

BURLINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ANNUAL REPORT
2020

A LETTER FROM OUR MAYOR

This past year has certainly proven how truly resilient and community-minded the City of Burlington is. While 2020 has been the toughest in recent memory, we've also seen our residents and business community rise and forge new partnerships and ways of doing business that has become a legacy of the pandemic and will last well beyond its end.

We've seen how devastating the COVID-19 pandemic has been to our residents and local business. As such, establishing the Burlington Economic Recovery Network proved to be invaluable in not only advocating for our local businesses that led to direct cash in their pockets, but also by providing them a single, easily-identifiable source they could go to for clarity and financial assistance at a time when a large influx of information seemed to change almost daily.

There have been some positive outcomes emerging from the pandemic. Many small businesses were able to digitize and expand their reach to their customers thanks to Team Burlington, BERN and the Digital Main Street program, and that will help them long after we're out of the pandemic.

In addition, 2020 saw Burlington get into the post-secondary realm with the announcement of Brock University moving its campus to our city. City Council supported establishing the Burlington Lands Partnership as a new organizational structure with key priorities to maximize business development opportunities to support economic growth and job creation; implement city building projects and initiatives that enhance the quality of life for our citizens; and leverage opportunities and deliver increased affordable housing in our city.

As we now look towards economic recovery, Burlington Economic Development continues to evolve to help support the City of Burlington's strategic plans and initiatives and be well-positioned to meet the future challenges of the business environment.



Burlington Mayor
Marianne Meed Ward
Board Member, Burlington Economic Development

A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

2020 proved to be a challenging year for everyone. I am proud that Burlington Economic Development was able to remain focused on its mandate while constantly adapting to the new challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, we were able to complete a comprehensive governance review of Burlington Economic Development, which resulted in the organization remaining a separate corporate entity from the City, with a governance-style Board of Directors made up of the Mayor, City Manager and business leaders. This will allow the organization to maintain a close working relationship with the City and Council, while ensuring we remain business focused and nimble to address business needs.

When the pandemic hit, Burlington EcDev didn't hesitate to partner with the other members of Team Burlington to develop a coordinated approach to supporting businesses. One of the first things Team Burlington did was launch the Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN), which I am proud to Chair. BERN brings together key stakeholders, business leaders and elected officials to understand the needs of business during this time, strategize to support them, communicate critical information and resources, and finally, prepare for long-term economic recovery.

Small businesses were especially hard hit during 2020. Burlington EcDev wasted no time in stepping up to support its Team Burlington counterparts by adapting our focus to include retail and hospitality, as well as take on a stronger role in government advocacy. On behalf of BERN, Burlington EcDev also received a \$50,000 grant from Digital Main Street Ontario to launch a Digital Service Squad (DSS) in Burlington, and with the support of the City we were able to distribute more than \$240,000 through the Burlington Safe Restart Grant, the first grant of its kind at the municipal level.

In 2021, Burlington Economic Development will continue to move forward key initiatives that support the attraction of new businesses to Burlington, including the implementation of the Brownfield Community Improvement Plan (CIP), which will help keep Burlington competitive and help address Burlington's climate change goals. The Burlington Lands Partnership will also be activated, resulting in significant opportunity for EcDev and the City of Burlington to jointly assess opportunities to leverage Burlington's real estate strategy and generate economic opportunities to attract investment and shape the future of Burlington.

Finally, we are committed to ensuring we have a diversity of voices across the Board. In 2020, we adopted the Government of Canada's 50-30 Challenge, which challenges Canadian organizations to increase the representation and inclusion of diverse groups within their workplace. At the Board level, we will seek to achieve gender parity (50%), as well as a significant representation of underrepresented groups (30%) by 2023. We encourage other employers to join us in committing to this important goal.

This report celebrates the milestones we achieved in 2020, such as unprecedented partnership, advocacy, and business supports. However, it also reviews the challenges of what has been one of the most difficult years in recent history. Not just economically, but also emotionally and physically for every member of our community. We have been asked to do things we never could have imagined such as wearing masks in public, isolating ourselves from friends and family, and balancing work and family life like never before. It was a year we will not soon forget, and unfortunately, we are not in the clear yet. Economic recovery will not happen overnight, but with vaccinations now rolling out, we are hopeful for the future.

I am proud of what we have accomplished, and I would like to thank the Board of Directors for their dedication and commitment over the last year, as well as recognize the staff at Burlington Economic Development for their hard work, adaptability, and perseverance in doing everything possible to support our local economy.



Randall Smallbone
President & CEO, Astron Connect Inc.
Board Chair, Burlington Economic Development



WELCOME TO BURLINGTON

ONTARIO, CANADA

213km

Of trails including the Niagara Escarpment, a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve and the Bruce Trail, .Canada's oldest and longest marked footpath.

127

Parks including Spencer Smith Park with its Japanese Sakura Trees and 10,000 square foot pond Rotary Centennial Pond.

20min

Every Resident lives within a 20-minute walk to a park or green space.

Burlington has struck a balance of progressive urbanization and preservation of natural features and open spaces that separates it from the rest."

MTE Consulting

Burlington company since 2002



2020 ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

94 NEW
LEASES

584,270 sq. ft.

Total lease space of the 94 new leases

187,626 sq. ft.

Total ICI developments in 2020

7.1% Office
Vacancy Rate

1.6% Industrial
Vacancy Rate

843

NEW JOBS

Calculation based on industry averages for employment densities across similar industries and building permit data for the City of Burlington.

749

NEW
OFFICE
JOBS

42

NEW
INSTITUTIONAL
JOBS

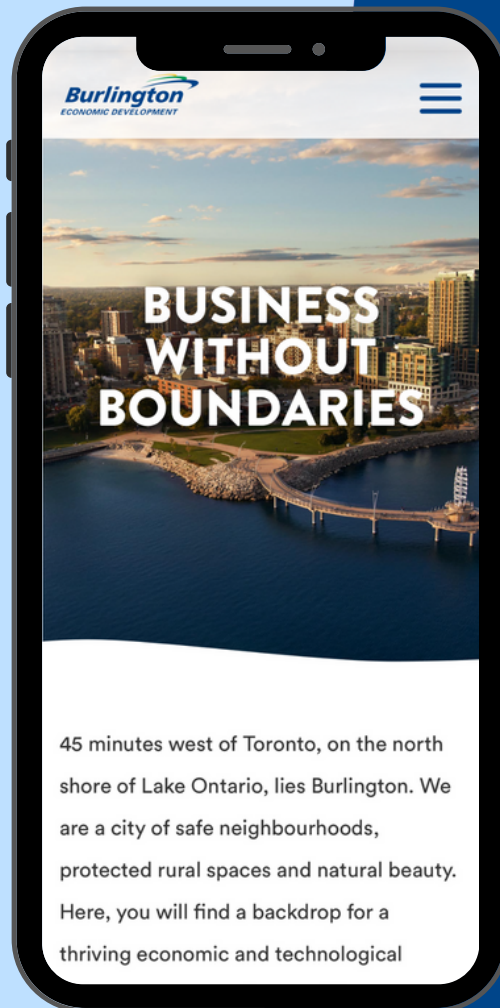
27

NEW
RETAIL
JOBS

25

NEW
INDUSTRIAL
JOBS

A FRESH LOOK



In November 2020, Burlington Economic Development launched the brand new InvestBurlington.ca website. With a focus on storytelling and user experience, the new website features dedicated pages for Burlington's key sectors and easy to navigate tools and resources that provide all of the qualitative and quantitative information businesses and investors need to locate or grow a business in Burlington. Since launching, the website has seen increased traffic of over 50%.

Shortly after the website launch, Burlington Economic Development Corporation, also known as BEDC, announced it would be revising its name to Burlington Economic Development and dropped the use of an acronym. This change correlated with an updated logo that is easier to read. The evolution of the name is a natural next step in building awareness of Burlington Economic Development, and its role in attracting new investment to Burlington, as well as in supporting Burlington's existing business community.

Burlington
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AWARD-WINNING SUPPORT

In 2020, Burlington Economic Development won a Gold Award for TechPlace, a project in the Entrepreneurship category of the 2020 Excellence in Economic Development Awards Program. Since opening in 2017, the space has welcomed over 15,000 users, directly supported over 400 innovative businesses and more than 20 companies have utilized the LaunchPad program to take their business to the next level. For the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020, businesses supported by TechPlace and Haltech generated over \$56M in revenue, generated over 166 jobs, and brought 89 new products or services to the market. This award validates the success of the space and the significant investment from Burlington Economic Development over the last three years.

