







City of
PICKERING

Recreation & Parks Ten Year Plan

2024 - 2034

City of Pickering
August 2024

mbpc
Monteith • Brown
planning consultants

City of PICKERING

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We appreciate the valuable input provided by Pickering residents, community groups, and partners into this Recreation & Parks – Ten Year Plan. We also recognize the insightful contributions from elected officials and staff of the City of Pickering. Your passion for our recreational spaces and parks has been instrumental in crafting a plan that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of our community.

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Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that the City of Pickering resides on land within the Treaty and traditional territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation and Williams Treaties signatories of the Mississauga and Chippewa Nations. Pickering is also home to many Indigenous persons and communities who represent other diverse, distinct, and autonomous Indigenous nations. This acknowledgement reminds us of our responsibilities to our relationships with the First Peoples of Canada, and to the ancestral lands on which we learn, share, work, and live.



Executive Summary

Pickering is a fast-growing and culturally-diverse community within the Greater Toronto Area, offering a blend of urban and rural settings along a picturesque Lake Ontario waterfront. The City boasts high quality parks, recreation, and culture programs and facilities that contribute to the personal health and wellbeing of residents and the community in so many ways.

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

Rapid and significant population growth is the single biggest challenge that the City will face in the coming years. Over the ten-year projection period of this study (2024-34), the City is projected to grow to approximately 149,000 persons – growth of 45%.[1] This Ten Year Plan will help position the City to respond to this growth, deliver efficient, inclusive, relevant, and valuable municipal services and, at the same time, remain fiscally prudent.

In charting a course for the next decade, the Plan:

- provides guidance on maintaining service levels in the face of rapid population growth, most notably for recreation facilities and parkland provision;
- considers emerging activities where supported by demonstrated needs, including both structured and unstructured recreational activities;
- identifies options for addressing aging infrastructure;
- includes a comprehensive Arena Strategy (under separate cover) that identifies future needs and provision strategies;
- offers new approaches for maximizing parkland supplies within growing neighbourhoods;
- provides direction on how to unlock the benefits of participation for all, including under-represented populations; and
- provides tools for managing a broad range of partnerships and relationships that build community capacity and enhance public access to quality services.

[1] City of Pickering. Detailed 20 Year Population Forecast. March 2023.

A comprehensive public and stakeholder engagement program was initiated to ensure that the Plan responds to local aspirations, values, and priorities. Where appropriate, additional consideration was also given to participation trends, leading practices, socio-demographic data, and growth projections.

There is much to be learned from the input provided by Pickering's youth, residents, and organizations. Just some of the key themes that emerged from the engagement program include:

- **Recreation and parks are critical to resident wellbeing.** 92% of residents agree that City of Pickering recreation facilities are important to their quality of life.
- New **indoor spaces and programs** are needed to keep pace with a growing population, especially pools and gymnasiums in the Seaton area.
- **Outdoor recreation demands** are on the rise, such as trail use, racquet sports (tennis, pickleball, etc.), skateboarding, basketball, outdoor skating, and more.
- **Youth** are seeking more after-school recreation and arts-based activities in accessible and convenient locations.

Pickering strives to be a complete, world class city...inclusive, connected, caring and prosperous. A key part of this corporate vision is recognizing the important contributions that recreation and parks services make to the community's health, wellbeing, and overall quality of life. These services also benefit other community priorities and the public realm, such as active transportation, climate change mitigation, social equity, economic growth and tourism, environmental health, and more.

Recreation and parks are worthy of sustained investment and enhanced focus. To inform the recommendations of this Ten Year Plan – as well as future decisions related to its implementation – a strategic framework has been developed.

Vision for Recreation and Parks:

Responsive recreation and park services that foster an active, inclusive, and connected community where everyone can participate.

Core Principles:

1. Exceptional Service
2. Financial Sustainability
3. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
4. Community Connectivity and Belonging
5. Adaptable and High Quality Spaces
6. Environmental Leadership and Innovation
7. Collaboration and Partnerships
8. Personal and Community Wellbeing

Within the Ten Year Plan are 101 recommendations, organized by subject area and summarized in Section 9 (Implementation), along with timing and funding considerations. While the Plan identifies many key priorities, the most important indoor recreation requirement in the short-term is the delivery of the **Seaton Recreation Complex & Library** – a multi-use facility that will serve as the heart of the Seaton community and be accessible by residents and visitors of all ages and abilities. Other notable priorities are summarized below (see Section 9 for a complete listing).

A. Indoor Recreation Facilities

i. initiate planning for the long-term **revitalization of the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex (CHDRC)** and consider relocating the **indoor tennis courts** to another location, possibly within an air-supported dome that also accommodates pickleball

ii. introduce **youth programming and space** within the CHDRC

iii. continue to explore options for the proposed **Seniors & Youth Centre** in Pickering's City Centre prior to 2034

iv. gradually reduce the number of **community halls** through attrition and/or improvements to nearby facilities; no new community halls are recommended

v. examine future programming needs and potential capital replacement of the **Dunbarton Indoor Pool**

vi. provide up to **15 indoor pickleball courts** by 2034 through the use of gymnasiums and multi-use spaces

vii. consideration of arena requirements through an Arena Strategy (endorsed by Council with amendments; contained under separate cover)

B. Outdoor Recreation and Park Facilities

i. continue to advance **park development** in Seaton and growing neighbourhoods to address growth related needs (playgrounds, splash pads, courts, etc.)

ii. earmark the Greenwood Conservation Lands and future district park as locations for **multiple sport fields**

iii. repurpose selected **surplus ball diamonds** in south Pickering

iv. develop up to **19 new outdoor pickleball courts** by 2034, including dedicated courts in Diana, Princess of Wales Park, Dave Ryan Community Park, and another location in Seaton

v. continue with plans for a refrigerated skating rink/water feature within **City Centre Park** and consider a refrigerated outdoor ice pad at the **Seaton Recreation Complex & Library**

vi. consider a covered multi-use pad in **Claremont Memorial Park** to support extended use for floor sports (ball hockey, skating, etc.), camps, and events

vii. work with the TRCA to enhance **Petticoat Creek Conservation Park** as a signature park site for large events and festivals

C. Parkland

i. adjust the City's **parkland classification system** (e.g., new park types in mixed use areas) and parkland dedication requirements identified in Bill 23

ii. adopt a minimum City-wide parkland provision target of **1.5 hectares per 1,000 residents** through to 2034

iii. prepare a **parkland acquisition strategy** to enhance current and future community access to parks; target the priority areas identified in the plan

iv. establish planning guidelines to evaluate proposals for **privately-owned public spaces (POPs) and strata parks** and the need for appropriate legal agreements

v. adopt a **"Parkland First" approach** that prioritizes parkland conveyance over cash-in-lieu of parkland; actively pursue direct purchase of land in priority acquisition areas and unserviced land with future parkland potential

vi. continue to **expand and connect the recreational trail network**

D. Recreation Service Delivery

i. increase **staffing levels** by providing **targeted leadership courses** in aquatics, programs, and camps; reach out to area school boards to assist

ii. establish strategies to assist not-for-profit groups in the **recruitment, training, and retention of volunteers** to support community-led recreation and sport programs

iii. seek sponsorships and sustainable funding to reintroduce the **Swim to Survive** program

iv. support the sport and recreation needs of **Indigenous Peoples** through collaboration with this community and supporting agencies

v. ensure that all public spaces are **safe and welcoming spaces for all users and staff**, including under-represented populations

vi. develop a **staff training and development continuum** that identifies the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies for each job type to keep staff performing at a high level and improve readiness for succession planning

vii. develop a **Ten-Year Staffing Plan** that reflects approved levels of service and changes in population-driven service requirements

Active implementation of the Recreation & Parks – Ten Year Plan is fundamental to its success. This requires coordinated efforts and a commitment from Council, staff, user groups, and the public, as well as a variety of funding sources.



1. Introduction

1.1 About the Ten Year Plan

Informed by extensive research and consultation with the community, the City of Pickering last prepared a Recreation and Parks Plan in December 2017. This plan has served as an effective guide for facility development, park planning, and service delivery since that time.

However, much has changed in the past seven years. The City is now planning for additional growth beyond that contemplated in past plans, with new residents – many with diverse cultural backgrounds – moving to Pickering every day. New recreation activities have emerged and others have grown in popularity, partly fueled by the pandemic and greater time spent outdoors and in smaller group settings. Opportunities to secure parkland for future generations through the development process have been reduced (most recently through Bill 23), necessitating new approaches for community building. Furthermore, the City's inventory of parks and recreation facilities is now a bit older, requiring greater attention to renewal and revitalization.

The time has come to update the Recreation and Parks Plan and establish progressive directions that support the City and community stakeholders in delivering responsive and sustainable facilities and services. More specifically, this Ten Year Plan provides direction and guidance for managing parks and recreation programs, infrastructure, and investment in a fiscally responsible manner for the period of 2024-2034. In doing so, the plan identifies the general types, quantities, locations, and timing of recreation services, facilities, and parks that are required to serve existing and future populations. It also considers the timing and priority of the recommendations, along with implementation strategies.

As noted in the City's Corporate Strategic Plan, rapid and significant population growth is the single biggest challenge that the City will face.

Over the ten-year projection period of this study (2024-34), the City is projected to grow to approximately 149,000 persons – growth of 45%.

A goal of this Ten Year Plan is to help position the City to respond to this growth, deliver efficient, inclusive, relevant, and valuable municipal services and, at the same time, remain fiscally prudent.

Notable amenities and services addressed within the plan include (but are not limited to):

- **indoor recreation facilities** such as community centres, arenas[2], pools, seniors and youth space, sport facilities, and more;
- **outdoor recreation amenities** such as sports fields, sport courts, playgrounds, splash pads, skate parks, community gardens, and more;
- **parkland**, including future requirements across Pickering and within strategic growth areas (note: this Ten Year Plan will serve as a parks plan as required by the *Planning Act*); and
- **recreation services**, such as drop-in and registered programs, policies and practices, community supports, and more.

This Ten Year Plan is being prepared with the assistance of a consulting team and being informed by a wide-ranging engagement program targeting input from both internal (City staff, Council) and external (public, service providers) stakeholders. Additional consideration was also given to participation trends, leading practices, socio-demographic data, and growth projections.

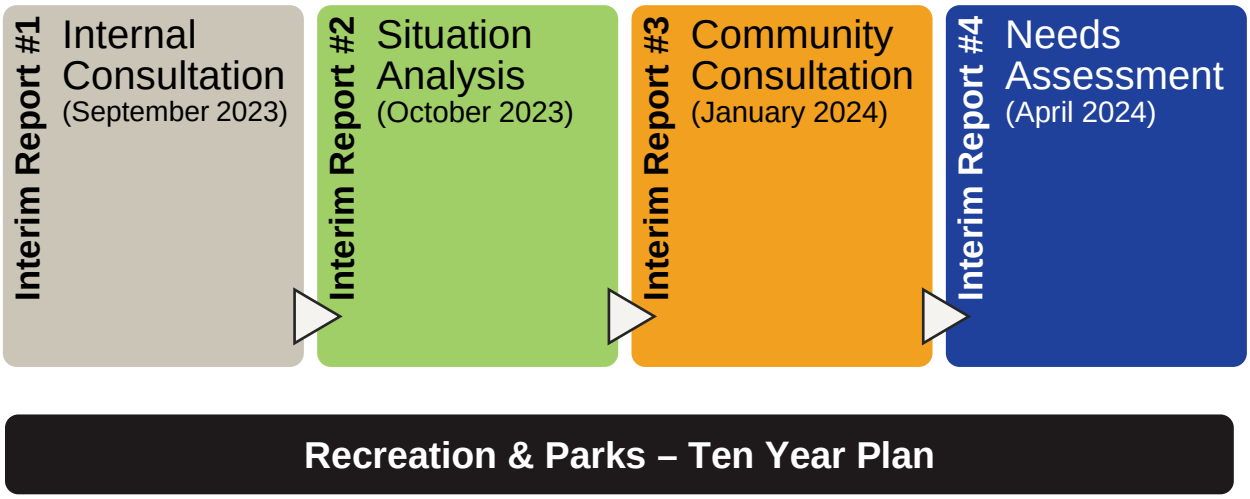
1.2 Study Process

The Recreation & Parks – Ten Year Plan establishes an approach to planning for the provision of recreation and parks facilities and services across the entire City of Pickering. Its focus is on recreation and parks facilities owned and/or operated by or in partnership with the City that support participation in sport, recreation, and leisure activities. This includes places and spaces that facilitate both structured and unstructured recreational experiences for the benefit of individuals and communities.

The methodology involved the preparation of a series of interim reports that build the foundation for the full plan, prepared by the Consulting Team and overseen by the City's inter-departmental Steering Committee. This includes: (1) an Internal Consultation Report outlining key issues and priorities identified by City officials and staff; (2) a Situation Analysis Report containing demographic profiles of the City, facility inventory details, trends research, and summaries of related policy documents; (3) a Community Consultation Report summarizing the results of the initial phase of public and stakeholder consultation; and (4) a Needs Assessment Report containing evidence-based assessments for all in-scope facilities and services. The Recreation & Parks – Ten Year Plan was formed from these reports and includes a multi-year implementation strategy that identifies synergies and priorities across the city and for all facility types.

[2] Note: Supported by the Ten Year Plan but delivered under separate cover is an Arena Strategy, a key initiative that was recommended within the 2017 Recreation and Parks Plan.

Figure 1: Ten Year Plan Deliverables



Additionally, an Arena Strategy was developed concurrently with the Ten Year Plan. Although the Arena Strategy is a distinct deliverable, the Ten Year Plan's internal and external consultation program was designed to inform both studies.

1.3 Needs Assessment Methodology

Creating a sustainable and equitable network of recreation facilities and parks for all community members requires considerable research and direction-setting. Regular monitoring and adjustments may be required as needs can be relative and may vary according to the type of facility and the communities they serve. In all cases, equity of access is the primary objective – ensuring that all residents have appropriate access to municipal recreation facilities and parks based on their interests.

This Ten Year Plan employs a standards-based gap and provision analysis that will help Pickering identify and plan for new parks and facilities as the city grows and needs evolve. Provision targets incorporating a multitude of variables (e.g., current service levels, socio-demographic and growth factors, public and stakeholder input, trends research, municipal benchmarking, municipal policy, etc.) have been established through an understanding of current service levels, usage, and demand indicators.

Examples of provision target types include:

- **Total Population:** Used to assess facilities that serve people of all ages, such as recreation complexes.
- **Target Population:** Used to assess facilities that serve distinct age groups, such as youth-based facilities.
- **Registered Participants:** Used to assess facilities that are mostly used through permitted rentals, such as arenas and sports fields.

- **Geographic Distribution:** Used to assess facilities with localized service areas to which residents may reasonably expect to walk or bike, such as playgrounds and outdoor courts.

The provision targets are evaluated against the spatial distribution and growth factors to determine potential gaps and needs now and into the future. To support this analysis, a comprehensive, integrated inventory of parks and facilities was prepared. It is vital that the City keep this inventory up-to-date to support future planning efforts and track progress.

All targets are intended to be applied flexibly and may be modified over time to remain responsive to local needs. Different targets may be established for unique circumstances, such as stable and growing communities with different urban structures. They are not intended to be strictly adhered to at the local level as each community may have different needs based on its unique characteristics.





2. Community Context and Growth

This section provides summaries of supporting research, including the City's demographic characteristics and growth forecasts. The implications of this information on facility and park planning are substantial and will assist in identifying key geographic areas and population groups that should be priorities for future investment.

2.1 Benefits of Recreation and Parks

Access to recreation and parks services is a fundamental human need in all ages and stages of life. People participate in recreational activities for fun, enjoyment, fitness and health, social interaction, creative expression, a desire to connect with nature, relaxation and to enhance their quality of life. Most people also understand and support the beneficial role that recreation and parks play in community development.

Recreation, parks, and related service providers play an important role in collectively enabling residents and families to reach their full potential. Each organization has an inherent responsibility to understand and respond to local social, environmental, and economic issues. Their role is to engage as many residents as possible in healthy and active pursuits, and to inform, educate, engage, and activate residents toward the common community good.

All recreation and parks facilities and the services they provide play a role in placemaking, socialization, inclusion, physical activity, culture, and the city's history. Many also address key drivers such as beautification, environmental stewardship, and poverty reduction, all of which serve to position Pickering as a great city. Recreation and parks facilities and services also help build strong neighbourhoods and improve quality of life for residents. An effective combination of recreation spaces and parks in the right places can have a significant impact on resident interaction, community building, and positive social outcomes.

A study "The Price of Inactivity: Measuring the Powerful Impact of Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation (SPAR) in Canada" was released in 2023 by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association and the Canadian and Fitness Lifestyle Research Institute. Summarized below, this data and the respective impacts on Canadian society are compelling and can assist all levels of government and related organizations make evidenced-based decisions on investments in recreation and culture.

Table 1: Summary of the Impact of Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation in Canada

Social	Health
• SPAR contributes $13.6 billion in volunteerism • 27% of Canadian adults actively volunteer in SPAR related activities • 76% of Canadians feel welcomed and included through SPAR activities • Programs, especially engaging older adults have the potential to reduce isolation and loneliness and improve social cohesion • 69% of Canadians agreed that SPAR contributes to reduction in harmful behaviours such as suicide ideation	• Physical inactivity accounts for $3.9 billion of annual healthcare expenditures • Certain conditions like heart disease, diabetes, obesity, anxiety, and depression disproportionately affect equity-seeking populations, such as women, older adults, Indigenous persons, those with disabilities and individuals from the LGBTQ2S+ community • Physical inactivity is a risk factor for mental illness; the cost associated with treating depression in Canada is approximately $409 million annually. A 10% decrease in physical inactivity can reduce this cost by 17.3% • SPAR has the potential to enhance cognitive function and overall mental health, crucial for quality of life and community prosperity
Economy	**Environment**
• SPAR contributes $37.2 billion to Canada's economy • Retail sales of SPAR products reached $23.3 billion in 2022, a 7% increase from the previous year, contributing $21.5 billion to GDP • The amusement, recreation, and sport sector added 42,728 jobs in 2022 compared to 2021 (not including the public sector) • Canadian governments invested $2 billion in SPAR infrastructure in 2022, with $1.5 billion coming from municipalities. Some municipal investment could be from federal or provincial/territorial funding (e.g., through grants and contributions)	• The replacement value of replacing SPAR infrastructure is estimated at $42.5 billion annually • If 1% of Canadians switched from car use to active transportation, $564 million could be saved in greenhouse gas emissions • A 2% increase in bicycle infrastructure investment can prevent up to 18 premature deaths and reduce carbon emissions by up to 142,000 tonnes over 10 years

The benefits of participation in recreation for individuals and communities are well documented. By focusing on key community priorities and monitoring progress, recreation and parks facilities are important indicators of Pickering's success.

2.2 Recent Accomplishments

Recreation and park facilities are vital contributors to strong, vibrant communities and help residents to achieve many of their personal goals. Pickering boasts high quality parks, sports fields, recreation and culture programs, and major parks and facilities such as the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex, Don Beer Arena, Pickering Museum Village, Pickering Soccer Centre, Petticoat Creek Conservation Park, and much more. These recreation and park services contribute to the personal health of residents as well as the wellbeing of the Pickering community.

In recent years, the City has initiated and completed several significant projects – many that were advanced through the 2017 Plan – including (but not limited to) the following.

a. Construction has begun on the **Pickering Heritage & Community Centre**, a new multi-use hub offering space for programs, events, and exhibitions.
b. Planning is underway on the **Seaton Recreation Complex & Library**, with the design process ongoing to be followed by construction starting in 2026.
c. The **Pickering Soccer Centre** was reopened following significant damage from a winter storm.
d. Council has confirmed the construction of City Centre Park (consisting of a water feature/skating rink, pavilion, public art, vendor space, etc.) as a priority; Phase 2 of the **City Centre Project** (including the proposed Senior & Youth Centre and Performing Arts Centre) has been deferred until 2028 for future consideration.
e. The City has initiated negotiations with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to enhance park amenities and year-round programming within **Petticoat Creek Conservation Park** project.
f. City of Pickering recreation programming has been expanded in **Claremont** and implementation continues on the Claremont Memorial Park concept plan.
g. Restoration and rehabilitation of **Rotary Frenchman's Bay West Park** has been completed and work will soon begin on **Beachfront Park**.
h. The **West Shore Skate Spot** opened in 2022.
i. The **running track** at Beverley Morgan Park was recently replaced.
j. The City is in process of adding 4 new (shared) **pickleball courts** in Shadybrook Park.
k. Dunmoore Park **tennis courts** have been reconstructed this year.
l. Various **playground improvements** have been completed across the city and more are underway.
m. Planning and development of many **new community parks, neighbourhood parks, and village greens** for the Seaton community are underway.
n. The Region is advancing planning for the **Durham Meadoway**, a proposed pedestrian and cycling route and linear park across Durham Region.

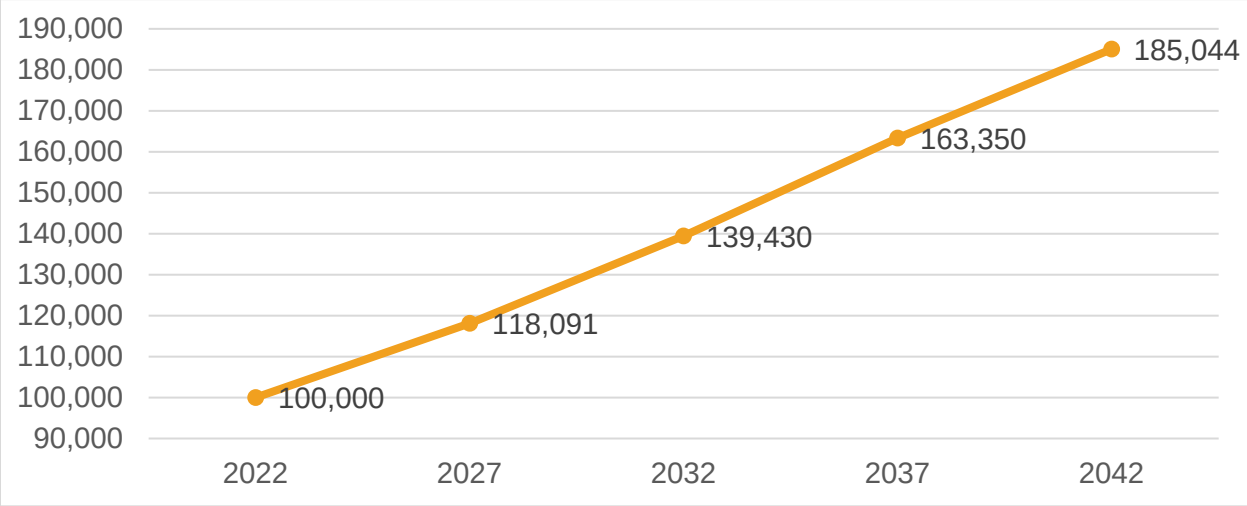
2.3 Planning for Growth

Until recently, population growth in Pickering has been quite. This has begun to change with the development of the Seaton community in Central Pickering and residential intensification within the City Centre and Kingston Road corridor. Between the 2016 and 2021 Census periods, the City grew from 91,771 to 99,186 persons. This is a five-year growth rate of 8%, representing an average annualized growth rate of 1.6%. Durham Region also grew by 8% over the same period.

An estimate of **103,000 persons** for 2024 will be used as a baseline population for this Ten Year Plan[3].

Pickering is set to undergo substantial growth in the years to come. **Over the ten-year projection period of this study (2024-34), the City is projected to grow to approximately 149,000 persons – growth of 45%.** By 2042, this figure is forecasted to grow to 185,044 – growth of 80% from 2024[4]. The Region has also set a longer-term population forecast for Pickering of 256,370 persons by 2051 – this would require an expansion of the current urban area boundary.[5] Part of this growth is attributed to the provincial housing target of 13,000 units to be achieved by 2031, an average of 1,300 units per year for the next decade. These forecasts are much higher than previous estimates, including the ones included in the 2017 Plan.

Figure 2: City of Pickering Population Forecast for 2022 to 2042



Source: City of Pickering. Detailed 20 Year Population Forecast. March 2023.

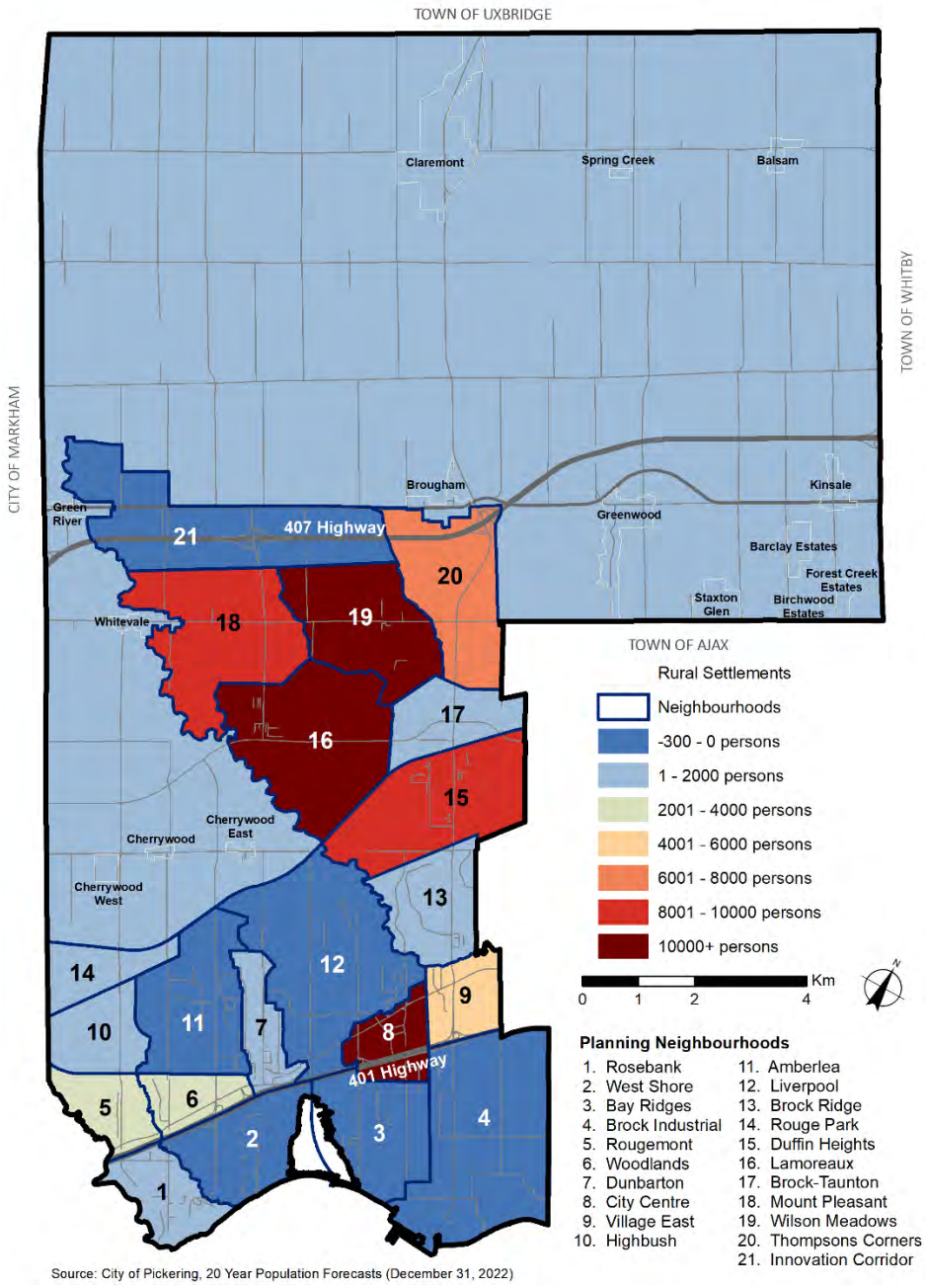
Planned population growth is allocated to new communities and strategic growth areas. This includes the Seaton community in central Pickering, which will be home to 70,000 new residents within a more traditional greenfield subdivision (featuring mixed housing

[3] Rounded from the 2024 estimate of 102,919 persons from the City of Pickering Detailed 20 Year Population Forecast (March 2023).
[4] City of Pickering. Detailed 20 Year Population Forecast. March 2023.
[5] Region of Durham. Envision Durham: Official Plan (adopted). May 2023.

styles and designated employment lands), integrated with a thriving agricultural community and an extensive Natural Heritage System. Furthermore, higher density residential intensification is planned for the City Centre, Brock Road, and Kingston Road Corridor area, which are intended to be compact, walkable, close to transit, and environmentally sustainable communities.

The following map and table illustrate planned population growth to 2042 by neighbourhood based on active residential development applications and potential growth on vacant lands.

Figure 3: Projected Population Change by Neighbourhood, 2022 to 2042



Source: City of Pickering, 20 Year Population Forecasts (December 31, 2022)

Recreation and parks facilities and services are essential to fostering complete communities, including areas that are beginning to experience residential intensification. Within these areas, more compact urban built forms (e.g., condominium towers, townhouses, etc.) are becoming more common, resulting in higher population densities and putting pressure on existing systems such as recreation complexes and parks. Planning for this transformation has been many years in the making and remains ongoing.

Life in mixed use areas with mid- to high-rise buildings will differ in several ways to that in traditional suburban neighbourhoods and people will interact with public space differently. Some of the anticipated considerations of these changes are noted below.

- As the amount of private space shrinks, the public realm will increasingly become an extension of people's homes. Higher quality and more robust public amenities will be required, including "third places" where people can gather and socialize freely.
- Given housing affordability challenges, families are likely to turn to condo ownership as places to raise their children, placing pressure on recreation programs (e.g., swimming, etc.) and park spaces. The lack of backyard space will create challenges and place greater importance on the ability of public space to serve more people, more often, and in different ways.
- Condo amenities can include leisure-activity spaces; however, these are not typically supervised or programmed in the same way as municipal facilities and will be generally be smaller and of variable quality.
- Active transportation routes (trails, cycling corridors, etc.) and public transit that connect residents to key recreation and park destinations in other locations of the city will be vital to ensuring that residents have ready access to amenities and activities that are not possible to provide locally, such as sports fields and exposure to more naturalized settings.
- Higher-order facilities such as recreation complexes, artificial turf fields, event venues, etc. may be more viable within high density areas due to the larger market. However, land economics suggest that building footprints will need to be significantly smaller, creating the need for multi-storey construction, reduced space allocations, less parking, and space-saving partnerships. Conversely, there may be requests for extended hours and services.
- Public spaces will be more diverse, accessible, flexible, dynamic, and safe, supporting year-round public life and setting the stage for daily social interaction and community building. Pickering will also seek to enhance and expand connectivity to Wi-Fi, digital sources, social media, eSports, artificial intelligence, virtual and self-serve technologies, and more within its public spaces and facilities.
- In general, the changes in built form and population growth associated with these growth areas will require innovative and integrated approaches to the funding

and delivery of recreation services, including partnerships, co-locations, and more.

New space and facilities should keep pace with growth to ensure that residents and workers will be served by new, improved, and expanded recreation facilities and parks. The City's ability to grow depends on responding to the demand for new or additional services and facilities in a timely and coordinated way.

2.4 Other Demographic Considerations

Age

Age is an important factor for planning recreation facilities and parks. While 26% of Pickering's population is represented by adults ages 35 to 54 years, the size of this age cohort has been declining over the past 10-years as older adults (38%) and seniors (43%) have experienced the most significant increases (2021 Census).

With the exception of youth who have decreased by a rate of 14%, the City has experienced an increase in each of the other age cohorts between 2011 and 2021. Pickering's 40.8-year median age is slightly older than that of Durham Region (40.0 years), but younger than that of the Province (41.6 years). The following table and figure show the distribution and growth of Pickering's population over the past three census periods.

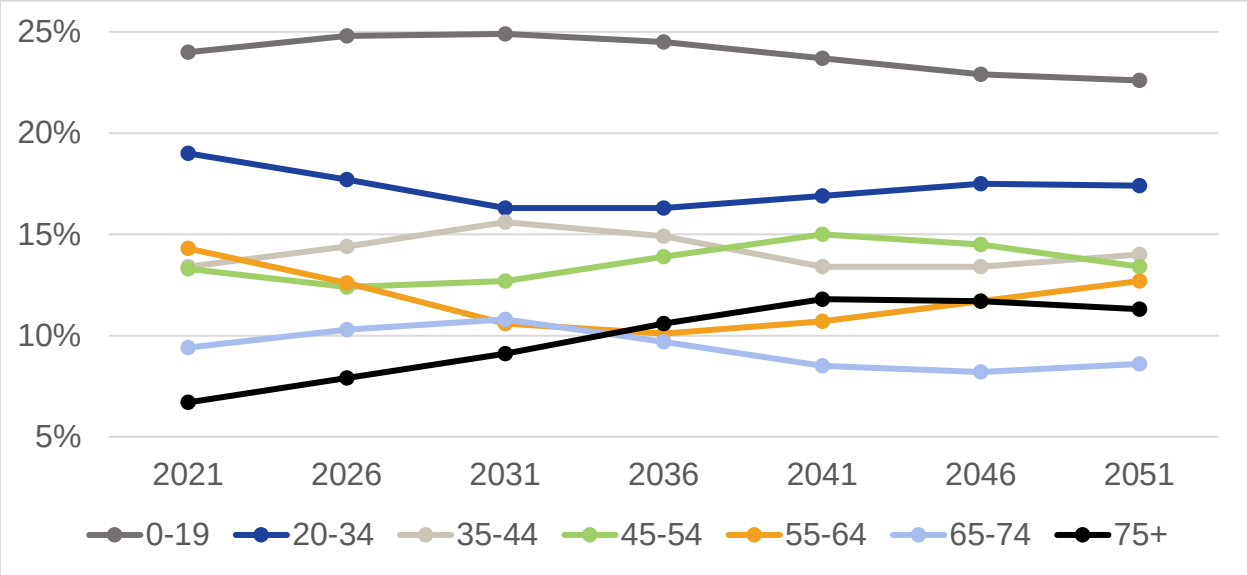
Table 2: Population by Age Group, City of Pickering (2011 to 2021)

Age Cohort	2011	2016	2021	Change from 2011-2021
Children (ages 0 to 9)	9,035	9,455	10,785	19%
Youth (ages 10 to 19)	13,425	11,750	11,530	-14%
Young Adults (ages 20 to 34)	15,845	17,610	19,525	23%
Adults (ages 35 to 54)	27,910	25,930	26,040	-7%
Older Adults (ages 55 to 74)	17,945	21,575	24,800	38%
Seniors (ages 75 and over)	4,550	5,470	6,525	43%
Total	88,720	91,771	99,186	12%
Median Age	40.7	41.6	40.8	0%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada

Looking forward to the year 2051, the population in Durham Region (and – by extension – Pickering) is forecasted to continue to get older, with the number of seniors (age 75+) expected to grow faster than all other age cohorts. Age-specific forecasts are not available only for the City of Pickering and it is possible that Pickering will experience different rates of growth across its age spectrum as development occurs within the city's strategic growth areas and new communities.

Figure 4: Durham Region, Total Population Forecast Shares by Major Age Group, 2021 to 2051



Source: Region of Durham, Region-Wide Growth Analysis Technical Report (June 2021)

Income

Research has found that income levels influence (or at least are an indicator of) participation levels in recreation and sport opportunities. 2021 Census data indicates that the City's median household income of $118,000 ($102,000 after-tax) was 10% higher than the Durham Region median and 30% above the provincial median. The City's median household income rose by 18% from five years prior. Higher incomes can contribute to high expectations for recreation facility provision and service delivery.

Municipalities are mindful of offering more low-to-no cost recreation offerings where possible. While Pickering's households have higher incomes than most communities, the City provides several accessible low cost and subsidized recreation programs for residents.

Income disparity is a growing concern in many Ontario communities as less affluent individuals are less likely to participate in leisure activities than their more affluent peers. Municipalities are mindful of offering more low-to-no cost recreation offerings where possible.

In 2020, Pickering had 2,870 residents living below Statistics Canada's low-income cut-off, after tax (LICO-AT), amounting to 2.9% of the overall population. This is down considerably from 2015, when 6.4% of the population was identified as low-income. For comparison, 2.9% of Durham Region residents and 5.3% of Ontario residents were below the low-income cut-off in 2020.

Immigration and Diversity

Pickering has a diverse population that is represented by changing demands for recreation and sport. Notable is the significant population of visible minorities, which account for 52% of the population in 2021 (up from 43% in 2016). There are several studies that demonstrate that additional barriers to participation exist for residents of our BIPOC communities[6].

The distribution of official languages spoken most often at home in Pickering is 82% English, 0.4% French, and 12.3% non-official languages. Non-official languages are mainly represented by Tamil (2%), Urdu (2%), Tagalog (Pilipino, Filipino) (0.7%), Gujarati (0.6%), and Mandarin (0.6%).

As the city has grown, its population has also become more diverse. Between the 2016 and 2021 Census periods, the number of Pickering residents born outside of Canada increased by 15% (adding 2,820 persons) – nearly two out of every five (38%) new residents in Pickering were newcomers to Canada. Whereas immigrants to Canada accounted for 34% of the population in 2016, newcomers comprise 36% of all Pickering residents in 2021 and this figure is expected to rise into the future.

Newcomers to Canada are more likely to reside in growing areas such as Seaton and intensifying areas closers to Highway 401.

2.5 Leading Studies and Corporate Reports

The City of Pickering and other public agencies have authored several studies, reports, and plans that help to directly and indirectly inform and guide the provision and delivery of recreation and parks services and facilities. A listing of all relevant reports reviewed during the planning process can be found in **Appendix A**; their relevant findings are described in more detail within supporting documents.

2.6 Recreation and Parks Trends and Best Practices

Trends and best practices have played a significant role in shaping this Ten Year Plan. They serve as valuable guides and benchmarks for planning, helping to improve the relevance, innovation, and alignment of planning efforts. By staying informed and adaptive to evolving trends, this plan can effectively meet community needs now and in the future. Notable trends and best practices are listed in **Appendix B** and are described in more detail within supporting documents.

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[6] One such example: “More than one in three Black youth, one in four Indigenous youth, and one in five BIPOC youth reported having directly experienced racism in sport.” MLSE Foundation (2021). https://www.mlsefoundation.org/news-stories/mlse-foundation-reveals-change-the-game-research-results

2.7 Preliminary Research Findings

Key findings from the initial situation analysis phase are summarized below. These themes (which are listed in no particular order) were considered in subsequent project phases along with public input and local demand indicators to inform the Ten Year Plan's recommendations.

Population Growth	After years of little change, Pickering is poised for substantial population growth. By 2042, the City's population is forecasted to grow to 185,044 – an increase of 85%. These forecasts are much higher than previous estimates, requiring thoughtful but significant adjustments to past recreation and park planning strategies. New recreation and parks facilities will be required to address growth-related demands, as well as changing participation. Park creation is lagging behind past standards, making it more difficult to establish the land base required for active and passive uses. Greater pressure will also be placed on existing assets to meet the demands of a growing population.
Urban Form	As Pickering grows, its urban form will change. Population growth is allocated to new communities and strategic growth areas such as Seaton, City Centre, Brock Road, Kingston Road Corridor area, and emerging Northeast Pickering area. The City's planning policies support higher population densities in strategic growth areas. Higher residential densities often mean less private space (e.g., living space, backyards, etc.), making it more critical that public spaces be accessible, well designed, and capable of accommodating more intense use.
Participation Trends	Pickering is changing and recreational needs are expanding as different interests and new trends emerge. Pickleball and outdoor activities are just some of the options that residents are looking for within the City's facilities and parks. Flexible and inclusive spaces are needed to address current priorities and those to come. Monitoring of trends in sports and activities allows the City to look toward a balanced range of amenities when and where they are needed. Flexibility in park and facility design also helps the City respond to these changing participation patterns.

Evolving Demographic Profile	Pickering's population has been aging over the past decade, with increases in the number of older adults and seniors, coupled with a decrease in the youth population. This trend is forecasted to continue across Durham Region, with the number of seniors expected to grow faster than all other age cohorts. These trends have led to increased demand for a wider variety of interests, including both active pursuits (e.g., pickleball, hiking, etc.) and more passive activities (e.g., hobbies, socials, special events, etc.). With slower growth projected for child and youth cohorts, the demand for active sports amenities targeted to these populations can also be expected to slow. The current economic circumstances are challenging for many Pickering households, with many facing barriers in accessing leisure opportunities. Accessible spaces and affordable services are critical to ensuring that everyone can participate fully. Pickering also has a diverse population, including a large BIPOC community, and much of the City's future growth is expected to be include newcomers to Canada. This will create new demands on recreation and parks services such as culturally-appropriate programming, picnic and special event spaces, cricket fields, etc.
Pandemic Implications	The pandemic will have a lasting impact on the recreation and parks sector, which is increasingly being viewed as essential not only to physical health, but also mental wellbeing. For example, unstructured park use has increased, helping people stay active and connected. Many recreation activities have grown or emerged through the pandemic as people have found new interests and are trying to catch up for lost time. Conversely, some organized sports have not fully rebounded and rising costs are becoming a new concern for many. Long-term planning and strategic investment are vital to support the significant role that these spaces play in our personal, social, and economic recovery and revitalization.
Facility Provision & Benchmarking	Facility provision ratios and municipal benchmarking are just some of the tools that are used in identifying long-term infrastructure needs. At a preliminary level, this data recognizes some gaps in facility distribution and identifies key priorities for growth-related facility development. With guidance from past plans, the City has several projects in the planning and construction pipeline that will help address growing needs relative to multi-use recreation complexes, outdoor courts, and more.

Project Alignment	Recent and relevant policy direction provides a strong foundation upon which to build this Recreation & Parks – Ten Year Plan. Innovation, sustainability, and community building are just some of the common threads that are woven throughout the City's planning documents – the plan's strategic framework will seek alignment wherever possible.
Previous Plan	The 2017 Plan helped to guide the City's recent capital program – 73% of its recommendations have been completed or are in progress. Short-term planning helps the City to respond to emerging needs in a timely fashion, while taking the long-view ensures that major infrastructure can be integrated into long-range financial plans. In the next phase of analysis, the recommendations from this previous plan will be reviewed and reassessed to align with current directions and updated information.
Potential Impacts of Bill 23	The *Planning Act* has undergone several amendments in recent years that represent fundamental changes in how growth planning is carried out in the province – this includes Bill 23 (More Homes Built Faster Act). One area of notable change is updated direction regarding the conveyance of parkland through the development approvals process. The changes will make it extraordinarily challenging for the City to realize established targets for parkland conveyance, especially within strategic growth areas. The policy and financial implications will be wide ranging as the City strives to maintain appropriate park provision levels through acquisition and other tools. Bill 23 also made sweeping changes to the *Development Charges Act*, shifting some of the cost of growth from developers to municipalities to incentivize housing affordability and supply. Overall, the City's estimated loss of Development Charge revenues is approximately $22.8 million over the next four years (2023-2026). This has the potential to delay the development of growth-related infrastructure or result in a reduction to service levels. Financial sustainability will be one of several goals advanced within this Ten Year Plan.


City of
PICKERING
Recreation Complex
POLICE
CP24
Welcome to the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex!
We have a Lot to Offer!
VOTING STATION
What activities do you want more of in Pickering?

3. Community Engagement

Public engagement for this Ten Year Plan is essential to creating more inclusive, responsive, and dynamic recreation and parks facilities and services that truly reflect the needs and aspirations of the community. This section summarizes the many ways in which the public have been involved within this planning process, including key themes from the consultations.

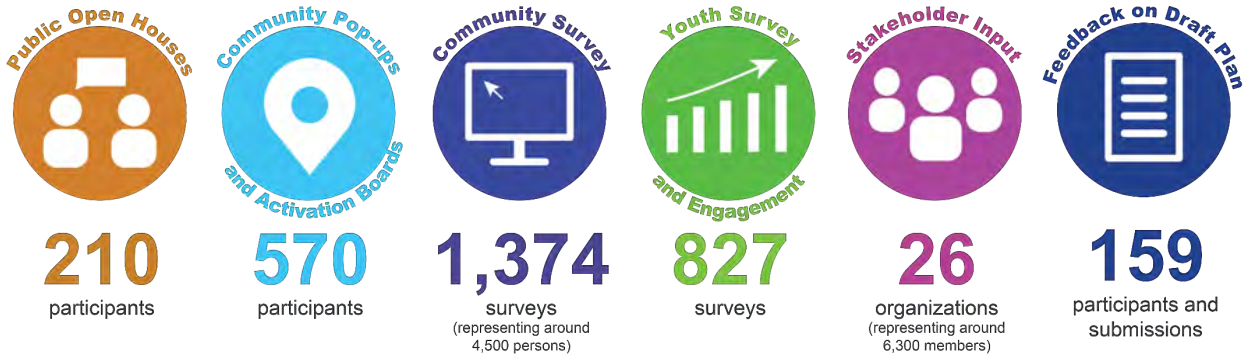
Through this plan, we have directly consulted with over 3,100 persons, representing priorities for over 12,100 residents and recreation participants.

3.1 Overview

Key engagement tactics utilized for this Ten Year Plan have included:

- **Public Open Houses** (in-person and virtual) to solicit input from the general public **(engaged 210 participants)** – input was also solicited through Activation Boards **(engaged 570 participants)** available at key facilities.
- An online **Community Survey (1,374 respondents representing an estimated 4,500 persons)** to gather opinions and preferences from residents.
- An extensive **Youth Engagement Program** led by the City of Pickering to engage students and local teens in the planning process – tactics included a youth-focused survey **(827 respondents)**, in-school presentations, and other information gathering options.
- **Stakeholder Input (26 groups participated representing an estimated 6,300 members)** through topic-based workshops and focused interviews to gather input from community organizations, volunteer associations, and user groups.
- An **Online Questionnaire (96 submissions, plus 3 stakeholder groups)** and **Public Open Houses (60 attendees)** in July 2024 to gather input on the draft Ten Year Plan.

Figure 5: Public Engagement Program Summary



3.2 Summary of Public Input

Input from the plan's community and stakeholder engagement is summarized below. These themes (which are listed in no particular order) have informed the Ten Year Plan's recommendations. Additional detail can be found in **Appendix C**.

Recreation and parks are critical to resident wellbeing	Recreation and parks are the building blocks of healthy, happy, and vibrant communities. 97% of residents agree that City of Pickering parks are important to their quality of life and 92% say the same about local recreation facilities.
New indoor spaces and programs are needed to keep up with a growing population	More than two-fifths (43%) of survey respondents indicated that they are not satisfied with the City's breadth of recreation programming. In particular, there is high demand for aquatic programs and access to city pools for both residents and clubs. Needs are also rising for gymnasium sports such as volleyball, basketball, and pickleball. Additionally, requests were also received for expanded and new programming (e.g., youth, older adults, arts, general interest, etc.) that cannot be accommodated within existing venues. Access to community recreation spaces is of particular importance to residents living in the growing Seaton community.
Outdoor recreation demands are on the rise	Residents place a high value on Pickering's parks and outdoor spaces. Unorganized outdoor activities increased during the pandemic and exposed residents to many traditional and emerging pursuits that remain in high demand, such as trail use, racquet sports (tennis, pickleball, etc.), skateboarding, basketball, outdoor skating, and more. Strong support was expressed for additional investment in outdoor spaces and amenities, including park washrooms, sport courts, playgrounds, splash pads, and open space to support events and picnicking.
Youth are seeking more after-school activities	Pickering's children and youth want to participate in more activities but are just as time-constrained as their parents. Scheduling activities after-school is preferred, but they must be in accessible and convenient locations. They expressed interest in seeing more unstructured and drop-in recreation opportunities (such as swimming, beach volleyball, basketball, etc.), as well as an expanded range of creative arts programs. Expanded Wi-Fi in parks and facilities was also suggested.

Sport participation is shifting	As the city's population grows and becomes more diverse (age, ethnicity, etc.), sport participation is also changing. Some traditional sports (such as ice hockey and baseball) are witnessing declining or stable participation profiles, while others (such as soccer, tennis, and swimming) are growing. Pickleball and cricket also represent just some of the emerging sports that are on the rise and need to be accommodated within the City's parks system. Further, some lower participation sports (such as squash and racquetball) have strong local followings and expect that service levels be maintained. Many sports associations are regional – crossing municipal boundaries – and residents frequently travel outside of Pickering to access programs and spaces that are not available locally. It will be important to understand what options existing within the region and Pickering's role in supporting the broader sport network. Some groups suggested a need to review the City's permitting process to ensure that local organizations receive priority access.
Maintaining affordability promotes participation and access	Three-quarters (73%) of residents feel that Pickering's program fees are reasonable and that maintaining affordability is a vital investment in the health of individuals and the community. Some community organizations and user groups expressed concern about rental rates and new pricing structures, but are largely satisfied with the level of service that these fees help to support. Improved public transit was also suggested as a way to ensure that the City's recreation and parks spaces are inclusive of all needs.
Challenges remain as we emerge from the pandemic	The COVID-19 pandemic was an unprecedented time for the recreation and parks sector and many community organizations continue to be presented with new challenges in this post-pandemic period. Declining volunteerism, rising costs, retention of girls/women in sport, and a lack of facility access are concerns for several groups, many of which are seeking ways to reduce the impact on their members so they can maintain strong registration levels. Interest in virtual programming was also expressed as a way to enhance accessibility and inclusion for all.

Residents value access to the waterfront, trails and natural areas	Walking is the most common activity for Pickering residents (followed by trail use and picnicking) and demand for trails and informal park spaces topped the list of infrastructure investments. Residents particularly enjoy access parks and trails along the waterfront and Frenchman's Bay, and place a high value on open space properties (many of which are operated by others, such as the Petticoat Creek Conservation Park). Stakeholder groups expressed an interest in expanding the trails network, improving connections to Rouge National Park, and enhancing waterfront access for activities such as canoeing and dragon boating. Climate change, environmental sustainability, and greenspace protection are also becoming more prominent themes in the City's future planning.
Partnerships and collaborations will be important to moving forward	There is a spirit of cooperation amongst community groups, as many recognize the challenges of facility development and are open to working together to achieve common goals. For example, some organizations are open to cost-sharing for facility enhancements. Long-term planning is essential to supporting a strong and diverse network of recreation providers, and community organizations are willing to collaborate.

The two graphs below illustrate two key questions from the 2023 community survey that have helped to inform the plan's recommendations, including:

- resident/household participation in recreation and park activities; and
- priority for public spending on various facility types.

Figure 6: During the past 12 months, please indicate the types of recreational or park activities that you and/or any members of your household have participated in (n=1374)

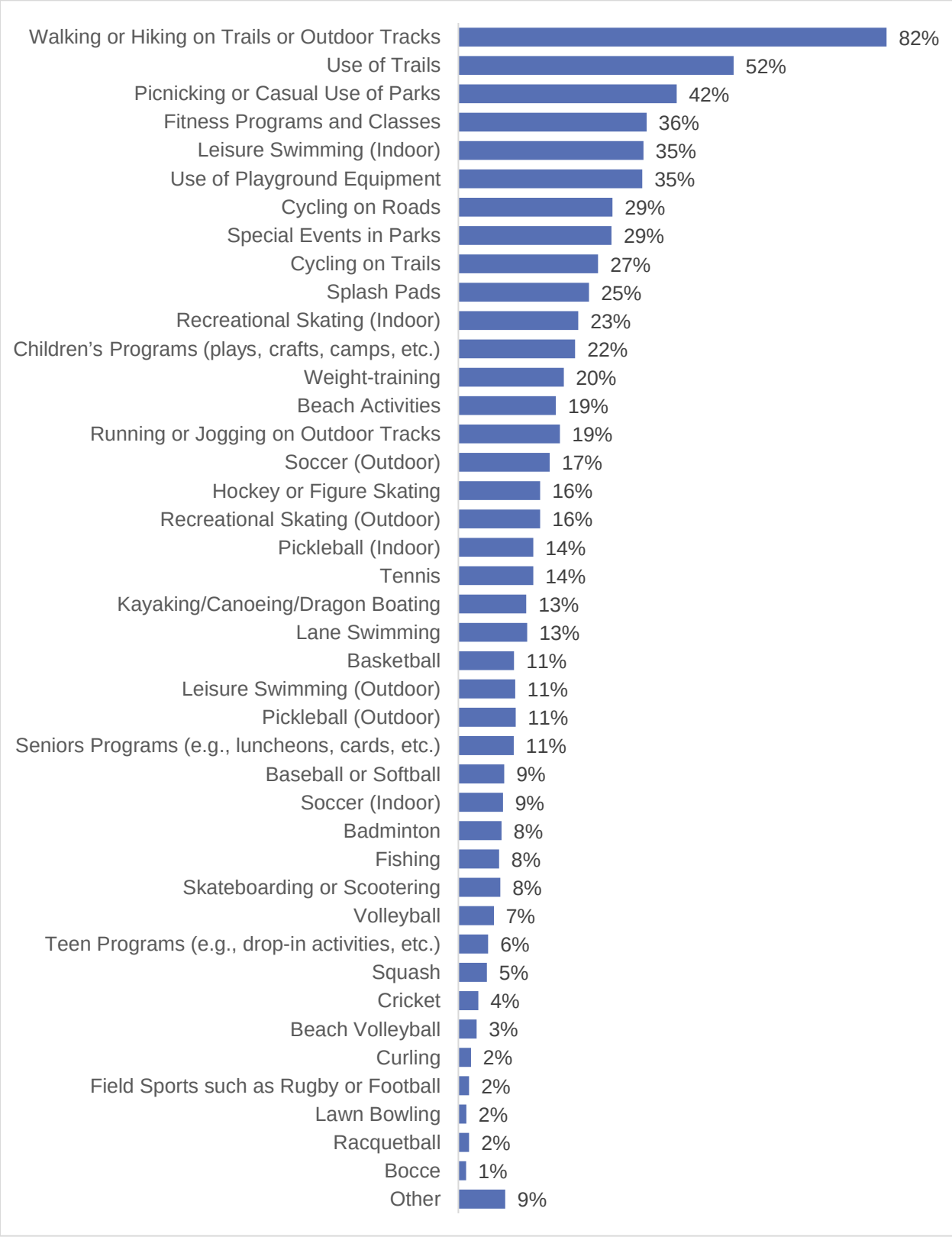
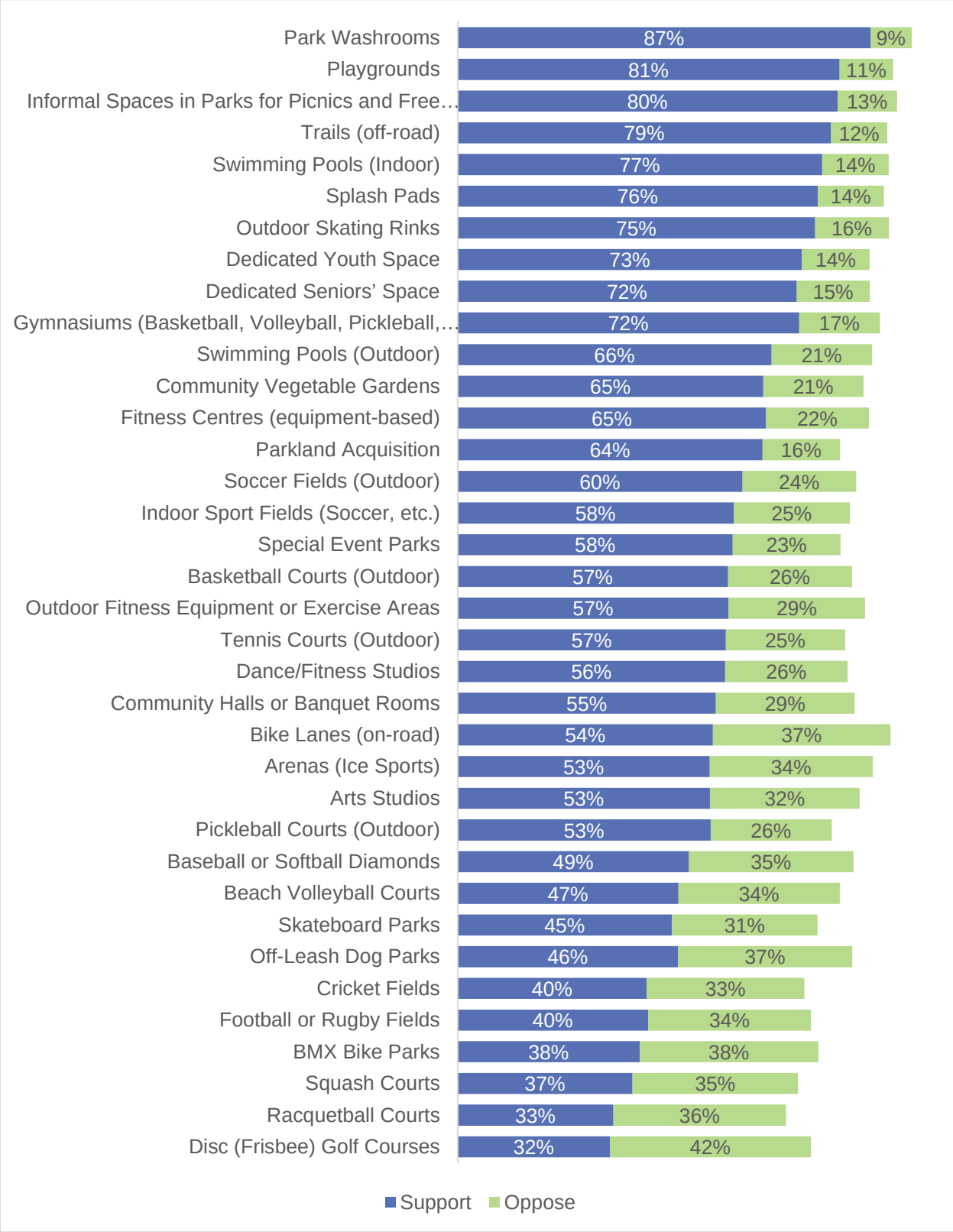


Figure 7: To what degree do you oppose or support the City spending additional public funds to provide more of the following types of facilities in Pickering?(n=1052-1131)



Note: "Don't Know" responses not shown.

3.3 Summary of City Input

Input from City Council and staff was equally important to the planning process. Key themes from these consultations are identified below (listed in no particular order).

Population and Growth-Related Capital Needs	After years of slow growth, Pickering's population is on the rise with substantial growth on the horizon (Seaton, Cherrywood, Northeast Pickering, etc.). This development will be focused on greenfield areas as well as strategic growth areas such as the City Centre, bringing higher density residential forms to the city, placing pressure on existing parks and facilities and generating demands for more. A key priority for the City will be advancing the development of a multi-use recreation complex in the Seaton area, which is needed to address growing demands for aquatic services and recreational programming of all types. Longer-term, additional recreation facilities and park amenities will be needed to respond to growth (especially in the north), greater cultural diversity, and changing interests. A focus should be placed on flexible spaces that can adapt to shifting needs.
Parkland Acquisition	A growing community will require new lands for recreation, community gatherings, sports, events, and respite. Expanding the City's parks system is a high priority, particularly larger parks that can support active play and sport as well as space for events and passive recreation. There have been regular requests for more amenities such as sport courts (basketball, pickleball), splash pads, skateboard parks, community gardens, and more. Recent changes to the *Planning Act* will reduce the amount and quality of lands (and funds) that the City can acquire for parkland in the future. The City must identify priorities and seek new and creative ways of securing lands, including optimizing existing spaces to respond to emerging needs.

Aging Facilities and Parks	Pickering's recreation facilities and parks are aging and many are approaching the end of their functional life, such as the West Shore Community Centre, Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex, Don Beer Arena, and single purpose halls/centres. This means that they are not only unable to adequately accommodate modern demands and uses, but that they require increasing investment and run a greater risk of failure. Moving forward, an emphasis needs to be placed on flexible, multi-use spaces that are accessible to all (e.g., barrier-free), in locations that can be accessed by active transportation and transit.
Outdoor Activities and Amenities	Demand for year-round outdoor recreation is on the rise. From active sports that require courts and fields, to walking and hiking on connected trail systems, to gathering together for picnics and community events. The City has been responding to these trends, but there is little additional space in its parks system to accommodate more. In addition to new parks, park renewal projects are another way that the City can address evolving needs, such as the recent improvements at Rotary Frenchman's Bay West Park. Installing services (e.g., parking, water, electrical, shade, etc.) in appropriate park sites will help to maximum functionality. Working with others to provide programming in parks and public spaces can also be anticipated.
Equity, Diversity, Inclusion	Pickering's population is becoming more diverse and the range of needs is widening. The City has prided itself on offering a range of affordable activities and it is vital that Pickering's parks, facilities, and programs continue to be designed to be welcoming and accessible to all, including equity-seeking populations. Greater intentional efforts are needed to include diverse populations in facility design, programs and services, as well as volunteerism and special events.

Staffing Levels	City staff are proud of the high quality and responsive services they offer. Employees work well together with the primary goal of serving the public interest. However, there is a sense that public needs are growing faster than staffing levels, creating gaps in service (e.g., aquatics, adult programming, service to growth areas, etc.). Creating a staff resource plan based on approved levels of service that supports incremental increases in staffing levels was suggested as a way to build capacity in line with community needs. How the City uses volunteers and works with community groups should also be reviewed.
Technology and Innovation	There is an interest in exploring new technologies and approaches that can create efficiencies, improve service, and measure performance. Digital and online services are one example that can increase user convenience while creating efficiencies. Different approaches are also being used to reduce environmental impacts and respond to climate change.
Communication and Marketing	The City has established effective networks and means of promoting services and opportunities, but there is a sense that more can be done to create public awareness of opportunities to participate and engage in recreation and parks services. There is also a desire to improve internal communication among staff teams, from daily tasks to corporate priorities.
Safety and Security	Staff have witnessed an increase in the number of volatile and aggressive behaviours from those using community facilities. Existing policies and procedures should be continually reviewed to ensure that intentional decisions are made to maintain the security of customers and staff.
Funding and Implementation	There is excitement as the City plans for Pickering's new growth, but concern that there may not be enough funding to fully support these needs. Capital projects are currently impacted by rising capital construction costs and rising high interest rates, significantly impacting the timing and financing of these projects. Creative approaches, partnerships, and optimization of available funding are necessary to ensure that projects move forward in a timely fashion in line with population growth. Following through on corporate priorities will be one of the ways that the City's performance is measured.



4. Strategic Framework

Pickering strives to be a complete, world class city...inclusive, connected, caring and prosperous. A key part of this corporate vision is recognizing the important contributions that recreation and parks services make to the community's health, wellbeing, and overall quality of life. These services also benefit other community priorities and the public realm, such as active transportation, climate change mitigation, social equity, economic growth and tourism, environmental health, and more.

Recreation and parks are worthy of sustained investment and enhanced focus. To inform the recommendations of this Ten Year Plan – as well as future decisions related to its implementation – a strategic framework has been developed. This framework creates focus for this plan and is intended to provide direction through Council to City staff and related partners and stakeholder groups.

The proposed vision and core principles reflect the City's values and express fundamentally how Pickering will approach investment and set priorities related to recreation and parks facilities and services over the long-term. To ensure alignment, connections have been made to the City of Pickering Corporate Strategic Plan (2024-2028). The vision and core principles are complementary and should be read and interpreted as a set.

Vision for Recreation and Parks:

Responsive recreation and park services that foster an active, inclusive, and connected community where everyone can participate.

Core Principles for Recreation and Parks
Corporate Strategic Plan Corporate Key: Good Governance/Customer Service Excellence
1. **Exceptional Service**: We are proactive and accountable to resident needs through exceptional customer service, responsive programming, proactive workforce training and development, and coordinated service delivery.
2. **Financial Sustainability**: Recreation and parks services offer intrinsic benefits to our community, but they must be delivered in a fiscally responsible manner. We will seek to balance the impact to taxpayers by pursuing creative funding approaches that support our core services and community priorities.

Core Principles for Recreation and Parks
Corporate Strategic Plan Priority 2: Advocate for an Inclusive, Welcoming, Safe & Healthy Community
3. **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**: We celebrate our diversity, support community members with diverse needs, foster a sense of belonging, show respect for all, and strive for fairness in our decision-making.
4. **Community Connectivity and Belonging**: We strive to remove barriers to participation that allow community members – including youth, seniors, newcomers, and vulnerable populations – to feel connected and safe. In part, we achieve this through affordable programs and events and accessibility to public spaces, parks, trails, and waterfront spaces.
Corporate Strategic Plan Priority 3: Advance Innovation & Responsible Planning to Support a Connected, Well-Serviced Community
5. **Adaptable and High Quality Spaces**: Recreation facilities and parks are critical places and spaces that are welcoming for all. We aim to meet the needs of current and future populations by optimizing existing assets and ensuring the timely delivery of growth-related infrastructure.
Corporate Strategic Plan Priority 4: Lead & Advocate for Environmental Stewardship, Innovation & Resiliency
6. **Environmental Leadership and Innovation**: We demonstrate environmental leadership by designing healthy, resilient, and sustainable parks and facilities and through responsible management practices. We seek opportunities to incorporate innovation in community infrastructure and operational practices.
Corporate Strategic Plan Priority 5: Strengthen Existing & Build New Partnerships
7. **Collaboration and Partnerships**: We foster collaboration and community partnerships that help improve service delivery, build capacity, engage volunteers, attain shared goals, and achieve our vision of an active, inclusive, and connected community.
Corporate Strategic Plan Priority 6: Foster an Engaged & Informed Community
8. **Personal and Community Wellbeing**: Participation and engagement in recreation creates healthier individuals and communities. We include as many residents as possible by supporting a wide variety of accessible programs and opportunities.


TAYLOR MOORE
SYMPHONY OF SECRETS
BRENDAN SLOCUMB

5. Indoor Recreation Facilities

From large recreation complexes to local community spaces, Pickering's recreation facilities are critical places where residents come together to participate in structured and unstructured activities, develop skills, create friendships, and build the kind of community in which we all want to live.

This section contains a needs assessment for indoor recreation facility, with recommendations supported by inventories, usage data, trends, public input, and related initiatives. While a focus is placed on needs for the next ten years (to 2034), a high-level, longer-term view is provided to 2042 given the amount of advance planning needed for major recreation infrastructure.

An inventory of indoor recreation facilities can be found in **Appendix D**, along with comparisons to provision levels in other municipalities. Other supporting materials, such as facility-specific trends, community input summaries, and usage analyses are contained in **Appendix E**.

5.1 Recreation and Community Centres

The City of Pickering offers three different types and scales of community and recreation spaces, with a variety of programming and operating models across these facility types:

- recreation complexes
- community centres
- community halls

These spaces are supplemented by stand-alone facilities offering sport- or activity-specific spaces, such as Dunbarton Indoor Pool, Don Beer Arena, Pickering Soccer Centre, Pickering Museum Village, etc. These facilities and their individual components are discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

Descriptions of existing, planned, and proposed community recreation facilities are summarized below, following the map of all municipal indoor recreation facilities in Pickering.

Figure 8: City of Pickering Municipal Indoor Recreation Facilities

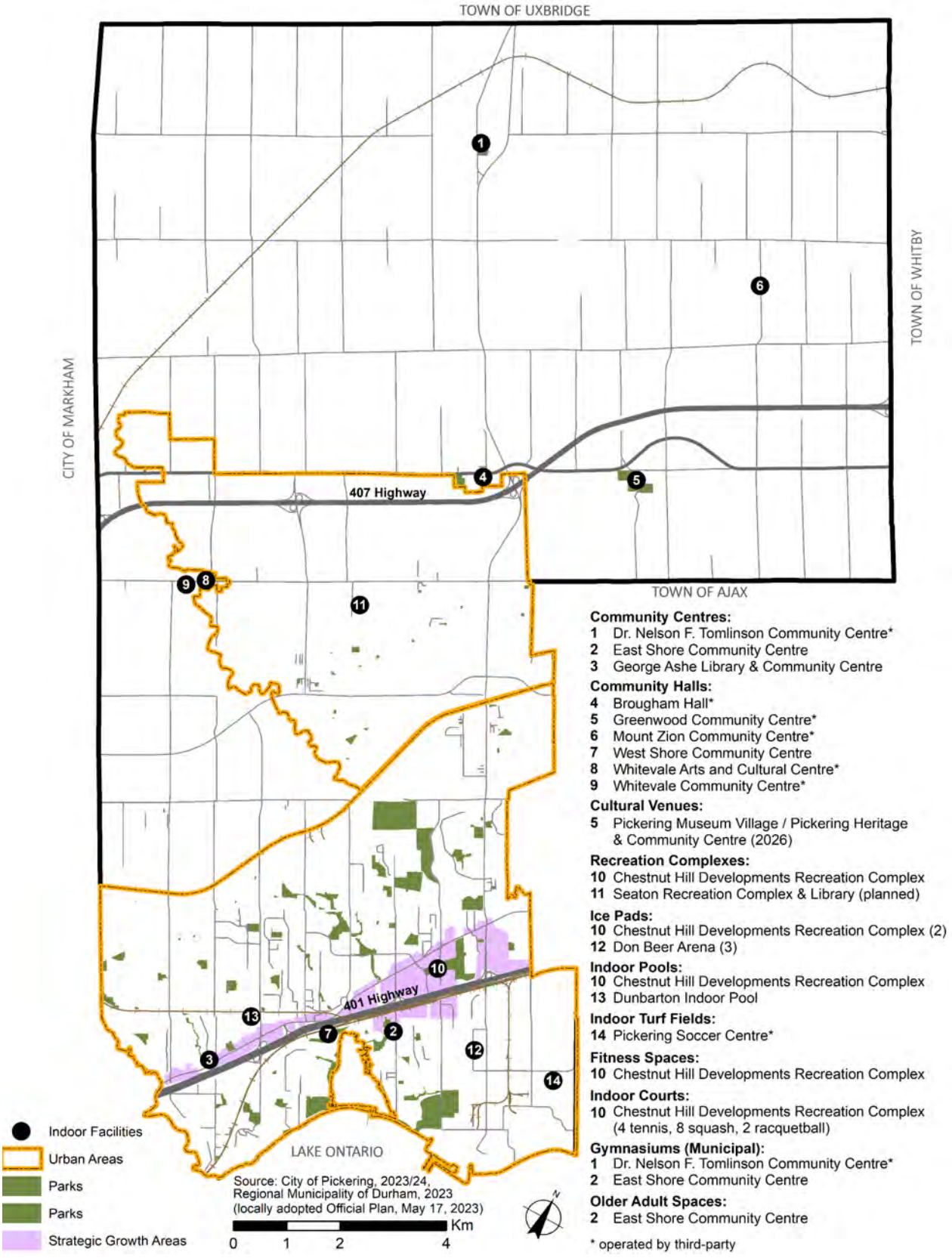


Table 3: Recreation Complexes in Pickering

Recreation Complexes	Detail
Role / Description	Recreation complexes are large-scale activity hubs that support a wide variety of indoor registered and drop-in City programming, casual use, rentals, and events that reflect the specific needs of area residents. They often include amenities such as indoor pools, gymnasiums, fitness rooms, space for youth/seniors, meeting spaces, and more.
Supply	The City currently has one such facility at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex. There are plans to build another recreation complex (and library) in Seaton, proposed to be designed in 2024 and opening by 2028/29.
Existing Facilities	**Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex (CHDRC):** Opened in 1983, CHDRC (formerly Pickering Recreation Complex) is the City's primary hub for indoor recreation activities. The venue includes two arenas (Delaney and O'Brien), pools, indoor racquet sport courts, weight room, fitness studios, community rooms, banquet hall, and more. At 230,000 square feet, it is one of the largest municipal recreation complexes in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Several additions have been attached to the building since it opened, including squash courts and a second ice pad in the early 1990s, then doubles squash courts and fitness expansion in 2009. Most recent renovations included the Delaney Arena in 2015 and the main lobby and change rooms in 2021.
Planned Facilities	**Seaton Recreation Complex & Library (SRCL):** Identified as a top capital priority of Council in January 2024, the planned Seaton Recreation Complex & Library will serve the growing community of Seaton and surrounding areas. Located at Whitevale Road and Sideline 24, this facility is envisioned to include various program amenities including a 25M indoor pool with a separate warm-water leisure tank, fitness centre with a group fitness studio, full-size triple gymnasium, two indoor ice pads, walking track, multi-purpose program rooms, and library branch with a full suite of services. The introduction of an arena in this facility is subject to an Arena Strategy which is currently being undertaken in conjunction with this Ten Year Plan. This Plan has an opportunity to inform the functional program for this facility, as will subsequent community engagement and the Council approval process.

Table 4: Community Centres in Pickering

Recreation Complexes	Detail
Role / Description	Community centres are smaller than recreation complexes, offering spaces that are used for City and community programming, meetings, and rentals such as activity rooms, gymnasiums, libraries, and more. Community centres are typically staffed (even if occasionally) and may be oriented to specific uses or markets (e.g., sports, youth, seniors, arts, etc.).
Supply	The City currently has three (3) community centres including Dr. Nelson F. Tomlinson Community Centre in Claremont (operated by a third-party), East Shore Community Centre, George Ashe Library & Community Centre. A fourth community centre – the Pickering Heritage & Community Centre – will soon be under construction and scheduled to open in 2026.
Existing Facilities	**George Ashe Library & Community Centre (GALC):** George Ashe Library & Community Centre (formerly Petticoat Creek Community Centre) opened in 2000 and contains 3 multi-purpose spaces (used for City programs, gatherings, rentals, etc.) and a branch library. Located along the Kingston Road corridor, the facility is well situated to serve both current residents and future growth. **East Shore Community Centre (ESCC):** The East Shore Community Centre (ESCC) was originally built as an elementary school in 1951, with a series of additions over the last 70 years. The facility contains a small gymnasium, a series of program and activity rooms, and a seniors centre (operated by the South Pickering Seniors' Club). The ESCC serves as the City's primary hub for seniors programming. As the building is reaching end of its serviceable life, a replacement facility has been proposed in the form of a Senior & Youth Centre included within the City Centre development proposal (funding has not yet been approved for this project, which has been deferred until 2028 for further consideration). **Dr. Nelson F. Tomlinson Community Centre:** The Dr Nelson F Tomlinson Community Centre was built in 1997 within the Village of Claremont. The facility is co-located with a fire hall, newly renovated library branch, and community park. It contains a main hall (under-sized gymnasium), kitchen, and meeting room. The centre is managed under agreement by the Claremont & District Lions Club. The City has recently begun to offer direct programming to the community through this facility.

Recreation Complexes	Detail
Planned Facilities	**Pickering Heritage & Community Centre (PHCC):** The PHCC will celebrate the City's rich heritage by bringing together a museum, library, and community centre under one roof on the upper site of the Pickering Museum Village (Highway 7 & Greenwood Road). Construction on this facility has begun with opening anticipated in 2026. This facility will serve many purposes, including as a new visitor's centre for the PMV, local history preservation, and providing a modern and accessible space for community groups (replacing the aging Greenwood Community Centre), programs, events, and exhibition space. PHCC is also designed to be zero-carbon, supporting Pickering's journey of becoming one of the most sustainable cities in Canada. **Senior & Youth Centre (proposed):** There are longer-term plans to develop a Seniors & Youth Centre within the City Centre campus; however, funding has not yet been allocated by Council to this phase of work and has been deferred to 2028 for further consideration. This project includes a double gymnasium, dedicated spaces for youth and seniors, programs rooms, library branch, and the potential to partner with developer for residential above. It is designed to replace the aging East Shore Community Centre.

