

Phase 3 Batch 2: What We Heard

Official Plan Amendments 18.5, 18.6, 18.7, and 18.8 Summary Report

City Plan:
Richmond Hill Official Plan Update

Prepared by LURA Consulting

Prepared for the City of Richmond Hill

September 2023



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Executive Summary

The City of Richmond Hill is undergoing an update of the City's Official Plan to provide a clear vision for planning and development to 2051 and attract more businesses, jobs, and residents. The update will consider new opportunities while aligning with current provincial and regional policies and plans where applicable (e.g., A Place to Grow: the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Provincial Policy Statement, York Region Official Plan, etc.).

A key component of the project is an extensive stakeholder and community engagement program designed to raise broader interest and awareness and help shape the City's vision and goals for the future.

The Official Plan update process consists of three phases. We are currently in Phase 3 of the update process. During this phase, the City will gather feedback from residents and community groups as they draft and finalize several Official Plan Amendments (OPAs). These OPAs have been divided into three batches. Each will include public engagement, sharing our research, discussing possible changes to the Official Plan, receiving feedback and sharing what we have heard before recommending the adoption of changes to the Official Plan.

This report summarizes feedback received since December 1, 2022 following the previous consultations to August 15, 2023. This includes feedback received during Batch 2 of Phase 3 with comments received surrounding City's June 7, 2023 Open House and June 20, 2023 Council Public Meeting for OPAs 18.5 (Yonge and Carrville / 16th Avenue Key Development Area [KDA]), 18.6 (Village Local Centre), 18.7 (Newkirk Local Centre) and 18.8 (Oak Ridges Local Centre).

The draft OPAs are available online:

- [Yonge and Carrville / 16th Avenue Key Development Area– Draft OPA 18.5](#)
- [Village Local Centre – Draft OPA 18.6](#)
- [Newkirk Local Centre – Draft OPA 18.7](#)
- [Oak Ridges Local Centre – Draft OPA 18.8](#)

Key messages emerging from feedback are listed below.

Yonge and Carrville/16th Avenue Key Development Area (OPA 18.5)

- Concerns about coordination between transit improvements and development.
- Mix of support and opposition for higher/lower density and building heights.
- Concerns about light pollution from development impacting David Dunlap observatory.
- Walkability and Low-Impact Development are important to the area's future growth.

Village Local Centre (OPA 18.6)

- Mix of support and opposition for higher/lower FSI and building heights.
- Mix of support and opposition for the angular plane policy.
- Concerns about new development's compatibility with the existing character of the area – both the size and scale of development and uses.

Newkirk Local Centre (OPA 18.7)

- Concerns about coordination between transit improvements and development.
- Some areas adjacent to the Centre should be considered for inclusion as development opportunities that may support connection in the broader area.

Oak Ridges Local Centre (OPA 18.8)

- Mix of support and opposition for higher/lower FSI and building heights.
- Concerns related to development impact and expansion on the Oak Ridges Moraine.

Engagement and Promotion

The figure below summarizes efforts that the City has undertaken to engage the public in this Official Plan Update process between December 1, 2022 and August 15, 2023. This engagement relates to efforts to raise awareness about the OP Update and to educate and seek feedback on the proposed OPAs through events such as an open house and Council Public Meeting, and the City's dedicated webpage.

