Richmond Hill

2020-2024

Environmental Scorecard

Welcome to Richmond Hill's second Environmental Scorecard!

This document provides a brief assessment of how the City and the community are progressing on goals from our Environment Strategy, Greening the Hill. The first Scorecard aligned with our first Strategy, covering 2015-2019. This second Scorecard aligns with our updated Strategy, covering 2020-2024 but incorporating the full 10 years of data wherever possible.

The Scorecard is divided into three sections: Greening our Consumption, Greening our Natural Spaces, and Greening our Growth. Each section contains "indicators" that reflect key environmental themes in the Strategy. For each indicator, you will find both data-driven infographics and useful bits of information that provide a snapshot of trends, challenges, achievements, and opportunities.

As we strive to balance our greening efforts with ongoing pressures from urban growth, climate change, technological transformations, and even a global pandemic, the Scorecard shows us we have a lot to be proud of – and reminds us we have a lot to protect.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Greening our Consumption
- Greening our Natural Spaces
- Greening our Growth

- Good Progress
- Stable Progress
- Needs Improvement

STATUS

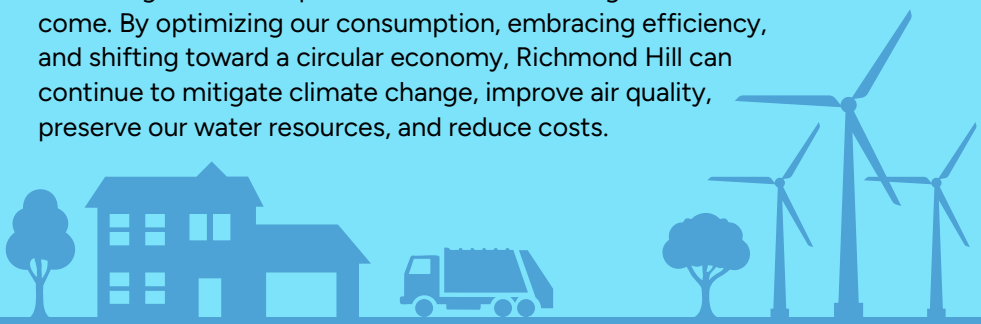
Summary of progress toward environmental goals

NEXT STEPS

Plans and opportunities for continuing to make progress

Greening Our Consumption

The way our community consumes energy, water, food and material goods will impact our environment for generations to come. By optimizing our consumption, embracing efficiency, and shifting toward a circular economy, Richmond Hill can continue to mitigate climate change, improve air quality, preserve our water resources, and reduce costs.

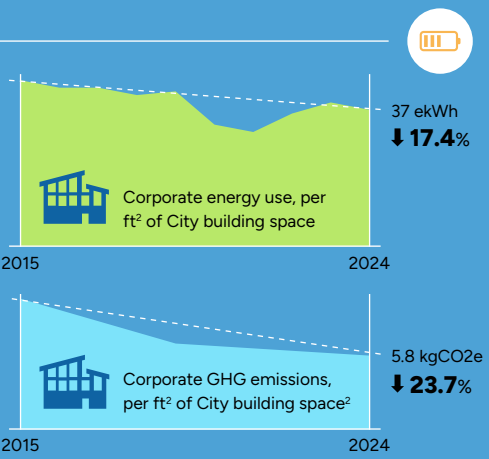


Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions and Energy Use

Community & Corporate Energy Use

5 tCO2e

The average annual GHG emissions per person fell to 5 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2e) in 2024[1]. Our goal is to reduce this number to 1 tCO2e by 2050.



DID YOU KNOW?

The City's Connor Building renovation will pilot net-zero features, such as electrification of heating systems, to gain insight and expertise for reducing emissions at other Richmond Hill facilities.

STATUS

While strategic investing in efficiency and renewables is helping to lower energy use and GHG emissions, more action across the entire community is needed to reach our Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) 2050 net-zero emissions goal.

NEXT STEPS

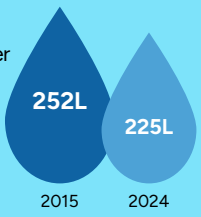
Further implementation of the CEEP and related initiatives focused on building and home retrofits, electric vehicles and micromobility, and waste management will continue to reduce emissions and energy consumption in our community.

Water Use

Community & Corporate Water Use

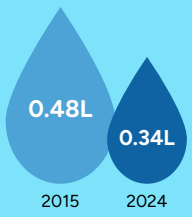
Average daily water use per person[3]

⬇ 10.7%



Average daily facility water use per ft² of City building space

⬇ 30.4%



225 L The average daily water consumption per person fell to 225 L in 2024.

STATUS

Better technology and better habits are working to lower water consumption in Richmond Hill. Proactive maintenance, repair and replacement of our drinking water infrastructure also play an important role in preventing leaks and maximizing efficiency.

NEXT STEPS

The City will continue investing in, practicing and promoting the efficient and wise use of water.

Waste Generation and Diversion

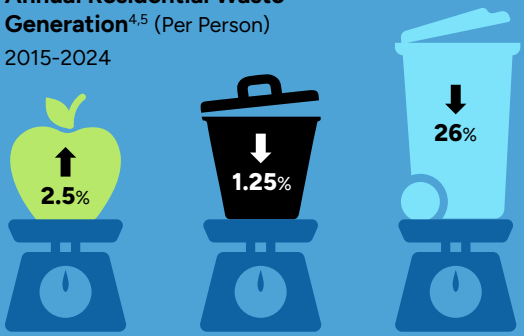
68%

Richmond Hill's 2024 residential waste diversion rate was 68%.

⬇8%

Our waste generation per person fell by 8%, from 234kg in 2015 to 216kg in 2024.

Annual Residential Waste Generation[4,5] (Per Person)
2015-2024



STATUS

Waste diversion rates in Richmond Hill have been stable in recent years and have consistently been among the highest in Canada.

NEXT STEPS

Our community can further reduce its waste footprint by embracing circular economy habits, such as repairing or repurposing old items, meal planning to reduce food waste, and purchasing durable goods.

DID YOU KNOW?

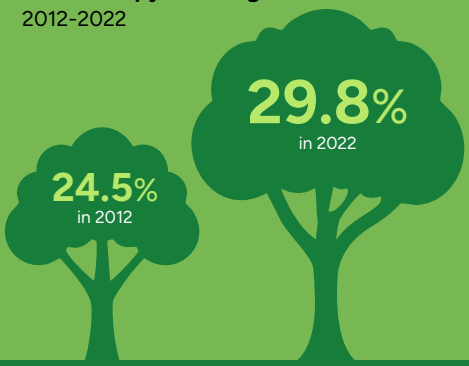
- **~70%** of RH waste is diverted through the organics & recycling programs
- **~25%** goes to energy-from-waste facilities
- Only **~5%** goes to landfill

Greening Our Natural Spaces

Our natural spaces – such as forests and woodlands, lakes and streams, and gardens and open spaces – provide many environmental, social, and economic benefits. Protecting and enhancing these spaces helps clean our air, promotes biodiversity, and provides wildlife habitat. Other co-benefits include increased resilience to climate change, improved health, and greater access to local food.

Tree Canopy & Natural Heritage

Tree Canopy Coverage[7]
2012-2022



5.3%

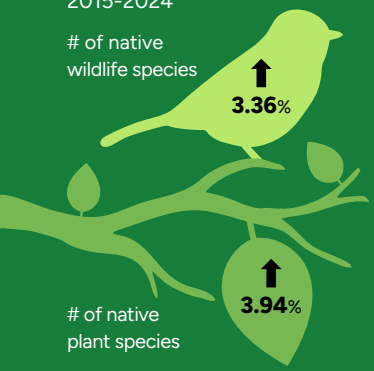
Richmond Hill's tree canopy cover increased by 5.3% from 2012 to 2022.

Community Stewardship and Capital Restoration Projects 2015-2024

107,372 trees were planted

61 ha of natural area were restored – roughly the size of Lake Wilcox!

