

MARKHAM'S PERMANENT FOODBELT PROPOSAL



*Markham Foodbelt Proposal Presented
by: Councillor Burke & Councillor
Shapero December 1, 2009.*

*Markham Farm 2009
19th Avenue & Reesor Road*

Origin of the Markham Foodbelt

York Region Official Plan Policies

Section 5.6

“...Agriculture is an important part of the regional economy providing jobs and agricultural products”

“...It is important to protect the remaining farmland in the rural portions of the Region because of their importance to the Region’s economy and as a source of food”

“...To ensure that uses that would result in conflict with agricultural operations are not established in productive farming areas”



Origin of the Markham Foodbelt

Town of Markham Official Plan

Section 3.7.3 A

“General policies relating to lands designated Agriculture; new, non-farm residential development shall be strongly discouraged.”



Click With Markham

“Maintain our present farmland” ...

“We can’t afford to lose any more”...

“Do not allow Markham to spread north of Major Mackenzie”

Markham GreenPrint Sustainability Plan

consistent with protection and enhancement of agriculture



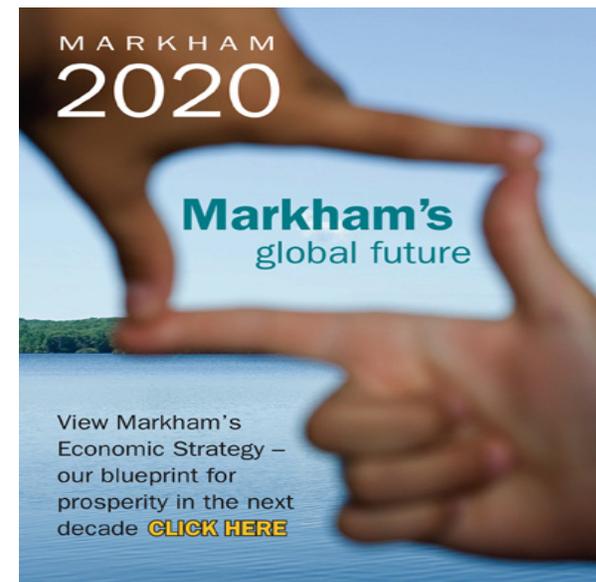
Origin of the Markham Foodbelt

Building Markham's Future Together

- *“Boosting local food production as a priority... for a sustainable community”*
- *“Sustaining a healthy agricultural sector as a key element of Markham’s plans for the future”*

Markham 2020 Strategic Directions for our Economy

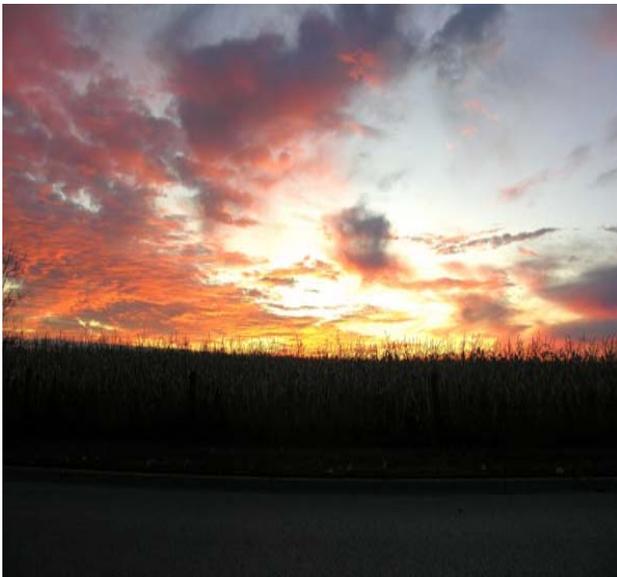
- *“Strengthening and promoting local agricultural links in Markham”*



Foodland

Markham's Agricultural Assessment Report

- Markham, Canada's best farmland
- Markham's rural area is 95% Class 1 farmland according to the Canada Land Inventory
- Less than 0.5% of Canada is Class 1 farmland!



Origin of the Markham Foodbelt

Provincial Policy Statement

Section 2.3.1

“...Prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture”

Provincial Growth Plan

- Reinforces the policies in the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) to support agriculture
- The framework requires that prime agricultural areas be identified and protected unless required to accommodate projected growth.



