

# Richmond Hill



City of Richmond Hill | November 2022

## Recreation and Culture Plan

*mbpc*  
**Monteith • Brown**  
planning consultants

 **MDB**  
INSIGHT

**tra.**  
TUCKER-REID & ASSOCIATES

 **Watson**  
& Associates  
ECONOMISTS LTD.

 **The JF Group**



# Recreation and Culture Plan

November 2022



# Recreation and Culture Plan

## Table of Contents

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1	Purpose of the Recreation and Culture Plan .....	2
1.2	Vision and Mission for Recreation and Culture .....	3
1.3	Overarching Principles for the Recreation and Culture Plan .....	4
1.4	Planning Process.....	5
1.5	Plan Organization .....	6
1.6	Potential Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic .....	7
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Richmond Hill's Planning Context .....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1	Richmond Hill's Population and Planned Growth .....	9
2.2	Engaging the Community .....	11
<b>3.0</b>	<b>A Plan for Recreation .....</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1	2013 Recreation Plan .....	16
3.2	Recreation Planning Context .....	17
3.3	Key Recreation Facility and Service Delivery Trends.....	18
3.4	Existing and Planned Indoor Recreation Facilities .....	21
3.5	Recreation Service Delivery.....	33
<b>4.0</b>	<b>A Plan for Culture .....</b>	<b>44</b>
4.1	2011 Cultural Plan .....	45
4.2	Culture Policy Context .....	46
4.3	Cultural Resources .....	48
4.4	Cultural Service Delivery .....	59
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy.....</b>	<b>65</b>
5.1	Monitoring and Updating the Recreation and Culture Plan .....	65
5.2	Partnerships .....	66
5.3	Funding the Recreation and Culture Plan .....	67
5.4	Action Plan .....	69

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Historical and Projected Population Growth by Census Year (includes census undercount), 2006 to 2031 .....	9
Figure 2: Parks and Recreation Community Survey Summary .....	12
Figure 3: Arts and Cultural Community Survey.....	13
Figure 4: Distribution of Indoor Recreation Facilities .....	22
Figure 5: Cultural Resource Framework.....	49
Figure 6: Distribution of Cultural Facilities .....	51

## List of Tables

Table 1: Summary of Indoor Recreation Facility Achievements and Development Status as per 2013 Recreation Plan.....	16
Table 2: Summary of Existing Indoor Recreation Facilities.....	21
Table 3: Suggested Performance Measures and Targets .....	37
Table 4: Summary of Achievements, 2011 Cultural Plan.....	45
Table 5 : Summary of City owned Cultural Facilities .....	50
Table 6: Summary of Major Capital Recreation Facility Recommendations.....	68



# Section 1

## Introduction





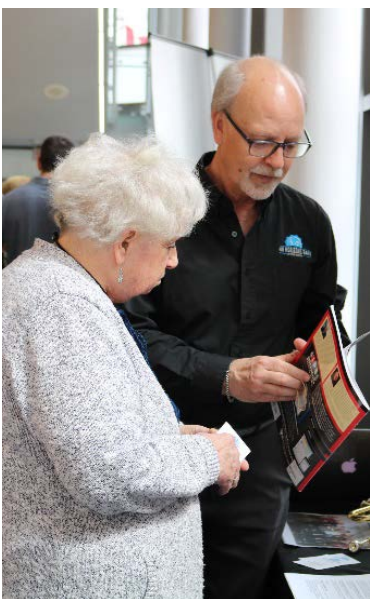
## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose of the Recreation and Culture Plan

The Recreation and Culture Plan (herein referred to as the “RCP”) updates the 2013 Recreation Plan and the 2011 Cultural Plan. The RCP guides the City of Richmond Hill on matters related to the planning and delivery of its recreation and cultural facilities, programs and services to the year 2031, when Richmond Hill is projected to reach a population of 253,000 residents. The RCP deals exclusively with the recreation and cultural opportunities provided by the City’s Community Services Department.

The primary objectives of the RCP are to:

- Understand Richmond Hill’s needs for current and future residents through an understanding of community demographics, relevant trends, public input and needs assessments.
- Provide recommendations centred upon needs for recreation and cultural facilities, programs and services required in Richmond Hill.
- Develop strategic directions for the City to consider as it implements recommendations to meet community needs in an effective, efficient, and financially sustainable manner.



### Reviewing Richmond Hill’s Parks and Recreation Plans

The updated Parks, Recreation and Culture Plans outlines strategies and actions to support residents’ evolving needs. In July 2021, 1,160 residents were engaged through a survey that helped to shape the future of these services.

~ Council Strategic Priority for 2020 to 2022

## 1.2 Vision and Mission for Recreation and Culture

Recreation and culture services in Richmond Hill are provided by the Community Services Department, which is comprised of four divisions. Of relevance to the RCP is the Recreation and Culture Division that oversees matters related to facility operations, aquatics and fitness, general programs, arts, culture, heritage, and event services. It is the goal of the Division to ensure that everyone is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation and culture experiences that foster individual and community well-being, as well as the well-being of Richmond Hill's natural and built environment. This goal aligns with Richmond Hill's corporate vision, which is expressed below.

**Richmond Hill, where people come together to build our community.**

City of Richmond Hill Corporate Vision

To achieve the corporate vision, Division staff must work collectively to execute the roles and responsibilities associated with providing high quality recreation and culture opportunities and to achieve service excellence. This approach strives to implement Richmond Hill's corporate mission, which is stated below.

The City of Richmond Hill Council and staff are committed to providing exceptional public service to our community.

City of Richmond Hill  
Corporate Mission Statement



### It is the Policy of Council to:

1. Direct Recreation and Culture staff to evaluate the need for, and if so, to work with Division staff to establish, a Division-specific vision and mission that is consistent with corporate values and strategic direction.

### 1.3 Overarching Principles for the Recreation and Culture Plan

The following overarching principles for the Recreation and Culture Plan emphasize the value that the City and its community partners embrace. They are beliefs that are complementary and should be read as integrated statements. The principles expressed in the previous Recreation and Cultural Plans continue to resonate with the voice of residents and align with the City's Strategic Plan. As a result, they continue to move services forward in Richmond Hill although with some adjustments to reflect the evolving recreation and cultural landscape.

Overarching principles for the Recreation and Culture Plan:

- a. **Recreation and cultural opportunities for all** – The City is committed to increasing participation in and visibility of recreation and cultural activities for all residents, regardless of age, ability, income, background, and orientation.
- b. **Community hubs for activity** – The City will meet recreation and cultural facility needs through the creation of community hubs that centralize community activities at key destinations. Efforts to connect residents in areas of intensification with recreation and cultural facilities is encouraged.
- c. **Empower recreation and cultural organizations and businesses** – The City will look to assist in the growth and development of Richmond Hill's recreation and cultural organizations in order to build a unique sense of belonging and make the community a great place to live.
- d. **Improve physical and mental health** – The City will support a healthy Richmond Hill by providing recreation and cultural opportunities that allow citizens to access therapeutic health benefits through social interaction, personal skill development and physical activity.
- e. **Facility service levels** – The City will strive to continue to meet the established facility service levels as the population increases.
- f. **Equitable access to facilities** – The City will ensure equitable access to recreation and cultural facilities, with an emphasis on connecting with under-represented populations.
- g. **Leveraging strengths** – Where appropriate, the City will pursue creative partnerships with stakeholders to share roles and responsibilities in order to meet community recreation and cultural needs.
- h. **Fiscally sustainable planning** – Recreation and cultural opportunities provided by the City should be provided in a fiscally sustainable manner with consideration given to internal and external funding sources, appropriate cost-recovery levels, and alternative service delivery models (e.g., partnerships).



## 1.4 Planning Process

The City of Richmond Hill retained the Consulting Team of Monteith Brown Planning Consultants, MDB Insight, Tucker-Reid and Associates, Watson and Associates Economists, and The JF Group to prepare the RCP.

The RCP employed a comprehensive planning approach. Foundational elements included a review of relevant documents, socio-demographic data, trends, as well as staff input, key stakeholder interviews and an online community survey. These building blocks provided vital information in preparing the needs assessments, which provide supporting rationale for recommendations contained in the RCP. These details can be found in the Phase 1 Background and Preliminary Needs Assessment Report and key themes and findings identified in this report are contained in the Key Directions Report, which are two companion documents to the RCP.

### **Phase 1: Background Research and Preliminary Needs Assessment Report**

- Background document review
- Community profile
- Recreation and culture trends
- Assets and inventories
- Regional benchmarking
- Staff input
- Key stakeholder interviews

### **Phase 2: Key Directions Report**

- Online community survey
- Key themes and findings

### **Phase 3: Recreation and Culture Plan**

- Draft Recreation and Culture Plan
- Finalize Recreation and Culture Plan
- Presentation to Council



## 1.5 Plan Organization

The RCP is organized by the following Sections:

### Section 1: Introduction

Describes the purpose of the RCP, vision, mission guiding principles, planning process, and potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Section 2: Richmond Hill's Planning Context

Highlights Richmond Hill's community profile and key characteristics that influence the recreation and cultural system. Key consultation findings are also highlighted.

### Section 3: A Plan for Recreation

Summarizes key policies relevant to recreation, as well as sector trends and findings from the indoor recreation facility and service delivery assessments. Detailed analysis can be found in the Phase 1 Background and Preliminary Needs Assessment Report.

### Section 4: A Plan for Culture

Identifies policies and trends relevant to cultural opportunities and needs assessments. Detailed analysis can be found in the Phase 1 Background and Preliminary Needs Assessment Report.

### Section 5: Implementation Strategy

Provides guidance on how to activate the RCP including a strategy for ongoing monitoring and action plan for implementing recommendations and applicable resource implications.



## 1.6 Potential Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Given the rapid pace of change that the COVID-19 global pandemic has brought, planning for an uncertain future is a challenge with people trying to find new ways of living, working, playing, and connecting with each other. Clearly, this is uncharted territory and Richmond Hill's Community Services Department will need to continually assess and adjust expectations, practices, and norms.

The pandemic has the potential to affect the long-term demand for, and delivery of, recreation and culture services; however, the ultimate scope and scale of change is unknown. Long-range planning and strategic investment are believed to be as vital as they have ever been to support the significant role that the recreation and culture sectors play in the personal, social, and economic recovery/revitalization of communities.

The RCP has been prepared during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to shifting in-person consultation initiatives to online formats, analysis of recreation and culture components relied upon data compiled between 2017 and 2019. More recent data may not be directly comparable to past years, nor may it be a strong indicator of expected future performance due to facility closures, changes in rental activities and/or program participation, cancellation of special events, or shifts in recreation and cultural preferences resulting from COVID-19.

Recognizing that the situation is evolving, and new information and guidance is emerging on a regular basis, the City must prepare for a wide range of scenarios. The following are some preliminary thoughts about how the COVID-19 pandemic may affect the sector in the short to longer-term.

- Growing interest in unstructured, individual, and small group activities;
- A possible shift in prime-time demand as people work more flexible hours;
- Volatility in volunteerism and special events;
- Substantial changes to operations (e.g., demand for touchless services, cleaning, visitor management, staff training, delivering special events, etc.), possibly requiring higher levels of subsidy;
- Significant impacts on building design (ventilation, spacing, access/egress, mid-door spaces, etc.);
- Constant engagement and communication – people need accurate and real-time information;
- Rethinking of some third-party partnerships (schools, etc.); and
- Greater use of technology to help support changes (virtual programming, services and events, etc.).





## Section 2

# Richmond Hill's Planning Context



## 2.0 Richmond Hill's Planning Context

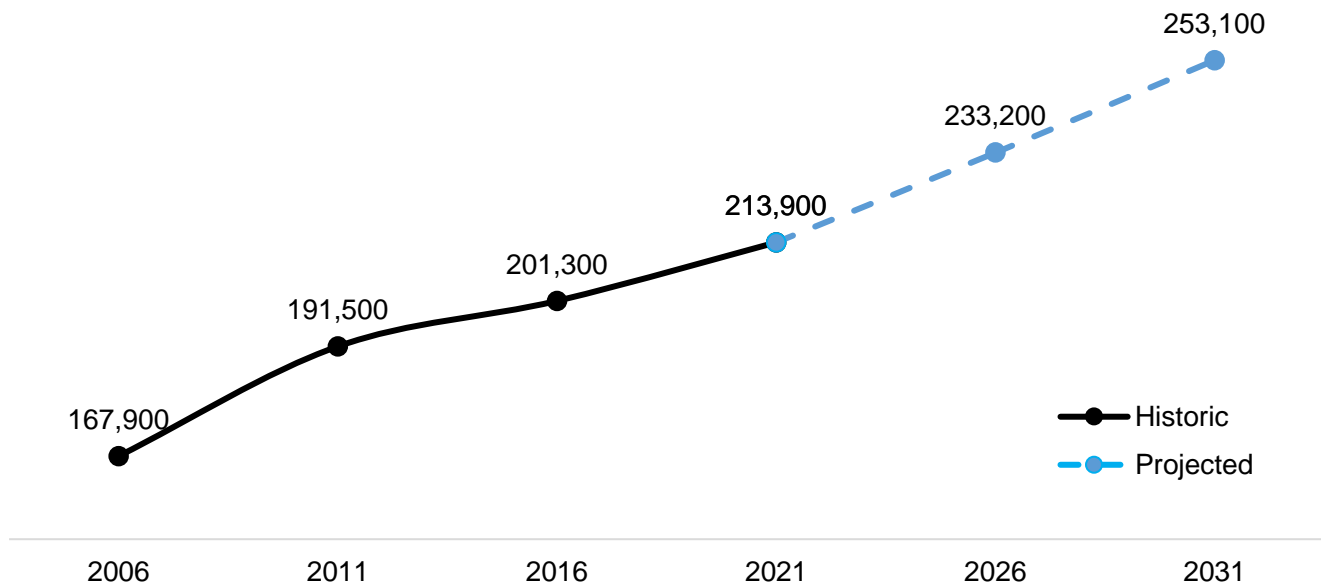
### 2.1 Richmond Hill's Population and Planned Growth

Understanding who, how, and where population growth will occur is important to guide Richmond Hill's recreation and culture system to adapt to changing community needs. This section highlights key socio-demographic factors that influence the provision of recreation and culture opportunities. Additional details can be found in the Key Directions Report and Phase 1 Background and Preliminary Needs Assessment Report.

#### Historical and Projected Population

While Richmond Hill experienced substantial growth during the 1990s and early 2000s, recent population growth has slowed, but will likely resume shortly given announcements related to the Yonge subway extension to Richmond Hill Centre. Richmond Hill's population is expected to grow by nearly 40,000 residents (or 18%), reaching a population of 253,000 by 2031 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Historical and Projected Population Growth by Census Year (includes census undercount), 2006 to 2031



Note: Population includes a census undercount of 3.2%.

Source: Watson and Associates Economists Ltd. and the City of Richmond Hill. 2021.

Over the next 10 years, Richmond Hill can continue to expect intensification and infill-related development to accommodate most new residents. Focusing on higher density forms of residential development within intensification areas supports the City's goals to create walkable streets and transit-oriented communities; the Yonge Street subway station in Richmond Hill Centre is expected to be completed by 2030 and will likely foster high levels of intensification. The City's Official Plan directs intensification to areas designated as: centres, corridors, and key development areas. These areas are located along Yonge Street and Highway 7. During the planning period, these areas are expected to accommodate approximately 20,000 residents through new medium to high-density development. The balance of projected growth will be accommodated through infill development in parts of the City's built-up neighbourhood areas and within greenfield areas located in the North Leslie and West Gormley Secondary Plan areas.

## Population Growth by Age Group

According to the 2021 Census, Richmond Hill's median age of 43.6 years was slightly older compared to York Region (42.0 years) and the Province (41.6 years). The City's population median age increased by more than three years compared to the 2011 Census (39.8 years), which suggests that Richmond Hill's population is aging, and it is expected to continue as the baby-boomer generation continues to age.

Between the 2006 and 2021 Census, the proportion of Richmond Hill's older adults (ages 55 to 69) increased from 13% to 20% and seniors (ages 70+) experienced a growth from 7% to 12%. By contrast, the proportion of all other age groups declined by 1% to 5%. While this suggests that the City will face mounting pressure for recreation and culture opportunities for adults ages 55+, there will be a continued need to offer facilities, programs, and services for all age groups.

## Income and Education

Richmond Hill has a higher level of income compared to the Province. The high cost of living, however, will leave less disposable income for recreation and culture activities, particularly among households experiencing low-income. As a result, there is a need to continue offering affordable recreation and cultural opportunities and access to financial assistance programs.

Higher levels of education also correlate to higher participation. A greater proportion of residents in the City have a post-secondary degree compared to York Region and the Province.

## Cultural Diversity

Richmond Hill is a culturally diverse community with more than half (57%) of the population being born outside of Canada. The population is expected to continue diversifying as newcomers tend to be attracted to established ethnic communities and associated social ties. Richmond Hill's strong cultural diversity influences the demand for non-traditional programs, events, services, and activities, encouraging an integrated social support system that cultural groups typically seek. However, trends also suggest that many newcomers are keen to engage in 'traditionally' Canadian pastimes such as ice sports and aquatics. Ensuring that opportunities are available to engage residents from diverse cultural backgrounds and supporting social organizations and services are key considerations in the RCP.

## Place of Work and Primary Mode of Transportation

Richmond Hill has a large commuter population with 22% of the workforce employed within the City. Nearly one out of three labour force participants (31%) are employed within York Region while 47% of employees commute outside of the region.

