

## Discussion Topic Information Sheet Discussion Group #3

### Environment

The Town's natural environment will be protected and enhanced through the development of comprehensive, holistic policies in the new Official Plan for the following areas:

#### 1. Natural Heritage

A connected **Greenway System** will be identified and designed to protect and provide opportunities to enhance the natural areas of the Town. This will include:

- Identifying and protecting **Natural Core Areas** that contain valuable and sensitive natural areas such as wetlands, significant woodlands, areas of natural and scientific interest and significant wildlife areas;
- Identifying and protecting **Natural Corridor Areas** along existing streams and lakeshores to provide natural connections between Natural Core Areas and to protect valuable aquatic ecosystems such as fish habitat;
- Identifying potential **Restoration Areas** where conversion to natural habitat will be encouraged to improve size, diversity, and connectivity of Natural Core and Natural Corridor areas;
- Ensuring that development in lands adjacent to natural areas will be required to develop in a way that will protect or if possible enhance these natural areas by defining an **Areas of Influence**; and
- Retaining the **Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan areas outside settlements** (e.g. those lands designated ORM Natural Core, Natural Linkage or Countryside and located in the north-east portion of Richmond Hill) as essential open space, agricultural or rural areas free of large scale buildings and structures that may disrupt plant and animal movement patterns.

#### 2. Water Resources

Water resources will be identified and protected to ensure a clean, abundant supply of water for future generations and where possible, degraded systems will be improved by:

- Identifying and protecting from inappropriate development sensitive hydrological features and functions including stream and lakeshore riparian zones, recharge areas, artesian flow areas and areas underlain by aquifers vulnerable to pollution;
- Promoting low impact development design approaches in sensitive hydrological areas;
- Supporting the conservation authorities in the development and implementation of watershed plans;
- Adopting state of the art stormwater planning practices emphasizing both quantity and quality control;
- Adopting stream restoration initiatives; and
- Adopting water conservation initiatives throughout the Town.

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### 3. Landform Conservation

**Significant Landform Features** within the Town should be identified and protected. The preparation and implementation of landform conservation plans will be required in complex and/or sensitive landforms such as the hummocky terrain of the Oak Ridges Moraine and significant valleylands.

### 4. Greening and Naturalization

Greening and Naturalization practices can be promoted throughout the Town. Examples of such practices include:

- Encouraging rooftop plantings and bio walls;
- Encouraging natural landscaping on school sites and other large institutional properties;
- Promoting greater amounts of natural landscaping in municipal parks and road right of ways;
- Promoting naturalization techniques in stormwater pond and infrastructure design; and
- Promoting and supporting programs that encourage private landowners to go green and natural

### 5. Sustainable Development

The Town can take a leadership role by promoting innovative and sustainable development approaches that reduce water use, energy consumption, and waste generation. Examples of such practices include:

- Encouraging adoption of microclimate enhancement techniques as part of new building designs;
- Developing more attractive/efficient mass transit;
- Adopting LEED (Leadership in Energy Efficiency and Environmental Design) and/or Energy Star standards;
- Promoting energy and water conservation initiatives;
- Promoting transit and pedestrian-oriented development; and
- Promoting mixed-use development.

### Questions

1. Sustainability will be a key component of the new Official Plan. **How can the Town's built up areas be more sustainable? How can we protect the Natural Areas of the Greenway system where they abut developed areas?**
2. The Town of Richmond Hill has an extensive greenway system. **Do you feel the Greenway system is an effective way to protect the natural values in the Town? Is it complete or is anything missing?**
3. **What are your thoughts on the long-term management of natural areas within the Greenway system? Does the town do enough to promote these - what could be done through the Official Plan?**