Agriculture: Ontario's Second Largest Economic Sector

Ontario's Economic Engine



- ***“ GTA agricultural related business generates 1.3 Billion in annual gross sales” *1.***
- ***“ Agriculture is a hugely important sector of the economy, supporting Ontario’s food processing industry and accounting for tens of thousands of jobs”. *2.***
- ***“ Although the Greenbelt protects some important farmland, farmland outside the Greenbelt is...less well protected or not protected at all from development. Thousands of acres of farmland are in the so-called “whitebelt” *2.***

*1 .Source: The GTA Agricultural Action Plan (2005)

*2. Source: Metcalf Foundation Report “Food Connects Us All; Sustainable Local Food in Southern Ontario” (2009)

What Will The Markham Foodbelt Protect?



Markham Farm, 2009
Warden Ave north of Major Mackenzie Dr.

Farm Families



Farm Families

Protecting Farm Families

- Remaining Farm families will continue to thrive and feed the Town of Markham & GTA
- Families whose heritage and future depends on farming will be protected
- “...The Agricultural community is committed to farming in Markham...”*
- Markham is losing its farmland faster than any other GTA municipality. 43% from 2001-2006. *

*Source: Markham Agricultural Assessment, 2009



Farm Fresh, Local Food



Markham Village Farmer's Market

Farm Fresh, Local Food

Local & sustainable food close to market

- ✓ Food security
- ✓ Action on climate change - rising food import costs & peak oil
- ✓ New opportunities for agritourism & artisanal foods
- ✓ More pick-your-own & local farmers markets
- ✓ Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
- ✓ Local food procurement
- ✓ Educational & farm experience opportunities



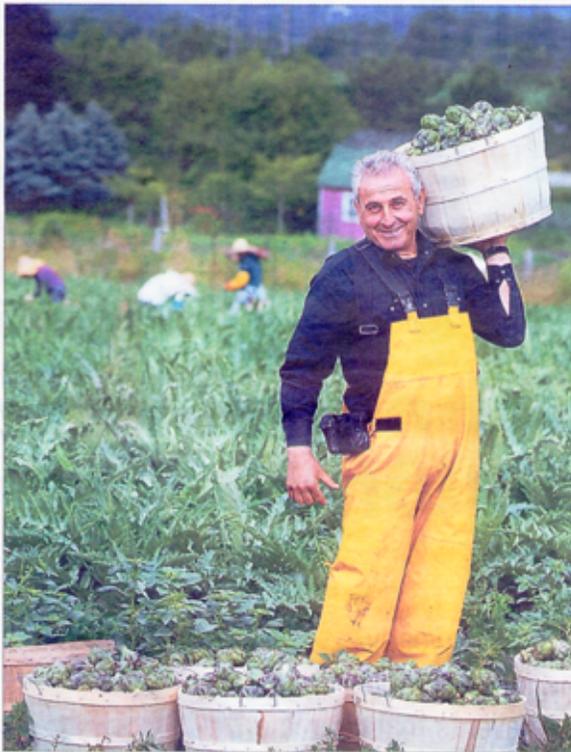
Job Protection & Job Creation

MARKHAM ECONOMIST & SUN

Saturday, Aug. 1, 2009

TO REACH US: 905-294-2200

SATURDAY FOCUS



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEN

Markham farmer Dominic DeFilippis shows his artichoke crop. Although Mr. DeFilippis only started growing artichokes about eight years ago, California growers are already nervous of the Markham farmer.

Farmer makes California nervous

Markham man began growing artichokes eight years ago

BY L.I.L. TIFFANY HSIEH
tshieh@yrng.com

For someone who has never set foot in California, Dominic DeFilippis has made a name for himself amongst artichoke growers on the west coast.

"They know who I am," he said. "Last year, California tried to put me out of business by shipping their crops here for free."

Eight years ago, when Mr. DeFilippis began experimenting with artichokes on his farm in Markham, his intention was not to take on California, which grows about 85 per cent of North American artichokes.

Instead, the Canadian-born Italian farmer said he did it "because it's part of our tradition. People eat a lot of artichokes in Italy."

Mr. DeFilippis, 52, has worked on the farm since he was young, when his father purchased the land in Markham in 1963.

He specializes in growing cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, tomatoes and eggplants on more than 600 acres of land, most of them leased.

