritage, and SODA.

A third Council Workshop was held on December 2, 2024. The purpose of this Council workshop was to introduce “Future Newmarket”, which rebranded the study and set out the vision for the Town to 2051. During this meeting, Town staff discussed the updated vision, guiding principles, strategic actions, policy lenses, and transformative theme areas that will shape Newmarket's Official Plan. Members of Council then participated in a collaborative and interactive discussion to share their insights and feedback on Future Newmarket.

Figure 3: Presentation from December 2, 2024, Council Workshop

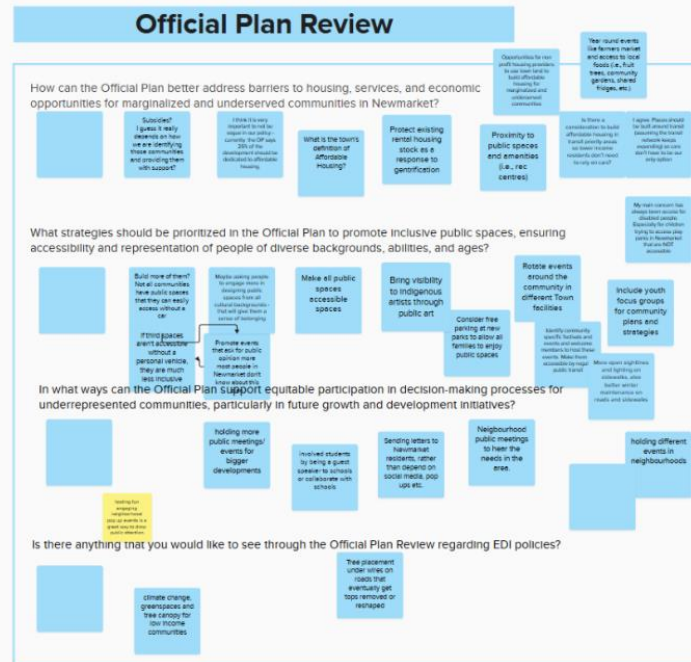
## WHAT IS ‘FUTURE NEWMARKET’?

- A shared vision for the future, with guiding principles and actionable strategies to implement this vision through the updated Official Plan.
- Based on feedback received in Phases 1-3 of the study, implementing a people-first approach to future growth.
- 2051 is a milestone date for population projections and the time horizon of the Plan.
- Intended to inform draft policy directions which will be presented at a future meeting in early 2025.

4

slide

To demonstrate its commitment to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in Newmarket, the project team hosted a virtual Focus Group meeting on October 7, 2024, with local organizations using Zoom. Eleven participants attended the meeting, including representatives from Blue Door, Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association, the Clean Air Partnership, the Local Arts Groups of Newmarket, and community members.



The purpose of the meeting was to gather feedback on how the Town could promote EDI in land use planning. The presentations included an overview of the OPR Vision, Guiding Principles, a new EDI Theme Area and related policy directions, and new lenses for the Official Plan (People-First, Climate Resilience, and Indigenous Values-Based lenses). The project team also made presentations on the Residential Parking Study and Housing Needs Assessment.

- Introduced members of the Project Team and provided a brief overview of each project;
- Discussed the importance of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in land use planning;
- Explored 'Big Questions';
- Facilitated knowledge-sharing as a group on how the OP and other studies can better support marginalized communities, promote inclusive public spaces, ensure equitable participation in decision-making, and enhance EDI policies more generally; and,
- Discussed next steps and how to stay engaged in the process.

7 Town of Newmarket Official Plan Review - Phase 3 Engagement Summary Report



## 5.4 Community Pop-ups

Fourteen community pop-up events were held in Phase 3 in various locations across the town. At these pop-up events, participants were able to read discussion guides on 11 official plan policy theme areas, take a survey and provide their feedback, and engage with staff. Community pop-ups were held on the following dates and locations:

1. Friday Night Social Dance, Seniors Meeting Place (June 21, 2024);
2. Farmers' Market, Riverwalk Commons (June 22, July 6, 13 & 20, 2024);
3. Parent and Tot Pre-School (June 24, 2024);
4. Seniors' Badminton, Seniors Meeting Place (June 25, 2024);
5. Tim Hortons Canada Day Event, Riverwalk Commons (July 1, 2024);
6. Magna Centre Pop-ups (July 8, 15, & 22, 2024); and,
7. Ray Twinney Recreation Centre Pop-ups (July 8, 15, & 22, 2024).

## PHASE 3 ENGAGEMENT:

*We wanted to hear from Newmarket!*



Figure 6: Photos Planner Pop-Up booth at various Town locations

## 5.5 Meeting with the Central York Chamber of Commerce

On July 23, 2024, Town staff held a virtual meeting with the President of the Central York Chamber of Commerce to discuss draft policy directions for the Official Plan Review. The conversation focused on proposed strategies related to jobs and employment, with an emphasis on supporting local economic growth and business development.



