

TOWN OF NEWMARKET

OLD MAIN STREET TERTIARY PLAN STUDY



Summary Report

Public Consultation Session #1 - Old Main Street Walking Tour

In order to initiate the public consultation process for the Old Main Street Tertiary Plan Study, the Town of Newmarket invited local residents to participate in a guided walking tour of the Old Main Street neighbourhood. The tour was facilitated by Town Staff, in coordination with a multi-disciplinary consultant team, which has been retained to undertake the study.

The walking tour was held on Thursday, October 19, 2017. The meeting commenced at 5:30pm at the intersection of Old Main Street and Bexhill Road, and concluded at 6:30pm at the intersection of Old Main Street and Main Street North Bypass. The tour was attended by approximately 35 participants, which included residents of Old Main Street, residents of the surrounding neighbourhood, and representatives of various land owners.

Throughout the course of the walking tour, participants were given the opportunity to discuss key issues facing the Old Main Street neighbourhood, and to provide preliminary verbal and written feedback to Town Staff and the consultant team. Participants were provided with a comment card, clipboard and pen. Each comment card included a map of the Old Main Street neighbourhood and list of four questions. These materials were collected at the end of the tour. Following the tour, several participants provided supplementary verbal and written feedback to Town Staff and the consultant team via telephone and email.

The following document summarizes this feedback. Findings from the walking tour will be incorporated into the Background Report, and will be considered in the preparation of the Draft Tertiary Plan.

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1. What are the key defining characteristics of the Old Main Street neighbourhood? (e.g. walkability, landscaping, building heights, architectural style, etc.)

Residents reported that:

- The neighbourhood incorporates an eclectic variety of dwellings, which were constructed at various points over the last 100 years, in a range of architectural styles and with a variety of material pallets.
- The neighbourhood creates the feeling of living in a rural village, despite proximity to Downtown Newmarket.
- The neighbourhood is comprised entirely of detached single family dwellings, with heights ranging between 1 and 2 storeys.
- Properties in the centre of the neighbourhood are smaller and rectangular in shape, while properties close to the periphery are larger and irregular in shape.
- The southern portion of the neighbourhood is characterized by shallower front yard setbacks, while the northern portion is characterized by deeper front yard setbacks. Throughout the neighbourhood, front yards are characterized by generous landscaping and narrow driveways.
- Side and rear yard setbacks vary significantly depending on the size and shape of the property.
- Parking is provided on-site in a variety of forms, including parking pads at the side of the property, integral garages at the front of the property, and detached garages at the rear of the property.
- The meandering nature of Old Main Street is central to the character of the neighbourhood, and the built form character of properties along Old Main Street transitions throughout the length of the street.
- Opinions differed as to whether Old Main Street's narrow asphalt width, swales, and absence of sidewalks was central to its character.
- The neighbourhood is characterized by a mature tree canopy, which establishes a sense of enclosure and buffers the neighbourhood from Main Street North and the adjacent rail corridor.
- The neighbourhood is characterized by a central gathering / open space, which is used for community and recreational activities.
- The neighbourhood is quiet and family friendly.

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2. What are the key issues facing the Old Main Street neighbourhood? (e.g. flooding, development, traffic, etc.)

Residents reported that:

- Future development has the potential to negatively alter the character of the neighbourhood. Opinions differed regarding the desired form and extent of development.
- The neighbourhood's existing transportation and servicing infrastructure is nearing the end of its functional life, and upgrades to existing infrastructure are required in order to facilitate additional development.
- Portions of the neighbourhood, east of Old Main Street, are situated within a floodplain and are subject to seasonal storm water management issues.
- Portions of the neighbourhood, west of Old Main Street, are situated at the base of a significant slope, and are subject to ongoing ground water management issues.
- Portions of the neighbourhood, west of Old Main Street, contain clay-based soil mixtures which promote storm water run-off. The existing swale, which runs parallel to west side of Old Main Street, is in a poor state of repair with limited conveyance capacity. Combined, these factors contribute to the flooding of properties located along the east side of Old Main Street. Furthermore, there is concern that surface flooding is causing the asphalt along Old Main Street to heave.
- Although there is a limited amount of vehicle traffic, concerns were expressed about the use of Old Main Street as a cut-through between Bexhill Road and Main Street North, as well as the speed of vehicle traffic. This, in addition to the absence of sidewalks on Old Main Street, presented concerns over pedestrian safety.
- Portions of the neighbourhood remain on private septic systems, while other portions have been connected to municipal sanitary sewers. On occasion during or following heavy rains, remaining septic systems have been known to produce strong odors.
- The introduction of new development could result in an increase in vehicle traffic. Opinions differ as to the potential extent of impact associated with such development. Particular concern was given with respect to the safety of senior citizens attempting to cross Main Street North, adjacent to the seniors housing development.

