

King Chamber of Commerce Annual Mayor's Luncheon

May 10, 2023 | Nobleton Lakes Golf Club

Township of King Mayor Steve Pellegrini

Check Against Delivery

Good afternoon everyone.

It's great to see you as we get together for our annual Chamber Luncheon here at beautiful Nobleton Lakes to talk about the state of the Township.

A lot has happened over the last year, not the least of which was emerging from a global pandemic. I'm proud of the resilience shown by our business community during the single-largest economic challenge of our lifetimes. You made tremendous sacrifices and many changes to keep your doors open and on behalf of the community that relies on your many services, I'd like to say thank you.

Before we begin, I'd like to acknowledge our members of Council and staff who are in attendance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNCILLORS AND STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

We have a lot of great news to share which will be followed by a question-and-answer period.

Citizen Survey

We've just released the results of our first-ever citizen survey which was conducted in February.

The random survey, conducted by Ipsos, is considered statistically significant, having a margin of error of +/-14.2 per cent. This means it can be considered an accurate representation of the entire Township.

Some key findings include:

- 95 per cent of citizens say the quality of life in the Township of King is good to very good
- 80 per cent of citizens are satisfied with the overall quality of municipal services
- 80 per cent agree King is a welcoming community and economically vibrant

The three most important issues facing the municipality identified by respondents in an open-ended question were: municipal governance, taxation and user fees; traffic congestion; and urban development and complete communities.

I hear from people all the time what a fantastic place King is so it's gratifying to see this revealed by the survey. We will take time to look at the results to see what we're doing well and find opportunities to make King an even better place to live, work and play.

Official Plan

We have a new Official Plan, called Our King. It's the first major overhaul of the plan in almost 40 years.

The Official Plan establishes a comprehensive, long-term vision for the future of the Township and will guide growth in the Township's villages, hamlets and rural areas.

It addresses the Township's long-term planning requirements to the year 2031 and brings the Township into conformity with recent Provincial and upper-tier land use policy directions.

I'm incredibly proud of the work Council and staff did in drafting the plan. That included extensive consultation with the community. For example, there were almost 12,000 engagement touchpoints related to the plan on SpeaKING, our online engagement platform.

Building a plan with the input of so many different stakeholders means it truly sets the course for 'Our King.'

Corporate Strategic Plan

Staying on the theme of plans, we're just wrapping up year four of our Corporate Strategic Plan.

This is the very first term of Council for which a strategic plan has been established and presented to the community. The 2019-2022 Corporate Strategic Plan was based on the top priorities of citizens as they communicated and engaged with their local councillors.

Having a strategic plan ensures that everything we do is driving us forward in the right direction. We've been keeping score as we go along too, delivering annual progress reports to the community. Staff is now working on the next version of the plan.

Continued Financial Responsibility

I am proud of our financial record in King.

Council managed to hold the line on the municipal portion of taxes during the pandemic because we knew how many people and businesses were struggling financially during the extended lockdowns.

The average increase for the Township portion of municipal tax was 1.11 per cent for the period between 2018 and 2022, positioning King as having one of the lowest tax increases in the GTA.

The one area we will continue to work on is attracting new business to King. Right now we have a very high residential-to-commercial tax base compared to municipalities to the south of us. If we can attract more commercial and industrial businesses to King, we'll be able to spread taxes more evenly between the three sectors.

Investments in King's Infrastructure and Paving Strategy

King continues to make capital improvements to our infrastructure. This includes park and trail redevelopment, drainage improvements, watermain and sewer upgrades, stormwater works, and bridge and culvert rehabilitation.

The paving of local roads in King is a priority. Since 2019, almost 40 kilometres of roads were converted from gravel to paved surface, and almost 60 kilometres were upgraded with asphalt improvements and surface treatments.

Broadband

In King, we are committed to keep working with the private sector and other levels of government to ensure our residents and businesses have the internet access they need for work and personal use. Since 2019, there has been a 47-per-cent increase in homes with access to newly available broadband and 120 kilometres of fibre has installed in municipal right of ways.

We also recently received the good news that more than \$48 million in funding from the governments of Canada and Ontario will be coming to York Region for more high-speed internet.

The money will go to YorkNet, a corporation owned by the Regional Municipality of York, to bring high-speed internet access to over 3,800 homes in 31 Ontario communities. That will include homes in King City, Lloydtown, Nobleton and Pottageville.

Parks and facilities upgrades

Tasca Park

Our award-winning park in Nobleton is even better as the next phase of construction at Tasca Park is nearing completion. This phase of development includes a pump track, permanent washrooms, pickleball courts, area for ice skating and an off-leash dog park.

Pottageville Pavilion

Extensive renovations were made to the Pottageville Pavilion last year. The improvements included new skylights and dormers, a new functional kitchen area, two spacious barrier-free restrooms, and a fully renovated interior hall that extends to the outdoor covered patio area.

Schomberg Hall

The Schomberg Community Hall at 325 Main St. has been renovated to become a high-efficiency, fully accessible Community Hall. Key renovations included moving to full electrical operation to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions and the addition of fully accessible space to meet current accessibility standards.

King City Library branch and Seniors' Centre

We opened the new King City Branch of King Township Public Library and King City Seniors' Centre at 1970 King Rd. in November of 2021.

