



FOCUS NEWTON

Action Plan

MARCH 2024

We acknowledge that Surrey is situated on the unceded traditional territory of the Coast Salish people, including the səmyámə (Semiahmoo), ǵʷɑ:ńłəń (Kwantlen) and ǵícəy̓ (Katzie) land based First Nations.





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DRAFT

Statement from Mayor



I am proud to share the Focus Newton Action Plan on behalf of Council, outlining our strategy to enhance and beautify the unique and dynamic Newton community, Surrey's most populous area.

Initiated by Council, this is more than a set of initiatives; it's a commitment to shaping a vibrant, green, safe, and connected Newton over the next three years.

By investing in Newton, we are contributing to the vibrancy and overall well-being of the heart of our city. Focusing on key areas such as enhancing landscaping, increasing safety, fostering social connectedness, providing amenities, and improving active transportation, we aim to create a community where residents and businesses can thrive.

The Action Plan, developed with extensive community engagement, relies on the support of our residents, businesses, and community partners. As we start putting the plan into action, your ongoing involvement will be key to achieving our shared vision for a thriving Newton.

Mayor Brenda Locke
City of Surrey

Statement from Task Force Chair



The Focus Newton Action Plan is the result of collaborative efforts, community engagement, and a shared vision for revitalizing Newton.

We listened to the concerns of thousands of community members at open houses, outreach sessions, and as part of our survey. Guided by this feedback, the plan focuses on five key areas: making our spaces vibrant and green, keeping them clean and safe, organizing diverse events and programs, improving public spaces and amenities, and enhancing active transportation options. Each action is aligned with our guiding principles to meet Newton's specific needs.

I encourage you to review the Action Plan and actively participate in the initiatives that matter to you. Together, we can make a positive impact and create a neighbourhood that we are proud to call home.

This plan represents the hard work and voices of many. Thanks to Council, City staff, the Focus Newton Task Force, and all Newton residents. Your commitment speaks volumes, and I'm excited about the positive changes ahead for Newton.

Councillor Harry Bains
Chair of the Focus Newton Task Force

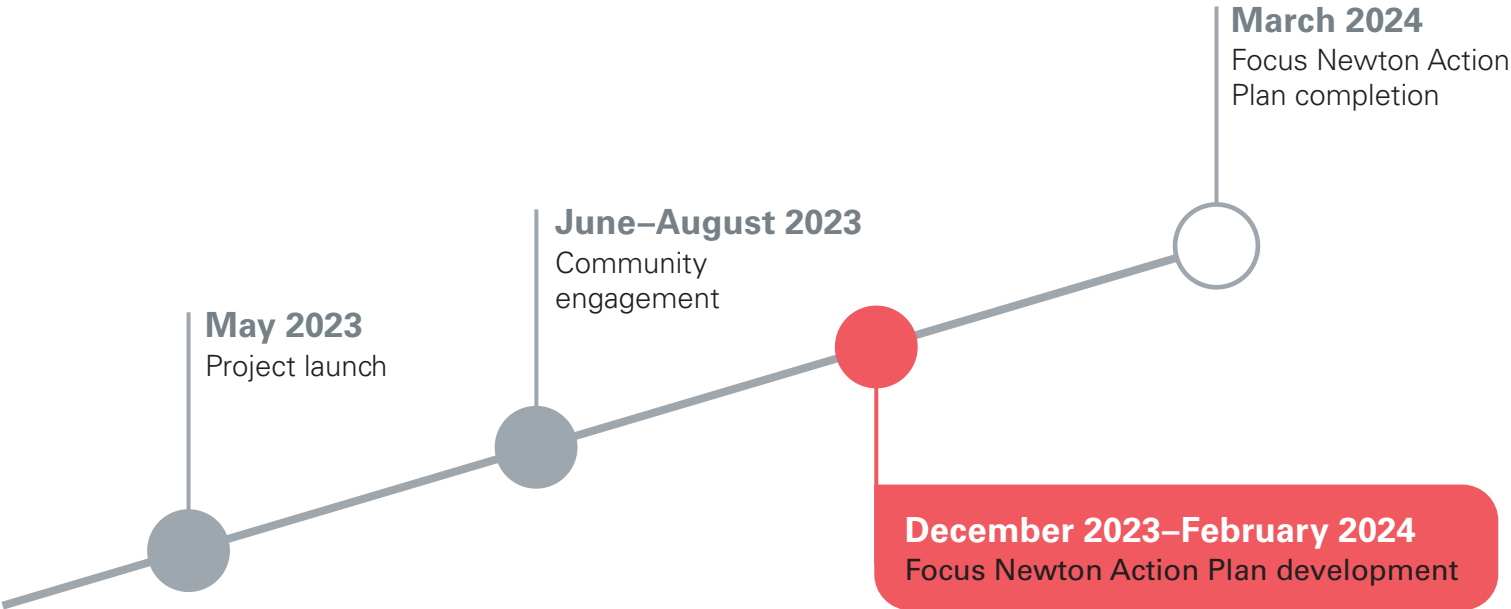


About Focus Newton

Newton is a growing community with strong neighbourhood connections and local pride. Through Focus Newton, the City of Surrey will invest in Newton’s future—to enhance, beautify and engage with Surrey’s most populated town centre.

Informed by input from the community, Focus Newton presents an Action Plan to guide the City over the next three years with the goal of beautifying and enhancing Newton. The Focus Newton Action Plan will serve as a roadmap to improving parks and open spaces, streets and sidewalks, and events and activities.

The Focus Newton project coincides with—and strengthens—a number of ongoing capital projects to meet the needs of the diverse and growing Newton community. The projects include a range of new facilities, park master plans and facility upgrades.



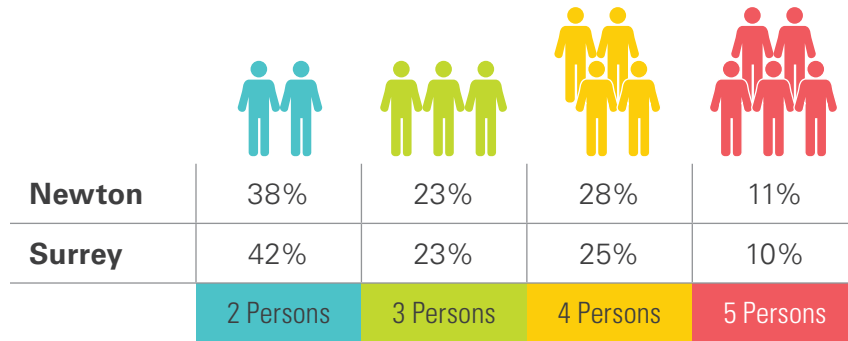
About Newton

Newton is Surrey’s most populous community with 149,040 people according to the 2016 census. This comprises 29% of Surrey’s total population. The community is growing steadily at an estimated 12% annually.

	Newton	Surrey
Area (hectares)	5,871	32,621
Population	149,040	517,885
Immigrant population	49%	43%
Renters	31%	29%
Unemployment rate	7%	7%
Take transit to work	13%	15%

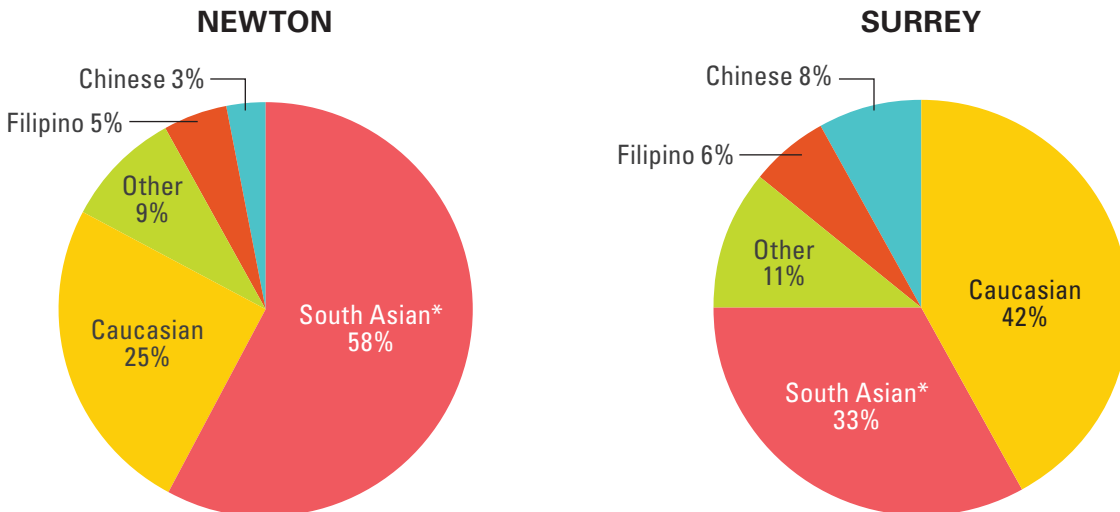
Family Size

The breakdown of family sizes in Newton in the 2016 Census was comparable to the breakdown for all of Surrey.



Top Four Ethnic Groups

The population of Newton has a lower percent of Caucasians than Surrey as a whole, as per the 2016 Census.



*South Asian include East India, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.

Community Engagement Summary

Public engagement for Focus Newton included three community open house events, an online survey and a series of survey outreach sessions—all with the goal of hearing from diverse and representative Newton residents. This community input has helped to inform the focus areas and actions of the Action Plan.

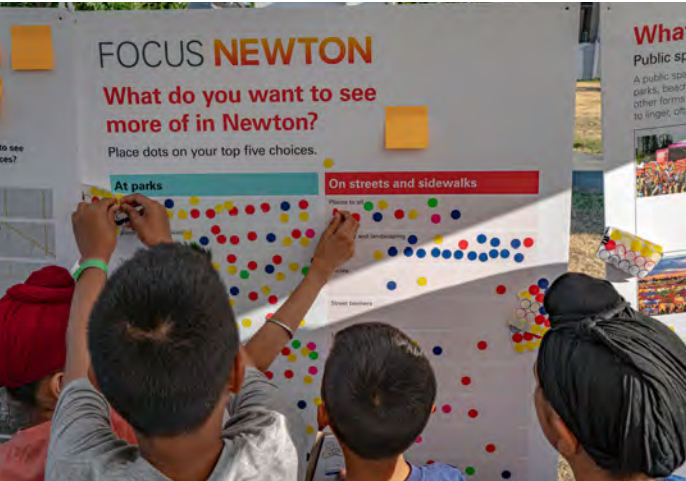
Who We Heard From

42,421
Informed Residents

visited the project website, received a postcard, or engaged through social media.

2,019
Engaged Residents

engaged residents attended a pop-up event, connected through phone or email, or completed the survey.



Engagement Summary

Many respondents expressed pride in Newton, particularly in the neighbourhood's parks, open spaces, neighbours, celebrations and events, and civic facilities. Overall, across the engagement activities, we heard strong support for:

- More landscaping and green spaces.
- Improved and expanded recreation facilities and park amenities.
- More family-friendly events and activities.
- Cleaner and safer spaces, that are regularly maintained.
- Reducing congestion and enhancing pedestrian safety.
- Better active transportation infrastructure, for transit and cycling.
- More outdoor spaces, cafes and restaurants in the neighbourhood to gather socially.

Respondents also noted a few local concerns. Over two thirds felt that Newton could be cleaner, with the top concerns being illegal dumping and general litter. Respondents also shared concern around homelessness and drug addiction in the Newton area, as well as the need for maintenance and care on both public and private property.

A full summary of the engagement results can be found at surrey.ca/focusnewton.



What We Heard

At parks

The community would like to see more greenery and landscaping, walking trails and pathways and infrastructure to support a diversity of people using parks. Parks were noted as important spaces for families and friends to gather.

On streets and sidewalks

The community would like to see more vibrant public spaces with street-level activities and amenities (such as greenery, outdoor patios and cafes, sidewalks, places to sit, bicycle racks and public art).

Events and activities

Respondents shared the type of activities that they'd like to attend. Top responses included food trucks, outdoor daytime activity, family-friendly events, outdoor nighttime activities and large special events.



FOCUS **NEWTON**

FOCUS NEWTON
Tell us about important places in Newton

FOCUS NEWTON
What do you want to see more of in Newton?
Place a dot on your top five choices:

On streets and sidewalks

What is public space?
Public spaces are for everyone.
Remember that it is free to enjoy and open to the public. Public spaces do not have to be parks. Sidewalks, playgrounds, recreational areas, skateparks, plazas, squares, and open lawns are all public spaces. Public spaces can be big or small, but they all attract people and bring life to a neighborhood.

Creating shared spaces to meet fundamental human needs from small to large



Focus Newton Action Plan

The following section presents the Focus Newton vision and guiding principles, followed by the **five strategic focus areas**:



These action items are anticipated to be implemented over the next one to three years, unless otherwise indicated. Many of the actions include multiple pathways for implementation.

Vision

A rejuvenated and enhanced public space that celebrates Newton’s identity and uniqueness and fosters opportunities for people to connect with each other and take part in and contribute to a vibrant community life.

Guiding Principles

These guiding principles are key concepts that will help guide decision making when implementing the Focus Newton Action Plan to make sure that the outcomes meet the needs of the unique Newton community.

Vibrant Places

Welcoming, safe and clean spaces create vibrancy by encouraging residents to meet, gather and connect—for major events, community gatherings, and on a day-to-day basis.

Newton Identity

Shared spaces, activities and public art all provide opportunities to celebrate Newton with diverse cultures and groups represented.

Community Spirit

Local leaders and residents care deeply about Newton and contribute generously to making it a vibrant and inclusive place to live for people of all ages.

Small Steps, Big Impacts

Small changes have big impacts in supporting Newton to be more safe, active and beautiful—if they are centered around the unique needs of residents.

Focus 1: Vibrant and Green

Action 1.1

Enhance Landscaping and Greenery

Additional landscaping will improve key locations across Newton, including key parks, vibrant business areas, key transportation corridors and residential areas. Opportunities to engage community members in enhancing and stewarding natural areas will be expanded.

Related Strategies:

Climate Change Action Strategy (2023)

Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategy (2018)

DID YOU KNOW?

Loneliness decreases with each additional hour that people spend visiting green spaces.

Community spaces offer opportunities to bring people together. A multi-city European study in Barcelona, Kaunas, Doetinchem, and Stoke-on-Trent found that loneliness decreases with each additional hour that people spend visiting green spaces—places with street trees, parks, water and other natural features.

Happy Cities and Canada Healthy Communities Initiative, from the Power of Placemaking



Action 1.2

Create Art and Placemaking Opportunities

Implementing more art and placemaking throughout public spaces in Newton will contribute to interesting and vibrant public spaces. Opportunities for static installations such as murals, street banners, ground art, vinyl wrapping and sculptures will be explored, as well as performance and interactive art. Locations that benefit most from art and placemaking may include hubs for people including cultural and business districts, key park nodes and paths, transportation hubs and civic amenity areas.

Related Strategies:

Age Friendly City Strategy (2024)

Surrey Music Strategy (2023)

Public Art Master Plan (2020)

Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategy (2018)

DID YOU KNOW?

When people help shape places, they care more about them.

When people are involved in shaping community spaces—such as painting a mural or organizing block party—they are more likely to feel a sense of care for these places. People who feel a strong sense of belonging are healthier, more productive, more trusting and live longer. In Portland, Oregon, City staff supported low- to moderate-income residents in designing new placemaking amenities for streets in their community.

After these changes were made, 53% of residents rated their community as better than before, reporting stronger social ties, higher participation levels, an enhanced sense of place and more attractive environment.

Happy Cities and Canada Healthy Communities Initiative, from the Power of Placemaking

Action 1.3

Expand Seasonal and Decorative Lighting

Decorative lighting will help create warm spaces that are welcoming to everyone, no matter the season. Commercial streets, transit stops, parks and other high traffic community destinations across Newton will benefit from additional decorative lighting.

Focus 2: Cleanliness and Safety

Action 2.1

Increase Safety in Public Places

Safety and cleanliness are key parts of making public spaces comfortable and well-used. Piloting a program to pair outreach workers and bylaws officers will help keep Newton spaces vibrant, as well as support vulnerable populations.

DID YOU KNOW?

Placemaking attracts more people to streets and public spaces.

Lively environments can help people feel safer, by adding “eyes on the street.” Many studies show that public space transformations increase feelings of safety for women in particular.

A study of 31 parks in low-income neighbourhoods in New Orleans found that park attractiveness was significantly linked to the number of females using the park. Unclean and disorderly parks had 49% fewer female users, whereas attractive parks—with visually appealing landscaping and other amenities—had 146% more female users. In contrast, park attractiveness did not significantly impact male use.

Happy Cities and Canada Healthy Communities Initiative, from the Power of Placemaking

Action 2.2

Increase Cleaning and Litter Removal Services

The City is committed to increasing service levels to clean litter and remove illegally dumped items throughout Newton. This includes increasing the frequency and expanding the areas of litter collection to reflect the needs of the growing community. Large-scale cleanups will complement the City’s efforts, along with targeted enforcement.

Action 2.3

Encourage Resident Care Through Engagement and Education

The City will support residents in organizing community clean-ups by making additional resources available to groups and volunteers. The City will develop resources and opportunities for community members to make informed decisions around waste removal. This may include educational resources on waste removal or free sessions on community safety measures.

Related Strategies:

Climate Change Action Strategy (2023)



Focus 3: Programs and Events

Action 3.1

Increase Family-friendly Activities

Family-friendly activities and programs help make Newton more lively and animate public spaces. More free family-friendly activities will be organized in Newton. This will include summer programming at parks and recreation facilities and through new partnerships with local groups and organizations.

Related Strategies:

Surrey Libraries Strategic Plan (2024) Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategy (2018)

DID YOU KNOW?

Opportunities to meet others creates attachment to community

A national survey in the United States found that the leading factor in whether people feel a sense of attachment to their community is if they have community events and places to meet people.

Happy Cities and Canada Healthy Communities Initiative, from the Power of Placemaking

Action 3.2

Engage and Support International Students

Many international students call Surrey, and Newton in particular, home. The City can support and lead programs that cater to international students and help them develop deeper and beneficial ties to the community. Initial actions include outreach to share available recreation and library resources, as well as further engagement and coordination with community partners.

Related Strategies:

Surrey Libraries Strategic Plan (2024)

Action 3.3

Foster Social Connectedness Through Programs

The City is committed to developing new programs and strengthening existing resources, that encourage social connection between residents. Such resources may include English language programs and mobile library services. Programs that encourage social connections may also activate outdoor spaces, such as safe streets at schools that are designated for walking and cycling during key pick-up and drop-off times.

Related Strategies:

Accessibility Action Plan (2024)

Surrey Libraries Strategic Plan (2024)

Action 3.4

Support Community Leadership to Make Newton Vibrant

The City recognizes that the greatest impacts can occur through community-led initiatives. The City will support residents who are interested in improving Newton and who may have innovative ideas. Examples include promoting Surrey's grant programs and youth leadership opportunities.

Related Strategies:

Climate Change Action Strategy (2023) Surrey Music Strategy (2023)

Public Art Master Plan (2020)

Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategy (2018)

Focus 4: Public Spaces and Amenities

Action 4.1

Provide Places to Sit and Gather

To be functional and social, public spaces require comfortable places to sit together. A variety of seating options and locations throughout parks and activity hubs will help ensure that spaces are meeting residents' needs and providing the opportunity for social connections. Seating options may take the form of picnic tables, covered tables and benches.

Related Strategies:

Age Friendly City Strategy (2024) Accessibility Action Plan (2024)

Surrey Libraries Strategic Plan (2024)

Climate Change Action Strategy (2023)

Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategy (2018)



DID YOU KNOW?

