



—City of—  
**PICKERING**

# **Community Services**

## **Annual Report | 2024**

The City of Pickering resides on land within the Treaty and traditional territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation and Williams Treaties signatories of the Mississauga and Chippewa Nations. Pickering is also home to many Indigenous persons and communities who represent other diverse, distinct, and autonomous Indigenous nations.

This acknowledgement reminds us of our responsibilities to our relationships with the First Peoples of Canada, and to the ancestral lands on which we learn, share, work, and live.



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Guests enjoying Fall  
Fling 2024



# Achievements & Results



**Pickering Museum Village**  
Lieutenant Governor's  
Ontario Heritage Awards for  
Excellence in Conservation



**Pickering Museum Village**  
Best Local Tourist Attraction



**Chestnut Hill Developments**  
**Recreation Complex**  
Best Recreation Facility  
Best Fitness Club



**City of Pickering**  
Top 100 Festivals & Events in Ontario  
Cultural Fusion Festival  
Municipality of the Year 2024

	followers	engagements
	7,500 ↑ 8.5%	29,000 ↓ 54%
	5,300 ↑ 10%	6,600 ↓ 67%
	1,600 ↑ 3%	12,000 ↑ 823%
	2,300 ↑ 5%	15,600 ↑ 457%

	followers	engagements
	8,300 ↑ 26.5%	15,500 ↑ 19%
	2,700 ↑ 80%	6,800 ↑ 110.5%
	1,000 ↑ 25%	2,000 ↑ 1233%
	150	400



# Festivals & Events



Litmus Dance Group at Cultural Fusion



# Festivals & Events

Each year, the City organizes and hosts a wide range of dynamic events that bring together our community to learn, celebrate, and connect. These events welcome thousands of residents and visitors each year and promote a sense of unity, creativity, and pride.

Events provide significant benefits to our community, including generating positive economic impact, promoting tourism, and community engagement. These events also offer cherished experiences that enrich and celebrate community spirit, vibrancy, connectivity, and resilience across the province.

Special events support the well-being of our community, as well as the social and economic value they bring to our residents and businesses. While special events may vary in size, purpose and complexity, they all enhance cultural diversity, encourage recreation and tourism opportunities and provide economic benefits to local businesses and organizations.



50

dynamic, community events

89,000+

guests attended City of  
Pickering events

# Events Overview

**Mayor's New Year's Day Levee**  
January 1

**Easter Parade**  
March 30

**Petapolooza**  
May 13

**Civic Awards**  
May 13

**Artfest**  
May 25, 26

**Dragon Boat Festival**  
June 1 - 2

**D-Day Parade & Ceremony**  
June 2

**On the Backs of Fish Unveiling**  
June 7

**Pickering Rotary Ribfest**  
June 14 - 16

**National Indigenous People's Day**  
June 21

**Canada Day**  
July 1

**Waterfront Summer Concerts**  
July 4, 11, 18, 25, Aug 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

**Esplanade Park Summer Concerts**  
July 7, 14, 21, 28, Aug 4, 18, 25

**Summer Concerts & Movie Nights**  
July 5, 12, 26, Aug 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

**Jennifer O'Connell Movie Night**  
July 19

**Pickering Food Truck Festival**  
August 9 - 11

**Wagon Wrap / Log Barn Uveiling**  
August 16

**Festival of India's Independence**  
August 18

**Groundbreaking: Beachfront Park**  
September 10

**Cultural Fusion**  
September 14

**Ganesh Festival**  
September 14

**Truth and Reconciliation**  
September 30

**Fall Fling**  
October 19, 26

**Poppy Sidewalk Unveiling**  
October 25

**Remembrance Day Service**  
November 11

**Mayor's Gala**  
November 15

**Winter Night, City Lights**  
November 16, 17

**Santa Claus Parade**  
November 23

**Winter Wonderland**  
December 7, 14

# Featured Events



## Summer Concerts

Esplanade Park, Millennium Square & Rick Johnson Memorial Park

The City of Pickering's Summer Concert Series, brings live music and community spirit to residents and visitors alike. Hosted in scenic outdoor venues, this annual tradition showcases talented performers across diverse genres, ensuring there's something for everyone to enjoy. Concerts are free to attend, providing an accessible and vibrant space for families, friends, and neighbors to connect while appreciating local artistry and entertainment. The series supports the city's commitment to fostering cultural growth and enriching community life.

**Date:** Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays in July & August

**Event Type:** Community Engagement

**Attendance:** 5000+





# Santa Claus Parade

Pickering's City Centre

The Santa Claus Parade is a cherished holiday tradition, bringing festive cheer and community spirit to residents and visitors alike. Winding through the heart of the city, this annual event features dazzling floats, marching bands, local performers, and of course, a special appearance by Santa himself. The parade offers a magical and family-friendly atmosphere where neighbors come together to celebrate the season. Free to attend and full of holiday joy, the event reflects Pickering's dedication to fostering community connection and creating unforgettable memories.

