

Resolution for the Provincial and Federal government to extend and expand Digital Main Street funding to support local business

WHEREAS: The Digital Main Street Program has been a critical support to local main street businesses during COVID-19;

WHEREAS: As part of the program Burlington has benefitted from hiring two Digital Service Squad members who have reached out to over 1000 businesses and supported over 130 businesses to date in growing their digital presence and tools. In addition, qualifying businesses have been able to access a \$2,500 Digital Transformation Grant to implement digital tools within their business;

WHEREAS: Current funding for our Digital Service Squad members end in February 2021;

WHEREAS: When the province of Ontario went into lockdown on December 26th online and digital channels became the primary method for main street businesses to interact with customers and generate revenues;

WHEREAS: Many businesses have reached out to Burlington's Digital Service Squad team for support in how to engage with customers, update their website and use social channels to promote curb side pickup and takeaway, in line with provincial lockdown restrictions placed on business;

WHEREAS: As of December 31st 2020 applications for both the \$2,500 Digital Transformation Grant and new applications for Digital Service Squad support have been closed to new applications awaiting renewal of funding;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

City Council, in partnership with the Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN) and Team Burlington, call on the provincial and federal governments to:

- renew and expand funding to the Digital Main Street program as soon as possible to help our businesses to survive the provincial lockdown and reopening of the economy in the future;
- renew the \$2,500 Digital Transformation Grant and Digital Service Squad support; and
- expand the Digital Main Street Transformation Grant to be available to main street businesses that are located outside of BIAs as the initial program restricted applicants to BIA member businesses only
- Commit to a minimum 2 year funding extension to the Digital Main Street program

And Further BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Mayor and Council representative on the BERN be directed to write a letter, jointly with BERN and Team Burlington members, advocating the extension and expansion of the Digital Main Street Program and Digital Transformation Grant to the Provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Minister Economic Development, Job Creation & Trade and Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction, and the Federal Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages and Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade; and

The City Clerk be directed to send a copy of the letter and resolution, once approved, to:

- Burlington Ministers of Parliament including Minister Karina Gould, MP Pam Damoff and MP Adam Van Koeverden
- Burlington Members of Provincial Parliament including MPP Jane McKenna, MPP Effie Triantafilopoulos and MPP Parm Gill
- Halton Regional Council
- Members of the Towns of Milton, Halton Hills and Oakville Councils
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)
- Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
- Ontario Big City Mayor's Caucus (OBCM)
- Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario (MARCO)
- GTHA Mayors and Chairs
- Ontario Business Improvement Area Association (OBIAA)
- Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA)
- Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO)
- Ontario Restaurant, Hotel and Motel Association (ORHMA)
- Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC)
- Milton Chamber of Commerce
- Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce
- Oakville Chamber of Commerce
- Team Burlington (Burlington Economic Development, Burlington Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Burlington, Burlington Downtown Business Association and Aldershot Village BIA)
- Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN)