



Report to: Development Services Committee

Meeting Date: February 11, 2019

SUBJECT: Destination Markham Strategy
PREPARED BY: Christina Kakaflikas, Ext. 6590

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the staff report entitled, “Destination Markham Strategy”, dated February 11th, 2019 be received;
- 2) That Council approve the Destination Markham Strategy and forward it to the newly incorporated destination marketing organization and relevant city departments; and
- 3) That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Destination Markham strategy is based on extensive consultation with external stakeholders and City staff across all commissions. The staff report presents findings of stakeholder consultations and identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Markham as a destination for visitors, residents, talent and business. The strategy also proposes value proposition statements for each of the above target audiences and recommends strategic priorities for action by the City and its newly incorporated destination marketing organization.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this staff report is to describe the outcomes and findings of the Destination Markham Strategy stakeholder consultations, and strategic recommendations. The purpose of the Destination Markham Strategy is as follows:

- To promote greater knowledge, communication and awareness of Markham as a preferred place to live, visit, work and do business;
- To articulate Markham’s value proposition for each of the strategy’s target audiences: residents, visitors, talent, and business;
- To pinpoint and leverage opportunities for collaborative destination-focused communications and integrated branding;
- To identify and leverage city strengths and points of distinction, and to inspire active participation and engagement from residents, visitors, workforce and business; and
- To align and leverage destination attraction efforts, programs, and resources within the organization and externally with stakeholder organizations.

The following considerations are outside the scope of the Destination Markham Strategy:

- Corporate Communications Strategy and Branding Strategy. This will be the subject of a separate initiative in 2020.
- Destination Markham is not a tourism strategy. This will be the subject of a future initiative of the newly incorporated destination marketing organization.
- Revisions to existing strategies and plans to align to the recommended Destination Markham Strategy (eg. Markham 2020, Markham Culture Policy and Plan, etc.). These revisions/updates are anticipated outcomes/next steps of the Destination Markham strategy.

BACKGROUND:

Markham is a prosperous and admired community with a high quality of life. Over the years, Markham has made strategic investments to build a well-planned city guided by core values of: strong financial management; progressive planning focused on building complete communities; heritage preservation; environmental stewardship; thriving arts and culture; and meeting and often exceeding the needs and expectations of its diverse residents and businesses. Until now, however, the City of Markham has not undertaken a comprehensive look at itself as a destination. The City is seeking to adopt a strategy to position itself as a destination city.

Destination Markham is a corporate wide umbrella strategy and a key part of the City of Markham's 2015-2019 Corporate Strategic Plan entitled, *Building Markham's Future Together (BMFT)*. BMFT focuses on four goals as follows:

1. Exceptional Services by Exceptional People
2. Engaged, Diverse & Thriving City
Goal: Promoting Markham as the Best Place in Canada to Invest and Locate Knowledge Based Industries
 - a. Support the development of a York University Campus
 - b. Stimulate new business formation and commercialization through increased market awareness of the Markham Convergence Centre, ventureLAB, and the Markham Small Business Centre
 - c. Increase Foreign Direct Investment in Markham
 - d. Create Destination Markham
3. Safe & Sustainable Community
4. Stewardship of Money & Resources

Section 5 of Markham's Official Plan, *A Strong and Diverse Economy* focuses specifically on Markham's tourism opportunities as follows:

It is the policy of Council:

- 5.1.8.1 To recognize Markham's distinct neighbourhoods, cultural heritage resources, hotels, recreation opportunities, and cultural programs, festivals, facilities and attractions, including the Fred Varley Art Gallery and the Markham Museum, Markham Theatre, unique shopping experiences, agri-tourism, and the Rouge National Urban Park and connected natural heritage systems, as part of the City's tourism assets.
- 5.1.8.2 To work with provincial tourism organizations, Parks Canada and York Region to promote Markham's tourism assets.
- 5.1.8.3 To direct new local tourism attractions, including theatres and cinemas, to Markham's Centres and Corridors, which provide enhanced connectivity and convenient travel to local attractions.
- 5.1.8.4 To encourage the protection and enhancement of Markham's cultural heritage resources in order to provide for additional economic development and tourism opportunities.

Markham's corporate strategy, *Building Markham's Future Together* and the City's Official Plan each reference building Markham as a destination city. Currently, there are many policies, initiatives and programs across city departments that reference destination attraction goals. For example, *Shared Places*, *Our Spaces*, Markham's Public Realm Strategy points to the importance of creating quality public spaces for residents to enjoy and as a means to attract talent to the City. The Flato Theatre Strategy speaks to the competitive advantage of Markham's culturally diverse programming as a draw for visitors and as a differentiator for Markham. *A Vision for Sport Development*, Markham's Sport Strategy includes "raising the profile of Markham through Sport Tourism" as a key objective. *Markham 2020* the City's Economic Development Strategy focuses on attracting investment and supporting local businesses to succeed and grow in Markham.

