

His Worship Mayor Frank Scarpitti  
Address at the PanIIT 2014 Conference  
Toronto, Ontario, Saturday, June 7, 2014



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Thank you for your kind introduction.

His Excellency Governor General David Johnston, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Let me first take a moment to say how honoured I am to be invited to speak among such esteemed leaders here at the Pan IIT Global Conference.

I want to commend the Indian Institutes of Technology Alumni Canada for mounting this conference. The IIT-AC has played an important role in strengthening the Canada-India relationship and this conference is an example of their commitment, dedication and leadership.

The conference theme, “Innovate, Integrate, Transform – Let’s Co-Create Our Future” is both broad-reaching and strategic in its focus.

The panel discussions taking place at this conference promote the type of collaboration and integrative thinking that we strive to implement everyday at the City of Markham.

In fact, Markham’s corporate-wide strategy, entitled “Building Markham’s Future Together” is a roadmap towards achieving 6 overarching corporate goals, many of which are the focus of your panel discussions. They include: building global cities; prioritizing sustainable growth; and supporting commercialization, entrepreneurship and economic development.

All departmental functions and plans are directed towards achieving Markham’s corporate goals.

Since I became Mayor, Markham Council and staff have not only kept taxes low, we have more than doubled our reserve funds from \$105 million to \$240 million. Markham has the lowest six-year total tax rate increase of 25 GTA municipalities. We also have the lowest commercial and industrial tax rates.

We have received the Government Finance Officer’s Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for 13 years and the Canadian Award for Financial Reporting 12 years in a row.

Our fiscal record gets high praise from the CD Howe Institute and the prestigious Frontier Centre for Public Policy ranked us Number One in Canada – the first Ontario municipality so honoured – for fiscal performance and transparency in 1012, and again in 2013.

In the knowledge economy, innovation is the key to success. Our Economic Development Strategy, Markham 2020 identifies key sectors and strategic markets for business attraction.

Markham is proud to be Canada's High Tech Capital. Markham is home to IBM's largest software development lab outside the U.S. IBM continues to be among the top five R&D spenders in the country. Other notable globally innovative companies in Markham include AMD Canada, GE, Motorola, Apple, Qualcomm, Huawei Technologies, and TEVA.

Our Markham Convergence Centre, an innovation accelerator, is home to ventureLAB, which in its three years of operation has helped 1,000 entrepreneurs, creating 3,000 jobs and \$190 million in company revenues.

The City of Markham is Canada's most diverse community. A significant part of our growth is coming from new comers – those arriving new to Canada. Close to 60 per cent of our residents were born outside of Canada.

Markham acts locally and reaches globally. Through our international business missions, we reach out to major trading partners to strengthen our global connection.

We believe the role of municipalities is increasingly important in a globalized world.

In a complex market like India, we recognize that anything we do would be best served as part of the wider Canadian brand and so we work closely with our federal and provincial government consulates and marketing centres in Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, and Chennai. They all serve our interests very well.

We also work very closely with our community partners – local leaders such as the IIT-AC who helped us develop a very successful program of meetings in India in 2013.

In almost every city we visited we made sure to incorporate as a key part of our program, meetings with high-level officials at IIT campuses including IIT Bombay, IIT Ghandinagar and IIT Chennai.

Our delegation was overwhelmed by the warm and generous welcome we received from the Directors and faculty at each campus – including the welcome we received from IIT Bombay Director Devang Khakhar who is here with us this evening.

At each of our meetings we engaged in discussions focusing on research and development and commercialization activities and building industry, academic, and government links between Canada and India.

Our strongest partnerships are with local businesses and informed community leaders such as Novo Plastics which is based in Markham and does advanced, environmentally innovative manufacturing and has clients such as TATA and Mahindra in India.

Quanser is another example of a Markham company doing business in India. Quanser is the world leader in the design and manufacture of advanced systems for real-time control design and implementation used in education, research and industry. Quanser has relationships with many universities in India to supply their engineering schools with Quanser controls systems and

mechatronics equipment. Among the universities are the College of Engineering in Pune; the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar; and SRM University.

Similarly I have had the privilege of leading missions to India in 2012 and 2013 and also worked closely with the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce (ICCC) in building key relationships with business leaders and key organizations such as NASSCOM.

We also participated in the 2012 and 2013 Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Conventions as well as the 2013 Vibrant Gujarat.

In summary, from my own interactions with Canadian and Indian business leaders as well as Government representatives in both countries, my observations are as follows:

In a country as vast and geographically diverse as Canada, it is important to build on our local strengths. In the case of Markham, the ICT sector stands out as one of the great locations not just in Canada but across North America.

Doing business in India requires knowledge and on-the-ground experience. Canadian municipalities are uniquely positioned. Through our economic development offices we have the pulse of our business strengths and can readily match them to an Indian business's needs.

Leadership matters. I have been to India twice in the last three years and have met with Chief Ministers (including the newly elected Prime Minister Narendra Modi), boards of trade and leading business associations, heads of academic institutions and individual business leaders.

The diaspora is an incredible asset. At Markham we take great pride in being Canada's most diverse city. The local presence of many communities allows us to reach the world and build important linkages across many sectors.

Local partnership can yield global success. Our collaboration with Seneca College and the College of Engineering in Pune is one such example where we are working on commercialization initiatives.

In building our global partnerships, Markham is focused on our long term success. Telling our distinctive story and working with our partners in India is an ongoing effort to which we are fully dedicated.

Markham is a premium partner. We are committed to providing superb service to our international partners and India is one of our top priorities. I seek to earn the trust of each business partner – that is the Markham proposition; if we do it right, we are convinced the deals will happen.