

Shared Places All Spaces

Markham's Public Realm Strategy





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Acknowledgements



Inited in 2011, the Public Realm Advisory Committee (PRAC) works with the City to develop strategies which enhance and animate Markham's public spaces through partnerships, community engagement and City leadership. The PRAC advocates, promotes and supports public realm programs and initiatives within existing communities in Markham. The PRAC reviews the annual public realm programs, encourages community involvement, establishes priorities, assists with the evaluation of submissions and recommends actions to Council for implementation of projects.

Cross-Commission Working Team

The Markham staff team for the Public Realm Strategy consists of members from Operations, Planning and Urban Design including Heritage, Development Engineering and Transportation, Capital Works, Asset Management, Recreation Services, Culture, Markham Public Library, Corporate Communications and Community Engagement, By-law Enforcement and the Sustainability Office. The team was assembled to coordinate and develop the *Markham Public Realm Strategy*.

Project Consultant

Peter J. Smith & Company, Inc. is a full-service urban design, urban and regional planning and economic development firm with experience in public realm studies and implementation strategies. The company was hired to assist the Public Realm Advisory Committee and the Public Realm Staff Working Team in the development of the strategy. Their experience in public realm projects was invaluable in developing a public realm strategy for Markham.

8-80 Cities

8-80 Cities is a non-profit organization based in Toronto, Canada, dedicated to contributing to the transformation of cities into places where people can walk, bike, access public transit, and visit vibrant parks and public spaces. 8-80 Cities was hired to assist the Public Realm Advisory Committee and the Public Realm Staff Working Team with the public realm public engagement process and analysis of community priorities. Their experience is in public realm engagement in urban areas across Canada, the United States, Latin America, Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

Public Realm Advisory Committee

Chair Hanif Nori

Members of Markham Council

Councillor Alex Chiu
(Vice Chair)

Councillor Valerie Burke

Councillor Logan Kanapathi

Community Members

Omar Bhatti

Sadiq Pirani

Carmen Hui, Region of York

City of Markham staff



Frank Scarpitti
Mayor, City of Markham

A Message from Our Mayor

The development of Markham's public realm is essential to the continued engagement of our residents and visitors in our public spaces. Through our strategic plan *Building Markham's Future Together*, and initiatives including our draft Official Plan, Diversity Action Plan, Greenprint Community Sustainability Plan and Integrated Leisure Master Plan, we have forged a strong foundation for managing growth, engaging our community and building our city. Markham has been successful in large part because residents and visitors are engaged within our public spaces and feel connected to the community. Developing attractive, inviting and functional spaces for gathering and socializing, in combination with convenient and efficient transportation links, trails, bikeways and parks, creates connections within our community.

Markham is committed to the continual enhancement of our public realm, and to creating engaging and outstanding public spaces as part of our city building efforts. As a result, Markham's Public Realm Strategy – *Shared Places Our Spaces*, is a living document that has been developed collaboratively with our residents, business partners and staff. It is a guide for everyone to use in the planning, development and redevelopment of our neighbourhoods.

Together, we have identified opportunities and successes to build upon. Together, we will implement this strategy to ensure our public spaces are welcoming for those of all ages, backgrounds, abilities and interests. Markham is known widely for its diversity, strong community spirit, prosperity and award-winning neighbourhoods. Through our public realm initiatives we will continue to demonstrate municipal leadership in how we manage our growth, and building a sustainable community that is vibrant and engaging.

I encourage you to read this document, become involved in the continued development of Markham's public realm, and experience the great variety of our City's parks, trails, facilities and heritage villages.

Together, we can continue to build Markham as a unique, world-class city for generations to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Scarpitti".

A Message from Our Commissioners

A vibrant public realm is vital for City life. It can enrich the community experience, create a sense of identity and promote a City's competitive edge by making it an attractive place for people to live, work, play and invest.

Shared Places, *Our Spaces* is Markham's strategic plan for achieving a successful public realm with public spaces that are well planned, designed and managed: spaces where our heritage, culture and diversity can be celebrated, where there are opportunities to recreate and enjoy nature – and where daily life in the City is enhanced.

We are especially pleased that this strategy document is the result of the combined efforts of Markham's Community & Fire Services and Development

Services Commissions. With the assistance of a multi-departmental staff team and the Public Realm Advisory Committee, we have developed a unified vision for Markham's public realm with shared municipal and community responsibility for its management, enhancement and success.

We hope that *Shared Places*, *Our Spaces* proves to be an excellent guide for achieving a vibrant public realm in Markham as our City develops over the coming years. We welcome your feedback and support in making Markham's public realm the best it can be.



Jim Baird
Commissioner,
Development Services

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Baird".



Brenda Librecz
Commissioner,
Community & Fire Services

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brenda Librecz".



A Message from the Advisory Committee



The public realm allows the City of Markham to come alive. The development of diverse public spaces and the animation of our neighbourhoods enable residents, businesses and visitors to celebrate the rich culture and heritage of our growing vibrant community.

Shared spaces shape the contours of our way of life. It is the place where work meets play, where economic vitality is molded by community building, and where we work as one to make our City our home. The public realm is where opportunities thrive, building dynamic and innovative public spaces reflective of Markham's diversity and beauty. These spaces should be accessible to all, create destinations, cultivate civic pride, and celebrate Markham's artistic and architectural talents.

Through shared responsibility, collaboration, community engagement, sustainable use of resources, and partnerships between the public and private sectors, we hope that all stakeholders in Markham will contribute to our public realm. By harmonizing our efforts, we strengthen our resolve to achieve our goal of making the City of Markham a truly enjoyable destination to live, work, study, play and visit.



Chair
Hanif Nori

Vice-Chair
Councillor Alex Chiu

Planning a Great Public Realm Together – Our City Public Realm Working Team

Staff throughout the Corporation collaborate and co-operate to bring their areas of expertise and experience to the creation, construction, maintenance and programming of the public realm. Each area of expertise contributes to the public realm in the following ways.

Community & Fire Services Commission

Operations Department maintains the City-owned parks, urban forest, open spaces, roads, traffic controls and fleet of vehicles; and reviews and assesses maintenance impacts of development and capital projects related to the street, park and open space infrastructure. Through effective maintenance and care, they ensure these City assets remain safe and accessible to residents and other user groups.

Asset Management Department manages street lights, bridges, culverts, sewer outfalls and the City's storm water system, built assets, parks and open spaces, and an inventory system to keep our public spaces safe and well managed.

Recreation Services Department promotes wellness, fitness and engagement through recreation and leisure programming for all ages and abilities. These activities are programmed in community centres, other local facilities and parks. Programs range from

day camps and drop-in programs, to organized sports in partnership with sports groups and individual opportunities such as yoga, swimming and fitness.

Culture Services Department is the catalyst for creativity, innovation and artistic expression in all disciplines. *The Culture Policy and Plan* guides programming and exhibition development in Flato Markham Theatre, Markham Museum and the Varley Art Gallery of Markham, as well as Public Art. Public art, managed by the Culture Services Department, is an essential component of *Markham's Public Realm Strategy*. Public art is a key component and vital tool for shaping, enhancing, and contributing to all elements of the public realm.

Markham Public Library, through its seven branches, provides residents with lifelong learning opportunities. Its many partnerships within the community include health, wellness and reading programs, film screenings, author talks, as well as arts and culture appreciation programs. Staff at the libraries can play an important role in educating and receiving input into public realm planning.

Development Services Commission

Planning and Urban Design Department creates long-range strategic plans and manages current development through the formulation of plans, policies, regulations and guidelines on land use, development, urban design, heritage conservation and growth management. In addition, the department processes and evaluates development applications, manages and analyzes data on land use, and designs and oversees the implementation of projects and digital mapping related functions. Strategic planning of new growth is important to the creation and integration of the public realm within our communities.

Development Engineering and Transportation Division of the Engineering Department is responsible for the planning, approval and construction of essential services such as sanitary sewers, watermains, storm sewers, and the City's storm water management system. The division is also responsible for the planning, approval and construction of new roads, bridges, sidewalks, streetlights, transportation planning, and the administration of construction within subdivisions.

Capital Works Division of the Engineering Department is responsible for the design and implementation of infrastructure projects throughout the City. These projects include roads/streetscapes, cycleways, walkways and bridges. There are opportunities to provide significant public realm design elements and approaches within the scope of these projects. A key to the delivery of a great public realm is the combination of quality engineering practices with innovative and sustainable solutions for infrastructure design, implementation and maintenance.

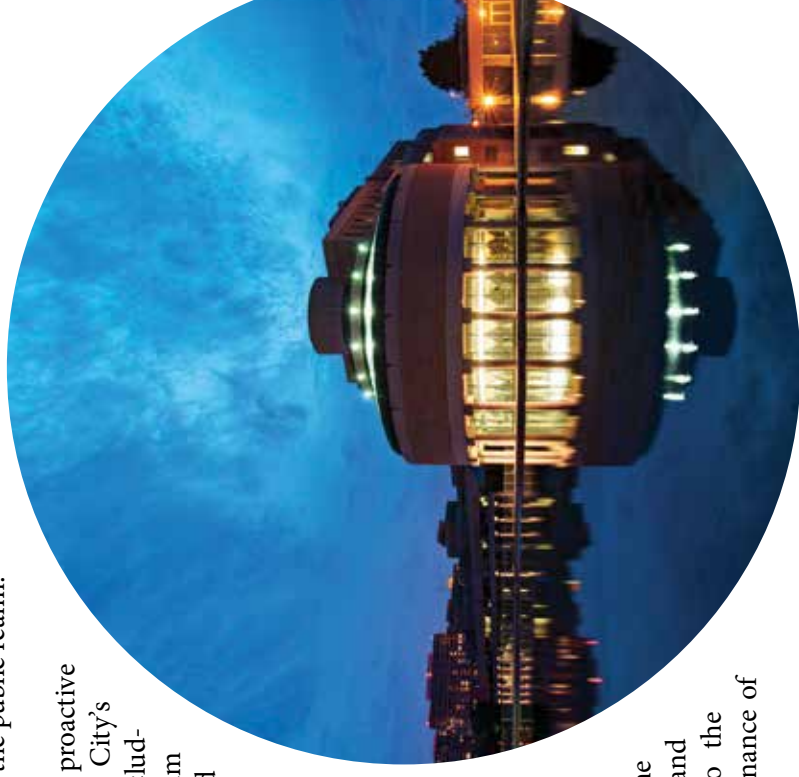
Corporate Services Commission

Corporate Communications and Community Engagement is dedicated to supporting and promoting Markham's business activities, events, projects and strategic priorities through the provision of strategic marketing, communications and community engagement planning, advice, research, tactical execution and ongoing communication. The department helps to build community awareness of municipal activities, monitors and manages issues and promotes accessibility to Markham's many events and activities. Community awareness, engagement and funding opportunities are areas that relate to the public realm.

By-law Enforcement provides proactive enforcement services for all the City's regulatory and licensing by-laws including those related to Keep Markham Beautiful, Tree Preservation and property standards.

CAO Office

Sustainability Office leads the way, together with related departments and the community, towards liveable neighbourhoods, healthy people and continuing prosperity. *The Greenprint Community Sustainability Plan* guides the efforts of the City in the provision of environmental, social and accessibility components related to the design, implementation and maintenance of the public realm.



Executive Summary

**A place for all
that is engaging,
sustaining and
beautiful.**

A great public realm includes a consistent and cohesive design, implementation of community responsive programming, and efficient and effective maintenance of a diverse range of public open space facilities. Together, these elements will deliver inviting, safe, clean and vibrant public spaces for residents, visitors and businesses.

Creating a public realm that encourages partnerships enriches the community experience and contributes to the overall sense of identity for Markham residents and their neighbourhoods, historical districts and business parks. It is critical to raise awareness with residents, developers, business owners, and visitors about the importance of the public realm. Creating and sustaining excitement about the importance of a strong vision for our public realm is a vital component in the creation of a sustainable community.

Defining the Public Realm

Our public realm is defined as the visible and accessible spaces, connections and buildings which enhance public life, promote civic pride and enliven the spirit of the City. The public realm is made up of

all the areas to which the public has physical or visual access including:

- Parks and open spaces;
- Pathways, bikeways and trails;
- Boulevards, streets, laneways and bridges;
- Wetlands, woodlots, meadows and environmental areas; and,
- Plazas, squares, publicly accessible buildings and building interfaces.

Community infrastructure is an integral part of creating a functional, memorable and sustainable public realm. It provides the facilities and services that meet the needs of residents and visitors, builds community networks and enhances the overall quality of life. Markham plays a central role in the planning and implementation of a wide range of services and facilities including:

- Parks and open spaces;
- Transportation networks;
- Libraries and community centres;
- Arts and culture resources; and,
- Fire and emergency services.