Staff across all Commissions are engaged in destination attraction efforts but until now, there has been no cross-commission, holistic framework to steer the City's efforts towards a corporate-wide set of destination goals, objectives and action plans.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Destination Markham is a corporate-wide, umbrella strategy that involved the participation and collaboration of the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer and departments from all three commissions: Development Services; Corporate Services; and Community and Fire Services. While the Department of Economic Growth, Culture and Entrepreneurship is the project lead on Destination Markham, all commissions provided input in the project scope and in the focus group consultations.

The Destination Markham strategy does not replace existing departmental strategies and operational plans. Rather, the Destination Markham strategy is intended to better link existing plans and strategies to overarching goals related to attracting visitors, residents, talent and business.

Following is an outline of the project methodology and timeline.

- Step 1: Project Scope (Feb '17 -Aug '17)
- Step 2: Literature Review (April '17 to October '17)
- Step 3: Internal Staff Focus Groups, Surveys, One on One Interviews with External Stakeholders (Aug '17 -March '18)
- Step 4: Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Information (Feb. '18 – Mar '18)
- Step 5: Draft Report and Visualization (Feb '18- May '18)
- Step 6: Presentation to Executive Leadership Team (May '18)
- Step 7: Destination Marketing Organization governance and consultation (Aug '18)
- Step 7: Submission to Council – Draft Destination Marketing Organization business plan (Sept '18)
- Step 9: Destination Markham Strategy Report to Council (Feb 2019)

The term 'destination strategy' has a different meaning to different audiences. For some, a destination strategy is equivalent to a tourism strategy. Others interpret a destination strategy to imply a city branding exercise. Some may view this type of strategy to be more of a public relations and civic pride campaign. With the broad range of possible interpretations, staff set out first to establish the project scope of the Destination Markham strategy.

Step One of the Destination Markham strategy focused on identifying and articulating the project scope through research, and working with key staff from across all commissions and Markham's Executive Leadership Team.

Step Two was a literature review of the related internal strategies and documents; city strategies and best practices; marketing, research and analysis produced by destination stakeholders in Markham and York Region including Central Counties Tourism and York Region Arts Council.

Step Three focused on gathering primary, qualitative information about the perceptions of Markham with respect to strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities as a destination city. Interviews were conducted with external stakeholders and internal staff.

Step Four involved analyzing and synthesizing information collected in Step Two and Three.

Step Five and Six included drafting the report and engaging a designer to assist with visualizing the research findings and creating a visual identity for Destination Markham.

Step Seven focused on aligning to new provincial legislation that allows for the collection of an accommodation tax by municipalities. This will enable the City to invest in destination attraction initiatives.

Step Eight was the development of an application by the City to establish a destination marketing organization pursuant to the provincial accommodations tax legislation.

Step Nine is the drafting of final report including Destination Markham Strategic priorities/next steps.

Vision

Successful strategies are inspired by a vision. The vision describes the central outcome of the strategy and helps an organization and its stakeholders to stay focused on what is important. Ultimately, the strategy recommendations and actions will bring Markham closer to the vision of Destination Markham.

Destination Markham Vision:

Markham will be among the top places in Canada to live, work, play and do business. Markham will be regarded as a highly desirable, welcoming place with distinctive, high quality attractions and exceptional amenities for residents, visitors, talent and business. Together with its stakeholders and the community, Markham will co-create and promote distinctive experiences for residents and visitors; and grow opportunities for businesses and talent to thrive in the 21st century.

The way in which a vision is implemented is essential to achieving the vision outcomes. The following guiding principles demonstrate Markham's values as an organization and as a destination city. The guiding principles also speak to the City's desired reputation.

Guiding Principles:

1. Promote Markham through partnership and collaboration
2. Position the City as a tech and innovation hub, and centre of creativity
3. Utilize digital tools and channels to promote the City and its competitive advantages
4. Leverage Markham's diversity as a positive distinction and point of pride
5. Support sports tourism
6. Link parks, natural trail systems, cycling and pedestrian pathways with Markham attractions and events

7. Build well planned and complete communities with transit and pedestrian access to employment, amenities, public spaces and places
8. Preserve our heritage assets
9. Grow sustainably and consistent with Markham's Greenprint Sustainability Plan
10. Adhere to responsible financial stewardship and good governance

Literature Review; Key Findings:

Although several organizations in the Markham area do some form of destination marketing, no organization has a holistic and coordinated strategy in place focusing on Markham

A number of organizations in the Markham area promote local and regional attractions and events as part of their mandate. Following is a description of the key organizations.

Central Counties Tourism (CCT) is the Regional Tourism Organization that promotes attractions and events in York Region, Durham Region, and the Hills of the Headwaters (Erin, Caledon, Dufferin County, Mono and Shelburne). CCT targets visitors from the GTA and beyond and select US Border States. Another example is the York Region Arts Council (YRAC). York Region designated YRAC as the destination marketing organization for promoting attractions, festivals and events across York Region, mainly through its website www.experienceyork.ca. YRAC's target audience is primarily York Region residents.

