



Town of Newmarket

South of Davis Drive Area (SODA)

Policy Directions Report

May 2025



FUTURE NEWMARKET:
Planning OUR
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Draft for Town Review

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Executive Summary

This Policy Directions Report synthesizes input received from the public, key stakeholders, Town staff, and Council during Phases 1 and 2 of the Town of Newmarket Official Plan Review. Policy directions have been prepared for the South of Davis Drive Area (SODA), an emerging area of interest for the Town of Newmarket given that it is located within Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA) 33 – Main Street BRT and its proximity to the Urban Centres Secondary Plan area along Davis Drive. The SODA is also north of Newmarket’s historic Main Street area, which includes a Heritage Conservation District and guiding plan.

The SODA Study is an important component of the Town’s Official Plan Review project and will inform policy updates to the Official Plan. Refinement of the policy directions presented in draft in this report have been informed by consultation and engagement with Council and the public through workshops and a public open house. The purpose of this Policy Directions Report is to:

- Establish the context for the SODA, including existing conditions and the policy context;
- Outline draft policy directions for the SODA; and;
- Propose an emerging identity for the SODA, building on the draft Vision and Guiding Principles informed by consultation and engagement with the public and Council.

The policy directions recommended in this Policy Directions Report will be presented to Council in Phase 3 for input and review. Following Council endorsement in principle of the recommended policy directions, the final policy directions will be implemented through updates to the Official Plan policies, as Phase 4 of the Official Plan Review includes the development of the updated Official Plan, which involves the review of policies and schedules to implement the preferred and final policy directions.



Table of Contents

- Executive Summary 3
- Table of Contents 4
- Glossary 7
- 1 Background 9
 - 1.1 Project Purpose 9
 - 2.1 Purpose of the Report 9
- 2 SODA Context 11
 - 3.1 SODA Study Location 11
 - 4.1 SWOC Analysis 12
 - Strengths 12
 - Weaknesses 12
 - Opportunities 13
 - Constraints 13
 - 5.1 Existing Conditions Analysis 14
- Main Street Corridor 14
 - East of Main Street 16
 - West of Main Street 17
 - Parks and Open Space 18
 - Views and Vistas 18
 - Public Art 19
- 3 Policy Context 19
 - 6.1 Provincial Policy Context 19
 - 7.1 Regional Policy Context 20
 - Structure and Land Use 20
 - Complete Communities 21
 - Transportation and Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) 21
 - Human Services and Facilities 23
 - 8.1 Local Policy Context 23
- Town of Newmarket Official Plan, 2006 23



Guiding Growth and Establishing Land Uses	24
Encouraging Sustainable Transportation.....	25
Guiding Urban Design and Protecting Cultural Heritage.....	25
Public Health and Safety	26
SODA Zoning	26
Urban Centres Secondary Plan	28
Heritage Conservation District Plan	28
4 Summary of Engagement Events.....	29
Project Website	29
April 2025 Public Open House Meetings.....	29
Upgrade and maintain streets to foster a safe and active public realm	29
Support local sustainable retail and expand commercial options	30
Sustainable transportation connecting green spaces to and through SODA	30
.....	30
What We Heard	31
Vision and Guiding Principles for SODA	32
Vision for the SODA Study.....	32
Emerging Guiding Principles for the SODA Study.....	32
Providing a Range of Housing Options.....	33
Facilitate Accessible and Inclusive Spaces	33
Refined SODA Boundary.....	34
5 Transformative Theme Areas for the SODA Study	35
Achieving Appropriate Scale, Massing and Compatible Built Form	36
Main Street Character Area	37
East of Main Street	38
West of Main Street	39
Transition.....	39
Enhance and Reveal Views and Vistas.....	40
Landmarks and Important Views.....	41
Enhancing Public Realm Elements	42
Circulation Network.....	42
Park and Open Space System.....	43



Built Form	44
Main Street Streetscape	44
Streetscape Components	45
Parks and Open Space.....	46
Public Art.....	47
Protecting and Enhancing Heritage Resources.....	48
6 Next Steps	49



Glossary

Term	Detail
ADU or ARU	Accessory Dwelling Unit or Additional Residential Unit
BIA	Business Improvement Area
CIP	Community Improvement Plan
EIS	Environmental Impact Study
GGH	Greater Golden Horseshoe
GHG	Greenhouse gas emissions
GTHA	Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area
HATF	Housing Affordability Task Force
HCD	Heritage Conservation District
In-effect Official Plan	Town of Newmarket Official Plan, 2006 (Office Consolidation August 2022)
LSRCA	Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority
MCR	Municipal Comprehensive Review
MTSA	Major Transit Station Area
Newmarket	The geographic area of the Town of Newmarket
O. Reg	Ontario Regulation
OPA	Official Plan Amendment
OPR	Official Plan Review



OHA	Ontario Heritage Act, 2005
ORMCP	Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, 2017
PHPPS	Provincial Heritage Properties of Provincial Significance
PHP	Provincial Heritage Properties
PMTSA	Protected Major Transit Station Areas
PPS	Provincial Planning Statement, 2024
ROP	York Region Official Plan, 2022
SODA	South of Davis Drive Area
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
Town	The Corporation of the Town of Newmarket
UDG	Newmarket Urban Design Guidelines
WSP	WSP Canada Inc.
York Region	Regional Municipality of York



1 Background

1.1 Project Purpose

The Town of Newmarket (the “Town”), together with a Project Team led by WSP Canada Inc. (WSP) is reviewing the Town’s Official Plan, 2006, as amended (the “in-effect Official Plan”) through the Official Plan Review (OPR) project. The purpose of the OPR is to update the in-effect Official Plan and establish innovative, proactive, and contemporary policies to reflect the changing characteristics and demographics of the community and manage growth and development to the 2051 planning horizon.

The updated Official Plan will be developed through a six-phase work plan over approximately two years. This work plan includes the preparation of background studies and reports informed by Provincial and Regional policy directions, best practices for comprehensive planning processes, and several opportunities for consultation and engagement with the Town, the community, Indigenous Peoples, and stakeholders. We are currently in Phase 3 of OPR.

The South of Davis Drive Area (SODA) Study plays an integral role in supporting the OPR project by informing and shaping the future development and planning of the SODA which forms part of the Main BRT Station Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA). The SODA Study will establish vision and guiding principles, ultimately providing a framework for decision-making and development planning. The outcomes of the SODA Study will encompass a range of policy recommendations that will address various aspects of development and urban planning, such as land use, built form, and/or the design of the public realm. These recommendations are intended to not only support but also enhance the existing and planned environment in SODA.

One significant aspect of the SODA Study is its critical link between the Urban Centres Secondary Plan area along Davis Drive, just north of the study area, particularly Newmarket’s Main BRT Station PMTSA, and the historic Main Street area. These linkages provide opportunities for the SODA to evolve into a connected and walkable community with urban built form such as gentle intensification housing types, like midrise buildings and duplexes, underpinning the area’s strategic location and its potential influence on the broader urban fabric.

Ultimately, the SODA Study will focus on creating a comprehensive vision, guiding principles, and policy recommendations that will shape the area's development and ensure integration within the larger urban context, particularly enhancing the public realm and preserving the historical and economic significance of the study area. Section 1.2 provides further details of the SODA.

2.1 Purpose of the Report

This Policy Directions Report (the “Report”) is a significant deliverable in Phase 3 and represents an important step in developing and informing an updated policy framework to implement the SODA vision and future development in this area. In particular, this Report evaluates the South of Davis Drive Area (SODA), illustrated in [Figure 1](#). The study area encompasses the lands fronting Main Street from Simcoe

Street, south to Millard Avenue, and the area from Niagara Street east to the Canadian National Rail corridor. These lands are being carefully considered through a study (the “SODA Study”) as part of the OPR. This Report is also informed by the OPR Policy Directions Report which recommends policy directions for the updated Official Plan. The relationship between the OPR and SODA Study is illustrated in **Figure 1**. Policy directions function as a roadmap for updating the Official Plan, by identifying specific and high-level directions for revising and updating Official Plan policies. Policy directions address gaps and opportunities previously identified in the Background Summary Report (BSR) and are framed as “Big Moves” for Newmarket that will ensure the updated Official Plan achieves conformity with Provincial and Regional policies but also establish a framework for sustainable growth to 2051.

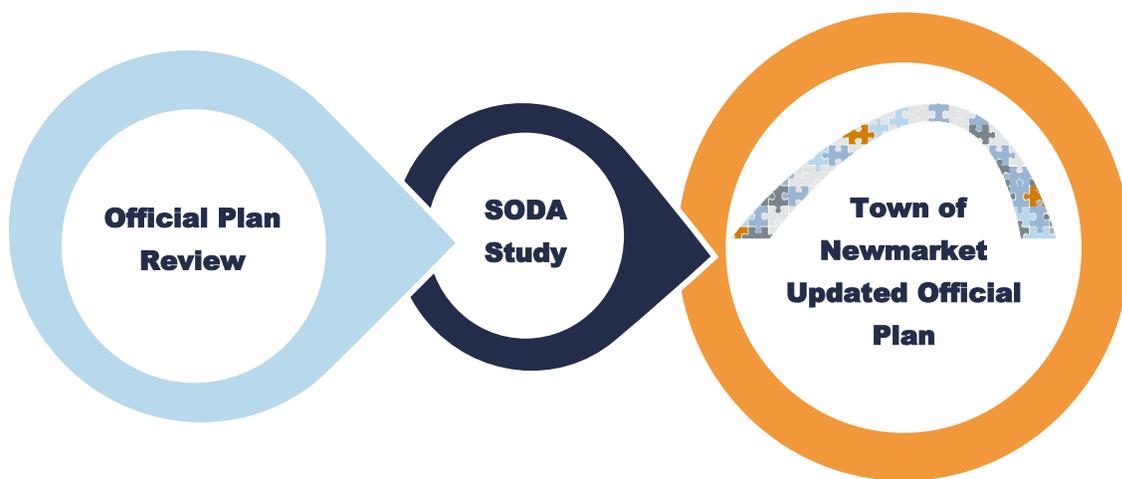


Figure 1: The results of the SODA Study will inform land use, heights, the public realm, and design policies for SODA to be included in the updated Official Plan

2 SODA Context

This section sets the stage for the SODA Study by providing a description of the SODA location and a description of existing conditions including a review of heritage resources, and a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and constraints (SWOC) analysis.

3.1 SODA Study Location

The study area¹, which is illustrated in **Figure 2**, is bound by Simcoe Street to the north, Millard Avenue and the Main Street HCD boundary to the south, Niagara Street to the west and the Canadian National Railway right-of-way and Holland River Ravine to the east. SODA is a key link between the Urban Centres Secondary Plan area along Davis Drive and the historic lower Main Street South area, which is designated as an HCD. SODA is also located within a five to ten-minute walk of the Newmarket GO Transit Station and close to the Southlake Regional Health Centre, a key economic driver and community asset in Newmarket.

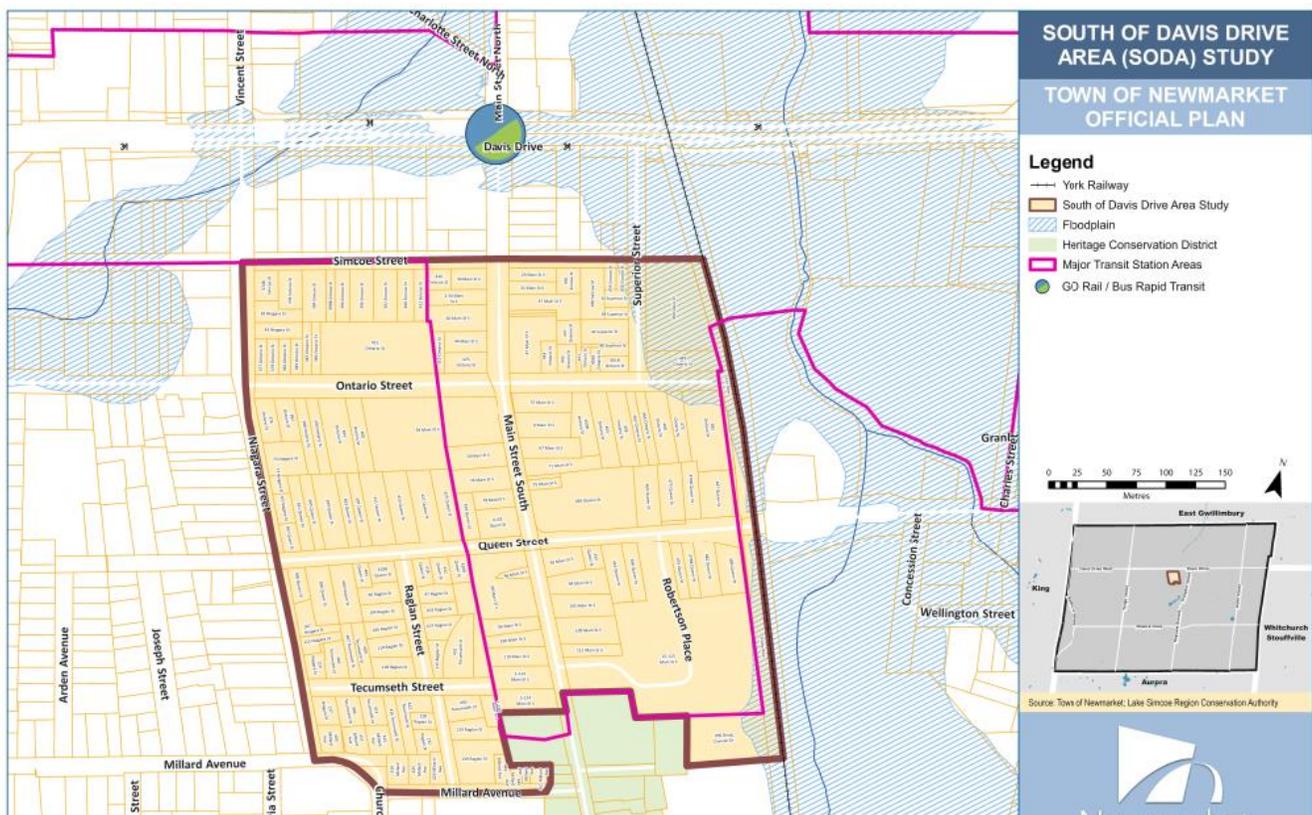


Figure 2: The South of Davis Drive Area (SODA) Study area, which is being considered and studied through the Town's Official Plan Review

¹ The SODA boundary is subject to further refinement

4.1 SWOC Analysis

Provided below is a high-level summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and constraints (SWOC) of the study area that informed the draft policy directions in this Report.

Strengths

The SODA Study Area includes:

- Valued heritage resources support SODA's local heritage identity which is understood by some residents, Town staff, and Council as being an extension of lower Main Street's heritage;
- An energy and vitality similar to that generated by the hub of businesses and pedestrian activity in the lower Main Street area;
- Some adaptive reuse of heritage buildings already exists, such as Sanctuary Day Spa, Old Flame Brewing Co., and Hungry Brew Hops;
- Proximity to major transit facilities, Davis Drive, and GO transit as well as the Tom Taylor Trail network;
- Casual slower paced environment, which could be seen as an oasis of calm between areas of more intense activity;
- Residential sites and buildings on local streets (particularly to the west of Main Street);
- Buildings of a pedestrian scale;
- A mature tree canopy and greenery in many areas;
- Consistency in height and massing on parts of Main Street; and,
- Architectural interest, articulation, and a variety of architectural styles.

Weaknesses

The SODA Study Area:

- Is different from lower Main Street South and the Davis Drive Corridor because of its physical fabric and attributes, but appears rundown and lacks its own identity;
- Is perceived by some to feel less safe than lower Main Street due to fewer pedestrians, reduced street-level activity, and the presence of vacant lots and unused outdoor spaces;
- Is comprised of buildings along Main Street which lack animation and pedestrian interest along sidewalks;
- Lacks public parkland, open spaces, and outdoor programs;



- Lacks connectivity to the nearby Holland River open space network and trail system;
- Experiences increased traffic volumes on Main Street during peak periods as a bypass for Yonge Street;
- Has inconsistent or non-existent streetscape improvements; and,
- Has challenging grading, particularly near the ravine, which has resulted in the extensive use of retaining walls. The use of retaining walls has also resulted in accessibility issues from the sidewalk to the front door of some existing buildings.

Opportunities

The SODA Study Area:

- Has several large-scale sites (e.g., St. John Chrysostom) supporting institutional uses with some public programs. These sites have the potential to provide publicly accessible outdoor space in the form of Privately Owned Public Space (POPS) and community activities through mutually beneficial partnership development with the Town, community groups, or other potential partners;
- Includes some large-scale sites in private ownership with development potential;
- Main Street and Queen Street are a primary focal point for development in the SODA, with a secondary developmental point being the area at Main Street and Ontario Street;
- The potential for enhanced connections from SODA's Main Street along Ontario Street to the Holland River ravine and active transportation trail network, with connections to the Davis GO Transit Station;
- Could function as a missing link between the bus lane on Davis Drive and lower Main Street with an enhanced pedestrian environment, cycling facilities, direct access to transit and other alternative mobility options;
- Has the potential for adaptive reuse of buildings and sites with heritage value;
- Provides an opportunity to build on and extend the positive streetscape strategies, elements, and features of lower Main Street, with these elements tailored to the SODA context; and,
- Provides an opportunity for the Town to promote sensitive infill in the form of missing middle housing and gentle intensification while helping the Town meet its density targets for the Main Street PMTSA.

Constraints

The SODA Study Area may be constrained by:

- Heritage resources, which may limit lot consolidation and investment or opportunities to explore adaptive reuse in existing built form;
- Servicing infrastructure in the area and the Town overall;



- Setbacks from the floodplain and other provincial and LSRCA requirements related to development in or near floodplain areas and setbacks to the rail corridor; and,
- Development proposing fewer than 10 units is no longer subject to site plan review which may impact the Town’s ability to apply design standards, such as the Urban Design Guidelines to new development in the Study Area.

5.1 Existing Conditions Analysis

This Section explores existing conditions in the SODA, including on Main Street, in parks and open spaces, views and vistas, and public art.

Main Street Corridor

The Main Street corridor is primarily a mixed land use area including some institutional and residential uses. The lands are designated “Historic Downtown Centre” in the Official Plan, which is expanded further in Section 2.5.3 (Figure 4). Main Street is lined with detached one- to three-storey buildings on lots fronting onto Main Street. Access to these sites varies. In some cases, the lots take their access from Main Street. This typically occurs where the land is used for residential uses. In other cases, lots are accessed via parking lots that front onto east-west streets (Figure 3).

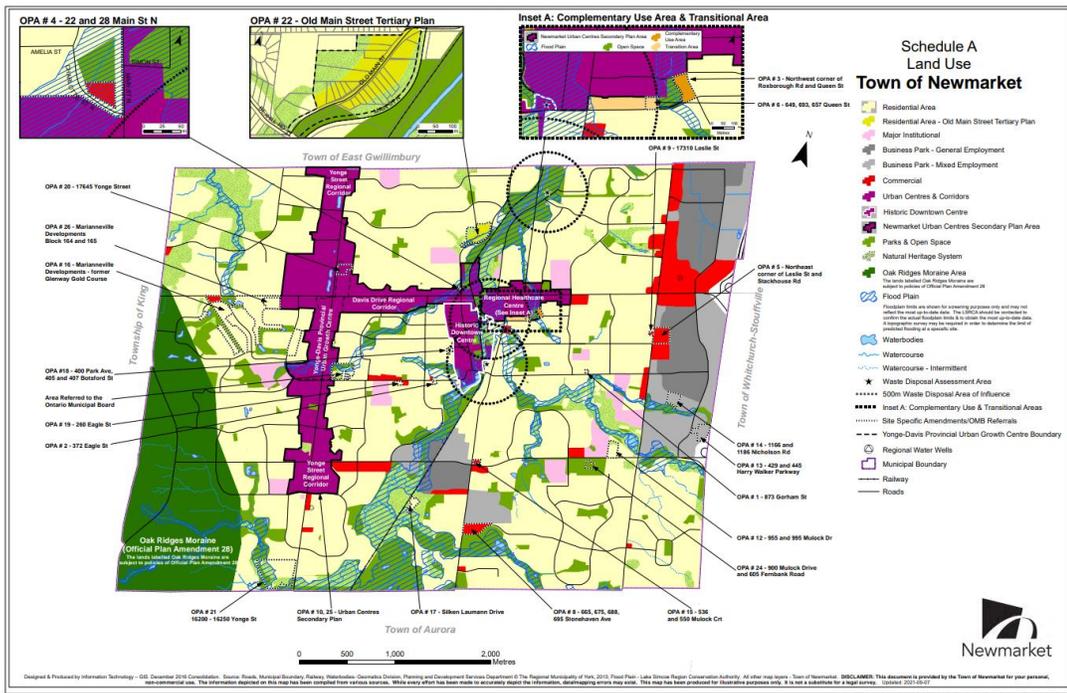


Figure 4: Official Plan Schedule A

Lots vary in size, depth, and frontage with a few large lots located within the existing urban fabric. Building setbacks are generally shallow to moderate, less than two metres in most cases, with few exceptions, such as the Robertson House site. Some lots have access from laneways located parallel to Main Street,



while others have access directly on Main Street. **Figure 5** exemplifies the Main Street corridor in the SODA and illustrates these characteristics.

Main Street has two lanes of traffic, on-street parking and turning lanes. Signalized intersections are located at Queen Street and Ontario Street. The existing streetscape is inconsistent in its boulevard design, with limited street trees and amenities. Sidewalks are narrow with significant pinch points at intersections. The Main Street streetscape is unevenly developed with portions that are visually different from the high quality design of the nearby lower Main Street HCD streetscape.



Figure 5: Main Street in the SODA, including a snapshot of existing buildings, pedestrian walkways, and parking spaces (Source: Project Team and Google Maps)

Existing buildings are generally setback from Main Street with some amount of green space around them. Small nodes of storefront buildings, some with heritage interest, are located close to the street at the intersection of Main Street and Queen Street, and also at Main Street and Ontario Street ([Error! Reference source not found.](#) and [Error! Reference source not found.](#)). Heritage buildings in various states of repair and use are located along the length of Main Street. Some front yard vehicle parking is available, such as at the Mercato Grocery Market (shown in [Figure 5](#)) and limited rear yard parking is available on some sites.

Sites identified as places of interest for redevelopment, parks and open space, or parking opportunities include but are not limited to large lots of interest at the southwest corner of Ontario Street and Main Street.



Figure 6: View of 421 Queen Street, an example of an Italianate dwelling.



Figure 7: View of 93 Main Street South, an example of a boomtown-style building.

