Richmond Hill

Greening The Hill

Our Community, Our Future.

2022 Environment Strategy Update

PUBLIC GUIDE

GREENING THE HILL
Our Community Our Future

Welcome to the Environment Strategy Update: Public Guide

OUR VISION

Richmond Hill: a community that protects, enhances and restores its natural environment.

OUR MISSION

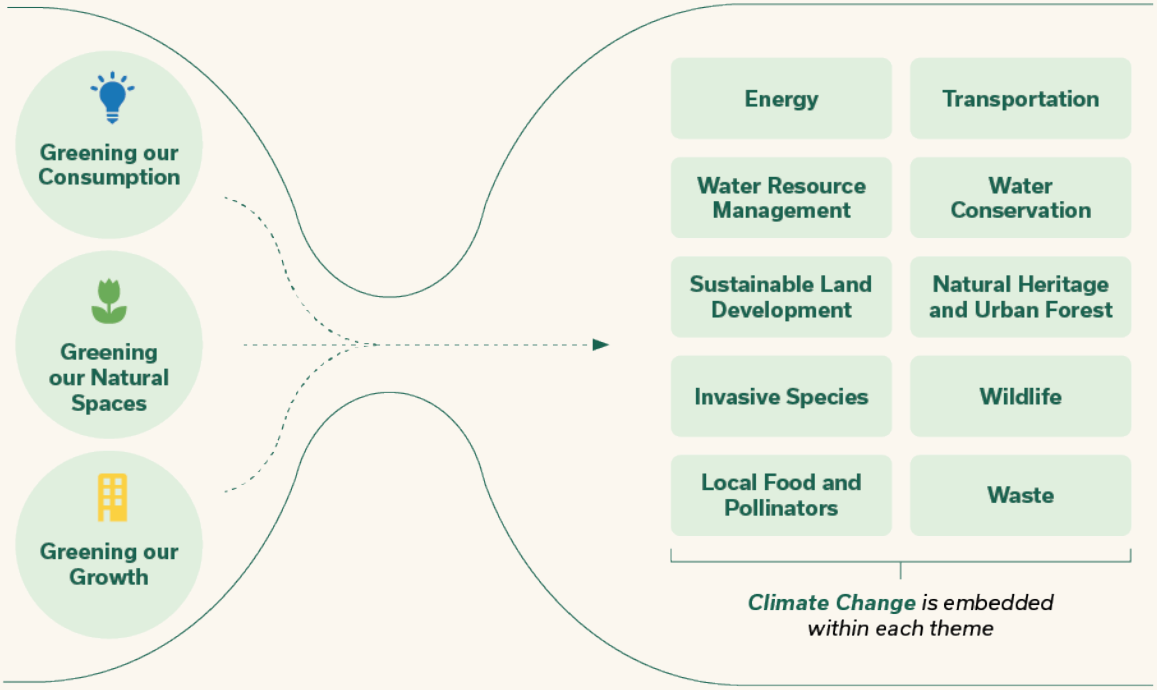
To achieve our vision by engaging and inspiring residents, leading by example and encouraging sustainable growth.

We've prepared this public guide as a companion document to summarize the key elements of the *Greening the Hill: Our Community, Our Future* Environment Strategy Update.

The Environment Strategy Update reflects what we've heard and learned since the original Strategy was first approved in 2014. It is a call to action that brings a stronger lens to how we can all work together to protect our environment as the City grows and as climate change impacts intensify. The updated Environment Strategy sets out goals, objectives and actions in 10 theme areas that will help focus actions by the City, our partners and residents out to 2031.

This update shows us how to make Richmond Hill a more sustainable, resilient and low-carbon community by **Greening our Consumption, Greening our Natural Spaces** and **Greening our Growth**.

The Updated Environment Strategy is guided by our 3 greening principles and 10 themes:



NEXT STEPS

Richmond Hill's Environment Strategy Update describes how we will reach our vision of a community that protects, enhances and restores its natural environment. It outlines a suite of actions to green our consumption, natural spaces and growth, and emphasizes a commitment to innovation and collaboration through partnerships, education and outreach. The Strategy also demonstrates and acts upon Richmond Hill's continued commitment to climate action.

To continue the momentum developed since 2014, and to assess and report our progress as we did in Phase 1, we will continue to provide annual progress updates and report milestone achievements to Council and the community. We will also publish the Environmental Scorecard at five-year intervals to report key trends and progress.

Together, we can foster a sustainable and resilient community that values the environment and makes active decisions to protect it in our daily lives.

Read on to learn more about our goals and actions. ▶▶▶

Energy

GOAL

To improve energy efficiency, reduce GHG emissions and mitigate climate change.

ACTION SUMMARY

- Encourage community energy planning and district energy systems for major development
- Track and reduce corporate energy consumption and GHG emissions through implementation of the City's Corporate Energy Plan, and adopt a net zero target for City buildings
- Work with partners to support deep energy retrofits, showcase and pilot innovative GHG-reducing and renewable energy technologies, and provide energy conservation education to the community

Transportation

GOAL

To establish a lower-carbon transportation network with options that are more accessible, reliable and equitable.

ACTION SUMMARY

- Encourage and advocate for sustainable travel options (such as the Yonge North Subway Extension) that reduce traffic and manage transportation demand
- Expand and improve the City's active transportation network to promote walking and cycling
- Shift to electrifying the City's vehicles and equipment, and partner with agencies and businesses to develop an electric vehicle charging network
- Educate the community about active and sustainable modes of travel, and research, pilot and showcase new and innovative technologies and trends

Water Resource Management

GOAL

To conserve and protect our water resources by managing water quality, water quantity and stormwater infrastructure.

