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# The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

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To: Planning and Economic Development Committee  
From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development  
Report: #2024-P-1  
Date: January 9, 2024

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**Subject:**

Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee 2023 Annual Report and 2024 Workplan,  
File:C07-02

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**Recommendations:**

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

- A) That Commissioner's Report #2024-P-1 be received as the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee's 2023 Annual Report;
  - B) That the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee's 2024 Workplan be approved, as outlined in Attachment 1 to Commissioner's Report #2024-P-1;
  - C) That a copy of Commissioner's Report #2024-P-1 be forwarded to the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Durham Federation of Agriculture, the Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association, the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance and Durham's Area Municipalities.
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**Report:**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee (DAAC) Terms of Reference (ToR) requires the submission of an annual report to the Planning and Economic Development Committee summarizing the activities of the previous year. DAAC is also required to prepare a proposed Workplan for the coming year and when necessary, recommend revisions to the ToR, for consideration and approval of the Planning and Economic Development Committee and Council.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to:

- a. Summarize the activities of DAAC from 2023; and
- b. Present the proposed DAAC 2024 Workplan – see Attachment 1.

## **2. Previous Reports and Decisions**

- 2.1 In January 2023, Council considered the 2022 Annual Reports of the Durham Active Transportation Committee, Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee and Durham Environmental Advisory Committees through Commissioner's Report [#2023-P-3](#).
- 2.2 In April 2023, Council considered DAAC Membership Appointments through Commissioner's Report [#2023-P-11](#).
- 2.3 In June 2023, Council considered DAAC's 2023 Workplan and Terms of Reference through Commissioner's Report [#2023-P-16](#).
- 2.4 In October 2023, Council considered the summary of the 2023 Farm Tour through Information Report [#2023-INFO-87](#).

## **3. 2023 Annual Report**

- 3.1 DAAC is composed of seventeen members, including one member of the Planning and Economic Development Committee.
- 3.2 At the May 9, 2023, meeting, Zac Cohoon was elected Chair, Dave Risebrough was elected 1st Vice-Chair and Bryan Smith was elected 2nd Vice-Chair. The Meeting on May 9 was the first DAAC meeting following the approval of the membership appointments for this Council term.
- 3.3 Membership at the end of 2023 was:
  - Zac Cohoon (Chair) (Member at Large – Farmer)
  - Dave Risebrough (1st Vice-Chair) (Member At Large – Non-farmer);
  - Bryan Smith (2nd Vice Chair) (Member at Large – Farmer);
  - Neil Guthrie (Ajax);
  - Tom Watpool (Brock);
  - Tom Barrie (Clarington);
  - Derrik Stevenson (Oshawa);
  - Fuzz (Gord) Taylor (Pickering);
  - Nicole Swain (Scugog);
  - Bryant Hulshof (Uxbridge);

- Ronald Death (Whitby);
- Hubert Schillings (Member At Large – Farmer);
- Gerri Lynn O’Connor (Member At Large – Non-farmer);
- Matthew Sommerville (Member At Large – Non-farmer);
- Mark Shiers (Durham Region Federation of Agriculture);
- Jordan McKay (Durham Farm Fresh)
- Mayor Wilma Wotten (Planning and Economic Development Committee);  
and
- Councillor John Neal (Planning and Economic Development Committee -  
Alternate).

### Major Activities

- 3.4 At the first DAAC meeting of this term, members were given an orientation presentation to familiarize themselves with the role and duties of the committee.
- 3.5 The role of DAAC is to provide advice to the Region on agricultural and rural related planning matters. The Committee also has a role in implementing programs which enhance public awareness and knowledge of agriculture and rural related issues in the Region.
- 3.6 During 2023, DAAC fulfilled this role by:
- a. Expanding its knowledge of agricultural related issues by receiving presentations and engaging in discussions on the following:
    - Envision Durham:
      - (a) Regional Official Plan Growth Allocations and Settlement Area Boundary Expansions
      - (b) Draft Regional Official Plan Policies
    - The Barrett Centre of Innovation in Sustainable Urban Agriculture;
    - Proposed updates to the Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Normal Farm Practices Protection Board;
    - Updates to Regional Roads and Infrastructure Projects;
    - Avian Influenza;
    - Backyard Chickens;
    - Bill 97 - Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023 - Provincial Policy Statement and A Place to Grow Review;
    - Regional Development Charge By-Law as it pertains to;
      - (a) On Farm Diversified Uses

- (b) Agricultural Uses
  - Provincial Tax Classes as it pertains to Value Added Agriculture;
  - Region of Durham Annual Business Count;
  - Consultation on Proposed Changes to Part XV of the Health of Animals Regulations (Identification and Traceability);
  - City of Pickering – Pickering Corporate Strategic Plan;
  - Growing Agri-Food Durham Annual Report;
  - Greenbelt Plan;
  - On Farm Diversified Uses as the matter pertains to:
    - (a) Local by-laws and planning policy
    - (b) Approval challenges
  - Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022;
  - Bill 39, Better Municipal Governance Act;
  - Excess Soil and in particular discussions around challenges accepting soils on agricultural sites.
- b. Providing advice on various Regional issues, including:
  - Food prices and financial viability for the agri-food sector ;
  - Bill C-234: An Act to Amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act;
  - Proposed Provincial Planning Statement Update
  - Official Plan Amendment applications to permit surplus farm dwelling severances (ROPA 2023-001, ROPA 2023-002, ROPA 2023-03);
- c. Organizing and/or participating in the following educational/outreach initiatives:
  - Hosting the 2023 DAAC Farm Tour held on September 21 (see Commissioner's Report [#2023-INFO-87](#)). The farm tour was attended by over 100 participants and provided a unique opportunity to visit two farm operations in Blackstock (Scugog).
  - On March 1, 2023, DAAC Chair Zac Cohoon presented Agriculture 101 training to Regional Council. The training covered a number of topics related to the agricultural industry and was well received by Regional Council.

#### 4. 2024 Workplan

4.1 The proposed 2024 DAAC Workplan (Attachment 1), represents activities which are a priority, and achievable within the calendar year. The activities are divided into four categories:

- a. **Policy Development and Implementation** – Activities involve providing advice on the formulation and implementation of land use planning policies to the Planning and Economic Development Department and Planning and Economic Development Committee;
- b. **Communication/Outreach/Educate** – Activities that support community knowledge and awareness such as farm tours or workshops (including the 2024 Farm Tour and Agriculture 101 training);
- c. **Economic Development and Tourism** – Activities to encourage economic development research and implementation strategies to assist Durham’s agricultural sector; and
- d. **Issues of Interest** – Activities related to the monitoring of issues that DAAC deems significant and may require further consideration.

#### 5. Terms of Reference

5.1 DAAC is guided by Council approved [Terms of Reference \(ToR\)](#). The ToR outlines the goal, mandate and scope of activities for the Committee. No changes are proposed for the coming year.

#### 6. Relationship to the Strategic Plan

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

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

#### 7. Conclusion

7.1 DAAC had many notable accomplishments in 2023, including hosting the Annual DAAC Farm Tour and initiating Agriculture 101 training. Members should be commended for the time and commitment they have invested in the activities of the Committee. Michael Scott acted as the Planning and Economic Development Department staff liaison over the course of 2023.

7.2 It is recommended that:

- a. This report be received as DAAC's annual report on its 2023 activities;
- b. The proposed 2024 DAAC Workplan be approved (Attachment 1);
- c. A copy of this report be forwarded to the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Durham Federation of Agriculture, Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association, the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance and Durham's Area Municipalities.

