



## The Regional Municipality of Durham

### Planning and Economic Development Committee Agenda

Tuesday, December 6, 2022, 9:30 a.m.

Regional Council Chambers

Regional Headquarters Building

605 Rossland Road East, Whitby

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2097.

Note: This meeting will be held in a hybrid meeting format with electronic and in-person participation. It is encouraged that members of the public view the Committee meeting via live streaming, instead of attending the meeting in-person. If in-person attendance is required, arrangements must be made by emailing [clerks@durham.ca](mailto:clerks@durham.ca) prior to the meeting date.

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1. Roll Call	
2. Declarations of Interest	
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4. Adoption of Minutes	
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5. Statutory Public Meetings	
5.1 Report #2022-P-19	15
Application to Amend the Durham Regional Official Plan, submitted by Clark Consulting Services, on behalf of Wechsel Farms, to permit the severance of a farm dwelling rendered surplus as a result of the consolidation of non-abutting farm properties, in the Township of Brock, File: OPA 2022-004	
a. Presentation	
a. Vannitha Chanthavong, Planner	
b. Public Input	
a. Hugh Stewart, Clark Consulting Services, on behalf of Wechsel Farms	

c. Report

6. Delegations

- 6.1 Michael Mendel, Manager, Government Affairs and Stakeholder Relations, and Johan van 't Hof, Board Member, Greater Toronto Airports Authority  
Re: Annual Update from the Greater Toronto Airports Authority

7. Presentations

- 7.1 Brian Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, Gary Muller, Director of Planning, and Simon Gill, Director of Economic Development and Tourism  
Re: Planning and Economic Development Committee Orientation
- 7.2 Simon Gill, Director of Economic Development and Tourism  
Re: Ready Set Future: Five Year Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Action Plan (2022-EDT-15)

8. Planning

8.1 Correspondence

8.2 Reports

- a. Report #2022-P-20  
Planning and Economic Development Department  
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9. Economic Development

9.1 Correspondence

9.2 Reports

- a. Report #2022-EDT-15  
Ready Set Future: Five Year Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Action Plan
- b. Report #2022-EDT-16  
Local Food Business Retention and Expansion Project:  
Annual Implementation Update

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10. Advisory Committee Resolutions

There are no advisory committee resolutions to be considered

11. Confidential Matters

There are no confidential matters to be considered

12. Other Business

13. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 9:30 AM

14. Adjournment

Notice regarding collection, use and disclosure of personal information:

Written information (either paper or electronic) that you send to Durham Regional Council or Committees, including home address, phone numbers and email addresses, will become part of the public record. This also includes oral submissions at meetings. If you have any questions about the collection of information, please contact the Regional Clerk/Director of Legislative Services.

## **The Regional Municipality of Durham**

### **MINUTES**

#### **PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, September 6, 2022**

A regular meeting of the Planning & Economic Development Committee was held on Tuesday, September 6, 2022, in the Lower Level Boardroom (LL-C), Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 9:31 AM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

#### **1. Roll Call**

Present: Councillor Ryan, Chair\*  
Councillor Joe Neal, Vice-Chair\*  
Councillor Grant\*  
Councillor Highet\*  
Councillor Kerr\*  
Councillor Lee\*  
Councillor Yamada attended the meeting at 9:40 AM  
Regional Chair Henry  
\* **denotes Councillors participating electronically**

Also

Present: Councillor Barton  
Councillor Dies  
Councillor Smith attended for part of the meeting  
Councillor Wotten attended for part of the meeting

Staff

Present: E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer  
B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development  
C. Boyd, Solicitor, Corporate Services – Legal Services  
H. Finlay, Project Planner  
S. Gill, Director, Economic Development and Tourism  
C. Goodchild, Manager, Policy Planning & Special Studies  
W. Holmes, General Manager, DRT  
L. Huinink, Director, Rapid Transit and Transit Oriented Development  
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT  
G. Muller, Director of Planning  
G. Pereira, Manager, Transportation Planning  
B. Pickard, Manager, Tourism  
N. Prasad, Assistant Secretary to Council, Corporate Services – Legislative Services  
D. Ruby, Manager, Business Development and Investment



J. Severs, Manager, Economic Development, Marketing and Cluster Development  
N. Taylor, Commissioner of Finance  
L. Trombino, Manager, Plan Implementation  
T. Fraser, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Lee, Seconded by Councillor Kerr,  
(110) That the minutes of the regular Planning & Economic Development Committee meeting held on Tuesday, June 7, 2022, be adopted.  
CARRIED

B. Bridgeman introduced Dan Ruby as the new Manager of Business Development and Investment. He advised that D. Ruby brings a wealth of economic development experience and is well respected in the business, public and academic sectors.

Chair Ryan welcomed D. Ruby to the Region.

**4. Statutory Public Meetings**

**4.1 Application to Amend the Durham Regional Official Plan, submitted by CBM Aggregates to permit the expansion of Aggregate Resource Extraction Area #2 in the Township of Brock, File: OPA 2022-003 (2022-P-17)**

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The Chair advised that this portion of the Planning & Economic Development Committee meeting constitutes the Statutory Public Information meeting under the Planning Act for a proposed amendment to the Durham Regional Official Plan. He noted that it is important that anyone who may have an interest in this matter make a submission prior to Regional Council making a decision.

**A) Presentation**

Heather Finlay, Principal Planner, Planning Division, provided a presentation outlining the details of Report #2022-P-17 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development. She advised that an application has been submitted by Esher Planning Inc., on behalf of CBM Aggregates, to amend the Regional Official Plan to permit the expansion of an existing licenced aggregate pit operation in the Township of Brock. The subject site is municipally known as S895 Regional Road 13. She provided an overview of the application and land use policy considerations. She also advised that the application has been circulated to relevant agencies and notice given to the public. She further advised

that there have been approximately 20 inquiries from 12 area residents regarding the application and concerns relate to the protection of the adjacent provincially significant wetland, groundwater, wildlife, noise and dust concerns, potential property value decrease, potential flooding and damage to the surrounding roads and infrastructure. She added that all of these concerns will be examined during the amendment process.

H. Finlay responded to questions with respect to whether there is an aggregate shortage in Durham; whether the area to the west of the subject site is actively being mined; the status of other lands owned by the applicant; and whether there are any reports on the environmental impact of other licenced aggregate pits in the Beaver River Valley area. H. Finlay agreed to advise of the number of active aggregate pits in Durham Region following the meeting.

The Chair asked if there were any persons in attendance who wished to make a submission or ask any questions.

B) Delegations

1. Peter Renz, S670 Brock Concession 2, Sunderland

Peter Renz, participating electronically, appeared in opposition to the proposed amendment.

P. Renz advised that he is opposed to the CBM Aggregates request for re-zoning, and he stated that this is not an expansion as the previous site was completed several years ago and this is a new pit. He also stated that when the previous pit was operating CBM Aggregates routinely skirted the rules operating beyond the guidelines and their employees' dismissed complaints from property owners. He also advised that CBM Aggregates uses the term rehabilitation and he stated that they do not do this.

P. Renz further advised that his property is located across from the proposed site, and he stated that his concerns include decreased property values, potential health impacts of silica particles being released into the atmosphere, and the elimination of farmland. He also stated that current aggregate operations in Ontario can support current and future needs.

P. Renz also advised that he participates in the Conservation Land Tax incentive program to protect the environment and he stated that the agreement includes that property owners will not undertake any activities that degrade, destroy, or result in the loss of natural heritage environmental features.

P. Renz concluded by expressing concern that a large-scale aggregate operation can be approved and considered safe for the environment.

2. Ian Adams, 68 East Street, Collingwood

Ian Adams, participating electronically, appeared in opposition to the proposed amendment.

I. Adams advised that his family purchased a 20 acre property on the south side of Regional Road 13 in 1975 where his parents built their principal residence. He also advised that there was no residence on the property previously and prior to any residential development, aggregate operations to the east had already been established. He stated that CBM Aggregates purchased the operations around 1982.

I. Adams further advised that when his parents were informed CBM Aggregates would resume extraction on the lands bordering their property, they were assured there would be a 30-metre treed buffer. He stated that in examining the site now, the extent and quality of the buffer could be challenged. He also stated that during the following years his parents experienced noise and dust issues, and when concerns were raised the response from CBM Aggregates appears to have been “too bad” or “mind your own business”.

I. Adams also advised that CBM Aggregates built a temporary berm between his parents’ property and the excavation area and based on their experience he would suggest the berms being proposed now will do little to stop noise and dust. He asked if CBM Aggregates will be restoring any of the temporary berms to protect his parents’ property.

I. Adams expressed concerns related to noise and dust emanating from trucks using the road, potential impact on their well from extraction below the water table, and the response from CBM Aggregates when neighbours complain about dust and noise.

I. Adams referenced policy 9D.2.2 in the Regional Official Plan and he stated that given the dust and noise issues with the existing operations he does not believe any amount of mitigation could adequately address the potential impact on neighbours. He also referenced sections of the Provincial Policy Statement.

Ian Adams concluded by stating that the immediate community has changed significantly in the 65 years since aggregate extraction was established in the area and he expressed his opinion that re-zoning agricultural land to permit an industrial use is incompatible and does not meet the tests of the Regional Official Plan, Brock Official Plan or principles in the Provincial Policy Statement.

3. Melanie Horton, Esher Planning Inc.

M. Horton, participating electronically, appeared with respect to the application to amend the Durham Regional Official Plan submitted by CBM Aggregates, on behalf of the applicant. David Hanratty, Mike LeBreton, and Heather Melcher were also in attendance.

M. Horton provided a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed amendment. Highlights of the presentation included:

- Who is CBM Aggregates?
- Why This Site?
- What we have heard so far
- Responding to Concerns
- Response to Concerns – Protection of the Wetland
- Response to Concerns – Protection of Well Water
- Response to Concerns – Visual Impact
- Rehabilitation Plan
- CBM Sunderland Pit Rehabilitation

M. Horton and D. Hanratty responded to questions of the Committee.

4. Carole Ditomaso, 345 Concession 2, Sunderland

Carole Ditomaso, participating electronically, appeared in opposition to the proposed amendment.

C. Ditomaso expressed concerns related to the impact on neighbouring properties, residents, wildlife, and protected wetlands; potential change in the haul route; the three ponds in the proposed expansion area for extraction below the water table; and the noise impact assessment.

5. Kaik Bharucha, S700 Concession 2, Sunderland

Kaik Bharucha, participating electronically, appeared in opposition to the proposed amendment.

K. Bharucha advised that he has previously made a deputation to the Township of Brock Council and appeared at the public meeting in the Township of Brock in July 2022. He also advised that a petition was submitted to the Township of Brock and Region of Durham in November 2021. He further advised that he had a professional real estate appraisal executed that indicates his property value would be at least 20% less with a pit operating directly across from his property.

K. Bharucha stated that the subject lands are productive farmland and are a travel path for wildlife. He also advised that he purchased his property in 1980 and built his residence in 2004 for a quiet spot to live, enjoy and maybe retire. He further advised that his property is 74 acres, of which 56 acres are in the wetland and part of the Conservation Land Tax incentive program.

K. Bharucha expressed concerns that amending the Official Plan to allow Brock Township to change the zoning is alarming and distressful to residents, and will create noise, dust, aquifer problems and health issues due to silica in the dust. He added that the proposed expansion will substantially depreciate their property values by 20% to 30%.

K. Bharucha concluded by advising that he strongly opposes any change to the Regional Official Plan to allow a zoning change of the existing farmland.

6. Janice Mears, S700 Concession 2, Sunderland

Janice Mears, participating electronically, appeared in opposition to the proposed amendment.

J. Mears advised that according to Ministry data from 2018, there are 66 active aggregate pits in the Region of Durham, including 9 in the Township of Brock. She also advised that the subject site is classified as Prime Agricultural Area in the Regional Official Plan.

J. Mears further advised that she lives within 120 metres of the site and is identified as a sensitive receptor by the proponent, but their distinct features have not been included in the biologist and hydrogeologist reports. She stated that the area is a continuous corridor of rural agricultural and residential land from Regional Road 13 to the Township of Brock boundary on Sideroad 17 and is in the Greenbelt Natural Heritage System.

J. Mears referenced the Provincial Policy Statement and she stated that there is no justification for the proponents' claim that the land is unsuited for cultivation but capable for use as unimproved pasture. She also stated currently the land supports a flourishing crop of soy.

J. Mears expressed concerns related to land use compatibility; impacts on wildlife; noise and dust; potential impact to the aquifer and wells; extraction below the water table; and environmental and health risks.

7. Matthew Negrazis, 10955 Sideroad 17, Sunderland

Matthew Negrazis, participating electronically, appeared in opposition to the proposed amendment.

M. Negrazis expressed concerns related to the potential effects on the water table and wells; impact on property values; dust and pollution; impacts on the environment; and land use compatibility. He also questioned how this is considered an expansion and not a new pit.

C) Correspondence

1. Peter Renz, Sunderland resident
2. Kaik Bharucha, Sunderland resident
3. Janice Mears, Sunderland resident
4. Robert Ritter, Sunderland resident
5. John and Susan Adams, Sunderland residents
6. Keld and Angela Greflund, Sunderland residents
7. Matthew Negrazis, Sunderland resident
8. Jody Dales & Francis Muscat, Sunderland residents

D) Report

B. Bridgeman responded to questions with respect to the anticipated timing for the decision meeting, and the peer review process.

Moved by Councillor Grant, Seconded by Councillor Kerr,

(111) A) That Report #2022-P-17 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development be received for information; and

B) That all submissions received be referred to the Planning and Economic Development Department for consideration.

CARRIED

**5. Delegations**

- 5.1 Don Given, Malone Given Parsons, on behalf of Oland Holdings (Uxbridge) Inc., re: Application to Amend the Durham Regional Official Plan, submitted by Malone Given Parsons on behalf of Oland Holdings (Uxbridge) Inc., File: OPA 2022-001 (2022-P-18)
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Don Given, participating electronically, appeared with respect to the application to amend the Durham Regional Official Plan submitted on behalf of Oland Holdings (Uxbridge) Inc.

D. Given advised that he is the applicants' agent and is appearing in support of the recommendations contained in Report #2022-P-18 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development. He also advised that Vince Figliomeni, Ahmed Al-Temimi, Robert Johnson, and Jason Cole, were also in attendance to answer any questions.

With the consensus of the Committee, the order of the agenda was altered to consider Report #2022-P-18 at this time.

## 7.2 Reports

- A) Application to Amend the Durham Regional Official Plan, submitted by Malone Given Parsons on behalf of Oland Holdings (Uxbridge) Inc., in association with TACC Developments to permit soil remediation and processing uses in the Township of Uxbridge, File: OPA 2022-001 (2022-P-18)
- 

Report #2022-P-18 from B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, was received.

B. Bridgeman responded to a question with respect to whether the Region always waits for support from the local municipality before recommending adoption of a Regional Official Plan Amendment.

Moved by Councillor Lee, Seconded by Councillor Highet,  
(112) That we recommend to Council:

- A) That Amendment #189 to the Durham Regional Official Plan, to permit soil remediation and processing uses, as contained in Attachment #2 to Report #2022-P-18 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development be forwarded to Regional Council for adoption upon receipt of correspondence from the Township of Uxbridge that it is in support of the proposal; and
- B) That "Notice of Adoption" be sent to the applicant, the applicant's agent, the Township of Uxbridge, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and all other persons or public bodies who requested notification of this decision.

CARRIED

## 6. **Presentations**

- 6.1 Jacquie Severs, Manager, Marketing and Cluster Development, re: Durham at the 2022 Collision Conference: Investment Attraction and Brand Awareness (2022-EDT-12)
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J. Severs provided a presentation outlining the details of Report #2022-EDT-12 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development. Highlights of the presentation included:

- Collision Conference June 20-23, 2022
- #DurhamAtCollision
- Key Messages
  - Location for innovation
  - Lifestyle
  - Support
- Durham Team
- By the Numbers
- Event Marketing
- Select Metrics
- Select Outcomes
- Legacy & Success

J. Severs responded to questions of the Committee with respect to who developed the key messages; the cost to attend the conference; whether displays could be re-used; and the number of leads generated.

## **7. Planning**

### **7.1 Correspondence**

There were no communications to consider.

### **7.2 Reports**

- A) Application to Amend the Durham Regional Official Plan, submitted by Malone Given Parsons on behalf of Oland Holdings (Uxbridge) Inc., in association with TACC Developments to permit soil remediation and processing uses in the Township of Uxbridge, File: OPA 2022-001 (2022-P-18)
- 

This item was considered earlier in the meeting. Refer to page 8 of these minutes.

## **8. Economic Development**

### **8.1 Correspondence**

There were no communications to consider.

### **8.2 Reports**

- A) Durham at the 2022 Collision Conference: Investment Attraction and Brand Awareness (2022-EDT-12)
- 

Report #2022-EDT-12 from B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, was received.

Moved by Councillor Lee, Seconded by Councillor Yamada,



- (113) That Report #2022-EDT-12 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development be received for information.

CARRIED

B) Tap Into Talent – Workforce Development and Investment Attraction Campaign (2022-EDT-13)

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Report #2022-EDT-13 from B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, was received.

Moved by Councillor Lee, Seconded by Councillor Yamada,

- (114) That Report #2022-EDT-13 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development be received for information.

CARRIED

C) Toronto Global Membership Funds (2022-EDT-14)

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Report #2022-EDT-14 from B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, was received.

Moved by Councillor Kerr, Seconded by Councillor Lee,

- (115) That Report #2022-EDT-14 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development be received for information.

CARRIED

**9. Advisory Committee Resolutions**

There were no advisory committee resolutions to be considered.

**10. Confidential Matters**

There were no confidential matters to be considered.

**11. Other Business**

There was no other business to be considered.

**12. Date of Next Meeting**

The next regularly scheduled Planning & Economic Development Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 6, 2022 at 9:30 AM in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

**13. Adjournment**

Moved by Councillor Kerr, Seconded by Councillor Yamada,

- (116) That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 11:03 AM

Respectfully submitted,

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D. Ryan, Chair

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T. Fraser, Committee Clerk



# The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

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To:	Planning and Economic Development Committee
From:	Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
Report:	#2022-P-19
Date:	December 6, 2022

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**Subject:**

Public Meeting Report

Application to Amend the Durham Regional Official Plan, submitted by Clark Consulting Services, on behalf of Wechsel Farms, to permit the severance of a farm dwelling rendered surplus as a result of the consolidation of non-abutting farm properties, in the Township of Brock, File: OPA 2022-004.

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**Recommendation:**

That the Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends:

- A) That Commissioner's Report #2022-P-19 be received for information, and
  - B) That all submissions received be referred to the Planning Division for consideration.
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**Report:**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 On August 18, 2022, Clark Consulting Services on behalf of Wechsel Farms submitted an application to amend the Regional Official Plan (ROP) to permit the severance of a dwelling rendered surplus as a result of the consolidation of non-abutting farm parcels in the Township of Brock.
- 1.2 A "Notice of Complete Application and Public Meeting" regarding the application has been advertised in the appropriate newspaper. Notice of this meeting has also been

mailed to those who own land within 120 metres of the subject site. This report was made available to the public prior to the meeting.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The subject site is located on the north side of Regional Road 15, west of Thorah Sideroad and is approximately 2.4 kilometres east of the Beaverton Urban Area, in the Township of Brock (refer to Attachment 1). The property is municipally known as B1845 Regional Road 15, and is described as Part of Lot 6, Concession 5, in the Former Township of Thorah.
- 2.2 The subject site is roughly square in shape and is approximately 40 hectares (100 acres) in size. The southern portion of the site contains an existing house, barn, and other outbuildings to be removed. The White's Creek watercourse is located along the site's southeast property line. A woodlot is located in the northwest corner of the site. The house is rented to a tenant who is not involved with the farming operation.
- 2.3 Wechsel Farms is a private farm business and produces cash crops. As shown on Attachment 2, the applicant owns a total of five agricultural properties in the Township of Brock with present land holdings of 234 hectares (578 acres), of which 206 hectares (509 acres) are workable. In 2010, Garth Wechsel purchased the subject site, and the lands are used for cultivating crops. Two of the agricultural properties contain a house. The applicant's family lives in the homestead located at B2005 Concession Road 6. The house located on the subject site is not utilized by a farm employee and is surplus to the farm operation.
- 2.4 The applicant has concurrently filed a Zoning By-law Amendment Application (Application 13-2022-RA) with the Township of Brock to rezone the proposed retained farm parcel to prohibit any further severances and the construction of any new dwellings.
- 2.5 The surrounding land uses to the subject site includes:
  - a. North - agricultural lands and rural residences
  - b. East - Thorah Sideroad, rural residences, agricultural lands, and White's Creek
  - c. South - rural residences, Regional Rd. 15, a woodlot, White's Creek, and agricultural lands
  - d. West - wooded areas, agricultural lands, and rural residences

### **3. Reports Submitted in Support of the Application**

- 3.1 A Planning Justification Report/Agricultural Assessment prepared by Clark Consulting Services Ltd. dated August 8, 2022, has been submitted in support of the application. The report concludes that the proposed amendment meets the objectives and requirements of the Provincial Policy Statement, the Greenbelt Plan, the Regional Official Plan, and the Provincial Minimum Distance of Separation requirements.
- 3.2 An Environmental Site-Screening Questionnaire (SSQ) completed by GHD Ltd. indicated that there is a low level of environmental concern at the subject site.

### **4. Policy Context**

#### **Provincial Policy Statement and Greenbelt Plan**

- 4.1 The subject site is located within the Protected Countryside designation of the Greenbelt Plan. Both the Provincial Policy Statement and the Greenbelt Plan permit the severance of a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation, provided the planning authority ensures that a residential dwelling is not permitted on the proposed retained farm lot created by the severance and will be limited to the minimum size needed to accommodate the use.

#### **Durham Regional Official Plan**

- 4.2 The subject site is located within the “Prime Agricultural Areas” designation in the ROP. The site is also located within the Provincial Agricultural System. The northwest and southeast corner of the site contains Key Natural Heritage and/or Hydrologic Features. Severance applications for agricultural uses may be considered in accordance with the relevant policies of the Sub-Section 9A of the ROP.
- 4.3 Policy 9A.2.10 of the ROP permits the severance of a farm dwelling rendered surplus as a result of a farmer acquiring a non-abutting farm, provided that:
- a. the dwelling is not needed by a farm employee;
  - b. the farm parcel is of a size which is viable for farming operations;
  - c. within the Protected Countryside of the Greenbelt Plan Area, the dwelling was in existence as of December 16, 2004; and
  - d. the farm parcel is zoned to prohibit any further severances and the establishment of any residential dwelling.

## **5. Proposed Official Plan Amendment**

- 5.1 The proposed amendment to the ROP would facilitate the severance of a 0.49 ha (1.21 acre) parcel of land containing a farm dwelling, retaining a 39.76 ha (98 acre) farm parcel. The subject dwelling was in existence prior to December 16, 2004.

## **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 A copy of the proposed ROP Amendment has been circulated to the Ministry of the Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Township of Brock; the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority; the Regional Health Department; the Regional Works Department; and the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

## **7. Public Consultation**

- 7.1 A “Notice of Complete Application” and “Notice of Public Meeting” regarding this application was advertised in the Brock Citizen and a notice was posted on the Region’s website. Notice of this meeting has also been mailed out to those who own land within 120 metres (400 feet) of the subject site. The report was also made available to the public prior to the meeting.
- 7.2 Anyone who attends or participates in a public meeting may present an oral submission and/or provide a written submission to the Planning and Economic Development Committee on the proposed amendment. Also, any person may make written submissions at any time before Regional Council makes a decision.
- 7.3 If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting, or does not make written submissions before the proposed official plan amendment is adopted, the person or public body:
- a. Is not entitled to appeal the decision of the Region of Durham to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT); and
  - b. May not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the OLT, as appropriate, unless in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.
- 7.4 Anyone who wants to be notified of Regional Council’s decision on the proposed ROP Amendment must submit a written request to:

Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP  
Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development  
Planning and Economic Development Department  
Regional Municipality of Durham  
Durham Regional Headquarters  
605 Rossland Road East  
Whitby, ON L1N 6A3

## **8. Future Regional Council Decision**

- 8.1 The Planning and Economic Development Department Committee will consider the proposed ROP Amendment at a future meeting and will make a recommendation to Regional Council. Council's decision will be final unless appealed.
- 8.2 All persons who make oral submissions, or have requested notification in writing, will be given notice of the future meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Committee and Regional Council at which the subject application will be considered.

## **9. Previous Reports and Decisions**

- 9.1 There are no previous reports on this matter.

## **10. Relationship to Strategic Plan**

- 10.1 In the processing of Regional Official Plan Amendment applications, the objective is to ensure responsive, effective and fiscally sustainable service delivery.

## **11. Attachments**

Attachment #1: Location Sketch

Attachment #2: Wechsel Farms Agricultural Land Holdings

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP  
Commissioner of Planning and  
Economic Development

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

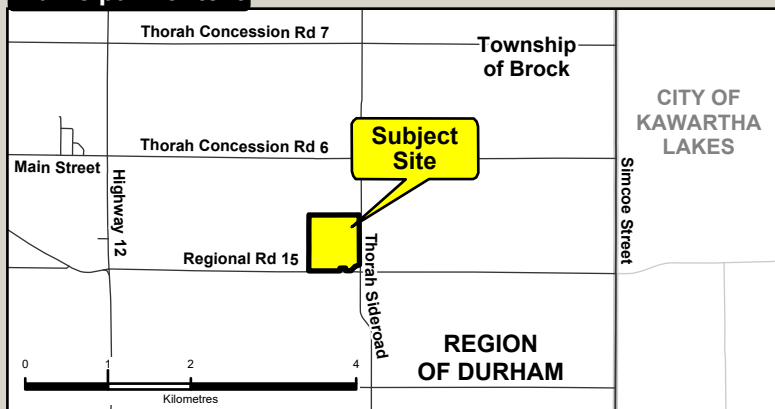
Original signed by

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Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair  
Chief Administrative Officer

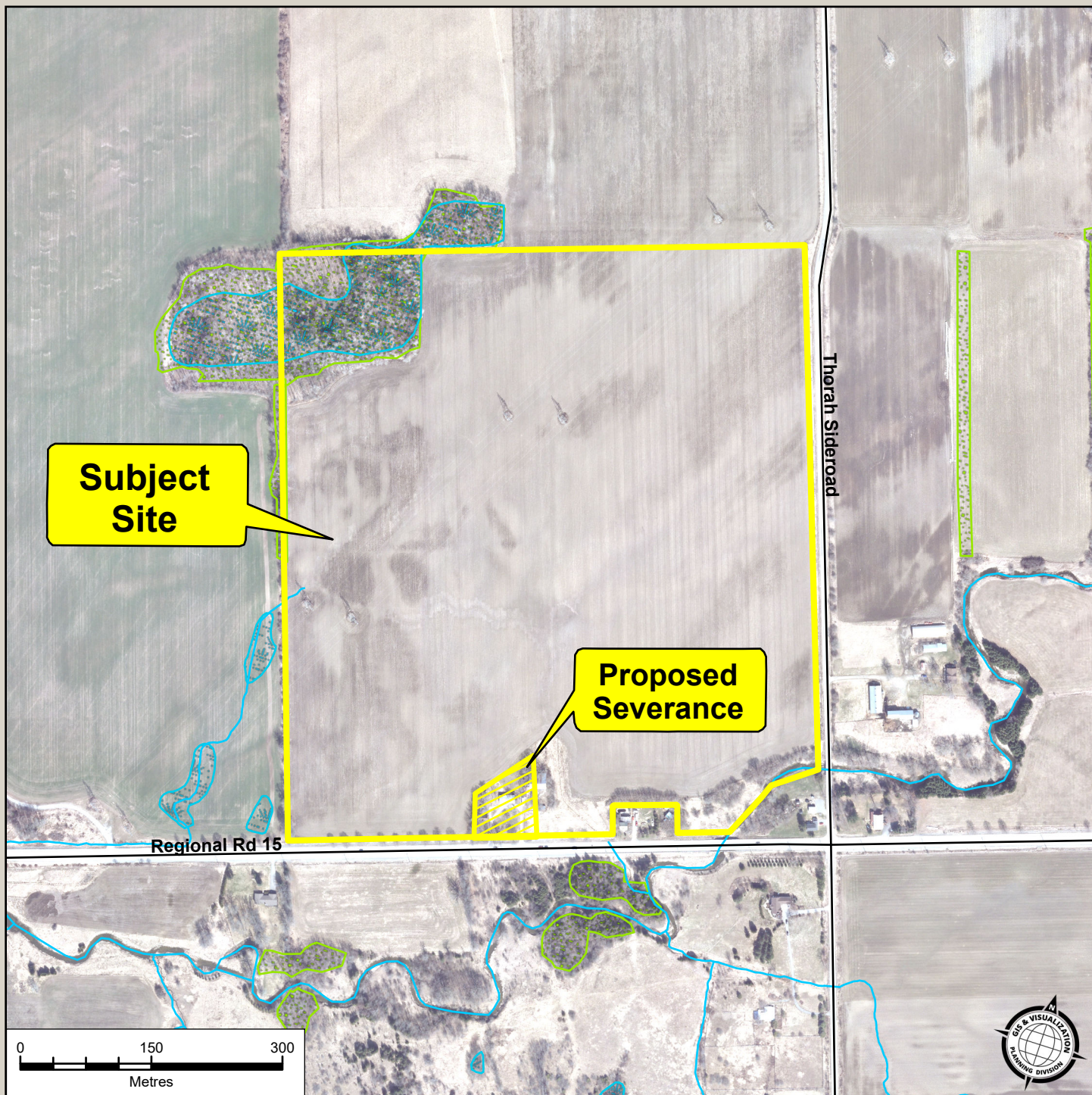


## Municipal Context

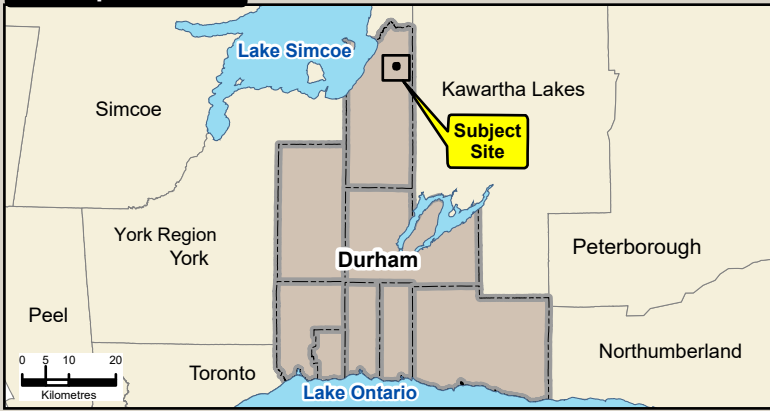


## Attachment #1 Commissioner's Report: #2022-P-19 File: ROPA 2022-004 Municipality: Township of Brock

### Legend



## Municipal Context



Attachment #2  
Commissioner's Report: #2022-P-19  
File: ROPA 2022-004 Municipality:  
Township of Brock

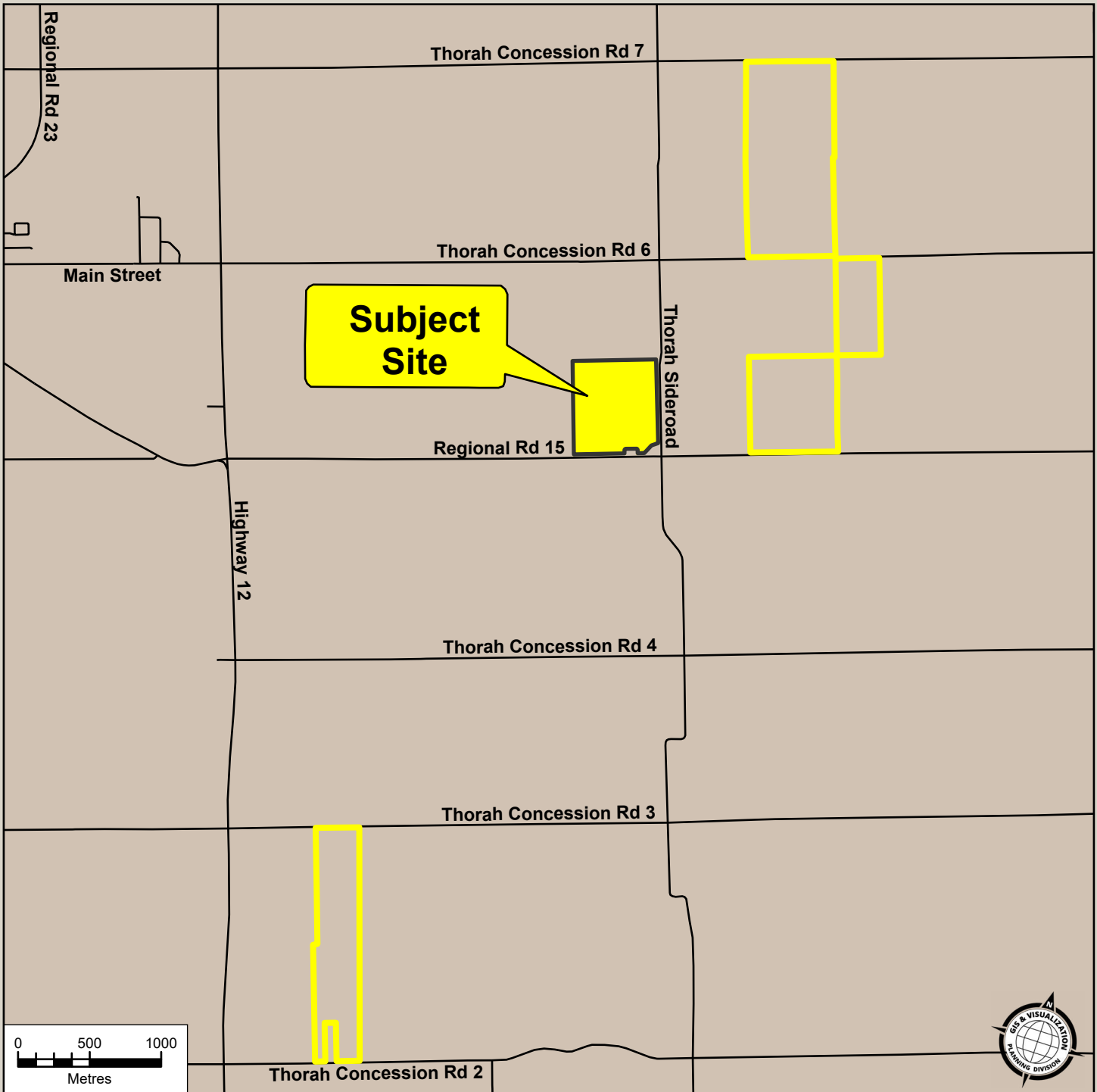
## Legend



Subject Site



Other Lands  
Owned by  
Wechsel Farms





# The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

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To: Planning and Economic Development Committee  
From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development  
Report: #2022-P-20  
Date: December 6, 2022

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**Subject:**

Planning and Economic Development Department Achievements, 2018 – 2022

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**Recommendation:**

Receive for information

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**Report:**

**1. Background and Purpose**

- 1.1 As this next term of Council commences, it is beneficial to provide a report summarizing the activities undertaken by the Planning and Economic Development Department over the past term of Council. By reviewing the accomplishments over the past term of Council, this report is intended to serve as a useful starting point for the incoming members of the Planning and Economic Development Committee.
- 1.2 Note: At the time of writing this report, the role of regional planning appears to be on the cusp of change. On October 25, 2022, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing introduced Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act. Bill 23 proposes to amend various pieces of legislation including the Municipal Act, Planning Act, and the Development Charges Act. If Bill 23 comes into effect as introduced, certain planning responsibilities would be removed from the upper-tier municipalities including the Region of Durham. The Associated ERO postings also propose to make changes to the Provincial Policy Statement and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Once the full impact of these changes are known, further information will be provided to this Committee.

- 1.3 Over the last Council term, 373 reports from the Planning and Economic Development were produced, covering a wide range of planning and economic development matters as outlined below.

## **2. Departmental Overview**

- 2.1 The Planning and Economic Development Department consists of two Divisions, the Planning Division, and the Economic Development and Tourism Division, that are responsible for establishing and implementing a long-term vision for the growth and economic prosperity of the region. During the last term of Council, the Department also provided oversight for Broadband implementation and the Rapid Transit and Transit Oriented Development Office, as further described in Paragraph 2.2.

The work of the Planning Division includes:

- Conducting long range planning, growth management and forecasting
- Undertaking “one window” review and comment on development applications and area municipal planning documents through the lens of conformity with the Regional Official Plan and delegated provincial plan review responsibilities
- Exercising delegated approval authority of area municipal official plan amendments, certain subdivision/condominium plans and part lot control exemption by-laws
- Administering the Regional Land Division Committee
- Conducting special studies and strategic initiatives, such as the development and administration of the Affordable Housing Incentive Program, and advancing Envision Durham – the Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Regional Official Plan
- Providing review and comment on provincial legislative, policy and regulatory changes
- Implementing the Transportation Master Plan, the Regional Cycling Plan, active transportation initiatives and associated planning and forecasting
- Providing staff support for the Durham Environmental Advisory Committee, the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Durham Active Transportation Advisory Committee.

