

SUBJECT: Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) 2025 update

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Development and Growth Management
Community Planning

Report Number: DGM-51-25

Wards Affected: all

Date to Committee: July 7, 2025

Date to Council: July 15, 2025

Recommendation

Receive for information the Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) 2025 update contained in development and growth management report DGM-51-25.

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) initiative. Originally launched in 2019 through Report CM-24-19 and updated in 2023 (ECDEV-04-24), the initiative sought to eliminate barriers to business and development in Burlington. This report confirms that nearly all original recommendations have been either fulfilled, embedded into standard operations, or addressed through broader process improvements. As RTRC-specific efforts conclude, the work continues through ongoing coordination, customer-focused development facilitation, and integrated performance tracking across city departments.

Purpose of report:

To provide Council with an update on the Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) initiative and demonstrate how its principles have been embedded into citywide development operations. This includes highlighting how staff now deliver services with a focus on coordination, transparency, and customer experience

Key findings:

- The Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) initiative has transitioned from a targeted task force to an embedded citywide operational model. Its principles now inform how city staff deliver planning, permitting, and customer experience services.
- RTRC outcomes are now reflected in structured processes such as the Streamlined Development Application Process (SDAP), proactive navigation support, and early issue identification across departments.
- Industry-specific forums like the Housing Development Liaison Committee (HDLC) and Lunch & Learn events have become platforms for two-way dialogue and process improvements.
- The business concierge model is now embedded within staff functions through two dedicated roles as well as a fully staffed One Window counter, offering in-person navigation and development support.
- City staff are actively using dashboards and digital tools to track relevant metrics and manage file timelines, further enhancing transparency and internal coordination.
- The initiative has improved clarity, timeliness, and customer experience across application touchpoints, and is now a foundational part of how development services are delivered

Implications:

- Financial, Legal, Climate: None Identified
- Human Resources: RTRC-aligned practices have been embedded into training, onboarding, and internal service culture, and existing staff functions have evolved
- Communications: No new efforts beyond existing processes
- Engagement: Ongoing industry engagement is supported through RTRC coordinated mechanisms (Pipeline to Permit, HDLC, SDAP) and One Window Service Counter, and supported by cross-departmental collaboration from Planning, Building and Customer Experience leadership and staff.

Recommendation Report

Background

The Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) initiative was launched in 2019 through Report CM-24-19, in response to barriers raised by Burlington's business and development community. Led by the Mayor's Office, the RTRC Task Force identified over 22 recommendations focused on improving permitting timelines, digital access, interdepartmental coordination, and customer service.

Report ECDEV-05-23 provided a status update on the implementation of these recommendations, highlighting completed actions, ongoing initiatives, and areas needing further work, adding additional recommendations, with emphasis on customer service improvement.

Report ECDEV-04-24 outlined how legislative changes, internal restructuring, and tools such as the Streamlined Development Application Process (SDAP) were supporting a more coordinated and efficient development review process.

Collectively, these reports reflect the City's shift from a task force initiative to an embedded operational model, where RTRC will continue to inform how City staff deliver planning, permitting, and business support services.

While this report focuses on the recommendations endorsed by Council, it is important to acknowledge that broader transition work remains underway. The conclusion of regional economic development services has left notable service gaps, particularly for agricultural businesses and rural small business support. These needs, previously addressed through regional programs, remain a priority for the City and have been flagged through BARACC and other forums. Future reporting will provide Council with a more comprehensive update on the City's realignment efforts and partnership discussions related to these services.

Analysis

1. From Fulfillment to Evolution

The RTRC initiative laid the groundwork for how city staff deliver planning and permitting services today. These are foundational principles that have shaped staff and applicant interactions:

- **MyFiles Portal:** Launched in 2023, this tool allows applicants to track their application status in real time. It supports transparency by reducing uncertainty and decreasing status inquiries.
- **Structured intake and Pre-Consultation:** RTRC’s recommendation to improve early coordination now lives through formalized pre-consultation. Planning, engineering, zoning and building teams meet early to identify gaps and support complete application submissions. This approach strengthens file readiness and ensures there’s no rework.
- **Customer Service Culture:** Customer Experience (CX) practices initiated under RTRC are now embedded in staff training, onboarding, and service delivery. Teams guide applicants and collaborate to resolve issues early and often.
- **Business Navigation & Concierge Support:** RTRC’s recommendation to have navigation support has resulted in successful implementation of dedicated roles and accessible service channels. There are now staff roles to support applicants through medium-to-small scale and high-impact development files. In addition to these roles, City Hall now offers a fully staffed “One Window” counter, an in-person service desk where applicants can receive coordinated support from planning, building and zoning staff.

