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The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee
From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
Report: #2023-EDT-5
Date: April 4, 2023

Subject:

Invest Durham – Five-Year Marketing Plan

Recommendation:

That the Planning 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 overview of the new 2023-2027 Invest Durham Marketing Plan (the Marketing Plan), included as Attachment #1. The Marketing Plan is a five year action-focused document to guide the marketing activities of the Region of Durham's Economic Development and Tourism Division (Invest Durham), especially as it relates to the overall vision of [Ready Set Future: A PLACE Blueprint for Durham](#), 2023-2027 Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Action Plan.
- 1.2 This report will be accompanied by a staff presentation by Jacquie Severs, Manager of Marketing and Cluster Development, to the Planning and Economic Development Committee.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Economic Development and Tourism Division has developed a new five-year Strategy and Action Plan. This strategy sets out the vision for long-term regional economic prosperity and contains a robust set of action items for the next five years. One action item will be to develop and implement growth strategies for key priority clusters, including Future Energy, Next-Generation Mobility, Arts, Culture & Creative Industries, Applied Digital Technology, and Agri-Food. This Plan supports these growth areas, leveraging the Invest Durham brand to attract inbound investment.
- 2.2 Durham Region's economy continues to transform. Durham's value proposition for investment is strong, and its central location within the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) elevates its relevance on a global stage. However, there is more to be done in terms of building general awareness of Durham Region, in particular its general location, quality of life, investment value proposition, and competitiveness.
- 2.3 The Marketing and Cluster Development section of Invest Durham is responsible for marketing the benefits of doing business in Durham Region to local, national, and international audiences.
- 2.4 This Marketing Plan is designed to create strong awareness and trust of the Invest Durham brand, significantly enhancing awareness of Durham Region and its business ecosystem; building Durham's reputation for innovation to solve global challenges; and broadly sharing the story of Durham Region with a goal of increasing investment to the region. This Plan positions Invest Durham as a central voice in Durham Region's economic community.
- 2.5 The Marketing Plan incorporates feedback gathered from the Durham Economic Development Partnership, comprised of economic development staff from Durham's area municipalities. It also incorporates feedback gathered during collaborative sessions with partners in development of Ready, Set, Future.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 3.1 The following reports and decisions relate to the Marketing Plan:
 - a. [#2021-EDT-15](#): Ready Set Future Five Year Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.

4. Invest Durham Marketing Plan

- 4.1 The Marketing Plan, included as Attachment #1, is a 5-year action focused document to guide the activities of the Marketing and Cluster Development section of Invest Durham.
- 4.2 The Marketing Plan considers the current situation and future aspirations for Durham Region. It also explores the Invest Durham brand vision, messaging, positioning, and values. The Marketing Plan includes a high-level content strategy.
- 4.3 The Marketing Plan identifies 3 goals:
- Develop strong brand awareness for investment value.
 - Develop strong awareness for Durham Region as a place.
 - Use marketing success to foster Durham Region's innovation community.
- 4.4 Techniques that will enable the success of these goals include:
- Brand marketing.
 - Transformational storytelling.
 - Place branding differentiation.
 - Collaboration.
- 4.5 These goals and techniques are evident across five objectives identified within The Marketing Plan:
- **Objective 1:** Achieve strong brand awareness and brand trust through promotion of our value proposition for investment and focus on priority clusters as identified in Ready Set Future.
 - **Objective 2:** Firmly establish Invest Durham as the central voice for business in Durham Region by producing and partnering to produce consistent, reliable, timely and useful information for our partners, local business, entrepreneurs, investors, and others.
 - **Objective 3:** Strengthen our local economy and attract and retain talent to Durham Region through marketing activities and transformational storytelling that deepens quality of place and encourages a strong sense of pride in Durham Region.
 - **Objective 4:** Ensure marketing materials support investment attraction activities by building an inventory of information and resources that are data-driven, sector-specific, and brand-aligned.

- **Objective 5:** Align marketing processes to ensure our information, service, and communications are industry-leading, current, consistent, reliable, and responsive.

4.6 There are action items for each objective, and for each action item there is a timeline, anticipated outcomes, and key performance indicators.

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

- 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.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The Marketing Plan identifies goal areas, objectives, and actions that will be undertaken or supported by Invest Durham staff over the next five years to increase investment into Durham Region. The Marketing Plan is guided by [Ready Set Future: A PLACE Blueprint for Durham](#), 2023-2027 Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Action Plan.

7. Attachments

Attachment #1: Invest Durham Five-Year Marketing Plan

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer

2023-2027

Invest Durham Marketing Plan





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

The 2023-2027 Invest Durham Marketing Plan (the Plan) is a five-year action-focused document to guide the activities of the Marketing section of the Region of Durham's Economic Development and Tourism Division (Invest Durham).

The Plan is designed to consider the activities that will leverage the Invest Durham brand to attract inbound investment. It also leverages the brand to help companies grow and succeed in Durham Region through promotional opportunities, and to further the reputation of Durham Region as a good place to do business.

The Plan features collaborations with many other teams and organizations to achieve its goals. This Plan has been developed in parallel with Ready Set Future: A PLACE Blueprint for Durham (the Durham Region Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2023-2027) and shares some of the action items found therein.



Invest Durham Today

Situated within the most in-demand province in what is widely considered the best country in the world, Durham Region is part of the strongest economic metropolitan area in Canada. With notable strengths in Future Energy, Next Generation Mobility (Next Gen Mobility), Arts Culture and Creative, Applied Digital Tech and Agri-Food, Durham Region’s economy continues to transform as companies innovate new technologies.

Durham’s value proposition for investment is strong, and its proximity within the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) is central to its relevance on a global stage. However, there is more to be done in terms of building general awareness of Durham Region—in particular its general location, quality of life, investment value proposition and competitiveness.

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.

Location: Intensification and Renewal in Durham’s Urban Cores, and vibrant and diverse downtowns.

Acceleration: Durham’s innovators are solving global challenges.

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

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

Ready Set Future, The PLACE Blueprint and its defined priority clusters are central influences within the Plan. Additional information and consultation for this Plan includes feedback gathered from the Durham Economic Development Partnership (DEDP).

Investment attraction marketing

Investment attraction can increase regional prosperity through job creation. Invest Durham, the investment attraction brand of Durham Region Economic Development and Tourism, is targeted at attracting new investments and supporting the growth of local businesses through a variety of methods. These include a digital strategy, targeted messaging, virtual and in-person events, advertising, public relations activities and more. The outcomes of these activities are intended to attract investments and support business growth to create new, high-value jobs; increase economic prosperity for the community; and build a more favourable environment for future industry investment.

Though the organization—Durham Region Economic Development and Tourism—has long existed, the Invest Durham brand as it exists today is approximately four years old. In this window of time, activities have been focused on building the brand reputation of Invest Durham, audience development, brand awareness and marketing in key sectors. Activities have included redeveloping foundational materials, including the Invest Durham website, establishing and building social media accounts, and developing new marketing materials including white papers and niche sector profiles.

The brand has received multiple recognitions from economic development, marketing and communications, and web development awards programs. It also significantly outperformed peers in follower and engagement growth on social media. Our brand has accelerated awareness of Durham Region as an area hungry and ready for significant investment.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Invest Durham brand was used as the central brand for promotions of the Durham Economic Task Force (DETF). The outcome of this was building local brand awareness and positioning Invest Durham to leverage the local business community to better promote the region to external audiences.

These activities have created a strong foundation on which to launch Invest Durham into the next five years of activities.

This plan is focused on the brand marketing activities of Invest Durham and is not intended to be comprehensive of all marketing activities undertaken by the Economic Development and Tourism Division of the Region of Durham. Significant additional marketing efforts are made by Durham Tourism, Film Durham, Sport Durham, and Rural and Agriculture Economic Development, which are targeted at their specific sectors and tailored audiences.



The Plan is designed to create strong awareness and trust of the Invest Durham brand, significantly enhancing awareness of Durham Region and its business ecosystem; building Durham’s reputation for innovation to solve global challenges; and continually telling the story of Durham Region with a goal of increasing investment into the region. This plan positions Invest Durham as a central voice in Durham Region’s economic community.



Invest Durham the Future

The Vision

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

To align with the PLACE Blueprint, Invest Durham the brand also has established a 30-year vision.



Invest Durham will be recognized as one of the most well-known, trusted and creative economic development organizations in Canada. As an outcome, Durham Region is seen nationally and internationally as a creative, innovative, and welcoming place to establish and rapidly grow a business. Invest Durham aspires to be known throughout external domestic and international markets for its innovation community that is solving global challenges.



To progress toward this vision, actions over the next five years will:

- Promote Durham Region as a good place to invest, with particular focus on bringing in investment and supporting growth of established businesses.
- Support businesses and entrepreneurship in Durham Region’s downtowns and central business districts.
- Deepen awareness of Durham Region’s value proposition both within Durham as well as regionally and internationally.
- Use marketing activities to support workforce development, in particular those that help to retain graduate talent.
- Host, collaborate in and participate in flagship events.
- Develop and implement a government relations strategy to promote the interests of Durham’s priority clusters to provincial and national governments.

The Plan also holds space for cross-departmental marketing activities including those which support Durham Tourism, Film Durham, Sport Durham, and Rural and Agriculture Economic Development, as well as supportive activities for other Regional departments.

Invest Durham will use creative, industry-leading and innovative approaches to economic marketing to achieve our goals.



Marketing Plan Goals

- **Develop strong brand awareness for investment value:** Firmly establish the reputation that Durham Region is the very best opportunity for investment in the GTHA.
- **Develop strong awareness for Durham Region as a place:** Enhance Durham Region's reputation and place brand, while firmly establishing the reputation that Durham Region is a good place to start a business. Particular focus is placed on Durham Region's downtowns, and their offering as a welcoming and supportive environment for small and medium, startup, independent, innovative, and creative businesses and entrepreneurs.
- **Use marketing success to foster Durham Region's innovation community:** Firmly establish that Durham Region is a community where innovative businesses thrive, so that Durham Region is further regarded on a national and international stage as an economic engine for Canada.

Techniques that will enable the success of these goals include:

- **Brand marketing:** Use bold, creative and engaging marketing to portray Durham Region as the vibrant, innovative community that it is. Leverage the Invest Durham brand to help deepen pride of place, promote Durham's investment value proposition and strengthen our economy.
- **Transformational storytelling:** Undertake initiatives that spotlight real entrepreneurship success stories; portray Durham Region as a great place to work or start, grow or relocate your business; and deepen pride of place to foster connections of residents to local businesses.
- **Place branding differentiation:** Manage and enhance the reputation of Durham Region to achieve a distinct position; specifically communicate successes of our local businesses to local and regional communities and partners; promote and support our 14 downtowns; demonstrate our urban excitement and country charm; and promote our distinct sense of place.
- **Collaboration:** Work with our partners to strengthen, foster and promote the Durham Region business and innovation community by working with groups including chambers and boards of trade, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), accelerators and incubators, post-secondary institutions, and other business communities and groups.

SOAR Analysis

(Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results)

In contrast to a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, the SOAR model focuses on what is known to work, rather than internal weaknesses or perceived threats that might not take place.

The output from a SOAR analysis is a set of actions that leverage strengths and opportunities to strive for shared aspirations with measurable results.

Strengths: Regional Value Proposition

- Location within Ontario and Canada
- Location within Greater Toronto Hamilton Area
- Booming population growth
- Increasing diversification of our population
- Growing and thriving post-secondary institutions
- Existing cluster – Clean Energy Capital of Canada
- Rapid emergence of Artificial Intelligence, cybersecurity and technology sector jobs
- Rapid emergence of Next Gen Mobility cluster – Research and Development (R & D) facilities, startup community, Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN) and Durham Regional Technology Development Site (DRTDS)
- Rural and urban mix, high quality of life via access to recreation and outdoors, vibrant and growing restaurants, and creative communities
- Transportation assets (Port, 400-series infrastructure, potential airport)
- GO East extension
- Existing innovation cells and hubs, business and entrepreneurship support networks
- Strong agricultural community, agri-tourism, innovation in agriculture
- Talent and labour force growth
- Compelling value proposition for residents who work from home

Strengths: Marketing Analysis

- High national and moderately high international understanding of location and value proposition for Toronto
- High quality of life rankings for Canada
- Strong Invest Durham marketing partnerships and collaborations with innovation community and business groups
- Strong brand with good foundational brand assets
- Consistent social media growth; strong foundation on which to build social campaigns
- Established regional value proposition

Opportunities: Regional Value Proposition

- Changing availability of talent – talent previously commuting to Toronto now working from home, remote talent and hybrid workers— talent that wants to give up the commute and stay closer to home
- Significant excitement around and activity in Next Gen Mobility and Future Energy clusters in Durham Region
- Graduating talent from post-secondary startup programs including Brilliant Catalyst
- Opportunities in energy value chain due to continued Ontario Power Generation expansion
- Opportunities in Next Gen Mobility due to emerging cluster, momentum in automotive industry resurgence in Ontario
- Updated cluster approach leading to measurable outcomes
- Upcoming serviced employment lands availability
- Technology infrastructure innovation and investment (Broadband, Electric Vehicle tech)
- Changes in how office space is needed due to continued global impacts of the pandemic and changing attitudes toward remote working, addition of hub offices, co-working spaces, etc
- Demand for innovative tech company small space or innovation clubhouse spaces.
- Demand for growth in Arts and Culture cluster
- Interest and demand for local food

Opportunities: Marketing Analysis

- Opportunity to significantly grow awareness of Durham Region's location
- Opportunity to leverage provincial marketing around OVIN and other major investments in Next Gen Mobility
- Opportunities to leverage post-secondary institutions' talent story
- Opportunities to leverage recent announcements on small modular reactors and clean energy investments in Durham Region
- Opportunities to build momentum behind Next Gen Mobility through targeted investment attraction
- Marketing opportunities for in-demand employment lands
- Opportunity to be a centralized and trusted voice for business in Durham Region
- Marketing opportunities presented by shift to work from home, which include but are not limited to, more disposable income remaining in the region, higher interest in local business and future entrepreneurship

Aspirations: Regional Value Proposition

- Lead Ontario for workforce skill and education attainment
- Intensification and renewal in Durham's urban cores and vibrant and diverse downtowns
- Durham's innovators are solving global challenges
- Durham has a distinct identity for arts, culture and creative industries
- Highly marketable quality of place and strong marketing materials to support that message
- Strong external preconceptions of the economy in Durham Region
- Seen as a strong competitor for investments against comparable areas in the Waterloo-Toronto Region Innovation Corridor
- Strong broadband speeds available through our rural communities
- Quality supply of market-ready employment lands, class A office space
- Home to a centralized innovation space or clubhouse for foreign and domestic tech companies to land in and grow, network and collaborate
- Well-resourced marketing and business development teams able to effectively manage and service leads

Aspirations: Marketing Analysis

- A strong presence reputation in the Waterloo-Toronto Region Innovation Corridor
- High brand awareness of Durham Region's location and value proposition
- Positive brand associations for Invest Durham and Durham Region
- Increased awareness of Durham Region on a national and international level
- High level of understanding that Durham Region is a diverse business ecosystem
- Regarded reputationally as a creative and strong economic development organization among other government professionals
- Numerous success stories to tell as outcome of marketing initiatives; measurable impacts that can be reported on as successes
- Effective marketing processes that ensure materials are readily available

Results

- Significant growth of social media channels and monthly Invest Durham e-newsletter subscribers
- Many new users discovering our content as measured through website traffic
- High engagement rates among subscribers to Invest Durham channels.
- Investment leads that can be directly tied to results of marketing campaigns
- Positive unpaid media impressions and mentions of Durham Region

Key brand messaging



The value of having a strong investment attraction and economic development brand, that is distinct from the Regional Government identity, is rooted in its ability to offer relevance and speak to a business audience directly, consistently, and with relevance and focus into specific strategic sectors.

Through this direct, consistent and strategic business-oriented communication, Invest Durham establishes itself in a position of thought leadership among business communities; builds and supports the business community; and collaborates with others who further establish and nurture a supportive business environment.

Invest Durham's brand is designed to align with the competitive priority clusters for Durham Region's investment attraction strategies. Through its websites, social media presence and branded marketing materials, Invest Durham presents Durham Region to high-value business audiences with modern tactics and sophisticated—but clear—language.

Competitors such as Ottawa (Invest Ottawa), Waterloo Region (Waterloo EDC) and Hamilton (Invest in Hamilton), have each established investment attraction brands that advance and complement the corporate brand of the regions they represent. These investment attraction brands drive value for their respective regions by “speaking the language” of the business communities in which they are active and engaged. Maintaining, building and strengthening the Invest Durham brand is the best solution to attract a high-value and relevant audience.

Brand vision

Invest Durham will be recognized as one of the most well-known, trusted and creative economic development organizations in Canada. As an outcome, Durham Region is seen nationally and internationally as a creative, innovative, and welcoming place to establish and rapidly grow a business. Invest Durham aspires to be known throughout external domestic and international markets for its innovation community that is solving global challenges.



Vision statement

Invest Durham supports and promotes Durham Region's business ecosystem to grow, succeed and create value.

Built on the Region's history and commitment to work on the world's greatest challenges, Durham's innovation community is innovating the future.

Positioning

Businesses that are looking to rapidly grow need a thriving innovation community, a region that offers a talented workforce, and a great place to live for employees and founders. Durham Region is in-demand because it offers these qualities. We're confident our region is the very best opportunity for investment in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area.

Core brand values

Collaboration: Durham Region is an innovation community. A strong community is collaborative; our innovation community is built on our region's history of innovation and through fostered partnerships.

Service: Invest Durham supports businesses. At Invest Durham, we support the evolution of our business ecosystem so that businesses can grow, thrive and create jobs in Durham Region.

Confident: Invest Durham is confident in the current and future economic opportunity in Durham Region. We are confident in the contribution of Durham Region's innovators. We're not just innovating, we're innovating to solve global challenges. And we're confident our innovators will continue to change the world.



Invest Durham domestic value proposition

In collaboration with our partners in the Durham Economic Development Partnership (DEDP), the domestic value proposition is designed to speak to domestic audiences who already understand Canada’s offering. Our international investment value proposition will be developed as an action of this plan and will leverage the brand strength of Canada and other qualities.

Domestic Value Proposition	Key Statement
Booming Growth	We’re confident the booming growth of our community offers the very best opportunity for investment in the GTHA.
Innovating the Future	We’re confident our innovation community will continue to solve the world’s biggest challenges.
In-Demand	We’re confident you will love our creative side. Explore it in our 14 vibrant downtowns.
Talent	We’re confident innovative businesses can find the talent they need in Durham Region.



Invest Durham Marketing 2023–2027 Action Plan

Objectives

1. Achieve strong brand awareness and brand trust through promotion of our value proposition for investment, and focus on priority clusters as identified in Ready Set Future: A PLACE Blueprint.
2. Firmly establish Invest Durham as the central voice for business in Durham Region by producing and partnering to produce consistent, reliable, timely and useful information for our partners, local businesses, entrepreneurs, investors and others.
3. Strengthen our local economy and attract and retain talent to Durham Region through marketing activities and transformational storytelling that deepens quality of place and encourages a strong sense of pride in Durham Region.
4. Ensure marketing materials support investment attraction activities by building an inventory of information and resources that are data-driven, sector-specific and brand-aligned.
5. Align marketing processes to ensure our information, service and communications are industry-leading, current, consistent, reliable and responsive.





Objective 1:

Achieve strong brand awareness and brand trust through promotion of our value proposition for investment, and a focus on priority clusters as identified in Ready Set Future: A PLACE Blueprint.

Actions	Timeline	Anticipated Outcomes
1.1 Develop and deliver creative promotional campaigns, including showcasing success stories to domestic and international audiences that build the region's reputation for innovating to solve global challenges.	Medium - 2024	Increased awareness of Durham Region's value proposition for investment.
1.2 Promote the strong post-secondary talent story in Durham Region through video and promotional campaigns.	Immediate/Ongoing	Leverage our talent story to create more awareness that Durham is a place to source in-demand talent.
1.3 Promote the region's career opportunities in innovation-led companies and priority clusters across the wider GTHA.	Immediate/Ongoing	Increased draw for talent to work in Durham Region.
1.4 Through content production, and working with notable publications, develop and execute advertorial and marketing strategies that shift narratives about Durham Region while building awareness of our attributes.	Immediate/Ongoing	Brand awareness and place brand enhancement for Durham Region.
1.5 Update the Regional Value Proposition for Investment (Domestic) on a bi-annual basis with input from the Durham Economic Development Partnership (DEDP).	Near - 2023	Consistent promotion of our value proposition.
1.6 Research, develop, and promote Durham Region's Value Proposition for Investment (International) in collaboration with the DEDP and develop an associated campaign targeting international audiences.	Medium - 2024	Developed international value proposition for investment and increased awareness for desired audiences.
1.7 Collaborate, participate in and host sector-specific events that have a high value in lead generation and brand awareness including Collision Conference, Access IO, Masterclass and others.	Immediate/Ongoing	Increased brand awareness and brand trust.
1.8 Enable growth in the film industry through a refreshed region-wide film sector strategy.	Near – 2023	Cluster development, strengthen Quality of Place.
1.9 Enable growth in the music industry through the development of a strategy to become a Music Region.	Near – 2023	Cluster development, strengthen Quality of Place.



Objective 2:

Firmly establish Invest Durham as the central voice for business in Durham Region by producing and partnering to produce consistent, reliable, timely and useful information for our partners, local businesses, entrepreneurs, investors and others.

Actions	Timeline	Outcomes
2.1 Consistently communicate good news stories about innovators in our communities through social media, blog posts, advertorials and other editorial opportunities.	Immediate/Ongoing	Building brand trust and audience growth.
2.2 Establish and promote a property site or portal that lists market-ready real estate and development sites for developers and businesses seeking a regional presence.	Medium - 2024	Provide timely and useful information to investors.
2.3 Build relationships with marketing professionals at other levels of government, local companies, post-secondary institutions and others, to build trust for shared content.	Immediate/Ongoing	Leverage professional networks to increase audiences and community awareness.
2.4 Produce a monthly e-newsletter that has relevant and timely information, is easy to read and garners consistent open rates.	Immediate/Ongoing	Consistently be relied upon for business information.
2.5 Maintain and update website directories including the Downtowns of Durham, Co-Working Spaces and Networking Groups. Consider the addition of new directories based on market needs.	Immediate/Ongoing	Develop ongoing relationships with local businesses.
2.6 Engage local business audiences through partnerships with local chambers and boards of trade, Business Advisory Centre of Durham, Spark Centre, 1855 and others, to promote events and opportunities for entrepreneurship growth, including tradeshow, business events and other opportunities.	Immediate/Ongoing	Develop ongoing relationships with local businesses.



Objective 3:

Strengthen our local economy and attract and retain talent to Durham Region through marketing activities and transformational storytelling that deepens quality of place and encourages a strong sense of pride in Durham Region.

Actions	Timeline	Outcomes
3.1 Create a promotion program to attract skilled and educated workers to the region, including a dedicated website that showcases the region’s vibrant urban centres and amenities.	Long - 2025	Building brand trust and audience growth.
3.2 Work with post-secondary institutions on a Magnetic Region program to retain graduates and implement a marketing campaign to attract new graduates from elsewhere into the region.	Medium - 2024	Provide timely and useful information to investors.
3.3 Promote locally owned, micro-manufacturing and creative industry startups.	Medium - 2024	Leverage professional networks to increase audiences and community awareness.
3.4 Develop annual program with student placements to undertake reputation enhancement activities including Wikipedia entries, Getty Images updates, story pitches and campaigns.	Medium - 2025	Consistently be relied upon for business information.
3.5 Firmly establish Durham Region as the Clean Energy Capital of Canada through development of a dedicated campaign and continue to work with partners in communicating the value proposition for locating clean tech, clean energy and future energy businesses in Durham Region.	Medium - 2024	Develop ongoing relationships with local businesses.
3.6 Research and undertake a sentiment analysis of Durham’s reputation in 2023 and follow up in 2027 to determine progress.	Near - 2023 and again in 2027	Develop ongoing relationships with local businesses.

Objective 4:

Ensure marketing materials support investment attraction activities by building an inventory of information and resources that are data-driven, sector-specific and brand-aligned.

Actions	Timeline	Outcomes
<p>4.1 Complete a review and update of the Invest Durham website to ensure alignment with the Economic Development and Tourism Strategic Plan 2023-2027 and associated documents, as well as the Domestic and International Value Propositions.</p>	<p>Near – 2023 and 2024</p>	<p>Ensure key content is aligned to strategic goals.</p>
<p>4.2 Ensure marketing material inventories are available to promote programs that are developed in partnership with other teams, organizations and partners. For example, targeted training programs, business expansion programs, urban renewal projects, strategic commercial development and flagship events.</p>	<p>Immediate/Ongoing</p>	<p>Support investment attraction activities and ease of deployment of materials.</p>
<p>4.3 Redevelop the Invest Durham Community Profile.</p>	<p>Near - 2023</p>	<p>Ensure foundational marketing materials are up-to-date.</p>
<p>4.4 Develop campaigns that utilize creative messages and marketing strategies to stand out among economic development industry competitors, supporting the implied brand message that Durham Region is a welcoming environment to creative thinkers, business owners, professionals and entrepreneurs.</p>	<p>Medium - 2024</p>	<p>Leverage outcomes of priority cluster documents to create marketing campaigns.</p>
<p>4.5 Develop and or maintain key documents including the Signature Sites package, Realtor and Developer tool kit and other investment readiness materials.</p>	<p>Immediate/Ongoing</p>	<p>Ensure materials are readily available as needed.</p>
<p>4.6 Develop and maintain a library of materials available upon request to media, partners and others, which may include brand assets, images, video and others.</p>	<p>Far - 2026</p>	<p>Improve access to owned imagery.</p>
<p>4.7 Create updated Priority Cluster marketing materials to align with the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2023-2027.</p>	<p>Medium - 2024</p>	<p>Leverage outcomes of priority cluster documents to create marketing campaigns.</p>
<p>4.8 Develop marketing campaigns to promote serviced employment land in the region to attract investment from desired sectors as defined by the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2023-2027.</p>	<p>Medium – 2024 (or as lands ready)</p>	<p>Attract investment into serviced employment lands.</p>



Objective 5:

Align marketing processes to ensure information, service and communications are industry-leading, current, consistent, reliable and responsive.

Actions	Timeline	Outcomes
5.1 Measure and track performance of marketing campaigns, social media platforms and other metrics to ensure content is relevant to our audiences.	Immediate/Ongoing	Ensure key content is aligned to strategic goals.
5.2 Ensure the region's diverse community voices are reflected in all Invest Durham content including blog posts, social media and promotional materials, to better represent our residents.	Immediate/Ongoing	Support investment attraction activities and ease of deployment of materials.
5.3 Produce an annual Invest Durham report that highlights key investments and achievements of the division.	Annual	Ensure foundational marketing materials are up-to-date.
5.4 Maintain brand standards and visual assets including maps, graphics, brand guidelines and other materials to ensure they are consistent.	Immediate/Ongoing	Leverage outcomes of priority cluster documents to create marketing campaigns.
5.5 Refine the use of our customer relationship management platform to ensure processes and marketing activities are operating effectively.	Far - 2025	Ensure materials are readily available as needed.
5.6 Review industry best practices and platforms to ensure marketing materials are innovative, suited to the needs of our audiences and are considering new technologies.	Annual/Near-2023	Improve access to owned imagery.
5.7 Develop content strategy for TikTok.	Annual/Near-2023	Ensure opportunities are leveraged to grow awareness of Durham Region.
5.8 Continue to build national and international awareness of Durham Region's value proposition through targeted, industry-leading, disruptive and digital strategies.	Immediate/Ongoing	Leverage outcomes of priority cluster documents to create marketing campaigns.

Content Strategy

Themes



Good news stories

- Investment announcements.
- Quality of life – positive media about life in Durham Region.
- Quality of life – stories from Downtowns of Durham or Tourism blog if relevant, business-focused in target categories.
- Invest Durham and relevant Region of Durham news releases.
- Good news stories from local business and post-secondaries—awards and announcements, rankings, arts and culture awards (i.e., Juno Awards), major business milestones, expansions.
- Downtowns of Durham stories about new business openings, spaces available, stories of business resilience, professional services and office-based companies in downtowns, as well as storefronts.
- Local founder success stories with particular focus on the supports they have accessed.



Campaign messages – investment attraction content

- Roll out of messages tied to promotional campaigns, nationally and internationally.
- Messages about the region as the Clean Energy Capital of Canada.
- Shop Local messaging, especially as it is specific to promoting independent, innovative, creative and locally owned businesses.
- Campaigns to promote specific initiatives including virtual events or awareness of regional initiatives including the Business Count.
- Spaces and locations available for investment (real estate, employment lands projects).



Brand marketing

- General brand content – Why Durham Region?, our value proposition for investment.
- Partnership announcements and content related to event sponsorships.
- Joining and or leading conversations about Durham Region as a good place to do business.
- Career opportunities in Durham and why Durham is a good place to work.
- Advertorial partnerships with news media.
- Stories that support brand positioning and vision – confident about how we will continue to change the world and solve big problems.
- Ongoing and repetitive use of key brand iconography: (i.e., Clean Energy, apples, trails, (Capitals) farm-to-fork, creative downtowns and key brand values (collaboration, service, confidence).



Aligned partner content

- Shared content from community partners, Durham Economic Task Force, Durham Economic Development Partnership, chambers, boards of trade, Business Advisory Centre Durham, 1855 Accelerator, Spark Centre, post-secondaries, etc.
- Business success and recovery events and webinars.
- News from regional, provincial and federal investment attraction agencies, when appropriate.

Tone/Voice/Images

Key components of the social media brand voice for Invest Durham are the brand values: collaboration, service and confidence. The voice is professional and service-oriented, however, it also at times uses a personal tone to drive conversation and connection.

When Invest Durham publishes on social media, it uses a professional tone with confident, clear and concise statements pointing to key resources and information. Statements are positive and forward-thinking. In comments and replies, Invest Durham uses human and personal statements in plain language including “we are excited,” “this is a great place to do business,” or “Congratulations, Jeff!”

When appropriate, Invest Durham may use internet slang or lingo, memes and other timely content to join relevant conversations with its audience. This is done in a very limited fashion and only when related to business, quality of life or the value proposition of Durham Region for investment.



Images used by Invest Durham are brand-aligned, created in-house whenever possible and sourced from in-house libraries of images whenever possible. As a second supply, Invest Durham uses Burst and Getty Images for content that is brand-aligned. Images consistently portray the diverse community of Durham Region and consider inclusivity in content graphics and images. All content is designed to meet accessibility requirements.

Cadence

LinkedIn

Cadence	Approach
Daily – Weekdays, with occasional weekends if content volume demands it; Weekly Careers Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Five times weekly scheduled posts.• Actively replying to comments.• Thanking users who share content in their comments.• Tagging partners and users often to gain visibility.• Provided content to staff for thought leadership or increased visibility of key messages.• Boosted posts to gain visibility and followers.

Twitter

Cadence	Approach
At least daily - weekdays	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At minimum, one daily scheduled tweet.• Ad hoc content based on casual review.• Weekends – checking notifications and retweeting relevant content.• Joining relevant conversations and retweeting partner content daily.• Increased participation during events and major news stories.

Instagram

Cadence	Approach
Twice weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rotation between image and graphic to create attractive visual “grid.”• Regular “stories” features to share partner content.• Boosted posts to gain visibility and followers, promote events and support campaigns.

E-newsletter Email

Cadence	Approach
Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Good news stories – major headlines, investments.● Key marketing messages.● Push to website content – blog features, news releases, announcements.● Forward looking – upcoming events and opportunities.● Call to action to contact us.

Targeted email

Cadence	Approach
Campaign-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Sales funnel advancement email campaigns; especially following campaigns, events and other times of lead gathering.● Multi-email ‘drip’ campaigns to be executed through the year as needed in collaboration with Business Development team.

TikTok

Cadence	Approach
To be launched pending approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● For People pillar of Ready, Set, Future: A PLACE Blueprint.

Associated plans, supports, and priorities

- Durham Tourism – engage in key projects and sponsorships that align quality of life and quality of place, including Downtowns of Durham. Support marketing activities and editorial oversight.
- Collaborate with Sport Durham to support advertising and brand needs, advise on marketing strategies.
- Durham Agriculture and Rural Economic Development – supporting key activities and design marketing assets.
- Film Durham – support key activities, strategy development and design marketing assets.
- Lead and support development of Music Region project and associated materials.



Key Performance Indicators

Category	Metric	Tracking Mechanism	Target
Digital/Social	Global social follower growth; all platforms combined: Invest Durham LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, E-newsletter subscribers, etc	Hubspot and social channel reporting	Growth target set annually in consideration of market factors and trends. 2023 target is 18%
Digital	Invest Durham website views	Google Analytics	45,000 annual page views
Campaigns	Impressions and Click Through Rate, campaign dependent, website traffic final goal	Various digital platforms	15,000 new website users annually
Total Engagements	Global engagement rate across platforms	Email open rate + email clicks + social media interactions= total engagement	Target of 16,000 Engagements annually
Sentiment	Earned positive media coverage, social sentiment	Measured analysis tool to be determined	Sentiment analysis improvement, metric to be set



InvestDurham.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.