

**A STRONG AND
DIVERSE ECONOMY**



5.0 A STRONG AND DIVERSE ECONOMY

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5.0 A STRONG AND DIVERSE ECONOMY

5.1 EMPLOYMENT

Markham has a strong and diverse economy contributing to the second largest share of local municipal employment in York Region. This economic success can be attributed to a number of factors including Markham's reputation as a High Tech Capital; its attraction of world-class companies; its skilled, diverse and educated labour force; and its strong service-based economy. The ability to carry forward this pattern of economic success will depend on the ability of new and existing companies to find or maintain business sites that provide a high-quality, engaging business environment for their employees. The challenge will be to ensure that there is an adequate supply of employment lands in key locations over the long term to provide for the retention of existing employment and the creation of new employment and economic opportunities.

Markham's economic success can be attributed to a number of factors including its reputation as a High Tech Capital; its attraction of world-class companies; its skilled, diverse and educated labour force; and its strong service-based economy.

5.1.1 General Policies

Economic competitiveness can be promoted by providing support for a diversified economy – one with a mix of local, regional, national and international businesses and a diversity of business types and sizes. By planning for and accommodating this diversity of business sizes and sectors with adequate employment lands, appropriate mixed-use neighbourhoods and support for home-based businesses, Markham can continue to provide for a diverse selection of jobs, goods and services to create a community of choice to live, work and play. Markham can also promote green business development and business greening strategies for existing and new employers.

It is the policy of Council:

- 5.1.1.1 **To promote** economic development and competitiveness by:
- a) providing for an appropriate mix and range of employment (including industrial, commercial and institutional uses) to meet long-term needs;
 - b) providing opportunities for a diversified economic base, including maintaining a range of choice of suitable sites for employment uses that support a wide range of economic activities and *ancillary uses*, and take into account the needs of existing and future businesses;
 - c) planning for, protecting and preserving designated 'Employment Lands' for current and future uses; and
 - d) ensuring the necessary infrastructure is provided to support current and forecasted employment needs.
- 5.1.1.2 **To facilitate** the establishment and maintenance of a competitive business environment that is able to easily adapt to changing circumstances and priorities by ensuring the policy framework permits a broad range of employment uses in appropriate locations.
- 5.1.1.3 **To promote** economic growth and diverse employment opportunities in order to:

- a) maintain Markham's tax base;
 - b) achieve an appropriate balance between population and employment growth; and
 - c) foster and sustain stable and accessible employment opportunities for Markham residents.
- 5.1.1.4 **To support** existing and new industry sectors of the economy, critical to Markham's success by focusing employment growth to strategic locations and to protect employment areas from incompatible development including *sensitive land uses*.
- 5.1.1.5 **To facilitate** the establishment of business parks in key locations that:
 - a) are competitive locations for national and international business and offer a wide choice of accommodation for new business;
 - b) are maintained, protected and designed as cohesive and contiguous areas for employment use;
 - c) include only those retail and service uses that primarily serve businesses and employees within the business park;
 - d) attract high-quality and diverse businesses;
 - e) provide local employment opportunities so as to minimize overall commuting times and reduce traffic congestion, emissions and air pollutants; and
 - f) accommodate new business start ups and business incubator facilities and expertise.
- 5.1.1.6 **To identify** and designate through secondary plans or local area studies, Research and Development Business Parks that are:
 - a) a minimum of 4 hectares in size in proximity to transportation hubs;
 - b) adjacent to or in the vicinity of innovation and commercialization partners such as the Markham Stouffville Hospital, Seneca College Campus and the (former) Toronto Buttonville Municipal Airport lands; and
 - c) designed and located to take advantage of the convergence of life sciences and information communication technology and/or advanced manufacturing, and/or other knowledge-based advanced technology clusters to create the competitive advantage those emerging industries need to grow and prosper.
- 5.1.1.7 **To encourage** eco-industrial activities in business parks and the retrofit of existing business parks in ways that support and maximize:
 - a) mutually supportive business relationships between industries through resource sharing;
 - b) re-use of industrial by-products;
 - c) sharing of services and facilities including transportation demand management strategies; and
 - d) co-generation opportunities including District Energy.
- 5.1.1.8 **To encourage** the business community to support the greening of industry that:
 - a) helps to protect and restore ecosystems and *biodiversity* through the use of innovative infrastructure and other design features;



Markham enjoys a significant employment base contributing to a strong economy.





Markham has a rich history as a settled agricultural community and contains some of the most productive agricultural land in southern Ontario.



- b) reduces energy consumption and carbon creation including adopting the highest standards of green building design that include energy efficiency, water conservation, and the maximization of solar gains; and
- c) minimizes or avoids the generation of waste and pollution, including the adoption of a zero waste strategy and working with government agencies on other means of waste reduction, and alternative technologies for managing wastes.

5.1.2 Protecting Employment Lands

Markham enjoys a significant employment base contributing to a strong economy. To ensure that Markham's economy continues to grow, it is essential to provide and protect sufficient land to accommodate opportunities for future employment growth. Both the Provincial Policy Statement and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe contain policies that support the protection of employment lands from conversion to other uses. The York Region Official Plan also recognizes that the continued viability of employment lands is contingent upon their long-term protection, and requires local municipalities to include employment land non-conversion policies that are consistent with the policies of the Province and the Region.

It is the policy of Council:

- 5.1.2.1 **To recognize** that all designated 'Employment Lands' are strategic and vital to Markham's and the Region's economy, and necessary to achieve the employment forecasts for Markham identified in Chapter 2. 'Employment Lands' include all lands within the following land use designations identified on Map 3 – Land Use, and described in Chapter 8:

- 'Business Park Employment';
- 'Business Park Office Priority Employment';
- 'Service Employment'; and
- 'General Employment'.

- 5.1.2.2 **For** the purposes of this Plan, 'Employment Lands' comprise an 'area of employment' as defined by the Planning Act and 'employment area' as defined by the Growth Plan and the Provincial Policy Statement.

- 5.1.2.3 **To ensure** the intended uses in 'Employment Lands' are protected from other uses that may jeopardize the continued viability of the intended employment uses and their expansion in the future, and the ability to achieve the employment forecasts for Markham.

- 5.1.2.4 **That** in regard to the conversion of employment land:

- a) Conversion of employment land includes:
- the removal of land from an 'Employment Lands' designation established by this Plan; or
 - the use of land in an 'Employment Lands' designation for a use other than those established for the designation by this Plan; or
 - the introduction of a non-employment use that includes *major retail*, residential and non-*ancillary uses* as identified by the Province or York Region.

To ensure that Markham's economy continues to grow, it is essential to provide and protect sufficient land to accommodate opportunities for future employment growth.

- b) That a development application involving the conversion of employment land shall only be dealt with in the context of a *municipal comprehensive review*, in accordance with Provincial and York Region Official Plan policy.

- 5.1.2.5 **That** during the course of a *municipal comprehensive review*, in considering a request for conversion of lands within an 'Employment Lands' designation as defined in Section 5.1.2.4, it shall be demonstrated that:
- a) there is a need for the conversion; and
 - b) the employment forecasts allocated to Markham by York Region will be able to be accommodated on appropriately designated 'Employment Lands'; and
 - c) the conversion will not adversely affect the overall viability of the 'Employment Lands' and achievement of the *intensification* target, density targets, and any other policies of the York Region Official Plan, this Plan and the Province; and
 - d) there is existing or planned infrastructure to accommodate the proposed conversion; and
 - e) the lands are not required over the long term for the employment purposes for which they are intended; and
 - f) cross-jurisdictional issues have been considered.

5.1.3 Maintaining a Supply of Diverse Employment Lands

Markham is forecast to add over 95,000 new jobs by 2031, increasing the total employment base to 240,400 jobs. The majority of employment growth is expected in major office employment, followed by employment land employment and population-related employment.