While most employed residents travel by car, this trend appears to be shifting because of the work from home arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic. The City needs to continue to monitor changes to participation in recreation and culture services resulting from the new work from home arrangements. Historically, Richmond Hill has had a large commuter population placing pressures on prime-time activities. Activities that can be self-scheduled may become more popular as people's availability changes.

## 2.2 Engaging the Community

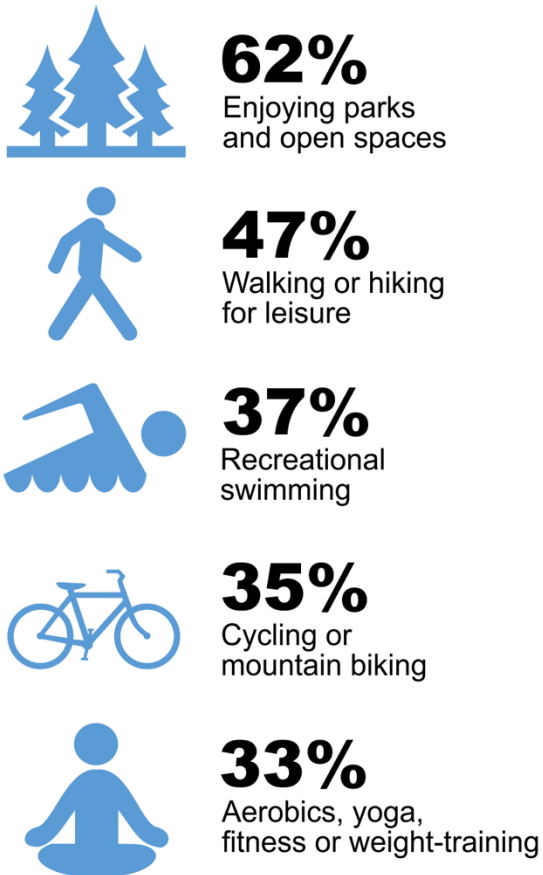
Consultation with the public is crucial to the success of the RCP. Consultation tools used included an online project webpage, community survey (1,169 respondents representing over 5,200 residents), cultural stakeholder workshop, key informant interviews, and engagement with staff and Council. Figure 2 and Figure 3 contains key highlights from the community survey. Additional findings from the consultation activities can be found in the Key Directions Report and Phase 1 Background and Preliminary Needs Assessment Report.



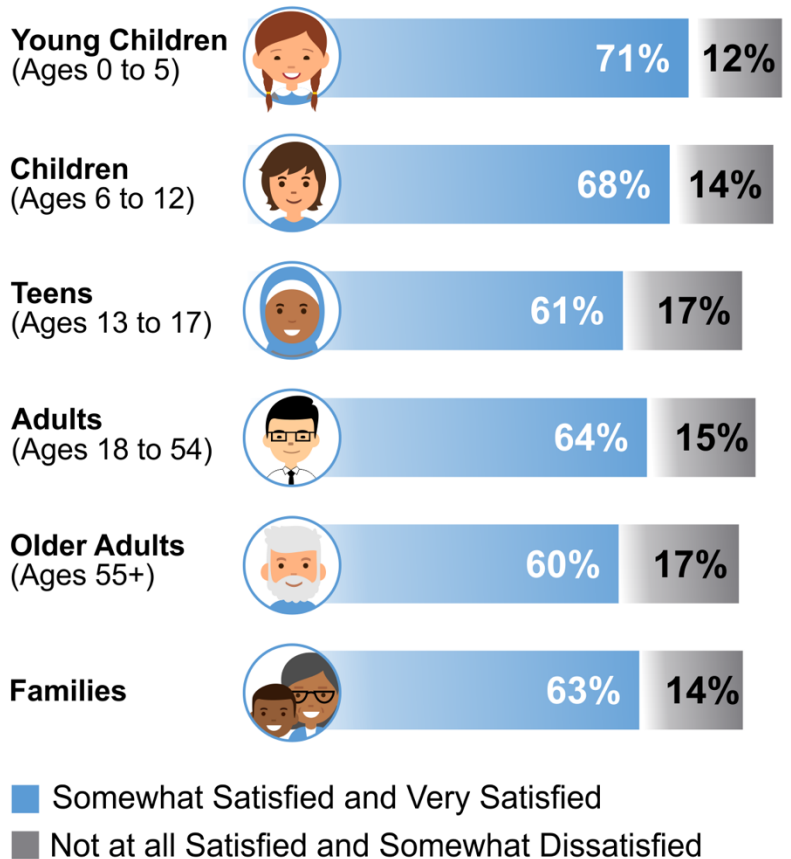
Figure 2: Parks and Recreation Community Survey Summary

# Parks and Recreation Community Survey Summary

## Top 5 Most Popular Parks and Recreation Activities in 2019



## Satisfaction with Parks and Recreation Opportunities by Age Group in 2019



## Top 3 Barriers to Participation in Parks and Recreation Activities in 2019





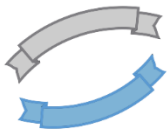
Figure 3: Arts and Cultural Community Survey

# Arts and Cultural Community Survey Summary

## Top 5 Most Popular Arts and Cultural Activities in 2019


**64%**

Use of a library


**53%**

Attend a festival or event


**47%**

Attend a play or live performance


**33%**

Visited a museum


**30%**

Visited an art gallery

## Satisfaction with Arts and Cultural Opportunities by Age Group in 2019

**Young Children**  
(Ages 0 to 5)

**66%**
**12%**
**Children**  
(Ages 6 to 12)

**63%**
**15%**
**Teens**  
(Ages 13 to 17)

**53%**
**18%**
**Adults**  
(Ages 18 to 54)

**60%**
**14%**
**Older Adults**  
(Ages 55+)

**57%**
**17%**
**Families**

**61%**
**15%**

■ Somewhat Satisfied and Very Satisfied

■ Not at all Satisfied and Somewhat Dissatisfied

## Top 3 Barriers to Participation in Arts and Cultural Activities in 2019


**32%**

Lack of free time / Too busy


**27%**

Lack of desired facilities or programs


**25%**

Program not offered at a convenient time

## Section 3

# A Plan for Recreation





### 3.0 A Plan for Recreation

Richmond Hill residents enjoy many indoor recreation facilities and programs. Richmond Hill is anticipated to undergo changes over the 10-year planning period, most notably in population growth and community composition. The City will also grow as land use development shifts towards intensification and strategies to make efficient use of remaining greenfield lands are employed. This section summarizes the indoor recreation facility and service delivery needs over the next ten years to ensure that the City continues to meet current and future needs.

Consideration has been given to factors including demographics, land use patterns, guiding documents, trends and best practices, service targets, community engagement, usage data, and more. Detailed recreation facility needs assessments can be found in the Key Directions Report and Phase 1 Background and Preliminary Needs Assessment Report.



### 3.1 2013 Recreation Plan

The 2013 Recreation Plan was a guiding document for the City's indoor recreation facilities over a nearly 10-year period. The primary objectives of the Recreation Plan were to understand current and future needs through a combination of consultation, demographic and trends review, and facility needs assessment to develop strategic directions and an implementation strategy for the City to meet community needs effectively and efficiently. Table 1 summarizes the indoor recreation facility achievements that have been implemented since the 2013 Recreation Plan was approved, and the items that are on the horizon to be actioned in this RCP.

Table 1: Summary of Indoor Recreation Facility Achievements and Development Status as per 2013 Recreation Plan

Facility Type	Achievements / Status
<b>Arenas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One ice pad added to the Ed Sackfield Arena and Fitness Centre</li> <li>Two ice pads planned for the North Leslie Community Centre</li> <li>One ice pad not yet implemented/planned</li> </ul>
<b>Aquatic Centres</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One indoor aquatic centre planned for the North Leslie Community Centre</li> </ul>
<b>Gymnasiums</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bocce courts at Rouge Woods Community Centre converted to gymnasium</li> <li>One gymnasium planned to be located at the North Leslie Community Centre</li> </ul>
<b>Fitness Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fitness centre added to the Ed Sackfield Arena and Fitness Centre</li> <li>Fitness studio at Bayview Hill Community Centre and Pool closed during COVID and it is recommended to be repurposed</li> <li>Fitness studio at Centennial Pool closed; aerobic room remains</li> <li>One fitness centre planned for the North Leslie Community Centre</li> </ul>
<b>Multi-Purpose Rooms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lake Wilcox Community Hall decommissioned</li> <li>Richmond Green Agricultural Building #2 used for indoor bocce courts</li> <li>Connor Room main floor leased; potential use for municipal works yard</li> <li>Multi-purpose rooms planned for the North Leslie Community Centre</li> <li>Multi-purpose space that was the former daycare space at Richvale Community Centre recommended to be reviewed</li> </ul>
<b>Indoor Track</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indoor track added to the Ed Sackfield Arena and Fitness Centre</li> </ul>
<b>Indoor Artificial Turf Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Second location to be added at Richmond Green Park</li> </ul>
<b>Indoor Tennis Courts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tennis Strategy completed</li> <li>Second indoor tennis facility to be investigated at the community club courts planned for the future West Gormley Community Park.</li> </ul>



### 3.2 Recreation Planning Context

Guiding national and municipal documents (listed below) and other relevant materials (e.g., participation and facility utilization data) have been reviewed for use throughout the planning process. To ensure alignment, the findings and directions from these reports – as they related to indoor recreation – have been incorporated where appropriate. A summary of these materials can be found in the Phase 1 Background and Preliminary Needs Assessment Report.

- Framework for Recreation in Canada (2015)
- City of Richmond Hill Council Strategic Priorities 2020 – 2022 (2020)
- 2019 Socio-Economic Study (2019)
- 2018 – 2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2018)
- Tennis Strategy (2016)
- Tennis Court Assessment and Condition Analysis Report (2018)
- Options for the Implementation of an Indoor Bocce Facility Staff Report SRCS.19.20 (2019)
- Council Motion Regarding the Indigenous Cultural Centre C#09-22 (2022)
- Council Motion Regarding the Indoor Soccer Dome C#09-22 (2022)
- Council Motion Regarding the Richmond Hill Canoe Club C#41-19 (2019)
- Recreation Master Plan (2013)

#### A Renewed Definition of Recreation

Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.

*Framework for Recreation in Canada*

### 3.3 Key Recreation Facility and Service Delivery Trends

There are a number of recreation trends that affect the way that recreation facilities, programs and services are provided. This section highlights key trends that have been considered and the local implications are identified. Additional details can be found in the Phase 1 Background and Preliminary Needs Assessment Report.

#### 3.3.1 Recreation Facility Trends

##### Multi-use Facilities and Community Hubs

There is a growing expectation that community centres contain something for everyone, rather than being designed solely for singular uses. Co-location of complementary facility components often create convenient, centralized activity centres and generate financial efficiencies through centralized operations. The provision of high quality, multi-use facilities encourage physical and social activity among all age groups, while also creating opportunities for sport tourism at a regional scale.

##### Demand for High Quality Facilities and Design

Today's consumers expect and demand high quality, a trend that is applicable to recreation facilities. What highlights this demand is that users are now paying more for the use of recreation facilities than they have in the past, and with the rise in user fees province-wide comes an expectation for higher levels of service and facilities. Notwithstanding public expectations, modern recreation facilities are typically constructed in highly visible areas of a community and are being positioned as desirable community destinations that leverage the design of the facilities to support principles of place-making and foster sense of place. New and renovated facility designs also respond to the growing demands of users to provide superior and inclusive experiences. Such design considerations may include removing barriers for physical accessibility and providing casual spaces or viewing area (such as a lobby, open area, or galleries) for people to gather, meet, or relax.

##### Removing Physical Barriers through Design

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) seeks to “improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province” (c.32, s.1). Barriers are defined to include anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of disability, including physical, architectural, informational, communicational, attitudinal, technological, or policy/practice barriers.

## Aging Infrastructure

The 2019 Canadian Infrastructure Report Card found that approximately one-third of Canada's sports and recreation facilities were considered to be in "Fair" condition or worse. This suggests that municipal sports and recreation facilities require attention, show signs of deterioration, or have deteriorating components.<sup>1</sup> Pressures to renew aging infrastructure have been somewhat alleviated through various provincial and federal stimulus plans such as the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP), Canada Community Building Fund Program, Community Improvement Infrastructure Fund and Gas Tax Fund.

## Sport-Friendly Recreation Facilities

Organized sport in general, but particularly at high-performing levels, requires access to specialized facilities whether aquatic centres, arenas, or others. While some population centres make full use of large competition facilities such as stadiums, there are many ways for recreation facilities to support the needs of athletes. The consideration of sport needs during the design of new facilities or renovation of existing ones can create significant opportunities for sport groups to utilize these facilities for training and/or competition as well as economic development and sport tourism potential.

### 3.3.2 Recreation Service Delivery Trends

#### Lack of Free Time

A lack of free time is commonly identified as the number one barrier to participating in physical activity. Municipalities are often faced with the challenge of overcoming this barrier from a service delivery perspective, but this is a societal issue that communities have limited ability to directly influence. To mitigate the impacts of the time crunch, municipalities have practiced strategies such as providing more unstructured and drop-in programs, and more.

#### Increasing Rates of Physical Inactivity

The 2022 ParticipACTION report card on physical activity graded overall physical activity levels a "D"<sup>2</sup> for children and youth, which is a decline from 2019 and 2020 where a "D+" was reported, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report identified that the pandemic was the primary driver for the decline as in-person and indoor recreation programming was cancelled due to public health measures. The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology recommends that children and youth get an average of 60 minutes of physical activity per day, and 150 minutes per week for adults.<sup>3,4</sup> However, research suggests that very few people are meeting these requirements. Studies found that engaging all household members is a key strategy to increasing physical activity levels. Children and youth are also more likely to be physically active if they spend more time outside or are enrolled in organized sports, leagues, and lessons.<sup>5</sup> Other strategies aimed at enhancing physical activity levels include offering unstructured and drop-in activities to encourage spontaneous participation.

<sup>1</sup> Canada Infrastructure. 2019. Canadian Infrastructure Report Card. Retrieved from <http://canadianinfrastructure.ca>

<sup>2</sup> The ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults (2019) and Children and Youth (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.participaction.com>

<sup>3</sup> CSEP. Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth. Retrieved from <http://www.csep.ca>

<sup>4</sup> CSEP. Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Adults aged 18 to 64. Retrieved from <http://www.csep.ca>

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada. 2017. Ten years of measuring physical activity - what have we learned? Retrieved from <https://www.statcan.gc.ca>



## **Persons with Disabilities**

The 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability recorded one in five Canadians aged 15 years and over - amounting to 6.2 million individuals - as having one or more disabilities relating to physical, sensory, cognitive, or mental health. The survey found that the prevalence of disability increases with age, as well as persons with more severe disabilities and lone parents / persons living alone as being more likely to be living in poverty.<sup>6</sup> As the average age of Canadians continues to increase, so can the number of persons living with disabilities.

## **Women Participating in Recreation and Sport**

A report by Canadian Women in Sport found that sport participation among women (age 6 to 18) is much lower than their male counterparts. It found that women experience a significant drop out rate by late adolescence. One-in-three women leave sport as compared to one-in-10 boys and common barriers that were mentioned included low levels of confidence, low body image, lack of skills and feeling unwelcomed in a sport environment. To bolster participation among women, the Federal government established a goal of achieving equity in sport participation by the year 2035.

## **Use of Technology**

The integrated application of technology in recreation service delivery can assist in enhancing client experience beyond public recreation facilities, engage a wider segment of the population, and enable staff to make informed decisions on the current needs and demands of the community. While technology can be targeted towards personalized services inside facilities, it can also be used to connect and engage with individuals during their daily routine using social networks, programs, and services. Current trends towards the external application of technology in recreation can include expanded service delivery, wearable technology, virtual programming, social networking and activating public spaces (e.g., Wi-Fi).

## **Serving All Ages, Abilities and Backgrounds**

Inclusion and access are key goals for municipal leisure departments. To ensure access for all, the following barriers to participation should be considered and addressed: economic (e.g., costs associated with participation); information (e.g., knowledge and information sharing about available opportunities); geographic (e.g., equitable distribution of facilities and services), and inclusivity (e.g., ensuring all participants feel welcomed and supported).

---

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada. November 2018. Canadian Survey on Disability: A demographic, employment and income profile of Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and over, 2017.

### 3.4 Existing and Planned Indoor Recreation Facilities

Table 2 summarizes existing indoor recreation facilities that are owned by the City. The geographic distribution of facilities is illustrated in Figure 4.

