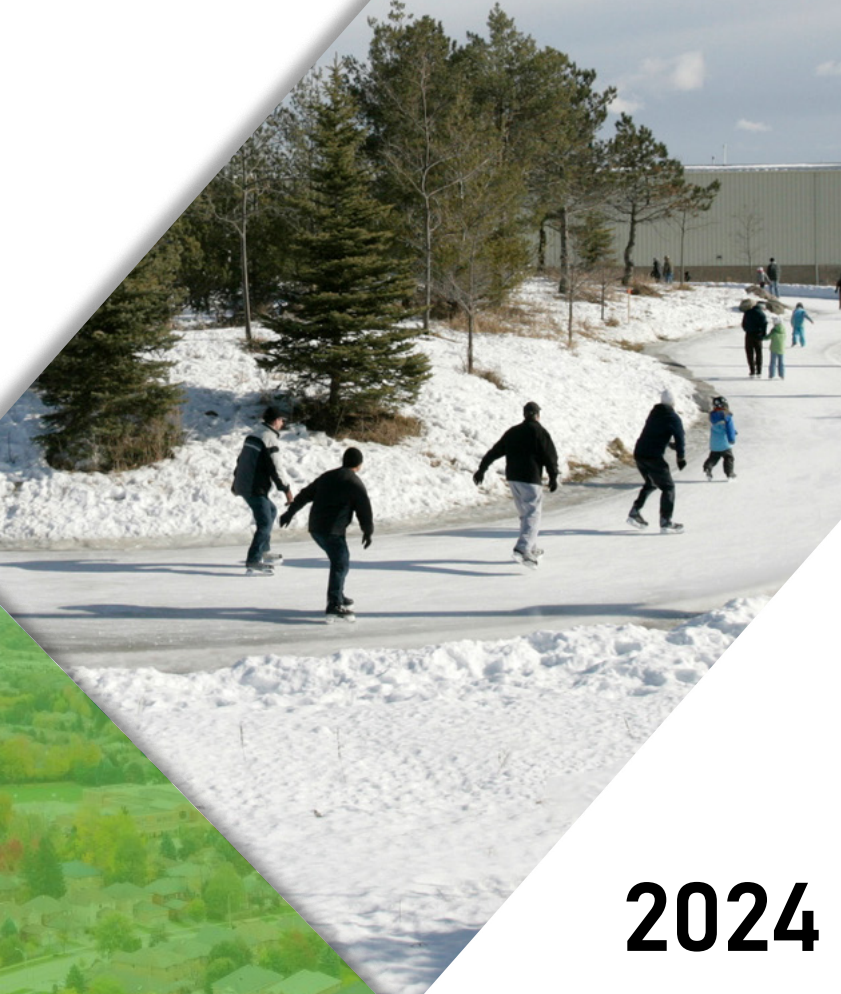




2024 - 2027  
**Strategic Plan**



# 2024 Annual Report & Implementation Plan



*Richmond* **Hill**

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

“We are gathering on lands that have been home to First Nations Peoples from time immemorial. We acknowledge that what we now call Richmond Hill is on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Mississauga and Chippewa Nations of the Williams Treaty. We also recognize that we are on part of the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee and the Huron Wendat.

We would also like to acknowledge all First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples from across North America, also known as Turtle Island, who now reside in the City of Richmond Hill. We are committed to rebuilding constructive and cooperative relationships.”

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Introduction ..... 5
- Pillar 1: Growing a Livable, Sustainable Community ... 6
- Pillar 2: Focusing on People..... 10
- Pillar 3: Strengthening our Foundations ..... 14
- Implementation Plan..... 17
- 2025..... 18
- 2026..... 20
- 2027..... 21
- Conclusion ..... 23



# MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

I am pleased to share the first annual report of the [2024-2027 Richmond Hill Strategic Plan](#), developed in consultation with residents, businesses, staff and Council. It provides a framework for decision-making and prioritization and aligns our work on Council and at the City with the aspirations of our community.

This report, like the Strategic Plan itself, is not intended to cover all the work that the City does, but rather to highlight the steps taken and choices made toward delivering on and supporting our collective aspirations.

We have made significant progress on a number of the challenges before us,

including to enable more housing for current and future residents, as well as supporting our business community and improving safety, just to name a few.

Thank you to the community for continuing to make Richmond Hill “A Vibrant and Inclusive City of Neighbours.” This vision, which we developed collaboratively through consultation that led to this Strategic Plan, really captures, for me, what makes our Richmond Hill special.



## MESSAGE FROM THE CITY MANAGER

This first annual report of the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan highlights the progress, achievements and future actions we are planning to deliver on the three Pillars of the Plan: Growing a Livable, Sustainable Community; Focusing on People and Strengthening our Foundations.

I'm proud of the work done by City staff towards these goals as we carry out our mission to work with Council and the community to make decisions and deliver quality services for today and tomorrow. I'm especially proud of the culture of continuous improvement we are building in Richmond Hill. Municipalities exist in an ever-changing environment as a result of Provincial legislation, Federal priorities, market trends, and population growth and

change, among others. Process innovation to improve the service experience and save resources allows us to reinvest in other areas of emerging importance. This is what we heard from the community through the development of this Strategic Plan, which has set us on the right course to be responsive and resilient.

In 2024, staff made considerable progress on many key projects and priorities. The success highlighted in this report is a direct result of their hard work and dedication.



## RICHMOND HILL'S 2024-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

In February 2024, Council approved Richmond Hill's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, which set out a vision for "a vibrant and inclusive City of neighbours." What does this mean? It sets out that we are, and aspire to be, vibrant and inclusive by being a welcoming community with a sense of place, thriving businesses and valued cultural and natural heritage. This vision also recognizes that we are a growing city, but we want to maintain and support a sense of connectedness and care we have for our neighbours.

The Plan is structured around three Pillars, each with priorities and priority actions to guide our work towards realizing this vision: Growing a Livable, Sustainable Community; Focusing on People; and Strengthening our Foundations.

The Strategic Plan reflects the feedback from residents, businesses, staff, and Council, gathered through an extensive engagement process in the spring and summer of 2023. Over 1,300 individuals from various stakeholder groups were engaged as part of the strategic planning process, including Council, approximately 400+ staff and 900+ community members. This work to understand our collective ambitions for Richmond Hill facilitate the alignment of the City's priorities to those of the larger community.

With one year of work under the plan now complete, this report is intended to provide an overview of the progress the City has made in 2024, as well as outline what is planned for 2025 to 2027 as we continue this journey.



# PILLAR 1

## Growing a Livable, Sustainable Community

One of Richmond Hill’s key challenges is balancing growth and development with the diverse needs of its community. The City strives to provide more housing options, improved connectivity and a healthy natural environment while protecting its unique identity as a welcoming community.

To achieve this, the City is guided by its Official Plan vision of being the centrepiece of York Region and one of the most prominent, complete communities in the Greater Toronto Area. Our priorities include increasing housing choices, enhancing transit systems and preserving natural spaces, while supporting local businesses and strengthening community connections. These efforts aim to ensure that Richmond Hill grows sustainably, offering opportunities for current and future residents while preserving its character and charm.

### PRIORITY 1:

Manage growth in a way that enables choice and connection for the city, its residents and businesses now and in the future.

- The City is taking bold actions to address the nation-wide housing crisis. Many projects and initiatives are currently underway to remove barriers and speed up the process of building more housing and increasing residential development.



Federal Housing Accelerator funding of \$7.8M in 2024 to start nine initiatives to create more housing options faster.



Approved planning applications representing 4,437 housing units, exceeding our Provincially mandated target of 2,250.



Adopted the Affordable Housing & Sustainable Design Community Improvement Plan. Incentives for affordable rental housing will be available in 2025.



Approved zoning by-law amendments that will accelerate the development process by minimizing planning approvals.

