



Pickering Forward: Official Plan Review

Community Elements and Infrastructure Engagement Summary Report

June 2025

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Executive Summary

During engagement on the Community Elements and Infrastructure component of Pickering Forward, the City of Pickering's Official Plan Review, input was gathered from about 250 residents through two Public Information Centres and an online survey. Key emerging themes highlighted the need to improve transportation options beyond driving, with many calls for safer, more accessible, and connected infrastructure for walking, cycling, and public transit. Priorities included wider sidewalks, separated bike lanes, better lighting, reliable transit services, and concerns about traffic growth and equitable access for all users.

On cultural heritage, participants emphasized protecting buildings and intangible heritage through storytelling, plaques, and inclusive public art. A strong desire was expressed to integrate local stories and cultural identity into urban design, with support for spaces that commemorate community history and celebrate diverse narratives. Participants expressed mixed views on how to best preserve heritage buildings but agreed on the importance of context-sensitive approaches and community-led decision-making.

Regarding parks, participants preferred a mix of large and small parks that are walkable, multi-purpose, and connected through trail systems. Integrating green spaces wherever possible was suggested to enhance recreational opportunities across the city. Inclusive design and natural features such as bioswales and permeable pavers were also suggested.

The community expressed the importance of a more sustainable, inclusive, and connected Pickering. This input will guide the development of the updated Official Plan, ensuring it reflects the community's vision regarding Pickering's growth.

This report was written by LURA Consulting, the independent community engagement team retained to deliver community engagement. It summarizes and reflects the community's diverse inputs for the City of Pickering's Official Plan.

Section 1: Project Overview

Project Description and Engagement Objectives

The City of Pickering is updating its Official Plan, the City's long-range, comprehensive planning document that guides land use decision-making. An Official Plan addresses issues such as:

- Where to locate new housing, industry, offices, and shops.
- What services will be needed, such as roads, water mains, sewers, parks and schools.
- How to protect what is important, such as the natural environment and cultural heritage.
- When, where, and in what order the community will grow.
- Where and how the City will invest in community improvement initiatives.

This engagement report summarizes input from the fifth community conversation related to community elements and infrastructure, which will inform the City's Official Plan Review.



Figure 1 – Pickering Forward project logo.

Section 2: Engagement Process and Communication Methods

Engagement Methods



Figure 2 – Image of participants engaging in discussion at the in-person Public Information Centre.

In May 2025, the City of Pickering hosted an in-person Public Information Centre (PIC), a virtual PIC, and an online survey to gather community input about community elements and infrastructure. Two hundred and forty-six (246) people participated in these events.

In-Person Public Information Centre

On May 6th, 2025, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., an in-person PIC was held at the Purpose Church (1527 Bayly Street). Eight (8) people attended the event. City staff delivered a brief overview of what makes up Pickering's community elements and infrastructure, including policies in place to enhance and protect transportation, cultural heritage, parks and open spaces. The presentation was followed by a question-and-answer period and activity to stimulate discussions.

Appendix A includes a detailed summary of the in-person PIC.

Virtual Public Information Centre

The project team hosted a virtual PIC on May 7th, 2025, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. Seventeen (17) people attended the online event. City staff presented the same content as the in-person PIC. The presentation was followed by a question-and-answer period.

Appendix B includes a detailed summary of the virtual PIC's comments.

Online Survey

From April 22nd, 2025, to May 20th, 2025, an online survey was available on Let's Talk Pickering. The survey questions sought input from the community on how the City of Pickering can create complete communities, improve mobility, preserve heritage buildings, and expand the parks

system. Two hundred and twenty-one (221) people responded to the survey. The demographics of the survey participants are provided in the **Who Participated** section below.

Appendix C includes a detailed summary of the survey responses.

Communication Methods

The City of Pickering used various methods to advertise the Official Plan review and engagement opportunities. Information was shared through the following channels:

- Via email with interested parties, registered ratepayers' groups, and Committee of Council liaisons.
- Published multiple notices on social media, including paid pushes on Facebook.
- Displayed digital message boards throughout the City.
- Posters were placed in all City library branches.
- Details were posted on the City's website and online public notices section.

Engagement and Reach

Table 1 below shows the reach of engagement throughout the engagement period.

Table 1: Summary of engagement activities.

Engagement Activity	Date	Location or Format	Attendance or Response Count
In-Person Public Information Centre	May 6 th , 2025 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.	In-person at the Purpose Church	8
Virtual Public Information Centre	May 7 th , 2025, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.	Online via Teams Webinar	17
Online Survey	April 22 nd , 2025 – May 20 th , 2025	Online via Let's Talk Pickering	221
TOTAL			246

Data Analysis Methodology

Input was gathered through in-person and virtual PICs, and an online survey. Where responses were received to a quantitative question, results have been quantified. All qualitative responses are analyzed thematically. This involves summarizing and categorizing qualitative data to capture important concepts within the data set.

Section 3: What We Heard

This section summarizes the key themes heard on Community Elements and Infrastructure.

In-Person Public Information Centre

Below are highlights of the in-person PIC findings. Discussions on each topic, transportation, cultural heritage, and parks, are captured thematically.

Transportation



Figure 3 - Image of participants discussing topics about transportation.

Participants reported primarily getting around Pickering by car, followed by walking, using transit, and cycling. They expressed concerns about transit accessibility, traffic congestion, and safety on major roads like Highway 7. Participants recommended more and wider sidewalks, separated bike lanes, better lighting, and safer, non-glass bus shelters to improve transportation services and conditions. There were suggestions for infrastructure that supports safe, connected, and inclusive mobility options for all residents, including seniors and people with disabilities.

Cultural Heritage Elements



Figure 4 – Image of participant discussing topics about cultural heritage elements.

Participants emphasized protecting physical heritage elements like cemeteries, public art, commemoration spaces, and intangible cultural heritage—particularly storytelling. They wanted

to see local stories, histories, and origin narratives meaningfully integrated throughout the city through plaques, displays, and public spaces. Suggestions included using storytelling to build identity and community pride, with creative approaches like “in the footsteps” walking tours and culturally themed initiatives. Regarding redevelopment, participants preferred buffering heritage buildings rather than relocating them and called for preservation strategies tailored to each building’s specific context and era.

Parks



Figure 5 - Image of participant discussing topics about parks.

Participants preferred a mix of several smaller parks and a few large ones in Pickering, emphasizing accessibility, connectivity, and inclusive design for all ages and abilities. Suggestions included integrating parks into employment areas, ensuring walkability, adding parking, and incorporating natural features like bioswales and hydro pavers for stormwater management. Participants also stressed the importance of parks as vital community spaces that support mental health, offer free recreation, and serve those without private yards. Parks like Maple Ridge and Beverley Morgan were praised for their amenities, accessibility, and neighbourhood walkability.

Online Survey

Below are highlights of the online survey findings. Each multiple-choice question includes a graph showing responses and themes emerging from ideas participants provided under 'Other' in the list of survey answers. Open-ended questions are summarized thematically.

Complete Community

Complete communities accommodate people of all ages, abilities, incomes, and backgrounds. Complete communities allow people to live close to the area where they work, learn, shop, and play. Complete communities may look different in Pickering's urban and rural communities.

Participants were asked to identify which neighbourhoods in Pickering offer the best characteristics of a complete community.

The most frequently mentioned neighbourhoods seen as having characteristics of a complete community in Pickering include Amberlea, Bay Ridges, West Shore, City Centre, and Rosebank. These areas were praised for their walkability, mix of housing types, access to parks, schools, transit, and community services. However, many participants felt that no neighbourhood in Pickering truly meets the standard of a complete community, citing issues like car dependency, lack of bike lanes, disconnected amenities, and poor planning. Some highlighted newer areas like Seaton as having potential but lacking basic infrastructure like shopping and transit. Additional comments included the following:

- **Specific Areas**
 - Amberlea (21)
 - Bay Ridges (14)
 - Not sure (13)
 - West Shore (11)
 - City Centre / Downtown (10)
 - Rosebank / South Rosebank (7)
 - Liverpool (5)
 - Near Pickering Mall (4)
 - Seaton / Setonville / New Seaton (3)
 - Pickering Village (3)
 - Other areas mentioned by two or less participants include: Glendale, Maple Ridge, Rouge West / Rougemount, Glenanna / Glen Grove, Valley Farm Road, Dunbarton, Major Oaks Road, Whites Road and Finch, The Esplanade N., Altona Forest/North Pickering, Lookout Point, Taunton & Whites / Burkholder, Fox Hollow, Abbey Road, Greenwood, Northshore, Chestnut Hill / Recreation Centre, Fairport and Finch, Pacific Fresh Food Market area, Kinsale.

Participants were asked what Pickering neighbourhoods need more of to become complete communities.

The following feedback was received:

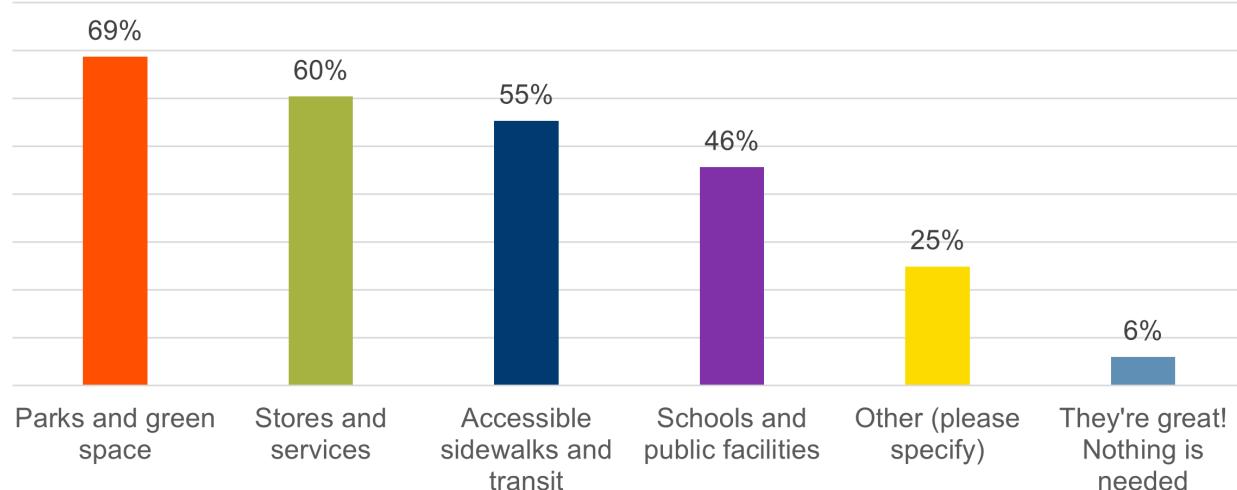


Figure 6 - Summary of elements selected to make Pickering neighbourhoods complete communities. *N = 217*

Figure 6 shows that most participants selected “parks and green space” (69%), followed by “stores and services” (60%), and “accessible sidewalks and transit” (55%).

Some participants expanded on their choices. Their explanations are summarized below:

- **Transportation and Connectivity**
 - Improve public transit with frequent, reliable service that connects to TTC and within neighbourhoods.
 - Develop a walkable and bikeable city with connected bike lanes and safer sidewalks (shelters, signage, lighting, and emergency features).
 - Build more roundabouts, wider roads, and turn lanes to ease congestion and reduce emissions.
- **Community Facilities & Services**
 - Build more localized community centres and public gathering spaces.
 - Expand access to green spaces, trails, libraries, family clinics, and senior activity spaces.
 - Ensure public spaces have basic amenities like public bathrooms and seating.
- **Land Use and Zoning**
 - Promote mixed-use zoning and the “live-work-play” model to reduce car dependency.
 - Limit high-rise development; support low-rise and diverse housing options for seniors and families.
- **Economy and Local Business**
 - Attract more local jobs with livable wages and reduce reliance on external commercial hubs.
 - Support independent businesses with affordable rents and storefronts.
 - Encourage third spaces (e.g., pottery studios, yoga, coworking) for local gathering and creativity.

- **Equity and Inclusion**

- Design inclusive communities for all ages, abilities, and racial backgrounds.
- Add more Indigenous spaces and representation in the built environment.
- Increase visible, responsive safety infrastructure (street lighting, emergency communication).

Transportation and Mobility

Participants were asked to identify how they usually get around in Pickering.

The following feedback was received:

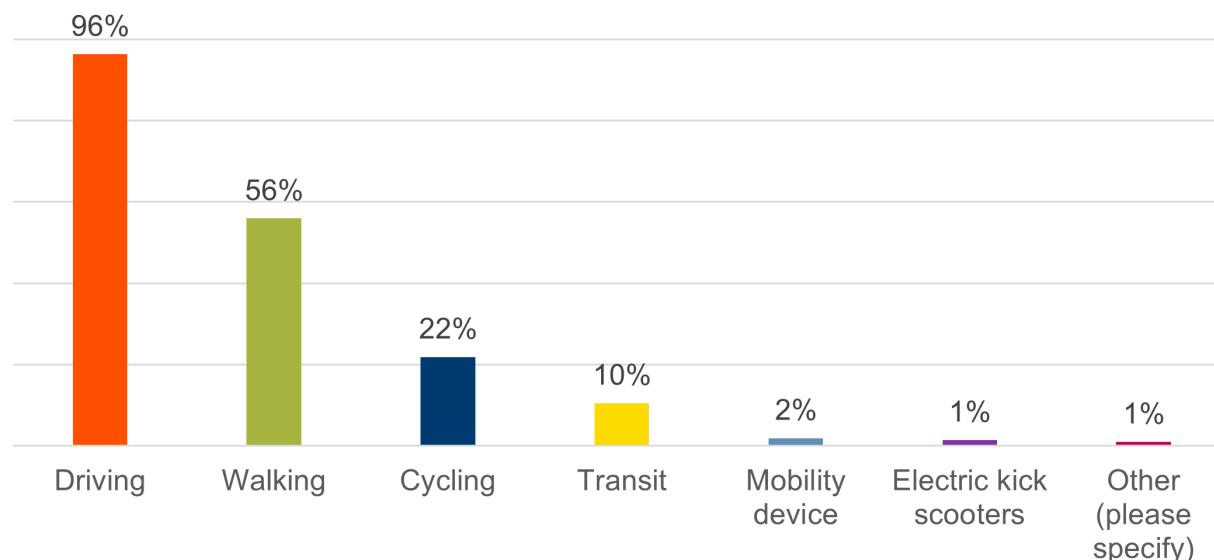


Figure 7 - Summary of transportation methods participants used to get around Pickering.

