

December 8, 2025

Mayor David West
City of Richmond Hill
225 East Beaver Creek Road
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 3P4

Re: Recommendations for the 2026 Richmond Hill Budget

Dear Mayor West and Members of Richmond Hill Council,

On behalf of the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board (TRREB), representing more than 70,000 REALTOR® members serving the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), we are pleased to submit the following comments on the City's proposed 2026 budget. Our members support thousands home buyers, sellers, landlords and renters every year in Richmond Hill and they are deeply connected to the community you serve.

The 2026 Richmond Hill Budget comes during a period of housing supply and affordability challenges across the GTA driven by high construction costs, government taxes and red tape. As a result, home prices are out of reach for many buyers and renters, and thousands of jobs in the construction sector are at risk.

TRREB applauds the City's strategic focus on housing supply, infrastructure readiness, and economic competitiveness within the draft budget. Specifically, we welcome all efforts to expand new housing development and initiatives to expedite the approval process, including those tied to the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) agreement and zoning changes for missing-middle and transit-oriented projects. These initiatives are tangible steps toward meeting current housing targets and addressing affordability challenges.

TRREB urges strong action in the 2026 Richmond Hill Budget to address the housing affordability and supply crisis. TRREB recommends that the Town focus on two steps. First, Richmond Hill should cut and simplify development charges and second, create the conditions to get more attainable homes built faster by speeding up approvals, investing in infrastructure, and quickly unlocking lands for development. These measures will help Richmond Hill deliver more affordable options for families and individuals.

Lower Development Charges (DCs) to Boost Supply

High municipal and regional development charges, combined with other government fees, add tens of thousands of dollars to the cost of every new home in Richmond Hill, impacting both the construction industry's ability to build homes and young individuals and families' ability to afford them. Development charges (DCs) are one of the largest taxes imposed by local governments on a new home. In Richmond Hill, they represent over \$145,000 in additional costs that a developer

must pay when they receive permits for construction. In total, research from the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA) estimates that approximately 35 per cent of a final cost of a home in the GTA is made up of government taxes and fees. While DCs are an important source of funding for growth-related infrastructure, escalating DCs risk pricing out ground-related and multi-residential projects.

To help improve housing affordability and get more homes built faster, TRREB recommends taking steps to reduce DCs on new homes in Richmond Hill. Reductions and deferrals for first time-homebuyers are essential to maintaining attainable pathways into homeownership for young families. Extending this, while ensuring it is fully offset by contributions from senior levels of government, will provide a fiscally responsible mechanism for supporting new entrants to the market without imposing additional burdens on local taxpayers.

This measure also aligns with current housing objectives, supports continued market activity, and sustains a predictable environment for builders and buyers. Through these efforts, the City can facilitate greater housing mobility, stimulate construction of new units, and safeguard affordability. In addition, these incentives for builders and buyers will increase demand, enabling Richmond Hill to collect additional revenue.

Second, Richmond Hill should explore incentives for builders to construct larger, family-oriented units (2+ bedrooms). This would fulfill council's stated goal of delivering homes that meet the needs of growing households.

An incentive could involve a DC-based solution or other measures that will expand the variety of housing options for residents, ensuring that residents are able to access larger sized units. This shift would support Richmond Hill's long-term planning objectives, enhance affordability by increasing the supply of appropriately sized housing, and more accurately reflect the principles of fairness, proportionality, and growth.

Unlocking Housing Potential Through Transit and Transportation Investments

Building more homes near transit infrastructure such as Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) and along key transit routes is smart planning. It allows people to reduce their dependence on cars, eliminates the need for large numbers of parking spaces and provides an incentive to build more units at a greater density. This strategy will help Richmond Hill get closer to achieving its housing targets, lower the costs of new homes and reduce traffic congestion and emissions.

TRREB supports incentives for mixed-use projects near transit hubs, and streamlining housing approvals to ensure Richmond Hill's transit investments directly lower housing costs and boost market activity amid York Region's projected population growth to 1.8 million by 2041. These steps will encourage greater transit integration that is linked to housing density, resulting in increased affordability and competitiveness in Richmond Hill. This becomes critical as urban and transit planning will integrate with the Yonge North Subway Extension and terminus at Bridge Station, creating a major urban hub around Langstaff area.

In addition to these important policies, TRREB is also recommending that the City integrate transit supportive zoning in station-area plans to expedite missing-middle and multi-residential approvals. This should include pre-zoned areas as-of-right around existing and future GO stations and rapid transit corridors.

This single step would unlock thousands of much-needed townhomes, mid-rises, and apartments that are currently blocked by low-density zoning. It will help Richmond Hill fully leverage the multi-billion-dollar transit investments from all levels of government, meet provincial housing targets, reduce car dependency, and deliver attainable homes where infrastructure already exists or is planned.

In summary, TRREB advocates for a 2026 budget that balances fiscal prudence with bold action on housing supply, affordability, and infrastructure readiness. We are willing to partner with Richmond Hill through ongoing dialogue, data sharing, and joint advocacy with senior governments.

Thank you for your continued leadership in building complete, prosperous communities across Richmond Hill.

Sincerely,

Elechia Barry-Sproule
President