

Appendix B: Virtual Public Information Centre

On February 11, 2025, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., project team members hosted a virtual public information centre via Zoom. Approximately 24 people attended the online event.

The project team began the meeting by asking participants demographic questions. The questions and results of the polls are as follows.

It is important to acknowledge that these poll results are based on a limited sample size and may not reflect the views of the broader population.

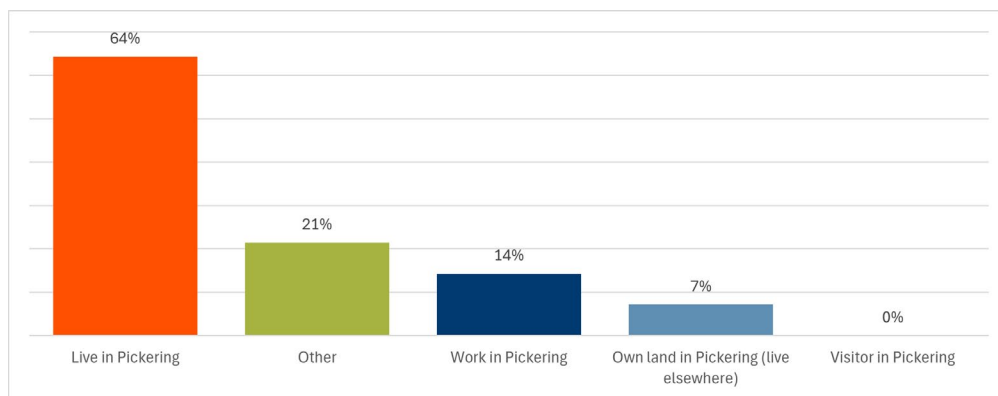


Figure 1 - Summary of participants' association with Pickering. N = 14

Figure 1 shows most participants selected “Living in Pickering” (64%) as a response to their association with Pickering. Participants selected “Other” (21%), “Work in Pickering” (14%), and “Own land in Pickering (live elsewhere)” (7%).

Participants were asked if they had attended any other Pickering Forward meetings. Sixty-four percent (64%) of participants indicated they had not attended previously, while thirty-six percent (36%) had attended a Pickering Forward meeting before.

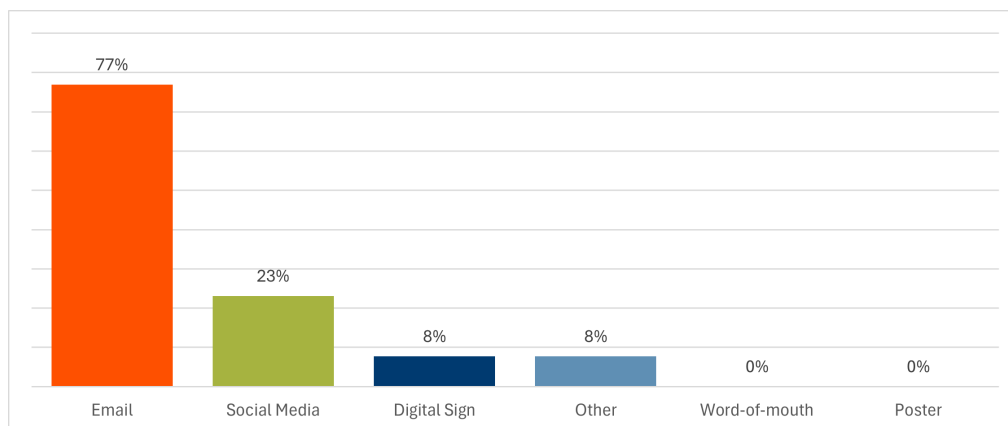


Figure 2 – Summary of how participants heard about this meeting. N = 13

Figure 2 shows most participants selected “email” (77%) in response to how they heard about the meeting. Participants also selected “social media” (23%), “digital sign” (8%), and “other” (8%).

Following the demographic poll questions, a presentation was delivered by City staff, discussing Pickering’s natural heritage features, hazards, and sustainability efforts, including what features are valuable and worth preserving, the process of natural heritage planning in Ontario, related provincial plans, legislation, and official plans. Additionally, the presentation spoke about the role of conservation authorities and provided an update on the federal airport lands.

Question and Answer

Following the presentation, participants were invited to ask questions of clarification. These are summarized below, with questions noted with a ‘Q,’ and answers noted with an ‘A’.

- **Q.** How do Category 3 land constraints impact development? Do they affect density or height limits? What mitigation measures might be required?
 - **A.** Land classification assesses agricultural capability, helping the City avoid high-quality farmland from urban development. Once designated for development, it won’t be reconsidered. Growth areas include South Pickering and Seaton, with Northeast Pickering being considered for future expansion. Before the Region lost its planning authority, this area was designated for urban growth and the details of that growth is still under review.
 - **Q.** What about Northeast Pickering’s natural systems?
 - **A.** The City is conducting a sub-watershed study to assess natural features and groundwater impacts. The results will guide planning decisions and determine which areas remain underdeveloped. Email the City to be added to the project contact list if interested.
- **Q.** Has the City considered using porous materials for streets to improve flood prevention and water absorption, as seen in European cities?
 - **A.** The City mainly looks at Ontario examples but is open to learning from other places. Engineers tend to be cautious, but projects like this can help introduce innovative solutions. Since the Official Plan of Pickering is a complete overhaul, the team welcomes proven ideas that could work in Pickering.
- **Q.** Will Pickering participate in the provincial 10-year review of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), Greenbelt Plan, and Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM) Conservation Plan?
 - **A.** The City follows the provincial Environmental Registry updates and actively engages in municipal and council-level feedback. The Greenbelt review is expected soon, but the PPS was recently updated and merged with the Growth Plan in 2024. Typically, these reviews occur every 10 years, and the City will be involved. While the City cannot predict the Province’s future actions, there has been active municipal engagement in past reviews, that the City hopes will continue.

- **Q.** How is the City addressing infrastructure, particularly traffic within the Kingston Road corridor?
 - **A.** Development is rapid in Pickering and across Durham’s lakeshore municipalities. The City looks at lessons from other GTA municipalities that are also developing around Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) like the Pickering GO station. Some infrastructure decisions are within the City’s control, while others, like parking, are developer-driven. The City’s master plan guides land-use decisions, ensuring development is phased in line with transit improvements.
- **Q.** With the loss of regional planning responsibilities and the conservation authority’s revised mandate, how will Pickering enhance its capacity in these areas?
 - **A.** The Regional Official Plan is now effectively the City’s plan, together with the Pickering Official Plan. The Region still handles key services, such as water, sewer, roads, transit, and health, but no longer oversees planning. The City may need additional studies to fill the gaps. The City collaborates with neighbouring municipalities to navigate these changes and adapt policies accordingly.
- **Q.** Could new provincial policies cause municipalities to work against each other?
 - **A.** Coordination and new expertise are essential for effective collaboration.
- **Q.** Northeast Pickering is on the Carruthers Creek headwaters and is surrounded by the Greenbelt. Given its ecological significance, how will Pickering protect these areas?
 - **A.** Northeast Pickering was designated for development despite the Region’s land needs assessment. While it is not within the Greenbelt, it includes agricultural and natural lands. A sub-watershed study will determine what areas need protection before development proceeds.
- **Q.** Is there a required minimum percentage of land that must remain natural?
 - **A.** No set percentage exists, but the City will follow best planning practices. For example, the sub-watershed study property studies in Northeast Pickering will further refine development boundaries. Some municipalities set targets, such as tree coverage goals, which are typically aspirational since each area is unique.
- **Q.** How does this planning align with the City’s Climate Adaptation Plan? Will it influence land use decisions, especially regarding sprawl in Northeast Pickering?
 - **A.** The City works with sustainability partners to align adaptation measures with planning policy. Some actions can be implemented sooner than broad official plan policies. Sustainability is a core lens in Pickering’s growth strategy, and the City welcomes feedback on specific priorities.

The project team asked a final poll question. The questions and results of the poll are as follows.

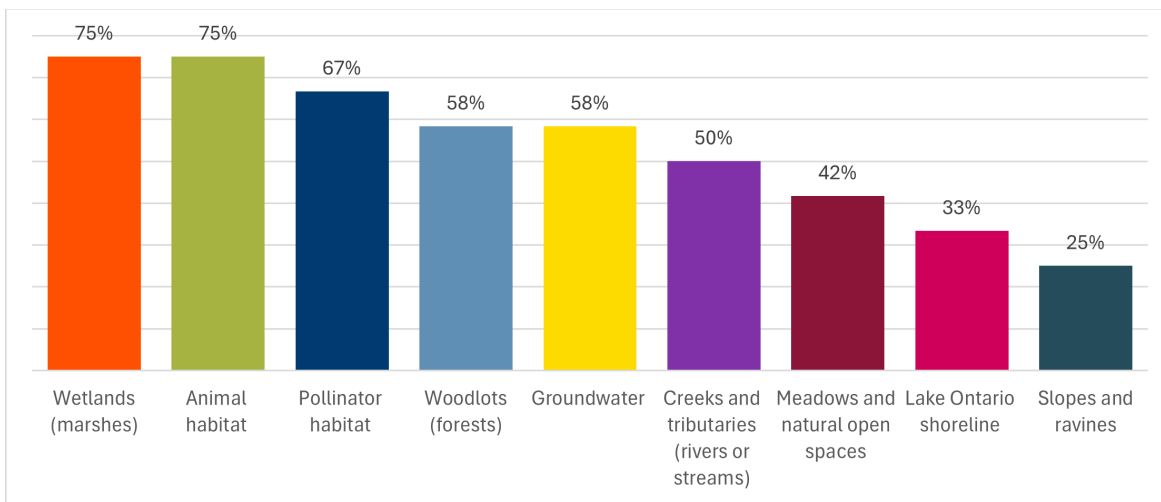


Figure 3 – Summary of which natural environmental features are most at risk of being impacted by development in Pickering. N = 12

Figure 3 shows that most participants selected “wetlands (marshes)” (75%) and “animal habitat” (75%) as natural environmental features that they think are well-protected in Pickering. Participants also selected “pollinator habitat” (67%), “woodlots (forests)” (58%), “groundwater” (58%), “creeks and tributaries (rivers or streams)” (50%), “meadows and natural open spaces” (42%), “Lake Ontario shoreline” (33%) and “slopes and ravines” (25%).

To conclude the meeting, the project team provided participants with the next steps and future engagement opportunities, noting that the next PIC will be held in March 2025 to discuss *Agricultural and Rural Areas*.