

Environmental Technology

Promote Energy Conservation as a Business Retention Strategy: Cutting Energy to Cut Operating Costs (appears as an action under “Build the Sustainable City”)

In cooperation with the Markham Energy Conservation Office, develop and enhance energy reduction and conservation programs targeting the industrial and commercial sectors. This initiative should be positioned as a tool for business retention, building on the idea that reductions on operating costs improve overall financial performance, and therefore overall business viability. A combination of energy auditing, new technology adoption and environmental performance monitoring should lay the foundation for a proactive and prescriptive effort to simultaneously improve business performance while reducing environmental burdens. Over time, the success of such a program could also differentiate Markham from competitor communities when it comes to corporate site selection and investment attraction.

Action: Develop an energy-focused business retention initiative that uses environmentally-sound energy conservation techniques to enhance the viability of local businesses.

Role & Timeline: Town in lead role, with short-term timeline (ongoing from 2008-2010)

Key Partners: Markham Energy Conservation Office, environmental organizations, business and industry associations

Develop a Waste Audit Program for Retention & Expansion: Cutting Costs and Sourcing Raw Materials (appears as an action under “Build the Sustainable City”)

In cooperation with local environmental and waste management interests, develop a program to deliver commercial and industrial waste audits within Markham. This program should have two goals: first, the ability to identify waste reduction initiatives, and thereby reduce corporate operating costs and enhance business viability; and second, to identify products and materials entering the waste stream that could be utilized as inputs or raw materials by other industries, particularly other local industries where this local supply could also reduce operating costs. In essence, this approach treats the entire community as an eco-industrial park, seeking matchmaking opportunities in the waste stream in order to enhance overall business performance, promote business-to-business synergies and enhance local environmental mitigation and waste management efforts.

Action: Work with industry and local environmental organizations to develop a business-focused waste audit program.

Role & Timeline: Town in facilitating role, with short-term timeline (ongoing from 2008-2010)

Key Partners: environmental organizations, waste management sector, local business and industry associations

Become an Early Adoption Zone for Energy-Efficient Vehicles: Fuelling the Future as a Community Test Site (appears as an action under “Build the Infrastructure City”)

Building on existing initiatives to purchase environmentally friendly and energy efficient vehicles as part of local municipal and transit fleets, Markham should seek to become a leader in the early adoption of new vehicle and transportation technologies. As new motor vehicle technologies emerge, Markham should support progress in the sector by positioning its purchasing policies to embrace these new vehicles quickly. However, by working with manufacturers that have strong local connections (such as Honda and BMW) Markham should also seek to become a test site and institutional development partner, providing venues and opportunities for the beta testing of concept cars and pre-production models in a practical work environment. Over time, this will position the community to be at the forefront of emerging technologies, while enhancing its reputation for innovation, creativity and environmental sustainability.

Action: Develop a program for Markham to become an “early adoption zone” for new and environmentally friendly transportation technologies.

Role & Timeline: Town in lead role, with a medium-term timeline (ongoing from 2011-2014)

Key Partners: transit commission, local government agencies, automotive sector, environmental community

Target Sector Actions

(Action appears under “Professional, Scientific and Technical Services”)

Markham should **promote the creation of a local Environmental Technology Association, linking area businesses together for networking, promotional and joint venture initiatives** to enhance the community’s role at the leading edge of the environmental sector. Building on its existing strengths in advanced manufacturing,

environmental consulting and scientific research, Markham is well-positioned to take a lead role in a sector already aggressively targeted by regional economic development interests, and closely supported by expertise at local post-secondary institutions.

(Action appears under “Finance & Insurance”)

Building on initiatives elsewhere in this strategy that promote both sustainability and new environmental technologies, **Markham should target Socially Responsible Investment funds, companies and vehicles in its business recruitment and investment attraction attempts.** The community's commitments make it a logical home for such funds, which are rapidly growing in size and number across Canada (and generally outperforming the wider market). While most are associated with larger investment houses or financial institutions, smaller players also exist, and in all cases, the presence of these funds in the community may lend itself to enhanced financing opportunities for companies involved with environmental technologies, sustainable business practices or a strong commitment to social justice.