Table 5: Community Halls in Pickering

Recreation Complexes	Detail
Role / Description	Community halls are single purpose buildings typically containing one or two meeting or activity spaces. These unstaffed buildings are primarily used for meetings, community events, and gatherings. Municipal programming is limited or non-existent. Many community halls are managed by volunteer associations and/or third-parties. They are typically older, repurposed facilities that are more commonly located in Pickering's rural areas, receiving and intermittent use.
Supply	The City currently has six (6) community halls including one that is operated by the City (West Shore Community Centre) and five that are operated by third-parties (Brougham Hall – currently closed – and Greenwood Community Centre, Mt. Zion Community Centre, Whitevale Arts and Cultural Centre, and Whitevale Community Centre). Note: despite their naming conventions, these facilities have levels of service more closely aligned with "community halls" than "community centres"

Recreation Complexes	Detail
Existing Facilities	**West Shore Community Centre (WSCC):** West Shore Community Centre is located south of Highway 401. The centre is licensed to a nursery school on weekday mornings and available for community rentals on weeknights and weekends. The facility was constructed in 1972 and does not meet contemporary standards for a municipal building. **Northern Community Halls:** In total, the City owns five (5) community halls located in the rural north. There are plans to replace the aging and inaccessible Greenwood Community Centre through the construction of PHCC, which will reduce this number to four (4), all of which are not operated by local community associations through lease agreements. These four buildings are each at least 100 years old and require significant capital investment to renew and maintain.
Planned Facilities	none



Existing Facilities

Many of the City's existing recreation and community centres are reaching a point in their lifespan where they require significant renovation or rationalization. Implementing capital plans to address these challenges will be a key focus for Pickering during the course of this ten-year plan and beyond.

The **Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex** is the City's cornerstone recreation facility, offering a wide range of services to residents and visitors. It is ideally located within the City Centre area and – through strategic upgrades and renewal projects – it will be capable of serving future residents for years to come.

However, given its age (41 years in 2024), the City's 2024 Facility Renewal Strategy indicates that strategically planned renovations and upgrades will become more critical within the years to come. The City currently has tens of millions identified in its budget forecast for capital projects over the next ten years, including tennis court resurfacing (2024), renovation of the O'Brien rink (2027), and renovation of the pool (2029). Intensification and growing demand will also place pressure on the facility and may accelerate the need for renewal and/or expansion.

In the interim, some items for further consideration at the CHDRC are listed below, based on input and observations from the research and consultation phase. Specifically, future renovations may:

- consider strategic re-purposing of under-utilized spaces to active program spaces (e.g., tenant spaces, etc.);
- explore opportunities to improve public circulation and access between the arena wing and recreation complex wing;
- given the complex's premium location, consider relocating the indoor tennis centre to another municipal recreation site (with consideration of an air-supported dome) when it reaches end of life; these courts function more independently from other spaces at the recreation complex and may benefit from another location that can support a minimum of four courts;
- add a gymnasium and flexible programming space should the proposed Senior & Youth Centre project not proceed;
- improve and/or expand office space for Recreation Department staff; and
- consider additional recommendations for the arenas, as identified in the 2024 Arena Strategy.

The **East Shore Community Centre** is reaching end of its serviceable life according to the Facility Renewal Study. This centre is also not barrier-free and was not purpose-built for its current uses. A replacement for this facility has been proposed through the Senior & Youth Centre project within the City Centre development; however, approval of funding for this project has been deferred until at least 2028. Should no replacement be constructed in the next 5 to 10 years, significant capital investment can be anticipated to address the gradual deterioration of the ESCC. Replacing the building on the same site

is also possible, but would mean shuttering or displacing existing services during construction and is not recommended.

The 2024 Facility Renewal Study indicates that the **West Shore Community Centre** is "beginning to show its age. Recent renovations and repairs have helped to extend its serviceable life, but consideration should be given to longer term intentions for this site and particular facility, which will likely reach end of life in the next 20 years." Reinvestment in this property is not recommended due to its limited utility and community benefit. It is likely that local demand can largely be absorbed within other facilities (municipal, non-profit, private, etc.). Disposal of the full property is not currently recommended given its co-location with West Shore Skate Spot, but rather a future use options report should be prepared to examine longer-term options for the property.

The City's four **northern community centres** (Brougham Hall, Mt. Zion Community Centre, Whitevale Arts and Cultural Centre, and Whitevale Community Centre; excluding Greenwood CC which is set to be replaced through the construction of PHCC) are each at least 100 years old and require significant capital investment to renew and maintain, estimated to total over $5 million in capital costs over the next ten years. As recommended in the 2024 Facility Renewal Study, the potential closure and disposal of aging assets that would require significant costs to restore and maintain should be considered as other alternatives become available in the vicinity (e.g., Pickering Heritage & Community Centre, Seaton Recreation Complex & Library, etc.).

These halls are not barrier-free, cannot accommodate a wide range of recreational activities, and are not conducive to City or other progressive programming. They serve as venues for occasional rentals, meetings, or small-scale community events. Most are legacy facilities located in rural areas, serving smaller local markets. Although they are not typically costly to operate as they rely on volunteer groups or third-party operators, capital renewal will be costly. Increasingly, these halls are viewed as liabilities and will require reinvestment if they are to remain in the inventory.

It is recommended that the City examine its community hall operating model and prepare a study of options that examines local needs, capacity within area facilities, and long-term requirements prior to undertaking significant investment. Looking ahead, the City may review the closure of underused halls, particularly where their functions can be accommodated within nearby facilities. The City may also explore opportunities to divest buildings and/or sites to others where appropriate and not needed for service delivery.



Future Facilities

Recreation complexes and community centres serve residents of all ages and abilities. They are planned based on geographic accessibility and population, serving multiple neighbourhoods. Facility components and programming may vary by location and will be based on the specific needs of each community.

The trend has been toward larger, flexible facilities that support a wider array of activities, which is the model that the CHDRC was built upon and that the new Seaton Recreation Complex & Library carries forward. For planning purposes, provision targets of one recreation complex for every 75,000 residents and one community centre per 35,000 residents are recommended; consideration may also be given to service radii of 2.0 to 2.5 km. To achieve this planning target, 1 additional recreation complex (the planned Seaton Recreation Complex & Library) and 1 additional community centre (the Pickering Heritage & Community Centre, opening in two years) are required within the ten-year timeframe of this plan. As discussed earlier, several existing facilities should also be enhanced or rationalized, including the planned replacement of East Shore Community Centre with the proposed Seniors & Youth Centre.

Table 6: Projected Long-term Needs for Recreation Complexes

Target: **1 per 75,000 pop.**	**Now (2024)**	**In Ten Years (to 2034)**	**Further Ahead (to 2042)**
Facility Needs	1.4	2.0	2.5
Current Supply (2024)	1	--	--
Surplus (Deficit)	(0.4)	(1.0)	(0.5)
Potential Strategies	n/a	Proposed Seaton Recreation Complex & Library	Consideration of needs in Northeast Pickering

Population forecasts: 2024 = 103,000; 2034 = 149,000; 2042 = 185,000

Table 7: Projected Long-term Needs for Community Centres

Target: **1 per 35,000 pop.**	**Now (2024)**	**In Ten Years (to 2034)**	**Further Ahead (to 2042)**
Facility Needs	3.0	4.3	5.3
Current Supply (2024)	3	--	--
Surplus (Deficit)	0.0	(1.3)	(2.3)
Potential Strategies	n/a	Pickering Heritage & Community Centre (opening 2026); Senior & Youth Centre (replacement for ESCC)	future site in Seaton

Population forecasts: 2024 = 103,000; 2034 = 149,000; 2042 = 185,000

No provision target is provided for community halls as new halls are not recommended. These are legacy facilities that will be gradually phased out over time in response to community need and in keeping with responsible asset management practices.

Public interest is strong for new CRCs in growing communities. Looking beyond 2034, a second community facility is planned for Seaton (Thompson's Corners) and planning should also begin for a new recreation complex in Northeast Pickering (including securement of land). These projects are described in more detail below.

The **Seaton Recreation Complex & Library** will be the first multi-purpose recreation complex built in Pickering since the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex opened in 1983. The co-location of multi-purpose spaces with other recreation and civic amenities is a common approach that facilitates a broad range of localized activities, cross-programming opportunities, and economies of scale.

Seaton Recreation Complex & Library

Based on a review of indoor recreation facility needs throughout this section, the future Seaton Recreation Complex & Library should be designed as a multi-use and multi-generational destination. Major recommended facility components include:

- **Indoor Aquatics Centre:** a 25-metre lane rectangular pool with a minimum of 6 lanes plus a separate leisure/therapeutic pool.
- **Triple Gymnasium:** a triple gym that is designed to an appropriate specification including adequate playout dimensions, ceiling heights, flooring, and support amenities.
- **Fitness Centre:** a training club with weight-training space and group fitness studios.
- **Multi-Purpose Rooms:** for meetings, programs, and gatherings that enable a flexible range of community uses.
- **Arena:** 2 NHL-size ice pads to replace the aging Don Beer Arena, as well as an indoor walking track (encircling an ice pad or the gymnasium).
- **Outdoor Spaces:** identified through the outdoor facilities assessment, including a destination playground, skate park, and more; the full extent of outdoor facilities will depend on land availability.
- **Library:** space needs are supported through the Library's Strategic Plan.
- **General:** provide sufficient spaces for casual social activity, change rooms, washrooms, storage, office space, etc.

These components will be confirmed through architectural design to ensure that space exists on site to accommodate them along with vehicular parking and other servicing considerations.

In the interim, the City will be expanding programming to the newly constructed Rick Johnson Memorial Park, including pre-registered, instructional programs for children

and youth, as well as weekly cultural events including small-scale concerts and movie nights in 2024.

With the ESCC reaching the end of its lifespan, a homebase is needed for seniors programming. As of 2021, nearly one out of every three (31.5%) Pickering residents were older adults 55 years of age or over. The proposed **Seniors & Youth Centre** is in a centralized and accessible location that offers convenient connections to higher-order transit that will help to support a flexible community hub within an area poised for growth in the future. It will be able to offer a wide range of activities that focus on active living, health and wellness, education, arts, sports, and more. Beyond this location, youth, seniors, and all-ages programming will continue to be delivered through other appropriate locations throughout Pickering in order to support inclusive and accessible opportunities. Flexible spaces where the entire population can become active and connected will be the preferred model over single-use or stand-alone facilities.

Looking beyond 2034, additional facilities will be needed in strategic locations to support "complete communities". Future opportunities are anticipated in both Seaton and Northeast Pickering.

1) The City has secured a second parcel of Seaton for a **community centre in the Thompson's Corners neighbourhood**. This site is located on 5th Concession (east of Brock Road) and is on a site adjacent to a future secondary school. This is a longer-term project that would seek to supplement (and not duplicate) services planned for the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library. Planning and design of this facility has not yet been initiated, but should be a priority over the course of this Ten Year Plan. Based on a preliminary needs assessment, the community centre could include a variety of activity spaces (e.g., multi-use program rooms, sport-specific spaces, outdoor amenities, etc.), but would not likely include an indoor pool or arenas.

2) As the City's next new community area, **Northeast Pickering** will require a full range of new community services and facilities, with consideration given to a new recreation complex and arenas, among other community facilities. The Northeast Pickering Secondary Plan is underway and includes recreation planning at a high level that will be proportional to the amount of population planned for that area (approximately 45,000 people). Development of this area is beyond the timeframe of this Ten Year Plan.

It is also noted that, through the City's Cultural Strategic Plan, a **Performing Arts Centre** has been proposed at the northwest corner of the CHDRC site. Funding has not yet been approved by Council for this long-term project, which would provide an auditorium and various spaces to host, display, and celebrate the arts both locally and beyond. The next term of Council is expected to advise on the timing and implementation of this project.

Recommendations – Recreation Complexes and Community Space

1. As a high priority, continue to proceed with the timely development of the **Seaton Recreation Complex & Library.** At minimum, this facility should be designed to include a 25 metre 6-8 lane rectangular pool and separate warm water leisure pool, fitness centre and studios, full size gymnasium, walking track, multi-purpose spaces, two arena pads, and library.
2. Prior to undertaking significant capital renewal projects, initiate planning for the **major long-term revitalization of the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex** as supported by the City's Facility Renewal Study. The assessment should consider factors such as public input, asset management, facility and program needs, related initiatives, site and partnership opportunities, potential funding sources, and more.
3. Seek to construct the proposed **Seniors & Youth Centre** in Pickering's City Centre within the ten-year horizon of this plan (prior to 2034). Once open, the **East Shore Community Centre** should be closed and declared surplus, with programming transferred to the new facility.
4. Prepare a business case for the expansion of **youth programming and space within the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex.** This should be viewed as an interim measure prior to opening the Seniors & Youth Centre and should be implemented through the repurposing of tenant spaces and/or under-utilized areas (not a physical expansion to the building).
5. As part of the next Ten Year Plan (around 2034), initiate high-level planning for the development of a **second recreation facility (Thompson's Corners community centre)** within the Seaton community on lands owned by the City (east of Brock Road, south of Highway 407).
6. Through the **Northeast Secondary Plan** process, designate land for community facilities suitable for the development of a future recreation complex and library.
7. Prior to undertaking significant investment in existing **community halls** (e.g., West Shore Community Centre, Brougham Hall, etc.), prepare a study of options that examines local needs, capacity within area facilities, and long-term requirements. The assessment should be used to guide options, including sale, third-party-lease, and/or reinvestment. Closure and sale of underused halls that require significant investment is possible, particularly where these functions can be accommodated within a nearby facility. New community halls should be discouraged.
8. As a general principle, **design indoor recreation facilities** to be flexible, accessible, multi-use (non-dedicated space, where possible), inclusive, and age-friendly community hubs. Consider models co-located with libraries and other community uses. Locate these sites in highly visible locations with strong pedestrian, cycling, and transit connections for convenient access. Involve the community and stakeholders in the facility design process.

5.2 Arena Facilities

A comprehensive Arena Strategy has been prepared for the City of Pickering, the purpose of which is to guide planning and inform decisions for Pickering's arena system for the next 10 years (to the year 2034). This strategy was recommended within the 2017 Plan to determine whether a net expansion to the City's supply of ice pad and/or relocation of an existing ice pad(s) is warranted based on prevailing market forces and arena operating conditions.

The Arena Strategy is presented under separate cover and includes considerable detail regarding arena usage, demand, operations, and approaches to provision. The recommendations from the strategy are identified below.

Note: At its meeting of June 24, 2024, City of Pickering Council endorsed the Arena Strategy (#514/24), save and except that the decision to decommission Don Beer Arena be subject to a needs analysis. This impacts recommendations "c" and "d" below.

Recommendations from 2024 Arena Strategy:

a) **Update the participant-based target to 1 ice pad per 400 registered youth participants (residents ages 5 to 19) to support current and future ice surface needs.** This target applies to the arena supply and user base of arenas in both Pickering and Ajax, which must be considered together due to the cross-municipal boundaries of core user groups.

b) **Align arena demand to supply based on a need for 4 indoor ice pads currently and 5 total ice pads by 2034**. There is a surplus of ice at present; however, demand for ice sports will grow along with the population, gradually eroding this surplus. Should programs be formed that attract new users to ice sports (or if total registration changes in any substantial way), this forecast should be revisited. Pickering and Ajax should share equally in addressing these demands.

c) **Begin planning to replace Don Beer Arena (3 pads) with two (2) new ice pads within the Seaton community no later than 2029 (next five years).** The preferred site is the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library. If the selected site cannot be expanded to a quad pad arena through a future phase of construction, a second site may be required for a multi-pad arena beyond 2034, possibly in Northeast Pickering.

d) **Maintain at least 2 ice pads at Don Beer Arena until such time as the new twin pad facility is open.** In the interim, reduce capital spending at Don Beer Arena unless necessary for structural or legislated safety requirements. Consideration may also be given to **removing ice from Rink 1** to limit capital and operating expenses (non-ice activities may be permitted, as appropriate) and/or limiting off-peak hours of operation. Once deemed surplus, dispose of Don Beer Arena property and use proceeds to offset funding of replacement infrastructure.

e) **Continue to operate two ice pads at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex for the foreseeable future.** Capital requirements are

identified in the City's long-term forecast, with further technical considerations within Section 4.1 of the Arena Strategy.

f) Continue to promote **recreational skating and drop-in programs** at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex and consider providing additional opportunities (e.g., Parent & Tot Skating, Parent & Tot Stick/Puck, Ticket Ice, etc.) to improve participation levels, accessible options for residents, and off-peak revenue enhancement. Expand programming to the new arena when built.

g) Consider adjustments to the City's **ice allocation practices** to ensure that they reflect local demand, provide adequate ice time to priority categories, and generate efficiencies. The submission of annual registration figures (including residency) by user groups should be strictly enforced as a condition of approval. Further, the City is strongly encouraged to work with the Town of Ajax to ensure that allocation practices and amounts are consistently applied across both jurisdictions to create a fair and transparent approach to allocation. Should demand for ice rentals grow over time, ice sport organizations should be encouraged to make efficient use of non-prime time hours and to adapt their programs to accommodate all participants, such as adjustments to practices, rosters, and scheduling.

h) Through future Recreation & Parks Plan updates, consider **longer-term arenas needs (post-2034)**, with a focus on growth areas such as Northeast Pickering as well as a capital revitalization strategy for the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex arenas. It will be important for the City to secure sufficient blocks of land to support major recreation infrastructure within the **Northeast Pickering** community.

Recommendations – Arena Facilities

9. Utilize the findings and recommendations of the **Arena Strategy** to inform decision-making regarding arena investment, development, and operations.



5.3 Indoor Pools

Pickering operates two indoor aquatic pool locations, each of which offers a slightly different aquatic experience through their respective designs and in turn influences how the City programs them or how conducive they are for aquatic sports and activities. The City's largest pool is located within the CHDRC and was built in 1983. The other is a smaller facility attached to Dunbarton High School, which opened in 1972.

Table 8: Municipal Indoor Pools in Pickering

Indoor Pools	Detail
Role / Description	Indoor pools offer a wide range of shallow and deep water swimming instruction and activities to the general public. Facilities may contain one or more indoor pool basins that are generally available year-round. Pools may be part of recreation complexes or co-located with schools, although the former model of provision is preferred as it offers greater public access and operational efficiencies.
Supply	The City currently has two (2) indoor pool facilities including a two-tank at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex and a single tank facility at Dubarton Pool (attached to Dunbarton High School) There are plans to build an aquatic centre as part of the proposed Seaton Recreation Complex & Library.
Existing Facilities	**Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex:** The CHDRC's indoor aquatic centre opened in 1983 and consists of a 25-metre 8-lane tank and a separate shallow warm-water tank. Both are used for instruction and recreational swimming, while the larger rectangular tank is also used for lane swimming, training, and competition. It is home to the Pickering Swim Club, which has a broad membership. **Dunbarton Pool:** This pool is attached to Dunbarton High School and is owned and operated by the City on lands owned by the Durham District School Board. This pool consists of a 25-metre 6-lane tank. The City has access to the pool in the morning and after 5pm and on weekends, with the school accessing the pool during school hours. The pool is primarily used for swimming instruction and club rentals, but lacks many support amenities and conveniences (e.g., barrier-free change rooms, viewing areas, complementary activity spaces, etc.) that are available at the CHDRC.

Indoor Pools	Detail
Planned Facilities	**Seaton Recreation Complex & Library:** The Seaton Recreation Complex & Library will serve the growing community of Seaton and surrounding areas. Preliminary designs include a 25-metre 6-lane indoor pool with a separate warm water leisure tank, in addition to complementary activity and support spaces. A detailed design process is being initiated this year, with the goal of opening in 2028/29.

Existing Facilities

Aging infrastructure is a significant concern for the City's indoor pool facilities as they are an average of 47 years old and reaching a typical lifespan for a facility of this type (50-70 years).

For the CHDRC pool, the 2024 Facility Renewal Study indicates that "*Minor repairs and upgrades have been completed on the pool at CHDRC over the years, but the space has never received a complete renovation, and could be considered overdue.*" While the complex still has considerable life left, a recommendation has been made to begin long-term planning for its revitalization, which would also include the indoor pool facility.

In the interim, several repairs to the CHDRC pools are planned to be undertaken in 2029, with the goal of extending their life and avoiding the need for a lengthy shutdown prior to the planned pool at the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library coming online. As the aquatics facilities at CHDRC are much larger than what is offered at Dunbarton Indoor Pool, they are critical to supporting municipal and community programming. By advancing the construction of an indoor pool in Seaton, it is anticipated that programs can be temporary shifted to accommodate a major revitalization project (currently identified for 2029 in the City's long-term capital forecast) as the CHDRC pools are showing their age and could benefit from accessibility improvements.

Dunbarton Indoor Pool was built in 1972 and – despite benefitting from several renovations in the last 15 years – its structural elements are expected to be within their last 10 years of serviceable life. The City's 2024 Facility Renewal Study notes that: "Given the age and use of the building, additional renovation is not expected to be practical or cost effective, meaning that replacement at this or another location will need to be considered." Any capital projects on the pool or school could impact both operations, thus coordination with the Durham District School Board is vital. It is understood that the school board does not currently have any major capital work planned for the site.

It is recommended that the City undertake a study to examine future programming needs and potential capital replacement of the Dunbarton Indoor Pool. This study should consider the need for this facility to remain operational during any extended shutdown of the CHDRC and should be completed following a minimum of one year of the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library being fully operational.

Future Facilities

The rate of population growth in Pickering lends support to the inclusion of indoor aquatic centres within all new recreation complexes and, where appropriate, community centres. A provision target of one indoor pool location per 45,000 persons is recommended, with any new or redeveloped aquatic centres including multiple tanks to accommodate expanded programming, where possible.

To achieve this target, one additional indoor pool location (multiple tanks) is required within the ten-year horizon of this plan – this facility is recommended as part of the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library. Another indoor aquatic centre will be required to serve growth beyond this timeframe, possibly in Northeast Pickering.

Table 9: Projected Long-term Needs for Indoor Pool Sites

Target: **1 per 45,000 pop.**	**Now (2024)**	**In Ten Years (to 2034)**	**Further Ahead (to 2042)**
Facility Needs	2.3	3.3	4.1
Current Supply (2024)	2	--	--
Surplus (Deficit)	(0.3)	(1.3)	(2.1)
Potential Strategies	n/a	Proposed Seaton Recreation Complex & Library	Consideration of needs in Northeast Pickering

Population forecasts: 2024 = 103,000; 2034 = 149,000; 2042 = 185,000

The CHDRC pool is currently the largest in Durham Region and often hosts regional-level meets (it is not certified for provincial or higher-level competition). In 2024, the Town of Whitby began construction on a new sports complex including a 25-metre 10-lane pool that will offer additional opportunities for athletic training and competition within the region. Given the regional nature of high performance sport, it is not feasible for Pickering to provide a 50-metre pool or large regional competition venue in Seaton, but rather should consider a pool design that satisfies community-level needs. This supports the provision of a multi-tank pool within the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library, consisting of a 25-metre tank with 6 to 8 lanes and a separate warm-water leisure pool designed to allow barrier-free entry. Modern pool designs include multiple tanks with different water temperatures, universal change rooms, and barrier-free accessibility. Local swim clubs have expressed a preference for at least 8 lanes at this location; however, this will be space and budget dependent.

Looking beyond 2034, there is anticipated to be sufficient demand to support a recreation complex and multi-tank indoor aquatic centre within the future Northeast Pickering community. Indoor recreation needs should be validated through ongoing planning of this community and future updates to this Ten Year Plan.

Pickering has convenient access to modern 50-metre long-course indoor pools in both Markham and Scarborough – these facilities serve a broad market and require

extensive partnerships and unique funding models to support. A 50-metre pool is not recommended for Pickering at this time.

Recommendations – Indoor Pools

10. Provide **multi-tank indoor aquatic centres** within all new recreation complexes. A 25-metre tank with 6 to 8 lanes and a separate warm water leisure pool are recommended as part of the planned **Seaton Recreation Complex & Library**.

11. Prioritize the revitalization of the **Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex indoor aquatic centre** as part of the proposed facility revitalization strategy following the opening of the Seaton Recreation Complex and Library.

12. Undertake a study to examine future programming needs and potential capital replacement of the **Dunbarton Indoor Pool**. This study should consider the need for this facility to remain operational during any extended shutdown of the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex and should be completed following a minimum of one year of the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library being fully operational.



5.4 Gymnasiums

There are no regulation gymnasiums within the City's facility inventory, although some spaces are used for court sports (sometimes on a modified basis). The City has agreements with local school boards to use selected gymnasiums on evenings and weekends in order to support registered and drop-in programming, including many youth activities.

Table 10: Gymnasiums in Pickering

Gymnasiums	Detail
Role / Description	Gymnasiums offer open court areas for sports (e.g., basketball, volleyball, badminton, pickleball, etc.), registered and drop-in programs, rentals, special events, community meetings, etc.
Supply	The City currently has a variety of spaces that accommodate indoor court sports on a modified basis, although few would meet the contemporary definition of a gymnasium: • East Shore Community Centre – offers a small, non-regulation size gymnasium • Dr. Nelson F. Tomlinson Community Centre – contains a hall that can be used for active sports (non-regulation size) • CHDRC – the banquet hall has been used for pickleball, although active sports are a secondary use • Pickering Soccer Centre – under the dome is a futsal court that can also be used for sports such as volleyball, badminton, etc. (operated by Pickering FC) Additionally, the City has agreements with local schools to use selected gymnasiums (Dunbarton High School, Highbush Public School, Pine Ridge Secondary School, and St. Mary Catholic Secondary School) outside of school hours.
Existing Facilities	All gymnasium-like spaces in City community facilities are non-regulation and under-sized, limiting their utility.
Planned Facilities	There are plans to build gymnasiums as part of the proposed Seaton Recreation Complex & Library. New schools may also offer future opportunities for community and municipal use afterhours. Two gymnasiums are considered in the proposed Senior & Youth Centre (City Centre), a project that has been deferred until 2028 for further consideration.

Gymnasiums are essential to supporting year-round organized sports programs and the City is striving to increase its capacity to offer more sports programming to match with growing demand. Over the past few years, the City has witnessed a remarkable surge

in the popularity of various sports programs, with many programs having extensive wait lists. Drop-in (pre-registered) activities such as youth sports and pickleball are especially in high demand. The lack of regulation-size gymnasiums is limiting the City's ability to address these needs in an equitable manner.

The new sport courts at the Pickering Soccer Centre are well used for futsal (the Provincial championships are being hosted here), as well as sports such as volleyball. Pickering FC (which operates the facility under agreement) is currently working with the City to improve the flooring so that it can be used for other sports such as pickleball.

Whereas older delivery models left the responsibility for gymnasium provision to schools, it has now become common practice for municipalities to include large gymnasiums within recreation complexes. This is driven by increased needs for municipal program delivery, particularly for youth and increasingly for seniors, as well as challenges with gaining reliable access to some school facilities throughout the year.

There is no gymnasium at the CHDRC and the City of Pickering has a lower supply of municipal gymnasiums in comparison to other communities (benchmarking average of 1:38,200). If this provision rate was applied to Pickering, there would be a need for four (4) gymnasiums by 2034. Going forward for Pickering, it should be a best practice to include a gymnasium as part of any new recreation complex (e.g., Seaton, etc.) and gymnasiums should also be strongly considered within future community centres (e.g., Seniors & Youth Centre).

To maximize program flexibility and allow use for sports such as basketball, pickleball (up to 6 courts), and volleyball, a triple gymnasium specification should be incorporated in the design of the proposed **Seaton Recreation Complex & Library**. The design of the gymnasium should allow for sufficient playout distance to the structural walls, have an appropriate ceiling height, and preferably use a sprung-wood flooring system. Amenities such as a scoreboard, spectator viewing, and generous storage would significantly improve the user experience and functionality of the space.

In terms of accommodating the growing sport of pickleball, this plan recommends expanded opportunities for both outdoor (see Section 3) and indoor play using a variety of approaches. Pickleball is currently played indoors at the CHDRC Banquet Hall (4 courts) and though occasional use other community centre and school spaces for a total of 51 hours per week (drop-in and registered programming). To inform the City's provision of indoor facilities, a guideline of one pickleball court per 10,000 residents is comparable to approaches in other municipalities (based on an average provision of one gymnasium per 40,000 persons and assuming that each gymnasium can accommodate 4 courts).

Applying this measure to Pickering, the City will be able to meet its current target of 10 indoor courts through upgrades at the Pickering Soccer Centre (up to 6 courts and 42 hours/court per week) and also its 2034 target (15 courts) through the development of the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library. School gymnasiums and other spaces within the City's inventory also offer opportunities to accommodate occasional use, as well as

the potential for non-municipal providers which are becoming more common across the Greater Toronto Area.

Recommendations – Gymnasiums

13. Provide **gymnasiums** within all new and redeveloped recreation complexes (e.g., Seaton, etc.) and consider their provision within appropriate community centres (e.g., Seniors & Youth Centre, etc.). A triple gymnasium (FIBA regulation) is recommended as part of the **Seaton Recreation Complex & Library**.
14. Provide one **indoor pickleball court** for every 10,000 residents, with a target of 15 indoor courts by 2034. The City will be able to meet its current target of 10 indoor courts through upgrades at the Pickering Soccer Centre (up to 6 courts and 42 hours/court per week) and also its 2034 target (15 courts) through the development of the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library.
15. Where additional access is required, expand **agreements with local school boards** to offer programming within school gymnasiums and other community spaces within Seaton and future growth areas.

5.5 Indoor Fitness Spaces

The City operates a fitness centre at the CHDRC. Additionally, the City offers group fitness classes at locations such as East Shore and George Ashe community centres. There are also many private sector fitness and health/wellness providers within Pickering.

Table 11: Fitness Centres in Pickering

Fitness Centres	Detail
Role / Description	Fitness centres provide opportunities for registered members to workout using weights and equipment and to participate in fitness classes. They are typically complemented by other activity spaces such as indoor swimming pools.
Supply	The City currently has one fitness centre location at the CHDRC. There are plans to build another fitness centre in Seaton, proposed to be designed in 2024 and opening by 2028/29.
Existing Facilities	**Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex (CHDRC):** This fitness centre contains cardio and weight-training equipment along with fitness studios that offer floor-based programs. The facility is spread across two levels and also contains a small three-lane walking/running track.

Fitness Centres	Detail
Planned Facilities	**Seaton Recreation Complex & Library:** The Seaton Recreation Complex & Library is currently proposed to include an equipment-based fitness centre with several studio spaces.

There are no widely accepted service level targets for municipal fitness centres based on population. Market economics guides private sector decisions as to whether they invest in equipment-based fitness centres; however, most municipalities view fitness studios for group programs as a core level of service while others – like Pickering – go further by operating fitness centres based on a wellness philosophy. Municipal fitness centres are in a more competitive environment as the private sector is now entrenched in the low-cost/discount membership market that used to be dominated by municipalities and YMCAs.

While it is clear that there is competition in the fitness market from the private sector, the City has made a conscious decision to compete directly in this industry. In order to remain competitive in the marketplace, the City regularly invests in fitness equipment and the overall customer experience. Part of Pickering's advantage is its ability to co-locate fitness centres with indoor pools and create convenient hubs where aquatic, fitness, and wellness activities are complemented by other spaces and services. This model differentiates the City's fitness product from other providers and offers an affordable option for most residents.

On this basis, there is strong rationale to include fitness space within future recreation complexes. These spaces will complement other components, offering user convenience and generating economies of scale. Inclusion of publicly-accessible indoor walking tracks within recreation complexes (elevated above a gymnasium or ice pad) is also recommended to reinforce opportunities for year-round physical activity and dry-land training for sports groups. The provision of a second fitness centre and studio space is recommended as a part of the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library.

Recommendations – Indoor Fitness Spaces

16. Provide **fitness centres and studios** within all new and redeveloped recreation complexes (including the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library) to support the delivery of health and wellness programming. Consider the provision of **indoor walking tracks** (free public access) within new recreation facilities, where appropriate.

5.6 Indoor Sport Facilities

Addressed in this section are additional sport-specific facilities that the City and its partners offer to the community, including:

- Squash courts
- Racquetball/handball courts
- Indoor tennis courts
- Indoor soccer/turf fields

Note: Indoor pickleball is ideally played on gymnasium courts and is considered within the gymnasium section of this report.

Table 12: Indoor Sport Facilities in Pickering

Indoor Sport Facilities	Detail
Role / Description	Indoor sport facilities are purpose-built spaces that accommodate specific sports and activities, often on an exclusive use or membership-driven model. These facilities typically support sports on a year-round basis.
Supply	The City and its partners currently offer. • 8 squash courts (including 6 international single courts and 2 doubles courts) at the CHDRC • 2 racquetball courts (also used for handball) at the CHDRC • 4 indoor tennis courts at the CHDRC • 1 indoor turf field (divisible into up to four small-sided fields) at the Pickering Soccer Centre
Existing Facilities	**Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex (CHDRC):** This facility is home to one of the largest municipal squash, racquetball, and indoor tennis court complexes in the GTA. Courts are accessed via membership and pay-as-you-go models. **Pickering Soccer Centre:** The Pickering Soccer Centre is the City's sole indoor turf facility, which is a municipal capital facility that is operated by Pickering FC under agreement. The facility offers a certified FIFA regulation soccer field that can be partitioned into smaller fields, an associated sprint track, and futsal/sport courts.
Planned Facilities	None, although there may be potential for smaller-scale sport facilities at future recreation complexes.

Squash & Racquetball Courts

Current and projected levels of usage for squash are adequate to support the continued provision of courts at the CHDRC, but insufficient to recommend additional facilities at this time. As a premier site for squash in Ontario, Pickering is currently providing one squash court per 13,000 residents, a rate nearly eight times greater than comparator communities (one per 105,000). Usage of squash courts and membership levels should be monitored to ensure that these spaces are optimized.

Pickering is currently providing one racquetball court per 51,500 residents, a rate more than nine times greater than comparator communities (one per 475,000). Participation in racquetball lags well behind squash and many municipalities that had racquetball courts in their supply have been gradually converting them to other uses due to low demand. Following years of declining utilization, Pickering's 2017 Plan recommended that one or more of the City's racquetball courts be repurposed to another use (guided by public input) to enhance use of the space to benefit the broader community. This recommendation was not supported by club members and in 2018 Council afforded the Racquetball Hub of Durham Region committee an opportunity to increase membership, usage, and revenues to reach City established targets over a 2-year period ending December 31, 2019. Despite the goals not being achieved over this period, in 2020 Council did not undertake further public consultation and did not support repurposing a racquetball court. As of 2023, the number of racquetball and handball players remains below past levels.

Note: At its meeting of June 24, 2024, City of Pickering Council resolved (#514/24) that any consideration to permanently repurpose the racquetball courts not be actioned until further meaningful discussions are undertaken with the Racquetball Club on its growth plans including the impact of intensification and growth targets in the City of Pickering.

Indoor Tennis

There are 4 indoor tennis courts at the rear of the CHDRC. These courts are available to members and non-members, and classes and lessons are also offered. Members have access to the fitness centre, swimming pool, and/or squash/racquetball courts depending on the membership category. The courts are well used most of the year, but less so during the summer months when the sport shifts outdoors.

The 2017 Plan found a surplus of indoor tennis courts and declining utilization levels (and efforts were subsequently made to trial the use of pickleball on these courts,). From our experience in other communities, each indoor court should be able to support a minimum of 75 members; programs and lessons are in addition to this amount. Membership has since increased to 117 players in 2023 as demand for the sport has grown in recent years and there have been informal proposals to expand to other locations. There remains capacity for greater use at the existing indoor facilities.

No new indoor tennis courts are recommended within the ten-year timeframe of this plan; however, should the City receive a proposal to install a season air-supported

dome over outdoor courts at no cost to the municipality, this may be considered this through the partnership framework identified in Section 2.7 and **Appendix F**.

It is also noted that a planning process for the long-term revitalization of the CHDRC has been recommended to be initiated during the next ten years. Given the large footprint that the existing indoor courts account for at the CHDRC – coupled with its high land value and related plans that Pickering has established for the site and surrounding City Centre lands – consideration may be given to relocating the indoor courts to another accessible location within Pickering in the longer-term (with consideration of an air-supported dome and the joint provision of pickleball courts). The optimal use of this site may be more fully considered through the City Centre project and/or planning of the future parks and recreation facility sites.

Indoor Turf Fields (Pickering Soccer Centre)

The Pickering Soccer Centre is located in southeast Pickering and offers a FIFA regulation soccer field that can be partitioned into smaller fields, an associated sprint track, and futsal/sport courts. It is operated by Pickering FC under agreement with the City (it is a municipal capital facility). The air-supported dome was opened in 2014 and a new fabric was installed in 2023 (along with a new multi-use sports court) following heavy damage from a winter storm.

Pickering FC indicates that its membership has grown since the pandemic, especially in younger ages and high performance streams. The club is projecting its membership to increase by 19% by over the next three years, generating greater demand for both outdoor fields and indoor turf time. One of the Club's biggest challenges is the lack of indoor space as the group uses 98% of the hours on the Pickering Soccer Centre's turf field during the winter season. Given these trends, there is very little capacity on the indoor turf field for non-soccer community rentals (e.g., other soccer clubs, football, softball, ultimate frisbee, lacrosse, cricket, rugby, etc.).

Trends are shifting to greater year-round use and more and more sports and activities that can use these facilities are demonstrating sustainable growth. As the operator, Pickering FC administers rentals at the Pickering Soccer Centre and is not bound by municipal allocation policies. Creating opportunities for other sports and organizations to access the field, as well as utilization of the field for a broader variety of recreation programs during off-peak times, are opportunities that the City should consider in partnership with the facility operator.

The Pickering Soccer Centre has been a significant success for the local club and City. Indoor turf fields such as this are becoming more common, with the average level of provision being approximately one municipal turf facility per 100,000 residents. The City should work with Pickering FC and other organizations to monitor the demand for **indoor turf facilities** (including the collection of utilization and registration data from the Pickering Soccer Centre and community organizations) to allow for a needs assessment for a second indoor turf facility beyond 2034 within the Seaton or Northeast Pickering community areas (e.g., Thompson's' Corner recreation site, future district park, etc.).

Recommendations – Indoor Sport Facilities

17. Engage the **local racquetball club** to assess their future outlook and ways to increase usage of the courts prior to repurposing one racquetball court at the CHDRC.
18. Consideration may be given to **relocating the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex indoor tennis courts** to another accessible location within Pickering in the longer-term, possibly through an air-supported dome and the joint provision of pickleball courts. This is a matter that may be more fully examined through the recommended recreation complex facility revitalization study, the City Centre project, and/or planning of the future parks and recreation facility sites.
19. Encourage wider community access to the **Pickering Soccer Centre field** by working with Pickering FC to create an allocation framework and/or scheduling options that provide other youth-based organizations with access to the turf field within prime, shoulder, and non-prime times.
20. Monitor the demand for **indoor turf facilities** and examine the potential to develop a second indoor turf facility beyond the timeframe of this Ten-Year Plan.



5.7 Requests for Other Types of Facilities

Future requests for municipal participation in capital projects not identified in this plan can be expected. There are several other types of facilities that fall outside of the traditional municipal scope of provision, but may offer benefit to area residents and contribute greatly to the range of local services.

The City's Community Grant program can be used to support minor requests (typically under $3,000) from non-profit organizations. To evaluate and respond to more significant unsolicited requests, a formal partnership framework should be used to guide the parameters for these relationships. Municipal involvement in such proposals must be transparent and consider overall municipal priorities and the City's capacity to participate in such projects.

The evaluation of potential major capital partnerships should require the proponent to provide information such as (but not limited to):

- a comprehensive needs analysis
- a comprehensive business plan
- the proponent's financial capacity
- a demonstration of the sustainability of the project
- detailed evidence of community benefits
- full risk analysis

In cases where the City has decided to participate and/or invest in a proponent-initiated project, they will seek innovative solutions and/or partnerships (using a standardized partnership framework – see **Appendix F**) that enhance access to residents.

Recommendations – Other Indoor Spaces

21. Adopt a **partnership framework** to evaluate and respond to major capital proposals from community organizations, with consideration given to overall municipal priorities and the City's capacity to participate in such projects. A sample framework and criteria are identified with this Ten Year Plan (see appendix).



6. Outdoor Recreation and Park Facilities

Pickering's parks contain a wide variety of sport and community recreation amenities, from courts to sports fields, playgrounds to splash pads, and much more. Demand for outdoor activities has been on the rise, underscoring the need to maintain and enhance outdoor amenities for current and future populations.

This section contains a needs assessment for outdoor recreation and park facilities, with recommendations supported by inventories, usage data, trends, public input, and related initiatives.

An inventory of outdoor recreation facilities can be found in **Appendix D**, along with comparisons to provision levels in other municipalities. Other supporting materials, such as facility-specific trends, community input summaries, and usage analyses are contained in **Appendix E**.

6.1 Soccer and Multi-Use Fields

Soccer and multi-use fields are a core element of the City's parks system and come in a wide variety of sizes. Fields are predominantly used for soccer, but some can also accommodate other fields sports such as football, rugby, and field lacrosse.

The City of Pickering currently permits 46 soccer and multi-use fields to sport organizations, including some fields on school properties. The supply of permitted outdoor soccer and rectangular fields is well distributed throughout Pickering's urban area. This inventory consists of

- 2 lit artificial turf fields
- 4 lit full size fields
- 13 unlit full size fields
- 11 9v9 (intermediate) fields
- 16 7v7 (mini) fields

To account for extended playing capacity, lit artificial turf and lit grass fields are assumed to be equivalent to 3.0 and 1.5 unlit natural fields, respectively. As a result, Pickering has an effective supply of 52 unlit equivalent (ULE) soccer fields. The City is presently providing one field (ULE) per 2,000 residents, a higher rate than the comparator group (one field per 2,700 persons). These fields may be supplemented by school fields, which are permitted through the school boards but tend to be of lower quality.

The indicators suggest that the number of rectangular sports fields is adequate at the present time, but demand is expected to increase as the City grows, generally in line with population growth.

A city-wide provision target of one soccer/multi-use field per 100 registered youth and adult participants is recommended, a slight adjustment from the one per 90 players identified in the previous Ten Year Plan. This target responds to contemporary standards of play and considers appropriate usage/rest periods for fields.

The number of registrants in the two largest organizations (Pickering FC and Durham Dolphins Football Club) was approximately 2,750 in 2023, an increase of 20% since 2018. This growth has largely been driven by increases in the number of soccer players with Pickering FC. Beyond these two groups, the total number of players using Pickering fields is not available. It is recommended that the City require reporting on membership levels as part of the annual permitting process to improve tracking of demand and usage.

A population-based standard can be used in the interim until accurate data on the number of players using Pickering's soccer and multi-use fields is known (future Ten Year Plan update). Recognizing that most larger fields are well used, but that there is some capacity within smaller or neighbourhood-based fields, a provision target of one field (unlit equivalent) per 3,000 persons is recommended to be applied to future growth.

Looking ahead, additional fields will be required to address growth-related needs. Applying the provision target to the forecast of 46,000 new residents by 2034 equates to a growth-related need for 15.3 new fields over the next ten years.

Table 13: Projected Long-term Needs for Soccer and Multi-use Fields

Target: **1 field (ULE*) per 3,000 pop.**	**Now (2024)**	**In Ten Years (to 2034)**
Current Supply / Facility Needs	52*	15.3* more
Potential Strategies	n/a	- new field development in Seaton - expanding capacity within existing parks - greater capacity through new artificial turf fields - working with partners - multi-field potential at Greenwood Conservation Lands and/or District Park (longer-term)

Demand derived by applying provision target to anticipated growth (46,000 new residents by 2034), plus any current shortfall in supply

* Each lit soccer field is equivalent to 1.5 unlit fields (ULE) and each lit artificial field is equivalent to 3.0 unlit fields (ULE).

As the City intensifies, sports fields are less likely to be provided in mixed use areas due to their large size, requiring users to travel outside of their community to access these facilities. The greatest short-term opportunity for new fields will be through park development in new communities such as Seaton. To address the full range of future needs, sports field development must focus on improving existing fields and parks (e.g.,

adding lights, installing artificial turf, expanding fields, etc.), acquiring land, and working in partnership with owners of other large sites to bring more fields online.

Full-size fields with artificial turf that can support competitive play are in particularly high demand in Pickering, with several stakeholders seeking more as these fields can support more hours of use throughout and at the beginning and end of the playing season. Artificial turf presents a viable option due to its greater capacity for use (e.g., multiple sports, extended seasons, inclement weather, etc.) and lower maintenance cost, therefore reducing the need for land acquisition and operational resources. The needs of all field sports should be considered when designing new artificial turf fields.

At this time, planned soccer field development includes 8 fields (8.5 unlit equivalents), a little more than half of what is recommended by 2034. This includes:

- One (1) full lit field in Seaton (P-123).
- One (1) full unlit field in the proposed Hydro Corridor Park north of Kingston Road (pending approval from Hydro One).
- Six (6) 7v7 and/or 9v9 fields in Seaton (P-106, P-109, P-124, and P-131) and in the proposed Hydro Corridor Park north of Kingston Road (pending approval from Hydro One).

Potential for additional fields may be realized through park redevelopment (e.g., converting an underutilized diamond at Maple Ridge Park to a soccer field) and future development opportunities such as at the Greenwood Conservation Lands and future district park site – both of these sites would be good candidates to support a lit artificial turf field and multiple additional fields. The provision of an artificial turf field may also be considered at Seaton Recreation Complex & Library (or the community facility planned for Thompson's Corners) should there be sufficient land. A variety of field sizes are needed in order to comply with Ontario Soccer guidelines and additional artificial turf fields will be necessary to accommodate growing needs.

Should demand exceed the number of planned fields, the City may consider working more formally with school boards to permit suitably-sized school fields as schools are developed in new communities such as Seaton. This may require Pickering to allocate additional operating funding toward field maintenance, in agreement with the respective school boards.

The City may receive requests from sport organizations for fields and specialized amenities (e.g., scoreboards, on-site washrooms and dressing room facilities, spectator seating, etc.). to support competitive and high performance teams. Proposals that go beyond the City's established levels of service will typically require an appropriate cost-sharing agreement that maintains a level of public access to the site.

Recommendations – Soccer and Multi-use Fields

22. Provide approximately **15 additional soccer and multi-use fields** (unlit equivalents) over the next ten years to address growth-related needs. New fields may be developed within community parks (with multiple fields per site) and appropriate neighbourhood park sites, as well as in partnership with other land providers such as schools. Where possible, a focus should be placed on full size fields (both lit and unlit) and artificial turf fields as these provide greater capacity for community use. In addition to new fields in the Seaton community, opportunities should be sought to enhance field supplies within existing parks (e.g., conversion of under-utilized assets such as in Maple Ridge Park).

23. Through the annual permitting process, **track the number of registrants** using Pickering sports fields (soccer, football baseball, cricket, etc.). At a minimum, data to be collected should include age (youth, adult, etc.) and residency (Pickering, other, etc.). This data will enable trend tracking, support future demand analysis, and inform allocation practices.



6.2 Ball Diamonds

The City of Pickering currently permits 27 ball diamonds to sport organizations. The diamonds are well distributed throughout Pickering's urban area, with additional diamonds in rural areas. This inventory consists of

- 4 hardball diamonds (3 with lights)
- 23 softball diamonds (9 with lights)

To account for extended playing capacity, lit diamonds are assumed to be equivalent to 2.0 unlit diamonds. As a result, Pickering has an effective supply of 39 unlit equivalent (ULE) ball diamonds. The City is presently providing one diamond (ULE) per 2,640 residents, a higher rate than the comparator group (one diamond per 3,900 persons).

The indicators suggest that the number of ball diamonds is adequate at the present time, with available capacity for more use and/or repurposing of under-utilized diamonds. Pickering's increasing ethnic diversity may mean a slower growth trajectory for baseball in the future, a sport that has more limited appeal amongst many newcomer groups. However, some demand can be anticipated as the City grows as there will be a need to enhance accessibility for those in the new Seaton community.

A city-wide provision target of one ball diamond per 100 registered youth and adult participants is recommended. This target responds to contemporary standards of play. Pickering Baseball Association (minor ball) is the largest user of diamonds in Pickering, responsible for over 40% of all booked hours. The minor ball club reported an overall membership of 493 youth in 2023, down from a peak of 811 in 2016 – a 39% decrease. In addition, there are approximately six adult slo-pitch leagues that use City diamonds; current registration for these organizations is not known, but in 2016 was estimated to be approximately 1,075. With some registrants potentially not returning since the pandemic, it is likely that the number of adult players is slightly less than it was eight years ago.

Beyond the minor baseball association, the total number of players using Pickering diamonds is not available. It is recommended that the City require reporting on membership levels as part of the annual permitting process to improve tracking of demand and usage.

A population-based standard can be used in the interim until accurate data on the number of players using Pickering's ball diamonds is known (future Ten Year Plan update). Recognizing that several diamonds are not currently used to capacity, a provision target of one diamond (unlit equivalent) per 8,000 persons is recommended to be applied to future growth.

Looking ahead, additional diamonds will be required to address growth-related needs and improve geographic distribution with improved service to new communities. Applying the provision target to the forecast of 46,000 new residents by 2034 equates to a growth-related need for approximately six (6) new diamonds over the next ten years.

Table 14: Projected Long-term Needs for Ball Diamonds

Target: **1 diamond (ULE*) per 8,000 pop.**	**Now (2024)**	**In Ten Years (to 2034)**
Current Supply / Facility Needs	36*	5.8* more
Potential Strategies	n/a	- new field development in Seaton - optimizing existing diamonds - multi-field potential at Greenwood Conservation Lands and/or District Park (longer-term)

Demand derived by applying provision target to anticipated growth (46,000 new residents by 2034), plus any current shortfall in supply

* Each lit ball diamond is equivalent to 2.0 unlit diamonds (ULE).

New diamonds will be required to serve the Seaton community in particular and many of these new fields will not be required until later in the ten-year cycle of this plan. Currently the City has plans to develop a lit ball diamond in Dave Ryan Community Park (P-123) in Seaton (2.0 unlit equivalents). Two additional lit diamonds (or 1 lit and 2 unlit diamonds) would be required to satisfy the balance of needs by 2034. Adult-size diamonds are recommended for maximum flexibility, with one diamond suited for hardball.

Due to their size and buffer requirements (especially hardball fields), ball diamonds can be challenging to fit within many parks and are best provided within community or district parks where clustered fields can better support league play and tournaments. Where appropriate, supporting amenities should be provided including, but not limited to, parking and washrooms. The future Greenwood Conservation Lands have potential to serve as a destination for field sports with multiple ball diamonds.

Future demand should be addressed through a combination of strategies, including new field development, optimizing use of diamonds, and upgrading existing diamonds to fit with needs. As sports fields are less likely to be provided in strategic growth areas due to their land-based requirements, upgrades to existing diamonds may be necessary to address localized needs in some areas, including expanding under-sized fields where possible. Strategic diamond improvements may assist in dealing with potential shortfalls and should be further assessed through discussions with local baseball organizations.

Despite ten-year growth-related needs amounting to nearly six (6) new diamonds, the City should also consider strategic opportunities to repurpose under-sized and under-utilized diamonds in areas with needs for other park amenity types. Examples include the ball diamonds at Maple Ridge Park, Lookout Point Park, and Greenwood Park, which may be considered further through park-specific planning exercises for conversion to other community and/or sport amenities or even informal open play spaces.

Recommendations – Ball Diamonds

24. Provide approximately **6 additional ball diamonds** (unlit equivalents) over the next ten years to address growth-related needs. New fields should be developed within community parks (with multiple fields per site where possible), as well as in partnership with other land providers where appropriate. These needs can be largely satisfied through planned development at Dave Ryan Community Park (1 lit diamond) and future development on the Greenwood Conservation Lands (multiple lit diamonds), including consideration of both hardball and softball needs.

25. Evaluate opportunities to repurpose **surplus ball diamonds** and to align the diamond supply and distribution with demand. Some candidates for conversion include under-utilized and/or under-sized diamonds at Maple Ridge Park, Lookout Point Park, and Greenwood Park.



6.3 Cricket Pitches

The City of Pickering provides one cricket pitch at Alex Robertson Park.

With Pickering's diverse population, the City can expect pressure for cricket facilities to continue to increase. This growth will also be supported by the establishment of new leagues for youth and shorter game formats that broaden the appeal of the sport. Furthermore, cricket viewership is rapidly increasing in Canada (a recent report estimated that there are 5 million or more cricket fans across the nation[7]) and the sport is being reintroduced into the Olympics in 2028.

While the City's current level of provision (one field per 103,000 residents) is slightly better that the average of the comparator communities (one field per 136,300 persons), the large land base associated with cricket fields is a deterrent to their broad provision in many municipalities. In Brampton, a community with a large South Asian and Black/West Indian population, this per capita ratio is closer to one field per 40,000 persons.

For the immediate ten year needs of this plan, a target of one cricket field per 75,000 is recommended; this target reflects the growing appeal of the sport amongst Pickering's diverse communities. By 2034, a total of 2 cricket fields are recommended, one more than is currently available.

Table 15: Projected Long-term Needs for Cricket Fields

Target: **1 cricket field per 75,000 pop.**	**Now (2024)**	**In Ten Years (to 2034)**
Current Supply / Facility Needs	1	0.9 more
Potential Strategies	n/a	- new field development in Seaton - working with partners

Demand derived by applying provision target to anticipated growth (46,000 new residents by 2034), plus any current shortfall in supply

The cricket field at Alex Robertson Park is somewhat under-sized, but is suitable for youth and most levels of adult play. This location – which is on leased land from Ontario Power Generation – should be maintained for the time being but may not be a suitable long-term solution. While it is common to consider cricket as an interim use for lands with a longer-term purpose, this discourages investment and can be detrimental to the growth of the sport.

Additionally, another field is recommended for the Seaton area to improve accessibility to new residents and to provide greater opportunities to support the sport in growing communities. Due to the amount of land required – it takes 2+ hectares to accommodate a cricket field that is up to 150 metres in diameter (plus buffers) – the

[7] CulturalIQ. Cricket – The Fastest Growing Sport in Canada: A National Study. 2022.

only sites able to potentially accommodate the sport are the Greenwood Conservation Lands to the east of Seaton or the future District Park north of Highway 407. The first of these parks to be developed (likely the Greenwood Conservation Lands) should include a regulation size cricket field. Some communities have had success overlaying a cricket field across two soccer fields, with the pitch placed between them. An overlay allows for one sport to be played at a time; cricket demand is highest on weekends, while soccer groups have historically concentrated their programming on weekdays.

Recommendations – Cricket Fields

26. Include a **regulation cricket field within the future Greenwood Conservation Lands** or other suitable location capable of serving Seaton and surrounding area. Consideration may be given to designing the pitch as an overlay across two full-size soccer fields.

6.4 Tennis Courts

Pickering provides 24 lit tennis courts at nine parks. With the exception of the tennis courts at Claremont Memorial Park (2) and Village East Park (2), the City's tennis courts are operated by neighbourhood clubs that provide tennis programming and leagues to members. Indoor courts are available at the CHDRC; however, summer usage of this facility is lower as many players prefer to play outdoors.

Due to its international appeal, strong gender and age balance, low injury risk, and high profile Canadian professional athletes, tennis is a sport that should retain its popularity in Pickering for the next decade and beyond. The City has indicated that all of its tennis clubs have experienced an increase in membership participation over the past few years and entered into updated lease agreements with the clubs in 2023.

New tennis courts will be needed to address growth. Recognizing this, the City has recently redeveloped the courts in Dunmoore Park, is planning to add 1 new tennis court at Shadybrook Park (shared with pickleball courts and accessible through the Amberlea Tennis Club), and has plans to construct 1 new public tennis court and 4 pickleball courts in the future Dave Ryan Community Park (P-123) in Seaton. Tennis and/or pickleball courts are also planned for Titanium Green (P-107) in Seaton and there may also be the potential for outdoor courts at the site of the planned recreation facility on Thompson's Corners.

The City is providing tennis courts at a slightly greater rate (one per 4,300 persons) than the comparator communities; however, there are fewer public courts available in Pickering (4 public courts, representing 17% of all courts) than most other similar communities as the majority of courts (20 club courts) are operated by clubs with exclusive rights to operate tennis programming. A provision target of 1 tennis court per 4,500 residents (public and club-based courts) is recommended, with a focus on improving the distribution of unrestricted public courts. Application of this target finds a need for 9 more courts to 2034, largely to serve growth in the Seaton area.

Table 16: Projected Long-term Needs for Tennis Courts

Target: **1 tennis court per 4,500 pop.**	**Now (2024)**	**In Ten Years (to 2034)**
Current Supply / Facility Needs	24	9 more
Potential Strategies	n/a	- new court development in Seaton (public and club) - strategic investments in existing parks (e.g., Shadybrook Park)

Demand derived by applying provision target to anticipated growth (46,000 new residents by 2034), plus any current shortfall in supply

The following strategies are recommended to address the need for 9 new courts, with consideration of equitable distribution and opportunities for casual/public play:

- add 1 new tennis court to the tennis complex at Shadybrook Park, in partnership with the Amberlea Tennis Club;
- develop 2 public tennis courts at the future Dave Ryan Community Park (P-123) in Seaton;
- develop 2 public tennis courts at Titanium Green (P-107) in Seaton;
- develop 2 public tennis courts at P-086 in Duffins Heights; develop 4-5 club tennis courts at another site in Seaton (possibly at the community facility planned for Thompson's Corners); and
- work with the Greenwood Tennis Club to confirm the long-term need for these courts (usage is not tracked but though to be low) and consider shifting use to the aforementioned new courts planned for Seaton, allowing this space to be converted to other uses as defined by a future design process for this park.

Within South Pickering, there is a good distribution of courts with several located near growing mixed use areas. There are limited opportunities to establish new tennis courts in this area, aside from expansions at some locations. Should membership decline significantly at existing clubs, consideration should be given to converting the courts to public use (e.g., tennis, pickleball, etc.).

Due to its burgeoning popularity, the City added pickleball lines to its four public tennis courts to allow for shared use. City courts managed by community clubs are not ideal candidates for shared pickleball use due to the level of use and expectation of tennis club members. As discussed in the next section, new dedicated pickleball courts are needed and the shared-use model is not appropriate for most sites. As such, new tennis courts should be developed for tennis-only use (but may be co-located with other sport court uses) and be in groups of two or more.

Recommendations – Tennis Courts

27. Expand the number of **public tennis courts** (lit where possible) in growing communities through new court development in Seaton (4 courts at 2 parks) and Duffins Heights (2 courts at 1 park). Courts should be designed for tennis only, but may be co-located with other sport courts as part of a complex.

28. Consider the development of an **outdoor tennis complex** (4-5 courts) at the site of the community facility planned for Thompson's Corners. The complex should be operated by a community-based club under agreement with the City, allowing for public access during specified hours and/or low use periods. The potential for an air-supported dome to allow for year-round use of the courts (possibly as a long-term replacement for the indoor courts at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex) may be considered further through a business plan that examines demand, partnerships, financial performance, and related factors.

29. Work with the local tennis club to confirm the long-term need for the courts at **Greenwood Park** and consider shifting use to new courts planned for Seaton, allowing this space to be converted to other uses as defined by a future redesign process for this park.

6.5 Pickleball Courts

The City does not currently offer any dedicated outdoor pickleball courts, but does allow for the sport on 11 shared courts. Six (6) courts are shared with tennis on a first-come first-served basis (Village East Park and Claremont Memorial Park) and five (5) courts are on multi-use pads requiring portable pickleball nets.

Plans are in place to expand this inventory by adding one new tennis court at Shadybrook Park that be converted to use as four (4) pickleball courts; it will be accessible to club members. In addition, the City has been working with the pickleball community to expand opportunities to play the sport indoors (see Section 2.4).

Strong interest has been expressed by pickleball enthusiasts for more courts in Pickering, both indoor and outdoor, with demand for court time exceeding the facilities available within the City. In particular, the lack of dedicated outdoor courts for the sport has been an issue as the playing experience on shared courts is not ideal. For example, many shared courts require users to bring and/or set up portable nets, do not have dedicated times for the sport, and lack other supporting amenities that are becoming standard with new court complexes (e.g., proper fencing, wind screens, permanent lines, etc.). Dedicated courts are becoming commonplace in many municipalities and should form the primary focus for Pickering's future capital projects.

Looking ahead, the City currently has plans to construct:

- four (4) dedicated pickleball courts in the Dave Ryan Community Park (P-123) in Seaton;
- six (6) dedicated pickleball courts at the south end of Diana, Princess of Wales Park in place of the southernmost soccer field (requires approval from Hydro One);
- four (4) pickleball courts shared with tennis at the Amberlea Tennis Club in Shadybrook Park (2024); and
- two (2) multi-use courts shared between pickleball and basketball at both Beechlawn Park (P-019) and at a future park in Duffin Heights (P-087).

With the number of older adults expected to increase at a faster rate than the overall population, sustained demand for pickleball can be anticipated. Due to the smaller size of the courts, it is possible to fit two to four pickleball courts within the same footprint of one tennis court.

Due to the rapid rise of the sport, very few municipalities have yet to establish firm targets for outdoor pickleball court provision. Many communities responded quickly through the provision of shared courts, but now dedicated courts are becoming more common due to the level of demonstrated demand and their ability to support organized play. A goal of providing one outdoor pickleball court (dedicated or shared) per 5,000 residents is similar to tennis and represents a reasonable target for future planning at this time. This target suggests a need for 30 total outdoor courts by 2034 (dedicated and shared), 19 more than are currently provided.

Table 17: Projected Long-term Needs for Pickleball Courts

Target: **1 pickleball court per 5,000 pop.**	**Now (2024)**	**In Ten Years (to 2034)**
Current Supply / Facility Needs	11 (shared/overlay)	19 more (mostly dedicated)
Potential Strategies	n/a	- dedicated court development in community parks - shared court development in neighbourhood parks - one to two club court locations (Diana, Princess of Wales Park, Thompson's Corners)

Demand derived by applying provision target to anticipated growth (46,000 new residents by 2034), plus any current shortfall in supply

Going forward, the primary focus of pickleball court provision should be on dedicated courts (generally 4 or more courts per site) within community park sites to accommodate organized play. Although a lower priority, multi-lined shared courts can be effective to support casual play and may continue to be provided on an equitable

basis through new construction and court rehabilitation/conversion projects within neighbourhood parks, being mindful of setback requirements to nearby houses.

Additionally, the City lacks an outdoor multi-court (4 or more courts) site for pickleball in South Pickering. Working alongside Pickering Pickleball Club, the City has been investigating possible options for the construction of outdoor and indoor courts. The preferred location for this activity is at a park that offers access to nearby parking and washrooms and that is adequately separated from nearby residential properties. Given the mixed ownership of several park sites (and related development restrictions), lack of available open space, and the amount of buffer space required from adjacent uses, there are very few sites that could adequately accommodate a larger outdoor pickleball venue in South Pickering. The City is currently pursuing the development of six courts in Diana, Princess of Wales Park on lands owned by Hydro One. Opportunities for this to become a club-managed location (similar to Pickering's tennis clubs) should be explored[8].

To summarize, recommended provision strategies to accommodate approximately 19 new outdoor pickleball courts to 2034 include:

- four (4) courts shared with tennis at the Amberlea Tennis Club in Shadybrook Park (2024);
- six (6) dedicated pickleball courts at the south end of Diana, Princess of Wales Park in place of the southernmost soccer field (requires approval from Hydro One), possibly operated in partnership with a club;
- four (4) dedicated courts at the planned recreation facility in Thompson's Corners, possibly operated in partnership with a club;
- four (4) dedicated courts in the Dave Ryan Community Park (P-123) in Seaton; and
- consideration of painting lines on selected multi-use basketball courts at locations such as Beechlawn Park (P-019) and selected neighbourhood parks in Duffins Heights and Seaton (e.g., P-086, etc.).

Should the project in Diana, Princess of Wales Park not proceed – or should a second site for pickleball be required in the longer-term – Petticoat Creek Conservation Park may be considered further. Not only does PCCP meets the general locational criteria, but pickleball was one possible option site identified in the City's preliminary review. The City is currently investigating the possibility of entering into a long-term lease or management agreement with TRCA for this property.

In confirming and establishing new locations and provision strategies, a site evaluation process should be undertaken with consideration of the following criteria:

[8] One useful metric for more formalized play has been established by the City of Mississauga, which uses minimum membership thresholds for the creation of new tennis and/or pickleball clubs: 2 to 3 courts = 100 members; 4 to 5 courts = 200 members; and 6 to 8 courts = 300 members.

a) Pickleball courts may be established through conversion of under-utilized amenities or new construction. The City may establish minimum standards for court surfacing.

b) Courts should be developed in pairs (ideally oriented north-south), using fixed pickleball net equipment and fencing to support dedicated use. Consolidating courts is more economically efficient, will help to leverage community partnerships, and can better support organized play.

c) Shared use courts (e.g., pickleball, tennis, basketball, etc.) are less desired and will not typically be supported as long-term options.

d) Court locations must consider potential for noise impacts on adjacent properties[9].

e) Nearby parking, washrooms, and/or lights for night play are desired, but will only be considered within appropriate park types.

f) Enhanced levels of service (such as winds screens, acrylic surfacing, and other supporting amenities) may be considered through sponsorship or other partnership opportunities (e.g., community-based clubs).

Recommendations – Pickleball Courts

30. Target the development of up to **19 new outdoor pickleball courts** by 2034, with a focus on dedicated courts in appropriate locations. Projects should have consideration to the site evaluation and design criteria identified in this plan. The City should continue to work with pickleball organizations to monitor and assess the need for additional dedicated court complexes over time. Potential capital projects include:

a. developing six (6) dedicated courts at the Diana, Princess of Wales, possibly operated in partnership with a club;

a. developing four (4) dedicated courts at the site of the planned recreation facility in Thompson's Corners, possibly operated in partnership with a club;

b. developing four (4) dedicated courts in the Dave Ryan Community Park (P-123) in Seaton; and

c. consideration of painting lines on selected multi-use basketball courts at locations such as Beechlawn Park (P-019, future) and selected neighbourhood parks in Duffins Heights and Seaton (e.g., P-086, etc.).

[9] For a 2-court complex with no noise mitigation, guidelines from Pickleball BC suggest a minimum setback is 50-metres. This increases to 85 to 115m in a typical community park setting depending on the number of courts and noise attenuation measures. These guidelines should be considered as the city establishes or reinvests in outdoor pickleball sites.

6.6 Basketball Courts

With several new half courts being added to new parks, the City's supply of outdoor basketball courts has increased in recent years to 17 (10 full courts and 7 half courts). More courts are planned to be added to growing areas, particularly in the Seaton community.

Due to community requests, outdoor basketball courts have become a typical level of service in most neighbourhood parks within Seaton, to the point where some have been added following the parks' initial construction. The provision target established in the previous ten year plan would seem to have been insufficient to address the needs of growing communities that have large youth populations and fewer opportunities for driveway basketball.

To respond to growing demand, the City currently has plans to establish basketball courts in 11-12 park sites:

- Seaton: Half courts at P-105, P-106, P-108, P-112, P-125, P-127 and multi-use courts at P-109 and P-124; there may also be the potential for one or more courts at the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library.
- Duffins Heights: Full court at P-087.
- South Pickering: Full court at Beechlawn Park (P-019).

Court sizes are influenced by space availability; however, there is a general guideline of providing half courts in neighbourhood parks (and appropriate village greens) and full courts in community parks. Additional features for consideration include, but are not limited to, seating, shade, paint markings for other hard surface activities, landscaping, and appropriate sound buffering.

In setting a reasonable target to guide court development, geographic distribution is a key determinant as courts are viewed as neighbourhood-level amenities that are walkable for most residents. On this basis, an 800-metre radius can be used to identify potential gaps in distribution and for planning in new community areas. Using this measure, the Liverpool neighbourhood (west of Liverpool Road) is currently underserved and additional courts will likely also be required along the Kingston Road corridor to serve future residential development. The City should evaluate existing and future park sites to provide outdoor basketball courts in these areas.

A balanced distribution of courts should also be a goal for Seaton as this area develops. Currently, some proposed court sites (e.g., P-105, P-106, P-108, and P-109) are in close proximity to one another. Consideration should be given to reallocating one or more courts to parks in underserved areas (such as the southern portion of Lamoureax and/or the northern portion of the Wilson Meadows neighbourhood), subject to space availability.

To guide future provision, a target of one court (full or half) per 5,000 residents is recommended. Application of this target suggests a need for 13 more courts by 2034.

Planned court development will account for 10-11 of these sites, while the gaps noted above – if addressed – will alleviate the balance of these needs.

Table 18: Projected Long-term Needs for Basketball Courts

Target: **1 basketball court per 5,000 pop.**	**Now (2024)**	**In Ten Years (to 2034)**
Current Supply / Facility Needs	17 (10 full, 7 half)	13 more
Potential Strategies	n/a	- new court development in Seaton and mixed use areas - address gaps in geographic distribution (Liverpool, Kingston Road corridor)

Demand derived by applying provision target to anticipated growth (46,000 new residents by 2034), plus any current shortfall in supply

Recommendations – Basketball Courts

31. Develop approximately **13 additional outdoor basketball courts** by 2034 within growing communities (e.g., Seaton) and under-served areas (e.g., Liverpool, Kingston Road corridor) based on an 800-metre service radius. Half courts should generally be considered for neighbourhood parks (and appropriate village greens) and full courts for community parks.



6.7 Splash Pads and Outdoor Aquatics

Pickering offers three (3) splash pads located at Amberlea Park, Beachfront Park, and Foxtail Green. Each site contains a range of interactive features such as spray posts, spray creatures, waterfalls, and water jets. Facilities are unstaffed and available for community use during the warmer months. The City does not have usage data for its splash pads as they are casual use amenities.

Splash pads appeal to young children and families looking for a fun and affordable way to cool off during the warmer weather months. These facilities complement other recreation facilities at their respective parks including playgrounds, seating, shade areas, and seasonal washrooms (amenities vary by location). With the increase number of heat alerts, splash pads were also identified as an important consideration through the City's Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

The City does not provide any additional outdoor aquatic facilities such as outdoor pools at this time. There is a splash pad and outdoor pool at TRCA-operated Petticoat Creek Conservation Park; however, these facilities have been closed in recent years due to needed repairs.

Several requests have been received for splash pads in recent years and they have become a standard level of service in many newer parks across Ontario. Pickering's supply of three splash pads (one per 34,300 residents) is well below comparable communities (one per 12,400 persons) and local residents have been seeking additional investment in this area.

The previous Ten Year Plan recommended a provision target of one splash pad per 3,000 children ages 0 to 9 years. Based on 2021 Census data, this translates into a per capita target of one splash pad per 27,500 persons (all ages), a rate that lower than comparable municipalities. For long-term planning purposes, it is recommended that this target be adjusted to one per 20,000 persons (all ages) to account for the younger population anticipated to move into the Seaton community. Application of this provision target yields a need for five (5) additional splash pads within the next ten years.

Table 19: Projected Long-term Needs for Splash Pads

Target: **1 splash pad per 20,000 pop.**	**Now (2024)**	**In Ten Years (to 2034)**
Current Supply / Facility Needs	3	5 more
Potential Strategies	n/a	- new park development in Seaton - evaluation of existing parks in South Pickering

Demand derived by applying provision target to anticipated growth (46,000 new residents by 2034), plus any current shortfall in supply

In providing Pickering's children and families with suitable access to splash pads, two key factors should be considered:

- that splash pads are equitably distributed across the city so that they are within reasonable proximity of all residential communities; a service radius of 1.0 km (within new community areas and mixed use areas) to 1.5 km (within established areas) may be used to measure this; and
- that splash pads are available within higher-order parks that serve as community destinations (busier parks can sustain larger splash pads with more features and have other necessary support amenities such as shade, seating, washrooms, parking, etc.), such as community parks.

On this basis, notable gaps in distribution can be found in the City Centre, Duffins Heights, and Wilson Meadows neighbourhoods. The City is currently planning to install a splash pad in Stonepay Village Green (Duffin Heights, P-086), which will address one of these priority areas. Additionally, splash pads are proposed for several parks in Seaton, including the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library, P-123 (Dave Ryan Community Park), P-107 (Titanium Green), and P-131. Beyond 2034, it can be anticipated that additional splash pad development will be required in the Mount Pleasant area at minimum.

Additional gaps may present themselves based on community growth and staging of development. Should the City remove the splash pad at Beachfront Park due to operational issues, another splash pad should be developed south of Highway 401, ideally in proximity to growth areas. Furthermore, although there are no splash pads within Pickering's rural communities, provision is a low priority in these areas due to their small and dispersed populations.

In consideration of parks south of Highway 401, the City will be working with the TRCA to advance the Petticoat Creek Conservation Park project. Currently operated by the TRCA as a day use area, the park contains a number of recreational amenities, including a splash pad and outdoor pool that has been closed for several years due to mechanical and infrastructure challenges. A preliminary study identified the potential for enhanced park amenities within non-regulated areas (e.g., event spaces, sport courts, possible replacement of the outdoor pool, winterized washrooms, etc.) and year-round programming.

A park-specific planning study is recommended to more fully define future uses and costs for Petticoat Creek Conservation Park, including a decision on whether to remove the outdoor pool or replace it with a modern facility. Although the pool has historically been a draw to the park, its shape and design make it very difficult and costly to operate and lifeguard. With many outdoor pools across Ontario now reaching the end of their lifecycles, many communities are rationalizing pool replacement against issues such as rising costs, stagnant visitation, staffing challenges, and short operating seasons. As an outdoor pool would represent a new level of service for the City of Pickering and would potentially impact programming and staffing at its indoor pool facilities, the operation of

an outdoor pool at this or any other location would be viewed as a lower priority within the scope of this Ten Year Plan.

Recommendations – Splash Pads

32. Continue with plans to construct **5 new splash pads / water play areas** in Duffins Heights and the Seaton community by 2034; additional sites in Seaton and possibly City Centre will be required longer-term. Should the City remove the splash pad at Beachfront Park, it should be replaced at another location south of Highway 401 in proximity to growth areas.

33. The provision of an **outdoor pool** would represent a new level of service for the City and the reconstruction of the pool at **Petticoat Creek Conservation Park** is not viewed as a priority within the scope of this Ten Year Plan.



6.8 Outdoor Ice Rinks

The City currently permits the creation of outdoor natural ice winter skating locations within three of its parks: Claremont Memorial Park (maintained by the City on a rink pad) and both Whitevale and Greenwood Parks (maintained by volunteers with support from the City). All three of these locations are in Pickering's rural areas.