The City of Markham is dedicated to enhancing, improving and sustaining a unique, safe, vibrant and



memorable place to live, work, play and invest. It is predicated on providing quality designed, sustainable communities and developments which recognize Markham's rich historical legacy.

Benefits of the Public Realm

The public realm builds community spirit, promotes physical activity, provides diverse environmental features and sustains our economic vitality on a daily basis. These benefits are interdependent and build upon each other.

Community recreational and cultural programs and events help neighbours keep in touch reinforcing relationships that develop strong neighbourhoods. The public realm provides opportunities to gather and celebrate locally or community-wide through programmed and spontaneous activities, including:

- Canada Day Celebrations;
- Taste of Asia;
- Farmers' markets;
- Markham's Santa Claus Parade;
- Family picnics and celebrations;
- Community volunteer ice rinks; and
- Organized and unorganized sporting events.

Engaged and active people who walk or cycle as part of their daily routine provide 'eyes on the street,' which enhances the social safety net. Other community activities such as tree planting, caring for an off-leash dog park and volunteering at a community garden provide opportunities to interact with friends and neighbours, and help to define a sense of place.

The public realm provides facilities and networks supporting a physically active lifestyle. It also enables citizens to actively connect with their communities and reconnect with nature.

Investment in Markham's public realm is critical for sustainable economic growth. A vibrant, safe, diverse and interactive public realm has a positive economic effect and can act as a catalyst for development, new business and regeneration.

Markham's Plan for a Successful Public Realm

The City's Public Realm Strategy will help clarify what needs to be done and how everyone can contribute to achieve our goals. The strategy will:

- **Define** what the public realm means to Markham;
- **Raise awareness** of the importance of a high quality public realm for our community and the role everyone can play to ensure its success;
- **Define the vision and goals** for Markham's public realm;
- **Provide a framework** for the delivery and maintenance of high quality public realm; and
- **Provide recommendations and actions** to enhance the public realm in the City of Markham.

This Public Realm Strategy will be used by citizens, community groups, developers, builders, utility providers, businesses, the City of Markham, York Region, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, as well as Provincial and Federal stakeholders.

Best Practice Analysis

A review of national and international best practices was undertaken as part of the strategic plan development process. This review identified key planning tools and some general approaches that municipalities are using.





With a combination of older and newer areas, Markham can apply the revitalization and refocus approach of older cities, and the approach of identification and implementation of opportunities to build connections used in newer cities.

Community Engagement

8-80 Cities worked closely with Markham in fall 2014. They engaged and educated more than 700 residents, soliciting feedback on what residents like, don't like, would like to see changed and on their vision for the future related to Markham's public realm.

The hundreds of ideas collected were compiled, categorized and ranked, and then divided into two main categories – Software (programming spaces) and Hardware (physical infrastructure).

We will continue to engage residents through place-based consultation and short-term pilot projects to move public realm enhancement forward.

Vision

A place for all that is engaging, sustaining and beautiful.

Markham's public realm is the foundation which enables the spirit of the community to flourish. As we grow from our heritage roots as a town to a great and vibrant city, the public realm is a fundamental component of a successful, sustainable community.

Markham's Public Realm Strategy is a plan to ensure that all who live, work, play, visit and invest in our city share ownership and responsibility and aspire to create and maintain great public spaces.

Goals

1. Made in Markham Innovation and Design

Deliver high quality public realm city wide by applying innovative design standards, comprehensive oversight measures, precise construction practices and thorough inspection processes within our new development, capital and redevelopment projects.

2. Keeping Markham Beautiful

Partner with residents and businesses to maintain and beautify private and public properties.

3. Animating Our Neighbourhoods and Districts

Celebrate Markham's inclusiveness and cultural diversity by assisting in event organization and promoting community use.

4. Harmonizing Our Efforts and Sharing Our Resources

Increase funding opportunities through public-private partnerships, government grants and private donations. Enhance collaboration among Markham residents, Business Improvement Area associations, community groups, public agencies and the City. Prioritize the city-wide public realm delivery, improvement and maintenance through the City budgeting process.

5. Creating Gateways and Destinations

Showcase Markham's unique areas and destinations with beautiful public spaces, great public art, memorable arrivals, and sustaining and engaging neighbourhoods and city districts.

A Great Public Realm for All – Markham Residents, Businesses, Developers, City staff



“A great community does not happen by chance. It is the people, shared interest and collective efforts of everyone that makes a difference.” Keep Cornell Beautiful, a voluntary non-profit group founded as a result of inspiration from the community of Cornell, Markham and the Keep Markham Beautiful (Maintenance) By-law.

“Markham’s public realm is a demonstration of civic pride and a celebration of our great City.” Stephen Chait, Director, Economic Development

“We believe in the Trees for Tomorrow initiative.” TACC Development donated a tree nursery and provided funding to the street tree program.

“The retail offerings, restaurants, art installations and green spaces will all contribute to a terrific environment and an engaged workforce.” Aviva Canada chose LEED certified commercial space in Markham.





Leading While Remembering – Ground Work for Our Public Realm



Markham Township, originally surveyed in 1793-94, was incorporated in 1850. Over time, specific communities grew within the Township around mill sites and transportation routes. One of the largest and most prosperous communities was Markham Village, which was incorporated in 1872 and by 1891, had a population of 1,100 residents. Today, the City of Markham, with a population of over 340,000, includes the villages of Thornhill, Markham Village, Unionville and Buttonville, which are designated heritage conservation districts. These protected areas remain prominent and offer a unique public realm experience. The historic foundation on which to improve and build our public realm is strong. Incorporating the City's motto, Leading While Remembering, into the Public Realm Strategy's vision provides a clear direction in which to develop a modern, creative public realm that reflects our rich history. Markham has welcomed people of all backgrounds from around the world who have contributed to the success of this community. Early immigration included settlers from Germany and Pennsylvania led by William Moll Berczy in 1794. The first settlement was in the Thornhill area, initially focused on Yonge Street. During the early 1800s, Pennsylvania Germans settled most of the northern and eastern parts of

Markham Township. From the 1830s on, there was a great influx of Irish, Scottish and English immigrants. Modern Markham continues to attract a diverse population. Over 70 per cent of residents represent visible minorities and of these new residents, almost 38 per cent are from China. Markham's diversity is celebrated and endorsed through the City's Diversity Action Plan, "Everyone Welcome". This plan provides a foundation to understand the diverse community we serve and Markham's history. In addition to developing inclusive, diverse and accessible programs and services, Markham's cultural diversity is celebrated through festivals, flag raisings, special events, and the naming of streets including Sun Yat Sen, Rizal Avenue, Manila Avenue, Aksel Rinck Drive and Karachi Drive.

Future Impacts

Markham's 2014 Official Plan anticipates that by 2031, the population will be about 422,000. This is an increase of about 100,000 people and 75,000 jobs. More than 60% of new residential growth will be located in mixed-use centres along rapid transit corridors within current urban areas. With this increased intensity and population growth, it is critical for Markham to deliver and maintain a high quality public realm.





What is the Public Realm? The Space Where Public Life Takes Place



Our public realm is a critical element in establishing Markham's identity. **The "Public Realm"** is defined as all privately or publicly owned spaces, indoors and outdoors, which are accessible to the public – either visually or physically – including parks, walkways, bikeways, trails, boulevards, streets, lanes, open spaces, wetlands and bridges. The public realm is a social space, a forum for discussion, and a space where public life takes place.

It is essential that the public realm provides and maintains safe, accessible and comfortable public spaces that create vibrant, healthy, sustainable and people-friendly communities.

Community infrastructure and the inherent programming are integral to a public realm that successfully responds to meet the needs of residents and visitors, builds community networks and enhances the overall quality of life.

The City of Markham plays a central role in the planning, implementation and maintenance of a wide range of community facilities and services for its residents

including libraries, community centres, parks, open spaces, transportation networks, arts and culture resources as well as fire and emergency services.

The public realm is the framework that provides community identity, and connects diverse communities and places within our City. Our public realm provides us with the opportunity to enrich our daily lives through the interface with people, communities and places. "Streets, public spaces, buildings and views will be designed to be human scale and context sensitive, and provide for a diverse mix of uses that are pedestrian, bike and transit friendly." (City of Markham Official Plan)

The City of Markham is dedicated to improving and sustaining a unique and vibrant place to live, work, play, learn and invest. Markham is committed to providing high quality designed, sustainable communities and developments that build upon our rich historical legacy. Shared Places, Our Spaces – Markham's Public Realm Strategy – will provide strategic action items to deliver an enhanced and complete public realm across Markham.

The public realm is a social space, a forum for discussion, and a space where public life takes place.





What are the Benefits of Public Realm? Building Community Spirit on a Daily Basis



The public realm is where we live, work, socialize, learn and play. It enhances public life, promotes civic pride and enlivens the spirit of the City. The public realm engages our citizens on a daily basis and provides opportunities to gather and celebrate on a wide range of scales including:

- Canada Day celebrations;
- Ribfest;
- Markham-Milliken Children's Festival;
- Applefest;
- Taste of Asia;
- Farmers' markets;
- Jazz festivals;
- Family picnics; and,
- Organized and unorganized sporting events.

As one of the most inclusive and culturally diverse municipalities in Canada, the vitality of Markham is dependent on creating a welcoming, memorable, safe, functional and recognizable public realm.

A welcoming public realm encourages people to walk and cycle as part of their daily routines, which provide 'eyes on the street' and enhances neighbourhood safety.

Events

Community events help keep neighbours in touch with each other and build the foundations of strong relationships and neighbourhoods. Participation in cultural and recreational programs has been found to promote social connectedness and foster positive civic behaviour.

Sociability

Vital public spaces offer a wide range of opportunities to engage people, reduce isolation and encourage civic pride. Participating in litter cleanup in a park, planting a tree, caring for an off-leash dog park, maintaining a neighbourhood rink, caring for your property and volunteering at a community garden are great opportunities to meet neighbours, define a sense of space and build community spirit. The shared responsibilities for the public realm connect people of all ages and abilities, enhance a sense of belonging, and create stable and desirable neighbourhoods and cities.



Annual Ribfest event takes place at Civic Centre (left); Cornell Community Garden (above).



Integrating Healthy Physical Activities into Our Daily Lives



Health Canada estimated that for each dollar invested in physical activity, there is a long-term savings of \$11 in health care. (Haldane 2000) In Ontario, obesity is now an epidemic: 60 per cent or over three in five Canadian adults are overweight or obese (Statistics Canada, 2012b). This is putting a massive financial strain on the health care system.

Markham is committed to creating healthier communities through quality urban and architectural design guided by the City's *2014 Official Plan* and *Greenprint Community Sustainability Plan*. Healthy activities can be integrated into our daily lives when we develop communities with interconnected parks, open spaces, shopping areas, community centres and workplaces. Accessible, well designed and well maintained streets, cycleways and walkways enhance our commuting experience, and promote alternative and healthy ways to get around.

People who live close to a public park or open space are three times more likely to meet recommended physical activity levels (Milbank Quarterly 2009). Participation in recreation and regular physical activity has been shown to improve self-esteem, reduce depressive symptoms, decrease stress and anxiety, improve self-acceptance, enhance psychological well-being and create changes in anti-social behaviour. The presence of public art coupled with access to physical activity within the public realm triggers positive feelings, intellectual thoughts and creativity.

“Markham can build on and continue to provide an accessible and safe public realm that encourages residents to use active transportation methods, and to gather and connect with neighbours year-round. The City can provide access to all public facilities and programs for Markham residents regardless of means or ability, and can use such facilities to assist residents in times of need. “- *Greenprint Community Sustainability Plan*





CHANGING
AREAS
→
TICKETS
→

Sustaining Economic Vitality and Employment



Markham is Canada's High Tech Capital with more than 1,000 high technology and life sciences companies in 2014 with Canadian headquarters for international organizations including IBM, Honda Canada, Hyundai, Advanced Micro Devices, Johnson & Johnson, Apple Inc., and Honeywell. Institutional facilities such as Seneca College, the Markham Convergence Centre and the newly announced York University Campus, nurture professional advancement and foster knowledge exchange that builds a prestigious workforce. Direct investment in the public realm has a positive economic effect and can act as a catalyst for development and regeneration.

Over the next 30 years, the New York City Highline Park has been predicted to bring \$4 billion in private investment and \$900 million in revenues to the City. (source The New York Times, Taking A Stroll Along the Highline, Nov. 28, 2008)

A lively, safe and well-maintained urban environment that provides a range of opportunities is a key factor for relocation of businesses and the associated labour force. Place making through an animated public realm

provides civic identity and pride. This civic pride ensures businesses and citizens perceive Markham as a highly desirable place to live, work, play and invest. This is what makes Markham unique and distinct.

An appealing public realm brings high pedestrian traffic that attracts street related shops and restaurants. Investing in a great public realm will attract more residents, tourists and businesses to Markham.