Among the most tangible outcomes of RTRC has been the formal introduction of roles focused on high-impact development files. Business navigation and customer experience functions were created to guide applicants through the regulatory process and ensure consistent support across departments. These roles have now become central to how the City delivers complex development support, reflecting the legacy of RTRC.

2. Implementation Outcomes – Where RTRC Recommendations Are Now Sustained

These outcomes reflect how RTRC-aligned practices have become operationalized within standard workflows. These are ongoing outcomes that staff continue to sustain, monitor and refine:

- **Zoning and Approval Timelines:** The original target was a 30-day goal for minor applications. While provincial legislation now mandates 60 days, city staff consistently meet or exceed this timeline through internal coordination and proactive issue management.

- **Streamlined Zoning and Development Approvals:** Significant strides have been made through the Streamlined Development Application Process (SDAP), which enhances coordination between Planning, Building, and Zoning. It has improved handoffs, reduced delays, more timely review cycles, and clarity at intake.
- **Industry Coordination and Proactive Stakeholder Management:** City staff now regularly engage with industry partners and stakeholders through the Housing Development Liaison Committee (HDLC). This cross-functional forum brings together representatives from Planning, Building, Zoning, CX and other departments to collaborate and address reoccurring issues and align on service expectations. HDLC has become a platform for two-way dialogue with organizations such as BILD and Landscape Ontario. It enables city staff to hear directly from larger applicants, identify root causes of issues they may be facing, and address them, as well as build on existing relationships with partners and organizations.

3. RTRC Principles as Foundation for Culture Change

City staff continue to apply RTRC principles not as standalone tasks but as part of a broader shift in how the City approaches development, permitting and customer service. This culture change is evident in:

- **Coordinated Navigation:** Early coordination and shared accountability across Planning, Building, Zoning and CX teams for complex files
- **Two-Way Industry Dialogue**
Mechanisms like HDLC and other educational events have become key feedback and engagement tools
- **Data Driven Practices:** The City now uses internal dashboards and metrics to track timelines, identify gaps, and improving efficiency and service metrics. What began as static tracking has evolved into a system of proactive service management.

4. Next Steps

City staff will continue to apply RTRC-aligned principles to improve development facilitation and customer experience. This includes supporting complex files, ensuring early issue resolution, providing consistent staff touchpoints, and maintaining structured applicant navigation.

- The City also continues to gather and evaluate feedback from applicants and industry partners to inform future improvements. Testimonials and engagement data from customers, such as satisfaction scores or resolution rates, will support a more data-informed approach to service design. These insights will be included in future reporting, helping to shape an ongoing culture of responsiveness and continuous service enhancement

Ongoing efforts will include:

- Expanding the use of data-driven dashboards
- Strengthening cross-departmental processes through SDAP
- Maintaining regular industry engagement and education sessions
- Supporting applicants through business navigation and coordination across departments

5. Conclusion

The Red Tape Red Carpet initiative has evolved from a focused task force effort into a sustained, organization-wide approach to service delivery. Its principles, such as early coordination, improved customer service, and interdepartmental alignment, are now embedded in how the City of Burlington staff support all types of development and business needs. Whether supporting large developments or small-scale inquiries, the culture of continuous improvement, customer-centered service, and interdepartmental alignment is now reflected in daily practice.

Recommendation Details

THAT Council receive Report DGM-51-25, providing update on the status and ongoing influence of the Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) initiative.

Key Dates & Milestones

- 2019 – RTRC initiated via Report [CM-24-19](#)
 - 2023 – Interim update via Report [ECDEV-05-23](#)
 - 2024 – Expanded status and modernization via Report [ECDEV-04-24](#)
 - 2025 – RTRC update via Report DGM-51-25
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Implications

- Financial: None
 - Legal: None
 - Human Resources: Roles related to RTRC navigation have been fulfilled
 - Communications: Ongoing updates to industry groups through education sessions and relevant communications
 - Engagement: Continued engagement through HDLC and One Window service counter, supported by cross-departmental collaboration between Planning, Building and Customer Experience
 - Climate: None
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References

[MO-06-19](#)

[CM-24-19](#)

[ECDEV-05-23](#)

[ECDEV-04-24](#)

Strategic Alignment

- Designing and delivering complete communities
 - Providing the best services and experiences
 - Protecting and improving the natural environment and taking action on climate change
 - Driving organizational performance
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Appendices:

- A. RTRC Updates DGM-51-25

Draft By-laws for Approval at Council:

- N/A

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and approved by the Commissioner, Head of Corporate Affairs, Chief Financial Officer, and Commissioner of Legal and Legislative Services/City Solicitor.