



Report to: General Committee

Meeting Date: January 20, 2020

SUBJECT: Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund Review
PREPARED BY: Claudia Marsales, Senior Manager Waste and Management Community and Fire Services

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the Report entitled “Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund (MESF) Fund Review “ be received; and,
- 2) That the Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund include a new funding program entitled the “Sustainable Neighborhoods Small Grant” program under the terms, conditions and approval process outlined in this report; and further,
- 3) That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund (MESF) and expand its mandate to include a Sustainable Neighborhoods Small Grant (SNSG) program.

BACKGROUND:

Council created MESF in 2002. The mandate of MESF is to assist the City with funding innovative and leading environmental initiatives, including pilot projects, which contribute to the sustainability and health of the natural environment and support Markham’s Greenprint, Energy Plan, Community Sustainability Plan and Zero Waste Diversion targets.

MESF applications were first received in 2004, following Council adoption of a process and criteria for application review.

Environmental Services Department staff reviewed all applications and made recommendations for approval to the Environmental Issues Committee (EIC), with ultimate approval by General Committee and Council.

All approved projects are expected to meet at least one of the following objectives:

- Project is a leading innovation (i.e. pilot project) that can be showcased by Markham;
- Project promotes education, understanding and participation in environmental sustainability in Markham;
- Project supports the City’s environmental policies and strategic plan.

MESF has funded 92 environmental projects since 2004

From 2004-2017, 71 external community projects were approved and provided funding totaling \$396,147. From the total funding provided, \$22,804 in unspent funds was returned by project applicants. In addition, MESF funded 21 internal City projects.

As currently structured, organizations eligible to apply for funding are: other levels of government, public agencies, Markham based community groups, schools and City staff.

The total annual MESF Fund was originally established at \$300,000, to be replenished through the annual capital budget process. In 2012, Council capped the fund at \$100,000 to be more reflective of actual expenditures. In 2013, Council directed \$25,000 of the funds to be dedicated to Zero Waste for School program which staff facilitates transitioning schools to Zero Waste. To date, over 42 of Markham's Elementary Schools has been transitioned to Zero Waste facilities.

External applicants include a wide range of organizations and groups: Ontario Streams; Markham schools; Youth Environment Network of York Region (YENYR); Boy Scouts groups; Markham Fair; Markham Lion's Club; North American Native Plant Society; Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA); York University; Eco Watch Canada, 10,000 Trees for Rouge Valley; Knights of Columbus; Smart Commute; Pollution Probe; Friends of Thornhill Heritage Garden; Ontario Centre for Environmental Technology, Pomona Mills Park Conservationists; York Region Environmental Alliance.

Funding from MESF was also utilized for a number of large-scale City initiatives including: Anti-idling campaign, seed funding for the Markham Energy Conservation Office, Little Rouge Creek Masterplan, Solar projects, tree plantings, energy retrofits and the Green Roof symposium.

Additional internal staff projects include: Invasive Species Awareness, Water on Wheels (WOW) trailer and mini WOW, conversion of a gasoline utility vehicle to an electric vehicle, Styrofoam densifier, Big Belly Solar compact pilot project, community litter clean ups, replacement of the City underground parking lighting with energy-efficient bulbs, and several Zero Waste projects.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Comprehensive audit of MESF completed

In 2017, staff undertook a complete review of MESF. Every external MESF project file was reviewed for completion and adherence to Council approved policies.

Project files were audited and checked for:

- Accounting of all spent funding
- Original copies of invoices (receipts)
- Project outcome and final reports received from approved applicants

Of the 71 external community projects that received MESF funding from 2004-2017, all were found to be in compliance.

2018 MESF Review

MESF has been in place for over 15 years. Considered to be leading edge and innovative at the time, communities across Canada established similar funding programs based on MESF including Vancouver, Saskatoon, Ottawa and Toronto.

Based on Markham's MESF program, the City of Vancouver developed 'The Greenest City Fund' to help Vancouver achieve their goal to make Vancouver the greenest city in the world by 2020. From 2012-2018, they have funded \$2.75 million to over 1,000 projects in partnership with the Vancouver Foundation:

- 885 Greenest City – Neighbourhood Small Grants
- 119 Greenest City Grants

In late 2018, the Environmental Issues Committee held a workshop to review MESF to ensure its mandate is still relevant and aligned with other City funding programs.

The recommendation of the Environmental Issues Committee was:

- (i) To continue the MESF program as is (i.e. internal and external program); and**
- (ii) To create a new community funding opportunity under MESF to be called the "Sustainable Neighborhoods Small Grant" (SNSG) program.**

The Sustainable Neighborhoods Small Grant (SNSG) program

The purpose of the Sustainable Neighborhoods Small Grant will be to support small scale, resident led sustainability projects within the City of Markham that focus on:

- (i) Reduction of community's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in support of the Municipal Energy Plan target of net zero energy emissions by 2050;
- (ii) Enhance the health and resilience of our ecosystem and natural environment;
- (iii) Attain our Zero Waste targets with a focus on the reduction of Single Use Plastics;
- (iv) Support efforts to be a Monarch-butterfly Friendly City;
- (v) Water Conservation.

Examples of SNSG projects include: projects to get more people to walk, bike, bus, or carpool, organize a neighbourhood 'walk to school' group; bike repair clinics, clothing exchange events; tool sharing program; organize free sewing and mending workshops; build a Little Free Library to exchange books; neighbourhood litter clean-ups, adopt a location and clean-up cigarette waste; form a group to remove posters from public spaces, plant a butterfly garden, collect glass jars for fats and grease and hand them out in your neighborhood. etc.

The primary benefit of the SNSG funding will be to support and empower residents to undertake their own green actions and engage the neighborhood in taking action to help Markham go green – in their homes and gardens, on the road, at work, and in the community.

Markham utilized this model with great success for Canada 150 grants.

Markham residents will be able to apply for small grants of up to a maximum \$500 per project. For the 2020 funding year, it is recommended that \$10,000 will be allocated from the current MESF budget for SNSG projects.

SNSG criteria:

- Must be a resident of Markham.
- Applicants can apply for one SNSG project per year.
- Two applicants living in Markham but from different households are required on every application. Both applicants are responsible for managing the grant money.
- Project must be free, accessible and welcoming to all.
- May not profit financially from the project. Registered organizations and businesses are not eligible to apply. These grants are specifically for individuals and small volunteer-based neighbourhood/community groups.
- Project must begin after the grant decision is made; Projects are not supported retroactively.
- While some projects may continue year-round, it is expected that the grant is spent by November 30 in the funding year.

The Sustainable Neighborhoods Small Grant Program Applicant's Guide and Application Form will be posted on the City's web site. (Attachment #1)