FORECAST EMPLOYMENT GROWTH 2006 TO 2031 BY TYPE

Employment Type	Total 2006	Additional Employment 2006 - 2031	Total 2031
Major Office	47,300	37,500	84,800
Employment Land	50,000	33,000	83,000
Population Related	47,500	25,100	72,600
Total Employment	144,800	95,600	240,400

Source: York Region

Anticipated major office employment will almost double in Markham over the forecast period. The majority of these jobs are planned to be accommodated within office buildings located within centres on Regional corridors where higher order transit services will be available. The balance is planned to locate in business parks.

Approximately one-third of the anticipated employment growth will occur in the industrial sector, which, in addition to the protection of the existing supply of designated industrial land will require additional 'Future Employment Lands' to accommodate the forecast growth.

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While industrial and office employment growth make up large and important sources of economic growth, the growth of jobs that directly support the day-to-day needs of the community (population-related employment) will also need to be accommodated. These jobs are directly related to population growth and include jobs in institutional, retail and service sectors.

It is the policy of Council:

- 5.1.3.1 **To plan** for and accommodate York Region's forecasts for employment by type in Markham to 2031 by:
- a) establishing policies to prevent conversion of designated 'Employment Lands';
 - b) providing sufficient additional 'Employment Lands' at appropriate locations;
 - c) achieving an average minimum gross density of at least 40 jobs per hectare on developable lands; and
 - d) controlling and managing the use of 'Employment Lands'.
- 5.1.3.2 **To maintain** a sufficient and diverse supply of 'Employment Lands' to ensure:
- a) serviced vacant lands are available in a variety of lot sizes for employment uses; and
 - b) a diverse mix of building stock and tenures can be provided to accommodate employment uses.
- 5.1.3.3 **To require** that development within 'Employment Lands' be serviced by municipal services, and where existing development has been approved on private services, to encourage connection to municipal services, where available.
- 5.1.3.4 **To encourage** the intensified use of 'Employment Lands' consistent with the provisions of the applicable land use designation, and particularly within *intensification areas* along rapid transit corridors.
- 5.1.3.5 **To ensure** that the planning and phasing for development of the lands designated 'Future Employment Area' and 'Future Neighbourhood Area' in the 'Future Urban Area' as shown on Map 3 – Land Use contributes to an appropriate City-wide balance between residents and jobs.
- 5.1.3.6 **To work**, in cooperation with the Region, to monitor employment growth and the inventory of 'Employment Lands' to ensure there is a sufficient and diverse supply of serviced 'Employment Lands' available at all times in appropriate designations.

5.1.4 Offices

It is the policy of Council:

- 5.1.4.1 **To direct** major office development to the 'Business Park Office Priority Employment' and 'Mixed Use Office Priority' designations and to *intensification areas* along rapid transit corridors.

The majority of employment growth is expected in major office development located within centres on Regional corridors where higher order transit services will be available.

5.1.4.2 **To require** that new office development in the 'Business Park Office Priority Employment' and 'Mixed Use Office Priority' designations be in the form of mid- to high-rise buildings, and be serviced by underground or structured parking, where feasible.

5.1.4.3 **To encourage** the introduction of office uses as a component of the 'Mixed Use' and 'Commercial' land use designations.

5.1.4.4 **To provide** for office uses as an accessory use or limited *ancillary use* complementary to primary industrial uses where permitted in the appropriate 'Employment Lands' designation.

5.1.5 Industry

It is the policy of Council:

5.1.5.1 **To recognize** the importance of industry such as manufacturing, warehousing and processing in contributing to a diverse economy.

5.1.5.2 **To provide** and maintain a land use planning environment that is supportive of the operational needs of industry.

5.1.5.3 **To recognize** existing buildings accommodating industry as a valuable asset and encourage their maintenance and refurbishment.

5.1.6 Institutions

The strategy in this Plan for providing locational opportunities for institutional uses is to integrate neighbourhood-scale facilities into existing and new communities or to locate larger scale institutions in mid- or high-rise mixed-use areas focused on arterial or major collector roads, either in mixed-use or stand-alone buildings. The Plan moves away from a single use institutional designation and increases the opportunities for institutional uses to be located across a broad range of land uses.

