BUILDING **HEALTHY** COMMUNITIES

Greening Our Communities

How we design and manage our natural and built environment including green infrastructure, is important to sustainable healthy complete 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 and adapt to 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 and help to address mental health.

PUBLIC HEALTH
1-877-464-9675
york.ca/HealthyBuiltEnvironment

25-PH3-057

DID YOU KNOW?

- The York Region Forest is over 2,500 hectares and is made up of 24 Forest Tracts (22 are open to the public) located in different parts of the Region.

- York Region Forestry manages 75,944 live street trees.

- Since 2004, the Grow Your Legacy large-scale tree-planting program has planted over 763,000 trees and shrubs across York Region

- Each year, the forests in York Region remove and store 77,000 tonnes of carbon. That equals 60,000 fewer cars on the road

- 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.

- 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.

York Region

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

You make a difference when you...

- Reduce the demand for heating and cooling your home by incorporating shade trees and native species, 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 to sign up for a York Regional Forest walk or event

- 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!