

# PICKERING FORWARD



Planning tomorrow, together.



## Pickering Official Plan Review

Growth Management & Urban Structure  
Discussion Paper

November 2024

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

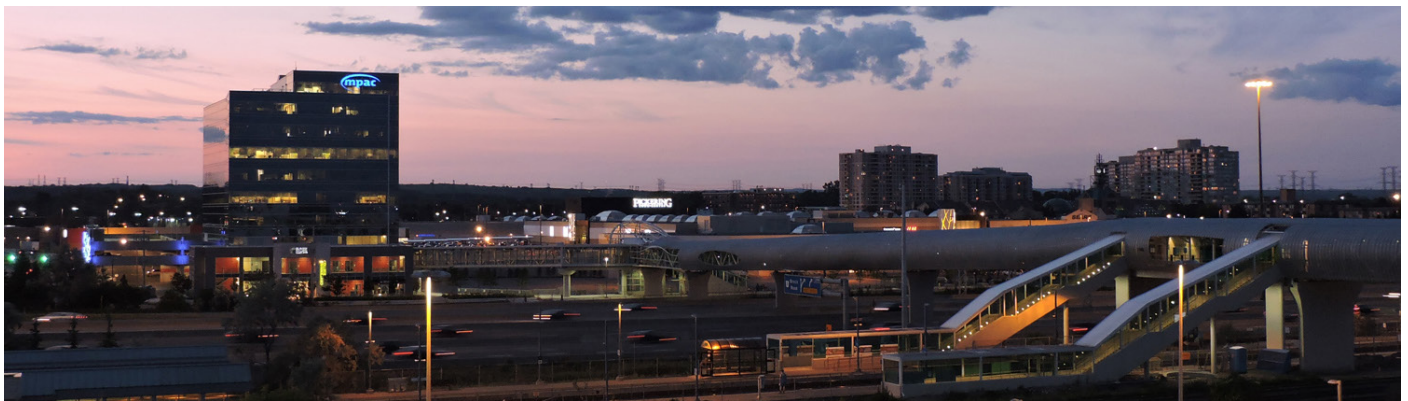
The City of Pickering is currently reviewing its Official Plan. The outcome of the Official Plan Review, known as Pickering Forward, will result in a plan to guide growth and development in Pickering to 2051.

The Official Plan is the City's long range, comprehensive planning document, that guides land use decision-making in the City. 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.

A major component of the Official Plan Review involves examining specific elements of the city in more detail, through engagement with Council, residents, and stakeholders. One of the main elements of the Official Plan Review is identifying how much Pickering is anticipated to grow, and where that growth will be accommodated within the city.

The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) region has seen significant growth in recent years, and that trend is expected to continue to 2051. The GTA is projected to add over 3.0 million residents by 2051, accounting for 47 per cent of Ontario's growth, from 7.4 million in 2023 to 10.4 million by 2051<sup>1</sup>. Looking at Durham Region, the growth rate is projected to be 44.7 per cent, which is slightly lower than the GTA growth rate indicated above but exceeds the projected Ontario growth rate of 41.4 per cent<sup>2</sup>.

Within Durham Region, Pickering is projected to have the highest annual growth rate of all the local municipalities within the region. Pickering's projected growth rate of 3.3 per cent annually is approximately three times the growth rate Pickering has experienced since 2006<sup>3</sup>. Pickering is projected to reach a population of 256,370 by 2051, based on population allocations in the Region of Durham Official Plan, Envision Durham. Driving the population projections in Pickering are new greenfield development areas, including Seaton and Duffin Heights, and intensification opportunities in the City Centre and along the Kingston Road corridor.



Pickering City Centre.

1,2,3 Ontario Ministry of Finance, Ontario Population Projections, 2023-2051



Pickering is also projected to increase the number of jobs in the city from 39,310 to 93,790 by 2051<sup>4</sup>. Much of this growth is anticipated to occur in the Innovation Corridor Neighbourhood in Seaton, expanding businesses in south Pickering and new employment lands in Northeast Pickering.

For a City like Pickering that has only recently reached a population of 100,000 residents, and that has generally seen relatively slow to modest growth, the numbers above can be daunting. While growth will lead to change, it doesn't mean Pickering has to abandon what residents value.

It is more important than ever that residents share their ideas on what is most important to them and their families, and how we can accommodate this anticipated growth in a way that complements Pickering's identity and evolving character.

As Pickering enters what is anticipated to be its largest and fastest period of growth in its history, it is vital that the Official Plan reflect current values while providing a framework to welcome a significant number of new residents and businesses in the coming decades.

We encourage all residents and stakeholders to engage with us on this important topic to ensure we plan for growth and change responsibly and respectfully.

## Purpose of this Discussion Paper

The discussion papers developed through Pickering Forward are meant to get residents and stakeholders thinking about potential solutions for solving challenges and mapping a course for the City's future. The discussion papers set the stage for subsequent policy direction. While there are six discussion papers, the themes within each paper often connect with concepts or ideas discussed in another paper.

The Growth Management and Urban Structure Discussion Paper is the second discussion paper of the City's Official Plan Review.

The Growth Management and Urban Structure Discussion Paper has three intended outcomes:

- To explain how many people and jobs are expected to be accommodated in Pickering to 2051.
- To explain the rules set out by the Provincial and Region of Durham that Pickering must follow as it plans for growth; and
- To explore and imagine how, where and in what form that growth will occur within Pickering to 2051.

Housing is directly related to how the City will grow, and where density will be focused. While this paper may touch on housing elements, such as where in the city homes will be directed, building types or densities, it is not the purpose of this paper to discuss housing in detail. The sixth discussion paper will focus on Housing and Affordability. That paper will be a focused discussion on housing types, tenures, and the cost of housing in Pickering.

<sup>4</sup> Ontario Ministry of Finance, Ontario Population Projections, 2023-2051



Universal City condominium.

## Why is this Important to the Official Plan?

As outlined in the introduction section to this discussion paper, Pickering is projected to experience significant population and employment growth by 2051. The Official Plan is required to ensure there is adequate land available to allow for growth to meet Provincial and Regional projections. That includes ensuring appropriate policies are in place to guide and manage growth in Pickering.

The Official Plan includes policies and maps that set the urban structure for Pickering, directing land uses and focusing growth to specific areas. The policies also influence the form, including building types and heights, that impact how Pickering will look as it grows in the years to come.

This Discussion Paper identifies and reviews the key Provincial and Regional policies that need to be considered through Pickering Forward. The Discussion Paper also introduces the Pickering Urban Structure, which currently guides development, and outlines the strategic approach to managing growth.

The key Planning Act and Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) policies, and recent changes that impact growth management and the Pickering Official Plan Review, have been identified in highlighted text boxes throughout the subsequent sections of this paper. The goal is to highlight the key policy changes and provide context of what they may mean for Pickering, and receive feedback from residents and stakeholders on how we can create Pickering specific solutions to guide growth as a result of the changes.



This is a starting point for generating discussion about growth management related issues and questions that need to be addressed through Pickering Forward.

In addition to community engagement, the City has also retained a consultant, Watson & Associates, to provide an analysis of the Region of Durham's population, employment, and projected land budget for the City of Pickering to 2051, and how this will impact growth rates in the city. Watson's work will also review Pickering's current growth-related policies, and intensification targets, and clarify how they impact the ability to meet the 2051 population and employment allocations. This work will complement the community engagement on growth management, to set Pickering's policy framework on where and how growth will be accommodated.

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 **November 27, 2024 (in-person)**, and a virtual presentation on **November 28, 2024**. More details on the upcoming PIC, and the upcoming engagement activities, can be found on the project web page: [www.pickering.ca/PickeringForward](http://www.pickering.ca/PickeringForward).

## How to get involved

1. Participate in one of the public information centres on **November 27, 2024 (in-person)** or **November 28, 2024 (virtual)**
2. View the background information on our web page – [Pickering.ca/PickeringForward](http://Pickering.ca/PickeringForward)
3. Complete the online survey
4. Send your questions/comments to us – [PickeringForward@Pickering.ca](mailto:PickeringForward@Pickering.ca)



# 1.0 What is Growth Management?

It is important to understand how we define Growth Management, and the role it plays in how Pickering's Urban Structure will look, function, and change as the City grows.

Growth management, at a high level, involves establishing a long-term vision, which includes population and employment projections, for the City, including its urban communities, rural areas, and natural systems. This vision will identify how and where growth or change occurs, while ensuring growth occurs in a financially, environmentally, and socially sustainable manner.

Pickering is made up of a number of individual layers, including urban areas, rural areas, natural areas, etc., that connect to create the city as we know it, see Figure 1 below.

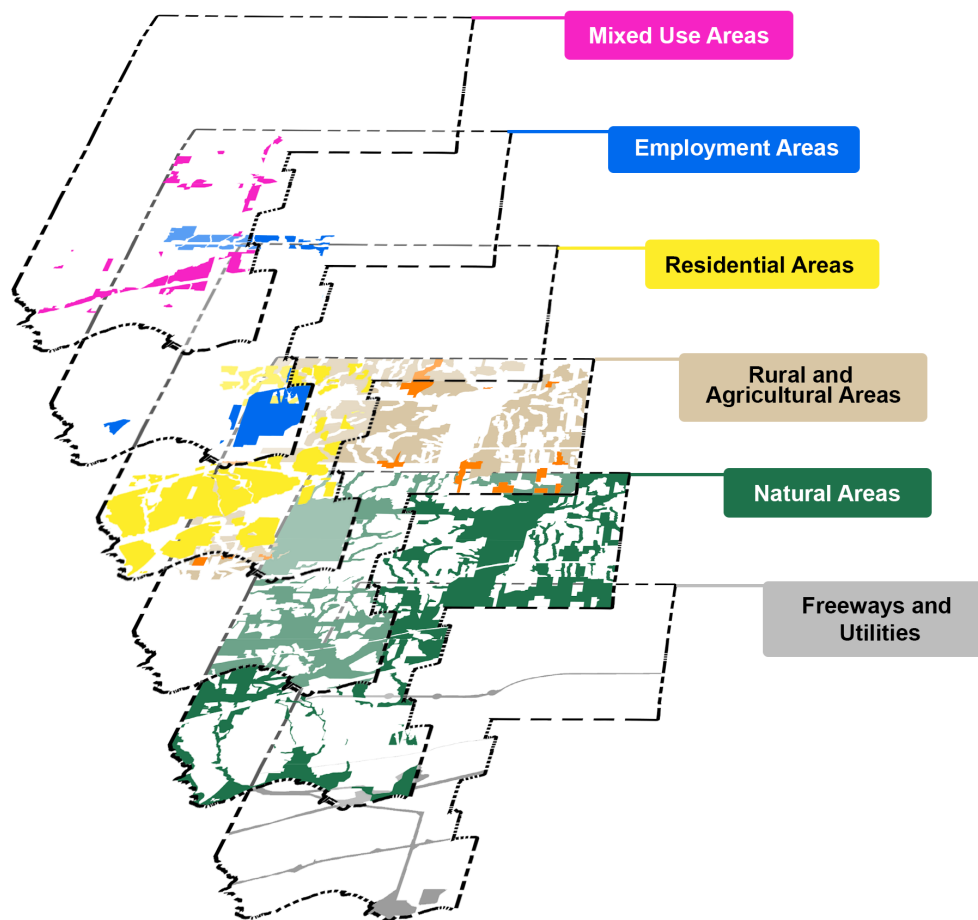


Figure 1: Land use layers that make up the City of Pickering.

All of these layers inform growth management by creating areas that support growth (urban areas) or do not support growth (natural areas), and provide the infrastructure to the areas that support growth.



# 2.0 Pickering's Urban Structure

Pickering's individual layers interconnect to create the city as we know it. When those layers are combined, they create a City Structure that is envisioned through Official Plan land use maps, see Figure 2 below.

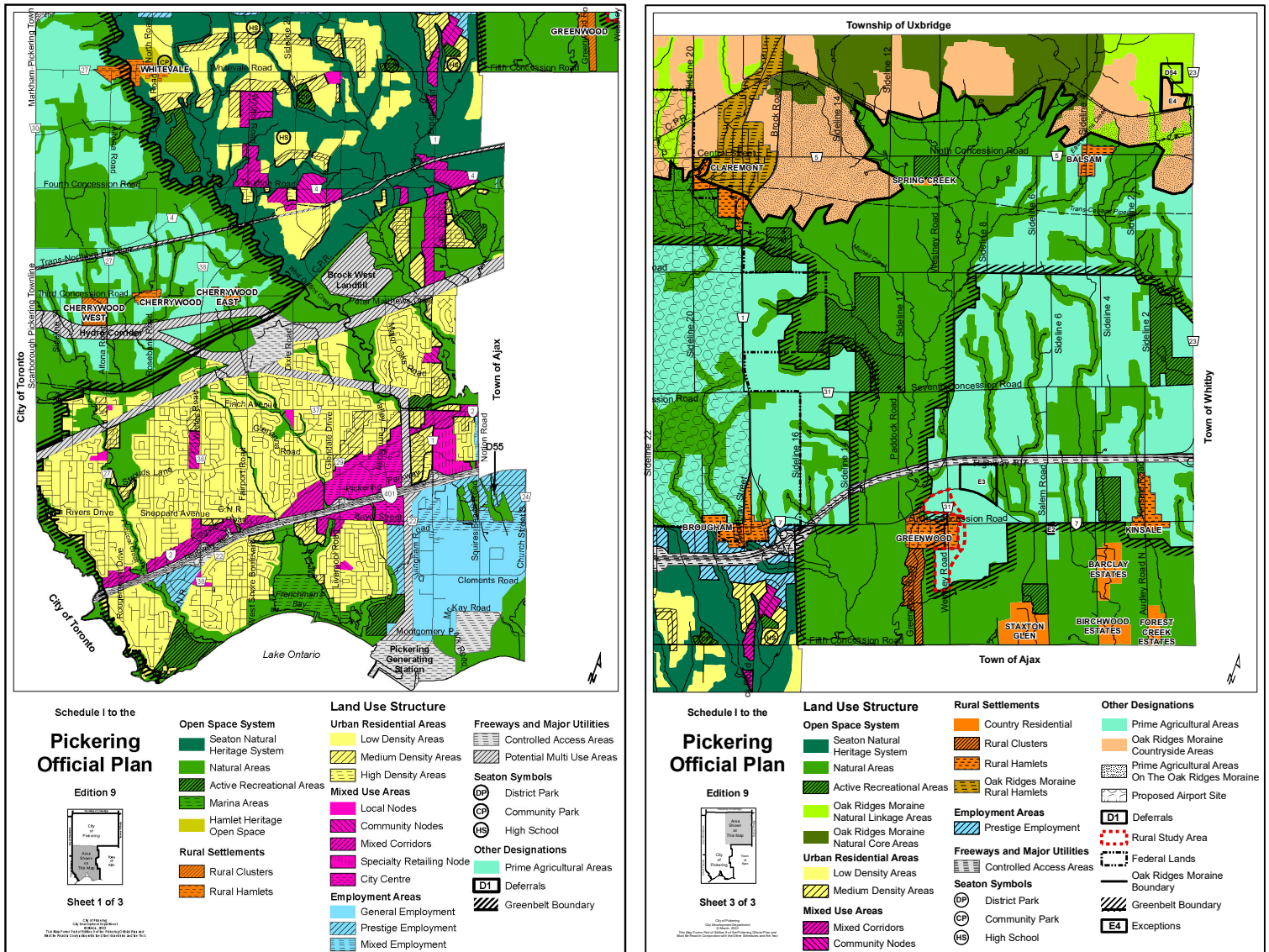


Figure 2: Official Plan Land Use Schedules showing south Pickering Urban Area, portions of Seaton Urban Area, and portions of the agricultural and rural lands in northeastern Pickering.

1. Are the current Official Plan maps easy to read and understand (i.e. can you find specific land uses and where higher density developments are anticipated)?
2. What improvements would make the Official Plan maps easier to understand?

Pickering's structure can be further refined to urban and rural areas. Urban areas are areas generally serviced by municipal infrastructure, sewer and water, and have a higher intensity of uses, including residential, employment, commercial, roads, parks, recreation centres and/or arenas, etc. They are the broad elements, identified above, that combine to create a community. This structure establishes where we live, work, and connect within the urban areas. When you look at all these elements collectively, they form the urban structure of the city.

The urban structure also helps determine where and the type of infrastructure, which is required to support development, is built. This includes not only "hard" infrastructure such as roads, sewers and water, but also "soft" infrastructure, such as parks and open space, and public service facilities, such as libraries and recreation centres.

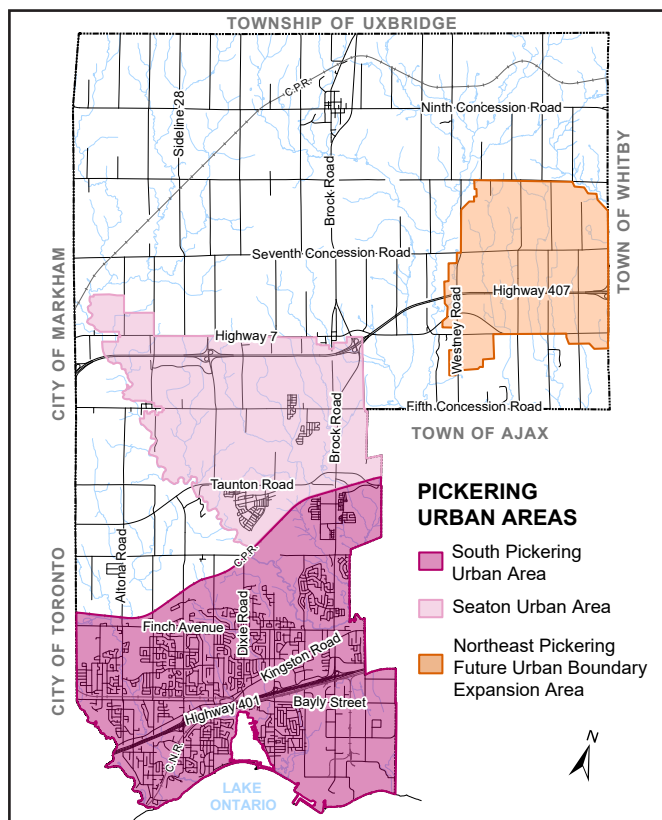


Figure 3: Pickering's urban areas.

Pickering has two existing urban areas and a future urban area. The South Urban area is where the majority of the development and amenities in Pickering are currently located. Many of you will know that it includes City Centre, the waterfront area, the established neighbourhoods, the Kingston Road corridor, and the Amberlea and Brock employment areas, etc. There is very little **greenfield** development occurring in the South Urban area, with most of the development occurring in the form of **intensification**. It includes the City Centre, waterfront, the Brock employment area, etc.

The Seaton urban area is a new greenfield community that began development in 2017, and will see continued development for the next few decades. The Northeast Pickering future urban area was identified through the Region of Durham Official Plan Review as a future growth area.

**Intensification** is the development or redevelopment of an existing piece of land to increase the density of development beyond what exists on the property today. Intensification can include the expansion or conversion of existing buildings or redevelopment. Intensification can help create more compact, walkable communities, and ensures that land is used efficiently.

**Greenfield** development means the development of lands that are within an urban boundary, that have been designated for development but were previously undeveloped or were previously used for agricultural purposes.



Within urban areas, lands are identified by different categories, called 'designations', that permit different uses which help guide development. Below is a brief description of the major land use categories in Pickering's urban areas.

### Mixed Use Areas

Mixed Use Areas are parts of the City where development has the highest concentration of activity and the broadest diversity of community services and facilities. Mixed Use Areas permit a wide variety of uses for residents, businesses and visitors, including residential, retail, business, office, service, recreational, community and cultural uses. These uses can be located on the same property, within the same building, or as standalone uses on a property. These areas include the City Centre, Kingston Road Corridor, and the Brock Specialty Retailing Node.

These areas are found along major roads and close to frequent transit service, and at the intersection of major roads in Pickering.

### Urban Residential Areas

Urban residential areas are to be used primarily for housing and related uses, including home occupations and group homes. To ensure that these areas provide an appropriate degree of neighbourhood and community services, other uses are also permissible, including, schools, parks, libraries, places of worship, limited office development, limited retailing of goods and services, and limited special purpose commercial uses.

These areas are usually adjacent to mixed use and employment areas on local or collector roads that are designed to handle less traffic.

### Open Space System

The Open Space System is Pickering's "greenspace". It includes the Natural Heritage System, Marina Areas and Active Recreation Areas. The Open Space System is important for its role in maintaining ecological health, and where possible, improving the ecological and hydrological integrity of the Natural Heritage System, but also in promoting physical, spiritual and mental health for the City's residents.

This includes protecting natural features such as significant valleylands and stream corridors, shorelines, wetlands, significant woodlands, and promoting active spaces such as trails and public parks. Lands within the Open Space System are intended to be used primarily for conservation, restoration, environmental education, recreation, and ancillary purposes.

These areas are protected from development, and can complement growth by providing recreation and open spaces for residents to enjoy.

- 3. Are there any additional uses, other than schools, parks, libraries, places of worship, and limited office and retail, that should be permitted in residential areas?***
- 4. What elements or characteristics of mixed use areas should be protected as new development occurs in these areas?***

## Employment Areas

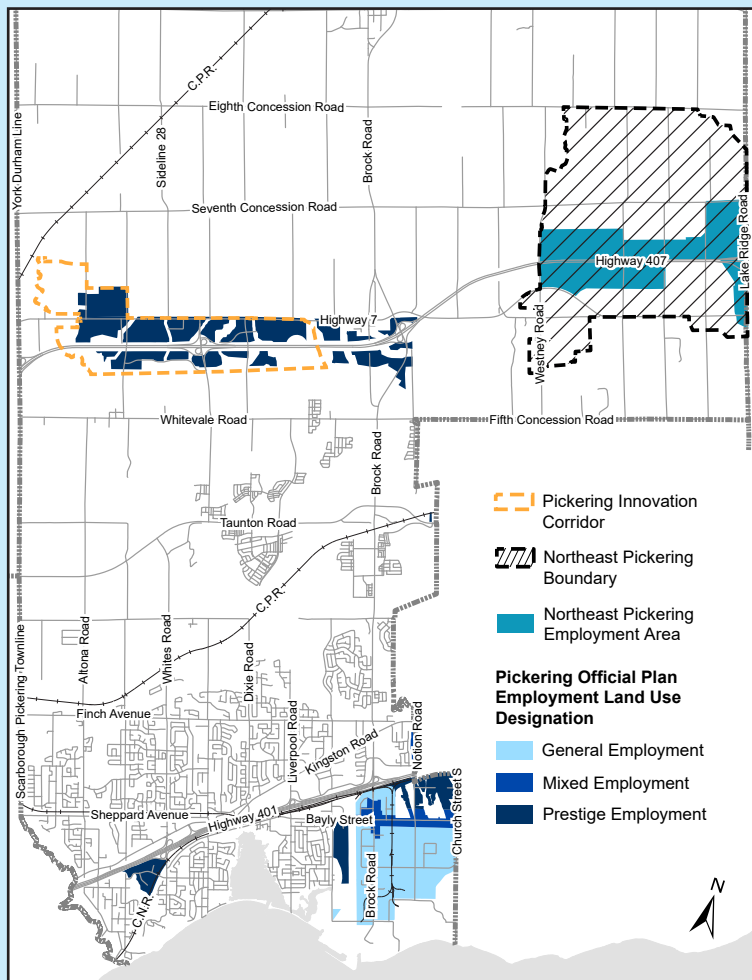


Figure 4: Employment Areas in Pickering.

Jobs, including retail, offices, personal service, etc., are permitted within most land use designations in Pickering. However, manufacturing, assembly and warehousing uses, and related industrial businesses, are directed to locate in Employment Areas.

Employment areas are classified according to their business type, their operational characteristics, and their requirements to be separated from sensitive uses, such as residential. Three employment subcategories are identified in the current Official Plan:

- General Employment, which allows the broadest number of uses including warehousing, manufacturing, waste transfer, transportation facilities, etc.
- Prestige Employment, which allows warehousing, light manufacturing, office, and limited personal service, and
- Mixed Employment, which allows the same uses as prestige employment areas but also limited retail.

Employment areas are strategically located adjacent to higher order roads, such as Provincial Highways and arterial roads, to facilitate the movement of goods. They are also located away from sensitive uses, such as schools and residential, due to potential disturbances such as noise, odour, dust, and vibration.

### 5. How can the Pickering Official Plan support industrial and economic growth in Pickering?

Now that we have defined what we are going to discuss in this paper, let's turn our focus to how it will apply to Pickering through the Pickering Forward process.



## 3.0 How Many People and Jobs are expected to come to Pickering?

The City of Pickering is currently a community of over 100,000 residents, that is made up of urban areas, natural heritage areas (forests, creeks, etc.), and the rural areas comprising of farmland, and eight rural hamlets. While Pickering has only recently reached a population of 100,000 residents, the anticipated rate of growth over the next 25 years is expected to result in Pickering more than doubling its current population by 2051.

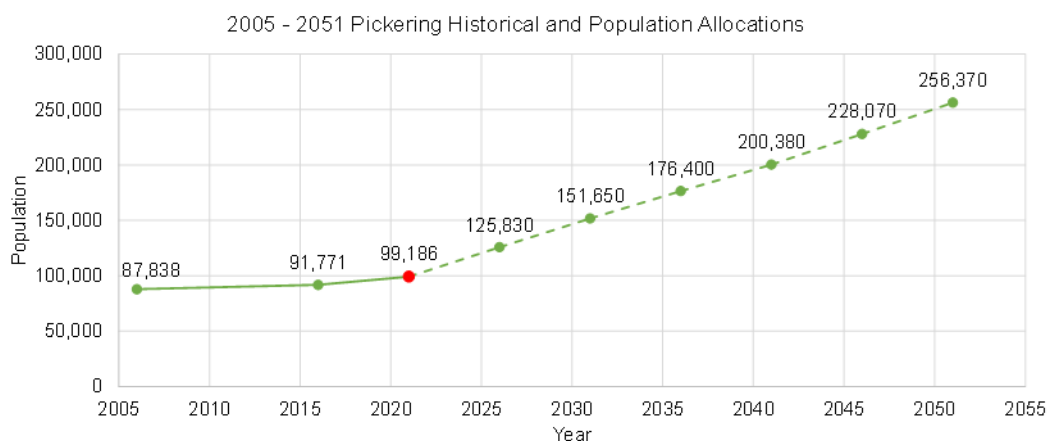


Figure 5: Pickering Population and Allocated Growth Population to 2051. Source: Statistics Canada, 2022, Census Profile 2021 Census of Population; and Envision Durham, 2023, Durham Regional Official Plan.

### Rule Pickering Has to Follow

#### *Requirements to Plan for Growth*

*The Provincial Planning Statement, discussed in section 4.0 below, requires municipalities to have enough land designated for growth to meet the projected needs for a time horizon of at least 20 years, but not more than 30 years. Municipalities are required to use the population projections set by the Province when planning for growth.*

The Region of Durham recently completed their Official Plan process, Envision Durham, which included Provincial growth projections for the entire region to 2051. Through Envision Durham the Region allocated population and employment growth projections for all the local lower-tier municipalities, including Pickering. Pickering was allocated population and employment forecasts of 256,370 people and 93,790 jobs by 2051.

The City of Pickering recently entered a period of significant growth. Historically, Pickering's greatest period of growth was between 1960 and 2000, when many of the existing lower density neighbourhoods were developed. Of all the homes in Pickering, approximately 71% of dwellings were built between 1960 and 2000, while 22.5% were built since 2001.

Municipality	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	2051
<b>Pickering</b>							
Urban	98,360	121,220	147,000	171,710	195,670	223,330	251,600
Rural	4,580	4,610	4,650	4,690	4,710	4,740	4,770
<b>Total</b>	<b>102,940</b>	<b>125,830</b>	<b>151,650</b>	<b>176,400</b>	<b>200,380</b>	<b>228,070</b>	<b>256,370</b>
<b>Projections</b>							
Households	33,430	41,310	50,360	59,230	68,010	78,200	88,590
<b>Employment</b>	<b>39,310</b>	<b>47,000</b>	<b>55,260</b>	<b>62,840</b>	<b>71,080</b>	<b>81,860</b>	<b>93,790</b>
<b>Durham</b>							
Urban	673,400	760,260	855,940	949,550	1,040,320	1,141,990	1,246,470
Rural	49,870	50,580	51,350	52,000	52,410	52,940	53,530
<b>Total</b>	<b>723,270</b>	<b>810,840</b>	<b>907,290</b>	<b>1,001,550</b>	<b>1,092,730</b>	<b>1,194,930</b>	<b>1,300,000</b>
<b>Projections</b>							
Households	243,040	276,540	313,410	350,010	386,710	427,360	468,870
<b>Employment</b>	<b>241,660</b>	<b>272,880</b>	<b>307,430</b>	<b>340,670</b>	<b>374,510</b>	<b>415,810</b>	<b>460,000</b>

Figure 6: Population, Employment and Household projections by the Region of Durham. Source: Envision Durham.

The majority of the recent growth in Pickering, including housing and employment, has occurred in the urban area. The growth has been spurred by higher density intensification in the City Centre, moderate infill and replacement housing in established neighbourhoods, and new greenfield development areas, like the Duffin Heights Neighbourhood and the Seaton Neighbourhood.

While some areas, specifically the Seaton Neighbourhood, received planning approvals that will generally direct growth going forward more recently, how we plan to accommodate future growth in our existing City Centre, along the Kingston Road Corridor, within existing neighbourhoods, and new urban areas will be essential to shape Pickering to 2051.

It is not only Pickering’s population that is growing. To complement the population growth, Pickering is projected to see a significant increase in the number of jobs within the city, from the existing 39,000 existing jobs in 2021 to a projected 93,790 by 2051. Pickering has employment lands available, specifically the Innovation Corridor in Seaton and in the Northeast Pickering urban boundary expansion area, that are expected to accommodate a significant number of the projected jobs. Development in these areas, along with expanding existing businesses in south Pickering’s employment areas are expected to result in the number of jobs in the city more than doubling by 2051.

It is important to note that employment lands refer to industrial jobs that require separation from sensitive land uses, such as residential, within the City. While that is where the highest concentration of jobs is located, jobs are also found within mixed use areas and some residential areas, typically in the form of retail or services uses.

As illustrated in Figure 6 above, there is some anticipated growth within the rural area of Pickering. However, due to how little growth is expected in rural areas this paper will only discuss urban growth, and will defer the discussion on growth in rural areas to a future discussion paper that will focus specifically on Agriculture and Rural Areas.



# 4.0 The Rules Pickering must Follow as it Grows

The responsibility for long-term planning in Ontario is shared between the Province and municipalities, which include upper-tiers, the Region of Durham, and lower-tiers, the City of Pickering.

The Province sets the ground rules and directions for land use planning through the Planning Act and the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS), which came into effect on October 20, 2024 (replacing the Provincial Policy Statement and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe). The Planning Act requires that all municipal planning decisions within Ontario must be consistent with these planning documents.

In addition to the Planning Act and PPS there are two Provincial Plans, The Greenbelt Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, that impact where Pickering can grow. The Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine Plans provide direction to protect farmland, the countryside, natural areas, and resource management planning to prevent incompatible development in these specific areas. These areas are protected from urban development and act to limit urban sprawl. Municipal planning decisions must conform to these plans.

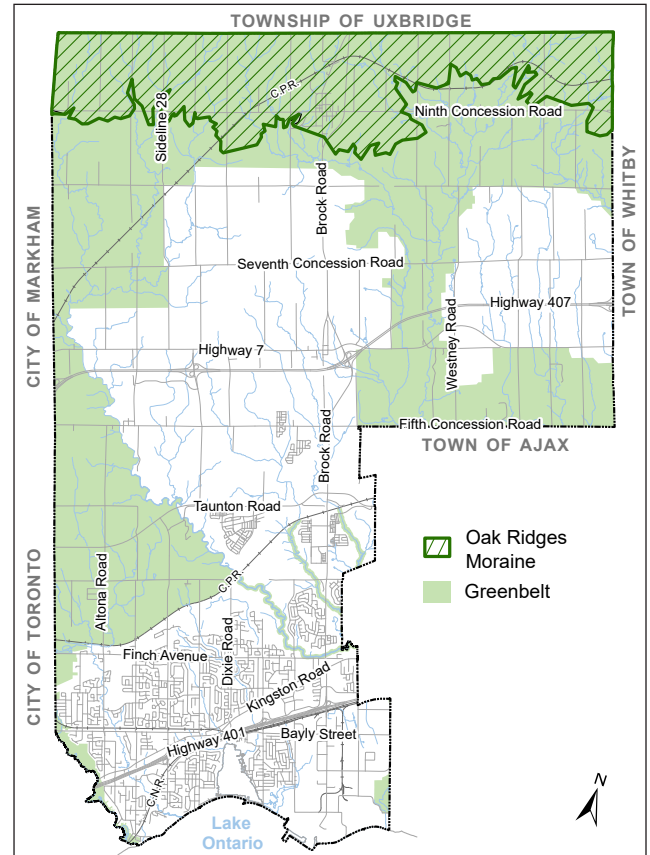


Figure 7: Lands impacted by Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine plans.

## The Planning Act

The role of the *Planning Act* is to outline the planning process, identify matters of provincial interest that municipalities must have regard for, and encourage coordination among various interests. The Planning Act also sets criteria, regarding the approval process, requirements for new developments, and defining uses, that municipalities and developers must abide by.

## The Provincial Planning Statement

On August 20, 2024 the Province issued a decision approving a new Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) that replaced the previous Provincial Policy Statement and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan). The new Planning Statement came into effect on October 20, 2024.

The PPS is issued under the Planning Act and is the primary provincial land use planning policy document, applying across Ontario. The PPS provides policy directions on matters of Provincial interest such as housing, infrastructure, and natural resources. The PPS also sets the policy foundation that all planning decisions shall be consistent with at the local level.



## Region of Durham Official Plan

In addition to Provincial policy, the Pickering Official Plan must conform with the Region of Durham Official Plan policies. The Region's new Official Plan, Envision Durham, was adopted by Regional Council on May 17, 2023, and approved by the Province, in part, on September 3, 2024.

The approved Region of Durham Official Plan outlines a comprehensive land use policy framework to guide growth and development within the Region to the year 2051, including policies that:

- establish minimum density and intensification targets;
- appropriately phase future development and infrastructure;
- establish major transit station areas;
- provide for a wide range of housing options;
- provide for employment area planning;
- environmental and agricultural protection;
- public health and safety; and
- other matters.

Despite the Province approving most of the plan, a large portion of the proposed urban boundary expansion lands in Northeast Pickering and the total population, employment and household allocations for Pickering and Durham Region have been withheld by the Minister (see Figure 8).

## Northeast Pickering Urban Boundary Expansion

The Region of Durham projects Northeast Pickering to accommodate a population of approximately 45,000 residents and 13,000 jobs. Pickering began a Secondary Plan process in 2022, and the study area covers an area of approximately 1,600 hectares, located generally north of Sixth Concession Road, west of Lakeridge Road, south of Eighth Concession Road, and east of Westney Road.

The Minister's final decision will have an impact on the overall growth anticipated for Pickering in this Official Plan Review. It is expected that should the Minister's final decision regarding the urban boundary expansion area in Northeast Pickering, exclude areas identified in Envision Durham, adjustments to the population, households and employment projections in Pickering would be made at the same time.

This paper, and the work being undertaken by staff, are utilizing the numbers included in Envision Durham as the highest growth scenario for Pickering Forward, while we await the Minister's decision.

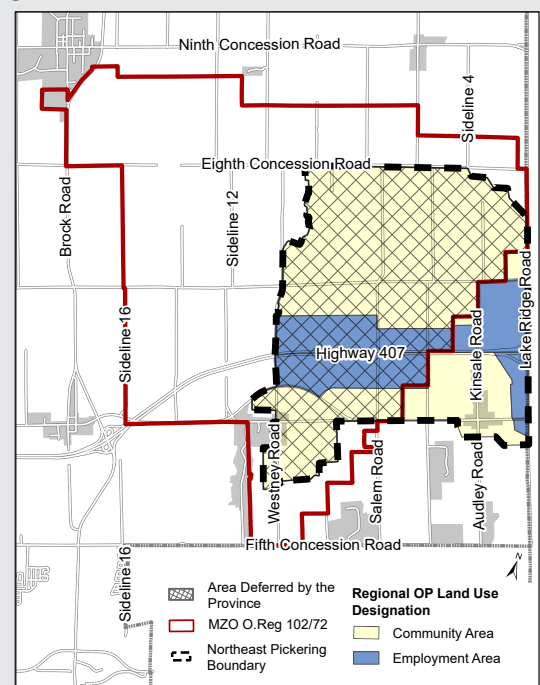


Figure 8: Map of Northeast Pickering and MZO 102/72.



# 5.0 Where and How Growth Will Occur in Pickering

Now that we have highlighted some of the major changes driving growth in Pickering, it is important to understand how that growth will be accommodated in the urban structure of the city. Many of the changes to Provincial and Regional policy that Pickering must follow have specific impacts for specific areas of the City, while some apply more broadly across the urban area.

Figure 9 below, highlights Pickering's current communities and strategic growth areas identified by Provincial and Regional policies.

### Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs)

Areas within the municipality identified to be the focus of growth and intensification. Typically located near existing or planned transit services.

Pickering City Centres and Kingston Road Corridor are examples of SGAs within Pickering expected to accommodate the majority of the growth. Other SGAs include regional centres and corridors shown in pink below.

### Current and Ongoing Greenfield Development (Seaton)

The Seaton Neighbourhood is planned to accommodate a population of 61,000 residents and 30,500 jobs, with a long-term intensification target of 70,000 residents and 35,000 jobs, currently being built out.

### Future Greenfield Development (Northeast Pickering)

Northeast Pickering is identified in Envision Durham as a future urban boundary expansion area. A small portion of the area has been approved by the Province, however, majority of the area is still awaiting a decision.

### Existing Neighbourhoods

Existing neighbourhoods are residential areas that remain relatively stable with the ability to accommodate gentle intensification.

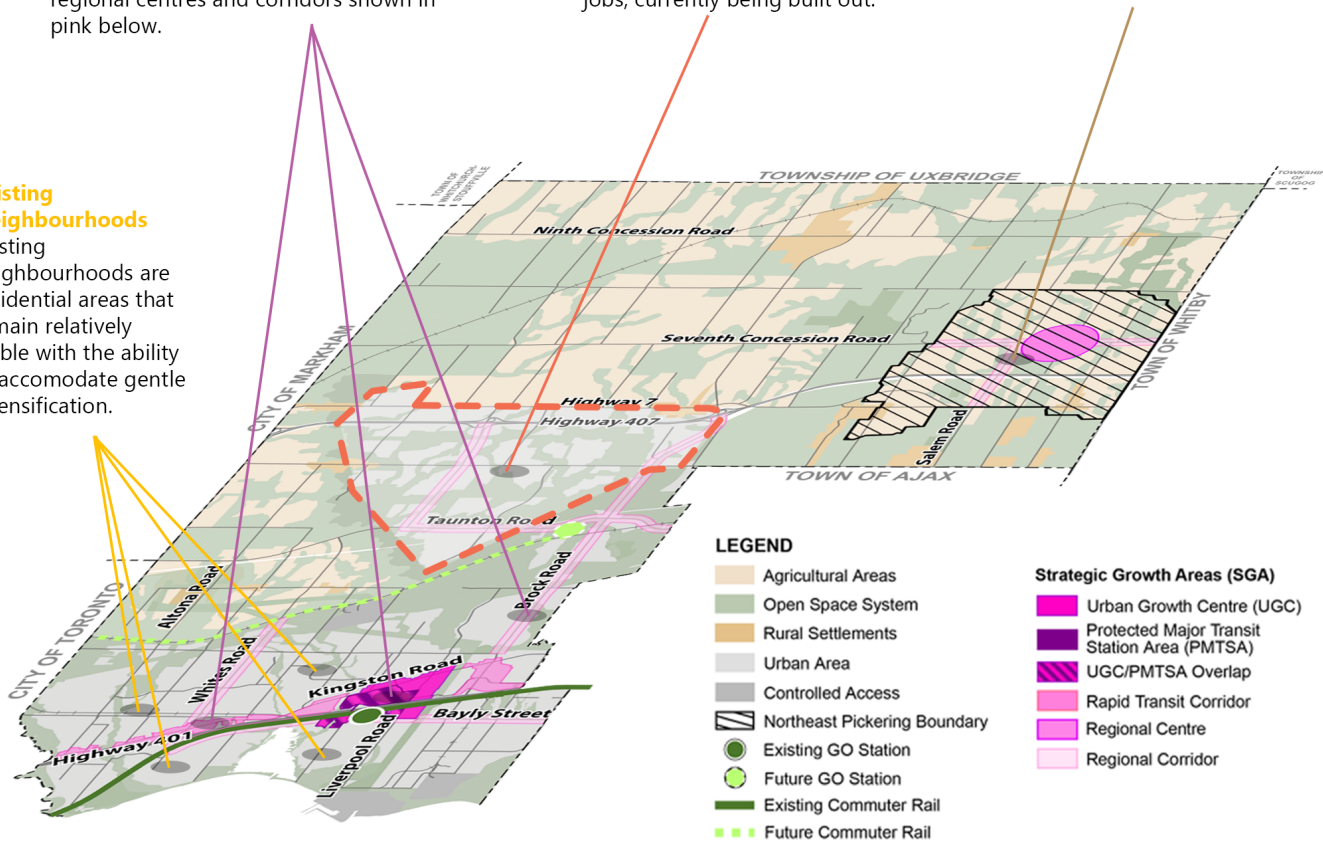
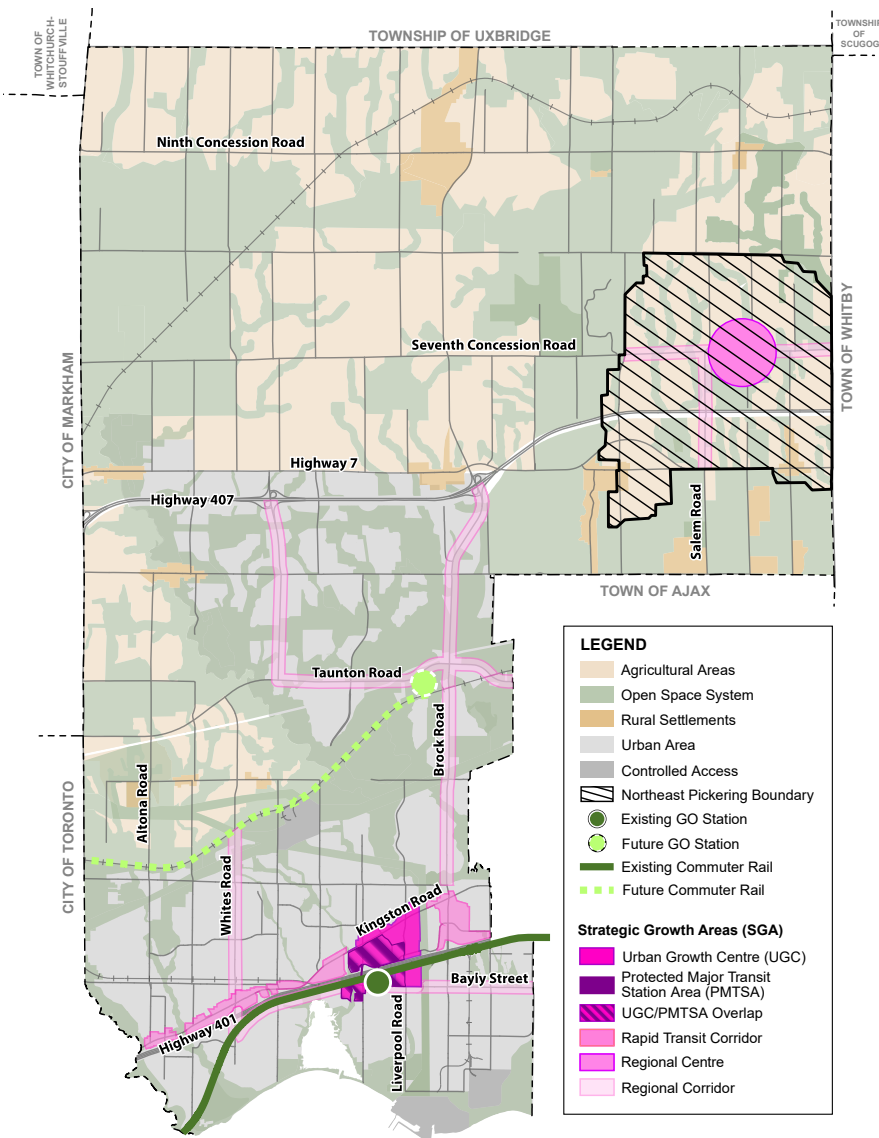


Figure 9: Map of Pickering's current communities and strategic growth areas identified by Provincial and Regional policies.

## Strategic Growth Areas

Many areas within Pickering's Mixed Use Areas designation, including the Pickering City Centre and the Kingston Road Corridor, are referred to in Provincial and Regional policy as Strategic Growth Areas (SGA). They are to be the focus for growth, including intensification and higher-density mixed use development, typically in a more compact built form. SGAs are typically located near high order transit infrastructure, such as the GO Train station, Bus Rapid Transit, etc., to efficiently utilize existing or planned transit services. These are areas within the City where the highest densities are anticipated as Pickering grows.



The SGAs in the City of Pickering (see Figure 10), include the Pickering Urban Growth Centre (UGC), also known as Pickering City Centre; Pickering Protected Major Transit Station Area; Kingston Road Rapid Transit Corridor; Brock Specialty Retailing Node, and other Regional Corridors including Bayly Street, Whites Road, Brock Road, and Taunton Road.

**Below:** Example of high density developments directed to SGAs. Credit: CentreCourt.

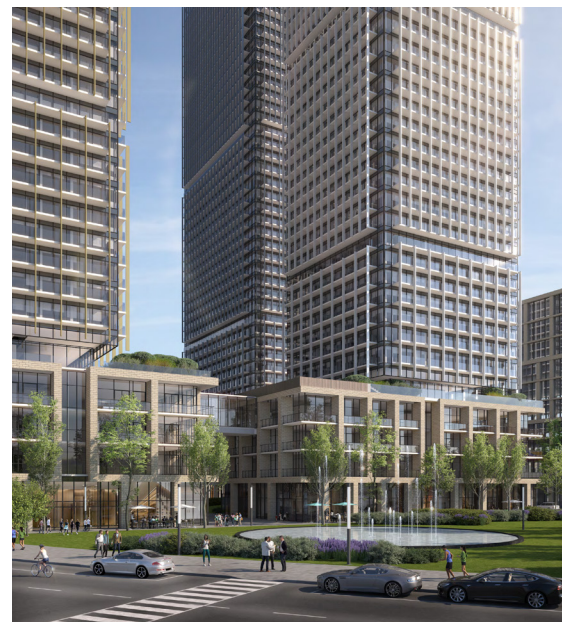


Figure 10: Map of the strategic growth areas identified for Pickering by Provincial and Regional policies (shown in hues of purple).



## Rule Pickering Has to Follow

*The Region of Durham Official Plan, Envision Durham, sets intensification targets for lower tier municipalities. The Region of Durham has set Pickering's intensification target at 40% of new development on an annual basis. Based on the 40% target, the total number of dwelling units anticipated to be built within intensification areas in Pickering by 2051 is 21,790<sup>5</sup>.*

As discussed at multiple points in this paper, the main areas of Pickering where intensification is occurring are the City Centre and along the Kingston Road Corridor.

### **6. As intensification occurs in the City Centre and along the Kingston Road Corridor, which aspects, in your opinion, are most important for the community?**

Provincial and Regional policy also require municipalities to plan for minimum densities within specific SGA's. Urban Growth Centres, including the Pickering City Centre, are required to have minimum densities of 200 people and jobs per hectare. Regional Rapid Transit Corridors, including the Kingston Road Rapid Transit Corridor and Brock Specialty Retailing Node, are required to have minimum densities of 150 people and jobs per hectare.

## City Centre and Protected Major Transit Station Area

Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSA's) are defined by the PPS as the area including, and around, any existing or planned Higher Order Transit station within a Settlement Area; or the area including, and around, a major bus depot in an urban core. PMTSA's generally are defined as the area within a 500 to an 800-metre radius of a transit station, representing a 10-minute walk. PMTSA's located around Go Stations must be planned with a minimum density of 150 persons and jobs per hectare.

## Rule Pickering Has to Follow

### **Implementing PMTSA's**

*The Planning Act requires municipalities to delineate the boundaries of PMTSA's in their Official Plans. The Region of Durham, in consultation with municipalities, delineated PMTSA's through the Envision Durham process, including Pickering's, and they were approved by the Province as part of Envision Durham. Pickering's Official Plan will be required to identify the PMTSA around the Pickering GO Station.*

5 Envision Durham, Region of Durham Official Plan

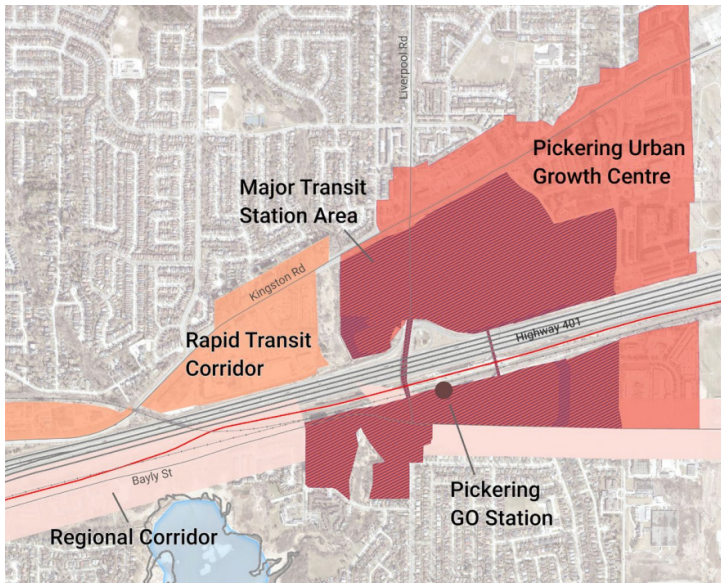


Figure 11: Map of City Centre and PMTSA boundary.  
Credit: Region of Durham.

The Pickering PMTSA is located around the existing Pickering GO Station, and the majority of it falls within the Pickering City Centre designation. As outlined above the City Centre is required to have a minimum density of 200 people and jobs per hectare. As the PMTSA overlaps with the City Centre designation, the area has already been planned for higher density development within Pickering. There are a small number of properties, on Liverpool Road, south of Bayly Street that are not within the City Centre but are within the Pickering MTSA. Envision Durham included these properties within the Urban Growth Centre for Pickering and the PMTSA.

Pickering Forward will be required to include the properties along Liverpool Road within the PMTSA, as shown in Envision Durham, and the creation of policies to guide development in an area that is adjacent to existing low density development.

## Rule Pickering Has to Follow

### *Parking Requirements in PMTSA's*

*Recent changes to the Planning Act removed the ability of municipalities to require car parking associated with developments (residential, commercial, office, etc.) in PMTSAs.*

This does not mean there will be no parking spaces in new developments in PMTSAs. However, the City will not be able to require a minimum number of spaces based on the anticipated use of the building. Developments in the PMTSA will be subject to the developers' understanding of market requirements to meet future resident and business needs for parking.

These changes could make more developments feasible, as underground parking spaces are very expensive to construct, leading to more uses wanting to locate within the City Centre. This could benefit residents, as it will make it easier for all uses to locate in the City Centre as parking requirements will no longer be a barrier. It may also make the cost of new housing units less expensive.

It may also create challenges for residents coming from other neighbourhoods to shop in the City Centre if not enough new parking is constructed with future developments.



## Kingston Road and Brock Specialty Retailing Rapid Transit Corridor

In 2022, Pickering Council and Regional Council approved amendments to the Pickering Official Plan to implement policies that would enable the redevelopment and intensification of the Kingston Road and Brock Specialty Retailing Node (These amendments are currently under appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal). These amendments were undertaken to be consistent with the then in force Provincial Policy Statement, A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and to conform with the Regional Official Plan. Recent changes to Provincial and Regional policy maintain the area's designation as a SGA within Pickering.



Durham-Scarborough bus rapid transit station rendering. Credit: Metrolinx.

Kingston Road has been identified as a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor. As a rapid transit corridor with dedicated transit, the area has been identified as a focus of growth and intensification. The improvements to transit will provide residents and businesses more transportation options while providing connections to neighbouring municipalities.

### Rule Pickering Has to Follow

#### *Minimum Density in Rapid Transit Corridor*

*Envision Durham requires that lands surrounding a dedicated Rapid Transit Corridor be planned for a minimum density of 150 people and jobs per hectare .*

## Regional Corridors

Regional corridors are arteries within the urban area and form key connections between SGAs, employment areas, and provide connections to higher order roads, such as highways. They support the movement of people and goods and encourage intensification to create transit supportive densities. These areas are anticipated to redevelop over time, and provide additional housing forms adjacent to the existing neighbourhoods.

Envision Durham has identified Bayly Street, Whites Road, Brock Road, and Taunton Road as Regional Corridors within Pickering. Many of these roads are already planned for compact, mixed use and transit supportive development in the Seaton community and as part of the City Centre. Brock Road and Whites Road, north of Kingston Road, are the two areas that will require further investigation to understand how and which areas could provide additional development opportunities. These areas are currently characterized by a significant amount of natural areas and established neighbourhoods surrounding these roads. These existing conditions impact the potential to (re)develop the lands along these corridors.

## Future Commercial Growth

As part of Pickering Forward, the City has undertaken a Retail Market Study to understand the current and anticipated future market needs for retail and service commercial spaces in Pickering. The study will also look at changes in the retail landscape, including changes in technology and consumer needs.

Currently, most commercial, retail, and service uses are located in mixed use areas in south Pickering: along Kingston Road; in the City Centre; in the Brock Mixed Node near Highway 401; and within existing plazas throughout the community.

As identified above, the areas with the largest amount of Pickering's current retail and service uses are located on lands anticipated to experience the most growth and intensification. As these lands redevelop, it will be important to understand how much retail and service space is required to serve existing and future residents to ensure that those uses are accommodated in convenient locations.

The study will also look at retail and service needs in new neighbourhoods, including Seaton, to understand the demand in those areas, and ensure that adequate land is available in all areas of Pickering.

The final Retail Market Study will be available on the Pickering Forward project page once completed, and will inform the policies that help shape Pickering's growth.

## Current and Developing Greenfield Communities (Seaton)

The Seaton Community, and the specific policies that direct growth in this urban area were originally developed through the Central Pickering Development Plan. The resulting plan, which was approved by the Province, was a product of years of work to create a "sustainable urban community in Seaton, integrated with a thriving agricultural community in the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve and an extensive Natural Heritage System".

Seaton is planned to accommodate a population of 61,000 residents and 30,500 jobs, with a long-term intensification target of 70,000 residents and 35,000 jobs. While Seaton is part of the Official Plan Review, and subject to recent Provincial policy changes, development within the various neighbourhoods will remain largely guided by the existing policies contained in the Official Plan that respect the original vision in the Central Pickering Development Plan.



Seaton community.



## Future Greenfield Development (Northeast Pickering)

As discussed in Section 4 above, Northeast Pickering is identified in Envision Durham as a future urban boundary expansion area within Pickering. A small portion of the area, located in the southeast quadrant, has been approved for inclusion in the Northeast Pickering Urban Boundary by the Minister. However, the majority of the area is still awaiting a decision, as are Pickering's final population, household and employment allocations.

The Pickering Official Plan review will need to reflect the decision of the Minister regarding the Envision Durham.

## Existing Neighbourhoods in South Pickering



Existing residential neighbourhood.

In addition to the continued growth occurring in Seaton, and the new growth that is anticipated to take place in Northeast Pickering, the City is also experiencing a gentler form of growth within existing neighbourhoods.

Pickering recently passed amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-laws to permit three units as-of-right throughout the City, subject to provisions. Properties in the rural area are subject to additional constraints from the Oak Ridges Moraine Provincial Plan and Greenbelt Plan policies. This allows for gentle intensification in residential areas if property owners wish to take advantage of these permissions.

Some municipalities are going a step further to permit up to four units as of right. Some municipalities are exploring additional forms of gentle intensification such as increased building heights as-of-right or allowing additional units on corner lots, which tend to be larger lots in general.

### Rule Pickering Has to Follow

#### *Additional Dwelling Units*

*Recent changes to the Planning Act require municipalities to allow, as-of-right, up to two additional dwelling units on a lot with a single detached, semi-detached, and townhouse dwelling, for a total of three dwellings.*

**7. How should the City plan to add more homes to existing neighbourhoods?**





Kubota industrial development.

## Employment Areas

As discussed in Section 2.0 of this paper, jobs can be located in most areas within Pickering. Employment areas will continue to be the focus for traditional industrial uses and uses that require separation from sensitive uses, such as residential. While these areas will continue to promote significant job growth, there have been recent changes that will encourage traditional employment uses in additional areas of the City.

### Rule Pickering Has to Follow

#### ***Area of Employment Definition***

*The definition of “Area of Employment” in the Planning Act and the PPS has been amended to focus on: heavy industry; manufacturing; research and development in connection with manufacturing; warehousing; goods movement; associated retail and office; ancillary facilities; and other employment uses that cannot be located near sensitive uses, (i.e., not suitable for mixed use).*

*Specific uses that were previously permitted but are no longer permitted within employment areas include institutional uses, and retail and office uses that are not associated with the primary employment use (i.e. storefront for a business).*

There are provisions in the Planning Act that will allow the City to recognize uses that existed prior to this change coming into place, meaning no displacement of existing businesses. This recognition will also allow for easier expansion of those existing businesses in the future. However, new businesses not in place as of October 20, 2024 that do not meet the definition above will not be allowed to locate in employment areas

The changes to exclude these uses, specifically office, institutional and personal services, from industrial areas could place a greater demand for these uses in mixed use areas. This could also result in directing more jobs to be located in SGA's, closer to residential areas, closer to where people live.





