

Pickering
Public
Library



2024-2027 Strategic Plan

Welcome to our New Strategic Plan

On behalf of the Pickering Public Library Board and Leadership Team, welcome to our new Strategic Plan.

Pickering Public Library looks forward to updating its Strategic Plan every four years to meet the changing needs of the community. The process involves extensive consultation with Pickering residents to hear what is important, so that we can work together to enhance existing services or introduce new initiatives to better serve the community. When we build a Strategic Plan, we look to the local community to identify the outcomes residents care about. This guides how we allocate resources and set bold and ambitious goals.

In this Strategic Plan you will find priorities and goals that may feel both familiar to the mandate of a public library—we heard loud and clear from the community that you still want books and quiet spaces—but also represent new frontiers and emerging needs, like building space for respectful community connections, combatting misinformation, and promoting play in public spaces.

The current Strategic Plan covers the period of 2024 to 2027. Each year, we will share updates with the community on our progress towards the priorities and goals outlined in this document to ensure we remain accountable to Pickering residents and stakeholders. This report will share how we are progressing towards the vision laid out in the plan and ensure that we remain accountable to you, our community.

As we implement this new Strategic Plan together, we want to highlight keywords in the vision: **ideas, community, possibilities, and futures**. These are powerful words we are excited to bring to life, as we strive towards being a place where everyone comes together to discover, learn, play, and connect.



Land Acknowledgement and Commitment

→ Land Acknowledgement

Pickering Public Library acknowledges 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 acknowledgment 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.

This land acknowledgment was created in 2020 by the City of Pickering's Cultural Advisory Committee in collaboration with Indigenous community members from across southern Ontario.



→ Pickering Public Library's Commitment to Indigenous Peoples and Communities

In developing this Strategic Plan, we recognize that reconciliation and justice are not the same as achieving equity; Indigenous Peoples are not seeking equity but rather seeking to have their distinct Indigenous and Treaty Rights recognized and protected.

We are committed to an ongoing response to Truth and Reconciliation. As part of our strategic planning process, our consulting team included Ridge Road Training & Consulting who engage Indigenous community members. As a result, one specific goal identified by Indigenous residents was to celebrate Indigenous cultures and learn from Indigenous communities as a commitment to Reconciliation.

To follow Pickering Public Library's learning journey, and commitment towards Truth and Reconciliation, visit pickeringlibrary.ca/truth-and-reconciliation.

Responding to a Changing City



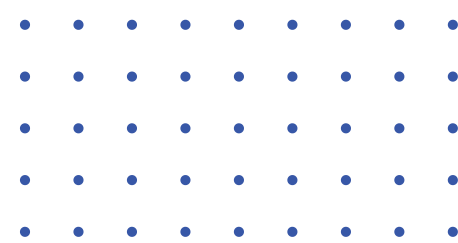
It's an exciting time for Pickering and the Pickering Public Library (PPL). We live in a rapidly growing and changing city, with ambitious plans for the future. But our city faces challenges too, from the rising cost of living, to growing inequality and shortfalls in our social fabric. Though we are increasingly hyper-connected, many people are feeling more isolated than ever before, and divisions are widening.

Public libraries play an important role in addressing these challenges. Libraries have increasingly become more than a collection of books or quiet spaces; they are often at the forefront of change, and play a crucial role in supporting community wellbeing during periods of transition. Libraries not only provide access to information, technology, resources but also address complex community matters like literacy, mental health, and social isolation.

We hear loud and clear, the community wants PPL to be a space where we can all imagine, nourish, and build a future for Pickering where there is room for everyone to grow and thrive. This new Strategic Plan will guide our path forward over the next four years.

In 2023, the City of Pickering developed its first Corporate Strategic Plan. The plan acts as a blueprint for our growing city for 2024-2027. It focuses on building an inclusive, connected, and healthy community, and a city that is innovative, resilient, and sustainable. The Library's Strategic Plan has been developed to ensure opportunities for alignment with the priorities of the City of Pickering.

