

INFO-25-08

From: Margret Rzymiski <Margret.Rzymiski@durham.ca>

Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2024 2:39 PM

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Subject: Report #2024-P-17 Proposed Name Updates for the Planning and Economic Development Department and Committee

Good afternoon,

Please find attached report **#2024-P-17 Proposed Name Updates for the Planning and Economic Development Department and Committee**, dated December 18, 2024 for your information.

Thank you,

Margret



Margret Rzymiski | Administrative Assistant
Planning and Economic Development Department
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The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Regional Council
From: Chief Administrative Officer
Report: #2024-P-17
Date: December 18, 2024

Subject:

Proposed Name Updates for the Planning and Economic Development Department and Committee

Recommendation:

That it be recommended to Regional Council:

Effective January 1, 2025, the “Planning and Economic Development Committee” be renamed as the “**Community Growth and Economic Development Committee**” and that the necessary amendments to the Procedure By-law to reflect this change be presented to Regional Council for approval.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend that the Planning and Economic Development Committee be renamed as the “**Community Growth and Economic Development Committee**” effective January 1, 2025, to reflect Durham’s forthcoming proclamation under Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act. The name of the Department will change accordingly and a number of other changes within the Department will also be made as of January 1, 2025, as detailed in Paragraph 3.2 of this report.

2. Background

- 2.1 In the November 15th Council Information Package, a [Memorandum](#) from the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development advised that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced on November 5th that the Durham Regional Official Plan and certain upper-tier land use planning responsibilities will be removed from Durham Region on January 1, 2025.
- 2.2 The Commissioner's Memorandum further noted that Regional and area municipal planners are currently working together on the necessary steps to implement this proclamation. To that end, a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will soon be circulated to the area municipalities and when executed, this MOU will confirm/clarify the scope of regional interests in planning matters. It is expected these MOUs will be finalized in the first quarter of 2025.
- 2.3 Until the MOU with the area municipalities has been executed and a period of time has passed to allow the impact of the changes to settle, it is premature to impose changes to the organizational structure of the Planning and Economic Development Department. At present, there are a significant number of staff vacancies within the Regional Planning Division. Given the number of staff vacancies, no staff reductions will need to be made as a result of proclamation.
- 2.4 As noted in Information Report [#2024-P-16](#) which was before the Planning and Economic Development Committee on November 5th, a host of upper-tier planning activities will continue post-proclamation, e.g. transportation planning, integrated growth management, GIS and data analytics related to land and housing supply, support to other regional departments in relation to the planning of infrastructure, housing and development charge background studies, etc.
- 2.5 As an owner of infrastructure, facilities and land across Durham, the Region will continue to provide comments on development applications submitted to the area municipalities for approval, to ensure Regional interests are properly protected.
- 2.6 In 2000, Durham Region delegated its approval authority for subdivisions, condominiums and part-lot control exemption by-laws to the five lakeshore municipalities; hence, the Region has been a commenting agency on development matters for almost 25 years. As of January 1, 2025, the Region will become a commenting agency on development applications in the Townships of Brock, Scugog and Uxbridge. Consistent with all other commenting agencies, the Region charges a fee to private sector applicants for these comments. The principle is that those who benefit from the service should pay, rather than the general taxpayer.

The Region's fees for commenting on development matters have not been updated in nearly four years; therefore, a fee review will be undertaken in early 2025 and staff will be recommending increases to ensure the Region's commenting fees properly reflect the cost of providing the service.

- 2.7 In 2025, the Region will undertake a comprehensive review of the recommendations resulting from various departmental assessments to ensure effective alignment of programs and services to the needs of communities in Durham Region. This will ensure the Region is well-positioned to deliver on the community-informed Strategic Plan and remain responsive to the changing legislative landscape.

