



Staff Report for Council Public Meeting

Date of Meeting: May 27, 2025

Report Number: SRCM.25.07

Department: Office of the City Manager

Division: Economic Development and Richmond Hill Centre

Subject: SRCM.25.07 – Request for Comments Draft
Richmond Hill Centre Zoning By-law
Amendment
File MZBA-25-0001

Purpose:

To request comments on the City-initiated draft Zoning By-law Amendment for Richmond Hill Centre.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That staff report SRCM.25.07 with respect to the Richmond Hill Centre Zoning By-law Amendment be received for information and that all comments be referred back to staff.

Contact Person(s):

- Clement Chong, Project Manager, ext.2515
- Daniel Olding, Senior Manager Richmond Hill Centre Subway, ext. 5505
- Anthony Ierullo, Director Economic Development and Richmond Hill Centre, ext. 6515

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Anthony Ierullo, Director Economic Development and Richmond Hill Centre

Approved by: Darlene Joslin, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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Location Map:

Below is a map displaying the subject lands. Should you require an alternative format, please call the person listed as the “Contact Person” above.



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Key Messages:

- The Planning Act requires that no later than three years after the approval a Secondary Plan, Council must pass a Zoning By-law to support its implementation.
- As required under the Planning Act, the proposed Richmond Hill Centre (“RHC”) Zoning By-law Amendment includes permitted uses, restrictions and development standards, which implement the policies of the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan.
- The RHC Zoning By-law Amendment is also one of the City’s Housing Accelerator Fund commitments and must be completed within specified timeframes, in order for the City to remain eligible to receive funding disbursements.
- The City is currently seeking feedback on the proposed RHC Zoning By-law Amendment with the intent that it will be brought forward to Council for approval in September 2025.

Background:

In November 2023, the City was awarded over \$31 million of Housing Accelerator Fund (“HAF”) funding by the federal government to eliminate barriers to building housing. Richmond Hill Centre (“RHC”) was identified as a key strategic growth area in the City’s HAF Action Plan, which encourages the creation of more density and affordable housing. The RHC Zoning By-law Amendment is one of the City’s Housing Accelerator Fund commitments and must be completed within specified timeframes, in order for the City to remain eligible to receive funding disbursements.

On February 19, 2025, Staff Report SRCM.25.04 initiated the RHC Zoning By-law Amendment process to implement the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan (“RHCSPP”), help accelerate key infrastructure and streamline development. The City is committed to advancing the RHC Zoning Bylaw Amendment process to:

- implement the RHCSPP vision;
- provide an opportunity for public consultation and engagement with the community and stakeholders; and,
- to fulfill the City’s obligations under the HAF program.

The Planning Act also requires that no later than three years after the approval of the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan, Council must pass an implementing Zoning By-law to establish land use zones that will permit the types of uses and establish appropriate development standards to implement the Secondary Plan. The purpose of this report is to seek comments from Council and the public with respect to the proposed RHC Zoning By-law Amendment in accordance with the *Planning Act*.

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Consultation and Engagement

The Consultation and Engagement Plan for the RHC Zoning By-law Amendment includes identifying and notifying stakeholders that will be impacted, hosting an open house, arranging meetings involving key stakeholders, and holding a statutory Council Public Meeting. To date, the City has hosted one Public Open House on May 20, 2025 to provide information to the public regarding the draft RHC Zoning By-law Amendment. Further follow up meetings with key stakeholders will be held after the Council Public Meeting and prior to a final draft of the by-law being brought forward in September for Council approval.

Discussion:

Legislative and Policy Regime

The *Provincial Planning Statement (2024)* (“PPS”) establishes a planning policy framework and provides tools that enable municipalities to plan for and support development. Pursuant to Section 2.1 of the PPS, planning authorities should support the achievement of communities by accommodating a range and mix of land uses, housing and transportation options, public service facilities, institutional uses, recreational, park and open space uses, among other uses necessary to meet the long-term needs of a municipality. Growth and development shall be directed to strategic growth areas, including nodes, corridors and other areas designated by municipalities for accommodating intensification and higher-density mixed-uses. All decisions affecting planning matters shall be consistent with the minimum standards set out in the PPS. Furthermore, planning authorities shall keep their zoning by-laws up to date with their official plans and the Provincial Planning Statement with respect to establishing permitted land uses, minimum density, height and other development standards to govern growth and development.