Native Flora & Fauna
2015-2024



STATUS

The City and community continue to collaborate in growing our urban forest and building biodiversity (as evidenced by the City's Ontario Nature award in 2024). However, our natural systems are under noticeable, but not extreme, stress.

NEXT STEPS

The City's upcoming Natural Heritage Strategy and Invasive Species Management Plan will provide further tools for protecting and enhancing these essential natural assets.

Community Gardens

↑350%

The number of community gardeners has increased by over 350% from 2015 to 2024.

Community Gardeners (#)

STATUS

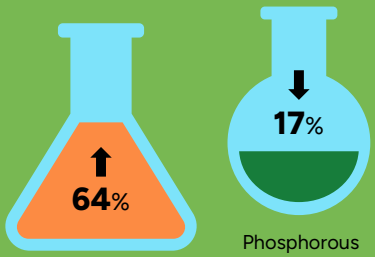
Our community gardens are positively impacting food security and community health. They bring residents together to grow plants that support the local environment and provide healthy food for sharing and donation.

NEXT STEPS

The program continues to grow, with a planned new allotment garden at Bridgeview Park (2027) which will engage more residents in food growing and promote land stewardship.

Water Quality and Stormwater Management

Phosphorus and Chloride Levels in Lake Wilcox[8] 2015-2024



- In developed areas, **chloride** or "salt" typically enters our waters as road salt runoff and can harm aquatic life when concentrations are high.
- **Phosphorus** enters our waters through fertilizers and other sources. High phosphorous concentrations can lead to algal blooms and affect fish populations.

100+ Richmond Hill has over 100 stormwater facilities, and over 80 Low-impact developments (LIDs).

STATUS

While Lake Wilcox's phosphorus levels are relatively stable, its chloride levels continue to rise.

NEXT STEPS

The City will continue to explore innovative and collaborative ways to protect our lakes and manage stormwater.

DID YOU KNOW?

Richmond Hill's extensive experience and robust monitoring of stormwater infrastructure and waterways have helped make the City a recognized leader in stormwater and water resource management.

Greening Our Growth

As Richmond Hill's population continues to grow, our local environment faces greater development pressures and stresses. By greening our growth through sustainable development practices and green transportation options, Richmond Hill can continue to minimize development impacts to the natural environment while addressing the needs of our growing community.

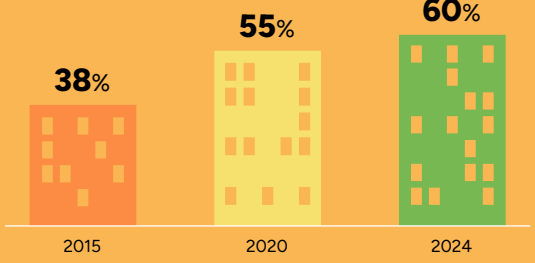
New Development Sustainability Performance

90%

Richmond Hill's 2021 Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) recommends a target of 90% of new development take place along Yonge Street, Highway 7, and other select infill areas, to help create more compact, walkable, low-carbon communities.

Growth Directed to Intensification Areas[9]
2015-2024

% of Residential Development Application Units Located within an Intensification Area



DID YOU KNOW?

The **Sustainability Metrics Program** requires new development applications to incorporate sustainable design features - such as energy and water efficiency - from a menu of options. The Program is shared by the Cities of Richmond Hill, Markham, Vaughan and Brampton.

