

GOAL: ENGAGED, DIVERSE AND THRIVING CITY

OBJECTIVE 1 – Increasing Community Engagement

1. What is the most important action/task to be worked on for this objective?
Recruiting & sustaining volunteers is a priority
a) Assist Councillors with their newsletters to reach the public to inform about volunteer programs and encourage them to get involved
b) e.g. Adopt a Park program - need better recognition of volunteers
c) Ensure that anytime is welcome (1hour, 1 day, etc) for volunteering by creating a spectrum of volunteer opportunities
d) Information Markham plays a key role in attracting and maintaining the volunteers
e) Awareness, education of the volunteer program
f) Find individuals that have applied for an Advisory Committee, but not appointed to include information in their letter about the other volunteer opportunities (alignment between Advisory Committee recruitment and general volunteer program)
g) Increase the use of social media to provide awareness (tweeter, etc) for the volunteer program
h) Make volunteer program family friendly - plan events that the entire family can do together
i) Staff need to make the volunteer program a priority as well
j) Include volunteer information in the welcome package that new residents receive when they move in to the City
k) Quarterly announcements by the Mayor through the different media channels providing information about upcoming events and opportunities available for volunteers (activity registration, City events/festivals, etc) include communication at libraries
l) Increase awareness of residents for events and activities that are taking place in Markham, thus providing the opportunities to participate
m) Leverage social media (Twitter, e-Blasts, etc.) as a means to engage the public but not to forget those citizens who may not be technology savvy
n) Have a better idea for the makeup or factual data about our community
o) On-line system has glitches. Difficult application process. Needs to be fast, easy, user-friendly, provide enough details, consider demographics and different cultural needs to connect with the public

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p)	Is a police check always necessary? Could be a disincentive – should the City subsidize fee/group discount? Balance risk with engagement outcome. It is a standard today.
q)	Organizations “protective” of its volunteer base – City program as a gateway to join overall program, then pick specific opportunity will help to eliminate “ownership” of volunteers
r)	City could approach outside organizations to inform about the City’s volunteer program – outreach campaign, attend volunteer fairs (seniors, high schools) – “Join Team Markham”. Need to go out to the community as well as use on-line process. Click with Markham style of approach for Team Markham – social media
s)	Create volunteer opportunities – how to manage the programs. Work with festivals and other organizations to identify volunteer opportunities. On-line list to connect opportunities with volunteers (Farmer’s Market, Unionville Festival)
t)	Local Councillors can build on items of interest to the community, rallies, openings, public meetings
u)	Corporate volunteer spirit is alive and well – tree plantings, funding, i.e. Union Villa has corp volunteers that tend to gardens
v)	Promote next event at the current event – community calendar; newspaper, social media, face-to-face

OBJECTIVE 1 – Increasing Community Engagement

2. At the end of four years what does success look like for this area?	
a)	Increasing the number of volunteers
b)	Profile of volunteers (get all ages involved)
c)	Retaining the volunteers
d)	Are the residents satisfied with the outcomes of the City's BMFT
e)	Engaging the "silent majority" to participate
f)	Having a scientific survey of Markham residents, that this repeated over time to gauge areas of success and areas of improvement. Undertake one at the beginning (baseline) and end (results) of each Council term to gauge and measure our success.
g)	More awareness and participation from residents and businesses in events that takes place in Markham
h)	Easily accessible

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i) Events should not be scrambling for volunteers at the end, i.e. central registry for volunteers as a safety net
j) Diverse pool of volunteers – age, culture, etc
k) Survey experience of volunteers
l) Recognition program
m) Ensure all events are open to everyone
n) Target 10,000, or double number of volunteers as an indicator of success of community engagement
o) Engage Pan Am volunteers in other events
p) Volunteer Management Coordinator, as administrator. Which department? Develop a good computer-based management program that can deal with privacy issues (similar to hospital system)
q) Acknowledge that volunteers are involved for different reasons – school requirement, build resume, etc.

OBJECTIVE 1- Increasing Community Engagement

3. Where do we need to improve on volunteerism?
a) Establishing a volunteer pool that local event organizers can draw from, not just for municipal programs and events
b) Use event/program requirements, volunteer skills, and volunteer interests to match volunteers to events/programs. Volunteers may think they need to be the same ethnicity to support cultural events, such as Chinese New Year.
c) Current website and speed need to be improved to enable the public to volunteer. Need to make this more prominent on our City website, branding, marketing, etc. Use technologies to help.
d) Understand why volunteers volunteer – what intrinsic rewards do they get from it, eg. giving back, social gathering with friends?
e) Matching volunteers to their interest areas – determine how they want to volunteer?
f) Collect information to better understand the profile of our volunteer base (eg. age, interests, why they volunteer, how did they hear about the event, etc.) and develop a relationship where the volunteer and the receiving organization both benefit from the experience.

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- g) Anecdotally we observed Markham volunteer base to be in terms of age group, eg. not just kids trying to fulfil their requisite volunteer hours

OBJECTIVE 2 – Ensuring Markham is Welcoming and Inclusive

4. What is the most important action/task to be worked on for this objective?
a) Ensure business that are currently here are valued and welcomed
b) More inclusion with LGBT group
c) We aspire to deliver the message so that everyone (residents, businesses, stakeholders) understands it.
d) Due to the makeup of our community and requests that have been received by Council members and staff, some residents have interest in accessing our information in other languages. Council members in this group did not arrive at a consensus whether we should provide information in other languages but did agree it should be criteria based and prioritized (similar to a business) strategically since it will likely require more resources, eg. translation service costs, material in other languages. Group agreed that information regarding health and safety would have a higher priority should translation be provided. Criteria discussed include size of population. Need policy to clarify what, if anything, we will translate and the tools needed to ensure we are successful – framework, training, translation and material costs.
e) Group showed interest in 2-way communication in that it is not about what we, the municipality, want to tell the community but what does the businesses and residents want to hear about and how do they want to hear about it.
f) Group discussed the use of universal graphics as much as possible to lessen the need to translate information into other languages.
g) Must also be compliant with legislated AODA requirements when communicating with community.
h) Do not forget about the business community
i) Group agreed it is important to move diversity towards inclusivity and at least one Councillor has spoken about the ultimate goal being unity or harmony. Markham has a good foundation to build on.
j) Markham should aspire to be inclusive while respecting the diversity in our City. We need to hear from and listen to the community.
k) Need to increase outreach with the business community through associations and individual businesses.

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l) Use and leverage business community to assist with achieving City objectives i.e. tree planting, cultural events.
m) Leverage business recruiters.
n) scientific survey at each Council term to measure progress and success
o) How to engage on a neighbourhood basis – i.e. community park consultation; wide notice
p) Lots of support and networks for new residents – welcome centre, immigrant youth centre
q) Markham is very welcoming to businesses
r) Not necessarily inclusive – be mindful and proactive for language diversity

OBJECTIVE 2 – Ensuring Markham is Welcoming and Inclusive

1. At the end of four years what does success look like for this area?
a) Branding and the sense in the community that Markham is inclusive.
b) Need to determine what the perception of quality of life is in Markham right now and then assess at end of four years.
c) Measurement created for each of the objectives to answer the question, Have we grown in each of the areas by end of four years?
d) Opportunity to leverage our efforts in Pan Am to achieve our objectives, including “Destination Markham”.
e) Need to review the objectives from various perspective, residents, stakeholders, and businesses.
f) Strategically use awards and recognition from external associations as third party validation of good practices. Group discussed some services do not lend themselves to awards and winning an award does not mean a service is more important than another. Some awards are used as a mean To draw in membership and reward members.
g) Media should be inclusive. i.e. Chinese newspapers should involve non-Chinese readers. Simplify message in different languages and provide on-line programs
h) Live translation services at events, presentations - multi-lingual summary slides. Organizations need to focus on their target audience and language

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i) Over the generation, diversity of languages will continue to change
j) Being invited is an indication of inclusivity
k) “Integrated” community while respecting diversity. i.e. integrated United Way
l) Community centres need to be inclusive and reflective and understanding (staff training) of neighbourhood demographics to welcome all residents “Places for All” concepts
m) Training to welcome community demographics

OBJECTIVE 2 – Ensuring Markham is Welcoming and Inclusive

2. Age discounts – yes or no? If yes are we willing to have a property tax increase to fund?
a) Do more research
b) Should not be lead by the this municipality - will come through other municipalities and Federal/Provincial government
c) Group discussed there is an expectation in the society that discounts for seniors are expected, almost as a reward for their contribution to society, and it was acknowledged that this segment may be one of the richest in today’s society. There is recognition that like other age groups, it is not uniform and some seniors are living at or below the poverty line. Group discussed that the Federal and Provincial Governments have structured the income tax system by lowering tax rates for seniors and providing various rebates or tax credits.
d) Group agreed have some basis for discounts for any age group, including seniors, is important. We did not have time to agree on the basis though means test or income was discussed. In terms of age and the assumption of contribution to the Canadian society, observation was made for new immigrants who are seniors, they actually have not contributed to the Canadian society.
e) Determination of the discount amount and qualification, eg. at what age, will have implication for the city budget. Group agreed that when a group pays less for a service, eg. seniors, others in the City pays for that discount. There is the implication that like other municipalities, our population is aging rapidly as our the baby boomers move into the seniors segment. They may require different services.
f) Whatever action that is taken by Markham in this area, we should educate the community as it will be inevitable that we receive complaints that other neighbouring municipalities offer more services

