

MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Don Taylor, Acting Director Strategic Initiatives

SUBJECT: Click With Markham - Building Markham's Future
Together – Council's Strategic Areas of Focus

DATE: March 25, 2008

Based on Councillors' review of the Click With Markham – Building Markham's Future Together - Council's Strategic Areas of Focus report as presented to General Committee on March 17, 2008, the following changes to Appendix 1 – "Building Markham's Future Together" were requested:

In the Environment Section

- The issue statement (p. 19) to be revised - "Globally, human activity is significantly impacting and altering the natural environment, affecting our air, land, water and habitat and therefore impacting Markham's quality of life. There is an urgent need for a coordinated and comprehensive strategy to enable us to continue to be a leader in environmental sustainability, **to protect the natural environment** and advance innovation in our built form".

In the Diversity Section

- Paragraph 1(b) under Action Plans (p.46) – "and promotion" should be added after the word "recruitment".
- Paragraph 5 under Action Plans (p.47) – in line 1, the word "residents" should replace "constituents" and any other place where that happens.

Copies of revised pages 19, 46 and 47, showing the original and revised wording, are attached to this memo.

Environment

Issue Statement:

Globally, human activity is significantly impacting and altering the natural environment, affecting our air, land, water and habitat and therefore impacting Markham's quality of life. There is an urgent need for a coordinated and comprehensive strategy to enable us to continue to be a leader in environmental sustainability, ~~and to continue to~~ **protect the natural environment** and advance innovation in our built and natural environments.

Action Plan:

1. Create a "Green Print" strategy for Markham that protects our environment and includes:
 - a. Policies for protection of our air, land, water, vegetation/habitat, wildlife and all living species;
 - b. A comprehensive, multi-year, multi-lingual education and communication strategy for staff and the public that involves the community and creates awareness of the Green Print;
 - c. Work with all levels of government to endorse and support the sustainability program, and;
 - d. Develop a comprehensive Climate Action Plan.
2. Adopt a "Green Building Standards" and "Green Community Standards":
3. Develop and implement a community-side zero waste strategy
4. Prepare an enhanced Town-wide Beautification Policy.
5. Develop alternative ideas and strategies that encourage maintaining a healthier community including local food production and security, bike paths and trails
6. Establish the Town's ecological footprint as a baseline and as a tool to help the community understand how to reduce its ecological footprint.
7. Develop a financial funding strategy and modeling tool to support these initiatives.

Diversity

What is the issue?

Markham is home to individuals representing a wide range of human experiences, including; stages of life, abilities, and ethno-cultural backgrounds. There is a need to develop a clear strategy and policies to strengthen the Town's ability to promote unity, inclusiveness and to provide programs and services in a manner that addresses the diverse needs of Markham residents.

Action Plans:

1. Vision and Strategy

Develop a vision statement, strategy and comprehensive work plan that will move the corporation towards an increased level of "*Diversity competence*". (*Diversity competent organizations understand, respect and embrace difference. Through community involvement they develop services and programs which are appropriate and relevant to the diverse groups within the community. They participate in continuous self-assessment, expand their knowledge of issues related to inclusion and adapt their service models to respond to those needs. Such organizations consult with relevant individuals and groups and are committed to creating inclusive work environments.*)** The work plan will include the following elements:

- a) Mandatory training for all Town staff to achieve individual diversity competence.
- b) Inclusive Human Resource practices with a particular focus on recruitment **and promotion**.
- c) Opportunities for staff to mentor diverse individuals in the area of career development through expanded participation in various Mentorship/Partnership programs such as *Career Edge, Ability Edge* and *Career Bridge*.
- d) An effective internal communications plan
- e) A program to measure our success

2. **Increased Civic Engagement and Participation**

Reach out to Markham's various communities to hear the diverse voices, increase engagement and increase participation in Town activities and initiatives. Specific activities could include the holding of regular focus group consultations. Seize opportunities to foster a welcoming environment at all Town locations such as the Civic Centre, Community Centres and Cultural venues, in a manner that is consistent with a "doors wide open" philosophy.

3. **Strengthened Community Partnerships**

Through community partnerships and collaboration, share a greater understanding of the diverse make-up of the community. This increased understanding will not only assist in ensuring that the Town's services and programs align with the various needs of Markham residents, but will also serve to demonstrate the Town's commitment to unity and to respecting and promoting human rights.

4. **Board and Committee Development**

Create opportunities for the Town's boards and committees to reflect the voices and faces of Markham through outreach and training efforts. Further, introduce a *Seniors Committee* and review (and revise as appropriate) the respective structure and mandates of the *Race Relations Committee*, the *Markham Advisory Committee on Accessibility* and the *Mayor's Youth Task Force*.

5. **Accessible Communication and Services**

Identify opportunities to increasingly provide accessible services and barrier-free engagement to as many of our ~~constituents~~ **residents** as possible, in so far as practicable. This would include the physical environment, customer service, and enhanced communication methods through the use of multilingual services and assistive communication technologies (i.e. TTY/TDD teletypewriter/telephone devices for the deaf). Volunteer partnerships will be explored to assist in accomplishing this.

6. **Share the Town's Efforts with Residents**

Develop an effective external communications plan that will increase awareness of the Diversity strategy across Markham and will further foster both the feeling and the experience of inclusion and unity across Markham's communities.

** Adapted from Cross 1989, Georgetown University, National Center for Cultural Competence

DIVERSITY

Action Plan 5: Identify opportunities to increasingly provide accessible services and barrier-free engagement to as many of our ~~constituents~~ **residents** as possible, in so far as practicable. This would include the physical environment, customer service, and enhanced communication methods through the use of multilingual services and assistive communication technologies (i.e. TTY/TDD teletypewriter/telephone devices for the deaf). Volunteer partnerships will be explored to assist in accomplishing this.

What are the high level planning and tactical activities required in order for this action item to succeed?	- Identify the accessibility and language needs of Town residents through a set of reliable sources/surveys that could include the Canadian census, regional social planning data, Ward Councillor perspectives and community feedback - Define the elements of multi-lingual services and accessible communications - Develop a mechanism and a set of criteria to determine when, how, at what level and what type of multi-lingual and accessible services the Town may offer (guidelines, protocols etc.). - Establish volunteer partnerships, which increase the Town's ability to provide multi-lingual and accessible services in a customer friendly and cost effective manner. - Fulfill requirements of legislation, such as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). - Corporate Communication business unit - Communication committee of Council - Cross Commission team - Community Stakeholders - Organizations with similar objectives (York Region, York Region School Board, York Regional Police and the City of Toronto)
Who needs to be involved?	
What are the milestone performance measurements over the next 4 years?	- Knowledge of resident needs - Development of a policy framework - Well defined program objectives - The establishment of the requisite program infrastructure which includes tracking and measurement mechanisms - Have entered into at least one effective volunteer/community partnership - Increased civic engagement - Town staff gain an understanding of and respect for cultural/language differences - Expanded levels of service - Town is regarded as a leader in this area
Identify the Benefits to the Town and Residents. (What will they look like?)	
Identify any potential barriers to success:	- Resources - Competing priorities - Our efforts at broadening services are seen as "not sufficiently inclusive" - Limited number of volunteers

Identify any high level budgetary considerations:	• Translation and interpretation services • Ongoing internal resources • Training costs • Dedicated staff position (Accessibility Coordinator)
Phasing Target	• Initiation in 2009 - Projected Completion 2011