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The Regional Municipality of Durham

Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee Minutes

Thursday, November 20, 2025

A regular meeting of the Durham Environment & Climate Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, November 20, 2025 in Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 7:00 PM

In the absence of J. Cuthbertson, Chair, and G. Carpentier, First Vice-Chair, K. Lui, Second Vice-Chair assumed the Chair.

1. Roll Call

Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

* all individuals participated electronically.

Members

Present: K. Lui, Member at Large, Second Vice-Chair
B. Basztyk, Brock
S. Brouwer, Uxbridge
O. Chaudhry, Pickering
P. Cohen, Post-Secondary Student attended the meeting at 7:10 PM
K. Murray, Clarington
M. Nasir, Ajax attended the meeting at 7:02 PM
Councillor Shahid attended the meeting at 7:03 PM
D. Stathopoulos, Oshawa
B. Widner, Whitby left the meeting at 8:44 PM

Members

Absent: J. Cuthbertson, Member at Large, Chair
G. Carpentier, Scugog, First Vice-Chair
C. DeAbreu, Youth Member

Staff Present: A. Bathe, S. Ciani, N. Halim, R. Inacio, D. Stewart

At this time, K. Lui introduced and welcomed S. Brouwer to the Committee as the Township of Uxbridge representative.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by K. Murray, Seconded by B. Basztyk,
That the agenda for the Thursday, November 20, 2025 Durham Environment & Climate Advisory Committee (DECAC) meeting, be amended as follows and as amended be approved:

That Feedback on a Provincial Proposal to Consolidate the Conservation Authorities be added under Section 6 as a new Item 6. D).

Carried

3. **Declarations of Pecuniary Interest**

B. Widner made a declaration of interest under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act with respect to Item 6. D) Provincial Proposal to Consolidate the Conservation Authorities. He indicated that he is currently employed by a conservation authority.

4. **Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by B. Widner, Seconded by Councillor Shahid,
That the minutes of the regular DECAC meeting held on Thursday,
October 16, 2025, be adopted.

Carried

5. **Presentations**

- A) Matthew Fair, Maintenance Operations & Fleet Services & David Stewart, GIS Infrastructure & Analytics, Region of Durham
Re: Durham Region Phragmites Management and Mapping
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David Stewart, GIS Infrastructure & Analytics, Region of Durham provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding Durham Region's Phragmites Management and Mapping.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Introduction
 - Region of Durham and Municipal Partners
 - Invasive Species Center
 - The Plan
 - Notable Resources
 - Integral Partners
- Mapping Methodology
 - Desktop Mapping and Field Verification
 - Regional Right of Ways (ROW) Mapped
 - Data Integration
 - Layer – Invasive Species Tracking
- Prioritization Methodology
 - Prioritization Ranking
- Advancements and Moving Forward
 - Artificial Detection – Rover
- Next Steps

Staff responded to questions from the Committee regarding whether the Region has received any funding from the government to use towards the phragmites management program; how phragmites management would be addressed on non-regional roads; and the anticipated timeline for implementation.

6. Items for Action/Discussion Items

A) District Energy Update (I. McVey & N. Halim)

N. Halim provided a brief update on the Region's current district energy initiatives. He shared that the Region recently received \$200,000 in grant funding from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to support the development of a district heat master plan that would include the development of a waste heat thermal map. He further advised that the Region is engaging in parallel district energy feasibility studies in the Town of Ajax, the City of Pickering, and the Municipality of Clarington.

B) Durham Climate Roundtable Fall Forum Debrief (N. Halim)

N. Halim advised that the Durham Climate Roundtable Fall Forum was a huge success with over 30 sustainability groups in attendance, and just under 200 attendees. He advised that the photographs and video of the event would be shared with the Committee shortly.

M. Nasir stated that the main feedback he received from the attendees was that at a future forum they would like a question/answer period with the panelists or break out sessions to encourage further dialogue with the residents.

C) Environmental Achievement Awards Debrief (A. Bathe)

A. Bathe advised that 5 awards were presented and that there was representation from every winner at the ceremony. She advised that the next Environmental Achievement Awards will take place in 2027.

Discussion ensued with respect to whether the call for nominations could be opened sooner to allow for more time to receive nominations; and if councillors could be given earlier notice so that they could include the call for nominations and details of the awards on their newsletters.

D) Feedback on a Provincial Proposal to Consolidate the Conservation Authorities

At this time, B. Widner did not participate in the discussion or vote on the motion that took place.

A. Bathe provided a brief background on the province's proposal to consolidate the conservation authorities.

It was the consensus of the Committee to invite the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (CLOCA) to a future DECAC meeting.

Moved by B. Basztyk, Seconded by O. Chaudhry,

- A) That the Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee (DECAC) does not support the proposal to consolidate conservation authorities as proposed; and

- B) That the following comments on behalf of DECAC, be forwarded to the appropriate staff for consideration as part of the Region's response to the province's proposal to consolidate the conservation authorities:

The province of Ontario has proposed a consolidation of conservation authorities into larger regional conservation authorities. The current situation is that the province has 36 conservation authorities with each one having extensive local expertise and knowledge of natural hazards, and their potential effects on the protection of life and property. The proposal is to consolidate these 36 conservation authorities into 7 large, regional conservation authorities. We see a number of key issues and problems with this proposal.

1. Shifting of focus.

The proposal suggests a focus on land and property development and not on natural hazard protection. The concentration appears to be a method of speeding up the issuance of building permits. There is also a suggestion of greater bureaucratic authority as opposed to technical expertise in the role of the regional conservation authorities.

While the proposed consolidation of the conservation authorities is being presented as a housing affordability solution, the provincial Housing Affordability Task Force outlined 55 recommendations on how the province can improve access to housing and conservation authority consolidation was not suggested.

2. Loss of local knowledge and technical expertise.

The consolidation will likely eliminate a number of positions within local conservation authorities. This is likely to come about with staff layoffs, and departure of staff members to other positions most likely in the private sector. The result will be a loss of this local knowledge and technical expertise as staff departs. It is this knowledge and expertise that makes the smaller conservation authorities effective in protection of human lives and property.

3. Issues with proposed boundaries of regional conservation authorities.

We question the logic of the inclusion of particular conservation authorities within the proposed new regional boundaries. In the proposal documentation it is suggested that the Central Lake Ontario regional conservation authority would include areas of Durham and the Kawarthas (pg. 2). However, the map of the new regional authorities would include the Lake Simcoe regional conservation authority, which includes north Durham, being included as part of the Huron-Superior regional conservation authority. The Lake Simcoe area has very little in common (i.e., biologically, geologically, ecologically, geographically, etc.) with Lake Huron and Lake Superior. It would be better placed with the Kawartha area in either the Central Lake Ontario, or Eastern Lake Ontario Regional conservation authorities.

4. Rethinking the consolidation.

Instead of creating seven large regional conservation authorities, it would be more useful to consolidate two or three of the smaller, under resourced conservation authorities together as one. These slightly larger conservation authorities would share the same ecological and hydrological aspects and could support each other in their functions.

Organizational consolidation and restructuring causes disruption within the organization, leading to a decline in service delivery.

Conservation Authorities work to protect local communities and ecosystems through regulating development. Education and restoration are an essential part of CAs being able to protect people and their properties from natural hazards, especially as the hazards evolve due to climate change.

Given the Province's goal to accelerate housing development and industrial projects, disrupting the work of Conservation Authorities presents an unacceptable risk to residents, property, and ecosystems.

5. Issues with the proposed regional consolidation plan.

Overall, we believe that the move to a regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities would fail to serve the needs of the residents and municipalities of the province. Canada has always seemed to focus on the big versus the small. Big government, big business, big banks, etc. to the detriment and loss of the knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm of smaller organizations. This move towards consolidation is not always best. The 36 conservation authorities have provided the province with the local knowledge, expertise, and passion for the management of natural hazards in their area. Would the same be the case with 7 Regional Conservation Authorities?

We are strong supporters for intelligent development. By our definition, this is development that has consideration for the environment, conservation, and sustainability all the while growing the province.

We believe that this proposed consolidation will have predominantly negative impacts on communities and local ecosystems and will not deliver its stated positive impacts.

Carried

7. For Information

A) Energy from Waste – Waste Management Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

A copy of the September 25, 2025, Energy from Waste – Waste Management Advisory Committee (EFW-WMAC) meeting minutes was received.

B) Report #2025-INFO-78: Update on the Cart-Based Waste Collection Pilot Expansion

A copy of Report #2025-INFO-78 of the Commissioner of Works was received.

C) Report #2025-INFO-79: Durham York Energy Centre 2025 Compliance Source Test Update

A copy of Report #2025-INFO-79 of the Commissioner of Works was received.

D) Durham Active Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes

A copy of the October 9, 2025, Durham Active Transportation Committee (DATC) meeting minutes was received.

E) Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

A copy of the October 14, 2025, Durham Agriculture Advisory Committee (DAAC) meeting minutes was received.

Moved by K. Murray, Seconded by M. Nasir,
That Information Items 7. A) to 7. E) inclusive, be received for information.

Carried

8. Other Business

There was no other business to be considered.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled DECAC meeting will be held on Thursday, January 15, 2026 at 7:00 PM.

10. Adjournment

Moved by O. Chaudhry, Seconded by P. Cohen,
That the meeting be adjourned.

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 PM

Respectfully submitted,

J. Cuthbertson
Chair

S. Ciani
Committee Clerk