These rinks support leisure skating (organized sports are prohibited) within cold weather months; however, due to changing weather patterns and volunteer commitments, not all rinks are operated every year. When not being used for skating, these amenities may serve other uses during the warmer months (e.g., unstructured play, open space, etc.).

During the pandemic, additional outdoor rinks were a popular request in many Ontario municipalities. Unfortunately, climate change, unpredictable weather, and fluctuating volunteer commitments are having an impact on the viability of natural rinks.

Temperature is the primary determinant of whether outdoor skating is feasible. Refrigerated outdoor rinks offer a safer and more reliable skating surface, and are also available for an extended season. Covering an artificial rink would provide for an extended season (60+ days per year, depending on weather and temperature variation) and improved ice conditions (and shade in the summer). However, artificial rinks represent a significantly higher level of service both in terms of capital and operational resources. For example, artificial rinks require support buildings for washrooms, change rooms, and mechanical systems; opportunities to co-locate them with other community facilities (such as arenas) or in community parks should be considered to generate efficiencies and enhance geographic accessibility. Operationally, refrigerated rinks require a greater level of care and maintenance, with regular ice checks, flooding, and activity scheduling much like municipal arenas. Indoor arenas remain the preferred venues for organized play and public skating opportunities.

While there are currently no designated sites for outdoor skating in South Pickering or Seaton, City Council has identified the development of a refrigerated skating rink/water feature at City Centre Park to be a key capital priority and has also identified a desire for one at the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library. Applying the recommended target of one refrigerated rink per 100,000 persons, one location would be sufficient to meet community-wide needs over the next ten years; however, a second location in Seaton can be supported on the basis of improved accessibility for this growing area of Pickering.

Note: At its meeting of June 24, 2024, City of Pickering Council resolved (#523/14) that a refrigerated outdoor ice pad be considered as an outdoor amenity (combined with the splash pad, if possible) for the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library site.

Table 20: Projected Long-term Needs for Refrigerated Outdoor Skating Rinks

Target: **1 refrigerated outdoor rink per 100,000 pop.**	**Now (2024)**	**In Ten Years (to 2034)**
Current Supply / Facility Needs	0	1 more
Potential Strategies	n/a	- 2 proposed for City Centre Park and Seaton Recreation Complex & Library

Demand derived by applying provision target to anticipated growth (46,000 new residents by 2034), plus any current shortfall in supply

A future phase of the concept plan for Claremont Memorial Park included consideration of a covered and/or artificial rink. This site is on well water and does not have the capacity for a significant water draw, though water can be brought in to support the setting of a rink. Additionally, this park is used for several area events and activities during the summer months. There is an insufficient market to support the initial and ongoing investment associated with a refrigerated rink; however, consideration should be given to redeveloping the existing rink with a roof (but not enclosed) to provide an all-weather, four-season venue for ice skating, floor sports, camps, and events.

Support of the volunteer-based neighbourhood rink program may be continued for current sites as long as they remain viable. New sites for natural ice rinks are not a priority at this time, but may be considered in appropriate parks that have access to water, lighting, and support buildings, as well as a suitable volunteer base.

Recommendations – Outdoor Ice Rinks

34. Continue with plans to include a refrigerated skating rink/water feature within **City Centre Park** and consider the feasibility of a refrigerated outdoor ice pad (combined with the splash pad, if possible) at the **Seaton Recreation Complex & Library**.

35. Consider the development of an appropriately-sized covered multi-use pad in **Claremont Memorial Park** to support extended use for floor sports (ball hockey, skating, etc.), camps, and events. The ice pad should not be refrigerated.

6.9 Skateboard Parks

The City of Pickering recognizes the importance of skateboarding as a form of recreation for the physical and creative well-being of its citizens of all ages and skill sets. The City's only full size skateboard park is at Diana, Princess of Wales Park, located behind the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex. The park is at end of life and users are supportive of replacing it with a new park in a safer, more visible location.

In an effort to expand local offerings, the City recently opened its first skate spot, adjacent to the West Shore Community Centre in 2022. Pickering also offers a mobile skate park during the summer months, with financial support initially provided by the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Foundation. Ramps, rails, banks, and other skate elements are set up outside the trailer to create mobile skate spots throughout the City. In 2023, this service was offered at West Shore, St. Mary's High School, and Dr. N. Tomlinson Community Centre in Claremont.

The City does not provide any dedicated BMX bike parks or pump tracks, which are becoming more common in many municipalities. In Pickering, these uses are generally accommodated within skateboard parks.

Usage of skateboard parks is not tracked as they are mainly casual use amenities. However, City staff have noted increasing demand for pre-registered skateboard programs, especially for those interested in learning to skateboard. With only two designated outdoor permanent locations for skateboarding activities, a mobile skate park was implemented to address needs as the City's future network of skateboard parks takes share.

The planning and development of skateboard parks is led by the Skateboard Park Strategy 2017. This strategy examined current and forecasted participation rates in action sports and made recommendations toward the development of a network of skate park opportunities throughout the City to serve a variety of age groups and skill levels. Location criteria was established and evaluations of selected sites were completed.

The Skateboard Park Strategy describes four different park typologies, including:

- **Skate Dots:** these are generally less than 1,500 sf (the size of a street corner)
- **Skate Spots:** these are generally 1,500 sf to 6,000 sf (the size of a half basketball court)
- **Neighbourhood Skate Parks:** these are generally 6,000 sf to 12,000 sf (the size of a tennis court)
- **Community Skate Parks:** these are generally 12,000 sf to 25,000 sf (the size of a hockey rink)

Recommendations outlined in the Skateboard Park Strategy (developed in consultation with the local skateboarding community) include adding approximately 24,000 square feet of skateable area within South Pickering (through 1 community skate park and 5 skate spots) and over 33,000 square feet of skateable area within Seaton (through 1 community skate park and 3 skate spots) by 2029. Sites should be equitably distributed to maximize accessibility for area residents and be situated in visible locations.

Table 21: Projected Long-term Needs for Skateboard Parks

Target: **see Skateboard Park Strategy 2017**	**Now (2024)**	**In Ten Years (to 2034)**
Current Supply / Facility Needs	2 (1 skate park and 1 skate spot)	1 more skate park Up to 7 skate spots
Potential Strategies	n/a	- new park development in Seaton - evaluation of existing parks in South Pickering - replacement of existing skate park

Demand derived by applying provision target to anticipated growth (46,000 new residents by 2034), plus any current shortfall in supply

On this basis, the City currently has plans to develop the following outdoor skateboard locations:

- A new skate spot in South Pickering at a location to be determined (community consultation will be undertaken in 2024, with construction in 2025);
- A replacement skate park located along the proposed Hydro Corridor park north of Kingston Road (construction anticipated for 2026, pending approval from Hydro One – this facility would replace the aging skate park at Diana, Princess of Wales Park; and
- A skate spot located Dave Ryan Community Park in Seaton (construction anticipated closer to 2029).
- Skate parks/spots are also being considered for the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library site and other appropriate park sites in Seaton as they are developed.

In order to address the demand levels forecasted by the 2017 Strategy, additional sites beyond those identified above will be required to fully implement the planned network, particularly in South Pickering where these features are more likely to be integrated into existing parks. Geographic gaps exist in Amberlea, Liverpool, Duffins Heights, and Bay Ridges neighbourhoods. Among the highest rated potential sites evaluated within the Skateboard Park Strategy were Amberlea Park, Bay Ridges Kinsmen Park, Centennial Park, David Farr Memorial Park, and Shadybrook Park, although there may be other candidates. City Council did not support the recommendation for a skate park to be developed in front of the main entrance of the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex, and the City is now pursuing opportunities within the Hydro Corridor to the north.

Because they can be used for a wide range of wheeled sports – scootering which is now a dominant use in many locations, in addition to skateboarding, BMX biking, and inline skating – the term “all wheels parks” in place of “skateboard parks” is becoming more common.

It is also noted that bike parks and pump tracks are beginning to be introduced by many area municipalities (e.g., Whitchurch-Stouffville, Uxbridge, etc.). These are specially designed courses – often consisting of berms, rollers, ramps and/or similar features – used by cyclists to enjoy off-road cycling and build skills. These parks provide safe spaces for bikers to develop their skills and connect with others within a purpose-built environment, deterring property damage from illegal biking in environmental areas. Many are co-located with skate parks to create an "all wheels" environment. While not a high priority for Pickering at this time, a pump track may be considered through future park renewal or development projects, ideally in proximity to growing residential neighbourhoods.

Recommendations – Skateboard Parks

36. Reclassify skateboard parks as **"all wheels parks"** and integrate this term into the City's signage and promotions.

37. Expand the network of all wheels parks by:

a. replacing the aging community-level skate park at **Diana, Princess of Wales Park** at the proposed hydro corridor park to the north (pending approval from Hydro One);

b. developing up to **4 new local skate spots in South Pickering**;

c. developing a community-level skate park in Seaton, possibly at the **Seaton Recreation Complex & Library**; and

d. developing up to **3 new local skate spots in Seaton**, including one at Dave Ryan Community Park.

Determination of locations and designs will require additional community consultation and site evaluation, guided by the criteria and classifications established in the City's Skateboard Park Strategy 2017.

38. Explore the potential for installing a **pump track** through a future community or district park development project.



6.10 Playgrounds

The City provides playgrounds at 63 parks throughout Pickering. Most of the City's playgrounds offer creative play structures and/or traditional play equipment; three sites provide swings only.

The provision of playgrounds relies on equitable geographic distribution to enable ease of access within Pickering's residential areas. The location of Pickering's playgrounds has been assessed using an 800-metre radius; there are no significant gaps in playground provision based on this measure.

Many more playgrounds are planned for the Seaton community, including (but not limited to) P-104, P-105, P-106, P-107, P-108, P-109, P-110, P-111, P-112, P-113, P-121, P-124, P-125, P-126, P-127, P-131, P-132) and village greens in Duffins Heights (P-83 and P-87). Larger, destination playgrounds should be planned for prominent sites such as the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library, Dave Ryan Community Park (P-123), and Pickering Heritage & Community Centre (possibly at the adjacent Greenwood Park). At the City's discretion, additional playgrounds should be considered to enhance geographic distribution and address equity, where appropriate.

As the City replaces older play structures, consideration is being given to components that are barrier-free for persons with disabilities. The City should be strategic in these replacements, ensuring that destination sites such as community parks offer highly accessible playgrounds with rubber surfacing. Engineered wood fibre surfacing and accessible components are suitable for most installations in neighbourhood parks. With over sixty playground sites and an average lifespan of around 20 years per structure, the City can be expected to average three (3) replacements each year. Future budgets for playground reconstruction should be reassessed to reflect recent inflationary factors.

Recommendations – Playgrounds

39. Continue to install **playgrounds** within appropriate park types in growth areas. At minimum, playgrounds should be located within 800 metres of residential areas (less in intensified areas), unobstructed by major pedestrian barriers such as valleys, highways, and railways. Playground design should give consideration to play value, variety in design, accessible features (focusing on community park sites), and supporting amenities such as pathways, seating, and shade.

6.11 Outdoor Fitness Equipment

Outdoor fitness stations feature low-impact, joint-friendly equipment that use resistance created by a person's own body weight; the equipment is stationary with no moving parts. Pickering currently offers basic outdoor fitness equipment at one location – St. Mary Park. The equipment is free to use and located adjacent to the playground.

Pickering has a slightly lower level of provision of outdoor fitness stations compared to benchmarked municipalities. As these amenities become more common, per capita ratios can be expected to drop.

Outdoor fitness equipment offers the community affordable opportunities to stay fit and should be considered for locations that offer an improved distribution within growing communities and destination parks. The preferred design involves clustering of components in relaxed park settings that are connected to a trail system and close to residential areas, with good access to parking and shade.

Outdoor equipment is planned for several sites in Seaton, including a fitness circuit across P-124, P-126, and P-127. The City may consider distributing these locations more equitably throughout the new community area by applying a minimum catchment radius of 1-kilometre per site. Approximately five (5) locations can be anticipated in Seaton based on this measure. Opportunities should also be sought to establish designated outdoor open space exercise zones that can be used for permitted group fitness activities that are supported by the City's parks by-law.

Recommendations – Outdoor Fitness Equipment

40. Integrate **outdoor fitness equipment** into appropriate parks, focusing on destination parks (e.g., selected community and waterfront parks) and growing communities (using a 1-km radius to support equitable distribution).

41. Develop guidelines to support the design of **designated open space exercise zones** where the community can organize fitness classes (yoga, tai chi, etc.).

6.12 Community Gardens

The City has a large community garden site at the north end of Diana, Princess of Wales Park with 107 rentable plots that is administered by the City of Pickering in partnership with the Valley Plentiful Community Garden Committee. Additionally, the City runs a 55+ Plot to Plate program using 12 garden plots at the George Ashe Library & Community Centre site and has plans to extend this program to the Pickering Museum Village.

With a growing and more diverse population, it is anticipated that the demand for community gardens in Pickering will rise. Smaller residential lots and more multi-storey buildings are also leading to fewer opportunities for backyard gardens, creating greater demand for community plots. These sites should be promoted as they bring residents together, offer improved food security and affordability, provide healthy food options, and offer educational and stewardship opportunities. In 2022, the City developed a Community Garden Policy to guide the establishment of new sites in partnership with community groups. Within the policy is a set of criteria that can be used to identify suitable locations for new community gardens.

Building on the recommendations outlined in the 2017 Plan, the City has been monitoring the use and evaluating opportunities to expand the number of garden plots available at Diana, Princess of Wales Park. In 2024, the City aims to expand the existing community garden east of Kingston Road in collaboration with the Valley Plentiful Community Garden Committee, the Region of Durham, and Hydro One staff. This collaboration will enhance Valley Plentiful by increasing the number of raised garden plots and creating an accessible parking lot. Also, acting on a recommendation from the 2017 Plan, the City will be expanding their largest community garden site to the north side of Kingston Road through the proposed Hydro Corridor Park (pending approval from Hydro One). This site will help to address the current wait list and help to support longer-term needs as this area intensified, but additional locations should be considered to improve geographic equity.

As a newer amenity within the parks system, it can often be difficult to find appropriate locations for community gardens, Ideally, these amenities are supported by access to water, parking, fencing, shade, accessible features, and good visibility to improve safety and deter theft. It is understood that the City completed an assessment of potential locations, but that most existing parks are fully subscribed or not suitable for the placement of gardens. As the City builds new parks within new community areas, there is an opportunity to design community gardens into selected locations.



Given the need for support amenities, locating a community garden on the same site as the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library or other higher-order park site in Seaton in partnership with community groups is recommended. Under-utilized lands can be used for gardens if they have the necessary infrastructure (e.g., water source, nearby parking, etc.) and community support. Preferred locations will be those in proximity to higher-density forms of housing as these residents will have more limited opportunities for "backyard gardening". Consideration should be given to providing opportunities for raised garden beds to accommodate all abilities.

The City does not need to be the only provider of community gardens. Different municipalities use various approaches in administering a community garden program based on considerations around management, access, cost, site suitability, partnerships, etc. Many communities have had success working with agencies in the management and expansion of community garden programs, and the City is encouraged to continue working with the development community and other property owners to promote the establishment of gardens on private lands. Additional direction was provided through the City's Urban Agriculture Action Project, which is currently underway.

Recommendations – Community Gardens

42. Support the establishment of **community gardens** on appropriate municipal lands and as an option in new and redeveloped parks able to meet the site criteria contained in the City's Community Gardens Policy. Leverage partnerships with agencies and private landowners to ensure an equitable distribution across Pickering (including one or more sites in Seaton).

6.13 Off-Leash Dog Areas

Leash-free areas are fully fenced areas that provide pet owners with an opportunity to legally exercise and socialize their dogs off-leash in a controlled area. The City of Pickering offers off-leash dog areas at three locations: Baldson Park, Dunmoore Park, and Grand Valley Park (2 separate areas). Additionally, there is an off-leash area within the portion of the Greenwood Conservation lands that is within the Town of Ajax.

Off-leash areas are increasingly being provided by urban municipalities as one approach to reduce conflict within shared park spaces, as well as to offer a social opportunity for responsible dog owners. Pickering's current level of provision (one location per 34,300 residents) is slightly lower than the comparator group. For long-term planning purposes, a target of one off-leash area per 30,000 residents is recommended, with consideration given to geographic accessibility. Application of the provision target indicates a need for two new off-leash dog areas over the next ten years. An equitable distribution of off-leash dog areas offers convenient access to residents, which is important as many users visit off-leash parks multiple times a week throughout the year.

Table 22: Projected Long-term Needs for Off-Leash Dog Areas

Target: **1 off-leash location per 30,000 pop.**	**Now (2024)**	**In Ten Years (to 2034)**
Current Supply / Facility Needs	3	5
Potential Strategies	n/a	- new park development in mixed use areas (City Centre) and new communities (Seaton)

Demand derived by applying provision target to anticipated growth (46,000 new residents by 2034), plus any current shortfall in supply

The City has plans to establish a new dog area in the proposed Hydro Corridor Park within the City Centre neighbourhood (pending approval from Hydro One), which will be ideally located to support future growth in this area. The City has done well to support off-leash sites within South Pickering – it can be difficult to identify appropriate sites within a mature parks system due to concerns of conflicting uses, nuisance, and perceptions of safety.

Although the Grand Valley and Greenwood Conservation Area off-leash areas are centrally located for many, another location should be planned for the Seaton community. As Pickering grows, there may be opportunities to design off-leash areas into parks from the onset, to the benefit of users and area residents alike. However, given the premium placed on parkland in new communities, sites for new off-leash areas should also be sought on under-utilized lands, including remnant park spaces, naturalized lands (excluding sensitive habitats), surplus municipal lands, hydro corridors (approval required), and other partnered or alternate spaces.

New sites should only be advanced in cases where location criteria can be met and in partnership with the volunteer working group that is responsible for general upkeep and safety of the sites. Some criteria that can be used to evaluate potential off-leash dog areas may include (but not be limited to):

- Ability to maintain public safety for users and non-users, including animals;
- Minimum size, appropriate configuration, and site characteristics;
- Land ownership and cost;
- Walkability and access;
- Compatible and non-compatible adjacent uses, such as buffering from highly populated residential areas, busy sports parks, and environmentally significant areas;
- Consideration of fencing, on-site parking, water and shade;
- Community input and support from neighbours;
- Interest from a volunteer committee to act as park stewards; and/or
- Performance measures to monitor and evaluate facility conditions and operation.

The demand for off-leash areas is expected to continue into the future due to a recent increase in pet ownership during the pandemic and greater residential densities that are

reducing lot sizes, thereby increasing the reliance upon public space for exercising and toileting dogs. Leash-free areas serving missed use areas may require different approaches due to competing interests for parkland. High rise developers should be encouraged to provide pet-friendly spaces to support their residents (the City of Toronto's recently published Pet Friendly Design Guidelines and Best Practices for New Multi-use Buildings may be a helpful reference in this regard).

Recommendations – Off-Leash Dog Areas

43. Provide two (2) additional **leash-free dog areas** within the next ten years in response to community need and only in cases where location criteria can be met. Evaluate options for establishing an off-leash dog area in Seaton and continue with plans to develop an off-leash park in the proposed Hydro Corridor park (pending approval from Hydro One).

44. Prepare an **off-leash dog area policy** to address the dynamics of providing, designing, and maintaining leash free dog areas in higher density neighbourhoods.

6.14 Outdoor Event Spaces

Community events contribute to Pickering's vibrancy and livability and are important economic drivers. Pickering is well known for its community events and festivals, such as Canada Day, Ribfest, Winter Nights City Lights, Cultural Fusion, Artfest, Dragon Boat Festival, Food Truck Festival, Summer Concert Series, various heritage events at Pickering Museum Village, and more.

Many of these events occur within the parks system and are guided by the City's Community Festival & Events Manual. Signature event parks in Pickering include:

- Alex Robertson Park (waterfront)
- Bruce Handscomb Park (waterfront)
- Esplanade Park (City Centre)
- Millennium Square (waterfront)

The City also hosts a seasonal outdoor farmers' market at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex.

Due to their location along the waterfront, many of the City's signature event parks are in mixed ownership, have limited parking, and do not have permanent infrastructure to support large gatherings on a regular basis. Despite this, these parks are well used and the City's Community Festival & Events Manual is an effective tool for ensuring that events are well coordinated.

The City is witnessing greater demand for events, both large and small. Staff have indicated a need for a large park site that is capable of accommodating crowds of 5,000 or more persons. Event parks require suitable adjacencies, including sufficient parking

and access to transit, as well as electrical connections, water and wastewater disposal connections, public washrooms, shade, etc. Flexibility and increased functionality are critical – when not programmed with animations or community events, these spaces could be adapted for use as casual congregation and community space.

There is a growing case to be made for the development of flexible and multi-purpose outdoor community gathering areas and purpose-built event spaces in Pickering. Such spaces could host short-term and one-off events, as well as longer-term, ongoing, and larger-scale community events and activities (including cultural festivals, open-air markets, food festivals, and community gatherings).

Through the ongoing discussions with the TRCA about a future operating model for Petticoat Creek Conservation Park, there may be an opportunity for the City to designate this park as a signature large event site within Pickering, supported by proper amenities and features. Strategies and additional resources will be needed to activate this and other event spaces for community benefit.

Further, infrastructure projects capable of supporting smaller scale or pop-up events in a variety of locations should be considered, such as Greenwood Park which is adjacent to the Pickering Museum Village and new Heritage & Community Centre. The animation of parks and public spaces helps to make these venues more accessible and enjoyable for residents of all ages and provides an affordable outlet that connects the community.

Recommendations – Outdoor Event Spaces

45. Work with the TRCA to enhance **Petticoat Creek Conservation Park** as a signature park site for large events and festivals.

46. As a general principle, consider and evaluate **event hosting capabilities** when developing and redeveloping community and district parks, including the provision of support infrastructure (e.g., parking, electrical service, water and wastewater services, washrooms, shade, etc.).

6.15 Beach and Waterfront Facilities

Pickering's waterfront is one of the city's most prominent features and is host to a wide range of recreational opportunities including a wide range of beach, water, and paddling activities. The City works with other landowners such as Ontario Power Generation and TRCA to manage public access to waterfront lands, preserving the unique character of its waterfront.

The City has recently completed extensive renovations to Rotary Frenchman's Bay West Park, including improvements to washrooms, trails and pathways, picnic areas, shoreline restoration, and a new accessible canoe/kayak launch. The City is also moving forward with reconstruction of Beachfront Park following significant damage from high-water levels and intense storm events in 2017 and 2019.

Through focus group workshops, continued access to Pickering's waterfront was voiced as a concern. Open input on the engagement boards identified waterfront revitalization as a top five priority for recreation and parks. Recently, the City announced its interest in purchasing Frenchman's Bay from private interests in order to restrict development, maintain public access and recreational use, and enhance environmental stewardship.

The City of Pickering is fortunate to have access to scenic beaches and waterfront lands, which are utilized for swimming, leisure activities, dragon boating, kayaking, and more. Given the popularity of beach and waterfront activities, similar municipalities are increasingly providing updated and accessible amenities such as changerooms, washrooms, pavilions, play areas, and accessible features (the AODA has specific regulations that apply to newly constructed and redeveloped beach access routes). Beach and waterfront facilities may also be used to support permitted gatherings and programs (such as yoga groups using pavilions).

Outdoor water sports, such as stand-up paddleboarding and kayaking, have surged in popularity over the past few years. With people unable to travel during the pandemic, water sports provided an opportunity to get outdoors and experience their local water bodies. Water sports can be enjoyed for much of the year if the right equipment and wetsuits are provided. Additionally, inflatable equipment has become very popular which makes it easier to travel with and more accessible for the casual user to set up and use in their leisure time. Inflatable options also make paddleboards easier to store compared to the conventional paddleboard. In short, water sports have become easier for people to get involved in, with many opportunities to purchase or rent equipment, and even participate in lessons to improve their water skills.

Through the consultation program, residents expressed how important these waterfront spaces are to them and the broader community as they not only bring people together, but play an important role in preserving greenspace and habitat. Waterfront parks received extremely high levels of use during the pandemic and



are an important part the City's special events network. Continued investment in the development and maintenance of key waterfront sites (e.g., recreational amenities, trail connections, conservation initiatives, public art, support buildings, wayfinding, etc.) should remain a top priority.

Recommendations – Beach and Waterfront Facilities

47. Continue to place a high priority on the preservation and restoration of **waterfront parks and beaches** that support public access for residents and visitors.

6.16 Other Outdoor Facilities

The demands being placed on parks are rising every year. Beyond those facilities discussed above, there may be additional amenities provided within the parks system, such as (but not limited) to lawn bowling, bocce, disc golf, beach volleyball, kayak launches, running tracks, tobogganing hills, etc. Pickering has many of these facilities within its parks system at present. These amenities and features can add variety and value when supported by sufficient and sustained demand, effective management and maintenance, and successful partnerships.

Opportunities will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the key principles and actions of this Ten Year Plan. Larger community and district park sites may have the greatest capacity to accommodate new facilities, but any investment should be supported by demonstrated needs. The framework for evaluating capital proposals from community organizations identified in Section 2.7 may also be applied to outdoor capital amenities.

Recommendations – Other Outdoor Facilities

48. Continue to **monitor participation and trends in recreation and sport activities** accommodated through the parks system (including those delivered in partnership with others) to inform future capital needs and strategies.





7. Parkland

Access to outdoor space matters as parks are increasingly being seen as critical social, health, and environmental infrastructure. Green spaces offer places of respite and improve air quality, provide venues for physical activity, and conserve natural and cultural heritage landscapes.

The City of Pickering wishes to position itself with a modernized policy framework to support its current and future system of parks. This section contains an assessment of current parkland service levels and future needs and provides recommendations to assist the City in addressing its growth-related parkland needs and policy requirements.

While this plan will inform many aspects of the City's future planning, the following items are excluded from the scope of this analysis:

- preparation of the Parkland Conveyance By-law;
- calculating or setting fees for cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication payments;
- financial or growth modelling, Official Plan policy development;
- technical parkland design or development standards;
- assessments of the natural heritage system or other lands not subject to parkland dedication under the *Planning Act*; and
- land acquisition strategies or the identification of specific parcels to acquire.

7.1 Planning Context

In November 2022, the Province of Ontario enacted the More Homes, Built Faster Act. This Act (also referred to as Bill 23) made significant adjustments to the parkland dedication requirements of the *Planning Act*, among amendments to several other regulations with this and other statutes.[10]

Bill 23 will result in considerably less parkland (and funding for land acquisition), particularly within higher density areas. Municipalities may also have less discretion over the acceptability of lands through the development process, leading to smaller parkland parcels and less suitable lands for public spaces. The current planning regime and potential impacts are discussed in more detail later in this section.

New approaches to parkland dedication are needed to reflect current provincial policy and to support complete communities. This Recreation & Parks Plan presents an opportunity to review and establish an appropriate provision level that will guide future acquisitions and leverage a wider variety of growth-related policy and financial tools.

This Ten Year Plan is intended to satisfy the provisions of the *Planning Act* – specifically the requirement for a Parks Plan identified in Section 42(4.1) – and to support the City's

[10] Note: As of writing, regulations are not currently in place for some of these legilslative changes.

next Official Plan review. The Ontario *Planning Act* now requires that a municipality prepare a parks plan prior to passing a parkland dedication by-law.

7.2 School Board Consultation

Schools can play an important role in bolstering public access to parkland. School boards operating in urbanized communities share similar land-acquisition challenges as their municipal counterparts which is leading to greater collaboration and coordination among these parties across Ontario. Strategic coordination with local school boards in Durham Region is particularly important as schools are often encouraged to be co-located with neighbourhood parks. As future population growth continues, opportunities to continue working together will be paramount. At a minimum, consideration should be given to:

- Understanding if/when surplus schools are identified where the City may benefit from purchasing them to meet outdoor parks and/or open space needs.
- Joint land use planning activities, particularly when there is an opportunity to situate parkland adjacent to a school block with the intent of maximizing the amount of publicly accessible greenspace.

Section 42 (4.2.a) of the *Planning Act* identifies that in preparing a parks plan, municipalities shall consult with school boards within the jurisdiction.

School board representatives were engaged to understand any new schools or surplus school sites, how municipal parkland is currently used, capital priorities, and opportunities for partnerships and collaboration. Both the Durham District School Board and Durham Catholic District School Board participated in meetings in February 2024. The MonAvenir Conseil Scolaire Catholique and Conseil Scolaire Viamonde were invited but did not participate.

New and Surplus Schools

- The Durham District School Board (DDSB) has a total of nine sites in the Seaton community, with the first elementary school under development and scheduled to open in September 2025. The Board is working with the City to secure a location for the second school on a former public works site. As growth has slowed in Seaton, the board is able to accommodate most new students in nearby schools at this time.
- The Durham Catholic District School Board (DCDSB) has identified five sites in Seaton and are in the process of developing their first elementary school (adjacent to the Rick Johnson Memorial Park), to accommodate a capacity of 620 students and include an EarlyON hub.
- While most current student growth is occurring in the Seaton area, the boards are noticing increases in student enrollment in established areas as well. A future site for a new public elementary school has been identified on the City Centre

Neighbourhood Map 18 in the Pickering Official Plan to serve growth in this intensifying community.

- Neither the DDSB nor the DCDSB have any surplus lands in Pickering and do not have any planned closures.
- The boards expressed concern about the shrinking sizes and poor quality of new school sites, which creates challenges in offering sufficient outdoor green space for students. It is understood that the Province is working on guidelines for urban school models (e.g., podiums), which may become more prevalent in the future.

Joint Use

- Both boards have several schools adjacent to a municipal park or green space with agreements to support reciprocal use. The boards are keen to work with the City to ensure that school blocks continue to be planned adjacent to park sites.
- Both school boards have joint use agreements with the City that enable them to use key City recreation facilities and parks and, in turn, facilitate public access to school facilities such as gymnasiums and sports fields. The City programs several gymnasiums (typically larger high school gyms; e.g., Dubarton, Pine Ridge, St. Mary's, etc.) for use throughout the year. Both school boards spoke positively about these arrangements.
- The boards also directly administer a community use of schools program that allows community organizations to rent spaces. Gymnasiums and lit fields are in the highest demand, especially Monday to Friday evenings (excluding summer). The boards have seen considerable growth in demand for rental activities such as badminton, cricket (softball), volleyball, and pickleball.

Working Together

- In terms of facility partnerships, the DCDSB mentioned that they are open to discussions for developing artificial turf fields on their school sites. For the DDSB, a City indoor pool is co-located with Dunbarton High School; the board indicated that, while there are no major capital improvements planned for the high school, they anticipated it to remain in their inventory for years to come.
- Both school boards expressed a desire to collaborate with the City on park projects and future shared sites. DCDSB's Father Fenelon elementary school was discussed as an example of how it may be more optimal to maintain green space rather than designating outdoor facilities (e.g., soccer fields), to allow for wider range of activities and uses. DCDSB also indicated that they are working toward creating more naturalized safety zone areas in playgrounds, outdoor classrooms, and social spaces.

7.3 Parkland Provision

Public parks are important places for building a sense of community, social belonging, and retaining and attracting residents and visitors. This section highlights the City's parkland hierarchy and summarizes the parkland inventory based on park type. To ensure that the City keeps pace with land-based demands, this section also examines Pickering's future parkland requirements.

Defining Parkland

Section 3.5 of Pickering's Official Plan provides the basis for the "Open Space System". This system includes a variety of key natural heritage and key hydrologic features, much of which is not in public ownership. The Open Space System also includes major parks, recreational, and conservation areas that are the focus on this Ten Year Plan.

For the purposes of this plan, the following definitions and examples are used:

> **"Parkland"** refers to all lands owned, leased, and/or managed by the City and includes those lands that are classified in the City of Pickering Official Plan as "Active Recreational Areas". Parkland typically consists of tableland suitable for the development or installation of built recreational or civic amenities (such as sports fields, playgrounds, courts, gardens, etc.) that may be used for both organized and unorganized activities, although these parks may also incorporate natural features[11]. In the context of this plan, the terms "park" and "parkland" are used interchangeably.
>
> **"Open Space"** refers to all lands owned, leased and/or managed by the City that are classified in the City of Pickering Official Plan as "Natural Areas". These sites generally have no to low development potential and are primarily designated for purposes such as environmental conservation, stormwater management, buffers, etc. While it is important to recognize the benefits of open space lands, they are excluded from policies relating to parkland as they typically have limited opportunities for active recreation and have not traditionally been accepted as parkland through the development process.

The focus of the analysis in this Ten Year Plan is on "parkland" as these are the lands that accommodate the majority of active recreation amenities and are typically acquired through the land development process (through dedication or cash-in-lieu).

Parkland and open space may be provided by a variety of agencies and take different forms. All parks owned by the City of Pickering are available for public use and the City has supplemented this supply by entering into maintenance agreements for lands

[11] Note: Bill 23 introduced changes to the *Planning Act* that will allow applicants the opportunity to identify the land they intend to convey to the municipality for parkland, including encumbered land. Clarification of these conditions will be provided by way of regulations (not yet released).

owned by public agencies, such as Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation. The degree of public access and functions of these and other parklands will vary and can be different from what the City delivers through the sites that it owns. Regardless of ownership, all sites work together as key parts of the parkland and open space system by promoting physical and mental wellbeing and preserving ecological benefits.

Table 23: Parkland and Open Space Providers in the City of Pickering

Provider	Comments
City of Pickering	City of Pickering parks vary in their size, design/configuration, and intended function(s). Some parks are co-located with community facilities and provide parking onsite, while others may simply have a playground, open play space, and/or seating, or may even be undeveloped.
School Boards	School grounds may include play structures, sports fields, and hard surface courts. The City has a joint-use agreements to enable public access to several school sites outside of school hours. School facilities are often designed and maintained to different standards than those of municipal parks and may not always be conducive to the needs of all residents or user groups. Consultations with local school boards were carried out as part of this plan.
Conservation Authorities	The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) owns and manages several notable properties in Pickering focused largely on conservation and protection of ecological systems. These lands provide a range of activities such as hiking and picnicking. Public access may be restricted or require an admission fee. Notable TRCA-managed properties include: Petticoat Creek Conservation Park (70 hectares, located along the Lake Ontario shoreline), Greenwood Conservation Area (675 hectares, located in both Pickering and Ajax, separated by Fifth Concession Road), Claremont Nature Centre (160 hectares, located along Duffins Creek), and Altona Forest (53 hectares). The City also maintains (under agreement) some TRCA-owned lands as municipal parks, such as Rotary Frenchman's Bay West Park, Bruce Handscomb Park, and Glen Ravine Park.

Provider	Comments
Other Government Agencies	Ontario Power Generation (OPG), which operates the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station, owns and maintains lands predominantly on Pickering's waterfront. Alex Robertson Park, Bayridges Kinsmen Park, and Beachfront Park are operated by the City of Pickering under agreement with OPG. Hydro One is responsible for the hydro transmission corridors, several of which are operated under agreement by the City of Pickering as district and community parks (Diana, Princess of Wales Park and Beverley Morgan Park). Additionally, Transport Canada owns the land upon which Don Beer Memorial Park is located, an arrangement that came about through the realignment of Highway 7. Operated by Parks Canada, Rouge National Urban Park –one of the largest parks in an urban area in North America – is located along the entire westerly boundary of Pickering. Parts of the park are situated in rural northwest Pickering and in 2018 the City transferred additional lands to Parks Canada to help complete the park. This park is a unique combination of woodlands, valleys, meadows, and farmlands. Parks Canada is planning to expand the park's trail network and link up with trails in Pickering and adjacent municipalities.
Private Owners	Parks held in private ownership are not typically considered part of the parkland inventory. Privately owned parks and any associated analyses of these lands generally fall outside of the scope of work for this plan. Although there are some privately owned lands within the open space designation, this is not to imply that these lands are publicly accessible or that the City or any other public agency is obligated to purchase the lands.

Park Hierarchy and Classification System

The parkland hierarchy is a core element of park planning, design, and development. The hierarchy system defines the range of characteristics found in municipal parks, such as their size, form, function, and/or level of amenity. Such definition encourages a broad range of park types and facility combinations that enables a consistent management approach that can be tailored to respond to community needs. The identification of common elements also helps to ensure compatibility with neighbouring land uses, while providing the community, developers, and planners with an understanding of what new or redeveloped parks may include.

The City of Pickering Official Plan identifies the following parks hierarchy for the Seaton Urban Area (Section 11.13). While the classification system was developed for the Seaton community, it is understood that it is being applied in practice to parks in all areas of the City.

The current classification system[12] consists of:

- District Park (also referred to as City-wide Parks)
- Community Parks
- Neighbourhoods Parks
- Village Greens (also referred to as Parkettes)
- Urban Squares

Each of the above-noted park types are described in **Appendix G**, in accordance with the City's Official Plan policies for the Seaton Urban Area.

Pickering has historically grown through traditional suburban development forms and – while it will continue to do so – there is also a significant shift toward higher density developments and infill projects in the City Centre area and along key corridors. This intensification is creating pressures on existing and proposed parkland as land is more expensive and availability is highly restricted. New, innovative, and collaborative approaches are needed. A more nuanced parkland dedication regime that goes beyond the traditional park types identified above is required to reflect this urban context and to ensure that the growing city is well-served by its public parkland system.

The proposed framework distinguishes the parkland hierarchy between Mixed Use Areas and Urban/Rural Residential Areas. Further, two new parkland classes are introduced to the Mixed Use Area hierarchy: **Urban Parks and Linear Parks**. The new park types will be required as the City's parks system evolves to include new forms that respond to the changing urban structure. Guidelines for these new park types are shown in the following tables, along with the existing framework.

It is also recommended that the City consider renaming its **District Park designation** to "City-wide Parks" to better reflect the level of service within this park type and, further, to amend related guidelines to allow for the dedication and/or reclassification of large blocks of land (greater than 20 hectares) that also support environmental education, interpretation, and nature-related recreation, thus serving a broader audience. This change is intended to allow for the inclusion of larger properties (ideally combined with parklands that support active recreation) that support linear and passive recreation, including events and amenities that would attract users from across the city.

[12] Although the City's Official Plan identifies "Trailheads" within the parkland classification system for the Seaton Urban Area, in practice this is a feature and not a park type.

Table 24: Proposed Parkland Classification System

	Urban Residential Areas & Rural Settlements	Mixed Use Areas
Areas Covered	South Pickering, Seaton Urban Area, Northeast Pickering, Claremont, Brougham, etc.	City Centre, Nodes and Corridors
Park Types	District Park (City-wide Parks) Community Parks Neighbourhoods Parks Village Greens (Parkettes)	Urban Park – proposed Urban Squares (Parkettes) Linear Park – proposed

Table 25: City of Pickering Parks Hierarchy, Proposed Additions

Park Type	Proposed Guidelines
Urban Park (proposed)	Urban Parks are publicly-owned lands that are located in highly visible and accessible locations, 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. More specifically, Urban Parks are: • May be characterized by hardscaped areas for events and gatherings, fountains/waterplay, public art, seating areas, lighting, related civic uses, etc. They should also include soft surface elements for outdoor play, rest and shade, and outdoor urban life. • As significant gathering places that provide a strong sense of place, they are designed to a very high standard to support more intensified use and to promote universal/barrier-free access and user safety. • Generally 1ha or larger. • Situated to meet the needs of the local community (generally within a 10-minute walking distance; approximately 800 metres) and in some instances may accommodate City-wide facilities. • Designed with frontage on at least one public street, but may be surrounded by public streets where the scale of the park is appropriate. The adjacent built form should have active frontages facing the park, where appropriate.

Park Type	Proposed Guidelines
Linear Park (proposed)	Linear Parks are substantial corridor spaces 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. More specifically, Linear Parks are: • Typically located between adjacent building facades and the adjacent road right-of-way (but not within the right-of-way), running continuous along the length of the block. They may also be located along or near boulevards, rail lines, watercourses, or other public open space corridors. • Designed to accommodate an active pedestrian experience along with street-related activities such as vendor and exhibit space. • Designed to enable pedestrians to safely travel through the urban community quickly and easily through the provision of facilities such as pedestrian links with adequate lighting, seating/tables, recycling and waste receptacles, bike racks, and accessibility supports. • Will generally have a minimum width of 15 metres. • Typically publicly-owned spaces, but may be privately owned and publicly accessible in keeping with City policies.

Recommendations – Park Hierarchy and Classification System

49. Modify and update the City's **parkland hierarchy** through the next Official Plan update. This includes distinguishing between different types of parkland in Mixed Use Areas and Urban/Rural Residential Areas and updating the policies for existing designations as appropriate. Additionally, it is recommended that two new park categories (Urban Parks and Linear Parks) be created to support the emerging Mixed Use Area hierarchy. Consideration may also be given to renaming the District Park (to "City-wide Park") and expanding the designation to allow for the inclusion of larger properties that support linear and passive recreation, such as city-wide events, environmental education, interpretation, and nature-related recreation.

City-wide Park Supplies

The City of Pickering manages 180.9 hectares of parkland distributed across 70 sites, exclusive of open space lands[13]. Nearly half of this supply is owned by other public agencies, but available for public access (through management agreements with the City). This level of provision translates into a ratio of 1.76 hectares per 1,000 residents.

Public parkland and open space amounts owned and/or leased by the City of Pickering are identified in the following table. A full listing of existing and proposed parks is contained in **Appendix D**. Note: the City's parkland database is maintained by the Operations Department, which uses a slightly different classification system than what is contained in the Official Plan; where possible, parkland categories have been blended to improve alignment.

Table 26: Current Supply of Municipal Parkland, City of Pickering

Park Type	Number of Parks	Lands Owned by City* (ha)	Lands Owned by Others (ha)	Total Land (ha)
Community Parks	21	54.8	76.3	**131.1**
Neighbourhood Parks	22	39.9	0.6	**40.5**
Parkettes (Village Green, Urban Square)	27	8.7	0.6	**9.3**
Total Parkland	**70**	**103.4**	**77.5**	**180.9**

* Note: some lands are in mixed ownership
Other landowners include: Ontario Power Generation, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Hydro One, Frenchman's Bay Ratepayers, Transport Canada, and/or Regional Municipality of Durham.

Due to changes in how the City categorizes its parks and open space, it is not possible to accurately compare changes in the supply from past planning cycles, although it is likely that the City's parkland service ratio has decreased in recent years due to the declining sizes of parkland dedicated through development. It is recommended that a system be put into place to create a centralized database that will allow for tracking over time.

Looking ahead, additional parkland will be dedicated to the City in the future as new development applications are approved, as well as through negotiated approvals for secondary plan areas.

The supply of parkland in the City's new community areas (e.g., Seaton, Northeast Pickering) will likely be less on a per capita basis than in South Pickering because of declining parkland dedication amounts through the *Planning Act*. While these new parks will be able to accommodate active and structured recreational amenities, smaller parks mean that there may be less space for unstructured or passive use, buffers and

[13] Note: Significant open space portions of existing parks have been removed from the calculations to provide a more accurate depiction of the lands available for park purposes.

setbacks, parking, etc. It also means that the City will need to design parks to accommodate greater capacity than traditional parks, with considerations of robust materials and designs that allow for greater use (e.g., artificial turf fields, multi-use courts, etc.). The community must also continue to rely on lands provided by other public agencies (e.g., schools, Hydro One, OPG, TRCA, etc.) to serve residents over the planning period.



Table 27: Future Parkland Potential Across the City of Pickering

Community	Comments
Seaton Urban Area	Seaton has been planned as a sustainable urban community with a focus on walkable neighbourhoods and equitably distributed parks and recreational facilities. The majority of future parkland in Seaton has already been negotiated by way of the Neighbourhood Plans. There is approximately 95 hectares of parkland anticipated within Seaton according to the City's database; this includes a 36.4 hectare district park within the Innovation Corridor. Nearly all of this parkland has yet to be dedicated to the City, but will be transferred as the area is developed. This translates into an average rate of provision of 1.36 ha/1000 residents.
Mixed Use Areas	Considerable growth is anticipated for the City's mixed use areas such as the City Centre and Kingston Road Corridor. Parkland dedication is required through development and redevelopment applications, as guided by the City's Official Plan. Larger sites may yield land for urban parks, which may not be viable on smaller development sites. As discussed later in this section, privately-owned public spaces and strata parks are becoming more common in intensification areas, with one currently being planned in Pickering's Universal City development.
Established Areas	Mature, established parts of Pickering are unlikely to yield much in the way of additional parkland. There may be low potential through infill development (which would yield small park blocks or cash-in-lieu) or through the strategic acquisition of lands for park purposes by Council (such as the recent acquisition of waterfront properties).
Northeast Pickering	A secondary plan process is just getting underway for this new community area and a land use structure (and parkland amounts) has yet to be developed. A series of community parks, neighbourhood parks, village greens, a connected trail system may be anticipated.

Community	Comments
Other	The City has a history of working with other public agencies (e.g., schools, Hydro One, OPG, TRCA, etc.) to supplement municipal parkland supplies. These arrangements should continue to be pursued to serve residents over the planning period. Notable non-municipal properties that may assist the City in meeting its long-term parkland and recreation goals include (but may not be limited to): • **Petticoat Creek Conservation Park:** These lands are owned and managed by TRCA; they are located in South Pickering along the Lake Ontario waterfront. The City has been studying the potential to introduce new activities and programming to turn this into a destination park for all residents. An agreement and detailed design plan is required to more fully define future park uses and costs. • **Greenwood Conservation Area:** These lands are a former City of Toronto Landfill that are now owned and managed by TRCA. They are located in Central Pickering along the border with the Town of Ajax. There is a longer-term opportunity to develop a municipal sports field complex on approximately 20 hectares through agreement with TRCA. • **Future District Park north of Green River:** A currently undeveloped and unserviced 36-hectare property has been secured for a future District Park north of Highway 7 near Green River access off Sideline 32. This is a long-term project. • **Durham Meadoway:** This is a proposed pedestrian and cycling route and linear park that will connect people to destinations across more than 27 kilometres of Durham Region. In addition to providing a significant east-west recreational facility and active transportation spine, the Durham Meadoway also has the potential to become a multi-faceted space for people that includes ecological enhancements, public art and community amenities. This space is currently in the design phase, being led by the Region of Durham.

Recommendations – City-wide Park Supplies

50. Develop and maintain a **comprehensive inventory database** of parks and open spaces (linked to GIS and asset management databases) for the purposes of evaluation and planning.

Parkland Needs

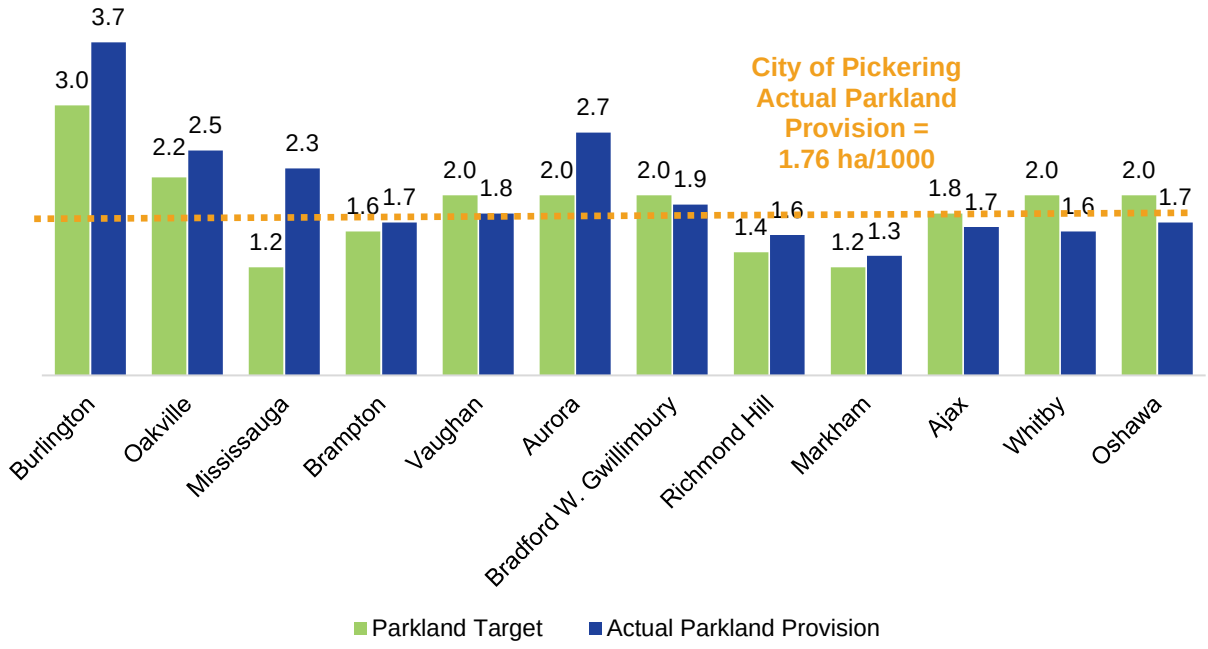
An appropriate supply and equitable distribution of parkland is critical to ensuring a high quality of life and maximizing accessibility to services and amenities that achieve community objectives. As the City grows, there will also be a growing need for more parkland to serve the increasing number of residents.

Most municipalities use population-based targets to calculate and plan parkland supply. As it is becoming more complex and costly to secure quality parcels for parkland within new higher density forms of development, a parkland target can be a useful tool that informs the City's parkland acquisition program.

Parkland to population ratios are in common use throughout Ontario and beyond. The City's current parkland provision rate is **1.76 hectares per 1,000 residents**, excluding open space (e.g., natural areas); nearly half of this is not owned by the City of Pickering, but managed under agreement.

As shown in the following figure, municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area with comparable characteristics to Pickering typically strive to achieve parkland provision rates around 2.0 hectares per 1,000 residents, with larger, more urbanized communities tending to have lower targets. It is notable that many of these targets have been set prior to recent changes to provincial legislation that place additional limits on parkland dedication amounts. Even prior to these changes, parkland service levels have been declining over time in most jurisdictions.

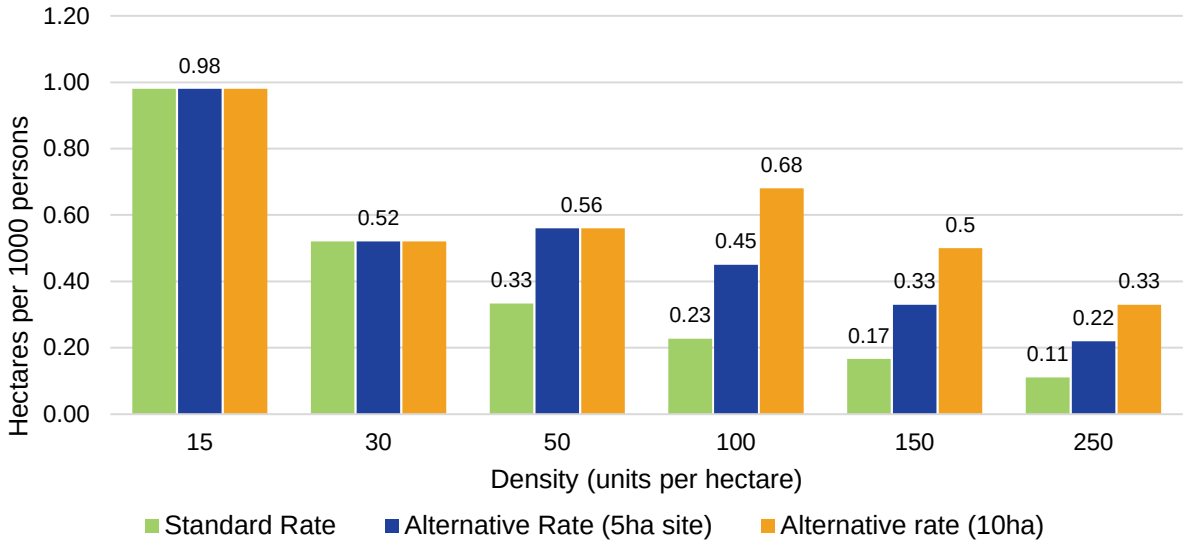
Figure 9: Parkland Provision Targets in Selected Ontario Municipalities (hectares per 1,000)



Source: Various Official Plans, Parks and Recreation Plans; compiled by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants

Understanding current parkland dedication tools and prospective ratios is important in establishing a target that is both realistic and achievable. Through the Bill 23 provisions now within the *Planning Act*, application of the standard and/or alternative rate will generally result in parkland dedication ratios of between **0.2 to 1.0 hectares per 1,000 residents**, well below current levels of supply in Pickering. The actual ratio will vary depending on the density of the development and the number of persons per unit. The following graph and tables in **Appendix H** provide several illustrations.

Figure 10: Parkland Dedication Scenarios (Bill 23)



Note: Parkland dedication is capped at 10% of the land or value of the land for development or redevelopment sites that are five hectares or less and at 15% of the land or value of the land for sites that are greater than five hectares.

The current provincial policy regime and land economics mean that per capita parkland provision rates will continue to decline. Applying the City's current parkland provision level to future growth is not attainable or realistic as all new residential development that occurs within Pickering will reduce the City's overall ratios. It is common for current provision rates to be higher than established standards as this reflects historical land acquisition practices and the declining service levels anticipated for the future. Moving forward, needs are more likely to be focused on neighbourhood and community parks in new communities and growth areas.

It is recommended that the City establish a municipal-wide provision target for parkland that is both attainable and that helps Pickering achieve its vision for a parks system that responds to resident needs. This means setting a target that will promote equitable distribution, expand in step with the community (and its many new young families), encourage quality sites that support a range of park types, and that is financially achievable. A target should be seen as a benchmark to guide long-term goals and against which to measure progress.

On the basis of this analysis, it is recommended that the City set a target of achieving – at minimum – a parkland provision level of 1.5 hectares per 1,000 residents by 2034 (City owned and leased parkland). This target should not be interpreted to be rigid and should be reviewed again in ten-years' time.

As time goes on, the City-wide target may be greater than what can be achieved solely through the provisions of the *Planning Act* and will potentially require other means of securing parkland, such as acquisitions, lease agreements, etc. It is also important to recognize that this target is supplemented by other public lands that are not defined as parkland, but that can provide valuable contributions to community life, such as open spaces, schools, conservation areas, etc.

Further, it is recommended that this target be modified to address the specific needs and policy approaches within Pickering's various urban, suburban, and rural contexts. With increasing intensification, more municipalities have been adopting different parkland targets for different urban contexts and trying to avoid over-reliance on a single measure. For Pickering, these recommended sub-targets (expressed as "minimums") are as follows:

1) **Mixed Use Areas:** A minimum target of **0.5 hectares per 1,000 residents** or 12% of total gross land area (whichever is greater) is recommended for mixed use areas such as the City Centre and growth nodes and corridors. This standard is 50% of the target for new communities and reflects the complex land economics of developing in intensification areas where parkland opportunities will be severely limited.
2) **New Communities:** A minimum target of **1.2 hectares per 1,000 residents** is recommended for suburban areas such as the Seaton Urban Area and Northeast Pickering. As new community areas are much larger in context and can be planned as a complete community, there is a greater likelihood of achieving this target. The development community should be encouraged to participate in achieving or exceeding this target as neighbourhood and community parks offer value to prospective buyers and are vital in designing complete communities.
3) **Established Areas:** A minimum target of **1.5 hectares per 1,000 residents** is recommended for mature residential areas in South Pickering and rural settlements. This largely reflects the current level of provision in these areas, which will see slower growth partially through infill developments over the next ten years.

Application of the City-wide provision target calculates a need for 69.1 additional hectares of parkland by 2034 (to address population growth of approximately 46,079 residents). The following table illustrates minimum future parkland amounts required to achieve the recommended targets.

City databases identify 61.6 hectares of parkland that are anticipated to be dedicated over time within the Seaton Urban Area (54.0 ha, much of which will be beyond 2034; excluding the planned District Park in the Innovation Corridor) and approved plans of subdivision in other areas of Pickering (7.6 ha). **Discounting for these known conveyances, it is estimated that 7.4 to 18.0 additional hectares of parkland (over**

and above planned dedications) will need to be secured to meet the city-wide target. Of this, 11.8 hectares will be specifically intended to serve established areas and 6.3 hectares to serve mixed use areas (City Centre, Kingston Road Corridor, etc.). At this time, no additional parkland needs have been identified within the Seaton Urban Area beyond those that are currently planned.

Table 28: Approximate Parkland Dedication / Acquisition Targets to 2034

Community Types	Parkland Provision Target (minimum)	Population Growth (2024-2034)	Estimated Parkland Requirements (2024-2034)	Known Parkland Dedication	Parkland Deficit
Mixed Use Areas (City Centre, Kingston Rd., etc.)	0.5 ha/1000	13,829	**6.9 ha**	0.6 ha	**6.3 ha**
New Communities (Seaton)	1.2 ha/1000	19,732	**23.7 ha**	54.0 ha*	**n/a**
Established Areas (other urban and rural neighbourhoods)	1.5 ha/1000	12,518	**18.8 ha**	7.0 ha	**11.8 ha**
City-wide	**1.5 ha/1000**	**46,079**	**69.1 ha**	**61.6 ha***	**7.6 ha to 18.0 ha**

Note: Parkland supplies and targets include City-owned parklands and non-owned parkland that is managed under agreement.
* a large portion of these lands will be conveyed post-2034; excluded from this figure is the planned District Park in the Innovation Corridor (36.4 ha)

Achieving these targets will require a variety of approaches, including direct acquisition, off-site conveyance, agreements with other landowners for public access (e.g., Petticoat Creek Conservation Park, Greenwood Conservation Area, etc.), etc. Beyond 2034, the City is planning a future District Park (36.4 ha) within the Innovation Corridor that will also offer significant opportunity to expand the supply of public parkland in the longer-term. Approaches to land acquisition are discussed further later in this section.

Recommendations – Parkland Needs

51. Adopt a minimum City-wide **parkland provision target** of 1.5 hectares per 1,000 residents through to 2034. This target (as well as defined targets for mixed use areas, new community areas, and established areas) should be used to inform the review of development applications and secondary plans for the next ten years. Where possible, parkland provision targets should be linked to population and/or housing units.

Park Distribution and Priority Acquisition Areas

Equity is a foundational principle in assessing the adequacy of parkland provision. This can be measured by considering both access (e.g., gaps in geographic distribution) and supply (e.g., areas with parkland shortfalls).

The City of Pickering Official Plan contains the following policy relating to a connected system of parks, trails, and greenspaces (Section 7.7):

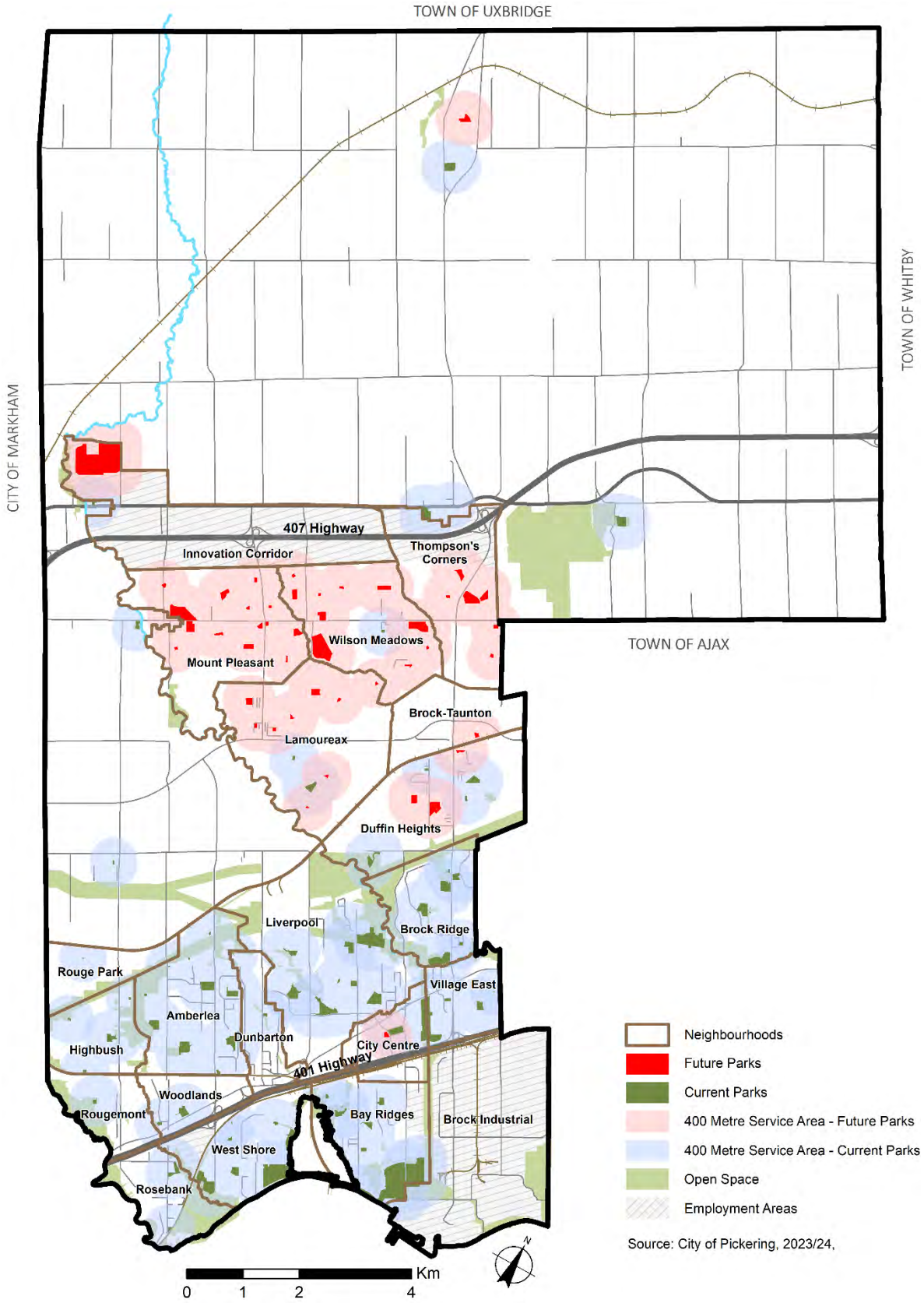
> *"Recognizing the importance that parks and green space have in providing healthy settings and opportunity for healthy lifestyles for residents, employees and visitors, City Council shall promote the establishment of an accessible, publicly-owned, connected system of parks, trails and greenspaces, providing within that system activities for people of different ages and different abilities."*

A distributional analysis was undertaken by applying this service area to Pickering's parks to understand where residents are located within walking distance to a park or where gaps exist. The City's Official Plan identifies a measure of 400 to 800 metres to ensure accessibility to neighbourhood parks (5 to 10-minute walk). The following map illustrates the current distribution of parks (all parkland types) based on a 400-metre radius, adjusted for highways and creeks. By using the lower end of this range, there is a greater likelihood that those with limited mobility would have access to the many benefits that parks provide.

As shown on the following map, Pickering's parks are equitably distributed across the city. Any visible gaps in park distribution are a result of natural areas (e.g., ravines, woodlots, etc.), golf courses, schools, commercial, or industrial areas. While park coverage is excellent overall, intensification will amplify the need for equitable distribution and the constrained availability of land could challenge the City's ability to address localized gaps in the future. For example, there is a minor gap within southern parts of the Woodlands, Dunbarton, and Liverpool areas (generally along the north side of Kingston Road between Whites Road and Pickering City Centre). With residential intensification planned along this corridor, it will be important to secure appropriate land for parks in this area to serve existing and future residents.



Figure 11: Current and Future Parkland Distribution, City of Pickering (400-metre radii)



The City's current (2024) and forecasted (2034) population was also assessed in relation to the parkland inventory using the City of Pickering's neighborhood areas. This parkland to population ratio analysis provides another approach to determining areas of under-supply and identifying priority areas for future parkland acquisition.

Specifically, this approach allows for:

- a geospatial analysis of current and known future parkland supplies (all parkland types) across the City's various neighbourhoods using a 400-metre radius;
- identification of areas currently with low and high parkland supplies in comparison to the planning targets for their particular urban structure (e.g., mixed use areas, new communities, and established areas) and an illustration of how this may change over time (note: industrial areas are excluded from the analysis);
- identification of areas of growth that will experience added pressure and demand for parkland;
- recognition of the differences in parkland supply, parkland needs, and population within different urban contexts, such as rural, suburban urban and established communities; and
- a basis for considering different park provision targets or approaches across different urban contexts.

The following tables and maps identify per capita parkland supplies by neighbourhood, both now (2024) and in the future (2034+). More than 50% of the City's residential and rural neighbourhoods (11) currently have parkland provision ratios that are below the recommended targets. Some of this can be attributed to the pace of development in Seaton, where ratios are likely to improve as new parks come online in the future. Notably, parkland ratios are currently forecasted to decline substantially in the City Centre unless sufficient new parklands are secured through planned growth.

Figure 12: Parkland Provision by Neighbourhood, Existing (2024)

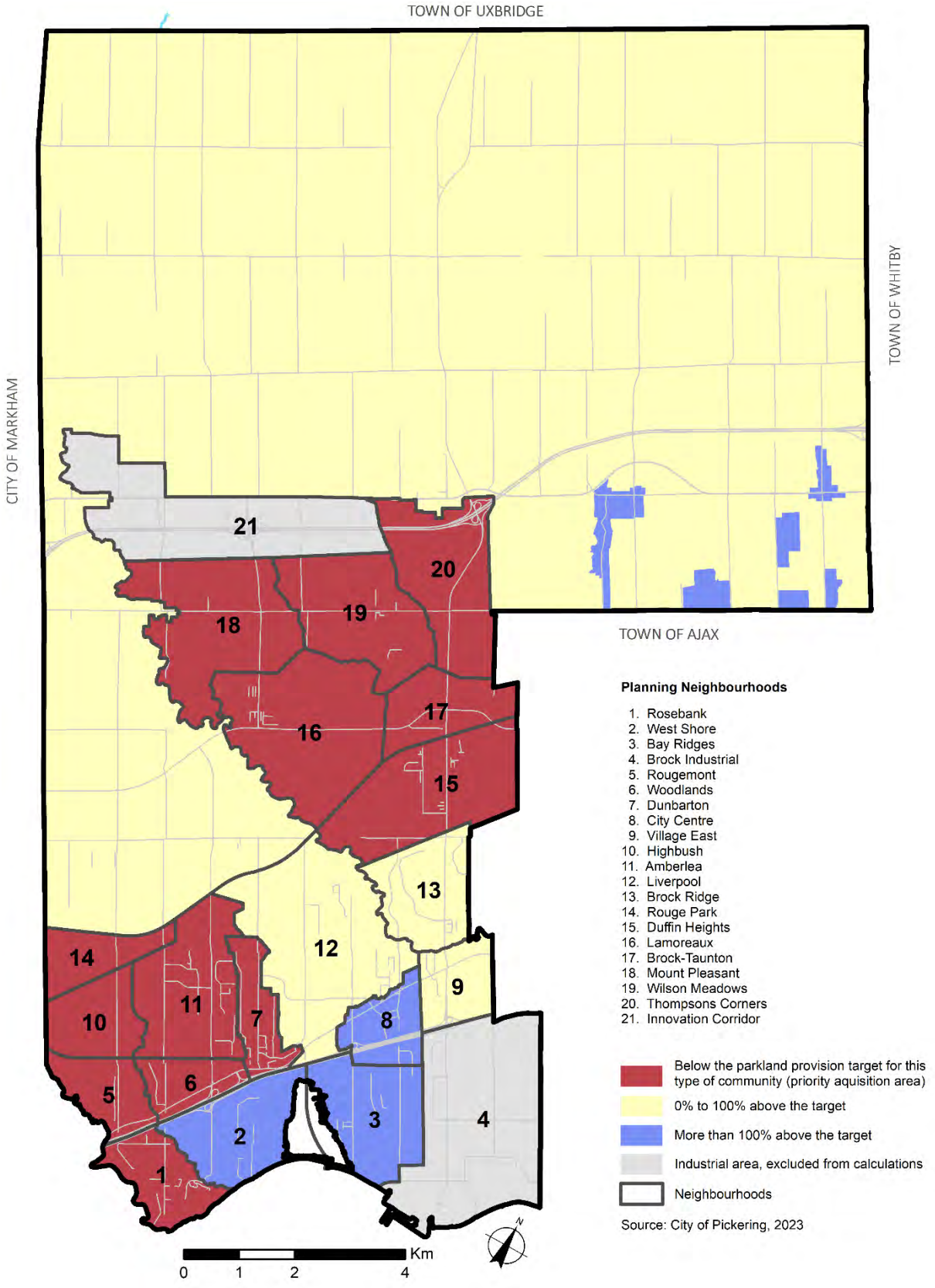


Figure 13: Parkland Provision by Neighbourhood, Planned (2034+)

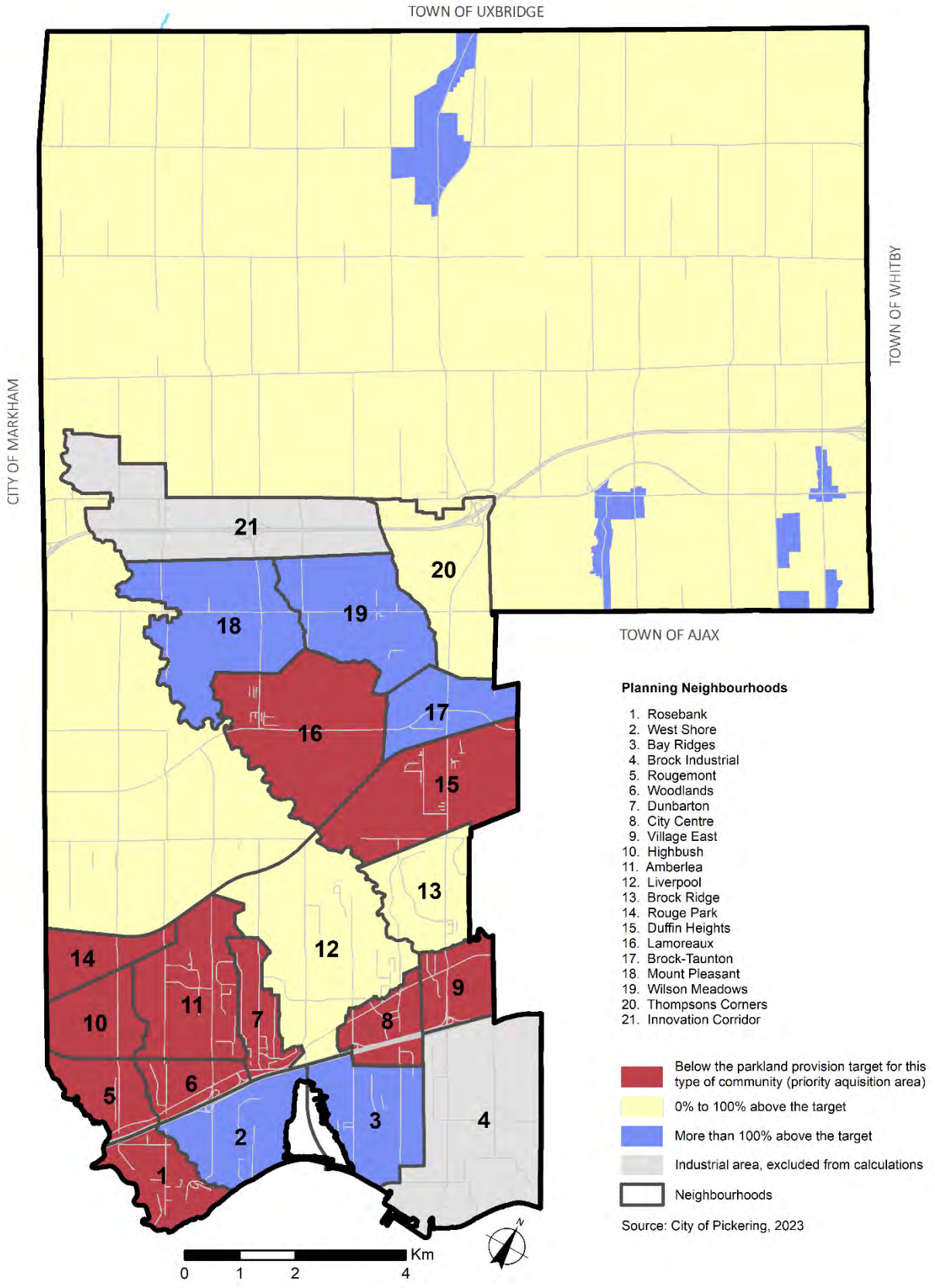


Table 29: Parkland Provision within Mixed Use Areas, Existing and Planned (Target = 0.5 ha/1000)

Neighbourhood	2024 Population	2034 Population	Population Change 2024-2034	Current Parkland (ha)	2024 Parkland Per 1,000	Future Parkland (ha)	2034 Parkland Per 1,000
8-City Centre	6,260	20,090	13,829	8.6	1.37	9.2	0.46
Mixed Use Area Total	**6,260**	**20,090**	**13,829**	**8.6**	**1.37**	**9.2**	**0.46**

Legend: Red = Below the parkland provision target for this type of community (priority acquisition area); Yellow = 0% to 100% above the target; Purple = more than 100% above the target

Table 30: Parkland Provision by New Communities, Existing and Planned (Target = 1.2 ha/1000)

Neighbourhoods	2024 Population	2034 Population	Population Change 2024-2034	Current Parkland (ha)	2024 Parkland Per 1,000	Future Parkland (ha)**	2034 Parkland Per 1,000
16-Lamoreaux	4,205	11,752	7,547	2.2	0.52	6.8	0.58
17-Brock - Taunton	38	37	-1	0	0.00	0.5	13.58
18-Mount Pleasant	46	2,219	2,172	0	0.00	18.3	8.25
19-Wilson Meadows	1,595	7,142	5,547	0.2	0.13	22.4	3.14
20-Thompson's Corners	38	4,504	4,467	0	0.00	8.4	1.86
21-Innovation Corridor*	32	32	0	0	0.00	0.0	0.00
New Communities Total	**5,953**	**25,685**	**19,732**	**2.4**	**0.40**	**56.4**	**2.20**

* industrial area, excluded from calculations

** a large portion of these lands will be conveyed post-2034; excluded from this figure is the planned District Park in the Innovation Corridor (36.4 ha)

Legend: Red = Below the parkland provision target for this type of community (priority acquisition area); Yellow = 0% to 100% above the target; Purple = more than 100% above the target

Table 31: Parkland Provision within Established Areas, Existing and Planned (Target = 1.5 ha/1000)

Neighbourhoods	2024 Population	2034 Population	Population Change 2024-2034	Current Parkland (ha)	2024 Parkland Per 1,000	Future Parkland (ha)	2034 Parkland Per 1,000
1-Rosebank	3,234	3,367	133	2.4	0.74	2.4	0.71
2-West Shore	6,893	6,830	-63	33.3	4.83	33.3	4.88
3-Bay Ridges	11,095	10,899	-196	45.1	4.07	45.1	4.14
4-Brock Industrial*	12	12	0	0	0.00	0.0	0.00
5-Rougemount	3,087	4,933	1,846	0.7	0.23	0.7	0.14
6-Woodlands	3,370	4,410	1,040	2.6	0.77	2.6	0.59
7-Dunbarton	2,699	2,908	209	0.6	0.22	0.6	0.21
9-Village East	5,641	6,844	1,202	10.2	1.81	10.2	1.49
10-Highbush	6,156	6,164	9	2.7	0.44	2.7	0.44
11-Amberlea	12,965	12,740	-225	15.4	1.19	15.4	1.21
12-Liverpool	17,415	17,163	-252	28.6	1.64	28.6	1.67
13-Brock Ridge	6,702	8,007	1,305	14.8	2.21	14.8	1.85
14-Rouge Park	1,494	2,324	830	0.1	0.07	0.1	0.04

Neighbourhoods	2024 Population	2034 Population	Population Change 2024-2034	Current Parkland (ha)	2024 Parkland Per 1,000	Future Parkland (ha)	2034 Parkland Per 1,000
15-Duffin Heights	5,754	12,069	6,315	3.6	0.63	8.9	0.74
Claremont & Area	1,092	1,263	170	2.5	2.29	4.2	3.33
Greenwood, Kinsale & Estate Clusters	621	699	77	2.7	4.35	2.7	3.86
Remaining Rural	2,477	2,593	117	4.6	1.86	4.6	1.77
Established Area Total	**90,706**	**103,223**	**12,518**	**169.9**	**1.87**	**176.9**	**1.71**

* industrial area, excluded from calculations
Legend: Red = Below the parkland provision target for this type of community (priority acquisition area); Yellow = 0% to 100% above the target; Purple = more than 100% above the target

Table 32: Parkland Provision Area Totals, Existing and Planned

All of Pickering	2024 Population	2034 Population	Population Change 2024-2034	Current Parkland (ha)	2024 Parkland Per 1,000	Future Parkland (ha)	2034 Parkland Per 1,000
Mixed Use Areas	6,260	20,090	13,829	8.6	1.37	9.2	0.46
New Communities	5,953	25,685	19,732	2.4	0.40	56.4	2.20
Established Areas	90,706	103,223	12,518	169.9	1.87	176.9	1.71
City Total	**102,919**	**148,998**	**46,079**				

Legend: Red = Below the parkland provision target for this type of community (priority acquisition area); Yellow = 0% to 100% above the target;

Based on the preceding analysis, the following table identifies areas of the city where parks and parkland are not as locally accessible. It is suggested that these areas be considered priority areas for parkland acquisition.

