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URA COMMUNITY IMPACT DURING 2025

January, 2026

URA ImpactReport2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The URA continues to be involved in many issues to improve our community, using tools like public education, resident engagement and representation. Last January, we published a report describing the many areas we were engaged in during 2019 to 2024. This report summarizes our 2025 activities.

MANAGING DEVELOPMENT

- As described last year, we review and normally comment on **all proposed developments** within or adjacent to our boundaries. We also closely track and advocate for updated Official Plans and Secondary Plans, so that planning is done comprehensively rather than piecemeal. We participate in Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) hearings as necessary.
- In November, the Province made a posting on the Environmental Registry (ERO 025-1099) asking for public comments on “Simplifying and Standardizing Official Plans”, including potentially **prohibiting the use of secondary plans**. URA sent in comments strongly opposing this idea. See our website for details.
- Progress on the **Markham Centre Secondary Plan** appears to have been negligible in 2025. Staff produced a draft Plan, including maps, in July, 2024 contemplating 139,000 residents and 55,000 jobs at full buildout (in 100+ years). A draft transportation plan was released in September, 2024 predicting road gridlock at populations beyond 80,000 – despite construction of new collector roads and implementing policies favouring transit and active transportation. There have been no updates to this Secondary Plan since then.
- On the positive side, most developers (not all) within Markham Centre appear to be complying with the height/density limits cited in the draft Plan.
- One developer not following this draft Secondary Plan is Transmark Developments, the owner of the **“Shoppes of Unionville” plaza**, across from Unionville on Highway 7. They are proposing 2 towers of 30 and 35 storeys, versus a limit of 3 stories in the draft Plan. URA deputed against this proposal. The City refused the application. The matter has gone to the OLT and URA has been granted participant status. The next hearing date is April 2, 2026.

- In contrast to Markham Centre, the **Markville Secondary Plan** has progressed steadily. A draft final Study Report was released in June planning for 26,000 residents and 15,000 jobs. Together with other resident groups, URA has been heavily involved. To spread out the work, the other groups have focussed on social infrastructure (parks, schools). URA has focused on concerns that the density is about two-fold higher than it should be, the transportation study is still missing and that the phasing plan is inadequate. Council decided not to endorse the study until a transportation workshop is conducted.
- URA has also been heavily involved in a redevelopment proposal by **Cadillac Fairview (CF) Markville** for their mall. We deputed against their application for an Official Plan Amendment, noting the unrealistic transit assumptions being made and urging deferral until the Secondary Plan is completed. We also deputed against their application for a Zoning Bylaw Amendment for Phase 1 (5 towers at the corner of McCowan and Highway 7), citing concerns with traffic impacts, high parking ratios and the need for more phasing . In both cases, despite our objections, Council approved the applications, although it did institute new phasing requirements within Phase 1. CF has indicated they wish to start construction on the first part of Phase 1 soon.

TRANSPORTATION

- URA continues to closely track transportation infrastructure improvements in our area. Initial construction work on **widening 16th Avenue** between Highway 404 and Warden has begun. Widening projects on Warden (Maj. Mac. to Elgin Mills) and Kennedy (YMCA Blvd to Highway 7) are slated to start construction in 2027. We also follow transit closely, and were pleased to see improvements in GO Train service effective September.
- Preparation of a new **Markham Transportation Plan** is underway. URA is tracking closely and will be actively involved as it nears completion in 2026.
- **Micromobility** (bicycles, e-bikes, e-scooters) is becoming an increasingly popular mode of transportation within Markham and Canada. However, it is not without controversy, especially related to pedestrian safety. URA held a members meeting with Markham staff to hear the status of Markham's plans and respond to residents' questions. Staff answers to 17 of our questions are on the website

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Affordable Housing** continues to be an urgent item for Greater Toronto. In January, we hosted Franz Hartman of the Alliance for a Liveable Ontario, who spoke about 5 actions to improve affordability. For details see URA meeting minutes for January 13, 2025
- Markham is making progress on affordable and rental housing. The City developed a 35-point action plan in 2021, and signed a pledge with Ontario to facilitate 44,000 new housing units over the next 10 years. In 2024, the federal Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) granted Markham \$58 million to implement 7 distinct measures to support these housing types. Four public-private partnerships have been signed using HAF funds, with more in the wings. Policy changes in Major Transit Station Areas, Development Charge deferrals for long-term rentals and updated parking

standards are on track. However, a policy to permit 4 housing units on a lot as-of-right, subject to zoning rules (versus 3 units as-of-right today) has inexplicably been under debate in Council for months.

- Following a briefing from school board representatives, URA wrote the Ministry of Education urging more **capital funding for public schools**. We were pleased when, in May, the Province approved funding for a new elementary school on Village Parkway and an addition to Markville High School. These are in addition to two already-approved public elementary schools in Markham Centre and Angus Glen and the expansion of Unionville High. In December, the Province announced funding for another high school in Berczy Glen (Future Urban Area).
- URA hosted a representative from **York Regional Police** who spoke to members about safety and crime prevention. Links to related information are available in the minutes from Nov. 3, 2025.

MAIN STREET REVITALIZATION

- URA closely tracked progress on this important project, including hosting a presentation by the Field Ambassador for the project in February. We are very pleased that the project is now essentially completed on schedule. Attention now turns to how to best use this beautiful new asset in 2026. The Unionville BIA is proposing numerous **street events**, including Sunday closures for pedestrian-only. URA has written the City supporting the BIA plan and urging prompt consultation on the costs and procedures for road closure, so that these events can occur.

OTHER

- URA was pleased to welcome **Mayor Frank Scarpitti** to speak to us in May. We had submitted 9 discussion topics, ranging from land development, transportation, environment and economic development. The mayor responded to each item. His slides can be viewed on our website.
- In September, residents were surprised to hear that Markham had signed a contract to host the **Honda Indy car race** for 5+ years, starting in 2026. The course would be in Markham Centre, entirely within URA boundaries. URA convened two public sessions with Councillors and proponents to get answers to our many questions. Further details are on our website.