

## Record-breaking development – 15,000 units on the way – made 2023 a “wild ride” for Pickering Mayor

Source: [Glenn Hendry](#) , inDurham  
March 22, 2024



Universal City project, Pickering

### *“Pickering’s on a ‘wild ride,’ says Mayor Kevin Ashe*

Nuclear energy on the lakeside, the massive revitalization of downtown and record development – from the high rises touching the sky in the urban core to residential housing in the north end Seaton community – powered up growth in Pickering last year at a pace Mayor Kevin Ashe is calling a “wild ride.”

### *Nuclear energy*

Ashe spoke to business leaders Thursday at Deer Creek in Ajax for his annual address to the Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade, with the refurbishment of Pickering Nuclear’s four ‘B’ reactors at the top of his agenda.

Once refurbished, Pickering will produce a total of 2,000 megawatts of electricity, equivalent to powering two million homes, helping to meet increasing demand and fueling the province’s growth and electrification of our economy,” Ashe said of the refurbishment, which was announced January 30 by Ontario Energy Minister Todd Smith.

### ***Employment will zoom***

Ashe noted Conference Board of Canada estimates peg the impact to Ontario’s GDP at \$19.4 billion over the 11-year build-out, creating some 11,000 jobs per year in the process. “This re-commitment to nuclear energy will help attract nuclear supply chain businesses to Pickering.”



Pickering Nuclear, now undergoing a refurbishment

That domino effect is already happening, he added, citing AtkinsRealis, a key player in the nuclear technology sector, deciding to expand its operations from Mississauga with an 18,000 square foot, LEED gold-certified office on Pickering Parkway that will employ 150. “This expansion is not only a testament to their confidence in Pickering’s future, but also a significant boost to our city’s role in advancing nuclear technology.”

### ***Provincial support***

The Pickering’s record-breaking development in 2023 was also a source of pride for Ashe, who recently hosted Premier Doug Ford, who presented the Mayor with a cheque for \$5.2 million for exceeding the Province’s home building target by 58 per cent last year, with 1,502 new units underway.

### ***Development, home building, boom times***

The City issued 1,933 building permits, valued at \$853 million, and received 1,972 new development applications last year with a construction value pegged at \$1.26 billion. The numbers are the highest ever in a single calendar year for Pickering.

### ***City core to be gem of attraction and growth***

The downtown transformation, led by CentreCourt's Pickering City Centre project – one of the largest and most ambitious mixed-use developments in Canada – is another reason for the soaring development numbers in Pickering, Ashe said.

The project, which is tied into the Pickering Town Centre shopping mall, will see a 55-acre master-planned community with 12,000 residential units in 20 mixed-use condominium developments with heights ranging from nine to 55 storeys.

Pickering CityCentre will also include nearly 130,000 square feet of office space in Phase 1, Ashe noted. "The City Centre project has brought a new energy and buzz to the mall, where more retailers, brands, shops, and restaurants are vying to be part of this."

### ***Condo towers and more housing construction***

Other major projects also underway in downtown and at the Kingston Road Corridor include Universal City (Bayly Street and Sandy Beach Road), which already has 17-storey and 28-storey towers up and a third building at 30 floors, with the final storey now being put in place.

Universal 3 will be the tallest building in Pickering until 4 and 5, which will soar 54 and 46 storeys, respectively, are completed. In total, Universal City will include seven buildings and will "transform" the Pickering skyline with 2,851 residential units, Ashe said.

Just west of Universal City is the VuPoint Condo project, which will have 1,700 more units when complete, with a portion dedicated to affordable housing in conjunction with Habitat for Humanity.

Pickering Casino, part of the Durham Live project

"To say, it's been a wild ride would be an understatement," Ashe said in his address.

All the development will be guided by the City's first Corporate Strategic Plan, which will carry Pickering through the next four years of construction.

"This plan is more than just a compilation of goals and objectives; it signifies our commitment to strategic governance, long-term planning, and the responsible stewardship of our city's resources," he said.

Ashe noted that condos and skyscrapers get most of the headlines but the City has a "wealth" of other housing options, including low-rise homes units springing up in the Seaton community and 'missing middle' projects which he said will play a "crucial role" in addressing the housing crisis by filling in the gap between traditional single-family homes and high-rise buildings.

Pickering has also hired 10 new full-time development department staff in the City development department to handle all the new projects and introduced a new online City Portal, which enables developers to apply for residential building permits electronically.

“While Pickering is recognized as one of Ontario’s growth leaders, it’s important to emphasize that our vision and efforts extend beyond construction and land development,” Ashe added. “Our overarching commitment is to plan for and build a complete community that not only thrives economically, but also prioritizes social infrastructure and amenities to enhance the quality of life for all residents.”

The Pickering Mayor cited the Pickering Heritage and Community Centre – the city’s first new community centre in decades, and its first Net-Zero facility – which will break ground next week, with the grand opening expected in 2026; the future Seaton Recreation Complex (a \$242 million project that will be the largest project in Pickering’s history); continued development at the Durham Live lands, including the Porsche Experience Centre and Launchpad Golf; the recent opening of the Jerry Coughlan Health & Wellness Centre; and ground-breaking for the city’s next long-term care home.

“Social spaces, recreational facilities, public art, and green spaces all foster a sense of belonging and well-being. These elements are integral to creating a vibrant and livable city where residents can live, work, and play in harmony. “



Jerry Coughlan Health and Wellness Centre

