



The Regional Municipality of Durham

Community Growth and Economic Development Committee Agenda

Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 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](#).

	Pages
1. Roll Call	
2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest	
3. Election of Community Growth and Economic Development Committee Vice-Chair	
4. Adoption of Minutes	
4.1 Community Growth and Economic Development Committee meeting - January 7, 2025	3
5. Statutory Public Meetings	
There are no statutory public meetings	
6. Presentations	
6.1 Lori Talling, Acting Manager, Agriculture and Rural Economic Development, and Allison de Vos, Economic Development Specialist re: Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan Annual Report (2025-EDT-3) [Item 9.2 a.]	11
7. Delegations	
7.1 Terry Rekar (In-Person Attendance) re: Transportation Master Plan	
8. Community Growth	
8.1 Correspondence	
8.2 Reports	

9. Economic Development

9.1 Correspondence

9.2 Reports

- a. Report #2025-EDT-3 26
Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan Annual Report
- b. Report #2025-EDT-4 34
2024 Convergence Music, Arts, and Cultural Festival
- c. Report #2025-EDT-5 42
Do It In Durham Entrepreneurship Week - Business Advisory
Centre Durham

10. Advisory Committee Resolutions

10.1 Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee 49

- a. Support the Need for Provincial Action on Salt Pollution from
Road Salt

11. Confidential Matters

There are no confidential matters to be considered

12. Other Business

13. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at 9:30 AM

14. Adjournment

Notice regarding collection, use and disclosure of personal information:

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

The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

COMMUNITY GROWTH & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, January 7, 2025

A regular meeting of the Community Growth & Economic Development Committee was held on Tuesday, January 7, 2025 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 Kerr
Councillor Pickles
Councillor Shahid
Councillor Woo
Councillor Wotten
Regional Chair Henry* attended the meeting at 9:36 AM
*** denotes Councillors participating electronically**

Absent: Councillor Chapman, Chair
Councillor Collier

Staff

Present: E. Baxter-Trahair*, Chief Administrative Officer
B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Community Growth & Economic Development
M. Broderick, Manager, Business Development & Investment, Economic Development
A. Caruso, Senior Planner, Transportation Planning
S. Dessureault, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
S. Gill, Director, Economic Development & Tourism
C. Goodchild, Director of Community Growth
A. Harras, Director of Legislative Services & Regional Clerk
B. Holmes, General Manager, Transit
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
J. Kelly, Manager, Integrated Growth Management & Policy
C. Leitch, Manager, Transportation Planning
L. Lovery*, Director, Rapid Transit & Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)
A. Luqman, Manager, Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)
M. Scott, Project Planner, Integrated Growth Management & Policy
J. Severs, Manager, Marketing & Tourism, Economic Development
T. Shaver, Manager, Small Business Enterprise Centre, Economic Development & Tourism
K. Smith, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

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

Moved by Councillor Shahid, Seconded by Councillor Wotton,
(1) That in the absence of the Chair and a Vice-Chair, Councillor Pickles be appointed as the acting Chair for the meeting.

CARRIED

Councillor Pickles chaired the remainder of the meeting.

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest made.

3. Election of Community Growth and Economic Development Committee Vice-Chair

Moved by Councillor Shahid, Seconded by Councillor Wotton,
(2) That the election of the Vice-Chair for the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee be deferred to the next Community Growth and Economic Development Committee meeting to be held on February 4, 2025.

CARRIED

4. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Kerr, Seconded by Councillor Shahid,
(3) That the minutes of the regular Planning & Economic Development Committee meeting held on Tuesday, November 5, 2024, be adopted.

CARRIED

5. Statutory Public Meetings

There were no statutory public meetings.

6. Presentations

There were no presentations.

7. Delegations

7.1 Zac Cohoon, Chair, Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee, re: Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Workplan (2025-CG-1) [Item 8.2 a)]

Zac Cohoon, Chair, Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee, appeared in-person before the Committee with respect to the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee (DAAC) 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Workplan.

Z. Cohoon highlighted the following activities and achievements of DAAC in 2024:

- Receiving presentations on various topics, including the Skilled Trades Programs in the Region; the North Durham On-Farm Diversified Uses Project; the Independent Electricity Systems Operator Battery Storage Site Selection; farm worker accommodation related by-law issues; Enbridge's proposed Natural Gas System Expansion; sustainability initiatives; width of culverts during road upgrades; the proposed Provincial Planning Statement update; Bill 136, Growing Agritourism Act; provincial water testing services for private drinking water; and excess soil challenges on agricultural lands.
- Providing advice to the Region on various agricultural related issues including backyard chickens and Avian Influenza; the North Durham On-Farm Diversified Uses Project; stormwater management fees on agricultural properties in Ajax; the Durham Food System Report Card; and various official plan amendment applications.
- Organizing educational and outreach initiatives, including presenting Agriculture 101 training to the area municipal councils; and hosting the Annual Farm Tour.

Z. Cohoon identified DAAC's priority initiatives set out in the 2025 Workplan.

Z. Cohoon responded to questions from the Committee.

Councillor Shahid requested that staff look into the issue of culvert widths during road construction.

The Committee thanked Z. Cohoon and members of DAAC for their contributions.

7.2 Jay Cuthbertson, Chair, Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee, re: Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Workplan (2025-CG-2) [Item 8.2 a)]

Jay Cuthbertson, Chair, Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee, appeared virtually before the Committee with respect to the Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee (DECAC) 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Workplan.

J. Cuthbertson highlighted the following activities and achievements of DECAC in 2024:

- Receiving presentations on various topics, including the Ontario Provincial Climate Change Impact Assessment; assessing lands for conservation status through the Municipal Protected Areas Project; the Durham Climate Dashboard; the Courtice District Energy System Project update; the 2024 Annual Climate Change Progress Report; the Durham Food System Report Card; Leveling the Playing Field for Energy Choices in Ontario; Sustainable Built Form; impacts of road salt on the environment and infrastructure; and Regional salt management practices.
- Providing advice to the Region on various environmental and climate change-related issues, including the Pollinator Pilot Project on Regional properties and rights-of-way; the Durham Region Strategic Plan; and Bill 199, the EV-Ready Homes Act.
- Organizing and/or participating in community outreach initiatives, including the Spring Bee Pollinator Seed Distribution Project; the Port Perry Lions Club Community Waste Diversion Day event; tours of the McLaughlin Bay Wildlife Reserve and Oshawa Second Marsh; and the 2024 Annual Durham Climate Forum.

J. Cuthbertson identified DECAC's priority initiatives set out in the 2025 Workplan.

J. Cuthbertson responded to questions from the Committee.

The Committee thanked J. Cuthbertson and members of DECAC for their contributions.

7.3 Ron Lalonde, Chair, Durham Active Transportation Committee, re: Durham Active Transportation Committee 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Workplan (2025-CG-3) [Item 8.2 c]

Ron Lalonde, Chair, Durham Active Transportation Committee, appeared in-person before the Committee with respect to the Durham Active Transportation Committee (DATC) 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Workplan.

R. Lalonde highlighted the following activities and achievements of DATC in 2024:

- Receiving presentations on various topics, including the Region's Wayfinding and Signage Strategy; Greenup Canada's active transportation initiatives; the Region's Transit-Oriented Development Strategy; active transportation plans and projects for various local area municipalities; and Vision Zero updates.

- Providing advice to the Region and support to staff on various active transportation issues, including the repair initiatives of the North Durham Rail Trail Corridor; and the preparation and submission of an application for the Share the Road Cycling Coalition's "Bike Friendly" status.

R. Lalonde identified DATC's priority initiatives set out in the 2025 Workplan.

R. Lalonde responded to questions from the Committee.

The Committee thanked R. Lalonde and members of DATC for their contributions.

8. Community Growth

8.1 Correspondence

There were no communication items to consider.

8.2 Reports

A) Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Workplan (2025-CG-1)

Report #2025-CG-1 from B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development, was received.

Moved by Councillor Shahid, Seconded by Councillor Kerr,

(4) That we recommend to Council:

- A) That Report #2025-CG-1 of the Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development be received as the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee's 2024 Annual Report;
- B) That the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee's 2025 Workplan and Terms of Reference be approved, as outlined in Attachments 1 and 2 to Report #2025-CG-1; and
- C) That a copy of Report #2025-CG-1 be forwarded to the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Durham Federation of Agriculture, the Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association, the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance and Durham's area municipalities.

CARRIED

B) Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Workplan (2025-CG-2)

Report #2025-CG-2 from B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development, was received.

Moved by Councillor Shahid, Seconded by Councillor Kerr,
(5) That we recommend to Council:

- A) That Report #2025-CG-2 of the Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development be received as the Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee's 2024 Annual Report;
- B) That the Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee's 2025 Workplan and Terms of Reference be approved, as outlined in Attachments 1 and 2 to Report #2025-CG-2; and
- C) That a copy of Report #2025-CG-2 be forwarded to the Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee and Durham's Area Municipalities.

CARRIED

C) Durham Active Transportation Committee 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Workplan (2025-CG-3)

Report #2025-CG-3 from B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development, was received.

Moved by Councillor Shahid, Seconded by Councillor Kerr,
(6) That we recommend to Council:

- A) That Report #2025-CG-3 of the Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development be received as the Durham Active Transportation Committee's 2024 Annual Report;
- B) That the Durham Active Transportation Committee's 2025 Workplan be approved, as outlined in Attachment #1 to Report #2025-CG-3; and
- C) That a copy of Report #2025-CG-3 be forwarded to the Durham Active Transportation Committee and the Area Municipalities.

CARRIED

9. Economic Development

9.1 Correspondence

There were no communication items to consider.

9.2 Reports

A) 2024 North Durham Building Business Forum (2025-EDT-1)

Report #2025-EDT-1 from B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development, was received.

Moved by Councillor Wotten, Seconded by Councillor Woo,
(7) That Report #2025-EDT-1 of the Commissioner of Community Growth
and Economic Development be received for information.

CARRIED

B) Gather at the Farm 2024 Agri-Food Marketing Campaign (2025-EDT-2)

Report #2025-EDT-2 from B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Community Growth
and Economic Development, was received.

Staff responded to questions from the Committee regarding the general feedback
and overall success rate of the campaign; whether the farms have a means to
digitally record the participants visiting the farms; whether there is an ability to
identify farm visitors from outside of the Region, and determine which municipality
they are from; and whether the Economic Development division has engaged with
the organization A Country Path to promote the various farms they are associated
with.

Moved by Councillor Wotten, Seconded by Councillor Shahid,
(8) That Report #2025-EDT-2 of the Commissioner of Community Growth
and Economic Development be received for information.

CARRIED

10. Advisory Committee Resolutions

There were no advisory committee resolutions to be considered.

11. Confidential Matters

There were no confidential matters to be considered.

12. Other Business

There was no other business to be considered.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Community Growth & Economic Development
Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 4, 2025 at 9:30 AM in the
Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East,
Whitby.

14. Adjournment

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

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 10:33 AM

Respectfully submitted,

D. Pickles, Acting Chair

V. Walker, Committee Clerk



Growing Agri-Food Durham

5-Year Action Plan

Annual Update

February 4, 2025



Growing Agri-Food Durham

Purpose

- Supporting plan of Ready Set Future: A Place Blueprint for Durham
- 5-year action focused document guides agriculture economic development activities of the Agriculture and Rural Section within the Region of Durham’s Economic Development and Tourism Division





Goal Areas

1. Retain and expand agri-food businesses
2. Streamline regulations and approvals
3. Enable and encourage agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses
4. Advocate for infrastructure support (including broadband)
5. Increase agri-food processing capacity
6. Identify opportunities and solutions for the workforce and labour shortages in the agri-food sector
7. Provide resources for aging and young farmers
8. Partner with stakeholders and agricultural organizations to deliver and expand agricultural literacy in the Region
9. Enable and encourage a culture of innovation in agriculture
10. Enhance urban agriculture

Goal 1

Retain and expand local food businesses

A photograph of a large field of pumpkins, likely at a farm stand or market. The pumpkins are arranged in rows and are the central focus of the image. In the background, there is a wooden structure with a red roof, possibly a market stall, and a person in a red shirt is visible. The lighting is soft, suggesting an overcast day or late afternoon.

Goal 2

Streamline the regulation and approval process for agri-food businesses



Goal 3

Enable and encourage agriculture related and on-farm diversified uses related to agriculture



Goal 4

Advocate for infrastructure support



Goal 5

Support businesses to increase agri-food processing capacity

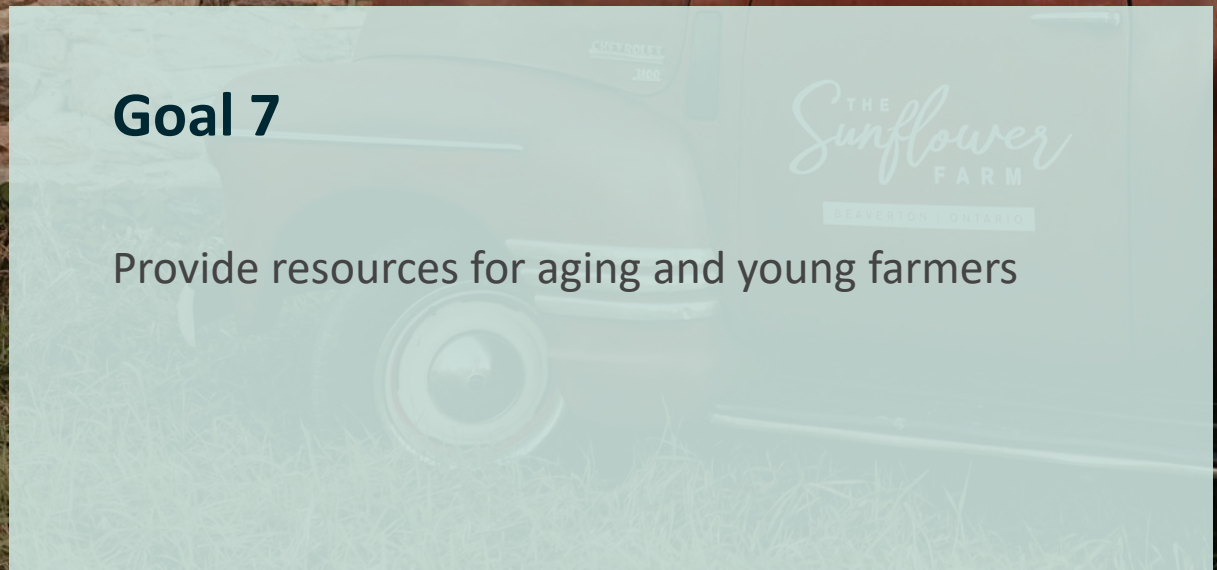


Goal 6

Identify opportunities and solutions for the workforce and labour shortages in the agri-food sector

Goal 7

Provide resources for aging and young farmers





Goal 8

Partner with agriculture organizations to deliver and expand agriculture literacy in the Region



Goal 9

Enable a culture of innovation in agriculture and food



Goal 10

Enhance urban agriculture



Annual Reporting and 2025 Priorities

- Annual reports to agri-food partners underway
- Key 2025 projects and activities
 - Enabling North Durham Agriculture-Related and On-Farm Diversified Uses
 - Agriculture Leadership Program
 - Secondary School Agriculture Career Tours (Culinary/Meat Cutting and Mechanics)
 - Precision Agriculture Field Day
 - Abattoir Investment Attraction



Questions & Thank you!



The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Community Growth and Economic Development Committee
From: Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development
Report: #2025-EDT-3
Date: February 4, 2025

Subject:

Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan Annual Report

Recommendation:

That the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee recommends:

That this report be received for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an annual update on the implementation of the Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan.
- 1.2 This report will be accompanied by a staff presentation from Lori Talling, Acting Manager of Agriculture and Rural Economic Development, and Allison de Vos, Agriculture Economic Development Specialist.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan (the Plan) was endorsed by Council in June, 2022 and sets out the Region's activities to grow and support Durham's agri-food businesses and the agri-food industry over a period of five years. As one of the top goods-producing industries in the region, agri-food offers a significant economic opportunity to create jobs and enable economic growth in all corners of the region.

- 2.2 When the Plan was prepared in 2022, the Local Food BR+E Action Plan was incorporated into it. The activities within the Local Food BR+E Action Plan are now identified as one of the Goal Areas of the Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan.
- 2.3 According to the 2021 Census of Agriculture, Durham Region is home to 1,200 farms and 264,518 acres of agricultural lands, which is more than any other jurisdiction in the Greater Toronto Area. Durham's rural areas comprise a majority of the Region's land base, and the success of the agri-food industry is imperative to Durham's overall economic health.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 3.1 The Region of Durham Local Food Business Retention and Expansion Project Report and Action Plan was received by Planning and Economic Development Committee on June 4, 2019 ([#2019-EDT-11](#)).
- 3.2 The Growing Agri-Food Durham – A Five-Year Plan to Grow the Agri-Food Industry was received by Planning and Economic Development Committee on June 7, 2022 and endorsed by Regional Council on June 29, 2022 ([#2022-EDT-10](#)).
- 3.3 The Local Food Business Retention and Expansion Project: Annual Implementation Update for 2022 was received by Planning and Economic Development Committee on December 6, 2022 ([#2022-EDT-16](#)).
- 3.4 The Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan Annual Report was received by Planning and Economic Development Committee on October 3, 2023 ([#2023-EDT-13](#)).

4. Implementation of the Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan

- 4.1 The Plan is a five-year action-focused plan to guide the activities of the Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Section. It is task-oriented and benefits the agri-food industry while supporting agri-food partners/organizations across the region.
- 4.2 Since the last update provided in October 2023, Economic Development and Tourism Division staff have worked in collaboration with partners including the Durham Farm Fresh (DFF) Marketing Association, Durham Farm Connections (DFC), Durham Region Federation of Agriculture (DRFA), Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee (DAAC), Durham College, National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC IRAP), and others to deliver several projects, initiatives and events prescribed in the Plan.

4.3 The list below highlights some of the key activities completed in 2024 or underway to advance each of the ten goal areas identified within the Plan.

a. Goal 1: Retain and expand local food businesses.

- An annual campaign to celebrate Local Food Week (June 3 to 9, 2024) included updates and promotion of the [Invest Durham Local Food Directory](#) and promotion of the DFF interactive map and a local food blog post.
- Posts to celebrate the harvest season and to encourage shopping for locally grown produce and farm-to-fork dining were shared during Ontario Agriculture Week (October 7 to 13).
- The Economic Development and Tourism Division executed the Gather at the Farm digital campaign ([#2025-EDT-2](#)) in collaboration with DFF, to promote agri-food and visiting local farms to residents and visitors during the month of October.

b. Goal 2: Streamline regulations and approvals process for agri-food businesses.

- Agriculture Economic Development and Planning Working Group tour of different types of agricultural businesses was held in March 2024 to provide the opportunity for learning and developing strong working relationships between Economic Development, Planning and Building staff across the region.
- Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) information and other resources (e.g. OFA Community of Practice Webinar) were shared with the Working Group during the year to encourage participation in learning opportunities related to agricultural development.
- The project to enable North Durham Agriculture-Related and On-Farm Diversified Uses (see project description in Goal 3 below) advances this goal area.
 - Community involvement in this policy review has been facilitated by creating a project information webpage and conducting a survey through the Your Durham community engagement platform and the hosting of a public open house. Community consultation on draft recommendations will continue in 2025.
 - It is anticipated that policy and process improvements will result in an improved application process and streamlined services for Agriculture-

Related and On-Farm Diversified Uses, assisting operators in overcoming barriers to business startup and expansion.

c. Goal 3: Enable and encourage agriculture related, on-farm diversified uses and agri-tourism uses.

- A collaborative project between the Region of Durham's Community Growth and Economic Development Department and the Townships of Scugog, Uxbridge and Brock was initiated in 2023 to support and enable north Durham agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses. The objective is to provide an economic environment in north Durham that supports the ongoing viability of the agri-food industry through updated land-use policies and development approval processes that enable agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses as-of-right, while balancing farmland protection. A planning consultant, WSP Canada, was engaged in April 2024 to undertake a study and provide policy and process recommendations. Phase 4 (Consultation) is presently underway and scheduled to be complete by March 2025. Phase 5 (Final Recommendations Report), which will include presentations to the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee and to northern area municipal committees of Council, will take place in spring 2025.
- Staff presented the Enabling North Durham Agriculture-Related and On-Farm Diversified Uses project to other communities during an OFA/Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness Community of Practice webinar.

d. Goal 4: Advocate for infrastructure support.

- In 2024, staff supported the Hamilton Oshawa Port Authority (HOPA) by providing data to assist with grain and fertilizer expansion forecasting, connecting HOPA to industry contacts including the Chair of DAAC who hosted a tour of local agri-businesses for the Oshawa Port's General Manager, and participating in a Cross-Lake Ontario truck ferry research project undertaken by McMaster University.
- HOPA presented an update on the Port of Oshawa Grain Export Terminal to DAAC in October 2024.

- e. Goal 5: Increase agri-food processing capacity in Durham Region.
- Staff began to explore the opportunity to attract an abattoir investment to the region. This will continue in 2025.
 - Student career tours being organized for March and April 2025 will include a meat cutting culinary tour. This is a trade that is experiencing major labour shortages. The tour will help encourage culinary students to consider a career path in meat cutting.
- f. Goal 6: Identify opportunities and solutions for the workforce and labour shortages in the agri-food industry.
- The second Precision Agriculture Field Day ([#2024-INFO-75](#)) was hosted in partnership with DFC in May 2024 where over 100 secondary school students visited a farm in Clarington to gain on-the-ground insights into the application of precision agriculture technologies and to explore the variety of career opportunities in agriculture.
 - The [Soybean harvest video](#) was developed and added to the Precision Agriculture video series. All five videos were shared with teachers and students prior to the Precision Agriculture Field Day and will be used as a future educational resource.
 - Staff exhibited at the CBOT Student/Employer Summit to showcase the opportunities to work in agriculture to high school students.
 - Culinary/meat cutting and agriculture mechanics career tours were organized for high school students are being organized for March 2025 to increase awareness of these career opportunities.
- g. Goal 7: Provide resources for aging and young farmers.
- A Durham Agriculture Leadership Program was developed to provide farmers with the opportunity to grow their interpersonal, business, and leadership skills. The program is a four-part series covering important topics in agriculture leadership starting in January 2025 and running once monthly until April. The program includes an evening session entitled “Finding fairness in farm transition” that will provide farmers with succession planning resources.

- h. Goal 8: Partner with agricultural organizations to deliver and expand agricultural literacy in the region.
- Ongoing support is provided to DFC who deliver educational programming for farm and non-farm populations in Durham Region, including an in-person event to educate primary school students about where food comes from and a community open house.
 - Staff supported DFF/DFC Shared Coordinator workplan development and activities.
 - Staff assisted DAAC with preparation of presentation materials for their f Agriculture 101 presentations and training to area municipal councils across the region between 2023 and 2024.
 - Staff collaborated with DFC to develop apple value chain video series and educational campaign ([#2024-EDT-15](#)), “From Farm to Plate: Journey of the Durham Region Apple,” to increase public awareness of the food supply chains in Durham Region. The videos will also be used to educate and generate student interest in agri-food career opportunities, in support of efforts to address labour shortages in the industry being addressed under Goal 6.
 - Economic Development and Tourism staff supported planning and delivery of the annual DAAC Farm Tour held in September 2024.
 - Agri-food focused economic factsheets for municipalities are being developed. The factsheet for Uxbridge was prepared in 2024 and factsheets for other municipalities will be completed in 2025.
- i. Goal 9: Enable and encourage a culture of innovation in agriculture.
- The Agri-Food Gateway Pilot Program ([#2024-INFO-85](#)) was developed and delivered to provide small to medium sized technology companies with agricultural training to help them adapt their technologies to fill needs and gaps in the agri-tech and agri-food industry. This program was a partnership between NRC IRAP, Durham College and the Economic Development and Tourism Agriculture and Rural program. Five companies completed the training, and three of those companies are actively pursuing an agri-tech product offering. Continuation of the program in 2025 is being explored.

- j. Goal 10: Enhance urban agriculture.
- The Region advanced its partnership with Barrett Centre for Innovation in Sustainable Urban Agriculture including participation on an urban agriculture advisory committee.
 - Staff collaborated with the Barrett Centre to host an on-farm culinary demonstration with Chef Alex Page, a local food advocate, as part of the broader Gather at the Farm marketing campaign. Approximately 150 attendees learned about urban agriculture and the opportunities for cooking with local ingredients.
 - Staff advised and reviewed the Durham Food System Report Card 2024 issued by the Durham Food Policy Council (DFC) which included urban agriculture recommendations.

4.4 Successful implementation of the Agri-Food Plan relies on strong relationships between the Region and agri-food partners. Between January and March 2025, staff are attending meetings of DFC, DFF, DRFA, DAAC and the Agricultural Advisory Committee of Clarington to share details related to the implementation of the Plan.

5. Relationship to Strategic Plan

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

- a. Goal 3: Economic Prosperity
- Item 3.5: Provide a supportive environment for agriculture and agri-food industries.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan supports and enables growth and economic prosperity of the agri-food industry in Durham, one of the priority clusters identified in Regional Economic Development Strategy ([Ready Set Future: A PLACE Blueprint for Durham](#)).

6.2 Plans are underway to support, advance, or launch several key initiatives that will continue to advance Goals of the Plan. Areas of focus include supporting implementation of policy and process improvements to enable agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses across north Durham, delivering the Agriculture Leadership Program, activities to support increasing agri-food processing capacity, and activities to address workforce and labour shortages in the agri-food industry.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP, PLE
Commissioner of Community Growth 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: Community Growth and Economic Development Committee
From: Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development
Report: #2025-EDT-4
Date: February 4, 2025

Subject:

2024 Convergence Music, Arts, and Culture Festival

Recommendation:

That the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee recommends:

That this report be received for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a summary to the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee and Regional Council of the second annual Convergence Music, Arts, and Culture Festival, a festival held in downtown Oshawa between Friday September 20 and Saturday September 21st, 2024, including outcomes and metrics for the event.

2. Background

2.1 Convergence Music, Arts and Culture Festival (Convergence) is an initiative of Oshawa Tourism, which is a division of the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce. Supported by the City of Oshawa, the Regional Municipality of Durham Economic Development and Tourism, and other partners, the event was first held in 2023.

2.2 Convergence promoted local music, arts, and culture and offered a creative and welcoming environment for all ages in downtown Oshawa. There were activities at various locations through the weekend, with the main festival happening on Saturday September 21st, 2024.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

3.1 [#2023-INFO-106](#) – 2023 Convergence Music, Arts, and Culture Festival.

4. Events Overview

4.1 Convergence is a two-day festival. Ticketed or associated events were held at venues including the Robert McLaughlin Gallery, the Atria, and the Biltmore Theatre. The event includes live music, immersive art experiences, cultural demonstrations and more.

4.2 The 2024 festival grew in scale and space, including additional street closures, partners, and an additional stage area, making this event a larger and more significant undertaking for partners and collaborators.

4.3 During the main event on Saturday September 21st, between 11:30 A.M. and 10:00 P.M. there were a wide range of activities to explore on downtown Oshawa streets which were closed for the event:

- a. Live pro-wrestling
- b. Live music across three stages
- c. Contemporary circus performers
- d. The Punk Rock Flea Market Oshawa (a collective of alternative arts vendors)
- e. The Nerd Alley (a collective of comics, arts and music vendors)
- f. Art installation and activation area “The Art Block” presented by the City of Oshawa and the Robert McLaughlin Gallery in and around the former downtown Oshawa bus terminal, which included local and emerging Canadian contemporary artists
- g. Live music across three stages
- h. International street food area
- i. Tech Deck skateboard competition
- j. Live pro-wrestling
- k. Pop up and staged dance performances
- l. Durham Region Roller Derby demonstration area

- m. Family zone, which included art making with Living Room Community Art Studio, the Durham Black Arts Collective, Durham Shoestring Performers, Reptilia, Oshawa Museum, Canadian Automotive Museum, and others.
- 4.4 Contemporary artists presenting works at the event included Geordie Lishman, Christina Leslie, LeuWebb Projects, Malik McKoy, Brigitte Sampogna, and Andil Gosine.
- 4.5 Musicians performing at this event included a diverse line up of locally and internationally recognized acts including: Cassie Noble, Equal, SRE, Daphne, the Holy Gamblers, R.I.S.E. Edutainment, Aaron Ridge, Rachael Rose, Azalyne, Nicolina, Kubla, Tyler Lorette, The Anti-Queens, Contour, Sasha L Henry and the Dope Band, I, the Mountain, Excuses Excuses, Dizzy and TALK.
- 4.6 Economic Development and Tourism staff also hosted an on-site activation at the event. The activation included a custom photo booth experience, passing out hundreds of promotional materials such as the Durham Tourism Discovery Guide, the Durham Farm Fresh Guide, promotional pins, as well as hundreds of guest interactions to promote various great places to discover across Durham Region.

5. Event Metrics of Success

- 5.1 Convergence was a great success. Visitor data was collected for Convergence on the main event day Saturday September 21st, within a defined geographic area in downtown Oshawa for event reporting purposes. Metrics include:
- a. 15,300 households attended the event (Source: Environics);
 - b. Estimated visible minority presence of 37.5%, with 27.2% of attendees born outside of Canada (Source: Environics);
 - c. 23,955 total attendees (Source: GroundLevel Insights data), with 33.2% of visitors (7,636) traveling from more than 40km away. The average visitor travelled 56km;
 - d. Primary language of attendees included English, French, Mandarin, Arabic, and Hindi (Source: GroundLevel Insights data from mobile devices present);
 - e. \$1.16M was the estimated lift in revenue by local businesses during the event and for the following 30 days by event attendees (Source: GroundLevel Insights Real Economic Impact model).

- 5.2 The Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sports “TREIM” modelling calculator can provide an estimated economic impact of visitors from 40km away for tourism events. Using the above metrics from GroundLevel insights data, this tool estimates the Saturday event at Convergence Oshawa 2024 had a total local economic impact of over \$2.7 million to Durham Region.
- 5.3 Comparing the 2024 Convergence event to the year prior, the 2024 event realized:
- a. An increase of 85% in overall attendance;
 - b. An increase of 40% in visible minority presence;
 - c. An increase of 153% from attendees traveling from more than 40kms away;
 - d. An increase of 210% to estimated economic impact following the TREIM model.

6. Budget Implications

- 6.1 Durham Region Economic Development and Tourism was a primary sponsor of the event for the purposes of promoting the Durham Tourism brand, building quality of place and tourism capacity, and reaching new audiences for the purposes of attracting continued tourism spending to the Region overall. Sponsorship of \$25,000 was committed from the approved 2024 Economic Development and Tourism Division budget.

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 2 – Community Vitality
 - Priority 2.2 Enhance community safety and well-being.
 - Priority 2.5 Build a healthy, inclusive, age-friendly community where everyone feels a sense of belonging.
 - b. Goal 3 – Economic Prosperity
 - Priority 3.1 Position Durham Region as the location of choice for business
 - Priority 3.2 Leverage Durham’s prime geography, social infrastructure, and strong partnerships to foster economic growth
 - Priority 3.4 Capitalize on Durham’s strengths in key economic sectors to attract high-quality jobs

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 Convergence Music, Arts, and Culture Festival 2024 was highly successful in its second year, seeing attendance increase by 85%, and it plays a significant role in enhancing and driving tourism spending in Durham Region.
- 8.2 Convergence supports Durham Tourism's brand messaging that Durham Region offers urban excitement and country charm, by contributing to Durham's reputation for urban excitement.
- 8.3 Convergence has generated significant economic impact locally and shows how Durham Region is a welcoming and inclusive community. It is expected that Convergence will continue to grow and offer experiences that bring people together through music, arts, and culture.

9. Attachments

Attachment #1: Photos of Convergence 2024

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP, PLE
Commissioner of Community Growth and
Economic Development

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer



Durham Tourism booth at Convergence





Convergence Main Stage



Convergence Main Stage



Live Pro Wrestling



Nerd Alley



Convergence Main Stage



Art Block (above)
Community participants (left)





The Regional Municipality of Durham

Report

To: Community Growth and Economic Development Committee
From: Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development
Report: #2025-EDT-5
Date: February 4, 2025

Subject:

Do It In Durham Entrepreneurship Week – Business Advisory Centre Durham

Recommendation:

That the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee recommends:

That this report be received for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 This report highlights the activities and notable statistics from the Do It In Durham Entrepreneurship Week events. Do It In Durham was celebrated during Global Entrepreneurship Week (November 18th to 22nd, 2024) with a dynamic lineup of events designed to inspire, educate, and connect entrepreneurs across our region and beyond.

2. Background

2.1 Do It In Durham Entrepreneurship Week has been running annually since 2013 and is led by the Business Advisory Centre Durham (BACD) in collaboration with over 10 sponsors, 20 local entrepreneur support organizations, and over 40 different speakers and presenters.

2.2 BACD is a Section within the Region of Durham's Economic Development and Tourism Division.

- 2.3 Do It In Durham continues to be a catalyst for entrepreneurial growth and community building. This year's success reaffirms its importance as a platform to inspire innovation and foster economic resilience.
- 2.4 The name Do It In Durham was inspired by the thinking that the entrepreneurs support organizations, including BACD, wanted entrepreneurs and businesses to **start here, grow here and hire here**. They wanted them to Do It In Durham! Global Entrepreneurship Week takes place in November each year and was started by the Kauffman Foundation. It takes place in over 200 countries and there are over 40,000 activities globally during that week.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 3.1 There have been no previous reports or decisions on this topic.

4. Do It In Durham Week 2024

- 4.1 Do It In Durham Entrepreneurship Week was a dynamic celebration of innovation and business growth, featuring 62 engaging events across five days. The week brought together 1,226 attendees to participate in workshops, panels, and networking sessions led by industry experts and local leaders. Highlights included keynote addresses from renowned entrepreneurs, hands-on learning opportunities, and interactive showcases of local startups and innovations. With strong support from 11 sponsors and 50 community partners, the week's events highlighted Durham's vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem and its commitment to supporting local businesses, fostering connections and collaboration.
- 4.2 Metrics for all events during Do It In Durham week:
- a) Total Events: 62
 - b) Total Attendees: 1,226
 - c) Sponsors: 11
 - d) Community Partners: 50
- 4.3 Metrics for only those events organized by BACD during Do It In Durham week:
- a) Total Events: 31
 - b) Total attendees: 601

4.4 BACD attendees represented over 120 cities globally, including Winnipeg MB, locations across the Greater Toronto Area such as Scarborough and Brampton, and international locations including Port of Spain, Amsterdam, and Dubai. See Appendix A, Table 1 for the global distribution.

4.5 The breakdown of attendees from Durham Region is as follows:

- a) 225 from Oshawa
- b) 140 from Ajax
- c) 117 from Pickering
- d) 89 from Whitby
- e) 59 from Clarington
- f) 22 from North Durham

In 2025, a more concerted effort will be made to encourage organizations to host events and activities for entrepreneurs from the northern townships to attend. See Appendix A, Table 2 for the geographic distribution of regional attendees.

4.6 Distribution of all events:

- a) 26 events (41.94 per cent) were virtual.
- b) 35 events (56.45 per cent) were held in person, at locations such as Core 21, The Work Hub, Regional Headquarters, Bond St. Event Centre, OPG Offices in Courtice, 40 Temperance St in Bowmanville, Spark Centre, and Town Brewery.
- c) 1 event (1.61 per cent) was hybrid.

4.7 Event Highlights:

- a) The following sessions had the highest participation. See Appendix A, Table 3 for a list of events with the highest attendance.:
 - Kicking off Do It In Durham Entrepreneurship Week 2024: 99 attendees
 - How To Leverage AI To Create Killer Content That Converts: 70 attendees
 - Mastering Momentum: 6 Steps to Supercharge Your Sales: 68 attendees
 - How to grow your service-based business: 65 attendees
 - Social Media Trends for 2025: 59 attendees

- b) The following three key impacts were achieved through the events and training sessions:
- **Learning & Connection:** Participants gained valuable skills in marketing, sales, financial planning, and technology.
 - **Global Engagement:** Registrations from diverse locations showcased Durham Region as a hub for entrepreneurial innovation.
 - **Community Support:** The week's events strengthened ties between local businesses and the broader community, encouraging support for small enterprises.

5. Relationship to Strategic Plan

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

Goal 3: Economic Prosperity: To build a strong and resilient economy that maximizes opportunities for business and employment growth, innovation and partnership.

- Item 3.1 Position Durham Region as the location of choice for business
- Item 3.2 Leverage Durham's prime geography, social infrastructure, and strong partnerships to foster economic growth

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Do It In Durham Week was a great success, delivering valuable skills and knowledge to the Regional entrepreneurship community with the goal of assisting entrepreneurs to grow their businesses, create jobs, spark innovation, and strengthen the local economy. Do It In Durham will take place again this year, in November 2025.

- 6.2 Goals for the upcoming 2025 event include:

- a) **Empower community-led leadership:** BACD will take on the role of lead coordinator, focusing on guiding and supporting community organizations to host more events. This strategic shift empowers local organizations to take centre stage, fostering greater collaboration and expanding the diversity of programming while enabling BACD to focus on providing Do It In Durham event coordination and promotion of Entrepreneurship Week.

- b) Increase event reach and participation: BACD, as part of Invest Durham, will roll out targeted marketing campaigns through social media, email, and local press to target diverse audiences. Start the campaign in August.
- c) Showcase Durham's entrepreneurship ecosystem: BACD will support ecosystem partners and organizations to take the lead in showcasing Durham's innovation by supporting them in securing keynote speakers, building media partnerships, and hosting interactive showcases.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP, PLE
Commissioner of Community Growth and
Economic Development

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix A: Tables

Table 1: Worldwide Event Registrations

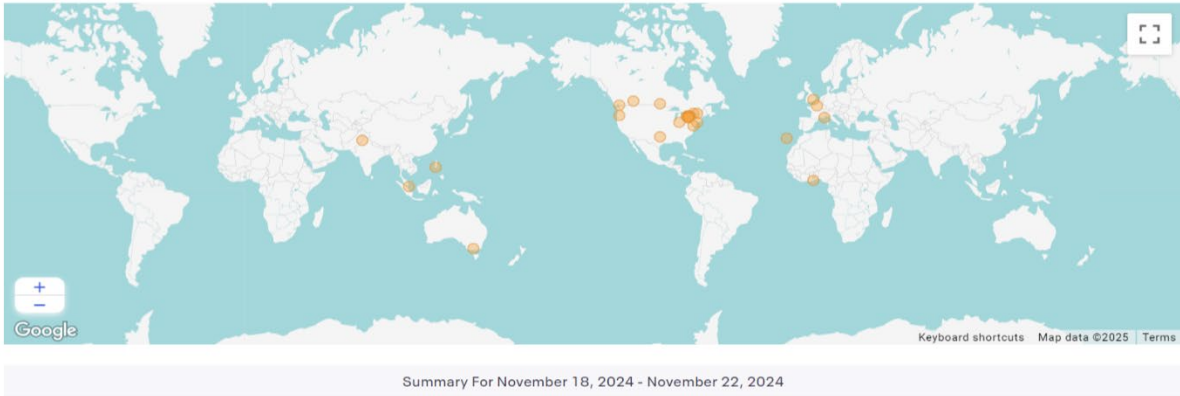


Table 2: Attendees across Durham Region Town's/Cities

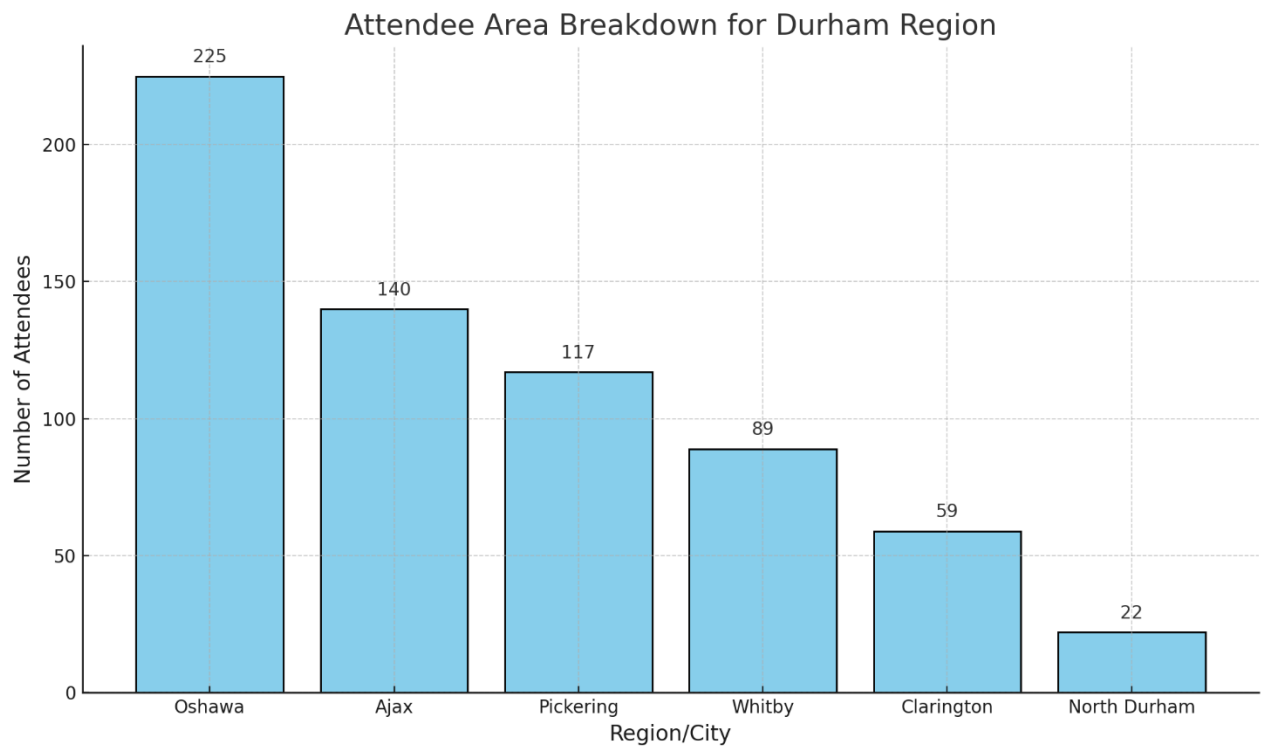
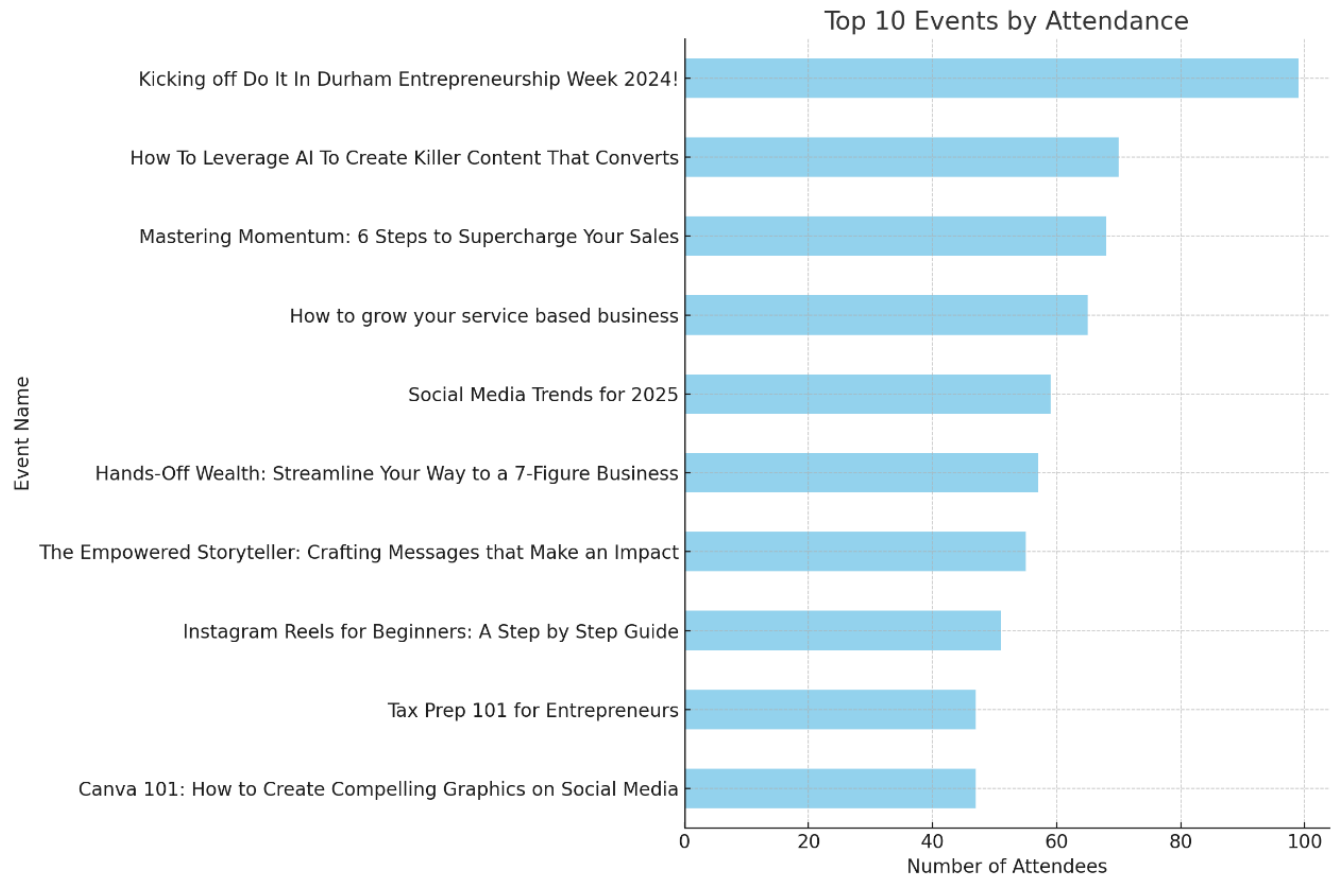


TABLE 3: Top 10 Events by Attendance



Resolutions from Advisory Committees

Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee

1. Support the Need for Provincial Action on Salt Pollution from Road Salt

That we recommend to the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee for approval and subsequent recommendation to Regional Council:

That the following motion from the Ontario Road Salt Coalition be endorsed:

Whereas road salt is a known toxic substance designated under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act because of tangible threats of serious or irreversible environmental and health damage from road salt; and

Whereas salt levels in Ontario's groundwater aquifers, creeks, rivers, and lakes have increasingly worsened since the 1970s, seriously affecting municipal drinking water sources and aquatic life; and

Whereas the Ontario and Canadian governments have taken many actions over the past 25 years including setting water quality guidelines, developing voluntary codes of practice, signing the Canada-Ontario Great Lakes Agreement, and holding workshops, yet still the salt problem continues to grow; and

Whereas numerous situation analyses have recommended salt solutions involving liability protection, contractor certification, government-approved Best Management Practices (BMPs) and salt management plans; and

Whereas increased numbers of slips and falls claims, and other injury/collision claims related to snow and ice, are resulting in salt applicators overusing salt beyond levels considered best practices; and

Whereas unlimited contractor liability is making it difficult or expensive for snow and ice management contractors to obtain insurance coverage, resulting in contractors leaving the business, thereby making it difficult for municipalities and private owners to find contractors; and

Whereas the Snow and Ice Management Sector (SMS) of Landscape Ontario is working with the Ontario government to institute a limited liability regime for snow and ice management, including enforceable contractor training/certification and government approved BMPs for salt application; and

Whereas many Ontario municipalities have Salt Management Plans, but these often require updating in light of improved science and better salt management practices now available.

Therefore be it resolved that:

1. That Durham Region urges the province of Ontario to work urgently with key stakeholders to develop limited liability legislation, including enforceable contractor training and a single set of provincially endorsed standard BMPs for snow and ice management; and
2. That Durham Region urges the province of Ontario to create and fund an expert stakeholder advisory committee to advise the province and municipalities on the best courses of action to protect freshwater ecosystems and drinking water from the impacts of salt pollution; and
3. That Durham Region commits to the reduction of the use of road salt as much as possible while maintaining safety on roads and sidewalks; and
4. That this resolution be sent to all municipalities in Durham Region, Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), local MPPs, Conservation Ontario, Minister Andrea Khanjin (MECP), Interim Minister Todd McCarthy (MECP), Attorney General Doug Downey, and Premier Doug Ford.