

# year in review

## The Strength of Stouffville

Stories of community strength through disaster.

pg. 05

2022

# Letter from the Mayor

In writing this year's Year in Review article, I kept trying to think of one word or two that would define what 2022 has meant for our community and beyond. What leapt to the forefront for me was Community Engagement.

Much of 2022 was devoted to engaging with residents both virtually and in-person. We consulted with you on the Leisure Services Master Plan, the Official Plan Review, the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Strategy, the Water and Wastewater Master Plan Update, the Main Street Reconstruction Plan, and the Transportation Master Plan, and the list goes on. Countless times in 2022, we looked to engage with you all to understand how you envision the future Stouffville and we couldn't be more grateful for your time, your passion, and your desire to help shape the future of Stouffville.

Some of my personal highlights for 2022 include the opening of the new Pickleball and Tennis Courts at the Leisure Centre, the groundbreaking of Housing York's Main Street development, the launch of our incredible new website, the implementation of several traffic calming strategies across the municipality, and the successful return of the Stouffville Holiday Market which marked the beginning of the magical holiday season here in Stouffville.

Perhaps the biggest highlight of this past year though has been the municipal

election. I am humbled again by the confidence placed in me to be your mayor, to lead us forward towards a prosperous Whitchurch-Stouffville. The council you elected is represented by strong, experienced leaders who have committed to act in the best interests of their respective ward residents and all residents of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Campaign season provided all of Council with an opportunity to engage with so many of you. We heard what's working, what's not working and what you want to see for the future of this town we all call home. Thank you for your time, your trust, and your candor. As a Council, we have been discussing your priorities, as they are our priorities as well. Your feedback will help shape our new Strategic Plan for the next four years. The top priorities that I heard about door knocking were issues around traffic and speeding, how we plan for growth, and the importance of strong customer service and strong communication from the Town. As we work through our Strategic Plan, there will be continued opportunities for your input, and I would encourage everyone to

participate in the process. More information will be available in the New Year at [www.cometogetherws.ca](http://www.cometogetherws.ca), so please have a look and get involved.

On the topic of engagement, we are launching a monthly e-newsletter from the Mayor's Office to keep you in the loop on local events, offerings, news and important updates. If you would like to subscribe, please visit [www.Lovatt.ca](http://www.Lovatt.ca). Additionally, we recently launched a new video series to recap Council meetings for residents the day following each Council Meeting. These videos can be found on my social media channels, both on Instagram and Facebook at [@iaianlovattws](https://www.instagram.com/iaianlovattws).

This community is defined by the people who live and work here and we can't do what we do without hearing from you, so please continue to engage with us and help us shape the future of Stouffville. I wish you all a 2023 filled with only the best that life has to offer.

Be well,  
Iain Lovatt



Iain Lovatt Mayor  
Hugo T. Kroon Ward 1  
Maurice Smith Ward 2  
Keith Acton Ward 3  
Rick Upton Ward 4  
Richard Bartley Ward 5  
Sue Sherban Ward 6

## Contents

### Letter from the Mayor

Mayor Lovatt reflects on the the great accomplishments of 2022.

pg. 01

### The Changing Face of Stouffville

The 2021 Canadian Census gives us a snapshot of Stouffville's evolving growth and diversity.

pg. 03

### The Strength of Stouffville

Stories from communities coming together in the aftermath of the May 21st derecho storm.

pg. 05

### Downtown Revitalization

Take a stroll along the future Main St. to experience all the details of the Town's biggest project on the horizon.

pg. 15

### The Stouffville Market Lives!

2022's newest Downtown Market emerges with a variety of vendors and big plans for next season.

pg. 19



# The Changing Face of Stouffville

Census information is central to our daily lives. Whether starting a business, planning transportation needs or choosing the location for a school, Canadians use census data every day to inform their decisions. 2021 was a census year and updated data about Stouffville was released throughout 2022. Here is the changing face of Stouffville...

Stouffville has changed. What started out as a one horse town is barely recognizable from when it was first founded. The various types of mills, farms, and shops have mostly faded away over the years, and replaced by new and ever changing and expanding businesses. There are still some landmarks to be seen around town that reflect and protect our heritage - the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum does a wonderful job of recording and preserving our history, and celebrating it with various events every year.

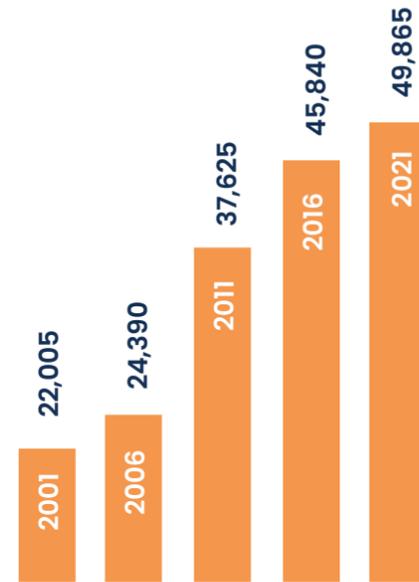
Today, multiculturalism thrives in new and exciting ways. We have a myriad of fascinating cultures and religions that have been arriving and adding to the diversity and uniqueness of Stouffville for decades and it's wonderful to witness the changes and additions.

From 2001 - 2021, our population more than doubled. We have gone from 22,000 to 49,900 with the biggest and steepest

climb occurring in the 10 years between 2006 to 2016. Since then, we have still been growing, but it contradicts popular belief that we're exploding as the growth rate has dramatically slowed. As of 2021, the population of Whitchurch-Stouffville sits at 49,864, and is continuing its climb upward. We are growing and will continue to grow for several years due to population mandates set out by the province. By 2030, we should be at just under 56,000 and by 2050 we should be close to 100,000.

A good reference to use to see what the background of our new residents reflects, is language. In Stouffville, 75.5% of individuals spoke English as their primary home language, while 18.6% spoke a non-official language.

See all the data at [townofws.ca/census](http://townofws.ca/census)



Population

## 8.8%

Population Growth Rate 2016-2021

### Top Non-Official Languages Spoken at Home



### Monthly housing costs

Between 2016 and 2021, the monthly costs associated with renting have increased at a higher rate than the monthly cost of owning a home. The increase in annual household income has not increased at the same rate as monthly costs for renters. In Stouffville,

- Household income increased 19%.
- Owner housing costs increased 17%.
- Renter housing costs increased 28%.

## 7%

Households that are multi-generational, shared by three or more generations. This number is up from 5.9% in 2016.

## 15.6%

Households that are one-person households. This number has been increasing over the years, up 14% since 2016.

## \$122k

We remain a higher income town, with more than half of Stouffville's households having a median household income greater than \$100,000.



## 16,707

Occupied private dwellings in Stouffville, which is an increase of

## 8.8%

over 2016. This compares with York Region's occupied private dwelling growth rate of 9.5% and the province's rate of 6.2%.



# The Strength of Stouffville

Written by Julia Jackson



*Tree lifted straight out of the ground of a property at Cedar Beach Resort.*

The skies darkened from bright blue to an eerie green in the blink of an eye— the only warning of the devastating storm headed our way.

**Cold, dry air meeting warm, moist air created the perfect recipe for the derecho storm. On May 21st this long-lasting windstorm, embedded with thunderstorms and tornadoes, swept across Ontario and into Quebec. Unfortunately, Stouffville was in its path.**

So many within Stouffville were impacted by the derecho. Dave Beauchamp, Mark McMahon and Kyle Jenkin all experienced the devastation brought upon their neighbourhoods first-hand and have shared their stories of community strength through disaster.

## The Impending Storm

**Preparing to celebrate their anniversary, Dave and Janet Beachamp were suddenly struck with a strange feeling. First, power went off in their home near the Robinson Tract. Then, the sky turned green, the air filled with a vibrating hum, and a base rumble was underfoot.**

When the winds hit, the couple stared out their kitchen window, panicked by the trees being picked straight up and out of the ground, spinning like tops. Six to eight trees fell a mere fifty feet away from their home, yet they didn't hear the heavy trunks meeting the earth— all they could hear was the wind.

On the north side of town, close to Island Lake, Mark McMahon was mowing his lawn when he noticed the trees begin to wave. In a moment of eerie calm, he managed to put his mower away, and just as he walked into his house, it began to pour. Like so many of us, there was no time to be scared because it all happened out of the blue and he had no idea of the severity.

Though Mark, his wife, and a Ukrainian family staying with them tried to see what was going on outside, they couldn't even make out their yard due to the darkness and rain the storm brought. "The wind wasn't in gusts," Mark described, "it was one big sheet driving sideways for about ten minutes."

Kyle Jenkin has always tracked weather as a hobby. As a fourth generation family owner of Cedar Beach Resort, he was keeping a close eye on Stouffville, aware of the impending storm. As radar worsened and cellular alerts began, Kyle started the drive home.

His drive was "something out of a movie. There were trees blowing across the road...along with all kinds of debris— from lawn chairs to trampolines."

*Image: Many hydro poles came down during the storm, blocking access throughout town.*





## Landscape Forever Changed

**After the windstorm passed, Dave and Janet went to assess the damage. The storm appeared to have bounced, with three large trees toppled over like dominoes across the driveway then nothing until they reached the middle of their property line.**

The roots of the trees lifted the concrete of their driveway and many trees had been snapped in half from the high winds.

There were trees downed over many neighbouring driveways, some so large that using a chainsaw would not be an option. Worse still, access to Kennedy Road was blocked with low hydro wires and a tree hanging over the road, leaving the residents of the entire street unable to leave the area.

Dave and Janet have lived in their current home for thirty-one years and had so many large, established trees the property was always in shade. Now, due to the loss of trees, they have sun and will have to reconsider all the other plantlife that thrived in shade and will no longer survive.

Just like Dave and Janet, Mark noticed how the damage in his own neighbourhood skipped along the street. In the immediate aftermath of the storm, the one road into and of his neighbourhood was blocked by downed trees. The forty year canopy that provided shade, privacy, and noise barriers was decimated. Mark lost shingles, sheds, a dozen trees and umbrellas. This was a "life altering event for nature", with birds establishing their spring nests unable to survive.

*Image : Aerial shots illustrate the vast amount of fallen trees and root balls that became part of cleanup. Provided by Aerolens Inc.*

Kyle was getting reports on the severe damage at Cedar Beach Resort from staff while he drove. Being the May long weekend, there were over two thousand people at the resort across the five hundred and sixty sites. Getting back to the resort proved a challenge because of all the inaccessible roads— a glimpse of the damage done in Stouffville.

Cedar Beach Resort spans fifty four acres north of Musselman Lake, and received a massive amount of damage from the derecho. Near impossible to imagine the damage, with many large silver maples uprooted, falling on properties and changing the landscape forever. Trailers, playgrounds, roads, and cars were crushed. Electrical infrastructure was damaged, and as tree roots that had grown around infrastructure came up, water pipes went with them. Unsurprisingly, there were customers staying at the resort unable to get out.

This spring day became a horrible experience that nobody saw coming, yet everyone managed to come together and lend a helping hand to begin the clean up.

## Community Resilience

**With the storm cleared, and damage assessed, it was time to go to work. Neighbours gathered and tackled trees across driveways that needed access the most, including those with illness, seniors and people unable to clear on their own.**

It took Dave, Janet, and others two days to clear one neighbour's driveway alone, doing back-breaking labour with chainsaws. It was stressful to do all this work then have no electricity to go home to, but some had generators to keep food temperature controlled, and used their gas BBQs to cook. Those in this area of town are on well and septic water systems, so they also had to deal with no water throughout these long days.



*Kyle and some of his team at Cedar Beach Resort.*

**Month after month, the work continued as they checked up on one another. It was clear that their "street is the community".**

Within thirty minutes of the storm passing, blue skies returned and Mark joined the rest of his community with chainsaws, handsaws and rakes. There are many seniors on the street, so the priority was to clear those driveways first so they could go for medical appointments or groceries. His "neighbourhood has always been very good about watching out for each other and it was "nice to see everyone out like that". The street was out of power and water for twenty eight hours, but they persevered by meeting to talk, share food and make sure that everyone was going to be okay.

**Kyle returned to an entire resort ravaged by weather. His team's top priority was to go through the park to ensure no medical attention was required. Thankfully, everyone was okay. Then they called in the rest of their staff, who dropped everything to come help.**

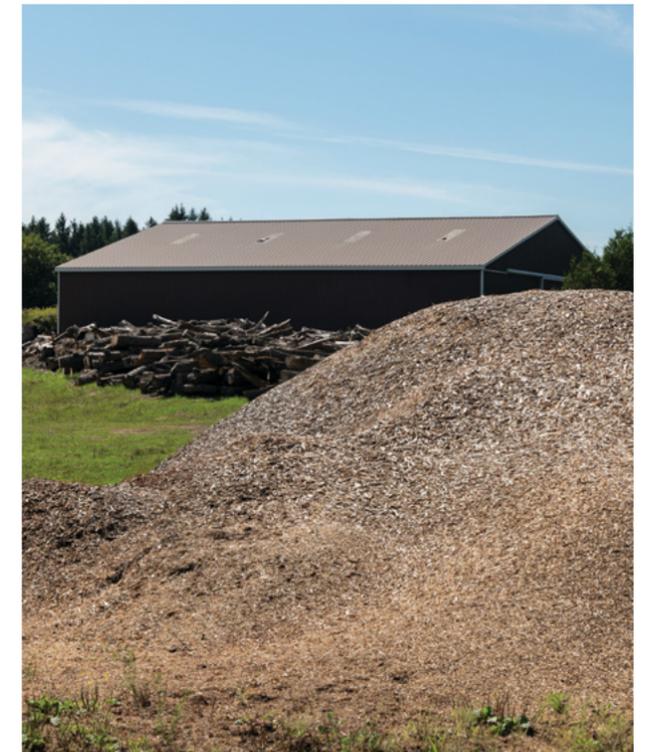
Any chainsaws and heavy equipment on the property was used to get people out of the park, and as the day went on, they made the decision to evacuate. It was the only time since 1929 an evacuation was called, but with uprooted and hanging trees wavering over populated areas, no power or water, Kyle was left "feeling unable to safely allow people to stay on the property... customers were fantastic and responded immediately, by gathering what they needed and evacuating".

Faced with an already difficult task of getting the resort ready for summer, Mark and his staff had the overwhelming job of cleaning up from the storm. For six weeks they spent ten hours a day taking down one hundred and fifty trees, roping off trees to still be cleared, cleaning up debris, moving trees from trailers and destroyed vehicles, and repairing damage to various structures and property— "The overall scope of the cleanup and trying to get the work done as quickly as possible to get the park opened seemed insurmountable at times."

Kyle still has sixty trees to be removed, and as most others have found, a big barrier to cleanup became trying to book professional arborists or equipment for large work. This was the same for services such as hydro that had come from across the province and beyond to attempt to keep up with the sheer amount of work to be done in our area.

Not only did neighbours help one another out... a huge amount of support came from Stouffville businesses. Many local businesses lent a hand to the community at large by providing services, bins, clean up, equipment, and food.

**Not only did neighbours help one another out... a huge amount of support came from Stouffville businesses. Many local businesses lent a hand to the community at large by providing services, bins, clean up, equipment, and food.**



*A small glimpse of the amount of work that went into cutting and chipping.*

**A summer meant to be full of relaxation was now a summer of cleanup. Mark's community went to work on their own properties, the field and forest where they hold events, and even a close-by golf course so their entire season wouldn't be lost.**

One of Mark's biggest challenges was tree stumps. It's a lot of work to delimb a tree, but a whole other issue to deal with the damage caused by root balls. They are large and can't be dug out, there is nowhere to dispose of them, to ground them down is expensive, and a small root ball takes a week and a half to burn, which can be extremely dangerous. Root balls across Stouffville continue, even now, to be a reminder of the storm.

## Looking Ahead

**The derecho storm of May 21st, 2022 did a lot of damage to the beautiful town of Stouffville. Our landscape has changed significantly and there are constant reminders of the work that still needs to be done. It took only a few moments of an extreme weather system cause such disaster, but it also illustrated just how strong this community is in supporting one another. It taught many some valuable lessons on emergency preparedness.**

Reminiscent of the power outage we saw in 2003, living and working without hydro isn't easy. Having generators ready to go in case of an outage is so important, and the derecho was another reminder of that. Generators are in short supply in times of crisis, so planning ahead and purchasing generators, saws, and other equipment now will allow you to help yourself and others if the time comes. Also be sure to stock up on water, non-perishables and cooking equipment, and review the town's emergency preparedness resources on [townofws.ca](http://townofws.ca).

We will continue hearing chainsaws and chippers well into 2023, cleaning up remaining remnants

of the year before. Residents should also consider preventative measures, such as assessing their property for unhealthy trees that can come down now to avoid future damage, and by reviewing their insurance policies.

Dave, Janet, Mark, and Kyle's stories all illuminate how important it is for our tight-knit community to come together in times of hardship, have empathy for others, and put safety first.

We weathered the storm, Stouffville. Now, we can look ahead to planning, being prepared, and replanting for our future.

*Image : Dave and Janet were quick to help out in their neighbourhood after the storm.*



# Downtown Revitalization

In what seems like years in the making, it appears phase two of Stouffville’s Downtown Revitalization project is on the horizon. By enhancing the natural environment and the cultural heritage of the downtown core, the revitalization project will create an attractive, active, animated, and vibrant downtown where people come together to live, work, shop, meet, and engage.

This past September, Stouffville Council gave the go-ahead to three important aspects of what could ultimately be Stouffville’s largest capital project.

First, they endorsed the “Downtown Main Street Reconstruction design concepts” that were developed for Albert Street to Park Drive. The concepts, not necessarily meant to be final designs, outlined the proposed streetscape, including trees, outdoor

furniture, overhead banners, sidewalks and curb designs.

Second, Council asked staff to research the costs to bury hydro lines in the downtown core. The report suggested five different alternatives for the wires, including the status quo, full burial, partial burial, or relocating them north or south of Main Street.

Third, Council endorsed “in principle the compensation of businesses ... for losses directly attributed to the reconstruction project.” They asked staff to “prepare a draft compensation program.”

Any construction on Main Street would not start until at least 2024 after the designs have been finalized and Edward Street is opened to Millard Street.

More info: [cometogetherws.ca/mainstreet](https://cometogetherws.ca/mainstreet)

## ● Edward Street

Edward Street reconstruction, including its opening to Millard Street, must be completed before construction on Main Street begins. Edward St. is expected to be finished in 2023.



## ● Signage

Gateway signage reading “Welcome to the Village of Stouffville” will be erected at the western approach near Main Street and Second Street.

## ● Traffic signals

Traffic signals at the intersection of Edward and Main Street are being proposed. Higher traffic volumes are anticipated on Edward Street once it opens up to Millard Street next year and considering that it is already difficult to pull out onto Main Street, traffic signals would create a safer intersection with more efficient traffic flow.

## ● Innovative technologies

Revitalization allows for the installation of new innovative technologies including free public wi-fi, cameras for crime prevention, and parking availability sensors.

## ● One-way streets

Street directions, such as the possibility of making Blake Street one-way, will be studied during the design phase of the project.

## ● Pedestrian crossing

Three pedestrian crossings will be built along Main Street. Each will provide a safe means for a pedestrian to cross the road easily. Each will consist of a sidewalk with ladder-style painted stripes, flashing lights and pedestrian push-buttons. One crossing will either be on the west or east side of Lloyd St. near Freel Lane. This crossing will be constructed before Main Street revitalization begins.

## ● Separated bike lanes

With two lanes of traffic and sidewalks of sufficient width for accessibility, there is not enough room remaining for two on-street parking lanes and separated bike lanes. With the desire of downtown merchants to maintain as many main parking spaces as possible, additional cyclist-friendly elements are being considered, including additional bike racks, bike repair stations and shared traffic/bike lanes in the downtown core. Dedicated bike lanes east of Park Drive and west of Albert Street are, however, proposed.

## ● Pedestrian crossing

A second pedestrian crossing, closer to 6240 Main Street and Buckingham Manor, is planned just east of O'Brien Ave.

## ● Curb Extensions

Curb extensions will be included at intersections to reduce the width of the road and slow traffic. They will also increase visibility of pedestrians, create a shorter crossing distance, and prevent illegal parking close to intersections.

# Infrastructure

Significant underground infrastructure improvements are proposed for this project. Large excavations will be made for the replacement of the road base, the watermain, and sanitary sewer, and the improvement of the storm sewer. A project of this scale is not expected to be completed again for well over 50 years. This work presents a rare opportunity to consider the burial of overhead hydro and telecom infrastructure. Three realistic options are currently being considered:

**Maintain existing aerial utilities:** This will not add to the cost of the project and will not be extending the duration of construction. However, it does not take advantage of an opportunity to improve the aesthetics of Main Street.

**Relocate north/south crosswires underground:** This option involves burial of the service wires that run north/south across Main Street. It does not result in the removal of the hydro poles or the east/west

wires, but it does improve the streetscape by eliminating some clutter over the roadway.

**Relocate all aerial services underground:** This option includes the burial of all hydro and telecom infrastructure. It achieves the best aesthetic improvement, although street-level transformers and switchgear will still be required.

## ● Pedestrian crossing

A third pedestrian crosswalk will be constructed in the heart of the downtown core near the Clock Tower.

## ● Furniture

A consistent suite of furnishings throughout the downtown will help create a unified and recognizable public realm and reinforce the identity of the downtown. Furnishings include benches, lighting, bollards, bicycle infrastructure and waste receptacles. Each element will be made of durable and natural materials that are long lasting and easily maintained. Furnishings will be located to guide movement through the downtown without cluttering streets and sidewalks.

## ● Sidewalks

The current interlocking brick sidewalk on Main Street is problematic due to heaving, settling and spalling. The Canadian climate makes it very difficult for interlocking sidewalks to provide a safe and accessible long-term solution. Alternative materials being considered include patterned concrete or a mixture of concrete and interlocking brick.

## ● Curbless streets

Curbless streets will prioritize pedestrian and cyclist movement by removing the grade-separation between the sidewalk and the roadway. This will create a shared space for all modes of transportation.

## ● Trees

Trees in our urban environment represent an important investment in community health, environmental conditions and overall quality of life. Native tree species will be planted throughout the downtown core. The native tree species were selected because they provide food and shelter for local wildlife, can handle the cold Canadian winters and hot summers, require less fertilizer, require less water and are non-invasive.

## ● Signage

Gateway signage reading "Welcome to the Village of Stouffville" will be erected at the eastern approach near the St. James Presbyterian Church.



The entire Main Street project will be funded 11% by development charges, 57% by the federal gas tax and 32% through water/wastewater reserves. The project will not be funded by property taxes.

## ● Removable bollards

Removable bollards allow parking spaces to be quickly and easily converted to protected pedestrian space and patio areas. Planters will also be incorporated to manage safety and soften the streetscape aesthetic.

# Business Impacts

During the initial phase of the project, the following will be considered to ease the impact on local businesses:

- The need for extensive communication with businesses and residents prior to and during construction. A full-time on-site staff/business liaison is being considered to facilitate advance and real-time communication.
- The development and application of construction strategies that will allow pedestrian, vehicular and delivery

access to businesses; including rolling road closures that minimize the length of closures.

- Provision of appropriate detours to avoid excessive traffic delays. This includes the opening of Edward Street to Millard Street.
- Planned parking arrangements that facilitate continued access to businesses for staff and customers; including Parking By-law amendments to improve the flexibility of public parking lots.

- Extended construction hours, including weekend work, to limit the duration of construction; balanced by a mindfulness of noise impacts on residential occupants.
- Consideration of financial compensation for businesses negatively impacted by construction.
- Consideration of a financial incentive for contractor work completed in advance of the agreed-upon project completion date.

# The Stouffville Market Lives!

Written by Susan Tucker



## The Stouffville Market Lives!



The 2022 season ran from Saturday May through to October this year, and occupied the outdoor space at 6240 Main St. bringing a wide variety of products and artisan wares to our fair town.

**This is the first year of this new market and we organizers (myself, Chris & Freda Sidiropoulos, and Laura Cusack) are thrilled with the response. It was the first time for us as a team to run the market after taking it over from Town staff that ran it for the last 2 years.**

It is a big job organizing a market like this, with many hours spent behind scenes doing all the preparation each week, but come Saturday, it (mostly) ran quite seamlessly. Mother Nature did us a huge favour by bringing us good weather every week, the exception

being the tornado day that caused so much devastation for so many of our friends and neighbours. So, as I tap my head and say "touch wood", let's hope she brings us nothing but sunshine and good weather next year.

Our goal was to put on a market that would bring townfolk out for a nice day of shopping, meeting and greeting and introducing everyone to great vendors.

**Our central location was ideal in that it provided lots of space, was easy to get to and accessible for all. We wanted to maintain a level of exclusivity among vendors... meaning we were very conscious of not having multiple vendors selling the same type of products.**

We felt that is a disservice to vendors and patrons alike, so we did our best to ensure that did not happen. It was wonderful to see so many people come out to the market, after being cooped up for so long, it was invigorating to be out each weekend socializing and welcoming so many vendors, neighbours, shoppers and wanderers. Hopefully those lockdown days are behind us and we will continue to move forward.

Vendors had the option of choosing whatever dates they wanted to attend, some chose all 22 weeks, some chose half season, some chose dates here and there when it fit their schedule and we think having that flexibility worked out well. It assured patrons that they could count on certain vendors being there each week, and brought new and different vendors as well, it gave good diversity to the market. We had vendors applying all season up to and including the last weekend!

Some products and businesses we had, had honey, jerky meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, cookies, candles, cupcakes, gluten free goodies, butter tarts, bread, craft beer, wine, health food, educational booths, Indian spices and snacks, health care, skin care, eco friendly products, plants, woodworking, painting, gifts, health food, jams and spreads, olive oil, tarot card reading, spiritual items, cannoli, desserts, cars, clothing, jewelry, crystals, gems, quilts, popcorn, nail polish, financial advisor, insurance agent, driveway sealing, handknit /crocheted items, tea, dog treats, pet accessories, catering, sunglasses, sauce, syrups, meatballs, photography, many non-profit and charitable groups... the list goes on, we had so many great vendors with such wonderful products.

**We'll be gearing up again in January booking vendors for the 2023 season which will run May 13 – October 14.**

The website [www.thestouffvillemarket.ca](http://www.thestouffvillemarket.ca) has our vendor application form and lots of vendor information, so if you'd like to apply, please do so! We are very much looking forward to seeing our past vendors, meeting new ones, and especially seeing all the people that come to shop on those beautiful Saturdays!

**Thank you to our sponsors for the support you provided us to get us up and running...**

- The Whitchurch-Stouffville Legacy Fund
- Main St. Bakehouse
- The Powell and Gallop Team/Royal LePage Your Community Realty
- Lite 88.5 Radio
- Redefined Finds
- Belicious Products
- Hummingbird Hub
- Weezel's Wood Working