His business, Top Tomato Foods, is based out of the 19th Avenue Farmers' Market.

See OMX, page 4.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEN

Markham farmer Dominic DeFilippis with an open artichoke.

Only farmer to grow artichokes in Ontario

From page 1.

Even with the help of hired farm labourers as well as his two sons — Vito the office manager and Antony the sales manager — Mr. DeFilippis can still be seen in his rubber boots and overalls, cropping vegetables in the fields when the weather permits.

"I'm in the fields, I love the fields — give me fields," he said.

Aside from his love for growing things, Mr. DeFilippis likes to be challenged and embraces the idea of producing artichokes in Markham, something his late father tried and failed at 30 years ago.

"I wanted to do something interesting. If you grow something that everybody is doing, it's boring. Somebody says I can't grow something, I'm going to try to do it — just don't tell me grow rice," he said, chuckling.

Two years ago, he was told he would not be able to grow strawberries on the often wet soil in the area, so Mr. DeFilippis planted them on raised soil and has had two consecutive successful strawberry seasons since.

This year, he also produced his first crop of Napa (aka Chinese cabbage), after tasting it for the first time in Aruba.

However, it took no less than six years before Mr. DeFilippis saw his first crop of artichokes.

That was about three years ago when he

had five acres invested in the perennial thistle and almost gave up on them because the plants had gone yellow and appeared dead.

"It was a challenge. They need a dormant period where they are just plants but there are no buds," he said. "So what happened was they naturally went dormant and this dormancy has to be done prior to harvesting."

The artichokes came back thriving in the past two years, Mr. DeFilippis said.

He seeded the plants in the greenhouse March 1, brought them out of the greenhouse April 15 and into the fields May 1. Last week, he harvested the first crop of the year.

"Basically, it takes two years to make artichokes, but I do it in six months," he said. "Artichokes like warm, misty weather, like foggy mornings. This is normal Canadian weather. It's ideal for artichokes."

As the only farmer in Ontario who grows artichokes commercially, Mr. DeFilippis said his artichokes are different than those produced in California, both in flavour and texture.

"Ours are sweeter and bigger-hearted," he said. "It may be a bit more expensive, but the quality is better and fresher. Their best artichokes are grown in our winter months."

Plus, with the locavore movement in full swing, Mr. DeFilippis said he has seen a big response from customers who understand and appreciate knowing where the foods come from.

Job Protection & Job Creation

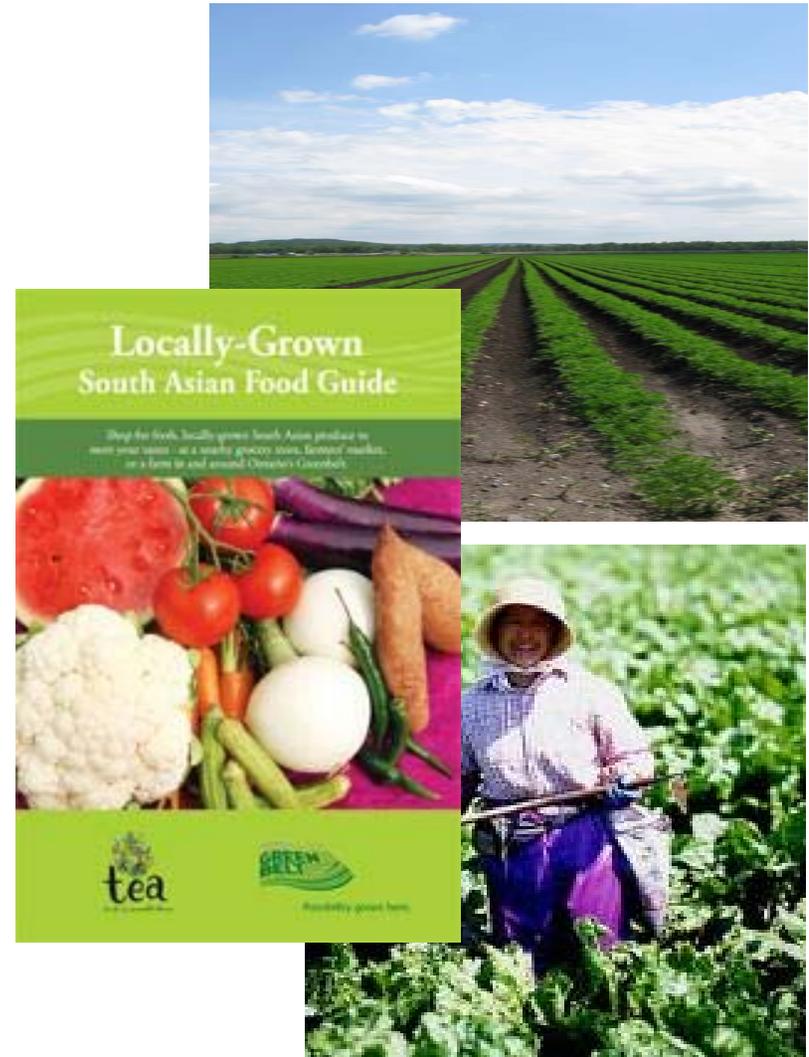
Strong potential to retain & create new jobs

