

# Phase 2: What We Heard

## Key Directions Engagement Summary Report

### City Plan 2041: Richmond Hill Official Plan Update

Prepared by LURA Consulting

Prepared for the City of Richmond Hill

November 2021



## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Section 1: Project Background .....	6
Section 2: What We Heard .....	8
Section 3: Who We Heard From .....	26
Section 4: Engagement Process and Communication Methods.....	33
Section 5: Next Steps.....	35
Appendix A: Emerging Key Directions Open House Q&A Summary.....	36
Appendix B: Online Survey .....	43

## Executive Summary

The City of Richmond Hill is undergoing an update of the City’s Official Plan to provide a clear vision for planning and development to 2041 and attract more businesses, jobs, and residents. The update will consider new opportunities while aligning with current provincial and regional policies and plans where applicable (e.g. A Place to Grow: the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Provincial Policy Statement, York Region Official Plan, etc.).

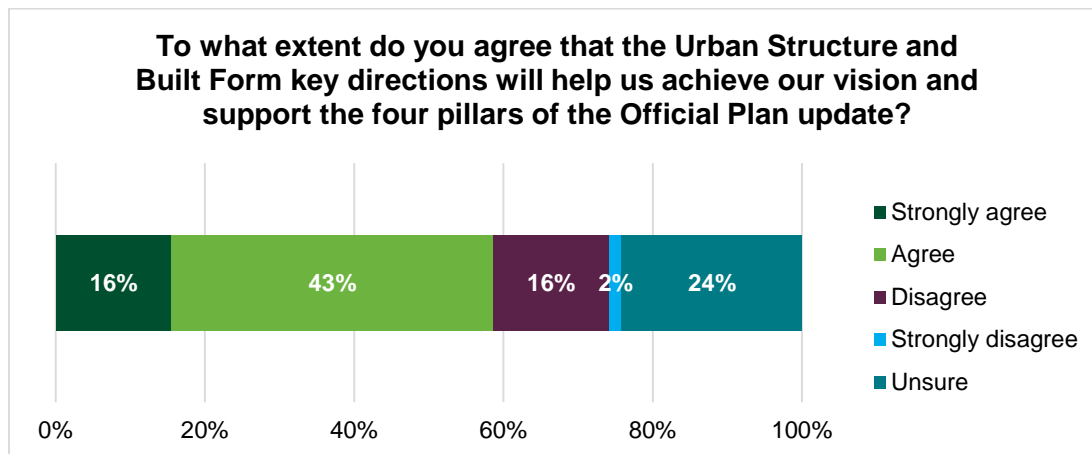
A key component of the project is an extensive stakeholder and community engagement program designed to raise broader interest, awareness and help shape the City’s vision and goals for the future. This report summarizes the engagement process and the feedback received during the second phase of City Plan 2041 – Richmond Hill’s Official Plan Update. Phase 2 focuses on Key Directions for updating the Official Plan.

During this phase, the engagement methods used to seek feedback from the community included a virtual open house held on October 14, 2021, and an online survey available from September 30 – October 21, 2021. Feedback was provided on the key directions relating to built form, intensification, employment, climate change, and implementation. A copy of the [presentation](#) and a full list of [emerging Key Directions](#) are available on the City’s webpage. A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix B of this report.

Key messages emerging from feedback on the proposed Key Directions are listed below:

### Urban Structure and Built Form

The majority of participants at the public open house felt the urban structure and built form key directions would support the vision and pillars of the Official Plan.



The online survey feedback provides more insights into the specific key directions under the built form category and may clarify the areas where participants were unsure. Most participants indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed with all of the Built Form directions at a high level. The most strongly supported directions related to public realm

to support growth, prioritizing micro-mobility and transit; and opportunities for a mix of uses with 15 minutes of most residents.

Participants at the open house and through the survey highlighted the following key considerations:

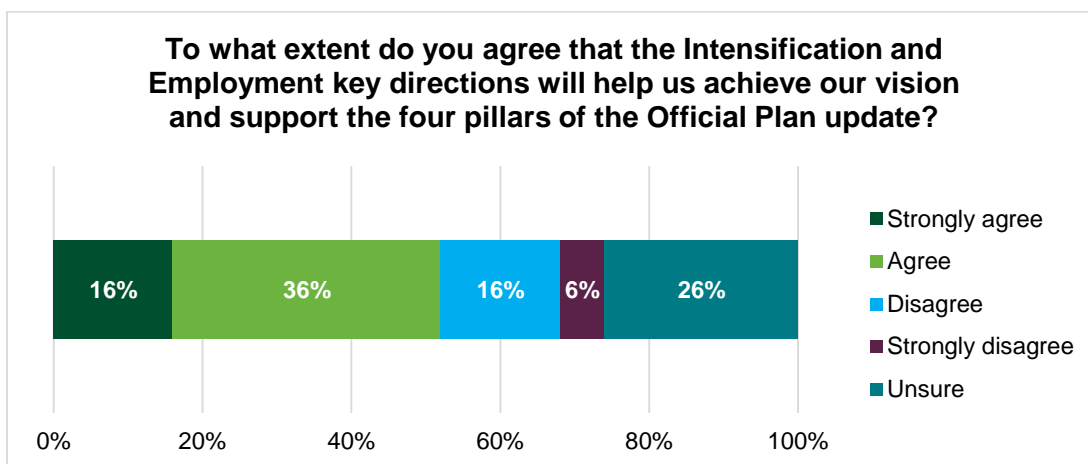
- Strong support for directions to encourage more mixed-use opportunities in new developments and the building of new road and cycling connections in neighbourhoods.
- Strong support for key directions that respect the character and features of existing communities, limiting the impact of new development on existing communities.
- The value of having directions that address preserving the natural environment and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Recommendations to ensuring high-quality architectural and public realm design.
- The importance of including Built Form directions that focus on developing affordable housing and housing stock for current needs.

In addition, participants in the survey noted the importance of:

- Having directions that address the need for entertainment, recreation and community facilities in Richmond Hill.
- Building and restoring the historic downtown core.
- Built Form directions that protect heritage resources and create vibrant communities around them.
- Having Built Form directions that promote or incentivize sustainable development practices and green building retrofits.

## Intensification and Employment

Approximately half of the participants at the public open house felt the intensification and employment key direction would support the vision and pillars of the Official Plan.



The online survey feedback provides more insights into the specific key directions under the intensification and employment categories relating to centres and corridors and may clarify the areas where participants were unsure.

### **Intensification**

With respect to Intensification, most participants indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed with all of the centres and corridors directions. The most strongly supported directions related to public realm elements that support density, supporting “micro-mobility” and transit supportive hubs along transit corridors.

Participants at the open house and through the survey highlighted the importance of:

- Directions that addressed intensification through a variety of housing sizes and types.
- The need for mixed-use requirements for buildings in Centres. The development of these areas as destinations with walkable streets, active podium uses, variety of architectural design, connections etc.
- Providing active transportation and transit options and a well connected network.
- Protecting natural areas and greenspaces.

In addition, participants in the survey noted the importance of identifying:

- Thoughtful management of development along Yonge Street as a direction.

### **Employment**

As noted above, approximately half of the participants at the public open house felt the intensification and employment key directions would support the vision and pillars of the Official Plan. Through the survey, most participants indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed with the Employment directions. The most strongly supported directions related to urban design to make employment areas more attractive for employees and business investment and attraction and business attraction and retention.

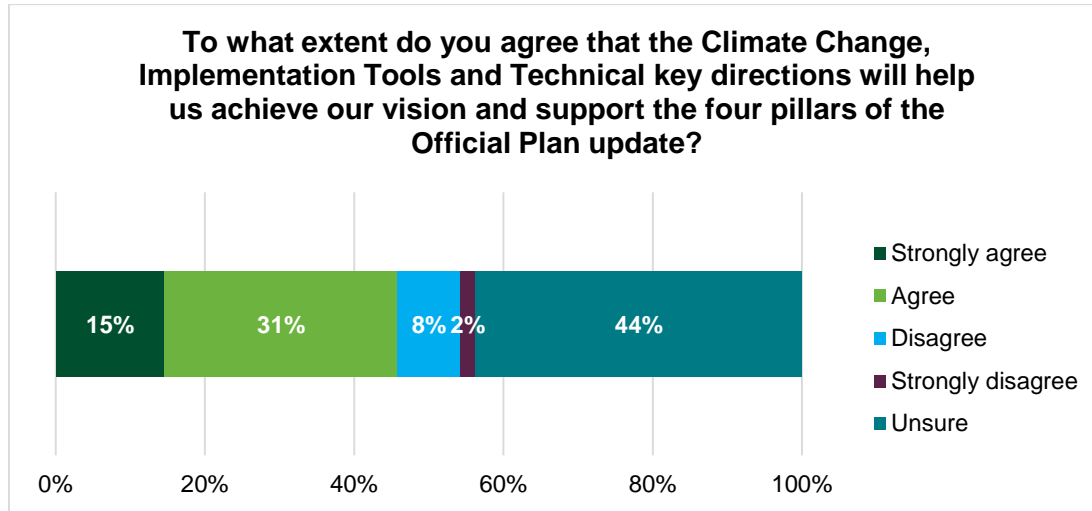
Participants at the open house and through the survey highlighted the importance of directions that:

- Support more mixed-use buildings near transit corridors, live-work units and work from home or self-employed arrangements.
- Support active transportation (i.e. walking and cycling) and micro-mobility (i.e. scooter and ebikes) modes for employee commuting.
- Ensure businesses close to residential areas are compatible and environmentally safe was identified.
- Make Richmond Hill attractive to employers and attract and retain employees.
- Create walkable employment areas with their own distinct sense of identity and amenities with access to sustainable forms of transportation.

In addition, participants in the survey noted the importance of coordination with neighbouring municipalities to identify where hubs of expertise can emerge as an Employment-related direction.

## Climate Change, Implementation and Technical

Approximately 46% of participants at the public open house felt the climate change, implementation tools, and technical key directions would support the vision and pillars of the Official Plan. A significant portion of participants were unsure if the key directions would support the vision and pillars of the OP. Feedback received suggests the uncertainty relates to the implementation tools, related to how quickly they would be implemented and that they may ultimately favour developers and/or reduce public involvement in land use planning decision-making.



The online survey feedback provides more insights into the specific key directions under the climate change and implementation categories (no questions were posed about the Technical Key Directions).

### Climate Change

Most participants indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed with all of the climate change directions fairly equally. Participants in the survey noted the importance of:

- Including stronger language about climate change mitigation.
- Creating more directions addressing adaptation.
- Creating a direction to address climate change that requires updated and improved building codes to ensure all new builds respect and protect the environment.
- Providing incentives to land developers and builders to implement green requirements and standards and providing incentives for businesses to transition to sustainable practices.
- Direction that stops urban expansion into greenfield areas to mitigate climate change.

### Implementation

Feedback from the open house suggests that the community is uncertain if the tools identified would support implementation. Through the survey, it was recognized that

participants had the most concerns about the implementation of the Community Planning Permit System, Inclusionary Zoning and Official Plan Amendment Evaluation Criteria because they felt that adoption of the tool would either take too long or that it may favour developers or reduce public involvement in land use planning decision making.

## Engagement

An overall summary of engagement numbers and communication reach is included in the graphics below.



The feedback received from the Emerging Key Directions Open House and online surveys inform the second phase of the Official Plan update process. In November 2021, the key directions report will be released. This report will be presented to Council for endorsement in December 2021. Phase 3 of the Official Plan update process that involved consultation and adoption of Official Plan Amendments will begin in July 2022.

## Section 1: Project Background

The City of Richmond Hill is undergoing an update of the City's Official Plan to provide a clear vision for planning and development to 2041 and attract more businesses, jobs, and residents. The update will consider new opportunities while aligning with current provincial and regional policies and plans where applicable (e.g., A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Provincial Policy Statement, York Region Official Plan, etc.).

The Province requires that an Official Plan update be undertaken within ten years after preparing a new comprehensive Official Plan. This ensures that the updated plan implements any changes to provincial policies, conforms with the York Region Official Plan's policies, responds to current urban issues and conditions, and considers new opportunities for shaping the city.

Council adopted Richmond Hill's current Official Plan in July 2010 to guide development to 2031, which was substantially approved by the Ontario Municipal Board in 2012. This review will provide a clear vision for planning and development in Richmond Hill to 2041.

In addition to Planning Act requirements, the Official Plan update will look to better support long-term sustainable city-building, respond to climate change, and create a better balance of jobs and residents in the city.

Several City initiatives will occur concurrently with the Official Plan update, which will address some of these key themes. These initiatives will develop tools that will be used to implement the policies of the Official Plan. There are also studies underway that will inform the Official Plan update.

The following is a list of these City-led projects:

- [Affordable Housing Strategy](#)
- [Community Energy and Emissions Plan](#)
- [Comprehensive Zoning By-law Review](#)
- [Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan](#)
- [Socio Economic Study](#)
- [Transportation Master Plan Update](#)
- [Urban Forest Management Plan](#)
- Urban Master Environmental Services Plan
- [Yonge and Bernard Key Development Area Secondary Plan](#)
- [Parks, Recreation and Culture Plans](#)
- [Environment Strategy](#)
- [Richmond Hill Investment Attraction Strategy](#)
- [Stratification and Public Access Easement Study](#)



## Engagement Objectives

Updating the City's Official Plan provides an important opportunity to engage the public and key stakeholders in the process. A key component of the project is an extensive stakeholder and community engagement program designed to raise broader interest, awareness and help shape the City's vision and goals for the future.

Specific objectives of the City Plan 2041 engagement program are to:

- Facilitate authentic and meaningful opportunities for engagement
- Engage broad members of the Richmond Hill community
- Report back on key outcomes

The engagement program is envisioned to be delivered in three distinct phases as described on the City's [website](#). Phase 2: Key Directions Report focuses on key directions for how the Official Plan should be updated to address matters related to: height and density of buildings within different land use designations of the city, intensification of development in transit supported areas, opportunities to increase employment and economic prosperity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, implementation tools and technical matters.

This report summarizes the engagement process, and the feedback received during the Emerging Key Directions Open House and survey which took place during the second phase.

## Section 2: What We Heard

This section provides a high-level summary of the key themes heard throughout engagement process. The purpose of the key directions is to form the basis for changes to the City's Official Plan to shape the future of the city's communities and to support economic development opportunities. The draft key directions build on the vision and four pillars of the Official Plan update which reflect Council's strategic priorities. Feedback was collected on the following six Key Direction categories:

- Built Form
- Intensification
- Employment
- Climate Change
- Implementation Tools
- Technical

As noted in the summary below, participants at the Open House and in the online survey were asked if they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with a Key Direction, or if they had a neutral opinion or felt undecided on a proposed Key Direction. The reason behind these opinions is not always provided via this process. Having this early feedback however provides staff and Council with an understanding of what matters ought to be pursued through this Official Plan update process and what matters need more discussion and consultation before making a decision.

### Overall Key Directions Feedback

At the Emerging Key Directions Open House, staff provided information regarding the 2041 City Planning Vision, pillars of the Official Plan update, and proposed Key Directions for how the Official Plan should be updated to address these pillars and achieve the vision. During the presentation, attendees were asked to participate in polls about the key directions. Following each poll, presenters responded to questions. A summary of these Question and Answer sessions is provided in Appendix A of this report.

Participants were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed that the Urban Structure (which had also been discussed in at an earlier open house and related online survey in February 2021) and Built Form key directions would help the vision and support the four pillars of the Official Plan update. As shown in Figure 1, the top three responses were Agree (43%), Unsure (24%) and Strongly Agree (16%).

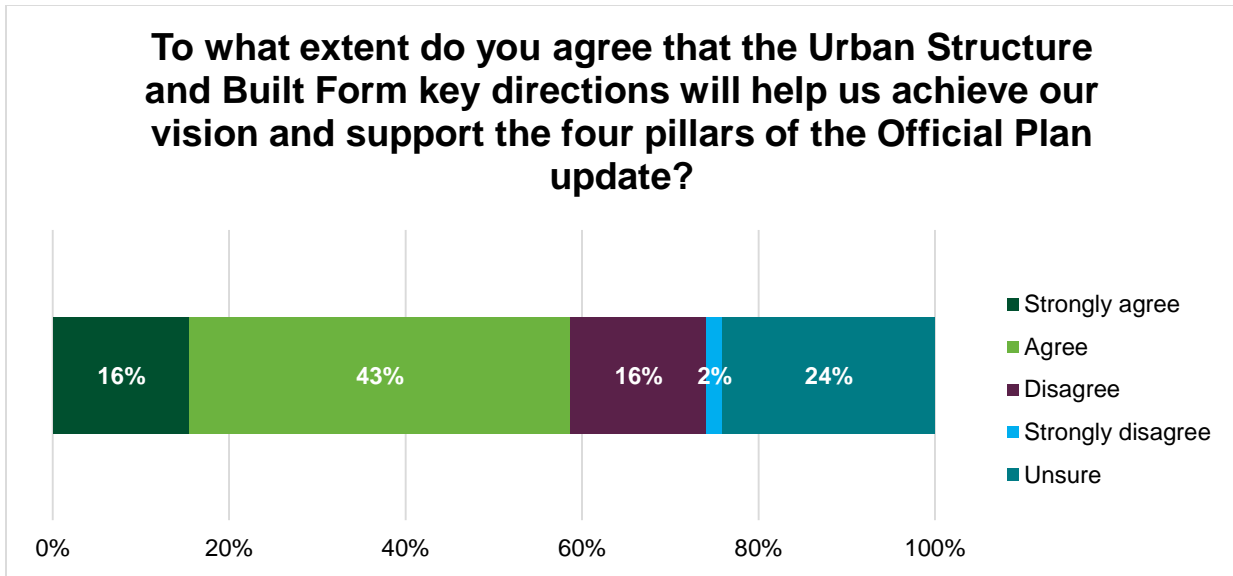


Figure 1: Graph showing participant responses for, “To what extent do you agree that the Urban Structure and Built Form key directions will help us achieve our vision and support the four pillars of the Official Plan update?” n=58.

Additional insights and perspectives shared at the open house on mobility, neighbourhoods, and the greenway system are captured in the sections below as additional context to the poll results.

Open house attendees were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed that the Intensification and Employment key directions would help achieve the vision and support the four pillars of the Official Plan update. As shown in Figure 2, the top responses were Agree (36%), and Unsure (26%), with Strongly Agree (16%) and Disagree (16%) being the same proportion.

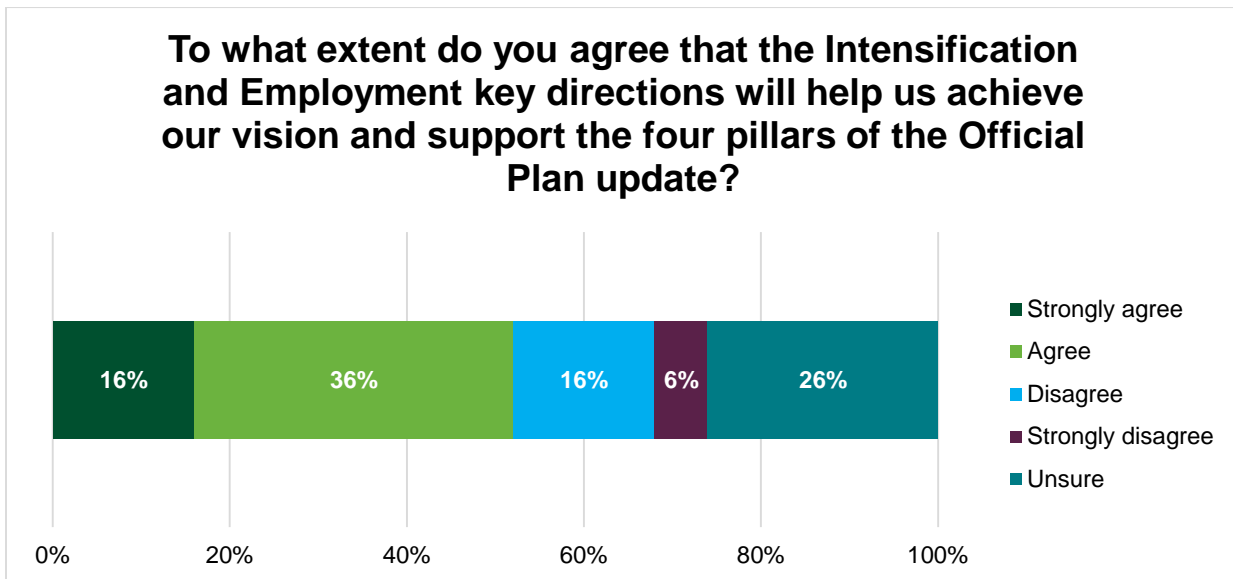


Figure 2: Graph showing participant responses for “To what extent do you agree that the Intensification and Employment key directions will help us achieve our vision and support the four pillars of the Official Plan update?” n=50.

During the open house, participants shared their perspectives on intensification in local centers, corridors, impacts to neighbourhoods and on the natural environment as additional context to the poll results. These perspectives have been integrated into the sections below.

Finally, participants were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed that the Climate Change, Implementation and Technical key directions would help achieve the vision and support the four pillars of the Official Plan update. As shown in Figure 3, the top three responses were Unsure (44%), Agree (31%) and Strongly Agree (15%).

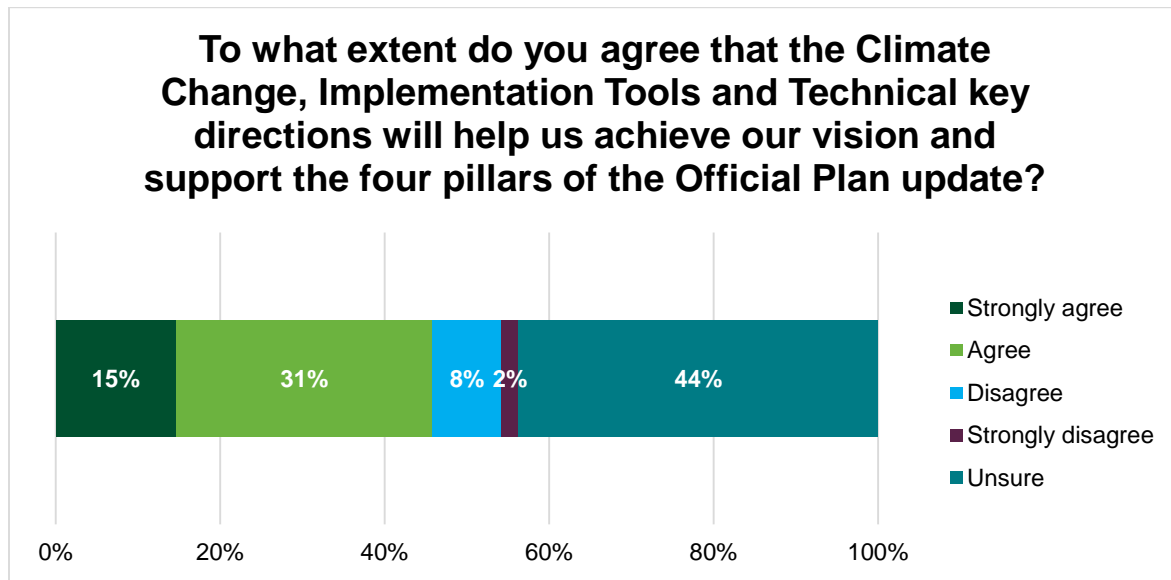


Figure 3: Graph showing participant responses for “To what extent do you agree that the Climate Change, Implementation Tools and Technical key directions will help us achieve our vision and support the four pillars of the Official Plan update?” n=48.

Survey participants were given the opportunity to provide additional feedback on the key directions. A summary of additional feedback gathered for each Key Direction is provided.

### Built Form

The Official Plan provides direction for how and where development should occur across the city. Built Form is about how public and private land use relate to each other to create places to live, work, innovate, shop and play. Built Form policies help to ensure that land use is responsive and adaptive to the future. The City is also looking at the design features needed to create a city that people can take pride in. The following is a summary of responses received on the Built Form key directions.

Survey participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the Built Form directions. As shown in Figure 4, most participants indicated that

they strongly agreed or agreed with all of the Built Form directions. The top three directions that participants strongly agreed to were: (1) identifying the need for and providing public realm to support growth and to ensure that new and existing communities are appropriately served (69%); (2) promoting development that prioritizes micro-mobility and transit (54%); and (3) promoting opportunities for a mix of uses with 15 minutes of most residents (49%).

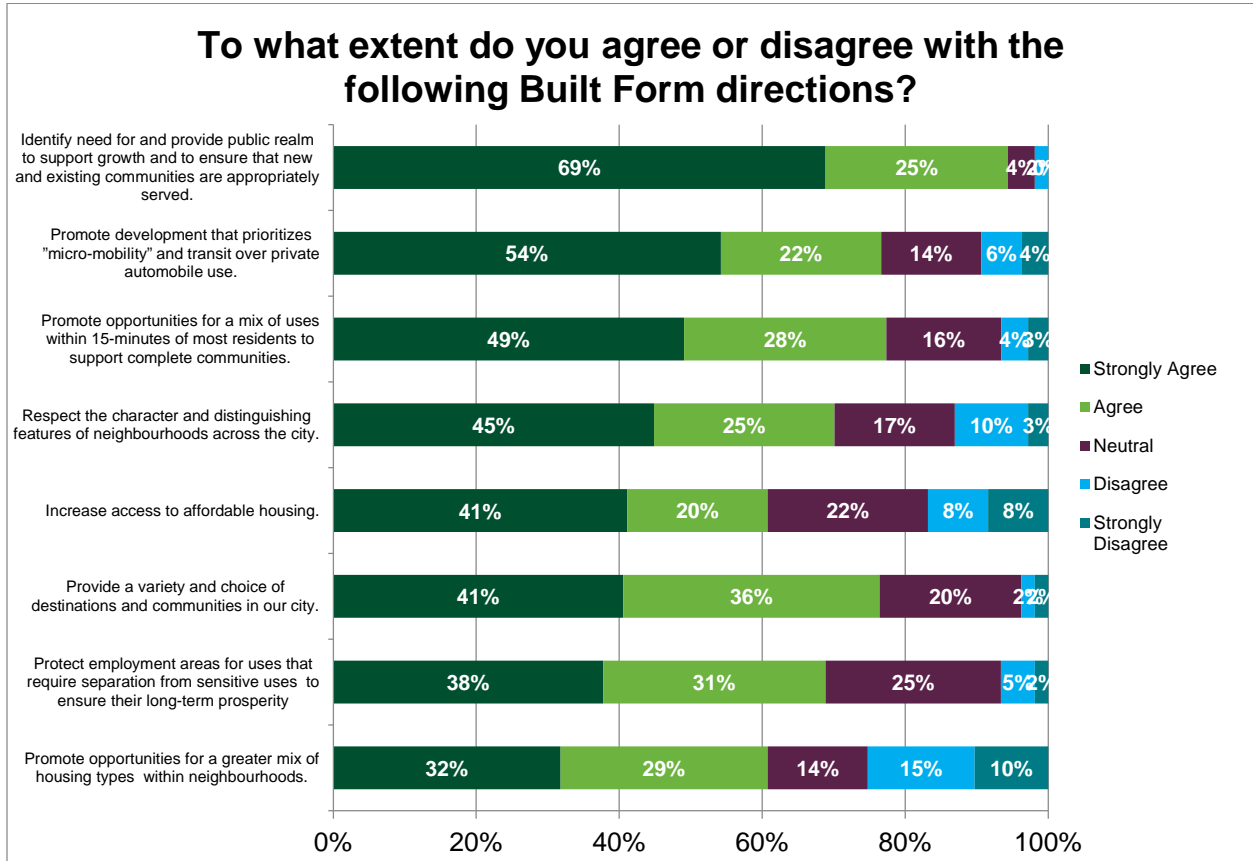


Figure 4: Graph showing participant responses for “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following Built Form directions?” n=107.

Participants were given the option to identify any other directions that should be included relating to the Built Form. The following is a thematic summary of responses provided during the open house and in the survey.

### Entertainment, Recreation and Community Facilities

Participants highlighted the importance of having directions that address the need for entertainment, recreation and community facilities in Richmond Hill. It was noted that the existing recreation and fitness facilities do not have enough capacity for the current population. A lack of available park space was also identified.

Alternatively, other participants noted that some recreational facilities like soccer and baseball fields are under-used and sit empty. It was suggested that the City look at

repurposing the underutilized facilities for higher use activities. Expanding the scope and use of public libraries was also identified.

Participants identified the importance of building and restoring the historic downtown core. It was recommended that Built Form direction focuses on bringing restaurants, storefront shopping, nighttime activities and other attractions to the historic downtown core.