Table 33: Current and Future Parkland Shortfalls – Parkland Acquisition Areas (ranked by population, with populations over 5,000 persons bolded for emphasis)

Current (2024)	Future (2034))
1. **Amberlea (pop. 12,965)** 2. **Duffin Heights (pop. 6,315)** 3. **New Community (Seaton) neighbourhoods (pop. 5,953)*** 4. **Highbush (pop. 5,754)** 5. Woodlands (pop. 3,370) 6. Rosebank (pop. 3,234) 7. Rougemount (pop. 3,087) 8. Dunbarton (pop. 2,699) 9. Rouge Park (pop. 1,494)	1. **City Centre (pop. 20,090)** 2. **Amberlea (pop. 12,740)** 3. **Duffin Heights (pop. 12,069)** 4. **Lamoureax (pop.11,752)** 5. **Highbush (pop. 6,164)** 6. Rougemount (pop. 4,933) 7. Woodlands (pop. 4,410) 8. Rosebank (pop. 3,367) 9. Dunbarton (pop. 2,908) 10. Rouge Park (pop. 2,324)

*lower priority due to new parkland coming online

Many of the City's mixed use areas have (or will have) below average supplies of parkland. As residential growth is anticipated within these locations, the pressure for

parkland will continue to increase over time. It will be important to ensure that an adequate supply of parkland is available within these areas, or within walking distance, to respond to an increase in population over the long-term. The City should be prepared to acquire lands in these areas as they become available and to explore other strategies (both capital and programmatic) to enhance recreation and community activities in these areas.

It is also noted that there are locations within Pickering's urban area that are parkland deficient but are outside of the designated mixed use areas. These existing communities are generally older and well established with limited development potential that could generate parkland acquisition opportunities – these areas will generally be a lower priority for parkland acquisition.

Equitable distribution is a key principle for the city's parks system. Growing areas with inadequate parkland supplies should be a priority for the City to address through both the development process and direct acquisition via cash-in-lieu and other financial tools. In this way, the City can work to maintain parkland provision standards, while also improving accessibility to those that are most in need.

The following strategies may be considered for **addressing parkland gaps and shortfalls within Priority Acquisition Areas**. These are generally listed in order of priority.

1) On an ongoing basis, evaluate proposed development applications for future park dedication and connectivity opportunities (e.g., sidewalks, trails, etc.). While expansion to existing parks may not directly enhance overall accessibility, it can improve economies of scale and should generally be encouraged. For development applications in other areas of the city, consider the potential for off-site conveyance within priority acquisition areas (where appropriate and supported by policy).
2) Evaluate other municipal or public lands (not currently designated as parks) within these areas for their ability to be used as parkland or – at a minimum – accommodate a public playground.
3) Consider improvements to parks (including park programming) to enhance active and passive recreational opportunities in the vicinity of the growth area.
4) Encourage voluntary conveyance, donations, gifts, and bequests from individuals or corporations.
5) Monitor real estate opportunities and seek to purchase (or swap) one or more properties that could be developed as a municipal park. This may be the highest cost option and would require additional resources.

Recommendations – Park Distribution and Priority Acquisition Areas

52. Prepare a **parkland acquisition strategy** to enhance current and future community access to parks, with consideration of alternative acquisition tools.

Recommendations – Park Distribution and Priority Acquisition Areas

The strategy should confirm priorities for land acquisition (including opportunities to secure larger park blocks for community-serving amenities) and a budget for the annual allocation of funds.

53. Use the **priority mapping** in this plan to inform land acquisition and work with other municipal departments to secure land and/or enhance programming in high priority areas (informed by the proposed parkland acquisition strategy).

54. Strengthen **collaboration with public agencies** (e.g., schools, local and other levels of government, utility and infrastructure agencies, etc.) to facilitate community access to parks, trails, and recreation spaces on non-municipally owned sites. Consider developing a framework to improve connections to (and programming of) these spaces.



7.4 Parkland Policy

This section examines policy approaches to be considered through future updates to the City's Official Plan and parkland dedication procedures. Additionally, a comparative analysis of three other Greater Toronto Area municipalities was undertaken to inform the analysis of Pickering's parkland policies and approaches (see **Appendix H**).

Legislative and Policy Scan

Summarized below are applicable provincial and local policies that have relevance to the analysis of parkland provision and policy.

Provincial Policy Statement

The *Provincial Policy Statement* (PPS), issued under the authority of the *Planning Act*, sets a vision for land use planning in Ontario. The *PPS* is a significant document since it provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest as it pertains to land use planning and development. Regional and local planning policies (including those prescribed through Official Plans) must be consistent with the *PPS*.

On April 6, 2023, the province released for comment the proposed 2023 *Provincial Planning Statement*. It proposes to repeal "A Place to Growth – the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe" and the *2020 Provincial Policy Statement* and replace both with an integrated policy statement.

Policy 3.9 of the proposed policy statement addresses Public Spaces, Recreation, Parks, Trails and Open Space (see below).

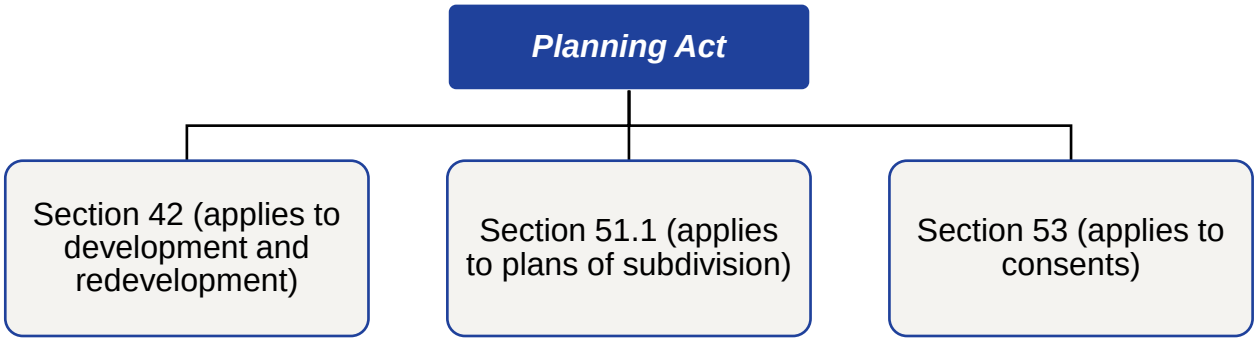
> *Healthy, active, and inclusive communities should be promoted by:*
>
> *a) planning public streets, spaces and facilities to be safe, meet the needs of persons of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, foster social interaction and facilitate active transportation and community connectivity;*
>
> *b) planning and providing for the needs of persons of all ages and abilities in the distribution of a full range of publicly-accessible built and natural settings for recreation, including facilities, parklands, public spaces, open space areas, trails and linkages, and, where practical, water-based resources;*
>
> *c) providing opportunities for public access to shorelines; and*
>
> *d) recognizing provincial parks, conservation reserves, and other protected areas, and minimizing negative impacts on these areas.*

Among other items, the *PPS* also outlines the importance of active transportation and green infrastructure, mitigating impacts of climate change, and a clean and healthy environment.

Ontario Planning Act

Parkland conveyance authority is established in the *Planning Act, R.S.O., 1990, c. P.13* and facilitated through the City's Official Plan policies. Specifically, this includes *Planning Act* Section 42 (which pertains to parkland conveyances associated with development and redevelopment, to be imposed by by-law) and Sections 51.1 and 53 (which pertain to parkland requirements as a condition of plan of subdivision approval and consent).

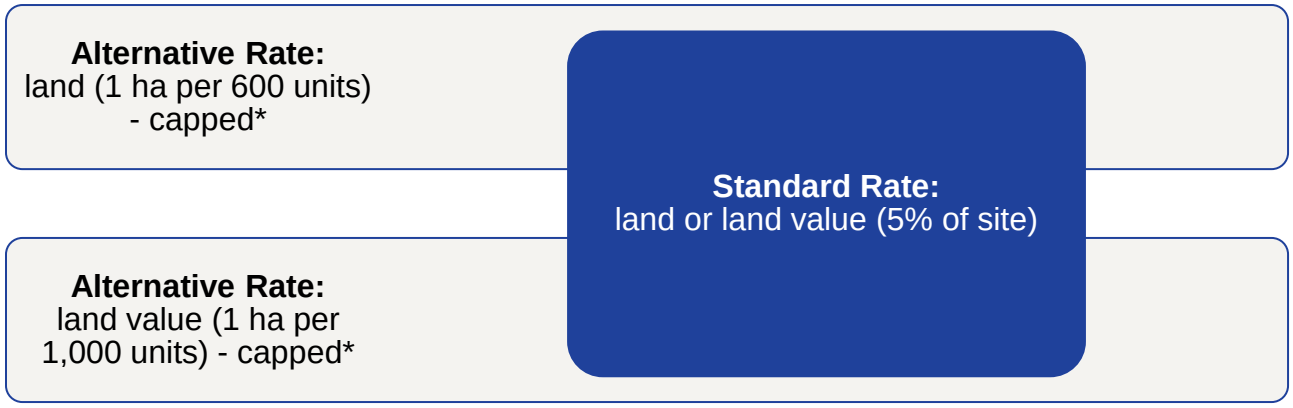
Figure 14: Parkland Dedication Sections in the Ontario *Planning Act*



Under the Act, municipalities may levy a **standard rate** of 5% of developable residential lands (or cash-in-lieu) or 2% of commercial and industrial lands, or an **alternative rate** of up to one hectare of land for every 600 hundred residential units (this rate was 1 hectare per 300 units prior to November 28, 2022) or an equivalent to one hectare of land for every 1,000 units when requiring cash-in-lieu of land (this rate was 1 hectare per 500 units prior to November 28, 2022).

The alternative rate typically generates more parkland when densities exceed 30 units per hectare when accepting land and 50 units per hectare when accepting payment, although recent changes to the Act have instituted caps on this (10% of land or its value for sites under 5 hectares, and 15% for sites greater than 5 hectares).

Figure 15: Residential Parkland Dedication Rates in the Ontario *Planning Act*



* no conveyance may exceed 10% of the land for sites under 5 hectares or 15% of the land for sites 5 hectares or larger.

In recent years, significant changes have been proposed to the parkland dedication requirements established in the *Planning Act*:

- **Bill 108** (*More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019*) proposed sweeping changes to parkland dedication requirements, but these changes were not brought into force as they were ultimately further amended through Bill 197.
- **Bill 197** (*COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020*) introduced a sunset clause for existing parkland dedication by-laws that use the alternative rate (September 18, 2022); new by-laws are appealable to the Ontario Land Tribunal.
- **Bill 109** (*More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022*) amended parkland requirements on lands designated as transit-oriented communities, including allowances for encumbered lands; these changes would apply to planning in the Pickering GO Station area as this is designated as a Protected Major Transit Station Area.
- **Bill 23** (*More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*) was introduced in October 2022 and came into effect on November 28, 2022. This Act introduced significant changes to parkland dedication requirements (among many other aspects of the *Planning Act*, Development Charges Act, etc.), including but not limited to reductions in the alternative parkland dedication requirement.

The recent changes introduced by the *COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act* (Bill 197) and the *More Homes Built Faster Act* (Bill 23) will result in at least a 50% reduction in parkland provision in areas of higher density – and allow for the conveyance of poorer quality lands – in approved developments moving forward.

A summary of some of these recent changes is provided below:

- The **maximum alternative dedication rate** has been reduced by 50% to 1 ha/600 units for parkland and 1 ha/1000 units for cash in lieu. Further, the legislation caps the maximum alternative dedication rates at 10% of the land for sites under 5 ha and at 15% for sites greater than 5 ha. This will dramatically reduce parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu to the City for applications under Section 42 (development and redevelopment outside of plans of subdivision). Parkland requirements are not scaled to density.
- Affordable residential units[14], attainable residential units, inclusionary zoning residential units, non-profit housing, and additional residential unit developments are **exempt** from parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu requirements.[15] This change will also reduce parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu to the City, possibly increasing the financial burden on taxpayers and/or leading to reduced levels of park service.

[14] Most recently, the Province introduced the *Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act, 2023* (Bill 134) which amended the definition of affordable residential units.
[15] As of the date of writing, this statutory exemption is not in effect for affordable residential units, attainable residential units, and inclusionary zoning residential units pending release of a bulletin.

- **Parkland rates** are frozen as of the date that a zoning-by law or site plan application is filed. The freeze is effective for two years after approval. This will reduce cash-in-lieu payments to the City.
- To take effect at a future date, developers will be able to identify the land they intend to convey to the municipality for parkland. These lands may include **encumbered lands** and privately-owned public space (POPs). If agreement cannot be reached, the municipality or the landowner can appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal. This may result in less suitable lands being accepted as parkland dedication.
- There is a new requirement for municipalities to **spend or allocate** at least 60% of the monies in their parkland reserve account at the beginning of each year. This will create challenges for long-term planning and implementation of park projects.
- Municipalities are required to develop a **parks plan** before adopting Official Plan policies imposing the alternative rate and passing a parkland dedication by-law. The Parks Plan must examine the need for parkland in the municipality, be made available to the public (including as part of the legislated consultation process in passing a parkland dedication by-law), and include consultation with every school board that has jurisdiction in the municipality.

Envision Durham Official Plan (2023)

The 2023 Envision Durham Official Plan establishes the land use structure (urban, rural, green lands, and transportation systems) for Pickering and other lower-tier municipalities in Durham. Recreation and parks are supported throughout the Plan, including objectives that support strengthening these offerings in strategic growth areas and regional nodes.

Several policies of council include support for the development of healthy, sustainable and complete communities that incorporate safe and publicly accessible recreation areas, parks, open spaces, trails and other recreation facilities. These include an integrated and easily accessible open space network with active recreational facilities, urban squares, green spaces, parks and informal gathering spaces generally within 500 metres of all residents.

City of Pickering Official Plan (Edition 9)

Section 16.29 of the City of Pickering's Official Plan (Edition 9) provides policies for the conveyance, design, and development of parklands. These policies require the conveyance of land or payment in lieu to the municipality for park or other public recreational purposes in the following amounts:

- for residential development, an amount not exceeding 5% of the proposed land to be developed;
- for high density residential and mixed-use areas, a rate of up to one hectare for each 300 dwelling units proposed; and

- for commercial or industrial development, an amount not exceeding 2% of the proposed land to be developed.

The Official Plan states the following in relation to the acceptability of parkland:

> *"[the municipality] shall not accept as parkland conveyance lands required for drainage; valley and stream corridor or shoreline protection purposes; lands susceptible to flooding; steep valley slopes; hazard lands; lands required to be conveyed to a public agency other than the City of Pickering; and other lands unsuitable for park development."*

These policies do not fully reflect the updated legislative changes made to the *Planning Act* and will need to be updated and brought into compliance. The provisions of the *Planning Act* override these policies and the provisions of the City's current parkland conveyance by-law. The City is expected to review and update these policies during its Official Plan Review.

Parkland Conveyance By-law (By-law Number 7955/22)

The City passed a new Parkland Conveyance By-law on June 11, 2022. This was following royal assent of the *COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020* (Bill 197) but prior to the passing of the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* (Bill 23), both of which created notable changes to parkland dedication requirements, allowances, exemptions, administrative processes, etc. Like Pickering's Official Plan, the Parkland Conveyance By-law should be brought into compliance with the current Planning Act; until such time, the provisions of the *Planning Act* will override the provisions of the City's current by-law.

The current by-law implements the Official Plan policies for the conveyance of parkland (free and clear of all liens and encumbrances) or payment in lieu for residential (including high density and mixed use), commercial, and industrial development and redevelopment.

Not identified herein, but important to the administration of a new by-law, are requirements related to exemptions, credits, land valuation (i.e., cost per residential unit), payment, reserve accounts, by-law administration and review, etc. These matters should be given appropriate consideration through the next by-law update and/or development of a parkland dedication procedure.



Recommendations – Parkland Policy

55. Update the parkland dedication requirements and related policies within the **City of Pickering's Official Plan and Parkland Conveyance By-law** to reflect the changes enacted through the *More Homes, Built Faster Act* (Bill 23) and related legislation, with further consideration of the recommendations within this Ten Year Plan. Consideration may also be given to developing a procedure establishing the guidelines and process for administering the Parkland Conveyance By-law.

The Relationship between Density and Parkland

For many years, the parkland dedication tools within the *Planning Act* existed to respond primarily to the needs of communities that grew through lower density subdivision and greenfield site development, much like Pickering's traditional development patterns. The standard 5% parkland rate generally provided parkland amounts that addressed the needs for neighbourhood and – to some extent – community parks.

As communities began to grow inward and upward and densities rose, this 5% standard rate proved inadequate as it would not generate sufficiently-sized parkland parcels given the smaller development sizes. The alternative rate was then devised to better align parkland requirements with service needs in higher density areas. This alternative rate (initially 1 hectare per 300 units) was typically applied to residential developments or redevelopments outside of the subdivision process, often when densities exceeded 15 units per hectare, such as infill townhouses or other low to medium-density developments.

In November 2022, this alternative rate was reduced by 50% to one hectare per 600 units (or one hectare per 1,000 units for cash-in-lieu) due to the much higher residential densities being experienced in Ontario's larger urban centres. One reason for these changes is that the resultant parkland requirement had the potential to consume most or all of the development site (particularly for very high density developments), impacting the viability of the development. Furthermore, depending on the density of the development, the rates did not accurately reflect needs (keeping in mind that many apartments and condos have fewer persons per unit than traditional subdivisions), particularly for those in infill locations that were being promoted to achieve other city-building objectives. However, these changes have had a dramatic impact on the ability for municipalities to secure sufficient parkland to serve growth areas and are requiring new approaches to building complete communities.

Striking an appropriate balance across Pickering's various urban, suburban, and rural contexts is vital. While the standard 5% parkland rate remains an appropriate tool for addressing needs in Pickering's lower density greenfield areas, the alternative rate is a more appropriate tool for the City's built-up areas, such as the City Centre and key nodes and corridors. However, planning, designing, and maintaining parks in

intensifying areas presents several new challenges, including smaller parkland blocks that are used more intensely and are thus more costly to construct and maintain. Given the scarcity and higher cost of land in these areas, new tools are required to acquire suitable land for parks and to program these parks to meet the unique range of needs.

Encumbered Lands

Two options that are becoming more common in urbanizing communities include Privately-Owned Public Spaces (POPs) and Strata Parks. While fee simple (municipal ownership) will always be the City's first option and priority, it is expected that alternative options may be presented as potential opportunities to address a portion of growth-related parkland needs within intensification areas over time.

Privately-Owned Public Spaces

- As the name states, POPs are spaces provided by private landowners that are universally accessible and open to the public, such as plazas, courtyards, or pedestrian walkways that create the opportunity for community-building and interaction. They are intended to be small "breathing spaces" that fit best in dense urban environments. They seldom have playgrounds or mature trees.

- To truly be accessible to the public, they must be in locations that complement and/or expand on existing or future parks. They have different levels of service from public parks and should not be considered replacements for functional parkland.

- POPs can be secured through a variety of means, including through Section 37 of the *Planning Act* and Site Plan Agreements. Historically, few municipalities accepted POPs toward the required public parkland dedication, but this has been changing with the new Bill 23 legislation.

- Some allowance for privately-owned public spaces is currently made for urban squares in Seaton through Section 11.13(f) of Pickering's Official Plan. The creation of POPs is also occurring as part of the Universal City development within the Pickering Major Transit Station Area.

- Although POPs will generally be discouraged, the City of Pickering may consider counting them toward the parkland dedication requirement only where appropriate legal agreements are established guaranteeing that the park space is designed, built, and maintained to City standards, and that it is open and accessible to the public at all times (or otherwise to the satisfaction of the City). POPs are not appropriate in new community areas or any locations outside of mixed use areas.

Strata Parks

- Strata ownership is used where a parkland element is to be built over the top of some underground structure or facility (such as a parking garage, stormwater management facility, highway underpass, etc.).

- Strata parks can be owned by the City under agreements established through the Condominium Act and be fully accessible to the public. It is vital that they be accompanied by a management agreement and consideration of long-term maintenance costs as strata parks have a more limited lifespan due to the waterproofing membrane over structures, requiring significant disruption to the park and park infrastructure above. These costs need to be captured in the financial valuation and long-term agreement.

- Stratified parks often have encumbrances that prohibit certain types of construction within the park due to weight limits or intrusions (e.g., tree roots, pilings, etc.) or other accessibility concerns. It is important that the municipality exercise control over the design and development of the site to ensure that it contains necessary amenities and is designed to municipal standards (e.g., accessibility, maintenance, etc.). In recent years, strata parks have been accepted as partial parkland credits in some communities (at a discounted rate at the discretion of the City).

- Although strata parks will generally be discouraged, the City of Pickering may consider counting them toward the parkland dedication requirement at a discounted rate at the discretion of the City and only where appropriate legal agreements are established to address park design and construction standards, public access, and maintenance costs.

Traditionally, encumbered lands (e.g., POPs, strata parks, natural/hazard lands, etc.) were excluded from the required land dedication amounts by municipalities as they are not suitable replacements nor equivalent to community parkland. Through the *Planning Act* regulations being developed in support of Bill 23, landowners will now be allowed to identify lands to meet parkland conveyance requirements, within regulatory criteria (not yet developed). Municipalities may enter into agreements with the owners of the land to enforce conditions and these agreements may be registered on title. The suitability of land for parks and recreational purposes will be appealable by the municipality to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

Encumbered lands are more expensive to maintain and harder to program. As a result, there are concerns that developer-identified lands may not fully contribute to the overall parks and open space as there is a greater potential for the lands to be in unsuitable locations, be under-sized, or not be functional to accommodate the required amenities. It is common for municipalities to have location and development criteria for parkland embedded within their Official Plans, including restrictions for encumbered lands, hazards lands, steep slopes and unstable lands, environmentally protected lands, rights-of-way and easements, contaminated lands, etc.

Accepting encumbered land for parks is a more complex process and one that requires long-term maintenance, cost-sharing, and access agreements with developers to ensure that the municipality can continue to maintain POPs and strata parks to municipal standards.

Recommendations – Encumbered Lands

56. Establish policies surrounding **privately-owned public spaces (POPs) and strata parks**. While these spaces will generally be discouraged, they may be counted toward the parkland dedication requirement at the discretion of the City (with strata parks being accepted at a discounted rate). Appropriate legal agreements must be established to address park design and construction standards, public access, maintenance, etc. POPs are not appropriate in locations outside of mixed use areas.

57. Establish clear **location and development guidelines** describing what constitutes acceptable parkland dedication from developers. These guidelines should consider restrictions for encumbered lands, hazards lands, steep slopes and unstable lands, environmentally protected lands, rights-of-way and easements, contaminated lands, etc. and be included within the Official Plan or parkland conveyance procedure.

Parkland Acquisition

There are several tools and options available to municipalities in Ontario as it relates to the acquisition and improvement of lands for parks purposes. Amongst these tools, the practice of requiring parkland dedications as a condition of subdivision or development has long been the primary tool for the City of Pickering. Use of cash-in-lieu to purchase parkland as well as other acquisition tools are projected to become more prominent in the future, especially for acquiring parkland outside of mixed use areas.

Parkland dedication through the *Planning Act* (Bill 23) is likely to be insufficient to meet the full range of parkland needs. Furthermore, the ability to secure larger parcels for parkland is reduced within time due to land scarcity and higher land values, especially in areas undergoing intensification. Land dedication must be supplemented by other measures such as land use agreements, purchase, etc. As a result, it is recommended that the City adopt a “parkland-first” approach that directs staff to prioritize the dedication of land in appropriate locations rather than cash-in-lieu of parkland during the development review process. This means that:

- Policies and practices that support on-site parkland dedication and encourage front-end acquisition of parkland should be encouraged.
- Parkland will be required when development will result in a park block that: (i) meets or exceeds the minimum size established for the park class; or (ii) expands an existing park site.

- The City may still accept cash-in-lieu of parkland when it is determined to be more beneficial, especially for development projects that would not meet the minimum requirements. For example, cash-in-lieu may be considered for higher density development or redevelopment sites that cannot physically accommodate a typical park block. In addition, POPs may be permitted, subject to the execution of an agreement acceptable to the City and other criteria established by the City from time to time.
- Unless otherwise specified through the *Planning Act*, all lands to be dedicated for park purposes must be to the City's satisfaction and will not include restricted lands such as Environmental Protection designated lands, hazard lands, steep slopes, contaminated lands, easements, stormwater ponds, etc.

The City is not expected to be able to maintain parkland service levels or achieve targets through parkland dedication alone. A greater focus will need to be placed on park quality and partnerships with other land owners to ensure that residents have access to a varied and robust parks and open space system.

Additionally, the City may need to utilize alternative financial tools and other parkland acquisition approaches beyond traditional parkland conveyance mechanisms to meet the City's parkland targets. Some **supplemental parkland acquisition strategies** that the City may pursue, include (but are not limited to):

a) Municipal land purchase or lease (ideally in priority parkland locations, expansion of existing park sites, or unserviced land as part of a future land banking strategy), funded from cash-in-lieu reserves, Community Benefits Charges, general tax funding, grants, donors, etc.;
b) Land exchanges or swaps;
c) Off-site conveyance of parkland (ideally in priority parkland locations);
d) Donations, gifts, and bequests;
e) Establishment of a Parks Foundation (e.g., community, corporate or municipal donations towards parkland acquisition);
f) Reallocating surplus municipal lands to park use; and/or
g) Partnership/joint provision of lands with local partners under agreement.

In addition to other services not provided by Development Charges, Community Benefits Charges can be imposed to recover the costs for land for parks or other public recreational purposes in excess of lands conveyed or funded by cash-in-lieu of parkland payments under sections 42 and 51 of the *Planning Act*. Consideration may be given to updating the City's Community Benefits Strategy and By-law to include the consideration of parkland acquisition beyond the amounts available under the provisions of the *Planning Act*.

The following criteria may be used to assess the suitability of potential park sites on a case-by-case basis. As identified in the Official Plan, the location and configuration of land conveyed must be suitable for park development and shall not include: lands required for drainage; valley and stream corridor or shoreline protection purposes; lands susceptible to flooding; steep valley slopes; hazard lands; lands required to be

conveyed to a public agency other than the City of Pickering. However, recent changes to the *Planning Act* (though not yet enacted through regulations) will allow developers to identify and dedicate encumbered lands. It is recommended that the City use this criteria to more fully develop clear guidelines describing what constitutes acceptable parkland dedication from developers.

Table 34: Potential Parkland Site Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Description
Site Conditions	Consider topography (tableland is strongly preferred), parcel configuration (square or rectangular), drainage, and soil conditions (e.g., free of environmental contaminants).
Size	Should meet or exceed minimum standards established for park classification.
Centrality	Proximity to the population to be served, in keeping with the service radius and population targets of the park type.
Land Use Impacts	Compatibility of adjacent land uses; conformity with Official Plan or Secondary Plan (if applicable).
Connectivity	Integration of trail and open space linkages or corridors (where applicable).
Accessibility	Site has substantial frontage on a public road, reasonable access to public transit and/or sidewalks (in urban areas), etc.
Partnerships	Potential joint use with school sites or other municipal assets.
Visibility	Ability to create a local or city-wide focus.
Natural Features	Park site is not encumbered by features of cultural or natural significance.
Added Value	Access to the waterfront, viewpoints, or vistas (where applicable).
Constructability	Active parks should generally not be built in floodplains, stormwater overflow areas, valleylands, easements, encumbered lands, etc.
Services	Active park sites have full municipal services (or the potential for full services, including water, storm sewers, and electrical services; sanitary servicing may be required for some higher-order parks) to the property line.
Availability	Timing of parcel availability should coincide with preferred timing of park development.
Cost	Reasonable land valuation (if applicable); publicly-owned lands offer the greatest potential.

Recommendations – Parkland Acquisition

58. Adopt a **"Parkland First" approach** that prioritizes parkland conveyance over cash-in-lieu of parkland and privately-owned public spaces in order to address parkland requirements.

59. Consider updating the City's **Community Benefits Charges Strategy and By-law** to include the consideration of parkland acquisition beyond the amounts available under the provisions of the *Planning Act*.

Recommendations – Parkland Acquisition

60. Utilize **alternative financial tools and other parkland acquisition approaches** beyond traditional land conveyance mechanisms as necessary to meet the City's parkland targets to 2034. The City is encouraged to actively pursue direct purchase of land in priority acquisition areas and unserviced land with future parkland potential.

Cash-in-lieu Considerations

Policies in the Official Plan provide the City with the discretion to take parkland or cash-in-lieu of parkland (or a blend of the two); however, there is little guidance to assist the City in making this determination. It is recommended that the City clearly articulate the criteria that will be used to determine when to accept cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication.

Some potential criteria include (but should not be limited to):

a) Where the area served by the development is determined (at the City's discretion) to be have sufficient existing active public parkland to accommodate existing residents and needs (as well as projected population growth)

b) Where the development would not result in a suitably-sized, shaped or functional park site;

c) Where it is preferable to use the cash-in-lieu to expand existing parks directly serving the area or where the City identifies land in a more appropriate or accessible location that has been, or is to be, acquired by the City; and/or

d) Where the taking of parkland from the site may reduce the number of dwelling units such that it renders the development or redevelopment unfeasible (note: Bill 23 instituted alternative requirement caps of 10% to 15% to eliminate this possibility).

The City maintains a parkland dedication reserve fund with a balance of approximately $2.7 million as of the end of 2023. Nearly $6.3 million was added to this account January 2017 and June 2023, with a portion of these funds going to purchase an extension to the waterfront portion of Rotary Frenchman's Bay Park West. Future amounts will fluctuate from year-to-year subject to how the funds are planned to be allocated and future levies collected by the City.

The *Planning Act* now requires municipalities to spend or allocate 60% of monies in parkland reserve funds each year. This provision was recently undated by regulations for Bill 185 (Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024) stipulating that these reports must include details on how the amounts spent addressed the need for parkland identified within the parks plan. This raises the significance of both short- and long-term planning for parkland and park assets. Frequent updates to this parks plan and recreation amenity needs assessments should be supported.

Since 2014, about one-half of the parkland cash-in-lieu funds have been used for land acquisition, while one-half has been used to support capital renewal or construction projects within parks. Given the anticipated need to acquire additional parkland to meet the targets established in this plan, the City is strongly advised to use cash-in-lieu of parkland for acquisition, rather than capital improvements in parks. The priority for acquisition of lands for public parkland should be in proximity to the development (generally within 400 metres).

The funds in this account are accrued through a fee in lieu of parkland dedication that the City of Pickering charges for development and redevelopment when land is not required. Municipalities may require independent land appraisals for each development application in order to establish the fee and/or have the option of establishing set fees for various classes of residential dwellings. The City should conduct an assessment of its parkland valuation processes and fees to determine an approach that is equitable, transparent, consistent, and reflective of current land values. While the use of a per unit rate may be appropriate for some lower density residential developments in infill situations[16], given the variation of land values within intensification areas, a land appraisal approach may be most appropriate for establishing the charge in mixed use areas. Appraisals shall be prepared by an accredited appraiser for approval by the City's real estate division, with provisions established for disputes.

Recommendations – Cash-in-lieu Considerations

61. Clearly articulate the criteria that will be used to evaluate the acceptance of **cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication**.

62. Prioritize spending **parkland cash-in-lieu funds** on land acquisition, rather than capital improvements in parks.

63. Institute a program to **track the annual spending and allocation of cash-in-lieu funds** in keeping with *Planning Act* requirements (at least 60% of monies must be spent or allocated at the beginning of each year) and to evaluate the performance of this Ten Year Plan.

64. Conduct an assessment of cash-in-lieu of parkland **valuation processes and fees**, with the goal of ensuring that cash-in-lieu of parkland rates are reflective of local market conditions.

[16] Note: additional residential units and non-profit housing are exempt from parkland dedication.

Open Space Planning

Open space lands and natural areas (e.g., wetlands, valleylands, woodlands, environmentally constrained areas, and a variety of other natural heritage landscapes) – addressed under Section 3.5 of Pickering's Official Plan – serve numerous functions: they protect and conserve natural features; they preserve habitat for various species, including threatened and endangered species; they provide buffers to development (protecting people and property from damage); they provide visual breaks within an otherwise urban/suburban landscape; and they enhance air and water quality. They are not counted toward parkland dedication requirements.

In Pickering, these lands are in a blend of public and private ownership. Conservation areas, school boards, other government agencies, and private landowners may also own and make lands available for public use from time to time. The City is encouraged to continue working with partners to support community access to parks and open spaces. The City's Official Plan recognizes the role of these open spaces in contributing to opportunities available for the public to experience the outdoors and in supplementing municipal parkland supplies.

Where appropriate, open space lands may be conveyed to the City or other public authority at no cost (gratuitous conveyance). Additional options for the securement of open space and environmentally significant lands include land exchange, donation/land trusts, conservation easement/purchase of development rights, leasing, purchase, and partnerships. Conservation easements are particularly useful when protecting open space lands as they allow title to the land to remain in private ownership, but development rights to be restricted based on the specific conservation requirements. However, not all lands need to be publicly owned in order to be permanently protected. Environmental policies and practices at the municipal and provincial levels are in place to manage sensitive areas.

Within the context of this plan, a key priority for open space conservation are those lands that provide connections between parks and other public areas to allow for a continuous parks and open space system, including active transportation opportunities. Passive maintenance and development of these lands is anticipated, as directed by site-specific management plans (often in partnership with other agencies).

Initiatives that encourage residents to learn more about their parks and protected areas should also be supported. This can be achieved by establishing walking trails within or surrounding key open space lands (while respecting policies relating to the protection of sensitive wildlife and natural habitat). Open space lands can also offer tremendous opportunity for experiential learning and cultural interpretation, which in turn can assist with educating the public about the need for active conservation and restoration.

Recommendations – Open Space Planning

65. As opportunities arise, evaluate the potential to **secure and/or protect open space lands** that are outside the parks system and that provide important connections between parks, trails, and other public areas, having regard to the Official Plan and partner agency requirements.



7.5 Park Design, Maintenance, and Renewal

City of Pickering parks are well maintained and cared for. There is variety of design within the parks system, with different park types performing diverse functions, such as community gatherings, athletics, passive recreation, free play, open space buffers, environmental appreciation and conservation, civic beautification, and more.

Notable observations include:

- The City regularly **inspects** its parks and playgrounds, addressing any issues in a prompt fashion.
- The **lifecycle condition** of park assets is monitored and addressed through capital projects on a priority-basis, although the amount of deferred maintenance (e.g., playground replacement) is growing.
- Many of the City's parks contain mature **trees**, providing shade to park users and contributing to environmental goals such as reducing heat and air pollution.
- **Naturalization initiatives** are supported by the City's Sustainability Department. Community education remains important to the successful implementation of this program.
- **Public art** is prevalent in destination parks, guided by a robust Public Art policy, procedure, and three-year plan.
- **Winter maintenance** occurs on park pathways that serve as local routes to schools.
- Cameras are being added to high use park sites to bolster **security**.
- **Park signage** (both informational and regulatory) is extensive and generally consistent (rollout of the signage program continues as resources allow).
- **Support infrastructure** – such as benches/picnic tables, washrooms, and off-street parking – varies by site, but is generally compatible with contemporary design and provision practices.
- **Off-street parking** is less common in newer communities due to smaller park sizes and more compact community development standards.
- The community survey found demand for additional **park washrooms**, which is a common request in all communities, but is not typically feasible to provide in all park types.
- The City's **waterfront parks** are well supported by the community, with requests for additional improvements that support the unique role of these parks as destinations for both residents and visitors.
- A large portion of the City's parkland is **owned by outside agencies** (e.g., Hydro One, Ontario Power Generation, etc.). Permission is required before the City alters or invests in these properties (such as through the addition or renewal of park amenities) and there are limitations on what will be allowed. For example,

development of lands within Hydro Corridors is restricted and it is becoming increasingly challenging to receive approvals, even for infrastructure replacement. These lands are encumbered and are not typically eligible for senior government grants, thus they cannot be considered a complete replacement for municipally-owned parkland.

- Many of the City's newer parks are **built by developers**, allowing them to be provided earlier in the community development phase. The City has input into the designs and retains control over approvals.
- Most of Pickering's **stormwater (SWM) ponds** have perimeter fences due to mitigate safety concerns caused by their slopes and pond depths. Some municipalities have adopted landscape design guidelines (e.g., strategic planting of thorn bearing trees and shrubs) that serve as effective barriers in place of fencing (where supported by SWM engineering standards), making the environment more appealing for walking and passive recreation around the perimeter.

The public consultation program and the evolution of the City's parks system support a continued broadening of the range of recreation opportunities within local parks. Although new parkland will be required to serve future residents, the focus should be on making the best use of existing park sites, keeping parks relevant considering changing demographics, and improving connectivity and accessibility. Examples include (but are not limited to): adding new elements such as pavilions, unique play experiences, sport courts, and community gardens; piloting outdoor programming and educational initiatives; and expanding operational practices such as naturalization.

Designing and improving parks requires a strong understanding of community needs, contemporary design practices, operational requirements, and programmatic considerations. These elements require adequate forethought in the planning of the park parcel itself, well in advance of conveyance and detailed design. Designing spaces to be multi-use or flexible – including spaces that are inclusive, open, and affordable for casual use – helps the City to adapt to shifting needs over time.

The following are best practices that the City of Pickering may use as guidelines in designing or redeveloping parks. Many of these are reflected in recent park designs, but not formalized in writing.

a) incorporating a blend of active and passive spaces (multi-use) and amenities for people of all ages and backgrounds (multi-generational);

b) following accessibility legislation (AODA) and guidelines to accommodate persons with disabilities;

c) applying Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles for enhanced safety and security;

d) considering the needs of a diverse and aging population through washrooms and access to potable water, seating, shade (trees, shelters, shade sails, etc.),

pathways, picnic areas and pavilions, and bicycle racks (note: some amenities may not be appropriate for all park types);

e) enhancing connections to nature and preserving and emphasizing cultural and heritage environments, including interpretive content;

f) considering four-season programming and applying design principles to encourage usage throughout the year;

g) promoting designs that encourage sustainable maintenance practices and climate resilience;

h) incorporating native and drought resistant vegetative features that are biologically robust and increase the amount of park space that is dedicated to naturalized, bio-diverse pollinator areas;

i) designing parks adjacent to schools to withstand higher use and sustain healthy turf in order to withstand higher use (e.g., in-field drainage, irrigation, soil specifications that lessen compaction and increase drainage, soil treatments that stimulate plant growth, etc.);

j) recognizing, consulting with, and considering the needs of Indigenous Peoples in park design and programming;

k) utilizing materials that are robust, durable, and mindful of future maintenance requirements;

l) applying consistent signage and information about park contents, accessibility, etc.;

m) seeking innovative and engaging initiatives that encourage naturalization and environmental stewardship, including opportunities for public education and access;

n) encouraging public art and spaces for cultural expression; and,

o) promoting active transportation connections and a linked open space system.

With many of Pickering's parks in latter stages of their life span, improvements and enhancements are necessary to address asset lifecycle requirements and to respond to changing needs. Common triggers for park redevelopment include state of good repair requirements (aging amenities), under-utilized and/or redundant facilities, emerging needs, partnership opportunities, nearby residential growth and increased demand for programable space, coordinated civic works projects, and more – usually multiple factors play into the decision to launch a major capital project. The possibilities for parkland renewal are limitless, but typically include new and upgraded amenities and accessibility enhancements.

Park renewal and development projects should be accompanied by public and stakeholder input, park-specific design plans, and business planning to obtain accurate costing associated with any capital works. Once a park is identified as a candidate for redevelopment, the City develops a detailed park design plan with input from the community and stakeholders. Concept plans are developed, with consideration of

phasing and impact on existing uses. Funding is then sought through the long-term capital budget and sometimes supplemented from other sources (e.g., grants, partners, etc.). This process can take several years and is often reflective of site-specific circumstances and the availability of funding.

In recent years, the City has prepared park design plans for several sites such as:

- Rotary Frenchman's Bay West Park – capital works completed in 2023
- Beachfront Park – capital works schedule to begin in 2024
- Claremont Memorial Park – phase one is complete (improvements to ball diamond, etc.) with phase two (improvements to outdoor rink and playground, and possibly a new skate spot) currently unfunded
- Hydro Corridor Park (north of Kingston) – draft design prepared (includes new skateboard park, community gardens, off-leash dog area, one senior and one junior soccer field, and off-street parking); development requires approval from Hydro One
- Seaton Parks – several park concepts (e.g., Dave Ryan Community Park, etc.) have been prepared or are in progress as this new community is developed

In the near term, park-specific planning is anticipated to begin for:

- Maple Ridge Park – site is adjacent to school with aging park amenities; potential to convert under-used ball diamond to alternative uses
- Greenwood Community Park – the new Pickering Heritage & Community Centre will replace the aging Greenwood Community Centre, presenting an opportunity rethink this park and its ability to complement programming at the adjacent Pickering Museum Village

Partnership and growth opportunities may also necessitate the need for site-specific planning for other key park properties across Pickering. For example, the City is working with TRCA to examine the potential to introduce new activities and programming at the Petticoat Creek Conservation Park. Additionally, sites in proximity to high density mixed use centres (e.g., Ernie L. Stoud Park, Beechlawn Park, etc.) may also have the ability to serve a greater range of needs through improvements or partial redevelopment.

Recommendations – Park Design, Maintenance, and Renewal

66. Continue to maintain a commitment to **universal accessibility, safety, and comfort** within the City's parks and trails system by:

a. Regularly consulting with the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee and ensuring compliance with the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**, recognizing that some parks and trails may include areas of natural terrain that are more difficult to access.

Recommendations – Park Design, Maintenance, and Renewal

b. Emphasizing the provision of amenities such as **washrooms, benches/seating areas, bike racks, and shade** (structures, tree canopy, etc.) in appropriate park types to address the needs of all age groups.

c. Engaging qualified personnel to undertake a review of all parks and trails using **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles** to identify safety concerns relative to access, sightlines, etc.

67. Continue to provide a **balance of active and passive spaces** within the parks system to support all-season recreation and sports, casual use and unstructured play, special events, and cultural activities.

68. Continue to support **outdoor education, stewardship, and climate change mitigation initiatives** through the open space system, such as tree plantings, naturalization efforts, community gardens, butterfly/pollinator parks, and adopt-a-park/trail programs, in conjunction with community partners.

69. Continue to initiate **park redevelopment projects** at key sites requiring renewal and evaluate park sites within or adjacent to high density mixed use areas for longer-term redevelopment. Park redevelopment projects should be identified in the City's long-term capital plan and include additional public and stakeholder consultation.

7.6 Recreational Trails

With the Lake Ontario waterfront, Rouge River, Duffins Creek, and notable naturalized lands in north Pickering, the city boasts an impressive trails system that offers access to local lands as well as trails systems in adjacent communities.

The City of Pickering owns and/or maintains over 40 kilometres of recreational trails – several of which are connected – including Waterfront Trail and West Duffins Trail. The Trans Canada Trail generally follows the Waterfront Trail (including some on-road segments) and portions of the Duffins Creek Trail, extending north through Greenwood (Pickering Museum Village) into Uxbridge. Additionally, A volunteer group coordinates maintenance of the Seaton Trail and the Rouge National Urban Park maintains a significant trails system along the city's western edge, with connections in the south and the north. Many local parks also offer internal trail systems, such as Rotary Frenchman's Bay West Park, Grand Valley Park, Diana, Princess of Wales Park, and properties managed by TRCA.

The City has made significant recent improvements along the Waterfront Trail, with more improvements planned for the short-term. There are also plans to expand the trail

system to create a more comprehensive network, such as through connected trails system in Seaton and region-wide initiatives like the Durham Meadoway[17].

The trails are complemented by an extensive sidewalk network, cycling routes, and park pathways that connect users to a variety of destinations within the city. For on-road active transportation routes, reference should be made to the Integrated Transportation Master Plan (ITMP, 2021), which is Pickering's long-term, strategic planning document that directs transportation policies, programs, and infrastructure.

Recreational trails are one of the most highly desirable amenities in any community. They facilitate low-cost outdoor physical activity opportunities and can be used by residents of all ages. The demand for trails has been growing in response to an aging but more active population, as well as outdoor recreation trends that began during the pandemic.

Research completed by Trans Canada Trail indicates that 72% of Canadian use trails, with 89% stating that trails add value to the quality of life in their community. Furthermore, 69% of Canadians say that easy access to trails and outdoor activities have an impact on where they choose to live.[18] During the COVID-19 pandemic, communities across the Province experienced a strong increase in trail usage, highlighting the importance of providing a connected trail network that connects residents within the city.

Trails also have an environmental benefit as they alleviate road congestion and minimize vehicular emissions, land consumption, and costs for road construction and maintenance. Active transportation can heighten community and social vibrancy by encouraging compact developments and more livable communities where individuals are more likely to have personal contact with one another.

The popularity of recreational trails in Pickering was demonstrated throughout the consultation process as 52% of households responding to the community survey indicated that they use trails (while 27% reported cycling on trails), which ranked 2nd out of 41 listed activities. Four-fifths (79%) indicated they support the City spending additional funds to provide more trails (off-road) in Pickering, which ranked 4th out of 36 facility types. Suggestions were received for more trail connections, improved trails (e.g., Seaton Trail, connections to Rouge National Urban Park), lighting, trash cans, and the introduction of programming. Safety and comfort are important components of a successful trail system, including natural landscaping, signage, shade, benches, rest areas and parking.

[17] The Durham Meadoway is a proposed pedestrian and cycling route and linear park that will connect people to destinations across more than 27 kilometres of Durham Region. In addition to providing a significant east-west recreational facility and active transportation spine, the Durham Meadoway also has the potential to become a multi-faceted space for people that includes ecological enhancements, public art and community amenities.

[18] National Léger Survey Reveals Canadians' Trail Use on the Rise in 2023. Trans Canada Trail, April 16, 2023. https://tctrail.ca/news/national-leger-survey-reveals-canadians-trail-use-on-the-rise-in-2023/

The key to developing an effective trail network is to create a connected system of routes that are safe, accessible, and conveniently link users to key destinations (e.g., parks, recreation facilities, schools, commercial areas, waterfront areas, regional trail networks, etc.).

The opportunities for enhancing trail connectivity in Pickering are primarily through: (1) new community area development (e.g., Seaton, Northeast Pickering); (2) regional trail networks that connect to adjacent municipalities; and (3) new trail development along existing corridors (e.g., Meadoway). The latter will require collaboration with other public agencies and landowners, but represents an important long-term opportunity for the City and its residents. In terms of Northeast Pickering, trail connectivity with the open space system and adjacent neighbourhoods (e.g., Seaton, Ajax) will be important to optimizing access for future residents.

In relation to trails, the 2021 ITMP recommended:

- Completing a multi-use trail design and safety audit to identify recommended upgrades to existing multi-use trails to enhance safety for both cyclists and pedestrians;
- undertaking an active transportation wayfinding study and pilot project, focused on key trails and cycling corridors; and
- preparing a cycling and trails amenities plan to identify existing and future locations for amenities within the public right-of-way along major active transportation corridors.

In 2019, TRCA developed a Trail Strategy for the Greater Toronto Region. Key strategies include working with partners to complete, expand, manage, and celebrate the Greater Toronto Region Trail Network, and developing a connected trail network within the regional greenspace system. The Strategy serves as a framework to protect potential trail alignments and to guide the planning, development, and management of these trails.

In addition to its several strategic objectives and initiatives for the region’s trail system, the Strategy acknowledges the City of Pickering as one of several municipal governments who collaborated with the federal and provincial governments to form Rouge National Urban Park, the largest urban wilderness park in North America. The Park’s historic Seaton Trail and the active transportation corridor of the Meadoway (an ongoing initiative with the Region and area municipalities) provide linkages to Pickering and its growing Seaton community. The Strategy also recognizes that growing and new communities in Pickering hold exciting prospects to acquire east-west greenway corridors that would link the Rouge River and Duffins Creek systems to the Oak Ridges Moraine.

Figure 16: TRCA Trails Strategy (2019), North East Concept Plan

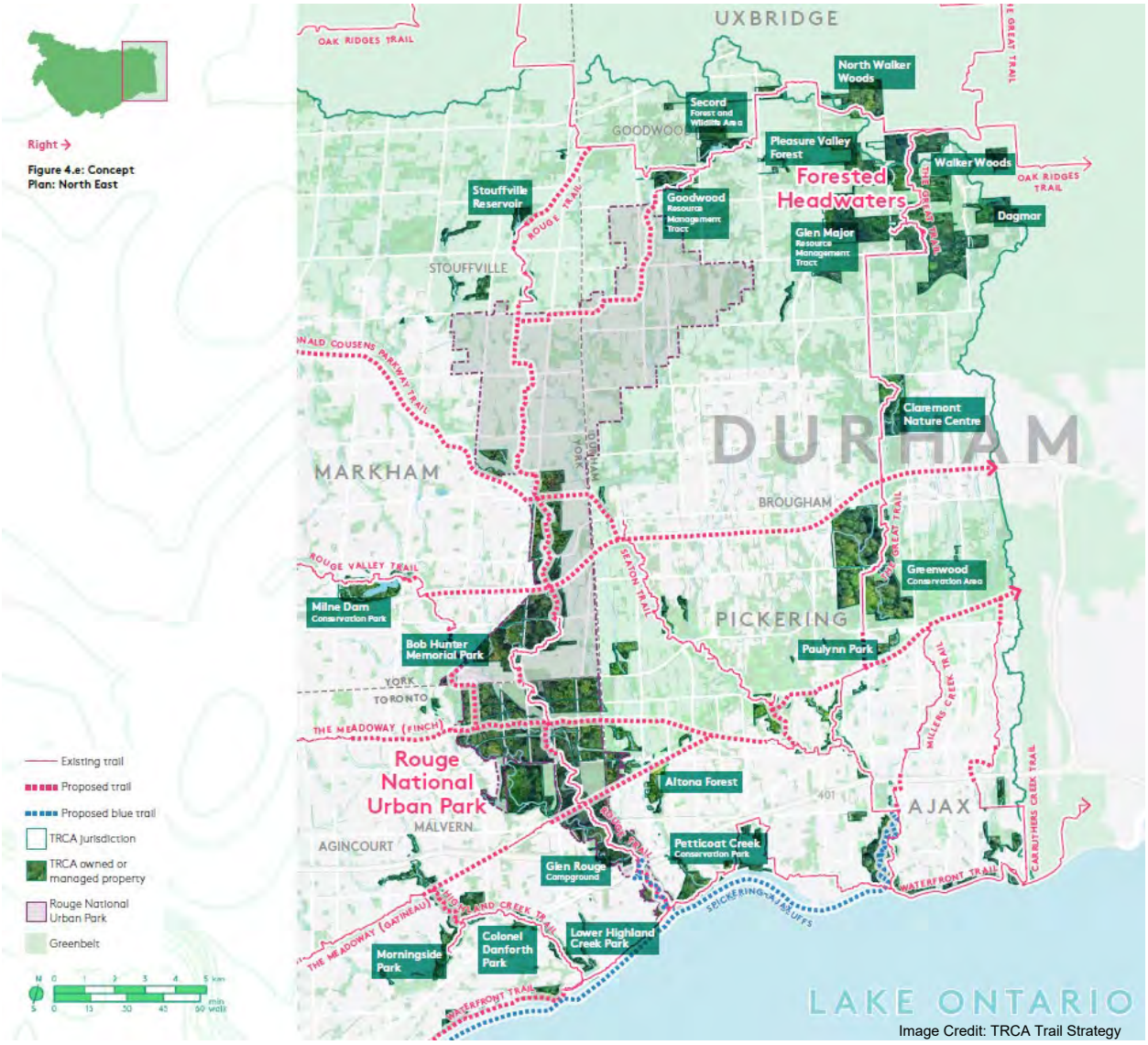


Image Credit: TRCA Trail Strategy

Recommendations – Recreational Trails

70. Continue to **expand and connect the recreational trail network**. This includes planning trails within new community areas and working with partners to leverage public sites (such as utility rights-of-ways and other linear corridors) for trail use as appropriate. Improvements to the on-road cycling network should be guided by the City's Integrated Transportation Master Plan.

71. Continue to **enhance the trail network** by installing and maintaining safety and comfort features – such as lighting, signage, seating, etc. – in appropriate locations and addressing the recommendations for a multi-use trail design and safety audit, wayfinding study and pilot project, and trails amenities plan within the City's Integrated Transportation Master Plan.


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8. Recreation Service Delivery

8.1 Overview

The City of Pickering believes there is a significant return on investment in parks, recreation, and culture. Some benefits include active and engaged residents, positive health and social outcomes, as well as pride and cohesion within the community. These benefits inspire staff and community providers to deliver high quality, enjoyable, and safe opportunities for residents and visitors. Furthermore, continued efforts are being made to ensure that under-represented populations are being welcomed and included, in turn providing a full range of opportunities and equitable participation across Pickering.

Efforts focus on increasing participation and improving service delivery to provide accessible, local, and enjoyable opportunities. The City has a strong commitment to the residents to promote City-wide opportunities, provide support to not-for-profit groups and coordinate a wide range of services through partnerships, and third-party providers. The City of Pickering's recreation delivery system has been strengthened over the years through approaches that allow for adaptability to changing conditions, including an increasing number of additional residents, older adults, and newcomers to Canada. This includes volunteer efforts that offer expanded programs, increased capacity for events, and community engagement.

Pickering residents have come to enjoy a recreation delivery system that emphasizes:

- A **wide range of choices for all residents** delivered by the City and other providers, including leisure opportunities, sports, creative arts, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics), general interest programs, etc.
- **Quality assurance, safety, and legislative compliance** in the delivery of service, regardless of who is providing the program or service.
- Collaboration with all providers to identify **gaps in service**, with the City directly addressing gaps where there is no suitable community provider.
- Priority allocation and support to eligible **not-for-profit volunteer groups,** especially those activities serving children and youth. **Volunteerism** is recognized as the backbone of the sport and recreation delivery system.
- Intentional efforts to **include under-represented** communities and/or individuals through policy and intentional actions.
- A **range of service price points**, including free universal opportunities, low-cost opportunities, and enhanced service levels to best include all residents.
- **Accountability** to the public by open reporting on the number of residents participating, satisfaction levels, and efforts to improve service delivery.

This recreation service delivery review takes into consideration relevant trends, promising practices, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, participation and utilization data, corporate and departmental initiatives, and input from the public, staff, and Council. Specifically, the review includes direction on the service improvements highlighted below.

Table 35: Suggested Focus for the Future of Recreation Services

Focus	Objectives
Sustaining Service Delivery	• Supporting recreation staff in leadership development • Supporting volunteerism and assisting community groups • Encouraging community development and partnerships
Expanding Programs and Services in a Growing Community	• Sustaining the Swim to Survive program • Planning for aquatic, fitness, and recreation programs • Quality assurance in the delivery of services • Fill rate targets for programs and services • Promoting physical activity • Working inter-municipally in the allocation of facilities
Increasing Participation of Diverse and Under-represented Residents	• Revising the Access to Recreation Policy • Addressing gender equity in sport and recreation • Creating an equity lens toolkit • Providing safe and welcoming public spaces
Supporting a High-Performing Staff Team	• Confirming levels of service • Developing a ten-year staffing plan • Supporting staff training and development • Setting performance targets and measures

8.2 Sustaining Service Delivery

Sustaining the current quality of recreation services within Pickering will take some preparatory thoughts and actions for the future. Residents have come to expect a variety of quality services and programs that meet the needs of all age groups. To be prepared for increased participation due to growth and growing participation rates, staff will need to focus on increasing the number of part-time staff members, assisting community groups to attract and retain volunteers, fostering partnerships, and building capacity within the community (community development).

Supporting Part-Time Recreation Staff and Leadership Development

Some of the challenging post-pandemic aspects in delivering programs and services has been keeping pace with the need for part-time staff to deliver services. For example, aquatics requires specific certifications to teach and lifeguard. These certifications require years of training and were disrupted during this time. Leadership

courses for camp counsellors in training were also lessened and, therefore, the capacity to deliver on current participant needs cannot always be met.

The City of Pickering recognized these challenges and has developed plans to increase leadership training opportunities and offering some training at a reduced or no cost. This momentum will need to be maintained for the next few years as the population increases and more program leaders are needed. There have been some innovative approaches that have been taken place throughout Ontario that are also suggested for Pickering. Examples include targeting leadership training in neighbourhoods where program opportunities are lacking, as well as working with school boards to promote and support leadership training opportunities.

Supporting Volunteerism and Assisting Community Groups

A recent study[19] found that 79% of Canadians over the age of 15 years volunteered in 2018 (prior to the pandemic). In 2022, 55% of Canadian not-for-profits and charities identified a reduction in the number of volunteers. Many of Pickering's community groups echoed this observation, with several sport and recreation organizations experiencing difficulty in attracting and retaining volunteers.

This research study also identified that women from the Baby Boomer and millennial generations tend to volunteer at a greater rate than men, as do Canadians with higher educational backgrounds. The "I-generation" (Internet-Generation born after 1996) volunteer at a greater rate than most age cohorts, likely due to a secondary school graduation requirement.

The ability to recruit, train, supervise, retain, and recognize volunteers is an ongoing requirement for the success of all not-for-profit community stakeholder groups. Operations depend on having a volunteer corps and local groups indicated that they are currently having difficulty attracting and retaining volunteers. Pickering – through its role in assisting community groups in the delivery of their recreation and sports services – could play a vital role in promoting all volunteer postings, along with their volunteer opportunities. The City of Richmond Hill has had a system in place for many years and has increased its volunteerism as a result.[20] Other municipalities are also providing benefits for volunteers such as free or subsidized access to public swim and skate opportunities.

[19] Made in Canada. Volunteer Work Statistics in Canada. 2024. https://madeinca.ca/volunteer-work-statistics-canada/

[20] The City of Richmond Hill publishes a list of all community sport, recreation, and cultural groups and encourages potential volunteers to contact the groups directly. Not-for-profit community groups are encouraged to list volunteer opportunities and the City will post them on their volunteer site. Richmond Hill will also provide training to community groups on volunteer recruitment and retention. These efforts have assisted community groups in maintaining sustainable operations.

Encouraging Community Development and Partnerships

Community development is an approach to increase the capacity of programs and services whereby the municipality provides support to community groups that offer aligned services. In an ideal scenario, all parties work to identify needs and groups are established and supported in numerous ways depending on needs. A menu of supports offered by the municipality typically includes:

a) Identifying community needs;

b) Finding and allocating appropriate spaces;

c) Coordinating joint promotions and communications;

d) Sharing grant and funding opportunities;

e) Offering municipal grants to assist with start-ups and special projects;

f) Information sharing regarding legislative compliance, industry standards, quality assurance models, etc.;

g) Sharing and/or supporting virtual training content (access and equity training, legislative compliance, quality assurance models, etc.);

h) Assisting with volunteer recruitment and retention; and

i) Providing governance assistance where needed.

The City of Pickering helps community groups on an ongoing basis and regularly communicates to share upcoming events and facility allocation procedures. No staff are explicitly dedicated to this function, but program and facility staff undertake these communications annually or on an as-needed basis. It is recommended that the Community Services Department study the potential to advance a community development model in order to increase the capacity of the entire recreation system.

Most recreation departments in Ontario have a focused goal to provide meaningful programs and services to all residents cost-efficiently. These programs and services enhance user experiences and create a sense of accomplishment through skill development. There are often opportunities to work with other service providers and third parties to broaden choices and the number of services offered.

In terms of more formal types of collaboration, the City of Pickering has historically collaborated with community partners to reduce duplication, share costs and physical assets, and maximize efforts to expand programs and services. For example, the City works with school boards to gain access to selected school gymnasiums and spaces to offer after-school programing to youth. The City has also invested in artificial turf fields and all-weather track facilities at local schools in order to maximize the benefit of these assets for the community. Seeking out partners can serve to share resources and reduce duplication.

In a growing community, the use of partnerships becomes more important as the demand for programs and services increases. The City should proactively seek

partnerships and determine when best to directly provide services or seek out an aligned partner organization to assist. Given the degree of pent-up demand for children's summer camps, this may be an area that could benefit from the application of a decision-making framework.

A general rule embraced by many municipalities is to provide core services internally and specialized services through third-party provision, particularly where the municipality lacks the expertise and/or resources. A key deciding factor is whether a financial gain (through cost avoidance or revenue enhancement) can be realized without unduly affecting quality assurance, customer satisfaction, and legislative compliance.

Table 36: Considerations for Third-party Program and Service Providers

Scenario	Conditions
Continue to Provide Programs and Services Directly	1. The program or service is considered core to the Department, such as learn to swim lessons to prevent water incidents or older adult services where a relationship is critical to the success of the program and service. 2. The program meets a sustainable resourcing need such as youth leadership development to enable future skilled staffing in program and service delivery. 3. The program development and delivery meet strong priorities and require municipal-centric coordination, such as better serving under-represented populations.
Consider Seeking a Third-party Provider	1. The program is specific to a unique population that would be most appropriately provided by a community partner where the expertise lies. 2. The program or service requires specialized knowledge, resources, and/or equipment that is not considered part of the municipality's introductory and developmental approach to program provision. 3. The program or service meets a required need of the residents and cost-sharing of space, and the partnership provides cost efficiency to both parties.

Scenario	Conditions
Seeking Out & Implementing Strong Partnerships: (see also **Appendix F**: Types of Partnerships and Approaches to Evaluation)	1. There is an identified need for the service. 2. The terms and conditions are clear as to what service needs to be provided and when and how the service provider will intersect with the municipal staff. 3. There are labour conditions that allow open procurement of the service. 4. A comparison is developed as to which provider will deliver the service most effectively – the municipality or the other provider(s). 5. A thorough investigation of past performance in partnership with other municipalities is undertaken. 6. The merits outweigh the current service delivery model. Public engagement is sought where appropriate. 7. A contract is developed with the successful third-party provider complete with detailed performance expectations, legislative compliance, quality assurance, levels of service, targets, and performance.

A regularly scheduled evaluation of the third-party arrangements and other performance metrics (e.g., participant satisfaction levels) is an essential element in continually providing quality programs and services through partnerships.

Recommendations – Sustaining Service Delivery

72. Provide **targeted leadership courses** in aquatics, programs, and camps until appropriate staffing levels are achieved. Reach out to area school boards to assist in this endeavour.

73. Establish strategies to assist not-for-profit community groups in the **recruitment, training, and retention of volunteers** to support community-led recreation and sport programming.

74. Create objectives and strategies to enhance community capacity and increase access to recreation and parks services for residents through an **expanded community development model**.

75. Regularly review **agreements with partners** to ensure an appropriate and sustainable distribution of operational and financial responsibilities.

76. Identify opportunities to enhance and grow **community partnerships** that increase the range of recreation, parks, sport, and community opportunities in support of future population growth.

8.3 Expanding Programs and Services in a Growing Community

The City's recent focus has been on recovering from the lower program, service, and staffing levels experienced during the pandemic. Staffing shortages in some areas have created challenges in offering a robust range of choices for all age groups. As a result, the City has made targeted changes to schedules to ensure the efficient use of staff and resources.

The following table illustrates a comparison of pre-pandemic (2019) and post-pandemic (2023) data for selected registered and drop-in opportunities.

Registration Levels of Selected Recreation Programs and Services 2019 and 2023

Year	2019	2019	2023	2023
Program Type	**Registration**	**Fill Rate**	**Registration**	**Fill Rate**
Recreation Programs:				
Summer Camps	3,031	88%	3,168	97%
March Break	208	65%	250	99%
Active Programs	1,734	49%	2,138	74%
Creative	248	61%	370	77%
General Interest	1,613	43%	2,212	49%
Total - Recreation	**6,834**	**60%**	**8,138**	**71%**
Drop-in Activities:				
Fitness Classes	774	65%	671	78%
Health Club	593	119%	776	182%
Youth	6,347	59%	5,041	46%
Older Adult	N/A	N/A	425	49%
Rouge Hill SC	110	55%	73	36%
South Pickering Seniors Club	784	52%	755	50%
Pickering Lawn Bowling	163	81%	145	72%
Total – Drop-in	**8,608**	**61%**	**7,741**	**52%**
Aquatics Programs:				
Pre-School	3,177	93%	2,938	93%
Children	3,827	85%	4,515	89%
Youth	505	79%	354	79%
Adult	1,414	93%	742	93%
Total – Aquatics	**8,923**	**89%**	**8,549**	**90%**
Family/Public Swim	68,981	31%	77,890	42%

Source: City of Pickering, 2024

Overall, 2023 participation levels in registered programs have surpassed 2019 (pre-pandemic) levels by 19%. Camps have recovered to the pre-pandemic levels and have a high fill rate of 97% (percent of registrants as compared to the capacity); a high fill rate would indicate that there is a waitlist for summer camps.

Participation in drop-in aquatic programs has increased by 11% since 2019, supporting a national trend in the popularity of casual use of facilities. The Health Club is particularly oversubscribed. Staff monitor the number of active members to ensure that there is not overcrowding of changerooms and fitness spaces during peak hours.

Sustaining the Swim to Survive Program

According to the Lifesaving Society (Ontario Branch), there was one fatal drowning for every four non-fatal drownings in 2023. There are typically 150 fatal drownings in Ontario each year; most occur in open water and are preventable. Children and youth under 20 years of age make up the highest number of emergency visits due to non-fatal drownings, with males accounting for two-thirds of non-fatal drownings.

The most important preventative measure for drowning centres on education and learning to survive in and around water. The Lifesaving Society (Ontario Branch) oversees the Swim to Survive program along with grant funding to assist municipalities. Often the program is offered through the schools and some municipalities offer family-oriented opportunities. Pickering has traditionally offered the Swim to Survive Program but has recently declined due to the lack of sustainable funding. This program is critical in a diverse community that has its southern boundary as Lake Ontario. Going forward, it is important that the City play its part in drowning prevention by seeking out sustainable funding sources for this program, including sponsorships and/or tax-based funding if necessary.

Planning for Aquatic, Fitness, and Programs

With anticipated population growth, the City should begin to plan for future program and service requirements in programs, aquatics, and fitness, all of which will be substantially expanded through the new Seaton Recreation Complex & Library. By identifying current penetration rate (the number of unique clients in programs and services), the City can establish a baseline figure of participants to measure against. Data should also indicate how many programs and services each unique client participates in each year. With this information, the City can anticipate future program and service needs within neighbourhoods and service areas and plan accordingly. Development of a program plan will allow staff to recruit and train leaders, and anticipate budget and resourcing requirements.

Quality Assurance in the Delivery of Services

The City of Pickering embraces industry standards and quality assurance programs in the delivery of programs and services. Programs that have been utilized to varying degrees include HIGH FIVE in supporting children’s development in recreation, Youth Friendly Communities (although the criteria are currently under review), and Active

Aging through Parks and Recreation Ontario. Further, the Aquatic Safety Management Program is a worthwhile undertaking in ensuring that aquatic policies and operations meet the highest standard. These quality assurance tools should continue to be utilized to ensure that the quality of recreation services is maintained and can be regularly audited for improvements.

Fill Rate Targets for Programs and Services

Municipal recreation service providers are especially cognisant of maximizing the use of public spaces for appropriate purposes and ensuring that programs and services are filled to near capacity. This work involves scheduling programs during times that each age group can participate.

A common goal is to fill program spaces to 85% of capacity, which helps to ensure that programs remain financially sustainable. Admittedly, ensuring that a public swimming pool is used to capacity during a public swim makes swimming less enjoyable, thus the capacity of program spaces should be designed to accommodate the respective activity. An 85% fill rate in programs is appropriate and should be a benchmark for the department going forward.

Promoting Physical Activity

Canada's Physical Activity Report produced by ParticipACTION continues to identify Canadians as receiving a failing grade to sustain adequate health outcomes through physical activity.

Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines have replaced Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines. These guidelines were introduced in 2020 and depict the amount of time various age groups should "Sweat, Step, Sleep and Sit" in a 24-hour period. This is viewed as more a helpful tool for Canadians as the new guidelines speak to the amount of recreational screen time that is appropriate from a health perspective each day. The table below highlights daily movement guidelines for children and youth between the ages of 5 and 17. Posting these movement guidelines for each age group in appropriate community spaces will continue to remind residents to become more active and limit sedentary behaviours.

Table 37: Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth

Activity	Time per Day
Sweat	60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity
Step	Several hours of moderate physical activity
Sleep	9 to 11 hours for 5 to 13-year-olds
Sit	8 to 10 hours for 14 to 17-year-olds

Source: Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (csepguidelines.ca)

Working Inter-Municipally in the Allocation of Facilities

Many facilities and organizations in Pickering attract participants from outside the community, particularly the neighbouring town of Ajax which forms part of many regional West Durham Region sport alliances. As a result, many groups rent fields and facilities in both jurisdictions; this was a key finding of the City of Pickering 2024 Arena Strategy. Coordination is necessary to ensure that groups are afforded equitable and appropriate access and that municipal facilities are maximized. To this end, it is important that allocation formulas are similar and based on standard guiding principles, allowing eligible groups to expand their services without being unduly impacted by historical allocations; this concern was expressed by multiple groups during the consultation for this plan.

Recommendations – Expanding Programs and Services in a Growing Community

77. Seek sponsorships and sustainable funding to reintroduce the **Swim to Survive** program for students and families (once staffing shortages are addressed). Place additional emphasis on the need for children and families to be safe in and around water.
78. Develop an **Aquatic, Fitness and Program Strategy** that reflects current and future programming needs to identify the scope of future program needs and to maximize community resources.
79. Implement **quality assurance programs** in the delivery of service in recreation to reflect the quality and safe programming for all age groups. Some examples include: HIGH FIVE (Principles of Healthy Child Development and Active Aging), Youth Friendly Communities, Lifesaving Society Aquatic Safety Management program, etc.
80. Work to achieve an **85% fill rate** in all recreation services and programs (calculated as participation divided by capacity).
81. Promote **Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines** to encourage greater physical activity levels (frequency, intensity, and duration) in Pickering residents.
82. Work with the Town of Ajax to develop **common principles in the allocation of community facilities** that are commonly used by organizations that operate across the West Durham area.

8.4 Increasing Participation of Diverse and Under-represented Residents

Confirming which populations are equity-deserving in Pickering is the first step in building an effective outreach initiative. The following table identifies key populations that are traditionally under-represented in recreational activities based on Statistics Canada and other leading research.

Table 38: Estimates of Equity-Deserving Groups in Pickering

Diverse Population Group	Percentage of Pickering's Population	Approximate Population (out of 103,000)
2SLGBTQ+**	4% (estimated*)	4,800
Indigenous Identity	1%	1,400
Visible Minorities - Racialized Populations	44%	45,300
Girls and Women	51%	52,500
Persons Experiencing Low Income (Lower Income measure – After Tax)	5%	5,500
Persons with Disabilities	15 to 22% (estimated*)	15,500 to 22,700

*Estimates based on Statistics Canada data, various sources
**Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and additional people who identify as part of sexual and gender diverse communities

The most important principle in developing meaningful programs and services in a diverse community is to engage the people who may be participating. Practitioners cannot assume that they know what activity preferences exists nor current barriers for any equity-deserving population. The identification of equity-deserving populations allows the City to inventory and assess outreach and inclusionary policies and practices that are in place and that many be missing. Outreach to these populations is critical in enabling greater representation in recreation and sport activities.

Revising the Access to Recreation Policy

The Access to Recreation Policy in Pickering allows people experiencing low income to receive subsidies to participate in a program of their choice. Participants qualify by being on income support through the government or living at the Lower Income Cut-off This policy provided over 600 Pickering residents with subsidized recreation in 2022. Pickering also provides many free and low-cost opportunities for residents to be active regardless of their income level. During an undertaking to develop a fair-minded use fee policy, residents receiving subsidies provided feedback as to how this policy might improve, including suggestions for providing free programs close to where residents

live, ensuring sustainable funding levels, and ensuring equity throughout the subsidy application process.

Addressing Gender Equity in Sport and Recreation

Over 90% of girls and women believe that sport benefits their physical and mental health, but less than 50% continue to participate once they have reached puberty[21]. The Federal government has declared that Canada will achieve gender equity in sport by 2035[22].

Canadian Women & Sport (CWS, a non-governmental organization) supports and enables girls, women, and gender diverse people in pursuing sport and active lifestyles, and keeps women actively engaged in building community capacity. CWS' priority and focus is to develop and support welcoming environments and sustainable models where women are trained to lead and promote active opportunities in concert with community partners such as municipalities, universities, and not-for-profit organizations. They have many resources that are readily available to audit policies and practices and help to build capacity within community organizations (e.g., Gender Equity Temperature Check, Game On, etc.).

Female participation in community-driven sport and recreation should be identified as a priority in Pickering as it has the potential to engage one-half of the population and include equity-deserving populations. Female and gender diverse participation in sport and recreation warrants assessment and the development of a multi-year plan where inequities exist.

