

2025 Sustainable Pickering

Year-in-Review



Table of Contents

Message from the Mayor	03
Message from the CAO	04
Enhancing the Natural Environment	05
Fostering Community Engagement	09
Reducing Waste	13
Growing Urban Agriculture	14
Becoming More Energy Efficient	16
Looking Towards the Future	17



Message from the Mayor



Pickering is one of the fastest growing cities in Canada, but growth on its own does not create a community where people truly want to live. A thriving city is shaped with intention. It balances opportunity, environmental responsibility, and a strong quality of life. This is why Pickering continues to pursue the vision of a complete community that attracts talented residents, forward looking businesses, and innovators who want to help build our shared future.

The 2025 Sustainable Year-in-Review report reflects this commitment. It highlights the progress we have made and the choices we must continue to make as we work toward a greener and more resilient city. Through careful planning and responsible development, we are ensuring that Pickering grows with purpose. We are protecting natural spaces, strengthening our economic foundation, and nurturing a strong sense of community.

As our population increases, so does our responsibility to provide the recreational and social infrastructure that supports both long time residents and newcomers. Over the past year, we advanced the Beachfront Park Revitalization and introduced a new elevated boardwalk along the lake. Frenchman's Bay remains the shimmering jewel of our city, and we are actively seeking tri-party funding from the federal and provincial governments so we can return this treasured waterfront fully to the public realm and forever protect it from inappropriate development.

Our leadership in sustainability and community building is gaining national attention. For three years in a row, The Globe and Mail has named Pickering one of the most livable cities in Canada. This recognition reflects what our residents already know. Pickering is a place where people want to live, work, and thrive. It is also a testament to the vision and dedication of our residents, businesses, community groups, and local leaders.

As Mayor of this great city, I'm proud that the 2025 Sustainable Year-in-Review reflects not only our progress, but our unwavering commitment to shaping a greener, more connected Pickering for generations to come.

Kevin Ashe
Mayor, City of Pickering

Message from the CAO



As CAO, I am proud to present our 2025 Sustainable Pickering Year-in-Review, showcasing the City's key sustainability initiatives and achievements over the past year.

In 2025, staff built meaningfully on the strong foundation established in previous years. We continued to engage residents through impactful initiatives such as tree planting events, educational workshops, and the Bring Back the Salmon program. These initiatives not only restore natural assets but also strengthen community stewardship.

We also introduced new programs that reflect our evolving understanding of sustainability and climate leadership. A significant milestone this past year was Council's endorsement of Pickering's first Community Climate Adaptation Plan (CCAP). This plan outlines actions the City will take to prepare for and respond to the impacts of our changing climate, including extreme heat, rain events, and severe weather. It marks an important shift from planning for sustainability to planning for resilience.

We also launched the "That's So Trash" anti-litter campaign to address everyday waste and promote shared responsibility for keeping our neighbourhoods clean.

Complementing these efforts was the introduction of the Shared E-Scooter Pilot Program, providing residents with a convenient, low-carbon mobility option from April through October. Together, these initiatives demonstrate how environmental action can be practical, visible, and community-driven.

These efforts directly advance the priorities outlined in our Corporate Strategic Plan, particularly our commitment to lead and advocate for environmental stewardship, innovation, and resiliency. Sustainability is not a standalone initiative. It is integrated into how we plan infrastructure, support economic development, design programs, and serve our residents.

My sincere thanks go to City staff whose dedication and expertise continue to move this work forward, to our community partners and residents who collaborate and participate in meaningful ways, and to Council for its ongoing leadership and support.

I encourage you to explore the 2025 Sustainable Year-in-Review to learn more about our progress and the practical actions each of us can take. Building a more sustainable Pickering is a shared responsibility, and together, we are making measurable progress toward a resilient and thriving future.

Marisa Carpino
Chief Administrative Officer, City of Pickering



Enhancing the Natural Environment

In 2025, Pickering expanded tree planting, pollinator habitats, and invasive species control to support biodiversity, shade opportunities, and healthier ecosystems in parks and natural spaces.



Valley Farm Ravine Project

To support urban tree canopy growth, the City collaborated with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to identify new planting opportunities. Valley Farm Ravine emerged as a priority site due to its existing canopy gaps. As part of the restoration effort, TRCA completed their site prep and planted 300 stems, 75 bare root trees, 25 potted trees, and 200 bare shrubs, to strengthen and enhance the surrounding natural area.



Updating the Urban Forest Study

The City is updating its 2012 Urban Forest Study and Canopy Cover Assessment to expand the study area, assess the current state of the urban forest, monitor changes to its condition, and act as a guide for long-term urban forest planning.



Bring Back the Salmon

The City, in partnership with the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, and the Pickering Public Library, supported a salmon hatchery at the Central Library. Patrons observed and learned about the Atlantic Salmon's lifecycle and the importance of biodiversity. The hatchery resulted in the release of 261 Atlantic Salmon into Duffins Creek. To date, the program has helped release over 1,200 Atlantic Salmon into Duffins Creek.



Backyard Tree and Shrub Planting Program

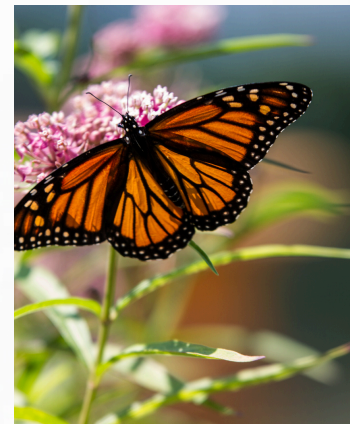
In partnership with Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests (LEAF), neighbouring municipalities, and the Region of Durham, the City completed its fifth year of the Backyard Tree and Shrub Planting Program. This program provides residents the opportunity to add native trees or shrubs to their property at a discounted rate. The program includes on-site consultation, free delivery and tree planting, as well as follow-up tree assessments.



Enhancing Parks and Boulevards

As part of the City's annual tree planting program, 225 large-caliper trees were planted along boulevards to replace mature trees that required removal. An additional 78 new boulevard trees were planted on Dixie Road between Glen Eden Court and Glenanna Road, further increasing the City's urban canopy. Another 50 trees were added in parks including: Beechlaw Park, Bonita Park, Claremont Memorial Park, Kinsmen Park, Rick Hull Memorial Park, and at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex to expand shade coverage around play areas and walkways.





Mayors' Monarch Pledge

In 2025, as a Leadership Circle member of the Mayors' Monarch Pledge, the City reaffirmed its commitment to protecting pollinator species by completing 11 targeted actions. These included, for example, planting native plants, engaging with the development community to create monarch habitat, removing invasive species, distributing native seeds, engaging local garden groups, and running public education campaigns to raise awareness.

The City extends its thanks and appreciation to community garden volunteers, Dunbarton High School students, and the Toronto Conservation Youth Corps for their support in planting and maintaining pollinator gardens across Pickering.

Invasive Species Management

The City worked with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority on a pilot project to control phragmites, an invasive plant, in the ditches along Brockridge Community Park, Sandy Beach Road, and Sunbird Trail Park. Phragmites control was also undertaken by Ontario Power Generation in Hydro Marsh, east of Frenchman's Bay.



25th Anniversary Silver Maple Planting

To celebrate Pickering's 25th anniversary as a city, 25 silver maple trees were planted across all three wards, including Esplanade Park. The silver maples, chosen for their symbolic connection to 25 year milestones, serve as a lasting tribute to the city's growth while enhancing its urban tree canopy and public green spaces.



Take Pride in Pickering

As part of the City's spring Take Pride in Pickering Day initiative, over 100 volunteers participated in a two-hour event at Alex Robertson Park, where they collected litter and planted 250 trees and shrubs. In the fall, the City partnered with Ontario Power Generation (OPG), 10,000 Trees, and the TRCA to host an additional planting event, at which 75 volunteers did a community cleanup and planted 500 trees and shrubs.



