
2024 Measuring Sustainability Report



Sustainable
PICKERING 

— City of —
PICKERING

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Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that 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.



Building a Healthy and Complete City

A Message from the Mayor

This year marks a historic milestone - 25 years since Pickering officially became a city. On January 1, 2000, as the world held its breath in anticipation of a new millennium, Pickering boldly stepped forward, embracing the future with vision and purpose. That same fearless spirit continues to guide our journey today.



As one of Canada's fastest-growing cities, we recognize that growth alone does not create a truly vibrant and livable community. A thriving city must be intentional in its development, ensuring balance between economic opportunity, sustainability, and an exceptional quality of life. That is why Pickering remains steadfast in its commitment to building a complete community, one that attracts the best and brightest residents, businesses, and innovators eager to contribute to our shared success.

The 2024 Measuring Sustainability Report reflects our dedication to this vision. It highlights the steps we've taken and reinforces the choices we must continue to make for a greener, more resilient future. Thoughtful planning and responsible growth ensure that as Pickering flourishes, we do so with purpose, protecting our natural spaces while building our economic foundation and strengthening the ties of community.

I'm fiercely proud that our leadership and commitment to sustainability and community-building are gaining national recognition. For the past two consecutive years, The Globe and Mail has named Pickering one of Canada's most livable cities, reaffirming what we already know: Pickering is a place where people want to live, work, and thrive. This distinction is a testament to the vision, hard work, and shared commitment of our residents, businesses, community groups, and local leaders.

As we celebrate this milestone year, this living document will serve as a roadmap for our future, offering valuable insights and a framework to ensure Pickering continues to grow responsibly, embrace innovation, and attract top talent. Together, we are laying the groundwork for a thriving, sustainable, and forward-thinking city that will inspire generations to come.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin Ashe". The signature is stylized with a large "K" and "A".

Kevin Ashe
Mayor, City of Pickering

Toward a More Sustainable Pickering

A Message from the Chief Administrative Officer

I am delighted to present Pickering's 2024 Measuring Sustainability Report. This comprehensive document is a testament to our ongoing commitment to building a more sustainable and dynamic community.



Since publishing our first report in 2010, we have tracked our progress, refined our approach, and strengthened our commitment to sustainability. Over time, we have developed a more comprehensive framework for assessment, and the 2024 report now features 33 indicators across five focus areas: Healthy Environment, Healthy Society, Healthy Economy, Responsible Development, and Responsible Consumption.

The report highlights the impactful actions taken by the City and its partners to drive meaningful progress, while also identifying areas for improvement. Through this ongoing collaboration, we continue to advance positive outcomes and strengthen our commitment to sustainability. As well, the report offers practical tips for residents to integrate sustainable practices into their daily lives, reinforcing that sustainability is a shared journey.

I am proud that Pickering's sustainability leadership is earning national recognition, with the Sustainable Housing Foundation honouring the City for its forward-thinking approach and commitment to working with the building community through our Integrated Sustainable Design Standards (ISDS), which guides growing development with cutting-edge green technology, best practices, and a balance of flexibility and high-performance sustainability. As other cities look to Pickering's example, our leadership continues to shape the future of sustainable development nationwide.

I am extremely proud of the innovative steps we have taken to foster a greener, healthier, and more prosperous Pickering. As we move forward, we remain committed to making Pickering a model of sustainability, where quality of life continues to be enhanced for all who live, work, and play here.

Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to Pickering's vibrant and resilient future.

A stylized blue ink signature of Marisa Carpino.

Marisa Carpino

Chief Administrative Officer
City of Pickering

Executive Summary

Pickering continues its work toward becoming a more sustainable city. Key to the success of this transformation is collecting, tracking data on our progress, and reporting.

Where we started

The City produced its first partial report on measuring sustainability in 2010. The 2010 report included metrics for indicators identified in consultation with staff, stakeholders, and residents. A second report was produced in 2012 and a third in 2017.

With each new report, including the fourth and latest report in 2024, it has become possible to recognize some general trends within Pickering that can help clarify our community's sustainability profile and priorities as they change over time.

Where we are today

This Measuring Sustainability Report outlines the progress on existing and newly introduced indicators. You can read more about the process behind indicator selection in Appendix A – Methodology.

This report includes findings from a community survey done in early 2024. The City conducted a survey to gather perspectives of Pickering's residents on sustainability and to learn what households are doing to support sustainability in the community.

The report covers a total of 33 indicators, numbered 1 to 33 for ease of reference. The indicators are grouped into the following five focus areas: Healthy Environment, Healthy Society, Healthy Economy, Responsible Development, and Responsible Consumption.

The report conveys the status of each indicator and highlights actions taken by the City and community partners to support ongoing progress. As well, the report includes tips for community members to use in their daily lives, as we work together toward a more sustainable Pickering for all.

Introduction

The 2024 Pickering Measuring Sustainability Report provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating how the City is advancing its sustainability goals, which align with the objectives of its [Corporate Strategic Plan](#).

The report's five focus areas — Healthy Environment, Healthy Society, Healthy Economy, Responsible Development, and Responsible Consumption — mirror the priorities for building a more resilient, inclusive, and environmentally conscious community set out in the City's strategic plan.

To help inform the development of the report, the City conducted a community survey in early 2024. The feedback gathered offered insight into residents' evolving sustainability priorities and reinforced the importance of shared responsibility in shaping a more sustainable Pickering.

By tracking indicators across the five focus areas, the report highlights trends and progress in environmental stewardship, economic resilience, and social well-being. This report is designed to share information with the community and help the City, along with its community partners, guide decision-making and align efforts.

While this report provides a snapshot of progress, its primary purpose is to present indicator data to support ongoing monitoring and communication. The report is not intended to prescribe actions or require decisions at this time. Also, it does not detail the specific elements behind each indicator, all of the actions taken to date to address, or that which could be initiated in the future. As indicators span multiple sectors, detailed implementation updates can be found in the specific plans and reports of the relevant departments or agencies.



Healthy Environment

A healthy environment refers to the condition and integrity of the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, and the natural areas we enjoy. To measure the health of Pickering's environment, we reported on eight indicators across the following five categories: Air Quality, Water Quality, Biodiversity, Urban Forest, and Natural Cover.



Air Quality

The Air Quality Health Index measures air quality in relation to human health on a scale from 1 to 10. The higher the number, the greater the associated human health risk. Numbers 1 to 3 indicate a low risk, 4 to 6 a moderate risk, and 7 to 10 a high risk. When air pollution is extremely high, the number is reported as 10+.

The index measures a combination of common air pollutants known to be harmful to human health. They include:

- ozone (O3) at ground level
- particulate matter (PM2.5/PM10)
- nitrogen dioxide (NO2)

Ontario has 38 Air Quality Health Index monitoring stations that provide real-time data and air quality reading for each location. This report uses air quality readings from the Toronto East Monitoring Station.

1. Number of days when the Air Quality Health Index is above 7 (high risk)

Table 1 shows the number of days when the Air Quality Health Index reached a level of moderate or above for Pickering.

Table 1. Number of days when the Air Quality Health Index was at moderate risk or above

	Moderate Risk (4-6)	High Risk (7-10)	Very High Risk (10+)
2015 (Baseline)	70 days	0	0
2017	34 days	1 day	0
2023	35 days	1 day	1 day

Source: [Government of Ontario Air Quality Health Index](#)

According to the [Air Quality Health Index 2021](#) Report issued by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks in 2023, air quality in Ontario can vary from year to year owing to a variety of factors. Those factors include pollutant emissions, weather, natural events such as forest fires, and the long-range transport of air pollutants from elsewhere.

What the City is doing to promote better air quality and reduce air pollution

Acquiring Cleaner Vehicles for the City's Fleet

To support and encourage the adoption of electric vehicles, in 2023, the City installed six electric vehicle charging ports at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex. This includes two Level 3 fast chargers, a first for a Durham Region municipality. The City also has installed six Level 2 charging ports at the Pickering Operations Centre. For its Corporate vehicle fleet, four double EV stations were installed with the capability to charge eight vehicles in the parking garage at City Hall. The City also has two Level 2 charging ports in its garage for servicing and charging of its electric vehicle fleet.

Using Cleaner Property Maintenance Tools

The City has invested in a range of battery-powered property maintenance tools, such as lithium-ion powered line trimmers, hedge trimmers, handheld blowers, chainsaws, snowblowers, and portable rechargeable battery generators. In 2021, the City also purchased its first two EV zero-turn riding lawn mowers. Benefits of using electric tools include improved air quality, lower costs and maintenance, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Smart Commute

In partnership with Smart Commute Durham, the City continues to participate in the Smart Commute Program, which provides tools and resources to encourage and support cycling, walking, carpooling, and transit as convenient ways to get around.

Water Quality

Directly or indirectly, clean water affects all aspects of life on Earth. The biodiversity of our streams and lakes depends on abundant, clean water, as does our own human health and well-being. We need water for agriculture, fishing, manufacturing, and other commercial activities, and for recreational activities like swimming and boating. People rely on high quality water for drinking and household use.

This report uses Water Quality Index data collected by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. The index summarizes water quality conditions from multiple measurements into a single indicator of water quality. Values range between 0 and 100. Higher values indicate that water quality meets the guidelines more frequently and is considered higher quality.

2. Surface Water Quality Index for key watersheds

Table 2 shows the Surface Water Quality Index readings for Pickering. The readings are based on the levels of five key pollutants sampled at the main rivers and creeks. The five pollutants are:

1. chloride (e.g., from road salt)
2. Escherichia coli bacteria (E. coli)
3. phosphorus (total phosphorus)
4. nitrogen (nitrate)
5. suspended sediments (total suspended solids)

Table 2. Surface Water Quality Index for key watersheds

Location	2010	2017	2022	Comments
Duffins Creek	51 (marginal)	54 (marginal)	48 (marginal)	Marginal quality is mainly due to phosphorus and E. coli
Petticoat Creek	no data	38 (poor)	23 (poor)	Poor quality is mainly due to chloride and E. coli, but also phosphorus
Frenchman's Bay (Pine Creek)	no data	27 (poor)	20 (poor)	Poor quality is mainly due to chloride and E. coli, but also phosphorus

2010 = 2007-2009 average (baseline)

2017 = 2010-2013 average

2022 = 2018-2022 average

Source: [Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Watershed and Ecosystems Reporting Hub](#)

Since the first report, there have been several changes in how Toronto and Region Conservation Authority measures and assesses water quality. For example, in the first report, total nitrogen was included in the calculation (along with nitrate) and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority no longer receives total nitrogen data from some labs. Also, water quality guidelines have changed for chloride and nitrate. To ensure valid comparisons over time, a subset of parameters from the first report and the updated guidelines to recalculate Water Quality Index values for each time period was used.

» 3. Percentage of swimming days posted as unsafe

Beach postings indicate the number of days a beach is considered unsafe because of high bacteria levels. This indicator shows those days as a percentage relative to the total number of days a beach is open for swimming. Environmental factors such as recent rainfall, wave strength, presence of waterfowl, and number of bathers may contribute to poor bacteriological water quality resulting in beach postings

Table 3. Percentage of swimming days posted as unsafe

Period	Frenchman's Bay West (Rotary Frenchman's Bay West Park at the foot of West Shore Boulevard)	Frenchman's Bay East (Beachfront Park at foot of Liverpool Road)
Five-year average, 2005 to 2009 (baseline)	13%	13%
Five-year average, 2012 to 2016	21%	11%
Five-year average, 2019 to 2023	11%	8%

Source: Region of Durham Health Department

The decrease in the five-year average for 2019 to 2023 shows a positive trend compared with the baseline average.



What the City and others are doing to improve water quality in Pickering

Managing Road Salt

Pickering's Salt Management Program ensures the efficient use and storage of road salt to keep the amount of salt entering the surface water and groundwater system as low as possible. All City salt trucks are equipped with a salt controller with settings that apply the salt at three different rates. All trucks have GPS units that record where salt has been applied. These numbers are tracked for each weather event and for the entire season. Quality control and calibration of salt application equipment is completed annually to ensure that the City meets Provincial regulations.

