



Report to: Development Services Committee

Meeting Date: December 12, 2022

SUBJECT: 2022 Monitoring Growth in the City of Markham -
Performance Indicators

PREPARED BY: John Yeh, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Strategy & Innovation –
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RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the staff report entitled, “2022 Monitoring Growth in the City of Markham - Performance Indicators” dated December 12, 2022, be received;
2. And that staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

The Monitoring Growth in the City of Markham – Performance Indicators report (**Appendix ‘A’**) provides annual results of performance indicators that measure and track the progress of policy objectives in the City’s Official Plan. This is the third annual Performance Indicators report beginning in 2020 that provides input to further policy review and development, and assists in monitoring growth targets.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Markham’s Official Plan 2014 (Official Plan) provides a long-term framework for guiding sustainable growth and land use planning decisions in Markham. The Official Plan reflects the goals, policies, and targets set out in Markham’s endorsed Growth Alternative to 2031, Building Markham’s Future Together Strategic Plan, Greenprint Community Sustainability Plan, York Region’s Official Plan, and the Provincial Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan. The Official Plan was adopted by Council on December 10, 2013 and approved by York Region Council on June 12, 2014. The majority of the Official Plan is currently in effect.

Chapter 10.12 Monitoring of the Official Plan provides for the development of a framework for monitoring growth and to measure progress towards achieving policy outcomes. That framework has been developed and is actively used in monitoring the Official Plan.

A key component of the Official Plan is to monitor progress towards the achievement of the Official Plan’s policy objectives and targets. **Appendix ‘A’** contains the results of the Official Plan Performance Indicators to monitor growth and development in the City and to provide input for future Official Plan policy development through the review of the Official Plan. This report has 29 indicators with updated data available for 20 of the indicators.

Staff will continue to monitor the performance of these indicators and will report to DSC on an annual basis.

Official Plan Performance Indicators

Indicators have been identified based on a combination of data availability, practicality for tracking, and relevance toward Official Plan objectives and targets. These indicators are arranged according to thematic areas of the Official Plan and are listed in **Appendix 'B'** to this report which also lists updated data for certain indicators.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Generally, the indicators demonstrate the City of Markham is on the right track to meeting the objectives of the Official Plan in the thematic areas covered in Sustainable Growth, Protecting the Natural Environment, Building Complete Neighbourhoods, Increasing Mobility Options, and Maintaining a Vibrant and Competitive Economy. A summary of some of the updated indicators are provided below (See **Appendix 'A'** for a report with a full list of Official Plan Performance Indicators and a summary of trends). Indicators previously reported that don't have current data available such as Regional Centre Density and Modal Split are not provided below but are included in **Appendix 'A'**.

Population and employment growth has fallen below forecast levels

Table 2.3 of the City's Official Plan contains Markham's population and employment forecast to 2031 in five year increments. This forecast serves as the basis to plan for population and employment growth. The estimated 2022 population of 354,900 residents in Markham is about 21,000 less than the 2022 forecasted population of 375,900. Based on annual average growth from 2016 to 2022 of around 2,700 residents, Markham's population in 2026 could be at least 32,600 residents less than the 2026 forecast of 398,300. Development in the Future Urban Area and along the City's centres and corridors is expected to increase the rate of population growth and reduce the gap.

2021 and 2022 employment estimates are from the Conference Board of Canada as York Region did not undertake the Employment Survey in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 and the 2022 Survey results were not available at the time of the completion of this report. The estimated 2022 employment of 177,440 jobs in Markham was about 44,000 less than the 2021 forecasted employment of 221,500. To achieve the 2026 forecast, an annual growth of about 13,500 jobs per year would have to occur for the next four years, which is above the 4,000 annual jobs growth between 2006 and 2016. The City has generally been successful in achieving the goal of 1 job for every 2 residents since 2006, with the ratio ranging from 1.05 jobs per 2 residents in 2006 to 1.08 in 2016 and 1.00 in 2022.

It should be noted the new York Regional Official Plan which includes population and employment forecasts to 2051 was approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and

Housing on November 4, 2022. The forecasts in the Markham Official Plan will be updated to conform the Regional Official Plan.

Markham is continuing to intensify along its Centres and Corridors

Residential intensification rate is the annual percent of all residential units built within the Provincial built boundary, which was established by the original Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe in 2006. The City's intensification strategy targets an intensification rate of 60 percent. This target is measured annually to optimize the use of existing land and infrastructure, which contributes to creating compact, walkable and complete communities. Over the last 10 years (2012-2021), the City's intensification rate has been averaging 57 percent and this rate is anticipated to increase as more development occurs within the City's Centres and Corridors including Markham Centre, Langstaff Gateway and Cornell Centre, all of which are within the built boundary.

Significant portion of the Greenway system is in Public Ownership and increasing

Markham's Greenway designated lands serves as an interconnected system of natural open space, agricultural lands and enhancement areas that preserve areas of significant ecological value while providing, where appropriate, opportunities to improve biodiversity and connectivity of natural features and ecological function. The Official Plan policy 3.1.1.2 encourages public acquisition of natural heritage network lands where possible over the long term. Public ownership provides a more consistent and more comprehensive level of protection for these lands. As of 2021, nearly 67% of the lands designated as Greenway in the Official Plan are now publicly owned which is up from 63% in 2020. For 2021 public ownership is further divided between Parks Canada at 71% or 3,209 hectares, the City of Markham at 22% or 1,006 hectares, and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority at 4% or 165 hectares. The remaining 3% or 128 hectares are owned by other public agencies.

New housing supply trends indicate higher densities being achieved

New Housing Supply by type tracks the amount of new housing units completed annually by unit type. The Official Plan has policies to encourage a mix of housing units to meet the diverse housing needs of the City's residents. For the period of 2016 to 2021 there were 7,559 higher density units built which made up 85% of all new units. In 2021 there was a total of 36,332 higher density units (apartments and townhouses) which comprised 33% of the total housing stock an increase from 25% in 2011.

Affordability of annual new ownership housing units continues to decline with 0 units being affordable in 2021

The housing affordability indicator tracks the proportion of new ownership units created annually that are affordable to low and moderate income households below 60 percent of the income threshold. Markham's Official Plan policies aim to promote affordable housing choices to accommodate residents. In 2021, 438 new ownership units were created and none of those units were affordable. Recent results have shown that ownership units, regardless of type, have become increasingly unaffordable to households

with incomes in the lowest 60th percentile or below. In 2016 there was a high of 60% of new ownership units being affordable, followed by 24% in 2018, 2.7% in 2020, and 0 in 2021 as noted.

There were 16 affordable rental units built in 2021 (all were registered second units) with a total of 25 second units built over the period 2017-2021.

A greater proportion of higher density developments are located within walking distance of higher order transit stations

Higher density development and residents living within an 800 metres walking distance to higher order transit stations along Highway 7 and the Stouffville GO Train line supports Official Plan policies to provide for transit-supportive development where there is a mix of land uses close to transit. As of 2021, 58,800 residents or 16% of the City's residents live within 800 metres to higher order transit stations along the VIVA Bus Rapid Transit Line on Highway 7 and Stouffville GO Train line. This is an increase of 3,400 from the previous estimate of 55,400 from 2019. The majority of housing unit types within 800 metres of all higher order transit stations are apartment units at 54%.

Active transportation network slowly growing but not meeting targets

The 2010 Cycling Master Plan established a target of 93 km of cycling paths/bike lanes and 70 km of multi-use pathways/trails to be built by 2022. This supports Official Plan policies to provide active mobility choices for everyday activities such as work, school, shopping and leisure and helps reduce road congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. As of December 2021, 51.8 km of cycling paths and 48.9 km of multi-use pathways have been built. This is an increase of 3 km and 5.9 km since 2018. 41.2 km of additional cycling paths and 21.1 km of additional multi-use pathways will need to be built to complete the City's target network of active transportation infrastructure.

Vacant employment land supply is decreasing

To accommodate employment growth and maintain a strong and diverse economy in Markham there needs to be a supply of serviced employment lands. A number of indicators track this including inventory of serviced and unserviced industrial and commercial lands. The supply of serviced vacant industrial land has decreased from 2018 to 2021 by 72 hectares to 132 hectares while the supply of serviced vacant commercial land has increased by 31 hectares to 63 hectares. In the same time period, the total inventory of unserviced industrial land decreased by 221 hectares to 469 hectares and unserviced commercial land have decreased by 51 hectares to 34 hectares.

Employment floor area has steadily increased from 2018 to 2021 from 3.2 million m² to 3.4 million m² for industrial uses and 0.8 million m² to 1.3 million m² for commercial uses.

The vacancy rate for industrial spaces remained between 0.4% and 1% but the vacancy rate for commercial has fluctuated between 1% and 19% over the last 3 years.

Commercial and industrial property values declining as a percentage of all assessed properties

Assessing the value of commercial and industrial properties as a percentage of all properties in Markham helps track how diversified of a tax base it is for residential and non-residential development to support economic growth and employment opportunities. Between 2017 and 2022, the total assessed value of commercial and industrial properties as a percentage of total assessed value of all properties declined from 12.8% to 11.8%.

Building permit activity is cyclical and has experienced a decline from 2018 to 2020 but increased in 2021

Tracking the number of units and non-residential building area for building permit issuances helps inform the future supply of residential units and employment spaces. The number of building permit issuances for residential units increased in 2021 to 3,941 units compared to the last past 5 years trend (from a high of 2,784 units in 2018 to a low of 118 units in 2019). From 2016 to 2021, the annual proportion of higher density units (apartments and townhouses) ranged between 57% (68 units) and 81% (3,173 units) respectively in 2019 and 2021. In the past 5 years building permit issuances for non-residential building spaces have averaged over 245,000 m² per year while increasing to a high of 458,649 m² in 2021 compared to a low of 118,192 m² in 2020.

NEXT STEPS

This report is the part of an on-going effort to monitor growth as directed by the Official Plan. Future reports will occur on an annual basis where information can be obtained regularly.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Official Plan performance indicators were identified and monitored in the context of the Strategic Plan Priority of Goal 3 Vibrant City and Safe, Sustainable and Complete Community.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

The Planning & Urban Design, Engineering, Economic Growth, Culture, & Entrepreneurship, Financial Services, and Building Standards Departments and the Policy & Research Group were consulted in the preparation of this report.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Arvin Prasad, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner of Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix 'A' – City of Markham 2014 Official Plan Performance Indicators
Appendix 'B' – List of Thematic Areas and Indicators (Includes Updated and New for 2022) for City of Markham 2014 Official Plan Performance Indicators