**Date:** Saturday, November 23, 2024

**Event Type:** Community Engagement

**Attendance:** 15,000+



# Beachfront Park Groundbreaking

Beachfront Park

The City's Beachfront Park project officially broke ground, addressing shoreline damage from high lake levels in 2017 and 2019. Led by Mayor Ashe, the event marked the start of a revitalized waterfront featuring an elevated walkway, cycling route, viewing platforms, barrier-free beach access, shoreline protection, and supporting amenities. This project will connect Pickering's waterfront trail to a new raised boardwalk with scenic lookouts and accessible beach connections, enhancing mobility and visitor experience. The ceremony included formal remarks, light refreshments, and a cartoonist providing caricatures for guests.

**Date:** September 10, 2024

**Event Type:** Groundbreaking, Community Engagement

**Attendance:** 100



# Cultural Fusion

Esplanade Park

The City hosted the returning Cultural Fusion event that celebrates the City's diversity. Cultural and Community groups were involved in two planning meetings in 2024 prior to the event, allowing the opportunity to contribute suggestions and feedback to enhance the event. Cultural Fusion included cultural performances, multicultural showcase, cultural food market, and cultural and community groups interactive booths.

**Dates:** September 14, 2024

**Event Type:** Community Engagement

**Attendance:** 3,300+

Sponsored by: Elexicon, HiFive Kid's Dental, Steamoji



Performers at Cultural Fusion  
September 14, 2024





# Public Art & Placemaking



Crimson Inflorescence by Linfeng Zhou



# Public Art & Placemaking

Public Art and Placemaking have been instrumental in enriching Pickering's cultural tapestry. It goes beyond mere decoration; it has engaged communities, stimulated dialogues, and contributes to the overall well-being and vitality of our City.

In 2024, the City of Pickering has over 48 Public Artworks throughout the City including permanent sculptures and murals. Public art can inspire innovation and impart education. It can boost creative industries, drive cultural tourism, and support local business.

At the core of the City's public art and placemaking initiatives is our community. All of our artistic projects are developed collaboratively with, and endorsed by our residents. Through various committees and councils, our community steers and supports these projects.

Through this engagement with community, we know that the City's visual culture reflects the thoughts, interests, and perspectives of our community.



48

permanent and temporary artworks created



31

local and Canadian artists supported

# Ayukwenodih

**Artist:** Javid JAH, Alex Akbari & Catherine Tàmmaro

**Location:** Kingston Road and Whites Road

**Installation:** September 2024

"Ayukwenodih" is a permanent public artwork that explores the continuous evolution of trade, extending beyond the conventional economic understanding of the term. The work represents a broader exchange—one that includes the exchange of ideas and an openness to education. In their public art practice, the artists utilize geometry as a lens to highlight the central themes and characters of the narrative.

The concept of a trade route is symbolized through the movement of a spiral, suggesting the fluid and interconnected nature of this exchange. The "goods" or outcomes of the trade are envisioned as a crystal, with its 3D geometry signifying openness through an empty central void. The interaction of geometric forces within the sculpture creates a dynamic balance between the curved and linear, presence and absence, as well as between the weight of history and the potential of the future.



# Crimson Inflorescence

**Artist:** Linfeng Zhou

**Location:** Esplanade Park

**Installation:** October 2024

"Crimson Inflorescence" is a permanent public artwork that seeks to capture the multifaceted symbolism of the poppy in the context of remembrance. By integrating light posts as the stems, the installation evokes the natural elegance and rapid growth of these iconic flowers. Lining the pathway with light posts adorned with these crimson blooms, the installation creates a powerful visual narrative. This solemn display is meant to be both striking and emotionally resonant, prompting reflection on sacrifice, memory, and gratitude.





# The Way Gone Made Clear

**Artist:** Georgia Fullerton

**Location:** Pickering Museum Village

**Installation:** August 2024

The wagon is a temporary public art work that is part of the permanent exhibition, "Roots to Rebellion: Pickering in the 1830s". The 1830s was host to multiple community-changing events in Upper Canada. By viewing these events through the eyes of Pickering's Black citizens, visitors will empathize with, and learn to look at the past through diverse perspectives.



This exhibit explores the early years of Pickering and how the settlers from this small farming community were instrumental in the Rebellion of 1837. It is told through the perspectives of Black settlers, working through their lives from the 1820s and culminating in the Rebellion of 1837-38.

The project is funded through Digital Access to Heritage Fund and Canada Race Relations Fund. The artwork is located outside of the Log Barn on the grounds of Pickering Museum Village.

# Migizi (Bald Eagle) Saves The World

**Artist:** Nyle Miigizi Johnston

**Location:** City Hall

**Installation:** November 2024

Migizi (Bald Eagle) Saves The World is a temporary public artwork by Nyle Miigizi Johnston that was installed on the balcony of City Hall. The work was unveiled on November 15, 2024, as part of Winter Nights, City Lights 2024 and remained on display until March, 2025.