East of Main Street

Lots within the SODA between Main Street and the rail corridor, connected to Newmarket GO, and Tom Taylor Trail that form the east SODA Study boundary, are oriented east-west on blocks south of Queen Street and north-south for blocks north of Queen Street. Lots are deeper on the north side of Queen Street than the lots to the south. The area is predominantly comprised of residential uses with low-rise, two storey homes and includes heritage resources. Two large lots, owned by the St. John Crysostom Catholic Church, fronting onto Ontario Street are anomalies to the lotting pattern.

This area is characterized by small-scale detached buildings with some generalized issues of maintenance and property standards apparent. [Figure 8](#) illustrates the difference between older, single detached houses (see the left image) versus newer buildings. There is a noticeable difference between the two typologies in terms of scale, height, and size. For example, the single detached house is two storeys high, with a deep backyard and shallow front yard (see the left image). The stacked townhome in comparison is at least three storeys tall (see the right image, located east of Main).

Well-designed stacked townhouses located at 487 Queen Street are a good example of a typology appropriate for the SODA's emerging pattern of local intensification in terms of scale, orientation, configuration, and siting. Local streets are narrow with sidewalks, and street trees in sod. Ontario Street ends in a stub overlooking the depressed rail corridor and Tom Taylor Trail. Queen Street is the only route connecting the study area to the east, providing connections to the Tom Taylor Trail and the Prospect Street cycling route.



Figure 8: Examples of different residential building typologies (single detached on the left and stacked townhouses on the right) in SODA.

West of Main Street

The area west of Main Street consists of residential properties located between Main Street and Niagara Street, between Davis Drive and Millard Street. The lots vary in size, frontage, depth, and configuration but can be characterized as deep and generally rectangular. The blocks north of Queen Street contain fewer heritage resources than other areas within SODA. Lands west of Main Street are also predominately two storey residential detached homes with some semi-detached homes. This neighbourhood is well kept and in good condition.

The variation of architectural styles and eras of construction of the homes west of Main Street contributes to this neighbourhood's overall physical character.

- Facades are well-articulated and detailed with generous fenestration and front doors facing the street;
- Materials vary and include wood, brick, stone, and siding;
- Front porches or stoops present opportunities for socializing and “eyes on the street”; and,

- Garages and other outbuildings located in the rear yard or in a few instances garages are integrated into building massing at front, however garages do not dominate the streetscape.

Local streets west of Main Street have a generous tree canopy. The lots along the streets add to the green street character and include shallow landscaped setbacks, some with gentle grade change. The streets are narrow and comfortably scaled for local traffic, on-street parking, active transportation, and pedestrian use. Buildings face the street with doors, fenestration, and porches to create overlook and a safe environment.

Parks and Open Space

There are no public parks in SODA. Most of the green spaces within SODA are located on private lands located east and west of Main Street, such as front and rear yard landscaping, and on the church sites along Main Street. The Holland River ravine and Tom Taylor Trail are located adjacent to the SODA. The only connection to the Tom Taylor Trail from SODA is on Queen Street. Desire created by pedestrians are observed just outside the study area, potentially demonstrating the desire for formalized access to the Holland River ravine and Tom Taylor Trail on these informal routes. Although the railway creates a physical barrier, limiting access between SODA and the ravine, there are visual links to the ravine.

Views and Vistas

An arched gateway structure located at Main Street and Davis Drive beyond SODA's north boundary, is visible along the length of Main Street and Davis Drive.

The Christian Baptist Church, with its prominent steeple and located on high topographical point just south of the study area boundary is a highly visible landmark both within SODA and beyond. The study area also includes important views of the Holland River ravine with its extensive tree cover and other natural features from and between buildings east of Main Street.

The railway is a physical barrier between SODA and the Tom Taylor Trail. The nearby Railway Bridge just east of SODA is the site of a local "rite of passage" landmark and meeting place and views from the Queen Street Bridge both north and south are memorable.

Local views from Main Street onto tree-lined pedestrian-scale streets and the residential low rise neighbourhood are very inviting, evoking a relaxed welcoming atmosphere that complements the urban village atmosphere.



Figure 9: Main Street arch, "Well Beyond the Ordinary"

Public Art

Currently, there are no public art installations or programs in the SODA. However, interest in the arts is apparent based on observations of a street artist setting up their easel on Main Street to create a sketch and painting. The OPR Policy Directions Report includes additional detail and direction for the Town to consider through the OPR as it relates to public art.

3 Policy Context

This Section inventories and reviews applicable provincial, regional, and local policies that inform the draft policy directions proposed in this report to guide land use and development in the SODA.

6.1 Provincial Policy Context

Section 3 of the Planning Act requires that municipal official plans be consistent with the policies of the Provincial Planning Statement, which came into effect and was enacted on October 20, 2024. It replaces the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020). The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) sets the Province's policy direction for land use, development, infrastructure, and protection of natural heritage resources in Ontario, among other things.

The PPS directs Planning Authorities to identify the type and scale of development in Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs), nodes, corridors, and other areas identified to be the focus of intensification and built form. This can include infill, redevelopment, expansion, or conversion of existing buildings.

Planning authorities are also encouraged to identify and focus growth and development in Strategic Growth Areas (SGA), with SODA forming part of a SGA in the Town of Newmarket. SODA qualifies as a SGA under the PPS given its location within 500–800 metres of a Mobility Hub and is largely within an Major Transit Station Area (MTSA), with Main Street identified as a Local Corridor.

SGAs are to support the achievement of complete communities, a range and mix of housing options, intensification and more mixed-use development. As per policy 2.4.1.2, SGAs are to be planned to:

- Accommodate significant population and employment growth;

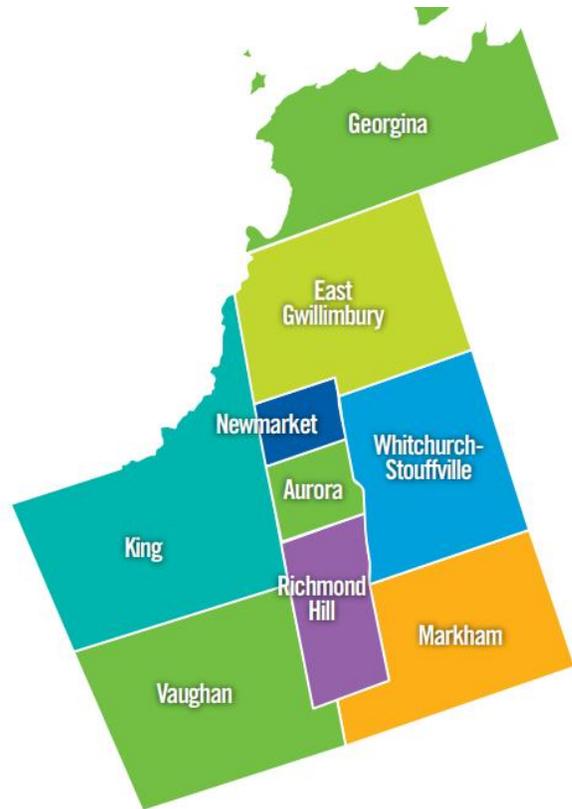


Figure 10: This excerpt from the ROP identifies the local municipalities in York Region, including the Town of Newmarket



- As focal areas for education, commercial, recreational, and cultural uses;
- To accommodate and support the transit network and provide connection points for inter- and intra-regional transit; and,
- To support affordable, accessible, and equitable housing.

Planning authorities are to promote appropriate development and intensification in MTSAs by:

- Planning land use and built form to meet density targets (160 people & jobs per hectare); and,
- Redeveloping surface parking lots within MTSAs to support transit and complete communities.

The PPS also sets out policies that support walkable, mixed-use neighbourhoods, with access to transit and reduced infrastructure needs. This also includes diverse building forms, such as small-lot homes, townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, walk-up apartments, and mixed-use buildings.

7.1 Regional Policy Context

This Section provides an overview of the York Region Official Plan, 2022 (the “YROP”), which describes how the Region and local municipalities, including the Town, will accommodate future growth and development while meeting the needs of existing residents and businesses. As a local municipality in York Region, the Town’s updated Official Plan is required to conform with the YROP.

Structure and Land Use

York Region’s Urban System is comprised of Community Areas and Employment Areas. The SODA is designated as a Community Area. Community Areas are intended to accommodate residential, population-related employment and community services and concentrations of existing and future population and employment growth in York Region.

As noted, PMTSA 33 overlaps part of the SODA and includes the Newmarket GO Station and Main Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station. PMTSAs are an important component of the Town’s overall structure for growth. This is further discussed and explored in the OPR PDR. However, it is important to consider that PMTSAs are a focus for growth and intensification in the YROP and will be recognized as such in the updated Official Plan. This is further discussed in Section 2.4.1.3 of this Report.

The SODA can play an important role in accommodating current and future residential and employment growth to achieve the goals and objectives identified by York Region for Community Areas and Employment Areas through the ROP.

What are MTSAs?

MTSAs are areas including and around selected existing or planned higher order transit stations and GO stations.

They are generally defined as the area within an approximate **500 to 800 metre radius** of a transit station or stop. This is equivalent to about a **10-minute walk**.

Complete Communities

Through the ROP, York Region places a high priority on complete communities that support a full range of amenities and housing types for people of all ages and stages of life, different household formations and incomes. The ROP directs growth to existing urban areas, with an emphasis on development that supports compact development patterns, complete communities, and minimized servicing costs for local municipalities and residents.

The policies established by the ROP are intended to help create well-designed complete communities that have integrated greenspace, trails, pedestrian and transit networks, and that offer housing, transportation, accessible human services, and employment options. To achieve this, the ROP requires that communities are planned and designed as sustainable, healthy, vibrant complete communities that are walkable to most local amenities.

The ROP promotes an appropriate mix and range of housing options that meet the needs of residents and workers of all income levels, ages, abilities, and stages of their lives. The ROP establishes a region-wide target that 25% of all new housing units be affordable to low and middle-income households. A minimum of 35% of all new housing units within Regional Centres and Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) are to be affordable. The east portion of the SODA is located within a MTSA and the area can play an important role in contributing to York Region's affordable housing supply as discussed in the next section.

To support the evolution of complete communities that are sustainable and resilient, the Region requires local municipalities to incorporate policies in their official plans that support low- or no-carbon energy alternatives and net-zero emissions by 2050. Local municipalities are required to implement actions in the York Region Climate Change Action Plan and Community Energy and Emissions Plan. These policy requirements must be implemented Town-wide, but may also be addressed through specific policies identified through the SODA Study.

Transportation and Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)

The ROP establishes a policy framework to encourage compact, mixed use, and transit-supportive communities, consistent with Ontario's Transit Supportive Guidelines. While there are 11 MTSAs located within the Town, one Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA) intersects with the SODA. PMTSA 33 overlaps in part with the SODA² and includes the Newmarket GO Station and Main Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station, as illustrated in [Figure 1](#). The ROP establishes a density target of 160 people and jobs per hectare for PMTSA 33. The built form and scale of development established for PMTSA 33 and other MTSAs will support York Region's intensification hierarchy. Policies in the updated Official Plan can help the Town to achieve these minimum density targets. Complementary to the PMTSA, proposed cycling facilities are identified for Davis Drive and Leslie Street, as illustrated on Map 9A to the ROP. While not located directly within the SODA, it is important to consider future opportunities for cycling facilities that may enhance or support connections to the SODA and beyond.

² The SODA boundary in Figure 11 is the preliminary study boundary which has since been modified.