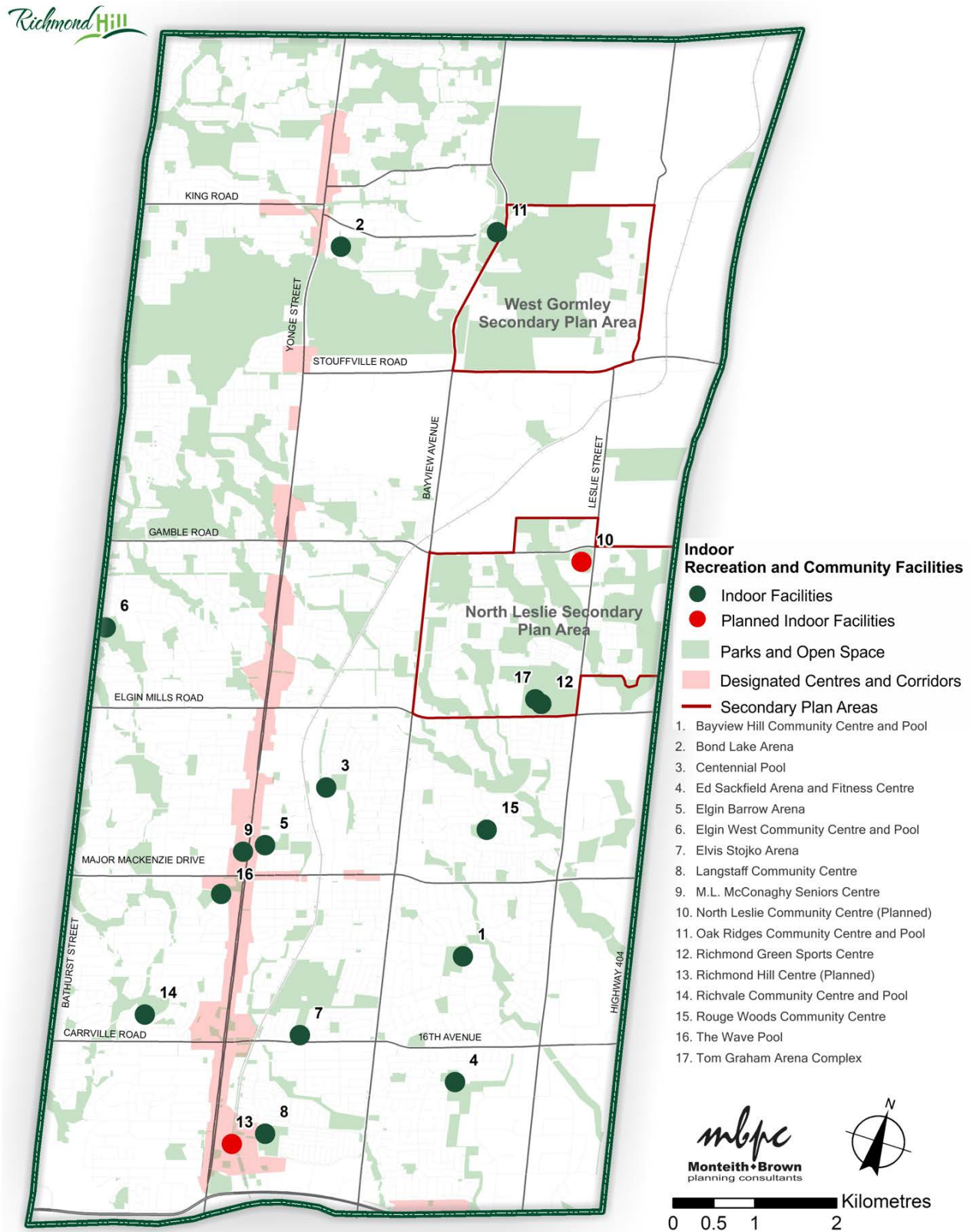
Table 2: Summary of Existing Indoor Recreation Facilities

Facility Type	Supply	Location(s)
<b>Indoor Aquatic Centres</b>	6	Bayview Hill Community Centre and Pool, Centennial Pool, Elgin West Community Centre and Pool, Oak Ridges Community Centre and Pool, Richvale Community Centre and Pool, The Wave Pool
<b>Arenas</b>	8	Bond Lake Arena, Ed Sackfield Arena and Fitness Centre (2), Elgin Barrow Arena (2), Elvis Stojko Arena, Tom Graham Arena Complex (2)
<b>Gymnasiums</b>	9	Bayview Hill Community Centre and Pool, Elgin West Community Centre and Pool, Langstaff Community Centre (3), Oak Ridges Community Centre and Pool, Richvale Community Centre and Pool, Rouge Woods Community Centre (2)
<b>Fitness Facilities</b>	2	Ed Sackfield Arena and Fitness Centre, Oak Ridges Community Centre and Pool
<b>Indoor Walking Track</b>	1	Ed Sackfield Arena and Fitness Centre
<b>Indoor Artificial Turf Facilities</b>	2	Richmond Green Sports Centre and Sports Dome (Seasonal Air Supported Structure)
<b>Multi-Purpose Rooms</b>	61	Various locations
<b>Dedicated Age Facilities</b>	5	<u>Youth Facilities:</u> Eyer Wideman Youth Centre, Oak Ridges Community Centre and Pool <u>Adults 55+ Facilities:</u> Bayview Hill Community Centre and Pool, M.L. McConaghy Centre, Oak Ridges Community Centre and Pool
<b>Indoor Bocce Courts</b>	3	Richmond Green Sports Centre and Park (3 courts)
<b>Indoor Tennis Courts</b>	6	David Hamilton Park (6 courts)

This RCP provides direction on recreation facility needs to address the growing population. In particular, the RCP identifies the facility components that should be included in the future North Leslie Community Centre to provide indoor recreation facilities for current and future residents in this area. The RCP provides rationale for recreation facility components at this location including an indoor aquatic facility, gymnasium, fitness centre, multi-purpose space program and gathering space, and accommodating arena ice pads, when needed. This facility should be constructed with a climate change and sustainability lens and consider other leading design practices to reflect the progressive nature of Richmond Hill's community.

The Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan also identifies the need for a community centre within this emerging intensification area to serve current and future residents. While full build out of Richmond Hill Centre is not expected until after 2031, it is important to begin long-term planning for an indoor recreation facility in this area due to its unique land and capital needs, as well as to consider partnership and phasing opportunities. The RCP provides a high-level look at potential facility components to be considered at a Richmond Hill Centre facility, which should be reconfirmed through a future study. Facility components may include, but not be limited to, ice pads, indoor aquatic centre, gymnasium, indoor walking track and multi-purpose spaces. This future facility provides an opportunity to function as a new community hub within Richmond Hill Centre, as well as to re-purpose and/or replace existing aging community infrastructure.

Figure 4: Distribution of Indoor Recreation Facilities



Facility components for the Richmond Hill Centre facility to be defined beyond 2031 but may include, but not be limited to, ice pads, indoor aquatic centre, gymnasium, indoor walking track and multi-purpose spaces. Facility components to be reconfirmed through a future study prior to construction.



### 3.4.1 Aquatic Facilities

Richmond Hill operates six indoor aquatic facilities. This supply provides a strong distribution of indoor aquatic centres where most residents are located within proximity to at least one pool. Indoor swimming continues to be one of the most desirable recreational pursuits in Richmond Hill and as a result, participation in drop-in and registered aquatic programming at City facilities is strong.

The development of future indoor aquatic facilities will be a challenge due to factors such as staffing shortages, land scarcity and rising costs that have made land acquisition more costly. A service target of one indoor aquatic facility for every 36,000 residents is recommended to guide future needs, which suggests that Richmond Hill will require one additional indoor aquatic facility by 2031. This need would be met through the future North Leslie Community Centre.

Enhancing the distribution of indoor aquatic facilities across Richmond Hill will ensure that residents have strong access to swimming opportunities. This supply is complemented by a healthy stock of outdoor splash pads, with additional splash pads planned as identified in the City's Parks Plan. Together, this supply satisfies aquatic needs and as a result, no outdoor pools are required during the planning period.

Indoor aquatic needs may evolve over the course of the planning period, particularly in the Richmond Hill Centre where future population growth is also expected. While residents may have access to private swimming pools within condominiums, the City should monitor the demand for indoor aquatic facilities within this growing area to evaluate future indoor aquatic needs and validate or adjust the service target. This should include monitoring system-wide aquatic utilization, including program participation and wait lists.

#### It is the Policy of Council to:

2. Provide an indoor aquatic facility as part of a North Leslie Community Centre. The City's standard aquatic facility template is recommended, which consists of a 25-metre rectangular tank with six to eight lanes and a separate tot-teaching tank to ensure use by all ages and abilities. Other components to be contemplated include water play features, sauna, warm-water therapeutic pool, viewing area, universal change rooms, adult change tables, and washrooms.
3. Evaluate long-term indoor aquatic needs within the Richmond Hill Centre with consideration given to system-wide utilization, program participation rates and wait lists, to validate or adjust the service target to inform future decisions.



### 3.4.2 Arena Facilities

Richmond Hill operates eight ice pads at five arenas that translate into a service level of one ice pad for every 27,000 residents.

Between the 2016 and 2019 ice season, arena usage softened from 96% to 86%. This was partly due to declining arena participation as there were 4,700 youth and adult participants for the 2018/19 season, translating to a service level of one ice pad for every 600 players; by comparison, the City provided one ice pad for every 800 players when the 2013 Recreation Plan was prepared. The recent addition of a new ice pad at the Ed Sackfield Arena and Fitness Centre will further increase available capacity.

The pandemic's significant impact on ice sport organizations across the Province has led to lower participation levels that may not recover over the short-term, resulting in an impact on ice demand. A target of one ice pad for every 27,000 residents is recommended, consistent with the current service level, which would require one additional ice pad around the year 2031. A new ice pad could be accommodated at the future North Leslie Community Centre; however, prior to doing so, the City should reassess long-term arena needs to re-confirm the number of ice pads required to serve the community. As a part of this process, the merits of future ice pad needs to address population growth within areas of intensification, such as in the Richmond Hill Centre, should be considered.

#### It is the Policy of Council to:

- Undertake an arena analysis to confirm ice pad needs and timing prior to moving forward with constructing the North Leslie Community Centre, recognizing lower participation rates in ice sports resulting from the arena closures experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consideration should be given to historical ice utilization trends, participation data and waitlists following the COVID-19 pandemic, and other trends associated with ice usage, as well as opportunities to replace aging ice pads but ideally designing the North Leslie Community Centre to be positioned to accommodate a twin pad arena as need warrants and/or consolidation of an older arena facility is rationalized. Arena needs within the Richmond Hill should also be evaluated at this time to respond to long-term population growth.





### 3.4.3 Gymnasium Facilities

Richmond Hill provides nine gymnasiums of varying size, which translates into a service level of one gymnasium for every 24,000 residents, which is on par with the City's historical service target of one gymnasium per 25,000 residents. When factoring the number of single, double and triple gymnasiums that can be partitioned for concurrent programming, the City can program up to 13 gymnasiums simultaneously.

Gymnasium use remained steady at 72% of available capacity between 2018 and 2019, suggesting that there is room to accommodate additional usage. An emphasis should be placed on providing public access to large, affordable, flexible, indoor multi-purpose spaces in Richmond Hill. To achieve this, the City should continue to maintain its historical service target, resulting in the need for one additional gymnasium at the future North Leslie Community Centre. New gymnasiums should be designed with appropriate dimensions and amenities to support a variety of programs.

Recognizing that future population growth is also expected to take place within the Richmond Hill Centre, the City will need to monitor the need for additional gymnasium space to serve residents in this area.

Maintaining adequate access to gymnasium space will be particularly important due to greater restrictions on the use of school gymnasiums due to the COVID-19 pandemic; however, joint facility development opportunities with school boards should be explored as opportunities become available. Working with school boards to program gymnasium space located at school sites for after school activities, with a priority placed on local Richmond Hill groups, is also encouraged.

#### It is the Policy of Council to:

5. Include a gymnasium as part of the North Leslie Community Centre. A gymnasium template similar in size to the Oak Ridges Community Centre and Pool and the ideal operational amenities similar to Rouge Woods Community Centre or Elgin West Community Centre and Pool is recommended.
6. Monitor the long-term need for future gymnasium space within the Richmond Hill Centre.
7. Explore joint-development opportunities with school boards, as opportunities become available with a focus on access to larger gymnasiums. Working with the school board to program gymnasium space located at school sites for after school activities, with a priority placed on local Richmond Hill groups, is encouraged.





### 3.4.4 Fitness Facilities

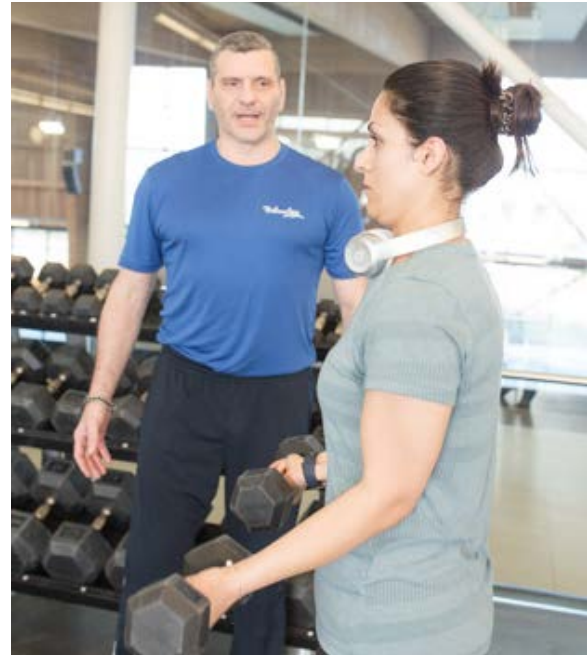
Richmond Hill provides large-scale fitness centres at the Ed Sackfield Arena and Fitness Centre and Oak Ridges Community Centre and Pool, which offer fitness equipment and an aerobics room. City fitness programs are also offered within multi-purpose spaces across Richmond Hill. There are also many private sector fitness providers in Richmond Hill, along with private exercise amenity space located within existing and planned condominiums.

Physical fitness and individual wellness are top of mind issues among many Canadians, resulting in a greater emphasis being placed on personal health. This has translated into increasing demand for fitness services, particularly active living programming centred on general health and wellness, weight-training, cardiovascular training and stretching activities. The focus for quality fitness experiences has also driven the demand for indoor tracks, such as the one recently constructed at the Ed Sackfield Arena and Fitness Centre.

With two large-scale fitness centres in Richmond Hill, a third location is recommended to strengthen distribution and to serve the City's needs to 2031. A fitness centre should be included as part of the North Leslie Community Centre, which should include space for equipment, adjoining aerobic room, and an indoor track. A future fitness facility and indoor track may also be considered at a future community facility within the Richmond Hill Centre to serve residents living in this intensification area. The former fitness studio at the Bayview Hill Community Centre and Pool should also be repurposed to meet other community needs (e.g., programming for all ages including youth and adults 55+, rentals, etc.) recognizing that the recently expanded Ed Sackfield Arena and Fitness Centre provides an enhanced level of service in the same area.

#### It is the Policy of Council to:

8. Incorporate a fitness centre at the planned North Leslie Community Centre, which should include space for equipment, an adjoining aerobic room, and an indoor track.
9. Investigate the feasibility of repurposing the undersized fitness studio at the Bayview Hill Community Centre and Pool to address to other community needs (e.g., program space for all ages including youth and adults 55+, rentals, etc.).
10. Evaluate long-term opportunities to incorporate fitness facilities and an indoor track at a future community facility in the Richmond Hill Centre.



### 3.4.5 Indoor Artificial Turf Facilities

The City provides two indoor artificial turf fields at the Richmond Green Sports Centre and Sports Dome. The Sports Dome is a seasonal, air-supported structure, which is a FIFA-sized turf field contained within an air-supported bubble (the field can be rented as a full-field, half-field, or a quarter-field). The second field at the Richmond Green Sports Centre is one-quarter of the size of a FIFA turf field.

Indoor artificial turf facilities provide enhanced recreation experiences that complement outdoor fields and respond to increasing demand for year-round play. While the primary use of artificial turf fields is for soccer, these facilities can also accommodate conditioning and training for field sports such as rugby, lacrosse and football (but not practices and games), as well as fitness activities. Indoor fields allow municipalities to deliver their own instructional programming and leagues while servicing local sports field associations that organize their own leagues and related programs, as well those seeking pick-up rentals.

Richmond Hill's indoor artificial turf fields are well used. In 2019, the City's system-wide utilization rate of 91% in 2019 was a marginal decrease of one percent from 2017. The strong usage level suggests that the City's indoor artificial turf fields are under pressure.

On September 14, 2022, Richmond Hill Council approved funding to undertake a feasibility study, including public consultation and a parking study, to locate a new indoor soccer facility over the west artificial turf field at the Richmond Green Sports Centre.

#### It is the Policy of Council to:

11. Undertake a study to determine the City's precise seasonal, locational and time allocation needs related to indoor artificial turf fields. The study should evaluate indoor artificial turf needs in relation to outdoor field availability, including understanding the impact on outdoor field use from installing a dome structure over an existing outdoor field and should involve input from sports field user groups.



### 3.4.6 Multi-Purpose Facilities

The City operates 61 multi-purpose rooms across Richmond Hill, including 58 spaces within community facilities and three within condominium buildings (two existing and one not yet completed). These multi-purpose rooms vary in size and amenities and are suitable for a variety of community, recreation, arts, and cultural functions.

Incorporating multi-purpose space within multi-use community facilities is a common best practice to achieve efficiencies in cross-programming, staffing, construction, and other factors. For these reasons, the construction of stand-alone multi-purpose program spaces are generally discouraged. Inclusion of multi-purpose space within the future North Leslie Community Centre would achieve the benefits of integrated community space, while also enhancing the geographic distribution of affordable multi-purpose space across the City. As a best practice, three to four multi-purpose spaces should be provided within new community centres. Based on the projected 2031 population, this would result in a service level of one multi-purpose space for every 3,800 residents. With respect to existing multi-purpose rooms, the City is also encouraged to review the repurposed daycare space at the Richvale Community Centre to ensure that it is appropriate to address recreation and culture programming.