Figure 7: Presentation slide on Jobs and Employment Discussion Guide

## 5.6 Official Plan Review In-Person Public Information Centre

Town staff hosted a drop-in style Public Information Centre on August 29, 2024, from 1:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Old Town Hall. Participants were able to visit eleven “information booths” and activity stations to learn about and share feedback on the various theme areas. Subject matter experts from the Town conducted five speaking sessions on a range of topics including jobs and employment, cultural heritage, parks and open spaces, climate and sustainability, and the public realm.

Figure 8: Future Newmarket artwork unveiling with Commissioner Peter Noehammer, Town of Newmarket, and Jeff Nve, local artist







## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Home Sweet Home:**  
Shaping Newmarket's Housing Future

Housing affordability is not just about providing a roof over one's head; it's about creating complete communities where people feel they belong and can succeed. This involves accommodating diverse needs, from young individuals seeking their first homes to families needing more space, and seniors looking to downsize. The goal is to create inclusive neighbourhoods where all residents, regardless of their economic status, have access to safe, affordable, and suitable housing. By understanding the complex nature of housing issues and engaging in collaborative discussions, we can work towards a more sustainable and inclusive housing future, well beyond the ordinary.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The Town of Newmarket has targets for providing housing suitable for all ages, household sizes and abilities? These targets include:

- A minimum requirement of 25% of new housing to be affordable outside of Regional Centres and Major Transit Station Areas and a minimum of 35% inside of these areas.
- By 2051, Newmarket together with its partners will need to plan to achieve 1,000 new purpose-built rental units.

**The Current Housing Situation**

The housing market in the Town is driven by a combination of factors:

Increased Demand	Limited Supply	Global Inflation
<p>As our population grows, the demand for accessible and various housing types rises, increasing the cost of housing.</p>	<p>Increasing the housing supply can bring down costs, and open up more affordable housing options that meet the needs of diverse residents.</p>	<p>The housing crisis has been exacerbated by inflation, rising interest rates, and increased construction costs.</p>

**WE HEARD YOU!**

The Background Review and Visioning phases of the Official Plan Review highlighted the need for a diverse range of housing options, to ensure affordability, accessibility, and inclusivity in the housing market. Here's what we heard:

Age Friendly & Inclusive Communities	Diverse Housing Types	Addressing Middle Housing	Innovative Housing Solutions
<p>• Provide affordable housing for individuals across different life stages, ensuring that everyone can find suitable and affordable places to live.</p> <p>• Build communities and housing that allows residents to age in place comfortably and affordably.</p>	<p>• Mixed-use Development is crucial to create vibrant, walkable communities.</p> <p>• Provide a variety of housing forms such as mid- and high-rise developments, multi-family units, condos to meet diverse community needs.</p>	<p>• Opportunities in existing neighbourhoods to encourage "missing middle housing" like duplexes and triplexes, and mid-rise developments on collector roads.</p> <p>• Integrate multiple housing forms for cohesive neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>• Interest in Additional Residential Units (ARUs), including laneway housing, as flexible and viable housing alternatives to address housing shortages.</p> <p>• Strong call for creating housing solutions for the homeless population to provide shelter and support for the most vulnerable.</p>

## YOU'RE INVITED

# OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW

## PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE

Thursday, August 29 | 1 to 7 p.m. (drop in anytime)

Old Town Hall (460 Botsford Street)

**GET INVOLVED**

Help plan, create and have your say about Newmarket. Drop in to learn about the policy directions for the Official Plan Review.

- 11 Official Plan Review Booths
- 5 Speaking Sessions
- Activities for All Ages
- Light Refreshments

**Fun Activities for all Ages!**

<p><b>LEGO® Brick Modeling</b></p>	<p><b>Create your own Newmarket Atlas</b></p>	<p><b>Design Your Own Park</b></p>	<p><b>Show and Tell with Newmarket Artifacts</b></p>
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**Hear short presentations about:**

1:15 p.m.	2:15 p.m.	3:15 p.m.	4:15 p.m.	6 p.m.
Revitalizing Newmarket's Historic Downtown	How Cultural Heritage Contributes to Placemaking	Designing Inclusive Parks and Open Spaces from Parklets to Mulock Park	Climate Conversations: Building a Greener Newmarket	Elements of a Great Public Realm

**WHAT IS AN OFFICIAL PLAN?** It's a policy document that guides how land is used. This means where housing, institutions and offices can go, where shops are located, where services like parks, trails and schools reside, what areas are protected/enhanced and more.

**We are reviewing the Official Plan** to meet current and future needs of the community, while conforming with provincial and regional policies.

Join the discussion and learn more  
[HeyNewmarket.ca/NewmarketOP](https://www.heynewmarket.ca/NewmarketOP)

Figures 9 to 11: Image of participants at the August 29<sup>th</sup> Public Information Centre, EDI information booth (top). Image of Affordable Housing Panel & Public Information Centre invitation (bottom left and right).

## 5.7 Official Plan Review Virtual Public Open House

The Town of Newmarket hosted a virtual Public Open House on February 25, 2025, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM as part of its Official Plan Review (OPR). This meeting aimed to provide an update on the project and summarize key takeaways from the Policy Directions Report, presenting major findings and proposed strategic initiatives across eleven theme areas. The project consultant monitored the chat and Q&A function during the presentation, compiling questions by thematic area to facilitate engagement and discussion.

The meeting also served as an opportunity to collect feedback on the Policy Directions Report, which will inform future policy updates in the Official Plan. Attendees were able to actively participate in the Q&A session by raising their hands and being unmuted by the WSP Lead Facilitator to pose questions or seek clarifications. The feedback gathered from this session was summarized in an Engagement Summary Report, ensuring that community input is considered in shaping Newmarket's planning and development policies.

Six questions and/or comments were asked about the OPR process and Vision Statement, Guiding Principles, Strategic Priorities and Policy Lenses. Members of the public inquired about the components of the energy plan in the Official Plan that will address climate change targets and emissions reductions. Concerns were also expressed regarding the short-term and long-term plans for housing and primary care for the aging population and those nearing retirement. Additionally, questions were asked about employment opportunities for young adults and youth, emphasizing the need for straightforward access to well-paying jobs. Lastly, there was interest in whether there would be public input opportunities for the Clean Energy Plan (CEP) and if it would be included as a component of the Official Plan.

Members of the public raised several questions during the engagement sessions. They asked about the impact of regional projects like the widening of Yonge Street on the town's climate objectives and the possibility of transforming Davis Drive with trams. There were inquiries about developing the downtown area, the iconic park at Yonge Street and Mulock Drive, and eliminating minimum parking requirements. Updates on the Mulock Station Area Secondary Plan and building standards, such as moving to heat pumps and solar energy, were also requested. Other questions included the completion of the half interchange at Highway 404, draft land use schedules, community fridge locations, revitalization plans for the Tannery and Old Main Street areas, and the impact of tariff wars. Attendees sought ways to encourage developer compliance with climate goals, changes in road design for walkability and safety, and the use of community benefit charges for undergrounding overhead lines.

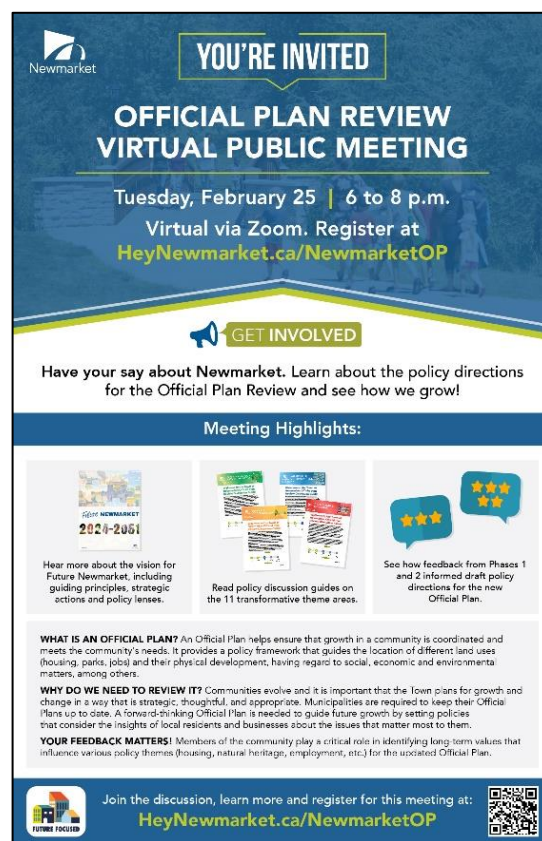
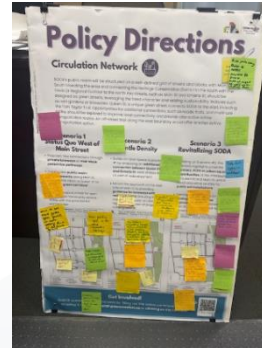
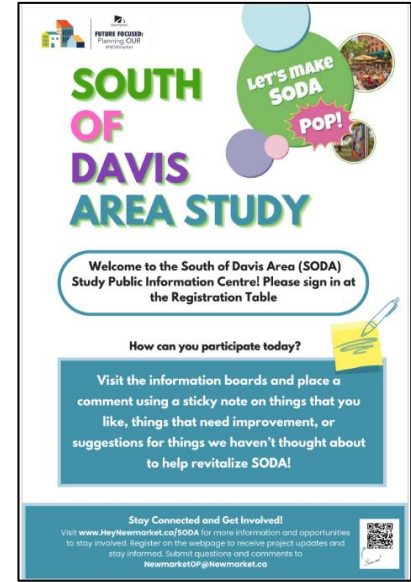
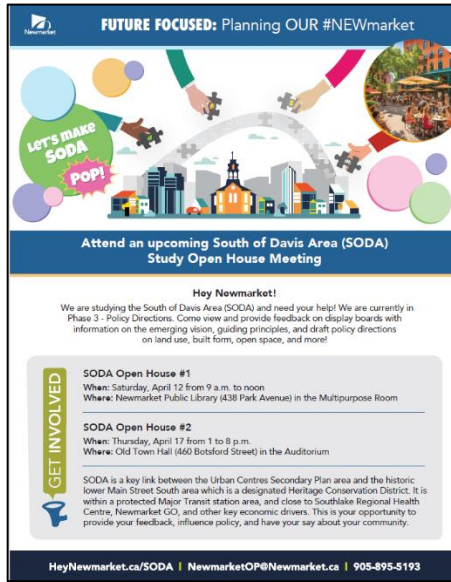


Figure 12: Image of flyer for Virtual Public Open House



## 5.8 SODA In-Person Public Information Centres

Town staff hosted two in-person public information centres on April 12<sup>th</sup> at Newmarket Public Library and April 17<sup>th</sup> at Old Town Hall, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM and 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM respectively. The purpose of these information centres was to provide an update on the SODA study, provide an overview of what the project team heard in the first two phases, present the draft vision and guiding principles, and summarize key takeaways from the Policy Directions Report. Staff also prepared panels on three development scenarios to help visualize the draft policy directions.



Figures 13 to 20 (starting clockwise from the top left): Flyer for SODA Public Information Centre(s); SODA information panels; SODA social media flyer; SODA panels with comments; photo from the April 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> meetings.



## 6 What We Heard

### 6.1 Official Plan Review

The following section provides a summary of feedback received on the Official Plan Review draft Policy Directions during the various Phase 3 engagement events including the OPR survey.

#### 6.1.1 Housing

Community feedback on housing emphasized the need for clear, locally relevant definitions of “affordable housing” and stronger policies to protect existing rental stock and prevent gentrification. There was strong support for requiring at least 25% of new developments to be affordable, particularly in transit-priority areas to reduce car dependency for all residents, especially those with lower incomes. Respondents also called for a greater diversity of housing types and tenures to meet varied community needs, with increased height and density encouraged near major transit stations to support affordability and transit-oriented growth.

#### 6.1.2 Economic Development

Participants highlighted the importance of supporting growth in key sectors such as food services, healthcare, arts, and recreation to generate more well-paying and accessible job opportunities. Community members also highlighted the need to create dedicated spaces for local businesses to thrive and to protect employment areas to ensure they remain available for full-time jobs and business operations.

#### 6.1.3 Accessibility, Engagement, and Community Health and Wellbeing

Creating inclusive, accessible communities emerged as a recurring theme. Respondents emphasized the need to create more accessible public spaces that are easy to reach without a car, while also encouraging free parking at new parks. Community members called for the development of amenity-rich, inclusive communities that integrate schools, recreational facilities, and culturally sensitive design. There was strong support for engaging diverse populations in the planning process through accessible events like pop-ups, collaborations with local schools to include a younger perspective, and rotating events at town facilities across town. Participants also stressed the importance of using plain language in engagement materials and hosting events at varied times to accommodate different schedules and increase participation.

Improving community health, safety, and well-being in Newmarket was seen as a multifaceted goal requiring both physical infrastructure and social support. Participants emphasized the need for visible wayfinding and public education to help all users navigate streets safely. Pedestrian safety, accessible walking paths that follow AODA standards, and better connections between open spaces, transit, and dense areas were also mentioned. Respondents to the OPR survey noted the importance of creating, supporting and monitoring inclusive community spaces, events for diverse groups, and increased support for social services with funding from the Region. Concerns about climate change and its local impacts, such as extreme weather, wildlife interactions, and youth anxiety, underscored the need to plan through a climate lens. Suggestions included maintaining pathways, increasing transit coverage, and ensuring all residents, including those without internet access, are supported through community infrastructure upgrades.

#### 6.1.4 Parks



Parks were seen by many respondents as essential spaces in the town for connection, relaxation and learning. Ensuring safe, easy, and regular access to parks and open spaces for people of all ages and abilities was highlighted as a key priority. Participants supported expanding the trail network across all neighbourhoods, installing new entrances, and creating short connections that cross barriers between communities and green spaces.

Enhancing connectivity between subdivisions, retail areas, and parks without relying on major roads was also encouraged. Respondents expressed a desire for more inviting and inclusive green spaces that offer amenities such as washrooms, benches, and equipment for all ages and abilities. Respondents highlighted the importance of creating areas where people can sit, relax, and connect with nature, while also protecting natural features for future generations. There was strong support for expanding active transportation networks to better connect parks within and beyond Newmarket, and for incorporating climate resilience into park planning to lead by example in addressing the impacts of a changing climate.

#### 6.1.5 Climate Change and Sustainability



Addressing climate change and promoting sustainability emerged as key priorities throughout the consultation process. Participants emphasized the need to preserve Newmarket's tree canopy, expand green spaces, and update development standards to reflect environmental best practices. Respondents expressed interest in integrating emissions reduction strategies into land use planning and supporting year-round active transportation. Suggestions also included incorporating climate-resilient infrastructure, offering incentives for eco-friendly practices, and ensuring the housing vision includes energy efficiency and emissions reduction to align with broader sustainability goals.

To foster a culture of community care and environmental responsibility, survey respondents encouraged the Town to lead by example and promote the benefits of sustainable practices. They supported advertising the cost savings and public benefits of renewable energy systems, offering incentives for electric vehicles, rain barrels, and energy-efficient appliances, and electrifying tools like lawnmowers. Clear, engaging educational materials shared through schools, businesses, and public institutions were seen as opportunities to build awareness and action on climate change. Suggestions included promoting passive sustainable design, reducing reliance on active energy systems, encouraging public and active transportation, carpooling, and promoting community-based initiatives like clothing swaps, local food production, and community gardens. Residents also emphasized the importance of reducing consumption and waste, expanding EV infrastructure, and protecting the tree canopy to support a more sustainable and resilient future.

Integrating climate action into infrastructure and planning was also seen as important for building a resilient and sustainable Newmarket. Survey participants highlighted the importance of prioritizing environmental best practices, advocating for features like rain gardens, rooftop greenery, and natural drainage systems that also enhance public spaces. Addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, such as low-income residents and outdoor workers, through passive design and urban heat island mitigation was seen as important to mitigate the impacts of a changing climate and major storm events. Other suggestions included eliminating parking minimums in high density areas, increasing green space



in the Town, and upgrading municipal assets to the highest environmental standards. Respondents suggested early stakeholder engagement, regular climate impact reporting, and drawing on global best practices rooted in scientific evidence to guide local decision-making in climate change adaptation and mitigation, and land use planning.

### 6.1.6 Natural Heritage



Some community members felt that protecting Newmarket's natural heritage would help maintain the town's identity and environmental health. Participants expressed a desire to discourage development from encroaching onto natural spaces while encouraging respectful enjoyment through expanded parks, integrated trail networks, and accessible community green spaces. Community members noted that there should be coexistence with nature, ensuring equal access to open space across all neighbourhoods, and new development. Suggestions for enhancements to parks, park types and activities/programming ranged from off-leash dog parks, toboggan hills, and fitness parks to more outdoor pools, ice rinks, and pickleball courts. Participants suggested amenities such as benches, group seating, and clean, year-round public restrooms to foster inclusive community use. Integrating recreational infrastructure with the natural environment, increasing the tree canopy, and addressing climate change by enhancing and protecting natural heritage & water resource systems were seen as key strategies for the town's long-term sustainability.

### 6.1.7 Transportation and Mobility



Improving how people move through Newmarket was a common theme in the feedback received from the community. Respondents emphasized the need to redesign streets to prioritize walkability and road safety, while also calling for better winter maintenance of sidewalks and bike lanes to ensure year-round accessibility. Suggestions for new development included implementing a docked bike-share system, as well as working with other levels of government to invest in expanded transit networks, dedicated cycling paths and connected active transportation infrastructure to reduce car dependency. Participants highlighted the importance of enhancing local transit—particularly GO rail service—and ensuring all mobility investments work together and provide more frequent service.

*"I love how walkable the downtown is, and I hope others in Newmarket appreciate it as much as I do."*

OPR survey respondent,  
April 2025

Building up around transit hubs, completing the Highway 404 half interchange, and closing gaps in active transportation networks were seen as key steps toward creating more connected, complete communities. Respondents emphasized the importance of safe, separated infrastructure—such as protected bike lanes and multi-use paths (MUPs)—and suggested placing transit stops near parks to improve accessibility. Additional ideas included increasing transit funding, promoting walkable communities, installing more benches, and developing an e-bike strategy to reduce car dependence and support sustainable, inclusive access to nature.



### 6.1.8 Cultural Heritage and Placemaking

Celebrating Newmarket's identity and fostering a strong sense of place were key themes in community feedback. Residents expressed a desire for more year-round events, such as farmers' markets, community gardens, and shared fridges, to promote local food access and community engagement. There was strong support for continuing culturally diverse festivals and preserving the town's rich heritage through historical conservation. Public art, heritage installations, and historic landscapes were seen as important focal points for public spaces, with an emphasis on ensuring that art is created by local artists to reflect the community's unique character.

Respondents want to see Downtown Newmarket protected and enhanced by preserving its unique architecture, green spaces, older homes, and walkable character—qualities they consider the town's most valuable heritage assets. They emphasized maintaining the existing urban structure while encouraging sustainable redevelopment that rejuvenates core areas without compromising historical integrity. There was strong support for restoring heritage buildings rather than defaulting to façade retention or demolition, and for focusing new development near transit while preserving natural and built heritage. Participants also urged the Town to consider how expanding development could impact Newmarket's historic character, with one respondent noting that iconic spaces like Main Street should evoke emotion and reflect the town's identity.

**"If I think of iconic places in Newmarket, I think of Main Street. We need to create spaces that evoke emotions."**

~ OPR survey respondent,  
April 2025

Community members also emphasized that Newmarket's heritage should be thoughtfully integrated into public spaces such as streets, buildings, parks, and trails. Heritage designations and enhancing the visibility of cultural assets—such as illuminating historic buildings—were viewed as essential strategies to preserve and celebrate the town's identity. Suggestions included installing plaques along trails, creating murals and sculptures in parks, and setting up public displays of artifacts or reproductions that reflect local history, including connections to nearby municipalities such as Aurora and East Gwillimbury. Participants also advocated for the inclusion of Indigenous art, dedicated spaces for local artists, and interactive features like benches, events, and interpretive signage to promote deeper engagement with Newmarket's heritage and history.

### 6.1.9 Urban Design Principles, Public Art, and Inclusion



Creating vibrant, walkable neighbourhoods was seen as an important objective in creating great places. Some respondents emphasized the importance of urban design that prioritizes pedestrians, active transportation, and mixed-use development. Enhancing accessibility to parks and open spaces was seen as key to creating equitable communities, with calls for well-maintained pathways, clear signage, and strong connections to transit and trail systems to ensure these spaces are welcoming and easy to navigate for all.

Some participants called for more opportunities to engage with local artists through inclusive and creative initiatives such as promoting school field trips to heritage destinations, hosting more festivals and community events, and providing dedicated spaces for local artists to showcase their work. Some survey respondents felt that public art should reflect the Town's natural beauty and be a required element in all



significant development projects, with a preference for commissioning local artists. Events like Pride were seen as essential to community identity, and suggestions included continuing to close Main Street to traffic during cultural celebrations to create vibrant, educational spaces that celebrate diversity and foster community connection.

To promote inclusion and lead by example, respondents recommended offering engagement opportunities at various times of day to accommodate different work schedules, calling for more forums to support community-driven change. Participants of the EDI focus group suggested inviting equity-seeking groups to participate in special Council sessions. There was support from focus group participants, and survey respondents, for including diverse stakeholders in all public discussions and events including evolving the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Committee into a broader body to address inclusivity across issues such as homophobia and antisemitism. Publishing an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) report every 4–5 years was suggested as a vehicle to maintain accountability, alongside leveraging social media to highlight the importance of civic participation in land use planning.

### 6.1.10 Community Services and Facilities



Participants emphasized the importance of strengthening community infrastructure to support a growing and inclusive population. Expanding library services was seen by some as a priority, with libraries recognized as essential hubs for accessible programming and resources. Suggestions included using community benefit charges to fund new or satellite library branches in both new and established neighbourhoods. Additional feedback called for placing overhead utility lines underground to modernize infrastructure and improve aesthetics. Promoting environmental stewardship through spaces like community gardens was also encouraged to foster a culture of care and connection within the community.

## 6.2 SODA

Feedback through the Phase 3 consultation program on the SODA study was received through the April 12<sup>th</sup> and April 17<sup>th</sup> Public Information Centres and has been categorized into themes below. The feedback has been used to refine the SODA policy directions and will inform draft policies in Phase 4.

### 6.2.1 Vision Statement

Community feedback showed strong support for the community vision, including integrating vibrant urban features like plazas, laneways, and gathering spaces into the study area, along with support for higher density in areas closer to transit and opportunities for sustainable development. There was also a suggestion to align zoning with developer incentives to encourage redevelopment.

Residential development was seen as desirable but required a supportive policy and zoning framework. There was also clear support for enhancing pedestrian and cycling connections in the area to Davis Drive and local transit.





# Our Vision

## Emerging Vision



SODA will thrive as a **dynamic centre** for culture, business, tourism, public services, and entertainment, providing a mix of **diverse uses and housing options**.

With convenient active transportation choices, a **vibrant public realm**, and **enhanced connections** to natural resources and key destinations, the area will continue to **be a place to stay and visit**.



Figure 21: SODA Vision Statement

## 6.2.2 Study Area Process and Boundary

Community members expressed a desire to be involved in smaller working group meetings in the next phase and emphasized the importance of sitting down with local landowners and businesses. One community member requested that the project team consider incorporating the north side of Simcoe Street in the study area, noting that the existing housing stock in this area was relatively affordable and essential to providing a range of housing types and tenures in the study area.



Figure 22: SODA Study Process

## 6.2.3 Guiding Principles

Feedback on the guiding principles included highlighting the importance of creating safe public spaces, enhancing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and promoting green, active transportation. There was strong support for a diverse range of housing, with some participants asking the project team to prioritize affordability and explore supports to address homelessness. Comments also encouraged inclusive spaces with sustainable, plant-based food options as a standard offering.



Figure 23: SODA Guiding Principles

## 6.2.4 Public Realm

### 6.2.4.1 Green Corridors & Safe Streets

Participants voiced their support for the proposed public realm vision of a vibrant Main Street with green spaces, pedestrian-friendly streetscape, and local amenities. Participants suggested enhancing the tree canopy with native species, preserving mature trees, and drawing inspiration from Indigenous markers and nature-based experiences. Suggestions also included narrowing streets for a more intimate feel, revitalizing neglected areas along Millard Avenue, Main Street and Queen Street, and celebrating local history through plaques and public art. Laneways were viewed as opportunities to promote active street life. Participants emphasized preserving the environmental integrity of natural areas and promoting wildlife corridors near the ravine. New east-west connections were suggested connecting SODA and Haskett Park. Safety in public spaces was noted as a priority to keep SODA vibrant and active (e.g. new laneways increasing foot traffic in these areas, ensure there is lighting and active uses nearby).

### 6.2.4.2 Urban Parks and Open Spaces

Participants noted their desire for more recreational areas near or in SODA. Suggestions included a community hockey rink and additional parks with playgrounds. Others emphasized the importance of having businesses near urban parks to help activate and sustain these public spaces, as well as designing for comfort for people of all ages and abilities.

### 6.2.4.3 Streetscape and Public Art

Respondents emphasized the need to make Main Street more vibrant through public art installations, patios, and wayfinding. There was strong support for wider sidewalks with street furniture, creating complimentary outdoor spaces to boost local business, as well as wayfinding and directional signage. Concerns were raised about the space which may required to create urban squares. Suggestions included adding stop signs at the intersection of Ontario and Niagara Street and improving directional signage to enhance circulation.



Figures 24 & 25: SODA Public Realm Policy Directions



## 6.2.5 Heritage

Some participants expressed a strong interest in preserving historical character and enhancing the aesthetic appeal of key areas. One respondent noted their concerns with the protection of the historic two-storey red brick building located at 99 Main Street. There was also a desire to retain building façades as a way to maintain heritage character while allowing for efficient redevelopment of properties.

Promoting local history with redevelopment, including increasing public engagement with the museum, installing historical plaques, and recognizing heritage in residential areas—even where current legislation may not formally acknowledge historic resources—was seen as key to respecting the area's history and heritage. Some respondents encouraged adopting urban design policies that celebrate and communicate the area's rich history, particularly in the 'yellow' Neighbourhood designation, to foster a deeper appreciation of the community's cultural and architectural legacy.

# Policy Directions

## Landmarks & Important Views

The existing gateway feature at Davis Drive and Main Street is unlikely to be obstructed by SODA development. Modest building heights near the Christian Baptist Church should not impact its views, but taller buildings may require further study.

New buildings, streets, parks, and open spaces will create new landmarks and vistas, enhancing social and community identity. Policy directions include: **protecting views of landmarks** (Christian Baptist Church and Main St South Gateway), **maintaining a two-storey base** for Main St buildings, **creating viewing locations** at the Ontario St stub, and **identifying opportunities for new views and landmarks** to support SODA's urban design structure.

## Heritage


New development or the revitalization of existing heritage properties will include **stepbacks** and **setbacks** to ensure building heights do not overwhelm the heritage buildings. Buildings with **longer footprints** should be broken into **smaller forms** to match the heritage character of the area.

## Public Art


Public art can **enhance local character, identity, civic pride, and sense of place** by bringing unique dialogue about public spaces to the community. The SODA area currently lacks public art installations, but numerous opportunities exist to support place-making objectives. Public art can facilitate community participation through small-scale installations like painted hydrants or utility boxes, especially along Main St and Queen St.

Policy directions include:


- developing a **Public Art Plan** and **Mural /Laneway program**;
- encouraging on-site public art for larger developments;
- promoting **community-led art installations**; and,
- involving Indigenous communities in developing a **reconciliation-focused art program**.




Christian Baptist Church, Main Street South



1880 Excerpt Map of the County of York



Queen Street, Brampton Revitalized Laneway & Public Art



Whyte Avenue, Edmonton. Source: curtidayedmonton

# Cultural Heritage

Developed in the late nineteenth century, **Main Street South** features a mix of commercial structures and single detached dwellings from that period, along with twentieth-century commercial infill. Architectural styles vary widely, including boomtown commercial buildings, Italianate, Queen Anne Revival, and Gothic Revival. Commercial buildings are typically situated close to the sidewalk, while residential and institutional buildings have deeper setbacks with landscaped lawns. Main Street features a mix of nineteenth-century dwellings and twentieth-century buildings, including one-storey commercial storefronts, a strip mall, and mid-century styles. The twentieth century saw both infill development and the redevelopment of older structures.



View of 71 Main Street South, an example of a boomtown style building



View of 74 Main Street South, an example of an Italianate former dwelling, now a restaurant



View of 70 Main Street South, an example of a Queen Anne style former dwelling, now office use

The area **west of Main Street South** features late nineteenth and early twentieth-century residential dwellings, predominantly one-and-a-half to two-storeys high, showcasing Italianate, Gothic Revival, Edwardian, and Arts-and-Crafts styles. The neighbourhood's mature character is enhanced by deciduous trees and materials like brick, stucco, and horizontal siding. The Holland River valley and the early mill at Fairy Lake were crucial to Newmarket's settlement and prosperity, further supported by the presence of the former Northern Railway, now the Canadian National Railway (CNR), along the west boundary.



View of 421 Queen Street, an example of an Italianate dwelling



View of 354 Queen Street, an example of a Gothic Revival dwelling



View of 387 Queen Street, an example of an Arts & Crafts style dwelling

The area **east of Main Street South** includes one to two-storey dwellings featuring horizontal siding. Architectural styles include Edwardian, Ontario Gothic Cottage, Georgian, and simple Ontario Cottages. Notable exceptions are the large property at 31 Superior Street and the Robertson Place development, which includes an 1873 Italianate Villa and two-storey townhouses.



View of properties on the south side of Simcoe Street, examples of Edwardian style dwellings

Figures 26 & 27: SODA Cultural Heritage Policy Directions and Cultural Heritage Resources

## 6.2.6 Circulation Network

The for a greener, more connected SODA, emphasizing the need for sustainable transportation that links parks, trails, and public spaces. There was support for improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, especially between Davis Drive and Main Street South, and for encouraging active transportation on other streets within and outside of the study area.

Participants contributed ideas to achieving this vision, including enhanced access to the Tom Taylor Trail and a potential east-west connection to the Nokiida Trail and GO/BRT network. Community feedback highlighted the need for more convenient parking, safer crosswalks, and improved east-west connections, including a potential bridge over the rail corridor. There was strong support for enhancing Queen Street with active transportation, revitalizing Millard Avenue, and exploring new trail connections to Haskett Park. Respondents also supported pedestrian-friendly features such as patios, laneways, and plazas, especially in Scenario 3, which received the most support. Concerns included managing foot traffic, preserving heritage buildings like 99 Main St, and balancing increased density with traffic solutions. Other comments included formalizing an existing cut-through by extending a laneway between Queen Street and Ontario Street. This would enhance pedestrian connectivity and circulation in the area.

## 6.2.7 Land Use

Community members supported creating convenient, walkable routes to local grocery stores, retail, and commercial uses to enhance Main Street's vibrancy. There was support for coordinated redevelopment through lot assembly, maintaining green spaces, enhancing wildlife corridors, and directing parking to parking lots and/or garages. Suggestions included setbacks around parks, improved playground maintenance, and centralizing social services near Newmarket GO. Across all scenarios, there was consistent support for increased density—especially near transit—with a focus on affordable housing, mixed-use development, and integrating active transportation. There was interest in clearer policies on permitted land uses for businesses in the various 'mixed use' areas. Community members who lived in the Raglan Street area expressed a desire to remain within the 'Neighbourhoods' designation.

Main Street was identified as a key opportunity for expanding commercial and mixed-use infill development, with an emphasis on preserving and enhancing Downtown Newmarket's unique character through architecture that reflects its built heritage. In the SODA area, community members suggested using underutilized or abandoned lots for off-site parking to help compensate for the potential removal of on-street parking and support future growth. There was also a desire among respondents to further support local, sustainable retail and to broaden commercial permissions in the future land use framework. Respondents emphasized the need for walkable access to grocery stores and convenience shops, noting that current options in the study area are limited. Participants encouraged a shift toward sustainable, plant-based food options as a standard, not an exception, and highlighted the importance of placing businesses near parks to help activate public spaces. Additionally, there were calls for more specific policies outlining the types of businesses permitted, with a focus on fostering a vibrant, locally driven commercial environment, particularly along Main Street.





### 6.2.7.1 Built Form

Community members emphasized the importance of creating a comfortable pedestrian environment, especially when planning taller buildings, by mitigating shadow impacts and using stepbacks to create 'breathing room' on streets. There was support for increased density at key intersections like Main Street and Simcoe Street, while maintaining lower heights along Main Street to create a more seamless transition to the existing heritage context. Respondents favoured gentle density outside of the boundary of the major transit station area, nearer to existing transit routes, in mixed-use buildings, with sustainable design features like solar panels and green roofs. Scenario 3 received strong support for 6–8 storey mixed-use development.

### 6.2.7.2 Engagement in Future Phases and Other Comments

Community members expressed a desire to continue efforts for an inclusive and transparent study process, highlighting a desire for collaboration and developing a shared vision. One participant requested that the north side of Simcoe Street be removed from the Urban Centres Secondary Plan area, and included in SODA, citing the importance of preserving affordable housing stock located on that side of the street.

Concerns were raised about the potential displacement of existing structures to create new public squares at Main/Ontario or Main/Queen, and the broader impacts of intensification, including traffic congestion. One respondent stressed the need for thoughtful redevelopment policies that encourage cohesive lot assembly rather than fragmented, inconsistent development. These insights underscore the need for proactive engagement with the community to ensure that growth is managed in a way that respects existing residents and maintains neighbourhood character.

## 7 Next Steps

The feedback summarized in this report will help inform new and updated policies in the Town's Official Plan. Residents and stakeholders are encouraged to sign up for project updates through the Hey Newmarket OPR and SODA project websites. Comments can be submitted at any time throughout the Official Plan Review project at [newmarketop@newmarket.ca](mailto:newmarketop@newmarket.ca).