# PRIORITY 1:

## Continued

- Traffic safety is a top priority for our community. In 2024, traffic calming measures, including speed cushions, gateway features, flexible bollards, curb extensions and enhanced pavement markings and signage, were installed at 17 locations across the city. These helped improve compliance to the speed limit, reduce speeding in neighborhoods by up to 22% and decrease traffic volume by up to 17%.
- The City strives to build a complete community by fostering sustainable growth that balances residential and commercial interests, supports local businesses and enhances opportunities for residents. This helps keep the economy strong while ensuring a high quality of life for everyone.
  - The [Centre for Local Innovation and Collaboration \(CLIC\)](#) program supported 22 businesses, with one cohort completing the program in 2024 and another cohort underway. As part of the program, these businesses get a chance to pitch their innovation challenges to higher education institutions for possible further collaboration and funding. Four businesses highlighted their innovations at the Collision Conference, and new partnerships with George Brown College, Seneca College, and York University are helping businesses grow, develop and succeed.
  - In 2024, Richmond Hill's Small Business Enterprise Centre, which is supported by the Provincial Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, provided support that directly resulted in the creation of 104 jobs and 81 businesses.

### Economic Development Supports Richmond Hill Business

The City's Economic Development team helps to bring business to Richmond Hill. The City launched a Foreign Direct Investment program to attract businesses, focusing on key U.S. markets and highlight Richmond Hill at major events like the Site Selectors Guild Forum, Collision Conference and MedTech Conference. Partnerships with organizations such as York Region, Toronto Global and Invest Ontario helped raise awareness of Richmond Hill's business opportunities along with grant funding from Global Affairs Canada.



# PRIORITY 2:

## Implement environmental sustainability practices in our work in collaboration with the community, including planning for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

- The City's [Corporate Energy Plan](#) has been updated to reflect the target of net zero carbon emission by 2050 for City facilities and 85 energy conservation and carbon reduction measures will be implemented over the next five years as part of the Plan.
- Mandatory [Bird-Safe Design Standards](#) were established for developers and builders to follow when designing new buildings in Richmond Hill to protect birds from window collisions.
- The City signed a [Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health \(UNU-INWEH\)](#), which relocated to Richmond Hill in 2024. This partnership will help further the UN Sustainable Development Goals in Richmond Hill and York Region, specifically in relation to the City's environmental footprint, including efforts to reduce carbon emissions, water/energy use and waste production.

# PRIORITY 3:

## Make decisions that meet the needs of today's residents without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.



In 2024, 450 trees were planted at the Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory (RHDDO) Park as part of the City's long-term ecological restoration efforts. Over 12,067 trees were planted in Richmond Hill overall in 2024.



The City initiated a review of its Tree By-law to align with current legislation and policies, ensuring stronger protection for Richmond Hill's tree canopy and urban forest.



The City designated 19 properties as having cultural heritage significance in Richmond Hill in 2024, helping to enable an understanding of the City's past as we prepare for the future.



# PILLAR 2

## Focusing on People

An important part of the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan is about focusing on people: those who live and work in Richmond Hill and the quality of their experience of the city, as well as the people that make up the City’s workforce, who provide the expertise and skills to ensure service delivery and continuity in an ever-changing municipal environment.

The priorities and priority actions under this Pillar are about quality programming and events that promote connection and resilience, building a workforce for tomorrow, meaningful community engagement, inclusion and working toward Truth and Reconciliation with the city’s First Nations Treaty Partners and Indigenous Peoples.



## PRIORITY 1:

Engage the community, stakeholders and City staff to support informed participation and to ensure that all voices can contribute toward effective decision-making.

- Richmond Hill continues to engage the community on important issues for the city, including traffic and pedestrian safety, increasing housing options, parks design and recreation opportunities.
- In 2024, the City undertook several actions to support Truth and Reconciliation and increase awareness of Richmond Hill’s Treaty Partners:
  - After the election of Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation’s (MCFN) new Chief, Mayor West attended their offices to meet Ogiima Kwe, Chief Claire Sault and bring official greetings from the City.
  - Richmond Hill sent a delegation to the opening ceremony for the restored historic MCFN Council House.
  - The City held a ceremony to raise the “Every Child Matters” flag for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, inviting representatives from MCFN and Odeiwin, a local Indigenous non-profit organization, to share their experiences.

**8,000+**  
participants in  
City’s engagement  
activities.



### Truth and Reconciliation - Building Relationships with Treaty Partners

Richmond Hill is located on lands covered by Treaty 13 (the Toronto Purchase) and the Williams Treaties.

