

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2564



The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee
From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
Report: #2024-P-7
Date: March 5, 2024

Subject:

2024 Planning and Economic Development Department Business Plans and Budget

Recommendation:

That the Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends to the Finance and Administration Committee for subsequent recommendation to Regional Council that the 2024 Business Plans and Budget of the Planning and Economic Development Department be approved.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to receive Planning and Economic Development Committee concurrence of the 2024 Business Plans and Budget for the Planning and Economic Development Department. The Planning and Economic Development Department's 2024 Business Plans and Budget will be referred to the Finance and Administration Committee for consideration during deliberations of the 2024 Property Tax Supported Business Plans and Budget.

2. Overview

2.1 The recommended 2024 Planning and Economic Development Department Business Plan and Budget meets the Council approved guideline for the 2024 Property Tax Supported Business Plans and Budget.

- 2.2 The 2024 Planning and Economic Development Department Business Plans and Budget supports all five goals of the Region's Strategic Plan, namely:
- a. Environmental Sustainability
 - b. Community Vitality
 - c. Economic Prosperity
 - d. Social Investment
 - e. Service Excellence.
- 2.3 The recommended 2024 Planning and Economic Development Department Business Plans and Budget includes \$25.8 million in gross expenditures requiring \$12.8 million in property tax funding with the remaining funded by program fees, provincial funding for business advisory services and debenture financing for design and professional services to advance the new stations for the GO Train East Extension.
- 2.4 Similar to last year, it is still not known if, or when, the operative changes of Bill 23 that proposed changes to the regional planning function will take effect. As such, there remains uncertainty of how Bill 23 will fully impact the Planning Division's budget.
- 2.5 The 2024 Planning Budget considers the proposed changes to Bill 23 and also reflects the transfer of the Regional Land Division approval responsibilities to the area municipalities in late 2023 impacting Application Fee Revenue which has been reduced by \$282,250, or 35%, as compared to 2023¹. To compensate for this decrease in revenue, 3 full-time positions in the Planning Division will remain vacant for the entire twelve months and as such the proposed 2024 Planning Budget does not include any salary or benefit costs for these three positions. It remains premature to make any additional changes to the operational aspects of the Planning Division until more information about the potential proclamation of Bill 23 is known.
- 2.6 The recommended 2024 Planning and Economic Development Department Business Plans and Budget provides operating and capital funding for the following Divisions and functional areas:

¹ While the transfer of consent-granting authority results in a loss of application revenue for the Region, it becomes a new source of revenue for the area municipalities as they assume this function. Under the Planning Act, municipalities are permitted to charge the proponent the anticipated reasonable cost of processing the application.

- a. Planning Division
 - Policy Planning and Special Studies
 - Transportation Planning
 - Plan Implementation
 - GIS and Visualization
 - Executive, Administrative and Support Services
 - Citizen Advisory Committees
 - Application Fee Revenue
- b. Economic Development and Tourism Division
 - Administration
 - Business Development
 - Marketing and Tourism
 - Agri-Food and Rural Economic Development
 - Business Advisory Centre Durham (BACD)
 - Community Promotion Resources
- c. Rapid Transit and Transit Oriented Development Office

3. 2023 Accomplishments

3.1 In 2023, the Planning and Economic Development Department undertook several activities including the delivery of core and mandated services:

- a. Planning Division
 - The new Regional Official Plan, Envision Durham was adopted by Regional Council in May 2023, and then forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval, along with the detailed submission record of all background reports, consultation and engagement materials.
 - Presented the recommendations for the award of funding under the new At Home Incentive Program (AHIP) to support the development of affordable housing through direct funding support through amendments to the Region's Municipal Capital Facilities By-law and released the call for the second year of applications.
 - Continued work in support of Regional efforts to advance opportunities for affordable housing by supporting Social Services in the kickoff of the Region's next 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan.

- Continued work on, and substantially completed the Durham Meadoway Visioning Study, a key component of a connected, safe, and accessible region-wide cycling network of the Regional Cycling Plan Update.
- Initiated the Cycling Wayfinding and Signage Strategy to create a unique regional cycling identity and wayfinding system and held public information centres in the fall of 2023.
- Supported the successful Pedal for Patients Charity Ride in the spring for Lakeridge Health Oshawa Foundation.
- Initiated work on Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines that will provide a comprehensive set of strategies that outline clear direction for public realm improvements around transit stations, transit corridors and other strategic growth areas across the Region.
- Collaborated with the Region's five conservation authorities and led an internal staff working group to finalize Memorandums of Understanding to guide our future working relationships and budget process with our conservation authority partners.
- Continued work in support of the Region's efforts to advance the GO East Extension.
- Supported efforts by the Finance Department to deliver the Region's updated Development Charge By-laws.
- Continued maintenance of PLANit, the Region's development tracking system.
- Presented information and staff's recommendation on various Regional Official Plan Amendment applications for Committee's consideration.
- Provided timely review of land development applications where the Region is a commenting agency to the area municipalities. Where the Region is an approval authority, provided timely review, comment and approval of development applications.
- Effectively administered the Regional Land Division Committee, and prepared for, and executed, the transfer of responsibility for land division to the area municipalities by facilitating training for municipal staff members and area municipal Committees of Adjustments.
- Assisted in the preparation and filing of comments on provincial legislative changes introduced through Bill 97 – The Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, the proposed Provincial Planning Statement, and the Greenbelt Statute Law Amendment Act to return lands to the Greenbelt.

- Supported the activities of the Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee, Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee, and the Durham Active Transportation Committee, including a Pollinator Seed Distribution project, partnering with the Durham Climate Roundtable on the Environmental Achievement Awards and Climate Forum hosting an in-person Farm Tour, and providing feedback regarding the North Durham Rail Trail Corridor.
- b. Economic Development and Tourism Division
- Delivered extraordinary customer service to prospective investors, including servicing 230 new leads, organizing and suggesting suitable real estate options for over 35 inquiries, delivering over 20 detailed pitch proposals, and hosting 14 inbound delegations and site visits.
 - Teamed up with Durham’s local innovation community—including the eight local municipal economic development teams; three post-secondary institutions; as well as 1855 Accelerator; Spark Centre, the APMA, and Ontario Power Generation—to showcase Durham Region’s exciting potential for automotive sector innovation to businesses and investors at Collision Conference, resulting in nearly 1,000 new connections and considerable growth in brand awareness among the north American tech business community.
 - Supported the Durham Region International Film Festival (DRIFF), coordinated film and television productions in Durham, increased awareness of career opportunities by hosting a Film and Television career fair with local partners, and helped businesses learn how to do business with the film and television industry.
 - Continued promotion of Durham Region as a desirable location for new investment and job creation, with a 21% growth in social media followers across the Invest Durham and Durham Tourism social channels, including strong growth in engagement on the [Invest Durham LinkedIn](#) channel.
 - Hosted the Durham 2023 Ontario Parasport Games.
 - Organized the Precision Agriculture Field Day which built on the successful Agricultural Career Video Series.
 - Organized and delivered the “Gather at the Farm” campaign to drive visitors to local agri-food producers and increase the adoption of local food in the culinary sector.

- Advanced On Farm Diversified Use support to the northern townships; in 2023, staff prepared a best practices report and launched the OFDU zoning project.
 - Organized the north Durham Building Business Forum with over 100 business attendees and a full day of content.
 - Delivered the Scugog Business Program which was funded by a successful Rural EcDev (“RED”) Grant application that had been prepared by Economic Development staff.
 - Prepared Business Toolkits for each of the northern municipalities and which are now available on each Township website.
 - Continued work on Project Woodward to establish a clean energy business and industrial park on Region-owned lands in the Clarington Energy Park.
 - Led the initiative to advance Family Physician recruitment including the securing of funding from the Region’s area municipalities through a cost-sharing agreement.
- c. Rapid Transit and Transit Oriented Development Office
- Leveraged advocacy strategies to ensure the Bowmanville GO East Extension project was announced, funded, and with procurement started. Metrolinx awarded the Construction Manager At Risk (SMAR) contract in June 2023 to finalize the design of the rail corridor extension.
 - Advocacy and technical group work with the Ministry of Infrastructure culminated in the tabling and subsequent royal assent of the *GO Transit Station Funding Act, 2023* pursuant to Bill 131: Transportation for the Future Act, 2023 on December 4, 2023.
 - Continued development of station implementation frameworks in tandem with Metrolinx Bowmanville Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) Strategy.
 - Continued Region/Area Municipal collaboration tables with Metrolinx to advance the Bowmanville GO East Extension design and feasibility assessment work.
 - Continued collaboration with Area Municipalities along the extension regarding land use permissions (i.e. in secondary plans and zoning by-laws) within the Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs).
 - Assisted with work on the Simcoe Street Rapid Transit Environmental Assessment in advancing the Visioning Study and Initial Business Case.

2024 Strategic Highlights

3.2 The 2024 Business Plans and Budgets provide critical resources to advance the programs and services provided by the Department. Some of the tasks in 2024 include:

a. Planning Division

- Enhancing the Division's growth management and data analytic capabilities to move towards the implementation of a growth management model that will better monitor residential unit supply, employment land supply as well as the availability of infrastructure capacity and servicing.
- Supporting the province's review and approval of Envision Durham, the new Regional Official Plan.
- Completing the first stage of a Regional Housing Assessment report to inform area municipal consideration of Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) opportunities in Protected Major Transit Station Areas, following numerous provincial changes to IZ regulations and applicability.
- Presenting recommendations in support of eligible new affordable housing projects through Year 2 of the Region's *At Home Incentive Program*;
- Implementing recommendations contained in the Region's 2021 Cycling Plan including:
 - (a) Drafting the terms of reference for the Durham Meadoway Environmental Assessment in partnership with area municipalities and negotiating a suitable cost-sharing arrangement for the EA work with the affected area municipalities;
 - (b) Drafting the terms of reference for the development of Durham Bicycle Parking Guidelines that will assist Regional staff, area municipal staff, developers and other stakeholders with identifying best practices in types and provision of bicycle parking facilities locations, and overall guidance of how to implement and manage high-quality bicycle parking infrastructure across Durham Region
 - (c) Completing the Signage and Wayfinding Strategy;
 - (d) Continued assistance in developing school safety plans as part of the Active and Sustainable School Travel Program (ASST); and
 - (e) Working with Lakeridge Health Foundation and Ajax-Pickering Hospital Foundation to host the "Bike for Health" charity bike ride on

June 2, 2024.

- Undertaking background work in preparation for updating the Regional Transportation Model and Transportation Master Plan.
 - Undertaking background research and modelling work to explore the use of a truck-only lane along Highway 401.
 - Conducting the 2024 Durham Region Business Count.
- b. Economic Development and Tourism Division
- Continue execution of the action items in the [2023 to 2027 Ready Set Future – A PLACE Blueprint for Durham](#), a five-year Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Action Plan.
 - Strengthen the Region’s internal investment attraction efforts and be a trusted voice to domestic and international investment audiences and coordinate seamless concierge services.
 - Advance the process of bringing the programs and services of the Business Advisory Centre Durham (BACD) into the regional corporation under the Economic Development and Tourism Division.
 - Create a new Investment Attraction Plan to identify target geographies and implement a 2024 Mission Plan to meet with prospective investors in their home markets.
 - Develop and deliver marketing campaigns through innovative digital channels to grow awareness of the Region, supporting growth of the clean energy and advanced automotive clusters.
 - Develop and implement a new Five-Year Regional Tourism Plan.
 - Continue to promote Durham Region as a destination for sporting events by bidding and hosting events that are diverse and inclusive.
 - Undertake Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) programming across north Durham and advance the On-Farm Diversified Uses Project to assist the northern townships to navigate additional commercial activities on farm properties.
 - In coordination with the Durham Economic Development Partnership, create a plan to deliver support services for major expansions to the Region’s top 50 businesses.
 - Advance Project Woodward for the purpose of establishing a clean energy business and industrial park on Region-owned lands in the Clarington Energy Park.
 - Continue to implement the Local Food Business Retention and Expansion Action Plan to support the retention and expansion of agri-food businesses, and work to grow the agri-tourism sector regionally.

- Begin implementation of the Family Physician Attraction and Retention Program in collaboration with the area municipalities, Clarington Board of Trade, and the Durham Ontario Health Team; and continue to deliver welcome and support services to the family medicine trainees in the Region.
- c. Rapid Transit and Transit Oriented Development Division.
- Advance station implementation frameworks for adoption as part of the Region's TOD Strategy for the Bowmanville GO East Extension, exploring the use of the new legislation, the *GO Transit Station Funding Act, 2023* including developing the necessary Economic Study and Bill 131 Background Study as appropriate.
 - Continue to identify transit-oriented development opportunities associated with rapid transit investment in the Region.
 - Continue to build the Rapid Transit Deployment Plan and advance in-process projects.
- 3.3 A series of initiatives are included in the 2024 Business Plans and Budgets that will help provide mitigation and adaptation measures and strategies to address the Region's climate change initiatives, including the following:
- a. Implementation of Envision Durham, the new Durham Regional Official Plan incorporates mitigation and adaptation policies, a greater focus on transit-oriented development, and a regional natural heritage system that will help address the Region's climate change initiatives.
 - b. Improved rapid transit service and the extension of GO Train service to Bowmanville will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles.
 - c. The addition of dedicated rapid transit infrastructure through the Durham Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit project along Highway 2 and a future rapid transit service along Simcoe Street will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles.
 - d. Advancing the planning and implementation of transit-oriented communities in Strategic Growth Areas, including Protected Major Transit Station Areas will create walkable, sustainable, and compact communities that provide a broader range of housing choice, with less reliance on the automobile.
 - e. Planning for active transportation projects that are designed to enable residents to get around without the need for a vehicle.
 - f. Promoting active and safe routes to school, and alternative travel choices for commuting to encourage residents and employees to choose more sustainable modes.

- g. The implementation of projects identified under the Regional Cycling Plan, including ongoing work with area municipal partners for the Durham Meadowway will help support mode shift toward active modes of transportation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
 - h. Supporting the work of the Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee to promote sustainability and climate initiatives.
- 3.4 If the applicable sections of Bill 23 are proclaimed, Regional Council's role as the approval authority for certain types of applications under the Planning Act will be removed, primarily with the three northern townships (e.g. subdivisions, condominiums and part-lot control exemption by-laws). There will be a further loss of application fee revenue at the Regional level which will be picked up by the area municipalities. The Region will continue to provide comments on development applications going forward.

2024 Risks and Uncertainties

- 3.5 Some of the risks and uncertainties that could be experienced through 2024 include:
- a. Bill 23 has introduced challenges and uncertainties in the context of an ambitious 2024 workplan and existing staff vacancies.
 - b. The potential that application revenue may not meet the forecast due to Bill 23 changes and market factors.
 - c. The procurement for the construction of the Lakeshore GO East Extension to Bowmanville has advanced substantially over the past year, and this continues to increase pressure on the Region and the Province to ensure plans for station delivery are agreed to, and advanced.

4. Future Budget Pressures

- 4.1 The Planning and Economic Development Department anticipates the following future budget pressures that are of note:
- a. The Region's population is forecast to grow at an unprecedented pace. Once the Region's new official plan is approved, the combination of pressures from Regional infrastructure and service planning, responding to development applications, housing and area municipal initiatives, will be significant.
 - b. Technological changes and improvements as the Department continues to offer a greater variety of on-line services.
 - c. The timing and amount of Transit Oriented Development and related infrastructure coordination may result in additional staffing pressures.
 - d. Ready Set Future – the Five-Year Economic Development & Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, sets out action items that require a resourcing plan, for such

activities as talent attraction and retention, and place-making. Additional resources will be needed to successfully deliver on all listed actions for the future years of 2025/2026.

5. Relationship to Strategic Plan

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

- a. Goal 5 Service Excellence – to provide exceptional value to Durham taxpayers through responsive, effective, and fiscally sustainable service delivery. By responsibly managing the Region’s financial assets, the proposed 2024 Planning and Economic Development Department Business Plans and Budget looks to optimize resources to deliver critical infrastructure and services for current and future generations.
- b. Goal 3 Economic Prosperity - To build a strong and resilient economy that maximizes opportunities for business and employment growth, innovation, and partnership.

5.2 The Strategic Priorities section of the 2024 Planning and Economic Development Department Business Plans and Budget document further highlights planned activities for the current budget year which will contribute to the achievement of the Region’s priorities outlined in the Region’s Strategic Plan.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The recommended 2024 Planning and Economic Development Department Business Plans and Budget meets the Council approved guideline for the 2024 Property Tax Supported Business Plans and Budget and supports the Department’s role in generating new investment, creating jobs, and establishing and implementing a long-term vision for the growth and prosperity of the Region.

6.2 It is recommended that the Planning and Economic Development Committee approve the 2024 Business Plans and Budget for the Planning and Economic Development Department and forward this report to the Finance and Administration Committee for consideration during the budget deliberations of the 2024 Property Tax Supported Business Plans and Budget.

6.3 This report has been reviewed by the Finance Department and the Commissioner of Finance concurs with the recommendation.

7. Attachments

7.1 The detailed 2024 Business Plans and Budget for the Planning and Economic Development Department is attached.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer

2023 Accomplishments – Link to Reports/Websites for more information

- [Envision Durham](#)
- [Recommendations for Eligible Projects Under the At Home Incentive Program for Affordable Housing](#)
- [Update to 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan](#)
- [Durham Meadoway Visioning Study](#)
- [Pedal for Patients Charity Ride](#)
- [Collision Conference](#)
- [How to do business with the film and television industry](#)
- Hosted the [Durham 2023 Ontario Parasport Games](#).
- [“Gather at the Farm”](#)
- On Farm Diversified Use [best practices report](#)
- [North Durham Building Business Forum](#)
- [Business Toolkits](#) for each of the northern municipalities.