



Report to: General Committee

Date Report Authored: March 13, 2013

---

**SUBJECT:** Earth Hour and Earth Day 2013  
**PREPARED BY:** Katie Burns x 5283 & Amanda Martin x 2956

---

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1) That the report titled Earth Hour and Earth Day 2013 be received;
- 2) That the Sustainability Office continue to work with staff, advisory committees, and community partners to promote events that advance the Greenprint: Markham's Community Sustainability Plan;
- 3) And that Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Not applicable.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the promotions and activities underway by the City of Markham for Earth Hour (March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 8:30pm to 9:30pm) and Earth Day (April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013) 2013.

**BACKGROUND:**

Earth Hour

Earth Hour is an annual global World Wildlife Fund (WWF) climate change initiative where individuals, businesses, governments and communities will turn out their lights and/or reduce their energy consumption for one hour on Saturday March 23, 2013 at 8:30 PM to show their support for action on climate change.

History

The event began in the City of Sydney in 2007, when 2.2 million people switched off their lights. In 2008, more than 50 million people around the globe participated. Earth Hour 2009 was from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. local time, March 28, 2009. 88 countries and 4,159 cities participated in Earth Hour 2009, ten times more cities than Earth Hour 2008. Earth Hour 2010 was held from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. local time, March 27, 2010. 126 countries participated in Earth Hour 2010. More than 5,200 cities and towns in 135 countries worldwide switched off their lights for Earth Hour 2011 alone, sending a powerful message for action on climate change. Earth Hour 2012 was observed on March 31, 2012 from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. It took place in more than 7000 cities and towns across 152 countries and territories, making it the biggest growth year for the campaign since 2009.

## Markham's Past Efforts and Results

In 2012, the Sustainability Office staff partnered with the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) and received funding from PowerStream to promote Earth Hour to the community via advertising in both English and Chinese language newspapers, and held an event at the Markham Museum. The Museum event included tours highlighting its environmental features, booths from PowerStream, and Markham's Greenprint. Our facilities reduced power consumption wherever possible without affecting service. Despite our best efforts, energy reduction results from 2011 to 2012 did not improve (shown below), and turnout for the Museum event was disappointing.

The table below provides the results amongst PowerStream Municipality customers for 2012. Markham achieved the second largest Megawatt reduction but was near the bottom for percentage reduction:

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Per cent Reduction*</b>	<b>MegaWatt Reduction*</b>
Aurora	10.8%	5.1 MW
Barrie	6.7%	8.3 MW
Bradford West Gwillimbury	8.1%	1.9 MW
Essa (Thornton)	28.0%	0.2 MW
Markham	7.2%	18.3 MW
New Tecumseth	9.0%	2.4 MW
Penetanguishene	4.1%	0.4 MW
Richmond Hill	8.2%	10.9 MW
Vaughan	8.6%	27.0 MW
PowerStream Service Territory	7.8%	74.5 MW

The results for PowerStream Municipality customers for 2011 are in the table below. Markham achieved the second largest Megawatt reduction but was near the bottom for percentage reduction:

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Per cent Reduction*</b>	<b>MegaWatt Reduction*</b>
Aurora	14.3%	7.4 MW
Barrie	7.7%	9.9 MW
Bradford West Gwillimbury	9.1%	2.3 MW
Essa (Thornton)	18.0%	0.2 MW
Markham	8.5%	23.0 MW
New Tecumseth	9.2%	2.0 MW
Penetanguishene	6.6%	0.6 MW
Richmond Hill	9.3%	12.9 MW
Vaughan	8.8%	28.4 MW
PowerStream Service Territory	8.9%	86.7 MW

---

## Earth Day

Earth Day is an annual event held on April 22. Earth Day events are held worldwide to increase awareness and appreciation of the Earth's natural environment. Earth Day started in the United States in 1970, was first celebrated in Canada in 1980, and by 1990 had become international with organized events in 141 countries.

### Markham's Past Efforts and Results

In 2012 the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) planned an Earth Day event with the support of the Sustainability Office. It was held on Sunday April 22 at the Millennium Bandstand and Park on Main Street Unionville. A number of organizations participated including the Sustainability Office, Waste Management, PowerStream, Water for Tomorrow, Varley Art Gallery, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Rouge Park, The Youth Environment Network of York Region, and Muskoka Wildlife Centre. The event was highlighted by speeches by Mayor Frank Scarpitti and Federal Environment Minister Peter Kent.

Despite cool weather, a total 350 residents attended. MEAC administered a survey and found that:

- Increasing renewable energy and public transit were two actions that should be taken to improve the environment
- Respondents have been involved in other environmental events and children's activities within the last year
- Respondents were satisfied with the state of the local environment
- 75% of respondents were not aware of many of Markham's environmental initiatives.

## **OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:**

### Earth Hour 2013

For Earth Hour 2013, a five question quiz was prepared for City staff with Greenprint paraphernalia as the prizes. Promotional material will be provided to the Communications Department, posters for display around the facilities, and the Earth Hour Playbook will be made available. Building supervisors and operators were asked to shut down or turn off as much equipment as possible without compromising customer service. Going forward, MECO will record successful shutdown practices and create a list to build off of for future Earth Hours.

### Earth Day 2013

The Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) is planning an Earth Day event for 2013. MEAC felt that while the Millennium Bandstand and Park would be an excellent location if the weather was good, April's weather was too unpredictable and an indoor venue with high traffic would be more appropriate.

The Earth Day 2013 event will be held on Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup> at Markville Mall from 10am to 4pm. Confirmed participants include the City of Markham Sustainability Office, Waste Management & Waterworks, PowerStream, Enbridge Gas, Rouge Park, Orange Drop, The Permaculture Project GTA, Smart Commute, and Ontario Electronic Stewardship, with more to confirm. The formal speeches will take place at 1:00pm. MEAC will be administering an online survey with QR codes available for smart phone users to participate.

Waste Management will be releasing a new Mission Green newsletter in the week around Earth Day, known as Earth Week, which will promote the launch of Markham's clear plastic bag program.

Operations is continuing its 10,000 Trees for the Rouge during Earth Week, on Sunday, April 28, 2013 from 9am to 1pm. Residents can access a shuttle bus at the Walmart plaza at Hwy 407 & Donald Cousens Parkway to be picked up and taken to volunteer for a large scale tree planting at 14th Avenue & Reesor Road.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE: (external link)**

The Sustainability Office is providing \$500 to support the Earth Hour 2013 event from MECO accounts.

The Sustainability Office is providing \$2,000 to support the Earth Day 2013 event from our capital account.

**HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS**

Not applicable.

**ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

Earth Hour and Earth Day align with the Greenprint Community Sustainability Plan.

- Earth Hour promotes the Energy and Climate priority
- Earth Day promotes the Materials Management, Water Efficiency, Ecosystem Integrity, Energy and Climate priorities


Both events further community engagement with the Greenprint and provide residents with meaningful and practical methods to live more sustainably.

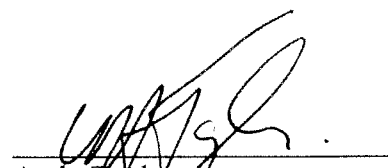
**BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:**

Not applicable.

**RECOMMENDED**

**BY:**

  
Graham Seaman  
Senior Manager, Sustainability

  
Andy Taylor  
CAO