



# **Mission Green Ambassador Program: Education and Outreach**

Presented to Markham Council  
November 29, 2005  
Romila Verma, Vice-Chair  
Markham Conservation Committee

# Agenda

- Markham Conservation Committee (MCC)
- Mission Green
- Ambassador Program
- Questions/Concerns on Mission Green
- Positive Comments
- Lessons Learned
- Conclusions
- Acknowledgements

# Markham Conservation Committee

- The MCC is an environmental advisory group
- Its objectives are:
  - to assist Council with the development of resource and environmental initiatives
  - to educate and inform the public about the values of conservation and the role of stewardship in the management of the natural environment
  - to act as an umbrella organization to assist community groups with conservation activities in the Town of Markham
- Through the MCC's Education and Outreach subcommittee, we helped launch the Ambassador program to disseminate information regarding Mission Green to the people of Markham
- The ambassador program was introduced in September, 2004 to help launch the Phase 1 of Mission Green program

# MISSION *Green*

- What is Mission Green?
  - Markham has developed a plan to divert 70% of our waste from landfill
  - To reach its goal, Markham has introduced new initiatives that encourage composting and recycling and discourage landfilling of waste
- A key component of the Mission Green plan is the three-stream collection system
- Three-stream collection means collecting materials in separate ways in order to divert more waste from the landfill



