

PICKERING FORWARD

Planning tomorrow, together.



Pickering Official Plan Review

Community Elements and Infrastructure
Discussion Paper

April 2025

— City of —
PICKERING

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Land Acknowledgement

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.



City of Pickering Indigenous Day 2022.

Introduction

A vibrant and complete community accommodates people of all ages and abilities. It provides convenient access to essential amenities and services that support the physical and emotional well-being of its residents and enhances the quality of life for everyone in the community. A strong “sense of place” is also fostered by acknowledging the City’s history and preserving distinctive buildings and landscapes found in different parts of the City.

Our City is served by various infrastructures and amenities that help the city to function. These include key components such as:

- the transportation system that moves people and goods around the city;
- the parks and recreational spaces that contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community; and
- cultural heritage that acknowledges the history of our City.

Pickering is projected to add approximately 150,000 residents and 54,000 jobs by 2051. To accommodate this growth, we must consider how various elements contribute to the success of a complete community.

The Official Plan provides broad directions on land use policy to create complete neighbourhoods within the City. However, it is important that we acknowledge that not all essential services and/or infrastructure are provided and maintained by the City itself. However, the Official Plan includes policies that support and enable the development of these uses within the community.



Pickering City Centre



As a lower tier municipality, Pickering is responsible for the delivery and upkeep of:



Fire Services



Parks



Recreational Facilities



Local Roads



Sidewalks



Stormwater Management Facilities

As the upper tier municipality, the Region of Durham is responsible for:



Transit



Police Services



Ambulance Services



Waste Collection



Regional Roads



Water and Sewer

The Province of Ontario is responsible for:



Schools



Hospitals



Provincial Highways

The City's Official Plan provides the mapping and policy framework that incorporates all of these necessary elements, to guide the development of a complete community that serves the needs of all those who live and work in Pickering.

Purpose of this Discussion Paper

The discussion papers developed through the City's Official Plan Review ("Pickering Forward") are meant to get residents and stakeholders thinking about mapping a course for the City's future. The discussion papers set the stage for subsequent policy recommendations. While there are six discussion papers, the themes within each paper often connect with concepts or ideas discussed in other papers.

Response to the first discussion paper, "Community Vision and Priorities", revealed a number of elements that residents felt made Pickering a great community. Many people stated how important it is to them that Pickering be a complete community, where people can live, work, and play. Other priorities included maintaining Pickering's community character, having an accessible transit network, providing ample green spaces, and accommodating more affordable housing and job availability. All of which contributes to a complete community.

The second discussion paper, "Growth Management and Urban Structure", described how much growth Pickering is required to plan for. It also illustrated the areas that are anticipated to receive the most growth within the city, which includes Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs), such as

the City Centre and the Kingston Road Corridor, as well as new and/or developing greenfield neighbourhoods in Seaton and Northeast Pickering.

The third and fourth discussion papers, “Natural Heritage, Hazards, and Sustainability” and “Agriculture and Rural Areas”, examined opportunities and threats to the City’s natural heritage system, agricultural system, and rural areas.

The “Community Elements and Infrastructure” discussion paper is the fifth discussion paper of the City’s Official Plan Review. This discussion paper has three intended outcomes:

- Describe the elements of a complete community;
- Identify current policies and opportunities that support the creation of complete communities; and,
- Focus on the specific elements of transportation, parks, cultural heritage, and community facilities.

Housing and affordability are important components of complete communities that will be discussed in the next and final discussion paper.



Nautical Village



Why is this Important to the Official Plan

The Official Plan is the City's long range, comprehensive planning document, that guides land use decision-making. It represents Council's vision, guided by community involvement, for growth and change within the City. It sets a policy framework for the physical, environmental, and economic development of the City, while ensuring that growth occurs responsibly, and resources are used efficiently and sustainably.

The Official Plan's maps and policies are required to meet Provincial requirements and conform with Envision Durham. Planning for compact and complete communities is one the key priorities within Provincial policies, to ensure that existing and future generations live in healthy, well-designed, and resilient communities.

Discussion questions have been included throughout this paper. They are designed to help the reader develop suggestions and comments that can then be shared with the project team.

The ideas presented in this report will be further discussed at a public information centre (PIC) to be held on **May 6, 2025 (in-person)**, and a virtual presentation on **May 7, 2025**. More details on the upcoming PICs, and the corresponding engagement activities, can be found on the project web page: www.pickering.ca/PickeringForward.

How to get involved

1. Participate in one of the public information centres on **May 6, 2025 (in-person)** or **May 7, 2025 (virtual)**
2. View the background information on our web page – Pickering.ca/PickeringForward
3. Complete the online survey – Pickering.ca/PickeringForward
4. Send your questions/comments to us – PickeringForward@Pickering.ca

1.0 What is a Complete Community?

Before we dive into the discussion paper, we must understand what is a complete community and how the various community elements contribute to creating a community that is desirable for all.

The concept of community communities is not new to urban planning. This approach is reflected in planning policies of the Province and many municipalities, including Pickering.

Complete communities allow residents to meet most of their daily needs within a short walk, bike ride, or public transit trip. This is not intended to restrict automobile usage but rather increase the mobility choices available. Additionally, planning compact communities maximizes the efficient delivery of municipal services, reduces urban sprawl, and supports healthy lifestyle choices.

Complete communities accommodate people of all ages, abilities, incomes, and backgrounds to live, work, learn, shop, and play within their communities. The key components of a healthy and complete community include the following:

- **Places to live** – A range of housing options for all ages, incomes, and abilities, including shared housing opportunities;
- **Places to learn, work and shop** – Close proximity to schools and public institutions, stores, services, and businesses;
- **Places to play and access nature** – An abundance of parks and open spaces, and access to community centres, recreation facilities, and libraries;
- **Places for cultural and heritage celebrations** – Opportunities for like-minded groups to gather, preserved cultural landscapes, heritage buildings and museums;
- **A well-connected and accessible transportation system** – Reliable transit, efficient road grid, as well as abundant active transportation routes and trails;
- **Environmental protection** – Protection of natural features including woodlots, wetlands, flood plains, and wildlife habitats;
- **Access to healthy and affordable food** – Support and protection for local food systems and food production; and
- **Essential services and infrastructure** – Including emergency services, waste collection, along with utilities, water and wastewater infrastructures.



Event at Esplanade Park



While there are many components to a complete community, this discussion paper will focus on the community elements and infrastructure, such as the transportation network, cultural heritage, parks and recreation, and community facilities. Other components, such as employment areas and the natural heritage system in Pickering, were discussed in previous discussion papers and are available on the Pickering Forward website (pickering.ca/pickeringforward). Additionally, the final discussion paper (available June 2025) will focus on housing and affordability.

We recognize that not all neighbourhoods will have the same needs. Amongst other things, the goal of complete communities is to create convenient access to daily needs, ideally within easy walking distance. For example, complete communities have a mix of land uses such as a convenience store, grocery store, school, and restaurants near to where people live. Larger facilities, such as hospitals, post-secondary institutions, or other major public facilities, with larger service areas, may be situated further away. However, these larger facilities should ideally be accessible by a well-connected transit network and active transportation network (i.e. walking and cycling) to accommodate residents of all ages and abilities.

Complete communities may look different in Pickering's urban and rural communities. In the urban areas, the higher concentration of people allows for more services to be located close to a greater number of people. Rural communities, like Pickering's hamlets, may have access to some, but not all, of the services that are needed to meet their daily needs within their immediate area. It is not uncommon for residents of hamlets to travel further distances to meet their daily needs.



Seaton Community

- 1. *What neighbourhoods in Pickering offer the best examples of complete communities?***
- 2. *What components of a complete community (amenities, services, or infrastructure) are needed in your neighbourhood?***

2.0 Policies and Initiatives Supporting Complete Communities

The concept of complete communities is a best practice amongst Provincial, Regional, and local policies. The Province recognizes and highlights the importance of planning for complete communities as a strategic direction to creating vibrant and thriving communities, that help to optimize investments in infrastructure.

The Official Plan is required to conform with the Provincial Planning Act, the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, and all applicable Provincial plans. The sections below highlight these Provincial policies along with the current city initiatives that assist Pickering in becoming a more complete community.

Planning Act

The Planning Act outlines the planning process, integrates matters of Provincial interest into municipal planning decisions, and encourages coordination among various interests.

In the process of carrying out their responsibilities under the Planning Act, municipalities shall have regard for matters of Provincial interest identified in the act. Many, if not all, of the matters of Provincial interest are aligned with the components of complete communities including:

- the orderly development of safe and healthy communities and the accessibility for persons with disabilities to all facilities, services and other matters regulated by the Act;
- the adequate provision and distribution of educational, health, social, cultural and recreational facilities;
- the adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing;
- the adequate provision of employment opportunities;
- the protection of ecological systems, including natural areas, features and functions; and
- the promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be oriented to pedestrians.

Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

The Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS) sets the foundation for land use planning in the province. The PPS provides directions on matters such as managing growth and new development, housing, economic development, natural heritage, agriculture, mineral aggregates, water and natural and human-made hazards.

Complete communities are defined by the PPS as follows:

“Places such as mixed-use neighbourhoods or other areas within cities, towns, and settlement areas that offer and support opportunities for equitable access to many necessities for daily



living for people of all ages and abilities, including an appropriate mix of jobs, a full range of housing, transportation options, public service facilities, local stores and services. Complete communities are inclusive and may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts to meet the diverse needs of their populations.”

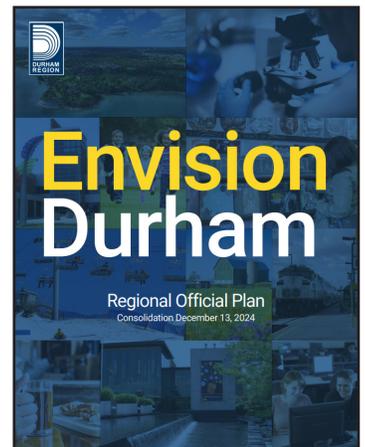
The PPS directs municipalities to support the achievement of complete communities through accommodating an appropriate range of housing options, transportation choices, employment, parks and open spaces, community and public service facilities, and other institutional uses. The PPS also emphasizes accessibility and social equity for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes to allow various groups of people to have full participation in society.

Envision Durham

Envision Durham, the new Regional Official Plan that came into effect on September 3, 2024, provides direction on how growth is expected to occur to 2051. To accommodate the needs of the projected growth, Envision Durham provides policies that:

- Promote healthy, sustainable, complete communities for the enjoyment of present and future residents;
- Promote high-quality urban design and pedestrian-friendly communities that are safe, comfortable and conducive to active transportation;
- Respond to the needs of an aging population by providing opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities to actively age in place;
- Include age-friendly design considerations;
- Promote the conservation, protection and enhancement of Durham’s built and cultural heritage resources and landscapes;
- Ensure an adequate supply of housing units and land to accommodate growth in Durham;
- Promote a culture of conservation across the region’s natural and built environments; and
- Support new development that provides an attractive, well-designed, comfortable and sustainable public realm that incorporates natural landscapes and features;

On January 1, 2025, planning functions were removed from the Region of Durham and Envision Durham became a responsibility of all lower tier municipalities in Durham Region, including Pickering. As a result, Envision Durham now exists alongside Pickering’s Official Plan.



City Initiatives

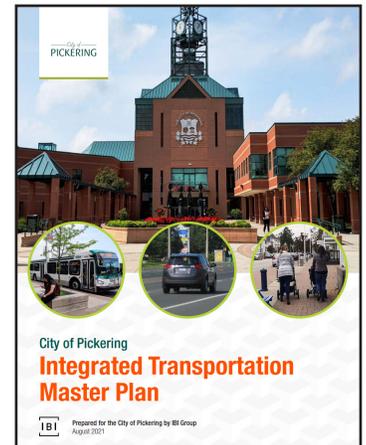
The Official Plan already contains numerous policies designed to help Pickering grow into a complete community. In addition, Pickering has undertaken various initiatives to ensure that the City is adequately prepared to address the needs of a growing population, and to mitigate issues that come with significant growth and intensification. The goal of these initiatives is to create an inclusive community that promotes social interaction, and fosters community health and individual wellbeing.

This section will highlight some of the key initiatives that guide City investments in various complete community components, such as transportation, parks and recreation, and culture.

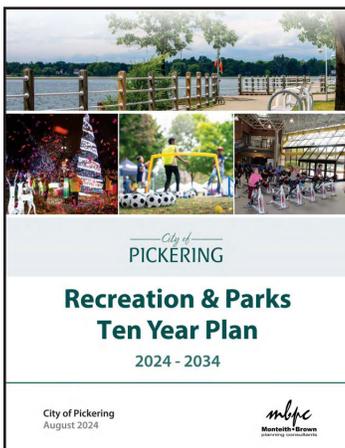
Integrated Transportation Master Plan

The Integrated Transportation Master Plan (ITMP) is a long-range planning document with the goal of addressing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, motorists, and goods movement. It uses a complete street approach in planning for the city's transportation needs, which we will delve into detail in the later sections. The plan also provides supporting strategies to further improve access to transit, transportation demand management, parking management, and access management.

More information on the ITMP can be found on our website at Pickering.ca/ITMP.



Recreation and Parks Ten Year Plan



In September 2024, Pickering Council approved the Recreation and Parks Ten Year Plan (RPTYTP). The RPTYTP is a long-range planning study for the City of Pickering's recreation, parks, arts & culture facilities, programs and services. The RPTYTP provides direction and guidance on how best to manage current and future land needs for parks and other recreational/cultural/arts facilities. It also identifies service improvements and future infrastructure that will be needed to support our growing community.

The RPTYTP also examined recent trends and legislative changes impacting parkland acquisition and provided various recommendations that can be implemented through the Official Plan Review.

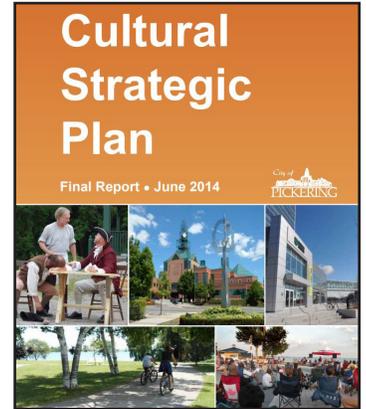
More information on the Recreation and Parks Ten Year Plan can be found on our website at Pickering.ca/RPTenYearPlan.



Cultural Strategic Plan

For the past 10 years, Pickering's Cultural Strategic Plan (CSP) has set the vision for arts, culture and heritage in the City. It identifies strategic directions for public policy, investment, partnerships and programs. The CSP defines Pickering's cultural identity, maps out the city's cultural assets and resources, and outlines a comprehensive and strategic approach to achieve the City's vision for culture. Supplemental to the CSP, the Official Plan will include policies that will protect and potentially enhance the City's cultural resources.

More information on the CSP can be found on our website at Pickering.ca/CSP.



Cultural Fusion 2023

3.0 Transportation

Pickering’s transportation system is an integrated component in delivering complete communities within the city. The City’s current policies encourage a well-connected network of transportation corridors that accommodate various modes of travel. This includes driving, walking, cycling, and using transit.

Pickering is expected to experience significant growth to 2051. To accommodate the increasing travel demands, we must plan for a multi-modal transportation system that offers choice and maximizes connectivity.

The following section describes various aspects of the transportation system, and best practices, that contribute to a complete community.

A Complete Streets Approach

Our roads are used by many different users including drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and those who use mobility aids. As such, it is essential to consider all user experiences in the planning and design of our streets.

The goal of the complete streets approach is to make streets more accommodating to various road users and trip purposes. It considers people of all ages and abilities, as well as trips of varying lengths. Complete streets offer convenient, comfortable, and safe access to alternative modes of travel, like walking, cycling, and transit.



Figure 1: Illustration of a Complete Street (Source: City of Santa Fe)



The complete streets approach is not a new concept to the City, it has been incorporated in the planning work and urban design guidelines in the newer development areas, such as City Centre, Kingston Road Corridor, and Seaton. The Integrated Transportation Master Plan (ITMP) recognizes the benefits of complete streets and recommends it to be applied city-wide in all city processes that involves planning, design, and operation of roads.

The ITMP also recommends an area-wide approach when crafting complete streets policies to address different land use contexts (i.e. South Pickering Urban Area, Seaton Urban Area, and Rural Areas). Generally, the ITMP recommends the following strategies for consideration when developing complete streets policies:

- Encourage pedestrian connections between streets, shorter block lengths, and pedestrian facilities in new growth areas to improve neighbourhood connectivity and access to transit;
- Encourage street-oriented development in intensification areas to create a “sense of place”;
- Accommodate on-street parking in intensification areas, where feasible, accounting for transit and maintenance needs;
- Accommodate all road users on all streets;
- Improve wayfinding signage for pedestrians and cyclists to major destinations and transit stops/ stations;
- Develop a priority winter maintenance network for active transportation; and
- Review pavement marking and signage guidelines to enhance safety (high visibility crosswalks, cycling facility intersection markings, etc.).