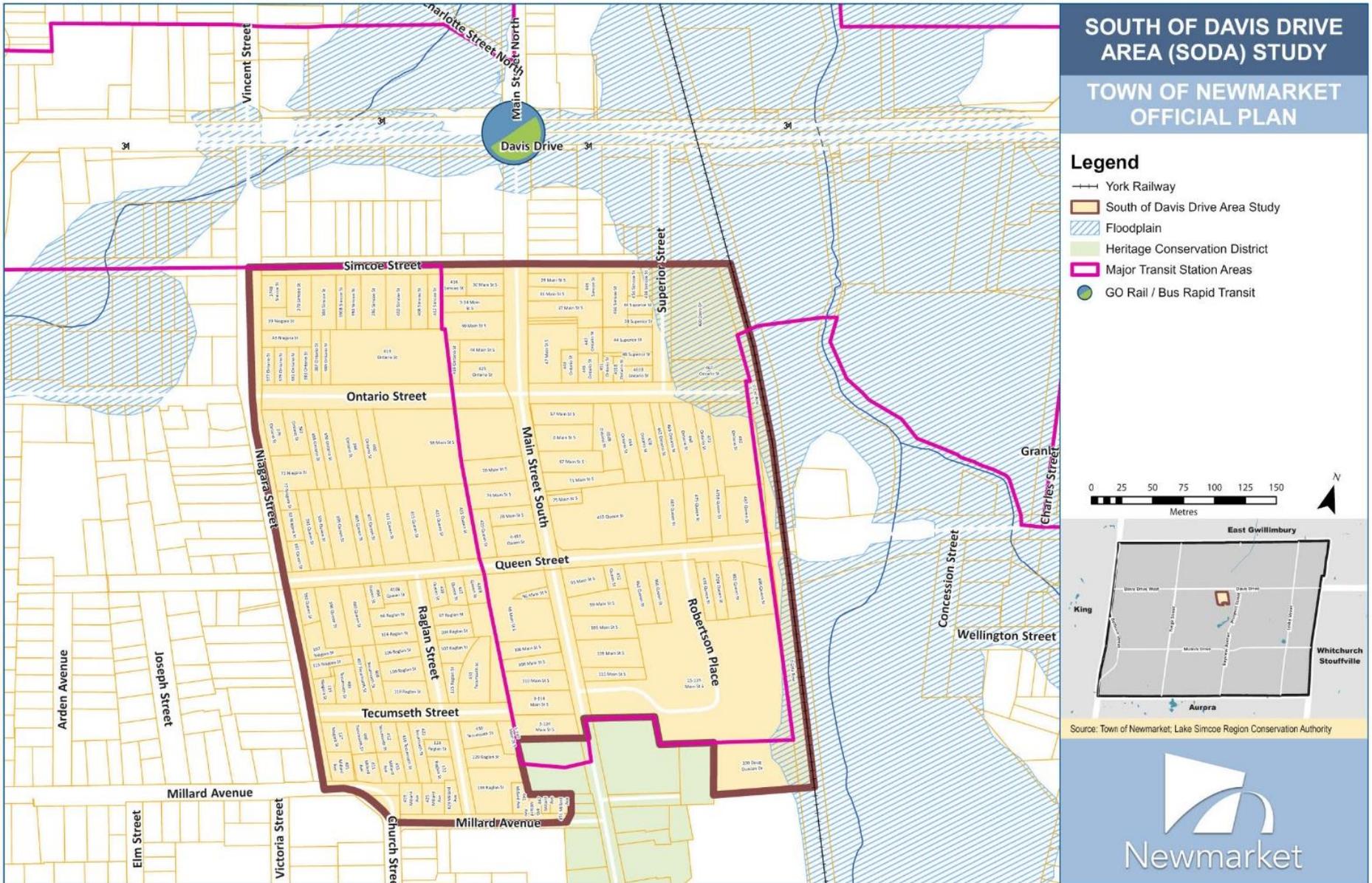


Figure 11: The preliminary SODA Study Area boundary overlaps with the boundary of PMTSA 33 established by the ROP, Appendix 2 – York Region Major Transit Station Areas

Human Services and Facilities

Human services, such as libraries, schools, healthcare centres, and community outreach programs, support people at every stage of their life and can positively influence a person's health and stability. Human services are important elements of complete communities. The ROP recognizes the role of partners and stakeholders in early identification of human service requirements to support the development of complete communities.

The ROP requires that human services facilities be accessible and in close proximity to places where people live, work, and have active transportation linkages to public transit. The provision of human services also plays an important role in fostering an economic environment that supports business growth, employment, and volunteer opportunities.

There is an opportunity for the Town to leverage existing assets in the SODA and connections to active transportation and transit linkages to support the provision of future human services. Through the SODA Study and OPR, the Town will consider these policy requirements to ensure that complete communities include human services. This and other policy directions are further contemplated in Section 4 of this Report and in the Official Plan Review Policy Directions Report.

8.1 Local Policy Context

This Section provides an overview of the Town's in-effect Official Plan and policies that must be reviewed and considered as part of the SODA Study. This Section also contemplates the Town's Urban Centres Secondary Plan and Heritage Conservation District Plan as important drivers for growth and change in areas adjacent to the SODA³.

Town of Newmarket Official Plan, 2006

The Town's in-effect Official Plan establishes land use designations and policies for the physical development and redevelopment of Newmarket having regard for social, economic, and environmental matters. Through the OPR, new policies to implement the findings from the SODA study will guide land use, heights, densities, and design.

While not explicitly acknowledged in the in-effect Official Plan, SODA plays an integral role in connecting the Urban Centres Secondary Plan area along Davis Drive with the historic Lower Main Street South area. As noted, it will also play an important role in helping the Town meet the density targets for the PMTSA. The Historic Downtown area, in particular, is envisioned as the heart and traditional Central Business District of Newmarket. The Historic Downtown also holds a significant place within the Community Improvement Plan (CIP). Section 4.3.3 of the in-effect Official Plan provides direction for the revitalization of the Historic Downtown and specifically refers to the CIP as an important tool that is used to guide decisions on improvements in the Historic Downtown.

³ The SODA boundary is subject to further refinement



CIPs within Newmarket are instrumental in safeguarding, revitalizing, and renewing specific town areas to enhance building safety, structural quality, and overall urban aesthetics. These initiatives aim to create inviting, attractive, and people-centric urban streetscapes and public spaces. Specifically, policies in Section 4.3.3 note that the CIP for the Historic Downtown is designed to facilitate growth and transformation aligned with the Plan's strategic objectives. Its purpose is twofold: revitalize the area with appropriate development and protect and enhance the history of the area.

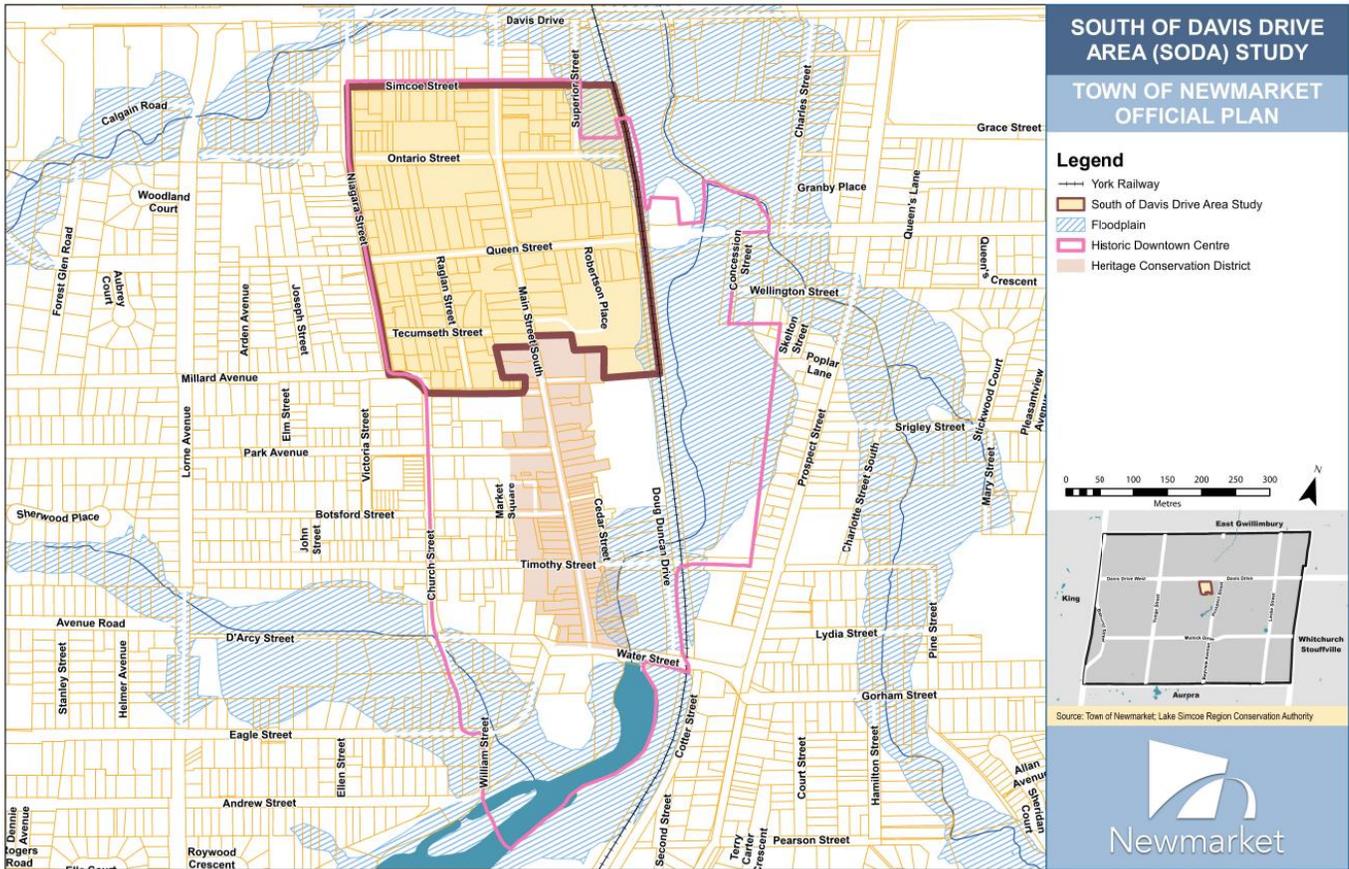


Figure 12: SODA (preliminary boundary) and the Historic Downtown Centre

Guiding Growth and Establishing Land Uses

The SODA is located within the Urban Centres Secondary Plan Area. Lands within the SODA are designated Historic Downtown Centre (see Figure). Permitted uses include retail and service commercial uses, institutional uses, entertainment, educational and accommodation facilities, business and professional offices, residential uses, conservation uses, parks and open space areas. Residential units up to 80 units per net hectare are also permitted, with a target of 60 to 200 persons and employees per hectare. These targets are identified in Table 1 of the in-effect Official Plan.

The SODA is also located within the Historic Core Character Area which is broadly characterized in the in-effect Official Plan as an area with mature trees, a range of architectural expressions, and a significant concentration of listed and designated heritage properties.

A significant portion of the SODA is located within PMTSA 33 (Main Street & Davis Drive), granting the study area an important role in supporting the density targets for the MTSA, while achieving objectives for gentle density and intensification through a range of housing opportunities.

Given the broad range of uses permitted in the SODA, with a mix of intensification planned to be accommodated in this area in the form of infill and adaptive reuse to help the Town meet its density targets (established by the ROP), there is special attention on sound urban design principles for these areas to develop in a manner that is attractive, safe, and pedestrian-friendly.

Encouraging Sustainable Transportation

While the modal split in the Town still points to automobiles as the main mode of transportation, the in-effect Official Plan provides direction for promoting other sustainable transportation options. For example, policies 4.3.3.3.b and 4.3.3.3.d-e provide direction for improvements to the streetscape along Main Street, including centralized, communal parking areas, improvement of lanes for off-street loading and deliveries to business, and improvement of access to the Historic Downtown and circulation within it through pavement widening and resurfacing.

Additionally, there are proposed cycling routes on Main Street as noted in the Town's Active Transportation Implementation Plan, as well as on-street bike lanes extending on Main Street and along Queen Street, that support the Town's active transportation network.

Guiding Urban Design and Protecting Cultural Heritage

Section 12.2 of the in-effect Official Plan identifies six key design principles that apply to all types of development across the Town, including but not limited to designing in context with the natural and built environments, enhancing connectivity, and pedestrian amenities. These principles work together to promote the development of high quality urban places. They are implemented through policies for compatibility, buffering, and linkages.

Section 4.3.3 of the in-effect Official Plan specifically deals with the Historic Downtown Centre and includes policies for the protection and enhancement of historic Newmarket. Policies related to urban design and cultural heritage include but are not limited to:

- Improvements to the streetscape through lighting, landscaping, street furniture, and the use of laneways for deliveries for businesses;
- Rehabilitation and revitalization of facades along Main Street;
- Promotion of retail, service commercial, and office uses along Main Street at grade; and,
- Improvements to the Historic Downtown in the form of infill development.

Through the SODA Study, the updated Official Plan will include new policies to guide built form and the public realm in the SODA. These policies should be informed by, and closely related to, new urban design policies in the updated Official Plan with specific guidance to achieve the emerging vision for the SODA.



Public Health and Safety

Section 10.0 of the in-effect Official Plan acknowledges that flood-prone areas, former waste disposal areas, and contaminated lands can pose risks to public health, safety, and property value. The in-effect Official Plan directs the Town to monitor and manage development in such hazard-prone regions, identified on Schedule B of the in-effect Official Plan. Policies in Section 10.5 of the in-effect Official Plan also address noise, vibration, and air quality issues associated with certain land uses. The objectives of these policies are to identify potential hazards, protect residents from hazards, ensure development near hazards mitigates risks, establish requirements for site assessment and cleanup, minimize impacts related to noise, vibration, and air quality, and safeguard drinking water sources as per the *Clean Water Act*. These policies have been reviewed and considered as part of the OPR and in terms of their specific relevance to the SODA.

SODA Zoning

The purpose of a Zoning By-Law is to implement the policies of the Town of Newmarket Official Plan. The Official Plan contains general policies that affect the use of land throughout the municipality. These policies specify where certain land uses are permitted and, in some instances, specify what regulations should apply to the development of certain lands.

The zoning in SODA consists of mostly low density residential (R1-D, R1-E, R1-F, R2-K, R3-K, and R3-L), which allows single detached, semi-detached, triplex, duplex, and fourplex, as well as includes specific zoning provisions. There is also the Historic Downtown Urban Centre Zone (UC-D1) and the Downtown Urban Centre Zone (UC-D2), minor institutional zones (I-B), and several others such as residential apartment dwellings, residential townhouse condominium plan dwellings, and office commercial zones (R5-S, R4-CP, CO-1 and CO-2).

The existing zoning permissions and existing permitted uses in the SODA are in Zoning By-law 2010-40 and are located in **Table 3-1: Existing Zoning Permissions and Permitted Uses**.

Table 3-1: Existing Zoning Permissions and Permitted Uses

	UC-D1	UC-D2	I-B	CS (482 Ontario Street – east of Main St) Site Specific Exception	CO-1-146 (482 Queen – east of Main Street) Site Specific Exception	CO-1-22 (411 Queen – west of Main St) Site Specific Exception	CO-2 (429 Millard – west of Main St) Site Specific Exception
Residential Uses	Apartment buildings Stacked townhouses Retirement residence Group home Live work units	Apartments Stacked townhouses Retirement residence Group home	Retirement residence				
Commercial Uses	Retail stores Restaurants Studios Motor vehicle service stations* Commercial school Commercial Rec Centre Hotel Medical office/clinic Veterinary clinic	Retail stores Restaurants Studios Motor vehicle service stations Commercial school Commercial recreation centre Hotel Drive through facility		Restaurant Retail Studio Commercial school Commercial Rec Centre Personal service shop Office Medical office Hotel Motor vehicle service shop & rental establishment	Medical office and office, in conjunction with a dwelling unit	Day nursery	Sole Medical Practitioner and Office Conversion
Institutional Uses	Long term care facilities Community centres Schools	Long term care facilities Community centres Schools	Day nursery Institutional Day Centre Place of Worship	Place of worship Library Elementary school			
Industrial Uses	Micro-industrial uses	Micro-industrial uses		Micro-industrial uses			

Urban Centres Secondary Plan

The Urban Centres Secondary Plan was adopted by Council in June 2014 and approved by York Region in 2015. The Urban Centres Secondary Plan has been incorporated into the in-effect Official Plan through Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 10.

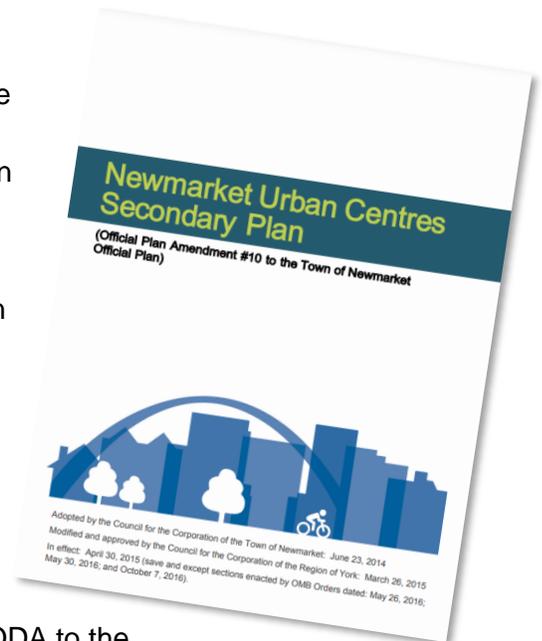
Urban Centres were established in response to direction from the Province and York Region directing future growth and intensification to specified growth centres with specific density targets. The Newmarket Urban Centres Secondary Plan Area is considered an Urban Growth Centre, as identified by the Province and York Region. It also generally includes the Regional Corridors of Yonge Street and Davis Drive. The Historic Downtown Centre is a Local Centre. Both areas have their own unique characteristics and roles to support growth and intensification in the Town.

While the OPR and the SODA Study are not intended to add the SODA to the Urban Centres Secondary Plan, there is an opportunity to apply similar policies to the SODA to help achieve the same objectives in this unique area of the Town.

Heritage Conservation District Plan

The Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan is the only heritage district in the Town at present. The HCD Plan applies to the Historic Downtown area. The HCD Plan sets out policy statements and guidelines to address matters such as public and private landscaping, land use, additions and new construction, existing buildings, and lands adjacent to the Heritage Conservation District. It also addresses the types of work that may require a heritage permit or are minor in nature and are exempt from heritage review.

The OPR and SODA Study will take into consideration the policies and recommendations of the HCD Plan as an area that is adjacent to the SODA. Given the physical proximity between the two areas, it is important to recognize and acknowledge the existing conditions and policy framework for the Historic Downtown Area. However, the HCD Plan policies will not be applied to or extended to the SODA.

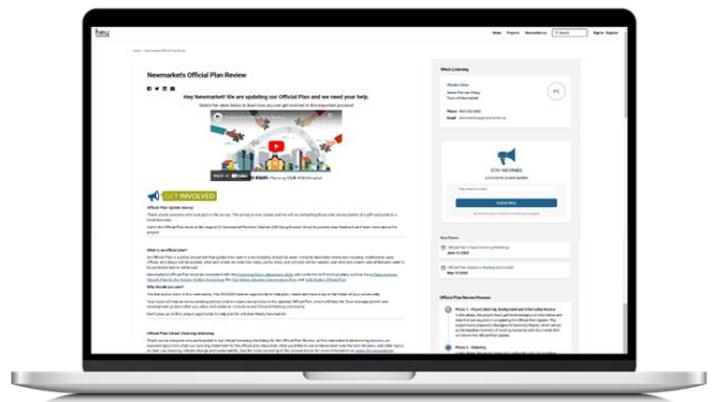


4 Summary of Engagement Events

As part of Round 2 Consultation Cluster, the project team engaged residents, business owners, and others in the study area. This Consultation Cluster was focused on setting the context, listening, and learning. This Section provides an overview of the various engagement tactics used specifically for the SODA Study, which included a project website, pop-up events, a walking tour, a visioning workshop, and a community vision survey. Additional information is provided in the Engagement Summary Report, which has been included as **Appendix A** to this Report.

Project Website

The Town of Newmarket launched the “Hey Newmarket” page at Newmarket.ca in August 2022. A separate website has been created for the SODA Study, heynewmarket.ca/soda. The website is updated as needed to highlight key dates for the SODA Study, to issue surveys to the community and share project documents for public review and comment. The SODA Study webpage had a total of 2,230 visits (as of May 26, 2025.)



April 2025 Public Open House Meetings

Town Staff hosted two public open houses on Saturday, April 12 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Newmarket Public Library, and on Thursday, April 17 from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Old Town Hall. A total of 90 attendees had the opportunity to provide comments on the SODA draft policy directions, guiding principles, and vision. Comments were received from conversations with staff, sticky notes on posters and maps, and paper feedback sheets. Key themes from these events are summarized below.

Upgrade and maintain streets to foster a safe and active public realm

There is a strong desire for upgrades to roads, signage, sidewalks, crossings, and active transportation infrastructure to make SODA safer and more accessible. Some roads, such as Millard Ave, are in poor condition and need significant repairs. The street network, especially one-ways, may need re-evaluation as many drivers do not respect existing signage. There was strong support for enhanced active transportation infrastructure, although responses were split on whether to direct micromobility to Main Street proper, or side streets.

Attendees want to see more trees, better street furniture, and more public art installations. Patios and other indoor/outdoor retail expansions may bring more life onto Main Street. Parking directly on Main St was not popular, and options like garages, using nearby abandoned or underutilized lots, and increasing public transit service are ways access could be provided. There was also interest and support for adding

laneways, with attendees indicating excitement around active laneways providing a transitional boundary between different land use intensities.

Support local sustainable retail and expand commercial options

Attendees desire clear policies highlighting who and what will be encouraged to move in. Grocery stores, local food shops, and sustainable retail options were highlighted. Main Street is a key opportunity for expansion of commercial and mixed-use infill. New developments could leverage and integrate with nearby parks to drive traffic. Above all else, local businesses should be promoted and encouraged.

Sustainable transportation connecting green spaces to and through SODA

SODA is strategically located near quality parks, trails, and natural heritage landscapes. It is important that these assets be connected to the area, and that travel between them is facilitated by SODA's future circulation network. East-west connections are needed between the Tom Taylor trail and Haskett Park, particularly along Queen St and over the rail corridor. These connections should also enhance pedestrian and cycling routes between Lower Main Street South, Davis Drive, and beyond to Newmarket GO.

Transportation corridors in and through SODA should promote engagement with nature, employing native trees and plants. There is a desire for new parks, playgrounds and open spaces, which should also reflect the local plant life. Attendees indicated strong support for pedestrian zones and plazas as focal points at major intersections. Newmarket's Indigenous history should have an important place in SODA's public and open spaces, potentially similar to the kilometre markers along the Tom Taylor Trail.

Emphasize affordable housing

Any development in SODA should have regard for current and future residents' ability to afford life, work, and recreation. Though some residents were hesitant to see high-density development on Main St, most indicated strong support for medium scale residential to help reduce pressures on the rental market. Importantly, there is a need for diverse housing options of size and tenure to make SODA accessible and affordable for all residents.

Gentle, mixed-use density with opportunities for even higher density east of Main

There was overwhelming support to see SODA evolve into a walkable, dense, mixed-use community. Attendees were excited by active laneways, commercial units with residential above, and increased density near transit. Potential improvements to the public realm were well-received, with strong support for intersections to be transformed with increased densities and urban plazas.

Many encouraged increased density, including between 6 and 10 storeys east of Main St, while small-scale apartment buildings were generally supported across the study area. One respondent indicated their support for increased density as it would shift the tax burden of civic improvements from residents to developers.

Though responses encouraged density, care must be taken to ensure a comfortable pedestrian realm. Stepbacks and strategic location of tall buildings should be employed to mitigate their visual impact and reduce shadows cast on existing properties. Traffic management and public transit investment should be coordinated with redevelopment to mitigate congestion impacts on new and existing residents.



Preserve history and encourage beautiful and interesting places

Existing heritage buildings should be preserved, and where this is impossible or impractical, tools such as façade retention should be used. There are a number of architecturally interesting and historically significant buildings along Main St which should form the basis for the look and feel of redevelopment. Promotion of the Elman W. Campbell Museum, plaques, and public art can encourage engagement with local history. This can make SODA a place to admire built and natural history.

Promote effective communication with existing community

The proposed changes in SODA are major, and while the community is supportive of these improvements, there must be an emphasis on accommodating the needs of existing residents. Increases in traffic of all types, encroachment of development, public safety, and a loss of affordable housing stock are major concerns. Development should be purposeful, and the local community should be involved in the design process. Other suggestions by respondents included better access to the website for people to provide comments, a requirement for green roofs or solar panels on new structures, a deeper examination of landscaping opportunities, and further study of informal circulation networks used or created by community members.

What We Heard

Members of the public have provided important feedback related to SODA through the various events and activities described in this Report. Comments received on the Study and future opportunities and constraints are detailed in Engagement Summary Report, provided in **Appendix A**.

Key feedback received is summarized below at a high-level:

- Expand land use options (e.g., retail stores, restaurants, parks, playgrounds, public facilities, etc.) in the Study Area.
- Ensure an appropriate height transition between historical, existing, and proposed developments.
- Improve the public realm in the SODA by enhancing amenities such as benches or water bottle filling stations along trails or parks, and encouraging the installation of public art. Create more placemaking opportunities.
- Consider the development of a Heritage Strategy to inform land use planning decisions that may impact historical features in the SODA.
- Refer to existing areas in the Town, such as Fairy Lake and River Commons to further inspire the development of greenspaces in the Study Area.
- Implement climate change adaptation or mitigation strategies in the SODA.

“My Dream: Traffic free Main Street with green areas, benches, artwork, coffee and bakeries for people of all ages.”

~SODA Public Open House attendee, April 2025

- Prioritize the development of active transportation infrastructure and options (e.g., cycling infrastructure, a bike share service, charging stations for electric bikes and scooters, etc.).
- Explore opportunities to host outdoor events to celebrate holidays, build community, and increase foot traffic in the SODA.
- Improve community services by creating public event spaces, facilities with stormwater management plans, and updating public infrastructure. It was also noted that amenities should include implementation of high-quality building materials for new developments and creating public outdoor spaces.

This feedback has been used to inform the emerging Vision and Guiding Principles for SODA and the policy directions for the updated Official Plan.

Vision and Guiding Principles for SODA

The ideas expressed in Phases 1 to 3 were used to develop a Vision Statement and Guiding Principles for the SODA Study. It is expected that these will evolve as feedback is received throughout the project.

Vision for the SODA Study

The draft **Vision Statement** for the SODA Study is:

SODA will thrive as a dynamic centre for culture, business, tourism, social 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.

Emerging Guiding Principles for the SODA Study

The **Guiding Principles** are further detailed in the Engagement Summary Report and built out through the Transformative Theme Areas for the SODA Study.

The draft **Guiding Principles** for the SODA Study are:



Preserve and Promote Cultural and Natural Heritage Resources

SODA possesses an identifiable sense of place through its cultural and natural heritage resources. The Town is to preserve and promote cultural and natural heritage resources by:

- Improving Access to Natural Heritage
- Nurturing Arts and Cultural Activities
- Creating an Arts and Culture District
- Design Great Places and Spaces

Communities have social and physical characteristics that make them special. The SODA policy framework will foster well-designed places and spaces by:

- Creating Attractive Community Spaces
- Promoting Vibrant Streets and Public Spaces
- Enhancing Green Infrastructure and Public Art

Prioritize Active Transportation

A transportation system should provide choices for easy, accessible travel by facilitating all forms of transportation, including the prioritization of active transportation. Policies for SODA will promote a more linked community by:

- Expanding Recreational Trail Systems
- Enhancing Infrastructure for Active Transportation
- Establishing Accessible Transit Connections

Support Economic Opportunities

A strong economy is integral to a successful community. The policy framework for SODA will support strong economic opportunities by:

- Strengthening the Local Economy
- Encouraging Growth of Local Businesses

Providing a Range of Housing Options

The SODA will encourage and support a range of housing options by:

- Promoting Housing Diversity and Inclusivity

Facilitate Accessible and Inclusive Spaces

The SODA will foster and facilitate an accessible and inclusive community by:

- Developing Accessible Recreation Spaces
- Enhancing Food Security
- Prioritizing Inclusivity and Safety

Refined SODA Boundary

As set out in [Section 2.1](#), the preliminary SODA Study Area boundary included lands from Simcoe Street south to Millard Avenue, from Niagara Street to the west and the rail corridor to the east.

The SODA Study Area boundary has since been adjusted based on feedback received during the engagement program and consultation with Town Staff. The updated SODA boundary has removed the lands in the north-east corner of Superior Street and Simcoe Street, which is in the Urban Centres Secondary Plan and excludes Town-owned lands at 170 Doug Duncan Drive. The study area initially only included the north portion of the property which is not accessible from the SODA area and did not follow logical property boundaries. For this Report, the SODA boundary illustrated in [Figure 3](#) is the study area used to support the “Transformative Theme Areas” for the SODA Study and through the OPR. The final SODA boundary will be referenced during policy development when updating the Official Plan.



5 Transformative Theme Areas for the SODA Study

This Section explores thematic areas and “Transformative Theme Areas” for the SODA Study that inform preliminary policy directions and will ultimately guide updates to policies through the OPR. Ultimately, the proposed policy directions reflect comments and input received from the public and Council, as well as background research on the SODA.

The policy directions presented in this Section establish a framework for the updated Official Plan policies to support the evolution of the SODA in alignment with the emerging Vision and Guiding Principles presented in Section 3.3 of this Report. A summary of the policy directions is described below to present a holistic vision for the future of the SODA.



Figure 6: Photographs from Main Street south which provided public realm and public art inspiration for the SODA Study.

The SODA should be sensitively planned in terms of compatibility, providing appropriate uses, intensity of development and transition to adjacent neighbourhoods, and be responsive and respectful in its relationship to the adjacent HCD, the Holland River Ravine, and the Urban Centres Secondary Plan existing and planned context. Higher densities could be established within identified nodes and in a manner that facilitates public transit ridership to support and connect with the Newmarket GO Station and Regional BRT transit on Davis Drive. Creating a pedestrian-first environment should be a key consideration at all levels of development and design, influencing how buildings are designed and located, how new streets, trails, parks and open spaces are planned and connected, and how different land uses are mixed across the community.

Distinct and unique areas are observed in SODA, Main Street Character Area (detailed in Section 4.1.1), East of Main Street (detailed in Section 4.1.2) and West of Main Street (detailed in Section 4.1.3) and may develop into neighbourhoods and mixed-use districts. Each neighbourhood or district, will establish its own unique identity, buoyed by high-quality architecture and design, and signature public realm of streets parks, open spaces with public art opportunities realized to create comfortable, attractive, and memorable places. A high standard of design will govern the built form and public realm within the SODA.

Buildings will range from **low to medium building heights** and allow for a range of different built form typologies, remaining sensitive to adjacent land uses, heritage sites & districts, providing appropriate transition and compatible design. Mid-rise building forms as well as a range of low-rise built form types should be incorporated into SODA. Generally, building heights of 3 to 4 storeys are recommended west of Main Street with a 4-storey Main Street Corridor context having a consistent 2-storey street wall along Main Street. More intensive development and higher buildings, up to 6 storeys, should be developed in the east of Main area and in the vicinity of SODA's boundary with the Davis Drive Transit Corridor, an area of intensification.

The transportation network in the SODA will support **multiple modes of travel**, with priority given to improving connectivity, planning for pedestrians, promoting active transportation, and supporting transit. Means to strengthen the active transportation linkages through design, way-finding, and amenities can be achieved through public realm and built form improvements.

In addition to improving connections to the nearby Holland River Ravine, the SODA should be complemented by a **green network of medium to small parks, urban squares, and open spaces**. Intensity of development should be balanced by parks and other open spaces to provide areas of respite and amenity for all ages including play areas for children, outdoor lunch and coffee rooms for local businesspeople, and areas of quiet relaxation and social interactions for elders.

Achieving Appropriate Scale, Massing and Compatible Built Form

Three areas of distinct physical character have been identified within SODA (see **Figure 3** for map of SODA):

- Main Street;
- West of Main Street; and
- East of Main Street.

These three areas can be described in terms of built form typologies, future growth potential, and degree of intensification. The built form, open space, views, and streetscape characteristics differentiate these areas and give them a distinct look and feel. Each area will need to be considered with respect to how new development will be compatible with its existing and planned context to achieve good built form solutions that are in scale and compatible with the surroundings.

This Section describes existing conditions and provides recommended policy directions for building massing to support urban design objectives for a vibrant public realm and high-quality built form in the SODA.

Main Street Character Area

The predominant commercial land use and relationship to Main Street differentiates and delineates this area from the other areas within the SODA, as illustrated in [Figure 78](#). The building fabric is also differentiated from the balance of SODA by including some larger scale buildings organized to include less green space and more paved areas for parking and servicing functions.



Figure 7: An example of a commercial strip mall on Main Street South

Main Street is anticipated to be an area of transformation allowing for the redevelopment of existing sites and buildings to accommodate greater intensity, height, and mixed uses with a focus on commercial, retail, and entertainment. Flexible use options for the public to gather and use public space at key focal points, such as Main Street and Queen Street, may emerge overtime as the built form and transportation network evolves.

SODA's overall identity will be tied to its Main Street Corridor character, the centre for its social and community life, and the places that will draw residents and visitors to the SODA. The future branding of SODA's Main Street with a distinct design and identity can be achieved through an urban design framework.

Developing SODA's identity, as a basis for branding design, will require a comprehensive approach with multiple stakeholders, including business owners, residents, the general public, as well as experts in the fields of economic development, heritage, natural environment, and parks. Through a process that includes public consultation and collaboration with the Town's economic development and tourism initiatives, opportunities for an identity to emerge will evolve.

Transition from buildings on Main Street to adjacent low rise residential neighbourhoods can be achieved through a range of urban design opportunities including landscaping, fencing, and screening. Where Main Street building sites abut other new mid-rise sites, mitigation measures may not be required.

Recommended policy directions include:

- Identify priority sites for redevelopment along Main Street on a Block Plan and consider updating the zoning-by-law or using a Block Plan approach to integrate built form, circulation, and parks and open spaces within the block;
- Develop transition policies, as discussed in Section 4.2, allowing for transition from low-rise residential neighbourhoods on the east and west of Main Street to a four storey street wall height on Main Street; and,
- Consider setbacks, landscaping, and building stepback transition as options to promote flexible opportunities for development on Main Street.

East of Main Street

The area east of Main Street may be considered an area of future change. Given its deep lots, proximity to major transit, and fewer heritage resources than other areas of the SODA, it is anticipated that there may be opportunities for redevelopment and more intensive development than other parts of the SODA.

New buildings may include townhouses and mid-rise development (up to 6-storeys, with this height requiring guidelines for mid-rise development). Separation distances and other relationships for multiple buildings on a single site, including on-site open space, parking, servicing and circulation, and parkland provision should be considered comprehensively for an entire block rather than for individual sites to achieve a high-quality, connected, planned environment.

A Block Plan approach can help to ensure that individual and shared components of new development are created to guide all parties prior to detailed designs are submitted. When there is an opportunity to coordinate between several owned parcels, a Block Plan could be triggered. For example, with a Block Plan, landowners / developers may agree upon a single location for a large park, contributions to be pooled, rather than dedicating small parks on each individual site or providing individual cash-in-lieu payments.

Recommended policy directions include:

- Consider a Block Plan approach for planned intensification;
- Apply mid-rise guidance based on existing mid-rise development in the study area; and
- Develop consistent setbacks, site organization, and massing direction to support a vibrant public realm and hierarchy of streets.



West of Main Street

In the SODA, west of Main Street is predominately characterized by two storey residential detached homes, with some semi-detached homes. Several homes in the area have been identified as non-designated heritage properties. Non-designated properties (also known as listed properties) are defined as properties that have potential for having cultural heritage value or interest.

This neighbourhood is well kept and in good condition. Housing is relatively small in size (footprint and height) in comparison to the scale, height, and size of new housing being built. These lots have deep backyards and shallow front yards.

Significant redevelopment is not anticipated to occur west of Main Street, except in the north portion of the SODA due to its proximity to Davis Drive and the PMTSA. Gentle intensification may occur in the form of infill, secondary suites, additions to existing homes, or conversions of existing homes into duplexes or multi-unit housing. For example, this could include 3 or 4-storeys with a stepback or a secondary suite above a garage or detached ARU.

For properties that are designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, intensification proposed beyond a building's existing structure should be located, massed, and articulated to respect the heritage site and character.

Recommended policy directions include:

- Consider missing middle housing forms in the West of Main Street area and permit additional residential units as a form of gentle intensification;
- Explore approaches for accommodating infill development adjacent to designated properties;
- Identify key massing, scale, and articulation direction for new development which matches the heritage and character of the area;
- Create built form guidelines to guide the integration of sensitively massed and organized built form, incorporated into residential fabric; and,
- Prioritize the front and side yard setbacks for new developments to be consistent with the existing pattern of designated heritage properties.

Through a future Staff Report at a Committee of the Whole Meeting, Town Staff will provide the consultant with further direction on matters pertaining to the non-designated properties, as required.

Transition

As previously mentioned, areas of new development will require transition to existing land use areas, particularly in relationship to low-rise residential sites in the area west of Main Street. Transition will be considered in terms of the overall transition in height for built form, and for localized transition between areas of greater height and areas of lesser height. Transition elements and strategies should include but not be limited to:

- Spatial separation;
- Landscape enhancement;
- Grading and topographical considerations;
- Parks or open spaces;
- Building setbacks and stepbacks;
- Building siting and site organization;
- Building massing, circulation and servicing; and,
- Buffering.

As discussed in Section 4.1, it is anticipated that building heights will be greatest, up to six storeys, in the north portions of the SODA, close to Davis Drive. The northeast quadrant of SODA, east of Main Street and north of Queen Street may also support mid-rise buildings. Building heights should transition down southward and westward to two and three-storey buildings, defining the relationship between intensification on Main Street buildings and sites with the surrounding context.

Recommended policy directions include:

- New development close to Main Street should have a street and block pattern that extends the grid pattern, is pedestrian-scaled, and walkable;
- New development to the west of Main Street should reflect the form and massing of adjacent existing homes;
- Infill within the SODA should maintain consistent form and massing reflective of the existing Main Street type buildings within a prescribed depth from Main Street, allowing for more height at the rear of sites; and,
- Develop appropriate transition for taller portions of Main Street buildings to adjacent low-rise residential areas and lots in consideration of increased setbacks, landscaping, buffering, and building stepbacks.

Enhance and Reveal Views and Vistas

Views and vistas both from within the SODA and to the SODA have been examined including consideration of those views identified by stakeholders, views of the natural environment, cultural sites, and landmark sites and buildings, including those buildings and sites that stand out and mark important places within the SODA.



Landmarks and Important Views

There is an existing gateway feature located south of the intersection of Davis Drive and Main Street. Though this is located outside of the SODA, due to its proximity, it is unlikely that development in the SODA could block views of this feature.

The modest building heights anticipated within the vicinity of the Christian Baptist Church are not anticipated to impact views of the Church, given its height, setback, and location on a prominent high



Figure 8: The existing gateway features located north of the SODA on Main Street (left) and the Christian Baptist Church (right).

point. Consideration of any buildings with heights exceeding those suggested in this Report, especially for sites south of Queen Street, may be required to demonstrate that views of the church won't be impacted.

New buildings, streets, parks and open spaces will create new landmarks, views, and vistas. For example, views to a park in the middle of a neighbourhood could be identified as being important for social, community identity, and safety reasons. Criteria for identifying these new features as well as any direction for where landmarks and views could or should be created to support SODA's urban design structure would be a useful planning tool.

Recommended policy directions include:

- Protect and enhance views of valued landmarks and vistas including the Christian Baptist Church, Holland River ravine (north and south), and Main Street South Gateway as illustrated in **Figure 8**;
- Require further study of views to the Christian Baptist Church for buildings proposed to exceed the recommended building heights;

- Maintain a two-storey base or podium for Main Street buildings to maintain sky view and frame the street at a comfortable scale;
- Create an end-of-street location at the Ontario Street stub to allow for public viewing into the adjacent Holland River ravine and Tom Taylor Trail;
- Consider whether a portion of Ontario Street where it abuts the ravine could be closed to add green space that would support a ravine viewing opportunity; and,
- Recognize existing landmarks, views, and vistas and direct the Town to identify, through implementing mechanisms, opportunities within SODA where potential new views, landmarks, or vistas should be created to support the Town’s vision and objectives.

Enhancing Public Realm Elements

The SODA emerging public realm, consisting of streets, parks, open spaces, and public art will be vibrant, connected, and attractive, reflective of the emerging Vision and Guiding Principles for the SODA. In this Section, components of the public realm are identified and evaluated in terms of their role, potential, and value to the community with policy directions recommended to support the evolution of the public realm.

Circulation Network

The public realm in the SODA is structured on a well-defined grid of streets and blocks. This is illustrated in **Figure 9**. Main Street South bisects the study area, connecting the HCD to the south with the Davis Drive Regional Corridor to the north. The north gateway to SODA is located beyond the limits of the study area, at the intersection with Davis Drive and is marked by a large-scale overhead arched structure stretching across the roadway.

Main Street is a key element of the public realm. South of the SODA, around Millard Avenue has developed with a Main Street character, including walkable, active storefront uses at grade with possible office and/or residential uses on upper floors, and active frontages with entrances lining the street.

The connecting grid of local and collector streets should be designed as green streets, leveraging the extensively treed character and adding sustainability features where possible. Queen Street, identified as an active transportation link and the single route connecting SODA to areas east of the CN railway corridor, including the well-used Tom Taylor Trail, is a unique existing green street.

Opportunities to introduce more connections, whether road, trails, walkways or multi-use trails should be further explored. Mid-block connections whether streets or multi use paths, can provide active transportation routes alternative to Main Street and improve local connectivity. An off-street trail route



within a new green corridor along the east boundary of SODA would facilitate another active transportation option connecting the SODA to local destinations.

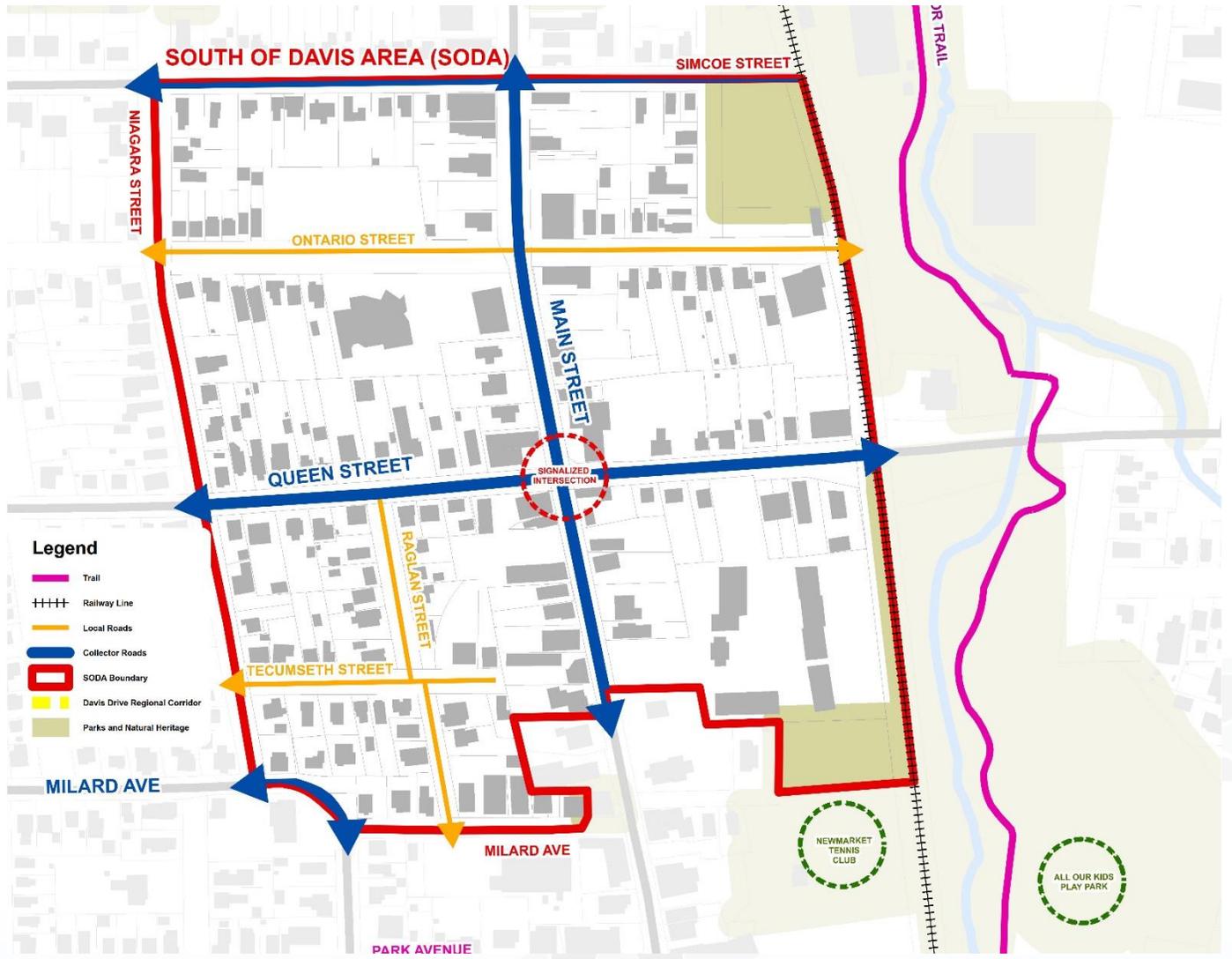


Figure 9: Existing transportation network in the SODA (Image based on Preliminary Study Boundary)

Park and Open Space System

The street and block framework in the SODA should be complemented and enhanced by an open space network with a range of different types and sizes of parks. Urban squares, small parks or open spaces with seating, lighting, landscaping and other amenities, should be encouraged at all four corners at Main Street’s intersections with Ontario Street and Queen Street to enhance social use and area identity.

