

2025

 Stouffville

# *Year in Review*

A YEAR OF GROWTH AND CELEBRATION

## **Hear ye, hear ye!**

New Town Crier Brian Mangubat brings a bold new voice to Stouffville.

### **Hometown Pride**

A look at art, investments, and moments shaping 2025

### **Aspen Parkette**

Turning construction into connection, joy, and memories

### **Powered by Heart**

Celebrating staff who make Stouffville thrive



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## Year in Review Team

Editor-in-Chief	Staff Writers	Cover Photography
Cassandra Papas	Cassandra Papas	Sarah Amelia
	Michaela Ray	
Graphic Design	Hayley Langdale	
Kira Hassard	Ruby Vasanthan	
Felicia Guan	Glenn Jackson	
	Alyssa Gee	



## Message from Stouffville CAO Sunny Bains

As we wrap up another successful year, it's a great moment to reflect on everything we've accomplished together, and to look ahead at where we're going next. 2025 has been a year of progress, momentum, and meaningful connection with our community.

I'm proud to work alongside such a dedicated team of professionals who care deeply about delivering the best possible services to our residents, businesses, and visitors. Together, we've pushed forward on key priorities while laying strong foundations for what's to come.

Some standout moments from this year include:

- Launching our first-ever community satisfaction survey to better understand what matters most to residents (see page 3).
- Teaming up with the Strawberry Festival to help make another great year for this beloved tradition.
- Revitalizing our sense of local pride with public art, downtown projects, a refreshed Discover Stouffville brand, and events like the Sounds Like Home concert series.
- Opening new neighbourhood parks, Aspen Parkette and Sugar Maple Park – giving families more places to gather and enjoy the outdoors (see page 6).
- Earning recognition as one of Canadian HR Reporter's Best Companies to Work for and receiving the Employer of Choice Award (see page 31).
- Hosting our first Public Works Week Open House, giving residents a behind-the-scenes look at the essential services that keep Stouffville running smoothly.

For a deeper look at our priorities, I encourage you to explore our 2022–2026 Strategic Plan. It outlines the goals and actions guiding our efforts this Council term and will continue to shape our path forward.

Looking ahead to 2026, I'm excited about the opportunities on the horizon. There's no question that challenges will arise, but I have every confidence in our ability to meet them head-on; together. I look forward to another year of progress, partnership, and community-building.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful and restful holiday season.

# Listening to Our Community

## What You Told Us in 2025



by Michaela Ray

## This spring, over 600 residents took part in the Town of Stouffville's largest-ever Resident Satisfaction Survey.

The goal was clear: find out what matters most to the people who live and work here and use that feedback to help shape our shared future.

The results are in, and they tell a hopeful story: Stouffville is a town where people feel proud, safe, and connected.

## Rooted in Pride

Nearly 87% of residents rated their quality of life positively, with a Net Satisfaction Score of 56.08, well above average. A telling stat: 63% of respondents have been here for more than a decade, bringing strong local pride and long-term perspective.

What residents love most:

- Small-town charm and friendly neighbourhoods
- Access to parks, trails, and nature
- A strong sense of safety
- Family-friendly amenities
- Convenient services and commuting access

**“What I love most about living in Stouffville is its remarkable blend of natural beauty, community spirit, and convenient amenities... It's a place where you can build a fulfilling life.”**

– Survey Respondent

## Where We Shine

Residents gave top marks to the Town's day-to-day services, especially in areas that impact quality of life:

- Emergency Services & Fire Education
- Town Facility Maintenance
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Library Services
- Events and Community Programming
- Waste Collection



## Feeling Safe, Feeling at Home

Safety is a cornerstone of Stouffville's identity. 91% of residents said they feel safe in their neighbourhoods, with 73% believing safety has improved or remained stable in recent years. This sense of security is one reason families continue to choose Stouffville.

## Staying Connected

Over 76% of respondents were satisfied with opportunities to engage in local decisions, even if not everyone attends council meetings.

Top ways residents stay informed during Council:

- “Council Corners” in *On the Road*
- Town website
- Council agendas, minutes & summaries
- Email updates

## Room for Growth

While there's a lot to celebrate, residents voiced clear priorities:

- Traffic & road conditions
- Maintaining small-town character amid growth
- Visible policing & safety enforcement
- Affordable housing & cost of living
- More amenities & entertainment
- Downtown revitalization

Some also shared concerns about communication around planning and growth, highlighting the need for clearer engagement moving forward.

— Did you know? —

**63% of residents** have lived in Stouffville for 10+ years



Emergency Services and Parks scored over **90% satisfaction**

The Town website is the **#1 source for updates**

## Looking Ahead

This year's survey provides a strong foundation for future planning. As we move into 2026, the Town remains committed to listening, learning, and delivering the high-quality services that help Stouffville thrive, while preserving the charm that makes it feel like home. 🏡



# Mayor Iain Lovatt's Year-End Message: *Celebrating Stouffville's Successes*



Mayor Lovatt on a future trail link in Rouge National Park. The new connection will unite Park Drive's multi-use trail with the Stouffville-Rouge Trail system, improving access and connectivity across town.

**As 2025 draws to a close, I'm excited to share highlights from a remarkable year in Whitchurch-Stouffville.** With just one year left in this council term, it's a great time to reflect on what we've accomplished together and look ahead to the future.

## Planning for Our Future

This year marked a major milestone with provincial approval of our new Official Plan – the first update in 20 years! This plan will guide how our town grows over the next decade, making room for all types of housing, from affordable

homes to options for families and seniors. Council's unanimous support ensures we're building a community that welcomes everyone. The Official Plan is more than a document – it's a vision for Stouffville's future, balancing growth with the preservation of our unique character and green spaces. We're committed to supporting a range of housing options, including Additional Residential Units (ARUs), the “missing middle,” and affordable housing, so that everyone can find a place to call home.

## New Parks and Recreation

We celebrated the opening of the multi-purpose trail in Memorial Park at our first Mayor & Council New Year's Levee. It's wonderful to see so many residents enjoying this new space for walking, skating, and gathering with friends

and family. Sugar Maple Park also opened this summer, quickly becoming a favourite spot with accessible play structures and courts for tennis and pickleball. These new amenities reflect our ongoing commitment to creating inclusive spaces where everyone can stay active and connected.

After overcoming some early challenges, construction is now underway on the Ballantrae Multi-Sport Complex, with foundation permits issued this fall. Once completed, this facility will offer a variety of sports and recreational programs for residents of all ages including a FIFA turf soccer pitch, multiple pickleball courts, NBA basketball courts, padel courts and more. We're excited to see how this investment will enrich our community's quality of life for years to come.

## Keeping Our Streets Safe

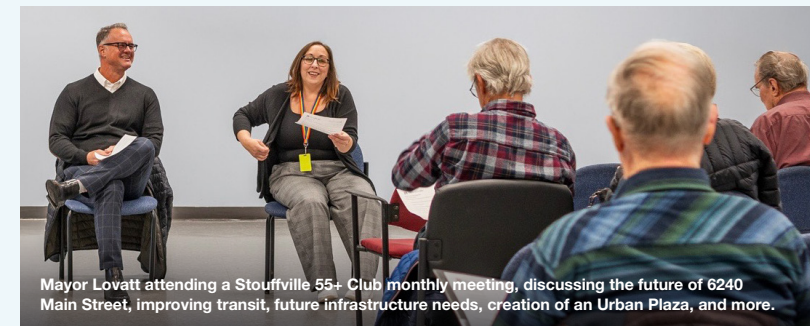
Street safety remains a top priority. Although the Province removed Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) last month, we're hopeful that new provincial funding will help us add traffic calming measures to keep our roads safe for all. We know that safe streets are essential for families, pedestrians, and cyclists, and we will continue to advocate for and fund solutions that protect everyone in our town.

## Award-Winning Community Events

Stouffville's community spirit shone brightly this year! Our team delivered internationally recognized events, earning several awards at the 2025 IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Awards:

- **Gold – Best Sponsor Activation:** Ribfest presented by Green Infrastructure Partners
- **Gold – Best Parade:** Stouffville Santa Claus Parade
- **Gold – Best Overall Entertainment Program:** Ribfest
- **Gold – Best Event/Program to Benefit a Cause:** Stouffville Main Street 5K and Kids 1K Dash benefiting Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation
- **Silver – Best On-Site Décor:** Stouffville Holiday Market – Civic Square Décor
- **Bronze – Best New Festival or Event:** Symphony Under the Stars

These events brought our community together, celebrated local talent, and supported important causes. I want to thank all the volunteers, sponsors, and staff who made these successes possible. Your dedication and enthusiasm are what make Stouffville such a vibrant place to live.



Mayor Lovatt attending a Stouffville 55+ Club monthly meeting, discussing the future of 6240 Main Street, improving transit, future infrastructure needs, creation of an Urban Plaza, and more.



**In the Loop  
with Lovatt**

Stay connected with Mayor Lovatt for the latest updates, community news, and initiatives—follow [@iainlovattws](#) on social and subscribe to the Mayor's Monthly newsletter at [lovatt.ca!](#)



Mayor Lovatt and Ribfest performer Sully Burrows paused for a photo following Burrows' performance at this year's event.

## Stouffville: A Great Place to Live and Work

This year, Stouffville climbed 66 spots in The Globe and Mail's rankings, now standing as the 13th most livable city in Canada, the 2nd most desirable place to live in Ontario, and the #1 most livable community in York Region. These achievements reflect our ongoing efforts to create a welcoming, dynamic, and sustainable town.

We also received two Best Places to Work awards: recognition from Human Resources Director Canada and the Canadian HR Reporter: Employer of Choice 2025 Award. These honours reflect our commitment to a supportive, inclusive, and healthy workplace. We believe that happy, engaged staff are the foundation of excellent public service, and we will continue to invest in our people.

## Looking Ahead

As we move into the final year of this council term, our focus remains on listening to residents, responding to your needs, and building on our successes. We encourage everyone to get involved – attend town events, share your ideas, and help shape the future of Stouffville. Together, we can continue to make our community a wonderful place to live, work, and play.

## Thank You, Stouffville!

Thank you to all the contributors and staff who made this Year in Review possible, and to you – the residents – for making Stouffville such a wonderful place to call home. It's an honour to serve as your Mayor, and I look forward to another great year ahead! 🍷

## Mayor Iain Lovatt:

Guided by a people-first mindset, Mayor Lovatt continues to support Stouffville through regional collaboration, community partnerships, and a heartfelt commitment to residents of every age and stage.

[mayor@townofws.ca](mailto:mayor@townofws.ca)





# ONCE UPON A PLAYGROUND

by Hayley Langdale

The story of a *park that grew* alongside the *children who loved it*

For Kim Whitebread, an Early Childhood Educator at Upper Canada Child Care at Harry Bowes Public School, every day is filled with laughter, learning, and the joy of discovery. But, this past spring, her class's biggest lesson came not from books or toys in the classroom, but from a nearby construction site.

Just down the street, Aspen Crescent Parkette had become a favourite adventure spot for Kim's daycare group. Although the childcare centre's nearest Town Parkette is Greenwood, once they discovered Aspen Crescent, it quickly became their go-to destination. "It was our cozy nook," Kim remembers with a smile. The quieter setting, nestled behind Penndutch Circle, provided the children a "secret space" to play and explore – not to mention, it included a pleasant walk that helped burn off some toddler energy on the way to and from. "We'd pack up snacks, shovels, and books, sometimes even a little tent, and spend the whole morning there. The kids loved it. It felt like our own secret park."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SARAH AMELIA



## Learning Through Construction

When the Town announced that the park would be closed for revitalization, the children were crushed. Their quiet green escape was suddenly surrounded by fencing and heavy machinery. But Kim and her fellow educators decided to turn the loss into an opportunity. "We thought, what if instead of saying goodbye, we watched it be rebuilt?" she explained in an interview with *Year in Review*. "We wanted the kids to see that change can be exciting, that something new can grow from something gone."

From that moment on, the children became regular visitors to the construction site, alongside their dedicated caregivers. Each day brought discoveries: the rumble of trucks, the buzz of machinery, and the friendly faces of the workers who waved from behind the fence. Kim and her team watched the tiny classmates with their own childlike wonder, deeply appreciating how truly sweet each interaction between the workers and the kids was.

"The kids considered them their friends," Kim recalls. "The crew was incredible. They'd talk to the kids, answer their endless questions, and even scoop little piles of dirt for them to 'help.' One day, the guys brought a skid steer out for the kids to see up close, after having the kids close their eyes and wait for a surprise. When they turned around and saw it right there, their faces just lit up. It was pure joy."







## Community Spirit and Classroom Play

The Stouffville community quickly caught on to the daycare's excitement. Neighbours sent Kim messages whenever something big was happening, sometimes even virtually shouting at her on the Stouffville Bulletin Facebook group, "The cement truck is here, hurry down!"

When Kim's quest for "Aspen Updates" became known to Roger da Cunha, Manager of Stouffville's Parks Development and Operations Department, he made sure Kim never missed a milestone. As a father himself, he understood the unwritten assignment: to give the little ones memories they'd carry for years – the kind that turn everyday moments into stories told at the dinner table, nurturing that spark of excitement every child feels when they get to be part of something bigger than themselves. "Roger from the Town called me personally so we could bring the kids to watch," she said. "He didn't have to do that, but it meant the world to us."



Back in the classroom, construction became a theme of play and imagination. The children built parks out of blocks, mimicked the workers with toy trucks and shovels, and proudly learned words like excavator and cement. "For months, everything was about building," Kim said. "It wasn't just about watching a park come together. It was about learning patience, teamwork, and how things take shape when people care."

One of Kim's most memorable moments came when Johnny, a member of the construction crew, introduced the children to a skid steer for the very first time. "We led them around the corner so they couldn't see until the last second," she said. "And when they did, the gasps, the cheers, the wide eyes. I'll never forget it. There were even a few tears. It felt like watching them see magic for the first time."

Michael Lee, whose son Noah was part of Kim's class, remembers fondly how much his little boy talked about the park at home. "He'd come home and say, 'Today we went to see the construction vehicles at the park! They are building a new park for us!'" Michael shared with *Year in Review*. "Getting to see the construction vehicles working was the highlight for him. Usually, he only sees them parked, but at Aspen he got to watch them in action." The experience even shaped Noah's playtime. "He's definitely played more with his construction vehicles at home," Michael laughed. "He'd say, 'We have to dig a hole for the new park!' He also still tells his baby brother all about how he saw the construction vehicles working when they built this new park. Every time we walk by, he points it out and says, 'That's the park we used to visit with my class!'"



The construction-loving kids, alongside Kim and her childcare colleagues, were joined by Stouffville Parks staff, Mayor Lovatt, and Councillor Bartley, in celebration of the completion of Aspen Crescent Parkette in August.

## A Park Reimagined

Today, Aspen Crescent Parkette has been completely reimagined. The 4,950-square-metre park features a new playground, cozy seating areas, open green space, and winding pathways that welcome families, friends, and neighbours to reconnect outdoors. Designed with input from residents and built with heart, the park now stands as a symbol of community spirit and the joy of growing together.

On August 6th, the little ones returned to share their heartfelt thanks, proudly presenting handmade cards to the crew who built their beloved new playground. The hardworking team that had spent months bringing their park dreams to life was met with smiles,



laughter, and plenty of shared excitement over excavators. In return, the workers surprised the children with miniature trucks and diggers, giving them the chance to keep the magic alive through imaginative play.

For the children of Upper Canada Child Care, this playground will always be more than just a place to play. It will be a reminder of friendship, curiosity, and the joy of watching something new grow in the heart of their own neighbourhood. "It started as a simple idea," Kim reflected with happy tears. "But it turned into something so much more. The workers, the parents, the neighbours, everyone came together for the kids. It reminded me why I love what I do, and how kindness really builds community."

**"It started as a simple idea, but it turned into something so much more... It reminded me why I love what I do, and how kindness really builds community."**

- KIM WHITEBREAD







## A message from Ward 1 Councillor *Hugo Kroon*

I have been honoured to proudly represent you as your Councillor in Ward 1 and previously Ward 3, for almost 12 years. At times it seems that first election was only a matter of months ago, but I am amazed at how many changes and accomplishments we have seen here in town, but also how much things have stayed the same in those years.

In the Vandorf and Gormley areas, new businesses establish themselves, others expand, and development continues bringing much needed new assessment and jobs to our town.

The newly planned complete community west of Highway 48 in the extreme south of the town is currently building the infrastructure which will support the building of thousands of new homes over the next decade.

At the same time in other areas of the Ward, life for the most part goes on as always. Protected by the Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenbelt Legislation, the rolling hills, farms, fields, forests and wildlife remain as they have been for a generations and will continue to be. Those long term residents who like my family and I who have lived here for decades, in many cases generationally,

and those new ones who have discovered the beauty and tranquility of our town would have it no other way, and for my part I will do everything in my power to keep it that way.

Having said that, the pressures of a growing and expanding GTHA continue to have their impacts on us. Especially traffic. Which seems to be the number one concern in town, as all members of council will attest to. With the demise of the Automated Speed Enforcement cameras, we will be looking at other measures to address these issues. For Ward 1 the major item of concern is truck traffic, especially as it relates to Bloomington Rd. To that end we have asked the Region to study potential improvements to it and surrounding roads. The Region is also installing more Redlight Cameras in an attempt to make the intersections safer. I, for one, appreciate the value of roundabouts and am advocating for one to be constructed at Woodbine and Bloomington.

The Town continues to try to be responsive to residents' need and desires and tries its best to accommodate, but needs to couple those improvements with our responsibility to fiscally sound budgeting and service delivery.

Although our residents enjoy one of the lowest tax rates in the GTHA, we must always be cognizant that we can do better. Affordability must always be one of our top priorities.

As always, a tip of my hat to our amazing staff who so diligently and selflessly serve all of you, and help make the job of council that much easier.

In closing, as we come to the end of another year and the temperatures begin to moderate, heralding the arrival of winter and the holiday season, I wish for all of you the opportunity to take the time to be with your family, friends and look forward with anticipation to the promise of a new and successful year.

From my family to you and yours, have a great Holiday season, and thank you all for your continuing support. 🍷

👤 **Councillor Hugo Kroon** was first elected to Council in 2014 and is now proudly serving the residents of Ward 1.

[hugo.kroon@townofws.ca](mailto:hugo.kroon@townofws.ca)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DENNIS HRISTOVSKI

## A message from Ward 2 Councillor *Maurice Smith*

2025 has seen a number of very exciting projects underway within Ward 2. I am happy to present an update on a few of the more prominent ones.

The sidewalk to be installed along the east side of Highway 48 running from Aurora Rd. north is still very much in the works. I am still very confident it will be installed but presently we await final approval from the Ministry (MTO). The appropriate funds remain in the Town's budget.

A section of sidewalk that was installed this year is the one on Aurora Rd. This newest section now allows students from the Ballantrae Public School to walk safely all the way from their school to the plaza entrance. It gives me great pleasure when I see those students using this new extension instead of having to walk along the curbside and traffic of Aurora Rd.

The project to deal with traffic and roadway safety around Musselman's Lake is still ongoing. The Mayor and I held another very successful public meeting in early November to receive input and thoughts from residents as how best to handle this problem. We are aware that the section of Ninth Ln. around the lake is a Regional Roadway. As it is their road the cost to have it repaired or reorganized will be theirs not the local taxpayer. The Mayor is our advocate for this project at the Region and I believe he understands the urgency of doing something to fix our concerns. We have also received initial response from a local landowner who is prepared to provide land such that another roadway between Aurora Rd. and Lakeshore Rd. in order to ease traffic is a real possibility. This opportunity was added to the Town's official plan which was approved by the Province in 2025. Another meeting to update residents will be held in the spring.

As advised in previous reports, a new updated fire station will be built in Ballantrae. Land has been purchased along Aurora Rd. for this project. Exterior design and property layout

approval was given earlier this year and onsite groundbreaking was celebrated in November. It is anticipated construction should begin in a few months with the new home occupied in late 2027. Yes, there are still plans for the new station to include a 24/7 Regional ambulance service.

A long-term program I have supported is to bring the Town's crew of Suppression Firefighters up to a very acceptable and full complement level. To this end, I supported having funds in the 2026 Town Budget such that in the coming year we will hire four new officers to fill these positions.

I would like to thank all residents for your continued support, comments

and involvement during 2025 in this beautiful and involved community. My wife and I extend to you and your family all the best for the upcoming holiday season. My hope for you for 2026 is that you and your family stay healthy, your days are filled with happiness and that you enjoy all this great community has to offer. 🍷

👤 **Councillor Maurice Smith** was first elected to Council in 2014 and continues to proudly serve the residents of Ward 2.

[maurice.smith@townofws.ca](mailto:maurice.smith@townofws.ca)







# THE MAN *behind* THE BELL

by Hayley Langdale

From *Electric Circus* to civic ceremonies – **Brian Mangubat** is ready to be Stouffville’s next Town Crier.

When Brian Mangubat spotted a mobile sign on Main Street calling for applicants to become Stouffville’s next Town Crier, something clicked. “There are certain opportunities you just know you’re meant for,” he says. “I saw that sign and thought, ‘I can do this.’”

With his booming voice, professional entertainment background, and almost 20 years of community pride, Brian wasn’t just right for the role – he was ready.

And now, as of November 2025, he's officially been appointed as Stouffville’s first Town Crier since 2016.

## THE NEWSFEED PERSONIFIED

The position of Town Crier is steeped in history. Long before social media, email, or even widespread literacy, medieval Town Criers were the original messengers, delivering news, proclamations, and public notices to gathered crowds on behalf of English Kings.

Today, the role is ceremonial, but no less important. Stouffville’s Town Crier will help open community events, declare official announcements, and promote civic pride at festivals, ceremonies, and milestone occasions. “It’s about bringing people together in a joyful, visible way,” says Brian. “And I’m honoured to be a part of that.”

Brian steps into the shoes once filled by Marcel Bossi, who served as Stouffville’s beloved Town Crier from 1990 until his passing in 2016. “Bringing back the role is both a tribute to our past and a joyful step forward,” said Mayor Iain Lovatt in the Town’s announcement. “We’re thrilled to once again hear the ringing bell and resounding voice that connects us to our roots.”

## AN ENTERTAINER AT HEART

Brian’s voice may be new to the role, but it’s one that’s been trained on some of the biggest stages in Canadian entertainment. A graduate of Humber College’s radio broadcasting program, he launched his career in media as a dancer on *Electric Circus*, MuchMusic’s iconic live dance show in the late ‘90s. “We performed in front of thousands,” he recalls. “It was wild and unforgettable.”

After his on-camera debut, Brian moved behind the scenes at MuchMusic and later CTV and CP24, where he worked as a floor director for legendary broadcasters like Mark Dailey and Gord Martineau. He’s also been an on-air traffic and weather announcer, a freelance DJ and MC for over 20 years, and a passionate producer of live events.

“My career has all been about energy, storytelling, and connection,” he says. “Which is exactly what the Town Crier role is all about too.”

## PROCLAIMING HIS CANDIDACY

Applications to become Stouffville’s next Town Crier opened at the beginning of July. Interested candidates submitted a written component, along with a sample performance video. The selection committee were thrilled to receive numerous applications from all corners of Town, some even applying from beyond Stouffville’s borders.

“We were blown away by the number of passionate community members who stepped forward,” shared Shannon Jaffer, the Town’s Manager of Heritage, Events, and Theatre Operations.

Brain’s audition video stood out immediately; it was thoughtfully crafted with custom text overlay and filmed in a DIY uniform, right downtown in front of the mural at 6240 Main Street. In doing so, he essentially went and offered his submission in a public square, declaring his candidacy in true Town Crier fashion. “It had to be just right,” he said with a smile while reflecting on his application.

When it came down to the final in-person auditions in Council Chambers, Brian continued to impress the hiring committee, comprised of Town staff, heritage committee representatives, and even the City of Markham’s iconic Town Crier, John Webster, who had endorsed Marcel Bossi as the Town’s first Town Crier back in the 90s – while Brian would have been warming up his dance moves for *Electric Circus*.

## A COMMUNITY CONNECTOR

“We’re locals through and through,” he smiles. Brian and his wife, Robin, have lived in Stouffville for nearly two decades. “We’ve built our lives here,” he says. “Our kids have grown up here. Robin works at RE/MAX on Main Street. My niece works down the street at Saint Island Pies. We’re all-in on this town.”

More than anything, Brian wants to help residents feel connected. “To me, community doesn’t mean living in the same place and staying inside,” he says. “It means skating together at Memorial Park. Watching fireworks. Sharing hot chocolate or bubble tea at a local event.”

In his role as Town Crier, he plans to bring that spirit to every event. “If the vibe is low, I’ll help lift it. I’ll dance with the crowd. I’ll cheer with the crowd. I’ll be with the crowd. That’s what I do.”

With his bell in hand, voice ready, and heart full of hometown pride, Brian is eager to step into his new role. “This is going to be a team effort,” he says. “Together, we’ll make Stouffville louder, prouder, and more connected than ever.”

So the next time you hear a bell ring at an event, or spot a familiar smile in ceremonial attire, know that it’s more than tradition. It’s Brian Mangubat, your neighbour, your cheerleader... and your new Town Crier. 🎪



## BRIAN, UNSCROLLED

While Brian’s credentials are impressive, it’s his personality that shines brightest. He’s endlessly positive, deeply community-minded, and refreshingly funny. Here’s few fun facts about the voice you’ll soon be hearing all over town:

- Former dancer on MuchMusic’s *Electric Circus*
- Has DJ’d and MC’d events for over 20 years
- He’s very superstitious; he refuses to get out of bed if the clock says an odd number and was married on the auspicious date 08/08/08
- His dream proclamation? “Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! Free bubble tea for everyone!”
- His favourite local events? Tie between the Strawberry Festival and Ribfest. (“I love ribs. And cornbread. It inspires me to up my game at home.”)
- His theme song? Either *Wanna Be Startin’ Somethin’* by Michael Jackson... or The Rock’s WWE intro song, *Electrifying*

He’s also got a sentimental side. Brian speaks fondly of his late father’s love for records, his mother’s work ethic, and his early fascination with radio legends like Casey Kasem. “This has all been a dream come true,” he says. “I’ve been chasing it since I was a kid.”