The work of the Economic Development and Tourism Division includes:

- Investment attraction and promotion of the Region to key international and domestic markets, investment intermediaries and site selectors



- Marketing and communication strategies, tools and materials focusing on attracting non-residential investment and jobs to the Region
- Business retention and expansion support in North Durham
- promotion and support of priority clusters including Future Energy, Next Generation Mobility, Arts Culture, and Creative Industries, Applied Digital Technology, and Agri-Food
- Building partnerships with businesses, post-secondary institutions, stakeholders, and all levels of government
- Supporting entrepreneurship and start-ups through the Business Advisory Centre Durham (BACD), 1855 Accelerator Spark Centre, and other initiatives
- Promoting the film industry focusing on attracting new film production to the Region
- Promoting the Region as a destination for tourists, sporting events, and festivals

2.2 Along with the above two Divisions, two other areas of responsibility formed part of the Department during the past term of Council: Broadband, and the Rapid Transit and Transit Oriented Development (RT/TOD) Office. Their work includes:

a. Broadband

- Delivering the action items within the Regional Broadband Strategy
- Conducting Broadband surveys and collecting data to identify areas of poor broadband coverage
- Engaging service providers through a Request for Information (RFI) to understand challenges to rural expansion
- Coordinating with Area Municipalities and service providers to address challenges and promote the expansion of broadband services through rural areas of Durham
- Developing plans to expand and operationalize the Regional Broadband Network (RBN)
- Pursuing grant funding applications
- Monitoring and implementing broadband construction projects; and
- Launching and operationalizing Durham OneNet Inc. as a wholly owned Municipal Services Corporation (MSC) of the Region
- With the launch of Durham OneNet in 2022, Broadband will no longer be a functional area of the Planning and Economic Development Department except in a supporting capacity.

b. Rapid Transit and Transit Oriented Development (RT/TOD) Office

- By way of introduction, it should be noted that the RT/TOD Office shares a joint reporting relationship with the Regional Works Department. The RT/TOD Office reports to the Commissioner of Works with respect to matters that pertain to rapid transit implementation, and to the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development with respect to transit-oriented development. Activities of the Office include:
- Building a Rapid Transit Deployment Plan and delivering approved rapid transit projects so that this investment is optimized and leveraged to catalyse TOD
- Advancing approvals, funding and delivery of rapid transit projects through collaboration, coordination of review and implementation
- Identifying and coordinating the implementation of Transit-Oriented Development opportunities being delivered by the Region or Metrolinx to help optimize rapid transit investment, and capture land value through increased densities around rapid transit stations
- Developing strategies to capture land value from transit investment and to increase jobs and housing where rapid transit stops are located, within Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)
- Delivering the four GO stations planned for the GO East Extension in partnership with other parties
- working collaboratively across Regional Departments and with key regional and provincial partners to help grow TOD practices in the province

2.3 Supporting the Department is the GIS and Visualization section which provides the following services:

- Mapping and land-based analysis using Geographic Information Systems
- Developing report maps and infographics
- assist with graphic design for departmental projects and initiatives
- Developing tools and mechanisms to assist with spatial analysis, including customized datasets for the Municipal Comprehensive Review
- Liaising with other Regional departments to maintain corporate data standards
- Conducting regular updates to maps, including the Region's Official Plan schedules
- Maintaining and updating spatial data
- Administering Durham's annual Business Count program

2.4 Also supporting the Department is the Administrative Services Section which provides the following services:

- Providing front-line customer service and overall administrative support
- Leading in the preparation of the Department's annual budget
- Supporting the establishment of a new Regional E-Filing System, as part of the Region's Enterprise Information Management (EIM) Strategy
- Assistance with my Durham 311

### **3. Planning Division Activities**

3.1 The Planning Division consists of three sections: Plan Implementation; Policy Planning and Special Studies; and Transportation Planning. The following provides an overview of some of the key projects and accomplishments by the Planning Division over the last term of Council.

3.2 Envision Durham – A substantial body of work has been done to advance Envision Durham, the Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Regional Official Plan. Informed by the latest Growth Plan forecasts<sup>1</sup>, the MCR included a series of public opinion surveys, and theme-based discussion papers to help inform and guide the new Regional Official Plan. Various studies and reports were prepared for comment, including the technical reports for the Growth Management Study (GMS) pertaining to the overall growth forecast, employment land need, intensification potential and designated greenfield area densities. Proposed Policy Directions for a new Regional Official Plan were also released for consultation. As well, draft systems-based mapping was released for a Regional Natural Heritage System and Agricultural System.

3.3 Through Envision Durham, Regional Council approved Amendment #186 which provided policies and delineations for Protected Major Transit Station Areas along the Lakeshore East GO Rail line. Recommendations on urban area land need was presented with Council's decision forming the basis for proposed area municipal growth allocations and geographic locations for Settlement Area Boundary Expansion. The new Official Plan is currently being drafted, with consultation and adoption in 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe was revised in June of 2019 through Bill 108, which would extend the planning horizon to 2051, and provide a planning forecast of 1.3 million residents and 460,000 jobs for Durham by 2051.

- 3.4 Carruthers Creek Watershed Plan Update (CCWP) – In June, 2021 the CCWP was completed and endorsed by Regional Council. The CCWP evaluates current conditions and identifies measures to protect, enhance and restore the health of the watershed. The information contained within the CCWP will be used inform future land use planning and infrastructure decisions, particularly within northeast Pickering through the Region’s MCR and future land use planning processes.
- 3.5 Changes to Provincial Legislation – Over the last term of Council, the Planning Division reviewed and commented on a number of changes to legislation, including:
- a. In June, 2019, the province enacted Bill 108, the *More Homes, More Choices Act, 2019* which made a number of changes to the provincial land use planning system. Decision timelines for development applications were reduced, and the appeal process was changed to resemble the former Ontario Municipal Board process. Official plans and amendments would no longer be sheltered from appeal where they conformed to provincial policies and plans.
  - b. In April, 2022 the province passed Bill 109, the *More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022* which made changes to various pieces of legislation including the Planning Act, Development Charges Act, New Home Construction Licensing Act, the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act. Certain changes, including requirements that municipalities refund development application fees are scheduled to come into effect on January 1, 2023. The Region’s comments addressed time requirements to review applications, refunding of fees, confirmation that changes would not negatively impact the environment, representation on working groups, and support for housing affordability.
  - c. On October 25, 2022 the province passed Bill 23, the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*. Bill 23 would make further sweeping changes to the land use planning system in Ontario, through amendments to the Planning Act, Development Charges Act, and other legislation that will have significant impacts to the Region. Many of these changes, as well as amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act, the Ontario Land Tribunal Act and the Heritage Act will be reported on once the Bill is brought into effect.



- 3.6 Changes to Provincial Plans, New Procedures and Guidance Materials – Over the previous Council term, the province made a series of changes to the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), Planning Act, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Provincial Land Needs Assessment Methodology. These changes included new population and employment forecasts to 2051, changes to how urban land need would be calculated, and how settlement boundary expansions would be conducted through Municipal Comprehensive Reviews.
- 3.7 Review of Development Applications – The Plan Implementation Section is responsible for reviewing and commenting on development applications that are filed with or circulated to the Region. Over the past four years, public meetings were held on applications to amend the Regional Official Plan, and final recommendations were made with respect to the disposition of a variety of planning and development matters.
- 3.8 The Planning Division was also involved in the review and approval of several official plan amendments to bring local official plans into conformity with the Region's Official Plan.
- 3.9 Subdivision and Condominium Activity – The Planning Division reports annually on the status of subdivision and condominium applications and approval activities to monitor growth. Highlights from January 2018 to December 2021 is summarized below.

<b>Durham wide Indicators</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Applications Received	42	23	31	43
Applications Draft Approved	37	30	23	16
Plans Registered	44	28	40	38
Active Applications	366	369	345	346
In Process Residential Units	27,787	25,863	25,714	28,476
Draft Approved Residential Units	30,075	34,788	33,257	33,433

- 3.10 Building Permit Activity – The Planning Division reports annually on building permit activity in Durham’s area municipalities. The Division also compares of the Region’s activity with that of other Regions in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. A snapshot of some of the indicators is highlighted below:

<b>Durham wide Indicators</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Total Building Permit Value (\$ billion)	\$2.06	\$1.97	\$2.87	\$2.98
Permits for New Residential Units	4,729	3,130	5,380	6,290
New non-residential floor space (thousand sq. ft.)	4,235.5	2,541.4	5,904.1	8,062.6
Average price of a new single detached dwelling (\$)	\$739,821	\$810,424	\$848,088	\$891,557

- 3.11 Census of population – The Planning Division regularly reports on the Region’s demographic profile and trends. In 2021, Statistics Canada released its Census of Population data, which revealed that the Region’s population in 2021 was 696,992, an increase of 7.92% since 2016 (not including Census net undercoverage). Durham’s share of GTHA growth was approximately 15.6% over the same period. A Regional demographic profile will be released in late 2023.
- 3.12 PLANit – In July 2021, the Region launched PLANit, our new online development application tracking software. Through the new software, staff are able to upload files, track comment responses, submit comments, assign tasks to team members, and circulate files through an E-Referral function. Further enhancements were initiated in response to provincial funding through the Streamline Development Approvals program which will be completed in 2023. Enhancements will enable improved turnaround times, coordination between commenting partners, monitoring and improved capacity in the volume of applications that can be processed.
- 3.13 Incentive Programs – The Planning and Economic Development participates in joint reports together with Works and Finance with respect to requests for financial assistance under the *Regional Revitalization Plan*. Projects supported through the RRP included a new 160 unit development with 9,500 sq. ft. of commercial space on Brock Street, and a six-storey purpose-built rental apartment building to Perry and John Street area, both in the Town of Whitby. The RRP also provided funding for a new integrated medical facility adjacent to the Oak Valley-Uxbridge Hospital in the Township of Uxbridge.

- 3.14 In 2022, Planning staff presented the *At Home Incentive Program* (AHIP). The AHIP supports the development of affordable housing through direct funding support and by expediting planning approvals. AHIP provides capital grants to eligible residential housing developments and streamlines the approval process for planning applications that include affordable housing units. Applications for the program launched in September 2022 and will close in December 2022.
- 3.15 Regional Broadband Strategy – In 2019, “*Connecting Our Communities - A Broadband Strategy for Durham Region*” was endorsed in principle focusing on ensuring that residents, businesses, and institutions have access to fast, reliable, and affordable broadband services.
- 3.16 Over the next three years, actions identified in this strategy were implemented. Durham OneNet was established in 2022 with a mandate to design, build, and operate the Regional Broadband Network. Through Durham OneNet the Region is working to actively grow the Regional Broadband Network (RBN) to 600 km over the next 5 years and enable improved broadband services in underserved areas of Durham.
- 3.17 Community Safety and Well-Being Plan – The Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan was initiated in 2019 in response to legislative amendments to the Police Services Act, 1990. Co-led by Planning and Economic Development and the Social Services Department, the CSWB identified the priority risk factors in the Region; the programs, strategies and bodies to address those priority risk factors; action items and a short-term implementation plan. The CSWB was endorsed by Regional Council in November 2021 and is now being implemented through the CAOs Office.
- 3.18 Regional Cycling Plan Update – In October 2021 the Region approved the updated Regional Cycling Plan (RCP) that identifies actions and initiatives that help the Region and area municipalities work together to provide a high-quality, well connected, and safe cycling network that accommodates people of all ages and abilities. The updated Plan reflects emerging Provincial and international best practices and responds to changes in policies and priorities at the Provincial, Regional and area municipal level.

- 3.19 Durham Meadoway Visioning Study – One of the major initiatives identified in the RCP is the Durham Meadoway, which is a planned 27-kilometre trail stretching from Rouge National Urban Park in Pickering, through Ajax and Whitby to Simcoe Street in Oshawa. As the easterly extension of the existing Meadoway through Scarborough, the planned Durham Meadoway is intended as an active transportation corridor with community spaces, environmental restoration areas, education and placemaking opportunities. The Visioning Study process commenced in 2022 and is expected to be completed through 2023.
- 3.20 GO East Extension and Transit Oriented Development – In fall of 2019, the Region provided comments to Metrolinx on its Initial Business Case Update for the Lakeshore GO East Extension. Regional Council supported the approval of two-way, all day service using the CP rail line with four new stations at Thornton's Corners, Central Oshawa, Courtice, and Bowmanville. To facilitate the extension and station area planning, the Rapid Transit Implementation / Transit Oriented Development Office was established, and the review and approval of policies and delineations for Protected Major Transit Station Areas through Envision Durham was expedited.
- 3.21 Smart Mobility Durham – Smart Mobility Durham<sup>2</sup> helps reduce traffic congestion through measures that encourage higher vehicle occupancy rates, off-peak travel, shorter and fewer trips, by promoting cycling and pedestrian trips and by undertaking education and promotion activities. The Smart Commute Durham program engages 45,000 employees through its programs and events. The ASST Program has developed and implemented 12 School Travel Plans and will be working with schools to develop 8 new School Travel Plans by the end of 2023.
- 3.22 Regional Electric Kick-Scooter By-law and Demo Event – In January 2022, the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) implemented a new five-year pilot to permit the use of electric kick scooters (E-Scooters) on Ontario's roads. In response to the provincial pilot, the Region developed its own Regional Electric Kick-Scooter By-law to permit the use and enforcement of E-Scooters on Regional Roads which was adopted by Regional Council in April 2022. Staff hosted an E-Mobility Demo in June of 2022 to educate the public on the safe use of e-scooters and e-bikes and to provide an opportunity to try the devices first-hand.

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<sup>2</sup> Smart Mobility programs encompass Smart Commute, the Active and Sustainable School Travel (ASST) program and Cycle Durham which together form the Region's overall Transportation Demand Management (TDM) approach.

- 3.23 Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan (GGH Transportation Plan) – In March 2022, MTO developed a regional transportation plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The GGH Transportation plan is presented as a 30-year vision of mobility to help improve road performance, improve transit connections, support more sustainable transportation and improve the efficiency of moving goods. The Region's comments highlighted the importance of key projects including the Lakeshore GO East extension and Major Transit Station Areas, regionally significant road and transit infrastructure, the Strategic Goods Movement Network and the need for expanding new sustainable transportation options.
- 3.24 Transportation Tomorrow Survey (TTS) – The TTS is a survey that takes place every five years to collect information from households in Durham Region and other participating municipalities about trips made by each household member during a typical weekday, as well as select demographic information. Transportation staff along with other Regional departmental staff, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO), Metrolinx, Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), and other participating municipalities across the Greater Golden Horseshoe have partnered to deliver the 2022 TTS. The data collected helps to support planning for transportation infrastructure, investment decisions and service across central Ontario. The TTS survey launched in September 2022 and will be completed in December 2022.
- 3.25 Freight and Goods Movement Strategy Update – In June of 2022, Regional staff hosted a Freight and Goods Movement Forum to identify specific goods movement issues and to find ways to address opportunities and challenges. The freight forum focused on Durham-specific issues and was an opportunity to coordinate with broader GTHA agencies, such as the Southern Ontario Gateway Council, Metrolinx and other governments/agencies.
- 3.26 Business Count/Employment Survey – Each year, the Department undertakes a comprehensive business count/employment survey initiative to obtain detailed and reliable employment data for the entire Region. The data gathered from this program informs the development of Regional programs, policies, economic initiatives, and infrastructure investments. It also maintains Durham Region's free municipal business directory, an online tool for those interested in shopping or doing business in Durham. The data is collected by a group of summer students over a 16-week period. The students conduct short face-to-face interviews with business owners about the type of business, number of employees, floor space, location, etc. The most recent survey was undertaken in summer of 2022. Due to the ongoing

pandemic, no survey was conducted in 2020, and a modified survey was undertaken in 2021.

#### **4. Economic Development and Tourism Division Activities**

- 4.1 The Economic Development and Tourism Division consists of four Sections: Business Development and Investment Attraction; Agriculture and Rural Economic Development; Marketing and Cluster Development; and Tourism. The Division has also led the implementation of the Region's Broadband Strategy and actively supported the launch of Durham OneNet Inc. The Section also provides support to the entrepreneurship and innovation community, including core funding for Durham's incubators and accelerators.
- 4.2 Key projects and accomplishments of the Economic Development and Tourism Division over the past term of Council are provided in the following annual reports:
- [2021 Durham Economic Development and Tourism Annual Report](#)
  - [2020 Durham Economic Development and Tourism Annual Report](#)
  - [2019 Durham Economic Development and Tourism Annual Report](#)
- 4.3 Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan –Throughout the prior term of Council, the Economic Development and Tourism Division implemented the 2017-2021 Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan. Over 100 of the major projects, programs, and initiatives identified in the strategy are either underway or have been successfully completed. In December 2022, a new five-year Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Action Plan will be delivered to Council for endorsement. This strategy, 'Ready Set Future: A PLACE Blueprint for Durham', sets out a bold aspirational long-term vision for Durham Region.
- 4.4 Investment Attraction (IA) Plan – The IA Plan is focussed on recognizing the importance of attracting new investment and jobs and is identified as a priority by Regional Council. In 2018, priority sectors were identified, and key target geographies were established. Throughout 2018 and 2019, active investment attraction activities were undertaken; however, at the onset of the pandemic, internal efforts were largely redirected to supporting impacted local businesses, in collaboration with partners through the Durham Economic Task Force. In early 2023, staff will be delivering a new three-year IA Plan to Regional Council.

4.5 Investment Attraction – Investment attraction programs typically take several years to pay dividends. As noted in the Annual Reports, the Region is now realizing job and assessment growth from both global and local sources. The following non-exhaustive list details some key new businesses, strategic investments, and retained/expanded businesses in Durham Region over the prior term of Council. Please note that this list does not include any retail or franchise opportunities and includes some investment for which the Regional team did not provide direct assistance:

In 2019:

- Durham Live, Entertainment Facility, Pickering - Construction started
- Port Lands Silos, Oshawa -State-of-the-art grain-handling terminal located at the Port of Oshawa
- Toyota Facility, Clarington - Parts distribution and management
- Ontario Power Generation, Clarington - Announcement of new HQ in Clarington
- Trent University Durham GTA, Oshawa - Construction begins on campus expansion
- General Motors, Oshawa - Development of the 55-acre Canadian Technical Centre McLaughlin Advanced Technology Track is announced

In 2020:

- Construction underway in Ajax on 1,000,000 sq ft Amazon Distribution Facility
- 354,000 sq ft. Amazon Fulfillment Facility opened, Whitby
- Centre for Canadian Nuclear Sustainability opened - Ontario Power Generation, Pickering
- General Motors, Oshawa Announced \$1-1.3 billion investment and return of truck assembly
- Olympia Steel, Clarington – Construction underway on new facility
- Downtown Uxbridge Revitalization – Rural Economic Development (RED) Grant received

In 2021:

- Servify locates North American office in 1855 Accelerator, Whitby
- Inclusive Instruments locates in 1855 Accelerator, Whitby
- Sargent Family Dairy, Durham's first on-farm dairy processing facility

- opens, Clarington
- William F White (WFW) opens 90-acre film and television backlot, Pickering
- Ontario Power Generation announces GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy selected as partner to deploy a Small Modular Reactor (SMR) at Darlington site, Clarington
- Trent University Durham GTA Residence building opened.

In 2022:

- CloudTax committed to 1855 Accelerator for acceleration services and its corporate location in Canada.
- Atlantic Packaging announced an expansion of its existing facility to include a paper manufacturing mill
- TriBros Studios created a new film studio in Pickering
- The Region, and Durham College partnered to bring the Barrett Centre in Sustainable Urban Agriculture to regionally owned land in the Town of Ajax
- Kubota Canada celebrated the grand opening of their new Corporate HQ in the Pickering Innovation Corridor
- Lastman's Bad Boy announced the development of their new corporate HQ in the Pickering Innovation Corridor.

4.6 Marketing and Cluster Development – This section is responsible for oversight of marketing activities of Economic Development and Tourism. An annual plan has been developed and deployed each year since 2019, and a new Marketing 5-year Action Plan has been developed in alignment with the updated Economic Development and Tourism Strategic Plan.

4.7 Since 2019, the team has refreshed the Economic Development and Tourism brand (now operating as Invest Durham), as well as re-branded Durham Tourism. In step with these branding updates there have been numerous collateral updates including websites, promotional items, tradeshow materials, digital graphics, videos and other items created and updated.

4.8 Marketing has worked closely with colleagues within the DEDP to develop a four-pillar domestic investment attraction value proposition which communicates why Durham Region is the very best opportunity for investment in the Greater Toronto Area. Based on those points, numerous marketing initiatives are designed to communicate the value offered in Durham, through editorial, advertorial, partnerships, and promotions.



- 4.9 Regional marketing staff lead major event activations and campaigns such as the Collision Conference, Energy Sector Campaign, Tap into Talent, and the Timeline of Innovation. Marketing staff oversee, develop content for, and manage websites such as InvestDurham.ca, InvestDurham.ca/COVIDresponse, and DowntownsOfDurham.ca. They also produce the Annual Report referenced in paragraph 4.2.
- 4.10 Activity Updates - Economic Development staff provide periodic updates on the investment attraction activities. These reports include updates on investment leads; business missions; incoming delegations; and investor visits, as follows:

Activity	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Investment leads	132	65	112	124	<b>433</b>
Business missions	5	1	2	9	<b>17</b>
Incoming delegations	N/A	3	1	0	<b>4</b>
Investor visits	N/A	1	4	4	<b>9</b>
Events hosted/participated	N/A	3	2	7	<b>12</b>

- 4.11 The Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan – The Region of Durham is home to more farms and agricultural area than any other jurisdiction in the Greater Toronto Area, supporting the agri-food industry and enabling farms and food businesses to thrive is imperative to Durham’s overall economic health. The Plan was endorsed by Council in June 2022, and is a five-year action-focused plan which guides the activities of the Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Section staff. The Plan is task-oriented and will benefit the agri-food industry and support-agri-food partners/organizations across the Region.
- 4.12 Vibrant North Durham Economic Development Plan 2022-2027 – The Vibrant North Durham Economic Development Plan provides a roadmap for supporting economic development in the Townships of Scugog, Uxbridge and Brock. It takes a joint approach to economic development by recognizing that these communities share many similarities, and build on the existing collaborative spirit of north Durham. The Plan focuses on three main pillars: People, Places and Prosperity, with implementation led by Agriculture and Rural Economic Development staff in collaboration with the north Durham Townships.

- 4.13 Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA) – The GHFFA collaborated with Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation on the development of an Action Plan to support food and farming across the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Action Plan focuses on removing barriers and enhancing the opportunities to promote a competitive and sustainable food and farming sector.
- 4.14 Business Retention and Expansion – Agriculture and Rural – Provincial data suggest that between 60 and 90 per cent of new jobs in rural areas are created by already existing businesses. To support economic growth, the Agriculture and Rural Economic Development section have embarked on business retention and expansion (BR+E) programs and business visitations in collaboration with other partners.
- 4.15 Spark Centre – As one of 14 Regional Innovation Centres in Ontario, Spark Centre serves technology and innovation entrepreneurs who require information and support to launch, develop and grow small business. Through collaboration with funders and stakeholders, Spark is creating a world-class innovation sector in Durham Region. Council's support enables the organization to deliver services and programming for local start-ups and entrepreneurs that spur job creation.
- 4.16 1855 Accelerator – Established in 2019, 1855 Accelerator in the Town of Whitby serves as a commercialization and acceleration centre to high growth potential tech companies, advancing their growth to the global stage, with the goal of creating local jobs and economic prosperity for Durham Region. Council's support enables the organization to deliver programming such as their Masterclass event series, that provides thought leadership to the local start-up community.
- 4.17 Business Advisory Centre Durham (BACD) – The Region provides core funding for the BACD. With Council's support, BACD delivers support services to entrepreneurs and small start-up businesses engaged in traditional sectors of the economy including retail, services, home-based businesses, and 'main street' businesses.
- 4.18 Durham Economic Task Force (DETF) – the Economic Development and Tourism Division formed the DETF in response to the impacts of the pandemic on local Durham businesses. Consisting of the Region and area municipal economic development teams, as well as the Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, the BIAs, BACD, and the Province, this group met regularly and collaborated to delivery much-needed information and support services to the impacted business community. The DETF continues to meet bi-monthly to discuss business impacts and potential joint programming.

- 4.19 Market Ready Employment Land – A major collaborative project was undertaken by the Region and area municipalities to identify priority employment lands where new servicing would improve investment readiness. A report was presented to Regional Council recommending the servicing of certain priority areas, and work has commenced. A report was also delivered that quantified Durham Region’s supply of “market ready” employment land - properties that are serviced by water supply and sanitary sewers. The report revealed that of the overall 730 hectares (1,800 acres) of shovel ready employment land, only 150 hectares (370 acres) are available at present. Approximately 530 hectares (1,310 acres) are not considered for sale at this time, with no indication from the owners of when they might be for sale.
- 4.20 Film Durham – Durham Region plays an important role in all aspects of Ontario’s film, television and digital media industry due to its proximity to: the City of Toronto; Durham’s film industry workforce; supporting service providers; and availability of film location sites. These attributes make Durham a welcome host for television, feature films, commercials, as well as pre-and post-production activities.
- 4.21 From 2012 to 2019 film and television production value in Durham Region increased by 220% with an estimated total of \$252 million in production activity generated from 531 projects over eight years. In 2019, the estimated value of film production in Durham Region grew by 19% to reach an all-time high of \$63 million, generated from 88 projects and 388 production-days of shooting on-location. In 2021, the estimated value of film production activity in Durham Region was \$45.7M generated from 51 projects and 330 days of shooting on location. However, since Durham experiences only on-location filming, the COVID lockdown from January until May 31, 2021, inhibited film, and television activity with 72% of the production occurring between June and November after restrictions were lifted.
- 4.22 In 2021, the City of Pickering leased 90-acres of City-owned lands to William F. White International, Inc. (WFW) for up to 9 years. This has become the largest film backlot in Canada, and houses a 23-acre modern day small town set. In addition, TriBros studios have opened a film production facility, “Sandy Beach Studios” in the City of Pickering. Parkwood National Historic Site is a top-6 filming location in Canada. For these reasons and more, Durham Region plays an important role in the film sector in North America.
- 4.23 Bringing together the world of cinema and talented artists to celebrate Durham’s strong and growing film community, the Durham Region International Film Festival was launched in 2015 and continues annually as a major event partnership providing attendees with the on and off-screen film experience.

- 4.24 Staff leads and coordinates efforts with local municipal Film Liaisons for location scouting, film permits, marketing activities, industry familiarization tours, public education, and troubleshooting to help ensure projects are completed on time and on budget.
- 4.25 Sport Tourism Activities – Sport Tourism has been identified as a key economic driver for the tourism industry in Durham Region, filling hotel rooms during slow periods, and providing business to restaurants, theatres, and attractions year-round.
- 4.26 In 2019 Ontario Parasport Games were held in Durham Region. Sport Durham was the lead organizer of these games supported by a volunteer Games Organizing Committee to deliver a successful event. Over 350 athletes competed in eleven sports over three days from February 8 to 10, 2019. In 2023 Durham Region will host these games again from February 4-6.

## **5. Awards and Recognition**

- 5.1 Council's support of the work done in Economic Development and Tourism enabled staff to develop award-winning marketing collateral, projects and events. The following awards were received by the team:
- 5.2 The International Economic Development Council (IEDC)'s Excellence and Leadership in Economic Development Awards recognize the world's best economic development programs, partnerships, marketing materials, and influential leaders.
- Invest Durham won a 2022 IEDC Bronze Award for the Timeline of Innovation print brochure.
- 5.3 The Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) Awards of Excellence – EDCO is a well-established program available to communities to have their economic development initiatives judged by industry leaders against their peers in communities of similar size. These awards recognize efforts for promoting and marketing communities for investment attraction and tourism opportunities.
- For 2021, the Economic Development and Tourism Division won an honourable mention for the 2021 EDCO Awards of Excellence for Investment Attraction - Energy Campaign and the 2021 EDCO Awards of Excellence for Community Economic Development - Shop Durham Region Marketplace;
  - In 2020, the Economic Development and Tourism Economic Development Department won the EDCO Lieutenant Governor's Award for Best Economic Development Initiative of 2019;

- Awarded the 2019 Tourist Attraction and Tourism Product Development EDCO Award of Excellence for the Durham Region 2019 Ontario Parasport Games;
  - Won a 2019 Award of Excellence in the category of Sector or Project Specific Strategic Plan for Growing Resilience: Durham Region Agricultural Sector Climate Adaptation Strategy and an honourable mention in the same category for Connecting our Communities: Broadband Strategy for Durham Region.
- 5.4 Smart Cities Forum Finalist – In 2019, the Economic Development and Tourism Division was selected as a finalist for the 2018 Hello Tomorrow: Durham Smart Cities Forum, in partnership with the CAOs office, and The Guide to Filming in Durham Region.
- 5.5 Economic Developers Association of Canada (EDAC) Marketing Canada Awards – To receive an EDAC award, demonstrating excellence in marketing is a critical differentiator for Canada's Economic Development Professionals. The Marketing Canada Awards acknowledge and praise communities who shine in this arena. Seven EDAC awards were presented to the Region between 2019 to 2022 and include:
- The Durham Tourism Monthly E-Newsletter won a 2019 EDAC Marketing Canada Award for single publication under four pages
  - Downtowns of Durham won a 2020 EDAC Marketing Canada Award in the recovery project/plan category
  - Our Vertical Farming Campaign won a 2020 EDAC Marketing Canada Award in the social media/APP category
  - Our Invest Durham Annual Report 2019 won a 2020 EDAC Marketing Canada Award in the single publication, less than 5 pages category
  - The Timeline of Innovation Ad won a 2021 EDAC Marketing Canada Award in the category of Single Advertisement.
- 5.6 The Durham is Home Social Media Campaign – won a 2021 EDAC Marketing Canada Award in the category of Social Media/Apps. Tap into Talent Marketing Campaign won a 2022 EDAC Marketing Canada Award in the category of Award in the category of Advertising Campaign.
- 5.7 The AVA Digital Awards – AVA awards honour excellence in digital creativity, branding:
- Invest Durham won a 2019 Gold AVA Digital Award for the Invest Durham Website

- The Invest Durham COVID Response Website won a 2020 Gold AVA Digital Award
  - Invest Durham Value Proposition Video won a 2021 Platinum AVA Award for Web-Based Production
  - Invest Durham won a 2021 AVA Platinum Award in web-based production for the Invest Durham Tap Into Talent Video
  - A Timeline of Innovation in Durham Region won a 2021 Platinum AVA Award in Digital Advertising Campaign
  - The Invest Durham Agriculture Careers Video Series received a 2021 AVA Honorable mention for Video Production
  - The Invest Durham Energy Campaign received a 2021 AVA Honourable Mention for the Digital Advertising Campaign.
- 5.8 Webaward – In 2020, Durham Region also won a Webaward for outstanding achievement in Web Development for the investdurham.ca website.
- 5.9 Sport Tourism Canada 2020 Prestige Awards – Durham Tourism won the Sport Tourism 2020 Prestige Awards for Canadian Sport Event of the Year Award [Group B, budget less than \$1 million] and finalist for the Sport Event Legacy of the Year Award – Durham Region 2019 Ontario Parasport Games.
- 5.10 The Tourism Industry Association of Ontario 2020 Tourism Awards of Excellence for Tourism Event of the Year Award – Tourism was selected as a Finalist for Durham Region 2019 Ontario Parasport Games.
- 5.11 2020 Festivals and Events Ontario Achievement Award – Selected as a winner of a 2020 Festivals and Events Ontario Achievement Award for Canada Day the Durham Way.
- 5.12 DotCOMM Award – Winner of a 2021 dotCOMM Award for Durham Tourism's Instagram account.
- 5.13 MarCom Awards – The international MarCom awards honour excellence in marketing and communication. The Department received eight awards between 2021 and 2022 including:
- 2021 Platinum MarCom Award for Invest Durham Brand Guidelines
  - 2021 Gold MarCom Award for Invest Durham History of Innovation Ad Series;
  - 2021 Gold MarCom Award for Durham Tourism Rebrand
  - 2021 Gold MarCom Award for Durham is Home

- 2021 Honourable Mention for the Invest Durham LinkedIn Page
- 2021 Honourable Mention for the Downtowns of Durham Blog
- 2022 Gold MarCom Award for the Invest Durham Innovation Ad Series.

## **6. Advisory Services**

- 6.1 The Planning and Economic Development Department supports the activities of the Durham Environmental Advisory Committee (DEAC), the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee (DAAC) and the Durham Active Transportation Committee (DATC). These Committees provide the Region with advice on planning and related matters dealing with the environment, agriculture and active transportation respectively.
- 6.2 Over the last term of Council, DEAC continued to host the Environmental Achievement Awards Program; DAAC has continued with its highly successful annual farm tour (held virtually in 2020 and 2021 and returning to an in-person event in 2022); and the DATC continued with its on-line trails application.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 As demonstrated in this report, there was a considerable amount of activity in the Planning and Economic Development Department over the past term of Council. Departmental staff look forward to working with the new Committee over this coming term of Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP  
Commissioner of Planning and Economic  
Development

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

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Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair  
Chief Administrative Officer



# The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

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To: Planning and Economic Development Committee  
From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development  
Report: #2022-EDT-15  
Date: December 6, 2022

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**Subject:**

Ready Set Future: Five Year Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Action Plan

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**Recommendation:**

That the Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends to Regional Council:

- A) That the new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, '2023-2027 Ready Set Future: A PLACE Blueprint for Durham', be endorsed.
  - B) That a copy of "Ready Set Future" be sent to Durham's Area Municipalities, all members of the Steering Committee, all members of the Durham Economic Development Partnership, Durham's post-secondary institutions, Durham Chambers of Commerce and the Boards of Trade, Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, Durham Workforce Authority, Business Advisory Centre Durham, Spark Centre, 1855 Accelerator, OPEN.Innovate, and Central Counties Tourism.
  - C) That Durham Region Council extend its thanks to the many contributors and collaborators throughout the Region and the members of the Steering Committee for their time, dedication, and support to this important project.
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**Report:****1. Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a. Provide Committee and Council with Durham Region's new five-year Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, '2023-2027 Ready Set Future: A PLACE Blueprint for Durham'; and
- b. Notify Committee that this report will be accompanied by a presentation by Simon Gill, Director of Economic Development and Tourism at the inaugural meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Committee on December 6, 2022.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The Region's prior Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan that was endorsed by Council in 2017 has reach the end of its five-year timeframe. It is outdated and in the past five years, much has changed. The global pandemic has permanently changed the nature of work, the pace of innovation globally is accelerating, and Durham's demographics and economy are evolving rapidly. Good news stories consistently emerge of the incredible advancements occurring throughout Durham's economy. A new bold, transformative, and forward-looking strategy is needed to set the course of regional economic development for the coming five years.
- 2.2 A comprehensive analysis was commissioned to review and consider economic and demographic data, local economic reports, and research, and to explore the most impactful global drivers of change for the next ten years. This research and analysis was used to identify high-value opportunities to grow the regional economy.
- 2.3 A Steering Committee was assembled, comprised of a strong and diverse group of leaders from throughout Durham, including the post-secondary institutions, Durham's largest businesses, the Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, the Arts / Cultural / Creative industry, and technology startups from the innovation community. The names of the Steering Committee members and other key contributors are listed on page 70 of the Strategy, and staff are grateful for their dedicated participation and guidance.
- 2.4 The data analysis and global drivers of change were used to frame the challenge: "What does economic success look like in the near term (5 years) and in the long

term (30 years)?”. Collaborative sessions were held to identify and develop shared economic aspirations. These sessions included over 80 of the Region’s economic partners including economic development staff from Durham’s area municipalities, post-secondary institutions, major employers, entrepreneurs, the Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, Durham Workforce Authority, the Mississaugas of Scugog Island, BACD, the Arts, Cultural and Creative Industries, BIAs, the Innovation Community (including Spark Centre, 1855 Accelerator and OPEN.Innovate), Central Counties Tourism, and other internal Regional Departments.

- 2.5 In collaboration with these partners, four long-term aspirations for Durham’s economic future were formed, and measures of success were identified. The new strategy places Durham residents at its centre, with activities aligned behind the overall goal of improving long-term economic prosperity of the residents of Durham.
- 2.6 The Steering Committee met throughout the strategy development process and created goals for each long-term aspiration. For each goal area, action items were generated to be undertaken by the Economic Development and Tourism Division over the coming five years. These actions would send the Region confidently down the path toward achieving its economic development aspirations.

### **Previous Reports and Decisions**

- 2.7 [#2022-EDT-1](#) Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Action Plan: Update
- 2.8 #2017-COW-116 The prior five-year strategy: [2017-2021 Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan “Durham Region: The Right Choice for a Bright Future”](#)

### **3. Vision and Aspirations**

- 3.1 “Ready Set Future” endeavours to support the creation of economic opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds, identities, abilities, lifestyles and life stages; and aims to create an inclusive prosperous future for everyone. The strategy places Durham’s residents at its centre.
- 3.2 Strategic Vision: “Durham’s distinct cultural identity, and its vibrant and diverse downtowns will be magnets for talent and investment, and the region’s innovation community will be known for solving global challenges.”
- 3.3 The ‘PLACE’ based economic aspirations for Durham 30 years in the future are that:

- a. PEOPLE: Durham will be a leader in Ontario for workforce skill and education attainment
- b. LOCATION: Durham will capitalize on potential for strong intensification and renewal in urban cores, and grow vibrancy and diversity in the downtowns
- c. ACCELERATION: Durham's innovative businesses will continue to solve global challenges
- d. CREATIVITY: Durham will have a distinct creative and cultural identity for its vibrant base of creative businesses, cultural institutions, galleries, entertainment venues, and homegrown talent
- e. ENABLERS: Collaboration, resourcing and metrics will enable success.

#### **4. Relationship to Strategic Plan**

4.1 Ready Set Future is the primary Regional strategy and action plan to deliver on 'Goal 3: Economic Prosperity' of the [Durham Region Strategic Plan 2020-2024](#), which is "To build a strong and resilient economy that maximizes opportunities for business and employment growth, innovation and partnership". Specifically, the priorities of Goal 3 are:

- a. 3.1 Position Durham Region as the location of choice for business
- b. 3.2 Leverage Durham's prime geography, social infrastructure, and strong partnerships to foster economic growth
- c. 3.3 Enhance communication and transportation networks to better connect people and move goods more effectively
- d. 3.4 Capitalize on Durham's strengths in key economic sectors to attract high quality jobs
- e. 3.5 Provide a supportive environment for agriculture and agri-food industries

#### **5. Related Action Plans**

5.1 Ready Set Future will be supported by other more detailed action plans. Some have already been completed, and others are planned or in development. The following strategies and plans provide greater functional detail on how certain goals within the strategy will be executed.

- a. [Local Food BR&E Project Plan \(#2019-EDT-11\)](#)
- b. Growing Agri-Food Durham ([#2022-EDT-10](#))
- c. Vibrant North Durham Plan (Draft Complete)
- d. Invest Durham Marketing Action Plan (Draft Complete)
- e. Durham Tourism Action Plan (In Development)
- f. Investment Attraction Plan (In Development)

- g. Other Priority Cluster Strategies: Future Energy; Next Generation Mobility; Arts, Culture & Creative Industries; Applied Digital Technology. (To Be Developed)

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 The attached “Ready Set Future” strategy sets out bold, long-term economic aspirations for Durham. Through an extensive and collaborative process, the Region worked with a diverse group of partners to co-develop a five-year Action Plan consisting of 71 action items organized within 15 goal areas.
- 6.2 The strategy was developed in collaboration with the Region’s many economic partners, including Durham’s area municipalities, post-secondary institutions, major employers, entrepreneurs, the Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, Durham Workforce Authority, the Mississaugas of Scugog Island, BACD, the Arts, Culture and Creative Industries, BIAs, the Innovation Community (including Spark Centre, 1855 Accelerator and OPEN.Innovate), Central Counties Tourism, and other internal Regional Departments.
- 6.3 The PLACE-based economic aspirations for Durham 30 years in the future set out an economic vision based on People, Location, Acceleration, and Creativity, and supported by a set of Enablers.
- 6.4 The Action Plan for the next five years will send the Region confidently down the path toward realising these economic development aspirations.

## **7. Attachments**

Attachment #1: 2023-2027 Ready Set Future: A PLACE Blueprint for Durham

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP  
Commissioner of Planning and  
Economic Development

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

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Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair  
Chief Administrative Officer

2023-2027

# READY SET FUTURE

## A PLACE Blueprint for Durham



Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Action Plan

Page 50 of 126



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there are green fields, a road, and some buildings. In the middle ground, there are more fields and a line of trees. In the background, there is a large body of water, possibly a lake or a wide river, under a clear blue sky.

# Acknowledgement

Durham Region is located on the traditional lands of the Mississauga Peoples. While the Region has started its journey to develop meaningful relationships and work toward reconciliation with local First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, we recognize and acknowledge that a more comprehensive approach to reconciliation is needed to address systemic inequities and racism; and to better support, celebrate and deliver services to Indigenous Peoples in the region. We give this acknowledgement to show respect to the First Peoples who inhabited this land and to remind ourselves of the importance of strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities and of our continuing commitment to do better.

This strategy endeavours to support the creation of economic opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds, identities, abilities, lifestyles and life stages; and aims to create an inclusive prosperous future for everyone.



# Introduction

Ready Set Future delivers on the third pillar of Durham Regional Council’s Strategic Plan: **“To build a strong and resilient economy that maximizes opportunities for business and employment growth, innovation and partnership.”** It was developed collaboratively with partners from the academic, business, and public sectors, and with partners from the area municipalities, innovation community, and the arts and creative sectors. With the guidance of a steering committee (credited at the end of this strategy), economic data and global drivers of change were analyzed, and aspirations were developed to frame a long-term vision for the future.



“Our collaborative process to develop this strategy led back to one fundamental objective: the work of Invest Durham is ultimately to improve the success, fulfillment, and prosperity of the region’s residents. For that reason, this strategy puts the region’s people at its centre.”

— John Henry, Regional Chair and CEO



“Ready Set Future is Durham Region’s bold and transformational economic action plan. It was built to support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and targeted investment. This plan is ambitious, aspirational, and tenacious— just like our community.”

— Elaine Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer

This strategy sets out an economic development vision for the region three decades into the future – aspirations for a talented workforce, vibrant downtowns, a reputation for business innovation, and a distinct creative identity. A Five-Year Action Plan, found in the second half of this strategy, is the roadmap for the next five years. These actions will guide Durham Region confidently down the path to begin realizing these aspirations.

**Durham’s distinct cultural identity—and its vibrant and diverse downtowns—will be magnets for talent and investment, and the region’s innovation community will be known for solving global challenges.**



Aspirations  
page 12



Economic  
Growth  
Principles  
page 18



Priority  
Clusters  
page 26



Five-Year  
Action Plan  
page 33



**Situated within the most in-demand province in what is widely considered the best country in the world, Durham Region is part of the strongest economic metropolitan area in Canada.**

The global economy is changing rapidly, and the region is in a time of booming growth. Durham Region needs a bold and transformative strategy to unlock economic potential, and it must build on and use its incredible strengths and assets to drive job growth through innovation.



Large investments into **Pickering's** Seaton lands by international companies are examples of this booming growth. The transformation of Pickering City Centre, with dense housing and office buildings connecting to mass transit makes it an emerging alternative to downtown Toronto. Pickering has long been a home to the nuclear industry, and in recent years, the Canadian Centre for Nuclear Sustainability was established with a vision for global influence in the future of clean energy.

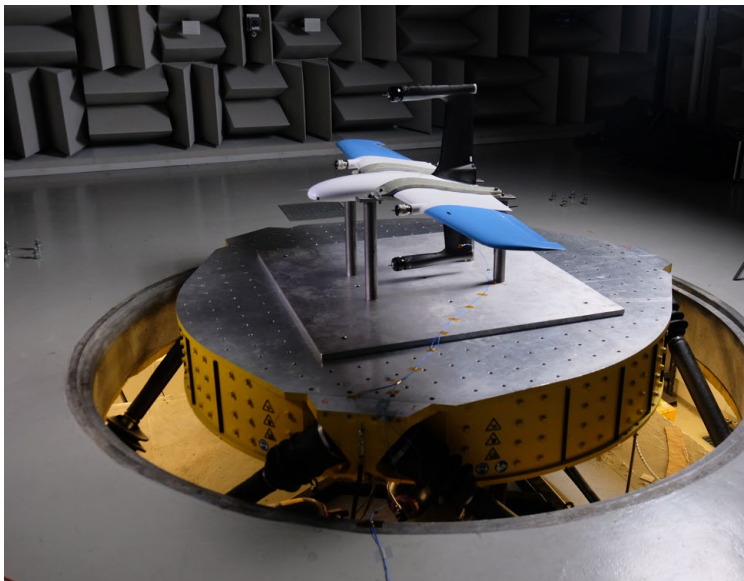


The **Ajax** lakeshore community has a long history of industrial innovation. Now a diverse urban community with a passion for cycling and lakefront trails, the natural assets complement cutting-edge aerospace and advanced mobility innovators.



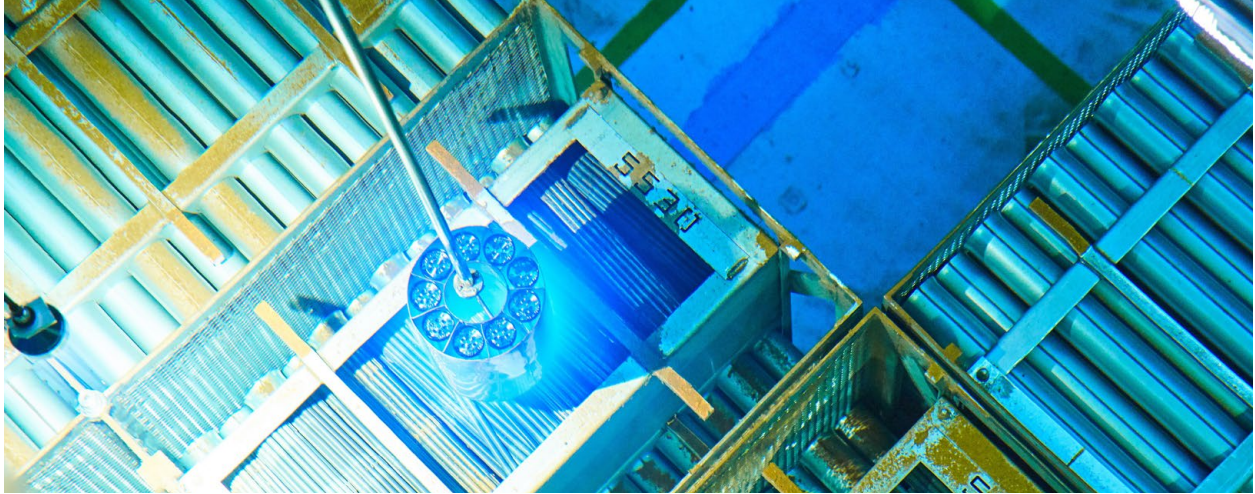


In **Whitby**, Merck is producing leading-edge pharmaceuticals at Thermo Fisher Scientific. Nearby, Ontario Shores for Mental Health Sciences is beginning work on Canada's first Mental Health Innovation Accelerator. Durham College's Centre for Food is innovating sustainable food systems. Home grown technology companies are accelerated into global leaders at 1855 Accelerator.



**Oshawa** is an innovation centre. With three top-ranked post-secondary institutions, it is a cultural crossing place that leads Ontario in workforce development. ACE, one of the world's most advanced climatic testing facilities, is one of many advanced and industry-responsive research and development labs on campus. With a downtown under transformation, Oshawa's core contains collections of national significance, including fine art, vintage automobiles, and Parkwood National Historic Site—one of Canada's top 10 film and television industry locations.





Together with Pickering, **Clarington** positions Durham as the Clean Energy Capital of Canada. With the headquarters of Ontario Power Generation (OPG) on the way, lifesaving medical isotopes under production, and the site of the first grid-tied Small Modular Reactor (SMR), Durham's enormous competitive advantage globally in the future energy cluster will attract investment and jobs for decades. Innovation continues in the rural areas.

Algoma Orchards is Canada's largest apple grower, using cutting edge technology to meet ambitious sustainability goals. Tesla batteries and industrial-scale water reclamation at their facility propels sustainability and solves global challenges in agri-food production.



These connections demonstrate how Durham balances urban excitement with country charm. This is apparent in **Uxbridge**, where farm meets table. Farmers markets, bistros, and a strong artistic community complement rolling, colourful trails. Animated by historic architecture, innovators and entrepreneurs work remotely in Uxbridge and Port Perry—areas boasting high growth rates and densities of tech talent.





**Brock** offers lakefront beauty and recreation, as well as rolling agricultural countryside dotted with three historic main street communities. Brock is home to several cutting-edge businesses ranging from agri-food and agri-tech enterprises, to businesses specializing in advanced 3D printing and additive manufacturing.

**Scugog** is a creative community. Here you'll find a recognized music industry technology giant, and innovative indoor farming, situated alongside some of the best and most scenic agri-tourism attractions in Ontario.



The **Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation** is proud Anishinabek community, located on Lake Scugog in the heart of the Durham Region. The community is home to the Great Blue Heron Casino, Tim Hortons, an expanding commercial center, and hosts an annual Powwow celebrating 25 years in 2023. The community has recently invested in clean drinking water infrastructure to the community, lifting a 20-year boil advisory. The First Nation has established an economic development partnership, Noozhoo Nokiyon Limited Partnership ("NNLP"). NNLP operates and manages several businesses and commercial properties for the First Nation and continues to build a broad investment portfolio aimed at generating sovereign wealth for the community.

# It is with good reason that Durham is in-demand.

Over the last five years, Durham Region has collaborated with our area municipal partners to prioritize the servicing of desirable employment lands and have made major advances in connecting our underserved communities to high-speed broadband. We have showcased our innovation community and attracted new investment.

We have been ambitious, and now it is time to be **bold and transformational**. Our strategy, developed with partners from across the region, sets out four aspirations for long-term prosperity.














To reach these bold economic aspirations for 30 years from now, we will harness the region's many strengths, and support the leaders and innovators in our community.

We've plotted strong and action-oriented activities for the next five years that will confidently move the Region along the path to realizing this vision.



2023-2027

# STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Long-Term Aspirations	Five-Year Goals	Economic Growth Principles	Priority Clusters
<b>PEOPLE</b> Durham is a leader in Ontario for workforce skill and education attainment	1.1 Identify Future Talent Requirements 1.2 Unlock Potential of Women in STEM 1.3 Connect Businesses to Talent 1.4 Attract and Retain Talent	 Collaboration   Talent	 Future Energy
<b>LOCATION</b> Intensification and renewal in Durham's urban cores, and vibrant and diverse downtowns	2.1 Urbanize Urban Growth Centres 2.2 Facilitate Rural Resilience 2.3 Create Magnetic Downtowns	 Distinct Cultural Identity	 Next Gen Mobility
<b>ACCELERATION</b> Durham's innovators are solving global challenges	3.1 Strengthen Innovation Community 3.2 Grow Local Businesses 3.3 Build a Reputation 3.4 Attract Investment	 Vibrant, Financially Attainable Downtowns   Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	 Arts, Culture and Creative
<b>CREATIVITY</b> Durham has a distinct identity for arts, cultural and creative industries	4.1 Build the Tourism Brand 4.2 Strengthen Quality of Place 4.3 Champion Inclusive Tourism 4.4 Drive Prosperity through Local Love	 Climate Emergency Response   Innovation	 Applied Digital Tech
<b>ENABLERS</b> Collaboration, a resourcing plan, and performance metrics will unlock the potential of this strategy	1. Delineation of Economic Development Roles across the Region 2. Resourcing Plan 3. Metrics and KPIs	 Infrastructure and Investment Readiness	 Agri-Food



# Aspirations: A 30-Year Vision

# REALISE

## People

Durham is a leader in Ontario for workforce skill and education attainment.

## Location

Intensification and renewal in Durham’s urban cores, and vibrant and diverse downtowns.

## Acceleration

Durham’s innovators are solving global challenges.

## Creativity

Durham has a distinct identity for arts, cultural and creative industries.

## Enablers

Collaboration, a resourcing plan, and performance metrics will unlock the potential of this strategy.



# PLACE Aspirations

Placing people at the centre of this strategy is a modern and progressive approach to sustainable economic development. To track success of the strategy, we will monitor aggregate and median household income growth as an indicator of resident prosperity. This central focus gives rise to four long-term and interrelated aspirations that frame a bold vision for Durham 30 years in the future.

We have considered the critical ingredients that will lead to resident prosperity. Our diverse residents must have the skills and education needed to be responsive to an evolving global environment and economy. Our urban cores should be places to gather, offering affordable living options and cultural experiences that attract a variety of skilled talent. And we must focus on creating vibrant, distinct cultural identities. In doing so, we will accelerate innovation, investment, and high-quality job growth.

The Region's aspirations to be a PLACE of economic prosperity were based on the principle that skilled and talented **People** will act as a magnet to attract investment. Attracting skilled and talented people requires diverse and vibrant **Locations**, and this magnet will **Accelerate** investment and prosperity throughout the economy. Success in all three aspirations is driven by regional **Creativity** and made possible with key **Enablers**.

## People

The region welcomes vast numbers of new residents every year, resulting in above-average population growth. This growth presents an opportunity. The region can retain and develop a talent profile to match the skill requirements of key priority clusters. The region is already home to many office-based knowledge-sector workers who, prior to the pandemic, commuted out of the area for work. There is an opportunity to connect this talent with local opportunities. Skill requirements for growing clusters are evolving rapidly, as these clusters experience rapid technological innovation, which makes education and skills training critical for both individuals and organizations to remain competitive. It is important to retain, empower, diversify, and continually adapt labour force skills to meet the current and future demands of the economy.

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## Location

Durham saw significant population changes during the pandemic, as hybrid and remote workers moved to the region with their families. This trend of high population turnover preceded the pandemic and is expected to continue. The region is forecasted to grow to 1.3 million people and 460,000 jobs by 2051.

To match economic growth to residential growth, and to meaningfully increase the ratio of jobs to residents, Durham Region must support its area municipalities in pursuit of a bold and transformational vision for the Urban Growth Centres of downtown Pickering and Oshawa. Intensification and renewal in Urban Growth Centres can attract office-based employers, leading to meaningful long-term job growth. Urban renewal and intensification can also bring financially attainable housing options, helping with retention of new graduates and supporting inward migration of new working-age Canadian residents and international students.

The Region must also collaborate with area municipalities on enabling exciting placemaking initiatives in its 14 downtowns of Ajax, Beaverton, Bowmanville, Brooklin, Cannington, Newcastle, Orono, Oshawa, Pickering Nautical Village, Pickering Village, Port Perry, Sunderland, Uxbridge and Whitby. Diverse and vibrant downtowns with a strong Quality of Place are magnets for talent, and for employment-generating investment.

## Acceleration

Global, national, and regional economies are changing at speeds not seen for generations. The digital shift has been enabled by a revolution in processing power and cloud storage, automation and quantum processing. New jobs and economic value will emerge in clusters yet to be defined, and the impacts of hybrid and remote work are creating ripple effects for communities like Durham. There is a growing movement in the global economy to prioritize Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) sustainability targets, as all levels of government actively work to decarbonize and advance the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. These changes and trends create opportunities for individuals and businesses in the region. As the region's innovators solve global challenges, our local businesses become more globally competitive, and new roles and positions emerge that didn't exist before. Our broad reputation for innovation will grow. The Region must provide the necessary support to strengthen the innovation community, and strategically attract investments that solve local, national and global challenges. This support will create high value jobs and economic prosperity for the region's residents.

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## Creativity

Quality of Place elements make a community distinctive in ways that are desirable, attractive, and in turn, make it competitive for investment. In fact, it can significantly impact whether highly trained or educated workers choose to move to the region, or to stay after completion of their post-secondary schooling. We will collaborate to influence major advances to the region's Quality of Place through bold and transformative tourism and placemaking initiatives. Growth in the arts, cultural, and creative industries contribute to the magnetism of a community. There are numerous opportunities to support rural and urban economies by enabling agri-tourism, promoting recreational cycling, and creating new frameworks that foster our music industry. Our teams can help to build momentum around local food and culinary experiences, and support and grow diverse cultural festivals. In helping to build and lift-up our homegrown talent, our distinct cultural identity will be strengthened. In this way, we will lay the foundation for a magnetic, sociable and prosperous community and economy.

## Enablers

Successful economic development outcomes are enabled by a collaboration, resourcing aligned with aspirations, and documented priorities. Bringing together Regional economic development and tourism staff to collaborate with area municipal staff, post-secondary institutions, business organizations, innovation community support organizations, advisory councils, advocacy groups, and others, will create a whole greater than the sum of its parts. Working together, our collective aspirations for economic success in Durham Region will be achieved more efficiently. Further, the Regional strategy has outlined bold aspirations which will require resourcing and organizational planning to ensure they are achievable. The success of the five-year action plan will be measured through specific key performance indicators.

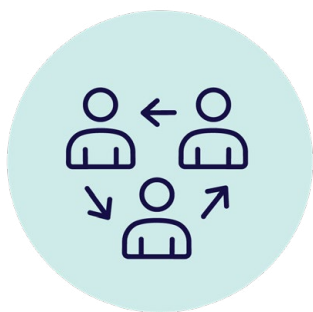


# Eight Economic Growth Principles



## PRINCIPLE 1

### Collaboration



The Region will achieve bold and transformational objectives by collaborating with area municipal economic development teams, the business and academic communities, the innovation community, and other agencies and levels of government.







## PRINCIPLE 2

### Talent



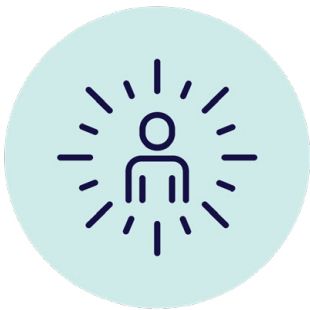
Supporting the growth of the region's skilled and educated workforce is an investment in the region's economic future. The world's most successful and innovative companies will locate new offices and investments in places that can reliably deliver a skilled and innovative workforce.





### PRINCIPLE 3

## Distinct Identity Through Culture



Durham Region should support and enable desirable amenities and experiences to attract a diverse range of residents, visitors, and investors. Rural experiences such as recreational cycling and agri-tourism will draw in families. The arts, cultural, and creative industries will create a distinctiveness that is desirable.







#### PRINCIPLE 4

### Vibrant, Financially Attainable Downtowns



A diverse mix of housing and business premises should be financially attainable to people and entrepreneurs at each stage of their life and career. A combination of urban intensification and renewal, good urban design, cultural and creative industry investment, and supporting the right place-making elements, will help unlock the ability to attract new graduates and a skilled workforce.

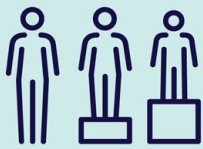






## PRINCIPLE 5

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



Durham Region should support the creation of economic opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds, identities, abilities, lifestyles and life-stages. The Region should ensure it welcomes new residents and establishes strong links with Indigenous communities to ensure there are appropriate opportunities to address past injustices and ensure an inclusive and equitable future for everyone.





## PRINCIPLE 6

### Climate Emergency Response



Durham Region's actions should clearly contribute to the commitment to reach net-zero emissions and should work to reduce the harmful impact on the global environment by the community. Clean infrastructure, clean future energy, transit, electrified mobility, urban intensification, and innovation will all contribute Durham's ability to reduce environmental impacts, build resilience to the impacts of climate change, and capitalize on the global opportunity of being a climate leader.







## PRINCIPLE 7 **Innovation**



The region's businesses, institutions, students, and residents should be primed to use insights and research to drive the commitment to adaptation and improved competitiveness in all facets of the economy. The rapid pace of global change is creating new challenges and opportunities that are still being defined. Competing will require the brightest minds backed by ambitious investment and underpinned with supporting infrastructure.







## PRINCIPLE 8

### Infrastructure and Investment Readiness



Supportive infrastructure such as transit, the Port of Oshawa, the GO East Extension and associated opportunities for transit-oriented development, along with the servicing of employment lands, all contribute to the region's competitiveness for attracting new investment. This includes the continuing collaboration among the Region and area municipalities to deliver exceptional and seamless concierge services throughout the investment attraction process and includes maintaining and marketing a steady supply of market-ready employment lands for new industrial development.



# Priority CLUSTERS

Our team will focus actions and investment toward a new set of five key priority clusters by enabling infrastructure, sites, skills, and resources needed for them to grow. We will strengthen the priority clusters by attracting new investments, filling value chain gaps.

An industry cluster is a concentration of interconnected businesses, supply chain linkages and associated ecosystem supports that can be measured and compared to other geographic areas. Clusters, when taken together, generate overall economic strength and output that is greater than the sum of their individual parts, compounding economic returns and job growth.

## **Priority clusters were selected based on their:**

- Strength to act as a platform consisting of resources, supply chain assets, and post-secondary curriculum to launch new related opportunities
- Global growth prospects
- Ability to create high-value jobs
- Capacity for innovation
- Ability to improve the regional reputation







## Future Energy

The clean energy cluster is set to undergo a dramatic transition to address the climate emergency. It is increasingly interconnected and plays a critical role driving growth in other sectors. Durham is positioned to power southern Ontario's economy, as it has a dominance in nuclear that can be leveraged to create high-quality jobs and stimulate investment in supply chains for renewable and new-nuclear solutions. The region's advantages include its labour force, strong cluster of existing businesses, and being home to Ontario Power Generation (OPG). OPG has continued its decade-long collaboration with Durham College and Ontario Tech University to build an enviable talent pool. Durham's post-secondary institutions also offer degree programs and curriculum that drive innovation. Facilities, such as Ontario Tech University's Clean Energy Research Laboratory (CERL) and ACE Climatic Wind Tunnel, are key in the progression of the Region's clean technology objectives.

### **The areas where Durham will drive growth opportunities are:**

- Professional services for energy generation and distribution
- Nuclear energy and supply chain
- Medical isotopes
- Clean renewable energy
- Battery storage
- Energy efficiency retrofit technologies



## Next Generation Mobility

The global drivers of change point to a major shift toward electric and autonomous vehicle systems. The Canadian government has mandated that all new vehicles sold by 2035 must be zero-emission. With a long-established automotive industry, Durham Region continues to foster innovation as the mobility industry evolves. Central components of the next generation of mobility economy are knowledge intensive. Durham has the base of businesses and post-secondary programs on which to build the required talent pipeline. The region's location, available land, cost-competitiveness, and established manufacturing supply chain mean that Durham is positioned to attract globally significant investments.

Both Durham College and Ontario Tech University have extensive research and development initiatives in place to accelerate the next generation of mobility. Durham is a Regional Technology Development Site (RTDS) and part of the Autonomous Vehicle Applied Research (AVAR) initiative. It is also a partner in the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN), with Ontario Tech University and Spark Centre.

**The ACE facility at Ontario Tech is an asset, which positions the following areas for growth:**

- EV technologies and charging infrastructure
- Autonomous/connected vehicle technologies
- Software development and testing
- Additive manufacturing and 3D printing
- Vehicle testing/prototyping





## Applied Digital Technology

Digital technology is now embedded broadly and deeply in all aspects of our lives. The acceleration of technology creates growth prospects, especially for places and businesses that can secure the skills that will drive development and application of new digital technologies. The region is situated within the Toronto Region – Waterloo Innovation Corridor, a global hot spot for technology growth. Durham has a base of digital tech and media businesses and will aim to secure cluster concentrations in areas of this cluster whereby businesses best fuel economic potential. The Region will aim to harness the cross-pollination of ideas among innovators, work to attract skilled labour, harness the leadership of larger employers and work to ensure availability of collaborative co-working facilities for startups. The talent pool emerging from the region's three post-secondary institutions and the potential of our larger employers to help strengthen local suppliers will spinout new business models and drive wealth creation.

**Durham Region will initially explore the case for the following areas of digital technology to be the drivers of growth in the cluster:**

- Data analytics
- Immersive technology
- Cyber security
- Applied artificial intelligence
- Next-gen automation
- Medical technology



## Arts, Culture and Creative

The arts, cultural, and creative industries cluster spans a wide range of business types. The region has well-established creative businesses; a growing film industry, a notable music scene, and 14 vibrant downtown areas that host a growing base of creative businesses. The creative businesses in our downtowns—such as music venues, culinary destinations and micro-manufacturers—provide social value to residents, while helping to attract tourism and new residents. These businesses are vital to the region’s Quality of Place, while also playing a critical role in creating jobs and prosperity in our local economies. Film and television is exhibiting strong annual growth, and there is explosive growth of electronic sports (e-sports), both which are creative industries that rely on digital technology and demand a highly skilled workforce; a workforce that is largely attracted to creative communities.

**Work will be undertaken to identify which of the following areas hold the greatest prospects for local growth in the region:**

- Music
- Film and television
- Digital media
- E-gaming and e-sports
- Cuisine and culinary





## Agri-Food

More than 80 per cent of Durham lies within the provincially designated Greenbelt, which supports a thriving agri-food industry through job creation and stewardship of the region's natural assets. With a competitive edge over other Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) municipalities, the ongoing growth of the agri-food cluster is critical to the overall economic success of the region, allowing us to leverage opportunities for growth across the entire value chain. There is a vital role to play in attracting visitors through enabling new agri-tourism offerings, local food and on-farm diversification initiatives, that support enhanced Quality of Place and access to local products and experiences. Our farmers are cutting-edge, creating an environment that provides access to the right tools and resources to invest in and adopt leading agri-tech and modern agricultural applications.

**Supporting this cluster will be imperative to sustainably feed our growing population. Areas of focus include:**

- Agri-technology
- On-farm diversified uses
- Agri-tourism
- Local food supply and value chain
- Vertical/indoor agriculture

The background is a dark blue and purple abstract design. In the top left, there is a lightbulb icon. In the top right, there is a lantern icon with a plant inside. In the bottom right, there is a stylized robot head icon. The page is filled with various geometric shapes like circles, squares, and triangles in different shades of blue and purple.

# Five-Year ACTION PLAN

To advance Durham toward our 30-year aspirations, goals and action items for the next five years have been established. These will propel the Region down the path to achieving this vision.





# EECE

**Durham is a leader in Ontario for workforce skill and education attainment.**





**The talent-driven economy requires an increasingly skilled and educated workforce. Economic growth regionally is dependent on successfully attracting, retaining, developing, and deploying people in a way that maximizes their potential in the regional economy.**

Over the next 30 years, the region's workforce will lead Ontario in technical skills and trades training, and in average university-level education attainment. The region will also have inclusive and equitable talent development pathways for residents that focus on matching skills and knowledge to market demand, and on improving diversity and gender equity in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and Trades/Technical) educations and careers.

**Evidence:**

- The region's aging population and labour force will place downward pressure on long-term labour force growth potential, emphasizing the need to plan for steady migration, particularly geared to a talented working age population.
- Anticipated economic growth in the region and decarbonization of the building sector through energy retrofits, will continue to generate a steady need for local skilled trades over the coming decades. This will require ongoing efforts to retain, attract, and accommodate new residents to avoid labour shortages.

- The region's resident population outperforms its peers in terms of college diploma attainment, but there is an opportunity to increase average university attainment to surpass the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) average.
- Farmers in the region are getting older, with more than 60 per cent aged 55 years and older. While the region has a slightly higher proportion of women farm operators than the provincial average, it is still very low.
- As the province with the highest child care costs, Ontario also has the lowest rate of women's workforce participation at 80.6%. Ultimately, early learning and child care supports parental labour force participation. While child care service is strong in Durham, improving access and reducing barriers to child care is a focus of the Region's Childcare Services Early Learning and Child Care Plan. One focus of the Plan is to ensure more people enter the child care profession in Durham, which will help unlock the ability for women to enter or re-enter the workforce.
- There is strong gender disparity in major fields of study relating to STEM in the region. Only nine per cent of women with post-secondary degrees in the region graduated from STEM fields against 50 per cent for men, and that ratio drops to under three per cent to 40 per cent for engineering.

Diverse, experienced, and educated talent is of critical importance to growing the economy and attracting investment. Talent must meet the changing needs of the economy, and the resident labour force needs to be well matched to current and future demands. The region must have a supportive and responsive environment where both individuals and businesses can build the knowledge, capacity, skills, and capabilities needed to prepare for and capitalize on economic evolution.

The region's strong legacy in advanced manufacturing gives it a competitive advantage over its peers in skilled trades and college-educated workforce, but the average age of this workforce is increasing, as is demand.



Over the next five years, Durham Region must focus on attracting, retaining, and building STEM education and skills that will allow the region's economy to grow, innovate, transform, and adapt, creating high-value jobs and attracting businesses. A skilled and highly educated population will also act as a magnet, attracting the world's fastest growing and most innovative businesses. Increasing skills and education will also place upward pressure on resident wages, driving up household income.



## **Goal 1.1 Identify future talent requirements of Durham businesses and skills gaps in key priority sectors.**

Through engagement with businesses on skills requirements, Invest Durham can support existing businesses to expand and grow while simultaneously tracking the evolution of new skills that will be required in the future. Collaboration with partners will enable new and existing businesses to come together to co-create skill-development strategies and initiatives that promote business growth, maintain consistent engagement, and track progress.

Action	Timeline
<b>1.1.1</b> Form a major Employers Roundtable to identify future talent requirements and skills that would help unlock rapid growth in key priority sectors.	2026
<b>1.1.2</b> In collaboration with others, perform talent development research into anticipated future demands for skills and knowledge, and co-develop strategies that address identified needs.	2026
<b>1.1.3</b> Conduct a future-facing skills gap analysis specific to north Durham businesses and partner with Durham Workforce Authority to identify future needs, and design programs specific to rural economies.	2025
<b>1.1.4</b> Working with partners, develop an approach to evaluate the economic contribution and local wealth creation of residents that live in the region and work remotely, to improve resident connection to the local economy.	2026

**Potential Partners:** Durham Workforce Authority, Post-Secondary Institutions, Local Area Municipalities, Major Employers, Social Services





## **Goal 1.2: Unlock the potential of women in STEM, and foster workforce diversity. Encourage inclusive talent development to enable underrepresented groups to invest in skills and education.**

A diverse talent pool is important for long-term economic growth, innovation and competitiveness. Globally, there is growing demand for STEM skills in the workforce and the region's post-secondary institutions have unique, competitive strengths to meet these needs. Despite these demands, women and other racialized populations continue to be under-represented in STEM fields. A focus on improving workforce diversity and supporting gender equity is an economic imperative for Invest Durham.

Action	Timeline
<b>1.2.1</b> Develop a program that includes dedicated outreach efforts to increase the number of women in STEM education and careers.	2026
<b>1.2.2</b> Investigate the potential to work with partners to develop an incentive program to encourage under-represented groups to enter STEM education, including micro-credentials.	2026
<b>1.2.3</b> Explore partnership opportunities to address sexism and gender-based violence in skilled trades. Support awareness and education programming for those industries that promote inclusive and safe spaces for all genders, and which work to address gender bias in the recruitment and selection process.	2026
<b>1.2.4</b> Sponsor and promote diversity and gender equity initiatives in STEM and innovation ecosystems, including Hackathons, Women in Cyber, Women in STEM, Women in Nuclear, Women in Trades, and Women in Automotive. Contribute to delivering racialized and women-owned business initiatives.	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>1.2.5</b> To address challenges in skilled trades, work with regional partners to develop culturally responsive outreach and recruitment efforts geared toward the needs of racialized and marginalized communities.	2026

**Potential Partners:** Post-Secondary Institutions, Durham Region DEI Division, Durham Business Community, Trade Unions. Social Services



### **Goal 1.3: Support Durham businesses to target skilled workers through promotion, outreach, and post-secondary programs.**

Durham-based businesses face stiff competition in securing talent, and some lack capacity to upskill and recruit. Many priority clusters in the region need candidates with very specific skills and are experiencing skilled labour shortages.

Through initiatives to connect talent to career opportunities and identifying opportunities for organizations to tap into new and diverse talent streams, Invest Durham can provide support to the region's businesses that addresses their talent challenges, enabling them to expand and grow more quickly.

Action	Timeline
<b>1.3.1</b> Promote the region's career opportunities in innovation-led companies and priority clusters across the wider GTHA.	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>1.3.2</b> Address the ongoing labour shortages in the agri-food sector. Measures include succession planning workshops for farmers, mentorship for young farmers, skills training programs, and Invest Durham agri-food career video promotion.	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>1.3.3</b> Develop a systematic approach to match GTHA-based students and graduates with placements in the region's businesses and connect businesses to research and development and applied research opportunities.	2026
<b>1.3.4</b> Highlight opportunities to businesses that employ many of the region's out-commuters, to relocate jobs or divisions into the region by establishing satellite offices or creating hybrid work nodes in the region's urban centres.	2026
<b>1.3.5</b> Partner on the promotion and delivery of targeted training or micro-credentials to employers on culture, leadership, immigration and diversity, well-being, workforce planning and skilled workforce attraction, to support business expansion and growth.	2025

**Potential Partners:** Post-Secondary Institutions, Durham Region DEI Division, BACD, Area Municipalities, Agricultural Associations, Social Services



## **Goal 1.4: Attract and retain talent: Develop programs to attract skilled workers into Durham.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the fundamentals of where people work. It is estimated that 25 per cent of the office-based workforce will work remotely with another 25 per cent given the option to do so. Alongside this workforce shift, the rate of job change has reached historic heights as people adjust their circumstances.

The shift to remote work provides a window of opportunity for Durham Region to attract skilled workers who seek a change in lifestyle or more residential space. While the region has no difficulty in attracting new residents generally, it is imperative that we target specific potential new residents that have the desirable skills and talent needed to spur on the growth of Invest Durham's priority clusters.

Action	Timeline
<b>1.4.1</b> Create a promotion program to attract skilled and educated workers to the region, including a dedicated website that showcases the region's vibrant urban centres and amenities.	2025
<b>1.4.2</b> Drawing upon the rural assets of north Durham, highlight north Durham success stories and target attracting talent that is seeking a more balanced quality of life.	2025
<b>1.4.3</b> Work with post-secondary institutions on a Magnetic Region program to retain graduates and implement a marketing campaign to attract new graduates from elsewhere into the region.	2024

**Potential Partners:** Area Municipalities, Post-Secondary Institutions





# LOCATION

**Durham has strong intensification and renewal potential in the Urban Growth Centres, and vibrant and diverse downtowns.**





**Over the next 30 years, to attract the desirable talent necessary to draw in business investment, the region's urban cores must be safe, financially attainable, attractive, and livable, and Durham's 14 downtowns must be diverse, lively and vibrant.**

Support for the intensification and urban renewal of the region's commercial districts and urban growth centres will introduce diverse and financially attainable housing and business real estate types.

Similarly, investing in the region's downtown Quality of Place is essential for its long-term economic prosperity. Places with an enviable Quality of Place are at a competitive advantage for attracting talent, and a connection to place is fundamental to the concept of livability and a high quality of life. The region is already home to thriving urban areas and vibrant rural downtowns. This strategy will place a focus on collaborating to support, enable, and promote these areas and projects to improve Quality of Place.

- Similarly to other areas in the GTA, the region has a high population turnover rate (departure of residents and new inbound residents) which can be associated to a lack of personal investment into communities both economically and socially, presenting an opportunity to better connect residents to their economy and community.

- The largest demographic of new regional residents is the 25 to 44 age group, driven by inter-provincial and inter-GTA migration into the region.
- New STEM graduates from Ontario's universities and colleges have a strong potential to drive innovation and economic growth. Attracting and retaining these graduates requires a desirable urban lifestyle offering and financially attainable housing supply.
- The largest potential for office-based job growth is in vibrant, diverse, urban downtowns, and the region's downtowns are in competition with peers in the GTHA for attracting new office-based employers.
- Each year, the region welcomes thousands of international post-secondary students from more than 70 different countries around the world, many bringing desirable skills and educations. Urban attractions and experiences that are desirable to this demographic can help students form attachment to the community, retaining them post-graduation.
- Vibrant rural downtowns are often indicative of strong rural economies; they represent a hub of community services, mixed housing options, historical and cultural assets and employment opportunities that enhance overall quality of life in rural areas.



Over the next five years, Durham Region will take actions to support and enable renewal within Urban Growth Centres. In doing so, condominium and apartment housing supply should increase, offering more financially attainable housing options to new graduates and new residents in the early-working age demographic.

Urban renewal initiatives will also result in new shared office and arts, performance and gallery spaces. This will help to improve desirability by the creative industries, such as film and television, and video game design.

Invest Durham will also support, enable, and promote placemaking projects throughout the region's 14 downtown areas, to improve vibrancy and diversity, attracting talent.



## **Goal 2.1: Advance the creation of strong, urban, east-GTA downtowns as a long-term economic imperative.**

Durham Region will support and promote intensification projects, commercial office developments, and urban renewal in the urban cores of Pickering and Oshawa. Part of this ambition is to diversify the type of residential housing, offering more financially attainable urban units such as condominium and apartments, attracting younger working-age demographics and new university graduates.

Intensification of urban cores and transportation corridors will also begin to address the low availability of prime commercial real estate – both office and retail, by working with area municipalities, planners, and attracting development.

Action	Timeline
<b>2.1.1</b> Support, enable, and promote redevelopment, intensification, and urban renewal projects in the region's Urban Growth Centres in Pickering and Oshawa.	2024
<b>2.1.2</b> Quantify the economic benefits and workforce development opportunities available if financially attainable housing options were made available in urban cores for younger working-age STEM graduates.	2025
<b>2.1.3</b> Identify underutilized urban sites where appropriate urban renewal projects are possible and desirable, and generate interest by developers.	2025
<b>2.1.4</b> Explore the use of Community Improvement Plans to incentivize key commercial developments that lead to job creation in Urban Growth Centres.	2026

**Potential Partners:** Durham Region Rapid Transit and Transit-Oriented Development Division, Area Municipalities, Arts, Culture and Creative Industries, the Innovation Community



## **Goal 2.2: Rural Resilience: Facilitate the revitalization of rural downtowns to grow economic resilience.**

The vibrant downtowns of north Durham attract visitors from around the region and the wider GTHA. Through targeted support programming and retention activities, downtown businesses can continue to build economic resilience and ensure these areas thrive.

The downtowns of north Durham act as a hub of services, activities and cultural amenities that support the wider rural economy. Nurturing these areas by investing in their health and resiliency ensures they will continue to entice visitors, attract new businesses, and support a cohesive social and built environment that is reflective of community history and identity.

Action	Timeline
<b>2.2.1</b> Enhance the economic and social vibrancy of north Durham's downtowns and economies through the implementation of the Vibrant North Durham Plan.	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>2.2.2</b> Support the implementation of downtown revitalization action plans (such as My Uxbridge Downtown) and review and update existing action plans (such as Shop Brock).	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>2.2.3</b> Actively promote Community Improvement Plans to building owners and tenants in rural downtowns to encourage further investment.	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>2.2.4</b> Undertake north Durham downtown-focused business attraction promotion to attract and diversify the business base.	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>2.2.5</b> Support and enable the growth of agri-tourism business initiatives and make connections between agri-tourism operators and downtown businesses.	Immediate & Ongoing

**Potential Partners:** Northern Area Municipalities, BIAs, Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade





## **Goal 2.3: Magnetic downtowns: Cultivate vibrant and diverse downtowns, to create magnets for talent and creative businesses.**

A crucial factor for vibrancy is the presence of diverse “third places”. These are locations that are not homes (first places) or places of employment (second places). Third places are bars, restaurants, retail areas, parks, social amenities - places where people go to gather and socialize. The density, quality, walkability, and transit-connectedness of these places builds Quality of Place. Though primarily within the control of area municipalities, the Region will seek collaborative opportunities to support and enable these initiatives.

Another dimension of vibrancy is the availability of co-working and shared creative spaces where people can come together and work on new businesses, research, and services. In recent years these have morphed into lifestyle spaces where work and social lives intertwine and are increasingly important as the trend of hybrid work continues.

Action	Timeline
<b>2.3.1</b> Attract, support, and enable new co-working commercial developments in urban centres, for freelancers, “Working Near Home” remote workers, and for the arts, cultural and creative industries, including flex exhibit and performance spaces.	2024
<b>2.3.2</b> Target investment from a wider range of hotels and accommodation (including boutique and mid-tier hotels) across the region.	2023
<b>2.3.3</b> Establish a Welcome to Durham protocol for new residents and businesses that introduces them to local services, businesses, and tourism sites within the region.	2024

**Potential Partners:** Area Municipalities, BACD, Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade









# ACCELERATION

Durham's innovators are solving global challenges.





## **Providing the necessary supports to enable the region's innovation community will result in an ecosystem that drives innovation into the local economy and improves the local and global competitiveness of businesses.**

Over the next 30 years, the region will become widely known for the strength of its innovation community. Durham's industries will have a reputation throughout the GTHA and Ontario of solving global challenges, including being leaders in clean energy technologies in response to the climate emergency, innovating new adaptive and inclusive technologies, and leading in advanced human mobility and transportation. The world's leading multi-national businesses that have a presence in the region will benefit from the distinct talent and post-secondary supports available, helping them innovate in competitive new ways that benefit humanity.

### **Evidence:**

- Durham is home to more than 12,600 businesses, with an average of 1,000 new businesses created each year. The majority serve the local or GTHA area, with only 3.6 per cent of business exporting products or services.
- Durham has a high concentration of electric power generation workforce and industry compared with the rest of the province, making it a uniquely strong sector for the region.

- There is a mismatch between the skills of regional residents and the types of jobs available in Durham. The region is already home to a vast number of knowledge workers that, prior to the pandemic, largely commuted out of the area for work. This resident workforce can propel growth in new knowledge-based businesses.
- Compared to other jurisdictions, the region's post-secondary institutions have fewer startups in proximity to their campuses. The region has foundational sector strengths that offer a platform from which to launch growth in associated priority clusters with high job growth potential.



In the next five years, Invest Durham must actively promote success stories broadly, building reputational strength and awareness outside the region. It must also actively attract globally significant investments into the region from leading international companies, to propel key priority clusters and fill gaps in local supply chains.

Tech start-ups, entrepreneurs, the academic sector and established business community must have physical space to co-locate and jointly pursue research and development objectives. Incubation and acceleration programming must provide the tools needed to new innovators to commercialize ideas and scale their business rapidly. This will result in new start-ups that innovate made-in-Durham solutions that solve global challenges.

Through our actions over the next five years, the region's reputation will continue to grow, acting to attract investment and draw in new talent, making the region a destination for global economic leaders and generating new, high-value jobs for residents.



### **Goal 3.1: Strengthen the innovation community: Support creation of flexible workspace and tailored programs to encourage start-ups tackling global challenges.**

Building and scaling an innovation focused ecosystem requires a comprehensive approach. Durham Region and its partners are committed to supporting and growing new networks that connect startups to investors and valuable programming. Ensuring the availability of flexible, physical, shared space for entrepreneurs, researchers, and innovators to come together and collaborate is critical for success. Equally important is ensuring that support services and programs are available to deliver outcomes and support the commercialization and acceleration of strong business plans. Our aim is not just to support a new generation of start-ups and ventures by students and new grads, but to ensure they stay in the region.

Action	Timeline
<b>3.1.1</b> Lead development of a business case to create a large physical innovation space that functions as a post-graduate tech incubator; shared office space; and collaboration area for larger businesses to connect with the innovation community, with opportunities for B2B mentorship.	2024
<b>3.1.2</b> Partner to seek federal funding for the creation and delivery of high-profile acceleration programming which is built on ESG priorities, to help the region's innovators solve global challenges.	2025
<b>3.1.3</b> Explore options to develop or enable a Research and Development Park, close to post-secondary institutions, that provides flexible lease types, as a landing pad for corporate spinoff from the academic community.	2026
<b>3.1.4</b> Undertake a comprehensive review of funds and grants available for start-ups, commercial ventures originating in post-secondary institutions, and acceleration programs. Explore the potential for a Regional Innovative Investment Fund.	2024
<b>3.1.5</b> Evaluate the effectiveness of regionally funded innovation centres and programming.	2023
<b>3.1.6</b> Support the Ontario Shores Living Lab business case development and the securing of grant funding and support the Abilities Centre in their creation of research and development space for technology supported accessibility, belonging, and inclusion.	Immediate and Ongoing

**Potential Partners:** Post-Secondary Institutions, 1855 Accelerator, Spark Centre, Province of Ontario, Area Municipalities, Ontario Shores





## **Goal 3.2: Grow key local businesses: Provide growth support services to Durham's local businesses in key priority sectors.**

With competitive strengths in the priority clusters of future energy, next-generation mobility, arts, culture and creative, applied digital technology and agri-food, our ambition is to accelerate the growth of these clusters, creating firm and permanent roots in Durham.

The region's existing businesses have the potential to create job growth through expansion and through the introduction of new business lines that respond to the global drivers of change.

Action	Timeline
<b>3.2.1</b> Develop cluster growth strategies for key priority clusters: future energy, next-generation mobility, arts and creative, applied digital technology, and agri-food.	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>3.2.2</b> Establish expert tactical teams from Ontario Tech University, Trent University Durham GTA and Durham College, to support the region's existing businesses with technological adoption and industrial research.	2024
<b>3.2.3</b> Create a new network for the region's top 50 businesses that innovate to solve global challenges. Develop tailored support services including an expansion support program.	2024
<b>3.2.4</b> Act as the primary contact point for the Regional corporation with businesses, business associations, and post-secondary institutions, leading economic development policy, supportive advocacy, and acting as a concierge for business or academic partner access to Regional services.	2023
<b>3.2.5</b> Partner to promote available programs that support the integration of ESG priorities into the business models of local businesses.	2025

**Potential Partners:** Post-Secondary Institutions, Industry Associations, Business Community, Area Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, Innovation Community



### **Goal 3.3: Build Durham's reputation for innovation to solve global challenges.**

To stand out among our global competitors, we must promote our value proposition to attract talented residents, grow businesses and attract inbound investment. We must consistently communicate the region's strengths both nationally and internationally to innovative businesses, entrepreneurs, the realtor and developer community, and senior agencies in government. While reputational strength must be earned, the Region must also build momentum behind our reputation through consistent, effective, and authentic promotion of our successes.

Action	Timeline
<b>3.3.1</b> Host flagship GTHA-wide events annually to showcase the region's investment-ready businesses, technologies and research to investors, companies and entrepreneurs.	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>3.3.2</b> Host a Future Energy event in the region and attract an international audience.	2025
<b>3.3.3</b> Develop and deliver creative promotional campaigns, including showcasing success stories, to domestic and international audiences that build the region's reputation for innovating to solve global challenges.	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>3.3.4</b> Develop partnerships with senior investment agencies including pan-regional investment attraction groups, Invest Ontario, Invest In Canada, and the Canada Foreign Trade Commissioner Service, to ensure Durham is top-of-mind for investment projects and senior-level incentives for new investment.	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>3.3.5</b> Develop and implement a government relations strategy to promote the interests of Durham's priority clusters to provincial and national governments.	2023

**Potential Partners:** Area Municipalities, Future Energy Business Community, Post-secondary institutions, Innovation Community



### **Goal 3.4: Attract domestic and international inward investment into Durham's priority sectors.**

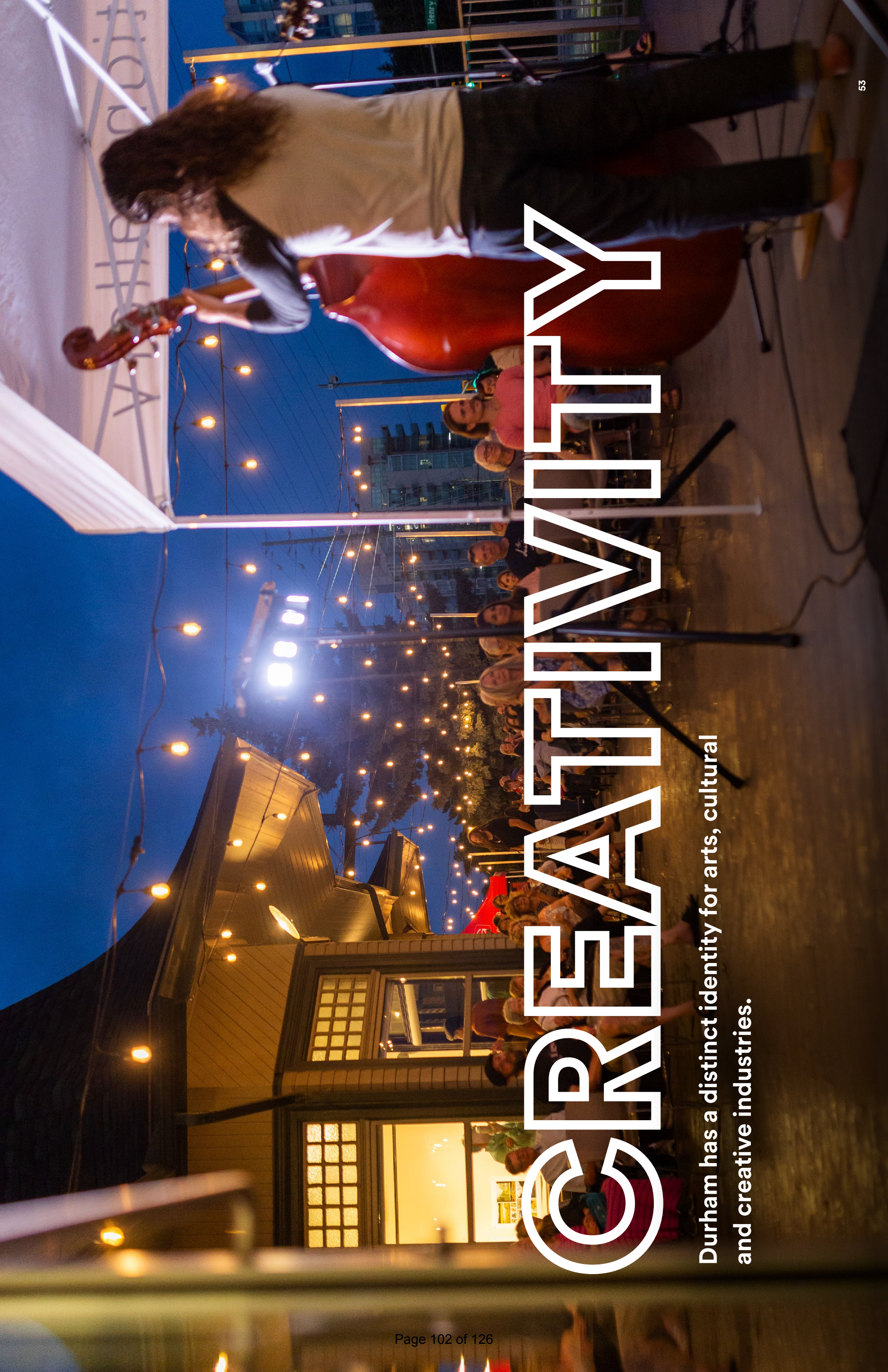
The last decade has witnessed increased competition between places for investment, which has only accelerated with the ability for more of the workforce to work remotely. New locations have entered the competition and, at the same time, the global pool of investment capital is becoming more targeted at businesses and investments with strong ESG mandates.

Invest Durham has an opportunity to attract new investment that strengthens its key priority clusters. Critical to success will be formalizing a central inward investment office and delivering a focused investment attraction program.

Action	Timeline
<b>3.4.1</b> Develop and deliver an Investment Attraction Plan to target and attract domestic and international investment in key priority clusters.	2023
<b>3.4.2</b> Formalize and strengthen the single and centralized Inward Investment Office within Durham's Economic Development and Tourism Division to be the trusted voice for Durham to domestic and international investment audiences, coordinating seamless concierge services.	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>3.4.3</b> Continuously assess and advance initiatives to improve investment readiness, including the continued prioritization of servicing to desirable employment lands.	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>3.4.4</b> Establish a site portal that lists market-ready real-estate and development sites for developers and businesses seeking a regional presence.	2024
<b>3.4.5</b> Collaborate with key partners to develop the Regionally owned land in the Clarington Energy Park and attract future energy cluster organizations, adding to the research and development capacity of the region.	2023
<b>3.4.6</b> Explore bringing the BACD into the Regional Corporation.	2023

**Potential Partners:** Area Municipalities, Province of Ontario, Government of Canada





# CREATIVITY

Durham has a distinct identity for arts, cultural and creative industries.





## **In 30 years, Durham will have a distinct cultural identity for its vibrant base of creative businesses, cultural institutions, galleries, entertainment venues, and homegrown talent.**

Durham's Tourism activities will achieve broader goals beyond attracting visitor spending; our activities will also strengthen the region's overall Quality of Place, enhance the vibrancy of our urban and rural downtowns, and ensure that Durham is both magnetic and memorable.

### **Evidence:**

- Ontario's creative cluster is growing faster than the rest of the economy. The creative industries in Ontario generate \$12.2 billion in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for Ontario's economy annually and are number one in Canada by GDP.
- The region's film industry is growing rapidly; from 2012 to 2019 film production value grew 220 per cent, to \$63 million.
- The music industry in the region has strong grassroots support through festivals and events such as the Oshawa Music Awards (OMAs) and Springtide Festival, has established production studios working on top-tier projects, and has recently produced international superstars such as Shawn Mendes, Daniel Caesar, Lennon Stella, Boi1da, and Meghan Patrick as well as nationally recognized artists such as Crown Lands, Dizzy, and Protest the Hero.

- The region has a strong cultural sector. It is home to Parkwood National Historic Site, which is a top 10 filming location in Canada. Other major assets and cultural attractions include The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Station Gallery and the Visual Arts Centre of Clarington; the Ontario Philharmonic, Canadian Automotive Museum, multiple local history museums, as well as an array of art associations, galleries, studios and tourism loops.
- The region is home to 14 downtown and main street areas which house more than 1,000 largely independent businesses, such as restaurants, boutiques, makers markets, and music venues. These downtowns also host annual festivals and cultural events.

Regions that are desirable destinations have diverse and memorable attractions, a high Quality of Place, and distinctive attributes that make them attractive to visit. Tourists seek creative and cultural experiences; memorable culinary destinations, live music, museums and galleries, attractive downtowns to explore, and boutiques to visit. The region offers these attractions, however there is an opportunity to both strengthen the offering as well as build the awareness of these offerings.

Beyond tourism, creative communities have additional social value for residents. A variety of activities and experiences outside of the workplace are key to quality of life, and these generally include a range of creative businesses, as well as natural assets such as trails and waterfronts. Creative business clusters complement and enhance natural amenities while also playing an important economic role. With the rise of remote work, the opportunity to live and work anywhere is attainable to a growing population. Within this transition there lies the opportunity to attract and retain a highly skilled and knowledge-based workforce. As we compete with other regions in the GTHA, establishing a more creative, more vibrant community with a reputation for high Quality of Place provides a strong workforce attraction tool.



Over the next five years, Invest Durham will broadcast our offering of urban excitement and country charm. We will help to facilitate infrastructure that supports creative businesses, to create jobs in creative and cultural industries. Through this, our creative industry exports will grow, awareness of the region's creative industries will increase, and a stronger ecosystem for creative entrepreneurship will emerge. The focus on place excellence will help deliver broader economic development objectives.



## **Goal 4.1: Urban excitement and country charm: Build the Durham Tourism brand by promoting attractions and experiences that align with brand principles.**

Invest Durham's value proposition for tourism is rooted in its landscape and location. The region offers both exciting urban communities and rolling countryside. As a key differentiator, this means that the region authentically offers farm-to-fork culinary experiences, exciting music events in excellent venues, and creative culture both urban and rural. Promoting these assets consistently through Durham Tourism will define the region as a weekend destination from the GTA.

Action	Timeline
<b>4.1.1</b> Promote the economic value of tourism through programs that improve tourism readiness and through tourism ambassador programs.	2023
<b>4.1.2</b> Redevelop the Durham Tourism website to effectively promote Durham's tourism value proposition and support the tourism industry to leisure and corporate visitors.	2024
<b>4.1.3</b> Promote the region as a weekend destination for visitors from the GTA through a targeted annual marketing plan built on the brand promise of urban excitement and country charm.	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>4.1.4</b> Develop a modern and bold concept for the Durham Tourism Discovery Guide that uses striking photography to convey the region's scenic urban and rural destinations, visually immersing readers in the region's experiential offerings.	Immediate and Ongoing

**Potential Partners:** Central Counties Tourism, Area Municipalities, Tourism Industry Business Community





## **Goal 4.2: Strengthen Quality of Place: Undertake activities that improve Durham's Quality of Place metrics.**

Quality of Place is consistently a crucial factor in investment attraction, talent attraction, and talent retention. It is a key component of quality of life for residents, contributing to social well-being. As strong creative industries contribute significantly to Quality of Place, a regional approach to growing creative industries will enable our existing cultural and creative industries such as film, music, culinary, festivals and events to expand, thrive, and create additional jobs.

Action	Timeline
<b>4.2.1</b> Explore the creation of a fund that supports the region's diverse arts and cultural industries including creative and culinary businesses, events, festivals and placemaking.	2025
<b>4.2.2</b> Enable growth in the film industry through a refreshed region-wide film sector strategy.	2023
<b>4.2.3</b> Enable growth in the music industry through the development of a strategy to become a Music Region.	2023
<b>4.2.4</b> Establish a process to consider sponsorship opportunities for events that enhance the region's Quality of Place.	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>4.2.5</b> Explore the potential for establishing a festival incubator.	2024
<b>4.2.6</b> Host sport events that engage, inspire and connect the community, creating sport and social legacies.	Ongoing

**Potential Partners:** Ontario Creates, Central Counties Tourism, Local Area Municipalities, Festivals and Events Ontario, Local Cultural Partners



### **Goal 4.3 Champion inclusive tourism: Pursue tourism initiatives which are diverse, accessible, and inclusive.**

Durham Region's commitment to the communities we represent requires that the region be a welcoming community to all visitors and residents. Inclusive approaches to tourism initiatives consider the needs of our audiences and reflect the voices of our residents.

Ensuring that the experiences that visitors and international students have with the region's tourism assets are inclusive and memorable will help to create deeper connections, leading to longer term improvements in talent retention and attraction.

Action	Timeline
<b>4.3.1</b> Promote the region's tourism offering to diverse local audiences including translation of promotional materials.	2025
<b>4.3.2</b> Ensure the region's diverse community voices are reflected in all Invest Durham content, including blog posts, social media and promotional materials to better represent our residents.	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>4.3.3</b> Support the growth of inclusive and accessible sport opportunities, infrastructure, and participation, including the exploration of a sport event hosting grant program.	2024
<b>4.3.4</b> Promote the region's tourism attractions to international students studying at the region's post-secondary institutions through projects designed to deepen off-campus community connections.	Immediate and Ongoing

**Potential Partners:** Central Counties Tourism, Local Area Municipalities, Sport Tourism Canada, Post-secondary institutions



## **Goal 4.4: Drive prosperity through local love: Prioritize activities with high potential to drive spending to locally owned and operated businesses and increase overnight stays.**

Invest Durham can increase prosperity in local communities by promoting independent local businesses, encouraging overnight stays, and strengthening the creative industry businesses that make the offering memorable.

A large geographic region, the region also has the benefit of urban lakeshore municipalities that are an audience for North Durham communities, and vice versa. Ensuring more intra-regional tourism dollars are spent locally will strengthen and build our local business community, creating jobs and ensure the region becomes more magnetic to visitors.

Action	Timeline
<b>4.4.1</b> Promote tourism products that attract weekend visitors from the GTA, particularly those visitors with high spending potential.	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>4.4.2</b> Promote the importance of tourism within our local community and encourage resident tourism spending locally.	Immediate and Ongoing
<b>4.4.3</b> Develop and promote regional tourism products that drive spillover spending opportunities and a propensity for overnight stays.	2023
<b>4.4.4</b> Explore developing a strategy to encourage a diverse range of options for rural overnight accommodations (i.e. luxury short-term rentals, bed and breakfasts).	2023
<b>4.4.5</b> Develop and deliver a Rural Cycle Tourism Program to map and sign beautiful recreational cycle loops.	2023
<b>4.4.6</b> Promote locally owned, micro-manufacturing, and creative industry startups.	2024

**Potential Partners:** Central Counties Tourism, Durham Hotels Association, Local Area Municipalities, Ontario By Bike, Local Tourism Industry Businesses Community



# ENABLER

Collaboration and resourcing that enables  
the PLACE blueprint.





# Co-ordination of Service Delivery

Invest Durham is a division of the Regional Municipality of Durham, which represents eight area municipalities. Invest Durham leads, facilitates, collaborates, and supports investment attraction and expansion initiatives to create and retain jobs.

Our ambitious plans cannot be achieved alone. We will work in collaboration with Durham's area municipal staff at the Cities of Pickering and Oshawa, Towns of Ajax and Whitby, the Municipality of Clarington, and the Townships of Brock, Scugog and Uxbridge.

Other initiatives are run by, or in collaboration with, Durham Region's chambers of commerce and boards of trade, the Business Advisory Centre of Durham, the Durham Workforce Authority, Central Counties Tourism, Durham's three post-secondary institutions, as well as Durham's tech hubs, incubators and accelerators, and other community partners.

Central to co-ordination is the creation of clear and distinct roles and functional mandates between regional and area municipal economic development organizations in the region, which will minimize duplication of effort and competition, and maximize effectiveness. A joint session of the Durham Economic Development Partnership will be organized with regional Mayors, CAOs, and Regional Chair to consider best practices for investment attraction and promotion and advance the collective Durham regional economic strategy for competitiveness, investment, and long-term prosperity.

Partnerships and a unified approach to investment attraction are essential to achieving the goals set out in this strategy. Together, we will strengthen Durham's economy, create jobs and enhance quality of place.

## Resourcing Plan

The completion of certain action items in this strategy relies on the creation and execution of a new resourcing plan, which would be executed in a phased approach over the coming five years. Broad feedback was strong and consistent in detailing the need for the **People** aspiration and its associated work plan; however, there is a need to increase the level of resourcing within the team to deliver this aspiration. Additionally, certain goal areas within the **Location** and **Acceleration** aspirations are also dependent on a new resourcing plan. Staff will complete a jurisdictional scan and explore best practices in peer geographies to develop a new resourcing plan for consideration by Durham Regional Council in 2023.

## Key Performance Indicators

This strategy delivers on the third pillar of Durham Regional Council's Strategic Plan: **"To build a strong and resilient economy that maximizes opportunities for business and employment growth, innovation and partnership."** The Durham Region Strategic Plan is measured through key performance indicators (KPIs).

To track success of **Ready Set Future**, we will monitor aggregate and median household income growth as an indicator of resident prosperity. Additional KPIs will be developed to track milestones and outcomes of specific projects that progress us towards our PLACE aspirations.

## Related Strategies and Plans

- The Regional Municipality of Durham Strategic Plan 2020-2024
- Envision Durham
- Early Learning and Child Care Plan 2023-2027
- Regional Cycling Plan Update
- Employment Strategy Technical Report
- Connecting Our Communities: Durham Broadband Strategy
- Region-wide Growth Analysis Technical report
- Proposed Policy Directions/Growth Opportunities and Challenges Report
- Durham Competitiveness Study
- The Durham Community Energy Plan
- Durham Community Climate Adaptation Plan
- Agri-food Action Plan
- North Durham Action Plan
- Durham Tourism Action Plan
- Invest Durham Marketing Action Plan



# Acknowledgments

## **Regional Senior Leadership Team:**

- John Henry, Regional Chair, Region of Durham
- Elaine Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer
- Brian Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
- Simon Gill, Director of Economic Development and Tourism
- Lorraine Huinink, Director of Rapid Transit Initiative and Transit Orientated Development
- Gary Muller, Director of Planning
- Sandra Austin, Director, Corporate Policy and Strategic Initiatives
- Allison Hector-Alexander, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Gary Williams, Director of Communications

## **Economic Development Strategy Steering Committee**

- Maryam Bayoumi, Executive Director, OPEN.Innovate Creative Arts Incubator
- Carla Carmichael, Vice President, Decommissioning, Ontario Power Generation
- Nicole Gibson, Executive Director, Ajax Pickering Board of Trade
- Ted Graham, Vice President, Innovation, General Motors
- Dr. Scott Henderson, Dean, Trent University Durham GTA
- Asif Khan, Founder – Canatrace, CTO, Vector Health Labs
- Don Lovisa, President, Durham College
- Andrew McBarnett, Founder, Neales Sweet 'n Nice Ice Cream
- Dr. Steven Murphy, President, Ontario Tech University
- Rebekah Noseworthy, Community Arts and Culture Champion, Signs of Life Mural Project
- Swapneet Ranike, Franchisee, Boston Pizza

**Durham Region Economic Development and Tourism Leadership Team:**

- Stacey Jibb, Manager, Agriculture and Rural Economic Development
- Brandon Pickard, Manager, Tourism
- Dan Ruby, Manager, Business Development and Investment
- Jacquie Severs, Manager, Marketing and Cluster Development

**Area Municipalities:**

- Kristi Honey, Chief Administrative Officer, Township of Uxbridge
- Kyle Rainbow, Director of Development Services, Township of Uxbridge
- Judy Risebrough, Program Manager – Downtown Revitalization, Township of Uxbridge
- Fiaz Jadoon, Director, Economic Development, City of Pickering
- Kevin Heritage, Director of Development Services, Township of Scugog
- Paul Pirri, Senior Manager, Economic Development, Town of Whitby
- Carlos Salazar, Manager, Economic Development, Municipality of Clarington
- Ingrid Svelnis, Chief Administrative Officer, Township of Brock
- Robin Prentice, Director of Development Services, Township of Brock
- Samuel Twumasi, Manager, Economic Development, Town of Ajax
- Hailey Wright, Director, Economic Development, City of Oshawa

**Project Consultants:**

- Hatch

We would like to thank all Members of Regional Council, area municipal partners, the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, local boards of trade, chambers of commerce, BIAs, innovation and entrepreneurship organizations, post-secondary institutions, Sonia Salomone, government agencies and businesses who collaborated in the development of this strategy. Thank you also to all regional economic development staff who contributed to this strategy. We appreciate your time and insights as we work together to shape the future of Durham Region.



CANNINGTON



# Photography

Photos listed left to right. Photos marked with \* by Shay Conroy.

Page 2: Aerial of Lake Scugog.\*

Page 5: Canadian Centre for Nuclear Sustainability, Pickering.  
Safran Landing Systems, Ajax. Lakefront Trail, Ajax.

Page 6: W. Galen Weston Centre for Food at Durham College (DC),  
Whitby. ACE Climatic Wind Tunnel, Ontario Tech University (Ontario  
Tech), Oshawa. Parkwood National Historic Site, Oshawa.

Page 7: Ontario Power Generation (OPG), Clarington. Downtown Uxbridge.

Page 8: Downtown Beaverton. Downtown Port Perry.  
Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation.

Page 12-13: Mural by Vizsla Bacon, Signs of Life Project, Oshawa.

Page 18: Collision Conference. Axcessiom Technologies at Spark Centre.  
Brilliant Catalyst at Ontario Tech. 1855 Accelerator, Whitby.

Page 19: Photo courtesy Trent University Durham GTA (Trent U Durham).  
OPG, Clarington. Photo courtesy DC. Photo courtesy Ontario Tech.

Page 20: Biltmore Theatre, Oshawa.\* Clarington Farmers' Market .  
Durham Region International Film Festival. Station Gallery, Whitby.\*

Page 21: Port Perry. Port Restaurant, Pickering. 8-Bit Beans, Whitby.\* Gateway mural  
by Jon Colwell and Jesse Watson, Signs of Life project, Pickering Village, Ajax.\*

Page 22: 360insights, Whitby. OPEN.Innovate Creative Arts Incubator,  
Ajax. Students at Trent U Durham. Little West Indies, Bowmanville.\*

Page 23: GO Transit, Pickering. Ganaraska Wind Farm.\* OPG,  
Clarington. EV Charging Stations, Oshawa.\*

Page 24: Smart Arm at Ontario Tech. W. Galen Weston Centre for  
Food at DC. Korechi Innovations, Oshawa. OPG, Clarington.

Page 25: Steel ceremony, Oshawa. Infrastructure Project. Oshawa Port. Highway 401.

Page 28: SMR rendering courtesy GE Hitachi.

Page 29: ACE Climatic Wind Tunnel at Ontario Tech, Oshawa.

Page 29: ACE Climatic Wind Tunnel at Ontario Tech, Oshawa.

Page 30: Mixed Reality Capture Studio, photo courtesy DC.

Page 31: Biltmore Theatre, Oshawa.\*

Page 32: The Veggie Shack, Clarington.\*

Page 34-35: Photo courtesy Ontario Tech.

Page 36: 360insights, Whitby.

Page 42-43: Downtown Oshawa.\*

Page 44: Starapples Restaurant, Bowmanville.\*

Page 49: Brew Wizards, Oshawa.\*

Page 50-51: ACE Climatic Wind Tunnel, Ontario Tech, Oshawa.

Page 52: Photo courtesy Ontario Tech.

Page 58-59: Station Gallery, Whitby.\*

Page 60: The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa.\*

Page 66-67: Downtown Bowmanville.\*

Page 72: Cannington Railway Station, Brock

Page 75: River Street Cafe, Sunderland





breadpiesmuffinsteacupcakessoupcoffeecakejams

chocolatestartartscoffee

River Street  
Cafe

705 357 0606

Coffee

OPEN





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 Durham Region, Ontario, Canada

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Within Durham: 311 • Toll-Free: 1-800-372-1102



# The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

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To: Planning and Economic Development Committee  
From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development  
Report: #2022-EDT-16  
Date: December 6, 2022

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**Subject:**

Local Food Business Retention and Expansion Project: Annual Implementation Update

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**Recommendation:**

That the Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends:

That this report be received for information.

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**Report:**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an annual update on the implementation of the Durham Region Local Food Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Project which was received by the Planning and Economic Development Committee in June 2019.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The Local Food BR+E Action Plan contains 42 actions to address the challenges and opportunities raised by the 64 businesses interviewed as part of the BR + E project. A copy of the 2019 Project Report is located at <https://www.durham.ca/en/economic-development/resources/Durham-Region-Local-Food-BRE-Final-report-EMAIL.pdf>
- 2.2 In addition to the 42 actions identified, 3 key recommendations emerged as goal areas on which to focus future efforts and resources:

- a. Regulations and approvals
  - Help businesses navigate regulations and layers of approvals.
  - Encourage and enable on-farm value added activities.
- b. Engagement and education
  - Build connections between businesses.
  - Improve consumer and producer understanding of local food.
  - Enhance promotion and marketing efforts on local food in Durham Region.
  - Improve the distribution system.
  - Attract a skilled workforce.
- c. Infrastructure support
  - Strengthen infrastructure.
  - Improve processing capabilities.
  - Establish viability of a year-round farmers' market.

### **3. Previous Reports and Decisions**

- 3.1 The Local Food BR+E Report was received by Committee on June 4, 2019 (#2019-EDT-11).
- 3.2 The Local Food Business Retention and Expansion Project: Annual Implementation Update for 2021 was received by Committee on October 5, 2021 ([#2021-EDT-6](#)).
- 3.3 The Growing Agri-Food Durham – A Five-Year Plan to Grow the Agri-Food Industry was received by Committee on June 7, 2022 ([#2022-EDT-10](#)).

### **4. Implementation of the Local Food BR+E Actions**

- 4.1 Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an increased demand for locally-produced food. This led many agri-food operators to refine their businesses practices and embrace digital technologies to keep up with consumer demand for online sales and safe outdoor food experiences.
- 4.2 At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Economic Development and Tourism Division staff undertook an exercise to identify and reprioritize the most urgent action items identified in the Local Food BR+E Final Report to effectively respond to the changing needs of the agri-food industry.



- 4.3 This exercise was repeated as part of workplan development throughout 2021 and 2022. Actions were reprioritized, and several ongoing activities continue based on the previous exercise. The action items are listed in Attachment 1.
- 4.4 The prioritized actions listed in Attachment 1 also support actions identified within the Growing Agri-Food Durham – Implementation Plan (the Plan). Goal 1 of the Plan states:
- a. Retain and expand local food businesses
    - Conduct an annual exercise to prioritize and implement actions within the Local Food BR+E Action Plan. This activity will correspond with an annual update report to the Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee.
- 4.5 Key highlights of actions completed or underway from the Local Food BR+E Action Plan include:
- a. Delivery of a 4-part workshop series titled ‘Vertical Farming 101” which received more than 400 registrants and provided information on the vertical farming sector for business start-ups, investors and organization interested in learning more the vertical farming industry and technical components of growing.
  - b. In collaboration with industry partners, several webinars/workshops were delivered over the course of the last year:
    - Succession Planning for Farms webinar – partnership with BDO Accountants (February 11, 2022)
    - Migrant Worker Information Session for Farm Operators (February 17, 2022)
    - So You Think You Want to Farm 2-part webinar series (March 4 and March 11, 2022)
    - Thinking of Diversifying Your Farm- 2 part-webinar series (March 25 and April 1, 2022)
    - Agriculture Economic Development and Planning workshop (June 9, 2022)
    - Port tours of Oshawa and Hamilton with the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Clarington Agricultural Advisory Committee (July 21, 2022)
    - Durham Farm Fresh Social and Networking Event (August 9, 2022)

- 4.6 As part of Ontario Local Food Week (first week of June) and Ontario Agriculture Week (first week of October), robust campaigns were launched using Economic Development and Tourism digital channels to spotlight the agri-food sector and share resources on where to find local food across the Region.
- 4.7 Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Section staff have provided ongoing input to Envision Durham, the Region's municipal comprehensive review of the Durham Regional Official Plan. Input was recently provided throughout the development of the draft Agriculture System to ensure the Agri-Food Network was maintained.
- 4.8 A business case and feasibility study were completed to examine the potential for a Local Food Logistics Hub and Innovation Centre in Durham Region. A steering committee of local agri-food producers and industry partners was established to provide guidance during the completion of the study. Staff continue to work with partners, including Durham College, to move forward with next steps on the project ([2022-EDT-2](#)).
- 4.9 An agriculture and food workforce development project was completed in 2022 which included a series of videos for high school students in the grade 10 civics and careers programming, the videos are intended to highlight the diverse career opportunities available in the agri-food industry. A suite of resources was also developed for teachers to use in the classroom. The next phase of the project involves the development of curriculum for the Secondary High Skills Major Programming with a focus on agriculture technology (see report [2022-EDT-4](#)). The videos produced under this project are linked below:

[Farming video featuring Nature's Bounty Farm](#)

[Precision agriculture and agri-tech feature Korechi Innovations](#)

- 4.10 Invest Durham staff supported efforts to find a location for the Durham College Barrett Centre for Excellence in Sustainable Urban Agriculture and continue to collaborate on the creation of the new temporary facility on Regionally owned land in the Town of Ajax.
- 4.11 Staff have increased focus on and support of agricultural organizations in the region that identify local food as a mandate. These efforts have included participation with the DFFMA Board of Directors meetings, as well as organizing, participating in, and supplying a virtual meeting platform for Durham Farm Connections meetings.

- 4.12 Plans are underway for an Agri-Food Processing Business Retention and Expansion project to take place in 2023, the project will focus on increasing food processing capacity within the region and supporting food processing businesses to strengthen the local food system.
- 4.13 The 2022 Gates Open event took place on October 1 and 2, 2022. This successful event returned after a 2-year hiatus due to COVID-19. The goal of the event is to highlight Durham's vibrant local food businesses including agri-tourism operators and on-farm craft beverage producers. The event is organized jointly between the Economic Development and Tourism Division and the Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association.

## **5. Relationship to Strategic Plan**

- 5.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham region Strategic Plan:

a. Goal 3: Economic Prosperity

- Item 3.5: Provide a supportive environment for agriculture and agri-food industries.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 The Durham Region Local Food BR+E project identifies high-value opportunities for the Region to support the growth of local food businesses. Given the changing landscape and local food system, action items continue to be reprioritized, and staff delivered projects and programming to respond to the evolving needs of businesses.
- 6.2 Staff will continue to deliver high value projects and programs from the Local Food BR+E project and support the growth and vibrancy of the Region's local food sector.
- 6.3 A copy of this report will be sent to the Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association, the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee, Area Municipalities, all relevant partner organizations and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs as information.

## **7. Attachments**

Attachment #1: Local Food Business Retention and Expansion Project – Prioritization Plan



Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP  
Commissioner of Planning and  
Economic Development

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

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Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair  
Chief Administrative Officer

## Local Food Business Retention and Expansion Project – Prioritization Plan

The [Durham Region Local Food Business Retention and Expansion \(BR+E\) Project](#) was completed and received by Planning and Economic Development Committee in June 2019. The Final Report and Action Plan contained 42 actions to address the challenges and opportunities raised by the 64 businesses interviewed as part of the project. An annual exercise is undertaken to prioritize the most urgent action items with 16 priority action items. The actions identified below are ones that will be prioritized for attention in 2023.

	Action
1	Work with Regional and municipal planning staff to include Economic Development staff as part of consultations around business proposals where appropriate.
2	Create a checklist that lays out processes and key departments that can be used as a 'one stop shop' resource for businesses.
3	Gather staff to review regional and municipal approaches to policy, regulations and approvals to identify best practices that should be adopted throughout the region. Consider by-laws for value-added agriculture development on farms and provide a development/permitting charge incentive or discount for agri-tourism.
4	Update the Regional Official Plan to include appropriate policy support for agriculture, agriculture related on-farm diversified uses.
6	Work with local tier municipal staff to establish consistent processes across municipalities for on-farm events (health department, planning approvals, by-law, emergency services) and develop communication.
7	Host education workshops on topics such as navigating regulations and gather input from businesses on reducing barriers to foster business growth in Durham Region.
8	Bring together players in the agri-food system at a Durham Local Food Showcase to foster connections, showcase innovation and enable access to tools to enhance the local food system.
9	Host education workshops on topics such as navigating regulations and gather input from businesses on reducing barriers to foster business growth in Durham Region.

	Action
10	Encourage businesses/chambers to adopt local food week and foster relationships between food service providers and local producers and food manufacturers.
11	Provide businesses with improved marketing skills and tools to promote their businesses through workshops and training sessions.
12	Collaborate with local chefs/restaurants and farms and direct farm markets to provide on-farm experiences that showcases local food.
13	Provide educators with immersed experience to build awareness of local food system workforce needs and connect to co-op and internship programs.
14	Research different models (such as online) to create a youth and young-adult mentoring program to match young entrepreneurs with experienced businesses in the agri-food sector.
15	Create a database/list of commercial kitchens in Durham Region (institutions, food service establishments, co-packing facilities) available for rent/lease.
16	Investigate deeper into the barriers for businesses to scale-up and provide tools, training or resources to address the barriers (such as food safety, minor processing, storage).