Pickering's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy

The City of Pickering has developed its own Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy. Key advances are anticipated in education and awareness, structure and resources, community engagement, integration into policies and practices, and measurement. Specific initiatives that are relevant to the delivery of recreation and parks include:

a) embedding the principles of EDI into the organizational culture;
b) ensuring that there is diverse representation at all levels of staff and within the volunteer core;
c) training on the EDI Strategy and the development of a training curriculum for full-time staff, part-time staff, and volunteers;
d) developing a practical guide/handbook for staff to provide services with an equity lens (see next subsection on creating and equity lens toolkit), including terms that are acceptable;

[21] Canadian Women & Sport and Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities. Rally Report. 2022. https://womenandsport.ca/rally-report-2022
[22] Government of Canada. The Government of Canada Is Taking Concrete Steps to Achieve Gender Equity in All Levels of Sport. https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/news/2019/03/the-government-of-canada-is-taking-concrete-steps-to-achieve-gender-equity-in-all-levels-of-sport.html

e) creating dedicated spaces for prayer in community facilities;
f) developing performance metrics to assist in evidenced-based decision-making surrounding EDI;
g) reviewing all policies, operating manuals, and standard operating procedures with an EDI lens.

Creating an Equity Lens Toolkit

During the staff engagement in developing this plan, participants felt strongly that staffing and program offerings must reflect the diverse needs of the community. It was indicated that many efforts have been made to discuss needs with diverse populations. Modifications have been assessed and evaluated with participant's input and this process will continue to continually embrace service excellence. Staff identified the need for a toolkit to enable proactive action at the local level.

The municipalities of Oshawa, Oakville, and Brampton are examples of recreation departments that have adopted and refined resources to assist staff and volunteers provide equitable and inclusive programs and services. It is anticipated that Pickering's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan will set about to achieve developing equity and inclusion tools and a lens for staff and volunteers. The aforementioned communities have adopted Equity and Inclusion Lens Guidelines, the concept for which was originally developed through the Non-Profit Association of Oregon. The goal of the guidelines is to ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of promising practices and can act with the right tools and thought processes.

The guidelines prompt staff to:

- Consider their own diversity;
- Check their assumptions;
- Ask about inclusion;
- Apply this knowledge to their own work; and
- Be a change agent by taking action.

The Equity and Inclusion Lens Guidelines provide checklists as staff undertake planning and policy work, plan projects, strengthen communications, and recruit and lead staff. This resource would be an excellent starting point for Pickering to develop a toolkit that meets the needs of staff and residents.

One area where this lens can be applied is through recognition of Indigenous Peoples and their stories. Several recent national-level reports speak to the role that Canadians have in reconciling with Indigenous Peoples over our shared history. All communities have a role to play in recognizing the land that Indigenous Peoples previously lived on and in being inclusive of this population. In turn, many recreation, parks, and culture organizations are emphasizing the role of Indigenous Peoples through education, arts, sports, parks amenities and interpretation. Meaningful local supports can only be determined through open discussions with local Indigenous Peoples and organizations.

Some resources that can be utilized at the local level to ensure that staff and volunteers are including the voice of Indigenous Peoples include:

- Aboriginal Sport Circle: The Aboriginal Sport Circle is a not-for-profit organization that is designated as Canada's governing body and voice for Aboriginal sport throughout the country. Each Province and Territory is represented and is an excellent resource for recreation providers. It advocates for the Aboriginal community to engage in healthy and active lifestyles. The Regional Coordinators in Ontario work to better engage the community and offer grants to fund programs and activities through the Power to Play Program.
- IndigenACTION: The Assembly of First Nations is a national organization representing First Nations peoples in Canada. The group has developed an IndigenACTION Strategy which serves to develop partnerships with community level sport and recreation leaders to ensure that First Nations youth can live healthier lifestyles and overall well-being through recreation and sport.

Providing Safe and Welcoming Public Spaces

The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants developed the Positive Spaces Initiative through Citizen and Immigration Canada to denote public spaces that are safe for and welcoming to the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Signage including the Pride flag in the graphic denotes that the space is positive for this population.

Recommendations – Increasing Participation of Diverse and Under-represented Residents

83. Refine and expand the **Access to Recreation Policy** to include stabilized funding based on need, equity in the registration process, and other findings based on input from recipients.

84. Conduct an audit of municipally-supported recreation and sport opportunities available to all genders and work to increase participation by **girls, women, and persons identifying as female or gender diverse**.

85. Consider the recommendations of the City's **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy** through the implementation of recreation and parks services including those related to key principles, representation, training, space design, guide/handbook, and performance metrics.

86. Develop a **Community Engagement Plan** to welcome and involve all residents in recreation and parks opportunities.

87. Work with the Aboriginal Sport Circle and IndigenACTION to discuss ways of collaborating with **Indigenous People** to reflect sport and recreation needs in Pickering.

88. Ensure that all public spaces are **safe and welcoming spaces** for staff and users as outlined in the Safe Spaces Canada criteria.

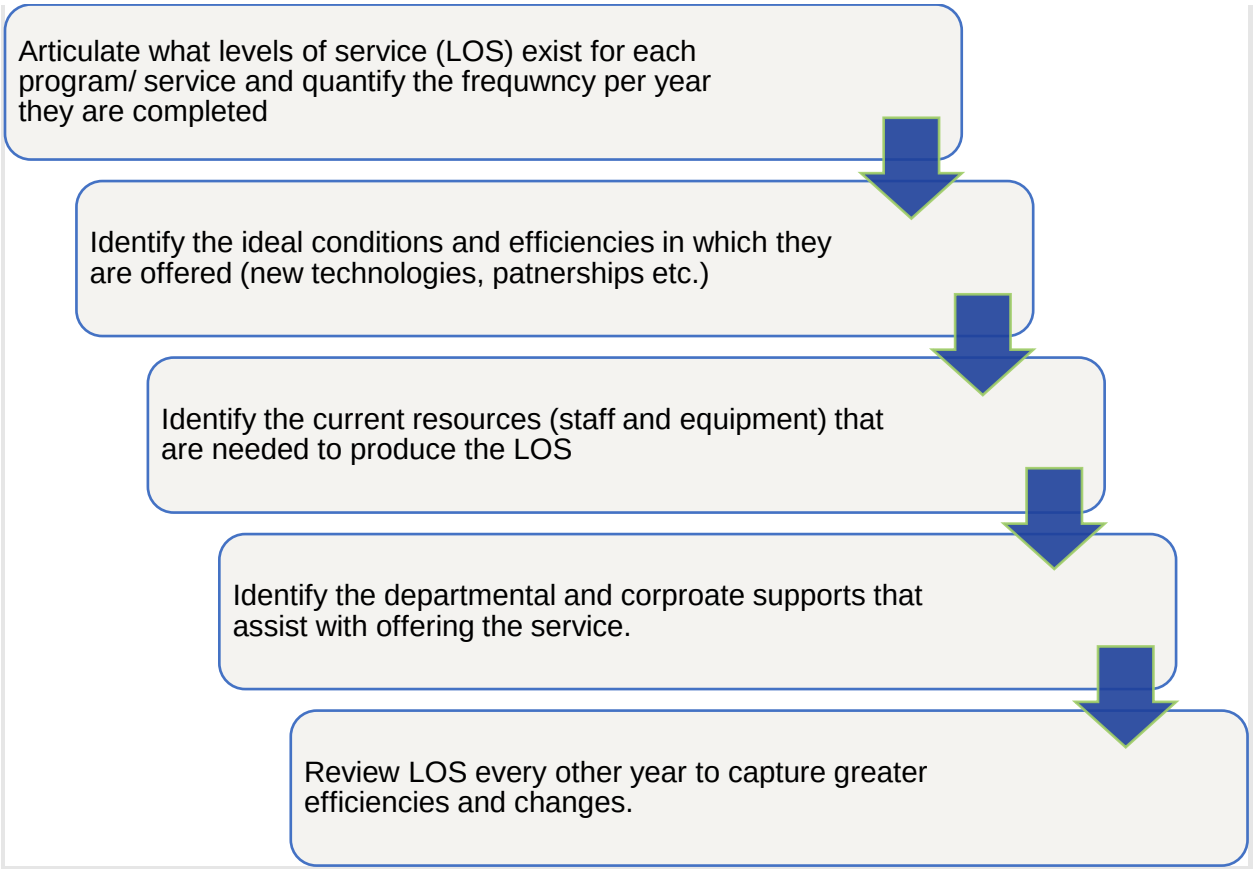
8.5 Supporting a High-Performing Staff Team

There is a strong commitment in Pickering to innovate service delivery, expand community engagement, and enhance satisfaction levels. To this end, key initiatives that staff should undertake internally to heighten the ability of staff and volunteers to be even better skilled and prepared to respond to changes within the community have been identified below.

Confirming Levels of Service

In a community that is increasing in population and recreation and sport demands, it is important to confirm and document the levels of service that are provided to the public and the resources that it takes to provide them. In this way, future requirements for resourcing and staffing can be determined for Council approval well in advance of implementation. For instance, the operating impacts of capital projects can be determined by the services that will be provided within new or improved spaces and the operating impacts can be approved at the time that the capital allocation is approved. Many levels of service standards are in place, but likely many are not articulated and approved by Council. The process to articulate levels of service is shown below.

Figure 17: Framework for Establishing Levels of Service



Developing a Ten-Year Staffing Plan

Once the levels of service have been developed and approved by Council, the process to develop a ten-year staffing plan can begin. This plan will serve to plan the number and type of staff in the context of additional facilities and services to respond to a growing population. The plan should also address average levels of staff turnover, pending and potential retirements, succession planning, and ensuring that the staff team reflects the community that they serve.

In the meantime, organizational structural guidelines can be used to determine if the current organizational structure is designed with equity and consistency. Utilizing the following guidelines, the City can assess its structure on an annual basis or as staff changes occur in order to seek opportunities for efficiencies.

Typical guidelines used in a municipal organizational system include:

a) **Organizational levels** – a maximum number of staff levels (ideally less than 5) between the Director and the public should be established

b) **Functions and customer focus** – each staff unit should be designed around common customers and like functions

c) **Equitable distribution of workloads** – where possible, positions should be designed that have equitable accountabilities and responsibilities

d) **Reduction of duplication of efforts** – positions with overlapping responsibilities (booking, allocating, etc.) should be reviewed for potential efficiencies.

e) **Span of control** – each management/supervisory level could have between four and seven direct reports

f) **Sole contributors** – there should be few if any one-on-one reporting relationships unless the direct report is a sole contributor to the organization.

Supporting Training and Development

A standardized training and development plan ensures that all staff and volunteers have the skills and competencies to provide a high level of service. An inventory of skills needed per position type is a required undertaking. Common requirements such as customer service standards, inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility, and sustainability in the delivery of services are all common competencies and can be packaged and offered online, in-person, or a combination thereof. More specialized training such as evacuation procedures per facility type, and emergency response measures can be offered through the various disciplines. Ensuring that each staff person can provide an exceptional level of service and is aware of refined and innovative approaches will enable the City to continue to effectively respond to needs.

Setting Performance Targets and Measures

Recreation staff collect participation, utilization, and service satisfaction data to analyze current service delivery levels and to measure performance against the previous year's

results. This is completed to demonstrate that there has been movement in addressing key goals and initiatives and that residents are well satisfied with service and program provision. Annual attendance and registration statistics are captured and shared with staff to allow improved planning for the next session and accommodate pent-up demands. Annual reporting establishes transparency in the operations and demonstrates to the public that there is excellent value in the investment of tax dollars.

Recommendations – Supporting a High-Performing Staff Team

89. Articulate and seek Council approval for all **recreation and parks levels of service** in preparation for the need for expanded growth-related services. This work will entail working with a third-party to identify all services, how often and the standards to which they are delivered, resources required, and potential efficiencies.

90. Develop a **Ten-Year Staffing Plan** that reflects the approved levels of service and changes in service requirements (e.g., staffing levels, office space, etc.) due to the growth of the population.

91. Develop a **Staff Training and Development Continuum** that identifies the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies for each job type. This exercise should document current trends and developments that will keep staff performing at a high level and improve readiness for succession planning.

92. Refine existing **performance metrics** and prepare a concise **annual report card** to reflect changes in participation rates, service delivery, volunteerism, utilization of public spaces, satisfaction levels, and other outcomes from recreation and parks participation.





9. Implementation

Active implementation of the Recreation & Parks – Ten Year Plan is fundamental to its success. This requires coordinated efforts and a commitment from Council, staff, user groups, and the public, as well as a variety of funding options to implement certain aspects of the Plan. This section provides guidance on the Plan's implementation, including a summary of all recommendations and their intended timing.

9.1 Plan Evaluation and Monitoring

The City should regularly review, assess, and update the recommendations of this Plan to ensure that they continue to reflect local conditions and that they are responsive to the changing needs of the community. This will require monitoring population data and growth patterns, tracking activity trends and user satisfaction levels, coordinating with community organizations and the public, reporting on progress, and undertaking a comprehensive ten-year update to the Plan. Through these strategies – or as a result of other internal or external factors – adjustment of resource allocations and priorities identified in this plan may be required.

The Plan should be reviewed annually as part of the City's budget cycle. The following steps may be used to conduct an annual review of the Ten Year Plan:

a) review of the past year (recommendations implemented, capital projects undertaken, consideration of new and existing initiatives, changes in participation levels, emerging issues and needs, etc.);

b) identification of issues impacting the coming year (anticipated financial and operational constraints, emerging opportunities, etc.);

c) cursory review of the plan for direction regarding its recommendations;

d) preparation of a staff report to indicate prioritization of short-term projects and determination of which projects should be implemented in the following year based on criteria established by staff (e.g., financial limitations, community input, partnership/funding potential, etc.);

e) communication to staff and Council regarding the status of projects, criteria used to prioritize projects and projects to be implemented in the following year; and

f) budget requests/revisions as necessary.

Lastly, additional data collection and evaluation has been recommended to inform performance measures and targets. Monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and facility management will be an important part of this plan moving forward, as will regular reports to the public on progress and implementation priorities.

Recommendations – Plan Evaluation and Monitoring

93. Regularly **monitor progress of the Ten Year Plan**, including tracking of growth and demographic characteristics, activity patterns, facility usage, participation levels, trends, and completed recommendations.

94. Ensure that planning for major capital projects includes meaningful **community engagement and feasibility studies** that validate building program and service requirements and are aligned with community needs, partnership opportunities, and financial capabilities.

95. Develop a **communications plan** following approval of the Ten Year Plan to create awareness about its key messages and recommendations amongst residents and stakeholders. Implement a system for the regular reporting of the plan, including an **annual report card** to the community.

96. Establish **annual work plans** to identify recommendations requiring implementation within the coming year. Work plans should identify departmental leads, partners, funding requirements and sources, etc.

97. Undertake a **comprehensive review and update** of the Ten Year Plan to begin no later than 2033. Timing may be accelerated based on the pace of implementation and changes within the community.

9.2 Financial Considerations

The Ten Year Plan calls for continued financial investment and outlines a series of planning priorities for the provision of new and upgraded recreation and parks infrastructure for the next ten years. The amount of funding required to support some or all major capital recreation projects will place pressure on the City's debt capacity. The City has limited resources and cannot afford to do everything that the community desires; underscoring the importance for undertaking the plan in the first place.

Although Pickering may experience various challenges in providing sufficient resources to achieve the plan's recommendations, it is expected that the City will make every effort to implement these strategies through appropriate means. Pickering's recreation and parks capital projects are primarily funded from development charges, community benefit charges, asset management levy (tax-base) and other capital reserves, special reserves (e.g., gaming revenues, municipal accommodation tax, etc.), debt, and outside sources such as senior government grants and third-party contributions.

The City's annual budget and long-term forecast contains considerable detail regarding capital projects to be undertaken during the next ten-year period (subject to change based on needs/priorities, funding availability, etc.). This Ten Year Plan will have an influence on the projects that are included in the town's long-term capital forecast and should be used as a resource in developing secondary plans and related studies. Through implementation of the plan, the City will take into consideration available capital and operating funding via available sources to identify potential budget shortfalls

or overruns and areas for adjustment. On an annual basis, the City should reconcile the recommendations with its fiscal capacity and focus on the highest priority items.

The City will lean on its creativity and leadership to enable full implementation of this plan. It is vital that growth-related funding sources are maximized. Financial processes and practices will support the maximization of available funds and be supplemented by other approaches, where possible. Approaches that are financially sustainable will be encouraged, such as partnerships that leverage assets and resources to provide the best value to residents, building cost-effective multi-use facilities rather than those designed for a single use, seeking senior government grants and fundraising, etc. The City routinely seeks grants, sponsorships, naming rights and advertising revenue as a means to offset the costs of services.

Recommendations – Financial Considerations

98. Use this **Ten Year Plan as a resource** in establishing the City's annual budget documents, capital forecasts, development and community benefits charges studies, secondary plans, and other related studies.

99. Where appropriate and consistent with City policies and priorities, consider **alternative funding and cost-sharing approaches** such as (but not limited to) fundraising, grants, private-public partnerships, sponsorships, surcharges, capital reserve contributions, and various forms of collaboration to provide the best value to residents.

100. Assess and ensure that **operating budget implications** are identified and appropriately resourced prior to approving major capital projects.

101. Foster **effective partnerships and co-location opportunities** with landowners and public agencies (e.g., public libraries, schools, etc.) that support the improvement, provision, and expansion of recreation, parks, and community facilities that address demonstrated needs.

9.3 Implementation Strategy

Throughout this Ten Year Plan, recommendations have been identified at the end of each section. This is not intended to be a definitive list of recommendations as ongoing capital projects/repairs, operating expenditures, and other initiatives outside the scope of this plan may be identified and prioritized by the City on an ongoing basis. By approving this Ten Year Plan as a guiding document, the City is not bound to implementing every recommendation; rather, this plan provides guidance on community priorities and sets a general course for meeting community needs as they are presently defined.

Priority is generally synonymous with timing – the higher the priority, the sooner the recommendation should be implemented. All recommendations within this plan are important and, if properly implemented, will provide the community with enhanced recreation and parks services in Pickering. The priority/timing of recommendations is organized into the following three categories:

- Short Term priority (1-3 years)
- Medium Term priority (4-6 years)
- Long Term priority (7-10+ years)

The proposed priority/timing of each recommendation has been determined based on an assessment of need, as identified throughout the planning process (including public consultation, trends and demographic variables, assessment of parks, facilities, services, etc.), and is based on current and anticipated circumstances. Budget pressures, changes in participation rates or demographics, availability of resources, and other factors may impact the implementation of these recommendations. The pursuit of external funding opportunities and partnership opportunities may also assist in accelerating implementation.

The following tables contain the recommendations in the order in which they are presented in the body of the plan. Where applicable, estimated capital costs are articulated for each recommendation, which are based on published budget figures and/or industry norms. Costs are shown in 2024 dollar figures; however, inflation is at its highest level in decades, and all costs identified in this plan should be confirmed though further study.

Table 39: Indoor Recreation Facilities Recommendations

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
1.	As a high priority, continue to proceed with the timely development of the **Seaton Recreation Complex & Library.** At minimum, this facility should be designed to include a 25 metre 6-8 lane rectangular pool and separate warm water leisure pool, fitness centre and studios, full size gymnasium, walking track, multi-purpose spaces, two arena pads, and library.	✹			Design and construction costs included in 2024 budget and long-term forecast ($243 million).
2.	Prior to undertaking significant capital renewal projects, initiate planning for the **major long-term revitalization of the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex** as supported by the City's Facility Renewal Study. The assessment should consider factors such as public input, asset management, facility and program needs, related initiatives, site and partnership opportunities, potential funding sources, and more.		✹	✹	Costs to be determined through future study.
3.	Seek to construct the proposed **Seniors & Youth Centre** in Pickering's City Centre within the ten-year horizon of this plan (prior to 2034). Once open, the **East Shore Community Centre** should be closed and declared surplus, with programming transferred to the new facility.			✹	Design and construction costs estimated at $56.3 million.
4.	Prepare a business case for the expansion of **youth programming and space within the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex.** This should be viewed as an interim measure prior to opening the Seniors & Youth Centre and should be implemented through the repurposing of tenant spaces and/or under-utilized areas (not a physical expansion to the building).	✹	✹		Staff-led (business plan). Costs to be determined through future study.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
5.	As part of the next Ten Year Plan (around 2034), initiate high-level planning for the development of a **second recreation facility (Thompson's Corners community centre)** within the Seaton community on lands owned by the City (east of Brock Road, south of Highway 407).			✹	Consultant: $100,000 for needs and feasibility study.
6.	Through the **Northeast Secondary Plan** process, designate land for community facilities suitable for the development of a future recreation complex and library.	✹			Secondary planning process is ongoing.
7.	Prior to undertaking significant investment in existing **community halls** (e.g., West Shore Community Centre, Brougham Hall, etc.), prepare a study of options that examines local needs, capacity within area facilities, and long-term requirements. The assessment should be used to guide options, including sale, third-party-lease, and/or reinvestment. Closure and sale of underused halls that require significant investment is possible, particularly where these functions can be accommodated within a nearby facility. New community halls should be discouraged.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice. Reports may be prepared on an as-needed basis.
8.	As a general principle, **design indoor recreation facilities** to be flexible, accessible, multi-use (non-dedicated space, where possible), inclusive, and age-friendly community hubs. Locate these sites in highly visible locations with strong pedestrian, cycling, and transit connections for convenient access. Consider models co-located with libraries and other community uses. Involve the community and stakeholders in the facility design process.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
9.	Utilize the findings and recommendations of the **Arena Strategy** to inform decision-making regarding arena investment, development, and operations.	✹	✹	✹	See 2024 Arena Strategy.
10.	Provide **multi-tank indoor aquatic centres** within all new recreation complexes. A 25-metre tank with 6 to 8 lanes and a separate warm water leisure pool are recommended as part of the planned **Seaton Recreation Complex & Library**.	✹			Costs included in facility-specific budgets.
11.	Prioritize the revitalization of the **Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex indoor aquatic centre** as part of the proposed facility revitalization strategy following the opening of the Seaton Recreation Complex and Library.		✹		$5 million estimate contained within long-term capital forecast; to be confirmed through future study.
12.	Undertake a study to examine future programming needs and potential capital replacement of the **Dunbarton Indoor Pool**. This study should consider the need for this facility to remain operational during any extended shutdown of the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex and should be completed following a minimum of one year of the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library being fully operational.		✹		May be staff-led or require outside services ($50,000).
13.	Provide **gymnasiums** within all new and redeveloped recreation complexes (e.g., Seaton, etc.) and consider their provision within appropriate community centres (e.g., Seniors & Youth Centre, etc.). A triple gymnasium (FIBA regulation) is recommended as part of the **Seaton Recreation Complex & Library**.	✹		✹	Costs included in facility-specific budgets.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
14.	Provide one **indoor pickleball court** for every 10,000 residents, with a target of 15 indoor courts by 2034. The City will be able to meet its current target of 10 indoor courts through upgrades at the Pickering Soccer Centre (up to 6 courts and 42 hours/court per week) and also its 2034 target (15 courts) through the development of the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library.	✹	✹	✹	Costs included in facility-specific budgets.
15.	Where additional access is required, expand **agreements with local school boards** to offer programming within school gymnasiums and other community spaces within Seaton and future growth areas.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice.
16.	Provide **fitness centres and studios** within all new and redeveloped recreation complexes (including the Seaton Recreation Complex & Library) to support the delivery of health and wellness programming. Consider the provision of **indoor walking tracks** (free public access) within new recreation facilities, where appropriate.	✹		✹	Costs included in facility-specific budgets.
17.	Engage the **local racquetball club** to assess their future outlook and ways to increase usage of the courts prior to repurposing one racquetball court at the CHDRC.	✹			Staff-led.
18.	Consideration may be given to **relocating the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex indoor tennis courts** to another accessible location within Pickering in the longer-term, possibly through an air-supported dome and the joint provision of pickleball courts. This is a matter that may be more fully examined through the recommended recreation complex facility revitalization study, the City Centre project, and/or planning of the future parks and recreation facility sites.			✹	Costs and implementation strategies to be determined through future study.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
19.	Encourage wider community access to the **Pickering Soccer Centre field** by working with Pickering FC to create an allocation framework and/or scheduling options that provide other youth-based organizations with access to the turf field within prime, shoulder, and non-prime times.		✹	✹	Staff-led, in cooperation with Pickering FC.
20.	Monitor the demand for **indoor turf facilities** and examine the potential to develop a second indoor turf facility beyond the timeframe of this Ten-Year Plan.			✹	Consider as part of Ten Year Plan update.
21.	Adopt a **partnership framework** to evaluate and respond to major capital proposals from community organizations, with consideration given to overall municipal priorities and the City's capacity to participate in such projects. A sample framework and criteria are identified with this Ten Year Plan (see appendix).	✹			Staff-led. Example provided in Appendix.

Table 40: Outdoor Recreation and Park Facilities Recommendations

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
22.	Provide approximately **15 additional soccer and multi-use fields** (unlit equivalents) over the next ten years to address growth-related needs. New fields may be developed within community parks (with multiple fields per site) and appropriate neighbourhood park sites, as well as in partnership with other land providers such as schools. Where possible, a focus should be placed on full size fields (both lit and unlit) and artificial turf fields as these provide greater capacity for community use. In addition to new fields in the Seaton community, opportunities should be sought to enhance field supplies within existing parks (e.g., conversion of under-utilized assets such as in Maple Ridge Park).	✹	✹	✹	Costs included within park development budgets. Construction benchmarks are $200,000 to $500,000+ for an unlit field, $100,000 to $250,000 to add lights, and $1.0 to $2.0+ million to add artificial turf.
23.	Through the annual permitting process, **track the number of registrants** using Pickering sports fields (soccer, football baseball, cricket, etc.). At a minimum, data to be collected should include age (youth, adult, etc.) and residency (Pickering, other, etc.). This data will enable trend tracking, support future demand analysis, and inform allocation practices.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
24.	Provide approximately **6 additional ball diamonds** (unlit equivalents) over the next ten years to address growth-related needs. New fields should be developed within community parks (with multiple fields per site where possible), as well as in partnership with other land providers where appropriate. These needs can be largely satisfied through planned development at Dave Ryan Community Park (1 lit diamond) and future development on the Greenwood Conservation Lands (multiple lit diamonds), including consideration of both hardball and softball needs.	✹	✹	✹	Costs included within park development budgets. Construction benchmarks are $200,000 to $500,000+ for an unlit field and $100,000 to $250,000 to add lights.
25.	Evaluate opportunities to repurpose **surplus ball diamonds** and to align the diamond supply and distribution with demand. Some candidates for conversion include under-utilized and/or under-sized diamonds at Maple Ridge Park, Lookout Point Park, and Greenwood Park.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice. Costs to be determined based on selected option(s).
26.	Include a **regulation cricket field within the future Greenwood Conservation Lands** or other suitable location capable of serving Seaton and surrounding area. Consideration may be given to designing the pitch as an overlay across two full-size soccer fields.			✹	Costs included within park development budget. Construction benchmarks are $400,000 to $800,000 per field.
27.	Expand the number of **public tennis courts** (lit where possible) in growing communities through new court development in Seaton (4 courts at 2 parks) and Duffins Heights (2 courts at 1 park). Courts should be designed for tennis only, but may be co-located with other sport courts as part of a complex.	✹	✹	✹	Costs included within park development budgets. Construction benchmarks are $400,000 for a 2-courts complex.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
28.	Consider the development of an **outdoor tennis complex** (4-5 courts) at the site of the community facility planned for Thompson's Corners. The complex should be operated by a community-based club under agreement with the City, allowing for public access during specified hours and/or low use periods. The potential for an air-supported dome to allow for year-round use of the courts (possibly as a long-term replacement for the indoor courts at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex) may be considered further through a business plan that examines demand, partnerships, financial performance, and related factors.			✹	Construction benchmarks are $750,000 for a 4-courts complex. Additional costs for a dome to be defined through future business plan, including partnership potential.
29.	Work with the local tennis club to confirm the long-term need for the courts at **Greenwood Park** and consider shifting use to new courts planned for Seaton, allowing this space to be converted to other uses as defined by a future redesign process for this park.	✹			Staff-led. Costs to be determined based on selected option(s).

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
30.	Target the development of up to **19 new outdoor pickleball courts** by 2034, with a focus on dedicated courts in appropriate locations. Projects should have consideration to the site evaluation and design criteria identified in this plan. The City should continue to work with pickleball organizations to monitor and assess the need for additional dedicated court complexes over time. Potential capital projects include: a. developing six (6) dedicated courts at Diana, Princess of Wales Park, possibly operated in partnership with a club; b. a. developing four (4) dedicated courts at the site of the planned recreation facility in Thompson's Corners, possibly operated in partnership with a club; c. developing four (4) dedicated courts in the Dave Ryan Community Park (P-123) in Seaton; and d. consideration of painting lines on selected multi-use basketball courts at locations such as Beechlawn Park (P-019, future) and selected neighbourhood parks in Duffins Heights and Seaton (e.g., P-086, etc.).	✹	✹	✹	Costs included within park development budgets. Construction benchmarks are $250,000 for two courts and $500,000 for six courts.
31.	Develop approximately **13 additional outdoor basketball courts** by 2034 within growing communities (e.g., Seaton) and under-served areas (e.g., Liverpool, Kingston Road corridor) based on an 800-metre service radius. Half courts should generally be considered for neighbourhood parks (and appropriate village greens) and full courts for community parks.	✹	✹	✹	Costs included within park development budgets. Construction benchmarks are $100,000 to $150,000 per court.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
32.	Continue with plans to construct **5 new splash pads / water play areas** in Duffins Heights and the Seaton community by 2034; additional sites in Seaton and possibly City Centre will be required longer-term. Should the City remove the splash pad at Beachfront Park, it should be replaced at another location south of Highway 401 in proximity to growth areas.	✹	✹	✹	Costs included within park development budgets. Construction benchmarks are $400,000 to $700,000 per location.
33.	The provision of an **outdoor pool** would represent a new level of service for the City and the reconstruction of the pool at **Petticoat Creek Conservation Park** is not viewed as a priority within the scope of this Ten Year Plan.	✹			Although not recommended, the cost for pool design and construction is estimated at $11.5 million (KPMG, 2023).
34.	Continue with plans to include a refrigerated skating rink/water feature within **City Centre Park** and consider the feasibility of a refrigerated outdoor ice pad (combined with the splash pad, if possible) at the **Seaton Recreation Complex & Library**.	✹	✹		Costs included within park and facility development budgets.
35.	Consider the development of an appropriately-sized covered multi-use pad in **Claremont Memorial Park** to support extended use for floor sports (ball hockey, skating, etc.), camps, and events. The ice pad should not be refrigerated.		✹		Construction benchmarks are $1.0 to $1.25 million.
36.	Reclassify skateboard parks as **"all wheels parks"** and integrate this term into the City's signage and promotions.	✹			Staff-led.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
37.	Expand the network of all wheels parks by: a. replacing the aging community-level skate park at **Diana, Princess of Wales Park** at the proposed hydro corridor park to the north (pending approval from Hydro One); b. developing up to **4 new local skate spots in South Pickering**; c. developing a community-level skate park in Seaton, possibly at the **Seaton Recreation Complex & Library**; and d. developing up to **3 new local skate spots in Seaton**, including one at Dave Ryan Community Park. Determination of locations and designs will require additional community consultation and site evaluation, guided by the criteria and classifications established in the City's Skateboard Park Strategy 2017.	✹	✹	✹	Costs included within park development budgets. Construction benchmarks are $350,000 to $750,000 per location.
38.	Explore the potential for installing a **pump track** through a future community or district park development project.			✹	Staff-led. Construction benchmarks are $200,000 to $400,000 per location.
39.	Continue to install **playgrounds** within appropriate park types in growth areas. At minimum, playgrounds should be located within 800 metres of residential areas (less in intensified areas), unobstructed by major pedestrian barriers such as valleys, highways, and railways. Playground design should give consideration to play value, variety in design, accessible features (focusing on community park sites), and supporting amenities such as pathways, seating, and shade.	✹	✹	✹	Costs included within park development budgets. Construction benchmarks are $150,000 to $500,000 per location, depending on scope of work.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
40.	Integrate **outdoor fitness equipment** into appropriate parks, focusing on destination parks (e.g., selected community and waterfront parks) and growing communities (using a 1-km radius to support equitable distribution).	✹	✹	✹	Costs included within park development budgets. Construction benchmarks are $75,000 to $150,000 per location.
41.	Develop guidelines to support the design of **designated open space exercise zones** where the community can organize fitness classes (yoga, tai chi, etc.).		✹		Staff-led.
42.	Support the establishment of **community gardens** on appropriate municipal lands and as an option in new and redeveloped parks able to meet the site criteria contained in the City's Community Gardens Policy. Leverage partnerships with agencies and private landowners to ensure an equitable distribution across Pickering (including one or more sites in Seaton).	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice. Construction benchmarks are $100,000 to $250,000 per location.
43.	Provide two (2) additional **leash-free dog areas** within the next ten years in response to community need and only in cases where location criteria can be met. Evaluate options for establishing an off-leash dog area in Seaton and continue with plans to develop an off-leash park in the proposed Hydro Corridor park (pending approval from Hydro One).	✹		✹	Costs included within park development budgets. Construction benchmarks are $100,000 to $200,000 per location.
44.	Prepare an **off-leash dog area policy** to address the dynamics of providing, designing, and maintaining leash free dog areas in higher density neighbourhoods.		✹		Staff-led.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
45.	Work with the TRCA to enhance **Petticoat Creek Conservation Park** as a signature park site for large events and festivals.	✹	✹		Costs will be dependent on agreement and scope of improvements. Preliminary capital cost estimate is $35.8 million (KPMG, 2023).
46.	As a general principle, consider and evaluate **event hosting capabilities** when developing and redeveloping community and district parks, including the provision of support infrastructure (e.g., parking, electrical service, water and wastewater services, washrooms, shade, etc.).	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice. Costs to be determined based on selected option(s).
47.	Continue to place a high priority on the preservation and restoration of **waterfront parks and beaches** that support public access for residents and visitors.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice. Costs to be determined based on selected option(s).
48.	Continue to **monitor participation and trends in recreation and sport activities** accommodated through the parks system (including those delivered in partnership with others) to inform future capital needs and strategies.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice.

Table 41: Parkland Recommendations

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
49.	Modify and update the City's **parkland hierarchy** through the next Official Plan update. This includes distinguishing between different types of parkland in Mixed Use Areas and Urban/Rural Residential Areas and updating the policies for existing designations as appropriate. Additionally, it is recommended that two new park categories (Urban Parks and Linear Parks) be created to support the emerging Mixed Use Area hierarchy. Consideration may also be given to renaming the District Park (to "City-wide Park") and expanding the designation to allow for the inclusion of larger properties that support linear and passive recreation, such as city-wide events, environmental education, interpretation, and nature-related recreation.	✹			To be considered through Official Plan Review.
50.	Develop and maintain a **comprehensive inventory database** of parks and open spaces (linked to GIS and asset management databases) for the purposes of evaluation and planning.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led.
51.	Adopt a minimum City-wide **parkland provision target** of 1.5 hectares per 1,000 residents through to 2034. This target (as well as defined targets for mixed use areas, new community areas, and established areas) should be used to inform the review of development applications and secondary plans for the next ten years. Where possible, parkland provision targets should be linked to population and/or housing units.	✹	✹	✹	To be considered through Official Plan Review and development review processes.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
52.	Prepare a **parkland acquisition strategy** to enhance current and future community access to parks, with consideration of alternative acquisition tools. The strategy should confirm priorities for land acquisition (including opportunities to secure larger park blocks for community-serving amenities) and a budget for the annual allocation of funds.	✹			Consultant: $150,000 (may be combined with other corporate land needs). Excludes cost for land acquisition.
53.	Use the **priority mapping** in this plan to inform land acquisition and work with other municipal departments to secure land and/or enhance programming in high priority areas (informed by the proposed parkland acquisition strategy).	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice.
54.	Strengthen **collaboration with public agencies** (e.g., schools, local and other levels of government, utility and infrastructure agencies, etc.) to facilitate community access to parks, trails, and recreation spaces on non-municipally owned sites. Consider developing a framework to improve connections to (and programming of) these spaces.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led.
55.	Update the parkland dedication requirements and related policies within the **City of Pickering's Official Plan and Parkland Conveyance By-law** to reflect the changes enacted through the *More Homes, Built Faster Act* (Bill 23) and related legislation, with further consideration of the recommendations within this Ten Year Plan. Consideration may also be given to developing a procedure establishing the guidelines and process for administering the Parkland Conveyance By-law.	✹			May be staff-led or require outside services. To be considered through Official Plan Review and related planning processes.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
56.	Establish policies surrounding **privately-owned public spaces (POPs) and strata parks**. While these spaces will generally be discouraged, they may be counted toward the parkland dedication requirement at the discretion of the City (with strata parks being accepted at a discounted rate). Appropriate legal agreements must be established to address park design and construction standards, public access, maintenance, etc. POPs are not appropriate in locations outside of mixed use areas.	✹			May be staff-led or require outside services. To be considered through Official Plan Review and development review processes.
57.	Establish clear **location and development guidelines** describing what constitutes acceptable parkland dedication from developers. These guidelines should consider restrictions for encumbered lands, hazards lands, steep slopes and unstable lands, environmentally protected lands, rights-of-way and easements, contaminated lands, etc. and be included within the Official Plan or parkland conveyance procedure.	✹			May be staff-led or require outside services. To be considered through Official Plan Review and development review processes.
58.	Adopt a **"Parkland First" approach** that prioritizes parkland conveyance over cash-in-lieu of parkland and privately-owned public spaces in order to address parkland requirements.	✹	✹	✹	To be considered through Official Plan Review and development review processes.
59.	Consider updating the City's **Community Benefits Charges Strategy and By-law** to include the consideration of parkland acquisition beyond the amounts available under the provisions of the *Planning Act*.	✹	✹		Consultant-led through CBC Strategy Update.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
60.	Utilize **alternative financial tools and other parkland acquisition approaches** beyond traditional land conveyance mechanisms as necessary to meet the City's parkland targets to 2034. The City is encouraged to actively pursue direct purchase of land in priority acquisition areas and unserviced land with future parkland potential.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice. Land costs to be determined on a site-specific basis.
61.	Clearly articulate the criteria that will be used to evaluate the acceptance of **cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication**.	✹			To be considered through Official Plan Review.
62.	Prioritize spending **parkland cash-in-lieu funds** on land acquisition, rather than capital improvements in parks.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice.
63.	Institute a program to **track the annual spending and allocation of cash-in-lieu funds** in keeping with *Planning Act* requirements (at least 60% of monies must be spent or allocated at the beginning of each year) and to evaluate the performance of this Ten Year Plan.	✹			Staff-led. Regulatory requirement.
64.	Conduct an assessment of cash-in-lieu of parkland **valuation processes and fees**, with the goal of ensuring that cash-in-lieu of parkland rates are reflective of local market conditions.	✹			May be staff-led or require outside services ($50,000).
65.	As opportunities arise, evaluate the potential to **secure and/or protect open space lands** that are outside the parks system and that provide important connections between parks, trails, and other public areas, having regard to the Official Plan and partner agency requirements.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice. Land costs to be determined on a site-specific basis.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
66.	Continue to maintain a commitment to **universal accessibility, safety, and comfort** within the City's parks and trails system by: a. Regularly consulting with the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee and ensuring compliance with the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**, recognizing that some parks and trails may include areas of natural terrain that are more difficult to access. b. Emphasizing the provision of amenities such as **washrooms, benches/seating areas, bike racks, and shade** (structures, tree canopy, etc.) in appropriate park types to address the needs of all age groups. c. Engaging qualified personnel to undertake a review of all parks and trails using **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles** to identify safety concerns relative to access, sightlines, etc.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice. Additional costs can be anticipated in order to implement AODA accessible public spaces standard, CPTED principles, and robust support amenities within parks.
67.	Continue to provide a **balance of active and passive spaces** within the parks system to support all-season recreation and sports, casual use and unstructured play, special events, and cultural activities.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice.
68.	Continue to support **outdoor education, stewardship, and climate change mitigation initiatives** through the open space system, such as tree plantings, naturalization efforts, community gardens, butterfly/pollinator parks, and adopt-a-park/trail programs, in conjunction with community partners.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice. Additional costs can be anticipated (to be determined through program development).

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
69.	Continue to initiate **park redevelopment projects** at key sites requiring renewal and evaluate park sites within or adjacent to high density mixed use areas for longer-term redevelopment. Park redevelopment projects should be identified in the City's long-term capital plan and include additional public and stakeholder consultation.	✹	✹	✹	May be staff-led or require outside services for design (approximately $25,000 to $50,000 per park for design, plus site-specific construction costs).
70.	Continue to **expand and connect the recreational trail network**. This includes planning trails within new community areas and working with partners to leverage public sites (such as utility rights-of-ways and other linear corridors) for trail use as appropriate. Improvements to the on-road cycling network should be guided by the City's Integrated Transportation Master Plan.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led. Additional costs can be anticipated (to be identified on a project-specific basis).
71.	Continue to **enhance the trail network** by installing and maintaining safety and comfort features – such as lighting, signage, seating, etc. – in appropriate locations and addressing the recommendations for a multi-use trail design and safety audit, wayfinding study and pilot project, and trails amenities plan within the City's Integrated Transportation Master Plan.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led. Additional costs can be anticipated (to be identified by Engineering Services on a project-specific basis).

Table 42: Recreation Service Delivery Recommendations

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
72.	Provide **targeted leadership courses** in aquatics, programs, and camps until appropriate staffing levels are achieved. Reach out to area school boards to assist in this endeavour.	✹			Staff-led. There will be a defined fiscal impact on foregone revenue for leadership training.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
73.	Establish strategies to assist not-for-profit community groups in the **recruitment, training, and retention of volunteers** to support community-led recreation and sport programming.	✹			Staff-led. There may be added costs to develop materials.
74.	Create objectives and strategies to enhance community capacity and increase access to recreation and parks services for residents through an **expanded community development model**.	✹			Staff-led. There may be added costs to develop materials and support groups.
75.	Regularly **review agreements with partners** to ensure an appropriate and sustainable distribution of operational and financial responsibilities.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led.
76.	Identify opportunities to enhance and grow **community partnerships** that increase the range of recreation, parks, sport, and community opportunities in support of future population growth.		✹		Staff-led. There may be added costs to support groups.
77.	Seek sponsorships and sustainable funding to reintroduce the **Swim to Survive** program for students and families (once staffing shortages are addressed). Place additional emphasis on the need for children and families to be safe in and around water.	✹	✹		Staff-led. Operating costs to be determined through program development.
78.	Develop an **Aquatic, Fitness and Program Strategy** that reflects current and future programming needs to identify the scope of future program needs and to maximize community resources.	✹			Consultant: $50,000.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
79.	Implement **quality assurance programs** in the delivery of service in recreation to reflect the quality and safe programming for all age groups. Some examples include: HIGH FIVE (Principles of Healthy Child Development and Active Aging), Youth Friendly Communities, Lifesaving Society Aquatic Safety Management program, etc.	✹			Staff-led. Operating costs to be determined through program development.
80.	Work to achieve an **85% fill rate** in all recreation services and programs (calculated as participation divided by capacity).	✹	✹		Staff-led.
81.	Promote **Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines** to encourage greater physical activity levels (frequency, intensity, and duration) in Pickering residents.	✹			Staff-led. There may be added costs to promote.
82.	Work with the Town of Ajax to develop **common principles in the allocation of community facilities** that are commonly used by organizations that operate across the West Durham area.	✹			Staff-led.
83.	Refine and expand the **Access to Recreation Policy** to include stabilized funding based on need, equity in the registration process, and other findings based on input from recipients.	✹			Staff-led. Fiscal impact to be determined.
84.	Conduct an audit of municipally-supported recreation and sport opportunities available to all genders and work to increase participation by **girls, women, and persons identifying as female or gender diverse**.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led, with resources from the Canadian Women in Sport Organization.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
85.	Consider the recommendations of the City's **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy** through the implementation of recreation and parks services including those related to key principles, representation, training, space design, guide/handbook, and performance metrics.	✹			Staff-led, with resources from the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities, the Canadian Centre for Diversity & Inclusion, and other municipalities.
86.	Develop a **Community Engagement Plan** to welcome and involve all residents in recreation and parks opportunities.	✹	✹		Staff-led.
87.	Work with the Aboriginal Sport Circle and IndigenACTION to discuss ways of collaborating with **Indigenous People** to reflect sport and recreation needs in Pickering.	✹	✹		Staff-led. There may be added costs to support groups.
88.	Ensure that all public spaces are **safe and welcoming spaces** for staff and users as outlined in the Safer Spaces Canada criteria.	✹	✹		Staff-led. There may be added costs for training (note: the Safe Zone Project is a free online resource).
89.	Articulate and seek Council approval for all **recreation and parks levels of service** in preparation for the need for expanded growth-related services. This work will entail working with a third-party to identify all services, how often and the standards to which they are delivered, resources required, and potential efficiencies.	✹			Consultant: $80,000 to $100,000
90.	Develop a **Ten-Year Staffing Plan** that reflects the approved levels of service and changes in service requirements (e.g., staffing levels, office space, etc.) due to the growth of the population.	✹	✹		Staff-led or consultant: $75,000

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
91.	Develop a **Staff Training and Development Continuum** that identifies the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies for each job type. This exercise should document current trends and developments that will keep staff performing at a high level and improve readiness for succession planning.	✹	✹		Staff-led (Human Resources). There may be added costs for training.
92.	Refine existing **performance metrics** and prepare a concise **annual report card** to reflect changes in participation rates, service delivery, volunteerism, utilization of public spaces, satisfaction levels, and other outcomes from recreation and parks participation.	✹			Staff-led.

Table 43: Implementation Recommendations

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
93.	Regularly **monitor progress of the Ten Year Plan**, including tracking of growth and demographic characteristics, activity patterns, facility usage, participation levels, trends, and completed recommendations.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led. Coordinate with all involved departments as appropriate.
94.	Ensure that planning for major capital projects includes meaningful **community engagement and feasibility studies** that validate building program and service requirements and are aligned with community needs, partnership opportunities, and financial capabilities.	✹	✹	✹	Project-specific. May be staff-led or require outside services.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
95.	Develop a **communications plan** following approval of the Ten Year Plan to create awareness about its key messages and recommendations amongst residents and stakeholders. Implement a system for the regular reporting of the plan, including an **annual report card** to the community.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led.
96.	Establish **annual work plans** to identify recommendations requiring implementation within the coming year. Work plans should identify departmental leads, partners, funding requirements and sources, etc.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led through annual budget process.
97.	Undertake a **comprehensive review and update** of the Ten Year Plan to begin no later than 2033. Timing may be accelerated based on the pace of implementation and changes within the community.			✹	Consultant: $200,000
98.	Use this **Ten Year Plan as a resource** in establishing the City's annual budget documents, capital forecasts, development and community benefits charges studies, secondary plans, and other related studies.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led. Coordinate with all involved departments as appropriate.
99.	Where appropriate and consistent with City policies and priorities, consider **alternative funding and cost-sharing approaches** such as (but not limited to) fundraising, grants, private-public partnerships, sponsorships, surcharges, capital reserve contributions, and various forms of collaboration to provide the best value to residents.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice.
100.	Assess and ensure that **operating budget implications** are identified and appropriately resourced prior to approving major capital projects.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice.

#	Recommendation	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10+ years	Costs / Implementation
101.	Foster **effective partnerships and co-location opportunities** with landowners and public agencies (e.g., public libraries, schools, etc.) that support the improvement, provision, and expansion of recreation, parks, and community facilities that address demonstrated needs.	✹	✹	✹	Staff-led / best practice.









City of
PICKERING

Appendix

Recreation & Parks

Ten Year Plan

2024 - 2034

City of Pickering
August 2024

mbpc
Monteith • Brown
planning consultants

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Appendix F: Types of Partnerships and Approaches to Evaluation

Appendix G: Description of Existing Park Type

Appendix H: Parkland Policy Background

Appendix A: Project Alignment

The following documents and studies were reviewed and integrated as appropriate into the analysis within this Ten Year Plan.

Sector / Provincial Documents

- Framework for Recreation in Canada
- Parks for All
- Ontario Culture Strategy
- Ontario Planning Act
- Provincial Policy Statement
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

City of Pickering Documents

- Corporate Strategic Plan (2023)
- Recreation and Parks Master Plan (2017)
- Skateboard Strategy (2017)
- Official Plan (Edition 9)
- Envision Durham Official Plan (2023)
- Development Charges Background Study (2022)
- Capital Budget (2023)
- Northeast Pickering Secondary Plan – Community Services and Facility Study (2023)
- Five-Year Accessibility Plan 2021-2025
- Cultural Strategic Plan (2014)
- Age Friendly Community Plan (2019)
- Integrated Transportation Master Plan (2021)
- Asset Management Plan (AMP) (2020)
- Community Safety & Wellbeing Plan (2023-draft)
- Public Art Plan (2023/2026)
- Corporate Energy Management Plan (2019-2024)
- Recreation User Fee Study (ongoing)
- Facilities Renewal Study (2024)
- Digital Strategy (ongoing)
- Community Tourism Plan (ongoing)
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (ongoing)
- Community Climate Adaptation Project (ongoing)

Appendix B: Trend and Best Practice Review

Below are several trends that are influencing the demand for and delivery of recreation and parks services in Canadian municipalities. Some of these trends have emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, while others have been affecting service provision for several years. These trends have been considered against other study inputs (such as public consultation and local usage levels) to inform the Plan's recommendations. Additional detail on each trend can be found in the Ten Year Plan's supporting materials (Interim Report #2).

General Participation Trends, Behaviours, and Policy Responses

- Promoting Health and Wellness
- Engaging the Aging Population
- Combating High Levels of Physical Inactivity
- Participating in Sport
- Growing Concerns over Affordability
- Meeting the Demand for Unstructured, Self-Directed Activities
- Encouraging Outdoor and Free Play
- Accommodating Emerging Activities
- Focusing on Inclusion and Access
- Improving Gender Equity and Women's Sports & Fitness
- Using Recreation and Parks to Support Indigenous Reconciliation
- Offering Safe Spaces for Marginalized Populations
- Sport Specialization and Long-term Player Development Models

Service Delivery Trends

- The Necessity of Partnerships
- Data, Technology and Digital Transformation
- Declining Volunteerism

Infrastructure Trends

- Rationalizing and Addressing Aging Infrastructure
- Designing Facilities to be Sport-Friendly
- Parks as Critical Outdoor Spaces
- Supporting Active Transportation
- Growing Emphasis on Neighbourhoods and Local Opportunities
- Increasing Focus on Environmental Design and Climate Change

Pandemic Impacts and Possible Future Implications

- Social Infrastructure is Vital to our Mental and Physical Health
- Parks Continue to be Appreciated and Well Used
- Virtual Programming has Emerged as an Option
- Many are Returning to Play, but Affordability is a Rising Concern
- Evolving Financial and Staffing Challenges

Appendix C: Analysis of Public Input

The following is a summary of public and stakeholder input received through the Ten Year Plan's community engagement program.

A1. Public Open Houses





Broad community input was sought through drop-in open houses, pop-up booths, and a community-wide survey (the latter is described in the next section).

Four **public open house sessions** (three in-person and one virtual) were held to engage interested residents, community partners, and user groups in the planning process. The open houses were available for all community members to attend. In total, over **210 participants** attended these sessions to discuss their ideas with the Consulting Team and City staff.

1. November 14, 2023 (Morning), Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex
2. November 15, 2023 (Afternoon), Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex
3. November 15, 2023 (Evening), Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex
4. November 28, 2023 (Evening), Virtual Consultation

These sessions were promoted through the City's website, email networks, roadside signs, posters in City facilities, social media accounts, and traditional media. The in-person events consisted of information boards detailing the scope and process, sticky notes on display boards, comment sheets, a priority polling station and child's voice drawing station to identify public priorities. The virtual session provided a presentation followed by a facilitated discussion and group chat for interactive feedback. In addition to these sessions, feedback provided by residents via the activation boards also contributed to public open house input.



Additionally, City staff used smaller versions of the open house displays to create awareness about the community survey and to engage community members throughout Pickering. Pop-up sessions were held at:

- Don Beer Arena
- Delaney & O'Brien Arenas
- East Shore Community Centre
- George Ashe Library and Community Centre
- Pickering GO Station
- Pickering City Centre (shopping centre)
- Special events, including Fall Fling and Winter Nights City Lights

Key Themes from the Open Houses

Common themes that emerged from Public Open house discussions, emails, display boards, comment sheets, and priority polling station are summarized below.

Summary of Feedback from Public Open House Display Boards

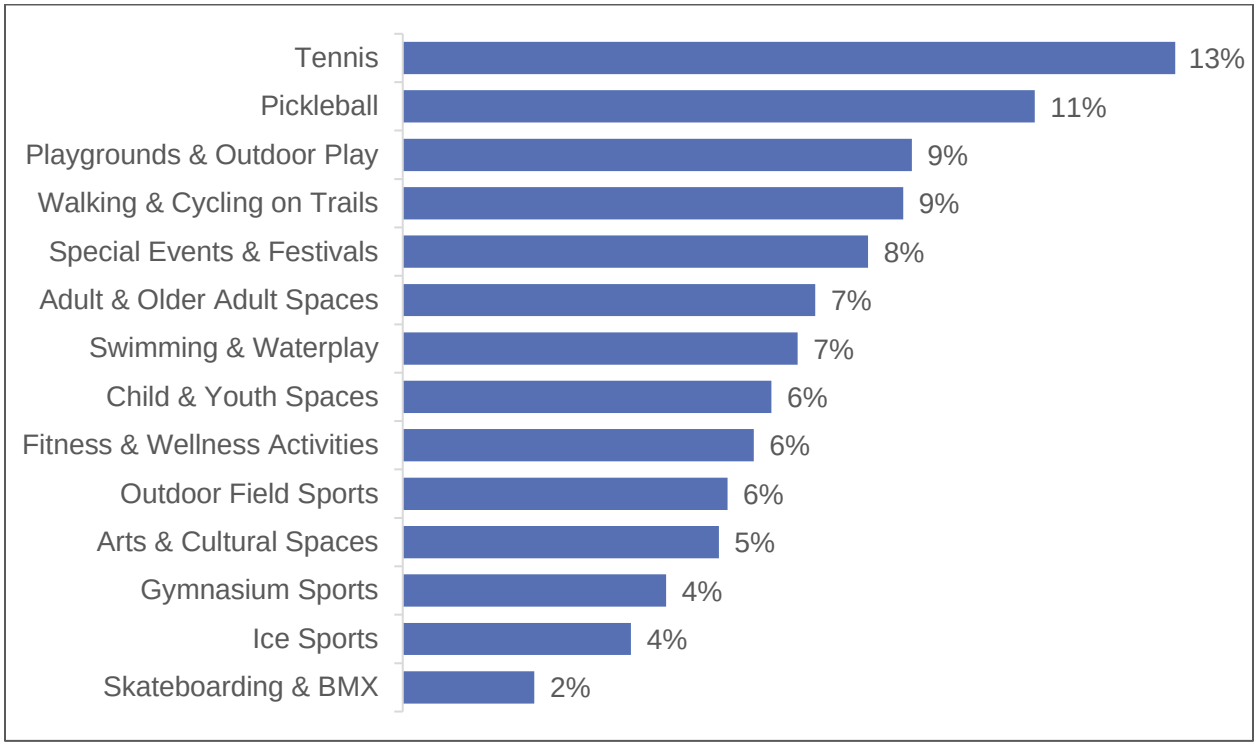
Requested Improvements or Additions	
Indoor Recreation	**Outdoor Recreation and Parks**
Swimming • Additional, larger, warmer pool (4) • Indoor slide, diving board (4) • More swim times (classes, public) (4) • Outdoor water play (i.e., splash pads) **Pickleball Courts** • Dedicated facility (indoor and /or outdoor) (6) **Additional Programming** • Parent classes, pottery and summer youth (3) • Evening and weekend options (2) **Improved changerooms and washrooms** • Better showers, hockey change rooms, working locks (3) • Accessible washrooms • Female only washrooms **Fees** • Better facility rental rates for residents • Reduced personal trainer rates • Free gymnastics	**Basketball Courts** • Accessible and safe courts across the city • Areas for teenagers to hangout • New courts in Seaton area **Environment** • Supporting trail connections (3) • Acknowledging conservation areas and wildlife spaces amongst the City's park locations • Pursuing environmental partnerships, events, and protecting native plants **Playgrounds** • More and bigger playgrounds (2) • Fun accessible playgrounds **Pickleball Courts** • Dedicated outdoor courts (3)

Requested Improvements or Additions	
Indoor Recreation	**Outdoor Recreation and Parks**
Sign-up • More capacity for programs with large waitlists (2) **Outreach** • Advertise facilities in the community, cross promote with other community services • Encourage more usage of high schools **Basketball Court / Gymnasium** • New basketball court (2) **Community Centre** • Providing larger facility in the core • Providing a new facility in Seaton **Racquetball Courts** • Maintaining existing courts (2) **Other Mentions** • Indoor playground, rock climbing wall (2), improving gym capacity, adding a concession to the recreation complex	**Skateboarding** • Facility near Whitevale Road and Brock Road • Facility in an allocated area to attract teenagers **Splash Pads** • Splash pads throughout Pickering (2) **Swimming** • Outdoor pool (2), possibly at Frenchman's Bay **Other Mentions** • Cricket fields (2), Outdoor rinks (2), Water park (2), Community gardens, Lawn bowling, Outdoor track
Sample Comments	
Indoor Recreation	**Outdoor Recreation and Parks**
"More options for swimming lessons to meet demand" "Dedicated indoor pickleball facility" "Better options for recreation programs on the weekend and in the evening" "Accessible washroom near sports clinic" "Eliminate paid parking at Waterfront" "Carry on with Century club program - to keep people motivated for exercise"	"Better playgrounds with splash pads" "Allocate areas for facilities that would attract teenagers such as basketball and skate boarding, too many youth hanging out in the mall" "We are fortunate to have some beautiful parks and open green areas in Pickering. These could be used to hosting city sponsored activities in the summer like yoga, meditation, and regular talks by experts on how the seniors can promote their physical and mental health and well-being."

Furthermore, through the interactive voting stations, open house attendees were asked to select amongst a series of recreation and parks facility activities to indicate which ones they wanted to see more of. Top priorities included:

- Tennis (13%)
- Pickleball (11%)
- Playgrounds & Outdoor Play (9%)
- Walking & Cycling on Trails (9%)
- Special Events & Festivals (8%)

Figure 18: Public Open House Poll Results – What Activities do you Want More of in Pickering? (n = 668)



Respondents also provided the following suggestions: racquetball (2), badminton, cricket, disc golf, dog areas, handball, and ping pong.

Key Themes from Engagement Boards

Three engagement boards were displayed at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex (CHDRC) and made available at other area facilities to interact with users and community members, asking the public questions about recreation and park strengths, potential improvements, and priorities. A total of **570 community members** interacted with the engagement board about key priorities.

Summary of Feedback from Engagement Boards

What improvements would you like to see for recreation and parks in the city?

The themes presented for question one include improving facilities, courts (volleyball), arenas, park washrooms, and the city's waterfront. There is a desire for more swimming lessons and art programming as well as the improvement of playgrounds and splash pads. Demand for new dog parks and improved bike lanes in the City are also apparent. Lastly, there is a want for more year-round City events.



What do you like best about City recreation and parks (facility, programs, or services)?

The themes present for question two are similar to the improvements from question one. Although community members believe there is a need for improvement in recreational facilities, residents still enjoy participating in programming and events hosted by the City. The sense of community that the City of Pickering provides can be seen through staff's interaction with the public and recreation users.

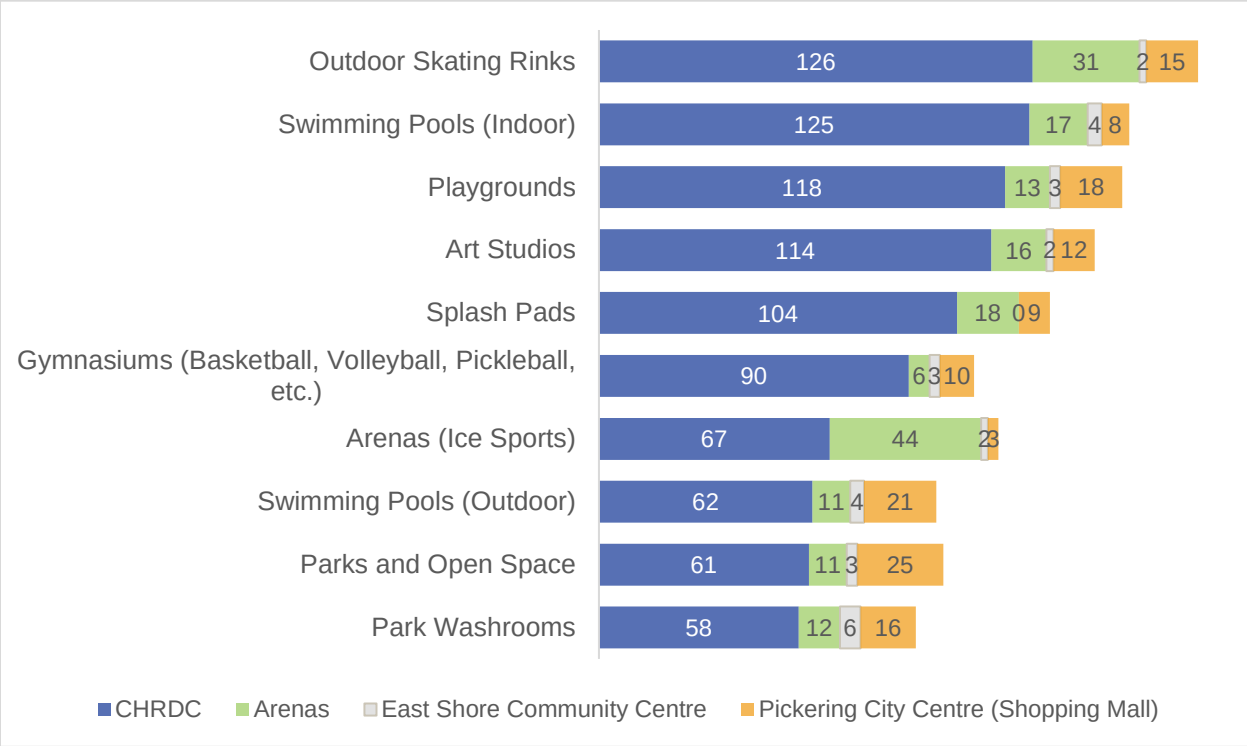


What are your top five priorities for our recreation and parks?

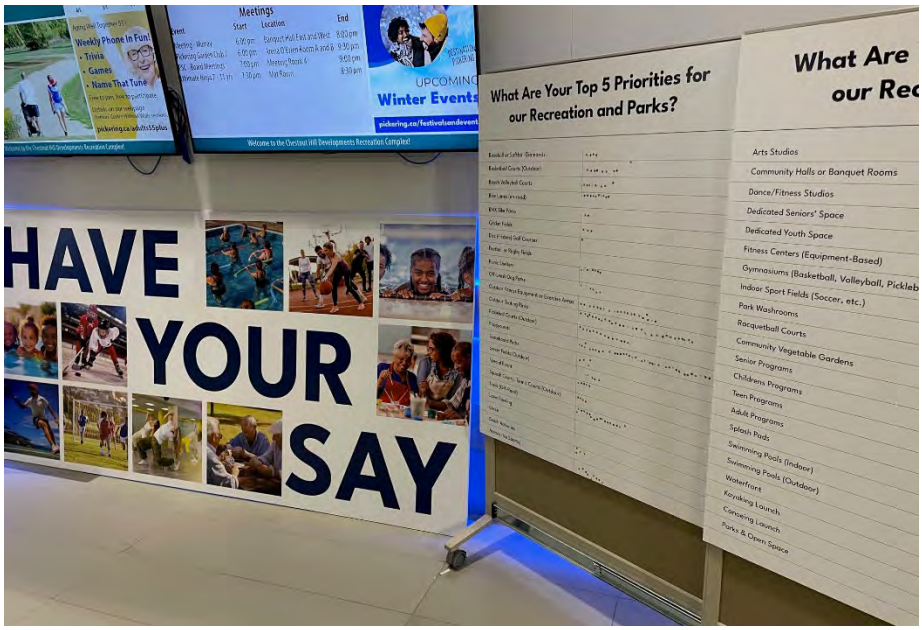
From gathering community members' priorities through a sticker-dot matrix, the graph on the following page illustrates that community members placed a priority on new or improved outdoor skating rinks, playgrounds, art studios, gymnasiums, park washrooms, children's programming, splash pads, indoor swimming pools, waterfront revitalization, and parks and open space. Community members' priorities generally align with their requests for improved recreation and parks amenities.



Key Facility Priorities from Engagement Boards



In comparison with the open house voting station (which focused on activities that residents want to see more of), opportunities for playgrounds and outdoor play were also highly ranked through the engagement boards.



A2. Community Survey

To support the development of this Ten Year Plan, the City of Pickering hosted an online community survey that was available from October 25, 2023 to December 7, 2023. The survey was promoted through a variety of means (e.g., email blasts, social media, traditional media, roadside signs, posters, etc.) and was available through the project website. hard copies were also made available at City facilities.

A total of **1,374 responses** (representing approximately **an estimated 4,500 person** residents) were received. The response rate is strong and – when combined with other consultation tactics and inputs – provides a solid basis for future planning. Being a voluntary, self-directed survey, response rates varied by question; response levels have been identified for each question (n=”x”) within the pages that follow.

The purpose of the community survey was to elicit information on the recreation and park preferences of Pickering residents. Specifically, the survey gathered information regarding: residency; participation rates in a variety of recreation and park activities and facilities; programs / activity gaps; facility priorities; opinions on various statements; preferred methods of communication; and demographics.

Participation

Participants identified the various types of recreational and park activities that they or members of their household have participated in the last 12 months. **The most common responses include passive activities such as walking or hiking on trails or outdoor tracks (82%), use of trails (52%), and picnicking or casual use of parks (42%).** Following these responses were many more active recreational and park activities such as fitness programs and classes (36%), indoor leisure swimming (35%), and use of playground equipment (35%).

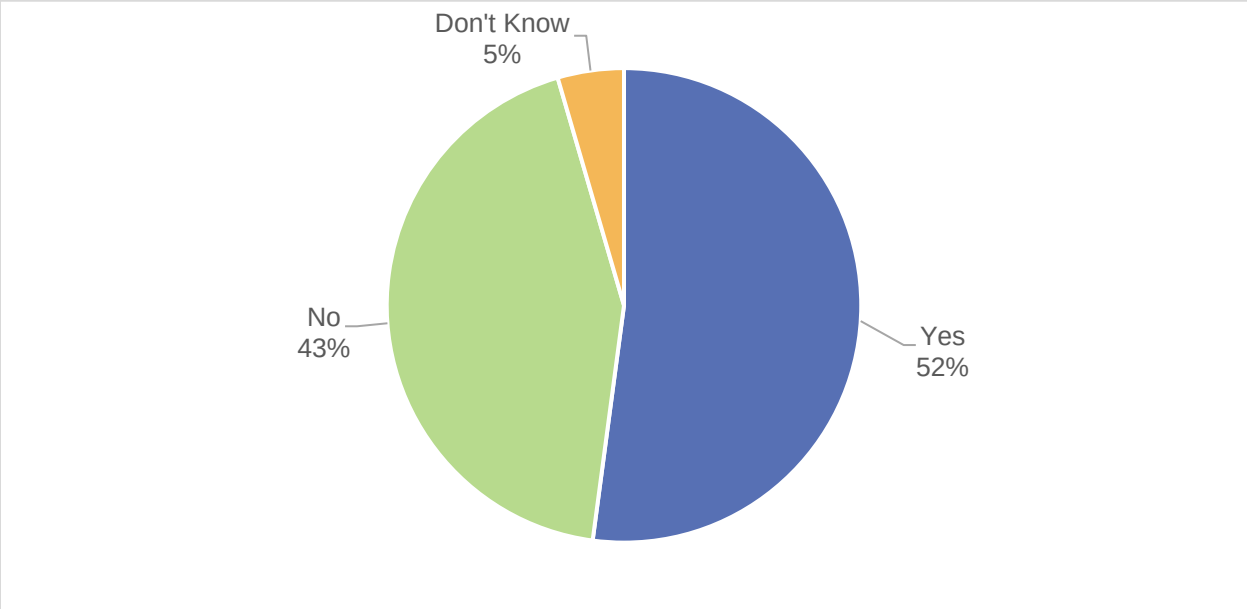
A chart showing the results of this question is contained in Section 3.2 of this report.

Participation profiles also resulted in the following observations:

- Respondents living in the rural areas north of Highway 407 (Claremont, etc.) are less likely to participate in leisure swimming and picnicking;
- Respondents living between Highway 407 and Finch Avenue (Seaton, etc.) are less likely to participate in pickleball;
- Respondents living south of Highway 401 are more likely to use trails (and cycle on them) and participate in beach and paddling activities; and
- Respondents that speak a language other than English and French at home are more likely to participate in leisure swimming and children’s programs (and participate in swimming outside of Pickering).

Over half (52%) of survey respondents identified that they are able to participate in recreational and park activities as often as they would like. Four-in-ten (43%) respondents identified that they are not able to participate as often as they would like.

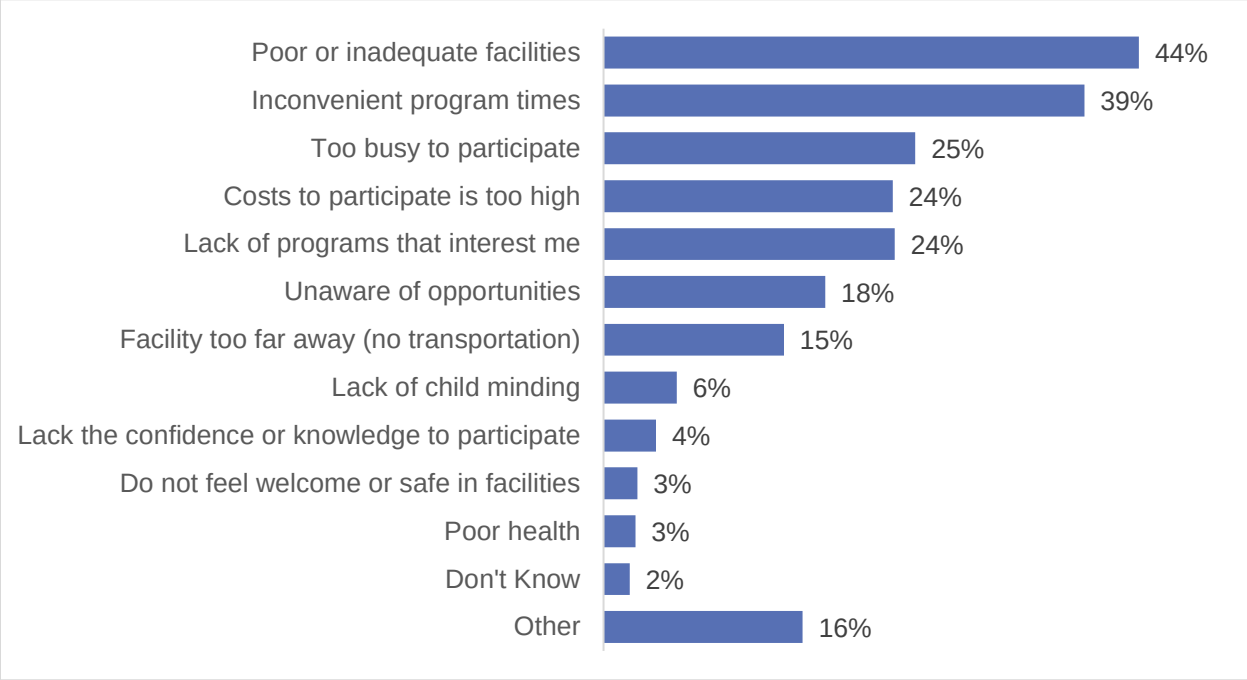
Are you or members of your household able to participate in recreational and park activities as often as you would like? (n=1374)



For those that do not participate as often as desired, the most common reasons included poor or inadequate facilities (44%), inconvenient program times (39%), too busy to participate (25%), cost to participate is too high (24%), and lack of programs that interest me (24%).

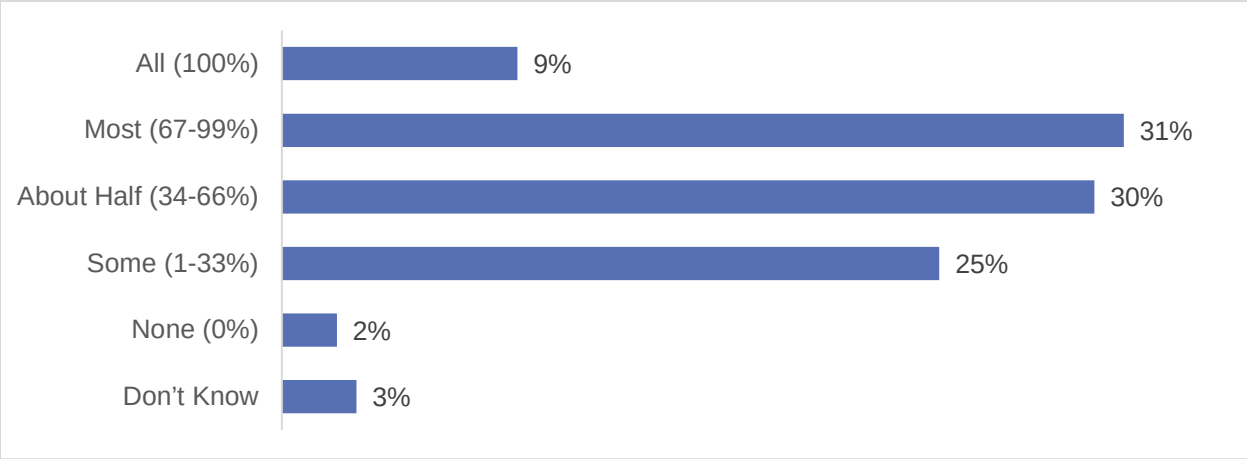
It was also found that respondents living in the rural areas north of Highway 407 (Claremont, etc.) are more likely to indicate that they cannot participate in recreation and park activities as often as they would like. Respondents identifying as a person with a disability and those that speak a language other than English and French at home are more likely to indicate that costs are a barrier to participation.

If not, what are the top reasons preventing you and your household from participating as often as you would like? (Multiple responses) (n=655)



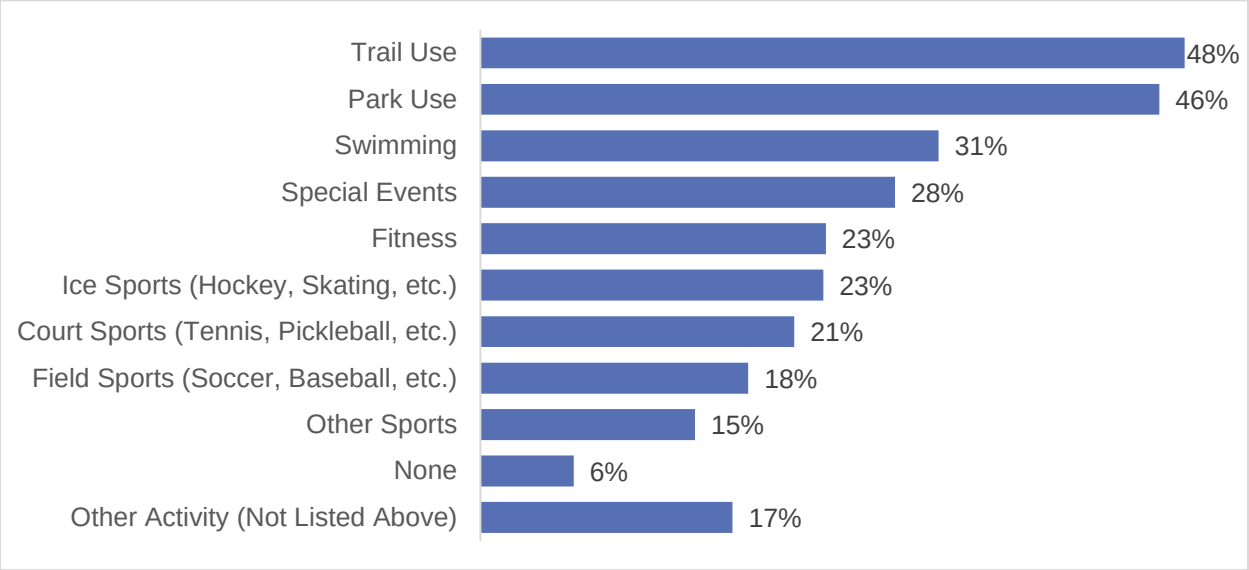
Two-fifths (40%) of survey respondents indicated that "all" or "most" of their recreation and parks needs are met within Pickering. Conversely, 27% indicate that only "some" or "none" of their needs are met locally.

Generally, what percentage of your household's recreational and parks needs are met within Pickering? (n=963)



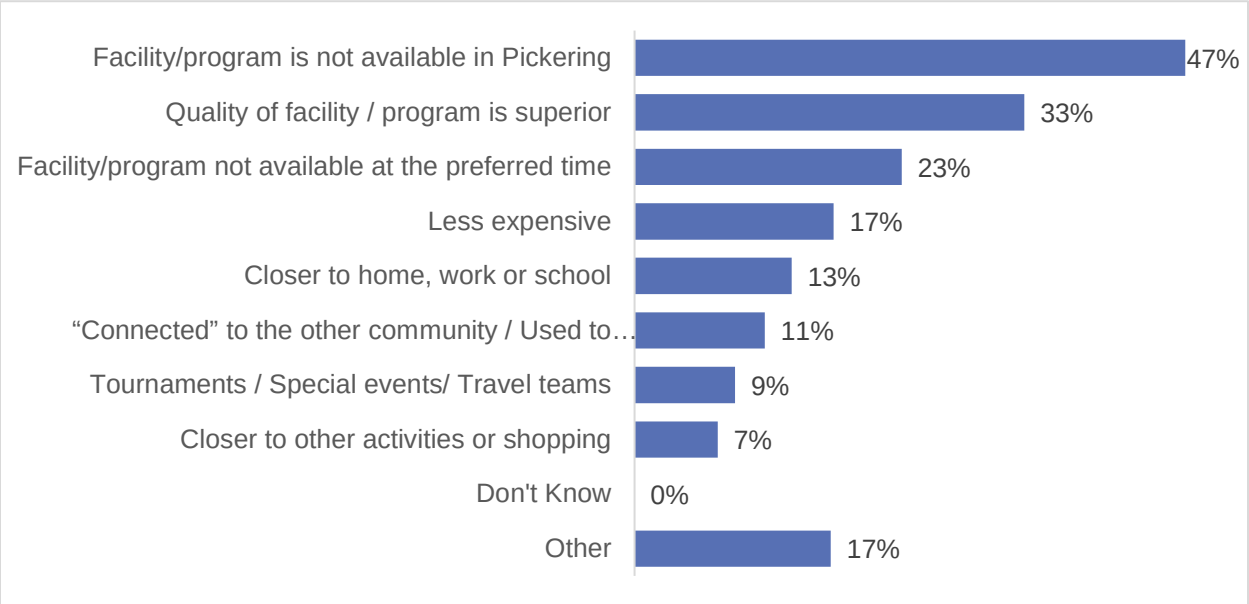
Most (88%) of survey respondents have a portion of their recreational and park activities met elsewhere outside of Pickering. Common responses for the types of needs met elsewhere include trail use (48%), park use (46%), swimming (31%), and special events (28%). Respondents living north of Finch Avenue (Claremont, Seaton, etc.) are more likely to participate in recreation and park activities outside of Pickering.

If a portion of your needs are met elsewhere, what recreational and park activities do you or members of your household participate in outside of Pickering? (n=1218)



Half (47%) of survey respondents participate in recreation and parks activities outside of Pickering due to their desired facility or program not being available in the City. Other common responses include the quality of facilities or programs being superior to what is available in Pickering (33%), facility or program is not available at their preferred time (23%), and the activity being less expensive elsewhere (17%). These indicate areas where the City can focus improvements to encourage residents to use local facilities rather than travelling to other municipalities.

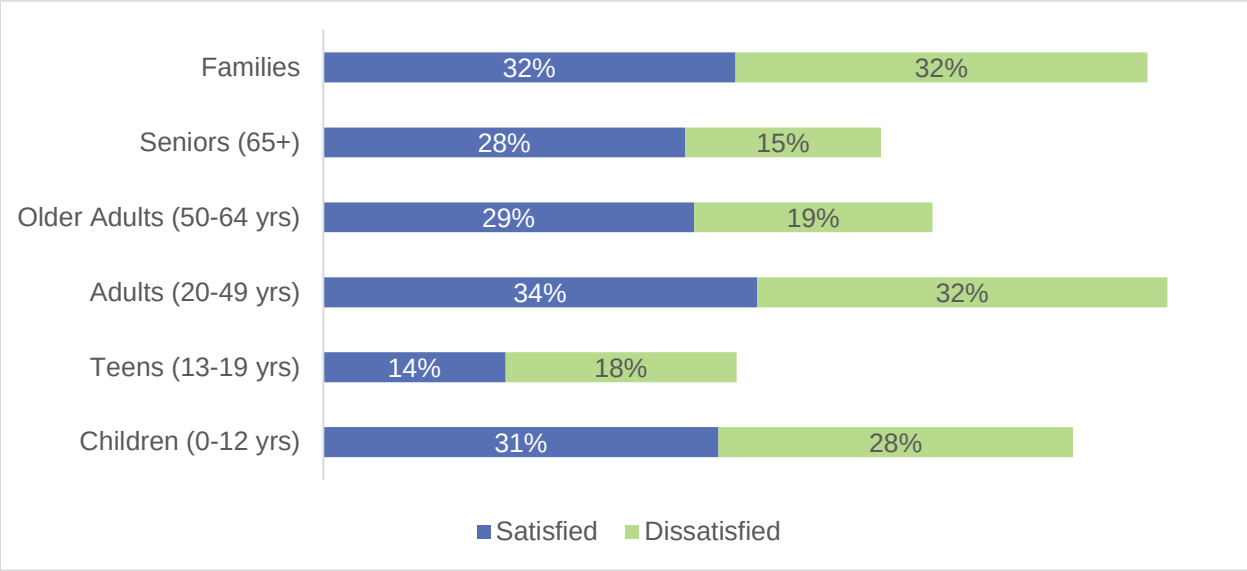
Why does your household participate in these activities outside of Pickering? (Multiple responses) (n=1120)



Programs/Activity Gaps

Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with the available recreational programs and activities for different age groups. The age groups that generally had an even distribution of satisfaction/dissatisfaction were families, adults, and children. Seniors and older adults were generally more satisfied than dissatisfied with programs and activities. **The age group that was more dissatisfied than satisfied were teens, suggesting that this may be an area of future focus for the City (the youth survey provides more information on this topic).**

In general, please rate how satisfied you are with the recreational programs and activities available in Pickering to the following age groups (n=987-1068)

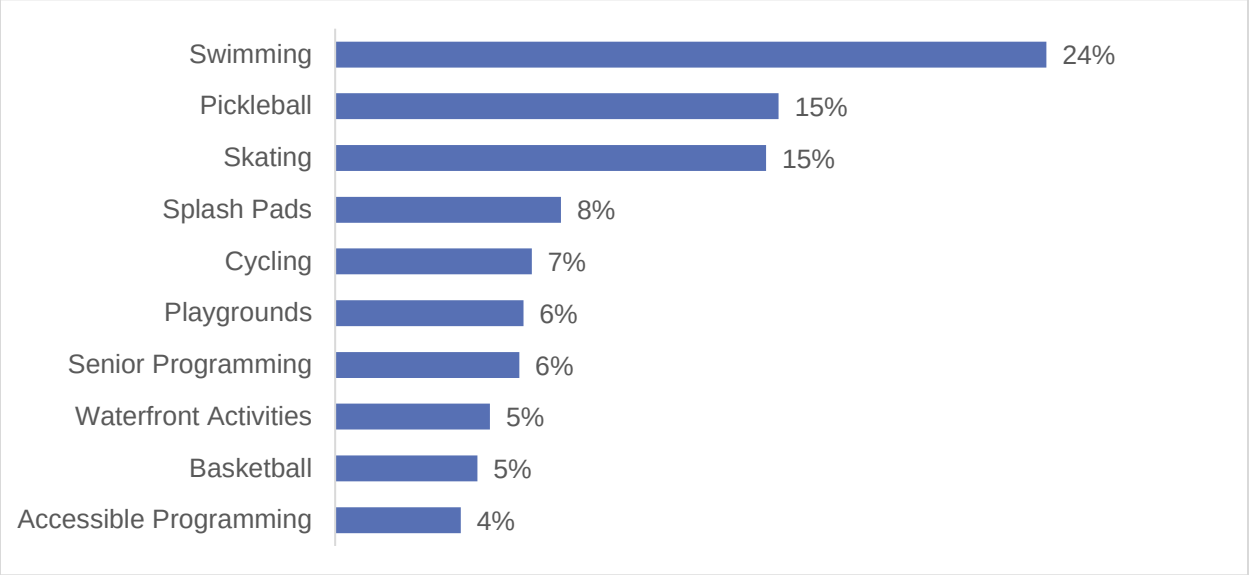


Note: “Don’t Know” responses not shown.

Respondents living north of Finch Avenue (Claremont, Seaton, etc.) and those that speak a language other than English and French at home are more likely to be dissatisfied with recreation program and activity options for children and youth, as well as festivals and events provided by the City. Respondents living north of Highway 407 (including Claremont) are more likely to be dissatisfied with options for older adults and seniors.

Over half (57%) of survey respondents would like to see additional recreational and park activities or programs that are not currently available in Pickering. Nearly one-in-four (24%) suggested they would like to see more swimming offered in Pickering, followed by pickleball (15%), skating (15%), splash pads (8%), and cycling (7%).

What recreational and park activities or programs would you like to see offered in Pickering? (Open-ended) (n=704)



Facility Priorities

Survey respondents were asked whether they oppose or support the City spending additional funds to provide more of a variety of facility types in Pickering. **The most supported facilities for added investment** include:

- Playgrounds (81%)
- Informal spaces in parks for picnics and free play (80%)
- Trails (79%)
- Indoor swimming pools (77%)
- Splash pads (76%)
- Outdoor skating rinks (75%)
- Dedicated youth space (73%)
- Dedicated seniors' space (72%)
- Gymnasiums (72%)

The least amount of support was expressed for more specialized or niche facilities, such as squash and racquetball courts, disc golf, BMX parks, and cricket, football and rugby fields.

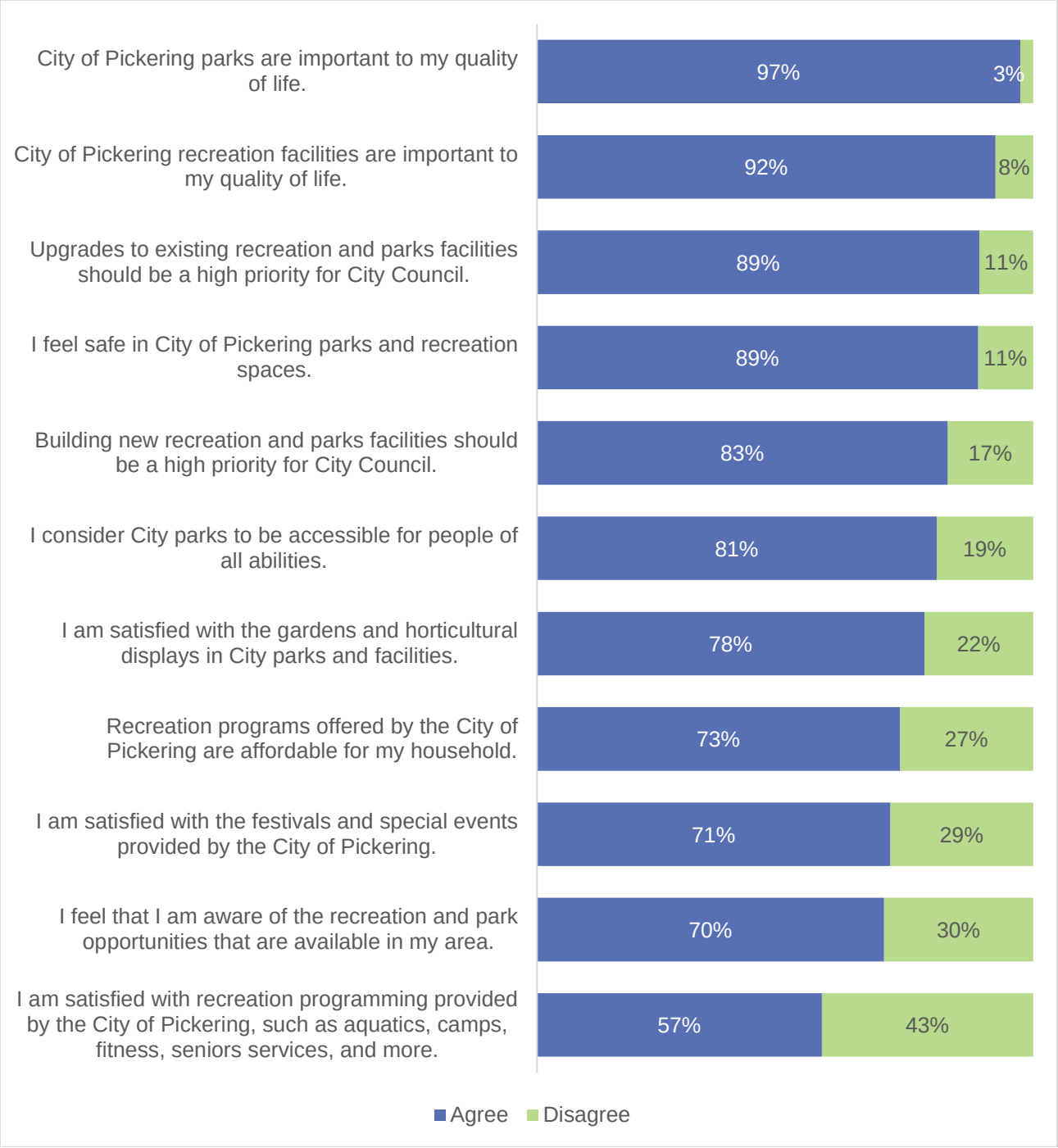
Respondents living in the rural areas north of Highway 407 (Claremont, etc.) are more likely to support investment in outdoor pickleball courts and BMX bike parks. Respondents that speak a language other than English and French at home are less likely to support investment in ball diamonds, BMX bike parks, off-leash dog areas, and outdoor pickleball courts.

A chart showing the results of this question is contained in Section 3.2 of this report.

Statements

A variety of statements were provided to survey respondents to determine their level of agreement.

Please share your level of agreement with the following statements. (n=1163-1201)



Note: “Don’t Know” responses removed and remaining values recalculated.

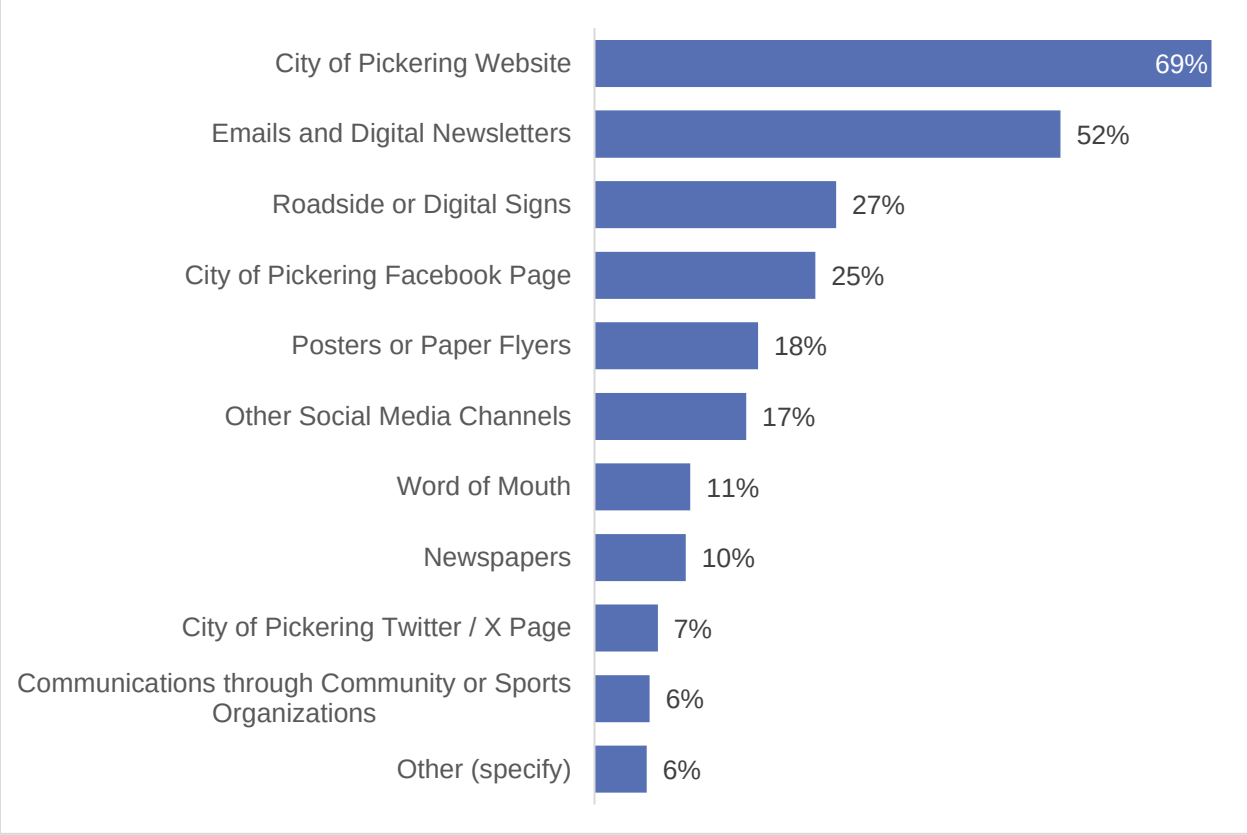
The most agreed upon statement (97%) was “City of Pickering parks are important to my quality of life”; similarly, 92% agreed that “City of Pickering recreation facilities are important to my quality of life”.

Conversely, over two-fifths (43%) of respondents disagreed with the statement “I am satisfied with recreation programming provided by the City of Pickering, such as aquatics, camps, fitness, senior services, and more”. Also of note, 27% disagreed with the statement that “Recreation programs offered by the City of Pickering are affordable for my household”.

Communication

Preferred methods of communication to learn about City of Pickering events, programs, and activities include the City of Pickering website (69%), emails and digital newsletters (52%), roadside or digital signs (27%), and the City of Pickering Facebook page (25%).

What are your preferred methods of learning about City of Pickering events, programs, and activities? (Multiple responses) (n=1211)



Additional Comments

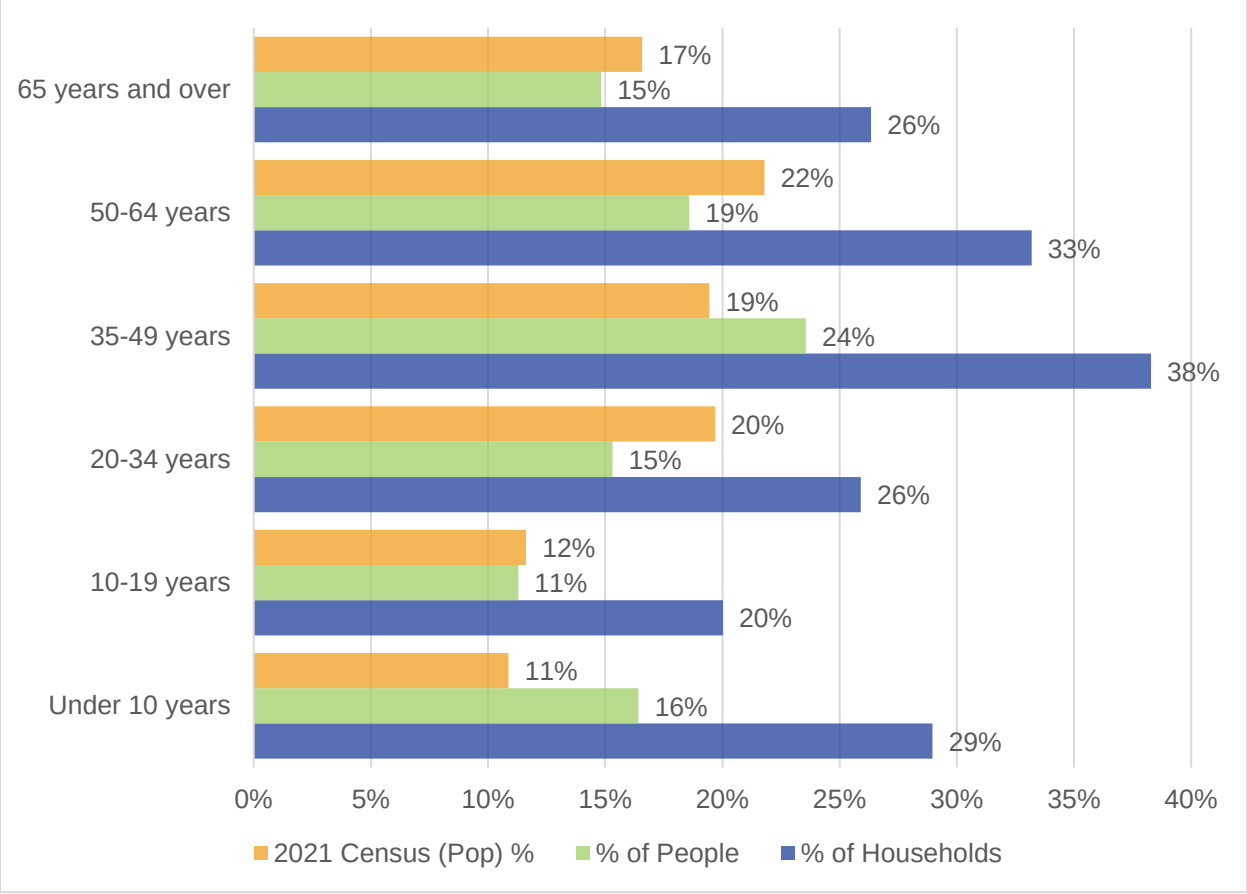
An open-ended response allowed for survey respondents to further share their ideas or comments. Common topics of discussion involved fees (10%), accessible/available programs (9%), improved outdoor facilities (8%), pickleball (6%), and a new recreation facility (6%).

Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

Demographic information was collected from survey respondents to gain a better understanding of who participated. The survey represents an estimated 4,500 people in responding households, for an average of 3.3 persons per household.

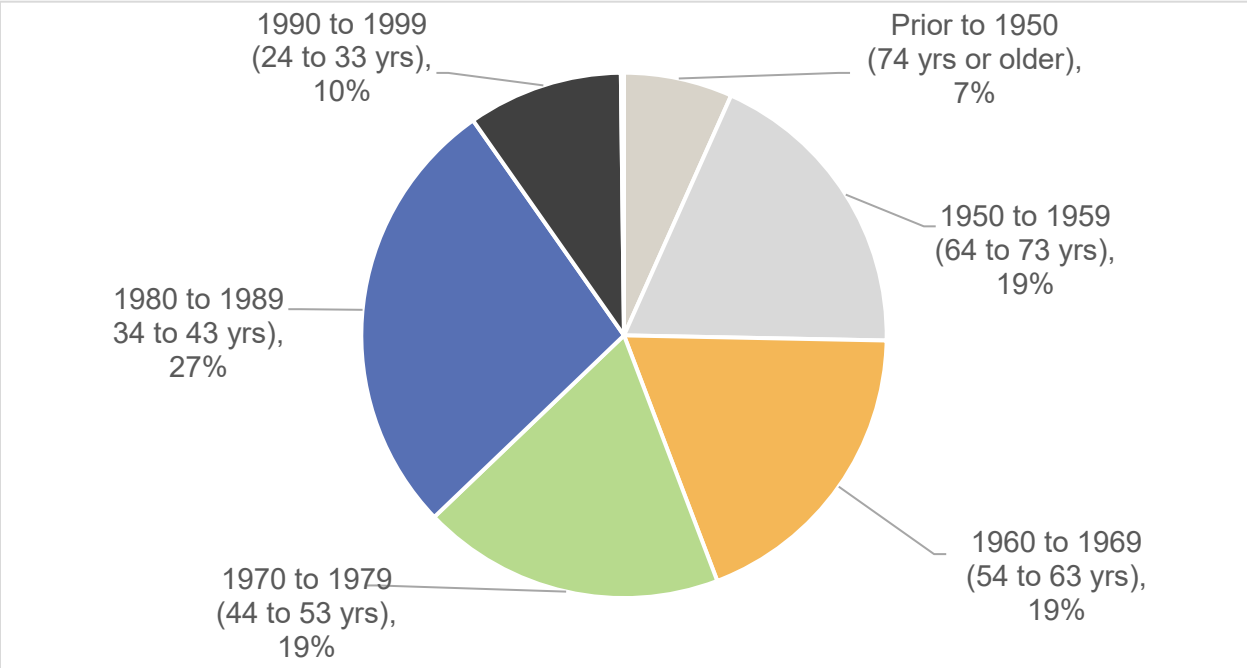
As is typical in surveys of this type, families with young children are somewhat over-represented in the survey, while young adults are somewhat under-represented. There was a very good response rate from older adults and seniors, indicating strong interest in the topics amongst these age groups. It should be noted that input from youth was also specifically sought through a separate survey and related tactics.

Including yourself, what is the total number of persons within your household that fall into the following age categories? (n=1142)



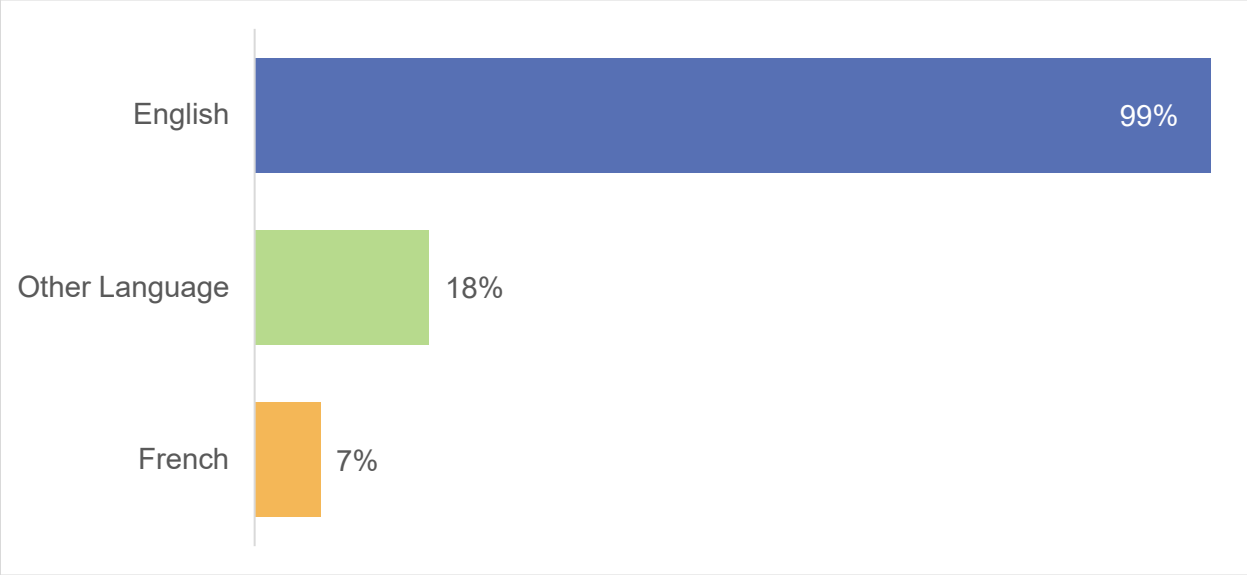
The average age of survey respondents was 53 years (1970 birth year).

In what year were you born? (n=1048)



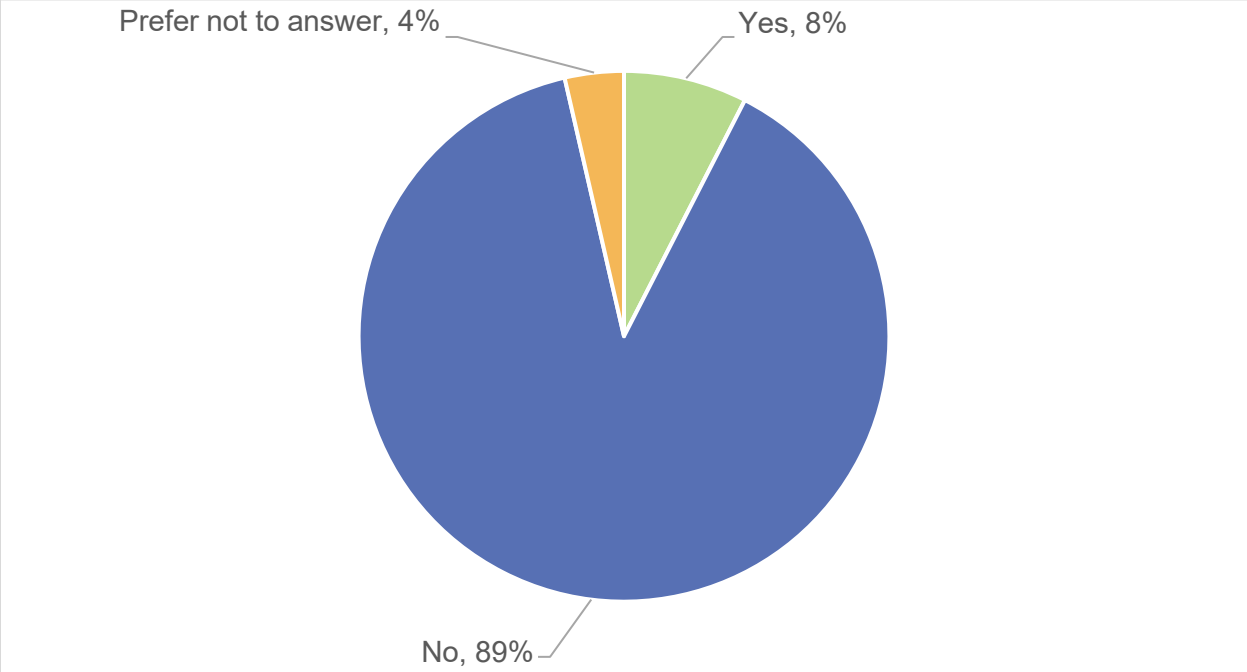
The most commonly spoken language in responding households is English (99%), which is not a surprising finding given that the survey was provided in English only. Of interest, however, is that 18% of responding households also speak a language other than English or French at home.

What languages are spoken in your household? (n=1171)



8% of participants identified themselves as a person with a disability.

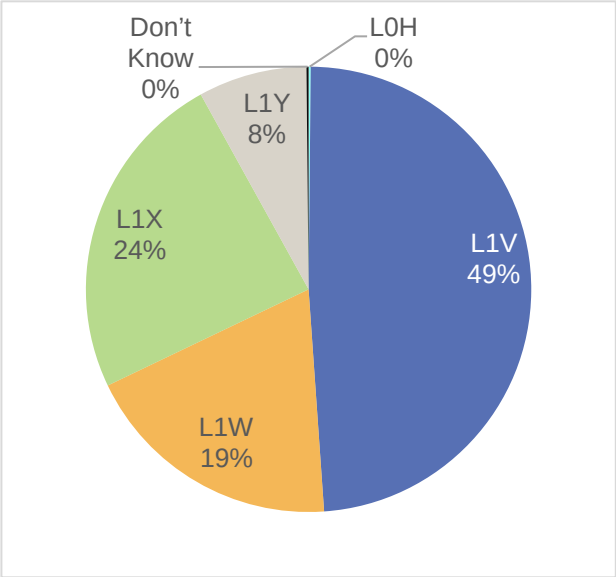
Do you identify as a person with a disability? (n=1168)



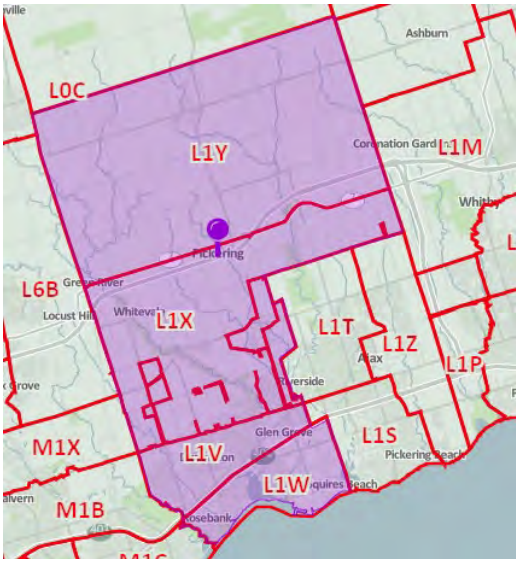
95% of respondents live in the City of Pickering. The remaining 5% who responded live outside the City of Pickering in adjacent areas including Ajax (2.4%), Scarborough (0.8%), and Whitby (0.7%).

Almost half (49%) of survey respondents identified their postal code as beginning with L1V which is the area generally between Highway 401 and Finch Avenue. This is followed by 24% of survey respondents with the postal code L1X (North of Finch Avenue [Seaton, etc.]), and 19% with the postal code L1W (South of Highway 401). A small number of residents in the L0H postal code area (Rural) were represented through the survey. Residents with the postal code L1Y (Claremont and area) were over-represented by 5% compared to Canada Post forward sortation areas.

If living in Pickering, what are the first three characters of your postal code? (n=1305)



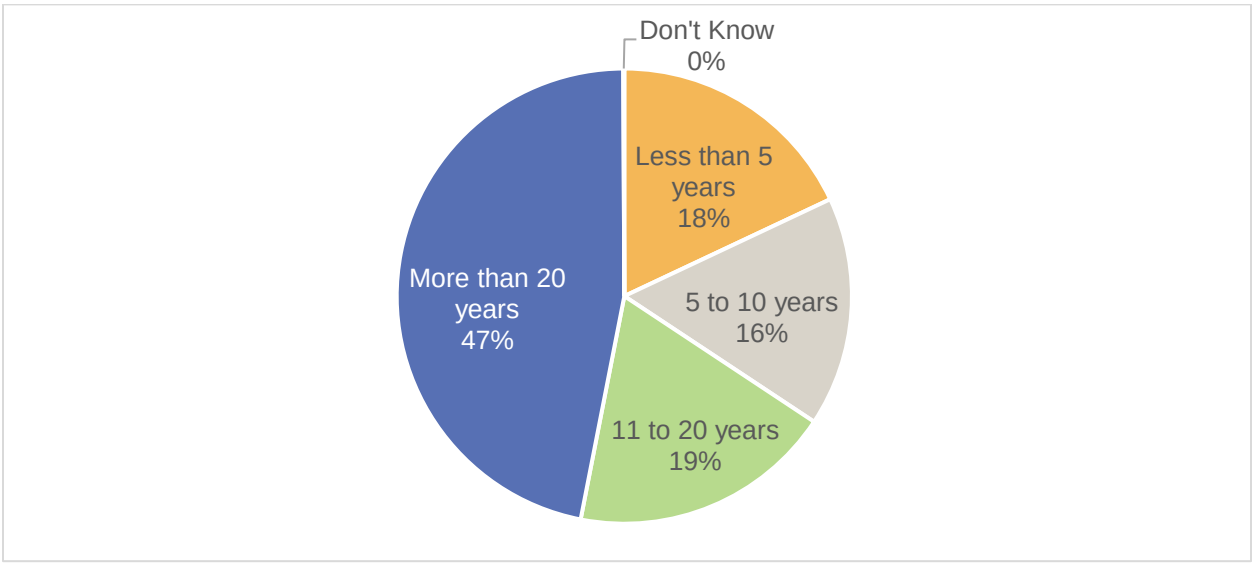
Forward Sortation Areas (FSAs) in Pickering



Source: Canada Post

Almost half (47%) of survey respondents living in Pickering have lived locally for more than 20 years. Conversely, one-fifth (18%) of survey respondents are generally newcomers to the area, having lived in Pickering for less than 5 years.

How long have you lived in Pickering? (n=1300)



A3. Youth Engagement

Youth engagement is crucial in the development of the Ten Year Plan. As youth are one of the largest user populations for the City, it is essential to understand their priorities for improving recreation and parks for Pickering.

The City of Pickering conducted youth engagement consultations through several classroom presentations and dot-mocracy exercises at Pine Ridge S.S., Dunbarton S.S., St. Mary C.S.S., and various elementary schools. Additionally, an online youth survey was promoted by the City to engage students. A focus group session was also held with members of PACT4Teens (Pickering Activity Council for Teens) and the City of Pickering's Central Library TAG (Teen Advisory Group).

The key findings from the survey are summarized below.

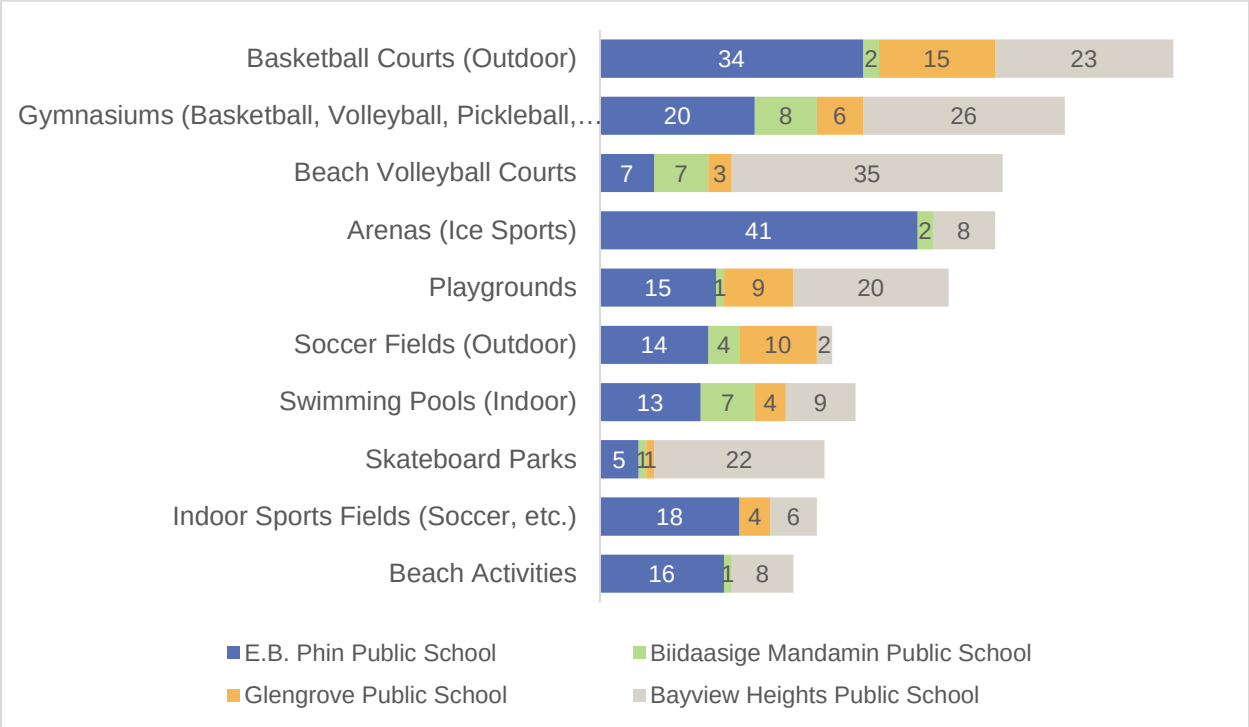
In-school Consultations

In-school Youth Consultation Methodology

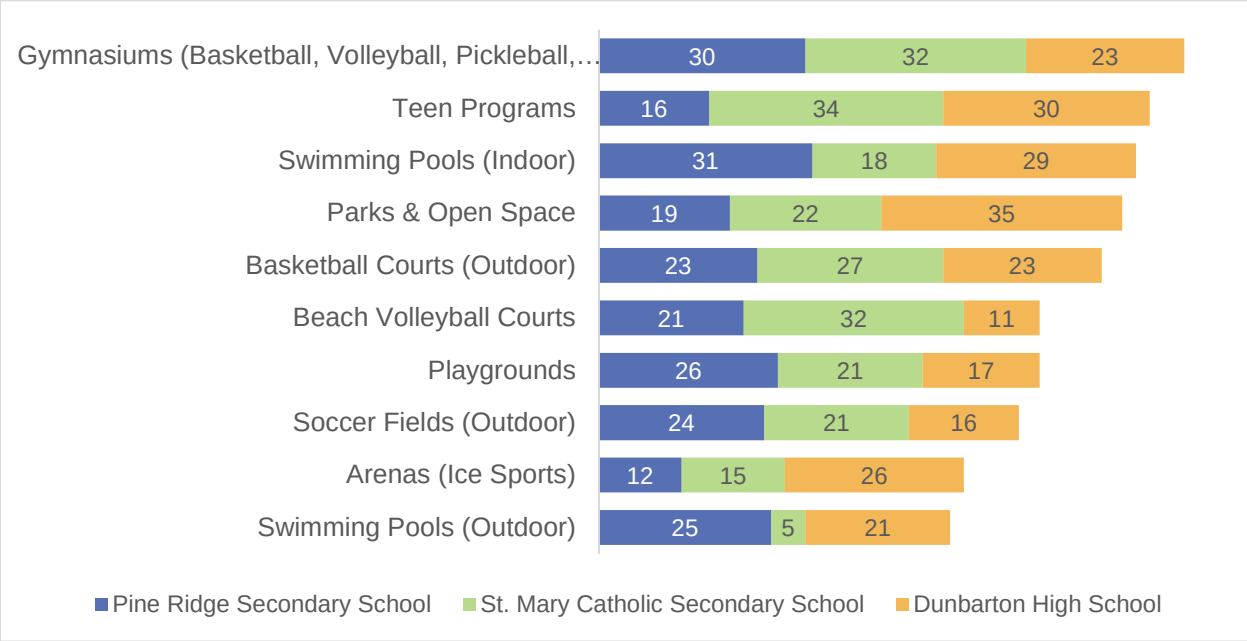
Tactic	Description
Student Leadership Team	City staff worked with student leadership teams at Pine Ridge S.S. to administer surveys to their peers during lunch hour and gain feedback for the plan. The leadership team also promoted participation in the priority dot-matrix exercise to students.
Classroom Presentations	City staff designed presentations to focus on strategic planning and the importance of long-term planning in a community and personal context. Students learned community engagement skills, strategic planning, the importance of civic participation, and lastly, the decision-making process and how their input impacts the development of our community. Students completed the youth survey and participated in an interactive priority dot-mocracy exercise as part of the presentation.
Elementary School – Grades 7 & 8	Interactions with elementary schools consisted of presenting in school classrooms with a brief overview of the project and articulating the importance of their feedback in the planning process for their community. With City staff's guidance, students could complete a city-wide youth survey and participate in the interactive priority dot-matrix exercise.

Smaller versions of the engagement boards were taken to pop-ups at local Pickering elementary schools and secondary/high schools. Around 800 youth participated in this activity. The following graphs below show the top 10 priorities for both levels of schooling. It is evident that youth community members' priorities are for recreational facilities and programming.

Facility Priorities – Elementary School and Result (top ten)



Facility Priorities – Secondary/Highschool and Result (top ten)



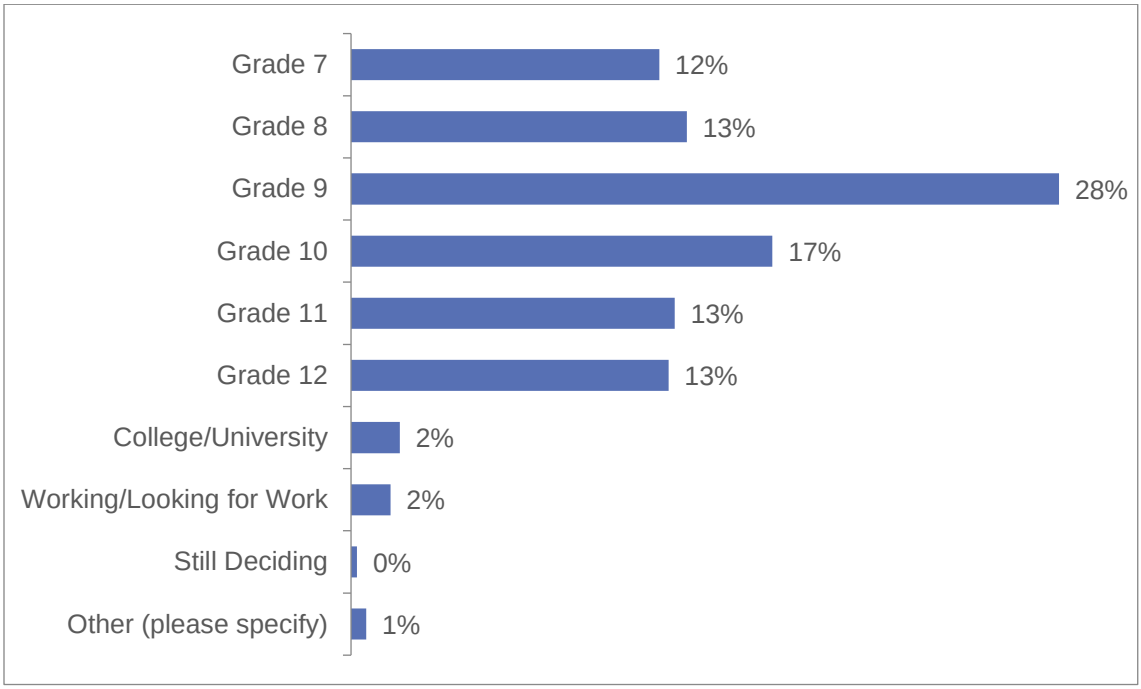
Youth Survey

The youth survey was open to community members between 12 and 24 years of age, and achieved 827 online survey submissions. This survey was modelled off the community survey, but included some youth-specific questions. By undertaking youth

consultations at local schools in Pickering and promoting the survey across the community, City staff were able to engage youth and gain an immense amount of feedback for the plan.

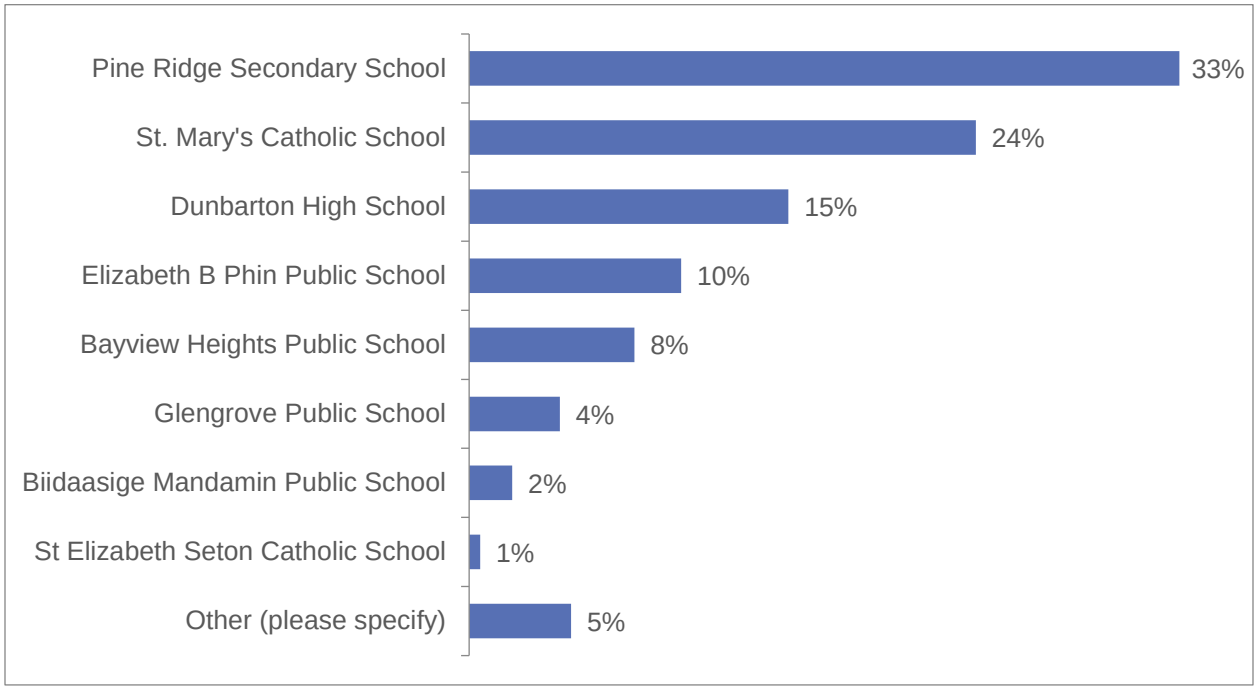
Information regarding the grades of respondents and the schools they attend was collected to gain a better understanding of who participated. The majority of the surveys' respondents were in grades 7 to 12, with Grade 9 (28%) having the highest representation.

What Grade are you in? (n=827)



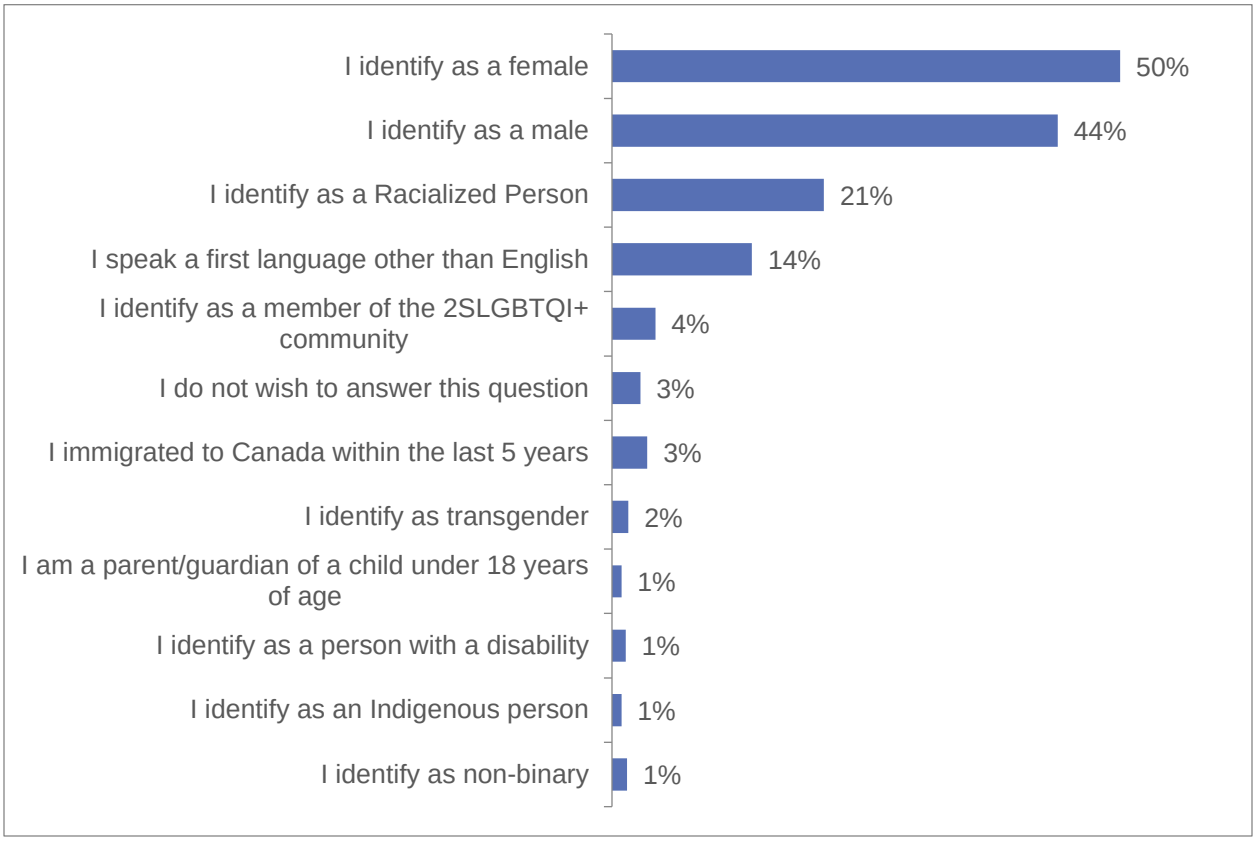
One-third (33%) of respondents attended Pine Ridge Secondary School, followed by St. Mary's Catholic School (24%), Dunbarton High School (15%), Elizabeth B Phin Public School (10%), and Bayview Heights Public School (8%).

Which School do you attend? (n=783)



One-in-two (50%) indicated they identify as a female, whereas 44% indicated they identify as a male, 2% indicated they identify as transgender, and 1% indicated they identify as non-binary. Additionally, 21% indicated they identify as a Racialized Person and 14% indicated they speak a first language other than English.

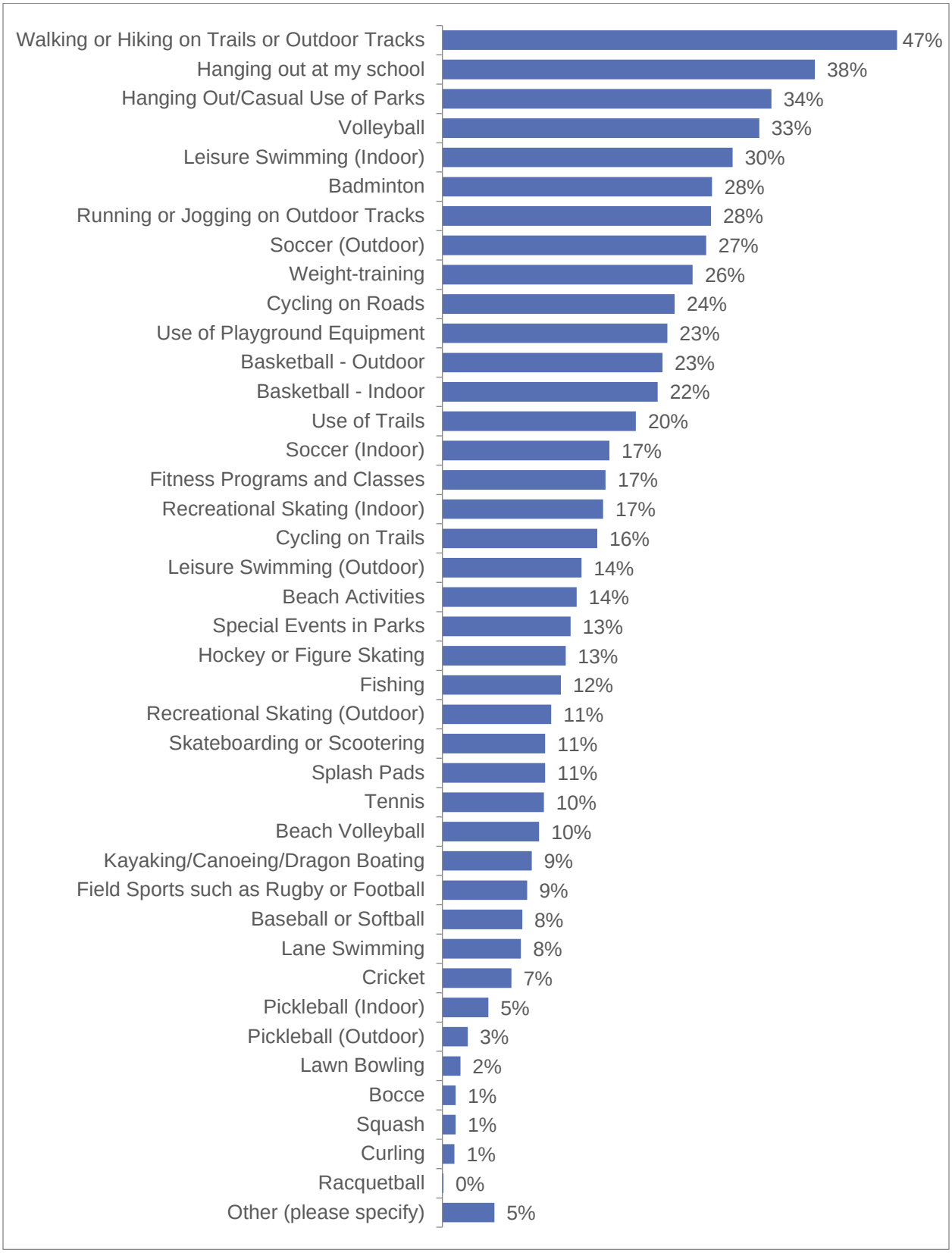
Tell us a bit about yourself (n=749)



Respondents identified the various types of recreational and park activities that they have participated in the last 12 months. The most common responses include passive activities such as walking or hiking on trails or outdoor tracks (47%), hanging out at my school (38%), hanging out/casual use of parks (34%), and leisure swimming (indoor) (30%). Volleyball (33%) was also amongst the top five responses, representing a more organized recreation activity.

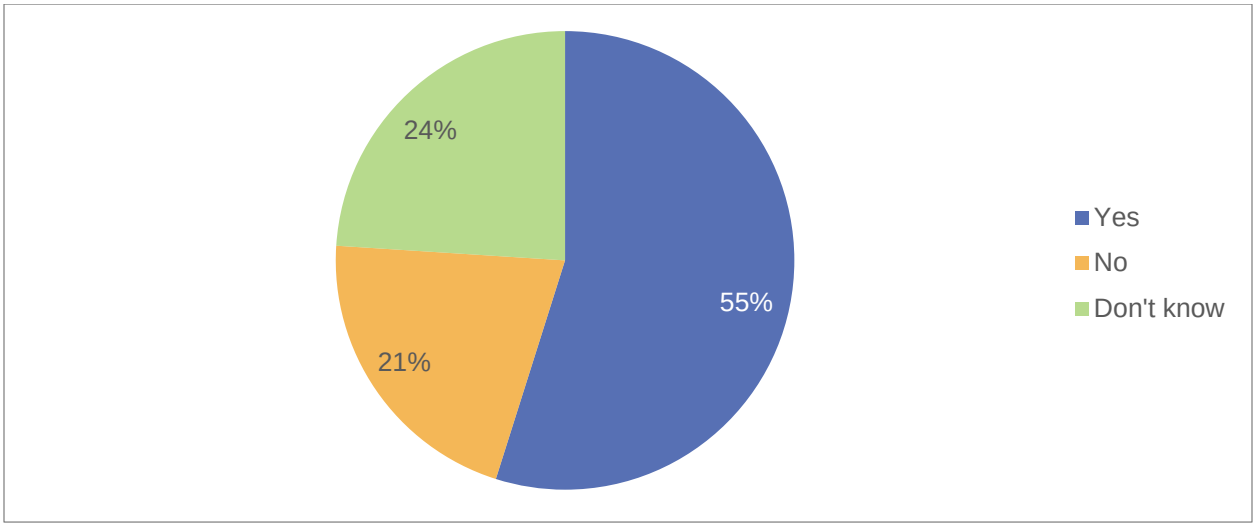
Walking or hiking on trails or outdoor tracks was also the most common response on the community survey, as were passive and unstructured activities such as use of trails, and picnicking or casual use of parks. furthermore, participation rates for most active sports (aside from Pickleball) were higher on the youth survey.

During the last 12 months, please indicate the types of recreational or park activities that you have participated in. (Select all that apply). (n=801)



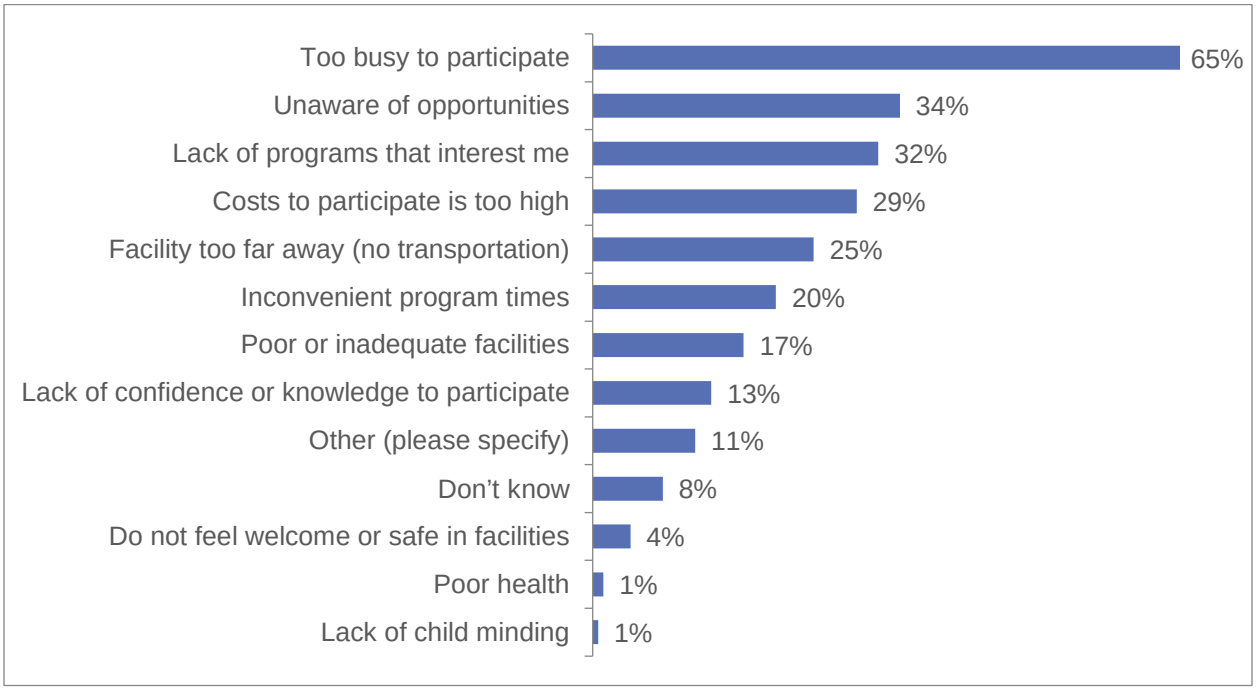
Over one-half (55%) of students identified that they are able to participate in recreational and park activities as often as they would like. One-in-five (21%) identified that they are not able to participate as often as they would like.

Are you able to participate in recreational and park activities as often as you would like? (n=809)



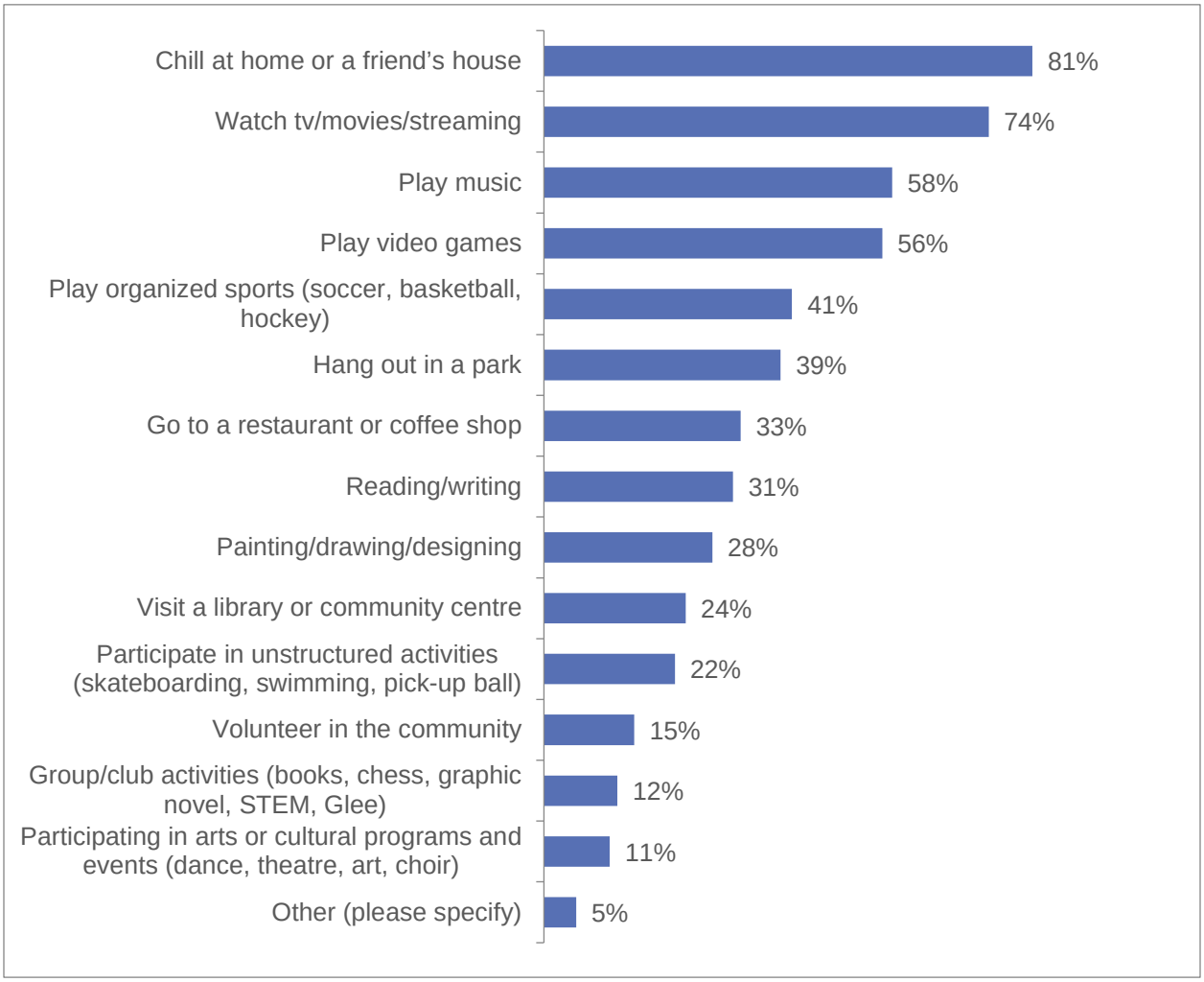
The top reasons identified to be preventing youth from participating as often they would like included too busy to participate (65%), unaware of opportunities (34%), lack of programs that interest me (32%), costs to participate is too high (29%), and facility too far away (no transportation) (25%).

What are the top reasons preventing you from participating as often as you would like, if any? (Select up to three responses) (n=167)



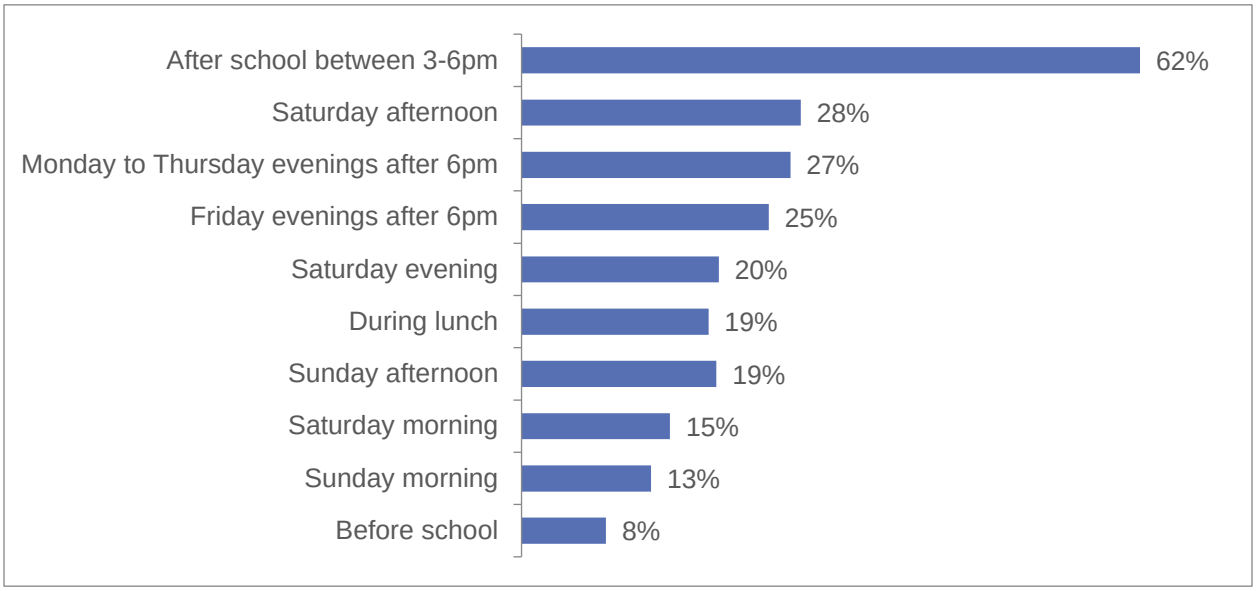
Respondents identified what they like to do in their free time. Responses were led by less active types of activities such as chilling at home or a friend's house (81%), watching tv/movies/streaming (74%), playing music (58%) and video games (56%), proceeded by playing organized sports (soccer, basketball, hockey) (41%).

What do you like to do in your free time? (Select all that apply) (n=787)



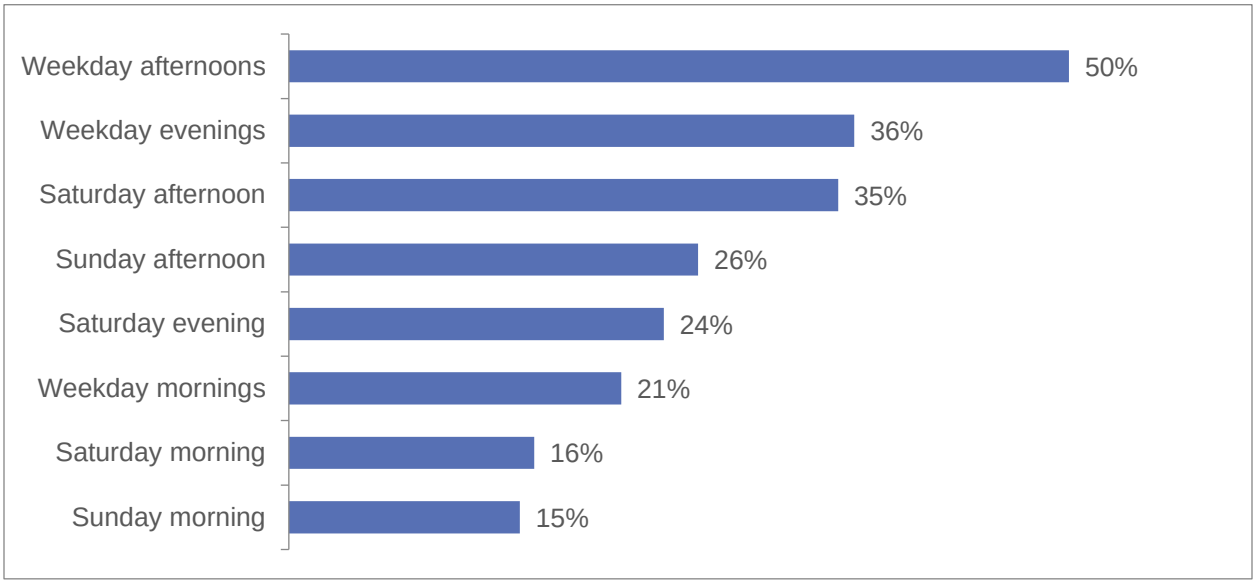
Respondents identified when they prefer to attend activities and/or events during the school year. The leading response consisted of after school between 3-6pm (62%), followed by Saturday afternoon (28%), Monday to Thursday evenings after 6pm (27%), Friday evenings after 6pm (25%), and Saturday evening (20%).

When do you prefer to attend activities and/or events during the school year? (n=782)



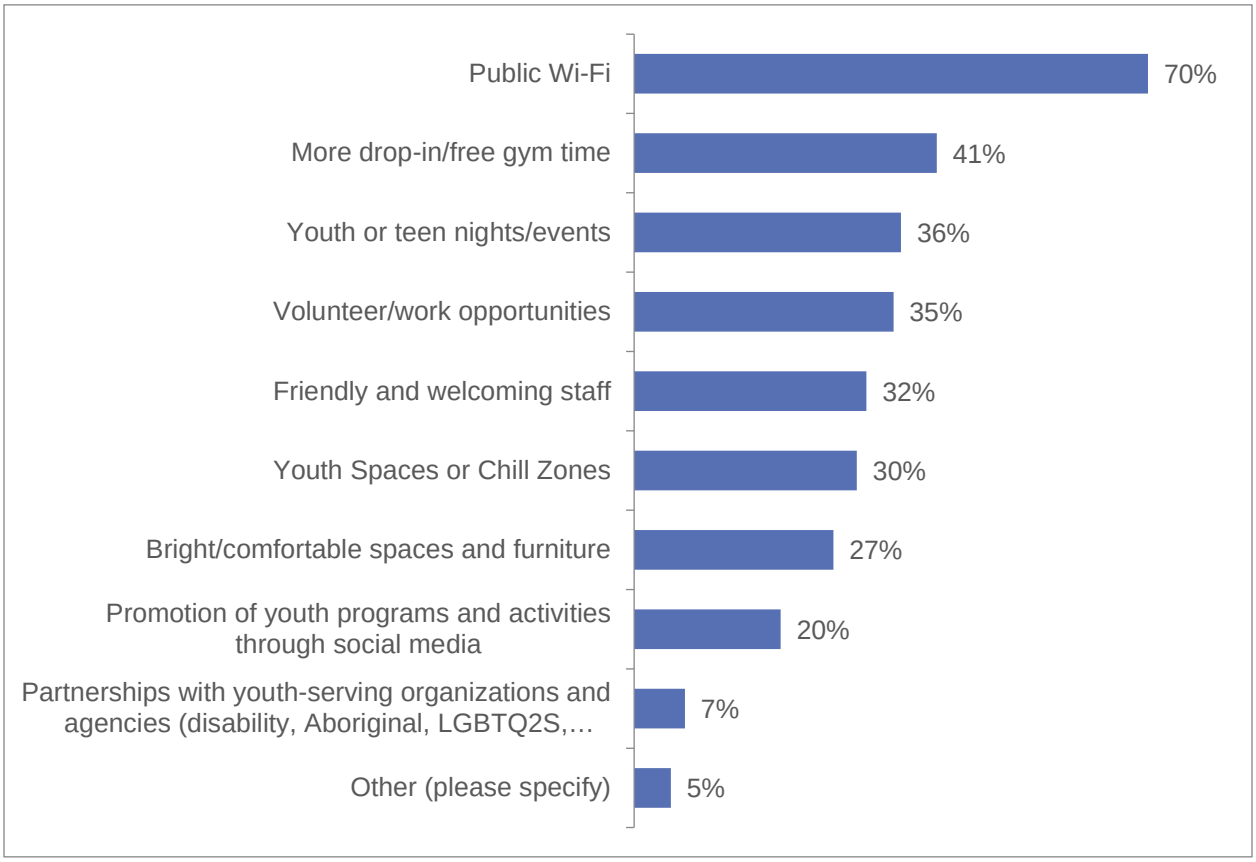
Respondents identified when do they prefer to attend activities and/or events during the summer. One-in-two (50%) respondents identified weekday afternoons, followed by Weekday evenings (36%), Saturday afternoon (35%), Sunday afternoon (26%), and Saturday evening (24%).

When do you prefer to attend activities and/or events during the summer? (n=768)



Respondents identified what would make them want to use Pickering's recreation programs and facilities more. Top responses were led by Public Wi-Fi (70%), followed by More drop-in/free gym time (41%), Youth or teen nights/events (36%), Volunteer/work opportunities (35%), and Friendly and welcoming staff (32%).

What would make you want to use Pickering's recreation programs and facilities more? (n=783)

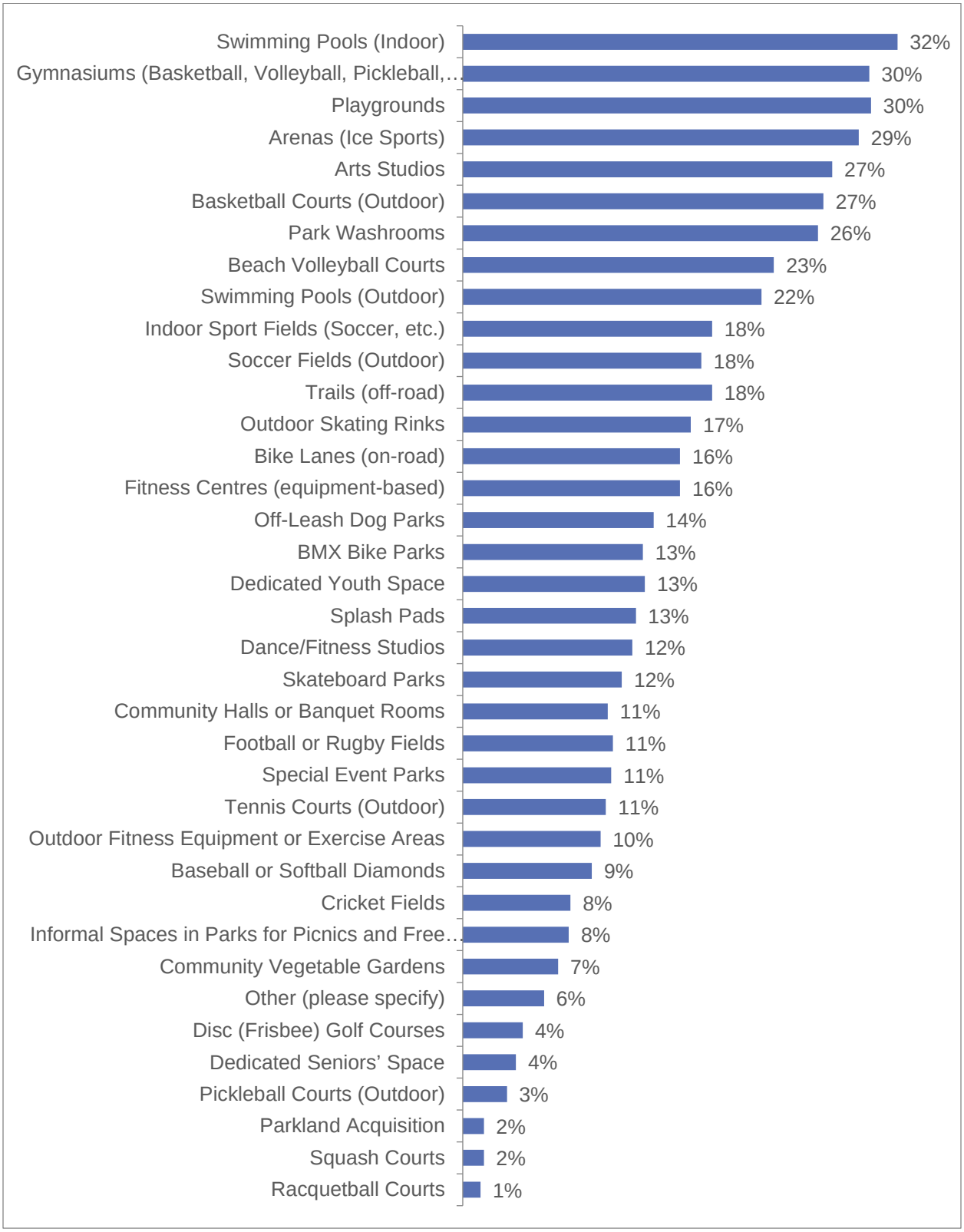


Respondents identified what additional recreational and park activities or programs they would like to see offered in Pickering. In general, active sport amenities (e.g., gymnasiums, arenas, basketball courts, etc.) ranked higher for youth than they did on the broader community survey, though playgrounds, park washrooms, and swimming pools rated highly on both surveys. Youth also rated arts studies much higher than the community survey.

Top facility priorities from the youth survey included:

- swimming pools (indoor) (32%)
- playgrounds (30%)
- gymnasiums (basketball, volleyball, pickleball, etc.) (30%)
- arenas (ice sports) (29%)
- arts studios (27%)
- basketball courts (outdoor) (27%)

From the list below, what recreational and park activities or programs would you like to see offered in Pickering? (n=769)

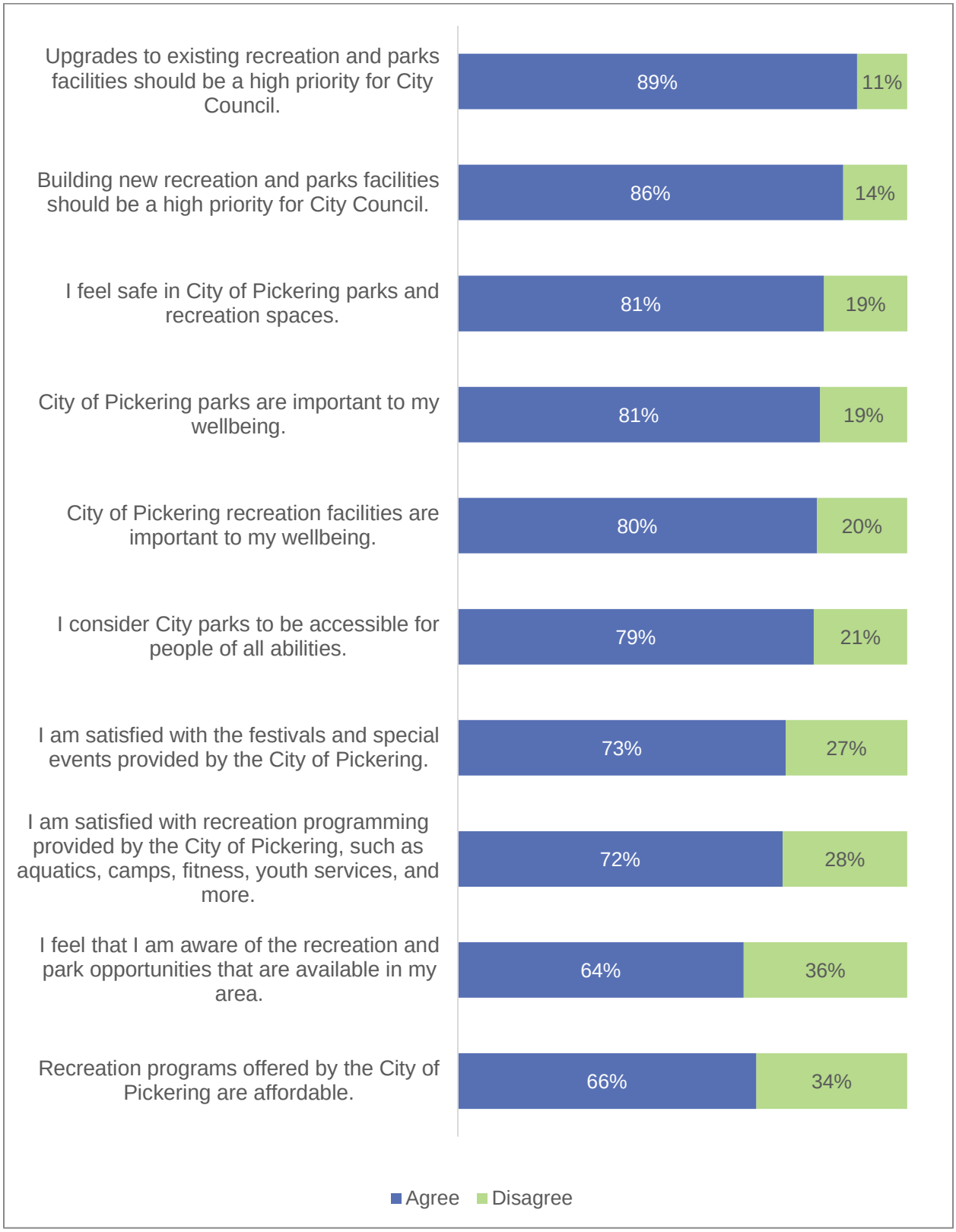


Respondents shared their level of agreement with a set of statements. Statements with the highest rates of agreement consisted of:

- 89% of respondents agree that upgrades to existing recreation and parks facilities should be a high priority for City Council.
- 86% of respondents agree that building new recreation and parks facilities should be a high priority for City Council.
- 81% of respondents agree that I feel safe in City of Pickering parks and recreation spaces.
- 81% of respondents agree that City of Pickering parks are important to my wellbeing.
- 80% of respondents agree that City of Pickering recreation facilities are important to my wellbeing.

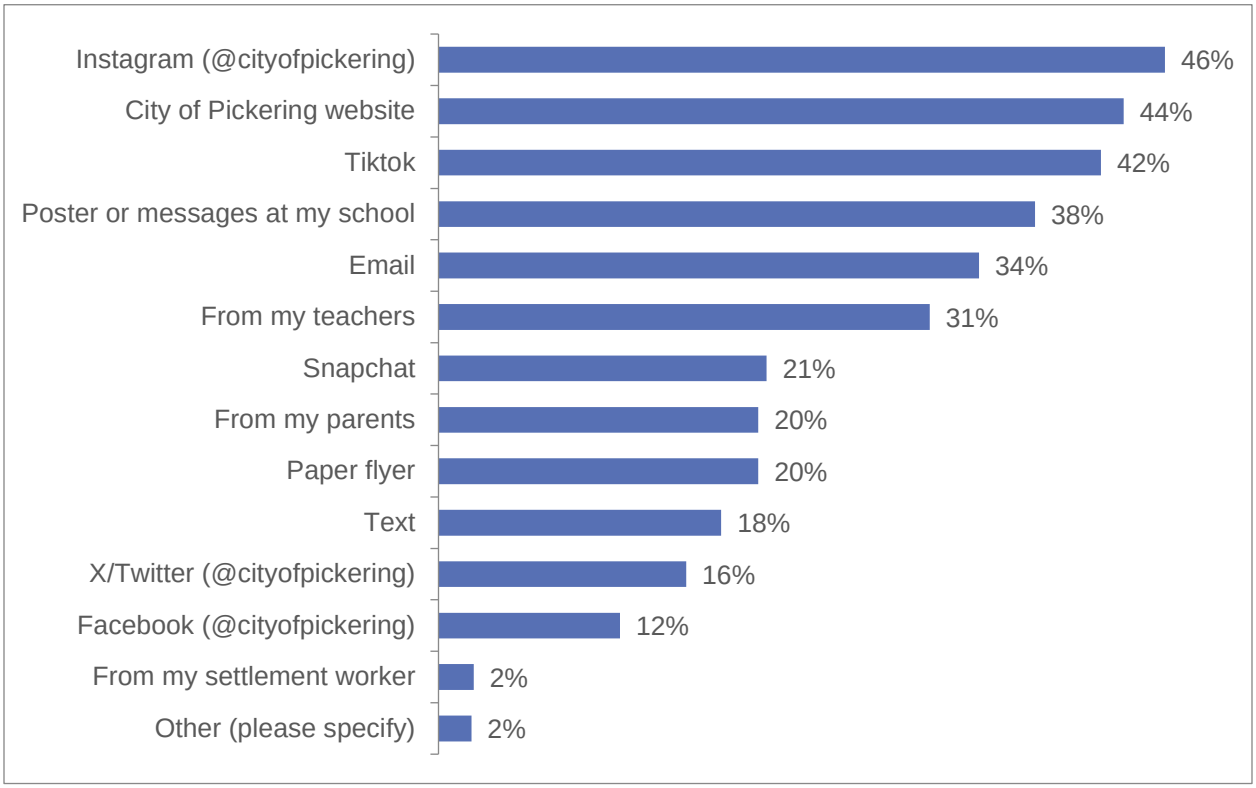
Statements regarding affordability and promotion/awareness exhibited the highest levels of disagreement, as they did on the community survey.

Please share your level of agreement with the following statements (n=772)



Youth identified the best way to tell them about programs and services available in the City of Pickering. Top responses consisted of by Instagram (46%), the City of Pickering website (44%), TikTok (42%), posters or messages at school (38%), and email (34%).

What is the best way to tell you about programs and services available in the City of Pickering? (n=760)



Youth were asked “How can recreation and parks facilities be designed to be more youth-friendly?” The leading responses are detailed below.

How can recreation and parks facilities be designed to be more youth-friendly? (n = 501)

1. Free Wi-Fi	5. Affordability
2. Inclusivity	6. Friendly Staff
3. Accessibility	7. Volunteer Opportunities
4. Safety	8. Engaging/Colourful

Students were also asked “Do you have other ideas to share or any additional comments that are important for the Recreation and Parks Plan? For example, are there any new programs or activities you would like to see?" The leading responses are detailed below.

“Do you have other ideas to share or any additional comments that are important for the Recreation and Parks Plan? For example, are there any new programs or activities you would like to see?" (n = 578)

1. Swimming Pools	5. Basketball Courts
2. Art Programs	6. Badminton Courts
3. Volunteer Opportunities	7. Skating Rink (Outdoor/Indoor)
4. Volleyball Courts (Beach/Indoor)	8. Fitness

Youth Focus Group Session

A focus group session was held on November 15th at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex with four (4) Pickering youth, including members of the TAG Public Library Group. Discussion was guided by the following questions and resulted in these key themes.

Participation – What recreation, sport, and cultural activities do you and other youth participate in? How do these benefit you?

- **Fitness Centre** – A healthy body improves mental health and sleep quality
- **Public Skating** – Is a fun way to meet new people (i.e., indoor and outdoor rinks)
- **Soccer Club** – Drills, practices, and scrimmages boost motivation

Improvements – What recreation facilities and parks do you use the most? What improvements would make them more youth-friendly?

- **Fitness Centre** – Needs to be expanded and provide more equipment
- **Basketball Courts** – More open courts are needed in Pickering as it is currently difficult for friends from different schools to find a spot to meet and play; outdoor locations with forests behind them should be fenced
- **Gymnasiums / Fitness Centre** – Would like to see one to two hours of space designated exclusively for young girls
- **Pools** – More open swim times

Barriers – Are recreation facilities, programs and services for youth inclusive, safe, accessible and affordable? What barriers prevent you from participating as often as you would like?

- **Lighting** – All public spaces require sufficient lighting for safety and use during months when it gets dark outside earlier in the evening
- **Park Monitoring** – Locations in more isolated areas can feel unsafe

- **Language/Culture** – New immigrant residents may not be aware of recreation and park services and community events.
- **Affordability and Availability** – Various programs may be more difficult to participate in and spaces for school events may be difficult to secure.
- **Security at Facilities** – Concern about safety at public facility spaces (i.e., library study rooms, washrooms).
- **Public Transportation** – Isn't always dependable

Working together – How can we work together to provide youth in Pickering with more opportunities in the future?

- **Niche Sports** – Support less popular or thriving activities to keep participants engaged (i.e., Rugby)
- **Youth Outreach** – Introduce programs to elementary school students
- **Female Participation** – Provide an encouraging environment that is judgement free.
- **Volunteering** – More opportunities for youth.

A4. Stakeholder Input

A series of **workshops** and **interviews** were held to engage community user groups and key stakeholders and to solicit their input on a range of topics such as participation trends, facility utilization, satisfaction levels, current and future facility and programming needs, opportunities to partner, and more. The community user groups and stakeholders participating in the sessions consisted of those serving various sectors such as sports, arts and culture, seniors, youth, special interests, and government agencies.

The distribution list included approximately 75 user groups, community organizations, service providers, and partners involved in the delivery of recreation and parks services across Pickering. **Over 25 organizations participated, representing approximately 6,300 members.**

Sessions were held virtually on the following dates:

- Sports User Groups - November 6, 2023, from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm
- Special Interest User Groups - November 7, 2023, from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm
- Seniors User Groups - November 8, 2023, from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm
- Arts and Cultural User Groups - November 9, 2023, from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm
- Key Informant / Agency Interviews – February 2024 (various)

Stakeholder Organizations Participating in the Workshops and Interviews

Organization	Type	Reported Membership
Affiliation for Inspiring Youth Upliftment (AFIYU)	Community Sport	30 members
Amberlea Tennis Club	Community Sport	40 members
Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority	Government Agency	N/A
Cricket Club	Community Sport	50 members
CSWB Committee	Cultural/Community	N/A
Durham Catholic District School Board	Government Agency	N/A
Durham Champions Cricket Club	Community Sport	90 members
Durham District School Board	Government Agency	N/A
Durham Recreational Sports League	Community Sport	N/A
Ontario Handball Association	Community Sport	N/A
Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee	Cultural/Community	7 members
Pickering Club	Community Sport	500 members
Pickering Dragon Boat Club	Community Sport	N/A
Pickering FC / Pickering Soccer Centre	Community Sport	3500 members
Pickering Men's Slow Pitch	Community Sport	675 members
Pickering Public Library	Government Agency	N/A
Pickering Rouge Canoe Club	Community Sport	N/A
Pickering Squash Club	Community Sport	120 members
Pickering Swim Club	Community Sport	400 members
Pine Ridge Art Council	Cultural/Community	N/A
Racquetball	Community Sport	50 members
Rouge National Urban Park	Government Agency	N/A
Toronto and Region Conservation Authority	Government Agency	N/A
Waterfront Visionary Advisory Committee	Cultural/Community	N/A
Westshore Slo-Pitch	Community Sport	180 members
55+ Program Committee	Cultural/Community	N/A

Additional workshop sessions were held with youth and arena user groups. Input from the youth session is summarized in the previous section, input from the school boards is summarized in Interim Report #4, and input from the arena session is contained in the Arena Strategy (under separate cover).

Strengths

Stakeholders suggested the following as being core strengths of the City's recreation and parks facilities and services:

- groups expressed satisfaction with the facilities they use, including Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex (great location), with reasonably priced services
- groups expressed satisfaction with the resourcefulness of City Staff and their openness to collaborate with local organizations
- parking at green spaces was identified as an asset for outdoor recreation facilities
- the City's skateparks are used consistently and cleared off in the winter
- the sport courts at the Pickering Soccer Centre are well used for futsal (the Provincial championships are being hosted here), as well as sports such as volleyball
- the City's trails were highlighted as a strength (though improvements were also suggested) and have been well used since the pandemic
- there may be potential to leverage sites such as Petticoat Creek Conservation Park (TRCA) to support recreation programing and events

Trends

Organizations are influenced by many trends. Stakeholders indicated the following:

- tennis, skateboarding, and soccer have seen notable increases in participation since the pandemic
- Pickering FC (soccer) has seen growth since the pandemic (especially in younger ages and high performance streams) and the club is projecting its membership to grow by 19% by over the next three years, generating greater usage of outdoor fields and indoor turf time;
- demand for cricket is growing, including for youth and women's teams
- concern was expressed that sports and activities are going to be stretched with Pickering's future growth over the next 10 years, including impacts of rising costs of living
- several groups sought clarification around permitting and fees (the City's permit process is being revised for the coming year)
- some groups noted a drop off in participation amongst young women in sports around the ages of 15 and 16 years
- waitlists for meeting spaces, pre-competitive swim programming were noted
- some suggested that there is sustained demand for virtual programming, especially for seniors

Barriers and Challenges

Many of Pickering's organizations experience challenges. Stakeholders suggested the following:

- improved accessibility between facilities (e.g., soccer dome) and public transportation was identified as a suggestion to address barriers
- there is a shortage of locations to support aquatic program demand
- difficulty accessing the waterfront was noted as a barrier
- advertising programs and gaining new members (e.g., squash – requested access to CHDRC digital screens)
- communicating with the City prior to weekend tournaments to ensure proper coordination
- lack of accessibility in Frenchman's Bay poses safety concerns and requires the Pickering Dragon Boat Club to hire an external truck to launch their boats
- TRCA has noted challenges with state of good repair at sites such as Petticoat Creek Conservation Park and encourages partnerships to assist with funding of major capital projects
- there was concern that water-based activities in Frenchman's Bay may be impacted by pending land sales
- parking capacity at the CHDRC during peak times
- Millennium Square washrooms have no access during early spring for the Pickering Dragon Boat Club; parking can also be a challenge at this location
- programming is limited with only two courts for racquetball and handball
- skateparks do not have a reputable public perception and older facilities are not designed well
- the cricket field and clubhouse at Alex Robertson Park has electricity but no running water to support the group's growing demand
- some trails do not have enough lighting and trash cans
- there are currently no plans to develop new trailheads on the Pickering side of the Rouge National Urban Park at this time; however, a visitor's centre will soon be built in the Park that will offer new opportunities to learn about the Park and the broader ecosystem
- transit access to trails and greenspaces in rural or peripheral locations was noted as a barrier by local conservation authorities

Facility Needs

Organizations identified a wide range of facility and service needs. Stakeholders suggested the following:

- a new multi-use recreation facility in Seaton
- completion of the Youth/Seniors Centre project
- several groups are seeking affordable rental space for meetings and activities
- new indoor pool facility to support demand (minimum 25 metres, competition-ready)
- more indoor and outdoor pickleball courts;
    - operators of the Soccer Centre are currently working with the City to improve the flooring so that it can be used for pickleball
    - preference for outdoor courts to be dedicated (not shared with other uses)
- continued expansion of the skatepark network:

    - want to see quicker action for a new skatepark as they already have a budget for a smaller facility and need to choose a location
    - add pump tracks at David Farr Memorial Park, the Hydro Corridor, and on Liverpool Rd. North
    - add a skate spot at Kinsmen Bay Ridges Park and consider St. Mary's Park as a location for a skatepark with a sculptural skate dot
    - consider skate dots for older park renovations (simple ledges or sculptures) that can be skated on in the shared public space, and skateparks and spots at new parks in North Pickering (without murals, gravel parking lots, or Honey Locust trees – which create challenging conditions)
- another cricket pitch for adult games; could consider a cricket/soccer field overlay
- soccer fields in neighbourhood parks and shared fields could be opportunities to support soccer and other sports moving forward, in addition to lit rectangular fields being developed in Seaton (many young families and diverse populations); a variety of field sizes are needed in order to comply with Ontario Soccer guidelines and additional turf fields (or even a stadium field) are desired in order to accommodate growing needs
- soccer fields in Beverly Morgan Park are in need of revitalization
- Pickering FC cited a lack of indoor space as the club uses 98% of available hours at the Pickering Soccer Centre's; there is very little capacity on the indoor turf field for non-soccer community rentals
- improvements to ball diamonds at Forestbrook Park
- the City is lacking an accessible water facility at Frenchman's Bay for the canoe club
- bigger event spaces (indoor and outdoor), like Esplanade Park, Millennium Square, Kinsmen Park, Dunmore Park
- enhanced trails, including north/south connecting trails within the city, improving the Seaton Trail connection, and connecting to the hydro corridor and Rouge National Park
- the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) is implementing a trails strategy in cooperation with several other partners; the Gatineau portion of the Meadoway corridor trail is currently a focus.
- public washrooms that coincide with the times that parks are open
- clubhouse improvements and providing storage space for equipment at Alex Robertson Park
- adding a canteen for athletes and a snack shop facility in the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex
- improving squash court lighting and general maintenance (i.e., floor gaps, cleaning walls)
- partnering with the City to use waterfront for programming

Implementation

Organizations were asked about their future plans, including threats and opportunities to their sustainability. Stakeholders suggested the following:

- having groups work together in Pickering to improve outdoor facilities, rather than competing against each other for permits
- concern over registration fees being impacted by facility rate changes (i.e., would the City consider 1.5-hour permits?); it was requested that the City review its permitting process to optimize access for local groups
- Accessibility Committee could be involved in more public meetings to contribute accessibility insight when designing new facilities
- providing soft infrastructure in parks to serve as community hubs (e.g., bake ovens, bbq's, seating, etc.)
- pursuing partnership opportunities for park space to leverage keystone properties such as Petticoat Creek Conservation Park, Rouge National Urban Park, Greenwood Conservation Lands, Meadoway corridor, etc.
    - the TRCA specifically highlighted the potential withing the Petticoat Creek Conservation Area and is about to enter into discussions with the City about broader uses (e.g., community events, recreation, sports, etc.) and management
    - the Greenwood Conservation Lands also have potential to serve as a district park with several sports fields when the City moves forward with this initiative
- local conservation authorities and Rouge National Urban Park expressed a desire to work with the City to improve trail routes, looped trails, and connections of greenspace across Pickering, including the new Seaton community
- the aforementioned agencies also deliver a wide range of nature-based and educational programming and expressed an interest in working more closely with the City on events and programming
- providing more centralized facilities in Pickering
- swimming programs should be assessed as demand is significant and growing
- more creative senior programming (for younger seniors), including use of trails
- time sharing on shared tennis and pickleball courts (designated times)
- maintaining affordability was noted as a key objective by several groups
- tap payment technology at all recreation centres

A4. Feedback on Draft Plan

Following its receipt by City Council in June 2024, the full draft Ten Year Plan was posted on the Let's Talk Pickering public engagement site. Feedback on the plan was sought through:

- Open House sessions that were held at the CHDRC on July 9 (evening), July 10 (morning), and July 17 (evening) – approximately **60 persons** attended these three sessions.
- The draft plan was circulated to all involved stakeholders – **3 organizations** provided formal submissions (Rouge National Urban Park, BILD, skatepark advocate).
- An online questionnaire that was available from June 28 to July 24, 2024. Approximately **96 persons** submitted their input on the following questions:
    - What do you like best about the new Recreation & Parks - Ten Year Plan?
    - What do you feel is missing from the Plan that we should consider adding or what do you feel should be revised in the Plan?
    - Any additional comments/feedback?

Key themes from the input are summarized below:

- The Pickering Swim Club and its members are seeking 8 to 10 lanes in the 25m pool proposed for the Seaton Recreation Complex in order to support competitive swimming. A 50m pool was also requested.
- The Pickering Swim Club expressed concern about the timing of the proposed CHDRC pool shutdown (longer-term). The Club is supportive of improvements to pool (e.g., improved air quality, deck space and configuration, etc.), but is concerned about the impact of a shutdown on its events and operations.
- The Racquetball Club is not supportive of repurposing any of the two existing indoor courts as these are the only courts in the area. The Club indicates that they require two courts for annual events (3) and are starting up new programming.
- Pickleball players requested more dedicated indoor pickleball courts, as well as shared use gymnasiums. The group noted that tennis has dedicated indoor and outdoor courts, but that pickleball has more players.
- Comments appeared supportive of a third-party partnership for more indoor pickleball courts, use of school gyms, use of the indoor tennis centre, etc. The Pickering Pickleball Club requested dedicated pickleball courts for club use.
- Pickleball players take issue with the quality of existing outdoor pickleball courts – they are shared use and substandard and not well used as a result.

- There were also requests for more dedicated outdoor pickleball courts. There were suggestions that the City be fully converting outdoor tennis courts, developing courts at Petticoat Creek Conservation Park, using outdoor courts at schools, etc.
- There were a variety of comments supporting planned and recommended improvements to the trail network, ball diamonds, playgrounds, outdoor rinks, splash pads, off-leash dog parks, etc.
- There were suggestions for expanded health and wellness, fitness, and aquatic programming.
- Some responses expressed frustration with the pace of capital construction, with residents seeking new community infrastructure to be delivered in step with population growth.

Appendix D: Asset Inventory and Mapping

Listing of Existing Indoor Recreation Facilities

Facility	Supply	Locations
Recreation Complexes	**1**	Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex
Community Centres	**3**	Dr. Nelson F. Tomlinson Community Centre*; East Shore Community Centre, George Ashe Library & Community Centre
Community Halls (stand-alone)	**6**	Brougham Hall*; Greenwood Community Centre*; Mt. Zion Community Centre*; West Shore Community Centre; Whitevale Arts and Cultural Centre*; Whitevale Community Centre*
Cultural Venues	**1**	Pickering Museum Village
Ice Pads	**5**	Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex (2), Don Beer Arena (3)
Indoor Pools	**2**	Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex (25m), Dunbarton Indoor Pool (25m)
Fitness Spaces	**1**	Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex (health club and 3 fitness studios)
Indoor Tennis Courts	**4**	Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex (4)
Indoor Turf Fields	**1**	Pickering Soccer Centre*
Squash Courts	**8**	Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex (6 international, 2 doubles)
Racquetball Courts	**2**	Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex (2)
Gymnasiums (municipal)	**2**	Dr. Nelson F. Tomlinson Community Centre*; East Shore Community Centre (plus school board gymnasiums through the Community Use of Schools agreement) Note: City gymnasiums are undersized/non-regulation
Multi-Purpose Rooms	**18**	Various locations
Older Adult Space	**1**	East Shore Community Centre

* operated by third-party

Listing of Existing Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Facility	Supply	Locations
Soccer & Multi-Use Fields	**46 (52 ULE)**	
Artificial Full (Lit)	2	Bay Ridges Kinsmen Park, Beverley Morgan Park
Full (Lit)	4	Bay Ridges Kinsmen Park (3), Dunmoore Park
Full (Unlit)	13	Amberlea Park, Bay Ridges Kinsmen Park, Beverley Morgan Park (4), Creekside Park, Diana, Princess of Wales Park, Glengrove Park, J. McPherson Park, Rick Johnson Memorial Park, St. Mary Park (2)
9v9 (Unlit)	11	Bay Ridges Kinsmen Park (2), Brockridge Community Park (2), Douglas Park, Maple Ridge Park, Shadybrook Park (2), Village East Park (3)
7v7 (Unlit)	16	Diana, Princess of Wales Park (3), Dunbarton High School (9), Glengrove Park, Rick Hull Memorial Park (2), Whitevale Park
Ball Diamonds	**27 (39 ULE)**	
Hardball (Lit)	3	Amberlea Park, Brockridge Community Park, Don Beer Memorial Park
Hardball (Unlit)	1	S.M. Woodsmere Park
Softball (Lit)	9	Bay Ridges Kinsmen Park (4), Centennial Park, Claremont Memorial Park, Dunmoore Park (2), Greenwood Park
Softball (Unlit)	14	Amberlea Park, Beverley Morgan Park, Brockridge Community Park (2), Forestbrook Park (2), Glengrove Park, J. McPherson Park, Lookout Point Park, Major Oaks Park (2), Maple Ridge Park, Southcott Park, Valleyview Park
Cricket Fields	**1**	Alex Robertson Park
Tennis Courts Club (Lit)	**24**	Bay Ridges Kinsmen Park (4), Claremont Memorial Park (2), David Farr Memorial Park (4), Dunmoore Park (4), Greenwood Park (2), Maple Ridge Park (2), Rick Hull Memorial Park (2), Shadybrook Park (2), Village East Park (2)
Pickleball Courts	**11**	
Overlaid	5	Amberlea Park, Diana, Princess of Wales Park (3), Rick Hull Memorial Park
Overlaid with Tennis	6	Claremont Memorial Park (4), Village East Park (2)

Facility	Supply	Locations
Basketball Courts	**17 (13.5 FCE)**	
Full	10	Beverley Morgan Park, Diana, Princess of Wales Park, Don Beer Memorial Park, East Woodlands Park, Frenchman's Bay Rate Payers Memorial Park, Glengrove Park (2), Rick Hull Memorial Park, St. Mary Park, Valleyview Park
Half	6	Beverley Morgan Park, Canadian Green, Creekside Park, Major Oaks Park, Rouge Valley Park, St. Mary Park, Usman Green
Outdoor Ice Rinks	**3**	Claremont Memorial Park, Greenwood Park, Whitevale Park
Skateboard Parks	**2**	
Skate Park	**1**	Diana, Princess of Wales Park
Skate Spot	**1**	West Shore Community Centre
Splash Pads	**3**	Amberlea Park, Beachfront Park, Foxtail Green
Playgrounds (locations)	**63**	Amaretto Park, Amberlea Park, Balsdon Park, Bay Ridges Kinsmen Park, Bayshore Tot Lot, Beechlawn Park, Beverley Morgan Park, Bidwell Tot Lot, Bonita Park, Brockridge Community Park, Bruce Hanscomb Memorial Park, Canadian Green, Centennial Park, Chickadee Park, Claremont Memorial Park, Clearside Park, Creekside Park, David Farr Memorial Park, Denmar Park, Diana, Princess of Wales Park, Don Beer Memorial Park, Douglas Park, Dunmoore Park, East Woodlands Park, Erin Gate Park, Ernie L. Stroud Park, Forestbrook Park, Foxtail Green, Frenchman's Bay Rate Payers Memorial Park, Glen Ravine Park, Glendale Park, Glengrove Park, Green River Park, Greenwood Park, Hollyberry Green, J. McPherson Park, Lookout Point Park, Lynn Heights Park, Major Oaks Park, Maple Ridge Park, Martin's Tot Lot, Mitchell Park, Mulmer Tot Lot, Nature Haven Park, Pinegrove Park, Progress Frenchman's Bay East Park, Rick Hull Memorial Park, Rick Johnson Memorial Park, Rosebank South Park, Rouge Valley Park, S.M. Woodsmere Park, Shadybrook Park, Shadybrook Tot Lot, Southcott Park, St. Mary Park, Summer Park, Sunbird Trail Park, Usman Green, Valleyview Park, Village East Park, Whitevale Park, William Jackson Green, Woodview Tot Lot
Outdoor Fitness Locations	**1**	St. Mary Park
Community Gardens	**2**	Diana, Princess of Wales Park – 107 plots (plus future phase proposed to the north), George Ashe Library & Community Centre – 12 plots (55+ Plot to Plate Program)

Facility	Supply	Locations
Off-Leash Dog Areas	**3**	Balsdon Park, Dunmoore Park, Grand Valley Park (2)
Bocce Courts	**4**	Centennial Park (4)
Beach Volleyball Courts	**5**	Diana, Princess of Wales Park (5)
Lawn Bowling Greens	**2**	East Shore Community Centre (2)
Running Tracks	**2**	Beverley Morgan Park, St. Mary Park

Note: The inventory excludes sports fields permitted by school boards.
*Each lit soccer field is equivalent to 1.5 unlit fields; each lit artificial turf field is equivalent to 3.0 unlit fields (unlit turf is equivalent to 1.5 fields) (ULE). Each lit ball diamond is equivalent to 2.0 unlit diamonds (ULE). Each half court is equivalent to 0.5 of a full basketball court (FCE).

Benchmarking Against Comparator Municipalities

Facility	City of Pickering	Municipal Benchmarking Provision Ratio
Indoor Facilities	**1 facility per "x" residents**	
Community Centres	25,800	32,900
Ice Pads	20,600	20,000
Indoor Pools	51,500	45,400
Fitness Spaces	103,000	47,700
Indoor Tennis Courts	25,750	212,000
Gymnasiums (municipal)	51,500	38,200
Older Adult Spaces	103,000	63,600
Youth Spaces	None	73,400
Outdoor Facilities	**1 facility per "x" residents**	
Soccer & Multi-Use Fields	2,200	2,700
Ball Diamonds	3,800	3,900
Basketball Courts	7,600	6,700
Beach Volleyball Courts	20,600	190,800
Cricket Fields	103,000	136,300
Lawn Bowling Greens	51,500	190,800
Off-leash Dog Parks	33,340	22,700
Outdoor Fitness Locations	103,000	86,700

Facility	City of Pickering	Municipal Benchmarking Provision Ratio
Playgrounds	1,600	1,700
Skateboard Parks	51,500	46,200
Splash Pads	34,300	12,400
Tennis Courts	4,300	4,700
Pickleball Courts (shared/dedicated)	9,400	21,900
Community Gardens (plots)	900	2,100
Parkland		
Active Parkland	1.8 ha/1000	2.0 ha/1000

Notes:
The comparator group includes eleven regional and/or large urban municipalities in Ontario: Ajax, Barrie, Burlington, Clarington, Guelph, Markham, Milton, Oakville, Oshawa, Richmond Hill, and Whitby.
Unless otherwise noted, the data includes facilities that are owned and/or permitted for public use by the municipality, including facilities that are leased or under agreement (such as school board fields and facilities for which the City of Pickering has an agreement for public use).
Per capita provision rates for City of Pickering based on 2024 estimated population of 103,000 persons.
The City of Pickering does not currently have any dedicated outdoor Pickleball Courts.

Listing of Existing Parks

Park #	Existing Park	Park Type	Ownership	Neighbourhood	Parkland Area (ha)	Open Space Area (ha)
P-001	Pinegrove Park	Neighbourhood	City	Highbush	0.6	1.7
P-002	Balsdon Park	Neighbourhood	City	Bay Ridges	1.2	--
P-003	Frenchman's Bay Rate Payers Memorial Park	Neighbourhood	Frenchman's Bay Ratepayers	Bay Ridges	0.6	--
P-004	Douglas Park	Neighbourhood	City	Bay Ridges	1.6	2.9
P-005	Mitchell Park	Parkette	City	Bay Ridges	1.3	--
P-006	Lookout Point Park	Neighbourhood	City	West Shore	1.9	--
P-007	Rick Hull Memorial Park	Neighbourhood	City	Rosebank	2	--
P-008	Centennial Park	Community	City	Brock Ridge	3.5	0.2
P-009	Glengrove Park	Neighbourhood	City	Liverpool	4	--
P-010	Maple Ridge Park	Neighbourhood	City	Liverpool	2.4	--
P-011	David Farr Memorial Park	Community	City	Liverpool	4.9	--
P-012	Major Oaks Park	Community	City	Brock Ridge	3.5	1.2
P-013	J. McPherson Park	Neighbourhood	City	Amberlea	2.1	--
P-014	Shadybrook Park	Neighbourhood	City	Amberlea	2.8	--
P-015	Forestbrook Park	Community	City	Liverpool	3.2	6.9

Park #	Existing Park	Park Type	Ownership	Neighbourhood	Parkland Area (ha)	Open Space Area (ha)
P-016	East Woodlands Park	Parkette	City	Woodlands	0.4	--
P-017	Valleyview Park	Neighbourhood	City	Highbush	1.6	--
P-018	Village East Park	Neighbourhood	City	Village East	2.1	--
P-019	Beechlawn Park	Neighbourhood	City	Village East	1.5	--
P-020	Denmar Park	Neighbourhood	City	Village East	0.6	--
P-021	Southcott Park	Neighbourhood	City	Brock Ridge	1.4	--
P-022	Ernie L. Stroud Park	Neighbourhood	City	Woodlands	2.2	--
P-023	Woodview Tot Lot	Parkette	City	Highbush	0.3	--
P-024	Bay Ridges Kinsmen Park	City	OPG	Bay Ridges	13.6	1.6
P-025	Dunmoore Park	Community	City/TRCA	West Shore	6.3	--
P-026	Brockridge Community Park	Community	City	Brock Ridge	5.9	3.2
P-027	Amberlea Park	Community	City/Region	Amberlea	3.7	--
P-028	St. Mary Park	Community	City	Amberlea	3.4	--
P-029	Beverley Morgan Park	Community	City/Hydro One	Liverpool	10.6	3.4
P-030	Diana Princess of Wales Park	Community	Hydro One	City Centre / Village East	12.1	--
P-031	Alex Robertson Park	City	OPG	Bay Ridges	21.8	--
P-032	Beachfront Park	City	OPG	Bay Ridges	3.6	3.2
P-033	Shadybrook Tot Lot	Parkette	City	Amberlea	0.4	--
P-035	Bayshore Tot Lot	Parkette	City	Bay Ridges	0.4	--
P-037	Bidwell Tot Lot	Parkette	City	West Shore	0.4	--
P-038	Bonita Park	Parkette	City	Dunbarton	0.4	--
P-039	Bruce Handscomb Memorial Park	Neighbourhood	City/TRCA	West Shore	3.4	0.7
P-040	Chickadee Park	Parkette	City	Highbush	0.2	--
P-041	Clearside Park	Parkette	City	Brock Ridge	0.2	--
P-043	Esplanade Park	City	City	City Centre	2.5	--
P-044	Amaretto Park	Parkette	City	Amberlea	0.1	--
P-045	Progress Frenchman's Bay East Park	Community	City	Bay Ridges	1	--
P-046	Glendale Park	Neighbourhood	City	Liverpool	1.1	--
P-048	Erin Gate Park	Parkette	City	Dunbarton	0.2	--
P-049	Nature Haven Park	Parkette	City	Rouge Park	0.1	--
P-050	Lynn Heights Park	Neighbourhood	City	Liverpool	1.3	3.1
P-051	Martin's Tot Lot	Parkette	City	Remaining Rural	0.2	--

Park #	Existing Park	Park Type	Ownership	Neighbourhood	Parkland Area (ha)	Open Space Area (ha)
P-052	Mulmer Tot Lot	Parkette	City	Liverpool	0.3	--
P-057	Sunbird Trail Park	Parkette	City	Amberlea	0.2	--
P-058	Creekside Park	Neighbourhood	City	Duffin Heights	1.9	--
P-061	Rotary Frenchman's Bay West Park	City	TRCA	West Shore	20.8	--
P-064	Rosebank South Park	Parkette	City	Rosebank	0.4	--
P-065	Rouge Valley Park	Parkette	City	Rougemont	0.7	2.2
P-066	Bicentennial Arboretum	Parkette	City	Amberlea	0.1	--
P-067	Summer Park	Parkette	City	Amberlea	0.2	--
P-070	Glen Ravine Park	Parkette	TRCA	West Shore	0.5	2.6
P-072	S.M. Woodsmere Park	Neighbourhood	City	Amberlea	2.4	--
P-073	Grand Valley Park	City	TRCA	Duffin Heights / Liverpool	1.7	40
P-074	Green River Park	Parkette	City	Remaining Rural	0.5	--
P-075	Whitevale Park	Community	City	Remaining Rural	1.1	0.5
P-076	Greenwood Park	Community	City	Greenwood, Kinsale & Estate Clusters	2.7	1.6
P-077	Claremont Memorial Park	Community	City	Claremont & Area	2.5	--
P-078	Town Hall Park	Parkette	Public Works Canada	Remaining Rural	0.1	--
P-080	Don Beer Memorial Park	Community	Public Works Canada	Remaining Rural	2.7	--
P-081	William Jackson Green	Parkette	City	Duffin Heights	0.4	--
P-082	Canadian Green	Parkette	City	Duffin Heights	0.4	--
P-085	Usman Green	Parkette	City	Brock Ridge	0.3	--
P-101	Foxtail Green	Parkette	City	Lamoureax	0.4	--
P-102	Rick Johnson Memorial Park	Neighbourhood	City	Lamoureax	1.8	--
P-114	Hollyberry Green	Parkette	City	Wilson Meadows	0.2	--

Source: City of Pickering, 2024
Note: open space parcels excluded

Listing of Future Parks

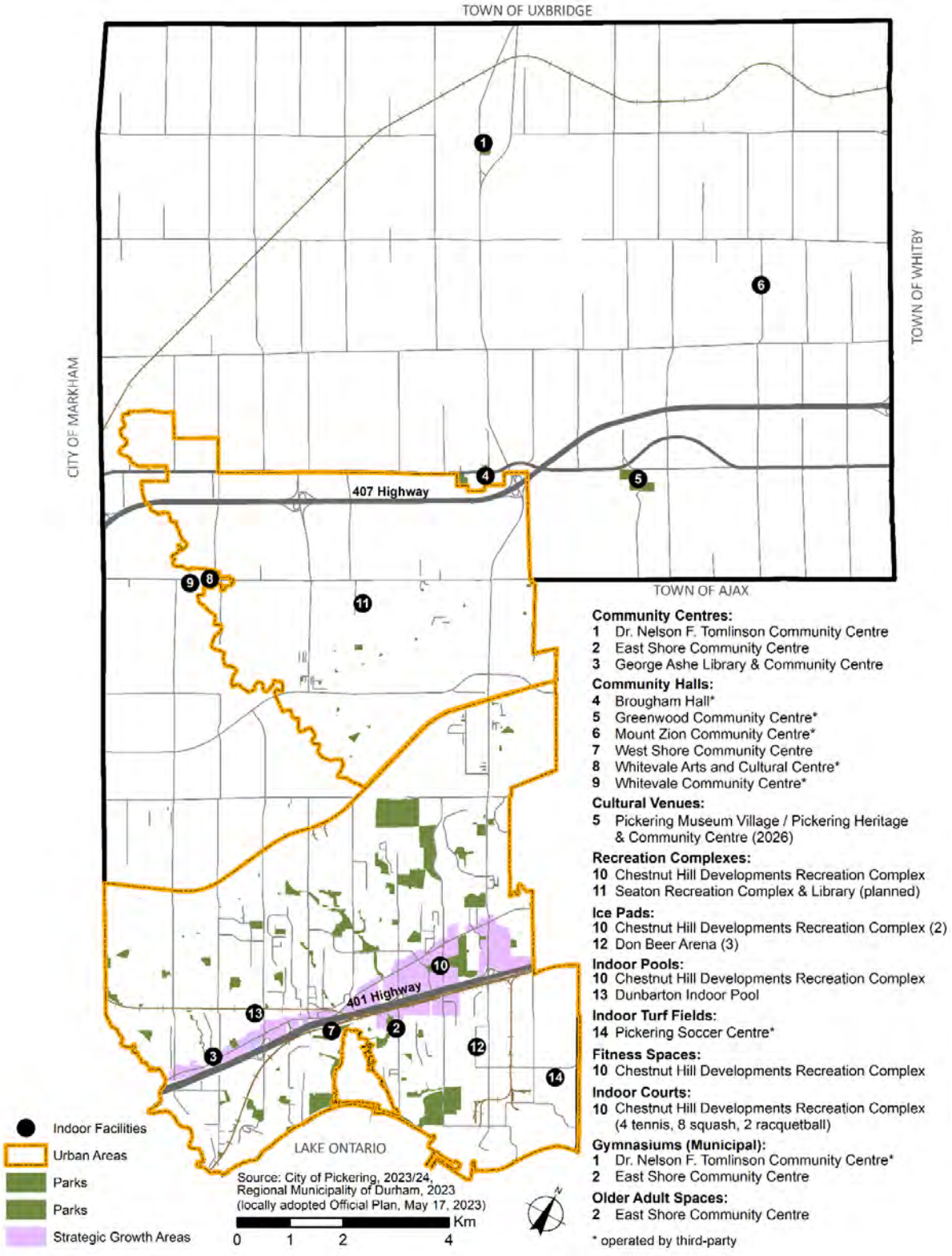
Park #	Future Park	Park Type	Ownership	Neighbourhood	Area (ha)
P-083	Carousel Green	Village Green	City	Duffin Heights	0.5
P-086	unnamed	Neighbourhood	City	Duffin Heights	2.7
P-087	Stoneypay Village Green	Neighbourhood	City	Duffin Heights	0.6
P-088	City Centre Park	Urban Park	City	City Centre	0.6
P-103	unnamed	Parkette	City	Lamoureax	0.1
P-104	unnamed	Parkette	City	Lamoureax	0.3
P-105	Hawkridge Green	Parkette	City	Lamoureax	0.3
P-106	Smoothwater Green	Parkette	City	Lamoureax	0.4
P-107	Titanium Park	Neighbourhood	City	Lamoureax	1.3
P-108	Zircon Green	Parkette	City	Lamoureax	0.3
P-109	Sea Mist Park	Neighbourhood	City	Lamoureax	1.4
P-110	Winding Woods Green	Parkette	City	Lamoureax	0.3
P-111	Virgo Green	Parkette	City	Lamoureax	0.2
P-112	Heartwood Green	Parkette	City	Wilson Meadows	0.4
P-113	Scarlett Green	Parkette	City	Wilson Meadows	0.2
P-115	unnamed	Community	City	Wilson Meadows	11.1
P-116	unnamed	Parkette	City	Mount Pleasant	0.3
P-117	unnamed	Community	City	Mount Pleasant	1.4
P-118	unnamed	Parkette	City	Mount Pleasant	0.3
P-119	unnamed	Parkette	City	Mount Pleasant	0.7
P-120	unnamed	Neighbourhood	City	Mount Pleasant	1.3
P-121	unnamed	Parkette	City	Mount Pleasant	0.6
P-122	unnamed	Community	City	Mount Pleasant	1.6
P-123	Dave Ryan Community Park	Community	City	Wilson Meadows	4.7
P-124	Brickyard Park	Neighbourhood	City	Thompson's Corners	1.5
P-125	Joshua Tree Green	Parkette	City	Thompson's Corners	0.3
P-126	Passionfruit Green	Parkette	City	Thompson's Corners	0.3
P-127	Blazing Star Green	Parkette	City	Thompson's Corners	0.5
P-128	unnamed	Neighbourhood	City	Thompson's Corners	1.5
P-129	unnamed	Community	City	Thompson's Corners	4.2
P-130	unnamed	Community	City	Brock Taunton	0.5
P-131	unnamed	Neighbourhood	City	Wilson Meadows	1.7
P-132	unnamed	Parkette	City	Wilson Meadows	0.3
P-133	unnamed	Parkette	City	Wilson Meadows	0.3
P-134	unnamed	Neighbourhood	City	Wilson Meadows	1.7
P-135	unnamed	Neighbourhood	City	Wilson Meadows	1.5
P-136	unnamed	Parkette	City	Wilson Meadows	0.3
P-137	unnamed	Parkette	City	Mount Pleasant	0.3
P-138	unnamed	Parkette	City	Mount Pleasant	0.3

Park #	Future Park	Park Type	Ownership	Neighbourhood	Area (ha)
P-139	unnamed	Parkette	City	Mount Pleasant	0.4
P-140	unnamed	Parkette	City	Mount Pleasant	0.4
P-141	unnamed	Open Space	City	Mount Pleasant	8.0
P-142	unnamed	Open Space	City	Mount Pleasant	2.4
P-143	unnamed	Parkette	City	Mount Pleasant	0.3
P-144	unnamed	District Park	City	Innovation Corridor	36.4
P-145	Scenic Lane Park	Neighbourhood	City	Duffin Heights	1.4
P-146	Forsythe Farm Park	Neighbourhood	City	Claremont	1.7

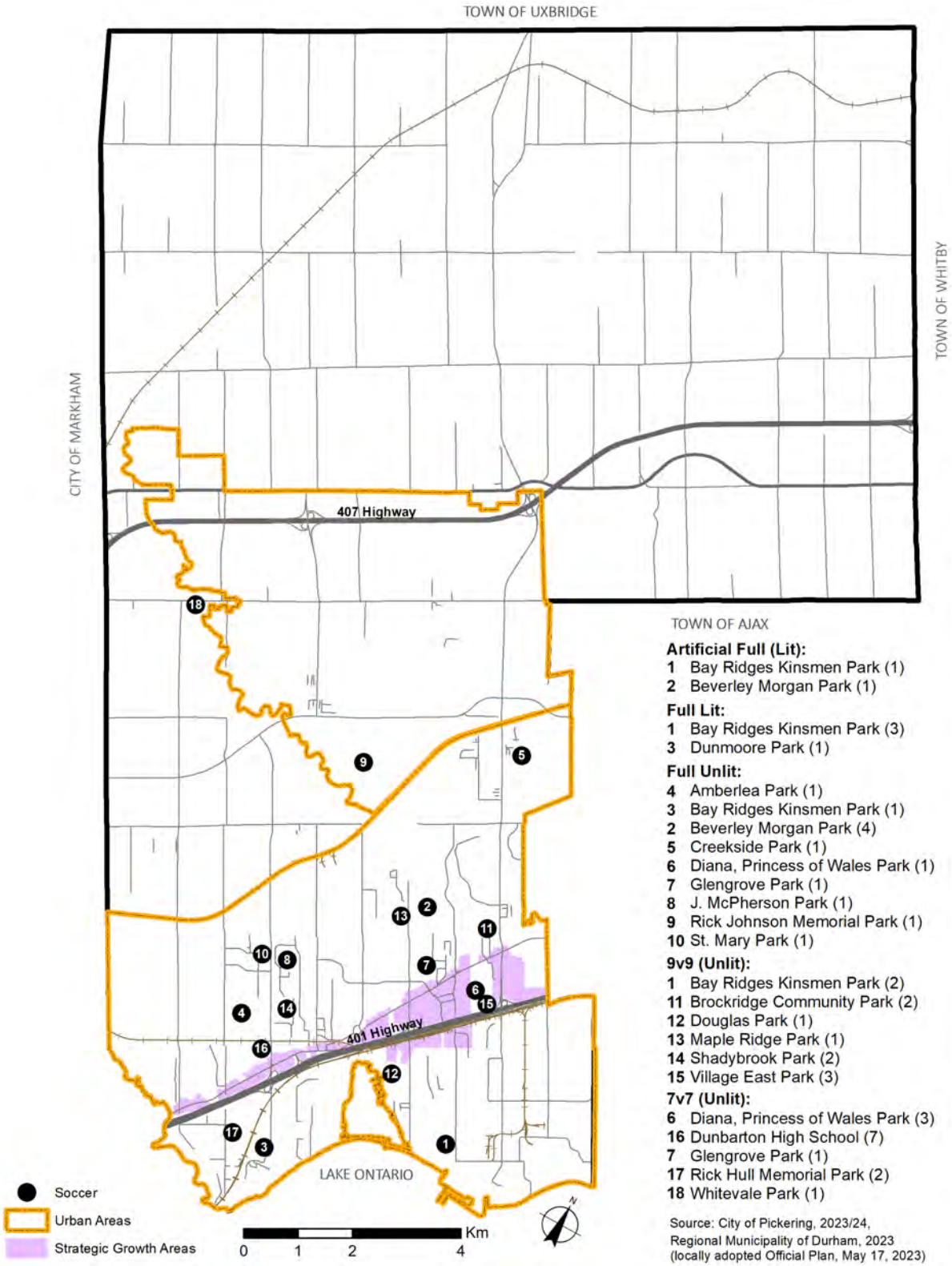
Source: City of Pickering, 2024

Mapping of City Recreation Facilities and Park Amenities

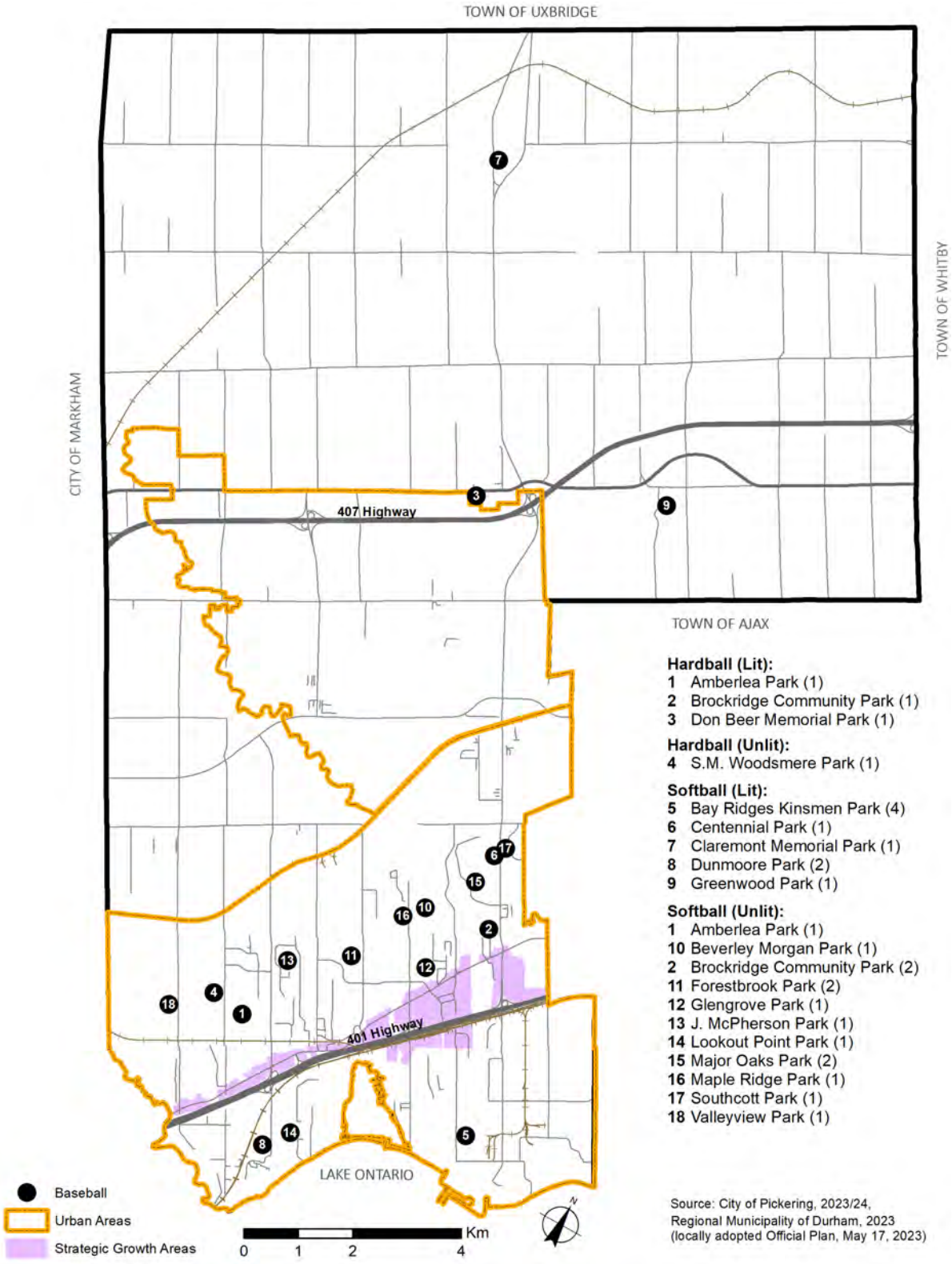
City of Pickering Municipal Indoor Recreation Facilities



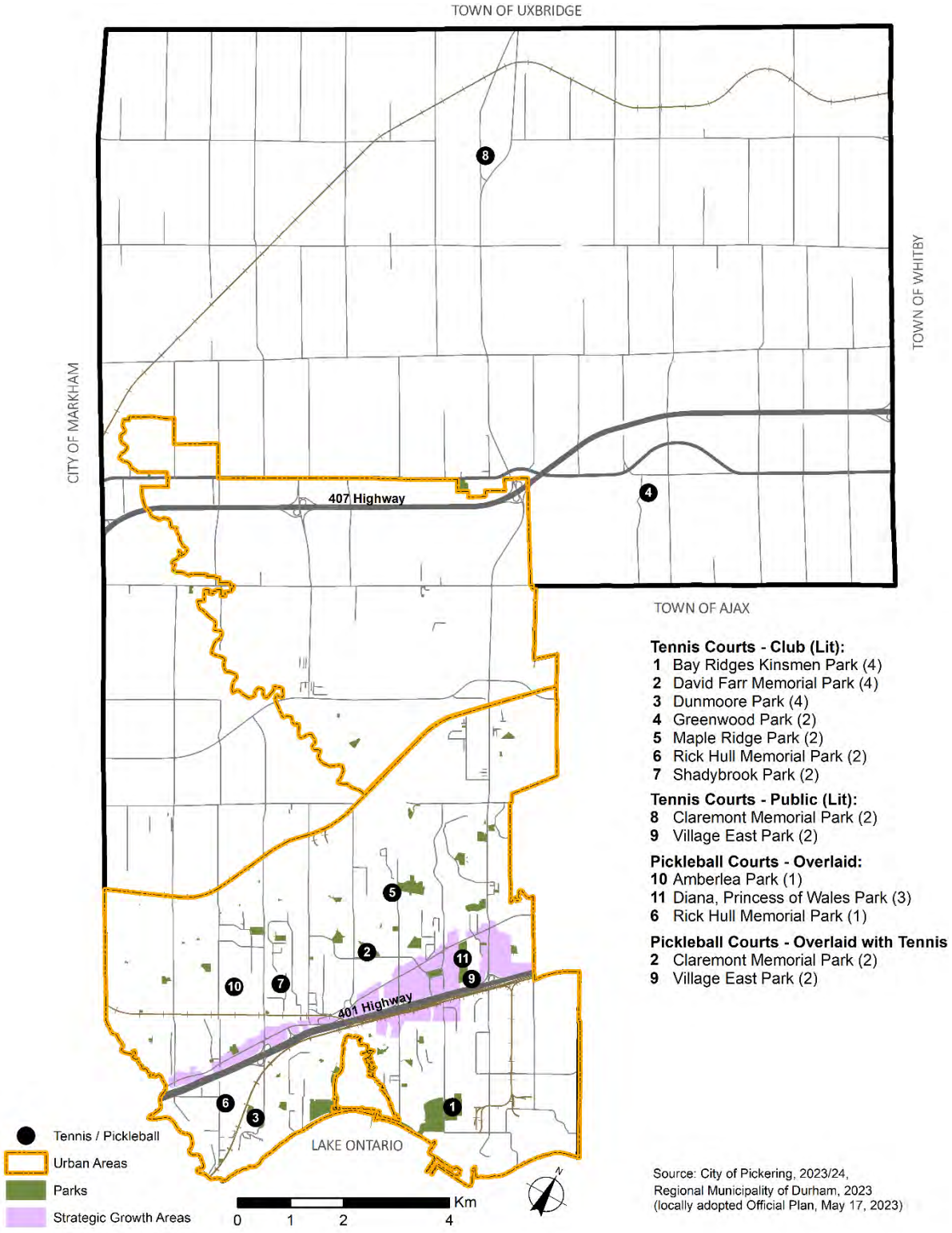
City of Pickering Soccer and Multi-use Fields (including permitted non-municipal fields)



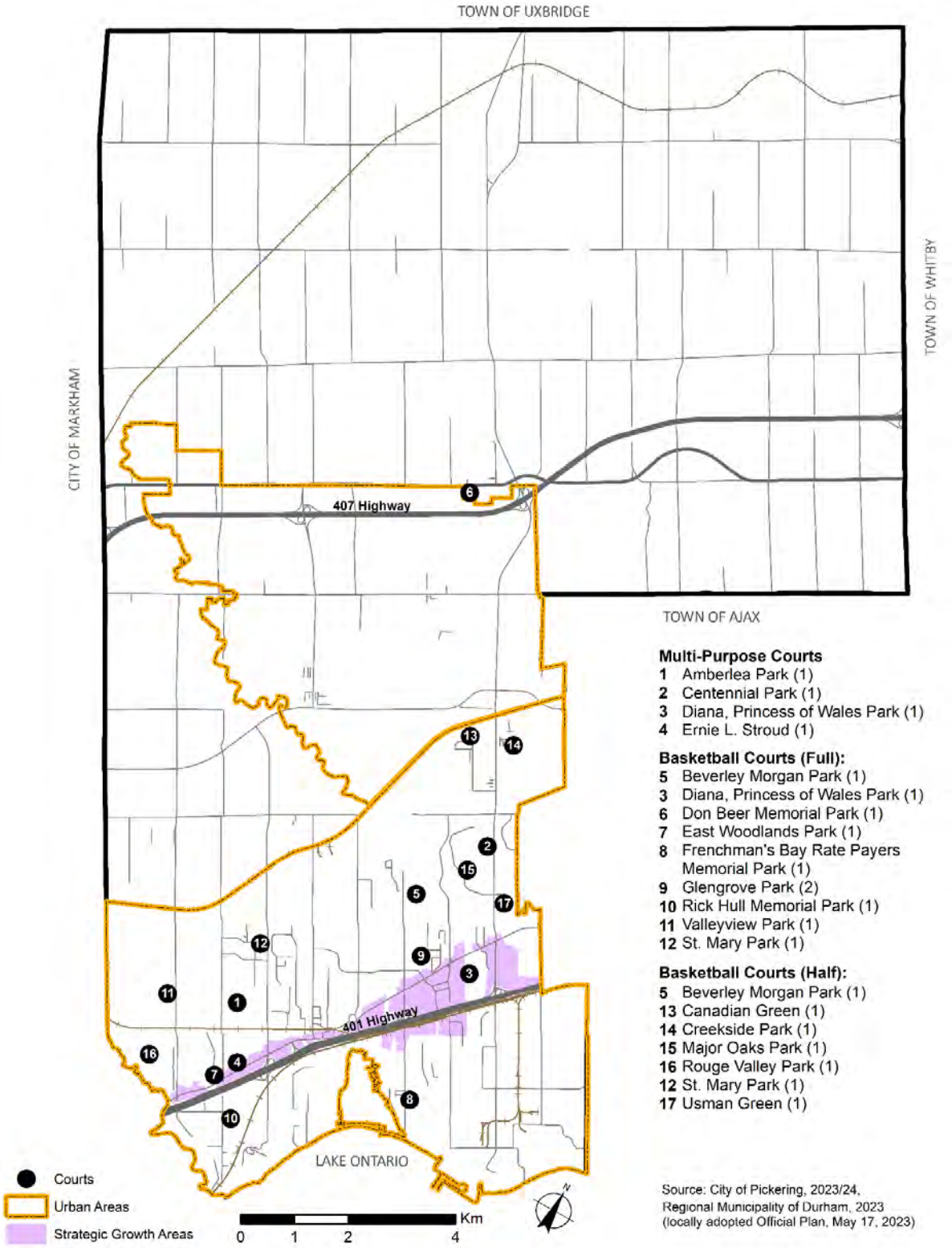
City of Pickering Ball Diamonds



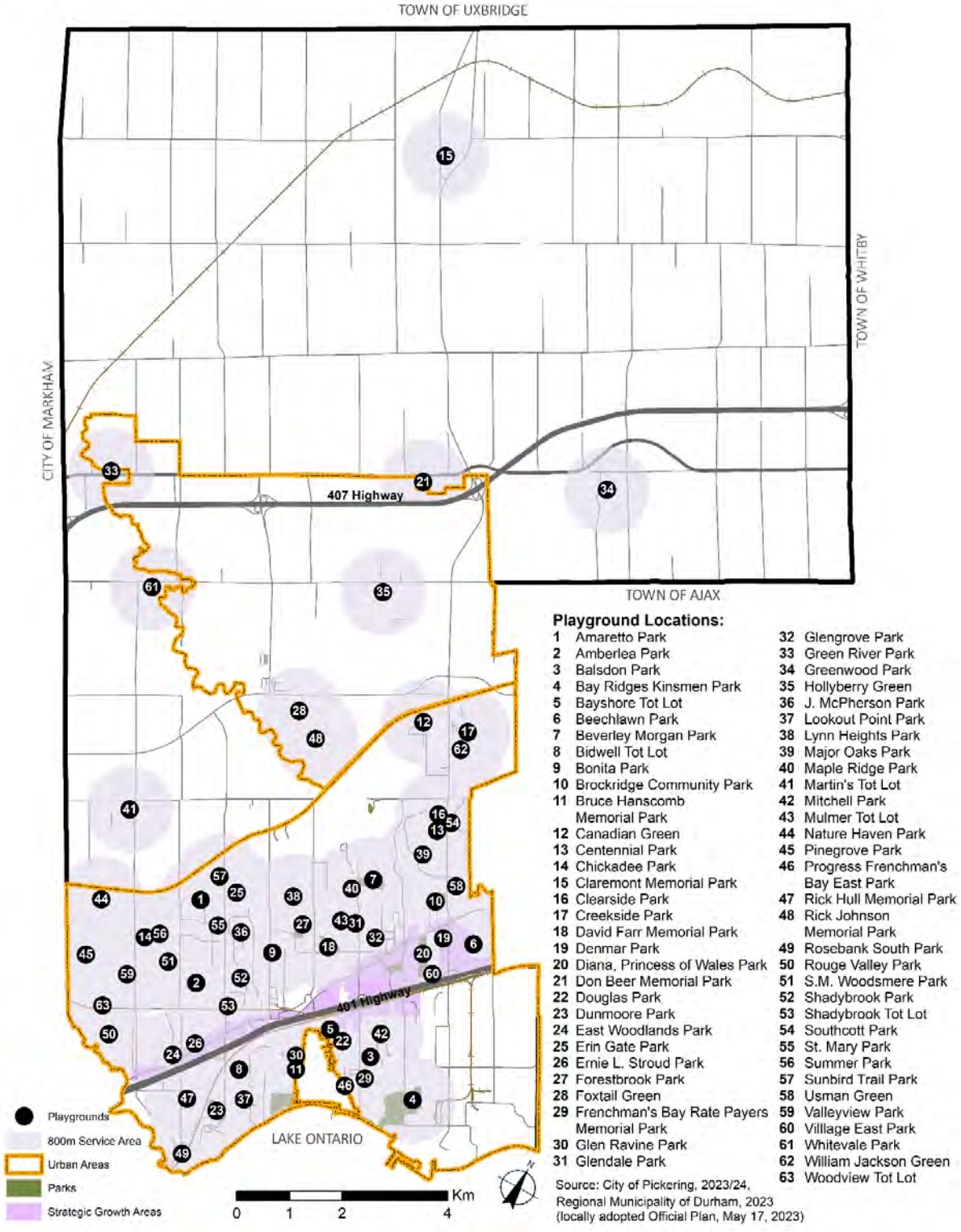
City of Pickering Outdoor Tenns and Pickleball Courts



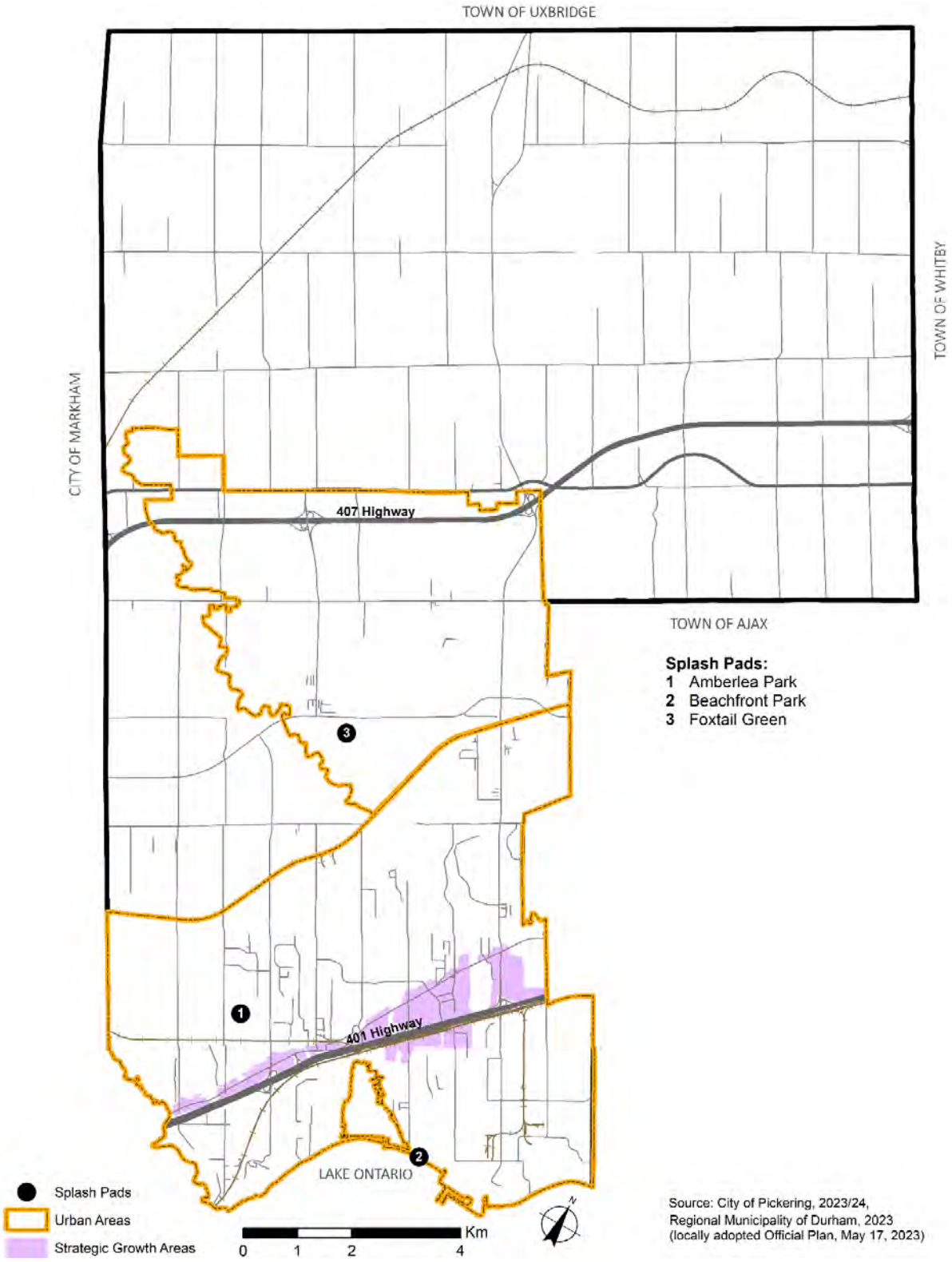
City of Pickering Outdoor Basketball Courts



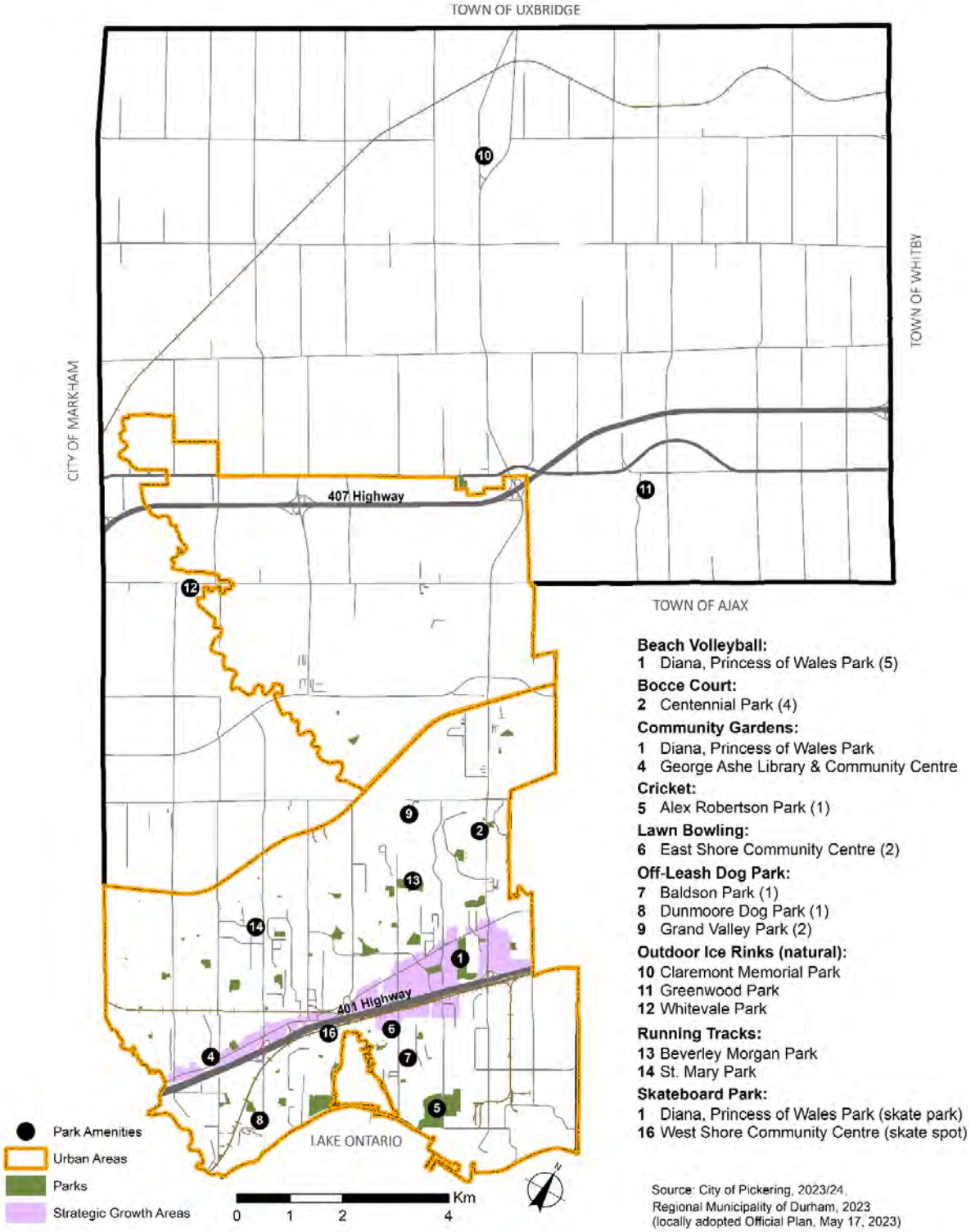
City of Pickering Playgrounds, with 800-metre catchment



City of Pickering Splash Pads



City of Pickering Other Outdoor Recreation Facilities



Appendix E: Supporting Materials for Facility Needs Assessments (Trends, Input, Usage)

1) Recreation and Community Centres

Market Trends

In this era of user convenience and cost recovery, most municipalities are centralizing multiple recreational and cultural facilities under one roof to offer a “one-stop-shop” experience – a key feature of the CHDRC. Best practices in facility design consider safety, comfort, connectivity with active and public transportation systems, and opportunities for community gathering and socialization. This may include strategic placement of seating areas, proximity to washroom facilities, and open concept design features.

