



Everyone Welcome

Markham Diversity Action Plan



Welcome

歡迎
நல்வரவு
Üdvözöljük
Willkommen
Bem-vindo
सुआराउ
स्वागत
ДОБРО ПОЖАЛОВАТЬ
Sveiki atvykę!
Bienvenue
Mirë se erdhët
ברוכים הבאים

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The Mayor and Council of Markham set out on a process of civic self-examination and creative problem-solving shortly after the 2006 municipal election. In his inaugural address, the Mayor said, “the strength of our future lies in recognizing the energy, determination and talents of the new immigrants who make Markham their home. Regardless of their birth country, regardless of their religion or colour of skin, they are no less important than those who arrived over 200 years ago. To every new resident, I pledge tonight to help adapt the services of the Town of Markham to your needs. To make this Town your Town.”¹

The Mayor’s call for action was followed by a staff and councillors’ session at which senior staff determined to make Markham better serve all of our diverse communities. Maureen Brown, an internationally recognized expert in inclusivity training, helped our staff to identify issues through 12 focus groups and an internal diversity survey. We also took advice from the community: the Mayor consulted 35 key leaders; the staff organized 11 more focus groups, with representatives of community organizations and individuals from the community; and we implemented Click With Markham, our innovative online survey of citizens’ views. The result is this document which lays out the paths that we will travel toward an inclusive Markham.

The Town of Markham thanks all participants including:

John Livey, *Chief Administrative Officer*
Jim Baird, *Commissioner, Development Services*
Andy Taylor, *Commissioner, Corporate Services*
Catherine Conrad, *Town Solicitor*
Victoria McGrath, *Director, Sustainability Office*
Don Taylor, *Manager, Executive Operations*
Brenda Librecz, *Commissioner, Community and Fire Services*
Sharon Laing, *Director, Human Resources*
Nadine Daley, *Manager, Human Resources*
John Ryerson, *Director, Culture*
Jason Tsien, *Community Resources Coordinator*
Regan Hutcheson, *Manager, Heritage Planning*
Kathleen Graver, *former Senior Communications Advisor*
Moe Hosseini-Ara, *Director, Service Excellence, Markham Public Library*
Yolanda Chan, *Manager, Angus Glen Library*
Lana Miljkovic, *Information Services Librarian*
Fred Whitmarsh, *Information Services Librarian*
Angela Tse, *Acting Manager, Markham Village Library*
Andrea Dunn, *Information Services Librarian*
Matt Miller, *GIS Analyst*
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Cathy Molloy, *Manager, Markham Museum*
Cheryl McConney-Wilson, *Diversity Specialist*
Lorne Smith, *Community Member and Official Town Historian*
Peter Fernandez, *Consultant*
Prashanth Srichandramohan, *Human Resources*

Members of the Inclusivity (formerly known as Diversity) Advisory Committee (IAC) as of February 2008 are:

Sheila Birrell, *former Town Clerk*
Catherine Biss, *Chief Executive Officer, Markham Public Libraries*
Janet Carnegie, *former Director, Corporate Communications & Community Relations*
Miriam Comerford, *former Manager, Human Resources*
Nadine Daley, *Manager, Human Resources*
Mark Ingwersen, *District Manager, West*
Shayne Mintz, *former Deputy Chief, Fire and Emergency Services*
Raj Raman, *Acting Director, Financial and Client Services*
John Ryerson, *Director, Culture*
Michael Shatil, *former Manager Facilities, Asset Management*
Val Shuttleworth, *former Director, Planning and Urban Design*
Don Taylor, *Manager, Executive Operations*
Lori Wells, *Manager, Programs*
Tahmena Bokhari, *former Diversity Coordinator*
Maureen Brown, *Principal, Diversity Trainers Plus*

Participating community organizations include:

Active Living Alliance
Afghan Association of Ontario
Afghan-Canadian Senior Centre
African Canadian Social Development Council
Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama’at Canada
Alzheimer Society of York Region
Amici Italian-Canadian Community Association
Annswell Court Foundation
ARCH Disability Law Centre
Armada Chinese Seniors Association
Association for the Neurologically Disabled of Canada
Association of Jewish Seniors
Autism Society of Ontario
Baha’i Community of Markham
Bangladesh Awami Society
Bartimaeus Inc.
Behaviour Management Services of York and Simcoe
Bereaved Families York Region
Big Brothers Big Sisters of York
B’Nai Brith Canada
Bob Rumball Centre for the Deaf
CAASA
Canada-China Economic & Cultural Centre
Canadian AIDS Society
Canadian Association for Community Living
Canadian Association of the Deaf
Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
Canadian Diabetes Association
Canadian Hearing Society
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
Canadian Jewish Congress
Canadian Mental Health Organization - York Region Branch
Canadian National Institute of the Blind (CNIB)
Canadian Paraplegic Association
Canadian Pensioners Concerned – Ontario
Canadian Red Cross Society – York Region Branch
Canadian Tamil Chamber of Commerce
Canadian Tamil Congress
Care Watch Toronto
Carefirst Seniors and Community Services Association
Caribbean Canadian Seniors Club (CCSC)
Catholic Community Services of York Region (CCSYR)
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)
Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)
Centre for Information and Community Services (CICS)
Centre for Information and Community Services of Ontario
Centre for Information and Community Services of Ontario – Youth
Chabad Youth Network
CHATS (Community Home Assistance to Seniors)
Chinese Canadian National Council
Chinese Canadians for Equity in York Region
Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Markham
Chinese Family Services of Ontario
Circle of Care
Comfort Keepers
Community Care Access Centre
Community Crisis Response Services
Compassionate Advantage Inc.
Congress of Black Women of Canada – York Region
Corbrook
COSTI-IIAS-Family Counselling Services
Deaf Blind Ontario Services
Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Care Center (DASA) – York Region
Easter Seal Society of Ontario – York Region
Eating Disorders of York Region
Ed Joaquin
Epilepsy Ontario
Ethno-Racial People with Disabilities Coalition of Ontario (ERDCO)
Evergreen Hospice of Markham-Stouville (Bereavement)
Family Services York Region (FSYR)
Federation of Chinese Canadians in Markham
Focus – Career Services for Women
Future Possibilities Canada
Gay York Region
Giant Steps Toronto

Girls Incorporated of York Region
Grand Parents Requesting Access & Dignity Society
Greater Toronto Kurdish House
Hispanic Development Council
Hispanic Development Council – Youth Program
Hong Fook Mental Health Association
Human Endeavour
IBM
In Search of Justice
Islamic Centre of Vali- e Asre
Islamic Society of Markham
Jamaican Canadian Association
Jamaican Canadian Association – The Mentoring Program
Japanese Social Services
Japanese Social Services – Youth Programs
Japanese Support Services
Jehovah’s Witnesses Markham Congregation
Jewish Family and Child Services of York Region
Jewish Immigrant Aid Services
Jewish Women International (Markham-Unionville Chapter)
JOIN Network
Justice for Children and Youth
Kerry’s Place York Residential Program and Community Service Program
Kids Help Phone
Kinark Child and Family Services
Korean Community Center for Multiculturalism (KCCM)
Korean Community Centre for Multiculturalism – KCCM – Youth
Korean Seniors Citizens Society of Toronto (KSCST)
Krasman Centre
K-W Multicultural Centre
Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
Link Up Employment Services
Lupus Ontario
Markham African Caribbean Association
Markham Board of Trade
Markham Chinese Seniors Association
Markham Economist and Sun
Markham Federation of Filipino Canadians
Markham Filipino Heritage Group
Markham Italian Canadian Association
Markham Seniors Activity Centre
Markham Stouffville Parkinson Support Group
Markham Tamil Organization
Markham Tamil Seniors Association Canada
Markham Youth Theatre
Maytree Foundation
Mental Health Works
Midwives of York Region
Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training
Monarch Women’s Club
Muslim Welfare Centre
New Leaf Living and Learning Together
New Path Youth and Family Counselling Services
Nin Os Kom Tin Committee
Older Women’s Network
One Parent Families Association of Markham
Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors
Ontario Association of Residences Treating Youth
Ontario Association on Development Disabilities
Ontario Early Years Centre – Markham
Ontario March of Dimes
Ontario Retirement Communities Association (ORCA)
Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Association, Active Retired
Members – ARM (OSSTF) Chapter 12
Operation Catch-up
Palliative Care Network for York Region
Parent Action on Drugs
Parents for Youth
Parya Trillium Foundation
Pathways for Children, Youth and Families of York Region
PFLAG York Region
Project Work
Providence Learning Centres
Punta Serena Counseling Services & Healing Centre
Race Relations Committee

RAINBOWS Canada
REENA
Region of Peel
ReNEW Experienced Worker Program
Retirement Home Associations
Richmond Hill Small Business Enterprise Centre
Rose of Sharon
Sanatan Mandir Cultural Centre
Schizophrenia Society of Ontario
Scouts Canada
Seneca Centre for Entrepreneurship
Senior Tamil Society of Peel
Senior’s Residences Seniors for Seniors
Service Ontario INFOline
Social Club 35
Social Services Network
Somali Youth Association of Toronto
South Asian Family Support Services
South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario - SALCO
Southern African Jewish Association of Canada – SAJAC
Springtide Resources Inc.
Support Enhance Access Service Centre (SEAS)
Tamil Eelam Society of Canada
Tamil Eelam Society of Canada – Youth Wing
The Access Program
The Association of Parent Support Groups In Ontario Inc.
The Care Guide
The Cross Cultural Community Services Association - TCCSA
The Family Resource Centre
The Innovation Synergy Centre in Markham
The Ontario Society (Coalition) of Senior Citizens’ Organizations
The York Centre
Toronto Chinese Community Services Association
Toronto Seniors’ Council
Tragic Events Response Team
Trillium Foundation
Trinidad and Tobago 50 Plus & Seniors Association of Canada (Ontario)
Under the Banyan Tree Centre for the Developmentally Disabled
Unionville Home Society
United Synagogue Youth
United Way of York Region (see contact for Ethno-cultural focus group)
Vedic Cultural Centre
Victim Services of York Region
Vietnamese Association, Toronto
Vietnamese Association, Toronto Youth Program
Vision Youth Leadership Program
Welcome Centre – York Region Branch
Women’s Learning Institute
Women’s Support Network of York Region
Women’s Centre of York Region
Work On Track @ Seneca
Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care
Yellow Brick House
YMCA Business Services
YMCA Markham
York Catholic District School Board
York Centre for Children, Youth and Families
York Child and Family Development Services
York Region Abuse Program
York Region Accessibility Services
York Region Children’s Aid Society
York Region Community Foundation (YRCF)
York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre
York Region Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee
York Region Youth Shelter
York Regional District School Board
York Regional Police Services
York Support Services Network (South Office - Markham Branch)
York University
York Youth Program
Youth Assisting Youth



**Welcome to Markham,
one of the fastest growing
and culturally diverse
municipalities in Canada.**

**Here is our plan to
make our community
work for everyone.**

Cover Image:
At Swan Lake Park, during Markham's Future race.
Photograph courtesy of Markham.

Left: At Milne Park, on Canada Day, 2008.
Photograph by Stephanie Lake.



Top:
The community gathers at The Milliken Mills Children's Festival, held at the Milliken Mills Community Centre, summer, 2008. Photograph courtesy of Councillor Logan Kanapathi.

Bottom:
The community celebrates in the light of the Olympic torch as it passes through the Markham Civic Centre, December, 2009. Photograph by Stephanie Lake.

On Belonging

Markham's demographic makeup has changed so dramatically in the last thirty years that it has become a wide open window on the world. It is now the most visibly diverse municipality in a country well known for multiculturalism. About 57 percent² of our citizens are foreign born, and 65 are "visible minorities,"³ many from areas not previously well represented in Canada. Markham's cultural wealth is both a benefit and a challenge, as new ideas and ways of doing things compete with, or extend, the traditional ways.

The benefits are obvious; where else can one walk—in the malls, recreation centres, parks, schools, streets—and enjoy the pleasures and wisdom of so many traditions all at once? Markham is directly connected, through ties of history and family, to every corner of our globalized world. But the challenge is obvious too: how do we build one community from so many?

Sudden and remarkable change can undermine the sense of belonging which is as vital to individual well-being as it is to a well-ordered community.⁴ Newcomers find themselves in a stranger's world, having left family, friends and familiar landscapes far behind. With diverse origins come different languages, values, religious beliefs, cultural practices and styles of political engagement.

Over time, the mix of cultures in Markham has widened and deepened; where there were once only Christians in Markham's four founding villages (Markham, Unionville, Milliken, Thornhill)⁵, there are now Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and many people who are not affiliated with any religion.⁶ What's old news to some, is new to others. The descendants of the first generations of European immigrants to Markham—Germans, Swiss, British—have become a new minority among Canadians from China, India, Korea, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and the islands of the Caribbean. More than half of Markham's households use English at home and almost none use French (although the French were the first Europeans to explore southern Ontario and among the first to settle here).⁷ An estimated 16 percent of Ontario's citizens have a disability, creating another minority—sometimes acknowledged, but often hidden.⁸

Yet at least two things unite Markham's many communities: everyone wants a better future for themselves and their children, and we all share Markham as home. Everyone should feel that they belong.