3. Proposed Name Updates

- 3.1 While it is premature to make organizational changes until the impacts of the changes are better known, as a first step, certain departmental name changes will be made that reflect the diminishment of the regional land use planning function imposed by Bill 23. It is not a provincial requirement to remove the word "Planning" from upper tier Planning Departments, but doing so is consistent with what other upper tier regions have done.
- 3.2 Upon Bill 23's proclamation on January 1, 2025:
- a) the "Planning and Economic Development Department" will be renamed as the "**Community Growth and Economic Development Department**";
 - b) the "Planning Division" will be renamed as the "**Community Growth Division**";
 - c) the "Plan Implementation Section", the section within the Planning Division that has historically led the development approvals function, will be renamed as "**Development Advisory Services**". Going forward, this section will coordinate our one-window Regional comments on local development applications; and
 - d) the "Policy Planning and Special Studies Section" will be renamed as the "**Integrated Growth Management and Policy Section**".
- 3.3 Subject to Council approval, the "Planning and Economic Development Committee" will be renamed as the "**Community Growth and Economic Development Committee**".
- 3.4 Three positions from the former Plan Implementation section have been held vacant in the 2025 budget with a potential savings of \$465,000. Consideration will be given as to whether these positions could be redeployed elsewhere to meet operational needs, e.g. expanding the Integrated Growth Management team; a dedicated staff liaison reporting to the Rapid Transit/Transit-Oriented Development Office for our

dealings with Metrolinx; an Economic Development Coordinator to assist with implementing Ready Set Future; and a dedicated coordinator for the annual Business Count/employment survey.

4. Following Proclamation

4.1 Upon proclamation, the following will occur:

- a) The new Regional Official Plan (ROP) will become the official plan for the lower-tier municipalities that may repeal or amend it, meaning that each area municipality will have responsibility for the ROP as it pertains to their municipality;
- b) It is anticipated that area municipalities will assume approval authority for all Planning Act decisions, except official plans which will need to be approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing; and
- c) All eight area municipalities will have approval authority over subdivisions, condominiums, land division, and part lot control exemption by-laws. Commenting responsibilities on all land use planning applications and related matters will continue to be performed by the Region to protect Regional interests related to infrastructure, facilities, services and Regionally-owned land.

4.2 A draft Planning Services Agreement was prepared last year that could allow an area municipality to request development related planning advice, assistance, services or expertise from the Region. Regional staff from this Department could then be contracted to provide support similar to the way other Regional supports are provided in areas of human resources, IT and legal.

5. Previous Reports and Decisions

5.1 The implications of Bill 23 on the Region of Durham was first presented through Report [#2022-COW-33](#) in December of 2022.

5.2 The delegation of Durham Region's Land Division responsibilities and an update on Bill 23 was provided through Report [#2023-P-22](#) in September of 2023.

5.3 A proclamation update was provided in Report [#2024-P-16](#) which was before the Planning and Economic Development Committee on November 5, 2024. The report stated that a proclamation date was still unknown and detailed the upper tier planning functions and responsibilities that would continue post-proclamation. That

afternoon, the proclamation date of January 1, 2025 was announced by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

6. Relationship to Strategic Plan

6.1 This report aligns with the Strategic Goal of Service Excellence in the Durham Region Strategic Plan and the following priorities:

- a) 5.1: Optimizing resources and partnerships to deliver exceptional quality services and value: by ensuring capacity and training are provided and available for consent applications; and
- b) 5.2 Collaborating for a seamless service experience: by ensuring that training, materials, time and communication are provided so that existing and future land division applicants are aware of process changes.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Durham Region was created by the province on January 1, 1974. Ever since that time, a strong upper tier land use planning program has served to guide the Region's tremendous growth over the last half century.

7.2 The Ontario Planning system has evolved over time. In the past five years alone, there have been a significant number of changes with the introduction of at least twelve significant pieces of new legislation. The practice of land use planning operates within this environment of change and Durham Region will adapt to its new planning role.

7.3 Effective January 1, 2025, the Durham Regional Official Plan and certain upper-tier land use planning responsibilities will be removed from Council's purview. Staff from the Region and area municipalities are working together to implement these changes. Specific changes to the organizational structure of the Planning and Economic Development Department have yet to be determined, but as a first step to implement Bill 23's proclamation, staff are recommending that the name of the Planning and Economic Development Committee be changed to the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee, and that the Procedure By-law be amended to reflect this change. On January 1, 2025, the name of the Planning and Economic Development Department will similarly be changed to "Community Growth and Economic Development" with companion changes to the Planning Division and Sections within the Division.

- 7.4 Staff will report on progress related to the Memoranda of Understanding as new information becomes available.
- 7.5 A copy of this report will be shared with Durham's area municipalities and conservation authorities.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer