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Durham Region – The Greater Toronto Area

By Dave Lympany

Durham Region covers an area of over 2,500 square kilometres and is conveniently located to the

East of Downtown Toronto. Another Region with a diverse landscape, Durham has everything from the large lakeshore communities of Pickering and Oshawa to the farmlands and recreational areas in the north. Durham Region has a well educated population of over 570,000 that are employed by a wide variety of Businesses. These employers range from the High Tech like Siemens and Corning controls through agriculture and automotive manufacturing – GM Motors, Volkswagen Canada and BMW Canada all have facilities in the Region.

Durham Region administers its Healthcare and Education following the Provincial guidelines. The responsibility for the day to day operations of the education belongs to the Durham District School Board and the Durham Catholic District School Board – all the schools in the area are governed by these boards.

One essential piece of research you need to do BEFORE you purchase/rent a house is to find the school(s) you want your child(ren) to attend. This is vital as the schools are dedicated to particular residential area's so where you live decides where they go to school.

The Region has excellent transportation links including Pearson International airport, Oshawa airport and the Harbour at Oshawa which give tremendous access to North America. This is coupled with easy access to recreational opportunities in the outdoors and everything that a Major metropolitan area like the GTA has to offer!

Each section below is only an overview so please use the links to each Town/City website on the main website linked below for more detail. For job research definitely use the Chamber of Commerce websites for each location for great information on the local businesses.

Durham's Municipalities

The Town Of Ajax – In 2005 Ajax will celebrate its 50th anniversary as a town and has many events planned to recognise this. A small town in the South of Durham Region on the shore of Lake Ontario, it

Durham Region – The Greater Toronto Area

was named after the World War two British Warship The Ajax.

With a population in excess of 80,000 the Town covers an area of over 65 square km. The unemployment rate was 5.4% (2001) with an average family income of around \$80,000 a year. The average price of a house was in the region of \$215,000 making Ajax one of the cheaper areas in the GTA. Transport is provided by the Ajax/Pickering Transit that also links in with GO Transit and the Greyhound Bus.

There are two recreation centres in the Town that offer a full range of activities and sports. There are skateboard parks for the kids as well as summer camps for various activities during the school holidays. The Lake provides great recreation for the residents during both the summer and winter months.

The Municipality of Clarington – A collection of several smaller communities, the municipality now has around 75,000 residents and occupies just over 600 square Kilometres of the Lake Ontario shoreline in the south of Durham Region. The main settlements are Darlington, Newcastle and Bowmanville/Courtice. The area is growing quickly with a 10 year population growth average of 4% per year.

The main businesses are agriculture (and the services), aggregate excavation and cement works, tourism, manufacturing, retail and construction. There is an average unemployment rate of only 4.9% as the area is very business friendly, with the average household income around \$74,000. There are great transportation links with 3 major highways, docks, rail links, a regional airport with 2 runways and of course – Pearson International. The Clarington Transit connects with Whitby and Oshawa Transit and you can even use the same tickets on each system.

There are good facilities with a modern hospital that continues to expand, plenty of schools and the newly built University of Ontario Institute of Technology. There are 5 golf courses, 2 marina's, 2 indoor and 2 outdoor swimming pools, 5 arena's with 7 ice surfaces, extensive parks and 7 conservation areas that have downhill and cross country skiing. Last but not least – Bowmanville even has its own Zoo!

The City Of Pickering – Ideally situated between Downtown Toronto to the West and Port Whitby Marina to the East, the 94,200 population of the City of Pickering enjoy life on the shores of Lake Ontario. With the Waterfront Trail extending along the shores and the "environmentally significant" wetlands of Frenchmen's Bay residents are provided with some great scenery and recreation opportunities. On top of that the impressive leisure centre has fantastic modern facilities that any community would be proud of. For those with interest in the History of the region, a visit to the Pickering Museum Village should not be missed.

Business in Pickering is also well catered for and the City unemployment rate of 4.9% is well below the Canadian average. The main employers are the Ontario Power Generation plant that can be found on the waterfront and includes a massive wind turbine, Manufacturing and Construction, Business services and Retail. As with all the municipalities in Durham Region, for employment research go

Durham Region – The Greater Toronto Area

through the City's Business Directory for some idea of who is in the area and how to contact them. Public Transport is administered by the joint Ajax/Pickering Transit Authority who also link into the Toronto Transit Commission, GO Transit, Whitby Transit and Oshawa Transit to maintain a comprehensive network. Schools and Healthcare are administered by the Durham Region school boards and Health service.

The City is young with 79% of the population under age 45 giving a median age of only 35. The average household income is over \$80,000 with an average price of a home around \$235,000.

The City Of Oshawa – After starting off as a French fur Trading Post in 1750, The City of Oshawa has come a long way. Now, it is renowned as the eastern Gateway to the Greater Toronto Area and has become the economic centre of Durham Region. Its rapidly expanding population of over 146,000 also marks it as the largest residential community as well.

General Motors Canada are based here in North America's largest automobile production facility that produces over 1 million vehicles per year and are the City's leading employer. Minacs Call Centre has arrived and along with many different manufacturers, research and development companies, advanced manufacturing of transportation equipment, Healthcare, Printing and Publishing the city has a truly diverse Business base. The City has an unemployment rate of around 6%.

Being well located on the shores of Lake Ontario in the South of Durham region, the City has excellent transportation links that include a deep water port. Two major highways pass through the city and it has its own regional airport with close proximity to Pearson International. The Transit system links in with GO Transit, Toronto transit Commission and several other local community networks. Via rail provide the rail network to give the City every possible transportation option.

There is also plenty to do in the area – with the big city close by and easily accessible. For outdoor pursuits, the Kawartha and Haliburton tourism areas are close along with numerous parks and conservation areas that provide hiking, skiing and cycling. Over \$60 million is being invested in the City's recreational infrastructure in the next 2 years. This includes many renovations and improvements of existing facilities and a large new recreation centre for the city.

Many new residential and business developments are being constructed in the north of the city as it continues to grow. The cost of housing is cheaper than Toronto with an average home costing around \$160,000 in 2001. The median income for each household was in the region of \$60,000.

The Township Of Scugog – In the Northeast of the Durham Region, the Township of Scugog is located on and around the shores of Lake Scugog and occupies around 470 square km. Once the separate Towns of Port Perry (now Municipal Government HQ), The Island of Scugog, Cartwright and Reach, all have now amalgamated into the single municipality to reduce the administration costs.

The area is well set up for Tourism and the major employer is a Casino. After that, retail and manufacturing provide employment to the approximately 20,000 residents of the Township. There are 5 Marinas, 2 ice rinks, an indoor and outdoor swimming pool, a Theatre and 4 golf courses. The average household income is around \$70,000 with an unemployment rate of 5%. It will cost an average

Durham Region – The Greater Toronto Area

of \$220,000 to buy a single family home in the area. Police, Healthcare and Schools are administered by the Durham Region Government.

The Township Of Uxbridge – The Township of Uxbridge has a relatively small population of around 18,000 spread throughout various village sized communities in the Northwest of Durham Region. Located about 40 miles North of Toronto in the picturesque OakRidge Moraines, the Town of Uxbridge is the centre piece of the Township. A pleasant community that is close enough to the big City for all its amenities, Uxbridge has its own leisure centre, swimming pool and two ice arena's.

The Town also has the Northern terminus for the York – Durham Heritage Railway in the form of a fully restored station.

The Township's main industries are the Construction and Manufacturing, Business Services and Retail. These provide plenty of employment with a low unemployment rate of 4.1% (2001). The average household income is around \$75,000 with the cost of a home coming in around \$270,000.

The Town Of Whitby – Conveniently located just 15 miles to the East of Toronto, the Town of Whitby is an industrial town. The rapidly expanding population is now over 100,000 and the towns businesses are also expanding at a fast rate as it aims to be the business centre of Durham Region. With 4 major highways, close proximity to the Oshawa harbour (and its own smaller harbour)and Pearson International airport, extensive rail network and an enviable Transit system the Town is thoroughly "connected".

The automobile industry has a large presence, though the town has a truly diverse base of companies.

The services range from plastics and steel work through to telecommunications and pharmaceuticals. The two main downtown area's (Whitby and Brooklin) are both historical "heritage" areas with an old world charm. The Town has an unemployment rate of just 4.9% and an average household income of \$80,000 taken from the 2001 figures.

For recreation, there is a multi million dollar leisure centre (Iroquois Park Sports Centre) with fantastic facilities. Golf courses, parks, a marina, yacht club, Whitby Shores waterfront trail, indoor soccer and all the other facilities you would expect to find in a modern Canadian urban centre. There are plenty of schools that are administered by the Durham Region school boards and close proximity to several Universities and Colleges. Healthcare is administered by the Durham Region and is provided through several clinics and the main Lakeridge Health Centre, Whitby.

Dave Lympany moved to Canada in 2003 and after settling successfully has developed <http://www.onestopimmigration-canada.com> – the free onestop information resource for Canada and Canadian Immigration.