Managing the Canada Goose Population

A Goose Control Program is coordinated in the community that includes egg oiling to prevent eggs from hatching, and rounding up and relocating geese to reduce shoreline contamination caused by droppings. In 2024, this program managed 11 Canada goose nests containing 59 eggs and 17 mute swan nests containing 78 eggs. As well, 61 Canada geese were rounded up and relocated.

Improving Water Quality in Duffins Creek

The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority prepared a Watershed Plan for Duffins Creek and Carruthers Creek in consultation with the City of Pickering and other government stakeholders, as well as non-government and community stakeholders. The plan identified ten key management actions.

Improving Water Quality in Frenchman's Bay

Implementation projects as part of the City's Frenchman's Bay Stormwater Management Master Plan include:

- a new stormwater management pond in the Krosno Creek watershed
- erosion control measures along Amberlea Creek, Pine Creek, and Krosno Creek
- the installation of oil and grit separators to the stormwater system south of Kingston Road
- restoration of the eroded valley wall along Amberlea Creek to help protect against slope instability, channel erosion, and reduce sediment levels in Frenchman's Bay

Controlling invasive phragmites

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. The Hydro Marsh, east of Frenchman's Bay, is owned and managed by Ontario Power Generation, which also undertook its own phragmites control program in the marsh.

Biodiversity

Species richness refers to the number of different species in a given area. High species richness indicates that the ecosystem is more diverse, providing a variety of services, and enhancing its resilience and adaptability.

Species sensitivity refers to the degree to which species are affected by environmental changes. Species sensitivity shows the vulnerability of species and the need for conservation measures and is an indicator of environmental health.

It is important to maintain diverse and resilient ecosystems, which will continue to support a variety of species and human needs and adapt to changes, thereby promoting long-term environmental sustainability and the well-being of future generations.

4. Species richness and sensitivity of plants and animals

Established in 2008, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority’s Terrestrial Long-term Monitoring Program looks at changes in wetland, forest, and meadow communities, and species that live in these habitats across the conservation authority jurisdiction.

Inventories are completed in different areas every year, and the number of inventory areas has decreased in recent years. As a result, it is difficult to draw direct comparisons between different years.

Table 4. Species richness and sensitivity of plants and animals

Species Type	Observation Period	Total Number of Species	Total Number of Native Species	Number of Species of Regional Conservation Concern
Plant Species	2008-2023	138	112	68
Animal Species	2012-2022	79	79	40

Source: [Toronto and Region Conservation Authority’s Watershed and Ecosystems Reporting Hub](#)



The number of Species of Regional Conservation Concern include species under L1 to L3 ranking (Local rank [L-rank] system) based on Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's scoring and ranking system.

During the observation period the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority reports species richness in the recommended range of 15 years for plants and 10 years for animals.

Reducing the spread of invasive species

Invasive species pose a major threat to biodiversity. Sometimes called exotic species, these plants, animals, or insects originate from outside Ontario. They can invade local meadows, woodlands, wetlands, and waters, damaging and pushing out the native plants and animals that belong there. Measures to reduce the spread of invasive species include planting native wildflowers, trees, and shrubs in affected areas, and educating anglers and boaters to clean their boats, fishing gear, or other equipment before travelling to a new area to prevent transporting an invasive species.



What the City and others are doing to promote the health and diversity of terrestrial plants and animals

Mayors' Monarch Pledge

Pollinators such as butterflies, birds, and bees play a vital role in maintaining a healthy environment and sustainable food system. As part of the Mayors' Monarch Pledge launched by the National Wildlife Federation, the City has committed to taking action to support pollinator populations. These actions include planting native species, removing invasive species, supporting native seed giveaways, connecting with garden groups, and building public awareness of the value of pollinators to a healthy ecosystem.

Bring Back the Salmon

In partnership with the Pickering Public Library and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, the City collaborated on a salmon hatchery at the library. This allows library patrons to observe and learn about the Atlantic salmon's life cycle and the importance of biodiversity. The hatchery produces 100 to 200 Atlantic salmon for release into Duffins Creek each year.

Clear Your Gear Program

The City has partnered with Ontario Power Generation and a Canadian volunteer-run fishing line recycling network called Clear Your Gear to help protect waterfowl found along Pickering's waterfront. To date, eight fishing line receptacles have been installed in key locations. The receptacles help reduce the amount of litter and debris left on the ground, which can result in injury to many wildlife species.

Monitoring Beaver Activity

The City embraces the critical role that beavers play in our ecosystem. Beaver dams can help create wetlands and reduce erosion to our waterways, as well as benefit rivers, streams, and local fish populations. When beaver activity is present, City staff monitor the area to protect properties and high value trees. Staff evaluate each situation individually and take a collaborative approach across departments and partnering organizations to determine the best solution.

Preventing and Reducing Wildlife Road Deaths

The City, along with other local and regional governments, is working with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to help create safe passageways for terrestrial and aquatic species through the [Road Ecology Project](#). Roads act as barriers between habitats, and crossing guidelines are needed to support measures to prevent animals from being killed while trying to cross a road.

The [Crossing Guidelines for Valley and Stream Corridors](#), developed by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority in partnership with Peel Region, York Region, the University of Toronto, and the Canadian Water Network, help create safe passageways for terrestrial and aquatic species throughout the jurisdiction. Pickering Animal Services staff have also been working with Parks Canada, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Eco-Kare International, and the Toronto Zoo on ways to reduce turtle and other wildlife mortality along Finch Avenue and the Pickering Scarborough Townline near Amos Pond.

Lessening Harmful Effects on Rodents

In December 2023, Pickering City Council endorsed a policy to establish a humane pest management program on City properties while banning non-essential use of pesticides to kill rodents (rodenticides).

Protecting Endangered Wildlife

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources is working on recovery planning for species at risk in the province. Through its review of development proposals, the City implements the requirements of the Provincial *Endangered Species Act* to take action to protect species at risk.

Urban Forest

The urban forest includes all trees, shrubs, and understory plants that grow on public and private property in Pickering, as well as the soils that sustain them. A healthy and resilient urban forest benefits the community, as trees absorb carbon dioxide, improve air quality, reduce stormwater runoff, help control erosion, and provide recreational, health, and social benefits. These benefits increase as trees grow larger.

>> 5. Number of trees planted by the City, Region of Durham, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Ontario Power Generation, and the Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests organization

Table 5. Trees planted per year in Pickering

Year	Trees Planted
2010 (Baseline)	6,180
2015	5,354
2017	16,243
2023	44,681

Source: City of Pickering, Region of Durham, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and the Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests organization

The community-wide effort has contributed to a positive trend in the number of trees planted since 2017.

What the City and others are doing to promote tree cover

Backyard Tree Planting Program

In 2020, the City launched a [Backyard Tree Planting Program](#) in partnership with the Region of Durham and a non-profit organization, Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests (LEAF). This program gives residents an opportunity to add native trees or shrubs to their property at a discounted rate.

Take Pride in Pickering

The City hosts two community tree planting events through Take Pride in Pickering, a joint venture with Ontario Power Generation, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and other partners. At these events, community members help plant trees, shrubs and other plants, clean up litter, and maintain existing planting areas.



Enhancing Parks and Boulevards

Every year, the City's tree planting program adds nearly 400 large caliper trees across City parks and boulevards.

Commemorative Tree Program

The City's Commemorative Tree Program allows the public to pay tribute to a loved one by purchasing a tree for installation in a public park or open space.

Durham TREES program

The Region of Durham and its five local conservation authorities have collaborated to form [Durham TREES](#). It's a subsidized tree-planting program for private landowners willing to plant at least two acres with a minimum of 500 trees. The program's goal is to increase tree cover in Durham Region by 30 percent or more.

Identifying Tree Planting Sites

City staff worked with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to complete a desktop analysis of potential tree planting sites. Through this analysis, areas were identified to fill existing tree canopy gaps and complete restoration projects.

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, to monitor changes to its condition, and act as a guide for long-term urban forest planning.

Preventing the Loss of Trees

Pickering City Council approved a [Tree Protection By-law 8073/24](#) in the spring of 2024. The by-law prevents the destruction of healthy trees in the specified tree protection areas, in an effort to protect and preserve the environment.





Natural Cover

Natural cover is the percentage of land with forest, meadow, wetland, or beach bluff habitat. The quality, quantity, and distribution of natural cover are linked to water and air quality, climate change, and levels of biodiversity.



6. *New indicator* Area of natural cover

This indicator identifies the percentage of natural cover in the creek and river valleys that traverse the city. Pickering currently has 8,417.5 hectares of natural cover, which accounts for around 38 percent of its land.

Table 6 only includes lands within the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's jurisdiction.

The methodology for classifying natural cover has changed over time. Historically, natural cover was not measured in the same way, which may explain the increase in some natural cover types (e.g., wetland and successional forest cover).

Table 6. Area of natural cover in Pickering within TRCA jurisdiction

Year	Beach/ Bluff	Wetland	Successional Forest	Meadow	Forest	Total
2007 Area (hectares)	10.9	313.4	678.7	2,408.2	4,398.5	7,809.7
2013 Area (hectares)	14.7	528.7	621.1	2,134.9	4,991.3	8,290.7
2017 Area (hectares)	13.5	567.3	693.1	1,599.6	4,807.3	7,680.8

Source: [Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Watershed and Ecosystems Reporting Hub](#)



In previous reports, the City used natural cover data from the Living City Report Card (2016). Since 2021, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority reports on watershed and ecosystem health through an online platform referred to as the [Watershed and Ecosystems Reporting Hub](#). The reporting hub enables users to interactively explore the latest information on current environmental conditions and changes over time. It provides insights into the quantity of natural cover across Pickering within Toronto and Region Conservation Authority’s jurisdiction, which are used in this report.

While the data indicates that natural cover has remained generally stable, it also shows a slight decline over time. This trend can be attributed to factors such as the loss of natural cover, potential changes in TRCA watershed boundaries, and methodological differences in deriving natural cover data for 2007, 2013, and 2017.

Table 7. Area of natural cover in Pickering within the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority’s jurisdiction

Year	Total Natural Cover (CLOCA)
2024 Area (hectares)	736.7

Source: 2023 Ecological Land Classification Data from Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority

Table 7 presents total natural cover within the conservation authority’s jurisdiction. The total includes all natural cover attributes such as forest, meadow, successional forest, and others.

The Altona Forest

The Altona Forest is situated within the Petticoat Creek watershed and covers about 53 hectares. The forest is owned by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. Forest maintenance and monitoring are carried out in partnership with the volunteer Altona Forest Stewardship Committee and local schools.

The Altona Forest provides essential habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals native to Southern Ontario, including songbirds, foxes, coyotes, hawks, and rare amphibians. The forest contributes to the region’s greenspace network and is an important part of the Rouge-Duffins Wildlife Restoration Corridor.

What the City and others are doing to increase the percentage of natural cover

Preserving Trees Whenever Possible

Pickering's Official Plan requires an environmental impact study when properties proposed for development include a woodlot. The study recommendations determine whether the woodlot must be protected in whole or in part based on Provincial, Regional and City policies.

Working with Partners to Protect Natural Cover

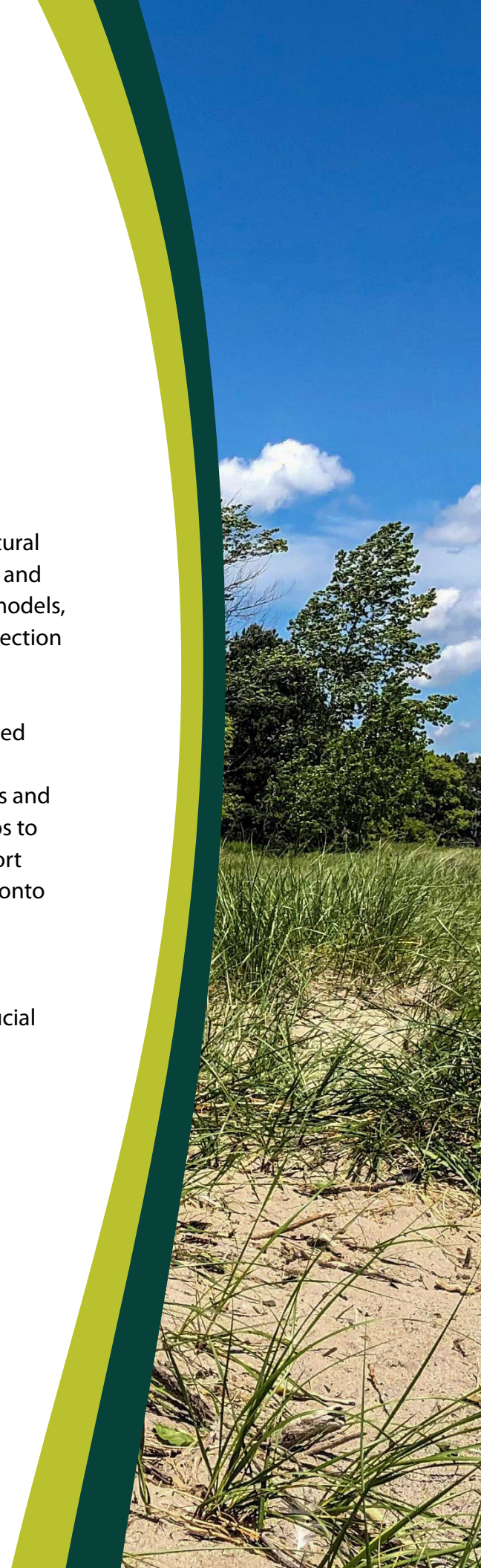
The Government of Ontario protects natural cover through the Provincial Planning Statement, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, and the Greenbelt Plan. The Terrestrial Natural Heritage Systems Strategy, developed in 2022 by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, provides the data, scientific models, mapping, and guidance to help achieve natural heritage protection objectives.

The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority also developed a tool that analyzes environmental data to guide ecological restoration. The process can identify restoration opportunities and priorities based on multiple objectives and benefits. This helps to guide restoration planning and resource investment to support healthier functioning ecosystems throughout the Greater Toronto Area.

The City's Official Plan review project (Pickering Forward) will reevaluate the existing natural heritage boundaries in the official plan to ensure they continue to reflect the location of natural and hydrological features. The review will also determine appropriate buffers from these features to ensure their long-term protection.

Promoting Land Stewardship

The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Terrestrial Natural Heritage Systems Strategy recommends restoration activities to improve the size, shape, and function of natural cover throughout the region, including Pickering. The conservation authority is also continuing to monitor the quantity and quality of natural cover to track changes over time.







7. *New Indicator* Quality of natural cover

This new indicator, quality of natural cover, includes only the area of Pickering within the jurisdiction of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. It uses data from the conservation authority's watershed and ecosystems reporting hub.

Table 8. Quality of Natural Cover in Pickering in 2017

Quality Rating	Percentage
Good	3.5%
Fair	20.3%
Poor	10.9%
Very Poor	0.6%
Non-Natural	64.8%

Source: [Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Watershed and Ecosystems Reporting Hub](#)

On average, quality of natural cover in Pickering (within TRCA jurisdiction) is rated as fair. This rating is based on size, shape, and urban matrix influence, which is the influence of surrounding land uses on ecological function. As urbanization increases, infrastructure can create more habitat fragmentation, negatively impacting natural cover quality and ecosystem function.





8. *New Indicator* Area and percentage of impervious cover

Impervious cover means the surfaces that prevent water from naturally soaking into the ground, such as concrete, asphalt, roads, rooftops, and other built structures. These surfaces prevent natural water absorption, leading to increased runoff, reduced groundwater recharge, and higher risks of flooding.

Impervious cover can contribute to water pollution by carrying pollutants into water bodies. It can also harm aquatic habitats, worsen urban heat island effects, and increase erosion and its impacts on water quality. Managing impervious cover is important in urban planning to ensure healthy water cycles and lessen negative effects on the environment.

This report uses the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority’s 2017 impervious land use layer and the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority impervious land use layer to report on this indicator for the first time. This number will serve as a baseline for comparison in future years.

Table 9. Area and percentage of impervious cover in the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority’s jurisdiction

Year	Impervious Cover (hectares)
2017	2,711

Source: [Toronto and Region Conservation Authority’s Watershed and Ecosystems Reporting Hub](#)

Table 10. Area and percentage of impervious cover in the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority’s jurisdiction

Year	Impervious Cover (hectares)
2023	1,687.6

Source: 2023 Ecological Land Classification Data from Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority

The data provides a baseline for understanding the distribution of impervious surfaces within Pickering. Monitoring changes over time can help the community to understand the impacts of urban development on stormwater management, water quality, and climate resilience.





Healthy Society

A healthy society refers to the physical and mental health, safety, and well-being of the people living in the community, and how community members relate to one another. A healthy society offers recreational and educational opportunities for residents, as well as access to arts and culture. To measure Pickering's social health and well-being, we reported on nine indicators across the following three categories: Neighbourhood Satisfaction and Engagement, Physical and Mental Health, and Safety and Security.



Neighbourhood Satisfaction and Engagement

Residents’ perceptions of their social ties help indicate the level of community cohesion and sense of belonging within a neighbourhood. Strong connections, such as relationships with nearby family, friends, and neighbours, can foster local engagement, including participation in events, support for businesses, and involvement in community initiatives. These social bonds also contribute to resilience by providing informal support systems during times of disruption or emergency.



9. ***New indicator*** Neighbourhood satisfaction – social connection

According to the community survey done for this report, 45 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had strong social ties to their neighbourhood, 18 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 37 percent were neutral.

Table 11. Perception of the strength of social ties to neighbourhood

Perception	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have strong social ties to my neighbourhood	6%	12%	37%	34%	11%

Source: 2024 Measuring Sustainability Report Community Survey



10. *New indicator* Neighbourhood satisfaction – physical connection and accessibility to amenities

Assessing residents' accessibility and connection to local amenities is critical to enhance social sustainability. Increasing access and connectivity to such amenities as parks and open spaces, recreational areas, and other community services can promote physical and mental well-being, encourage social interaction, strengthen community connections, and contribute to fostering greater inclusivity and quality of life.

According to the community survey done for this report, respondents found they had easiest access to the following amenities (from the list provided):

1. Safe recreational areas, parks, open spaces, and trails
2. A mix of housing options
3. Enhanced and protected natural environment

Respondents found the following amenities were more difficult to access:

1. Employment opportunities
2. Healthy, local and affordable food options, including urban agriculture
3. Institutional facilities and amenities

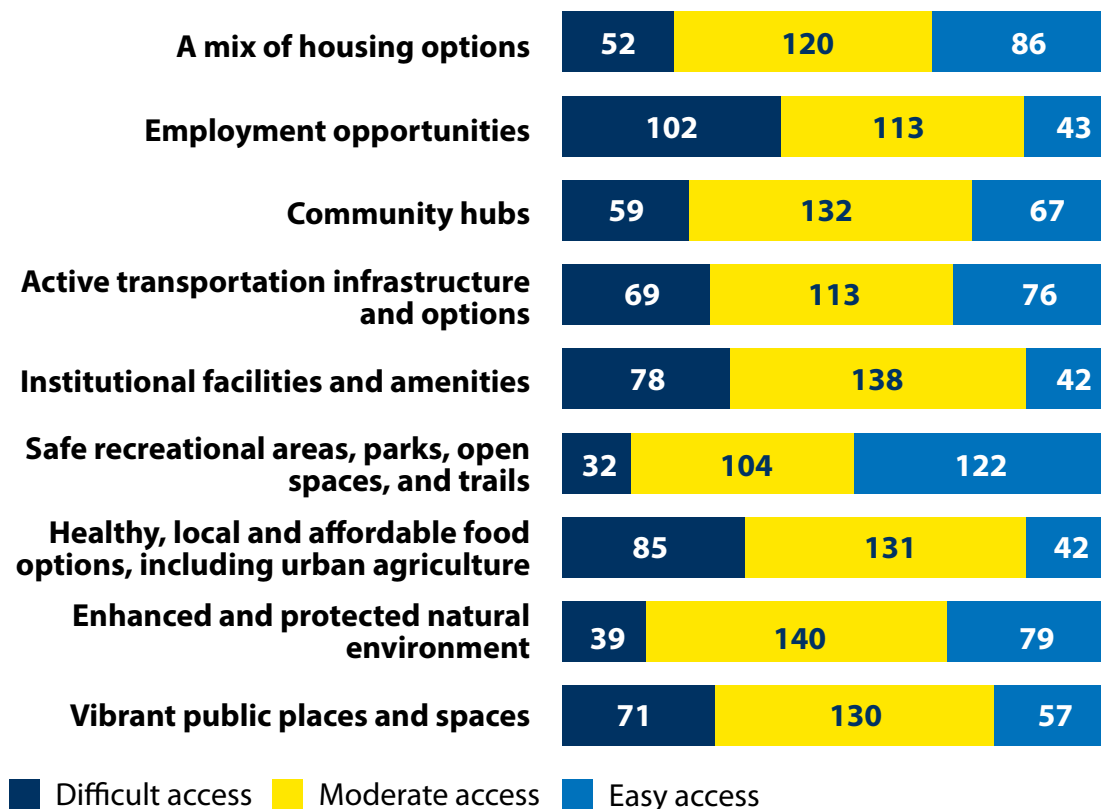


Figure 1. Perception of the level of accessibility of amenities in Pickering

Source: 2024 Measuring Sustainability Report Community Survey

For all but one amenity, the most common response was “moderate access”. The exception was safe recreational areas, parks, open spaces, and trails, which most respondents said they had “easy access” to.





11.*New indicator* Annual attendance at events, and performances within Pickering

Annual visits to facilities, events, and performances enhance social sustainability by fostering community engagement through cultural experiences. They provide opportunities for residents and visitors to connect, support local economies through job creation and economic activity, and contribute to community well-being. Events like Spring Fling, ArtFest, Cultural Fusion, Petapolooza, Fall Fling, and Winter Nights, City Lights help build cultural vibrancy and enrich social interactions.

Table 12. Annual attendance at live events and performances within Pickering

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Live event attendance (events, partner events, cultural pop-ups)	2,184	22,000	41,965	75,097

Source: City of Pickering Community Services Department, Key Performance Indicators Report

The lower number of annual visits in 2020 is attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. Attendance at live events was 75,097 in 2023, including partner events and cultural pop-ups. This total is a significant increase from previous years and marks a noticeable upward trend in community participation post-pandemic.

Pickering was named **Municipality of the Year (2025)** by Festivals & Events Ontario in the 50,000–150,000 population category, recognizing its vibrant community event support.

The Cultural Fusion Festival was selected as one of Ontario’s **Top 100 Festivals & Events in 2025**, celebrating Pickering’s rich cultural diversity.





12. Voter turnout for municipal elections

Voter turnout for municipal elections is important to social sustainability since it demonstrates the community’s engagement in local governance and democratic decision making. High voter participation helps ensure that a diverse range of voices and concerns are reflected on Council and in decision-making processes. It can also foster a sense of civic ownership and responsibility among residents.

Table 13. Voter turnout for municipal elections

Election year	2010	2014	2018	2022
Percentage of eligible voters who voted in the Pickering municipal election	32.16%	34.37%	29.20%	27.24%

Source: City of Pickering Corporate Services Department



What the City and others are doing to encourage civic and community participation, and volunteerism, in programs and organizations within Pickering

Fostering an engaged and informed community is one of the City's six corporate priorities. The City aims to build stronger partnerships by promoting collaboration across the corporation and with community members and organizations.

Civic and Community Participation

The City of Pickering actively fosters civic and community participation through initiatives like Let's Talk Pickering, an interactive platform that engages residents in meaningful discussions about local issues, projects, and policies. Additionally, the City hosts a variety of non-mandatory Open Houses and Public Information Centres to keep residents informed and involved in decision-making processes. These events provide opportunities for community members to learn about upcoming developments, ask questions, and provide feedback.

Offering Programs

The City provides hundreds of programs in sports, fitness, recreation, leisure, arts, heritage, and culture throughout Pickering and also online. Many of these programs are specifically for youth such as, Youth Week Celebrations, Hip Hop in the Park, skateboard competitions, and an annual Youth Art Show. In 2024, more than 300 youth attended the Hip Hop in the Park event — the highest attendance for the event to date.

Providing Training and Networking Opportunities

The City offers a Camp Counsellor in Training Program for youth 13 to 14 years old. Participants learn about healthy play and childhood development, and how to be active in their community. The program includes sessions on goal-setting, volunteer opportunities, networking, leadership, and conflict resolution.

As well, youth can sign up for babysitter training. The full-day course covers important aspects of babysitting, such as safety skills, emergencies, and conflict resolution.

Working with the School Boards

The City maintains strong working relationships with the Durham District School Board, Durham Catholic District School Board, and Viamonde School Board. Youth staff from the City's [Free Teen Stuff](#) programs attend presentations and outreach sessions at local elementary and secondary schools to encourage participation in free events, sports, and hubs.

Supporting Interactive History at Pickering Museum Village

More than 60 volunteers contributed a total of more than 1,500 hours at the Pickering Museum Village to support programs in 2023. Volunteers performed a wide range of tasks behind the scenes and also served as program greeters. Youth volunteers also shared their feedback on the design of the museum's new [ForgingOn](#) website.

Pickering Public Library

The Pickering Public Library offers volunteer and learning opportunities for youth through various programs such as the Teen Advisory Group and co-op placements. The library also offers adults the opportunity to give back to their community through the Seed Library and the Books+Express homebound reader programs.

Encouraging Volunteerism

The City continues to value and encourage the involvement of volunteers within a wide range of programs, events, and services. In 2023, a total of 289 volunteers provided 10,802 hours of volunteer service.

Recognizing Those Who Contribute

The City recognizes residents, associations, and businesses who have made a significant contribution to Pickering through its Civic Awards. Award categories include the environment, cultural diversity, youth leadership, heritage, volunteerism, accessibility, green builder, animal advocate, economic development, lifetime achievement, among others.

Ovee Outreach Vehicle - Expanding Library Access

The Pickering Public Library's Ovee Outreach Vehicle delivers library services directly to neighbourhoods farther from existing branches. Residents could browse materials, attend events, sign up for cards, and pick up holds, making library resources more accessible and community-focused.



Pickering Public Library

Pickering Public Library received two major awards in 2024: the **Les Fowlie Intellectual Freedom Award** for championing access to information, and the **Joyce Cunningham Award** for its innovative partnership with Durham Region Children's Aid Society on the 2023 Drag Queen Storytimes.

Physical and Mental Health



13. Childhood asthma prevalence

Childhood asthma prevalence is a valuable indicator of environmental health, housing quality, and access to healthcare in communities. Research by the Canadian Institute for Health Information ([Asthma Hospitalizations Among Children and Youth in Canada: Trends and Inequalities, 2018](#)) shows that exposure to air pollution, inadequate housing conditions, and income-associated environmental factors are key contributors to childhood asthma rates. Monitoring this metric helps identify and address these underlying factors to improve public health outcomes and promote equity.

Table 14. Childhood (ages 0 to 14) asthma prevalence in Pickering

Year	Percentage
2013	19.4%
2016	16.9%

Source: [Region of Durham Health Department](#)

The last available reporting in 2016 shows a decrease in the prevalence of childhood asthma in Pickering compared with the previous reporting period, indicating a positive trend.



14. Percentage of Pickering residents (ages 18+) who report excellent or very good mental health

Promoting positive mental health in daily life is beneficial for everyone. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, positive mental health is a key determinant of a person's ability to participate in community life, build strong social networks, and contribute to shared goals. Excellent or very good mental health can support active community engagement and enhances overall social cohesion.

Table 15 shows the percentage of Pickering and Durham Region residents (ages 18+) who reported excellent or very good mental health, based on data collected by the Region of Durham Health Department for the years 2014 to 2018.

Table 15. Percentage of residents (ages 18+) who report excellent or very good mental health

Year	Pickering 5-year average	Regional 5-year average
2014 to 2018	70%	69%

Source: [Region of Durham Health Department](#)

This data provides a baseline for tracking residents' self-reported mental health in future reporting cycles. Ongoing monitoring can help inform programs that support mental well-being and strengthen community connections across Pickering.



15. Percentage of Pickering residents (ages 18+) who report excellent or very good overall health

Perceived health is an indicator developed by the [Canadian Institute for Health Information](#). The indicator measures, on a scale from excellent to poor, how individuals perceive their overall health, including physical, mental, and social well-being — not just the absence of disease. Self-reported good-to-excellent health can be linked to lower risks of illness and mortality, and to reduced use of health services.

Table 16 shows the percentage of Pickering and Durham Region residents (ages 18+) who reported excellent or very good overall health, based on data collected by the Region of Durham Health Department for the years 2009 to 2018.

Table 16. Percentage of residents (ages 18+) who report excellent or very good overall health

Year	Pickering 5-year average	Regional 5-year average
2009 to 2013	62% (baseline)	60%
2014 to 2018	57%	56%

Source: [Region of Durham Health Department](#)

Since the last reported five-year average, adults (18+) in Pickering who said they had excellent or very good overall health decreased to 57 percent compared with 62 percent in the baseline five-year average. These results highlight the importance of continued support for health promotion, active living, and community well-being initiatives.



What the City and others are doing to promote physical and mental health, and access to medical resources

Improving Access to Health Care

The City is committed to enhancing access to both physical and mental health resources through several key initiatives. As part of this, the City invested \$250,000 in the Base Hospital at the Jerry Coughlan Health & Wellness Centre, supporting a wide range of services including primary and urgent care, mental health supports, diagnostic imaging, specialist care, and essential training for paramedics, firefighters, and health staff.

To help address the shortage of family doctors in the region, the Durham Family Physician Recruitment Strategy was endorsed by Council in early 2024. This initiative aims to attract and retain family medicine trainees and physicians, and includes hiring a dedicated recruiter through the Durham Ontario Health Team.

Community Grant Program

The City also strengthens community health through its Community Grant program, which funds local organizations and projects that support community gardens, food banks, and initiatives that build local engagement and well-being.

Encouraging Participation in Recreation Programs

The City provides year-round recreation programs for all ages, including squash, tennis, racquetball, pickleball, learn-to-swim classes, public swimming, and skating. A subsidy program is offered so that qualifying families can enroll in recreation programs at a discounted rate. Free or discounted activities and classes are also offered during holidays and for other special events. Pickering has many camp programs for youth and the Pickering Public Library also offers free programs and resources that support a healthy lifestyle for all ages.



Offering Fitness Programs

The City offers high-quality fitness programs and services for all ages and abilities across the community. Certified fitness professionals deliver specialized group fitness classes, small group training programs, and a range of personal training services. A subsidy program helps qualifying individuals to enroll in group fitness programs at a discounted rate.

Making Space Available for Sports Organizations

The City supports a range of local sports organizations to use municipal facilities for practices, programs, and events. Some current users include the Pickering Swim Club, Pickering Master Splashers, the Pickering Hockey Association, and the Pickering Soccer Club. As well, pool space is provided for the Durham District School Board to use for high school physical education programs and swimming teams.

Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace

The City's Mental Wellness Committee launched new initiatives in 2024 to promote staff well-being, including Mental Health First Aid training, wellness workshops, recreational activities, and comfort visits from Therapeutic Paws of Canada, reinforcing a culture of mental health awareness and support.

Wellness Checks

The City works with regional and community partners to provide coordinated wellness checks and outreach services that support individuals experiencing housing insecurity. These efforts help connect residents to critical health, housing, and social supports.



Safety and Security

Low crime rates can build up community trust, increase quality of life, and encourage economic investment. This helps to foster a shared sense of safety, promote social cohesion, and attract businesses and residents. Reporting on crime statistics can help us to understand overall safety.

16. Number of crimes against persons or property

Table 17. Crime statistics for City of Pickering

Incident	2021	2022	2023
Reported property crime	1,464	1,722	2,216
Reported violent crime	433	551	601

Source: Durham Regional Police Service Monthly Crime and Traffic Statistics Dashboard, 2023

The crime data in this report differs from previous reports because it focuses exclusively on Pickering and separates incidents into violent crime and property crime. Earlier reports aggregated data for Ajax and Pickering (using information from Division 19 Ajax-Pickering) and presented total Criminal Code violations, making it difficult to identify trends specific to Pickering or differentiate between types of crimes. This newer data available from Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS) provides clearer insight. The trend in this data indicates a rise over the three-year reporting period.

What the City and others are doing to address safety

Implementing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

The City incorporates the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), in the design of city parks and facilities and during the review of site plan submissions for private developments. Features such as natural surveillance, landscaping, lighting, access control, and circulation play an important role in creating a safe environment.

Encouraging the Public to Report Problems

The City encourages residents, local businesspeople to report problems that affect the quality of life in Pickering, such as graffiti, vandalism, and littering. Opportunities are provided to make reporting easy, including submitting an online Service Request or contacting [Customer Care](#).

Community Safety Days

DRPS regularly hosts interactive events featuring police, fire, and paramedic services to engage residents and promote public safety awareness.

Project Impact & Road Watch

Ongoing traffic enforcement initiatives target major intersections (e.g., routes along Kingston Road) to reduce speeding and enhance road safety.

Compliance Checks

Regular compliance checks are conducted by DRPS to ensure individuals with court-ordered conditions adhere to their legal requirements, supporting community safety.

Crime Prevention Education

DRPS delivers public education sessions on fraud prevention, cyber safety, and personal security.

Hosting Community Safety Meetings

The City supported Community Safety Meetings with DRPS and local groups. These sessions focused on auto theft, frauds and scams, and cyberbullying—engaged 72 residents and strengthened public awareness and shared responsibility for safety.

Safety, Self Defence & Walking Home

The City partnered with Villari's Martial Arts Centre to offer a free safety and self-defence workshop, led by Master Joan Richert. This initiative strives to empower residents to feel confident and secure in their daily lives.

Security Cameras

In 2024, the City operated 295 Closed Circuit Television cameras across municipal spaces. New installations and upgrades were completed to strengthen public safety.



Perception of Climate Change Impacting the Community

Climate change will affect each community differently, depending on the community’s sensitivity and capacity to adapt to these changes. All these impacts have physical, economic, and societal consequences. In southern Ontario, we have already witnessed shorter winters and earlier springs, changes in precipitation patterns, increased weather variability, and more frequent extreme weather events.

17. *New indicator* Respondents’ perception of weather-related emergencies impacting the community

Findings of the community survey conducted in 2024 for Pickering’s Community Climate Adaptation Plan suggest that a vast majority of respondents are either very concerned or somewhat concerned about the impacts of weather-related emergencies.

Table 18. Respondents’ perception on weather-related emergencies impacting the community

Perception	Percentage
Very concerned	44%
Somewhat concerned	49%
Not Concerned or Other	7%

Source: 2024 Community Climate Adaptation Plan Community Survey

These results establish a baseline for understanding community perceptions of weather-related risks and can help guide future education about preparedness and adaptation initiatives.

What the City and others are doing to address climate change

Pickering Community Climate Adaptation Plan

The City’s 10-year [Community Climate Adaptation Plan](#) is a strategic and collaborative plan to help the Pickering community prepare for, and adapt to, different weather-related emergencies. This plan aligns with many municipal and regionally approved plans and builds upon important actions the City and community stakeholders are doing. Those actions include establishing warming and cooling centres at City facilities, developing naturalization projects, shade structures, and splash pads, carrying out waterfront restoration, and sharing weather alerts and service disruptions.

Durham Environmental and Climate Advisory Committee

This committee of Durham Council advises on environmental planning and climate change. This includes engaging the community in environmental stewardship through programs and activities that encourage participation in conservation efforts such as the Durham Environmental Achievement Awards.

Durham Climate Roundtable

The Durham Climate Roundtable is a leadership body whose members include organizations from across the Durham Region, including regional and local government, as well as corporate and community organizations. Roundtable members are committed to working together to address climate change through actions in the region that support Canada's commitment of reaching net-zero carbon by 2050. The Roundtable runs the annual Durham Climate Forum to engage the community and partners.

Flood Ready Durham Website

A partnership between the Region of Durham, local municipalities, conservation authorities, and the [Climate Risk Institute](#), the [Flood Ready Durham](#) website provides Durham residents with access to information and resources about flood risk and resilience in their community.

Durham Climate Change and Health Vulnerability Assessments

The Region of Durham Health Department is developing region-wide vulnerability assessments to examine health-related impacts of climate change, including including, extreme heat and weather, vector-borne diseases (e.g., tick-borne diseases, West Nile virus), food and water impacts, poor air quality, and ultraviolet radiation.

Extreme Weather Alert and Response System

In 2016, the Region of Durham Health Department launched Durham Region's Heat Warning and Information System. The system provides advance notice of extreme heat conditions to municipalities, community partners and the public so that heat response plans can be activated in advance of extreme heat.

The Region of Durham also developed an urban heat strategy in 2018. Called Keeping Our Cool, the strategy provides an overview of urban heat island causes, impacts of extreme heat, high-risk areas in the region, and recommended reduction measures.

Flood Vulnerable Road and Culvert Hydraulic Capacity Assessment

The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, alongside the Region of Durham and local area municipalities, assessed the flood vulnerability of roads and the capacity of watercourse crossings (culverts and bridges) under current and future climate scenarios. This assessment can help identify candidate projects for enhanced resilience measures.



Healthy Economy

Vibrant economies support a mix of economic activities and help residents enjoy a high quality of life. By creating economic security and financial stability, local governments can contribute to positive social outcomes, improve access to basic needs, enhance meaningful employment, and support local job markets. To measure Pickering's economic health, we reported on four indicators across the following three categories: Labour Force Participation, Job Distribution, and Family Income.



Labour Force Participation



18. Employment rate

The employment rate is the total number of residents working full-time or part-time for pay, expressed as a percentage of the total population 15 years of age or older. This indicator provides a measure of the size of Pickering’s workforce relative to all residents except children. It helps to determine the proportion of people who have an increased ability to improve their living standards and meet their needs.

Table 19 compares Pickering’s 2011, 2016 and 2021 employment rates, based on the Census Canada datasets for those years.

Since the City of Pickering is a census subdivision (municipality as determined by provincial/territorial legislation), its employment rate is reported with Statistics Canada’s census update.

Table 19. Employment rate

Year	Employment Rate
2011	66.3%
2016	62.7%
2021	56.9%*

Source: [Statistics Canada 2021 Census Profile](#)

* Economic indicators in the 2021 Canadian Census, the most recent dataset, reflect the unfavourable economic conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In August 2024, the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area, which includes Pickering, reported an employment rate of **61.1 percent**.



19. Unemployment rate

The unemployment rate represents the percentage of people in the labour force who are not working for pay. It helps determine whether the economy is resilient to changes in some or all sectors and reflects the ability of an economy to create employment.

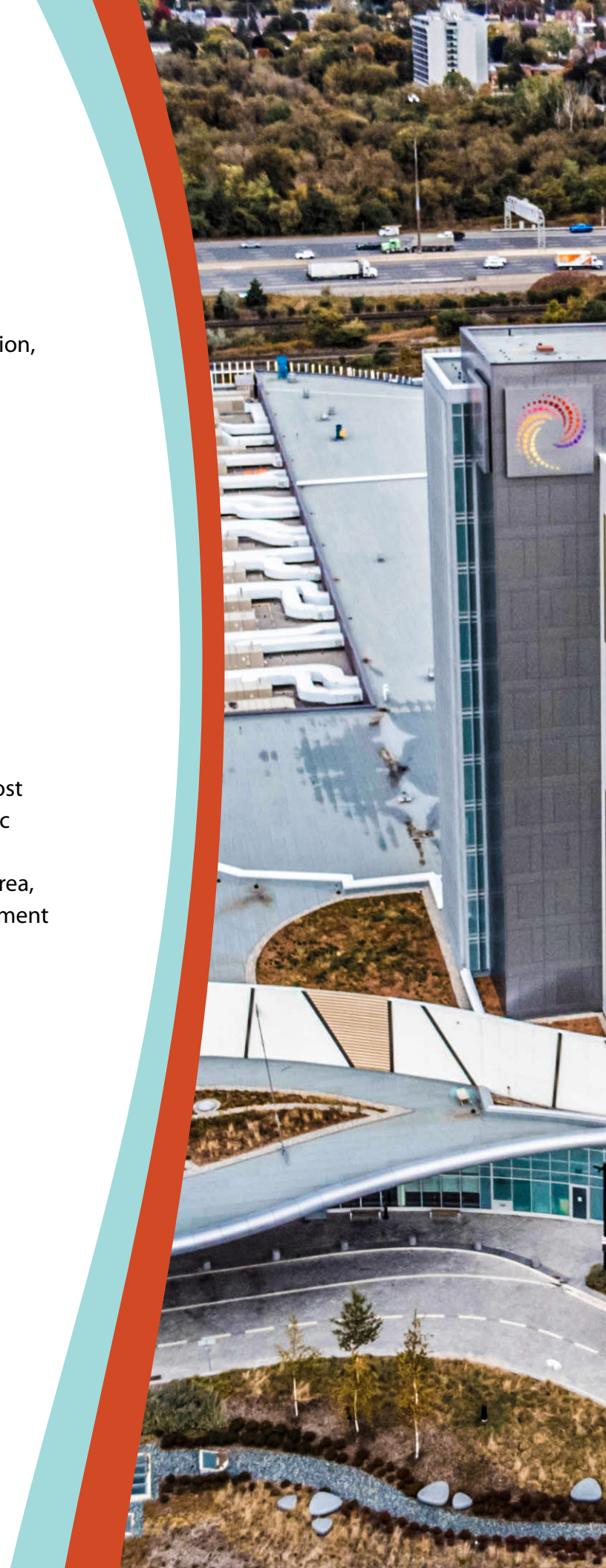
Because the City of Pickering is a census subdivision, its unemployment rate is reported with Statistics Canada's census update.

Table 20. Unemployment rate

Year	Unemployment Rate
2011	8.6%
2016	8.0%
2021	12.9%*

Source: [Statistics Canada 2021 Census Profile](#)

* Economic indicators in the 2021 Census, the most recent dataset, reflect the unfavourable economic conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In August 2024, the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area, which includes Pickering, reported an unemployment rate of **8 percent**.





Job Distribution



20. *New indicator* Job distribution by sector

Assessing job distribution by sector helps identify Pickering's level of economic diversity and resilience. It reveals whether employment is concentrated in a few industries or spread across multiple sectors, highlighting potential areas for economic development. This information also supports workforce planning by indicating growth in emerging sectors and informing policies that promote balanced, sustainable growth.

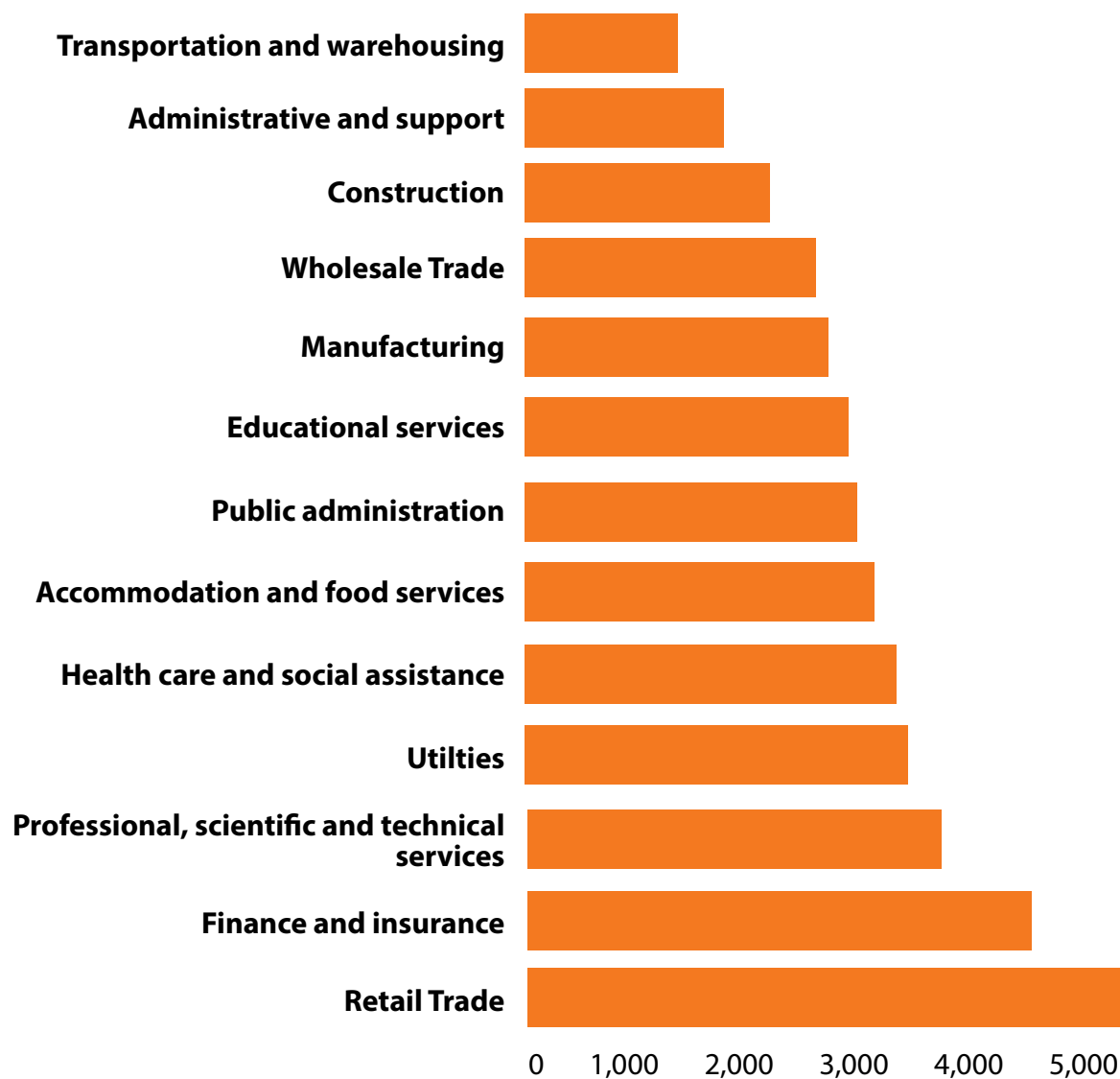


Figure 2. Job distribution by sector in Pickering

Source: Lightcast Data

The 2024 data shows that Pickering's labour force is primarily concentrated in retail trade, finance and insurance, and professional, scientific, and technical service sectors, which together make up a significant portion of local employment. This range of employment across multiple sectors highlights Pickering's economic diversity.



Nautical Village

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PERMIT OR
PAID PARKING
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MAY 1 - OCT 1
9 AM - 10 PM

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What the City is doing to address employment rates and Support Diverse Jobs

Seaton Community

Progress is well underway for the community of Seaton, one of Canada's largest combined residential, employment, and commercial developments. Seaton is designed to develop into a complete community, offering a range of housing types, employment lands, and land densities. Over the next 20 years, the Seaton community is set to welcome 70,000 new residents and 35,000 new jobs.

Pickering Innovation Corridor

Located in central Pickering along Highway 407, the Innovation Corridor includes more than 800 acres of prestige employment land ready for development. The corridor is intended to support the creation of 35,000 jobs in a variety of industry sectors. Already, the corridor is home to major end-users that occupy more than 200 acres, including Kubota Canada, and FGF Brands (construction of facilities commenced in 2023 and is well underway).

Pickering City Centre

Led by CentreCourt Developments, this master-plan community, located adjacent to The Shops at Pickering City Centre, is set to transform the City Centre. It will include 6,000 condominium residences, and a 1.5-acre park. The goal is to create a walkable and connected destination that will become a bustling downtown node, welcoming visitors, commuters, and residents alike.

Promoting Business Through Partnerships

To promote business and create opportunities for economic development, the City works with partners such as the Region of Durham, Infrastructure Ontario, Invest Ontario, the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, Ontario Tech University, Durham College, and the Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade.



Pickering Entertainment District

The City of Pickering has experienced significant growth with developments within the 240-acre Durham Live site. This landmark project, located at the northwest corner of Church and Bayly streets, boasts a dynamic mix of excitement, culture, nightlife, cuisine, and adventure. Anchored by a resort casino and five-star hotel, this unique destination will include a boutique hotel, the Porsche Experience Centre, a convention centre, an amphitheatre, restaurants, cinemas, LaunchPad Golf, and more.

The Pickering Casino Resort, which opened in July 2021, generates non-tax gaming revenue payments from Ontario Lottery Gaming Corporation. The City is reinvesting these revenues into the community, supporting a wide range of local programs, initiatives, and infrastructure projects.

Plan to Refurbish Pickering Nuclear Generating Station

The Ontario government is supporting Ontario Power Generation's plan to refurbish Pickering Nuclear Generating Station's "B" units (units 5 to 8). Once refurbished, the Pickering generating station would produce a total of 2,000 megawatts of electricity (the equivalent to powering two million homes), helping to meet increasing demand from electrification and supporting growth. The Conference Board of Canada projects the full refurbishment project would create 11,000 jobs per year.

Northeast Pickering

The City is undertaking a Secondary Plan for a new community in Pickering, that covers over 1,600 hectares of land. The purpose of the Secondary Plan is to guide the significant residential and business growth anticipated for this area.



Family Income

» **21. Median household income of economic families**

This indicator measures how well families in Pickering are doing financially and how secure they are in providing a family's basic needs. The total income of economic families (households with two or more related people) is the sum income of all members of that family. The increase in median family income from 2010 to 2020 reflects the improving economic growth and financial security of Pickering households.

Table 21. Median family income of economic families

Year	Median Family Income in Pickering	Median Family Income in Canada
2010 (baseline)	\$99,680	\$76,511
2015	\$111,107	\$88,306
2020	\$132,000	\$105,000

Source: [Statistics Canada 2021 Census Profile](#)

The City of Pickering remains well above the 2020 median family income in Canada. According to [Statistics Canada's Canadian Income Survey](#), among economic families in Canada, the median family income — which is employment income, plus private pensions, plus income from investments and other sources — was \$105,000 in 2020 versus \$132,000 in Pickering.

Pickering's Booming Film and Television Sector

Pickering is home to Canada's largest filming backlot and TriBro Studios. Pickering continues to be a popular destination for filming, given its proximity to Toronto, tax incentives, and unique mix of cityscapes, rural lands, and country roads. Production companies can film at locations with minimal disturbance to the community and keep their production schedules on track. Pickering has attracted major film and television productions like *Reacher*, *Ginny and Georgia*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Gen V*, *Twisted Metal*, *Murdoch Mysteries*, and many more. The City's film office, Film Pickering, offers seamless, one-stop permit approvals for new and returning productions.

What the City and others are doing to create opportunities for increased average family income

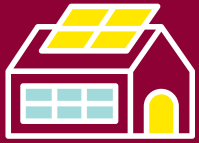
Employment & Skill-Building Workshops

In 2024, the City and Pickering Public Library delivered 35 employment and skill-building programs, including 18 workshops focused on job searching. Highlights included the 5-Minute Film Festival Career Path Series, entrepreneurship programs, cover letter and resume-building workshops, interview prep, job fairs, and Pathway to Newcomers sessions. These initiatives equip residents with the tools and knowledge needed to advance their careers and improve financial stability.

Partnerships

The City continues to partner with the post-secondary institutions to promote research and development, career development opportunities, and industry partnerships, in addition to academic programs.





Responsible Development

Responsible development promotes the sustainability and livability of the community as a whole. It integrates active transportation networks, strategic urban design, building practices, land use, and access to public spaces and services. To measure the City's progress in this regard, we reported on six indicators across the following three categories: Transport Modes and Distance, Active Transportation Infrastructure, and Parkland and Agricultural Land.



Transport Modes and Distance

22. Percentage of employed labour force commuting to work by walking, bicycling, and taking public transit

Sustainable commuting, such as walking, travelling by bicycle, taking public transit, and carpooling, offers a range of environmental, health, social, and economic benefits.

Table 22 is based on the [2021 Census Profile](#) from Statistic Canada. It shows a breakdown of the modes of transportation that employed Pickering residents use to commute to work.

Table 22. Transportation mode for employed labour force in Pickering, by percentage

Transportation Mode	Percentage
Car, truck, or van (as a driver)	79.9%
Car, truck, or van (as a passenger)	7.4%
Public transit	7.8%
Walking	1.9%
Bicycling	0.3%
Other methods	3.0%

Source: [Statistics Canada 2021 Census Profile](#)

Table 23. Percentage of employed labour force in Pickering commuting to work by walking, cycling, and taking public transit

Year	Percentage
2016	18.4%
2021	10.0%

Source: [Statistics Canada 2021 Census Profile](#)

Because the City of Pickering is a census subdivision, its labour force community is reported with Statistics Canada's census update. Economic indicators in the 2021 Census, the most recent dataset, reflect a decrease in commuting by walking, bicycling, and taking transit. This is likely because of many individuals working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the consequent decrease in transit service being offered at that time.



23. Median commuting distance to work

Commuting distance is particularly relevant to sustainability. Shorter commuting distances can decrease the use of fossil fuels for transportation, resulting in lower greenhouse gas emissions and less air pollution.

Table 24. Distance travelled to place of employment

Commuting Distance	Percentage
Less than 5 km	9%
Between 5 and 10 km	11%
Between 10 and 20 km	12%
Between 20 and 30 km	21%
Between 30 and 40 km	22%
Between 40 and 50 km	14%
More than 50 km	10%

Source: 2024 Measuring Sustainability Report Community Survey

Table 25. Median commuting distance to place of employment

Year	Median commuting distance
2016 (Baseline)	Between 20 and 30 km
2023	Between 20 and 30 km

Source: 2024 Measuring Sustainability Report Community Survey

According to the community survey done for this report, 53 percent of respondents who are not working from home travel between 1 and 30 kilometres (one way) to their place of employment. The median range of between 20 and 30 kilometres is the same as the baseline reported in 2016.





What the City and others are doing to promote sustainable commuting

E-scooter By-law and Pilot Program

Pickering's e-Scooter by-law, enacted in 2023, allows for electric scooters to be used on roads within the city. The City is also launching a shared e-scooter Pilot Program to introduce an additional mobility option by giving residents and visitors a new, convenient way to get around.

Integrated Transportation Master Plan

Pickering's Integrated Transportation Master Plan defines the policies, programs, and infrastructure improvements required to address existing and future transportation needs. Since plan implementation began in 2021, the cycling plan has been updated to incorporate new cycling lanes in various roads across Pickering. The cycling plan will be implemented on a yearly basis, subject to budget approval.

Durham Region Transit E-Mission Zero Plan

The E-Mission Zero Plan will guide how Durham Region Transit will deliver a network of vehicles, infrastructure, and facilities to reach zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. Measures in the plan include implementing demand responsive micro transit, piloting autonomous and connected technologies, and transitioning their vehicle fleet to alternative fuel propulsion systems.

High Frequency Rail Line

VIA Rail Canada is proposing a high frequency rail line between the Toronto–Quebec City corridor. The service will help reduce passenger and freight train delays, provide faster service, and broaden connectivity across eastern Ontario. It will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create jobs and opportunities. The City, in partnership with the Region of Durham, has proposed a stop in Pickering. As of 2023, a conceptual design of the proposed Pickering station and the surrounding development is in progress.

Durham-Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit Line

The [Durham-Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit Line](#) project, led by Metrolinx, will create seamless connections with local transit networks across Durham Region and into Toronto. Once completed, the line will provide the residents of Durham Region and the City of Toronto with more flexibility in transit options, including two-way service every five minutes, dedicated bus lanes, and priority signals. The project, which runs along Kingston Road, will also deliver multi-use paths, sidewalks, and off-road dedicated cycle paths.

Encouraging GO Transit Use

Pickering's fully enclosed pedestrian bridge spans 14 lanes of Highway 401, Canada's busiest transportation link. The bridge connects Pickering's main mobility hub with the emerging City Centre. Residents and commuters alike now enjoy safe, easy, and sheltered access to an integrated transportation network, as well as to shopping and services. The pedestrian bridge links the Pickering GO Station to the Shops at Pickering City Centre, and a Class A, LEED-Gold-certified office tower. It also links the GO Station to restaurants in the City Centre and a 500-vehicle GO Transit parking deck.



24. *New indicator* Sustainable mode share

Sustainable mode share refers to the proportion of total trips made across Pickering using environmentally friendly transportation options such as walking, cycling, and taking public transit. Increasing the share of these types of modes can help to reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

The table below shows the breakdown of different transport modes for all Pickering residents.

Table 26. Sustainable mode share of Pickering’s residents

Mode	Mode Share 2019	Mode Share 2023
Automobile	89.03%	94.91%
Bus	0.85%	1.17%
Cycling	0.37%	0.15%
Walking	7.41%	0.81%
Rail	2.34%	2.96%

Source: [Google Environmental Insights Explorer data and insights tool](#)

At present, automobile use accounts for more than nearly 95 percent of the trips made in Pickering. Increasing the share of sustainable transportation modes by promoting public transportation, carpooling, cycling, and walking can lower emissions and benefit air quality.



Active Transportation Infrastructure

The length of walking paths, cycling paths, and bikeways plays a crucial role in promoting active recreation within communities. Providing convenient infrastructure for active transportation increases residents’ mobility options, encourages residents to choose these alternative modes of transport, to help permote physical fitness, as well as reducing costs associated with automobile use.

» 25. Length of off-road trails, multi-use pathways, and on-road bike lanes

Pickering’s existing cycling infrastructure consists of 67.1 kilometres of off-road trails, multi-use pathways and on-road bike lanes.

Table 27. Length of off-road trails, multi-use pathways, and on-road bike lanes

Infrastructure	Length
Off-road trails	44.3 km
Multi-use pathways	12.5 km
On-road bike lanes	10.3 km

Source: City of Pickering Engineering Services Department

This indicator provides a snapshot of Pickering’s current active transportation infrastructure. With 67 kilometres of combined trails, pathways, and bike lanes, the City offers a growing network that supports walking and cycling as viable transportation and recreation options.

What the City is doing to increase the number of walking paths, cycling paths, and bikeways in Pickering

Planning New Trails and Paths

The City continues to plan and build new trails and paths. As of the fall of 2024, the Engineering Services Department had the following new paths in the planning stages, subject to budget approval:

- Dixie Road, from Kingston Road to the south and the hydro corridor to the north
- Pickering Parkway, from Glenanna Road to Brock Road
- Sheppard Avenue, from Altona Road and Fairport Road
- Strouds Lane, from Fairport Road to Rosebank Road

The City also has three educational signage installation projects in the planning stages:

- Glenanna Road, from Kingston Road to Dixie Road
- Strouds Lane, from Altona Road to Rosebank Road
- Woodview Avenue, from Finch Avenue to Pine Grove Avenue

Parkland and Agricultural Land

» 26. *New indicator* Ratio of people to parkland

The ratio of people to parkland indicates the availability of green spaces relative to the population size in an area. Adequate parkland area can provide essential ecosystem services, such as air purification and habitat for species, as well as recreational enjoyment for Pickering residents. Ensuring a balanced ratio of people to parkland can support sustainable urban living, further environmental health, and promote community well-being.

As referenced in its Recreation & Parks Ten Year Plan 2024-2034, the City manages 181 hectares of parkland distributed across 70 sites, exclusive of open space lands. While nearly half this supply is owned by other public agencies, the lands are available for public access through management agreements with the City. This translates into a ratio of 1.76 hectares per 1,000 residents. This ratio will serve as a baseline for future reporting on this indicator.

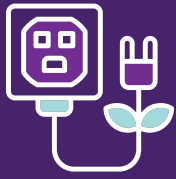
» 27. Land area designated for agricultural purposes and percentage in use

A large proportion of Pickering is on rural land. Where this land is currently used for agriculture, it represents economic productivity and jobs, and a potential source of locally grown food. Properly managed agricultural land can help ensure food security, support local economic activities, and provide ecosystem services. Ensuring an appropriate area of land designated for agricultural purposes is critical to continuing Pickering’s sustainability in these three aspects.

Table 28. Land area designed for agricultural purposes and percentage in use

	Land area designated for agricultural purposes (ha)	Area and percentage in use as farmland (ha)
2006 (Baseline)	8,850	4,327 (49%)
2011	8,850	5,283 (60%)
2016	8,850	4,097 (46%)
2021	8,850	3,905 (44%)

Source: [Statistics Canada 2021 Census of Agriculture](#)



Responsible Consumption

Responsible consumption refers to the manner in which a community consumes and uses resources, such as water, energy, and food, and the associated amount of waste produced. Responsible consumption seeks to minimize resource use through clean technologies, conservation, energy efficiencies, local food production, recycling, and waste diversion. To measure responsible consumption in Pickering, we reported on six indicators across the following five categories: Municipal Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Community Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Residential Water Use, Residential Waste, and Responsible Consumption Practices.



Municipal Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The City has developed a Corporate Energy Management Plan, which provides a five-year roadmap for energy management. By tracking greenhouse gas emissions, the City monitors municipal use of electricity and fossil-fuel energy.



28. Energy consumed by municipal buildings, per person

This indicator measures the efficiency and environmental impact of municipal buildings and their operations. High rates of energy consumption per person can indicate the inefficient use of and reliance on fossil fuels, which contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing energy consumption in municipal buildings through energy-efficient technologies, sustainable building practices, and renewable energy can help reduce emissions, optimize energy use, and reduce operating costs.

Table 29. Energy consumed by municipal buildings in Pickering, per person

Year	Energy Consumed Per Person in gigajoules (GJ)
2011	0.41 GJ
2015	0.47 GJ
2021	0.42 GJ

Source: Community Services Department

Gigajoules are units of energy used to measure energy content. One gigajoule equals 948,000 BTU or 278 kilowatt-hours, which would be enough energy to operate an average household in Pickering for just under three days.



29. Greenhouse gas emitted by municipal operations, per person

The average amount of greenhouse gas emissions per person from municipal operations is a useful indicator of sustainability since it can help indicate environmental impacts of a community’s services and infrastructure. Lowering emissions per person through sustainability measures, such as adopting renewable energy sources, can reduce the environmental impacts, contribute to lessening the impacts of climate change, and provide economic savings.

Table 30. Greenhouse gas emitted by municipal operations, per person

Year	Total Greenhouse Gas Emissions Per Person in tonnes of CO2 equivalent (tCO2e)
2011	0.033 tCO2e
2015	0.028 tCO2e
2021	0.013 tCO2e

Source: Community Services Department

In 2021, the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions by municipal operations in Pickering was 1,256 tonnes of CO2 equivalent (tCO2e), or 0.013 tCO2e per person. This is a marked reduction compared with per person emissions in 2011 and in 2015.



What the City is doing to reduce corporate energy use and greenhouse gas emissions

The City undertakes a variety of projects to conserve energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions when undertaking upgrades in its existing facilities and fleet, as well as when planning for future projects. Some of these examples are described below.

Dorsay Community & Heritage Centre

The Dorsay Community & Heritage Centre currently under construction, will be a new, 44,000 square foot facility that will celebrate Pickering's rich heritage by bringing together a museum, library, and community centre into one dynamic space. As a design certified zero-carbon building, the centre will be highly energy-efficient and will minimize emissions from building materials to operations. During typical operation, the site will be fully electric with zero fuel combustion. The design includes a 60-kilowatt rooftop solar array, with a battery energy storage system to offset on-site electricity consumption and provide backup power for lighting and receptacle loads.



Civic Complex

The City has successfully completed a comprehensive boiler retrofit project within the Civic Complex, which includes City Hall and the Central Library. Completed in 2023, the work involved replacing end-of-life natural draft units with high-efficiency modulating condensing boilers, achieving a 20 percent increase in efficiency. This retrofit project has reduced the consumption of greenhouse gas emissions by 52 tonnes a year, a significant decrease. Current work to improve the system will introduce new design envelope heating circulators to optimize heat generation, and system controls, resulting in further energy savings.

East Shore Community Centre

The City is in the design phase for the replacement of two gas-fired rooftop units with dual-fuel units at the East Shore Community Centre. These hybrid heat pump and gas heating units will operate in full electric mode for 50 to 60 percent of annual heating hours, with gas-fired backup used for extreme cold temperatures. Moving forward, planned equipment replacements will seek to use dual-fuel rooftop units and airside heat recovery systems where possible.

Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex

To improve energy-efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the recreation complex, the City replaced mid-efficiency space heating and domestic hot water boilers with high-efficiency modulating condensing boilers, helping to save close to 3,100 gigajoules per year.

Community Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

While only four percent of greenhouse gas emissions in Durham Region come from municipal operations, the rest — 96 percent — come from the community through transportation, homes, industries, businesses, and institutional buildings. The City has partnered with the Region of Durham and other local area municipalities to develop the [Durham Community Energy Plan](#). This 35-year plan establishes short-, medium-, and long-term targets for energy use and conservation in the community.

According to a carbon emission inventory report published by The Atmospheric Fund, the City of Pickering's total emissions in 2023 were 595,764 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (tCO₂eq), or 5.62 tCO₂eq per person. The Toronto Atmospheric Fund data is based on the available information and may not be comprehensive. It is important to note that this data is subject to limitations and may not cover all possible variables or scenarios.



What the City and its partners are doing to promote the reduction of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions throughout the community

Increasing Public Awareness

The City of Pickering is striving to create a culture of conservation. A section on the City's website, [Energy Incentives and Rebates](#), includes a list of some of the energy incentives and rebates currently available and will be updated regularly.

The City has also hosted numerous workshops, such as:

- heat pump workshops in partnership with Windfall Ecology Centre and the Region of Durham
- Home Efficiency Retrofit Orientation Program in partnership with Humber College, the Town of Ajax, and Enbridge

Ensuring New Development Supports Sustainability

In 2023, Integrated Sustainable Design Standards (ISDS) became a mandatory requirement for the planning, development, and construction industry. Builders, such as Chestnut Hill Developments, The Daniels Corporation, and Mattamy Homes have already incorporated many of the ISDS performance measures into their projects. The standards showcase Pickering's commitment to being at the forefront of sustainable development practices and promoting green building construction. Pickering City Council adopted the standards in September 2022, for implementation in January 2023. The language in the Official Plan was amended in November 2023.

Durham Community Energy Plan

The Durham Community Energy Plan will guide the region's transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient community. Strategies include enhancing energy efficiency, increasing renewable energy use, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Durham Greener Homes Program

[Durham Greener Homes](#) helps homeowners to overcome the challenges of completing energy retrofits by providing support throughout the home retrofit journey. The program connects residents with expert energy advisors, incentives, local lending institutions, and energy utilities to help simplify the process, while transforming the market for residential energy efficiency.

Durham Greener Buildings Program

[Durham Greener Buildings](#) supports owners of commercial, institutional, and multi-unit residential buildings to help them measure, report and take action on energy efficiency and conservation opportunities.

Durham Climate Dashboard

The [Durham Climate Dashboard](#) tracks regional community-wide progress toward climate goals. Metrics include reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, building efficiency improvements, and the progress in transitioning to sustainable transportation.

District Energy Study

The Region of Durham is currently undertaking a pre-feasibility study in Pickering, focusing on the City Centre and surrounding employment lands. The study will explore the feasibility of a district energy system that provides centralized heating and cooling to multiple buildings. The proposed system would capture low-carbon waste heat from the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station and the Duffin Creek Water Pollution Control Plant, which would then be used for space heating or cooling. The study will assess the technical, financial, and environmental impacts and is expected to be complete in 2025.

Residential Water Use

Water is a precious resource. Not only should water not be wasted, but the energy needed to produce, purify, pump, and distribute usable water should not be wasted either.

» **30. Daily volume of municipal water used, per person**
The daily volume of municipal water used per person is an important measure since it shows how efficiently water resources are being used. Reducing water use through conservation efforts and efficient technologies can help preserve freshwater ecosystems, lower energy consumption, and reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with water services and wastewater treatment.

Table 31. Daily volume of municipal water used, per person

Year	Volume of water use, per person
2015	163 litres per day
2023	174 litres per day

Source: Region of Durham water billing data

This indicator shows that per person water consumption in Durham Region has remained relatively consistent, with a slight increase from 163 litres per day in 2015 to 174 litres per day in 2023. While the change is minimal, it emphasizes the importance of encouraging good water use practices.

What the City is doing to reduce water use in Pickering

Encouraging Reduced Water Use for Gardens and Lawns

Pickering hosts free lawn and garden-related workshops. These workshops teach residents about appropriate lawn watering and gardening with native and drought- tolerant plants and grasses. Where appropriate, the City uses drought-tolerant plants in its own landscaping efforts. Residents have also enjoyed rain garden workshops focused on teaching participants how these gardens work, plant selection, and ideal locations.

Reducing Water Use in Facilities

As replacements are needed, the City installs low-flow restrictors on faucets and showerheads, low-flush toilets, and timed faucets.

Residential Waste

Waste is anything we throw away that doesn't get re-used. When we throw things out, we also lose potentially valuable resources and the energy that went into making each item. While we cannot eliminate waste, we can produce less of it, and we can reuse and recycle our products and resources whenever possible.



31. Total annual amount of residential solid waste generated, per person

The total annual amount of residential solid waste generated per person can indicate consumption patterns, resource use, and the effectiveness of waste management systems. Reducing the amount of waste generated per person is important for the efficient use of resources and the promotion of a circular economy.

Table 32. Total annual amount of residential solid waste generated, per person

Year	Garbage Generation Per Person
2018	173.2 kilograms
2020	180.6 kilograms
2022	166.0 kilograms

Source: Region of Durham Waste Management Annual Report

The data shows a positive trend by reflecting a reduction in the amount of solid waste generated per person in Pickering from the last report in 2020.



32. Percentage of residential waste diverted

The percentage of residential waste diverted is a key indicator of sustainability. Diversion of waste includes blue box recyclables, green bin compostables, and leaf and yard waste compostables.

Table 33. Percentage of residential waste diverted

Year	Percentage
2015	57%
2023	56%

Source: Region of Durham Works Department

The data shows a consistent trend in the percentage of residential waste diverted in Pickering.

What the City and others are doing to promote waste diversion

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

The City of Pickering partnered with Diabetes Canada to implement a Textile Diversion Program in 2023, reducing household waste. In the first year of the program, the community diverted over 8,600 kilograms of textiles.

The City offers battery recycling collection bins for residents to recycle used household batteries. Bins can be found at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex, East Shore Community Centre, George Ashe Library and Community Centre, and the Pickering Central Library. In 2024, 412 kilograms of batteries were recycled responsibly.

Increasing Public Awareness of Waste Diversion

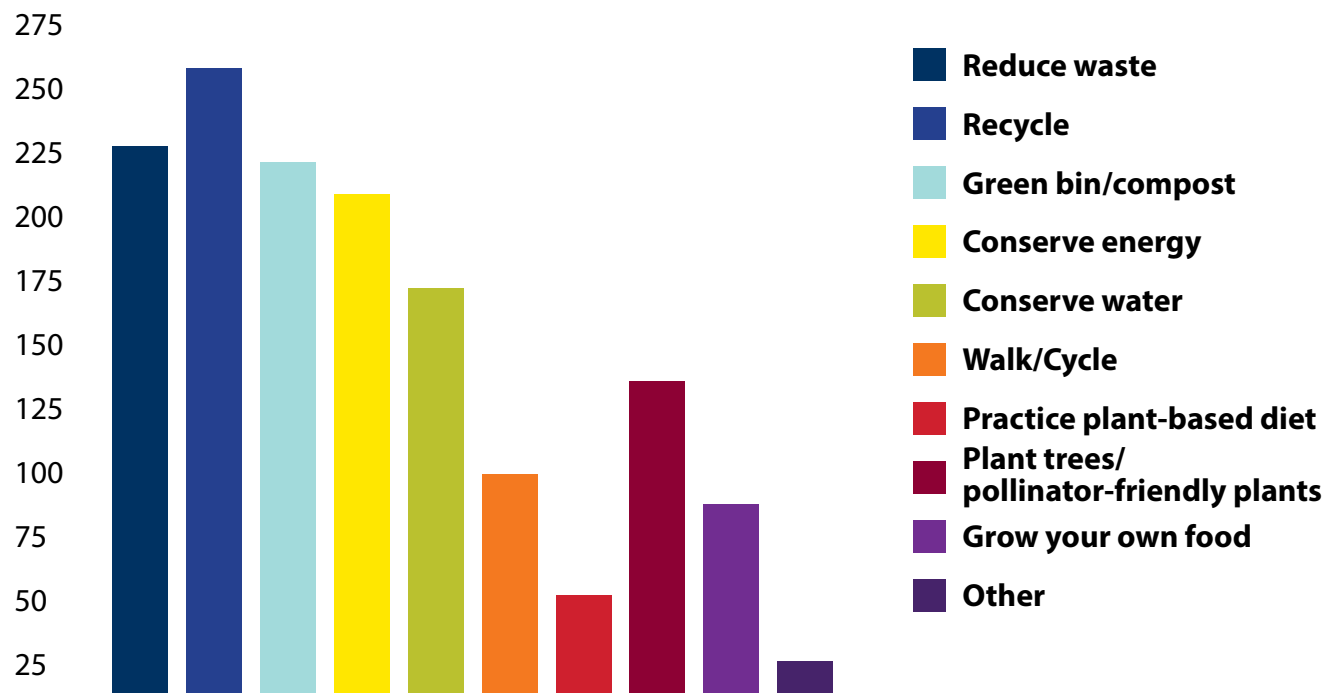
The City partners with the Region of Durham to offer electronic and household hazardous waste collection events. The City also works with the Region to host a popular compost giveaway event, at which residents can swap out their old diversion bins for new ones.

The City takes part in National Waste Reduction Week by carrying out internal and external education campaigns and waste reduction challenges.

Responsible Consumption Practices

Responsible consumption practices in our homes help to reduce environmental impact and promote resource efficiency. Encouraging households to adopt habits such as reducing waste, recycling, conserving energy and water, growing their own food, and using active transportation is important. These practices foster a culture of sustainability within the community.

33. **New indicator** Household responsible consumption practices



Source: 2024 Measuring Sustainability Report Survey

Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture is a priority area for Pickering and its residents, and it can play an important role in local food security and community resilience. Although an urban agriculture indicator was not included in this report, one of the findings from the Let's Talk Pickering community survey on urban agriculture, conducted in 2023, was that many residents are interested in growing their own fruits and vegetables. However, many said they do not know where to start or are concerned about not having enough space, time, and money. The City is taking action to help address these barriers.



What the City and others are doing to promote locally grown foods

Urban Agriculture Project

In February 2023, Pickering Council requested staff to explore ways to enhance urban agricultural programs and projects. For example, through the We Grow Food project, residents of a Durham Community Housing site built raised garden plots using funds accessed from the City's Community Grant Program.

Other ways that the City promotes urban agriculture include free workshops, stakeholder outreach, and partnerships to integrate urban agriculture features into new developments.

Community Vegetable Gardens in Pickering

The City of Pickering Council adopted a Community Garden Policy in 2022. The policy recognizes the benefits of community gardens to health, social ties, environmental education, and food security. The policy oversees municipal community gardens, ensuring equal access for residents to grow produce in collaborative, engaging, and healthy environments. In 2024, the four community garden plots at George Ashe Library & Community Centre were expanded with four new plots and four accessible garden beds added (for a total of 12) with funding from the Province of Ontario.

The City currently operates two community gardens: one at Valley Plentiful Community Garden in Diana, Princess of Wales Park; and one at the George Ashe Library and Community Centre, as part of the 55+ Plot to Plate Program. Both sites have donation plots that support the local food bank.

In collaboration with Valley Plentiful Garden Committee, the City completed an enhancement project to Valley Plentiful in 2025 that added accessible parking, bike racks, and more raised garden beds.



Pickering City Centre Farmers' Market

The City hosts the award-winning market to help residents connect with local farmers, bakers, artisans, and small businesses. The in-person market runs for 17 weeks, and has upwards of 29 vendors. Thanks to community support, the market has been recognized by the Durham Region Readers' Choice Awards with top recognition for six years running (2019 to 2024).

Educating the Community

The City coordinates free educational workshops each spring for residents to learn about for example, native plant gardening, lawn care, and how to save money by growing your own food. Many local community organizations, such as the [Valley Plentiful Community Garden](#), [We Grow Food](#), [Durham Integrated Growers](#), and [Durham Master Gardeners](#), lend their knowledge to help residents learn how to grow food. Please visit the [Urban Agriculture Hub](#) on the City's website to learn more about actions taking place to support and promote urban agriculture in Pickering.

Pickering Public Library Seed Library

The Seed Library encourages access to healthy food, while protecting the biodiversity of plants and food crops. Through the Seed Library project, the library started offering free programs in 2024 about food literacy, seeds, and gardening.

Pickering Environmental Schools Grant Program

Launched in 2020, the [Environmental Schools Grant](#) support schools in Pickering to undertake exciting projects that contribute to a healthy environment, such as creating pollinator gardens, installing outdoor garden beds to grow native plants and fresh food, and purchasing hydroponic growing towers, vermicomposters, and trees.



Appendix A – Methodology

The 2024 Measuring Sustainability Report began by assessing the 52 indicators used in the 2017 report, to determine which indicators were the most impactful for the purpose of ongoing reporting. This evaluation process also identified indicators that were no longer critical to carry forward.

As a first step, each indicator was scored from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) according to five criteria:

- relevance (to sustainability)
- objectivity (can be measured using factual, consistent, and quantitative data)
- availability of data (existing or readily available for collection)
- realistic (inexpensive, non-intensive data collection process)
- understandable (intended purpose of indicator is easy to understand)

Scores across these criteria were reviewed and assessed according to the following:

- Actionable (1 City has no influence - - - 5 City has direct influence)

Next the indicators were weighed against three criteria. This step aimed to help select a draft list of indicators for the 2024 report that:

1. Can be measured on an ongoing basis
2. Make sense according to current understandings of how sustainability is conceived and measured
3. Something the City can have some direct influence over at a policy or program level or otherwise



Indicators that scored very low or were not considered to be critical for carrying forward were eliminated. A list of potential new indicators to fill any gaps were identified. Proposed new indicators were assessed using the same criteria as previously described, and those that scored highly were considered as candidates for the draft list.

Over the next several months, the consultants from International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) Canada, City staff, and technical experts from various municipal departments and other relevant entities helped discern any gaps or challenges with the indicators selected to go forward.

A final set of 33 indicators was selected for this report. We expect further assessments and iterations will be made to the list of indicators in the future, as changes occur in the Pickering community and its priorities, as well as in best practices for measuring sustainability.

A list of data sources is located in Appendix C. For comments or questions about the report's methodology or data sources, please contact the City's Sustainability staff at sustainability@pickering.ca.



Appendix B

Sustainability Checklist for Pickering Residents



Healthy Environment

- ☐ Participate in tree planting initiatives like the Backyard Tree and Shrub Planting Program or Take Pride in Pickering.
- ☐ Join community cleanups like the 20-Minute Makeover or Litter & Plastics Challenge.
- ☐ Reduce stormwater runoff by installing a rain barrel or creating a rain garden.
- ☐ Support biodiversity by planting native species and creating pollinator habitats.
- ☐ Join citizen science efforts to track biodiversity and remove invasive species.
- ☐ Attend workshops, webinars, and hikes to learn more about sustainability.



Healthy Society

- ☐ Participate in Pickering's community events and festivals.
- ☐ Volunteer at City events, senior programs, or animal shelter.
- ☐ Stay active by joining fitness classes, playing sports, or swimming.
- ☐ Explore the Waterfront Trail, the Seaton Trail, the Rouge National Urban Park or other trails in Pickering.





Healthy Economy

- ☐ Shop locally and support Pickering businesses.
- ☐ Partner with local educational institutions to develop workforce skills for emerging industries.
- ☐ Encourage entrepreneurship by supporting local startups and innovation hubs.



Responsible Development

- ☐ Take transit, bike, walk, or carpool.
- ☐ Encourage your employer to join Smart Commute Durham.



Responsible Consumption

- ☐ Conserve energy at home by using energy-efficient appliances and lighting.
- ☐ Save water by installing low-flow faucets and fixing leaks.
- ☐ Reduce waste by recycling, composting, and donating reusable items.
- ☐ Choose reusable products over single-use items.
- ☐ Educate your household on recycling, energy conservation, and water-saving practices.
- ☐ Advocate for sustainable practices in your community.



Appendix C – Sources

Indicator	Source
Number of days when the Air Quality Health Index is above 7 (high risk)	Government of Ontario Air Quality Health Index , Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (issued in 2023)
Surface Water Quality Index for key watersheds	Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Watershed and Ecosystems Reporting Hub
Percentage of swimming days posted as unsafe	Region of Durham Health Department
Species richness and sensitivity of plants and animals	Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Watershed and Ecosystems Reporting Hub
Number of trees planted by the City of Pickering, the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, Ontario Power Generation, and the Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests (LEAF) organization	Data from the City of Pickering, Region of Durham, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Ontario Power Generation, and the Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests (LEAF) organization
Area of natural cover	Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Watershed and Ecosystems Reporting Hub , Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority Land Cover and Ecological Land Classification
Quality of natural cover	Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Watershed and Ecosystems Reporting Hub
Area and percentage of impervious cover	Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Watershed and Ecosystems Reporting Hub , Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority Land Cover and Ecological Land Classification
Neighbourhood satisfaction - social connection	2024 Measuring Sustainability Report Community Survey
Neighbourhood satisfaction - physical connection and accessibility to amenities	2024 Measuring Sustainability Report Community Survey
Annual attendance at events, and performances within Pickering	City of Pickering Community Services Department, Key Performance Indicators Report
Voter turnout for municipal elections	City of Pickering Corporate Services Department

Indicator

Source

Childhood (ages 0 to 14) asthma prevalence in Pickering

[Region of Durham Health Department, Canadian Institute for Health Information Report, Asthma Hospitalizations Among Children and Youth in Canada: Trends and Inequalities, 2018](#)

Percentage of Pickering residents (ages 18+) who report excellent or very good mental health

[Region of Durham Health Department, Health Neighbourhoods in Durham Region dataset, Public Health Agency of Canada, 2022](#)

Percentage of Pickering residents (ages 18+) who report excellent or very good overall health

[Region of Durham Health Department, Health Neighbourhoods in Durham Region dataset, Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2022](#)



Indicator	Source
Number of crimes against persons or property	Durham Regional Police Service Monthly Crime and Traffic Statistics Dashboard , 2023
Respondents' perception on weather-related emergencies impacting the community	2024 Community Climate Adaptation Plan Community Survey
Employment rate	Statistics Canada 2021 Census Profile
Unemployment rate	Statistics Canada 2021 Census Profile
Job distribution by sector	Lightcast Data
Median household income of economic families	Statistics Canada 2021 Census Profile
Percentage of employed labour force commuting to work by walking, bicycling, and taking public transit	Statistic Canada 2021 Census Profile
Median commuting distance to work	2024 Measuring Sustainability Report Community Survey
Sustainable mode share	Google Environmental Insights Explorer data and insights tool
Length of off-road trails, multi-use pathways, and on-road bike lanes	City of Pickering Engineering Services Department
Ratio of people to parkland	City of Pickering, Recreation & Parks Ten Year Plan 2024-2034
Land area designated for agricultural purposes and percentage in use	Statistic Canada 2021 Census of Agriculture
Energy consumed by municipal buildings, per person	Community Services Department
Greenhouse gas emitted by municipal operations, per person	Community Services Department
Daily volume of municipal water used, per person	Region of Durham Water Billing Data
Total annual amount of residential solid waste generated, per person	Region of Durham Works Department, Waste Management Annual Report
Percentage of residential waste diverted	Region of Durham Works Department
Household responsible consumption practices	2024 Measuring Sustainability Report Community Survey



2024 Measuring Sustainability Report
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