To address the need for multi-purpose community program space within areas of intensification, the City has been successful in providing public space within condominiums; however, the use of these spaces is limited due to constraints, including the size of the space and the lack of parking and on-site staffing. While there are limitations with these spaces, it is an important strategy to provide residents in these areas with public spaces for gatherings and activities. Within intensification areas, such as the Richmond Hill Centre, public spaces located within future City-owned indoor facilities and/or integrated within condominium buildings as a part of a partnership agreement, should have regard for appropriate designs and supporting amenities.

#### It is the Policy of Council to:

12. Provide up to four new multi-purpose spaces at the future North Leslie Community Centre.
13. Design multi-purpose spaces with flexibility in mind, with consideration given to a variety of sizes and amenities to accommodate a broad range of activities and functions. Amenities that should be considered include wood sprung floors, mirrors, dividing walls, storage space, kitchens, and other features.
14. Continue to monitor space needs in areas of intensification with consideration given to the provision of City-owned indoor spaces, such as at a future recreation facility in the Richmond Hill Centre, and partnership opportunities with the private and not-for-profit sector, development industry, and other public agencies. Indoor recreation facilities within or near intensification areas should have regard for public access, flexible and sufficiently sized spaces, parking accommodation and other associated amenities.
15. Review the use and function of the repurposed daycare space at Richvale Community Centre to ensure that the facility space is suitable for delivering recreation and culture programming to the community.



### 3.4.7 Spaces for Youth

Integrated youth space is located at the Oak Ridges Community Centre and Pool, which is shared with adult 55+ users, while a dedicated youth space is operated at the Eyer Wideman Youth Centre (home of the Ropes Challenge Course), which also forms part of the City's arts and cultural infrastructure. Youth programs are also provided at other City facilities and schools.

Participation in youth programming has been strong, particularly for drop-in activities. The City focuses on providing integrated youth space within multi-purpose community centres to achieve staff efficiencies and cross-programming opportunities. Maintaining this approach is recommended to continue realizing these benefits and support the growth of youth activities. Specific consideration should be given to the provision of integrated multi-purpose space that can accommodate program opportunities for youth at the future North Leslie Community Centre as well as existing locations, including the Elgin West Community Centre and Pool and repurposing the fitness studio at the Bayview Hill Community Centre and Pool to strengthen geographic distribution (youth tend to have lower mobility to travel longer distances, particularly those without access to a vehicle). Other opportunities may also be considered as they become available.

While the Eyer Wideman Youth Centre offers a unique experience, the City has had challenges with boosting interest at this location given that it is a standalone facility and public transportation access is limited. Youth programming has been relocated to other community centres, based on the needs of the youth participants. The City has the opportunity to investigate other uses of the house, when not in use by the Challenge Course programs and camps.

#### It is the Policy of Council to:

16. Address youth space needs through the following strategies:

- a) Provide integrated multi-purpose space that can accommodate program opportunities for youth within community centres as at the future North Leslie Community Centre and Richmond Hill Centre, Bayview Hill Community Centre and Pool, Elgin West Community Centre and Pool and in the south end of Richmond Hill.
- b) Investigate alternate uses for the Eyer Homestead house, ensuring that the programming needs for the Challenge Course are being met.



### 3.4.8 Spaces for Adults 55+

Richmond Hill provides three spaces for adults ages 55+ for recreation, arts, and cultural opportunities. The M.L. McConaghy Centre is a standalone, membership-based facility. Adult 55+ space is also available at the Oak Ridges Community Centre and Pool (shared with youth) and dedicated space is available at the Bayview Hill Community Centre and Pool (provided in partnership with Carefirst). These spaces are complemented by adult 55+ programs that are provided at parks and facilities found across the City.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, participation in structured and unstructured activities for adults 55+ had been increasing in recent years. This is consistent with trends suggesting that this growing age cohort has a strong desire to remain active and social within the community, thus driving demand for a wide variety of programs.

Ensuring that indoor public space is available across Richmond Hill is vital as trends suggest that the population of adults 55+ will increase during the planning period. Ensuring that integrated multi-purpose space within Richmond Hill's community centres is encouraged to meet current and future space needs. This approach should be explored together with other recreation and cultural strategies identified in the City's Age-Friendly Community Strategy, which is currently being prepared to address a variety of matters to improve the quality of life for adults 55+ in Richmond Hill.

#### It is the Policy of Council to:

17. Address space needs for adults 55+ as identified through the City's planned Age-Friendly Community Strategy and with consideration to the provision of integrated multi-purpose space that can accommodate program opportunities for adults 55+ within community centres as at the future North Leslie Community Centre and Richmond Hill Centre, Bayview Hill Community Centre and Pool, Elgin West Community Centre and Pool and in the south end of Richmond Hill.



### 3.4.9 Indoor Bocce Courts

Richmond Hill previously operated an indoor bocce facility at the Rouge Woods Community Centre. Due to low utilization and a strong need for broader community programming, this space was converted into a gymnasium in 2018. The City now offers three temporary or semi-permanent indoor bocce courts at the Richmond Green Agricultural #2 Building.

Staff Report SRCS.19.20 identified options for four indoor bocce courts to respond to comments from bocce court users and their expectation for an indoor facility. While City staff did not conduct a community-wide analysis of bocce as part of their 2019 report, recent membership data revealed that between 2017 and 2019, the number of bocce memberships declined by 30% from 77 to just 54 memberships. Usage data also indicated that use of the membership pass declined by 70% from 1,378 to 395. Four facility solutions were presented in the staff report:

- a) Maintain the status quo;
- b) Install specialized bocce court flooring at Richmond Green Agricultural Building;
- c) Modify the existing Richmond Green Agricultural Building to install four permanent bocce courts and improved amenities; and
- d) New permanent bocce facility complete with convertible courts and amenities.

The fourth option was ultimately supported at an approximate cost of \$7 Million (in 2019), although it is anticipated that this cost has increased due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a substantial public investment for 54 indoor bocce members and is considered to be inconsistent with Richmond Hill's corporate strategic priority of being fiscally responsible, particularly given that there are other needs that have been identified through this planning process.

#### It is the Policy of Council to:

- 18. Continue to provide the semi-permanent facility at Richmond Green, in light of the decrease in participation. Construction of a new indoor bocce facility is strongly discouraged as the financial case is such that the small base of local players would not justify the significant capital cost and ongoing operational resources that would be required.



### 3.4.10 Indoor Tennis and Pickleball Courts

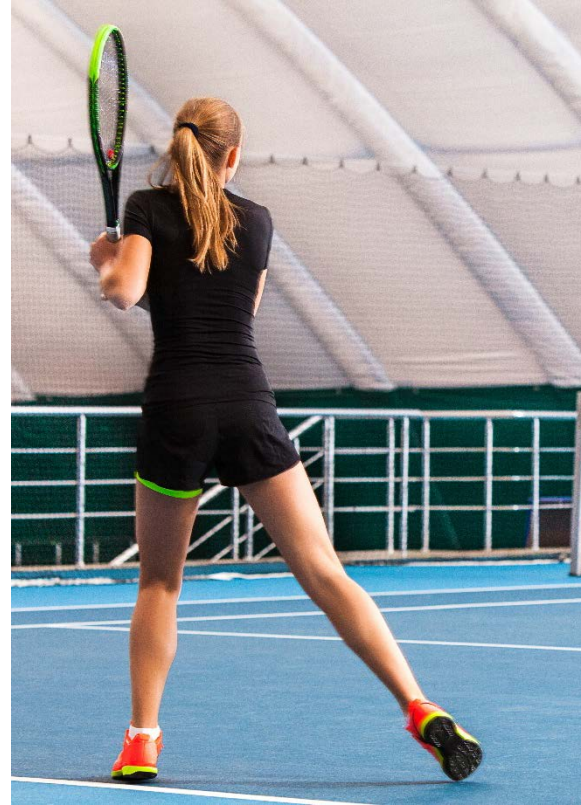
There are six indoor tennis courts at David Hamilton Park. The courts are operated by the Blackmore Tennis Club, which has been a partner with the City for over 30 years to provide high quality, accessible tennis programs from October to April. Indoor pickleball courts are provided through the City's gymnasiums and multi-purpose spaces such as at the M.L. McConaghy Centre, Oak Ridges Community Centre and Pool, and Rouge Woods Community Centre.

Trends suggest that there is a growing popularity in tennis and pickleball, which can be attributed to the growing baby boomer population that seek social and low impact activities. Research in the sector also suggests that there's a greater desire for year-round sports, including tennis and pickleball activities.

While pickleball can generally be accommodated within existing and future gymnasiums and multi-purpose spaces, enhancing the supply of indoor pickleball playing opportunities positions the City to respond to the popularity of the sport, particularly as Richmond Hill's population continues to age.

#### It is the Policy of Council to:

19. Continue to monitor the demand for indoor tennis and pickleball courts to inform an update to the 2016 Tennis Strategy, which should include pickleball. This investigation should be coordinated with the usage analysis of existing outdoor tennis courts identified in the 2022 Parks Plan, which is intended to identify courts suitable for relining or repurposing to facilitate pickleball courts. Future indoor tennis and pickleball court facilities should consider aesthetically pleasing exterior designs that complement the surrounding environment.



## 3.5 Recreation Service Delivery

### 3.5.1 Service Delivery Approach

The goal of every public community service provider is to increase participation in enjoyable, quality driven and safe opportunities. Staff and volunteer efforts are focused on improving service delivery while engaging users and non-users. Maximizing participation in safe and welcoming environments results in stronger and healthier residents and helps build cohesion within the community. The social, physical, emotional, and psychological benefits of participating in recreation are well known and supported in Richmond Hill. Continued effort must be made to understand needs, assess trends, and continuously improve the satisfaction levels.

Richmond Hill's delivery of recreation services is viewed as proactive and nimble as it readily responds to changing conditions and demographics. The delivery system is in a mature state with decades of focussed work to improve service delivery. The City is proactive and is positioned as a strong leader in the field of recreation in Ontario and across Canada. Richmond Hill was a leader in developing the quality assurance model of HIGH FIVE– The Principles of Healthy Child Development in Recreation – which is now a national industry standard.

It is important to clarify the responsibility of City in engaging residents in building and maintaining healthy lifestyles. This will serve to inform the relationships with other service providers, not-for-profit groups, and define the work of City staff. The City has a strong commitment to the residents to promote City-wide opportunities, provide support to not-for-profit groups and coordinate a wide range of services through partnerships, and third-party providers. Specifically, the role of Recreation Services includes consideration of the following:

- a) All residents should be provided, either by the City or another provider, a **range of choices** in programs and services including active, sports, creative, STEM (Science Technology, Environmental and Mathematics), and general interest.
- b) Opportunities for **residents of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds**.
- c) Intentional efforts to **include underrepresented** communities and/or individuals through policy and intentional actions.
- d) Priority allocation and supports to **not-for-profit community groups** (especially those serving children) who are powered through volunteerism. A broader range of opportunities can be offered through these community groups and volunteerism is recognized as the backbone of the sport and recreation delivery system.
- e) Regardless of the service delivery methodology – staff must be able to report **participation numbers** by age group and include the capacity, utilization, and fill rates per age group.
- f) Staff working to ensure **quality assurance, safety, and legislative compliance** in the delivery of service regardless of who is providing the program or service.
- g) Identify **gaps in service** and address these gaps directly should there not be a community-driven service provider.
- h) Programs and services should be offered **locally** where possible.

- i) A **range of service price points** should include free universal programs, low-cost opportunities, and enhanced service levels to include all residents.
- j) **Measuring effectiveness** in the delivery of recreation and set performance targets to demonstrate increased participation, transparency, evidenced-based decision making, and quality assurance.

The development of the Recreation Service Delivery review takes into consideration relevant trends, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, participation and utilization data, and input from the public, staff and Council, as well as Corporate and Departmental initiatives impacting the delivery of service. The service delivery review includes direction in the following areas:

### **Strengthening Divisional Capacity**

- a) Recovering Pre-Pandemic Service Levels
- b) Completion of the Departmental Organizational Changes
- c) Building Capacity Through Partnerships
- d) Performance Measures and Setting Targets

### **Supporting the City's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Efforts Programs and Services**

- a) Increasing Physical Activity Levels in Richmond Hill
- b) Youth and Adults 55+ Service Delivery
- c) Increasing Female Participation in Recreation and Sport
- d) Aquatic Programming Review
- e) A Blended Fee for Drop-In Activities

### **3.5.2 Strengthening Divisional Capacity**

#### **Recovering to Pre-Pandemic Service Levels**

In 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Recreation Services Division accommodated 385,000 people in drop-in opportunities and 60,000 participants of all ages in directly offered program opportunities. Pandemic-related recovery efforts currently underway provide fewer programs and opportunities to allow for the implementation of safety measures, including increased cleaning protocols and social distancing to accommodate phasing back into full operations with the numbers of staff needed.





Over the past year, the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association has studied the impacts of COVID-19 on recreation and sport delivery systems from a service delivery and community engagement perspective. Municipalities have experienced lost revenues, increased maintenance requirements, and are experiencing resident hesitation to enter public facilities. It is anticipated that recovery from COVID-19 related service closures and service disruptions will take years to achieve pre-pandemic utilization levels. Recreation Staff are phasing in the capacity to provide programs and services based on the number of staff available, providing services in a safe manner and considering the cleaning requirements of facilities.

During the height of the pandemic and during program and service shutdowns, staff relied on online programming and promoting outdoor experiences. The take up in both opportunity types may become more prevalent in the mix of recreation services provided.

The timing of the implementation of recommendations in the Recreation Services Plan must take into consideration the need for stabilization before newer initiatives can be undertaken.

#### **It is the Policy of Council to:**

20. Continue to address Public Health guidelines and industry standards to achieve pre-pandemic (e.g., 2019 or earlier) service delivery levels to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Completion of the Organizational Changes within the Recreation and Culture Division**

The organizational changes with the Recreation and Culture Division will serve residents well into the future. The design centres the staff unit around specific functions of facilities, administration and centralized supports, recreation programs, aquatics, fitness and skating, and cultural services. Like functions and serving aligned community groups and organizations creates ease of access for the community. Further staff units now have responsibility and accountability for user satisfaction levels. Efforts have been underway to clarify roles, refine communications systems, while achieving legislative compliance and meeting industry standards. Ensuring that staff are in alignment with the City's corporate values and competencies will ensure that the Division continues to function effectively as a high performing team.



#### **It is the Policy of Council to:**

21. Review and reassess the staff complement within the Recreation and Culture Division in the short-term to evaluate the effectiveness of the new organizational structure.

## Building Capacity through Partnerships

The delivery of recreation and culture services is a single element in a much more comprehensive initiative focused on improving health, social status, and wellbeing of the entire community. In Richmond Hill, the Community Services Department cannot effectively plan programs and implement services in the absence of knowledge and understanding of motivations and activities of other organizations working within allied sectors. This calls for a structured approach to collaboration between disciplines within local governments and across sectoral boundaries to ensure that objectives, plans, and actions are in alignment and focused to produce the most positive public health outcomes. Richmond Hill routinely develops relationships with external organizations for a variety of purposes and continuing to formalize these relationships is encouraged.

## Performance Measures and Setting Targets

Recreation staff collect participation, utilization, and service satisfaction data to analyze current service delivery levels and to measure performance against previous year results. This is completed to demonstrate that there has been movement in addressing key goals and initiatives and that residents are well satisfied with service and program provision. Annual attendance and registration statistics are captured and shared with staff to allow improved planning for the next session and accommodate pent-up demands. Staff posed the question in the planning sessions: “What are our targets and how do we know when we have been successful?” and “What are the clear expectations?”

In a large recreation system such as Richmond Hill, articulating specific targets and measures provides clarity and focus on key deliverables. This allows staff to share these expectations at the local level with all full and part-time staff and volunteers so that everyone is working toward the same goals.

Current priorities within recreation services centre on recovering services to pre-pandemic levels and responding to staffing and supply shortages. Normalizing services will take time and measuring performance to this degree will also take some time to implement by agreeing to the targets and measures, setting up data collection methodologies, discussing baseline data, and refining subsequent service improvement approaches.

Once performance measures and targets are established, baseline data collection can be achieved (Table 3). Staff have requested that a shared file to capture and summarize the data and to allow for viewing and editing access. Staff will use the findings to make appropriate and timely modifications to key deliverables to maximize performance and success.

### It is the Policy of Council to:

22. Develop meaningful performance targets and measures to reflect service priorities and public expectations.



Table 3: Suggested Performance Measures and Targets

Measure	Suggested Performance Measures	Suggested Targets
<b>Inputs</b>	a) Budget b) Full-Time Equivalents c) Square Footage of Facility Space	a) These are baseline inputs and will be compared year-to-year. Increasing outputs, efficiencies and effectiveness with similar resources becomes the focus of staff.
<b>Outputs</b>	a) Facility utilization versus capacity b) Direct program utilization against capacity c) Drop-in and casual use opportunities d) Permit utilization	a) 80-90% of prime-time hours and 50-70% of non-prime hours (of available facility spaces). b) 80-90% of capacity based on facility time available and budget parameters c) 50-75% of capacity pending on the activity d) 75% use of available hours
<b>Efficiencies</b>	a) Efficiencies as a result of better equipment, technology, streamlined processes, grants, partnerships, sponsorships etc.	a) An indication of cost avoidance, increased funding through alternate sources, reaching greater participation through partnerships etc.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	a) Facility cleanliness rating b) Satisfaction levels with programs and services c) Satisfaction levels with community development and sport development services d) Staff engagement levels	a) 80-90% rating b) 80-90% rating c) 80-90% rating d) 50-75% rating





### 3.5.3 Supporting the City's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Efforts

Municipalities are making intentional efforts to ensure that public spaces and places are welcoming to all residents and programs and services reflect the broad needs of a diverse population. Richmond Hill is currently in the process of preparing a City-wide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy to establish an action plan to become a more diverse, equitable and inclusive community. From a community services perspective, the City has demonstrated its commitment to including all residents with examples that include encouraging persons with disabilities to participate in programs with support workers and offering a broad range of programs to meet the needs and interests of Richmond Hill's diverse population. Recognizing that the development of this Strategy is currently underway, specific initiatives and actions aimed at opportunities to be more diverse, equitable and inclusive will be identified through this separate process, in coordination with Division staff, stakeholders and the public.