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or discounts.
g) Can we and should we adjust the “portion size” for seniors programs and services if we cannot charge them at the full price.
h) A criteria that was discussed was to prioritize subsidies based on strategic considerations such as steeper discount for programs that improve health and no discount for leisure and general interest programs.
i) Group expressed openness and the need to review discounts for seniors. Create a model to rationalize pricing for seniors. Be creative – review program content as well as price in instances a less expensive but relevant program can be provided.
j) Seniors discount available for recreation programs. Clubs get a further discount
k) Available for people who do not necessarily need a discount, they have the means. Assumptions of circumstances
l) Age should not be the only criteria for a discount, not sustainable financially
m) Objective is a healthy community for all ages. Who do you subsidize to achieve this?
n) Means test, self-declaration. Pricing based on affordability, not age
o) Community centres, libraries, transit, etc.
p) Other factors for discounts such as keeping older adults active to avoid health care costs; people with challenges
q) Balance of user fees and increased taxes – both would impact the residents

OBJECTIVE 2 – Ensuring Markham is Welcoming and Inclusive

3. What is the next frontier for diversity?
a) Inclusivity and unity. Diversity is our success. Unity is our future. See 1G)
b) Identify inclusivity in terms of age, gender, sexual orientation, culture, religion, beliefs, values, etc.
c) Respect each other’s differences.
d) We need more facts on inclusivity and our community. Our discussion is based on anecdotal

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experience that may not be representative of the community. For instance, at one point an observation was made that perhaps the number and types of inquiries received by a ward councillor may be influenced by a resident's perception of having shared experience, such as speaking the same language or sharing the same culture.

OBJECTIVE 3 – Promoting Markham as the best place in Canada to invest and locate Knowledge Based Industries

1. What is the most important action/task to be worked on for this objective?
a) Increase the "attraction" areas in Markham
b) Increase the public arts to attract
c) Group observed that having a diverse or inclusive community or work force is beneficial to the business community
d) Knowledge based industries are Markham's niche
e) Be vigilant on mixed-use zoning to ensure employment component
f) Measuring stick for economic development business trips. There is value, but need to demonstrate it
g) Not just business trips, but value of day-to-day efforts needs to be evaluated
h) Express regular appreciation to developers/businesses for their support of the City. Corporate exchange and demonstration of appreciation.
i) Sustain existing small/medium businesses, i.e. flexibility sign by-law and regulations, tax policies, storm water fees
j) Promote investment – define "investment", consider affordability issues, DC and parkland charges
k) Affordability of rentals, condo

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OBJECTIVE 3 – Promoting Markham as the best place in Canada to invest and locate Knowledge Based Industries

2. At the end of four years what does success look like for this area?
a) Support the existing business along with promoting new business
b) Create science park and plan for it - creating a section with Hightech opportunities
c) Leverage the capacity with the Hightech businesses already here such as IBM
d) Land York University
e) Have our own robust tourism strategy
f) Markham, Unionville and Thornhill Main Streets - need to ensure those areas are promoted (ensure downtown Markham doesn't take away all the business opportunities from the Main Streets)
g) Public Realm - invest more - need to do more to the gateways into each part of the City
h) Engage all demographics of the community (no many places for the youth groups to gather)
i) New immigrants - assist in getting established
j) Develop a "destination Markham" strategy (include more than tourism opportunities)
k) Above or underground walkways between buildings in new centres
l) Measurable improvement, including improvement in the quality of life.
m) Retain existing businesses
n) Affordability of rentals, condos – look at DC fees, etc. Privatization of services?
o) More flexible zoning, conducive to new businesses
p) Business appreciation event – awards? More media and outward communications of business successes.
q) Rouge Park Gateway is an opportunity for welcome centre
r) Vision for Markham to attract tourists – Pacific Mall, Sports Park, PanAm Centre, Rouge National Urban Park, Main Streets, festivals, fair grounds
s) Connect people with transit system