



# How Durham plans to bring over 500,000 new residents and thousands of new jobs to the area

By Jennifer Foden

The eight cities that make up Durham Region—Ajax, Brock, Clarington, Oshawa, Pickering, Scugog, Uxbridge and Whitby—have a population of close to 750,000 people. However, that is forecasted to grow by over 500,000 people—to 1.3 million—by 2051. “It’s a time of rapid change in Ontario generally, but Durham is incredibly fast-growing and we are working on many projects and strategic initiatives to help support this growth,” says Simon Gill, director of economic development and tourism at Invest Durham. Gill points to the Region’s focus on transit-oriented development, which means creating housing and mixed-use commercial developments around existing and new transit stations to bring in new residents. This includes the existing Pickering, Ajax, Whitby and Oshawa GO stations, as well as the planned GO stations in Courtice, Bowmanville and two more in Oshawa. They’re also increasing housing density in their 14 downtown and main street areas to support this growth. “A connected Region is important,” says Gill. “And all of these projects will result in increasingly vibrant communities, especially in our lakeshore area downtowns, with more options for commuting, working locally, visiting friends and family and more options for car-free living.”

Of course, all those new residents will need jobs and there are several ways the Region helps support job development. “With big growth comes big opportunity,” says Gill. For example, they nurture local entrepreneurship through several government-funded organizations, like the Business Advisory Centre of Durham, Spark Centre and 1855 Technology Accelerator. They also work with countless partners to help grow locally-owned small- and medium-sized businesses in Durham Region, from helping companies find a larger location and assisting with permits and approvals to providing data and demographics to help inform decision-making to seeking out earned media opportunities. They also work with provincial and federal partners to attract major investments such as business expansions that create thousands of jobs at once. Gill points to a recent collaboration with the Province and City of Pickering to bring FGF Brands, the baked-goods manufacturer, to a facility in north Pickering. “We must work on all fronts to create opportunities for residents of Durham to have good quality, fulfilling work,” says Gill.





One key way the Region is attracting major investments is through pre-serviced employment land, which means an employment-designated property that already has water, sewer and broadband connectivity on-site. “This helps attract business expansions, so that companies can get new facilities built faster, creating local jobs more quickly and with less barriers,” says Gill. He adds that they’ve already seen positive outcomes and new businesses open in Durham because of this strategy. “For example, in the Northwood Business Park in Oshawa, the Region is working with the City of Oshawa to bring water and sewer servicing to more employment lands; and recent investments in that Business Park include Martin-Brower and Lactalis.”

Other than housing and jobs, Gill says that they’re striving hard to make Durham Region a place where people want to live, work and play. “We are also striving to make Durham the very best place it can be in terms of quality of place and livability, maintaining what we have and improving for the future,” he shares. “Ensuring our quality of place remains strong means residents have great things to do when they’re not working, be it cycling, events and festivals, independent restaurants or thriving downtowns. Being a great place from a culture, recreation and creativity perspective will not only ensure Durham remains a good place to live but will also help attract more investment in the future.”.

This is part of a 10-article series profiling the innovation happening in Durham Region. The region has been recognized as one of the top seven Intelligent Communities in the world for the third year in a row. Learn more at [durham.ca/IntelligentCommunities](http://durham.ca/IntelligentCommunities) and [IntelligentCommunity.org](http://IntelligentCommunity.org).

