



The Regional Municipality of Durham

Planning and Economic Development Committee Agenda

Tuesday, September 3, 2024, 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. Committee meetings may be [viewed via live streaming](#).

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There are no confidential matters to be considered

11. Other Business

12. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, October 1, 2024 at 9:30 AM

13. Adjournment

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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, June 4, 2024

A regular meeting of the Planning & Economic Development Committee was held on Tuesday, June 4, 2024 in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 9:30 AM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

1. Roll Call

Present: Councillor Chapman, Chair
Councillor Pickles, Vice-Chair
Councillor Collier*
Councillor Kerr
Councillor Neal
Councillor Shahid
Councillor Wotten
Regional Chair Henry
*** denotes Councillors participating electronically**

Also
Present: Councillor Brenner*
Councillor Schummer* left the meeting at 10:57 AM
*** denotes Councillors participating electronically**

Staff

Present: E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer
B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
M. Broderick, Manager, Economic Development, Business Development and Investment
A. Caruso*, Senior Planner, Transportation Planning
S. Dessureault, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
S. Gill, Director, Economic Development and Tourism
C. Goodchild, Director of Planning
A. Harras*, Director of Legislative Services and Regional Clerk
J. Kelly, Principal Planner, Policy & Special Studies
L. Lovery, Director, Rapid Transit and Transit Oriented Development
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
G. Pereira, Manager, Transportation Planning
D. Perkins, Project Planner, Planning Implementation
J. Severs, Manager, Economic Development, Marketing and Cluster Development
K. Smith, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

L. Talling, Acting Manager, Economic Development, Agriculture and Rural Affairs
N. Taylor*, Commissioner of Finance
L. Trombino, Manager, Planning Implementation
V. Walker, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
R. Woon, Senior Solicitor, Chief Administrative Office – Legal Services
*** denotes staff participating electronically**

2. **Declarations of Pecuniary Interest**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest made.

3. **Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Kerr, Seconded by Councillor Pickles,
(35) That the minutes of the regular Planning & Economic Development Committee meeting held on Tuesday, May 7, 2024, be adopted.
CARRIED

B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning & Economic Development introduced Lisa Lovery as the new Director of Rapid Transit Implementation and Transit Oriented Development.

4. **Statutory Public Meetings**

4.1 Application to Amend the Durham Regional Official Plan, submitted by Lafarge Canada Inc. to permit the expansion of Aggregate Resource Extraction Area #30 in the Township of Uxbridge, File: OPA 2024-001 (2024-P-11)

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 also advised that notice of the public meeting was advertised in the applicable newspaper and mailed to landowners and residents within 120 metres of the subject property. 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

David Perkins, Project Planner, Planning Division, provided a presentation outlining the details of Report #2024-P-11 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development. He advised that an application has been submitted by MHBC Planning, on behalf of Lafarge Canada Inc., to permit the expansion of Aggregate Resource Extraction Area #30, in the Township of Uxbridge. The subject site is municipally known as 4900 Concession 4 and is located on the west side of Concession 4, south of Wagg Road. He provided an overview of the

application and land use policy considerations. He also advised that to date one inquiry regarding dust concerns has been received related to the proposed application.

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

B) Delegations

1. Caitlin Port, Planner, MHBC Planning, on behalf of Lafarge Canada Inc. (In-Person Attendance)

Caitlin Port, Planner, MHBC Planning, appeared in-person on behalf of Lafarge Canada Inc. and provided a PowerPoint presentation with respect to the proposed application.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Existing Lafarge Goodwood Pit
- Project & Property Overview
- Application Process
- Pit Extension Operational Overview
- Trucking & Traffic
- Public Consultation Activities
- Indigenous Consultation
- Next Steps

C. Port stated that trucking and traffic is a concern for community members in the Village of Goodwood and confirmed there will not be any changes to the existing truck patterns and routes as a result of the proposed extension. She further stated that Lafarge has entered into a cost sharing agreement with the Region to implement road safety improvements in the Village of Goodwood, which includes the installation of speed cameras, pedestrian signals, and pavement markings.

C. Port responded to questions from the Committee regarding whether any major concerns have been raised by members of the public regarding the application; the overall environmental effects of the rehabilitation work completed on the existing pit, and whether there has been an increase in animals inhabiting those lands; whether the two properties located on the southeast corner and the properties to the east across Concession Road 4 are also owned by the applicant or are privately owned; and whether it is anticipated there will be any impacts on the wells of the neighbouring properties.

C) Correspondence

There were no communications to consider.

D) Report

Moved by Councillor Shahid, Seconded by Councillor Wotten,

(36) A) That Report #2024-P-11 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. Presentations

There were no presentations to be heard.

6. Delegations

6.1 Sean O'Connor, Durham Resident (In-Person Attendance), re: MMAH Draft Decision on Durham Region Official Plan – Modification #46 – Highway 412 and Rossland Road Interchange

Sean O'Connor, Durham Resident, participating in-person, appeared before the Committee regarding the MMAH Draft Decision on the Durham Region Official Plan, Modification #46 relating to the Highway 412 and Rossland Road Interchange.

S. O'Connor stated that due to increasing traffic in the area of Lakeridge Road and Rossland Road in Ajax, there is a growing need for an interchange at Highway 412 and Rossland Road. He further stated that the Region's proposed wording in its response to MMAH on its Draft Decision on the Durham Regional Official Plan does not provide a timeline for completion and reiterated the importance of an interchange at this location.

Councillor Chapman clarified that the Region's response recommends the designation of interchanges at this location following MMAH's proposed removal of this item.

6.2 Rob Alexander, Past Board Chair, Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association (Virtual Attendance), re: Local Food in Durham Region: Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association Annual Update and Ontario Local Food Week (Report #2024-EDT-11) [Item 8.2 C]

Rob Alexander, Past Board Chair, Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association (DFFMA), participating virtually, appeared before the Committee regarding Local

Food in Durham Region: Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association Annual Update and Ontario Local Food Week.

R. Alexander stated that DFFMA is a grass roots, not for profit organization that is run by a group of volunteers. He advised that the organization has successfully raised awareness of many direct-to-consumer agriculture businesses located in the Region, such as farmers markets, cideries, Christmas tree farms, pick your own strawberry patches, and more.

R. Alexander highlighted DFFMA's various activities in 2023, including:

- The "Gather at the Farm" campaign, which was a month-long digital campaign that took place in October 2023, and marked DFFMA's 30-year celebration of promoting local food in the Region. The campaign was designed to inspire residents and visitors to discover the Region's countryside and unique farm destinations. Gather at the Farm received over 1 million digital impressions and over 14,000 visits to its landing page over the duration of the campaign.
- A partnership with Durham Farm Connections to submit a joint application to receive funding through the Provincial Rural Economic Fund. The funding has been allocated towards hiring a shared coordinator with Durham Farm Connections, increasing DFFMA's online presence, attending more networking events, and redesigning the organization's marketing materials.

R. Alexander stated that DFFMA has the following activities planned for 2024:

- Continue to support existing members and deliver on commitments through the Rural Economic Development (RED) grant program.
- Organize seasonal culinary-focused, on-farm activities through a further collaboration with Durham Farm Fresh, which involves partnering with local chefs and farms to feature products grown and prepared on site.
- Updating DFFMA's website and re-developing its social media strategy.
- Supporting the northern area municipalities as they update their zoning by-laws as it relates to on-farm diversified uses.

R. Alexander stated that the first week of June is Local Food Week, which celebrates the local food growers, processors and retailers who supply the Region's residents with access to fresh, nutritious, and sustainable foods. He thanked the Region, and in particular, the Economic Development and Tourism divisions, for their continued support to DFFMA in carrying out their mission.

R. Alexander responded to questions from the Committee.

6.3 Lauren Gould, CEO, The Robert McLaughlin Gallery (In-Person Attendance), re: Arts and Culture Mapping Report (Report #2024-EDT-9) [Item 8.2 A]

Lauren Gould, CEO, The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, and Member of the Durham Arts and Culture Collaborative, participating in-person, appeared before the Committee regarding the Arts and Culture Mapping Report.

L. Gould stated that the Durham Arts and Culture Collaborative (DACC) is comprised of artists and cultural workers from a variety of sectors including theatre, music, dance, literary arts, and visual arts, and was formed to develop connections in the community through creativity.

L. Gould provided an overview of the survey results received from independent research conducted by DACC in November 2023 to provide insights of the arts and culture sector in the Region. L. Gould stated that DACC developed a 3-step process to build additional supports for the arts and culture sector in the Region based off the survey data collected, which was shared with all members of Regional Council. The 3-step process included a request to the Region to undertake a research and mapping study to provide a deeper understanding of arts and culture; the development of a collective database; and the establishment of a regional arts council.

L. Gould stated that the information collected has provided an understanding of the current challenges faced by artists, creatives, and entrepreneurs, and identified the following key components required for arts and culture within the Region to thrive: more regional connections to support networking and collaboration opportunities; increased communications and promotions for arts and cultural events, programs and activities, and paid employment opportunities; improved communication between different levels of government, local education institutions and art organizations; effective alignment of resources and initiatives; advocacy for the value of arts and culture; and increased funding at the regional level.

L. Gould reiterated the importance of the arts and culture sector and stated its significant contribution to tourism and economic development presents an opportunity to support the goals outlined in the 2023-2027 Invest Durham Strategy and Action Plan.

Following a comment from the Committee that area municipalities would benefit from hearing her presentation, L. Gould advised that could be considered.

L. Gould responded to questions from the Committee.

7. Planning

7.1 Correspondence

- A) Correspondence received from Laurie Miller, Director, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), dated May 27, 2024, re: Consultation on Potential Amendment of City of Pickering Minister's Zoning Order, Ontario Regulation 102/72
-

Moved by Councillor Pickles, Seconded by Councillor Neal,

- (37) That correspondence received from Laurie Miller, Director, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), dated May 27, 2024, re: Consultation on Potential Amendment of City of Pickering Minister's Zoning Order, Ontario Regulation 102/72 be referred to consideration of Report #2024-P-13.

CARRIED

- B) Correspondence received from Stop Sprawl Durham, dated May 28, 2024, re: Request for Planning Committee to Consider a Public Process for Durham Region's response to the May 6, 2024 MMAH Draft Modifications to Durham's New Official Plan
-

Moved by Councillor Neal, Seconded by Councillor Wotten,

- (38) That correspondence received from Stop Sprawl Durham, dated May 28, 2024, re: Request for Planning Committee to Consider a Public Process for Durham Region's response to the May 6, 2024 MMAH Draft Modifications to Durham's New Official Plan be referred to consideration of Memorandum of Brian Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, re: Preliminary Regional Response to MMAH's Proposed Modifications to the Durham Regional Official Plan [Item 7.1 D)].

CARRIED ON THE FOLLOWING
RECORDED VOTE:

Yes

Councillor Collier
Regional Chair Henry
Councillor Kerr
Councillor Neal
Councillor Shahid
Councillor Wotten

No

Councillor Chapman, Chair
Councillor Pickles

Members Absent: None

Declarations of Interest: None

- C) Correspondence received from Linda Gasser (Whitby Resident), dated May 29, 2024, re: Durham's Response to MMAH May 6th Letter with Draft Decision & Proposed Modifications to Durham Region Official Plan – Requires Staff Report, Public Process & Council Decision
-

Moved by Councillor Neal, Seconded by Councillor Wotten,

- (39) That correspondence received from Linda Gasser (Whitby Resident), dated May 29, 2024, re: Durham's Response to MMAH May 6th Letter with Draft Decision & Proposed Modifications to Durham Region Official Plan – Requires Staff Report, Public Process & Council Decision be referred to consideration of Memorandum of Brian Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, re: Preliminary Regional Response to MMAH's Proposed Modifications to the Durham Regional Official Plan [Item 7.1 D)].

CARRIED ON THE FOLLOWING
RECORDED VOTE:

Yes

No

Councillor Collier
Regional Chair Henry
Councillor Kerr
Councillor Neal
Councillor Shahid
Councillor Wotten

Councillor Chapman, Chair
Councillor Pickles

Members Absent: None

Declarations of Interest: None

- D) Memorandum from Brian Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, re: Preliminary Regional Response to MMAH's Proposed Modifications to the Durham Regional Official Plan
-

Discussion ensued regarding the increased traffic pressures in the area of Highway 412 and Rossland Road, and the importance of an interchange at this location to accommodate future growth to the area and provide access to the 400-series highways to alleviate volume on municipal roads; motions passed at the Town of Ajax and Town of Whitby supporting an interchange at this location; and the appropriateness of submitting a proposed amendment to the Region's response to MMAH compared to allowing Region staff to continue its discussions with MMAH directly.

