



The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

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

Subject:

Planning and Economic Development Department Achievements, 2018 – 2022

Recommendation:

Receive for information

Report:

1. Background and Purpose

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

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

2. Departmental Overview

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

The work of the Planning Division includes:

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

The work of the Economic Development and Tourism Division includes:

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

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

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

a. Broadband

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Planning Division Activities

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

3.2 Envision Durham – A substantial body of work has been done to advance Envision Durham, the Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Regional Official Plan. Informed by the latest Growth Plan forecasts¹, the MCR included a series of public opinion surveys, and theme-based discussion papers to help inform and guide the new Regional Official Plan. Various studies and reports were prepared for comment, including the technical reports for the Growth Management Study (GMS) pertaining to the overall growth forecast, employment land need, intensification potential and designated greenfield area densities. Proposed Policy Directions for a new Regional Official Plan were also released for consultation. As well, draft systems-based mapping was released for a Regional Natural Heritage System and Agricultural System.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 3.19 Durham Meadoway Visioning Study – One of the major initiatives identified in the RCP is the Durham Meadoway, which is a planned 27-kilometre trail stretching from Rouge National Urban Park in Pickering, through Ajax and Whitby to Simcoe Street in Oshawa. As the easterly extension of the existing Meadoway through Scarborough, the planned Durham Meadoway is intended as an active transportation corridor with community spaces, environmental restoration areas, education and placemaking opportunities. The Visioning Study process commenced in 2022 and is expected to be completed through 2023.
- 3.20 GO East Extension and Transit Oriented Development – In fall of 2019, the Region provided comments to Metrolinx on its Initial Business Case Update for the Lakeshore GO East Extension. Regional Council supported the approval of two-way, all day service using the CP rail line with four new stations at Thornton's Corners, Central Oshawa, Courtice, and Bowmanville. To facilitate the extension and station area planning, the Rapid Transit Implementation / Transit Oriented Development Office was established, and the review and approval of policies and delineations for Protected Major Transit Station Areas through Envision Durham was expedited.
- 3.21 Smart Mobility Durham – Smart Mobility Durham² helps reduce traffic congestion through measures that encourage higher vehicle occupancy rates, off-peak travel, shorter and fewer trips, by promoting cycling and pedestrian trips and by undertaking education and promotion activities. The Smart Commute Durham program engages 45,000 employees through its programs and events. The ASST Program has developed and implemented 12 School Travel Plans and will be working with schools to develop 8 new School Travel Plans by the end of 2023.
- 3.22 Regional Electric Kick-Scooter By-law and Demo Event – In January 2022, the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) implemented a new five-year pilot to permit the use of electric kick scooters (E-Scooters) on Ontario's roads. In response to the provincial pilot, the Region developed its own Regional Electric Kick-Scooter By-law to permit the use and enforcement of E-Scooters on Regional Roads which was adopted by Regional Council in April 2022. Staff hosted an E-Mobility Demo in June of 2022 to educate the public on the safe use of e-scooters and e-bikes and to provide an opportunity to try the devices first-hand.

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

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

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

4. Economic Development and Tourism Division Activities

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

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

In 2019:

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

In 2020:

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

In 2021:

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

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

In 2022:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. Awards and Recognition

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

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

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

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

6. Advisory Services

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

7. Conclusion

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

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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