In Markham, a successful public realm will enhance the lifestyle and transportation opportunities for citizens by integrating pedestrian and transit-oriented land uses that offer improved recreation, gathering, walking, cycling and transit opportunities.

In a recent Canadian study, property values increased by \$8.00 for every 30cm (foot) closer a home was to a green space.

Source: Crompton J., 1999 Financing and Acquiring Park and Recreational Resources, Waveland Press Inc.

**Investing in
Markham's public
realm is critical
for sustainable
economic growth.**





Integrating Diverse Environmental Features into Communities



Natural areas offer a sanctuary from the everyday stress of life and enable citizens to reconnect with the wonders of nature. Preservation of our natural areas creates a legacy for future generations. Trees, shrubs and grasses, along with streams and ponds, provide a contrast to buildings, concrete and asphalt. Interconnected natural areas provide opportunities for walkways and trails, improved air quality and pollinators, and support for wildlife.

A tree can absorb as much as 48 pounds (21.8 kilograms) of carbon dioxide per year and can sequester one ton (907.2 kilograms) of carbon dioxide by the time it reaches 40 years old. (www.ncsu.edu)

A diverse park and natural environment open space system allows users to experience a wide range of landscapes on a year-round basis. Seasonal changes, maturation of natural elements and spotting wildlife on a walk enhance user appreciation and provide limitless interest and education.

By enhancing our efforts to integrate natural areas as part of the public realm, Markham is working towards the goals of providing a sustainable and environmentally responsible community. Markham's

2014 *Official Plan* integrates parks, open spaces, storm water management (SWM) ponds, woodlots, channels, environmental areas and valleylands into the development fabric of communities. Storm water management ponds control runoff, reduce the risk of flooding and erosion. Further, SWM ponds are designed to replicate natural water features, complete with appropriate plantings. They provide beautiful amenities and serve as community gateways.

Woodlots and wetlands have been identified as significant and, in conjunction with our community partners, have been preserved within the development of new communities.

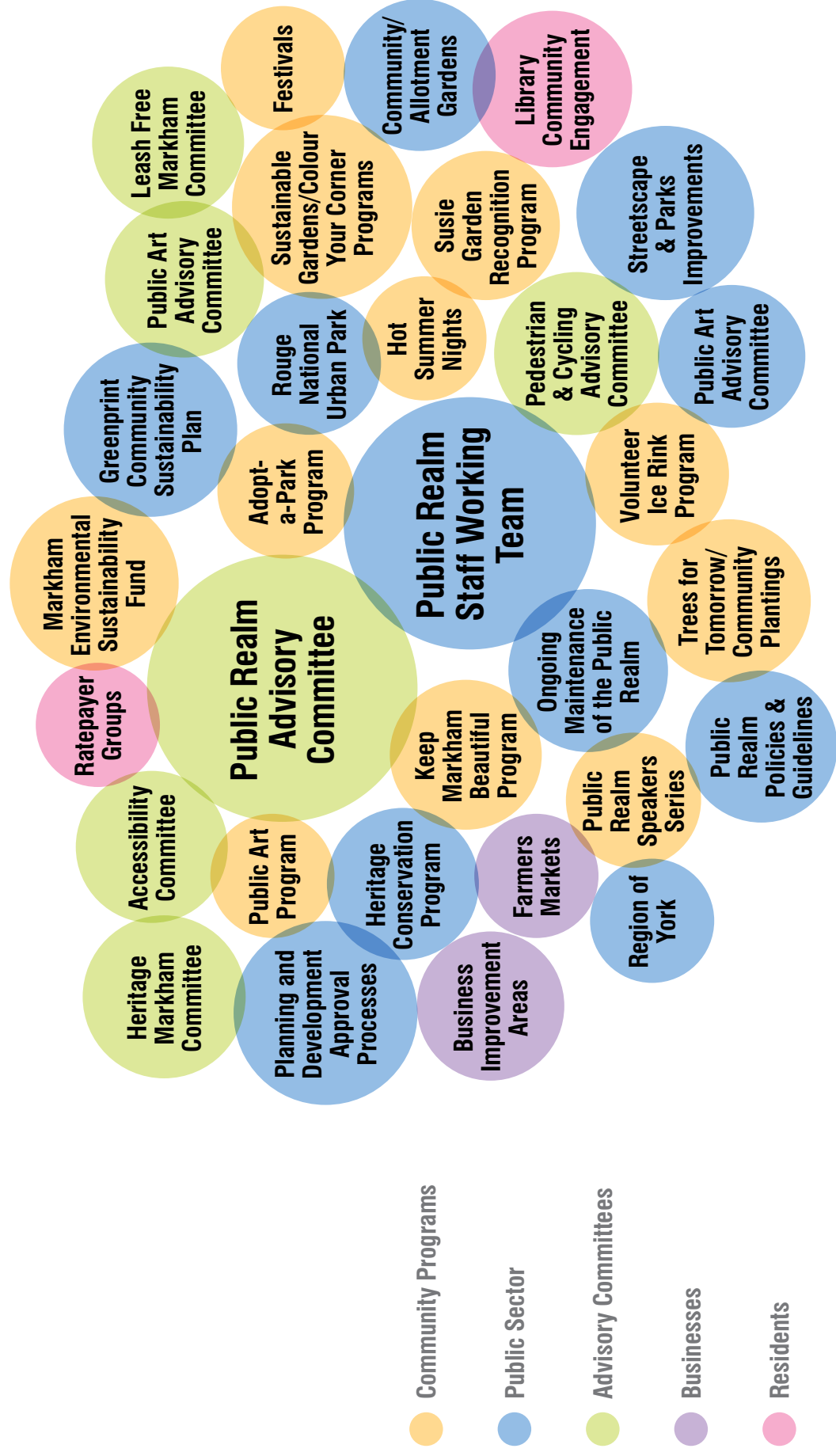
The Rouge Park, with an area of approx. 3,800 hectares in Markham, is currently transitioning into a National Urban Park, led by the Federal Government under Parks Canada. Once established, the park will celebrate and protect a diverse landscape which offers a connection to, and provides protection of, terrestrial, aquatic, agricultural, aboriginal, pioneer cultural, and heritage resources while presenting a significant opportunity for recreational and educational engagement.



One large tree can provide a supply of oxygen for two people.

McAlaney, Mike. Arguments for Land Conservation: Documentation and Information Sources for Land Resources Protection, Trust for Public Land, Sacramento, CA, December, 1993

Where are we now?



Current Initiatives



Markham Programs

Programs occur year-round in Markham's facilities, parks and open spaces. The public sector contributes policy, design guidelines and standards, and the capital to implement and maintain our public realm. Our advisory committees make recommendations to Council based on input from our residents and the City. The Business Improvement Areas and businesses provide an economic foundation to draw upon within our business and commercial areas.

There are many community programs that engage residents to facilitate improvements and animate Markham's public spaces. Programs such as Trees for Tomorrow encourage and facilitate community tree plantings. Other programs such as Adopt-a-Park encourage residents to help care for our public spaces, and take pride and ownership. Residents are involved in decisions related to park and open space development and subsequent programming. They also act as stewards of these resources. Often, as a result of these programs, partnerships develop between community ratepayers' and environmental groups, service clubs, horticultural and historical societies, local businesses and schools.

Appendix 1 contains a listing of current programs. These initiatives are important contributions to creating and maintaining great public spaces.

Markham Publications

The City of Markham contributes policy, design guidelines and standards to guide how the public realm should be improved as the City grows. Following are a few of these documents.

Markham's Official Plan (OP) Markham's 2014 Official Plan (adopted by Markham Council in 2013) provides a vision to guide future development in Markham over the next 20 years. Section 4, Healthy Neighbourhood & Community and Section 6, Urban Design and Sustainable Development, within the Plan set out public realm policy that is based on the principles of: protecting cultural heritage resources, the natural environment and agricultural lands; building healthy communities; increasing travel options; and maintaining a strong economy.

Section 6.1.2 outlines Council's policy to require the design of high quality, attractive and sustainable





developments that contribute to a successful public realm and include the following elements: connections to the street network that are accessible to people of all ages and abilities; streetscapes that are safe and attractive; enhanced views and vistas of identified landmarks; well designed public and private open spaces; enhanced landscaping and tree plantings; public art that promotes a sense of place; and sustainable development practices.

It is vital to integrate public realm priorities at the planning stage in the development of buildings and neighbourhoods, transportation and municipal infrastructure projects, mixed-use and employment areas, and the Greenway system.

Markham's Greenprint Community Sustainability Plan addresses environmental health, social and cultural well-being, and economic vitality. It is a plan to deliver positive change that helps prepare Markham for future challenges, both locally and globally, and to ensure that Markham continues to be a great place to live, work, play and invest. The Greenprint focuses on 12 sustainability priorities and 241 recommendations that were developed through a systems thinking approach with significant community input. The Greenprint and *Markham's Public Realm Strategy* are intertwined. A prime example of this is the Community and Allotment Garden Program. This initiative is the embodiment of an enhanced public realm; it fosters community engagement and participation. The Greenprint lays the foundation for a sustainable public realm through its priorities, recommendations and initiatives.

Pathways and Trails Master Plan sets out the means for improving and expanding Markham's trail system in order to provide a wide range of leisure, learning

and healthy lifestyle opportunities for Markham residents. The master plan identifies a city-wide, off-road pathway and trail system that connects destinations within Markham as well as design guidelines and standards to achieve these objectives.

Trees for Tomorrow Guidelines and Program conveys the benefits of trees and the urban forest as well as helping to guide the City of Markham towards achieving a sustainable ecosystem in a compact urban environment. It sets the framework for best management practices in the development, implementation, maintenance, and preservation of our urban forest resources. Tree planting targets are achieved through partnership with developers of new and revitalized communities, and through community tree planting and outreach programs.

Appendix 2 contains references and links to other documents.

York Region

Markham's street network is comprised of both local and regional roads. Regional roads such as Yonge Street, Highway 7, Warden Avenue, Highway 48 (Markham Road) and Kennedy Road represent some of Markham's most active streets with a concentration of developments. The Regional Municipality of York has partnership funding programs and design guidelines to improve the street environment, making it more pedestrian and cyclist friendly.

The Region's Municipal Streetscape Partnership Program (MSPP) The Regional Municipality of York is committed to creating great streets and an efficient transportation network across its nine municipalities. York Region endorsed a Regional streetscape policy in

2001 and the Towards Great Regional Streets strategy, which integrates design elements for both pedestrians and cyclists, in 2006. MSPP staff help support transportation planning on environmental assessments and streetscape construction. They are also responsible for the MSPP, and providing input on local municipal streetscape master plans and urban design guidelines.

York Region's Designing Great Streets: Context Sensitive Solutions York Region's Designing Great Streets guidelines recognize that the function of regional roads has evolved from being primarily a conduit for automobiles to street connections that provide mobility for all road users including transit users, pedestrians and cyclists. Regional roads not only serve as transportation structures, they are also an important element of the public realm that should accommodate and promote the activities of multiple types of transportation in a manner that is safe for the public and addresses the requirements of provincial legislation such as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The development of the Designing Great Streets guidelines helps the Region design streets that are safe, clean and beautiful for the public and strengthen communities.

Valuable input from Markham advisory committees and communities strengthens the local character of public realm projects.

Citizens

Advisory Committees Both the Public Realm Advisory Committee and the Public Art Advisory Committee provide input, suggestions and help to guide the development and implementation of our public realm. The Heritage Markham Advisory Committee provides guidance on public realm

improvements in the City's heritage conservation districts. The Main Street Markham Advisory Committee provides advice to Council on public realm initiatives within the historic Markham Village. Representatives from local communities and the City sit on these committees.

Business Improvement Areas Our Business Improvement Areas work to draw customers to their places of business. Within the public realm, they host events such as sidewalk sales, parades and festivals. They work with the City to improve the public realm with flowers, signage and seasonal streetscape enhancements.

Resident Associations Throughout the City, we have many citizens who organize and participate in ratepayers' or residents' groups representing their neighbourhoods. These organized groups not only maintain a voice about what goes on in their neighbourhood; they also host events within our public realm.

Appendix 3 includes information for citizens interested in establishing a Ratepayers Community Association as well as a current list of Ratepayers' Groups. In addition, there are historical associations and village conservancies that promote and undertake special public realm projects throughout Markham.



What Works Elsewhere?



Best Practice Analysis



Worldwide, improvement of the public realm is an essential approach to defining a city's future form, quality and identity. Major cities are focusing on the planning, design and development of the public realm, and engaging residents, businesses and community groups to play essential roles by actively participating in the improvement of the urban experience. More and more communities are recognizing the benefit of looking at the public realm holistically, as an urban system, and developing an overall strategy for it.

