



## 3 Summary of Research Findings and Public Input

The research conducted for this plan was wide-ranging and highly detailed. In order to keep this Cultural Plan as concise and accessible as possible, we have summarized the findings here; the full results are available in a separate document. Interested readers are encouraged to consult this document to appreciate the wealth of information, insight, and passion of all those who contributed to the Plan. A few of those insights and comments have been selected and highlighted in this plan, to show how it reflects the community consultation process.

Pickering staff first gathered background information from statistics, historical documents, and other sources to help define Pickering's cultural make-up, as well as its cultural and heritage assets. The research also included canvassing opinion from the community through a telephone survey of Pickering residents; online surveys for community organizations; interviews with members of Council and senior City managers; and focus group sessions with youth and seniors.



“ A strong and positive volunteer sector breeds success and sustainability from within... I don't think anything says more than the value of the volunteer in-kind donation that supported this museum's operation in 2009... \$585,000 dollars of time is not insignificant... 305 volunteers believe this facility is worth investing in, and we could not receive the awards, the accolades, or offer the public programs without those volunteers and their commitment. ”

**Contributed by volunteers from  
Pickering Museum Village**

“ Woodworking was a major activity in 19th-century rural society. The Woodwrights have completed 53 on-site projects since inception in 2007. This doesn't include the many hours involved in constructing the new Woodwrights shop. These are outstanding accomplishments from a small group of volunteers. The quality of our work has been noted by all those who remember “how it was like.” ”

**Contributed by the Woodwrights' Guild**

## 3.1 Background



### 3.1.1 Pickering's Geography

Pickering's environmental heritage includes the waterfront on Lake Ontario, the nationally renowned Rouge Park, and the provincially significant Oak Ridges Moraine. Within its boundaries are 79 parks and four conservation areas. These areas support recreational opportunities such as paddling along the shores of Frenchman's Bay, walking the West Duffins Trail and Seaton Trail systems, cycling the Waterfront Trail, hiking through Altona Forest, and swimming in Ontario's largest outdoor pool at Petticoat Creek Conservation Area.

Pickering's 231.59 square kilometres of land and waterways are situated within five watersheds: Petticoat Creek, Frenchman's Bay, Duffins Creek, Carruthers Creek, and Lynde Creek. Watershed plans have been or are in the process of being completed for each of these areas.

The urban part of Pickering is focused on the "Downtown", which we now refer to as the "City Centre". The City Centre includes the Pickering Civic Precinct (City Hall, Main Central Library, Esplanade Park and the Pickering Recreation Complex), and Pickering Town Centre (a large regional shopping centre with more than 200 stores and services), as well as office buildings and a bridge to the Pickering GO Station. Approximately 5,000 people live in the City Centre today, and 5,000 people are currently employed here.

Pickering's rural area occupies about two-thirds (15,200 hectares) of Pickering's land mass. In 1996, Pickering's rural residents made up approximately 6% of Pickering's population, mostly in rural hamlets, rural clusters, and country residential settlement areas.

### 3.1.2 Pickering's History

The first people to live in Pickering settled there approximately 4,000 years ago. By the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, the Huron were driven away by the Five Nations Iroquois, who established villages throughout the area. By the late 1600s, French explorers made their way into the area and established trade and missionaries. English settlers followed, fought against the French settlers, and defeated them, which ultimately led to the acquisition of Pickering Township by England in 1785.

The Township of Pickering was settled by farmers, most of them from Great Britain or Ireland, starting in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to a settlement focused on the harbour at Frenchman's Creek, there were hamlets scattered throughout the rural area, many of which have survived to this day (such as Brougham, Cherrywood, and Whitevale). The harbour declined in importance in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the growth of the City of Toronto led to a rise in the number of summer cottages in the Pickering area. New suburban communities were built, starting in the 1960s. By the 1990s, in response to concerns about environmental impacts and the loss of farmland, the City began a Journey to Sustainability to chart a new course for the City.

### 3.1.3 Pickering's Demographics

At the end of 2013, the City of Pickering had a population of approximately 95,000. Between 2006 and 2011, Pickering's population increased by 1%. Pickering is planned to grow to approximately 225,000 people by 2031. Of this number, 61,000 people (about 25%) are expected to live in the Seaton Community by 2031. The Seaton Community is nearing the end of the planning stage.

