



2021

Economic Development and Tourism Annual Report



2021 Year in Review

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Like many, the team at Durham Region Economic Development and Tourism began 2021 hoping that the worst of the economic impacts of the pandemic might be behind us. The year turned out to be more unpredictable and challenging than we had hoped—especially for small business owners—and the hard work we had underway in 2020 to support locally-owned businesses was still critically important.

To continue our progress toward economic recovery in the region, we continued to work with our partners on the Durham Economic Task Force (DETF) throughout 2021. Together, the DETF offered webinars, promoted business supports, launched huge buy-local marketing campaigns, and worked together on projects to support business recovery.

At the same time, our team continued to find innovative ways of attracting investment and enabling economic growth. In 2021, we organized events, investment tours, agri-food workshops and tourism roundtables—all virtually. We showcased all of the absolutely incredible things that Durham has to offer to tens of thousands of people, online.

The pandemic has dramatically changed how many of us live and work. Our 14 downtowns are vibrant and exciting, and the rolling countryside outside our towns is charming and beautiful, offering the inspiring experiences that people need and want for a balanced lifestyle. Durham Region continued to experience booming growth, because we are in-demand. We welcomed new headquarters for innovative tech companies, international film production facilities, and we saw massive growth in interest for commercial and industrial development. Durham is an attractive place for businesses to grow.

Later in 2021, we started work on a new five-year Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan that will chart the path for how our region's economy can become more innovative, diverse, resilient and strong. Workshops with our stakeholders and community partners have started, to gather critical input.

In 2022, we will complete and launch this action plan. It will outline how our team will promote the region for new investment, enable business growth and job creation, support on-farm diversification, and support innovation, to meet the needs of the changing global economy.

We will continue to support our local businesses as they confidently build back stronger.



Simon Gill
Director, Economic Development and Tourism

Economic Snapshot



Booming Growth

- Estimated population of Durham Region in 2021 grew to 728,100.
- Durham Region's population is forecast to grow to 1,300,000 by 2051.



In Demand

- Oshawa census metropolitan area (Bowmanville to Whitby) is the third fastest growing population in the country (2021 Census Data).
- The average selling price in Durham Region for all home types increased by almost 33 per cent from December 2020 reaching \$1,033,032.



Talented

- Durham Region post-secondary student population grew to more than 30,000 students annually.
- Nearly 40 per cent* growth in tech talent in the last five years (*Oshawa CMA).



Innovating the Future

- Ontario Power Generation announces partnership to deploy a Small Modular Reactor (SMR) at Darlington site, Clarington.
- Home to campuses of two of the top 10 ranked primarily undergrad universities in Canada: Ontario Tech University and Trent University Durham GTA.

COVID Response

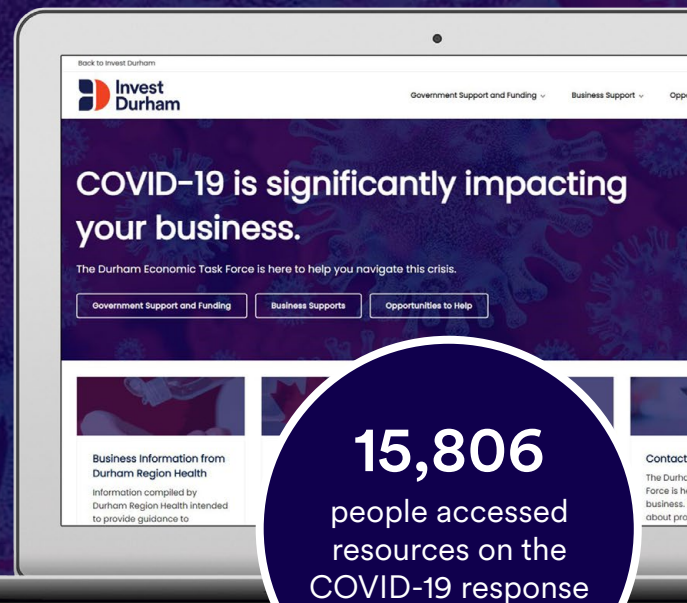
The COVID-19 pandemic continued to bring challenges for Durham Region businesses in 2021. The Durham Economic Task Force (DETF), formed in 2020, continued to respond to the COVID-19 crisis with targeted programming, advocacy and support for locally-owned businesses.

The DETF is made up of Regional and local area economic development teams as well as local Boards of Trade, Chambers of Commerce and Business Improvement Areas (BIAs). The DETF also includes the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Business Advisory Centre of Durham.

Continuing to lead projects in coordination with the DETF was a major area of focus for Invest Durham in 2021.

DETF Projects:

- COVID-19 response website and campaign
- COVID-19 response webinars and advocacy
- Downtowns of Durham website and campaign
- Shop Where You Live, Shop in Durham—Shop Local Campaign
- Shop Durham Region Marketplace
- Chamber-led rapid testing program



By the Numbers:



26

community partner organizations in the DETF



760

attendees at DETF webinars in 2021



60,000

residents visited DowntownsOfDurham.ca, a 42% increase over 2020

Business Investment Highlights

The following non-exhaustive list details some key new businesses, strategic investments and retained/expanded businesses in Durham Region in 2021. Please note that this list does not include any retail or franchise opportunities and may include opportunities that our team did not provide direct assistance.

Autocrypt locates North American office in 1855 Accelerator, Whitby

Inclusive Instruments locates in 1855 Accelerator, Whitby

Porsche Experience Centre (PEC) announces location is being added to the 'Durham Live' development, Pickering

General Motors assembly plant reopened, Oshawa

Sargent Family Dairy, Durham's first on-farm dairy processing facility opens, Clarington

GEODIS, a global logistics provider, opens a distribution and logistics facility, Oshawa

Aosom Canada Inc. opens distribution facility, Oshawa

William F White (WFW) opens 90-acre film and television backlot, Pickering

Ontario Power Generation announces GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy selected as partner to deploy a Small Modular Reactor (SMR) at Darlington site, Clarington

East Penn opens warehouse and head office, Clarington

Merck announces production of COVID-19 antiviral drug at Thermo Fisher Scientific, Whitby

Windmill Farms (Greenwood Mushroom) expands, growing their facility by more than 100,000 square feet, Port Perry



Responded to 112 Business Investment Inquiries

Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Invest Durham supported a wide range of innovation and entrepreneurship organizations and initiatives, including:

- Spark Centre and Spark Angels
- Synergy Pioneer Program
- 1855 Accelerator
- Business Advisory Centre of Durham (BACD)
- Collision Conference
- Durham Entrepreneurship Ecosystem
- OPEN.innovate Creative Arts Incubator of Durham Region
- Digital Main Street
- SiberXChange and SiberX Canadian Women in Cybersecurity
- Ontario Shores' Mental Health Innovation Incubator

Tourism Activities

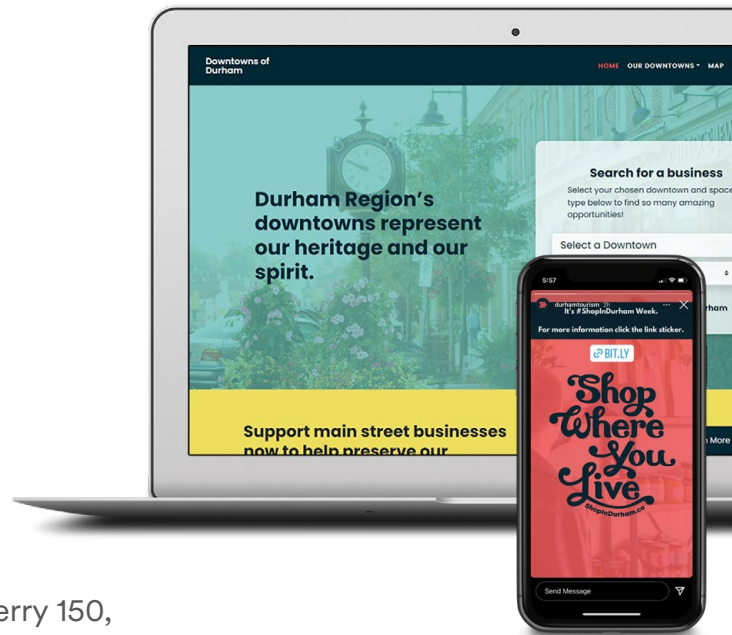
With promotions to bring tourists to Durham limited by the pandemic, Durham Tourism focused significant effort on supporting local tourism businesses and operators as many experienced the most severe impacts to their business due to restrictions.

Initiatives included:

- Shop Where You Live, Shop in Durham campaign—a joint effort with Durham’s Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade
- Downtowns of Durham project—the project has grown to profile nearly 1,000 downtown and main street businesses, including dozens of blog posts, and a downtown business value proposition.

Other key initiatives include:

- North Durham Tourism Ambassador Program launch; and partnership with North Durham events such as Winding Roads Festival, Port Perry 150, Mural Marathon, and the Uxbridge Holiday Trail.
- Partnering to support and promote safe outdoor events such as the Downtown Whitby BIA Christmas Market, The Troubadour Series in Downtown Oshawa, the OMAs – Celebrating Music in Durham Region, and Durham Carifest.



7,758

monthly e-newsletter subscribers



4,199

monthly industry e-newsletter subscribers



131,485

engagements on social media – an increase of 45 per cent year over year



Twitter

8,183 followers
7,172 engagements
4% follower growth



Instagram

7,683 followers
44,368 engagements
56% follower growth



Facebook

6,284 followers
79,945 engagements
24% follower growth



Tourism Initiative: Durham is Home Collection

Durham Tourism launched the Durham is Home collection, featuring 22 designs, representing iconic locations across the region. Developed in consultation with stakeholders and designed in-house, the collection provides a way for residents to visibly demonstrate their love and sense of pride and belonging for the many communities that make up Durham Region.

17,296 store sessions—\$27,796.37 in proceeds that will be used to promote our vibrant local tourism industry businesses.



Sport Tourism

In 2021, Sport Durham announced the Parasport Games Legacy Fund Grant, in partnership with Their Opportunity. The program provides subsidies for children and youth to participate in adaptive sport programs in Durham Region.

In collaboration with the Abilities Centre and the Durham Adaptive Sport Collective, Sport Durham launched the first phase of the Parasport School Grow It program, with a teacher training session for two parasports.

Sport Durham continued to support adaptive sport initiatives and pursued adaptive sport event hosting opportunities, including co-hosting the Canadian Blind Hockey #COURAGE21 fundraiser and awareness campaign stop. In 2022, Sport Durham plans to host the Canadian Women’s Para Hockey National Selection Camp and is collaborating with partners to develop a new adaptive Stand-Up Paddleboard program.

Sport Event Bidding and Hosting

- Hosted Field Hockey Ontario Talent Identification Camp with Town of Ajax
- Confirmed Field Hockey Ontario 2022 Team Ontario Day Weekend and May Meltdown events
- Awarded 2022 Ontario Basketball Association Under 16 Boys, Under 17 Boys and Under 19 Ontario Cup Championships
- Submitted bid to host the 2023 Ontario Parasport Games to continue to build on the momentum of the 2019 Games and elevate the profile of adaptive sport in our community

Rural and Agricultural Economic Development



796

bi-monthly industry e-newsletter subscribers



15%

growth in number of social media followers



470

total attendees at agriculture and rural workshops



3,784 visits to the Durham Region local food directory

Launched a workforce development project that included eight videos highlighting the diverse career opportunities available in the agri-food industry.



- Hosted a four-part webinar series on various niche and specialty crops that can be grown in the region. Topics included technical agronomic information and marketing tactics, with more than 300 participants.
- Wrote and supported the execution of three successful rural economic development projects and initiatives in north Durham.
- Reached more than 1,450 Uxbridge residents, business owners and visitors as part of the Uxbridge downtown revitalization project.

Film Durham



54%

increase in film production days in Durham Region from 2020 to 2021



19%

increase in film production projects in Durham Region from 2020 to 2021



170

attendees at virtual career fair



- Durham Region International Film Festival (DRIFF) hosted a series of five drive-ins. Films were selected by invitation and were all Canadian filmmakers showing Canada's diversity.
- Largest backlot of its kind in Canada is now open in City of Pickering.

Broadband

Improving access to broadband is a strategic priority for Durham Regional Council. Increasing broadband availability in underserved areas is critical to Durham's economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. Bridging the digital divide is highlighted in the economic pillar of the Regional Recovery Framework and Action Plan.

Ongoing project accomplishments include:

- With assistance under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP), the first broadband network construction project was initiated. The 38-kilometre high-speed fibre optic backbone, will connect the Township of Uxbridge to the City of Pickering.
- Development of a business plan that received Council endorsement to construct a Regional Broadband Network (RBN); and established a Municipal Services Corporation called Durham OneNet Inc. to develop, manage and operate the RBN, connecting our Regional facilities and communities across Durham.