N=220

Figure 7 shows that most participants selected “driving” (96%), followed by “walking” (56%), and “cycling” (22%).

Participants were asked to select what could make walking, cycling, or taking transit easier and/or safer in Pickering.

The following feedback was received:

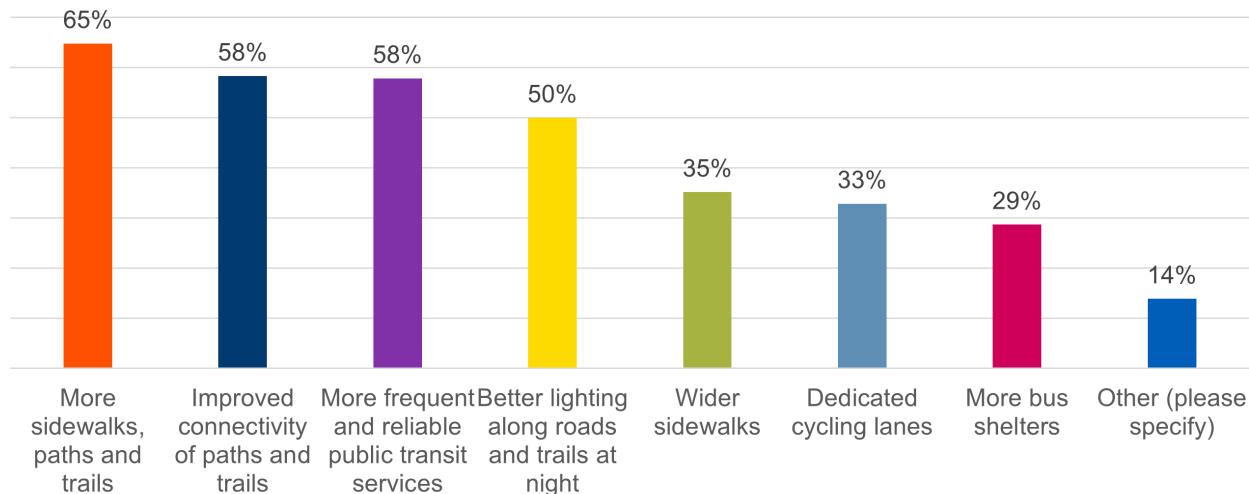


Figure 8 - Summary of elements identified to make transportation easier and/or safer in Pickering.

N=216

Figure 8 shows that most participants selected “more sidewalks, paths, and trails” (65%), followed by “improved connectivity” (58%), “more frequent and reliable public transit services” (58%) and “better lighting along roads and trails at night” (50%).

Some participants expanded on their choices. Their explanations are summarized below:

- **Pedestrian Safety**
 - Build and maintain sidewalks near schools and along rural or high-traffic roads.
 - Improve crossing safety with features like safer on/off-ramp designs, more crosswalks, and better lighting.
 - Add pedestrian-only zones.
- **Cycling Infrastructure**
 - Create protected bike lanes that are separated from traffic.
 - Ensure full network connectivity with continuous cycling routes and multi-use trails.
- **Public Transit**
 - Improve transit service quality and wayfinding; explore alternatives like LRT, subway, or small elevated trains.
 - Increase transit safety through enforcement and shorter distances to stops.
 - Encourage mixed-use and walkable developments so people can live, work, and shop without needing a car.
- **Traffic Management and Safety**
 - Introduce traffic-calming measures (e.g., speed humps, chicanes, lower speed limits).
 - Improve traffic flow and road maintenance, especially on arterial roads (e.g., Brock, Kingston, Bayly).
 - Enforce traffic laws more strictly to reduce dangerous driving behaviour.

Cultural Heritage

Participants were asked what cultural heritage elements in Pickering should be protected, aside from heritage buildings.

Many participants emphasized the importance of protecting Pickering's waterfront, citing concerns about overdevelopment and a desire to preserve public access. Natural features such as forests, trails, wetlands, and green spaces were also widely valued for their ecological and recreational significance. Parks, recreational areas, and agricultural lands were seen as integral to the city's identity and community wellbeing. Several responses also highlighted the need to preserve Indigenous cultural elements, small heritage landmarks, and spaces that foster local cultural life. Additional comments included the following:

- **Waterfronts**
 - Protect the waterfront, including Frenchman's Bay, Liverpool Beach, boardwalks, and marinas.
 - Avoid overdevelopment and loss of public access to lakefront areas.
 - Designate waterfront zones as parkland or wildlife refuges.
- **Green Spaces and Natural Features**
 - Preserve trails (e.g. Seaton Trail), wetlands, forests, and conservation areas.
 - Protect the Greenbelt, Duffins Creek, Petticoat Creek, Lynde Shores, and Rouge National Urban Park.
 - Maintain big trees, marshes, watersheds, and native wildlife habitats.
- **Recreation Areas**
 - Preserve parks, swimming areas, splash pads, and playgrounds.
 - Protect public parks like Diana Princess of Wales Park and Beachfront Park.
- **Cultural Identity**
 - Preserve Indigenous cultural sites and historical areas like Whitevale, and hamlets.
 - Protect spaces like Devi Mandir, youth murals, small malls, and community gathering spots.
 - Increase and protect public art, storytelling routes, performance centres, and heritage-based tourism.
- **Agricultural & Rural Landscape**
 - Ensure that farmland in North Pickering is protected for agritourism and local food production.
 - Preserve scenic rural roads, brick farm walls, and rolling hills.

Participants were asked to select the best way to preserve and protect heritage buildings in neighbourhoods that are being redeveloped.

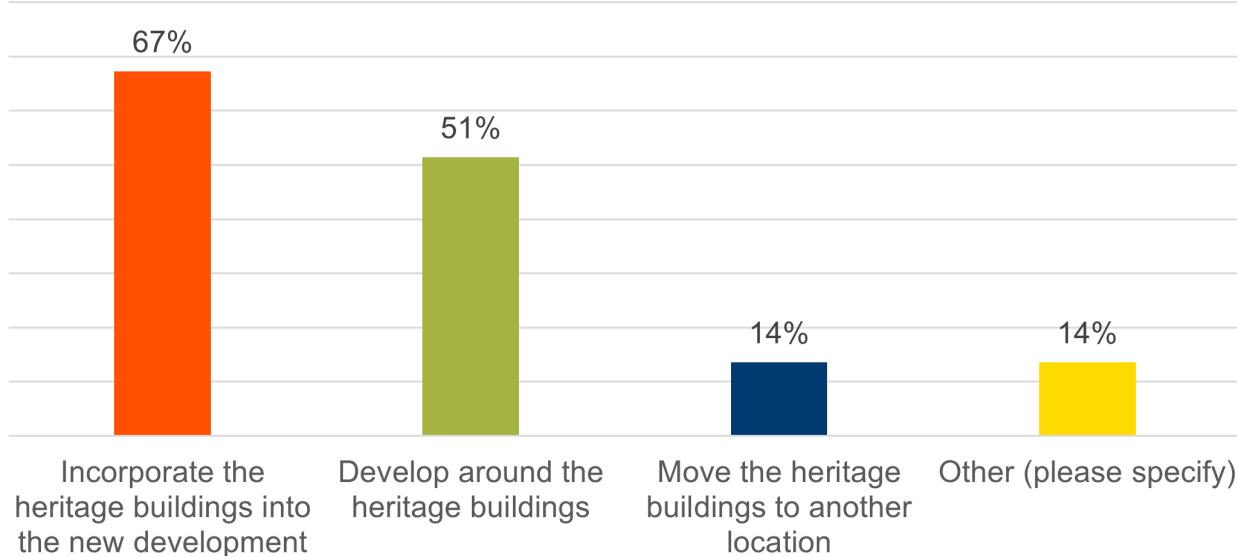


Figure 9 - Summary of suggestions identified as the best ways to preserve and protect heritage buildings in neighbourhoods that are being redeveloped. N=214

Figure 9 shows that most participants selected “incorporate the heritage buildings into the new development” (67%), followed by “develop around the heritage buildings” (51%).

- **Conditional Support**
 - Preservation should depend on the building’s condition, context, or proposed use.
 - Integrate heritage buildings into new developments with green space or design consistency.
 - Ensure that relocated heritage buildings remain within Pickering.
- **Opposition or Indifference**
 - Redevelopment should take precedence.
 - Let heritage buildings go if the upkeep is costly.
- **Policies and Planning**
 - Ensure that community values are understood and apply clear planning tests during development reviews.
 - Model policies after successful examples in other municipalities like Markham or Barrie.
 - Develop and enforce stricter guidelines and protections near heritage sites.

Parks

Participants were asked what parks in Pickering they love and why.

The following feedback was received:

Most Loved Parks

Table 2 – Summary of which parks in Pickering participants love and why.

Park	Why People Love It
Petticoat Creek Conservation Area (50)	Walking/biking trails, water proximity, size, family friendliness, and nature access
Frenchman's Bay & Waterfront Parks (45)	Lake views, fresh air, calm atmosphere, and open trails
Rouge National Urban Park (30)	Preserved natural landscapes, hiking, and a break from urban life
Seaton Trail (20)	Immersive nature experiences and scenic hiking
Alex Robertson Park (10)	Shade, sledding, culture/history, and ease of access
David Farr Park (10)	Open green space, safety, trails, and multi-season usability
Bay Ridges Kinsmen Park (10)	Natural remnants, marshes, and centrality
Esplanade Park (10)	Artistic elements, shade, event programming, and accessibility
Amberlea Park (10)	Splash pad, sports fields, tobogganing, and lack of parking
Princess Diana Park / Diana Princess of Wales Park (10)	Community gardens, play equipment, trail loops, and sports amenities
Millennium Square (10)	Social hub, event space, and lakefront access
Altona Forest / Altona Park (5)	Natural, less developed environment
Rotary Frenchman's Bay West Park (5)	Beach, water access, and good facilities

Desired Features

- Forested areas, wildlife, and natural beauty.
- Trail connectivity.
- Water access/waterfront parks.
- Family-friendliness (playgrounds, splash pads, etc.).
- Multi-use amenities (sports fields, gardens, etc.).
- Walkability and cycling access.
- Cleanliness and maintenance.
- Event programming and community use.

Concerns and Criticisms

- Poor maintenance or degradation.
- Limited parking or access.
- Overdevelopment/loss of green space.
- Lack of quality parks in certain areas.
- Accessibility issues.
- Dog waste.
- Overcrowding.

- Safety on mixed-use trails.

Participants were asked to identify how important it is to integrate parks into the design and planning of new developments.

The following feedback was received:

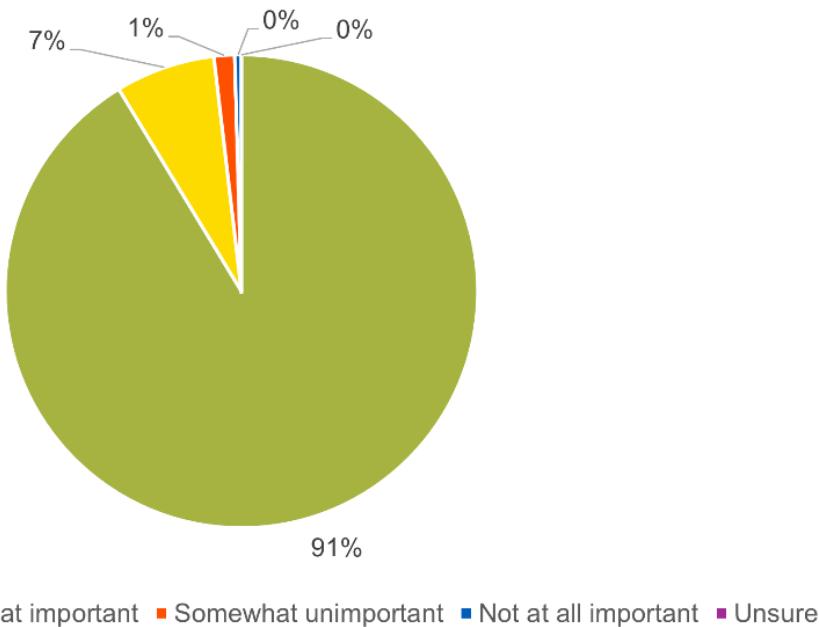


Figure 10 - Summary of the level of importance of integrating parks into the design and planning of new developments.

N=220

Figure 10 shows that most participants selected “very important” (91%), followed by “somewhat important” (7%).

Participants were asked what types of parks are most needed in Pickering.

The following feedback was received:

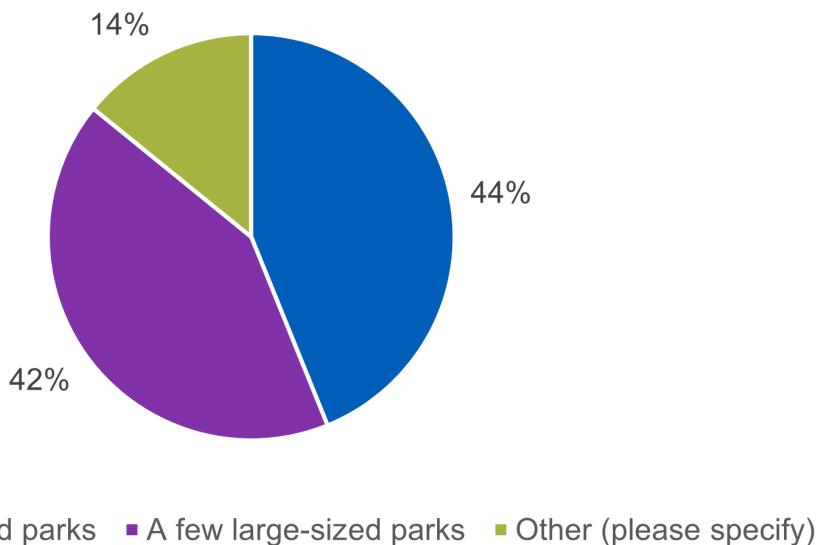


Figure 11 – Summary of the type of parks identified as most needed in Pickering.

N=212

Figure 11 shows that most participants selected “several smaller-sized parks” (44%), followed by “a few larger-sized parks” (42%).

Participants who selected “other” emphasized the need for a variety of park types, including large and small spaces to serve different purposes - from family gatherings and sports to quiet relaxation and play. Many stressed the importance of integrating parks into all neighbourhoods, especially areas that lack green space, and highlighted the value of connecting parks through off-road trails.

All participants were asked to expand on their choices. Their explanations are summarized below:

- **Accessibility and Proximity**
 - Strong desire for parks within walking distance of homes.
 - Smaller, distributed parks are seen as more accessible, especially for children, seniors, and those without cars.
 - Emphasis on walkability, active transportation, and reducing car dependence.
- **Balance Between Large and Small Parks**
 - Many respondents want smaller neighbourhood parks for daily use and large destination parks for gatherings and events.
 - Large parks are valued for hosting community events and sports and having varied amenities.
 - Smaller parks are praised for being peaceful, accessible, and integrated into neighbourhoods.
- **Desired Amenities and Infrastructure**



- Sports courts (pickleball, basketball, tennis)
- Splash pads and outdoor pools
- Playgrounds (including accessible/ inclusive ones)
- Trails and paths for walking and biking
- Picnic areas, seating, shade, BBQ spots
- Skating rinks, sledding hills, nature elements
- **Mental and Physical Wellbeing**
 - Parks are tied to improved mental health, wellness, and physical activity.
 - Parks are essential in high-density living where backyards are limited or absent.
 - Comments emphasize the calming, peaceful nature of green space.
 - Parks are seen as a way to preserve green space, support biodiversity, and mitigate climate change.
- **Equity and Inclusion**
 - Concerns that park distribution isn't equitable—rural areas, high-density developments, and northern neighbourhoods may be underserved.
 - There is a desire for inclusive designs and diverse programming to serve all ages and abilities.

Who Participated

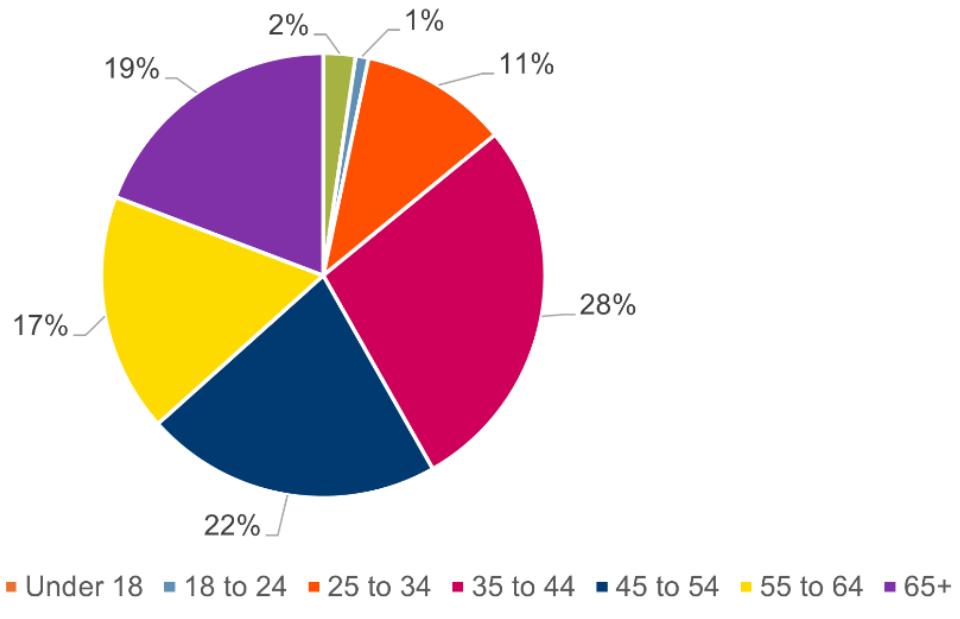


Figure 12 - Summary of participant ages.