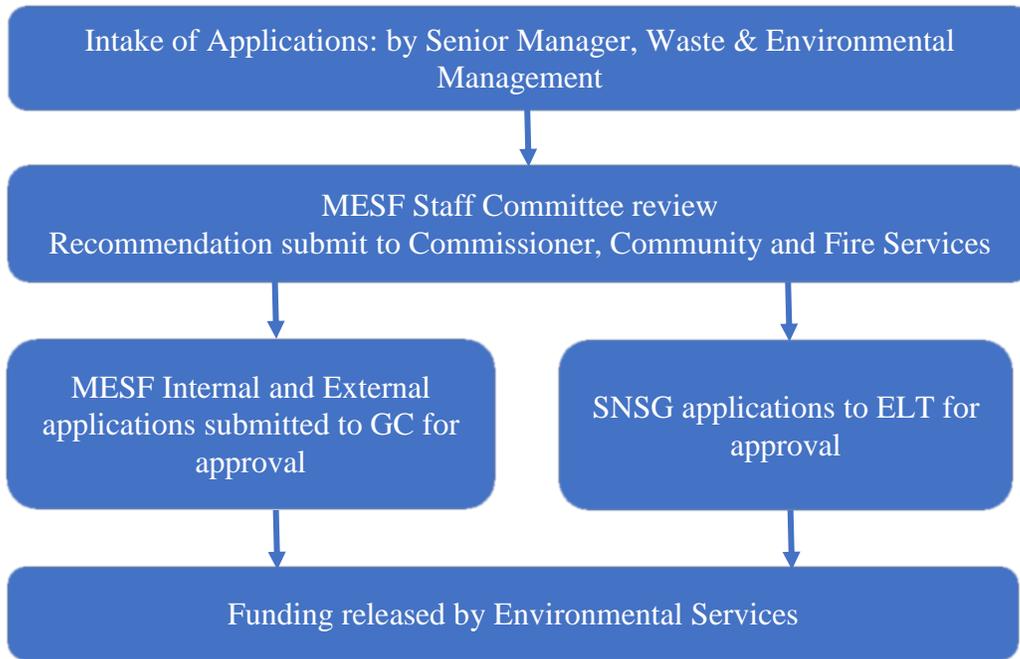
MESF and SNSG Approval Process

In 2020 an MESF Staff Committee will be created to review all MESF (internal and external program) and SNSG applications. Staff from the Waste & Environmental Management Department will compile applications to be reviewed by the MESF Staff Committee. The Committee will have staff representation from a cross section of City Departments and include:

- Environmental Services: Senior Manager Waste and Environmental Management,
- Environmental Services: Water Conservation Program Specialist
- Operations: Parks Planner – Operations, Manager Business Planning & Innovation
- Sustainability and Asset Management: Sustainability Coordinator
- Recreation: position to be determined
- Economic Growth, Culture & Entrepreneurship: position to be determined
- Additional internal subject matter staff will be consulted as required.

The approval process for the two applications are as follows:

MESF & SNSG APPLICATION APPROVAL PROCESS



Follow up with all grant recipients will occur to ensure project completion and to request information on results and photographs/videos for sharing on the City website.

Summary

Markham will continue with the existing MESF program with the creation of a new community funding opportunity called the “Sustainable Neighborhoods Small Grant” (SNSG) program.

Attachment 1 and 2 outlines the criteria of the two programs, as highlighted below:

Item	MESF Internal/External Program	Sustainable Neighborhoods Small Grant Program (SNSG)
Who can apply	Outside organizations City of Markham Departments	Residents of Markham
Amount Eligible	Maximum \$10,000 per project per year	Up to maximum \$500
Available budget	\$65,000 / Year (as required)	\$10,000 / Year (as required)
Application	February deadline – fund award in Spring September deadline – fund award in Fall	April deadline – fund award once a year
Approval authority	General Committee	Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

The MESF will continue to contribute to the sustainability and health of the natural environment and support City's Municipal Energy Plan and Building Markham's Future Together, with alignments to York Region's Smart 4 Living Plan and City's Zero Waste Diversion targets.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Funding for MESF projects is provided in the amount of \$100,000, to be replenished through the annual capital budget process. \$25,000 of the Fund is dedicated annually to Zero Waste programs in City schools and if approved, \$10,000 for the SNSG. The current balance in the MESF reserve fund is \$84,046. The reserve fund will be topped up to \$100,000 through the 2021 budget process.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

BMFT goals, Greenprint, Markham's Community Sustainability Plan, Municipal Energy Plan, Zero Waste Diversion strategy

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Not applicable

RECOMMENDED BY:

Phoebe Fu
Director, Environmental Services

Brenda Librecz
Commissioner, Community & Fire Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund SNSG Applicant Form
Attachment 2 - Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund Applicants Guide



101 Town Centre Boulevard
Markham, Ontario L3R 9W3

Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund

Sustainable Neighborhoods Small Grant Program

Applicant's Guide and Application Form

Attachment "1"

What is the SNSG?

Climate change affects everyone and we must all play our part. Community leadership alongside individual action are essential to success and we will make better progress if we are prepared to take responsibility and work together.

Sustainable Neighborhoods Small Grants (SNSG) is a new funding program under the Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund. The purpose of the Sustainable Neighborhoods Small Grant is to support small scale, resident led sustainability projects within the City of Markham that: reduce the community's carbon footprint, enhance the health and resilience of our ecosystem and natural environment.

Who can apply?

- Must be a current resident of Markham.
- Two Markham residents, each from different households are required on every application. At least one applicant must be 18 years of age.
- Residents can apply for one Sustainable Neighborhoods Small Grants project per year.
- The project must be free, accessible and welcoming to all. You may not charge entrance fees, request donations, or fundraise for other projects and/or organizations.
- You may not profit financially from the project. Registered organizations and businesses are not eligible to apply. These grants are specifically for individuals and small volunteer-based neighborhood/community groups.
- You must begin your project after the grant decision is made. Projects are not supported retroactively.
- While some projects may continue year-round, it is expected that your grant is spent within 12 months of approval.
- For-profit organizations are not eligible
- Youth-led or youth centric projects are strongly encouraged.
- At the completion of the project all grant recipients must provide project photo or video and submit a post project report.