STOUFFVILLE — 2025

# Hometown Pride



by **Michaela Ray**

From murals to music, markets to Main Street - 2025 was a year that reminded Stouffville what it means to feel at home. Whether through bold new art, a thriving downtown, or community-driven initiatives that celebrate local business, our town continues to grow with purpose, pride, and personality.



## A Spark of Success

What started as an idea inspired by a *Forbes* article quickly became one of Stouffville's most exciting initiatives in entrepreneurship. The Stouffville Village Small Business Challenge, a joint partnership between the Office of the Mayor and the Greater Stouffville Chamber, invited aspiring entrepreneurs to pitch their dreams for a chance to turn them into reality right here in the heart of downtown.

More than 20 entrepreneurs submitted business plans, each envisioning how their venture could contribute to Stouffville's growing local economy. From there, four finalists were chosen to present their ideas in a Dragon's Den-style showdown before a panel of local business leaders. The result was an inspiring showcase of creativity and determination.

Emerging from that competition were Danielle and Amanda, co-founders of Francis & Meyer Candle Co., whose handcrafted, eco-conscious candles have already captured the community's attention. Their vision, blending artistry, sustainability, and commitment to self-care resonated deeply with both the judges and the residents who now visit their warm, inviting storefront at 6290 Main Street.

When they cut the ribbon surrounded by friends, family, and fellow entrepreneurs, it was a celebration of community spirit and possibility. The win marked the beginning of a new wave of small business innovation in Stouffville.

"After five years of bringing our vision to hundreds of venues and events - we are beyond grateful to the Stouffville community, Mayor's Office, Greater Stouffville Chamber, Neighbouring businesses and our incredible customers across Canada for believing in our dream," said Danielle and Amanda. "We look forward to welcoming you into our new space on Main!"

From concept to candlelight, the Stouffville Village Small Business Challenge proved what's possible when a town believes in its entrepreneurs and invests in helping them shine.

LEFT AND BOTTOM: PHOTOS BY SARAH AMELIA | TOP: PHOTO BY VALERIA MITSUBATA

## SOUNDS LIKE HOME: Music That Brings Us Together

In 2025, 19 on the Park Theatre launched its new concert series, Sounds Like Home, an eight-show lineup celebrating Canadian talent, creativity, and community. This marks the first time the venue has given its annual series a dedicated theme and identity, setting the stage for a more cohesive, memorable, and distinctly Stouffville experience.

The series kicked off this fall with No Sugar Tonight: A Tribute to The Guess Who, Burton Cummings & BTO, filling the theatre with nostalgic hits and standing ovations. From there, the stage has welcomed a mix of performances, from family favourite, A Merry Munsch-mas! to the return of Yuk Yuk's On Tour, delivering big laughs in the heart of downtown.

By the time this publication hits mailboxes, the series will be halfway through, with even more exciting shows to come including an energetic tribute to Bryan Adams, a DuffleBag Theatre's Robin Hood, plus a special performance by award-winning folk storyteller David Francey.

Beyond just a lineup of performances, Sounds Like Home embodies the heart of Stouffville - where creativity thrives, audiences connect, and local culture takes centre stage. It's a reminder that you don't have to leave town to experience world-class entertainment.





## Supporting Local Together

In 2025, Stouffville's Shop Local campaign brought fresh energy and creativity to a familiar but vital message: supporting local businesses strengthens the heart of the community. From vibrant storefront displays to hands-on partnerships at events and markets, the campaign celebrated the everyday choices that build a resilient local economy, and reminded residents that behind every purchase is a neighbour, a story, and a shared sense of hometown pride.

In Stouffville, supporting local is a year-round movement rooted in community pride. Throughout 2025, the Town's Shop Local campaign continued to build momentum, reinforcing the simple but powerful idea that every purchase made close to home strengthens the community we share.

This year's campaign blended creativity, collaboration, and grassroots energy. Across downtown and beyond, businesses proudly displayed Shop Local window posters, turning storefronts into a unified visual chorus encouraging residents to "think Stouffville first." These small touches created a stronger sense of place along Main Street and helped guide residents toward local choices during some of the busiest shopping periods of the year.

The campaign also stretched beyond signage. At community events, markets, and seasonal celebrations, the Town worked closely with local entrepreneurs to amplify their presence and weave Shop Local messaging throughout the experience. Business owners participated in Town events, pop-ups, and activations that showcased their products and services to new audiences. Photo props, stickers, and branded materials helped keep the message playful and visible, giving residents fun ways to show off their hometown pride while supporting neighbourhood shops.

Whether it was finding the perfect gift from a Main Street boutique, grabbing a treat from a local café, or booking a service from a small business run by a neighbour, the campaign celebrated the everyday choices that create a thriving local economy. And behind every transaction was a simple truth: supporting local means supporting people; the owners, families, and employees who help make Stouffville feel like home.

In a year when many Canadian businesses continued to navigate rising costs, workforce challenges, and shifting economic pressures, Stouffville's commitment to choosing local mattered more than ever. The campaign proved that small actions add up, and that a strong, resilient local economy is built one cup of coffee, one gift, and one conversation at a time.

## Where's Stouffville? Glad You Asked.

With a fresh look and a fun, welcoming spirit, Discover Stouffville launched this year to shine a spotlight on all the things that make our town worth the trip. From the Hot Chocolate Trail to a growing online hub of things to do and places to explore, the campaign invites visitors to connect with Stouffville's charm including scenic trails and local shops to food, art, and community events. Backed by strong social media and a vibrant website, Discover Stouffville is turning regional curiosity into lasting connection.



**DISCOVER  
Stouffville**  
Closer than you think.

DISCOVER *Stouffville.ca*



## By the numbers

Instagram - March to October

@discoverstouffville.ca

	<b>780k</b>	Views
	<b>478k</b>	Reach
	<b>10k</b>	Interactions
	<b>6.6k</b>	Visits
	<b>1.7k</b>	Follows
	<b>1.3k</b>	Link Clicks

In August, the Town proudly launched Discover Stouffville, a refreshed tourism brand designed to introduce our community to visitors across the region in a bold and memorable way. Playful, welcoming, and rooted in local pride, the brand takes the familiar question "Where's Stouffville?" and transforms it into an invitation that encourages day-trippers, weekend wanderers, and urban explorers to take a closer look at what makes our town special.

The campaign focused on audiences just beyond a 40 kilometre radius, positioning Stouffville as a close-to-home destination worth discovering. Through a vibrant mix of marketing, including *Globe and Mail* placements, TTC and GO Transit ads, digital campaigns, and social media outreach, the Discover Stouffville message reached thousands of potential visitors. The early response was clear: people were curious, engaged, and eager to learn more.

More than a new look, the brand reflects the heart of Stouffville itself. It highlights our blend of small-town comfort and modern creativity, from a historic downtown full of character to scenic trails that wind through the Oak Ridges Moraine and a thriving food, arts, and music scene. Whether someone is searching for a cozy café, a weekend market, or a picturesque spot to hike, Discover Stouffville showcases the experiences that make our community shine.

As the brand continues to roll out through events, tourism materials, and future campaigns, it is already doing what it was created to do: turning curiosity into connection. In helping more people find Stouffville, the campaign is helping even more people fall in love with it.





## COLOURING OUR COMMUNITY: The Heart Behind Stouffville's New Mural

In 2025, local artist Colin Whitebread transformed a blank downtown wall into a vibrant expression of Stouffville's creativity and connection. The large-scale mural (photo above), commissioned through the Town's public art program, celebrates themes of heritage, diversity, and our shared future, blending bold colours and symbolic imagery that reflect the town's spirit.

"As an artist I was so honoured to leave a visual legacy on one of our walls," said Colin. "I have been fortunate to share my art in a variety of ways in the past 20 years but painting a wall mural this past June was a blessing. In the planning stages I reflected on all the gifts this town has to offer. I reflected on the diversity and expansion of cultures as the town has grown."

The project was a true community effort - from the concept phase to installation day, residents and local businesses cheered the process along.

"We are all connected, humans, non-humans, and all the elements. Our destiny forward requires inclusivity of all citizens. And our town politicians and staff supported this project and others like it completely," continued Colin. "Finally my reactions and conversations with a variety of Stouffvillites at the site encouraged and caused us great joy each day. Thank you Stouffville, an amazing town. May the warm colours and symbols bring a smile to your face and warm your heart!"

The mural now serves as a striking landmark, adding beauty and a sense of identity to one of Stouffville's most visited public spaces. It reflects the community's spirit and pride in a way that feels both personal and collective.

## Wear Your Stouffville Pride

This year, hometown pride took on a whole new look. Literally.

The Stouffville Varsity Collection gave residents a fresh way to show off their local love, featuring premium embroidered hoodies, soft tees, and classic ball caps. Select pieces could be customized with hamlet-specific embroidery, turning simple merch into a true badge of belonging.

The collection quickly became a hit, with locals proudly repping their neighbourhoods, from Ballantrae to Gormley.

Beyond the style factor, the initiative carried heart: 100% of proceeds supported the Town's Recreation Subsidy Fund, helping ensure everyone in Stouffville can access recreation programs regardless of financial barriers.

The launch was truly a way for residents to wear their pride, support their neighbours, and carry a piece of home wherever they go.



## THE HEART OF MAIN STREET:

# Downtown Revitalization in Motion

This year marked a pivotal moment in shaping the future of Downtown Stouffville. While construction is not slated to begin until fall 2026, the work completed in 2025 laid the essential foundation for one of the most transformative projects in our town's history. This was a year defined by planning, listening, investigating, and imagining; everything required to ensure that when change arrives, it arrives with purpose.

Much of the year was spent looking beneath the surface, in more ways than one. Through extensive underground investigations and engineering assessments, the Town and Accardi Engineering Group gained a fuller understanding of what Main Street needs to thrive for decades to come. What they found confirmed why revitalization is so important: aging watermain, cracked and corroded storm and sanitary pipes, joint separations, sediment buildup, and infrastructure that had long exceeded its lifespan. Replacing and upgrading these systems will help prevent future breaks, improve drainage, and support the community as it continues to grow. These discoveries, while not glamorous, are essential pieces of the puzzle. They shape everything else that will follow.

Above ground, the work was equally thoughtful. Preliminary designs explored how to reimagine Main Street as a more walkable, welcoming, and people-focused destination. Engineers and urban designers examined every detail, from sidewalk widths and tree placement to lighting, accessibility, and how people move through the downtown core.



Concepts introduced wider sidewalks, landscaped areas, more public gathering spaces, and green infrastructure like bioretention bump-outs and permeable pavement. Traffic and lighting studies helped determine how to improve pedestrian crossings and maintain safety, while also confirming that Main Street's narrow width could not accommodate dedicated bike lanes. Each consideration reflected the same goal: creating a downtown that feels vibrant, safe, and true to Stouffville's character.

Just as important as the technical work was the collaboration that guided it. Community engagement remains at the heart of the project, with open houses drawing more than 100 residents eager to learn, ask questions, and offer feedback. Visitors browsed display boards, studied early renderings, and spoke directly with engineers and Town staff. Their insights helped refine the designs and reinforced what people value most about downtown: its heritage charm, its walkability, and its potential to serve as a true gathering place. Throughout the year, updates were shared through *On the Road* magazine, podcasts, e-newsletters, social media, and the Town's website, ensuring residents stayed informed every step of the way. A dedicated Field Ambassador role was also introduced,

ensuring that once construction begins, businesses and residents have a direct line of communication and on-the-ground support.

All of this work; planning, consultation, design development and interdepartmental coordination, has meant that although construction has yet to begin, the revitalization is already underway. The vision is becoming clearer, the community is becoming more involved, and the excitement is steadily building. When the first shovels finally hit the ground next fall, the physical transformation of Main Street will begin. But the spirit of revitalization? That has already taken root.

What lies ahead is a downtown that honours its history while embracing the future, a place where people can gather, stroll, shop, dine, and feel at home. A downtown that functions better, looks better, and brings people together in new ways. This year was about imagining what that future could look like. Next year, we begin the journey of bringing it to life.

Stay up to date! Follow this project and sign up for the eNewsletter at [townofws.ca/downtown](https://townofws.ca/downtown)



As 2025 comes to a close, the stories on these pages share a common thread - pride. Pride in creativity. Pride in local business. Pride in progress. And most of all, pride in the people who make Stouffville a place that always feels like home. 🍉



## A message from Ward 3 Councillor *Keith Acton*

This past year has been one of continued growth and progress for Stouffville. As your Ward 3 Councillor, I take great pride in representing our community and playing an active role in the Town's ongoing development and success.

One of the biggest projects in Ward 3 this year was the Westfield Estates Neighbourhood Land Use Study. Over the course of the year, I had the opportunity to speak with many residents about the project. While opinions varied, I'm pleased to share that Council approved the Block Plan in November. This plan will guide any future redevelopment in a thoughtful, phased way - ensuring consistent land use and a cohesive look and feel across the neighbourhood as it evolves.

I want to emphasize that the majority of residents do not wish to sell homes or see widespread redevelopment. We deeply value the strong sense of community that already exists here. However, should redevelopment ever occur, it's reassuring to know we've taken proactive steps to protect the area through careful planning and responsible growth.

Another major topic of discussion this year was speed cameras. I was eager to review the Council report released in October, which confirmed what many of us already suspected - they work. The

Town collected over \$2 million in fines, and data showed a 55% reduction in vehicles exceeding the 40 km/h speed limit.

That's why I was extremely disappointed by the Province's decision to ban automated speed enforcement cameras. These cameras have proven effective in slowing drivers down and making our streets safer for children, parents, and grandparents alike.

This has been one of the most divisive issues I've faced since joining Council. Many residents reached out to share their views - some in favour of the cameras, others opposed. What everyone agrees on, however, is that we need safer streets.

One suggestion I've heard is to add more police officers to address speeding. While I fully support increasing police resources to combat crime, adding officers solely for traffic enforcement means all taxpayers bear the cost - including those who follow the rules. Speed cameras, on the other hand, made our streets safer and ensured that only those breaking the law paid the price. My hope is that we can find a long-term, sustainable solution to keep our neighbourhoods safe.

As the 2026 budget was approved last month, I also want to highlight another key issue - economic balance.

Stouffville relies too heavily on residential property taxes, with only 14% of our tax revenue coming from businesses and industry. This level of dependence on homeowners is not sustainable - or fair - in the long run.

We must continue to attract more commercial and industrial investment, particularly in areas like Gormley, to create local jobs and strengthen our tax base. The upcoming Lincolnville buildout will also play a role in shaping this growth, and it's important that we plan with both opportunity and balance in mind.

Thank you for your continued support throughout the year. It's an honour to represent Ward 3 - and all of Stouffville - on Council. Together, we're building a stronger, safer, and more vibrant community.

Wishing you and your family a very Merry Christmas, a joyful holiday season, and all the best in the year ahead. 🍷

👤 **Councillor Keith Acton** was first elected to Council in 2022 and proudly serves the residents of Ward 3.

[keith.acton@townofws.ca](mailto:keith.acton@townofws.ca)

## A message from Ward 4 Councillor *Rick Upton*



### “The Waiting List” – A Story of Long-Term Care in Stouffville

Margaret Thompson spent her entire life in Stouffville, watching it evolve from a quiet village with a few shops into a bustling town. At 84, she still cherished its peaceful charm -but her body no longer cooperated. Arthritis stiffened her fingers, her balance grew uncertain, and her memory began to fade. Her daughter Emily, who lived just minutes away, visited daily with groceries, medications, and comfort. Yet the “little things” were becoming heavy burdens.

One snowy January morning, Emily arrived to find the stove left on and a pot scorched black. In that moment, fear and love collided. Together, they acknowledged the truth: Margaret needed long-term care.

As Stouffville's population grows, so does its senior community. Families like Margaret and Emily's are becoming increasingly common, and the need for long-term care is no longer just a policy issue - it's a deeply personal one. Behind every statistic is a daughter doing her best, and a parent seeking dignity, safety, and familiarity in their final years.

Stouffville has long taken pride in being a compassionate town. Now, more than ever, it must find new ways to support its caregivers, its elders, and its future.

### The Bigger Picture: Ontario's Long-Term Care Crisis

The waitlist for long-term care beds in Ontario is exceeding 50,000. In some cases, it means years, years many seniors do not have. This alarming number reflects deeper systemic challenges:

**Hospital gridlock:** Thousands of patients are designated as Alternate Level of Care (ALC) - they no longer require hospital treatment but remain hospitalized due to the lack of available LTC placements. These patients occupy 15-20% of hospital beds, contributing to overcrowded emergency departments and delayed surgeries.

**Staffing shortages:** Many LTC homes are unable to operate at full capacity due to insufficient staffing, further limiting access to care.

**Aging infrastructure and rising demand:** Ontario's aging population is placing increasing pressure on a system already stretched thin.

We in Stouffville have 977 long-term care (LTC) beds bringing significant benefits to the community. It enhances access to quality care for seniors, reducing wait times and easing pressure on hospitals. This expansion also stimulates the local economy by creating hundreds of jobs in healthcare, administration, food services, and maintenance. It

offers career opportunities for nurses, personal support workers, and allied health professionals, attracting talent and fostering workforce development. Moreover, it encourages investment in the building of infrastructure and services, strengthening Stouffville's reputation as a compassionate, growing town committed to supporting its aging population with dignity and comprehensive care. As Stouffville's population continues to grow, so does its senior community.

