



# 2020 Sustainable Pickering Year-in-Review

Sustainable  
PICKERING 

— City of —  
PICKERING

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The year 2020 was one like no other. The coronavirus spread and resulting impact presented a number of unique challenges to the businesses and residents of our community. While our service delivery and user-experience may have looked a little different, many meaningful sustainability projects, programs, and events were accomplished.

Some highlights of the past year include:

- Introduced a Virtual Farmers' Market to support local businesses and strengthen connections between local consumers and farmers, bakers, artisans, and other businesses until the traditional market could resume under public health guidelines.
- Implemented a Corporate Waste Diversion Strategy aimed at improving corporate waste disposal and diversion practices.
- Installed circuit level monitoring technology at City Hall and Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex to monitor and understand energy use, while identifying energy saving opportunities and setting performance targets.
- Launched a backyard Tree Planting program, in partnership with LEAF (Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests), and the Region of Durham, which enabled residents to plant native trees and shrubs on their property at a discounted rate.

I am proud of how our staff, residents, community groups, and businesses have responded to this unprecedented situation. By working together, we have been able to undertake actions that demonstrate a commitment to the long-term social, environmental, economic, and cultural vitality of our City.

A blue ink handwritten signature of Marisa Carpino, consisting of a stylized 'M' and 'C' followed by a horizontal line.

Marisa Carpino  
Chief Administrative Officer

## Adopt-a-Park

The [Adopt-a-Park program](#) encourages families, businesses, and community groups to become actively involved in keeping their local parks clean. As of 2020, 19 groups have adopted parks throughout Pickering by making a commitment to do litter cleanups, and promote a positive image in their neighbourhood park.



Devi Mandir Youth group picking up litter at Greenwood Park

## Stormwater Catch Basin

The City partnered with Littatrap to install the first trial stormwater catch basin in Pickering. The catch basin basket sits inside the stormwater drain and prevents litter and debris from being sent through the water system. Each device is capable of collecting over 3.6 kg of waste per day, including microplastics, improperly discarded cigarettes, and floating debris.

## Take Pride in Pickering Giveaway

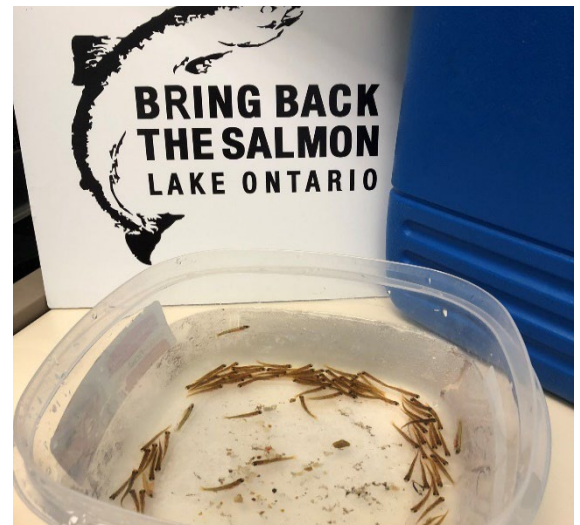
The City, in partnership with Ontario Power Generation, and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority hosted a free shrub giveaway, handing out 300 Red Osier Dogwood shrubs for residents to plant in their backyard.



Shrub Giveaway event

## Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Release

The City, in partnership with the Pickering Public Library, and Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters supported a salmon hatchery at the Pickering Public Library. Library patrons observed and learned about the Atlantic salmon's lifecycle and the importance of biodiversity. The hatchery resulted in the release of 100 Atlantic salmon into Duffins Creek. To date, the program has helped release a total of 400 Atlantic salmon into Duffins Creek.



Atlantic salmon reared at the library

## Enhancing Rotary Frenchman's Bay West Park

Eight interpretive signs were installed at the educational kiosk at Rotary Frenchman's Bay West Park. The topics include the history of Frenchman's Bay, the Waterfront Trail, invasive species, threats to the park ecosystem, as well as detailed signs about the various types of ecosystems within the park.