In addition, Information Markham, Markham Arts Council, the two Main Street Business Improvement Areas and others are, to varying degrees, engaged in efforts to draw visitation to area attractions by either local residents or visitors. Similarly, organizations such as Toronto Global and York Link promote the region as an attractive place for businesses and talent. The City of Markham's Department of Economic Growth, Culture and Entrepreneurship markets Markham as Canada's High Tech Capital and collaborates with numerous stakeholders including the above regional agencies.

Markham events and attractions are not well known outside Markham

The absence of large-scale tourist attractions in Markham coupled with low consumer awareness of Central Counties Tourism and the York Durham Headwaters brand suggests Markham needs to invest proactively and strategically to position itself as a destination city for visitors.

Research conducted through the course of developing this strategy suggests many of the amenities and experiences sought by visitors are also highly valued by residents, and the reverse is also true.

Marketing to local residents can be an effective way to reach visitors. Approximately 60% of visitors to Markham visit friends and relatives who live in the city (Source: Statistics Canada's Travel Survey of the Residents of Canada; Statistics Canada's International

Travel Survey, 2015). When residents act as guides to their visitors, they also spend time and money locally and act as ambassadors for Markham.

Attracting talent to Markham is increasingly dependent on investing in similar amenities and unique experiences as those enjoyed by residents and visitors.

Markham's economic vitality will depend on our ability to attract talent (individuals who work in Markham or are considering working in Markham). Creating a preferred place for talent positions the City to attract more employers, particularly knowledge-based companies that require specialized skills. Urban development projects, such as Markham Centre with live, work and play options and access to transit and a variety of housing types, position Markham well to compete for and attract companies, high quality jobs and talent.

Stakeholder Consultations, Key Findings:

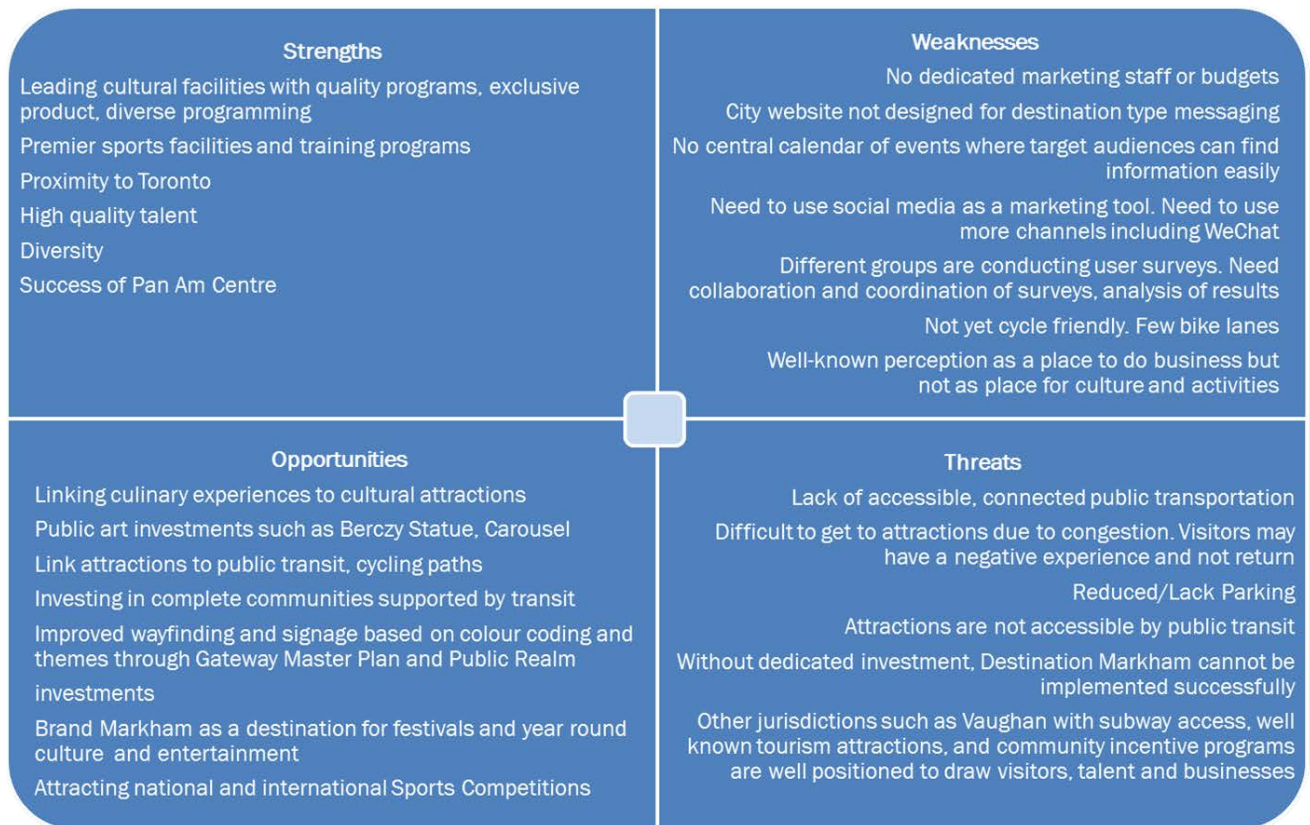
Staff conducted interviews with over 25 external stakeholders and over a dozen internal staff to gauge perceptions and awareness of Markham attractions and to identify assets and strengths. See Attachment 2 for the interview questions. The list of those interviewed is as follows:

External Stakeholders	
Angus Glen Golf Club	Main Street Markham Business Improvement Area (BIA)
Association of Chinese Canadian Entrepreneurs (ACCE)	Main Street Unionville Business Improvement Area (BIA)
Central Counties Tourism (CCT)	Markham Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee
CBRE	Private Citizens/Volunteers (4 interviews)
General Motors	Remington Group
Hilton Hotel and Convention Centre	Regional Municipality of York
IBM	Seneca College
Information Markham	Seneca Planning Technician students
Liberty Development	Small businesses (3 interviews)
Local artist	Survey Questionnaire at Canada 150 event
Markham Arts Council	ventureLAB
Markham Board of Trade	York Region Arts Council
Markham, Richmond Hill, Vaughan Chinese Business Association	York University
City of Markham Staff Survey and Focus Group Discussions	
CAO's office	Markham Public Library
Corporate Communications and Community Engagement	Planning & Urban Design
Economic Growth, Culture, and	Public Realm

Entrepreneurship
Heritage
Information Technology Services
Recreation Services
Sustainability

The following pages summarize the feedback and results of the consultations with internal and external stakeholders. The survey results are grouped by target audience (residents, visitors, business, and talent) and expressed as Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

Figure 1: Staff Corporate Findings- Destination Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats



The top destination strengths identified by staff relate to the high quality, diverse arts and cultural programming, sports programming, and facilities in Markham. The top opportunities to grow Markham's status as a destination city were identified as linking together culinary experiences with arts and cultural attractions, and linking attractions with infrastructure such as public transit, pedestrian and cycling paths, and natural trail systems.

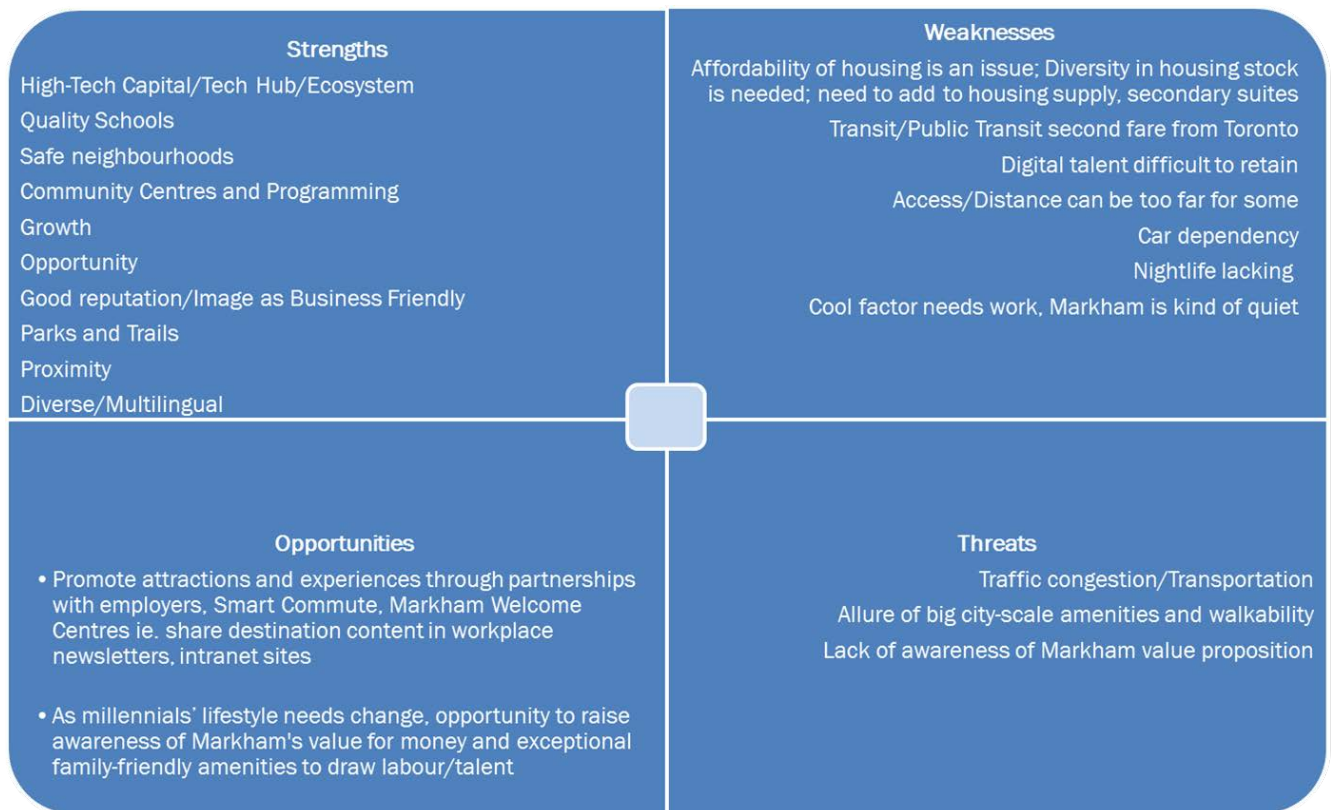
Top weaknesses include a lack of marketing mechanisms such as a dedicated destination website with centralized and easily accessible information about where to go and what to do in Markham. As well, staff identified the need for more active use of social media channels and an overall digital marketing strategy. Top threats included lack of accessible public transit and insufficient connectivity to attractions.

