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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-2  
Date: January 9, 2024

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**Subject:**

Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee 2023 Annual Report and 2024 Workplan, File: A01-37

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**Recommendations:**

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

- A) That Commissioner's Report #2024-P-2 be received as the Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee's 2023 Annual Report;
  - B) That the Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee's 2024 Workplan be approved, as outlined in Attachment 1 to Commissioner's Report #2024-P-2;
  - C) That a copy of Commissioner's Report #2024-P-2 be forwarded to the Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee and Durham's Area Municipalities.
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**Report:**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee (DECAC) 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. DECAC 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 DECAC from 2024; and
- b. Present the proposed DECAC 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 Environment and Climate Advisory Committee through Commissioner's Report [#2023-P-3](#).

2.2 In April 2023, Council considered DECAC Membership Appointments through Commissioner's Report [#2023-P-12](#).

2.3 In June 2023, Council considered DECAC's 2023 Workplan and Terms of Reference through Commissioner's Report [#2023-P-17](#).

2.4 In September 2023, Council considered the summary of the 2023 Pollinator Distribution Project through Information Report [#2023-INFO-75](#).

## **3. 2023 Annual Report**

3.1 DECAC is composed of thirteen members, including one member of the Planning and Economic Development Committee.

3.2 At the May 18, 2023, meeting, Geoff Carpentier was re-elected as Chair, Jay Cuthbertson was elected first Vice-Chair and Kimberly Murray was elected second Vice-Chair. The meeting on May 18 was the first DECAC meeting following the approval of the membership appointments for this Council term.

3.3 Membership at the end of 2023 was:

- Geoff Carpentier (Scugog) (Chair);
- Jay Cuthbertson (Member at Large) (1<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair);
- Kimberly Murray (Clarington) (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair);
- Muaz Nasir (Ajax);
- William Basztyk (Brock);
- Dimitri Stathopoulos (Oshawa);
- Ozair Chaudhry (Pickering);
- Bruce Foxton (Uxbridge);
- Bryan Widner (Whitby);

- Keiko Lui (Member At Large);
- Peter Cohen (Post-Secondary Member);
- Luke Nguyen (Youth Member);
- Councillor Maleeha Shahid (Planning and Economic Development Committee); and
- Councillor Wilma Wotten (Planning and Economic Development Committee – Alternate).

### **Major Activities**

3.4 At the first DECAC 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 DECAC is to provide advice to the Region on environmental and climate change-related matters. The Committee also has a role in implementing and participating in community outreach programs that support environmental awareness and appreciation in the Region.

3.6 During 2023, DECAC fulfilled this role by:

a. Expanding its knowledge of environmental and climate change related issues by receiving presentations and engaging in discussions on the following:

- The SaveSoil initiative;
- Building Energy Benchmarking and Disclosure Program;
- Envision Durham Draft Regional Official Plan Policies;
- Durham Region Organics Management Plan;
- Wetland Key Performance Indicators;
- Rethinking how we maintain roadsides and public spaces (No Mow May);
- Friends of Second Marsh Love the Marsh! Campaign;
- Annual GHG Inventory (A recap of the Durham Climate Roundtable Greenhouse Emissions and Climate Action Report); and
- Restoring and Protecting Pollinator Habitat in Rights-of-Way.

b. Providing advice on various Regional issues, including:

- The Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) process by providing input and comments on Envision Durham Draft Regional Official Plan.

- c. Organizing and/or participating in the following educational/outreach initiatives:
- Preparing for, and implementing a spring bee pollinator seed distribution project at Regional Compost Day events across all eight area municipalities, where members distributed pollinator seeds and connected with over 2,400 residents (Report [#2023-INFO-75](#)).
  - Planning and hosting the 2023 Durham Environmental Achievement Awards at the Durham Environment and Climate Forum. The hybrid forum was attended by over 120 participants either online or in-person, and provided a unique opportunity for environmental and climate appreciation in the region.

#### 4. 2024 Workplan

- 4.1 The proposed 2024 DECAC 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. **Community Outreach and Stewardship** – Activities that support community knowledge and awareness such as the pollinator distribution project, volunteer program, and the Environmental Achievement Awards program;
  - c. **Committee Education and Development** – Activities, such as presentations and tours, that enhance members' knowledge of environmental issues; and
  - d. **Issues of Interest** – Activities related to the monitoring of issues that DECAC deems significant and may require further consideration.

#### 5. Terms of Reference

- 5.1 DECAC 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 1: Environmental Sustainability's objective: To protect the environment for the future by demonstrating leadership in sustainability and addressing climate change.