- In Canada the agricultural sector provides 1 in 8 jobs
- Markham agriculture generates \$62 million annually
- Strong economic potential for employment growth in this sector in Markham
- Job creation for new Canadians with farm experience & young Canadians wishing to farm - incubating a new & diverse generation of farmers



Cultural Heritage

- ✓ First Nations: maintain and enhance the First Nations cultural
- ✓ Historic Farming: maintain Town's strong farming traditions
- ✓ Markham farmers say: *"the quality of the land is so high in Markham, that as long as there is land available to be farmed it will be farmed"**
- ✓ Diverse Landscapes: maintain rural landscape & vistas
- ✓ Cultural Foods: maintain diverse cultural food base



• *Agricultural Assessment 2009

Historic Farmsteads



Flora & Fauna

Protection of biodiversity... hundreds of species



In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous - Aristotle

Greenspace



Rivers & Streams

Protecting the Rouge Watershed:

- ✓ The middle and upper reaches
- ✓ More than 17 tributaries, headwater & small streams
- ✓ Aquatic habitat
- ✓ Markham Water quality
- ✓ Downstream communities who would otherwise feel the storm-water impacts of urbanization of the upper and middle reaches



Rouge Watershed

Forests

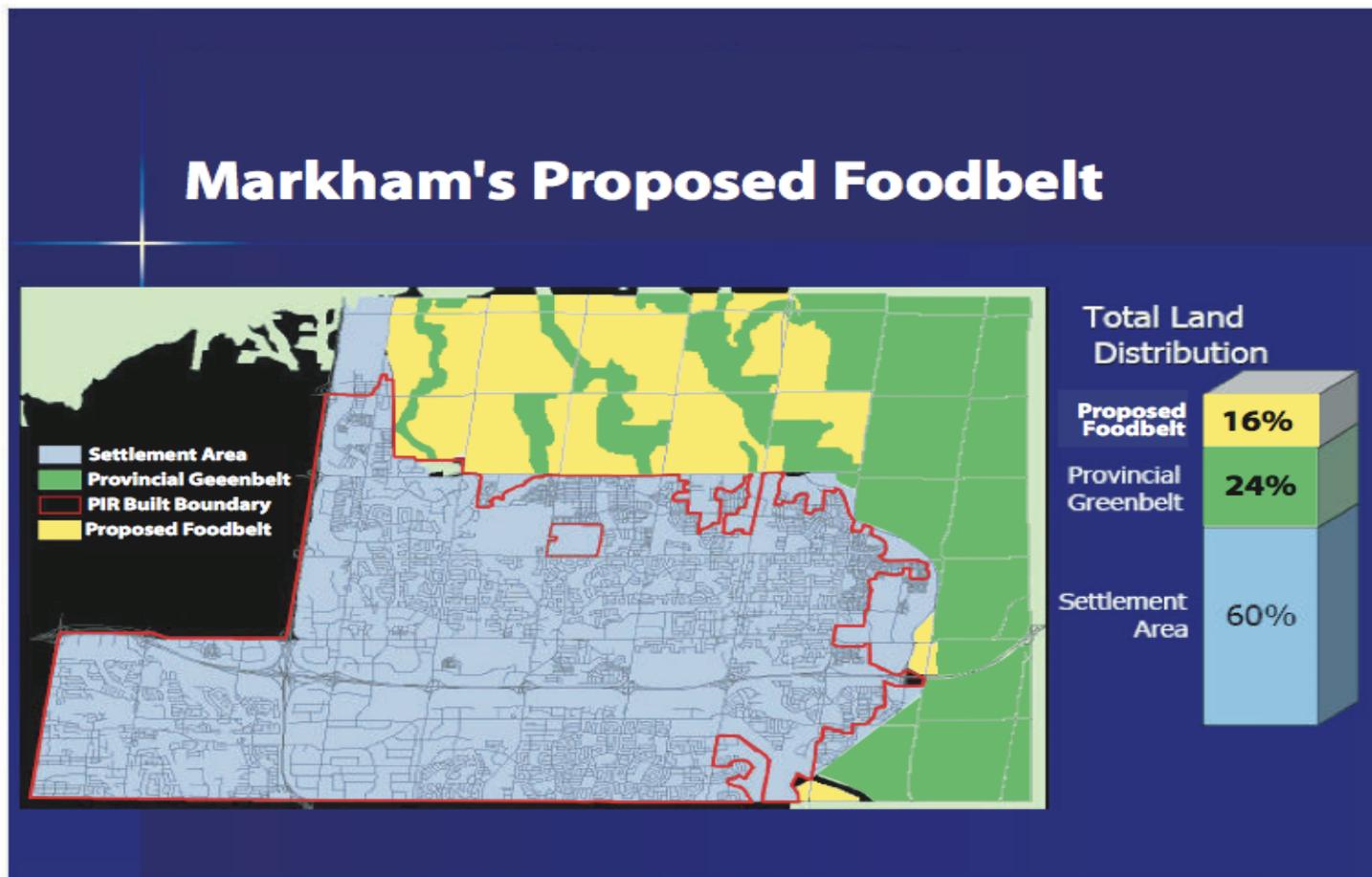


Recreation



Proposed Permanent Land Use In the Town Of Markham

Total Size of Markham's Class 1 Foodbelt: 2,000
Hectares/4,940 Acres



Vision & Goal



Our Vision:

- Markham's Local Foodbelt will be a special place in the GTA consisting of beautiful productive farmland
- Its' long term future as a vibrant rural community will be permanently protected
- It will profitably produce diverse, healthy, local, sustainable foods/products & will co-exist in harmony with the surrounding natural heritage system & urban communities in perpetuity.

Our Goal:

- To protect, restore & enhance the agricultural, cultural, historical, natural, scenic, recreational and economic values of Markham's northern farmscape
- To promote public responsibility, understanding, appreciation & enjoyment of this heritage
- Promote new innovations in farming, encouraging a new generation of farmers to thrive