Figure 2: Stakeholder Perceptions of Markham as an Attractive Place to Visit

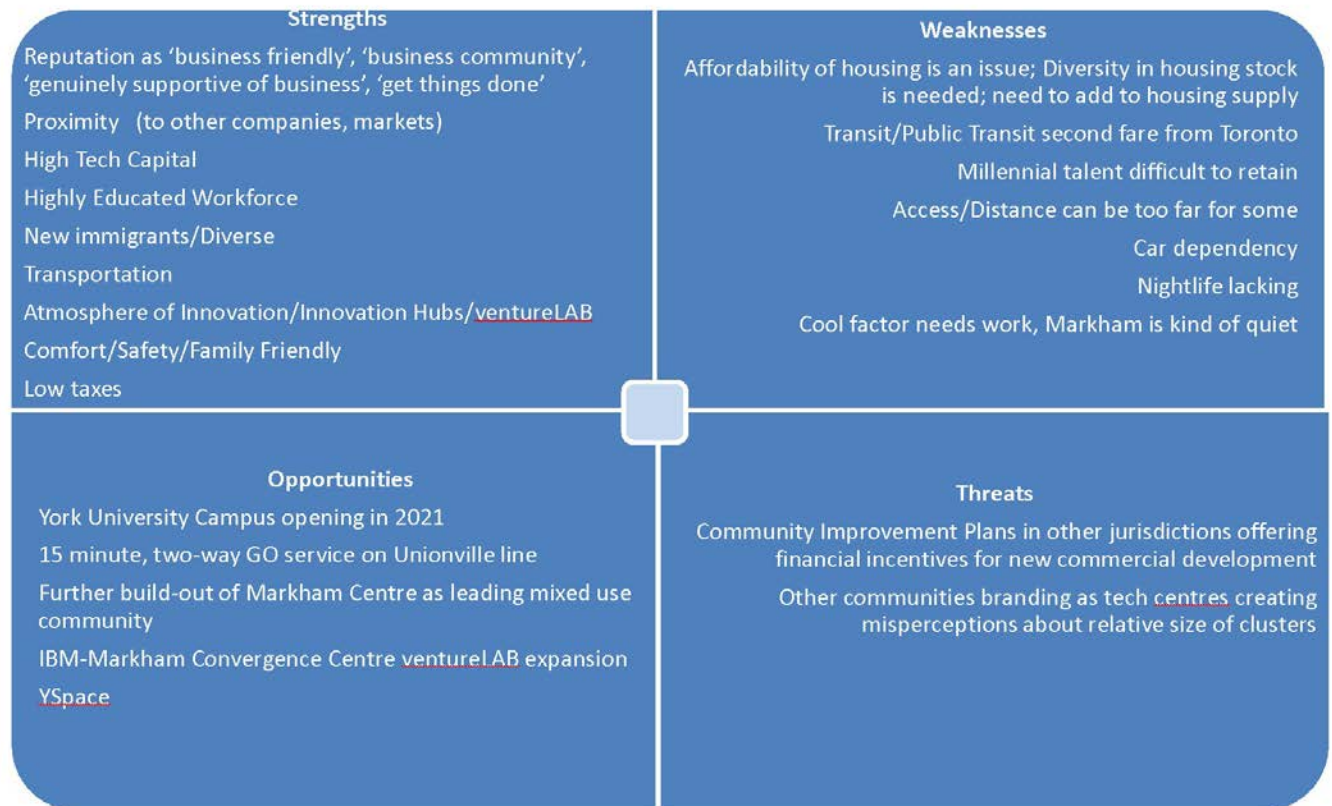
External stakeholders echoed many of the comments made by staff including the significance of diverse arts and cultural programming as a draw for visitors. Safety, a sense of community, and excellent community amenities were identified as strengths in attracting visitors. Traffic/public transit and insufficient marketing and promotion including regular social media engagement were identified as the top weaknesses along with lack of awareness of where to go for visitor experiences in Markham.

Figure 3: Perceptions of Markham as an Attractive Place for Residents

For residents, many of Markham's positive attributes relate to Markham's strong sense of community anchored by excellent schools and community amenities and cultural and recreation programming. Safety and diversity were cited as strengths along with proximity to Toronto and high quality talent. Transit was listed as a weakness along with a lack of a central source for information about events and attractions. Transit connectivity and housing affordability were identified as threats.

Figure 4: Perceptions of Markham as a Place to Work

Perceptions of Markham as an attractive place to work were generally positive, particularly for high tech companies. Housing affordability and access to public transit were identified as weaknesses. Opportunities included engaging in partnerships with private companies and business associations to promote destinations/attractions and targeting millennials who may be rethinking their lifestyle to accommodate changing needs such as growing families, home ownership, and easier access to quality amenities. Once again, transportation was identified as a threat along with lack of awareness of Markham's value proposition. The allure of downtown Toronto's amenities, accessibility and walkability was also seen as a threat to Markham's ability to attract talent.

Figure 5: Perceptions of Markham as a Place for Business

Markham is well known and well regarded as a business friendly city that acts quickly to facilitate investment. Markham's long standing reputation as Canada's High Tech Capital is listed as a strength when attracting and retaining business. Mirroring the weaknesses listed in the other categories, housing affordability and access to transit remain the top weaknesses along with challenges in attracting millennial talent and perceived lack of night life. The proposed York University Markham campus was identified as the top opportunity to attract business. The two-way, 15-minute GO train service is also an opportunity to attract and retain business in Markham.

Overall, stakeholders responded to the Destination Markham project with enthusiasm and support and viewed the strategic initiative as a positive step in improving Markham's visibility as a Destination city.

Value Proposition Statements

One of most important objectives of the interviews, surveys, and focus group sessions was to achieve a better understanding and articulation of the characteristics and assets that make Markham stand out from its competition in terms of attracting visitors, residents, talent and business.

Based on the literature review and results of the stakeholder consultations, the following value proposition statements have been developed for the key target audiences: visitors, residents, talent and businesses.

Visitors:

The world's best, at your doorstep. Uniquely diverse and vibrant arts and cultural programming; exceptional Asian cuisine; best of class athletes and sports; Rouge national urban park.

Residents:

A caring community with an enviable quality of life: All of the best you can provide to your family and kids; welcoming, safe city; quality programs, services, public spaces and places.

Talent:

Quality, Innovation Community in the centre of the GTA: top-rated schools and amenities; great neighbourhoods; open spaces and natural experiences; rich ecosystem of tech companies; easy access to urban culinary, cultural experiences.

Business:

Business-Friendly, "make it happen", culture of Innovation: Strong Tech Cluster focused on Enterprise Solutions; Educated, Diverse Talent; Low Taxes; embedded in GTA ecosystem; Proximity to Markets.

Understanding and communicating Markham's unique and authentic attributes in a consistent manner will help staff, elected officials and stakeholders to effectively market and position the City to their respective target audiences. Over time, consistent marketing and communication will help to build Markham's brand among key stakeholders.

Destination Markham Strategic Priorities:

Staff are recommending the following strategic priorities be undertaken to address the issues and opportunities identified through the literature review, focus groups and interviews.

Strategic Priority #1: Establish a Destination Marketing organization to advance tourism development and attraction in collaboration with existing tourism stakeholders

In 2017, the Ontario government passed legislation allowing municipalities to collect a municipal accommodations tax to assist in attracting tourism to their communities. In 2018, and concurrent with the development of the Destination Markham strategy, staff in

Finance and Economic Development worked together on a report recommending the implementation of a 4% accommodation tax effective January 1, 2019 and the creation of a Destination Marketing Corporation to which 50% of the accommodations tax raised would flow. The above staff recommendations were approved by Council on April 23rd, 2018. Once established and operational, the Markham destination marketing corporation will guide and implement the Destination Markham program's tourism and destination marketing objectives.

Strategic Priority #2: Enhance digital presence of Markham as a destination

Strengthening Markham's digital presence is critically important. When exploring places to visit, live, work or invest, most will begin their search online visiting websites and blogs, using social media and reading consumer/employee reviews and company testimonials and posts. Increasingly, searches are done via mobile device. Viewer impressions gathered during this stage of exploration are made quickly. To keep and grow viewer interest, accurate and current information must be easily accessible and visually compelling.