### **A Greater Mix of Uses**

Participants noted the need for directions to encourage more mixed-use opportunities in new developments. A need to increase the number of grocery stores, restaurants and shopping in Richmond Hill was raised. A direction to create walkable commercial areas closer to neighbourhoods was suggested.

### **Connections and Accessibility**

Built Form directions that address building new road connections in neighbourhoods to provide better bus routing, increase road network capacity and provide more direct routes for active transportation were suggested.

Participants highlighted the importance of directions that use trail systems to meet micromobility and active transportation needs. It was noted that trails could increase connectivity within Richmond Hill as well as to neighbouring municipalities.

Participants also noted that Built Form directions should address the importance of increased transit connections to neighbouring municipalities and accessible transit.

### **Natural Environment and Climate Change**

Participants highlighted the value of having directions that address the preservation of the natural environment. Suggestions to provide more green space, more protection for the greenbelt and greener streets and consideration of flood plains in the development process were made.

It was recommended that park design that focuses on open space and programming should not be prioritized over natural parks that use existing green spaces and trees.

Participants also identified the need for Built Form directions that address climate change. Aggressive solutions regarding greenhouse gas emissions, waste management and water management were all recommended.

### **Heritage Resources**

Built Form directions that protect heritage resources and create vibrant communities around them was also identified.

### **Infrastructure**

Participants recommended that Built Form directions address the maintenance of existing infrastructure and burying any aboveground infrastructure.

Designing complete streets to allow for designated spaces for active transportation was also suggested as a direction.

### **New Construction**

Built Form directions that address limiting the impact of new development on existing communities were suggested. Participants noted that new construction should be user and environmentally friendly. Participants also noted that new buildings and access routes should be designed to avoid congestion.

High-quality architectural and public realm design that creates a sense of place, uses good materials, and is harmonious was suggested as a Built Form direction. It was also noted that Built Form directions should address the need for aesthetically pleasing landmarks, public spaces and gathering spaces. It was recommended that these spaces should be designed for all four seasons.

A direction that eliminates multiple amendments to City policy and building permits to increase the size of new structures in existing neighbourhoods during the approvals process was identified. Built Form direction that includes collaboration with residents on infill-related matters was recommended.

Participants highlighted the importance of having Built Form directions that promote or incentivize sustainable development practices and green building retrofits. Built Form directions that require tree preservation or new tree plantings during new construction or renovation were identified to allow more greenspace integration with housing.

Some participants noted the importance of including direction on high-density development in Key Development Areas. Other participants suggested that light commercial uses and denser residential forms (townhouses, duplexes and triplexes) be allowed in the zoning for single-family neighbourhoods. Alternatively, other participants highlighted the importance of not over-building in areas of the city due to concerns of overcrowding and congestion.

Elimination of parking minimums was also suggested as a Built Form direction. It was noted that parking minimums create unnecessarily large parking lots, which negatively impact the environment and the walkability of neighbourhoods.

### **Active Transportation and Micro-mobility**

During the open house participants provided feedback focused on the current transportation challenges faced by Richmond Hill residents, that impact transit uptake. Participants noted:

- The majority of residents are commuting to dispersed locations where transit options are limited, making personal vehicle use the preferred mode of travel.
- Members of a single household could work in different parts of the GTA, have to juggle transportation options.
- There is already significant traffic on Yonge Street and if development focuses on adding residents to this corridor, the traffic congestion will increase.

Participants identified the need for directions that address safe and direct cycling path connections to key destinations like schools, workplaces, shops, and community centres. It was noted that off-street trails and paths should be as direct as possible, feature lighting to permit use of these paths after dark, receive snow removal, and connect to major destinations. It was also recommended that on-street cycle tracks be protected from cars. Traffic calming measures and reduced vehicle speeds were also suggested to make on-street cycling safer and more comfortable for users.

Some participants suggested that all forms of mobility (including automobile use) need to be supported and sustained equally in the Built Form directions. Other participants suggested that the directions should focus on forms of micromobility and active transportation over automobile use.

### **Affordable Housing**

Participants identified the need for Built Form directions to focus on developing affordable housing and housing stock for current and future needs.

### **Intensification**

The City wants to plan Centres and Corridors (areas near VIVA and some GO stations and areas along major Regional transit roads) to ensure that they support transit, offer a mix of uses for residents and businesses, and efficiently use land and investments in infrastructure. The following is a summary of responses received on the Intensification key directions.

Survey participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the directions for planning Centres and Corridors. As shown in Figure 5, the majority of participants indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed with the Intensification directions. The top three directions that participants strongly agreed to were planning for and providing public realm elements that support density (57%), planning for and providing public realm elements that support “micro-mobility” (57%) and promoting the building of transit supportive hubs along transit corridors (47%).



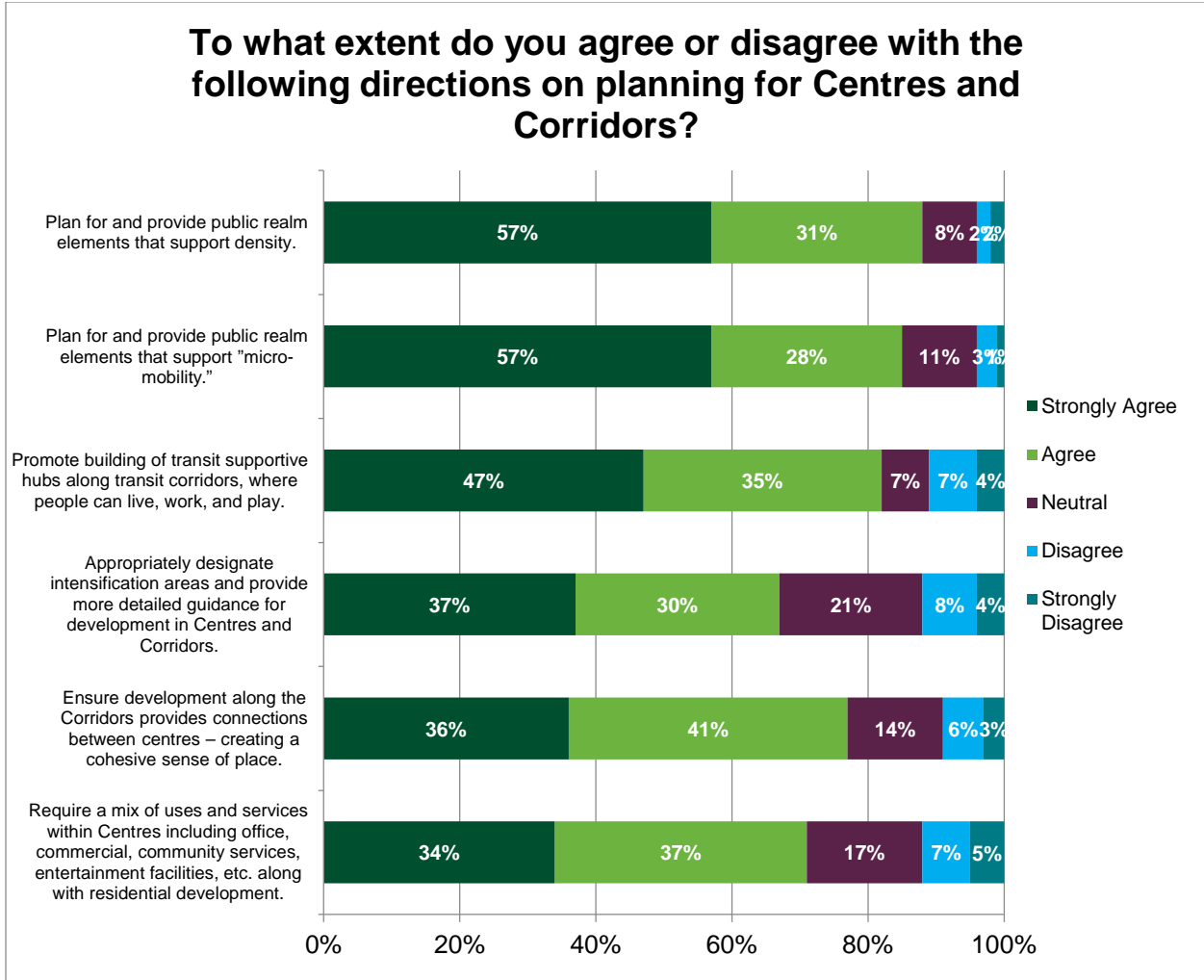


Figure 5: Graph showing participant responses for “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following directions on planning for Centres and Corridors?” n=100.

Participants were given the option to identify any other directions relating to Intensification that should be included when planning for Centres and Corridors. The following is a thematic summary of responses provided during the open house and in the survey.

### Building Height and Density

Participants identified the need for directions that addressed intensification through a variety of housing sizes and types. It was noted that residential units need to be built large enough and affordable enough for families. Consideration of locating affordable units close to retail and other service jobs, as well as transit, was identified.

The importance of providing a variety of housing types as a key to creating a liveable city was identified. Respecting existing neighbourhoods and protecting smaller housing sizes was also highlighted. It was suggested that the City focus on intensification of all neighbourhoods by allowing duplexes and semi-detached houses. Some participants noted the importance of encouraging mid-rise development in neighbourhoods like the

Village and the importance of planning for liveable communities in centres. Conversely, some participants felt that intensification should not occur in neighbourhoods.

Participants during the open house, provided the following feedback relating to specific centres and corridors:

- Richmond Hill Centre and Yonge/16<sup>th</sup> KDA areas assume that new residents will not own cars, however many residents will still need vehicles to travel.
- There is uncertainty that mixed use and walkability objectives can be supported along Yonge Street.
- Consider making 16th Avenue part of a tourist destination for David Dunlap Observatory and Park with boutique hotels and shops.
- Infill development should conform and be consistent with existing development.

Several concerns were raised about overcrowding, congestion and building height as a result of intensification. Direction related to supporting peak traffic and congestion times was suggested. Another direction towards evenly spreading mixed-use development across the city to ease the traffic congestion of Centres and Corridors was recommended.

### **Connectivity**

Coordination of regional connections with surrounding municipalities was identified as an additional Intensification direction. It was also noted that the concept of active transportation needed to be built into the planning process for intensification. Support was shown to reduce speed limits and the number of car lanes to support an active transportation network.

A focus on the need for thoughtful management of development along Yonge Street was also identified as an additional direction to ensure the corridors are more walkable and liveable.

### **Mix of Uses**

Participants identified the need for mixed-use requirements for buildings in Centres. It was suggested that a minimum amount of non-residential gross floor area be required.

The development of these areas as destinations with walkable streets, active ground-floor uses, variety of architectural design, connections etc., was suggested as possible directions for intensification of Centres and Corridors. Participants highlighted the need to connect outdoor amenities with large commercial spaces, to create an animated public realm. Participants also identified the importance of including directions to plan for infrastructure like schools and recreational spaces. Planning for accessible public space for children and seniors was also highlighted.

### **Natural Environment**

Providing infrastructure to protect the natural environment from intensification was identified as a direction that should be included when planning for Centres and

Corridors. Additionally, the protection of existing green spaces as a direction was also identified.

Participants noted the importance of ensuring development near the Gormley Station does not impact the protected Oak Ridges Moraine and that green spaces should not be lost at the expense of intensification.

## Employment

The City provides necessary land use direction to ensure that jobs are available for people living in Richmond Hill, that existing businesses can grow, and that new businesses can establish themselves and prosper. The following is a summary of responses received on the Employment key directions.

Survey participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the Employment directions. As shown in Figure 6, the majority of participants indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed with the Employment directions. The top three directions that participants strongly agreed to were: (1) promoting urban design that make employment areas more attractive (40%); (2) promoting business attraction and retention that are responsive to the need of businesses (38%); and (3) promoting urban design that makes employment areas attractive for business investment and expansion (36%).

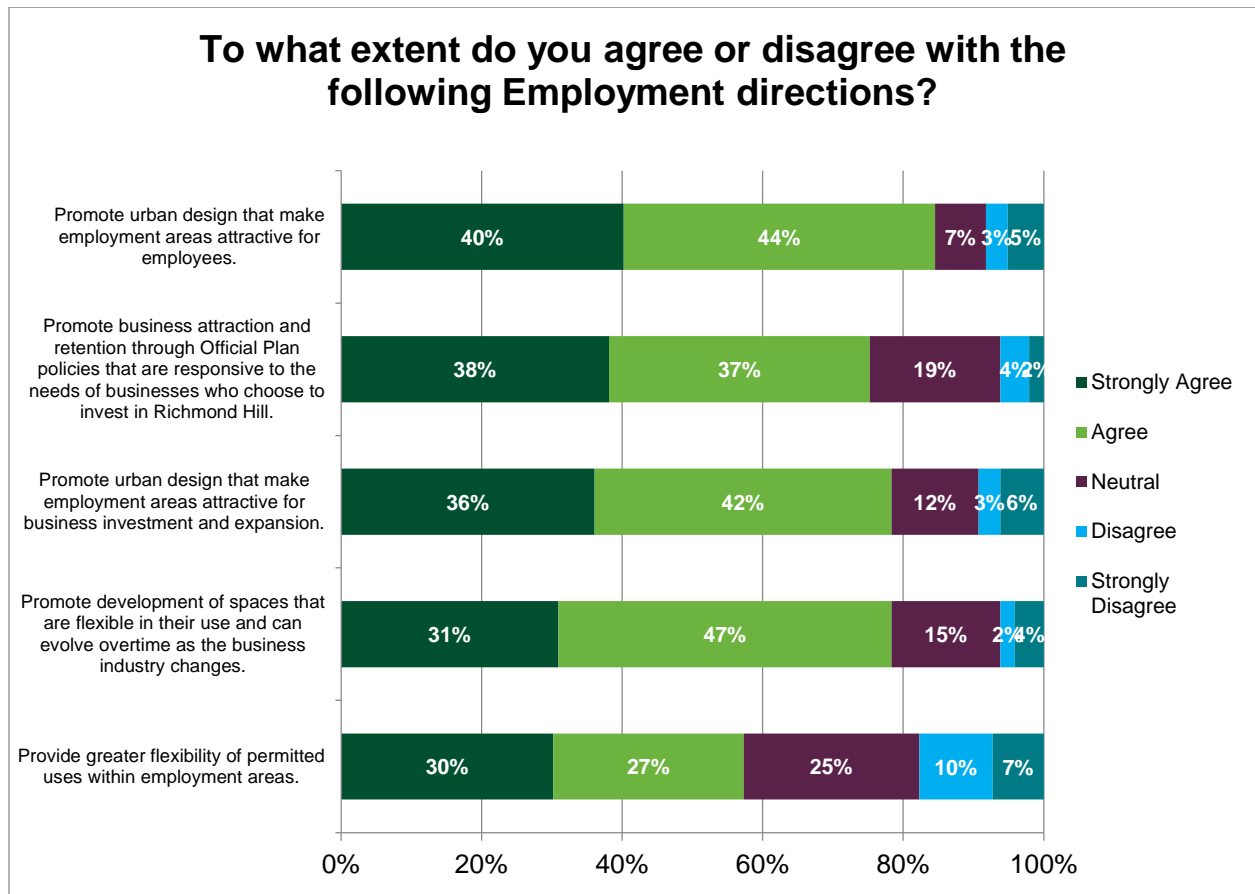


Figure 6: Graph showing participant responses for “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following Employment directions?” n=97.

