

Cross-Departmental Submission to the Region of York's Long-Term Tourism Development Strategy

inclusive of:

**Culture, Planning, Clerks, Economic Development and
Sustainability Departments**

Submitted by Economic Development

June, 2009

Background

- **March 31st Ms. Brenda McGowan, Manager of Tourism Development, Region of York delivered a Presentation to DSC regarding “Long Term Destination Development Strategy.**
- **DSC requested that Town staff comment on the Strategy.**

Action Requested by Region

- **Support destination development, growth and long-term viability of tourism in the Region, and an expanded mandate and scope for York Region Tourism.**

Region of York Tourism Vision

- York Region is seeking economic, social and cultural development based on sustainable tourism, which preserves the environment and respects local populations.
- Establish the Region as a tourist destination, building upon its cultural identity and the quality of its environment.

Strategic Framework: Region's Goals

- 1. Strengthen Strategic Marketing**
- 2. Expand Tourism Attractors**
- 3. Leadership and Governance**
- 4. Sustainable Funding**
- 5. Product Sector Development**

Strengthen Strategic Marketing

- **Region's Goal**
 - **Strengthen the image of York Region in the minds of consumers as a leading destination for getaways, visiting friends and relatives and meetings of groups**

Town staff response:

- *Maximize the tourism value, accessibility and equity of Markham's cultural venues, agricultural sector, parks, open spaces and golf courses*
- *Highlight, promote and enhance the charm of historic Main Streets and Heritage Districts*
- *Support partnership with local associations to promote farmers' markets, agri-tourism, local food, Rouge Park as a destination, connected destinations via walkable, accessible multi-use pathways community, festivals, sporting and cultural events*

Expand Tourism Attractors

- **Region's Goal**
 - **Create visitor friendly communities, new tourism experiences and opportunities for additional tourism infrastructure investment.**

Town staff response:

- *Venues such as the proposed Sports Institute, or New Cricket Pitch have potential of being attractions to sports enthusiasts.*
- *Promote green business opportunities such as hotels*
- *Develop promote and enhance eco-tourism opportunities within the Rouge Park, Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenbelt*

Expand Tourism Attractors

(continued)

- *Enhance local food promotion, products and distribution through agri-tourism, farmers' markets, and farmgate opportunities*
- *Packaging of our hotel and conference facilities with leisure activities such as golf or cultural events enhance the overall tourism experience*
- *The diversity of Markham's communities may be basis for unique opportunities (e.g. Markham Village / Pacific Mall)*
- *Ensure flexible multi-tasked landscapes that support a variety of potential interests in all seasons*

Leadership and Governance

- **Region's Goal**
 - **Establish an organization with the infrastructure that supports marketing and creates a business climate for investment, expansion and enhancement of overall tourism economic development**

Town staff response:

- *Continue to support and partner with the Region of York in the delivery of the Tourism Strategic Plan*
- *Collaborate with GTA, Tourism Ontario, Agricultural sector Federations of Agriculture partners to support development of tourism sector*
- *Leadership through including diverse groups ensuring accessibility, equity and inclusively.*

Sustainable Funding

- **Region's Goal**

- Ensure that sufficient funding is in place to enhance new product and experiences, market the Region effectively to key market segments, and service the information needs of visitors and residents

Town staff Response:

- *Ensure social, environmental, cultural and economic aspects are all considered as part of funding*
- *Identify possible funding programs and support partnership applications*
- *Gas Tax funding could be initialized through capacity building via community sustainability plan*

Product Sector Development

- **Region's Goal**

- Continually upgrade the quality and quantity of tourism attractors, products and packages, based on market research
- ***Town staff response:***
 - *Determine signature events and enhance the opportunities based on the diversity, accessibility, safety connectivity of communities*
 - *Support the Region's strategy to bid on provincial and international sports events and conventions while ensuring the social, cultural, environmental and economic sustainability of the strategy (eg. Understand the implications of strategy, events, etc. and support with an informed decision)*

Tourism Growth Opportunity

- **Region's Goal**

- Increase visitation to Cultural venues

Town staff response:

- *Varley Art Gallery is expanding*
- *Museum Collections and Exhibitors Centre*
- *Markham Museum building a new archive facility*
- *The celebration of the Markham theatre 25th anniversary*
- *Historic Main streets are showcased*
- *Rouge Park is developed as a unique destination fostering appreciation of First Nations heritage and contribution to the community*
- *Have cultural venues celebrate the heritage and diversity of our communities*

Development Potential in Markham

Town staff identified potential new assets:

- 1. Two hotels in Markham Centre District*
- 2. A mixed use hotel/convention centre on Woodbine*
- 3. Sports institute/ Entertainment district in Markham Centre*
- 4. International calibre Asian/South Asian retail/mixed use destination*
- 5. New Marketing channels eg. On-line Cultural Mapping*

Development Potential in Markham

(continued)

6. Rouge Park

7. Greenbelt

8. Oak Ridges Moraine

9. Agricultural Sector

10. Green Buildings

Town Staff and Partners Canvassed

- *Culture Department*
- *Planning Department*
- *Clerks Department (Information Markham)*
- *Economic Development Department*
- *Sustainability Department*
- *Markham Board of Trade*
- *Markham Fairgrounds*
- *Markham BIA*
- *Unionville BIA*