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April 15.2025

**To:**  
Mayor and Members of Council  
City of Richmond Hill  
225 East Beaver Creek Road  
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 3P4

**Subject: Objection to Proposed Amendment to the Tree Preservation Bylaw**

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

On behalf of Greenpark Group, a long-standing home builder with active development interests in the City of Richmond Hill, we are writing to formally express our concerns regarding the proposed amendment to the City's Tree Preservation Bylaw.

While we fully support the City's commitment to protecting its urban canopy, the current form of the proposed amendment—particularly its expanded application to privately owned trees—raises several significant concerns for both homeowners and developers.

Specifically, the requirement to obtain a permit for the removal of any tree above a relatively modest diameter threshold (such as 15 cm DBH) on private residential/development lots is problematic. This low threshold effectively subjects a wide variety of young, non-significant trees to regulation, creating unnecessary administrative burden without a proportional ecological benefit. In our experience, this kind of broad application will create delays, increase costs, and discourage proactive planting efforts by residents and developers alike.

Perhaps most concerning is the unintended message this sends to homeowners: that planting a tree on private property could result in future restrictions and red tape. If property owners feel that trees on their land will become regulated assets that cannot be removed or managed without municipal involvement, they may choose not to plant them at all. For a city striving to grow and protect its canopy, this is counterproductive.

We also believe it is important to consider the actual impact of private tree removals governed under the existing bylaw. How many residents currently apply to remove a private tree, and does that number represent a meaningful threat to the overall health of Richmond Hill's urban canopy? If the volume of applications is relatively low and the affected trees are not of significant ecological value, then the regulation of private tree removals may have only a minimal effect on canopy coverage across the municipality. In that case, removing or scaling back this portion of

the bylaw could be a reasonable adjustment—one that would reduce unnecessary administrative burden without producing any notable environmental consequence.

We recognize that choosing not to apply the bylaw to private trees is a difficult decision for Council, particularly given the heightened public concern around environmental sustainability and climate resilience. We understand that some residents may view such a decision as the City stepping back from its environmental responsibilities. However, this is not a matter of insensitivity—it is a matter of practicality, balance, and trust. Respecting the rights of private property owners does not mean disregarding the importance of tree preservation; rather, it means finding smarter, more collaborative ways to achieve shared goals without overregulation. A bylaw that empowers and encourages voluntary planting and stewardship—rather than imposing blanket restrictions—will likely result in greater community participation and a healthier urban canopy in the long run.

Greenpark Group remains committed to responsible building practices that align with municipal sustainability goals. We respectfully urge Council to reconsider the scope of the proposed amendment and engage further with stakeholders, including the development industry, to refine the bylaw in a way that is effective, equitable, and encourages genuine participation in tree preservation efforts.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,  
**Joe Di Giuseppe**  
**Development Manager**  
**Greenpark Group**