

Memorandum

October 23, 2024

MEMO TO: Mayor and Members of Council

FROM: Anthony Ierullo, Director, Economic Development and Richmond Hill Centre

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health

Recommendation:

- a) That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized, on the recommendation of the City Manager, to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health to support the advancement of the City's environmental and sustainable development strategies.

Comments:

As announced on April 26, 2024, the City of Richmond Hill was successful in attracting the head office of United Nations University – Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) to 225 East Beaver Creek Road. Richmond Hill was selected as the host City for the UNU-INWEH based on its exemplary leadership in the area of sustainability, its highly skilled and educated workforce, and the many opportunities the City offers for partnerships.

The UNU-INWEH is one of thirteen United Nations University (UNU) institutes located in 12 countries around the world that address a range of global development challenges. The UNU-INWEH specializes in water for development, working primarily with countries in the Global South and addressing water issues of global significance.

Over the past several months, the City has been working with the UNU-INWEH to support the advancement of the City's environmental and sustainable development strategies. This includes potential partnerships related to environmental education and training, recognizing excellence and supporting the implementation and monitoring of environmental plans and strategies. To further support this work, staff have also been negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the UNU-INWEH that further supports collaboration in the following areas of shared interest:

- Furthering the development, improvement, and implementation of Environment Strategies;
- Reducing the environmental footprint of the City of Richmond Hill, including efforts to reduce carbon emissions, water/energy use, and waste production;

- Scientific and technical cooperation in various areas related to environmental management and sustainable development;
- Guiding and supporting efforts to manage environmental impacts, enhance local ecosystems, and create a more sustainable community;
- Exploring opportunities create a sustainability innovation hub through close collaboration and empowerment of technology/environmental solution providers, start-ups, innovators, and entrepreneurs;
- Strengthening the City of Richmond Hill's environmental management and sustainable development expertise through training, education and capacity building initiatives;
- Improving environmental and space monitoring and data management capacity;
- Increasing the national and international visibility of the City of Richmond Hill's success in achieving environmental and sustainability goals; and
- Enhancing environmental and sustainability awareness in the City of Richmond Hill, York Region, the Province of Ontario, and Canada through environmental awareness and community engagement campaigns.

The purpose of the MOU is to establish a framework for the parties to work collaboratively to explore future partnerships within the areas of shared interest with the understanding that all future projects must be approved and funded by Council. Staff are working with the UNU-INWEH to finalize the MOU with the intent that it could be executed during a planned visit of the United Nations Under-Secretary General on November 9, 2024. It is recommended that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized, on the recommendation of the City Manager, to sign the MOU with the UNU- INWEH to support the advancement of the City's environmental and sustainable development strategies.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Ierullo".

Anthony Ierullo
Director Economic Development
and Richmond Hill Centre