In 2024, the City of Richmond Hill invited the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN), to work with us to promote greater awareness of the history of the area we now live. This included hosting the MCFN exhibit “Outcome of the War of 1812: First Nations Betrayed” at the Heritage Centre leading up to the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30. The exhibit explores the long-term consequences of the war, including the impact on MCFN in Southern Ontario. According to a survey, 100% of attendees reported that they had a greater understanding about the city’s Treaty Partners.

Mayor West talks with Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation Chief Claire Sault.

## PRIORITY 2:

Support Richmond Hill's unique character and sense of community through programs, services, and events.

- In 2024, the City offered a total of 9,668 recreation and culture programs totalling 95,195 hours of program time, involving 69,894 participants with an overall 2024 fill rate of 83%.
- The City hosted over 25 events, including Moonlight Movies, Canada Day, tree planting events and the Seniors' Fair, which in total drew over 75,000 attendees.
- The Community and Cultural Grant Program awarded funding to 20 projects in 2024, providing \$59,564 of support to community and cultural organizations and individual artists whose projects support a more vibrant Richmond Hill.

# 75,000+

attendees at City Events in 2024



### Community and Cultural Grant Program Dance Together Festival York Region 2024

Dance Together Festival York Region 2024 offered a series of free community dance workshops, performances and social dance events that celebrate positive and accessible dance experiences. In Richmond Hill, workshops were held in the Fall at the Richmond Hill Public Library as a part of Ontario Culture Days. This festival invited residents from all backgrounds to participate in diverse dance forms, connect with each other, discover different cultural traditions and build community bonds.

Photo credit: Mirna Chacin and @dancetogetherproject



## PRIORITY 3:

Build a workforce for tomorrow to ensure that expertise and continuity is in place to deliver on the city's aspirations for the future.

- In 2024, 71% of the City's people leaders attended sessions about Belonging, an important part of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts, which highlighted ways to support retention and corporate culture. There was an 85% satisfaction rate among those that attended the sessions.
- Supporting the City's learning on our Treaty Partners, Council and staff participated in a session from Darin Wybenga, Traditional Knowledge and Land Use Coordinator of MCFN on the history of Indigenous Peoples in Southern Ontario.
- Collecting and using data to make decisions is an important goal for the City in the coming years. To this end 50 staff from across the organizations were provided training on data literacy.
- To support respectful and constructive Council-Staff relations, Council approved a new [Council-Staff Relations Policy](#) in March. In addition, the City Clerk updated the Staff Report template to improve how staff provide information for Council to make decisions.



Mayor West and staff receive the Ontario Nature Award



# PILLAR 3

## Strengthening our Foundations

The City of Richmond Hill aims to continue strengthening its foundations by delivering value, accountability and transparency to residents and stakeholders, while addressing the social, economic and environmental needs of the community both today and in the future. Although municipalities, including Richmond Hill, face various constraints (financial and otherwise) in meeting the evolving needs of their communities, Council and City staff remain committed to strengthening our foundations as a local government, decision-maker, and service provider.

By harnessing the power of data, fostering a culture of continuous improvement, and focusing on quality customer service, Richmond Hill strives to be more responsive to the community's needs, support innovation, and make responsible, evidence-based, and data-driven decisions.



### PRIORITY 1:

Make decisions that are evidence-based and data-driven to enable the City's long term financial sustainability, as well as social, environmental, and economic sustainability.

- Council approved Richmond Hill's 2024 Corporate Asset Management Plan, which provides a comprehensive view of the City's assets' value and condition and reinforces our commitment to sustainable asset stewardship. The plan incorporates measures and metrics such as the value of our assets, their condition, lifecycle maintenance and replacement costs, risk prioritization and return on investment, which together, will support the City in continuing to make informed, data-driven decisions about how to invest, renew and manage its infrastructure and assets.
- To further advance sustainable financial decision-making, Richmond Hill Council adopted the Development Charges Background Study, the Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Financial Plans which provided recommendations to inform the 2025 Capital Budget and Forecast. The City will continue to implement a comprehensive Financial Sustainability Strategy in 2025 with a focus on other key areas including Tax Supported Capital to ensure fiscal responsibility in a sustainable and community focused manner.

