

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY



Presentation to the City of Markham Development Services Committee

March 18, 2019

“Making Markham an Age-Friendly Community!”

Markham's Older Adult Strategy 2017

THE NUMBERS



- We are facing a baby boomer / senior tsunami. By 2031, there will be 118,000 Markham residents over 60. That's 47,000 (66%) more than now!
- There are 6,385 senior households on the Housing York Inc.affordable housing wait-list looking for a unit in Markham
- Across Ontario, the current wait-list for long-term care beds is 34,862. The province just announced they are planning to add 30,000 new long-term care beds over 10 years. That doesn't even meet today's demand!

**CALLING THE NEXT 5 TO 20 YEARS “A SENIOR TSUNAMI” COULD BE
AN UNDERSTATEMENT**

HYI MAJOR PROJECTS

- Housing York's new 265-unit affordable building for seniors, to be located in Markham near Unionville (opens 2022)
- 162 units in Woodbridge (2019)
- 90-110 units in Stouffville (2022-23)

Opening across York to 2023:

537 units

*plus 32 MICAH units in Markham



A REALITY CHECK



- The demand for affordable housing for seniors and others is growing faster than government can build units. Impossible to catch-up
- The demand for long-term care beds is growing faster than government can provide them. Impossible to catch-up
- Land availability and cost are major impediments to providing significant increases in affordable housing and long-term care
- Seniors want to stay in their homes longer and, with the coming seniors' tsunami we may need them to, thus existing living accommodations and new builds need to be more age and health-care friendly
- Issues cross levels of government, but part of the solution is available here in Markham with minimal incremental costs

MARKHAM NEEDS TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP

HERE'S HOW



PRESS CONFERENCE - FEBRUARY 26

- Markham Economist & Sun / Toronto Star / YorkRegion.com
- Markham Focus
- Fairchild TV
- OMNI TV
- Neighbours of Olde Thornhill Village
- Toronto TV
- Markham Review

#1: “ALWAYS” HOMES

- Most seniors want to live independently. Bungalows & condos are perfect, but many don't want to move to a condo
- Because of the price of land, the number of new bungalows has plummeted (being replaced by “bungalows in the sky?”)
- Most multi-level homes like townhouses are not presently senior-friendly

**MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY THINKING
AHEAD WITH ALWAYS HOMES**

It is recommended that all future single, semi, and townhome developments approved in Markham contain a minimum portion of Always Homes, those which allow owners the option of aging longer in their home. An Always Home is one with no impediments for people with accessibility or health issues who may be required to eat, sleep and use the washroom on the ground floor of their home now or at a later point in their lives. Proposal:

- 10% of new home developments be Always Homes and built on grade with no basement thus ensuring greater affordability,
- 10% of new home developments be Always Homes and built on grade with a full basement, and
- 10% of new condo units being developed meet the Always guidelines as well.

#2: “ALWAYS” GUIDELINES

- Homes can be made safer and more accessible for seniors and anyone with mobility issues. Always Homes are adaptable if circumstances change
- New and exciting designs are already being offered by leading builders
- There is minimal cost impact when these features are incorporated into the design

**MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY ADOPTING
SIMPLE DESIGN MODIFICATIONS TO
IMPROVE THE ABILITY TO AGE AT HOME**

It is recommended that the City develop standards for Always Homes and units for implementation as soon as possible in all new developments, having consideration for:

- wheelchair accessibility including hallway widths
- better kitchen and bathroom design
- a shower on the main floor
- proper door handles
- a location for short-term sleeping quarters on the main floor
- no steps from grade to the front door, and to the main floor inside
- railing and ramp locations for future installation if required.

#3: HOME ELEVATORS & CHAIR LIFTS FOR NEW HOMES

- Multi-level homes as currently constructed become increasingly difficult for seniors with mobility challenges and those with physical disabilities
- Designing and reinforcing for future installation of mobility upgrades should have minimal cost relative to the cost of the house as a whole
- Always Home modifications may bring increased property values in the future

**MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY IMPROVING
MOBILITY OPTIONS IN NEW HOMES**

It is recommended that, to improve mobility for seniors and others within their own homes thus allowing them to remain in them longer, the City require that all new singles, semis and townhouses being built in Markham include space and structural supports for future installation of home elevators and chair lifts if needed.

#4: HOME ELEVATORS & CHAIR LIFTS FOR EXISTING HOMES

- There are 87,000 existing ground-based homes in Markham
- Most of those which are not bungalows are not senior-friendly
- Gaining experience with retrofitting chair lifts and elevators into existing homes could help us understand what is needed to keep seniors in their homes longer

MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY IMPROVING MOBILITY OPTIONS IN EXISTING HOMES

It is recommended that, to improve mobility for seniors and others within their own homes for those living in the City's existing homes, Markham and York Region conduct a pilot retrofit home elevator and chair lift program for different types of existing homes to determine the best ways to retrofit them. The expectation is that the recommendations at the end of the pilot will transition into significant improvements in current programs.

#5: THE SUPPLY OF LAND

- Land costs can be as high as \$15M per acre in Markham. This makes affordable housing difficult if not impossible to deliver
- Restrictions, including the Greenbelt, make land availability an issue. Prices drop the further one gets away from needed services such as good transit
- There is underutilized, publicly-owned land close to needed services

**MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY SHIFTING LAND
FROM SURFACE PARKING TO
AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

It is recommended that, since the cost and availability of land are the largest impediments to significantly increasing the supply of affordable housing for seniors and others, land presently being used for surface parking be obtained at no cost for the purpose of building affordable townhouses, condo apartments and purpose-built rentals. In order to replace the lost parking, the new housing development would provide the former owner an equal number of underground and / or structured parking spaces within the new development at no cost. The largest parking lots that fit this category can be found at:

- public utility companies,
- school boards,
- hospitals,
- public transportation agencies
- governments at all levels, and
- possibly, places of worship.

#6: PREFERABLE LOCATIONS

- Locating living spaces close to day-to-day amenities and jobs is especially helpful in reducing car use
- Combating loneliness can be achieved with higher density and co-location with seniors centres and amenities

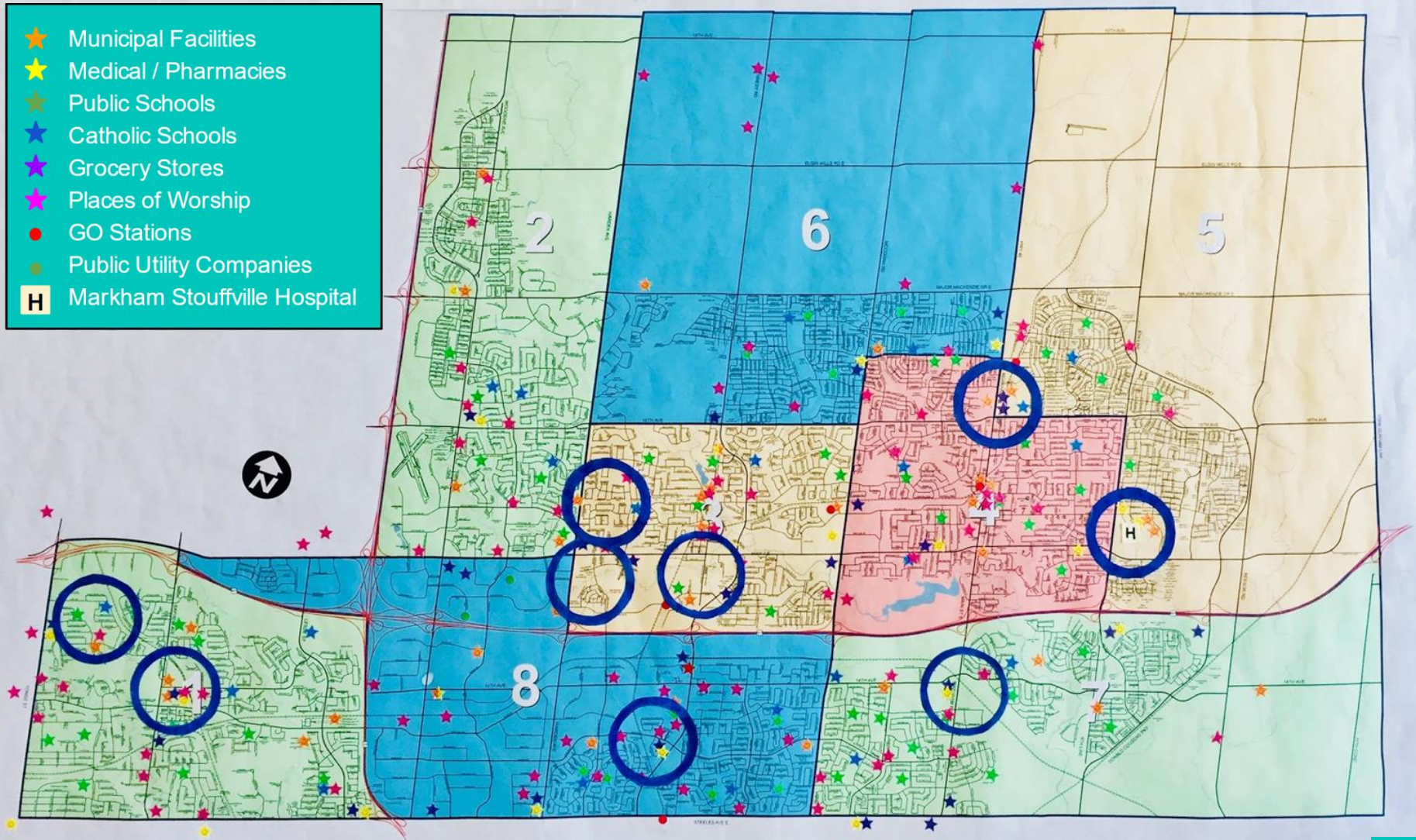
**MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY
IDENTIFYING IDEAL LOCATIONS FOR
AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

It is recommended that the City, in order to reduce the requirement for an automobile, concentrate on finding location opportunities for Recommendation #5 near:

- good transit
- important services such as medical and dental, and
- amenities such as grocery stores, pharmacies and other retail shops.

[See Slide #12 which shows Community Hubs across the City which meet the location criteria]

COMMUNITY HUBS



#7: RESIDENTIAL HOSPICE

- Markham is the 7th largest city in Ontario but the only one in the top 17 that does not have a residential hospice
- Based on Ontario guidelines, Markham should already have 23 hospice beds; we should be planning for 30 or more by 2031
- Residential hospices are more cost-effective compared to hospitals. Ontario's annual savings? \$5.3M

**MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY MEETING WITH
STAKEHOLDERS TO DISCUSS
DEVELOPING A HOSPICE**

It is recommended that, in order to meet the need for palliative, end-of-life, services in Markham, the City:

- support the establishment of 2 to 4 residential hospices over the next 12 years with a target of 30 or more residential hospice beds,
- provide the land at little or no cost for the first hospice site, and
- endorse the first hospice for 10 or more beds being built as quickly as possible.

#8: NURSING AND PERSONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

- Many seniors are struggling to remain in their homes as their costs rise for Personal Support Workers and Nurses
- With appropriate support, more than 20% of seniors admitted to long-term care in Canada could remain at home
- It costs less to fund at-home care than long-term care and hospitals. It also helps reduce hallway medicine
- Certification and licensing for PSWs would improve quality and accountability

MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY CALLING FOR IMPROVED HOME-CARE

It is recommended that York Region and the Province dramatically ramp-up at-home care for both nursing and personal support services including corporate and individual registration and qualifications, training, financial assistance, etc., in order to encourage seniors needing lower levels of such care to remain in their homes longer before being required to transfer to a facility with higher levels of care.

#9: MARKHAM PARKING AUTHORITY

- The City does not have a Parking Authority
- The proposal in Recommendation #5 and #6 is to build housing on publicly-owned parking lots. They are generally used only in the daytime. Using a small portion of the lot for overnight and off-hours parking would reduce the cost of structured parking for the affordable housing
- There are revenue opportunities for the Parking Authority

**MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY IMPLEMENTING
OFF-HOURS PARKING**

It is recommended that the City create a Markham Parking Authority with one of their responsibilities being the development of an “Off-Hours Parking Program” for overnight parking permits on lots listed in Recommendation #5 above to assist the nearby development of affordable housing by reducing the number of underground and / or structured parking spaces needed by the new housing development.

#10: SURPLUS SCHOOL PROPERTY

- Surplus School Board lands are currently sold to buyers, including the City, at market value
- Some of these sites are well located for affordable housing
- These sites were originally purchased with public money decades ago

MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY CALLING ON THE PROVINCE TO REQUIRE A LOWER VALUE IF SURPLUS PROPERTY WILL BE USED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

It is recommended that the Province, in order to reduce the price of land and increase its availability for affordable housing for seniors and others, introduce a requirement that the sale of surplus school board property to municipal governments or agencies, if for affordable housing purposes, be at the value of the original land purchase plus carrying costs as opposed to current market value.

#11: INCLUSIONARY ZONING

- Integrating affordable housing with market value housing is a leading planning practice
- Inclusionary zoning in Markham would see a given share of new residential construction to be dedicated to affordable housing, for both ground-based and condo units

**MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY IMPLEMENTING
INCLUSIONARY ZONING**

It is recommended that the City implement an inclusionary zoning policy for Markham so that all future apartment developments, and other types of housing if possible, contain a reasonable percentage of affordable housing units. The percentage would be set by Council after input by the public and stakeholders.

#12: SECONDARY SUITES

- There are about 7,500 Secondary Suites in Markham today, but that's difficult to pin down. Only one in ten are legal
- Regulation and inspection of Secondary Suites would improve safety for the tenants and neighbours
- Increasing the number of Secondary Suites would provide more affordable housing

MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY LICENSING AND REGULATING ALL SECONDARY SUITES

It is recommended that the City, in order to maintain and provide housing options for a larger range of residents:

- permit secondary suites by right across the city,
- legalize all secondary suites in the municipality which meet the parking requirements and establish a five-year program to register them thus ensuring that those already in existence meet safety and reasonable living standards as set out in the fire and building codes and property standards, and
- develop a program to encourage the provision of more secondary suites in the future.

#13: COACH HOUSES

- Coach houses in Cornell are well accepted as additional living spaces
- Coach houses improve housing affordability and provide additional income opportunities

**MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY
DEMONSTRATING THE PRACTICAL
IMPLEMENTATION OF SMALLER HOMES**

It is recommended that the City encourage the building, within the current urban boundary and in the Future Urban Area, of a significantly increased number of smaller homes such as Coach Houses, which are defined as homes above garages not attached to the main house, in order to provide greater opportunities for affordable rentals and purchases for seniors and others.

#14: LIVE / WORK OPPORTUNITIES

- Live / work arrangements improve the vibrancy of cityscapes and can reduce road congestion
- They provide opportunities for small businesses which are key employment generators
- Walkability opportunities improve the health of all citizens

**MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY INCREASING
LIVE / WORK OPPORTUNITIES**

It is recommended that future developments in the City include increased allotments for live / work opportunities for neighbourhood services and small businesses in residential areas in order that nearby residents, especially seniors, can walk to local services. It is also recommended that the City look for opportunities to increase live / work opportunities within its existing urban boundary.

#15: SENIORS' SNOW CLEARING SERVICE

- The number of seniors will increase dramatically in Markham in the next decade
- Demand for seniors' snow clearing will increase at the same time
- The issues are doctor's appointments, emergency access, dependability, and accessibility

**MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY IMPROVING
ACCESSIBILITY FOR SENIORS**

It is recommended that, if the City does not provide a city-wide windrow clearance service in the near future, Markham improve the current service for seniors by making it quicker.

#16: SIDEWALK COMPLETION

- Markham has started an Arterial and Collector Road Sidewalk Completion Program - Council is to be commended
- There is no set target date for completion, likely 2028 or later. Too far away!
- Locating sidewalks on all arterials and collectors means greater safety and improved public health

**MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY IMPROVING
PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ON ARTERIAL AND
COLLECTOR ROADS**

It is recommended that, in order to provide a safe environment for seniors and others wishing to walk for exercise and / or walk to services, the City target the “Finish-Date” of its Sidewalk Completion Program for Arterial and Collector Roads as 2026 or earlier.

#17: IMPLEMENTATION

- A number of these recommendations fall within existing City mandates
- Monitoring implementation is possible
- Especially for the affordability housing opportunities, some oversight is needed. Both public and private developers would be involved
- In a practical way, the City could have a direct impact on increasing the amount of affordable housing and helping seniors stay in their homes

**MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY DEMONSTRATING
REAL PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE**

It is recommended that City staff suggest an appropriate organization or organizations to oversee some of the projects envisioned above. Possibly:

- an independent non-profit agency, or
- a current or new City / Regional agency, or
- a special section within the Development Services Commission.

#18: THE FUTURE URBAN AREA

- Markham can start quickly by taking these recommendations into consideration while planning the Future Urban Area (FUA) to the north and other new developments coming to Council in the near time-frame

**MARKHAM CAN LEAD BY BEING
PROACTIVE ABOUT THESE
PROPOSALS**

It is recommended that Markham's FUA being developed in the Woodbine, Warden, and Kennedy areas north of Major Mackenzie, be designed with the above recommendations in mind.

#19: PROCESS



It is recommended that these **Recommendations for an Age-Friendly Markham** be received by Development Services Committee and sent to staff for public and stakeholder input with a draft report coming back to DSC by November 2019, and that staff in Markham and York Region also give consideration to developing further incentive programs if required to accomplish the above.

Thank you for your consideration

Questions?



**Prepared and presented by “The Committee for an Age-Friendly Markham”
(Andy Langer, Christl Reeh, Gail Leet, & Diane Gabay), Regional Councillor Jack Heath,
Melissa Qi, & Melinda Phuong**