



**SUBJECT: Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) implementation update – Q2 2020**

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

**FROM: Burlington Economic Development Corporation**

Report Number: BEDC-04-20

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 125

Date to Committee: August 11, 2020

Date to Council: August 24, 2020

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### **Recommendation:**

Receive and file Burlington Economic Development report BEDC-04-20 regarding Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) implementation update for Q2 2020 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

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### **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 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 Q2 2020 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. Progress in Q1 was reported to council at the May 12<sup>th</sup> CPRM Committee as part of report BEDC-02-20.

## **Key Actions on the Implementation of Red Tape Red Carpet Recommendations**

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

#### 1. Customer Experience Management

- The Customer Experience is being reimagined in light of new physical distancing requirements and other covid-19 adaptations in the workplace. An update is being provided at the August 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services Committee (EICS) including investing in an online appointment booking application for the public to arrange time to meet with staff from various service areas across the organization (either physically or virtually). This added service has the ability to provide the public with an improved customer experience, through reduced wait times (no need to stand in line at a counter), the flexibility to choose physical or virtual (depending on service area) and provide pre-screener questions to ensure the requestor is prepared prior to meeting.

#### 2. Burlington Economic Development Governance Review

- MDB Insights and Urban Metrics have been selected to lead the governance review process. A detailed workplan and milestones were approved by the Steering Committee composed of City Manager Tim Commisso, Mayor Meed Ward, Councilor Sharman, Councilor Galbraith, and Burlington Economic Development Board Chair Randy Smallbone. Draft recommendations for the governance review will be discussed with Committee at the August 11 CPRM Committee as part of report CM-19-20. Recommendations were reviewed at the June 25 Burlington Economic Development Board meeting.

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

#### 1. Business Attraction Strategy

- Business Attraction strategies are being redeveloped in light of COVID-19 for proactive lead generation. Burlington Economic Development will be focusing on regional business attraction opportunities with shifts in office demand due to COVID-19 and targeting expiring leases in downtown Toronto for lower costs and less dense alternatives in Burlington. They are also moving forward with delegation partnerships and are seeing active lead generation from virtual delegations. Burlington Economic Development presented to two virtual delegations in Q2 and generated six investment leads from these events. The continued closure of the border may slow down incoming international investment leads. Revised directions for the Investment Attraction Strategy were reviewed at the June 25 Board of Directors Meeting contained in Appendix C Burlington Investment Attraction Strategy Update 2020.
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.
3. One Brand
- The One Brand Work Plan was discussed at the December 3 Planning & Development Committee and approved at the December 16 Council Meeting. Following this, an Advisory Committee was formed composed of key internal and external stakeholders to guide the development of the One Brand. On March 13, the One Brand RFP process was completed, and a recommended Proponent was identified following an extensive and competitive procurement process that included in-person interviews. In total, 23 qualified submissions were received. However, given the circumstances surrounding COVID-19, there was a delay in awarding the project until a revised timeline for the One Brand project could be finalized. In agreement with Procurement Services, the Project Team (Corporate Communications, Burlington Economic Development and Tourism Burlington) has made the decision to award the contract with the condition that Phase 1 – Research, and subsequently Phase 2 – Development, and the respective implementation of the One brand (Phase 3) not commence for a minimum of six months from the date the Award was made, with the option to extend for up 24 months, if needed. If deemed advisable, the City can cancel, without obligation, the majority of the original One Brand initiative's scope of work. The decision to commence work or not will depend on a number of factors, including financial considerations by the City of Burlington, as well as on the community's perceived readiness to

engage on developing a new identity for Burlington. The successful Proponent is BT/A Advertising, a Toronto-based agency with an extensive portfolio that includes the City of Brampton, Yorkville-Bloor, the ROM, Ontario Creates (an agency of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport), and many others.

- As phase 1 of the One Brand project BT/A has begun work on the new InvestBurlington.ca website immediately. The new redesigned website will be more customer focused, interactive and will speak to our key investment attraction and business retention sectors. It will help support the new digital lead generation focus for investment attraction activities in light of covid-19.

#### 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.
  - A key concern for businesses since the outset of COVID-19 measures has been meeting non variable overhead costs including rent while forced to close and seeing significant decreases in revenues due to social distancing measures. The Ontario-Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (OCECRA) program is meant to provide rent relief for small businesses and help commercial tenants experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19. Local businesses had significant concerns with their ability to access the program under its current structure. Supporting the lobbying activity undertaken by Team Burlington, the City of Burlington approved a resolution encouraging local property owners/landlords to participate in the Ontario-Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (OCECRA) program at the May 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of council. The resolution asked for additional flexibility for businesses the access OCECRA for tenants to qualify for rent subsidy in those cases that a landlord chooses not to apply to OCECRA .
  - Throughout the pandemic, municipalities across Ontario have been advocating to the provincial and federal governments for financial assistance. On July 6, all organizations representing various municipalities and regions in Ontario released a joint statement to the provincial and federal governments requesting relief to stave off large tax increases or major service cuts.
  - Burlington Economic Development continues to take a leadership role including leading research and advocacy efforts on behalf of

the Greater Toronto Area Economic Development Alliance. On June 3, Burlington Economic Development staff submitted an advocacy letter on behalf of all GTA Economic Development Offices to the Federal and Provincial governments outlining key business issues and suggested policy initiatives to support businesses through COVID-19.