These events were delivered through Environmental Stewardship Pickering - a collaborative initiative between the City of Pickering, OPG, and TRCA.



"OPG values our longstanding partnership with the City of Pickering, especially through our shared commitment to environmental restoration. The Environmental Stewardship Committee is proud to host the annual Take Pride in Pickering event—a cherished tradition that brings together families, neighbours, local service organizations, and faith groups from across the community in celebration and stewardship of our natural environment."

Analiese St. Aubin, Sr. Manager, Corporate Relations and Communications, Pickering Nuclear



Fostering Community Engagement

In 2025, hands-on programs, workshops, and civic events connected residents to local sustainability efforts and encouraged broad community participation.



Community Litter Action

The City of Pickering continues to support residents, schools, businesses, places of worship, and community groups in reducing litter and keeping public spaces clean. This year, the City introduced its new “That’s So Trash” campaign, adding fresh tools and education to help residents take everyday action against litter. Alongside this new initiative, the City provided cleanup supplies and coordinated waste disposal for over 3,220 volunteers who took part in over 50 community cleanups through programs such as the 20-Minute Makeover, the Plastics & Litter Challenge, and the Provincial Day of Action on Litter.



Earth Month

In celebration of Earth Month, the City of Pickering hosted a series of free educational webinars and workshops featuring expert guest speakers. 338 participants took part in sessions covering a range of sustainability and nature-focused topics, including honey making, vegetable gardening, and ecological importance of birds.



Winter Wonders

The City, in partnership with OPG , TRCA, and Earth Rangers hosted a free family workshop event to kick-off the winter. At this event, 75 attendees had the opportunity to engage in family-friendly activities, including the creation of environmentally themed crafts, the assembly of bird feeders, cookie-decorating, and opportunities to observe local wildlife up close.



Nature Journaling Workshop

Residents of all ages explored their artistic side by learning how to capture the natural beauty in Rotary Frenchman’s Bay West Park through sketching and writing activities guided by a talented local artist. 35 participants enjoyed this creative opportunity to observe the surrounding landscape.

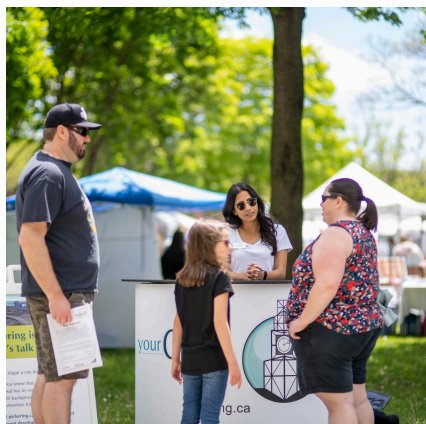


World Environment Day

World Environment Day in Pickering was a buzzing success as 175 community members came together to celebrate and learn about pollinators. A special thanks to the Fairport Beach Neighbourhood Association, Pickering West Shore Community Association, SoRo Good Neighbours, TRCA, OPG, Pickering Public Library, Native Plants of Claremont, and local artist Susan Munderich for coming together to host this engaging and educational event.

“Pickering’s first celebration of World Environment Day provided an excellent opportunity for local environmental volunteers and organizations to showcase opportunities for attendees to learn about and celebrate the biodiversity around us.”

Craig Bamford
Pickering West Shore Community Association



Sustainable Home Expo

Pickering's first Sustainable Home Expo at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex drew over 200 attendees. Guests had the opportunity to engage with experts on topics such as energy conservation, grant/incentives, fire and home safety, growing food, pollinators, wildlife, tree planting, sustainable gardening, electric vehicles, e-Scooters, and other green living practices.



Living Dinosaurs: Learn, Create & Protect!

