Building Markham’s Future Together

through...

Growth Management
Transportation/Transit
Environment
Municipal Services
Parks, Recreation, Culture and Library Master Plan/Public Safety
Diversity
Building Markham’s Future Together

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Markham has experienced dramatic growth and change during the past decade – and we need to prepare for and manage this change in the years ahead. In 2007, recognizing that we must take the right steps today to prepare for the future, Markham Council and senior staff identified six strategic priorities for Markham. Our goal: to ensure that Markham continues to be a vibrant, successful and sustainable community.

First, to check that we were on the right track, we launched **Click with Markham**, an innovative award-winning program. We asked residents, people who work in Markham and other stakeholders, to share their thoughts on our strategic priorities, the action plans associated with each priority, and any concerns we may have overlooked. More than 5,000 people responded, making **Click with Markham** one of the most successful programs of its kind in Ontario.

Based on this feedback, Council developed Markham’s official strategic direction for the coming years. Our top six strategic priorities include:

- Managing our growth
- Improving transportation and transit links in Markham
- Protecting our environment
- Municipal services
- Our parks, recreation, library and cultural services facilities and ensuring public safety
- Celebrating our diversity.

As you read this report, you will learn more about these priorities and the specific actions we are taking to address them. Markham has a 200-year tradition of community leadership and participation. Now, with your support, we are Building Markham’s Future Together.
Managing our growth

Through the Click with Markham program, you told us that managing growth is our top priority. Markham has been identified as a growth municipality by the Province of Ontario and York Region.

We need a strategy to manage the challenges of growth:

- Pace of growth
- Land use
- Environmental protection
- Agriculture
- Cultural heritage
- Economy
- Housing mix
- Quality of life
- Transportation
- Infrastructure.

Here is our plan.

We will:

- **Develop a vision and plan for sustainable community growth.**
  We will develop a ‘Made in Markham’ plan for sustainable community growth in response to provincial growth initiatives. The plan should protect our natural and cultural heritage, as well as provide for social and economic well-being.

- **Develop a plan to deliver the services required to accommodate growth.**
  We will develop a plan to deliver the additional infrastructure and services needed to support our new communities. Where these services are not provided directly by Markham, we will coordinate with other levels of government and other agencies to ensure the appropriate services are delivered.

- **Develop a financial strategy to implement our growth plan.**
  We will determine the fiscal requirements of our growth plan, and develop a financial strategy to implement it. We will work with all levels of government to reform legislation, develop new fiscal tools and directly provide the funding for necessary infrastructure.

- **Keep citizens involved and informed every step of the way.**
  We will consult and engage the people of Markham and other stakeholders in developing our growth plan.
Transportation/Transit

Improving transportation and transit

Rapid growth in the Greater Toronto Area, York Region and Markham has resulted in many transportation challenges. These include:

- Congested city streets and highways
- Environmental issues
- Noise pollution
- Reduced quality of life.

Markham needs a transportation/transit vision, along with an implementation plan, a funding strategy and a partnership framework. We need to take steps now to protect our neighbourhoods and encourage economic growth.

Here is our plan.

We will:

- **Work with partners to address our transit challenges.**
  We need to work in partnership with York Region, Metrolinx, and other levels of government and government agencies – including Toronto, GO Transit and other stakeholders. Together, we can plan and build an integrated Greater Toronto Area transit system and road network. This should address road improvements for the 400 series highways, as well as local and regional roads.

- **Develop our rapid transit infrastructure.**
  This can include a number of transit initiatives. For example: extending the Yonge subway to Highway 7; improving VIVA and GO service levels; setting up dedicated public transit corridors within Markham.

- **Create transit-friendly policies in all aspects of Town planning.**
  This includes development, land use, travel demand management, infrastructure, education, parking, cycling, safe streets and environmentally friendly transportation nodes and corridors.
Environm ent

Human activity is significantly changing the environment on a global scale. Markham’s air, land, water and habitats are all affected. We urgently need a coordinated strategy to promote a sustainable community.

Here is our plan.

We will:

• Create a Green Print strategy for Markham. This will include:
  • Policies to protect air, land, water, habitat and all living species
  • A multi-year, multi-language education and communication strategy
  • Partnerships with all levels of government to endorse and support sustainability
  • A comprehensive Climate Action Plan.

• Adopt green building standards and green community standards.
  We want to make Markham the recognized leader in environmental standards.

• Develop and implement a community-wide zero waste strategy.
  Just 30 per cent of Markham’s waste goes to landfill – the best record of any community in Canada. We want Markham to adopt best practices to move toward a zero waste ecological footprint policy as a baseline and model for residents to follow.

• Prepare an enhanced Town beautification policy.
  We want to build on our existing programs to improve our parks, streets and natural areas.

• Develop strategies to maintain healthier, greener communities.
  This includes boosting local food production, building more bike paths and walking trails, and improving the safety and security of our neighbourhoods.

• Develop a funding strategy and modeling tool to support these initiatives.

Protecting our environment
Municipal Services

Excellence in municipal services

Markham provides thousands of services to its residents and prides itself on providing high quality services. Our residents expect quality services that are cost-effective and responsive to their needs. Optimizing service delivery requires setting priorities and making choices. Performance measurements will be used to ensure that expectations are met or surpassed, services are delivered efficiently and effectively, and improvement areas are identified. We will also develop a systematic way to review and evaluate competing demands for municipal resources.

The goal: to ensure the most effective, economical and sustainable priorities are set.

Here is our plan.

We will:

• Complete all planned service improvements. Project teams will report to Council as they complete this work. We will build our municipal services model by pursuing excellence in service delivery in the following:
  • **Service Promise** – What can you expect from the service we are providing to you and what can you do if we do not meet your expectations?
  • **Service Value** – Why is the service we provide important and valuable to you and/or the community, as a whole? Are we delivering service in the most effective and efficient manner?
  • **Measurement** – Did we meet the expectations and live up to our Service Promise?
  • **Service Innovation** – Provide new and creative ways of delivering municipal services. Focus on results and outcomes that demonstrate leadership and innovation in all municipal services, and communicating these results effectively to residents.

• Develop a clear process to evaluate Town services. Building on the excellence model, municipal services will be driven by innovation and integration and a focus on value to residents and businesses.

• Develop a service planning process to guide service levels, and innovative and sustainable practices. This includes service level accountability and review, reporting and communication. Where practical, we will aim to reduce the cost of delivery while improving Town services.
Investing in our quality of life

We can enrich community life and create more “liveable” communities when we invest in health, wellness, and lifelong learning programs. In Markham, this includes:

- Enhancing our community parks, recreation, culture and library programs and service delivery systems
- Making community safety a priority in developing programs, policies and facilities.

Here is our plan.

We will:

- **Update and create an Integrated Leisure Master Plan.**
  We need to create short, medium and long-term priorities for our parks, recreation, culture and library programs and facilities. We must base our priorities on a sustainable financial model.
  - Review programs, facilities, and public spaces to ensure they reflect and respect the needs of our diverse communities
  - Ensure Markham’s green spaces fit the needs of local neighbourhoods and create interplay between active and passive leisure opportunities
  - Engage the public and stakeholders in the process of developing the Master Plan.

- **Create Markham’s first Community Safety Plan.**
  We need to develop a comprehensive strategic plan that will provide sustainable solutions to enhance community safety in Markham. A Community Safety Plan benefits from strong linkages with social service and enforcement agencies, urban growth, built form, transportation, and parks, recreation, culture, and library programs and facilities.
  - Engage the public in defining “community safety” in Markham
  - Strengthen neighbourhoods and invest in children, youth, and families
  - Build community partnerships, including the role of enforcement and policing
  - Design and retrofit facilities with community safety in mind
  - Maximize the synergies with other Council Priorities by sequencing this project to benefit from work underway in the areas of urban growth, transportation, and the leisure master plan.
Markham communities represent the full range of human experience, from all stages of life, abilities and ethno-cultural backgrounds. To serve them better, the Town needs to develop a clear strategy and related policies to:

- Promote unity and inclusiveness
- Provide programs and services that address the diverse needs of Markham residents.

Here is our plan.

We will:

- **Engage Markham’s diverse communities.**
  We will take steps to involve diverse groups in our activities and initiatives, including regular focus groups and fostering a welcoming environment at all our facilities with a “doors wide open” philosophy.

- **Foster a greater understanding of diversity across Markham through community partnerships.**
  This will help us align our services and programs with the needs of Markham residents. It will also demonstrate our commitment to unity and to respecting and promoting human rights.

- **Enhancing Markham boards and committees.**
  We will introduce a Seniors Committee. We will also review the mandates of the Race Relations Committee, the Markham Advisory Committee on Accessibility, and the Mayor’s Youth Task Force.

- **Find ways to make Town services more accessible.**
  Our goal is to reduce barriers to as many people as possible in the physical environment, customer service and communications. This includes new multilingual services and assistive communication technologies.

- **Develop an effective communications plan.**
  Our goal is to increase awareness of our diversity strategy and foster a sense of inclusion across all Markham communities.

- **Engage and educate Town staff.**
  We will develop a vision statement, strategy and comprehensive work plan to move staff towards an increased level of “Diversity Competence.” This will include: mandatory training for all staff; inclusive human resources practices, with a special focus on hiring; opportunities for staff to mentor diverse individuals in their career development; an effective communications plan; and a program to measure success.