Increasingly, these facilities are being designed as “community hubs” that provide a central access point for a range of needed health and social services – along with cultural, recreational and greenspaces – to nourish community life. Partnerships with service providers can help municipalities leverage resources and reach new audiences. This may include partnering with public libraries, school boards, service clubs, or other emerging activities. A future multi-use recreation complex in the Seaton community will fill many of these roles.

Community Engagement

The public expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex, including its location and range of reasonably-priced services. Among the top priorities expressed by residents was the need for a new multi-use recreation facility (with indoor pool, gymnasiums, etc.) in Seaton. Many stakeholders also highlighted a desire for additional affordable rental space for meetings and activities.

In addition, public input indicates that older adult and seniors’ services are highly valued. Through focus group workshops, a permanent hub for youth was suggested and the youth survey also found significant support for extended teen programming. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of survey respondents support additional spending on space for youth in Pickering and 72% support additional spending on space for seniors.

Usage Profile

Recreation complexes and community centres contain a wide variety of spaces, from meeting and activity rooms to specialized spaces such as pools and fitness centres. The City tracks the utilization of spaces that are rentable and/or programmable.

On average, the usage rate for municipal meeting and activity rooms in 2023 was 38%. As this figure includes all open hours, including non-prime time, this level of usage is strong and shows that larger, more flexible spaces within multi-use facilities are in highest demand. Usage data is not available for stand-alone community halls, but anecdotal information suggests that hall usage would be substantially lower.

Table 44 : Recreation/Community Space Usage (2023)

Facility	Hours of Usage per Room (2023)	Usage Rate
CHDRC Banquet Halls	3,260	71%
CHDRC Meeting Rooms (2)	358	8%
CHDRC O'Brien Room	1,757	38%
Don Beer Arena Hall	1,483	32%
East Shore CC Gymnasium	1,591	35%
East Shore CC Meeting Rooms (3)	1,804	39%
George Ashe CC	2,513	55%
West Shore CC*	2,239	49%
Total Utilization	**18,971**	**38%**

*Leased to nursery school provider

Usage of other spaces within recreation and community facilities is captured under the analysis of activity-specific components in subsequent sections.

2) Indoor Pools

Market Trends

Swimming is the most popular organized recreation activity and pools are used to deliver aquatic programs for a wide range of age groups, interests, and abilities. While municipal outdoor pools provide a similar range of recreation experiences in the summer, indoor pools deliver year-round aquatic programming in a controlled environment. With that said, indoor aquatic centres are among the most intensive and expensive recreation facilities to operate, and their provision must be carefully evaluated. Further, the pandemic reduced opportunities for many municipalities to offer certification programs for lifeguards, which – coupled with the elimination of swim and lifeguard training from the Canadian Red Cross in 2022 – has created additional challenges in attracting and retaining sufficient qualified lifeguards and aquatic instructors.

The most common minimum design template for a publicly operated indoor pool is a 25-metre rectangular tank with six swimming lanes. Trends in pool construction and retrofitting have seen an evolution in public pool design that offers more variety and that accommodates a growing diversity of users, thereby raising the bar in facility quality.

Facility providers including the City of Pickering are responding to user demands for modern amenities including, but not limited to, family or universal change rooms, warmer pool temperatures, spray features, updated viewing galleries, and universal design elements. Smaller secondary pool tanks (like at CHDRC) are sometimes incorporated into facility design to support warm water therapy, training, and lessons for young children, older adults, or persons with disabilities. Indoor pools are frequently co-located with other recreation facilities such as gymnasiums, fitness space, and/or seniors recreation space in order to bolster overall usage, provide opportunities for cross-programming cross-subsidization among facility operating units, and create a holistic and convenient experience at a single destination.

Community Engagement

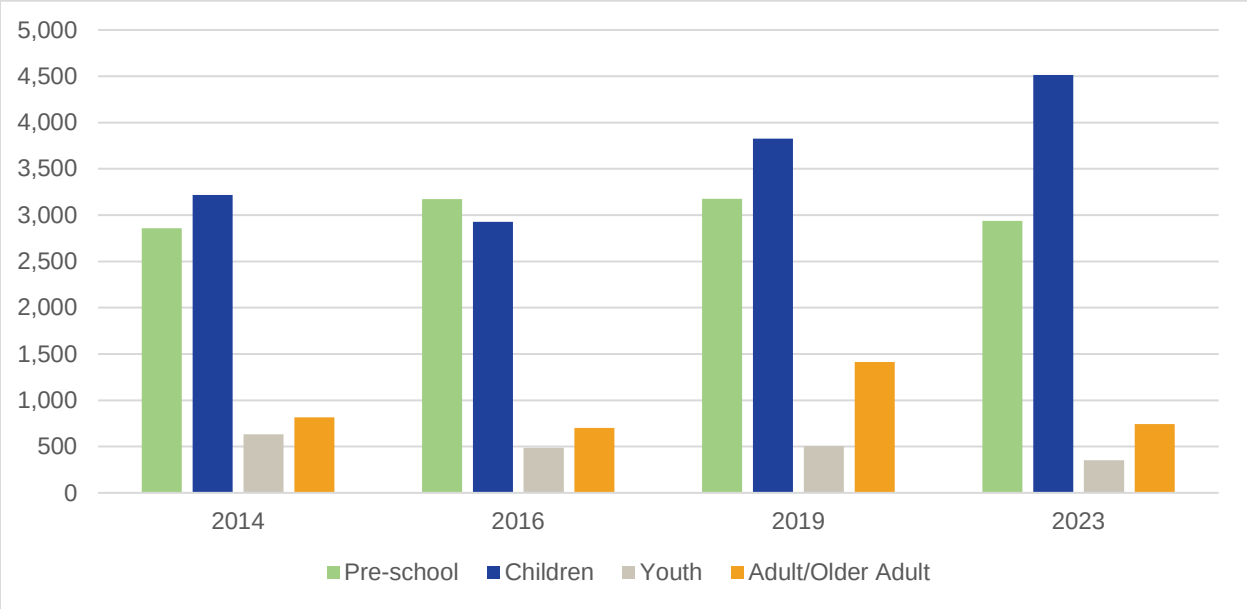
The community engagement program yielded very strong interest in expanding indoor swimming activities, with 77% of survey respondents supporting additional spending on more indoor swimming pools, ranking 5th out of 36 facility types. Indoor pools were also highlighted through the youth engagement, where they were ranked by secondary/high schools as the 3rd highest facility priority. Specific requests were received for new, larger, and/or warmer pool in the Seaton community with accessible features (the CHDRC pools do not offer ramped or beach entry, creating challenges for some users).

Furthermore, swimming is a top activity amongst many age groups. The community survey found that more than one-third (35%) of Pickering households participate in indoor leisure swimming. While many residents use the pools in Pickering, swimming was noted as one of the main activities that they travel outside of the City to participate in (e.g., Audley Recreation Centre in Ajax).

Usage Profile

The City provides a broad range of registered swim programs from learn to swim to aquatic leadership. Programs are structured to appeal to all ages of the community. The pandemic had a significant impact on the City's ability to maintain aquatic programming across all levels due to a shortfall of lifeguards and instructors. However, Pickering has worked hard to address service levels and, as shown in the chart below, the City exceeded pre-pandemic registration figures for children's lessons in 2023 and largely regained pre-pandemic registration levels overall. The City's aquatics programming is running around a 90% fill rate at this time and many programs and time slots have wait lists. Additional direction on staffing levels and programming is contained in Section 5.

Figure 19: Aquatic Program Registrants, 2014-2023 (not all years shown)



Pickering also offers public swim programs to accommodate residents and users that prefer swimming on their own schedule. Public swimming is a popular activity, aligning with broader national trends that suggest that there is a strong desire for unstructured, drop-in programs for people with increasingly busy lifestyles. In 2023, the City reported nearly 78,000 drop-in participants, an increase of 13% over 2019 figures (69,000 visits). These statistics suggest growing demand for aquatic services in line with population growth.

3) Gymnasiums

Market Trends

Gymnasiums facilitate a variety of indoor sports and recreation opportunities that require a hard surface, a large open space, and high ceilings, such as basketball, volleyball, badminton, pickleball, group fitness, and other active programs. While many other activities may take place in these facilities (e.g., special events), non-sport related rentals are sometimes discouraged to ensure that gymnasiums are used for high demand recreation uses and to protect floor finishes from damage.

Gymnasiums are designed with adaptability and flexibility to accommodate a wide range of activities. While there is no standard template, gymnasiums are typically influenced by community needs, although the minimum gymnasium size should be large enough to accommodate a school-sized basketball court with high ceilings. It is common for larger communities to provide gymnasiums large enough for multiple basketball courts, with dividing walls to facilitate simultaneous activities, and various painted lines that delineate several indoor sports. Gymnasium amenities may also include storage, change rooms, seating areas, a stage, and/or kitchen.

The supply of municipal gyms is typically bolstered by school boards that provide after school access to their gyms through the Province's Community Use of Schools initiative. This approach has strong merits in principle as it reduces the need for municipalities to construct their own facilities and avoid tax-funded duplications in service, while maximizing geographic distribution. The City of Pickering has a long history of working with school boards to maximize public access to these facilities (and will continue to do so through new school developments) and is also striving to include gymnasiums as part of all new recreation complexes.

Community Engagement

Through the community survey, 72% of residents support additional spending on gymnasiums in Pickering, ranking 9th out of 36 facility types. Approximately 14% of households indicated that they play indoor pickleball, 11% play basketball, 8% participate in badminton, and 7% play volleyball.

Youth are especially interested in more gymnasiums that can support basketball, volleyball, badminton, etc. – gyms were the highest priority identified by high school students and the 2nd priority by elementary school students (behind indoor pools).

Engagement board feedback also identified new or improved gymnasiums as a high priority and there were similar requests from community organizations through the focus group workshops.

4) Indoor Fitness Spaces

Market Trends

The growing emphasis on personal health and wellbeing is translating into increasing demand for private and public sector fitness services, including active living programming centred on general health and wellness, weight-training, cardiovascular training, and stretching activities.

The provision of fitness space varies by municipality due to the robust nature of private-sector fitness centres. The private sector can often expend greater resources to provide an enhanced level of service to their members. For municipalities such as Pickering that operate their own fitness centres, the rationale is usually to promote overall community health and to offer members a high-quality fitness experience as an affordable alternative to the private sector.

Group fitness programming has become one of the fastest growing segments of the fitness sector, requiring additional spaces within many facilities to accommodate the various requirements. Indoor walking tracks are also more commonly being provided within municipal facilities as they offer a safe and controlled year-round environment for walking.

Community Engagement

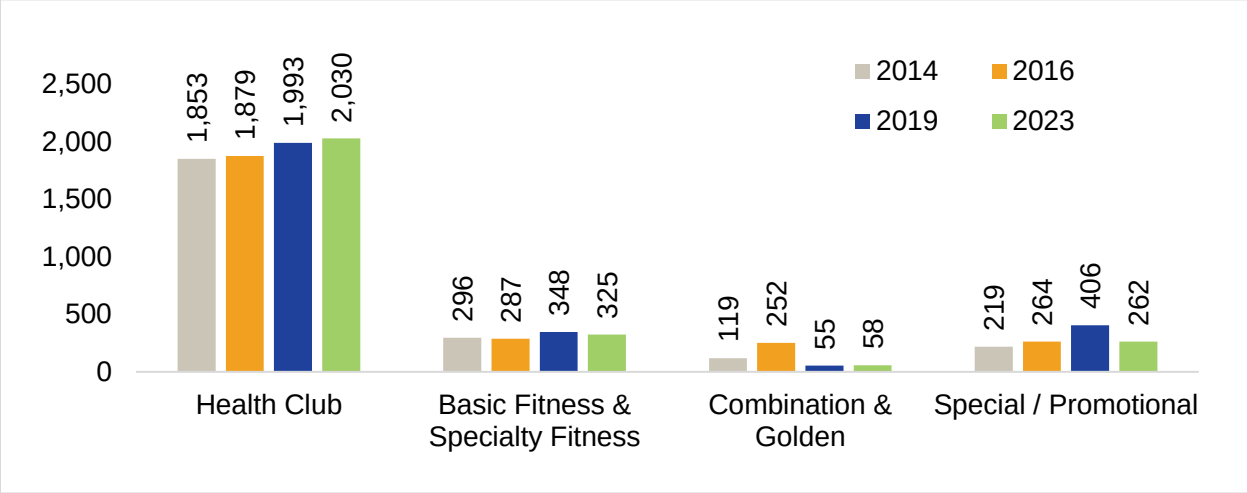
Users indicated a high level of satisfaction with the fitness centre at the CHDRC, among a few suggestions to improve the overall experience. Interest was also expressed for expanding fitness and wellness activities to the Seaton community through a future recreation complex.

The community survey found that fitness programs and classes are among the top activities that Pickering residents participate in, ranking 4th out of 41 options (this activity ranked 9th on the youth survey). Nearly two-third (65%) of respondents support additional spending on more equipment-based fitness centres in Pickering, ranking 11th out of 36 facility types (fitness centres ranked 15th on the youth survey).

Usage Profile

The City offers a membership system that residents may purchase to access an unlimited number of fitness programs and services, including cardio workouts, yoga, stretching and strength training, cycling, and more. Different membership packages are available. Non-members may drop-in to access the fitness centre or to participate in a fitness class on a pay-as-you-go basis.

Figure 20: Fitness Memberships Sold (selected categories)



Overall fitness and health club memberships grew by 13% between 2014 and 2019, illustrating steady growth prior to the pandemic. In 2023, total memberships have nearly reached pre-pandemic levels, with health club packages actually exceeding 2019 figures.

Additionally, the City offers registered active fitness programs, which are general recreation activities aimed at promoting and encouraging physical activity. Due to the variety of active fitness programs that are offered, these activities take place in several locations.

5) Indoor Sport Facilities

Market Trends

Indoor artificial turf facilities provide enhanced recreation experiences that complement outdoor fields and respond to increasing demand for year-round play. While the primary use of artificial turf fields is for soccer, these facilities can also accommodate other field sports such as rugby, lacrosse, football, baseball, team conditioning and training, and fitness pursuits.

Indoor fields are typically provided by a municipality, the private sector, a community group, or a combination of the three to share financial and operating responsibility. Many municipalities that have constructed permanent structures have tended to do so by integrating them with other municipal recreation facilities and usually operate such facilities autonomously given that there are already municipal staff onsite to schedule, maintain, and provide access to the fields while overhead costs are usually built into the entire facility budget.

The size of indoor fields varies considerably. Some municipalities have designed fields around the dimensions of an ice pad (including some that have converted surplus ice pads) while templates employed by other communities take the shape of a rectangular field. Even the size of an indoor rectangular field differs by community as some provide a full-size field that can be divisible into smaller fields while others provide fields that are divisible in two (or are not divided at all).

Squash courts in Ontario are primarily provided by the private sector, although some municipalities like Pickering offer courts. The sport was at its peak in the 1970s and 1980s, with many jurisdictions reporting declines since the mid-1990s. Squash was recently approved as an Olympic sport for the 2028 Los Angeles Games, which may help raise its profile.

From our experience, there are fewer municipal racquetball courts in Ontario than squash courts, due to racquetball having lower appeal. Courts are often provided by private sector fitness and racquet clubs. Racquetball Ontario recognizes the sport as both a stand-alone sport and a complementary “off season” activity, capable of improving one’s athletic abilities[23].

Most municipal squash and racquetball courts are legacy facilities; there are very few new courts being developed within municipal recreation facilities. Some municipalities are converting their courts to allow for other activities such as group fitness, golf simulators, rock climbing walls, etc.

[23] Racquetball Ontario. (2024). https://racquetballontario.ca/clubs-with-programs/

Community Engagement

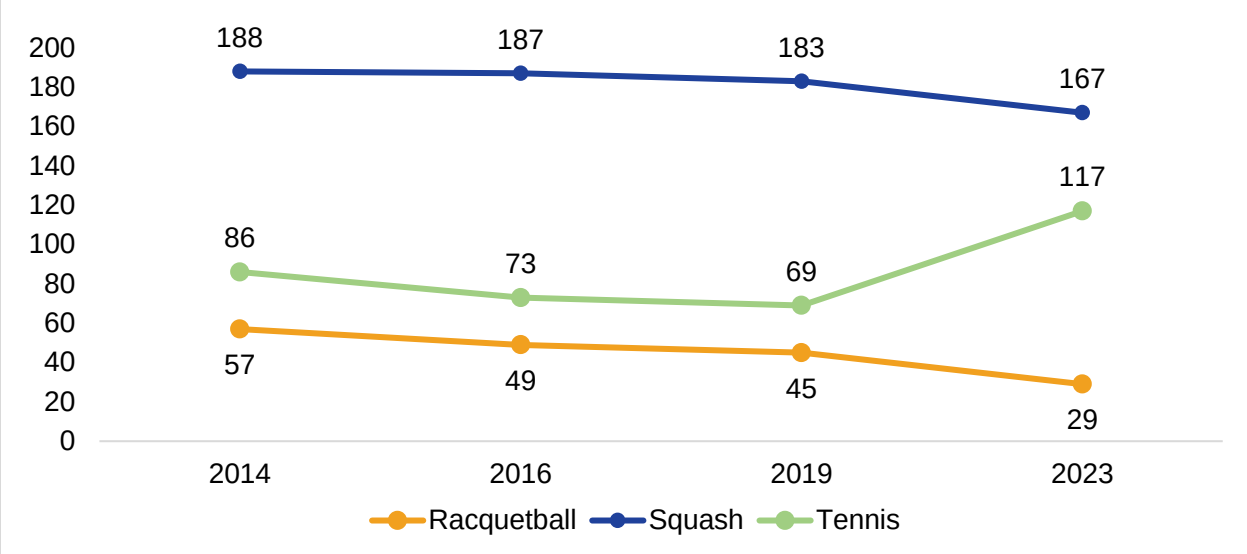
Indoor court and field sports do not have the same broad appeal as the other community-serving facilities covered above. For example, through the survey, it is estimated that 14% of households participate in tennis (indoor or outdoor), 9% in indoor soccer (more popular amongst youth), 5% in squash, and 2% in racquetball. While there was moderate support for additional spending on indoor sports fields (ranking 16th out of 36 facility types), support was lowest for spending on squash and racquetball courts (ranking 34th and 35th, respectively).

Stakeholders expressed interest in additional indoor handball courts and improvements to squash courts (i.e., lighting, general maintenance – addressed in 2024). The importance of continuing to have two handball / racquetball courts was also mentioned as this helps to support training, leagues, and tournaments.

Usage Profile

The City offers racquet court memberships (tennis, squash, racquetball), which provide unlimited access to the courts and benefits including discounts on supporting and access to restricted fitness areas. Non-members may also purchase court time on a pay-as-you-go basis. Data provided by the City indicates that over the past three years, membership purchases for racquetball and squash have declined, while indoor tennis memberships have grown. As a regional destination for racquet sports, the courts at the CHDRC attract both residents and members from outside Pickering.

Figure 21: Court Memberships Sold (selected years)



6) Soccer and Multi-Use Fields

Market Trends

Registration in Ontario Soccer's affiliated organizations has been declining for well over a decade. In 2018, Ontario Soccer reported approximately 287,000 players which is 25% below registrations from 10 years prior.[24] This decline is driven by factors such as demographic trends, growing competition from other sports and activities, and the emergence of elite soccer clubs and academies that are not affiliated with the provincial governing body. Despite this, soccer continues to be a popular sport due to its worldwide appeal, high fitness quotient, and relatively low cost to participate. With Pickering being a high-growth municipality, additional demand for soccer can be anticipated.

Since Ontario Soccer adopted its LTPD model, organizations have been evolving the delivery of their programs. With less emphasis on scoring and winning, LTPD focuses on improved coaching, fewer games, more ball time, and skill development throughout the year. Some of these new standards have a direct impact on the provision of fields, particularly with respect to standards for field sizes and the number of players per team. This has impacted the demand for field time as there can be fewer players per team, more practices, and a need for smaller field templates.

Participation in youth football is cyclical in nature, with many regional differences across the province. Greater concerns over head injuries have been a limiting growth factor, although some groups have introduced flag football (non-contact) with good success. Some organizations have difficulty securing field access due to the large field dimensions and potential for turf damage. Artificial turf fields help to mitigate field damage by shifting use away from grass fields. Football groups tend to appreciate the quality of artificial surfaces and value these fields' resilience to inclement weather that can occur in the spring and fall.

Community Engagement

Through focus group workshops, soccer was identified to have seen a notable increase in participation since the pandemic. Sport organizations suggested that new fields in Seaton be a priority, that existing fields be revitalized where necessary, and that the City offer additional support and coordination for weekend tournaments. Pickering FC is projecting its membership to increase by 19% by over the next three years, generating greater demand for both outdoor fields and indoor turf time.

The following findings were gleaned from the community survey:

- One out of six (17%) of responding households participated in outdoor soccer and 2% participated in field sports such as rugby or football, which ranked 16 and 38 out of 41 activities, respectively.

[24] Ontario Soccer Association. Annual General Meeting Reports.

- Three out of five (60%) respondents support the City spending additional funds to provide more outdoor soccer fields and two out of five (40%) support spending for more football or rugby fields in Pickering, which ranked 15 and 30 out of 36 facility types, respectively.

The following findings were gleaned from the youth survey:

- One out of four (27%) indicated they participate in outdoor soccer, which ranked 8 out of 41 activities.
- One out of ten (9%) indicated they participate in field sports such as rugby or football, which ranked 30 out of 41 facility types.
- One out of five (18%) indicated they would like to see outdoor soccer fields offered in Pickering, which ranked 11 out of 36 facility types.
- One out of ten (11%) indicated they would like to see football or rugby fields offered in Pickering, which ranked 23 out of 36 facility types.

Usage Profile

Pickering's natural grass fields are generally available for booking between the third Monday of May until the last Sunday of September while artificial turf fields are available for rent from March to the end of October.

Until 2024, the City did not charge for field rentals and many were blanket booked. This created challenges in assessing field utilization rates and did not generate revenue to reinvest in field maintenance or upgrades.

To help bridge the gap, the City conducted a review of club websites to determine when fields may have been used in 2023. It was estimated that Pickering's fields were used for approximately 13,575 hours in 2023, representing a total utilization rate of 377 hours per field across 36 fields. Higher quality fields are used the most, with the artificial turf fields at Bay Ridges Kinsmen Park and Beverley Morgan Park leading the way (about 883 hours annually per field). With the City now beginning to levy a charge for field rentals, improved tracking of utilization can be anticipated.

Table 45: Estimated Soccer and Multi-Use Field Usage by Field Type (2023)

Field Type	Estimated Hours of Use	Number of Fields	Hours per Field
Artificial Turf Field (Lit)	1,766	2	883
Full Size Soccer Field (Lit)	1,952	4	488
Full Size Soccer Field (Unlit)	3,485	13	268
Intermediate Size Soccer Field	2,460	11	224
Mini/Micro Soccer Field	3,912	16	245
Totals	**13,575**	**46**	**295**

Source: City of Pickering, 2023

Pickering's estimated field usage rates (an average of about 300 hours per field annually) are in-line with field capacities and contemporary turf management guidelines. While some additional usage could likely be accommodated on existing grass fields, care must be taken not to overuse the fields or allow usage during wet conditions to as to maintain appropriate turf quality.

Pickering FC (soccer) is the largest user of rectangular fields in Pickering, responsible for nearly 90% of all booked hours. Other notable users include the Durham Dolphins Football Club, adult soccer leagues, recreational users, and various other clubs.

7) Ball Diamonds

Market Trends

Baseball and its variations (including softball, fastball, etc.) have been experiencing a slight resurgence in recent years, particularly youth hardball. Baseball Ontario reported over 15,000 competitive participants in 2019, which was a growth of 36% compared to 2009, though that figure excludes recreational/house leagues and non-affiliated ball groups (thus actual participation figures are greater).[25] The renewed interest is driven by several factors such as a greater focus on skill development, and grassroots programs to engage children and youth at a young age to participate in the sport. Suitable competition formats and facility types are core components of baseball's Long-Term Player Development model. Full size diamonds with lights are in the greatest demand in most municipalities; many diamonds-built decades ago are too small to accommodate adult sports and may require expansion or fencing.

Community Engagement

Interest and demand for ball diamonds were generally found to be a low priority through the consultation program. Through the community survey, it was found that 9% of households participate in baseball or softball (ranking 27 out of 41 activities) and 49% support the additional spending on baseball or softball diamonds (ranking 27 out of 36 facility types).

From the youth engagement conducted by in school consultations, ball diamonds were not identified as a top ten facility priority by students. Findings from the youth survey indicated that 8% of youth participate in baseball or softball (ranking 31 out of 36 activities) and 9% of youth would like to see more baseball or softball diamonds offered in Pickering (ranking 27 out of 36 facility types).

[25] Baseball Ontario. Annual General Meeting Reports.

Usage Profile

Ball diamonds are generally available for booking between early-May and mid-October. Until 2024, the City did not charge for field rentals and many were blanket booked. This created challenges in assessing field utilization rates and did not generate revenue to reinvest in diamond maintenance or upgrades.

To help bridge the gap, the City conducted a review of league websites to determine when diamonds may have been used in 2023. It was estimated that Pickering's diamonds were used for approximately 5,186 hours in 2023, representing a total utilization rate of 192 hours per diamond across 27 fields. Lit diamonds are used the most given their additional capacity for evening play. With the City now beginning to levy a charge for diamond rentals, improved tracking of utilization can be anticipated.

Table 46: Estimated Ball Diamond Usage by Field Type (2023)

Field Type	Estimated Hours of Use	Number of Fields	Hours per Field
Hardball (Lit)	848	3	283
Hardball (Unlit)	171	1	171
Softball (Lit)	2,626	9	292
Softball (Unlit)	1,542	14	110
Totals	**5,186**	**27**	**192**

Source: City of Pickering, 2023

Pickering's estimated diamond usage rates (an average of nearly 200 hours per diamond annually) indicate additional capacity for use. There were a small number of diamonds that did not receive any formal use in 2023. While there is value in keeping some diamonds in the inventory for casual use, the usage data suggests that there is a surplus of fields at this time.

8) Cricket Pitches

Market Trends

Cricket is experiencing strong growth in Canada due to immigration from cricket-playing countries (largely from South Asia and the Caribbean). Cricket Canada estimates that there are approximately 130,000 players and 820 clubs across the country, with the largest concentration of players residing in Southern Ontario.

Due to its fast growth and large land requirement, there is generally a shortage of cricket fields across the province. At the community level, many groups have adapted the sport to make it more accessible, such as short-format cricket (e.g., T20/T25 which can be played within a one-to-four-hour period) and tape-ball cricket (which uses a wrapped tennis ball for added safety). A field overlay consisting of a wicket between two soccer fields is a common practice for municipalities that are looking to balance field

demands. Games are popular social events for non-participating family members and should be supported by picnic areas and other recreational amenities.

Community Engagement

Two area cricket clubs attended the stakeholder workshops and indicated that the sport is growing, including amongst youth and women. These groups currently use the field at Alex Robertson Park, but noted that the lack of running water limits their ability to use it and their clubhouse more often. There were suggestions for creating a regulation cricket field to host adult games, either as a dedicated pitch or through a cricket/soccer field overlay.

Interest in cricket was not evident though the surveying, with only 4% of households playing the sport (ranking 35 out of 41) and 40% supporting additional facilities (ranking 30 out of 36 facility types). However, it is likely that South Asian and other cultures closely associated with cricket were under-represented within the survey.

Usage Profile

Two clubs offer organized cricket in Pickering; the Pickering Cricket Club, which reported 50 members in 2003; and the Durham Champions Cricket Club, which reported 90 members in 2023 but primarily uses a field in Ajax. Additionally, many residents may play the sport casually or as part of clubs in other communities. Between the two clubs, the field at Alex Roberston Park was used for an estimated 371 hours in 2023.

9) Tennis Courts

Market Trends

Research suggests that tennis is experiencing a resurgence over the past several years. This has also been confirmed through strong growth in local tennis clubs. Tennis Canada reported that 6.5 million Canadians played tennis at least once in 2018 (45% of these are considered frequent players), translating to growth of more than 32% since 2012. The study also found that over 50% of Canadians have played tennis in their lifetime and 61% of Canada's tennis players utilize outdoor courts. The sport's popularity carried forward through the pandemic as it was deemed one of the safer sports to play at the time.

The popularity of tennis can be attributed to a number of factors such as the growing segment of baby boomers that seek social, lower impact activities (tennis has the second fewest injuries after baseball), and its appeal to diverse populations (23% of Canadian tennis players were born outside of the country). There is also a focus on promoting the sport at the grassroots level. Tennis Canada reported that in 2018, over 2

million children and youth aged 17 years and under played tennis in the past year.[26] Part of this growth can also be linked to the success of Canadian men and women currently competing on the professional tours.

However, many municipal tennis courts were built in the 1970s and 1980s during a wave of popularity and are deteriorating. Some are being repurposed to other uses (e.g., pickleball courts, ball hockey, etc.), while others are being redeveloped to today's standards. Furthermore, most tennis players want to play year-round. In 2019, Tennis Canada prepared a Municipal Tennis Facilities Strategy and Partnership Framework to advocate for more covered courts and to get more people playing tennis more often.

Community Engagement

Input from the public open houses indicated strong support for continued investment in both indoor and outdoor tennis courts. Comments were received that tennis participation has increased in Pickering since the pandemic and that sharing of court with other sports has been challenging for many users.

The community survey found that 14% of households participate in tennis (ranking 20 out of 41 activities) and that 57% support the provision of more outdoor tennis courts in Pickering (ranking 18 out of 36 facility types). About 10% of youth indicated playing tennis and 11% would like to see more courts.

10) Pickleball Courts

Market Trends

Pickleball is experiencing a popularity boom across North America. Older adults wishing to remain physically active and have fun are driving participation growth in pickleball to levels where it is now the fastest growing recreational sport in Canada. Pickleball is a lower intensity sport that can be played on a modified tennis court (pickleball courts are smaller in size with a slightly lower net height) and in gymnasiums. It is an accessible, affordable, and social sport, able to be played by newcomers and more seasoned players alike. Due to its primary demographic, daytime usage is currently more frequent than evening use.

As the sport of pickleball matures in Canada, participation is becoming broader and more diverse. This includes more competitive leagues (leading to the establishment of sport organizations and advocates for higher-quality facilities) and instructional programs for youth (it is beginning to be taught in schools). Additionally, exposure to the sport is growing and there are now three North American professional tours and hopes of the sport qualifying for the Olympics as soon as 2032.

[26] Tennis Canada. 2019. Let's Play Year-Round. Retrieved from https://www.tenniscanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/02.-Executive-Summary.pdf

A survey completed in January 2022 by Pickleball Canada showed that 8% of Canadian households report at least one household member plays pickleball once per month. This suggests that there are now one million Canadians playing pickleball at least once a month, a near tripling of the number of pickleball players in Canada in two years.

As an emerging sport, Ontario municipalities are gradually adopting strategies to address needs, although many responses would appear to be ad hoc, testing demand along the way. For example, it has now become common for pickleball lines to be painted on outdoor public tennis courts, sometimes at the time of court resurfacing. This may be supported by designated times or court booking systems for the two sports to avoid conflict. Some communities have provided storage boxes to provide for the use of portable pickleball nets that can run cross-court, creating multiple pickleball courts on one tennis court. This approach of creating shared courts is often seen in communities where there is capacity for added use due to lower demand for tennis. Where tennis demand is significantly lower, some courts are permanently converted to pickleball. Compared to tennis, which is generally played with two or four players, a group of 16 pickleball players can occupy the same amount of court space.

The provision of purpose-built dedicated pickleball courts is also becoming more common, either through new construction or the permanent conversion of tennis courts. Multi-court complexes of 4 to 16 courts (accompanied by access to parking, washrooms, and shade) are becoming commonplace, often in partnership with local pickleball clubs.

Increasingly, municipalities have cited problems with pickleball courts being located too close to residential areas due to both the racquet noise and the social nature of the game. There have been successful court challenges in Ontario that have resulted in pickleball activity being eliminated from various locations. A recent acoustics study evaluated potential setbacks and noise attenuation measures for pickleball (e.g., earth berms, engineered barriers, etc.). Recommendations for residential setbacks ranged from 30 to 160 metres depending on the use of noise barriers and the nature of terrain between the courts and residences.[27] The lower end of this range represents a location that consists of a small number of courts, noise barriers, and intervening terrain that is acoustically soft (e.g., grass).

Lastly, the private sector has generally been responsive to pickleball, recognizing that it is an emerging market and potential revenue stream. Many tennis clubs have begun offering pickleball and most are having difficulty keeping up with demand. Operators are also starting to convert warehouses and under-utilized retail spaces into pickleball hubs offering professional instruction and leagues.

[27] Pickleball BC. A Guide to Pickleball Court Planning and Operation. (2023) https://www.pickleballbc.ca/uploads/1/4/2/5/142597665/pbc_court_guidelines__r1[1]_sept_30_2023.pdf

Community Engagement

Interest in more pickleball courts – especially dedicated times and/or dedicated courts – was expressed through all facets of the public consultation program

The community survey found that 14% of responding households participate in pickleball (ranking 25 out of 41 activities) and 53% indicated support for more outdoor pickleball courts in Pickering (ranking 24 out of 36 facility types). Pickleball was amongst the most common responses when asked what programs or activities residents wanted to see more of in the city. Interest was lower from students, with 3% indicating that they have played the sport in the last 12 months and 3% seeking more outdoor courts.

11) Basketball Courts

Market Trends

The popularity of basketball is on the rise due to its affordability and growing appeal, with courts becoming a standard element of park design. Compared to some other sports, basketball is easy to learn, safe, affordable, and can be played individually or in small groups.

Outdoor basketball courts range from simple asphalt to high quality acrylic surfaces with lights for evening play. Some municipalities have had success with multi-use court templates that are designed to accommodate a variety of activities throughout the year (e.g., ball hockey, futsal, ice skating, etc.).

Community Engagement

The community survey found that 11% of responding households participate in basketball (ranking 23 out of 41 activities) and 57% support more outdoor courts in Pickering (ranking 18 out of 36 facility types). Suggestions were received for basketball courts that are safe and accessible for youth across the city, particularly for teenagers in the Seaton area.

From the in-school youth engagement, outdoor basketball courts were the highest priority for elementary school students and the fifth highest priority for high school students. Through the youth survey, it was found that nearly one-quarter (23%) of youth play basketball outdoors (ranking 12 out of 41 activities) and 27% would like to see more courts (ranking 6 out of 36).

12) Splash Pads and Outdoor Aquatics

Market Trends

Splash pads have gained popularity in recent years, sought after by young families seeking affordable and accessible opportunities to cool down on a hot day. They

provide opportunities for unstructured, spontaneous play, and are an ideal way to activate public spaces. Splash pads are best located at community parks as they serve multiple neighbourhoods and are complementary to other on-site amenities such as parking, playgrounds, seating, and washrooms, although consideration is also given to geographic accessibility.

Splash pads can vary with different components and spray functions to create unique and engaging experiences. There are three types of splash pads – freshwater (or flow through) systems that drain directly to municipal sewers (all of Pickering's are flow through systems); recirculating systems that filters, collects, treats, and re-uses the splash pad water; and greywater systems that collects splash pad water for other public uses such as irrigating greenspaces and landscapes, as well as and watering gardens.

Community Engagement

Input from surveys, engagement boards, and open houses indicates that the community is supportive of new or improved splash pads. Three-quarters (76%) of community survey respondent support additional spending on more splash pads in Pickering, ranking 6 out of 36 facility types.

13) Outdoor Ice Rinks

Market Trends

Recreational skating outdoors is a Canadian tradition although the ability to maintain outdoor rinks has become increasingly difficult due to warming climates. Natural ice rinks are the most affordable method to build and maintain given that expenses are largely relegated to water and staff time. Consistently cold temperatures are required to provide a safe and level skating surface. However, municipalities across Ontario are experiencing increasingly warmer winters which is not suitable for outdoor skating since maintenance is cumbersome when temperatures are near or above the freezing mark during the winter. As a result of milder winters, municipalities are forced to shorten skating seasons and, in some cases, outdoor rinks are closed completely. For example, local outdoor rinks were operational for only three days in 2023 due to above-average winter temperatures and thus were not able to deliver value in relation to the operational costs of setting up and maintaining the rinks.

Alternatively, municipalities can construct refrigerated outdoor rinks or skating trails although this approach requires a greater upfront capital expenditure due to the mechanical infrastructure along with associated operating costs. In addition to cost challenges, there are other limiting factors specific to outdoor ice rinks including safety and liability concerns, proximity to residences, less daylight in the winter, having electrical and water services in place, etc. However, outdoor skating opportunities can enhance social connections among individuals during the winter months when people tend to spend more time indoors, thereby allowing the community to come together and provide passive recreation activities in a convenient, drop-in manner.

Community Engagement

Despite only 16% of households responding to the community survey indicating that they participate in ice sports and recreational skating (ranking 17 out of 41 activities), 75% of all respondents support the City spending additional funds to provide more outdoor skating rinks in Pickering (ranked 7 out of 36 facility types). Lower support was expressed through the youth survey, with 17% of respondents wanting to see more outdoor rinks provided.

14) Skateboard Parks

Market Trends

All-wheels parks (skateboarding, scootering, BMX biking, inline skating), skateboard parks, and pump tracks are now a standard level of service in most municipalities. They respond to increasing interest in unstructured, low-cost activities and support physical activity. Participation in these sports has a broad appeal to both youth and young adults, as well as an emerging market for young families. For many youth, action sports are an outlet for self-expression and an opportunity to find a sense of belonging that they cannot get elsewhere. By their very nature, action sports build independence and resilience.

Skateboard parks take many forms and formats depending upon their intended type of use, skill level, and fit within a park and its surrounding land uses. Many parks are designed to accommodate not only skateboards, but a growing number of two-wheel scooters, in-line skaters, BMX users, etc. Scooters are now the predominant type of equipment seen at many skate parks.

Community Engagement

The youth survey found moderate support for expanded skate park opportunities:

- 11% indicated they participate in skateboarding or scootering, which ranked 25 out of 41 activities (compared to 8% of households, ranking 31st on the community-wide survey).
- 12% indicated they would like to see more skateboard parks offered in Pickering, which ranked 21 out of 36 facility types (compared to 45% of households, ranking 29th on the community-wide survey).
- Amongst elementary school students, skateboard parks were the eighth most supported facility type.

Through focus group workshops, skateboarding was identified to have seen a notable increase in participation since the pandemic. Facility needs addressed by user groups included continued expansion of the skatepark network through new locations, as well as consideration of pump tracks and skate dots at existing parks.

15) Playgrounds

Market Trends

Playgrounds can be found in nearly all park types. They provide amenities that benefit childhood development, foster cognitive development and social skills, and encourage physical activity. Playgrounds are typically provided within walking distance of major residential areas (5-to-10-minute walk), without having to cross major barriers such as arterial roads, highways, railways, and waterbodies. Traditional playground equipment generally consists of swings, slides, and an array of climbing structures designed to offer creative and unique play experiences. Accessible playgrounds and playground components are also becoming standard elements in locations such as community parks – the City has recently converted several playgrounds over to rubber tile surfacing to improve accessibility.

Additionally, natural and adventure playgrounds are becoming more popular around the world. Using the existing landscape and materials such as wood, logs, ropes, stones, and boulders, these playgrounds create more daring opportunities and are proven to stimulate greater sensory and imaginative play compared to traditional plastic structures. Natural playgrounds are designed in compliance with provincial standards but appear more precarious, which aligns to the concept of “risky play” to encourage imagination, decision-making, and resiliency amongst children. These installations typically require less maintenance and receive less vandalism than traditional play structures. The City is considering the installation of a natural playground at Whitevale Park in 2024.

Community Engagement

There is strong public support for enhancing the supply and quality of Pickering’s playgrounds. The community survey found that 35% of responding households use playground equipment (ranking 5 out of 41 activities) and 81% support the City spending additional funds to provide more playgrounds in Pickering (ranking 2 out of 36 facility types). High usage rates and priorities were also found amongst elementary school and secondary school students. Suggestions from the open houses included providing more unique, larger, and accessible playgrounds.

16) Outdoor Fitness Equipment

Market Trends

Popular throughout the United States and Europe, Canadian municipalities have begun introducing outdoor fitness equipment that allow people to participate in free outdoor activities and engage more people in the public realm. During the pandemic, interest in outdoor unstructured recreation activities soared, making outdoor fitness an important option for many.

Outdoor fitness stations can be used by teenagers, adults, and seniors. Experience in other area municipalities suggests that their appeal is strongest with active older adults and seniors (particularly new Canadians), an age group that will increase over the study period. These stations can provide several benefits, from improved balance, speed, and coordination to reduced isolation and associated mood ills like depression.

Community Engagement

While interest in more fitness and wellness activities was expressed through the public open houses, demand was higher for indoor opportunities than outdoor. The community survey found that 57% of respondents support more outdoor fitness equipment or exercise areas in Pickering, which ranked 18 out of 36 facility types.

17) Community Gardens

Market Trends

Community gardens are sites located on City-owned or leased/licensed lands that are approved to be divided into plots and operated by a community garden committee for a community garden group to grow produce, herbs, and flowers for not-for-profit use. Interest is rising for improved food security, affordability, and healthy food options. Community gardens are integral to building a healthy, sustainable city with a strong, resilient food system.

Community food gardens play a valuable role in the City. These unique spaces have many benefits for participants including:

- allowing residents to grow fresh, healthy produce;
- reducing family grocery bills;
- creating pride and knowledge of where the organic produce came from;
- increasing local food security;
- growing food for the local food bank;
- providing opportunities for gardeners to interact with people from their community they may have otherwise not met; and
- providing locations where residents of all ages and cultures can come together to enhance spaces in their community.

Smaller residential lots (and more multi-use buildings) are leading to fewer opportunities for backyard gardens, creating greater demand for community plots. Under-utilized portions of City parks or other lands can be used for gardens if they have the necessary infrastructure and community support. Raised garden beds for greater accessibility are one of the key elements to consider in their design.

The City has long recognized the importance of urban agriculture in addressing food supply, food security, and sustainable urban development, which reduces carbon emissions and provides opportunities for social interaction and community cohesion.

The City has implemented initiatives tailored to support urban agriculture, including (but not limited to):

- Supporting Official Plan policies and zoning provisions that encourage community gardens in all land use categories and zones.
- Approving a Community Garden Policy (ADM 240) to provide a framework for the City to work with Community Groups on future community garden sites on municipally owned, leased/licensed land.
- Coordinating annual in-person and virtual educational workshops and webinars. These sessions increase awareness about the benefits of growing food and teach residents how to grow food regardless of the size of their space, e.g., plot gardens, container and balcony gardening.
- Hosting an award-winning City Centre Farmers' Market, through which the City provides access to locally grown fresh produce, as well as supports local small businesses.
- Providing funds through the City's Environmental School Grant and Community Grant. These grants provide funds that have helped schools, Valley Plentiful Community Garden (VPCG) and not-for-profit groups implement urban agriculture initiatives.
- Working with the VPCG committee to facilitate the operation of a large-scale community garden (over 100 plots).
- Working with builders for new development in the City to encourage community gardens on private lands.
- Advocating for community gardens within the City's draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law and the Region of Durham Meadoway Study.

Community Engagement

Of the community survey's respondents, 65% indicated they support the City spending additional funds to provide more community vegetable gardens in Pickering, which ranked 11 out of 36 facility types. The addition of community gardens including orchards, herb gardens, and nut trees was suggested at the public open houses.

18) Off-Leash Dog Areas

Market Trends

With by-laws regulating the use of leashes, off-leash dog areas provide owners an opportunity to exercise and socialize with their dogs in a controlled area. Off-leash dog areas should not be viewed strictly for pets as best practices suggest that they are also beneficial for residents and community interaction among those who share a common interest. Off-leash dog areas have proven to be very successful, particularly in highly urbanized communities that tend to have several such facilities as opportunities for dogs to run freely may be limited.

For many municipalities, off-leash dog areas can be opportunities for community organizations or the private sector to get involved through assisting with operations,

fundraising or partnerships. While off-leash dog areas are popular amenities for pet owners, finding the right site for the development of new locations can be a challenge due to noise concerns. Careful consideration, planning and consultation is a best practice when identifying new off-leash locations with consideration given to a range of factors. As a best practice, municipalities should evaluate factors, including, but not limited to, setback and layout requirements, accessibility, site buffers, impact on the natural environment, future development potential, compatibility with other users, and more.

Community Engagement

Nearly one-half (46%) of community survey respondents support more off-leash dog areas in Pickering, which ranked 28 out of 36 facility types. Suggestions were also received on the engagement boards for additional dog parks.

19) Outdoor Event Spaces

Market Trends

Outdoor and unstructured activities have grown in popularity since the pandemic. Communities are responding to this demand by enhancing locations (or partnering with other landowners) to provide festival and outdoor event space oriented to community-based event organizers.

Smaller-scale, locally-organized outdoor events are another effective approach for communities to stay engaged. These events are inclusive and often express the culture of a community. Locations can be created through tactical urbanism approaches, a typically low-cost model involving temporary pop-up initiatives to help test out concepts or projects. Another option is the creation of a community events hub, such as The Exchange in the City of Niagara Falls, which is a multi-purpose event space that provides shared spaces for local artists, businesses, musicians, food vendors and patrons. Interest in indoor space that can be used in the event of inclement weather is a common request.

Community Engagement

The consultation program for the Ten Year Plan found strong interest in outdoor spaces and amenities, including open space to support events. At least one of four (28%) community survey respondents indicated they participate in special events outside of Pickering. Year-round special events and festivals in Pickering were identified as a top priority amongst public open house and engagement board participants.

Stakeholder groups suggested there may be an opportunity for the City to leverage sites that deliver a wide range of nature-based and educational programming. Groups such as Petticoat Creek Conservation Park and other TRCA lands were identified as having significant capacity to host more events and programming.

20) Parkland Provision and Use Trends

Access to outdoor space matters as parks are increasingly being seen as critical social, health, and environmental infrastructure. Green spaces in urbanized areas often offer places of respite and improve air quality, provide venues for physical activity, and conserve natural and cultural heritage landscapes.

This section identifies several trends that are influencing the demand for and delivery of parks in Canadian municipalities. These trends should be considered alongside other study inputs to inform future strategies.

Parks Support Physical and Mental Wellness

For many, municipal parks services provide critical supports to maintain personal health and physical activity by addressing inactivity levels, social isolation, stress and anxiety. Access to outdoor spaces, physical literacy, and affordable, accessible leisure activities are key determinants in engaging people in active recreation.

The large majority (82%) of Canadians said that parks and outdoor spaces have become more important to their mental health during COVID-19 and 70% indicated that their appreciation for parks and green spaces had increased during the pandemic[28].

There is evidence that larger parks have a more direct impact on physical activity as they have the space to accommodate a wider variety of amenities and experiences. Proximity to parks and facilities is also correlated with higher levels of physical activity.[29] Dog ownership is often linked to higher levels of activity and social engagement, providing support to pet-friendly public spaces.

Parks Support Active Transportation

Active transportation offers many personal health and wellness benefits and is a core element of complete communities. During the pandemic, municipalities observed a surge in recreational trail use as residents participated close-to-home and sought connections with nature. Expanded use of these networks can be expected to continue – interest in bike lanes, off-road trails and cycling infrastructure are common requests in most communities. Active transportation is environmentally-friendly as it reduces road congestion and vehicle-related greenhouse gas emissions.

Parks Build Resilience to Climate Change

The many environmental benefits of parks and public spaces – such as reducing the urban heat island effect, mitigating flooding, and improving air quality – illustrate the critical importance of their role as public infrastructure and lend support for further

[28] Park People. COVID-19 and Parks Survey. July 2020. https://parkpeople.ca/2020/07/16/covid-19-and-parks-highlights-from-our-national-surveys

[29] Urban Institute. The Health Benefits of Parks and their Economic Impacts: A Review of Literature. February 2022.

investment. Parks are increasingly helping communities achieve their environmental goals by offering more naturalized spaces close to where people live, and contributing to climate resilience and urban biodiversity.

Already thought of as “green infrastructure”, parks are being positioned to be more environmentally sustainable through reducing grass cutting and naturalization initiatives, planting of native species, tree canopy targets, and programs that educate about local natural heritage features (e.g., outdoor classrooms or interpretive signage). More communities are also experimenting by piloting new approaches in parks, such as bioswales, rain gardens, pollinator gardens, habitat restoration, and biodiversity initiatives.

Parks and Outdoor Recreation were Rediscovered During the Pandemic

Communities witnessed increased park use and demand for unstructured outdoor recreation activities within parks and trails during the COVID-19 pandemic as people found or rediscovered new ways to remain active and connected. Parks were increasingly used as “outdoor living rooms” across all four seasons, strengthening connections with nature and introducing many people to new activities within their neighbourhood. Access to public spaces and programs is a fundamental service for Canadians and we are living in a time where we need more public space, not less.

Resident Expectations are Rising and Needs are Becoming more Sophisticated

As interest rises, residents are expecting more from their parks in terms of amenities and quality. Many communities are reimagining existing spaces in creative ways, such as car-free streets (or temporary street closures), outdoor workout areas, and open space enhancements that allow for creative programming and community interaction (e.g., Wi-Fi in parks, increased seating options, creation of new activity zones, etc.). Public demand is especially strong for year-round washrooms in parks and natural areas. Further, there continues to be great potential to animate unused or non-traditional outdoor spaces for community activities and nature-based programming. Municipalities must also consider higher standards for accessibility and inclusion. Recent surveys have found that 87% of Canadians support more investment in parks, including more places to experience nature close to home.[30]

Park Use is Changing

The variety of activities and sports available today is much broader than in the past and the popularity of recreation and sport activities are affected by a variety of socio-demographic and lifestyle trends. Many of these new recreational pursuits have emerged in the past few decades that were never contemplated in the design of older parks.

[30] Park People. https://parkpeople.ca/blog/park-people-parks-platform-2023-toronto-parks-as-core-urban-infrastructure

In general, there has been a shift toward multi-use, multi-purpose experiences within parks. People are choosing more informal and individual recreation activities that are more convenient and affordable. Activities and spaces such as pickleball, cricket, off-leash dog areas, splash pads, sport courts, disc golf, skateboarding and BMX biking, outdoor skating, public fitness, challenge courses and adventure play, community gardens, and trails are increasing in demand. Casual group spaces for diverse exercise and recreation experiences are growing in popularity (e.g., tai chi, BBQ pits, picnic spaces, etc.), as are demands for more special events (both small and large).

Park Activation and Year-Round Programming

Municipalities across Canada are experiencing increased demand for "activation" and programming in parks, such as social gatherings, community events, art displays, movie nights and more. During the pandemic, many indoor events were moved outdoors, helping to expand the scope of use and engaging a broader range of residents and visitors, leading to experiential learning, participation, and community mobilization. Non-programmed facilities oriented to social interaction and gathering can also draw people from their homes and into the park setting.

Land Assembly Challenges

As municipalities continue to grow inwards and upwards, it has become more challenging to assemble parkland in mixed use areas due to land scarcity and land cost. Specifically, areas of residential intensification generate less parkland per capita than greenfield development – and smaller park blocks – making it difficult to accommodate the desired recreational activities that residents have come to expect from the City's parks system. The challenges have become more acute through recent changes to the *Planning Act* as municipalities have lost significant potential revenue that could have been dedicated to purchasing and/or developing quality parks.

Rising Costs of Land and Park Development

Land values have exploded in recent years, making it more difficult for municipalities to purchase land for parks using reserve funds. Considerable purchasing power can be lost as municipalities accrue these funds to use on strategic acquisitions. The cost of park construction and materials are also rising, leading to project deferrals and delays as municipalities bolster funding or seek alternative approaches. These factors are also impacted by provincial changes to funding formulas (e.g., Development Charges, Community Benefits Charges, caps on cash-in-lieu of parkland, etc.) that are leading to reductions in growth-related funding mechanisms.

Urban Park Types are Emerging

Urbanization generally means that parks are becoming smaller and non-traditional park-like spaces are beginning to emerge, often supported by partnerships and agreements. The increasing focus on the integration of "places" and "destinations" through urban design practices seeks to create comfortable, connected, flexible, and sustainable streetscapes. High quality park development can increase the attractiveness and

marketability of new development areas, while redevelopment of parkland can similarly act as a catalyst for revitalizing established neighbourhoods. Additionally, investments in urban parks can also result in positive economic impacts, although it is noted that construction costs of urban/hardscape parks are quite significantly greater than traditional neighbourhood parks.

Appendix F: Types of Partnerships and Approaches to Evaluation

Many forms of partnerships may be considered by the City of Pickering for managing services and providing facilities. The most prevalent is partnerships that advance specific social issues and broader goals, such as capital arrangement regarding facility development. Using the appropriate partnership arrangement or combination of options should be an informed choice.

Partnership examples in a recreation and parks context include:

a) **Public/Public Partnerships** – Service delivery and/or the joint work to address social issues with other publicly funded organizations.

b) **Public/Not for Profit Partnerships** – Joint arrangements with non-profit organizations.

c) **Public/Private Partnerships** – Joint arrangement where costs and risks are shared.

d) **Joint Service Delivery** – A service provided by two parties, each contributing some resources.

e) **Service Contracts** – The service provider manages a particular aspect of a municipal services. The requirements are specific and service levels are articulated in a service contract often predicated through a competitive process.

f) **Management Contract** – The provider is accountable to manage all aspects of a municipal services. This may or may not include capital investment and is administered through a competitive process and a contract arrangement.

g) **Lease / License** – A lease or license arrangement turns the responsibility and accountability for a municipal asset to one or more service providers. A rental agreement is put in place with deliverables and compliance issues in exchange for payment to the municipality.

To be effective, partnerships must be strategic and work toward specific goals in the delivery of service. Specific to recreation and parks, partnerships are a way of including more residents in active and outdoor pursuits and expanding service delivery affordably.

Partnerships are currently assessed on a case-by-case basis and projects that increase access to public services and space for all are encouraged. Guidance is needed to establish a consistent and uniform municipal response to potential relationships with those wishing to partner with the City on facility development or program delivery.

A standardized partnership framework could set out why and how the City plans to work with others in fulfilling its mandate and the parameters for these relationships. The standardized partnership framework on the following page may be adapted by the City to evaluate potential partnerships and/or unsolicited proposals.

Standardized Partnership Framework

Criteria	Yes	No	Response
Is the initiative consistent with the municipal **mandate** and service philosophy?	🡻	➔	Do not consider municipal involvement in the project.
Is there a **municipal role** to play in providing the program or service?	🡻	➔	Do not consider municipal involvement in the project.
Is there a **demonstrated need** for the proposed service or program?	🡻	➔	Do not consider municipal involvement in the project.
Does the proposed service or initiative conform to **municipal priorities** and is it in operating and capital **budget forecasts**?	🡻	➔	Either do not consider municipal involvement in the project or consider alternate forms of capital financing or ongoing funding sources.
Can requirements **ensure compliance** with the department's vision, mandate, values, strategic priorities and service standards?	🡻	➔	Consider providing the service using a traditional municipal self-managed approach (direct delivery).
Can **financial risks** be reasonably mitigated through an arrangement with the group(s)?	🡻	➔	Consider providing the service using a traditional municipal self managed approach (direct delivery).
Are there suitably equipped and properly **qualified organizations** who can contribute or provide the service or program?	🡻	➔	Consider providing the service using a traditional municipal self managed approach (direct delivery).
Can responsibility of the delivery of the service or program be **assigned to another organization** while mitigating all risks to the organization?	🡻	➔	Issue a request for proposal or other procurement process specified by purchasing policies.
Is there **consensus** regarding the terms, conditions, standards of delivery and accountabilities?	🡻	➔	Negotiate a mutually acceptable operating agreement and monitoring of performance standards.
Establish a relationship with an outside entity to develop the facility or delivery the program or service and adopt a mutually agreeable monitoring system.			

Source: Adapted from various municipal recreation plans

Appendix G: Description of Existing Park Types

City of Pickering Parks Hierarchy, Existing (Source: Picketing Official Plan, Edition 9)

Park Type	Relevant Policy – Official Plan
District Park	District Parks are intended to provide for a range of illuminated recreational facilities. Note: These are the largest active recreational park type (generally 50 hectares or greater). The City's Official Plan currently only identifies one such site as a District Park (north of Green River), which is designated for future development.
Community Parks	Community parks are intended to provide for a range of illuminated recreational facilities as well as some non-illuminated mini-baseball and soccer fields servicing the adjacent residents. Community parks and recreation centres shall be located near frequent transit services. Adjacent natural heritage system lands are intended to be an integral part of each community park providing for passive recreational areas and buffer areas adjacent to the recreational fields. Note: The Official Plan does not define a minimum size for these parks, but it is recommended that they generally be a minimum of 4 hectares.
Neighbourhoods Parks	Neighbourhood Parks are intended to perform an array of functions and accommodate play structures as well as one non-illuminated mini-recreational field and possibly tennis or bocce courts, and passive areas. Neighbourhood Plans shall: (i) be easily accessible and generally centrally located for residents within a 400 to 800 metre radius (5 to 10 minute walk); (ii) have a size of approximately 1.5 hectares to 1.8 hectares; (iii) have road frontage on a minimum of two sides, where possible; and (iv) be supported by on-street parking.

Park Type	Relevant Policy – Official Plan
Village Greens	Village Greens are intended to provide greenspace for each neighbourhood and accommodate play structures and open informal play areas. Village Greens are smaller components of the open space system and shall: (i) have a size of approximately 0.3 to 0.6 hectares subject to demonstration of the functionality of the village green configuration; (ii) be easily accessible for residents within a 200 to 400 metre radius (3 to 5 minute walk) without the need to cross arterial roads; and (iii) have road frontage on three sides, but may be less where other design alternatives are used to achieve public view and access;
Urban Squares	Urban Squares are intended as formal pedestrian spaces, in support of the adjacent higher density, mixed use development. Urban Squares shall be provided within the commercial and mixed use components of the Community Nodes and Mixed Corridors and shall: (i) be located to provide easy access and multiple opportunities for rest, relaxation and visual interest; (ii) be provided in a location determined in consultation with City staff at site plan approval; (iii) generally have a minimum frontage on the abutting sidewalk of 5.0 metres, and a minimum depth of 5.0 metres; *(ed. note: these sizes are quite small and may be reconsidered through the Official Plan Review)* (iv) on large development parcels include a single, large-scale urban square and/or a series of smaller urban squares; (v) count as part of the block face in calculating the minimum block face requirement as per Section 11.8(e) of the Official Plan; (vi) contribute to the required parkland dedication, whether or not the land is dedicated to the City, provided an agreement is executed between the City and landowner which ensures that: (1) the urban square is designed and built by the landowner to the satisfaction of the City; (2) the urban square is maintained by the landowner to the satisfaction of the City; and (3) the owner(s) and/or the condominium corporation is made aware that the urban square is to be considered as a public space and is to be open and accessible to the public at all times.

Appendix H: Parkland Policy Background

Parkland Policy Jurisdictional Scan

A comparative analysis of three other Greater Toronto Area municipalities was undertaken to inform the analysis of Pickering's parkland policies and approaches. Municipalities included the Town of Oakville, City of Vaughan, and Town of Markham – all three of these communities have recently completed a series of comprehensive parkland assessments that have supported updated planning policies and approaches.

The exercise included research into the following items, with information culled from official plans, parks plans, and parkland by-laws or procedures:

- parkland hierarchy;
- parkland targets;
- parkland acceptability;
- encumbered parkland and ownership; and
- parkland cash-in-lieu policies.

Note: The summaries below are paraphrased. For additional information, specific reference should be made to the applicable by-laws, procedures, or studies.

Jurisdictional Scan – Parkland Hierarchy

Municipality	Summary of Parkland Hierarchy
Town of Oakville	The Town has adopted a two tier parkland hierarchy. Sizes, catchment areas, uses/functions, and general design guidelines are identified for each. Traditional Hierarchy – Established Neighbourhoods and Greenfields: • Community Parks • Neighbourhood Parks • Parkettes • Eco Parks (new) Urban Hierarchy – Strategic Growth Areas: • Public Commons • Urban Squares • Promenades • Other Urban Parks (Connecting Links, Pocket Parks, Sliver Parks) Additional classifications are identified for passive parkland and open space.

Municipality	Summary of Parkland Hierarchy
City of Vaughan	The City has adopted a two tier parkland hierarchy. Sizes, catchment areas, uses/functions, and general design guidelines are identified for each. Traditional Residential Communities and Delineated Greenfield Residential Communities: • Regional Parks • District Parks • Neighbourhood Parks Strategic Growth Areas • Urban Parks • Public Squares • Public Commons (new) • Promenades (active transportation component; not accepted as parkland dedication) New park typologies to be considered, subject to further review and criteria, include: • Eco-Parks that support environmental education and nature-related recreation • Parkettes to support the social fabric within traditional greenfield residential communities by providing parkland within a 5-minute walk from home

City of Markham	City Park Classifications:
	
	• Community Parks
	• Neighbourhood Parks
	  o Active Parks
	  o Urban Squares
	  o Parkettes
	  o Urban Parkettes
	• Open Space Lands (not accepted as parkland dedication)
	
	Sizes, catchment areas, uses/functions, and general design guidelines are identified in the Official Plan for each park type.

Jurisdictional Scan – Parkland Targets

Municipality	Summary of Parkland Targets
Town of Oakville	Townwide target of 2.2 ha/1000 persons to the horizon year of 2031. Note: The definition of parkland has recently been broadened to include unconstrained lands in the natural heritage system. Minimum of 12% of the Gross Land Area within Strategic Growth Area, such that all residents are within a 2.5 minute walk (200 metres) from a defined Public Common, Urban Square or Promenade.
City of Vaughan	Citywide target of 2.0 ha/1000 persons. Note: The definition of parkland has recently been broadened to include unconstrained lands in the natural heritage system. Prior to the introduction of Bill 23, the City gave consideration to designating a 20% Gross Land Area parkland requirement within a comprehensively planned intensification area.
City of Markham	Citywide target of 1.2 ha/1000 persons. A target of 0.4 ha/1000 persons has been established for intensification areas, with the balance of needs being accommodated outside of the area. Note: The City has adopted a reduced alternative rate of 0.55 ha/500 units for medium and high density residential apartments.

Jurisdictional Scan – Parkland Acceptability

Municipality	Summary of Parkland Acceptability
Town of Oakville	Lands must be in a condition satisfactory to the town and in accordance with the requirements of the town's Official Plan…Lands shall be free of any/all title encumbrances. Potentially acceptable lands for parkland dedication (accepted at a reduced rate) include: • Lands that are subject to a Strata Park arrangement; • Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPs) where located within a SGA subject to required legal agreements; • Lands that are within the designated Natural Heritage System, but are not specifically identified as a core natural feature; • Lands that include slopes between 5 percent and 15 percent, that are not included within the Natural Heritage System; and/or, • Lands that include designated cultural heritage resources or cultural heritage landscapes. Unacceptable lands for parkland dedication include: • Lands that are an identified core natural heritage feature as defined in the Official Plan, or an applicable Secondary Plan, or as identified in an Environmental Impact Study accepted by the town; • Lands that are identified as Hazard Lands, have poor drainage, erosion issues, extreme slopes (greater than 15 per cent) or other environmental or physical conditions that would interfere with the lands potential development or use as a public park; • Lands that are required to accommodate storm water management facilities. And, where lands for parks purposes include stormwater management facilities, that portion of the land that includes a stormwater management facility shall not be included in the area calculation for parkland conveyance; • Lands that are deemed to be contaminated in any way; • Lands used for utility corridors or any other infrastructure; and/or, • Lands that are encumbered by easements or similar legal instruments that prohibit public use.
City of Vaughan	Lands must be permit-ready for public programming, designed and developable to City standards, open and accessible to the public at all times, and meet requirements of applicable legislation and polices. Council may accept off-site land dedication. Unacceptable lands include lands: • with poor drainage, erosion issues, extreme slopes and other adverse physical conditions; • with open storm water management facilities; • deemed by the City to be contaminated in any way; and • that prohibit or restrict public programming.

Municipality	Summary of Parkland Acceptability
City of Markham	Parks shall generally: • have frontage on one or more public streets or publicly accessible private streets; • serve park users within a 2 to 10 minute walk from residential and mixed-use neighbourhoods; • not be encumbered by driveways, access lanes, garbage storage areas, utility vaults or other such uses that would take away from the enjoyment or use of the park; and • be recognizable by the park user as a public and publicly accessible park.

Table 47: Jurisdictional Scan – Encumbered Parkland & Ownership

Municipality	Summary of Encumbered Parkland Policies
Town of Oakville	Within all areas, the town will consider Strata Ownership under the Ontario Condominium Act for Neighbourhood Parks and Parkettes, subject to a land area discount, in recognition of lifecycle cost issues, to the satisfaction of the town. Within Strategic Growth Areas, the town may augment the urban parkland system with Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPs). The town may consider providing parkland dedication credit, where the following criteria are met, to the satisfaction of the town: • It is an integral element, and is directly connected to the broader urban parkland system and the adjacent public sidewalk system; • It can be defined only as an Other Urban Park element, and is not a Public Common, Urban Square, or Promenade; • An appropriate legal agreement has been established between the owner and the town that guarantees that the space is designed, built and maintained to town standards, and is open and accessible to the public at all times (or as otherwise to the satisfaction of the town); and, • The land area of the POPs is appropriately discounted, in recognition of the town's lack of programming control, to the satisfaction of the town. The actual amount of the land area discount shall be determined on a case-by-case basis, at the sole discretion of, and to the satisfaction of the town.
City of Vaughan	The City's 2022 By-law allows for the dedication for land for passive recreation uses. Acceptable lands (full credit) for parkland dedication include: strata parks; land encumbered by underground storm water facilities, utility corridors, and other publicly owned infrastructure; land that forms part of the Natural Heritage Network and associated buffers; land encumbered by floodplains or sustainability features; and land within the Greenbelt or Oak Ridges Moraine. Agreements may be required for such lands. The By-law also allows Council the discretion to accept privately owned public space (POPs) at full credit, subject to an agreement with the City.

Municipality	Summary of Encumbered Parkland Policies
City of Markham	The City may accept parkland where the ownership of the land is stratified or where the parkland is encumbered, including by underground structures. Typically, strata parks are located in mixed-use neighbourhoods in the form of a Neighbourhood Park such as an Urban Square or Urban Parkette. The value of the contribution to the parkland conveyance of any strata park shall be discounted at the discretion of the City.

Table 48: Jurisdictional Scan – Parkland Cash in Lieu Policies

Municipality	Summary of Parkland Cash in Lieu Policies
Town of Oakville	First priority is fee simple (municipal ownership). The town anticipates that approximately 25% of the land or cash in lieu within Strategic Growth Areas will be acquired within the area where it was generated. The remaining 75% generated through parkland dedication will be allocated elsewhere within the town in accordance with its parkland dedication procedure. Within the established neighbourhoods and Greenfield communities, land dedication shall always be the first priority. The Town does not use a per unit fee for calculating parkland dedication amounts, rather bases the amount off land appraisals coordinated through Realty Services, at the cost of the owner. Cash in lieu funds are allocated as follows: • First priority is the acquisition of parkland on the subject site. • Second priority is the acquisition of parkland within 400 metres of the subject site. • Third priority is the acquisition of parkland anywhere in the town. • Fourth priority is the acquisition of lands for pathways, trails and associated infrastructure throughout the town (with a focus on missing links), the erection, improvement, or repair of buildings used for park or other public recreational purposes, and/or the acquisition of vehicles and equipment used for parks maintenance or other public recreational purposes.

Municipality	Summary of Parkland Cash in Lieu Policies
City of Vaughan	First priority is fee simple (municipal ownership). At its discretion, the City may allow for payment in lieu where no reasonable prospect for land dedication exists, including • where land conveyance would render the remaining portion of the subject lands unsuitable or impractical for development or redevelopment; • where the amount of land conveyance does not meet the City's Official Plan definitions of parklands or provide a parkland configuration acceptable to the City; or • where existing parks and other recreational spaces are available and deemed sufficient by the City Per unit cash in lieu fees for stand-alone residential additions and multi-unit residential buildings are established within the by-law, with increases phased in annually until 2025. For multi-unit buildings, these fees will increase from $11,300 per unit in 2022 to $27,994 per unit in March 2025. The use of cash-in-lieu funding is prioritized at the City's discretion to support the acquisition of additional land and/or the completion of park enhancements or park redevelopment to meet the City's parkland objectives.
City of Markham	Instances where payment in lieu of parkland are not identified within the City's Parkland By-law. The citywide average per unit charge for all residential types is approximately $33,200.

Parkland Dedication Scenarios under the *Planning Act*

Parkland Dedication Scenarios under the *Planning Act*, 5-hectare development site

Units per Hectare	Total Units (5-hectare site)	Estimated Persons per Unit	Total Persons	Dedication Rate Applied	Parkland Dedication or Cash-in-Lieu	Hectares per 1,000 residents
15	75	3.4	255	Standard Rate (5% of site)	0.25 ha (land or CIL)	**0.98 ha/1000**
30	150	3.2	480		0.25 ha (land or CIL)	**0.52 ha/1000**
50	250	3.0	750	Alternative Rate (1ha:600 units or 1ha:1000 units CIL)	0.42 ha (land) or 0.25 ha (CIL)	**0.56 ha/1000**
100	500	2.2	1,100		0.5 ha (land – capped) or 0.5 ha (CIL)	**0.45 ha/1000**
150	750	2.0	1,500		0.5 ha (land – capped) or 0.5 ha (CIL)	**0.33 ha/1000**
250	1,250	1.8	2,250		0.5 ha (land – capped) or 0.5 ha (CIL)	**0.22 ha/1000**

Note: Parkland dedication is capped at 10% of the land or value of the land for development or redevelopment sites that are five hectares or less.

Parkland Dedication Scenarios under the *Planning Act*, 10-hectare development site

Units per Hectare	Total Units (10-hectare site)	Estimated Persons per Unit	Total Persons	Dedication Rate Applied	Parkland Dedication or Cash-in-Lieu	Hectares per 1,000 residents
15	150	3.4	510	Standard Rate (5% of site)	0.5 ha (land or CIL)	**0.98 ha/1000**
30	300	3.2	960		0.5 ha (land or CIL)	**0.52 ha/1000**
50	500	3.0	1,500	Alternative Rate (1ha:600 units or 1ha:1000 units CIL)	0.83 ha (land) or 0.5 ha (CIL)	**0.56 ha/1000**
100	1,000	2.2	2,200		1.5 ha (land – capped) or 1.0 ha (CIL)	**0.68 ha/1000**
150	1,500	2.0	3,000		1.5 ha (land – capped) or 1.5 ha (CIL)	**0.50 ha/1000**
250	2.500	1.8	4,500		1.5 ha (land – capped) or 1.5 ha (CIL)	**0.33 ha/1000**

Note: Parkland dedication is capped at 15% of the land or value of the land for development or redevelopment sites that are greater than five hectares.