



Town of Richmond Hill

P.O. Box 300
225 East Beaver Creek Road
Richmond Hill, Ontario
Canada L4C 4Y5
(905) 771-8800
www.richmondhill.ca

For Immediate Release

May 13, 2009

Contact: Paul Freeman
Manager of Policy
(905) 771-2472

OFFICIAL PLAN SUMMIT A CELEBRATION OF RICHMOND HILL'S FUTURE

Richmond Hill Official Plan Summit on May 27 & 28 is more than a public meeting

RICHMOND HILL – Is there anything more important than mapping out your community's future? How the Town looks and functions is important to each and every person who lives or works in Richmond Hill and additional opportunities to have a say will soon be here when the Town of Richmond Hill hosts its *Official Plan Summit* on May 27 & 28.

“The Official Plan Summit is a celebration of engaging and connecting the community through interaction and idea sharing,” said Mayor Dave Barrow. “We are bringing the ideas of planning and urban design out into our community to hear what they have to say about the Richmond Hill they want to be a part of over the next 25 years in look and function.”

The Official Plan Summit will kick off on Wednesday, May 27 at 7:30 p.m. with a celebration of *People Plan Richmond Hill* achievements (the Town's newly approved Strategic Plan and development of the new Official Plan), complete with a special guest speaker, live music and refreshments. The evening will feature Mayor Barrow in conversation with special guest speaker Alex Steffen, a world-renowned sustainability advocate and author from Worldchanging, a nonprofit organization with the second-largest sustainability Website on the planet according to a recent Nielsen study. The organization's book, *Worldchanging: A User's Guide for the 21st Century*, includes a foreword by Al Gore and won the Green Prize for Sustainable Literature.

“With our guest speaker, Alex Steffen, we hope to inspire people to not just think about housing, transit and the environment in general terms. We instead want them to think about and discuss, for example, how we create healthy and vibrant communities that provide for a range of services and amenities within walking distance of people's homes and places of work,” said Ana Bassios, Commissioner of Planning & Development.

The OP Summit will continue the following day on May 28 with an all-day Official Plan Multi-Stakeholder & Public Workshop consisting of presentations, roundtable discussions and group activities (from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.). Discussion will include topics such as housing, economy, transportation, intensification, urban design, heritage, environment and parks. The Summit will conclude with a Public Information Centre at 7 p.m. that evening with a wrap-up presentation and displays where staff and consultants will be available to answer questions. At the Summit, participants will also have an opportunity to view conceptual three-dimensional models and images of the downtown and Regional Centre study areas. All Summit events are free of charge to the public and registration is encouraged through the Town's Website (please note that registration for the all-day workshop on May 28 is required).



Town of Richmond Hill

P.O. Box 300
225 East Beaver Creek Road
Richmond Hill, Ontario
Canada L4C 4Y5
(905) 771-8800
www.richmondhill.ca

In the future, Richmond Hill will be transformed into a more urbanized, vibrant and complete community. Residents are encouraged to let the Town know what changes they want to see and how they think those changes should be implemented. For instance, the Yonge Street subway extension is planned to reach Richmond Hill and the Town needs to address some major questions that this change will bring. Questions like how we integrate public transit into our neighbourhoods, where our homes are and what form they will take, what our parks and public spaces will look like, and how we encourage business growth. The Official Plan Summit will address these questions and many more in a gathering of the community ranging from residents to businesses and from builders to visionaries.

The Town's current plan is more than 25 years old with 286 amendments with Richmond Hill experiencing significant growth since its creation. Once considered a medium-sized town on the outskirts of Toronto, Richmond Hill is now at the centre of a thriving urban region. Current direction established by the Region of York to develop Regional Centres and Corridors, key development areas and new transit projects will intensify and change the face of growth and development within the Town's settlement areas. In order to deal with these changing circumstances effectively, the Town needs a new Official Plan.

An Official Plan is a key guiding document that sets out policies regarding how land in the Town will be used in the present and future. It is prepared with input from the community to ensure that the physical, social and economic needs of residents can be met. It describes where housing, businesses and other land uses will be, which, in turn, sets the tone for the look and feel of our community. It ultimately impacts how it functions.

For more information, including a complete agenda, guest speaker biography and to register online, visit www.richmondhill.ca/opsummit. For Official Plan information, visit www.richmondhill.ca/officialplan.

Please view the attached backgrounder for additional information about the Official Plan Summit and guest speaker, Alex Steffen.



Town of Richmond Hill
P.O. Box 300
225 East Beaver Creek Road
Richmond Hill, Ontario
Canada L4C 4Y5
(905) 771-8800
www.richmondhill.ca

BACKGROUNDER: OFFICIAL PLAN SUMMIT

Official Plan Summit Agenda – May 27 & 28, 2009

(please note that there is no cost to attend any of the events)

Wednesday, May 27, 2009 - 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. (doors open at 7 p.m.)

People Plan Richmond Hill celebration for the Strategic Plan and the Official Plan

- includes guest speaker Alex Steffen (see bio below), live music, cake, refreshments and prizes

Location: M.L. McConaghy Seniors' Centre (10100 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill)

Thursday, May 28, 2009 - 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. (note: pre-registration by May 22 is required for this all-day workshop)

Official Plan Multi-Stakeholder & Public Workshop

- includes presentations, visualization, interactive roundtable discussions, breakfast and lunch
- topic stations will include the following subjects: housing, economy, transportation, intensification, urban design, heritage, environment, and parks

Location: M.L. McConaghy Seniors' Centre (10100 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill)

Thursday, May 28, 2009 - 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Official Plan Public Information Centre

- includes presentation, visualization, topic-based displays, workshop discussion summary, refreshments and prizes

Location: M.L. McConaghy Seniors' Centre (10100 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill)

**Please see complete agenda at www.richmondhill.ca/opsummit*

Special Guest Speaker: Alex Steffen

Who is Alex Steffen?

Alex Steffen is the co-founder and executive editor of *Worldchanging: A User's Guide for the 21st Century*. He will open the Official Plan Summit and talk about the opportunities facing Richmond Hill over the lifespan of the new Official Plan.

What is Worldchanging?

Worldchanging has received praise worldwide, with the Globe and Mail recently noting that the book includes "ideas, solutions and resources for people wondering what they can do to make life better for our planet and its people." The book's companion Website, Worldchanging.com, has become the most widely-read sustainability related publication on the Internet with contributions by some of the most innovative leaders and thinkers around the world.

Where can I learn more?

Please visit Worldchanging.com for more details.

-30-

*This document was produced by Communication Services Division staff, Department of the CAO,
at the Town of Richmond Hill.*