

Pickering Council  
March 27, 2026  
PDF via email to clerks@pickering.ca



**RE: Northeast Pickering Secondary Plan: PLN 03-26**

**For council's consideration**

Further to our February delegation and submission, as below, the Ontario Headwaters Institute, a registered charity that promotes watershed security - healthy and resilient watersheds that protect regional ecological integrity, social wellbeing, and economic vitality – urges Council to consider the following suggested motions on this issue:

1. That Official Plan Amendment OPA 25-003 include a commitment for Pickering to ensure that 30% of the final condition of land in this plan be in natural heritage, the minimum objective for watershed health as recommended in the federal guideline How Much Habitat is Enough;
2. That Official Plan Amendment OPA 25-003 reinforce Pickering's obligation to adhere to s 4.2 of the Provincial Planning Statement that "Planning authorities shall protect, improve, and restore the quality and quantity of water by:
  - a) Using the watershed as the ecologically meaningful scale for integrated and long-term planning, which can be a foundation for considering the cumulative impacts of development; (and)
  - b) Minimizing potential negative impacts, including cross-jurisdictional and cross-watershed impacts"; and,
3. That Official Plan Amendment OPA 25-003 establish a framework for cumulative monitoring, based on the early establishment of benchmark pre-development metrics for natural heritage, water quality, water quantity, and water temperature, including with respect to the storm-water treatment train.

We consider these proposed motions fundamental to the successful implementation of OPA 025, limiting potential future risks to the environment, local economy, and public wellbeing, and urge you to move and pass these motions at your first opportunity.

Sincerely,

*Andrew McCammon*  
Executive Director

**Water is Life.  
Let's act like it**

**The OHI Promotes Watershed Security in Ontario: Water for People and for Nature**  
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## Slide Deck for Pickering, February 27, 2026

The Ontario Headwaters Institute is a registered charity that promotes watershed security: healthy and resilient watersheds that protect regional ecological integrity, social wellbeing, and economic vitality.

We are thankful for the many positive changes since the first version of this proposal, and note a few concerns.



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## Positive Elements Needing Tweaks or Clarification

There are many substantial and generally positive directives on protecting natural heritage, wetlands, and water, as well as dealing with storm-water, including in sections 2.16; 11.B 5, 7, and 9; 11. B. 55; and 11. B. 70.

The proposed 60 meter buffer from water and wetlands is lower than the old provincial requirement, but substantially more than the current, inadequate 15 meters. Thank you.

However, we are concerned about, and think improvements are needed, regarding:

- Assurances that the treatment train for storm-water will meet the directive in s 4.2 of the Provincial Planning Statement to “protect, restore, and improve” water quality; and,
- That the location of storm-water facilities and outfalls within the 60 m buffer will both interfere with meeting s 4.2 in the PPS as above and impact trail connectivity and public safety.



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## Strategic Concerns

- Despite commitments to parks, trails, and other outdoor natural infrastructure, there is no overall goal to retain a minimum portion of the area in natural heritage, nor more broadly across the region to balance natural heritage lost in this development, per item 9 below. We recommend consideration of the targets in the federal guideline *How Much Habitat is Enough*: 30 % minimum; 40 % better; and 50% for healthy watersheds.
- The plan may also fall short of several key element in the Headwater Institute's Municipal Lens for Watershed Security, included in our written submission. Items of concern include:
  6. Require aquatic and terrestrial studies to identify and protect key ecological features and functions with respect to proposed development and conduct follow-up monitoring;
  8. Encourage sound stewardship practices on all land in (...this area); and,
  9. Work collaboratively, with other municipalities and relevant agencies, to enlarge or create new Greenbelt-style core and corridor natural heritage and agricultural areas as a counter-balance to the extensive land conversion now taking place across South-central Ontario.

Thank you

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