3. *What would make Pickering more desirable for people to walk to meet their daily needs?*

4. *What improvements would make Pickering safer for cyclists?*

5. *What barriers need to be removed to increase accessibility for people with mobility constraints to travel through their neighbourhood?*



Example of a Complete Street (Source: Urban Strategies)



Kingston Road and Brock Road Intersection

Road Network

The City of Pickering has a well-developed grid of arterial, collector, and local roads, anchored by Provincial freeways and Regional arterial roads. These road types have different sizes and are designed to carry different volumes of traffic. Highways 401, 407, and 7 run east-west in Pickering and predominantly serve inter-regional travel over longer distances. Regional roads form a large grid of major arterial roads across the city and are designed to carry large volumes of traffic across the city and into adjacent municipalities. Municipal roads consist of arterial, collector, and local roads that carry local traffic.

Appendix 1 illustrates the road network in Pickering by class and jurisdiction (municipal, Regional, or Provincial). Each of these roads is classified by their size and the amount of traffic that they will carry.

Several roads in Pickering form a part of the Regional Strategic Goods Movement Network identified by the Region of Durham. These roads include Provincial highways (401, 407 and 7), and Regional roads such as Brock Road, Taunton Road, Bayly Street, and Lake Ridge Road.

The ITMP further refines Pickering's goods movement network with proposed local connections along Whites Road and future Whites Road, Bayly Street, Squires Beach Road and Sandy Beach Road. Appendix 2 provides a snapshot of the proposed goods movement network for the city.

The Official Plan will need to be updated to reflect any revisions to the road hierarchy and network, and the good movement network, as informed by the ITMP and Envision Durham.





Trucks on the road

Conflicts between Goods Movement Corridor and Residential Uses

Pickering City Centre and the Kingston Road Corridor, are identified as Strategic Growth Areas in Provincial and Regional policies. As discussed in the Growth Management and Urban Structure discussion paper, these areas are the focus for growth within the city for more compact built forms, including intensification and higher-density, mixed-use developments. This may cause conflicts between residential and commercial needs along the corridor or within the development.

Below are a few best practices that are highlighted in the ITMP to manage future freight needs and reduce conflicts between goods movements and residential needs in dense mixed-use urban areas:

- New developments should be designed with off-street loading facilities that accommodates the typical vehicles that serves the development;
- Provide on-street loading bays in areas that cannot accommodate off-street loading, with time restrictions to avoid peak hours;
- Establish delivery areas where goods can be transferred to nearby locations using alternative transport methods, such as trolleys, bikes, etc.;
- Support night time deliveries for non-residential locations to avoid traffic and congestion during peak hours; and
- Encourage developers to adopt noise, vibration, and traffic mitigation measures along high volume goods movement corridors.

6. What is the best way to manage the competing needs of residential and commercial traffic on busy roadways?

Transit Services in Pickering

Transit services within the City of Pickering are provided by two operators: Durham Region Transit (DRT) and Metrolinx (GO Transit).

DRT provides bus services in Pickering and throughout the Region of Durham. In Pickering, Highway 2 (Kingston Road) is identified for future rapid transit, and frequent services are provided on Whites Road, Brock Road, Bayly Street and Taunton Road.

GO Transit, a division of Metrolinx, operates the interregional rail and bus network that connects Pickering to the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) and beyond. Metrolinx's 2041 Regional Transportation Plan identified several priority bus corridors in Pickering by 2041, such as Highway 7, Taunton Road, Whites Road, and Brock Road. The GO expansion and electrification of its rail lines is currently underway and will provide Pickering with 15-minute, two-way, all-day rail service.

Furthermore, Metrolinx recently completed the planning and design work for the Durham-Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit (DSBRT) project. The Region of Durham has committed to the construction of phase 1 of the DSBRT through Pickering, Ajax and Whitby starting in 2025.

The Official Plan review will consider the strengthening or inclusion of policies in support of an integrated and accessible public transit system.

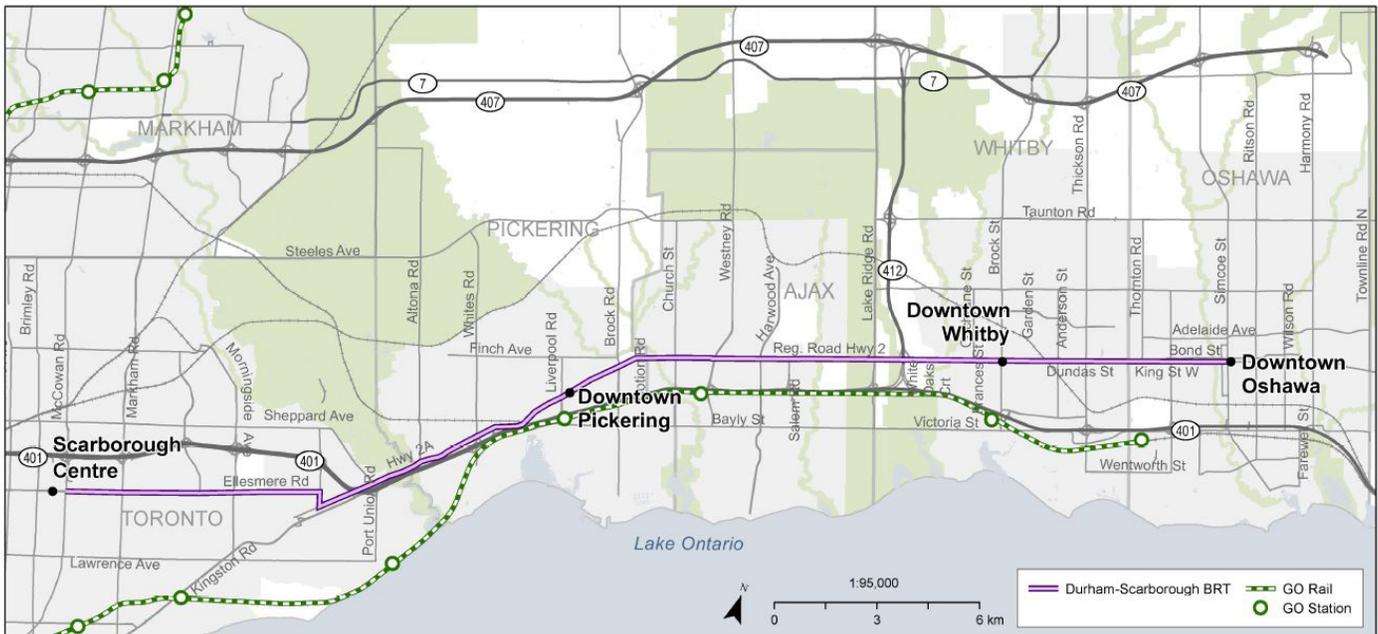


Figure 2: Map of the Durham Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit (Source: Region of Durham)



Active Transportation

Active transportation refers to the movement of people and goods using primarily human-powered modes. Active transportation generally refers to walking (including the use of mobility devices) and cycling but would also include rollerblading, riding a skateboard or kick scooter, e-bikes and e-scooters.

Active transportation has numerous community benefits, including:

- **Health Benefits** – Reducing the risk of sedentary lifestyle-related diseases;
- **Environmental Benefits** – Walking and cycling are emission-free; and
- **Economic Benefits** – An affordable transportation option for those without access to a vehicle. Increased foot traffic also encourages spending at local businesses.

Cycling Network

Cycling facilities within Pickering have mainly been constructed in a piecemeal manner, resulting in many gaps within the existing network. The Pickering Integrated Transportation Master Plan and Durham Region Cycling Plan have created a proposed cycling network locally and regionally (see Figure 3). A detailed breakdown of the cycling network by facility type is provided in Appendix 3. The Official Plan will need to be updated to reflect the cycling network of both plans.



Cycling in Nautical Village

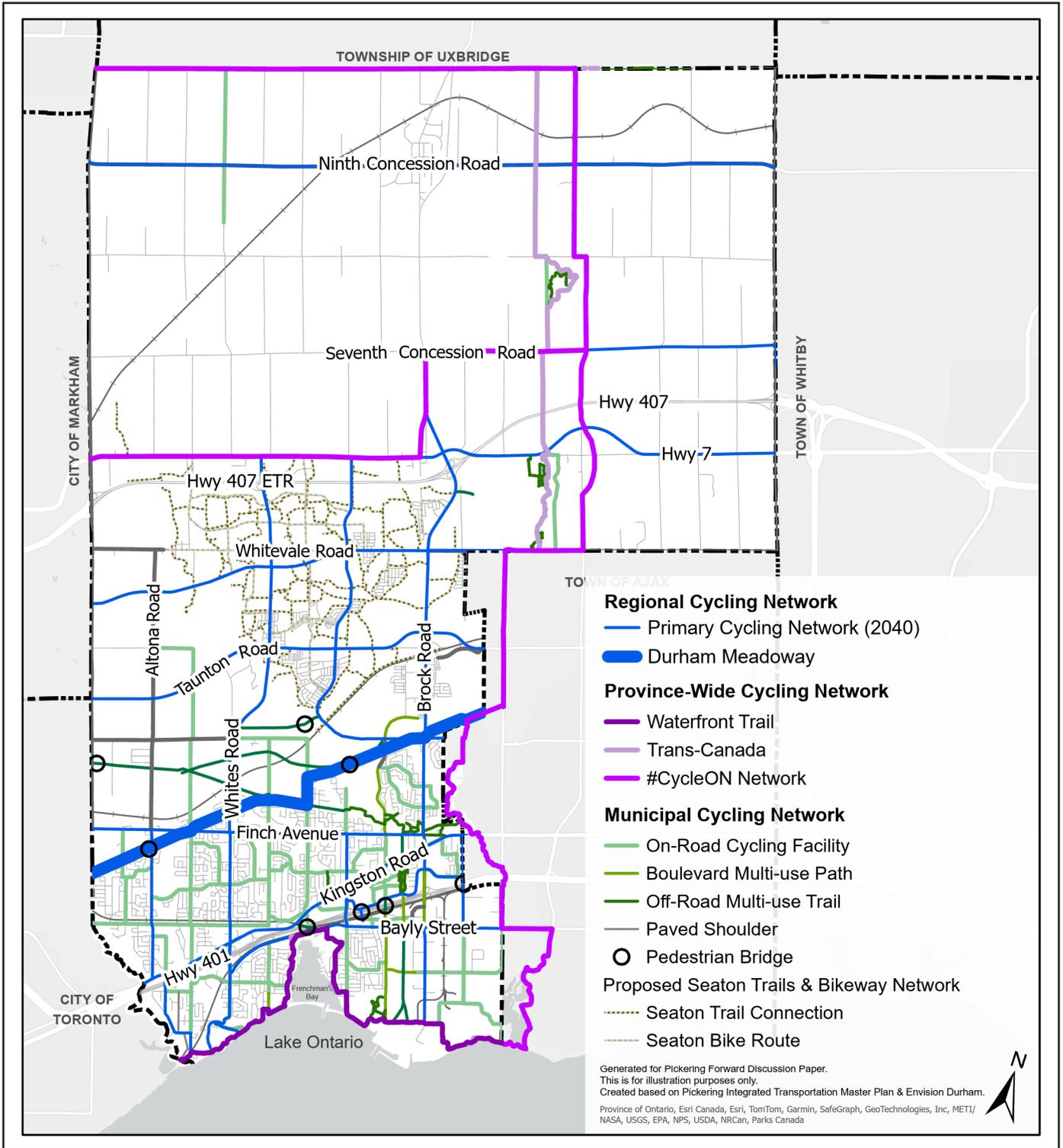


Figure 3: Proposed Cycling Network within Pickering based on Municipal and Regional Plans



Legislative Change

In December 2024, the Province passed Bill 212 which requires municipalities to obtain the Minister's approval to construct, install, or mark new bicycle lanes that would reduce the number of marked lanes available for travel by automobiles.

While the recent legislative changes have added an additional layer of approval to the planning of cycling infrastructure, the shift to more active transportation remains a priority when planning for transportation, particularly in intensification areas.

Pedestrian Network

The most common form of active transportation is walking. It is a practical and healthy way of accessing community services and amenities in short distances. It also promotes opportunities for social interaction with fellow residents and local businesses, contributing to a vibrant, economically vital and safe community.

The current pedestrian network is well-developed within most of Pickering's urban areas. Noticeable exceptions are along stretches of Kingston Road. In the developing area of Seaton, sidewalks are planned or under construction. The rural parts of Pickering contain very few sidewalks. However, paved shoulders along rural roads serve as a secondary pedestrian facility in rural areas.

Additionally, the city also has a series of recreational trails and multi-use paths that are suitable for both walking and cycling. Popular trails include the Pickering Waterfront Trail that provides east-west connections to Toronto and Ajax, and the Trans-Canada Trail that provides north-south connections through Ajax from the waterfront trail north to Uxbridge. The Seaton Urban Area also includes a number of proposed recreational trails and trailheads to provide Seaton residents with convenient access to our natural heritage system.

As Pickering shifts to more urban lifestyles, particularly within the intensification areas, it is essential we continue to invest in pedestrian facilities and recreation trails as we grow to increase the walkability of our neighbourhoods and provide our residents with access to nature.

7. What neighbourhoods would you point to as examples of where it is easy to use active transportation (walking, cycling, etc.) to reach most daily destinations?

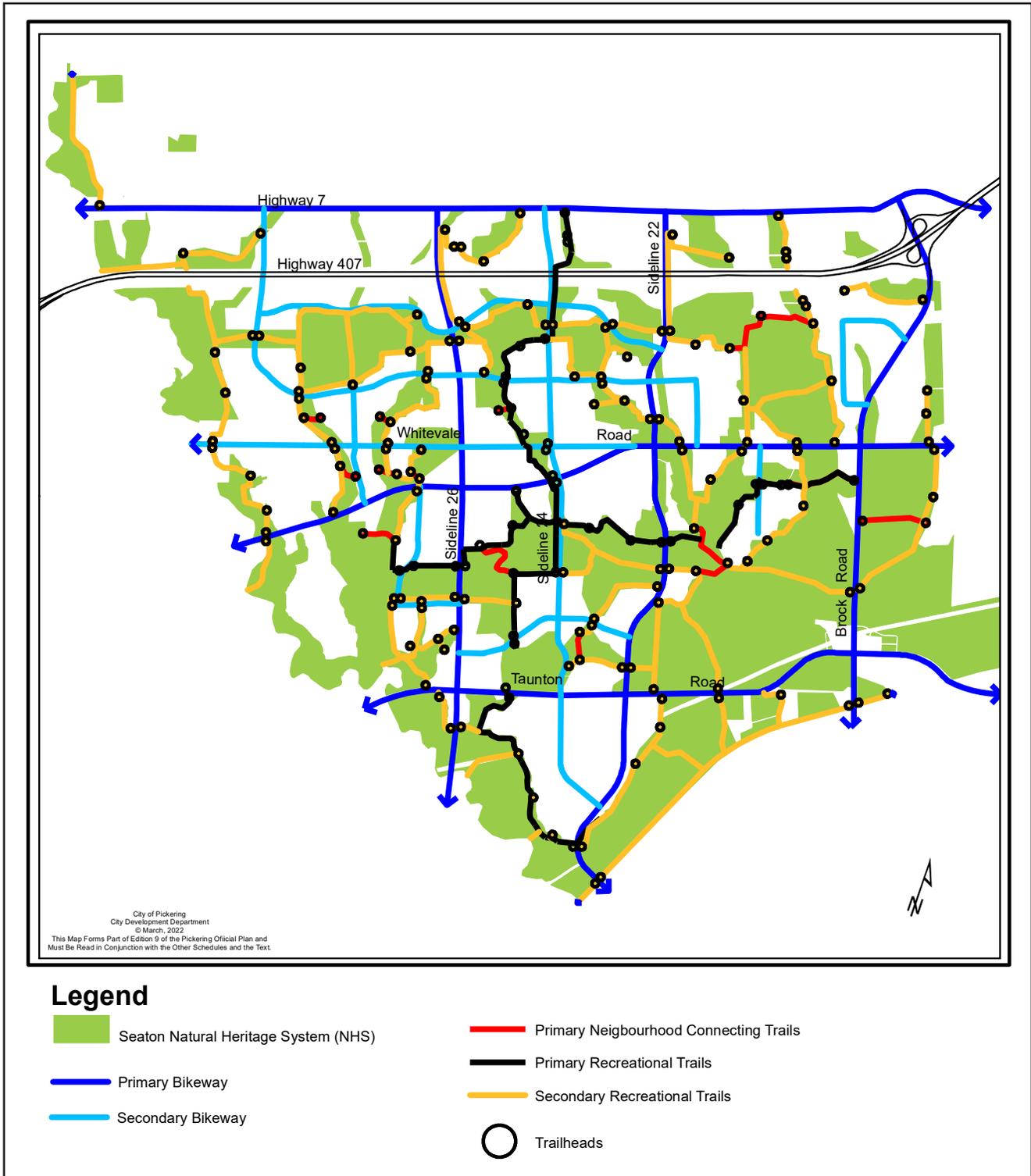


Figure 4: Seaton Urban Area Trail Map in the Official Plan Schedule



Parking Management

The majority of Pickering's parking supply is provided on private property. Public parking is provided near City facilities and some limited on-street parking locations within the City Centre. As the City continues to grow, it is important to consider the parking management strategies that will accommodate the growing residential and employment parking demands.

Legislative Change

In December 2024, the Province passed Bill 212 which requires municipalities to obtain the Minister's approval to construct, install, or mark new bicycle lanes that would reduce the number of marked lanes available for travel by automobiles.

Strategic growth areas (SGAs) in Pickering, such as Pickering City Centre and Kingston Road Corridor, are expected to receive significant growth and the highest densities within the City. SGAs are typically located near high order transit infrastructure, such as the GO Train station and along Bus Rapid Transit lines.

A large portion of the Pickering City Centre is designated as the Pickering Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA), and will not be subject to minimum automobile parking requirements. The City may only require bicycle parking for new developments in the PMTSA. The amount of automobile parking provided will be up to each developer.

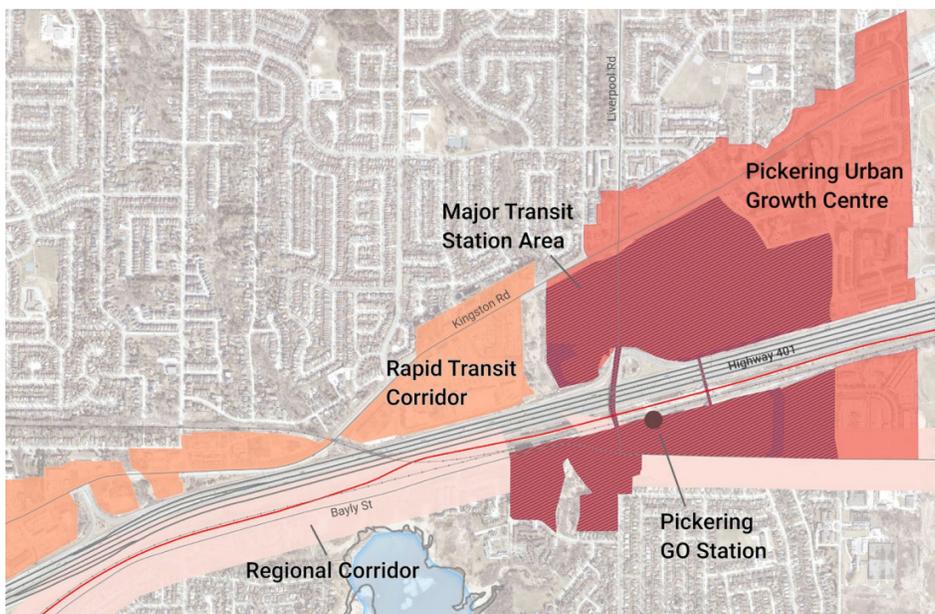


Figure 5: Map of the Pickering PMTSA and surrounding areas

The intent of the recent legislative change is to promote more efficient land use, reduce reliance on cars and encourage the use of public transportation within areas well-served by rapid transit. However, Pickering remains a relatively suburban city, and the lack of adequate parking may result in overflow parking onto nearby streets and neighbourhoods for residents and visitors travelling into high density areas.



To adequately manage parking demands in all areas of the city, the following best practices can be considered through the Official Plan Review or other city-initiatives:

- Establish a city parking authority to manage on-street and lot parking in intensification areas and popular destinations, like City Centre, Kingston Road Corridor, and the waterfront;
- Require on-site bicycle parking in all high-density residential, commercial and major industrial buildings in the urban area;
- Promote the consolidation of off-street parking in intensification areas; and
- Establish residential on-street parking programs in growing neighbourhoods, such as Duffin Heights and Seaton.

8. What best practices would be suitable to manage parking demands in Pickering?



Kingston Road looking west



4.0 Cultural Heritage

As Pickering evolves over the next twenty-five years, it is important that the community maintain a sense of continuity with the past and acknowledges the emerging cultures within the City. This involves identifying, protecting, and promoting cultural heritage resources in the municipality, and fostering an environment where various cultures and ethnic groups can express themselves.

Cultural Planning

Cultural planning is a “place-based” approach to planning and development that maps out the community’s cultural resources to develop a plan to manage those resources. It is a strategic and integrated approach to planning, enhancing, and preserving cultural resources to support economic and community development to help a community achieve its civic goals.

Pickering has a unique culture identity that is influenced by its people, history, heritage, and arts. Acknowledging and enhancing these cultural elements will create a strong sense of identity and belonging within our community.

The Cultural Strategic Plan established a vision that focuses on the following:

- Celebrating our cultural diversity, heritage and art;
- Sustaining our natural environment;
- Fostering a creative economy; and
- Strengthening our vibrant neighbourhoods.

The Official Plan Review has the opportunity to reinforce some of the goals in the Cultural Strategic Plan through prioritizing Pickering’s cultural identity and heritage in its policies.

9. *What part of Pickering should be recognized as having cultural heritage value?*



Celebrating various cultures in Pickering at the 2023 Cultural Fusion

Pickering's History

Pickering has had many identities over its lifetime, from early Indigenous communities, to the arrival of European colonizers and most recently an influx of international migration. Historically, the primordial forests of Pickering provided lumber which fed the mills. These mills helped serve as the foundations for villages and hamlets throughout Pickering. Soon after, the forests gave way to grain and livestock farming which was supported by nautical shipping based at Fairport on Frenchman's Bay. As the community grew, subsistence farming gave way to urbanization and more intensive farmland practices. After World War II the City experienced an incredible amount of growth which led to the creation of the Pickering City Centre which today includes the Pickering Civic Centre, the Chestnut Hill Recreational Centre, the Pickering Mall and numerous surrounding developments.

Some of the important areas in Pickering that have historic or cultural heritage value include:

- the Whitevale Heritage Conservation District;
- the rural hamlets including Claremont, Green River, Brougham, Kinsale, and Greenwood;
- the City's agricultural history which forms cultural heritage landscapes;
- the Pickering Museum Village; and
- Frenchman's Bay and Fairport.



Areas of significant historic or cultural heritage value to Pickering. Whitevale school (Top-left). Agricultural landscape (Top-right). Frenchman's Bay (Bottom-left). Redman House in Pickering Museum Village (Bottom-right)



Areas and Properties of Heritage Significance

To preserve and protect the city's heritage, the Ontario Heritage Act gives municipalities the power to list and designate properties of cultural heritage value or interest with its Municipal Heritage Register, as well as designating a distinct area as a Heritage Conservation District.

Properties protected under the Ontario Heritage Act can fall under the following categories:

- **Listed properties** – Properties that have been identified by the municipality as having cultural heritage value or interest but have not been legally designated. Council approval is required prior to the demolition of these buildings.
- **Designated properties** – Heritage properties that have been legally designated by a municipal by-law, which is registered on title to the property. Once designated, Council approval and a heritage permit will be required to alter or demolish the designated property/feature.
- **Heritage Conservation District** – A geographically defined area within a municipality that is noted for its distinct heritage character. This could be based on the collection of buildings, patterns of historical development, or other streetscape features, such as trees, open spaces, vista, or typography.

Legislative Change

In 2022, the Province added a “Designate or Lose it” provision to the Ontario Heritage Act through Bill 23. Municipalities are now required to remove listed properties from the Municipal Heritage Register if a notice of intention to designate the property is not given within 2 years of listing the property. Municipalities were given until January 1, 2025 to designate the existing listed properties on their registers.

In 2024, the province passed Bill 200, which provided municipalities additional time to determine whether to designate the listed properties on their register. It also restricted municipalities from relisting a non-designated property for five years after it is removed from a heritage register.

At this time, the City of Pickering will have until January 1, 2027 to designate the listed properties within the [Municipal Heritage Register](#).

10. Aside from maintaining heritage buildings, what should the protection of cultural heritage include?

11. What is the best way to preserve buildings with significant architectural and/or cultural value that are located in areas being redeveloped?

5.0 Parks and Recreation

Parks and open spaces have always been a part of the fabric of our neighbourhoods. In recent years, the pattern of growth in Pickering has shifted towards creating neighbourhoods with smaller lots and apartment developments within the City Centre and along our major corridors, such as Kingston Road. With new residents having less access to private yards and green space, the need for public parks and community facilities has become even more important.

Legislative Change

In October 2022, Bill 23 reduced the amount of growth-acquired parkland or payment-in-lieu of parkland municipalities can receive through the development approval process.

Lands Suitable for Parkland

The lands given to the City as parkland must be suitable for parks or other recreational uses. Therefore, the City does not accept the following as parkland:

- natural heritage features;
- slopes and valley lands;
- contaminated lands; and
- lands encumbered by underground structures, infrastructure or easements (with the exception of the City Centre).

Since natural heritage features, slopes, and valley lands are not usable for development, these lands are commonly conveyed to municipalities or conservation authorities at no charge as a condition of approval. Once in public ownership, these lands are then protected in perpetuity. Although a portion of these lands may be used to accommodate a pedestrian or multi-use trail, they are not suitable for typical park programming.



Don Beer Memorial Park

12. Where are there opportunities to create better park and trail connectivity within the City?



Parks Hierarchy

The City needs to have a variety of parks and facilities to meet different recreational needs. The Recreation and Parks Ten-Year Plan recommends that the City update its parkland hierarchy as part of the Official Plan update. This includes distinguishing between different types of parkland and updating the policies for existing park designations as appropriate. Different sized parks meet various recreational needs throughout the City. A description of the proposed park hierarchy is included in Appendix 4.

13. Should the City prioritize the creation of a few, large-sized parks or several, smaller-sized parks?

Strata Parks and POPS

In areas of the City that are being redeveloped with high-density apartments, it is increasingly difficult to provide traditional parks to meet the needs of these new residents. This is due to two factors:

- the modest parcels of land being developed have limited area to accommodate parks; and
- the requirements in the Planning Act that have significantly limited the amount of park space that developers must provide.

Some alternative ways of providing new parkland and park spaces are strata parks and POPS (privately-owned, publicly-accessible spaces). Strata parks are parcels of land where the City owns the surface, while the developer or condominium corporation owns the space below grade (typically used for underground parking or other infrastructure). POPS are park spaces and plazas on private property that are publicly accessible through legal agreements between the property owner and the City. The City has already begun approving these new park models to maximize the amount of park space available within the City. The Official Plan Review will help articulate the scenarios that qualify for the use of non-traditional parks such as Strata Parks and POPS. For more information on Strata Parks and POPS, see Appendix 5.



Commerce Court POPS in Toronto (Source: QuadReal)



5.0 Community Facilities

In addition to the elements already listed above, a complete community comprises many other elements that meet the daily and ongoing needs of those who live there. Of these elements, only libraries, recreation centres, and fire halls are directly in the City’s control to plan and construct. The Official Plan Review will strengthen the existing policy framework to encourage continued collaboration between the City and other levels of government to ensure that the location and timing of community infrastructure supports the creation of complete communities.

The Province, Region of Durham and the City of Pickering, look to the Official Plan for guidance on how the community will grow when planning the need for and location of their public service facilities.

Schools

The City reserves locations for schools in new neighbourhoods. It is up to the Province to provide funding to the respective school boards for these schools to be built. Unfortunately, it is often the case that the homes in the neighbourhood must be built before the justification can be made for the school to be funded. In the meantime, students in new neighbourhoods are bussed to existing schools, and sometimes accommodated in portable classrooms, until a new school is built.

School boards rely on the growth forecasts and the new neighbourhoods identified in the Official Plan, when planning new schools. Over the next 25 years, a significant amount of residential intensification is expected to occur within the City Centre and along the Kingston Road Corridor. The City will continue to work with School boards to reevaluate the size, format and location of new schools to accommodate this growth.

Hospitals

Public hospitals are independent corporations that are funded by the Province. As a result, cities are reliant on the Province to decide where new hospitals are built.

The new Jerry Coughlan Health & Wellness Centre opened in Pickering in Spring 2024. This medical hub performs surgical procedures, physician training, and mental health assistance among other services.

In August, 2024, the Province announced plans for a new hospital to be built in Whitby. Additionally, Lakeridge Health announced in early 2025 the need to locate a new hospital in Pickering to function as a comprehensive rehabilitation/ post-acute care centre.



Jerry Coughlan Health & Wellness Centre



Places Of Worship

Faith groups play an important role in unifying, supporting, and encouraging people. As a result, places of worship contribute to the creation of complete communities.

Historically, places of worship were constructed in prominent locations in the centre of the community. As the cost and availability of land has increased over time, new places of worship have sought more affordable locations to buy or rent either on the periphery of the community, within schools, or within employment areas.

Provided that they meet the criteria for appropriate development (parking requirements, safe traffic flow, noise and light mitigation) places of worship are encouraged to locate throughout the City, including in all residential neighbourhoods, and along mixed-use corridors such as Brock Road and Kingston Road.

In the recent past, new places of worship have been established in employment areas where land and rents were cheaper than residential and commercial areas. Recent policy changes prohibit new places of worship from locating in employment areas. The Official Plan Review will consider policies that promote the inclusion of places of worship in new residential and mixed-use areas.



Masjid Usman (Pickering Islamic Centre)

Libraries and Recreation Centres

Libraries and recreations centres are planned based on growth. The Official Plan provides the basis for planning of these facilities in terms of population targets within a neighbourhood, as well as enabling policies to support a complete community.

Public libraries within the city are planned by the Pickering Public Library Board, which is informed by the Pickering Public Library Facilities Plan. Pickering Public Library currently provides services through three locations within the city. According to the Pickering Public Library Facilities Plan (2023 Update) an additional library branch, of approximately 23,500 square feet, will be required for a future population above 150,000 residents. The proposed Seaton Recreation Complex & Library will address this need.



Seaton Recreation Complex & Library Public Engagement

In September 2024, the City approved the Recreation and Parks Ten Year Plan. The Plan provides direction and guidance on how to manage current needs and identifies service improvements and future infrastructure needs to support our growing community, which includes new recreation centres. A new Seaton Recreation Complex & Library will provide a variety of services including a pool, gymnasium, fitness centre, and two ice pads.

Emergency Services

Police Services and Paramedic Services are provided by the Region of Durham while Fire Services are provided by local municipalities, such as Pickering.

In January 2025, Pickering Council approved a Community Risk Assessment and Fire Master Plan, which address fire protection services and emergency response needs over the next 7–10 years.

The City's newest fire hall was constructed at Brock Road and Zents Drive. Planning is underway for a new fire station to replace the existing Fire Station #5 located on Bayly Street.



New fire hall



6.0 Utilities

At the foundation of our City are the utilities that benefit us daily but often go unnoticed. They include:

- Railways;
- Electrical transformers and transmission corridors;
- Information and communication technology networks;
- Major natural gas pipelines;
- Energy generation facilities;
- Water treatment plants, reservoirs, pumping stations, and watermains;
- Sewage treatment facilities, pumping stations, and sewage pipes; and
- Waste and recycling depots.

Significant utilities (such as the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station, transmission corridors, highways, railways, etc.) are identified on the schedules to the Official Plan. The Official Plan Review will strengthen the existing policy framework to encourage collaboration between the City and utility providers to ensure that the location and timing of infrastructure supports the creation of complete communities.



Pickering Nuclear Generating Station (Source: OPG)

Conclusion

This is the fifth of the six discussion papers, which follow the focus areas of the City's Official Plan Review. Public input, together with ongoing policy analysis, will be integrated into the drafting of a new Official Plan and schedules.

This discussion paper has identified various elements of a complete community. These elements are provided for by local, Regional, and Provincial levels of government. Guided by Provincial policy, and informed by public priorities, the Official Plan provides the policy framework and mapping to coordinate how services and facilities come together to create a City that benefits everyone.

As Pickering continues to grow, it is essential that new homes and neighbourhoods are supported by a proportional increase of services and facilities to remain a vibrant and complete community that accommodates people of all ages and abilities.

Let's Connect!

How to get involved

1. Participate in one of the public information centres on **May 6, 2025 (in-person)** or **May 7, 2025 (virtual)**
2. View the background information on our web page – Pickering.ca/PickeringForward
3. Complete the online survey – Pickering.ca/PickeringForward
4. Send your questions/comments to us – PickeringForward@Pickering.ca



Celebration on the park



Next Step

The Official Plan Review is partly about sharing information with the public (education) but mostly, it is about receiving information from the public (community engagement). To assist with this process, the City will host six public information centres (PICs) from fall 2024 to early summer 2025.

Prior to each Public Information Centres (PIC), the City will release a discussion paper to describe the topic and “set the table” for a conversation with the public. The PICs will be based on the following themes and general schedule:

1. Community Vision and Priorities (September 2024)
2. Growth Management and Urban Structure (November 2024)
3. Natural Heritage, Hazards and Sustainability (February 2025)
4. Agriculture and Rural Areas (March 2025)
5. Community Elements and Infrastructure (May 2025)
6. Housing and Affordability (June 2025)

The PICs will provide an opportunity for more detailed conversations on how legislative changes, Pickering initiatives, and best practices will impact each of the listed topics. Further details on the six main themes are included in Appendix 6 at the end of this discussion paper. After each engagement session we will prepare a report that outlines the comments that have been received.

Those engagement reports, together with background research, will inform the draft policies that are brought forward in the proposed Official Plan.

Interested community members and stakeholders are encouraged to add their names to the contact list for the Official Plan Review by connecting with staff through the Pickering Forward web page and the e-mail listed below.

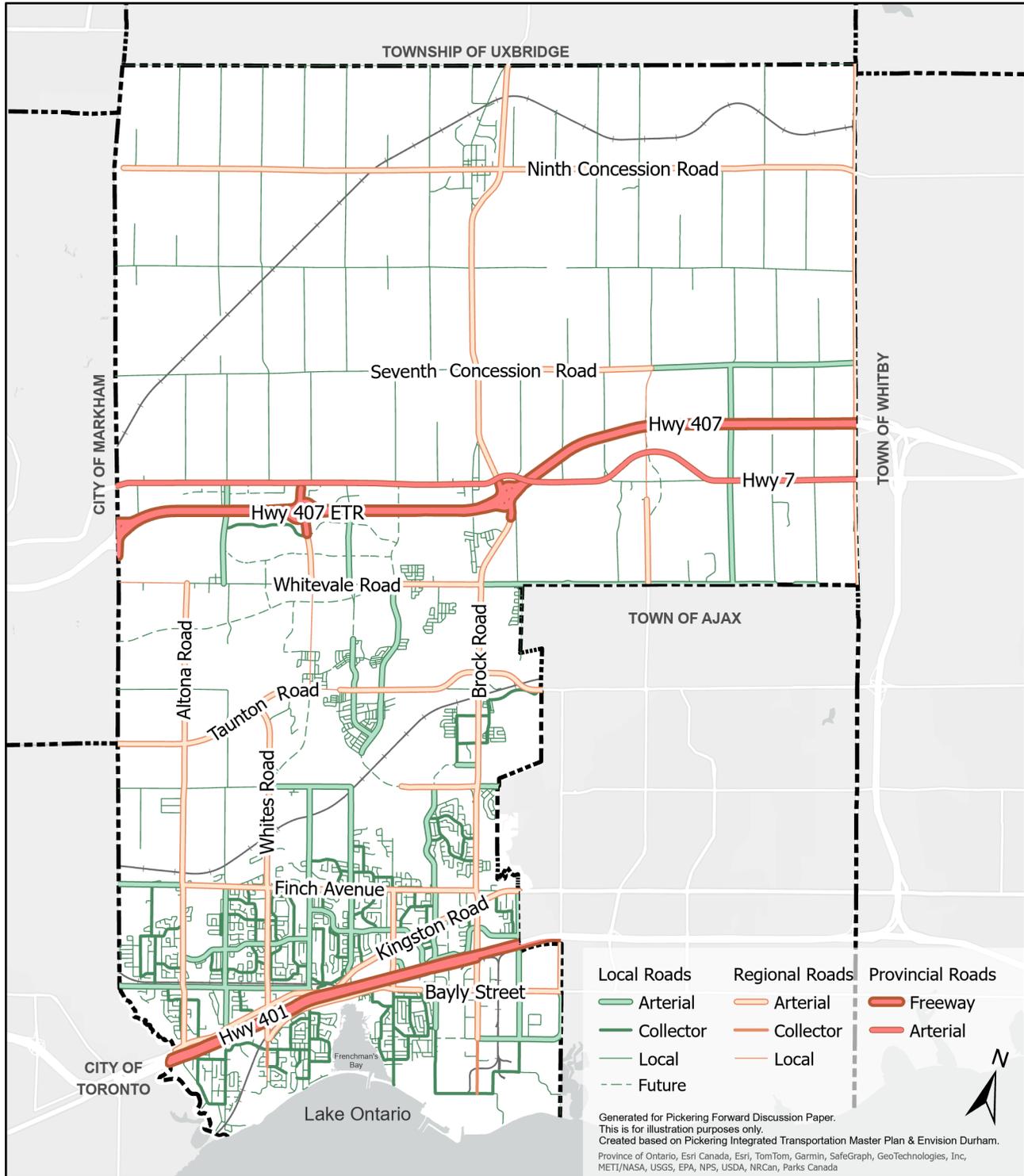
Connect with Us! We want to hear from you!

Pickering Forward Web Page: Pickering.ca/PickeringForward

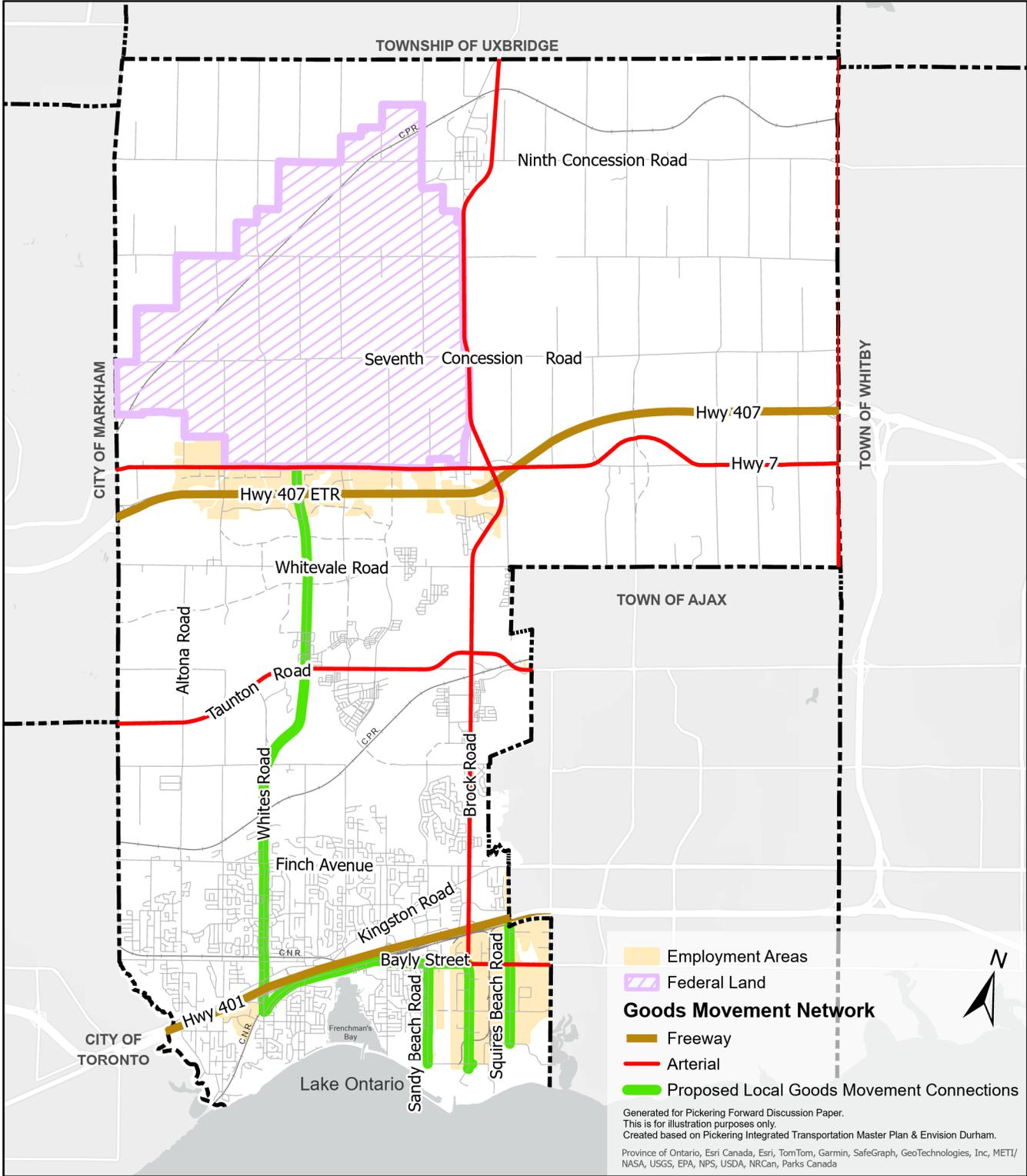
Pickering Forward E-mail: PickeringForward@Pickering.ca

Appendix

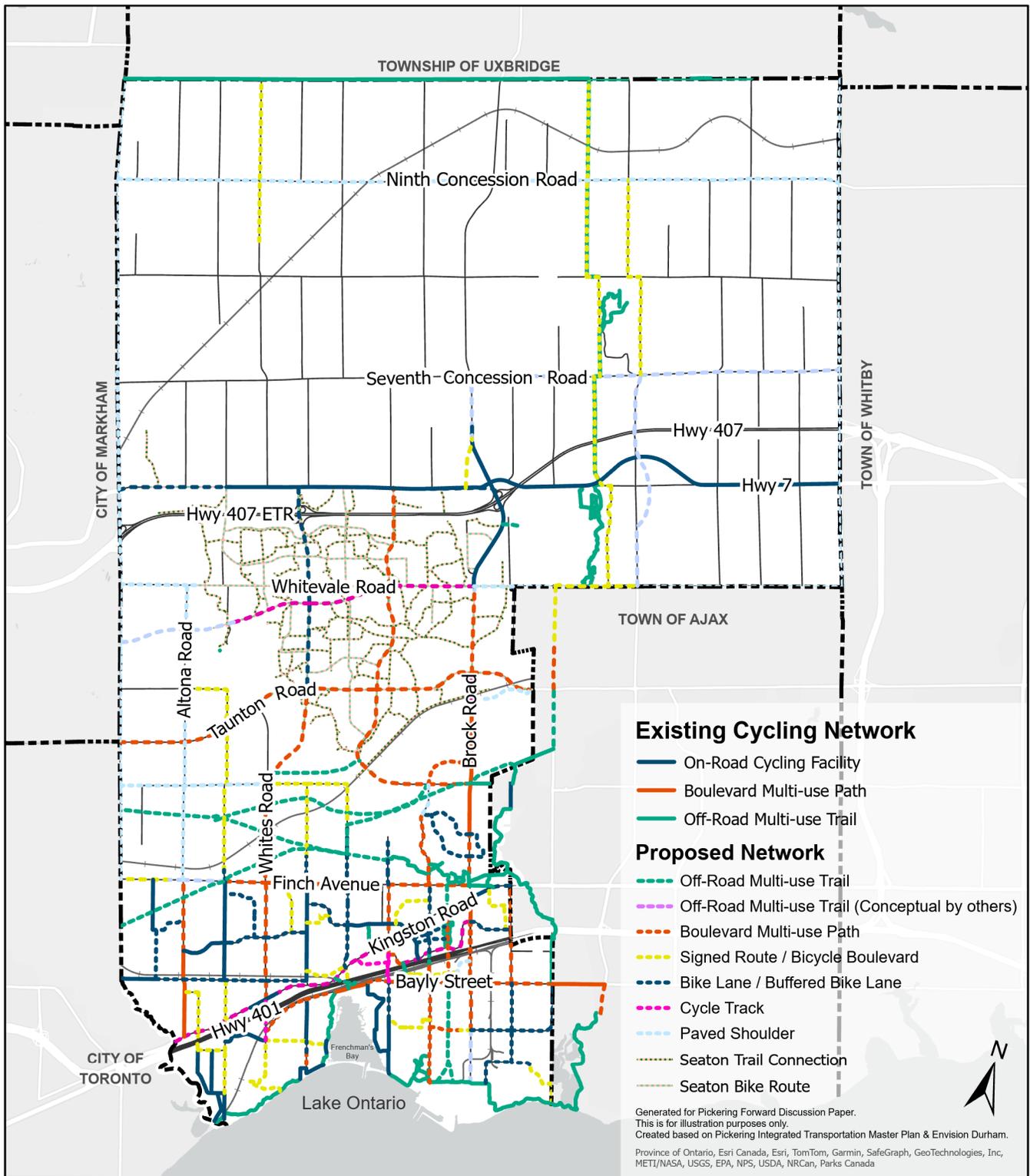
Appendix 1 – Pickering Road Network by Jurisdiction and Classification



Appendix 2 – Proposed Goods Movement Network through the Pickering Integrated Transportation Master Plan



Appendix 3 – Proposed Cycling Network by Facility Type



Appendix 4 – Recommended Park Hierarchy from the Parks and Recreation Ten Year Plan

The following framework outlines the recommended park hierarchy from the Recreation and Parks Ten-Year Plan (RPTYP):



District Parks / City-Wide Parks are larger-scale properties that provide for a range of illuminated recreational facilities and host city-wide events. An example would be Esplanade Park.



Community Parks provide for a range of illuminated recreational facilities as well as some non-illuminated mini-baseball and soccer fields servicing the adjacent residents. Combining community parks with recreation centres and libraries can reduce land needs through shared parking. An example would be Bay Ridges Kinsmen Park.



Neighbourhood Parks accommodate play areas as well as one non-illuminated mini-recreational field and possibly tennis or bocce courts, community mailboxes and passive areas. An example would be Creekside Park or Rick Johnson Memorial park.



Village Greens provide greenspace, informal play areas and space for community mailboxes and information boards. An example would be Foxtail Green.



Urban Parks are a new park type recommended by the RPTYP. Typically in higher density residential and/or mixed use areas. They include a balance of active and passive uses and are intended to serve both the local community and city-wide needs. Shown in the image to the left is Downtown Park in Redmond, Washington



Linear Parks are a new park type recommended by the RPTYP. These are corridors that contribute to placemaking, connectivity, safety, and enhanced streetscapes within higher density mixed use areas. They may be destinations unto themselves with outdoor seating, restaurant and retail frontages, and public art. Shown in the image to the left is Avenue René-Coty in Paris.



Appendix 5 – Strata Parks and POPS



Strata parks are parcels of land where the City owns the surface (with appropriate depth for plantings, and installation of structures and services), while the developer or condominium corporation owns the space below grade, typically used for underground parking, or other infrastructure.



Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) are park spaces and plazas on private property that are publicly accessible through legal agreements between the property owner and the City.

Staff recognize that there is a role for strata parks and POPS in certain high-density developments.

POPS have the ability to provide innovative and creative park spaces in areas where it is challenging to provide traditional parkland. The City has already accepted one strata park and one POPS in the City Centre at the Universal City development.



Appendix 6 – Engagement Topics

Community Vision and Priorities – Released September 2024

A review and refresh of the current Official Plan vision. A facilitated discussion of local priorities related to the Official Plan Review topics.

Growth Management and Urban Structure – Released November 2024

This includes a discussion of where and how Pickering will grow to 2051. This growth will occur within the City’s intensification areas (the City Centre and the Kingston Corridor / Brock Node), on currently undeveloped land, and also to a much smaller extent within existing neighbourhoods. This discussion also explores the changing nature of employment and how Pickering will plan to accommodate future jobs to maintain the vitality of the community.

Natural Heritage, Hazards, and Sustainability – Released January 2025

At the same time that we look at where the City will grow, we must also look at what the City must protect. It has always been important to ensure human safety, and avoid destruction to property from extreme weather events. Maintaining this priority is even more important in light of a changing climate. In conjunction with protecting the natural environment and avoiding natural hazards, it is also essential that new development outside of these areas is sustainable and contributes to making our City more resilient and livable.

Agriculture and Rural Areas – Released March 2025

The majority of growth in Pickering is directed to occur within the City’s urban residential areas and mixed-use areas. Outside of this is the City’s rural areas, which include hamlets and the open space system. These areas, which include farmland and hamlets, contribute a number of vital functions, such as producing food and other crops, providing jobs, housing the rural community, and being the location for many of the City’s natural heritage features. Rural areas have unique needs that deserve distinct recognition.

Community Elements and Infrastructure

A successful community contains a variety of services and amenities that contribute to the quality of life, such as parks and community facilities. Successful communities are inviting and contribute to a “sense of place” that helps people connect to one another and have a shared sense of identity. One way this can be reflected is through the preservation of our cultural heritage. In order to function well, a successful community includes a combination of all of the elements that are often taken for granted, including safe transportation connections such as roads, sidewalks, and trails.

Housing and Affordability

The topic on everyone’s minds these days is housing affordability. Whether you are trying to purchase your first home, looking to downsize to a neighbourhood that is more walkable, or you are searching for an apartment, everyone needs a safe and comfortable place to live. That does not mean that future development will/should look the same as it has in the past. Challenges, like affordability, require a variety of solutions. One area that will be further explored is expanding housing options to serve people at all income levels and at all walks of life.



Appendix 7 – Official Plan Review Timeline

