BIRD FRIENDLY

APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION

Scoring and Evaluation Rubric Version 2.0 • June, 2025

BIRD FRIENDLY CITY

CERTIFIED BY NATURE CANADA

CITY REPRESENTED: Richmond Hill, ON

DATE OF SUBMISSION: September 2026

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please take a few moments to review the below preamble and Bird Friendly City criteria.
2. Either copy and paste the information below into your preferred collaborative word-processing document or download the Word document version.
3. Provide relevant information needed for each criteria where indicated.
4. Upon completion, please send your completed document to Autumn Jordan, Senior Organizer - Bird Friendly City by email at: ajordan@naturecanada.ca

PREAMBLE

WHO CAN APPLY?

The Bird Friendly City Canada Standard generally applies to cities with **populations over 30,000**. Cities (municipalities) that have populations between 15,000 and 30,000 have the option of applying for this standard or for the small municipality standard.

The applicant municipality must have its own elected Council with typical municipal powers. To obtain Bird Friendly status, a certain number of points must be obtained in each category of criteria. The level that an applicant is awarded is equivalent to the lowest level achieved in each of the three categories of criteria (threat reduction, habitat protection, restoration and climate resilience, and community outreach/education).

Many of the criteria include evidence of a policy and evidence of implementation of the policy. In many cases, actions to meet a criterion are community-based (not government). It is a good exercise for Bird Teams during the application process to identify those actions that can be implemented by community members and those that require implementation by the municipality or some other level of government.

Generally all of the points are awarded contingent on evidence in support of the action. However, points can be rewarded even if the action has not been completed, as long as there is strong evidence that a process to implement or complete the action is underway.



MANDATORY CRITERIA

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M-1: ESTABLISHMENT OF BIRD TEAM

DESCRIPTION

Establish a Bird City Team (standing committee) to drive the project forward. Try to ensure that your team represents different perspectives and has a liaison with the municipality.

SCORING INDICATORS

Provide a list of the bird team members, affiliations and contact information.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

Bird Friendly Richmond Hill is the City of Richmond Hill's official Bird Team, co-lead by Kathleen Wong and Cheryl Lewandowski; and their municipal liaison is Diana Shermet.

There are approximately 65 bird team members, and around 10 members are very active. A list of the members is below:

- Caterina Liberatore
- Eva Song
- Nathan Au
- Elaine Gu
- Lian Karmiol
- Howard Pang
- Peter Lau
- Sayed Haiderzadeh
- Shirley Dren
- Adriana Beaumont
- Cheryl Lewandowski
- Kathleen Wong
- Karen Oreto
- Parnian Safaraifard
- Gloria Reszler
- Monica M
- Walter Watt
- Nicolas Moreno Tanaka
- Nilya Adab
- Mireille Mouscardy
- Lina Corcacchia & Frank Melino
- Jim Wooller
- Natasha K
- Sheri-Anne Harrison
- Paula Gianasi
- Paricia Hernandy
- Lily
- Sue Foerster
- Norma McCullough

- Komal
- Anurita
- Peggy Bowman
- Johnny Kwok
- Anne Chiang
- Katerina Khit
- Jen Lau
- Gwen Johnstone
- Diane Thomspon
- Steve Liu
- Karin Lynett
- Lynda Muir
- A. J. Wang
- Dina Papadimitriou
- Gary Chan
- Megha Kapoox
- Kristen
- Jackie Low
- Kathrine Mabley
- Thomas Kim
- Simone Granieri
- Zoe
- Shima
- Shahrzad
- Kmnd
- Fatima
- Nargs
- Razieh
- Cresencia
- Samar Esmaelian
- Keivan Mesgari
- ZeinabHAllajian
- Debu H.
- Jung Kang Park
- Katarina Keanie
- Vrajesh Mehta

M-2: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, LAND AND INCLUSION

DESCRIPTION

We recognize that all of Canada is still within the traditional territory or unceded territory of Indigenous Peoples. Through respect of this fact, and the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples, an Indigenous perspective should be included in this program if possible. We encourage prospective applicant bird teams to seek this perspective as is possible. Bird teams must identify the Indigenous traditional territory (ies) of the municipality and invite it/them to participate in the initiative.

SCORING INDICATORS

Provide the name of the relevant Indigenous Nation(s) and report on the outcome of an invitation to participate in the initiative. Reporting on progress of having an Indigenous perspective on the Bird Team is an annual requirement.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

Council adopted Richmond Hill's first official Land Acknowledgement Statement in 2023, which was developed in consultation with Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN).

"Richmond Hill is located on the Treaty lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Mississauga and Chippewa Nations of the Williams Treaty; Richmond Hill is also part of the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee and the Huron-Wendat Nation."

As part of Richmond Hill's Official Bird Friendly City Bird poll (2024/25), we engaged Mississauga's of the Credit First Nation and Hiawatha First Nation to provide relevant choices of birds as well as the Ojibwe/Anishinaabemowin names for each.

In 2026, the City has engaged our William's Treaty and Mississauga Rights Holders on our Natural Heritage Strategy, which looks to identify opportunities for restoration, ecological connectivity and land securement.

For Planning and Infrastructure projects the Province has delegated the City of Richmond Hill the "Duty to Consult". As the City is the proponent, the City engages Indigenous Peoples who have traditional and territorial claims such as MCFN Treaty 13 Rights Holders and Williams Treaties Nation and holds monthly meetings to discuss items, including development applications and Official Plan updates.

In addition to ongoing engagement with the Nations whose traditional territories include Richmond Hill, the City also works collaboratively with local Indigenous communities and organizations to support Indigenous-led initiatives, strengthen relationships, and incorporate Indigenous perspectives into municipal programs and projects.

Recent projects include:

- Waterway signage where the City worked with MCFN to create translation signage identifying the Don, Rouge, and Humber Rivers in Ojibway. The signs feature artwork of three common fish species which inhabit these waterways, including the Redside Dace, Bluntnose Minnow and the Mottled Sculpin. The artwork was created by Indigenous artist Tracey Anthony.
- Medicine Gardens, a partnership between the City and Miskwaadesi Studio to create a network of Indigenous medicine gardens that will serve as living classrooms, cultural gathering spaces and help increase local access to Indigenous medicines.

For more information: https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/learn-more/indigenous-partnerships.aspx

M-3: FORMAL MUNICIPAL SUPPORT

DESCRIPTION

Pass a council resolution nominating or supporting your municipality's efforts to be a Bird Friendly City OR a letter of support from a high-ranking city official (latter only applies to entry level).

SCORING INDICATORS

Willingness to pass council resolution within the first year of certification OR a letter of support for the certification program from a high-ranking city official (mayor, CEO, etc.). Intermediate and High status require a Council resolution.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

Richmond Hill received Municipal support from the Member's Motion endorsing the City's efforts to become a Bird Friendly City that was unanimously passed in 2023.

Bird Friendly practices were added as an action item within the City's updated Environment Strategy (2022), which is also council endorsed.

Attachment:
RH_M3_FormalMunicipalSupport_March22nd_COW_Minutes

M-4: ANNUAL REPORT

DESCRIPTION

Once your municipality has been accorded Bird Friendly City status, the Bird Team must provide an annual report card on activities related to your Bird Friendly City status. Download Report cards from the Bird Friendly City website or request from Nature Canada staff.

SCORING INDICATORS

Provide an Annual Report card by your municipality's one-year certification anniversary.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City and Bird Friendly Richmond Hill have prepared report cards for the Bird Friendly Program annually since its certification in 2023.

In addition, the City reports on actions related to bird friendly initiatives through its existing programming, such as the annual Environment Strategy report and annual update to Council on the progress of the actions.

Attachments:

- RH_M4_2024 Environment Strategy Progress Report Staff Report
- RH_M4_2025 Environment Strategy Progress Report Staff Report
- RH_M4_2026 Environment Strategy Progress Report Staff Report
- RH_M4_2024BirdFriendlyReportCard
- RH_M4_2025BirdFriendlyReportCard

M-5: WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

DESCRIPTION

Hold a World Migratory Bird Day event annually to celebrate birds in your municipality. Municipalities applying for the first time must hold a Bird Day within the year of application and continue the event to maintain status.

SCORING INDICATORS

Provide proof of the event and Mayor's or Council proclamation in support of Bird Day.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City, in partnership with the Richmond Hill Public Library and Bird Friendly Richmond Hill, has held an annual World Migratory Bird Day event since 2024.

The events have been held at the Central Library and focus on the WMBD theme each year. The following events have occurred:

- 2024 - Birds & Bugs Bonanza, May 11, 2024
- 2025 - Bird Friendly Festival: Shared Spaces, May 2nd, 2025
- 2026 - Bird Friendly Festival: Every Bird Counts, May 9th, 2026

Bird Friendly Richmond Hill has also held bird walks in 2025 (May 10th) and 2026 (June 16th) in partnership with TRCA and Wild Birds Unlimited Newmarket to raise awareness on threats to birds and to spark interest and understanding in observing our feathered friends.

In addition, the City has proclaimed World Migratory Bird Day annually since 2024, on it's website: https://eservices.richmondhill.ca/proclamations/

M-6: PROGRAM VISIBILITY

DESCRIPTION

Include information about Bird Friendly City on the City website where it can be easily found, once certification is accorded.

SCORING INDICATORS

Provide a link and proof of posting. This is expected to happen during the annual report or when as city re-applies for certification.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

See link to City of Richmond Hill's Bird Friendly City website: Richmondhill.ca/Birds

The City's Greening the Hill social media accounts are the Sustainability team's dedicated communication channels, highlighting initiatives related to sustainability, climate change, natural environment and urban forestry – including bird conservation, bird education, and related community events:

- https://www.facebook.com/GreeningtheHillRH
- https://x.com/GreeningtheHill

In addition, Bird Friendly Richmond Hill has Facebook and Instagram accounts to engage residents:

- https://www.facebook.com/BirdFriendlyRichmondHill/
- https://www.instagram.com/birdfriendlyrhill/

M-7: RENEWAL

DESCRIPTION

Bird Friendly City Certification status will last three years, after which you must reapply. Each application can use and build-on past applications, but must show evidence of progress over time. No evidence of progress will result in rejecting the application or dropping a certification level.

SCORING INDICATORS

Submit an application for renewal. Applications for renewal are due by the September or February application window that follows the three years of their most recent application's acceptance and their recognition as a Bird Friendly City.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

Staff commit to renewing their application as required every three years.



SECTION 1:
THREAT REDUCTION

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1.1 (A) OWNED CATS

DESCRIPTION

Regulatory and educational measures taken to help control and reduce populations of cats roaming at large:
a) Coordinated efforts directed at cat owners to reduce the number of owned cats outside such as educational campaigns, licensing and no-roam bylaws.

SCORING INDICATORS

One point for a no-roam bylaw (i.e. owned cats not allowed to roam at large), one point for evidence of enforcement of the bylaw, and one point for an educational campaign targeting residents to make them aware of the bylaw. High-level certification requires proof of a no-roam bylaw on all three indicators.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

In 2025, the City updated its animal control by-laws and introduced the Responsible Pet Ownership By-Law. This by-law repeals the city's previous Animal Control By-laws (Animal Trespassing (306), Cat Keeping (309), Dog Licensing (314) and Animal Keeping (304). It acts to modernize and consolidate these versions for simplicity, and all the animal-related regulations are captured within the one by law.

In terms of education, the City ran a post-enactment communication plan to educate the public on the new by-law. This included:

- Digital advertisements on social media platforms/other websites
- Advertisements on LCD displays inside condos and within City owned facilities such as Municipal Offices (East Beaver Creek) and community centres
- Updated city webpages highlighting the new by-law and its updated requirements (e.g. cat licensing)
- Distributed informational posters to community centres, pet stores and veterinary clinics
- installed mobile signs near City streets with promotional messaging

Education also remains on-going with By-Law Enforcement and Vaughan Animal Services (VAS) as part of regular enforcement (e.g. proactive patrols in City parks). As part of its responsible pet ownership messaging, the City encourages residents to keep cats on their own property and avoid roaming and trespassing to keep them safe, noting that free-roaming cats can result in property damage and harm to both wildlife and the cats themselves. This messaging supports responsible pet ownership while also helping reduce potential impacts of free-roaming cats on local wildlife, including birds. For more information visit:

- https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/living-here/responsible-pet-ownership.aspx

Lastly, the City continues to provide information through Greening the Hill social media communications, public community events and community centre displays.

Attachments:

- RH_1.1A_2025 Responsible Pet Ownership and Staff Report
- RH_1.1A_1.7_Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law No. 22-25

1.1 (B) UNOWNED CATS

DESCRIPTION

Within the municipality, there is an active strategy to reduce populations of unowned (feral) cats and mitigate their threat to birds (e.g. removing feral colonies from areas of high bird importance).

SCORING INDICATORS

One point for evidence of active, municipal-wide strategies and actions that demonstrate progress on reducing the population of unowned cats. A second point for proof of efforts to remove feral cats from important bird habitats where they present increased risk to birds. An example would include relocating feral cats to areas such as a cat sanctuary, where they do not pose risks to wildlife.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City has a partnership with Vaughan Animal Services (VAS), and VAS enforces the City's Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation by-law. In regards to stray cats, VAS provides the City with the following service:

- All stray cats, whether domestic or feral are scanned for microchips, tattoos, or other identifying information upon intake. If an owner is identified, VAS will make arrangements for return. Cats requiring urgent care are taken to a partnered veterinary clinic; others are admitted to the shelter and placed on a mandatory stray hold.
- Under the Animals for Research Act (Ontario), the stray hold is a minimum of three (3) days (excluding the day of intake and closure days). Where feasible, VAS extends this to five (5) days to allow additional time for owner redemption. Proof of ownership is required for all claims.
- Following the hold period, cats are assessed on a case-by-case basis for behaviour and health. Suitable cats are vaccinated (including rabies), microchipped, and spayed or neutered prior to adoption. VAS has, in some cases, worked with rescue partners to place feral cats, based on available resources.

Attachment:

- RH_1.1B_VAS_Richmond Hill - Feral & Stray Cats Procedure

1.1 (C) MONITORING OF ROAMING CATS DESCRIPTION

DESCRIPTION

(C)The Bird Team and/municipality either has, or is a partner in programs/projects to estimate the number and/or distribution of cats outdoors so that progress on reducing the populations of outdoor cats can be tracked over time.

SCORING INDICATORS

One point for proof of implementation of a cat counting/estimating protocol to establish baseline numbers or to compare with baseline numbers. Data collected from shelters that demonstrate trends showing fewer cats over time is acceptable.

** Note that this criterion does not apply to municipalities in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories or the Yukon.*

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City does not currently have a monitoring program for roaming cats.

1.2 (A) WINDOW COLLISIONS – NEW CONSTRUCTION

DESCRIPTION

Demonstrate that your municipality is taking measures to reduce window collisions by:
a) Developing and implementing bird friendly design standards/CSA Bird Friendly Building Design standard for new construction

SCORING INDICATORS

Proof of each action required.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

(A) One point if a municipality has a bird-friendly building design standard that is a guideline, and two points if the standard is a requirement.

**Note: High-level status requires that a municipality have, at least, a guideline.*

In 2024 Council endorsed mandatory Bird-Safe Design Standards for new private and public buildings in Richmond Hill. The standards can be found here: https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/learn-more/resources/RICHMOND_HILL_BIRD-SAFE-DESIGN-STANDARDS_FINAL_2024_05_22.pdf

The City's Official Plan (2025) also has policies to encourage bird-safe design:

- 3.2.3(20): To reduce light pollution, development shall be encouraged to design lighting according to dark sky compliant standards.
- 3.2.3(21): To reduce the collision of birds against windows, development shall be encouraged to incorporate bird-friendly design strategies, including reduced reflectivity and transparency of windows.

Attachment:

- RH_1.2A_SRPBS.24.018 - Bird-Safe Design Standards Recommendations Report

1.2 (B) WINDOW COLLISIONS – EXISTING AND PROPOSED MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

DESCRIPTION

(B) Assessing and mitigating risk to birds from existing and proposed municipal buildings.

SCORING INDICATORS

One point if individuals or a group monitors window collisions, and/or assess risk by using BirdSafe, or a similar program.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

In 2024 the City initiated a bird-collision monitoring pilot project at the Richmond Hill Public Library – Central Branch to In 2024 the City initiated a bird-collision monitoring pilot project at the Richmond Hill Public Library – Central Branch to inform potential bird-safe retrofits. Monitoring has occurred during spring and fall migratory seasons since 2024. Building on this work, the City launched a Bird-Collision Monitoring Pilot Program in 2025 where Bird Team volunteers conduct bird collision monitoring during fall and spring migration to inform and prioritize buildings for future retrofits. A desktop analysis of City facilities was completed to assess potential risk of buildings to window-collisions strikes, based on coverage of the buildings' façades that are reflective (>40% or >80%), proximity to natural features and landscaping. City facilities that were ranked as

high priority on the desktop analysis, with less than 3 stories will be considered for a potential bird-safe retrofit pilot, pending budget approvals, feasibility and bird collision monitoring results.

In addition to this, City hired FLAP to conduct risk audits at RHPL Central Branch and the City's municipal office. The volunteer bird team collision data collected will help assess the scale and frequency of bird window collisions, providing evidence to support and prioritize future retrofits at the most hazardous facilities.

1.2 (C) WINDOW COLLISIONS - EDUCATION OF PROPERTY OWNERS

DESCRIPTION

(C) Informing and educating property owners and tenants of existing buildings (including home owners) of measures they can take to mitigate bird collision risk.

SCORING INDICATORS

One point for evidence of educational campaigns focused on the broad public or specific neighbourhoods.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City continues to distribute Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) Homes Safe For Birds brochures, as well as education through the Greening The Hill social media communications, Bird Friendly Richmond Hill social media communications, public community events and community centre displays. The City developed a new magnetic game for community events which highlights a variety of threats and appropriate depictions of mitigation strategies are placed overtop of the threats.

Social media post examples from Greening the Hill and Bird Friendly Richmond Hill:

- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1G6d2mK4C6/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1UBqE5VDYN/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1TLP9taSHr/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/19KHBnU9MD/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1B9Xoiz1LC/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1ES9TyN8MF/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/19LVmJygAL/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1EptiqBZQB/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/19Y4zwNyHD/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1EKzPJCU6f/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/199PgnafVE/

Attachment:

- RH_1.2C_Bird Threats Gameboard X045_Draft2

1.2 (D) TREATED WINDOWS – BASELINE DATA

DESCRIPTION

(D) Establishing a baseline and maintaining a database of the number of residences or buildings with treated windows in the city to demonstrate progress over time.

SCORING INDICATORS

Provide evidence of an active database on treated windows.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City tracks approved site-plan applications that have committed to bird-safe design through their Sustainability Metric's Program (SMP). While these applications may not be constructed yet, it gives an idea as to how many sites have committed to bird-safe design through their elevation drawings. Presently, between 2024 and 2026, 2 of 10 signed site plan agreements have committed to incorporate bird-safe design as part of their development application.

In addition, on Global Bird Collision Mapper, there are at least 2 buildings identified as having bird-safe design treatments, including Richmond Hill Public Library – Oak Ridges Branch. The City will encourage the use of Global Bird Collision Mapper to track bird-safe treatments and retrofits as they occur in the City.

