



The Regional Municipality of Durham
Year in review
2020



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Message from the Regional Chair

In 2020, we learned the importance of flexibility, adaptability, and resilience.

There is no doubt the COVID-19 virus changed our daily lives. A pandemic that caused us to be physically apart; yet managed to bring us all together.

We stood together. We remained #DurhamStrong. And, we pitched in to support our local businesses when they needed us the most. In the toughest of times, we did things the Durham way.

We focused on the bright spots. Launched a new strategic plan to guide our vision for Durham Region. To maintain our high quality of life; recognize our diverse and growing population; and work together to keep our economy strong.

Thank you for everything you do. Your efforts make our community a fantastic place to be!

—**John Henry**, Regional Chair and Chief Executive Officer



Message from the Chief Administrative Officer

Those who choose a career in public service often talk about community first. It's about creating quality of life. A safe place to raise a family. A place where neighbours come together to support one another.

For Regional employees, it's a promise. A promise to deliver high-quality programs and services—even in the middle of a global pandemic. A promise to work around the clock to keep one another safe. A promise to show support for those who need us most; including those who struggle with mental health, job loss, loneliness and isolation.

We want to set the example. We've outlined important health measures. And, we've embraced this advice. Because we want to again experience important celebrations, cherished moments, and even the ability to share a hug with someone we love.

While the health and safety of residents is always a top priority, it was our focus in 2020. We've gotten this far; let's continue to stand together to help keep everyone safe.

—**Elaine Baxter-Trahair**, Chief Administrative Officer



COVID-19



46 Regional Control Group meetings held by Durham Emergency Management; leading corporate response to the pandemic since March 2020



300 children provided with emergency child care to support essential workers



1,367 number of staff working remotely as of March 24



45 videos focused on COVID-19 delivered by the Regional Chair



38 weekly briefing notes, from Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), sent to Regional Council and eight local CAOs



Region declared State of Emergency on March 24; first time in history



Lead the Emergency Information function at the Regional Control Group



Shared a daily COVID-19 media clippings package with key contacts across the organization, as well as all Regional Councillors



Ensured a co-ordinated response with Health Department communications



Established a comprehensive COVID-19 web page to provide important and timely information to community partners and residents



Provided crisis communications and issues management support to high-profile issues, including COVID-19 outbreaks at long-term care homes

282

media inquiries related to COVID-19 co-ordinated by CCO

33

This Week in Durham newsletters distributed

Advertising

Phase One:
Flatten the Curve
(March 2020)

Phase Two:
Let's all do our part
(April 2020)

Phase Three:
Safe reopenings;
mandatory mask
wearing (July 2020)

Phase Four:
Second Wave
of COVID-19
#StopTheSpread
(October 2020)

Phase Five:
Red Zone
(November 2020)

Social media


26.9k total
Twitter followers


14,452 total
Facebook followers


19,946 total
LinkedIn followers

86,593 views of
videos produced

212 videos produced

Podcast



Launched
“Stuff you should
know about
Durham Region”
podcast

Video examples

#DurhamStrong kids
video series

#FrontLineHeroes
video

Family Services
video series

Regional Chair videos

Web

The week of
March 13 to 19, 2020
durham.ca saw a
353 per cent increase
in page views over
the week prior

Launched the
COVID-19 Community
Resources and the
COVID-19 Community
Funding Opportunities
web page: **4,000**
visits per month



Formed the Durham Economic Task Force to support local businesses with 26 community partners

68,162

people accessed resources on the Invest Durham COVID Response website

1,792

responses to **4** Business Surveys



Created a portal for local businesses

1,225

businesses supported through COVID-response local directory websites

40,437

residents visited Downtowns of Durham



Launched multi-vendor, innovative marketplace called Shop Durham Region

1,040

businesses supported through Digital Main Street and Digital Durham



Developed and promoted a series of **13** videos to promote support for local businesses with **154,000** impressions



Recorded and circulated notes from over **150** daily provincial and federal updates

Developed and launched the Durham Region COVID-19 Data Tracker in April:

- Almost **1.37** million views in 2020
- Includes information about number of cases, FAQs, outbreaks, etc.