Two important trends are evident: the population is aging and is becoming more ethnically diverse. The majority of Pickering's population is between the ages of 45 and 59. More than 35% of Pickering's population is made up of a visible minority and more than 24% (statistic 21,240/87,920 working numbers) of the population speaks a language other than English or French. Pickering's largest visible minority is Black Canadians with Caribbean origins, followed closely by residents from South Asia.

### 3.1.4 Pickering's Economy

Pickering is a leading centre for energy in Ontario. Its core business sectors include companies in Energy, Environment, and Engineering (known as the EN3 Cluster). It is home to Ontario Power Generation (OPG), the City's largest employer and one of the largest electricity producers in North America, as well as Eco-Tec, Siemens/Trench Canada Ltd. and Intellimeter. Other important industries and sectors include advanced manufacturing, logistics, pharmaceuticals, electronics, and consulting.

### 3.1.5 Pickering's Natural, Cultural and Recreational Assets

Pickering has a range of natural, recreational, heritage, arts, and cultural attractions for residents and visitors that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Frenchman's Bay** is a shallow coastal lagoon on the Lake Ontario shoreline, protected by a barrier beach that is well used by residents and visitors for walking, boating and fishing.
- **Waterfront Trail** is a scenic haven for cycling, in-line skating, and leisurely strolls.
- **Altona Forest** is an environmentally significant area that provides essential habitat for many plants and animals and is used for hiking, bird watching, wildlife photography, and educational interpretative walks.
- The **Seaton Trail** is located along the West Duffins Creek and follows historic hunting and fishing routes on the creek. The trail passes heritage buildings from Pickering's pioneer days, such as the grist mill at Whitevale.
- **Petticoat Creek Conservation Area** on the shores of Lake Ontario offers spectacular views of the coastal bluffs, and opportunities to see wildlife and enjoy picnics and walks in a 70-hectare park. The 35-year-old swimming pool, one of Petticoat Creek's main attractions, was recently reconstructed as a new aquatic entertainment facility. The new facility includes a 3,200 square metre wading pool, a 750 person capacity swimming area, and a splash pad with interactive water features.
- **Greenwood Conservation Area** on Duffins Creek is managed by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and open to the public for hiking, cross-country skiing, fishing, and bird watching.
- **Claremont Field Centre** is located on the banks of the Duffins Creek East and Mitchell Creek and is on the Trans Canada Trail. The Centre is managed by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. Outdoor education programs are offered for school, Scouts, Guides, and other groups.
- **Diana Princess of Wales Park** is a well-used park adjacent the City Centre that offers a ball hockey rink, basketball court, mini soccer pitch, skateboard park, soccer/football field, tot equipment, and volley ball court.
- **Millennium Square** is a large public square at the southern tip of Liverpool Road, on the shores of Lake Ontario. From the Square visitors can access the Waterfront Trail system, or picnic at the adjacent Beachfront Park. Events such as concerts are often held here in summer.

- **Beachfront Park**, south of Hydro Marsh, offers an elevated beachfront boardwalk, beautiful views across Lake Ontario, generous seating and picnicking areas. In addition to the beach, children can enjoy the recently constructed splash pad play area, modern accessible play structures, swings, and beach volleyball.
- **Alex Robertson Park** is home to the popular art installation "Homeplace" and the newly created Butterfly Garden. Alex Robertson Park includes hiking and running trails and is popular with cricketers, dog walkers, cyclists, and hikers on the Waterfront Trail.
- **Homeplace**, located on the north side of Alex Robertson Park, is a structural design by Canadian artist, Dorsey James, which was installed in 2001. The different designs of the structure symbolize a variety of periods, cultures, and beliefs. The most recognizable is the hydro pole arrangement atop the hill. The poles grow in height toward the centre, acknowledging individual growth as well as the growth, evolution, and prosperity of the community.
- **Nautical Village** is a community of residences, shops, services and marinas anchored by a core of live/work units, located at the base of Liverpool Road. Nestled between the edge of Lake Ontario and the western shores of Frenchman's Bay, Nautical Village offers a waterfront lifestyle including recreational opportunities for boating, paddling, fishing and cruising, all supported by specialty shops, full service restaurants and cafes.
- **Frenchman's Bay Marina** was established on the north shore of Lake Ontario in Frenchman's Bay during the summer of 1972. The Marina serves several hundred boating customers.
- **Wind Turbine**: This 117-metre turbine (measured from the ground to the highest blade tip) can produce enough emission-free energy to supply the annual electricity needs of about 600 average Ontario homes.
- **Pickering Museum Village** is located on the banks of Duffins Creek in historic Greenwood. The largest living history museum in the Durham Region, this award-winning site has 20 restored heritage buildings dating from as far back as 1810, including a blacksmith and woodworking shop, a general store, a schoolhouse, houses, barns, and places of worship. Tours at PMV re-create the daily life of Pickering Township's settlers from the early pioneer days onward.
- **Whitevale Heritage Conservation District** contains more than 50 buildings dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which are listed on a heritage inventory. The district is located on West Duffins Creek and retains traces of its past as an important rural centre and mill site.
- **Heritage Properties** listed on Pickering's Cultural Directory range from Victorian schoolhouses to unique modernist properties to historic cemeteries.
- **Pickering Town Centre Farmers' Market** was started in 2011, and was designed to be a comprehensive community event to feature local farmers and food producers, support local food banks, and showcase local artisans, craft workers, and musicians.

- **Pickering Recreation Complex**, a nationally accredited fitness centre in the heart of Pickering, offers world-class training to athletes such as Olympian Perdita Felicien. The Complex celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013. It offers more than a quarter-of-a-million square feet of facility space and top-of-the-line cardio and fitness equipment, twin ice pads, and programs for all ages and abilities, including fitness, aquatics, tennis, squash, and racquetball.
- **Durham West Arts Centre** in the Pickering Recreation Complex showcases local, national, and international talents, ranging from visual to performing arts.
- **Pickering Public Library:** Pickering has one central public library and three branches. A Central Library Expansion and Renovation Study was completed with stakeholder and community input in 2012. The Library's current Strategic Plan is moving services away from a more traditional model of providing physical materials to providing access to technology and training to produce creative and intellectual products.
- **Shopping and Dining:** The Pickering Town Centre offers more than 200 stores, restaurants, and services. Pickering is also home to a SmartCentre, The Shops at Pickering Ridge, and Brookdale Centre, the Pickering Markets, and many stand-alone shops and restaurants.

### 3.1.6 Pickering's Cultural Organizations

Pickering's Culture & Recreation Department offers thousands of programs each year, promoted through the **City of Pickering Leisure Guide**. Programs include culinary arts, visual arts, performing arts, language, and heritage programs (offered by the Pickering Museum Village). The Department coordinates many free events, including Theatre in the Park, Waterfront Concert Series, Treble in the Park, Heritage Day, Artfest, Spirit Walk, Steam Up & Opening, The Settler Trail, and Christmas in the Village.

The stakeholder survey completed for this plan identified 79 other cultural organizations in Pickering, listed in Appendix C. These include schools, places of worship, ethnocultural groups, businesses focused on the arts, recreational organizations, and environmental groups. The diversity of Pickering's cultural fabric and the commitment of its volunteer sector are evident in the list and in the responses to the survey.

## 3.2 Public Input



### 3.2.1 Community Telephone Survey

In January and February 2010, a household telephone survey of Pickering residents was conducted by the firm of Monteith Brown Planning Consultants; 450 households participated, making the findings statistically significant.<sup>18</sup>

**Participation in cultural activities:** The most popular activity was singing or playing music (33%), followed by painting, drawing, crafts, sculpture, pottery, or other visual arts (27%), and multi-cultural activities (19%). The top two activities can generally be undertaken in an unstructured and unscheduled manner, which is becoming increasingly important as people have less free time.

**Place of participation:** Most people participated in cultural activities in the City of Pickering, but some went outside the City to participate in multicultural activities (45%); acting or theatrical performance (36%); and heritage activities, such as classes or workshops at a museum or historic site (35%). If respondents participated more often outside Pickering, they were asked to provide reasons. The top three responses were: facility/program not available in the area (29% of those participating outside Pickering); connected to the other community/used to live there (18%); and special events/variety (16%).

**Most popular events:** The top three most-attended facilities, events, or performances were: community events (e.g., Canada Day, Santa Claus Parade, RibFest, etc.) (65%); a musical performance, such as a concert or opera (57%); and a dance performance, such as a recital (54%).

<sup>18</sup> These 450 households represent approximately 1,400 Pickering residents. Although this accounts for only 1.5% of the City's population, statistical modelling proves that this is a significant figure and it would take thousands more completed surveys to improve survey confidence (and only marginally at that). The survey response level is similar to those frequently used to report on regional or provincial research polls. In statistical terms, this represents a confidence interval of  $\pm 4.6\%$  (that is, the survey provides for an accuracy of  $\pm 4.6\%$ , 19 times out of 20).

**Gaps:** When asked about events that they would like to see in Pickering that are not currently offered, respondents most often suggested musical performances, theatre, art exhibits and galleries, educational programs, and ethnic or multicultural festivals and events.

**Awareness:** The most common ways in which people learn about cultural offerings are newspapers (42% of all households); mail outs (21%); e-mail (13%); newsletter/magazines (12%); and bulletin boards/posters/flyers (12%). Households with children were more likely to feel that their household is generally aware of the heritage, arts, and culture opportunities that are available in Pickering than households without children.

**Barriers to participation:** The most common reason given for not participating as often as they would like was lack of personal time (59%), followed by health problems or disability (16%) and lack of desired facilities or programs (8%).

**Spending on culture:** Respondents were asked how much money their entire household spends on heritage, arts, and culture in a typical month. This spending includes subscriptions, tickets, donations, program fees, and materials, but excludes movies. We learned that 54% of respondents spent \$0–\$50 per month, followed by 15% each for those that spend \$50–\$99 per month and \$100–\$199 per month. Only 8% of households spent more than \$200 per month on heritage, arts, and culture.

**Spending priorities for the City:** The facility type thought to be most in need of additional public spending was parkland for festivals and special events (66%), followed by a performing arts centre for theatrical and musical performances (55%), museum or heritage sites (43%), rehearsal spaces for dance, theatre or music (43%), art galleries and exhibition space (31%), and art studios for creating visual arts, crafts, and other works (31%).

### 3.2.2 Stakeholder Group Survey

Between January and March 2010, the City contacted cultural groups and community organizations and asked them to complete a survey about their activities. A total of 79 organizations completed the surveys. Of those organizations completing the survey, 22% were incorporated not-for-profit, followed by not incorporated not-for-profit (19%), other (16%), for profit (15%), school/educational institution (15%), government (9%), and church/place of worship (4%).

The most common primary discipline of the organizations represented by respondents was cultural heritage (39%), followed by community events (37%) and other (34%), such as education, ethnocultural groups, photography, and environment.

**Participation trends:** Of the sample that provided feedback, 44 respondents (67%) reported an increase in their organization's participation, attendance, and membership over the past five years, 25% saw no change, and 8% experienced decreases.

**Cultural assets:** 39 organizations (49%) reported owning or managing significant collections or other physical heritage, arts and culture resources, from buildings to costumes to musical instruments to archival materials.

**Funding:** 23 organizations (29%) stated that they had received government funding from federal, provincial, and/or municipal sources in 2009. The total amount of funding received by the 23 organizations was \$50,615,876, for an average of \$2,200,690 per organization.

**Need for City support:** 48% of the 62 respondents that provided feedback regarding this question stated that their organization required additional support from the City of Pickering relative to heritage, arts, and culture, including:

- Promotion and increased awareness
- Facility upgrades/expansion
- Financial assistance/lower fees
- More cultural staff at the City
- Partnership for marketing and sponsorship
- Grants
- Expanded programming
- Long-term planning

**Challenges:** Respondents were provided a list of 8 options and asked to select the 3 greatest challenges facing their organization relative to heritage, arts, and culture. Lack of community awareness and promotion (56% of all organizations) was the primary challenge, followed by shortage of facility space (42%), level of funding (40%), and staff or volunteer resources (36%).

“ I propose to establish a big enough place in which Jewish, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs may be allowed to one day teach in order to offer their heritage, arts, and culture events and participated by community and City officials who would like to participate. ”

**Contributed by a member of the Muslim Youth & Community Centre for Pickering/Durham**

### 3.2.3 Interviews: Council Members

In May and June 2011, interviews were conducted with members of Pickering Council.

**Pickering's strengths:** When asked to identify the strengths of Pickering's current cultural community, the most common response was Pickering's diversity.

**Gaps:** Many members of council felt that a gap in the current delivery of cultural services and facilities was Art Facilities (performing arts, visual arts, art studios, meeting spaces, etc.). Pickering's city centre was identified as the ideal location for an Arts Centre and so a strategic use of municipal and provincial lands in the city centre must be considered.

**Priorities:** All members of Council felt that culture should be a high priority for the City of Pickering, but recognize that it is not, as is evident in current budgets, facilities, and staff allocations. Many feel that active recreation holds a greater priority than the arts, culture, and heritage. But members are not sure that is where the community is headed – as diversity continues to grow, cultural services will become increasingly important.

### 3.2.4 Interviews: Senior Managers

In May and June 2011, interviews were conducted with seven senior management staff members with the City.

**Pickering's strengths:** The diversity of its people was once again recognized as a strength of Pickering's cultural community. Staff also recognize and value the engagement of our residents and community organizations as a major strength.

**Gaps:** Many staff felt that the development and support of the arts was a critical gap and opportunity for the City of Pickering to address in this plan. Dedicated space is needed for proper artifact storage, archives, and visual and performing arts programs and services.

**Challenges:** Staff wanted to see more engagement of cultural community members, better development and promotion of Pickering's natural heritage (trail maps, sites), better historical connections, ways to overcome the urban and rural split within the community, and more funding for artistic placemaking in the municipality.

### 3.2.5 Committee of Council Questionnaires

In June 2011, Pickering staff invited committees of Council to participate in a questionnaire related to the cultural plan. The committees included Heritage Pickering, Pickering Museum Village Advisory Committee, and the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Four completed surveys were returned to staff.

**Pickering's strengths:** Respondents indicated that Pickering's diverse community, parks, waterfront, museum, and library are all invaluable.

**Gaps:** Respondents suggest that more be done to promote and support these pillars of the community. This includes better access to the waterfront, more programs at the Recreation Centre, increased park safety, and development of the arts through an arts centre, better collaboration and communication among like-minded groups (i.e., Heritage Pickering, Pickering Museum Village, Pickering Historical Society, the Central Library) and the creation of an economic plan to support tourism. One respondent also recommended increased support and funding for Pickering heritage so that a specific staff member is responsible for heritage matters.

**Challenges:** Respondents suggested that the Cultural Plan should address the need to include northern Pickering in activities that take place in the city centre and the waterfront; to include advisory committee participation in the planning of cultural services; and to assign a coordinator who can facilitate cultural development. Also, housing developments should be designed to support residents through their lifespan and not segregate seniors, but integrate them in the community.

### 3.2.6 Focus Group: Youth

In September 2011, youth from Pickering Activity Council for teens (PAC4Teens) and Pickering's youth programs were invited to participate in a focus group session led by Pickering staff.

**Preferred activities:** Many youth reported participating in the following cultural activities during their free time: dancing, drawing, painting, playing music, writing, visiting historic sites, and attending multicultural events. Youth most often participated in these cultural activities at home, at a friend's house, at a City facility and to a lesser extent, at school.

**Awareness:** Many youth reported becoming aware of cultural programs and services through their friends, schools, parents, leisure guide, and newspapers. They also recommend that the City promote programs and services to them through schools, Facebook, and Twitter.

**Gaps:** When asked what cultural activities they think should be offered, the responses included dances (for kids older than pre-teens), breakdancing, ballroom dancing, and a new facility for art classes.

### 3.2.7 Focus Group: Seniors

In June 2012, seniors from the South Pickering Seniors Executive Committee were invited to participate in a focus group session led by Pickering staff.

**Preferred activities:** The seniors reported the following cultural activities as important to them: crafts, heritage activities that include Scottish and Irish events (Robbie Burns Supper and St. Patrick's Day Celebration), Pickering Concert Band performances, dancing, playing music, computer courses (which include assistance with photos), graphics, honour library (where books are available to borrow without the need to sign them out), and theatrical performances.

**Restrictions:** Seniors Club Executive members did not feel particularly restricted from participating in cultural activities. They feel that they have the support and resources to offer their membership cultural activities of interest. They also appreciate the programs the City of Pickering offers and are often invited by other agencies to attend specific activities or events.

**Gaps:** When asked what City of Pickering programs could be offered to seniors but currently are not, the following programs were listed: line dancing (club led), Zumba, Tai Chi, clog dancing, art classes, and a pole walking club (inside during winter). When asked what cultural facilities should be offered to seniors, the response was a theatre in Pickering featuring an accessible location, with weekday and weekend matinee show times. The membership also wanted a dance hall that would be accessible and large enough for big events.

“ I have been involved with the Pickering Museum Village as staff and volunteer for 20 years. It always surprises me that at each event there, I run into someone who is attending the site for the first time, and “never knew” that Pickering had a museum; has lived in Pickering for years and paid taxes to help support the museum (unknowingly) and has now discovered what a wonderful, enjoyable, educational experience the museum is! ... This must happen in other cultural groups also. Are we missing an opportunity for communication or promotion here? ”

**Contributed by a member of Bloomers & Britches Heritage Gardeners, Pickering Museum Village**