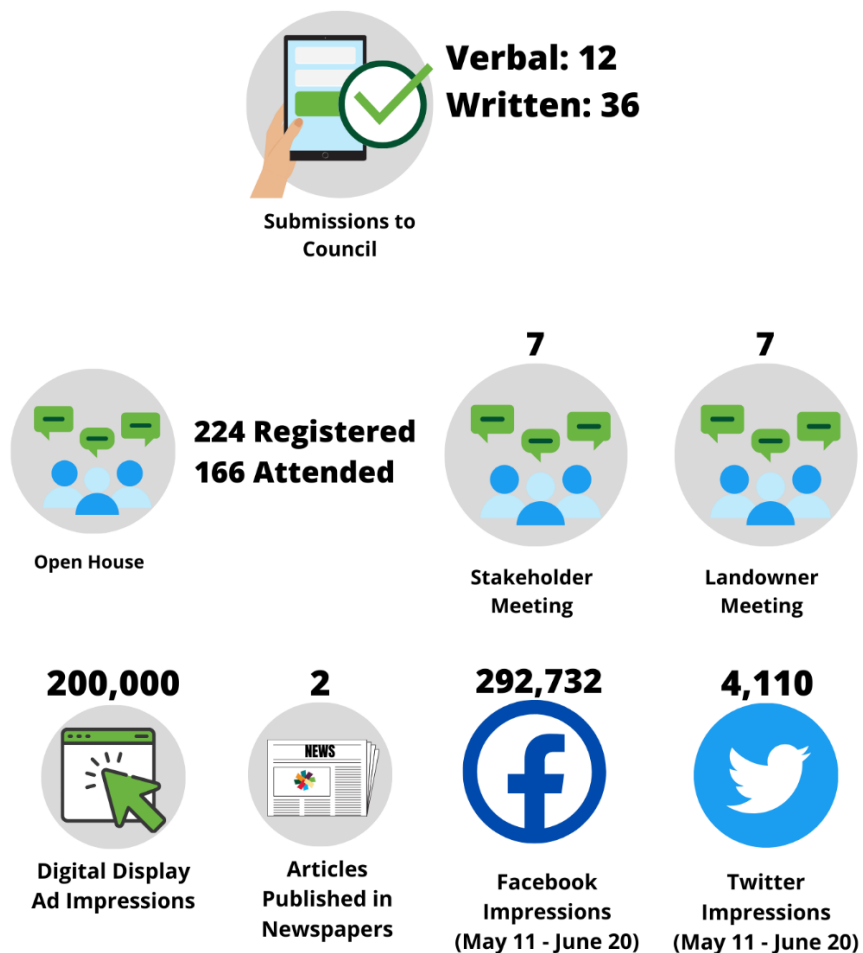


Figure 1: Engagement & Promotion Statistics

Next Steps

City staff will consider this feedback as it updates the OPAs before taking them to Council for adoption in Fall 2023.

Section 1: Project Background

The City of Richmond Hill is undergoing an update of the City's Official Plan to provide a clear vision for planning and development to 2051 and attract more businesses, jobs, and residents. The update will consider new opportunities while aligning with current provincial and regional policies and plans where applicable (e.g., A Place to Grow: the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Provincial Policy Statement, York Region Official Plan, etc.).

The Province requires an Official Plan update to be completed ten years after preparing a new comprehensive Official Plan. This ensures that the updated plan implements any changes to provincial policies, conforms with the York Region Official Plan's policies, responds to current urban issues and conditions, and considers new opportunities for shaping the city.

Council adopted Richmond Hill's current Official Plan in July 2010 to guide development to 2031. This review will provide a clear vision for planning and development in Richmond Hill to 2051.

In addition to *Planning Act* requirements, the Official Plan update will look to better support long-term sustainable city building, respond to climate change, and create a better balance of jobs and residents in the city.

Several City initiatives will occur concurrently with the Official Plan Update, which will address some of these key themes. These initiatives will develop tools that will be used to implement the policies of the Official Plan. There are also studies underway that will inform the Official Plan Update.

The following is a list of these City-led projects:

- [Affordable Housing Strategy](#)
- [Community Energy and Emissions Plan](#)
- [Comprehensive Zoning By-law Review](#)
- [Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan](#)
- [Socio-Economic Study](#)
- [Transportation Master Plan Update](#)
- [Urban Forest Management Plan](#)
- Urban Master Environmental Services Plan
- [Yonge and Bernard Key Development Area Secondary Plan](#)
- [Parks, Recreation and Culture Plans](#)
- [Environment Strategy](#)
- [Richmond Hill Investment Attraction Strategy](#)
- Stratification and Public Access Easement Study

Engagement Objectives

Updating the City's Official Plan provides an important opportunity to engage the public and key stakeholders. A key component of the project is an extensive stakeholder and

community engagement program designed to raise broader interest and awareness and help shape the City's vision and goals for the future.