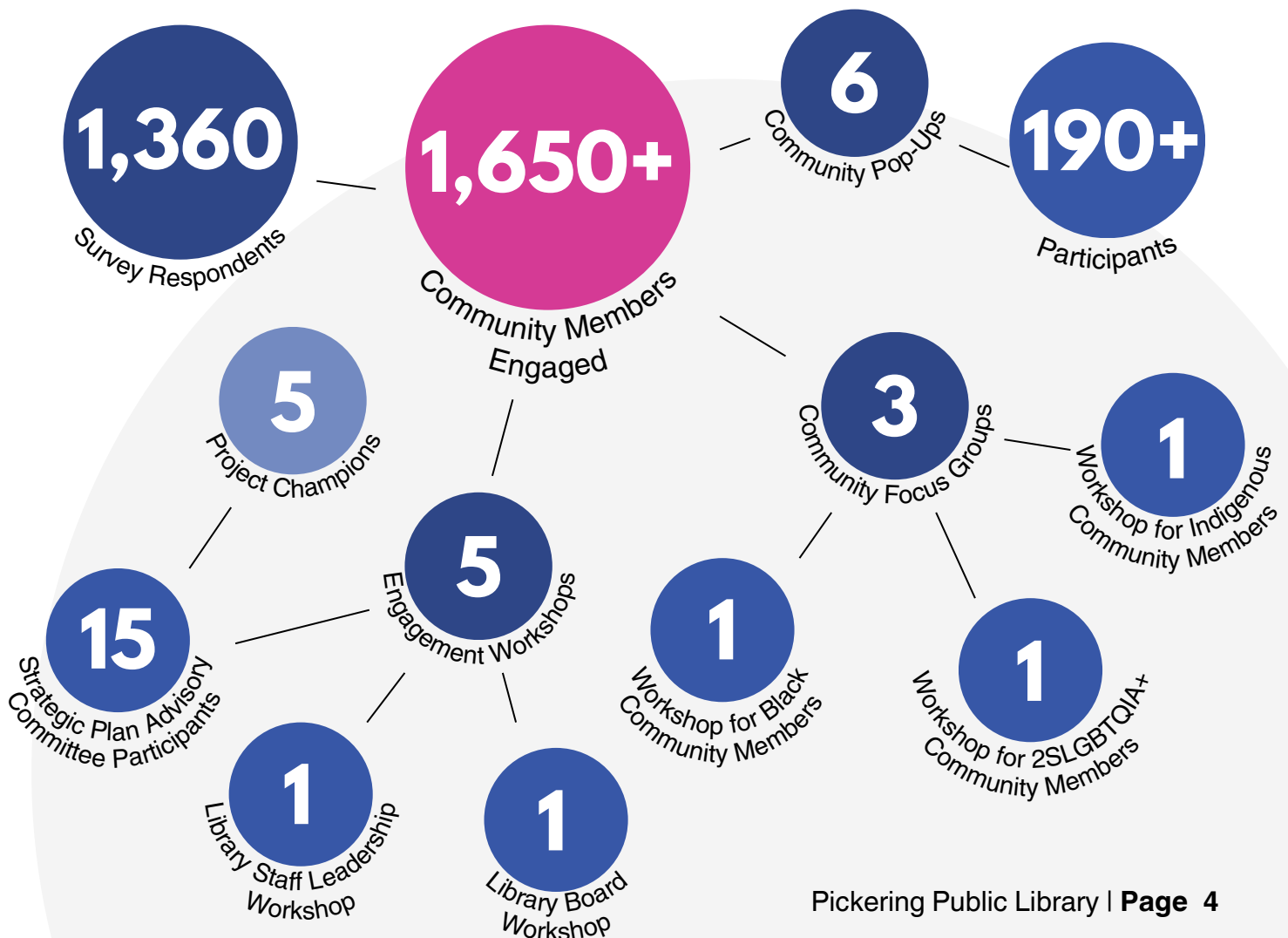
Listening to Community



A Strategic Plan defines an organization's direction and outlines concrete actions to achieve its goals. It acts as a roadmap for an organization to implement change and new ideas. We knew that we couldn't create a new Strategic Plan for PPL without you, the public and our valued community.

We prioritized equity, invited people into the process, and made sure the Strategic Plan was reflective of what we heard and learned from the diverse community responses gathered, as well as our staff and stakeholders.

Engagement by the Numbers

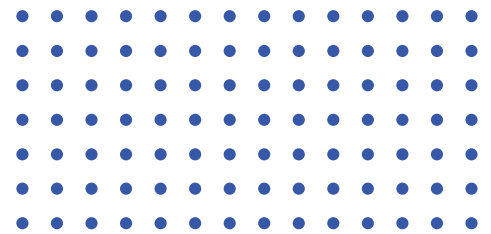


Appreciation

Imagining the future of PPL was a collaborative endeavour, and creating this Strategic Plan would not have been possible without your support, input, collaboration, and participation. In particular, we'd like to thank those who responded to the public survey, participated in focus groups, and shared candidly about their lived experiences during workshops and collaborative sessions.

We would like to thank all Pickering residents, community members, Library staff and leadership, and the Pickering Public Library Board for their thoughtful contributions to this Strategic Plan.

We thank the the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, Black communities, Indigenous communities, Strategic Plan Advisory Committee engagement participants, Strategic Plan Advisory Committee members, and Project Champions for their additional time, effort, and contributions to this process.



Strategic Plan Advisory Committee (SPAC)

We worked collaboratively with the Strategic Plan Advisory Committee (SPAC) to create the Strategic Plan. The SPAC included 15 community members, selected through an adapted civic lottery process.

Civic lotteries are equitable, inclusive, and democratic methods to randomly select participants to represent their communities, based on demographics. We adapted the selection criteria to account for historical inequities and future populations.

This process ensures that randomly selected members represent the demographically diverse makeup of Pickering as well as reflect equity-deserving populations, perspectives, and experiences. This innovative method helped centre equity and anti-oppression in the consultation process and lower barriers to participation for our community.



Defining

Pickering Public Library

Our vision, mission, and values capture who we are and what we are trying to achieve. Our vision sets our direction and aspiration, our mission tells us about our role and mandate and our values operate as our core belief system, telling the world who we are and what we stand for. Our priorities and goals outline the steps we'll take to bring our vision to life.

Our Vision

Explore ideas.
Connect communities.
Embrace possibilities.
Build the future.

Our Mission

To inspire a thriving community and be a place where everyone comes together to discover, learn, play, and connect.

Our Values



Belonging

We believe a sense of belonging is essential for safe and equitable spaces where every person is included, respected, and valued.



Innovation

We believe in adopting innovative and flexible approaches to generate new ideas, create positive change, and meet community needs.



Curiosity

We believe encouraging curiosity fosters understanding which strengthens connections to one another and the wide world of knowledge.



Integrity

We believe in upholding integrity by being accountable, providing access to reliable information, and strengthening democratic values and civic participation.

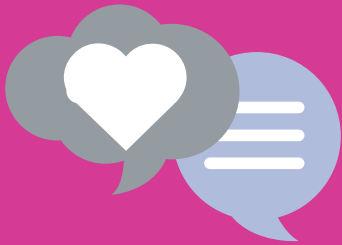
Our Priorities and Goals

Our work will be guided by four priority areas where we will focus our efforts over the next four years.



The Best Place for Everyone to Learn

We are a destination for engaging learning experiences, appealing collections, and learning-to-read resources that help community members realize their potential and thrive.



Committed to Care, Inclusion and Belonging

We create a caring culture that promotes social connection and inclusion and helps connect people to the services and supports they need.



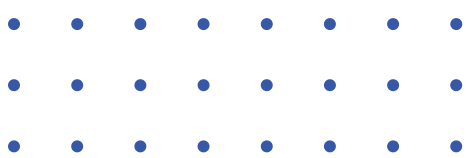
A Connected Community

We are a go-to, trusted source for reliable information. We encourage residents to take pride in their community and to build the future they want for Pickering.



Building for the Future

We are forward-thinking and adaptable for a rapidly evolving world and fast-growing community.



The Best Place for Everyone to Learn

Learning and reading are core to the Pickering Public Library. We foster curiosity, critical thinking, and empathy through joyful and enriching learning experiences. We believe learning is a lifelong journey and are well-positioned to be a destination for engaging learning experiences, appealing collections, and learning-to-read resources that help community members realize their potential and thrive.



What We Heard



The community highlighted the Library's important role in nurturing curiosity and fostering enjoyable learning experiences for all. We heard appreciation and a continued desire for diversity within our collections, hands-on learning, and technology skill development opportunities.

Through the survey, 60% of the respondents indicated the library's purpose should be to support individuals' learning. Other top priorities included developing individuals' technology skills, providing access to new technologies, and enhancing reading and literacy in the community.

What Success Looks Like

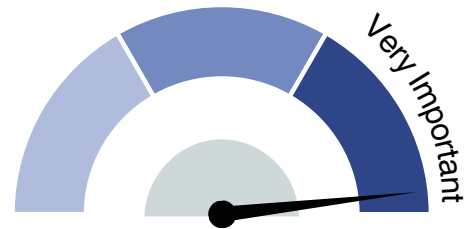
- ✓ Clients are satisfied with our collections and report they can easily access them online or in person
- ✓ All children in Pickering have access to enriching early childhood development experiences
- ✓ Clients value play as an important part of learning and development and can access play-based learning experiences at PPL
- ✓ Clients report an increase in "digital comfort" and value the technology access at PPL
- ✓ All community members see themselves reflected in local history resources

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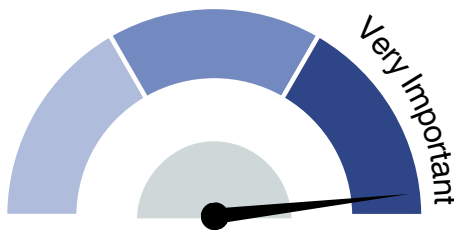
I believe that the main role of the library is to provide books to people and over the years it has transformed into a gathering place for the community.

What do library clients value?

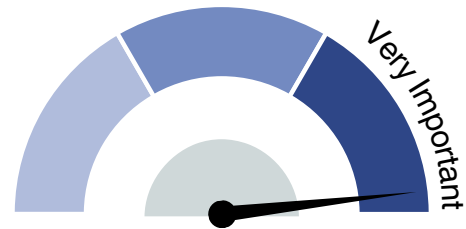
Survey respondents ranked the following as “**very important.**”



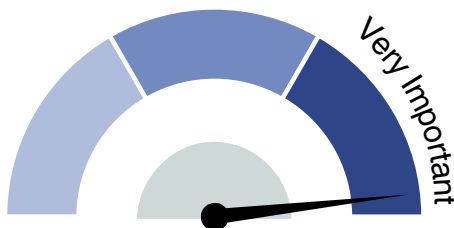
Community access to a safe and comfortable space for leisure reading, contemplation, and/or respite



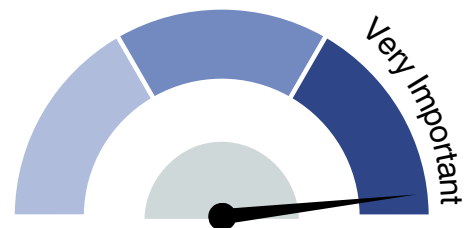
Spaces for individuals and groups to study



Spaces to read

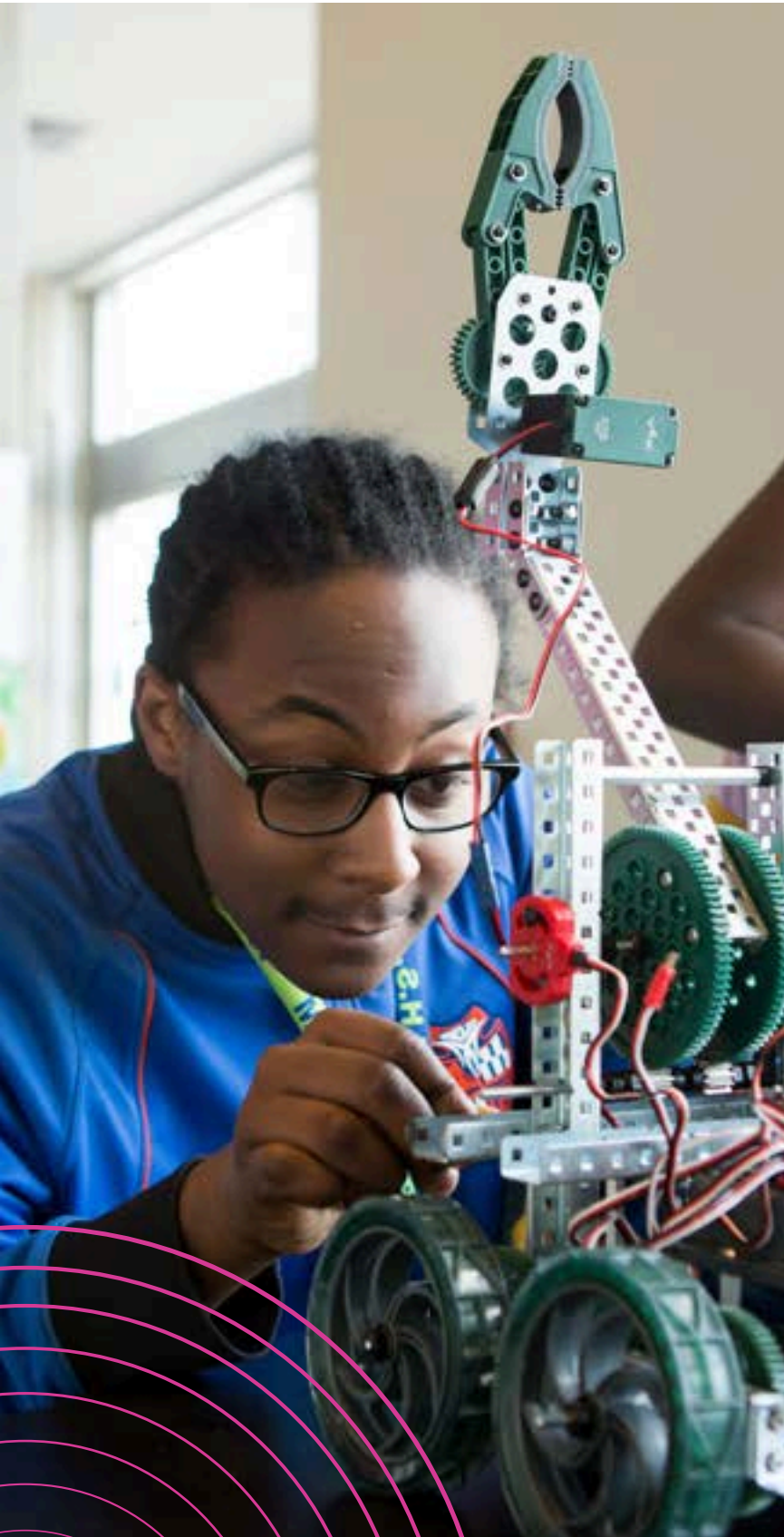


Borrowing physical books



Borrowing eBooks and eAudiobooks

Our Goals



1

We make it easy and convenient to find your next read. The collections are reflective of, and responsive to, our community.

2

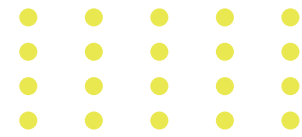
We are leaders in early literacy and supporting children to read. We provide excellent and impactful learning experiences and spaces for all children in Pickering.

3

We offer access to technology and learning opportunities to ensure everyone has the skills and tools to thrive in a digital world.

4

We offer access to local history resources and learning experiences that are inclusive and meaningful to our diverse community.



Priority 2

Committed to Care, Inclusion and Belonging.

We believe every person should feel respected, and valued at the Pickering Public Library. Our spaces are fresh, inclusive, welcoming, accessible, and safe. We create a caring culture that promotes social connection, combats loneliness, and helps connect people to the services and support they need.



What We Heard



We heard that while PPL has made incredible strides in creating an inclusive space that is loved by many, there is more work to be done. We heard a huge desire for the library to play a role in creating cross-cultural understanding, and a space for self-expression and community well-being. There was also an emphasis placed on spaces and programs that cater to youth.

Residents raised challenges with accessing library services due to geographic or transportation barriers, and shared many ideas about how to create a more vibrant space that has something for everyone. Indigenous community members expressed the need for more designated Indigenous learning spaces and programs and saw the library as a cultural connector.

What Success Looks Like

- ✓ Clients report they enjoy spending time at a Pickering Public Library location.
- ✓ Clients see themselves reflected in our spaces, whether through enhanced collections, local history, or public and community art displays.
- ✓ Library spaces are refreshed to create spaces that support client activities.

“

I feel like the library always brings a sense of community and a place to learn new things. Whenever I want to reconnect with people or want to learn something new, my first choice is going to the library.



When you walk into Pickering Public Library, how do you feel?

Welcomed

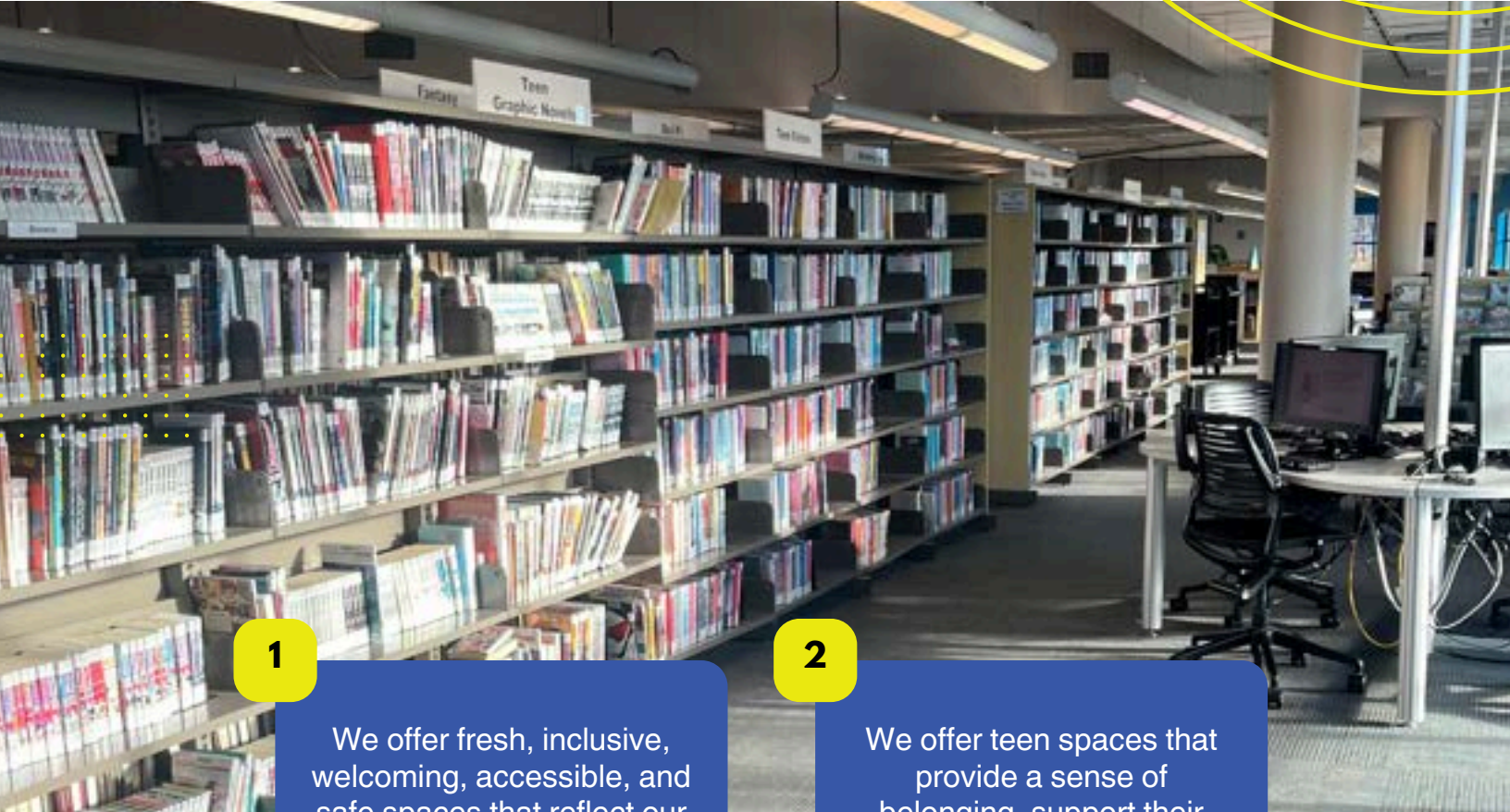
Safe

Curious

Calm



Our Goals



1

We offer fresh, inclusive, welcoming, accessible, and safe spaces that reflect our diverse community and accommodate a variety of needs.

2

We offer teen spaces that provide a sense of belonging, support their wellbeing and facilitate learning opportunities and creativity.

3

We facilitate the celebration of Indigenous cultures and learn from Indigenous communities as a commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.

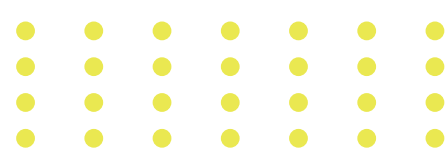
4

We reach out into the community and meet people where they are so our services are accessible to everyone.

5

We build strong community partnerships to support wellbeing, inclusion and belonging, and connect people to resources across Durham Region.





A Connected Community

The Pickering Public Library is a go-to, trusted source for reliable information, combatting misinformation and censorship.

We foster civic engagement through respectful dialogue, resident participation, and shared understanding. We encourage residents to take pride in their community and use their voices and skills to build the future they want for Pickering.



What We Heard



We heard about rising social challenges and polarization and the need for the library as a trusted, democratic, and safe public space. We also heard an excitement for the future of this growing city, and a desire to work collaboratively in creating communities within the City that lifts all Pickering residents up.

Residents shared their view that a public library could be a forum for community conversations, where residents can talk about issues, solutions and how to feel more connected to their neighbours.

What Success Looks Like

✔ Clients feel that the Library supports opportunities for residents to advocate for their shared needs and fully participate in civic life in Pickering.

✔ Clients and staff understand why intellectual freedom is a core tenet of public libraries.

✔ Clients report that the Library is a place they might run into their neighbours or engage someone new in a conversation and staff are trained to facilitate community conversations.

✔ Residents of Pickering understand the range of services the Library offers.

“

PPL should be a one-stop shop for “information”, an information hub, a self-learning environment, and a structured space that is protected but free to think and just be.



200+

survey respondents feel the ‘lack of connection to community or neighbourhood,’ is one of the biggest challenges facing Pickering’s community

What role do you envision PPL playing in addressing community challenges?

Top of mind from survey respondents:



Create safe spaces



Offer space for civic discourse and conversation

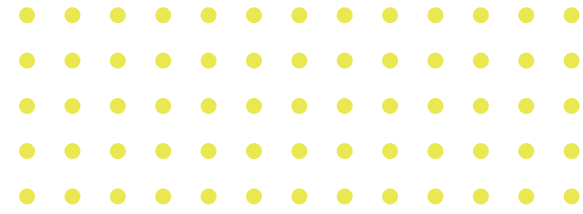


Offer more programs to connect people



Connect people to resources and community services

Our Goals



1

We are a forum for civic engagement, conversation, and understanding about what matters to the community. We facilitate respectful conversations and navigate disagreements to find common ground for building the future residents want for Pickering.

2

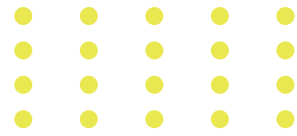
We facilitate residents knowing their neighbours and forming social connections and bonds that build understanding and a sense of community and belonging.

3

We facilitate access to reliable information and a full range of ideas to foster informed and engaged citizens.

4

Through the power of promotion and community word of mouth, everyone is talking about the Pickering Public Library.



Building for the Future

The Pickering Public Library is future-oriented and prepared for a changing world and a fast-growing community. We embrace emerging technology and new approaches to foster an agile and change-positive organization that tests new ideas and champions community-centered innovation.



Priority 4

What We Heard

We heard that the library is a dynamic cultural hub that adapts and responds to community interests, tests new services, and experiments with its offerings. People shared a desire to see PPL remain on the leading edge, with access to and support for the latest technologies, to stay ahead of complex and evolving trends like artificial intelligence.

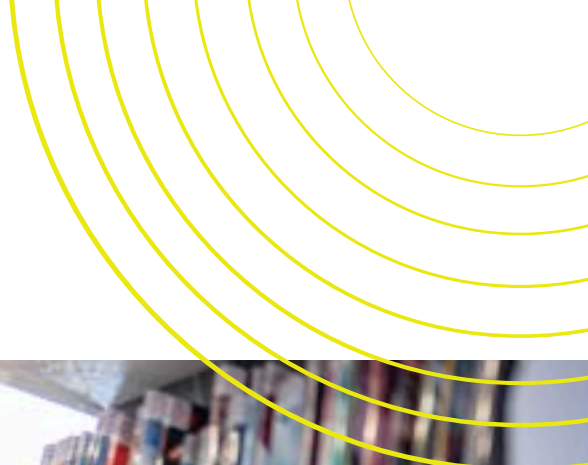
Creating a library system that is prepared for the impacts of a changing climate, resilient to a quickly growing city, and innovative in its approach to meeting community needs was brought forward throughout the engagement.

We also heard excitement about opportunities for the community to continue to provide input into shaping PPL, with opportunities to share and be heard and understand how feedback is applied.

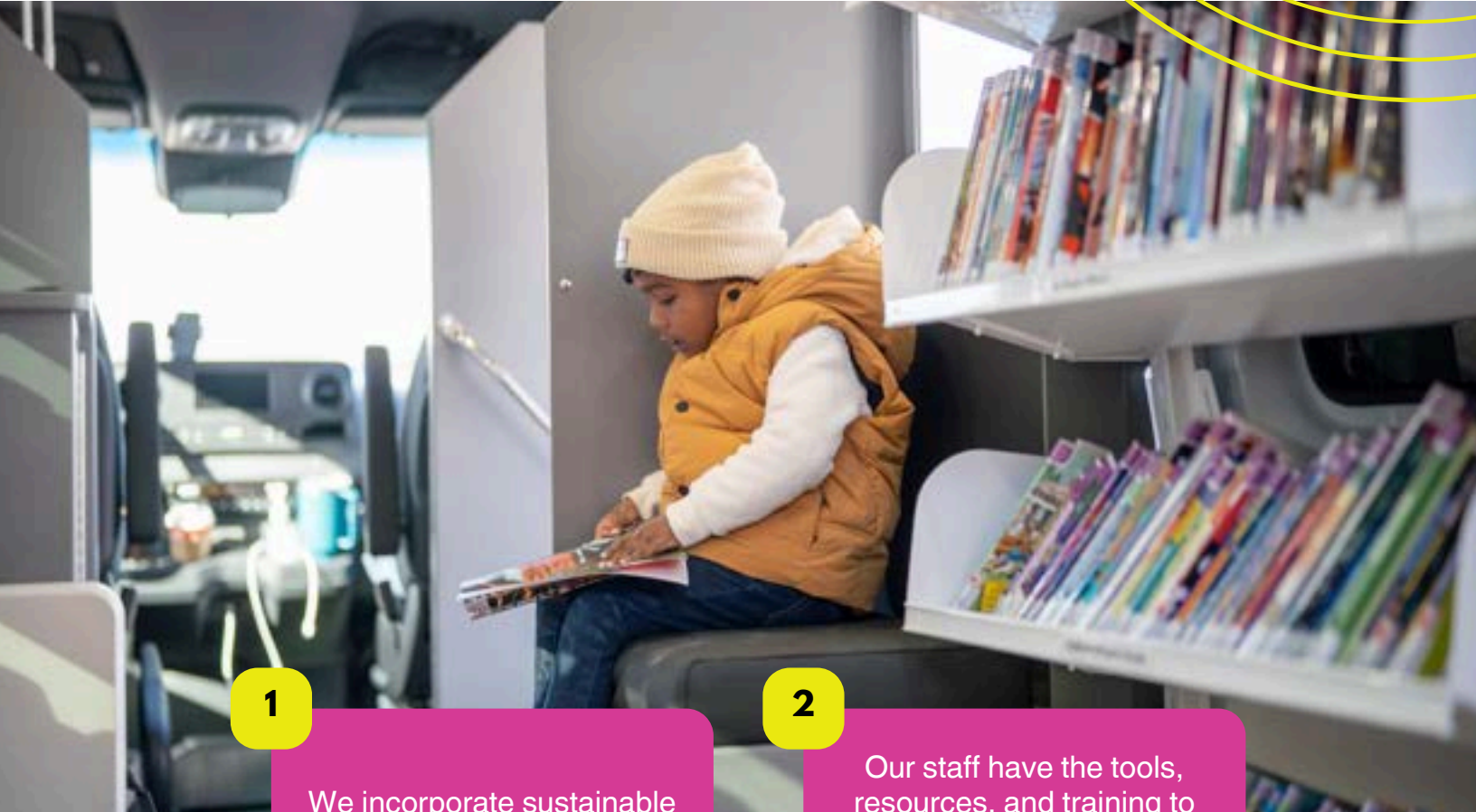


What Success Looks Like

- ✓ Staff have the training, skills, and support to deliver emerging technology services and iterate to continuously improve service delivery.
- ✓ PPL increases resources to support ongoing innovation
- ✓ Clients are engaged in initiatives about new programs, services and spaces at PPL and understand how their input is applied.



Our Goals



1

We incorporate sustainable practices organization-wide and promote environmental leadership in the community.

2

Our staff have the tools, resources, and training to adapt and deliver excellent experiences and services for a changing world and our fast-growing community.

3

We build support for high-impact, remarkable and accessible initiatives through philanthropy and grant opportunities.

4

We improve library services by listening to the community and sharing back what we've learned.



Moving Forward Together

We are committed to serving the Pickering community through this strategic plan. The goals and strategies outlined in this document reflect our dedication to excellence, inclusivity, and innovation to foster a vibrant, informed and connected community.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our staff, stakeholders, and community members who have contributed to the development of this strategic plan. Your insights, feedback, and passion for the library have been invaluable.

Together, we will continue to build a library that not only serves but also inspires and empowers the Pickering community. We are excited about the journey ahead and look forward to working with you to bring this vision to life.



Stay connected.

Website

pickeringlibrary.ca

Instagram

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Facebook

[@pickeringlibs](https://www.facebook.com/pickeringlibs)

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[@pickeringlibs](https://twitter.com/pickeringlibs)



This document was published in 2024 by the Pickering Public Library Board and Leadership.

In addition to the contributions acknowledged throughout this document, the Library would like to express appreciation to:

SAFFY

Consultant Team

Ridge Road Training & Consulting

Indigenous Engagement Lead

This document is available in alternate formats upon request.

