



Corporation of the Township of Brock

Staff Report to the Mayor and Members of Council

From: Stacey Jibb
Position: Manager, Agriculture and Rural Economic Development (Invest Durham), Durham Region
Title / Subject: Growing North Durham Annual Report
Date of Report: January 29, 2023
Date of Meeting: January 29, 2023
Report No: 2024-TED-001

1.0 Issue / Origin

The purpose of this report is to deliver an annual report regarding implementation of the [2023-2027 Growing North Durham: A Rural Economic Development Action Plan](#).

This report will be accompanied by a presentation from Stacey Jibb, Manager of Agriculture and Rural Economic Development and Glen Macfarlane, Rural Economic Development Specialist, with the Region of Durham's Economic Development and Tourism Division (Invest Durham).

2.0 Background

The Growing North Durham Plan was endorsed by Regional Council and the Council of the Township of Brock in early 2023. It sets out goals and actions to support economic growth across north Durham to 2027.

The Growing North Durham Plan supports a collaborative north Durham-wide approach to economic development where regional resources can be shared across the three Townships (Scugog, Uxbridge and Brock) to advance common interests for economic development and tourism.

3.0 Analysis

The delivery of economic development programming in the Township of Brock relies on collaboration between the Region, the Township of Brock as well as business support organizations, including the Brock Board of Trade (BBoT).

Regional Economic Development staff have regular communication with the Township's Director of Development Services on matters relating to economic development. This ongoing communication and collaboration is integral to the implementation of the Growing North Durham Plan.

The Growing North Durham Plan is structured under three pillars (people, places and prosperity). Each pillar includes goal areas and actions that support a community-driven approach to economic development. Identified below are the key activities completed within each pillar over the course of the past year and/or activities that are underway:

- A. People: This pillar is about recognizing the strong correlation between human capital and economic growth.
- Hosted the North Durham Building Business Forum (NDBBF), which took place on November 14, 2023, at the Trail Hub. The NDBBF included several elements which supported advancement of actions within the People pillar of the Growing North Durham Plan:
 - Social Media 101 Panel highlighted how to enhance digital presence and balance running a business as well as social media as a tool for business promotion.
 - Information tables featuring various business support organization allowed businesses to make in-person connections and better understand the resources available to them.
 - Inspiring stories from entrepreneurs and small business across north Durham shared lessons learned and key takeaways to operating a successful business.
 - Plans are underway to complete a workforce planning study to help identify gaps in workforce data and skills gaps in north Durham.
 - Throughout 2023, shared relevant information with entrepreneurs and small business owners through a bi-monthly e-newsletter, Invest Durham social channels and one-on-one interactions/support.
 - North Durham innovation success stories are featured in Rural business Spotlights through Invest Durham social channels and marketing.
 - Supported the delivery of Digital Main Street Program in collaboration with the Business Advisory Centre Durham to eligible businesses in the Township of Brock.
 - Plans are underway to partner with Durham College and the National Research Council/Industrial Research Assistance Program to connect information and

communications technology companies with agri-food operators in north Durham to support innovation in the agri-food sector.

B. Places: This pillar is about highlighting and strengthening north Durham's unique qualities of place that stimulate meaningful connections with the community.

- Several initiatives and campaigns have been delivered over the last year with efforts made to ensure there is a north Durham lens on marketing efforts. These include:
 - Collision Conference 2023 (Regional Economic Development staff attended on behalf of north Durham).
 - Shop Where You Live Campaign to support shopping local.
 - Gather at the Farm campaign which highlighted agri-tourism destinations and local food during the month of October.
- In collaboration with municipal staff, a Rural Economic Development (RED) grant was secured in 2023 to update the Downtown Community Improvement Plan in the Township of Brock as well as enhanced marketing to encourage business uptake of incentive programs once established.
- Regional Economic Development staff participated in the Beaverton Waterfront Advisory Group to provide economic development and tourism related insights.
- Looking at 2024, plans include a strong focus on Brock's downtown areas including the completion of building and business inventories and promotion of updated Community Improvement Plan programs.

C. Prosperity: This pillar is about business retention and making informed decisions to encourage and enable economic growth.

- Working with the Director of Development Services, completed a signature sites inventory on behalf of the Township for the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade (MEDJCT).
- Working with Township communications staff, an [online business toolkit](#) was developed and launched on the Township of Brock website in 2023. The toolkit provides a one-stop-shop of information and resources for new and existing businesses as well as those looking to grow their business in the Township of Brock. Some highlights includes a community profile for Brock, information on obtaining a building permit, Community Improvement Plan incentives, how to access local talent and more.
- Working closely with the Director of Development Services, available properties in Brock are identified and submitted as potential investment leads for inquiries received directly to Township/Regional staff or through the Durham Economic Development Partnership.

In addition to collaboration on economic development initiatives in the Township of Brock, the Region of Durham's Economic Development and Tourism Division, through the Durham Tourism Team, also support tourism related initiatives across the Township. While not the focus of the Growing North Durham Plan, it should be noted

that tourism plays an integral role in advancing the overall economic prosperity of Brock. Durham Tourism has supported and/or assisted with several tourism related events/initiatives in Brock over the past year:

- Alignment with the Durham Tourism events calendar
- Brock Tourism website development and funding secured
- Environics reports/data for the downtowns of Cannington, Sunderland and Beaverton
- Professional winter photography captured

Support on creation of blogs and blog content for choosebrock.ca, including a blog writer who visited several Beaverton businesses over the summer and a feature for Brock in a north Durham holiday experience.

4.0 Related Policies / Procedures

Section 3 of The Township of Brock's Official Plan identifies several Economic Development Goals, including 3.1.4 which identifies the Region working cooperatively with the Township to promote private investment and to effectively market the municipality.

5.0 Financial / Budget Assessment

There are no financial implications for the Township of Brock at this time.

5.1 Asset Management

N/A

6.0 Climate Change Impacts

Economic development aims to strengthen local economies and improve the well-being of communities. It not only improves the overall economic well-being of the community but also enhances social cohesion and quality of life for residents. Economic development supports the preservation and creation of local jobs, which helps to create more sustainable communities where people can live, work and play. It also helps to reduce automobile use if people work closer to where they live.

7.0 Communications

N/A

8.0 Conclusion

Several projects and initiatives have been identified for 2024 to support the ongoing implementation of the Growing North Durham Plan. This includes a workforce planning study, the 2024 North Durham Building Business Forum, a project focusing on the

enabling innovation in the agri-food industry, ongoing collaboration with the Brock Board of Trade and support for future grant applications.

The Growing North Durham Plan represents an ongoing commitment for a collaborative North Durham-wide approach to the delivery of economic development support for the Townships of Scugog, Uxbridge and Brock. Regional Economic Development staff look forward to continuing a positive working relationship with Township staff and business support organizations to attract and retain businesses in the Township.

9.0 Recommendation

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Report 2024-TED-001, North Durham Annual Report be received for information.