

**strong mayor
powers**

**beer on Main?
revitalization coming
Ribfest shatters records**

2023

year in review

MESSAGE FROM
STOUFFVILLE CAO
SUNNY BAINS



As we approach the end of another year, it's natural to pause and reflect on the journey the Town has undertaken together. As a town we have grown stronger as a community, learned valuable lessons, and celebrated numerous successes.

As the Chief Administrative Officer for the Town, I am fortunate to work with a team of dedicated individuals who regularly go above and beyond to serve our community. It is with great pleasure that I extend my heartfelt appreciation for their continued hard work, passion, and commitment. As we celebrate successes, we remain focused on continuous improvement and will always strive to enhance programs, services, and experiences for our residents, businesses, and visitors.

A few highlights from 2023:

- Staff drafted the update of the Development Charges Background Study and the new Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan.
- Lloyd Street reconstruction was initiated which includes the building of accessible sidewalks.
- The Adventure Zone was introduced in June, where community members can now borrow bicycles and other sporting equipment from the Whitchurch-Stouffville Library.
- Fire and Emergency Services implemented its 2023 Community Fire Safety Program through the school system, with a return to the schools in 2024.
- A Customer Service Framework was complete, which will enhance the way we provide customer service to our community; implementation is underway and will continue throughout 2024.
- Record-breaking attendance at the 2023 Stouffville Ribfest with 52,374 visits, which exceeded the total weekend attendance of 32,549 in 2022.

For a more comprehensive view of major initiatives, I encourage everyone to explore our 2022-2026 Strategic Plan to see our goals, objectives, and actions required over this Term of Council.

Next year promises to be filled with exciting projects, new collaborations, and fresh challenges. I have full confidence in our ability to make 2024 another remarkable year for Stouffville.

Wishing you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and joyful holiday season!

Sunny Bains,
Chief Administrative Officer

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Welcome to the 2023 Year in Review! As we reflect on the past year's triumphs, challenges, and milestones, embrace the opportunity to celebrate growth and resilience. Your presence in this retrospective journey adds value. Here's to a year of shared memories, lessons learned, and the promise of new beginnings ahead!

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LIFE BEGINS AT 50

01 Honouring 50 years of vintage splendor at the Museum's car show

In 1973, the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum embarked on a journey that would become a local tradition for car enthusiasts and families alike—the Antique & Classic Car Show. Now, as the event reaches its remarkable 50th anniversary, it stands as a testament to the community's enduring passion for vintage automobiles.

Held annually on the 2nd Sunday in August, the Car Show has been a fixture in the town's cultural calendar, except for a brief hiatus in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions. Despite the challenges, the event has grown to become the museum's largest and most beloved, embodying the institution's identity.

From its modest beginnings with 50 cars and 600 visitors in 1973, the Car Show has blossomed into a grand spectacle, featuring over 420 cars and attracting 3400 visitors in 2023. The heartwarming

aspect is not just the impressive display of classic vehicles but the sense of community fostered over the years.

Volunteers, the backbone of the event, have played a pivotal role in its success. In 2023 alone, 30 volunteers dedicated 150 hours to ensure the smooth running of the festivities. Their roles ranged from planning committee members to interpreters of historic buildings, from food services to customer service duties.

The 50th-anniversary celebration was nothing short of spectacular. Titled "Enjoy the Ride: Celebrating 50 Years," a special exhibit curated in collaboration with the Canadian Automotive Museum and local residents showcased the rich history of the event. This exhibit, open from April 15 to September 2, encapsulated the spirit of the Car Show and garnered tremendous popularity.

In a gesture of gratitude, admission was free for all visitors, including those showcasing their vehicles. Participating drivers were treated to a complimentary breakfast. Special awards were presented to long-serving volunteers, acknowledging their decades of commitment.

The day itself was a whirlwind of excitement, featuring live music, historic demonstrations, face painting, food trucks, and more. The event's success was further highlighted by the sell-out of 50th-anniversary souvenir t-shirts.

As the sun set on the 50th Whitchurch-Stouffville Antique & Classic Car Show, it left behind not just tire tracks but a legacy of community spirit, volunteerism, and a shared love for automotive history that will undoubtedly carry forward into the next 50 years.



MESSAGE FROM THE **MAYOR**

Mayor Iain Lovatt reflects on Stouffville's 2023 accomplishments

As 2023 ends, so does the first year in my second term as Mayor. I am so honoured to be serving the residents of Whitchurch-Stouffville and I know that sentiment is shared by council as well.

I would like to highlight a few of my ongoing priorities to you, the residents and businesses of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Communication - me to you

One of my top priorities this past year has been increased communication with residents and businesses. In January, I was pleased to start the Mayor's Monthly Community Newsletter, which has been very well received. Residents often tell me that they find it difficult to stay on top of community news since the cancellation of the paper edition of the Sun-Tribune. I call it a Community Newsletter because I don't just highlight items related to our Municipal Offices. I share information from York Regional Police, community groups, charities, etc. If you would like to submit an item to my newsletter, drop me a line at mayor@townofws.ca And I encourage everyone to sign-up for the newsletter at www.lovatt.ca

Another communication priority for me has been connecting with new businesses. I am often invited to grand opening events and ribbon cuttings, but if my team or I notice a new business that we have not heard from yet, we will proactively reach out to say, "Welcome to Stouffville," and to offer an opportunity to be included in my newsletter under the New Business section. I have attended 15 ribbon cuttings & groundbreakings this year, and I never tire of them. The new business is always so grateful for the warm welcome and for the opportunity to snap some fun photos with my giant ribbon-cutting scissors.



Communication - you to me

I want to hear from you! Being accessible is also a top priority for me. I enjoy meeting with residents and business owners in my office, but I'm also cognizant of the fact that it may not be easy or even feasible for someone to travel to meet with me. That's why I hit the road. I was thrilled to host Town Halls in the Town Hall, Parkview, SDSS, Bloom, Stouffville Creek, 55+ Club, etc. At these events, attendees were encouraged to ask me anything they'd like, and to share feedback with me on what's working well in our community and what we could be doing better. People did not hold back! I left each event with a list of follow-up items and suggestions to review with staff. If you would like me to pay a visit to your club, group, or organization, please email me at mayor@townofws.ca

I am always up for visiting schools too! I had some great elementary classroom visits this past year, and I have committed to forming a Youth Council in 2024. Stay tuned for more details on that.

Service levels - always growing

As Mayor, to see the efforts of our staff working tirelessly to improve service levels for the betterment of our community is truly heartening. Here are a few that stand out to me:

- Increased programming and waiving the registration fee at the 55+ Club has resulted in membership exploding from 420 in 2022 to 1,071 in 2023.
- Expanding public swimming availability resulted in swim participants growing from 25,212 to 2022 to 34,448 in 2023.
- Mail distribution of On the Road magazine has increased to 19,850 households. OTR continues to fulfill its goal of communicating with all residents, promoting local businesses, supporting agriculture, developing tourism and, most importantly, building community.

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library's Service Levels have been particularly amazing to watch.

- Increasing Library programming resulted in program attendance growing from 18,219 in 2022 to 33,721 in 2023.
- The Library increased the number of physical materials in circulation from 265,621 in 2022 to 296,621 in 2023.
- The Library increased the number of digital materials in circulation from 265,621 in 2022 to 296,621 in 2023

From a safety perspective, Whitchurch-Stouffville Fire and Emergency Services made our community safer by:

- Increasing the number of Public Education events from 89 in 2022 to 115 in 2023.
- Public Education is key to reducing emergency responses, which fell from 1,720 in 2022 to 1,146 in 2023.

In closing, I want to reiterate a message I shared in last year's edition. Our community is defined by the people who live and work here, and we cannot do what we do without hearing from you, so please continue to engage with us and help us shape the future of Stouffville. I wish you all a 2024 filled with only the best that life has to offer.

Thank you to all the contributors and staff who put together this special *Year in Review OTR*.

Be well,
Iain Lovatt, Mayor

LIVIN' THE DREAM

Earlier this year Stouffville was named one of Canada's most livable cities by the *Globe & Mail*.

If you have lived in Stouffville for any length of time, it should not be surprising that in November of this year, Stouffville was named one of the "most livable cities" in Canada. After all, we do have everything!

In a ranking developed by the *Globe and Mail*, Whitchurch-Stouffville was named the 79th "most livable city" in Canada, representing the 18th highest ranked Ontario community and the 3rd most desirable place to live in York Region.

According to the *Globe*, the assessment considered 43 variables within 10 different

categories. The categories include economy, housing, demographics, health care, safety, education, community, amenities, transportation, and climate. These categories were chosen because they "mirror the key factors people prioritize when looking to relocate to a new community."

At the time of the announcement, Mayor Iain Lovatt said "this recognition echoes what we as residents have known all along, Stouffville is an incredible place to live, work and raise a family. We are

honoured to be on this list alongside so many other beautiful communities across the country. I am so grateful for the dedication and commitment of everyone in Stouffville who help create a welcoming and thriving community for all."

Using the same criteria, Stouffville was named the 32nd best place in Canada to retire, and the 88th most livable city for newcomers.

This *Year in Review* highlights 50 reasons why Stouffville is so desirable. Starting with these three...





03 The great outdoors

Most of our town is located within the provincially-defined Greenbelt, which includes the Oak Ridges Moraine. We are known for our beautiful setting, rolling hills and kettle lakes.

Not only do golf courses, equestrian centres and wineries attract thousands of visitors every year, Stouffville is home to three conservation areas, one national park, and the lush sanctuary of the York Regional Forest. With over half of the forests' tracts located in Stouffville, including three accessible trails, it's easy to spend time amongst the trees.

04 Business is booming

Our town has a diverse local economy, including high-tech, knowledge-based industries, manufacturing, construction, agriculture, and a thriving tourism sector. The labor force is strong, with over 26,000 individuals contributing to our economic vibrancy.

Looking ahead to 2051, we anticipate a significant increase in employment opportunities, projecting an expansion to 28,400 jobs. This represents an estimated growth of about 11,400 jobs from 2021 to 2051, showing an average annual growth rate of 1.7% during this period.

As of late 2023, Stouffville is home to 964 brick-and-mortar businesses and an additional 350 home-based, web-based, and farms. Mayor Iain Lovatt and the Council have celebrated the opening of 15 new businesses this year, and it's expected that 2024 will bring even more.

05 A growing population

In 2021, our town had 51,400 residents, growing consistently at an average annual rate of 1.7% from 2016 to 2021.

Projections suggest that by 2051, our population will reach approximately 103,500, indicating an estimated increase of 52,100 individuals between 2021 and 2051.

Stouffville is known for its diverse community, with over 46% of the population in 2021 coming from various visible minority groups, including South Asian, Chinese, Black, and Filipino.



CHEERS TO FUTURE DAYS?



Susan Michalek (l) and Jeff Manol, owners of Toronto's Muddy York Brewing Co. are eyeing Main St. Stouffville for their next beer adventure.

06 After years of fermenting, are suds about to flow on Main Street?

For at least 15 years, rumours have circulated about Stouffville getting its own brewery. Although plans were initiated and beer was brewed, the aspirations faded away as neighboring towns like Uxbridge, Port Perry, and Newmarket established popular brewery destinations that drew in thousands of beer enthusiasts.

However, the dream of a brewery in Stouffville persisted, awaiting the entrepreneurial spirit of someone willing to make it happen.

That someone turned out to be Susan Michalek and Jeff Manol, co-founders of Toronto's Muddy York Brewing Co.

Already successful with their award-winning brewery in East York, Jeff and Susan identified Main Street in Stouffville as the ideal location for their second venture.

"When Susan and our family moved to Claremont a few years ago, we frequently drove down Stouffville's Main Street. We fell in love with the Old Post Office – it was a beautiful building with a lot of charm, the perfect location for a comfortable, community-focused brew-pub" Jeff shared with *On The Road* magazine earlier this year.

The Old Post Office Jeff referred to stands on the southwest corner of Main St. and Market St. The current building replaced

the historic Daley's Hall after a fire destroyed it in 1923 and most recently served as the town's Silver Jubilee Club. Large marketing pictures of beer in its windows now signal the transformation to a brewery.

In addition to winning *Brewery of the Year* at the 2023 Canadian Brewing Awards, where brewers from across the country competed, Muddy York also secured Gold Awards in the Smoked Beer and German Style Wheat Beer categories.

While Jeff and Susan aim to open the Stouffville brewery in 2024, no specific date has been set. They did, however, recently announce the upcoming closure of their location near St. Clair Ave. E. and O'Connor Dr. this February.

Notably, the name "Muddy York" harks back to an old nickname for the city of Toronto. The moniker is believed to have originated during a time when Toronto, then known as York, lacked proper drainage systems or sewers, resulting in a very muddy city.

Fortunately, this historical aspect is unlikely to be a concern for Jeff and Susan in Stouffville!

07 Skating trail opens this winter

Coming soon to Stouffville's Memorial Park, the new 275-metre refrigerated accessible skating trail is sure to be a family favourite for residents and visitors alike.

Originally visioned in the Town's Memorial Park Master Plan approved a few years ago, the trail is situated "behind" the Leisure Centre and Library. To the south of the trail are the new tennis and pickleball courts that opened in the fall 2022, and the Wayne Emerson Skate Park.

The new skating trail has been made possible through grants from The Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP), a federal infrastructure program designed to create long-term economic growth, build inclusive, sustainable, and resilient communities, and support a low-carbon economy. This investment will support the creation of a fully accessible, inclusive, community hub where residents can enjoy the outdoors, and stay fit and healthy now and into the future.

08 New playgrounds open

The skating trail wasn't the only new recreational addition to Memorial Park this year. In April, two new playgrounds were opened to the cheers of kids everywhere.

The largest is on the south side of Burkholder St. near Stouffville Creek while the second is closer to the lawn bowling greens. Both have accessible features and numerous enhancements.

The construction and installation of the playgrounds were made possible through a \$560,000 grant from the Government of Canada.

09 Old Elm GO station opens

The new Old Elm GO Station officially opened its doors on October 17.

The new station includes a new passenger pick-up and drop-off area, a designated waiting area, more than 670 vehicle parking spaces and enhanced cycling amenities. Customers can also access new heated shelters, a new platform with an advanced snow-melting system and a bus loop to better connect GO Transit customers with more transit options.

The station is located near the intersection of Tenth Line and Bethesda Road and is currently the last stop on the Stouffville Line.

Metrolinx has also recently added two additional GO train trips between Old Elm and Union Stations, serving nearby communities including Unionville, Markham, Stouffville and Lincolnville.

10 New fire hall in Ballantrae

Although the relocation was announced in 2022, funding for the first phase of a new Ballantrae Fire Station was approved earlier this year in the Town's 2023 capital budget.

The new station will be located on the north side of Aurora Road just west of Highway 48 and will also house York Region Emergency Medical Service ("EMS").

The design of the new station is currently underway and construction is expected to begin in the next couple of years when further funding is approved.





12 Disc golf coming to Greenwood Park

As the Town continues to grow, the need to offer residents new and diverse recreational opportunities is important. Disc golf provides a means of giving residents a healthy, family-friendly activity to enjoy, free of cost. The sport not only promotes participation, but also attracts users from neighbouring communities.

Disc golf gained popularity during the pandemic, it is a variant of ball golf, but with special frisbees or flying discs. However, instead of hitting a ball off a tee and aiming at getting it down a hole in as few strokes as possible, disc golf involves throwing a disc from the tee and hitting an above-ground target in as few throws as you can.

Earlier this year Council approved a five-hole disc golf course for Stouffville. It will be located at Greenwood Park and will be ready for use in late spring or early summer.

11 Stouffville Market celebrates another successful year

The Stouffville Market came back for its second season in downtown Stouffville this year. Numbers continued to impress as each Saturday averaged 1100 patrons with a season-high of 5500 visitors on the first weekend in July.

Over 300 vendors applied for the limited space with between 30 and 45 selling goods each week. Vendors do not have to commit to a full season, they can come whenever they want as long as there is no other duplicate vendor on a given Saturday, making the selection as diverse as possible.

A couple of weeks ago, town Council approved the Market for the next two years. So, they'll be back in mid-May with lots of makers, creators, bakers and producers!

13 Stouffville Yankees U14 win provincial title

The U14 AAA Stouffville Yankees are provincial champions.

It's the second Ontario title in Yankees history and the first in an age group where live pitching – not a batting machine – is used.

The team won 40 games and lost 19 this season, they captured their third straight York Simcoe championship, made the finals of five of the six tournaments they entered, and won three.



LEADING THE CHARGE

Cheryl Hogg assumes presidency of Stouffville Legion as Memorial Park prepares for commemorative additions



The Stouffville Legion Branch 459 recently welcomed Cheryl Hogg into the role of Legion President for her first 1-year term. Cheryl has been with the Legion for several years, having joined as a member, volunteer and then working through various operational roles in the organization. She is excited about her new role and the many opportunities it brings.

The Royal Canadian Legion is Canada's largest veteran support and community service organization founded by veterans for veterans. It was initially formed as a supportive gathering place for those who served in the various branches of the Canadian Armed Forces as a way for members to access various systems of support from fellow veterans and professionals. It can also be a valuable place to simply swap stories and socialize. For several years, it has welcomed any member of the public wanting to join and enjoy the many services, social functions, and events offered. It is a place to enjoy the company of others who share your interests and for some good camaraderie. The Legion believes in supporting the community and provides various means, from financial support for veterans and their families, providing rental space to services and organizations, and offering educational and support programs; the Legion has much to offer.

15 Cenotaph moving

The Stouffville Legion and its memorial cenotaph have moved around town a couple of times. Still, they hope they have both found their permanent homes. Almost 13 years ago, both were moved from their Ninth Line location to the current site on Mostar Street. Town council recently received and approved the request from the Legion to move the cenotaph from its current location to where it was originally...in Memorial Park.

A return to Memorial Park allows the cenotaph to honour and show respect for veterans and members of the armed forces who lost their lives in the line of duty. The cenotaph will become part of a larger memorial, which will incorporate elements of the remembrance pillars,

16 Tank donation

which include the names of fallen soldiers from Whitchurch-Stouffville, along with the plaque for Captain Arthur Roy Brown at the entrance to Memorial Park. In addition, through the Department of National Defence, the Town and the Legion can receive a donation of a Leopard tank at no cost to the Town that will form a new, larger memorial area that will embrace and recognize these existing and new elements.

The location approved for this new memorial display will be the southeast corner of Park Dr. and Booth Dr. It was chosen due to the high visibility of the display and the accessibility for more residents to attend the annual Remembrance services.





WARD ONE HUGO KROON

I have had the pleasure to serve the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville for the two previous terms as councillor for the former Ward 3, and now in this term for the new and expanded Ward 1.

As you know, prior to the last election the Town embarked on a much-needed ward boundary review, which resulted in some minor changes in the village, and for the rural areas reduced representation by one councillor. The old Ward 3 was joined to the bulk of Ward 1 (with a small part partitioned off to Councillor Smith in Ward 2) creating the largest ward in the Town covering almost 60% of its land mass.

Being such a large ward, it follows that there is the potential for lots of development activity, especially considering the pressures put upon the Town by upper levels of government to do just that. Fortunately for the residents of all of the Town, and especially Ward 1, the protections afforded us by the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Greenbelt ensures that any new builds will be limited to new housing in the southern end of the ward in the Whitebelt lands, and much needed

commercial/industrial/retail uses in the 404 corridor.

A new complete community is being built straddling our southern boundary, shared with our neighbours in Markham, which will feature a wide range of housing forms including affordable, purpose built rental, seniors housing, along with parks, a community centre, a school site, expansive green spaces and supporting retail and other services.

In the Gormley and Vandorf areas, new commercial development which brings much needed assessment dollars continues with both ongoing builds and newly contemplated ones.

As for the rest of the Ward, life quietly goes on as it generally has for many years amongst the green spaces, farms, fields and forests. Equestrian centres, golf courses and publicly accessible lands in the Regional Forest Tracts, and the in quiet secluded estate subdivisions, a lifestyle that the residents enjoy, cherish and wish to protect.

And rightly so. As a resident of Whitchurch-Stouffville for 35 years and

having raised our family here, my wife and I continue to love everything about this place that you do. No matter what time of year, even now with summer fading into memory and winter soon upon us, the stillness of a crisp fall morning also displays the majestic beauty of the place we all call home.

And that's worth protecting for all of us now, and for future generations.

I'll end this by saying thanks to all of you for supporting all of us on council, and also to the staff who work so diligently to provide you with the kind of services you so richly deserve... we couldn't do what we do without them.

From my family to yours, have a Merry Christmas and a Happy Holiday season.

Hugo Kroon,
Councillor Ward One



For more information about Councillor Kroon, visit:
townofws.ca/ward1



WARD TWO MAURICE SMITH

As 2023 comes to an end, I am happy to reflect on the year we are leaving behind us with a few specific matters pertaining to Ward 2.

So often over-looked with all of what is going on within the core of Whitchurch-Stouffville, are the strides being made in the northern most parts of the community. High-speed internet is one such matter. It is important to so many rural families. To this end negotiations with a service provider were completed with installation of a reliable internet into many rural homes. Thank you.

Traffic signals have been installed at the intersection of Aurora Road and Ninth Line. This project was just one of the many that staff at York Region had to continually assess. While it did take nearly three years of the continuance and reminder of the need, I am thankful that it has been finally completed.

Tenants continue to open operations at the Ballantrae Gates Plaza. In November the opening of a family dentist being the latest. Two other tenants have signed up and should be open before spring. Also,

of course, the Shell gas bar opened. There is very positive response from many as to the idea of adding a carwash at the same location. Final design for the layout of the corner is presently before Town staff and MTO. If approval is given, you will not be disappointed.

During the years 2022 and 2023 the greatest portion of the Town's Capital dollars for road repairs was spent in Ward 2. Iroquois and all the side courts, Lakeshore and many of the roads around Musselman's Lake were upgraded.

A location for a new Fire Station in Ballantrae has been acquired and design work for the facility is under way. Grand opening will be in 2025. The biggest change you will see in this new facility is the addition of a bay as a home for 24/7 paramedic service.

As a final comment, on behalf of my wife Jane and myself, I extend to you and your family all the best for the upcoming holiday season. Hopefully we can all spend a traditional Christmas by having time with family and friends. My desire for you is that during 2024 you have peace of mind, good

health and enjoy all our great community has to offer.

Maurice Smith,
Councillor Ward Two



For more information about Councillor Smith, visit:
townofws.ca/ward2



TAKING THE --- **PLEDGE**

**'Strong mayor powers' come with
Stouffville's commitment to building
6,500 new residences by 2031**

5968 MAIN STREET

19 Housing Pledge

On June 16, the then-Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve Clark, requested that the Town of Stouffville demonstrate its commitment to accelerate the housing supply in the province. Stouffville was asked to identify a locally appropriate housing target to meet the province's needs to 2031 and to develop a Municipal Housing Pledge.

However, on August 22 the Minister indicated that the Town had been assigned a specific housing target of 6,500 new residential dwellings to be built by 2031. The Mayor confirmed the Town's commitment at the September 13 Council meeting. At that time, Town staff informed Council that Stouffville was well on its way to building 6500 new residential units regardless of the Pledge.

As a result of Stouffville confirming the Pledge, Mayor Iain Lovatt received "strong mayor powers" (see below) and the province agreed to supply Stouffville with a portion of \$1.2 billion in housing incentive funding.

20 What is Bill 23?

Bill 23, known as the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*, is a comprehensive piece of legislation introduced by the Ontario government in an effort to increase Ontario's housing supply thereby making housing more affordable for Ontarians. The Bill aims to make significant changes to land use planning in the province, with the goal of constructing 1.5 million homes over the next decade. The changes include modifications to the *Planning Act, Development Charges Act, Conservation Authorities Act, Heritage Act*, and the review of *A Place to Grow* and the *Provincial Policy Statement*.

The legislation has prompted a detailed analysis by Stouffville staff, who presented an initial overview to Council in late 2022. The full extent of the impacts on the town is not entirely known at this time, and a comprehensive analysis may be available as further clarification on the Bill is provided by the province. For further information about the Bill's impact on you, the resident, see the January 2023 issue of *OTR*.

21 What are 'strong mayor powers'?

On August 21 the Province revealed that Stouffville, along with 20 other municipalities in Ontario, would be granted 'strong mayor powers.' This change was introduced in alignment with the Province's core focus and pledge to boost housing availability by 1.5 million new homes by 2031.

In accordance with the recently revised *Municipal Act*, 'strong mayor powers' grants mayors and other council leaders the authority to propose their municipality's budget and endows them with the capacity to veto local by-laws should they deem them as potential hindrances to provincial objectives, particularly in the domain of housing development.

Mayors also have the authority to appoint or remove municipal department directors and other town managers. However, a strong mayor can't hire or dismiss the fire chief, town clerk, deputy clerk or integrity commissioner, among other roles.

During the Council meeting held on October 18, and in a subsequent official statement, Stouffville Mayor Iain Lovatt detailed his plans for utilizing the newly granted powers.

"I don't anticipate the need to ever use them," Lovatt said. "I appreciate all of you (council members) and the contribution each of you make to the great team we are."

At the meeting, Lovatt delegated several powers back to staff.

Under the new powers, the Mayor has the authority to appoint the Town's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and the members of any Council-appointed committees. Lovatt delegated them both back to Council, as it was before the 'strong mayor powers' were granted.

Lovatt also delegated to the CAO any powers related to altering the corporate organizational structure and hiring and dismissing staff members.

One aspect of 'strong mayor powers' that mayors cannot delegate back to staff is proposing the Town's annual budgets. In previous years, Stouffville staff would create a proposed operating and capital budget, which would then be deliberated before Council over one or two days. Council would then approve the budgets, with corresponding tax levy increases.

Under 'strong mayor powers,' Lovatt directed staff in November to create the budget on his behalf. After council members had the opportunity to contest individual items, Lovatt finalized the operating, capital and water/wastewater budgets for 2024 on November 30.

Also under the new powers, the Mayor may "... direct municipal employees to undertake research and provide advice

on policies/programs or carry out duties... including implementing decisions." Under previous procedures, Council, as a whole, could only dictate tasks to staff. This power cannot be delegated.

All directives must be given in writing. When such direction is given, the Mayor must provide a written record of the direction to the Clerk and CAO by the next business day. In addition, the Mayor must provide a written record to each Member of Council and make them available to the public.

All mayoral directives will be available on the Town's website at townofws.ca/mayoral-decisions

To be granted 'strong mayor powers,' Stouffville had to commit to the Province's Housing Pledge (see above).



For a list of the Mayor's directives and decisions, visit: townofws.ca/mayoral-decisions



For Stouffville's complete housing pledge, visit townofws.ca/housing-pledge



Stouffer Mills Village - Hoover Park and Highway 48

ELEVATING STOUFFVILLE

Seniors homes, apartments, plazas highlight 2023 approvals and public meeting discussions

22 Stouffer Mills to commemorate Town's first European settler

When SmartCentres opened its doors in late 2006 with Walmart as its anchor, the aspirations were ambitious. Following suit, Canadian Tire, Tim Hortons, and Boston Pizza joined the retail lineup, yet a crucial element was missing – residential areas. This gap was addressed in 2017 when the Council entertained and eventually approved SmartCentres' proposal to re-zone the area, allowing for the construction of seniors residences, townhouses, and other much-needed housing.

The inaugural significant development is now on the horizon, with construction poised to begin in 2024. The forthcoming Stouffer Mills Village will comprise three interconnected buildings, featuring an apartment building for seniors, a long-term care facility, a senior citizen home, and a zone with mixed-use commercial establishments. It will include one six-storey building, two twelve-storey buildings, and four three-storey components. A one-storey building will link these structures, collectively providing 722 residential units.

Situated on the vacant parcel of land south of Hoover Park Drive, immediately east of Tim Hortons, the Village of Stouffer Mills will introduce a new road connecting Hoover Park Drive to the Town's off-leash dog park, intersecting with Sam's Way. Stouffer Mills is named after Abraham Stouffer, who along with his wife Elizabeth Reesor, were the first European settlers in the village of Stouffville.

SmartCentres REIT and Calloway REIT, the developers, anticipate the construction of the initial 192-bed home to span 2-3 years, with the aim of welcoming the first residents in 2026. All rooms will be single occupancy. Upon completion of the long-term care Village, the developers will explore further phases for the development of retirement suites.



For more information about developments current underway in Stouffville, visit: townofws.ca/development

If there is any part of the Community of Stouffville that has metamorphosed into something so drastically different from its geographic predecessor, it's the corner of Main Street and Weldon Road. Once a home to a pub, a greasy spoon, and one of Canada's largest retailers, the corner now sprouts the first of three residential buildings built by LivGreen Developments.

Old timers easily remember the Lion Pub on the corner, having been opened by a former owner of downtown's Earl of Whitchurch Pub in the late 1990s. Also in the memory banks is the Main Street Canadian Tire with a convenient gas station that was not relocated when the retailer moved to SmartCentres off Hoover Park Drive about 20 years ago. If you are slightly older, you remember Steer Burger, the home to the Town's best chocolate milk shakes (sorry P&R Burger).

And that's not to mention Coffey and Bartley's Motors or Barry's farm a generation or two ago.

The seven storey residential building on the corner is nearing completion and should be ready for occupancy in the new year.

However, LivGreen is not stopping there. The Newmarket-based developers have made an application to the Town to continue their sustainable neighbourhood towards the east.

At a public meeting in April, Stouffville Council received a presentation from the company asking for an Official Plan Amendment and a Zoning By-law Amendment that would allow for the building of a mixed-use development comprising of a 10-storey residential building and 2 commercial buildings.

LivGreen outlined their proposal which would include two commercial (retail) buildings abutting Main Street, approximately 263 m² (2,830.9 ft²) and 328 m² (3,530.5 ft²) in size. Additionally, a 10-storey residential building located to the rear of the site, containing 166 dwelling units, would have a total density of 215 units per net hectare. Both underground and at grade parking are proposed. The residential unit sizes range from one-bedroom units, 62.16 m² (669 ft²) to three-bedroom units, 93.94 m² (1,011 ft²).

The presentation also contained information about LivGreen's strive towards sustainable development. LivGreen insisted the building will use sustainable building materials, geothermal heating and cooling, roof solar panels, energy monitors in each unit, electric car charging stations, balcony insulation, a rain water recycling program, thermography imaging, triple glazed windows and R80 roofs.

The approval of the site plan agreement is expected in 2024.



LivGreen Phase II - Main Street and Weldon Road

24 Southwest corner of Ninth & Main

The LivGreen development does not extend all the way to the Ninth Line. However, the owners at the southwest corner of Ninth Line and Main Street have plans themselves.

At a public meeting only a couple of weeks ago, the owners, Stouffville Main Properties Ltd., gave Council a presentation outlining their vision for the intersection. In it, they detailed a request for an Official Plan Amendment and a Zoning By-law Amendment.

The owner proposes constructing a 12-storey residential apartment building with public uses and amenity spaces on the ground floor. The building would include 130 residential units on floors two through twelve. The first floor could consist of a

resident lounge, a co-working space, a party room, and exercise spaces. According to the applicant, some of the spaces on the main floor may be made available to the public for rent.

The development would have 153 parking spaces, with 146 in the underground parking.

The proposal considers vehicular and pedestrian interconnectivity with the LivGreen properties to the west, which are currently under development. If developed as planned, direct access between the Ninth Line and Weldon Road through the properties would be possible.

A formal submission from the applicant is expected in the new year.



25 Old Elm Land Use Study

The *Old Elm GO Land Use Study*, formerly known as the *Lincolnville Land Use Study*, was approved by the Council on February 1. The study focuses on guiding future development around the recently opened Old Elm GO station (see highlight #8, page 9), situated near Tenth Line and Bethesda Road. Covering an area within an approximately 800-metre radius of the station, it includes rural and natural features.

The study provides recommendations for population distribution, land use, environmental considerations, road networks, streetscapes, parks, and open spaces. It serves as a comprehensive guide for urban design in the region. For the complete Study, visit cometogetherws.ca/lincolnville

26 Cam Fella townhouses

On September 27, a public planning meeting featured two zoning applications for adjacent lots on Cam Fella Blvd. in eastern Stouffville.

Both applications seek zoning amendments, a Draft Plan of Subdivision, and a Draft Plan of Condominium. The combined development proposals intend to include 151 residential units, with 32 being single detached homes and the remainder being townhouses. Mohawk Gate separates the two developments, with a row of townhouses facing Main Street and detached homes fronting Cam Fella Blvd.

As of now, the Town has not yet received the final applications.



27 Ringwood proposals

Two substantial Ringwood applications draw the attention of residents this year.

The first is a small strip plaza on the southwest corner of Highway 48 and Stouffville Road. The proposed plaza would consist of two buildings, each one storey in height, with retail units and restaurants with two drive-through facilities. They would comprise 674 sq. m. (7,250 sq. ft.).

The property is located west of an abandoned gas station. The new development would front Stouffville Road.

The owners, FLATO Developments, proposes the commercial development as “an interim use until such time that the market for higher density and mixed-use development emerges for this area and site.”

The second proposal is of much grander scale and is located on the northeast corner of the intersection.

At a public meeting in November, applicants Evans Planning, on behalf of 2440332 Ontario Inc., gave Council an outline of a proposed development of eight hundred residential apartment units comprised within five buildings. The buildings are proposed to range from ten to twenty storeys in height, with the tallest structures to be located on the more southerly portion of the property near Main Street.

28 Development Charges by-laws approved

On December 6, Council approved By-Laws 2023-146-FI through to 2023-152-FI, which impose development charges as outlined in the *Development Charges Act*. These by-laws replace the current one, By-Law 2018-165, starting January 1, 2024.

The specified development charges outlined are listed in the schedules accompanying each respective by-law. These charges are determined based on municipal services, as established in the supporting background study, which is accessible online for reference.

For those wishing to appeal By-Law 2023-146-FI through 2023-152-FI, you can do so with the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (formerly the Ontario Municipal Board) under section 14 of the *Development Charges Act*. Submit a notice of appeal, along with objections and supporting reasons, to the Clerk's Office by no later than 4 p.m. on January 15, 2024.

The by-laws are available for review at the Clerk's Office and are also posted on the Town's website at townofws.ca/DCStudy, alongside its companion policy and supporting background study and addendum.

These by-laws cover the entire geographic area of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

If you have any questions, feel free to visit townofws.ca or contact the Clerk's Office at (905) 640-1900.



WARD THREE KEITH ACTON

I would like to start by thanking the residents of Ward 3 for instilling their trust in me. I must also thank you for having patience with me when making requests and sending me your concerns in our ward. I've always tried to get the answers and solutions as promptly as possible, and I will get better as we progress through this term.

It was a turbulent start with some delayed decisions waiting for the new term to start. There was a consensus that some changes needed to be made with regards to our leadership team. Without experience and without past working relationships with all, I had some intense investigating and agonizing over some vital moves. We have now put together a very strong Senior Leadership Team that has tremendous experience. Our directors are not only exceptional, but they all have a strong desire to be a part of our Stouffville team.

A culture has been created where we no longer see many of our top employees exiting, but many from other communities showing a strong interest to be here representing our town. It started with the promotion from within of Sunny Bains as Chief Executive Officer, and then luring Rob Braid, Jack Graziosi and Becky Jamieson from other communities. They are all

building strong teams under their tutelage. Our town should be excited about our future with the accumulation of these exceptional talents.

This team takes pressure off our Mayor and Councillors as they give us strong recommendations, and as a result, there have been many positive by-products. The biggest one, I believe, is our Councillors will never always agree on certain issues, which is healthy, but I think we have become more cohesive over the past year and have a strong, healthy working relationship.

Over the past year, I've been so impressed with the residents of our community. At many public meetings, the Council Chambers have been full of our residents showing their passion, concerns and their intellect in helping to shape our community. We most definitely invite, embrace, and applaud this behaviour. Please keep it up - it most definitely has influence and impact.

The proposed Cam Fella development continues to move forward with amicable discussions between residents, developers, and Town staff. I thank the residents for their interest, passion, and knowledge and for voicing their concerns. With regards to what this looks like with the development that is on the forecast, we wish at the town

we had a heavier bat to swing with regards to controlling it. Unfortunately, we are at the mercy somewhat of the Province. It has been said many times that it's not the strongest or smartest that survive, but the ones who can adapt to change. No doubt change is coming, but rest assured we are doing our best to make it right for today, tomorrow and 30 years from now.

Another concern in Ward 3 is speeding. We all have busy schedules. Traffic flow is getting more congested, and we get late. There is no excuse for speeding and making our roads unsafe. We are working with all parties to implement tactics to curb this.

In conclusion, I am very proud to be on Council and it is a responsibility I don't take lightly. I want to make good decisions for our town moving forward. I've lived in a lot of cities and communities over the years, and none has come close to this beautiful community we live in. Let's continue together to keep Stouffville great!

Keith Acton,
Councillor Ward Three



For more information about
Councillor Acton, visit:
townofws.ca/ward3



WARD FOUR **RICK UPTON**

Here we are at the end of 2023, another great year for Stouffville. It was Council's first year of our new 4-year term. This is my 3rd term and I sincerely appreciate and am humbled by the continued confidence and trust the residents of Ward 4 have showed in me. Thank you.

So, what's going on in **Ward 4**?

There was an adjustment in the Ward boundaries. It was needed due to population imbalance within the old Wards. There now are two Wards in the rural and four Wards in the urban part of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Wards 4's new boundaries are Highway #48 on the west, Bethesda (east) on the north, Ninth Line on the east and Town of Markham on the south.

There are some great Long-Term Care projects happening. We have Mon Sheong LTC on Sandiford Drive with 320 beds. Schlegel Villages on Hoover Park phase one with 192 beds. Phases 2 and 3 will include 424 retirement beds and 106 seniors' apartments. Gottardo (Sandiford Dr. & Hoover Park) 212 beds, with a mix of assisted living, independent living, and supported living. Lang Yi (Hwy #48 and Hoover Park) with 256 beds. These facilities are in high demand and will create thousands of jobs.

Behind Winners at Smart Centres, the music store Long and McQuade has broken ground and will open for business in 2024. In the same area there will be a large 4 story medical office that will soon start construction.

On Hoover Park and Mostar (beside SDSS) 33 industrial offices will break ground in 2024. The old 'Fish n' Chip', at 5505 Main Street is under construction and will be a gas station, operational in 2024.

We will be improving safety at all roundabouts by adding directional signage. There will be a test program at Millard Street and West Lawn's roundabout, raising the walkways to try to reduce speeding.

Early 2024 there will be studies done to verify if 4-way stops are required at Boadway Cres. and Baker Hill as well as West Lawn and John Davis Gate.

In 2023 the Town received an abnormally high amount of residential condo submissions that will change the Western Approach and eventually the Town of Stouffville. In the area of Main Street from Highway #48 to 9th Line, there are 12 condos proposed, ranging from 12 stories to 27 stories. We must be cautious and be aware the effect this volume of development/traffic will have on Stouffville.

I receive calls and emails everyday from

you, the residents, and I truly appreciate everyone taking the time to do so.

If you have any questions about any of these updates or anything happening in Ward 4, please do not hesitate to contact me at rick.upton@townofws.ca or my cell 647-542-4046.

Let's all continue to support our local businesses and support local charities.

Please be safe and have a great holiday and a very Merry Christmas.

Rick Upton
Councillor Ward Four



For more information about Councillor Upton, visit: townofws.ca/ward4



VIBRANCY, COMMUNITY & REVITALIZATION

31

Main Street Revitalization included in capital budget

Building on the momentum highlighted in last year's *Year in Review*, the 2024 capital budget for Stouffville demonstrates an ongoing commitment to revitalizing the community, notably through a dedicated tax levy directed towards the rejuvenation of Main Street. This forward-looking fiscal approach underscores the town's sustained focus on urban renewal, recognizing Main Street as a vital component of Stouffville's identity.

The dedicated tax levy signifies a proactive effort to secure funding specifically earmarked for the revitalization project, ensuring financial stability and a clear pathway for progress.

As Main Street stands at the intersection of commerce and community, the budget aligns with a vision that goes beyond mere infrastructure improvements, aiming to create a thriving, cohesive, and inviting hub that reflects the town's character and aspirations for years to come. This financial commitment serves as a tangible manifestation of Stouffville's dedication to shaping a dynamic and prosperous future.

32

Historic O'Brien Ave. work coming

In 2024, Stouffville's capital budget takes a transformative leap by earmarking substantial funds for the revitalization of the cherished O'Brien Avenue in downtown (see image above). The budget prioritizes a meticulous blend of heritage preservation and modernization initiatives, ensuring O'Brien Avenue stands as a testament to Stouffville's past while embracing a sustainable future.

The funding injects life into aging infrastructure, balancing the restoration of historic architecture with the integration of contemporary amenities. Moreover, the capital budget envisions O'Brien Avenue as a dynamic community space, with provisions for public areas and cultural enhancements. This holistic approach aims not only to rejuvenate physical structures but also to foster a vibrant and inclusive environment, solidifying downtown Stouffville as a focal point for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

Also included in the capital budget is the reconstruction of Commercial Street and Mill Street, both in the downtown core.

33 2022-2026 Strategic Plan

Last year, the Town created a Strategic Plan to revive our vision, mission, and values. Through careful analysis, our aim is to promote community growth and ensure a prosperous future, emphasizing a sustainable approach that aligns every aspect of our community, from economic development to cultural preservation. The 2022-2026 Strategic Plan is organized into seven service themes:

- **A town that grows** - our priority is to maintain a manageable growth rate and create a complete community that helps meet the needs for people's daily living
- **A town that moves** - our goal is to improve the condition and efficiency of the local road network while addressing connectivity and advancing active transportation facilities.
- **A healthy and greener town** - we are striving to improve the well-being of our residents by improving Active living and promoting responsible use and protection of natural resources.
- **An engaging town** - we are working to build a welcoming community for all where each member feels engaged, empowered and supported
- **A safe town** - we are striving to ensure residents have access to the services that promote safety
- **Organizational effectiveness** - we are ensuring all services are provided in an effective manner
- **Good governance** - we are committed to being transparent and accountable

As we embark on this transformative journey, the Strategic Plan becomes a guiding force, steering us towards a vibrant, inclusive, and enduring legacy for the years to come.

To learn more about Stouffville's Strategic Plan, visit townofws.ca/stratplan

34 Lloyd Street Crosswalk

Exciting developments are underway in Stouffville's downtown core with the construction of a new crosswalk at the intersection of Main Street and Lloyd Street. This vital addition is part of a broader initiative, the Main Street revitalization project (see highlight #31, page 22), aiming to enhance safety and accessibility.

The Main Street plan includes two more crosswalks in the coming years, creating a pedestrian-friendly environment. As the town progresses towards a more connected and inviting downtown, these crosswalks symbolize a commitment to urban renewal, fostering a sense of community and facilitating safe and convenient access for residents and visitors alike.



35 Oak Valley Health updates

During the September 13 Council meeting, the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation presented updates on the hospital's future vision and launched a campaign for growth.

Between 2022 and 2023, the Markham Stouffville Hospital and Uxbridge Hospital collectively served 468,000 patients, with 173,000 clinic visits, 110,000 emergency visits, and 65,000 virtual visits. A \$65 million budget was announced to construct a new 80,000-square-foot ambulatory center at the Markham Stouffville Hospital, facilitating the expansion of outpatient programs. Plans include establishing a dedicated child and adolescent mental health center as part of their transformative vision.

Also, under the heading of healthcare, back in May, Oak Valley Health opened a new community health clinic at 5402 Main St. The clinic is meant to be a bridge for these patients until they find permanent primary care.

36 Track your water usage

On May 29, the Town of Stouffville launched an online customer water use portal that helps residents monitor their water consumption and avoid costly leaks in real-time. The new Water Watch Portal allows you to set and receive leak alerts; identify usage and monitor efficiencies; view and compare historical usage data; and access account information from anywhere. To sign up or learn more visit townofws.ca/waterwatch



For more information about the Water Watch program, visit: townofws.ca/waterwatch



37

Lemonville Community Centre celebrates 100 years

The Lemonville Community Centre celebrated its 100th anniversary on June 3 with a special party attended by former students, teachers, dignitaries and friends.

The community centre, located in the hamlet of Lemonville on McCowan Road just south of Bloomington Road, has a rich history spanning from 1813 to today.

The journey began with the earliest records of a school in 1813, and by 1923, the Lemonville School S.S. No 9 building was erected, becoming a cornerstone for the community. In 1957, the school expanded its role by opening a Sunday School, and in 1959, a second room was added to accommodate its growing activities.

The school played a central role until 1964, when it marked the last records of its educational service. The doors officially closed in 1969-70, prompting a public meeting in 1971 to discuss the building's future. In a significant turn of events, the sale of the Lemonville School building was approved in late December 1971 by the York County Board of Education. Arthur Latcham, a key figure in the community, purchased the building for \$19,000, paving the way for its transformation into the Lemonville Community Centre in 1972.

Over the years, the community centre underwent renovations, with exterior landscaping improvements in 1989 and additional interior and exterior upgrades in 2006. The Lemonville Group of Artists, established in 1994, added cultural vibrancy by presenting annual Art Shows and Sales. The community's resilience and commitment to preserving its heritage were evident in these milestones, culminating in a grand re-opening in September 2006.

38

Commemorative Plaque Program starts

In a bid to celebrate our rich local history, the Stouffville has introduced a Commemorative Plaque Program. This initiative allows property owners to pay homage to their historic residences and buildings through an accessible online application process. The plaque serves as a time capsule, encapsulating details such as the property's age, notable past residents, and distinctive features that contribute to its historical significance. The first plaque has been dedicated to The Shaffer House, which is owned by Ward 1 Councillor Hugo Kroon. Property owners interested in participating can apply for a plaque for their own homes by visiting townofws.ca/heritage.

39 Ribfest attracts over 52k

Stouffville Ribfest returned to Memorial Park in August with a record-breaking attendance of 52,374 visits, which exceeded the total weekend attendance of 32,549 in 2022. Attendees came from all over the GTA including York, Peel, Durham and even some visitors from as far away as Montreal and San Francisco!

The weekend also including performances from American Idol's Matt Wilson, Ben Hudson, Alessia Cohle, Alexa Goldie and Alyssa Reid. Saturday night's headliner Shawn Desman gave an electric performance that brought in visitors from over three hours away and broke a daily attendance record.

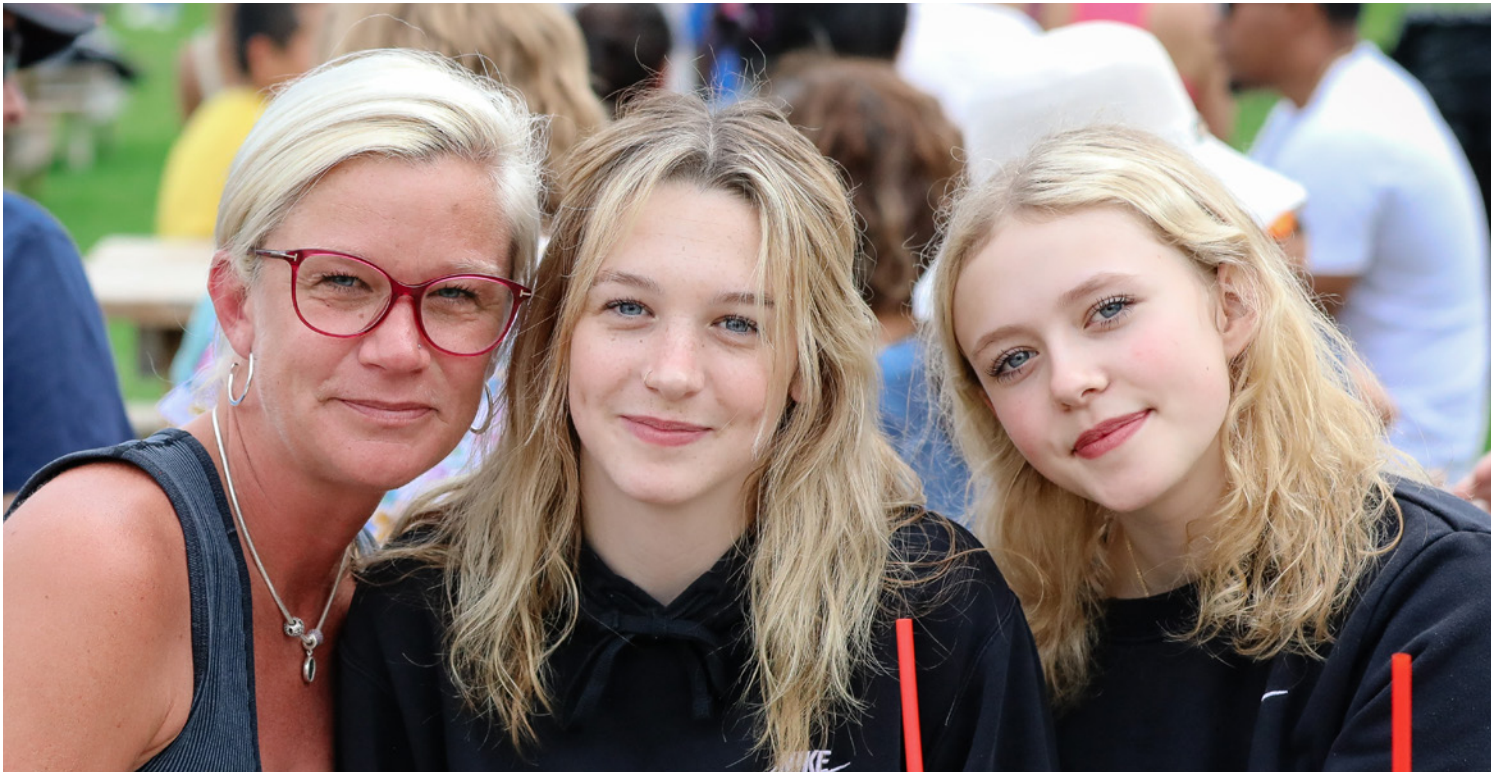


40 Holiday Market spreads cheer

The 3rd annual Stouffville Holiday Market returned to Memorial Park on November 24th and November 25th with over 15,100 attendees. The event featured a local artisan marketplace, magical lighting displays, a carousel, food & beverages, horse & carriage rides, roaming characters, and the famous Santa Claus. Performances on November 24th included Christmas favourites from Quintessence String Trio and Motown Boys. The November 25th headline event was hosted by radio personality Jax Irwin and included dazzling performances from internet sensation Sofia Camara and Juno-nominated Tyler Shaw.

41 Stouffville's 5k Run

The inaugural Stouffville Main Street 5K took place on Sunday, June 18 in support of the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation. Over 900 participants took part in the event which featured a 5K across Main Street and a 1K Dash for children under 12. Runner's Village was at Memorial Park and featured several vendors and sponsor booths including activations like guided stretching, hydrating sports drinks, music and concluded with a cheque presentation to the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation in the amount of \$118,382. The new Father's Day tradition returns in 2024 on Sunday, June 16.





45 Adventure Zone kicks off

In 2023, The Adventure Zone, an extension of our Library Lendery program, enjoyed a triumphant inaugural year. This innovative outdoor initiative empowered over 230 customers with access to a diverse array of resources, including bikes, bike accessories, sporting equipment, and outdoor gear. The program not only expanded recreational opportunities but also played a pivotal role in enriching our community's outdoor experience. The resounding success of The Adventure Zone underscored its positive impact, fostering a vibrant and active lifestyle for residents while reinforcing our commitment to providing diverse and accessible resources for a thriving community.

44 Summer Reading Club

The 2023 Summer Reading Club made waves, garnering an impressive 723 customer interactions. A staggering 591 children enthusiastically enrolled in the program, while the dedication of 26 teen volunteers shone through with a remarkable contribution of 661 hours. What truly sets this year apart is the astounding 375,000 minutes of reading logged by our participants, a testament to the program's outstanding success in nurturing a profound love for reading among our young readers.

42 Gallery receives Community Impact Award

The Latcham Art Centre is honored to have been awarded the esteemed "Creative Whitchurch-Stouffville" Community Impact Award, acknowledging its remarkable accomplishment through the "Street Art Seniors of Stouffville Project."

Designed to engage local seniors in creative placemaking and lifelong learning, SASS gave fifteen participants an opportunity to showcase their creativity, learn new skills, and build social connections by transforming a public space with art. This transformative endeavor has made an enduring impact on the local arts scene, fostering lively community engagement, particularly among our treasured seniors.

43 Beyond Craft Show and Sale

The Beyond Craft Show and Sale triumphed as a resounding success, drawing in a remarkable 3000+ attendees and boasting a 12% surge in sales from the previous year. The 2023 edition not only showcased a myriad of artistic wonders but also underscored the burgeoning enthusiasm and backing for local arts and crafts. The event proved to be a testament to the thriving community of artisans and their crafts, resonating with the palpable energy of over 3000 eager visitors. The impressive 12% uptick in sales solidifies the event's impact and sets a promising trajectory for the future celebration of creativity and craftsmanship.



Highway sign extends brand

Three years ago Stouffville undertook the development of a new brand identity in an effort to enhance community cohesion, attract tourism and investment, reflect evolving demographics, and foster a positive image.

Once it was complete, Stouffville's refreshed brand created a distinctive, appealing image that resonates with residents and outsiders, fostering a sense of pride and encouraging economic growth.

This past November 15 was a milestone for our imagine. A new town entrance sign was unveiled on the northbound Highway 404 - a sign that shows thousands of people a day that Stouffville is vibrant, attractive and has a bright future.

Entrance signs not only play a key role in safety and wayfinding but they also play a role in shaping and reinforcing a town's identity. They serve as symbolic markers and contribute to a sense of community pride. They create a positive first impression for visitors, and help define the town's character.

No longer will Stouffville's Highway 404 claim-to-fame be the road where traffic jams start in the mornings.



Participate!

In September of this year, Stouffville, in partnership with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, hosted a public evening in Ballantrae discussing the health of Musselman's Lake.

The evening was very well attended and residents left knowing more about their beloved lake having just listened to scientists and specialists talking about everything from blue-green algae to upcoming development.

The evening also marked a stepping stone for community engagement. Stouffville has made a committed effort to increase its public outreach and to not only provide more educational sessions like the one in Ballantrae, but to also increase the ways you can provide your opinion.