Durham Local Immigration Partnership - #ImmigrantsWork Initiative

The Durham Local Immigration Partnership (DLIP) partnered with World Education Services Canada and community stakeholders to deliver virtual workshops and webinars as a part of an #ImmigrantsWork Initiative. The program is designed to engage the business community in dialogue around hiring newcomers and aims to foster inclusion of immigrant talent in Durham Region. The program is also developing a toolkit of resources for local employers.

Marketing Activities – Invest Durham

Promoting Durham Region for new investment and job creation.



Twitter

1,047 followers
2,182 interactions
43% follower growth



LinkedIn

2,669 followers
4,328 interactions
107% follower growth



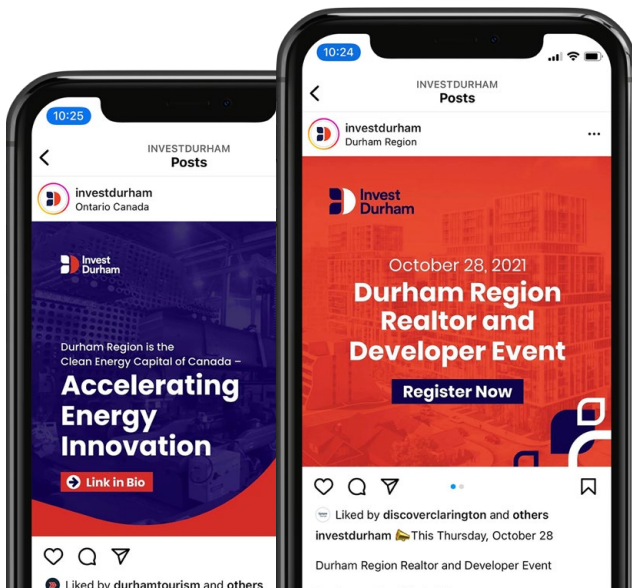
Instagram

1,404 followers
2,535 interactions
67% follower growth

1,677 subscribers to Invest Durham Enews

Invest Durham Marketing Initiatives

- 400+ printed Timeline of Innovation brochures distributed internationally
- 1,200,000+ impressions of campaign promoting Durham’s history of innovating
- 110 connections made at Collision Virtual Conference



- 367 registrations received for the Durham Region Realtor and Developer event
- 1,000,000 impressions from campaign to promote the energy, environment and engineering sector in Durham Region



Awards

2020 Festivals and Events Ontario Achievement Award

- Canada Day the Durham Way

2020 WebAward

- For outstanding achievement for the InvestDurham.ca website.

Sport Tourism Canada 2020 PRESTIGE Awards (awarded in April 2021)

- Durham Region 2019 Ontario Parasport Games—Canadian Sport Event of the Year award [Group B, budget less than \$1 million]

MarCom Awards

- Invest Durham History of Innovation Ad Series: Gold
- Invest Durham Brand Guidelines: Platinum
- Durham Tourism rebrand: Gold
- Durham is Home: Gold
- Invest Durham LinkedIn page: Honourable Mention
- Downtowns of Durham blog: Honourable Mention

AVA Digital Awards

- Invest Durham Value Proposition video, web-based production: Platinum
- Invest Durham Tap Into Talent video, web-based production: Platinum
- Invest Durham—A Timeline of Innovation in Durham Region, Digital Advertising Campaign: Platinum
- Invest Durham Agriculture Careers video series, video production: Honourable Mention
- Invest Durham Energy Campaign, Digital Advertising Campaign: Honourable Mention



2021 dotCOMM Awards

- Durham Tourism Instagram

2021 EDCO Economic Development Awards (Results April 2022)

- Energy Campaign: Finalist
- Shop Durham Region Marketplace: Finalist

2021 Economic Developers Association of Canada (EDAC) Annual Marketing Canada Awards

- Durham is Home – Category: Social Media/Apps in the \$600,000+size category
- Timeline of Innovation Automotive Ad – Category: Single Advertisement in the \$600,000+size category



Economic Development and Tourism Office

🇨🇦 Durham Region, Ontario, Canada

605 Rossland Road East

Whitby, Ontario L1N 6A3

+1-905-668-7711

InvestDurham.ca



If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact Economic Development and Tourism at 1-800-706-9857, ext. 2619.