B. Bridgeman responded to questions from the Committee with regards to whether the expected tri-party feasibility study between the Town of Ajax, the Town of Whitby and the Region was ever completed; whether the group that advocates to the province on the Region's behalf has been made aware of the

proposed removal of this interchange from the Official Plan; and whether there is an example of an interchange at a comparable corridor that was supported by the province.

Moved by Councillor Collier, Seconded by Councillor Shahid,

(40) That the rules of procedure be suspended in order to introduce a motion pertaining to the reinstatement of policy into the Durham Regional Official Plan relating to the construction of an interchange at Highway 412 and Rossland Road.

CARRIED (A 2/3rds Vote Was Attained)

Moved by Councillor Collier, Seconded by Councillor Shahid,

(41) That we recommend to Council:

WHEREAS the Highway 412 interchange at Rossland Road was approved in the Highway 407 East Environmental Assessment study but deferred from initial construction;

AND WHEREAS the traffic has increased in volume on Highway 412 since the tolls were lifted in 2022;

AND WHEREAS both Ajax and Whitby are experiencing significant residential growth in the area of Highway 412 and Rossland Road;

AND WHEREAS this corridor is required for critical goods movement for major employers, including Amazon, H&M, and Gordon Food Service;

AND WHEREAS the Town of Ajax is widening Rossland Road from Westney Road to Lake Ridge Road to further Support the movement of people and goods;

AND WHEREAS the Draft Durham Official Plan Decision removes policy encouraging the construction of an interchange at Highway 412 and Rossland Road;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) Durham Region request the province to reinstate policy encouraging the construction of an interchange at Highway 412 and Rossland Road in the Regional Official Plan; and
- 2) A copy of this motion be sent to the Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria, the Minister of Transportation, all Durham MPPs, and all lower tier Durham municipalities.

PART 1 WAS CARRIED LATER IN THE
MEETING ON A RECORDED VOTE

PART 2 WAS DEFEATED LATER IN THE
MEETING ON A RECORDED VOTE
(See Following Motions)

Moved by Councillor Pickles, Seconded by Councillor Kerr,
(42) That the main motion (41) of Councillors Collier and Shahid be divided in
order to allow voting on Part 1) separately from Part 2).
CARRIED

Part 1) of the main motion (41) of Councillors Collier and Shahid was then put to a
vote and CARRIED ON THE FOLLOWING RECORDED VOTE:

Yes

No

Councillor Collier
Regional Chair Henry
Councillor Kerr
Councillor Neal
Councillor Pickles
Councillor Shahid
Councillor Wotten

Councillor Chapman, Chair

Members Absent: None

Declarations of Interest: None

Part 2) of the main motion (41) of Councillors Collier and Shahid was then put to a
vote and DEFEATED ON THE FOLLOWING RECORDED VOTE:

Yes

No

Councillor Collier
Councillor Neal
Councillor Shahid

Councillor Chapman, Chair
Regional Chair Henry
Councillor Kerr
Councillor Pickles
Councillor Wotten

Members Absent: None

Declarations of Interest: None

Staff responded to further questions from the Committee regarding the process
for residents to submit comments on the draft decision of the Official Plan;
whether the proposed modifications would result in any impacts to the Columbus
Planning Area, and if so, whether those impacts are considered major; the
reasoning for not presenting a report before the Committee prior to the Region
submitting its response to the MMAH on its draft decision; whether a

supplementary report will be brought before the Committee following the MMAH's consideration of the Region's response to its draft decision on Envision Durham; and the anticipated next steps in the process leading up to the finalization and implementation of Envision Durham.

Moved by Councillor Pickles, Seconded by Councillor Kerr,

(43) That the Memorandum from Brian Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, re: Preliminary Regional Response to MMAH's Proposed Modifications to the Durham Regional Official Plan be received for information.

CARRIED

7.2 Reports

A) Ontario Northlander Station Strategic Case, in Beaverton (Township of Brock) (2024-P-12)

Report #2024-P-12 from B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, was received.

Moved by Councillor Wotten, Seconded by Councillor Shahid,

(44) That we recommend to Council:

- A) That the Ontario Northlander Station Strategic Case in Beaverton prepared by WSP Inc. on behalf of the Region be endorsed, and that staff be directed to engage with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Ontario Northland and Township of Brock Council and staff, to further develop the station concept and service;
- B) That Regional staff be directed to develop a satisfactory financing and implementation proposal with the Township of Brock, Ontario Ministry of Transportation, and Ontario Northland, for a new Beaverton Ontario Northland station, and report back in the fall of 2024 with a recommended proposal for Finance and Administrative Committee's endorsement, prior to proceeding to Regional Council for approval; and
- C) That a copy of Report #2024-P-12 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development be provided to the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Ontario Northland and the Township of Brock.

CARRIED

B) Regional Comments on ERO Posting #019-8707 to amend the lands covered by Ontario Regulation 102/72 (Federal Airport Lands MZO) in the City of Pickering (2024-P-13)

Report #2024-P-13 from B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, was received.

B. Bridgeman provided clarification regarding the lands appearing on the maps contained in Attachments #2 and #3 to Report #2024-P-13.

B. Bridgeman responded to questions from the Committee with regards to why the Region didn't make a request to the province to revoke the Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) at the time of developing Envision Durham; whether there are any concerns with Mayor Ashe's request to the province to remove the MZO in its entirety, and that the other lands remain in the urban boundary expansion; clarification on whether these are the same lands that were opposed to in a previous supplementary Planning report; and whether the Region is aware of the Landowners' Group discussions to address concerns relating to flooding of the headwaters of Carruthers Creek which would impact these lands.

Moved by Councillor Pickles, Seconded by Councillor Kerr,
(45) That we recommend to Council:

- A) That the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing be advised that Durham Regional Council has no objection to the revocation of lands within Ontario Regulation 102/72 that are outside the Greenbelt Plan Area; and
- B) That a copy of Report #2024-P-13 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development be forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Durham's area municipalities.

CARRIED

8. Economic Development

8.1 Correspondence

There were no communication items to be considered.

8.2 Reports

A) Arts and Culture Mapping Report (2024-EDT-9)

Report #2024-EDT-9 from B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, was received.

Moved by Councillor Wotten, Seconded by Councillor Pickles,
(46) That Report #2024-EDT-9 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development be received for information.

CARRIED

B) Hannover Messe Trade Show, 2025 – Participation (2024-EDT-10)

Report #2024-EDT-10 from B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, was received.

Moved by Councillor Wotten, Seconded by Councillor Pickles,
(47) That we recommend to Council:

That, subject to the approval of funding by the Finance and Administration Committee, the Region of Durham's Economic Development and Tourism Division (Invest Durham) exhibit at the Hannover Messe 2025 trade fair in collaboration with the area municipalities through the Durham Economic Development Partnership (DEDP) and other partners to showcase the Region to key business audiences for investment attraction.

CARRIED

This matter will be considered by the Finance and Administration Committee on June 11, 2024 and presented to Regional Council on June 26, 2024.

C) Local Food in Durham Region: Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association Annual Update and Ontario Local Food Week (2024-EDT-11)

Report #2024-EDT-11 from B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, was received.

Moved by Councillor Wotten, Seconded by Councillor Pickles,
(48) That Report #2024-EDT-11 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, September 3, 2024 at 9:30 AM in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

13. Adjournment

Moved by Councillor Shahid, Seconded by Councillor Kerr,
(49) That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 11:14 AM

Respectfully submitted,

B. Chapman, Chair

V. Walker, Committee Clerk



Durham Tourism Strategic Action Plan
Planning and Economic Development Committee
September 3, 2024

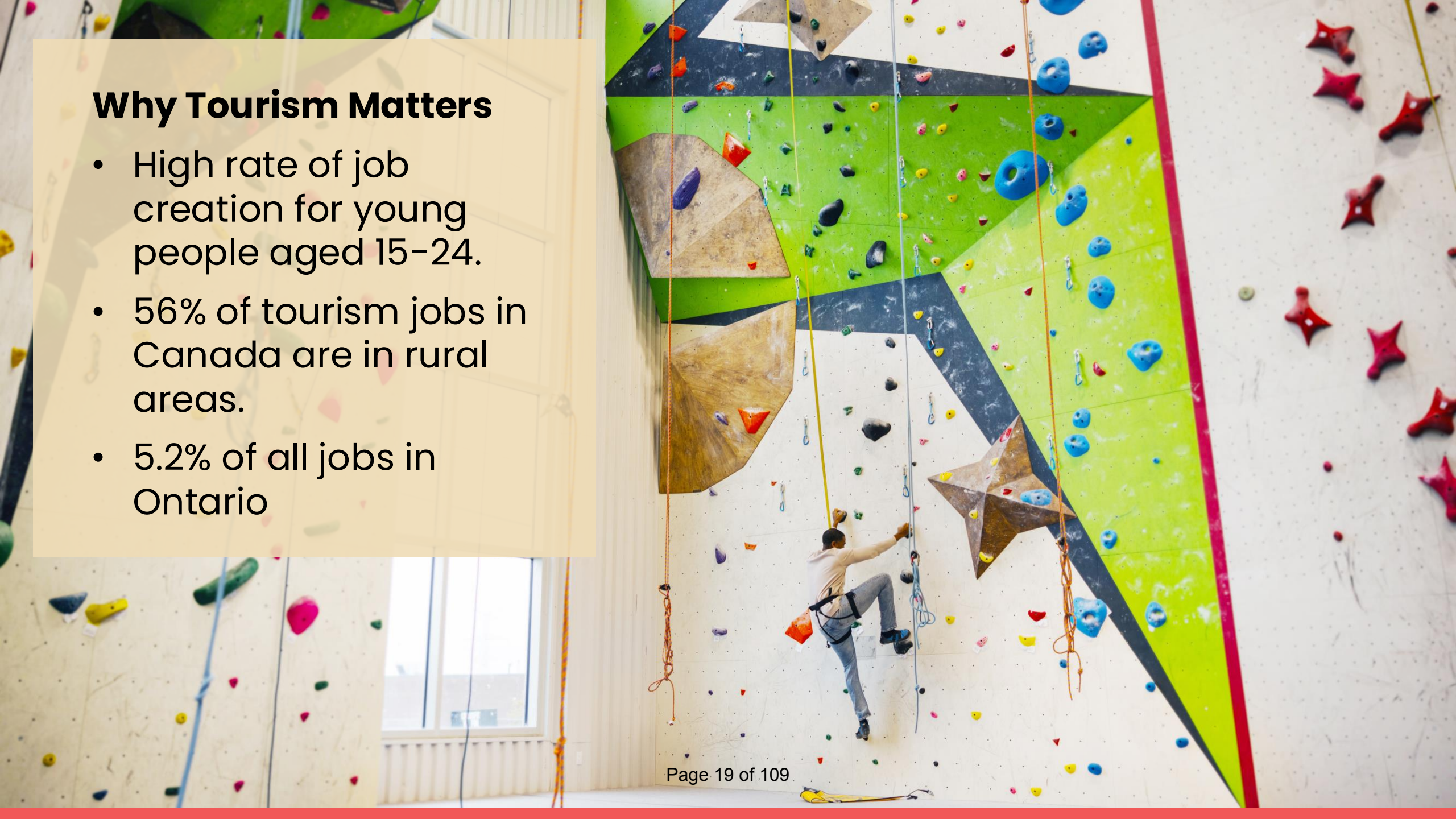


Why Tourism Matters

- \$1.4B in Municipal tax revenue in Ontario
- Visitors create major economic impact to locally owned business.
- ~20% of visitors to our downtowns are from outside Durham Region.

Why Tourism Matters

- High rate of job creation for young people aged 15–24.
- 56% of tourism jobs in Canada are in rural areas.
- 5.2% of all jobs in Ontario





Why Tourism Matters

- Businesses—like restaurants, destination shops, those offering outdoor adventures, and live music venues—help to strengthen Durham’s cultural identity.

A young girl with curly hair, wearing a pink knit beanie and a light-colored puffer jacket, is looking at a box of pastries. A woman with dark hair, wearing a black scarf and a light-colored jacket, is smiling and pointing at the pastries. The box is yellow with a pattern of white circular designs. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a market stall with various items on display.

Why Tourism Matters

- Ensuring Durham is magnetic improves our ability to attract trade, talent, and tourists.

Why Tourism Matters

- Tourism sector development and visitor attraction creates jobs, builds our economy, and also makes Durham a great place to live.



Ready Set Future's vision statement:

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.

Five Sub-Plans

- ✓ Growing North Durham
- ✓ Growing Agri-Food Durham
- ✓ Marketing Action Plan
- Durham Tourism Action Plan
- Investment Attraction Plan



Journey to the plan

- A year-long consultation with over 80 community partners for the development of Ready Set Future
- Durham Tourism rebrand, which started in 2019 and reached approval in 2020
- 2021 Durham Tourism industry survey
- 2023 Central Counties Tourism industry survey
- Consultative process with Central Counties Tourism
- Review of all 8 Community Tourism Plans across Durham Region as well as visits to Tourism Advisory Committees
- Plan drafted and designed in-house





Key Tourism Segments

- Culinary Tourism
- Creative Industries
- Agri-Tourism
- Downtowns
- Sport Tourism
- Outdoor Tourism



Special Sections



Vision

Durham Region is known as the most authentic and memorable nearby destination for residents of the Greater Toronto Area.

Mission

Durham Tourism will strengthen awareness of Durham Region as a desirable destination for visitors, repeat guests, and tourism businesses. We will undertake activities that support, promote, and enable tourism experiences, offerings, and businesses. These actions will enhance Durham's brand identity, increase local spending, build an interconnected quality of place, and achieve broader economic development goals for the regional economy.

Goals

1. **Urban excitement and country charm:** Build the Durham Tourism brand by promoting attractions and experiences that align with brand principles.
2. **Strengthen quality of place:** Undertake activities that improve Durham’s quality of place metrics and prioritize experiences that instill fond memories and deepen connections to local community.
3. **Champion inclusive tourism:** Pursue tourism initiatives which are diverse, accessible and inclusive.
4. **Drive prosperity through local love:** Prioritize activities with high potential to drive spending to locally owned and operated businesses and increase overnight stays.
5. **Achieve broader economic development goals:** Leverage tourism industry development activities to attract a talented workforce, retain new graduates, and improve investment readiness.



Thank you!

Jacquie Severs – Manager, Marketing and Tourism

jacquie.severs@durham.ca



If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2564.



The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee
From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
Report: #2024-P-14
Date: September 3, 2024

Subject:

Overview of Carbon Offset Opportunities for the Agriculture Sector in Durham Region

Recommendation:

That the Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends:

That this report be received for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 At the April 2, 2024, Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting, staff were directed to “investigate whether a formula exists to calculate carbon credits for farmers that have naturalized areas on their properties and examine what subsidies a working farm may be eligible to receive at the Provincial and Federal levels to offset the effects of carbon taxes”.

1.2 This report responds to Committee direction by providing an overview of current senior government programs as well as carbon offset opportunities available to the agricultural sector.

2. Context – Agriculture’s contribution to Climate Change in Canada

2.1 Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are the main cause of human-induced climate change. Nationally, agriculture represents 9 percent of Canada’s total emissions,

not factoring carbon sequestration, making agriculture Canada's fifth largest emitting sector.

- 2.2 While GHG emissions from the agriculture sector contribute to climate change, the sector can continue to be part of the solution to climate change by adopting best management practices that can reduce the amount of GHG emissions in the atmosphere and sequester carbon. Such practices include planting cover crops after fall harvest or before spring seeding to reduce soil erosion while also sequestering (storing) carbon. Another example is nutrient management strategies that help farmers optimize the amount of fertilizer used and reduce the amount of nitrous oxide emissions released into the atmosphere. These practices have led to an increasing trend of carbon sequestration in Canadian agriculture from 1981 to 2016. In 2021, carbon sequestration in agricultural soils were estimated to offset about a quarter of total annual emissions in Canada's agricultural sector.
- 2.3 The agriculture sector is estimated to represent approximately 7 per cent of Ontario's total annual emissions, and 3 per cent of Durham Region's total emissions. In Ontario, the GHG emissions per tonne of grain, and kilogram of meat produced have decreased over time. Durham Region farmers also play a role in producing low carbon fuels from agricultural operations such as renewable natural gas and ethanol.
- 2.4 Farming and related industries are major contributors to the local economy, and to the health and prosperity of rural communities across Durham Region. In 2021 the 1,200 farms in Durham Region generated more than \$350 million in farm cash receipts. Farmers in Durham play an important role as stewards of natural resources, and in helping to address environmental challenges like climate change and biodiversity loss through implementation of on-farm best management practices. Approximately 350 farms in Durham have Environmental Farm Plans which are renewed every five years by participating in workshops and workbooks through the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association.

3. Federal and Provincial Commitments to Mitigate Climate Change in the Agricultural Sector

- 3.1 In 2016 the [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#), developed in collaboration between the Federal government, provinces, and territories, identified several actions relating to the agricultural sector:
 - a. Increase stored carbon - Federal, provincial, and territorial governments will work together to protect and enhance carbon sinks, including in forests,

- wetlands, and agricultural lands (e.g. through land-use and conservation measures).
- b. Generating bioenergy and bioproducts - Federal, provincial, and territorial governments will work together to identify opportunities to produce renewable fuels and bioproducts, for example, generating renewable fuel from waste.
 - c. Advancing innovation - Federal, provincial, and territorial governments will work together to enhance innovation to advance GHG efficient management practices in forestry and agriculture.
- 3.2 Since the finalization of the Pan-Canadian Framework, the Federal government and the Government of Ontario have launched several programs designed to reduce GHG emissions from the agriculture sector:
- a. The [Living Labs program](#) which aims to bring together stakeholders to co-develop and test innovative technologies and on-farm practices to reduce GHG emissions and store carbon. There are currently 14 approved living labs, of which one is in Ontario located in the Lake Erie basin in the southwestern region of the province.
 - b. The [On-Farm Climate Action Fund](#) (OFCAF) which is a \$704 million program that provides cost-share funding to farmers to support the implementation of best management practices that store carbon and reduce GHGs. In Ontario the OFCAF is delivered by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA). The program covers 65% of eligible project costs up to a maximum of \$30,000 per project for cover cropping, nitrogen management, or rotational grazing systems.
 - c. The [Nature Smart Climate Readiness Program](#), which is a 10-year \$1.4 billion program delivered through Environment and Climate Change Canada. In Ontario this program is also delivered by the OSCIA, and farmers are eligible for up to \$40,000 in funding for projects that involve restoration or creation of grasslands, riparian areas, and wetlands.
 - d. The [Agriculture Clean Technology program](#) which is a \$471 million program administered by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada that aims to support the installation of commercially available clean technology or equipment upgrades that reduce GHG emissions. Funding ranges from \$25,000 up to \$2 million per project, with the Federal government providing a maximum of 40% of project costs.

- e. The Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership program, which includes \$68 million in funding for the Ontario Agricultural Sustainability Initiative (OASI). A large portion of OASI funding (\$56.7 million over five years to 2029) is for the [Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program](#) that makes funds available to farmers to complete projects such as reducing tillage, creating water retention ponds and other projects to reduce GHG emissions and sequester carbon. Funding is delivered on a per acre basis, and ranges widely depending on the project category. For example, the program will pay farmers \$30-\$50 per acre for reduced tillage projects, but \$10,000-\$25,000 per acre for wetland projects.
- 3.3 In addition to funding support available through senior levels of government, some municipalities in Ontario provide support to farmers for the implementation of environmental best management practices that protect water quality and soil health and contribute to carbon sequestration in agricultural lands. Such programs are typically framed as rural clean water programs and are delivered by Conservation Authorities with funding from upper tier municipal governments. An example of such a program is the [Rural Clean Water Program](#) delivered by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). The Rural Clean Water Program provides financial assistance to farmers in York and Peel Regions. Similar municipally-funded and Conservation Authority-delivered programs are available in other municipalities across Ontario, including several that involve partnerships with the non-profit agency ALUS (Alternative Land Use Services).
- 3.4 Durham Region provides financial support for rural tree planting initiatives through Conservation Authority partners that farmers can access, but there is currently no dedicated municipally funded program to support the implementation of on-farm environmental best management practices in the region. Staff in the Planning and Economic Development Department, and the CAO Office (Sustainability) are conducting research on existing programs and exploring options to develop a program that would support farmers in Durham Region with the implementation of environmental best management practices.
- 3.5 Beyond government funding programs, there is increasing interest in opportunities to leverage private sector capital to expand the resources available to support farmers with the implementation of initiatives that reduce GHG emissions, and provide important co-benefits such as clean water, climate resilience, and biodiversity improvements. Carbon offsets provide such an opportunity and have emerged as an important GHG reduction tool globally.

4. What are carbon offsets?

- 4.1 Carbon offsets are generated by projects that result in real, quantified and verified GHG emissions reductions. Carbon offset projects are developed using project-specific methodologies, or protocols, which help to ensure comparability and interchangeability between offset credits.
- 4.2 Carbon offsets are bought and sold in both voluntary and compliance markets around the world. Within the voluntary carbon market, entities purchase offset credits on a voluntary basis to offset their carbon emissions as part of their climate commitments and targets, not due to regulatory requirements. Voluntary markets are unregulated and exhibit a high degree of diversity and fragmentation globally. There is also a wide variation in the level of credibility associated with some voluntary offset markets. Because of these challenges, prices for carbon offset credits traded on voluntary markets are typically quite low.
- 4.3 Within compliance markets, participation is mandated by law for certain industries or sectors that emit greenhouse gases. Compliance markets exist where governments have decided to use carbon offsets to supplement climate policies under their regulatory compliance systems. In Canada, the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec currently have climate change regulations that allow for the use of carbon offsets. In 2018 the Ontario government decided not to proceed with the planned cap-and-trade program and associated [Ontario Offset Credits regulation](#) that would have linked farmers in Ontario with carbon markets in Quebec and California.

5. Canada's Federal Carbon Offset System

- 5.1 In 2022 the federal government published a regulation to develop a carbon offset system for compliance by large industrial emitters. Currently there are three federal protocols available, and only one that is applicable to farmers – [Improved Forest Management on Private Property](#).
- 5.2 Carbon offsets generated under the federal system could be used by industrial emitters for compliance purposes or purchased by voluntary market participants looking to offset corporate emissions. Environment and Climate Change Canada is developing additional protocols, with several currently being considered that are directly or indirectly relevant to farmers:
- a. Reducing Enteric Methane Emissions from Beef Cattle
 - b. Enhanced Soil Organic Carbon

- c. Avoidance of Manure Methane Emissions through Anaerobic Digestion & Other Treatments

6. Clean Fuel Standards

- 6.1 The federal government's Clean Fuel Regulations (CFR) were introduced in 2023 to help reduce the GHG emissions associated with transportation fuel produced and used in Canada. The CFR requires suppliers of liquid fossil fuels (gasoline and diesel) to gradually reduce the carbon intensity from the fuels they produce and sell for use in Canada over time. One way suppliers can achieve this is through acquiring low-carbon biofuel credits. Credits can be generated and sold by biofuel companies, such as those that produce ethanol from corn or renewable diesel from oilseeds like soybeans. The suppliers then sell the low-carbon biofuel credits to fossil fuel companies to receive value.
- 6.2 In addition to the federal CFR, Ontario's Cleaner Transportation Fuels regulation requires that fuel suppliers blend 10% of renewable content in gasoline. This includes biofuels such as ethanol, and biodiesel which could be sourced from agricultural producers in Ontario. The renewable content requirement is set to increase over the next several years, as follows:
 - a. 11% in 2025
 - b. 13% in 2028
 - c. 15% in 2030
- 6.3 It is anticipated that the CFR and Ontario's regulation will generate increased demand for grain crops to support biofuel production.

7. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 7.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:
 - a. Goal #1 – Environmental Sustainability
 - Goal 1.1 - Accelerate the adoption of green technologies and clean energy solutions through strategic partnerships and investment;
 - Goal 1.4 - Demonstrate leadership in sustainability and addressing climate change.

- b. Goal #3 – Economic Prosperity
- Goal 3.5 - Provide a supportive environment for agriculture and agri-food industries.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 This report responds to a request from the Planning and Economic Development Committee for additional information relating to opportunities for the agricultural sector to generate revenue from carbon offsets, credit markets and cost-share subsidy programs associated with on-farm environmental stewardship and climate action initiatives.
- 8.2 Staff are conducting research on existing programs, and exploring options to develop a program that would support farmers in Durham with the implementation of environmental best management practices. Any recommendations regarding a future program will be brought forward to Committee and Council, with funding commitments considered for future budget years (i.e. likely beyond 2025).
- 8.3 This report was prepared jointly by staff in the Planning and Economic Development Department and the Strategic Initiatives Division of the CAO's Office. For additional information, contact: Ian McVey, Manager of Sustainability, at 905-668-7711, extension 3803.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2564



The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee
From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
Report: #2024-EDT-12
Date: September 3, 2024

Subject:

Durham Tourism Five Year Action Plan, the Regional Tourism Plan

Recommendation:

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

That the Durham Tourism Strategic Action Plan 2024-2028 be endorsed.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Durham Tourism Strategic Action Plan 2024-2028 (Regional Tourism Plan), included as Attachment #1, and to recommend that it be endorsed.

1.2 This report will be accompanied by a staff presentation by Jacquie Severs, Manager of Marketing and Tourism, to the Planning and Economic Development Committee.

2. Background

2.1 The Regional Tourism Plan is a five year action plan to guide the tourism activities of the Region of Durham's Economic Development and Tourism Division (Durham Tourism), and outlines how projects and programs will be implemented to support achieving the overall vision of [Ready Set Future: A PLACE Blueprint for Durham](#), 2023-2027 Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Action Plan.

- 2.2 The Tourism section of Economic Development and Tourism (Durham Tourism) is the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Durham Region. Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) represent the voice of a destination to potential visitors. This can involve attracting visitors, partnering with operators to develop tourism products, providing amenities, working with partners to circulate information to tourists, and ensuring economic competitiveness of the sector. As DMO, Durham Tourism has the lead role in promoting Durham Region as a place to visit.
- 2.3 Durham Tourism has been Durham Region's DMO since 1987. Durham Tourism works collaboratively with Destination Ontario, Central Counties Tourism, Area Municipal teams, local tourism organizations, businesses, operators, and many others.
- 2.4 Working in cooperation with our Area Municipalities, Durham Tourism attracts visitors, supports tourism businesses, engages with key groups such as agri-tourism operators, champions and facilitate Rural Economic Development (RED) projects, leads tourism sector business retention and expansion (BR+E) initiatives, cultivates the film, television and music industries, hosts multisport games, and orchestrates a wide array of sector-specific initiatives designed to strengthen our tourism offering and create jobs.
- 2.5 The Regional Tourism Plan incorporates Ready Set Future actions, while also taking a deeper look at the Durham Tourism value proposition and brand; the landscape of tourism; and target audiences to be developed, nurtured, and attracted to Durham.
- 2.6 The collaboration, consultation and research involved in completing the Regional Tourism Plan included:
 - a. A year-long consultation with more than 80 community partners as part of the development of Ready Set Future
 - b. Information gathered at the consultations to redevelop the Durham Tourism brand (completed and approved in 2020)
 - c. A 2021 Durham Tourism Industry Survey
 - d. A 2023 Central Counties Tourism (CCT) Industry Survey and consultative process with CCT on early iterations of this plan including research and feedback
 - e. A review of the community tourism plans for Durham's area municipalities

- f. Circulation to area municipal economic development and tourism staff, north Durham Tourism Advisory Committees, Oshawa Tourism, CCT, and the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation
- 2.7 In addition, the Regional Tourism Plan development included industry research to develop a broad picture of local, national, and global trends impacting tourism to identify areas of opportunity. These include reports such as: StatsCan National Travel Survey (2019), Sport Tourism Canada data (2021), Durham Hotel Accommodations Reports, State of the Ontario Tourism Industry (2022), Ontario Arts and Culture Tourism (2023), Destination Ontario Market Report (2023), and others.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 3.1 The following reports and decisions relate to the Tourism Plan:
- a. [#2022-EDT-15](#): Ready Set Future – Durham Region Five Year Economic Development and Tourism Strategy
 - b. #2024-EDT-13: Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) and the forming of Tourism Municipal Services Corporations. The collection of MATs by Area Municipalities was considered during the creation of this Regional Tourism Plan. Increased Area Municipal spending on tourism infrastructure and promotions, through their respective community tourism plans, will act to support and strengthen outcomes of the Regional Tourism Plan.

4. Durham Tourism Action Plan

- 4.1 The Regional Tourism Plan considers the current situation and future aspirations for Durham Region. It also explores the Durham Tourism brand vision, messaging, positioning, and values. The Tourism Plan also includes a high-level review of the Durham Tourism brand personality.
- 4.2 The Tourism Plan vision is that Durham Region is known as the most authentic and memorable nearby destination for residents of the Greater Toronto Area.
- 4.3 To achieve this vision, the Tourism Plan identifies five goals:
1. Urban Excitement and Country Charm: Build the Durham Tourism brand by promoting attractions and experiences that align with brand principles.

2. **Strengthen Quality of Place:** Undertake activities that improve Durham’s quality of place metrics and prioritize experiences that instill fond memories and deepen connections to local community.
 3. **Champion inclusive tourism:** Pursue tourism initiatives which are diverse, accessible, and inclusive.
 4. **Drive prosperity through local love:** Prioritize activities with high potential to drive spending to locally-owned and operated businesses and increase overnight stays.
 5. **Achieve broader economic development goals:** Leverage tourism industry development activities to attract a talented workforce, retain new graduates, and improve investment readiness.
- 4.4 Action items and tactics are associated with each goal detailing specific activities which will help Durham achieve its vision as a tourism destination. Each action item includes a forecasted date for starting work on that action.
- 4.5 The new Regional Tourism Plan was developed entirely in-house.

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 1: Environmental Sustainability**
 - 1.5 Expand sustainable and active transportation.
 - b. **Goal 2: Community Vitality**
 - 2.4 Support a high quality of life for all through human services delivery.
 - 2.5 Build a healthy, inclusive, age-friendly community where everyone feels a sense of belonging.
 - c. **Goal 3: Economic Prosperity**
 - 3.1 Position Durham Region as the location of choice for business.
 - 3.2 Leverage Durham’s prime geography, social infrastructure, and strong partnerships to foster economic growth.
 - 3.4 Capitalize on Durham’s strengths in key economic sectors to attract high quality jobs.
 - 3.5 Provide a supportive environment for agriculture and agri-food industries.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The Regional Tourism Plan identifies goal areas, tactics, and actions that will be undertaken or supported by Economic Development and Tourism staff over the next five years to strengthen our tourism sector and increase economic impact of visitors to the tourism economy. The Tourism Plan is guided by, and founded on, Ready Set Future: A PLACE Blueprint for Durham, 2023-2027 Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Action Plan.

7. Attachments

Attachment #1: Durham Tourism Strategic Action Plan 2024-2028

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer

2024-2028

Durham Tourism Strategic Action Plan



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. The scene is dominated by vibrant green agricultural fields, some of which are divided into smaller plots. A prominent road or highway runs diagonally across the middle of the image. In the lower-left quadrant, there is a cluster of buildings, possibly a farm or a small industrial site, with a parking lot. A small pond is visible in the lower-center. The background shows a vast expanse of land with more fields and a large body of water, possibly a lake or a wide river, under a clear blue sky with light, wispy clouds.

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.

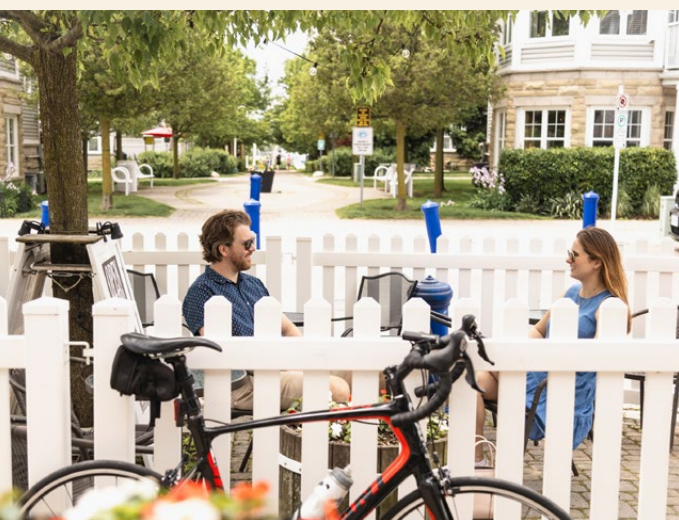


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Introduction

Ready Set Future: A PLACE Blueprint for Durham, Durham Region’s Economic Development and Tourism Strategic Plan (2023–2027) was approved by council in December 2022. The strategy is bold and ambitious; and sets out a 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. It contains a Five-Year Action Plan.

As an outcome of that strategy development, a series of Action Plans are being developed to implement Ready Set Future and communicate more detailed plans for specific areas of focus.

Ready Set Future: A PLACE Blueprint for Durham 2023–2027

The vision statement of Ready Set Future is:

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.

Ready Set Future lays out a PLACE (People, Location, Acceleration, Creativity, Enablers) blueprint for achieving this vision, which sets a vision for the next 30 years:

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

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

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

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

Acceleration: Durham’s innovators are solving global challenges.

Ready Set Future, The PLACE Blueprint and its defined priority clusters are central influences within this Plan.

A Collaborative Approach to Tourism Development

Durham Tourism, as the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Durham Region, has proudly fostered collaborative endeavors with local partners for more than four decades to support and grow the local tourism economy. Our commitment to a shared vision has been instrumental in nurturing a robust and dynamic tourism economy in the region.

Durham Tourism assumes the lead in championing Durham Region as an enticing destination. In our role as the DMO, we offer support to agri-tourism operators; champion and facilitate Rural Economic Development (RED) projects; spearhead tourism sector business retention and expansion (BR+E) initiatives; cultivate the film, television, and music industries; host multisport games; and, orchestrate an array of sector-specific activities.

Central Counties Tourism (CCT) compliments our efforts by providing strategic insights and invaluable research on the tourism industry—encompassing hotel occupancy, visitor flows, and other critical data. CCT is not just a partner but a collaborator, actively supporting ambassador programs and delivering training for tourism operators to enhance the community’s overall tourism readiness. The ‘partnership program,’ administered by CCT, serves as a crucial conduit for directing project funding to tourism operators—an important component of the comprehensive approach to tourism delivery in Durham Region.

Local area municipal tourism teams play a vital role by crafting locally-specific promotional materials and campaigns. They foster a vibrant local cultural scene through a rich tapestry of arts and cultural programming, including festivals and events that showcase the distinct charm of each area.

To fortify these collaborative efforts, Durham Tourism organizes the Durham Tourism Municipal Leadership team. This team—comprising members from Durham Tourism, Central Counties Tourism, Oshawa Tourism, and representatives from all local area municipalities—serves as a nexus for shared insights, strategic planning, and unified action.

In the broader Durham Region community, our collaborative relationships include groups such as Durham Farm Fresh, local Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, Business Improvement Areas, event producers, tourism businesses and destinations, cultural organizations, and many others. This collaborative network actively drives visitation and awareness—bolstering our region’s tourism offerings and reinforcing its standing as an appealing and dynamic destination. Together, we embrace a collective commitment to realizing the full potential of tourism, making Durham Region a standout destination on the global stage.



The Durham Tourism Five Year Action Plan incorporates these Ready Set Future actions, while also taking a deeper look at the Durham Tourism value proposition and brand; the landscape of tourism in a post-pandemic world; and target audiences to be developed, nurtured and attracted to Durham. The plan also outlines a defined action-oriented strategy to achieve the broader goals of economic development and tourism activities.



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Executive summary

Durham Tourism will promote tourism and support tourism industries in alignment with the following five goals:

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

2. **Strengthen quality of place:** Undertake activities that improve Durham's quality of place metrics and prioritize experiences that instill fond memories and deepen connections to local community.

3. **Champion inclusive tourism:** Pursue tourism initiatives which are diverse, accessible and inclusive.

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

5. **Achieve broader economic development goals:** Leverage tourism industry development activities to attract a talented workforce, retain new graduates, and improve investment readiness.

Leveraging data, community input, macro trends, tourism industry insights, and local data, Durham Tourism is launching a new and targeted focus of their work, for the years ahead. The plan strengthens and nurtures our tourism assets, attracts visitors, while helping to deeply define Durham's place brand identity.

Tourism is the heartbeat of our communities

Businesses—like restaurants, destination shops, those offering outdoor adventures, and live music venues—help to strengthen Durham’s cultural identity. Further, it is a combination of factors—such as the vibrancy in our downtowns; the success of rural agri-tourism operators; and welcoming, authentic experiences—that communicate our place identity to visitors. Together, this tapestry of businesses, destinations, and places make up the brand promise for Durham Tourism: Urban Excitement and Country Charm.

In Canada, the tourism industry is a significant contributor to the economy and job creation. In 2019, Tourism accounted for 2.1 million total jobs in Canada. In 2019, Ontario hosted 144 million annual visitors, generating over \$34 billion in new spending that represented 4.3 per cent of GDP. Tourism employs the largest percentage of young people in Ontario (23 per cent) aged 15 to 24 and creates year-round jobs in our communities. In 2019, Durham Region welcomed 3.6 million annual visitors, which generated a total of \$321 million in new visitor spending.

This plan sets out promotional activities designed to attract more visitor spending. This in turn, creates jobs in our communities and strengthens tourism operators. However, the plan will achieve broader goals, which include strengthening the region’s overall Quality of Place; enhancing the vibrancy of our urban and rural downtowns; and ensuring that Durham is both magnetic and memorable.

These inward-looking activities are designed to ensure that visitors have a memorable experience that they will share—either online or by word of mouth. They are designed to encourage the residents of Durham to be its proud advocates, and built around activities that support the place brand identity of Durham Region; enabling experiences that contribute to quality of life and community pride.

Supporting our communities from within—ensuring a healthy heartbeat—while also attracting visitors will create a stronger tourism industry, better experiences for visitors, and a bold place brand with which to attract investment.

Using tourism to build Quality of Place

Durham is a four-season destination that offers 14 downtown and main street communities, eight cities and towns, dozens of hamlets and small communities, and picturesque rural areas. Among these areas are neighbourhoods and communities ready to be celebrated and visited. Supporting thriving communities, local businesses, and downtown areas will help make Durham a better place to live and visit. Supporting programming in downtown areas will be a priority.

While attracting visitors to Durham is an essential component of our economy—and offers support for local business—Durham Tourism can help strengthen our region’s creative identity and sense of place. This is achieved by supporting, nurturing, and undertaking projects that create a sense of interconnectedness and community pride. Examples such as local public art projects, placemaking initiatives, supporting homegrown festivals and events, participating in or leading campaigns to build resident pride, and continued support to activities that align with Durham Tourism’s brand principles.

Tourism is a key contributor to economic development across Durham Region. Durham Tourism’s actions include activities that strongly position and communicate Durham Region as a welcoming and attractive place; a place where visiting, living, working, and/or building a business, is a positive experience worthy of consideration.



“An attractive sense of place is integral to a place brand. We are attracted to, and spend more time in attractive, distinctive, and engaging locations.”
Bill Baker, Place Branding for Small Cities, Regions and Downtowns



Regional tourism industry and partners

Destination Canada

Destination Canada provides intelligence, tools and resources that help the Canadian tourism industry reach domestic and international markets.

Destination Ontario

Destination Ontario is the lead tourism marketing organization for Ontario, Canada. Destination Ontario markets Ontario to travel consumers within Ontario, Canada and around the world.

Central Counties Tourism

Central Counties Tourism is an independent, non-profit Regional Tourism Organization (RTO) established within the Ontario regional framework. This organization plays a lead role in the continued development of a dynamic, competitive and rewarding tourism industry across the Central Counties region. A geographic area that includes the regional municipalities of York and Durham, as well as the Headwaters area which is made up of Caledon, Dufferin County, Erin, Mono, Orangeville, and Shelburne.

Tourism Industry Association of Canada

The Tourism Industry Association of Canada is responsible for representing tourism interests at the national level, and its advocacy work involves promoting and supporting policies, programs and activities that will benefit sector growth and development.

Sport Tourism Canada

Sport Tourism Canada is an organization founded through a partnership with the Canadian Tourism Commission, with the goal to increase Canada's capacity to attract and host sport tourism events.

Durham Tourism

Durham Tourism represents eight local area municipalities to promote, support, and grow the region's tourism industries. Durham Tourism builds, promotes, and strengthens: Durham's quality of place, inclusive tourism, spending to local businesses, and the creation of memorable experiences.

Tourism Industry Association of Ontario

The Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) is recognized as the voice of the tourism industry in Ontario. TIAO advocates for the importance of tourism, as an economic driver and job creator, to serve the interests of Ontario’s diverse tourism industry and business community. TIAO collectively represents 200,000 businesses and 400,000 employees, to take on pressing policy issues that impact the Ontario tourism industry.

Indigenous Tourism Ontario

Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO) is Ontario’s first and only dedicated Indigenous tourism organization; focuses on uniting communities, Indigenous organizations and industry leaders to support the growth of Indigenous tourism in Ontario.

Culinary Tourism Alliance

The Culinary Tourism Alliance works with communities to grow food tourism by leveraging the history, heritage and culture behind food and drink unique to each destination.

Conservation Authorities

Five conservation authorities in Durham—the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority, Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority, Kawartha Conservation, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority—host more than 300 kilometres of trails.

Local Municipalities

Durham Region is made up of eight local municipalities, including the cities of Oshawa and Pickering; the towns of Ajax and Whitby; the Municipality of Clarington; and the townships of Brock, Scugog and Uxbridge. Durham Tourism works closely with local municipal partners to promote their various tourism strengths, and partner in the delivery of their respective community tourism plans or cultural plans.

Other Groups

Other partners within the industry include (but are not limited to) the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Greenbelt Foundation, Ontario By Bike, and local groups and associations.

Visitor types

Tourism-related businesses rely on many different visitor types to make them profitable. For most of them in Durham Region, it is local and regional residents who keep them afloat and non-residents who make them profitable.



Business categories

Tourism is not one industry. It is made up of businesses from many different sectors along with community assets that, collectively, motivate visitation. They are the same businesses and assets that convince a person to set up their business and lay down their roots in a community. These include:

Agri-tourism

Indigenous tourism

Museums and heritage

Arts and culture

Accommodations and meeting venues

Outdoor nature

Food and beverage

Education and tourism services

Festivals and events

Sports and recreation

Downtowns and specialty retail

Outdoor power

Attractions

Key geographic audiences

Durham Region is a large geographic area. Residents in the lakeshore communities of Ajax, Pickering, Whitby, Oshawa and Clarington are potential tourists in the northern Durham communities of Brock, Scugog, and Uxbridge—and vice versa.

Within Durham Region there is a population of nearly 750,000 residents that spend tourism dollars in neighbouring communities, especially at major tourism draws in other parts of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Meanwhile, Durham Region’s post-secondary students number 30,000 annually. Many of these students are temporary residents who do not have much knowledge of the region off-campus.

These groups are important audiences to focus on as potential customers for local business and tourism operators. These customers travel less distance than is traditionally considered tourism (40 kilometres is considered industry standard definition of a tourist). However, maintaining a higher percentage of their “staycation” spending, within Durham, helps strengthen our economy and operators; helps deepen connections between students and the community; and helps to further strengthen Durham Region’s Quality of Place and identity.



Quality of Place elements make a community distinctive in ways that are desirable, attractive, and in turn, make it competitive for investment. Quality of Place can significantly impact whether highly trained or educated workers choose to move to the region, or to stay after completing post-secondary graduation.





Travel trends and data

Domestic tourism spending has been more resilient in the face of pandemic travel restrictions. After reaching 92 per cent of 2019 levels in 2022, domestic tourism spending fully recovered. It started to expand again in 2023. The domestic market is expected to continue to expand through a mild recession and reach 129 per cent of 2019 levels by 2030. (Source: Destination Canada Fall Tourism Outlook, November 2022 and Annual Outlook, December 2023)

According to Destination Ontario's most recent ad tracking study in Ontario, travelling in Ontario continues to lead the marketing for short getaways. About 85 per cent plan to take overnight trips in Ontario in the next 12 months; with 90 per cent thinking of Ontario when asked about short getaways. (Source: Destination Ontario Market 2023 Spring Summer Ad Tracking Evaluation, May 2023)

Despite countless interruptions—and the grip of rising prices and interest rates on household budgets—spending on travel has remained exceptionally strong; rising almost 30 per cent above pre-pandemic levels according to tracking of RBC data. Newcomers likely brought with them more demand for domestic tourism—either their own, or that of visiting friends and family. (Source: RBC Proof Point: Canadians' post-pandemic travel fever holds steady, from May 2023)

Key survey insights

In late 2021, Durham Tourism undertook an industry survey and noted key insights that informed our strategic approach:

What opportunities exist to grow tourism in your sector?

The top two answers are as follows:

64%

said developing new tourism products, packages or offerings

59%

said improve brand awareness of Durham Region

What age group of visitor are you looking to increase or grow?

The top two answers are as follows:

**Ages
25-34**

**Ages
55+**

In a fall 2023 Central Counties Tourism survey, of all Durham municipal teams, the top 10 priority segments for tourism growth were:

Festivals and events

Tourism Routes

Arts, culture, heritage

Downtowns and retail

Sport tourism

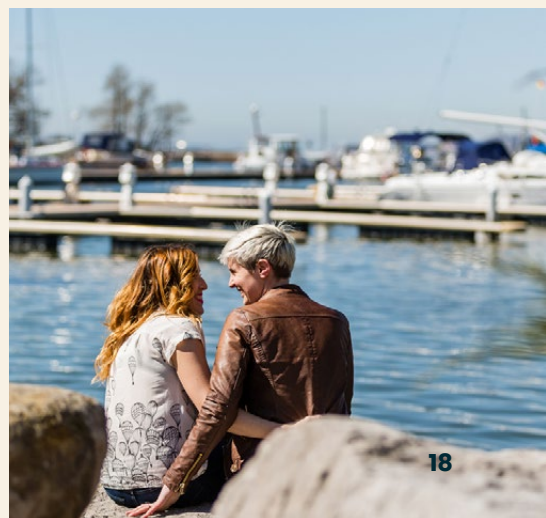
Family activities

Agri-tourism/rural

Culinary tourism

Outdoor adventure

Cycling





Key tourism segments of focus

There are six key tourism segments of focus listed below; a list that includes all 10 of the top-listed priorities identified by the eight local area municipalities. These six segments also align with our brand principles, “Urban Excitement and Country Charm.” Putting significant focus into these six areas will help strengthen our messaging and define our strategic projects.





“The average arts and culture trip has nearly triple the economic impact of non-arts and culture trips.”
– Ontario Arts and Culture Tourism Profile, August 2023



Creative industries

Creative-industries tourism includes live music events and festivals, film tourism, live theatre events, arts and culture events, and other experiences.

- Cultural tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry, accounting for about 40 per cent of tourism worldwide. (State of the Ontario Tourism Industry Report, 2022)
- Durham is a major cultural centre and live music tour stop between Toronto and Montreal. This is a strategic opportunity to strengthen and grow this position, which will enhance quality of place and quality of life.
- The film sector has grown 250 per cent over the past 10 years in Durham Region; with recently hosted productions, such as The Handmaids Tale, Reacher, Umbrella Academy, Schitts Creek, and many other noteworthy productions that attract tourists to their filming locations.

Culinary tourism

Culinary tourism may include restaurants, food and drink festivals, food and beverage producers, and other culinary experiences.

- Culinary travellers spend 30 per cent more a day on average than non-culinary travellers; outlining that food and drink experiences make them more likely to return to a destination. (Source: Invest Ontario)
- Research shows that as many as 93 per cent of leisure travellers choose a destination based on their expectation around its food and drink. (Source: World Food Travel Association)
- Durham has a growing diverse population and increasing number of noteworthy international cuisine options. Durham also has a thriving foodie community that demonstrates it is seeking authentic, locally owned and independent restaurants of quality. There is a strategic opportunity to foster this demand and growing community.





Downtowns

Downtown and main street areas are places where people come together; for a common purpose, for the arts, to experience culture, to meet for business, and to visit institutions. They are critical to the livability of our larger urban and suburban communities. Durham Region is home to 14 downtown and main street areas.

- Downtowns contribute to the overall quality of place of a community and contribute to broader economic development goals through visitor, investment and resident attraction.
- The 2019 visitor impact to downtowns in Durham Region, using the Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model evaluation, totals more than \$680 million
- Durham's distinct cultural identity, and its vibrant and diverse downtowns will be magnets for talent and investment. It is a strategic opportunity to focus on these areas, which are of key importance to our community's sense of place and community pride across the region.

Agri-tourism

Agri-tourism may include diversified farm activities, such as on-farm sales, recreation, events, farmers markets, and other experiences.

- Agri-food is an area of strategic focus in Durham Region. As noted in the plan “Growing Agri-Food Durham,” there is a notable increase in interest in value-added agriculture and agri-tourism across the region—from both producers and consumers.
- Some studies have shown that approximately 64 to 81 per cent of farms that implemented agri-tourism operations saw their profits rise by an average of 56 to 68 per cent. (Invest Burlington Agri-tourism Guide, 2020)
- Agri-tourism supports additional income and job opportunities, especially in our rural communities. As destinations they help to lengthen the tourism season, preserve rural land, buildings and heritage, encourages retention of family farms, and provides opportunities for cultural exchange.



**“Engaging the senses
allows us to form
deep relationships
with places.”**

**Bill Baker, Place
Branding for Small
Cities, Regions and
Downtowns**





Outdoor tourism

Outdoor and nature-based tourism of focus in Durham Region involves cycling, hiking, on-water activities like paddling, sailing and fishing, golf, skiing, and other activities.

- In 2016, nearly seven in 10 Canadians participated in outdoor or nature-based activities, with hiking being the most popular activity. (State of the Ontario Tourism Industry Report, 2022)
- Durham is home to the Trail Capital of Canada, in Uxbridge, and is home to more than 350 kilometres of recreational trails, 10 conservation areas, three lakefronts, three ski hills, and one provincial park (with another recently announced).

