



**SUBJECT: ECDEV-02-23 Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) update and 2023-24 work plan**

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

**FROM: Burlington Economic Development**

Report Number: ECDEV-02-23

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 150

Date to Committee: June 27, 2023

Date to Council: July 11, 2023

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**Recommendation:**

Receive and file Burlington Economic Development report ECDEV-02-23 regarding Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) implementation update and 2023-24 work plan and associated appendices, and;

Direct Executive Director of Burlington Economic Development, Executive Director Community Planning Regulation and Mobility and Executive Director Community Relations and Engagement to provide an update on draft RTRC 2023 recommendations at the September 12, 2023 Community Planning, Regulation & Mobility Committee Meeting.

**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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**Executive Summary:**

In 2019, Mayor Meed Ward and Councilor Galbraith launched and co-chaired, the Red Tape Red Carpet Task Force initiative. The taskforce collected insights and ideas from

the Burlington business community, partner organizations and staff to better understand the challenges (reduce “red tape”) to locating or expanding a business here, and to ideate around solutions that would better serve our businesses (roll out the “red carpet”). 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, 2019, Planning and Development Committee via report CM-24-19: Red Tape Red Carpet Update and approved by City Council on October 21, 2019.

In 2022, we entered the new term of council and engagement was undertaken with the business community to understand where we have improved, what issues they face in doing business in Burlington and how we can make it easier for them to start, locate and grow in Burlington. As part of this engagement, focus groups were held based on the following key segments of businesses that interact with the City of Burlington and Burlington Economic Development:

1. Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (ICI) Realtors
2. Industrial, Commercial and Institutional Landowners and Developers
3. Residential Landowners and Developers
4. Existing Businesses (Non-Development Industry)
5. City of Burlington Staff

Detailed feedback received from each of these groups is available in Appendix A and is summarized in the public engagement section of this report.

In addition, Customer Service Requests (CSRs) completed by Burlington Economic Development were analyzed to look at key problems, feedback from businesses and the most common issues that businesses ran into when requesting economic development support in facilitating interactions with the City of Burlington.

The engagement highlighted the need for a more efficient, transparent, and customer-focused development process in Burlington that can provide faster turnaround times, improve communication, and facilitate business growth. Recommendations for draft prioritized actions for Red Tape Red Carpet for 2023 onwards can be found at the end of this report. The purpose of this report is to provide an opportunity to engage with members of committee on issues identified and emerging opportunities to improve the customer experience. A final set of recommendations integrating feedback from members of council will be brought forward at the September Community, Planning, Regulation and Mobility (CPRM) meeting. Moving forward these recommendations will be the updated and evolved recommendations for Red Tape Red Carpet replacing the original 2019 recommendations moving forward.

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## **Background and Discussion:**

### **Red Tape Red Carpet Key Achievements 2018-2022**

The City of Burlington has achieved several key accomplishments in improving its development and customer service processes. Since 2018, the City has shifted priorities and resources to improve customer experience and strengthen economic development by committing resources to address key challenges. This includes key investments made by council to address staffing constraints so applications can be processed faster and pinch points eliminated, including the approval of 8 new staff in Site Engineering and 21 staff hired in the Planning and Building departments. Across the CPRM division, steps have been taken to increase retention and reduce staff turnover through a focus on work place culture as well as competitive salary analysis with overall vacancies reduced as a result.

By the end of Q2 2023, the city plans to launch the One Window for Development Services at City Hall, which will provide a single point of contact for planning, building, and renovating services as well as licensing for businesses and other matters. Additionally, Service Burlington, the City's principal customer contact centre, will have a redesigned and renovated counter. Continuous improvement of service delivery for high density development applicants is ongoing.

As part of the Designing and Evolving Our Organization plan, a new structure has been developed to emphasize and manage our commitment to a positive customer experience. The establishment of a new Executive Director Community Relations and Engagement role in 2022 will lead a broader service group including the Office of the City Clerk, Customer Experience, and Corporate Communications and Engagement. The creation in 2020 of a Customer Experience Manager – Business Development role has the potential to provide business concierge services, and the city has established a Customer Experience department, which has developed a new Customer Experience Strategy, revised Customer Service Standards, and engaged customers in continuous improvement initiatives. The city has also created a new Customer Feedback survey, empowered multiple departments to use the City's Customer Relationship System, and established Service Burlington as the City's principal customer contact centre.

In addition to these achievements, the City has created a Temporary City-Wide Patio Program, coordinated advocacy with Team Burlington for business supports during COVID-19, and achieved investment attraction wins, such as Endress + Hauser's new North American Headquarters, The Cultivated B's new headquarters, and the attraction of Brock University to Burlington for a new campus. Finally, in April 2023 the City has launched an "MyFiles", an application visibility tool which has the potential to evolve into a comprehensive E-Submissions system to improve efficiency and promote business growth.

The Burlington Economic Development Governance Review has been completed, resulting in changes to the governance structure and strategic priorities. This has included new integrated reporting to council, renewed investment in TechPlace and the integrated Customer Experience program. A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Project Team was formed in 2019 and the Brownfield CIP By-Laws were approved in April 2021. Business cases to implement the brownfield CIP and develop a comprehensive CIP Strategy with actionable incentive program will be brought forward in 2023 for consideration of inclusion in the 2024 Budget.

The One Brand project was approved in 2019 and an agency brought on board in 2020. The project was placed on pause due to the pandemic and we anticipate reinitiating the One Brand work in Q3 2023.

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 was last updated to reflect RTRC Implementation in Q3 2021 and is available for review at <https://www.burlington.ca/en/council-and-city-administration/red-tape-red-carpet-progress-reporting.aspx>. A full dashboard of the approved 22 Red Tape Red Carpet Recommendations and status is included in Appendix B and the online status on the dashboard will be updated following approval of the report.

### **Draft Red Tape Red Carpet Updated Recommendations 2023**

The following recommendations in line with customer and staff feedback are recommended to be the focus of the Red Tape Red Carpet 2023-2026 with integration as necessary into the next iteration of Vision to Focus. This list of recommendations and prioritization criteria is continuing to be refined, to be brought back at the September meeting of Community Planning, Regulation and Mobility

#### **Strategic focus on high impact outcomes**

1. Develop prioritization criteria for file management and problem resolution with clear escalation process based on economic impact and the City's strategic goals. Possible Economic Impact criteria/KPIs to be used in prioritization of files are below. Criteria to be integrated into the next iteration of AMANDA to track economic impact criteria for all development applications. Example criteria are listed below and will continue to be refined. Staff discretion will also be used to escalate files as needed:
  - For industrial and commercial files:
    - \$3.7+ million in new industrial tax assessment
    - \$2.8+ million in new office tax assessment

- \$9.2+ million in new retail tax assessment
- For industrial and commercial files:
  - 50+ industrial jobs generated or retained
  - 50+ office jobs generated or retained
  - 30+ retail jobs generated or retained
- Residential developments proposing 6+ net new rental units to market or minimum investment values of renovations and enhancements
- Additional residential criteria are being developed, including density of units, affordability, bedroom ratios.
- Partnership/application by Not-For-Profit housing provider.
- Community infrastructure development proposals.

Files recognized as High Economic Impact (HEI) will be eligible to receive a Development Concierge service, which will include a higher level of service and access to staff from end to end of the application process. Prioritization of HEI files will not necessarily involve expediting of processes as legislated timelines will still need to be met across applications.

2. Determine the role that Burlington Economic Development should take to address gaps identified through stakeholder engagement including expansion of their business growth mandate to support residential growth in MTSA and intensification areas. Determine the role between City of Burlington and Burlington Economic Development in high density residential business community engagement and relationship management.
3. Recognize the City has an endorsed Corporate Continuous Improvement Strategy and plan to action, implement and report on ongoing continuous improvement activities that demonstrate the application of the Lean Six Sigma training received by staff throughout 2022. Align improvement activities with the Corporate Continuous Improvement strategy and its best practices, capturing the voice of the customer, identifying the value add within process and eliminating waste. Continue engaging in regular Plan Do Check Act cycles between staff and customers, making visible further opportunities for improvement and reinforcing a solutions-oriented service culture. Support psychological safety by encouraging experimentation, rewarding innovative thinking, celebrating small successes and framing failed experiments as great learning opportunities. Report on improvements and service delivery outcomes using quality data and results-based accountability practices.
4. Form a senior team that can be pulled together quickly with decision makers for new investments from the City, Economic Development and other partner agencies to problem solve and roll out the red carpet for businesses that meet HEI criteria.

