

THE  
**RIGHT  
CHOICE**  
FOR A **bright  
future.**



2017-2021

# Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan

May 3, 2017

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## Message from Durham Regional Council

The 2017-2021 Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan for Durham Region affirms the Regions commitment to grow and strengthen our business community.

Economic advantage and opportunity live here. Building on an already well-established entrepreneurial spirit and culture, Durham is leveraging success and creating opportunity. Housing here is affordable; in fact, average house prices in Durham are more affordable here than in any other Regional Municipality in the GTA. Ranked by 2017 MoneySense as the #1 community in the GTA (Durham/Oshawa) for purchasing real estate, and #9 in all of Canada, this is a quality community. The Fraser Institute has ranked ten schools across Durham Region in the top 200 schools in Ontario.<sup>1</sup> Importantly, Durham is home to the right blend and mix of businesses. It is this perfect clustering of affordability, accessibility and connectivity that makes Durham the right choice.

Ontario's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe sets a target of 430,000 jobs, and projects that 1.2 million people will call Durham Region home by 2041. Our Region is well on the way to achieving these targets. In 2017, we are already home to 95 foreign owned businesses, 125,621 full-time\*, 55,862 part-time\* and 12,147 seasonal employees and an incredibly well-connected and diverse business community comprised of 12,220 enterprises in total.<sup>2</sup>

Durham Region is geographically, culturally and economically diverse. We have large urban cities, smaller towns and quaint villages that support both a bustling urban environment and a prosperous rural and agricultural economic base. And we are continuing to transform and evolve. We have world-class learning institutions that offer post-secondary and graduate professional and technical training opportunities that will provide a ready supply of future labour force participants and community leaders.

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<sup>1</sup>Citation: [Fraser Institute Website](http://www.fraserinstitute.org), www.fraserinstitute.org

<sup>2</sup>Citation: Durham Region 2016 Business Count

This Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan identifies the work we will do to build the best economic future for Durham Region by being:

- a supporter of business;
- a builder of jobs and the economy;
- a highly effective collaborator and facilitator; and
- the choice location for business, investment and labour.

Durham Region 2017-2021 Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan will enable us to ensure that our journey to be the most affordable, the most desirable, and the most prosperous Region in Canada will be realized. Welcome to Durham Region – the right choice for an incredibly bright future.

If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact the [Accessibility Coordinator](#) at [accessibility@durham.ca](mailto:accessibility@durham.ca) or 905-668-4113 ext. 2619.

## Section 1.0: Statement of Purpose and Intent

### 1.1. Introduction - Purpose of the Strategy and Action Plan

This document represents Durham Region's Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan. The actions identified in this document, both individually and in combination, are about realizing **the best** economic outcomes for Durham. The approval by Regional Council of the new 2015-2019 Strategic Plan - Growing Together Reaching Further Aspiring Higher - provided an important platform for advancing an even stronger and more diversified economy, more local employment, value-added agriculture and technological innovation.

This Strategy and Action Plan has been developed collaboratively with area municipal economic development specialists, community leaders and members of the business community. Thirty companies, twenty-five associations, business groups, realtors and post-secondary institutions were engaged in its development. Close to fifty one-on-one interviews were completed to provide the Region with crucial insight from key partner and business leaders. An online survey also provided an opportunity for digital input from community members. The collective input has been synthesized, and has been used to develop and inform this Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan. In addition, considerable community outreach took place in the form of Community Roundtable Sessions that supported community-based input and engagement.

This Strategy and Action Plan is one of many tools that will be used by Regional Council to provide leadership in implementing economic development initiatives. This document is a testament to the fact that much work has been done to put Durham Region 'on the economic development map.' At the same time, it is an acknowledgement that while we are heading in the right direction, more focus and alignment is needed to achieve even better outcomes. We have work to do and this document articulates the actions that we are committed to undertake for the work planning period 2017-2021.

This Strategy and Action Plan will be used by many different individuals and organizations. Those who will find this document of interest include:

- Elected officials and community leaders across Durham Region;
- Members of the business community and potential investors who are interested in better understanding the Region's plans to achieve long-term economic growth and prosperity;
- Economic development partners interested in exploring collaborative opportunities and working to build better economic outcomes;

- Area Municipal staff who will use this document to develop their own Economic Development strategies; and
- Community leaders and economic development professionals from other jurisdictions interested in learning about exemplary economic development practices.

In addition to serving a broader audience, this Strategy and Action Plan will guide the direction of the Region's Economic Development and Tourism Division for the next five years. As such, it offers an important operational/business planning tool for Economic Development and Tourism staff to align resources (fiscal and human) in keeping with defined priority projects and initiatives.

## 1.2 Our Vision, Mission, Values and Guiding Principles

Economic development plays a pivotal role in advancing the corporate Vision for Durham Region, as articulated in the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan which states that: "Durham Region will be a united group of vibrant and diverse communities recognized for their leadership, community spirit and exceptional quality of life." In keeping with this corporate vision, an Economic Development Vision, Mission and Governing Principles have been developed to support this Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan:

### **Our Economic Development Vision**

Durham Region will be the most prosperous and innovative region in North America.

### **Our Economic Development Mission**

To partner with others to support innovation, business growth and economic opportunities for Durham Region.

## **Our Governing Principles**

In carrying out our responsibilities, we will be guided by our corporate values of ethical leadership, accountability, service excellence, continuous learning and improvement and inclusion. We will be driven by a business service mindset, and we will ensure that our actions, at all times, leave a lasting and positive impression with existing and potential investors.

This Strategy and Action Plan is premised on the principles of collaboration and partnership; in fact, these are our keys to success. As Dr. Martin Luther King noted so eloquently in 1967, “We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

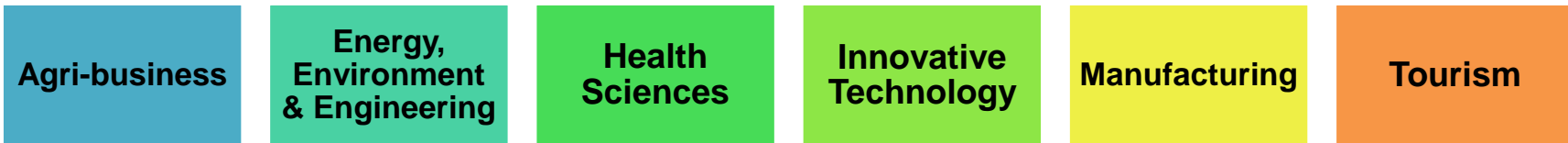
For these and so many other important reasons, successful implementation of this Strategy and Action Plan requires a collaborative approach that will engage the efforts of many including:

- Area municipal economic development staff across the Region;
- Staff from all Regional departments;
- Elected officials, community leaders and engaged partners;
- Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce;
- The ICI real estate and development industries;
- Spark Centre, Business Advisory Centre Durham (BACD), Durham Workforce Authority (DWA), Durham Region Employment Network (DREN);
- Durham’s elementary, secondary and Post-Secondary Institutions;
- The agricultural community;
- The tourism sector; and
- The network of health care institutions.



## 1.3 Key Economic Development Sectors

Durham Region's economic diversity and the composition of the employment base by sector mirrors that of the Greater Toronto Area as a whole. Taking a multi-faceted lens, and recognizing the important contribution that various sectors make to the overall economy, Durham Region will focus its efforts to support and build upon the following six key sectors:



### Agri-business

Agriculture remains a fundamental strength of Durham Region's economy. In Clarington and North Durham, the prevalence of prime agricultural land and the presence of the Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine have enabled the preservation of greenspaces. Durham's agricultural sector is diverse and includes: Oilseeds and grains; beef cattle; greenhouses, nursery and floriculture; dairy cattle and milk; and poultry and eggs.

The agri-business industry in the Region prides itself on embracing technology and innovation with some of the most progressive and skilled managers in the industry. Durham's agriculture production has grown from traditional commodity crops to include new biomass crops for the next generation of energy, biofuels and chemicals, as well as new crops to meet the growing demand from our ethnically diverse population. Some have also diversified into related processing, retail, hospitality and tourism business ventures. A major asset for the Agri-food sub-sector is the W. Galen Weston Centre for Food at Durham College.

The Region continues to aspire to grow its still modest food-processing sector. A considerable number of local food processing facilities are currently farm-based, and the lack of serviced industrial land in North Durham acts as an impediment to attracting new and/or expanding processing facilities to this area. Foreign direct investment in Agri-business includes, but not limited to: Del Monte Fresh Produce and Hela Spice Canada.

Livestock breeders in Durham Region are world renowned for their quality genetics, which are found in many countries around the world.

The Durham Agricultural Strategy emphasizes industry attraction, retention and expansion; outreach and education; a supportive policy environment; and labour force development as areas of focus. These continue to be supported through the Economic Development annual work plans.

## **Energy, Environment and Engineering (EN3)**

Durham Region's diverse business community includes a world-class EN3 cluster of Energy, Environment and Engineering sector businesses. Companies having business interests that span all three areas involve manufacturing and service. In addition, the refurbishment of the Darlington Nuclear Generating Station spotlights Durham Region as a nuclear industry supply chain.

This fusion of interests will be driven further as the Federal and Provincial governments develop and fund stepped-up sustainability and climate change plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Specific initiatives in the Ontario Climate Change Action Plan align favourably with Durham Region capabilities, experience and assets. For both senior levels of government, infrastructure spending is a high priority.

Opportunities to attract foreign investment are linked to Ontario's international reputation as a North American leader in utilizing the public private partnership (P3) model for large infrastructure projects.

There is also potential for firms locating in Durham Region to tap into the significant construction, engineering, professional and technical services talent pool that reside in the Region, particularly given that many are currently commuting to work elsewhere in the GTA.

## **Health Sciences**

Durham Region has a well-regarded and growing health care sector for health and wellness education and training, medical services and health technologies production. This sector was further strengthened through the integration in 2016 of Lakeridge Health with Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering Hospital.

Lakeridge Health has partnered with more than 80 post-secondary institutions, including Queen's University, Durham College, UOIT and the University of Toronto, to train the next generation of healthcare providers for our growing community. Lakeridge Health Education and Research Network (LHEARN) is a hub for cutting-edge training, education and research. It welcomes 1,600 students across a broad range of health disciplines as they pursue their studies in our state-of-the-art facilities.

Lakeridge Health's R.S. McLaughlin Durham Region Cancer Centre remains one of the top Cancer Centres in the Province on Ontario. Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences employing 1,200 staff provides a range of specialized assessment and treatment services to those living with complex and serious mental illness. These public facilities are complemented by numerous medical clinics across the Region.

UOIT has a Faculty of Health Sciences with Bachelor Programs in Public Health, Human Health, Kinesiology, Nursing, Medical Laboratory Science and a Masters of Health Sciences. The integration of information into health care is a strength in which UOIT's Canada Research Chair in Health Informatics is leading a neonatal intensive care data mining initiative. Disability prevention and rehabilitation is also a field of excellence at UOIT.

At Durham College, areas of involvement are addictions and mental health, child and youth care, critical care nursing, dental hygiene, fitness and health, practical nursing, and a BScN in Nursing (with UOIT). Centennial College offers workplace wellness and health promotion.

Ontario's excellence in life sciences is nurtured by public and private investments and forged through collaborative partnerships. The strength of the Health Care industry in Durham strategically supports the growing health sciences sector here in Durham, and it's continuing to develop.

Leading companies include, but are not limited to:

- Purdue Pharma, a leading pharmaceutical industry leader providing accessible analgesia and consumer health solutions, employing approximately 400 people;
- Patheon Inc., with 550 staff, are engaged in manufacturing of products for some 400 pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies;
- Dynacare provides lab testing services and diagnostics and employs 50 staff; and
- Holburn Biomedical Corporation focuses on the provision of R&D in the medical devices sector.

Developing local synergies to further grow the sector will be essential to supporting initiatives aimed at attracting new investment in this sector.

## Innovative Technology

Innovative technology is no longer a separate industry on its own, but an enabler and facilitator that affects virtually every enterprise. The Internet of Things (IoT), big data, cloud computing, 3D printing and 3D visualization, robotics, cyber security, augmented and virtual reality, machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) are all impacting business; unlocking new discoveries in materials science, nanotechnology and biotechnology and transforming – even disrupting – nearly every sector.

The impact of this digital convergence can be found in emerging new business models and technologies associated with all areas of production including digital and information technology, advanced manufacturing, precision agriculture, medical imaging, data mining, e-health advances and sophisticated simulators in fields such as energy.

Businesses are increasingly seeking employees with digital, engineering, science and innovation skills rather than those who possess traditional manufacturing experience, and the occupational skills associated with these sectors.

According to the national talent strategy, by 2019, the in-demand roles in the digital economy will be in:

- information systems analysts and consultants;
- computer network operators and web technicians;
- computer programmers and interactive media developers;
- software engineers;
- graphic designers and illustrators;
- computer and information systems managers; and
- database analysts and data administrators.

The effects of the digital evolution have been felt in Durham. Perfectly positioned as the eastern gateway to the GTA, the Region's manufacturers are utilizing technologies to drive efficiency; farms are implementing technology to obtain greater productivity; and entrepreneurs are developing new technologies for 3D printing, augmented reality and health informatics. The Region needs to embrace these changes and work to increase the development, adoption and integration of new digital technologies within its businesses. A full service broadband network will be critical in growing this sector.

Combining innovative technology with traditional advanced manufacturing to create the Innovative Technology and Production Sector allows for the flexibility of focusing on all areas of technology and manufacturing.

## **Manufacturing**

As manufacturing processes have advanced, Durham's manufacturers have moved to adopt increasingly sophisticated methods, technologies and structures for developing and delivering their manufactured products to market. One of Durham's largest employers, the growth of manufacturing continues to be concentrated in:

- Textile and fabric finishing and fabric coating manufacturing;
- Converted paper product manufacturing;
- Pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing;
- Paint, coating and adhesive manufacturing;
- Rubber product manufacturing;
- Glass and glass product manufacturing;
- Cement and concrete product manufacturing;
- Forging and stamping;
- Motor vehicle manufacturing; and
- Motor vehicle parts manufacturing.

Advancement in manufacturing processes is also supported by innovating local companies in advanced materials, engineered assembly systems, automated logistics and material handling systems. Some of the manufacturing companies that make Durham Region their home include:

Active Automation  
Aerotek  
Autodyne Machinery Inc.  
BRIC Engineered Systems  
Ball Packaging  
Canada Rubber Inc.  
Castool Tooling Systems  
Cleeve Technologies  
EHC Global

General Motors Canada Ltd  
Gerdau  
Hela Spice Canada Inc.  
Makita  
Noranco Inc.  
Real Tech  
Safron Landing Systems  
Siemens

Durham Region has much to offer in all fields of manufacturing through a highly diversified, yet well-balanced manufacturing sector. This is highlighted by expertise in the automotive, metal fabrication, environmental, biological and life sciences and aerospace sectors, as well as IT and engineered assembly systems.

## **Tourism**

The mandate for Tourism and Sport Durham in Durham Region is to promote and leverage tourism to drive economic growth. Durham Region plays host to more than 3 million visitors each year who contribute over \$200 million to the area. Target audiences currently include consumers mainly in the short-haul (2 hours) market with limited mid-haul (3-5 hours) market visitation.

In 2017, Durham Tourism will begin building a 5-year Tourism Strategic Plan (2017-2021) to strengthen the Region's role in product and tourism experience development. Along with a new strategic plan, Durham Tourism will also create new branding, intended to give Durham a major advantage in promoting the Region against increasingly competitive markets. The 2017-2021 Tourism Strategy will be completed and will be a companion to the Economic Development Strategy.

Tourism is a highly competitive industry, and tourism infrastructure in Durham Region is not as well developed as some of its competitors. New and unique local attractions and products are needed, along with increased hotel, restaurant and convention centre facilities. There are also untapped opportunities in sport tourism that could offer a future focus. The updated tourism strategic plan should assess the strength and growth of tourist markets and segments for Durham, and evaluate marketing initiatives and products that will distinguish the Region from other regions and communities in the GTA.

While it is likely that the major tourist market for Durham Region will continue to be the GTA short-haul market, consideration should also be given to the potential for attracting U.S. and foreign visitors. U.S. travel to Canada has grown steadily in recent years as more Americans have become aware of the buying power of the higher U.S dollar. Asia is a challenging market, heavily focused on group travel to globally-known, signature destinations. However, Chinese tourism to Canada continues to grow, with Canada receiving preferred visa status and more visa issuing locations in China. This also supports the investment attraction initiatives in China by demonstrating Durham Region as a great place to live, work and invest.

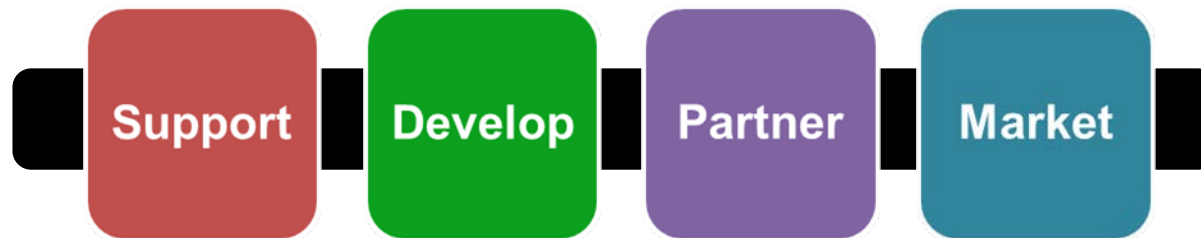
## 1.4 Economic Development: Four Pillars of Economic Growth

Regional Council has made economic growth a key priority. This focus is mirrored in area municipal strategic plans, official plans and economic development strategies; it is an imperative for region-wide well-being. Creating better economic outcomes requires concerted effort. To this end, Durham Region will be:

- a supporter of business;
- a builder of jobs and the economy;
- a highly effective collaborator and facilitator; and
- the choice location for business, investment and labour.

Against this focus on economic vitality and against the backdrop of the many impressive achievements that have been realized, the Region will continue to build economic advantage by focusing its efforts in four (4) goal areas:

### Durham Region Pillars of Economic Growth 2017-2021



### Pillar 1: **Support** business growth

- Be investment-ready, business-service focused and competitive
- Provide sound quality infrastructure and exceptional services to business

### Pillar 2: **Develop** an enhanced economic base

- Actively facilitate investment and growth across the Region
- Support small business, entrepreneurship and innovation
- Help existing businesses to grow, develop and scale up
- Attract new investment to Durham Region

### Pillar 3: **Partner** and build upon Durham Region's talent pool

- Actively strengthen existing partnerships and build new alliances
- Create connections across the Region through collaboration and relationship building
- Assist area municipalities to realize their full economic potential
- Develop opportunities for youth and new graduates

### Pillar 4: **Market** Durham

- Lead a coordinated region-wide marketing strategy
- Showcase regional success stories

Strategies and actions that will enable Durham Region to advance these four pillars are discussed in more detail in Section 3.0 and Section 4.0.



## Section 2.0: The Durham Advantage

### 2.1 Introduction: Opportunity Lives Here

This Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan focuses on supporting the growth of existing and new business and importantly, addresses some of the key challenges that the Region is facing. One of these challenges is the concern raised by the real estate and development industry that despite the competitive DC's and lower land prices, higher taxes in Durham Region are seen as an impediment to attracting investment compared to GTA communities boasting more lucrative Community Improvement Plans (CIP's).

Durham Region is one of the fastest growing regions in Canada and uniquely, remains not only the most affordable municipality in the Greater Toronto Area, but one of the most strategically positioned municipalities in southern Ontario.

These facts offer critical insight about the value that Durham Region offers to those who are 'in the business of growing their business' and who have made the decision to live and or invest here. Durham Region, in few words, is THE place to be; already well-positioned for sustainable, long-term prosperity.

Ideally located just 37 km from the centre of Canada's largest city (and the fourth largest in North America), Durham enjoys 'the perfect location.' Tapping into the broader Toronto and international markets is seamless, and the expansion of Highway 407 ETR and improvements to Highway 401 suggest that the movement of goods and products across the southern Ontario corridor will be even easier as a result.

As of 2016, 663,460 people had already discovered that Durham Region offers an unparalleled quality of life – clean, green outdoor spaces, a diversity of housing options, unique and charming communities and importantly, abundant economic opportunities. There are 95 foreign owned companies in Durham Region and these numbers are growing. To support our growing business community, the Region is cultivating a world-class workforce – not only attracting seasoned professionals but working closely with UOIT, Durham College, Centennial College, Queens University and Trent University to build a cadre of future professionals and technical specialists. We have solid partnerships at the municipal level and collaborate to deliver exceptional service delivery to our business clients – existing and new. The ongoing efforts of the Durham Economic Development Partnership (DEDP) provides a unique and critical collaboration between the Region and all eight area municipalities - Ajax, Brock, Clarington, Oshawa, Pickering, Scugog, Uxbridge, Whitby - to ensure that exceptional and importantly, seamless service is provided to our business community.

This seamless service is vital because our model of collaboration and partnership recognizes that those who have invested in Durham are connected to a much larger global economy. Connectivity to that global marketplace, moving goods and providing services must be facilitated in a way that promotes efficiency and effectiveness. Just as business doesn't recognize administrative jurisdictions, our approach to economic growth recognizes that we are all working together to bring better economic outcomes to Durham and that includes better outcomes for our residents and our investors.

## **Sector Growth at a Glance**

Historically known for its strengths in manufacturing, recent job growth in Durham Region has been associated with the service sectors. While the number of jobs in manufacturing, the third largest sector, declined by 2% from 2010 to 2015, employment has increased over the same period by 21% in construction; 13% in finance and insurance; 11% in professional, scientific, engineering and technical services; 11% in health care; and 10% in transportation and warehousing.

A notable concentration of jobs relative to the provincial average is evident in Durham Region's utility sector primarily because of the two major nuclear power generation plants which provide 30% of Ontario's electricity output. The agriculture sector is a vital component of the region's economy, contributing \$273 million to Ontario's total farm production. It is also a large part of the Region's tourism offering.

Durham Region has deep entrepreneurial roots and is home to globally recognized firms that have demonstrated technological leadership in diverse fields of innovation. Today, a younger generation of technology-centred businesses, are benefiting from links with local innovation support organizations including Spark Centre, UOIT and Durham College.

The Region's transportation infrastructure is made up of an integrated network of provincial and regional highways, cargo-loading and deep-sea shipping ports connecting to the Atlantic Ocean via the St. Lawrence Seaway, transcontinental and commuter railway lines, as well as local and international airports. This exceptional transportation infrastructure facilitates access to 135 million American and Canadian consumers, within a day's drive, and further supports the efficient movement of goods and people.

As an inclusive, welcoming place, Durham Region has made an affirmed commitment to advancing affordable rental housing and to increasing the housing supply choices for seniors. We are anticipating the needs of our community members and working to ensure that Durham Region remains a vibrant, dynamic community of communities, with a readily accessible local workforce to support those who are looking to expand existing businesses or establish new. Entrepreneurs and innovators will know about the solid business supports that have been put into place through the Spark Centre to fuel technological innovation and promote collaboration and partnerships.

The notion of innovation and excellence is being realized across Durham Region. For example, the Town of Whitby is creating an Innovation Hub and Incubator for start-ups in Durham Region. These efforts will have the effect of moving Whitby and Durham Region toward a vision of becoming the high tech innovation eastern gateway along the Highway 401 tech corridor. In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding has recently been signed by the City of Oshawa, UOIT, Durham College, the University of Toronto (Engineering) and the Canadian Urban Institute to enable the creation of an urban innovation lab as well as Oshawa's focus on being a teaching city.

Existing investors will also know that Durham Region is:

- **Entrepreneurial** in our approach to service delivery and business support. We offer **seamless service** and work together across all eight municipalities to bring positive benefit to all;
- **Diverse and growing, prosperous and affordable**;
- **Connected** to the world and easily accessible to Toronto and global markets as a result of massive infrastructure investments with more investments planned;
- **The perfect geographic location**, just 37 km from the largest city in Canada and the fourth largest city in North America;
- A renowned **knowledge and research-centric community** with world-class post-secondary and research institutions closely aligned to support industry innovation;
- An established hub for Manufacturing, Energy, Agri-Food and Innovative Technology; and
- It makes sound financial sense to locate here. Development charges are highly competitive. **Taxes and land prices are lower** than any other regional municipality in the Greater Toronto Area.

Here in Durham Region, in addition to our Triple A credit rating, we support life-long learning and have a readily accessible labour force. Last, but certainly not least, those who have chosen to live and/or invest in Durham Region know that we have an unparalleled quality of life and a unique blend of rural and urban communities that appeal to residents, investors and economic partners alike.

## 2.2 Macro & Micro Economic Trends: The Agents of Change

Remaining at the forefront of opportunity requires an ongoing commitment to identifying and addressing the challenges of change. Seismic shifts, at both the macro-economic level and within the Region, must be continually monitored to enable the Region to anticipate and act proactively to create, and sustain, economic advantage. The effects, for example, of globalization will have very real implications for investment close to home.

There are many factors that will influence, and in turn be influenced by, Durham's economic growth and diversification. The global markets factor prominently when it comes to the level of investments that will be made locally. Despite six consecutive years of stagnation, there is some indication that the global economy is improving with more positive outcomes anticipated for 2017 and 2018. Some of the underlying reasons for an economic turnaround include job market recovery, increasing oil prices, increased trade and the fact that in 2017 the TSX is at an all-time high. Canada is expected to have the second fastest growth among the G7, ahead of the four European members and Japan.

Canada's competitiveness has also improved recently as a result of an appreciating U.S. dollar (relative to most other currencies.) This favourable and volatile exchange rate impacts the Canadian and Durham economy through:

- **Prospective New Investors:** A lower Canadian dollar can make Canada a more competitive location; however, the increased volatility in the Canada-U.S. exchange rate makes new investors cautious about committing to major capital investments in Canada;
- **Existing Foreign-Owned Firms:** Foreign firms that already have a presence in Canada/Durham possess greater local knowledge and confidence that permits them to move forward in more volatile times; and
- **Canadian Exporters:** A lower Canadian dollar generates a cost advantage for Canadian manufacturers and exporters through raised profit margins. A lower Canadian dollar however could mean higher production and equipment costs as equipment frequently comes from higher cost global sources.

Fluctuating exchange rates and concerns with global security and volatility will influence the investment climate around the globe. Demographic trends will also play a key role in driving economic growth and change. In 2015, for the first time in history, Ontario's population included more residents 65+ than children age 0-14.<sup>3</sup> Not only will demographics influence consumer demands, but demographics will also factor prominently from a recruitment and employee retention lens. Businesses will be required to adapt to a highly mobile workforce and to a workplace where technology drives the pace of change and in turn, reigns supreme.

Closer to home, Ontario population is expected to continue to increase, largely as a result of immigration. Durham Region is expected to grow at levels well above the provincial and national average. The unemployment rate is expected to continue its downward trend and labour market participation rate<sup>4</sup> will hold steady at 65%.

In the context of market uncertainties, Ontario business prosperity is increasingly dominated by financial activity rather than production. Restoring investment in the production of goods and services in Ontario will secure greater long-term prosperity for the province as a whole.

With the Canadian dollar forecast to remain weak and the improving economic prospects for the U.S. economy, Ontario's major export market is expected to be a critical contributor to the Ontario economy. Stability in the automotive sector, including General Motors' new product mandate at its Oshawa plant, will help international and local trade remain strong.

Given its geographic location just 37 km from downtown Toronto, Durham Region is part of, and sits as the eastern gateway to more than six million people. More than 20% of the nation's gross domestic product is generated here.

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<sup>3</sup> Citation: [Ministry of Finance Website](http://www.fin.gov.on.ca). Ontario Population Projections. www.fin.gov.on.ca

<sup>4</sup> As defined by Statistics Canada, the labour market participation rate measures the total labour force (comprised of those who are employed and unemployed, combined) relative to the size of the working-age population. In other words, it is the share of the working-age population that is working or looking for work.

The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) occupies a vital place in Canada by virtue of its size and economic influence. The GTA is home to more than six million people and generates more than 20% of the nation's gross domestic product.

The GTA is the industrial and financial capital of Canada. Business and financial services, manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade, and transportation are the foundations of the Region's dynamic, diverse and growing economy. Closely linked with the continued expansion of these globally competitive sectors is the growth of the GTA's deep pool of educated, skilled and creative people.

The growth generated in the GTA will likely be a significant contributor of growth for Durham Region. The wider region of the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area is expected to outperform the national and Ontario economies, and Durham Region's challenge will be to capture its share of this economic growth.

Durham Region will face changes and challenges over the next five years. Some of these challenges will be driven by external forces beyond the control of Durham Region and a number will be transformative trends that will influence the Region in major ways. An example of a major change is digital technology and its effects on everything from media to new forms of manufacturing. The key challenge for Durham will be to transform these changes – major as well as minor – into opportunities.

A Region as diverse as Durham will be repeatedly challenged to find an appropriate balance, as the Region is characterized not only by rapidly growing and evolving urban and suburban communities, but one where agriculture, outdoor and recreational pursuits support a vital rural lifestyle. It will be important for Durham to continue to recognize and support the diverse urban and rural culture that exists here.

## **Focusing On Specific Geographies**

Durham Region is undertaking a number of initiatives designed to create connections across the Greater Toronto Area and beyond. Some of these initiatives are described below.

### **Toronto Global**

Toronto Global, formerly the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance (GTMA), was launched in February 2016. It is a public-private partnership that serves as the key point of contact for businesses exploring opportunities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The partnership brings together the 29 municipalities and regions in the Greater Toronto Area, the governments of Ontario and Canada, and a broad cross section of private sector corporations.

The mandate of Toronto Global is to be the sole organization marketing the entire GTA in the global marketplace. Based on historical activity of Durham receiving zero investments from seventeen years of financial invest to the former GTMA, Durham Region Council endorsed the position that until Durham sees significant and consistent investment from the efforts of Toronto Global, Durham Economic Development will continue to deliver its FDI strategy.

Durham Region and Toronto Global staff continue to work together towards the economic prosperity of Durham Region and the greater GTA.

### **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)**

Some macro-level trends are of particular interest to Durham Region given the approval granted by Regional Council in 2012 of the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Strategy for Economic Development which identifies Brazil, China, Germany and the U.S. as 'focus markets' for attracting investment to Durham Region. The following summarizes the projected outlook for each of these priority markets:

#### **Brazil**

Brazil is expected to emerge from the worst recession in recent decades. Experts predict the Brazilian economy to grow by 2.4%. While political volatility has declined, Brazilian companies are expected to look abroad for new growth opportunities.

Outbound investment to Canada continues to provide opportunities for Brazilian firms looking for a more stable and safe country to grow their businesses, representing a significant opportunity for attracting investment to Durham Region.

### **China**

In spite of slower growth in recent years, China remains a strong global economic driver and is one of the world's most attractive markets for business investors. China will remain Asia's growth engine for the foreseeable future, with slower rates of growth predicted.

Outbound investment to Canada is forecast to continue its growth trend, as wealthy individuals and capital-rich firms in China look to further diversify and expand their global presence and sophistication, representing a significant opportunity for attracting investment to Durham Region.

### **Germany**

Having proven resilient to global challenges including Brexit, the European economic recovery is expected to continue for the first time in almost a decade. The German economy continues to strengthen, bringing the GDP to a multi-year high.

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the European Union will be a significant driver of trade and investment, and represents a significant opportunity for attracting investment to Durham Region.

### **United States**

Canada's largest trading partner is the U.S., and as such, Durham Region needs to be aware of existing and emerging issues south of our Canadian border. Influence from a geo-political lens has been significant; the outcome of the 2016 U.S. election has increased global uncertainty and, to some degree, market unrest, around the globe. Fiscal policy measures such as tax cuts and investment in infrastructure may provide some growth in the short-term, but it is predicted that their impact will be small. The new administration's ambitious target for job creation will be constrained by a tightening labor market.

Outbound investment to Canada will most likely be hampered by the promise of dropping the personal tax rate and lowering the U.S. corporate tax rate from 39% to 19%. This drop will make the U.S. corporate rate far lower than Canada's combined rate of 26%.



There may be additional opportunities for Durham Region to capitalize on ‘low hanging fruit’ by connecting with investors in other jurisdiction who are interested in investing in Ontario (e.g. India, Japan, etc.).

### **2.3 Past Achievements & Opportunities Already Realized**

There are many noteworthy economic development achievements that Durham Region has realized in recent years. Massive investments and growth are bringing unprecedented opportunity to Durham. Together with its partners, Durham Region is moving forward to support the single largest build-out of employment and residential land in Canada’s history. The much anticipated 8,000 acre Seaton initiative in north-west Pickering, will transform the face of Durham Region. Fifteen compact transit-oriented resident and employment neighbourhoods, surrounded by protected natural areas and farmland will bring with them an unprecedented scale of development, but also a new enlightened approach to planning and place making that requires sewer and water infrastructure to be in place to service employment areas before residential plans of subdivision can be registered on title. Logical, integrated, strategic and visionary – it is little wonder Durham’s economic future is so bright.

In addition to the Seaton community, three of the country’s top 100 infrastructure projects<sup>5</sup> for 2017 are located in Durham Region, including the Darlington Nuclear Refurbishment, Highway 407 East Extension (Phase 2) and the East Rail Maintenance Facility. Recent improvements to Highway 401, the expansion of GO Transit’s Lakeshore East service from Oshawa to Bowmanville, and the eastern extension of the 407 will continue to strengthen Durham’s accessibility. Looking ahead, the decision by Metrolinx to locate the \$860 million-dollar East Rail Maintenance Facility in Durham will ensure that the Region (as host to this LEED Gold Certified 500,000 square foot facility) plays a key role as a GO Transit service and storage hub.

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<sup>5</sup> Citation: Top 100, [Canada’s Biggest Infrastructure Projects website](http://www.top100projects.ca), www.top100projects.ca

The unprecedented growth and opportunity so evident across the Region has come because of the collective efforts of many. It is this collaborative mindset among area municipalities and the Region that have allowed many of these opportunities to be realized. Unlike many other jurisdictions, Durham has created a collaborative economic development forum – the Durham Economic Development Partnership – to enable partners across the Region to deliver seamless and exceptional service to business clients – existing and new.

## 2.4 Addressing the Challenges

Despite the remarkable achievements that have been and will continue to be realized across Durham Region, the region faces a number of challenges. Perhaps most critically, there is a perception held by some that the Region is not open for business. This is a fundamental challenge that the Region must overcome and consequently, the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan includes numerous strategies to address this and other issues:

### **Absence of Fundamental Baseline Information & Data**

- Better information is needed about investment ready vacant employment land across the Region.
- There is a need for a Labour Shed Study (Who) and Skill Shed Study (What).
- There is a need for a Competitiveness Study.

### **Employment Opportunities & Job Growth Needed**

- Durham has a low job to population ratio with 1 job to every 3 residents.
- Locally available specialized skills to support some businesses are lacking.
- Job growth in comparison to other 905 GTA Regions is lower.

### **Limited Accessibility In Some Areas of the Region**

- The 401 is congested which negatively impacts the movement of goods and people across the GTA.
- There is a limited supply of residential rental accommodation.
- There are limited public transit options in north Durham.
- Reliable broadband, particularly in north Durham is not widely available.
- There is limited available space for business expansions and relocations.

### **Lack of a 'Whole Team' Approach**

- There is a perceived lack of collaboration between the Region and area municipalities.
- Community not seen as speaking with one voice.

Durham is addressing these challenges, perceptions and misconceptions directly, first by recognizing the Region's role in addressing these challenges and secondly, by capitalizing on the Region's responsibilities to build partnerships through collaboration to turn these challenges into opportunities.

To position the Region for long-term economic vitality and success, the Region will focus its efforts in alignment with the four pillars of focus as described in Section 1.4, and seven goal areas as follows:

### **Seven Goal Areas**

The seven goal areas that will support the four pillars of economic development include the following:

- Goal 1: Enhancing Partnerships**
- Goal 2: Promoting Infrastructure Readiness for Regional Competitiveness**
- Goal 3: Capitalizing on Durham Region's Talent Pool**
- Goal 4: Supporting Small Business, Entrepreneurship and Innovation**
- Goal 5: 5A: Retaining & Expanding Existing Business – North**  
**5B: Retaining & Expanding Existing Business – South**
- Goal 6: Attracting New Investment**
- Goal 7: Marketing Durham Region**

In Section 4.0 of this document, specific actions are identified around each of these goal areas to address the challenges and drive economic growth in Durham Region.

## 2.5 Durham's Unique Attributes

Economic growth and prosperity is not just about today, it is also about tomorrow. What are the indicators that suggest Durham Region will continue to enjoy solid growth across the Region? There is compelling evidence to suggest that Durham Region 'has it all' and that the Region's position moving forward will only be strengthened economically as a result of a number of catalysts that will continue to drive growth. Among the catalysts are:

- The presence of high impact infrastructure projects will ensure that connectivity across the Region is improved and that connections to the Toronto, Ontario, and global market are assured;
- The fact that Durham has transitioned to become an advanced knowledge economy;
- The presence of impressive elementary, secondary and world-class post-secondary institutions aligned with the business community and economic development specialists across the Region;
- Governance models already in place across the Region that supports a co-creative and collaborative approach to economic growth that is premised on seamless, exceptional service delivery;
- Established formal and informal networks with the broader Toronto, Ontario and global marketplace; and
- Having a multi-dimensional network to support the business and investor community.

Durham's position in the GTA is changing and creating opportunities to accelerate growth. The future is bright with promise. The Region has much to offer and has moved forward to develop champions who are advancing transformative change. Delivering timely, competitive and varied opportunities for new and expanding businesses will enhance the Region's ability to create complete communities and an enviable quality of life.

## Section 3.0: Realizing Results

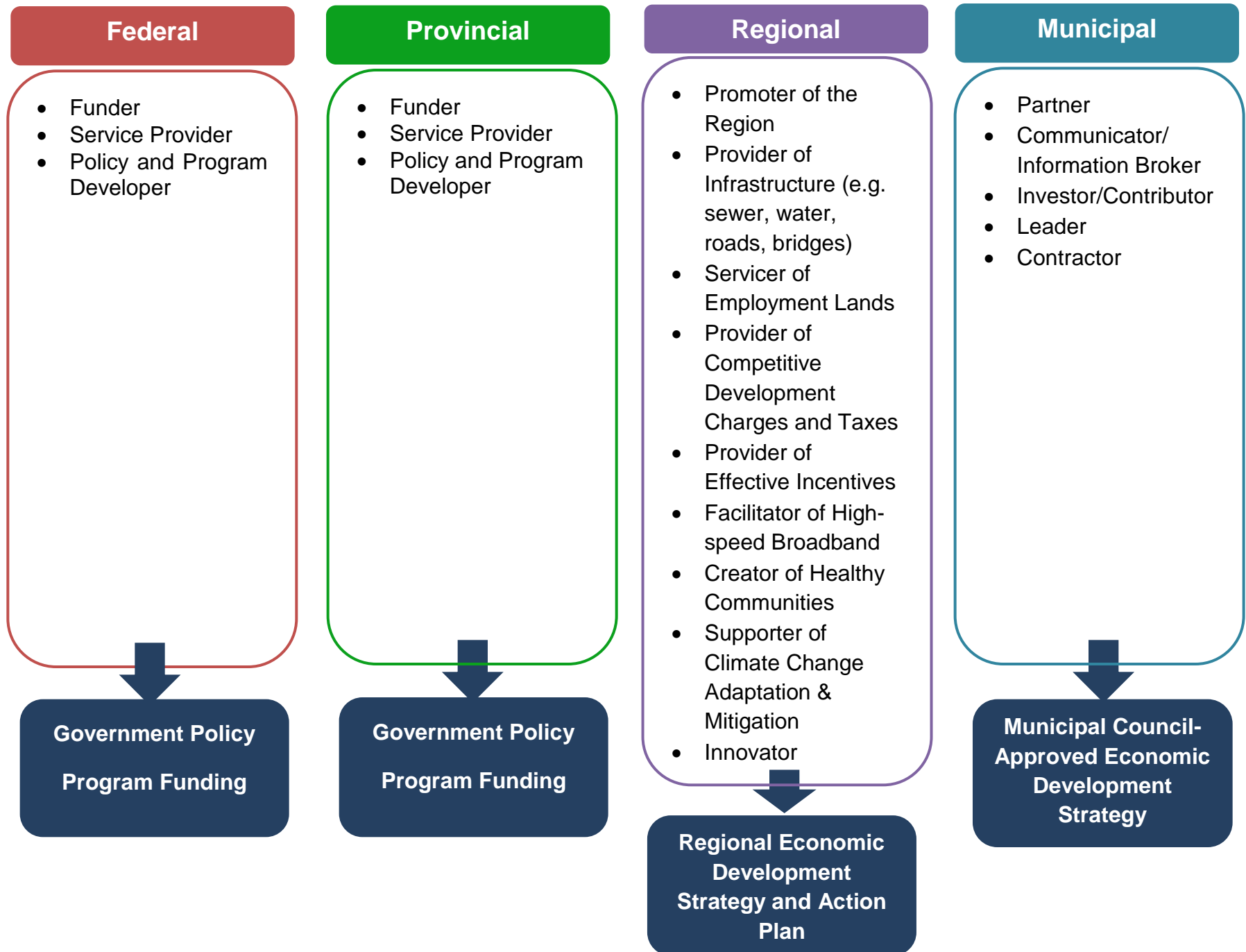
### Better Economic & Community Outcomes for Durham Region: A Plan of Action

#### 3.1 Coordination, Collaboration & Collective Commitment

The rationale behind the 2017-2021 Durham Region Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan is to realize greater economic outcomes across the Region. It has been developed to focus on priority actions that will:

- Grow and strengthen the economy of the Region by supporting the existing business community and attracting new investment and investors;
- Increase the number and diversity of locally-based employment opportunities;
- Build the regional talent pool to ensure a ready supply of labour for existing and future investors;
- Support the next generation of business leaders;
- Engage with academia and enhance business-sector linkages; and
- Market Durham as a quality place in which to live, work and invest.

To realize even greater economic advantage for Durham Region, an integrated, aligned and multi-faceted approach is needed, one that engages across a spectrum of agencies at all levels of government and across sectors, public and private. The landscape of economic development is such that coordination, collaboration and collective commitment are essential simply given the fact that economic development transcends jurisdictional boundaries, as demonstrated by the following graphic:



## 3.2 The Role of the Region in Economic Development

The Region plays an important role in economic development. While this strategy has been completed by the Region's Economic Development and Tourism Division, it will engage many partners. Implementing the actions set out in this Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan will require support from a wide range of Regional Departments and Divisions, including Planning, Works, Finance, Health and Transit. Economic prosperity is everyone's business. The multi-faceted role of the Region in fostering a favourable climate for economic development is discussed in detail below.

### Promoter of the Region

The Economic Development and Tourism team leads, facilitates and supports various investment attraction and expansion initiatives in order to create and retain jobs, increase non-residential assessment and promote the Region as the best place to live, work and invest.

Increasing the awareness and image of Durham Region regionally, nationally and globally, is a leading role of the Region's Economic Development team. Targeting the sectors identified in Section 1.3 in the right geographies; differentiating Durham as the choice location for new business investment; and facilitating the location decision by providing timely and appropriate information is the fundamental basis of success. The economic development website is used as a promotional tool for investment attraction and includes the creation of geographic micro-sites aimed at eliminating potential language and culture barriers for the Region's global markets.

Aside from the attraction and expansion initiatives noted above, promoting outreach and education of the agriculture sector is another key component of the Economic Development promotion activity.

To attract and promote Durham Region as a destination for tourists, residents, meetings and conventions, sport events and festival goers, Durham Tourism promotes and markets the Region through a strong marketing, communications and public relations plan.

Effective marketing remains Economic Development and Tourism's highest priority and marketing collateral continues to be updated to reflect the fast changing economic and tourism environments.

## **Provider of Infrastructure (Sewer, Water, Roads, Bridges)**

To increase the Region's economic development competitiveness, infrastructure plays a critical role. The Region's responsibility for regional arterial roads, water and sanitary sewer to service residential, industrial and commercial land is essential to economic development, growth and prosperity. Durham Region boasts a comprehensive modernized asset management and infrastructure program aimed at meeting the needs of residents and industry, and focused on growing the Region's economy.

## **Servicer of Employment Lands**

The Planning Act, the Provincial Policy Statement, and the Growth Plan all give direction on employment land planning.

The fundamental considerations of employment land planning are to:

- Support prosperity by ensuring adequate supply of land that can accommodate diverse employment uses over the forecast period and beyond;
- Address issues of land use compatibility by managing potential adverse impacts of employment uses on sensitive uses and inversely, protecting employment uses from the intrusion of sensitive land uses which could limit their viability;
- Recognize the importance of major infrastructure to optimize goods movement;
- Balance of jobs and people in the municipality; and
- Ensure competitive positioning in a regional and global market.

The new non-residential growth areas in the Seaton employment lands in Pickering and the soon to be serviced employment lands along the new 407 in Whitby and Oshawa represents a significant asset for the entire Region for attracting investment and jobs.

The Region prepares annual ten-year Servicing and Financing Studies for major infrastructure, including Water Supply, Sanitary Sewage, Regional Roads, Transit, Social Housing and Waste Management. The servicing needs of employment lands is considered part of that annual business planning process, as well as through longer-term studies such as Master Plans and Development Charge Background Studies.



## **Provider of Development Charges (DC's) and Non-residential Property Taxes**

Development Charges are a viable capital funding source to recover the net cost of capital expenditures. Under the Development Charges Act 1997, the Region imposes development charges for this purpose. Also, each year Durham Region Council approves annual property taxes that support existing service levels and addresses critical needs, while providing additional funding for key strategic priorities.

## **Provider of Effective Incentives**

Incentivizing non-residential redevelopment projects supports the key goals of the Regional Official Plan, to promote the efficient use of land and infrastructure, and to focus growth within intensification areas, including infill, redevelopment and conversion of existing buildings.

The following highlights the Region's incentive programs that support intensification projects in Durham:

- **Redevelopment Credits under the Development Charges By-Laws**

Provision of a DC credit for the redevelopment of an existing site, where a building (residential or non-residential) is either demolished or redeveloped within ten years of its demolition.

- **Regional Revitalization Program (RRP)**

Intended to assist Durham's area municipalities in achieving the unique needs and specific goals they've identified through their Community Improvement Plans (CIPs).

Building on the initial steps that have been taken to make the RRP better known, it will be important for the Region and area municipalities to further define and promote the Region's incentives and the area municipalities' CIPs, in parallel.

## **Facilitator of High-speed Broadband**

Regional Council recognizes high-speed broadband as an indispensable part of modern infrastructure. As a companion of this Strategy and Action Plan, a comprehensive Regional Broadband Strategy is being prepared which will identify the gaps to enable the Region to be funding-application ready, as well an overall Broadband Strategy for Durham Region. It is expected this Broadband Strategy will be completed before the end of 2018.

## Creator of Healthy Communities

The Region is committed to fostering a healthy and vibrant community through its work in supporting and promoting healthy lifestyles. This commitment is evident in expanded transit, the Health Neighbourhoods in Durham Region Report and the Financial Empowerment Framework that focuses on boosting efforts to increase incomes for Durham Residents. The full suite of services offered through the Department of Social Services, from childcare to long term care, ensures the needs are met for the current and future workforce and residents of Durham.

The Region's Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council (LDIPC) works to create welcoming communities across Durham Region. Its priorities include:

- Creating a culture of inclusion;
- Supporting labour market attachment of newcomers;
- Engaging employers in attracting and retaining a diverse workforce; and
- Supporting two-way integration of diverse populations.

Investing in the health of a community is a vital economic and societal catalyst. Through the Region's efforts, Durham can continue to be competitive on the global stage.

## Supporter of Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation

Scientific evidence overwhelmingly supports the conclusion that human activities are fundamentally altering the conditions for life on earth. Climate change and associated global warming is recognized as a severe threat to global systems with the potential for catastrophic outcomes. International, national and provincial efforts are being developed and enhanced to find solutions to this growing problem.

Durham Region Council recognized the importance of participating in these efforts and in 2009, launched the Durham Region Roundtable on Climate Change (DRRCC). Strategies have been developed to help the Region mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. The DRRCC's mandate focuses on three areas:

- **Outreach:** assist all stakeholders within the Region to address climate change in their respective practices and operations;

- **Advocacy:** make recommendations with respect to policy positions that Regional Council could adopt and/or take forward to other levels of government and government agencies to address climate change; and
- **Education:** continually improving knowledge and understanding of climate change.

Corporately the Region has prepared mitigation and adaption strategies for the Regionally-owned assets to build regional resilience and to think strategically about the challenges ahead.

## **Innovator**

Organizational Health and Service Excellence represents one of the four priority areas of the Regional Council's 2015-2019 Strategic Plan. Under this priority area, Durham Region will continue to be financially healthy and well-managed through the focus of resources on continuous improvement and innovation. Ensuring a culture of creativity and innovation will help foster alternative approaches to the development of economic development programs and service delivery.

## Section 4.0: The Economic Development Action Plan

Durham Region's Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan, as noted, provide a platform for Regional staff to work collaboratively with others to build an economic advantage across Durham Region. The Region however does not operate alone but rather, in partnership with area municipalities and stakeholders. Economic development is everyone's business and the action tables that follow provide clear indication that moving forward, Durham Region will ensure it is business ready and well-positioned to offer seamless service to existing clientele as well as future investors.

Durham Region will focus its efforts in seven goal areas:

**Goal 1:** Enhancing Partnerships

**Goal 2:** Promoting Infrastructure Readiness for Regional Competitiveness

**Goal 3:** Capitalizing on Durham Region's Talent Pool

**Goal 4:** Supporting Small Business, Entrepreneurship & Innovation

**Goal 5:** 5A: Retaining & Expanding Existing Business – North Durham  
5B: Retaining & Expanding Existing Business – South Durham

**Goal 6:** Attracting New Investment

**Goal 7:** Marketing Durham Region

For the purpose of Lead & Partners definitions in these tables:

DEDO - Durham Economic Development Office

DEDP - Durham Economic Development Partnership (area municipalities' economic development office)

Each goal area has been colour coded to align with the four pillars of economic growth as noted previously in Section 1.4. This colour code appears below:



## Goal 1: Enhancing Partnerships

By ensuring that governance is sound and that partners are engaged in initiatives that encourage economic growth in the Region.

**Objective 1.1** – Strengthening the role and function of the Durham Region Economic Development Partnership (DEDP).

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
1.1.1 Undertake a functional review of the DEDP to assess its effectiveness and efficiency, and make recommendations to address gaps and strengthen existing capacity.	2017	DEDO with DEDP	More collaboration across the Region on economic development priority projects and initiatives.
1.1.2 Develop and implement a lead servicing protocol for DEDP.	2017	DEDO with DEDP	A consistent, effective and efficient approach for managing inquiries.
1.1.3 Review and update the existing DEDP Terms of Reference to promote economic advantage across Durham Region.	2017	DEDO with DEDP	A broadly supported approach for inter-municipal economic development collaboration.

**Objective 1.2** –Collaborate with stakeholders to support and encourage economic development across Durham Region.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
1.2.1 Develop an Engagement Strategy to strengthen existing partnerships and build new alliances to advance the economic agenda in Durham Region.	2017	DEDO with stakeholders	Stronger economic outcomes and a more engaged constituency.
1.2.2 Participate as a member of the Communications sub-committee and Asset Management sub-committee of the Idea Summit program.	Ongoing	DEDO with Idea Summit participants	Regional Asset Map of key sectors in Durham.
1.2.3 Participate on the Idea Summit Steering Committee. (Eight of Durham Region's largest employers came together with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce for the Region's first-ever Idea Summit. The one day conference provides a platform for the development of a new strategy aimed at creating jobs and stimulating investment and innovation in the Region.)	Ongoing	DEDO with Idea Summit steering committee	Better, stronger partnerships.
1.2.4 Support private sector-led peer-to-peer, sector and cluster groups in Durham Region by encouraging partnerships and collaboration with sector, cluster and peer-to-peer groups and developing Regional Guidelines and activities aimed at fostering stronger and more vibrant clusters.	Ongoing	DEDO	Alignment of Regional staffing and fiscal resources in keeping with identified priorities.

**Objective 1.3** – Create a framework for ongoing dialogue with internal and external stakeholders.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
1.3.1 Implement the 2016 Economic Development Communications Plan.	2017 ongoing	DEDO, DEDP	Position Durham as a thought-leader in the business and economic development community that highlights division achievements, business opportunities and successes.  Reverse negative perception held by the GTA commercial real estate agents, brokers and developers of doing business in Durham Region.
1.3.2 Identify opportunities to reach a wider economic development audience by expanding the distribution of the ED Newsletters.	2017 ongoing	DEDO	Greater awareness by a broader audience (e.g. local businesses, investment leads, stakeholders, partners, intermediaries, site selectors, and GTA commercial real estate agents, brokers and developers).

**Objective 1.4** – Build stronger relationships with all levels of government.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
1.4.1 Work with Federal and Provincial partners to identify opportunities to strengthen the relationship with upper levels of government, including economic development, workforce development, innovation and investment attraction.	Ongoing	DEDO	Durham staff is up-to-date on affiliated programs and Durham is top of mind for inbound investment and other areas of the economy.

## Goal 2: Promoting Infrastructure Readiness for Regional Competitiveness

By actively facilitating investment and growth across the Region; supporting the development of small business, entrepreneurship and innovation, helping existing businesses to grow and develop and attracting new investment to Durham Region.

### Objective 2.1 – Undertake a region-wide Employment Lands Review.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
2.1.1 Review the current Employment Land Inventory to identify the actual acreage and location of shovel ready employment lands across the Region.	2017	DEDO, DEDP with region-wide Planners	An inventory of investment ready employment lands to market to investors/companies requiring these conditions.
2.1.2 Share the Region's Ten Year Capital Forecast of the servicing schedule, including the timing and phasing associated with servicing land across Durham Region with interested stakeholders.	2018	Region Works with Finance, Planning and DEDO	Durham's Ten Year Capital Forecast is shared with stakeholders.
2.1.3 Undertake an inventory of potential redevelopment sites in Durham Region.	2018	DEDO, DEDP, planners and business community.	A comprehensive inventory of potential sites to support investment attraction.



**Objective 2.2** – Publicize incentives to prospective investors, realtors and property developers.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
2.2.1 Develop a compendium of economic development incentives from all levels of government.	2017	DEDO with DEDP	Increased awareness and tools to assist decision making by investors.
2.2.2 Promote available incentives to existing and potential investors by posting to the Durham Region website as well as ensuring hard copies are made available to all interested parties.	Ongoing	DEDO with DEDP	Increased awareness and tools to assist decision making by investors.

**Objective 2.3** – Develop a comprehensive Regional Broadband Strategy.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
2.3.1 Coordinate and facilitate the development of a Region-wide Broadband Strategy.	2018	Planning and Economic Development, regional colleagues, and stakeholders	Phase 1 – baseline inventory in order to be Funding-Application ready. (Target completion by end of 2017.)  Phase 2 – Comprehensive Durham Region Broadband Strategy.

**Objective 2.4** – Make the development approvals process easier to understand.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
2.4.1 Collaborate with Area Municipalities to develop a Development Approvals Process Flow Chart and make this readily accessible in hard copy and digital format to existing and potential investors across the Region.	2018	DEDO with DEDP and area planners.	Improved understanding of the development approval process in the Region.
2.4.2 Undertake the development of a Competitiveness Study.	2017	DEDO with DEDP	Increased awareness of Durham's position vis-à-vis the rest of the GTA to: improve Durham's ability to attract high value companies, increase the level of industrial/commercial development; make a compelling case for existing business to stay and grow their operations and create sustainable and competitive advantage for Durham.

### Goal 3: Capitalizing on Durham Region’s Talent Pool

By actively strengthening existing partnerships and build new alliances; creating connections across the Region through collaboration and relationship building; and developing opportunities for youth and new graduates.

**Objective 3.1** – Increase knowledge about labour force needs and availability.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
3.1.1 Continue to support the Durham Workforce Authority (DWA) and its research programs/new initiatives that provide detailed analyses of skills supply and demand in Durham Region.	Ongoing	DEDO with DEDP and Durham Workforce Authority (DWA)	Better understanding of skill gaps and the development of supportive economic development programs.
3.1.2 Examine commuting patterns based on the 2016 Census to identify prevailing trends, issues and opportunities.	2018	DEDO with Region Planning	Better information and knowledge about commuting patterns of Durham Region’s labour force.
3.1.3 Support partners who are working to create awareness at the elementary and secondary school level of skill shortages in Durham Region.	2018	Post-secondary institutions, local school boards and other partners	Encourage students to consider a range of career opportunities, including those where skills shortages have been identified.

**Objective 3.2** – Involve Durham Region’s newcomers and international workforce in promotion of the Region’s diversity and talent.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
3.2.1 Explore opportunities to better engage newcomers to the Region and advance Durham Region’s Diversity and Immigration Community Plan 2016-2019 to profile specific newcomer economic development achievements and contributions.	Ongoing	DEDO with Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council (LDIPC)	Local companies more aware of the opportunities to hire skilled and talented newcomers.  Updated data included in marketing and promotion of the Region’s talent pool.
3.2.2 Continue to promote and support the Spark Centre as a designated business incubator for Canada’s Start-up Visa program for international entrepreneurs and business prospects.	Ongoing	DEDO with Spark Centre	Attraction of international entrepreneurs to Durham Region.

**Objective 3.3** – Capitalize on the talent generation capabilities of Durham Region’s Post-Secondary Institutions.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
3.3.1 Work with post-secondary institutional partners to profile new talent and make relevant data and information on talent generation available to the business community across Durham Region.	2018	DEDO with DEDP, Post-Secondary institutions and Durham Workforce Authority (DWA)	Post-Secondary programs and graduating talent are showcased.
3.3.2 Support collaboration between post-secondary institutions and Durham’s business community to attract and retain talent which in turn support healthy communities.	Ongoing	DEDO with DEDP and stakeholders	Stronger connections between academia and business. Talent is recruited and retained.

**Objective 3.4** – Support youth and special needs employment initiatives.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
3.4.1 Continue to support the BACD, Spark Centre and Brock Youth Centre (BYC) economic development initiatives focusing on youth engagement and opportunity.	Ongoing	DEDO with BACD, Spark Centre and BYC	More youth employed and youth entrepreneurs are supported.
3.4.2 Support Ontario Works (OW) program for youth under 30, by promoting the employment placement program to the local business community.	Ongoing	OW with DEDO and DEDP	More youth are hired by local businesses participating in the OW employment placement program.
3.4.3 Support the expansion of the upNext Durham.	Ongoing	BACD, DEDP and community partners	Greater youth awareness about local Durham career opportunities.

**Objective 3.5** – Track job growth in Durham Region; compare to resident labour force growth.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
3.5.1 Monitor, track and report on job growth.	Annually	Planning and Economic Development Department	Better and more information about job growth and the ability to develop programs to support same.

**Objective 3.6** – Encourage suitable public transit service for Durham Region businesses.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
3.6.1 Collaborate with Durham Region Transit on the process and criteria for route selection and advocate for the interests of the business community from the lens of public transit.	2018	DEDO with Durham Region Transit, DEDP	Transit routes that support the needs of employees working in Durham Region companies.
3.6.2 Share important economic development information with Durham Region Transit including business community needs and requirements for business park access in particular.	2018	DEDO with DEDP and Durham Region Transit	Transit routes that support the needs of employees working in Durham Region companies.
3.6.3 Work with Durham Region Transit to identify opportunities to address employee transportation needs (e.g. Smart Commute Durham, company-initiated dedicated services, etc.)	2018	DEDO with DEDP and Durham Region Transit	Transportation options that support the needs of employees working in Durham Region companies.

## Goal 4: Supporting Small Business, Entrepreneurship & Innovation

By actively facilitating investment and growth across Durham Region, helping existing businesses to grow and prosper, attracting new investment to Durham and actively strengthen partnerships to support small business.

**Objective 4.1** –Effective, collaborative delivery of programs for SMEs by the Business Advisory Centre Durham (BACD) and Spark Centre.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
4.1.1 Continue to fund, share, participate in the governance of, and ensure the effectiveness of the Business Advisory Centre Durham (BACD) and the Spark Centre.	Ongoing	DEDO	Effective programs that support the growth of small business and entrepreneurship in Durham.
4.1.2 Review BACD and Spark Centre program offerings annually to encourage innovation, business scale-up, guard against duplication, monitor effectiveness, ensure relevancy, and anticipate needs.	Annually	DEDO with partners	Innovation, alignment, effectiveness and efficiency are encouraged and supported.

**Objective 4.2** – Work with experienced entrepreneurial business people in charting the evolution and enrichment of Durham Region’s business creation and growth initiatives.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
4.2.1 Involve successful Durham Region entrepreneurs, and those experienced with scaling up growing companies in leading business creation initiatives in Durham.	Ongoing	DEDO, DEDP, Spark, BACD, StartUp Durham and business community	Best practices are shared in a peer-to-peer environment.

## Goal 5A: Retaining and Expanding Existing Business – North Durham

By actively facilitating investment and growth across the Region, supporting existing businesses to grow and prosper and attracting new investment to Durham Region.

**Objective 5A.1** –Participate in the coordinated approach to economic development in North Durham as outlined in the “Vibrant North Durham Economic Development Plan, 2013-2018” (VNDEDP).

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
5A.1.1 Advocate for the adoption of the North Durham Plan by Regional Council and the Townships of Uxbridge, Scugog and Brock.	Ongoing	DEDO with North Durham stakeholders	Full support within the North Durham communities on economic development initiatives.
5A.1.2. Support the implementation of the North Durham Plan by committing to the Regional responsibilities, as identified.	Ongoing	DEDO	Regional commitment and support.
5A.1.3 Work in collaboration with the North Durham area municipalities to develop marketing collateral and communication tools, including promoting business attraction and investment on available employment lands.	Ongoing	DEDO with North Durham Municipalities	Vibrant, effective and consistent marketing materials for all three North Durham Municipalities.
5A.1.4 Continue to support a structured Business Retention and Expansion program in collaboration with partners.	Annually	DEDO with partners	Better understanding of business economic health and “red flags” to business growth.



**Objective 5A.2** – Inspire and support entrepreneurship, innovation, labour force development and expansion initiatives.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
5A.2.1 Continue to support the annual North Durham Building Business Forum.	Ongoing	DEDO with partners	A stronger better connected North Durham business community.
5A.2.2 Support the establishment of mentorship initiatives to foster the development of high growth local businesses.	Ongoing	DEDO with partners	A stronger better connected North Durham business community.
5A.2.3 Develop a Home-based Business Growth Program to assist the expansion of home-based businesses to commercial locations.	2018	DEDO with North Municipalities and local realtors	Vacant commercial space will be filled.
5A.2.4 Continue to advocate for the expansion of Community Futures Development Corp. funding in North Durham.	Ongoing	DEDO with stakeholders	More funding opportunities for business in North Durham.
5A.2.5 Facilitate business access to support services offered by the Spark Centre, BACD, Durham Workforce Authority, post-secondary institutions and Ontario and Federal officials.	Ongoing	DEDO	Continued business growth in North Durham.

**Objective 5A.3** – Attract and retain creative professionals to smaller communities and rural areas.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
5A.3.1 Design a targeted program to recruit and retain 'the creative class'.	2019	DEDO with North Municipalities	Strengthened creative class in North Durham.

**Objective 5A.4** – Engage, attract and retain and bring back youth and young adults.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
5A.4.1 Support the BACD Summer Company program by identifying opportunities to increase the number of North Durham students who participate.	Ongoing	DEDO with North Municipalities	Youth are employed in North Durham.
5A.4.2 Collaborate with partners to identify opportunities to increase the number of co-op placements for secondary and post-secondary students in North Durham.	Ongoing	DEDO with partners	More co-op placements for students in North Durham.

**Objective 5A.5** – Build a stronger rural and small town identity.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
5A.5.1 Support opportunities to foster vibrant downtown areas.	Ongoing	DEDO with North Municipalities	Vibrant downtowns in North Durham.
5A.5.2 Support the development of community marketing campaigns to celebrate local successes and share the stories of North Durham communities.	Ongoing	DEDO with North Municipalities	Profile of North Durham communities is increased.
5A.5.3 Support regular updates of the cultural mapping exercise and identify opportunities to foster cultural development.	Ongoing	DEDO with North Municipalities	Better understanding of the cultural assets of North Durham communities.
5.5.4 Build community capacity for economic development through relationships with Chambers of Commerce and local organizations.	Ongoing	DEDO	Stronger partnerships and greater collaboration.

**Objective 5A.6** – Promote the value proposition of local agriculture and agri-business to Regional and local Council, stakeholders and residents in order to inform and facilitate economic development-related interactions and decisions.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
5A.6.1 Coordinate and implement Familiarization (FAM) Tours in the northern communities focused on success stories in each community’s agriculture sector.	Ongoing	North Municipalities with DEDO	Better understanding of North Durham communities by politicians, staff and other stakeholders.

**Objective 5A.7** – Develop a new five-year economic development plan covering 2019-2023 for North Durham.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
5A.7.1 Develop a new five-year economic development plan for North Durham.	2018	North stakeholders and DEDO	Ongoing commitment to economic growth and diversification in North Durham.

**Objective 5A.8** – Develop “Buy Local” initiatives that enhance local companies’ access to municipal government procurement.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
5A.8.1 Work with partners and area municipalities to develop “Buy Local” initiatives and campaigns.	2019	DEDO with community partners	Stronger economic collaboration and more support for the farming community.

## Goal 5B: Retaining and Expanding Existing Business – South Durham

By actively facilitating investment and growth across the Region, supporting existing businesses to grow and prosper and attracting new investment to Durham Region.

**Objective 5B.1** – Provide value-added support and connections to area municipal partners’ business retention and expansion (BR&E) activities.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
5B.1.1 Support the Business Retention & Expansion efforts of area municipal partners, with a particular emphasis on foreign-owned enterprises.	Ongoing	DEDP with DEDO	Knowledge of business health and red flags to impediments to foreign-owned business growth.

**Objective 5B.2** – Ensure that the Region benefits from aggregated information generated by BR&E.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
5B.2.1 Encourage area municipal partners to share information about their BR&E programs at the Regional level.	Ongoing	DEDO with DEDP	Better understanding of the local business community.

## Goal 6: Attracting New Investment

By being business-service focused and competitive, providing exceptional service to business, attracting new investment to Durham Region and actively promoting and marketing Durham.

**Objective 6.1** – Ensure prompt, informed and collaborative responses to investor enquiries and needs.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
6.1.1 Re-examine the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) to ensure the system provides accurate tracking of investment prospects, leads, clients and influencers and provides investment attraction performance metrics.	2017 ongoing	DEDO	Effective CRM system allowing for regular follow-up and better customer service.
6.1.2 Implement the Client Service Protocol with area municipal partners to promote a standard approach to respond promptly to external investment leads.	2017 ongoing	DEDO with DEDP	Efficient and effective responses to inquiries as well as follow up tracking and reporting.

**Objective 6.2** – Benefit fully from participation in Toronto Global.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
6.2.1 Effectively communicate Durham Region's value proposition, strengths, opportunities and priorities to Toronto Global.	2017 onward	DEDO, DEDP & Toronto Global	More effective representation of Durham Region. New investment and jobs to the Region.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
6.2.2 Capitalize on Toronto Global leads and initiatives to create economic advantage for Durham Region.	Ongoing	DEDP & Toronto Global	New investment and jobs to Durham Region.
6.2.3 Complete an effectiveness evaluation of Durham Region's investment in Toronto Global prior to the completion of its 3-year mandate.	2018	DEDO	Ongoing support based on effective return on investment.

**Objective 6.3** Implement the programs for attracting new investment and jobs to the Region.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
6.3.1 Continue to build relationships and work in China to bring investment and jobs to Durham Region.	Ongoing	DEDO	New investments and jobs.
6.3.2 Continue to implement the Pegasus Project focusing on attracting investment and jobs from Germany to Durham Region.	2017 ongoing	DEDO with DEDP	New investments and jobs.
6.3.3 Continue to develop relationships and business opportunities in Brazil to bring investment and jobs to Durham Region.	Ongoing	DEDO	New investments and jobs.
6.3.4 Continue to partner with the Ontario Manufacturing Community Alliance (OMCA) and the Ontario Food Corridor (OFC) to bring investment and jobs from both sectors to Durham.	Ongoing	DEDO	New investments and jobs.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
6.3.5. Explore opportunities to attract investment and jobs through the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).	2017 ongoing	DEDO	New investments and jobs.
6.3.6 Continue to forge relationships with US Site Selectors and other intermediaries.	Ongoing	DEDO	New investments and jobs.
6.3.7 Explore opportunities to capitalize on 'low hanging fruit' by connecting with investors in other jurisdictions who are interested in investing in Ontario (e.g. India, Japan, etc.).	Ongoing	DEDO	New investments and jobs.
6.3.8 Ensure that Durham is represented in the Toronto-Waterloo Innovation Corridor.	Ongoing	DEDO and Idea Summit Steering Committee.	Durham Region will be identified as an innovative leader in this corridor which will support the attraction of sector-specific jobs.

**Objective 6.4** – Build relationships and heighten awareness of Durham Region with the GTA-based Real Estate and Development Community.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
6.5.1 Collaborate with the GTA-based Real Estate and Development community to heighten awareness of Durham Region.	2017 ongoing	DEDO with DEDP	New investments and jobs.
6.5.2 Collaborate with the GTA-based Real Estate and Development community to convene an Annual/Biennial Durham Real Estate Forum.	2018	DEDO with DEDP	Increased awareness of Durham within the GTA Real Estate and Development community.

**Objective 6.5** – Cultivate relationships with Federal and Ontario government officials engaged in investment attraction.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
6.5.1 Work collaboratively with upper levels of government to identify and implement initiatives that will attract investment to Durham Region.	Ongoing	DEDO with DEDP	Upper levels of government better informed about Durham Region as a place to do business.
6.5.2 Host the first Durham Region Franchise Show.	2018	Metroland, DEDO, DEDP and other community stakeholders.	Vacant storefronts across the Region will be replaced with viable businesses.



## Goal 7: Marketing Durham

By providing economic development marketing capital and through the marketing and promotion of Durham Region.

**Objective 7.1** – Develop and implement an integrated marketing plan that incorporates distinct messaging and tactics that target specific audiences.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
7.1.1 Review and update existing marketing collateral to highlight Region of Durham.	2017 ongoing	DEDO	Effective and vibrant marketing materials for promoting Durham as place to do business.
7.1.2 Enhance the Invest Durham website to include additional information about Durham Region growth, academic and other community-based assets.	2017 ongoing	DEDO	Effective and vibrant website for promoting Durham as place to do business.
7.1.3 Target the GTA-based Real Estate & Development Community with respect to marketing Durham as an investment location of choice.	2017	DEDO	New investment and jobs.

**Objective 7.2** – Invest in research to create value propositions profiling Durham Region investment opportunities in high priority sub-sectors.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
7.2.1 Invest in research to create value propositions in the sectors of focus and identify target companies.	2017 ongoing	DEDO	Solid value propositions for each sector of focus.

**Objective 7.3** – Get everyone in Durham Region “singing from the same song sheet” and working as a whole team.

Action	Timeline	Lead & Partners	Outcomes
<p>7.3.1 Create a cadre of Economic Development champions by building contagious commitment for the Region through shared messaging, showcasing exemplary practices and businesses and creating common language for Durham Region stakeholders and business community members to ‘sell the Durham experience.’</p>	<p>2017 ongoing</p>	<p>DEDO with stakeholders</p>	<p>Durham Region is promoted by local ambassadors.</p>

## Section 5.0: Putting it All Together

### 5.1 Monitoring & Reporting

An essential part of any Strategy is regular monitoring and reporting to document success. As part of the ongoing management, monitoring and reporting process, Regional staff will report annually to Regional Council. Part of this reporting process is the transparent sharing of information with interested members of the public and shareholders.

Regional Council, as articulated in this document, has a number of important responsibilities with respect to economic development and community well-being. Measuring strategic outcomes is important to ensure that the Strategy and Action Plan is being implemented and importantly, that progress toward the vision is being made. To this end, the Region's Economic Development and Tourism Division will measure key outcomes to determine success in the following key areas:

1. **'Substance' Indicators:** Whether the level of economic activity is increasing or decreasing in business and employment numbers across the Region. Whether or not there has been a growth in GDP and GDP growth per capita. Whether quality of life indicators (e.g. health, safety, crime, etc.) have been positively or negatively impacted as a result of economic growth.
2. **'Relational' Indicators:** Whether relationships with key partners have been strengthened and whether new alliances have been created in key sectors.
3. **'Process' Indicators:** Whether process-related improvements have been made (e.g. a streamlined approvals process).

### 5.2 Conclusions

This Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan is the culmination of extensive background review and engagement. The vision and guiding principles reflect Durham Region's current management philosophy and those of our partners. The goals, objectives and actions are the trajectories that will enable the Region, together with its partners, to create and sustain better economic and community outcomes for all who live, work and invest here.

The development of the Strategy and Action Plan however is only just the beginning. The real task lies in implementation and realizing results. To this end, the Region's Economic Development and Tourism Office will begin to operationalize this document by taking action to address the immediate short-term priorities by allocating resources – both fiscal and human – in alignment with these critical priority actions. At the same time, the Region will begin in a parallel way, to advance medium and longer-term priorities and to encourage its partners to identify ways in which they too can assist in strengthening economic opportunities across Durham Region.

Durham Region is poised for sustainable economic success and long-term vitality. Durham has it all: major infrastructure investments, an accessible and specialized talent pool, world-class educational institutions (including impressive elementary and secondary school rankings), a well-established enterprise-driven business community and a committed partnership between Regional and Area Municipal staff who are committed to service excellence and business readiness.

In addition to these key ingredients of success, Durham Region is committed to creating, and sustaining, economic advantage. The Region is diverse and with diversity comes opportunity. The Region is one of the fastest growing jurisdictions in the country and this rapid pace of change is expected to continue. As the Toronto area becomes increasingly densified, Durham Region as the most affordable Region in the Toronto area from a land value, development charges and tax lens, may be expected to draw even more attention not only from local investors, but from foreign owned and globally connected enterprises. Capitalizing on the growth that has come to Durham requires a concerted effort and this Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan identifies a number of key actions to ensure that Durham remains on the cusp of innovation, learning and importantly, economic opportunity.

Durham Region. The right choice for an incredibly bright future.