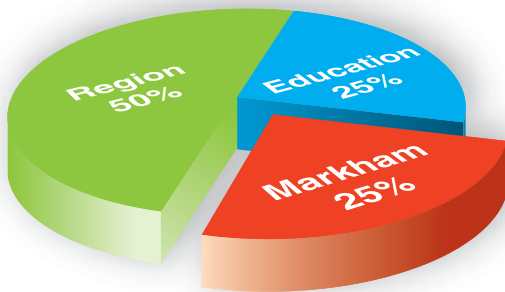


# Holding the Line on Taxes ... Building a Creative Markham

by Mayor Frank Scarpitti

...Markham was the only municipality in the GTA in 2009 to pass a budget with no tax rate increase.

## Estimated 2010 Residential Property Tax Distribution



Markham's 2010 budget and zero tax rate increase only applies to 25% of the total residential tax bill.

As early as 2007 The Town of Markham saw signs of a deteriorating economy. Through Markham's E3 program – Excellence Through Efficiency & Effectiveness efforts were stepped up to ensure costs were managed, aggressive measures taken to examine every aspect of our business for efficiencies, and strategic investments were made for the long term. As a result, \$4.5M in savings were identified and Markham was the only municipality in the GTA in 2009 to pass a budget with no tax rate increase. And, we achieved this without any reduction in municipal services. Fortunately, our E3 business transformation efforts continued throughout 2009 as the economy worsened. Markham redesigned its organization structure, identified expenditure reductions

and made prudent investments in new technologies, products and services. Externally, we continued the execution of our Economic Development Plan – Markham 2020; including continued international relations with China and India to attract new culture, entertainment, life science and financial services industries. Markham was also

successful in forging partnerships with the provincial and federal governments on seven new infrastructure projects worth over \$23M.

## No Tax Rate Increase for 2010

While Markham's goal was to achieve another zero tax rate increase in 2010, the recession posed significant revenue challenges due to a slow down in residential, commercial and industrial development. Also, an additional \$6.1M in expenditures were identified in our 2010 budget to maintain existing municipal service levels as Markham continues to grow. Markham also needed to account for increased costs due to the anticipated harmonization of provincial and federal sales taxes in July 2010. This alone was estimated at \$360,000. However, the E3 process is now an integral part of the business planning process, and through this, Markham was able to find additional expenditure reductions and increased revenue opportunities. As a result Markham has once again been able to achieve a 2010 budget with no tax rate increase with no reduction in services. Among a number of cost reductions, \$460,000 was saved through energy efficiency measures; fuel consumption was reduced by \$190,000; \$320,000 was realized through price efficiencies in capital programs; \$300,000 saved by extending the life cycle of Markham's fleet vehicles; savings of \$790,000 occurred in our capital programs; and \$1.0M was saved through the development of an innovative pavement preservation strategy using green technology.

**Markham Breaks Ground on New Fire Station (93) in Cathedraltown Community.**

*From left to right: Markham Commissioners Andy Taylor and Brenda Librecz, Markham Chief Administrative Officer John Livey, Chief Bill Snowball, Councillors Dan Horchik and Alex Chiu, Mayor Frank Scarpitti, Councillor Carolina Moretti, Firefighters Wayne Hoover and Blaine Dobson, and Deputy Chief Dave Decker*



## Making Strategic Investments

For the long term Markham continues to make strategic investments in a number of areas, including green technologies, to help our residents and businesses. Markham's share ownership in the highly successful PowerStream utility, and our award-winning Markham District Energy facility represent important investments. Markham District Energy provides a reliable and economic district heating and cooling facility for Markham Centre businesses and will soon serve the Markham Stouffville Hospital. Together these two investments will ensure a sustainable revenue flow to Markham.

## Building a Creative Community

Developing a Creative Community is a high priority to enhance

Markham's live-work character. This means providing a variety of arts, culture, recreation and entertainment choices for residents. The new Varley Art Gallery and Markham Museum expansions are recent evidence of this commitment, as are a new cricket pitch facility, and the new East Markham Community Centre and Library. On the horizon Markham has much more planned. Langstaff, an innovative transit oriented development, will place Markham at the forefront of new urbanism. New sports facilities will be built to prepare for the 2015 Pan Am Games, and seven new infrastructure projects are underway through a funding partnership with the governments of Ontario and Canada. These new facilities will increasingly form Markham as a destination – oriented community. The most recent evidence of this was Markham's Olympic Torch Relay celebration on December 17, 2009.

Thousands of Markham and GTA residents chose Markham to celebrate the Olympic Torch as it made its way across Canada to the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games.

## Building Markham's Future Together

All these current and future successes have not occurred through chance. In early 2009 Markham began developing its strategic direction - Building Markham's Future Together - and since then thousands of residents have been engaged in the planning process. Our success reflects the entrepreneurial spirit of Markham's business community, the valued participation of residents in the municipal planning process, and the hard work, innovation and vision of Markham Council and staff to ensure Markham remains a leading municipality in Canada.

## Enterprise Boulevard Opens to Kennedy Road



Enterprise Blvd. was officially opened on December 22, 2009 representing the final construction to complete the east-west connection between Warden Avenue and Kennedy Road. Mayor Frank Scarpitti, Regional Councillors Joe Virgilio and Gord Landon, Ward 3 Councillor Don Hamilton and Markham Commissioner Jim Baird joined members of the construction, design and planning team to officially open the road.