



Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference

January 2026

1. Goal

- 1.1 To provide advice to the Region of Durham on environmental sustainability and climate change-related matters, as expressed in Regional policies and plans.

2. Mandate

- 2.1 The Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee (DECAC) is a volunteer Advisory Committee established by Regional Council in accordance with these Terms of Reference. Committee members are guided by these Terms of Reference.
- 2.2 The Terms of Reference provide for a balance between activities referred from a Regional department, Standing Committee, or Council and a provision for DECAC to be proactive and advise on matters identified on its own initiative.
- 2.3 Regional staff, Standing Committees, or Council may refer environmental sustainability, climate adaptation, and climate change-related matters to DECAC. DECAC shall report directly to the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee and/or the Regional Community Growth and Economic Development Department.

3. Scope of Activities

- 3.1 The scope of the DECAC may include activities such as:
 - a) providing advice on environmental and climate-change related policy directions and initiatives pursued by the Region. This may include providing advice, feedback, and guidance to Regional staff and Council on Durham's climate change-related plans and initiatives;
 - b) providing advice in the identification and implementation of new or existing programs, approaches, or policies relating to the protection, sustainability, and enhancement of natural resources and systems, and climate change adaptation and mitigation within the Region in co-operation with other organizations where appropriate. This may include investigating conservation easements, land trusts, tree planting, environmental stewardship, new

- provincial directions, and funding grants; or providing advice, feedback, and guidance to Regional staff and Council on Durham's climate change plans;
- c) providing advice in identifying and implementing community outreach activities which support the growth of environmental awareness and appreciation in Durham Region in co-operation with other organizations where appropriate. This may include recommending and assisting with educational workshops or homeowner guides which can be used by the public in areas such as tree cutting, fertilizer use, erosion control and general enhancement of the environment;
 - d) providing advice on Regional environmental data in co-operation with other organizations where appropriate;
 - e) providing advice on the state of environmental resources such as water resources and natural heritage features such as wetlands, forests, and wildlife within Durham Region in co-operation with other organizations where appropriate; and
 - f) appointing a member of DECAC to participate on steering committees for environmental impact studies or other committees with environmentally focused interests. In accordance with the Region's approved EIS Guideline, a DECAC representative would participate in Regionally co-ordinated EIS's and peer reviews; and
 - g) at the request of Regional Standing Committees or departments, provide advice on miscellaneous matters as they arise.

4. Composition

4.1 The DECAC will be comprised of thirteen members in total, as follows:

- Ten (10) citizen members (eight (8) municipally appointed, two (2) at-large).
- One (1) Post-Secondary Student member.
- One (1) youth member.
- One (1) member of the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee.

4.2 All members are regarded as private citizens and do not represent their respective employers or advocacy group in their capacity as a DECAC member.

- 4.3 Membership for citizen members shall correspond with the term of Regional Council. However, citizen members shall continue to serve until their replacements are appointed by Regional Council. If a member chooses to resign, the Region will seek a replacement in accordance with Section 5.
- 4.4 Membership for Post-Secondary Student members shall be up to a 4-year term, generally corresponding with the length of their college or university program.
- 4.5 Membership for youth members shall be up to a 3-year term, generally corresponding with the school year.
- 4.6 At the discretion of the DECAC, non-attendance of three consecutive meetings without prior notification be sufficient grounds for replacement.
- 4.7 DECAC will strive to maintain a high level of relevant technical expertise and competence in environmental issues within its membership.

5. Membership Selection

- 5.1 Durham Region will place an advertisement seeking individuals interested in volunteering for appointment to the DECAC. For post-secondary student and youth members, the Region shall also contact colleges, universities, and secondary schools in Durham Region to request that students be notified about the opportunity to volunteer with DECAC. Interested individuals will be required to submit an application form to the Regional Clerk outlining their interest and qualifications.
- 5.2 The Regional Community Growth and Economic Development Department will review the applications received. Applications from qualified applicants will be forwarded to the respective area municipality with a request that the local Council nominate one representative. The Regional Community Growth and Economic Development Department, from the remaining applications received, will nominate a sufficient number of citizen members at large in order to bring the citizen membership to ten. The Regional Community Growth and Economic Development Department will also nominate a Post- Secondary Student member and a youth member from the applications received.
- 5.3 In nominating citizen members to the DECAC, regard shall be given to the aim of achieving a combination of technical experts and community representatives with knowledge of environmental and land use planning matters. Regard shall also be given to residency within the Region and availability to attend meetings. An elaboration of the selection criteria is provided in Appendix 1 of the Terms of Reference. The nomination of members at large will help to achieve the desire of a diverse and balanced DECAC. All residents of Durham Region are eligible for membership.

- 5.4 In nominating a Post-Secondary Student member, consideration shall be given to the individual's interests, level of participation and knowledge of environmental issues in Durham Region and the planning process. The member must be enrolled full-time in a college or university program and express an interest in environmental matters. The relevance of their interests to the mandate of DECAC will be an important consideration. Regard shall also be given to residency within Durham Region for the school year and availability to attend meetings. An elaboration of the selection criteria is provided in Appendix 1 of the Terms of Reference.
- 5.5 All members of the DECAC shall be appointed by the Regional Community Growth and Economic Development Committee and Regional Council.
- 5.6 Regional Council shall appoint a representative and an alternate to the DECAC from the members of the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee. The role of the Council representative will be to champion DECAC's mandate, support and advocate DECAC's interests at Community Growth and Economic Development Committee and Council meetings and take a lead role in presenting updates to the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee and Council, including, but not limited to, DECAC's annual report and workplan in partnership with DECAC's chair.
- 5.7 In the case of a vacancy, the approach described in Section 5 will generally be followed.