Families like Margaret's are becoming more common, and the need for long-term care is no longer just a policy discussion—it's a human one. Behind every statistic is a daughter trying her best, and a parent who simply wants dignity, safety, and familiarity in their final chapters, which we are all entitled to. 🍷

👤 **Councillor Rick Upton** was first elected in 2014 and continues to serve the residents of Ward 4.

[rick.upton@townofws.ca](mailto:rick.upton@townofws.ca)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DENNIS HRISTOVSKI



# The Legacy of Giving

by Ruby Vasanthan



Honouring Residents Whose Service, Leadership, and Generosity Shape Our Community

## 2025 STOUFFVILLE RECIPIENTS

JULIANNA ANGHELONI | MUSHARRAF ANWAR | LINA BIGIONI | MARGARET-ANNE BIRTCH | NANCY TRENKA BRUMWELL | PAUL CALANDRA | ROCHELLE D'SOUZA | WAYNE EMMERSON | PAUL ETHERINGTON | MIKE FOSTER | MARY GEORGOPOULOS | MARGARET GRANDISON | YUN HUH | SIVAN ILANGKO | ALAN KAPLAN | JESSICA LANZINER | DAVID KWOK-WAI LI | MAYOR IAIN LOVATT | OWEN MACRI | JOAN MASTERTON | RAY MCNEICE | KATHY MITCHELL | BOB NICHOLSON | JORDAN PARIS | GANG PENG | NICHOLAS QUADRINI | GOBINDER SINGH RANDHAWA | FRED ROBBINS | BILL SNOWBALL | CRAIG STEPHENSON | SUSAN TUCKER | ANGELA WASKAWICH | JACK THOMAS WELCH | DOUG WILSON

While full biographies were not available for every recipient, each contribution is vital, and the stories shared here highlight the many ways residents strengthen, connect, and enrich the Stouffville community.

In communities across Canada, a quiet kind of greatness often goes unnoticed – acts of generosity, leadership, and service that form the backbone of civic life. But in 2025, that everyday heroism was brought into the national spotlight.

With the awarding of the King Charles III Coronation Medal, 30,000 Canadians were recognized for their meaningful contributions. Among them stood a remarkable group of Stouffville residents, their names etched into a national moment of gratitude.

For Mayor Iain Lovatt, the honour was deeply personal. “I was truly honoured to receive the medal from the Hon. Helena Jaczek, MP for Markham-Stouffville,” he shared on his Instagram. The moment symbolized not just recognition, but a celebration of a community that thrives because of its people. And indeed, the list of local recipients reads like a tapestry of Stouffville itself—diverse, driven, and deeply rooted in service.

## A National Honour with Local Heart

The King Charles III Coronation Medal, created to mark the historic coronation of His Majesty on May 6, 2023, is the first Canadian commemorative medal of its kind. Designed by the Canadian Heraldic Authority and struck by the Royal Canadian Mint.

Nominations took place by trusted partner organizations across the country who nominated individuals whose contributions had made significant impacts, either nationally or within their local communities.

For Stouffville, the recognition of more than 30 individuals is not just an honour. It's a celebration of a town whose strength lies in its people.

## WHAT IS THE CORONTATION MEDAL?

- CREATED:** May 6, 2023
- PURPOSE:** Commemorates the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III
- RECIPIENTS:** 30,000 Canadians recognized for outstanding service or achievement
- DESIGN:** Features the Canadian Royal Crown, Royal Cypher, and motto “VIVAT REX”
- ADMINISTERED BY:** The Chancellery of Honours at Rideau Hall
- NOT PUBLICLY NOMINATED:** Recipients were selected through partner organizations

## Leadership at the Forefront

Leadership takes many forms, and in Stouffville, it's often humble, consistent, and rooted in care. Mayor Iain Lovatt has guided the Town through rapid growth, all while preserving the qualities that make it our cherished welcoming, neighbourly place. Known for being accessible, thoughtful, and community-focused, he has championed sustainability, inclusivity, and civic pride.

At the provincial level, Paul Calandra, MPP for Markham–Stouffville and Ontario's Minister of Education, was also honoured. A long-time advocate for local priorities, Calandra has played a key role in protecting natural lands like the Rouge National Urban Park and promoting policies that benefit Ontario families.

Craig Stephenson, President and CEO of Centennial College, has made an indelible mark on post-secondary education. Under his leadership, Centennial has advanced mental health initiatives, expanded access to education, and led innovative projects that empower students across the province.

Stouffville Fire Chief Bill Snowball stands out as a true hometown hero. With 47 years in the fire service, his dedication to public safety is matched only by his volunteer spirit, making



him a cornerstone of emergency services and community life.

Then there are behind-the-scenes leaders like Musharaf Anwar, who has built bridges through international partnerships and raised over \$250,000 for the Markham Stouffville Hospital Young Leaders Program, and Alan Kaplan, a nationally respected figure in respiratory health whose work has improved care for thousands.

Also recognized is Owen Macri, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Minister of Education, whose work ensures that education policies are responsive and impactful for learners and families across Ontario.





## Champions of *Arts, Culture, and Heritage*

Every town has storytellers, people who use art, creativity, and memory to shape identity. In Stouffville, few have done this as passionately as Ray McNeice and Margaret Grandison. Since moving to the community in 1983, they’ve transformed a local painters’ group into the thriving Stouffville Studio Tour. Ray, a seasoned graphic designer and Board Chair of the Latcham Art Centre, has dedicated his life to supporting local artists.

“We’ve lived in Stouffville longer than we’ve lived anywhere,” McNeice

reflected. “Stouffville is home.” For him and Margaret, the Coronation Medal is a celebration of how art brings people together. “We’re proud to be part of a community that values the arts and supports each other,” he added.

Equally dedicated is Fred Robbins, a historian who has similarly strengthened Stouffville’s identity by preserving and sharing its history. His work connects the past to the present, ensuring future generations understand and appreciate the town’s roots.

## Promoting *Cultural Inclusion*

Some recipients remind us that inclusion is a practice as well as a policy. Sivan Ilangko, who immigrated from Sri Lanka at age 35, arrived in Canada with professional qualifications but had to start over. He earned his CPA and is now a Partner at Ernst & Young LLP. Despite being older than most of his classmates, he persevered, reflecting, “You can only control what’s within your control”, a mindset that has inspired his work across the region.

More than personal success, Sivan has co-founded the Stouffville Multicultural Association and the Stouffville Tamils’ Association, helped establish a Chair in Tamil Studies at the University of Toronto Scarborough, and led efforts to bring Tamil Heritage Month to town.

Gobinder Singh Randhawa’s story echoes the power of persistence. In 1978, he successfully challenged a discriminatory hiring practice at the TTC that prohibited him from working due to his turban and beard. He became the first TTC driver to wear a turban and now serves as Chair of the Ontario Sikh and Gurdwara Council. His work continues to champion fairness and representation.

Mary Georgopoulos, inspired by her father’s immigrant story, supports organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters, the AIDS Committee of York, and Welcoming Arms. Her efforts help those facing mental health challenges and survivors of domestic violence, ensuring that compassion is never in short supply.

## A Commitment to *Service*

Among the recipients, many have built careers and legacies around service. Lina Bigioni began as an administrative assistant and rose to become Chief of Staff at York Region, one of the first women in a senior leadership role. Her professional success is matched by her devotion to volunteer work, from healthcare to youth development.

“I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to give back,” Lina said. Her advice for young people? “Work hard and get noticed by volunteering in organizations that interest you.” For Lina, the Coronation Medal is a legacy for her grandchildren, a symbol of a life lived with purpose.

Rochelle D’Souza is another recipient whose commitment shines through her support for veterans. From organizing fundraisers to community tributes, her work ensures that those who served are honoured and remembered.

Kathy Mitchell is an advocate for families affected by impaired driving, while Bob Nicholson has merged leadership in sport with decades of volunteerism, supporting Special Olympics and other vital community programs.

## “Work hard and get noticed by volunteering in organizations that interest you.”

– Lina Bigioni, Chief of Staff (retired), longtime volunteer, medal recipient

## Dedicated *Contributors and Builders*

The list of recipients also includes quiet champions whose impact is deeply felt.

Gordon Roberts, a volunteer pilot with Hope Air, has flown nearly 250 missions since 2008, providing essential travel for patients needing life-saving care. His work is a profound example of how one person’s generosity can change lives.

Doug Wilson has devoted countless hours to a variety of local causes. His selfless commitment to service and leadership in the community has left a lasting impact

on Stouffville. Wilson’s dedication to helping others and his ability to inspire others to take action have contributed to a culture of volunteerism that strengthens the community as a whole.

Nicholas Quadrini is known for his active involvement in local initiatives and his tireless efforts to improve Stouffville through volunteerism. Whether through organizing events or stepping into leadership roles, Quadrini has consistently shown his dedication to fostering a better, more connected community.

