



Report to: Development Services Committee

Date Report Authored: May 10, 2011

SUBJECT: The Greenprint, Markham's Sustainability Plan, Final Report
PREPARED BY: Victoria McGrath x 7516

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the staff report and presentation titled The Greenprint, Markham's Sustainability Plan, Final Report dated June 13, 2011, be received;
- 2) And that Council approve the Greenprint, Markham's Sustainability Plan, as attached;
- 3) And that the Sustainability Office continue to work with Council, staff and the community to implement the recommendations and report progress annually to Council while also incorporating the Greenprint into annual business planning and capital and operating budget processes;
- 4) And that the implementation of the Greenprint be coordinated through the Environmental Issues Committee;
- 5) And that the Sustainability Office report back regularly on progress on implementation;

And that Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

N/A

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council approval of the Final Greenprint, Markham's Sustainability Plan (see Appendix A).

BACKGROUND:

Greenprint in strategic framework

In his 2006, inaugural speech, the Mayor outlined a strategic framework for the upcoming term of Council, including a Greenprint for Markham. Working together with Council, staff and the community, the Greenprint will include a vision, priorities, strategies, goals and objectives that will contribute to Markham's future as a sustainable community, ensuring long-term prosperity, social well being and environmental health.

The Greenprint will build on other initiatives, such as the Diversity Action Plan, the Integrated Leisure Master Plan, the Growth Management Strategy, the Vision 2020 Economic Development Strategy and policies, guidelines and processes underway, to become a comprehensive, integrated framework that guides the Town, over time, to the desired sustainable future.

The Greenprint will also meet the criteria of the Federal Gas Tax Agreement to complete a community sustainability plan and implementation will be funded, over time, by the Gas Tax. Schedule G of the Federal Gas Tax Agreement outlines how municipalities that

have completed a community sustainability plan are eligible for ongoing Gas Tax funding, including funding for “capacity building” to implement the community sustainability plan (see Appendix B).

Staff, Council, community and stakeholder engagement has been underway since 2008. Engagement activities included:

- Quest for the Best Markham Youth contest, October - December 2008
- Sustainability Fair and Futures Forum Workshop (October 2009)
- World Café (February 2009)
- Council/Senior Leaders Visioning Session (December 2009)
- Stakeholders Workshops (December 2009 and April 2010)
- Greenprint Advisory Committee Meetings (four between June 2009 and March 2010)
- Council Workshops (October 2009 and March 2010)
- The Natural Step Workshop (January 2010)
- Part A Presentation to General Committee (May 10, 2010)
- Draft approval, in principal, for consultation, of Greenprint (June 2010)
- Revisions to Greenprint to reflect feedback from consultation (December 2010)
- Review of recommendations with Council, staff (March – April 2011)

The Draft for Consultation Greenprint was approved, in principal, for public consultation by Council June 22, 2010. Since that time, inreach and outreach took place throughout the remainder of 2010 and first quarter of 2011 with Council, staff, the community, stakeholders and other levels of government.

Staff took into consideration the comments, feedback and suggestions received over the consultation period and have incorporated these into the Final Greenprint. The result is a long-term, overarching plan with 241 initial recommendations for implementation and ongoing opportunities for engagement around roles and responsibilities and timing. Staff presented 241 recommendations to Council at two workshops in February and March 2011, and, after thorough discussion and confirmation around wording, the recommendations were endorsed at the March 21, 2011, General Committee meeting.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

The Greenprint is a long-term, comprehensive strategy to make Markham one of the most liveable and sustainable cities in North America. The Greenprint is built on a framework of vision, priorities, strategies and indicators.

Draft Vision:

Markham: leading the way together to liveable neighbourhoods, healthy people, and continuing prosperity.

Using The Natural Step sustainability principles as a guide, in a sustainable Markham:

- We rely on materials, goods and services that are created, harvested and processed in keeping with natural cycles – we do not dig things up too fast;

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- We rely on materials, goods and services that break down easily in nature, are easily used by nature and are abundant in nature – we do not produce waste;
 - We value and restore the natural environment and protect biodiversity, natural capital and ecosystem services, and;
 - We meet people's needs.

Priorities:

The Greenprint vision is supported by twelve integrated sustainability priorities that reflect the three sustainability pillars of Social and Cultural Well-Being, Economic Vitality and Environmental Health.

Social and Cultural Well Being

- Social Equity
- Identity and Culture
- Individual Health
- Shelter
- Food Security
- Access and Mobility

Economic Vitality

- Education and Skills
- Economic Vibrancy

Environmental Health

- Energy and Climate
- Ecosystem Integrity
- Materials Management
- Water Efficiency

Final Greenprint

Since the Greenprint was draft approved in June 2010, in principle, for consultation, staff engaged extensively with Council, staff, stakeholders and the community. As a result of the consultation, many comments and suggestions were received. Staff restructured the Greenprint, in response to these comments to reflect a simpler structure with less repetition, a clear direction on governance, a section on how to fund the Greenprint and a clear articulation of how the Greenprint will be implemented over time.

Restructured Greenprint layout

- Introduction
- Vision
- Sustainability Pillars and Priorities

- Financial Discussion
- Governance
- Implementation Matrix (includes timeframe)
- Conclusion

The Introduction includes a new description of the three pillars of sustainability, Social and Cultural Wellbeing, Economic Vitality and Environmental Health, which was missing in the earlier draft. The sustainability priorities remain the same, however, many of the recommendations have been expanded to include the many suggestions and comments received through the consultation process.

The new financial discussion describes the current municipal funding framework , provides recommendations for working more efficiently in collaboration and partnership with others and suggests a low carbon economy will require transformational change.

The governance chapter clearly defines who will coordinate, implement, monitor and report on Greenprint over time and recommends ongoing consultation and engagement with the community through the creation of task forces and working groups.

The implementation matrix describes each of the recommendations and will, through ongoing discussion with staff and the community, articulates who will be responsible for implementing them, over a short, medium or long term time frame and opportunities for funding and partnerships.

Next Steps

A Steering Committee, made up of members of Council and the Commissioners helped to guide the development of the Greenprint. Staff considered the creation of a Greenprint implementation steering committee to ensure members of Council are actively engaged in the implementation of the Greenprint, however, it is recommended that the Environmental Issues Committee be the implementation steering committee. The Environmental Issues Committee currently deals with sustainability-related initiatives and the implementation of the Greenprint would be a natural fit within that mandate.

Following the approach of the Integrated Leisure Master Plan and the Diversity Action Plan, next steps for the Greenprint, upon approval by Council, will be implementing the initial recommendations and ongoing engagement, education and awareness building. There are many initiatives underway already within the community and the organization that can be built upon. In addition, there are many opportunities to partner within the community to move the recommendations of the Greenprint forward.

In order to move implementation forward a number of steps will be taken, including:

- Internal and external consultation around roles, responsibilities, timing and funding for implementing the initial 250 recommendations
- Creation of task forces and other implementation groups, internally and externally, to continue to build on existing leadership, begin implementation and ensure early adoption and success
- Continued partnering, internally and externally, to build on initiatives already underway and collaborate on new opportunities to ensure tangible implementation projects
- Capacity building within the community to integrate sustainability into decision-making
- Ongoing communication strategy to build awareness and involvement
- Ongoing monitoring and reporting of results and achievements

CONCLUSION

The Greenprint is a long-term, comprehensive and community-developed shared vision for a sustainable community. The Greenprint is a dynamic plan that will involve ongoing Council, staff and community participation. The Greenprint includes annual reporting and a five-year review process. This will provide regular opportunities to celebrate successes and allow sufficient time to achieve tangible results yet ensure the recommendations are still current.

The Greenprint will deliver positive change and improve the quality of life for all in Markham in a whole range of areas from education and skills for all, innovative jobs and opportunities for a new economy to safe, convenient open spaces in the community. The Greenprint reflects extensive consultation, over several years, with Council, staff, the community, stakeholders and other levels of government. The Greenprint demonstrates Markham's commitment to a sustainable future and builds on the significant progress made in many leadership areas.

The Greenprint informs decision-making, optimizes use of limited resources and provides a framework for aligning corporate and community efforts in a common direction. For the Greenprint to be truly effective, it is crucial that it be supported and implemented by the community. Many champions in the community have been established throughout the development of the Greenprint and implementation of the Greenprint will provide many more opportunities to demonstrate leadership and commitment from all areas of the community going forward.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE: (external link)

The Sustainability Office 2011 budget to implement the Greenprint is funded by the Gas Tax.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

None at this time

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The Greenprint will build on other initiatives, such as the Diversity Action Plan, the Integrated Leisure Master Plan, the Growth Management Strategy, the Vision 2020 Economic Development Strategy and policies, guidelines and processes underway, to guide the Town, over time, to the desired sustainable future. The Greenprint will also meet the criteria of the Federal Gas Tax Agreement to complete a community sustainability plan.


BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Community and Fire Services
Development Services
Corporate Services

RECOMMENDED

BY:


Victoria McGrath, Director
Sustainability Office


John Livey, CAO

ATTACHMENTS:

Presentation
Appendix A – Greenprint, Markham's Sustainability Plan
Appendix B - Schedule G, Federal Gas Tax Agreement