Specific objectives of the City Plan 2051 engagement program are to:

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

The engagement program will be delivered in three phases, as described on the City's [website](#). Phase 3: Policy Development and Official Plan Amendments seeks to gather feedback from residents and community groups as the City drafts and finalizes several Official Plan Amendments (OPAs). These OPAs have been divided into three batches. Each part will include public engagement to share the City's research, discuss possible changes to the Official Plan, receive feedback and share what we have heard before recommending the adoption of changes to the Official Plan.

This report summarizes feedback received since December 1, 2022 following the previous consultations to August 15, 2023. This includes feedback received during Batch 2 of Phase 3 with comments received at the City's June 7, 2023 Open House and June 20, 2023 Council Public Meeting for OPAs 18.5 (Yonge and Carville / 16th Avenue Key Development Area [KDA]), 18.6 (Village Local Centre), 18.7 (Newkirk Local Centre) and 18.8 (Oak Ridges Local Centre). The draft OPAs are available online:

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- [Oak Ridges Local Centre – Draft OPA 18.8](#)

Section 2: Overarching Feedback

Several submissions provided general input relevant to OPAs 18.5-18.8 that should be considered holistically as these OPAs are refined. Submissions identified the following overarching feedback:

- Respondents were interested in seeing more emphasis and directive placed on ensuring development delivers high-quality and unique design.
- Respondents indicated a mix of uses is important to help activate these areas during the day and evening.
- Respondents expressed their support for short, walkable blocks to encourage walking and cycling to local destinations such as stores and parks.
- Respondents emphasized the importance of striking a balance between development intensity and street-level experience. Some submissions referenced concerns about large buildings and feeling overwhelmed by the size and massing of high density development.
- Respondents expressed the importance of Low-Impact Development to ensuring green spaces are maintained and further developed to provide space for growing communities to access nature. Feedback suggested that the City should apply Green Standards to future development to lessen their environmental impact.
- Feedback expressed a desire for continued enforcement of appropriate setback near environmental features and to prohibit development in hazardous lands.

Section 3: What We Heard for Yonge and Carrville/16th Avenue KDA (OPA 18.5)

This section summarizes the key themes heard throughout engagement on the Yonge and Carrville/16th Avenue Key Development Area (KDA). It should be noted that many of the complementary City initiatives listed in the project description will also address the key themes outlined in the following sections.

The Official Plan Update website provides a copy of the [draft OPA 18.5 full text](#) with proposed changes to the City's Official Plan. A map of the KDA is provided below for reference.

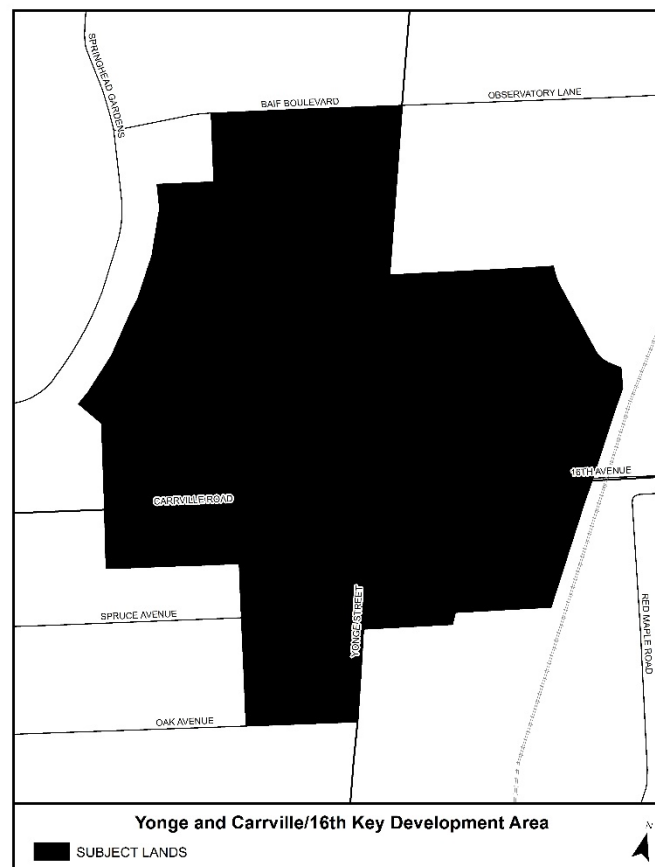


Figure 2: Lands Affected by OPA 18.5 Yonge and Carrville/16th Avenue Key Development Area (KDA)

OPA 18.5 Feedback by Key Themes

The following general (non-property specific) feedback on OPA 18.5 has been provided to the City for consideration, and touches on several important key themes to the long-term planning of the KDA including height and density, place-making, low impact development and phasing:

- **Transportation**
 - o Interest in ensuring that development is phased based on improvements to the transportation network's capacity to accommodate growth. The feedback provided to the City indicates that the area already suffers from traffic congestion that may be exacerbated by high density growth.
 - o Requests that vehicular parking should be accommodated underground.
 - o Desire to know if communities will be planned to be compact and walkable.
- **Environmental Impacts**
 - o Concerns about light pollution from growth in this area near the David Dunlap Observatory.
- **Height and Density**
 - o Concerns regarding height and density policies, and a desire for a detailed justification of them.
- **Walkability**
 - o Emphasis on the importance of walkability and sense of place as the area grows.
- **Public Space**
 - o Desire for more parks and open space for public gatherings and recreation.
- **Affordability**
 - o Interest in knowing where affordable housing will be built.
- **Infrastructure**
 - o Feedback provided to the City expressed that it will be important to integrate Low Impact Development and stormwater management infrastructure into future redevelopment plans.
 - o Interest in more information about capacity of infrastructure (watermains and sewers) to support proposed growth.

Feedback Related to Site-Specific Properties in the Yonge and Carrville/16th KDA

The following submissions were received regarding specific properties in or near OPA 18.5:

- Request to revise the minimum density permissions for 77 and 89 - 16th Avenue to 5.5 FSI to permit high-density, compact, pedestrian-friendly, and transit-supportive development.
- Detailed comments related to land use, urban design, and density for 9350 Yonge Street.
- Identified unevaluated wetland adjacent to a Key Development Area, and the limits of hazardous lands to be confirmed in the future through natural heritage evaluation.
- Comments related to the affordable housing targets, land use designations, public realm, and site density in the northeast corner of the Key Development Area.
-

Section 4: What We Heard for Village Local Centre (OPA 18.6)

This section provides a high-level summary of the key themes heard throughout engagement on the Village Local Centre. It should be noted that many of the complementary City initiatives listed in the project description will also address the key themes outlined in the following sections.

The Official Plan Update website provides a copy of the [draft OPA 18.6 full text](#) with proposed changes to the City's Official Plan. A map of the centre and lands affected by OPA 18.6 is provided below for reference.



Figure 3: Lands Affected by OPA 18.6 Village Local Centre

OPA 18.6 Feedback by Key Themes

The following general (non-property specific) feedback on OPA 18.6 was provided to the City for consideration, and generally touches upon height and density, a mixture of land uses, transition between tall and short buildings, and parking, as follows:

- **Height and Density**
 - o Several submissions addressed the desire for a higher FSI (at least 5.0 FSI) and maximum building heights in storeys (at least 15 storeys) for this Local Centre. The feedback received highlighted a rationale for this Local Centre as being an appropriate place for higher density development to increase housing supply, deliver affordable housing, and to maximize

investment in major infrastructure projects such as transit. In particular, the following feedback was provided to the City:

- Many small lots in the area may struggle to be developed based on the coverage, FSI, height, angular plane, and setback requirements. These will make the financial feasibility of development challenging.
 - Feedback from the development industry identified that achieving 12-18 storeys would be challenging with a 3.0 FSI.
 - Comments from the development industry suggested there should not be a maximum height or FSI, and instead let development be dictated by urban design and development standards.
- o Other submissions expressed concern that the 2.0 FSI is too high, and should instead be 1.0 FSI.
- o Consider changing “high-density residential” to “medium density residential” to allow for a broader mix of housing typologies more consistent with the existing area.
- **Land Use**
 - o Concerns were expressed related to adding retail and commercial uses that respondents believe have the potential to generate nuisance to the surrounding area. Some of these uses will be compatible, however retail and commercial uses should be carefully reviewed.
 - o Respondents expressed that the area needs strong employment growth to accompany development (not just residential).
- **Urban Design**
 - o Respondents articulated concerns that the angular plane and transition policies do not adequately protect heritage properties.
 - o Respondents articulated concerns that the angular plane policy would hinder development constructability, energy efficiency, and design, and result in fewer housing units constructed.
 - o Respondents expressed that urban design should play a key role in the future development of the area to preserve the look and feel of the village while still allowing for investment.
 - Responses encouraged the City to consider an urban design brief for new development.
- **Transportation**
 - o Respondents indicated that new development should provide parking on-site.
- Some clarifications were requested regarding:
 - o A desire to understand the source and methodology for the growth assumptions provided for the study area.
 - o Rationale for building heights and non-residential uses in the Centre
 - o Meaning of certain terminology
 - o Overall vision of the Centre.

Feedback Related to Site-Specific Properties in the Village Local Centre

The following submissions were received regarding specific properties in or near OPA 18.6:

- Request for increase of 15 stories with 7-7.5 FSI associated with 10312-10318 Yonge Street.
- Request for increase of 15 stories with 7-7.5 FSI associated with 10330 Yonge Street.
- Support for high density residential and mix of land uses in the Local Centre including 10350 Yonge Street.
- Concerns related to low FSI and maximum storey height, and angular plane requirements applicable to 52, 58, 60, 66, 74, and 76 Major Mackenzie Drive West.
- Request to include 47 Church Street North in the Centre boundary.
- Request to include 52 and 56 Dunlop Street in the Centre boundary.
- Unclear source for the growth assumptions provided for the study area.
- Identified unevaluated wetland adjacent to Addison Street and the limits of hazards lands would need to be confirmed through the development application review process.

Section 5: What We Heard for Newkirk Local Centre (OPA 18.7)

This section provides a high-level summary of the key themes heard throughout engagement on the Newkirk Local Centre. It should be noted that many of the complementary City initiatives listed in the project description will also address the key themes outlined in the following sections.

The Official Plan Update website provides a copy of the [draft OPA 18.7 full text](#) with proposed changes to the City's Official Plan. A map of the centre and lands affected by OPA 18.7 is provided below for reference.

