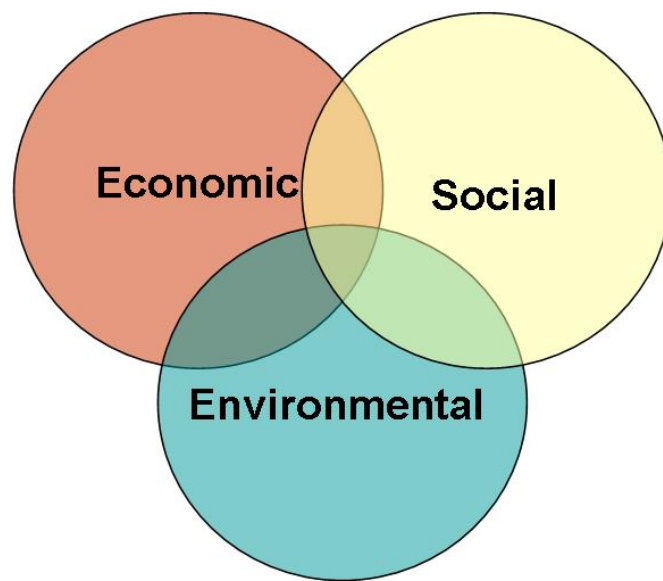


Sustainable Pickering:

A Framework for Benchmarking Sustainability



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Prepared by



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Sustainable Pickering: A Framework for Benchmarking Sustainability

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Benchmarking Sustainability Standards Committee – Councillors Brenner (Chair), Dickerson, and Johnson, and Mayor Ryan (ex-officio) – was formed in September 2005. The Committee worked through October, with support from senior staff and consultants, to prepare a report that was received by Council in early November.

This initial report outlined the results of preliminary research, and presented an innovative approach for the City to follow in order to make Pickering a leader in sustainability. The report, followed by the work undertaken by the Committee, placed a major emphasis on involving the public and key stakeholders in the most open and interactive way possible. A Phase One work plan was developed for implementation in the period of January to June 2006.

Following are some key events that were designed and implemented by the Committee, staff and consultants during Phase One:

- **A series of Town Hall Meetings (February/March 2006), held in three locations throughout the City;**
- **Information distribution to individuals and organizations involved in the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) process, as well as to all community groups listed with the City;**
- **Design and implementation of a new website – *sustainablepickering.com***
- **Working groups with key stakeholders – e.g., youth; and**
- **The first Sustainable Pickering Day, held at the Pickering Town Centre and City Hall, involving 20 exhibits, an afternoon workshop, and an evening Town Hall meeting.**

Through events such as those outlined here, residents and key stakeholders were given extensive opportunities to comment on and participate in the City's sustainability planning work. The feedback received through this process was highly supportive. Residents generally approve of the direction being taken by the City, and have indicated their continued interest in further participation in this work. Some significant momentum has been built already, and more can be accomplished in the coming months and years. Some "next steps" are outlined in Section 3.6 of this report, in key areas such as:

- **Continued development of Sustainable Pickering and related partnerships;**
- **Acceptance and implementation of actions arising from PCP and SNP plans;**
- **Further efforts to engage the public, build on current momentum; and**
- **Emphasize short-term practical action, continue expansion into 2007.**

Over the past eight months the City of Pickering has made extensive progress in its innovative work on sustainability. It's clear that residents support this effort and will continue to participate actively in future programs.

1.0 BACKGROUND

The City of Pickering has for many years been committed to protection of the environment, and has developed and implemented concrete programs to address this commitment. More recently the City has focused on the fact that environmental issues do not exist in isolation. They must be balanced with other critical needs, in particular economic and social concerns.

In September 2005, Council launched its current effort on this subject with the creation of the Benchmarking Sustainability Standards Committee. This Committee was comprised of Councillor Brenner (Chair) and Councillors Dickerson and Johnson, with Mayor Ryan as an ex-officio member.

From September through October the Committee worked with staff and consultants to develop an innovative approach - one designed to emphasize solid research while also maximizing participation by the general public and key stakeholders. The Committee's report was brought to Council, as planned, in early November. The plan presented by the Committee outlined a recommended approach that would address the following:

- **Educate and inform the public about the benefits of sustainable practices being adopted in residential, commercial, and municipal operations in Pickering;**
- **Design Phase One so that it can be implemented immediately and completed by June 2006 at the latest;**
- **Engage key stakeholders from all sectors in a concrete and practical discussion of the importance of sustainable practices, and facilitate feedback from the public on best practices, technological opportunities and the public's priorities; and**
- **Design a process that ensures concrete and practical results, from now through the end of Phase One, while setting the foundation for a process to set benchmarks and monitor progress, a process designed to grow and evolve through 2006 and beyond.**

Following acceptance of the Report by Council, the Committee proceeded, during November and December, to finalize program design and planning for the Phase One work to be carried out from January to June 2006.

The work of the Committee was carried out with reference to example programs from dozens of similar efforts by other municipalities, in Canada and globally. Several key conclusions guided this initial work, including:

- **Learn from the work of other municipalities, and from example efforts carried out in the private sector;**
- **Design an approach involving extensive, interactive consultation with the public and affected stakeholders at each step in the process; and**
- **Emphasize short-term practical action, wherever possible, to build involvement and momentum for a Sustainable Pickering.**

This last point was identified as particularly important, in relation to a number of example municipal programs analyzed. The Committee wanted to avoid a situation where months or years of planning would be carried out, with little or no practical results. In a number of municipalities, this approach led to non-interest or even mistrust on the part of the public. The goal was to ensure that the City of Pickering involves residents in a way that builds support while also drawing on the wealth of ideas available from interested citizens.

SUSTAINABILITY: *“Meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.”*

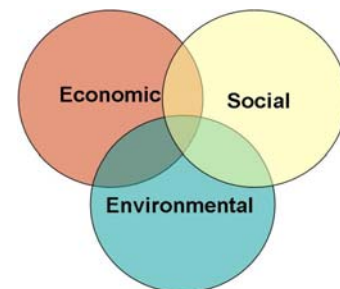
- Brundtland Report (1987)

2.0 PHASE ONE: JANUARY – JUNE 2006

2.1 Sustainability – The Three Lenses

In Phase One of the program, the three lenses of sustainability were introduced and discussed through consultation with the public.

In the past, we tended to view the needs of a community as disconnected segments: the environment, the economy and the society. Addressing issues in isolation, however, will not result in a community that is truly sustainable. Instead, sustainability is about balancing economic, environmental and social objectives.



These sustainability objectives can be thought of as separate yet equally important “lenses”. In order to achieve true balance, we must examine new initiatives through each of these lenses.

Balancing economic, environmental and social objectives is also collectively referred to as “triple bottom line” accounting. This approach to community decision making takes into account **all** resources - economic, environmental and social and recognizes the **full costs** of decisions in a way that supports financial, environmental, and community well-being over the long-term.

While economic demands are a driving force and are often a significant and immediate need, they must be balanced with the critical and long-term significance of social and environmental concerns.

Sustainability recognizes the **interconnectedness** of economic, environmental and social objectives. Balancing all three objectives will ensure a greater quality of life now, without compromising future generations.

2.2 Engaging the Public

As part of Sustainable Pickering, town hall meetings, public events and targeted working groups were held to educate the public and business sector about the City of Pickering’s sustainability program. These events were also designed to engage these same groups and gather feedback on the concept and elements of the Sustainable Pickering action plan. The new website – *sustainablepickering.com* – was also launched to support and extend this consultation process.

In total, well over 100 people participated in the town hall meetings and targeted working groups, with countless more taking part in Sustainable Pickering Day.

Town Hall Meetings

At the first set of town hall meetings (February/March 2006), comments were mainly positive and constructive. Overall, there was a clear consensus that the City is taking the right approach and that the “three lens” system for achieving sustainability is correct. Energy (both conservation and renewables), agriculture, and land-use planning were raised as key topics in all three sessions of this first round of town hall meetings.

A significant number of people said they would continue to participate, including some who volunteered to join a working group.

At the second town hall meeting held during Sustainable Pickering Day (May 2006), the information gathered and conclusions drawn from previous sessions were presented. The framework developed was also presented to attendees for feedback. Again, most comments were positive and constructive. Some participants had taken part in previous town hall meetings, while some were new participants. Again, energy, agriculture, and transit were raised as key topics. By and large, there was generally a consensus that the City of Pickering is taking the right approach with the framework and topics covered.

Youth

Following the first round of town hall meetings, a special session was held with City of Pickering youth. The comments from youth were positive and creative. Youth understand the concept of sustainability and see it as especially pertinent to their generation. The main sustainability concern for youth is transportation. Youth want to learn more about sustainability and believe that public education is the key to getting the message out.

