

Due to COVID-19 and the Premier’s Emergency Orders to limit gatherings and maintain physical distancing, the City of Pickering continues to hold electronic Council and Committee Meetings.

Members of the public may observe the meeting proceedings by accessing the [livestream](#). A recording of the meeting will also be available on the [City’s website](#) following the meeting.

Page

1. Roll Call

2. Disclosure of Interest

3. Delegations

Due to COVID-19 and the Premier’s Emergency Orders to limit gatherings and maintain physical distancing, members of the public may provide a verbal delegation to Members of Council via electronic participation. To register as a delegate, visit www.pickering.ca/delegation, and complete the on-line delegation form or email clerks@pickering.ca. Delegation requests must be received by noon on the last business day before the scheduled meeting.

The list of delegates who have registered to speak will be called upon one by one by the Chair and invited to join the meeting via audio connection. A maximum of 10 minutes shall be allotted for each delegation. Please ensure you provide the phone number that you wish to be contacted on.

Please be advised that your name and address will appear in the public record and will be posted on the City’s website as part of the meeting minutes.

4. Matters for Consideration

- 4.1 [Director, Economic Development & Strategic Projects, Report CAO 04-20](#) **1**
Economic Status of Local Businesses in Pickering During COVID-19

Recommendation:

That report CAO 04-20 regarding the economic status of local businesses in Pickering during COVID-19 be received for information.

- 4.2 [Director, Finance & Treasurer, Report FIN 11-20](#) **6**
COVID-19 Impact on Taxation Services

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Report FIN 11-20, from the Director, Finance & Treasurer regarding COVID-19 Impact on Taxation Services be received for information.

- 5. Other Business**
- 6. Adjournment**

From: Fiaz Jadoon
Director, Economic Development & Strategic Projects

Subject: Economic Status of Local Businesses in Pickering During COVID-19
- File: D-1520-001

Recommendation:

1. That report CAO 04-20 regarding the economic status of local businesses in Pickering during COVID-19 be received for information.
-

Executive Summary:

The Economic Development & Strategic Projects team are committed to supporting the existing business community and actively responding to the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

To support and advocate for Pickering's business community, the City is actively involved in the Durham Economic Task Force (DETF). DETF was created in response to the crisis and consists of Durham Region staff, local area municipal staff, chambers of commerce, local boards of trades, the Business Advisory Centre of Durham (BACD), and Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) across the Region. Feedback received from the business recovery surveys developed by DETF will be leveraged to help inform our economic recovery plan for Pickering.

As an initiative to support the region's vibrant downtown-area businesses, the Region of Durham, in collaboration with local BIAs launched a new online platform, Downtowns of Durham. Pickering's Nautical Village will be included in phase 2 of the project.

The City of Pickering has over 3,000 diverse businesses, of which 70 percent are categorized as a small business and over 52 are registered home-based businesses. These businesses have faced catastrophic impacts from COVID-19 and require significant support to recover. To assist these businesses, the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario partnered to develop and fund 3 new grants through the Digital Main Street Program.

COVID-19 has also exacerbated existing economic disparities by disproportionately impacting Black-owned businesses in Pickering. To ensure systematic racism is addressed in our community, staff will be collaborating with the Durham Region Association of Black Professionals & Entrepreneurs (DRABPE). This partnership is intended to strengthen local and community partnerships and raise the profile of Black-owned business networks in Pickering.

Financial Implications: Not applicable.

Discussion: Since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has had major impacts on local economies across the country. Many businesses have been forced to shut down and thousands of individuals have been laid off. To respond to the evolving challenges of the pandemic, the Region of Durham formed the Durham Economic Task Force (DETF) to provide support and guidance to the local business community. Since its formation, the DETF has been in constant communication, collaborating to provide updates to the business community on newly announced Federal, Provincial and Municipal programs, and to advocate on behalf of the business community who are experiencing impacts due to the crisis.

The objectives of DETF include the following:

- advocate for the urgent needs of Durham's business community to the Federal and Provincial Governments;
- provide resources and information about financial support available from all levels of government;
- guide small businesses through the process of accessing emergency financial assistance and programs;
- develop and implement support programming for businesses that are impacted by COVID-19; and
- promote small businesses that are operating and offering safe, no-contact delivery and pick-up options.

DETF has structured activities in three phases. The first phase were activities to "react" to the crisis, the second phase was to 'respond', and the third phase is to look towards supporting 'recovery'.

DETF Phase 1 Activities:

COVID-19 business survey #1: March 12 – 18, 2020

The initial survey launched by the DETF found that a third of respondents did not have business continuity plans in place, or the ability to create such a plan. Over 75 percent of survey responses were small businesses with less than 20 employees. Approximately 90 percent of the respondents indicated that they were concerned about financial implications due to decrease in business revenues.

Advocacy to Federal and Provincial Government

Feedback from the first survey was shared with Durham MPs and MPPs and was used to craft the DETF's initial advocacy strategy, which followed with letters to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Premier Doug Ford.

Central webpage

DETF launched a central webpage for COVID-19 information for businesses to act as a single point of information for the business community. The webpage, investdurham.ca/CovidResponse

is updated multiple times daily by Regional staff and shared by City staff to Pickering's business community.

DETF Phase 2 Activities:

COVID-19 business survey #2: March 22 – 26, 2020

On March 22, DETF launched a second survey which received over 870 responses, with 109 noting Pickering as the primary location of their business. The survey responses highlighted Retail and Health & Wellness as the sectors hardest hit by COVID-19, with 21 percent indicating they would take between 6-12 months for their business to fully recover from this pandemic.

Business intake portal for individual support

DETF developed an online intake form and a 1-800 number for businesses looking for live, one-on-one assistance. Through this portal, businesses are connected to a Regional staff member who can assist them in meeting their immediate needs. Information is then shared with the local municipal DETF member to provide continued support. To date, our team has received over 10 business inquiries through the portal intake form.

Webinars and sector roundtables with business community

Using data from the first two surveys, the DETF identified opportunities to provide specialized management training sessions on topics including cybersecurity and transitioning to e-commerce platforms. In addition, DETF delivered a series of sector-specific roundtables to offer the business community a chance to provide feedback on programs required for business recovery.

DETF also developed a webinar calendar for the business community, compiling online training sessions from all available sources across Canada. This calendar provides an easy-to-search listing of useful training sessions across a variety of topics.

Continued advocacy to Federal and Provincial Government

Through letters and calls with MPs, MPPs, and Provincial Ministers, the DETF advocated for the urgent needs of the business community, calling on all levels of governments to implement programs and policy changes that are needed.

DETF Phase 3 Activities:

Business recovery survey #3: May 5 – 19, 2020

As planning commenced for economic recovery, a third survey was launched to solicit feedback from the business community regarding priorities for recovery programming. Based on survey results, businesses highlighted concerns regarding a possible second wave of COVID, financial implications, and increased cost of compliance as the major barriers to recover from this pandemic.

Local personal protective equipment (PPE) supplier listing

The PPE Marketplace was launched on the Invest Durham COVID business portal on May 5, 2020 and rapidly became a popular page on the portal. The listing provides the opportunity for local PPE suppliers to be featured, and for local organizations to easily procure PPE. The supplier

listing continues to be maintained by Regional staff with input directly from businesses through the intake portal and through collaboration with DETF members.

Downtowns of Durham project

The Downtowns of Durham Project is a joint initiative of the Durham Region BIAs and Durham's Economic Development and Tourism Division. The project was initially intended to promote the Region's downtown-area businesses and increase tourism through the "Rediscover Downtown Durham from Home" marketing campaign. The initiative offers residents and visitors a chance to explore the Region's many "main street" shops, restaurants, and services virtually by providing a platform that highlights businesses that are operational, offer delivery, curbside pick-up, or online shopping.