6. Officers

- 6.1 A chair and two vice-chairs (first and second) will be elected annually by the membership of the DECAC. The Community Growth and Economic Development Committee representative will chair the inaugural DECAC meeting.
- 6.2 Post-Secondary Student members and youth members are not eligible to sit as chair or vice-chair.

7. Support Services

- 7.1 The Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development or designate shall serve as staff liaison to the DECAC. The staff liaison will provide administrative, procedural and technical support to the DECAC.
- 7.2 The staff liaison will co-ordinate all requests for advice from the DECAC, through meeting agendas. DECAC responses to such requests shall be co-ordinated by the staff liaison to the Community Growth and Economic Development Department.
- 7.3 The Region will provide secretarial and other support services. Regional Council will provide a budget to cover the operational expenses of the DECAC, and this

budget will be administered by the Community Growth and Economic Development Department.

8. Meetings

- 8.1 Regularly scheduled meetings of DECAC will be held virtually, and/or at the Durham Regional Headquarters. The DECAC, will establish a meeting schedule taking into account the business needs and the schedule of Regional Council and the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee. Special meetings may be held at the call of the Chair.
- 8.2 Unless otherwise determined, all meetings will be open to the public. As a formal Advisory Committee to the Region, the DECAC is subject to the Regional Procedural By-law, unless otherwise specified in the Terms of Reference.
- 8.3 A quorum for DECAC meetings shall be a majority of the sitting DECAC members. The Committee shall wait 15 minutes from the scheduled start time for quorum, at which point the meeting will be adjourned or and/or rescheduled if quorum is not met.

9. Delegations of Committee Meetings

- 9.1 Any person(s) wishing to appear before the DECAC as a delegate must submit a request to delegations@durham.ca, advising of the topic or item to which they wish to speak, which will then be forwarded to the staff liaison in the Regional Community Growth and Economic Development Department. All requests for delegations must be received at least one week prior to the meeting to ensure that the delegation is included on the agenda. Any person wishing to address the DECAC as a delegate, who has not previously arranged to do so, may be granted permission to do so only by Committee resolution. Delegates shall speak for no more than five minutes. The time for delegation may be extended by a 2/3rds vote of the Committee.

10. Minutes and Agenda

- 10.1 The minutes of each DECAC meeting will be approved at the following meeting. The unapproved minutes will be circulated to members of Council as part of the Council Information Package (CIP) by the Regional Clerk.
- 10.2 The DECAC agendas will be prepared by the staff liaison and the DECAC chair or vice-chair with input from other DECAC members. At the beginning of every meeting, the Committee shall approve its agenda.

11. Committee Resolutions

- 11.1 The DECAC will seek to achieve consensus on decisions. Recommendations are "carried" if supported by a majority. Only resolutions as they appear in the

adopted Minutes may be considered as officially representing the position of the DECAC.

12. Annual Reports and Workplan

- 12.1 An annual report summarizing the activities completed in the previous year shall be prepared by the DECAC. The annual report shall be forwarded to the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee.
- 12.2 An annual workplan with an estimate of the resources necessary and any suggested revisions to the Terms of Reference for the coming year shall also be prepared by the DECAC for consideration and approval by the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee and Regional Council. To avoid duplication, the DECAC shall ensure that the workplan is co-ordinated with other environmental initiatives in the Region.
- 12.3 An annual review of the DECAC by the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee will be completed to examine the effectiveness of the Committee and to ensure continued improvements.

Appendix 1: Membership Eligibility Criteria

1. Citizen Membership Eligibility Criteria

1.1 To facilitate the nomination and appointment of new citizen members to the DECAC, the following criteria will be considered:

A) Residency

Members should reside in Durham Region.

B) Technical Expertise

A high level of technical expertise is required within the Committee. Applicants with academic qualifications and/or work experience in environmental and climate change-related disciplines, such as, energy, housing, transportation, and conservation, will be an important consideration. Applicants are also encouraged to have experience within a range of industries, including public agencies, academia, professional and industry associations, and community and socially focused organizations, in order to bring a diverse and holistic range of perspectives to DECAC.

C) Community Representatives

Consideration shall be given to the individual's level of participation and knowledge of environmental issues and the planning process. The relevance of their interests to the mandate of DECAC will be an important consideration.

D) Availability

It is important that an applicant be able to attend as many DECAC meetings as possible and undertake work outside of the regular monthly meetings. An applicant should be able to be contacted or reached during the day in order for meetings to be arranged.

1.2 The aim is to achieve a diverse committee with a combination of technical experts and community representatives.

2. Post-Secondary Student Membership Eligibility Criteria

2.1 To facilitate the nomination and appointment of new Post-Secondary Student members to the DECAC, the following criteria will be considered:

A) Residency

Members should reside in Durham Region for the school year.

B) Education

Members must be accepted into or enrolled in a full-time College or University program and express an interest in environmental matters.

Consideration shall be given to the individual's interests, level of participation and knowledge of environmental issues in Durham Region and the planning process.

The relevance of their interests to the mandate of DECAC will be an important consideration.

C) Availability

It is important that an applicant be able to attend as many DECAC meetings as possible and undertake work outside of the regular monthly meetings. An applicant should be able to be contacted or reached during the day in order for meetings to be arranged.

3. Youth Membership Eligibility Criteria

3.1 To facilitate the nomination and appointment of new youth members to the DECAC, the following criteria will be considered:

A) Residency

Youth members should reside in Durham Region.

B) Education

Youth members must be enrolled in Grade 10, 11, or 12 and express an interest in environmental matters.

C) Availability

It is important that an applicant be able to attend as many DECAC meetings as possible. An applicant should be able to be contacted or reached during the day in order for meetings to be arranged.

D) Letter of Reference/Support

Applicants for youth membership must include a letter of reference from their school and a letter of parental/guardian support with their expression of interest.