



COMMUNITY SERVICES – IT Innovation
TOWN OF NEWMARKET
395 Mulock Drive
P.O. Box 328
Newmarket, ON L3Y 4X7

www.newmarket.ca
info@newmarket.ca
905.895.5193

April 26, 2016

**COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT
IT INNOVATION # 2016-17**

TO: Mayor Van Bynen and Members of Council

SUBJECT: Open Data Pilot Project

ORIGIN: Community Services - IT Innovation

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any Member of Council may make a request to the Town Clerk that this Information Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

COMMENTS

This report serves to inform Council of a pilot program for an Open Data project. An Open Data project is defined as the release of machine-readable data that is maintained by the Town through online data catalogue on the Town's website so it can be used freely by others for any purpose and shared with others in its original or modified forms. Ontario's Information and Privacy Commission advocates "that government-held information should be made available to the public, and that any exceptions should be limited and specific." An Open Data program is another step towards greater accountability and transparency and can also encourage greater community participation in government services, issues and decision-making. Open Data is also available to Town employees providing greater access internally to information to improve analysis and policy development. The pilot project is intended to determine if and how an Open Data program can benefit this community, the potential impact on existing resources and if there are issues that require more detailed consideration.

The Town already has a large amount of data available to the public. Some data, mostly map related, is available either free upon request or for an administrative fee under the Schedule of Fees and Charges. Data is also often provided to consultants working on the Town's behalf at no cost. As well, some data is provided through requests under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). The Open Data Pilot Program includes primarily data that is already accessible either online or by request. The data has been identified by an internal project team, who then meet with the data owner to confirm it's suitability for publication. It is then evaluated against the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to ensure that personal information is protected from disclosure. The data is then evaluated to ensure its completeness, accuracy and ability to be translated into different machine-readable

formats. The Pilot project is helping to further define this process to ensure all steps are in place to mitigate any risks in releasing data in the future.

We are participating in the **2016 GO Open Data Conference** that is being hosted by ventureLAB on **May 6 & 7, 2016. (go-opendata.ca)** This annual conference highlights the open data community and provides a forum for learning about open data, why it's important for government and businesses and how it can be used to build businesses based on open data or create disruptive solutions to an existing problem. We will be announcing our Open Data Project at this conference and in fact, our data will be highlighted during the scheduled hackathon. The theme of this year's conference is "**Better Living Through Open Data**" and the focus for the hackathon is affordable housing. The hackathon is an event that brings together different people who collaborate in the development of new datasets and applications (apps) through the use of open data programs. We are excited that the Town is participating in this event and look forward to receiving further feedback on our data that is presented and what data would be helpful in the future.

NEXT STEPS

The pilot project will be evaluated after it has been in operation for approximately 1 year. We will review feedback, identify benefits and risks, resource requirements and then develop a more robust Open Data Project Plan for full implementation if the pilot has proven to be of value. This plan will include an Open Data Policy, a governance framework, a more detailed process to identify open data elements and clarify roles and responsibilities. It is expected the new plan and policy will come forward to Council for approval.

BUSINESS PLAN AND STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGES

The initiative relates to the well-equipped and managed link of the Town's Community Vision- implementing a program that reflects sound and accountable governance as well as leadership excellence and leading edge management. It also reflects the well-respected link by discovering innovative and creative solutions and promoting engagement in civic affairs.

BUDGET IMPACT

Budget for the pilot project was included in the approved 2016 I.T. capital budget.

CONTACT

For more information on this, please contact Susan Chase, Director, IT Innovation, at schase@newmarket.ca or at (905) 953-5300, ext. 2301.



Susan Chase
Director, IT Innovation



Ian McDougall
Commissioner, Community Services



Mary-Anne Wigmore
Acting Director, IT



Esther Armchuk
Commissioner, Corporate Services