

Durham Food Charter can move ahead

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DURHAM -- A Pickering councillor and advocate of local agriculture was thrilled to learn of funding for a new initiative in Durham.

The Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation announced Jan. 22 it was providing \$35,000 to the Community Development Council Durham to get the ball rolling on the Durham Region Food Charter.

The charter, a document that reflects the community's values and beliefs for food security in the region, was endorsed by Durham Regional council last December.

"A cornerstone of long-term sustainability is food," said Pickering Ward 1 Regional Councillor Bonnie Littley. "So to promote environmental, economic and social sustainability, there must be planning for the future use of food."

The funding will allow the CDCD to start formulating a community-based action plan and working group focused on food security and developing the local food economy.

Coun. Littley said since the Region and many individuals work on various aspects related to food and food security, a Durham food policy council will provide opportunities to bring people and their knowledge together to help create positive change.

The project will include continuous consultation with farmers and farm groups.



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"We must look at new ideas of food production and security and how to achieve it, while at the same time not completely turning our backs to the many tried and proven methods that were employed by our present and past farming communities," said James Blair, co-chairman of the Durham Culinary Association.

Twenty-three of the Greenbelt's farms are located in Durham, more than any region in the Greenbelt. The majority is made up of livestock farms, but there are also fruit and vegetable farms that grow items such as corn, tomatoes, pumpkins, apples and strawberries.