## *Community Builders:* Sustaining the Stouffville Spirit

Building a community takes more than large-scale programs, it’s essential that people are supported through all of life’s moments. Reverend Joan Masterton has done exactly that. From welcoming Syrian refugees and launching Restore Stouffville to running a free tax clinic for low-income residents, her work has built safety nets for those in need.

Susan Tucker, another honouree, has created meaningful traditions like the Clock Tower Poppy Project and the Adopt-a-Senior program, which forge bonds between generations and honour the past while nurturing the present.

Other recipients like Linday O’Connor, Glenn Crosby, and Wayne Emmerson have spent decades advancing charitable causes, civic engagement, and regional development. Their legacy is felt in everything from real estate to conservation, from boardrooms to community gardens.

This year’s Coronation Medal recipients demonstrate the remarkable spirit of Stouffville. Their stories show how leadership, generosity, creativity, and courage take many forms, and how every individual contributes to a stronger, more connected community.



## A Medal That Reflects a *Community*

The King Charles III Coronation Medal may be a national honour, but its stories are deeply local. Designed to reflect Canada’s values, diversity, service, and inclusion, it features 13 shapes representing the provinces and territories, arranged in a circle to symbolize equity and the cycles of life, especially meaningful to Indigenous cultures.

While there are no post-nominals, and no financial prize, this medal represents something more enduring: it says thank you. Thank you for showing up, for building, for leading, for caring.

## Looking *Forward*

This year’s Coronation Medal recipients- Mayor Iain Lovatt, Paul Calandra, Craig Stephenson, Ray McNeice, Margaret Grandison, Mary Georgopoulos, Sivan Ilangko, Gobinder Singh Randhawa, and so many more, remind us of what’s possible when people serve with heart.

Together, they represent the very best of Stouffville: a town built not by headlines or grand gestures, but by consistent care, quiet leadership, and bold compassion.

Their stories are a call to action. What will your contribution be? 🍁





# A message from Ward 5 Councillor *Richard Bartley*

It's hard to believe another year has come and gone. As I reflect on this term of Council and on my 16 years serving the residents of Whitchurch-Stouffville, I'm reminded of how quickly time flies. It has truly been both a pleasure and a privilege to represent this incredible community.

When I first became interested in local politics, it was thanks to Wayne Emmerson, who continues to be a great friend, mentor, and example of public service. I've also been proud to serve alongside Mayor Lovatt, two great leaders who care deeply about doing what's right for our town. Their leadership and teamwork have helped guide Stouffville through a period of tremendous growth and change.

Over the years, I've watched our community grow and thrive. From the new fire hall helping to keep our community safe, to the beautiful parks, trails, and recreation facilities, including our popular multi-purpose skating

trail and new pickleball courts where I've recently become a member and met so many incredible new residents, Stouffville truly offers something for everyone.

As our community continues to grow, we must also focus on the infrastructure and safety measures that keep it moving. The Edward Street extension will help improve traffic flow and make travel safer for all. However, I remain concerned about the removal of speed cameras, which play an important role in keeping our roads and families safe. Community safety must always remain a top priority.

None of this progress would be possible without the dedication of Town staff, the backbone and the engine that keeps things running. Stouffville is one of the best places to work, and that's because of their commitment and pride in what they do.

As many in our community face challenges, I encourage everyone to

lend a hand, volunteer, support the food bank, or simply do a good deed each day. Small acts of kindness make a big difference.

Finally, I'm proud to serve on the Uxbridge Hospital Fundraising Committee. This hospital is vital to Stouffville, and I encourage you to consider supporting their important fundraising efforts.

From my family to yours, I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. 🎄

👤 **Councillor Richard Bartley**, previously served on Council from 2006–2014 and returned in 2022. He proudly represents the residents of Ward 5.

[richard.bartley@townofws.ca](mailto:richard.bartley@townofws.ca)



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DENNIS HRISTOVSKI



# A message from Ward 6 Councillor *Sue Sherban*

As 2025 comes to a close, I want to extend my sincere thanks for the continued trust you place in me as your Ward 6 Councillor. This year has been one of steady progress, meaningful conversations, and community-driven decisions. Every phone call, email, or chat in the park reminds me how passionate our residents are about the place we call home, and I remain committed to representing you with care and dedication.

Stouffville continues to grow, and with that growth comes both opportunities and challenges. Throughout the year, Council has worked to ensure new development supports our long-term vision while protecting the heritage, character, and open spaces that make Ward 6 so special. Downtown revitalization remains a personal priority, and although attracting new businesses has been difficult, I continue to work closely with staff and property owners to advocate for meaningful change. I share the community's desire to see our heritage buildings thriving again, and I remain hopeful that continued effort will bring renewed vibrancy to our core.

Transportation and mobility are always top of mind for residents. I

know many of you continue to wait for progress on whistle cessation, and I want you to know that this remains a file I push forward every chance I get. It has been a long and technical process, but Metrolinx continues to hear from us, and I will not stop advocating on your behalf. Traffic calming, speed reduction measures, and our commitment to Vision Zero also continue to shape safer neighbourhood streets, with radar boards, delineators, and improved policies helping address concerns around speeding and distracted driving.

Our parks and public spaces once again played a major role in bringing people together this year. Memorial Park continues to shine as our community gathering place, from summer festivals to markets and concerts. Watching families enjoy the playground, trails, and events reminds me why supporting local and keeping our parks healthy and green is so important. Continued investment in recreational amenities and environmental improvements ensures our community remains active, welcoming, and sustainable.

Safety, good governance, and responsible decision-making remain at the heart of my work on Council. I take seriously the responsibility to

advocate for fair budgeting, transparent communication, and careful planning. I continue to meet regularly with staff, participate in committees such as 19 on the Park, and stay engaged in every issue affecting our ward. Your feedback guides my decisions, and I value every opportunity to listen and learn from you.

As we move into 2026, I remain optimistic about what lies ahead. I will continue to champion the preservation of our heritage, improvements to road safety, support for local businesses, and thoughtful, well-managed growth. Thank you for being such an engaged and caring community. It is an honour to serve you.

Best wishes for the holidays and Merry Christmas! 🎄

👤 **Councillor Sue Sherban** has represented Ward 6 from 1997–2003 and from 2018 to the present, and previously served as Mayor from 2003–2006.

[sue.sherban@townofws.ca](mailto:sue.sherban@townofws.ca)



# Memorial Park Skating Trail's First Trip Around the Sun: A Community Dream Realized

by Cassandra Papas

In 2017, the Town of Stouffville set out to reimagine how residents experience parks and public spaces. Through a three-phase Leisure and Community Services Master Plan, one idea rose quickly to the top: a skating trail in Memorial Park.



By 2018, after extensive community consultation, the message was clear. Of all the proposed features, a skating trail was named a high priority. Town staff began developing a concept that would be more than a seasonal rink, a multi-use loop designed for all ages and abilities, a year-round gathering place, and a new focal point for outdoor activity.

By 2019, the vision was fully sketched: a 275-metre accessible, refrigerated trail just west of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Leisure Centre and Public Library. In the summer, it would welcome wheels, walkers, and strollers. In the winter, it would become a scenic, illuminated loop for free public skating.

Then, as momentum was building, the COVID-19 pandemic suddenly halted progress.



## Four Years on Ice

In early 2020, as the Town prepared to break ground, construction paused. Materials were delayed. Staff pivoted to pandemic response and essential services. Residents watched the cleared site sit still, wondering when the long-awaited trail would finally take shape.

Behind the scenes, staff continued the work; adapting plans, navigating restrictions, coordinating contractors, and securing funding. Key support arrived through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP), a partnership between all three levels of government. Funding from the Community, Culture and Recreation Infrastructure Stream allowed the Town to move forward with confidence.

"We are thrilled to receive this generous funding," said Mayor Iain Lovatt in 2021. "This skating trail, chosen by the community as the highest priority in the parks expansion, will bring generations together and create stronger, healthier residents."

The project also included accessible washrooms, changerooms, and an ice resurfacer garage, ensuring the trail would be functional, inclusive, and built to last.

The Honourable Helena Jaczek, MP for Markham-Stouffville, praised the milestone: "Community infrastructure is vital to the strength of our neighbourhoods, and I want to congratulate Mayor Lovatt and the Town for making this project a reality."



## The First Skate

By December 2024, the ice was finally ready. The Town quietly opened the trail for a soft launch to test the surface. Two weeks later, on January 10, 2025, it made its official debut as the centrepiece of the Town's inaugural Mayor's Levee.

Residents filled the loop. Council members laced up. Families glided across the ice, many experiencing their first outdoor skating opportunity close to home.

"This is absolutely amazing," said Mayor Lovatt after completing a lap. "You should all be so proud."