York Region Official Plan (2022)

The York Region Official Plan (“ROP”) was approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in November 2022 and provides direction for growth and development across York Region for a planning horizon to the year 2051. In addition, the policies of the ROP emphasize the importance of design excellence and the application of best practices and guidelines for transit-supportive development. Notwithstanding the foregoing and in accordance with Bill 185, Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, effective July 1, 2024, York Region no longer has planning responsibilities under the Planning Act and therefore is no longer the approval authority for the City’s Official Plan or its amendments. Accordingly, the ROP is now deemed to be an Official Plan of the City of Richmond Hill.

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The ROP establishes an urban structure for the region, including Regional Centres and Corridors, Major Transit Station Areas (“MTSAs”) and Local Centres, among other areas of intensification to support the development of sustainable, compact and transit supportive communities. In support of achieving complete communities, the ROP also identifies the importance of providing for a mix and range of housing options that are suitable for all ages, household sizes and abilities.

Richmond Hill Centre (“RHC”) is identified as part of a Regional Centre (Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Centre) and is located on two MTSAs (Richmond Hill Centre Subway Station and Bantry-Scott BRT Station). The Regional Centres have been targeted for the greatest mix of development in the region and highest densities. Similarly, the most intensive uses and widest range of uses within the Regional Corridors should be directed to MTSAs.

City of Richmond Hill Official Plan

The policies of the City of Richmond Hill Official Plan (“RHOP”) reflect the planning direction set out by provincial and regional planning policy that were in force at the time of its approval to manage growth and development within the City. The RHOP sets a spatial framework for the City, wherein the majority of intensification and growth and widest range of uses shall be directed to the City’s Centres and Corridors. The RHOP identifies an intensification hierarchy with respect to the prioritization for intensification and growth, in the following order:

1. Richmond Hill Centre;
2. Key Development Areas (KDAs) and Regional Corridors;
3. Local Centres;
4. Local Development Areas (LDAs) and Corridors; and,
5. Neighbourhoods.

RHC is the primary intensification area of the City and will provide the greatest range of uses in a mixed use format and accommodate the highest level of intensification in the City.

The Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan (“RHCSP”) provides the development framework for a new transit-oriented urban community and employment hub built around two planned subway stations in the Richmond Hill Centre, High Tech Station and Bridge Station. The RHCSP was adopted by City Council on May 10, 2023, and approved by York Region on October 11, 2023. Following the resolution of RHCSP appeals in late 2024, the preparation of the Richmond Hill Centre Zoning By-law Amendment is currently underway to implement the RHCSP policies.

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Richmond Hill Centre and Relationships to Other City Initiatives

The Richmond Hill Centre Zoning By-law Amendment has relationships to other municipal projects including the Yonge North Subway Extension (“YNSE”), the Federal Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Action Plan and the Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw (“CZBL”).

The YNSE will extend TTC Line 1 subway service approximately eight kilometres from Finch Station in Toronto to Richmond Hill. YNSE includes five new stations, including two in Richmond Hill. Project design requirements to implement the delivery of transit infrastructure have yet to be finalized by Metrolinx. A separate Zoning By-law amendment for the YNSE transit corridor within Richmond Hill will be advanced at a future date.

As previously mentioned, the RHC Zoning Bylaw Amendment forms part of the City’s HAF Action Plan. Zoning standards specific to RHC will support transit-oriented development, allow increased density around transit stations and enable long-term affordable housing.

The CZBL review is currently underway to consolidate and update the City’s parent Zoning By-laws into one user-friendly document that conforms with and implements the City’s Official Plan. On March 26, 2025, the Centres and Corridors component of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law was approved by Council. At that time, zoning for the RHC was excluded from the CZBL scope of work and has proceeded separately, in accordance with HAF timing commitments. Therefore, the proposed RHC Zoning By-law will be an amendment to the recently approved CZBL 30-25. While RHC requires some specific development zoning standards, the RHC Zoning By-law Amendment was closely coordinated with the CZBL project to ensure consistency.

Overview of Richmond Hill Centre Zoning By-law Amendment

The proposed draft RHC Zoning By-law Amendment, as outlined in Attachments 1 to 4, specifically includes permitted uses, restrictions and development standards which implement the policies of the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan (“RHCSPP”). The proposed draft amendment establishes permissions for a range of medium and high density residential, commercial, office, retail, institutional and community uses as well as parks and open spaces to support a planned mixed-use, compact and transit-oriented community.

The RHC Zoning By-law Amendment was drafted to amend and fit seamlessly into the Comprehensive Zoning By-law and will govern the form, location, and scale of development and uses as well as technical matters essential to the implementation of the RHCSPP. The draft Zoning By-law Amendment specifically includes permitted uses, restrictions and development standards, which implement the policies of the RHCSPP.

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The following provides an outline of the regulations contained within the proposed RHC Zoning By-law Amendment:

- Administration;
- Establishment of RHC Zones and holding (H) provisions;
- Regulations Applicable to RHC Zones and holding (H) provisions;
- Zoning Schedules (A1);
- Density Schedules (B1); and,
- Height Schedules (C1).

Development Standards

The proposed draft RHC Zoning By-law Amendment provides the locational criteria governing where specific uses, built forms and activities in the RHC including but not limited to community uses and specific residential typologies; regulations applicable to specific land uses such as live-work units and home occupations. Also included are development standards related to yards, lot coverage, lot frontage and area, minimum and maximum building heights, minimum and maximum site density, maximum podium heights, angular plane requirements, step-back provisions, and floor plate maximums.

Density

The proposed draft RHC Zoning By-law Amendment establishes permissions for a wide range of medium and high density residential, commercial, office, retail, institutional, community uses as well as parks and open spaces to support the planned mixed-use, compact and transit-oriented character of Richmond Hill Centre. The draft RHC Zoning By-law Amendment defines the zones to align with the uses contemplated within the RHCSP. Applicable maximum and minimum densities are reflected within the RHC Zoning By-law Amendment in accordance with the RHCSP.

To further support appropriate built form in the RHC, the RHCSP provides flexibility for site-specific densities to exceed the maximum density prescribed in the draft RHC Zoning By-law Amendment, when it can be demonstrated that the average densities outlined in the RHCSP can be met, to the City's satisfaction. Subject to a development proposal demonstrating conformity with policy 10.3.6.1 of the RHCSP, this policy will be administered through the Minor Zoning Bylaw Amendment process.

Angular Plane

The proposed RHC Zoning By-law Amendment sets out development standards governing minimum and maximum heights and densities, which generally direct the greatest intensification away from a neighbourhood designation. These areas represent an important transition from the highest and densest development expected in the interior of the RHC. This includes angular plane requirements in locations where properties in RHC abut an existing low rise residential area. Transition will be provided

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through stepped building heights, use of setbacks or step-backs and separation distances.

The RHCSP also provides flexibility for minor projections into the angular plane, when it can be demonstrated that the impacts of the building, including shadows, wind, light, view, and privacy, can be addressed to the City's satisfaction. Subject to a development proposal demonstrating conformity with the performance criteria in policy 10.3.4.5 of the RHCSP, this policy will be administered through the Minor Zoning Bylaw Amendment process.

Eleanor Circle

The lands on Eleanor Circle that are subject to policy 10.9.3 of the RHCSP will be under a holding (H) provision and subject to land assembly criteria to ensure the eventual redevelopment of the area will be done in a coordinated manner. The RHC Zoning Bylaw Amendment will continue to permit single detached dwellings until the subject properties are assembled to create a single development block. If the conditions in the proposed RHC Zoning By-law Amendment are met, the holding (H) provision may be removed and lands can be redeveloped in accordance with the prescribed regulations.

Richmond Hill Centre Areas Excluded from By-law

There are four properties in RHC that relate to either a recent Ontario Land Tribunal decision or an active development application. The City intends to recognize these existing or pending permissions and has excluded these properties from the proposed RHC Zoning By-law Amendment. These properties are shown on Attachment 5.

