

Phase 3: What We Heard

OPA 18.3 & 18.4 Engagement Summary Report

City Plan 2041: Richmond Hill Official Plan Update

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Prepared for the City of Richmond Hill

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Executive Summary

The City of Richmond Hill is updating the City's Official Plan to provide a clear vision for planning and development to 2041 and attract more businesses, jobs, and residents. The update will consider new opportunities while aligning with current provincial and regional policies and plans where applicable (e.g., A Place to Grow: the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Provincial Policy Statement, York Region Official Plan, etc.).

The Official Plan update process consists of three phases. Similar What We Heard Reports have been prepared for Phases 1 and 2. This Report is in relation to Part 1 of Phase 3 – Policy Development. This report summarizes the feedback received on two Official Plan Amendments (OPAs): [OPA 18.3 – Vision and City Structure](#) and [OPA 18.4 – Neighbourhoods](#). OPA 18.3 and 18.4 are the first of multiple OPAs identified for this phase of the Official Plan Update and to take place throughout 2022 and 2023.

OPA 18.3 proposes foundational changes to the Official Plan by updating the City's planning vision, horizon and city structure, and making consequential changes to policies that generally apply on a city-wide basis. This OPA is the starting point and subsequent OPAs will provide more detailed policy and mapping direction.

OPA 18.4 proposes changes to the Official Plan related to areas of the City that are designated Neighbourhood. These changes are largely intended to better create complete “15-minute” communities and to facilitate the provision of more housing options in terms of type, tenure and affordability within these areas.

Feedback on OPA 18.3 and 18.4 was collected through a virtual Open House held on April 26, 2022. Copies of the [presentation](#) and [meeting recording](#) are available on the City's website.

A Council Public Meeting was also held on May 18, 2022, to receive comments on these proposed Official Plan Amendments. The [meeting recording](#) is available online.

It should also be noted that prior to the formal engagement regarding the two OPAs, the City initiated a “Walk and Win” contest as a means to raise awareness about the Official Plan Update in general and the concept of “15-minute communities” more specifically. In addition, the City continued to invite members of the public to “tell us your favourite places in Richmond Hill” using the [My Favourite Places App](#), places identified and comments provided continue to provide staff with insight as to what the public values about the City.

Key messages emerging from feedback on OPA 18.3 and 18.4 are listed below.

OPA 18.3 – Vision & City Structure

Mobility Hierarchy & 15-Minute Community

Commenters generally supported the mobility hierarchy and the "15-minute community". Commenters would like to see active transportation and micro-mobility infrastructure which is safe for all users at all times of year. There is a desire to include transit in the 15-minute community objective, emphasizing local transit. Commenters recognized an opportunity to attract new community amenities through gentle density, making active transportation attractive.

Affordable Housing

Commenters supported the inclusion of policies around affordable housing. Commenters noted the lack of affordable housing in Richmond Hill, citing a need to build more units and protect existing units. Further clarification is needed on what is included in affordable housing and what affordable housing would look like in Richmond Hill.

Climate Change

Commenters were supportive of the inclusion of climate change policies. Commenters highlighted the need to protect greenspace and ensure buildings and infrastructure are resilient to a changing climate.

Sustainable Development

Commenters were supportive of the inclusion of policies around sustainable development. Commenters want to ensure that development does not come at the cost of environmental protection. Developers should be held accountable to sustainable design practices.

Infrastructure Alignment

Commenters wanted confirmation that the Official Plan considers supportive infrastructure and services for a growing population.

Park Typologies

Commenters emphasized the importance of recognizing urban plazas and destination parks, citing the need for more community gathering spaces and greenspaces across the city. Commenters would like to see vibrant, publicly accessible urban plazas that include access to restaurants and businesses. Commenters suggested the City explore the option of linear parks within hydro corridors.

Urban Design

Commenters expressed a desire for vibrant urban design with mixed housing types, amenities, greenspace and active transportation infrastructure. There was a desire for growth that fits with surrounding neighbourhoods, with gradual height changes.

Regional Corridor within the Oak Ridges Moraine

Concerns were raised with respect to the Regional Corridor along Yonge Street, as proposed in the Draft Regional Official Plan. Commenters called for a thoughtful and

environmentally responsible approach to developing higher densities along Yonge Street in Oak Ridges as proposed in the draft Regional Official Plan (2021). Furthermore, they expressed a desire for densities and heights to be limited to 4 - 6 storeys.

OPA 18.4 – Neighbourhoods

Community Character

Commenters were supportive of protecting existing community character and ensuring new neighbourhoods contain character elements. Commenters would like to see more character and variety in building types, rather than cookie-cutter buildings. Buildings should be aesthetically pleasing.

Multi-tached Dwellings

In general, commenters responded positively to the idea of multi-tached dwellings. It was felt that multi-tached dwellings provided opportunities for individuals of all life stages (including seniors and young adults) and both homeowners and renters. Commenters also acknowledged that the introduction of multi-tached dwellings would provide additional housing options, allowing residents to remain in their neighbourhoods and addressing the "missing middle" problem. Commenters encouraged the City to look to other municipalities (i.e., Toronto), which have already implemented such policies, for lessons learned.

At the same time, Commenters cautioned that the introduction of multi-tached dwellings needs to be done with careful consideration. Commenters would like reassurances that parking and other municipal services (i.e., waste management, snow removal, and electricity) would not be negatively impacted by such dwellings. Furthermore, Commenters would like to see regulations to prevent short-term rentals (i.e., Airbnb) in multi-tached units. There was a preference for having dwellings that are well-kept and owner-occupied. Finally, Commenters encouraged City staff to consider design and aesthetics when approving such dwellings.

Gentle Density and Missing Middle

Open House participants were asked how important it is to live in a 15-minute community. More than two-thirds of participants felt it was "somewhat important" or "very important" to live in a 15-minute community. Over half of Open House participants felt that their current community does not offer sufficient amenities and services within a 15-minute walk.

Commenters recognized the need for gentle density to support 15-minute communities. Transitions to existing neighbourhoods are important, especially in areas dominated by single-detached dwellings.

Engagement and Promotion

The figure below provides a summary of efforts that the City has undertaken to engage the public in this Official Plan Update process over the months of March to May. This engagement relates to efforts to raise awareness about the OP Update (i.e. the Walk and Win Contest and associated Online Survey) and efforts to educate and seek feedback on the proposed OPAs through events such as the Virtual Open House and Council Public meeting, and through the use of the City's dedicated webpage which includes links to the draft OPAs as well as short videos to provide an overview of each of them.

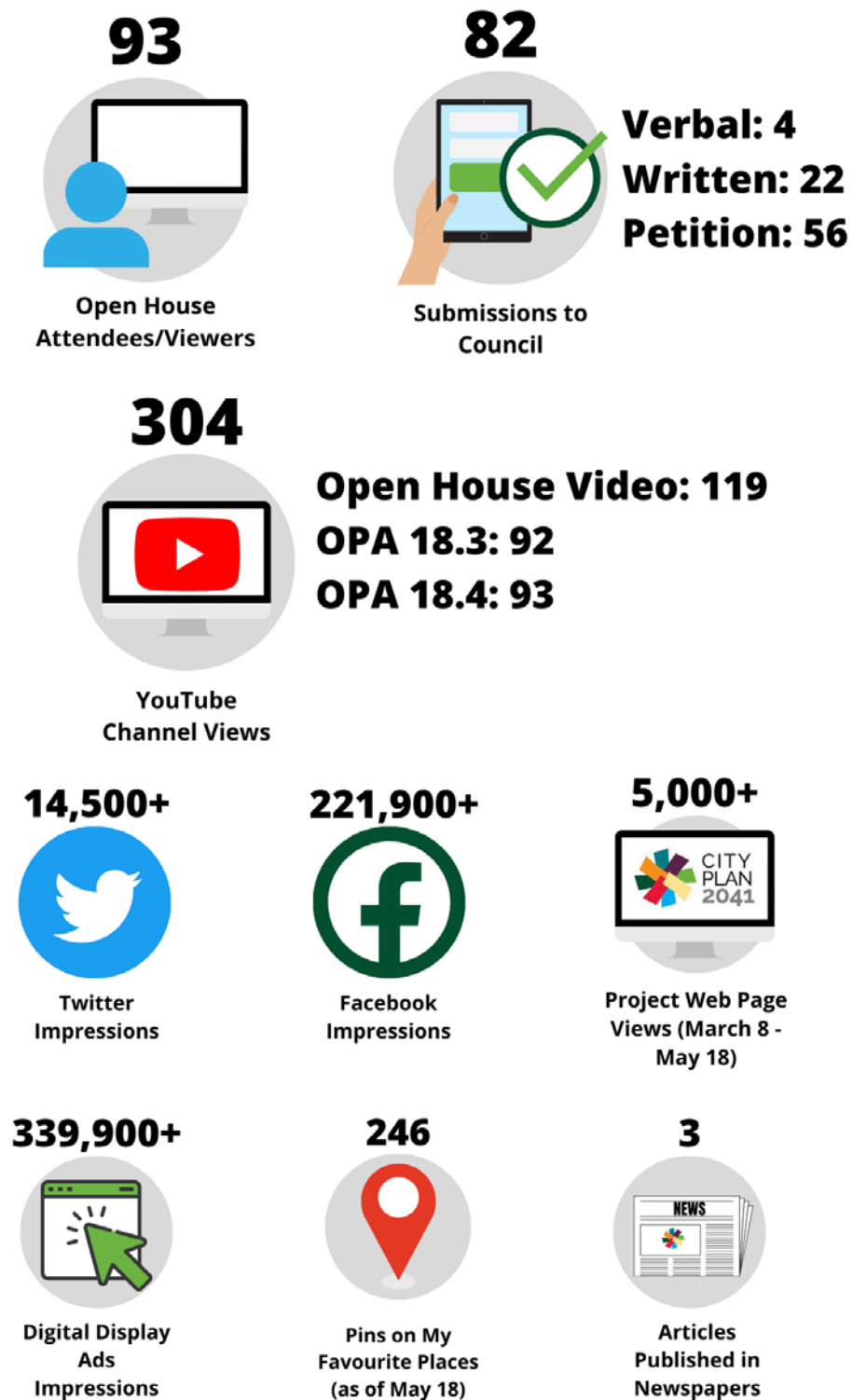


Figure 1: Summary of Engagement and Promotion Statistics

Next Steps

The feedback summarized will be used to refine OPA 18.3 and 18.4. These two OPAs will be presented to City Council on June 27, 2022.

Following this, Phase 3 will continue releasing additional OPAs for public review and feedback.

Section 1: Project Background

The City of Richmond Hill is undergoing an update of the City's Official Plan to provide a clear vision for planning and development to 2041 and attract more businesses, jobs, and residents. The update will consider new opportunities while aligning with current provincial and regional policies and plans where applicable (e.g., A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Provincial Policy Statement, York Region Official Plan, etc.).

The Official Plan update process consists of three phases. Phase 1 involved background work and public discussion about the City's 2041 Vision and "big moves" in relation to the city's structure. Phase 2 involved the development of the City Plan 2041 Key Directions Report. This report provides a road map for how City staff propose to update the Official Plan to achieve the City's 2041 Planning Vision. The intention of the Key Directions Report is to:

- 1) Articulate a 2041 vision for city planning;
- 2) Establish an urban structure that:
 - directs the majority of growth to a network of Centres and Corridors;
 - supports economic development by enabling more jobs within the City; and
 - ensures development is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable; and
- 3) Address key issues affecting the City, including:
 - housing affordability;
 - out-migration of residents for jobs;
 - climate change mitigation and adaptation; and
 - accommodating a diversity of lifestyles among city residents and workers.



Figure 2: Official Plan Amendments by batch

In February 2022, Council endorsed the Key Directions Report, marking the start of Phase 3. During Phase 3, the City will amend the Official Plan through three batches of Official Plan Amendments (OPAs) as noted in the diagram below. The first batch of

OPAs will be done before the approval of the Regional Official Plan, followed by batches two and three. In total, there are 14 separate OPAs identified. This approach of updating the Official Plan through separate OPAs is proposed for two reasons:

- This approach helps people digest information on the OPAs based on themes or geographic areas.
- This approach is flexible and it gives time to deal with any issues related to a specific theme or geographic area without holding up approval on other themes/areas.

Engagement Objectives

When updating the City's Official Plan it is important to engage the public and key stakeholders in the process. A key component of the project is an extensive stakeholder and community engagement program designed to raise broader interest, awareness and help shape how the City's vision and goals for the future may be achieved through city planning processes and decision making.

Specific objectives of the City Plan 2041 engagement program are to:

- Facilitate authentic and meaningful opportunities for engagement
- Engage broad members of the Richmond Hill community
- Report back on key outcomes

Phase 3 of the OP Update process focuses on policy development and approval. During this phase, proposed policy and mapping changes are presented to the community for feedback. The objectives of this phase of engagement are to: share research and what we have heard; and, present proposed amendments to the Official Plan to the community for feedback.

This report summarizes the feedback received on two Official Plan Amendments (OPAs): [OPA 18.3 – Vision and City Structure](#) and [OPA 18.4 – Neighbourhoods](#). These proposed amendments implement several key directions identified in the Council endorsed City Plan 2041 Key Directions Report. OPA 18.3 proposes foundational changes to the Official Plan by updating the City's planning vision, horizon and city structure, and making consequential changes to policies that generally apply on a city-wide basis. This OPA is the starting point and subsequent OPAs will provide more detailed policy and mapping direction. Whereas OPA 18.4 proposes changes to the Official Plan related to areas of the City that are designated Neighbourhood. These changes are largely intended to better create complete "15-minute" communities and to facilitate the provision of more housing options in terms of type, tenure and affordability within these areas. These OPAs are the first of fourteen OPAs identified in Phase 3 – Policy Development of the Official Plan Update to take place throughout 2022 and 2023.

Section 2: What We Heard

This section summarizes the key themes heard throughout the engagement process specific to OPA 18.3 and 18.4.

This engagement process consisted of the following initiatives (more details of each initiative is provided in Section 4 of this report):

- A contest and survey coined “Walk and Win” which took place in March. This initiative was intended to raise awareness about the Official Plan update in general and more specifically the concept of 15-minute communities, by inviting residents to walk 15 minutes from their home and take note of whether their community included elements that constitute a “15-minute” community by completing a simple 4 question survey. See **Appendix A** for more information about the contest and survey.
- Copies of the draft OPAs and their related prescribed information on the City’s webpage for people to review and provide comment, as of April 7, 2022.
- Short videos which explain the two Official Plan amendments, to help educate the public, as of April 20, 2022.
- A virtual open house where people could hear from city planners about the OPAs, ask questions and provide feedback, which took place on April 26, 2022.
- A Council public meeting, where people could provide their comments about the OPAs to staff and Council in writing or oral delegations, which took place on May 18, 2022.

During both the open house and Council public meeting, staff explained how the proposed changes to the Official Plan relate to matters such as the City's 2041 planning vision and the overall planning structure for where and how to accommodate growth and development. Staff also explained how these amendments propose changes to the Official Plan relating to matters such as: building "15-minute communities", providing affordable market housing, responding to climate change and prioritizing active transportation.

Feedback collected from all of the above noted engagement initiatives has been sorted into the following topics:

- OPA 18.3 Vision and City Structure
 - Mobility Hierarchy and 15-Minute Community
 - Affordable Housing
 - Climate Change
 - Sustainable Development
 - Infrastructure Alignment
 - Park Typologies
 - Urban Design
 - Walk and Win Contest
- OPA 18.4 Neighbourhoods
 - Gentle Density and Missing Middle

- Community Character
- Multi-tached Dwellings

OPA 18.3 Vision and City Structure

Mobility Hierarchy and 15-Minute Community

Open House participants were asked to indicate how they will travel in the City in twenty years using a poll. Participants were able to select all the forms of transportation they felt they would use. As shown below, "private vehicle" was the most popular form of transportation (44 votes), followed by walking (38 votes) and transit (32 votes). The additional context, provided through the chat and participant feedback, is found below.

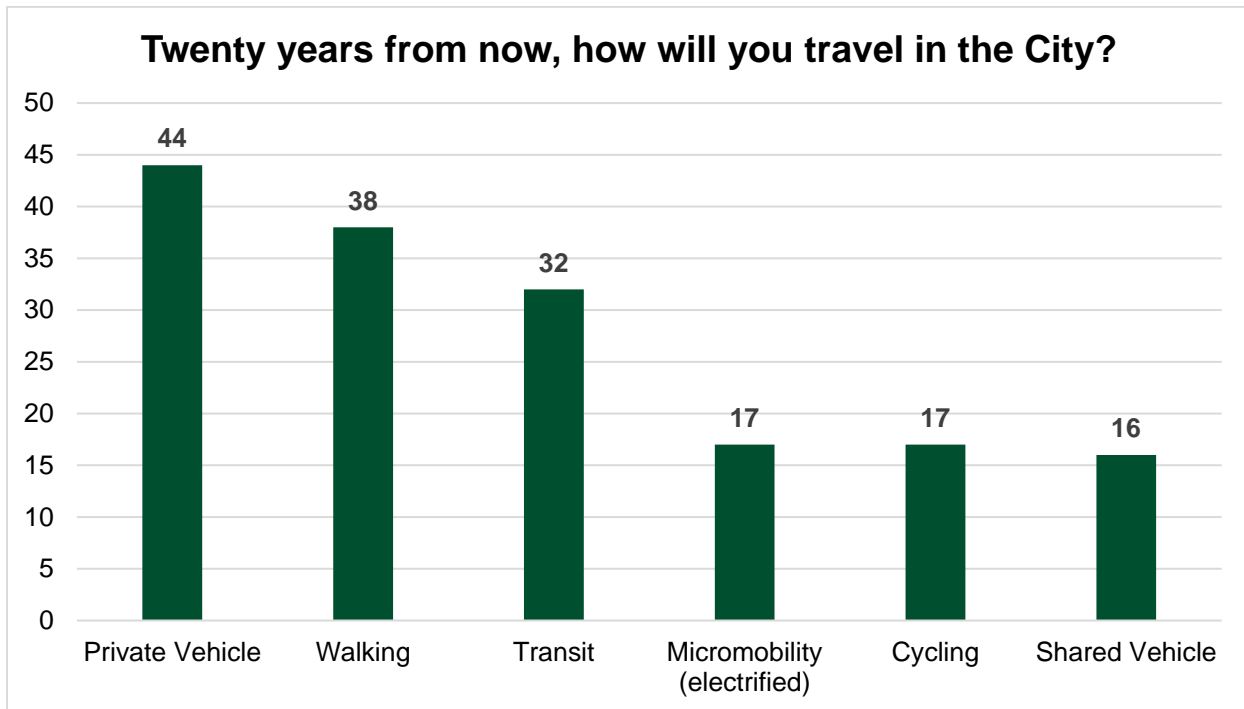


Figure 3: Graph showing participant responses to, "Twenty years from now, how will you travel in the City?" (Choose all that apply.) n=164.

Commenters recognize the link between the "15-minute community" objective and the mobility hierarchy. They generally supported the mobility hierarchy and the "15-minute community"

Commenters highlighted the following key considerations:

- The need to ensure that walking, biking and micro-mobility infrastructure is safe and comfortable to allow residents of all ages (i.e., seniors) to participate.
- Addressing challenges associated with walking, biking and micro-mobility in the winter months. Attention should also be paid to changes in grades and how this impacts active transportation.
- Transit should be included in the 15-minute community objective. Addressing current challenges with public transit, such as the "first mile, last mile" issue will

be critical. Interconnectivity (through local transit) is vital to ensure people can live, work and play in Richmond Hill.

- Additional emphasis should be placed on local transit and integrating with larger transit projects (i.e., subway extension), working closely with York Region Transit (YRT).
- Transit and personal vehicles will remain important for those unable to use more active modes of transportation.
- The opportunity to attract new community amenities through gentle density makes active transportation attractive.
- Recognition that the shift to a "15-minute community" may be difficult due to the large number of Richmond Hill residents that commute long distances to work.

Affordable Housing

Commenters supported the inclusion of policies around affordable housing, in principle. However, there were several questions about the definition of affordable housing. Further clarification is needed on what is included in affordable housing and what affordable housing would look like in Richmond Hill.

Commenters highlighted the following key considerations:

- The widespread need for more affordable rent and housing costs, particularly for first-time buyers, due to a lack of housing affordability currently in Richmond Hill.
- There is a need to encourage and hold developers accountable for building more housing units, including affordable units.
- Challenges associated with speculative owners and empty houses.
- There is a need to protect existing rental properties and develop additional purpose-built rental units to support affordable housing options in the City.

Climate Change

Commenters were supportive of the inclusion of climate change policies. Commenters highlighted the following key considerations:

- The need to protect trees and greenspace, which absorb carbon dioxide and mitigate the urban heat island effect.
- Preparing for climate resilience with infrastructure that will withstand severe weather, heat, ice and rain.

Sustainable Development

Commenters were supportive of the inclusion of policies around sustainable development. Commenters highlighted the following key considerations:

- A need to ensure developers are held to sustainability and climate actions.
- The opportunity to explore green roofs and solar roofing in Richmond Hill.
- The importance of protecting wildlife, biodiversity and native plants.
- Policies that support growth and development should not come at the expense of sound natural hazard management and natural heritage and water resource protection.

- An appreciation of the alignment between the Official Plan and the City's other environmental planning initiatives (Environment Strategy, Community Energy and Emissions Plan, Sustainability Assessment Tool, Mater Environmental Servicing Plan). Participants would like to see explicit reference to these tools and key elements of sustainable design (i.e., Low Impact Development) within the Official Plan.

Infrastructure Alignment

Commenters wanted confirmation that the Official Plan considers supportive infrastructure and services for a growing population. Infrastructure and services such as roads, wastewater, schools, hospitals, art centres, fire and police stations were top of mind. Density should be focused on where existing and planned infrastructure is in place.

Park Typologies

Commenters emphasized recognizing both urban plazas and destination parks. Commenters had the following comments with respect to urban plazas:

- There is an opportunity for urban plazas to include restaurants and businesses, allowing for interaction with surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Urban plazas should be required to be publicly accessible urban open space.
- There is a desire for more community gathering spaces across the city. Gathering spaces could be used for music events, farmers markets and local food vendors.
- There is a need to ensure urban plazas are designed to create uniqueness and vibrancy.
- Consider how urban plazas will be used in the winter months.
- Look to Europe for examples of urban plazas.
- Community safety should be considered when designing parks.

Commenters had the following comments with respect to destination parks:

- Existing parks need to be maintained and kept clean from litter. Older parks could be reimagined for future users.
- There is a desire for more parks and greenspace throughout the city (where residents do not need to drive), in addition to dedicated "destination parks".
- Participants suggested the City explore the option of linear parks, using hydro corridors (with buried hydro lines).

Urban Design

Commenters expressed a desire for vibrant urban design. More specifically, participants want to see:

- Building height limitations, with gradual height changes so that larger buildings fit with surroundings. Buildings over a certain height should have businesses at grade. Growth should fit with the neighbourhood context.

- A vibrant public realm with mixed housing types, greenspace and active transportation infrastructure.
- Amenities and retail options for the community to use and gather (i.e., restaurants, coffee shops).

Regional Corridor in the Oak Ridges Moraine

Letters were submitted between March 22 and April 4, 2022, prior to the release of the OPAs. These letters were concerning the proposed designation of a Regional Corridor along Yonge Street within the Draft York Region Official Plan. These letters were considered under OPA 18.3 at the May 18, 2022, council meeting, given the proposed City Structure does contemplate extending the current Regional Mixed Use Corridor designation to Bloomington Road in Richmond Hill. These letters expressed an interest in a thoughtful and environmentally responsible approach to developing higher densities along Yonge Street in Oak Ridges as proposed in the draft Regional Official Plan (2021). Additional comments include:

- Support for the Regional Corridor to be continuous along Yonge Street.
- Concern for the potential development along Yonge Street in Oak Ridges.
- Consistent with the current policy (2010 Richmond Hill Official Plan), densities and heights be limited to 4 - 5 storeys and allow special exemptions permitting up to 6 storeys, similar to the Oak Ridges Retirement Home.
- Protecting the environment should be a top priority in York Region planning.
- A need to preserve greenspaces, wetlands, and environmentally sensitive areas.

Walk and Win Contest Results

In addition to the Open House questions, the City also garnered feedback regarding 15 minute communities through its Walk and Win contest held between March 8, 2022, and March 31, 2022. While the intent of the contest was to raise awareness about the OP Update in general and also to encourage residents to think about what it means to be in a 15-minute community, the survey results do provide the City with a lot of insight in terms of current residents' attitude about their community.

The Walk and Win contest asked participants to walk within their neighbourhood and identify the elements they love and what they wished was within a 15-minute walk from their home. They were also asked to rank their level of satisfaction with the amenities and features within their neighbourhood.

At a very high-level, what we heard through this initiative was that most people feel there is room for improvement in terms of their community responding to the 15-minute community objectives. Whereas many survey participants identified aspects of the community that they love, there were certain amenities that are lacking and this varied from one community to another as it did from one respondent to another.

For more details about the contest and the survey response, please see **Appendix A**.

OPA 18.4 Neighbourhoods

Community Character

Commenters spoke about the importance of protecting existing community character and ensuring new neighbourhoods contain character elements.

- Commenters would like to see more character and variety in building types — good architecture rather than uniform, cookie-cutter buildings. Buildings should be aesthetically pleasing.
- Character could be enhanced in certain areas, like Yonge Street / Major Mackenzie Drive, which have an opportunity to become centerpieces for the city.
- Additional protections are desired to protect the character of the historic Village Local Centre.
- Select commenters voiced concerns about proposed changes to the angular plane policies. Transitions should respect the existing neighbourhood.
- More detail is desired on how the character of existing neighbourhoods will be protected.

Multi-tached Dwellings

Participants at the April 26, 2022, Open House were introduced to the concept of "multi-tached" housing – a multi-unit building typically containing three or more dwelling units, and located on existing single/semi-detached dwelling lots, and complying with all existing height and setback limits associated with a single/semi-detached dwelling. Participants were presented with options for how to enable multi-tached dwellings, including:

- Permitting them as new buildings and through a conversion of existing single-detached or semi-detached dwellings, **OR**
- Permitting them only through a conversion of existing single-detached or semi-detached dwellings (i.e., no purpose-built new builds)
- **AND**, in terms of location:
 - Allowing this form of housing as-of-right within Neighbourhoods; **OR**
 - Limiting this form of housing to certain geographic areas, which would be determined through consultation

Participants were then invited to provide feedback (in the chat) about the options presented. Some participants chose to select an option where as others provide supportive comments, and a few provided comments against this concept or identified concerns with the concept.

General Feedback

Of those who provided feedback, participants at the Open House responded positively to the idea of multi-tached dwellings. It was felt that multi-tached dwellings provided opportunities for individuals of all life stages (including seniors and young adults) and both homeowners and renters. Commenters also acknowledged that introducing multi-tached dwellings would provide additional housing options, allowing residents to remain

in their neighbourhoods and addressing the "missing middle" problem. Commenters encouraged the City to look to other municipalities (i.e., Toronto), which have already implemented such policies, for lessons learned.

At the same time, commenters cautioned that the introduction of multi-tached dwellings needs to be done with careful consideration. Commenters would like reassurances that parking and other municipal services (i.e., waste management, snow removal, and electricity) would not be negatively impacted by such dwellings. Furthermore, commenters would like to see regulations to prevent short-term rentals (i.e., Airbnb) in multi-tached units. There was a preference for having dwellings that are well-kept and owner-occupied. Finally, participants encouraged City staff to consider design and aesthetics when approving such dwellings.

In addition to the feedback provided at the open house, oral and written submissions were received by staff and Council, which echoed the general comments noted above.

New vs. Conversion

A number of commenters were interested in seeing multi-tached dwellings in both new and converted homes. Some commenters would prefer to see multi-tached dwellings focused on new builds rather than mature neighbourhoods. One commenter noted advantage is that new multi-tached homes can be designed accordingly, rather than requiring retrofits. At the same time, others recognized the benefits of converting existing homes; recognizing that existing homes would need to have sufficient square footage to warrant additional units.

In addition to allowing residents (like seniors) to remain in their homes, commenters recognize that converting existing homes helps to reduce greenfield development and conserves greenspace.

Location

Some commenters supported allowing multi-tached dwellings anywhere (in all neighbourhoods), whereas others would like to see them in select areas only. In terms of locational considerations, commenters suggested that consideration should be given to the number of multi-tached dwellings and units permitted in a certain area. Some commenters were concerned about high concentrations of multi-tached houses in one area resulting in a change in neighbourhood character or the ability of municipal services to keep up with growing demand. Given the large amount of concern raised around parking, one commenter recommended focusing on multi-tached dwellings in areas with ample parking

Clarifying Questions

Commenters asked several clarifying questions about multi-tached dwellings. Questions centered around the ownership of such dwellings (i.e., owned vs. rented), the number of potential multi-tached dwellings to be created, and access to backyard space. A summary of all the questions and answers is provided in **Appendix A**.

Gentle Density and Missing Middle

Open House participants were asked how important it is to live in a 15-minute community. As shown below, more than two-thirds of participants felt it was "somewhat important" or "very important" to live in a 15-minute community. Only 3% felt it was "not important at all". Additional context is provided below.

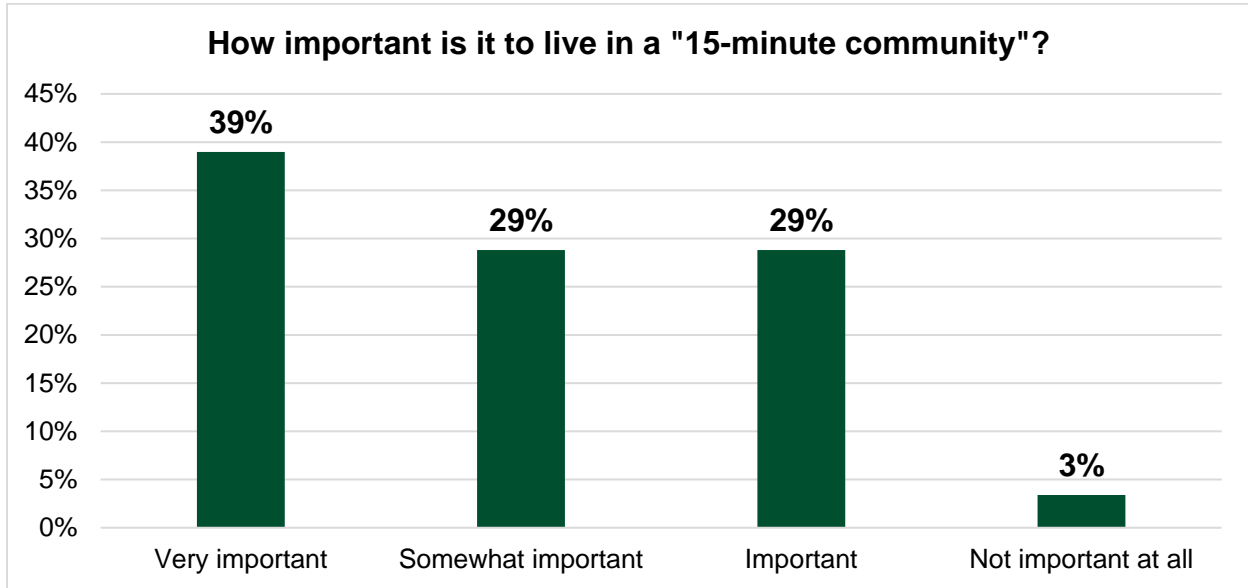


Figure 4: Graph showing participant responses for, "How important is it to live in a 15-minute community?" n=59.

Next, Open House participants were asked if they felt their current community offers sufficient amenities and services within a 15-minute walk. Participants were split, with 53% voting "no" and 44% voting "yes".

