



“The Power of Connection”

Inaugural Address by
Mayor Frank Scarpitti

Inaugural Meeting of the
2018 – 2022
Council of the
City of Markham

Friday, December 7, 2018 | 7:00 p.m.

Flato Markham Theatre
Anthony Roman Centre



Welcome honoured guests, Members of Council, ladies and gentlemen.

It's hard to believe but this week marks my 30 years of public service. The late Mayor Tony Roman asked me, through more than one conversation, to enter public life and run for Markham Council. It was that personal guidance, that personal connection that changed my destiny.

Now more than 30 years later, it is more than fitting that Tony's wife Elsie Roman presented me with the Chain of Office. Thank you for the honour Elsie.

It seems like yesterday, but let me assure you it's been a very long journey for my family. For the commitment and support year after year after year, I say a big thank you to my wife Nancy and to my children, Alessandra, Michael and Daniel. You constantly provide me with inspiration.

Everything we do in life is built on the solid foundation given to us by our parents. Tonight I salute my late parents – Lucia and Antonio Scarpitti and Nancy's late parents – Alcinda and Antonio Rodrigues.

Our families continue to have high regard for them and we always treasure the impact they had on our lives. They came to this country as immigrants, they overcame challenges, and somehow they not only fulfilled their dreams, they made ours possible.

I would like to take a moment to thank a few people who have been an integral part of my political journey, first and foremost, my brother Paul who gave more than any brother could ever ask for.

My campaign manager, Del Silvestri and his wife Gabriella, my CFO Art Moad and his wife Meek, Marylou Bechard, the late Don Ferguson, Mike Watters, Rick Crispi and of course the hundreds of volunteers who gave their time in each campaign.

Thank you Markham for providing me with the privilege of continuing to serve you as your Mayor, there is no greater honour.

It's always rewarding to be able to look back and point to everything we've accomplished together.

It's important to recognize the past, the goals achieved, the milestones reached, but the question we should always be asking in Markham, "What's next?"

We do not achieve anything alone, we achieve by connecting.

Imagine you are building a house. Think of the points where two pieces of wood meet, where they are joined. It is stronger there and those points enable the house to stand strong.

When we work together, when we join hands, when we connect to each other, that connection becomes a point of strength.

There is power in connection.

We have the power to connect through technology.

Technology gives us the opportunity to transform our world.

It is happening at a remarkable pace.

Markham isn't standing off to the side admiring that transformation, we bought the ticket; we're riding that transformation into the future.

We're advancing **Digital Markham**, our blueprint to create a "frictionless city", with technology that is seamless, accessible and integrated.

Everything Markham will literally be at your fingertips, and sometimes you won't even have to lift a finger.

As we advance technology, "living labs" in Markham Centre and other areas will address the challenges of mobility, traffic management, improving connectivity and the customer experience.

Technology allows us to reach over the horizon and into the future, while at the same time creating a community where people want to be.

There is a sense of belonging here, for everyone.

Little things can make a big difference, from that new bench in your local park, to an accessible doorway in a community centre, to a fireplace in your favourite meeting spot.

Spaces have the power to bring us together. They can shape how we feel.

Our parks, our natural open spaces, provide a connection to a healthy community.

We have a treasure in Markham Centre, a natural jewel – the Rouge River.

We will put a shine to that jewel with the creation of a fully integrated and animated pathway system that will stretch from Warden to Kennedy.

You will be drawn into the beautiful natural surroundings. You will be inspired by public art adding another dimension to that experience.

We've shared some great experiences together; and in Markham, we've truly distinguished ourselves as a community that celebrates with a number of marquee events.

The time has come for a new Markham Civic Square.

Nestled in the heart of Markham Centre, this vibrant space will host major community, national and international events.

This outdoor space of celebration will be one of the largest in Canada.

Creating a desirable community is key to economic prosperity.

We will continue to attract young talent, we want them to plant roots here, work here and experience living at its finest.

Our community is buzzing with excitement and endless cultural and social activity.

Young people are having a tough time breaking into the housing market. In the past, young people would worry about “when” they could buy a home, now they worry “if” they can afford to stay in our community.

The demand for rental housing far outpaces what is being built.

That is why we are moving forward with Inclusionary Zoning that will require large-scale development to include affordable housing units.

I will host an **Affordable Housing Summit**. The goal will be to bring together different levels of government, the development industry and members of the community.

Infrastructure is the backbone of a strong economy.

Look at what we've accomplished; from Roddick, to Birchmount, to Woodbine, to the 404 overpass, and the Viva transit way along Highway 7, we are connecting you to the jobs and places you want to be.

I have led the charge to initiate regional road improvements.

We will focus on making major intersections more efficient, along with using smart technology to improve traffic flow.

I am working hard on our top transit priority the **Yonge Subway Extension** to Highway 7. We have a commitment from the Provincial Government to start construction in this term of office. Now we need a commitment from the Federal Government.

When we talk about what's next for Markham, what motivates us? The answer is simple – talent.

We are building on our strong and thriving tech ecosystem, positioning Markham to attract the next generation of innovators.

Our goal is to form partnerships to create the **Centre for International Talent** that will bring disruptors, academia and employers together.

The Centre for International Talent will provide training, leverage technology to find new ways of interacting with our world and with each other.

We need to match the right skills with the needs of industry.

Markham is a global destination.

We are set to launch **Destination Markham** building on our success of hosting major sporting and cultural events and conferences, allowing us to showcase our diverse culinary experiences and our historic gems.

We will continue our efforts to secure premier destinations for tourists and residents alike.

Markham thrives in a global economy.

We are launching a signature innovation district; this new zone will be home to a vibrant mix of emerging and leading edge industries.

We will continue to revitalize our existing employment areas with an infusion of new industry like digital media and film production.

The stage is set in Markham.

A recent column in the Globe and Mail describes Markham, “Here is the face and the future... 21st century Canada.”

It goes on to describe our community, with a purposely-built downtown and a brilliant new community centre – the Aaniin Community Centre – it defines us as an “edge city bursting with energy and optimism.”

A few years ago, we introduced a summer camp, a special initiative for children of New Canadians. A Tamil father said something that has stayed with me, “We have lived in many places... Markham is the first place that feels like home.”

That’s the power of connection.

If you are willing to connect to our talent by investing;

if you are willing to connect to the future through your bright ideas;

if you are willing to connect to each other for a better community;

Welcome home.

Welcome to Markham.