1.3 (A) LIGHT POLLUTION – REDUCTION STRATEGY (MIGRATION)

DESCRIPTION

(A) Municipality has a light pollution reduction strategy for existing and planned neighbourhoods.

SCORING INDICATORS

One point upon evidence of a municipal strategy or policy (including guidance or standards) to reduce light pollution.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City has a by-law to Regulate Light Pollution (By-Law No. 63-95).

In addition to the City's by-law, through the Sustainability Metrics Program and OPA 18.3, the City encourages reducing light pollution through the use of Dark Sky Compliant fixtures and lighting controls.

- 3.2.3(20): To reduce light pollution, development shall be encouraged to design lighting according to dark sky compliant standards.

1.3 (B) LIGHT POLLUTION – NEW DEVELOPMENTS /RETROFIT

DESCRIPTION

(B) Municipality actively implements light pollution reduction strategy from point sources, such as retrofitting standard streetlights with downward directional, wildlife-friendly LED lighting that is 3000K or less, or make communication tower lighting and other facility lighting wildlife-friendly.

SCORING INDICATORS

One point for proof of implementation of a program to reduce light pollution from point sources.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City has a Standards and Specifications Manual that draft plan of subdivisions and site plans are expected to comply with. Lighting is captured within two sections of this manual.

- Division E – Utilities - This Division includes design guidance as well as construction and material specifications for lighting and utilities within municipal roads, parking lots, as well as parks and sports facilities.
- Division F – Development Application and Capital Project Requirements - This Division outlines the requirements for preparation and submission of various documents, drawings, and information in support of land development and capital projects within the City.

The Standards and Specifications Manual and related design and construction guidelines are available at: https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/learn-more/Design-and-Construction-Guidelines.aspx

1.3 (C) LIGHT POLLUTION - OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

DESCRIPTION

(C) Outreach campaign for residents and businesses to reduce external lighting that attracts nocturnal migrants such as "Lights out Toronto."

SCORING INDICATORS

One point for proof of educational and outreach campaigns to reduce light attraction during migration periods.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City continues to promote responsible light practices through the Sustainability Metrics Program, as well as educate residents through the Greening The Hill social media communications and public community events and community centre displays. Bird Friendly Richmond Hill also supports educating residents through their social media communications.

Social media post examples from Greening the Hill and Bird Friendly Richmond Hill:

- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Hm4L6Sa7Z/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1DbVFcY9ML/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1EKRkmu7Yr/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1DEbL9u6bt/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1HirbUfLEe/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/14pKtsqYt76/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/19Cq2K5Hh5/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Hi1M9g42P/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1EKzPJCU6f/

1.4 (A) PESTICIDE USE – COSMETIC PESTICIDES

DESCRIPTION

Municipality has a policy and bylaw to reduce or eliminate use of pesticides known to directly or indirectly harm birds on public and private lands including:
a) Restricting or banning use of cosmetic pesticides (e.g. broad-leaded plant control)

SCORING INDICATORS

One point with proof of a municipal policy and bylaw that bans cosmetic use of pesticides (including herbicides), and evidence of its enforcement.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City of Richmond Hill continues to rely on the Provincial Cosmetic Pesticide Ban for public and private property. In accordance with the provincial cosmetic pesticide ban, the City does use pesticides in conjunction with its Urban Forestry and Long-term Woodland Restoration programs. For example, TreeAzin has been used to protect trees against Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) and Spongy moth (*Lymantria dispar dispar*); Round-Up (glyphosate) has been used to treat invasive Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), dog-strangling vine (*Cynanchum rossicum*), and garlic mustard (*Allaria petiolata*) in partnership with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA).

1.4 (B) PESTICIDE USE – INSECT PESTICIDES

DESCRIPTION

(B) Restricting or banning use pesticides to control insects or rodents that are important food sources for birds (e.g. neonicotinoids, Bti for mosquito or midge control, rodenticides).

SCORING INDICATORS

One point with proof of a policy and bylaw that specifically bans or severely restricts uses of neonicotinoids, Bti and rodenticides.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

York Region oversees the West Nile program, in coordination with the City. York Region treats every public catch basin on a 21 day basis, 4 times a year. For environmentally sensitive areas York Region uses a different product called VectoLex, as approved by MOECP.

In 2025, 1,355 environmentally sensitive catch basins were treated with two rounds of larvicides; 2,065 site inspections were completed and 509 applications of larvicide were conducted within natural or semi-natural surface waters.

Attachment:

- RH_1.4_VectorBorneDisease_LiaisonCommitteeMeeting

1.5 PLASTICS

DESCRIPTION

Municipality has effective regulatory or non-regulatory measures that result in a reduction of plastic waste generated and the elimination of plastic pollution in local ecosystems such as shorelines and riversides.

SCORING INDICATORS

Provide proof of regulatory (e.g. a municipal bylaw) and voluntary measures such as banning single use plastics, shopping bags, plastic straws, or actions to remove plastic pollution from local ecosystems.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

Since 2023, the City has continued to advance implementation of its Single-Use Plastics (SUP) Policy through ongoing public education, corporate initiatives, and regional partnerships. Public awareness efforts have remained active each year through the City's dedicated SUP webpage, Waste Calendar messaging, and social media campaigns focused on reducing plastic waste and increasing understanding of environmental impacts. Additional measures, such as installing water bottle fill stations at City facilities, have encouraged the use of reusable alternatives within the community.

Corporately, the City expanded efforts to reduce single-use items at municipal events and facilities through staff and vendor engagement, including compliance assessments after events and promotion of the City's internal reusable "dish library." Use of the dish library increased from 17 events in 2024 to 29 events in 2025, helping divert hundreds of single-use items from landfill, including approximately 849 plates, 1,247 cups/mugs, and 2,317 pieces of cutlery in 2025 alone. Continued growth in the program has led to the addition of a second dish library in 2026.

Public summary of the dish library found here: https://www.yorkregion.com/news/colourful-scorecard-shows-richmond-hill-is-getting-greener/article_887f65c3-84ef-5c89-95c8-f80eafc08f5a.html

The City also continued collaborating with York Region to support broader SUP reduction initiatives, including business education resources, innovation funding, and community-based programs that encourage waste reduction and sustainable alternatives across the region. For more information visit: https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/living-here/reducing-single-use-items.aspx.

Social media post examples from Greening the Hill:

- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1DYsi8ubMC/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1DgsPvTLP6/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/18u91j9cmo/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1971NS3qqC/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/14n2W4ZgZY2/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1DJ1cxzs5K/
- https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Bm9JNUXF5/

Attachment:

- RH_1.5_Single-Use Plastics Reduction Policy
- RH_1.5_Reusable Party Pack Poster 2026

1.6 COLLISIONS WITH VEHICLES

DESCRIPTION

Measures in place to reduce bird collisions with vehicles such as lower speed limits when passing through important bird habitat, and measures to reduce the number of vehicles on the roads (such as a good public transit system and cycling infrastructure).

SCORING INDICATORS

Provide proof of measures to protect birds from vehicle collisions. For example, at locations where a busy road cuts through a wildlife corridor, evidence of mitigation would include lower speed limits, signage about wildlife crossing, or proof of engineered solutions such as wildlife underpasses or overpasses.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City has increased the number of wildlife signs in hot spot areas. There are now a total of 34 signs along a variety of roadways to raise road users' awareness to the potential of wildlife crossing in these areas. Hotspots are based on resident inquiries and natural areas abutting the roadways.

Staff have installed cut and rolling curbs along 2 roads (Newman Avenue and North Lake Road) that bisect natural areas to facilitate wildlife movement between wetland and natural communities. In addition to this, both roads have a speed limit of 40km/hr. These measures have reduced the number of calls related to road mortalities in the area.

The City also boasts a network of 1,046km of walking and cycling facilities, including sidewalks, walkways, bicycle lanes, cycle tracks, multi-use paths, and trails. As part of the City's Transportation Master Plan, the City will continue to expand this network in the coming years.

York Region Transit (YRT) operates public transit throughout Richmond Hill and York Region. YRT also takes steps to address bird collisions by installing fritted glass on their bus shelters, with over 50 shelters having bird-safe glass.

Attachment:

- RH_1.6_WildlifeSignage
- RH_1.6_York_Region_Bird_FriendlyStandards_2018_06_28

1.7 HABITAT DISTURBANCE

DESCRIPTION

Municipality has policy and practices to prohibit or mitigate disturbance of birds from humans or their pets at natural areas or important bird habitat (e.g., leash bylaw, no-go zones certain times of year).

SCORING INDICATORS

Provide proof of policy and examples of implementation such as signage at important bird habitat (e.g. a natural area, wetland or known migratory stopover site) or evidence of a bylaw in place.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

Through the City's Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation by-law, "No person shall relocate or Disturb Wildlife or the natural habitat of Wildlife on Public Property unless otherwise authorized by the Corporation or another government entity" and "no owner who keeps, harbours or possesses any Animal shall allow it to be at large or trespass on any private and/or public property" unless within an area designated as an "Off Leash Dog Area". Dogs are strictly prohibited from running at large in all public spaces unless within a designated off-leash area. The City currently has two designated off-leash areas, Phyllis Rawlinson Park and Tower Hill Park.

Attachment:

- RH_1.1A_1.7_Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law No. 22-25
- RH_1.7_Cut_and_rollingcurb

THREAT REDUCTION SCORING: 15/19 POINTS - INTERMEDIATE

ENTRY 10 points from at least 3 categories.

INTERMEDIATE 13 points from at least 5 categories including at least 2 categories worth 3 or more.

HIGH 16 points or more. Must include at least 3 points in categories 1 and 2.

Must have no roam bylaw (cats), and bird friendly building guidelines for high level.