Governments can make a profound difference in peoples' lives by enhancing this sense of belonging, both through practical measures and by leading the way. An example of one such practical measure is the federal, provincial and municipal governments' new Welcome Centres (— two will open in Markham in 2010)—where newcomers can find the information and advice they need to settle here.

But getting the paperwork done is just the beginning of the process of creating a healthy, sustainable community. Markham intends to do much more than help cut red tape: it will also be the bridge that connects disparate groups, and it will work to shape our public sphere so that everyone feels welcome and everyone has reason to trust in their government.

This will require nimbleness and flexibility on the part of Council and staff. No community's leadership can ever perfectly reflect such a quickly-changing ethnocultural mix as Markham's. There is a time lag between arriving in a new country, getting one's bearings, and stepping forward into public life. The makeup of Markham's staff reflects earlier waves of immigration. Employees try to offer services in the many languages spoken in Markham, especially for seniors who may not speak either official language, and who may be uncertain of their rights as Canadians. However, Markham is not perfect and it has work to do.

Markham has already taken several steps along the path to inclusion.

- Markham has accepted the opportunity presented by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization's Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD) to become a member. The coalition's member municipalities are resolved to maintain social cohesion through action, accountability and behaviour. CMARD members focus on removing all ethnocultural barriers to public access and promoting the value and virtues of diversity.⁹
- Markham has moved to meet its obligations under Ontario's Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act concerning access to services for all persons with disabilities.¹⁰ Our research and consultations have helped us identify four groups that need attention if we are to make Markham inclusive: youth, newcomers and visible minorities, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

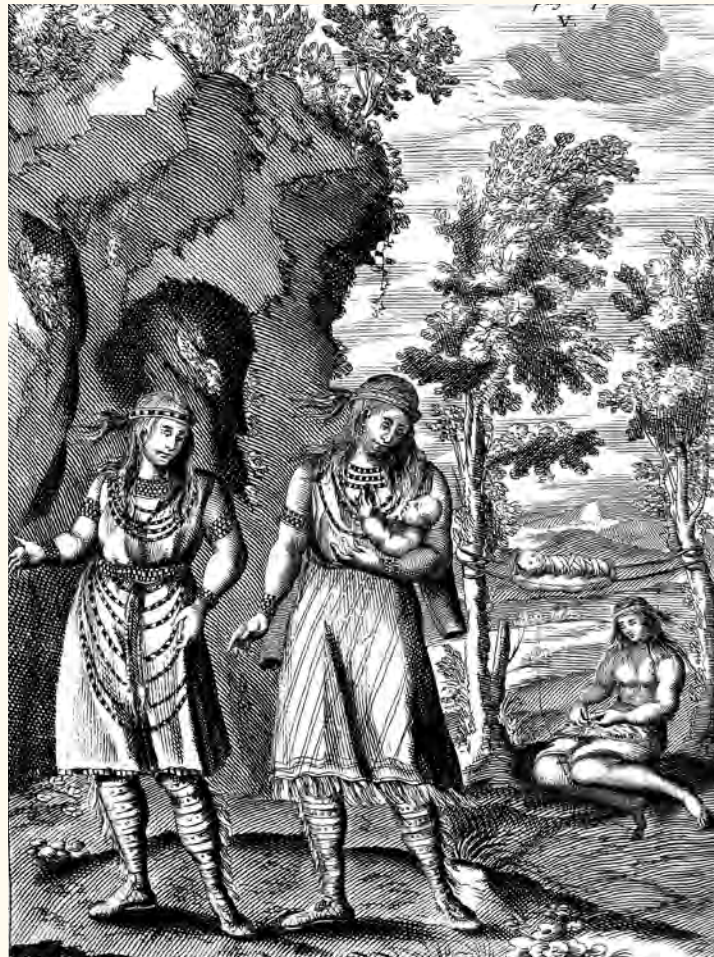
Markham's services should be designed with special consideration for how these groups will be affected. If we do that well, a new Markham will result — one in which diversity gives rise to unity, and in which the dream of inclusion becomes reality.



Top:
A new couple joined together in the oldest church in Markham— at the Markham Museum.
Photograph by Patty Ho.



Bottom:
Celebrating Canada Day in Markham, 2009. Photograph by Stephanie Lake.



Top Left:
The earliest contacts between First Nations Canadians and European explorers on trade. Explorers drew, painted and described the people they met and the wonders they encountered in letters and memoirs. *Historié Canadensis, seu Novae-Fraeciae Libri Decem, Ad Annum usque Christi, MDCLV* François Du Creux 1664, 17th century © McCord Museum.



Top Right:
Aboriginal person with objects to sell, 1866. Photograph by William Notman (1826-1891) © McCord Museum.



Bottom:
Canadian Voyageurs, oil on canvas 1915 by Miguel Hortiguela. Reproduced with permission of the Royal Ontario Museum.

Then, As Now

Our residents have told us that Markham's inclusive future must begin by honouring the past. Everybody's histories need to be acknowledged so they can be woven into the fabric of the Markham story.

In the Beginning...

People first arrived in the Markham area about 9000 BC¹¹ These aboriginal groups, called Paleo Indians by archaeologists, roamed a landscape freshly exposed by the retreat of Ice Age glaciers. They hunted the last of the giant mastodons and mammoths gorging on the lichens, grasses and herbs growing where ice had once towered three kilometres high.¹² Archaeologists speculate that they may have used sleds and canoes to cross the huge meltwater lakes and swollen rivers, and the main evidence of their presence is the fluted stone spear points, atl-atl spear throwers, residues of camp fires and some tools carved out of bone that they left behind.¹³

By about 8000 years ago, groups that archaeologists call Archaic had discovered new technologies. They are known for their beautifully worked copper spear points, knives and woodworking implements, which were used earlier here than in Asia or Europe. Copper was mined north of Lake Superior, and was transferred through trade networks as far as 1500 kilometres from its point of origin.¹⁴

About 3000 years ago, Woodland groups began to build large ceremonial burial mounds along the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes,¹⁵ (—their customs for honouring their dead influenced by people far south in Ohio). They used bows and arrows, and made pottery and stone pipes.

Around 500 AD, corn agriculture, established thousands of years earlier in Mexico, was adopted in southern Ontario (squash and tobacco were already grown, and beans and sunflowers were soon added): Life changed radically. Villages replaced seasonal hunting and fishing camps; pottery styles became elaborate and were passed, like family longhouses, from mother to daughter; and land clearing, (done by fire), required field rotation, so villages moved every decade or so. Remains of these settlements, dating to approximately 800 AD, have been found in the Pickering area and in Markham, where there have been finds of burials in communal graves called ossuaries.¹⁶ By the time Europeans arrived, some villages had multiple palisades, up to 38 longhouses, with populations as high as 2000.¹⁷ European trade goods had already made their way from the east coast long before the first French explorers¹⁸ appeared in person.

About 1000 AD, Markham was settled by the Iroquois people, who lived in

semi-permanent villages. They grew mainly corn, but also squash, beans and sunflowers in the fertile soil of the valley of the Rouge and Don rivers. After great conflict between native tribes, particularly the Six Nations Confederation south of Lake Ontario, the Algonquian-speaking Mississaugas moved down from north of Lake Huron and spread out along the north shore of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. What is now Markham was considered Mississauga territory at the time the first Europeans arrived. These Native people used the Rouge River and valley as a route to Lake Simcoe, and on to Georgian Bay, for trading. A large number of archaeological sites within the boundaries of Markham, particularly those close to the Rouge River, have provided many artifacts that illustrate their active life before the arrival of European settlers. Many of these artifacts are housed in Markham Museum. The Town supports the legislative requirements of the Planning Act to consult with its First Nations communities.

The First Europeans

The first British Governor of Canada, Lord Dorchester, bought vast tracts of land along Lake Ontario and Lake Erie by treaty from the Mississauga First Nations. This land became known as the Toronto Purchase.¹⁹ In 1791 British Parliament passed the Constitutional Act which established Upper Canada as a distinct territory from Quebec.²⁰ John Graves Simcoe was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada in 1792. Simcoe set up the seat of Parliament in Newark (now Niagara-on-the-Lake), directly across the Niagara River from Fort Niagara.²¹ Simcoe was very conscious of the danger from the new United States across the Niagara River, and decided that he needed a new military road from Lake Ontario north to Georgian Bay. In 1793, he instructed his chief surveyor Augustus Jones to mark out a road from York (now Toronto) to Holland Landing on Lake Simcoe (named after his wife). He called the road Yonge Street, after the British Secretary of War,²² Sir George Yonge.

His next need was for hardy settlers to create wealth from the forests north of Lake Ontario and to provide food, that would not have to be shipped on Lake Ontario for the people of York. He advertised for such families in Philadelphia. Some residents of the new United States, who were loyal to the British Crown and unhappy with their new government, quickly took up Simcoe's offer and moved to the north shore of Lake Ontario.

One group of 68 German Lutheran families, under the leadership of entrepreneur and artist William 'Moll' Berczy, approached Simcoe for land. Simcoe offered Berczy a complete township of 60,000 acres north of the town of York and east of the new Yonge Street. He called it Markham after his friend William Markham, the Archbishop of York in England.²³ Part of the deal was that Berczy and his men improve the surveyed Yonge Street. Some of these settlers were German Hessian soldiers, who had been hired to fight for Britain in the US War of Independence.



Top Left: Archaic tang notched copper point, 3500-3500 BCE, found on the west side of the Credit River in southern Ontario. Reproduced with permission of the Royal Ontario Museum.



Top Middle: Juvenile practice pot found on the Robb site in Markham, Ontario, among the remains of a circa 1450 CE Wendat village measuring 1.8 hectares. Reproduced courtesy of Archaeological Services Inc. of Toronto.

Top Right: Early French engraving of a Wendat village showing longhouses and styles of dress.

Middle Left: Iroquois man as illustrated by Giani Dagli in Travel Encyclopaedia, published by Grasset and Labrousse, in 1796. Reproduced courtesy of the Art Archive/Bibliothèque des Arts Decoratifs, Paris.

Middle Right Top: Iroquoian stone pipe found on the Robb archaeological site, dating between 1300 and 1350 CE, when southern Ontario was dominated by the Wendat (Huron) league of first nations. Reproduced courtesy of Archaeological Services Inc., Toronto.

Middle Right Bottom: Pop-eyed Birdstone, Meadowood Culture, 1000-400 BCE Early Woodland Period. Collection of the Markham Museum.

Bottom: Iroquoian carved wooden club, 1700s, from the Great Lakes region. Reproduced with permission of the Royal Ontario Museum.





Top: A painting by William Bent Berczy, son of William Berczy, called Huron Indians Leaving their Residence near Amherstburg, Upper Canada on a Hunting Excursion, circa 1825-1834. Watercolour over graphite on wove paper. Unlike his father, the younger Berczy prospered in Canada, becoming a legislator and a lieutenant colonel in the militia, as well as a tobacco farmer. Painting reproduced courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada.

Middle Left: Iroquois Woman from Kahnawake by Cornelius Kreighoff, famed painter of life in 19th century Canada, circa 1847-1852. Reproduced courtesy of the McCord Museum.

Middle Centre Left: Huron Wendat Hunter painted by Cornelius Kreighoff. Some of the Wendat who survived the war in Ontario in 1649 fled to Quebec where they still reside near Quebec City.

Middle Centre Right: Portrait of Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806), the first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada. This portrait is by an unknown painter circa 1796. Simcoe's surveyor laid out the territory for what we now call Markham. Reproduced courtesy of the McCord Museum.

Middle Right: William Berczy: a self portrait. Berczy was one of Canada's earliest portrait painters as well as a settler's agent. Reproduced courtesy of the Royal Ontario Museum.

Bottom Left: Canada's trade routes were created by First Nations, and were used by the fur traders of the Hudson's Bay Company, which had a monopoly on European/First Nations trade throughout a vast expanse of North America. This 1823 painting by Peter Rindisbacher is titled The Company's Officers Travelling in a Canoe Made of Birchbark Manned by Canadians. Reproduced courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada.

Bottom Right: Many of the Berczy settlers hauled their goods to Markham in Conestoga wagons like this one, painted by, Mr. Murray Pipher.