In older cities, public realm strategies target revitalization of a neglected public realm and refocus the public realm on pedestrian rather than vehicular-oriented mobility. In newer cities, public realm strategies look to identify, in advance of development, the appropriate level of standards in order to build connections, instill a sense of place and promote a pedestrian-friendly community.

With a combination of newer and older areas, Markham has the potential to apply both of these approaches to the City.

The best practice review identified several key public realm planning tools and these are listed in **Appendix 3**.





What is Working in Markham?

The creation of a world-class public realm is vital to all involved in the planning, design and maintenance of our City. The focus is creating an enriched urban experience and an enhanced sense of identity for the neighbourhoods, heritage districts, commercial areas and open spaces in Markham.

Markham recognizes the significance of raising residents' awareness about the importance of the public realm in their day-to-day lives and identifying opportunities for residents to participate in developing and maintaining an attractive public realm. Highlighted here are some examples of what is working well in Markham, based on the findings from our reviews.

Markham is transitioning into a great Canadian city.

Resident needs and demands are changing, and the municipal services to fulfill these needs must change to reflect the evolving demographics. The use of parks, open spaces, streets and other public realm facilities will change as demands vary. Markham has implemented a series of policies that will guide the development and implementation of public realm as

growth occurs. Growth and change offer Markham the opportunity to develop a wide range of innovative solutions in order to create unique public realm opportunities.

Markham is continuing to develop its public realm.

The steady pace of development in Markham means constant provision of public realm opportunities while the City examines and addresses existing elements of its public realm. The critical goal is to create consistency and provision of the public realm throughout a diverse and complex urban/suburban fabric. Markham is developing context and community sensitive streets, parks and open spaces that focus on safe pedestrian and vehicular use.

Markham understands the need for communication.

Communication will be the backbone of the public realm development process as it balances the interests of all, creating a high quality public realm. Many

public realm implementation tools are already in place including design review, implementation and site inspection, especially for the new growth areas. Furthermore, the City recently developed the Public Realm Coordinator role to facilitate a comprehensive approach to the development of the public realm.

As we develop and maintain a quality public realm, alternative funding opportunities will need to be defined. Future efforts will require multiple solutions targeting public and private partnerships. The City has been working towards high quality public realm development with the help of new funding and implementation strategies.



What Can We Improve?

Although there are many initiatives underway and the City is working to create a great public realm, there are areas in which we can improve.

Instill a greater sense of community ownership in the public realm. As residents are confronted with increased growth and development, people are feeling less involved and there is a need to inspire a greater sense of community ownership in the public realm. Residents must be engaged in their communities and feel that they are empowered to contribute to the design, implementation, maintenance and programming of their public realm.



The intensity and commitment must be focused on the funding, design and implementation of facilities within older communities.

The same rigor and standards developed for our growth areas need to be applied to the redevelopment of our existing, time-worn parks, open spaces and buildings in order to provide a consistent approach to the delivery of the public realm. There is a need for neighbourhood gathering places, accessibility to public art and multifunctional community spaces. Parks in older communities will need improvement to meet the current needs of residents. There is a requirement for public realm design standards to support the redevelopment of multi-purpose spaces that serve a variety of user groups and are more sustainable. Short-term pilot projects can demonstrate to communities that their opinions can be voiced and that they can make a difference.





A team approach is needed in the approval process from design initiation to maintenance. The approval process requires a team approach from the start of the design process, through approvals, implementation, programming and maintenance of the public realm. These parameters and protocols should be extended to the development process, to capital/infrastructure projects and the redevelopment of existing facilities. Communication within the City, and with relevant stakeholders and the community at large, is fundamental to the creation of a quality public realm. The process should be facilitated through the development and application of comprehensive standards, protocols and approvals.

There is a need to identify priority areas, and target specific funding sources and potential partnerships.

The development of a seamless public realm is reliant on funding commitments for its design, implementation and maintenance within developing and existing communities. Public realm improvements and maintenance must be prioritized by decision makers and the community as essential infrastructure which is as important as paving, sewers and pipes. It is essential that all projects incorporate public realm initiatives in order to create well designed, vibrant and activated public infrastructure. When budgeting for any project, public realm initiatives need to be vital elements within the project scope and all expenditures (such as ongoing maintenance and life cycle) need to be taken into consideration to ensure long-term community enjoyment and pride.



An aerial photograph of a park area. In the foreground, there is a large, irregularly shaped pond. To the right of the pond is a large, multi-story building with a red roof and a green glass facade. Behind the building is a large parking lot filled with cars. To the left of the pond is a playground with blue and red equipment. The park is surrounded by green grass and trees. In the background, there is a multi-lane highway with several cars driving on it.

A Vision for Markham's Public Realm

**A place for all that is engaging,
sustaining and beautiful.**

Markham's public realm is the foundation which enables the spirit of the community to flourish. As we grow from our heritage roots as a town to a great and vibrant city, the public realm is a fundamental component of a successful, sustainable community.



Reviewing Our Existing Spaces: Improving Design, Innovation and Accessibility
Aligning Our Current Policies
Delivering High Quality Public Realm



Creating Lasting Impressions
Showcasing Public Art
Developing Green and Cultural Assets
as Destinations



Maintaining Our Green Assets
Preserving and Enhancing Our
Heritage Assets
Maintaining Our Private and
Public Properties



Improving Partnerships, Sponsorships, and Joint Ventures
Continuing Collaboration, Co-operation and Budget Priority
Exploring Grant, Foundation, Crowd-sourcing, and Charity Opportunities



Updating Current By-laws and Resourcing Events
Interpreting Our City
Engaging Our Community



Markham's Public Realm Strategy

is a plan to ensure that all who
live, work, play, visit and invest
in our city share ownership
and responsibility, and aspire
to create and maintain great
public spaces.



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Our Goals



1. Made in Markham Innovation + Design



Deliver high quality public realm city-wide by applying innovative design standards, comprehensive oversight measures, precise construction practices and thorough inspection processes within our new developments, and capital and redevelopment projects.

2. Keep Markham Beautiful



Support residents, community volunteers and businesses to maintain and beautify private and public properties.

3. Animate Our Neighbourhoods and Districts



Celebrate Markham's cultural diversity and inclusivity by assisting in event organization and promoting community use.

4. Harmonize Our Efforts and Share Our Resources



Increase funding opportunities through public-private partnerships, government grants and private donations. Enhance the collaboration between residents, Business Improvement Area associations, community groups, the City and public agencies. Prioritize the city-wide public realm delivery, improvement and maintenance in the budgeting process.

5. Create Gateways and Destinations



Showcase Markham's unique areas and destinations with beautiful public spaces, great public art, memorable arrivals, and sustaining and engaging neighbourhoods and city districts.





Made in Markham Innovation + Design

Markham is known for its design excellence. In the 90's, the City (then Town) created an Urban Design Department with a Town Architect. Unique to local municipalities, this provided Markham with a focus on great design and city building. Innovation is found throughout the Corporation from our water works and asphalt re-surfacing programs to our award-winning buildings and library systems.

It is important that we continue our high-quality design and innovation within our public realm. The City continues to strive for better design in everything we do from our *2014 Official Plan*, *Greenprint Community Sustainability Plan* and *Accessibility Guidelines* to energy efficient street lights, benches made from recycled material, increased soil volume for our trees and LEED accredited buildings.

This strategy will allow the City to build on the foundation of our current innovation and improve our public realm to reflect that of a world-class city. Reviewing and improving our existing public realm will enhance the sense of pride and ownership of residents within our existing neighbourhoods. Applying innovative design standards, comprehensive oversight measures, precise construction practices and thorough inspection processes to all City projects will ensure the delivery of high quality public realm throughout the City. Raising Council and City staff awareness about the importance of the strategy, including innovation and design, is vital to successful implementation and management of a great public realm. Collaboration and co-operation throughout the organization is key to the delivery of a cohesive, well-designed public realm.

Review Our Existing Spaces: Better Design - Accessible Spaces

Great public realm provides a variety of public spaces that are used and enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities. A comprehensive review of our existing parks, open spaces and public places is essential to identify areas for improvement that respond to the needs of all our residents. The review needs to address the benefits of public realm improvements for the entire community by encouraging inclusion. A renaissance park and open space master plan and a pedestrian masterplan will identify service gaps, opportunities and areas of improvement.

Align Our Current Policies

We have many important documents, including *Building Markham's Future Together* – the City's strategic plan – and the Streetscape Manual, which guide our decision making. It is important that our current policies, guidelines and standards are aligned to achieve a successful public realm. These must be applied consistently throughout our development, capital and redevelopment projects.

Deliver High Quality Public Realm

A great deal of our public realm is being delivered through new developments. It is paramount that we work closely with the community, developers, architects, landscape architects, engineers and planners to ensure our processes deliver the highest quality public realm. Improving our control over the construction and inspection of our public realm is important. Similar controls and protocols need to be applied cross-departmentally to the design, implementation,



inspection and maintenance of capital and redevelopment projects. The importance of a well designed, constructed and maintained public realm must be extended to the various service operators and providers that impact public spaces throughout the City. It is essential

to align our design, construction, maintenance and management standards with these service providers in order to clearly establish expectations and deliverables. The public realm responsibilities for service providers must be clearly established and enforced.

Our Actions:

	Lead Commission	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019+
ACTION 1.1 Continue to engage with the public to determine public realm improvements and priorities.	Community & Fire Services Development Services		↕			↕
ACTION 1.2 Develop a Parks and Public Realm Renaissance Plan for our existing areas to identify gaps and opportunities, and set priorities for the improvement of existing public spaces such as parks and open spaces, heritage assets, and trails and pathways, including connections to and within these public spaces. The plan will provide policies, standards, guidelines and protocols that are consistent with current public realm development.	Community & Fire Services	↕				
ACTION 1.3 Ensure policies and standards used in new developments are aligned with the Public Realm Strategy.	Community & Fire Services Development Services	↕				
ACTION 1.4 Develop a Pedestrian Masterplan to improve the pedestrian network and experience. Identify gaps in the existing sidewalk network, and connections to pathways and trails. Incorporate accessibility guidelines and examine all elements related to the pedestrian experience including lighting, traffic interfaces and crossings. Set priorities for the construction of pedestrian and sidewalk infrastructure across the City to ensure an accessible, safe and walkable community for all ages and abilities.	Development Services		↕			
ACTION 1.5 Update our processes and oversight measures associated with our new developments and capital works projects to improve integration, quality of construction and supervision to ensure these align with the Public Realm Strategy and meet community expectations.	Community & Fire Services Development Services	↕				
ACTION 1.6 Deliver workshops to promote the importance of the public realm and illustrate the community and individual roles that will ensure its success.	Community & Fire Services	↕				↕
ACTION 1.7 Support the implementation of a Design Review Panel for major new development and ensure the mandate of the panel aligns with the Public Realm Strategy.	Development Services Community & Fire Services	↕				↕





Keep Markham Beautiful

Maintenance of both our private and public lands is critical to the success of the public realm. A clean, litter free and well-maintained city provides a positive image, enhances public safety and encourages investment. Markham currently has by-laws to ensure private land owners and businesses maintain their respective properties. The City also has programs to help keep our public spaces cared for and maintained.

This supports and engages current businesses and residents while reinforcing Markham as a vital place to live, work, play and invest.

This supports and engages current businesses and residents while reinforcing Markham as a vital place to live, work, play and invest.



Natural heritage areas such as Milne Park, Toogood Pond and Rouge Park, are valuable public assets that provide natural beauty and habitat diversity. These are places for active uses such as cycling, running and walking, as well as passive uses like meditation, reflection and restoration. It is essential that these natural and environmentally significant areas remain protected and well maintained for current and future users.

Preserving and Enhancing Our Heritage Assets

Cultural heritage resources in our community are fragile and non-renewable. Once lost or diminished, they are gone forever. Protection and maintenance of these resources is an important shared responsibility that provides a legacy that can be passed on to future generations. Our distinctive heritage conservation districts include historic Thornhill, Markham Village, Unionville and Buttonville. District Plans, which include policies and guidelines for restoration, redevelopment, new construction and streetscape improvement, have been adopted to preserve and enhance each district's historic character. These unique areas provide us with a tangible link to our past as well as a sense of continuity in our rapidly changing world. They contribute to an identifiable sense of place that belongs to the entire community. Ensuring ongoing restoration and maintenance of the heritage resources, compatible new developments, complementary streetscapes and public realm investments provides unique places that are attractions and destinations for residents, businesses and visitors. It is another key element required to Keep Markham Beautiful.

Maintaining Our Green Assets

Markham's "environment first" approach to land-use planning ensures that significant natural heritage areas are protected, preserved and enhanced as the City grows.

Maintaining Our Private and Public Properties

An essential component to a successful city is having clean, safe, well-maintained public and private spaces. There are numerous by-laws that deal with the maintenance of various property standards and tree preservation, and programs that provide support

to plant trees. It is important that everyone who lives, works and visits here understands their role in keeping the City clean, safe and tidy. Everything from picking up litter, mowing grass, and planting trees and flowers, to keeping driveways, sidewalks, walkways and areas surrounding shops and businesses clear of snow, ice and debris year-round contributes to a great public realm.

Our Actions:

	Lead Commission	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019+
ACTION 2.1 Develop a Maintenance Standards Manual to determine sustainable maintenance strategies for parks, open spaces, public spaces, roads, streetscapes, etc.	Community & Fire Services			↕	↕	
ACTION 2.2 Develop a Public Awareness Campaign to reduce litter and keep the City clean.	Community & Fire Services	↕	↕			
ACTION 2.3 Continue to raise awareness within businesses, BIA's and various user groups about the value of public realm and their role in maintaining and improving it.	Community & Fire Services	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕
ACTION 2.4 Continue to develop and nurture the value of public and private maintenance and the Keep Markham Beautiful (Maintenance), Property Standards and Tree Preservation By-laws and promote the value of landscaping.	Corporate Services Community & Fire Services		↕	↕	↕	
ACTION 2.5 Conduct a Public Realm Maintenance Review Study to determine sustainable long-term maintenance strategies that reduce the financial impacts of maintenance programs on current and future asset based budgets (life cycle). The study will identify and examine the feasibility of alternate funding opportunities.	Community & Fire Services			↕	↕	
ACTION 2.6 Develop a streetscape renewal plan for Main Street Unionville based on the Main Street Unionville Community Vision Plan (2014).	Development Services			↕	↕	
ACTION 2.7 Continue to fund financial assistance programs for privately owned heritage building exteriors including the Commercial Façade Improvement grants and the Designated Heritage Property grants.	Development Services	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕
ACTION 2.8 Review City of Markham Sign By-law.	Corporate Services	↕	↕			





Animate Our Neighbourhoods and Districts

A successful public realm is one that is lively. Animation can happen through programmed sports fields, bike paths, open spaces for outdoor fitness classes and storytelling, and spaces for people to relax, participate in festivals, have picnics or quietly reflect under a big shady tree.

Our spaces need to be designed and maintained to facilitate a multitude of uses at various scales . These range from a single meditative use in a local park, to Canada Day celebrations in Milne Park, and events and festivals at the Markham Civic Centre. Engaging the community in the design and programming will ensure our spaces are channels to celebrate Markham's cultural diversity and inclusivity, and respond to community needs. By providing assistance in event organization, our community builds a strong sense of ownership and shared responsibility of the public realm.



Informing Design and Wayfinding

Our spaces need to be designed to reflect the desires of the local people who use them most. These residents can be the best source of ideas for what will work. 8-80 Cities, a not-for-profit public space advocate in Toronto, discusses the importance of both “Hardware” and “Software” to animate and activate public spaces. “Hardware” is the physical design and infrastructure that is provided, while “Software” is the programming that is implemented. Paving, seating, trash

receptacles, grass fields are examples of “Hardware”. Music to hear, food to eat, history to experience and games to play are examples of “Software”. Activities can be unique to that particular spot and should be interesting enough to keep people coming back. Ideas that revolve around innovative seating such as moveable chairs, microclimate enhancements such as shade umbrellas, and activities that encourage the use of public spaces, need to be incorporated within our public realm. Successful communities need residents to be engaged in the design, delivery, programming and maintenance of their public spaces. Wayfinding within neighbourhoods and within Markham is another element to help animate and connect our spaces.

Engaging Our Community

Awareness of use and animation within public spaces is important. Animated spaces are safe and exciting, and support the character and identity of their neighbourhoods. Initiatives to engage the community around the type of programming and events they would like to see need to be developed. It is important to work with all interested parties to identify which areas in their community are important to them, what activities they would like to see, and then evaluate the ways in which these activities can be implemented. Established programs and events will be audited on a regular basis to evaluate respective roles and responsibilities, funding, expectations and return on investment.

Updating Current By-laws

In order to enable public users to animate our neighbourhoods, it is essential that residents understand the full range of opportunities and the respective

protocols for the use of public space. It is critical to engage the public in the review or creation of by-laws. By-laws may need to be created to include uses that have not been considered and updated for changes to existing uses. This goes hand-in-hand with raising awareness among residents and businesses about their responsibilities and obligations related to their use of the public realm. It is also incumbent on our internal protocols to provide clear, streamlined processes for various use permits for all public spaces.

Interpreting Our City

Animating our City involves educating our citizens about our resources. It is important that users are able to clearly understand the nature of our public realm. Interpretive signage, use of technology through QR codes, and themed walks/presentations provide ways of unlocking the rich natural, historical and cultural tapestry that Markham offers.

Community Gardens / Growing in the Park

Community gardens, as identified in the *Greenprint Community Sustainability Plan*, are important elements of the public realm. Markham has established a draft Community and Allotment Garden Manual. It is based on Greenprint recommendations on the importance of the social, cultural and environmental benefits of providing an interactive opportunity to grow food locally. The importance of community gardens is reinforced by the York Region and Markham Food Charters. It is important to refine the draft documents specifically regarding the protocol and methodologies

for site selection, design and implementation of the community and allotment gardens within Markham neighbourhoods. Underutilized spaces should be reviewed and identified with a focus on areas where there are limited opportunities for residents to grow their own gardens. Community gardens can be integrated at various scales within parks and open spaces while addressing the appropriate services, spatial relationships and support infrastructure.

Resourcing Events

Cultural and community events are an integral part of Markham's public realm, and the City has a long history of hosting and supporting events and festivals. These events enhance the quality of life and provide significant value to residents and visitors by showcasing the inclusiveness and values of the community. Part of the City's mandate is to encourage the engagement, inclusion and integration of diverse communities, as well as to promote and celebrate the arts, our culture and our diversity. As the population increases, the demand for more events increases. Markham will continue to support festivals and events as part of our commitment to community engagement, but resources are limited. A balance between the City's input and the public's input will be required to ensure future success.



Our Actions:

	Lead Commission	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019+
ACTION 3.1 Implement short-term pilot projects that demonstrate a vibrant and animated public realm in neighbourhoods based upon community engagement work with 8-80 Cities.	Community & Fire Services Development Services					
ACTION 3.2 Develop a Festival and Event Resource Plan that identifies funding, fee schedules and the City's role to assist with community events and festivals. Establish a protocol for review and audit of event proposals to evaluate expectations and return on investment.	Corporate Services					
ACTION 3.3 Align existing beautification programs to focus on community improvements by the community and through partnerships.	Community & Fire Services					
ACTION 3.4 Promote the installation of permanent heritage interpretive signage throughout the City by encouraging developers and community organizations to utilize the 'Markham Remembered' interpretive plaque concept or develop new interpretive signage that celebrates and commemorates Markham's cultural heritage, its environment or its people. Current significant events and people in our community will also be recognized in order to animate the public realm.	Community & Fire Services Development Services					
ACTION 3.5 Review and update our permitting processes and by-laws to facilitate greater animation of our public spaces with things like patios, food trucks, and private events and picnicking in parks.	Corporate Services Community & Fire Services					
ACTION 3.6 Develop a Public Realm Promotional Guide for the community that highlights elements of this document and the Strategy and encourages people to get involved. It will include a toolkit to assist community groups with organizing and managing community events and festivals in the public realm.	Corporate Services Community & Fire Services					
ACTION 3.7 Complete the draft Community and Allotment Garden Manual. Refine the protocols and methodologies for site selection, design and implementation of community and allotment gardens within neighbourhoods.	CAO's Office Community & Fire Services					
ACTION 3.8 Promote the installation of interpretive signs in naturalized areas to help educate residents and visitors.	Community & Fire Services					



Harmonize Our Efforts and Share Our Resources

A common concern in Markham is limited funding for public realm projects. While the City supports high quality public realm development, Markham must maximize its potential through partnerships. Currently, many different agencies and stakeholders are investing in Markham's public realm. The benefits extend across the entire City. Further investment in the public realm rests on raising community awareness on its benefits, recognizing partnership opportunities and setting clear practices for investment.

Improving BIA Partnerships

In great cities around the world, Business Improvement Area (BIA's) associations promote, contribute to and enjoy the benefits of their public realm. Markham needs to work closely with our BIA's to enhance their contribution to the public realm. This includes fostering and nurturing current relationships while examining the formation of other BIA associations within other parts of the City.

Corporate Sponsorships and Joint Venture Strategy

Markham has long-standing relationships with corporate groups. These are typically either project or event specific and can be direct or indirect relationships. Investment has been in the form of direct funding or volunteer work efforts to support projects. Ceremonial tree plantings, Trees for Tomorrow tree

plantings, and Adopt-a-Park have all benefited from either direct funding or volunteer efforts from our corporate partners. Corporate initiatives such as office expansions, new locations and achievements are often celebrated through community events and/or project involvement. Markham needs to work closely with corporate and community partners to identify and maximize joint venture public realm opportunities and programs that are engaging for residents and the local workforce. An organized and unified approach should be developed to maximize our opportunities and minimize the duplication of requests.

Community Groups

Markham has long-standing relationships with community and service groups. Markham has 48 ratepayers' associations and numerous service clubs that provide local input to the management and programming of our public realm. A strong volunteer ethic based within these organizations provides invaluable time and effort in the stewardship of their public realm. Their efforts range from community tree planting events, park clean ups, maintenance of local skating rinks, to organizing festivals and events of all levels that engage residents and strengthen communities. Markham needs to nurture these relationships and leverage the abilities and capabilities of these volunteers for continued participation in the development, maintenance and animation of our public realm.

Matching Grant / Community Foundation

Markham needs to examine various corporate and community funding strategies that could be used for public realm projects. Governmental agency funding,



grassroots community foundations, and corporate, personal and memorial donations should be explored. In addition, current BIA relationships should be examined in order to identify potential funding initiatives that may be available or that can be leveraged with support.

Continuing Collaboration and Co-operation

Within Markham's civic organization, projects are ongoing within the public realm. The City must continue to co-operation efforts to ensure all affected business units are consulted and their expertise used.

It is essential that the design, implementation and maintenance of public realm initiatives within capital works and redevelopment projects are prioritized and supported with appropriate funding.



Exploring Partnerships and Different Funding Opportunities

The public sector is facing aging infrastructure, population growth and budget constraints. One example of a unique funding partnership is called Public-Private Partnerships (P3s). This type of initiative maximizes the expertise of both the private and public sector to expand the number and scale of infrastructure investments for public benefit. P3s are an alternative approach to fund and implement projects within a municipality. Some other partnership models include grants, loans, bonds, sales tax, philanthropy, corporate sponsorship, foundations, friends groups, crowd funding, earned income and concessions, user fees, special uses, concerts, TIF (tax incremental financing), BIA contributions, and developer incentives.

Budget Priority

The success of the public realm is dependent on the support and priority provided by civic leadership. Budget and funding for public realm project development, implementation and maintenance must become a priority for our community. It is an essential component of making Markham into a world-class city and demands our focus and support within the budget process. By doing so, we establish ourselves as a leader when we approach corporate partners, and Federal or Provincial stakeholders for funding partnerships.

Our Actions:

	Lead Commission	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019+
ACTION 4.1 Encourage the City's BIA's to review their current roles and relationships, and explore how they can contribute to the public realm.	Corporate Services Community & Fire Services		↕			
ACTION 4.2 Explore the opportunity to establish new BIA associations within other parts of the City to assist with ongoing contribution to the public realm.	Corporate Services Community & Fire Services		↕			
ACTION 4.3 Increase funding opportunities through joint-venture public realm projects between BIA associations, developers, community groups, public agencies, sponsorship around crowd-sourcing, grants, community foundations, private donations and philanthropy.	Community & Fire Services Development Services		↕	↕		
ACTION 4.4 Build on the efforts of the cross-commission team created to develop this strategy by investigating the formalization of a city-wide Public Realm Review and Implementation Team. Establish a cross-jurisdiction review team, and review and approval protocols.	Community & Fire Services Development Services	↕	↕			
ACTION 4.5 Improve the financing of new and redevelopment capital projects by ensuring the required budgets include appropriate business units and costs, and that the Public Realm Strategy and desired elements are included at the design stage with implementation.	Community & Fire Services Development Services		↕	↕		





Create Gateways and Destinations

A great public realm creates memorable gateways and destinations within our City that provide lasting impressions for visitors and Markham residents. Our public realm defines our City and distinguishes our neighbourhoods. The expression of the public realm is critical in 'placemaking', and supports the development of civic identity and pride. Residents and visitors to Markham should immediately recognize our community as they enter our city limits and move throughout our neighbourhoods.

Creating Lasting Impressions

Gateways can provide day and night interest, as well as express the City's dynamic, creative and rapidly evolving nature. They can include architecture, natural features, and public art. Highly visible structures can be designed with a themed approach to provide way-finding cues, aid navigation and present a positive image of the City. Gateways are important to differentiate Markham from its neighbours and assist in creating a sense of pride and ownership of the City.

Showcasing Public Art

Public art brings value to Markham by providing unique and interesting experiences that delight residents and visitors. Markham has a vision for the establishment of a robust public art program. Cities across North America have proven that public art

increases the economic value of a development project by generating public interest. The City of Markham's Public Art Policy supports the display of public art within the public realm and within private and public development projects. Working together with public and private sectors, Markham encourages the inclusion of public art within our public spaces. This will give Markham a strong identity and sense of place. Public art can create destinations, places people want to visit, and unique experiences people want to have again and again.

Developing Green Assets as Destinations

Markham's "environment first" approach to land-use planning ensures that significant natural heritage areas are protected, preserved and enhanced as the City grows. These natural heritage areas are valuable public assets that provide destinations. For example, Rouge Park in Markham is located along the Rouge and Little Rouge rivers forming part of a larger inter-regional and inter-jurisdictional parks system. The park is a significant ecological area extending from the mouth of the Rouge River in Toronto into Pickering and Markham, with approximately 1,540 hectares located in Markham. The City has been an active participant in the management of Rouge Park lands since the Rouge Park formed in the early 1990s. The federal government has made a commitment to support the creation of the Rouge National Urban Park.



Identifying Cultural Assets as Destinations

There are destinations within the City that draw people to Markham and others that draw residents. Markham's cultural sites - Markham Museum, the Varley Art Gallery of Markham and Flato Markham Theatre are essential arts and cultural destinations that connect our

visitors, residents and businesses with the City. Areas such as Unionville and Markham Village heritage districts also function as "museums of the street" and are major cultural attractions. Markham offers unique shopping and dining opportunities that have arisen from the expression of our rich cultural diversity. Unique festivals and events are already celebrated throughout the year. These aspects need to be celebrated and promoted to our residents and potential visitors alike.



Our Actions

	Lead Commission	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019+
ACTION 5.1 Showcase Markham's unique areas and destinations with beautiful public spaces, great public art and memorable gateways, sustaining and engaging neighbourhoods, city districts and public engagement.	Community & Fire Services Development Services		↔			↔
ACTION 5.2 Develop a Gateway Masterplan to ensure people arriving and leaving the City feel a sense of pride and identity that distinguishes Markham from surrounding municipalities. This may include minor gateways within the City.	Community & Fire Services Development Services		↔	↔		
ACTION 5.3 Continue to promote the City's public art program and encourage developers, businesses and residents to participate.	Community & Fire Services	↔				↔
ACTION 5.4 Develop a masterplan for the Civic Centre lands to enhance the public realm opportunities.	Development Services Community & Fire Services	↔	↔			
ACTION 5.5 Develop promotional material to market our unique destinations and areas to both visitors and residents.	Corporate Services Community & Fire Services		↔	↔		↔
ACTION 5.6 Develop an Interpretive Walk in historic Markham, Unionville and Thornhill Villages to celebrate specific historical sites and events with on-street interpretive panels plus online audio and visual components offering additional information.	Development Services Community & Fire Services	↔				↔



Community Engagement Process



Residents are the experts when it comes to Markham's neighbourhoods. They are the ones who live, work, and play in Markham's parks, public spaces, community centres and streets. The City of Markham worked closely with 8-80 Cities in fall 2014 to engage residents about Markham's public realm. This community engagement process was used to raise public awareness about the importance of Markham's public realm and solicit feedback from them about what they like, don't like and would like to see changed in Markham's public realm. Most importantly, residents shared their vision for the future of Markham's public realm by identifying its existing strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

Residents know their communities best and they possess a great deal of creativity, knowledge and know-how about the public spaces in their neighbourhoods. The great diversity of people and perspectives in any community is its greatest resource. Finding creative ways to "tap into the collective brain" is the first step in creating a public realm that is people-focused, people-friendly and fun. The engagement sessions were supplemented with site visits, during which 8-80 Cities staff carried out observational exercises and analysis to gauge the level of safety, activity, and vibrancy of Markham's streets, sidewalks, parks, and public spaces.

Building on Markham's existing assets and improving the public realm will require full community buy-in and support. Hosting inclusive and empowering community engagement activities is an effective strategy for developing the sense of ownership and support that will enable the City of Markham to create collaborative solutions to public realm challenges.

Our Process

Through community meet and greets held at community centres throughout Markham, community meetings/workshops and public realm information sessions at large-scale Markham events, the City and 8-80 Cities spoke to residents and stakeholders of all ages, abilities and ethnicities across the entire city.

Stakeholders invited to participate at community workshops included members of ratepayers' organizations representing neighbourhoods across the city, Business Improvement Area association representatives, local service club members, youth groups and members of the arts and cultural sectors. Refer to **Appendix 6** for a summary of the findings.

Integration into the Public Realm Strategy

The findings from the public engagement process are integrated into Markham's Public Realm Strategy. These findings help the City to determine the priority of actions in achieving our goals. Refer to the "Our Actions" matrices for details.

The community engagement process has shown that infrastructure investments (Hardware) are just as important to Markham's residents as events and ongoing programming (Software). To effectively design and program a space, the internal City departments working on public realm improvement issues must be in sync and initiatives must be collaborative.





Appendices



APPENDIX 1	Current Public Realm Programs, Festivals and Events
APPENDIX 2	Current Public Realm Policies, Guidelines and Standards
APPENDIX 3	Best Practices
APPENDIX 4	City Resources
APPENDIX 5	Ratepayers' Groups – ALSO SEE 8-80'S "Community Engagement Report"
APPENDIX 6	Community Engagement Summary





Appendix 1

Current Public Realm Programs, Festivals and Events

Leash Free Markham Committee

The Committee is responsible for overseeing all off-leash dog parks established under guidelines approved by the City of Markham. They also review proposals for new off-leash dog parks in the City. The community is encouraged to consider new leash-free areas following set guidelines.

Rouge National Urban Park

Recognizing the Rouge Valley's potential in the eastern sector of the Greater Toronto Area holds an abundance of natural and cultural treasures within easy reach of 20 per cent of the nation's population, Parks Canada is looking to seize the opportunity as a "people's park" to protect this unique urban space. Guided hikes and interpretive programs have encouraged residents to explore and appreciate the park.

Keep Markham Beautiful Program

This program encourages residents and businesses to take pride in their properties and public spaces. The Keep Markham Beautiful By-law states that boulevards and front yards must be kept tidy and maintained on a regular basis.

Adopt-a-Park Program

Community groups are encouraged to help keep our neighbourhood parks beautiful and safe places to enjoy. The City provides cleanup supplies free of charge. This is a great way to get to know the neighbours and neighbourhood. In 2013, 74 groups had adopted their local parks and many of these groups have graduated far beyond their biannual cleanup events. Woodlot rehabilitation, invasive species removal and naturalization plantings are a few examples of ongoing park projects. The Grandview Area Residents Association won the 2010 Communities in Bloom Special Category Award for their multi-year woodlot rehabilitation project.

Volunteer Outside Ice Rink Program

Markham encourages the community to build their own ice rinks in parks. The City provides a water service in mutually agreeable park spaces. To date, 14 communities are involved. It is a great way for residents to be active in their parks and beat the winter blues.

Public Art Program

Public art creates dynamic urban landscapes and contributes to a City's identity. Public art is considered to be a key component of the attractiveness and uniqueness of a city, connecting distinct city centres and neighbourhoods and demonstrating the character of communities. Free and accessible to all, public art emphasizes a city's distinctiveness and makes creative public spaces that enhance the visual quality of a city and engage residents and visitors.

Public Realm Speakers Series

Public Realm talks were held in 2013 to raise awareness and provoke creative thought. Two talks were held – Art in Public Spaces and Gardens with Meaning.

Festivals

Markham is home to many festivals including the Unionville and Markham Village Festivals, Canada Day, Ribfest and the RBC Markham-Milliken Children's Festival. Festivals are an important catalyst to bring people together while celebrating our culture, food and diversity.

Farmers Markets

The Main Street Markham Market, Stiver Mill Market in Unionville and the York Farmers Market in Thornhill, along with private vegetable stands, are ways for residents to access locally grown food.

Colour Your Corner Program

Community groups are encouraged to establish and maintain a perennial plant/flower bed at significant entry corners into their community. The City helps with the design and site preparation, and the community weeds and maintains the bed.

Sustainable Gardens

These perennial and native plant gardens grow every year with no need for annual bed preparation, planting and watering. These plants can give a longer season of colour, and provide pollen, nectar and seeds to feed insects and birds. Twenty-four beds have been planted with perennials so far.

Susie Garden Recognition Program

This program promotes and celebrates beautiful front gardens in Markham, which encourages pride in the public realm. Residents can nominate their own, a neighbour's or a business' garden. A recognition sign is posted for people to enjoy.

Community/Allotment Gardens

Markham currently has seven community gardens with over 100 plots, giving residents the ability to grow food locally.

Hot Summer Nights

This outreach program was initiated in 2012. The goal is to introduce Markham Fire and Emergency Services to the community with one of their fire trucks and fire safety information. The City also provides water and waste management information with the Water on Wheels display.

Library Community Engagement

Markham Public Library has developed numerous partnerships within the community. Working with the Markham Stouffville Hospital, a series of health and wellness programs have been developed at the Cornell location. Film screenings, art displays and talks with local authors, along with the One Book One Markham initiative, have been popular in encouraging literacy and expanding an appreciation for art and culture. Outreach to schools and reading programs for adults and children are also very successful. The Cornell and Milliken Mills Public Libraries offer a seed library where residents can borrow organic, heirloom seeds to plant in their own backyards.





Doors Open Markham

Doors Open is a celebration of community spaces and places. It provides the public with an opportunity to explore unique and sometimes hidden treasures, some of which have never been open to the public. Markham held its first Doors Open in 2003 and since that time, Doors Open Markham has been an annual city-wide event. It is a free event supported by the City, its community partners and local businesses.

Markham Remembered Interpretive Program

Markham has a program for interpreting the rich history and architecture of the City known as “Markham Remembered”. There are over 40 interpretive panels throughout the municipality on both public and private spaces celebrating subjects of cultural heritage value or interest. Many of these panels were obtained as a condition of development application approvals.

Heritage Districts

Each heritage conservation district has a district plan with streetscape/public realm policies and guidelines relevant to the specific district. Many of our heritage districts have received enhanced heritage character streetscapes through community improvement projects, such as the 2013-14 streetscape enhancement project for Main Street Markham. Streetscapes have been enhanced with special lighting, street furniture

and boulevard/sidewalk improvements. All our districts also have unique district street name and entry/identification signage complete with a district logo and colour scheme to help further identify these special areas in our community. Commercial signage in districts is also enhanced through the Sign By-law to ensure heritage-friendly signage on both public and private properties.

Heritage Financial Assistance

Through financial assistance programs offered by Markham, heritage resources and the public realm are improved for the benefit of the community. Grant assistance is available to restore or replicate features on designated properties, to restore or improve exterior facades on commercial properties, and to replace inappropriate commercial signage in heritage districts.

Markham Heritage Estates

Markham is home to Canada's first heritage subdivision. Markham Heritage Estates is a unique environment created through a public/private partnership that attracts both local residents and visitors. This is a subdivision of last resort for threatened heritage buildings that cannot be retained on their original sites. The buildings are restored as private residences and individual property landscapes are created appropriate to the restoration period.

Appendix 2

Current Public Realm Policies, Guidelines and Standards

Markham's 2014 Official Plan

It is the policy of Council to:

6.1.1.3 Support the integration of the planning and development of the built form and public realm with land use and transportation planning, and municipal infrastructure projects to improve connectivity of neighbourhoods, mixed-use and employment areas, and the Greenway System.

6.1.1.5 Develop comprehensive urban design guidelines to guide new development and redevelopment to achieve a public realm consisting of streets and boulevards, open spaces and parks providing places for shared use and community interactions.

6.1.2.1 Support the development of a public realm that will contribute to the urban form and function of Markham's communities by creating safe, accessible, and comfortable spaces and places that enrich the urban experience.

6.1.2.2 Design and organize the public spaces as places of shared use; place priority on pedestrians, cycling and transit; contribute to place-making; and ensure consistency in quality and design.

6.1.2.3 Define the streets, blocks, buildings and structures, and public spaces that support the public realm based on their functional requirements. Then locate and configure them to enhance the safety, accessibility and attractiveness of Markham's communities.

6.1.2.4 Incorporate natural and cultural heritage features, landmark buildings, open spaces, streetscapes and view corridors, and public art that contributes to the overall sense of identity of Markham's neighbourhoods, heritage districts and business parks.