How does it work?

Small grants of up to a maximum \$500 are available for residents of Markham to develop projects that support Markham's Green Print and other Council approved environmental initiatives such as Zero Waste and Monarch-butterfly Friendly City.

For the 2020 funding year, \$10,000 has been allocated for SNSG projects from the MESF program.

What types of projects qualify for the grant?

Each project must support actions that contribute to reducing Markham's carbon footprint.

Green Energy & Transportation

Examples include: Develop a project to get more people to walk, bike, bus, or carpool. Organize a neighbourhood 'walk to school' group; Offer bike repair clinics. Use Crowdfunding to raise funds for projects that reduce CO₂ in the community.

Zero Waste & Reducing Single Use Plastics

Examples include: Clothing exchange events; Tool sharing program; make your next celebration a Zero waste event; Organize free sewing and mending workshops; Build a Little Free Library to exchange books; Build a backyard composter - keep organics within the same area code where the food was originally grown or consumed.; Host a 'retro' Tupperware party; Film a documentary on plastics and show it at your school or workplace

Keeping Markham Beautiful

Examples include: Pick up and recycle litter from a local outdoor space. Organize a hike or nature walk with friends, and bring bags to collect litter along the trails. Adopt a location and clean-up cigarette waste; Form a group to remove posters from public spaces.

Protection of Natural Species and Habitat

Examples include: Create a children's nature garden-label plants and trees, and schedule guided tours. Create a butterfly garden.

Water Conservation

Examples include: Collect glass jars for fats and grease and hand them out in your neighborhood; install a rain barrel; update your irrigation system;

When is the Application Deadline?

Funding is awarded once a year. THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS APRIL 21.

What is the Approval Process?

The MESF staff committee will review applications in May of each funding year and make funding recommendations to the Executive Commissioner of Community and Fire Services.

Final funding decisions will be made in May of each year. All successful applicants will be notified by e-mail. Payment of the approved grant usually follows within about two weeks. Projects must begin upon grant being awarded.

The City of Markham will post a list of approved projects funded under the SNSG Grant on its web site and report to Council on an annual basis.

What is the Evaluation Criteria?

Staff will review and assess applications through scoring and discussion, and make funding recommendations including grant amount and conditions. Recommendations will be made based on the following criteria:

- *Impact:* How well does the proposal identify a need, propose a solution and clearly state the hypothesis in terms of levers of change and potential to measurably advance one or more of Markham's sustainability goals?
- *Realistic:* Does the proposal offer a realistic plan for achieving its goals and objectives? Are the costs/timeframe reasonable?
- *Community Engagement:* Does the project involve those affected by the proposed work and increase the skills and assets of Markham residents, where possible?
- *Community Benefit:* Is the project inclusive and have the capacity to benefit all City of Markham residents?
- *Learning & Knowledge Transfer:* Is there a plan and willingness to share findings and lessons with neighborhood organizations and members?

Grant Amount and Budget

Please consider the following when calculating your project budget:

- Grant requests must be under \$500.
- Grant money may be used to pay people for services (also called honorariums). An honorarium is a small fee paid to someone for their in-kind skills or knowledge contributions. Total honorarium(s) may not be more than \$100 per project.
- When creating a project budget, you should determine the actual cost of items to be used, and think resourcefully about how to obtain materials through borrowing or donations.
- You are responsible for keeping expense receipts to account for all project costs.

How do I apply?

- Step 1 **Carefully review these guidelines** to ensure your group is eligible.
- Step 2 **Speak with the Senior Manager of Waste & Environmental Management 905-477-7000 3560**
- Step 3 **Prepare any supporting information**, such as illustrations and maps and attach them to the application form. Sufficient and complete information must be provided with the application.
- Step 4 **Submit your application**, forms are available on the City website:



101 Town Centre Boulevard,

Form

Markham, Ontario, L3R 9W3

Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund Applicant's Guide and Application

Attachment 2

What is the MESF?

The MESF is a municipal program that funds innovative and leading environmental initiatives that contribute to the sustainability and health of the natural environment. The fund provides financial resources for projects in Markham that promote environmental responsibility and enhance the protection of the Markham's natural resources. The

purpose of the fund is to provide demonstrable, widespread and lasting environmental benefits to the Markham community.

Who Can Apply?

Eligible organizations include: other levels of government, public agencies, school boards and Markham Community Groups including: Markham-based community ratepayer

associations and local organizations, such as conservation groups, Scouts, etc.

Multi-jurisdictional groups, such as NGOs, or other organizations may be considered if there are clearly demonstrable benefits in the City of Markham, conditional on such groups working with a local Markham community group.

A maximum of 3 schools may receive funding per funding cycle, to a maximum of \$5,000 each. Schools **must** be “Zero Waste” Schools (have an organic waste program) to be eligible starting in 2013.

Individuals and “for profit” organizations are not eligible. Any project that results in a direct financial private benefit to the fund recipient is not eligible.

What are the Program’s Requirements?

Applications will be considered by the staff review committee for recommendation to Markham Council. The following objectives shall be considered when reviewing applications:

- the project is a leading environmental innovation (i.e. pilot project) that can be showcased by the City of Markham;
- the project promotes education, understanding and participation in environmental sustainability in the City of Markham; and,
- the project supports Markham’s environmental policies and strategic plan

Projects will be expected to meet at least one of these objectives, if not more.

Applications that do not meet any of these criteria will not be approved.

What are the Community Funding Criteria for an Application?

- projects must be within the City of Markham and initiated by members of the City of Markham Community, or City of Markham Community Groups;
- applicants can request a maximum of \$10,000 from the MESF per project per year;
- applicants may only apply once a year, for projects that will be completed within that same one-year time frame (12 months from issuance of cheque);
- only materials and equipment costs (not consulting services) are eligible for funding from the MESF;
- the project should have measurable results;
- the project should have demonstrable, widespread and lasting environmental benefits for the Markham community;
- any groups that received funding for projects which have not been completed and reported on are not eligible for future funding; and
- funding will not be granted where projects have been commenced.

What are some Suggested Projects?

- energy efficiency initiatives / pilot projects
- climate change and carbon reduction initiatives
- clean air awareness activities and initiatives
- water management promotion
- green roof promotion and implementation
- downspout disconnection/rain barrel program
- wildlife habitat restoration/naturalization activities
- water conservation/efficiency initiatives
- natural features study update/implementation
- environmental and natural gardening promotion and information
- clean-up activities
- environmental management activities
- school environmental projects

When are the application deadlines?

Funding is awarded twice each year - in Spring (February application deadline) and Fall (September application deadline). For specific dates please refer to the website or contact the Senior Manager, Waste and Environmental Management.

How Do I apply?

- Step 1 **Carefully review these guidelines** to ensure your group is eligible.
- Step 2 **Speak with the Senior Manager, Waste and Environmental Management** about your proposed application.
- Step 3 **Prepare any supporting information**, such as illustrations and maps and attach them to the application form. Sufficient and complete information must be provided with the application.
- Step 4 **Submit your application** to the Senior Manager, Waste and Environmental Management, City of Markham, Ontario, L3R 9W3. Telephone 905-477-7000, Email cmarsales@markham.ca.

Application Checklist

Please ensure that your application is complete. Are the following included in your submission?

- A complete and signed application form, including all budget and funding details
- All supporting documentation such as a map, species list, etc.
- Consent letter from registered owner, if applicable

What will happen next?

The staff review committee will review all applications taking into account the established objectives and criteria described above. They may choose to grant the right to the applicant to present their proposal, if requested. They will determine which projects should be funded and how they should be funded (in a single payment or in phases) and make a recommendation to General Committee/Council.

How will I be notified?

A letter of acknowledgement will be sent upon receipt of an application. If your project is approved for funding, you will be contacted. If your application is not approved, you will be informed in writing.

What happens after the Project is completed?

Upon completion of the project and no later than 12 months from delivery of the funding, you are required to submit your project report. Include a project report and photos so we can review and promote your project, together with the completed consent forms permitting use of your photographs by the City (copy attached).

What does a Project Report Contain?

