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ESTABLISHED NEIGHBOURHOODS COMPATIBILITY

PRESERVING CHARACTER

Rachael Williams

In an effort to ensure infill developments do not jeopardize the character of established residential neighbourhoods, the **Town of Newmarket** is moving ahead with an established neighbourhoods compatibility study to identify and protect community character through regulation.

At Newmarket's September 23 committee of the whole meeting, **SvN Architects + Planners** business development director and senior planner **Blair Scorgie** presented the findings of an established neighbourhoods background study initiated by the town in January. The purpose of the study is to ensure that as residential trends in Newmarket shift from suburban growth to urban intensification and redevelopment, there is compatibility between properties and land uses.

"Newmarket is growing, Newmarket is evolving. It's beginning to intensify. We're at the point where we've exhausted outward growth potential, and we're now looking at regenerating and re-intensifying the existing built-up area of the town itself," said Scorgie.

While growth has been directed to lands along the Davis Drive and Yonge Street corridors, the existing GO station on the north side of Davis Drive East, and the future GO station on Mulock Drive, the town's established neighbourhoods are also experiencing growth in the form of construction of new lots and dwellings.

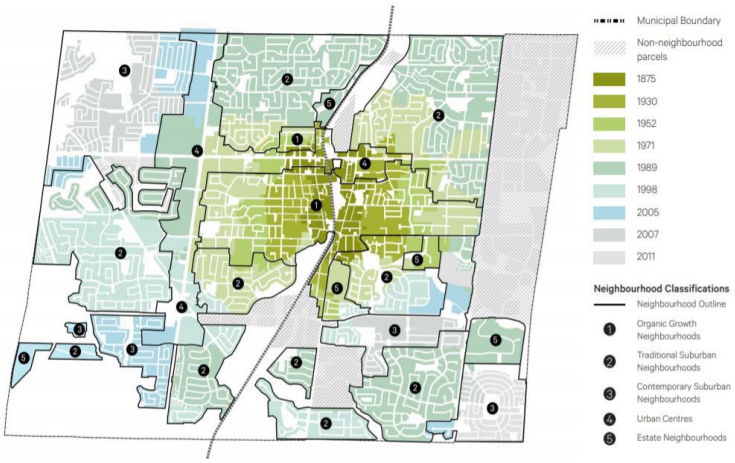
"Neighbourhoods, they change in a number of different ways. We are seeing demolition of existing dwellings and replacement dwellings going up. We're seeing additions, small and large, to existing homes. We're also seeing some lot severances through the committee of adjustment applications," said Town of Newmarket senior planner **Dave Ruggle**.

While these infill development projects can be done tastefully in a way that preserves the character of the area, there have been some approved applications where the built form looks vastly different than the surrounding neighbourhood. This has served as the impetus for the town moving ahead with an established neighbourhoods compatibility study.

As part of the background study, SvN has identified five neighbourhood classifications: organic neighbourhoods, traditional suburban neighbourhoods, contemporary suburban neighbourhoods, estate neighbourhoods and urban centres. The study will focus on the first three, as urban centres are subject to existing secondary plans and estate neighbourhoods are not anticipated to change.

"When we're discussing neighbourhood character, we're

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Map of neighbourhood classifications, showing approximate time periods when these neighbourhoods were built, as defined in Newmarket's Established Neighbourhoods Compatibility Study background report.

SOURCE: SVN ARCHITECTS + PLANNERS

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looking at both the public and the private realm. So for the public realm, there's things such as the street width, whether there's sidewalks on both sides or maybe none at all, boulevard trees. Those are all sort of the public realm aspects of character that we look at. In the private realm, we're looking at characteristics such as lot dimensions, setbacks and building heights, as well as things like the way parking is handled, private landscaping on lots," said Ruggle.

Organic neighbourhoods were developed prior to the 1940s and possess a traditional, rigid 19th century grid system comprised of short intersection blocks, narrow roads and extensive tree canopy. In organic neighbourhoods, building heights vary from one to two storeys, and building materials are predominantly solid masonry or wood cladding.

Traditional suburban neighbourhoods developed between the 1940s and 1990s and have a curvilinear street pattern with long blocks, wide roads and more pie-shaped lots. Building heights vary from one to two storeys, and masonry veneer, vinyl or stucco cladding are the most common building materials.

