



Priya Vadivel, Ward 1 Councillor Candidate

Q1 Introduce yourself and tell us why you're running for Ward 1 Councillor in Pickering.

- Proud Ward 1 resident — I live in the Highbush neighborhood and this community is deeply personal to me
- Double Master's degrees: Information Technology & Business — 20+ years leading and consulting for major global companies
- Built and run a million-dollar business in the GTA (8 successful British Swim School franchises) — I know jobs, budgets, and real accountability
- Founder of the Highbush Neighborhood Association — I've been giving residents a voice long before this campaign
- **I'm running because Ward 1 deserves a Councillor who was already here, already showing up — not someone who arrives at election time**

Q2 What does Ward 1 actually look like today? Paint a picture of the neighborhoods, the people, and day-to-day life.

- Highbush, Liverpool, Dunbarton, Amberlea, etc. — established, family-oriented neighborhoods with deep roots
- Strong senior population — aging population and people who built this community and deserve to stay in it affordably
- Growing fast — new families, new development pressure, infrastructure trying to keep up - Pickering is projected to be one of the fastest growing cities in Canada
- Waterfront, parks, green spaces — things people love and want to protect
- A community that is engaged, that pays attention, and that is ready for stronger representation based on what has transpired on Council in the past four years

Q3 How does your background in IT and Fortune 500 leadership prepare you to serve at City Hall?

- City hall is a large, complex organization — I've spent 20 years navigating exactly that
- Budget accountability: I've managed multimillion-dollar budgets — public money deserves the same rigour
- Stakeholder management: Leading global teams means bringing people together to solve hard problems — that's council work
- Technology lens: Pickering is growing fast; smart infrastructure and data-driven decision-making matter now
- **I don't come to the table to learn the basics — I come ready to get things done on Day 1**

Q4 You founded the Highbush Neighborhood Association. What inspired it and what impact has it had?

- I saw residents who cared deeply about their street — but had no formal way to be heard together
- Founded it to give Ward 1 residents a collective, unified voice at the table
- Organized community events, raised issues with the city, built connections between neighbors - I'm particularly proud of the job fare I initiated that got helped people find good paying local jobs
- It taught me that residents don't need to be saved — they need to be equipped and heard
- **Running for council is the next step of the same mission — just at a bigger table**

Q5 You volunteer at the food bank, support DARS, Pickering-Ajax Road Watch, Legion Branch 606. Why is community involvement so important to you?

- Community isn't a backdrop for my campaign — it's the reason I'm running
- Food bank: I see the reality of affordability in Pickering — it isn't abstract for me - I witness first hand weekly what happens when social services don't protect the most vulnerable in our city
- Legion Branch 606: Our veterans gave everything; supporting them is the least I can do
- DARS and Road Watch: Safety and inclusion are everyday issues, not just platform points
- One of my most proud moments was seeing someone I worked with graduate out of the DARS program and invite me to their housewarming
- **I believe a Councillor who only shows up on election years isn't really a councillor — they're a visitor**

Q6 What are the biggest issues you're hearing from residents in Ward 1 right now?

- Safer streets: Traffic calming, speeding, sidewalks — especially near schools and senior communities
- Affordability: Property taxes, cost of living, seniors on fixed incomes being priced out
- Development: Residents want growth, but growth that works for them — not just for developers
- Community spaces: Not enough infrastructure and rec facilities keeping pace with Pickering's massive projected population growth
- Accountability: People are frustrated with how city hall operates — they want a Councillor who is honest, inclusive and present for their needs

Q7 Pickering is growing rapidly. How do you balance new development with preserving the neighborhood feel people love?

- Growth is necessary — Pickering needs housing and Pickering needs jobs. I'm not anti-growth
- But growth has to be done right: with proper consultation, adequate infrastructure, and community input
- The Northeast Pickering Secondary Plan is a live example — 70,000+ homes on agricultural land. Residents deserve transparency
- Protect what makes Ward 1 special: the parks, the waterfront, the green spaces, the neighborhood scale
- **My standard: Does this development serve the people already here, or just the developer's bottom line?**

Q8 As a business owner serving the GTA, what are your top priorities for economic growth and responsible spending if elected?

- Grow the commercial tax base so the burden doesn't keep shifting onto residents so we can fight against unreasonable tax increases
- Make Pickering a place where entrepreneurs want to set up shop and stay — permitting, support, environment - we have an international population and we should foster that for small business growth
- Fiscal discipline: Every dollar of public spending should be justified and accounted for
- Support for local small businesses — they are the backbone of Ward 1's character and economy
- **Economic development that creates local jobs, not just buildings**

Q9 What surprised you most while knocking on doors and talking to residents during this campaign?

- How engaged people are — Ward 1 residents are paying close attention, more than people assume
- The consistency of concerns — streets, affordability, development, council accountability — everywhere I go
- How much people just want to be listened to — a candidate who actually hears them is rare and it matters
- The warmth and openness — people invite conversation when you show up genuinely, without a script
- **And honestly — the energy. It has reminded me every day why I'm doing this**

Q10 Why should Ward 1 residents care about who represents them on Pickering City Council?

- Your councillor decides what gets funded on your street, your park, your community center
- Your councillor is the person who votes on how your tax dollars are spent — every year
- Local government is the level of government closest to your daily life — it's where real change happens fastest (from your parks, garbage pickups and property taxes)
- A weak or disengaged Councillor means your voice is silent at the table. A strong one means Ward 1 is heard
- **This election is a chance to get it right — to choose someone who is already part of this community**

Q11 How can residents reach you or get involved in your campaign?

- Website: www.priyavadivel.ca — sign up, volunteer, donate, learn more
- Email: ward1@priyavadivel.ca — Priya reads her messages personally
- Phone: (905) 519-9118
- Social media: @priyapickering on Facebook and Instagram — follow along and join the conversation
- **Volunteer: We canvass weekly — even a few hours make a difference. Great exercise too!**

Q12 What's the one thing you're most passionate about delivering for Ward 1 families if elected on October 26?

- A Councillor families can actually reach — who responds, who shows up, who follows through
- Streets that are safe enough for children to walk to school and seniors to cross without fear

- A Ward 1 where people can afford to stay — not be priced out of the community they helped build
- Development that respects what residents love about this neighbourhood
- **Honestly — I want Ward 1 families to look back and say: she was here, she fought for us, and she delivered**

PERSONAL / LIGHTER QUESTIONS

Q13 When you're not campaigning or working, what does a perfect day off look like in Pickering or Durham Region?

- Morning walk along the waterfront — it never gets old
- Coffee somewhere local in Ward 1 — I love supporting the small businesses I'm fighting for
- Time with family — I have two daughters that are my world, they are my grounding force in all of this

Q14 Favorite local spot in Ward 1 or Pickering for a walk, coffee, or to unwind?

- The waterfront — especially early in the morning before the city wakes up
- Esplanade Park — there's a sense of community there that I love
- Anywhere with a good view of the Lake— it reminds me why we fight for green spaces

Q15 Priya, you've called Canada home for over 18 years now — your daughters were born here and you've clearly invested deeply in this community from the start. How has your journey shaped the way you think about public service and what you want to build for the next generation in Ward 1?

- - Arrived in Canada over 18 years ago with a dream and a deep respect for everything this country stood for
- - From day one, this wasn't just a place to live — it became home, fully and completely
- - Both my daughters were born in this great country and I'm proud I started a family here
- - I didn't wait to feel settled before giving back, I started getting involved almost immediately
- - Volunteering, building relationships, learning the community because that's how you truly become part of somewhere
- - Founded the Highbush Neighborhood Association because I saw what was possible when people came together
- - Food bank, Legion Branch 606, DARS, Ajax Pickering Road Watch — these weren't obligations, they were choices I made because this community gave me so much
- - When you choose a country — when you build your life here intentionally — you

feel a responsibility that goes beyond just living in it

- - I want my daughters to grow up in a Ward 1 that is safe, affordable, and full of opportunity — and I realized the only way to guarantee that is to help build it
 - - Public service isn't a career move for me. It's a natural extension of 18 years of showing up
 - - I want Ward 1 to be a place where every child — regardless of where their parents came from — has access to safe streets, strong community spaces, and a local government that actually listens
 - - My daughters will vote in this city one day. I want them to be proud of what their mother fought for
 - - The best thing I can do for the next generation is model what it looks like to show up, speak up, and never take this community for granted
 - - Canada gave my family a foundation. Ward 1 gave us a home. Running for council is how I say thank you — and how I make sure the next family who arrives feels exactly the same way
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