SECTION 2:

HABITAT PROTECTION, RESTORATION, AND CLIMATE RESILIENCY

SECTION 2: HABITAT PROTECTION, RESTORATION, AND CLIMATE RESILIENCY

2.1 NATURAL AREAS PROTECTION

DESCRIPTION

Natural areas within the municipal boundaries are protected within the Municipal Official Plan and there is a commitment to increase this area. The plan distinguishes between natural areas and other types of municipal space such as recreational parks.

SCORING INDICATORS

Provide proof of the policy. To maintain this criterion, the municipality must document the size of the area protected, and demonstrate a commitment to increase in this area over time. Any municipal plan that includes protection of natural area spaces will receive one point. Additional points are based on:
a) evidence of implementation;
b) whether there are ambitious targets to increase the number and size of the protected areas.

One point is deducted if there are current or recent (within last year) examples of large-scale habitat destruction, or clear examples of “urban sprawl.” “Urban sprawl” in this sense is when natural areas on the city’s periphery are converted to urban uses such as residential, institutional or commercial areas.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City of Richmond Hill's boundaries include lands within the protected Greenbelt (GB) Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine conservation planning areas.

GB Plan - files.ontario.ca/greenbelt-plan-2017-en.pdf

Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan - https://files.ontario.ca/oak-ridges-moraine-conservation-plan-2017.pdf

The current Official Plan (OP) identifies natural areas and protected countryside within the ORM and GB as well as the City's greenway system. The OP states to evolve towards a new kind of urban community, the Plan recognizes the natural environment as an integrated system and prescribes a holistic environmental policy approach aimed at preserving and enhancing the environment through the process of urbanization. The Plan therefore establishes the Greenway System as a key tool to implement the holistic environmental policy approach by protecting natural features and functions, enhancing linkages within the City and to adjacent municipalities, and protecting agricultural, countryside, parks and urban open space areas in a connected system. Guiding principles for the environment include:

- Protect and enhance natural environmental systems, functions and resources over the long term.
- Incorporate and promote sustainable development practices and initiatives.

3.2.1 Greenway System - The Greenway System is envisioned as a legacy of environmental, agricultural and urban open space lands that will be protected, enhanced, and actively managed over the long term. Richmond Hill’s Greenway System has a wealth of natural features and functions that are part of the larger Regional Greenlands System which includes portions of the Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM) Conservation Plan Area, the Greenbelt Plan Area, and the Parkway Belt West Plan Area. Over half of Richmond Hill is located on the ORM Conservation Plan Area and this Plan establishes policies that focus on preserving, connecting, enhancing, and restoring the Greenway System over the long-term.

Schedule A1: Urban Structure shows the boundaries of Richmond Hill's Greenway System; and Schedule A2: Land Use shows all protection designations, and Policy 3.2.1 supports this mapping.

The Official Plan has updated the urban forest canopy cover targets and woodland cover targets as well as its commitment to measuring and reporting on the state of the urban forest.

Policy 3.2.1.2 (21) "The City shall strive to increase tree canopy cover to a minimum of 30% of the City's total land area, in accordance with the City's Urban Forest Management Plan. Priority will be given to increasing tree cover within the settlement area in order to enhance linkages to the Greenway System."

Policy 5.22 (3) "The City shall develop, in co-operation with York Region, common measuring and reporting tools to monitor progress towards targets establish in this Plan, including:

(h) A minimum tree canopy cover of 30% and a woodland cover target of 15% across the city"

The most current OP can be found here: https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/shared-content/resources/documents/Richmond-Hill-OP_June-2025_AODA.pdf

The City's Official Plan is currently being updated and is anticipated to go to Council in September 2026; expected changes include:

- Updating the City's canopy cover target from 30% to 35%; and
- Directing the creation of a Natural Heritage Strategy.

Attachments:

- RH_2.1_RHOP ScheduleA1_UrbanStructure
- RH_2.1_RHOP ScheduleA2_Land Use

2.2 BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

DESCRIPTION

The municipality has an official strategy to protect and restore the biological diversity in its parks and natural areas. The strategy can include measures such as promoting connectivity between natural areas, buffering core biodiversity hotspots from harmful human activities, increasing the number of protected areas, and bird monitoring within municipal limits to assess the success of the strategy.

SCORING INDICATORS

Provide proof of the strategy and its implementation. The strategy to protect and restore biological diversity can be part of the protected areas plan, or vice versa, but must specifically identify protection of biological diversity as a goal.

One point for having an official biodiversity conservation strategy or goal (adopted by Council).

Two points if the strategy or goal has targets and metrics for success and evidence of implementation.

Three points for municipalities that meet the previous two tests as well as using monitoring to track changes to biodiversity and use results for adaptive management (e.g. bird monitoring in city owned natural areas).

One point is deducted upon evidence of current or very recent (within one year) activities that damage biodiversity such as loss or degradation of important habitat for wildlife, or contamination of wildlife habitat by toxic chemicals.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City continues to implement its Environment Strategy (2022) which outlines 10 key themes, including Natural Heritage and Urban Forest, Invasive Species, Wildlife, Local Food and Pollinators. Each theme has specific actions to protect, restore and improve the environment.

- Section 6: Natural Heritage and Urban Forest's goal is "to establish, protect and improve the extent and quality of natural heritage and the urban forest"
- Section 8: Wildlife's goal is "to protect, preserve and sustainably manage a healthy diversity of native wildlife."
- Section 9: Local Food and Pollinator's goal is "to improve access to local food and support pollinators and their habitat."

Through the Environment Strategy, the City prepares a Report Card every five years, and provides information on Greening Our Natural Species, and reports on Canopy cover, Flora and fauna species richness and tree planting initiatives. Richmond Hill Environmental Scorecard (2020-2024) can be found here: https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/learn-more/resourc30xes/RH-Scorecard-2024_AODA_Feb-5.pdf

As directed by the Environment Strategy and Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP), the City updated its Natural Area Inventory (NAI). This NAI is conducted every ten years to assess publicly owned natural areas and understand the health of natural spaces and habitats for native species. The report also provides recommendations on protecting and increasing biodiversity within natural areas, identifies opportunities to improve connectivity and protect biodiversity hotspots.

The UFMP identifies targets for canopy cover and woodland cover, as well as actions dedicated to monitoring these targets through regularly occurring Urban Forest Studies and the City's Natural Area Inventories.

The City is also in the process of developing a Natural Heritage Prioritization Model and Strategy (NHPM/NHS), which will identify priority areas for restoration, connectivity and protection. This strategy will also identify measurable criteria to monitor success; it is anticipated to be completed by June 2027.

Building on this work, the City collaborated with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and Ontario Nature to identify lands within Richmond Hill that contribute to Canada's 30x30 conservation target – the federal government's goal of protecting and conserving at least 30% of Canada's lands and waters by 2030. Through this identification process, Ontario Nature led an extensive assessment of 550 hectares of environmentally significant natural areas, determining that 31 properties, including 429 hectares of City-owned and 121 hectares of TRCA-owned public lands meet the rigorous national standard for conservation. Notable lands within Richmond Hill's Natural Heritage System that now count towards the 30x30 target include East Humber Trail, Haynes Lake Wetlands and Uplands, Oak Ridges Meadow and Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory Park. For more information visit:

- City of Richmond Hill and TRCA Contribute Lands to Canada's 30x30 Conservation Target

2.3 CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE

DESCRIPTION

Municipality has a climate change adaptation strategy that includes specific measures including nature-based climate solutions. Examples of this include wetland creation to absorb and retain floodwater, or planting trees to create shade and lower the surface air temperature.

SCORING INDICATORS

Provide proof of the strategy and its implementation. One point if the City has an official strategy to address the impacts of climate change and reduce the municipality's climate impact.

A second point is that nature-based climate solutions are an important part of the strategy.

A third point if there are active examples of wetland restoration projects and/or large-scale projects to mitigate the urban heat island through planting of trees and other vegetation that favour use by birds.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City continues to implement its Council approved Climate Change Framework and Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) - Richmond Hill's Path to a Low-Carbon Future. The Climate Change Framework outlines a coordinated approach for the City to improve resiliency and includes a goal of "leveraging natural and engineered green infrastructure to address climate change while increasing ecosystem quality, connectivity, integrity and diversity." The CEEP guides the City in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. Program Area 7 in the CEEP identifies the importance of Natural Heritage playing a role in increasing carbon sequestration, and the need to maintain and enhance open space through parks and undeveloped areas, which act as carbon sinks to reduce community emissions.

The City continues to implement actions, such as planting trees through the Community Stewardship Program, and ecological restoration as part of the Long term Woodlot Restoration Program. The 2025 summary can be found here:

- https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/things-to-do/Parks-Trails-and-Natural-Areas.aspx

In addition, the City regularly partners with local volunteer groups and non-governmental organizations to expand community outreach, increase public awareness, and encourage climate action and environmental stewardship. These partnerships have resulted in organizations participating in, co-delivering, and supporting a variety of City-led events and initiatives. Recent collaborative initiatives include: David Suzuki Climate Action Event (February 2026); Every Bite Counts (June 2026); Earth Day (2023 – 2026); Eco Family Fest (2024-2026); Local Food Matters webinar (June 2026); Local Food Stories Project (summer 2026); Solar Panel Event (2025). Recent partner and participating organizations include: Kids Right to Know Garden, Miskwaadesi Studio, York-Durham Plant Based Treaty, York Region Food Network, LEAF, Climate Action Richmond Hill, and Ice Dragons.

More information for each organization is provided on their websites below:

- https://www.kidsrighttoknow.com/
- https://miskwaadesi.com/
- https://plantbasedtreaty.org/about-us/
- https://www.yourleaf.org/
- https://climateactionrh.org/
- https://www.facebook.com/p/The-Ice-Dragons-100046139237638/

Attachment:

- RH_2.3_2026 Resilient Richmond Hill Staff Report

2.4 (A) HABITAT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

DESCRIPTION

A) Municipality has a habitat management strategy based on ecological and climate considerations.

These include: (A) increasing the number of trees and area of the urban forest canopy.

SCORING INDICATORS

Provide proof of implementation of the strategy and each action.

One point per action. Evidence for a. includes inventories of trees and plans for increasing their numbers.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) identifies targets for increasing canopy cover and woodland cover within the City by 2040, and have been incorporated into the City's Official Plan.

The City has developed site specific management plans through the Long Term Woodland Restoration Program which are intended to restore woodlots impacted by Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). The City is currently implementing the following ecological restoration plans: Beaver Woodland, Saigeon Trail, David Dunlap Observatory (DDO), Elgin Mills, Rouge River Headwaters Valley Woodland, and Toporowski Stream Assessment and Rouge Valleyland restoration plans. Moraine Park and Catfish Pond ecological restoration are planned for 2028.

In addition, through the City's soon to be complete Natural Heritage Prioritization Model and Strategy (NHPM/NHS), additional priority sites will be identified for restoration, connectivity and protection.

More information on these projects can be found here:

More information on these projects can be found here:

- https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/learn-more/Emerald-Ash-Borer.aspx
- https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/learn-more/ddo-ongoing-projects.aspx#RHDDO-Ecological-Restoration-In-progress
- Help Protect Richmond Hill's Wild Spaces - City of Richmond Hill

2.4 (B) SNAG PROTECTION

DESCRIPTION

Leaving snags standing in cases where public safety is not jeopardized.

SCORING INDICATORS

One point for snag retention based on evidence such as policy statements or evidence within management plans for natural areas.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City continues to incorporate snag trees into restoration plans where they do not pose a health and safety risk to the community.

An example can be found in the DDO Park Phase 2 Restoration and Implementation Plan in Section 4.0; the plan refers to snags as 'pegs', and section 7.2 is focused on large woody debris and nest box installation.

Currently the City has incorporated snags in the following restoration projects: David Dunlap Observatory ecological restoration plan, Beaver Woodland restoration, Saigeon Trail Woodland restoration, and Rouge River Headwaters Valley and Trails restoration site.

Attachment:

- RH_2.4B_DDO Park Phase 2 Restoration and Implementation Plan_Final_17Jul2020_

2.4 (C) PROTECTION OF TREES

DESCRIPTION

(C) Protecting trees on private and public lands.

SCORING INDICATORS

Refers to a tree bylaw that protects trees as a public value from private landowners cutting them down without permits.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City has several by-laws for protecting trees on private and public lands, many of which have been updated in 2025.

- Tree Preservation By-law 19-25 and Trees on City Lands By-law 20-25
  - These were modernized with new enforcement options, increased regulation of private trees (changing the size of tree regulated from = or > 20cm dbh to = or > 15cm dbh), updated Tree Protection Zones and Tree Replacement Planting ratios
- Site Alteration By-law 47-25
  - This was approved in May 2025 and combined two permits into one Site Alteration Permit that covers both tree removals/injuries and the associated site alteration.

Attachments:

- RH_2.4C_Tree-Preservation-By-law-No.-19-25
- RH_2.4C_Trees-on-City-Lands-By-law-No.-20-25
- RH_2.4C_Site-Alteration-By-law-No.-47-25

2.4 (D) RESPONSIBLE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

DESCRIPTION

(D) Prohibiting active vegetation management during breeding season on municipal lands, including forests, storm-water management facilities, and easements.

SCORING INDICATORS

A point by demonstrating that municipal employees involved in active habitat management do not harm breeding birds or their habitat.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City continues to reference and adhere to the Migratory Bird Convention Act (MBCA) and regional breeding bird windows for all City capital and operating projects, as well as through the development planning process. Breeding bird timing requirements are incorporated into detailed design drawings and project documentation for contractors to follow, with City inspectors monitoring compliance during construction. The City also requires that tree and vegetation removals occur outside the breeding bird period (generally April 1 to August 31 each year). Where removal during this period is necessary, as per, Environment Climate Change Canada, nest searches or sweeps must be completed by a qualified biologist prior to removals. Lastly, the City's Natural Heritage Terms of Reference demonstrates how compliance with the MBCA is addressed through the development planning and environmental applications and review process, helping to identify and avoid potential impacts to breeding birds and their habitat.

Two examples are attached as pdf.

Attachments:

- RH_2.4D_Appendix A- Material Disclosures_MBCA_BreedingBirdWindow
- RH_2.4D_RFQ-2210042 SUP_MBCA_BreedingBirdWindow
- RH_2.4D_Natural Heritage Evaluation ToR

2.5 IMPORTANT BIRD AREA NEARBY (IBA)

DESCRIPTION

Municipality has an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) within or adjacent to its boundaries. A local partnership promotes the protection and stewardship of this area.

SCORING INDICATORS

One point if there is one or more nearby IBAs and the Bird Team can provide the names of the IBAs and at least one IBA caretaker group or individual.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

There are no important bird or biodiversity areas within or adjacent to the City of Richmond Hill. However, in 2025 the City of Richmond Hill partnered with Ontario Nature and TRCA to have 550 hectares of land contribute to Canada's 30x30 Target. Notable lands within Richmond Hill's Greenway System include East Humber Trail, Haynes Lake Wetlands and Uplands, and Oak Ridges Meadow; David Dunlap Observatory Park was recognized as a protected area under Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs).

More details can be found here:

- https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/news/city-of-richmond-hill-and-trca-contribute-lands-to-canada-s-30x30-conservation-target.aspx

2.6 NATIVE FLORA - MUNICIPAL LANDS

DESCRIPTION

Municipality promotes the importance of planting native flora appropriate for the ecoregion on municipal lands, especially where new development is occurring through development and landscaping guidelines and standards in areas near natural features. Subdivision permits should include conditions protecting existing natural habitat and promote use of native vegetation, and include measures to discourage illegal disposal of yard waste (a source of invasive exotic plants) in natural areas.

SCORING INDICATORS

One point for evidence that the municipality promotes the use of site-appropriate native flora in landscaping for its own properties and for development landscaping standards for subdivision permits.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City continues to implement the Standards and Specifications Manual which provides technical information about the requirements and standards for City and private development projects.

Division K – Planting provides supplemental information to the City's Urban Forest Tree Planting Guidelines. The guidelines are used for all Capital project landscaping plans are reviewed by City staff and assessed for native species composition, ensuring ratios don't exceed 30% from one family, 20% from one genus and 10% from one species.

Guidelines can be found here: Design and Construction Guidelines - City of Richmond Hill

Through the development process, the Official Plan (OP) highlights the importance of planting native species, and the Urban Forest Tree Planting Guidelines are provided to developers/consultants/landscape architects to ensure compliance. In addition to this, the OP aligns with the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) and ensures the protection of natural features, and at times goes beyond those higher level documents in buffer requirements and protection.

As part of the City's park planning process, we continue to incorporate native flora into landscape plans. For example, the City's detailed design of the Dave Barrow Civic Square incorporates a pollinator meadow, natural grass (fescue) meadow, woodland area and marsh enhancements; the City installed two rain gardens with native pollinator plants (Minthorn Park and Dorothy Price Park); and the City's horticultural team converted an ornamental garden at Patterson Park into a butterfly habitat garden.

Bird Friendly Richmond Hill distributes native seed mix to residents to plant and distribute on their own properties.

For more information:

- https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/news/richmond-hill-community-doing-its-part-for-a-healthy-environment.aspx
- https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/things-to-do/Parks-Projects.aspx#Dave-Barrow-Civic-Square-Construction-Starting-Soon

2.7 NATIVE FLORA – PRIVATE PROPERTY

DESCRIPTION

Demonstrate widespread community participation in initiatives to encourage native plant habitat that supports native birds and pollinators on private property, to increase the urban tree canopy on private land, and to support other "green infrastructure" initiatives to address climate change.

SCORING INDICATORS

One point if you provide evidence supporting "widespread community participation" in at least one initiative or program that encourages increasing wildlife habitat on private land. This could include membership in a program like Bee City, for example.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

Richmond Hill continues to deliver its Community Steward Program (CSP) that works with organizations such as LEAF, Ontario Streams, and TRCA. Through CSP, the City holds workshops, webinars and tree planting events.

The City delivers the Healthy Yards program that provides subsidized native plant material for residents to plant in their own yards. In addition, as part of the City's Climate Ready Homes program, we have provided sessions on rain gardens and native plantings.

The City has partnered with Miskwaadesi Studio to create a network of Indigenous medicine gardens that will serve as living classrooms, cultural gathering spaces and help increase local access to Indigenous medicines. The gardens are maintained by the City and programmed by Miskwaadesi Studio, with workshops, events, and volunteer opportunities for the community.

The City is a Tree City of the World, Bee City, Bird Friendly City and we participate in the Mayors' Monarch Pledge.

Additionally, through the City's Climate Ready Homes program, the City partnered with TRCA to deliver an in-person Rain Gardens 101 information session as part of the Our Power, Our Planet: An Earth Day Celebration event. The workshop provided homeowners with information on rain garden design, environmental benefits, and how to create climate-smart

landscapes on their properties. By promoting native plantings and environmentally friendly yard designs, the program supports residents in creating healthier urban habitats that benefit local biodiversity, including birds and other wildlife while protecting their home through changing weather.

2.8 STOPOVER & NESTING HABITAT

DESCRIPTION

Implementation of stewardship projects to increase or improve breeding or stopover habitat for bird species that are of high conservation priority species from your Bird Conservation Region Plan.

Example species include Species at Risk (e.g. Chimney Swift) and other aerial insectivores, Eastern Meadowlark and other grassland birds, shorebirds, and birds requiring old growth forest conditions.

Example actions include providing housing (e.g., maintained Purple Martin housing), and maintaining bird-friendly hay production, and managing municipal forests to promote old growth conditions.

SCORING INDICATORS

A point is awarded if there are active stewardship recovery projects (can be led by individuals or groups in the community) such as those suggested in the criterion description.

Two points if there are more than two active projects for different species or groups of species.

For information on Bird Conservation Regions and their priority species, visit: https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/migratory-bird-conservation/regions-strategies.html

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

As part of the City's ecological restoration plans, wildlife habitat is always created for a variety of species, depending on the ecosystem type being restored.

Examples include, the installation of nest boxes, native shrub planting nodes, woody debris habitat piles, standing trees, snags and platforms. These various habitat structures can provide habitat to a variety of wildlife including small mammals, songbirds, reptiles, amphibians, raptors (e.g. falcons, osprey, etc.) and other bird species. More specifically, nest boxes for the following species have been installed in several locations across the City: eastern screech owl, wood duck, eastern blue birds, and black-capped chickadees.

Table below shows the habitat structure type and quantity on public lands, and the folder RH_2.8_WildlifeStructurePhotos provides evidence of different types of structures at various publicly owned locations.

Wildlife Habitat Structures - Count
Bird Box - 31
Black-capped Chickadee - 4
Brush pile - 1
Eastern Screech Owl - 9
Flying Squirrel - 1
Log tangle - 6
Raptor pole - 11
Song bird - 4

Wood Duck - 10

In 2024, the City initiated its first nest boxing monitoring and maintenance volunteer program, which included a training session in March of 2024 and March 2025 to educate bird team members on monitoring activity of the nest boxes and maintaining them in the winter. In addition to this, TRCA actively maintains the habitat structures every 5 to 7 years on TRCA owned lands.

In 2024, the City initiated its first meadow habitat restoration at David Dunlap Observatory Park (DDO), which consisted of converting 1.22ha of previously farmed land to meadow habitat to support monarch butterflies. This habitat can also support grassland species such as bobolink, eastern meadowlark, savannah sparrow, and other grassland ground nesting birds.

The City is also involved in the forest enhancement restoration at DDO, where strategic tree removals are being completed to remove hazardous and/or invasive trees, to encourage the maturation of the existing forest community and support the transition from plantation to mix deciduous forest.

Attachment:

- RH_2.8_Combined_Habitat_Structures_CRH_TRCA

HABITAT PROTECTION, RESTORATION, AND CLIMATE RESILIENCY SCORING: 17/18 POINTS - HIGH

ENTRY 9 points from at least 3 categories.

INTERMEDIATE 12 points from at least 4 categories.

HIGH 15 points from at least 6 categories including at least 1 point from categories 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4.



SECTION 3:

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EDUCATION

SECTION 3: COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EDUCATION

3.1 (A) CHILDREN AND YOUTH EDUCATION

DESCRIPTION

There are educational programs and activities for children and youth about birds and nature in the municipality.

(A) A significant percentage of local schools and other educational organizations (e.g. Scouts Canada, Earth Rangers, 4-H) provide students with opportunities to connect with nature, enjoy birds and learn how to help them.

Local school boards, conservation authority, or municipality, has facilities/staffing to support outdoor/environmental education, including opportunities to observe birds.

SCORING INDICATORS

Provide a description of the programs and the names of the organizations or institutions that offer them. One point if there are local education facilities and institutions that offer children or youth programming on nature appreciation and bird observation.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

Richmond Hill offers a wide range of opportunities for children and youth to connect with nature, observe birds, and learn about local biodiversity through municipal, conservation authority, and community-based education programs.

The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority has the Lake St. George education centre located on the Oak Ridges Moraine in Richmond Hill. This centre provides programming to school groups and includes programs such as bird study's, owl prowls, Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) bird identification and other programming for a variety of age groups. In addition to bird education, students can participate in hands-on programs focused on local ecosystems, including scavenger hunts, plant identification, bats, insects, forests, wetlands, and biodiversity. These programs encourage students to explore the natural environment and develop an understanding of wildlife and habitat conservation.

The full suite of programming can be found here:

- https://trca.ca/programs/?facility=lake-st-george-field-centre&sort=DESC&page=1

Other links:

- Bird Study https://trca.ca/programs/bird-study/
- Environment and Nature Programs/Workshops https://trca.ca/programs/

The York Region District School Board (YRDSB) and York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) also provide environmental education opportunities for students through outdoor learning, EcoSchools initiatives, schoolyard naturalization and enhancement projects, energy conservation and waste reduction programs, and field trips to local natural areas, including TRCA education facilities. Expectations for Student Learning at Outdoor Education Centres in York Region are that Students will:

- demonstrate awareness and understanding of the delicate balance in nature and the positive and negative impact of human activity
- learn how to prepare themselves for a positive outdoor experience

- demonstrate an awareness that everything in nature is important and connected
- use responsible environmental practices
- demonstrate respect for self, others and the natural environment
- describe how a strong environmental ethic can guide future behaviour

Links:
- https://www2.yrdsb.ca/schools-programs/school-programs/outdoor-education
- https://www2.yrdsb.ca/schools-programs/school-programs-nav/school-programs/ecoschools-and-environment/environmental
- https://www2.yrdsb.ca/schools-programs/school-programs-nav/school-programs/ecoschools-and-environment/eco-schools-and
- https://www.ycdsb.ca/about/departments/environmental-services/

The City of Richmond Hill complements these educational opportunities through community-based environmental programming delivered by the Sustainability Team. Annual initiatives such as World Migratory Bird Day provide residents, families, and youth with opportunities to learn about migratory birds through guided bird walks, educational displays, interactive activities, and presentations. Additional initiatives, including Healthy Yards and Greening the Hill, encourage residents to support birds and biodiversity through habitat creation, native planting, and environmentally friendly actions.

The Richmond Hill Public Library (RHPL) – Central Branch further supports nature education and bird observation through its Library of Things collection. The birdwatching kits have been checked out a total of 41 times since they launched at the end of 2024, and the 4 nature explorer kits for kids (which also have binoculars and materials related to birdwatching) have been checked out a total of 48 times. Available resources include:
- Adult Birdwatching Kits, which include birding resources and activities designed to support family-friendly learning and engagement with local birds.
- Nature Explorer Kits, which provide children and families with binoculars, biodiversity resources, books, and activities to support outdoor exploration and bird observation; and
- Experience Passes, which allow residents to borrow passes for local nature and cultural facilities, providing additional opportunities to explore natural areas and participate in environmental learning experiences.

In addition to the Adult Birdwatching and Nature Explore Kits, RHPL Central Branch lends an individual pair of binoculars (separate from the Birdwatching Kit), and it has had 22 checkouts since August 2024. Overall, participation in the library lending program has been a success, with one resident saying: “Greetings! My family thoroughly enjoyed the Bird Friendly Festival at Central yesterday afternoon. Please do this again! It was wonderful. My 10-year-old loves birds and observing nature. We had gone to a few Doors Open activities beforehand, but this one was her favourite activity of the day (although it wasn't for Doors Open).”

3.1 (B) CHILDREN AND YOUTH EDUCATION

DESCRIPTION

Educational programs include specific elements designed to engage children and youth who could be considered underprivileged, racialized or recent arrivals to Canada.

SCORING INDICATORS

One point if there are specific bird-related nature programs for recent arrivals to Canada, underprivileged, marginalized or racialized children, youth or families.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

As part of the City's environmental education outreach, the Sustainability Team delivered a nature and bird education presentation followed by a guided woodlot tour at Roselawn Public School. The school serves a diverse student population with a high number of newcomer households, providing an opportunity to introduce students and families who may be newer to Canada to Richmond Hill's natural environment and local biodiversity. The presentation introduced students (grade 4-7) to local biodiversity, including the importance of natural areas, birds, and wildlife habitat. Students learned about the impacts of climate change on ecosystems, as well as the differences between native, non-native, and invasive species, including how to identify examples found within their local environment. Following the presentation, students participated in a guided woodlot tour where they explored a natural area, observed local plants and wildlife, and learned about the connections between birds, habitats, and ecosystem health. In addition to the woodlot tour, the Sustainability Team attended a career fair at Richmond Hill High School for a summer school class of students with disabilities in July 2026. Sustainability staff spoke with students (approximately 16–17 years old) about potential career and volunteer opportunities, while also highlighting ways they can get involved in sustainability initiatives and connect with the natural environment within their community.

The Richmond Hill Public Library's Library of Things also helps reduce barriers to birdwatching by providing access to equipment and educational resources that may otherwise be cost-prohibitive for some residents. The library offers Birdwatching Kits and Nature Explorer Kits, which include resources such as binoculars, bird identification materials, books, and activities to support residents, including children and families, in exploring local birds and biodiversity. By allowing residents to borrow equipment rather than purchase it, these resources make birding and nature exploration more accessible to community members who may be interested in birdwatching but face financial barriers to purchasing specialized equipment.

3.1 (C) CHILDREN AND YOUTH EDUCATION

DESCRIPTION

At least one school does a specific bird-related program such as Christmas bird count for kids, School Yard Bird Blitz, Global Bird Rescue, or curriculum from Keep Cats Safe and Save Bird Lives.

SCORING INDICATORS

One point if at least one school or organization does a specific bird-related program for children and youth, such as Christmas bird count for kids, Global Bird Rescue, or curriculum from Keep Cats Safe and Save Bird Lives.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City of Richmond Hill engaged local schools in bird education and awareness through the Official Bird Voting initiative. The voting campaign was shared with both the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) and York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) through their established communication channels, allowing the information to be distributed to local schools and classrooms.

The initiative provided students with an opportunity to learn about a select list of local bird species and vote for Richmond Hill's official bird based on that list. The City received feedback indicating that some classrooms participated in the voting process, demonstrating student engagement with the bird-focused initiative.

As per criteria 3.1B the City does provide nature-based presentation by request to school groups. Through the Community Stewardship Program, the City provides two schools each year the opportunity to plant trees and learn about their importance to wildlife. The Richmond Hill Montessori Private School has acquired nest boxes to be installed and monitored by

their students; but have not been implemented yet. In addition, youth from the City's Bird Team have participated in the Christmas Bird Count for the past two years.

3.2 COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

DESCRIPTION

College, CEGEP, and University campuses have adopted practices that actively reduce threats to birds or establish habitat that benefits birds. Implementation of practices should include or be driven by student committees or groups.

SCORING INDICATORS

One point is awarded based on evidence that institutions that have policies and practices to benefit birds including names of institutions, the programs that they participate in (e.g. BirdSafe, Bee City), as well as an example of a recent action and evidence of student involvement.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

York University demonstrates strong bird-friendly practices through its participation in FLAP Canada's Bird-Safe Campus program and the implementation of bird-window collision mitigation measures, including Feather Friendly window treatments installed across campus buildings. These actions directly reduce bird mortality associated with glass collisions and reflect an institutional commitment to bird conservation.

The university also supports habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement through its Centre for Bee Ecology, Evolution and Conservation (BEEc). In collaboration with campus partners, researchers, and engaging in external pollinator initiatives such as Pollinator Partnership programming and World Bee Day activities, BEEc supports the development of pollinator gardens, native plant restoration, and educational outreach events (including "Garden Party" and World Bee Day programming on the university's campus). These initiatives collectively contribute to improved ecosystem health and indirectly benefit bird populations by enhancing habitat quality and food availability. Students are also actively engaged through garden stewardship, habitat restoration activities, outreach events, and research focused on pollinators and urban biodiversity.

York University has also engaged the campus community in bird conservation awareness through collaborative public art installations that raise awareness of bird-window collisions and promote environmental stewardship among students, staff, and faculty.

The City of Richmond Hill and York University (all campuses) further strengthened their collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) established in 2024, supporting joint work with some in sustainability, environmental stewardship, research, and innovation. While not limited to environmental objectives, the MOU creates a framework for cross-sector collaboration that can enable joint work in sustainability and community-focused initiatives, including those related to bird-friendly actions, environmental stewardship, and biodiversity.

- https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/news/richmond-hill-and-york-university-forge-new-partnership.aspx

Attachments:

- RH_3.2_York University - Richmond Hill MOU Signed

3.3 COMMUNICATING BEST PRACTICES TO HELP BIRDS

DESCRIPTION

Bird Team partners (including Municipality) provide public access to resources (web links, brochures etc.) that encourage and inform the public of ways to help birds. For example:

1. the benefit to birds from native plant gardening or establishment of natural habitat patches on their property in support of birds and/or pollinators (e.g. backyard habitat program).
2. best practices in feeding birds that mitigate risks from feeding (e.g. predation at feeder, contamination from pathogens, etc).

SCORING INDICATORS

One point if you can provide evidence of the digital or paper resources, as well as evidence of public interest and knowledge of them (e.g. social media activity).

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

The City continues to hold workshops and events through the Community Stewardship Program, Greening the Hill programming, Healthy Yards and RH Blooms. Workshops and events range from webinars on introduction to birding, native plants, pollinators and home-grown food. Staff and Bird Friendly Richmond Hill volunteers continue to attend local events providing information and interactive activities on natural heritage, biodiversity and wildlife.

In partnership with Bird Friendly Richmond Hill, the City created a training manual for BFRH volunteers to help them understand how the Bird Team fits into the City's Bird-Friendly program and provide educational and informative speaking points for new volunteers while at events promoting bird conservation.

Bird Friendly Richmond Hill (Bird Team) has held two bird hikes in partnership with Wild Birds Unlimited Newmarket and provided educational material to attendees on threats to birds and their habitats, native gardening to support birds, and plastics and pollution.

The Bird Team also distributes native seed packets, bird seed packets in winter, business cards with actions to take to keep birds safe, pamphlets on Anishinaabe bird names, and creates engaging social media posts to educate the community.

Attachment:

- RH_3.4_BusinessCard_Draftproof_Option2_V2
- RH_3.4_BirdTeamTrainingManual_2024

3.4 PUBLIC INSTALLATIONS FOR EDUCATION

DESCRIPTION

Municipality and Bird City partners install demonstrations or displays in public areas that educate citizens on the benefits of bird friendly actions and encourage engagement (benefits of dark sky lighting, window modifications etc.).

SCORING INDICATORS

One point based on proof of installations (e.g. photographic evidence, or news stories).

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

We continue to display the Protecting Richmond Hills Birds display at a variety of in-person events. The display is interactive, and resources and activities are provided for residents to take home and learn more about bird safe practices.

As part of the City's park planning process, art and informative demonstrations will be installed in new park design. For example, the newly designed Heron View Park will have symbolic heron poles to educate visitors on how Heron's nest; Mill Pond Park's renewal will include educational interpretative signage that will provide information on the natural environment, including nesting birds. Lastly, the Mill Pond Group of Artists has undertaken a project to paint migratory birds observed at Mill Pond, Richmond Hill, and they plan to install and open the exhibit in spring of 2027.

- https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/things-to-do/resources/Parks/North-Leslie-Community-Park---Park-Features-2-ACC.pdf
- https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/shared-content/resources/SRPBS.24.028---Appendix-A---Final-Mill-Pond-Master-Plan--AODA.pdf
- https://rhga.ca/

Attachment:

- • BFC_1.1A_1.2C_1.3C_3.5_ProtectingRichmondHillsBirds_CommunityCentreDisplays
- • BFC_1.1A_1.2C_1.3C_3.5_ProtectingRichmondHillsBirds_CommunityCentreDisplaysPhoto

3.5 ACCESSIBLE BIRD-WATCHING LOCATION(S)

DESCRIPTION

There is at least one birding location within your city or town that has infrastructure to facilitate the observation and appreciation of birds (e.g. signs, panels, observation tower, and trails). This facility is publicly accessible for people without a car (serviced by public transit and/or bicycle and pedestrian trails) and is accessible to people with disabilities or who are mobility impaired. Information on birding areas should be easily available.

SCORING INDICATORS

One point based on evidence of a local birding area that is publicly accessible, a brief description of the infrastructures (e.g. trails, observation tower), and how the area can be accessed by someone without a car or with disabilities.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

At World Migratory Bird Day events, the City promotes a map highlighting local birding locations, including QR codes linking to birding hotspots and information on public transit access. This helps residents identify birding locations that can be reached without a personal vehicle.

In addition, the City has many popular parks with accessible trails that have areas for bird watching, some of these include:

- Crosby Park - City of Richmond Hill - Accessible by public transit; Richmond Hill's first Fully accessible park
- Lake Wilcox Park - City of Richmond Hill - Accessible by public transit; public washrooms
- Mill Pond Park - City of Richmond Hill- Accessible by public transit;
- Phyllis Rawlinson Park - City of Richmond Hill
- East Humber Trail – City of Richmond Hill, trails, lookout, boardwalk
- Jefferson Forest Trail Head - City of Richmond Hill
- Rouge River Headwaters Valley & Trails - City of Richmond Hill
- Saigeon Trail - City of Richmond Hill
- Thomas Broadhurst Trail - City of Richmond Hill

The City's parks and trails provide a range of conditions and amenities that support accessible outdoor birdwatching (and recreation), including paved or relatively level trail sections, rest areas and benches, washroom facilities at select locations, parking, and public transit connections. The AccessNow app and website includes recreational trail maps on the app and has information on levels of accessibility, surface materials, general grade/slope conditions, access points, amenities (like benches

and washrooms) and parking, so you can plan ahead, navigate the trail systems easily and have a more enjoyable trail experience.

Crosby Park on the City's accessibility website provides a particularly strong example of accessible outdoor recreation in Richmond Hill. The list of accessibility features identified at the park include:

- One of the largest playground structures in Ontario that is completely accessible without steps
- Gently sloping ramps and railings
- A rubberized play surface
- A rubberized swing courts
- Accessible swing seats
- An elevated sandbox
- A double-width slide that can accommodate a child and caregiver
- The Sensory Garden
- Accessible board game tables
- Extra wide, gently sloping trails
- A new entrance and drop-off area

More information can be found at:

- https://www.richmondhill.ca/birds
- https://accessnow.com/

3.6 LOCAL BIRD FRIENDLY BUSINESSES

DESCRIPTION

Businesses in your area promote bird friendly practices (e.g. sell or offer bird friendly coffee, no single use plastics, treat their windows with feather-friendly markers, etc.), and reflect these values in their supply chains. These businesses are recognized on partner websites.

SCORING INDICATORS

To receive a point, you must name the businesses and describe what bird-friendly practices they have. These practices must include the sale of bird-friendly products, and demonstrated bird-friendly business practices (e.g. window treatments, low carbon footprint, plastic bag policy, etc.).

For one point, for cities under 100,000 residents, there must be at least 2 businesses.

For cities from 100,000 to 500,000 there must be at least 3 businesses.

For cities between 500,000 and 1,000,000, there must be at least 4 businesses.

For cities over 1 million, there must be 5 or more businesses. For two points there needs to be double the previous numbers of bird-friendly businesses, based on population size.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

Richmond Hill is home to several businesses that promote bird-friendly products and environmentally responsible business practices. These businesses support bird conservation through sustainable supply chains, the sale of bird-friendly products, and the promotion of habitat creation and wildlife stewardship. Examples include:

- Covernotes Coffee House (10268 Yonge St, Richmond Hill, ON L4C 3B7) serves Certified Fair Trade coffee and over 100

organic loose-leaf teas, using locally roasted coffee from Rufino Coffee. Rufino Coffee is committed to sustainable production, operating its roasting facility using 100% renewable electricity through Bullfrog Power and utilizing an energy-efficient roasting system that reduces fuel consumption and carbon emissions by up to 77% compared to conventional systems. These practices support environmentally responsible coffee production and reduce the environmental impacts associated with coffee roasting.

