



SUBJECT: Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) Update Q1 2021

TO: Community Planning, Regulation & Mobility Cttee.

FROM: Burlington Economic Development

Report Number: ECDEV-03-21

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 125

Date to Committee: April 6, 2021

Date to Council: April 20, 2021

Recommendation:

Receive and file Burlington Economic Development report ECDEV-03-21 regarding Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) implementation update for Q1 2021 and associated appendices.

PURPOSE:

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
- Deliver customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation

Background and Discussion:

On September 23, 2019, City Council approved the 22 recommendations arising from the Mayor's Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) Task Force initiative to better serve our customers as part of the City's commitment to continuous improvement. A draft implementation plan was presented at the October 8 Planning and Development Committee and approved by City Council on October 21, 2019.

An online Red Tape Red Carpet Dashboard was launched and presented at the December 3 2019 Planning and Development Committee to provide regular updates on implementation of the recommendations and ensure transparency and accountability. It

breaks out each of the 22 recommendations and provides interactive tools to review the status and what's been done so far. The dashboard has been updated to reflect progress against RTRC Implementation in Q1 2021 and is available for review at <https://www.burlington.ca/en/your-city/red-tape-red-carpet-task-force-progress.asp>. A spreadsheet outlining progress against the 22 recommendations is also detailed in Appendix A. The last RTRC update was provided to committee in the report BEDC-04-20 Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) Update Q2 2020 at the August 11th CPRM Committee meeting.

As we continue to evolve as a City to respond to needs of both businesses and residents during COVID-19 we are continuing to look for opportunities to cut red tape and provide responsive and flexible supports to our community.

Key Actions on the Implementation of Red Tape Red Carpet Recommendations

Action Area 1: Organizational Redesign to Enhance Economic & Business Development

1. Customer Experience

- The Customer Experience has been and will continue to be reimagined in light of new physical distancing requirements and other covid-19 adaptations in the workplace. A new permanent staff member has been recruited to the position of Customer Experience Manager – Business Development (CEM-BD). Burlington Economic Development and the CEM-BD will launch an Integrated Customer Experience (CX) Project in 2021 that will achieve the following outcomes:
 - Define the current state and recommend what we would like the ideal state of the CX journey to look like for the customer
 - Define common customer service standards between the City of Burlington and Burlington Economic Development
- An update on the Integrated Customer Experience project will be provided in the next RTRC report following the development of terms of reference and project commencement.

2. Burlington Economic Development Governance Review

- The results of the governance review were approved by council in Q3 2020. Following this the Burlington Economic Development Board has been making key changes in line with the recommendations. These include governance updates to council representation and key skill sets and creating stronger relationships and communications between board members and members of council.

Action Area 2: Clear Vision & Strategy for Business Attraction, Retention & Development

1. Business Attraction Strategy

- Business Attraction strategies continue to be redeveloped in light of COVID-19. In November 2020, Burlington Economic Development launched the new <http://investburlington.ca> website. With a focus on storytelling and user experience, the new website features dedicated pages for Burlington's key sectors and easy to navigate tools and resources that provide all of the qualitative and quantitative information businesses and investors need to locate or grow a business in Burlington. The site also features a number of success stories and testimonials from businesses that call Burlington home. In February 2021, Tourism Burlington also launched its new website, <http://tourismburlington.ca>.

2. Coordinated Communications & Story Telling

- Corporate Communications, Economic Development and members of Council are working closely to help create coordinated messaging for businesses and support members of Council in their roles as Chief Salespeople. With COVID-19 this has shifted to advocacy between Council and the Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN) to ensure the provincial and federal governments are aware of and deliver on the supports that Burlington's businesses need.

3. Burlington One Brand

- Work on Phase 1 - Research and Phase 2 - Development of the Burlington One Brand is on hold until 2022 as a result of the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to placing the project on hold, and following an extensive RFP process in 2020, BT/A Advertising was selected as the agency partner for the project.

4. Municipal Advocacy for Burlington's Economic Goals

- The City of Burlington and Team Burlington have been working to advocate for businesses throughout the Covid-19 crisis and recovery. Some key advocacy areas have included:
 - In the early days of the pandemic, we advocated to the Provincial and Federal governments for the introduction of commercial rent and other critical financial supports for business.
 - December 2020 – We advocated to the Provincial government to make changes to business restrictions to increase fairness for smaller businesses during the pandemic closures and restrictions.
 - January 2021 – We advocated to the Provincial and Federal governments to make changes to extend and expand funding for the Digital Main Street program to support local business.

