

Mayor: Oakville on path to mastering its future

By Angela Blackburn
OAKVILLE BEAVER STAFF

Oakville is poised to do what its motto says – Avancez — and do what the Province wants it to do, grow, but it wants to do so without eroding why people come here in the first place — Oakville's quality of life.

Oakville is set to do it all, to "be master of its future," but Oakville Mayor Ann Mulvale says the town can't do it in isolation — it needs some provincial help.

Mulvale delivered a State of the Town address to more than 180 members of the Oakville Chamber of Commerce Tuesday at the Holiday Inn Oakville Centre.

After 18 years on the job, the mayor was happy to report that survey results show the majority of Oakville residents perceive this to be a great place to live — with safe neighbourhoods, cultural amenities, recreational opportunities, lakefront access and walking trails — because of quality of life.

What's key now is how Oakville honours its motto, Avancez, and moves forward in the face of growth pressures — pressures being felt across the GTA.

"It requires a vision representing multiple points of view," said Mulvale.

It requires a balancing act. Seeking public input to the multi-faceted Blueprint Oakville, aims to build the town's future collectively and collaboratively, said the mayor.

Blueprint Oakville sets out plans for the environment, north Oakville, transportation, parks and development charges — all while the town's Official Plan, the town's planning blueprint — is being reviewed.

Mulvale said Oakville is "charting new waters."

Neighbourhoods aim to be environmentally responsible. The Uptown Core is to complement, not compete with, the downtown and Kerr Village.

A new hospital should be what Mulvale called "the catalyst" for accelerated employment and live/work lifestyles.

The mayor said Oakville is looking to "partner" with Ontario.

Mulvale said, "The case for the new hospital has been made, the province has responded correctly. We anxiously await. One critical key remains. Will a gift of land come with restrictions or will



RON KUZYSK / OAKVILLE BEAVER

CHAMBER TALK: Mayor Ann Mulvale gave a State of the Town address to the Oakville Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday.

the town be treated as an equal partner."

Similarly, the mapped out Natural Heritage System (NHS) for north Oakville is "right for the times" and could "set a new provincial benchmark for public policy on open space," said the mayor.

Oakville's Environmental Strategic Plan embraces a set of environmentally responsible values — to which the town is adhering by doing seemingly small things that can have great environmental outcomes — and urges everyone to do the same.

The town is installing LED traffic signals, recently added new low-emission hybrid vehicles to its fleets and uses motion sensors on lights at town hall to reduce consumption.

The town's transportation plans are linked to the ESP in that the town will use HOV lanes, promotes live/work lifestyles, but still recognizes the need for balance in what Mulvale called "comfortable ways to accommodate expansion of the QEW and 403, international trade corridors." Another reality is that "provincially-driven growth needs financial tools," said Mulvale.

Development Charges (DCs), which fund infrastructure like roads, bridges and stormwater management, need to be at least reinstated, if not expanded, to levels before they were cut by the Mike Harris Tories.

For example, there are no longer DCs for hospitals.

"DCs need to keep pace with the real costs of growth," said Mulvale.

Similarly gas tax revenues need not be project specific, but rather sustained revenue, in order to truly boost public transit.

Touting the merits of private/public partnerships, the mayor lauded Oakville Hydro's

partnering with Halton Region to turn landfill gas into green power — essentially energy from waste.

Oakville Hydro's diversification into data communication through BLINK has also turned a profit and led to growth — good news for the town as the shareholder of Oakville Hydro.

Ford of Canada is a success story with the new investment in that company's Oakville head office and plants secure the \$10 million in annual property taxes paid by Ford.

"Imagine the exposure to your proper-

ty taxes if that was lost," said Mulvale, outlining the importance of having business in the community.

Oakville is however out to become a

"creative community" where creative people who trade in knowledge set up shop as the jobs follow them, rather than people following jobs.

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invites you to attend its Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, June 27th, 2006
5 pm – 6 pm

The Community Foundation of Oakville Office
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Members of the public are invited to attend the annual Meeting of the members of the Corporation.
John P.H. Ford, Q.C., Secretary of the Corporation



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