Halton Region, Toronto

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The Halton Region covers over 230,000 acres including about 25km of the shore of Lake Ontario. With the population forecast to exceed 420,000 by 2006 (5 year increase of about 15%) the Halton Region is becoming one of the fastest growing regions of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Though renowned across Canada for having the highest density of population, the rural areas in the GTA are dedicated to agriculture which is an impressive \$1 Billion industry employing thousands of people. Other major employers include the Ford and Liberty car manufacturers, Aerospace manufacturers Goodrich, Oil and Gas exploration, utilities and other Manufacturing. This diverse business environment is further supported by a skilled workforce, large domestic market, excellent transportation and easy access to export markets.

Over half of the population is currently under the age of 40 to give the region a dynamic workforce.

There are two school boards that administer the educational programs in the region – Halton District School Board and the Halton Catholic District School Board. These are complemented by the many post secondary institutions and libraries that are located either in or within an hour drive of the region.

Healthcare is provided by 4 main hospitals which are administered by the regional health service. A full public health service is available for those who qualify under the Ontario Provincial rules.

Halton's Municipalities

The Halton Region of the GTA is predominantly made up of 4 main municipalities. The Town of Oakville and the City of Burlington make up the urban area to the south, and the Towns of Halton Hills and Milton make up the largely rural area to the north.

The City Of Burlington – Burlington is situated in the south of Halton region, on the shore of Lake Ontario, and is a vibrant and beautiful city close to Toronto. With a population of around 160,000 people, Burlington covers approximately 187sq km and has grown considerably since its beginnings in 1784.

As a part of the 740km lakefront trail there are plenty of parks and recreational opportunities for the inhabitants. With many festivals, museums, sports and activities available there is something for everyone. For added convenience there is a comprehensive public transport system that links up with the GTA transit "GO Transit".

There are many large employers in the area covering a wide range of specialties. These vary from Financial Services, Advanced Manufacturing, Health Care and Software Development to Business Services and Automation & Robotics. The full list of businesses can be found at the Burlington Economic Development website.

Town of Halton Hills – Halton Hills has a population of just over 51,000 with a forecasted growth rate of around 2.5%. Situated in the northern section of the Halton Region, Halton Hills has many community events, parks and recreational opportunities for its residents. Part of the Niagara Escarpment is in the

area along with the Bruce Trail which gives excellent camping, hiking and biking trails.

The two main populations in the municipality are centred in Georgetown and Acton. Schooling and Healthcare are administered by the Halton Region School Boards and Health Authority. Despite being the most rural area of the Region, Halton Hills has the GoTransit system links to the GTA. With good transportation and low unemployment the Town has a thriving Business community with excellent employment prospects.

The Town Of Milton – The town of Milton is conveniently located on Highway 401 about 20 minutes drive from Pearson international airport. Though further north in the Halton Region than Burlington and Oakville, Milton is still relatively close to Lake Ontario. Also, both national railway lines run through the town giving it excellent access to all the major cities in the region and beyond.

With nearly 50,000 residents, (and growing rapidly) Milton has all the amenities associated with a large town. These include a full hospital, large leisure centre and plenty of Golf courses. The 85 acre Kelso conservation area gives ample outdoor recreation opportunities like skiing, hiking, swimming and boating.

There are good employment opportunities with major manufacturing employers like Karmax, Modatek Systems and several aerospace and automotive technology companies. Though the Halton Region School Board is the highest single employer, health services and Sobey's food distribution centre give Milton a diverse range of employers.

The Town Of Oakville – Oakville was founded in 1827 and is well renowned as a beautiful city situated on the shore of Lake Ontario. With a population of around 145,000, Oakville is a 30 minute drive from downtown Toronto and is rapidly becoming a sought after place to live and do business.

The City's heritage is proudly preserved with many of the businesses in the centre converted 19th century buildings. Being so close to the Lake and Toronto, Oakville offers a multitude of recreational opportunities from outdoor pursuits to shopping, restaurants and nightlife of the big city. Also abundant are championship quality golf courses, performing arts festivals, parks and harbours.

The booming business community boasts some international company headquarters and all manner of manufacturing industry. Tourism is also a major player with over \$88 million per year being generated by visitors. The proximity to both Toronto and the USA with all the major types of transportation available will continue to give Oakville strong growth as a business friendly city.

Overall, Oakville is a great place to live with good schools, recreation and employment. The local transport system gives good access to the downtown core of Toronto and the GTA making it easily commutable.

Dave Lympany emigrated to Canada with his family in 2003 and has developed <http://www.onestopimmigration-canada.com> – the free information resource for Canada and Canadian Immigration. With over 150 pages of great content, the site is continually expanding and regularly updated and is an excellent resource for Immigration, Relocation and Travel



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