In 2019, TechPlace partnered with LATAM Startups, a non-profit organization that helps Latin American startups scale in North America. This partnership flourished in 2020 with three new Latin American companies expanding to Burlington through TechPlace's International Soft Landing program. The goal of this partnership is to support the development of a strong Latin American startup community in Burlington and the GTA. In 2020, TechPlace provided guidance and mentorship to businesses looking to immigrate to Canada by speaking at a number of virtual events and meeting several cohorts of international companies to promote Burlington. The TechPlace team also had one-on-one meetings with some of the companies to support them as they expand into the Canadian marketplace.

Like many other businesses, TechPlace was required to close their doors in early 2020 to stop the spread of COVID-19. This closure affected co-location partners Haltech and Angel One Investor Network, who pivoted their in-person event focused program offerings to virtual options. These pivots didn't slow TechPlace's momentum, welcoming three international companies through the LATAM start-ups partnership and one other LaunchPad resident in 2020. The companies that call TechPlace home have adapted their services to support COVID-19 efforts globally. LaunchPad company Expertic PGS Technologies pivoted their business model to develop a medical device. BeltechHub, the Canadian spin-off of Latin American company INVERCA SRL, located at TechPlace, is helping import affordable, cost-effective, quality medical supplies to help fight COVID-19. LaunchPad company IRIS R&D has developed occupancy sensor technology that we are piloting at TechPlace. Finally, Haltech client DiamondV developed AI devices that use biometric heat signatures to provide contactless access control.



TechPlace

YEAR IN REVIEW

As COVID-19 impacted businesses across all sectors during 2020, TechPlace continued to provide support and services to its portfolio companies including IRIS. At the height of the pandemic, IRIS was able to pivot, develop and test AI-enabled systems at TechPlace resulting in the commercialization of groundbreaking IP that enabled the safe reopening of our communities using smart cities technology, as well as protecting our front liners through the use of AI, IoT (internet of things) and Machine Learning. Today, IRIS has grown to 18 FTE's, received investment from a billion-dollar telematics company, has 2 patented technologies and 3 flagship products that are currently deployed in municipalities and public safety agencies in North America."

Emil Sylvester Ramos,
CEO of IRIS R&D

IRIS R&D moved into the LaunchPad program in late 2019 after winning the Lion's Lair pitch competition.



Since opening in 2017, TechPlace has been dedicated to supporting new and growing technology companies through access to space, resources, programming and mentorship, and creating an environment focused on generating opportunities for networking and growth. TechPlace had to make significant pivots to continue supporting the startup community in 2020. In previous years, TechPlace has marked success through the number of visitors and events hosted in the space. In 2020, we needed to reconsider how we measured success. Given the restrictions and pivots made, TechPlace continued to have a positive impact on the entrepreneurship community in Burlington and globally through partnerships with Haltech, LATAM Startups and Taiwan Startup Stadium.

3

Latin American
companies landed at
TechPlace

62

Virtual events
supported

281

Jobs created in
Burlington through
Haltech clients since
TechPlace opened

STRENGTHENING A GROWING COMMUNITY

Co-location Partners



Government & Academic Partners



Companies supported through TechPlace



And 400+ endorsed users

Community Partners



A MESSAGE FROM THE TEAM BURLINGTON EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

"Team Burlington remains a vital lifeline for the BDBA and the small businesses that we represent. The unprecedented sharing of knowledge and coalescing of talents with my organizational partners in Burlington has increased the prospects for recovery of our small business community downtown tenfold. This model worked during the early days of the pandemic to provide vital supports to our businesses and it has morphed into a well-respected group that is leading the advocacy efforts for our collective future"

Brian Dean, Executive Director, Burlington Downtown Business Association (BDBA)

"The Burlington Chamber of Commerce is pleased to be a partner with our Team Burlington counterparts to support businesses through the pandemic and to position our economy for recovery. By leveraging our collective strengths, pooling resources and through on-going collaboration to protect the interests of organizations across Burlington, the Team Burlington partnership model has enabled us to deliver a coordinated response and resources for Burlington businesses - proving that we truly are Stronger Together."

Carla Y. Nell, President and CEO, Burlington Chamber of Commerce

"Aldershot Village BIA is very fortunate to be a part of Team Burlington. The combination of knowledge and resources helps the Aldershot Village BIA get important messages out to our Aldershot businesses in a timely manner. It has helped position us to increase the leadership role in Aldershot as well as being an effective tool to make our voices heard at a municipal level."

Judy Worsley, Executive Director, Aldershot Village BIA

"The collaborative approach, combined leadership skills, and unified spirit that Team Burlington emanates are a driving force for business in Burlington. Tourism Burlington is proud to be part of this dynamic team which lends support in areas that might be overlooked by tourism. This has truly increased the support we are able to provide for our partners, and will lead to recovery for the hardest hit sectors."

Kristene Smith, Executive Director, Tourism Burlington

COVID-19 RESPONSE

2020 was a difficult time for everyone in the Burlington community. From day one, Burlington EcDev was committed to supporting businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic. Joining forces with Burlington's other business support organizations, including the Burlington Chamber of Commerce, Burlington Downtown Business Association, Aldershot Village BIA, and Tourism Burlington we worked closely to offer support and help the business community navigate the economic impacts of COVID-19 as Team Burlington.

To help support businesses in navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, Burlington EcDev launched a number of supports over the course of 2020. These supports included the COVID business support phone line, through which we were able to provide real-time support and information to more than 60 businesses. We dramatically increased our communications output through our e-newsletter (increase of 208%), social media platforms (increased engagement of 65%), business guides and FAQs, and paid advertising to ensure critical information was available and easy-to-understand. Webinars and virtual forums that we hosted in partnership with Team Burlington invited businesses to speak face-to-face with elected officials, subject matter experts, and private sector partners to stay informed and gain a stronger understanding of the impacts of the pandemic on business and how to adapt to the rapidly changing situation.

"The dynamic, proactive and collaborative approach Team Burlington took to the COVID-19 pandemic helped Burlington put their best foot forward when supporting businesses. Our individual organizations strive to support businesses in unique ways, and 2020 encouraged Team Burlington to collectively accomplish more than what we would individually. I am so proud of the work we have done and look forward to continuing the momentum in 2021."

Anita Cassidy, Executive Director, Burlington Economic Development

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Burlington Economic Recovery Network

The Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN) brought together key stakeholders and business leaders from across Burlington to develop a recovery strategy that will prepare Burlington for economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

BERN worked closely with Team Burlington on a number of advocacy pieces that support the needs of our business community.

GTA Economic Alliance

Burlington Economic Development was proud to lead the formation of the GTA Economic Alliance. Twenty municipal and regional governments, as well as key economic development partners from across the GTA and Niagara came together to form the GTA Economic Development Alliance. The formation of the Alliance was in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the urgent need to collaborate, share knowledge and ideas, and pool resources to support the regional economy in its recovery.

Throughout this initiative Burlington EcDev was able to effectively advocate for changes to business financial relief, share best practices, and adapt policy positions at both the federal and provincial levels. Burlington EcDev is continuing to take a leadership role for the foreseeable future as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the economy.

“The collaborative work Burlington EcDev did in 2020 supported employers and employees across our community. Working across all levels of government to ensure the needs of the business community remain a critical priority, Burlington EcDev will continue to advocate for businesses under the BERN mandate, as well as deliver much needed supports in 2021. I am proud of the work we have accomplished to-date and the progress we will continue to make in the upcoming year toward economic recovery.”

Randall Smallbone, Chair of the Burlington Economic Recovery Network and Chair of the Burlington Economic Development Board of Directors

ADVOCATING FOR BUSINESSES

In 2020 Burlington Economic Development took a strong role in advocating on behalf of the business community. Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, the EcDev team saw gaps in communication between all levels of government and the business community. Team Burlington became a voice at the table for the Burlington business community, advocating strongly for the rental relief program, wage subsidy and emergency response benefit. In March 2020 Burlington EcDev joined almost daily calls with Team Burlington and levels of government to strategize supports for businesses, releasing weekly communication to the business community on clarification regarding programs, restrictions and recovery efforts.