It is the policy of Council:

5.1.6.1 **To support**, attract and direct community college and university facilities and major institutions to locate in Regional Centres and *key development areas* along rapid transit corridors.

5.1.6.2 **To encourage** institutional uses associated with the Markham Stouffville Hospital to cluster into the health care campus within the immediate vicinity of the hospital.

5.1.6.3 **To integrate** institutional uses such as *cemeteries, public schools, places of worship, and shared housing* within the community in accordance with the provisions of the 'Residential', 'Mixed-Use' and 'Private Open Space' designations. These uses are not intended to be located within 'Employment Lands' designations.

5.1.7 Retail

Retail and service sectors are important components of a *complete community* and a strong economy. By planning for new retail and service development, including large-scale retail development, in a mixed-use

Approximately one-third of the anticipated employment growth will occur in the industrial sector, which, in addition to the protection of the existing supply of designated industrial land will require additional 'Future Employment Lands' to accommodate the forecast growth.

context, it is the intent of this Plan to make these sustainable, transit-supportive and pedestrian-friendly shopping areas. The land use policies contained in Chapter 8 of this Plan provide detailed criteria to guide opportunities for retail and service uses to be conveniently located near residents and employees in all parts of Markham. In future, the emphasis will be to move away from single-use retail complexes surrounded by large surface parking lots towards more compact, mixed-use developments that incorporate retail services, based on an urban form that features buildings aligned along streets with attractive pedestrian environments.

The policies contained in Chapter 8 provide opportunities for locating *convenience retail and personal service* uses in 'Residential' areas, provided development criteria are met to ensure compatibility with adjacent buildings and uses. 'Mixed Use Low Rise' areas are scattered throughout Markham near 'Residential' areas and are envisioned as small-scale, up to three-storey developments with ground-related retail and service uses, functioning as neighbourhood amenity centres. 'Mixed Use Heritage Main Street' areas serve a similar function in a main street environment for *heritage conservation districts*.

'Mixed Use Mid Rise' areas are located along arterial and major collector roads, providing services such as supermarkets, specialty grocery, hardware, clothing and electronics stores, in three- to 12-storey mixed-use buildings for residents, workers and businesses over a wider area than is served by 'Low Rise Mixed Use' areas.

'Mixed Use High Rise' areas are intended as locations for major *intensification* along Avenue 7, Yonge Street, the Langstaff Gateway and Markham Centre. The intent in these areas is to take advantage of excellent future planned rapid transit services to foster large-scale, mixed-use developments in buildings with four to 25 storeys incorporating a broad range of retail and service uses including large-format stores in multi-storey buildings. A restricted number of 'Commercial' areas accommodate existing or approved large-format retail developments at arterial road intersections close to interchanges with 400 series highways. 'Service Employment' areas are planned and developed for service and retail uses together with light industrial, warehousing and small office uses intended to primarily serve employees and businesses and located along arterial and major collector roads within 'Employment Lands'.

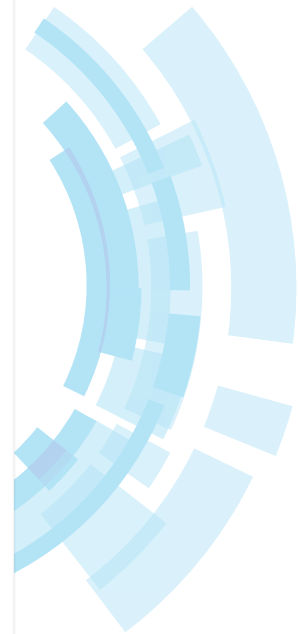
Together these areas represent a full spectrum of development options for retail and service possibilities in Markham that will address the needs of current and future residents and workers.

