

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Greening Our Communities

How we design and manage our built environment including green infrastructure, is important to sustainable healthy communities.

Green infrastructure takes many forms including: natural environment lands and features, street trees, agricultural lands, green roofs and green walls, parks, gardens, and stormwater ponds.

These features provide health, environmental, social, and economic benefits to communities. For example, studies have shown that forests improve air quality, provide natural shade, reduce urban heat island effects, mitigate climate change, reduce energy consumption, increase property value, reduce flood risks, improve water quality and water quantity, and reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases.

PUBLIC HEALTH

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york.ca/healthybuiltenvironment

19-5254

DID YOU KNOW?

- York Region Forestry manages 21 forest tracts that includes 2,300 hectares and maintains 68,000 street trees.
- York Region's Greening Strategy plants over 70,000 trees and shrubs annually.
- Trees in York Region remove 3,400 tonnes of air pollutants annually and produce oxygen which improves respiratory health and air quality.
- Trees reduce the demand for heating and cooling and reduce energy costs by shading and cooling homes during summer months and providing protection from cold winds in the winter.
- Surface temperatures in areas shaded by trees can be up to 10 degrees Celsius cooler.
- Forests provide the opportunity for increased physical activity from walking, hiking, skiing, and snowshoeing, which can decrease risk of chronic disease such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and obesity.
- Forests in York Region remove and store 80,000 tonnes of carbon each year- that is equivalent to taking 62,000 cars off the road.
- Contact with nature has a positive effect on human health. It can provide stress relief and improve mental well-being, memory performance, and attention span.

The logo for York Region, featuring a stylized white bird or wing shape above the text "York Region" in a white serif font.

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You make a difference when you...

- Reduce the demand for heating and cooling your home by incorporating shade trees, green roofs or other green infrastructure as part of your home energy management plan
- Get to know your green spaces by checking out local parks, forests and trails
- Participate in community tree planting events, hikes, festivals – visit york.ca/forestevents or yourleaf.org/events for community events
- Be active and take a walk in your local forest
- Plant native trees and plants on your property – visit yourleaf.org to learn about a subsidized backyard tree planting program

Municipalities show leadership when they...

- Make green infrastructure an integral part of climate change adaptation planning
- Incorporate greening policies in municipal plans such as green roofs and community gardens
- Implement and support natural heritage studies and urban forest management plans
- Provide opportunities for local residents to be active in parks and forests
- Support local organizations in community greening initiatives

BE AN ACTIVE PARTNER WHERE YOU LIVE, LEARN, WORK AND PLAY.
Participate in building healthy communities!