Hosted external Town Hall dedicated to COVID-19:

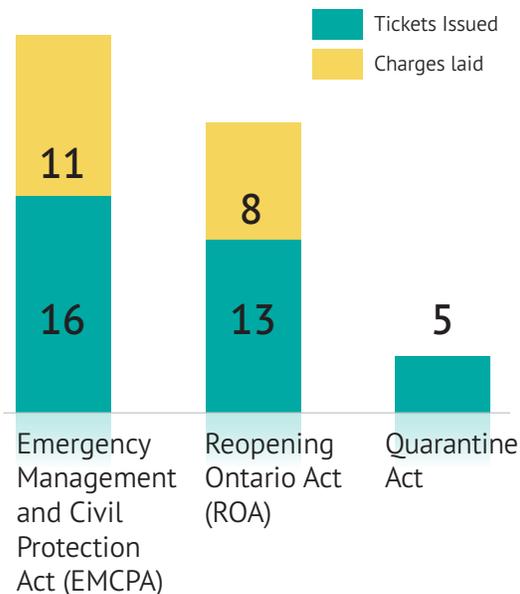
- Engaged with **11,300** people telephone and online
- Broadcast on Rogers TV Durham

Health and safety for staff

- Launched COVID-19 staff-screening tool
- Automatically installed federal COVID Alert app on all Regional mobile phones

Support from DRPS

Responded to about **3,677** calls for non-compliance related to COVID-19 (gatherings, non-compliance businesses, etc.)



Durham Region Transit

Implemented COVID-19 cleaning and disinfection processes through fleet and facilities

Suspended fares during first wave, for health and safety reasons

One of first in Canada to wrap three buses with a mask to reinforce mask use on transit

Offered free Presto cards after first wave to encourage contactless fare payment, with free cards later in the year when customers loaded a minimum of \$6.50

Installed Plexiglass barriers on conventional vehicles; barrier cleaned each time a bus returns to the garage from service, or when required while on route

Provided support to vulnerable populations

109

residents supported at Camp Samac

400

nurses, personal support workers, social workers and more hired to fill urgent staffing needs at three Regional long-term care homes



Opened rest areas with washrooms, showers and accommodations



Released colouring pages; photos shared with those in Regional facilities, including LTC homes; asked residents to colour and send in



Helped retailers quickly extend patios via expedited Road Occupancy Permits



Launched COVID-19 Health Survey—for residents 18 and up—to gather info about how the pandemic is affecting their health



Conducted accommodation inspections at **125** migrant farm worker facilities

340+

migrant workers health status monitored in their 14-day quarantine



Creation of COVID-19 Funders Table to assist funding organizations with allocating resources



Extraordinary efforts put forth by our Long-Term Care staff during the pandemic to ensure our 850 residents received needed care and many with complex medical conditions

IT support

334%

increase in sent emails

260%

increase in received emails

1,195%

increase in SharePoint use

24,691%

increase in meetings held via Microsoft Teams

Implemented an electronic Employee Performance system

1,456%

increase in chat messages

36,996%

increase in call participation

1,859

Regional laptops encrypted

520

desktop computers encrypted

Implemented system for Fast Track process for purchasing

500+

equipment-related support

1,000

additional support requests submitted between March and June

450

additional support tickets received in last two weeks of March

Implementation of Expense Claim Module



Outlined roadmap for post-pandemic recovery in Durham Region



In April, created a Task Force with community representatives from health care, emergency services, businesses and non-profit sectors

Created an online portal with access to resources related to recovery efforts

Region of Durham Recovery Framework and Action Plan

Four pillars of post-pandemic recovery framework and action plan:

Social recovery	Economic recovery
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes to community safety and well-being Identifies needs/gaps and explores mobile outreach Considers health and medical needs 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines path to strong and resilient economy Provides support and guidance to local businesses; improves broadband Maximizes growth, partnerships, collaboration and innovation
Built recovery	Municipal recovery
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advances economic, climate change and transit objectives Takes a “build back better” approach Pilots transformational projects 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines safe delivery of Regional services; reopens facilities Leverages technology and online options Ensures financial stability

Partnerships

Launched CityStudio Durham, a partnership with three local post-secondary institutions, and Durham Regional Police Service

- Developed CityStudio Durham website portal to support matchmaking between Regional projects and post-secondary students and faculty
- Completed **10** collaborative projects in the inaugural semester of CityStudio Durham
- Held first CityStudio Hubbub

Tested the public alerting system; residents received calls to landlines and/or heard loud siren

Took part in first virtual AMO conference to advocate for key priorities

Communications teams at Region and local tiers worked together to relay COVID-19 messages to residents

Helped lead Canada Day the Durham Way virtual event with eight area municipalities

30 delegations and meeting with provincial MPPs and federal MPs to advocate for Regional priorities

Partnered with local energy utilities and credit unions to co-develop the Durham Home Energy Savings Program to reduce energy use and emissions

Partnered with Oshawa Power and Elexicon Energy to develop the E-Mission electric vehicle education campaign

Innovation and modernization



Secured funding for **8** EV charging stations for corporate fleets, as part of first steps in transition to zero emissions vehicle fleets



Exported approximately **107,100** megawatt-hours of electricity to the grid and recovered **4,160** tonnes of metals as a result of operations at the DYEC



Launched Durham Intelligent Communities Framework: published **10** videos to showcase ongoing work

- DRT received grant for project management resources to support the electric buses pilot program
- Launched online portal for Regional water/sewer customers
- New technology allows residents to view real-time line painting operations
- Region launches first e-commerce transaction: online sale of garbage bag tags
- Launched online platform for Region's annual auction
- Hosted first virtual farm tour in co-operation with Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee
- Hosted virtual public information centre for input into transit priority projects on Simcoe Street
- Advanced research/testing for use of recycled material in road reconstruction, video monitoring for traffic conflict analysis, Bluetooth applications for traffic management and adaptive traffic control for operational improvements
- Assisted low income residents in receiving approximately **\$8.5 million** in refunds and benefits
- Continuation of accessibility upgrades to HQ, including additional touch-free door openers
- Commenced the redesign and modernization of workspace at Regional Headquarters and 101 Consumers Road
- Launched implementation of myDurham311 to integrate customer contact
- Facilitated online virtual focus groups in April to inform the design of the Durham Home Energy Savings Program
- Provided all DRT staff with network access and emails to facilitate improved internal communication and participation in virtual meetings and forums
- Modernization of data management at Duffin Creek WPCP
- Opened a Transit-Oriented Development Office
- Released proposed policy directions for Major Transit Station Areas along the GO Lakeshore East extension to guide their transformation into walkable, mixed use, urban destinations
- Revised and modernized the Region's Woodland Conservation By-law
- Developed an online dashboard for the Durham Region Profile
- Launched e-commerce payment option for Planning-related development application fees

Community engagement

12,000

residents participated in Virtual Budget Town Hall over the phone, via the Region's website, or viewed event on television

100,000

public interactions completed through Waste Call Centre

889

residents responded to survey for Region's Cycling Plan

7,000

participants in the virtual Anti-Black Racism Town Hall

100

students learned about waste management through school engagement activities

2,600

respondents to Regional survey about broadband needs across our communities

120+

submissions and **1,200+** responses to questions posted through discussion papers related to Envision Durham, the Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Durham Regional Official Plan



Hosted consultation for a modernized Soil and Groundwater Assessment Protocol

Undertook consultation activities for the development of the new Long-term Waste Management Plan



Hosted two WebEx workshops



Presented to **5** advisory committees

13,619

users were hosted during 1 virtual open house

2,093

survey responses received from 1 online survey



Hosted 1 live virtual town hall, over **300** residents participated

Showcasing of innovation at Collision From Home conference led to

24

Invest Durham organizational leads

54

Invest Durham landing page views (average visit time of nine minutes)

72,473

campaign impressions from Collision Conference Virtual Partnership #DurhamAtCollision



Three Invest Durham white paper downloads



News release picked up **88** times (potential audience of **3.3** million people)

Mixed Waste Pre-sort and Anaerobic Digestion Facility continued to move forward



Open house held for residents to learn about potential sites for new AD and Waste Pre-sort Facility

Durham Tourism

7,844

Monthly consumer e-newsletter subscribers

4,181

Monthly industry e-newsletter subscribers

89,784

Engagements on social media

8.7%

follower growth on Twitter

9.9%

follower growth on Instagram

6.9%

follower growth on Facebook

Invest Durham

180%

follower growth on Twitter*

564%

follow growth on LinkedIn*

503,373

impressions of the post-secondary reskilling programs campaign

14

industry and community engagement roundtables held, new Durham Tourism brand approved

*2020 was the first full year of account activity



Customer service

DRT Specialized Services eligibility review:

- Ensures customers are receiving services to best suit their abilities
- More than **300** eligibility review applications sent to customers



Moved the Accessibility Advisory Committee to virtual meetings, while meeting the accessibility needs of all members

Road maintenance responded to over **60** significant winter events to ensure road safety to motorists, pedestrians and other road users

635

staff received 1:1 virtual training on accessible documents

Curbside collection program

129,900



Tonnes of garbage material collected through curbside program

63,100



Tonnes of organic material collected through curbside program (GB and Yard)



March to September, Region increased numbers of bags for curbside collection from 4 to 6 bags biweekly

300,000+

visitors served at the WMFs

33,000

tonnes of material collected at the WMFs

46,100



Tonnes of recyclable material collected through curbside program

1,527

clients including children, youth and seniors were provided oral health services

2,670

routine public health inspections completed related to food safety, infectious diseases prevention and control, safe water, recreational water, migrant farm worker housing, and private sewage systems

465,700

hours of emergency response provided

45,269

patient hospital transports

27,000+

wellness checks were completed by Ontario Works staff from May to December 2020 (food banks, medical care, housing, mental and addiction services, legal assistance)

Health program stats

2,638

COVID-19 investigations/inquiries regarding priority population settings

11,087

COVID-19 testing kits prepared by administrative support staff

135,492

COVID-19 phone interactions with residents and community partners

15,121

COVID-19 cases and contacts followed by public health nurses

13,323

nasal swabs obtained by paramedic services from area residents; school staff and students; clients and staff in child care centres; long-term care and retirement homes; shelters and other congregate settings

44,442

nursing assessments to determine if further medical intervention is required

23,217

follow ups with facilities, completed by public health inspectors

81

outbreaks managed by public health inspectors in long-term care homes, retirement homes and hospitals

128,560

test results received and distributed for follow up

62,452

calls to cases and contacts

331

follow ups/investigations by Durham Region staff for confirmed positive cases and high-risk contacts not contacting Health for follow up

96

investigations conducted by public health inspectors for people failing to self-isolate under the Section 22 Class Order

11,328

COVID-19 investigations initiated in facilities

Note: many programs were suspended or operated in reduced capacity due to COVID-19 demands



Significant achievements

19

water supply and sanitary sewerage projects completed

1,160

clients working with Employment Supports obtained employment, including 367 clients who exited Ontario Works for full or part-time employment.

3,000+

clients received counselling and housing support from partnership between Social Services and the Health departments

100+

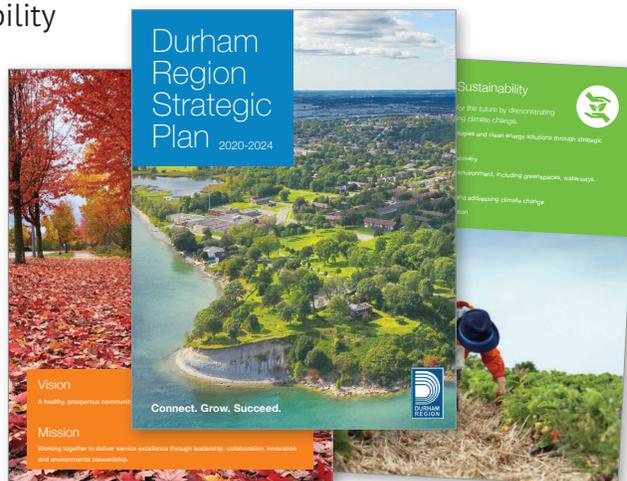
chronically homeless people housed

- Launched Durham Council on Aging's Beauty of Experience Campaign to combat misconceptions about aging
- Developed Intelligent Communities Framework
- Created Rapid Transit and Transit Oriented Development Division
- Counselling services for mental health and anxiety encompassed over 3,000 intake appointments during the pandemic
- Conducted a survey about the accessibility of Regional services
- Secured Council approval for the Regional installation of a fibreoptic backbone connecting Pickering and Uxbridge along the Brock road corridor to allow improved internet service access to businesses and residents on the corridor
- In support of Vision Zero, launched the Automated Enforcement program using on-road cameras to reduce red-light running at signalized intersections and to improve speed compliance on Regional roads

Five-year strategic plan

Focus on advancing five key goal areas:

- Environmental sustainability
- Community vitality
- Economic prosperity
- Social investment
- Service excellence



Sharing Durham Region with the world

Regional Chair momentum report; part of presentation to council; highlighted key priorities