Integrated Leisure Master Plan

This plan was approved by Markham Council in 2010. It identified that parks and open spaces are very important to residents and that there is a need to build community identity and social connectivity. Self-scheduled, unorganized and non-traditional outdoor activities (such as walking and cricket) are of growing interest, along with the development of more social gathering areas.

Building Markham's Future Together (BMFT)

This long-term strategic plan highlights ways to make Markham a more diverse inclusive, safe and active city. It strives to maintain and enhance healthy, green, accessible and beautiful communities, while providing excellent services in programming of our public spaces. Citizen input will be sought to ensure the plan reflects and respects the growing and changing needs of Markham's diverse population.





Accessibility Design Guidelines

The City of Markham intends to be a leader in developing accessible environments for all, embracing the principles of universal design and recognizing diversity, barrier removal, provincial directions and changing demographics. The Guidelines build on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) that lays the framework for the development of province-wide mandatory standards on accessibility in all areas of daily life including employment, transportation and design of public spaces.

Culture Policy and Plan

The Culture Policy and Plan defined public realm as all privately and publicly owned spaces, indoor and outdoor, which are generally accessible, either visually or physically, to the public free of charge. Also referred to as public places or the public domain, the public realm can be defined as a social space, a forum for discussion and a place to reach consensus.

Pathways & Trails Master Plan

The Pathways and Trails Master Plan sets out the means for improvement and expansion of Markham's trail system to provide a wide range of leisure, learning and healthy lifestyle opportunities for Markham residents. With the intention to improve walking and off road cycling routes, the master plan identifies a City-wide off road pathway and trail system that connects destinations within Markham. The plan also sets out design guidelines and standards to achieve objectives.

Public Art Policies

The City of Markham's Public Art Policies support the display of public art in the public realm within private and public development projects. Public art that creates a landmark or a gateway builds a sense of place and an identity for Markham and its neighbourhoods, brings people together, and engages people through thoughts. In 2012, Council approved two Public Art Policies – one for municipal projects and one for private sector projects. These policies will help to bring more public art to Markham's public places and municipal buildings, and encourage the private sector to do the same. There are many opportunities for community art creation, donations of artwork and commissions for art. We have a highly dynamic, talented and multicultural community. Increasing the presence of art in our community is a means to recognize and celebrate our local talent and engage all residents as we beautify our public space. Our public art policies help to create opportunities for Markham residents and visitors to be enriched by our community's heritage and diverse culture.

York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership (PCMP)

In June 2007, York Regional Council endorsed the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program. Through this Program, York Region covers up to 50 per cent of the eligible construction cost for qualifying local municipal and agency pedestrian and cycling projects that contribute to meeting sustainable objectives of the Region's Official Plan, Transportation

Master Plan, and Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan. The Program, which has an annual capital budget of \$500,000, supports the development of a regional scale, commuter walking and cycling infrastructure network. Since its launch, the Program has contributed a total of over \$1.1 million to five projects within the City of Markham including multi-use pathways and trails on Major Mackenzie Drive (two phases), Warden Avenue, and the Rouge River Valley area (two phases). These projects help to create an attractive and vibrant public realm, improve mobility and promote sustainable communities.

York Region Best Practices for Planning Centres and Corridors (Sept. 2013)

The Best Practices for Planning Centres and Corridors is a compilation of innovative approaches to overcoming some of the key challenges to implementing the vision for centres and corridors. The public realm is an important aspect of creating vibrant, healthy and successful regional centres and corridors. Innovative approaches to planning and implementing streets and open spaces, and a high quality of design in our communities are encouraged.

Section 2.2 Streets – highlights best practices for designing vibrant, active streets such as the use of complete street policies, context sensitive design and streetscaping master plans.

Section 2.4 Open Space – highlights best practices for establishing a network of open spaces, such as the development of comprehensive municipal park strategies and encouraging creativity in open space design.

Section 2.9 Place-Making – highlights best practices for establishing design excellence including taking a form based approach to zoning, establishing comprehensive design guidelines, establishing a design review panel and creating incentives for design excellence

York Region Transit Oriented Development Guidelines (Sept. 2006)

York Region's Transit Oriented Development Guidelines aim to create an urban form adjacent to public transit services that is transit supportive, pedestrian-friendly and well-designed. These guidelines support the implementation of the Regional Centres and Corridors, and supports current and future investments in rapid transit infrastructure.



Appendix 3 Best Practices

The best practice review identified several key public realm planning tools.

Physical Inventory

To provide a foundation for public realm planning, many municipalities identify and map the existing system of public realm spaces. This information provides a basis for a future public realm framework and for the development of public realm standards that are specific to the municipality.

Policy Framework

Policy guides the future; developing public realm policy ensures that as new development occurs, the public realm is enhanced based on the objectives of the Public Realm Strategy.

Planning Inventory

Because the public realm involves such a wide range of community resources, the majority of municipalities conduct an overview of plans that impact the public realm. The public realm planning inventory facilitates a coordinated approach to public realm planning across multidisciplinary practices.

Consultation

The public realm is the heart of the community. A community consultation process can help to ensure that the future public realm meets the needs of the public.

Visioning Framework

A visioning framework identifies the vision, goals and objectives that set the direction for future public realm development. This framework also helps to guide the completion of the plan towards achieving long-term goals for the future public realm.

Physical Framework

Identifying and mapping both the existing and future public realm spaces outlines where the municipality should focus development efforts for a complete public realm system or framework.

Action Plan

An action plan provides the next steps for public realm development and details how the plan objectives will be achieved.

Design Guidelines

For new and/or improved public realm spaces, design guidelines set the standards for development based on planning objectives and/or community consultations to ensure that each space meets the needs of the community.

Demonstration Projects

The significance of public realm improvements can be difficult to visualize; demonstration projects show what public realm development could look like based on the direction of the strategy.

Management Recommendations

How the public realm is dealt with in practice can be a complicated process. Since the public realm is a complex and multidisciplinary field, many municipalities provide management recommendations to ensure that strategy, actions and directions are implemented.

Funding Recommendations

As cities face limited budgets, some plans suggest potential opportunities for funding of public realm projects, including public and private options.

In Markham, each of these planning tools may be applied as part the Public Realm Strategy or as part of future public realm development efforts.



Appendix 4 City Resources

Ratepayers' Groups

Citizens dedicated to representing the interests of residents in Markham have formed Ratepayers' Groups with their neighbours. A current listing of Ratepayers Groups is available at markham.ca.

Ratepayer Associations

Citizens interested in forming a ratepayers' group can find information and forms related to Establishing a New Ratepayers Group online at markham.ca.

Mapping

Interactive maps help you locate facilities and amenities, business areas and vacant land within Markham's borders.

- [City of Markham Street Guide Map](#)
- [Navigate Markham Map](#)
- [Parks and Pathways Map](#)
- [Roads Map](#)
- [Vacant Land Map](#)
- [Ward Map](#)

Please visit the [Interactive Maps](#) section at markham.ca.

Markham Heritage

Our cultural heritage is a major part of what makes Markham unique. Cultural heritage resources can take many different forms:

- buildings and structures;
- streetscapes and landscapes;
- cemeteries and archaeological sites; and
- documents, photographs and artifact collections.

Our cultural heritage resources tell us who we are, where we have come from and what we have accomplished. For additional information, please visit the Heritage section at markham.ca.

Varley Art Gallery

The Varley Art Gallery of Markham features frequently changing exhibitions from the permanent collection as well as historical contemporary exhibitions drawn from local, national and international sources. New ways of seeing and appreciating art are enhanced through a broad range of dynamic hands-on art-related activities, including group tours, school programs, studio workshops and lectures, and children's seasonal programs and camps designed to appeal to audiences of all ages and interests. For additional information on events and programs, please visit varleyartgallery.ca.

Markham Museum

Since 1971, Markham Museum has offered a unique family and educational experience, on 25 acres of parkland, featuring over 20 historic buildings. Representing the main themes of settlement, as it relates to the environment, and the technologies used



to adapt to life, the Museum's many quality programs focus on the ongoing growth of our community. The Museum's exhibitions and events also aim to engage the community as a whole and attracts over 50,000 visitors to Markham and the Greater Toronto Area each year. For additional information on programs and events, please visit markhammuseum.ca.

Flato Markham Theatre

Flato Markham Theatre is one of Canada's premier theatre houses serving the GTA and Markham residents. With over 300 live performances each year, the Theatre presents a performance calendar that showcases the cultural diversity of the community. Live theatre, concerts, comedy shows and family entertainment provide an ever-changing array of performing arts. Flato Markham Theatre continues to honour respected international artists and Canadian talent in performances offered throughout its annual Diamond Series professional entertainment season held September through May each year. For more information related to events and programs, please visit markhamtheatre.ca.

Recreation Services

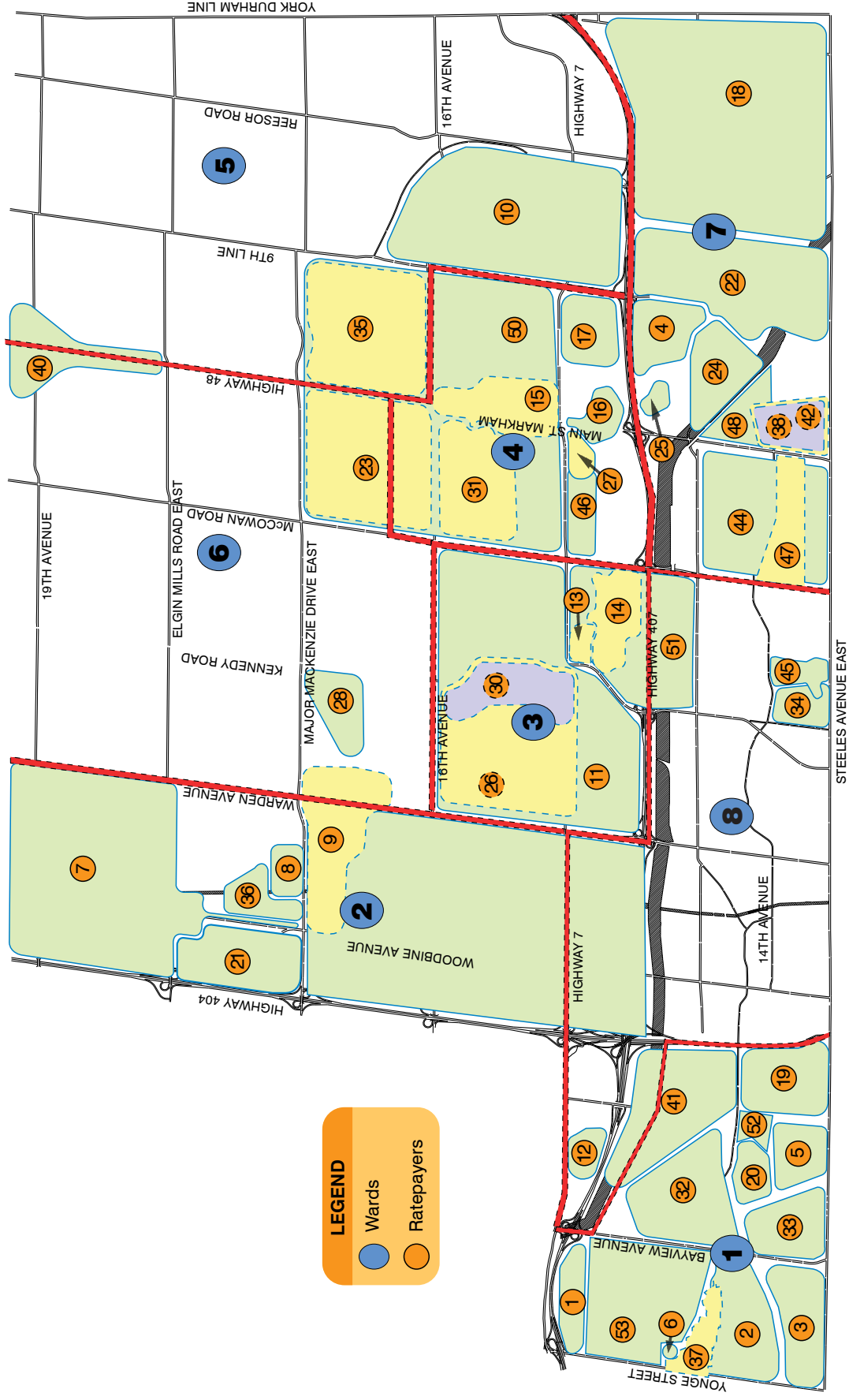
Recreation Services has many events, activities, programs and opportunities for community participation. They are constantly reviewing and adjusting their programs to help enrich the community experience for everyone who calls Markham home. For additional information on Community Centres, locations, hours of operations and programs, please visit the Recreation & Culture section at markham.ca

Markham Public Library

The Libraries support the dreams and aspirations of all members of the community, nourishing growing minds, refreshing the human spirit, and celebrating the power of reading and information to change lives and enrich leisure time. The Markham Public Library offers a wide range of programs for all age groups. For additional information, branch locations, hours of operation and programs, please visit markhampubliclibrary.ca.