- February 2021 – We advocated to the Federal government to renew funding for the Digital Main Street (DMS) Future Proof program.
- In February 2021, we learned the Provincial government made changes to the reopening Framework that echo the changes put forward in the December 2020 motion.
- March 2021 – We advocated to the Provincial and Federal governments to provide better support to businesses in the restaurant and hospitality sector through the following measures:
 - Long term support strategy
 - Supporting costs reductions in insurance and alcohol pricing
 - Renew and expand provincial supports
 - Removal of hard caps in red zone
 - Clear guidelines for safe consumer experience and evidence for decisions on restaurant restrictions

5. Post-Secondary Attraction

- On November 2, 2020 the City of Burlington and Brock University announced the university will relocate its current Hamilton campus to a more accessible location in Burlington. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed to work together to find a site and to realize the intention for the relocated campus. The MOU also calls for Brock and the City to seek opportunities to use the University's assets and resources in other collaborative efforts that will benefit the Burlington community.

6. Business Attraction & Retention Strategy

- Business Growth Support and Retention activities have been refocused on supporting businesses through the impacts of COVID-19. Burlington Economic Development has redesigned the Business Retention & Expansion Strategy in light of COVID-19. New support areas delivered include:
 - Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN)
 - COVID-19 Business Support Line
 - Digital Service Squad
 - Burlington Safe Restart Grant

Action Area 3: Innovative Tools to Support Business Attraction, Retention & Development

1. One Window

- Red Tape Red Carpet Recommendation RC16 called for the creation of 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. An update on the One Window project was provided at the March 4th meeting of the Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services Committee (EICS). The One Window is also connected to the One Brand and the development of the Burlington brand promise will be front of mind as we design the look and feel of the customer service window, and how staff and customers will interact with the space. The Burlington brand will be directly influenced and guided by the physical space, technology, and culture at City Hall, so it is crucial that these initiatives are in alignment. The new physical space will be reconfigured to address the existing concerns and allow for a greater customer experience. Design Development is proceeding for Phase 1 and construction is anticipated to be completed Q2 of 2022.

2. Adapting to support businesses during COVID-19

- The city of Burlington has been adapting and innovating to meet business needs during covid-19. Following recent engagement with businesses two new programs to support businesses were approved at the March 3rd meeting of Council.
 - 2021 Spring/Summer Patio Program including an expedited approvals process, extended patio timelines and waiving of fees.
 - 2021 Tax Relief Program which will allow businesses that have experienced hardship due to covid-19 to defer taxes under a pre-authorized payment plan.
- In addition Council’s supported an increase in budget to expand the Heritage Property Tax Rebate Program to include designated commercial heritage properties. This will offer a 20% tax rebate to commercial heritage properties designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.

3. Community Improvement Plan (CIP)

- A CIP Project Team was formed in 2019 and consultants were engaged to deliver recommendations to Council on a Brownfield Community Improvement Plan. The draft policy recommendations for the CIP were

approved at the March 23rd Council following a statutory public meeting. The draft by-laws will be brought to committee in April and staff will provide recommendations on comprehensive CIOP framework and priority tools for activation in Q4 2021.

4. Municipal Development Corp (MDC)

- The business case for the Burlington Lands Partnership (BLP) was approved by council in Q1 2020 and the terms of reference were approved at the March 3rd meeting of council. A new role of Manager – Burlington Lands Partnership has been created at Burlington Economic Development who will work closely with the City Manager's office (Manager of Corporate Strategic Partnerships), on the start up and ongoing project management/execution of the Burlington Lands Partnership (BLP), including leading the economic development focus area and delivering on the key deliverables as outlined in the BLP Terms of Reference. The position will also participate actively in the development of the 2021/22 BLP business plan and related BLP business processes, including ongoing land partnership opportunity identification/review and BLP reporting/decision making by CSSRA Committee and Council.

Connections:

Vision to Focus

The Red Tape Red Carpet Task Force recommendations contribute to the City's work towards Council's 2018-2022 Plan: From Vision to Focus. Business Growth is a top priority of Focus Area 1, Increasing Economic Prosperity and Community Responsive City Growth Management. The implementation of the Red Tape Red Carpet Task Force recommendations will make it easier for businesses to locate and thrive in Burlington. A Customer first approach is a top priority of Focus Area 5, Customer Centric Services with a Focus on Efficiency and Technology Transformation. The City's development application review process and new customer experience approach are examples of the commitment to make the process easier and seamless for customers. The recommendations from the Red Tape Red Carpet Taskforce will be fully integrated into the next iteration of Vision to Focus in Spring 2020.

Team Burlington

Since the emergence of the COVID-19 crisis, Team Burlington has been taking a coordinated approach with Burlington's business support organizations, which includes Burlington Economic Development, Burlington Chamber of Commerce, Burlington

Downtown Business Association, Aldershot Village BIA, and Tourism Burlington, in supporting businesses during COVID-19. During this challenging time, Team Burlington are focusing their efforts on:

1. Keeping our business community well informed as relevant and timely information becomes available.
2. Providing key tools/resources to support organizations during this very difficult time.
3. Working closely with our community partners to play a key leadership role for the business community and connecting organizations to support business.
4. Advocating for the interests of business and the provision of relief measures to ensure the viability of businesses into the future with all levels of government.
5. Developing recovery plans so we are poised to support the restart of business and welcome new development when we are able.

Team Burlington have also launched the Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN) to bring together key stakeholders and business leaders from across Burlington to develop a recovery strategy that will prepare our economy for recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. The creation of the network is about preparing businesses to come out strong on the other side and help our local economy recover. Meaningful advocacy, as well as business support and programming, will be key outcomes.

Strategy/process

The recommendations brought forward by the Red Tape Red Carpet Taskforce involved extensive engagement with the business community to develop the 22 recommendations. Extensive work is underway by staff to deliver on the recommendations and regular updates will be made to Council on progress against objectives.

Ongoing feedback from the business community will be collected via the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and annual business survey to inform further strategies and recommendations to better support businesses to start, locate and grow in Burlington.

Financial Matters:

At this time there are no current financial impacts to the implementation of the Red Tape Red Carpet recommendations.

Climate Implications

The implementation of the Red Tape Red Carpet Recommendations has the following climate implications:

- Through the approval and implementation of a Brownfield Community Improvement Plan, contaminated sites will be made ready for future uses.
- As part of the Business Attraction Strategy a focus will be on Cleantech which will attract companies that provide solutions to climate and environmental issues.
- Coordinated communications and marketing for business development will take a digital first approach focusing on digital assets such as websites and electronic distribution of information to reduce paper consumption.

Burlington Economic Development's Business Attraction & Retention and policy initiatives also help support GHG emissions reduction through the GO Corridor Vision and Master Planning which will encourage increased employment density and mixed-use development. As well, initiatives are being developed with Burlington Transit to increase transit connectivity to employment areas and create more opportunities for employees to use public transit for their day-to-day commutes, thereby reducing the production of GHGs by private vehicles.

Engagement Matters:

Public feedback informed the Red Tape Red Carpet Task Force recommendations and was gathered from a series of events (town hall, focus groups and task force sessions) along with other studies, surveys and anecdotal feedback to identify the challenges and obstacles facing growth and relocation of businesses in Burlington, and develop actionable solutions. In addition, there are other actions that are recently completed or underway to communicate this initiative and to continue the receipt of feedback, including:

1. Updated website content: www.Burlington.ca/RTRC
2. New email address: RTRC@burlington.ca – routes to Customer Experience Manager-Business Development
3. Ongoing blog posts for example: <https://mariannemeedward.ca/red-tape-red-carpet-task-force/redtape-red-carpet-recommendations-approved/>
4. RTRC Newsletter distribution with same content as blog posts
5. Social posts following Council September 23 approval of recommendations and ongoing progress reports to Council
6. Feedback intake survey completed via <https://www.getinvolvedburlington.ca/>

7. Postcard handout for customer-serving staff

8. Updated dashboard available publicly at <https://www.burlington.ca/en/your-city/red-tape-red-carpet-task-force-progress.asp>

Conclusion:

The implementation of the recommendations developed as part of the Mayor's Red Tape Red Carpet Task force initiative is well underway and regular progress reports will be ongoing.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendices:

A. Red Tape Red Carpet Implementation Update Q1 2021

Report Approval:

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