

Renewing Newmarket

FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

Mayor Van Bynen's Address

Chamber of Commerce Luncheon | Friday, February 11, 2011





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Good afternoon Madame Chair (Sarah Jane), Madame President (Deborah), valued Chamber members and guests.

Thank you for taking time out of your hectic schedules to once again join me here today to hear about how we will continue to renew, revitalize, recreate and re-imagine our extraordinary community in 2011 and beyond.

With the election of a new Council, this year represents a new beginning.

Some of the faces around the Council Chamber have changed and these newcomers bring with them a renewed and fresh perspective.

What has not changed for our new and existing Council members is our shared commitment and determination to building a better Newmarket.


Over the next four years, we will work closely with our community partners and our business community to continue to make Newmarket a desired destination for culture, shopping, parks, trails, restaurants, recreation, heritage, jobs and business.

We have made great progress in establishing a strong foundation for the future of our community. You need only to visit our downtown area or drive down Davis Drive to realize that Newmarket is transforming.

Today, you will hear about a number of projects that are already underway that are part of a bigger plan to *Renew Newmarket*. Over the past year, you have heard a lot about the Renewing Newmarket initiative. Once again, I would like to say that this is not about change, it is about transformation.

It is about transforming an already extraordinary community and making it even better. It is about creating balance between our past and our future.

It is about protecting and enhancing our natural and cultural heritage while continuing to manage growth and plan for the future.



Four years from now we will look back and realize that this next term of Council will be one of the most important in Newmarket's history.

We are at a turning point and we must continue to lead Newmarket's transformation. We will face challenges and we will have to make some difficult decisions.

With that I would like to introduce you to your new municipal Council, the people who will lead this bold transformation:

- Regional Councillor John Taylor
- Councillor Tom Vegh (Ward 1)
- Councillor Dave Kerwin (Ward 2)
- Councillor Jane Twinney (Ward 3)
- Councillor Tom Hempen (Ward 4)
- Councillor Joe Sponga (Ward 5)
- Councillor Maddie Di Muccio (Ward 6)
- Councillor Chris Emanuel (Ward 7)

Throughout our term, we will be supported in our many innovative endeavors by our hardworking staff, people like:

- Bob Shelton, our CAO
- Bob Dixon, Commissioner of Corporate and Financial Services and Acting Commissioner of Legal and Development Services
- Rob Prentice, Commissioner of Community Services
- Paul Ferguson, President and CEO of Newmarket-Tay Power Distribution Ltd.
- Todd Kyle, CEO of Newmarket Public Library
- Ian Laing, Chief of Central York Fire Services
- And all of our talented staff, many of whom are here today.

I would also like to acknowledge some special guests that are joining us today...

- Frank Klees, MPP
- Former Mayor's Tim Jones and Tom Taylor, both working with Neighbourhood Network, another successful community partnership
- Andrea Witty, vivaNext (sponsor)
- Lena Demarco, Bell (sponsor)
- Last but certainly not least, I would like to introduce my wife Roxanne

With the 2011 budget process underway, we will once again strive to continue to provide the high quality of programs and services that Newmarket residents are accustomed to.

Year-over-year our community survey ranks our Fire Services as the most important service delivered by the Town of Newmarket and they have rated our performance in delivering this service as very high.

Since 2002, we have had amalgamated fire services with our neighbours in Aurora. This innovative strategy demonstrates how communities can work together to provide the most efficient and effective services while maintaining fiscal responsibility. Just another example of how we continue to lead the way in municipal collaboration and capture real benefits for our community.

In 2011, we will see the addition of 20 new firefighters to respond to growth over the past 5 years and to continue to ensure the health and safety of both communities, remains well beyond the ordinary.

Our objective this year is to maintain a responsible and affordable tax levy to respond to current and future needs.

We have consistently ranked among the lowest tax levies when compared with our neighbours.

Once again, we have the lowest tax levy per capita in York Region and our property taxes remain below the average, when compared with 83 municipalities across Ontario.

As we look back at our many significant accomplishments and achievements and as we look forward to all of the milestones that are just around the corner, there is a common theme that emerges.

As business professionals we are familiar with the four p's of marketing, but when it comes to the Town of Newmarket we also have the 3 E's – Environment, Economic Development and Excellence.

2010 proved to be a very exciting and rewarding year for the Town of Newmarket. Last year, we were ranked the 15th best place to live in Canada out of 179 towns and cities, topping the list as the best place to live in York Region.

For those of us who call Newmarket home, this came as no surprise.

We were also recognized for our continued dedication to creating a sustainable community and for our unwavering commitment to environmental initiatives.

In the spring of 2010, Newmarket received the CH2M HILL Sustainability Award from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. We were recognized nationally for our 34-lot subdivision of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum homes, a first in Canada.

AND...Newmarket staff took the top honours in the Smart Commute Central York Clean Air Commute Challenge out of 67 participating organizations.

