



Town of Newmarket
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Community Economic Development Partnership with Shorefast

Staff Report to Council

Report Number: 2025-33

Department(s): Community and Economic Innovation

Author(s): Elizabeth Hawkins, Director, Community and Economic Innovation

Meeting Date: June 16, 2025

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled Community and Economic Innovation Partnership with Shorefast dated June 16, 2025 be received; and,
2. That the partnership and enclosed scope of work be endorsed; and,
3. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Purpose

This report seeks Council's endorsement and support of an exciting partnership opportunity for the Town of Newmarket with the world-renowned Shorefast Institute. This partnership will solidify a growing mutually beneficial relationship between the Town of Newmarket and Shorefast to accomplish local economic development, rooted in the existing assets and skillsets in Newmarket and the expertise in asset-based community development of Shorefast.

Background

Shorefast is a Canadian registered charity established in 2004 by Zita Cobb and two of her siblings, Alan and Anthony Cobb, from Fogo Island, Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada. Since the beginning, the charity's goal has been to build economic and cultural resilience on Fogo Island, a 400 year-old outport fishing community critically impacted by the decline of the cod fishery and the related moratorium established in 1992.

Today, Shorefast's activities include a holistic set of initiatives and businesses based on Fogo Island that hold relevance to community economic development. Its practices are Community Economic Development Partnership with Shorefast

aimed at unleashing the power of place and building new models of place-based economic development.

With an enduring commitment to Fogo Island, Shorefast is now expanding its work by collaborating with other communities, big and small, to share insights and practices that demonstrate that local communities can thrive in a global economy.

Today, the organization has evolved to provide a model for locally driven economic development has been globally recognized as a viable case study for use in communities around the world. Shorefast's innovative model for community economic development has been featured in case studies, media, and academic publications by [Harvard](#) and Memorial Universities and [60 minutes](#).

The Shorefast Institute for Place-Based Economies is a new national initiative dedicated to place-based economic development. The Institute will catalyse communities, governments, and markets to connect and build national economic strength.

Newmarket and the Shorefast Institute share common objectives of creating strong place-based economies. In the spring of 2025, the Town was approached by Zita Cobb and her team at Shorefast to discuss a possible partnership seeking to utilize an asset-based community development model to surface and advance local economic development reflective of this community's unique attributes.

In its first phase, this partnership would bring together community members and business leaders to identify key opportunities for the community and seek to develop a way forward. Shorefast would examine primary sources and existing local data and would host interviews and workshops to determine potential projects or pilots that would support local economic momentum. This work will include an assessment of potential uses for the former operations centre at 623 Timothy Street to a strong place-based economy.

In the second phase, Shorefast, the Town and participating interested parties would explore and test key pilot projects to determine the feasibility of the specific identified strategies in phase one.

This opportunity is being made available to the Town at no cost other than staff time.

Newmarket to join the Shorefast network.

In addition to the work being done in the local community, Newmarket will be integrated into the national Shorefast network of Canadian communities (Shorenet) and will serve as one of the Institute's founding community partners. Shorefast will work to facilitate introductions and potential areas for collaboration. As such, Newmarket will be part of Shorenet's founding partner communities with access to the expertise of Shorefast and peer communities across Canada.

Discussion

Newmarket invited to partake in Place-based Economies work.

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Consultation

The report sets the stage for future consultation across departments and the community.

Conclusion

The Town and Shorefast have shared objectives to create place-based economies that are resilient across time and global economic shifts. In addition, Shorefast has demonstrated themselves to be leaders in this space and have offered their partnership to tap into new and innovative economic opportunities for this community. This partnership would include interviews and workshops led by Shorefast and a resulting report which would shape the foundation of future pilots. Staff are seeking Council's support for this partnership and the exploration of future resulting opportunities including potential uses for the former operations centre.

Council Priority Association

This report aligns with the following Council Priority: Community and Economic Vibrancy

Human Resource Considerations

No new staff will be required for this work. Staff in Community and Economic Innovation will support the delivery of this project.

Budget Impact

The scope described in this report does not have an impact on budget.

Attachments

None.

Approval for Submission

Ian McDougall, Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the CAO

Report Contact

For more information on this report, contact Elizabeth Hawkins,
ehawkins@newmarket.ca.