

January 22, 2021

Mayor & Council, Richmond Hill
City Clerk clerks@richmondhill.ca



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RICHMOND HILL, ON L4E 0Z4

RE: COUNCILLOR TOM MUENCH, MEMBER MOTION, PERMEABLE PAVING SOLUTIONS

York Region Environmental Alliance (YREA) supports this motion with the exception of this paragraph to which we strongly object and reasoning we can disprove – *‘Whereas the use and expansion of stormwater ponds should be minimized as stormwater ponds create safety, liability and health concerns to people and wildlife, and are (breeding areas) magnets for West Nile Virus. Furthermore, stormwater ponds are costly to land development, hurting housing affordability’.*

Suggesting we minimize stormwater ponds because of isolated human mishaps and safety concerns is like saying we need to stop driving vehicles because of the thousands of annual accidents. Ponds that experience movement from wind and wildlife are not breeding areas for West Nile virus which breed in stagnant water in sewer catch basins and clutter around [homes](#). Green freshwater infrastructures provide ecosystem services such as **temperature regulation**, water purification and natural aesthetics while supporting biodiversity through habitat creation for aquatic, riparian and other wildlife species which are a pleasure to observe at our neighbourhood ponds. None of the above mentioned can be achieved through permeable paving alone. Rather, we need both. Municipalities and homeowners would benefit with reduced maintenance and insurance costs while developers need to do the right thing and stop trying to cut costs for larger profits. The function of stormwater ponds would also greatly improve if the soil at time of construction was of higher quality, thus ensuring the survival of more trees which absorb large amounts of water through their roots.

Almost everyone at one time or another has noticed joggers and walkers using the road instead of the adjacent sidewalk. That is because concrete surfaces are much harder than asphalt. There is an opportunity here while transitioning to permeable paving to also consider [environmentally friendly](#) and [permeable paving](#) derived from recycled rubber tires and plastic which would be more flexible.

In 2018 YREA drew attention to the paving over of properties for more parking. Our current bylaw on this matter is ludicrous saying that one can pave but cannot park on it. Permeable paving would certainly have a positive impact of water flow but the aesthetics are still very undesirable. This is where our stormwater ponds can add the missing green infrastructure and should be expanded for the benefit of nature and community wellbeing.



Sincerely
Gloria Marsh, Executive Director
York Region Environmental Alliance
Partnering for a greener planet