

Exceptional Services by Exceptional People

2020 Accomplishments

Undertook 10 customer surveys with overall satisfaction rate of 76.3%

Completed Winter Maintenance Council review of service levels, including an externally conducted survey that found 79% of residents are satisfied with the level of service received by the City.

YourVoice Markham has more than 30 projects competed, active or in the development stage

Successfully launched IBM Watson Assistant for Citizens to provide 24-hour, any time, any device information related to COVID-19 and City services.

Launched the COVID-19 public website and Staff Hub to keep internal and external audiences informed and connected

Completion of renovation and opening of Morgan Pool

Mobile GIS/ACR Forestry Field Application implementation

Electronic Plan Review (ePlan) staff seamlessly processed a full complement of new and existing planning applications on-line

Supported City bid for Top Intelligent Community of 2020. Markham ranked among the Top 7.

ePropertyTax - Increased the number of property tax accounts enrolled in ePropertyTax to 18.9%, exceeding the 2020 target of 16%.

Updated the City's website to maintain ongoing AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) compliance.

Implemented MPL Digital literacy and inclusion programs for the public.

Undertook necessary planning and infrastructure upgrades to support the MS365 pilot project

Continued implementation of the cyber security program including system patching and mandatory awareness programs

Implemented Well-Being Program for staff, conducted the Total Well-Being Index, and established a Total Well-Being Team.

Implemented tools to support business process modernization and service delivery CRM, EAM, ePlan, program registration system, M365 solutions

Adjusted in person training to live virtual and e-learning training while leveraging Markham Learn Centre; programs included cyber security and anti-Black racism training, among others.

Introduced leadership and employee learning and development strategy; commenced with virtual Harvard ManageMentor program to support leadership growth and extend management capabilities

Support for staff during COVID 19 - Supported pandemic response including developing and implementing training and guidelines; distributed PPE; introduced COVID 19 screening and related health and safety protocols, and undertook a variety of communications, including a Work From Home Survey to obtain feedback from staff and ensure that staff were supported.

The City activated its Emergency Operations Centre in response to COVID 19 - staff from several departments supported and managed the Emergency Operations Centre during activation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Launched COVID-19 public website and Staff Hub within days of the pandemic being announced by WHO to keep our internal and external audiences informed and connected (They have continually been updated to: improve user experience, improve Search Engine Optimization, improve access to info and allow us to track increase analytics and map trends); Added additional COVID City pages for weekly and monthly COVID updates and info.

Two virtual town hall meetings were hosted by the Chief Administrative Officer (avoided non-essential travel; showed that we all need to do our part, including the CAO of the corporation; hosted on YouTube to remove barriers for those not on the network and used Zoom share screen as a teleprompter for CAO); supported several Mayor's Town Halls, providing social media and technical support, as needed.

Regularly issued COVID-19 staff updates and CAO messages to staff, exponentially increasing the CAO's interaction with staff, while keeping them informed during these challenging times; Worked in partnership with the CAO's office to coordinate a virtual modification for Markham's 2020 Staff Teamwork Day, that exceeded the goal of 300 registered staff attendees.

Supported program implementation for various successful COVID-19 business support programs: Digital Main Street's shopHERE, powered by Google (more than 350 participating artists and small businesses), Markham Small Business Recovery and Digital Resilience Program (full capacity), "Open for Business" by Ritual ONE and DoorDash, SkipTheDishes holiday promotions and Destination Markham Shop Local campaign. Secured media coverage for ShopHERE and SkipTheDishes that also promoted local businesses; Successfully launched first-ever behavioural/geo-targeted B2B digital ad campaigns for Economic Development to help small businesses overcome the challenges of COVID-19

Advocated for New Animal Services Delivery model to bring Animal Enforcement Services in house. Approved by Council in December 2020 for start in early spring 2021.

Enhancing digital engagement through the introduction and facilitation of fully functional virtual Council/Committee meetings, Budget Committee meetings, Advisory Board Committee meetings, Tree Appeal Hearings and public consultation meetings (note: Markham among the very first municipalities to hold a virtual secondary plan design charrette)

Parking By-Law amendment to allow for virtual screening and hearings for parking ticket matters

Support City response to COVID-19 pandemic through interpretation and advice related to Provincial legislation

Developed electronic burial permits

Launched an outreach program to connect with about 4,500 local seniors to reduce social isolation when their senior clubs were shut down because of the pandemic

Launched an innovative Park Ambassador Program which saw some fitness staff bicycling through our parks and trail systems to educate the community on social distancing rules and other COVID safety measures

Launched Live Chat service through the library to support online public access following the closure of library branches due to the pandemic, where library staff provided 11,400 real-time sessions to assist with library card registration, account information, and coaching in accessing and using the library's digital resource

MPL Adapted service models to comply with COVID-safe requirements and delivered 10,900 curbside pickup appointments to ensure equitable and accessible library services to the community

Responded to evolving interests and increasing demand for digital collections by adapting borrowing rules and changing subscription models with the Library's vendors to maximize the community's ability to access digital content

Responded to the critical need for PPEs by using the Library's 3D printers to create face shield components and ear protectors for distribution to local frontline health care providers

Supported corporate response to the pandemic and adjustments made to the workforce by accepting and training, in three waves, a total of 70 staff redeployed temporarily from various departments

Fire completed a successful recruitment campaign and on boarded 11 new recruits with a modified training program during the pandemic

Parking By-Law amendment to allow for virtual screening and hearings for parking ticket matters

Drafted strategy and by-law for COVID 19 related temporary patios, and reviewed and permitted 50+ such patios.

Successfully transitioned to virtual Committee of Adjustment and Heritage Markham meetings as well as other planning meetings and open houses

Partnered with sports organizations to develop and implement return-to-play strategies that incorporated COVID-safe protocols and worked with local sports groups to implement contact tracing practices

Completed development and launch of updated and improved Mobile App (Access Markham) with enhanced functionality. Re-released to App Store

Developed and implemented the Customer Location Analysis interactive dashboard for the Building Department

Online Inspections Portal that provides applicants and owners a simple one step online method of booking inspections without having to enter into the eplan portal

Online Bill payment feature that provides applicants and owners a simple one step online method of paying ANY fee collected by the building standards department

Launched BrainFuse, a free online resource that supported 9,800 students and job seekers by offering services such as one-to-one live tutoring for Grades K through 12 and resumes and interview preparation

Participated in virtual LPAT hearings, including the resolution of Times Group LPAT Appeal in Markham Centre

Drafted strategy and by-law for COVID 19 related temporary patios, and reviewed and permitted 50+ such patios.

Obtained Pre-Approval, Tendered and Awarded 2021 Theatre HVAC Work

The first digital advertising screens were launched at Aaniin CC&L in early 2020. A first for the City's facility advertising program. These screens will become an important ad revenue stream moving forward as expansion happens in more community centres;

Successfully piloted several digital language pilots in Tamil, Simplified Chinese for emergency and Covid-related services, expanding our reach to non-English language speaking residents who may not be familiar with how to access City of Markham resources and information AND increasing our understanding of these audiences' behaviours. These pilots will continue through 2021 and results will assist with the development of a language & translation policy.

Successful defence of LPAT appeal re: JD Developments Zoning By-law Amendment for 7100/7200 Markham Road

Interpreted and provided advice on over 300 new and evolving Provincial regulations and statutes

Redeployment and training of more than 100 employees

Enabled the monthly Security Patching Program for Crown Jewel and infrastructure servers

Upgraded the Active Directory network management system from version 2008 to

Presented City of Markham's COVID-19 response and recovery efforts at the 14th Annual Municipal Communications Conference, attended by professional communicators from coast-to-coast-to-coast;

Monitored media chatter from the beginnings of COVID-19 surfacing in the GTA's Chinese community, through it's spread to wider community, to the present. Flagged issues and provided advice to management during the early days of Public Health messaging. Provided on-site media relations support. Scanned more than 1,000 media articles daily during the peak of EOC operations and reported on the progress of the virus in jurisdictions across Canada and shared COVID-19 announcements from the federal and provincial governments that affected Markham to help communicate service impacts on residents and businesses, resources and supports for businesses

COVID Enforcement initiative - By-Law Officers fully engaged in COVID19 Enforcement

Successfully pivoted to offer online stationary business licence renewal options for eating establishments, garages, personal service, car rental & dry cleaners.

Adapted in-person mobile business licence renewals to ensure public and personnel safety maintained following all Provincial and Regional Health guidelines including tow truck, refreshment vehicle, & driving school operators.

Continued to issue marriage licences by appointment only from the beginning of the pandemic

Engaged, Diverse, Thriving and Vibrant City

2020 Accomplishments

Established the Destination Markham Corporation (DMC) Board and supported the development of their business plan. Secured \$470k in RRRF Funding for Destination Markham to help tourism and hospitality businesses respond to COVID.

City staff negotiated a shared Use Agreement with Markham Stouffville Hospital for use of the Cornell Community Centre during the pandemic

Transitioned to virtual delivery of Economic Development services including small business and culture programs and services specifically camps and by appointment access to the gallery and museum

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, successfully modified and hosted 20+ meaningful virtual events to maintain community engagement in key City initiatives, dates of significance, and strategic mandates. Events included: Day of Mourning, Spring maintenance 2020, Indigenous Peoples History Month, Pride Celebrations, Innovation Month celebrations, virtual flag raisings, Made in Markham awards, Canada Day celebrations, Berczy Day 2020, Markham-Milliken Children's Festival, Winter maintenance 2020, Remembrance Day 2020 celebration, Season's greetings from ELT, Chanukah greetings 2020 and more! Supported the Markham Creates Community Challenge in the height of the first wave of the pandemic, resulting in more than 125 submissions – showcasing Markham's outstanding artistic talents and ability to come together as one strong and resilient community, while apart.

Enterprise Blvd Road Closure on Sundays and Public Holidays - street closures supported local community active lifestyle programming during the Summer months.

Developed and implemented Virtual Recreation Programs and Fitness programs for the community when the community centres were closed because of the pandemic, which attracted 2,451 programs participants and 21,602 fitness participants.

Developed an engaging 6-week Park Pop Up program for 1,661 children ages 6 to 12 during the summer that met legislative COVID-19 requirements and children's need for play

Leveraged YouTube to keep our residents engaged and active during COVID lockdowns, which attracted 53,742 participants in our fitness video classes, along with 722 YouTube subscribers and an offering of 123 YouTube Classes

Pivoted to virtual library programming and camps to provide the community with continued access to learning and social opportunities, which totalled 110,600 participants, during the COVID-19 pandemic

Curated the COVID-19 Stories Exhibit, a community memory journal of 100+ stories, to share and reflect on the experiences brought on by the pandemic, provide an outlet for stress and anxiety, and reduce social isolation

City of Markham cultural venues partnered with the library on the Markham Creates Community Challenge to engage and connect the artistic community while physically distanced to help stop the spread of COVID-19

Negotiated with OverDrive, MPL's largest provider of eBooks and eAudiobooks, to provide an Instant Digital Card so that residents without library cards could have free, temporary access to digital collections while staying at home that resulted in a 61.5% increase in eBook borrowing

Created multiple user guides and videos to assist the public in the general use of ePlan

On going work to facilitate the implementation of Public Art installations

Staff supported World Hakka convention planning, program development and marketing

Developed and rolled out mandatory Anti-Black Racism training for the corporation

AODA Compliance: AODA embedded Google Maps on Portal compliance. This project involved reaching out to all Commissions and Content Authors to review/update their pages to ensure compliance and accessibility. Began preparation for AODA training for all content editors.

Creation and production of National Indigenous History Month live, interactive online drumming and singing session (and video) featuring members from the Markham community. The video was shared on Portal, social media, Your Voice Markham (as part of our virtual Canada Day celebrations) and was shared nationally by Canada Day Drumming on July 1. The live virtual event on Zoom saw a total of 411 individuals registered to participate and 116 unique participant accounts join the event -- a higher participation level than the in-person National Indigenous Day events in previous years.

Villages & Valley Walking and Cycling Loop completed

Reopened the new outdoor Morgan Pool to provide lane swim, aqua fit, recreation swim, and leadership training for residents in a safe manner that followed all legislative guidelines

Designed and installed banners to recognize the Terry Fox Foundation near the Civic Centre and to celebrate Thornhill settlers and veterans along Yonge Street

Negotiated and executed Mass Immunization Clinic Memorandum of Understanding with York Region

Provided Zoning Review and Comment on over 400 Licensing Application Processes and on over 1000 Planning Processes related to Planning Applications

Markham Road-Mount Joy Design Charrette and Draft Development Concept – The Markham Road - Mount Joy Secondary Plan Study was started in November 2019 as a first step to preparing a new secondary plan for the area. In response to COVID19 realities, City staff transitioned from traditional engagement approaches and held the City's first virtual design charrette, two virtual community information meetings and developed and presented a draft development concept to Council in

Victoria Square Boulevard EA – Part 2 Order Decision

Successfully piloted several digital language pilots in Tamil, Simplified Chinese for emergency and Covid-related services, expanding our reach to non-English language speaking residents who may not be familiar with how to access City of Markham resources and information AND increasing our understanding of these audiences' behaviours. These pilots will continue through 2021 and results will assist with the development of a language & translation policy.

Events leadership - Internal: To support the on-going planning and delivery of virtual events by City teams and departments throughout the pandemic and into 2021, developed a robust toolkit of virtual event planning tools, resources, templates, standards and guidelines, available for all staff on [Checkmark](#)

Events leadership - External: For external event clients, restructured and launched a new webpage, [Markham.ca/events](#) as a one-stop-shop online source for event planning information for City and community event organizers. Enhanced the content of this site with wide variety of tools, resources, links to source materials and City event requirements. CoCo authored and launched Markham's (very first) Special Event Guide (affectionately referred to as the 'Events A-Z' guide) as a one-stop-shop resource to help event organizers navigate the departmental and external agency regulations and compliance requirements pertaining to planning events in Markham.

Introduced By-Law Twitter account

Markham Creates competition

Hosted theatre awards and 2020 excellence awards

Safe, Sustainable and Complete Community

2020 Accomplishments

Implemented a Corporate Security Control Centre within the Civic Centre – Centralized CCTV systems and Access Control system allowing the ability to remotely monitor our facilities from one central location, enabling a quicker response to incidents

#greenMarkham campaign relaunch (social media posts on sustainability tips through Covid), HERO (Home Efficiency Retrofit Orientation) program webinar for homeowners, internal staff lunch and learn - snack attack

Develop and implement 2 pilot projects related to bringing City facilities in line with the City and Federal Governments goal of Net Zero Emissions by 2050.

Completed comprehensive Draft Sustainability Metrics for implementation through development applications.

Completed construction of 5 parks totalling 18.8 ha

Metrolinx Forest Compensation Plantings - City staff worked with TRCA and Metrolinx to create and restore 3 hectares of forest (5000 trees and shrubs) in the Unionville and Cornell communities. This green initiative will help to protect the City's Greenway System and contribute to the City's 30% tree canopy target.

Council endorsed the Cornell Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP) Gateway Study. The purpose of the study was to prepare a Gateway Streetscape Concept Plan and Implementation Framework to create a highly articulated public realm that functions as a gateway into the Rouge National Urban Park. The gateway will seamlessly connect urban public spaces along Highway 7 and the Cornell community with park facilities including a future visitor area.

Housing Summit – The Mayor's Markham Housing Summit was held in November 2020 and was a livestreamed virtual event that brought together various sectors involved in building housing in Markham to discuss solutions to deliver affordable and rental housing.

Draft Affordable and Rental Housing Strategy – The City of Markham is developing a new Affordable and Rental Housing Strategy and exploring innovative solutions to address housing affordability. In February 2020, Council received the proposed Draft Affordable and Rental Housing Strategy including an inclusionary zoning framework which is a new provincial tool that can require affordable housing in residential developments.

Completed the Road Safety Audit

Main Street Unionville Summer Traffic Calming implemented. This project consists of traffic calming measures and expansion of the street boulevards to create a calmer and safer condition for pedestrians and cyclists during Summer. Unionville Main Street is a busy tourist attraction during the Summer months.

Whistle Cessation implementation on all 13 crossings
Rouge Valley Trail – Phase 4A Construction completed (Markham to Tuclor and 14th to Treeline Court)
Successfully managed seven major winter events, including the activation of a full network of plows, and 41 minor winter events in the 2019/2020 winter season
Implemented the Flood Control Program by completing West Thornhill Phase 3A for \$10.9M, bringing the total investment in stormwater projects completed to \$75.5M
Completed the 2-year pilot of the Private Plumbing Protection Rebate Program and obtained approval to extend the program for another two years that provides subsidies to residents to help reduce the risk of basement flooding
Achieved a score of 100% on the Drinking Water Quality Management System in the compliance inspection completed by the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
Received Council approval on Best of Best #2 Waste Diversion Strategy and Single-use Plastic Reduction Strategy, and implemented Styrofoam packaging ban from curbside collection
Updated internal processes related to watermain dead-ends and water meters, and optimized pressure releasing valve setting to address pressure issues for customers, in support of service planning and continuous improvement
Developed “Get to Know H2O” virtual school education program, resulting in 158 presentations to 3,250 students
Procured and installed new SCBA (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus) washing machines to improve health and safety decontamination practices following fire response
Created and implemented a best practice COVID Workplace Safety Plan that has been shared and replicated in other fire services across York Region
City acquired properties in support of the Markham Innovations Exchange and Multi-Use Pathways.
Staff executed the Markham Centre Enterprise Road Ground Lease for the new York University Campus
Rouge Valley Trail – Phase 4A Construction (Markham to Tuclor and 14th to Treeline Court)
Operated safely and increased registration and participants for Kirkham Allotment Garden and surrounding community
Commissioned the City's first Emergency Reception Centre at Aaniin Community Centre & Library
Fire Station LED Signs – Phase 2: All City of Markham Fire Stations (excluding Fire Station 97) has a new LED exterior signage to be used as one of the ways to keep public informed in event of emergencies. Safe & Sustainable Community
Completed gas collection system replacement and upgrade at the German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat
Traffic Signal Coordination along Main Street Markham and Denison Street
Operated safely and increased registration and participants for Kirkham Allotment Garden and surrounding community gardens through Covid

Converted the COVID-19 Active Screening and Contact Tracing paper process to a digital platform (ie. Simpletrack) for greater efficiency.

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Stewardship of Money and Resources

2020 Accomplishments

COVID-19 Presentations to Council - Staff provided 5 presentations that enabled decisive actions to support financial relief to residents and business owners, as well as providing strategies that assisted in mitigating financial impacts of COVID-19 on the City.

Destination Markham Organization Corporation (DMC) - Council approved twelve Directors, eight independent Directors and four non-independent Directors (being the Mayor and three members of Council) and the appointment of eight individuals as the independent Directors. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as part of Markham's economic recovery plan, the DMC Board was requested to lead a marketing strategy focused on promoting a 'buy local, shop local and stay local' campaign.

Created and implemented semi annual ePlan reporting dashboard. Dashboard tracks environmental impacts, review cycles, hours per review and applicant activity.

Risk assessment framework developed for Asset Management projects to reflect preliminary budgeting numbers relative to unknown factors and/or risks which include but are not limited to no design available, no project location selected, no building size defined, no building permit yet, etc.

Asset Management Plan Progress Update Report – First annual update report was presented to Council regarding City of Markham Asset Management Plan. Contributing to meeting the Auditor General Asset Management Audit recommendations.

Obtained Council approval of the 2020 budget. The Budget preserved current service-levels, continues investments in the Council approved priorities, as well as ensuring sufficient funds in the Life Cycle Reserve for the next 25 years, based on known inflows and outflows. The City of Markham had the lowest 15-year tax rate in GTA.

Continue to pursue E3 opportunities - Achieved \$1.7 million of E3 savings as part of the 2020 budget. Since 2009 over \$29.4M in savings have been achieved which equates to a tax rate increase avoidance of 24.5%.

C.D. Howe Institute for budgeting and financial reporting - The City of Markham has earned an "A" (85% score) in the C.D. Howe Institute's annual report card on municipal fiscal transparency. Markham's score places the City in the top 5 out of 31 major Canadian municipalities in the report.

Awarded City's Waste Management Collection Contract

Went to market with one of the largest (\$1M) single year Block Pruning tenders in the GTA and completed all 7 City blocks to its entirety before year-end

Received Council approval on Best of Best #2 Waste Diversion Strategy and Single-use Plastic Reduction Strategy, and implemented Styrofoam packaging ban from curbside collection

Sold over 300 rain barrels raised \$3,000 for WaterFirst, a charitable organization that helps educate and train First Nations youth in the water science field

In 2019, the City joined other municipalities to participate in the World Council on City Data (WCCD). Markham reported indicators in conformity with ISO 37120 at the Platinum Level . ISO 37120 Sustainable Development of Communities: Indicators for City Services and Quality of Life. The City was awarded WCCD Platinum Certification.

The City was successful in submitting applications to Audit & Accountability Fund: Intake 2 and the COVID Resilience Infrastructure Stream: Local Government, where Markham is eligible to access \$7,381,614 in grant.

Received 400 pieces of art work for the Varley Art Gallery

Regulating energy use in SAM run facilities (Civic, 8100 & 555) due to closures for a savings of \$84,000