These actions have set Team Burlington up for success in 2021 with the team driving advocacy work across the City including the December 2020 call for changes to business restrictions to increase fairness for smaller businesses. Changes announced in early 2021 by the Province indicate this work was successful.

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

“We learned about the program through Burlington’s website. The application process was simple and straightforward, and our acceptance into the grant program was quick. We were closed when we received the cheque, but it allowed us to go ahead with some PPE purchases when there wasn’t a lot of money to go around. The big thing for us was that it was quick and came when other supports weren’t readily available. Very much appreciated at the time.”

Craig Green
Owner,
The Follicle Spa

\$240,481

Distributed across two rounds of the Burlington Safe Restart Business Relief Grant.

153

Burlington small businesses were directly supported through the program.

Burlington Safe Restart COVID-19 Business Relief Grant

Team Burlington, in partnership with the City of Burlington, launched the Burlington Safe Restart Grant to help the city’s for-profit businesses open safely while following key public health guidelines. This grant was the first of its kind at a municipal level.

Businesses that were independently owned and customer-facing that experienced closure or employee layoffs, or significant revenue decline due to COVID-19 were eligible for this program. Businesses could receive up to \$2,500 that could be used towards the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or for the renovation of a business space in order to meet reopening guidelines.

For this program, Team Burlington and the City of Burlington partnered with POST Promise, a private sector-led initiative that provides essential information on how to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Grant recipients were required to take the POST Promise, a symbol of a business’s commitment to protecting their customers’ and employees’ health and safety during COVID-19.

In the two rounds of the Safe Restart Business Relief Grant, a total of \$240,481 was distributed across 153 Burlington businesses.

DIGITAL SERVICE SQUAD

Last summer, the Federal and Provincial governments invested nearly \$50-million into Digital Main Street (DMS) Ontario. This program helped small businesses across Ontario pivot their operations to include online business models, regain lost revenue and become more resilient and competitive as the economy recovers from the pandemic. On behalf of the Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN), Burlington Economic Development (EdDev) received a \$50,000 grant from Digital Main Street Ontario for a Digital Service Squad (DSS) to support small businesses in Burlington. The grant allowed EcDev to hire two full-time DSS members to help small businesses.

Digital Service Squads are fundamental to Digital Main Street's design and success, with trained specialists who meet with small businesses, at no cost, to help them improve their online presence. The squads assist with a number of activities, including developing a Google My Business profile, enhancing their social media presence and providing support for basic website and e-commerce set-up. Squads also assisted qualified small businesses through an application process for a \$2,500 Digital Transformation Grant, which included access to an online assessment, online training modules and the development of a Digital Transformation Plan (DTP).

228 Burlington Businesses
Supported through DSS

"I saw the Digital Main Street program as a great opportunity to help build my digital presence in order to increase sales and meet the changing demands of customers due to COVID-19. The Agora Marketplace is a small boutique that sells handmade one-of-a-kind art pieces - everything from jewelry to glass art and paintings. I worked with the ShopHERE program to launch an online website and got support from the Burlington DSS to enhance my online presence. The team was extremely knowledgeable and highly skilled, and I am grateful for the opportunity to use these programs. They helped me tremendously."

Ali Ucar, Owner, Agora Marketplace



This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario

MAKING MOVES



New 33,696 sq. ft. space and 35 new jobs

Motion is a global distributor of industrial parts and services, with more than 170,000 customers and annual sales of \$5.5 billion. The company chose Burlington to better service the area's large and diverse customer base, enabling same-day delivery of many products and services. Motion also identified Burlington as a large resource for talent, essential for business growth. The 33,696 sq. ft. expansion added 35 jobs to the community in 2020.



Brock University looks to relocate its satellite campus to Burlington

The University has announced it will relocate its current Hamilton campus to a more accessible location in Burlington to better serve students and the broader community. Brock and the City have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to work together to find a site and to realize the intention for the relocated campus. The EcDev team will continue to work with Brock University and the City of Burlington to find a suitable location in 2021.



