

Report #6 of the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee

For consideration by Regional Council

November 26, 2025

The Community Growth and Economic Development Committee recommends approval of the following:

1. **Planning Fees and Charges Review**
[\(2025-CG-12\)](#)

- A) That a by-law be approved, generally in the form included as Attachment 1 to Report #2025-CG-12 of the Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development, to repeal and replace the existing Region Planning Fees and Charges By-law 20-2021 and update the fees in accordance with Report #2025-CG-12;
- B) That the new Planning Fees and Charges By-law come into effect on January 1, 2026; and
- C) That a copy of Report #2025-CG-12 be forwarded to the local area municipalities, the Conservation Authorities, the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD), and The Durham Region Homebuilders' Association (DRHBA), for their information.

2. **Region of Durham Comments on ERO Postings #025-1077, a proposed regulatory framework under the Special Economic Zones Act, 2025 that sets out draft criteria for the designation of projects, proponents and zones and #025-1001, new requirements for data centres seeking to connect to the electricity grid in Ontario**
[\(2025-CG-13\)](#)

- A) That the letter dated November 4, 2025 found in Attachment #1 to Report #2025-CG-13 of the Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development, be endorsed as the Region of Durham's response to ERO Posting 025-1001 and ERO Posting 025-1077, including the following key comments:
 - i) the Region welcomes the opportunity to meet with the province to discuss the possibility of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Durham and looks forward to collaboratively participating in the process of determining the locations of any new SEZs. If SEZs will be used as a tool for facilitating foreign direct investment attraction and improving investment readiness, the Region looks forward to working jointly with the province to identify specific opportunities;

- ii) the Region would like to work with the province to explore how energy enabling infrastructure can be expedited, while maintaining critical project oversight beyond the project area;
- iii) the Region is concerned about the potential for a SEZs being used unilaterally for data centre development within the region and requests that the province engage Regional staff on any such proposals;
- iv) it is recommended that the province include municipal support as a requirement for designating projects, proponents and zones. This would help to mitigate concerns related to decision-making transparency under the SEZs Act;
- v) the Region appreciates the clarification that unless a law is specifically named in a regulation under the SEZs Act, existing laws will apply. The province should also consult with affected municipalities if their policies and/or by-laws are at risk;
- vi) if a SEZ is considered within Durham that overlaps with Transit Station Charge collection areas, it is requested that the future Transit Station Charge by-law not be considered for exemption under the SEZs Act, as this would impair the ability to extend GO Service to Bowmanville and construct four new stations;
- vii) to ensure transparency and maintain public trust, it is recommended that the province clearly outline the safeguards in place to support fairness and consistency when using the trusted proponent model;
- viii) the Region supports the inclusion of Duty to Consult and, where appropriate accommodate as specific project, proponent and zone criteria;
- ix) the Region remains concerned that potential SEZs exemptions to the Ontario Heritage Act could result in negative impacts, including to Indigenous artifacts and burial sites;
- x) it is recommended that decarbonization potential be included as a proposed project criteria under ‘Significant and Long-Term Economic Benefits for Ontario’ because doing so will not only support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, but also economic resilience and provincial security;
- xi) it is recommended that the province indicate the process by which respective ministries (e.g., Health and Environment, Conservation and Parks) will be involved in evaluating and/or overseeing proponent’s plans;

- xii) if aggregates are considered for designation as a SEZ, the province should ensure that there are no adverse impacts to groundwater. Additionally, if traditional aggregate licensing processes are bypassed, there would be limited ability for municipalities to secure mitigation measures, haul route agreements and operational adjustments (e.g., water delivery to mitigate well drawdown, street cleaning for dust, adjusted hours of operation, etc.) that are used to create solutions to unique local issues related to these sites; and
- B) That a copy of Report #2025-CG-13 be forwarded to the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, Ministry of Energy and Mines, the Region's area municipalities, conservation authorities, and to the Williams Treaty First Nations.

Respectfully submitted,

B. Chapman, Chair, Community Growth and Economic Development Committee