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3. What are the key opportunities to improve the Old Main Street neighbourhood? (e.g. flood mitigation, define neighbourhood character, walkability, etc.)

Residents reported that:

- Opportunities exist to allow for future development, while retaining the prevailing character and stability of the neighbourhood. Opinions differed with respect to the appropriate extent and form of development. Suggestions included:
 - Prohibiting lot severances vs. permitting lot severances; and
 - Restricting development to detached single family dwellings on moderate to large lots vs. allowing for semi-detached single family dwellings at neighbourhood edge conditions vs. allowing for semi-detached single family dwellings and townhouse clusters at the edge of the neighbourhood vs. allowing for semi-detached single family dwellings throughout the neighbourhood, and townhouse clusters at the edge of the neighbourhood.
- Opportunities exist to leverage future development for the purposes of improving existing transportation and servicing infrastructure. Opinions differed regarding the form of such improvements, and what specific elements of existing infrastructure are central to the character of the neighbourhood.
 1. With respect to transportation infrastructure, suggestions included:
 - Retaining the existing asphalt width vs. increasing the existing asphalt width;
 - Retaining the existing shared-road condition vs. introducing sidewalks;
 - Prohibiting on-street parking vs. permitting on-street parking;
 - Introducing vs. not introducing traffic calming measures, such as bump-outs and / or speed bumps;
 - Retaining two-way vehicle movement vs. conversion to one-way vehicle movement;
 - Retaining through-street connections vs. conversion to a cul-de-sac;
 - Retaining stop signs at intersections vs. introducing signalized traffic lights; and
 - Re-grading Old Main Street to prevent storm water runoff.

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2. With respect to servicing infrastructure, suggestions included:

- Repairing and maintaining the existing swale vs. introducing storm sewers and catch basins;
 - Continuation of septic systems vs. conversion of all properties to sanitary sewer connections;
 - Retaining over-head wires vs. burying overhead wires; and
 - Introducing additional trees and vegetation to absorb ground and storm water, while expanding the tree canopy and improving micro-climate conditions.
- Opportunities exist to renew the neighbourhood, and expand upon the existing sense of community, through the introduction of new residents and families.
 - Opportunities exist to retain, expand and improve the existing community / recreation space.
 - Opportunities exist to improve pedestrian safety and walkability throughout the neighbourhood.
 - Opportunities exist to retain and expand the existing tree canopy throughout the neighbourhood.
 - Differences of opinion exist pertaining to whether or not smaller and more affordable homes are appropriate.
 - Residents of 155 Main Street Bypass use Old Main Street as a walking trail.

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4. Is there anything else that we should know about the Old Main Street neighbourhood? Please provide us with any additional feedback here.

- Observations were made that participants represented a range of interests, including those who wish to remain within their homes for the foreseeable future, those who are hoping to sell their properties for a profit and relocate, those who reside outside of Old Main Street, and those who represent development interests.
- Concerns were raised that the opinions of all parties should be acknowledged and given equal consideration.
- Concerns were expressed that the implementation of transportation and servicing infrastructure could result in adverse financial impacts on the existing tax base.
- Concerns were raised that some new development is out of keeping with the prevailing character of the neighbourhood with respect to:
 - Overall building height, massing, scale and / or proportions;
 - Finished First Floor Height;
 - Emphasis on the garage and driveway;
 - Number of units within the dwelling;
 - Architectural character (although this cannot be regulated).