- In future all progressive, resilient communities will have food and farmland as an aspect of sustainable municipal planning, as part of a complete community, to ensure food security, local economic farming viability & a strong local economy.

Next Steps

1. Council endorse in principle the Markham Foodbelt Proposal, and present it as part of the Growth Management Study for public consultations
2. That Council request the Province of Ontario to expand the Greenbelt to include permanent protection for all Markham's Foodbelt Class 1 agriculture lands as outlined in the Markham Foodbelt Proposal report presented December 1, 2009, from the Oak Ridges Moraine to Major Mackenzie Drive
3. Council creates a Blue Ribbon Taskforce of existing farm families and ratepayers and other relevant stakeholders to create a plan with the goal of expanding agricultural employment and local food procurement in the Town of Markham
4. Council creates a Blue Ribbon Task Force of existing industrial landowners and ratepayers and other relevant stakeholders to create a plan with the goal of revitalizing existing industrial areas and creating 40,000 new jobs
5. Council creates a Blue Ribbon Task Force of developers and residents and other relevant stakeholders to create a plan with the goal of creating a healthy, vibrant, liveable, urban village environment in the Town south of Major Mackenzie Drive
6. Further that the Blue Ribbon Task Force exploring residential growth consider placing a 6 story height limit on future development excluding major nodes served by high order transit
7. Council creates a Blue Ribbon Task Force of developers, industrial landowners, green renewable energy companies, farmers and residents and other relevant stakeholders to create a plan with the goal of having a Carbon Neutral Markham by 2020
8. Council creates a Blue Ribbon Task Force of naturalists, residents and natural heritage agencies such as Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and Environment Canada to achieve the Town's natural heritage polices including 30% forest cover



Possibility grows here.



Welcome to Markham's Foodbelt! A First in Canada!

