

Announcement on Markham's Agreement with Local Food Plus to Adopt LFP Standards and Zero Waste program for municipal catering and food services

Mayor Frank Scarpitti
Municipality of Markham
June 4, 2008
2008 Smog Summit
Toronto, Ontario

Good morning. This represents an exciting time for the Markham as we continue to embark on a number of important and innovative environmental programs.

Today's summit is a great example of the kind of thinking that is necessary for real and substantive actions to take place. Because at the end of the day it's not about the promises we make but the actions we take.

And, Markham is taking action.

Today I'm pleased to announce that Markham is the first municipality in Canada to adopt a local food procurement policy that sets out stringent standards for food and catering services within our facilities. These actions will help support Ontario's farm economy, address climate change, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pesticide use, curb urban sprawl, protect Ontario farm lands and promote sustainable farming practices.

Specifically we have entered into an agreement with Local Food Plus that commits us to using LFP certified material and produce from local farmers. Our agreement mandates us to use a minimum of 10 per cent in the first year and increase this by 5 per cent every year. LFP's certification process for farmers ensures we are using our municipal buying power to procure locally and from sources that are transitioning to more sustainable farming practices.

Just yesterday I visited Denise and Dennis Harrison's LFP certified farm in Bradford to see first hand how they operate. I can tell you how impressed I was with their commitment to environmentally sound farm practices and their passion about climate change and the social, environmental and economic and benefits of sustainable farming. From that experience I was more convinced that Markham was on the right course.

There is an LFP representative here today that is available to answer any questions you have about transitioning to local food in your community.

In a related program Markham has also introduced a Zero Waste program across its facilities that will implement features such as:

1. bio-degradable cutlery
2. 10% recycled paper products
3. elimination of plastic water bottles for water jugs and glasses, and
4. elimination of polystyrene food ware.

These are two of the many environmental programs we have launched this year as we continue to create policies for the protection of air, water, land, vegetation, wildlife and other living species.... programs such as Trees for Tomorrow, our recent Pesticide bylaw, and award winning waste management program. Markham now diverts 70% of municipal waste from landfills. This is the highest diversion rate in Ontario and the third highest in Canada, an accomplishment we are proud of but we know we can do better. So we have set a target of 75% for waste diversion for 2008 and we are aiming for zero waste or as close as we can in the next few years.

It is no surprise then that the environment has been identified as one of Markham's six strategic priorities. As a result, a comprehensive Green Print is being developed that will create overarching policies to help promote a sustainable future for us, our grand children.and their grandchildren.

We're optimistic other municipalities and businesses will reduce their environmental footprint through similar programs and if Markham's experience can be of any assistance, we'll be there to help.

We have brought some print material and press kits today for anyone interested in learning more about these programs, or you can talk to me, Councillor Shapero or one of Markham's staff that are here today.

Thank you for providing Markham the opportunity to share this news.

Finally my thanks and congratulations to the Clean Air Partnership for your leadership making this conference happen for the past nine years.

Thank you.

For more information contact:

Dennis Flaherty, Corporate Communications, 905-415-7520, dflaherty@markham.ca

Tel: 905.477.7000 www.markham.ca