As the City of Pickering does not have an active BIA, we were not included in the original launch of the project. However, City staff worked closely with Regional staff to find alternative ways to include the Nautical Village as part of phase 2 of the Downtown of Durham website. The Nautical Village offers a glimpse into Pickering's array of small, vibrant and diversified businesses. This resource will help revitalize our small businesses, encouraging residents and tourists to rediscover the Nautical Village. Durham Region staff intend to evolve the website to become an investment attraction tool over the long run, highlighting the region as a place to work, shop, live and learn.

Planning for economic recovery

The DETF is currently working on an economic recovery and strategy plan, engaging with post-secondary institutions, the innovation community, and the local business community.

In addition to activities and support through DETF, the Economic Development & Strategic Projects team implemented the following initiatives in response to the impact to the business community resulting from the pandemic crisis:

- On April 16, Economic Development staff organized our first Virtual Business Town Hall Webinar with over 150 businesses in attendance. The webinar provided information on Pickering's response during COVID-19, Federal and Provincial support as well as navigating financial assistance for businesses. Speakers included MP Jennifer O'Connell, Premier Doug Ford, MPP Peter Bethlenfalvy, Deputy Mayor Kevin Ashe, and Nicole Gibson, Executive Director of Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade. The recorded webinar is available on the City's social media platforms.
- To support small business, a 'Support Local' social media campaign was launched in April, profiling small businesses that are open and have adapted during these difficult times to serve our community. This campaign is ongoing, with over 20 small businesses profiled to date.
- Actively engaging with the business community via social media, email and telephone regarding new COVID-19 response support programs.
- In June, staff developed a COVID-19 Business Recovery Podcast Series, featuring topics of interest to businesses during the pandemic, which included financial planning, labour laws, health and safety, etc.

On June 11, 2020, the Federal Government, in partnership with the Provincial Government announced more assistance for small businesses to reach more customers through the Digital Main Street Program, delivered by the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association (OBIAA).

Through the \$57-million contribution to the Digital Main Street Program, Pickering businesses will be able to take advantage of 3 new grants to support their digital transformation. These new grants are all beneficial to Pickering small businesses as many have shifted their focus to e-commerce in an effort to keep sales up since closing their shops in early March.

Further, Economic Development staff is working collaboratively with the Durham Region Association of Black Professionals & Entrepreneurs (DRABPE) to raise the profile of Black-owned business networks in Pickering. This Fall, our team will be partnering with DRABPE to organize their first virtual business expo. The event will offer resources needed to connect, start, grow and thrive in today’s “new normal”. It will provide business owners with a variety of educational experiences and networking opportunities to take their businesses and careers to the next level. The event will include the Region’s emerging and established Black business owners and professionals.

Prepared By

Original Signed By:

Aneesa Haniff
Senior Economic Development Officer

Approved/Endorsed By:

Original Signed By:

Fiaz Jadoon, Director, Economic
Development & Strategic Projects

Original Signed By:

Taaha Javed
Economic Development & Strategic Projects Associate

FJ:ah

Recommended for the consideration
of Pickering City Council

Original Signed By:

Marisa Carpino, M.A.
Interim Chief Administrative Officer

From: Stan Karwowski
Director, Finance & Treasurer

Subject: COVID-19 Impact on Taxation Services
- File: F-4200-001

Recommendation: It is recommended that Report FIN 11-20, from the Director, Finance & Treasurer regarding COVID-19 Impact on Taxation Services be received for information.

Executive Summary: At the April 30th Council Meeting, Council adopted the motion for staff to report back, prior to August 31, 2020, on the potential for the waiving of property tax penalties depending on the financial situation at that time.

This year, Council waived the late payment penalty fee for the months of May and June that translates into providing Pickering taxpayers additional time to pay the April installment. The waiving of the late penalty fee (for 2 months) resulted in the April due date, in theory, being pushed back to the end of June. Taxation staff used the same principle when developing the final due dates of providing Pickering taxpayers additional time to pay their final installments. In comparison to the other Durham Lakeshore municipalities, Pickering is providing approximately 96 additional days to pay the final property tax installments that exceeds the additional time Council provided with the first deferral.

Taxation payment statistics indicate that there are approximately 513 additional ratepayers in arrears when compared to June 2019.

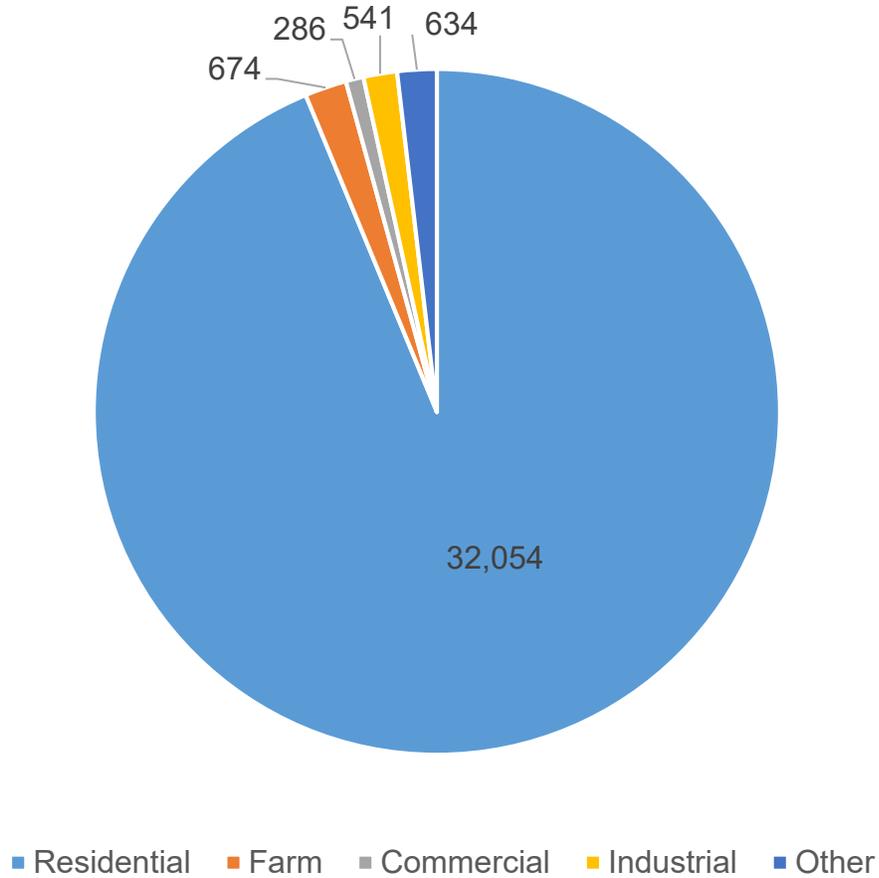
Financial Implications: This year, Council waived the late penalty fee for the months of May and June. Based on the previous year's data, it is estimated that the waiving of the May and June late fee translated into a revenue loss of approximately \$500,000.

Discussion:

Property Tax Base

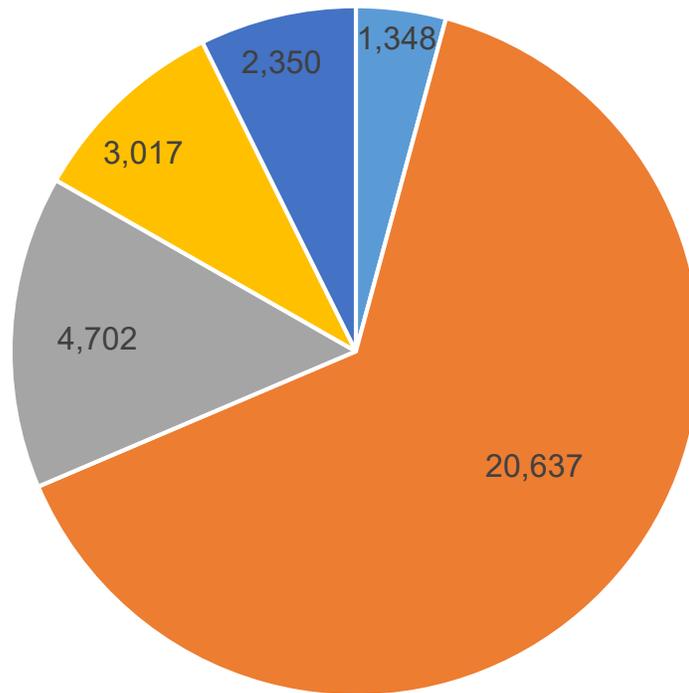
The 2020 property tax base consists of 34,189 roll numbers and a breakdown by major assessment classification is presented below.

Pickering Property Type



As shown above, the residential property tax class of 32,054 roll numbers is the largest realty tax class for the City. The above statistic relates to the number of properties and not the assessment value. From an assessment value perspective, the residential property tax class represents 84 percent of the total property tax pie. Within the residential property tax class, there are several assessment classifications as shown below.

Residential Property Count

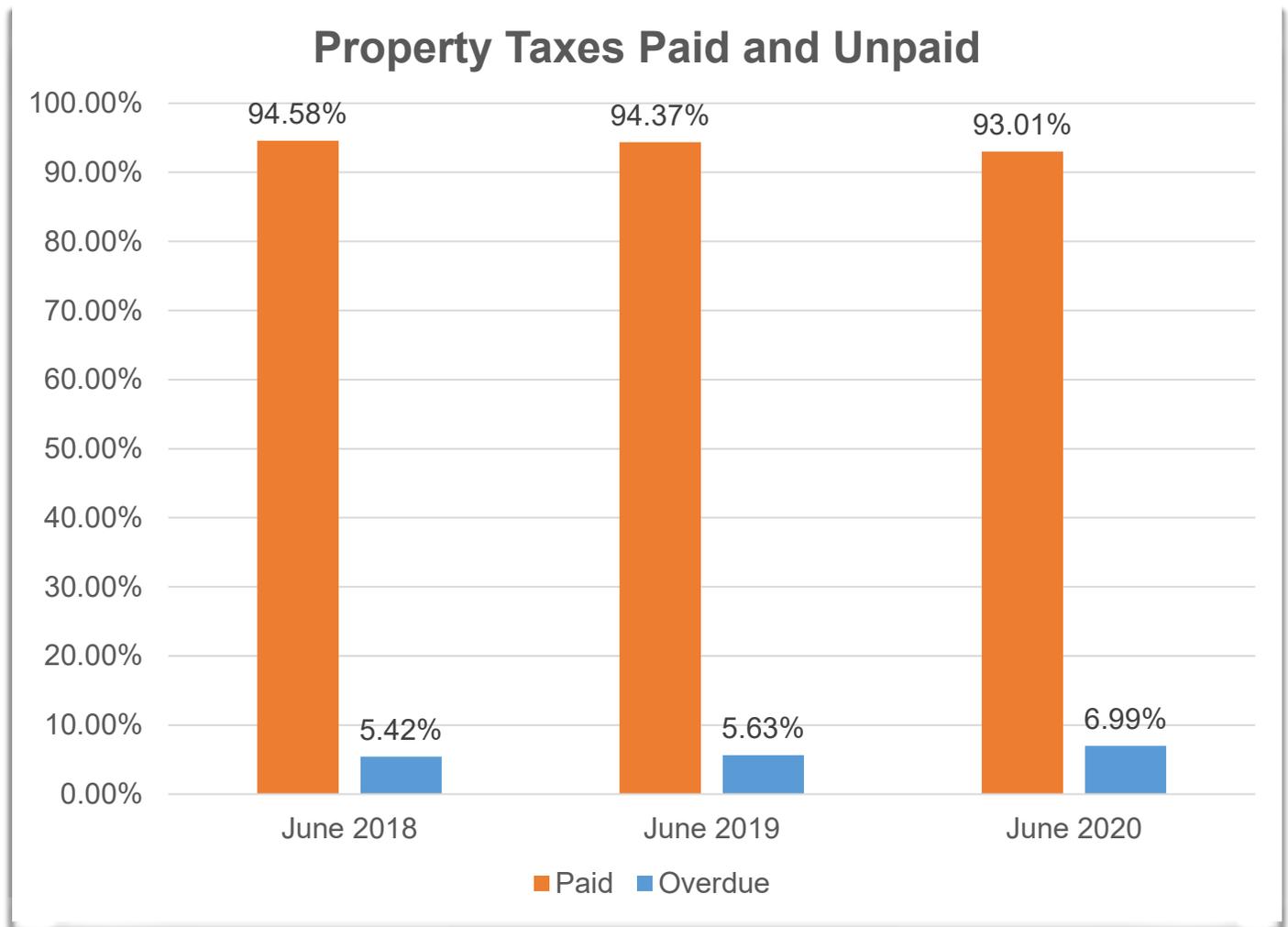


■ Land ■ Detached ■ Townhouse ■ Condo ■ Semi-Detached

The largest assessment group is for the “single detached” home structure.

Paid vs. Overdue

There will always be property tax accounts in arrears whether in good economic times or not. The first chart below shows the percentage of the current year’s property taxes that were paid and unpaid in the current year and compares those figures to previous years.



It is interesting to note, that the “June Arrears” percentage increased from 2018 to 2019 even though the economy was doing well with a low unemployment rate.

In 2020, roughly 7.0 percent of taxes are overdue compared to the same period last year. It is likely that this 1.5 percent is attributable to financial fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. It was expected that some households would be affected by the pandemic, but at this current time, it appears that the COVID-19 has increased the outstanding property taxes by 1.5 percent or 513 ratepayers. However, it should be noted that key financial assistance programs such as the 6 month mortgage deferral and Canadian Emergency Response Benefit or CERB will expire by the end of September that may result in additional taxpayers following behind in their payments. Offsetting the loss of these economic supports is the fact that the economy is slowly regaining strength from the COVID-19 lockdown period.

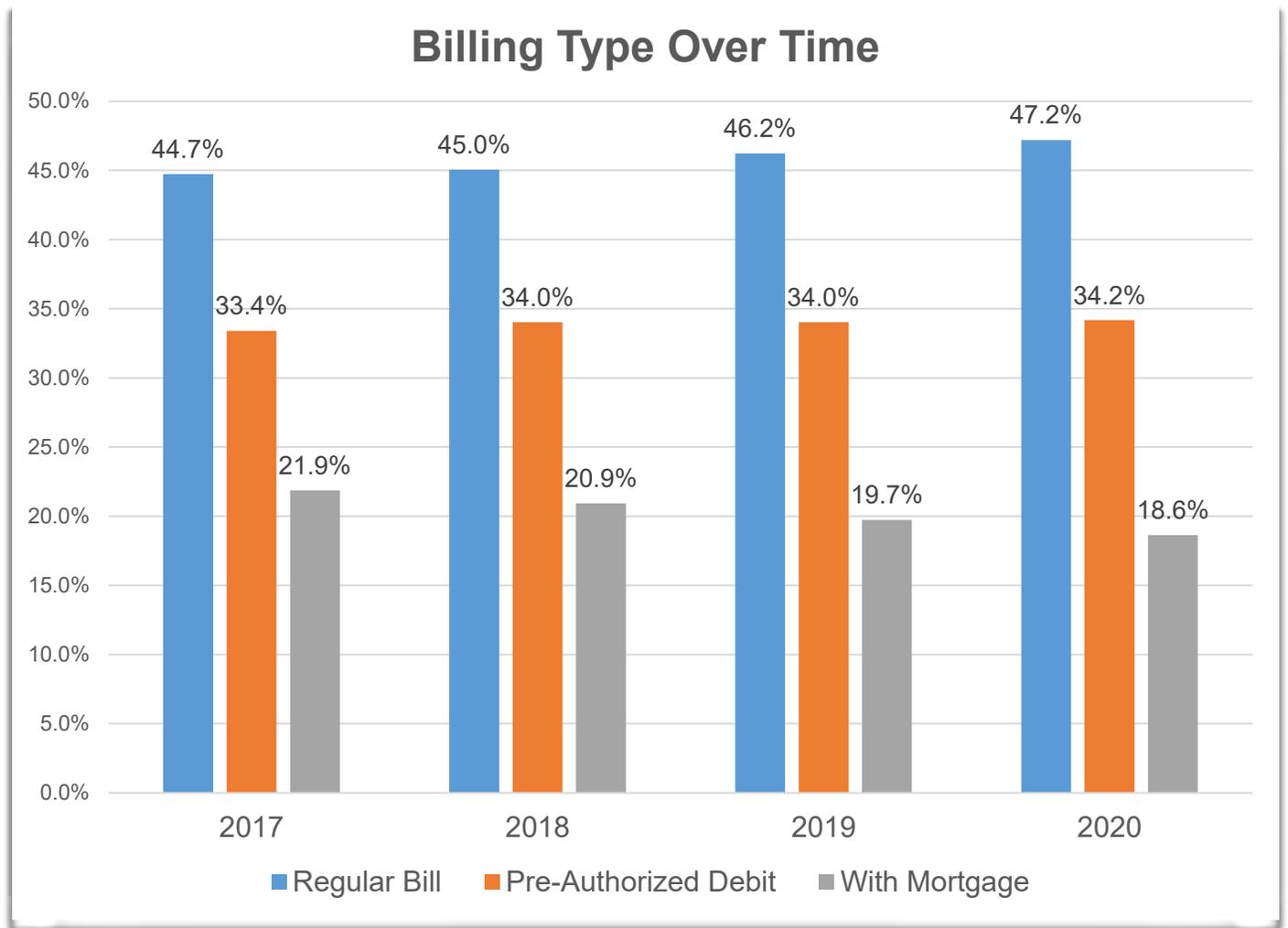
Providing Additional Time Final Residential Billing Cycle

For the 2020 final tax bill, Pickering deferred the 2 due dates by a total of 96 days compared to the 2019 due dates, which is more than our neighboring Durham municipalities who provided an average of 30 days. In April of this year, the City provided an interest free period for the months of

May and June that in-turn by default extended the April due date to the end of June. The extension of the final residential installments from the traditional months of June and September to the end of August and October, has paralleled the same principle of providing additional time with added benefit of additional days.

Billing Type

The chart below, provides a breakdown of the various billing types.



Currently, the most popular billing method is to receive a property tax bill through Canada Post (or e-bill) and the property owner is required to pay on the due dates either directly to the City (drop box or in person) or through various payment options.

Paying through the pre-authorized payment debit plans has seen steady growth over time. The pre-authorized payment plan allocates the annual property tax payment over 12 months and provides the taxpayer with the most "time" to pay their annual bill. Paying your property taxes through a mortgage is the third popular option and has been decreasing in popularity in recent years. The decrease in using the mortgage payment tool is probably due to the fact that the

homeowner has paid off their mortgage. However, with the introduction of Seaton and other developments within Pickering, the future long-term trend may indicate an increase in residential property taxes being paid via the mortgage.

E-Billing

There has been a gradual increase in property owners signing up for e-billing. Currently there are 486 customers receiving their bills by email. Every year each account that is enrolled in e-billing saves the City roughly \$2.50 in paper, printing, and postage. The e-billing numbers are expected to increase gradually over time.

Attachments: None

Prepared By:

Approved/Endorsed By:

Original Signed By:

Original Signed By:

Mike Jones
Supervisor, Taxation

Stan Karwowski
Director, Finance & Treasurer

Recommended for the consideration
of Pickering City Council

Original Signed By:

Marisa Carpino, M.A.
Interim Chief Administrative Officer