



**SUBJECT: Red Tape Red Carpet Task Force recommendations**

**TO: Planning and Development Committee**

**FROM: Mayor's Office**

Report Number: MO-10-19

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 135-01

Date to Committee: September 10, 2019

Date to Council: September 23, 2019

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### **Recommendation:**

Direct the City Manager to begin implementation of the following recommendations as listed below and develop an implementation dashboard with task, point agency and timelines, providing progress updates to council each month.

For organizational purposes, the list of recommendations has been categorized by their relationship to cutting red tape or rolling out the red carpet, although some fit in both categories. Those considered quick wins are placed first on each list and noted with an asterisk. Those that are bolded are the only changes since the July report.

### **Cutting Red Tape:**

1. \* Establish a position at City Hall to act as our Chief of Business Development, serving as a primary outreach for attracting new businesses to Burlington, overseeing and expediting applications through the system and reporting progress and obstacles regularly to City Council and the City Manager (See Appendix A for roles and responsibilities).
2. \* Develop and implement targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), including timelines for processing business applications, for all staff in planning, building & development teams
3. \* Streamline and optimize the zoning, site grading and Committee of Adjustment processes for faster execution and resolution, considering recommendations from industry professionals (see Appendix B).

4. \* Optimize the City of Burlington website with relevant, informative and easy-to-find content that is search-optimized and externally marketed in order to support businesses through their journey with us
5. Implement improved customer service technology including a self-serve online portal for applicants including the ability to submit and check on the status of their applications.
6. Explore additional paid “Fast Track” options for rush projects and business applications in areas in addition to the existing fast track for building permits, while also ensuring the delivery date results in a firm decision.
7. Foster a strong and meaningful culture of high performance and employee recognition
8. Review the agribusiness rules, zoning, and definitions to encourage diversified use and help support economic sustainability for our rural/farming businesses.
9. **Establish a rural-point-of-contact person who can navigate agriculture requests (business or otherwise) with other agencies.**
10. Target completion of all minor site plan reviews and zoning clearances within 30 days.
11. Implement an acceptable Standard Deviation for development related plans and drawings that better accounts for the use of imperial measurements (e.g. 0.00m or 3/16”).

#### **Rolling out the Red Carpet:**

12. \* Develop a clear vision **and associated branding strategy** at the City of Burlington with respect to business attraction and development.
13. \* Mayor and leadership team act as Chief Salespeople, actively seeking out opportunities to bring new business to Burlington.
14. \* Make business attraction/retention a standing item for discussion at all Planning & Development Committee meetings.
15. \* Launch monthly Subject Matter Expert (SME) drop-in sessions where businesses can come ask questions and get advice and guidance from experts from the City of Burlington and partner organizations.
16. \* Create an “Open for Business” customer service window, ideally on the first floor of City Hall, co-locating key staff from different business-related departments for easy public access and on-the-spot collaboration & problem solving.
17. Review the efficiency, effectiveness and optimal structure of the Burlington Economic Development Corporation and TechPlace, as well as the opportunity for a Municipal Development Corporation, in achieving the city’s business attraction and retention goals (see companion report listed on July 8, 2019 COW agenda: M0-04-19).

18. City Manager to review and implement changes to the City's organizational structure and business processes to give priority strategic focus to enhanced economic and business development working closely with the BEDC.
19. Explore opportunities to use city parking supply as a leverage for business attraction and address existing downtown parking challenges.
- 20. Consider the establishment of a venture capital fund to support business attraction (use Innisfil Accelerates as an example/model – [innisfilaccelerates.ca](http://innisfilaccelerates.ca)).**
- 21. Increase municipal advocacy by the Mayor and senior leaders at the City of Burlington with other levels of government and partner agencies to speed up their approvals as part of the overall development process.**

### **Purpose:**

These recommendations are being brought forward to address opportunities identified in the Red Tape Red Carpet Task Force initiative.

Since its inception earlier this year, the Red Tape Red Carpet Task Force initiative has collected insights and ideas from the Burlington business community, partner organizations and staff to better understand the challenges (red tape) to locating or expanding a business here, and to ideate around solutions that will better serve our businesses (red carpet).

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### **Background and Discussion:**

Initial recommendations were brought before council in July of 2019 for review (MO-06-19) and consideration, leaving them with the opportunity to provide additional feedback or suggestions throughout the summer. While not much has materially changed since the July report, this final report is inclusive of that additional feedback and any related suggestions that were raised.

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### **Financial Matters:**

Any additional budget required for implementation of the above recommendations to be provided by the City Manager's office and, if necessary, through the annual budget cycle as a request.

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## **Connections:**

This list of recommendations is well-complemented by other existing initiatives already being undertaken by Burlington Economic Development and the City of Burlington that further help address issues raised through the Red Tape Red Carpet Task Force engagement process, including (but not limited to):

- Implementing tools to make employment land shovel ready/development ready including a potential MDC (Municipal Development Corporation) and potential incentives through a Community Improvement Plan (CIP). Burlington Economic Development anticipates bringing a report to council in the fall on this matter.
  - Addressing issues with regulatory agencies and other levels of government in receiving approvals for development. The Prosperity Corridor Study, a joint initiative between the City of Burlington, Halton Region and Ministry of Transportation aims to facilitate, improve and expedite the existing approvals process by identifying a framework and tools to assist in development review, while comprehensively examining opportunities for intensification and redevelopment. The study's goal is to identify a full range of transportation improvements that support the long-term vision for the corridor as a prime location for new business and redevelopment.
  - Developing a Post-Secondary Attraction Strategy for Burlington to bring new programming and access to talent and R&D for Burlington companies. Burlington Economic Development anticipates bringing a report to council in the fall on this matter.
  - Developing a strategy to attract and retain the key talent companies need in Burlington through increased transit to employment areas, post-secondary engagement and the GO Investment Corridor Vision & Brand. Burlington Economic Development is working on a business case with Burlington Transit and local employers to discuss new routes in employment areas, with employer engagement on new routes targeted to be completed for the end of 2019. Burlington Economic Development is leading the development of a GO Investment Corridor vision and brand that will attract companies and talent. Stakeholder engagement will take place in the fall of 2019, public engagement in Q1/Q2 of 2020, and a final vision and brand launch targeted for summer 2020.
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## **Public Engagement Matters:**

Feedback for these recommendations was gathered through the following means and methods:

- A broad Town Hall that was attended by approximately 80 local business owners. Invitations were sent by postcard letter mail to all businesses designated as such with Canada Post.
  - Focus Groups that were held with the following smaller groups, attendees of which were included based on their own outreach of interest (having attended the Town Hall or seen information on the web about the initiative), and through additional suggestions made through the BEDC:
    - Small business owners
    - Large business owners / manufacturers
    - Developers and real estate industry professionals
    - City staff and partner organizations (ex: Burlington Hydro, local BIAs, etc.)
    - Rural business owners / farmers
  - 1:1 Meetings that were requested by individual business owners who could not attend the Town Hall or Focus Groups.
  - An Online Survey on the City of Burlington website that was promoted on the Mayor's blog and social media and at in-person events.
  - The August meeting of the Mayor's Millennial Advisory Committee (as a topic of discussion)
  - Meetings of the Mayor's Task Force itself, comprised of city staff, representation from the BEDC, and local business professionals invited by the Mayor to participate based on their unique skills and experience.
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## **Conclusion:**

The Red Tape Red Carpet Task Force thoughtfully collected feedback, insights and ideas from business owners, city staff, and partner organizations after its initial announcement on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Co-chaired by Mayor Meed Ward and Councillor Kelvin Galbraith, with strong input and support from Tim Commisso, City Manager, and partners at the BEDC, the initiative brought to light many of the issues our existing and prospective business owners face as they try to locate or expand in the City of Burlington.

These recommendations will pave the way to removing unnecessary "red tape" and create a "red carpet" experience for businesses in Burlington.

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Respectfully submitted,

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward

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**Appendices:**

- A. Roles & responsibilities related to Chief of Business Development position
- B. Zoning process improvements for consideration submitted by industry professionals in 2018
- C. List of detailed blog posts with additional information about the Red Tape Red Carpet Task Force