When we opened the doors to the Town's new Operations Centre last September, it was already an award-winning facility.

Winning the 2009 Award of Excellence from Canadian Architect Magazine for its innovative design and environmentalism, the Operations Centre is paving the way for Newmarket's future.

This new Centre will provide the means necessary to service the community as it continues to evolve and the population grows to approximately 98,000 by 2026.

With a long list of green features, the Operations Centre design will demonstrate an energy use reduction of 44 per cent, a 40 per cent reduction in domestic water usage and will save 411 tonnes of Co2 from entering the environment each year.

As well, our 2009/10 Community report won the top award from the Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) in the community profile category.

This is a significant achievement because it recognizes how well we are doing in marketing ourselves to potential residents and businesses.

That is just a snapshot of some of our major accomplishments in 2010.

Last year, in my annual Chamber speech, I told you about where we were and where we are going. I am very pleased to say that today we are that much closer to realizing our vision of *renewing* Newmarket.

We have taken great steps towards our destination. We are quickly moving from concept to construction.

This type of progress and these kinds of prestigious achievements don't just happen by chance. It is a result of hard work, strong leadership, strategic vision and perhaps most importantly partnerships.

By recognizing that 'together we're better', Newmarket has and will continue to realize efficiencies and become even more effective by working with our municipal neighbours, other levels of government, community organizations and our business community.

One of the best examples of a successful partnership is our Newmarket Economic Development Advisory Committee (NEDAC).

This key group of business owners has offered invaluable advice and direction in helping to formulate Newmarket's economic development strategy.

We will continue to value and solicit the unique insights and feedback of our business community to create sustainable local jobs and business opportunities that benefit the community as a whole.

Much of our Economic Development strategy going forward will largely be shaped by the health and knowledge sectors. We are seeing a significant shift in Newmarket's job market. From 1998 – 2010, we have had a 107 per cent increase in the health and social services sector and we have also seen a 116 per cent increase in business and professional services during the same timeframe.

For the first time ever, in 2010, the health and social services sector had the highest level of employment edging out the retail sector.

This is in no small part due to the success of our very own Southlake Regional Health Centre. Many of us remember it as York County, which was once upon a time a modest community hospital. Now Southlake, our regional health Centre is one of the most modern and progressive health care facilities in the country.

Last year, Southlake opened the doors to the new Stronach Regional Cancer Centre. It is estimated that approximately 1,800 cancer patients will receive more than 15,000 treatments at this facility every year.

Known as a trail blazer, Southlake was also recognized for two groundbreaking procedures - one was a first in Ontario and the other a first in Canada. In addition to this type of cutting-edge medical treatment, there were more than 70,000 emergency visits and just over 2,400 babies were born, at Southlake last year.

We are very fortunate to have this world-class health facility at our doorstep. Southlake will not only play a vital role in the quality of care provided to our community, but in our economic future as well.

We will continue to promote Newmarket as a premiere location for a Medical Health Campus.

A key to the success of making this happen is also our partnership with the Health Sciences Commission, which saw its roots begin right here within the Chamber of Commerce.

In developing our Economic Development Strategy, we learned there is the potential to create 1,200 to 1,400 new jobs at Southlake.

If we are successful in establishing a Health Sciences Campus, this could translate into a potential annual wage income of \$115 - \$135 million. Thousands of indirect jobs could also be created as a result of these health sector positions. This would have a colossal impact on our business and service providers. For you, that would equate to purchasing power and for our community it would create a sustainable long-term financial foundation.

Another crucial partnership we have is with the Provincial and Federal Government. This collaborative approach is helping to revitalize and rejuvenate Newmarket's historic downtown.

I have said it before and I will say it again – the downtown area is the living room of our community. It's where people go to have conversations, to meet with their neighbours and gain a sense of what we stand for.

Newmarket's historic downtown has been identified in the Town's Cultural Master Plan as our cultural centre.

The continued rollout of the Master Plan will lead the way in making Newmarket a more creative community that embraces place making, cultural celebration and the arts.

We are well on our way to establishing our very first arts Council following two successful Arts gala events. Our 3rd Annual Celebrate the Arts gala will once again be held at Pickering College in May, and I hope to see you there!

Another component of the plan will see Newmarket's Old Town Hall restored to its former glory.

Last year we said goodbye to Newmarket's old Community Centre arena, which served the community well for almost 100 years. But the decommissioning of the arena was one of the first steps in our transformation from pavement to parkland.

2011 will see the completion of the Community Urban Space Project, just in time to bring the Farmer's Market back to its home in downtown Newmarket.

This progressive park area will not only provide an important missing link in our trail system, it will unite our community. It will bring people together from all areas of Town to celebrate community events and experience everything that our downtown area has to offer. We have *already* seen a spike in the economic interest and investment in that area of town because of CUSP.

In 2010, 21 buildings along Davis Drive were moved in preparation for the \$315 million vivaNext rapid transit system. This project will have the largest impact on our community since the arrival of the railroad.

It will completely transform public transit as we know it while helping to alleviate decades of traffic congestion in our corridors.

This is not your ordinary construction project. We have worked with organizations like Habitat for Humanity to ensure that 85 % of building materials from buildings removed were reused, recycled and diverted from landfill.

VivaNext has also worked with the Newmarket historical to ensure a number of historic and heritage artifacts have been recovered and preserved.

I wanted to share with you one of the key components of this project which will be the reconstruction of the Keith bridge.

Working closely with the Heritage Committee, the reconstruction will reflect the community's rich architectural heritage while making way for the new rapidways. With work already underway and an expected completion date of late next year, this bridge will be a testament to the history of transportation in Newmarket.

It will not only be a bridge spanning the Holland River, it will act as a bridge between Newmarket's past and our future.

We have joined forces with York Region, community leaders like Belinda Stronach and more than 30 residents and community faith groups to make a difference in Newmarket and throughout York Region.

Over the past year, more than \$200,000 has been raised in support of York Region's first homeless shelter for single women. We are more than one fifth of the way there in achieving our goal of raising \$1 million.

When Belinda's Place opens its doors, it will offer hope to women without a home.

By providing life-changing services, we will be able to give countless women in our community the chance to rebuild their lives and start anew.

Responding to the needs of our community is a reflection of our constantly changing surroundings.

One of the most monumental changes in our community and around the world is of course the impact of social media.

For many of us social networking has become a way of life. There is no denying that technology has forever changed the way we communicate and the way we do business.

Keeping this in mind Newmarket has two key projects underway that will greatly enhance our technological capabilities and keep us on the top of our game when it comes to the latest and greatest in cutting- edge technology.

The Shared Digital Infrastructure (SDI) Project is a continuing partnership between the Town, our Library, Hospital, Chamber of Commerce and Newmarket Hydro.

SDI will seek opportunities to enhance, upgrade and integrate our technological infrastructure. It will also create job opportunities to help ensure that we boast a tech-savvy workforce that is ready for the future. Through this project we will seek to increase our economic development opportunities by attracting new talent and investment to the community in order to cultivate a 21st century knowledge-based economy.

In line with SDI, is our commitment to the i-Canada declaration. Municipalities across the country have come together to support and encourage i-Canada.

The goal is to ensure that by the year 2020 Canada is clearly one of the world's leaders in the global Smart, Ubiquitous and Intelligent Community movement with benefits available for all citizens, companies and institutions. This is something that will make Newmarket a preferred location for future-oriented businesses.

Within the next 60 days, SunEdison...North America's largest solar energy services provider...will be establishing its first Canadian solar panel manufacturing plant right here in Newmarket.

This is a real win for our community...one that will result in the creation of *over 200 green jobs*.

This business aligns perfectly with the Town's commitment to the environment, and to our economic development strategy...we knew that, and we aggressively and strategically pitched Newmarket to SunEdison.

Through months of ongoing communications and meetings, we convinced SunEdison that Newmarket was *the best place in Ontario* for its first Canadian plant.

In 2011, we will continue to seek out and attract these types of quality businesses to our community.

In 2010, we conducted a Town-wide survey. What we found is that 96 per cent of Newmarket residents are satisfied living in Newmarket, and 80 per cent of residents are satisfied with the services we provide. This is the result of all of our contributions to this community by our many partners.

Last year I spoke a lot about the difference between the tangible things you can see in a community like roads, buildings and infrastructure.
But it is what lies beneath the surface, the things you cannot see, that truly captures the essence of a community.

It is what takes place in the spaces that we have created that builds relationships and builds communities.

You, our business partners play a large role in shaping this community. Thank you for all of your grass roots efforts both individually and collectively. I invite you to continue to make your mark by participating in a community-wide Minga.

The concept of Minga comes from South America. Although there is no exact English translation what it represents is a community coming together to work for the benefit of all. Part of our Minga will include the organization of a town-wide 'give back' day which will provide all of us the opportunity to pitch in and demonstrate our commitment to this community that we are very proud to call home.

I invite everyone to join us on this journey. Margaret Mead once said “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” We will all be a part of rebuilding this community. Collectively, we will do something bigger than any one of us could have accomplished alone.

In conclusion, I am reminded of an old story about a stone mason’s apprentice. Although this was not a particularly well-paying or highly regarded job, day after day he would drag heavy stones from one place to another.

But, one day when a tourist asked him what he was doing he did not complain about being a lowly stone mason’s helper. Instead, he said I am building a cathedral.

Like the stone mason’s apprentice – we too have a long road ahead. We will have obstacles to overcome and at times we face uphill battles...but I ask that you keep the end result in mind. Change is not always easy to embrace. However, we need to look beyond the short-term disruptions to appreciate the long-term benefits.

We may not be building a cathedral, but we are building a community.

And together we will ensure that this remains one of the best communities to live in Canada.

Thank you very much.