People are attracted to vibrant, active spaces

Lively spaces increase casual social encounters, create opportunities to meet strangers, and build relationships with familiar faces. A Toronto Metropolitan University study found that people are:

- 50% more likely to spend time in places with art, play equipment, and seating.
- 63% more likely to feel positively towards these places.
- 77% more likely to tell other people to visit.

Power of Placemaking – Happy Cities/Canada Healthy Communities Initiative

Action 4.2

Provide Amenities to Support Public Spaces

Newton's public spaces and parks need to be welcoming for people of all backgrounds. The City will prioritize practical amenities to enhance comfort and access to public spaces. These include drinking fountains, washrooms and electric power (for programs and events) at key locations such as parks.

Related Strategies:

Age Friendly City Strategy (2024) Accessibility Action Plan (2024)

Surrey Libraries Strategic Plan (2024)

Climate Change Action Strategy (2023)

Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategy (2018)

Action 4.3

Improve Major Facilities

Newton's indoor public spaces are also important spaces for the community. The City has a number of ongoing capital projects and upgrades that will help enhance Newton's facilities. Additional improvements may include upgraded walking loops, small-scale renovations at Newton libraries and other civic facilities.

Related Strategies:

Climate Change Action Strategy (2023) Accessibility Action Plan (2024)

Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategy (2018)

Focus 5: Active Transportation

Action 5.1

Improve Wayfinding and Directional Signage

Quality of public space, comfort and access can be improved through wayfinding and signage, especially to improve experiences at key outdoor amenities such as greenways, major athletic fields and civic amenity hubs. Wayfinding may take the form of signage, kiosks, or other creative ground treatments and use of materials.

Related Strategies:

Age Friendly City Strategy (2024)

Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategy (2018)

Action 5.2

Enhance Walking and Cycling Routes

Walking and cycling must be a safe and healthy option for residents of all backgrounds and abilities to get around Newton. City investments can help enhance the comfort and safety of active modes of travel. This may include adding infrastructure improvements such as adding letdowns, new sidewalks, new curb bulges and pedestrian signals. Walking and cycling may be further enhanced by expanding the network of trails and paths in Newton parks.

Related Strategies:

Age Friendly City Strategy (2024)

Climate Change Action Strategy (2023)

Action 5.3

Strategic Long-Term Transportation Infrastructure

While the City may provide active transportation improvements in the short term, additional consideration needs to be given to long-term transportation infrastructure and planning to support the growing Newton population. This includes rapid transit options such as introducing Bus Rapid Transit and planning for future SkyTrain. These options, along with additional transportation strategy work, will help address congestion relief in Newton and across Surrey more broadly.

Related Strategies:

Accessibility Action Plan (2024)

Climate Change Action Strategy (2023)



Implementing the Plan

The actions in the Focus Newton Action Plan will be implemented within one to three years. The City will provide an annual update to indicate the progress of the action items. This annual update will summarize the status of each action and note any challenges, or changes, that have occurred.

There are a number of implications for the next steps of these actions. The City will consider:

- **Strategic locations:** Being strategic with the location of each of the actions, in some cases clustering actions for greater impact and in other cases implementing actions within key areas of interest.
- **Building on capital projects:** The City can continue to build on ongoing and upcoming capital projects to implement the actions. There may be opportunities to consider enhancements to the capital projects, through these actions, that will help maximize the impact of both.
- **Community champions:** Key to the success of these actions and fostering overall commitment to Newton's future, it will be important to identify opportunities to invite individuals, groups and local leaders to be involved in implementing and stewarding these actions.

Beyond Focus Newton

Focus Newton also received feedback about longer term projects outside of the scope of the project – such as major transportation infrastructure, neighbourhood densification and growth, and significant new facilities. While actions to address these ideas are not included in the Focus Newton Action Plan, this feedback has been added into the relevant long term planning and strategic processes.

How to Stay Involved

For updates and more information, please visit surrey.ca/focusnewton.