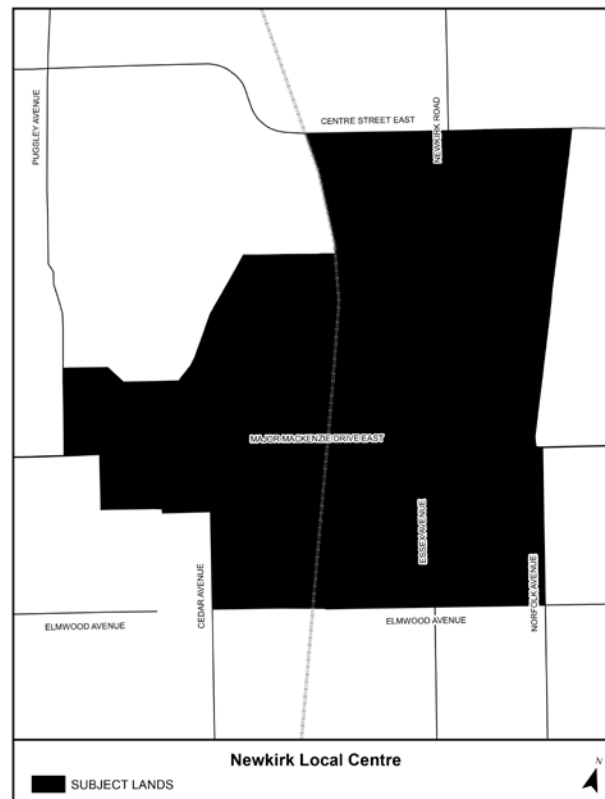


Figure 4: Lands Affected by OPA 18.7 Newkirk Local Centre

OPA 18.7 Feedback by Key Themes

The following general (non-property specific) feedback on OPA 18.7 was provided to the City for consideration, and generally touches upon assumptions related to transit-oriented development, affordability, a mix of land uses, and urban design, as follows:

- **Transportation**
 - o Concerns that the intensification targets are based on assumptions of transit service that have not materialized and/or may not be operational for many years to come. The need for two-way, frequent GO train service on the Richmond Hill line was referenced specifically. Comments suggested that assumptions surrounding transit use supporting higher density should be validated through ongoing surveying of residents of the new community

to understand their travel behaviour to make informed decisions around development intensity.

- **Affordability**
 - o Feedback expressed that it is important to protect affordable rental buildings.
- **Land Use**
 - o Feedback noted that Newkirk/Richmond Hill GO station should become the focus of the surrounding neighbourhoods, not just for the Centre.
 - o Feedback expressed that existing industrial lands and undeveloped land near Centre Street are opportunities for further development in the area.
 - o Unity Park should be included in the Centre area and establish connections between northwest neighbourhoods and Centre Street.
 - o A catalyst (potentially municipally developed housing) is needed to help spur development.
- **Urban Design**
 - o Development should be compact and include well-planned comfortable and attractive urban spaces – this may be achieved through mid-rise high coverage buildings.
 - o Support for medium density and angular planes in this Centre.

Feedback Related to Site-Specific Properties in the Newkirk Local Centre

The following submissions were received regarding specific properties in or near OPA 18.7:

- Request to include 150 Colborne Avenue and 9960 Bayview Avenue in the Local Centre designation.
- Request to permit a maximum base height of 6 storeys, maximum building height of 16 storeys, and an increase in density to 5.4 FSI at 162-182 Norfolk Avenue.
- Block north of Centre Street East and west of rail track should be designated High or Medium Density Residential.
- Identified redesignated lands in TRCA regulated German Mills Creek requiring setbacks and safe access as a prerequisite to evaluating development potential.

Section 6: What We Heard for Oak Ridges Local Centre (OPA 18.8)

This section summarizes the key themes heard throughout engagement on the Oak Ridges Local Centre. It should be noted that many of the complementary City initiatives listed in the project description will also address the key themes outlined in the following sections.

The Official Plan Update website provides a copy of the [draft OPA 18.8 full text](#) with proposed changes to the City's Official Plan. A map of the centre and the lands affected by OPA 18.8 is provided below for reference.