Contemporary suburban neighbourhoods developed following the 1990s, with a modified street pattern, short blocks, minimal tree canopy and smaller lot sizes. Building heights are consistently two storeys, with masonry veneer or vinyl cladding used for the

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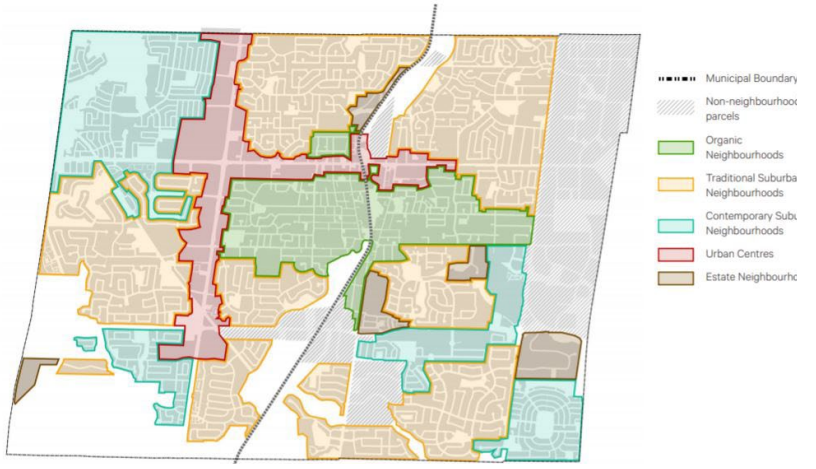
Map showing the locations of five neighbourhood classifications that will be used to form the Established Neighbourhoods Compatibility Study.

Rendering of a "contemporary suburban neighbourhood", which developed after the 1990s, with a modified grid street pattern, short blocks and small to moderate rectangular and pie-shaped lots.

Rendering of a "traditional suburban neighbourhood", which developed between the 1940s and 1990s, with curvilinear street patterns and moderate to large rectangular and pie-shaped lots.

Rendering of an "organic growth neighbourhood", which developed prior to the 1940s, with traditional street grid patterns and rectangular lots with varied lot dimensions.

SOURCE FOR ALL: SVN ARCHITECTS + PLANNERS









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building material.

Building Industry and Land Development Association policy and government relations planner **Carmina Tupe** told *NRU* that many municipalities are pursuing policies to maintain the character of neighbourhoods.

"More often than not, what we see is resistance to a provincially-mandated intensification or overly complex, rigid policies put in place that make it more difficult to bring in gentle forms of density. Those are the back-to-back [townhomes], the stacked units, the laneway housing and secondary suites – much needed forms of missing middle-income housing," she said.

One of the recommendations that is being contemplated by the town is the use of cultural heritage landscapes in identified areas under the Ontario Heritage Act.

"Our members' experience finds that this tool tends to be used as a way to stifle development," she said.

Rose Corporation chief executive officer **Sam Reisman**, who has completed a number of infill and high-density residential projects in Newmarket, told *NRU* he has had positive experiences with the town's current regulatory framework and credits the town for bringing awareness to its residents about what to expect in a municipality experiencing significant growth and development.

"When you're doing infill, by its very nature you're getting a lot of resistance from the community…Those are neighbourhood challenges and those are political challenges," said Reisman.

"It is incumbent on the town to set hard rules, clear direction that's consistent with the province, instead of having us have to come in there and take on that burden, so everybody gets upset with us because we're recommending what good policy and good planning dictates and what good economics dictates."

Ruggle said it is too early to determine the extent of the changes to the town's zoning by-laws, but noted there will be a strengthening of compatibility policies that will be included in the Official Plan.

The study is expected to be completed in early 2020, with draft zoning by-law amendments and Official Plan Amendments to be presented to council upon completion. An interim control by-law is currently in place in these residential neighbourhoods to restrict significant infill development projects. Ruggle said the interim control by-law, which has been in place since January, might have to be extended to accommodate the duration of the study period.

CLARIFICATION

Several items on the agenda for Mississauga Planning & Development Committee's September 16 meeting were not considered due to a power outage that cut the meeting short. The items not considered include development applications at 1745-1775 Thorny-Brae Place, 60 Bristol Road East, 55 Port Street East and 5510 Mavis Road.