5. Complete a review of records management and staff onboarding/off boarding procedures to improve file handover and consistency in responses to customers. Integrate culture of staff as problems solvers enabling Burlington's economic growth throughout onboarding and training of existing and new staff. Encourage staff freedom for flexibility in interpretation of regulations, particularly those known to be outdated and those which do not consider the modern digital business environment.

### **Delivering a Positive Customer Experience and Evolving Relationship Management**

6. Design and evolve our organization for customer experience to provide a clear ambassador role with ability to influence files and work in closer partnership with Burlington Economic Development to build relationships with the business community. Achieve this by redesigning Customer Experience Manager – Business Development to manage the integrated customer experience for high impact/low volume files as identified through the proposed prioritization criteria. Actions may include:

- Managing monthly review of HEI files with key city staff via the Development Control Committee (DCC) monthly meetings to prioritize processing and identify risks.
- Developing and managing a triage system for how customer requests for both high impact/lower volume and low impact/higher volume files are managed.
- Jointly managing with Economic Development, the integration of HEI files into a system to track customers interactions and common issues including customer service metrics to create a common baseline for our success in improving the customer experience.
- Providing monthly file tracking updates and advance issue identification updates to Council and senior staff for high economic impact files.
- Championing the integration of Customer Feedback to deliver an improved customer experience.
  - Using tools from the disciplines of Customer Experience, Human Centered Design, and journey mapping to fully understand the customer and build empathy.
  - Further refining of customer service standards for responding to customers questions, emails, and voicemails.
  - Defining turnaround times for reviews that are not currently legislated, such as the pre-consultation process.
  - Managing the collection of customer feedback for HEI files. Working with the broader customer experience team to integrate this data into broader customer service analytics collecting and sharing analytics from the new City-wide Customer Feedback Survey, including

measures of Net Promoter Score (NPS) and Customer Effort Score (CES).

7. Recognize the importance of Small Main Street Businesses to Burlington's economic growth by:
  - Expanding the mandate of Burlington Economic Development to support Main Street Businesses
  - Redeveloping the Small Business Coordinator Role as a Small Business Support role under Economic Development focused on:
    - Developing a main street business support strategy
    - Supporting BIAs in policy and strategy development
    - Providing a concierge/ambassador function supporting main street businesses through regulatory processes
    - Determining opportunities to provide additional main street businesses supports including exploring new BIAs for Burlington's intensification and growth areas

### **Proactive Marketing, Communications and Partnerships**

8. Continue Burlington's commitment to proactive investment attraction and building a strong reputation for Burlington as an attractive city to locate, start and grow a business including implementation of the One Brand project.
9. Align City of Burlington and Burlington Economic Development communication strategies and work plan focusing on Burlington's evolution to a complete community and the benefits that development of our MTSA's and intensification areas will bring to the community and businesses. Partner with development industry organizations on communications to help support the story telling of the benefits new development will bring to Burlington including highlighting information on walkability, public and private amenities and community investments to support existing and future residents.
10. Review the existing communications resources available to building and development customers to help explain Burlington's processes and how they can move their applications forward. Develop a joint communications plan between the City of Burlington and Economic Development for new communications resources including process guides and FAQs for businesses that are looking to lease, buy or develop/redevelop a site. Work to proactively communicate these resources to businesses and update regularly based on customer feedback on gaps/usefulness of information.
11. Continue to proactively communicate and engage with the development community as end-to-end development processes are improved including integration with partner agencies.

12. Work with the development community to address barriers post approval, including servicing. Engage with Halton Region to proactively map and budget for servicing in intensification areas to ensure servicing is in place for development approvals coming online.