N=213

Figure 12 shows most survey participants were between the ages of 35 and 54 with:

- 19% being 65+.
- 17% between 55 and 64.
- 22% between 45 and 54.
- 28% between 35 and 44.
- 11% between 25 and 34.
- 1% between 18 and 24.

- 2% prefer not to answer.

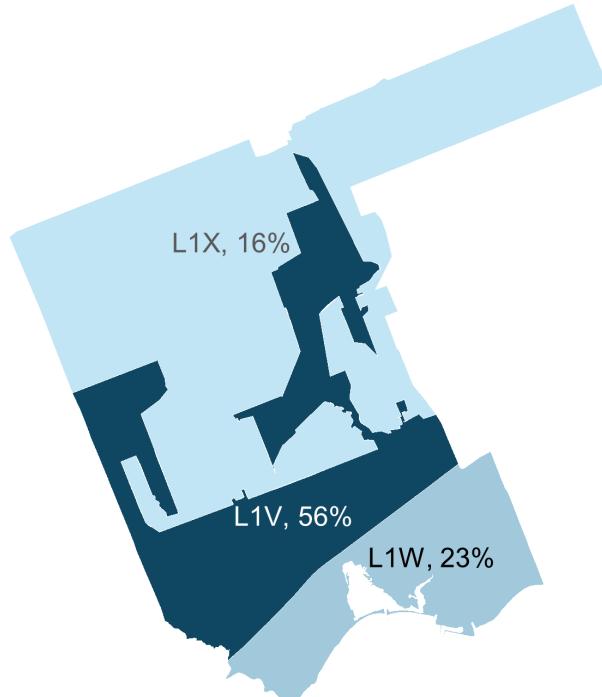


Figure 13 - Summary of participant postal codes.

N=200

Figure 13 shows the location of the survey participants. 56% live in the L1V postal code area, 23% live in the L1W postal code area, and 16% live in the L1X postal code area. The remaining 5% were participants from other postal code areas.

Section 4: Next Steps

Input from this engagement will inform the Official Plan about Community Elements and Infrastructure.

The next PIC will be in June 2025 to discuss *Housing and Affordability*.

The PICs provide an opportunity for more detailed conversations on how legislative changes, Pickering initiatives, and best practices will impact each listed topic. Further details on timelines are included below in Figure 14.

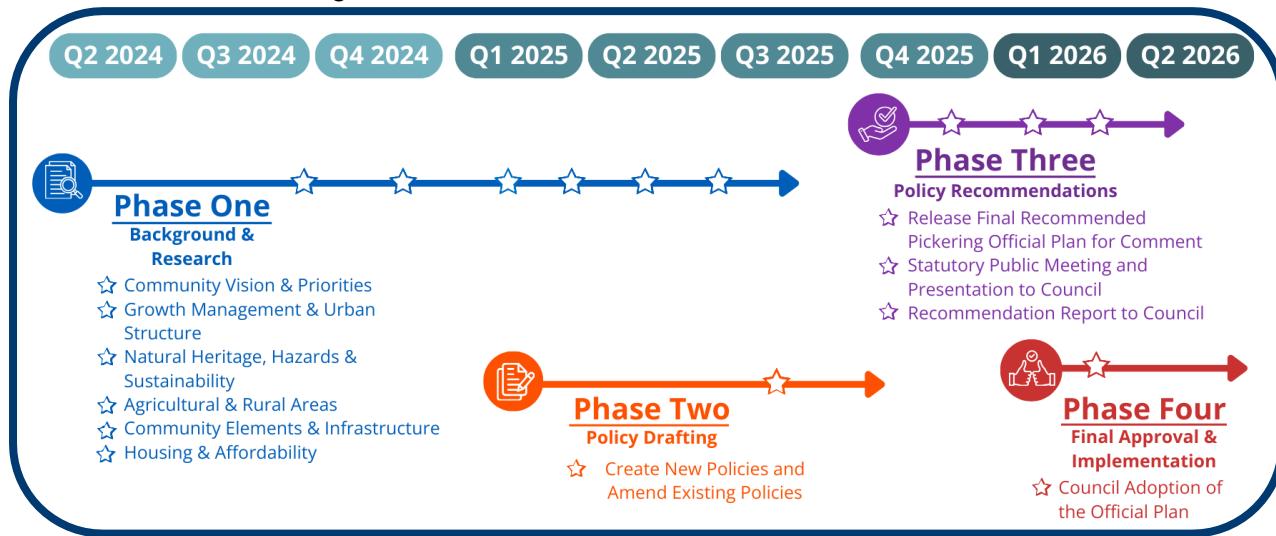


Figure 14 - Illustration of the Pickering Forward phases and breakdown.