Pride was shared across the team, especially among those who carried out the project through years of delays and uncertainty. As the season unfolded, their work became one of the trail's biggest success stories. Brian Slater, Manager of Facilities Development and Operations, highlighted the effort behind the scenes:

"I'm incredibly grateful to the staff who keep this trail running. It's taken years of planning, problem-solving, and sheer determination to get here, and our team has been fantastic. They've been out there

every day, early mornings, late nights, brutal cold, surprise warm spells, doing whatever it takes to make sure the ice stays safe, consistent, and ready for the community. Their diligence is the reason this trail has been such a success."

From December 14 to March 14, the trail welcomed skaters of all ages, 12 hours a day, seven days a week. A partnership with Cutting Edge Pro at Clippers Complex and Ninth Line Arena ensured residents could rent skates nearby. Early tracking showed an average of 1,800–2,000 skaters per week in the first month alone. Over the full 13-week season, that amounted to tens of thousands of visits, a resounding success by any measure.

## Summer on Wheels

The trail didn't rest when winter ended. Instead, it reinvented itself.

From June to August, the Town launched Youth Roller Skate Nights, made possible through the Whitchurch-Stouffville Legacy Fund and the Town's Youth Advisory Working Group (YAWG). Partnering with Toronto's SUSO Skate Co., staff transformed Thursday nights into lively, music-filled gatherings for young people and families.

A DJ played upbeat tracks. Volunteers handed out free skate rentals and helmets. Teens and tweens circled the loop in steady streams, some wobbly beginners, others confident pros. Many just came to spend time with friends in a safe, welcoming space. Across 12 weeks, the program drew 1,615 participants. "I'd never skated before," said 14-year-old Maya. "Now we come almost every week. It's just fun."



"We wanted to activate the trail beyond winter," said Rob Braid, Commissioner of Community Services. "This was about getting young people outdoors and creating something social and inclusive."



"I'd never skated before... Now we come almost every week."

- Maya, age 14

## A Trail That Means More

Beyond ice and wheels, the Memorial Park Skating Trail has become a symbol of what community-driven infrastructure can achieve. Designed with accessibility at its core, wide loops, barrier-free paths, inclusive washrooms and changerooms, it invites everyone to participate; parents pushing strollers, seniors with mobility aids, first-time skaters, and seasoned athletes.

It also creates a space to gather, move, and reconnect, something especially meaningful after years of pandemic disruptions. Staff believe it may be the largest three-loop refrigerated outdoor trail of its kind in Ontario.

"This is a long-term investment," said Mayor Lovatt. "It's not just a winter feature. It's a year-round destination."

## What's Next

Momentum is building. Construction is scheduled to begin in late 2025 to connect the skating trail to the larger Stouffville-Rouge Trail network via Park Drive, creating more active transportation options across town.

Planning is also underway to expand programming. YAWG is hoping for a return of roller skating nights with SUSO Skate Co. for summer 2026, and staff are exploring more ways to animate the space through all seasons.

No matter the weather, the trail continues to deliver on its purpose: getting people outside, moving, and connecting - one loop at a time. 🛼





# The **Team** Behind the **Town**

## Celebrating a Year of Dedication in Stouffville

by Ruby Vasanthan

The Town of Stouffville experienced a remarkable and rewarding year in 2025, one that highlighted the **commitment, creativity, and heart** of its municipal staff. From essential services to unforgettable community events, the people behind the scenes helped shape a thriving, connected community.

## The **Backbone** of Our Busy Community

### **Public Works: Purpose-Driven and Proud**

A standout moment came in May during National Public Works Week (May 18–24), themed “People, Purpose, Presence.” The week paid tribute to the tireless efforts of the Town’s Public Works teams, those who maintain over 540 km of roads, 130 km of sidewalks and trails, manage critical water systems, support capital projects, and power community events.

Mayor Iain Lovatt emphasized the often-overlooked importance of these workers, while Jack Graziosi, Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, praised their unwavering professionalism and passion. The week wrapped up with a joyful Public Works Open House, where families explored trucks, played games, and topped it all off with ice cream, a fitting thank-you for those who help Stouffville run safely and smoothly.

## Celebrating **Creative Excellence**

### **Town-wide Recognition for Events, Engagement, and Innovation**

In 2025, the Town of Stouffville earned a host of regional, national, and international awards, reflecting a deep commitment to excellence, innovation, and community spirit across all departments.

The **Community Services Events** team took centre stage with six awards from the International Festivals and Events Association, earning gold, silver, and bronze honours for standout events like the Main Street 5K, Symphony Under the Stars, Ribfest, the Holiday Market, and the beloved Santa Claus Parade. These events have globally received recognition for turning civic spaces into places of celebration, connection, and local pride.

At the **Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum**, the exhibit 100 Years of the York Regional Forest, developed in partnership with York Region which welcomed over 5,000 visitors and received a Gold Hermes Creative Award for Educational Exhibit. The project beautifully captured the balance between preserving history and engaging modern audiences.

The **Stouffville Library** also stood out for its focus on wellness and inclusion, earning the Healthy Community Award from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA). Additionally, the Library’s Digital eNewsletter Campaign earned a Gold MarCom Award, recognizing its creativity and reach in digital communication.



Human Resources staff were recognized at Council for helping Stouffville earn a national Employer of Choice distinction.

**Excellence across core services was also widely recognized:**

The **Aquatics Team** earned the Lifesaving Society Affiliate Recognition Award, building on their earlier win of the 2024 Scarborough Cup for operating the largest lifesaving program among comparable municipalities.

**Fire Services** were honoured with the Bringing Safety Home Award by the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition and the National Fire Protection Association, recognizing leadership in fire prevention education.

**Procurement Services** received the 2025 Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award from the National Procurement Institute.



The **Finance** team was awarded a Certificate of Recognition for Budget Preparation from the Government Finance Officers Association.



And **Human Resources**, by fostering a supportive workplace culture, helped Stouffville earn its place among Canada’s Best Companies to Work For – Employer of Choice.

### **Spotlight on Storytelling and Engagement**

**Corporate Communications**, often in collaboration with other departments, received several top honours at both the MarCom Awards and the Hermes Creative Awards, celebrating projects that informed, inspired, and unified the community.

One of the year’s standout achievements was the Discover Stouffville Brand Refresh and the Shop Local Marketing Campaign, which were developed in partnership between Corporate Communications and **Economic Development**. These initiatives successfully captured and celebrated the town’s identity while encouraging support for local businesses.

#### **MarCom Awards:**

**Platinum:** Talk of the Town Branding, Discover Stouffville Brand Refresh (with Economic Development), On the Road Magazine, Event Sponsorship Opportunities, and the Winter 2025 Play Book.

**Gold:** Shop Local Marketing Campaign (with Economic Development), Ribfest 2024, Year in Review, and the Library’s Digital eNewsletter Campaign.

**Honourable Mentions:** Discover Stouffville Fall Advertising Campaign (with Economic Development) and the Stouffville Proud initiative.

#### **Hermes Creative Awards:**

**Platinum:** 2024 Stouffville Year in Review

**Gold:** Ribfest 2024 Marketing Campaign

These recognitions reflect more than just polished design, they highlight the Town’s commitment to building meaningful connections through storytelling, transparency, and cross-departmental collaboration.

## Staff Charity Hockey Game **Scores Big**

### **Staff rally on the ice to raise funds for vital local programs**

The annual Stouffville Staff Charity Hockey Game brought excitement to the rink and heart to the community. In a lively 9–6 match that ended a four-year winning streak, the event successfully raised funds for Steer Friends, a local charity providing day programs for youth and adults with disabilities and complex care needs.

With enriching activities like art, therapy, skill-building, and community involvement, Steer Friends offers a vital post-secondary environment for individuals living with cerebral palsy, autism, seizure disorders, and more, ensuring they remain connected, challenged, and supported.



## Proud to **Serve**, Proud to Call Stouffville **Home**

### **Celebrating those who shape our community**

From building roads to building community, the Town of Stouffville’s staff made 2025 a year of outstanding service and shared success. Whether preserving local history, promoting public safety, creating inclusive programs, or earning international recognition, their collective effort spoke volumes. Staff across all departments worked with heart, vision, and dedication, helping to create a more connected, inclusive, and vibrant community.

It’s clear that the people who serve Stouffville are not only passionate professionals, they’re proud members of the community, working every day to make this town stronger, brighter, and more connected than ever. 🏡

LEFT AND PROCUREMENT PHOTOS BY SARAH AMELIA | BUDGET TEAM PHOTO BY VALERIA MITSUBATA



 Stouffville 2025

# Year in *Review*

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### Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

111 Sandiford Drive  
Stouffville, ON L4A 0Z8  
[customer.service@townofws.ca](mailto:customer.service@townofws.ca)

**Telephone:** (905) 640-1900

**Toll Free:** (855) 642-8696

**Fax:** (905) 640-7957

