



**SUBJECT: Burlington Economic Development Performance and Strategy Update**

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

**FROM: Burlington Economic Development**

Report Number: ECDEV-02-22

Wards Affected: all

File Numbers: 150

Date to Committee: December 6, 2022

Date to Council: December 13, 2022

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### **Recommendation:**

Receive and file Burlington Economic Development report ECDEV-02-22 regarding Burlington Economic Development Performance and Strategy Update.

### **PURPOSE:**

#### **Vision to Focus Alignment:**

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
  - Improve integrated city mobility
  - Deliver customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation
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### **Background and Discussion:**

Burlington Economic development supports businesses to locate, start and grow in Burlington. Through coordinated strategic planning the Burlington Economic Development Strategic Plan 2018-22 and From Vision to Focus provide a commitment to Economic prosperity by:

1. Supporting and maintaining a diverse economy in small business, commercial, industrial, office and academic sectors
2. Creating a competitive business investment environment in Burlington
3. Increasing options for employment opportunities

During 2021 Burlington Economic Development continued to focus on supporting businesses through the changing economic environment of the pandemic. Attached as appendix A is Burlington Economic Development's 2021 Annual Report detailing key economic statistics and significant business community milestones in 2021. In addition in 2021 we celebrated 5 years of TechPlace Burlington's innovation centre. At our first open house in September 2022, since the pandemic, we welcomed over 100 guests to share the results of TechPlace from 2017-2022. Key results for TechPlace are detailed in the 5 year impact report attached as appendix B. This includes welcoming over 6,000 visitors, hosting over 200 events to support entrepreneurs and supporting over \$48 Million in revenue generation for TechPlace businesses.

In 2022 Burlington Economic Development has continued to support the recovery of main street businesses through delivering the Digital Main Street (DMS) Program and the new My Main Street Program. To date we have supported over 250 business through DMS to upgrade their digital strategy and access \$2,500 grant funding. In addition the My Main Street Ambassadors have helped Burlington businesses access \$400,000 in grant funding to support their business growth. We continue to leverage TechPlace to not only support Burlington's entrepreneurs but bring new high growth companies to Burlington. In August 2022, jointly with our partners at Haltech Region Innovation Centre, Innovation Factory and LatAm Startups we announced the new Acceleration+ program. Funded by an over \$3 Million grant from FedDev the joint program will support over 45 new high growth companies to land in TechPlace over the next 18 months. While new investments slowed down during the pandemic we have seen business attraction activities pick up during 2022 and have renewed our focus on international partnerships to bring new companies to Burlington and raise our profile internationally. Successes in 2022 have included the recent announcement by Cultivated B of their acquisition of the 130,000 square foot former L3 Harris building in Aldershot and the promotion of Burlington at Web Summit in November 2022 where staff participated in over 40 meetings to grow our investment attraction networks and generated ten verified strong leads with interest in expanding to Canada.

### **Strategy/process**

Since the emergence of the COVID-19 crisis, Team Burlington took 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 focused their efforts on:

1. Keeping the business community well informed as relevant and timely information became available.
2. Providing key tools/resources to support organizations during a difficult time.

3. Working closely with 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 to support the restart of business and welcome new development

To support these coordinated efforts Team Burlington in partnership with the City of Burlington launched the Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN) to bring together key stakeholders and business leaders from across Burlington to develop a recovery strategy that would prepare our economy for recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. The BERN committee met in August 2022 to discuss the future of BERN. At the meeting the recommendations of Team Burlington were approved as follows “*That the Burlington Economic Recovery Network be disbanded August 2022. That the work on key focus areas be directed to the Team Burlington member organizations individually and collectively, in partnership with the City of Burlington to support economic recovery and prosperity*”. Moving forward Team Burlington will be meeting regularly to coordinate long-term recovery focused on talent and competitiveness, main street businesses and tourism and hospitality.

As we move into the new term of council Burlington Economic Development will be working closely with the City of Burlington to develop a joint economic strategy for 2023-2026. Queens University Executive Decision Centre have been engaged to support Burlington Economic Development’s strategic planning process for 2023 - 2026. Stakeholder engagement sessions took place in September and October 2022 and a board strategic planning session in November. All strategic planning will be integrated with the City of Burlington and we anticipate joint workshops with Council in 2023 as part of the new Vision to Focus council work plan for 2022 - 2026. In the second-half of 2023 we will coordinate with the City of Burlington to begin the project plan for the City of Burlington 2050 strategic plan and the Burlington economic vision 2035.

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## **Financial Matters:**

Not applicable

## **Total Financial Impact**

Not applicable

## **Source of Funding**

Not applicable

## **Other Resource Impacts**

Not applicable

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## **Climate Implications**

Burlington Economic Development supports Burlington's Climate Action Plan by supporting:

- the attraction and retention of jobs creating more options for employment in Burlington and reducing GHG emissions associated with commuting.
  - the development and intensification of Burlington's employment areas and the remediation of brownfield sites.
  - creating opportunities for employment in new mixed use areas including Burlington Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) increasing options for people to arrive at work via more carbon positive options such as rail, bike and foot by encouraging employment development within MTSAs
  - the development of complete communities that reduce individual residents and employees carbon footprints by reducing the need to use the car to live their daily lives
  - new entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses creating opportunities for residents to live and work in their community reducing commutes and GHG emissions.
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## **Engagement Matters:**

Businesses are regularly engaged by Burlington Economic Development via corporate calls, customer service requests (CSRs) and joint engagement with Team Burlington.

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## **Conclusion:**

Burlington Economic Development working jointly with the City of Burlington continues to focus on supporting our business community. As the world begins the recovery from the pandemic we look forward to working jointly with the City of Burlington to develop a new economic strategy that continues to support our business community in adapting to new economic challenges and supporting business to locate, start and grow in our community.

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Respectfully submitted,

Anita Cassidy

Executive Director, Burlington Economic Development

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**Appendices:**

- A. Burlington Economic Development Annual Report
- B. TechPlace 5 Year Impact Report

**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.