



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 (Region of Durham)

Title / Subject: Growing North Durham: Rural Economic Development Action Plan

Date of Report: January 20, 2023

Date of Meeting: January 30, 2023

Report No: 2023-TED-001

1.0 Issue / Origin

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Growing North Durham: Rural Economic Development Action Plan ("the Plan"), included as **Attachment #1**.

This Report will be accompanied by a staff presentation by Stacey Jibb; Manager of Agriculture and Rural Economic Development and Glen Macfarlane; Economic Development Specialist with the Region of Durham's Economic Development and Tourism Division.

2.0 Background

Over the last 3 years, staff in the Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Section of the Economic Development and Tourism Division have worked in collaboration with staff from the Townships of Scugog, Uxbridge and Brock in developing a new action plan to replace the prior Vibrant North Durham Economic Development Plan (VND Plan). Since 2013, the prior VND Plan provided a roadmap for economic development initiatives across north Durham.

Development of a new plan began in 2019, and consultations were held across north Durham to gather input on the effectiveness of various activities and projects that were underway or completed during the term of the prior plan.

The consultation session confirmed a desire by all parties to continue with the current approach, whereby the communities of north Durham would work together with Regional economic development staff, share resources, and advance common interests for economic development and tourism.

Throughout 2020 and 2021, staff reprioritized efforts to focus on supporting north Durham businesses and organizations throughout the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and development of the new plan was paused temporarily.

A socio-economic analysis was undertaken by staff entitled North Durham by the Numbers to inform the development of the Plan. Since its creation, the analysis is regularly updated as new data becomes available (e.g., Census data). It is a valuable tool for effective economic development planning and allows staff and community organizations to better respond to the socio-economic impacts and changes happening in their communities. North Durham by the Numbers will be provided as information at a later date.

In parallel, the Region developed a new five-year Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Action Plan (Ready Set Future: A PLACE Blueprint for Durham). The new Growing North Durham Plan was developed to align with these broader regional economic aspirations and goals, and Ready Set Future contained specific priorities and initiatives for north Durham.

3.0 Analysis

The delivery of economic development programming in north Durham relies on collaboration between the Region, the Townships of Scugog, Uxbridge and Brock; Economic Development Advisory Committees (EDACs) as well as business support organizations such as the Brock Board of Trade. This collaboration allows communities to take part in identifying opportunities and solutions to economic challenges.

The Plan was presented to the Brock Economic Development Advisory Committee (BEDAC) in spring of 2022, and feedback was gathered at that meeting and through subsequent surveys. The Brock Board of Trade representative on the BEDAC was also able to provide feedback on behalf of the organization.

The Plan was also circulated to other interested parties identified as having a support role in implementation, including South Lake Community Futures Development Corporation, and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

The Plan is structured under three pillars. These pillars are central to supporting the community-driven approach to economic development in north Durham and complement the long-term aspirations identified within Ready Set Future (People, Location, Acceleration, and Creativity). The three key pillars are:

- a. **People:** This pillar is about recognizing the strong correlation between human capital and economic growth.
- b. **Places:** This pillar is about highlighting and strengthening north Durham's unique qualities of place that stimulate meaningful connections with the community.
- c. **Prosperity:** The prosperity pillar is about business retention and making informed decisions to encourage and enable economic growth (e.g. sanitary sewer, water, transit, etc).

Within each pillar there are goal areas, objectives, and several high-level action items. As a next step; resources, performance measures, and timelines will be developed in collaboration with the Township to align with their respective capacities, while also maintaining a cohesive north Durham-wide approach to economic development. The Plan also captures projects underway or recently completed (e.g., North Durham Business Toolkits).

The below chart provides a summary of the goals and objectives identified within the Plan.

a. People

Goal Area	Objective
Support Entrepreneurship	Foster north Durham's entrepreneurial eco-system
Skills, Talent, and Workforce Development	Attract and retain a skilled workforce that meets the needs of the north Durham economy
Foster the Innovation Economy	North Durham businesses are recognized as a pivotal component of Durham Region's innovation community

b. Places

Goal Area	Objective
Welcome New and Diverse Businesses	North Durham is a welcoming community that appeals to a diverse range of businesses, workforce, and talent
Vibrant Downtowns	The economic and social vibrancy of north Durham's downtowns are enhanced through ongoing downtown revitalization programming and community economic development efforts
Showcase North Durham	Promote north Durham's value proposition, assets and quality of place to potential investors, businesses, and talent

c. Prosperity

Goal Area	Objective
Business Retention and Expansion	Retain existing businesses and support their expansion in north Durham to create new jobs
Investment Readiness	The north Durham communities are investment-ready and can effectively respond to investment inquiries while simultaneously supporting local business expansions and improvements
Employment Lands, Connectivity, and Economic Infrastructure	Ongoing improvements and expansions of north Durham's hard and soft infrastructure and employment land allocations are recognized as key drivers of economic prosperity

4.0 Related Policies / Procedures

Section 3 of The Township of Brock's Official Plan identifies several Economic Development Goals, including 3.1.5 which identifies support from the Region to facilitate and enable economic growth.

5.0 Financial / Budget Assessment

At this point in time there is no immediate financial impact for the endorsement of the Growing North Durham Plan. Future financial impacts will be brought forward to Council for consideration.

6.0 Climate Change Impacts

There are no climate change considerations at this stage of the Growing North Durham Plan but this will be a consideration during the Action Planning process

7.0 Communications

Regional Economic Development and Tourism staff will present the new Plan, along with Ready Set Future, to Council members of the Townships of Scugog, Uxbridge, and Brock throughout early 2023

Staff will also report annually to Councils in Scugog, Uxbridge and Brock with an individualized update on progress implementing the actions of the Plan.

Once Economic Development Advisory Committees have been confirmed, Regional Economic Development and Tourism staff will work together with Township staff to ensure alignment between

EDAC workplans and the Growing North Durham Plan, ensuring a cohesive approach to economic development across all three Townships.

8.0 Conclusion

The communities in north Durham share many socio-economic similarities which lends well to a coordinated approach of economic development and tourism programming and allows for shared resources and a strong, coordinated approach to supporting businesses.

The Growing North Durham Plan builds on the economic successes achieved under the prior plan. It is aligned with the Region's Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, and vice versa. Growing North Durham takes a community-driven approach to economic development planning that focuses on the pillars of people, places and prosperity, and takes advantage of the unique qualities of place that continue to make north Durham's economy vibrant and strong.

9.0 Recommendation

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Report 2023-TED-001, Growing North Durham: Rural Economic Development Action Plan and presentation from Durham Region be received; and THAT Council endorse the Growing North Durham Rural Economic Development Action Plan.