Sustainable Pickering Day

Sustainable Pickering Day was held on May 25, 2006 at the Pickering Town Centre, and at City Hall. It consisted of three events:

- Interactive and educational exhibits from groups representing key areas of sustainability in Pickering (see Appendix A);
- A targeted presentation to Pickering’s business community (titled *The Business Case For Sustainability*); and
- An open and interactive town hall meeting (as follow-up to the three town hall meetings held in February/March 2006).

Sustainable Pickering Day garnered positive responses from both the public and exhibitors who were impressed with the range of groups, products and services displayed. Approximately 60 people participated in depth, via the ‘Passport to Sustainability’ draw. These residents visited a minimum of four exhibits and provided written feedback on the Sustainable Pickering initiative. Hundreds more stopped by one or more displays, the town hall meeting, or the afternoon presentations at City Hall.

Summary of Consultation Program Findings

The following is a list of key issues raised during the consultation program, along with several examples of community input for each category. A full list of input received can be found in Appendix B.

Neighbourhoods & Homes

- More walkable neighbourhoods – less car dependence
- Should also focus on infill, brownfield and existing development, support higher density
- Create all new buildings as “green” buildings, EnergyStar

Energy

- Support for renewable energy, concerns about nuclear energy
- Idling is a problem - must enforce anti-idling by-law
- Support for waste incineration - provides energy, reduces transportation impacts and creates jobs

Agriculture

- Commercial farming: reduce barriers (i.e. support services), research innovative farm products and technologies, incentives to support farmers
- Promotion of local food production, organic farming and farmers’ markets as niche markets to increase economic viability of current local agricultural practices
- Promote non-food products – e.g. ethanol and bio-diesel

Employment

- Need to be aggressive to bring more employers to Pickering – less commuting
- Potential for ‘green’ technology jobs

Education, Awareness & Accessibility

- Need to make sustainable options available to diverse population (e.g. various cultural backgrounds and income levels)
- Start education in the schools – kids will educate their parents
- Must educate residents, e.g. literature on conservation, smart meters, help residents to see the difference that changing their energy use can achieve

Local Identity

- Residents and business owners in Pickering want a vibrant and sustainable city with a sense of identity
- Need to promote local food and local businesses – not ‘big box’ stores
- Must preserve heritage properties (tourism opportunity)

Transit/Transportation

- Need improved transit: location of stops, frequency, connections, service
- Transit is not easily accessible – youth need better incentives to encourage use of public transportation to and from school
- Interest in hybrid vehicles, alternative fuels, fleet conversion, bike commuting systems

Other general comments and suggestions about Sustainable Pickering include:

- Need milestones to measure our success
- Leadership in sustainability has to come from the City of Pickering (lead by example) - but not politicized
- Need legislation to ensure implementation of initiatives
- Must involve other levels of government (i.e. Region of Durham, Federal, etc.)
- Public/private partnerships are essential (e.g. government, developers, industry, etc.)
- Need incentives to encourage sustainability initiatives to residents, business owners, developers (e.g. tax breaks for sustainability related businesses to locate in Pickering, fast-tracking of approvals for ‘green’ developments)

2.3 Sustainability Framework

Based on research carried out by staff and the consultants, the following framework was developed. Each objective brings forward several areas of interest.

OBJECTIVE 1: HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Air • Our Land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Water • Our Plants & Animals
OBJECTIVE 2: HEALTHY SOCIETY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Needs (food, shelter, access) • Education/Literacy • Community Safety/Preparedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health/Well-being/Happiness • Arts/Culture/Heritage • Citizen Participation/Involvement
OBJECTIVE 3: HEALTHY ECONOMY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Opportunities • Income Levels • Innovation/Entrepreneurship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Participation Rates • Business Attraction/Expansion • Agriculture/The Rural Economy
OBJECTIVE 4: RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building/Structures • Transportation System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhoods • The City of Pickering
OBJECTIVE 5: RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy Use • Food Consumption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Use • Waste Production/Diversion

3.0 PHASE TWO: CONTINUING THE JOURNEY BEYOND JUNE 2006

3.1 Benchmarks and Indicators

Based on the framework, indicators and benchmarks are now being developed for each area of interest, under each objective. The areas of interest will also be prioritized to determine which indicators and benchmarks to address now, and which will follow over time. As part of the benchmarking exercise, it will be necessary to evaluate the City’s current performance before setting specific targets and plans for future performance.