The open space corridor located adjacent to the SODA boundary with the CN rail corridor, is an opportunity to explore, as this would support creating opportunities for enhanced greening, walking, and active transportation. Locations for new parks, neighbourhood scaled parks, should be considered in



relation to residential intensification focused on the blocks north of Queen Street and east of Main Street. There may be opportunities to partner with the local churches and other institutions on sites that are already large and open to contribute outdoor programming as well as additional accessible landscaped spaces.

Built Form

The built form and height strategies for SODA should be aligned with the circulation network and open space system and should be responsive to the existing and planned context, as established in the in-effect Official Plan.

The greatest intensity and height should be allocated in the north-east quadrant, the two blocks north of Queen Street and east of Main Street. This may take the form of townhouse types and mid-rise buildings up to four storeys in height with some areas allowing buildings up to six storeys in proximity to Davis Drive. A portion of the northwest block, west of Main Street and south of Simcoe Street is also in proximity to Davis Drive and may include townhouse and mid-rise buildings four to six storeys in height.

Buildings on Main Street may be permitted up to a height of four and up to six storeys in some locations that includes a two-storey base or podium along the Main Street frontage. This form takes advantage of lot depth to allow for taller parts of the building to be set back from the Main Street frontage. The front of the buildings would be in scale and massing with Newmarket's traditional Main Street buildings, frame the streetscape at a lower proportion, open up sky view along the length of the street, reduce shadow impacts and ensure that the podium will be the prominent building element.

Main Street Streetscape

Through the updated Official Plan, it is recommended that policies guiding the built form and urban design along Main Street encourage the evolution of an active, walkable, and attractive street. Main Street should be framed by buildings with active facades, entrances, extensive fenestration and weather protection along sidewalks. A consistent streetscape design with generously scaled sidewalks will be developed and implemented.

A series of urban squares with open space on each of the intersections' corners will further placemaking objectives. A main, urban square, themed on active transportation, wayfinding, and sustainability may be optimal at the Main Street and Queen Street intersection or at Main Street and Ontario Street. In conjunction with the node already developed within the HCD boundaries at Main Street and Millard Avenue, the Main Street in the SODA should function as a corridor punctuated with outdoor living rooms for residents and visitors.

The streetscape design will reflect many of the materials, features, and strategies of the successful heritage themed streetscape of the lower Main Street HCD. However, to create a new SODA identity that differentiates it from lower Main Street HCD, intentional variation and modification to that design concept will be introduced in a way that maintains a design relationship between the two, but not be identical. To slow traffic, on street parking spaces may be finished in decorative paving to visually reduce street width. Landscaped curb extensions may be used at intersections and considered for key locations mid-block to



create places where traffic could be calmed, pedestrian street crossing distance could be reduced, and refuge provided when needed.

Consideration may be given through urban design policies or a Streetscape Master Plan to allow for demonstration streetscape features such as rain gardens or parklets, to test out emerging innovative concepts during a potentially fragmented process of renewal in the Study Area.

Recommended policy directions include:

- Promote traffic calming by including features such as decorative paving treatment for on-street parking areas or landscaped curb extensions at key locations;
- Integrate street tree planting where feasible;
- Incorporate a modified lower Main Street streetscape design;
- Widen sidewalks especially at intersections;
- Promote urban squares, parkettes, and other place-making open space strategies;
- Develop a priority green square at the intersection of Queen Street and Main Street to mark active transportation and ravine connection and promote wayfinding; and,
- Consider temporary and demonstration urban design and landscape interventions, such as rain gardens, within and along Main Street at a local scale.

Streetscape Components

Streets connecting to Main Street have a generous tree canopy and a green appearance. The lots along these streets add to the greening, with shallow landscaped setbacks; some with gentle grade change. The streets are narrow and comfortably scaled for local traffic, on-street parking, active transportation, and pedestrian use. Buildings should face the street with doors, fenestration, and porches to create overlook onto these areas.

All the streets off Main Street, both east and west, and Ontario Street in particular, will be “green streets.” Green streets are roads that include green infrastructure to capture rainwater and direct it to plants and trees instead of a storm sewer system. Green streets can take many forms, ranging from a tree planting in sod graded to temporarily pool water during rain events, to specially designed planters and rain gardens designed to capture and store water from surrounding paved areas. Green streets also include street trees to provide shade, mitigate heat island impacts and provide shelter, food, and habitat for birds and other wildlife. SODA’s local streets will remain narrow with comfortable sidewalks. Where streets meet Main Street, the aperture should be narrowed with landscaped curb extensions that reduce crossing distances for pedestrians and slow traffic into the neighbourhoods.

Queen Street is the only street connecting SODA to the east, the Holland River Ravine, Tom Taylor Trail, and the Prospect Street Cycling Route. It is envisioned as an urban green street with an active transportation priority to promote connections to Newmarket’s well-loved trail and cycling network. Where



it meets Main Street, it could be marked by a landscaped urban square with amenities, cycling repair, and comfort facilities.

Policy directions recommended for local streets includes:

- Plant additional street trees to provide shade and to reinforce the ‘green streets’ concept, where space permits;
- Direct the Town to update the Zoning By-law to include minimum landscaped setbacks, building orientation, and gentle grade change for residential lots; and,
- Reduce curb radii and/or landscaped curb extensions at all local street intersections with Main Street to increase pedestrian and landscape space, and narrow local roadbed at aperture.

Policy directions recommended for Queen Street include:

- Develop an urban green streetscape including features such as permeable pavers, rain gardens, solar lighting, native tree planting, etc.;
- Consider opportunities to demonstrate and monitor other innovative sustainable streetscape features;
- Maintain landscaped front and side yard setbacks to complement the streetscape;
- Encourage sustainable design and planting concepts; and,
- Ensure positive grade relationships from front door to sidewalk and avoid using retaining walls along the street line to improve universal accessibility.

Parks and Open Space

Parks and open spaces in the SODA should provide not only recreation opportunities, greening, and amenities, but will also play an important role in shaping the emerging form of an Urban Village. Working in conjunction with the Main Street corridor streetscape concept, open space urban squares can be deployed at intersections to punctuate the corridor with outdoor urban rooms. A modestly scaled green corridor of parks and open spaces along the entire east boundary can provide a green edge for the SODA and space for nature, travel, and recreation opportunities that will provide improved green space in an area of increased intensification.

Partnerships with local institutions/places of worship located within the SODA may be pursued to investigate possibilities to gain public use of these large sites for community uses, low impact fitness and recreation activities, outdoor movie nights and arts markets, or other opportunities to further complement the parks and open space system. For example, at the discretion of the Town, a Community Services and Facilities Impact Study be prepared to accompany development applications or the preparation of planning studies, such as through Site Plan or Section 37 Community Benefits.

Policy directions recommended to enhance the parks and open space system in the SODA include:



- Determine parkland capacity and servicing needs in the Study Area to determine if there is a need for additional parkland, and to explore opportunity for parks or cash-in-lieu to serve planned residential intensification;
- Locate parks in prominent and highly visible locations to create foci in proximity to areas of residential intensification;
- Encourage urban park and open space typologies such as public squares, parkettes, and linear parks to augment the Town’s park system;
- Consider locating a new park located east of Main Street, north of Queen Street;
- Promote active transportation connections to parks and open space destinations (e.g., green street design for Queen Street);
- Consider developing a continuous green space corridor along the east boundary of the SODA with potential for augmented greening, new frontage, and active transportation opportunities; and,
- Encourage partnerships with places of worship to amplify presence, service to community, and take advantage of open space and develop guidelines for on-site open spaces to give residents access to open space and amenity space.

Public Art

Public art can contribute to local character, local identity, civic pride, and sense of place. Integrating public art whether large or small, sculpture or art-led park design, brings unique dialogue about public spaces directly to the community. Opportunities to incorporate public art in places to reinforce the overall urban design strategy for SODA and its identity should be developed including key locations, potential art installation types and programming opportunities.

Currently, no public art installations or programs exist in the Study Area. Numerous and varied public art locations and opportunities within SODA have the potential to support and enhance place-making objectives. Public art has programming dimensions that could be leveraged to facilitate community participation or outreach to community groups or schools to create small scale art installations such as painted hydrants or electrical transformers. Studies and initiatives such as a Public Art Plan, Cultural Master Plan, Public Art Strategies can be encouraged through the updated Official Plan to support the inclusion of public art, identifying locations, programs and collaboration opportunities with local artists or Indigenous Public Art.

Art should be focused on Main Street and Queen Street locations and could be included in the design of new open space squares that will mark the intersections of Main Street with Queen Street and Ontario Street. Incorporating public art into the elements of the streetscape design elements such as benches is another way of integrating public art to support place-making and urban design objectives for an attractive, interesting public realm that people will want to use and view.

Policy directions recommended include:



- Develop a Public Art Plan for SODA to identify potential locations for public art on public lands including parks and streets, as well as private lands;
- Review public art opportunities and their ability to reinforce urban design structure and programming, helping to create attractive, accessible and user-friendly environments;
- Encourage public art contributions on-site for larger lot and other priority developments;
- Encourage small scale community or school-led art interventions e.g. utility box painting to activate local art culture; Identify Squares or Nodes as priority public art locations to support overall structure;
- Consider a mural program with the potential to animate secondary streets and railway/ravine views of SODA; and
- Consider public art as a means of reconciliation and invite Indigenous stakeholders to participate in developing an appropriate program and process for its achievement.

Protecting and Enhancing Heritage Resources

SODA has been identified as a key link between the Urban Centres Secondary Plan area along Davis Drive and the historic lower Main Street South area, which is designated as a Heritage Conservation District (HCD). There is an opportunity for policy directions for SODA to guide development in this transition area that supports the urban centre, protects the natural environment, and respects the Main Street HCD.

Within the context of the OPR, an update to the current Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan policies could contribute clearer procedures, policies and terms of reference for both current and future HCDs that adhere to current provincial legislation and consider urban design, placemaking and heritage.

Recommended policy directions for SODA include but should not be limited to:

- Create specific design guidelines for SODA;
- Explore opportunities for policies for the SODA context that support cultural heritage as an integral part of the planning process;
- Collaborate with Indigenous Communities to support collaboration and engagement on cultural heritage conservation;
- Town to develop appropriate policies for properties which have been confirmed to have cultural heritage value or interest and are proposed to be included on the Municipal Heritage Register; and
- Investigate opportunities for a Cultural Heritage Assessment Report to include an assessment and recommendation for the preferred planning tool to conserve the identified cultural heritage resources, Heritage Conservation District or a Character Area in the Official Plan for SODA accompanied by site specific policies and heritage urban design guidelines.



6 Next Steps

Following Council endorsement of the policy directions at a future meeting of the Committee of the Whole, the Project Team will finalize this Report, formally concluding Phase 3 of the OPR.

The policy directions will be used to inform Phase 4 of the project, which includes the development of policies for the updated Official Plan.

