

Destination Markham Tourism Strategic Master Plan (2024 – 2026)

Presentation to Markham City
Council

June 27, 2023



Location: Rouge National Urban Park (visitmarkham.ca)

Agenda

1. Acknowledgements
2. Project / Phasing Overview
3. Tourism in Markham
4. Fundamentals of the Tourism Strategic Master Plan
5. Actions to Achieve Goals



Acknowledgements

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Acknowledgements

Destination Markham's Tourism Strategic Master Plan (2024-2026) is the culmination of a strategic process that included research and analysis, public engagement, and plan development.

It was created by the CBRE Team with the support of:

- **DMC Project Management Team** (made up of DMC Executive Director & key staff)
- **Project Advisory Team** (made up of 10 industry leaders, operators, and stakeholders)
- **DMC Board of Directors** (12 members, inclusive of Mayor Frank Scarpitti)

Project / Phasing Overview

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Project Phasing



1 - Environmental Scan

Key Tasks

- Stakeholder Consultation
- Document Review, Best Practice Review, Infrastructure Assessment, Trends Review, Organizational and Policy Assessment
- Destination Analysis (PESTLE & SWOT)

Deliverables:

- **Environmental Scan Report**



2 - Vision and Focus

Key Tasks

- Visioning Session Focus Group
- Draft Vision for Markham as a destination
- Goals for tourism sector
- 5 High-level Strategic Priorities

Deliverables:

- **Strategic Priorities Memo**
- **Vision Plan Report**



3 Strategies & Action Plan

Key Tasks

- Collaborate and finalize new Vision and Mission
- Consolidate Strategic Pillars, Goals to direct outcomes, and Strategic Actions to meet Goals and fulfil Vision

Deliverables:

- **Draft Strategies & Actions Report**



4 - Tourism Strategic Master Plan

Key Tasks

- Draft Implementation Plan with organizations to lead/support actions, performance measures & costs
- Final Master Plan Report and High Quality Publication

Deliverables:

- **Draft Final Tourism Strategic Master Plan (for DMC's internal use)**
- **Final Tourism Strategic Master Plan and High Quality Publication**

Tourism in Markham

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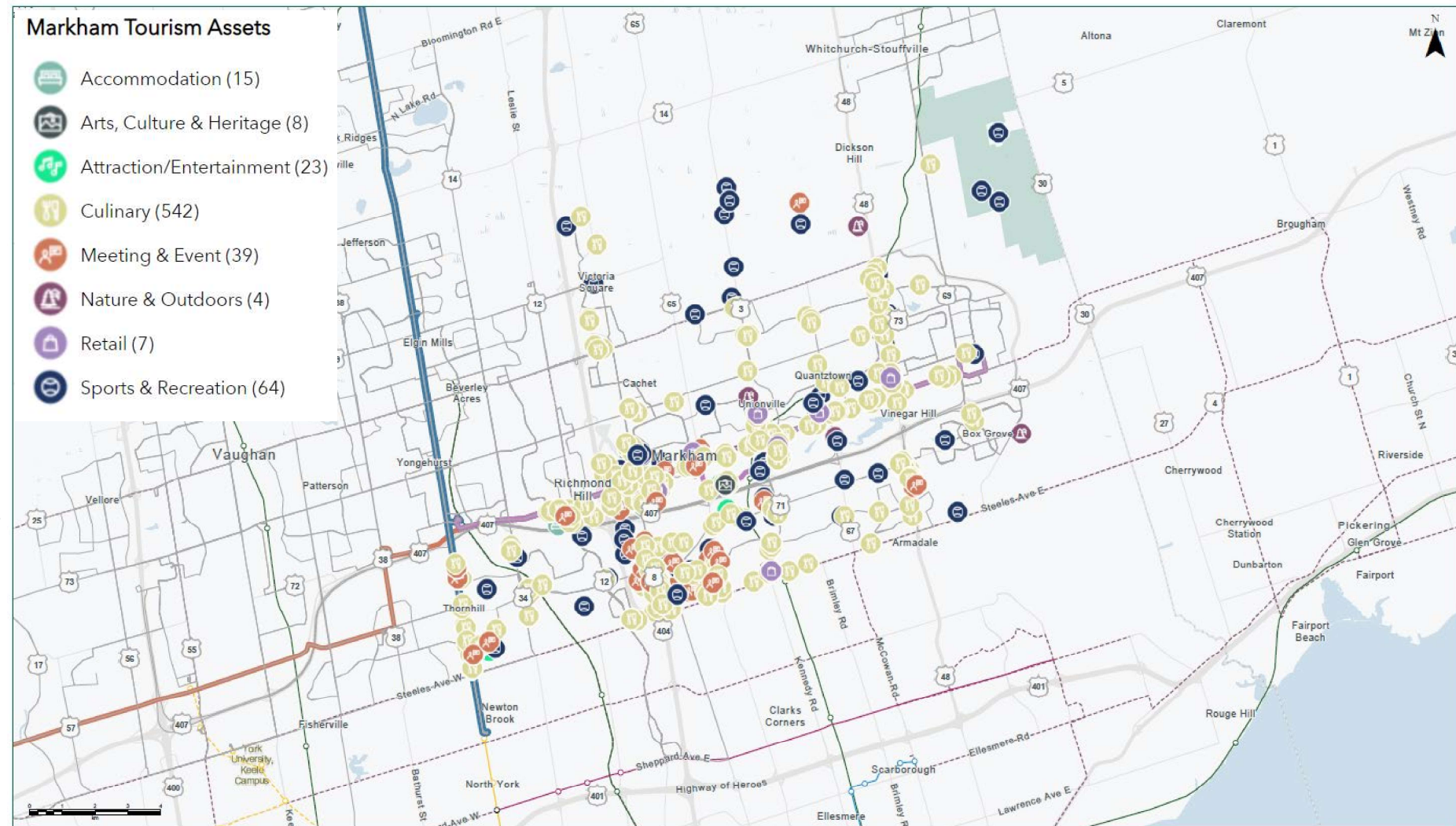


State of Markham's Visitor Economy

- 4.0 million domestic visitors to York Region in 2019 (79% same-day, 98% from Ontario)
- 2,437 hotel rooms in Markham generated 592,000 room nights (67% occupancy) in 2022

Tourism Assets

- 76% culinary/restaurants
- 9% sports venues/facilities
- Limited attractions and public assembly facilities



Source: CBRE Location Intelligence, CBRE Hotels

Markham's Tourism Potential

Potential Visitor Infrastructure Projects

- Multi-use event centre (convention centre / performing arts centre)
- Outdoor amphitheatre for festivals & events
- Boutique hotel (on Main Street of Unionville and/or Markham Main Street)
- Streetscaping with common wayfinding / signage
- Family attractions, especially nature-based
- Year-round indoor attraction geared towards young adults
- Waterfront enhancements
- Additional “Main Streets” e.g., redevelopment of Old Kennedy Road
- Additional sports fields and related infrastructure



Fundamentals of the Tourism Strategic Master Plan

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Vision for Markham:

Markham is an unmatched GTA destination that connects visitors to a unique blend of cultural heritage, innovation, events, and authentic experiences.



Destination Markham's Mission:

To be the leading authority for destination management, advancing Markham's visitor economy with the support of its residents, businesses and government.

Strategic Plan Components

4 Strategic Pillars

12 Goals

66 Specific Actions

Strategic Pillar Areas

Strategic Pillar Areas
provide structure to the
core priorities for an
organization that must be
addressed in order to carry
out the Mission

1. Destination Management and Internal Governance
2. Research and Investment Attraction
3. Product and Experience Development
4. Destination Marketing



Actions to Achieve Goals

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Destination Management and Internal Governance

To ensure DMC is a leading authority in destination management capable of growing Markham's visitor economy

- Plan to adjust roles to align internal staff with Pillars
- Provide regular updates to DMC Board on implementation and tracking of strategic actions
- Establish task force to help guide Change Management
- Advise Council and Municipal Departments on policies and processes that impact the visitor economy
- Create tourism education & awareness plan for elected officials
- Align DMC vision & goals with City Economic Development plans

Destination Management and Internal Governance

To provide the resources and support tourism related businesses need to thrive in Markham

- Create information & awareness program for local businesses
- Collaborate with Markham Small Business Centre to support tourism businesses
- Develop resources to support businesses (data analytics, economic impact, funding programs, etc.)
- Work with partners to leverage the regional GTA experience
- Position Markham as a GTA hub

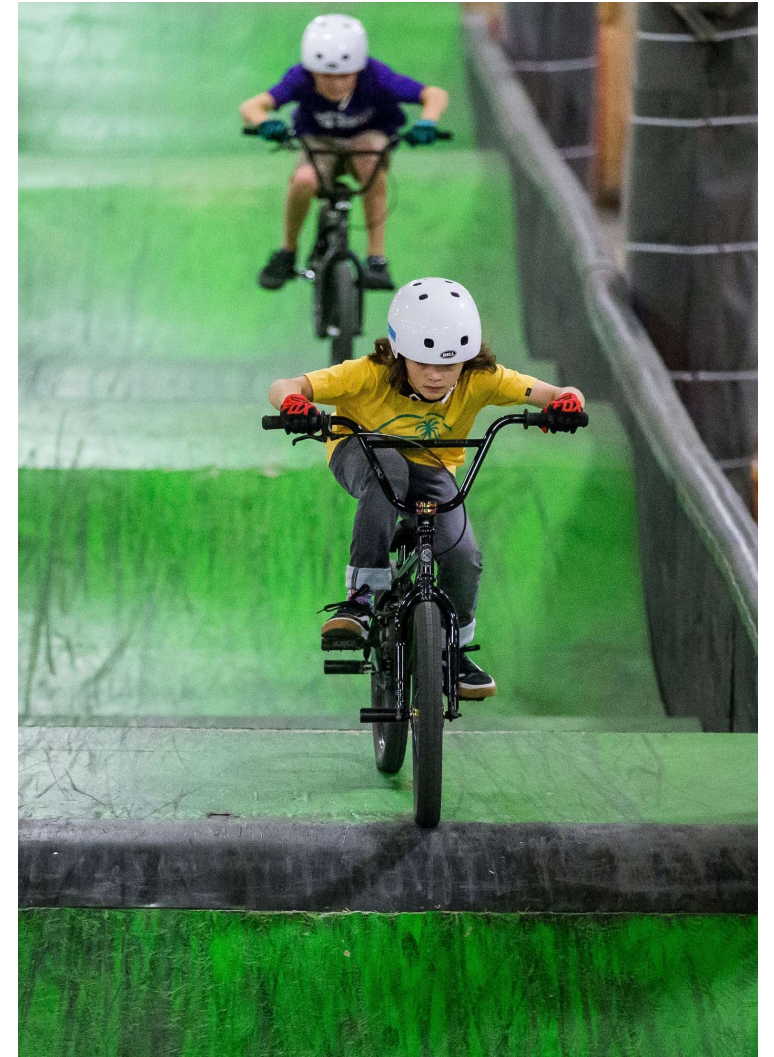


Source: <https://visitmarkham.ca/business-toolkit/>

Destination Management and Internal Governance

To enhance the visitor and resident experience in Markham

- Establish a **Cultural & Visitor Hub in Downtown Markham** – location of multi-use event & performing arts centre (TBC via feasibility study)
- Advocate for interim transportation solutions
- Work with Economic Development to prioritize tourism-aligned infrastructure
- Develop framework for allocation of City's portion of MAT funding
- Create visitor-friendliness plan
- Educate on importance of large events & help streamline processes for event organizers



Research & Investment Attraction

To collect and analyze meaningful visitor data to support product development and marketing

- Track visitation to Markham
- Survey for qualitative understanding of visitor experience
- Research impact & growth potential of current events
- Use event data to educate decision-makers on importance of events for identity & economy
- Consider interim transportation solutions (for advocacy)

To broaden Markham's reach and renown as a destination

- Research travel trends of young people to broaden target markets
- Identify niche visitor segments based on existing product/experiences (e.g., freestyle bikers)
- Create tourism awareness to support ambassador program for local residents
- Research regional/provincial conference and sport events to grow Markham's profile

Research & Investment Attraction

To attract future tourism investment to Markham

- Conduct product-market match exercise
- Strategy to address infrastructure gaps
- Create investment attraction tools for new investors (visitor stats, developable sites, policies, etc.)
- Support feasibility study for multi-use festival & event infrastructure



Product & Experience Development

To identify and support major product & experience clusters for Markham

- Develop product offering and visitor appeal in 4 targeted clusters:
 1. Sport Tourism
 - Establish Sport Tourism task force; advocate for City support of local sports; work to attract visitor-focused events at Pan Am Centre
 2. Retail Centres
 - Focus on primary centres: 1) Historic downtown of Unionville, 2) Historic downtown of Markham Main Street, 3) Pacific Mall, 4) First Markham Place, 5) other evolving centres (Markville Mall); advocate for wayfinding; share marketing & digital assets
 3. Culinary & Dining
 - Position Markham as the Culinary Capital of Asian dining; educate restaurants on visitor friendliness; work with CTA, develop itineraries with events and shopping
 4. Hallmark Events & CME
 - Focus on Taste of Asia, Unionville Festival, TD Markham Jazz Festival, Markham Music Festival as Hallmark Events for Markham; collect data at events

Product & Experience Development

To establish a diverse mix of exciting and engaging tourism products and authentic experiences

- Establish tourism asset and experience inventory
- Identify assets/products/stories that best combine to create experiences
- Create itineraries to increase existing visitors' length of stay
- Build on culinary to attract visiting friends & relatives, and incorporate outdoor assets

To position Markham as a preferred destination for business, leisure and group events

- Develop & enhance Markham's CME product offering
- Develop Sport Tourism Advisory team to advocate for & grow events
- Collaborate to promote large festivals and events
- Support Markham Pan AM & York University collaboration for large events
- Advocate for bid fund from City's portion of MAT revenues

Product & Experience Development

To develop the hard and soft infrastructure to support Destination Markham's key visitor segments

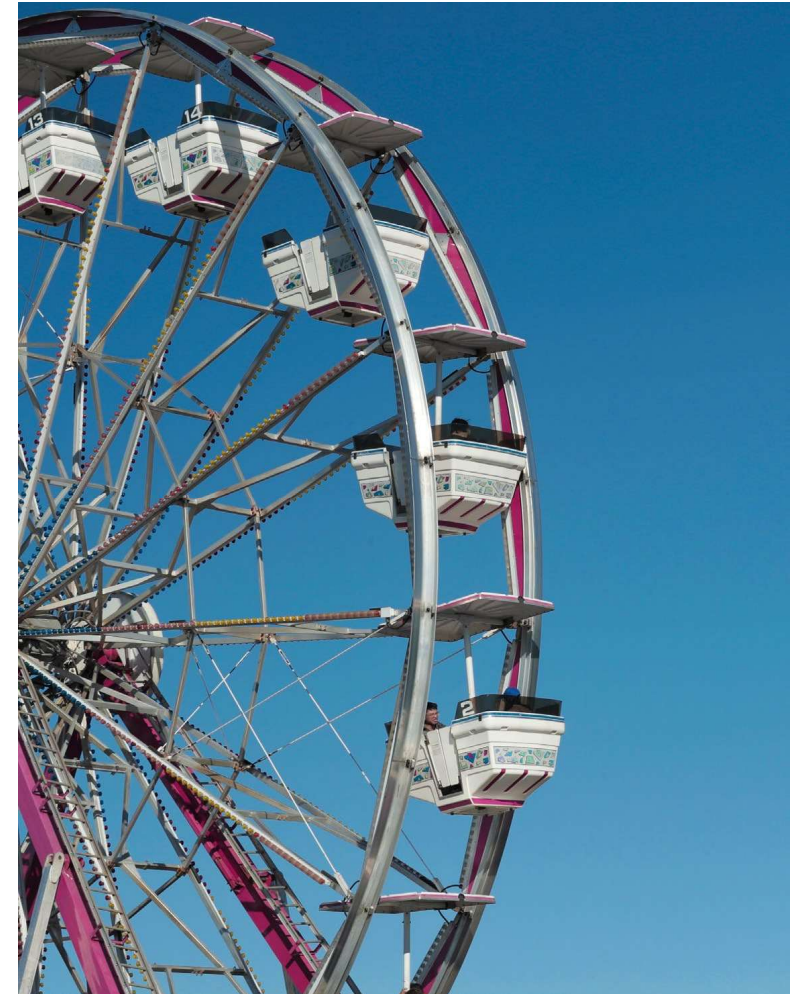
- Improve wayfinding & navigation to establish Markham as a unified destination
- Expand event infrastructure to support group and event markets
- Feasibility study / needs assessment for a multi-use event centre in Downtown Markham
- Feasibility study / needs assessment for accommodations in historic downtown retail centres
- Support active transportation strategy



Destination Marketing

To build a unifying and credible corporate identity for DMC

- Bring marketing in house (new staff)
- Develop dedicated marketing strategy to support DMC's mission
- Build awareness of DMC's features and benefits
- Create a corporate brand identity
- Grow awareness of DMC Corporate Brand



Destination Marketing

To create an appealing consumer visitor brand that heightens awareness of Markham as a unique tourism destination

- Align assets to needs and wants of visitor markets
- Undertake visitor branding exercise
- With partners, grow awareness & excitement of visitor brand identity
- Aggressively market key existing tourism assets and experiences:
 - a. New product and experience itineraries
 - b. Culinary
 - c. Sport tourism
 - d. Event and festivals
 - e. Meeting and conferences
 - f. Group travel
 - g. Major events

Implementation Plan

17 Actions for DMC to Complete in the Next 6 Months

Pillar #1 - Destination Management, Organizational Development and Internal Governance

Goal #1: To ensure DMC is a leading authority in destination management capable of growing Markham’s visitor economy

Strategic Actions	Partner (Lead in Bold)	Time Frame	Priority	Estimated Budget
1. Establish a full-time Executive Director position to lead the Destination Markham team.	DMC , DMC Board, Markham Economic Development	Immediate	Critical	TBD (est. \$115,000-\$175,000)
2. Provide regular updates to the DMC Board of Directors on implementation and tracking of strategic actions in the Tourism Strategic Master Plan.	DMC , DMC Board	Immediate and ongoing	Critical	N/A
3. Ensure DMC is consulted by and advises Council and Municipal Departments on policies and processes that impact the visitor economy	DMC , DMC Board	Immediate and ongoing	High	N/A
4. Create a Stakeholder Relations role to engage tourism-related businesses and associated partners	DMC , DMC Board	Immediate and ongoing	Critical	TBD – depending on
5. Establish task forces, when needed, with tourism operators and key stakeholders to ensure implementation of key destinations identified in the Tourism Strategic Master Plan				
6. Develop a Change Management plan to transition DMC staff into four functional areas described herein				
7. Reallocate budget for DMC to align with the Tourism Strategic Master Plan staffing suggestions				

Pillar #2 - Research & Investment Attraction

Goal #1: To collect and analyze meaningful visitor data to support product development and marketing

Strategic Actions	Partner (Lead in Bold)	Time Frame	Priority	Estimated Budget
1. Establish a Business Intelligence & Development Director position, in line with strategic recommendations, and reallocate support roles accordingly.	DMC , DMC Board	Immediate	Critical	TBD (est. \$80,000-130,000)
2. Develop a program to track visitation to Markham through a. macro 3rd-party data b. industry-generated data (segmented by festivals/events, major business events in hotels, sporting events)	DMC , Tourism Advisory Committee, partnering with: For Macro Data: CCT and other 3rd party partners (Sitewise, credit card, etc.)	Immediate	Critical	\$15,000-\$20,000
5. Research and define interim solutions for transportation (e.g. potential vehicle rental, carpooling, etc.) in collaboration with industry partners	DMC , DMC Board, City of Markham	Immediate	High	\$5,000

Pillar #3 - Product and Experience Development

Goal #3: To attract and support major product and experience clusters for Markham

Strategic Actions	Strategic Actions	Partner (Lead in Bold)	Time Frame	Priority	Estimated Budget
14. Undertake a product strategy to add new experiences	1. Establish a Destination Development Director role to oversee the development and enhancement of Markham’s tourism assets and experiences.	DMC	Immediate	Critical	TBD (est. \$80,000-\$130,000)
	2. Create position(s) to support visitor-focused festivals and CME industry	DMC , tourism operators	Immediate	Critical	NA

Pillar #4 - Destination Marketing

Goal #2: To establish a strong corporate identity for DMC

Strategic Actions	Strategic Actions	Partner (Lead in Bold)	Time Frame	Priority	Estimated Budget
4. Establish and maintain a brand inventory.	1. Establish the Marketing and Brand Management Director role, in line with strategic recommendations, to focus on development of both the corporate brand and the consumer visitor brand.	DMC , DMC Board	Immediate	Critical	TBD (est. \$90,000-\$130,000)
	2. In line with best practices, establish Content Developer / Manager and Graphic Designer roles to build the foundation for an in house marketing department to support messaging, design and content for brand initiatives.	DMC , DMC Board	Immediate	High	TBD (\$55,000 for Content Developer / Manager, \$65,000 for Graphic Designer)
	3. Develop a dedicated marketing strategy that supports DMC’s mission	DMC , Tourism Advisory Committee	Immediate	Critical	N/A

Performance Measures

- Specific measurements that demonstrate that we have achieved the desired outcome
- Considerations for performance measures to include relevance to mission and work required to measure, monitor and report

Inputs	Actions	Outputs	Outcomes
Human, financial, organizational and community resources required to implement the strategy	Specific activities undertaken using the inputs to further the strategy	The results of the actions (for example, # of tourism operators at a digital marketing workshop)	Broader longer-term impacts on the visitor economy and community as a whole arising from the implementation of the strategy





Thank you!

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