Benchmarking: *Process in which companies evaluate various aspects of their business in relation to how these same practices are carried out by other companies. Specifically, a company will measure their performance, against the **highest standards** that are achievable. This enables the company to develop plans for how to improve, how to achieve a higher goal.*

.....

Continuous Improvement: *Benchmarking can be a one-time event, but most progressive companies treat it as a continuous process in which they evaluate their performance on a regular basis, e.g., annually.*

Possible Indicators

- Renewable energy production
- Anti-idling
- Use of alternative fuels/hybrids within municipal fleets
- Energy efficiency of new building (EnergyStar, LEED certification)
- Walkability (distance to services)
- Density of development
- Average size of homes
- Use of local services (including agriculture)
- Local jobs created, 'commuting rate'
- Education (number of students reached)

The Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) Action Plan, which is being submitted to Council at a later date, outlines a benchmarking process for one key area of the overall plan for Sustainable Pickering. In the area of energy production and consumption, current levels and benchmark targets are identified for City operations, residences, and the commercial and industrial sectors. The primary focus is on greenhouse gas reduction. Some consideration is also given to directly related issues, such as smog. This PCP work will be incorporated into the overall benchmarking system developed by the City of Pickering.

3.2 Pilot Projects

In keeping with the goal of moving to practical action as soon as possible, a number of new initiatives were identified in Phase One that could be implemented in the short-term. Some of these efforts arose from discussions with the public and key stakeholders, as part of the Phase One consultation program. Examples include:

PCP Action Plan: Some 30 initiatives were identified by one or more of the Working Groups in the PCP process. Many of these action items can be implemented with little or no cost, others may be carried out and/or funded by participating stakeholders, ideally in partnership with the City of Pickering.

Walk 21: Given the profile that Pickering has gained with its launch of this sustainability program, the organizing group responsible for the Walk 21 Conference that will be held in Toronto in the fall of 2007 have invited the City of Pickering to consider participating as a demonstration project. The City of Toronto will be involved as an urban "test case" for improved walkability. Organizers are also looking to include a suburban and a rural example. The plan is to have several world experts work with the three municipalities over the coming year to develop walkability plans for their respective communities for presentation at the conference next fall. Funding for the experts will come mainly from the Trillium Fund. Pickering is now in discussion with the organizers to determine if this project is a good fit.

Eco-Schools: The Durham Board of Education has been working for some months to promote the adoption of the Ontario-wide Eco Schools program. Representatives from the School Board participated in the PCP Working Group process, and also in the Sustainable Pickering Day at the Pickering Town Centre. Through this interaction it now appears likely that several Pickering schools will commit to adoption of the Eco Schools program for this fall. The pilot effort will hopefully expand to other Pickering schools in subsequent years.

3.3 Partnership Opportunities

Over the past year the number and scope of partnerships has grown significantly, as a result of the City's Sustainable Pickering efforts. The first concrete example came with the PCP program, where OPG, Enbridge, and Veridian became key corporate sponsors – contributing valuable financial and staff resources. More recently, the City of Pickering has begun to explore a different

type of partnership, with UOIT – in particular, around the University’s new work with creation of the Observatory on Sustainable Cities. The breadth of partnerships that are being fostered by the City was very evident at the Pickering Town Centre exhibit on May 25th, with some 20 organizations and companies assembled to tell a common story about the importance of a Sustainable Pickering. Additional partnership opportunities can potentially be developed in the coming months, as the City’s program expands.

3.4 Staff Education and Consultation

Senior Staff have developed plans for orientation and education efforts that can ensure all staff in all Departments are fully aware of the City’s commitment to sustainability. Over the coming months, it will be possible to move ahead with meetings and workshops within the City, and to continue expanding the use of the intranet for internal staff education and feedback.

3.5 Sustainability Coordinator

Consideration is being given to a new staff position, perhaps titled *Sustainability Coordinator*. The model that is being considered is one where partners such as OPG and Enbridge could provide funding for this position, since it will serve important objectives that are already part of their corporate mandate. As with the City’s Community Emergency Management Coordinator position, this approach allows the City to increase its capacity without adding too great a staff cost.

3.6 Next Steps

The work of the Benchmarking Sustainability Standards Committee has already been functioning as a sort of umbrella for the City’s full range of work in this area. With the receipt of this Report to Council, it will be possible for this evolution to continue. This step has been logical, in part because of the strong emphasis on engagement of the public. While people can learn to understand the need for “benchmarking standards”, it has been clear that the public relates more readily to a title such as Sustainable Pickering.

It was evident at the Sustainable Pickering Day event at the Pickering Town Centre that people were extremely interested in the practicalities of sustainability. They reacted well to phrases such as “sustainable school”, “sustainable workplace”, and “sustainable home”. In coming months, it will be important to not only pin down the specifics of the benchmarking process, as discussed earlier in this report, but also to continue building public understanding, support, and involvement in the City’s wide range of programs.

Following is a summary of key work program tasks that should be considered for Phase Two:

- **Continue staff planning to build Sustainable Pickering as the umbrella for all benchmarking, PCP, SNP, and related sustainability work in the City;**
- **Develop specific targets and indicators, as discussed in Section 3.0;**
- **Pursue partnership opportunities, such as the UOIT Observatory;**
- **Continue to engage the public and the business community, including consideration of another public event (e.g., in September 2006), building on the success of Sustainable Pickering Day;**

- **Proceed with staff orientation and education;**
- **Continue development and expansion of *sustainablepickering.com* for the public, and as support for internal staff education;**
- **Prepare a status update in the fall, along with proposed priorities to be considered in 2007.**

APPENDIX A - Sustainable Pickering Day Details

As part of the Sustainable Pickering program, the City of Pickering held a multi-faceted event with the following objectives:

- **Educate** the public and business sector about the City of Pickering's sustainability program: Sustainable Pickering;
- **Engage** the public and the business sector on a variety of levels (e.g. conservation in their own home and business, champions and volunteers for future programs, etc.); and
- Gather **feedback** on the concept and elements of the Sustainable Pickering action plan.

The event consisted of exhibits from a variety of groups that represent sustainability in Pickering as well as targeted presentations.

LOGISTICS

- Date: Thursday, May 25, 2006
- Time: 10:00am – 9:00pm
- Location: Pickering Town Centre and Pickering Civic Complex

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

- Bob Willard – *The Business Case for a Sustainable Municipality/Business*
- Blair Feltmate – *Sustainable Development is Smart Business*
- Susan Clinesmith – *Sustainable Opportunities in the Commercial & Industrial Sectors*

EXHIBITORS

Sustainable Community

- City of Pickering – Sustainable Pickering Program
- City of Pickering – Partners for Climate Protection Program
- City of Pickering – Sustainable Neighbourhood Plan
- City of Pickering – Environmental Awareness Programs
- City of Pickering – Recreation Complex
- City of Pickering – Economic Development
- Durham Sustain *Ability*
- Pine Ridge Secondary School – 'I am the Change' Program
- University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT)
- Durham Strategic Energy Alliance

Sustainable Home

- Enbridge
- Veridian
- Sears
- Home Depot

- Tranquility Heating
- Next Energy
- Region of Durham – Green Bin Program

Sustainable Workplace

- OPG
- Enbridge
- Veridian
- Siemens

Sustainable Transportation

- City of Pickering – Hybrid Vehicle
- GO Transit
- Durham Region Transit

PASSPORT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Each exhibit had signage to indicate its category: Sustainable Community, Sustainable Home, Sustainable Workplace or Sustainable Transportation.

Attendees who wanted to enter the draw filled out their 'passport' with stamps from a representative exhibit for each category, encouraging them to visit a variety of displays. The completed passport served as a ballot for the draw and was also used to collect feedback on the Sustainable Pickering program.

APPENDIX B – Detailed Town Hall Comments

General Comments

- Public wants timeframe - when will a plan be ready?
- Need milestones to measure our success
- Leadership in sustainability has to come from City (lead by example) - but not politicized
- Need legislation to ensure implementation of initiatives
- Must involve other levels of government (i.e. Region of Durham, Federal, etc.)
- Public and private partnerships are essential (e.g. government, developers, industry, etc.)
- Need incentives to encourage sustainability initiatives to residents, business owners, developers (e.g. tax breaks for sustainability related businesses to locate in Pickering, fast-tracking of approvals for 'green' developments)
- Want to know specific initiatives involved in Sustainable Pickering, i.e. identify plans and initiatives under each area of interest (e.g. bike path master plan, compost giveaways)
- Need to consider noise and light pollution in our environment
- Need to make sure we go beyond the natural environment and also consider social objectives, such as public safety
- Should regulate use of pesticides
- Would like to see health care providers in local neighbourhoods
- Should take advantage of existing Provincial programs
- "It takes one City to change"
- "Sustainability is making it equal for everyone"
- Water conservation is important – youth need to be more informed
- Nighttime safety in parks is a concern – need more lighting (solar powered?)
- The economics of sustainability (triple bottom line) and energy savings should be part of school curriculum – kids will teach their parents
- Would like to be informed about future Sustainable Pickering events

Neighbourhoods & Homes

- More walkable neighbourhoods – less car dependent
- Need places to congregate/meet with neighbours within existing areas
- Need to demand smaller homes that are more durable, better quality
- Should also focus on infill, brownfield and existing development – not just Seaton
- Support for higher density development
- Phase development with infrastructure and services
- Tighter inspection by City inspectors to ensure code compliance (e.g. for energy efficiency) on new homes
- More trails that connect neighbourhoods and facilities
- Durham West Arts Centre wants to create a multi-purpose 'green' building that will showcase sustainability
- Create all new buildings as "green" buildings
- Need more walkable communities
- New neighbourhoods should have strong focus on space for youth groups, community centres and community groups
- New neighbourhoods should provide adequate medical centres for increased population

Energy

- Support for solar and wind generation and other forms of renewable energy
- Nuclear is not sustainable
- Idling is a problem - must enforce anti-idling by-law
- Interest in hybrid vehicles, alternative fuels, fleet conversion
- Ethanol plant potentially part of Seaton
- 'Energy Park' on Federal lands to service Seaton
- Support for waste incineration - provides energy, reduces transportation impacts and creates jobs
- Minimum EnergyStar level of construction for new buildings

- Want municipal programs (similar to provincial programs) for renewable energy, e.g. 10MW challenge or pilot projects for new neighbourhoods
- Want to know if nuclear plant will affect health of residents in the long term
- Need to educate the families about energy conservation
- Residents need to see the difference that changing their energy use patterns makes (i.e. Smart Meter)
- Reward system would be effective (e.g. showcase 'top 10 energy saving families' in News Advertiser)
- Need to address affordability and accessibility for families who cannot afford up front costs of energy efficiency products (e.g. appliances, changing heating system) – government grants available?
- Need to start constructing buildings with energy efficient measures so that future generations are able to conserve

Agriculture

- Make public more aware of community agriculture
- Local food production, organic farming and farmers markets as niche markets to increase economic viability of current local agricultural practices
- Farming is in a desperate situation: very few farmers in the area, farming services not accessible
- Need to establish appropriate use for land, i.e. agricultural vs. development
- Want to know of incentives that the City is providing to farmers to buy land back – “most land is owned by developers”

Employment

- Need to keep the critical mass here – less commuting
- Need to be aggressive in bringing more employers to Pickering
- Potential for 'green' technology jobs

Education, Awareness & Accessibility

- Need to make sustainable options available to diverse population
- Start education in the schools – kids will educate their parents
- Must educate developers/new home buyers on benefits of sustainability elements
- Must educate residents, e.g. literature on energy conservation delivered door-to-door
- More education will increase action around issues such as recycling and climate change

Local Identity

- Residents and business owners in Pickering want a vibrant and sustainable city with a sense of identity
- Need to promote local food and local businesses – not 'big box' stores
- Must preserve heritage properties (tourism opportunity)

Transit/Transportation

- Want updated transit system
- Transit is not easily accessible – especially for youth
- Should have anti-idling zones
- Suggest modifying road design to accommodate slow vehicles, e.g. farm vehicles and SMART cars
- Lack of transportation has a huge impact on youth: difficult to get to youth events, gym, mall, school
- Need improved transportation: location of stops, frequency, connections, service
- Would like to see improved system for high school students to travel to and from school
- Currently, students pay for pass (approx. \$100/month), which is expensive for a family with many students - many just drive instead
- Need better incentive (special price for students?) to encourage use of public transportation to and from school

- Would also like to see sidewalks on main roads such as Hwy #2 to enable youth to ride bikes safely along this road, especially to travel to school
- Would like to see more bike trail systems
- There are opportunities for new and innovative businesses in relation to sustainability principles (e.g. bike loan system at Go Station to simplify linkages)

Green Bin

- Should promote backyard composting – not just central composting
- Want to know what happens to green bin waste after collection