

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council **DATE: November 26, 2024**

FROM: General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture **FILE: 0550-20**
General Manager, Engineering
General Manager, Social Infrastructure &
Community Investment
Chief Librarian, Surrey Libraries

SUBJECT: Focus Newton Action Plan – 2024 Update

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department, Engineering Department, Social Infrastructure & Community Investment Department, and Surrey Libraries recommend that Council receive this report for information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information related to the implementation of the Focus Newton Action Plan (the “Action Plan”).

BACKGROUND

On February 13, 2023, Council established the Focus Newton Task Force (the “Task Force”). The mandate of the Task Force was to collaborate with stakeholders and identify ways to rejuvenate, beautify, and enhance the Newton community in order to improve daily life for Newton’s residents and business community. The Task Force was established to:

1. Identify existing conditions of the Newton community that require focussed attention;
2. Prioritize opportunities to improve existing conditions in the Newton community; and
3. Develop and initiate action plans based on prioritized opportunities.

The Task Force was comprised of four members of Council; Councillor Bains, Councillor Elford, Councillor Kooner and Councillor Nagra and was supported City staff from across the organization.

Extensive public engagement took place in multiple locations throughout Newton between April and July 2023. The goal of the public engagement was for residents to provide the City with feedback on the priorities for enhancing Newton and consisted of an online survey and pop-up open houses at major community events. The public engagement was innovative, as it included opportunities to reach a wide range of community members who would not normally come to engagement open-houses. These pop-up open house events were followed by a key stakeholder session to review and receive feedback on the Action Plan.

Full engagement results were compiled in the Focus Newton Community Engagement Summary Report, which is attached to this report as Appendix “I”.

Upon completion of the public engagement phase, the Task Force directed staff to develop the Action Plan. The Action Plan identifies five key focus areas: Vibrant and Green; Clean and Safe; Programs and Events; Public Spaces and Amenities; and Active Transportation. Detailed actions are set out for each key focus area within the Action Plan. On March 27, 2024, Council endorsed the Action Plan, attached to this report as Appendix “II”.

DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Action Plan began in April 2024, with a focus on service level improvements and minor capital projects. Highlights include:

- Significant improvements were made to family-friendly programming and events in Newton, including new community picnics, movie nights, library programs, musical performances and other public space activations.
- Extensive expansion of service levels to address litter and garbage. Litter collection routes were expanded in size and frequency, dedicated garbage removal teams were added to problem park sites, and new garbage cans were added to streetscapes and facilities.
- Capital projects completed to improve public spaces for people included adding benches, covered picnic tables, washrooms, water fountains, and trees and horticultural feature gardens.
- A public engagement event was held in August 2024 to keep the public engaged in the progress being made by the Action Plan. The project team also launched an online map that includes pictures and locations of completed projects and programs implemented through the Action Plan. This map is accessible from the City’s Focus Newton webpage.

All enhancements that were completed are in addition to the regular delivery of services and programs in Newton. The Focus Newton Action Plan 2024 Update (attached as Appendix “III”) provides a comprehensive overview of all Focus Newton projects completed and new programs that were implemented in 2024.

CONCLUSION

Focus Newton is a groundbreaking initiative aimed at revitalizing public spaces and enhancing public life in Newton. This project involves collaboration across multiple departments, all working towards a shared objective. Efforts will continue in Newton to build on past successes, expand service delivery and programming, complete capital projects, and engage with the community.

Laurie Cavan
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Scott Neuman, P.Eng
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Surinder Bhogal
Chief Librarian
Surrey Libraries

Appendix "I": Focus Newton Community Engagement Summary

Appendix "II": Action Plan

Appendix "III": Focus Newton 2024 Achievements

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Community Engagement Summary Report

OCTOBER 2023

FOCUS NEWTON



Newton is a growing community with strong neighbourhood connections and local pride. The City of Surrey has launched Focus Newton—an initiative to enhance, beautify, and engage with the Newton community.



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Focusing on Newton

In February 2023 Mayor and Council initiated Focus Newton, an initiative to enhance, beautify and engage with the Newton community. In order to hear feedback from the community on where the City should focus its rejuvenation and enhancement efforts, a public engagement campaign was planned.

Public engagement for Focus Newton included 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. Informed by input from the community, the City of Surrey will develop a plan to guide actions over the next three years with the goal of beautifying and enhancing Newton.

Through Focus Newton, the City of Surrey will invest in Newton’s future—to improve and beautify Surrey’s most populated Town Centre.



May 2023

Project launch



June-August 2023

Community Engagement, surveys and open houses



October 2023

Community Engagement Summary Report



December 2023

Focus Newton Action Plan complete



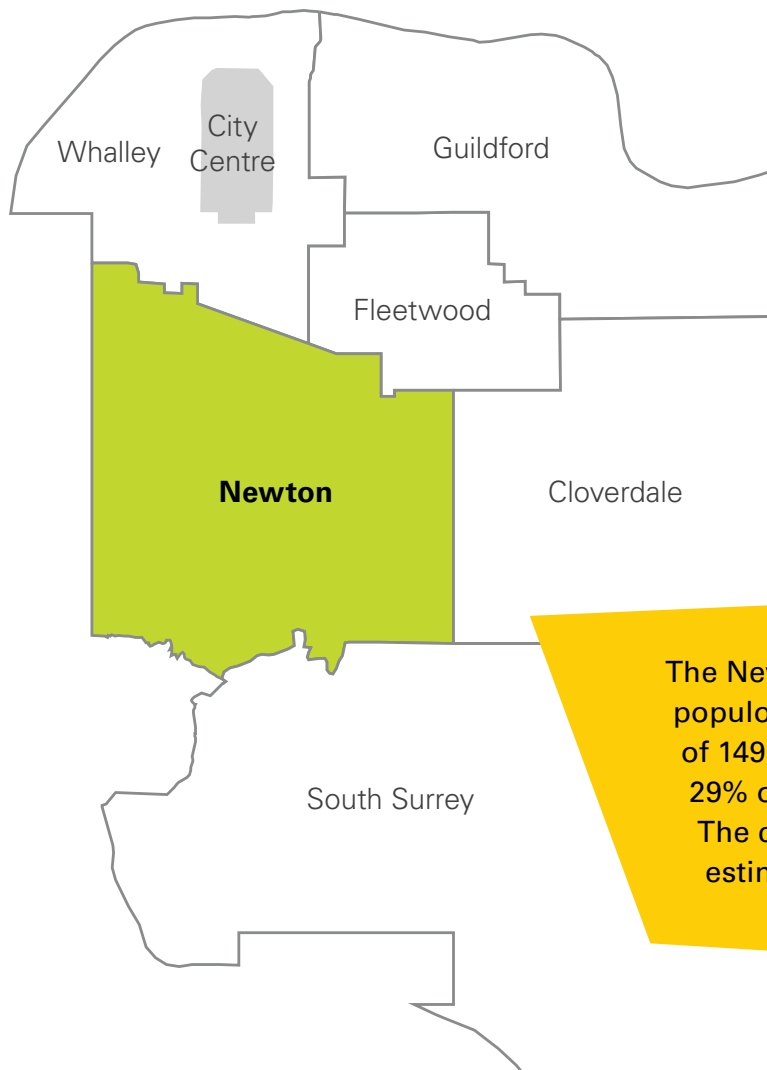
Newton in Context

The Newton area, like all other areas of Surrey and the Lower Mainland, is situated on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish people, including the Katzie, Kwantlen and Semiahmoo nations who have ancient and ongoing ties to this place.

This upland area of Surrey was once abundant with coniferous forest. As newcomer settlement began to take place in the late 19th century, logging and land clearing began to make room for farms, homes, and roads. Settlement increased considerably following the end of World War I. Settler farmers of the area were known as stump farmers, with homes, outbuildings, and crops built around and among the stumps which remained.

Numerous businesses opened in the vicinity of 72 Avenue and King George Boulevard, and gradually municipal services and amenities were established. Newton is still an economic centre in Surrey. Newton has Surrey's largest inventory of fully-serviced industrial and mixed employment lands, making it home to a variety of industrial sectors.

A culturally diverse community, Newton is home to the region's largest South Asian community and the heart of South Asian culture. Every year Newton hosts one of the largest Vaisakhi Parades outside of India, welcoming more than 500,000 people.



The Newton community is Surrey's most populous community, with a population of 149,040 people (accounting for 29% of Surrey's total population). The community is growing steadily, estimated at 12% annually.

2016 Census

Major Projects in Newton

The Focus Newton project coincides with several ongoing capital projects taking place to meet the growing needs of the Newton community.



Bear Creek Park Stadium

The City is building a new grandstand with seating for over 2,200 people, changerooms, public washrooms and an upgraded track.



Kabaddi Park

Two new rubberized volleyball courts and walking loop upgrades are now complete.



Newton Athletic Park

New synthetic turf fields and a walking track were recently completed. Additional upcoming amenities include a new field house and public washrooms.



Unwin Community Park Master Plan

A planning process for a new Master Plan for Unwin Park will commence in 2024.



Strawberry Hill Hall

The rebuilt Strawberry Hill Hall will provide multipurpose room space, cultural programming and 18 before and after school care spaces.



Whippletree Park

This new quarter-hectare neighbourhood park is located in South Newton near 62 Avenue and 128 Street.



Newton Community Centre

The Newton Community Centre will offer a state-of-the-art community hub for Newton residents of all ages to learn, exercise, and enjoy a fun and healthy environment. Recreation, childcare, culture, and library spaces will be advanced in the first phase of development. A master plan of the site has been developed that includes construction of a future aquatic facility.

Who We Connected With

42,421 Informed Residents

An informed resident is defined as an individual or group that has made at least one single visit to the project website, received a postcard, or engaged in the project through social media.

Ways residents were informed:

- 3,465** Website page views
- 37,491** Postcards mailed to Newton residents
- 136** Emails delivered to Newton residents
- 847** Newton-based CitySpeaks panel members invited
- 482** Social media engagements (through clicks, reactions, comments and shares)

2,019 Engaged Residents

An engaged resident is defined as an individual or group that has contributed to the project website, attended a pop-up event, connected through phone or email, or completed the survey (in person or online).

Ways residents were engaged:

- 1,314** Survey respondents
- 33** Mapping activity participants
- 681** Community event attendees

There were a variety of opportunities for people to get learn about Focus Newton and share their ideas. Three open houses, an online survey, and six survey outreach sessions were organized. The project was successful in reaching thousands of Newton residents.



Overview of Survey Demographics

As part of the online survey, demographic information was collected from the 1,314 respondents. However, it's important to note that this data does not account for the additional feedback provided by over 600 in-person participants at the three open house

Gender

- Female (51%)
- Male (48%)
- Non-binary and self-describing (1%)

Age

- 19 younger (3%)
- 20-29 (10%)
- 30-39 (19%)
- 40-49 (19%)
- 50-59 (17%)
- 60 or greater (30%)

Language

What language(s) do you speak?

English (94%)	Chinese languages (3.3%)
Punjabi (27%)	Tagalog (2.8%)
Hindi (15%)	Others combined (17%)
French (8.3%)	
Urdu (4.4%)	

Engagement Highlights



Open House at Newton Rec Centre

Drawing over 200 attendees, this open house offered interactive and informational boards, a mapping activity, lawn games, a library booth, a kids activity booth, a chalk talk wall and popcorn and refreshments.

Open House at T.E. Scott Community Picnic

With over 400 participants at this event, 150 participants provided feedback. This family-friendly neighbourhood picnic offered interactive and informational boards, a mapping activity, lawn games, a photo booth, a painting activity, a bouncy castle and food.

Open House at Miri Piri Tournament

With over 130 participants, this event offered interactive and informational boards, a mapping activity, lawn games, kids games and freebies and refreshments.

Survey and Outreach Sessions

In total, the survey received 1,314 online responses and ten printed responses. Six outreach sessions were held at sporting events, community events and business hubs.

What We Heard Through Engagement





Engagement Results Overview

Many people expressed pride in Newton and also shared their insights on how spaces in the community could be enhanced. 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
- Improved streets to reduce congestion and enhance pedestrian safety
- Better active transportation infrastructure to prioritize transit and cycling
- More outdoor spaces, cafes, and restaurants in the neighbourhood where they can gather socially

Participants were asked to share what words came to mind when thinking about Newton. Positively, Newton was described often as “*diverse*” and “*busy*”. Unfortunately, “*dirty*” was a word that was also mentioned.

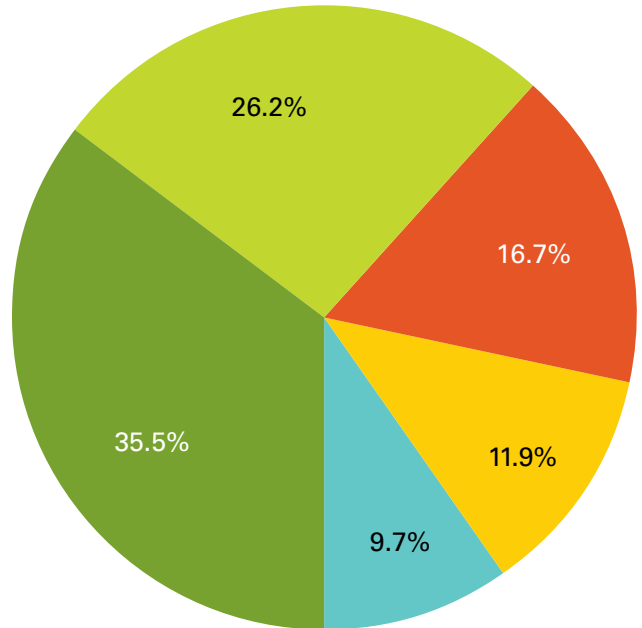
Understanding Newton

Finding Connection

Survey respondents shared that they find connection at the following locations. Less than 1% of total respondents noted that they don't feel connected within their communities.

- Park
- Place of worship
- Recreation centre
- Other*
- Library

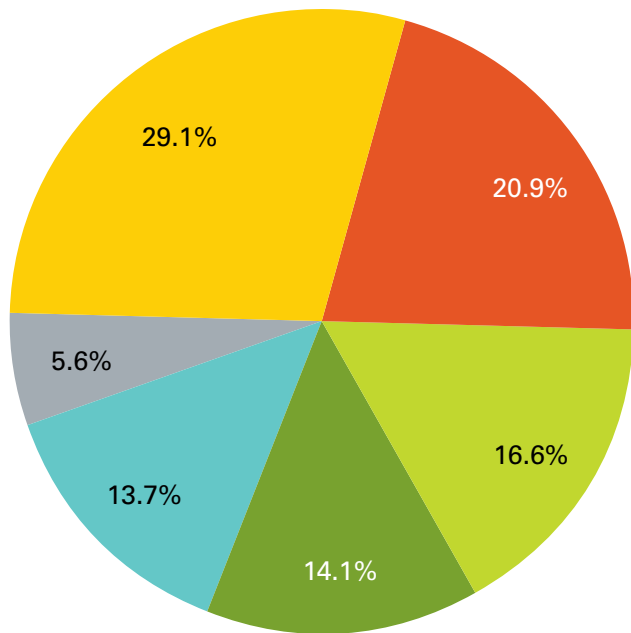
*Other responses included local cafes, neighbourhood events and public spaces.



Survey respondents were asked how they felt when spending time out and about in Newton—for example in public spaces or between errands. An almost even number felt a sense of belonging as those who did not. This indicates a need to improve public spaces to create a sense of belonging and connection for residents.

Neighbourhood Pride

Survey respondents shared that they are proud of the following features of their neighbourhood.

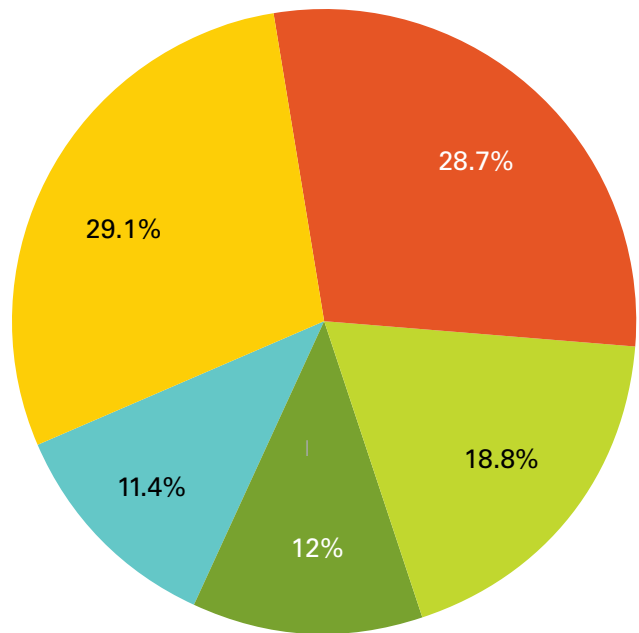


- Parks
- Open spaces
- Neighbours
- Celebrations and events
- Civic facilities
- Other*

*Other responses included local businesses, active transportation routes and places of worship.

Cleanliness and Care

A majority of respondents (over two thirds) do not feel that Newton is clean. When asked about the biggest cleanliness issues in Newton, people were most concerned about:



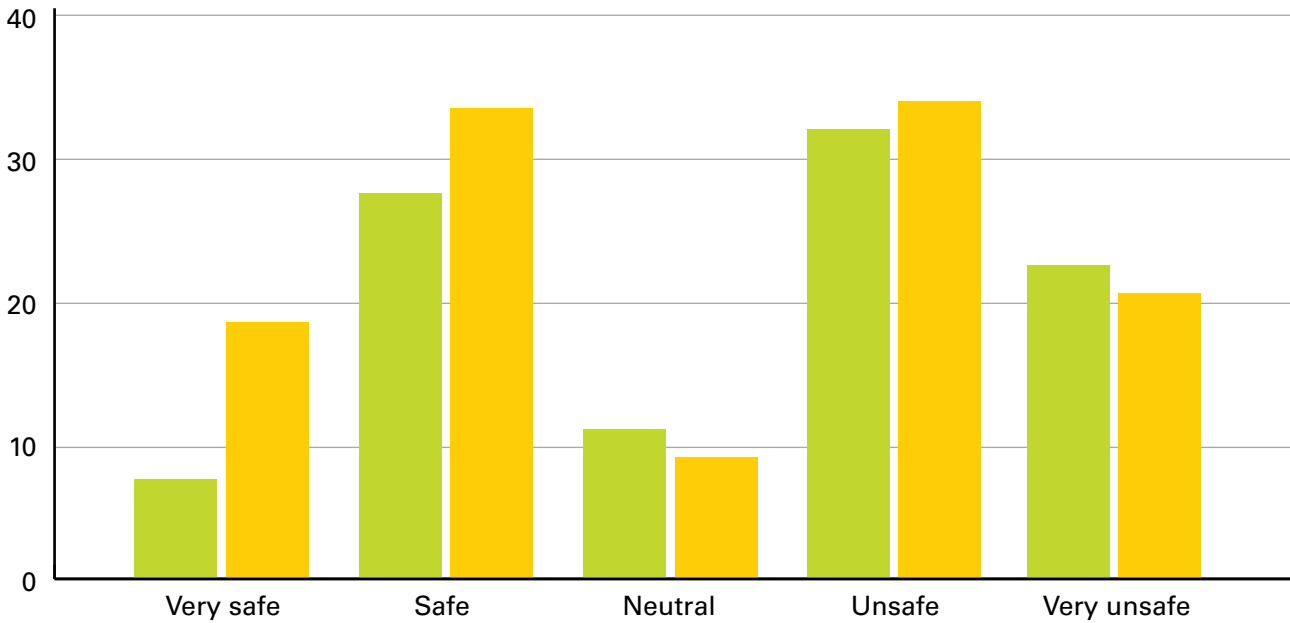
- Illegal dumping
- General litter on streets and sidewalks
- Unsightly private property
- Graffiti and tagging
- Destruction of property

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.

