

Renewing Newmarket

BUILDING OUR FUTURE...TOGETHER

Mayor Van Bynen's Address

Chamber of Commerce Luncheon | Friday, February 10, 2012





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Special thanks to Southlake CEO, Dr. Dave Williams, for his very dynamic presentation.

Southlake has a very important role in our community, not only in terms of the world class healthcare they provide, but also in the way they can take us to the next level in terms of creating home grown jobs through their global branding, and their ability to attract the kinds of jobs that will provide lifetime career opportunities, right here in Newmarket.

So, I was happy to hear that you were able to take the time to tell our Chamber about all the great things happening at Southlake. I am proud to say that I am a member of Southlake's Board of Directors.

Good afternoon Mister Chair (Steve), Madame President (Deborah) and valued Chamber members and guests.

First, I would like to acknowledge our municipal Council. I would like to commend my colleagues for their hard work, dedication and commitment to this community.

Sitting on Council is not a nine-to-five job. It is at times 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Let me introduce...

- 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)

At the Town of Newmarket, we pride ourselves on the close working relationships we have with our staff.

Every day we are supported by a talented staff team who take as much pride in our community as we do on Council, many of them are joining us today.

I would also like to welcome some special guests...

- Regional Chair Bill Fisch
- Former Mayors Tim Jones and Tom Taylor, both working with Neighbourhood Network, another successful community partnership

Over the past year, Council has been working towards establishing strategic priorities for our community in 2012 and beyond.

Four key areas we have identified are: **Sustainability, Community Building, Environmental Responsibility** and **Accountability & Transparency**. While each of these pillars are equally important on their own, combined they are the cornerstones upon which we will move forward and continue to make Newmarket *even better*.

This is my fifth opportunity to speak with you during my tenure as Mayor.

As I stand before you today, I am reminded of how fast five years have gone by and how far we have come in such a short time.

In just half a decade, we have...

- Opened the Magna Centre...a state-of-the-art facility which meets the recreational needs of our entire community and will continue to do so for years to come
- Welcomed the Olympic Torch on its 106-day journey across the nation
- Increased waste diversion from landfill sites by over 8,000 tonnes
- Constructed an EcoLogic subdivision...the first in Canada to be a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum certified subdivision
- Added 26 kilometres of new trails to our community
- And...opened an award-winning Operations Centre, one of a few facilities of its kind in the country to be LEED Silver certified

Each of these initiatives and achievements take our current needs into consideration, while also looking ahead to meet the needs of our community until approximately 2031.

Most recently, we opened Newmarket Riverwalk Commons, our community's newest landmark and crowning jewel. We have all carefully watched this urban park develop from concept to construction to completion.

The creation of Newmarket Riverwalk Commons and the revitalization of our Community Centre was not just about creating a community space – it was about connecting a town.

The completion of this 8.4 acre park provides an important missing link to connect our entire trail system from north to south, connecting us with our neighbouring communities and bringing people together.

Not only will this project contribute to enhancing and revitalizing the downtown area; it will also ensure that this area remains a cultural hub and continues to drive cultural and economic development.

Already garnering international attention, Newmarket Riverwalk Commons will be featured at the Liveable Cities conference in Portland, Oregon this spring.

As reflected in our strategic priorities, this is about **building a community**. Newmarket Riverwalk Commons is just one example of a bigger plan to *Renew Newmarket*.

Over the past year, we have continued to see progressive changes in our community.

By now, I hope you are all familiar with our Renewing Newmarket initiative. It is not about change it is about transformation.

Perhaps our biggest transformation will take place on Davis Drive as the vivaNext rapid transit system takes shape. When we first heard about vivaNext we had some resistance and we have overcome many obstacles. This video shows what we have been able to accomplish in 2011.
(Viva video)

First, I would like to thank our business owners for their patience, cooperation and understanding. We will continue to have growing pains, and we will have more challenges before it gets better, but we must keep our long term vision in mind. We are not just building a road...we are building our future.

I would like to congratulate Council for their leadership and vision to understand the importance of having this high level transit system in place.

Hazel Mcallion has often said that her biggest regret as the Mayor of Mississauga was a lack of transit planning.

It was a difficult decision at the time, but I think we made the right decision for us to move forward.

VivaNext will not only provide a safe, convenient alternative to driving, it will also transform Davis Drive as we know it. Davis Drive will become a place people want to go, rather than a place they have to go.

This instrumental project will allow for further intensification along the Yonge Street and Davis Drive corridors.

We have already approved two multi-residential developments and three more are currently in the planning process.

This growth will be designated in our urban corridors as we will continue to protect and preserve our existing neighbourhoods and green spaces.

Upward development will create much-needed office space for new and existing businesses while also creating the housing necessary to accommodate our growing workforce.

This enables us to continue to follow the blue print established by our official plan as our population increases to nearly 100,000 by 2026.

We are beginning conversations for the creation of a York Region Central Services Centre.

This 8-storey, 430,000 square foot centre will consolidate 9 different Newmarket Regional locations and act as a catalyst in developing our urban growth centre.

As we continue to intensify and literally 'grow up', we will continue to focus on economic development opportunities, by attracting positive and progressive businesses and continuing to create homegrown jobs.

We are now seeing the economy begin to recover. Our data tells us that our business activity has been restored to what it was in 2007, before the recession.

We have worked closely with our Newmarket Economic Development Advisory Committee (NEDAC) to develop a strategy that will act as the roadmap to our economic future.

Now is the time for us to move forward to implementation.

Over the past 10 years, we have seen significant growth in our business services and health services sector. In the past two years health services has been neck-and neck with the retail sector for the highest level of employment in Newmarket.

This is all part of a greater plan to ensure Newmarket remains an attractive and sustainable community for residents and businesses.

Sustainability has become a popular buzzword among municipalities.

Although there may be different interpretations... as one of our strategic priorities...for us it means balancing the needs of the present , without compromising future needs.

This is about taking proactive steps to secure the future of our community.

It means thinking big, stepping outside the box, partnering for the greater good and leaving a lasting legacy of sustainability for the Newmarket of tomorrow.

We will do this by continuing to create innovative policies, deliver cost effective services, maintain an affordable tax rate for our residents and business owners, and plan for our future.

Some examples of progressive steps we have taken include our Asset Replacement Fund and Service Pricing Policy. Both of these measures are in place to stabilize the tax rate and plan for the future.

Contributing \$12 million dollars annually into our Asset Replacement Fund ensures we will be able to maintain our approximately \$1 billion dollars worth of assets in years to come.

Our Service Pricing Policy balances the importance of individual needs with the greater community good and the revenues necessary to provide the high level of service that Newmarket residents are accustomed to.

Our most recent community survey tells us that we are doing a topnotch job in this area, as over 80 per cent of Newmarket residents are satisfied with the services we provide, and 96 percent of residents are happy living in Newmarket.

In fact, in 2011 we were once again recognized as one of the 25 best places to live in Canada.

All this while maintaining one of the lowest tax levies per capita in York Region and keeping our property taxes below average compared to 83 municipalities across Ontario.

Our commitment to sustainability is not only a financial commitment.

Newmarket has always had a steadfast **commitment to the environment** which is also reflected in our strategic priorities.

We have led the way in the GTA in passing environmental bylaws against idling and pesticides.

We also have numerous planning bylaws in place, including a wood lot preservation bylaw to protect our natural heritage.

SunEdison is an excellent example of the type of businesses that you can expect to see in Newmarket as we move forward.

This globally renowned solar energy provider chose Newmarket to produce their first Canadian-made solar panels, because of our shared commitment to environmental sustainability.

This partnership will not only benefit the environment, it has also created 400 local jobs, aligning perfectly with our Economic Development Strategy.

Other examples of our green initiatives include our Honeywell retrofit program, our award-winning LEED Silver Operations Centre, our EcoLogic subdivision and our extensive Smart Commute program.

According to Peter Drucker, “Efficiency is doing things right, effectiveness is doing the right things.” When it comes to being green, Newmarket is always committed to doing the right things to protect our environment for future generations.

As our fourth strategic priority, the Town of Newmarket is deeply committed to being **open and transparent**. This is reflected in our core values which include Courage & Creativity, Accountability & Accessibility, Respect & Integrity and Excellence.

To ensure we are practicing what we preach in terms of accountability and accessibility we have a number of measures in place.

We are always looking for new and innovative ways to engage our residents. Whether hosting Mayor in the Square, attending community events and ward meetings or seeking feedback via social media, public engagement is one of our top priorities and we take it very seriously.

In this new age of technology, we must embrace social media or be left in the dust. Newmarket has joined the cyber world and we are finding this to be a very useful tool for interacting with our residents.

With 1,200 Twitter followers, almost 5,000 hits on just one of our Youtube videos and over two million impressions on a recent Facebook survey, social media has become a staple of how we communicate and how we do business.

As a member of the iCanada declaration, Newmarket is committed to creating a highly progressive and competitive market place through the use of technology.

iCanada is dedicated to the creation of smart communities across the country, through the use of ultra-high-speed networks, for a globally competitive economy.

The reality is that just like the river was the basis for access to trading posts, like the railroad and the 404, a broadband strategy is a key economic driver for our future.

Much of Newmarket’s success is in no small part based on partnerships both within our community and beyond our borders.

We have always valued the strong relationship we have with the Chamber of Commerce.

Just a few of our joint partnerships with the chamber include the Shared Digital Infrastructure (SDI) project, Smart Commute, the Health Sciences Commission and Prosperity Council.

We also have productive partnerships with our neighbours in Northern York Region, known as the N6. In 2007, we partnered with the N6 to save \$11 million from an innovative and collaborative approach to waste diversion and in 2011, we realized an additional \$750,000 savings through a joint insurance Request for Proposal.

Our partnerships with other levels of government, including the Region, the Province and the Federal government have turned visions like the Riverwalk Commons into a reality. Numerous road and infrastructure improvements have also been made possible and in the next couple years we will see our Old Town Hall restored to its former glory as a result of these collaborative efforts.

We are also moving beyond our Canadian borders and creating international partnerships. We recently welcomed delegations from Italy and Finland to Newmarket, drawing attention on a world stage. This was as a result of our integral partnership with Southlake.

In the words of Henry Ford – "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."

In summary, our economic history began in the 1800s, when Newmarket's founders gathered around an elm tree to trade goods.

Becoming an important trading artery of the time is how we came to be known as the 'new market'.

Today, we have more than 85,000 residents and approximately 2,400 businesses, employing 40,000 people. As we once again transform and reshape our identity as the 'new Newmarket', we will remain rooted in tradition as we embark upon a new journey.

Like the old trading tree upon which we were founded, together we will plant the seeds of our future.

Thank you.