Participants were given the option to identify any other directions relating to employment that should be included to ensure that jobs are available for people living in Richmond Hill, that businesses can grow and that businesses can establish and prosper. The following is a thematic summary of responses provided during the open house and in the survey.

### **Zoning**

A direction on the rezoning of residential properties to permit commercial or mixed-use development along Yonge Street was recommended. It was highlighted that directions relating to Employment should ensure that designated employment lands are protected from redesignation to residential uses.

### **Mixed-Use Development**

Participants identified the need for directions that support more mixed-use buildings near transit corridors, live-work units and work from home or self-employed arrangements. Additional directions around flexible spaces that can change with uses or grow with families were suggested. Mobile kiosks for goods and services were also suggested.

### **Active Transportation and Micro-mobility**

Directions to support active transportation and micro-mobility modes for employee commuting were identified. The need for dedicated and separated bike lanes and street cleaning of debris and snow on routes was highlighted. The removal of barriers to pedestrians wishing to access services was also identified to ensure that businesses can grow and prosper.

### **Regional Hubs**

Coordination with neighbouring municipalities to identify where hubs of expertise can emerge was identified as an Employment-related direction. It was suggested that Richmond Hill could be a technology hub, Vaughan could be a health care hub, and Markham could be an education hub.

### **Business Location**

The need for direction to ensure businesses close to residential areas are compatible and environmentally safe was identified. Some participants noted an opportunity to focus employment in larger commercial and industrial areas in the City and build transit to those locations.

### **Business Supports and Attraction**

Participants identified the importance of the direction to make Richmond Hill attractive to employers. It was suggested that the City support initiatives such as lower tax rates, tax relief or investment subsidies and downtown-wide wi-fi to attract employers. A direction to focus on access to high-tech measures was also suggested to attract innovative

industries. A focus on supporting local small businesses was also identified as a direction.

Participants also identified the importance of the direction to attract and retain employees. Ensuring that employees can afford to live in Richmond Hill was identified as an Employment-related direction.

Concerns were raised about how expanding business investment could worsen traffic.

### **Employment Areas**

Design of walkable employment areas that have their own distinct sense of identity was suggested. Employment areas should include urban amenities and access to sustainable forms of transportation.

Some participants also recommended that employment lands allow for flexibility in land uses to allow municipalities to better react to market changes and trends. Other participants, however, opposed the conversion of employment areas for non-employment uses.

### **Climate Change**

The City provides direction to support climate change mitigation (reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (adjusting to current and future climate) in planning Richmond Hill. The following is a summary of responses received on the Climate Change directions.

Survey participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the Climate Change directions. As shown in Figure 7, the majority of participants indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed with the Climate Change directions. The top three directions that participants strongly agreed to were: (1) ensuring development does not negatively impact the function of natural heritage features (63%); (2) strengthening natural heritage protection and enhancement (61%); and (3) ensuring that the built environment minimizes the heat island effect and flooding (58%), as well as supporting energy conservation and promoting renewable energy opportunities (58%)

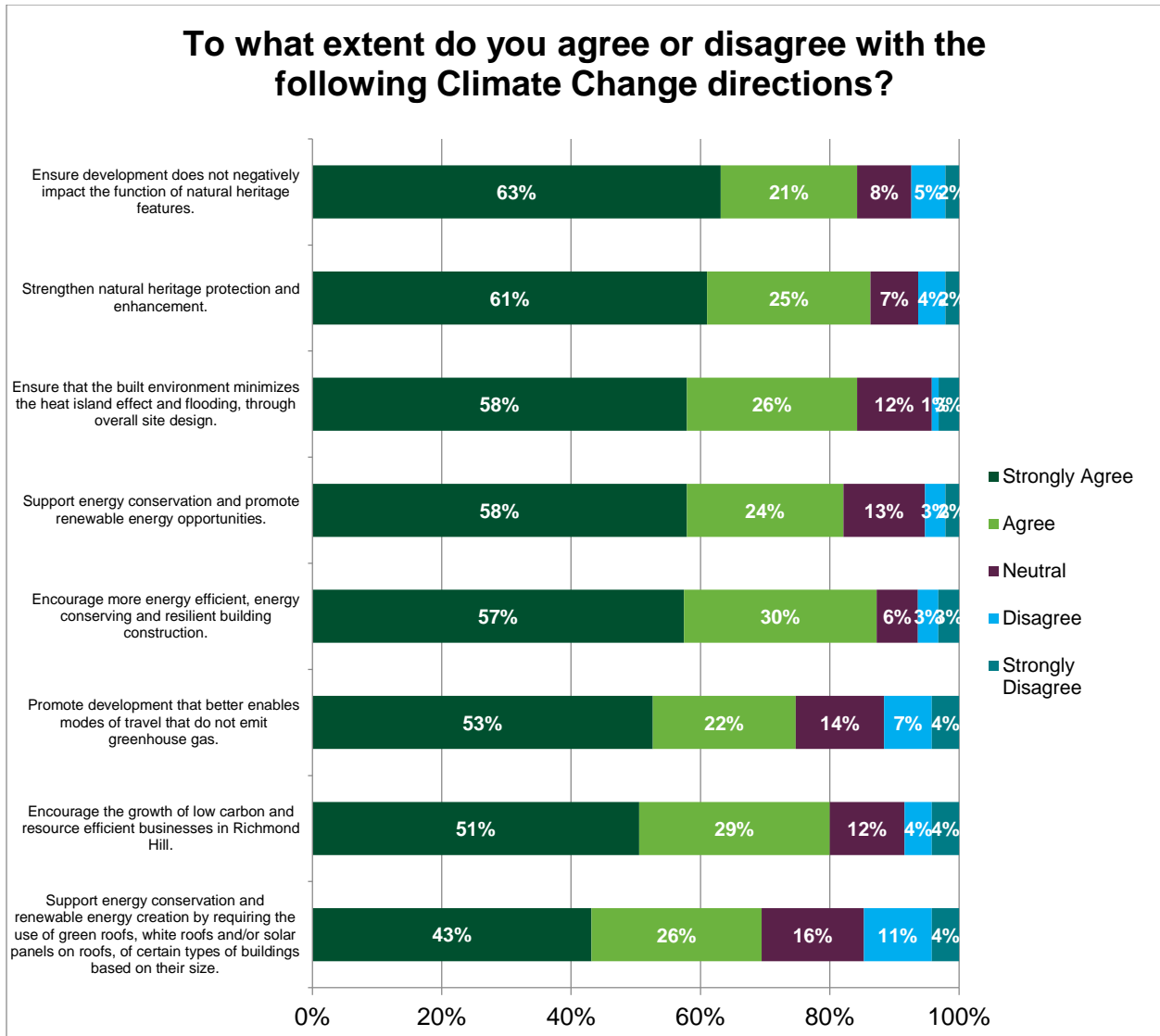


Figure 7: Graph showing participant responses for “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following Climate Change directions?” n=95.

Participants were given the option to identify any other directions relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The following is a thematic summary of responses provided during the open house and in the survey.

**Development Setbacks**

A direction on increasing development setbacks from valleylands to avoid negative impacts from future flooding and increase greenspace was suggested.

**Key Direction Language**

It was noted that the language around the Climate Change direction is too passive towards addressing mitigation. Words such as support, encourage and promote were suggested to be changed to mandate, demand and ensure. Other participants,

however, noted that the language used for the requirement of green roofs was too strong, as implementation in new developments may not be viable in all cases.

Taking a leading role in educating people living in Richmond Hill about climate change was identified as a direction to address mitigation and adaptation.

### **Green Building Practices**

Participants noted the need for a direction to address climate change that requires updated and improved building codes to ensure all new builds respect and protect the environment. Participants identified the need for additional tree and vegetation plantings in new developments. Green roofs and trees on buildings were recommended. The incorporation of vegetation and permeable materials was also identified as a Climate Change direction.

Participants noted that incentives should be provided to land developers and builders to implement green requirements and standards. Additionally, participants noted the importance of retrofitting existing buildings with more efficient design materials, permitting solar or green roof installments, installing electric vehicle charging station and diverting landfill waste by compositing as ways to address climate change. Suggestions included adding solar panels on all City-owned buildings, having an electric vehicle fleet and providing electric vehicle charging stations.

Support was shown towards a direction on underground intensification of development to minimize heating and cooling of buildings.

### **Incentives for Sustainable Practices**

Participants identified the need for a direction that provides incentivized opportunities for businesses to transition to sustainable practices. It was noted that the City could reward individuals or organizations for reaching specific benchmarks in mitigating climate change and reducing their carbon footprint. Additional directions relating to waste disposal improvements were suggested to encourage businesses to reduce waste.

### **Climate Change Adaptation**

More directions addressing climate change adaptation were recommended. It was noted that Richmond Hill needs a Climate Change Adaptation Plan to deal with extreme weather events and reduce the community's greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Urban Expansion and Protection of Green Spaces**

Participants highlighted the importance of direction that stops urban expansion into greenfield areas. Direction to maintain and increase the amount of green space was also identified. Protection of forests was identified as an additional direction to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.

## **Implementation Tools**

The City is updating the Official Plan to improve implementation. In response to this, the City is proposing to enable the use of planning tools by adding or updating policies related to the following items:

### **Inclusionary Zoning**

Create opportunities to adopt new by-law(s) that would require new residential developments to include affordable housing units in areas of the city that are well-served by transit.

### **Demolition and Conversion Control of Rental Housing**

Create an opportunity to adopt a new by-law that could allow the City to limit the demolition or conversion of purpose-built rental housing to preserve the existing rental stock in the City

### **Community Planning Permit System**

Create an opportunity to implement a land use planning tool that municipalities use to make the development approval process more efficient. This tool also helps the City support local community priorities through the use of conditions and creates certainty and transparency around the development process for the community, landowners and developers.

### **Community Improvement Plans**

Create an opportunity to adopt a Community Improvement Plan to support sustainable design measures. Generally, this tool can help revitalize areas within a community by designating a project area and provide programs, such as financial grants, to help meet specific goals and community improvement needs. The City could expand the use of this tool to achieve higher sustainability targets in private developments.

### **Official Plan Amendment Evaluation Criteria**

Create an opportunity to include policies in the Official Plan that explain how a request to amend the Official Plan will be evaluated.

Survey participants were asked whether they had any concerns about the City using any of these tools to implement their vision. As shown in Figure 8, the top response for each of the tools was “Yes”, followed by “No” and “Unsure”. Participants had the most concerns about the implementation of the Community Planning Permit System (47%), Inclusionary Zoning (44%) and Official Plan Amendment Evaluation Criteria (43%).



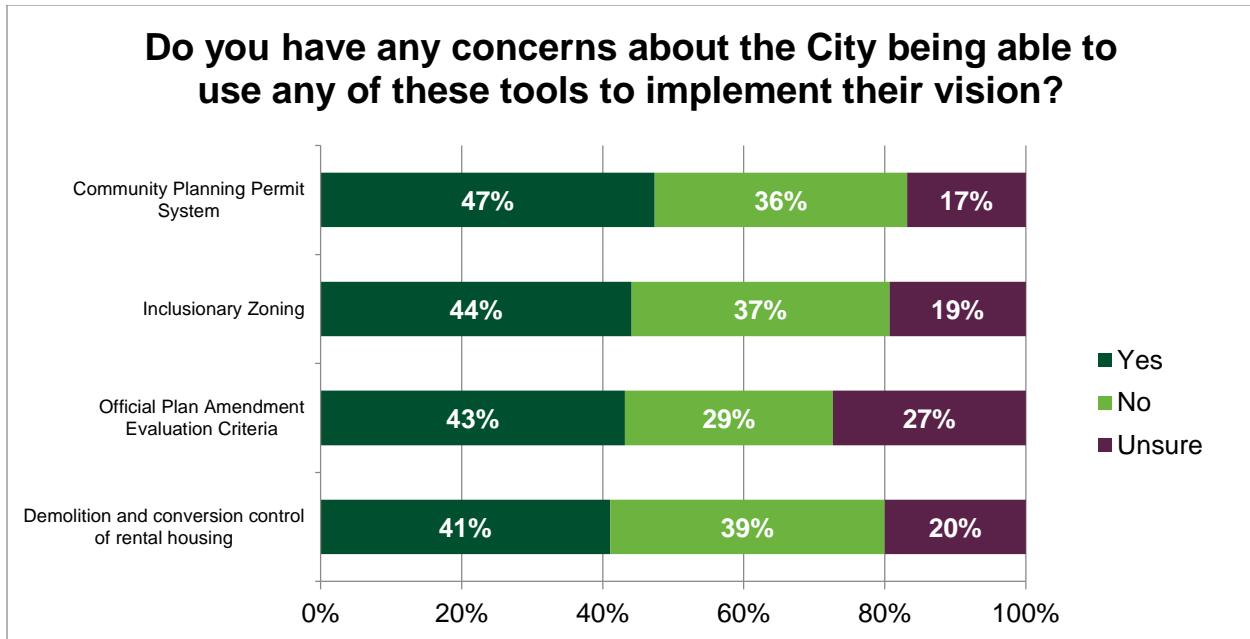


Figure 8: Graph showing participant responses for “Do you have any concerns about the City being able to use any of these tools to implement their vision?” n=95.

Participants were given the opportunity to expand on their concerns about any of the tools. The following is a thematic summary of responses provided during the open house and in the survey, by tool.

### Community Planning Permit System

Several concerns were raised about the Community Planning Permit System favouring and helping developers. Issues relating to transparency and little opportunity for public input were identified. It was recommended that any development needs to be thoughtfully considered and evaluated against the City’s needs for affordability, environment, climate change, water and waste management etc. A suggestion for an ethics committee to oversee the implementation of this tool was made.

Other participants showed support towards this tool but raised concerns that it would not be implemented fast enough.

### Inclusionary Zoning

Participants raised concerns that this tool may not appropriately take into consideration the cost of building affordable housing units.

Suggested alternative means for providing affordable housing included:

- Implementing a market-based strategy to dramatically increase the housing supply, rather than spending government dollars on subsidized housing.
- Adding permissions for housing such as duplexes and triplexes in established neighbourhoods.
- Improving the development approvals process.

Concerns were also raised due to the vagueness of the affordable housing requirement. It was suggested that a certain percentage of affordable units should be required in new developments. Some participants indicated that this percentage needed to be high to allow for more affordable housing. Other participants opposed the requirement of a certain percentage due to concerns on how it could negatively impact development quality.

Some participants raised concerns about living near affordable housing and rental buildings due to the perceived devaluing of their homes.

Concerns were also raised that Inclusionary Zoning could be a tool that favours developers and not the community's needs. Participants noted that the use of this tool could result in intensification above what is identified in the Zoning By-law.

Concerns were also raised that this tool could promote the development of greenfield areas and farmland.

### **Official Plan Amendment Evaluation Criteria**

Participants raised concerns that this tool may not be implemented fast enough.

Some concerns were raised that this tool would favour developers over the community. Participants expressed concern that developers will see the Official Plan as a suggestion that can continuously be changed. It was suggested that any Official Plan Amendments should still reflect the initial intent of the Official Plan. Concerns were also raised that Official Plan amendment criteria will make it easier for developers to get approvals for developments in the Oak Ridges Moraine. Participants raised concerns that resident voices would not be heard with the implementation of this tool.

It was noted that every development site is different and Official Plan Amendments should be evaluated on their own merits. Concern about the possibility of a Minister's Zoning Order to speed up development without a proper Environmental Assessment was also raised.

### **Demolition and conversion control of rental housing**

Concerns about the quality of rental stock in old buildings were raised. It was recommended that the City provide incentives to upgrade rental stock rather than simply preventing owners from demolishing units. Instead of a by-law, it was suggested that incentives be created to achieve the desired amount of rental units and improve the care and upkeep of existing rental buildings.

On the other hand, there was support for such a by-law provided that it could permit building mixed-income housing to add to both affordable and market units, when a rental building is demolished.

Some participants suggested that older rental buildings be torn down to rent out newer condos and townhouses. Other participants did not want to see the removal of any rental housing.

Concerns were raised towards the misuse of this tool to favour new development proposals. Participants noted the importance of controlling house flipping.

### **Community Improvement Plans**

Participants raised concerns that this tool may not be implemented fast enough after adopting the Official Plan update.

Some concerns were raised that this tool would favour developers over the community. A suggestion was made to ensure that all reports required as part of the development application process be vetted by a peer group.

It was noted that until affordable housing is available, Community Improvement Plans are unachievable.

### **Additional Tools**

Participants were also given the opportunity to identify any additional tools that were not listed. The following is a thematic summary of responses.

- Consider re-zoning of residential to mixed use for housing located next to commercial buildings
- Tools to offset height with more greenspace
- Site plan control across the entire city, including architectural control (local ordinances regulating the construction and design of buildings)
- Mandatory pre-application meetings with the planning department
- An urban design review panel
- An infill development tool to encourage collaboration
- A referendum to allow the public to accept or reject proposed projects
- An Environmental Assessment requirement for each development plan proposed
- Transparency for people living in the city on what is being planned.

### **Technical**

The City is making changes to the existing Official Plan to improve clarity and ensure conformity with Provincial and Regional planning policy and legislation. Consultation on these changes will occur through Phase 3 of the Official Plan update process, occurring in 2022.

### Section 3: Who We Heard From

This section provides a summary of the demographic information provided by participants through the survey. A summary of the responses received from workshop registrants on whether they had participated in a prior City Plan 2041 event is included.

#### Description

Participants were asked to select from a list of what best described who they were. As shown in Figure 9, most participants indicated that they lived in Richmond Hill (81%), followed by Live and Work in Richmond Hill (21%) and Other (12%).

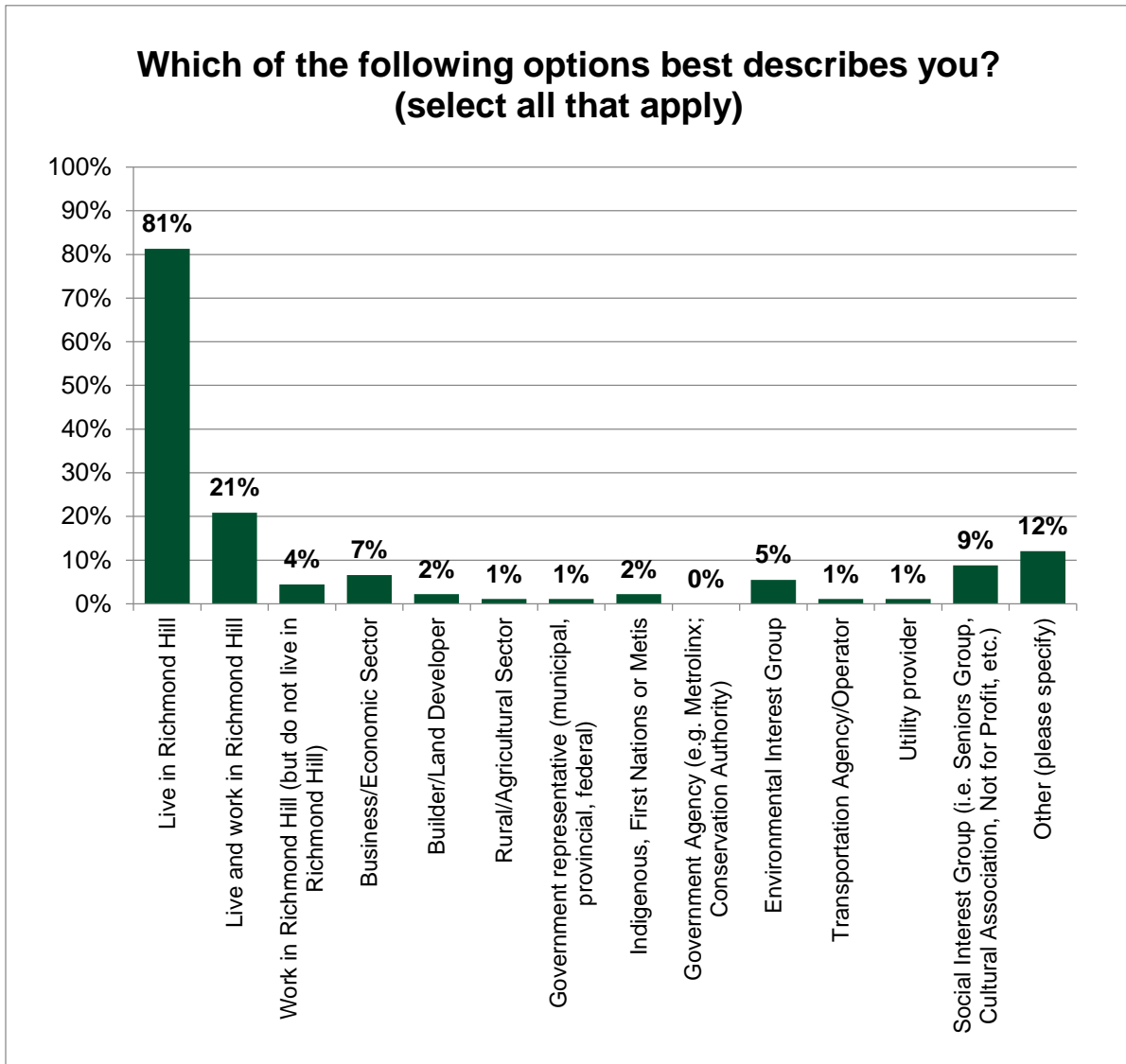


Figure 9: Graph showing participant responses for “Which of the following options best describes you?” n=91.

Participants who selected “Other” Identified the following:

- Research
- Parent
- Retired
- Resident and Landowner
- Self-employed
- Education Sector

### Length of Time Living in Richmond Hill

Participants were asked to indicate the length of time they had lived in Richmond Hill. As shown in Figure 10 below, the majority of survey participants have lived in Richmond Hill for more than ten years (78%), followed by less than five years (10%) and do not live in Richmond Hill (7%).

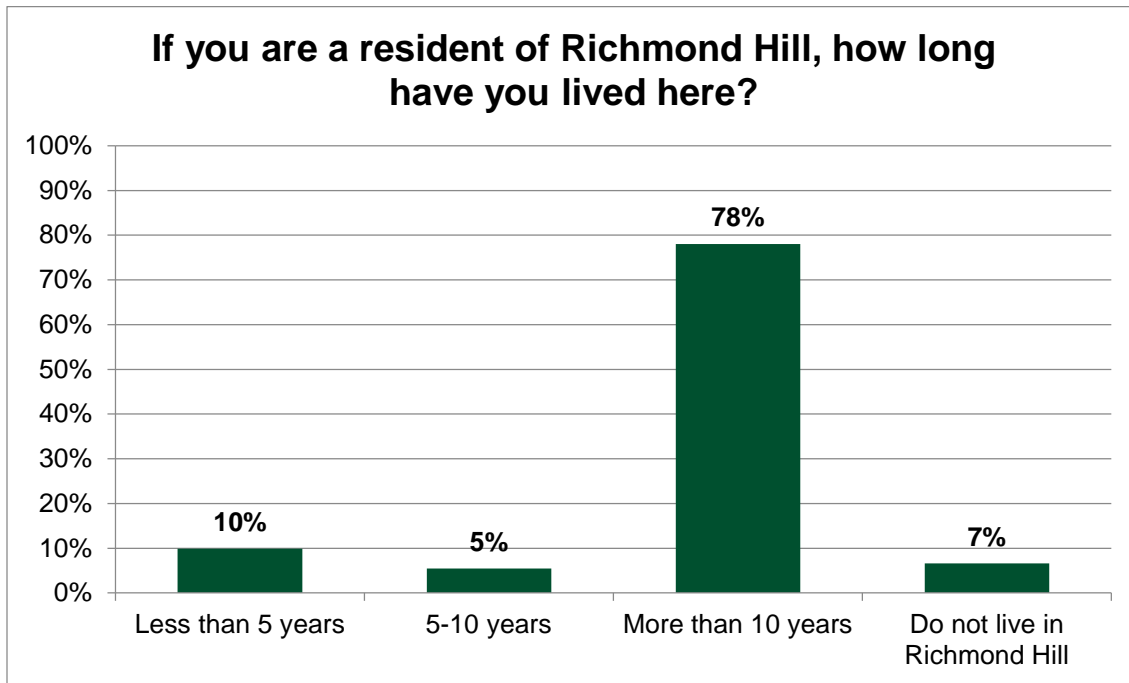


Figure 10: Graph showing participant responses for “If you are a resident of Richmond Hill, how long have you lived here?” n=91

## Age Range

Participants were asked to indicate their age range. As shown in Figure 11, the top three age range groups that participated in the survey were 65 years and over (19%), 35-39 (13%) and 50-54 (11%).

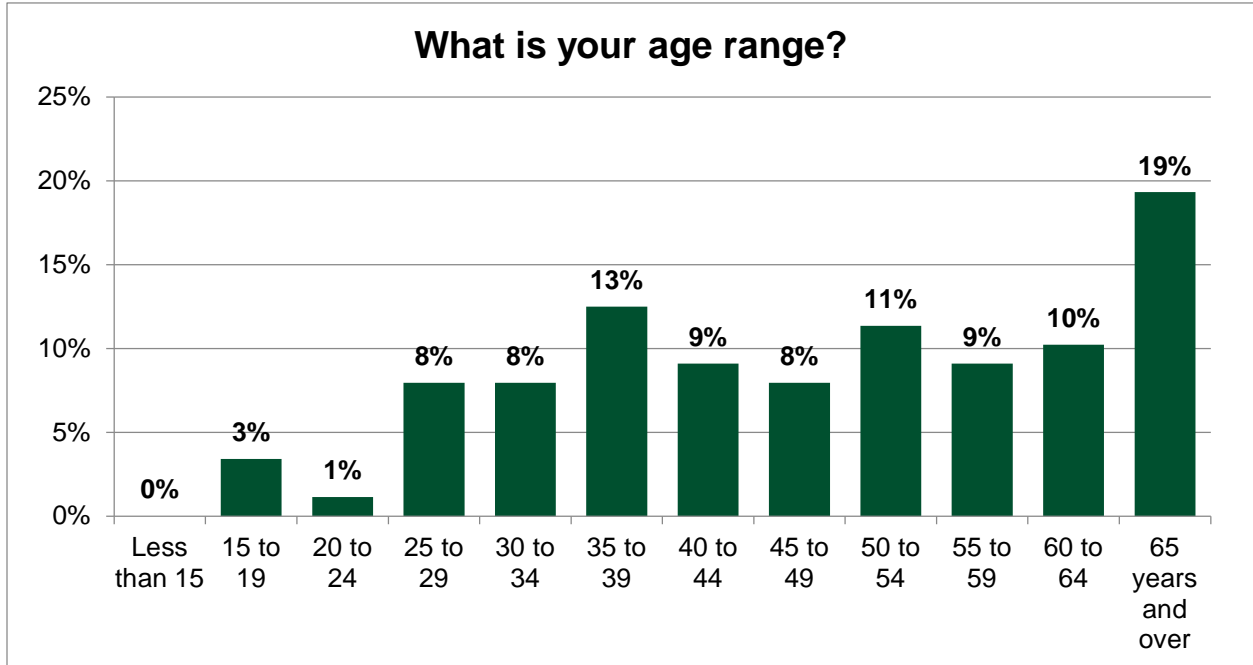


Figure 11: Graph showing participant responses for “What is your age range?” n=88

## Postal Codes

Participants were asked to input their postal codes. Postal code locations are shown in Figure 12, below.

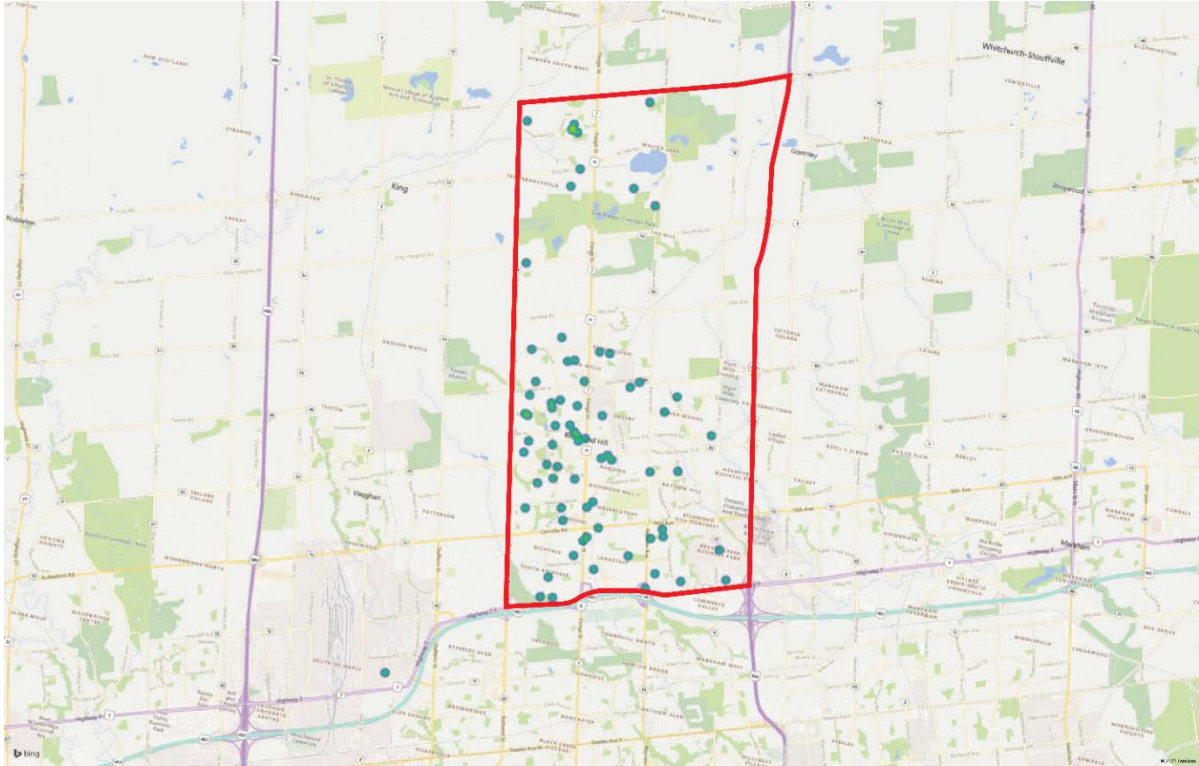


Figure 12: Map showing postal code locations for survey participants? n=76

## Project Involvement

Participants were asked to indicate how they would like to be involved in the project moving forward. As shown in Figure 13, the top three responses were online surveys (84%), virtual public meetings/open houses (67%) and virtual workshops (41%).

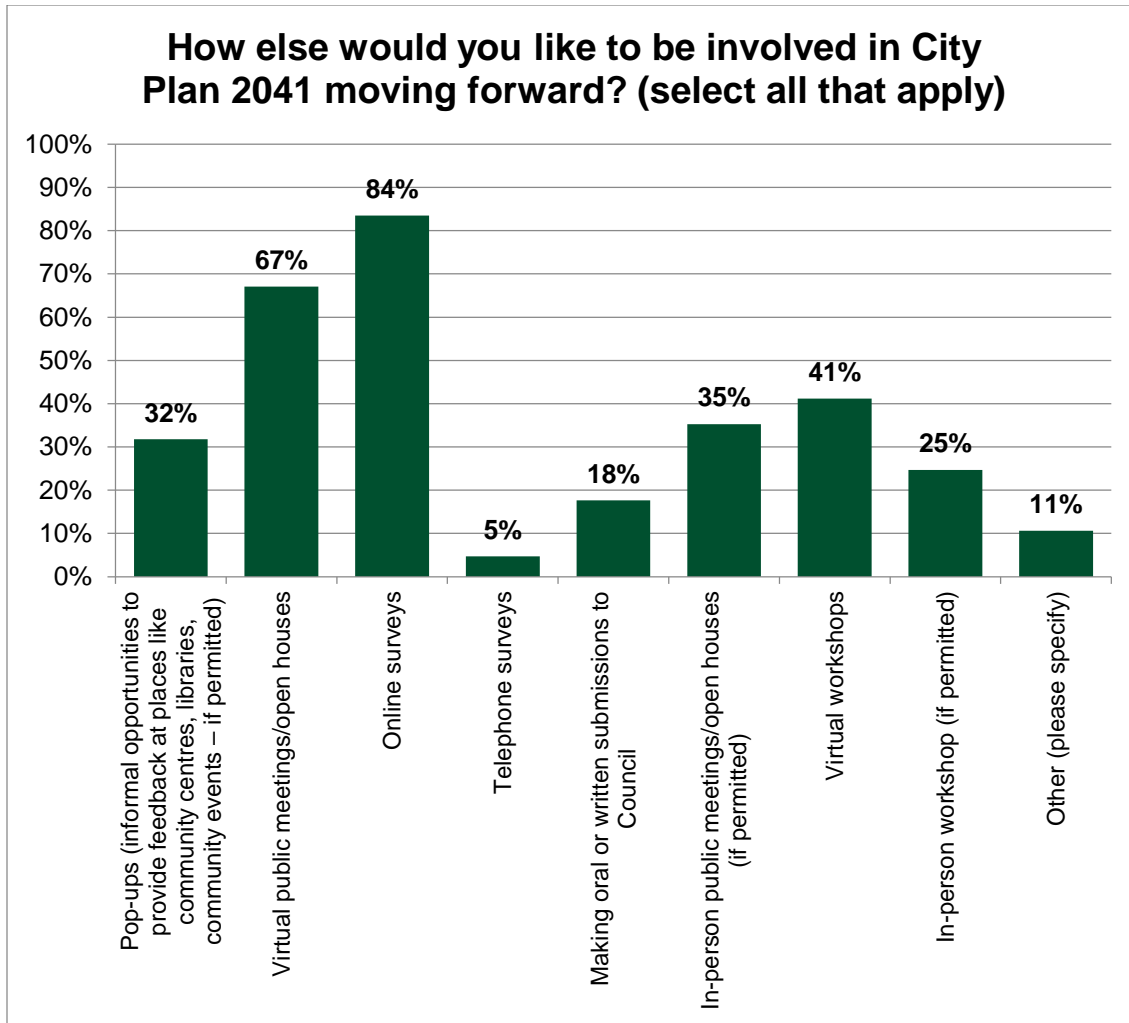


Figure 13: Graph showing participant responses for *How else would you like to be involved in City Plan 2041 moving forward?* n=85

Participants who selected “Other” were asked to expand on their responses. The following is a summary of the answers provided:

- Active on-going engagement at Bathurst and Highway 7 area
- Employment opportunities for the youth as the future of the 2041 plan
- Online information updates
- In-person events

### Participation in a Prior City Plan 2041 Event

When registering for the Emerging Key Directions Open House, participants were given the opportunity to indicate whether they had previously participated in a City Plan 2041 event. As shown in Figure 14, most registrants (55%) had previously attended a City Plan 2041 event.



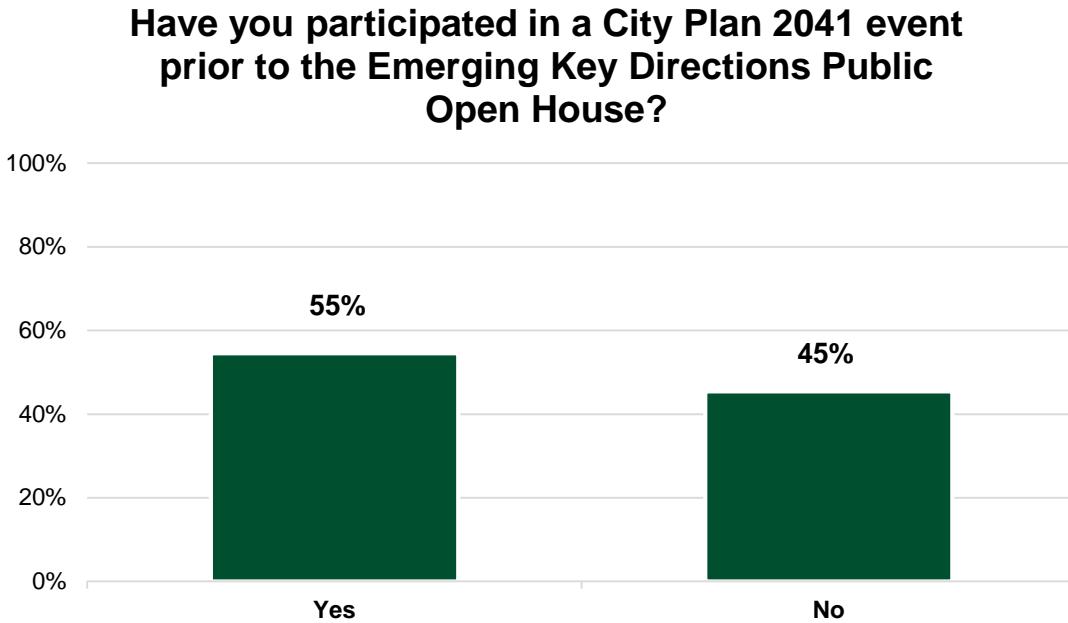


Figure 14: Graph showing participant responses for “Have you participated in a City Plan 2041 event prior to the Emerging Key Directions Public Open House?” n=176.

### Interest in Emerging Key Directions Open House

As part of the Emerging Key Directions Open House, participants were asked why they attended the meeting. As shown in Figure 15, participants cared about all options provided. The top three responses participants cared about the most were neighbourhoods (69%), how the City should develop to suit their lifestyle (66%) and social, economic and environmental sustainability over the long-term (65%).

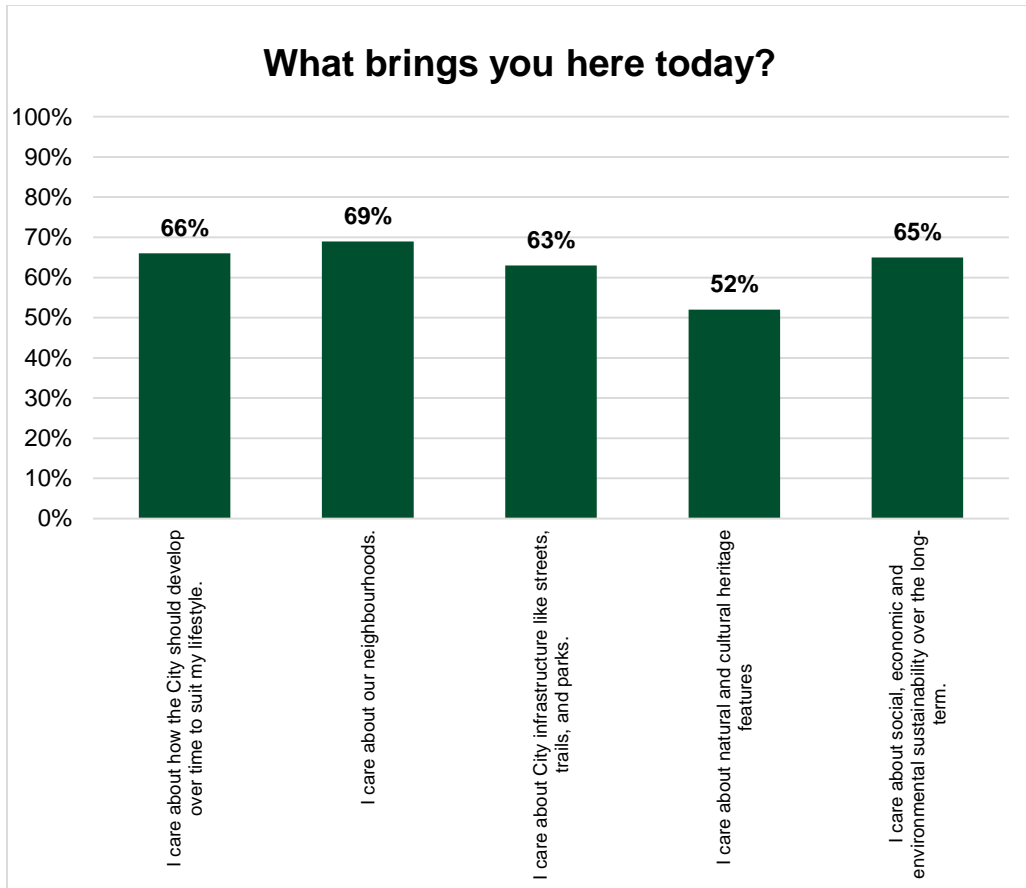


Figure 15: Graph showing participant responses for “What brings you here today?” n=62

## **Section 4: Engagement Process and Communication Methods**

### **Engagement Methods**

The engagement methods used to seek feedback from the community and stakeholders during this phase are detailed below.

#### **Emerging Key Directions Open House**

On October 14, 2021, The City of Richmond Hill hosted the Emerging Key Direction Open House on Zoom. The event began with Acting Mayor Di Paola providing welcoming remarks. This was followed by an introductory presentation from Sybelle von Kursell, Manager, Planning Policy, on the overall context for the City Plan 2041 project. The introduction was followed by the keynote presentation co-presented by David Dixon, Vice President and Urban Places Fellow of Stantec Consulting and Sybelle von Kursell who discussed key directions and opportunities for Richmond Hill. Three facilitated Question and Answer sessions were provided during the keynote presentation.

The event was live-streamed on the City's YouTube channel. The event itself was attended by 100 participants, with 14 watching the live stream. The live stream video was posted on the City's YouTube channel and was viewed 109 times between October 14, 2021, and October 21, 2021. A summary of the launch event, including the questions asked and responses provided, are found in Appendix A.

#### **Online Survey**

Public feedback in this phase was also sought through an online survey hosted on Survey Monkey. A link to the survey was included on the project webpage, social media posts and in emails. The online survey was made available from September 30 to October 21, 2020. The questionnaire focused on the six key directions.

The questionnaire had a total of 107 respondents. Appendix B provides a copy of the full questionnaire. A summary of the questionnaire results is provided in Section 2 of this report.

### **Communication Methods**

The communication methods used to share information on the open house and the online survey are detailed below.

#### **Social Media**

Social Media promoted the Emerging Key Direction Open House and the online survey through the City's Twitter and Facebook accounts with five Twitter posts and one Facebook post. The Facebook post was boosted one time.

#### **Homepage Static Banner**

Notice of the Emerging Key Directions engagement opportunities was posted on the City's Home page from October 4, 2021, to October 21, 2021.

## **Project Webpage**

Notice of the Emerging Key Directions Open House was posted on the project page from September 29, 2021, to October 14, 2021. A link to the survey was provided on the project page from September 29, 2021, to October 21, 2021.

The project webpage provided more information in the City Plan 2041 Official Plan update, including an overview of the project, latest updates and ways to participate.

## **Email**

Emails to prescribed bodies, individuals who subscribed to the sign-up list and individuals who indicated they wanted to be notified about the project were sent out to promote the open house and the survey.

## **News Release**

The City promoted the Emerging Key Directions engagement opportunities through publications in two newspapers. An article in The Liberal and on Yorkregion.com was published on October 8, 2021. A second article was published on the front page of Novae Res Urbis on October 20, 2021. A newspaper ad was also placed in The Liberal on September 30, 2021.

## **Newsletter**

The city promoted the Emerging Key Directions engagement opportunities in the City e-newsletter and the October edition of the internal newsletter.

## **Digital Ads**

The engagement opportunities for this phase were also promoted using digital ads from October 7, 2021, to October 21, 2021.

## **Poster**

Posters promoting the engagement opportunities for this phase were posted at re-opened Richmond Hill community centres from September 29, 2021 to October 21, 2021.

## **Curbex Signs**

The engagement opportunities for this phase were promoted using Curbex signs from October 7, 2021, to October 21, 2021, at three locations across the City.

## **LED Signage**

The project was promoted using the City's LED signs located at all Richmond Hill community centres and arenas. Advertisements were included on the LED signs from September 29, 2021, to October 21, 2021.

## **Section 5: Next Steps**

The feedback received from the Emerging Key Directions Open House, and online surveys inform the second phase of for this Official Plan Update process. In November 2021, the key directions report will be released. This report will be presented to Council for endorsement in December 2021. Phase 3 of the Official Plan update process that continues to involve consultation and adoption of Official Plan Amendments will occur in 2022 and 2023.

## Appendix A: Emerging Key Directions Open House Q&A Summary

At the Emerging Key Directions Open House, attendees were provided three opportunities to ask questions. Each session was themed, based on the key directions presented. The following is a non-verbatim summary of these sessions. Questions are marked with a “Q”, answers with an “A”, and comments with a “C”. Additional response details have been provided as needed.

### Questions on Urban Structure and Built Form

**Q1: What are the key changes proposed to the 2010 Urban Structure?**

**A:** The Urban Structure is not significantly changing from what was established in the 2010 Official Plan. We are proposing to move ahead with three Big Moves: 1) Extending the Yonge Street Intensification Corridor to Bloomington Road as a Regional Mixed-Use corridor; 2) Planning for employment areas to allow mixed-use to happen in certain areas along Yonge Street and Highway 7; and 3) Conversion of a portion of the areas designated as: Parkway Belt West Plan at Bathurst and Highway 7, Neighbourhood at Bayview and Highway 7, and Employment at East Beaver Creek Road and Highway 7, to mixed-use designations. These Big Moves build on our 2041 City Planning Vision and implement Provincial and Regional planning direction.

**Q2: Where have the projected changes in travel behavior assumed in your presentation been achieved outside of inner-city areas?**

**A:** Arlington, Virginia has several examples of communities focusing growth towards walkable centres and corridors. Like Richmond Hill will be, it is served by a subway from downtown Washington, DC. Arlington focused as much growth as possible around the transit stations, then scaled the built form down to the neighbourhoods nearby and created walkable routes (i.e. routes with retail and places to stop and get coffee). As a result, people living in single-family neighbourhoods who used to depend on their car to commute now walk along these streets and use transit. As for most communities, the cost of commuting by transit is roughly half the cost of commuting by car. Households who need to own and operate one less car, because transit is an option, save on average \$5-7,000 annually on household transportation. Travel behavior for suburbs across Washington DC’s Virginia and Maryland suburbs (e.g. Reston, VA, and Alexandria, VA) and suburbs outside of Boston, MA represent additional examples of changed travel behavior following transit and commuter rail extensions

**C1:** Richmond Hill residents like medium density in their city. In the past couple of years, the proposal for the Yonge Street corridor has not had the same density. Richmond Hill does not have the infrastructure to support this density. The City needs to use numbers to guide future development, not these high-density concepts.

**A:** Thank you for your comment. In terms of the update process, this is the table-setting exercise where we establish the framework. When we move to the third phase, we can develop and update policies. That is when the City will get into the details about the appropriate amount of growth and density. We recognize that not all areas in the city are the same and should not be planned in the same way. There are expectations on how these areas should grow and develop. Other infrastructure planning updates are happening in tandem with this process to ensure that development and infrastructure are provided to accommodate that growth. The Regional Official Plan update is also happening in tandem with this process.

**C2:** Height and density are successful when height and density are contained around transit and visibly step down to form appropriate transitions to adjacent neighborhoods. People who choose to take transit move to these areas. This change needs to happen to support nearby neighbourhood areas to provide all residents and workers places where they can walk or bike, to improve their quality of life.

**Q3: How is a “net benefit to the community” (reference on slide 32) measured?**

**A:** Slide 32 is in relation to Built Form, which focuses on how buildings interact with the surrounding neighbourhood and public realm. The idea of “net benefit” is to consider how new development improves a location and can be considered in many ways, for example: does this new development provide new jobs, affordable housing, amenities like courtyards and improved pedestrian access for people to move around within the broader area, are new streets provide to improve access using all modes of travel, does it provide more trees and sustainable design elements to mitigate and adapt to climate change? Through consultation in Phase 3, we can consider the “net benefits” that we would like to see at a city-wide and local scale and work to articulate those within the Official Plan.

**Q4: Building a large building on a lot but putting a bench out front is not a public benefit. Will the method of how community benefit is gauged be written in the Official Plan, or will this be determined on a per-application basis?**

**A:** Development on its own does not necessarily meet Richmond Hill’s goal to create a more complete community. Well planned and managed, development represents a powerful tool for achieving the letter and spirit of the Council’s priorities and the four pillars that are guiding this Official Plan Update. It is what that development can achieve for the community that makes development worthwhile for Richmond Hill. Activities, public facilities and spaces, affordable housing etc. can all add value and become incorporated into new development when adding density to an area.

The Planning Act (section 37) used to provide a tool where community benefits were provided through agreement with the City, where increase in height or density was permitted. The Planning Act now states that the provision of community benefits will be supported by all new high-density residential development. The City is working on a broader strategy on how to establish those community benefits. It will also be established through the Official Plan. If the Official Plan articulates how we want the city to grow and develop, then the expectation is that the benefits will also happen along with development. Through the continued consultation in Phase 3, we will work with the community to identify what defines a net benefit.

**Q5: Will the Yonge Street corridor up to Bloomington Road affect the Oak Ridges Moraine and the groundwater system? There are concerns about Minister’s Zoning Orders where full Environmental Assessments do not occur. There are also concerns about changes to height and density for existing development proposals.**

**A:** Nothing in the Key Directions speaks to harming the environment or veering away from the direction provided in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. Presently, there is a Local Centre designation along Yonge Street in the north end of the city. As part of this process, the City is looking at the potential expansion of that designation. The extent of the Local Area Centre designation and appropriate types of development will be determined in Phase 3. In terms of the enactment of Minister’s Zoning Orders, this is a Provincial decision.

**Q6: Can you explain the difference between a “regional corridor” and a “local corridor”?**

**A:** York Region identifies a regional corridor in their Official Plan as a focus for intensification and growth. In Richmond Hill, regional corridors are along Yonge



Street and Highway 7. A local corridor is identified at the local level as serving the local neighbourhood around it. A local corridor can be found along Major Mackenzie Drive.

**Q7: What is an “R.M.U.C”?**

**A:** That acronym stands for Regional Mixed-Use Corridor.

**Questions on Intensification and Employment**

**Q8: What mechanisms are available to encourage developers to consider alternative mixed-use built forms? What role do developers and commercial leasing companies play to ensure more inviting street-level retail?**

**A:** Developers have an incentive to put uses that people enjoy and invite them into their buildings on the ground floor. A place to get coffee and grab food or a drink—and run into neighbours—is increasingly critical to creating places that attract where people want to live and/or work. It is easier to attract people to the building with those uses. The City can also require active spaces along critical streets. Encouraging uses that activate the street can be done through zoning.

The City is also completing an Investment Attraction Strategy to engage with business and understand the ingredients necessary to attract investment and locate in Richmond Hill. The City is working with developers to develop properties along Centres and Corridors in mixed-use environments. As more and more people live in an area, it becomes more attractive for new businesses to locate in the buildings. As the city further intensifies, it will be easier to bring in those types of uses. Spaces can also be created to adapt to different uses over time.

**Q9: What is a constituent-facing service?**

**A:** In relation to the Key Direction for city-owned lands located at Major Mackenzie and Yonge Street, a constituent-facing service is related to services the City presently provides, such as counter services that are provided at the City’s Municipal Administrative Building at the East Beaver Creek and Highway 7, where they can ask questions about planning, submit applications, pay bills etc. This Key Direction suggests that we consider providing those types of services in a more central location in Richmond Hill at Yonge Street and Major Mackenzie Drive, as this could be a catalyst for other office development in the area and be more convenient for residents and businesses in Richmond Hill.

**Q10: The pandemic has taught us that density is risky. Why are we advocating for that?**

**A:** The spread of COVID-19 has correlated with poverty, not density. The healthiest communities in North America are denser urban cores where people walk more often.

**Questions on Climate Change, Technical and Implementation Tools**

**Q11: To what extent do architectural excellence and design, aesthetic quality and quality building materials fit into “design excellence”?**

**A:** All of those qualify as design excellence. Beyond the visual aspects, design excellence also includes the interaction of built form with public spaces, quality of life, and experiences in a space. As policies are developed, the City will be looking at a criteria-based system rather than a prescriptive system to encourage innovation.

**Q12: How can the Official Plan be made stronger so the ideas discussed by David Dixon can become a reality?**

**A:** This conversation with the public and the messages in the meeting chat help to strengthen the Official Plan framework. In Phase 3, we pull forward these good ideas and develop implementable policies that will allow us to achieve these goals. Other plan updates happening in tandem will help achieve that common vision.

**Q13: Are there any new Key Development Areas (KDA’s) being considered?**

**A:** No new KDA’s have been identified, however, the City has identified areas to propose as Local Centres. The KDA’s at Yonge and 16<sup>th</sup> and Yonge and Bernard are large areas with a lot of intensification and redevelopment potential. Concerning other Centres, the City is thinking of them as Local Centers because of their unique characteristics.

**Q14: When thinking about the concept of corridor intensification, how do corridors become more walkable and livable? Is that possible?**

**A:** Corridors connect Centres. For areas to be walkable, the Centres and Corridors have to have amenities. This can be more challenging in Richmond Hill because the Corridors have a narrower lot depth. Newer development with retail uses at-grade, or office spaces have been happening along Yonge Street, and the City wants to continue to promote that kind of growth along Corridors. This intensification of development along corridors—the housing and other uses located above street level retail—are essential to provide the critical mass of

people necessary to support the retail and similar uses that engage pedestrians and promote walkability.

## Questions Posed in the Chat

During the session, questions were also posed in the chat. Below is a summary of the questions and responses to them, prepared by City staff.

### Neighbourhoods

**Q1: Is there scope for more creative zoning in the 'heart' of our large subdivision blocks? For example, allowing some commercial activity on a small scale on the roads which cut through these subdivisions?**

**A:** The Key Directions related to Neighbourhoods described in the Urban Structure Section of the Key Directions report do suggest exploring opportunities to permit more “neighbourhood commercial” uses within the City’s Neighbourhood land use designation. Staff will consult on how the policies and/or mapping of the Official Plan could be updated to address this suggestion and better respond to the concept of “15-minute” communities.

### Intensification

**Q2: How could we encourage developments (such as large grocery stores with big parking lots) to build ‘up’ to provide intensification?**

**A:** The current OP has identified these type of sites for intensification, there is policy in the OP that speaks to maximum building density and height within these areas. Through the OP Update, we will consider provisions that relate to minimum height and density as well, to encourage these sites to intensify. Utilizing alternative parking approaches (i.e. underground and/or above ground in structures), we can intensify sites and provide necessary parking in relation to existing and new development. Furthermore, through further consultation, and by augmenting our urban design policies in the Official Plan and/or providing more/new guidance in our urban design guidelines, we can create more attractive complete communities in these areas.

### Climate Change

**Q3: With respect to climate change, where does business fit into carbon reduction?**

**A:** The City’s Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) provides a comprehensive list of actions to reduce GHG emissions. These actions are intended to be undertaken by the City as well as by all members of our community, including businesses. For more information about the CEEP, please see: [Richmond Hill’s Path to a Low-Carbon Future \(CEEP\)](#)

The City is also working with the Climate Wise Business Network to promote GHG reduction through building energy efficiency. To learn about this initiative and services provided by the Climate Wise Business Network, please see: [Sustainable Energy - City of Richmond Hill](#)

## Implementation

**Q4: Will Richmond Hill be implementing an Urban Design Review Panel for new development projects?**

**A:** Having an Urban Design Review panel is presently contemplated in the City's Official Plan.

**Q5: Does Richmond Hill plan to implement requirements into mixed use developments for community benefit, such as daycares and community centres?**

**A:** The identification of community benefits appropriate for different locations within the City will be informed by several inputs, including the forthcoming Community Benefits Charge Strategy (in accordance with Section 37 of the Planning Act as amended by Bill 108), the City's Parks Plan, Cultural Plan, Recreational Plan, Transportation Master Plan, and of course this Official Plan update.

**Q6: How realistic are the province's Growth Plan population targets?**

**A:** The Provincial residents and jobs forecast that is provided in a Place to Grow: The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe is based on a methodology that is detailed in the following document: [Technical Report - Greater Golden Horseshoe: Growth Forecasts to 2051, prepared by HEMSON Consulting, August 26, 2020.](#) This methodology considers economic, demographic, social and environmental conditions, as well as the overall regional planning context, and even COVID 19 impacts.

## Appendix B: Online Survey

The following is a sample of the questions and content in the online survey on the key directions.