Strategic Priority #3: Align and integrate consistent communication across city departments

Stakeholder interviews revealed a lack of clarity about Markham's brand as a destination. More integrated and consistent communication with stakeholders would help clarify Markham's brand to external audiences. Markham can align and better communicate strategic messaging by developing and sharing "unity standards" and value proposition statements with departments across the corporation. Tourism Calgary's brand standards is an excellent example of how an organization can unify and mobilize communication (<http://web1.visitcalgary.com/sites/default/files/brand-standards-guide-feb-2015.pdf>).

The unity standards recommended in Attachment 3 borrow from Tourism Calgary and are recommended as guidelines when posting articles and photos, and sharing stories about Markham attractions and attributes. Unity standards help reinforce key messages and over time, help build and clarify Markham's brand.

Strategic Priority #4: Establish a Destination Markham Influencers Group (DMIG)

The purpose of the DMIG is to engage external stakeholders with broad networks to actively promote and serve as ambassadors of Markham, promoting local sites, attractions, and events and creating positive word of mouth messaging that aligns with Markham's value proposition statements. The stories generated and shared will help promote the Markham experience and leverage DMIG networks. The DMIG would comprise entrepreneurs, students, residents, and partner organizations.

Strategic Priority #5: Leverage Existing Communications Tools and Databases to streamline and improve communication

- Leverage Checkmark (the City's intranet portal) to share information internally across the Corporation
 - Use Checkmark as a platform to share inventory of DM assets
 - Use Checkmark as a platform for sharing information about Markham calendar of events
- Volunteers and their families are natural partners in promoting Markham as they regularly attend events and can help spread the word about Markham through their networks. It is recommended that the City leverage Markham's volunteer database to share content; promote events; reinforce key messages; increase awareness; and access broader networks and audiences.

Strategic Priority #6: Undertake a City-led Branding Strategy for Markham

Recommend the City's Corporate Communications and Community Engagement team engage a consultant to lead a branding strategy for the City of Markham in collaboration with Destination Markham DMO.

Strategic Priority #7: Create/Designate 'Destination Advocate'

Engage Destination Advocate in planning process and policy development. For example, engage a destination/place making professional in the development of master plans and secondary plans. A Destination Advocate would help ensure a visitor and talent lens is applied to planning and development policies. As an example, there is an opportunity to connect wayfinding, gateway strategies, and community master plans with Markham attractions. Simple changes like incorporating distances in kilometres as well travel time by foot, bike, and car in city wayfinding (signage and digital/mobile applications) may facilitate more participation a local attractions and events and help to inform would be employees of desirable amenities near places of employment.

Similarly, incorporate a "talent" lens in the development of employment areas to ensure employment areas incorporate amenities, are pedestrian friendly and accessible via public transit to attract talent, particularly the younger workforce.

Strategic Priority #8: Link infrastructure investments such as the development of Markham's trail system with Markham attractions

Trail systems are part of the circulatory system of the City. They are attractions in and of themselves but can also serve as active transportation corridors to link other attractions (including cultural amenities, public art, parks, and major annual festivals) and link to major transit hubs such as GO stations. Marketing and promotion of Markham's trail system, access points, distances to transit and nearby amenities, etc. is best achieved through a combination of physical and digital wayfinding via signage, maps and mobile applications.

Strategic Priority #9: Incorporate talent attraction in Markham's next Economic Strategy (2020-2021)

The trend for employers and talent to locate in downtown Toronto, particularly in knowledge-based industries, is anticipated to continue. To compete for companies and jobs in specialized and emerging sectors, Markham will need to identify and implement meaningful measures to attract and retain talent. As such, it is recommended that talent attraction be a key component of a new Economic Development Strategy to be undertaken in 2020-2021.

In closing, in addition to the above strategic priorities, discussions held during the course of this report generated a number of tactical ideas for further consideration as outlined in Attachment 4.

CONCLUSION

At its core, Destination Markham is about city building. It is about working across departments and Commissions with an emphasis on internal collaboration and in partnership with external stakeholders to build Markham's reputation and reinforce the qualities that distinguish our community from others. Visitors, Talent, Residents, and Businesses have many choices about where to live, invest, work and visit. Destination Markham helps Markham to better understand and communicate our strengths in a strategic and compelling manner. When fully operational the City's destination marketing organization will have the resources to implement this strategy and continue the work started through the development of this strategy.