Just recently a dedicated Council meeting was held for residents to voice opinions about next year's budgets.

Community engagement is a mutually beneficial process. While individuals contribute to the betterment of their community, they, in turn, experience personal growth and satisfaction. Active community involvement is a powerful way to create positive change at both an individual and collective level.



To participate in our projects and initiatives, visit:
cometogetherws.ca





WARD FIVE **RICHARD BARTLEY**

Here we are at the end of another year, and I don't know about you but for me that one just flew by.

Serving the residents of Ward 5 continues to be a true pleasure for me. There are many changes coming to our Ward over the next few years and we are starting to see the landscape changing over time.

The opening of Old Elm station in October certainly has changed the look and feel of Lincolnville. The sleek, modern looking station is a sight to behold and has several new features including heated shelters and a platform snow-melting system and the signalized intersections at the bus entrance and main entrance can accommodate increased vehicle traffic.

Beyond the boundaries of Ward 5, there are so many improvements happening in our municipality that we should all be proud of. From the new pickleball and tennis courts beside the Leisure Centre to the skating trail which is currently under construction in that same area, as our community continues to grow, our Council is committed to providing this community with amenities they can be proud of.

We are building the new fire station in Ballantrae to better serve the needs of our changing municipality, there's the new multi-sport dome also going up in Ballantrae and we've got several new parks and parkettes getting underway shortly – there's certainly no shortage of activity here in Stouffville.

These past couple of years, I have had the pleasure of serving on the Uxbridge Hospital Fundraising Board of Directors and we really are incredibly blessed to have another hospital serving our community just a short drive away. I encourage you to support both of our Oak Valley Health hospitals if given the opportunity.

With 2023 in our rearview mirror, it is time to pause and reflect on all that we have been through as a collective community over the past several years. We are so much stronger for it. As always, I am thankful to our Town staff who keep this Stouffville shining and to you, the residents for making this the best Town to call home.

Sending warm holiday wishes from my home to yours! May the Christmas season fill your hearts with joy and your homes with warmth. Wishing you a New Year filled with safety, happiness, and good health.

I look forward to seeing you all in 2024 – Merry Christmas, Stouffville!

Richard Bartley,
Councillor Ward Five



For more information about Councillor Bartley, visit: townofws.ca/ward5



WARD SIX **SUE SHERBAN**

Rainbow or Skittles Park (aka new Memorial Park Playground) whatever your family has nicknamed the new colourful playground it has been a huge success since opening day. Just seeing the moms, dads, grandparents, and their children gather and share their culture, values and life stories puts a smile on my face. It is a community gathering place that makes me proud as a Councillor of Ward 6 to watch and see our young from all over town come to laugh and play!

Events, events, events ... whether it is Ribfest, Art in the Park, Stouffville Market etc. there is no better place to host than Ward 6 Memorial Park with its open park space for the town festivities. I am incredibly grateful to the businesses who have financially sponsored and/or joined the special event(s) being held, their participation is what makes these festivals possible. I want to sincerely thank the town staff event team for all their hard work and for bringing them to us so we can enjoy our community together.

When we are enjoying the fun events, please visit our Historical Downtown of small shops in Stouffville Village, it is one of the very reasons why we love Stouffville. These businesses work hard to keep their

doors open and I would ask please take the time to shop local and thank our local merchants. #supportlocal

Where are we with Whistle Cessation you ask? We are awaiting approval from Metrolinx for us to move to the next steps of construction. The Town sent a response on September 5th to Metrolinx regarding our design submission but have not heard anything back at this time.

Road safety is a significant issue and Council is moving forward with new measures to assist with slowing speed in our neighborhoods. Last year we tested speed humps in each of our wards and they were met with positive comments. As we plan for more safety devices like radar reader boards and delineators, our Public Works Department is introducing a policy as to where these devices are appropriate. The Road Watch Working Group continues to meet and focus on speed and distractive driving with education and implementation of Vision Zero.

Business development growth is a high priority for our community! If you know someone who may be interested in bringing a new business or relocating one, we are happy to help make it happen.

We need new corporations to provide those well-paying, good jobs for our highly talented work force; and the new taxes will help to provide relief for our residents.

I look forward to what 2024 will bring our community.

Best Wishes for the Holidays and Merry Christmas!

#inthesix

Sue Sherban,
Councillor Ward Six



For more information about Councillor Sherban, visit: townofws.ca/ward6

50 You

Residents like you are the lifeblood of a small town like Stouffville, embodying its character and vitality. Your diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives contribute to the rich tapestry that defines the community. In a close-knit setting, residents are not merely inhabitants but active participants in shaping the town's identity. Your engagement, feedback, and support drive local businesses, community initiatives, and create a sense of belonging.

Ultimately, you are the heart and soul of Stouffville, infusing the town with a unique spirit that fosters connection, resilience, and collective growth.

This year, we unveiled our new transformative Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Plan, reflecting a framework embodying the town's vision and values. This strategic initiative signifies a resolute commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace while delivering equitable services and programs to residents. The DE&I Framework will serve as a guiding beacon, steering Stouffville towards meaningful organizational changes. By developing targeted initiatives

aligned with the town's unwavering dedication to DE&I principles, we aim to cultivate an environment where everyone feels valued and included.

The Plan not only shapes the town's internal culture but also underscores its dedication to providing a more equitable and harmonious community experience.

Coupled with the new DE&I strategy, we also completed a Customer Service Excellence Assessment. This study is crucial for organizations to gauge and enhance their customer service quality. It provides a systematic evaluation of customer interactions, helping identify strengths and weaknesses. By understanding customer needs, preferences, and pain points, we can tailor services, improve satisfaction, and foster loyalty.

This assessment also aids in employee training and process refinement, ensuring consistent, high-quality service delivery. Ultimately, a commitment to customer service excellence not only enhances our reputation but also contributes to sustained success by fostering positive customer experiences and building long-term relationships with you.



51 From the editor...

Everytime I sit down to put together another edition of a Stouffville Year in Review (this is my fifth), I ultimately conclude I can't think of anything to write about. There is always one or two big "stories" but I keep asking myself what can I possibly highlight?

One month ago, I couldn't possibly imagine I could come up with 50 highlights this year. But during the middle of November a story hit the news that we couldn't ignore. Stouffville was named in the list of top 100 'most livable cities in Canada' (I know we aren't technically a city).

This is a big deal. According to our friend Google, there are over 3,500 municipalities in Canada. We fall in the top 3%. Then it hit me - there has to be 50 reasons why people call Stouffville home. The results are in these pages. Way to go Stouffville!

Putting this review together takes a team, and I would like to thank everyone who contributed. Notably the fine team of writers, proofreaders, editors, contributors, graphic designers and photographers. Special thanks to Brandi Pickering, Cassandra Papas, Julia Jackson, Michaela Ray, Sunny Bains and Susan Tucker for reading, writing and re-writing. Thanks to the dynamic duo of Kira Hassard and Katrina Robert and their creative design talents.

This is nothing without stunning photography. The pictures in this review were snapped by Valeria Mitsubata, Dennis Hristovski, Audra Bradbury and Katrina Robert.

And thanks to you. The best thing about this great town is the people. All 50,000 of you!

Glenn Jackson,
Editor




The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville acknowledges this land is the treaty territory of the Williams Nations. It is also the traditional territory of other Anishinaabeg peoples, the Wendat, and the Haudenosaunee. We also recognize the contributions of all Indigenous peoples to this place and commit to a continued dialogue and greater respect for the land we have come to share. This recognition of the contributions and historic importance of Indigenous peoples must also be clearly and overtly connected to our collective commitment to make the promise and the challenge of Truth and Reconciliation real in our community.

 @wstouffville

 @twsevents

 @wstownhall

 @wsmuseum

 @19onthepark

 @wsfes

 @wsplibrary

 @townofws

 @ws_townhall

 @wsfes


 @19onthepark

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 Whitchurch-Stouffville

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