

SUBJECT: Burlington Economic Development & Tourism – Destination Stewardship Plan

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Transformation Office  
N/A

Report Number: TRN-02-26

Wards Affected: ALL

Date to Committee: March 3, 2026

Date to Council: March 10, 2026

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**Recommendation:**

Receive for information transformation office report TRN-02-26 regarding Burlington Economic Development & Tourism – Destination Stewardship Plan.

**Executive Summary:**

- As part of the merger of Tourism Burlington and the Burlington Economic Development Corporation into a single entity, Burlington Economic Development & Tourism (BEDT). The BEDT Board identified the need to create a Destination Stewardship Plan (DSP), a long-term strategic roadmap that guides sustainable tourism development, ensuring that visitor experiences, community well-being, economic growth, and environmental protection are balanced.
- The DSP integrates tourism with broader community and economic goals with the intent of guiding tourism development in the longer term
- The DSP developed by BEDT has been endorsed and approved by the BEDT Board and expands beyond the role BEDT play, considering the entire tourism and destination marketing ecosystem,
- Receipt of the DSP will permit City staff to consider the goals and objectives identified within, determine how this plan aligns with the City's Broad 25-year Community Strategy and Culture Planning and determine where recommendations to Council may be appropriate in the future.

**Background:**

The merger of BED (BED) and Tourism Burlington was approved by City of Burlington Council in March 2024 and finalized January 1, 2025. Through the creation of the new merged organization, Burlington Economic Development & Tourism (BEDT), the Board of Directors identified the need to create a tourism and destination marketing strategy which

considered the broader economic goals identified by BEDT. The creation of a Destination Stewardship Plan was identified by the BEDT staff and endorsed by the BEDT Board in 2024. City of Burlington Council received further information on the BEDT merger, including the planned development of a Destination Stewardship Plan via the January 31, 2025, Council Information Package ([CAO-02-25](#)).

The Destination Stewardship Plan (DSP) received from BEDT has been approved by the BEDT Board of Directors and is publicly available via the BEDT website. The DSP was developed through engagement efforts and considers broader municipal and economic objectives, considering the existing ecosystem as well as potential changes, investments, and enhancements to the ecosystem in support of achieving the broader objectives.

The DSP is designed to identify opportunities with flexibility in mind, allowing BEDT, the City of Burlington and other partners to adapt to technological advancements, changing visitor preferences and environmental factors.

#### Alignment with the City's Community Strategic Plan

In 2015, the City created its first 25-year strategic plan, Vision 2040. This strategy document created an aspirational roadmap for the community at large considering a collective impact approach to community development. The planned evaluation and update of this strategy is every 10 years. 2025 was year the City began reviewing its progress against Vision 2040 while proceeding with a strategy update.

In 2025, the City of Burlington began its evaluation of Vision 2040 and to update its community level strategic plan through the creation of Horizon 2050. At the same time the City was engaged in the development of its new Culture Plan. It is anticipated that Horizon 2050 and the City's new Culture Plan will both be presented to Council for approval and endorsement in early 2026.

In reviewing the research and public engagement undertaken while developing each plan, there is consistency across the demographic analysis, anticipated resident, and business growth projections, and community feedback received via public engagement. Strategy alignment is an important consideration to ensure planned actions and investments are aligned.

Where synergies exist across strategy documents and the corresponding activities, these activities can have the highest impact across a range of desired outcomes. As such, City staff responsible for the development of Horizon 2050 and the City's Culture Plan engaged with BEDT staff to consider how each plan aligns with the other, and City staff were also engaged during the development of the DSP

## Implications

The BEDT Board of Directors have approved BEDT activities linked to the delivery of the DSP through their annual business and budget planning.

Through receipt of this report, City staff will consider how City led programming can support the achievement of activities identified within the DSP within existing resource allocations. Should any potential investment needs or program adjusted be identified, they may be explored further through future operational and capital budget processes.

As the funder of various organizations governed through municipal bylaw (boards and committees), the City will also play a critical role in advocating for the support of these organizations

## 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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### Author:

Andrew Scott  
Chief Transformation Officer  
[andrew.scott@burlington.ca](mailto:andrew.scott@burlington.ca)

### Appendices:

A. Destination Stewardship Plan - FINAL

### 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.