

APPENDIX B

Growth Management - Agriculture

TOWN OF MARKHAM

AGRICULTURAL ASSESSMENT PHASE 2: AGRICULTURAL OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

May 12, 2009

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AGRICULTURAL ASSESSMENT STUDY PROCESS

- April 2008 Study Process Initiated
- June 2008 Stakeholder Meeting
- October 2008 Part A DSC – Phase 1: Agricultural Assessment
- October 2008 Public Information Meeting
- January 2009 Farmer's Meeting
- May 2009 Part A DSC – Phase 2: Agricultural Options
- May/June 2009 Public Information Meeting
- October 2009 Phase 3: Final Report and Recommendations

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PHASE 1 ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

- Prime land – majority class 1 which is a limited non renewable resource
- Farms and farmland declining
- Gross farm receipts increased (2001 – 2006)
- Interest in long-term farming by farming community
- Competing land use interests in rural area
- Some fragmentation but generally larger lot fabric intact
- Amount of public land ownership very high

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PHASE 2 TASKS

- Consult with agricultural community to determine long-term objectives
- Evaluate Provincial, Region and local policy requirements
- Evaluate local constraints related to agriculture
- Evaluate local issues related to agriculture
- Evaluate local opportunities
- Identify a recommended approach for Markham which would include policy, regulatory, financial and implementation implications

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SUMMARY OF FARMERS MEETINGS

- Over 50 attendees – all actively farming in Markham

Identified Issues & Constraints

Issue/Constraint	Percentage
Land Use Regulations	40.0%
Urban environment	35.0%
Income from Farming	25.0%
Good Management & Financial Resources	15.0%
Provincial/Regional/Local	10.0%
Markham	5.0%

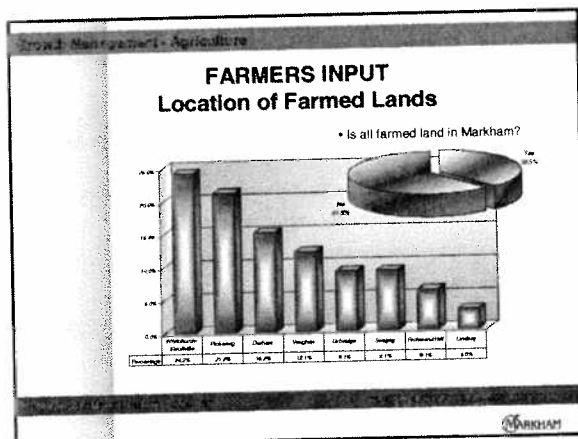
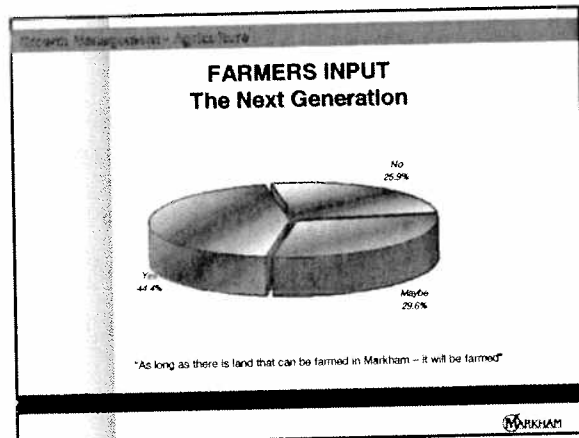
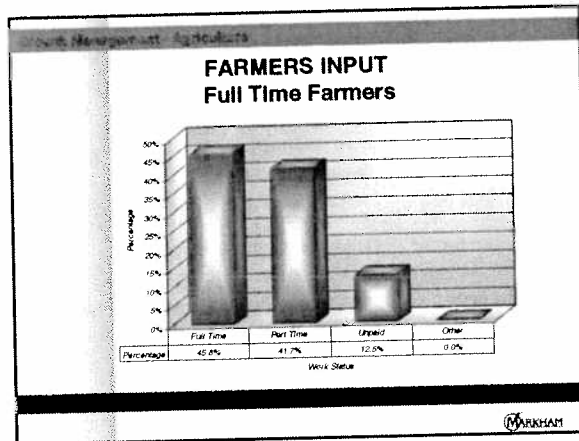
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FARMERS INPUT Generation's Farmed

Generation	Percentage
1	3.0%
2	11.0%
3	5.0%
4	19.0%
5	16.0%
6	7.0%
7	7.0%
8	5.0%
9	3.0%
10+	23.0%

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- ### TRENDS IN AGRICULTURE
- Changing food consumption patterns
 - Climate – Uncertainty
 - Energy Consumption
 - International Standards
 - Water
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- ### THREATS & WEAKNESSES
- Cost of Land
 - Conflicting Non- Agricultural Uses
 - Short Term Leases on publicly owned lands
 - Uncertainty Regarding Status of Public Lands
 - Rouge Park Plans
 - Myriad of Regulations
 - Aging Farm Population
 - Urban Growth Pressures
 - Fragmentation
 - Deteriorating Farm Infrastructure
 - Competition for Land
 - Lack of Agricultural Services
 - Re-Naturalization Program
 - Conflict with Natural Heritage Policies
 - Lack of Public Knowledge about Farming
 - Categorizing "good crops" vs. "bad crops"
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- ### STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES
- Public Land could support Permanency
 - Municipal support for Local Food
 - Outstanding Resource (class 1 soil and good climate)
 - Available Land In White Belt and Green Belt
 - Strong Markets
 - Committed Farm Population
 - Opportunity for Input into Rouge Park Planning
 - Growing Recognition of Value of Agriculture
 - Farms as Environmental Stewards
 - Partnership between NHS and Agriculture
 - Cultural and Historical Contribution
 - Abutting Agricultural Areas
 - Opportunity for Community Sustainability
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POLICY CONTEXT

- PPS
- GROWTH PLAN
- GREENBELT PLAN
- REGIONAL OFFICIAL PLAN
- MARKHAM OFFICIAL PLAN
- ROUGE PARK PLANS

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GOVERNMENT ROLES

- **Federal**
 - Trade Policy
 - National Food / Agricultural Policy
 - Safety Nets – Income Stabilization
 - Research and Development
- **Provincial**
 - Agricultural Support Strategy
 - Specialized Research and Development
 - Coordinated Legislation
 - Farming and Food Protection Act
- **Municipal**
 - By-Laws and Policies

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REGIONAL CONTEXT

- GTA Agricultural Action Committee
- York Official Plan Review
- Region of York LEAR
- York Regional Agriculture Liaison Group
- York Federation – Ontario Federation of Agriculture

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MARKHAM'S OFFICIAL PLAN

- Markham's OP uses a three-tiered agricultural designation approach (A1, A2 and A3) with different use permissions
- OP policies generally strong, but reflect a traditional approach to the management of agricultural lands
- Existing policies acknowledges potential for non agricultural uses in the agricultural designations

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POLICY AREAS

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AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY MUST CONSIDER THE DISTINCTIVE AGRICULTURAL AREAS

- Whitebelt lands required for growth to 2031
- Whitebelt lands not required for 2031 growth
- Greenbelt Federal Airport Lands
- Greenbelt Rouge Park Lands
- Greenbelt Private Ownership

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CONCLUSION

- There is a future for agriculture in Markham.
- An Agricultural Strategy for Markham could address the following matters:
 - Stronger Official Plan Policies and new policies to recognize various contexts for agriculture in Markham
 - Economic Development Policy for Agriculture
 - Local – Right to Farm Policy
 - Partnership with Federal Government to Encourage Agriculture on Airport Lands
 - Partnership with Provincial Government & Rouge Park Alliance to Integrate Sustainable Agriculture in the Rouge Park
 - Facilitation to assist with regulatory controls
 - Coordination with Farm Community to Provide support
 - Coordinated strategy with Region of York

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STRATEGY OPTIONS FOR MARKHAM

- Option 1: Strengthen and Enhance Agricultural Policies, Work with Rouge Park to prepare a long-term Rouge Park Agricultural Strategy and create an Agricultural Advisory Committee
 - Enhance Official Plan Policies to address short term agriculture (2031 lands) and long-term (post 2031 and Greenbelt)
 - Strengthen the partnership with Rouge Park in dealing with agricultural activities
 - Create an Agricultural Advisory Committee for the purpose of providing input to Council on agricultural related issues

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STRATEGY OPTIONS FOR MARKHAM

- Option 2: Secondary Agricultural Enhancement Initiatives
 - Option 1 plus.....
 - Incorporate Agriculture into the Town's Economic Development and Greenprint (Community Sustainability Plan) Strategy
 - Review Local Food Policy to align with Local Food Production
 - Prepare and endorse a Municipal Right to Farm Policy (statement of principles supporting agricultural farm practices)

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STRATEGY OPTIONS FOR MARKHAM

- Option 3: Agricultural Enhancement Initiatives Requiring Municipal Staff and Financial Resources
 - Option 1 & 2 strategies plus...
 - Introduce agricultural farm financial incentives such as further reduced property taxes (beyond 25%) for long-term agricultural production
 - Consider assigning duties to Town staff to facilitate agricultural support programs
 - Identify the financial and staff resources needed in conjunction with the Region of York

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IMPLICATIONS

- All options enhance the sustainability of long term agriculture
- All options requires a shared vision between the Town, Rouge Park and Federal Government
- All options require the formation of meaningful, effective partnerships with landowners and the agricultural community
- Town would need to address staff-work assignments and resource priorities in the moving forward with the recommended options 2 and 3
- Reduced Revenue from Development Charges & Property Tax (Option 3)

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NEXT STEPS

- Release Options Report for Public Input
- Public Information Meeting (late spring or early fall)
- Final Report and Recommendations

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