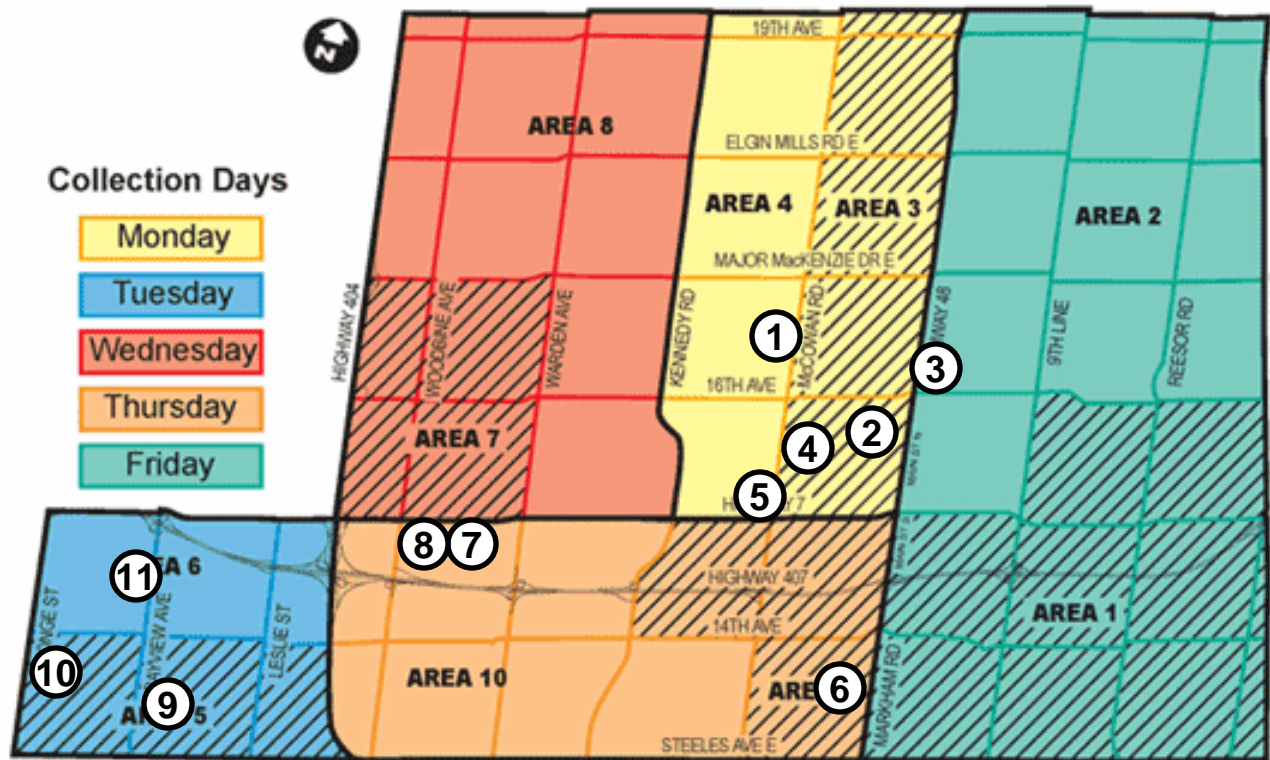
# Ambassador Program

## Objectives:

- To educate and raise awareness about the new garbage collection system in Markham
- To answer any questions or concerns the citizens might have
- To develop an education and outreach model for any environmental initiatives taken by the Town of Markham

# Locations

- Our target audience was female who are largely responsible for garbage disposal in their households



# Information Tables

- Information tables were set up at 11 locations throughout Markham on Saturday, July 2 and Sunday, July 3
- The education tools provided by the Waste Management Department were as follows:
  - Samples of the Mission Green containers
  - Posters
  - Brochures and newsletters explaining about the Mission Green program
  - Fridge magnets
  - Mission Green tattoos for the kids

# Information Table





# Positive Comments

- Based on the reports filed by the Ambassadors, we reached approximately 1500 people over the Canada Day weekend
- Almost everyone who stopped at the information tables saw great value in the Mission Green program
- Most of the residents have been waiting for this program since the launch of Phase 1 and congratulated the town of Markham for being the leader in waste management
- People from out of town wondered when will they have Mission Green available to them
- People were happy to see volunteers from their communities answering questions

# Questions and Concerns on Mission Green

## Questions

1. Confusion regarding the kitchen catcher liners
2. Where to get extra green bins, kitchen-catcher and blue boxes from
3. How to get broken latches in the green bins fixed/replaced
4. Whether the backyard composting is still required
5. How to separate baby wipes from used diapers before disposing it off
6. If on vacation, can one put out organics in clear garbage bags, instead of putting out green bins
7. What would happen if one collects more organic waste than would fit in the green bin
8. Some residents had not received their green bins so the Ambassadors forwarded their contact information to the Waste Management Department

## Concerns

1. Sorting the garbage was seen by some as time-consuming
2. Concerns were raised about the odour problem and maggot-infestation
3. Concerns about the green bins having racoon-proof latches
4. Some saw Mission Green as a cut-back on services. Ambassadors explained that actually it is an increase in service from four collections every two weeks to five collections every two weeks

# Lessons Learned

- Could have chosen a few more locations on the north side of Markham
- Could have included a few other stores like Home Depot, Canadian Tire and various gardening centres
- We had to discontinue the program on one site because of language problem, it would have been beneficial to have a Mandarin or Cantonese speaking volunteer at this location
- There were not enough posters for all the locations

# Conclusions

- The objective of reaching out to the people of Markham and raising their level of awareness about Mission Green was successfully met
- According to the latest information available, the launch of Mission Green has achieved a greater than 96% participation by the people and with a diversion rate of over 66%
- MCC members and other volunteers had a major role in the launch of one of the most significant public participation projects in Markham. Without their efforts, the launch of Mission Green might not have been as successful
- MCC's Ambassador Program can be a model for community education and outreach for other municipalities, not only for Mission Green type programs but also, for example, tree by-laws, Pesticide Reduction programs, etc.

# Acknowledgements

- Town of Markham Council
- Waste Management Department
  - Claudia Marsales, Manager
  - Leigh Gibson, Peter Veiga, Shayne Hartin
- Ambassadors
  - Jack Heath, Regional Councillor and MCC member
  - Brent Mersey, Chair, MCC
  - John O’Gorman, member MCC
  - Krista Olins, member, MCC
  - River He, member, MCC
  - Karen Volpe, ex-member, MCC
  - Stephanie Sokolyk, ex-member, MCC
  - Mary Hopperton, ex-member, MCC
  - John Siguigna, volunteer
  - Romila Verma, Vice-chair, MCC



**Questions?**

**Thank You**