**\$5,066,677**  
in grant funding secured

**30**  
applications for funding submitted

**80%**  
success rate of grant applications



The City and contractors complete a site visit with Parks Canada as part of their support for repairs to the David Dunlap Observatory through the National Cost Sharing Program for Heritage Places. Photo courtesy of Parks Canada.

- The City secured \$599,472 in funding from private sources, including local businesses through advertising agreements and sponsorships.
- In 2024, Richmond Hill was awarded over \$5 million in grant funding, including from the Federal and Provincial governments to reduce the costs of delivering City infrastructure and initiatives.



## PRIORITY 2:

Focus on quality customer service and a continuous improvement mindset to support innovation and be responsive to residents, stakeholders, businesses, the private sector, and colleagues.

- Richmond Hill improved the water billing experience for residents through the launch of a new online Water Portal in 2024. The portal provides residents a convenient way to manage their water bills, including signing up for e-billing to go paperless/receive bills by email, view current bills and past bills, and access to credit card payment. So far 5,500 residents have signed up on the portal, reducing the City's costs for billing by \$20,000.



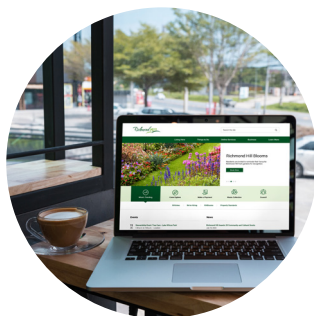
- Recognizing that Community Standards infractions can happen outside of the City's regular business hours, By-law Services enhanced its protocols to provide 24-hour service for resident complaints. Between March and September 2024, the City received 414 after-hours complaints, of which 73% were attended to in one hour or less.

- To help continue building a culture of continuous improvement, with a renewed focus on delivering quality customer experiences, Richmond Hill Council approved the City's first Service Charter in 2024. The Charter serves as a formal agreement outlining the mutual expectations, responsibilities and commitments between the City and the community to ensure accountability and maintain high-quality service.



- The City advanced several service-based improvements to the development review process in 2024, which together, aim to increase consistency, timeliness, and ease for applicants. One of the higher profile improvements included digitizing all *Planning Act* applications for online service.

- Richmond Hill launched a new homepage on its [website](#) in 2024 to improve the user experience through better navigation, enhanced accessibility and a new mobile experience.



# Strategic Plan Implementation Plan for 2025-2027

With the first year of the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan complete, the City is looking ahead to how we will continue to implement its Pillars, Priorities and Priority Actions. The following is an overview of projects, programs and activities that are planned for 2025-2027 to align the City's work to the Strategic Plan.

# WHAT WE ARE PLANNING IN 2025...

## Pillar 1: Growing a Livable, Sustainable Community

Launching two incentive programs for builders, funded by the Federal Housing Accelerator Fund: the **Community Improvement Plan for Affordable and Sustainable Housing** and the **Infrastructure Acceleration Initiative**.

The City will continue to implement the **Traffic Safety and Operations Strategy** and monitor the reduction in speeding, to ensure safety on and around our roads for both motorists and pedestrians.

With work already underway in 2024, an **Affordable Housing Concierge program** will be launched officially in 2025. This program will create a single point-of-contact to streamline and expedite approvals.

The City anticipates that the **Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan** will come into effect in 2025. It will support the development of a complete community with infrastructure and amenities to support the anticipated growth at Richmond Hill Centre, including the planned **Yonge North Subway Extension**.

Further north on Yonge Street, the concept plan for the **new park at the southwest corner of Yonge Street and Major Mackenzie Drive West** will be completed in 2025.

To support sustainable transportation, the City will continue working on two important studies to guide the future of public and private development: the **Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy** and the **Micromobility Strategy**.



## Pillar 2: Focusing on People

In 2025, the City will finalize a **Festivals and Events Strategy** which will guide the City's continuing support for these community-building and place-making initiatives. The City is also preparing to open a new **Cultural Centre at the historic Old Post Office Building** in the Village Core.

As part of our commitment to raise awareness of Richmond Hill's history, the City will be unveiling park signage to **recognize the Humber, Rouge and Don River system waterways using First Nations Languages**.

The City's People and Culture Division will be leading a **Recruitment Strategy**, creating and implementing a **New Leaders Program** to provide essential skills to newly promoted staff and supporting renewed efforts for **Succession Planning** in 2025. Part of this work will be reflecting the feedback gathered through a staff survey on **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging**.



## Pillar 3: Strengthening our Foundations

Building on the success of the launch of the Water Portal in 2024, the City plans to launch the **Property Tax Portal** in 2025, allowing residents to access their property tax information online, at their convenience. Further adding to services already online, the City is preparing an **online viewer and interactive map with the status of development planning applications** on the City's website to allow residents to access information about what is happening in their neighbourhood.

Residents and customers will continue to be the focus of our work in 2025, as we continue to **expand our Administrative Monetary Penalties** program and enact a new **Animal Services and Responsible Pet Ownership By-law**.

To further the City's continuous improvement efforts the City Manager has set a goal of **finding up to \$1 million of improvements through streamlined services, increased revenue and time and cost avoidance**. This is part of the City's efforts to deliver current and new service levels with the least impact on property taxes, despite constraints such as inflation, climate change and Provincially-mandated requirements.



# 2026

Looking ahead to 2026, the City plans to undertake or seek Council approval for a number of key initiatives that will help deliver on the Pillars of the Strategic Plan, including:

- The opening of the **new pedestrian and cycling bridge at the Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory** (a project supported by the Federal government's Active Transportation Fund).
- As 2026 is the final year for implementing the initiatives under the federal **Housing Accelerator Fund**, the City plans to realize a substantial number of residential units pending uptake from the development industry.
- Implementation of **automatic speed enforcement (ASE)** to promote traffic safety.
- The City will be completing a **Natural Area Inventory**, to help identify and preserve the City's natural assets and inform a Natural Heritage Prioritization Strategy.
- The preparation and delivery of the **2026 Municipal Election** to ensure that the residents of Richmond Hill can have trust and confidence in their local democracy.
- In support of building a workforce for tomorrow, the City's People and Culture Division will deliver an **Emerging Leaders Program** to work with high-potential future leaders in the organization as well as developing an **Employee Retention Strategy**.
- To support data-driven decision making and continuous improvement, the City will undertake several **LEAN projects and service reviews**, as well as conducting an annual review of our **Asset Management Plan** and reporting on progress to Council, reviewing our **Business Licensing Programs** and beginning to implement **Multi-Year Budgeting**.



# 2027

In the final year of the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, the City has plans on several fronts to enable the vision and goals of the Plan, including:

- Presentation of the City's updated **Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Master Plans** to Council for approval, enabling sustainable and effective resource planning.
- The City will **update its Community Benefits Charges By-law** to recover capital costs of facilities, services and matters required because of development or redevelopment.
- An update to the **Sustainability Metrics Program**. This is a scoring system providing green development standards that Richmond Hill uses to quantify and evaluate the sustainability performance of new developments and promote sustainable design targets that go beyond Provincial requirements.
- Following the technical work completed in 2026, the City will develop a **Natural Heritage Prioritization Strategy** to help preserve our natural heritage **for generations to come**.
- The **Tennis and Pickleball Strategy** will be completed and will inform how the City will support these community recreation activities for the future.
- Work with the newly elected Richmond Hill Council on **strategic planning and prioritization for the 2026-2030 term**.





## CONCLUSION

In the first full year of the implementation of the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, the City has completed a number of projects and furthered our efforts to enable the priorities of the community.

The City remains committed to accountability and transparency through annual reporting of our progress over the next few years as we work toward becoming an even more vibrant and inclusive city of neighbours.

To review the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan itself, and to find annual reports on progress and receive updates, visit [RichmondHill.ca/StrategicPlan](https://RichmondHill.ca/StrategicPlan).



# [RichmondHill.ca/StrategicPlan](https://RichmondHill.ca/StrategicPlan)