This work is funded by Ontario Power Generation (OPG)





Community Banner Design by Yen Ling Thai



# Pickering Museum Village



Blacksmith Shop, Pickering Museum Village

# Pickering Museum Village

Pickering Museum Village is a community hub where people come together to learn, share stories, and build relationships through progressive, fun, and vibrant experiences.

Through exhibitions, public programming, and school programming, now in both French and English, the museum ignites imaginations and fosters a connection between our residents and our history.

The museum is the safeguard for historical material and visual culture of our area. By collecting, preserving, and contextualizing important artifacts, we enable our residents to engage with and interpret artifacts and social culture.

472

artifacts added to the collection

10

unique school program themes offered

10,216

students visited the museum

total visitors

18,225

grant and sponsorship revenue

\$129,359



# Collections

In 2024, a plan to reorganize the museum's off-site storage - Green River, began. The objects here were once kept in a rented trailer and moved.

From March to December a total of 133 artifacts were catalogued.

**399** Artifacts moved

**855** New Object Records

## Conservation

A total of 12 objects were treated this year for mold remediation. Nine of which are chairs with fabric. After being cleaned these items were wrapped in a clear plastic to be sure all mold was removed. If mold continued to grow, the plastic would allow staff to monitor but keep the mold contained. All potential mold objects were then placed together away from the rest of the collection.

## Artifact Donations

**472** Artifacts Acquired

**20** Accessions

855 artifacts were entered into the Past Perfect 5 database. To date there are 9399 artifacts, 594 photographs, and 1668 archival records entered in the database.



Some artifacts of note that were acquired this year:

### Green family of Greenwood Fond

Including photographs, documents, and artifacts.  
This family is the namesake of Greenwood.

### Artifacts from the Altona China Hall

In 1865, Thomas and Joseph Monkhouse built a three-story store in Altona. The main floor was typical general store merchandise. The China Hall, on the second floor was the main attraction. It carried a large inventory of dry goods and delftware.



# Education Programs

A highly skilled team of 15 Museum Interpreters delivered the following exploratory and interactive education program, available in both English and French. These new education programs are based on the new Roots to Rebellion exhibits and Black History content,

**10,216** Field Trip Participants

## Millie's Day

Step back in time and experience the life of early settlers through the eyes of young Millie. This immersive education program takes students on a journey to understand the challenges and daily activities Pickering's early Black settlers. Through hands-on activities and interactive storytelling, students will explore the forest, participate in traditional chores, and learn about life in a log cabin.



## Follow the Drinking Gourd

Step back in time and embark on an interactive journey to freedom in this education program. Students explored the inspiring story of George Chapman, an early Black settler who escaped enslavement in Virginia and found freedom in Canada. Through primary source exploration and hands-on activities, students learned about George, the Underground Railroad, the significance of quilt codes, and the challenges faced by freedom seekers.

## Mapping Freedom: The Journey Continues

Students continued the UGRR learning adventure with an immersive add-on program that delved into the experiences of freedom seekers the Underground Railroad. Students engaged orienteering activities, mapped out escape routes used quilt codes, and responded to the powerful installation "The Way Gone Made Clear" by Georgia Fullerton.



# Events & Birthdays

## Woodworker's Apprentice Workshops Year-round 2024

This high demand, hands-on workshop taught guests woodworking skills to complete a porch sign or charcuterie board. This public program that attracted crafters and social media influencers alike will be returning in 2025 by popular demand with a third crafting option.

## Trick-or-Treat at the Museum

Children, families, and the public were invited to explore the spook-tacular exhibits at Pickering Museum Village and the heritage traditions behind this holiday. Guests participated in games, crafts, and a haunted house while trick-or-treating around the Village.

**3968** Public program guests

**3000** Birthday party guests



# New Permanent Exhibit

In 2024, the PMV completed rehabilitation work on two historic buildings: the log house (c. 1830) and the log barn (c. 1830). The rehabilitation work included conservation of the masonry using heritage mortars, repairs of existing woodwork and wooden windows, replacement of cedar shake roofing, as well as new flooring, modern glass doors, and an upgrade to electrical and data cables within the space.

## Roots to Rebellion

This engaging and hands-on exhibit brings to life Pickering in the 1830s. Visitors can explore two historic buildings—the Log House and the Log Barn—where they can immerse themselves in early settlement activities and discover the rich Black history of Upper Canada. Audiences will be guided through the exhibit by Millie, a fictional 12-year-old girl whose family came to Canada on the Underground Railroad. These stories and activities will illuminate the injustices faced by early White and Black settlers, and the issues that led up to the Rebellion of 1837. Highlights include interactive elements like augmented reality and digital storytelling provided by Oddside Arts.

Through augmented reality, text panels, and activities, visitors will understand the causes of the rebellion, the major players, Pickering's role, and the aftermath, as explained by Millie. While learning, visitors can try their hand at various household chores, experiencing life in an 1830s household.