It is the policy of Council:

- 5.1.7.1 **To plan** for and accommodate the retail and service needs of residents, employees, and businesses in convenient locations by providing for:
- a) the majority of Markham's retail and service needs on lands designated 'Mixed Use', 'Commercial' and 'Service Employment' as shown on Map 3 – Land Use through retail and mixed-use building forms; and
 - b) *convenience retail and service uses* in appropriate locations within 'Residential Areas'.

By planning for new retail and service development, including large-scale retail development, in a mixed-use context, it is intended that sustainable, transit-supportive and pedestrian-friendly shopping areas will be created.

- 5.1.7.2 **To provide** for the integration of new retail and service uses within mixed-use developments on lands designated 'Mixed Use'.
- 5.1.7.3 **To encourage** the *intensification* of existing single-use, single-storey retail and service sites within the 'Mixed Use' designations with multi-use, multi-storey development, while ensuring a similar retail and service function is retained.
- 5.1.7.4 **To provide** for retail and service uses on lands designated 'Mixed Use Heritage Main Street' while protecting the heritage attributes and characteristics that make these areas unique and distinctive shopping destinations.
- 5.1.7.5 **To direct** new *major retail* development onto lands designated 'Mixed Use' and 'Commercial' in accordance with the provisions of those designations.
- 5.1.7.6 **To recognize** that lands designated 'Commercial' will continue to accommodate *major retail* and service employment uses and to encourage new development and *redevelopment* of these lands into multi-use commercial and employment areas that accommodate complementary retail, service and office employment uses.
- 5.1.7.7 **That** the primary function of the 'Service Employment' designation is to provide for the retail and service needs of employees and businesses within 'Employment Lands'.
- 5.1.7.8 **To require** a Retail and Service Needs Study, in accordance with applicable development criteria, to support a development application where *redevelopment* of an existing retail and service site within a 'Mixed Use' designation is proposed. The study will:
- identify the present and future retail and service needs of the community and the function of the existing development in responding to those needs;
 - demonstrate how the proposed development will accommodate the identified retail and service needs and function;
 - identify how the design, size, layout and configuration of the development will create a flexible commercial space that will ensure its viability to perform the planned retail and service delivery function over the long term; and
 - address other matters, as appropriate.
- 5.1.7.9 **To require** a Regional Impact Analysis in accordance with the York Region Official Plan, for new retail development in excess of 30,000 square metres of gross leasable floor area, to the satisfaction of Markham and York Region.
- 5.1.7.10 **That** in considering retail proposals of less than 30,000 square metres, or where retail developments being considered in the same vicinity are in excess of 30,000 square metres, Council may require a retail impact study that addresses the following:
- transportation requirements;
 - the impact on the planned function of existing and approved future retail facilities;
 - pedestrian, cycling and transit access to the facilities; and



d) the manner in which the proposal is supportive of the centres and corridors policies of this Plan.

5.1.7.11 **To monitor** Markham's retail and service needs to determine whether the needs of the residents and businesses are being accommodated.

5.1.8 Tourism

As York Region's most ethnically diverse community, Markham has many tourism opportunities to offer, such as world-class festivals, cultural celebrations, unique shopping environments as well as the rich history of the Markham, Thornhill, Unionville and Buttonville Heritage Districts. New sports, entertainment and recreation facilities such as the FIFA regulation-size artificial soccer field, Pan Am Pool, Concert hall, and the Greater Toronto Area's largest outdoor artificial ice surface at the Civic Centre enhance Markham's tourism attraction potential.

It is the policy of Council:

- 5.1.8.1 **To recognize** Markham's distinct and historic neighbourhoods, hotels, recreation opportunities, and cultural programs, festivals, facilities and attractions, including the Fred Varley Art Gallery and the Markham Museum, Markham Theatre, unique shopping experiences, agri-tourism, and the Rouge National Urban Park and connected natural heritage systems, as part of the City's tourism assets.
- 5.1.8.2 **To work** with provincial tourism organizations and York Region to promote Markham's tourism assets.
- 5.1.8.3 **To direct** new local tourism attractions, including theatres and cinemas, to Markham's centres and corridors, which provide enhanced connectivity and convenient travel to local attractions.
- 5.1.8.4 **To encourage** the protection and enhancement of the Markham's *cultural heritage resources* in order to provide for additional economic development and tourism opportunities.

Markham has many tourism opportunities to offer, such as world-class festivals, cultural celebrations, unique shopping environments as well as the rich history of the Markham, Thornhill, Unionville and Buttonville Heritage Districts.

5.2 AGRICULTURE

5.2.1 Countryside Agriculture

Markham has a rich history as a settled agricultural community and contains some of the most productive agricultural lands in southern Ontario. Lands outside of the urban area reflect a rural landscape typical of urban edge conditions including a variety of agricultural operations such as fruit and vegetables, cash crops, nurseries, sod farms and hobby farms, and other agriculture-related uses.

The Countryside Agriculture policies apply to agricultural activities on 'Countryside Agriculture' lands identified as the 'Countryside Area', 'Oak Ridges Moraine Countryside' and 'Greenbelt Protected Countryside' shown on Map 9 – Countryside Agriculture. The 'Countryside Area' consists of lands outside of the 'Greenbelt Plan' while the 'Oak Ridges Moraine

Countryside’ and the ‘Greenbelt Protected Countryside’ areas consist of lands within the ‘Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area’ and the ‘Greenbelt Plan Area’, respectively.

Lands within the ‘Countryside Area’, ‘Oak Ridges Moraine Countryside’ and ‘Greenbelt Protected Countryside’ comprise *prime agricultural lands*, which are the best suited lands for agricultural purposes. These *prime agricultural lands* complement the ‘Natural Heritage Network’ by providing additional environmental benefits while at the same time supporting a viable and sustainable agricultural presence. It is important that these lands continue to be reserved and supported for sustainable agricultural activities and local food production to, among other things, reduce food kilometers traveled and increase food security and nutrition. The land use policies for protecting *prime agricultural lands* within the ‘Countryside Area’ are contained in Section 8.8 and for the ‘Oak Ridges Moraine Countryside’, and the ‘Greenbelt Protected Countryside’ in Section 8.6. These include provision for a range of uses and restrictions that may be placed on certain *agricultural-related* uses to ensure compatibility with agricultural operations.

The intent of the policies in this Section is to protect, maintain and enhance Markham’s most productive agricultural lands by:

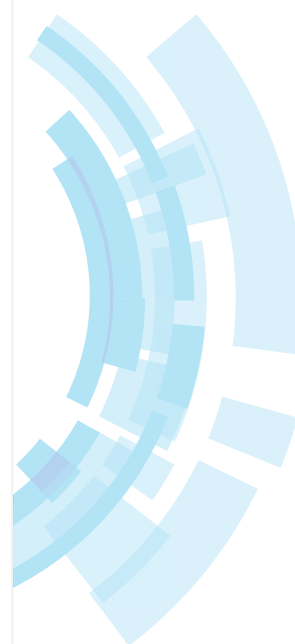
- protecting and supporting local food production;
- promoting efficient agricultural operations;
- addressing the economic viability of agricultural activities; and
- supporting complementary agri-business activities.

It is the policy of Council:

- 5.2.1.1 **To recognize and protect** Markham’s ‘Countryside Agriculture’ lands comprising the ‘Countryside Area’, ‘Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Area’, and ‘Greenbelt Protected Countryside’ lands shown on Map 9 – Countryside Agriculture by:
- a) classifying ‘Countryside Agriculture’ lands as *prime agricultural lands* for the purposes of Provincial and Regional policy;
 - b) protecting areas of agricultural production and other lands suitable for agriculture from loss to other uses to the greatest extent possible; and
 - c) restricting uses that would result in conflicts with agricultural operations.
- 5.2.1.2 **To only permit** refinements to the ‘Countryside Agriculture’ lands shown on Map 9 – Countryside Agriculture through a Regional *municipal comprehensive review*.
- 5.2.1.3 **To promote** the efficient operations and economic viability of agricultural activities within the ‘Countryside Agricultural’ lands by encouraging:
- a) value-added uses and activities that support agricultural businesses and enhance agricultural viability in a near urban context;
 - b) good farm and land stewardship practices including opportunities for tenant-based farming;
 - c) on-farm market, retail, and small-scale local food processing; and
 - d) partnerships with other organizations in the support of local food initiatives.

Lands outside of the urban area reflect a rural landscape typical of urban edge conditions including a variety of agricultural operations such as fruit and vegetables, cash crops, nurseries, sod farms and hobby farms, and other agriculture-related uses.

- 5.2.1.4 **To review** opportunities and economic incentives for private and public landowners to provide long-term agricultural land leases to assist the farming community with crop diversification and farming investments.
- 5.2.1.5 **To encourage** agricultural practices that support soil conservation methods and result in the maintenance and enhancement of surface and ground water quality in accordance with the Source Water Protection Act.
- 5.2.1.6 **To encourage** the agricultural community, agricultural organizations and public agencies to implement best agricultural management practices including:
- a) integrated pest management;
 - b) phosphorous reduction;
 - c) nutrient management;
 - d) soil and water conservation; and
 - e) practices that minimize impacts on air quality and climate change.
- 5.2.1.7 **To prohibit** development requiring municipal water and wastewater treatment services within the 'Countryside Agriculture' lands shown on Map 9 – Countryside Agriculture.
- 5.2.1.8 **To only support** consents in the 'Countryside' designation as shown on Map 3 – Land Use, where:
- a) land is acquired by a public body for *infrastructure* projects; or
 - b) land is conveyed to public bodies or not-for-profit agencies for natural heritage or *conservation* purposes provided no separate lot is created; or
 - c) a minor boundary adjustment is required to enlarge an existing farm lot provided no separate lot is created; or
 - d) a minor boundary adjustment is required for a residential dwelling provided no separate lot is created and there is no increased fragmentation of a *key natural heritage feature* or *key hydrologic feature*; or
 - e) each parcel is a minimum size of 40 hectares and used for agricultural purposes; or
 - f) an existing residence is surplus to a farming operation as a result of a farm consolidation provided no additional residence is permitted on the retained farmland.
- 5.2.1.9 **To recognize** that additional planning controls imposed by the Province and/or Federal Government in support of the potential airport in Pickering including Minister's Zoning Order – Airport, Bird Hazard Regulations and Noise Exposure Forecast Regulations apply to the 'Countryside Agriculture' lands shown on Map 9 – Countryside Agriculture.
- 5.2.1.10 **To require** *alternative energy systems* and *renewable energy systems*, which are subject to Planning Act approvals, within 'Countryside Agriculture' lands to be designed to minimize impact on agricultural operations and the visual character of the surrounding area.
- 5.2.1.11 **To only permit** new aggregate extraction lands on 'Countryside Agriculture' lands subject to an amendment to the York Region and Markham Official Plans, and subject to the policies of the York Region Official Plan and other Provincial regulations guiding the management of aggregate resources.



5.2.2 Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture describes the small-scale agricultural and food activities that take place within the urban area, generally secondary to existing uses. *Urban agriculture* generates local economic benefits while providing increased food security, reduced distance food travels, sustainable sources of food, leisure activities and educational opportunities. It is the intent of this Plan to encourage urban food growing opportunities.

It is the policy of Council:

- 5.2.2.1 **To support and promote** *urban agriculture* activities including community gardens, food cooperatives, local food sourcing programs for all municipal facilities and events and other food initiatives.
- 5.2.2.2 **To encourage** accessible locations for farmers markets in the urban area.
- 5.2.2.3 **To support and integrate** community gardens in public parks and open spaces, where appropriate, and encourage the provision of lands for community *urban agriculture* in new secondary plan areas.

Urban agriculture generates local economic benefits while providing increased food security, reduced distance food travels, sustainable sources of food, leisure activities and educational opportunities.