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Our Mission

Meeting the needs of the Durham community through leadership, co-operation and service excellence.
MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL CHAIR AND CEO

In 2003, Durham Regional Council was pleased to introduce its first Community Strategic Plan. Each year updates were presented to council, and a highlights document was published that outlined the progress being made. In 2008, council decided that it was time to revisit the plan to ensure that the direction of the organization was still based on priorities that are important to our community.

I am delighted to present our new Strategic Plan. The plan’s development has been guided by the Steering Committee comprising Mayor Marilyn Pearce (Chair), Mayor Jim Abernethy, Mayor Pat Perkins, Chief Administrative Officer Garry Cubitt and Commissioner of Human Resources Garth Johns.

Much of the focus is the same – with the economy, strong communities and the environment remaining as key factors. However, since the previous plan was adopted, there has been increasing awareness of climate change and the effects that it will have on our lives. Consequently, sustainability is the overarching principle that guides this plan. We need to ensure that what we do today will not adversely impact the citizens of tomorrow.

As I write this, the economic situation here in Durham is a little more unsettled than it was when our original plan was developed. It is more important than ever that our resources are directed in the most appropriate places. I look forward to our organization developing strategies that will bring to life the goals and objectives outlined in this new plan. By engaging our various partners and encouraging collaboration, I hope that the community will join together and continue building a strong, vibrant region that will be sustainable for future generations.

Roger Anderson
Regional Chair
REGIONAL COUNCIL 2006-2010

Back Row (L to R)
Councillors Scott Crawford (Ajax); John Neal (Oshawa); Rick Johnson (Pickering); Howie Herrema (Uxbridge); Bonnie Littley (Pickering); Bill McLean (Pickering); John Henry (Oshawa); Nester Pidwerbecki (Oshawa); John Grant (Brock); and Joe Kolodzie (Oshawa)

Middle Row (L to R)
Councillors Colleen Jordan (Ajax); Jim McMillen (Scugog); Don Mitchell (Whitby); Charlie Trim (Clarington); Joe Drumm (Whitby); Robert Lutczyk (Oshawa); Mary Novak (Clarington); Brian Nicholson (Oshawa); April Cullen (Oshawa); and Gerry Emm (Whitby)

Front Row (L to R)
Mayors John Gray (Oshawa); Jim Abernethy (Clarington); Dave Ryan (Pickering); Pat Perkins (Whitby); Regional Chair Roger Anderson; Mayors Marilyn Pearce (Scugog); Steve Parish (Ajax); Larry O’Connor (Brock); and Bob Shepherd (Uxbridge)
Introduction

BACKGROUND

In 2008, Regional Council decided that the organization should develop a new strategic plan. While the Community Strategic Plan – created in 2003 – had been an excellent road map for the Region, changing times and a growing population suggested that a renewal of the plan would be beneficial. Increased awareness of the impacts of climate change, and the effects it will have on the environment, economy and social fabric of our region and beyond, also supported the need to revisit the plan.

As a result, sustainability is the overarching principle guiding the goals outlined in this plan – and more importantly will steer implementation activities that will assist in achieving those goals. Sustainability has been characterized in many different ways, but Canada’s National Task Force on Environment and Economy has a definition that is easily understandable and can be used by all organizations:

“Development which ensures that the utilization of resources and the environment today does not damage prospects for their use by future generations.”

The Region of Durham understands that even greater awareness is essential, and that the incorporation of sustainability principles into the business decision-making process is required. This has already been occurring, but will now have a more formalized approach. The role of Regional Council to provide leadership and vision is a critical one.

The Durham Region Strategic Plan has a timeframe of six years. It is anticipated that when the next Regional Council is elected in 2010, they will review this plan and either ratify it as it stands, or make modifications to reflect any shift in priorities.

PROCESS

Plan development has been under the leadership of a Steering Committee comprising Regional Councillors Marilyn Pearce (Chair), Jim Abernethy, Pat Perkins, CAO Garry Cubitt, and the Commissioner of Human Resources Garth Johns. Pauline Reid, Policy and Research Advisor, from the Regional Chair and Chief Administrative Officer’s office, has been the Project Director for this initiative.

Broad consultations were held with regional stakeholders – councillors, staff, businesses, industry, education and health care sectors, social agencies, other levels of government, cultural groups, diversity groups, public libraries, conservation groups, churches, the energy sector, as well as residents. These consultations took the form of focus groups, a stakeholder forum and a telephone survey of 800 residents region wide.
PURPOSE

The development of a strategic plan assists in the following:
• Gives the public a voice in the direction of the organization.
• Identifies important issues and opportunities.
• Identifies common priorities.
• Establishes a common vision, goals and objectives.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Region’s business planning cycle is closely aligned with the strategic plan as the priorities outlined in the plan steer the Region’s operations.

Business planning is an ongoing cycle. This strategic plan is the guiding document by which programs are established and maintained. While the plan takes its direction from the priorities that have been identified through the consultation process, it is also important to recognize that many of Durham Region’s activities are mandated by the province.
Durham in context today

QUICK FACTS

• Durham consists of eight local municipalities: Ajax, Brock, Clarington, Oshawa, Pickering, Scugog, Uxbridge and Whitby.
• Durham’s area is 2,537 square kilometres (979.5 square miles).
• Durham’s population is approximately 606,750.
• There are approximately 203,925 households in Durham.
• Durham has the largest area of agricultural land in the GTA.

REGIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Most of the Region’s programs and services are overseen by four standing committees: Health & Social Services, Finance & Administration, Planning and Works. However, Durham Regional Police Service is governed by the Police Services Board and the Durham Region Transit Commission is the decision making body for Durham Region Transit.

Transit

Durham Region Transit was created in 2006 as an integrated transit system providing communities throughout the region with both conventional and specialized transit services.

What these services mean to our residents:

• Service to both rural and urban areas of Durham.
• An affordable, convenient and environmentally superior transportation mode.
• Travel options to meet diverse, specialized needs, including door-to-door transit for passengers with disabilities.

Police

To keep the public safe, the police provide a wide range of crime prevention and law enforcement services to our community.

What these services mean to our residents:

• Safe communities – we provide 24/7 police coverage, active crime prevention and education strategies, and immediate response to life-threatening situations. Our carefully deployed and professionally equipped team works closely with local municipalities, school boards, community organizations and other partners to keep our communities safe.
THE FOUR STANDING COMMITTEES

Health & Social Services
This committee oversees the programs administered by the Health Department and the Social Services Department. Both of these are large departments and many of the services delivered are mandated by the province. Responsibilities include:

• Land ambulance services.
• Long-term care facilities and services for seniors.
• Ontario Works programs and services.
• Public health programs and services.
• Social housing.
• Child-care centres, nursery school programs and Durham Behaviour Management Services.
• Family counselling.

What these services mean to our residents:
• During 2008 Emergency Medical Services responded to more than 80,000 calls.
• Our long-term care facilities are home to 847 residents.
• We provide social assistance to the people and families who need it, as well as supports to assist them to return to employment.
• The Health Department holds free flu clinics each year.
• Durham Region has 4,446 subsidized housing units.

Finance & Administration
This committee is responsible for the work of the support departments and divisions such as Clerk’s, Finance, Legal, Human Resources, Economic Development and Tourism, Chief Administrative Officer’s Office, Durham Emergency Management Office and Corporate Information Services. Specific services include:

• Emergency management.
• Water and sewer billing.
• Property tax policy.
• Economic development and tourism.
• Provincial offences court, prosecution services, administration and collection of fines.
• Borrowing money for capital expenditures of upper- and lower- tier municipalities.
What these services mean to our residents:

- Durham Emergency Management Office coordinates an effective response to natural and human-caused disasters to ensure the safety of our residents.
- The Clerk's Department’s Call Centre handles thousands of information and service request calls.
- The Region’s strong AAA credit rating means that money borrowed to finance Regional and local initiatives is repaid at a lower interest rate.
- In partnership with area municipalities, our Economic Development and Tourism Department promotes the region locally, nationally and internationally to attract new businesses and industry – making Durham a place of opportunity.

Planning

The Planning Committee oversees the work of the Planning Department and tasks include:

- Delegated authority for local municipal official plans and amendments.
- Durham Region Official Plan and implementation.
- Industrial, commercial and residential development approvals.
- Land division consent applications.
- Strategic land use planning.
- Subdivision and condominium approvals.

What these services mean to our residents:

- Development applications are reviewed and approved in a form that is consistent with Regional policies.
- Agricultural areas are protected for food production and contribute to food security.
- A Durham Trails Network is established linking all Durham municipalities, promoting outdoor recreation and tourism.
- Our natural heritage, including forests and wetlands, is protected.

Works

The Works committee is responsible for oversight of the Region’s second largest department. Services include:

- Municipal water supply, treatment and distribution.
- Regional roads, bridges and traffic signals (Regional roads are those which cross municipal boundaries).
• Sanitary sewage collection and treatment.
• Waste management.

**What these services mean to our residents:**

• Our municipal water supply is of excellent quality, meeting or exceeding Ontario water regulations and guidelines.
• We maintain, improve and expand the Regional transportation network.
• Protection of our water resources.
• Through our award winning municipal recycling facility, the residential diversion rate in urban areas exceeds 50 per cent with a goal of 70 per cent diversion by 2010.

**LOCAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

The eight area municipalities have distinct responsibilities which are different from Regional services. These include:

• Municipal elections.
• Property tax collection.
• Fire protection and prevention.
• Parks and recreation.
• Library services.
• Collection of garbage, green bin compostables, yard waste (for Oshawa and Whitby only).
• Parking and by-law enforcement.
• Local planning and development.
• Building and plumbing inspections and permits.
• Business and lottery licensing.
• Local streets and sidewalks.
• Property standards.
• Animal control.
Future direction

VISION

The vision statement that was created in 2003 has been retained. Participants in the recent consultation agreed that we should celebrate the individual characteristics of each community while working together to achieve common goals.

**Durham will be a united group of vibrant and diverse communities recognized for their leadership, community spirit and exceptional quality of life**

MISSION

The mission statement describes the fundamental purpose of the Region’s role in service delivery to the public.

**Meeting the needs of the Durham community through leadership, co-operation and service excellence**

VALUES

The Region of Durham has a set of values, which are integral to the organization’s collective behaviour.

**Ethical Leadership**

We demonstrate integrity and vision, providing the organization with good governance and management.

**Accountability**

We respond to the changing needs of residents and other organizations by providing transparent government within the framework of financial sustainability.

**Service Excellence**

We encourage professional excellence through collaboration, partnerships and teamwork in an environment that fosters trust and respect.

**Continuous Learning and Improvement**

We support life-long learning and commitment to innovation, research, knowledge exchange and ongoing program evaluation.

**Inclusion**

We provide an accessible, inclusive environment that values the diversity of our staff and the community.
STRATEGIC THEMES

From the broad consultation phase five themes emerged

1. Promote and strengthen a vibrant economy that will support prosperity for Durham residents, businesses and organizations.

2. Protect and enhance our environment for today and tomorrow through stewardship of our natural resources.


4. Enhance partnerships while providing continued service excellence.

5. Promote a safe, healthy, caring, inclusive community.
1. PROMOTE AND STRENGTHEN A VIBRANT ECONOMY THAT WILL SUPPORT PROSPERITY FOR DURHAM RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS
Goals

1.1 Develop a regional economic strategy that creates a more diversified base with high-paying jobs.

1.2 Strengthen support for the agricultural sector.

1.3 Create more opportunities for residents to live and work in Durham.

1.4 Market the “Durham Advantage” of UOIT as a centre for high technology jobs, and Durham College as a skills training centre of excellence.

1.5 Advance Durham as the energy capital of Ontario.

1.6 Promote and market Durham, both inside and outside of the region.
2

PROTECT AND ENHANCE
OUR ENVIRONMENT FOR TODAY AND
TOMORROW THROUGH STEWARDSHIP
OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES
Goals

2.1 Strengthen efforts to protect our rural resources.

2.2 Develop a strategy to enhance food security.

2.3 Enhance ecological health with a continuous natural heritage and greenland system.

2.4 Protect the quality and quantity of both ground and surface water.

2.5 Demonstrate leadership in waste reduction and reuse strategies, while managing residual waste effectively.

2.6 Develop a community-based action plan to mitigate and adapt to climate change, implementing strategies to use energy efficiently, and reduce air and light pollution.
3

BALANCE GROWTH, ENABLING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
Goals

3.1 Ensure design that promotes sustainable communities, limiting sprawl through increased density within existing built boundaries and any new expansion areas, in accordance with Durham Region’s Official Plan.

3.2 Promote and support the revitalization of downtowns.

3.3 Encourage the development of more cultural and arts opportunities, while fostering the preservation of our natural, built and cultural heritage.

3.4 Support the co-ordination of growth with the provision of both hard and soft infrastructure and services.

3.5 Encourage the development of an integrated transportation system that includes alternative transportation development (e.g., cycling, walking).

3.6 Reinforce the distinct character of our rural and urban areas.

3.7 Protect employment lands, which include our agricultural lands.
PROMOTE A SAFE, HEALTHY, CARING, INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY
**goals**

4.1 Provide accessible, affordable and responsive emergency and public health services.

4.2 Maintain strong, safe communities with a focus on crime prevention.

4.3 Develop a broad range of affordable housing.

4.4 Foster improved collaboration between both service providers and the volunteer community.

4.5 Strengthen accessibility to appropriate services which respond to the needs of our diverse community, including children, youth and the aging population.
ENHANCE PARTNERSHIPS
WHILE PROVIDING CONTINUED
SERVICE EXCELLENCE
Goals

5.1 Increase and strengthen intergovernmental co-operation and partnerships, including the sharing of resources.

5.2 Improve communication between the Region, residents and other levels of government and agencies, increasing awareness of Regional services.

5.3 Preserve Durham’s strong fiscal position and administrative excellence.

5.4 Provide an environment that sustains an effective, motivated, healthy workforce.
Implementation

TRANSLATING WORDS INTO ACTION

Implementation Plan
Early in 2009, the Region will prepare an implementation plan. Each department will identify specific actions to support the objectives outlined in the plan. As economic forecasting and business plans are developed, consideration will be given to include financial provision for identified actions. Budgets will show the links to each of the broad themes and the associated goals. Performance indicators will be identified to measure the progress made in each of those actions.

Training
The Region will continue to include strategic planning in its corporate orientation program for new staff. In addition, the strategic planning sessions offered to staff as part of the ongoing training program will be modified to reflect this new plan.

As a new initiative, at the beginning of each term of council, the plan will be reviewed as part of the orientation process. A training session will be held to ensure that both new and returning councillors familiarize themselves with the priorities of the plan, and how those priorities fit with their communities' current needs. Each new council may ratify the existing plan, or request the development of a new one.

Communications
This document will be a key communication tool for Durham Region. It will be shared with the participants from the recent strategic planning exercise and input from them will be welcomed as the plan is implemented. In addition, the plan will be available to the public on our website.

Partnerships
A key to success in the implementation of this plan is developing and fostering partnerships. Since the creation of the 2003 plan, a great deal of effort has been made to enhance existing partnerships and cultivate new ones. We will continue to nurture these invaluable relationships during the implementation of this plan.

MONITORING PROGRESS
The Regional Municipality of Durham is committed to open, transparent and responsive government. Regular reporting on the progress we are making in achieving the objectives identified in the plan is part of this accountability. Staff will be preparing annual reports, along with summary documents. These will be available in both hard copy and on our Regional website.
LAND AREA

2,535 square kilometres (980 square miles)

Durham Region is the largest geographical jurisdiction in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), stretching from Lake Ontario in the south to Lake Simcoe in the north.
MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

The initial task is complete – the production of the actual Strategic Plan. It is now that the more challenging part begins. Staff will work diligently to ensure that our operational plans and service delivery reflect the priorities identified in the plan.

Following our first Community Strategic Plan in 2003, detailed progress reports and a summary booklet were provided to Regional Council. A similar process will be used to report back to council and the public as we work towards implementing this new plan.

We are encouraged by the interest shown in the development of this plan – by councillors, staff, industry and businesses, non profit organizations and our residents. As we move forward and operationalize the goals and objectives, being mindful of the principle of sustainability, we urge you to continue your involvement. This involvement can be shown by adopting some of the objectives as your own, by considering whether your business decisions meet the “sustainability” test, or by providing us with feedback when we share our annual report.

In 2009, we will, no doubt, meet many challenges along the way. The strategic plan we have developed provides a map for us to follow for several years to reach our goals.

Garry H. Cubitt, M.S.W.
Chief Administrative Officer
SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Ray Briggs
Corporate Information Officer

Jim Clapp
Commissioner of Finance

Garry Cubitt
Chief Administrative Officer

Cliff Curtis
Commissioner of Works

Dr. Hugh Drouin
Commissioner of Social Services

Mike Ewles
Chief of Police

Ted Galinis
General Manager, Transit

Alex Georgieff
Commissioner of Planning

Garth Johns
Commissioner of Human Resources

Dr. Robert Kyle
Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health

Pat Madill
Regional Clerk

Pat Olive
Commissioner of Economic Development and Tourism

Brian Roy
Regional Solicitor
CONTACT INFORMATION

Regional Headquarters Building
P.O.Box 623, 905-668-7711 or
605 Rossland Rd. E. 1-800-372-1102
Whitby, ON L1N 6A3 www.durham.ca

Regional Chair and CEO
Roger M. Anderson ext. 2000
Email: chair@durham.ca
fax: 905-668-1567

Chief Administrative Officer
Garry H. Cubitt ext. 3000
Email: cao@durham.ca
fax: 905-668-5831

Clerk’s Department
Regional Clerk – Pat Madill ext. 2100
Email: clerks@durham.ca
fax: 905-668-9963

Corporate Communications
Director – Sherri Munns-Audet ext. 2068
Email: corporatecommunications@durham.ca
fax: 905-668-1468

Corporate Information Services
Corporate Information Officer – Ray Briggs ext. 2125
Email: cishelp@durham.ca
fax: 905-666-6205

Durham Emergency Management Office
Director – Ivan Ciuciura 905-430-2792
Email: demo@durham.ca
fax: 905-430-8635

Durham Regional Police Service
Chief of Police – Mike Ewles 905-579-1520
605 Rossland Rd. E., Box 911, 1-888-579-1520
Whitby, ON L1N 0B8 fax: 905-721-4249
Email: media@drps.ca
Durham Region Transit  
General Manager – Ted Galinis  
Email: transit@durham.ca  
fax: 905-666-6193

Economic Development and Tourism  
Commissioner – Pat W. Olive  
Email: business@durham.ca or  
tourism@durham.ca  
1-800-706-9857  
1-800-413-0017  
fax: 905-666-6228

Finance Department  
Commissioner – R. Jim Clapp  
ext. 2300  
fax: 905-666-6256

Health Department  
Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health – Dr. Robert J. Kyle  
Email: health@durham.ca  
fax: 905-666-6214

Human Resources  
Commissioner – Garth S. Johns  
ext. 2044  
fax: 905-666-3327

Legal Department  
Regional Solicitor – Brian J. Roy  
Email: legal@durham.ca  
fax: 905-668-4752

Planning Department  
Commissioner – Alex L. Georgieff  
Email: planning@durham.ca  
fax: 905-666-6208

Social Services Department  
Commissioner – Dr. Hugh A. Drouin  
Email: socserv@durham.ca  
fax: 905-666-6219

Works Department  
Commissioner – Cliff Curtis  
Email: works@durham.ca  
fax: 905-668-2051
THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF DURHAM

605 ROSSLAND RD. E., WHITBY, ON L1N 6A3

905-668-7711 OR 1-800-372-1102

www.durham.ca