## 7. Conclusion

7.1 DECAC had many notable accomplishments in 2023, including the Spring Bee Pollinator Project and Durham Environmental Achievement Awards. Members should be commended for the time and commitment they have invested in the activities of the Committee. Aneesah Luqman 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 DECAC's annual report on its 2023 activities;
- b. The proposed 2024 DECAC Workplan be approved (Attachment 1);
- c. A copy of this report be forwarded to the Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee and Durham's Area Municipalities.

## 8. Attachments

Attachment #1: 2024 DECAC 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 Environment and  
Climate Advisory Committee (DECAC)  
Proposed 2024 Workplan**



Item	Progress
<b>1.0 Policy Development and Implementation</b>	
Provide advice on	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Official Plan – input and advice on proposed amendments.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects subject to a Minister’s Zoning Order (MZO).</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Durham Community Energy Plan implementation and low-carbon pathway implementation.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate action monitoring, reporting, and reduction.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial and Regional Climate Change guidance materials.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Assessment (EA) Studies.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public and/or Stakeholder Advisory Committees.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Bill of Rights postings.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate adaptation, mitigation, and resiliency initiatives.</li> </ul>	
<b>2.0 Community Outreach and Stewardship</b>	
High Priority	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in Durham Climate Forum in partnership with the Sustainability Team</li> </ul>	Fall 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invasive and native species management and education.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore opportunities for a volunteer program.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in, and organize community environmental and stewardship events, including but not limited to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tree planting targets and initiatives, and canopy protection and stewardship.</li> <li>○ Opportunities for community clean-up/waste reduction.</li> <li>○ Identify timelines for Spring of 2024</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
Medium Priority	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and continue to implement the Environmental Achievement Awards.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to foster a working relationship with the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee, Durham Active Transportation Committee, and the Energy from Waste-Waste Management Advisory Committee.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in Climate Change outreach activities/events hosted by DECAC.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the Region of Durham Natural Features Map.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pollinator seedling distribution project.</li> </ul>	

Item	Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a forum for community climate groups.</li> </ul>	
<b>3.0 Committee Education &amp; Development</b>	
The Committee will expand its knowledge in some of the following issues:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy (e.g. sources, alternatives, producers, efficiency, etc.).</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreational uses in the natural environment.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial Planning documents.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality (e.g. Duffin Creek water treatment plant).</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human health and the environment.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green infrastructure and low impact development.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road salt.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Species at risk.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste reduction and management progress.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifecycle assessment of products and packaging (e.g. plastics).</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Microplastics.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forest, grassland, and wetland health.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active transportation.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pesticides and alternatives.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invasive species.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Native species.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban sustainability.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air quality.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food security.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community gardens.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggregate pit rehabilitation.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peat moss and top soil removal and restoration.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biological and physical decomposition (e.g. incineration, gasification, carbonization, anaerobic digestion, waste, etc.).</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noise and light pollution.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen science.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground and surface water preservation and protection.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education around Just Transition initiatives.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous reconciliation and partnership.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate justice and inequality.</li> </ul>	
<b>4.0 Issues of Interest</b>	
The committee will continue to monitor the following issues as prioritized by current events:	

Item	Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation Authority initiatives and activities, such as Carruthers Creek Watershed Plan Update and McLaughlin Bay Restoration Strategy.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial planning initiatives.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oak Ridges Moraine.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenbelt.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Official Plan Amendment applications.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water – groundwater, surface water, watersheds.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change impacts, e.g. flooding.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation developments.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waterfront protection and development.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nuclear Energy Management</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential future airport lands.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rouge National Urban Park.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban forest/naturalization strategies.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trails.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy from Waste Facility.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minister's Zoning Orders (MZOs).</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Durham Community Energy Plan – Implementation Governance Task Force.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large-scale fill operations.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste management and diversion.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental or climate incentives.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental impacts of agricultural and bioproducts producers.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air quality initiatives and metrics.</li> </ul>	

## Meeting Schedule

Due to the Committee's workload, DEAC will schedule 9 meetings for 2023. In general, meetings will take place on the third Thursday of each month. Resources (Planning Division and Legislative Services) will be required to accommodate the schedule and workload.

The 2024 meeting schedule is as follows:

- January 18, 2024
- February 15, 2024
- March 21, 2024
- April 18, 2024
- May 16, 2024
- June 20, 2024
- September 19, 2024



- October 17, 2024
- November 21, 2024