In addition, the High Tech Enhanced Ministerial Zoning Order (Ontario Regulation 344/22) ("EMZO") is also identified on Attachment 5. The regulations of the EMZO take precedence over municipal zoning by-laws, and therefore these lands have also been excluded from the Richmond Hill Centre Zoning By-law Amendment. However, in areas where the EMZO is silent, the policies of the RHCSP may continue to apply at the site plan stage.

An upcoming batch of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law ("CZBL") update will introduce City-wide zoning for the Greenway (including woodlands), Utility Corridor and the Canadian National Railway. As such, these lands have been excluded from the draft RHC Zoning By-law Amendment, as shown on Attachment 5.

Schedules and Overlays

The proposed draft RHC Zoning By-law Amendment includes relevant schedules to complement and support the provisions and regulations of the By-law. The proposed schedules will be added to, and form part of, the CZBL in order to identify the locations of the applicable zones, minimum and maximum densities and building heights, as well as parking areas. Each schedule forms an operable component of the CZBL and is

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intended to be read in conjunction with the associated regulation(s), provision(s) and development standard(s) in the by-law.

Summary and Next Steps:

The purpose of this report is to seek comments from Council and members of the public with respect to the proposed draft RHC Zoning By-law Amendment. Staff intend to consider the comments and feedback received from Council and the public and will finalize the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment for Council consideration in September 2025. The key milestones and timelines for the RHC Zoning Bylaw Amendment project are outlined in the Table 1 below:

Table 1: Richmond Hill Centre Zoning By-law Amendment Workplan

Project Phase	Milestone	Date
Phase 1	Committee of the Whole Report initiation RHCSP Zoning By-law Amendment	Completed on February 19, 2025
Phase 2	Background Review and Draft By-law	Completed between February to April 2025
Phase 3	Proposed By-law, Public Open House (POH) and Council Public Meeting (CPM)	Completed on May 20, 2025 (POH) and May 27, 2025 (CPM)
Phase 4	Council Approval	Targeted completion in September 2025

Financial Implications:

In accordance with the Federal Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Agreement, the City must comply with all terms and conditions, including completing deliverables within specified timeframes, in order to remain eligible to receive funding disbursements. The City was awarded \$31 million of HAF Funding to be distributed over the period of four years, for multiple initiatives, of which a portion was allocated to advancing the

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preparation and adoption of the Richmond Hill Centre Zoning By-law Amendment, including offsetting staff costs and consultants as necessary. This report is part of the City's compliance with the commitments made for HAF Funding with respect to the Richmond Hill Centre initiative.

Relationship to Strategic Plan 2024-2027:

The launch of the Richmond Hill Centre Zoning By-law Amendment as a Federal Housing Accelerator Fund initiative supports **Pillar 1, Growing a Livable, Sustainable Community**, and specifically supports, **Priority 1, Managing growth in a way that enables choice and connection for the city, its residents and businesses now and in the future.**

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

- Attachment 1, Draft Richmond Hill Centre Zoning By-law Amendment XX-25
- Attachment 2, Draft Schedule A1 (Zone)
- Attachment 3, Draft Schedule B1 (Density)
- Attachment 4, Draft Schedule C1 (Height)
- Attachment 5, Richmond Hill Centre Areas Excluded from By-law

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCM.25.07 – Request for Comments Draft Richmond Hill Centre Zoning By-law Amendment File MZBA-25-0001.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- SRCM.25.07 – Draft RHC ZBLA - ATTACHMENT 1 - Draft RHC Zoning By-law.docx- SRCM.25.07 – Draft RHC ZBLA - ATTACHMENT 2 - Schedule A1 (Zone).docx- SRCM.25.07 – Draft RHC ZBLA - ATTACHMENT 3 - Schedule B1 (Density).docx- SRCM.25.07 – Draft RHC ZBLA - ATTACHMENT 4 - Schedule C1 (Height).docx- SRCM.25.07 – Draft RHC ZBLA - ATTACHMENT 5 - RHC Areas Excluded from By-law.docx
Final Approval Date:	May 8, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Anthony Ierullo - May 7, 2025 - 7:11 PM

Darlene Joslin - May 8, 2025 - 9:38 AM