



**SUBJECT: Burlington Economic Development Corporation  
Governance Review**

**TO: Community Planning, Regulation & Mobility Cttee.**

**FROM: City Manager's Office**

Report Number: CM-27-20

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 155-03-01

Date to Committee: September 15, 2020

Date to Council: September 28, 2020

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**Recommendation:**

Adopt the recommendations contained within Appendix A to city manager's office report CM-27-20 (MDB Insight Report pages 29-31); and

Direct the City Manager to work with Burlington Economic Development to implement the recommendations and next steps outlined in the report.

**PURPOSE:**

**Vision to Focus Alignment:**

Delete this line and the areas that do not apply.

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
  - Improve integrated city mobility
  - Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment
  - Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture
  - Deliver customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation
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## **Background and Discussion:**

Council approved 2018-2022 Burlington's Plan from Vision to Focus.

Contained within this plan is Focus Area 1: Increasing Economic Prosperity and Community Responsive Growth.

Key Actions: Work with Burlington Economic Development Corporation to create and implement strategies to focus on:

1. Creating jobs and achieving long term economic vision for the City of Burlington
2. Reducing commercial and industrial office vacancies and reducing barriers in attracting Businesses
  - Developing attraction and retention strategies for knowledge based/technology-intensive industries
  - Developing and implement a Retail Strategy
  - Supporting small business and tech incubators
  - Assess the use of one or more Community Improvement Plans including options for incentive programs for business development
  - Remove constraints on availability of employment lands
  - Develop a plan to activate key parcels of vacant employment lands and facilitate vacant employment lands being shovel ready

In addition to the above approved Council direction in Vision to Focus the following Mayor's Report was approved at Council July 15, 2019 MO-04-19 containing the following recommendations:

1. Authorize the issuance of a Request for Proposal to an upset limit of \$100,000 from Strategic Planning Reserve Fund to review and report back to council by December 2019 a. on the efficiency, effectiveness and optimal structure of the Burlington Economic Development Corporation and TechPlace in achieving the city's business attraction and retention goals, including but not limited to bringing Burlington Economic Development in-house under the City Manager; and b. Review the opportunities and optimal structure of a Municipal Development Corporation in achieving the city's business attraction and retention goals; incorporate any changes in economic development functions arising from the provincial Regional Review, the results of which are expected in November 2019; and
2. Authorize the Mayor and City Manager to form a steering committee to develop the terms of reference, oversee the work of the consultant(s) and engage council and the Burlington Economic Development/TechPlace staff & board in the process, with representation on the steering committee from: Mayor's Office, City Manager's office, Capital Works, Planning, Legal, and Finance departments, Burlington Economic Development/TechPlace staff &

board, Regional Economic Development department, Ward 5 Councillor appointee on Burlington Economic Development Board, Ward 1 Councillor, co-chair of Red Tape Red Carpet initiative.

3. Include this strategic initiative in the Council Workplan as a priority time dated action item under the City Manager

The recommendations contained in Appendix A were tabled as part of report CM-19-20 at the August 10<sup>th</sup> Environment, Infrastructure & Community Services committee. In addition, direction was given to the City Manager to work with Burlington Economic Development to develop next steps and provide an update on the proposed implementation of recommendations as part of the update to committee in September.

### **Strategy/process**

An RFP was awarded December 2019 to MDB Insights led by the Executive Vice - President Lauren Millier. The consultant worked through a Streeting Committee to complete the work outlined in the RFP and also engaged the Board of Directors for Burlington Economic Development.

The consultant's report has been presented to both the project Steering Committee and the Board of Directors for Burlington Economic Development and both have provided support for the consultant's recommendations attached as Appendix A to report CM-27-20. The report was also tabled at committee as part of report CM-19-20.

The main elements of the recommendations are:

- Review skills Matrix of Burlington Economic Development Board
- Reduce number of council members on board to one
- Continue meaningful engagement with COB staff and council
- Increase support for local businesses
- Continue focus on innovation and entrepreneurship (TechPlace)
- Invest in attraction
- Enhance marketing and communications of work of Burlington Economic Development

Moving forward the following next steps are recommended to be implemented by Burlington Economic Development in coordination with the City Manager:

1. Continued Strategic Communications and Coordination between City of Burlington & Burlington Economic Development
  - a. Coordinated Strategic Planning between City of Burlington and Burlington Economic Development as part the 2015-2040 Strategic Plan and V2F refresh. Workshops dates are being examined for November 2020.

- b. Continued communications and advocacy coordination with the City of Burlington including:
    - i. Bi-weekly touch bases with the Burlington Economic Development Executive Director, Mayor and City Manager
    - ii. Regular meetings between the Burlington Economic Development Executive Director, Board Chair and Members of Council
    - iii. Updates to committee on key strategic priorities of Burlington Economic Development including the implementation of the Red Tape Red Carpet Taskforce and the Post Secondary Strategy
    - iv. Advocating jointly with the City of Burlington to higher levels of government on the key needs of our business community and key strategic priorities
- 2. Formalizing and developing processes to ensure current positive momentum in working relationship are maintained:
  - a. Update and renew the service agreement between the City of Burlington and Burlington Economic Development to support coordination, operational efficiencies and key performance indicators associated with strategic plans
  - b. Developing joint task forces to leverage the private sector expertise of Burlington Economic Development on key strategic initiatives for the City of Burlington. Initial prioritized task forces include:
    - i. Integrated Customer Service Experience
      - including implementing the customer promise associated with the One Brand as part of the customer service culture and physical space redesigns
    - ii. GO Investment Corridor
    - iii. Digital Transformation and Smart City Strategy
- 3. A renewed focus on supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurship as part of the economic strategy. This will include reviewing the recommendations of the governance report with ecosystem partners including Haltech and developing new joint directions for TechPlace programming.
- 4. Redeveloping and renewing the skills sets and experience of Burlington Economic Development board members in line with new strategic directions from the Governance Review, Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN) recommendations and joint strategic planning workshops with the City of Burlington.

A further report will be brought to council as part of the October committee cycle discussing next steps for the consideration of a Municipal Development Corporation (MDC). These discussions may result in further recommendations for the future role of Burlington Economic Development in strategic land development.

Strategic planning discussions between Burlington Economic Development and the City of Burlington may require the prioritization of initiatives or additional financial resources being invested to meet new economic development objectives in addition to current priorities.

### **Options Considered**

All options considered by the consultant in conducting the reviews contained in Part A can be found in their final report.

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### **Financial Matters:**

The RPF was awarded by Delegated Authority by the City Manager.

### **Total Financial Impact**

Strategic Planning Reserve Fund

### **Other Resource Impacts**

City staff, Council members, Burlington Economic Development board members and Burlington Economic Development staff participated in Steering Committee meetings and at various points in the process.

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### **Climate Implications**

Not applicable

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### **Engagement Matters:**

The project Steering committee was made up of Council Members, the Mayor, Burlington Economic Development Board Chair, Burlington Economic Development Executive Director, City Manager and City Manager staff. In addition to this City staff, TechPlace staff, Council and Burlington Economic Development Board members and Burlington Businesses participated in consultations, interviews, workshops and various other project engagement.

## **Conclusion:**

Staff recommend the adoption of the recommendations contained within Appendix A, the MDB Insight Report pages 29-31 and that the City Manager to work with Burlington Economic Development to implement the recommendations and next steps outlined in the report.

Respectfully submitted,

Leah Bisutti  
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## **Appendices:**

A. Burlington Economic Development Report Part A by MDB Insight

## **Report Approval:**

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Council.