Sport tourism

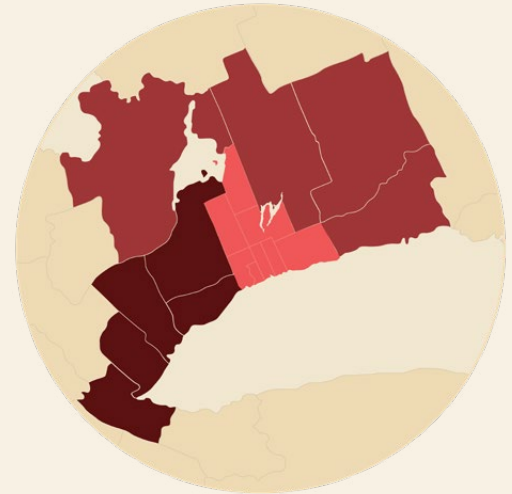
Sport tourism may include multi-sport games, tournaments, community sport events, and other experiences.

- In 2019, the sport tourism industry generated \$7.4 billion in spending by domestic and international visitors in Canada, including \$2.45 billion in Ontario. (Sport Tourism Canada, 2021)
- The 2023 Ontario Parasport Games, hosted in Durham Region, had an estimated local economic impact of more than \$700,000.



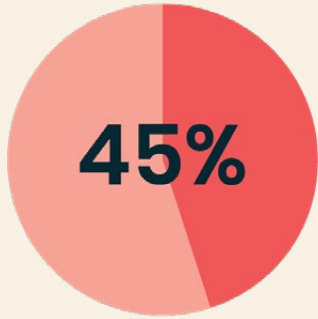
Visitors from the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA)

With post-pandemic recovery, regional tourism, and the staycation visitor in mind, tourists from the GTHA are a significant area of focus in this strategy. Durham Region is situated on the eastern side of the GTHA, which includes the City of Toronto and other regional municipalities (Halton, Peel, York and Durham). Residents of the GTHA offer a target market of more than six million people and is the second largest financial centre in North America. Other regional tourists residing in communities—such as those to the north and east of Durham Region—represent a secondary market as part of this strategy.



- Durham Region
- Primary Regional Tourism Market
- Secondary Regional Tourism Market





of visitors to Durham originated from the GTHA



Almost 6.4 million visitors travelled to our downtown areas in 2019



Consumers are 90 per cent more likely to purchase based on recommendations of a friend

Using StatsCan National Travel Survey (CD 2019) and Durham Hotel accommodators reports (2019), it is stated that 45 per cent of visitors to Durham Region originated from the Greater Toronto Area. About 22 per cent of visitors had a household income above \$150,000 annually.

In the Durham Tourism Industry survey completed in 2021, survey respondents estimated 59 per cent of their visitors came from outside Durham Region, specifically travelling in from the GTHA. Analysis—using mobile-movement data—captured from location-enabled mobile devices, such as cell phones—indicates a significant number of visitors to the 14 main streets and downtowns of Durham Region. In 2019, almost 6.4 million visitors travelled more than 40 kilometres to our downtown areas.

Tourism promotion strategies can draw on best practices from the marketing industry in general. It can cost nearly five times more to attract a new customer than to retain an existing one. Word of mouth marketing impressions result in five times more sales than paid media impressions. Plus, consumers are 90 per cent more likely to purchase based on recommendations of a friend.

With these marketing considerations in mind, efforts to increase the number of visits from other areas of the GTHA, increasing the length of stay, and increasing visitor spending, can significantly impact the success of our tourism promotion efforts.

With such a significant market opportunity, immediately to the west of Durham Region, the five-year strategic focus of our visitor attraction marketing will be to: strengthen Durham's place brand identity; increase awareness of Durham as a destination; boost visits; experience more overnight stays; and encounter more spending from GTHA residents.

Key marketing audience demographics

The key demographics outlined below are the segments which Durham Tourism has defined, and within which visitor growth is desired.

The first is **Family travellers**. This group is the strongest existing segment of visitors to Durham Region, made up of visitor types such as local and regional residents, VFR, sport tourism, and leisure travellers. Family travellers remains an audience of significant focus for all activities in this action plan.

Family travellers are in “family mode” and often taken part in family friendly activities. Their children are likely to participate in team sports and sports tournaments. They tend to be welcoming of diversity and experiencing other cultures; especially exposing their children to new experiences. They have a need for easy, near-by escapes that provide the feeling of a vacation from the usual, and love experiences that can be shared on social media. They spend time shopping on digital platforms, and support small local entrepreneurs when possible. These families want to live in vibrant communities that feel safe, have pleasant downtowns, and interesting restaurants. Health is of high value to Family travellers.



The focus of this action plan is to appeal to these three demographics.

This will be achieved through supporting and enabling the development of new tourism products and promoting existing offerings that appeal to these three demographics, while also creating marketing strategies and using communication tactics that suit these audiences.





When it comes to activities, they are especially interested in outdoor or sport activities (such as skiing, hiking and cycling trails), family friendly culinary experiences (such as maple and apple festivals), unusual culinary experiences, and agri-tourism.

Since the Family travellers segment is so large, Durham Tourism will further refine its focus in specific campaigns to a subset group. This consists of those with parents in the younger working-age demographics (ages 25 to 34) with STEM/T skills and educations (science, technology, engineering, math, and trades/technical). The purpose is to showcase the region's wonderful quality of life assets to this talented workforce, as the region's economy would benefit from attracting them into our local businesses.



The following two groups were developed based on feedback received from local businesses related to age demographics, inbound travellers, and spending (via Industry Survey). These groups also align with talent attraction and retention goals, as well as increasing Quality of Place goals as outlined in Ready Set Future. These travellers may be local or regional residents, as well as VFR, group travel, sport tourism, or leisure travellers.

Date days and nights visitors may be younger (no children yet, ages 25 to 34) or older (none or adult children, age 55+) who are looking for date days/nights and overnight stays. They are pursuing experiences that satisfy their sense of individuality. They like a wide variety of activities, but are compelled by concerts, theatre, culinary, outdoor sport, and “experiences”. These couples use the internet the most for recipes and to book their tickets/plans in advance. They seek out brands that offer a feeling of authenticity and higher quality, be they local brands or international brands. In terms of outdoor activities, they like to garden, value beauty and history, and are interested in the historical museum and arts and culture spaces, as they have more time to deeply engage with these venues.

Post-secondary adventurers are an audience identified specifically within Durham's three post-secondary schools, but may include students with a connection to Durham who are attending post-secondary schools outside the region. The goal in connecting with these students is deepening their roots off-campus. By taking them off-campus to engage with local adventure, we will deepen their understanding of Durham and connection to the community. This may include weekending and nightlife, social media-worthy adventures and locations, affordable foodie experiences, sport tourism and events, and outdoor adventure appeals. By strengthening these bonds with the local community, Durham Tourism can increase the likelihood that these new graduates will choose to live in Durham post-graduation, strengthening the region's skilled and educated workforce.





Sport tourism

In Durham Region sport tourism is facilitated by Sport Durham, a portfolio within Durham Tourism.

In 2019 alone, sporting events and tournaments brought more than \$10 million in visitor spending to Durham Region. This region is a two-time host of the Ontario Paraspport Games (2019 and 2023) and partnered with Skate Canada to bring the 2023 Canadian Tire National Skating Championships to Oshawa’s Tribute Communities Centre. The region is a growing multi-sport host destination, and offers a strategic focus on, and knowledge of, accessible and inclusive sport hosting.

Sport tourism is a vital and growing revenue source for businesses that are also enjoyed by local residents and other visitors. Leveraging these visitors to increase their spending off the “field of play” is a way to generate future interest in visitation for leisure travel.



Sport events also keep overnight accommodators busy, especially on weekends, which supports their ability to accommodate weekday business travellers and events. Hosting sport events, such as tournaments is a catalyst for visitation. It introduces Durham Region as an amazing place to visit, and to perhaps live.

Durham Region is in a prime position to support and co-ordinate local, regional, provincial, national and international tournaments and events across a spectrum of sports disciplines. Sport Durham's focus on increasing awareness and participation in accessible, inclusive sport is a key differentiator to our community as a host.

Sport Durham's brand statements:

Our love of sport runs deep.

This statement speaks to the authentic and engaged sport community of Durham Region.

We bring our A-game.

This statement speaks to the passion and professionalism with which Durham hosts sports events.

Sport for good.

This is a broad statement that speaks to the legacy created by our sport tourism activities.

Sport Durham sets out to:

1

Strengthen Quality of Place

Host sport events that engage, inspire and connect the community, and result in sport and social legacies.

2

Champion inclusive tourism

Support the development and growth of inclusive and accessible sport opportunities, infrastructure and participation, through sport hosting activities and legacy initiatives.

3

Be memorable

Enable and grow community sport hosting capacity and ensure memorable experiences for athletes while visiting Durham Region.

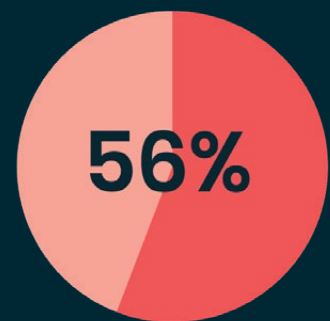




Rural tourism

The three northern Townships of Brock, Scugog and Uxbridge within the Region of Durham have been identified as “north Durham”. Covering approximately half of the total land area of the region, north Durham is home to about eight per cent of Durham Region’s population, with modest population growth expected. However, according to Statistics Canada, 56 per cent of tourism jobs in Canada are in rural areas. In rural areas, tourism is a key component in increasing diversification of the economy.

North Durham’s rural character, villages and natural landscape distinguishes it from the rest of the region. While the townships of Scugog, Uxbridge and Brock are unique from one another in many ways, they also share many similarities. The Growing North Durham (GND) Plan addresses these municipalities with a co-ordinated north Durham approach to economic development.

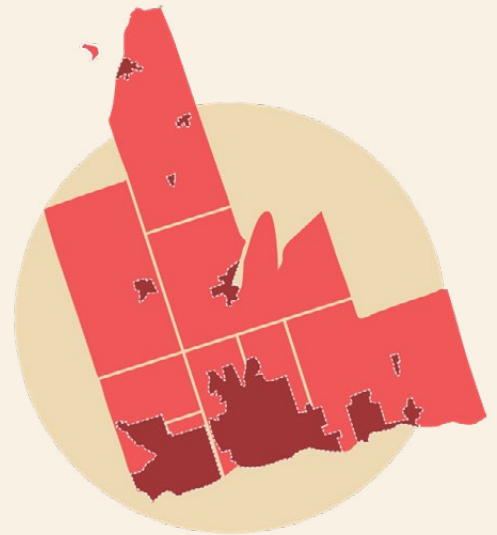


of tourism jobs
in Canada are in
rural areas

Additionally, other areas of Durham Region are rural, such as Clarington and north Pickering. These areas share similar opportunities and aspirations for rural tourism. Projects led by Durham Tourism focused on north Durham may also, if appropriate, include rural areas in other parts of the region.

The GND plan identified arts and culture, proximity to the GTHA, and quality of life as the key value proposition themes for north Durham. Rural Durham Region exemplifies country charm. Beyond its quaint downtowns, assets include agri-tourism destinations, food and beverage producers, outdoor adventure, and arts and cultural experiences.

Durham Tourism’s service delivery in rural Durham will entail co-ordinated promotion for inbound visitors to north Durham, supporting tourism industry businesses to grow and succeed, and development of new tourism products suited to rural Durham.



■ Rural area
■ Urban area



We will continue to support the development and interconnectedness of rural Durham to foster its potential as a weekend destination from the GTHA.



Key actions in our strategy that specifically support tourism in rural Durham include:

Tourism wayfinding and rural recreational cycling route creation and promotion.

Activities that support the ongoing revitalization work in downtowns.

Enabling opportunities for on-farm diversification and agri-tourism.

Fostering collaboration and encouraging multi-product experience development.

Supporting events, placemaking, and activities that deepen a sense of place.

Attract, showcase and support rural tourism businesses.

Explore and partner to promote Indigenous tourism opportunities.

Act as a connector between tourism businesses and support organizations.

Host or support tourism readiness workshops.

Attracting and encouraging accommodation development.

Leveraging tourism assets and infrastructure for sport visitors.

Attracting visitors to the tourism assets in north and rural Durham through regular annual marketing and communications campaigns.



Local food in Durham Region



Durham has an abundance of high-quality food being grown in the region. Products include beef, lamb, honey, cider, fresh fruit and vegetables. There are more than 200 farms in the region reporting direct-to-consumer sales, as well as many offering on-farm events and activities.

Regionally, we work closely with Durham Farm Fresh and its members in promoting Durham's locally grown food. This is a key activity across Regional Economic Development and Tourism.

Local food is both nourishing to our communities and helps to express our individuality. Apple-picking and cideries, local farmers' markets, farm-to-fork restaurants and pumpkin festivals are all examples of how much we love our local food.



Durham Tourism's brand identity

Durham Tourism's brand identity is inextricably linked to Durham's (the place's) brand identity. As a result, the marketing of Durham Region as a place to visit must be authentic to the true visitor experience, as well as align with the experience when visiting tourism businesses.

Building the brand identity "Urban Excitement and Country Charm" for Durham Tourism was the result of a rebranding process completed in 2020. "Urban Excitement and Country Charm" is not a slogan or tagline; rather it captures the essence and authentic representation of the Durham experience. This essence is communicated in various ways through the breadth of our marketing activities.

Identifying our brand identity was completed in a process with extensive community feedback and input. This Plan is the first created following that activity; setting out activities that will strengthen how our brand identity is communicated, in an authentic way. And it will strengthen perceptions of Durham Region and create curiosity and interest in visiting it.

Brand vision

Durham Region is recognized as a place that offers urban excitement and country charm. Durham Region is a creative, welcoming, authentic and connected destination. Through this brand promise of Durham Tourism, we will foster a stronger sense of place for Durham Region.

Brand positioning

Durham Region offers urban excitement and country charm. Durham is a place offering authentic experiences. In one trip, visitors can spend an afternoon on a scenic country bike ride, stopping into quaint small-town cafes along the way. That same evening, they can head to an urban downtown to see live music and experience fine dining.

Within one visit, visitors can connect with nature and each other. Some sample ways that we communicate this concept is through branded promises that speak to both urban excitement and country charm. These can be swapped and adjusted for the audience, season or need.

From rock concerts to starry nights.

From arcade games to cycling trails.

From luxury spas to pumpkin patches.

From fine art to apple picking.

From authentic takeout to waterfront views.

From urban bistros to farmers' markets.

Brand values

Urban Excitement

Durham Region's urban areas, especially those in the lakeshore communities, offer modern restaurants, dense downtowns, and exciting events. Our urban excitement is best captured by the energy of roaring crowds, lively nightlife, and contemporary arts and culture experiences.

Country Charm

Durham Region's rural areas, especially those in our northern communities, offer quaint downtowns, on-farm markets, and inspiring outdoor adventure. Our country charm is best captured by the wide-open spaces of our trails, apple picking in the fall, and lakefront activities.

Inclusive

Durham Tourism will help to foster an interconnected quality of place by working with the communities we serve to embrace diversity and champion inclusion. All who travel to Durham should feel welcomed.

Collaboration

Durham Tourism's brand promise requires us to work closely with our local area municipal partners, business owners, tourism assets, community organizations and many others to ensure Durham is magnetic to visitors and residents.

Memorable

Events and experiences worth remembering are typically special and unusual, evoke strong positive emotions, and play on the senses. Durham Tourism will create, nurture, and promote experiences that instill fond memories and deepen connections to local community.

Brand personality

Durham Tourism’s brand voice is rooted in being collaborative and memorable. The brand will avoid sounding like a corporation and strive to sound like a person: an unpretentious, approachable, and fun tone.

Durham Tourism will strive to be perceived as positive and upbeat; capturing the fun that visitors will have in our destinations. Examples include using puns, replying to comments in a personal way, and writing stories or hiring writers to write from a personal point of view. Language and vocabulary used will be that which is common among Canadian residents aged 25 to 34.

Images used by Durham Tourism may be self-produced or user generated content, with permission. Images consistently portray the diverse community of Durham Region and consider inclusivity in content graphics and images. All content will be designed to meet accessibility requirements.

“Have you ever seen such brew-ty?”

“We hope you find this list of apple treats very a-peel-ing.”



SOAR Analysis

Strengths

- Location within the GTHA and proximity to its population of 6.7 million.
- Access to three lakefronts.
- Four season destination.
- Access to hundreds of kilometres of trails for hiking, cycling and other activities; Trail Capital of Canada.
- Fourteen (14) downtown and main street areas across the region.
- Existing arts and culture assets.
- Film industry with potential for growth.
- Live music industry and assets.
- Culinary and other urban excitement experiences.
- Agri-tourism assets and on-farm experiences.
- Excellent sports facilities for all; accessible and inclusive sport programming and strong sport culture.
- Family friendly attractions.

Opportunities

- About 30,000 students annually enrolled in post-secondary.
- Opportunity to strengthen sport hosting capacity.
- Opportunity to build reputation as culinary destination; stronger awareness of agri-tourism assets.
- Stronger more inter-connected creative industries.
- Opportunity to attract more mid-range or boutique hotels and motels in wider geographic area, and larger hotels to support sport event hosting and other group travel.
- Increased north-south travel and local spending by Durham residents.

Aspirations

- Durham has a strong Quality of Place and is seen as a great weekend or overnight destination by residents in other areas of the GTHA.
- Durham has a distinct identity for arts, culture and creative industries.
- Durham is known as a premier destination for cycling and hiking trails.
- Increased positive reputation for our culinary sector due to a wide diversity in offerings.
- Urban and rural downtowns to become more vibrant, walkable, livable communities with thriving locally owned businesses.
- Growing creative industries.
- Inclusive tourism offerings.
- Stronger emotional ties to place for residents and visitors; through events, culinary, music, outdoor adventure, and wellness activities.

Results

- Increased visitor spending at locally owned and operated businesses.
- Increased overnight stays; growing audience of weekend visitors.
- Improved graduate retention and talent attraction.
- Improved Quality of Place.
- Increased sport events hosted that align with our tourism values and goals.
- Increased sport event hosting legacy initiatives.

2024-2028

Durham Tourism Strategic Action Plan

Vision

Durham Region is known as the most authentic and memorable nearby destination for residents of the Greater Toronto Area.

Mission

Durham Tourism will strengthen awareness of Durham Region as a desirable destination for visitors, repeat guests, and tourism businesses. We will undertake activities that support, promote, and enable tourism experiences, offerings, and businesses. These actions will enhance Durham's brand identity, increase local spending, build an interconnected quality of place, and achieve broader economic development goals for the regional economy.

Equity statement

Durham Tourism honours the value and dignity of all individuals. Through our activities we will foster an environment that respects and champions diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility so that all who travel to Durham feel welcome.

Goals

1. **Urban excitement and country charm:** Build the Durham Tourism brand by promoting attractions and experiences that align with brand principles.
2. **Strengthen quality of place:** Undertake activities that improve Durham's quality of place metrics and prioritize experiences that instill fond memories and deepen connections to local community.
3. **Champion inclusive tourism:** Pursue tourism initiatives which are diverse, accessible and inclusive.
4. **Drive prosperity through local love:** Prioritize activities with high potential to drive spending to locally owned and operated businesses and increase overnight stays.
5. **Achieve broader economic development goals:** Leverage tourism industry development activities to attract a talented workforce, retain new graduates, and improve investment readiness.

Goal 1

Urban excitement and country charm:

Build the Durham Tourism brand by promoting attractions and experiences that align with brand principles.

1.1 Promote the economic value of tourism through programs that improve tourism readiness and through tourism ambassador programs.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Host and/or support Durham-focused tourism and sport-tourism readiness workshops that focus on improving the visitor experience.• Support community-specific add-ons to CCT's Tourism Ambassador program.	2026

1.2 Redevelop the Durham Tourism website to effectively promote Durham's tourism value proposition and support the tourism industry to the Region's key target segments.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reimagine and redesign the Durham Tourism website to effectively communicate the brand promise.• Develop and execute a yearly content calendar to keep website content fresh.• Evaluate and refine the event calendar alignment project with support from partners.• Assess and activate appropriate opportunities for new tools within the website, such as on-site buy now buttons, itinerary planners, sport event calendars, business directory and other new methods of making the website highly functional to business and visitors.	2025

1.3 Promote Durham as a weekend destination for visitors from the GTHA through a targeted annual marketing plan built on the brand promise of urban excitement and country charm.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new brand assets that effectively communicate Durham’s tourism brand, by highlighting memorable experiences that authentically represent Durham Region. • Use data to inform tactics that target desired audiences. • Develop the supply of itineraries and routes that are designed for target markets and promote them to increase demand. • Continue to build the social community of Durham Tourism by producing regular, engaging and inspiring social media content across several channels, including Instagram, e-news, Facebook and other platforms. 	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p>

1.4 Develop a modern and bold concept for the Durham Tourism Discovery Guide that uses striking photography to convey Durham’s scenic urban and rural destinations, visually immersing readers in Durham’s experiential offerings.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a four-season guide with a long shelf life that drives year-round visitation. • Identify distribution channels that ensure the guide gets into the GTHA key markets, identified by the strategy. • Bolster community pride by using authentic local visual storytelling that is representative of community diversity. 	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p>

Partners and enablers: Central Counties Tourism, area municipalities, tourism industry business community, and marketing partnerships.

Goal 2

Strengthen quality of place:

Undertake activities that improve Durham's quality of place metrics and prioritize experiences that instill fond memories and deepen connections to local community.

2.1 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.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Undertake a jurisdictional review to understand possibilities and peer approaches to arts and culture funds.Identify potential funding sources and outline potential application frameworks.	2026

2.2 Enable growth in the film industry through a refreshed region-wide film sector strategy.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensure film tourism is a section of the film sector action plan.Identify opportunities to increase film tourism through routes and itineraries.	2024

2.3 Enable growth in the music industry through the development of a strategy to become a music region.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gather feedback and community input on a report that looks at the current status of the music industry in Durham Region.Undertake possible actions as recommended in a report.	2024

2.4 Establish a process to consider sponsorship opportunities for events that enhance the region’s Quality of Place.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earmark funds specific to partnerships dedicated to enhancing Quality of Place. • Create an intake program and strategic framework that Quality of Place partnerships are reviewed against. 	<p>Immediate and 2026</p>

2.5 Explore the potential for establishing a festival incubator.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a database of festival organizers. • Establish a festival organizer networking group to share best practices, connect organizers with municipal partners and other community members. • Undertake a jurisdictional review to see what peer tourism organizations do to support the growth and maturity of local festivals and festival incubator best practices. 	<p>2025</p>

2.6 Host sport events that engage, inspire and connect the community, creating sport and social legacies.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion the economic importance of sporting events and sport tourism’s contribution to the vibrancy of a community to municipalities and other partners. • Foster collaboration with municipal, post-secondary partners and local sport community partners to develop bids and host impactful sport events. • Support major sport events through sport hosting funding. 	<p>Ongoing</p>

2.7 Support the development of and promote events and experiences that enhance Quality of Place.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborate to enable and support the growth of events and experiences that enhance Quality of Place.• Collaborate to create programs and campaigns that support the growth of Durham’s culinary tourism sector.• Promote events that align with the brand values of urban excitement and country charm, enhance resident experience, encourage visitation.• Collaborate to encourage and support events in Durham Region’s 14 Downtowns.	2024

Partners and enablers: area municipalities, Film Durham, Durham College, music and film industry organizations and companies, and the tourism industry.



Goal 3

Champion inclusive tourism:

Pursue tourism initiatives which are diverse, accessible, and inclusive.

3.1 Promote the region's tourism offering to diverse local audiences including translation of promotional materials.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a network of community influencers and contributors who represent diverse audiences, and work with them to motivate residents and visitors to explore Durham Region.• Undertake research to determine prevalent languages by area for featured experiences and marketing materials.	2025

3.2 Ensure the region's diverse community voices are reflected in all Durham Tourism content, including blog posts, social media and promotional materials to better represent our residents.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure content focused on tourism operators and experiences reflect the diversity of our community, business owners, and the interests of visitors.• Ensure video and photography assets accurately reflect the diversity of our communities and those in our target demographics.	Immediate and ongoing

3.3 Support the growth of inclusive and accessible sport opportunities, infrastructure, and participation, including the exploration of a sport event hosting grant program.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through Sport Durham, educate and inspire municipal, post-secondary and other community partners about growing inclusive sport in the community. • Identify, evaluate and communicate inclusive sport hosting opportunities and collaborate with partners on bidding and hosting inclusive sport events with legacy benefits. • Share best-practice municipal and regional investments in infrastructure and sports legacy initiatives with municipalities and other partners. • Implement 2019 and 2023 Ontario Parasport Games legacy initiatives. 	2024

3.4 Promote the region’s tourism attractions to international students studying at the region’s post-secondary institutions via projects designed to deepen off-campus community connections.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement day trip itineraries built upon Durham Region Transit (DRT) routes. • Through partnership, market Durham Tourism to student audiences, for example through on campus events or tourism information materials supplied to students. • Develop partnerships and relationships between tourism operators and student groups to create custom group visit opportunities. 	Immediate and ongoing

3.5 Explore and partner to promote Indigenous Tourism opportunities.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner to understand Indigenous community tourism priorities.• Support the development of Indigenous-led tourism experiences.• Support the ongoing success of Indigenous-led tourism experiences through promotion, marketing and communications.	Immediate and ongoing

Partners and enablers: Central Counties Tourism, local area municipalities, Sport Tourism Canada, post-secondary institutions, and the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation.



Goal 4

Drive prosperity through local love:

Prioritize activities with high potential to drive spending to locally owned and operated businesses, and increase overnight stays.

4.1 Promote tourism products that attract weekend visitors from the GTHA, particularly those visitors with high spending potential.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop itineraries that provide two days of activities that match the interest of each of our defined target markets.• Develop and implement a yearly marketing and communications plan, that uses digital strategies to target potential visitors by geography, demographic and interests.	Immediate and ongoing

4.2 Promote the importance of tourism within our local community and encourage resident spending locally.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working with municipal partners, develop and deploy a series of stories from business owners on the importance of non-residents to their business success.• Strategically focus on growing resident engagement with Durham Tourism communication channels.• Develop resident contests or content that promotes being a tourist in your own region.	Immediate and ongoing

4.3 Develop and promote regional tourism products that drive spillover spending opportunities and increased overnight stays.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to develop visitor-ready themed routes and itineraries that encourage overnight stays. • Explore new tools and technologies that encourage tourism spending, trip planning or advance purchases at tourism operators. • Develop content and marketing campaigns that can be used in targeted messaging specific to each target demographic that includes information about overnight stays. 	2025

4.4 Explore developing a strategy to encourage a diverse range of options for rural overnight accommodations (such as luxury short-term rentals, bed and breakfasts).

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the possibilities to increase short-term rental properties being officially recognized by the Region or local municipalities. • Develop an inventory of premier short-term rentals available in the region that can be promoted. • Facilitate or partner to host meetings between short term rental owners and area visitor attractions to develop new overnight experiences. 	2027

4.5 Develop and deliver a Rural Cycle Tourism Program to map and sign beautiful recreational cycle loops.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with others to determine cycle tourism routes. Encourage and support businesses to become Bike Friendly certified through the Ontario by Bike network. Enhance and develop new tools, routes, maps, and roadside/trail signage. Explore opportunities for enhanced tourism wayfinding across north and rural Durham that complements the rural cycling program. 	2024

4.6 Promote locally owned, micro-manufacturing, and creative industry startups.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop relationships with micro-manufacturers that suit tourism stops. Increase communications with and facilitate networking between micro-manufacturers, makers hubs, and other destinations that suit tourism visitation. Create routes that include micro-manufacturers as stops for tourists. 	2028

Partners and enablers: area municipalities, Film Durham, Durham College, music and film industry organizations and companies, and the tourism industry.

Goal 5

Achieve broader economic development goals.

Leverage tourism industry development activities to attract a talented workforce, retain new graduates, and improve investment readiness.

5.1 Build and strengthen agri-tourism.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore, and produce campaigns and events that encourage visitation to farms.• Collaborate with the Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association to build awareness of Durham’s local food producers and promote awareness of membership benefits.• Measure the success of events and campaigns and seek opportunities for continuous improvement through feedback, surveys, and other metrics.• Seek additional partnerships to increase awareness of events, including media partners.	Immediate and ongoing

5.2 Undertake and support activities that instill pride of place and create awareness of memorable communities.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure Durham Tourism activations are memorable and engaging.• Support and collaborate with groups to support public art projects and policies, arts and culture events, and diverse community events that create awareness of Durham.• Foster, promote, and collaborate with the culinary community to support the growth of the sector and build its reputation in the GTHA.	2024

5.3 Build upon the success of the Downtowns of Durham project.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolve the Downtowns of Durham project to become a home for good news stories about downtown Durham communities. • Continue to engage partners in content development. • Continue to promote the project with an annual marketing and communications plan and editorial calendar to ensure ongoing engagement. 	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p>

5.4 Attract a wider range of mid-tier and boutique hotels/accommodation, and hotels to support sport hosting and other group travel, across Durham.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in tandem with other economic development strategies where tourism intersects. • Invest in or gather visitor research to demonstrate the growing need for overnight accommodations. • Collaborate with business development team to attract hotel investors. 	<p>2026</p>

5.5 Establish a “Welcome to Durham” protocol for new residents and businesses that includes services and different experiences within Durham.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in tandem with other economic development strategies where tourism intersects. • Work with attractions and restaurants to provide added value promotions for new residents. • Collaborate with Regional teams that support newcomers with Tourism content. • Partner to create a Durham Relocation Guide. 	<p>2025-2026</p>

5.6 Enhance the economic and social vibrancy of north Durham’s downtowns.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in tandem with other economic development strategies where tourism intersects. • Support local festivals and placemaking initiatives, especially as they relate to downtown areas. • Actively participate in downtown committees and working groups. • Promote to residents the entertainment and recreational value of their community. 	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p>

5.7 Enable and grow sport hosting capacity and ensure memorable experiences for athletes visiting Durham Region.

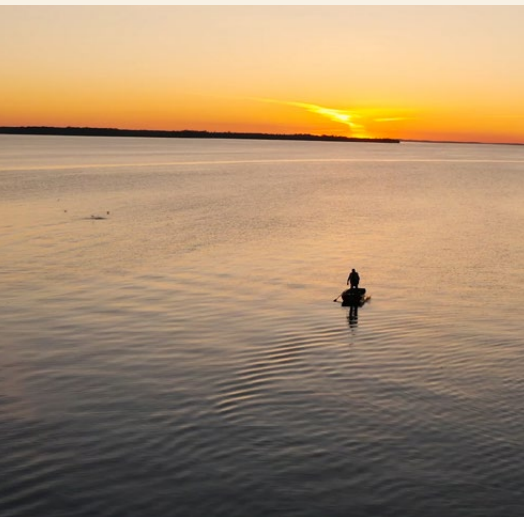
Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create promotional materials that encourage sport visitors to shop, eat and explore at locally owned businesses. • Explore the development and maintenance of a regional sport tourism event calendar that can be referenced by local businesses. • Support networking, training, and facilitate marketing the benefits of sport hosting to interested partners. • Explore the formalization of a sport event hosting fund. 	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p>

5.8 Prioritize and improve tourism readiness across the tourism ecosystem.

Tactics	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support educational experiences, workshops, networking and seminars that strengthen Durham’s tourism industry workforce.• Develop materials that support educating operators, including information about Durham Tourism’s support offerings.• Participate in the development of community tourism plans, and lead meetings with municipal tourism leaders to inform marketing plans and common themes.	Immediate and ongoing

Partners and enablers: Durham Farm Fresh, Central Counties Tourism, local area municipalities, Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), and the tourism industry business community.








**Durham
Tourism**

DurhamTourism.ca

 Durham Region, Ontario, Canada

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact
Economic Development and Tourism at 905-668-4113 ext. 2619.



The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee
From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
Report: 2024-EDT-13
Date: September 3, 2024

Subject:

Municipal Accommodation Tax and the forming of Tourism Municipal Services Corporations

Recommendation:

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

That the Chief Administrative Officer, on behalf of the Region and on terms satisfactory to the Regional Solicitor, be authorized to issue letters of authorization to Area Municipalities upon request, to form a Tourism Municipal Services Corporation to receive Municipal Accommodation Tax revenue and perform promotional activities related to tourism.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide background information on the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) and seek authority for the CAO, on behalf of the Region, to issue authorizations to Area Municipalities to create Tourism Municipal Services Corporations (MSCs) for the purpose of receiving MAT revenue and performing promotional activities related to economic development or tourism.

2. Background

2.1 Within Durham Region, Durham Tourism is the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO). Durham Tourism works collaboratively with partners, including Area

Municipal tourism and culture teams to deliver tourism related marketing, industry support, and various other sector-specific activities.

- 2.2 On November 23, 2017, the Province of Ontario issued the Transient Accommodation Regulation 435/17, which came into effect December 1, 2017, and provides the necessary provisions for municipalities across Ontario to implement a MAT.
- 2.3 A MAT is a sales tax collected by a lower-tier or single-tier municipality on all overnight accommodation sales within their municipal boundary, at a rate set independently by that municipality. MATs are common in Ontario, and the tax rate is typically 4 per cent.
- 2.4 Area municipalities must transfer a minimum of 50% of MAT revenues, net of the costs to administer the program, to an eligible tourism entity, as defined in the regulation.
- 2.5 In Durham, the Region of Durham is an eligible tourism entity since Durham Tourism is the Regional DMO, and so could be the recipient of MAT revenues. There may be other entities within and outside Durham Region that could meet the criteria of an eligible tourism entity.
- 2.6 There are various models employed by Ontario municipalities to distribute and use MAT revenues. Area Municipalities can select which eligible tourism entity or entities will receive 50% of MAT revenues. For example, the City of Oshawa has implemented a MAT and are transferring the required amount to the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce to fund the operations of Oshawa Tourism as a program of the Chamber (Oshawa Report FIN-20-55, October 2020, and associated by-law).

3. Requests to Form a Tourism Municipal Services Corporation

- 3.1 Pursuant to the *Municipal Act, 2001* (Ontario), Section 11(11), Item 10a. in the Table, Durham Region has exclusive jurisdiction over economic development services as it pertains to “promotion of the municipality for any purposes by the collection and dissemination of information.” Section 203(1) permits an Area Municipality to create a Municipal Services Corporation (MSC), but Regional authorization is required before an Area Municipality can create an MSC to perform promotional activities related to economic development and tourism.

- 3.2 In May 2024, the Town of Whitby delivered a notice to the Region of their intent to begin collection of a MAT (Whitby By-law # 8082-24) and requested authorization to form a tourism MSC to act as the Area Municipality's eligible tourism entity, and for it to perform promotional activities.
- 3.3 Regional staff and Town of Whitby staff have reached agreement on a form of letter of authorization.
- 3.4 It is anticipated that other Area Municipalities may also request similar authorizations from the Region. The City of Pickering Council, through Report CAO 06-23, approved in principle a Municipal Accommodation Tax Program and directed City of Pickering staff to report back to Council with a proposed Municipal Accommodation Tax implementation plan and associated By-law. The City of Pickering has indicated that they are looking to create a tourism MSC.

4. Discussion

- 4.1 Regional staff are supportive of Area Municipalities collecting a MAT, as these funds will be useful for building overall regional capacity for tourism and enabling economic growth and job creation. It will also make Durham more competitive in attracting visitors as other jurisdictions are already collecting MAT revenues to fund enhanced promotions to attract overnight visitors.
- 4.2 If all Area Municipalities charged a MAT of 4 per cent, based on accommodation projections, the total annual revenue region-wide would be approximately \$2.8M, of which 50 per cent (\$1.4M) would need to be transferred to eligible entities.
- 4.3 For other Area Municipalities in Durham who wish to implement and administer a MAT and share the minimum required percentage with Durham Tourism to undertake programming and promotional activities specifically on their behalf, staff at Durham Region Economic Development and Tourism would welcome the opportunity to discuss this option and enhance further collaboration.

5. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 5.1 The Region of Durham Report – Ready Set Future: Five Year Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Action Plan was endorsed in December, 2022 ([#2022-EDT-15](#)).

6. Relationship to Strategic Plan

6.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:

a. Goal 3: Economic Prosperity

- 3.1 Position Durham Region as the location of choice for business.
- 3.2 Leverage Durham's prime geography, social infrastructure, and strong partnerships to foster economic growth.
- 3.4 Capitalize on Durham's strengths in key economic sectors to attract high quality jobs.
- 3.5 Provide a supportive environment for agriculture and agri-food industries.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Whether MAT revenues are retained in full by Area Municipalities through their Tourism MSCs, or a portion is shared with other entities, or with Durham Tourism to build overall regional capacity for tourism, implementing MATs will have a positive impact on the local economy through the attraction of visitors and resulting increased spending and growth in the tourism industries.

7.2 If it is the preference of an Area Municipality to create an MSC for the purpose of performing promotional activities related to tourism, it is recommended that the CAO be authorized to issue letters of authorization upon request on terms satisfactory to the Regional Solicitor.

7.3 This report has been reviewed by the Legal Division and Finance Department.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer

Resolutions from Advisory Committees

Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee

1. Proposed Amendments to the Ontario Building Code

That we recommend to the Planning and Economic Development Committee for approval and subsequent approval to Regional Council:

Whereas to achieve GHG reduction targets in Durham Region a significant increase in the uptake of electric vehicles will be required;

Whereas to increase uptake there is an urgent need to ensure that new homes built in the Region are EV-ready with 200-amp electrical service, as well as electrical conduit, and outlet box in the garage;

Whereas the costs to make new homes EV ready are understood to be significantly less than the costs to retrofit homes;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee (DECAC) supports the proposed amendments to the Ontario Building Code outlined in Bill 199 and recommends to the Planning and Economic Development Committee that this motion be forwarded to Regional Council for their consideration and expression of support.