A surveyor named Iredell then laid out the Township in a rectangular shape, beginning at Yonge Street and moving east to what is now the Pickering Town Line. He created ten concessions, 2 kilometres wide, that ran from the northern boundary of Scarborough (now Steeles Avenue north) to the Whitchurch Town Line (now the Gormley-Stouffville road). They were crossed by six east-west sideroads, 2 kilometres apart. These concession roads and side roads have remained Markham's major thoroughfares but have been given new names. Concession 1 is Yonge Street, Concession 2 is Bayview Ave, Concession 3 is Leslie Street, Concession 4 is Woodbine Avenue, Concession 5 is Warden Avenue, Concession 6 is Kennedy Road, Concession 7 is McCowan Road, concession 8 is Markham Road, Concession 9 remains as Ninth Line, and Concession 10 is Reesor Road. The first side road north of Steeles is 14th Avenue. Highway 7 is next, followed by 16th Avenue, Elgin Mills Road and 19th Avenue.

The land within each block was divided into five lots of 200 acres each. This survey included the allocation of one-seventh of the lots for the Church of England's clergy. These were called clergy reserves.²⁴ Another one-seventh of the lots were reserved for the disposition of the Crown or, in other words, the Lieutenant-Governor's government. The fact that the Lieutenant-Governor could dispose of these lands as he wished meant that he could raise money without having to ask for the approval of the new local assembly. The Lieutenant-Governor of that time had real power, which came, not from the electorate, but from the powers given to him by the Imperial Government in London. He resented, and avoided when possible any constraints that an elected assembly could put on him. The Crown reserves were leased to farmers, with the payment going to assist the Government. They were eventually all sold by 1828, but the clergy reserves continued to be a source of friction, and even contributed to the grievances that led to the rebellion of 1837. They were not sold off until 1854.

Each of the original Berczy settlers received, free of charge, one lot of 200 acres. These first German speaking settlers moved onto their land in the fall of 1794 by way of Yonge Street, and across what is now John Street. A number of the families settled at Leslie Street to create the first community of German Mills. They had to clear the forest for their homes and barns, which they built mainly between concessions 2 and 6. It was very difficult to grow their first crops of wheat and peas as well as the vegetables they needed for food. Some men had to return to York and Niagara to get work to feed their families. However, they persevered and established a Lutheran Church north of Unionville (still an active congregation) and another in Buttonville (which ceased to operate in 1925). Even though Lieutenant John Graves Simcoe had promised William Berczy the entire Township of Markham, his successor (when Simcoe returned to England in 1796) be-

came nervous about these “foreign speaking” rural people, and refused to grant them ownership of their land until they had lived there for seven years.

William Berczy had incurred significant debts bringing settlers to Markham, and he expected to sell the rest of the Markham lots in order to pay his debts. Deep in debt, by 1803, Berczy and his family moved to Montreal, where he returned to his training as an artist. He is now recognized as an outstanding artist of the early 1800s. The Varley Art Gallery in Markham has several of his paintings.

By 1804, a new group of German-speaking settlers of Swiss origin began to arrive from Pennsylvania. Sixty-five families travelled the 800 kilometre trail in large Conestoga wagons, with all of their worldly goods, to establish farms in the eastern part of the Township. Most of these Pennsylvania Germans were of the Mennonite faith, and they held Sunday worship in their homes. They did not build meeting houses until the 1850s.

These early settlers were hard working and skillful. They cleared their farms, built roads, built saw and grist mills (using water power) for energy on the Rouge River and Don River, manufactured tools and farm equipment, traded farm products, opened stores, built their schools and churches and established their communities. They worked co-operatively in “bees” to build barns, houses and churches, and to cut wood and harvest crops. Small hamlets at the crossroads included German Mills, Thornhill, Buttonville, Milliken, Unionville, Victoria Square, Village of Markham, Mount Joy, Box Grove and Cedar Grove. Many of these hamlets still exist today. Dollar, Hunters Corners, Cashel, Mongolia, Headford and Peaches, have been lost.

Thus, by 1825 these first German settlers, and other settlers of British origin, had created the foundations of the prosperous community we now know as the Town of Markham. Groups were free to worship in their own faith and to build the church buildings they needed. Most churches created cemeteries around their buildings to provide a respectful burial ground for those early pioneer families. These cemeteries are still visible today across the Town.

By the 1850s, the Township of Markham and its villages had reached a stable population of about 10,000 inhabitants. The villages, with their stores, wagon makers, blacksmiths, harness makers, shoemakers, dress makers, and tanners, were the service centres for the agricultural communities.

In 1853 and 1871, Markham was changed forever with the introduction of the railroad from Toronto through Richmond Hill, and through Milliken, Unionville and Markham to Stouffville and beyond. The communities now had ready access to new markets for their products, and could receive goods

Top:
Settlers endured terrible hardships while they built cabins and planted crops. This log cabin once stood on the east side of Warden Avenue, across from Unionville High School. This photograph of Nehemiah Ogden's family was taken circa 1905. Reproduced courtesy of Markham Museum Collection.



Middle Left:
The Reesor family was among the first to come to Markham from Pennsylvania. Here Fred Reesor, a descendant, W. Thom and A. Scott break ground on the Reesor farm. Reproduced courtesy of Markham Museum Collection.

Middle Right:
The second and third generations lived much better than the first. This home was built by the son of a settler in the 1840s, and was bought by his sister Mary Klinck in 1866. The Klincks were prosperous enough to host a large crowd, as seen in this photograph from 1905. Reproduced courtesy of Markham Museum Collection.



Bottom Left:
Some prisoners, jailed after the failed rebellion, carved wooden boxes as tributes to their comrades. This one was made by James Cane. It reads: Top: From James Cane in prison Toronto June 16th 1838. Side Front: In memory of Samuel Lount & P. Mathews Executed April 12th 1838. Reproduced courtesy of Markham Museum.



Bottom Middle:
Portrait of William Lyon MacKenzie, leader of the Rebellion, by John Wycliffe Lowes Foster, 1931. Reproduced courtesy of Library and Archives Canada.



Bottom Right:
Portrait of Benjamin Milliken, Major in the Sedentary Militia. All fit males between the ages of 16 to 60 were required to enroll in local militias to defend Upper Canada. Milliken served as a private in the York Militia in the War of 1812 and later rose in rank. Reproduced courtesy of Markham Museum Collection.





Top Left and Top Middle:
January 1, 2010 Flag raising to celebrate 200th anniversary of the Governor General's Horse Guards at the Civic Centre. Photograph by Roger Carlsen.

Top Right:
George Crandell, a member of the notorious Markham Gang of the 1840s, received a penitentiary sentence of five years for larceny when the gang was broken up and prosecuted. Photograph reproduced courtesy of the Toronto Star.

Middle Left:
Reesor Rd and Highway 7, circa 1958, Photograph courtesy Lorne Smith, Town Historian.

Middle Right:
2009 Christmas Mess Dinner Gathering of the 748 Governor General's Horse Guard Cadet Corp, Markham 2009.

Bottom:
At the end of US Civil War, as Canada prepared to become a nation, Fenian invaders tried to move in from the South. The militias were called out to defend the borders. The 12th York Battalion of Infantry, with its company 7 located in Markham, was formed in the fall of 1866. This manoeuvre, practiced at Holland Landing in 1868, was a defence against cavalry. Reproduced courtesy of Markham Museum Collection.

from Toronto. The train stations became the hub of the community. Communications improved with the arrival of daily newspapers. Manufacturers like the Speight Wagon Works in the Village of Markham had markets for their products across Canada.

Early in the 20th century Markham was affected by the invention of the automobile. Transportation improved, the roads improved, but the population remained relatively stable until 1950 (after World War II) when Markham began to see an influx of more European immigrants from wartorn Europe.

A Township for All Reasons

Then as now, Markham's story is about overcoming adversity through ingenuity. All kinds of people came from all kinds of places, with shared dreams of religious freedom and even the hope of self-government.

Markham grew more quickly after World War II. Young families moved out from the City of Toronto in search of a more suburban lifestyle. After the federal government announced its new multicultural policy in 1971, Markham opened its immigration system. And as migration from Toronto continued, Markham's population grew significantly. Between 2000 and 2006 alone, the population of Markham grew by 22 percent, while other areas in Ontario grew by only 6.6 percent.²⁵

Contemporary Immigration. Chinese immigration to Markham came in advance of the handover of the governance of Hong Kong by the British to The People's Republic of China in 1997. The Chinese community is now the largest visible minority in Markham. Making up 34 percent of Markham's total population, the Chinese community is almost as big as all the European ethnocultural groups combined. Italians, Koreans, Filipinos, Iranians, Afghans, Russians, Serbians, and Indians have all come at different times for different reasons. The Vietnamese boat people came in the 1980s, escaping from persecution after US troops pulled out of Vietnam. Perhaps the most notable is the Tamil community. Although there is some uncertainty about the numbers in the international Tamil diaspora, estimates suggest that it's approximately 700,000. According to Human Rights Watch, Canada has the largest Tamil population outside of Sri Lanka: roughly 200,000, with the majority living in the GTA."²⁶

The Rebels. William Lyon Mackenzie, who led the Rebellion of 1837, was elected five times by Markham Township to the Assembly of Upper Canada. But Mackenzie was expelled because of his vocal opposition to an autocratic government that mainly served a few families known as the Family Compact. The rebellion was defeated, and many of the rebels were jailed. While in jail, some of the rebels carved memorial boxes. The

inscription on one such box, made by James Cane in 1838, says, “Tyrants their fetters forge in vain, To crush thy spirit—Liberty, Like brittle glass shall burst the chain, From hands now striving to be free.”²⁷ Repression did not last, as responsible self-government came four years later.²⁸

The Criminals. The Markham Gang’s exploits in the 1840s became notorious. Their well-organized crimes included murder, robberies, break-ins, horse thievery and the spread of counterfeit money they called “boodle” throughout Upper Canada, Lower Canada, Michigan, Vermont, and New York. They swore secrecy to the death, terrified local constables, intimidated juries, perjured themselves and sent scouts—tailors, peddlers and phoney preachers—to people’s houses in search of loot. At an exchange location in Lower Canada, counterfeit money was traded for stolen goods at a ratio of 100 counterfeit dollars to \$10 worth of goods. The Gang’s low morals were explained as the result of having been born in the US or Canada, and on former rebels as well. The man pictured here, George Crandell, was sentenced to five years in penitentiary for larceny.²⁹

The Heroes. Just as radical political ideas flourished in Markham, so did groups ready to die for the Crown. The first cavalry militia was founded in 1810 by Buttonville farmer Captain John Button, and fought against American invaders in the War of 1812. Renamed many times, this reserve regiment has earned battle honours in every Canadian conflict and peacekeeping operation. Now called The Governor General’s Horse Guards Regiment, they celebrate their 200th anniversary in Markham in 2010. They are recently deployed in southern Afghanistan; their modern Markham Cadet Corp is as diverse as Markham.

First Visible Minorities: African-American. Markham Township was one of many stops on the Underground Railroad (a series of safe-houses where runaway slaves could rest by day as they moved towards safety of Upper Canada by night). Although slavery was abolished in Upper Canada in 1793, it wasn’t outlawed across the entire British Empire until 1834. It was only then that former slaves lost their fear of the bounty hunters who sometimes crossed the border to abduct them. Markham Township was safer than York because it was farther from that border. The Methodist Church played a large role in ending slavery. Methodist preachers, called circuit riders, travelled Markham Township on horseback to pray with the isolated settlers. Among these preachers was Richard Barnhard, or Brother Barnhard, a former slave who arrived in Markham circa 1836. Barnhard travelled the Methodist circuit for years, (winter and summer, rain or snow), and, although he was unable to read, he led the singing of hymns, which he’d learned by heart. He eventually became a highly respected member of the board of what is now the St. Andrew’s United Church in Markham.³⁰



Top Left:
Susannah Maxwell and her husband, escaping slavery in the US, fled to Canada in 1861 and settled in Richmond Hill. She and her daughter Tillie earned a living by doing laundry. Reproduced courtesy of Markham Museum Collection.



Top Right:
A car club makes a pit stop in front of the Queen’s Hotel en route to the Markham Fair. Reproduced courtesy of Markham Museum Collection.



Middle Left:
Workers at the Maple Leaf Woollen Mills, circa 1910. Reproduced courtesy of Markham Museum Collection.



Middle Right:
A Fire Brigade all ready to go, circa 1912. Reproduced courtesy of Markham Museum Collection.



Bottom:
Main street, in front of the Unionville Post Office, gets a makeover, circa 1910. Reproduced courtesy of Markham Museum Collection.

Susannah Maxwell, a former slave, arrived from Pennsylvania in 1861 with her husband, and set up a laundry business in Richmond Hill. When she died, at 111, she was the oldest woman in Canada.

First Southern European Minorities: The Italians. The Pagnello family settled at Box Grove, an area known for its rough taverns, and tough working people, at the beginning of the 20th century. When they bought the last operating hotel, The White Rose, in 1910, they were visible enough that their house was burned down by arsonists resentful of “foreigners.”³¹

First Visible Minorities: The Chinese. Chinese immigrants arrived in Markham as early as 1911. Legend has it that the townspeople saw one Chinese laundry owner painting the English sign in his store window backwards. They were too embarrassed to point this out until he was almost done. Until 1961, there were only a handful of Chinese residents in Markham. Official federal government discrimination toward this visible minority was harsh; for many decades, Chinese men had to pay a punitive head tax just to land in Canada and, until the early 1960s, Chinese Canadians had no right to vote.³²

First Chinese Professional. Dr. Morley Lem, DDS, came to Markham in 1963, straight out of the Faculty of Dentistry at the University of Toronto. His father had arrived in Western Canada, at the age of 15, knowing no one. Living in Alberta, his father built five restaurants and a grocery store, but eventually sold them all to move his family to Ontario, He wanted his son, the future Dr. Lem, to have his choice of universities.

Dr. Lem decided to start his practice in Markham because the Province of Ontario had created the Toronto Centred Plan, which designated Markham as a high-growth area. He was busy from day one. He remembers patients coming to him injured by farm machinery. One mother insisted her jailed son keep his appointment with Dr. Lem, even if he had to go there chained to two police officers. Dr Lem continues to contribute to the Town by sitting on boards and maintaining his well-respected business.

Immigration Breeds Innovation

First they cut the trees and planted crops. Then they built homes, roads, villages, railways, and factories. With know-how and determination, the tiny, isolated villages of Markham Township became milling and supply centres for the surrounding farms. Markham Village, where horse-drawn carriages were built and many industries were founded, was soon called the “Birmingham of Ontario,”³³ comparing it to the British centre of industrialization.



Top Left: Ointments made in Markham at the turn of the 20th Century. Reproduced courtesy of Markham Museum Collection.



Top Right: Thomas Speight of Yorkshire England arrived in Markham in the 1830s and set up a carriage making business which grew large enough to supply Toronto's horse drawn bus and street cars and employ 125 people at its peak in the 1880s. Poster reproduced courtesy of Markham Museum Collection.



Middle Left: Women working the switchboard of the Bell Telephone office, circa 1962. Photograph courtesy of Markham Museum Collection.



Middle Right: A plane set to land at Buttonville Airport, an international airport serving small planes with up to 15 seats, an air ambulance service, and flight schools. Started as a grass landing strip in 1953, now it handles 150,000 flights a year. Photograph courtesy of Sebastian Ip.

Bottom Left: Biotech is big business in Markham. Many of the international pharmaceutical giants are represented here along with major consultants like PharEng. Photograph by Seokyoung Lee for Bloomberg via Getty Images.

Bottom Right: Other major high tech companies who've set up shop in Markham include Motorola and IBM. Photograph courtesy of Raysonho, Wikimedia Commons.





Top Left and Top Centre:
Youth strut their stuff at Markville Mall at Centre Court to celebrate Youth Week, 2008. Photographs by Jason Tsien.

Top Right:
At Pacific Mall—the largest Asian-themed indoor mall in North America—it’s not just the shopping that attracts the crowds, but the community events. Photograph by Anthony Poon.

Middle Left:
Five young women—models of Markham’s remarkable diversity—at a launch of a new fashion line at the Pacific Mall in 2007. Photograph by Blaine Kendall.

Bottom:
A Year of the Tiger face off during Chinese New Year celebrations at the Pacific Mall in 2010. Photograph by James Tong.

In the economic downturn following the American Civil War, most of the vast forest that greeted the first settlers was cut down for sale, leaving a landscape of farm fields and a few stray woodlands. Timber to supply masts for ocean-bound sailing ships was carried down the Mast Road and then south to Lake Ontario for transport.³⁴

The industries of Markham Township grew slowly. There were creameries, woollen mills, grist mills, coopers, smiths and carpenters. One family made its way into the early pharmaceutical business, selling a homemade balm as a treatment for skin cancer.³⁵ By the second decade of the 20th century, the vast Maple Leaf woollen mills had burned down, Speight Wagons were being replaced by Mr. Ford’s automobiles, and Markham Township devoted itself mainly to farming.³⁶

It’s only in the last 40 years that Markham has become a magnet for global-businesses such as IBM, Hewlett Packard, Motorola, Philips and Alcatel-Lucent, all tapping into our highly educated and diverse workforce. Markham has also become home to a thriving development industry, as well as new Canadian companies researching their way to the leading edge of information technology and life sciences. Now Markham is “the high-tech capital of Canada.”³⁷

Made in Markham: Alan Kwong’s company, PharmEng Technology Inc., advises global pharmaceutical giants such as Pfizer, Wyeth, Sanofi Pasteur, Schering-Plough, and Canada’s own Apotex from its head office in Markham, which Kwong has called home since 1980. Kwong’s father, who owned a Hong Kong construction business, decided his children would have a better future in Canada. He sent Kwong’s older brother to study engineering at the University of Toronto. After graduating and getting a job in Markham, Kwong’s brother sponsored the family as immigrants. Alan, having attended an English language high school in Hong Kong, had no trouble adjusting to life in Canada; but his parents spoke no English. As so many other immigrant parents have done, Kwong’s parents sacrificed their comfort to help their children.

Kwong got his engineering degree at University of Michigan, followed by an M.Sc. in biomedical engineering from University of Toronto, and lived at home until his marriage in 1987. His career flourished at the Ontario Cancer Institute, Connaught Labs and Glaxo Canada (now GSK). Markham’s Chinese community was small then, as was Markham. “Warden and Steeles was still a cornfield,” he laughs. “Highway 7 was very remote.” Although he was a member of a visible minority, he never experienced exclusion. “I think maybe sometimes it happens, but in general in 30 years now I never felt any racism, especially in Markham.” Kwong’s wife and children remained in

their Markham home as his career advanced and he took jobs in Chicago and New York City, flying home on weekends.

In 1997, Kwong spotted a major business opportunity. He noticed there was no pharmaceutical consulting offered in Canada, a major niche in a rapidly growing market. He left his six-figure executive job in New York to start up his Canadian business, making his own presentations, and preparing proposals late into the night at the business centre at Warden and Steeles avenues. His business grew quickly, winning design and consulting contracts as far afield as Taiwan and Kenya. In 2004, PharmEng acquired an Ontario pharmaceutical plant from Pfizer, borrowing \$20 million from an Icelandic bank to fuel expansion, and in 2005 the company went public on the TSX Venture Exchange. Then came the banking crisis of 2008. As Iceland slid toward sovereign financial disaster,³⁸ the bank went into receivership, and PharmEng's loan was called by its creditors. PharmEng was forced to reorganize. The bank's creditors got the plant and the stock exchange listing, but Kwong bought back the consulting business, retaining all 100 employees and all his clients.

Kwong's revised PharmEng is growing again, expecting revenues of \$10 million in 2010. Like Markham, PharmEng's staff has become incredibly diverse. "We are 20 plus nationalities," Kwong says. "We are from China, Hong Kong, Iran, Serbia, Russia, Denmark... it's like the United Nations."

The Pacific Mall. The Pacific Mall opened in 1997 on the spot where a community landmark, Cullen Country Barns, had stood for many years. Surrounded by 19th century buildings, Cullen Country Barns was famous for its annual Christmas displays. Now the landmark has been replaced by the largest indoor Asian mall in North America. The mall, developed right on time to serve the new wave of immigrants from Hong Kong, has interior streets named after Hong Kong roads.³⁹ The Pacific Mall was built by the Torgan Group, developers long active in Markham, several of whom are Israeli immigrants.⁴⁰

Now, As Then...

The population trends that have made Markham the most diverse municipality in Canada will continue, and will accelerate. A significant segment of our population is aging,⁴¹ as is the case across Canada, Europe and Japan.⁴² Markham will need to attract many more young and talented immigrants to help maintain what has been built, and to help support seniors in the ways they deserve.

Many of our recent immigrants have post-secondary degrees, and a significant number are professionals.⁴³ They would be welcome in many other



Top Left:
A multimedia presentation of the works of artist Natalie Shonfeld Howard at The Varley Art Gallery in Markham, 2009. This exhibition explored the intimate journey of discovery made when the viewer is deprived of particular senses, like sight or hearing. Photograph by Stephanie Lake.



Top Right:
Members of the Mayor's Youth Task Force learning to lead through inspiration at Camp Chimo Leadership. Photograph by Jason Tsien.



Bottom Left:
Wrapped in the flag on Canada Day celebrated at Milne Park, Markham, 2009. Photograph by Stephanie Lake.



Bottom Right:
Lorne Smith and Marlene Mattson at Settler's Day at the Markham Museum, June, 2008. Photograph courtesy of Markham.



Top:
Spirit Movers from L'Arche Daybreak performed at the 2010 Many Faces of Markham. L'Arche is a residence for persons with disabilities. Photograph by Stephanie Lake.



Bottom:
Volunteers at the Markham Museum archaeology lab are cleaning pottery shards found at an excavation on the Museum grounds in summer of 2009. It was discovered that the land was once a site of a Mennonite pottery industry, called Eby Pottery. Photograph by Stephanie Lake.

places in the world. Markham is up against a tough global competition to attract and retain the best and brightest. To keep them, we have to succeed in making everyone feel welcome, and at quickly integrating the necessary workforce into our community. But there are many barriers.

Acknowledging Barriers

Markham's new communities face modern versions of old problem political representation, social recognition, and prejudice. In the 19th century, it was the autocratic grip of the Family Compact that held newcomers back. Now, Markham's barriers are language differences, professional associations that are slow to acknowledge credentials, the so-called lack of "Canadian experience,"⁴⁴ and buildings or vehicles without proper facilities for seniors or persons with disabilities. These barriers also shield darker emotions that are rarely expressed but can be as powerful and destructive as an elephant in the room: the sad fact is that people often fear others who look different, or wear different clothes. And fear does not inspire welcome.

In the 1960s, descendents of the first Mennonite settlers in Markham experienced discrimination because they continued to wear traditional clothes while others wore mini-skirts and bell bottoms. Today, it is the new immigrants arriving at Pearson International Airport whose unfamiliar behaviours may be feared. Prejudice constantly changes its target, and is as hard to confront as a ghost, yet it can be a barrier as solid as a brick wall.

The latest newcomers to Markham are in some ways different from those who came before. Canadian immigration rules now favour people with postgraduate or professional degrees. Many newcomers are better educated than the average Canadian. Some arrive with enough money to buy homes and cars; some are able to start new enterprises. But like the pioneers, these newcomers still group with compatriots, often with several generations and families sharing single-family dwellings. This lessens the economic and social burdens of immigration, but sometimes challenges Markham's zoning bylaws.⁴⁵

And, while diversity is growing in Markham, one form of diversity can be damaging, both to individuals and to social cohesion: income disparity. Great income disparity can lead to great disparity in public health, including higher incidences of heart disease, diabetes and hypertension.⁴⁶ Studies in the UK have shown that there is a gradient between the good health associated with high incomes and the ill health of the poor and excluded.⁴⁷

More than 25.4 percent of new Canadian immigrants hold degrees,⁴⁸ yet are frustrated by professional associations balking at foreign credentials. These new Canadians may be working at a job beneath their talents and achievements,⁴⁹ or working at a job for less money than their Canadian colleagues.⁵⁰ Most families counter these problems by sending their teenagers to work part

time,⁵¹ which means many youth are stressed and may not have money to pay fees for swimming lessons, gym, hockey clubs, or extra books for school.

Lifting the Gates

Markham can, and will, take the lead in removing barriers. The staff works hard to ensure that there is a welcoming and respectful atmosphere displayed at the Anthony Roman Centre, and other facilities; according to our surveys, we've been succeeding.⁵² The same is true in Markham's libraries. But we have to do better at bridging language barriers between government and citizens, and between residents of different backgrounds. Staff need to be able to understand residents in order to help them. Citizens need to understand each other, and the Canadian way of doing public business, in order to get on better with their neighbours.

Markham must work harder to recruit seniors, newcomers and visible minorities, youth, and persons with disabilities to serve on boards, agencies and commissions, and to advise on municipal services. The Fire Services Department needs to reach out to youth and new communities to explain the reasons for Markham's fire safety rules, and to reassure that everyone is equally entitled to services.

The motto "Leading While Remembering" is part of Markham's Coat of Arms received May 25, 1991.⁵³ Markham has always concerned itself with rising to the challenges of the future while recognizing our responsibilities ourselves and beyond our local community. The stories that follow showcase some of Markham's citizens who lead while remembering their responsibilities to the past and to the future.

Arnel Scott's parents emigrated from Jamaica in the 70s. His dad had always wanted to own his own business, and he felt that Canada would provide him with that opportunity. Arnel, the middle child, attended Milliken Mills Public School and Milliken High School, living in a small, close knit community where everybody knew one another.