- accounting of how all funding has been spent
- original copies of paid invoices
- description of the success/any shortfalls of the project
- photographs for review and promotion of the project
- completed consent form for use of photographs

A project format will be provided to assist you in preparing the report

Application Form

For Office Use Only - **Project No.:**

Group Information

Name			
Address			
Phone		Fax	
Email		Website Address	
Charitable/Non Profit Organization registration # (if applicable)	Our Group has a bank account in the name of our organization Yes No		

Briefly describe what your group does:

Projects Contacts

Name		Name	
Title		Title	
Phone (work)		Phone (work)	
Phone (home)		Phone (home)	
Email		Email	

Project Summary

Title			
Location of Project			
Name of Registered Owner of the Lands			
Address of Registered Owner of the Lands			
Contact Name for Registered Owner of the Lands			
Phone # Registered Owner of the Lands		Duration (months, maximum 12 months)	
Request for	Spring Funding _____	Fall Funding _____	Either _____
Start Date of Project		End Date	

Please describe which of the following objectives your project meets and how:

- ❖ The project provides demonstrable, widespread and lasting environmental benefits for the community;
- ❖ The project is a leading environmental innovation that can be showcased by the City of Markham;
- ❖ The project promotes education, understanding and participation in environmental sustainability in the City of Markham; and;
- ❖ The project supports the City's environmental policies and strategic plan.

Please provide a detailed description of your project in the following space. Please attach additional pages if necessary to fully explain your project. This description should include:

- ❖ Purpose for the project
- ❖ Description of the Project Team
- ❖ What will your project accomplish? (include workplan with timelines)
- ❖ Who will maintain and monitor the project after completion? (please provide contact information)
- ❖ What are the measurable benefits of this Project?
- ❖ How will you promote the MESF fund with this project?
- ❖ Describe other funding sources/in kind support
- ❖ How will the benefits to the environment and your community be maintained after your project has been completed?
- ❖ Will there be an educational sign component. If so, please describe

Please also provide a cost summary including (please use attached budget forms on pages 4 and 5 to this application to provide details of the costs)

Total Project Cost		Amount requested from the MESF	
Amount from other sources		In-Kind support hours	

6. that there shall be no personal benefit directly, or indirectly, from this funding and I will notify the City of any conflict of interest situation should it arise in carrying out of the project.
7. that the City is not a partner with the MESF recipient.
8. to permit the City of Markham to claim ownership of greenhouse gas emission reductions, which resulted from the project.

Signature

Title

Printed Name

Date

In the event the Registered Owner of the lands is an entity other than the City of Markham, a letter must accompany the application stating that: the Owner consents to this application; acknowledges that the proposed project complies to all its applicable policies and requirements; and, that the writer has the authority to give its consent.

Submission of this application form does not guarantee approval of your application.

Personal information contained herein is subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information Act and the Personal Protection and Electronic Documents Act. The information collected may be used for promotional purposes. Completion of this form constitutes consent by the applicant to

OFFICE USE ONLY					
Date Application Received			New Applicant?	Yes	No
Approved/Not Approved	Yes	No			
Acknowledgement Letter Sent?	Yes	No	Date Sent		
Letter of Approval or Rejection Sent?	Yes	No	Date Sent		
Final Report Received?	Yes	No	Date Received		
Photos Received?	Yes	No	Date Received		
Consent for Photographs received	Yes	No	Photos posted on website?	Yes	No

these terms and uses.

Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund

Photo Consent and Release Form

I, _____ hereby permit
and authorize the (*Print in full – first, middle initial & last name*)
City of Markham (the “City”) to take my photograph/image.

I acknowledge and agree that the City may publish or use the image for any City purposes by any means whatsoever including, but not limited to electronic or digital means. I acknowledge that the City may not be able to control the distribution or use of the image by other than City representatives.

I agree that this Consent and Release is given in perpetuity and for no consideration, credit, acknowledgment or financial recompense, now and in the future.

I hereby hold the City harmless for any claims, actions, debts, damages, injuries or losses that may arise or be incurred as a result of the taking, use, publication or distribution of the image and I agree to indemnify the City against any third party claims, actions, damages, injuries or losses brought or assessed against or incurred by the City for the use of the image(s).

Contact Information					
Signature		Date			
Address					
City		Province		Postal Code	
Telephone			Email		
City of Markham:					
City Representative		Date			