### **Continuous Improvement and Tools to support the evolution of the customer experience**

13. Review current staff resourcing and structure for file processing and determine if any updates to resourcing and/or staff specializations are needed to support the processing of high economic impact/low volume files and low economic impact/high volume files. Consider alternative structures including separate intake streams and staffing resources assigned to each, among other options.
14. Continue to Invest in technologies to support business processes and file management including implementation of online submissions system that allows visibility of files to customers (Myfiles) and file management (AMANDA).
15. Evaluate risks and risk tolerance of the corporation of adjusting the level of technical review being undertaken on files that have been submitted by professionals with accreditation and any opportunities to redevelop processes recognizing the professional standards of accreditation. e.g., engineer, architect. Consider pre-qualification of experts to reduce resources directed at reviewing professionally stamped submissions from trusted experts.
16. Identify flexibility through Director of Community Planning interpretations in how zoning is applied in the interim period until an updated zoning by-law is approved.
17. Review parking standards in intensification areas
18. Implement Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) and other tools to support City-building initiatives. The low-hanging fruit is to provide funding and direction to implement the existing Brownfield CIP which was approved in 2020 for the redevelopment of complex brownfield sites. Additional funding and resources are required to develop a Comprehensive CIP Strategy with actionable incentive programs that may include City-Building components of:
  - Housing – Attainable, Affordable, Assisted and Special Needs
  - Continued Downtown Improvement and Business Attraction in both the Downtown and Aldershot BIAs
  - Commercial Office Attraction/Improvement/Revitalization/Development
  - Employment
  - Sustainability in the Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)
  - Rural Economic Development



### **Strategy/process/risk**

The 2019 recommendations brought forward by the Red Tape Red Carpet Taskforce involved extensive engagement with the business community. Additional work has been undertaken as part of the new term of council to engage customers and evolve the recommendations for Red Tape Red Carpet to meet current customer needs.

Ongoing feedback from the business community will be collected through the new city-wide Customer Feedback survey as well as through the work of the redesigned Customer Experience Manager – Business Development role 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 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:**

These Red Tape Red Carpet recommendations were gathered through a public survey and through virtual feedback sessions with key segments of businesses that interact with the City of Burlington and Burlington Economic Development:

1. Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (ICI) Realtors
2. Industrial, Commercial and Institutional Landowners and Developers
3. Residential Landowners and Developers
4. Existing Businesses (Non-Development Industry)
5. City of Burlington Staff

These sessions sought to identify the challenges and obstacles facing growth and the relocation/expansion of businesses in Burlington to develop actionable solutions. Existing businesses were asked largely about their experiences setting up in Burlington and how they feel the experience of other businesses in the future could be enhanced. The other groups were asked three main questions:

1. What are we doing well? What examples of good experiences or best practices have you experienced?
2. Where can we do better? Where can improvements be made? Are there any themes or recurrent issues you have experienced?
3. What do you feel has changed since the original RTRC discussions in 2018, if anything? What are other municipalities that you have worked with doing well that Burlington could learn from?

The feedback received from each session is available in Appendix A.

Overall, the key themes that emerged across all sessions with ICI realtors, industrial, commercial, and institutional landowners, residential developers and landowners, and existing businesses were as follows:

- Frustration with delays in the development process, lack of transparency, and poor communication with City staff.
- Need for a more cohesive approach, stronger connections between the city and other agencies, and a focus on culture and customer service.

- Desire for realistic timing guarantees and process improvements, capacity building, and reward for staff efficiency.
- Importance of feedback and communication, empathy, transparency, and relationship-building, and learning from other municipalities.
- Negative perception of Burlington's brand and reputation, and the need for faster turnaround times to attract investment and revenue.
- Zoning and regulatory concerns, and the need for a clear and streamlined process, with a single point of contact to manage the relationships for high economic impact files, for small main street businesses, and support them in navigating the complex development process in Burlington.
- Development of a culture that enables and rewards staff to be problem solvers and work with customers to achieve goals together

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## Conclusion:

The implementation of the recommendations developed as part of the Mayor's Red Tape Red Carpet Taskforce initiative in 2018 are well underway, Stakeholder engagement in 2022/2023 has resulted in an updated and enhanced list of new recommendations evolved recommendations for Red Tape Red Carpet replacing the original 2019 recommendations moving forward.

A cross-departmental team of senior staff is developing a long-term implementation plan of 2023 recommendations. These will be presented to the CPRM Committee on September 12, 2023. Should Council approve the new recommendations in September 2023, an updated dashboard will be available publicly at:

<https://www.burlington.ca/en/your-city/red-tape-red-carpet-task-force-progress.asp>

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Respectfully submitted,

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**Appendices:**

- A. Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) Feedback from Customer Segments and Staff
- B. 2018-22 Red Tape Red Carpet Recommendations Dashboard

**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.