#### 5. Post-Secondary Attraction

- The Post-Secondary Attraction Framework was presented at the October 7, 2019, Committee of the Whole and approved at October 28, 2019, Council meeting. Burlington Economic Development has been working closely with post-secondary partners to advance opportunities for post-secondary engagement and expansion in Burlington. Regular discussions are taking place with committee on post-secondary partnership opportunities.

#### 6. Business Attraction & Retention Strategy

- Business Attraction – Following the presentation of Burlington Economic Development’s Business Attraction Strategy at the October 8, 2019, Planning and Development Committee efforts have been focused on the key industry sector niches where Burlington has a strong value proposition.
  1. Clean Tech – Water & Wastewater Technology – Priority Sector
  2. Biomedical & Life Sciences – Cannabis HQ and R&D – Priority Sector
  3. Advanced Manufacturing – Robotics & Process Engineering, Additive & Composite Manufacturing
  4. Business & Professional Services – Regional Head Offices
  5. Information Technology – Smart Tech, Sensors, Software & Property Tech
  6. Creative Industries & Film
- Business Growth Support and Retention activities were refocused in Q2 on delivering up-to-date information to companies digitally and providing customer support for business issues. Burlington Economic Development have redesigned the Business Retention & Expansion Strategy in light of COVID-19 and the updated strategy was reviewed at the June 25 Board of Directors meeting. Additional focus has been placed on retention activities for companies most affected by COVID-19. A summary of key changes to the program is contained in Appendix B - Business Retention & Expansion Strategy COVID-19 Update.

- Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN) led by Team Burlington launched in Q2 to support continued economic growth in Burlington. The first meeting of the BERN Advisory committee took place to approved Terms of Reference, critical path and sub-sector focus areas. The ten sub-sector working groups are meeting throughout June and July to develop sector specific SWOT analysis and develop recommendations for economic recovery planning.

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

#### 1. E-Submissions

- From June 25 the City of Burlington is able to digitally review and finalize decisions for all types of development applications. The process has been accelerated by COVID-19 and with advancements that we have made since March, we are positioned with a new modern process that will continue beyond the current State of Emergency. This is a key milestone in the intention to create a City of Burlington online portal for development applications. Further information on development application processes can be found at [burlington.ca//developmentinfo](http://burlington.ca//developmentinfo)

#### 2. 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. The One Window project is being reconsidered in light of new physical distancing requirements and other covid-19 adaptations in the workplace. An update is being provided at the August 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services Committee (EICS) including investing in an online appointment booking application for the public to arrange time to meet with staff from various service areas across the organization (either physically or virtually).

#### 3. Adapting to support retail and restaurants during COVID-19

- The city of Burlington has been adapting and innovating to meet business needs during covid-19. Most recently bringing forward new recommendations to support business reopening during phase 2 including support for expansion of restaurant space through patios and use of downtown parking for retail pickup. Through the Temporary Use Bylaw and Bylaw to Regulate Temporary Patios to support COVID-19 relief - PL-38-20 the City is eliminating regulatory, normal process and cost barriers

to permitting temporary patios for the rest of 2020 to make it easier for temporary patios and temporary outdoor retail sales areas on private property. The streamlined application process includes guidelines to help businesses complete the application. Downtown Temporary Patios to support COVID-19 relief - PL-37-2 temporarily suspends the Pop-Up Patio Program for 2020. Allowing more inclusive, flexible patios and the use of municipal space downtown to support COVID-19 Relief. These measures include:

- Extending the 2020 patio season to Jan. 1, 2021 and
- Waiving the cost to use municipal lands
- Extending the program across the downtown

4. 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. Draft recommendations were discussed with committee as part of BEDC-02-20 at the May 11<sup>th</sup> CPRM Committee Meeting. Following stakeholder feedback, a draft brownfield CIP and a framework for sequencing of a comprehensive CIP Strategy for Burlington will be presented to committee in Q4 2020.

5. Municipal Development Corp (MDC)

- The development of a Municipal Development Corporation is being considered as part of an integrated workplan for the Burlington Economic Development Governance Review. A workshop took place with Council and Staff on July 14 on a potential MDC. Direction was provided for the City Manager to report back to council in September 2020.

6. TechPlace Business Model and Innovation & Entrepreneurship Strategy

- As an integrated part of the Burlington Economic Development Governance Review, we are engaging stakeholders in the Innovation & Entrepreneurship ecosystem on the success of TechPlace to-date and the best model to support job creation and the economic impact of start-up and scale-up companies. The work included one-on-one interviews, a stakeholder workshop and comparisons to other cities' approaches to supporting Innovation & Entrepreneurship. A key recommendation of the draft Governance Review recommendations that will be discussed as part of CM-19-20 is a continued focus on TechPlace as a key strategy to support Innovation & Entrepreneurship in Burlington.

## **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.

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### **Financial Matters:**

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

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### **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.

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## **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](http://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>.

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## **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.

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Respectfully submitted,

Anita Cassidy

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**Appendices:**

- A. Red Tape Red Carpet Implementation Update Q1 2020
- B. Business Retention & Expansion Strategy COVID-19 Update
- C. Burlington Investment Attraction Strategy Update 2020

**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. Final approval is by the City Manager.