1,614

articles in GTA news outlets that mention Durham Region programs and initiatives

300

media materials issued (excluding statements)

22

statements issued from the Region of Durham

Service improvements



Moved to online learning to accommodate staff and those teleworking



Launched the Flu Tracker to report number of cases, outbreak information and more



Launched external educational newsletter for residents and businesses



Launched Pcard to allow staff to procure goods quickly for COVID



Installed wider, paved shoulders on rural roads to provide safer cycling environment

- Wi-fi installed at homeless shelters in Durham Region; tablets purchased for clients to use to conduct searches online and connect with landlords directly
- Implemented a wide range of Vision Zero safety measures such as ladder crosswalk markings, pedestrian countdown signals, all way stops, new traffic signals, new pedestrian crosswalks, cross-rides for cyclists, protected-only left turn operations and battery backup systems at traffic signals
- Advanced Bus Rapid Transit on Highway 2
- Launch of Farm 911 project in Durham to help identify farm properties for first responders
- Established virtual site meetings for construction tenders to continue during COVID
- Developed vendor screening process to quickly vet PPE vendors responding to open call for PPE

- Digitizing the process for executing agreements and internal memos so that procurement awards could continue seamlessly
- Completing many arterial road widenings and related improvements, improving accesses and adding service capacities to attract further development, businesses and new residents
- Created PPE vendor list of **156** vendors by item category through open bid call and existing Region contracts
- MyDurhamWater launched online access for Region's **180,000** water and sanitary sewer customers
- **15,000** customers activated their online MyDurhamWater account
- Prepared an open call for PPE items posted to Bids and Tenders of which **356** solicitations received and logged

276

CAO all-staff emails and Insider articles distributed

19

water supply and sanitary sewerage projects completed

3.2

additional kilometres of the Regional Cycling Network advanced

24

Road Reconstruction, Widening and Road Rehabilitation projects

60

EV chargers installed in community-wide network



Legislative and regulatory changes

Reviewed and responded to the following:

- Ontario Flooding Strategy, COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020 (Bill 197)
- Building Transit Faster Act and Regulations
- changes to the Conservation Authorities Act
- changes to the regulations under the Endangered Species Act
- changes to regulations under the Aggregate Resources Act



Provided training and resources to promote watermain disinfection



Reviewed and commented on proposed Ministerial Zoning Orders in Pickering, Ajax and Clarington



Responded to a provincial review of the Made in Ontario Environment Plan



Responded to a detailed federal survey on the impacts of high Lake Ontario water levels



Initiated planning work for advancing regulatory compliance on management of excess soils generated from Regional construction projects



Began rollout of new Technical Standards and Safety Act (TSSA) regulations for backup fuel generator system upgrades at Regional facilities



Reviewed and commented on changes to provincial policies and legislation including changes to the Growth Plan, the Conservation Authorities Act, the Planning Act, the Development Charges Act



Interesting facts

In June 2020, Regional financial assistance in the amount of **\$625,580** was approved under the Regional Revitalization Program for the following:

- Whitby Firehall Redevelopment (Station No. 3) project
- Six (6) storey mixed-use development, including **160** residential condominium units, approximately **9,500** square feet of ground floor commercial space and a total of **186** parking spaces

Since the declaration of a climate change emergency on January 29, there have been several Council-approved projects for corporate and community-wide climate solutions that will support efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs; while creating local jobs and attracting private sector investment in the low carbon economy. Highlights include:

- A **\$5 million** Climate Mitigation and Environmental Initiatives Reserve Fund to help advance innovative low carbon technologies and building practices in Regional facilities, including new construction and retrofits; includes start-up funding as part of an innovative energy retrofit initiative
- Launch of the LEAF Backyard tree planting program, which elicited overwhelming demand in the first year of operations
- Development of the Durham Home Energy Savings Program, in partnership with local municipalities, energy utilities, and contractors, and submission of **\$4 million** funding application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- Attracting nearly **\$500,000** in funding for more than **90** EV charging stations in partnership with local area municipalities and electricity utilities

41,400

tonnes of recyclable materials marketed through the MRF

Social Services staff partnered with local agencies to create the In and Out of the Crisis program at Camp Samac

Strategy to increase supply of pre-serviced employment lands: Council approved recommendations to prioritize numerous high-value water and sewer infrastructure projects to help to attract new investment, create jobs and accelerate economic growth