Kingston Road at Liverpool Road looking west.



Brock industrial area.

## Rule Pickering Has to Follow

### *Employment Uses within non-Employment Areas*

*New policies in the PPS encourage light industrial uses, and small-scale warehousing to be locate within mixed use areas. Other uses prohibited from employment lands, and to be accommodated on non-employment lands, include: commercial uses, public service facilities, institutional uses, stand alone retail and office uses, and residential uses.*

This change could result in greater choice for employers to locate their businesses in a community, resulting possibly in reduced distances between work and home, or in locations within areas better served by existing or planned transit. However, it could also result in less desirable uses, such as those that generate more truck traffic locating within or near, residential, commercial and mixed-use areas. It is important to understand what uses residents would support in these areas and to understand how the Official Plan could mitigate potential impacts of traditional employment uses locating in mixed use areas.

- 8. What type of industrial-type businesses or uses are appropriate to be built near stores and homes?**
- 9. What are the most important considerations for permitting industrial-type businesses in mixed use areas?**

# 6.0 Urban Design

Urban design is a collaborative and multi-disciplinary process of shaping cities and its communities. It establishes frameworks and processes that facilitate the development of livable, sustainable, and vibrant communities through better design of buildings and public spaces.

An increasing amount of growth is projected through infill and redevelopment in designated intensification areas, adjacent to high order transit. As this growth continues, it is important that development is compatible with its surroundings.

Urban design plays an important role in defining the city's image, strengthening and promoting quality of life for its residents, and creating compact, comfortable, connected, and resilient communities.

The Pickering Official Plan, and area specific design guidelines, provide direction to implement urban design policies for new developments. As an example, Figure 12 illustrates how design principles in the [Kingston Road Corridor and Specialty Retailing Node Urban Design Guideline](#) are applied when implementing the guideline.

Appendix 1 highlights some key urban design concepts, defined at a high level, that attempt to create high quality public spaces that create a “sense of place” and complement adjacent existing development.

Additional questions regarding the urban design concepts are included in Appendix 1 to generate discussion and input on these concepts.

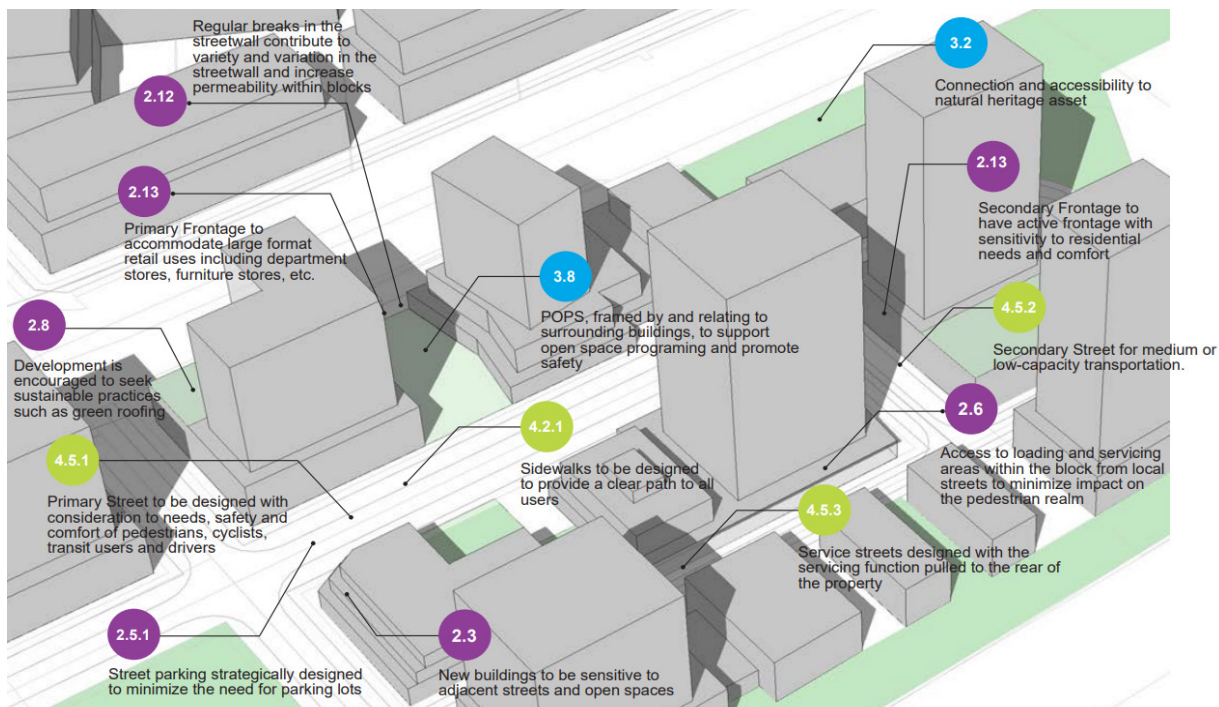


Figure 12: Example of an illustrative massing diagram demonstrating design principles at a mid-block site within the Kingston Road Corridor. Credit: SvN.



# Conclusion

Pickering is anticipated to add a significant number of new residents and jobs by 2051. This is not the first time Pickering has experienced significant growth. Approximately three quarters of the existing homes in Pickering were constructed between 1960 and 2000. While the growth in the coming years will look different than it did in the past, it is important to acknowledge that the Pickering we know today was formed by that previous growth. While the amount of change anticipated may seem daunting, if we create a vision and identity that reinforces what residents and businesses value today, we can continue to grow a Pickering that residents and businesses want to call home.

The discussion paper has outlined the Provincial and Regional rules that Pickering must follow as it grows. While Pickering must be consistent with Provincial and Regional policies, there remains a significant opportunity for Council, residents and stakeholders to shape how Pickering looks and feels as it grows.

Understanding what values are most important to current residents and businesses, while providing opportunities for new residents and businesses, will help Pickering move forward in a positive way. Now is the time to provide input on what we want future growth to look like and how we want to shape our city moving forward.

The Official Plan Review is planning for growth to 2051, as Pickering is required to. However, there will be opportunities between now and 2051 to revisit and modify the Official Plan, as needed, to ensure that the Official Plan continues to meet the City's changing needs. This ensures that as change occurs, we understand how it is impacting Pickering and can make adjustments or respond to changes as required.

## Let's connect!

### How to get involved

1. Participate in one of the public information centres on **November 27, 2024 (in-person)** or **November 28, 2024 (virtual)**
2. View the background information on our web page – [Pickering.ca/PickeringForward](https://Pickering.ca/PickeringForward)
3. Complete the online survey
4. Send your questions/comments to us – [PickeringForward@Pickering.ca](mailto:PickeringForward@Pickering.ca)

# Next Steps

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 spring 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 (January 2025)
4. Agriculture and Rural Areas (March 2025)
5. Community Components/Elements (May 2025)
6. Housing and Affordability (May 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 I 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](https://Pickering.ca/PickeringForward)

**Pickering Forward E-mail:** [PickeringForward@Pickering.ca](mailto:PickeringForward@Pickering.ca)



# Appendix

## Appendix 1 – Urban Design Concepts

### Transit Oriented Developments

A reoccurring theme in Provincial and Regional policy changes is to direct significant growth to transit stations and corridors to take advantage of higher-order transit infrastructure. This is identified as Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). It refers to the clustering of high-density, compact development in close proximity to transit infrastructure.

With denser area clustering around transit stations and corridors, it is essential to plan for these areas to be complete, healthy, sustainable, diverse, and welcoming communities.

In May 2024, the Region of Durham Council endorsed the 2024 Durham Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Strategy. The strategy is a tool for planning and designing TOD places in Durham Region. Council, residents and stakeholders can use elements of the strategy to rethink or reimagine how Strategic Growth Areas around major transit can look. In Pickering the City Centre and Kingston Road Corridor can take advantage of these concepts as well as other intensification areas such as the regional corridors. The full document can be found on the Region of Durham website ([Durham Transit Oriented Development Strategy](#)).

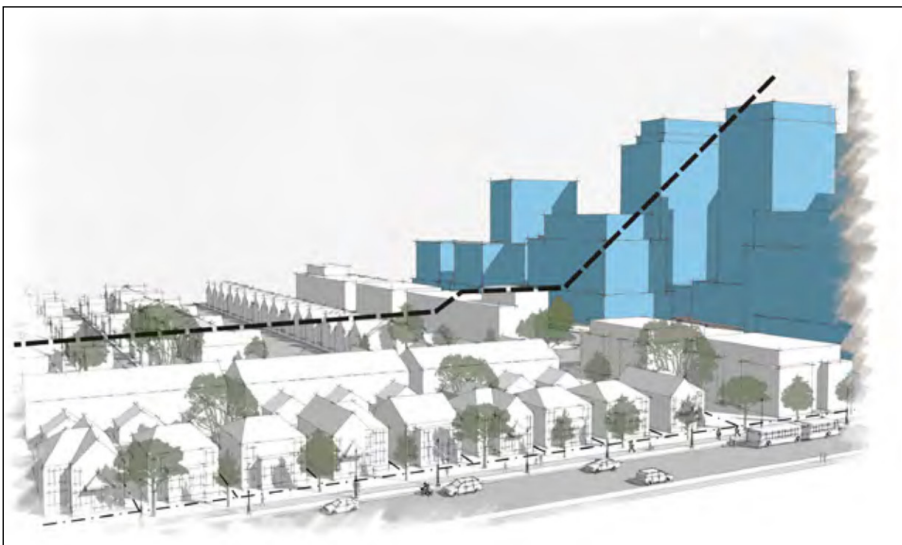


**Above:** Conceptual demonstration of TOD Strategies in GO Station Areas. Credit: Urban Strategies. **Top-Right:** Conceptual illustration of a fine-grained street and block network within TOD communities. Credit: Urban Strategies. **Bottom-Right:** c Credit: Urban Strategies.

## Transition and Massing

Appropriate transition between denser areas and existing low-density residential neighbourhoods are crucial in reducing shadowing and visual impacts to existing neighbourhoods and to create human scaled developments. Below are some best practices to regulate this transition:

- Direct highest density buildings to Strategic Growth Areas located on major corridors, along Highway 401.
- Utilize mid-rise buildings and low-rise buildings as transitions to existing low density neighbourhoods, to avoid shadow impacts.
- Apply appropriate angular plane to new buildings to reduce visual impact and create a proper transition for new development adjacent to low density residential neighbourhoods.
- Design buildings with a defined base, middle and top section to emphasize human scale dimensions

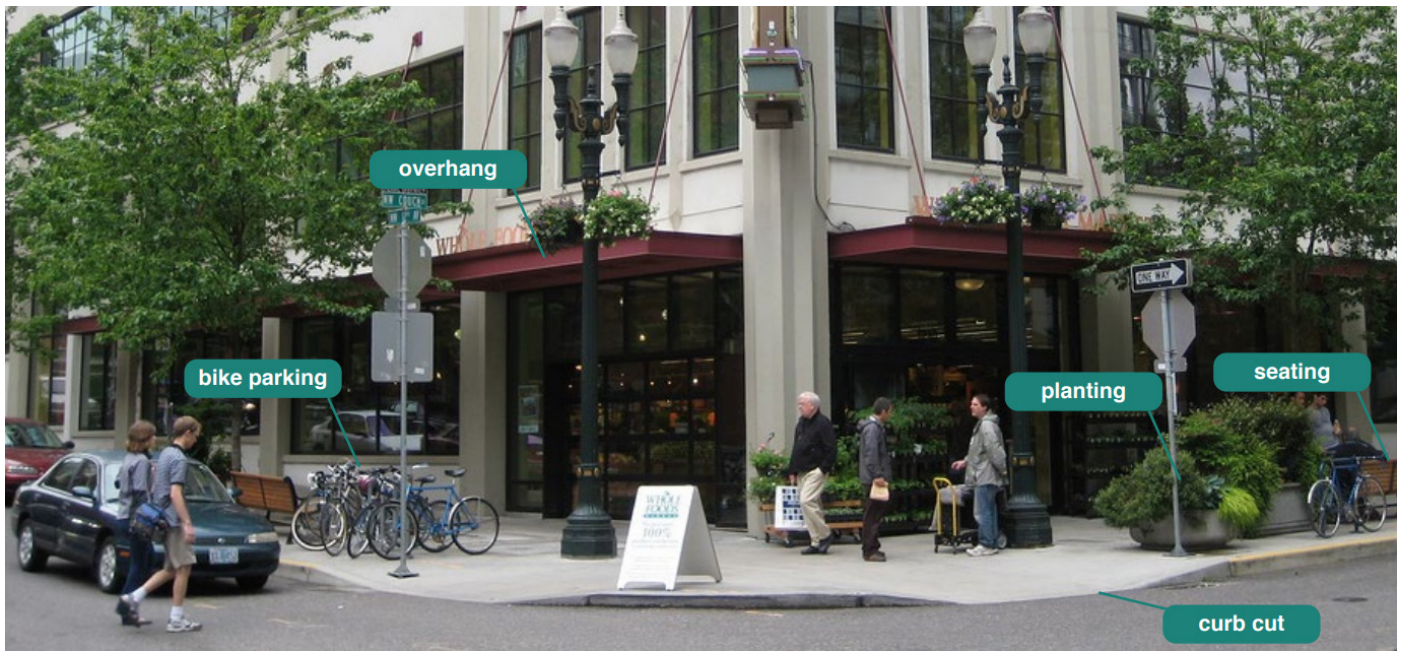


**Above:** Conceptual illustration of progressive transition of height and scale from growth areas to stable neighbourhood areas. Credit: City of Ottawa.

**Top-Right:** The base, middle, and top sections of a building. **Bottom-Right:** A mix of building types and scales in new development supports transition from higher density neighbourhoods to low-rise areas. Credit: SVN.

**10. Which of the best practices for transitioning from higher density to lower density are most important?**





Street elements that contributes to a dynamic streetscape. Credit: Urban Strategies.

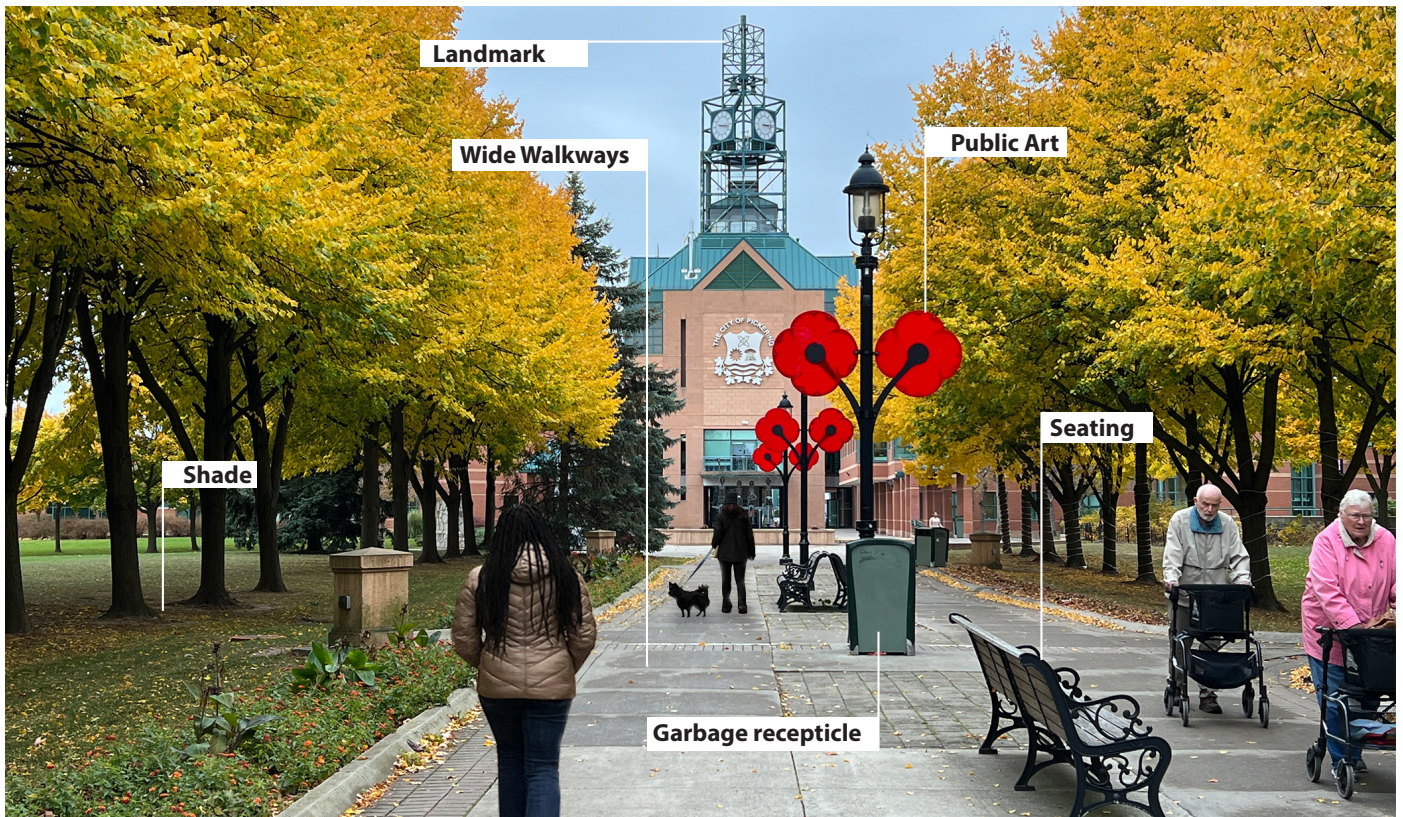
## Creating Street Edges and Streetscapes

Creating unique and active street edges, between a building and the street, provides opportunities for dynamic and lively streetscapes. A dynamic streetscape benefits all users of the road, especially pedestrians, to make traveling safer, and more pleasurable. Examples of best practices to foster a lively streetscape include the following:

- Occupy ground floors of buildings along streets with “active” uses such as restaurants, retail, personal service and other similar uses to animate the street edge.
- Align buildings to create a consistent street wall.
- Avoid blank walls, above grade parking and other “inactive” frontages along major roads and pedestrian streets.
- Incorporate transparent glazing, windows, doors, and other treatments that enable the activities within the building to animate the space outside.
- Include awnings, upper-level overhangs or canopies to provide weather protection and animate storefronts.
- Design sidewalks and walkways to be continuous, with ample room for pedestrians and a full range of amenities including street trees, benches, lighting, and garbage/recycling receptacles.

**11. Which of the best practices for achieving active streetscapes listed above are most important to you?**





Design elements in Esplanade Park that makes it a vibrant public space.

## Creating Public Spaces and Placemaking

Public spaces and places are important components of the public realm. They provide spaces for people to congregate and create a sense of place. Well-designed public spaces contribute to a vibrant community and animated streets. Below are some best practices to achieve vibrant public spaces:

- Design local streets and open spaces with the flexibility to host multiple types of events, including markets, festivals, and other cultural activities.
- Develop public art and place-making strategies in collaboration with the local community in creating welcoming spaces for a diverse range of users of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.
- Design public squares to be open to public and accessible at all times without physical barriers or gates.
- Cultivate a dense and diverse mix of uses through programming of spaces or providing opportunities for organic congregations of people.

**12. Which of the best practices for achieving vibrant public spaces are most important?**



## **Appendix 2 – 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**

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**

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**

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 3 – Official Plan Review Timeline