The exhibits are accompanied by a new educational website. Available in both English and French, visitors explore the artifact and audio gallery, play some games and learn what it took to live in the 1830s. <https://www.rootstorebellion.com/>. From August to December 2024, the Roots to Rebellion website has received 7,915 visits.

Developed in partnership with Sharon Temple National Historic Site and Museum, Mackenzie House (Toronto History Museums), Fort York National Historic Site (Toronto History Museums) Chatham-Kent Black Historical Society (Black Mecca Museum), Archives of Ontario, Canadian Race Relations and the Government of Ontario.

The exhibits were created by staff, with contracted specialist museum technician positions funded by Young Canada Works at Building Careers in Heritage. Volunteers participated in the development of the exhibit, in consultation with the Cultural Advisory Committee and the Anti-Black Racism Taskforce.

Funding provided by the Government of Canada Museum Assistance Program Digital Access to Heritage, Canadian Race Relations Foundation, and Government of Canada Young Canada Works Program.



Roots to Rebellion Exhibit Opening.  
From the left: Stoyan Barakov,  
Niko Taylor , Georgia Fullerton,  
Queen Kukoyi, Ellen Tayles,  
Marisa Carpino.

# Other Exhibits

The Museum offers a range of dynamic and educational public programs that encourage learning, foster connection, and spark imagination. By bringing the past to the present in interesting ways, the museum instills a sense of municipal pride and imparts cross-cultural knowledge amongst residents and visitors.

## **Gather & Grow Mini Exhibit** **Fridays in July & August, 2024**

In 2024, staff created a travelling exhibit, Gather & Grow, featuring topics such as recipe sharing, sharing seeds, and coming together. This exhibit featured child friendly content such as a scavenger hunt and coloring pages as well as a near field communication (NFC) tag to take participants to the Gather & Grow webpage where they can share their own stories and recipes. Exhibits were installed in the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex, Pickering Public Library, and George Ashe Library & Community Centre.

## **Blacksmithing in Ontario Website - Forging ON**

In 2024, the team completed the final stages of the Blacksmithing in Ontario website, funded through the Digital Museums Canada program. The website is available in both French and English and is a learning resource for students in high school. Developed in conjunction with five museum partners, the website takes the visitor through the history of blacksmithing from 1850-today through a series of videos, photographs, and teaching resources.

This project was funded through the Digital Museums Canada program.

## **Museum Village Digital Interpretation**

The Museum also introduced a NFC self-guided tour for the museum's buildings. Visitors can tap their mobile devices on the NFC tags located on signs around the village to explore additional information about the buildings on site. This work involved creating a website, designing and installing text panels, sourcing archival images, and curating information about each building.





# Tourism



Frenchman's Bay entrance



# Community Visitor Plan

On May 27, 2024, Pickering approved its first tourism plan, the Community Visitor Plan. This four-year initiative (2024 - 2027) is designed to enhance the visitor experience and promote the City through five core objectives: Enhance, Welcome, Develop, Distinguish, and Support, with 45 action items. With this milestone, Pickering became the eighth municipality in the region to adopt a formal tourism plan. To ensure effective implementation, the Community Services and Economic Development departments have established a tracking system to monitor progress and facilitate ongoing review through regular follow-up meetings.

Several key initiatives have already been successfully completed, demonstrating significant progress in advancing Pickering's core visitor objectives. These include securing the Experience Ontario grant and obtaining Council approval for an e-scooter pilot program. The City has also hosted a diverse range of events, such as Cultural Fusion, Fall Fling, Winter Wonderland, Fairy Tours, and Ghost Walks, which have played a vital role in fostering community engagement and attracting visitors. To further enhance accessibility, a free weekend shuttle service was introduced during the summer months, offering convenient transportation to and from the waterfront.

In addition, the Destination Pickering Tourism Guide was developed and distributed to key locations, including the Pickering Casino Resort and The Shops at Pickering City Centre, showcasing the broad range of attractions the City has to offer. A Summer Series video campaign, highlighting restaurants, parks and trails, and activities was created as a social touch-point. The campaign generated over 450 shares and 79,000 views, serving as an impactful visual tool for both visitors and residents seeking things to do in the City.





# Investing in Tourism Data and Statistics

Between 2023 and 2024, the City of Pickering experienced a notable rise in both tourist and local visits across its key areas, with particularly strong growth in Waterfront East. One possible contributing factor to this increase is the introduction of the city’s waterfront shuttle program in 2023, which provided easier and more convenient access to Waterfront East for both tourists and local residents.

Tourist visits to Waterfront East rose by 16.64%, increasing from 96,577 in 2023 to 112,652 in 2024. This growth may be partly attributed to the improved accessibility offered by the shuttle service, which likely encouraged more visitors from outside the area to explore the waterfront. Similarly, local visits to Waterfront East increased by 10.29%, from 1,022,432 to 1,127,688, suggesting that the shuttle also made it easier for nearby residents to enjoy the area.

In comparison, Waterfront West and the City Centre also saw increases in visits, but the introduction of the shuttle program appears to have had a particularly positive impact on Waterfront East, highlighting the potential benefits of enhanced transportation options in boosting local tourism and community engagement.

## Waterfront West Results

**25,560** Tourist Visits in 2023

**39,603** Tourist Visits in 2024

**54.94%** Increase

**391,935** Local Visits in 2023

**442,033** Local Visits in 2024

**12.78%** Increase

## Waterfront East Results

**96,577** Tourist Visits in 2023

**112,652** Tourist Visits in 2024

**16.64%** Increase

**1,022,432** Local Visits in 2023

**1,127,688** Local Visits in 2024

**10.29%** Increase

Data provided by Central Counties Tourism in partnership with Environics Analytics.



## Frenchmen's Bay West Shore Pier







# Capital Projects

Beachfront Park  
Construction

# Pickering Heritage & Community Centre

The City of Pickering is planning for a new, 44,000 sq. ft. facility that will celebrate the city's rich heritage by bringing together Museum, Library and Community Centre into one dynamic space. The new Community Centre is expected to be completed by the end of 2025, opening in Spring, 2026.

February 2024 - The Pickering Heritage & Community Centre project has been tendered for construction. Construction will be undertaken by J.R. Certus Construction Co. Ltd. Site works began in February, 2024.

March 26, 2024 - On March 26, Mayor Ashe and Members of Council were joined by MP Jennifer O'Connell on the future site of the Pickering Heritage & Community Centre to announce the official start of construction.

May 2024 – the heritage schoolhouse was relocated over a full basement, and will receive upgraded heating, air conditioning and ventilation which will allow for year-round use of the heritage building. The schoolhouse is planned to be used for public facing education and museum based programs in the future and is expected to be available when the Pickering Heritage & Community Centre opens in 2026.







Summer, 2024 – the foundation of the facility and concrete placement of foundation walls is complete



November, 2024 – the floor deck is installed and concrete pouring of slab-on-grade is underway.

# Seaton Recreation Complex & Library

Pickering's population is expected to grow to over 150,000 by 2036. As such, with high population growth comes higher demand for City growth-related infrastructure, like fire stations, roads, parks, libraries, and community/recreation facilities.

The new Seaton Recreation Complex & Library will help meet both the immediate and future needs of Pickering's growing community, and will be located at the re-aligned Whitevale Road (future Alexander Knox) & Sidelane 24 (future Burkholder Drive).

This will be Pickering's first multipurpose recreation complex built in Pickering since the Pickering Recreation Complex (now the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex) opened in 1983.

## Amenities are envisioned to include:

1. Aquatics Centre (with 25-metre, 6-8 lane pool and separate warm water leisure pool)
2. Gymnasium (divisible)
3. Fitness Centre and Studios
4. Full Service Library (with collections, Maker Space, printing centre, small meeting rooms, teen area, children's area, and work/study spaces)
5. Multi-purpose Program Rooms (various)
6. Arena (2 pads)
7. Walking Track
8. Support Spaces (e.g., lobby, change rooms, office space, storage)
9. Outdoor Spaces (e.g., destination playground, splash pad, sport courts)

The final amenities and functional programs will be guided by the City's Recreation & Parks - Ten Year Plan, the Pickering Public Library's Strategic Plan, and most importantly, community consultation.

Three different concept design and layouts were developed by Perkins & Will and were presented to the community for input in fall, 2024. Results of the public consultation will be shared in 2025 through a report to Council.







Bikers along Pickering's Waterfront Trail



# Recreation & Programs

Chestnut Hill Developments  
Recreation Complex Pool





# Recreation & Programs

Recreation programming promotes the importance of healthy living and encourages community members to come together for fun, relaxation, and pleasure. In doing so, it provides opportunities for individuals to enhance their physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.

Sports, arts, or hobbies, recreation programming forges community connections through shared experiences and shared interests. Our programs facilitate friendships and social connections, support families, reduce loneliness, and promote greater self esteem.



13,058

total participants

4,300+

free teen participants

1,595

paid programs offered

\$1,535,077.05

in program revenue

# Summer Camps



Throughout the 9 weeks of our 2024 Summer Camp program, we offered a total number of 150 various camp sessions and we hosted 3,386 campers in our facilities. A wide variety of camp options were available including: Dance, Drama, Skateboarding, Adventure, Sports, Mini Pidaca, Breakdance, Youth Exceptionalities Camp, Eco-Adventure, and Extend-a-camp. Camps operated out of facilities all around the City including all of our Community Centres, Don Beer Arena, Dunbarton and Pine Ridge high schools, Pickering Museum Village and Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex.

Youth Exceptionalities Camp operated out of George Ashe Library & Community Centre for the second year, hosting 33 youth with various exceptionalities throughout the summer.

All of our camp programs are fully inclusive, and we welcome campers of all abilities. We have an amazing team of integration staff to provide 1:1 support. Each week campers either go on a trip or have a special guest join their camps. Trips and guests included: Hands on Exotics, Keystone, Pickering Museum Village, Pickering Beach, Whitevale, Duffle Bag Theatre, and many more.

**We also offer March Break camps, Winter camps, and PA Day camps.  
Visit [pickering.ca/camps](https://pickering.ca/camps) to learn more!**



# Seniors Month

During Seniors month staff put on a variety of spotlight series presentations as well as Programs in the Park and the Seniors month Big Band.

**300** Big Band Participants

**12** Workshops

**4** Spotlight Series Presentations

## Plot to Plate

In 2024, the City received \$25,000 in funding from the New Horizons for Seniors Programs grant to construct four new community garden beds in the East Woodlands Park beside George Ashe Library & Community Centre.

In 2024, four volunteers participated in this program, and over 70 lbs of fresh produce grown in the gardens was donated to the Pickering Food Bank.

**4** New Garden Beds

**5** Gardening Workshops

## Rick Johnson Memorial Park Programs

New outdoor programs were introduced at Rick Johnson Memorial Park in 2024.

**35** New Programs



# Updated the Recreation & Parks Ten Year Plan

The Recreation & Parks Ten Year Plan establishes progressive directions that support the City and community stakeholders in delivering responsive and sustainable facilities and services. Specifically, the Plan provides direction and guidance for managing parks and recreation programs, infrastructure, and investment in a fiscally responsible manner to the year 2034. In doing so, the plan identifies the general types, quantities, locations, and timing of recreation services, facilities, and parks that are required to serve existing and future populations. It also considers the timing and priority of the recommendations, along with implementation strategies.

The Plan includes 101 recommendations. The plan was developed through a comprehensive consultation process that included a City wide survey, two public Open Houses, community pop-ups at various locations in the City, a youth engagement initiative in collaboration with the School Boards, key stakeholder interviews, and Sport/Culture User Groups Feedback sessions. Over 2,200 surveys were completed providing invaluable feedback throughout the process. The engagement campaign reached over 15,000 people and was highly successful in engaging the community in the planning process.

## New Arts Studio at Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex (CHDRC)

In early 2024, a new arts studio was launched at CHDRC in the former child care room. The arts studio offers a range of arts-based programs such as: Art Instruction, Watercolour painting, Acrylic Painting, Fine Details Drawing for all ages.

In 2024, with a total of almost 1,000 hours of art programming, 86 programs were offered, with approximately 489 participants.

## Free Public Skate Offered

Free public skating was offered in January, February, March, September, October, November and December in 2024. In 2024, this free program served approximately 5,438 people.





# Hip Hop in the Park

**Location:** Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex

In May 2024, Hip Hop in the park rocked its biggest crowd ever, with 350 attendees. With beats blasting and people dancing under the sun, many vendor booths, break dance battles, skateboarding competitions, graffiti workshops and more.





# Poinsettia Tea

**Location:** Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex

Poinsettia Tea had 300 participants, enjoying warm drinks and festive cheer. Music was provided by George Lake Big Band.



# 55+ Games Day

**Location:** Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex

**Date:** September 12, 2024

Guests enjoyed a day of excitement and friendly competition at the Free 55+ Games Day, presented by the 55+ Committee. The games included both physical and intellectual challenges with lots of laughter and prizes!

# Mobile Skate Park

The City offers residents a roaming and dynamic skateboard park. Throughout the summer, a trailer with ramps, and other skate park items, travels to a number of locations within Pickering to provide a free, drop-in skateboarding opportunity.

In 2024, the program had 284 participants and traveled to three parks/spaces per week.





# Aging Well Together Information & Active Living Fair

**Location:** Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex

**Date:** November 6, 2024

Adults 55+ attended the information fair for a day to learn about local services and to hear from guest presenters on key topics that promote living well. This information fair included vendors, guest speakers, and a demonstration offered by the Pickering fitness to get participants up and active.

Presentations include Dr. Joe Ricci who spoke on Cardiovascular health and rehabilitation, Retirement income group who presented on RRIF's, Debra Sayewich who talked about Age Friendly Consulting and Pickering Fitness staff who provided demonstrations and information on how to register for fitness classes with the City of Pickering.

**33** Vendors

**4** Presentations

**500+** Participants



# Volunteers

In 2024, volunteers made an incredible impact across the City of Pickering, dedicating their time and energy to a wide range of programs and events. They played a vital role in large-scale celebrations, including Artfest, Canada Day, Cultural Fusion, and Winter Nights, City Lights, as well as smaller events like Summer Concerts, Fall Fling, and Winter Wonderland. Volunteers loved the opportunity to assist Pickering Fire Services during Community Safety Day event, engaging with the community and supporting fire safety initiatives.



This year, a new opportunity was available for volunteers to assist in gathering feedback on the free Waterfront Shuttle, helping to enhance visitor experiences. Volunteers also provided valuable support at PA Day Camps, March Break Camp, and Summer Camp. In Recreation, Leisure Buddies volunteers helped children thrive in programs like skating, sports, art, swimming, and gymnastics. Recreation volunteers also supported community garden programs at the George Ashe Library & Community Centre, helping to plant, maintain and harvest plants and vegetables.

Our dedicated PAC4Teens led meaningful initiatives such as the Food Drive and Hygiene Kits while also supporting youth-focused events like Hip Hop in the Park, Youth Week, and the Youth Art Show. Volunteers got involved in sustainability efforts through Earth Month workshops, tree planting, and litter cleanups, making a lasting environmental impact.

Animal Services volunteers ensured that shelter cats were well cared for, socialized, and ready for adoption into loving homes. Meanwhile, museum volunteers continued their dedication by supporting programs, events, the gift shop, and exhibits and collections.

Volunteers were highlighted and recognized for their contributions through social media during Volunteer Week in April. They also had the opportunity to participate in appreciation events throughout the year, including swimming, skating, a summer BBQ, and a holiday movie screening. These events were well attended and provided a chance to thank volunteers for their time and dedication.

The contributions of our volunteers made a difference in every corner of our community. Their commitment, passion, and generosity helped bring the city to life in so many ways.

hours contributed by volunteers

11,813

new volunteers

111





Youth Art Show 2024



# Fitness & Aquatics



Chestnut Hill Developments  
Recreation Complex Pool



# Fitness

Fitness Services strives to enhance the quality of life of Pickering residents by supporting the development of an active and healthy lifestyle through the provision of quality fitness opportunities. We respond to community needs by offering programs tailored to the general public and specific populations in order to support all Pickering residents to feel engaged and involved in their health and wellness.

## Group Fitness

New classes were added to the membership schedule and registered programming at all locations. Fitness programming was introduced at Dr. Nelson F. Tomlinson Community Centre in Claremont in the Fall of 2023.

**4181** Membership Classes

**551** Registered Classes

**2,596** Registered Participants

**\$143,535** Total Revenue

## Small Group Training and Personal Training

Personal Training services were expanded. This included services that are not offered by any other municipality in the region - Fascia Stretch Therapy and Private Yoga therapy.

**112** Small Group Training Programs

**377** Small Group Training Participants

**144** Personal Training Packages Sold

**\$92,993** Total Revenue



# Health Club

<b>2,070</b>	Health Club Members
<b>4,712</b>	Available Hours
<b>893</b>	Individual Admissions Purchased

## Racquet Sports

### Squash

<b>167</b>	Members
<b>36,715</b>	Available Hours (Squash & Racquetball)
<b>2,684</b>	Guests
<b>11,033</b>	Courts Booked

### Tennis

<b>104</b>	Members
<b>10,616</b>	Available Hours
<b>9,358</b>	Guests
<b>8,793</b>	Courts Booked

### Racquetball/Handball

<b>31</b>	Members
<b>36,715</b>	Available Hours (Squash & Racquetball)
<b>387</b>	Guests
<b>1,785</b>	Courts Booked

### Pickleball

<b>1,690</b>	Available Hours
<b>11,351</b>	Guests





# Racquet Sports

The Racquetball courts were busy in 2024. Racquetball members hosted an International Women's Day Event which included Racquetball instruction and gametime, with support from local businesses, the first racquetball event for the Ontario Seniors Games. Two Racquetball Ontario tournaments, clinics for new players, staff and competitive players, house leagues, doubles fun nights and new players night drop in. On the same courts, we offered well attended free youth handball clinics with coaches from the Ontario Handball Association. These clinics will continue through 2025.

All CHDRC squash members have the opportunity to join the Pickering Squash Club which is run by Squash Pro, Nicole Pirko and a group of dedicated volunteers. The junior program continues to grow, developing skills and a passion for the game among our young players. A special highlight was working with a local high school group, Pine Ridge Secondary. The Club hosted a Squash Ontario junior silver tournament featuring to junior players from Pickering. We ran three lively and competitive doubles house leagues, along with a booming Monday night singles house league that kept members engaged and improving all season long. Every month, group clinics were run for all levels of players including beginners, competitive, newcomers and women only.

We proudly hosted several standout events, including the annual Doubles Harvest Hit tournament alongside the prestigious Singles Provincial Championships. This brought in top players in the province including some top world ranked players. The event featured a women's seminar focused on the benefits of sport (specifically squash) for females.

The annual Lee Hanebury Memorial Tournament is always another highlight of the season. In 2024, the event brought 180 players of all levels within and throughout the GTA for some intense competition. The season always concludes with our Club Championship Tournament where players of all levels (both singles and doubles) compete for the title. This event was a week long event where we celebrated the season at the annual banquet and awards party that brought together members to celebrate another successful season at the Pickering Squash Club.



## Highlights:

- The CHDRC tennis courts were resurfaced, the entire facility repainted, and necessary repairs were made, resulting in a six-month facility closure.
- During this period, staff provided extended maintenance and lighting for 23 outdoor courts, ensuring continued availability for tennis clubs throughout the extended season.
- 154 active CHDRC Tennis and Golden members had their memberships extended for the full duration of the closure, with the equivalent time added to their membership end dates.
- In 2022, Amberlea Tennis Club, in partnership with Pickering Pickleball Club, proposed building a shared tennis/pickleball court at Shadybrook Park. As part of the 2023 Capital Budget, Council approved funding for a new Tennis/Pickleball Court at Shadybrook Park.
- Staff consulted with both the Amberlea Tennis Club and Pickering Pickleball Club to design a court that accommodates one tennis or four pickleball courts, with distinct colour lines on the acrylic surface
- Tennis netting and posts were permanently installed at center court, while pickleball courts use portable nets set up in the opposite direction, with two courts per side.
- Updated licence agreements for both Amberlea Tennis Club and Pickering Pickleball Club were approved, and the court officially opened in Summer 2024.

## Sports Services

A new area in Community Services, this team works with City Infrastructure to develop, advance, advise and make recommendations on sport in the City of Pickering by representing the interests of the City and supporting the needs of sports leagues, sports clubs and user groups. In 2024, some highlights were working with the Pickering Cricket Club to provide learn to play session for city staff, with the Pickering Football Club promoted the new pickleball floors at the Soccer Centre, hosted community engagement for Paddle Sports on Frenchman's Bay and ran an open house for community sports groups and leagues. Staff also supported the Pickering Squash Club with the naming of the Ian Parsons Doubles Squash Courts and the Pickering Football Club with the naming of the Jayde Riviere Field.





# Arenas

Pickering's arenas feature multiple indoor ice rinks offering public skating, skating lessons, and private ice rentals throughout the skating season.

**6,417** CHDRC Total Hours of Ice Rental

**10,385** DBA Total Hours of Ice Rental

**4,545** CHDRC Total Hours of Arena Floor Time Rental

**5,007** DBA Total Hours of Arena Floor Time Rental

**2,331** DBA Banquet Hall Rental Hours

**1,315** O'Brien Meeting Room Rental Hours



# Arena Strategy

The Strategy evaluated options for maintaining and/or reinvesting in Pickering's two municipal arena facilities and examines growth-related needs to provide additional facilities into the future. Recommendations included:

1. Update the participant-based target to 1 ice pad per 400 registered youth participants (residents ages 5 to 19) to support current and future ice surface needs.
2. Align arena demand to supply based on a need for four indoor ice pads currently and five total ice pads by 2034.
3. Begin planning to replace Don Beer Arena 3 pads with two new ice pads within the Seaton community no later than 2029 (next five years). The preferred site is the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library.
4. Continue to promote recreational skating and drop-in programs at the CHDRC and consider providing additional opportunities (e.g., Parent & Tot Skating, Parent & Tot Stick/Puck, Ticket Ice, etc.) to improve participation levels, accessible options for residents, and off-peak revenue enhancement.
5. Consider adjustments to the City's Ice Allocation Policy and practices to ensure that they reflect local demand, provide adequate ice time to priority categories, and generate efficiencies.
6. Through future Recreation & Parks Plan updates, consider longer-term arenas needs (post-2034), with a focus on growth areas such as Northeast Pickering as well as a capital replacement strategy for the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex arenas.





# Aquatics

The City of Pickering aquatic programs provide our community with access to a variety of activities, allowing participants the opportunity to become familiar with the importance of water safety, learn-to-swim experiences, and community engagement, with no limitations regardless of age or swimming ability. Aquatics helps to enhance the quality of life, by providing socialization opportunities and fitness activities for a large demographic scope.

Through club and school teams, swimming lessons, aquafit and family swim programs, City of Pickering aquatics aims to: facilitate community involvement, promote a lifestyle of healthy living, assist in obtaining valuable life skills, and generate positive experiences for all our residents.

Leadership courses aid in the development of advanced swimming and safety skills, offering candidates the opportunity to further their knowledge in gaining exposure to the importance of lifesaving and first aid information, in the pursuit to becoming a certified national lifeguard, swim instructor, examiner/mentor through the Life Saving Society.

**2,014** Programs Offered

**12,849** Individual Swim Admission Purchases



total swim participants



swim members



\$945,901

in registered program revenue

# Highlights

- Aquatic Program Fill Rates: All aquatic programs, including registered, membership, and drop-in programs, have continued to fill to capacity.
- Increased Staffing: The hiring of over 20 swim instructors has supported high registration and waitlist numbers, allowing for continued growth in participation and lesson availability.
- Expanded Lesson Opportunities: Additional swim lesson opportunities have been created at Dunbarton Indoor Pool, thanks to the expanded instructor team.
- New Diving Board: A new diving board has been installed at the CHDRC, enhancing the facilities
- Private Permit Rentals: Private permit rentals have seen increased interest, with most available spaces filling up quickly.
- Leadership Course Success: Our leadership courses, including National Lifeguard (NL), Bronze Medallion, Bronze Cross, and Lifesaving Swim Instructor, have thrived and consistently filled to capacity.







Our staff, Kim Ospina, assisting with personal training.

## For more information:

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