The City, in partnership with TRCA and the Pickering Public Library, hosted an interactive workshop for children aged 6 to 12. Participants learned about the ecological importance of birds, including their evolutionary connection to dinosaurs, and explored practical ways to support local wildlife. Attendees also created DIY bird-safe window stickers designed to help prevent bird strikes.



Everything Maple Syrup

The Everything Maple Syrup event was a hands-on educational program hosted by the City, TRCA, OPG, and the Pickering Public Library to teach participants about the delicious origins of maple syrup and the environmental significance of maple trees.



Civic Awards

Pickering’s Civic Awards recognize outstanding community contributions. This year, the Environment Award went to local artist Susan Munderich for using her work to promote biodiversity and environmental stewardship. The Region of Durham was given the Green Builder Award for its sustainably designed Seaton Long-Term Care Facility, which features high-efficiency systems, low-impact development measures, native landscaping, and solar-ready infrastructure.



Know Before You Throw Workshop

Delivered in partnership with the Region of Durham, this workshop introduced children aged 6–12 to responsible waste management practices. Participants engaged in a storytelling activity, hands-on waste sorting exercises, and simple, practical actions they can take to reduce waste in their daily lives.



Environmental Schools Grants

Pickering’s Environmental Schools Grant supports school-led environmental projects, funding initiatives that contribute to a healthy environment. In 2025, schools created pollinator gardens, expanded food gardens, built outdoor learning spaces, and delivered nature- and science-based workshops.

Rodenticide Webinar

The City’s Animal Services with support from Rodenticide Free Ontario, hosted a webinar focused on effective wildlife-proofing strategies and the harmful impacts of rodenticides. The session shared practical prevention tips and highlighted the risks rodenticides pose to pets, wildlife, and the environment. This initiative supports Council’s 2023 Pest Management Policy, which made Pickering the first municipality in Ontario to restrict rodenticide use on City-owned properties.

“By prioritizing prevention-first strategies such as exclusion, waste management, structural maintenance, and habitat modification, local governments can address the root causes of rodent conflicts rather than relying on toxic rodenticides that fail to provide long-term solutions.”

Allison Hansen
Co-Founder and Campaign Director of Rodenticide Free Ontario



Reducing Waste

In 2025, Pickering helped residents reduce waste through practical programs like battery recycling, compost giveaways, and textile diversion.



Battery Recycling Program

The Battery Recycling program offers residents convenient drop-off locations at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex, East Shore Community Centre, George Ashe Library, and the Pickering Central Library. In 2025, 363 kilograms of batteries were collected and recycled responsibly.



Compost Giveaway

The City partnered with the Region of Durham to host a compost giveaway event, where more than 500 residents collected free compost produced through the curbside paper bag leaf collection program. The event also raised \$1,000 and food donations for St. Paul's on-the-Hill Community Foodbank. A special thanks to the Canadian Progress Club Durham Region Women for helping with donation collection.

Textile Waste Diversion

Pickering partnered with Diabetes Canada to launch a Textile Diversion Program in late 2023, helping reduce household waste. In 2025, the program diverted 13.7 tonnes of textiles, with collection bins available at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex, Dunmoore Park, and Esplanade South.



Growing Urban Agriculture

In 2025, the City continued its commitment to urban agriculture by expanding opportunities for local food growing. Through new tools, partnerships, and community programs, Pickering is supporting a more resilient and locally connected community.



Pickering 55+ Plot to Plate Program

The 55+ Plot to Plate program supports healthy aging by helping seniors grow vegetables in raised garden plots and prepare nutritious meals. Hosted at the George Ashe Library & Community Centre, it promotes wellness, food literacy, and community connection.



Pickering City Centre Farmers' Market

The City of Pickering hosted another successful season of the Farmers' Market, helping residents connect with local farmers, bakers, artisans, and small businesses. Running for 17 weeks, the market welcomed approximately 22,300 visitors and upwards of 25 vendors. Residents also enjoyed weekly entertainment from local artists.