ACTION SUMMARY

- Plan for the impacts of climate change and growth on the City's stormwater systems and infrastructure by creating a Stormwater Network Model, updating our drainage studies, and implementing the Stormwater Management Rate Program
- Protect our water resources by improving erosion and sediment control, monitoring our watersheds and the health of Lake Wilcox, reducing inflow and infiltration, and exploring opportunities to limit the impacts of road salt
- Monitor, inspect, and carry out improvements to the City's stormwater facilities and valleylands
- Provide education, citizen science opportunities, and programming such as the Backwater Valve Subsidy Program to reduce stormwater impacts and improve water quality

Water Conservation

GOAL

To use water wisely and promote the wise use of water.

ACTION SUMMARY

- Promote community water conservation and water-efficient technologies in new construction and redevelopment
- Reduce City water consumption by implementing Richmond Hill's actions within the York Region Long-Term Water Conservation Strategy
- Work with partners to pilot and demonstrate water re-use technologies and provide water conservation education to the community

Sustainable Land Development

GOAL

To foster sustainable development and redevelopment.

ACTION SUMMARY

- Incentivize and showcase innovative sustainable design through the City's Sustainability Metrics Program
- Explore and implement approaches to incorporate sustainable and resilient design features into City buildings and infrastructure
- Work with local partners to pilot, test and incentivize low impact development (LID) and green infrastructure approaches, and incorporate sustainability elements into parks to increase climate resiliency
- Provide education and outreach to residents on sustainable development approaches and ways to improve home efficiency and resiliency, especially in multi-residential buildings

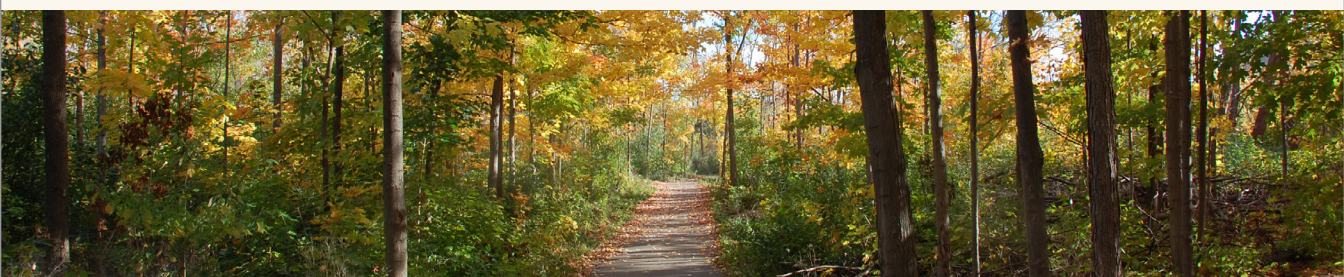
Natural Heritage and Urban Forest

GOAL

To establish, protect and improve the extent and quality of natural heritage and the urban forest.

ACTION SUMMARY

- Increase tree canopy and support trees through the City's planning processes, with a focus on new growth and high-density areas
- Prioritize, establish and improve natural heritage connections, and restore, enhance, and regularly assess the City's natural areas
- Work with community partners and residents to plant trees, and enhance and restore our natural environment through delivery of the Healthy Yards and Community Stewardship programs
- Educate the community about the urban forest, natural systems and naturalization and encourage involvement in related citizen science initiatives



Invasive Species

GOAL

To prevent and actively manage the impacts of invasive species.

ACTION SUMMARY

- Develop and implement a protocol and plan for responding to and managing invasive species in Richmond Hill
- Carry out the City's Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Management Strategy and pilot projects to manage invasive species through innovative techniques, tools and best practices
- Work with partners and engage the community to encourage invasive species monitoring and management on public and private lands

Wildlife

GOAL

To protect, preserve and sustainably manage a healthy diversity of native wildlife.

ACTION SUMMARY

- Implement Richmond Hill's Canada Goose Management Strategy and Beaver Management Policy
- Endeavour to protect wildlife and their habitats through the design, maintenance and operation of City spaces and infrastructure
- Explore policies and initiatives to create a more bird-friendly Richmond Hill
- Educate the community and initiate pilot projects to help protect wildlife and enhance biodiversity

Local Food and Pollinators

GOAL

To improve access to local food and support pollinators and their habitat.

ACTION SUMMARY

- Increase the presence of urban agriculture and pollinator-friendly gardens in new and redevelopment projects
- Carry out pilot projects and partnership programs to protect pollinators and grow food on City land
- Encourage residents and businesses to learn about and establish pollinator-friendly gardens, increase food security by growing local food, and naturalize their properties
- Create and expand community gardens in line with the City's Community Garden Policy

Waste

GOAL

To reduce the waste burden by encouraging reuse, diverting waste and promoting the circular economy.

ACTION SUMMARY

- Work with partner agencies to ensure a smooth and fair transition to producer responsibility for recycling
- Reduce and divert waste in City facilities through waste audits, waste reduction work plans, innovative techniques, tools and partnerships
- Advance the circular economy by promoting and supporting community reuse opportunities, and reducing single-use plastics
- Reduce and divert waste at City events, and undertake initiatives such as the City's Clean Up, Green Up Weeks to encourage waste stewardship and reduce litter
- Educate the community on waste reduction and diversion, and explore opportunities to improve and encourage diversion in multi-residential buildings and schools

To view the full Environment Strategy Update and learn more about how you can help, visit RichmondHill.ca/Environment.