Interpretive Signs at Rotary Frenchman's Bay West Park

## Duncannon Ravine

In 2019, the City began to restore the Duncannon Ravine tree canopy to address issues caused by the Emerald Ash Borer. This work continued in 2020, and an additional 100 deciduous and coniferous trees, 250 shrubs and 750 willow plant cuttings were added to the area.

## Backyard Tree Planting Program

In partnership with LEAF (Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests), and the Region of Durham, the City provided residents the opportunity to add native trees or shrubs to their property at a discounted rate. The program includes on-site consultation, free delivery and tree planting, as well as follow-up tree assessments. Through this [Backyard Tree Planting Program](#), 43 trees and 27 shrubs were planted throughout Pickering. Some benefits from these plantings include enhancement of the urban forest, increased property value and aesthetics, energy savings and comfort from shade, carbon sequestration, reduced urban heat island effect, and habitat enhancement.



Sugar Maple tree from the LEAF Backyard Tree Planting Program  
Photo Credit: Adriana Rezai-Stevens/LEAF

## Mayors' Monarch Pledge

[Pollinators](#) such as butterflies, birds, bats, and bees play a vital role in maintaining a healthy environment and sustainable food system. As part of the Mayors' Monarch Pledge, the City organized garden assessments from an expert horticulturalist. The assessments help staff and volunteer groups understand the gardens they care for.

## Pickering City Centre Pollinator Sculpture

As part of the Main Street Revitalization Initiative, pollinator sculptures designed by artist Ron Baird were installed in Esplanade Park. The sculptures celebrate and bring awareness to the City's commitment to supporting our pollinator population. They resemble large Joe Pie Weed flowers, which provide a natural food source to a number of honeybees. This project included other park enhancements such as new gathering areas, improved safety features, a community banner program, and public art installations.

## Pickering Blooms Day

This event educates residents on gardening, while recognizing [Pickering Blooms](#) participants that take pride in beautifying their front yard gardens. In 2020, the Garden of Distinction sign was awarded to 10 winners for their exceptional and beautiful garden design.

## Pollinator Week

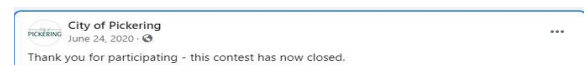
The City celebrated National Pollinator Week from June 22<sup>nd</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> by posting daily fun facts, activities and contests on its communication channels about the different ways residents can [help pollinators](#). This included tips and facts for planting pollinator gardens with species such as Milkweed, Cup Plant, Wild Bergamot, and other native plants.



SoRo Good Neighbour volunteer planting native plants at Rick Hull Memorial Park



Pollinator Sculpture at Pickering City Hall



As part of #NationalPollinatorWeek, be the first to identify these four Ontario butterflies in the comments for a chance to win a prize from Sustainable Pickering! (Pickering residents only). Butterflies travel long distances, helping to pollinate flowers along the way 🦋 🌸  
Learn how you can help pollinators at [pickering.ca/takeaction](http://pickering.ca/takeaction)



Virtual Pollinator Week Contest

## Flight of the Monarch Day

The City proclaimed August 22, 2020 as [Flight of the Monarch Day](#). This nation-wide initiative was led locally by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to celebrate and bring awareness to the Monarch butterfly and other species of concern. In honour of Flight of the Monarch Day, the City organized an educational campaign and an interpretive Monarch dance in parks near existing pollinator gardens. The dance was viewed online by over 5,000 viewers.



Flight of the Monarch Day Interpretive Dance at pollinator gardens. Photo Credit: David Ryce

## Replanted Pollinator Meadow

The David Farr Park Butterfly Meadow was renovated due to dominant plant species taking over the meadow. To create greater biodiversity and to attract many different butterfly species, staff rototilled and re-seeded early in 2020 with a custom seed mix that will result in a large variety of butterfly-attracting wildflowers. Once mature, the garden will provide a non-stop show of colour from May through October each year.

## Local Partnership to Expand Pollinator Habitat

The City partnered with Canada Bread Company Ltd. to plant 200 pollinator-friendly plants and shrubs in Ernie L. Stroud Park. The event also included a tag and release of Monarch butterflies that were reared at the Pickering Central Library as part of an educational exhibit. The beautiful butterfly release was viewed over 5,500 times on social media. Canada Bread also generously gifted approximately 110 native pollinator-friendly plants to three other garden projects in Pickering that were impacted by harsh summer conditions. Over the past three years, over 800 pollinator-friendly plants were planted by Canada Bread Ltd. to support declining local pollinator populations.



Monarch display at Pickering Central Library



Pollinator planting and butterfly tag and release

## Earth Month

In celebration of Earth Month, the City offered free, educational, virtual workshops from expert horticulturalists. This year over 600 viewers tuned in to learn about a variety of topics from Growing Culinary Herbs, Succulents for Beginners, Introduction to Vegetable Gardening, and Supporting Pollinators.



Virtual gardening webinar during Earth Month

## Reflections on Water Exhibit

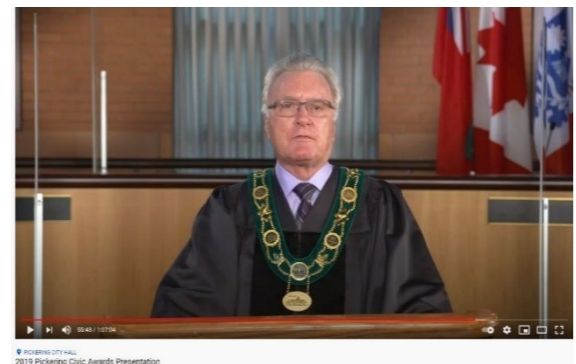
The [Reflections on Water exhibit](#) included photos of water in Pickering and the different ways it sustains life, powers industry, and supports recreation. Residents were invited to post a word, caption or story on the images that inspired them.



Reflections on Water virtual exhibit

## Civic Awards Program

[Civic Awards](#) is a recognition program to acknowledge members of the Pickering community that have made a significant contribution to the city. In 2020, Geranium Homes was awarded the Sustainability Award for installing the first-ever greywater system in a Pickering subdivision, and for their efforts to achieve 15% better energy efficiency than the Ontario Building Code. The Environment Award was given to St. Mary Catholic Secondary School Eco Team for their tireless efforts to increase environmental stewardship and awareness within the community. David Steele was also awarded the Environment Award for his history of volunteer work and continued efforts to be champion and advocate for the environment.



Civic Awards presented virtually to some remarkable residents and groups



## Neighbourhood Group Unveils 10K Project

Pickering's first-ever outdoor fitness circuit was unveiled in St. Mary Park as part of the City's final Celebrating Sustainable Neighbourhoods program. The project was a collaboration between the City and participating neighbourhood groups - PickWaste and Learning for Hope. PickWaste was awarded the opportunity to work with the City on a \$10,000 community enhancement project for its efforts in reducing litter and raising community awareness on the topic.



\$10,000 Community Enhancement Project – Outdoor Fitness Circuit at St. Mary Park

## Environmental Schools Grant

The [Environmental Schools Grant](#) supports Pickering school-based activities and programs that benefit the community and contribute to a healthy environment. Due to COVID-19, only seven of the twelve schools could complete their projects, however, the children's amazing efforts resulted in planting multiple pollinator gardens, installing shade trees in an outdoor classroom, purchasing an indoor aeroponic growing tower, and planting native shrubs and plants.



Maple Ridge Public School pollinator project supported by Environmental Schools Grant

## Pickering Farmers' Market

The City launched its first Virtual [Farmers' Market](#) in the spring to help residents connect online with local farmers, bakers, and artisans, as well as arrange for contact-free curbside delivery, until the in-person market reopened in the summer. The Virtual Market was well used with over 9,500 website visits. The in-person market ran for 13 weeks with approximately 4,550 visitors. The Market won 'Best Farm Market' in the StarMetroland Media Annual Readers' Choice Contest for the second consecutive year for providing the community with access to meat & fresh produce and supporting local businesses.



Produce from local farmers at the Pickering Farmers' Market

## Corporate Waste Strategy

In 2020, staff implemented a Corporate Waste Diversion Strategy to improve corporate waste disposal and diversion practices. The strategy focused on elements like staff education and awareness, training and collaboration across the corporation, integration of waste diversion into event/meeting guidelines, installation of customized user-friendly waste receptacles and standardization of collection services within City facilities.

## New Waste Receptacles

To help reduce waste, increase diversion, and reduce contamination rates in recyclables, 165 new waste bin receptacles were placed throughout 9 City facilities. The new user-friendly bins include pictures and descriptions for each waste stream to simplify recycling.

## Battery Recycling Program

The [Battery Recycling program](#) allows residents to drop off their batteries to the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex, Pickering Central Library, George Ashe, and East Shore Community Centres. In 2020, over 91 kilograms of batteries were recycled responsibly.

## Dog Waste Diversion Program

In 2020, the [Dog Waste Diversion Program](#) was available in 16 parks across Pickering. Approximately, 6.4 tonnes of dog waste was collected and delivered to a facility that converted it into electricity, heat, and nutrient-dense fertilizer.



New 4-tier waste receptacles at Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex



New 2-tier waste receptacles at Don Beer Arena

## Waste Reduction Week

The City celebrated [Waste Reduction Week](#) by focusing on the principles of a circular economy, resource efficiency, and waste reduction. A virtual educational campaign was delivered from October 15<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> to teach residents new ways to reduce textile, electronic, plastic and food waste, while also encouraging organizations and individuals to host safe, small-scale cleanup events.

## Paperless Building Permit Applications

In order to adapt to challenges with COVID-19, the City looked at new ways of conducting business. One such positive outcome was a shift to paperless building permit applications. In order to reduce exposure and adapt to the closure of City facilities, Building Services launched a Digital Submission Application for all building permits. The new process allowed for digital review and has greatly reduced paper use and waste. Similarly, the Planning & Design Division has also transitioned to electronic submission of applications and supporting material.

## Compost and Recycling Bin Exchange

In partnership with the Region of Durham, the City hosted a compost and recycling bin exchange. At this popular curbside event, over 600 residents were able to purchase or swap out their old bins for new ones.



Virtual Waste Reduction Week campaign



Drive-through bin exchange

## Energy Retrofit Project

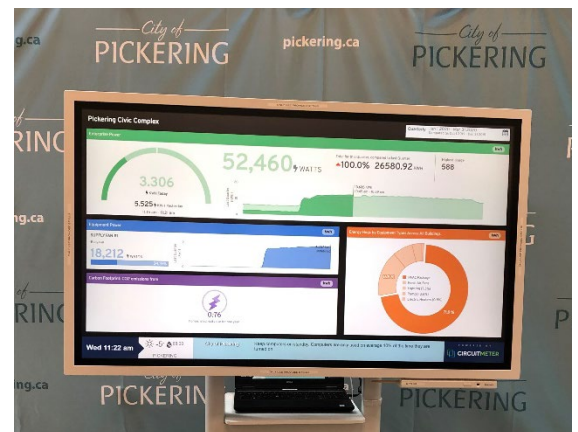
Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning units at Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex were replaced with energy efficient systems to reduce greenhouse gases and save up to 50% on energy use. The City received \$112,000.00 in incentives from energy savings to help offset the cost of boiler retrofits, street lighting phase 2.5, a solar FIT program at Dr. Tomlinson Community Centre, and the chiller and ice storage units at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex.



Boiler retrofit at Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex

## Circuit Meter Real Time Energy Management Platform

To monitor and understand energy consumption at City Hall, a circuit meter monitoring system was installed. This technology will identify energy saving opportunities, predictive maintenance, benchmark facility energy use, set performance targets, and monitor progress. A similar system will be installed at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex in 2021. Pickering is the first municipality in Canada to bring the Circuit Meter Real Time Energy Management platform into their operations.

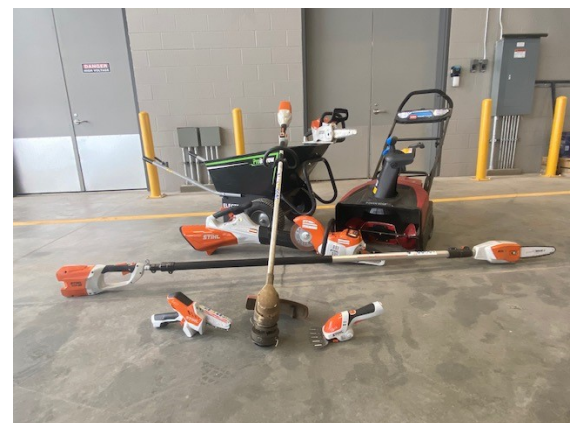


Circuit Meter Monitor at Pickering City Hall

## Electric Equipment

The City's Community Services Department purchased more environmental friendly equipment such as electric snow blowers, wheelbarrows, chainsaws, and pruners. The new equipment has many positive features:

- does not use fuel or produce exhaust fumes
- ergonomically friendly for the user
- reduced noise levels
- more user-friendly



Electric equipment used by parks and roads staff

## Sustainable Development Applications

In 2020, the City's [Sustainable Development Guidelines](#) were used to assess 53 development applications. The assessments identified mandatory and optional sustainable elements that could be included in draft plans for new neighbourhoods, site plans, rezoning and building permits. This City is applying for grants to undertake an engagement strategy and review process to update these standards in the future.



Sustainable development by local builder

## Seaton Trail Network

The City has been working with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) on the design of the primary neighbourhood connection trails that cross the natural heritage system within the Seaton development area. Site walks have been completed in order to determine the most appropriate trail routing to preserve as much of the natural environment as possible, while still providing an accessible path of travel.



Trail network within Seaton Development Area

## Integrated Transportation Management Plan

The City completed a draft [Integrated Transportation Master Plan](#) (ITMP) that will go to Council for consideration of approval in 2021. The ITMP is designed to define the policies, programs and infrastructure improvements required to address existing and future transportation needs. The City's Bikes and Trails Plan, from 1996, was also updated as part of the ITMP.



Public Engagement for Integrated Transportation Management Plan

## Waterfront Trail Improvements, Bruce Handsomb Park to Elvira Court

The City retained TRCA to complete investigations and prepare designs to improve the waterfront trail through this area. The existing trail is narrow, steep and crosses the watercourse over a culvert. TRCA will investigate to determine if a pedestrian bridge or other type of elevated crossing could be a more feasible way to span the valley. Construction is scheduled to proceed in the fall/winter of 2022.

In 2021, the City of Pickering will continue its longstanding commitment to create a more sustainable community. Join us on the journey to become one of the most sustainable cities in Canada. There are many fun and inspiring ways to make Pickering a better place socially, environmentally, and economically. To learn how you can get involved, visit: [pickering.ca/sustainable](https://pickering.ca/sustainable).

We welcome your comments, questions and suggestions. Please contact the City's Sustainability staff at [sustainability@pickering.ca](mailto:sustainability@pickering.ca).

Alternate formats available upon request at 905.683.7575 or [customercare@pickering.ca](mailto:customercare@pickering.ca).