#### It is the Policy of Council to:

23. Work in concert with the Corporate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to ensure that Recreation and Culture programs and services include and represent the service priorities of underrepresented groups in Richmond Hill.

### 3.5.4 Program and Service Improvements

#### Increasing Physical Activity Levels in Richmond Hill

Canada continues to focus on ways to increase physical activity levels to reduce chronic health issues. Richmond Hill has played an ongoing role to increase physical activity through the built environment through the provision of sport and physical activity programming and drop in opportunities. Staff will need to continue to work with health promoters, education, and other partners to address this critical health issue that if continued can lead to chronic health issues earlier in the lifecycle in the City. Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines have replaced Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines. The new guidelines were introduced in 2020 and depict the amount of time various age groups should "Sweat, Step, Sleep and Sit" in a 24-hour period. The new guidelines should be communicated and promoted to the public within facilities, online and in promotional materials. Discussions with community partners to introduce Physical Literacy, promoting active opportunities in increasing the frequency, duration, and intensity of physical activity all play a part in addressing this issue.

One approach to increasing physical activity is to ensure that community members have the basic physical skills to participate in active opportunities. The Canadian Sport for Life Movement has developed a Physical Literacy program for all age groups to ensure that they can run, throw, catch, etc. Physical literacy can be taught in existing programs and environments such as daycares, seniors centres, schools, sport clubs etc. Once people are comfortable with the skills to be more active, some barriers to their participation in physical activities can be alleviated.



ParticipACTION has developed and released a free App that serves to motivate and incentivize Canadians to be more active. Richmond Hill, as an initial approach, could make efforts to promote its use. The App includes daily quick tips, articles, videos, can connect to tracking devices and provides weekly, monthly, and yearly rewards. The App will also remind you to be active at pre-set times and continues to include upgrades. This is another opportunity for the City to continue promoting physical activity without utilizing significant staff and other resources.

ParticipACTION also hosts an annual Community Better Challenge to encourage Canadian communities to get more active. It is open to all communities and residents are encouraged to track minutes of activity on the ParticipACTION App or website during the month of June. Total minutes achieved per capita count toward the national winner and a top winning community is identified within each province and territory. This initiative has helped community groups and organizations join in and improve activity levels. The \$100,000 prize often helps to improve infrastructure, program, and equipment levels. This could be a way to animate the neighbourhoods and community groups in Richmond Hill to improve fitness levels for all age groups and abilities and become an annual event.

**It is the Policy of Council to:**

24. Promote Canada 24-Hour Movement Guidelines and the use of ParticipACTION's Physical Activity APP within facilities and recreation and culture marketing material.



## Youth and Adults 55+ Service Delivery

Youth engagement in meaningful leisure pursuits is of utmost importance with increasing reports of anxiety, depression, and self-harm among youth, summarized in the latest 2022 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey conducted by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH).

Richmond Hill is recognized at the Platinum Level as a Youth Friendly Community through the Playworks Consortium and has demonstrated application of the ten criteria in supporting quality youth leadership and engagement in recreation opportunities. Continuing to embrace these criteria will ensure excellent experiences for youth and promote the City's dedication to youth development and positive life outcomes.

While the Youth Action Committee (YAC) currently advises Council on teen-related matters, there is merit in streamlining the current governance structure. The Community Services Department works with youth and youth serving agencies daily and can respond to requests within the Department and improve service provision within its authority more readily. Regularly scheduled meetings will allow staff and youth to discuss and amend programs and services without reporting through Committees and Council. The Department would be responsible for bringing youth-related policy and system-wide change recommendations forward to Council. Reports on youth related parks, recreation and culture matters could be presented by Youth Advisory Committee members for Council consideration.



Richmond Hill's population of adults 55+ has also grown significantly over the last 15 years and the City's population is expected to continue aging over the next ten years. This trend will impact the level and approach to service provision for Richmond Hill's older adult population. The City's approach to meet the needs of this growing cohort will be guided by Richmond Hill's Age-Friendly Community Strategy that is currently being prepared. Strategies to address the recreation and cultural needs will be guided by this Strategy.

### It is the Policy of Council to:

25. Reposition the Youth Action Committee as an advisory committee to the Recreation and Culture Division; the Division will be responsible for engaging youth, making service changes and bringing youth-related policy and system-wide change recommendations forward to Council.
26. Consider partnering with other youth centred organizations to employ part-time youth workers with diverse backgrounds to relate to youth where they congregate, both to promote existing opportunities or to develop opportunities based on youth interests.
27. Implement strategies related to recreation and culture opportunities for adults 55+ as identified in the Age-Friendly Community Strategy.



## Addressing Female Sport Participation in Sport and Recreation

Participation in sport and recreation by girls and women is on a downward trend in Canada. In 2019, Canadian Women and Sport together with the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities published “The Rally Report” regarding sport participation for girls aged six to eighteen. The findings noted that girl’s participation in sport is much lower than boys at the same age and that girls experience a significant drop out rate by late adolescence. One in three girls leave sport as compared to one in ten boys.

Among the barriers cited, girls stated low levels of confidence, low body image, lack of skills and feeling unwelcomed in a sport environment. In 1992, over half of females over fifteen participated in sport. By 2019, 28% of females participate in sport, while 62% do not. Current studies are demonstrating that 25% of girls are not committed to returning to sport after the Pandemic. This declining participation rate is alarming, and the Federal government has declared that we will achieve gender equity in sport by 2035 in Canada.

The Canadian Women and Sport (CWS) supports and enables girls, women and gender diverse people in pursuing sport and active lifestyles, and keeps women actively engaged in building community capacity. CWS priority and focus is to develop and support welcoming environments and sustainable models where women are trained to lead and promote active opportunities in concert with community partners such as municipalities, universities, and not-for-profit organizations. They have many resources that are readily available to audit policies and practices and help to build capacity within community organizations - (The Temperature Check and Game On). Female participation in community-driven sport and recreation should be identified as a priority in Richmond Hill as it would serve to engage 50% of the population and all the underserved populations as identified by Council. Female and gender diverse participation in sport and recreation warrants assessment and the development of a multi-year plan.



### It is the Policy of Council to:

28. Work to meet the federal Governments goal of gender equity in sport by 2035. Conduct a review of current participation rates in sport and recreation and provide continued and long-term opportunities to collaborate with girls, women, and gender diverse people to create a greater sense of belonging and ownership and to collaboratively develop supportive programs and initiatives.

## Aquatic Scheduling Review

Aquatic services centre on learn to swim, aquatic leadership activities, aqua fitness, facility rentals and drop-in opportunities including Leisure Swim, Fun and Fit and Lane Swim. Each pool programs these activities to accommodate local needs and respond to participation levels. Staff have noticed that the attendance varies depending on location and time that the service is offered. With some pools in closer proximity, there is an opportunity for the aquatic staff to continually review capacity and attendance to determine staggering days and times of opportunities within locally located facilities. This approach will create efficiencies, create better staff allocation, and might result in greater attendance per opportunity; however, regular attendees should be consulted well in advance of any changes.

### It is the Policy of Council to:

29. Complete an analysis of the capacity and attendance of aquatic drop-in activities and other programs considering duplication of opportunities, pool design, surrounding demographics, distance between pools and with regular user input with a view to maximizing participation and creating efficiencies.

## A Blended Fee for Drop-In Activities

Drop-in fees for recreation are varied for public swimming and skating, drop-in fitness classes, lawn bowling, indoor track, etc. Drop-in offerings require the user to know what they would like to participate in and to buy a membership for each activity or pay as they participate. This system may cause some confusion as residents try to navigate recreational opportunities which may be a barrier to participation. The role of Recreation Services is to increase participation and ease of access. There is an opportunity to offer a “Try It” pass that will promote a broad range of activities for one fee. Blending the rates to create one pass for a myriad of activities will allow patrons to try various activities and not be restricted to one.

The proposed methodology is to develop the blended rate for each age group to provide a range of activities that would be attractive to them. Certain parameters may entitle the holder to a number of experiences within each activity – for example children over 3 years may wish to try public swims, public skating, and an experience at The Wave Pool. The “Try It” fee would serve to incentivize residents to try new and varied recreation experiences.

The Try It passes should be developed in concert with focus groups of various age groups to test possibilities and identify any barriers to its use before it is developed. Pricing the pass would blend the various rates without eroding current revenue cost recovery targets.

### It is the Policy of Council to:

30. Develop a “Try It” Pass to allow residents a range of drop in choices at one harmonized fee, to simplify drop in offerings and encourage participation in a range of recreational activities and experiences.



## Section 4

# A Plan for Culture





## 4.0 A Plan for Culture

Richmond Hill residents desire a place where people can come together to celebrate natural and cultural diversity, a place where creativity is fostered and ideas are exchanged, and a place where the arts and cultural community are appreciated. Over the next 10-year planning period, Richmond Hill is anticipated to continue to diversify demographically and intensify its built form. This anticipated change will lead to impacts on the delivery of arts and cultural services.

In 2011, Richmond Hill recognized cultural planning as a process of inclusive community consultation and decision-making that would guide the City in strategically thinking about how it can improve and use the local arts and cultural community to support the ongoing development of a vibrant community. This section summarizes trends, current best practices and strategy directions that will inform how Richmond Hill will approach cultural planning in the next ten years to ensure the City continues to meet current and future needs.

This section is a living document that reflects a 'big picture' overview of the community's cultural resources and comprising the opportunities and strategic key direction based on research and community dialogue. In some instances, the actions recommended are concrete and specific, while in other cases they may be more tactical and aspirational in nature. The result, however, provides a lasting framework that will embolden Richmond Hill's community leaders to respond to challenges and opportunities as they arise. Detailed assessments can be found in the Key Directions Report and Phase 1 Background and Preliminary Needs Assessment Report.



## 4.1 2011 Cultural Plan

The 2011 Cultural Plan was a 10-year living document where the objective of the plan was to provide a shared vision of the needs, aspirations and priorities related to arts and cultural development, arts and cultural infrastructure, and cultural planning in Richmond Hill. Table 4 summarizes the achievements that have been completed since the Cultural Plan was approved.

Table 4: Summary of Achievements, 2011 Cultural Plan

Goal Area	Achievements
<b>Goal 1: Demonstrated Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Leadership Council was established</li> <li>• Cultural Summits are held annually</li> <li>• Park Stories Scavenger Hunt was developed</li> <li>• Community Cultural Grant was established and operated for three years.</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 2: A Dynamic Cultural Sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Festival and Events Strategy was completed</li> <li>• The Small Business Enterprise Centre was engaged to promote business development and technical assistance among arts and cultural groups</li> <li>• Creative Industries Symposium is held annually</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 3: An Inclusive Cultural Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Richmond Hill online calendar promoted to arts and cultural organizations</li> <li>• A partnership was initiated between Richmond Hill and the York Region Arts Council</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 4: Places and Spaces for Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Improvement Plan for Downtown Revitalization was prepared</li> <li>• Funding SpaceFinder York Region to help identify cultural spaces, build capacity of organizations by sharing and renting spaces, and creating an online inventory</li> <li>• Public Art Policy was launched</li> <li>• Economic Development Strategy was updated</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 5: A Celebrated Story</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Arts Awards program was created to recognize artistic talent and community contributions</li> <li>• Cultural Icons film series was developed</li> <li>• Richmond Hill Cultural Portal was launched on the City's website</li> </ul>

## 4.2 Culture Policy Context

Guiding documents (listed below) and other relevant materials have been reviewed for use throughout the planning process. To ensure alignment, the findings and directions from these reports – as they related to art and cultural services – have been incorporated where appropriate. A summary of these materials can be found in the Phase 1 Background and Preliminary Needs Assessment Report.

- Centre for the Performing Arts Strategic Business Review and Core Services Review (2015 and 2021)
- City of Richmond Hill Council Strategic Priorities 2020 – 2022 (2020)
- Economic Development Strategy Update (2018)
- The Ontario Culture Strategy (2016)
- Community Cultural Grant Program (2015)
- Festivals and Events Strategy (2014)
- Richmond Hill Public Library Strategic Plan (2013)
- Public Art Policy (2012)
- Cultural Plan (2011)
- Municipal Cultural Planning A Toolkit for Ontario Municipalities (2011)

Culture is both the expression and celebration of the values and aspiration of a community. This is done through all manner of human activities that characterize a community and its people and shape its unique sense of place. It includes the sharing of ideas; learning through individual and locally authentic community expression in the fine, visual, literary, media, material and performing arts; heritage; and the shared experiences of history.





#### 4.2.1 Municipal Cultural Planning Framework

In 2011, the Cultural Plan introduced a Municipal Cultural Planning Framework that at the time was relatively new for the industry. Pioneered by the Government of Ontario the Municipal Cultural Planning Framework that has guided and will continue to guide arts and cultural development in Richmond Hill focused on defining cultural resources, continuously conducting cultural mapping exercises, adopting a cultural lens across department units and approaching municipal strategies with a cross-sectoral approach (e.g., a joint recreation and cultural plan).

Over the last 10 years Municipal Cultural Planning Frameworks have evolved and adapted as municipalities improved the development of the arts and cultural communities. In 2022, Municipal Cultural Planning Frameworks recognized that health, social capital, economic growth, and city development play a larger role in how the City approaches arts and cultural development.

In recognition of these changes the updated RCP has included the following Municipal Cultural Planning Framework (MCP) as its guide for arts and cultural development in Richmond Hill:



- **Defined Cultural Resources.** The MCP embraces a broad definition of cultural resources that includes creative cultural industries, cultural spaces and facilities, natural and cultural heritage, festivals and events, and community arts and cultural organizations.
- **Continuous Cultural Mapping.** The MCP embraces that a systematic approach to identifying and recording tangible and intangible cultural resources is used regularly to ensure cultural resources are up to date.
- **Ongoing Engagement.** The MCP embraces ongoing strategies to support engagement with the arts and cultural community. This includes strengthening the community with networking and input opportunities.
- **Cross Sector Strategies.** The MCP embraces shared governance mechanisms to support ongoing collaboration between the municipality and its community and business partners.
- **Adopting a Cultural Lens.** The MCP embraces processes that integrate arts and culture as a consideration across all facets of municipal planning and decision-making.
- **Adopting a Health Lens.** The MCP embraces processes that integrate arts and culture programming as a consideration to improve individual health, both physically and mentally.
- **Adopting a Social Capital Lens.** The MCP embraces processes that acknowledges the contributions that the arts and cultural community can have in uniting people from diverse backgrounds and different social levels.

- **Adopting an Economic Lens.** The MCP embraces processes that support the arts and cultural community's contributions to attracting new residents and talent all while generating economic wealth for businesses and individuals.
- **Adopting a Building Lens.** The MCP embraces processes that acknowledges arts and cultural needs in new developments, repurposed developments, and any intensification activities.

### 4.3 Cultural Resources

As described in the Municipal Cultural Planning Framework, cultural mapping is a foundational undertaking in all cultural planning exercises. Building a stronger base of information on the cultural assets in Richmond Hill was a priority identified during the 2011 Cultural Plan process.

The Richmond Hill Cultural Mapping initiative that began in the spring of 2010, has been a foundational element to understanding the arts and cultural landscape in Richmond Hill, and provides the RCP with valuable baseline information on current cultural resources.





### 4.3.1 Defining Cultural Resources

The RCP continues to recognize the 2011 Cultural Resource Framework (CRF) (Figure 5) as the foundation for collecting and identifying cultural resources in Richmond Hill.

Figure 5: Cultural Resource Framework



### 4.3.2 City Facilities that Support Cultural Resources

Table 5 provides the full range of City operated facilities that primarily support the arts and cultural community. These facilities provide Richmond Hill with a variety of arts and cultural programming, space and growth opportunities. Opportunities range from gallery and exhibit spaces, small scale and large-scale event spaces, heritage recognition, all ages programming, and workshop spaces. Additionally, each of these facilities also provide a potential opportunity to be a notable filming location in Richmond Hill, particularly facilities that hold heritage and unique significance such as the Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory.