Appendix 5 Markham Ratepayers' Groups





- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | Langstaff Community Association Inc. | 28. | Angus Glen Ratepayers Association |
| 2. | Ward 1 (South) Thornhill Residents Inc. | 30. | Unionville Villagers Association |
| 3. | Grandview Area Residents Association | 31. | Raymerville Ratepayers Association |
| 4. | Legacy Community Ratepayers Association Inc. | 32. | Aileen-Willowbrook Ratepayers Association Inc. |
| 5. | Bayview Country Club Estates Ratepayers Association | 33. | Bayview Glen Residents Association |
| 6. | Cricklewood Ratepayers Association | 34. | Milliken Mills East Ratepayers Association |
| 7. | Victoria Square Ratepayers Association | 35. | Greensborough Community Ratepayers Association |
| 8. | Jennings Gate Ratepayers Association | 36. | Victoria Manor Community Association |
| 9. | Devil's Elbow Ratepayers Association | 37. | Thornhill Conservation District Ratepayers Association |
| 10. | Cornell Ratepayers Association | 38. | Cedarwood Community Association |
| 11. | Unionville Ratepayers Association | 40. | Dickson Hill Hamlet & Neighbourhood Community Association |
| 12. | Leitchcroft Ratepayers Association | 41. | Leslie Street Thornhill Ratepayers Association |
| 13. | Village Green Ratepayers Association | 42. | Cedarwood Tamil Community Association |
| 14. | South Unionville Community Association (SUCA) | 43. | MAGIC - Markham Action Group for Improved Community |
| 15. | Old Markham Village Ratepayers Inc. | 44. | South Markham Residents Association |
| 16. | Vinegar Hill Ratepayers Association | 45. | Aldergrove Ratepayer Association |
| 17. | Sherwood-Amberglen Ratepayers Association | 46. | Sherwood South Ratepayers Community Group |
| 18. | Cedar Grove Community Club | 47. | 14th and Markham Community Association |
| 19. | German Mills Ratepayers' Association Inc. | 48. | Rouge River Residents' Association |
| 20. | Bayview Fairways Ratepayers Association | 49. | Buttonville Residents Association |
| 21. | Cathedraltown Community Ratepayers Association | 50. | Markham Village City Ratepayers Association |
| 22. | Box Grove Community Association | 51. | South Unionville Resident Forum |
| 23. | Wismer Ratepayers Association | 52. | Settlers Park Residents Association (SPRA) |
| 24. | Rouge Fairways Residents Association | 53. | Thornhill Green Ratepayers Association |
| 25. | Rouge River Estates Residents Association | | |
| 26. | Unionville Historical Society | | |
| 27. | Boyington Heights Ratepayers Association | | |

Appendix 6 Community Engagement Process

PUBLIC REALM



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Residents are the experts when it comes to Markham's neighbourhoods.

They are the ones who live, work, and play in Markham's parks, public spaces, community centres and streets. 8-80 Cities worked closely with the City of Markham in Fall 2014 to engage residents about Markham's public realm. This community engagement process was used to educate the public about the importance of Markham's public realm and solicit feedback from the public about what they like, don't like and would like to see changed in Markham's Public Realm. Most importantly, residents shared their vision for the future of Markham's public realm by identifying its existing strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

8-80 cities

8-80 Cities is a non-profit organization based in Toronto, Canada. We are dedicated to contributing to the transformation of cities into places where people can walk, bike, access public transit, and visit vibrant parks and public places.



Our approach is to engage communities at all levels and across multiple sectors to inspire the creation of cities that are easily accessible, safe and enjoyable for everyone. We have working experience in urban areas across Canada, the United States, Latin America, Europe, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand.

Our Method

By taking a 'go-to-them' approach, we ensured that the community engagement process was as welcoming and inclusive as possible. Community engagement events were hosted at community centres and other public facilities throughout Markham. At these meetings, 8-80 Cities and the City spoke to residents and stakeholders of all ages, abilities and ethnicities.

Three methods of engagement were used:

1

Engaging the public at large-scale community events

The City of Markham set up information booths and collected survey data at the Markham Children's Festival and Applefest.

2

Community Workshops

8-80 Cities hosted six community workshops with various stakeholders across the city. After a brief introduction to the public realm strategy, 8-80 Cities facilitated interactive activities designed to spark creative and critical thinking in regards to Markham's public realm. Our community engagement activities challenged residents to imagine their ideal public spaces and to determine what elements would create a vibrant public realm in Markham.

3

Community Meet and Greets

8-80 Cities and the City hosted four Meet & Greets to collect resident feedback from the broader public. These events took place in community centre lobbies during peak hours. 8-80 Cities and City of Markham staff (including translators) engaged people in casual conversations about the public realm and invited them to participate in a series of activities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Our community engagement activities are designed to help community members think critically about Markham's public realm and answer questions such as:

- What makes a great place?
- Where are Markham's gathering spaces?
- What are the best places in Markham?
- What is included in Markham's public realm?
- What would you like to see more of?
- What makes Markham a beautiful and vibrant place to live?

Public Realm Activities

All community engagement sessions should be inclusive, interactive, and fun. 8-80 Cities has developed a toolkit of activities to help kick-start the public realm conversation, and to stoke people's imaginations.

Community Hearts 
 Community Pylons 
 Public Realm Scrapbooking 
 Public Realm Surveys 

These activities were used during the workshops, Meet & Greets and large-scale community events. The results and findings presented in this report were collected at the following events:

- Centennial Community Centre Meet & Greet | Nov 20, 2014
- Thornhill Community Centre Meet & Greet | Nov 14, 2014
- Angus Glen Community Centre Meet & Greet | Nov 7, 2014
- Milliken Mills Community Centre Meet & Greet | Nov 6, 2014
- Markham East Ratepayers Associations Workshop | Oct 30, 2014
- Business Improvement Associations Workshop | Oct 29, 2014
- Central Markham Ratepayers Association Workshop | Oct 28, 2014
- Thornhill Ratepayers Associations Workshop | Oct 23, 2014
- Markham Youth Council Workshop | Oct 22, 2014
- Arts and Culture Organizations Workshop | Oct 21, 2014
- Applefest at Markham Museum | Sept 27, 2014
- Markham Children's Festival | Aug 23, 2014



PUBLIC REALM FEEDBACK ANALYSIS

8-80 Cities staff compiled, categorized, and ranked every idea collected during the community engagement sessions. The ideas were gathered over the course of three and a half months, during which more than 700 residents were engaged. This process yielded hundreds of ideas for improving Markham's public realm.

The ideas were first divided into two broad categories:

Software refer to project ideas that involve events, programming and public space management. We know that people bring more people. Activities that animate and activate the public realm are one of the greatest predictors of park use.



Hardware project ideas include investment in physical infrastructure in the public realm. Great parks offer a balance of natural "green infrastructure" that allow people to absorb natural beauty and tranquility, while also providing the infrastructure to support a variety of uses that serves the needs and desires of the community.



After the ideas were sorted into hardware and software, ideas were further sorted into categories under each activity. The top three categories from each activity are detailed on the following pages.





Community Hearts

Total Responses: 151

This activity asks residents to identify the place(s) in Markham that they feel a sense of belonging, ownership, or special attachment to.

Parks & Public Spaces (34%):

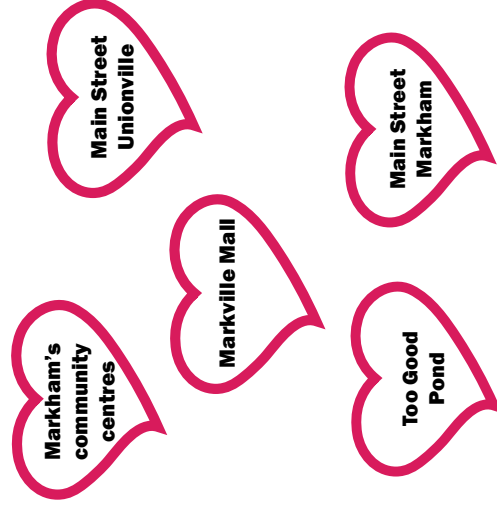
This category includes neighbourhood parks (ie. Berczy Park), as well as larger green spaces that attract visitors from across the city (ie. Pomona Mills Park).

Indoor Public Spaces (29%):

Community centres (58% of category totals), libraries, schools, art gallery, and theatres were chosen.

Private & Commercial Spaces (18%):

Private and Commercial Spaces include semi-public spaces and places that are privately-owned for commercial and/or entertainment purposes (ie. coffee shops, Marville Mall, etc.)



Community Pylons

Total Responses: 136

This activity encourages people to think about places and programs in Markham that could be updated, improved, or made more accessible.

Parks & Public Spaces (41%):

Responses in this category include hardware suggestions for improving the existing parks network (better maintenance, more benches, seating, lighting, greenery), and creating new public spaces.

Transportation & Safer Streets (23%):

Transportation & Safer Streets responses refer to traffic congestion, public transportation, pedestrian safety, sidewalk quality, and cycling networks. Suggestions included better bus shelters and real-time schedule updates.

Development, Politics, other Issues (14%):

Issues in this category related to the development process and municipal politics including concerns over the rapid pace of development in Markham.



Public Realm Scrapbooking

Total Responses: 280

A picture speaks 1,000 words. Using images from global case studies, this activity helps residents think big in regards to hardware and software improvements that they would like to see in Markham.

Parks & Public Spaces (26%):

Activity participants would like to see vibrant, successful and innovative parks and public spaces. Popular images depicted parks with accessible seating, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, and busy playgrounds.

Activities & Software (24%):

Giant chess boards, public art, outdoor concerts, farmers' markets, and yoga in the park were popular images chosen in this category.

Sociality (16%):

Participants want more opportunities to socialize and use Markham's public realm to gather with neighbours and friends.



Creative, active for kids!



Outdoor skating!



Full of energy :)



I love the playgrounds!

Public Realm Survey

Total Responses: 151

Survey results were collected during public events and Meet & Greets.

What makes Markham beautiful?

- Parks, Public Spaces, Nature (39%)
- Diversity, Culture, People (22%)
- Government, Planning, Land Use (18%)

What makes Markham a great place to live?

- Government, Planning, Land Use (35%)
- Diversity, Culture, People (19%)
- Indoor Public Spaces (13%)

What have you seen in other cities that you would like to see in Markham?

- Events & Attractions 37%
- Road & Transit Infrastructure 23%
- Parks, Public Spaces, Nature 17%

What would encourage you to visit Markham's parks more often?

- Activities & Events (21%)
- Greenery/Landscaping (17%)
- Benches/Seating (16%)

What would encourage you to walk more often?

- Greenery/Landscaping (21%)
- Sidewalk Improvement (19%)
- Benches/Seating (13%)

What would encourage you to bike more often?

- Better Connectivity (34%)
- Maintenance (18%)
- Lighting (15%)



Next Steps

How to move from Talking to Doing!

At 8-80 Cities we believe the local residents are a wealth of knowledge when it comes to their public realm. We have heard which elements of the public realm are important to Markham residents. The next step is to speak with residents on a specific public realm location, such as a neighbourhood block, park or other public space.

Below are some recommendations that will help the public realm engagement process move from talking to doing.

1

DETAILED PLACE-BASED PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Using the information gathered in this report, choose specific parks, streets or public spaces and conduct targeted public engagement at the local level. Engage residents to determine exactly what they would like to see, do and plan for in a specific public space with a special focus on how they would like to animate their local public space.

Place-based engagement such as this will also give the City the opportunity to identify community champions that will work with the City to make their local parks and public spaces vibrant and inviting places for all.

2

IMPLEMENT SHORT-TERM PILOT PROJECTS

Pilot projects can be implemented in the short-term and will show the community “quick-wins” that are directly related to community engagement results. Pilot projects can refer to any intervention that is inexpensive and doable in the short-term such as, community gardens, public art, colourful crosswalks, adding a few benches in key areas as well as activities that will animate a park or public space (yoga in the park, buskers and other ‘software’ or events).

3

INTERNAL CITY OF MARKHAM DEPARTMENTAL RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

This community engagement process has shown that ‘hardware’ interventions are just as important to Markham’s residents as ‘software’ interventions. Software such as events and ongoing programming, maintenance and management must be funded in conjunction with investments in public realm ‘hardware’ upgrades and designs. To effectively design and program a space, the internal City departments working on public realm improvement issues must be in-sync and initiatives must be collaborative.



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