New Zoning Definition for Vertical Farming

The City's new Consolidated Zoning By-law 8149/24 introduced a new definition for vertical farming, helping to clarify how and where this activity could take place in Pickering. Vertical farming was defined as "a building or part of a building used for cultivating, growing, producing, or processing of plant products or by-products and which may include aquaponics." Through this framework the City supports new approaches to local food production and encourages innovation in urban agriculture across Pickering.



Pickering Public Library - Seed Library

The Pickering Public Library's Seed Library is back for a vibrant new season! Launched in 2024 with support from the TD Friends of the Earth grant, this community-powered initiative continues to champion sustainability, food literacy, and resource sharing for all.



In 2025, through the Seed Library, Library staff distributed over 10,000 seed packages, hosted 15 hands-on gardening and harvesting programs, and welcomed dedicated community volunteers who contributed more than 300 hours to help the program flourish.

"St. Martin's Anglican Church was a recipient of the City of Pickering's Grant 2025. Meeting this joy-filled group of parishioners was inspiring. Their existing food gardens are not only impeccable but every bit of food grown was shared not only in the church community, but with St. Martin's Center, a facility with 58 suites, next door. Adding new accessible raised beds, to expand their growing space made sense. They shared a record harvest and increased interest in maintaining the space. They have solid plants for 2026, showing sustainability at its best."

Carol Vandersanden, Founder & President
We Grow Food



Becoming More Energy Efficient

In 2025, municipal retrofits reduced emissions, while energy workshops helped residents learn more about energy efficiency and how to reduce their own costs.



Energy Workshops

The City advanced its energy-efficiency efforts by hosting a series of free workshops for residents and staff on home upgrade opportunities, attracting 161 participants and highlighting incentives from partners such as Durham Greener Homes, Enbridge, and Save on Energy. To further support low-carbon heating and the goals of the Durham Community Energy Plan, the City also delivered Heat Pump Training to 16 local Heating Ventilation & Air Conditioning (HVAC) contractors through the Heat Pump Advantage program, building regional capacity.



Energy Projects

In 2025, the City advanced several corporate energy upgrades, including new heating circulators at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex, a hybrid heat pump HVAC unit at East Shore Community Centre, and new hybrid heat pump units and energy recovery ventilators at both George Ashe Library and Community Centre and Redman House, along with improved insulation at Redman House. The newly built Dorsay Community and Heritage Centre also achieved Zero Carbon Building (Design) Certification, highlighting continued progress toward low-carbon, energy-efficient facilities.



Looking Towards the Future

The City along with many partners and stakeholders, will continue to strengthen community sustainability with tools such as the Integrated Sustainable Design Standards and Community Climate Adaptation Plan.



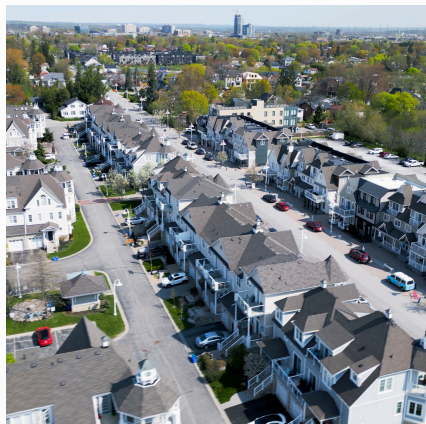
Overview of the Integrated Sustainable Design Standards (ISDS)

Since 2023, the ISDS has guided new development in Pickering by setting practical and flexible expectations. Developed with input from the building community, residents, stakeholders, and Council, the standards support a more efficient and sustainable community. Now in its third year, the ISDS continues to shape new projects by promoting energy efficiency, climate-ready design, accessible neighbourhoods, natural area protection, active transportation, waste diversion, water efficiency, urban agriculture, and stormwater management.



Municipal Leadership in Sustainable Development Recognized

Pickering received a Certificate of Recognition for Municipal Leadership and Preserving Builder's Choice from the Sustainable Housing Foundation for its Integrated Sustainable Design Standards (ISDS). The Foundation recognized the standards for being practical, flexible, and allowing different approaches to achieving high-performance building outcomes. Pickering's ISDS are now being used as a model by other municipalities.



Creating Accessible and Inclusive Public Spaces

Parks, pathways, and outdoor gathering spaces are becoming more accessible and welcoming through Accessible for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)-aligned design and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. Improved lighting, clear sightlines, and accessible seating help create safer, more inclusive public spaces.



Supporting Third-Party Sustainability Certifications

The ISDS framework helps projects pursue certifications such as LEED. In 2025, Porsche Canada Ltd. achieved LEED Gold, and the Seaton Paramedic Response Station and Training Facility earned LEED Silver through high-performance building and site design.



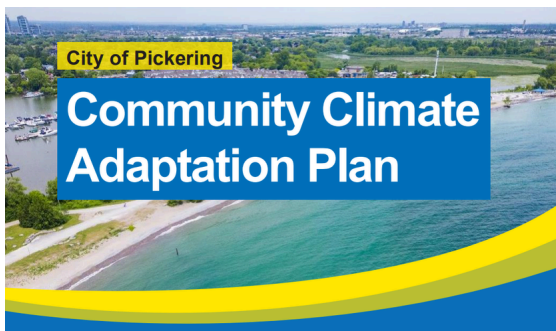
Protecting Birds through Bird-Safe Design

Where applicable, new developments in Pickering are required to incorporate bird-safe window design features, such as appropriate glazing, visible markers, and reduced nighttime lighting. These measures help keep birds safe from deadly building collisions, particularly during migration, while also supporting compliance with the *Migratory Birds Convention Act*.



Campaign to Protect Frenchman’s Bay

The City launched a campaign urging federal and provincial support to return Frenchman’s Bay to public ownership, citing its ecological significance and the risks associated with its continued private ownership under an 1853 Crown Charter. Residents were invited to show their support through a community call-to-action as the City reaffirmed its commitment to protecting the waterfront from inappropriate development.



Community Climate Adaptation Plan

In May 2025, Pickering Council endorsed the City’s first Community Climate Adaptation Plan (CCAP). Developed with input from residents, community organizations, technical experts, and regional partners, the CCAP serves as a roadmap to integrate climate resilience into City operations, services, and the broader community. The Plan outlines practical, measurable actions to help prepare for and respond to the impacts of extreme heat, heavy rain, and severe weather, with a strong focus on climate equity to support vulnerable populations.

2025-2035



“This Plan reflects the ideas and experiences of our residents, who helped shape it through surveys, community sessions, and thoughtful collaboration. Addressing climate change is truly a shared responsibility, and the City is committed to leading by example. Together, we can adapt to these changes, safeguard our environment, and preserve Pickering’s vibrancy for future generations.”

Mayor Kevin Ashe



Shared E-Scooter Pilot Launch

In 2025, Pickering launched its Shared E-Scooter Pilot Program, introducing a low-carbon, convenient mobility option to support short trips and connections to transit. Delivered in partnership with Bird Canada, the pilot emphasized safety, rider education, and equitable access across neighbourhoods. Operating from April to October, the program expanded active transportation choices and advanced the City's vision for a more sustainable and connected mobility network.



Measuring Sustainability Report Released

In 2025, the City released its updated Measuring Sustainability Report, providing a clear snapshot of progress toward environmental, social, and economic sustainability metrics. The report highlights key achievements, tracks long-term trends, and helps residents understand how local actions are shaping a more resilient and sustainable Pickering.



In 2026, the City of Pickering will continue its longstanding commitment to create a more sustainable community. Join us on the journey to become one of the most sustainable cities in Canada. There are many fun and inspiring ways to make Pickering a better place socially, environmentally, and economically.

To learn how you can get involved, visit: pickering.ca/sustainable.

We welcome your feedback. Please contact the City's Sustainability staff at sustainability@pickering.ca

Alternate formats available upon request at 905.683.7575 customercare@pickering.ca