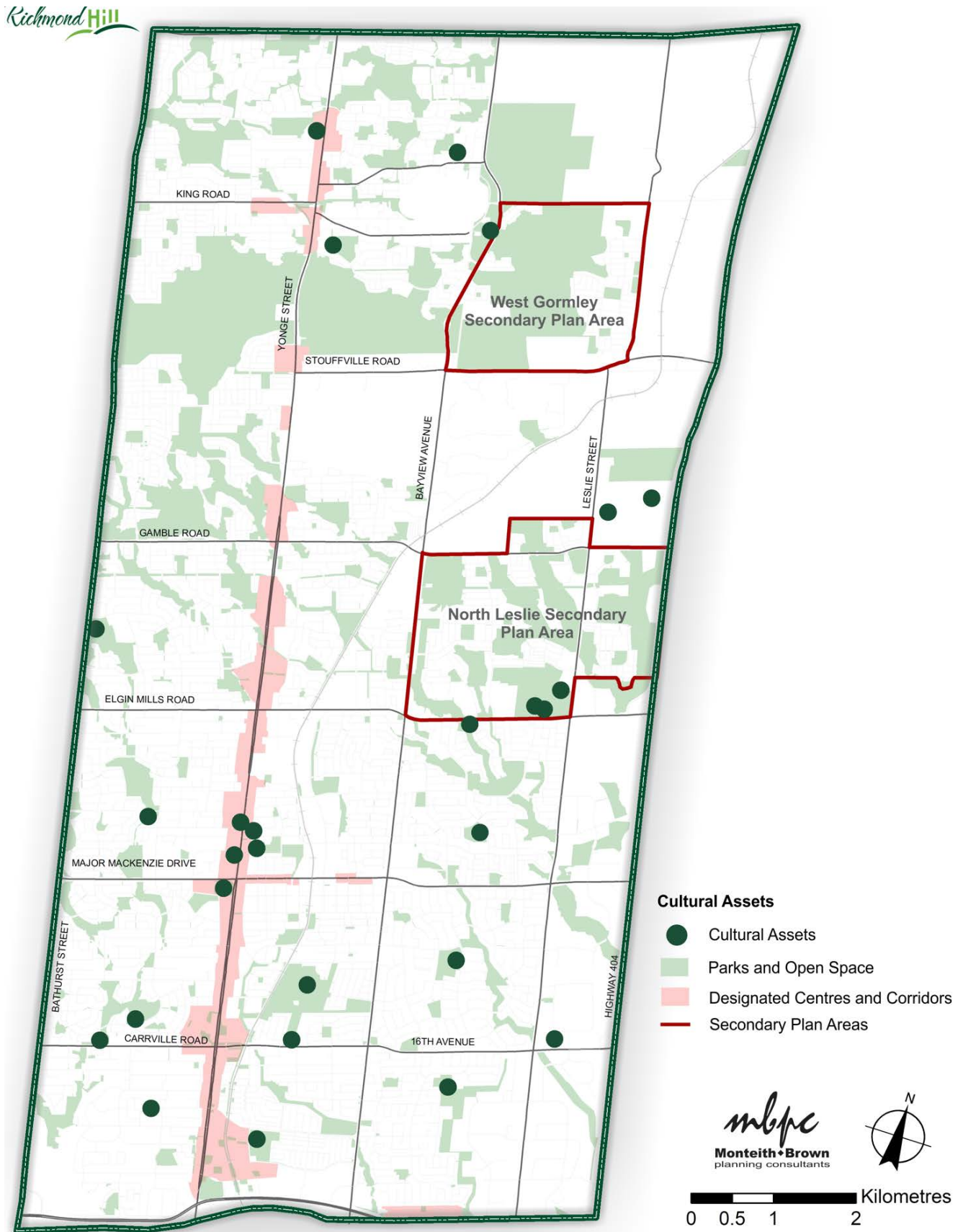
Observing the location of the facilities (Figure 6), most of Richmond Hill's cultural assets are located near designated centres and corridors, not surprising given the proximity to other major community facilities and tourism attractions. Additionally, there are strong clusters of cultural assets at the neighbourhood level. This reinforces the importance of arts and culture to the city's quality of place experience, as well as the vibrancy and liveability of its neighbourhoods.



Table 5 : Summary of City owned Cultural Facilities

Facility	Primary Use
Boynton House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic Site</li> <li>• Art Exhibition Space</li> </ul>
Burr House and Guild Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic Site</li> <li>• Gallery Space</li> <li>• Programming and Workshop Space</li> </ul>
Central Library, Oak Ridges Library, Richmond Green Library, Richvale Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programming Space</li> <li>• Library Programming</li> <li>• All Ages Programming</li> <li>• Business and Professional Development Support</li> </ul>
David Dunlap Observatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic Site</li> <li>• Astronomy Programming</li> </ul>
Eyer Wideman Youth Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic Site</li> <li>• Challenge and Ropes Course</li> </ul>
George Forster House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic Site</li> <li>• Outdoor Education Programming</li> </ul>
Heritage Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic Site</li> <li>• Heritage Programming</li> <li>• Gallery Space</li> <li>• Small Scale Event Space</li> </ul>
Mill Pond Gallery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gallery Space</li> <li>• Programming Space</li> <li>• Outdoor Event Space</li> </ul>
Richmond Hill Centre for Performing Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performing Arts Theatre</li> <li>• Gallery Space</li> <li>• Outdoor Event Space</li> <li>• Theatre Programming</li> </ul>
Richmond Hill Sports Hall of Fame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sports Heritage Exhibit</li> </ul>
Robert Holland Interpretive Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic Site</li> <li>• Environmental Activities and Programming</li> <li>• Outdoor Education Programming</li> </ul>

Figure 6: Distribution of Cultural Facilities



### 4.3.3 Cultural Resources Assessment

As of 2022, Richmond Hill's Cultural Resource Framework identified over 1,200 cultural resources. Detailed results of the cultural resource assessment can be found in the Phase 1 Background and Preliminary Needs Assessment Report with the Cultural Map accessible on the City's website.

The assessment identified a variety of strengths and gaps when comparing Richmond Hill's cultural resources to other cities<sup>7</sup>. In particular, Richmond Hill's observable strengths and gaps include:

#### Strengths

- A high concentration of individuals working in creative occupations when compared to the national average.
- A relatively higher proportion of creative industries focused on digital media, design and film compared to neighbouring communities.
- Compared to other municipalities in the region, Richmond Hill has good variety of facilities (e.g., libraries, community centres, halls) located in neighbourhoods that allow for small arts and cultural programming to be delivered at a grassroots level.
- Compared to other metropolitan regions in Ontario, Richmond Hill artists, arts and cultural groups and creative industries are in close proximity to several large scale regional cultural facilities (e.g., Large exhibit spaces in Toronto and performance and event spaces located in Markham, Aurora, and Mississauga) and networks (e.g., York Region Arts Council, Artscape and Business/Arts in the Greater Toronto Area) that provide local cultural assets an avenue to greater exposure and partnership opportunities.
- Compared to municipalities in the region, Richmond Hill continues to preserve, grow and support a concentration of heritage buildings and districts, particularly in its historic Downtown, as well as the Yonge, Bayview and Leslie Street corridors.
- A higher proportion of arts and cultural industries focused on music, visual arts and dance when compared to neighbouring communities.

#### Gaps

- Compared to other municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area, Richmond Hill has a limited supply of private studio spaces that can be used for an exhibition, musical or dance performance, temporary storefront, live reading, and workshops.
- Compared to other municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area, Richmond Hill has no official arts and cultural district, although most participants acknowledge the area around the Richmond Hill Performance Arts Centre as the unofficial arts and cultural district.

<sup>7</sup> Comparing one city to another in terms of strengths/ weaknesses in cultural resources is challenging. Cultural development in cities evolve along different paths shaped by history, geography, wealth, and prosperity, among others. Nonetheless observable gaps can be noted by completing a benchmarking exercise.



#### 4.3.4 Key Trends Facing Cultural Resources

There are several trends that inform the way that cultural resources are being supported at the local level. This section highlights key trends that have been considered in the context of Richmond Hill and the local implications that are present. For each trend, best practices, comparisons to other municipalities, and recommendations have been identified. Additional details on the trends can be found in the Phase 1 Background and Preliminary Needs Assessment Report.

##### Key Trends Facing Cultural Places and Spaces

Successful municipalities develop a wide range of places and spaces in which culture thrives. These include cultural districts, often in downtown areas, which offer a concentration of art in public spaces, cultural facilities, cultural industries and entertainment venues. Successful municipalities also provide the necessary workspaces for artists and creators allowing these creatives to play an integral part in growing the arts and cultural community of the area.

##### *A Global Movement Towards Cultural District Formation*

The creation of cultural districts has resulted in the emergence of interesting urban neighborhoods of all shapes and sizes which often have global recognition. As part of the cultural, social, economic, and physical development and re-development of urban communities, cultural districts are receiving considerable attention from scholars, planners, policymakers, and others concerned with the future of cities.

The past two years have seen the creation of a cultural districts program in Toronto and Mississauga. The purpose of developing these programs was to offer a clear process for local cultural planning, a combination of supports, and a new methodology to provide a more livable city and an enriched neighbourhood experience that reflects the unique local character and heritage. The anticipated benefits of the cultural districts program include enhancement of public spaces and streets, entice development and revitalization, increased spending at cultural facilities and establishments in the district, and the encouragement of people to stay longer in the district (which promotes local tourism and an evening economy<sup>8</sup>) via arts and cultural programming.

The cities of Toronto and Mississauga have a cultural district program that are process oriented guidelines that sets the precedent for local business areas to be able to say they are a cultural district in said city. An example would be Toronto approving the Fashion district as a recognized cultural district in the city because the area has creative industries, creative programming, public art, and cultural facilities.

The RCP process highlighted that while no formal definition of a cultural district exists in Richmond Hill, the block around the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts is identified as the informal hub of Richmond Hill's cultural district. Other potential districts that were identified included the cultural facilities near Oak Ridges and Gormley. It was also noted that the Richmond Hill Centre could also be built with a cultural district as part of its design.

##### **It is the Policy of Council to:**

31. Undertake research to determine how to foster and maintain cultural districts and their programming.

---

<sup>8</sup> Evening economy describes economic activity taking place in the evening after many people finish daytime employment

### *Places and Spaces for Culture*

Richmond Hill is home to quality and versatile places and spaces that encourage creativity and participation. These places and spaces for culture provide an opportunity for residents to explore creative expression and help to create a sense of pride and community. These places and spaces have the ability to bring people of diverse backgrounds together around shared interests and common goals and leads to developing understanding and respect. Successful municipalities develop a wide range of places and spaces in which culture thrives. These include designated cultural districts, concentration of art in public spaces, cultural facilities, and digital spaces.

In addition to privately-owned spaces, Richmond Hill has many spaces available for creative use. Spaces include the Richmond Hill Centre for Performing Arts, Boynton House, Mill Pond Gallery, as well as community centres, libraries, and alternative spaces such as parks and outdoor spaces like Richmond Green and Lake Wilcox. The RCP process highlighted that it is necessary to continue evaluating the design and use of places and spaces that allow for artists and creators to make these locations an integral part of the cultural fabric of Richmond Hill. Success in building and/or expanding programming in these places and spaces requires visionary place-making expertise often found in cultural planners, innovative private sector developers, and engaged civic agencies.

The RCP process noted that the Economic Development Strategy highlights the importance on ensuring there is an adequate supply of small, high-quality space for start-up businesses. The majority of cultural industries in Richmond Hill are small, independent start-up firms that require affordable and flexible spaces, often with short-term leases and proximity to institutions that provide opportunities for continuous interactions with social and professional networks. Working simultaneously to tackle cultural space availability through the Economic Development Strategy and the RCP is an excellent example of the opportunities and synergies that accompany a larger and more integrated vision of Richmond Hill. The availability of additional affordable cultural spaces may even emerge from the inventory of vacant spaces.

### **It is the Policy of Council to:**

32. Investigate the merits of combining existing cultural uses into multi-purpose buildings as City facilities and park spaces are created, renovated, revitalized or retrofitted.
33. Assess the community group use of stand-alone cultural facilities and the cost recovery model.
34. Evaluate the use of the current Public Art Policy and examine the creation of a Public Art Master Plan.

*Embracing Tactical Urbanism and Pop-up Initiatives to Support Cultural Placemaking*

Residents and communities often take it on themselves to change, repair or beautify public spaces through a concept known as tactical urbanism. Tactical urbanism is a collection of temporary changes to the built environment to improve local neighbourhoods and community gathering spaces. These changes can vary in cost and size and usually start at the community level to create spaces that are inviting, easy to navigate and offer residents a sense of ownership and communal pride for their public spaces.

An example of tactical urbanism is the creation of temporary or pop-up initiatives that help to test out concepts or projects in the community. Temporary or pop-up projects that become successful in the community often go on to become more permanent. These projects allow organizers to gather feedback, make changes quickly, build the public's imagination and are a form of creative placemaking. Richmond Hill is currently establishing an interim local park on Northern Heights Drive (south of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue) to provide five years of temporary recreation and culture programming and events.

This type of urbanism also does not require a long-term commitment from those involved and it is a low-risk activity. With relatively little contribution required, in terms of time and funding, there proves to be a high reward for participating communities. The most satisfying return from this tactic is that it emits realistic expectations.



A local example of tactical urbanism to support cultural placemaking can be seen in Brampton. In 2018, the City of Brampton proposed to temporarily transform four laneway corridors that presented great pedestrian thoroughway access but were widely seen as underutilized spaces in its downtown core. To display the possibility of changes in these spaces to residents, the proposal included items and activities such as, removable street furniture, pop-up arts and cultural vendors, public art, and arts and cultural programming to make these corridors welcoming of pedestrians. Overall, the transformation of these laneways presented a successful attempt in displaying the potential of animating underutilized spaces. Today, these laneways continue to present residents and visitors of Brampton ever changing experiences and unique programming.

**It is the Policy of Council to:**

35. Consider tactical urbanism, public arts and pop-up projects in underutilized spaces and areas (including vacant storefronts).



## Key Trends Facing Cultural Industries and Community Cultural Organizations

### *Digital Technology is Changing How the Arts and Culture Sector Engage People*

Digital technologies are impacting the arts and culture sector in new ways, including increased participation and consumption of arts, culture, and heritage. Digital technologies are increasing the amount of information available for participants to access when they want to, during their own time and immediately at their fingertips. This access has also dramatically affected cultural industries in the way they work, market, and run their businesses. With technology now abundant and universal, it extends to all areas of social life, work, and civic experiences.

Digital technologies, however, also change at a fast pace. Artists and other cultural producers are often at the leading edge of using these technologies in their artworks to invigorate exhibitions, installations and to engage the public at events and activities, but not every group or organization is able to adapt so quickly, in particular non-profit community groups that are largely operated and run by volunteers. It is impossible to predict what the future will bring in terms of technology but supporting these vital community groups in the use of digital technologies will support them in providing cultural experiences. Richmond Hill and York Region's economic development plans both currently take steps towards identifying digital strategies that will support organizations and businesses in delivering digital goods (and experiences). Richmond Hill also collaborates with the York Region Arts Council and the Richmond Hill Small Business Enterprise Centre to support skill training and capacity development in the use of digital technology in the arts and cultural community.

New movements in civic technologies also provide opportunities for innovative approaches to engaging audiences using digital technology in outdoor and public spaces. Several cities have introduced public Wi-Fi networks and digital infrastructure that can collect, analyze and use data to increase the quality of life of current and future residents. Richmond Hill is currently working with a developer to provide free Wi-Fi in a park, which could potentially support recreation and culture events and programs. This approach could be applied to other parks and public spaces to connect residents across the City.

### **It is the Policy of Council to:**

36. Continue to support the understanding and use of technology of the artists and arts and cultural organizations through collaborative working groups and training opportunities.

### *Recognizing the Need for Racial Equity in Cultural Engagement*

There has been growing recognition in Canada of the lack of diversity in mainstream arts, culture, and heritage experiences and also in the make-up of administrations, instructors, presenters and creators of arts, culture and heritage. 'Traditional' arts and culture representation will need to expand to incorporate and exhibit new forms of art for a wider community, ensuring racial equity in the arts is more than just tokenism.

Over the last few years, institutions and funding bodies have been identifying barriers faced by equity-seeking creatives and suggesting ways to improve racial equity in the arts. Several communities, including Richmond Hill, have been revising community engagement procedures to ensure these voices and barriers are addressed. This includes learning how to cooperate, to negotiate, and to compromise, and how to do so constructively and effectively with all of Richmond Hill's cultures and communities. As mentioned in Section 3.5.3, the City is in the process of preparing a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy that will establish an action plan for ensuring that all residents feel welcome in Richmond Hill, which will involve collaboration between staff, stakeholders and the public (see Recommendation #22).

## Key Trends Facing Heritage, Place Identity and Festivals and Events

### *Finding Authenticity in Intangible and Tangible Heritage*

As communities diversify and cultures are shared across the globe, there has been a move toward gathering, protecting, and featuring intangible heritage elements in modern cultural planning. Intangible heritage includes many aspects of a community's culture that are not represented by traditional physical artifacts, buildings, or monuments. It includes assets that are captured in storytelling, skill sharing and knowledge building. Often these intangible assets are created, transmitted, and maintained organically by a community without a realization that they are explicitly maintaining culture and heritage for future generations.

Rapidly changing demographics in many communities have pushed organizations and groups to document these intangibles for future generations in real time preserving their authentic representation of culture at its moment's time. Many heritage groups, museums and galleries are using technologies to collect, archive and exhibit their local intangible heritage assets. With the changing demographics in Richmond Hill, it is increasingly important to expand the definition of heritage beyond a Canadian-only focus of a community's origin to one that is encompassing the living diverse histories of the new populations that call Richmond Hill home. Celebrating living heritage and intangible heritage should be reflective of Richmond Hill's current and future demographics.

In Toronto, groups like the Myseum of Toronto<sup>9</sup> are bringing an innovative brand to intangible heritage showcasing the history and diversity of Toronto and its many communities without the use of a physical location. This virtual museum provides programs and exhibits for people to explore the city and its many communities. These are done through storytelling exhibits, short films and live events all accessed virtually on the group's website.

### **It is the Policy of Council to:**

37. Continue to research and implement creative ways to increase awareness and appreciation for the history, heritage and stories that are unique to Richmond Hill.



<sup>9</sup> The Myseum can be accessed at [www.myseumoftoronto.com](http://www.myseumoftoronto.com)

### *The Changing Nature of Today's Festivals and Events*

Technological changes, together with changing demographics, lifestyles, and interests are impacting the delivery of local festivals and events. The internet and social media have fundamentally changed the way festivals and events are marketed, providing a more effective way to reach target audiences than traditional advertising. Online ticketing is now common across all event sizes (small to large), in addition, online ticketing allows for more information on audiences and the effectiveness of marketing tactics.

Festivals and event goers are also becoming more demanding. They expect more choices, experiences, and authentic programming. There is an increasing demand for events that have anything to do with food, wine, and craft beer. Additionally, hybrid events – those that broaden the appeal of an event by adding complementary activities either in person or in tandem online – are increasing in number. This helps to grow audiences, give them more ways to spend money, and helps to expand the sponsor pool.

### **It is the Policy of Council to:**

38. Update the Festivals and Events Strategy to provide a refreshed vision for the arts and culture sector.





## 4.4 Cultural Service Delivery

The goal of every public cultural service provider in Canada is to advocate the value arts and cultural assets bring to the community. Public cultural service providers play several roles in accomplishing this task. They primarily act as a:

- **Program Provider**, where the City delivers arts and cultural programming and partners with other arts and cultural based community organizations to provide opportunities for residents to access arts and cultural experiences.
- **Communicator**, where the City champions the arts and cultural community, increasing the awareness of arts and cultural assets not only to its residents but provincially, nationally and internationally.
- **Facilitator**, where the City encourages linkages and coordination among members of the community to discuss, plan and act upon arts and cultural matters.
- **Partner**, where the City works with a range of organizations including business communities, public agencies, educational institutions and not-for profits to improve the arts and cultural community.
- **Supporter**, where the City invests in the arts and cultural community.

Richmond Hill's current delivery of cultural services has acknowledged the substantial investment the City, its external partners, local artists, cultural and creative industries, and organizations have made. The City's strategic priorities have also placed Richmond Hill in a proactive position to become a magnet for creative talent, to celebrate its natural and cultural landscapes, and to openly engage with its residents on all matters.

The development of the Cultural Services Delivery review takes into consideration practices that are occurring in other municipalities with the Greater Toronto Area and across North America. These practices have resulted in key initiatives and recommendations that will continue to shape the future of arts and cultural development in Richmond Hill.

#### 4.4.1 Supporting Recovery in the Cultural Sector

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenge for the arts and culture sector. The sector has traditionally been one of the highest economic contributors in Ontario. The City needs to continue supporting the recovery process and to welcome the community back to arts and culture activities, programs, facilities, festivals and events many have missed. Increasing funding for local events and offering a one-time grant for events and activities will support community recovery, attract, and help the arts and culture community get back on its feet and be ready to deliver on the goals of the RCP.

##### Examining Alternative Financial Models to Support the Cultural Sector

Nationally, municipal funding programs have been the most responsive solution to the needs of the arts and culture sector. Cultural community grants across the country have assisted the arts and culture sector in adapting to the realities and needs of a growing community, particularly where growth is accompanied by underlying problems accelerated by development. Income disparity, service gaps, equity and inclusion, affordability and accessibility of housing and studio space are all major issues for cultural organizations that require financial solutions.

Across Ontario, municipalities are reviewing their municipal funding program models, particularly as many municipalities are dealing with rigid budgets. There has been a rise in municipalities moving away from using budget allocations to fund community grants. In lieu, there are municipalities that are looking to creative sponsorships, development fees, service partnerships, utility models and funding partnerships.

Recently, the City of Toronto reduced its allocated budget contributions to its cultural community grant programs. In its place, the City of Toronto considered how it could more effectively administer these grants by targeting specific high profile cultural industries and facilities that could provide more grassroots support through service partnerships. The trade-off was that the existing grant money that was going to these high-profile cultural industries and facilities would now come with requirements that the high-profile cultural industries and facilities would need to offer up space and use of their facilities to local community cultural organizations at no cost to these organizations. This in turn has given grassroots organizations direct access to world class spaces at a nominal cost. The second grant, focused on providing funding for cultural festivals, examined the use of sponsorships as its alternative model. In this scenario, the City of Toronto was leveraging its sponsorship pool and extending those opportunities to arts and cultural organizations who may not have the immediate profile to capture a high-level sponsorship for its festival or event.

##### It is the Policy of Council to:

39. Conduct a review of the impact of the Community and Cultural Grant Program for the three-year period it was active in the community. Identify opportunities to improve and revitalize the program or establishing a new funding source for creative projects.
40. Explore alternative funding models to support arts and cultural community organizations.

## Business Support Mechanisms for Arts and Culture Industries

The City of Richmond Hill has recognized that arts and cultural industries are integral to its long-term economic competitiveness. Support for arts and cultural industries has been identified in various plans with greater emphasis within the Economic Development Strategy. The Economic Development Strategy identifies the Information and Cultural Industries as a key sector that will continue to grow, expand and strengthen the local business community.

Support for entrepreneurship and local business growth were also key priorities of the Economic Development Strategy. The Strategy aims to grow entrepreneurship opportunities and small business creation by leveraging connections to cultural development. The 2011 Cultural Plan identified specific recommendations to support artists and creative workers, including increased collaborations with local business networks and allocation of resources to grow creative businesses. Additionally, the City has been providing professional development and networking opportunities through the Richmond Hill Small Business Enterprise Centre.

Certain municipalities have examined the outsourcing of business support programs for arts and cultural industries. In Toronto, the City has partnered with Business / Arts to run an artsvest program. Artsvest is a national mentorship training program that works directly with small to mid-size arts and cultural organizations, equipping them with training and resources to help build sustainable partnerships with businesses and increase capacity and investment in the sector. In Brampton, the City created an agency known as The Arts, Culture and Creative Industry Development Agency that is a collective of inter and cross-sectoral partners that fund, advocate, and develop the sector.



### It is the Policy of Council to:

41. Continue to engage with the local community and municipal and national cultural networks to support the growth and sustainability of the local cultural sector.
42. Together with the York Region Arts Council, examine a partnership with Business / Arts community to introduce the artsvest program in the Region.
43. Conduct an engagement series with the arts and cultural sector to explore the impact of the pandemic and identify how the City can better prepare and support these organizations in the recovery process and to prepare for similar situations.
44. Facilitate ongoing sessions with the York Region Arts Council and the Richmond Hill Small Business Enterprise Centre to develop mentoring, skill training and capacity development opportunities for the arts and cultural sector.



#### 4.4.2 Refresh the Cultural Leadership Council

Lack of awareness is the biggest barrier to access for many in Richmond Hill and addressing it will require a joint effort and strong coordination between the City and its arts and cultural organizations. Refreshing the Cultural Leadership Council to work towards the creation of a single one-stop shop for input on what Richmond Hill has to offer culturally would likely improve access, growth of arts and cultural organizations, satisfaction with local offerings, and ensure residents stay and spend on local arts and culture activities.

##### It is the Policy of Council to:

45. Revisit the Cultural Leadership Council's Terms of Reference to reflect the outcomes of Richmond Hill's Recreation and Cultural Plan.

#### 4.4.3 Communication

A strong commitment to communications and community engagement were defining features in the development of the 2011 Cultural Plan. These same commitments must continue to support implementation of the RCP. A commitment to ongoing communications should be seen as inseparable from efforts aimed at supporting continuous community engagement.

Successful communications require an understanding of the targeted audience segment each requiring a different set of tactics and tools. Notwithstanding the audience, the City must strive to deliver messages that are both authentic and substantive.

##### Internal Corporate Communications

Successful implementation of the RCP and advancement of a cultural agenda in Richmond Hill will require a shared vision and collaboration across the Corporation. The Interdepartmental Team is ideally positioned to coordinate these internal communications efforts. Communication tools this team can use/continue to use include:

- **Staff Forum** – convene a forum for staff to present the RCP and the plan's cultural planning ideas and methodologies.
- **Cultural Plan Updates** – as the RCP is implemented and specific actions or initiatives launched, the Community Services Division should ensure this information is shared with colleagues across departments.
- **Annual Cultural Report** – will provide an update on all actions and achievements across divisions in implementing the RCP.

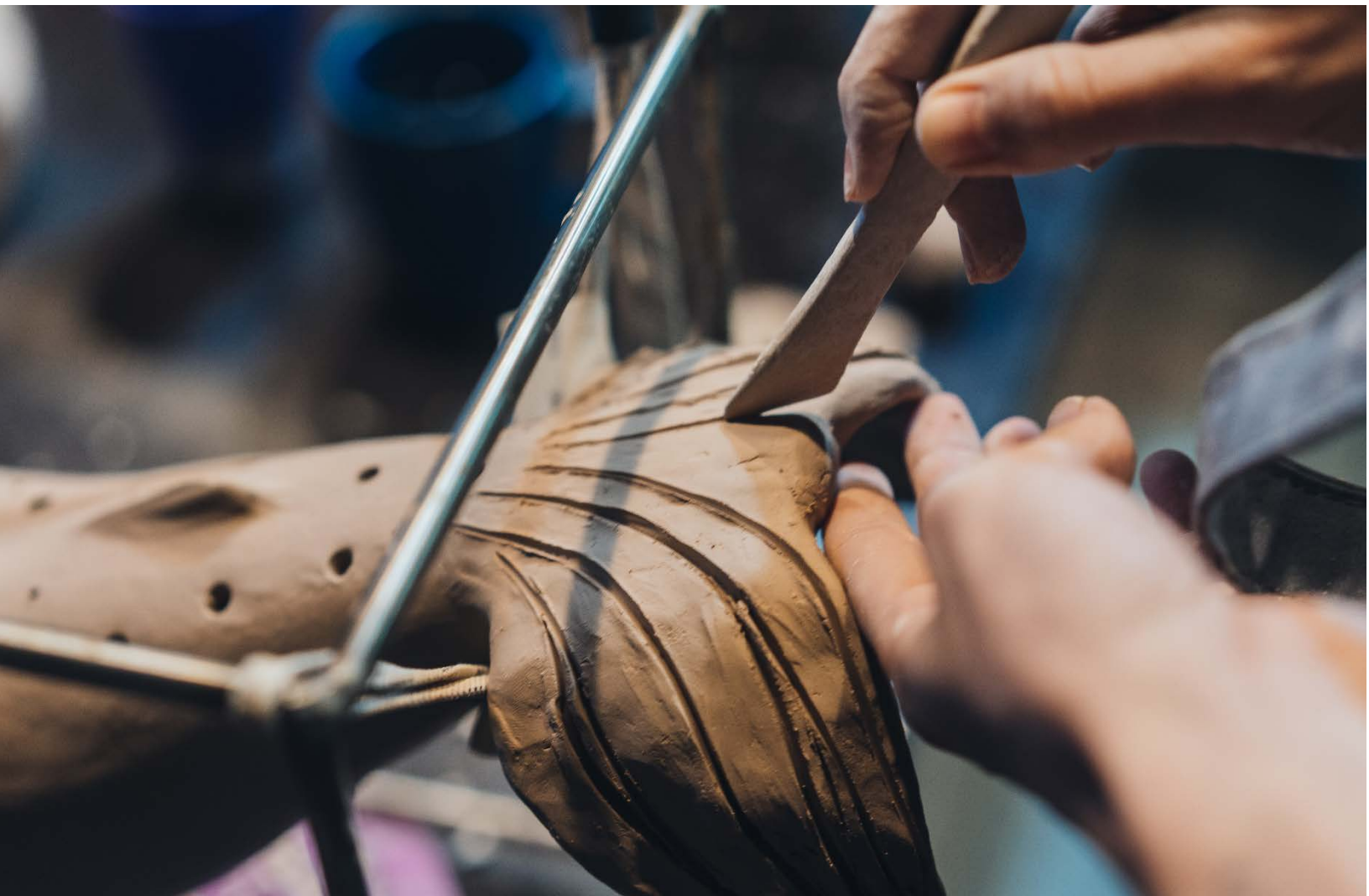
## Community and Cultural Stakeholder Communications

Implementing the RCP will rely on the focused participation of a wide range of individuals and organizations with direct responsibilities for advancing cultural development in the City. Responsibility for ongoing communications with these groups will be the responsibility of the City staff. The following provides vehicles around which ongoing communications efforts can be built.

- **Small Scale Cultural Organization Meetups** – communications support for the Cultural Leadership Council to share RCP updates with cultural organizations and stakeholders will maintain profile for the RCP and broader issues of cultural development in Richmond Hill.
- **Expand and Evolve Use of the Plan Webpage** – this will provide a central point of focus for the dissemination and sharing of information as implementation of the RCP moves forward.

### It is the Policy of Council to:

46. Prepare a communications plan on how to best inform cultural organizations, stakeholders, and residents on the implementation of the RCP.





## Section 5

# Implementation Strategy





## 5.0 Implementation Strategy

### 5.1 Monitoring and Updating the Recreation and Culture Plan

The development of annual work plans and year-end reporting should be undertaken to track achievements, and lessons learned to determine the status and success of the RCP. Through these mechanisms – or as a result of internal or external factors – adjustments in resource allocation and priorities may be required. The information collected through this monitoring process will assist Richmond Hill with undertaking a mid-term review and comprehensive review and update of the RCP by 2031. To ensure the successful implementation of the RCP, the following should be considered:

- a) review of the past year (recommendations implemented, capital projects undertaken, success/failure of new and existing initiatives, issues arising from the public and community groups, etc.);
- b) identification of issues impacting the coming year (anticipated financial and operational constraints, emerging opportunities, updated population data and forecasts, etc.);
- c) regularly monitor population growth, facility utilization, activity levels, and sector trends to determine if changes to recommendations are needed and to inform other or future planning processes;
- d) cursory review of the RCP for direction regarding its recommendations;
- e) utilize the recommendations contained in the RCP to inform annual work plans and staff reports (as necessary); and
- f) budget requests/revisions, as necessary.

#### It is the Policy of Council to:

- 47. Develop annual work plans that identify recommendations from the Recreation and Culture Plan that staff seek to achieve over the short-term. Work plans to identify financial requirements and other resources required to implement recommendations.
- 48. Undertake a mid-term review and comprehensive review and update of the Recreation and Culture Plan by 2031. Timing may be adjusted based on the pace of implementation and changes in population growth, trends and other variables.

## 5.2 Partnerships

As noted in the Recreation and Culture Plan, Richmond Hill routinely develops relationships with external organizations for a variety of purposes. The most common of these relationships are with external service delivery organizations that are developed through the implementation of the City's Program Partnership Procedure. The Procedure outlines the principles that apply to the relationship between the City and its partner, the processes for utilizing the Procedure's various tools, templates and resources, revenue implications of the arrangement, signing authority as well as roles and responsibilities of the partner and various City staff. The Procedure and its supporting documents are comprehensive and offer specific direction for developing relationships through which programs are delivered by non-municipal personnel.

It is noteworthy that the form and structure of a partnership between the City and an external entity should be dictated solely by the nature of the venture. The contractual arrangements that spell out the details of an arrangement for the project must be consistent with the needs and nuances of the endeavour regardless of whether the City's partner is from the private, not-for-profit or charitable sectors. Even if a group's mandate and service philosophies are seemingly aligned with municipal values, the contract terms and conditions must protect the municipality from the inherent risks of the arrangement – notwithstanding the well-meaning intentions of the proponent. Additionally, there may be circumstances where certain groups are not qualified to undertake a project despite their desire to serve the community. Or they may be ill-equipped, under financed, inexperienced or simply incapable of partnering on a facility development and management project.

### It is the Policy of Council to:

49. Formalize relationships and collaborative opportunities with community organizations through the City's Program Partnership Procedure to establish the approach, roles, responsibilities, and other factors for delivering recreation (and cultural) facilities, services and/or programs in Richmond Hill.



### 5.3 Funding the Recreation and Culture Plan

One of the reasons for undertaking the Recreation and Culture Plan is to establish community needs and priorities to ensure that Richmond Hill's resources are allocated in a responsible manner. Since the Plan Review process was initiated, the City has moved toward **the development of a 10-Year Capital Plan (and forecast). In addition, operating budget processes will need to be reviewed regularly to ensure implementation of the Plan over the next 10 years.**

As the City continues to grow and expectations for high quality leisure services evolve, Richmond Hill will continue to face financial pressure to meet all community needs. Implementing major capital projects in the RCP, particularly with the construction of the North Leslie Community Centre, will involve a combination of direct taxation combined with alternative non-tax based sources such as development charges, community benefit charges, municipal reserves, debt financing, donations, and sponsorships, and grants. Richmond Hill may be required to work with a local organization to apply for certain grants. Long-term operations and maintenance will continue to be funded by the tax base, user fees and other related sources.

To ensure that appropriate funding is available for capital projects, the City is expected to update its Development Charges By-law in 2023. A Community Benefits Charge Strategy and By-law was also completed in 2022, which will provide the City with a new funding stream for projects within Richmond Hill's centres and corridors. Table 6 summarizes capital needs as identified in this RCP. It should be noted that not all major capital recreation facility recommendations have been summarized as some may require additional study or investigation prior to construction.

The Richmond Hill Secondary Plan Area identifies the need for community facility(ies) to address the indoor recreation facility needs of current and future population growth in this area. While this area is not expected to be fully built out until after the planning period (beyond 2031), it is crucial to begin long-term planning to consider the unique land, funding, phasing, and partnership opportunities that may be involved. The RCP encourages co-locating community facilities within the Richmond Hill Centre to create a community hub to serve residents in this area. Potential facility needs within this area may include, but not be limited to, ice pads, indoor aquatic centre, gymnasium, indoor walking track, and multi-purpose spaces. Facility needs within the Richmond Hill Centre should be reconfirmed prior to construction.

In addition, the City has planned enhancements to existing cultural facilities including projects associated with the Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory Master Plan (e.g., Planetarium, Elms Lea, Radio Shack) and proposed renovations to the Mill Pond Park Centre.

#### It is the Policy of Council to:

50. Use the Recreation and Culture Plan to inform the 10-Year Capital Plan and operating budget processes. Implementing major capital recommendations may require a range of funding and cost-sharing approaches including taxation, user fees, development charges, community benefit charges, grants, sponsorships, partnerships, and other strategies.
51. Initiate a long-term planning process that considers the unique land, funding, phasing, and partnership opportunities that may be involved in providing a Richmond Hill Centre indoor recreation facility(ies). Co-locating community facilities within the Richmond Hill Centre to create a community hub to serve residents in this area is encouraged. Potential facility needs within this area may include, but not be limited to, ice pads, indoor aquatic centre, gymnasium, indoor walking track, and multi-purpose spaces. Facility needs within the Richmond Hill Centre should be reconfirmed prior to construction.



Table 6: Summary of Major Capital Recreation Facility Recommendations (2021 to 2031)

Facility Type	Current Supply (Population: 214,000)	2031 Recommended Supply (Population: 253,000)	Supply Change (+/-)
Indoor Aquatics	6 (1:36,000 residents)	7 (1:36,000 residents)	+1
Arena Facilities	8 (1:27,000 residents)	9 (1:27,000 residents)	+1 (Re-confirm prior to construction)
Gymnasium Facilities	9 (1:24,000 residents)	10 (1:24,000 residents)	+1
Fitness Facilities	2 (1:107,000 residents)	3 (1:85,000 residents)	+1
Indoor Artificial Turf Facilities	2 (1:107,000)	3 (1:84,000 residents)	+1
Multi-Purpose Facilities	61 (1:3,600 residents)	65 (1:3,800 residents)	+4
Youth Space	2 (1:107,000 residents)	3 (1:84,000 residents)	+1
Adult 55+ Space	3 (1:71,000 residents)	4 (1:63,000 residents)	+1
Indoor Bocce Courts	3 (1:71,000 residents)	3 (1:84,000 residents)	No Change
Indoor Tennis Courts	6 (1:36,000 residents)	6 (1:42,000 residents)	Subject to future study

Note: Change in supply excludes potential facility components for a future recreation facility in the Richmond Hill Centre (2031+), which should be reconfirmed prior to construction.



## 5.4 Action Plan

Throughout the body of the RCP, recommendations have been identified at the end of each subsection or by topic area. By approving the RCP as a guiding document, Richmond Hill is not bound to implementing every recommendation or providing facilities, programs and services in the order, amount or manner indicated; rather the RCP provides guidance on community needs and priorities and sets a general course for meeting the needs as they are presently defined.

Recommendations contained within the RCP are summarized on the following pages, together with potential resource implications including preliminary cost estimates for capital projects or staff time to implement actions. Estimates are based on past projects in comparable communities and should only be used as a guide for capital planning purposes. Actual costs will need to be determined by City staff at the appropriate time.

The timing for implementing each recommendation is identified and is generally synonymous with the level of priority, although this should be interpreted as a guide given that there are many factors that impact the timing of implementation such as the COVID-19 pandemic, rate of population growth, shifting trends and community interests, available funding opportunities, partnerships, and more. Timing is organized as follows:

Short-Term     2022 to 2024  
Medium Term   2025 to 2027  
Long-Term     2028 to 2031





Overarching Recommendations	Suggested Timing			Resource Implication
	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	
Vision for Recreation and Culture				
1. Direct Recreation and Culture staff to evaluate the need for, and if so, to work with Division staff to establish, a Division-specific vision and mission that is consistent with corporate values and strategic direction.	●			Staff time
Recreation Facilities Recommendations	Suggested Timing			Resource Implication
	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	
Indoor Aquatic Facilities				
2. Provide an indoor aquatic facility as part of a North Leslie Community Centre. The City's standard aquatic facility template is recommended, which consists of a 25-metre rectangular tank with six to eight lanes and a separate tot-teaching tank to ensure use by all ages and abilities. Other components to be contemplated include water play features, sauna, warm-water therapeutic pool, viewing area, universal change rooms, adult change tables, and washrooms.			●	Subject to 10-Year Capital Plan and operating budget processes
3. Evaluate long-term indoor aquatic needs within the Richmond Hill Centre with consideration given to system-wide utilization, program participation rates and wait lists, to validate or adjust the service target to inform future decisions.	●	●	●	Staff time



Recreation Facilities Recommendations	Suggested Timing			Resource Implication
	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	
Arena Facilities				
4. Undertake an arena analysis to confirm ice pad needs and timing prior to moving forward with constructing the North Leslie Community Centre, recognizing lower participation rates in ice sports resulting from the arena closures experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consideration should be given to historical ice utilization trends, participation data and waitlists following the COVID-19 pandemic, and other trends associated with ice usage, as well as opportunities to replace aging ice pads but ideally designing the North Leslie Community Centre to be positioned to accommodate a twin pad arena as need warrants and/or consolidation of an older arena facility is rationalized. Arena needs within the Richmond Hill should also be evaluated at this time to respond to long-term population growth.		●		Staff time
Gymnasium Facilities				
5. Include a gymnasium as part of the North Leslie Community Centre. A gymnasium template similar in size to the Oak Ridges Community Centre and Pool and the ideal operational amenities similar to Rouge Woods Community Centre or Elgin West Community Centre and Pool is recommended.			●	Subject to 10-Year Capital Plan and operating budget processes
6. Monitor the long-term need for future gymnasium space within the Richmond Hill Centre.		●	●	Staff time
7. Explore joint-development opportunities with school boards, as opportunities become available with a focus on access to larger gymnasiums. Working with the school board to program gymnasium space located at school sites for after school activities, with a priority placed on local Richmond Hill groups, is encouraged.	●	●	●	Staff time

Recreation Facilities Recommendations	Suggested Timing			Resource Implication
	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	
Fitness Facilities				
8. Incorporate a fitness centre at the planned North Leslie Community Centre, which should include space for equipment, an adjoining aerobic room, and an indoor track.			●	Subject to 10-Year Capital Plan and operating budget processes
9. Investigate the feasibility of repurposing the undersized fitness studio at the Bayview Hill Community Centre and Pool to address to other community needs (e.g., program space for all ages including youth and adults 55+, rentals, etc.).		●		Subject to 10-Year Capital Plan and operating budget processes
10. Evaluate long-term opportunities to incorporate fitness facilities and an indoor track at a future community facility in the Richmond Hill Centre.		●	●	Staff time
Indoor Artificial Turf Facilities				
11. Undertake a study to determine the City’s precise seasonal, locational and time allocation needs related to indoor artificial turf fields. The study should evaluate indoor artificial turf needs in relation to outdoor field availability, including understanding the impact on outdoor field use from installing a dome structure over an existing outdoor field and should involve input from sports field user groups.	●			To be determined by recommended study
Multi-Purpose Facilities				
12. Provide up to four new multi-purpose spaces at the future North Leslie Community Centre.			●	Subject to 10-Year Capital Plan and operating budget processes

Recreation Facilities Recommendations	Suggested Timing			Resource Implication
	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	
13. Design multi-purpose spaces with flexibility in mind, with consideration given to a variety of sizes and amenities to accommodate a broad range of activities and functions. Amenities that should be considered include wood sprung floors, mirrors, dividing walls, storage space, kitchens, and other features.	●	●	●	Staff time
14. Continue to monitor space needs in areas of intensification with consideration given to the provision of City-owned indoor spaces, such as at a future recreation facility in the Richmond Hill Centre, and partnership opportunities with the private and not-for-profit sector, development industry, and other public agencies. Indoor recreation facilities within or near intensification areas should have regard for public access, flexible and sufficiently sized spaces, parking accommodation and other associated amenities.	●	●	●	Staff time
15. Review the use and function of the repurposed daycare space at Richvale Community Centre to ensure that the facility space is suitable for delivering recreation and culture programming to the community.		●		Staff time

### Spaces for Youth

16. Address youth space needs through the following strategies:

- |  |   |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| a) Provide integrated multi-purpose space that can accommodate program opportunities for youth within community centres as at the future North Leslie Community Centre and Richmond Hill Centre, Bayview Hill Community Centre and Pool, Elgin West Community Centre and Pool and in the south end of Richmond Hill. | ● | ● | ● | Subject to 10-Year Capital Plan and operating budget processes |
| b) Investigate alternate uses for the Eyer Homestead house, ensuring that the programming needs for the Challenge Course are being met.  |   | ● |   | Subject to 10-Year Capital Plan and operating budget processes |



Recreation Facilities Recommendations	Suggested Timing			Resource Implication
	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	
Spaces for Adults 55+				
17. Address space needs for adults 55+ as identified through the City's planned Age-Friendly Community Strategy and with consideration to the provision of integrated multi-purpose space that can accommodate program opportunities for adults 55+ within community centres as at the future North Leslie Community Centre and Richmond Hill Centre, Bayview Hill Community Centre and Pool, Elgin West Community Centre and Pool and in the south end of Richmond Hill.	●	●	●	Subject to 10-Year Capital Plan and operating budget processes
Indoor Bocce Court Facilities				
18. Continue to provide the semi-permanent facility at Richmond Green, in light of the decrease in participation. Construction of a new indoor bocce facility is <u>strongly discouraged</u> as the financial case is such that the small base of local players would not justify the significant capital cost and ongoing operational resources that would be required.	●			Staff time
Indoor Tennis and Pickleball Courts				
19. Continue to monitor the demand for indoor tennis and pickleball courts to inform an update to the 2016 Tennis Strategy, which should include pickleball. This investigation should be coordinated with the usage analysis of existing outdoor tennis courts identified in the 2022 Parks Plan, which is intended to identify courts suitable for relining or repurposing to facilitate pickleball courts. Future indoor tennis and pickleball court facilities should consider aesthetically pleasing exterior designs that complement the surrounding environment.	●	●	●	Staff time and potential costs for an indoor tennis and pickleball court facility.

Service Delivery Recommendations	Suggested Timing			Resource Implication
	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	
Strengthening Divisional Capacity				
20. Continue to address Public Health guidelines and industry standards to achieve pre-pandemic (e.g., 2019 or earlier) service delivery levels to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.	●	●	●	Staff time
Completion of the Departmental Organizational Changes within the Recreation and Culture Division				
21. Review and reassess the staff complement within the Recreation and Culture Division in the short-term to evaluate the effectiveness of the new organizational structure.	●			Staff time
Performance Measures and Setting Targets				
22. Develop meaningful performance targets and measures to reflect service priorities and public expectations.	●			Staff time
Supporting the City’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Efforts				
23. Work in concert with the Corporate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to ensure that Recreation and Culture programs and services include and represent the service priorities of underrepresented groups in Richmond Hill.	●	●	●	Staff time
Increasing Physical Activity Levels in Richmond Hill				
24. Promote Canada 24-Hour Movement Guidelines and the use of ParticipACTION's Physical Activity APP within facilities and recreation and culture marketing material.			●	Staff time
Youth and Adults 55+ Service Delivery				

Service Delivery Recommendations	Suggested Timing			Resource Implication
	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	
25. Reposition the Youth Action Committee as an advisory committee to the Recreation and Culture Division; the Division will be responsible for engaging youth, making service changes and bringing youth-related policy and system-wide change recommendations forward to Council.	●			Staff time
26. Consider partnering with other youth centred organizations to employ part-time youth workers with diverse backgrounds to relate to youth where they congregate, both to promote existing opportunities or to develop opportunities based on youth interests.		●		Staff time
27. Implement strategies related to recreation and culture opportunities for adults 55+ as identified in the Age-Friendly Community Strategy.	●	●	●	Staff time
<b>Addressing Female Sport Participation in Sport and Recreation</b>				
28. Work to meet the federal Governments goal of gender equity in sport by 2035. Conduct a review of current participation rates in sport and recreation and provide continued and long-term opportunities to collaborate with girls, women, and gender diverse people to create a greater sense of belonging and ownership and to collaboratively develop supportive programs and initiatives.		●	●	Staff time
<b>Aquatic Scheduling Review</b>				
29. Complete an analysis of the capacity and attendance of aquatic drop-in activities and other programs considering duplication of opportunities, pool design, surrounding demographics, distance between pools and with regular user input with a view to maximizing participation and creating efficiencies.		●		Staff time
<b>A Blended Fee for Drop-In Activities</b>				



Service Delivery Recommendations	Suggested Timing			Resource Implication
	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	
30. Develop a “Try It” Pass to allow residents a range of drop in choices at one harmonized fee, to simplify drop in offerings and encourage participation in a range of recreational activities and experiences.		●		Staff time

Cultural Recommendations	Suggested Timing			Resource Implication
	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	
A Global Movement Towards Cultural District Formation				
31. Undertake research to determine how to foster and maintain cultural districts and their programming.		●		Staff time or cost for consultant (\$15,000)
The Impact Real Estate has had on Cultural Space Availability				
32. Investigate the merits of combining existing cultural uses into multi-purpose buildings as City facilities and park spaces are created, renovated, revitalized or retrofitted.		●		Staff time
33. Assess the community group use of stand-alone cultural facilities and the cost recovery model.		●		Staff time
34. Evaluate the use of the current Public Art Policy and examine the creation of a Public Art Master Plan.		●		Staff time and cost for consultant (\$100,000)
Embracing Tactical Urbanism and Pop-up Initiatives to Support Cultural Placemaking				

Cultural Recommendations	Suggested Timing			Resource Implication
	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	
35. Consider tactical urbanism, public arts and pop-up projects in underutilized spaces and areas (including vacant storefronts).	●	●	●	Staff time
<b>Digital Technology is Changing How the Arts and Culture Sector Engage People</b>				
36. Continue to support the understanding and use of technology of the artists and arts and cultural organizations through collaborative working groups and training opportunities.	●			Staff time
<b>Finding Authenticity in Intangible and Tangible Heritage</b>				
37. Continue to research and implement creative ways to increase awareness and appreciation for the history, heritage and stories that are unique to Richmond Hill.		●		Staff time
<b>The Changing Nature of Today's Festivals and Events</b>				
38. Update the Festivals and Events Strategy to provide a refreshed vision for the arts and culture sector.	●			Cost for consultant (\$100,000)
<b>Examining Alternative Financial Models to Support the Cultural Sector</b>				
39. Conduct a review of the impact of the Community and Cultural Grant Program for the three-year period it was active in the community. Identify opportunities to improve and revitalize the program or establishing a new funding source for creative projects.	●			Staff time
40. Explore alternative funding models to support arts and cultural community organizations.		●		Staff time

Cultural Recommendations	Suggested Timing			Resource Implication
	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	
Business Support Mechanisms for Arts and Culture Industries				
41. Continue to engage with the local community and municipal and national cultural networks to support the growth and sustainability of the local cultural sector.		●		Staff time
42. Together with the York Region Arts Council, examine a partnership with Business / Arts community to introduce the artsvest program in the Region.		●		Staff time
43. Conduct an engagement series with the arts and cultural sector to explore the impact of the pandemic and identify how the City can better prepare and support these organizations in the recovery process and to prepare for similar situations.	●			Staff time
44. Facilitate ongoing sessions with the York Region Arts Council and the Richmond Hill Small Business Enterprise Centre to develop mentoring, skill training and capacity development opportunities for the arts and cultural sector.	●	●		Staff time
Refresh the Cultural Leadership Council				
45. Revisit the Cultural Leadership Council's Terms of Reference to reflect the outcomes of Richmond Hill's Recreation and Cultural Plan.	●			Staff time
Community and Cultural Stakeholder Communications				
46. Prepare a communications plan on how to best inform cultural organizations, stakeholders, and residents on the implementation of the RCP.	●	●	●	Staff time



Implementation Strategy Recommendations	Suggested Timing			Resource Implication
	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	
Monitoring and Updating the Recreation and Culture Plan				
47. Develop annual work plans that identify recommendations from the Recreation and Culture Plan that staff seek to achieve over the short-term. Work plans to identify financial requirements and other resources required to implement recommendations.	●	●	●	Staff time
48. Undertake a mid-term review and comprehensive review and update of the Recreation and Culture Plan by 2031. Timing may be adjusted based on the pace of implementation and changes in population growth, trends and other variables.		●		Staff time
49. Formalize relationships and collaborative opportunities with community organizations through the City’s Program Partnership Procedure to establish the approach, roles, responsibilities, and other factors for delivering recreation (and cultural) facilities, services and/or programs in Richmond Hill.	●	●	●	Staff time
50. Use the Recreation and Culture Plan to inform the 10-Year Capital Plan and operating budget processes. Implementing major capital recommendations may require a range of funding and cost-sharing approaches including taxation, user fees, development charges, community benefit charges, grants, sponsorships, partnerships, and other strategies.	●	●	●	Staff time
51. Initiate a long-term planning process that considers the unique land, funding, phasing, and partnership opportunities that may be involved in providing a Richmond Hill Centre indoor recreation facility(ies). Co-locating community facilities within the Richmond Hill Centre to create a community hub to serve residents in this area is encouraged. Potential facility needs within this area may include, but not be limited to, ice pads, indoor aquatic centre, gymnasium, indoor walking track, and multi-purpose spaces. Facility needs within the Richmond Hill Centre should be reconfirmed prior to construction.		●	●	Staff time

