



**SUBJECT: Economic Development strategy update**

**TO: Committee of the Whole**

**FROM: Burlington Economic Development**

Report Number: ECDEV-01-24

Wards Affected: All

Date to Committee: January 8, 2024

Date to Council: January 16, 2024

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### **Recommendation:**

Receive and file Burlington Economic Development report ECDEV-01-24 providing an update on Burlington Economic Development's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

### **PURPOSE:**

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

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
- Improve integrated city mobility
- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture
- 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, as well as facilitate the transition of Burlington to an urban economy and promote Burlington as a unique destination for growth. Through coordinated strategic planning, the Burlington Economic Development Strategic Plan 2023-2026 and the Draft 2022-2026 Burlington's Plan From Vision to Focus provide a commitment to achieve the objectives and outcomes of designing and delivering complete communities by:

- Developing a strategy to support small business and tech incubators, new business, business retention, and nurturing the talent engine.
- Visioning and activation around the major employment areas - specifically around MTSA's and the development of complete communities.
- Business Attraction Strategy and proactive Investment Attraction Strategy.
- Partnership creation to champion entrepreneurship and business incubation

### **Strategy/Process**

In line with the new term of Council, Burlington Economic Development has worked closely with the City of Burlington, Team Burlington, and other key partners to develop an economic strategy for 2023- 2026. Queens University Executive Decision Centre has been engaged to support Burlington Economic Development's strategic planning process. A summary of the process is as follows:

- Good practice analysis from other economic development teams
- Four workshops focusing on key areas for Burlington Economic Development, including:
  - A Land Readiness Workshop on September 27, 2022
  - A Business Growth Workshop on October 4, 2022
  - A Branding/Communications Workshop on October 7, 2022
  - A Entrepreneurial Business workshop on November 15, 2022
- An online survey to gather additional feedback.
- Two Board of Directors Strategy Workshops on November 17, 2022 and February 16, 2023
- Receiving Draft Final Endorsement from the Economic Development Board of Directors at the March 23, 2023 Board Meeting.
- Ongoing discussions with the City's Strategy and Risk team, City Manager, Board of Directors, and Council Members to ensure alignment with Draft 2022-2026 Burlington's Plan From Vision to Focus work plan and Council priorities.

In addition to the above process on the Burlington Economic Development 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, businesses and partners are regularly engaged by Burlington Economic Development via corporate calls, customer service requests (CSRs) and joint engagement with Team Burlington. Council members are regularly engaged via 1:1 council updates and council reports on key projects.

Economic Development's strategic planning has been fully integrated with the City of Burlington's strategic planning processes. In 2024, we will coordinate with the City of Burlington on the City of Burlington 2050 Strategic Plan and the Burlington Economic Vision.

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### **Financial Matters:**

The strategic plan will be implemented within the base budget funding for Burlington Economic Development. Burlington Economic Development will apply for external funding opportunities/grants as they relate to the achievement of the Strategic Plan.

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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 neutral 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 greenhouse gas emissions.
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## **Engagement Matters:**

As outlined in the Strategy/Process section, staff completed four workshops with the community, an online survey, two Economic Development Strategy Workshops, and ongoing discussions with Council, City Staff, Key Partners and the business community in the development of the 2023-2026 Burlington Economic Development Strategic Plan.

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## **Conclusion:**

The 2023-2026 Strategic Plan has been adapted to new economic challenges and supporting business to locate, start and grow in our community. Burlington Economic Development is proud to work jointly with the City of Burlington, Team Burlington, and other partners to continue to focus on supporting our business community.

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Respectfully submitted,

Mark Steffler  
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## **Appendices:**

- A. Burlington Economic Development 2023-2026 Strategic Plan Summary

## **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.

Appendix A: Burlington Economic Development 2023-2026 Strategic Plan Summary



## Strategic Planning Framework

**Long Term  
Policy Documents**

**Strategic Plan 2015 – 2040**  
*Economic Vision as input*

**Medium Term  
Policy Documents**

Vision to Focus  
Red Tape Red Carpet

Official Plan  
Integrated Transit Plan  
Rural and Agricultural Plan  
Community Energy Plan  
Cultural Action Plan, Others

**Short Term  
Implementation Plans**

City Manager's  
Plan

EcDev Strategic  
and Tactical Plans

COB Financial  
Plan

## 2023-2026 Strategic Plan

- **Line of Business**

- To lead, influence and facilitate Burlington's growth into a vibrant and economically thriving mid-size urban city.

- **Vision**

- To be a champion for Burlington and its economic future, we deliver *customer focused* business support services and drive strategic opportunities to attract talent, jobs and growth

- **Objectives**

- Support companies to locate to Burlington
- Support companies to start in Burlington
- Support companies to stay and grow in Burlington
- Facilitate the transition of Burlington to an urban economy
- Promote Burlington as a unique destination for growth



## 2023-2026 Strategic Plan

- **Pillars**

- 1. Land readiness and intensification.**

- Visioning and activation around the major employment areas - specifically around MTSAs.

- 2. Business growth and entrepreneurship**

- Champion entrepreneurship and business incubation. Support new business, business retention, and nurturing the talent engine.

- 3. Brand Championing and Business Attraction**

- Lead the development and implementation of a unified brand identity. Support the attraction of innovative businesses.

- 4. Engaging Organization**

- That positions Economic Development as the go-to source for business expertise. Delivering an outstanding customer experience in partnership with the City of Burlington.



## 2023 Key Deliverables

1. **Burlington Lands Partnership and Opportunities**
  - BurlingtonGO Land Visioning
  - 1200 King Land Visioning
2. **TechPlace**
  - Bateman partnership plan
  - New 5 year business plan
3. **Business Retention and Expansion**
  - Small Business Support (City and Region role clarity)
4. **OneBrand and Business Attraction Strategy**
5. **Go Investment Corridor Implementation and MTSA Complete Communities**  
(City role clarity)



## Areas to clarify

### Partner Clarification:

- Role in Residential Development
- Role in Small Business
- Role in MTSAs and MTSA Investments
- Role in Talent (with various talent partners)
- Role of CX/Development Concierge
- *Role in City Strategy*
- Evolution of BLP

### Evolving trends to monitor:

- Tax impacts of emerging trends (WFH, office vacancy, etc.)
- *Impacts of ChatGPT /Natural Language Models*
- *Changing investment landscape for capital and business expansion*



## Next Steps

### Next Steps

1. Align with City's strategic planning efforts - 2023, 2024
2. Monitoring Framework

### Monitoring Framework

- Quarterly Performance Management Plan report to Board
- Annual report to Public

### Performance Measures (suggested)

- Pillar and project specific measures (to be developed by staff)
- Increased assessment/revenue base
- Increased knowledge based jobs in targeted/focus sectors
- A strong and diverse economy with thriving mixed-use communities