NEW ERA OF LEADERSHIP BEGINS ACROSS DURHAM REGION

New mayors, returning councillors and fresh faces usher in 2026–2030 municipal term as communities look toward growth, accountability and cooperation

By The Central Newspaper

DURHAM REGION — A new chapter in municipal government is unfolding across Durham Region as newly elected mayors and councillors take their oaths of office, promising renewed leadership, cooperation, accountability and stronger communities over the next four years.

Following the October 26 municipal elections, inauguration ceremonies have brought together elected officials, residents, business representatives and community leaders throughout the Region.

From Pickering to Oshawa, Whitby, Ajax, Clarington and Scugog, the 2026–2030 term introduces significant changes in political leadership.

The coming years will test municipal governments on taxation, housing affordability, public safety, infrastructure, economic development, homelessnes and transparency.

OSHAWA — NEW MAYOR TAKES OFFICE AT HISTORIC CEREMONY

Hundreds gathered at the Tribute Communities Centre on November 16 to witness Tito-Dante Marimpietri officially become Mayor of Oshawa alongside the newly elected City Council.

The ceremony marked a milestone for the arena, celebrating its 20th anniversary, and brought together municipal officials, residents and community organizations.

Marimpietri's inaugural address honoured generations of residents who helped build Oshawa while outlining opportunities for economic growth and community development.

Oshawa City Council 2026–2030

Mayor: Tito-Dante Marimpietri

Ward 1 Regional and City Councillor:

Christopher Biancaniello

Ward 1 City Councillor: Rosemary McConkey

Ward 2 Regional and City Councillor:

Cameron Anderson

Ward 2 City Councillor:

Jane Hurst

Ward 3 Regional and City Councillor: Bob Chapman

Ward 3 City Councillor:

Roger Bouma

Ward 4 Regional and City Councillor: Jack O'Donnell

Ward 4 City Councillor:

Deb Oldfield

Ward 5 Regional and City Councillor: Brian Charles Nicholson

Ward 5 City Councillor: John Gray

Councillor Gray expressed appreciation for the continued confidence of residents.

"Thank you to the residents who have placed their trust in me over the many years in serving the residents of Oshawa," Gray stated.

The inauguration attracted municipal leaders, including Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas and Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Iain Lovatt.

The Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation congratulated Marimpietri and expressed interest in strengthening workforce development, supply chains and energy cooperation.

The Durham Region Home Builders Association also welcomed the new administration, emphasizing housing development and responsible growth.

AJAX — MARILYN CRAWFORD MAKES HISTORY

Marilyn Crawford has officially taken office as Ajax's first female mayor, marking a historic milestone for the municipality.

Ajax's new council was inaugurated November 16 at the Audley Recreation Centre.

Ajax Town Council 2026–2030

Mayor: Marilyn Crawford

Ward 1 Regional Councillor: Rob Tyler-Morin

Ward 1 Local Councillor: Kristy McDonald

Ward 2 Regional Councillor: Ranjith Paranivasagam

Ward 2 Local Councillor: Nancy Henry

Ward 3 Regional Councillor: Stephanie Ashton

Ward 3 Local Councillor: Nick Papalambropoulos

Outgoing Mayor Shaun Collier congratulated Crawford following the election.

"I wish Mayor-elect Crawford and the entire 2026-2030 Council every success as they take on the opportunities and challenges ahead," Collier stated.

With renewed representation, Ajax's leadership faces major decisions concerning infrastructure, housing affordability, public safety and population growth.

Voter participation reached approximately 32.4 per cent, representing an increase over the previous municipal election.

PICKERING — KEVIN ASHE BEGINS DUAL LEADERSHIP ROLE

Mayor Kevin Ashe began another term as Pickering inaugurated its new council inside newly renovated Council Chambers on November 16.

Ashe pledged attention to responsible growth, protecting community character and creating opportunities for future generations.

Pickering City Council 2026–2030Mayor: Kevin Ashe

Ward 1 Regional Councillor: Maurice Brenner

Ward 1 City Councillor: James BlairWard 2 Regional Councillor: Linda Cook

Ward 2 City Councillor: Mara Nagy

Ward 3 Regional Councillor: David Pickles

Ward 3 City Councillor: Shaheen Butt

"We remain focused on the work ahead: managing growth responsibly, protecting what makes Pickering special, and creating opportunities for future generations," Ashe stated.

His responsibilities now extend beyond Pickering following his provincial appointment as Durham Regional Chair, placing him at the centre of regional decisions involving transportation, infrastructure, housing and economic development.

Pickering recorded voter participation of approximately 39.4 per cent.

WHITBY — ELIZABETH ROY LEADS NEW COUNCIL

Mayor Elizabeth Roy began another term following Whitby's November 16 inaugural council meeting.

The municipality enters the new term with representation elected by ward, including regional councillors responsible for both local and regional matters.

Whitby Town Council 2026–2030

Mayor: Elizabeth Roy

North Ward 1

Regional Councillor: Rhonda Mulcahy

North Ward 1 Town Councillor: Jay White

West Ward 2 Regional Councillor: Deidre Newman

West Ward 2 Town Councillor: Matt Cardwell

Centre Ward 3 Regional Councillor: Niki Lundquist

Centre Ward 3

Town Councillor: Bob Baker

East Ward 4 Regional Councillor: Steve Yamada

East Ward 4 Town Councillor: Victoria Bozinovski

Newly elected West Ward Regional Councillor Deidre Newman expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve. "Thank you to my dear family, friends, the people of West Ward and our community for your extraordinary trust!" Newman stated.

Whitby's administration faces continued pressures involving housing, infrastructure, economic investment and essential services.

Approximately 37,267 voters participated in the election, representing about 31 per cent turnout.

CLARINGTON: TOM DINGWALL PREPARES TO LEAD

Tom Dingwall has been elected Mayor of Clarington, succeeding Adrian Foster and beginning a new political chapter for the municipality.

Clarington's formal inauguration is scheduled for November 23.Clarington Municipal Council 2026–2030

Mayor: Tom Dingwall

Regional Councillor, Wards 1 and 2: Granville Anderson

Regional Councillor, Wards 3 and 4: Willie Woo

Ward 1 Local Councillor: Joe Neal

Ward 2 Local Councillor: Kathleen Flynn

Ward 3 Local Councillor: Corinna Traill

Ward 4 Local Councillor: Denise Robinson

Outgoing Mayor Foster congratulated the incoming council, declaring: "Our community begins a new chapter in local leadership, bringing with it new opportunities, fresh perspectives and important work ahead.

"Clarington faces important decisions involving development in Bowmanville, Courtice and Newcastle, rural infrastructure, roads, taxation and community services."

Voter turnout reached approximately 34 per cent, an increase from the 2022 municipal election.

SCUGOG: IAN McDOUGALL ELECTED MAYOR

Former Regional Councillor Ian McDougall returns to municipal leadership as Scugog's newly elected mayor, defeating incumbent Wilma Wotten.

McDougall secured 3,326 votes in the October election.

Scugog's formal inaugural meeting is scheduled for November 23.

Scugog Township Council 2026–2030Mayor:

Ian McDougall

Regional Councillor:

Patricia Conlin

Ward 1 Councillor:

David Le Roy

Ward 2 Councillor: Alisa Cole

Ward 3 Councillor:

Rosario Greco

Ward 4 Councillor:

Brad Martyn

Ward 5 Councillor:

Janna Guido

The incoming council will be responsible for balancing rural community priorities, municipal finances, infrastructure investments and responsible development. For residents of Port Perry and surrounding communities, issues involving roads, agricultural lands, environmental protection and local business development remain significant.

DURHAM REGIONAL COUNCIL: KEVIN ASHE TAKES THE CHAIR

A major governance change accompanies the new municipal term. Kevin Ashe was officially sworn in November 17 as Durham Region's Regional Chair and Chief Executive Officer, following his appointment by the Ontario government under new provincial legislation.

"I am honoured by the Province's appointment and grateful for the opportunity to serve as Durham Region's next Regional Chair and CEO," Ashe stated.

The Regional Chair presides over a 29-member council composed of the chair, municipal mayors and regional representatives from Durham's eight municipalities.

Regional Council oversees services affecting residents throughout Durham, including policing, public health, regional roads, transit, housing, waste management and major infrastructure.

As the new councils begin their four-year mandates, expectations remain high for improved accountability, responsible spending and stronger communication between municipal governments and taxpayers.

Residents will be looking for measurable progress rather than ceremonial promises.

The inaugurations may mark the beginning of a new political chapter, but the true measure of leadership will be how effectively these elected officials deliver for the communities that placed their trust in them.

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