Accessibility Awards video launched on International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Video to recognize National Access Awareness Week (NAAW)

6,200

tonnes of recycled, compost or reused material collected at WMFs

Community Investment Grants approved by Regional Council to expand the Durham College Whitby Campus, as well as to support the construction of three new hospice facilities in Durham Region

Region was awarded a **\$350,000** Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Green Municipal Fund Grant, to offset over **\$1.2 million** expended on the Blackstock landfill mining/reclamation pilot; returned legacy landfill to green space and reduced long-term environmental impacts

Maintained the Region's AAA credit rating with S&P and Moody's



Approval of Master Housing Strategy to help revitalize the Durham Regional Local Housing Corporation portfolio of community housing properties—including **1,292** units across the Region. Process includes reviewing public surplus lands; creating new partnerships and incentives for supplying affordable, community, supportive and transitional housing; supporting community housing; and modernization of the homelessness and emergency shelter system to reduce chronic homelessness to zero.

Water Supply and Sanitary Sewerage Systems' performance objectives in 2020:

100

per cent compliance of wastewater effluent results to protect water environment

0

Boil Water Advisory days

99.97

per cent compliance of drinking water test results

No sanitary sewage by-pass events

Communication support

Delivered communications regarding waste programs including:

2,000

radio advertisements over 4 radio stations

17,000+

new downloads of the Durham Region Waste app

120,000

waste collection calendars distributed

380

television advertisements broadcast



Awards



MarCom Award

Gold – All-Staff Email from the CAO

MarCom Award

Honorable Mention – #DurhamStrong COVID-19 all mayors video

MarCom Award

Honorable Mention – Stay Home Website

MarCom Award

Honorable Mention – Frontline Heroes video

Hermes Award

Platinum – COVID-19 Recovery Hub

DotComm Award

Platinum – COVID-19 Recovery Hub

DotComm Award

Gold – This Week in Durham

MarCom Award

Gold – Durham Region COVID-19 special insert (advertising)

MarCom Award

Gold – COVID-19 Colouring Pages

Smart 50 Award

for Traffic Services Division

- Award for the Best Customer Information System implementation project for the Region of Durham's WBCIS project, which replaced a legacy water billing system
- AVA Digital Awards – Gold – InvestDurham.ca/COVIDresponse website
- The Durham Region 2019 Ontario Parasport Games was selected as a finalist in the 2020 PRESTIGE Awards for the Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance (CSTA) Canadian Sport Event of the Year Award and CSTA Sport Event Legacy of the Year Award
- Awarded eight local champions with the Accessibility Award for their dedication to removing barriers and making Region more accessible for people of all abilities
- Municipal Waste Association P&E Silver Award for Durham's single-use plastics display at HQ
- Economic Developers Association of Canada (EDAC) Annual Marketing Canada Awards
 - ▶ Recovery Project/Plan in the \$600,000+ size category for Downtowns of Durham
 - ▶ Social Media/APP in the \$600,000+ size category for Vertical Farming Campaign
- ▶ Single Publication, less than 5 Pages in the \$600,000+ size category for Invest Durham Annual Report 2019
- Tourism Industry Association of Ontario 2020 Tourism Awards of Excellence
- Finalist – Tourism Event of the Year Award – Durham Region 2019 Ontario Parasport Games
- PRESTIGE (Program Recognizing Exceptional Sport Tourism Initiatives, Games & Events) Awards
 - ▶ Winner of the Sport Tourism Canada 2020 PRESTIGE Awards for Canadian Sport Event of the Year Award [Group B, budget less than \$1 million]
 - ▶ Finalist for the Sport Event Legacy of the Year Award – Durham Region 2019 Ontario Parasport Games
- 2020 Festivals and Events Ontario Achievement Award for Canada Day the Durham Way

Legend

CCO: Corporate Communications Office

CS-HR: Corporate Services Department,
Human Resources Division

DEM: Durham Emergency Management

DRT: Durham Region Transit

DRPS: Durham Regional Police Service

EV: Electric Vehicle

GB: Green Bin

ITHelp: Corporate Services, Information Technology help desk

LTC: Long-term care

MRF: Material Recovery Facility

POA: Provincial Offences Act

PPE: Personal Protective Equipment

RDPS: Region of Durham Paramedic Services

RHQ: Regional Headquarters

SS: Social Services

WMF: Waste Management Facility

WPCP: Water Pollution Control Plant





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