



**SUBJECT: Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) update for Q3 2021**

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

**FROM: Burlington Economic Development**

Report Number: ECDEV-05-21

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 125

Date to Committee: November 9, 2021

Date to Council: November 23, 2021

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### **Recommendation:**

Receive and file Burlington Economic Development report ECDEV-05-21 regarding Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) implementation update for Q3 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

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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, 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 Q3 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-03-21 Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) Update Q1 2021 at the April 6<sup>th</sup> CPRM Committee meeting.

As we continue to evolve as a City to respond to the 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**

- With the new Customer Experience Manager – Business Development (CEM-BD) in place, the Community Planning, Economic Development and Customer Experience (CX) groups are working collaboratively to understand and improve the customer experience. We have mapped the CX journey for Business customers from first connecting to EcDev as a lead all the way through the development process and eventual ribbon cutting and business retention services. The development of this customer journey involved feedback sessions undertaken with our development community over summer 2021. An update on the Integrated Customer Experience project journey mapping is attached as Appendix B and will be presented at Committee.

#### **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. This included the recruitment of three new board members that were appointed at the 2021 AGM. In line with governance review recommendations, recruitment focused on serial and technology entrepreneurs to address skills gaps to support the Burlington Innovation & Entrepreneurship Strategy focused on TechPlace programming and operations.

#### **3. Evolving our Organization Update**

- In October, Council approved 18 FTE for Community Planning, Engineering and Building resources to further enhance development applications and building permit processing.

#### 4. Burlington Lands Partnership

- In February 2021, City Council approved the implementation of a new organizational structure called the Burlington Lands Partnership (BLP) in report CM-01-21. An update report (CM-22-21) on the BLP was approved at the October 6<sup>th</sup> Corporate Service, Strategy, Risk, and Accountability (CSSRA) Committee. Updates included the establishment of the BLP Steering Committee and a new dedicated staff resource, Manager, Burlington Lands Partnership. Assessment of strategic lands and key projects including the acquisition of surplus school sites are moving forward managed under the new BLP model.

### 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. Our pipeline of business investments has begun to unfreeze with many companies now looking actively at acquiring and developing new properties in Burlington. Many company expansions are confidential in nature and Burlington Economic Development will be meeting one-on-one with Councillors in Q4 to discuss new businesses, as well as business expansion and retention issues. The Soft Landing Program offered to international companies through TechPlace has increased its value proposition through COVID-19 and has become an essential part of Burlington's value proposition for international investors.

#### 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 effort 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. Members of Council continue to be a trusted resource for residents and businesses and have been a vital resource for Team Burlington in disseminating information on new programs available to support our business community.

#### 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. Discussions will take place with the One Brand Project team in Q4 2021 on timing and next steps for the One Brand.

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. Targeted advocacy efforts will continue to seek the extension of existing programs such as Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) and Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS), as well as developing new supports to help businesses through the long economic recovery process.

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. In June 2020, the City of Burlington released a statement on their intent to submit an expression of interest to purchase the surplus Robert Bateman High School site and partner with Brock University. Work continues on partnership development and due diligence for the acquisition of the property under the BLP.

6. TechPlace Strategy

- A key recommendation of the TechPlace review undertaken as part of the BEDC Governance Review was :

*“At the end of the current lease, TechPlace and Haltech should consider options for co-locating with a post-secondary partner as part of plans for any post-secondary expansion in Burlington. In addition to lowering costs, this decision could increase the non-monetary benefits and synergies afforded both organizations having partnered with a post-secondary institution.”*

The Burlington Economic Development Board of Directors has formally endorsed that TechPlace should co-locate at the new Brock Campus at the end of the current TechPlace lease. Active partnership discussions are taking place between TechPlace, Haltech, Brock University and Burlington Public Library on a new co-location strategy at the new Burlington Brock Campus. Bringing together these partners under one roof will help create a true one-stop-shop for entrepreneurs in our community and position the new Brock Burlington campus as an education and entrepreneurship hub which will increase opportunities for residents to work and own a business in Burlington.

## 7. 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. Support areas delivered include:
  - Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN)
  - COVID-19 Business Support Line
  - Digital Service Squad
  - Burlington Safe Restart Grant
  - Workplace Rapid Antigen Screening Kits
- Work is continuing through BERN and Team Burlington to develop additional programming to support businesses through economic recovery.

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

#### 1. Adapting to support businesses during COVID-19

- The City of Burlington has been adapting and innovating to meet business needs during COVID-19. Activities in Q4 2021 will be focused on the rollout of the 2021 Winter Patio program including new FAQs and a template for winter patios. Feedback on the rollout of the new patio programs to-date has been very positive and has been a lifeline to Burlington's restaurant community in keeping their business model viable with COVID-19 safety measures.

#### 2. Community Improvement Plan (CIP)

- A CIP Project Team was formed in 2019 and consultants were engaged to deliver recommendations to Council on a Brownfield Focus Community Improvement Plan. The Brownfield CIP By-Laws were approved in April 2021. Work on the implementation of the Brownfield CIP and recommendations on comprehensive CIP framework will begin in 2022.

### **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 2023.

### **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.

### **Evolving the Red Tape Red Carpet Recommendations**

As we reach the milestone of two years since Council approved the Red Tape Red Carpet recommendations, staff have embedded and operationalized many of the recommendations. In 2023, Staff will bring a report back to Council on the overall outcomes of the Red Tape Red Carpet Taskforce recommendations and future focus areas for improving our performance in cutting red tape and rolling out the red carpet for businesses. Some key challenges and opportunities that have emerged to support the organization in meeting these goals include:

- Modernization of the City's Integrated Land Management Database;
- Resourcing appropriate levels of staff for Development Services and supporting departments such as ITS, Finance, and HR; and
- Business process improvements that provide efficiencies and leverage technology to empower customers.

Staff look forward to continuing the ongoing dialogue with our business community and Council on how Burlington can support our business community to expand and grow."

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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, previously contaminated sites will be made ready for future uses.

- As part of the Business Attraction Strategy, a focus will be on Cleantech 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 Q3 2021
- B. Integrated Customer Experience – Business Development

**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.