An exemplary student athlete, Scott was well known in Markham. Not only did he receive a scholarship to Boston College for basketball, he also qualified academically for Columbia University, graduating on the honour role from high school. His parents maintained that academics were the key to bettering himself and that even though he excelled in basketball, it would mean nothing if he didn't have the academics to support it. His perspective on diversity is what has been key to his success, "I didn't stay just with people who looked like me or who were athletes—I realized I needed to come out of my comfort zone to get the help I needed." He credits many people, such as his high school principal Jim Orfanakos, for his growth. "Sometimes you need someone outside of your family to tell



Top Left:
Mayor's Youth Task Force members
Shanthiya Baheerathan, Vetura
Jeyandran, Gauri Goyna,
Photograph by Jason Tsien.



Top Right:
Indoor Soccer Program at
Angus Glen Community Centre,
Photograph by Stephanie Lake.



Bottom:
Arnel Scott delivers a speech to the
Alliance of Educators for Black Students,
at Bur Oak S.S. Markham in 2008.
Photograph courtesy of YRDSB.



Photograph courtesy of Markham Parks and Recreation Department

Top:
One of Markham's Community Gardens located on Maple Street.
Photograph courtesy of Communications Department, Markham.

Bottom Left:
Lorne Smith at his farm works up the soil in preparation for planting his 2010 garden. Photograph courtesy Lorne Smith.

Bottom Right:
Picking Strawberries at Whittamores in 2008. Photograph courtesy of Danielle Woon.



you it's okay to be more than people expect you to be.”

Scott had every intention of playing basketball on a national level and then going on to law school, when he experienced health issues, which led to his return to Markham. During his recuperation, the desire to re-define himself propelled him to start a business based on what he knew: basketball and education. He remembered seeing many students miss key classes because they would have to leave school at 1pm to get to a game at 4pm. Responding to this problem he created Twice a Child, a transportation company which allowed student athletes to maximize their time in class and still make that key game. For more than four years, his company serviced 12 schools and numerous private clients.

When asked the question, “Why start this type of business?” he said he just wanted to make an impact on the community that had made an impact on him:—Markham.

Scott has subsequently added a publishing division to the company. Twice A Child Publishing & Educational Products works with corporate and community organizations such as York Regional Police, York Region District School Board, Toronto District School Board and the Stephen Leacock Foundation. Scott now feels that his temporary illness moved him in a direction he would never have thought of. He had felt somewhat trapped by his basketball talent, and had wondered what he could do without basketball as the driving force. Now he, and Markham, knows.

Lorne Smith, the Official Town Historian of Markham, relies on stories and relationships to remember the origins of the Township and to educate people about the history of Markham. He comes equipped with books and photos as if he were a travelling library, and begins his lesson by speaking about the first Town historian, John Lunau. Lunau, a descendant of the Berczy Settlers, was born in Markham in the 1930s, and became the first curator of Markham Museum. After John Lunau's death in the 1990s, Smith, also of Berczy ancestry, became the next Town historian.

After World War II, Markham remained a farming community. Farmers from the Scarborough/Agincourt area moved north as farms were bought out for urbanization. Smith still lives on a part of his original farm, located in the McCowan and Major Mackenzie area, which has been in his family since 1917. He and his brother were raised knowing where their food came from; they milked cows twice a day, butchered pigs and took meat and eggs to the St Lawrence Market in Toronto on Saturdays. Smith attended the local one-room Colty's Corners elementary school and Markham High School, and is now a proud grandfather of six

grandchildren.

Smith was a math teacher before spending 25 years as a civil servant. Now an active senior citizen, Smith continues to look after the Town's five active historic cemeteries when he is not providing a perspective on Markham's history. He praises Markham's recreation and library programs for seniors. He also is glad that the Town showcases the physical heritage of Markham; however, he recognizes that Markham has grown quickly, and that integration needs to be a two-way concern.

Smith's vision for a new Markham community is one that encourages volunteerism from both newcomers and those familiar with life in Markham. Smith says, "We need to build community. It is an opportunity on all sides to welcome those who look different and integrate people with various languages." As for his role as Town Historian, Smith says, "I like to tell stories. My name doesn't have to be seen, society has been good to me, so I'd like to give back to the Town."

Danielle Woon's interest in environmental studies and sustainability began when she started a recycling club in high school. She has organized events for the nation-wide annual litter cleanup, volunteered for Main Street Markham's pedestrian day, helped with art classes at the Varley Art Gallery and planted trees for Friends of the Rouge. Her passion has led her to a degree in Environmental Studies, which she selected because of its multidisciplinary approach to problem solving, combining concepts such as community sustainability, social conscience and economics. She will graduate in June, 2010.

Ms. Woon's grandparents left Hong Kong and immigrated to Jamaica, where her parents were born. Her parents moved to Toronto in the 1970s and, since 1991, the family has lived in Markham. Ms. Woon grew up in the Milliken area, and after attending elementary school at St. Vincent de Paul, was a student in PACE (Program for Academic and Creative Extension) and Brother Andre Catholic High School.

When asked about perceived barriers to sustainability, Ms. Woon answers that the biggest barrier to community sustainability is language. "Communication styles and abilities both add and detract from building community at the Town." She is often reminded of that when she is approached by those who assume she speaks Chinese because of her appearance. Her first suggestion for promoting relationships in Markham is to start small. "Get familiar and involved with your local neighbourhood. That is the area you will feel most connected with. Then broaden your involvement."



Top Left:
Markham wildlife. Photograph by Ilia Alshanetsky.



Centre Left:
Young women planting at the launch of the Trees for Tomorrow program, May, 2008. Photograph by Stephanie Lake.



Top Right:
Canoeing Program at Chimo/Milne Park. Photograph courtesy of Markham Recreation Services.



Bottom:
Kids planting at the launch of the Trees for Tomorrow program, May, 2008. Photograph by Stephanie Lake.

Ms. Woon feels that Markham is a privileged location, because, “Only in Markham can you really find such cultural diversity. The majority of my friends are first-generation Canadians, and many of them speak two languages. They come from all over the world: Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America. Despite differences, our backgrounds enrich our interactions. These differences do not separate or segregate, as I’ve found that they can in other communities. In Markham, residents are really able to shine and find their niche or area of community involvement, even within a 15 km radius. I’ve always been able to find a friendly face anywhere I go in Markham. This makes the process of joining a group or initiative with people I don’t know, much easier.”

One of her favourite areas of Markham is Milne Park, because it provides something for everyone. “In one spot you can have a picnic, fly a kite or sit by the lake.” Ms. Woon sees Milne Park as a place where Markham residents can go to be reminded about their connection to the land.

Ms. Woon feels that the most effective and important ways to positively influence social change – whether toward more environmentally-sustainable lifestyles or just socially-beneficial behaviours and practices – is through increasing awareness and educating members of the public. She feels that an individual approach is the most effective way to begin. In a variety of ways, Ms. Woon demonstrates the type of youth volunteerism and advocacy which will undoubtedly strengthen community sustainability in Markham.

Matthew Heng has lived in Markham since 2000; however, his family came to Canada almost by default. Mr. Heng comes from a family that had to make a choice to leave their home for the promise of a safe future. His father worked as a United Press photographer in Cambodia, during the wars between Cambodia and the North Vietnamese and Communist Khmer Rouge guerrillas in the early 1970s. Heng grew up in an unsettling environment of gunfire and bombings. The family left abruptly in 1975, when all correspondents were told to leave Cambodia because of the Khmer Rouge occupation.

Although Heng, his siblings, and his mother left for Vietnam, his father remained in Cambodia for a few weeks, feeling that it was important to document what was happening there. It was the Heng family’s intention to go to the United States; but their stopover in Toronto, the lifestyle, people and cultural ways of Canadians had a profound impression on them. They resolved to immigrate to Canada and find their place in here.

The Heng family first settled in downtown Toronto, eventually mov-

ing to Scarborough. In 2000, Matthew Heng left Scarborough for Markham because housing was more affordable. When he and his wife were looking to start a family, everything fell into place for them in Markham. “The community programs for children are phenomenal here,” he says. “Within a 15 minute drive my son can go to Cornell Community Centre or Angus Glen and participate.” He says, “Markham’s main attractions are its natural settings which surround where we live, the multiculturalism on our street and the proximity of schools and hospitals.”

Heng now works as a Manager of Employment Services, at Link Up, a community resource that supports the employment of persons with disabilities. He has spent many years working for agencies, including the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) and Corbrook, to reverse misconceptions about the productivity and commitment of persons with disabilities. Heng has a personal connection to the needs of this community because of a stroke he experienced as a youth. After rehabilitation, he returned to school to repeat grade 10. Heng realized that life is fragile, and he decided to help people live life to the fullest. Heng extends his services to people wanting to regain some sense of control over their daily challenges. His stroke left him with some cognitive impairment, including memory loss and double vision, but for the most part, his disability is invisible to those around him.

Heng’s suggestions for Markham are similar to those of other residents. He recognizes the need to have services close to where you live and work and he is keenly aware of the need for more accessible transportation, noting the congestion on Highway 7. He also understands the reality of a growing population of seniors who do not speak English. His own mother is fluent in Cantonese and Mandarin, and understands English; but when she is outside of her linguistic comfort zone, she is usually accompanied by his dad. Has Heng experienced any incidents of discrimination? He remembers one incident, but he considers it a rare, unprovoked occurrence, and chooses not to focus on it. “We have to live together, and people have their good and their bad days. Diversity is about recognizing each other’s culture, realizing we can share our unique personalities and views of life. Overall, Markham has done that and it is a place to build a future.”



Focus On Four

About Feelings

Markham Council has decided to focus this Diversity Action Plan on four groups: youth, seniors, newcomers and visible minorities, and persons with disabilities. Most of us have a family member who belongs to one of these groups, and who has likely experienced some form of exclusion. This Plan shares statistics to try to capture the realities of these groups, and to help us work out a means of redress, to heal the hurt that exclusion engenders.

Newcomers

More than half of Markham's population was born abroad. Of that number, 83.4 percent came from Asia, South Asia or the Middle East (specifically The People's Republic of China, Taiwan, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, The Philippines, and Iran). Many newcomers in Markham strive to put down roots among neighbours who have similarities, but who may not know much about each others' backgrounds or cultural heritage.

Markham needs to address:

Language barriers: Most newcomers have trouble accessing information and services regarding settlement.

Cultural norms: There are basic misunderstandings about Canadian cultural norms and values, such as the importance to Canadians of waiting one's turn and of saying please and thank you.

Communications: Markham's attempts to communicate about its services are not getting through to various new communities.

Navigation of the system: New immigrants need help in navigating the system, especially when it comes to applying for jobs offered by Markham. Our focus groups told us that the newer and smaller community organizations, who could help with such things, find it hard to partner with the municipality.

Affordable housing: The lack of affordable housing is a major newcomer issue. About 73 percent of those using housing services are immigrants earning less than \$50,000 a year.⁵⁴ In York Region, Markham has the highest proportion of families spending 30 to 50 percent of their income on housing.⁵⁵ Recent immigrants to Markham also pay the highest gross rent and the highest amounts in major homeowner payments.⁵⁶ The bylaw that outlaws basement apartments has increased the pressure on people with low income.

Top Left:
Canada Day, 2009.
Photograph by Stephanie Lake.

Top Centre:
Pat Howell, VP of Markham
African Caribbean Association at the
Olympic Torch event on December 17,
2009. Photograph courtesy of Commu-
nications Department, Markham.

Top Right:
Civic Centre, Seniors Art Show, 2009
Photograph by Kathleen Graver.

Middle Left:
Annual Wine Tasting event at the
Markham Museum, September, 2009.
Photograph by Stephanie Lake.

Bottom:
An innovative playground designed by
Town of Markham's Planning in collabo-
ration with Urban Design Department
consultants. It opened in 2007 at the
east corner of Swan Park Road and
Williamson Road South. Photograph
courtesy of Planning and Urban Design
Department, Markham.

Visible Minorities

About 65 percent of Markham's residents are "visible minorities," according to the Government of Canada definition: however, in Markham that is a misnomer, since people of colour constitute the majority.⁵⁷ Members of Visible Minorities born in Canada, may still experience racism in their daily life, and often face similar challenges to those of newcomers, (although they usually possess the benefit of fluency in one of the official languages of Canada, and have some familiarity with Canada's systems and resources).

In February 2009, Council supported a recommendation, initiated by the Town's Race Relations Committee, to join UNESCO's Canadian Council of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination. The promise was to develop a Plan of Action for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination, and to report publicly on the progress of its implementation. In 2010, The Race Relations Committee requested a member of Council be appointed to document the evolution of Markham's CMARD successes.

Markham needs to address:

Policies and Procedures: We need to continue to develop our policies and procedures to recognize racism and support Markham's commitment to UNESCO's Anti-Racism and Discrimination mandate.

The Employment Cycle: We need to improve the employment flow of visible minorities from recruitment, to promotion to separation.

Persons With Disabilities

In 2001 in York Region, an estimated 12 percent of the total population had disabilities. That number is estimated to rise to 18 percent by 2026.

In 2005, the Government of Ontario passed The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act in response to the growing needs of this substantial portion of our population. The Act requires municipalities to identify, remove and prevent barriers to access for persons with disabilities. Any municipality with a population larger than 100,000 must consult with persons with disabilities and prepare and publish an annual plan which identifies barriers to access and outlines how they will be removed; must ensure that proposed bylaws, programs, practices and services take accessibility into account; and must list any existing bylaws and programs, etc. that are to be reviewed in the following year.

There are five standards set out by the Act. The first, called the Accessible Customer Service Standard, came into effect in 2010. The next four include: transportation, information and communication, built environment, and employment. These will come into play in later years. Failure to meet accessibility standards will result in a heavy fine levied on the municipality.



Top :
Warren Rupnarain, Accessibility Coordinator, and Kathleen Graver, Senior Communications Advisor, at Angus Glen Community Centre. Photograph by Stephanie Lake.

Bottom Left:
Avid readers come in all sizes and ages and find a warm welcome at the Unionville Public Library. Summer Reading Club, 2009. Photograph courtesy of Markham Public Library.

Middle Right:
Viva the VIVA Bus which is user friendly with its curb-level entry ramp. Photograph courtesy of Markham Communications Department.

Bottom Right:
Markham Village Branch Library is accessible to all. Photograph by David Macklin, Markham Public Library.





Top Left:
Pipers lead the way at the naming ceremony for McLaren Trail in Simonstem Park, October, 2009. Photograph by Stephanie Lake.



Top Right:
Artist members of the Thornhill Seniors Centre work with instructor Bonnie Steinberg. Photograph courtesy of Markham.



Middle Left:
At Applefest 2009, two Cider Mill volunteers hand out fresh pressed cider and apple butter made from apples grown in the heritage apple orchard at Markham Museum. The orchard has 20 varieties of organically cultivated apple trees. The Cider Mill volunteers meet daily at T and T Bakery on Main Street in Markham. Photograph by Stephanie Lake.



Bottom Left:
Seniors greet the morning with T'ai Chi at Millennium Park, across the street from Markham Civic Centre. Photograph courtesy of the Planning and Urban Design Department, Markham.



Bottom Right:
President Marg Jones with Princess Hutchinson at the Thornhill Seniors Club, February, 2010. Photograph by Susan Watts.

We have made progress on our Service Standard. Our focus group participants commended Markham Public Library for providing large print and talking books and were pleased by the Town's willingness to partner with organizations to provide day camps for children with disabilities. But the majority of Council's Accessibility Committee agree that persons with disabilities still face more barriers to accessing Town opportunities because of their disability than because of their ethnicity or personal presentation. The committee also felt that persons with disabilities are more likely to experience these barriers if they are also elderly and/or speak little English.

Our staff, by and large, agreed with this assessment. Some 60 percent of staff disagreed with the statement that persons with disabilities "currently experience the feeling and reality of belonging when interacting with the Town." Markham must do better.

Markham needs to address:

Transportation: While it is York Region that supplies a mobility bus for the use of Markham residents, Markham staff need to work with the Region to: reorganize pick up routes to better coordinate with scheduled programs; address the transportation needs of caregivers; eliminate long waits for rides after medical appointments; and address a lack of transportation for non-medical trips.

Communication and signage: While we have made significant strides in the use of international signage, chirping traffic lights, and the widespread use of Braille and other touch sensitive signage in public places, there is still room to improve.

Lack of training: Our focus groups suggested that Markham staff would benefit from more training in the following: interacting with persons with disabilities; knowing when and when to call for help; and recognizing and responding to unfamiliar behaviours. In 2009, the Town facilitated six accessible customer-service training sessions in April, May and September, and offered on-line training for those unable to attend classroom training.

Employment: While Markham has won awards for its hiring practices of to newcomers and persons with disabilities, through their partnership with Career Edge and Ability Edge, specialized help is needed for new immigrants with disabilities who are seeking employment.

Housing: Markham has begun to attend to the problem of affordable housing. Currently, many persons with disabilities and limited incomes live in illegal basement apartments, and are subject to eviction if Fire Services attends an emergency.

Seniors

Seniors constitute about 11 percent of Markham's population, but this will grow quickly as the first of the Baby Boom population reaches age 65. The majority of Markham's population is in the 40-64 age group, so in 15 years, the senior population may top 20 percent.⁵⁸ There are four major issues for seniors: location of seniors versus location of services; the link between age and disability; the increasing senior population growth, and the creation of a more senior-friendly Markham so that seniors can age in place.

About one-third of Markham's immigrant seniors do not speak English at home; the largest group speaks Cantonese. Not speaking either of the official languages easily isolates seniors, especially those who may also struggle with physical disabilities. Seniors who are unable to get easy access to transportation for programs, for volunteer activities, or to attend Markham's social amenities, may fall into depression.

Markham offers seniors' programs at libraries, community centres, and the Markham and Thornhill Seniors Activity Centres. The Markham Public Library offers English as a Second Language (ESL) programs along with delivery of books in its Homebound service. It has large-print collections, audio books and helpful technology for the hearing and visually impaired. It has book collections in 13 languages.

Markham needs to address:

The Familiarity Factor: Our focus groups told us that: new immigrant seniors are more likely to attend programs if there is a dedicated staff member from their ethnocultural community, who looks as they do and can speak the same language.⁵⁹ Tamil seniors are less likely to attend programs where no one speaks their language. Materials also need to be translated into different languages.

Transportation: Our focus groups told us that seniors are more likely to attend programs if transportation is provided. Many newcomer seniors may be apprehensive about trying to use public transit on their own.

Subsidies with Dignity: The existence of subsidy programs and how to apply for them needs to be better explained, and care needs to be taken to provide subsidies in a manner which supports seniors' dignity.

Explaining Canada's volunteer styles and systems: It is well known that volunteerism reduces social isolation. But newcomer seniors often do not know about volunteer opportunities, or are unfamiliar with Canadian-style volunteerism. There are ways Markham can reach out to seniors, especially newcomers, such as partnering with ethnocultural community groups to deliver programs. But these sorts of solutions—which serve the need for familiarity in food, customs, style of dress and friendly faces—create new issues. Staff and many academics believe that if programs are organized primarily for specific ethnocultural groups,



Top:
Women and their children at Friday prayer service in the sisters' room of the Islamic Society of Markham, 2007. Photograph by Tara Walton, reproduced courtesy of the Toronto Star.



Bottom:
At a Community Days event at the Markham Museum, a volunteer from the Chinese Association of Greater Toronto demonstrates traditional brush painting. Photograph courtesy of Markham.



Top:
On the courts at Drop-In Basketball, Centennial Community Centre. Photograph courtesy of Markham Recreation Services.

Middle Right:
The Lifesaving Club of Markham at the Milliken Mills Community Centre, featuring, from left to right: Oliver Koh, Adrian Wong and Michael Nunes. Photograph courtesy of Markham Recreation Services.

Bottom Left:
Football, a.k.a. soccer, is played for keeps at the opening of the Lion's Club exhibit at Markham Museum's Community Days, June, 2009. The Lion's Club has supported the Markham Museum from its inception. Photograph by Stephanie Lake.

Bottom Right:
Aquatic staff Stephanie Dornan and Catherine Wylde at Thornhill Therapeutic Pool. Photograph courtesy of Markham Recreation Services.



they will not achieve the intended goal: a virtuous circle of inclusion and welcome.

Youth

Between 2001 and 2006, York Region's population under age 14 grew faster than the rest of Ontario's. The second largest age group in Markham is that of youth aged 5-24.

A survey completed by members of the Mayor's Youth Task Force told us that youth face barriers to Markham's services, to jobs and to other opportunities. The Task Force members believe that immigrant status and language are the biggest barriers, followed by race and disabilities. Though Markham employs 600 youth each year in Recreation, and more in Parks, other focus groups also told us that many youth in Markham feel excluded from our work, service and volunteer environments.

However, Markham has also been recognized as a Gold Youth Friendly Community Builder. The award recognizes the Town of Markham for its support of youth and the outstanding achievements of large number of youth service providers in our community including: Pathways of York Region, Markham YMCA, Power Unit, Scout groups, sport groups, churches, York Region District School Board, York Catholic District School Board and the wide variety of youth councils (Mayor's Youth Task Force, Markham Teen Arts Council, SSN - LOTT, Markham Library). PLAYWORKS Youth Friendly Community Award is a provincial accreditation that recognizes communities that make an investment in youth play. PLAYWORKS acknowledges the great work that Markham is doing to ensure that youth (ages 13-19) have continuous access to a diverse range of play.

Markham needs to address:

Money: One of the key problems noted by all groups is that youth lack money. It is hard for youth to pay fees for the public programs Markham offers. Similarly, public transportation to and from programs is expensive or not available.

Location of services: Our focus groups told us that in the south-east area of Markham, where there is a high concentration of newcomers with large families, there are too few community centres and only one well-used library to serve as social hubs for youth. Demand is so high for scarce resources that it is hard to get space for youth programs run by ethnocultural organizations even though youth programs are given top priority. There just isn't enough open park space for youth to congregate.

Means of communication: Focus groups feel that Markham needs to use new means to communicate with youth, such as tapping into social networks and making information available in other languages.



Top:
The Varley Art Gallery takes its offerings outside the gallery as well as inviting everyone in. Photograph courtesy of Town of Markham.

Middle Left :
On the ice at the Markham Museum Family Day, 2010. Photograph by Stephanie Lake.

Bottom Left:
Learn to Swim lessons at the Milliken Mills Pool. Photograph courtesy Town of Markham.

Bottom Right:
Music for the Seniors Art Show held in June, 2009 was provided by the MOTM (Milliken On the Move) Music Ensemble Group. Photograph courtesy Kathleen Graver Town of Markham.



What We Offer

Parks and Recreation, Culture and Libraries

Diversity, growth, and sustainability are key issues in every service Markham provides. We have achieved a great deal already in the encouragement of inclusion. But our budgets are limited, and needs are growing, so we must be flexible in the way we use what we have, as well as in the kinds of new programs we create.

The Integrated Leisure Master Plan approved in 2010 states it is to ensure that Markham's Parks, Recreation, Cultural and Library services provide inclusive, accessible, safe, enjoyable and sustainable leisure, learning, sport and cultural opportunities essential to vibrant places.

Parks and Recreation are vital to sustainable individual and community health. Markham's parks currently reflect the community we once were, rather than the community we have become, and the community we will be in the future. Demographic and cultural changes have a big impact on the kinds of games and entertainments people choose, the kinds of parks they want to be in, and where they want those parks to be. There is higher demand now for soccer and cricket, and neighbourhood parks are much more important to people's social lives than ever before. Parks have become community gathering places, especially in those parts of Markham where green space is hard to find. In the future, we know it is our community partnerships that will help us fill the gaps in service arising from growth, so Markham must encourage engagement and participation, especially of youth. And we do.

We have five youth councils that contribute advice in local neighbourhoods. The Mayor's Youth Task Force, specifically, presents youth issues to Markham's Council. Markham continues to build extensive partnerships among community groups and school boards. In addition, Markham has a Race Relations Committee, an Accessibility Committee and a new Seniors' Committee to allow residents to share their concerns, ideas and perspectives as the community works together for solutions and occasions for celebration..

Persons with disabilities provided with access to all Markham parks and recreational facilities. Markham will be retrofitting community centres and recreation facilities with energy and accessibility upgrades, with the help of the Recreation Infrastructure Canada Program (RinC). Barrier-free designs will be used at all newly constructed and renovated community facilities. These include lowered front counters to allow easier communications and access for persons with disabilities.

Culture creates a sense of place, of belonging. Markham's ethnocultural diversity provides a rich foundation for Markham's cultural future, which will

extend far beyond the walls of the Markham Museum, the Varley Gallery and the Markham Theatre. That's why Council created a Culture Department in 2009 and recently approved a process to create a Cultural Policy and Plan, including broad engagement with the community. We intend to bring cultural institutions to the community, as well as invite the community into Markham's cultural institutions.

Libraries are uniquely able to foster social inclusion because they have a tradition of making their programs, collections and services meet the needs of local residents. Most libraries design their services to attract audiences by age (seniors, adults, teens and children). Libraries help build early literacy, school and reading readiness, strengthen family literacy and lifelong learning, and can help newcomers access the information and tools that they need to succeed.

In early 2009, Markham Public Library underwent a reorganization. A new service model was implemented whereby branch managers took on the role of chairperson for service committees. These service committees are broken down into five areas, which overlap with this Diversity Action Plan: Seniors' services, inclusive services, teen services, adult services and children's services.

Adaptive technology for the hearing and visually impaired is already offered at two out of six branches. Markham Village Library and Thornhill Community Library have Kurzweil 3000 units, which are technological tools to support reading for people with learning difficulties and the blind and visually impaired. We hope to add another unit at the Milliken Mills Branch. We have been incorporating accessibility improvements required under the *Municipal Guidelines for Accessibility* in all library building programs including:

- curb cuts;
- ramps;
- well-marked wheelchair access routes, and fully accessible barrier-free entrances;
- automated entrance doors; full washroom accessibility for persons with disabilities and the wheelchair-bound;
- shelving that enables people to reach the top or bottom shelves;
- wide barrier-free pathways through the Library and between shelving stacks;
- ample turn areas at stack-ends for wheelchair and motorized scooter access;
- elevators between levels, with tactile signage sensitive to wheelchair users as well as people with visual impairments;
- railings on steps;
- floor surfaces that allow easy movement for persons with disabilities and impairments;
- a seating-level-height section at all service points;
- and wheelchair-accessible workstations and study tables.

Seniors have a dedicated Library web page with up-to-date information about collections, services and programs, as well as large print material and audio-books. Markham Public Library celebrates Seniors Month in June with a variety of programs including an Open House. Markham Public Library offers homebound service to all residents who are unable to leave their home. Library staff select material based on the customer's reading preferences and it is delivered directly to the customer's home. Material borrowed through the homebound service has an extended loan period of six weeks. Upon request, Markham Public Library sets up deposit collections at various community or non-profit seniors organizations. The material is loaned out to the organization for an extended period of time. All of this allows the Library to be wherever seniors are.

Youth have been working with the Library staff through the Immigrant Youth Centre in Markham. The Library maintains a dedicated youth web page, allowing Markham Public Library to promote teen programs and volunteer opportunities as well as offer links on topics such as books and literature, fitness, health and well-being, career development, employment and social activism. Markham Public Library has library spaces devoted entirely to teens/youth. The first dedicated teen space was unveiled at Angus Glen Library in 2004, followed by a second space at Markham Village Library in 2007. This concept will be incorporated in future projects such as East Markham Library and the renovations at Milliken Mills Library. The dedicated spaces provide teens with a comfortable destination where they can gather to study, socialize, and lounge. These spaces include Wii consoles, wide screen TVs and a number of Public Access Terminals dedicated for teen use. Teen services librarian positions have been introduced at Angus Glen, Markham Village and Milliken Mills branches: a librarian is devoted to supporting and promoting programs, services and collections for teens/youth. Where there is no teen librarian, a librarian within the branch is designated to be the teen representative for the branch.

Newcomers need gateways to their new community's resources. In 2009, the Markham Public Library launched the Library Settlement Program, a newcomer referral service in partnership with Citizenship and Immigration Canada and other settlement agencies, providing access to services, programs and information for newcomers. The Library also received a \$40,000 grant to improve English as a Second Language collections across the system. Markham offers events to celebrate diversity including: Chinese New Year, Black History Month, Asian Heritage Month, Holocaust Education Week, Islamic History Month, Canada Day and the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. We also offer ESL classes through a partnership with York Region District School Board. Our collections, in various languages and formats, reflect the cultural diversity of the community.



Top Left:
Children play in a park in Cornell, a new-urbanist community in east Markham. Photography courtesy of Planning and Urban Design Department, Markham.



Top Right:
Photograph courtesy of the Remington Group.



Middle Left:
This heritage home is on Colborne Street in the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District. Photograph courtesy of Adam Birrell.



Middle Right:
Unionville South Park, a new development. Photograph by Stephanie Lake.



Bottom Left:
High rises in the heart of Markham, at Town Centre Boulevard and Clegg Road, built by Liberty Development. Photograph courtesy of Planning and Urban Design Department, Markham.



Bottom Right:
A new townhouse development in Markham Centre, where density is higher, built by Tridel and Dorsay. Photograph courtesy of Planning and Urban Design Department, Markham.

Where We Live

What we offer and where we offer it often does not coincide with where our greatest needs are found.

The only way disparities and gaps in service can be rectified is if they are acknowledged and then used to provide a framework for action and planning. Mapping of existing services and needs clearly illustrates the issues.

As the Geography Information System (GIS) map on page 51 attests, Markham is both buoyed and troubled by its rapid growth and changing demographics. An early wave of immigrants from abroad, and Torontonians looking for wide open spaces, settled in communities such as Thornhill in the south west quadrant of Markham. This population is relatively wealthy, largely Canadian born, and predominantly of the Baby Boom generation. There is a second group of the more frail elderly, living primarily in the southwest quadrant of Markham, who require more personal support services, more access to transportation for medical appointments, help with snow removal, and other community programs.

Immigrants who speak Chinese languages as their mother tongue also reside in affluent districts of Northern Markham.⁶⁰ Recent newcomers to Canada tend to live in multi-generational and multi-family groups within single family homes in southeast Markham. In this area, parents have a high level of education and high aspirations, but family incomes are relatively low. In this district, Markham has not caught up with a whole range of burgeoning needs, including services in the relevant languages, sufficient parks, cultural facilities, skating rinks, libraries, community centres, swimming pools, cricket pitches and soccer fields. There is a general belief, supported by the evidence illustrated on the GIS maps, that more services are needed in many parts of the community south of Highway 7.

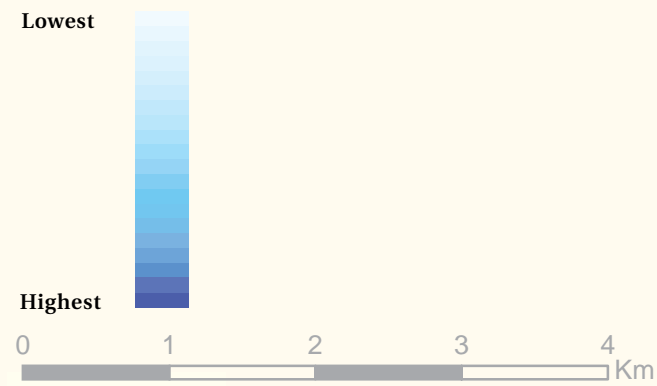
Statistics Canada
Population Density by Dissemination Area

Community Centres

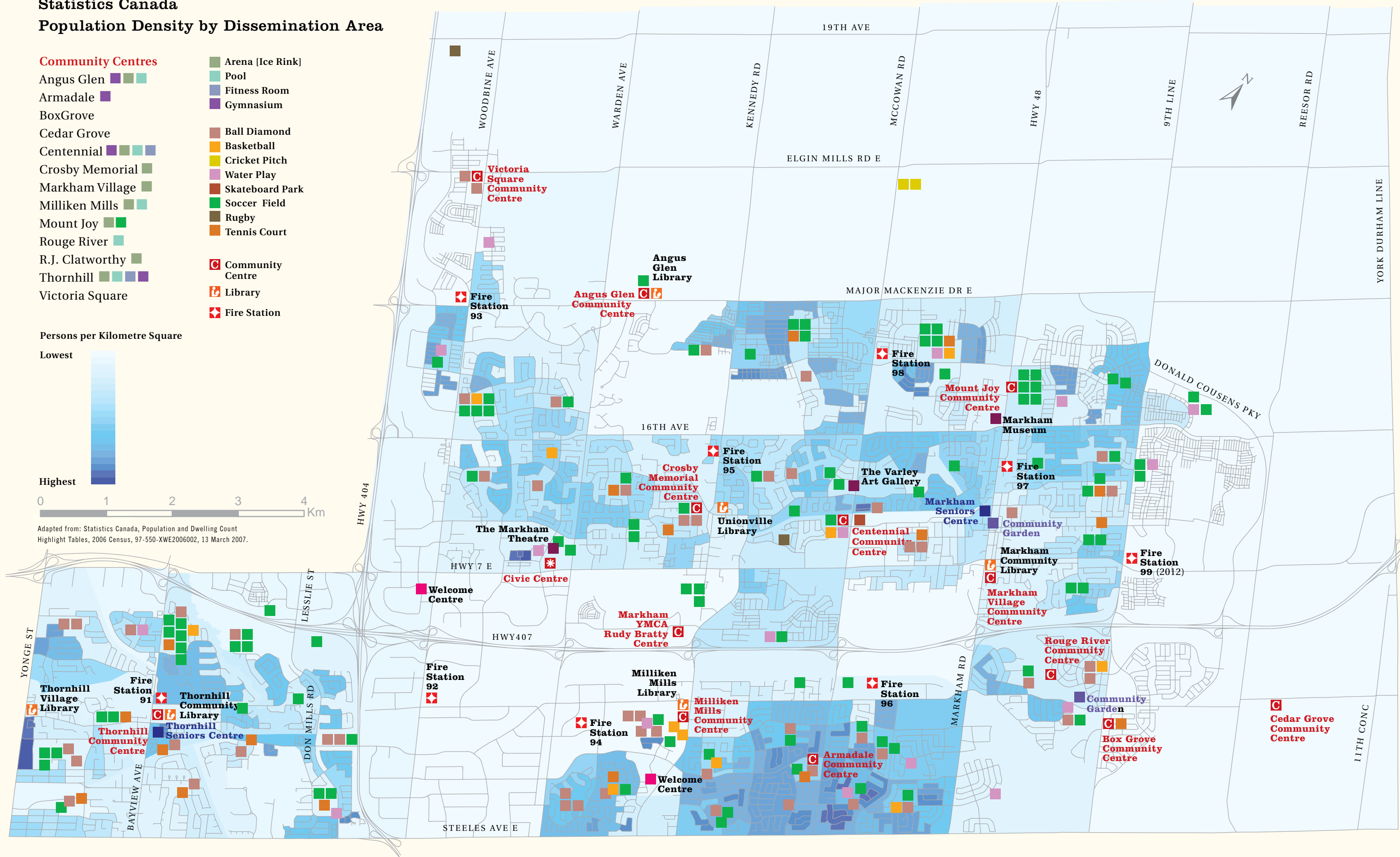
- Angus Glen
- Armadale
- BoxGrove
- Cedar Grove
- Centennial
- Crosby Memorial
- Markham Village
- Milliken Mills
- Mount Joy
- Rouge River
- R.J. Clatworthy
- Thornhill
- Victoria Square

- Arena [Ice Rink]
- Pool
- Fitness Room
- Gymnasium
- Ball Diamond
- Basketball
- Cricket Pitch
- Water Play
- Skateboard Park
- Soccer Field
- Rugby
- Tennis Court
- Community Centre
- Library
- Fire Station

Persons per Kilometre Square



Adapted from: Statistics Canada, Population and Dwelling Count Highlight Tables, 2006 Census, 97-550-XWE2006002, 13 March 2007.





Moving Forward

The glory of recent Canadian political history lies in how we have extended the hand of welcome to the world and have tried to repair historical damage done to disadvantaged minorities. As a nation, we embrace diversity. We rejoice as previously excluded groups are invited to participate and to create opportunities for others. Our experience teaches us that, in order to make this process work, political leaders must show the way and write the program. Then government officials must carry it out, and citizens must hold governments accountable.

The Mayor and Council of Markham have taken the lead in setting out this Diversity Action Plan. Markham's staff have invested much time and thought in its creation. At staff focus groups, as at our community meetings, concerns were honestly expressed. Here are a few:

- Fire Services staff worry that newcomers are reluctant to call for help. They have been offered money by some because that's how things are done in other places. They worry about being seen as culturally insensitive because they are required by law to respond to fire calls wearing full gear including boots, — even at religious institutions where, footwear is to be removed before entering. Fire staff also worry that people may not call them in an emergency if they are living in illegal apartments. They also believe they are not getting recruits from newcomer communities because their work is not valued, yet they don't have the budget for outreach to educate the community about the vital work they do.
- Recreation staff are on the front lines trying to help everybody, but are finding it tough to cope with the mismatch between location of needs and location of facilities.
- Library staff are thrilled at the high level of newcomers' interest in what they have to offer, but are almost overwhelmed by the huge number of new library users and the demand for services.

All the departments of Markham's government have contributed to the recommendations for action listed below. For each, recommendation we have named the lead department responsible for delivering the service, as a guide to accountability.

Top Left:
Thornhill Village Library has all the quaintness of 19th century Markham, but its services set a 21st century standard. Photograph by Kathleen Graver.

Top Right:
Asian Heritage Month 2009 celebrations at Angus Glen Library. All of Markham's libraries are accessible, with programs for everyone, especially for youth. Books are available in all of Markham's major languages. Photograph courtesy of Markham Library.

Middle Centre Right:
Youth perform at Markville Mall at Centre Court to celebrate Youth Week, 2008. Photograph by Jason Tsien.

Middle Centre Left:
Photograph by Stephanie Lake.

Bottom Right:
At the Markham Fair, Captain Dave Creighton, firefighter, demonstrates how Markham Fire Services saves lives every day throughout the community. Photograph by Roy Norgrove.

Bottom Left:
Families enjoy a stroller friendly path on The Annual Picnic and Fun Fair Day at the Benjamin Marr Park, Cornell. Photograph by Stephanie Lake.

Recommendations

To better serve everybody, we will:

| LEAD DEPARTMENTS | RECOMMENDATIONS | TIMING |
|---------------------------------------|---|------------|
| ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | 01 Develop a broad Kindergarten– grade 12 outreach program to help local youth better understand and prepare for productive work in a rapidly changing world. | 2015-2019 |
| ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | 02 Work with local post-secondary institutions to identify specific opportunities for building and nurturing our talent pool (including seminars, career days, a course in entrepreneurship and videos of successful new entrepreneurs). | 2010-2019+ |
| ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | 03 Leverage the multicultural and multilingual character of Markham’s population to attract international partners and new opportunities for economic development. | 2010-2019+ |
| DEVELOPMENT SERVICES | 04 Provide for a diversified housing stock to serve the growing population, including intensification at appropriate locations. | 2019+ |
| DEVELOPMENT SERVICES | 05 Support the further application of sustainable community design, transit investment and infrastructure improvement. Provide a mix of housing and jobs supportive of improved life and work options in Markham. | 2019+ |
| SUSTAINABILITY | 06 Partner with York food network to design a culture and food guide to support community in finding culturally appropriate food. | 2010-2019 |
| SUSTAINABILITY | 07 Develop introductory civic courses for citizens unfamiliar with municipal processes, and research the potential of a youth-shadow council to promote interest in Markham’s council to our future leaders. | 2010-2019+ |
| CONTACT CENTRE | 08 Identify and incorporate the needs of newcomers and visible minorities, seniors, youth and persons with disabilities into Markham’s corporate customer-service strategy. | 2010-2014 |
| COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS | 09 Develop clear language guidelines for all forms of Markham’s communications including, but not limited to, the Town’s website, program publicity, and public policies. | 2015-2019 |
| HUMAN RESOURCES | 10 Develop a Markham strategy for advertising employment opportunities to newcomers, visible minorities, seniors, youth, and persons with disabilities. | 2010-2019 |

| LEAD DEPARTMENTS | RECOMMENDATIONS | TIMING |
|--|---|------------|
| HUMAN RESOURCES | 11 Develop a formal diversity and inclusion vision statement and policy, and incorporate them into all job postings. Monitor employee awareness of diversity policies through impromptu surveys. | 2010-2014 |
| HUMAN RESOURCES | 12 Incorporate diversity competence into the performance management process commencing with management; develop diversity competence training, create a leadership and supervisory checklist for hiring, and publish an annual diversity report along with an employee demographic survey. | 2010-2019+ |
| RECREATION HUMAN RESOURCES | 13 Develop a corporation-wide public engagement strategy, focussing on newcomers and visible minorities, seniors, youth and persons with disabilities to increase outreach/participation. | 2010-2019+ |
| RECREATION | 14 Develop a pricing strategy that will include a balance of no-cost/low-cost programs and services that are accessible to all residents. | 2010-2014 |
| ASSET MANAGEMENT | 15 Ensure frequently used Markham facilities meet provincial accessibility requirements. | 2010-2019 |
| HUMAN RESOURCES, COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS | 16 Improve the availability of Markham staff that can offer help in key newcomer languages; increase the means to communicate with the hearing impaired; enhance and promote the use of Markham’s existing multi-language Line. | 2010-2014 |
| ACCESSIBILITY OFFICE AND HUMAN RESOURCES | 17 Develop a corporate policy to make Markham information and applications available in multiple formats. | 2010-2014 |
| HUMAN RESOURCES | 18 Ensure Markham continues to be a role model of inclusive employment practices. | 2010-2014 |
| HUMAN RESOURCES | 19 Develop a diversity resource on Markham’s staff intranet, providing tools for easy access to information. | 2010-2014 |
| CULTURE | 20 Develop strategic plans for Markham Museum, Theatre and The Varley Art Gallery, and present plans to newcomers and visible minorities, seniors, youth and persons with disabilities for comment. | 2010-2014 |

| LEAD DEPARTMENTS | RECOMMENDATIONS | TIMING |
|------------------------------------|---|-----------|
| CULTURE | 21 Establish a stronger presence for Markham Theatre, Markham Museum and The Varley Art Gallery by taking offerings from these cultural centres to the community, and contributing programming to major festivals and events. | 2010-2014 |
| CULTURE | 22 Enhance the use of social networks to gain feedback about cultural offerings. | 2010-2014 |
| CULTURE, RECREATION, LIBRARY | 23 Obtain more current data on neighbourhood changes through collaborating with school boards and other community partners. | 2010-2014 |

To better serve Seniors

We will:

| | | |
|---|--|-----------|
| RECREATION | 24 Partner with groups that provide specialized programming for seniors; develop a communications strategy specifically designed for seniors; engage seniors in planning our program delivery methods. | 2010-2014 |
| COMMUNITY SERVICES, FIRE SERVICES, RECREATION | 25 Develop a well-researched understanding of how to find and engage isolated individuals in the community. | 2010-2014 |
| RECREATION | 26 Encourage targeted outreach in neighbourhoods where seniors' programs are already located. | 2010-2014 |
| RECREATION | 27 Seek out volunteers who speak the languages of newcomer communities and ask them to assist in delivering programs to newcomer seniors. | 2010-2014 |
| RECREATION | 28 Inform seniors about subsidies they are entitled to by bringing forms or applications to them instead of assuming that seniors can figure it out on their own. | 2010-2014 |
| RECREATION | 29 Promote programs that allow seniors to stay in the community. | 2010-2014 |

To better serve Youth

We will:

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----------|
| RECREATION | 30 Develop new events and programs that suit all youth in the community by partnering with existing youth councils and cultural youth groups. | 2010-2019 |
| COMMUNITY SERVICES, FIRE SERVICES | 31 Pilot a project in underserved southeast Markham using integrated service delivery and community engagement concepts to help create customized youth programs. | 2010-2019 |

| LEAD DEPARTMENTS | RECOMMENDATIONS | TIMING |
|--|--|------------|
| RECREATION | 32 Track awareness of available youth recreational opportunities and satisfaction ratings on an annual basis. | 2010-2019 |
| LIBRARY | 33 Develop learning-place programs for teens and augment learning-place programs for children focussing on literacy and life skills. | 2010-2014 |
| RECREATION | 34 Promote Markham's Language Line to newly arrived youth. | 2010-2014 |
| RECREATION | 35 Build youth leadership opportunities in existing workshops and volunteer programs by increasing the number of schools active in our Healthy School Initiative. | 2010-2014 |
| RECREATION | 36 Enhance Markham's annual Youth Week celebration by developing new events and programs in partnership with existing youth councils and newcomers' cultural groups. | 2010-2014 |
| COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS | 37 Create a youth communications strategy incorporating the use of Social Media. | 2010-2014 |
| RECREATION | 38 Increase the number of programs and workshops held in neighbourhood schools to decrease the need for youth to pay for transportation to get to programs. | 2010-2014 |
| RECREATION | 39 Provide free youth leadership training for low-income youth, reducing barriers while increasing employment opportunities. | 2010-2014 |
| LIBRARY | 40 Introduce specialized librarian positions which focus on teen programs at all library branches and create new dedicated teen spaces as the branches are renovated/expanded. | 2010-2019+ |
| LIBRARY | 41 Launch a parent-child workshop to help teen parents develop early learning literacy skills at home. | 2010-2014 |
| LIBRARY | 42 Seek out partnerships with organizations that serve at-risk teens, such as York Region Health Services, to connect with teen parents and promote early literacy through story times, outreach and other programs. | 2010-2014 |
| ALL DEPARTMENTS | 43 Enhance opportunities to engage youth at events to which Markham is already committed. | 2010-2019+ |

| LEAD DEPARTMENTS | RECOMMENDATIONS | TIMING |
|----------------------|---|-----------|
| DEVELOPMENT SERVICES | 44 Provide for a diversified housing stock to serve the growing population, including intensification at appropriate locations. | 2019+ |
| RECREATION | 45 Ensure that all community centres have dedicated spaces for youth's exclusive use. | 2010-2019 |

To better serve Newcomers

We will:

| | | |
|---|---|------------|
| RECREATION | 46 Continue to provide diverse recreational opportunities appropriate to the interests of new Markham residents. | 2010-2014 |
| COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS | 47 Develop new strategies to lift language barriers that prevent newcomers from participation by offering recreation, culture and library information in multiple languages. | 2010-2014 |
| COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS, RECREATION | 48 Increase translation services offered in local community centres. | 2010-2014 |
| LIBRARY | 49 Support the settlement services of not-for-profit and government agencies; develop additional services for newcomers while improving the profile of our existing programs and services. | |
| DEVELOPMENT SERVICES | 50 Advocate for a better mix of housing to achieve better income-to-housing cost ratio and enable newcomers to live and work in Markham. | 2010-2019+ |
| RECREATION, LIBRARY | 51 Build sustainable partnerships with emerging cultural groups to help meet the needs of newcomers; expand the number of local clubs and groups helping to plan and deliver programs; publicize the start-up funding we offer to help create innovative, neighbourhood-based programs. | 2010-2014 |
| RECREATION, HUMAN RESOURCES | 52 Provide cultural sensitivity training to full-time and part-time recreation, library and culture staff, building a greater capacity to respond to newcomers' needs in Markham facilities. | 2010-2014 |
| CULTURE | 53 Tell the stories of Markham's history, from pioneer settlements to contemporary times, at the Markham Museum so that all our communities' stories are included. | 2010-2014 |
| LIBRARY | 54 Expand literacy programming in languages other than English through partnerships with community organizations. | 2010-2014 |

| LEAD DEPARTMENTS | RECOMMENDATIONS | TIMING |
|---|---|------------|
| To better serve Visible Minorities | | |
| We will: | | |
| ALL DEPARTMENTS | 55 Ensure Markham continues to be a role model of inclusive employment practices. | 2010-2019+ |
| HUMAN RESOURCES | 56 Establish an anti-racism statement within our anti-harassment policies and procedures. | 2010-2014 |
| HUMAN RESOURCES | 57 Evaluate and report on (as a member of the Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism) activities already being undertaken by Markham that correspond to one or more of the ten commitments. | 2010-2019 |
| HUMAN RESOURCES | 58 Create a leadership and supervisory checklist for bias-free recruitment and selection. | 2010-2014 |
| HUMAN RESOURCES | 59 Publish an annual diversity report that includes an employee demographic survey. | 2010-2014 |

To better serve Persons With Disabilities

We will:

| | | |
|---|--|------------|
| DEVELOPMENT SERVICES | 60 Ensure that the design of all improvements to Markham buildings and parks address the needs of persons with disabilities. | 2010-2019+ |
| DEVELOPMENT SERVICES | 61 Continue to advocate for the development of more assisted housing. | 2010-2019+ |
| LIBRARY, CORPORATE COMMUNICATION, COMMUNITY RELATIONS | 62 Assess all our programs, services and delivery methods with the help of the Accessibility Committee. | 2010-2014 |
| CORPORATE COMMUNICATION, COMMUNITY RELATIONS | 63 Design and establish accessibility features on the website. | 2010-2014 |
| LIBRARY | 64 Acquire funding to buy additional Kurzweil units for all library locations. | 2010-2019+ |
| ACCESSIBILITY OFFICE, HUMAN RESOURCES | 66 Increase staff awareness and training regarding the province's new Service Standard. | 2010-2019+ |
| HUMAN RESOURCES RECREATION, | 67 Create more partnerships with community-service providers offering specialized services to persons with disabilities. | 2010-2014 |
| ACCESSIBILITY OFFICE, HUMAN RESOURCES | 68 Explore the possibility of developing Accessible Interactive Maps. | 2010-2014 |

Taken together, we think our proposals are like pathways that point toward the inclusive Markham of the future.



Youth dance at Milne park on
Canada Day, 2008.
Photograph by Stephanie Lake.

Endnotes

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<http://www.markham.ca/Markham/Departments/EDO/Stats.htm>

For information on places of worship please go to:
<http://www.markham.ca/Markham/Templates/generic.aspx?NRMODE=Published&NRNODEGUID=%7bCF906D05-C514-4381-AFD6-43F3DEF6C644%7d&NRORIGINALURL=%2fMarkham%2fServices%2fCmnyRsrc%2fCommServLinks%2ehtm&NRCACHEHINT=Guest#PLACESOFWORSHIP>

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<http://www.yorkregiontransit.com/>

For more information on hospitals please go to:
<http://www.msh.on.ca/>



At Milne Park, Canada Day, 2008.
Photograph by Stephanie Lake.