STATUS

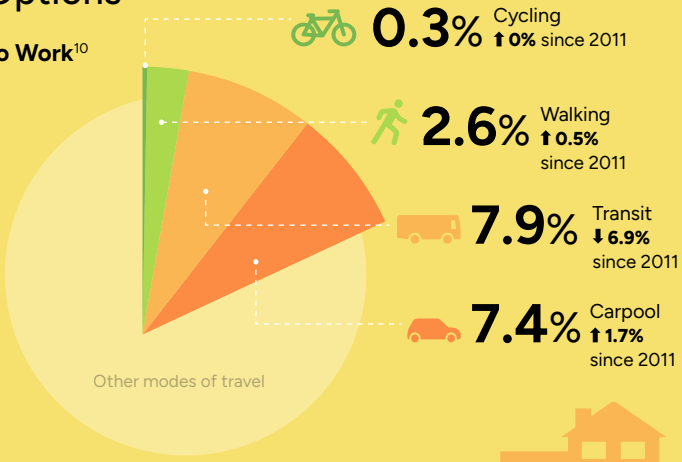
Richmond Hill is managing growth by directing new development into mixed-use, transit-friendly intensification areas, helping curb urban sprawl and preserve our natural environment. More progress is needed to encourage higher sustainable design standards in new buildings and homes.

NEXT STEPS

The City will continue to encourage sustainable development through its updated policies (e.g. Official Plan, Zoning) and available planning tools (e.g. Sustainability Metrics, Community Improvement Plans).

Sustainable Transportation Options

Primary Mode of Travel to Work[10]
2021



18.2%

In 2021, 18.2% of Richmond Hill residents used sustainable modes of transportation to get to work - a decrease from 23% in 2016.

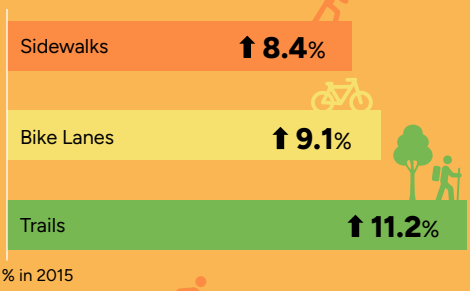
⬆10%

There was a 10% growth in active transportation infrastructure from 2015 to 2024.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2025, the City passed a Micromobility By-law that allows e-scooters on roads and cycling facilities.

Active Transportation Network Lengths
2015-2024



+85 km

The City has added over 85 km of sidewalks, bike lanes and trails since 2015.

STATUS

Active, clean, and public transportation options are key elements of the City's sustainable development and climate goals. Richmond Hill continues to maintain and expand its walking, cycling, and micromobility infrastructure.

NEXT STEPS

The City's recent Electric Vehicle Charging and Micromobility strategies, as well as the Yonge North Subway Extension, will support greater sustainable mobility in existing neighbourhoods and future developments.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2024 the City began constructing a pedestrian and cycling bridge over the CN Rail corridor, connecting the growing Yonge St. & 16th Avenue area to David Dunlap Observatory Park.

Thank You

For more information on Richmond Hill's environmental initiatives and opportunities for community involvement, or to access the electronic version of this Scorecard, visit RichmondHill.ca/Environment.

Notes

Population data for "per person" indicators based on York Region Long Range Planning end-of-year estimates and census data.

Greening our Consumption

[1] 2024 community emissions data is from The Atmospheric Fund.

[2] Corporate GHG emissions are based on data from City buildings, fleet, streetlights, water & sewage pumping stations, and solid waste.

[3] Community water use includes residential, commercial, institutional, and community uses.

[4] Waste data includes garbage, recycling (including appliances), and organics collected curbside, in multi-residential buildings, and at community facilities.

[5] Waste generation data based on York Region methodology.

[6] Recycling generation has declined due to lighter weight products and packaging.

Greening our Natural Spaces

[7] Tree canopy includes all trees and shrubs in woodlands and natural spaces, trees on private property, and street trees. Tree canopy data is available every 5 years, starting in 2012.

[8] Lake Wilcox is used for the water quality indicator based on its large size, proximity to development, frequent public usage, and active management by the City.

Greening our Growth

[9] For the purpose of this indicator, "Intensification Areas" are parts of the city identified in Richmond Hill's Official Plan for more compact, mixed-use, higher density development: Key Development Areas, Regional Mixed Use Corridor, Richmond Hill Centre, Local Centre, Local Development Area and Local Mixed Use Corridor.

[10] Transportation mode share data is available every 5 years through the Census.

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