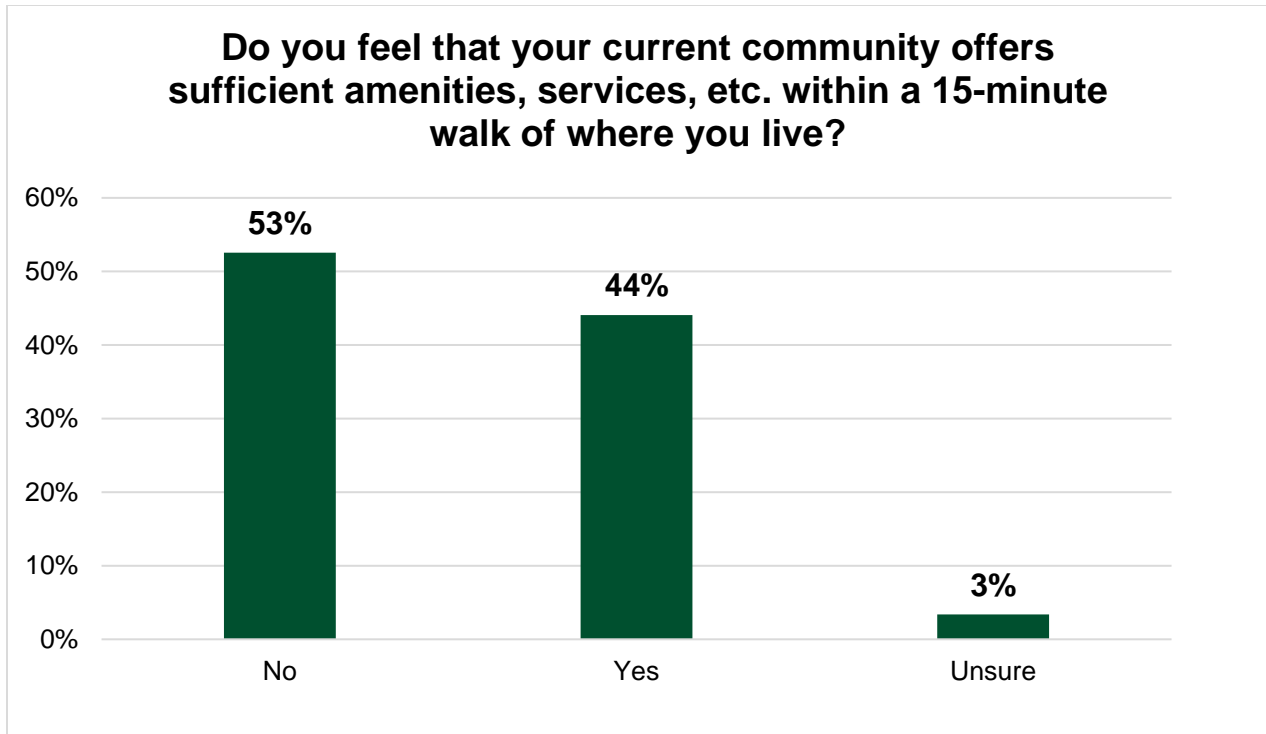


Figure 5: Graph showing participant responses to, "Do you feel that your current community offers sufficient amenities, services, etc., within a 15-minute walk of where you live?" n=59.

Commenters recognized the need for gentle density to support 15-minute communities. There was a recognition that some neighbourhood density is necessary to facilitate the concentration of neighbourhood amenities and services. In some cases, developers require a certain number of units per building to make residential developments viable. When done well, density can build community and improve quality of life.

More specifically, commenters want to see:

- A reasonable amount of density with gradual height changes. Transitions to existing neighbourhoods are important, especially in areas dominated by single-detached dwellings.
- Mid-rises and "missing middle" housing, rather than high-rises. Mid-rise housing could include ground-level retail.
- Density that is appropriate to the location, neighbourhood and street. Plans for infill should be aligned with existing and planned municipal infrastructure, especially in terms of transportation.
- A greater variety of housing options in neighbourhoods (i.e., townhouses, low-rise condos) for all ages and stages of life. This would, for example, allow seniors to remain in their neighbourhood if they wish to downsize.
- High-paying jobs in Richmond Hill, so that residents can live and work locally without long commutes.
- Opportunities to learn, socialize and dine within their neighbourhoods.

Section 3: Who We Heard From

Open House

Upon registering, Open House participants were asked to indicate which Official Plan Amendments they were most interested in learning about. As shown in the figure below, the majority of participants were interested in both OPA 18.3 and 18.4.

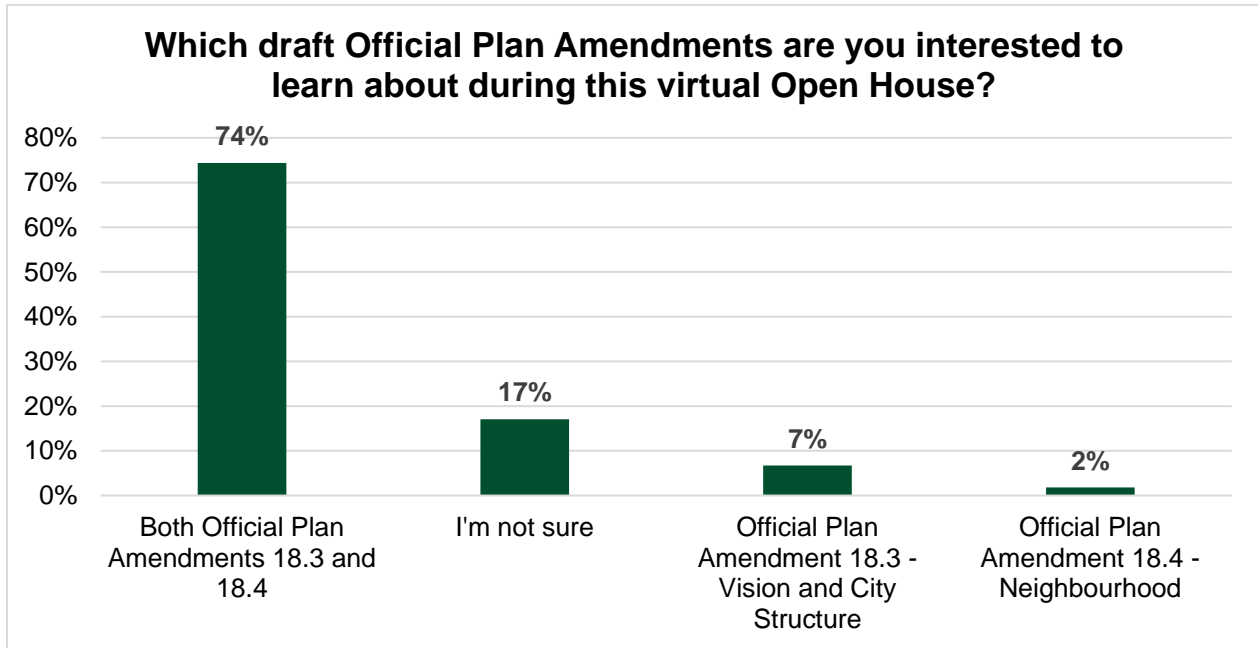


Figure 6: Graph of participant responses to "Which draft Official Plan Amendments are you interested to learn about during this virtual Open House?", n= 164

At registration, participants were asked to indicate which demographic group(s) best described them. Participants were encouraged to select all that apply. Of the 164 participants who registered, 108 were residents of Richmond Hill. More details are provided in the graph below.

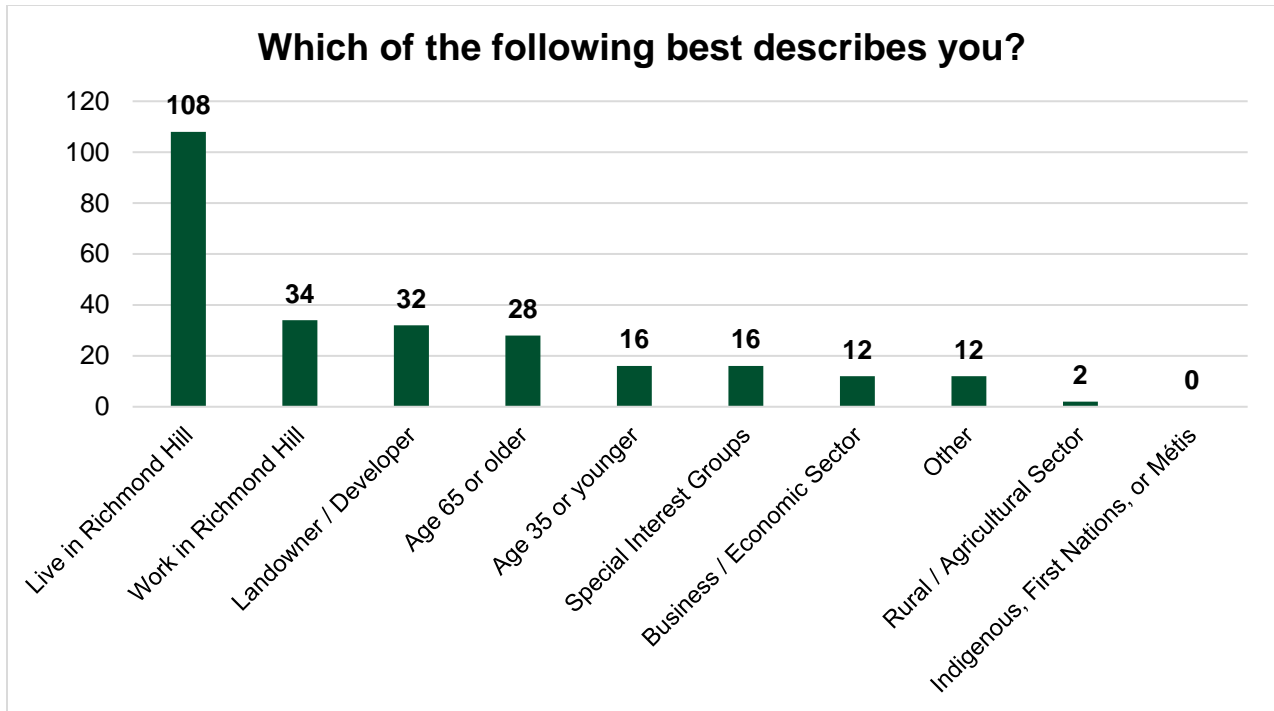


Figure 7: Graph of participant responses to, "Which of the following best describes you? (Choose all that apply.)" n= 260.

At registration, participants were asked if they had participated in a prior City Plan 2041 event. Participants were fairly split, with 57% indicating "no" and 43% indicating "yes".

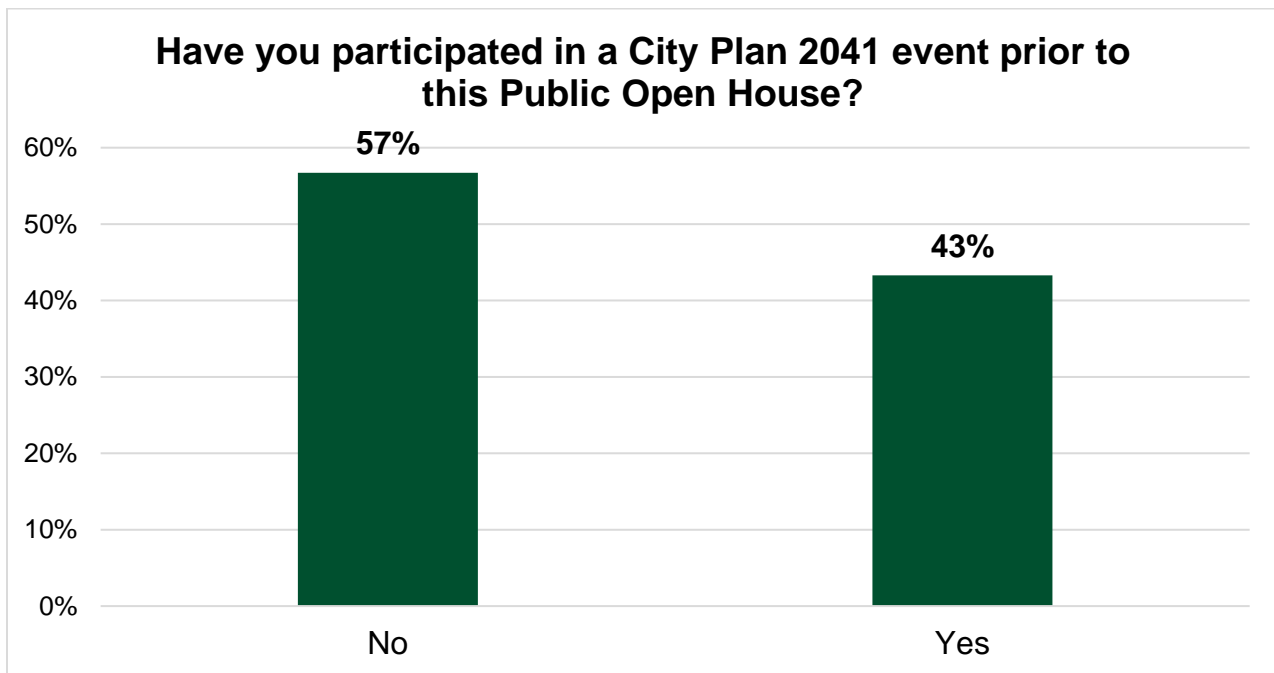


Figure 8: Graph of participant responses to, "Have you participated in a City Plan 2041 event before this Public Open House?" n=164.

