



Pickering takes digital leap forward with a smarter and faster website

Client

City of Pickering, Ontario

Website

Pickering.ca

Background

Nestled on the shores of Lake Ontario, just east of Toronto, Pickering is a city on the move. Once a quiet suburban community, it has transformed into a dynamic hub of growth and innovation. With a booming population, a thriving business sector, and ambitious plans for the future, Pickering needed a digital presence that could keep pace with its evolution.

As part of its commitment to modernization, the city launched a refreshed website in January 2025—an essential step in its broader Digital Strategy. The goal? To create a seamless, user-friendly online experience that connects residents, businesses, and visitors to city services like never before.

Project Overview

As a forward-thinking municipality, the City of Pickering recognized early on that delivering smarter, more responsive services required a modern, user-centric digital platform. While the previous website had served the community well, the City understood that evolving technologies and resident expectations demanded a more accessible, intuitive, and future-ready online experience. The website refresh is a key milestone in Pickering's broader Digital Strategy—a strategic and deliberate transformation aimed at enhancing service delivery, improving transparency, and reinforcing our position as a municipal leader in digital innovation.

- **Improved User Experience** : Making it easier for residents and businesses to access vital services and information.
- **Enhanced Accessibility**: Improving functionality and navigation to better support the user experience
- **A Modern, Future-Ready Design**: A fresh look with better functionality to support Pickering's digital ambitions.

The Implementation Process

The City partnered with GHD Digital and leveraged its Govstack platform to help bring its vision of a more citizen-centric municipal website to life. Beginning with its digital strategy preparation, the City's commitment to digital transformation unfolded in several strategic phases.

- ① **Digital Readiness Assessment**: In 2022, a comprehensive assessment was conducted to evaluate the City's digital capabilities and identify areas for improvement.
- ② **Development of Digital Strategy**: By early 2024, the City formulated its first Digital Strategy, establishing clear commitments and actions to guide the digital transformation.
- ③ **Community Engagement**: Between March and May 2024, residents were invited to provide feedback on the existing website, ensuring the new design would address user needs effectively.
- ④ **Staff Collaboration**: From May to June 2024, City staff engaged in refining the website's sitemap and content, ensuring alignment with organizational goals and user expectations.
- ⑤ **Website Development**: Between July and September 2024, GHD Digital built the new website on the Govstack platform, focusing on intuitive navigation, enhanced search functionality, and a clean design.

Project Highlights

- **Streamlined Navigation**: Reorganized menus and content structures, guided by user feedback and analytics, enable quicker access to key information.
- **Cleaner Interface**: A simplified design with reduced clutter and more white space improves usability across devices.

- **Improved Search**: The new Google Site Search enhances accuracy, helping users find what they need faster.
- **Modern Homepage Elements**: New visual features like iconography and banners improve user engagement and content presentation.
- **Secure and Scalable Platform**: With Single Sign-On (SSO) and improved backend functionality, staff now have greater control and flexibility in managing content.

Results That Matter

Since launching the new website, Pickering has seen immediate benefits:

- **Stronger Community Engagement**: Residents now find it easier to stay informed and connected with city services.
- **Operational Efficiency**: City staff can update and manage content more effectively.
- **Better User Experience**: A sleek new design, improved search function, and streamlined navigation have enhanced accessibility for all users.

Looking Ahead

The City of Pickering's collaboration with GHD Digital and the adoption of the Govstack platform have been instrumental in transforming its digital landscape. But the City of Pickering is not content to rest on its laurels. The new website is just the beginning of their plans. Pickering is now laying the groundwork for future digital initiatives, including an advanced Citizen Relationship Management platform and expanded eCommerce capabilities. By embracing digital transformation, the city is ensuring that its online services grow in lockstep with its thriving community.

With a bold vision and the right technology, Pickering is proving that a smarter, more connected city starts with a great website.

