

Durham Mayors Participate In Regional Government Review

Representatives of The Regional Municipality of Durham and eight local-tier municipalities recently participated in interviews with the Province of Ontario's special advisors to the Regional Government Review process.

All nine heads of council welcomed the opportunity to convey the region's productive and strong track record in working together to serve residents. Feedback was provided by Regional Chair and Chief Executive Officer John Henry and mayors Shaun Collier (Ajax), Debbie Bath-Hadden (Brock), Adrian Foster (Clarington), Dan Carter (Oshawa), Dave Ryan (Pickering), Bobbie Drew (Scugog), Dave Barton (Uxbridge) and Don Mitchell (Whitby).

Highlights included:

- Regions, cities and towns are the backbone of service delivery. With an area of more than 2,500 square kilometres, a large rural area in the north and urban south, Durham's two-tier structure ensures that services are planned, funded and delivered in a cost-effective manner, on a broad geographic scale. Municipalities can reap economies of scale and avoid duplication of effort; resulting in equitable, high-quality services that would otherwise be unattainable by smaller communities.
- Residents identify with their local municipality, a strong connection that should be preserved. Clearly defined upper- and local-tier roles and responsibilities allow the region to strengthen governance and service delivery within our communities.
- All local-tier governments, and the Region, include continuous improvement as part of their core business. Recent changes in senior leadership and elected officials across Durham Region have allowed municipalities to conduct internal service reviews, support innovation, and develop new shared service arrangements. This focus on effectiveness allows the Region and local-tier municipalities to align services where it makes the most sense. A collaborative approach is key to addressing issues, such as transportation, broadband connectivity, affordable housing, environmental stewardship, and waste and emergency management.
- This Region and its municipalities continue to be leaders and advocates for good governance. In 2016, Durham Regional Council proactively redistributed its 28 seats to reflect population changes. At the same time, area municipalities examined and adjusted ward boundaries to ensure a simple and transparent electoral process. Regional Councillors also serve at the municipal level, with the Regional Chair exclusively elected to the upper tier.

Currently, local tiers respond to local matters, such as planning needs, preferences and demand in the community in areas, such as parks and recreational services, property standards, business licensing, cultural activities and community improvement. Durham Region delivers services including public health, paramedic services, child care, income and employment support, services for seniors and long-term care, transit, water, the Regional road network, and policing.

DRPS Seeks Used Cellphones To Assist Crime Victims

DRPS, in partnership with Victim Services Durham Region (VSDR), has identified a need in our community for used and refurbished cell phones.

VSDR is a separate partner agency of DRPS and provides emergency resources, support and funding to victims of violent crime. Victims are often referred through DRPS and other police services. One of the resources VSDR provides is the use of an emergency cellphone.

The cellphone offers an invaluable source of security and assistance to victims who are often fleeing dangerous situations with little to no possessions or financial support, and are feeling fearful and unsafe.

MTC Factory Outlet in Whitby has answered the call by donating 40 refurbished cell phones to this community initiative. MTC has also volunteered to place a drop box at their location for any public donations.

If you would like to donate an old, used or refurbished phone toward this initiative, visit MTC Factory Outlet located at 220 Water Street, Whitby. Check the website for regular store hours. <https://mtcfactory-outlet.com/pages/contact-us/>

For more information about this initiative please contact: Carly Kalish, Executive Director
Of VSDR, 905-579-1520, ext. 3401 or www.victimservicesdurham.ca.

Fifteen performances, comprised of 18 musically talented youth, have been selected as the Town's 2019 Whitby Idol finalists.

Presented by the Whitby Youth Council, Whitby Idol, the Town's annual singing competition, is open to youth ages 12 to 18 years old. The event profiles local youth and provides an opportunity that showcases their vocal talents to a live audience.

This year's finalists are: Sofia Wagar, Brooke Hindle, Mariah Martin, Jenny Frost, Matt Doran, Nathan Carr, Joseph Gagliardi, Aidan Pleasants, Katherine Rodney, Alesha Stevenson, Julia Middleton, Tanvee Tuppal, Allison Beadle, Tessa Martilla, Malaika Lorde, Lauren Beauvais, Monique Tesser and Riley Wheeler.

"On behalf of Council, I want to congratulate this year's Whitby Idol finalists," said Mayor Don Mitchell. "We look forward to seeing these talented local youth perform at the Whitby Idol grand finale and throughout the year at Town events."

The Whitby Youth Council is composed of young people and adults from local schools, agencies and organizations that work together to address the needs of Whitby youth. For more information, visit whitby.ca/youthevents.

Town Announces Whitby Idol Finalists

Council Approves 2019 Budget

At a Special Council meeting on Feb. 18, Town Council approved the 2019 Budget that is focused on managing the Town's recent investments in strategic initiatives, infrastructure and staffing, while continuing to plan for the future. The budget also has continued focus on the delivery of high quality programs and services to residents.

"The 2019 Budget is fiscally responsible and delivers on some of the key priorities identified within Council's 2018 to 2022 Goals," said Regional Councillor and Budget Chair Chris Leahy.

The Town's impact on the overall property tax bill is 1.94 per cent or \$8.36 per month per household*. The Town's portion of the overall tax bill is approximately 33 per cent. The Town is responsible for collecting property taxes on behalf of the Region of Durham and the School Boards.

"Through our 2018 Community Survey we heard from our residents that they believe they are getting good value for their tax dollars," said Mayor Don Mitchell. "The 2019 Budget will continue to provide good value to our residents and businesses, maintaining our infrastructure and planning for the future."

Specifically, the 2019 Budget focuses on:

- continuing to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of program and service delivery;
- improving the Town's customer service through facility and technology upgrades;
- launching our corporate planning framework to provide a roadmap for the future. This includes a new Corporate Strategic Plan, Council's Goals and the biennial community survey;
- advancing the redevelopment of Town Hall into a community hub for all;
- creating local jobs and economic prosperity through investments like the new Innovation Accelerator;
- building walkable, cycling-friendly neighbourhoods to reduce local traffic congestion;
- redeveloping and reimagining parks to ensure they meet the needs of residents now and in the future;
- accelerating the pedestrian focus of the two historic downtowns;
- launching a new strategy aimed at making the Town's community engagement more consistent, inclusive and easy;
- finalizing new sustainable development and urban design guidelines; and,
- realizing the economic, cultural and social potential of our downtowns, waterfront, green spaces and major attractions.

The following capital investments are also included within the 2019 Budget:

- parks (\$4.7M), recreation (\$2.5M) and active transportation (\$4.3M);
- fire and emergency services (\$1.6M);
- roads and stormwater (\$19.9M);
- facilities (\$2.1M);
- communications and technology (\$4.1M); and,
- library (\$1.1M).

"The 2019 Budget allows us to continue to deliver quality services to residents, despite the cost pressures of continued growth in our community," said Ken Nix, Treasurer and Commissioner of Corporate Services. "By focusing on completing our recent investments in strategic initiatives, infrastructure and staffing, the 2019 Budget is helping to ensure our sustainable future."

Property taxes are just one of the revenue sources utilized by the Town to support its annual budget. Additional revenue sources include licensing fees, user charges and grants.

The 2019 Budget is available online at whitby.ca/budget and in-person at Town Hall.

For comments or questions about the budget, contact the Corporate Services Department by email at treasury@whitby.ca or by phone at 905.430.4300 x2232