



The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee
From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
Report: #2023-P-4
Date: March 7, 2023

Subject:

2023 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 2023 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 obtain Planning and Economic Development Committee concurrence of the 2023 Business Plans and Budget for the Planning and Economic Development Department. The Planning and Economic Development Department 2023 Business Plans and Budget will be referred to the Finance and Administration Committee for consideration during deliberations of the 2023 Property Tax Supported Business Plans and Budget.

2. Overview

2.1 The recommended 2023 Planning and Economic Development Business Plans and Budget meets the Council approved guideline for the 2023 Property Tax Supported Business Plans and Budget.

- 2.2 The 2023 Planning and Economic Development Business Plans and Budget supports the following five goals of the Region's Strategic Plan.
- a. Environmental Sustainability
 - b. Community Vitality
 - c. Economic Prosperity
 - d. Social Investment
 - e. Service Excellence.
- 2.3 The recommended 2023 Planning and Economic Development Department Business Plans and Budget includes \$13.3 million in gross expenditures requiring \$12.1 million in property tax funding with the remaining funded by program fees.
- 2.4 At some point in the future, it is understood that Bill 23 will have an impact on certain aspects of the regional planning function which may, in turn, affect certain aspects of the Planning Division's budget. At the time of writing this report, however, it is not known when the operative changes in Bill 23 will take effect. Therefore, the Planning Division's proposed budget for 2023 is generally the same as the Council-approved budget for 2022. It would be premature to make any changes to the operational aspects of the Planning Division until such time as the impacts of the Bill 23 changes are properly understood.
- 2.5 The recommended 2023 Planning and Economic Development Department Business Plans and Budget provides operating and capital funding for the following Divisions and functional areas:
- a. Planning Division
 - Policy Planning and Special Studies
 - Transportation Planning
 - Plan Implementation
 - Land Division
 - Executive, Administrative and Support Services
 - Citizen Advisory Committees
 - Application Fee Revenue
 - b. Economic Development and Tourism Division
 - Administration
 - Business Development
 - Tourism
 - Business Advisory Centre Durham (BACD)

- Rural and Agriculture
 - Community Promotion Resource
 - Marketing Strategy Partnerships
- c. Rapid Transit and Transit Oriented Development Office

3. 2022 Accomplishments

3.1 In 2022, the Planning and Economic Development Department undertook several activities including the delivery of core and mandated services:

a. Planning Division

- Through Envision Durham, the Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Regional Official Plan, the following was undertaken:
 - Through the Land Needs Assessment process of the Growth Management Study, released the following reports for public, agency and stakeholder review and comment:
 - (i) Proposed Alternative Land Need Scenarios Assessment Summary;
 - (ii) Recommendations on a Preferred Land Need Scenario;
 - (iii) Draft Settlement Area Boundary Expansions and Area Municipal Growth Allocations;
 - Released the following reports for public, agency and stakeholder comment:
 - (i) Identifying a Regional Natural Heritage System;
 - (ii) Implementation of the Provincial Agricultural System;
 - To support public and agency comment, implemented an on-line mapping and commenting portal;
 - Presented staff's recommendations on the Land Needs Assessment component of the Growth Management Study.
- Presented 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.
- Presented information and staff's recommendation on various Regional Official Plan Amendment applications for Committee's consideration.
- Commenced the Durham Meadoway Visioning Study, as a key component of a connected, safe, and accessible region-wide cycling network of the Regional Cycling Plan Update.

- Undertook enhancements to PLANit, the Region's new development tracking system under the provincial Streamline Development Approval Fund, allowing for the electronic submission, circulation and commenting on development applications filed with the Region.
 - Continued work in support of the Region's efforts to advance the GO East Extension.
 - Continued work in support of Regional efforts to advance opportunities for affordable housing.
 - Convened a Freight and Goods Movement Forum to identify issues and highlight opportunities in coordination with GTHA agencies.
 - 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 including effective administration of the Regional Land Division Committee.
 - Assisted in the preparation and filing of comments on provincial legislative changes introduced through Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act.
 - Supported the activities of the Durham Environmental Advisory Committee, Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee, and the Durham Active Transportation Committee, including hosting an in-person Farm Tour.
- b. Economic Development and Tourism Division
- Coordinated the work of the Durham Economic Task Force (DETF) to support Durham's business community through programs and initiatives such as the Shop Where You Live Campaign. The Shop Where You Live, Shop in Durham campaign is a joint effort with Durham's Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade and in 2022 it achieved a 61% year over year growth in traffic to the campaign landing page -[Shop in Durham Week](#).
 - Supported the Durham Region International Film Festival (DRIFF) and helped to coordinate 63 film and television productions in Durham, while increasing awareness of the industry among students by hosting a Film and Television career fair with local partners.

- 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; and Spark Centre—to showcase Durham Region’s exciting development potential to businesses and investors at Collision Conference, resulting in more than 1,000 connections.
- Continued promotion of Durham Region as a desirable location for new investment and job creation, with a 17.67% growth in social media followers across the Invest Durham social channels.
- Received council endorsement for Ready Set Future – A PLACE Blueprint for Durham, the Region’s new five-year Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Action Plan.
- Received council endorsement of the Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan, which sets out activities and goals to support the growth of the agri-food industry over the next five years.
- Supported 2 Access IO events to foster technological entrepreneurship and connect early-stage investors with innovative technological solutions in the local community.
- Advanced progress on a business case for a local food centre and assisted with the application for many Rural Economic Development (RED) grants to support our rural municipalities.
- Developed and launched a new business line for the Regional corporation, a Regional Broadband Network. Work included many successful grant applications, laying many kilometres of fibre backbone infrastructure, and establishing an entirely new special purpose entity to develop, construct, and commercially operate a network, bringing service to our unserved and underserved communities. In December of 2021, Regional Council approved the creation of a municipal services corporation that will lead future broadband initiatives.
- Delivered extraordinary customer service to 157 new prospective investment leads, organizing and suggesting suitable real estate options, hosting site visits, and preparing pitch packages.

- Bid on and hosted a variety of sporting events with local partners such as the Quidditch Canada 2022 Eastern Regional Championship and the 2022 Ontario Lacrosse Festival, demonstrating Durham Region's expertise at hosting large-scale sporting events.
 - Promoted Durham Region's vibrant agriculture sector through a variety of projects, such as showcasing 10 farms to 2,500 people at the Gates Open event and reaching more than 400 participants through a Vertical Farming 101 four-part webinar series. This webinar series supported advancement of agri-innovation in Durham region. 150 guests were also welcomed to Feast on the Farm—an event supporting industry changemakers who are championing regenerative farming and sustainable practices—in partnership with the Culinary Tourism Alliance.
 - Launched the North Durham Tourism Ambassador Program to support tourism in North Durham.
 - Continued work on Project Woodward to establish a clean energy innovation hub for business in Clarington Energy Park.
 - Advanced the servicing of priority employment lands as part of the Employment Land Servicing Project.
- 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.
 - Developed 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 the Preliminary Design Business Case for the Durham Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit project.
 - Commenced recruitment of an Active Transportation Project Manager to work in collaboration with Transportation Planning to deliver Active Transportation projects.
 - Recruited Manager TOD (Acting) and Works Technician positions.
 - Advanced detailed design of over 13 kilometres of bus rapid transit for Kingston Road, half of which will proceed to tender in 2023.
 - Commenced the Simcoe Rapid Transit Environmental Assessment by initiating a Visioning Study and Initial Business Case.

2023 Strategic Highlights

The 2023 Business Plans and Budgets provide critical resources to advance the programs and services provided by the Department. Some of the tasks in 2023 include:

d. Planning Division

- Completing Envision Durham, the Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Regional Official Plan, including recommendations on new Regional policies, designations, maps, and schedules to inform coordinated growth management, infrastructure, and service planning
- Undertaking a Regional Housing Assessment report to inform the local municipal consideration of Inclusionary Zoning opportunities in Protected Major Transit Station Areas.
- Presenting recommendations in support of eligible new affordable housing projects through the Region's *At Home Incentive Program*;
- Implementing recommendations contained in the Region's 2021 Cycling Plan including:
 - Advancing public engagement and conceptual designs for the Durham Meadoway in partnership with area municipalities;
 - Undertaking a Signage and Wayfinding Strategy;
 - Assisting in developing school safety plans as part of the Active and Sustainable School Travel Program (ASST); and
 - Working with partners to facilitate a Durham specific cycling event.
- Conducting the 2023 Durham Region Business Count, including the addition of one or two new survey questions to gauge the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on local businesses and the region's workforce.

e. Economic Development and Tourism Division

- Begin execution of the action items in the newly approved 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 capabilities and resources, through a reallocation of funds previously used for membership fees with Toronto Global, to be a trusted voice to domestic and international investment audiences and coordinate seamless concierge services.

- 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.
 - Continue to promote Durham Region as a destination for sporting events by bidding and hosting on opportunities such as the Durham Region 2023 Ontario Parasport Games and the 2023 Canadian Tire National Skating Championships, among other events.
 - Continue to support innovation and entrepreneurship regionally, working with local partners to showcase Durham Region's exciting development potential to businesses and investors at 2023 Collision Conference.
 - Undertake Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) programming across north Durham, including a Scugog focused BR+E project funded in part by the Rural Economic Development program.
 - Advance Project Woodward for the purpose of creating an energy innovation park and attracting new EN3 sector investment and jobs.
 - Advance the development of marketing initiatives to promote serviced and market-ready employment lands regionally to attract investment.
 - 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.
- f. 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.
 - 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
- 3.2 A series of initiatives are included in the 2023 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. Envision Durham, the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review of the 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. The *At Home Incentive Program* supports the delivery of needed affordable housing.

- c. The PLANit development tracking system will enable streamlined on-line submission, while supporting data collection, tracking and monitoring of new developments.
 - d. Improved rapid transit service and the extension of GO Train service to Bowmanville will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles.
 - e. Advancing the planning and implementation of transit-oriented communities in Protected Major Transit Areas will create walkable, sustainable, and compact communities that provide a broader range of housing choice, with less reliance on the automobile.
 - f. 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.
- 3.3 Until such time as changes to the Planning Act are proclaimed by the province, the role of Regional Council in the approval of planning applications remains unchanged. However, once the applicable sections of Bill 23 are proclaimed, Regional Council's role as the approval authority of certain applications under the Planning Act will be removed, primarily with the three northern townships. Similarly, Regional Land Division responsibilities will be assumed by the area municipalities. Area municipal responsibilities within the southern five lakeshore municipalities, including approval of official plan amendments, zoning by-law amendments, draft plans of subdivision and condominium will continue. The Region will continue to provide comments on development applications.

2023 Risks and Uncertainties

- 3.4 Some of the risks and uncertainties that could be experienced through 2023 include:
- a. Bill 23 has introduced challenges and uncertainties in the context of an ambitious 2023 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. Restrictions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 may have a continued impact on the business community including the hardest hit retail, hospitality, and tourism sectors.
 - d. The procurement for the construction of the Lakeshore Go East Extension to Bowmanville will advance substantially in the upcoming year, and this will increase pressure on the Region and the province to ensure plans for station delivery are agreed 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 new Five-Year Economic Development & Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, sets out an action item to create a resourcing plan for currently un-resourced components of the Strategy. This resourcing plan will identify further details related to talent attraction, place-making, and job creation.

5. Relationship to Strategic Plan

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

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 2023 Planning and Economic Development Department Business Plans and Budget looks to optimize resources to deliver critical infrastructure and services for current and future generations.

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 2023 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 2023 Planning and Economic Development Department Business Plans and Budget meets the Council approved guideline for the 2023 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 2023 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 2023 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 2023 Business Plans and Budget for the Planning and Economic Development Department is attached.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

Elaine Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer