



SUBJECT: Red Tape Red Carpet update Q1 2024

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Burlington Economic Development

Report Number: ECDEV-04-24

Wards Affected: All

Date to Committee: March 4, 2024

Date to Council: March 19, 2024

Recommendation:

Direct the Executive Director of Community Planning Regulation and Mobility and Executive Director of Community Relations and Engagement to work with the Executive Director of Burlington Economic Development, to report back semi-annually to the Pipeline to Permit Committee on progress for cutting red tape and rolling out the red carpet for investment in Burlington.

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

Background and Discussion:

In 2019, Mayor Meed Ward and Councilor Galbraith launched and co-chaired the Red Tape Red Carpet Task Force initiative, which led to 22 recommendations to better serve the business and development communities, and work undertaken to implement those recommendations.

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.

The engagement highlighted the need for ongoing work towards a more efficient, transparent, and customer-focused development process in Burlington that can provide faster turnaround times, improve communication, and facilitate business growth. Draft recommendations were discussed with council as part of report ECDEV-02-23.

During Q3 2023 staff continued to refine the recommendations and update with final recommendations was approved by council as part of report ECDEV-05-23 Red Tape Red Carpet Recommendation 2023. One of the critical findings of the engagement was the need to 'purpose-fit' the methods of service to the varying needs of different business segments. To address this finding the following key initiatives were identified:

- Continue to expand the functionality of the online portal, "MyFiles", to cover more application types and full end to end process of those applications;
- Expand the services provided by Burlington Economic Development to better support small businesses and the development industry; and,
- Scope the opportunity for enhanced service offered by the Customer Experience Manager by implementing High Impact criteria to identify those development proposals which address areas of critical need within the city (ex. Affordable housing, significant employment-related tax assessment growth).

The full recommendations approved by council are included in Appendix A: Updated Red Tape Red Carpet Recommendations October 2023.

Following approval of the recommendations by council staff have worked to integrate these recommendations into corporate strategic initiatives and the updated Vision to Focus (V2F). Key actions since approval of the updated Red Tape Red Carpet Recommendations in October 2023 include:

- Implementation of High Impact Criteria to allow applicants to receive tailored service to support applicants through the development process.
- Refocusing of Customer Experience – Business Development Role on High Impact Files, process improvements and customer engagement and education.
- Redevelopment of the Special Business Area Coordinator Role to focus on strategy development for main street business and Business Improvement Areas (BIA) and customer experience. This role will be retitled to Specialist, Business and Economic Development, with services designed to complement the Customer Experience Manager – Business Development role.
- Joint engagement of the development community by Community Planning and Economic Development. This has included integration of Red Tape Red Carpet update on the Housing and Development Liaison Committee (HDLAC) Agenda

and joint events with the West End Homebuilders Association (WEHBA) and Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD).

- Burlington Economic Development has continued its focus on investment attraction and promoting Burlington as an investment destination. This included joint business development missions with Toronto Global to Medtech and Websummit to attract technology companies aligned with our industry cluster focus.
- One Brand project was reinitiated in Q4 2023 to create an integrated brand and value proposition for residents, business and visitors.
- Landscape Ontario update.
- Ongoing refinement of the Community Planning Permit System, which will establish a rapid and predictable planning approval process, including flexibility that supports increased housing and amenities and mitigating cost barriers such as Parking standards in Major Transit Station Areas.
- Successful awarding of approximately \$21 million dollars of the Federal Housing Accelerator Fund that will implement [7 key initiatives](#) to support the development of housing.

With the launch of the new Pipeline to Permit Committee reporting on progress against Red Tape Red Carpet objectives will be provided to the new committee along with regular updates to members of council on High Impact Files.

Strategy/process/risk

The 2019 recommendations brought forward by the Red Tape Red Carpet Taskforce involved extensive engagement with the business community. Additional work 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.

Financial Matters:

Red Tape Red Carpet recommendations have been integrated into corporate strategic initiatives and department workplan. There are no additional financial resources required at this time.

Climate Implications:

The implementation of the Red Tape Red Carpet Recommendations has the following climate implications:

As part of the Business Attraction Strategy, a focus will be on Cleantech will attract companies that provide solutions to climate and environmental issues. 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.

Engagement Matters:

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 in 2019. Additional business community engagement took place in 2022 and 2023 to help reshape and update the recommendations to ensure they were addressing business improvement needs.

Conclusion:

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

The updated Red Tape Red Carpet recommendations will be reported on through an update Red Tape Red Carpet Dashboard available publicly at:

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

Regular reporting will take place to the Pipeline to Permit committee and members of Council on progress in cutting red tape and rolling out the red carpet for investing in Burlington.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendices:

- A. Updated Red Tape Red Carpet Recommendations October 2023

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.