The building includes meeting and study spaces, a reading lounge, book and out-of-the-box collections, public-use technology, children and teen areas and a Make-It Lab.

The Seniors' Centre includes rental space, community space and program areas.

Township-Wide Recreation facility

Construction is well underway on King's Township-Wide Recreation Centre, a multi-partner project, with an opening date set for 2024.

The centre is being constructed on 25 acres of land at the southeast corner of Seneca's King Campus at Dufferin Street and the 15th Sideroad.

The centre will be a state-of-the-art, carbon neutral, fully accessible recreation complex with two NHL-sized ice surfaces, a six-lane 25-metre lap pool, a leisure pool, a multi-purpose athletic fieldhouse and a multi-purpose community room.

The athletic fieldhouse will include an artificial turf field, a three-lane walking/running track, fitness equipment and a multi-purpose court consisting of basketball, volleyball and pickleball.

Site servicing is nearly complete, the pool is 30 per cent done and the two rinks have been started.

Economic Development

I'll now turn to something that I'm sure everyone in this room will be interested to hear about—what we've been doing on the Economic Development front for the last few years.

Community Improvement Plan update

We've updated our Community Improvement Plan grant program. The CIP targets specific areas within the Township and assists eligible businesses to receive grant funding for various initiatives such as new signage and accessibility features.

King now offers two different streams of the program — Village Vibrancy and Rural Resiliency.

Village Vibrancy includes the commercial cores of King City, Nobleton and Schomberg, properties peripheral to the commercial core, as well as commercial or community use properties in King's hamlets and properties in the Highway 11 corridor.

Rural Resiliency introduces a new framework of incentives related to certain on-farm diversified and agriculture-related uses, which will contribute to the economic resilience of the Township's agricultural areas.

Updated Community Tourism Plan

We've updated our Community Tourism Plan. The development of the plan began in early 2020 before the COVID-19 pandemic began and had to be put on hold while King Economic Development pivoted to support our businesses in new and innovative ways.

The 2021 Community Tourism Plan starts at the foundation and works its way up. The focus begins with assisting tourism-related businesses and stakeholders achieve success for themselves through education and leadership.

King's Economic Development team looks to support and foster the tourism sector and these new opportunities through the implementation of the goals and action items of the plan.

Economic Development Strategy

The current Economic Development Strategy is now being wrapped up. It was focused on investment readiness, business attraction, retention and expansion while leveraging our economic sector and business strengths.

I can give you a heads up that staff is scheduled to report on the successes of the strategy at the May 15 Council meeting, including a high-level review of the plan's action items, goals and objectives. Staff will be looking for Council's endorsement for the framework and scope of a new five-year plan.

Main Street Revitalization

Our work on revitalizing Schomberg's historic Main Street continues, thanks in part to funding through Ontario's Rural Economic Development program.

The Schomberg Downtown Revitalization Strategy will attract investments, businesses, and local partners that will diversify the local economy, bring jobs into the community, and provide easier access to services for local residents.

If you drive through Schomberg now, you'll see one of the benefits of the program with the recent installation of the seasonal Main Street patios. The Township was able to have patios installed two weeks earlier than last year.

Businesses applied for the program and were successful in leveraging financial support from the Community Improvement Village Vibrancy grant, representing 50 per cent of the cost of leasing and installing street patios equipment and fixtures. This year, three restaurants are participating in the program.

The program has been operational for four consecutive years.

Village cores

Transformational changes are coming to King City and Nobleton's village cores. Earlier this year, Community Services reported about moving the Nobleton Library to the frontage on Highway 27 and re-imagining an Old King Road downtown village core.

Block plan studies will be developed for both Doctors Lane in King City and Old King Road in Nobleton to guide these transformations.

ShopKING

Economic Development enhanced the ShopKING campaign during the pandemic, intended to promote local shopping and dining in King, ultimately supporting our local economy and maintaining local employment opportunities.

And thanks to the Chamber, we were able to offer a \$250 gift card to a random Citizen Survey respondent to be used at a Chamber-affiliated business. They chose Visconti's No Frills as the business where they want to use the card.

In conclusion, I think it's clear we've been extremely busy over the last several years doing our best to support our local businesses.

If you want any more information on the topics I've covered today, visit our fantastic website king.ca.

I may say it all the time, but it's more appropriate today than ever—it's a great time to live and work in King!

Community events

Before I open the floor to questions, just a reminder we have many great events happening in King this spring.

Next up is Victoria Day in Nobleton with a parade, fair and spectacular fireworks display, thanks to King Fire and Emergency Services. That all happens on Monday, May 22.

The Schomberg Agricultural Fair then runs from May 25 to May 28, followed by the King City Craft Beer and Food Truck Festival on June 10.

Finally, registration is now open for the Mayor's Golf Tournament which happens Thursday, July 13 here at Nobleton Lakes. Participants will enjoy a fun round of golf, and they also have a chance to win some prizes, enjoy some tasty food and enjoy the event in-person after a few years of hiatus. All proceeds from the event will go towards enhancing our municipal programs, services and facilities in King. You can register at king.ca/golftournament.

I'd now be happy to answer any questions you might have.

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