

September 23, 2024

Mayor & Council, Richmond Hill
cc. maria.flores@richmondhill.ca
cc. ruth.rendon@richmondhill.ca
cc. clerks@richmondhill.ca

Dear Mayor & Council

RE: Richmond Hill Sustainable Development Goals



The City's enlightened governance and vision have not only resulted in the UN University choosing Richmond Hill as its new location in Canada but also an Urban Economy Forum partnership with Richmond Hill as the first Frontrunner City in Canada championing [sustainable development goals](#). York Region Environmental Alliance (YREA) congratulates Richmond Hill for these distinctions.

YREA encourages Richmond Hill to follow through on [Goal 2](#) - promoting sustainable agriculture, supporting small-scale farmers and equal access to land, technology and markets. Although the community gardens at the Phyllis Rawlinson Park are a good first step, more can be done on this land by expanding the growing of local food and establishing an organic urban farm. Successful examples are [Montreal](#) and [Downsview](#). This would not only provide more readily accessible healthy food but would release 40% fewer GHGE, use 45% less energy than conventional agriculture & reduce the carbon footprint of distant transport by 14%. Aspects of [Goal 3](#) – good health & well-being, [Goal 8](#) - decent work and economic growth and [Goal 15](#) - life on land, food security, climate change mitigation & adaptation would also be achieved. YREA fully supports Richmond Hill's actions to convert some of the vast unused lawn areas in parks to meadows, thereby creating natural habitats and reducing biodiversity loss. A couple of pollinator patches would also be welcome at Richmond Green.

Richmond Hill must do better with sustainable urban design & development as YREA pointed out regarding a proposal for [Yonge and 16th](#). Constructing fake period structures does nothing to preserve the integrity of our heritage buildings, it in fact diminishes them. The Romanesque revival U of T building on the right of the modern Gardiner Museum with the neoclassical building on the left shows us the chronological order of built forms in Toronto. We need good design representative of the 21st century that will stand the test of time and integrates green infrastructure in subdivision and condo development. A missed opportunity in the one story Farm Boy plaza constructed a couple years ago in Ward 1 which would have been the perfect place for four or five stories of affordable apartment housing above. Single story strip plazas do not constitute sustainable urban development.



YREA looks forward to fruitful results with Richmond Hill's new partnerships.

(Please also review letter which follows, sent in support of the Richmond Hill Centre for the Arts in 2006).

Sincerely

Gloria Marsh, Executive Director
York Region Environmental Alliance

Partnering for a greener planet

www.yrea.org

September 25, 2006

The Liberal,
Letter to the Editor

RE: Glass façade key to new theatre's charm

Thank you Mayor and Council for endorsing the design of the new theatre and to the Liberal for a positive editorial on the subject. Christopher Hume, architectural critic for the Toronto Star, has criticized the new Opera House in Toronto, designed by the same architectural firm, as being too conventional. Yet here in Richmond Hill some groups are complaining it is too modern, has too much glass, and so on and so forth. They want the building to blend. With what? the silly phoney stag coach lamp posts.

In the 1950s and 1960s there was a style of contemporary furniture, which included Swedish Modern, being designed and produced throughout Europe. At the same time, if that was your taste, you could buy your imitation French or Italian provincial or American Colonial furniture instead. Museums throughout the world now have pieces of modern furniture representative of that period in their collections and not a speck of the imitation stuff.



*Modern entrance to ancient Roman coliseum,
Spoleto, Italy*

We need a building representative of this period in the history of Richmond Hill. Is it because our history doesn't go back all that far that we want to create Disneyfied streetscapes to evoke a cloying 'charm'? I visited an ancient amphitheatre in Spoleto Italy. A new entrance, adjacent to centuries old columns was constructed in a thoroughly modern style. Good design is a way of life there.

Construction of the Louvre began in the renaissance with baroque and neo-classical additions following over the centuries. Thank heavens I.M. Pei was not instructed to make his 1989 glass pyramids 'blend' with the surrounding buildings or change them to brick. His structures still cause controversy today, but there is no denying their ability to invigorate and yes, disturb our complacent sensibilities. Richmond Hill could do with a jolt of being invigorated and disturbed. It also needs informed people with architectural backgrounds to advise, not people who buy a colonial rocker from Sears and think that is heritage.

Sincerely,
Gloria Marsh