## 8. Attachments

Attachment #1: 2024 DAAC Workplan

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

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Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair  
Chief Administrative Officer



## **Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee (DAAC) Proposed 2024 Workplan**

### **1. Advice on Policy Development and Implementation**

#### **a. Provide advice on:**

- Proposed amendments to the Durham Region Official Plan.
- Agricultural and rural related planning matters, with a view to:
  - sustaining the viability of farming;
  - protecting and preserving agricultural land as a first priority; and
  - ensuring adequate separation between agricultural land uses and activities and urban residential areas.
- Durham Regional Official Plan Implementation.
- Provincial land-use planning policies, plans and regulations.
- Implementation of the Regional Broadband Strategy.
- Ongoing implementation of the Agricultural Sector Climate Adaptation Strategy.
- Regional Cycling Plan Update.
- Growing Agri-Food Durham implementation.
- Growing North Durham Plan implementation.

### **2. Communicate/Outreach/Educate**

#### **a. Host the 2024 Farm Tour that will:**

- assist Local and Regional Councillors, Provincial and Federal government officials as well as Conservation Authorities (including staff), to understand the concerns, opportunities and challenges of the agricultural community;
- reach key industry partners whose mandate may impact the agricultural community; including the educational sector to understand opportunities and challenges of the agri-food industry;
- highlight the diversity of agriculture in Durham Region and the economic benefits across the agri-food value chain to support the broader Regional economy.

- b. Deliver Agriculture 101 Training to Local Municipal Councils.
- c. Continue to work with Regional Departments including Planning and Economic Development, Works, Finance and Police Services where necessary to ensure agricultural interests are considered.
- d. Encourage participation of the Durham agricultural youth organizations.
- e. Investigate other outreach opportunities as they arise.
- f. Municipal representatives on the Committee will continue to dialogue with their respective municipalities including presentations to area municipal Councils on matters of interest where appropriate.
- g. Continue to establish a working relationship with the Durham Environment and Climate Change Advisory Committee and other Regional Committees.
- h. Participate in committees and working groups with local area municipalities and non-governmental organizations.

### **3. Economic Development and Tourism**

- a. Provide advice and feedback to staff on economic development and tourism activities pertaining to support and growth of the agri-food industry.
  - On an annual basis, assist with identifying priority projects that align with activities identified in the Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan (e.g. supporting the development of on-farm diversification, implementing a Food Processing Business Retention and Expansion Project).
  - Identify emerging trends and opportunities to grow the agri-food industry in Durham.
- b. Support the implementation of the Growing Agri-Food Durham Action Plan, the Local Food BRE Action Plan and Growing North Durham Plan.

### **4. Issues of Interest**

- Federal Pickering airport lands.
- Federal Oshawa Port.
- Federal policies effecting agriculture (tariffs, carbon tax, etc.)
- Alternative energy (e.g. solar farms, biomass, wind).
- Farm safety.
- Municipal, Provincial and federal legislation and policy affecting agriculture (e.g. species at risk, provincial land use plans).
- Commercial fill, excess topsoil and excess soil
- Aggregate matters, including aggregate pit rehabilitation.



- Implementation of source water protections plans.
- Farmland assessment and taxation.
- Farm animal health and wellness (e.g. DRPS, Avian Influenza).
- Natural Heritage System protection and construction of new farm infrastructure.
- Minimum Distance Separation formulae.
- Water and wastewater master planning.
- Biosecurity, trespassing and vandalism.
- Municipal Class EA's.
- Regional road projects.
- Conservation Authority matters.
- Energy-from-Waste implementation and monitoring.
- Region's waste diversion programs.
- Local food strategy.
- Agricultural training and employment, through continued work with the Durham Workforce Authority, Durham College, and Ontario Tech University.
- Activities of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance.
- Land use planning matters.
- Other matters affecting the agricultural industry (e.g. Municipal Fire Regulations, By-laws and Permits).
- Rouge National Urban Park.
- Clean Fuel Standards.
- Supportive agri-business in Durham, addressing local agri-food supply chain gaps.

## **5. Meeting Schedule**

- a. DAAC has scheduled 10 regular meetings in 2024. An additional meeting may be held in August, at the call of the Chair. Resources (Planning and Clerks) will be provided to accommodate this schedule and workload.

- January 9, 2024
- February 13, 2024
- March 12, 2024
- April 9, 2024
- May 14, 2024
- June 11, 2024
- September 10, 2024
- October 8, 2024
- November 12, 2024
- December 10, 2024