

## COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

# South Markham

## Vision Statement

We envision a South Markham neighbourhood where community members effortlessly access resources, benefit from new opportunities and developments, and drive positive change in their community. Residents have access to community-centric, multi-service spaces locally where they can gather and utilize various resources. They have the necessary skills and supports to explore and improve their economic stability, and to advocate for their housing rights and stable housing options. Those directly impacted by community changes can leverage their leadership to voice concerns, innovate solutions, and collaboratively determine appropriate actions with local stakeholders. Ultimately, the transformation of the local neighbourhood is built on a foundation of trusting partnerships between residents and community partners.

## Key Community Priorities (2024-27):

This Community Action Plan builds on the priority focus areas and actions identified through Building Markham Future's Together, Housing Choices: Markham's Affordable & Rental Housing Strategy, Milliken Centre Secondary Plan, York Region's Community Safety & Well-being Plan as well as through other complementing community engagement processes in South Markham. The actions identified in this plan also build on the progress and work of various community-based and community-led groups in the neighbourhood over the years.



### COMMUNITY SPACES

- An enhanced network of service hubs at existing spaces
- A mobile service system navigator
- A feasibility study for a multi-service hub



### HOUSING STABILITY

- Housing resource platforms
- Temporary / transitional housing model for families and non-youth individuals
- Scalable supportive housing options through vacant homes / spare bedrooms



### ECONOMIC STABILITY

- Training and development for emerging and small businesses
- Use of vacant storefronts for small business learning

## Community Spaces

Many services are available throughout South Markham, yet residents continue to report difficulties in obtaining information and accessing these services. There is also significant need for accessible and affordable shared spaces for community to gather and lead. Building on the success of existing local community centre models, there is an opportunity to increase centralized service spaces closer to community.



### OBJECTIVES

- Expand accessible service spaces for residents, grassroots groups, and agencies
- Streamline and make resource and service navigation more accessible for local residents
- Enable subsidized or low-cost programming spaces for residents with low or fixed incomes



### ACTIONS

#### Short-Term:

Conduct a space and services study to assess community and partner space needs and identify locally available spaces in order to match appropriate opportunities and develop an enhanced network of service hubs at existing spaces in the neighbourhood.

#### Medium-Term:

Establish a Service System Navigator role equipped to rotate through community organizations, helping residents and partners access housing and economic resources in a timely and accessible manner.

#### Medium-Term:

Explore feasibility of a multi-service hub that leverages local developments and/or other emerging space opportunities.



## Housing Stability

The South Markham community has long faced increasing housing prices, need for multigenerational homes, and a lack of affordable housing options. With growing housing instability, having affordable housing options and knowing how to access and/or maintain housing are the utmost priority to ensure that residents are housed. Leveraging existing momentum through local tables and partners, there is also an opportunity to advance resident- and community-based initiatives towards enabling housing stability for all.



### OBJECTIVES

- Enhance awareness of housing services in collaboration with partners
- Expand affordable, accessible, and supportive housing options through innovative models



### ACTIONS

#### Short-Term:

Enhance existing housing resource platforms and develop relevant communication strategies to maximize the reach of platforms to community, including digital and print resources and presentations by housing service providers.

#### Medium-Term:

Plan and design a temporary and/or a transitional housing model for families and non-youth individuals, adapting and integrating existing successful models in York Region, such as those led by 360 Kids and COSTI.

#### Medium-Term:

Explore the feasibility of spare bedrooms, public spaces or vacant spaces in creating supportive housing options in the community.



## Economic Stability

The economic landscape of South Markham is steadily evolving, yet a significant portion of the community—one-third—still identifies as low-income. Barriers such as language limitations and restricted access to technology prevent many residents from accessing employment and capacity-building opportunities that could enhance their financial stability. However, by fostering strategic partnerships with community organizations specializing in employment services and collaborating with entrepreneurial hubs, marginalized residents can gain dedicated opportunities to boost employability and move towards creating lasting economic security.



### OBJECTIVES

- Increase access to employability-related training opportunities for local residents and small businesses
- Strengthen partnerships with new and existing developments and retailers to collaborate on community-centered entrepreneurial initiatives



### ACTIONS & TIMELINES

#### Short-Term:

In collaboration with local businesses and community partners, offer business development training for emerging entrepreneurs and home-based businesses to boost residents' skills and employability.

#### Medium-Term:

Assess the feasibility of using local public spaces and vacant storefronts in new and existing developments for emerging and small entrepreneurs to operate businesses, including opportunities like pop-up markets.



**ENABLERS****Community Action Lead:**

ACSA Community Services plays a leading role in engaging residents and partners and maintaining collective accountability for accomplishing the Community Action Plan.

**Residents and community leaders:**

Participate in local discussions and implement resident actions to advance the Community Action Plan.

**Action partners:**

Supporting and championing the implementation of the actions are:

105 Gibson Centre, 211, 360Kids, Aaniin Community Centre, Centre for Immigrant and Community Services, COSTI, Community Legal Clinic of York Region, Housing York Inc., John Howard Society York Region, JVS Toronto, Markham Interfaith Coalition for Affordable Housing, Markham Public Library, Npower, Remington Group, South Asian and Tamil Women's Collective, South Markham Community Action Table, TIMES Group, York University – Y Space and other partners.

**United Way Greater Toronto:**

United Way is a funding partner for the Community Action Lead and Community Action Grants, contributing to the resources required by residents and partners to accomplish the Community Action Plan. United Way also plays a role in mobilizing key stakeholders for collaboration on any identified local opportunities and aligning resources accordingly.