- Origin 1668 (1255A Reid St 10 & 11, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 1E9) is a Richmond Hill specialty coffee roaster that exclusively sells Organic and Fair Trade certified coffee. The business uses eco-friendly packaging, partners with Tree Canada, and supports ethical coffee production through Café Femenino, which empowers women coffee producers. These initiatives demonstrate a commitment to sustainable supply chains and environmental stewardship.
- JV Hardware (125 King Rd, Richmond Hill, ON L4E 1A5) offers a variety of products that support urban bird conservation, including bird feeders, wild bird seed, and other bird feeding supplies, encouraging residents to create and maintain backyard bird habitat.
- The Branch by Connon Nurseries (9350 Yonge St, Richmond Hill, ON L4C 5G2), located in Richmond Hill, carries a diverse selection of Ontario-grown trees, shrubs, and perennials suitable for local landscapes. These plant materials help residents create naturalized gardens and landscapes that provide food, shelter, and nesting habitat for birds and pollinators.
- Global Pet Food Mill Pond (formerly Tru Pet) (10520 Yonge St, Richmond Hill, ON L4C 3C7) supports backyard bird conservation by selling a range of wild bird seed, bird feeders, suet products, and WindowAlert UV Liquid, a bird collision deterrent designed to make windows more visible to birds while remaining nearly invisible to people. By offering both bird feeding supplies and collision prevention products, the business helps residents create safer environments for birds.
- House of Cedar (53 Observatory Ln Unit D, Richmond Hill, ON L4C 8K9), a Richmond Hill-based wholesale nursery, supplies a wide range of trees, shrubs, and landscaping materials used to establish and enhance urban green spaces. By providing trees and vegetation that contribute to habitat creation and urban canopy expansion, the business supports healthier ecosystems for birds and other wildlife.

In addition to local businesses, several larger retailers operating in Richmond Hill support bird-friendly and environmentally responsible purchasing choices through sustainable product offerings and corporate sustainability initiatives. Examples include:

- Loblaws (301 High Tech Rd, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 4R2) provides access to sustainably sourced products, including coffee, tea, and cocoa products that support responsible agricultural practices. Loblaw has documented commitments related to sustainable sourcing, including the use of Fairtrade Certified ingredients and Rainforest Alliance certified cocoa, which support improved environmental practices and biodiversity protection within agricultural supply chains. The company has also implemented initiatives to reduce environmental impacts, including transitioning coffee packaging to more sustainable materials and eliminating plastic checkout bags across its stores. These actions demonstrate broader corporate commitments to reducing waste and supporting more sustainable supply chains.
- Farm Boy (12266 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill, ON, L4E 0W5) supports bird-friendly coffee purchasing opportunities through its coffee offerings, including products from environmentally responsible coffee brands such as Balzac's Coffee Roasters and Bridgehead Coffee.
- Healthy Planet (10520 Yonge Street Unit 32, Richmond Hill, ON, L4C 3C7 & 10775 Leslie Street, Unit A401, Richmond Hill, ON, L4S 0B2) provides Richmond Hill residents with access to environmentally responsible products, including organic and Fairtrade certified coffee options.
- Bulk Barn (11005 Yonge St, Richmond Hill, ON L4C 0K7) offers 15% off on Sundays for shoppers that bring their own containers (sustainable Sundays) encouraging reduction in plastic use. They also sell wild bird feed that is sold both packaged and in bulk, which allows shoppers to use their own containers instead of buying in plastic bags.

Lastly, Richmond Hill residents have access to Smithsonian Bird Friendly certified coffee at Whole Foods Market located in Markham (3997 Hwy 7, Markham, ON L3R 5M6), Frank's Organic Garden Marketplace (15 First Commerce Dr Unit 1, Aurora, ON L4G 0G2) and Wild Birds Unlimited (WBU) (16655 Yonge St, Newmarket). The Urban Nature Store, with locations in Thornhill (92 Doncaster Ave, Markham, ON L3T 1L3) and Markham (227 Main Street Markham N Unit 5, Markham, ON L3P 1Y6) offer a dedicated "wild birding" section on their website featuring products including bird seed, feeders, bird baths, bird houses, bird feeding accessories, window decals, bird identification resources, and educational materials. Wild Birds Unlimited Newmarket provides Canadian sourced wild bird feed, food, seed, houses and feeders; in addition to offering educational opportunities like bird walks, webinars and native plants. Although these retailers are outside the City's municipal boundary, they are located in very close proximity, immediately adjacent to Richmond Hill's northern, southern, and eastern borders, making them highly accessible to residents. This provides convenient opportunities for the community to support coffee producers whose farming practices protect migratory bird habitat and biodiversity, complementing the City's efforts to encourage bird-friendly purchasing choices and sustainable consumer behaviour.

Business' links:

- https://www.covernotesrichmondhill.com/
- https://rufino.ca/pages/sustainability
- https://www.facebook.com/Origin1668coffee/
- https://www.jvhardware.ca/category/pet-wild-bird
- https://houseofcedar.ca/
- https://connon.ca/the-branch/
- https://www.globalpetfoodsmillpond.com//
- https://www.loblaw.ca/en/environment/
- https://www.farmboy.ca/stores/yonge-and-silver-maple/
- https://www.healthyplanetcanada.com/en/
- https://nationalzoo.si.edu/migratory-birds/find-bird-friendly-coffee-retailer-near-you
- Frank's Organic Garden
- https://www.bulkbarn.ca/home-en/index_deals.html
- https://newmarket.wbu.com/

3.7 CITY BIRD

DESCRIPTION

You have a "City Bird" species that was selected through a public engagement process.

SCORING INDICATORS

You must provide proof that a campaign to select a "City Bird" is underway or has been successfully completed, evidence of community engagement, the name of the "City Bird" species, and proof that it is officially the "City Bird" through Council support/recognition.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

As part of the Richmond Hill's Bird Friendly City designation, the community had the opportunity to vote on a City bird in 2024, and the Great Blue Heron soared to the top of the bird race to become Richmond Hill's official 'Bird Friendly City bird'. This voting took place on the City's website and was advertised to the public on city social media pages and newsletters.

A total of 1,518 votes were cast with the Heron securing 456 or 30% of the vote. Here's how the six-bird race played out:

- Great Blue Heron – 456 votes

- American Goldfinch – 347 votes
- Red-winged Blackbird – 309 votes
- Cedar Waxwing – 229 votes
- Bald Eagle – 139 votes
- Sandhill Crane – 38 votes

3.8 PARTICIPATORY SCIENCE TO MONITOR BIRDS

DESCRIPTION

There are active participatory science programs to monitor birds in your municipality including Christmas Bird Count, Great Backyard Bird Count, Project Feederwatch, Marsh Monitoring, Swiftwatch, or Global Bird Rescue, which monitor birds on areas that include public land. Public participation in these programs is promoted on local media. Demonstrated efforts to engage members of the public could be considered underprivileged, racialized or recent arrivals to Canada.

SCORING INDICATORS

To receive one point, provide a list of bird-related participatory science programs in your city and describe the level of public interest and engagement of target audiences.

A second point for communities in which more than three of these programs are practiced. You must demonstrate widespread community involvement.

EXPLANATION OF PROGRESS OR COMPLETION

Richmond Hill supports active participatory science programs that contribute to bird monitoring across public and natural areas, including initiatives such as the Marsh Monitoring Program, the Great Backyard Bird Count, and the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas.

There are five Marsh Monitoring sites in Richmond Hill that have ON988 (1 bird 1 amph), ON945 (1 bird 1 amph), ON635 (1 bird 1 amph), ON630 (1 bird 1 amph), ON987 (1 bird 1 amph).

The Great Backyard Bird Count has received 407 checklists for York Regions which includes Richmond Hill. These efforts have helped identify 239 eBird hotspot locations and 61 species observed in the region, demonstrating significant community engagement in citizen science. Across all years, York Region demonstrates high levels of participation in eBird citizen science, with over 108,000 checklists submitted, 316 species reportings and over 4,900 eBirders.

The Great Backyard Bird Count has received 407 checklists for York Regions which includes Richmond Hill. These efforts have helped identify 239 eBird hotspot locations and 61 species observed in the region, demonstrating significant community engagement in citizen science. Across all years, York Region demonstrates high levels of participation in eBird citizen science, with over 108,000 checklists submitted, 316 species reportings and over 4,900 eBirders.

The Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas has 2 squares that cover RH (17TPJ26 & 17TPJ25). There has been a total of 32 participants in these two squares, with a total of 312 forms submitted, and a total of 279 hours of effort. For each of these squares, 10 Eastern Screech Owl Surveys were also conducted.

The Christmas Bird Count has an annual count, with Richmond Hill as the epicenter, but also includes Aurora, parts of Markham, and King City; it gets approximately 50 participants every year.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EDUCATION SCORING: 13/13 POINTS - HIGH

ENTRY 7 points from at least 3 categories.

INTERMEDIATE 9 points from at least 5 categories.

HIGH 11 points from at least 7 categories.

FINAL OVERALL APPLICATION SCORE: 45 / 50 - Intermediate

OUR NORTH STAR

The Normalization of Nature in Decision-Making

Bird Friendly Cities is a certification program run by Nature Canada.

Suite 1000, 141 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, ON K1P 5J3
1-800-267-4088 | info@naturecanada.ca | NatureCanada.ca
Charitable registration #11883-4704-RR0001

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