### Your Opportunity to Help Plan the Future of Richmond Hill!



Building on community input and ideas received earlier this year, the City is launching the second phase of its Official Plan update, also known as City Plan 2041.

The City is now proposing key directions that will form the basis for changes to the City's Official Plan to shape the future of the City's communities and support economic development opportunities.

This survey intends to receive your feedback on proposed key directions. Your feedback will play an important part in confirming that the proposed ideas will address local priorities and changing community needs.

For more information on all of the proposed key directions, you can view the information shared with the Official Plan update Committee on September 21, 2021, at [RichmondHill.ca/OPUpdate](http://RichmondHill.ca/OPUpdate). This survey includes required and optional questions and will take 10 to 20 minutes to complete, depending on the number of comments you wish to provide. The survey will close on October 21, 2021.

The personal information on this survey is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56 (MFIPPA), the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13 and the City of Richmond Hill's Procedure By-law. The information will be used to assist in the development of the Official Update for the City of Richmond Hill. All personal information (as defined by MFIPPA), including (but not limited to) names, addresses, opinions and comments collected, will be made available for public disclosure to members of the public, at meetings, through requests, and through the City's website. Questions about this collection can be directed to: Sybelle von Kursell, Manager of Policy, Planning and Infrastructure Department, 225 East Beaver Creek Road, 4th Floor, Richmond Hill Ontario L4B 3P4, by telephone at 905-771-2472 or by email to [OPUpdate@richmondhill.ca](mailto:OPUpdate@richmondhill.ca).

## Key Directions

The purpose of the key directions is to form the basis for changes to the City’s Official Plan to shape the future of the City’s communities and support economic development opportunities.

As the Official Plan update continues to occur, we aim to better plan our city. The draft key directions build on the vision and four pillars of the Official Plan update.

Through consultation in Phase 1 of the Official Plan update process, the City established its 2041 vision for planning as follows:

“By 2041, the City of Richmond Hill will be the centerpiece of York Region and one of the most prominent, complete communities in the Greater Toronto Area.”

The Four Pillars for updating the Official Plan are described below:



### Grow our Economy

The “Grow our Economy Pillar” looks for ways to increase economic and job growth in Richmond Hill by attracting and retaining talent, allowing for new business opportunities and providing infrastructure to support and expand local businesses.

### Design Excellence

The “Design Excellence Pillar” looks to provide well-designed public and private spaces that are memorable, improve access to community services, and can change in order to adapt to the needs of people and the environment.

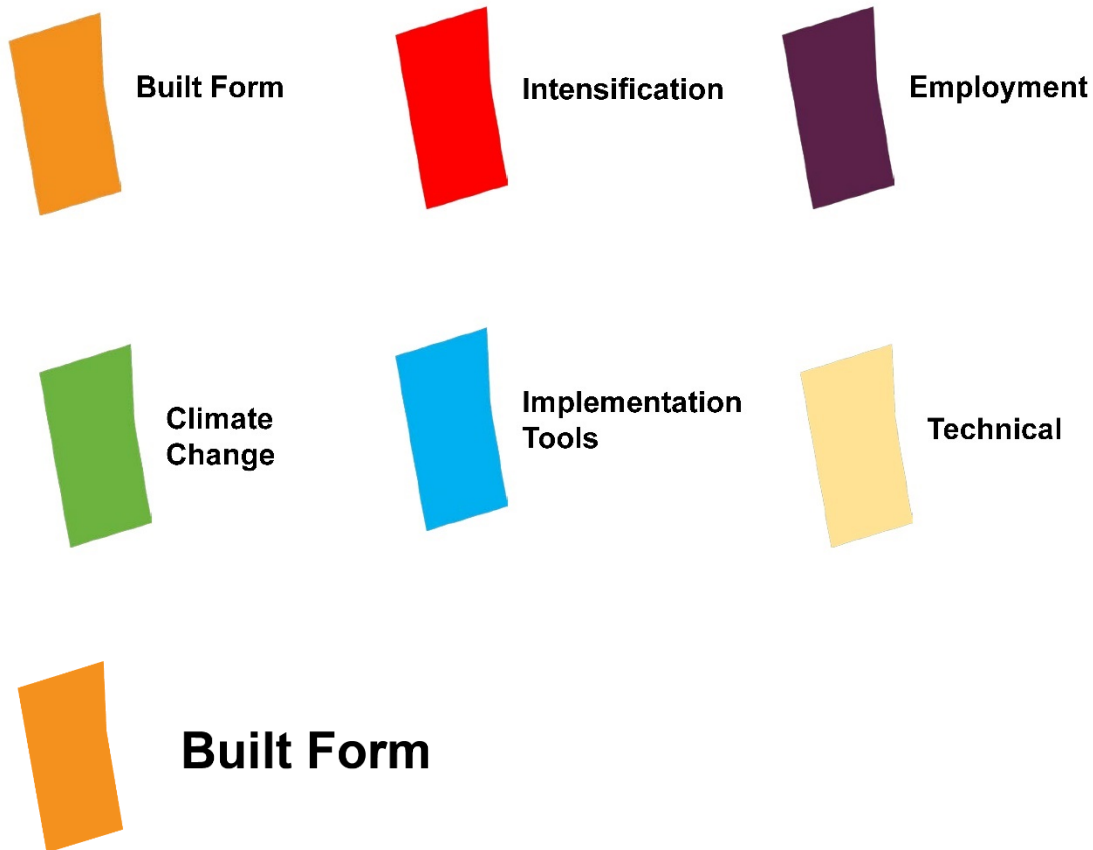
## Green and Sustainable

The “Green and Sustainable Pillar” looks to encourage innovation in “green” building standards, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, use of “green” infrastructure, and protect and expand existing natural areas.

## Protect and Enhance

The “Protect and Enhance Pillar” supports a Richmond Hill “identity” by protecting our cherished places, responding to diverse cultures and lifestyles, supporting a mix of housing types and enhancing civic spaces.

We want to know if we are on the right track! You will be able to provide your feedback on each of the following Key Direction categories in this survey:



The Official Plan provides direction for how and where development should occur across the city. Built Form is about how public and private land uses relate to each other to create places to live, work, innovate, shop and play. Built form policies help to ensure that land use is responsive and adaptive to the future. The City is also looking at the design features needed to create a city that people can take pride in.

The following questions seek feedback on directions relating to Built Form.

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following Built Form directions?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Identify the need for and provide public realm (e.g. streets, parks, recreational facilities, transit, power, schools, etc.) to support growth and ensure that new and existing communities are appropriately served.					
Provide a variety and choice of destinations and communities in our city.					
Increase access to affordable housing.					
Promote development that prioritizes” micro-mobility” (e.g. walking, biking, e-biking, etc.) and transit over private automobile use.					
Respect the character and distinguishing features of neighbourhoods across the city.					
Promote opportunities for a mix of uses (e.g. offices, schools, stores, services, homes, recreational facilities, etc.) within 15-minutes of most residents to support complete communities.					
Promote opportunities for a greater mix of housing types (e.g. duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, live-work units etc.) within neighbourhoods.					



City Plan 2041 – Key Directions Engagement Summary Report

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Protect employment areas for uses that require separation from sensitive uses (e.g. homes, hospitals, schools, nursing homes, etc.) to ensure their long-term prosperity					

2. What other directions do you think should be included relating to Built Form? (optional)



## Intensification

The City wants to plan Centres and Corridors (areas in close proximity to VIVA and some GO stations and areas along major Regional transit roads) to ensure that they support transit, offer a mix of uses for residents and businesses, and to efficiently use land and investments in infrastructure.

The following questions seek feedback on directions relating to Intensification.

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following directions on planning for Centres and Corridors?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Appropriately designate intensification areas and provide more detailed guidance for development in Centres and Corridors.					
Promote building transit supportive hubs along transit corridors, where people can live, work, and play.					
Require a mix of uses and services within Centres including office, commercial, community services, entertainment facilities, etc. along with residential development.					
Ensure development along the Corridors provides connections between centres – creating a cohesive sense of place.					
Plan for and provide public realm elements (e.g. parks, public squares, etc.) that support density.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Promote opportunities for a mix of uses (e.g. offices, schools, stores, services, homes, recreational facilities, etc.) within 15-minutes of most residents to support complete communities.					
Promote opportunities for a greater mix of housing types (e.g. duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, live-work units etc.) within neighbourhoods.					
Plan for and provide public realm elements (e.g. street trees, benches, lighting etc.) that support” micro-mobility.”					

4. What other directions related to intensification do you think should be included when planning for Centres and Corridors? (optional)



## Employment

The City is providing necessary land use direction to ensure that jobs are available for people living in Richmond Hill, that existing businesses can grow, and that new business can establish themselves and prosper.

The following questions seek feedback on directions relating to employment.

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following directions?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Promote business attraction and retention through Official Plan policies that are responsive to the needs of businesses who choose to invest in Richmond Hill.					
Promote development of spaces that are flexible in their use and can evolve overtime as the business industry changes.					
Provide greater flexibility of permitted uses within employment areas.					
Promote urban design that make employment areas attractive for employees.					
Promote urban design that make employment areas attractive for business investment and expansion.					

6. What other Employment-related directions do you think should be included to ensure that jobs are available for people living in Richmond Hill, that existing business are able to grow, and that new businesses are able to establish and prosper? (optional)



## Climate Change

The City is providing direction to support climate change mitigation (reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (adjusting to current and future climate) in planning our city.

The following questions seek feedback on directions relating to climate change.

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following directions?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Strengthen natural heritage protection and enhancement (e.g. increasing tree canopy, supporting biodiversity, preserving habitats).					
Ensure development does not negatively impact the function of natural heritage features.					
Promote development that better enables modes of travel that do not emit greenhouse gas.					
Encourage the growth of low carbon and resource efficient businesses in Richmond Hill.					
Encourage more energy efficient, energy conserving and resilient building construction.					
Ensure that the built environment minimizes the heat island effect (retention of heat in an area due to large amounts of pavement and concrete) and flooding, through overall site design.					
Support energy conservation and promote renewable energy opportunities – e.g. district energy, solar, anaerobic digester, and renewable natural gas.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Support energy conservation and renewable energy creation by requiring the use of green roofs (a layer of planted vegetation on a roof), white roofs (a roof painted white or made of white materials that reflect light) and/or solar panels on roofs, of certain types of buildings based on their size.					

8. What other directions do you think the Official Plan should provide to address matters related to climate change mitigation and adaptation? (optional)



## Implementation Tools

The City is updating the Official Plan to improve implementation. In response to this, the City is proposing to enable the use of planning tools by adding or updating policies related to the following items:

### Inclusionary Zoning

- Create opportunities to adopt new by-law(s) that would require new residential developments to include affordable housing units in areas of the city that are well-served by transit.

### Demolition and Conversion Control of Rental Housing

- Create an opportunity to adopt a new by-law that could allow the City to limit the demolition or conversion of purpose-built rental housing to preserve the existing rental stock in the city

### Community Planning Permit System

- Create an opportunity to implement a land use planning tool that municipalities use to make the development approval process more efficient. This tool also

helps the City support local community priorities through the use of conditions and creates certainty and transparency around the development process for the community, landowners and developers.

**Community Improvement Plans**

- Create an opportunity to adopt a Community Improvement Plan, which is a tool that can help revitalize areas within a community by designating a project area and providing programs, such as financial grants, to help meet specific goals and community improvement needs. The City could expand the use of this tool to achieve higher sustainability targets in private developments.

**Official Plan Amendment Evaluation Criteria**

- Create opportunity to include policies in the Official Plan that explain how a request to amend the Official Plan will be evaluated.

9. Do you have any concerns about the City being able to use any of these tools to implement their vision?

	Yes	No	Unsure
Inclusionary Zoning			
Demolition and conversion control of rental housing			
Community Permit Planning System			
Official Plan Amendment Criteria			

10. If you have concerns about any of the above tools, please expand on them below. (optional)

11. Are there any additional planning tools, not listed, that the City should consider?



**Technical**

The City is making changes to the existing Official Plan to improve clarity, and to ensure conformity with Provincial and Regional planning policy and legislation. The City is proposing to make the following changes:

Update policies, mapping and definitions to conform with applicable Provincial Plans and the York Region Official Plan.

Add figures, appendices and sidebars to assist with policy implementation and interpretation.

Clarify policies where there have been implementation and or interpretation challenges.

Respond to Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) direction regarding engagement with Indigenous communities.

Consultation on these changes will occur through Phase 3 of the Official Plan update process, occurring in 2022.

### **Tell Us a Bit About Yourself**

The following questions are all optional and will help understand who has responded to this survey.

9. Which of the following options best describes you? (select all that apply)

- a. Live in Richmond Hill
- b. Live and work in Richmond Hill
- c. Work in Richmond Hill (but do not live in Richmond Hill)
- d. Business/Economic Sector
- e. Builder/Land Developer
- f. Rural/Agricultural Sector
- g. Government representative (municipal, provincial, federal)
- h. Indigenous, First Nations or Metis
- i. Government Agency (e.g. Metrolinx; Conservation Authority)
- j. Environmental Interest Group
- k. Transportation Agency/Operator
- l. Utility provider
- m. Social Interest Group (i.e. Seniors Group, Cultural Association, Not for Profit, etc.)
- n. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. If you are a resident of Richmond Hill, how long have you lived here?

- a. Less than 5 years
- b. 5-10 years
- c. More than 10 years



- d. Do not live in Richmond Hill

11. What is your age range?

- a. Less than 15
- b. 15 to 19
- c. 20 to 24
- d. 25 to 29
- e. 30 to 34
- f. 35 to 39
- g. 40 to 44
- h. 45 to 49
- i. 50 to 54
- j. 55 to 59
- k. 60 to 64
- l. 65 years and over
- m.

12. Postal code: \_\_\_\_\_

Example: L4B3P4

13. How else would you like to be involved in City Plan 2041 moving forward? (select all that apply)

- a. Pop-ups (informal opportunities to provide feedback at places like community centres, libraries, community events – if permitted)
- b. Virtual public meetings/open houses
- c. Virtual workshops
- d. Online surveys
- e. Telephone surveys
- f. Making oral or written submissions to Council
- g. In-person public meetings/open houses (if permitted)
- h. In-person workshop (if permitted)
- i. Other \_\_\_\_\_

14. Are you interested in finding out more? Sign up for the project notification list, if you have not done so already.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address\*: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!**

For more information, please visit [RichmondHill.ca/OPUpdate](http://RichmondHill.ca/OPUpdate)