At the Open House, participants were asked how long they have been involved in the Official Plan Update. As shown below, 40% have been involved since the first Open House in February 2021, while 35% just started to be involved.

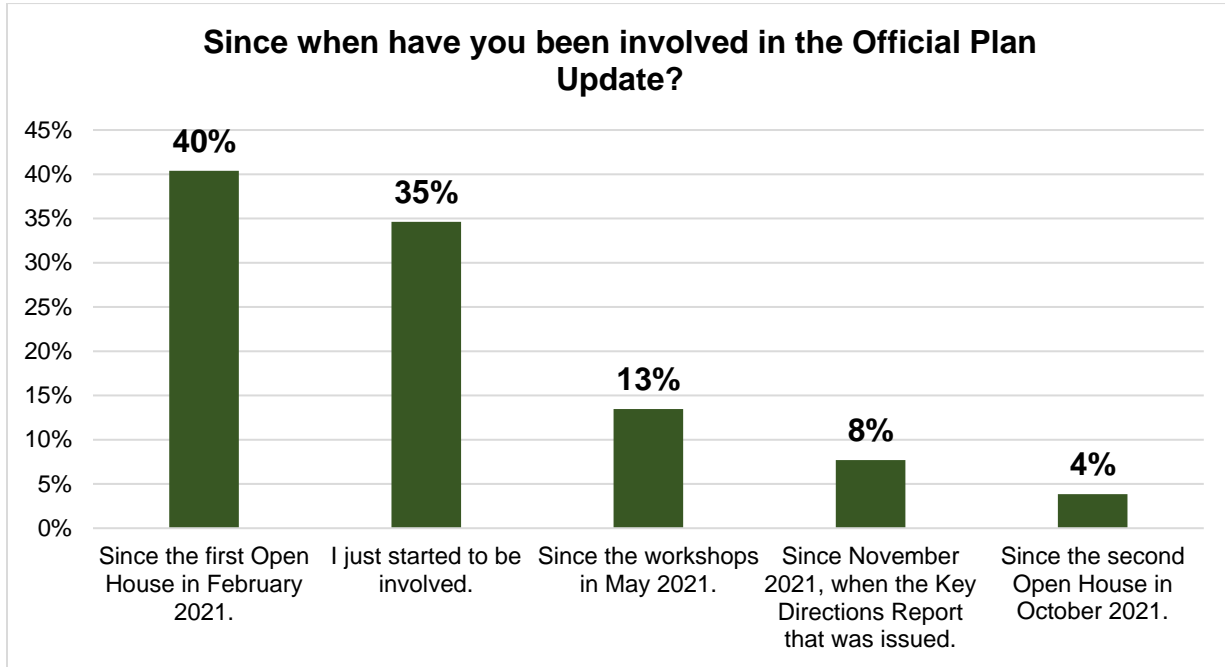


Figure 9: Graph of participant responses to, "Since when have you been involved in the Official Plan Update?" n=52

Other Commenters

Between April 7 and May 18, a total of 26 written and oral comments were received via email and at the May 18 Council Meeting. A breakdown is shown in the table below.

Sector	Number of Submissions
Developer	8
Public Agency	5
Resident	7
Resident Association	6

An additional 56 letters were submitted between March 22 and April 4, 2022, prior to the release of the OPAs. These letters were concerning the proposed designation of a Regional Corridor along Yonge Street within the Draft York Region Official Plan. Fifty-five of the letters were submitted by residents, with one submitted from a local environmental organization.

Section 4: Engagement Process and Communication Methods

Engagement Methods

The engagement methods used to seek feedback from the community and stakeholders during this phase are detailed below.

Walk and Win Contest

The Walk and Win contest and online survey was held between March 8 and March 31, 2022. The objectives of the contest was to raise awareness about the Official Plan update in general and to help residents better understand the concept of a 15-minute community. The Walk and Win contest challenged participants to walk 15 minutes from their home and identify the elements they love and what they wished to see. They were also asked to rank their level of satisfaction with the amenities and features within their neighbourhood. In total, 286 residents responded to the associated online survey.

Results of the survey are provided in **Appendix A** of this report.

Virtual Open House

On April 26, 2022, the City of Richmond Hill hosted the OPA 18.3 and 18.4 virtual Open House. The event began with Mayor West providing welcoming remarks. This was followed by an introductory presentation from Sybelle von Kursell, Manager, Planning Policy, on the overall context for the City Plan 2041 project. The introduction was followed by presentations on OPA 18.3 (by Andrew Crawford, Planner I - Policy) and OPA 18.4 (by Brian DeFreitas, Senior Planner - Policy). Three Question and Answer sessions were facilitated during the session.

93 participants attended the event. The live stream video was posted on the [City's YouTube channel](#) after the open house and was viewed 119 times between April 26 and May 18, 2022.

Informational Videos

On April 20, the City also posted videos explaining OPA 18.3 and 18.4, which were viewed 92 and 93 times, respectively, as of May 18.

Council Public Meeting

A Council Public Meeting, pursuant to Section 26 (3) of the Planning Act, was held on May 18, 2022, to notify the public and receive comments on the proposed Official Plan Amendments. Members of the public were invited to submit written comments before the meeting and provide oral delegations during the meeting. Overall, 22 written comments were submitted, and four individuals made oral delegations. An additional 56 letters were received regarding the Regional Corridor (Yonge Street) proposed in the draft Regional Official Plan, which also relates to the City Structure proposed in OPA 18.3.

Promotion Methods

Walk and Win Contest

Promotion for the Walk and Win contest took place between March 8 and March 31, 2022. The contest was launched on a dedicated webpage that was also linked with the OP Update webpage, which received 1836 views. The following promotional tactics were used:

- City of Richmond Hill homepage banner
- Public Service Announcement (distributed to several media outlets and resulted in two articles on yorkregion.com on March 14)
- Poster with QR code at recreation facilities
- Twitter posts (9,393 impressions)
- Facebook post (2,866 impressions) and ads (71,007 impressions)
- LED signs at all Richmond Hill facilities
- Richmond Hill e-newsletter
- E-blast to subscribers of the Recreation e-newsletter
- E-blast to subscribers of the Richmond Hill Public Library's e-newsletter
- Direct emails to: OP Update webpage subscribers and OP Update notification list.

Virtual Open House

Notice of information about the Virtual Open House was posted on the project webpage. There were, 2,657 unique page views between April 7 and 26, 2022. Following the open house, April 27 to May 18, the webpage received 596 unique page views. Promotion for the Virtual Open House took place between April 7 and 26, 2022. The following promotional tactics were used:

- City of Richmond Hill homepage banner
- Public Service Announcement (distributed to several local media outlets and resulted in an article on yorkregion.com on April 19, 2022)
- Poster with QR code at recreation facilities
- Twitter posts (5,171 impressions)
- Facebook post (2,163 impressions) and ads (146,912 impressions)
- Curbex signs
- Print ads in The Liberal
- Yorkregion.com homepage (190,982 impressions)
- Multilingual digital ads in four different languages (148,956 impressions for all four ads)
- LED signs at all Richmond Hill facilities
- Richmond Hill e-newsletter
- Direct emails to: OP Update webpage subscribers, OP Update notification list, Indigenous communities, and prescribed bodies

Appendix A: Walk and Win Contest and Online Survey

In addition to the Open House questions, the City also garnered feedback regarding 15 minute communities through its Walk and Win contest held between March 8, 2022, and March 31, 2022. While the intent of the contest was to raise awareness about the OP Update in general and also to encourage residents to think about what it means to be in a 15-minute community, the survey results do provide the City with a lot of insight in terms of current residents' attitude about their community.

The Walk and Win contest asked participants to walk within their neighbourhood and identify the elements they love and what they wished was within a 15-minute walk from their home. They were also asked to rank their level of satisfaction with the amenities and features within their neighbourhood.

At a very high-level, what we heard through this initiative was that most people feel there is room for improvement in terms of their community responding to the 15-minute community objectives. Whereas many survey participants identified aspects of the community that they love, there were certain amenities that are lacking and this varied from one community to another as it did from one respondent to another.

Participants were encouraged to consider their feedback under the following categories.

Things to look out for on your walk may include:



Figure 10: Things to look for on the walk

Level of Satisfaction with What is Close to Home within their Neighbourhood

When asked whether contest participants were happy with what is close to their home, 54% were very or extremely satisfied. 31% are satisfied, and 15% were dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied.

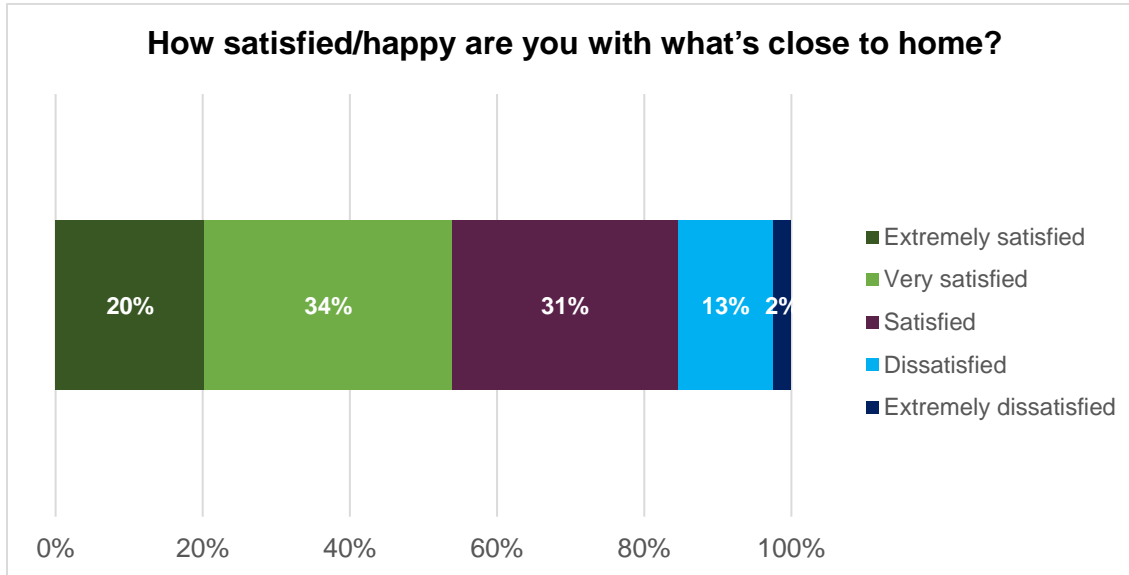


Figure 11: Graph showing participant responses for, "How satisfied are you with what's close to home?" n=286.

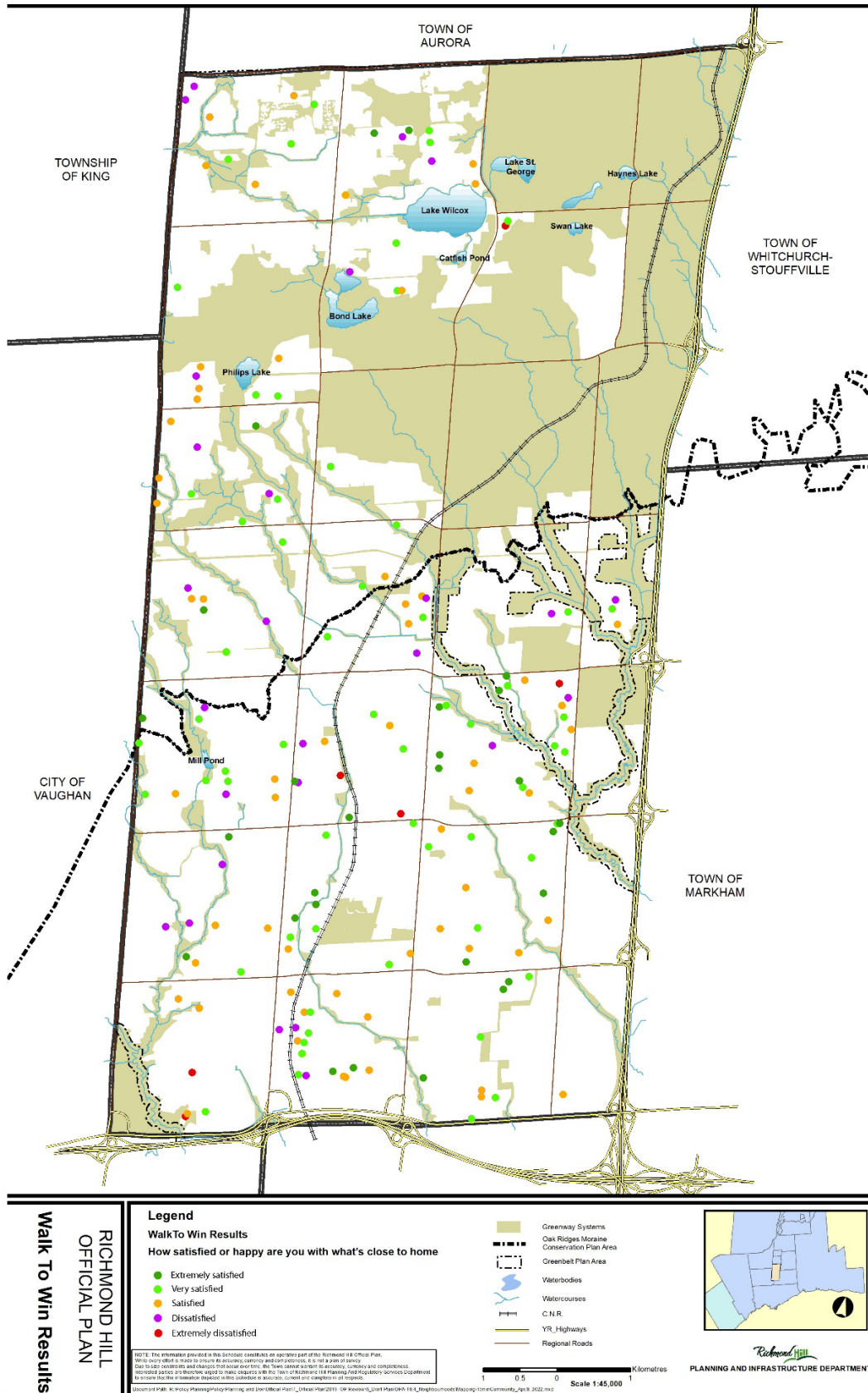


Figure 12: Map of the level of satisfaction with what is within a 15-minute walk from home.

What Residents Love about their Neighbourhoods

Parks, nature, and trails were most frequently identified as elements people loved or used in their neighbourhood. Many respondents also indicated they loved being able to use services and be near retail. Further details are provided below.

Parks and Trails

Parks were among the most noted features people loved about their neighbourhood. They highlighted parks, parkettes, picnic areas, and playgrounds.

Several respondents love Mill Pond Park. Lake Wilcox and the boardwalk, Hunter's Point Wildlife Park, Crosby Park, Richmond Green Park, Leno Park, and Headwater Park were also noted.

Some respondents identified baseball diamonds, tennis courts and soccer fields as amenities they enjoy.

Walkable and accessible trails, pathways and bridges through forests or parks or near ponds and ravines were noted by several respondents as valuable assets that contribute to neighbourhoods and wellbeing.

Nature and Trees

Many respondents highlighted the natural features in their neighbourhood as elements they loved. Things like birds, urban wildlife, ponds/streams were mentioned by many. People appreciated the opportunity to see, hear, photograph, and enjoy these elements close to home.

Forested areas, trees, flowers and scenery were appreciated by many and green spaces for walks. Lake Wilcox and local ponds were mentioned as great places to observe wildlife.

Food and Beverage

Respondents noted that they loved access to grocery stores, Chinese/Asian restaurants and groceries, nearby restaurants and coffee shops.

Retail

Many residents noted retail as a feature they used or loved. Specifically, they noted the neighbourhood pharmacy, hair salons, stores, small businesses, and business center. Some noted the proximity of small plazas as a convenience.

A few respondents noted the amenities in the downtown core and the art gallery, as well as the Richmond Hill Performing Arts Centre.

Services

Services were noted among many respondents as a key feature they loved or used. Elements such as community centers, libraries, sports facilities (i.e., arena, swimming pool, tennis courts, basketball courts) and local schools were noted.

Several participants noted garbage; while some appreciated that garbage cans were nearby and convenient, others indicated they would like to see more garbage cans available in their neighbourhood.

Street Amenity

Some noted roads, sidewalks, and infrastructure are well maintained, clean and shoveled. Others indicated public transportation as important.

Sidewalks were mentioned by some respondents who use the sidewalks to move around the neighbourhood and pedestrian traffic signals to cross the street. A few commented that the sidewalks are large, clear and well maintained.

People, Peaceful and Quiet

Some respondents highlighted that they enjoyed getting to know neighbours while walking. They enjoyed the quiet and peaceful streets as a time to relax.

Housing

Only a few respondents noted housing. A few noted the homes were nice in their neighbourhood and that there was a lot of residential housing. A few noted they loved the heritage homes.

What Residents Wish was Near Their Home, within a 15-Minute Walk

Several respondents indicated that they do not wish for anything else in their neighbourhood. They have access to Mill Pond, recreation facilities, David Dunlap Observatory Park, and the library.

Food and Beverage

While many respondents loved the access to food and beverage in their neighbourhoods, many wished for additional food and beverage. Specifically, respondents wished for:

- a local grocery store
- a market or convenience store
- a coffee shop or café with a patio
- more restaurants
- specialty food such as an ice cream shop or a bakery
- a Chinese restaurant or grocery store
- an LCBO

Services

Many respondents highlighted their interest in having a variety of services nearby. The following categories were mentioned most frequently.

Recreational Facilities

Recreational facilities such as:

- A swimming pool
- Recreation, fitness and gym facilities

- Splash pads
- Skating areas
- A sports hall
- Community congregation areas
- A yoga center or fitness room
- A basketball court
- An indoor stadium
- Updated playgrounds

Arts/Cultural Elements

Individual respondents indicated a gallery, another bandshell in addition to the one at Mill Pond, and an interest in more public art.

Banking

A couple of responses highlighted wanting a bank nearby.

Medical

A few respondents wanted medical services, a hospital, emergency services, family doctors, or specialists nearby.

Transportation

Convenient transportation options were mentioned by several, including access to a subway station or the highway. Others wanted more frequent bus service, closer stops, alternative pedestrian crossings, and additional parking.

Library and Community Centre

Several respondents wished for a library, and a few participants wished for a community center or a community square.

Schools

A few noted the importance of having schools nearby and access to a catholic school in the neighbourhood.

Garbage Addressed

A few respondents were concerned about garbage and recommended more garbage and recycling bins and pet waste removal.

Parks and Trails

Many respondents wished for enhanced parks and trails. They highlighted the following:

- Adding parks spaces
- Updating playground equipment and surfaces with new features and soft pad or wood chips
- Adding outdoor workout equipment
- Providing off-leash dog parks
- Planting more shade trees at the park
- Adding water features or splash pads for children
- Adding benches, tables and seating

- Creating more trails
- Creating pathways or trails that lead different areas, major streets, parkland and stores
- Creating nature trails, walking, hiking or biking trails

Nature and Trees

Many respondents identified an interest in preserving and creating nature areas such as forests and green spaces. There is an interest in protecting mature trees and increasing the tree canopy.

Retail

Many respondents identified an interest in having retail options close to home, including:

- More shops and stores
- Small mom and pop shops
- A shopping mall
- A bookstore
- A pharmacy

A few participants indicated they are interested in more non-retail employment opportunities within their neighbourhood.

Street Amenity

Several respondents wished for more flower beds, trees, benches in public spaces, streetlamps, and bus shelters.

Sidewalks were identified by several respondents who wished they were bigger, more accessible, or indicated they were missing in some areas. A few also mentioned the importance of snow clearing. Other items mentioned included:

- A safe pedestrian walkway to cross North Lake Road at North Lake Rd/Old Bayview Rd.
- A crosswalk or traffic light to cross the road is necessary across Bayview by Lake Wilcox Park.
- Traffic calming such as speed bumps to slow drivers.

Sustainable Design

Not many respondents identified sustainable design features for their neighbourhood. A few respondents wished for public EV charging stations and solar panels.

Appendix B: Open House Q&A Summary

At the OPA 18.3 and 18.4 Open House, attendees were provided three opportunities to ask questions. Questions were welcomed following the presentations on OPA 18.3 and 18.4, respectively, and at the end of the open house. The following is a non-verbatim summary. Questions are marked with a "Q", answers with an "A", and comments with a "C". Additional response details have been provided as needed.

Questions on OPA 18.3 – Vision & City Structure

Q1: Does the Official Plan Update incorporate the Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) for the Yonge Street/Highway 7 area?

A: The direction for transit-oriented communities (through the MZO) was announced after OPA 18.3 was released. It has not been incorporated into the current draft plan amendment. We are looking into it to see how it may affect some of our schedules and policies.

Q2: Could you elaborate on what you mean by "affordable housing"?

A: The City has developed an Affordable Housing Strategy. Within this strategy, we will further explore the definition of affordable housing. This will also be included in our second batch of official plan amendments, coming in the fall of this year. Generally speaking, affordable housing is based on what is affordable for those in the 60th percentile of the household income of a municipality, where these households would not be spending more than 30% of their annual gross income to pay their mortgage, utilities and property taxes. For rental units, given the small proportion of such housing both within the City and the Region, we consider rents that are 125% of the average market rent to be affordable.

Q3: Can you provide an example of what an "affordable house" would cost in Richmond Hill?

A: Richmond Hill is currently developing its thresholds as part of the Affordable Housing Strategy. In the meantime, we are using the 2019 York Region threshold: \$482,000 for homeownership and \$1,831/month for rentals.

C1: The Key Directions report was very impressive. It called for high-quality architectural and public realm design that creates a sense of place, uses good materials and provides aesthetically pleasing landmarks, public spaces, buildings and gathering spaces. This was an amazing goal; however, it is not reflected in the draft official plan amendment. Residents do not want cookie-cutter buildings but rather buildings that look good and create a sense of place. The policy has to be revised substantially and be more ambitious to achieve beautiful vibrant places that people care about.

Q4: Does the Official Plan consider what services (such as wastewater, schools, hospitals, art centers, fire and police stations, etc.) are needed to support a growing population?

A: Yes, the Official Plan does account for this. We have prepared a population forecast and are working with other departments and updating our other master plans alongside the Official Plan. For example, we are updating our Transportation Master Plan, which focuses on roads and road capacity, and our Urban Environmental Master Servicing Plan, which focuses on water, wastewater, and infrastructure services. We have also circulated our draft forecast and communicated with the local utilities and school boards. We are communicating with divisions internally and externally to make sure that we can accommodate the level of population that we are anticipating.

Q5: Does the City plan to ask developers to use climate mitigation strategies in their projects?

A: The City currently has a sustainability metrics program, which requires development to achieve a certain level of sustainable design measures. The official plan amendment considers climate change at many levels. First, there is the recognition of the Community Energy and Emissions Plan's target of reducing emissions to net-zero by 2050. When working with the development industry, we will be referring to actions identified in that plan. Within our City's standards manual, there are infrastructure standards that we are asking for that are related to climate mitigation. In addition, there will be further amendments to the Official Plan post-approval to ensure conformity with the regional and provincial plans that also address climate change.

Q6: Why does the "15-minute" trip not include transit?

A: We recognize that transit provides a sustainable mode of travel. For this OPA specifically, we are looking at the more immediate area surrounding the development (five-minute bike ride or 15-minute walk). Ideally, people do not have to go longer distances to get groceries that would warrant the need to use transit, for example. It should also be noted that transit is identified in the mobility hierarchy, below micro mobility, within active transportation modes of travel.

Q7: How do the policies in OPA 18.3 intend to address community design and provide more attractive spaces?

A: We have emphasized making sure buildings fit with the public realm. We understand the importance of making the streetscape attractive and walkable. To contribute to placemaking, we know that the first five stories of a building are critical to how people relate to buildings. We are focusing on the ground floor and ensuring we get that right in terms of how it interfaces with the public. We are thinking about how to use the ground floor to create synergies with the public realm, framing the street as not just a conduit for cars but a place where people

walk and cycle. Implementation tools and urban design guidance will focus on the floors people interact with. We are also looking at urban plazas, which may be implemented as privately owned public space that is accessible. This is another tool that municipalities use to provide more amenities and open space, and we look forward to implementing this in Richmond Hill.

C2: Public realm is the most important aspect of the city. While the parts of the buildings that interact with the public realm are important, higher floors should not be excluded. We have seen many developments with an amazing ground floor, but the tower above is cookie cutter. We need clear and ambitious policies that address aesthetics, architecture and the design of the public realm. It would be nice if we had a material palette for different parts of the city instead of the same utilitarian infrastructure across the entire public realm.

Q8: The Downtown Local Centre has been renamed the Village Local Centre, and its boundaries have been reduced. This is the historic center of Richmond Hill, and the change in phrasing has been done too quickly. The Village Local Centre will now be lumped in with the other local centres, which are expected to have a lot of intensification and high rises. This is not what we want in the Village Local Centre. The historic character should be maintained, and heights should be limited. Why has the Downtown Local Centre been renamed the Village Local Centre?

A: We propose renaming the Downtown Local Centre to the Village Local Centre since Richmond Hill Centre will act as the new downtown area; providing a scale of development and variety of land uses typical of a “downtown”. We propose that the local centres have their own unique individual characteristics even though they have the same designation. These centres will not necessarily be areas for high-density or high intensification. The 2010 Official Plan recognized this. We will likely continue to recognize this as we go through the detailed planning for the Village. Detailed planning for the Village will be part of the second batch of official plan amendments, and we will have additional engagement sessions to discuss in the fall and early next year. We agree that the Village is a special and unique place, and we want to make sure that continues to be the case. In OPA 18.3, we tried to make a concerted effort to clarify what the hierarchy means and what the land use designations mean. We have also made an effort to provide direction for developing Chapter 4 policies. We anticipate providing more detailed policy direction regarding how specific areas, like the Village, will grow and build out over the long term.

Questions on OPA 18.4 – Neighbourhoods

Q1: Can you reiterate how the OPA intends to broaden permissions for services and amenities?

A: OPA 18.4 aims to achieve 15-minute communities. We are broadening permissions for things like home occupation and neighbourhood commercial sites. We are adding flexibility to allow the development of neighbourhood commercial uses along the periphery of neighbourhoods to facilitate the idea of being close to daily amenities.

Q2: Are multi-tached houses owner-occupied, or are they rentals?

A: It could be either. There is an opportunity for the owner to occupy a portion of the dwelling and rent out the other portion. There is another option where you could subdivide the house into self-contained units and sell them off like condominiums. You will typically find that most owners will rent out spare units to supplement income, so it operates very much like an additional residential unit/secondary suite.

Q3: Will there be regulations to prevent multi-tached homes from being used as short-term rentals (i.e., Airbnb) and for waste management and parking concerns?

A: Yes, multi-tached units would be treated the same as “additional residential units” (ARU) permitted in the Official Plan and its implementing zoning by-laws. The OPA purposefully refers to the ARU policies to ensure that those policies which emphasize that certain criteria must be met, including the Ontario Building Code, fire code regulations and zoning by-law provisions (including parking and waste management), apply to these units.

Q4: Will secondary buildings on the same property (i.e., granny flats) be permitted under multi-tached houses?

A: These units are already permitted under the City's additional residential unit policy, adopted last year. That policy permits one additional unit in the primary dwelling. In addition, there is the option that enables an additional unit in an accessory structure (i.e., a detached garage or in a granny flat). The multi-tached dwelling concept is the same general principle, except we allow for more than one additional unit to be made within the same **primary** dwelling.

Q5: Is there a sense of the number of multi-tached homes/units that might be created?

A: It is unclear at this time; however, based on building permit requests, we have seen some uptake on the additional residential unit provisions introduced over a year ago; so this does indicate that there is an interest in partitioning homes to accommodate more households. This is still a relatively new concept, not just for Richmond Hill but also for many Greater Toronto Area municipalities. The

Province (in the Affordability Housing Task Force report) suggested the idea of additional units to make better use of existing infrastructure and to tackle the housing affordability problem.

C1: A little more density would be welcome in certain areas (i.e., along local collector streets) as it would provide things to do within our neighbourhoods and access to community services. This helps build community and quality of life. At the same time, aesthetics and character are important. Density needs to "fit" with the existing neighbourhood.

C2: The policies specify that density must be compatible and coexist with existing properties, respecting the adjacent neighbourhood. Changes in OPA 18.3 (to the angular plane policies) do not respect these criteria. The angular plane policies were more of an appropriate fit the way they were before. The OPA 18.3 is going the other way and not respecting neighbourhoods.

Q6: How do the changes to the angular plane policies respect the adjacent neighbourhood?

A: Angular plane policies in OPA 18.3 would apply mainly within the City's intensification areas. The purpose is to ensure that the height and massing of buildings within the intensification area do not overshadow low-rise buildings in neighbourhoods. While there is a connection to the neighbourhoods, the angular plane policies are not applicable for development within the neighbourhood designation. However, the point is well-taken. One of the objectives of the OPA 18.4 is to ensure that development acknowledges the distinct features that exist. While the City cannot prevent growth from happening, our objective is to strike a balance to ensure that development is compatible and can coexist.

C3: The angular plane policies were more of an appropriate fit the way they were before. With the OPA [18.3], it is going the other way and not respecting neighbourhoods.

Other Questions

Q1: Could City staff provide a redline version of the official plan amendments in a PDF that allows comments to be added?

A: City staff will work on this and see if it is feasible to provide this version to the public.

Q2: How is the mix of housing types in different parts of the city determined?

A: Richmond Hill has evolved as a municipality over several decades. A large part of the city's growth has occurred through suburban development. We saw exponential growth, for example, of single-detached dwellings in the 1980s. However, there are areas, such as the downtown core, where you will find a more eclectic mix of housing forms. You will notice a mix of multi-unit dwellings like townhouses in this older area. Now we are a municipality that is built out, and

we do not have the opportunity to grow in the typical ground-oriented fashion. A lot of the growth that Richmond Hill will experience over the next couple of decades will be in the form of apartments and intensification in centres and corridors. We also expect to see development through infill in the neighbourhoods, but at a lesser rate and smaller scale.

Q3: What is the population that Richmond Hill needs to accommodate? How many units are approved, and where will they be located?

A: In preparing for the official plan update, the City undertook a preliminary growth forecast analysis which includes assumptions made by the Region in terms of people and jobs expected to be accommodated over the planning horizon. This also includes assumptions associated with the City Structure proposed through OPA 18.3 regarding where this growth can be accommodated. When it comes to intensification on a site-specific basis, the timing can be variable and largely depends on a landowner's decision to change or add development to its site. Accordingly, while the City does undertake a "budget" process in terms of land and infrastructure needs when planning for intensification, we need to allocate density in various locations across the City to account for landowners' decisions regarding the timing of when they redevelop their property. In that regard, our land budgeting considers anticipated growth to 2041 and what the City could accommodate beyond 2041. Because the City cannot force landowners to change their property and increase density on a particular site, the City needs to enable development to accommodate the forecasted growth, which will happen in various locations across the city. OPA 18.4 also provides more opportunities for ground-oriented housing, which is different from those in the intensification corridors. We are trying to make different forms of housing available across the city to address affordability challenges.

Q4: With respect to the alignment of new development and infrastructure, as outlined in OPA 18.3, if a proposed development is not aligned with new infrastructure plans, could the City say no to that development?

A: There are a few tools the City could use in this case. One of the tools is a hold, where we could still approve the development but put a hold on the zoning. This prevents the development from occurring until the infrastructure is in place, and then the hold can be lifted. We could also reject the application or decline to send it forward to Council.

Q5: How does the Official Plan address the traffic bottlenecks, such as that at Yonge Street and Major Mackenzie Drive?

A: While we are working on the Official Plan, we are working closely with the transportation team that is working on the Transportation Master Plan. The mobility hierarchy is one of the key tools we use to address bottlenecks. If fewer people use cars and more people walk, cycle, or use micro-mobility this would reduce the pressure on the roads. In terms of the Transportation Master Plan, we are exploring the needed infrastructure to support the Major Transit Station Areas

(MTSAs), such as the provision of cycling infrastructure, to realize the 15-minute community concept. With the right pieces of infrastructure and using the transit system (Yonge Bus Rapid Transit and future subway), there will be a whole host of transportation options.

Q6: Does the Official Plan address empty homes and speculation?

A: There is not much that the City has in its toolkit to address the issue of speculative housing. We have by-laws requiring that properties be held to a specific standard at the municipal level. Hence, landowners need to ensure their properties are maintained. Whether or not homes are vacant is not something we can regulate at this time. However, our Affordable Housing Strategy recommends investigating a vacant home tax. At the Federal government level, taxation is being considered as well.

Q7: How will we be able to reach our net-zero by 2050 greenhouse gas emissions target as density increases and we lose greenspace?

A: Greenspace and the tree canopy are very important. That is why we have tree canopy targets. We recognize that this has an impact on the urban heat island effect. As we urbanize, we are putting more thought into incorporating the tree canopy into more urban areas. We are looking at urban squares, linear parks and rooftop gardens to provide more open (green) space options.

Q8: How can we make new and existing buildings and infrastructure more resilient to increasingly severe weather events?

A: We are beginning to corporately implement our Community Energy and Emissions Plan and our Climate Change Framework. We are thinking about incorporating things like shade structures into parks and materials to withstand heat or major stressors. We are incorporating climate resilience into our asset management and looking at our standards and specifications – information we can then use to inform our sustainability metrics. There is a challenge because we cannot require certain sustainability measures under the building code; however, through the implementation of our Sustainability Metrics tool, we can work with development proponents to incorporate climate change resiliency measures in their projects.

C2: It would be helpful if the City could provide indoor playgrounds for children during the winter.

Questions Posed in the Chat

During the session, additional questions were also posed in the chat for which verbal responses were not given. Below is a summary of the questions and responses to them, prepared by City staff.

Sustainable Design

Q1: Does the City have any plans to encourage solar roofing?

A: The City's [Community Energy and Emissions Plan](#) strongly recommends the installation of solar roofing. Policy updates provided in OPA 18.3 encourage their use. The City's [Sustainability Assessment Tool](#) also encourage the use of solar panels.

Q2: Is there a requirement to plan a certain number of trees for each new development?

A: The provision of trees within a development is subject to many factors and is informed by the City's Official Plan, Urban Forest Management Plan, Street Tree By-law, Tree Preservation By-law, Standards and Specifications Manual, and Sustainability Assessment Tool and planning studies.

Urban Design

Q3: How do urban plazas function in the winter months?

A: Urban Plazas are a new typology identified in OPA 18.3. The typology is described as privately owned publicly accessible open space. The design of these open spaces is determined by individual development proponents with the input of city staff. These open spaces can include amenities that make them inviting year-round, including small shelters and/or trees for shade and wind protection.

Q4: Are there building height limitations?

A: Presently the Official Plan does provide height limits for different areas across the City. For example, within neighbourhoods the Official Plan states that the maximum building height is 3 storeys, unless the development is on an arterial street, in those circumstances the maximum height is four storeys. The Official Plan also provides definitions for low, mid and high-rise buildings, and within specific land use designations the Official Plan permits these building types. As we continue to update the Official Plan consideration will be given to the appropriateness of these definitions and these height permissions on an area specific basis.

Mobility

Q5: How does micro-mobility work in the winter months, especially for seniors or other vulnerable populations?

A: In terms of the proposed Official Plan policies regarding micro-mobility, this form of mobility is defined as "electrified personal transport such as e-bikes." The benefit of these vehicles is that they are compact, use clean energy, and are suitable for all levels of ability. Of course, there may be certain weather conditions, i.e., major snow/rainstorm, where this mode of travel would not be advisable, and as such other means such as transit, shared vehicles or private cars would be a better option. We do know, however, in places like Denmark and Norway, where climate is on par with what we experience in Richmond Hill, the use of personal transport devices is used throughout all seasons.

Q6: Is there a plan to widen the sidewalk on the bridge at 16th Avenue east of Yonge Street to make it safer to walk and cycle?

A: While the City is undertaking this Official Plan update, it is also working on preparing its Transportation Master Plan Update (TMP), which includes consideration of the pedestrian realm. 16th Avenue however is a Regional road and as such the Region is also involved in the planning for this street. Please see [Transportation Master Plan Update](#) for more information.

Q7: Will there be a future road west of Yonge Street, passing Scott Drive?

A: While the City is undertaking this Official Plan update, it is also working on preparing its [Transportation Master Plan Update](#) (TMP) which addresses future transportation planning needs of the City.

Multi-tached Housing

Q8: How many people can live in a multi-tached house?

A: The City is not able to regulate the number of people who occupy a home, or their relationship status. However, based on the 2021 Census Release in April of this year, we know that household sizes in Richmond Hill are declining. On average, there are 2.9 persons per household. And in 2021, 45% of all households were made up of 1 or 2 people, whereas 33% were made up of households with 4 or more people.

Q9: What are the zoning bylaw provisions for multi-unit homes?

A: There are various by-laws across the city that address multi-unit homes such as townhouse, duplexes, triplexes, etc. If the proposed permission for multi-tached housing is approved, new provisions will need to be added through the City's Comprehensive Zoning By-law process to address this form of housing, in accordance with the approved policy for this housing type. Public consultation on this by-law will occur prior to Council adoption of the new zoning.

Q10: What incentives do developers have to build multi-tached homes?

A: Presently, there is no specific incentive proposed for multi-tached housing. The policy is proposed in response to the [Affordable Housing Strategy](#) and is intended to reduce barriers for home-owners who wish to make their home more affordable and/or to provide affordable housing for others who wish to live in their community.

Implementation

Q11: How much control does the City have in ensuring the Official Plan is used?

A: The Planning Act requires Council to make decisions regarding land use planning matters that are in conformity with the Official Plan. Accordingly, the Official Plan guides land use decisions regarding both public and private development.

Q12: Is anything being done to expedite the process of permitting and zoning?

A: While the City is undertaking this Official Plan update, it is also working on preparing a comprehensive zoning by-law. When completed, the update of the zoning by-law should reduce the need for zone change applications. Please see [Zone Richmond Hill](#) for more information. Furthermore, for certain types of applications, the City offers a service to assist with fast tracking approvals, please see [RH Concierge - City of Richmond Hill](#).

Q13: How does the new OP apply to buildings which are approved but not yet built?

A: Development that is approved, i.e., has site specific zoning and/or site plan approval, would not be impacted by changes to the Official Plan.

Q14: When will we see future developments in centres and corridors?

A: The Official Plan provides policy direction for where and how development may occur. The timing of development is largely subject to the development proponent. The decision to proceed with approved development is determined by numerous factors, such as market conditions, financing, and the availability of necessary services, to support proposed development.

Q15: How are you planning to implement affordable housing?

A: In early 2022, Council endorsed the City's Affordable Housing Strategy. This Strategy identifies 44 possible actions the City can undertake to facilitate the development of affordable housing. Please see the [Affordable Housing Strategy](#) for more information.

Batch 2 OPAs

Q16: Where can I learn more about the plans for Highway 7 and Bathurst Street?

A: More specific planning for the Bathurst and Highway 7 area will be addressed through Batch 2 Official Plan Amendments, consultation on these will occur in late fall 2022.

Q17: When will site-specific 'corrections' or refinements to existing OP schedules, as requested by individual landowners, be addressed by planning staff, and how?

A: Corrections and refinements to Official Plan Schedules can be addressed through the proposed housekeeping amendment. Please forward your requests along with an explanation/justification for the correction or refinement to OPUpdate@richmondhill.ca.

Q18: How can we attract high-paying jobs to Richmond Hill so people do not need to commute long distances?

A: The City's Economic Development Committee and Council recently received a [report](#) regarding investment attraction in Richmond Hill. This report will help to inform Official Plan policies while preparing Batch 2 OPAs related to employment areas, centres and corridors.

General Information

Q19: Is there a plan to increase safety in our community?

A: Presently, the City applies community safety principles (i.e. Crime Prevention Through Environment Design) when approving site plan and plan of subdivision applications.

Q20: What is the plan for the community center on Church Street South?

A: The City is presently updating its Park, Recreational and Cultural Plans. Please see the City's [webpage](#) for more information on these initiatives.

Q21: Where can I find out more about the plans for Bond Lake?

A: The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority is responsible for the Oak Ridges Conservation Corridor Reserve which includes Bond Lake. Please see the [Oak Ridges Corridor Conservation Reserve - Toronto and Region Conservation Authority \(TRCA\)](#) for more information.

Q22: Will there be a possibility to bury the hydro lines at Yonge Street and Highway 7 to free up land for linear parks?

A: Through the preparation of the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan, consideration has been given to burying the hydro lines. Please see [Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan](#) for more information with respect its related background work. Consideration has also been given to naturalizing the hydro-

corridor to create a linear park and/or trails not only within the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan area but also through to Bayview Avenue, as noted in the Key Directions Report.

Statistics

Q23: How do you determine the percentage of each housing type in every community?

A: Statistics Canada releases this information. The April 27, 2022 release of the 2021 Census results indicates that in May 2021, Richmond Hill's housing types are as follows: 56.7% single-detached houses, 3.8% semi-detached houses, 15.2% row house, 3.1% apartment in a duplex, 2.4% apartment in a building with fewer than 5 storeys, and 18.7% apartments in buildings that have five storeys or more.

Q24: How many single-family dwellings are there in Richmond Hill? What is the percentage of single-family dwellings in Richmond Hill?

A: According to the latest Statistics Canada release, as of May 2021, there are 39,395 single detached houses in Richmond Hill (which represents 56.7% of all housing stock).

Minister's Zoning Orders

Q25: Does the OP update consider possible MZOs for different parts of Richmond Hill in future by the Province of Ontario?

A: The decision to enact a Minister's Zoning Order is in the hands of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The Official Plan update cannot foretell if and when the Minister would choose to enact one. The Update, however, is intended to be future forward in its thinking and to be responsive to City's vision. Following approval of the Official Plan update, the City would rely on conventional means to implement the Plan through municipal zoning and/or community planning permit system by-laws.

Q26: Is the 5%, three-bedroom minimum consistent with Ontario's MZO?

A: The Minister's Zoning Orders enacted in the City of Richmond Hill to date do not include this requirement.

Q27: Can the City challenge the MZO?

A: The Planning Act includes provisions for a person or public body to request that the Minister revoke or amend the MZO. The Minister may consider this request and take action, or refer the matter to the Ontario Land Tribunal, and the Minister will consider the recommendation(s) of the Tribunal and make a final decision.