

Newmarket Chamber of Commerce – Mayor’s Annual Address
Friday, April 22, 2016
Cardinal Golf Club

Good afternoon Chair Veronica Williams, President and CEO Debra Scott, members of the Newmarket Chamber of Commerce and guests.

Welcome and thank you Newmarket-Aurora MP Kyle Peterson and MPP Chris Ballard, Aurora Mayor Geoffrey Dawe, Georgina Mayor Margaret Quirk and colleagues for joining us here today.

I’m very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to you this afternoon about how Newmarket is accelerating the growth of our community.

Today, I will tell you about the progress we’ve made in the year since my last Chamber address and show you exactly where we’re headed in the months ahead.

I’ll also outline our plans for economic development and demonstrate the direct impact of the strong partnerships we have with local groups and businesses on our community.

One of those core partnerships is with Southlake Regional Health Centre, and we’ll be joined shortly by President and CEO Dr. Dave Williams who will speak to us about the many innovative projects developing in the CreateIT Now innovation centre.

At this time however, I’d like start off by introducing the members of our Council: Deputy Mayor and Regional Councillor John Taylor and our Ward Councillors:

- Tom Vegh
- Dave Kerwin
- Jane Twinney
- Tom Hempen
- Joe Sponga
- Kelly Broome-Plumley and
- Christina Bisanz

As well as our:

- CAO Bob Shelton
- Commissioners Ian McDougall, Peter Noehammer, Esther Armchuk and regent commissioner Mike Mayes
- As well as members of our senior staff.

These are members of our outstanding team that has just been recognized with four notable provincial awards.

My wife Roxanne is here today, supporting me as always.

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I should also let you know that this speech, along with a presentation that I made to your Board of Directors, will be available on the Town of Newmarket website following this presentation.

Since we met last spring, our Council and staff have been working diligently to make progress on the targets set out by our Council’s Strategic Priorities. Our collective focus for this term is on:

- Economic Development and Jobs
- Enhanced Recreational Opportunities
- Community Engagement
- Efficiency and Financial Management and
- Traffic Safety & Mitigation

Throughout today’s presentation you will hear how Council’s **Economic Development priorities** will fuel the growth of our community.

But before we dive into where we’re going, it’s important to briefly outline some of the great progress we’ve made in our other strategic priority areas.

We’ve put an emphasis on community building through providing enhanced recreational opportunities and increasing our engagement with our residents.

Over the past year, we expanded our recreational programs by officially adopting The Recreation Playbook.

The Playbook is our recreational master plan and was influenced by input from our residents.

From their feedback, we approved additional outdoor splash pads, skate parks and skating rinks, and worked to create some unique community projects for all to enjoy.

One of the most cutting-edge projects developed in 2015 was the construction and implementation of the internationally acclaimed HollisWealth Story Pod.

The Story Pod is an innovative, community-supported lending library designed by AKB architects, constructed by Town staff and sponsored by HollisWealth, which has gained global attention for Newmarket.

Positive news about the Story Pod surfaced on almost every continent, and in January, was nominated for building of the year by ArchDaily. What a great moment for our Town.

In eight months, the Story Pod page on our website has had more than a million hits. Seven hundred thousand were unique users.

The First Lady of Gabon, Africa reached out to the architect and requested a Story Pod be shipped to her.

You can see that unique innovative structures like this help contribute to the overall cultural identity of our community.

Another important contributor to this identity will be the Old Town Hall, which is currently undergoing **final** finishing touches.

Once complete and open to the public this fall, Old Town Hall will have a capacity for 200 people and will be fully equipped with Wi-Fi; providing modern conveniences within one of Newmarket’s most historic buildings. The unique design pays homage to our history, while recognizing the prospects of our bright future.

Moving on to community engagement, we held a very well-attended Community Open House this past December, which gave residents the chance to speak one-on-one, ask questions and provide input to members of Council and staff. Another Community Open House is scheduled for May.

In addition to the Open House, we created a Recreation Pop-Up Shop in the Upper Canada Mall for three months over the summer to generate even more excitement and enrollment for our recreation programs. The Pop-Up Shop is yet another award-winning concept.

Finally, we engaged the public by hosting two budget events, and their feedback helped to shape our 2016 Budget.

I’d like to now speak a bit more about our Budget, and our financial management and efficiency priorities.

Newmarket is committed to taking a future-focused approach to budgeting. To start with, we have a tax rate that is competitive with the GTA, regional and provincial average.

In 2016, we’ll put approximately \$16 million in the Asset Replacement Fund to support long-term planning and the maintenance of our infrastructure. As part of this process, we developed an asset management strategy.

We also started a storm water management rate review to help prepare us for flood prevention, protect our environment and maintain our aging assets. You’ll hear more about storm water management later this year.

Investing in our infrastructure is crucial to our overall growth and future success.

Ensuring our roads are safe and reducing traffic congestion is another key priority of Council.

On this front, we adopted an Active Transportation Plan to support major transit service enhancements along with other modes of travel.

Davis Drive is already transforming the way people get around in Newmarket. I’m happy to report that the Davis vivaNext rapidway is operating, with final landscaping and streetscaping taking place as we speak.

Feedback from our community has been positive, and we’re looking forward to the public art installation dedications on the Keith Bridge later this year.

Upgraded infrastructure has improved travelling for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

A \$350k grant from the Ontario Government for a new bikeway that will connect residents in our east and west parts of Town will continue to move us forward... literally.

We have surpassed a significant milestone in our overall transportation plans but are mindful that construction is still being done on Yonge Street.

Yonge Street is yet another project which will require work and patience in the short term, but will deliver long-term changes that will benefit our community for generations to come.

On that note, I would now like to shift our focus to the future and speak about economic development and jobs.

The construction I just mentioned along our Davis and Yonge corridors plays an integral and historic role in the overall transformation of our community.

By 2020, the Regional Annex Building on Yonge Street should be complete.

This 422K square foot, 8-storey building will allow for the consolidation of Regional Services, improve overall program delivery to our area, and allow for more jobs in our community.

Funding for the Annex Building has been approved by Regional Council in the 2016 Budget, with construction scheduled to start later this year.

Between the Annex Building, the redevelopment of Davis and the construction on Yonge Street, we’ve seen an investment of close to **half a billion dollars** in Newmarket’s infrastructure in the past five years alone.

Projects like these will contribute to the development goals set out in the Town’s Urban Centres Secondary Plan.

Along Davis and Yonge, we’re planning for the expansion of condos and rental properties, mixed-use residential, and commercial buildings.

By build out – which is notionally around 2051 – this area could see the addition of **33,000 people** and **32,000 jobs**.

In order to stimulate this anticipated growth, we need to attract businesses and investors by showing them the full potential of this area as a great market.

Our Council and staff have been concentrating on competitive positioning and evolving our economic development strategies for Newmarket.

As a key component of this, we’re currently working on targeted marketing solutions for Davis Drive.

Davis Drive offers our residents and our businesses access to parks and trails.

Davis provides close proximity to our historic Downtown, to transit, to our healthcare facilities, to retail and to commercial businesses.

Our Economic Development Office is working with the Newmarket Economic Development Advisory Committee – or NEDAC – to leverage these strengths by implementing a three-pronged approach to growth.

It involves meeting with targeted property owners of Davis Drive to identify future plans, their needs, and the potential barriers to development.

It involves identifying high-value potential financial and non-monetary incentives intended to accelerate redevelopment plans.

And it involves producing marketing material and a full public relations campaign to promote and support corridor development.

This approach reinforces NEDAC’s mandate to provide strategic advice on facilitating and promoting balanced, sustainable, long-term economic growth that will benefit Newmarket and our residents through the attraction, expansion and retention of businesses.

Along with this work, the Town’s Community Improvement Plan could also play a role in the development of Davis Drive.

The Plan provides a suite of nine financial incentive programs available to property owners and tenants, including five programs that may be applicable to large-scale redevelopment projects.

These include:

- A redevelopment and rehabilitation tax incentive
- A development charges rebate/credit
- A planning and building fees rebate/credit
- A parking requirement program and
- A parkland dedication exemption.

Finally, York Region completed a corridor marketing study in the first quarter of this year which included Newmarket. The study will include a detailed plan to increase awareness of office market potential.

Overall, the Town has been working closely with the Region, the Chamber of Commerce, NEDAC, the Community Collaborative Ecosystem – or CCE innovation team – and Southlake to advance a plan to encourage redevelopment.

Together, we’re committed to increasing awareness of Newmarket as a smart location for business and we’re working to retain existing businesses.

We’re eager to generate excitement in Newmarket as a vibrant marketplace full of business opportunities.

We’re dedicated to building market confidence.

We’re showing that Newmarket is a Town which will offer many exceptional returns on business investments.

And...we’re making things possible with our partners – people like you.

These partnerships are needed now more than ever, as our economy shifts from sector-focused to roles requiring innovation and collaboration.

I am going to conclude today by speaking to the power of these partnerships in our overall economic development priorities.

We see Newmarket as a leader in the area of collaboration. We are very proud to say that other organizations and municipalities recognize this in us as well.

Earlier this year, the Town was the sole recipient of the Economic Developers Council of Ontario Innovative Community Award for our CCE innovation team.

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We were recognized by our peers for our commitment to improve sustainability, technology and the quality of life in Newmarket through creativity.

Let’s take a look at our CCE innovation team in action and roll our award-winning video.

As you can see from that clip, collaboration is at the core of many of our ongoing projects.

One example is our work with various groups as we continue to pursue access to affordable ultra-high-speed Broadband in Newmarket.

On the topic of Broadband, we have already conducted a Broadband business model review with NEDAC.

We’ve been working with the Chamber to identify Broadband efficiencies and strategies.

We remain an integral part of both the York Region Broadband Task Force – which I Chair along with Mayor Dawe – as well as the GTHA Economic Growth Broadband Sub-Committee.

As part of the Regional Task Force, we’re looking at our role in improving Broadband access in Newmarket.

In 2015, York Region’s Telecomm Network (YTN) had more than 150 km of fibre optic cable across the Region.

Current projects in progress or in the planning stages will increase that number to more than 230 km.

On the provincial side, Premier Wynne brought Mayors and Regional Chairs from the GTHA together as part of the Premier’s summit.

We talked about economic development and opportunities for collaboration on a number of key issues, including Broadband.

As a result, the province initiated, and we participated, in a GTHA-wide municipal survey to help determine the next steps in advancing this important strategic initiative.

The results indicate that more than half of the participating municipalities have identified Broadband as a key priority, and more than 60 per cent own a network or network access to make Broadband possible.

Beyond that, all of us recognize the crucial need to ensure there is reliable access to ultra-high speed internet to be competitive in today’s marketplace.

We live in a knowledge-based economy and developing these capabilities will ensure a competitive edge for our region.

Our goal is to make voice, data and video services widely available to our residents and businesses.

As a municipality, we want to bring 100 Meg symmetrical service to residents and 10 Gig symmetrical service to businesses and institutions.

Our aim is to be a top 10 community in Canada in terms of value, quality, speed and capacity for Broadband. This continues to be a top priority for the Town of Newmarket.

Ultra-high-speed connectivity is essential in enabling the type of transformation that Newmarket is undergoing.

We have seen this with the recent Point of Presence installation at Southlake late last year.

Through the Point of Presence at Southlake, ORION is connecting researchers to other world-class health research.

Southlake is the first non-teaching hospital in the province to be connected to the network.

In conjunction with the York Telecomm Network, the Point of Presence provides high-speed connectivity over a private, dedicated fibre optic network.

It provides access to high-performing computing networks and cloud services.

And it enables opportunities for increased collaboration with researchers and classrooms around the world.

This is fundamental for Southlake and its partners, like York University and ventureLAB.

Three ventureLAB-affiliated associations were the recent recipients of the Health Technology Exchange awards, including Newmarket based company SterileCare, which has been working closely with ventureLAB and is a tenant in the CreateIT Now innovation centre.

SterileCare is working on substantially reducing the risks of infection in Canadian hospitals and home care settings.

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The funding provided to SterileCare and Southlake will help develop, produce and commercialize health-related technologies.

The Point of Presence at Southlake will tremendously benefit the CreateIT Now incubator, which officially opened last year.

CreateIT Now fosters innovation in the healthcare sector, and is a prime example of the power of partnerships in our Region.

The Town of Newmarket, ventureLAB, Seneca College, York University and York Region are partners, and we know that CreateIT Now has the potential to put our community on the world stage.

As you can see from the examples given today, we’re working hard to accelerate the growth of our community through our Council’s Strategic Priorities; through our planning efforts; through our Economic Development strategies; and through our partnerships.

We should all be excited and inspired by the progress we are making and by the great projects unfolding around us which will help make Newmarket *even better*.

I would once again like to recognize our community partners, dedicated staff and committed Council for their forward-thinking vision and innovative ideas that continue to advance Newmarket’s reputation as a small community making a big impact in our region and beyond.

Before I pass the podium over to Dr. Williams – and I know we’re all looking forward to hearing from him – I wanted to quickly pay tribute to what a wonderful healthcare institution we have right here in our own backyards.

I believe in the great work taking place at Southlake. I have been a Board Member for the past nine years, and my wife now volunteers twice weekly at the Hospital.

I think we can all agree that Southlake is not just an economic engine that provides many of our residents with valuable and worthwhile employment.

It is, in many ways, the heart of our community – especially with that great cardiac program, right Dr. Dave?

Without further adieu, I will now hand it over to Dr. Williams, who will discuss the innovative, high-impact ideas that are taking shape just down the road.

Thank you for joining us here today and I look forward to working together now and in the future as we accelerate the growth of our community.