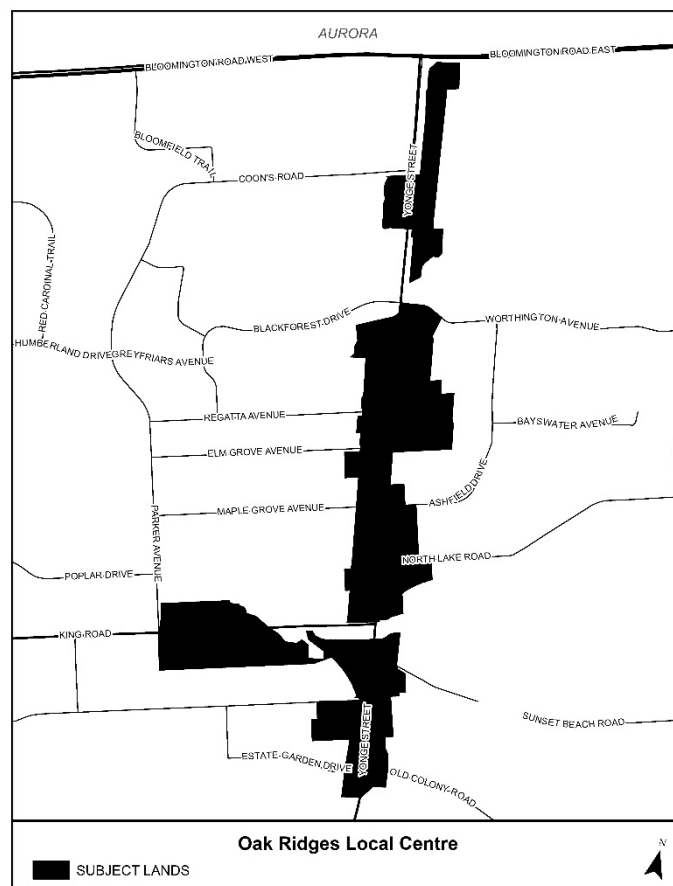


Figure 5: Lands Affected by OPA 18.8 Oak Ridges Local Centre

OPA 18.8 Feedback Key Themes

The following general (non-property specific) feedback on OPA 18.8 was provided to the City for consideration, and touches upon land use, height and density, environmental impacts, urban design, affordability, and transportation, as follows:

- **Land Use**
 - o Incentivizing housing, high-end retail, and restaurants in the corridor may encourage people to come here rather than travelling further afield to seek

these opportunities. The Centre should have well-defined purposes and a rationale for people to go there.

- **Height and Density**
 - o Several respondents expressed the desire for a higher density in FSI to meet housing targets set by the Province.
 - o Other submissions suggested that planned building heights are too high at 8 storeys – and suggested that a more compatible character would be 4 storeys.
- **Environmental Impact**
 - o Concerns related to the environmental impacts on groundwater and drainage on the Oak Ridges Moraine. Respondents expressed concern that the loss of greenspace and wetlands is irreversible.
 - o Feedback provided to the City indicated that new development should plan its Low-Impact Development to anticipate the changes in weather caused by climate change. This could include infrastructure such as bioswales, bird-friendly guidelines, and policies that preserve and enhance the Oak Ridges Moraine.
- **Urban Design**
 - o Feedback provided to the City articulated the desire for a prominent gateway to the area should help define arrival to this place.
 - o Concerns about incompatibility of character with surrounding neighbourhoods.
 - o Feedback provided by the City suggested that ground floor commercial spaces would help to animate the area.
- **Affordability**
 - o Feedback provided to the City requested that the municipality should ensure affordable housing is provided through redevelopment – where possible publicly-funded and modular housing should be explored to increase the supply of new housing.
- **Transportation**
 - o Respondents articulated concerns about traffic safety.
 - o Respondent feedback expressed that the 15-minute neighbourhood concept needs to be further reaching than just in the Centre. The concept as applied at this Centre is also perceived to be at risk of failure due to parking requirements.

Feedback Related to Specific Properties

The following submissions were received regarding specific properties in or near OPA 18.8:

- Concerns regarding a 2.0 FSI density cap and maximum building height of six (6) storeys related to 13515 and 13715 Yonge Street and 53 St. Laurent Drive. Requested clarification of public realm policies (4.3.2.3) and amendment of Limits of Schedule A1 to match Schedule A2.
- Draft OPA only includes the 13723 Yonge Street portion of the property not the Bloomington Road portion. Respondents have requested for a building height of

12 storeys and a density of 4.25 FSI to apply on the lands. In addition, feedback was provided to the City requesting that it consider no longer applying the policies related to Angular Plane as Toronto is beginning to do. Request for more clarity regarding planned collector road.

- Identified significant overlap of the OPA boundary and East Humber River and Lake Wilcox floodplain and Special Policy Area, A side bar could be added for clarification regarding permissions for more intensive development in the area.

Section 7: Feedback on the Official Plan Update not specific to OPA's 18.5-18.8

The City received additional feedback that was not directly related to a specific OPA:

- The City should consider adopting a Community Parking Permit System and Complete Application Requirements (requiring the developer to complete Traffic Impact, Noise and Vibration, Environmental Impact, and Urban Design studies before approving an application).
- The City should organize municipal design awards to encourage design excellence and pride of place.
- Request for inclusion of provincial policies and guidelines related to rail facilities in the Official Plan.
- Consider an update to the North Leslie Secondary Plan as part of the Official Plan Update process to recognize increasing intensification.
- Request for amendments relating to Section 3.1.9.7 Utilities and Utilities and Telecommunications in the North Leslie Secondary Plan.
- Clarification regarding extension of Addison North related to 49 Addison Street.

Section 8: Engagement Process and Communication Methods

Engagement Methods

In-Person Open House

On June 7, 2023, the City of Richmond Hill hosted a combined public open house for the four OPAs. The event was held at the Mcconaghy Seniors' Centre, 10100 Yonge Street from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open House attendees had the opportunity to review material presented on a series of display boards, ask questions to City staff, and provide comments on each of the four proposed OPAs.

The City received 224 registrations for the Open House, and 166 participants attended the Open House.

Council Public Meeting

A Council Public Meeting, pursuant to Section 26 (3) of the *Planning Act* was held on June 20, 2023, to notify the public and receive comments on the proposed Official Plan Amendments. Members of the public were invited to submit written comments before the meeting and provide oral delegations to Council during the meeting. Overall, 36

written comments were submitted, and 12 oral delegations were made. These submissions included other orders of government, regulatory agencies, property owners and/or their delegated representatives, community associations, individual residents/business owners, and other community members.

Communication Methods

The following communication methods were used to promote this round of engagement:

- City of Richmond Hill homepage banner
- Public Service Announcement
- Poster with QR code at recreation facilities
- Twitter posts
- Facebook post and ads
- Curbex Signs
- Print ads in The Liberal
- Multilingual digital ads in four different languages
- LED signs at all Richmond Hill facilities
- Direct emails to: OP Update webpage subscribers, OP Update notification list, prescribed bodies and Indigenous Communities

Appendix A: OPA Submissions

Council Public Meeting: June 20, 2023

Correspondences that were submitted up to and during the [Council Public Meeting on June 20, 2023](#) can be accessed in the meeting agenda.

Committee of the Whole Meeting: November 1, 2023

Correspondences regarding OPA 18.5 (Yonge and Carrville/16th Avenue Key Development Area) and OPA 18.6 (Village Local Centre) that were submitted from June 21, 2023 and up to the Council Public Meeting on November 1, 2023 can be accessed in the meeting agenda for each Council meeting by navigating to the [City's Event Calendar](#).

Committee of the Whole Meeting: November 15, 2023

Correspondences regarding OPA 18.7 (Newkirk Local Centre) and OPA 18.8 (Oak Ridges Local Centre) that were submitted from June 21, 2023 and up to the Council Public Meeting on November 15, 2023 can be accessed in the meeting agenda for each Council meeting by navigating to the [City's Event Calendar](#).