Destination Markham outcomes can be successfully achieved by applying the following operating principles:

- Invest dedicated resources through the Municipal Accommodations Tax and establishing a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)
- Build a robust, multi-platform digital presence
- Communicate with consistent, clear messaging
- Integrated Branding – Use the Markham Unity Messaging Checklist
- People-Focused Storytelling
- Apply a Destination Lens to Planning and City Building

The outcome of this strategy is to inform the discussion about how to address Markham as a destination for activity and investment. The report should be circulated to the relevant departments and to the new destination marketing organization.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no financial considerations arising from this report. As per the staff report to General Committee dated April 23, 2018 Markham will implement a Municipal

Accommodations Tax beginning January 1st, 2019. The MAT is estimated to generate \$2.6 million, 50% of revenue to be directed towards the City of Markham, and the remaining 50% of revenue to be directed to the new Markham Destination Marketing Organization (DMO). A report outlining the governance, mandate and suggested priorities was adopted by Council in September 2018.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

There are no Human Resources considerations at this time.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Destination Markham is a corporate-wide umbrella strategy and a key part of the City of Markham's 2015-2019 Corporate Strategic Plan, *Building Markham's Future Together (BMFT)*.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

The Destination Markham staff team included representation from CAO's office, Markham Public Library, Corporate Communications and Community Engagement, Planning & Urban Design, Economic Growth, Culture, and Entrepreneurship Public Realm, Heritage, Recreation Services, Information Technology Services and Sustainability.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Arvin Prasad
Commissioner, Development Services



Stephen Chait
Director, Economic Growth, Culture
and Entrepreneurship

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Destination Markham Presentation
2. Survey Questions
3. Branding Unity Standards
4. Additional Tactical Recommendations for Further Exploration

Attachment 2: Survey Questions

1. What do you consider to be Markham's biggest attraction(s) in terms of drawing visitors from outside the City? This could be an event, a place, a public space, a neighbourhood, etc.
2. What do you consider to be Markham's biggest attraction(s) in terms of drawing local residents? This could be an event, a place, a public space, a neighbourhood, etc.
3. What in your view are Markham's strengths in terms of attracting and retaining workforce?
4. What do you consider to be Markham's strengths in terms of attracting and retaining businesses?
5. What is the most well recognized landmark or place in Markham known by both residents and non-residents of Markham?
6. What do you think Markham can be doing better to encourage residents to take part in Markham events and festivities?
7. What do you think Markham can be doing better to attract visitors from outside our City?
8. Please indicate all the terms – words, verbs, expressions – that come to mind when you think about Markham.
 - a. What is your opinion about these terms?
Very negative negative neutral positive very positive
9. What do you think is Markham's greatest challenge(s) when it comes to attracting visitors to our City?
10. What do you believe is Markham's greatest opportunity to attract more visitors?

Attachment 3: Unity of Messaging, Markham Message checklist**Audience Value Proposition:**

- **Visitors:** The world's best, at your doorstep. Uniquely diverse and vibrant arts and cultural programming; Exceptional Asian cuisine; best of class athletes and sports.
- **Residents:** A caring community with an enviable quality of life: All of the best you can provide to your family and kids; welcoming city; quality programs, services, public spaces and places.
- **Talent:** Quality, Innovation Community in the centre of the GTA: Fine Schools and Amenities; great neighbourhoods; open spaces and natural experiences; rich ecosystem of Tech companies; easy access to urban experiences.
- **Business:** Business-Friendly, "make it happen", culture of Innovation: Strong Tech Cluster focused on Enterprise Solutions; Educated, Diverse Talent; Low Taxes; embedded in GTA ecosystem; Proximity to Markets

The following checklist will help ensure all related projects support the above value statements.

- Are we showcasing the various attractions and activities within Markham?
- Are we reinforcing the idea that Markham is uniquely diverse and smart?
- Are we addressing the intended target audience and their value propositions? (residents, visitors, talent, businesses)
- Are we highlighting Markham's competitive advantage as a technology hub?

Photography checklist

Any image being considered for use should answer the following questions:

- Does the image show people as well as buildings?
- Is the image framed around the subject? Be careful not to include ceilings and floors in the frame.
- Does the image show an authentic experience?
- Is the moment captured relevant to our target audiences?
- Is the photography inviting and emotional?
- Does the photography highlight something unique about Markham?
- Does the photography capture an inspiring moment?

Writing checklist

To ensure a written piece is on brand, ask yourself the following five questions:

- Does it convey one or the entire list of core Markham attributes described in Destination Markham?
- Does the piece capture an inspiring moment?
- Is the tone positive and energetic?

- Does it engage the senses, conveying what one might see, hear, touch, taste or smell?
- Does it use active language?
- Does it use correct grammar and vocabulary?

Attachment 4: Additional Tactical Recommendations for Further Exploration

The following are ideas of note arising from the stakeholder consultations, which merit further exploration and follow up with partner organizations:

Host Inaugural Annual “Markham Trails Open” Event to promote Trail System and Bob Hunter National Park and connections to cultural attractions and events such as Doors Open. Introduce cultural and culinary experiences along Markham’s trail system pathways.

Explore special designations for Main Street Unionville, Markham Main Street, Markham Centre as key visitor destination zones. Support BIAs in developing and implementing ideas for visitor attraction.