Feeling Safe

Overall, a similar number reported feeling unsafe as those who felt safe when walking alone in Newton. However, women, non-binary, and people who self-described their gender reported feeling less safe than the average male.

■ Women, non-binary and self-describing ■ Men

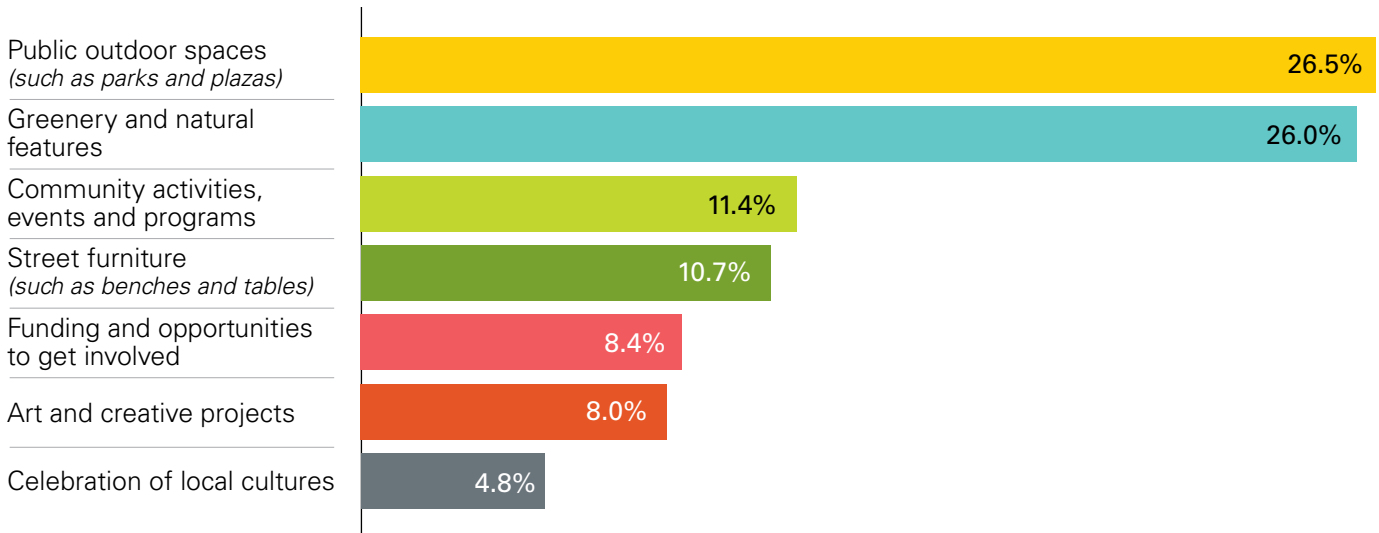




Priority Improvements

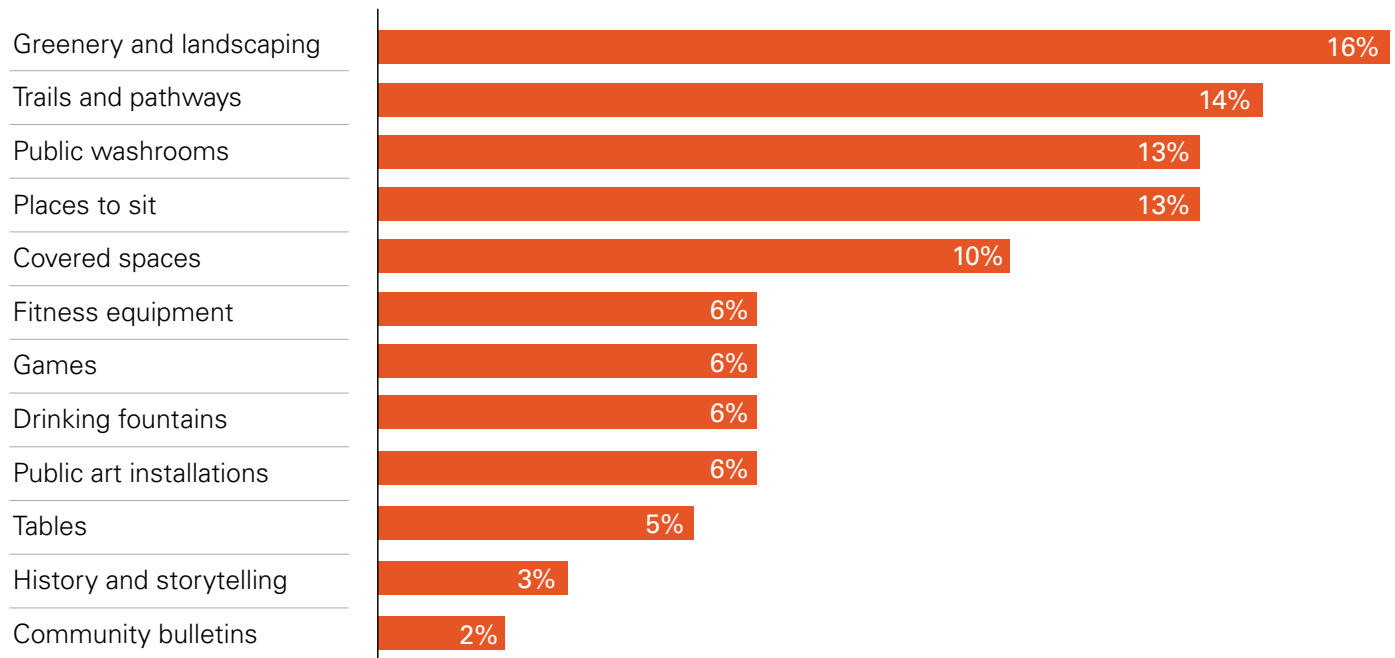
We wanted to find out the community's priorities in order to know which changes would have the most positive impact in Newton. In particular, we asked about improvements at parks and open spaces, on streets and sidewalks, and at events and activities. These findings are detailed on the following pages.

Survey respondents shared that they would like to see more:



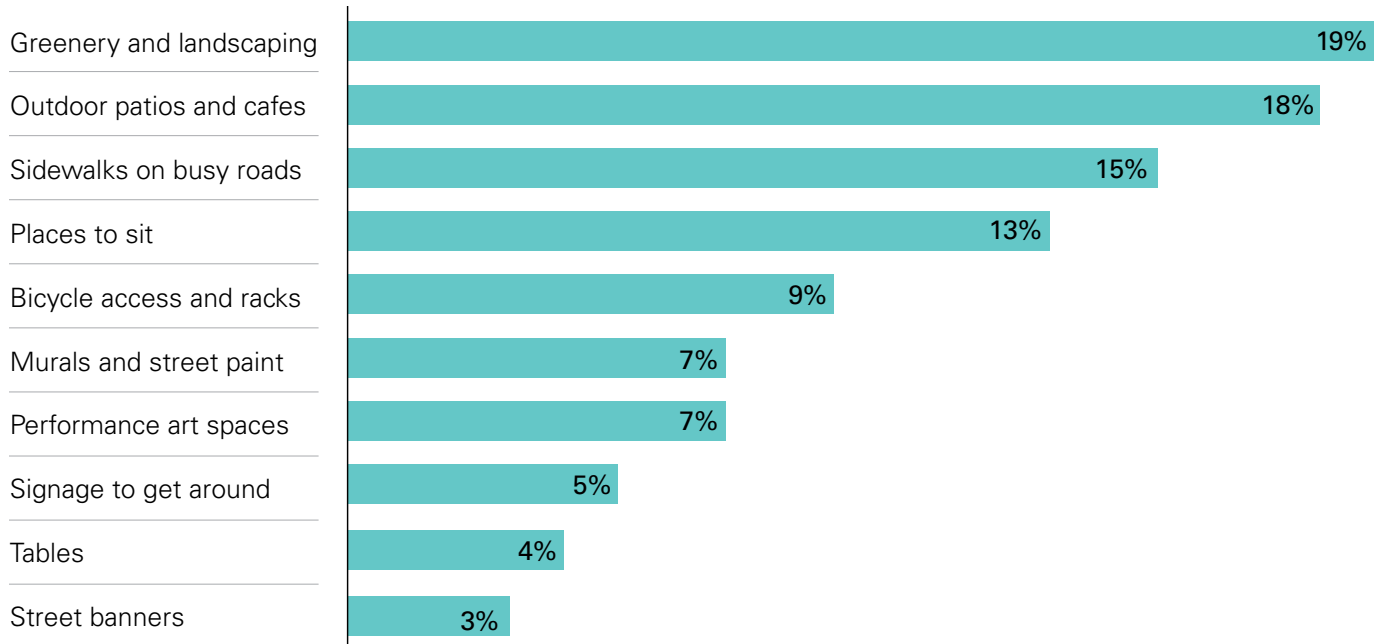
At Parks in Newton

Respondents shared what additions they would like to see at parks in Newton. Priorities identified include: greenery and landscaping, walking trails and pathways and various infrastructure to support a diverse range of people using parks. Parks were identified as important community spaces for families and friends to meet and gather. Other open ended survey responses shared the need for garbage cans and litter cleaning.



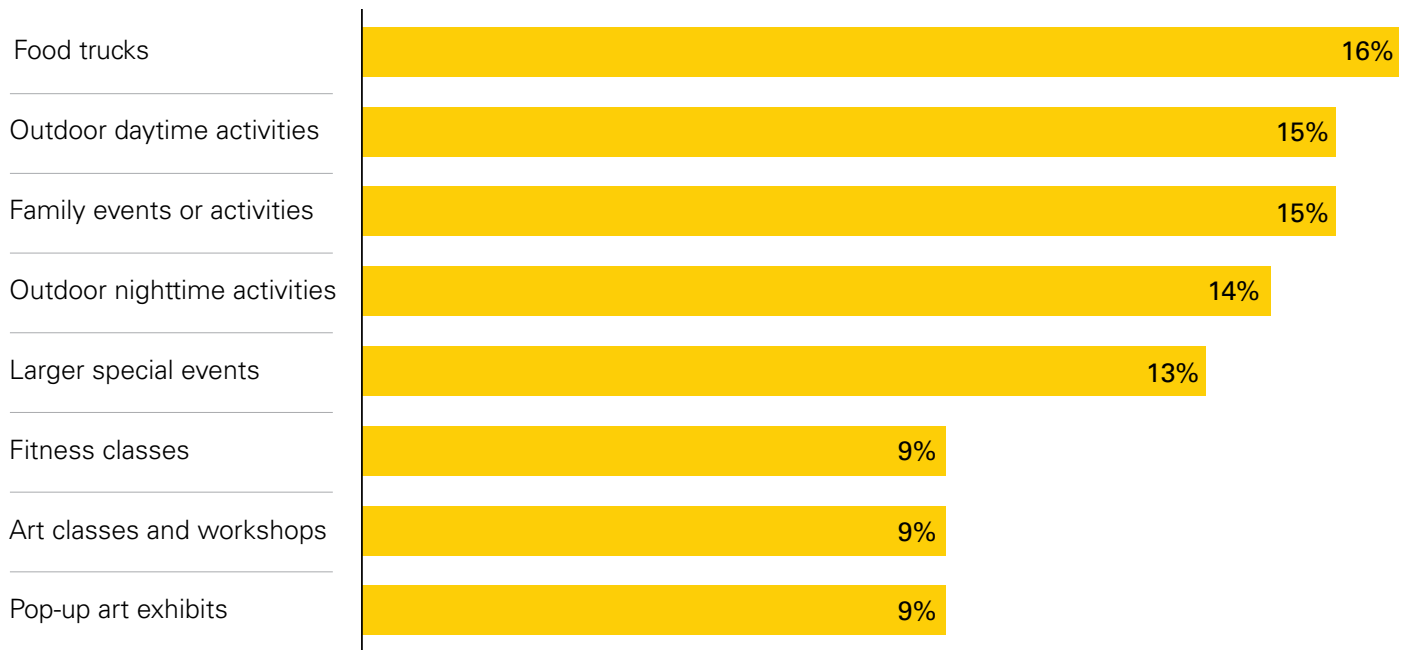
On Streets and Sidewalks in Newton

Respondents shared what improvements they would like to see along streets and sidewalks in Newton. Responses indicated a desire for vibrant public spaces with street-level activities, and the infrastructure to support that. Other open ended survey responses noted better lighting and larger pedestrian spaces, like plazas.



Events and Activities in Newton

Respondents shared what types of events and activities they'd like to attend in Newton. Other open ended survey responses expressed support for music, shows and festivals (for entertainment and local food). Respondents also noted cleanliness and safety.



Public Art

The types of art that respondents indicated they most wanted to see in public spaces included art that involves light or water, art on plaza and sidewalk surfaces, discoverable art along paths, Indigenous art, and street banners.

Youth Voice (under 19)

Youth (under 19) in Newton would like to see more: public outdoor spaces; art and creative projects; community activities, events and programs; and greenery and natural features.

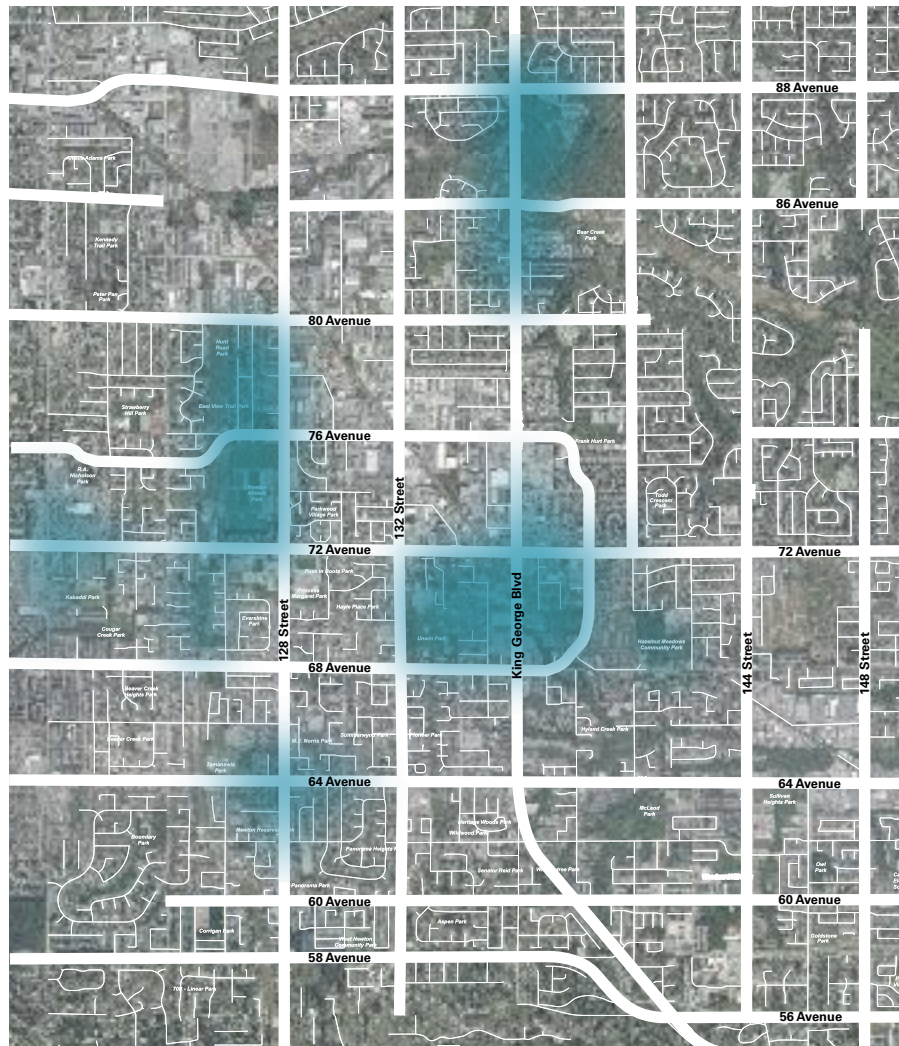
Grant Program

Survey respondents were asked if they would be interested in participating in a neighbourhood grant program to lead a creative, community oriented project. One third of respondents (33%) expressed interest in such a program.



Key Newton Locations

Survey respondents and open house participants identified the top locations in Newton where they love to spend time or that needed improvements. This feedback on important areas for Newton residents will be combined with other data sources (such as population density and land use designations) to help prioritize focus areas for the Action Plan.



Next Steps

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Focus Newton public engagement! Input from the community will help guide the Focus Newton Action Plan as it is developed in Fall 2023. The Action Plan will detail short and mid term priorities to help rejuvenate, beautify, and enhance Newton. The Action Plan will also explore the role of the City of Surrey in supporting the community and identify opportunities for residents who are eager to help enhance Newton.

The City of Surrey's Public Engagement Strategy is modeled after the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) guidelines and best practices.



How to Stay Involved
For update and more info on the engagement that took place, please visit surrey.ca/focusnewton.

115780 / 2023



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 ǵíćəý (Katzie) land based First Nations.





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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

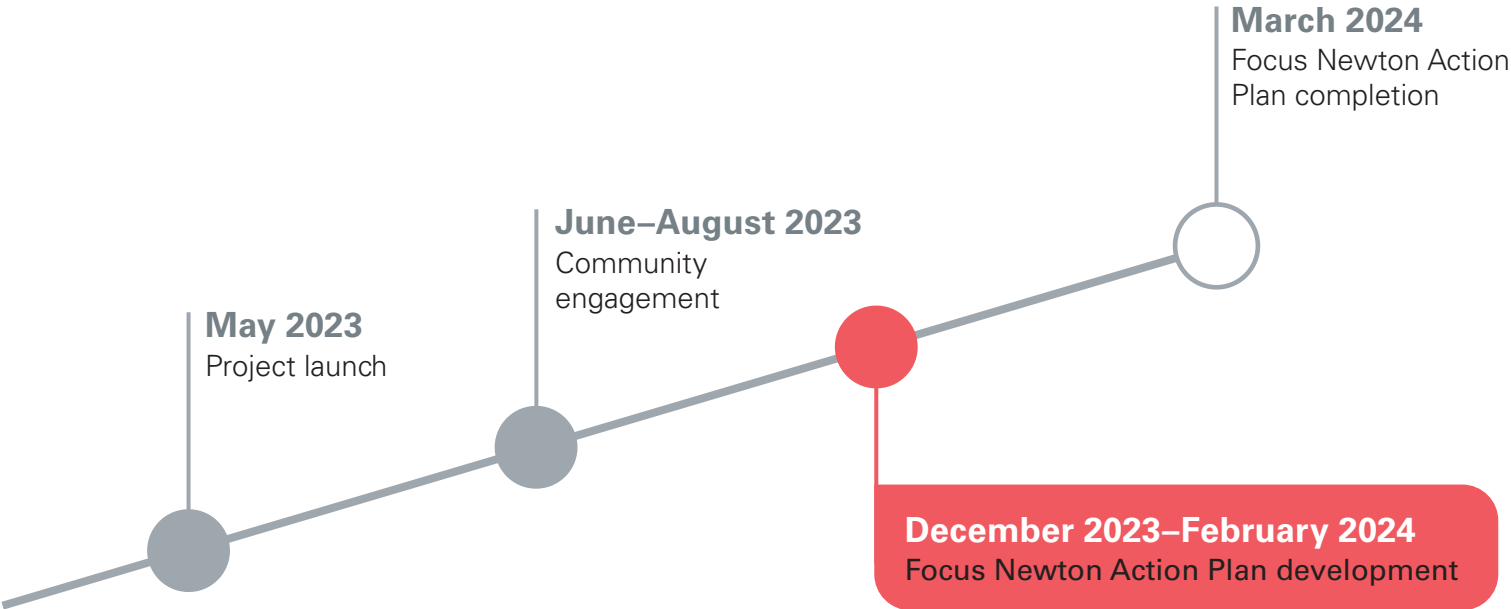


About Focus Newton

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.



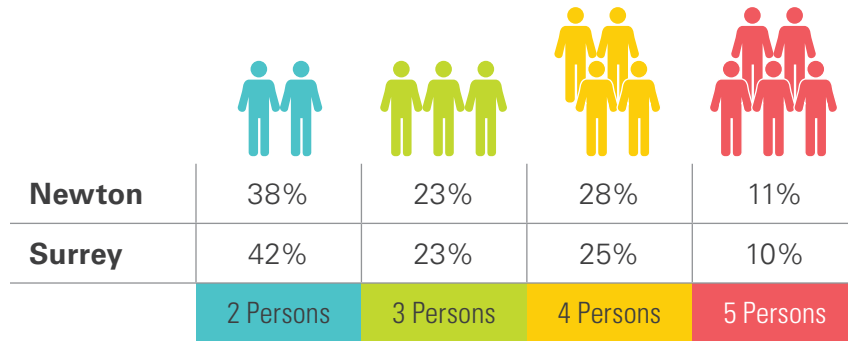
About Newton

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%

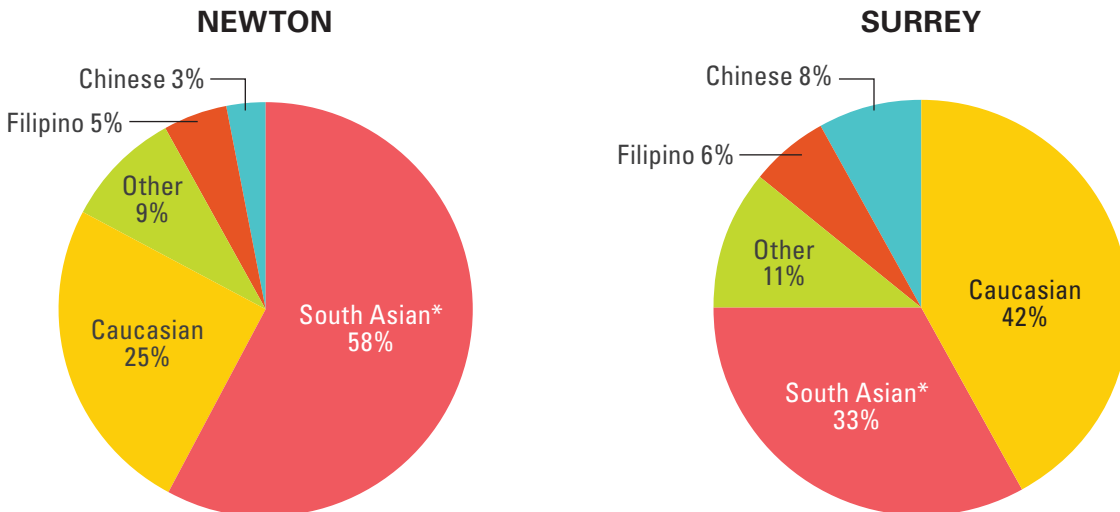
Family Size

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.

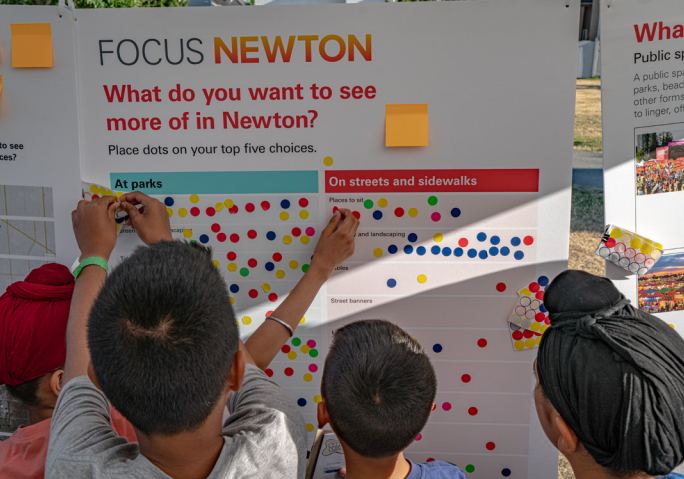
Who We Heard From

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.



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Tell us about important places
in Newton.

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What do you want to see
more of in Newton?
Place dots on your top five choices.

What is public space?
Public spaces are for everyone.

Public spaces are everywhere that is free to enjoy and open to the public. Public spaces can be
parks, playgrounds, recreational areas, marketplaces, squares, and
streets and sidewalks. Public spaces can be lively when they attract people
to enjoy them outdoors.



On streets and sidewalks

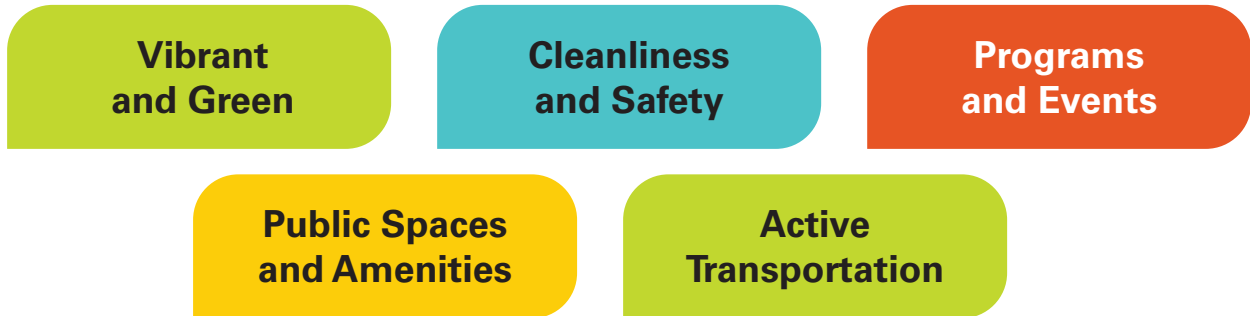


... beautifying

... sharing shared spaces to
... most foundational human
... 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:

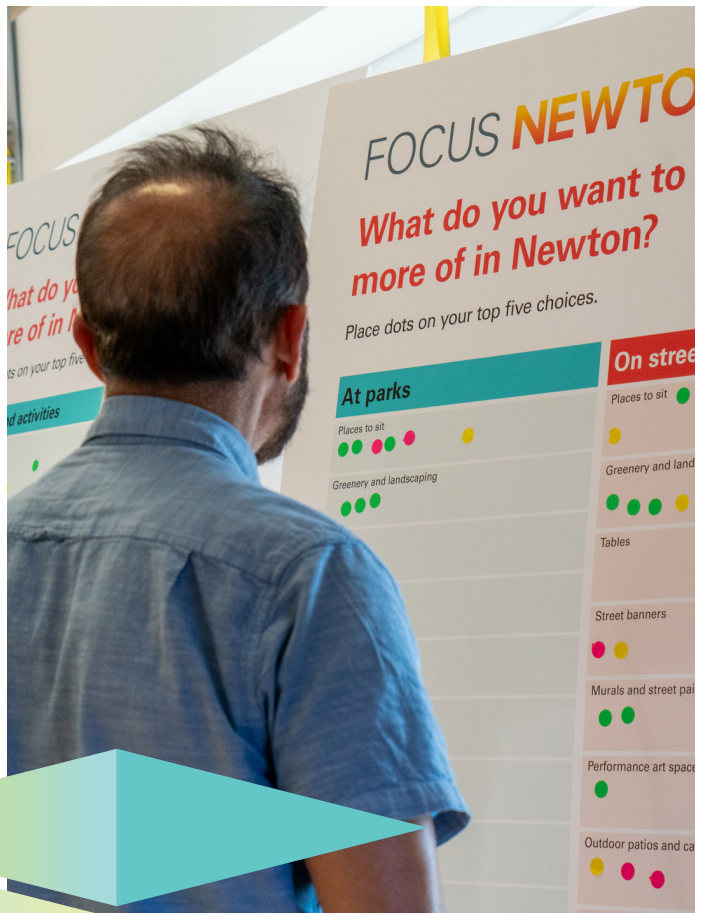
- **Strategic locations:** Being strategic with the location of each of the actions, in some cases clustering actions for greater impact and in other cases implementing actions within key areas of interest.
- **Building on capital projects:** The City can continue to build on ongoing and upcoming capital 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.





Focus Newton 2024 Achievements

This list is a compilation of projects completed in 2024 supported through Action Plan funding.

Focus 1: Vibrant and Green

This focus area responds to feedback received from residents for improvements to trees, greenery, vibrancy and excitement in public spaces. Focus Newton actions in 2024 that enhance landscaping and greenery, create art and placemaking opportunities, and expand seasonal and decorative lighting in the community are included below.

Enhance Landscaping and Greenery

- Median horticulture major renewal at King George Blvd and 72 Avenue;
- New Feature Garden at Newton Athletic Park and Unwin Park;
- Major improvement to landscaping at Tamanawis Park;
- Phase 1 of Serpentine Greenway Enhancement, replacing fencing at four major intersections; and
- Bulb beautification pilot project.

Create Art and Placemaking Opportunities

- Street Banner hardware installed on 128 Street between 76 Ave and 84 Ave; and
- Five new utility boxes wrapped in Newton.

Expand Seasonal and Decorative Lighting

- New decorative lighting on street poles installed on 128 Street between 76 Ave and 84 Ave.

Focus 2: Cleanliness and Safety

This focus area responds to feedback received from residents for improvements to Newton streets and parks in order to be cleaner and safer. Focus Newton actions in 2024 that increase safety in public places and increase cleaning and litter removal services in the community are included below.

Increase Safety in Public Places

- Park ambassadors increased in Unwin Park;
- Park ambassador program increased in Newton Athletic Park; and
- Park ambassador program increased in Bear Creek Park.

Increase Cleaning and Litter Removal Services

- Litter collection routes on streets were increased by 28 kilometres;
- Frequency of litter collection routes increased to two times per week;
- Increased illegal dumping cleanups in Newton;
- Weekly litter picking and large item collection at 35 park sites that have historic issues with garbage (July to November);

- 20 new solar compactor garbage cans installed in three areas of Newton;
- Six Additional Natural Area Clean Ups at 25 park sites in Newton;
- Two Clean up Blitzes where 3,050 illegal dumped items and 2,280 bags of litter were collected, and graffiti removed at 296 locations; and
- Garbage bin upgrade at Newton Library to increase capacity and function.

Focus 3: Programs and Events

This focus area responds to feedback received from residents for improvements to family friendly-friendly events, more activities in public, and programming to bring people together. Focus Newton actions in 2024 that increase family friendly activities, engage and support international students and foster social connection through programs are listed below.

Increase Family Friendly Activities

- The Sounds of Summer program expanded to Newton with two events;
- Six new community picnics were organized for Newton parks;
- Outdoor movie nights were hosted at three parks (Unwin, TE Scott, Newton Athletic);
- Canada Soccer Nationals hosted at Newton Athletic Park included a community event activation to provide programming for local community;
- Free Diwali family event at Newton Recreation Centre;
- Outdoor evening community programming at Newton Recreation Centre on Wednesday nights;
- Community Art program expansion leading to eight new Community Art and Heritage events;
- Nine new public music performances;
- New Punjabi, Cantonese and Tigrinya story times at Newton and Strawberry Hill libraries; and
- Ping Pong table installed outside Newton Recreation Centre.

Engage and Support International Students

- Focus groups and engagement activities with community stakeholders and international students;
- International student job fair;
- English conversation circle programs for international students at Newton and Strawberry Hill libraries;
- Two introduction workshops to recreation opportunities for international students; and
- Speaker and workshop series on issues of key importance to international students.

Foster Social Connection Through Programs

- New English conversation circles in Newton and Strawberry Hill libraries;
- New Diwali celebration programming at Newton and Strawberry Hill libraries; and
- Extra technology training classes at Newton and Strawberry Hill libraries.

Focus 4: Public Space and Amenities

This focus area responds to feedback received from residents for improvements to amenities to support being out in public, as well as more places to sit and gather. Focus Newton actions in 2024 that increase places to sit and gather and support the active use of public spaces are listed below.

Provide Places to Sit and Gather

- New pop-up temporary plaza next to Newton bus loop;
- New picnic shelters at West Newton Community Park, Nichol Estates Park, and Strawberry Hill Park; and
- New benches at Panorama Village Park and Parkwood Village Park.

Provide Amenities to Support Public Spaces

- New washrooms installed in M.J. Norris Park and Cougar Creek Park; and
- New drinking water fountain added to Kabaddi Park, Hazelnut Meadows Park, Newton Athletic Park and Sullivan Park.

Focus 5: Active Transportation

This focus area responds to feedback received from residents for improvements to sidewalks, crosswalks, bike routes and trail networks in Newton. Focus Newton Actions in 2024 that enhance walking and cycling routes are listed below.

Enhance Walking and Cycling routes

- Expansion of walking trails in Joe Brown Park, Nichol Estates Park and Bear Creek Park;
- New curb letdown and crosswalks at eight locations throughout Newton; and
- Improved bike access to Serpentine Greenway at select locations.