20,000 sq. ft. expansion

Long-time Burlington design and manufacturing company Aslan Technologies has expanded with an additional location in Burlington. Their new location added an additional 6 jobs and 20,000 sq. ft. of office and manufacturing space in Burlington. The increased production space will allow Aslan to engage in offering more design, engineering, fabrication and private labeling of customized, packaged and modular solutions in energy, water, wastewater, and biosolids management, treatment and site services.

They plan to continue pursuing strategic partnerships with cleantech and innovative technology developers in mining, auto, battery, food and many other sectors.



MNP's Burlington office continues to grow with 20,000+ sq. ft. expansion, new partners and team members

Leading accounting, consulting and tax firm, MNP has doubled the size of its Burlington office (1122 International Boulevard), adding 20,300 square feet of new office space – room for 120 team members. In addition (as part of its Canada-wide acquisition of more than 25 offices, 70 leaders and 900 people from Deloitte), partners Anita Scholman, David Tonin, Francis Mackan and their teams joined MNP's Burlington office at the start of March 2021. The firm also merged with Burlington-based PJ Partners at the end of 2020; Frank Jasek and Jim Prapavassis joined MNP as partners.

CUTTING RED TAPE AND ROLLING OUT THE RED CARPET

In January 2019, Mayor Marianne Meed Ward announced a new initiative in partnership with Ward 1 Councillor Kelvin Galbraith: the Red Tape Red Carpet Task Force (RTRC). The goal of the initiative was to identify and eliminate barriers to growth and promote new business attraction in Burlington. Later in 2019 City Council approved the 22 recommendations that came from the various stakeholder engagement sessions led by the RTRC initiative. These recommendations aim to better serve the Burlington business community. Providing a comprehensive roadmap for the issues our business community and the City of Burlington have prioritized to ensure business development and customer experience is a core focus.

COVID-19 accelerated the need for a digital-focused customer centric approach to the services the City of Burlington delivers to the business community. With support from Team Burlington, the City reprioritized some items in 2020 to ensure we were cutting red tape and rolling out the red carpet in a way that recognized the urgent shift to digital platforms. These items included:



- The City launched a new online development submissions service for all types of development applications.
- The City updated their regulatory process and eliminated cost barriers associated with temporary patios and temporary outdoor retail spaces to help keep businesses open while helping stop the spread of COVID-19. This includes by-laws that support designated curbside pickup spots, allowing more inclusive, flexible patios and the use of municipal space downtown for private businesses struggling during COVID-19.

822

Development applications received in digital format during 2020. These applications included: Official Plan Amendments, Committee of Adjustment, Site Plans, and Zoning Certificates

54

Approved temporary patio applications

2020 also saw the kickstart of the redesign of the City of Burlington's integrated customer service experience. This initiative is part of an ongoing service redesign and the City of Burlington's new Service Brilliance Strategy, one of the recommendations from the RTRC Taskforce. Burlington EcDev and the City helped propel the initiative forward by:



- In 2020 the City of Burlington hired a Customer Experience Manager – Business Development who is leading business concierge services at the City.
- Reimagining what the customer experience looks like since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Significant investments were made into a virtual meeting platform that allows the public to arrange time to meet with staff from various service areas across the City. This will reduce wait times and increase flexibility while adhering to the highest level of health and safety.
- Burlington EcDev developed guides and resources in conjunction with key public health measures including a Business Guide to Masks in the Workplace which included an FAQ, tools and more on the Mask By-law that came into effect in summer 2020.
- Burlington EcDev also launched the COVID-19 Business Support Phone Line in March 2020 to give the business community a direct line for support.

5,021

Web visits to the Mask By-law Guide for Businesses

100+

COVID-19 related requests for assistance

64

Calls to the COVID-19 Support Phone Line

Other RTRC Recommendations that made progress in 2020 include:



- A review of the efficiency, effectiveness and optimal structure of Burlington EcDev and TechPlace. In 2020 the EcDev governance review was completed with recommendations on changes to the governance model and TechPlace strategy, which are to be implemented in 2021.

"COVID-19 forced the City of Burlington to innovate and modernize several business processes very quickly. I am incredibly proud of my colleagues who were able to transition our development planning application processes to be entirely digital. We consistently hear that going digital has made the experience better for our customers. The changes made in 2020 have laid the foundation for more process improvements in the coming years."

Jamie Tellier, Manager of Planning Implementation, City of Burlington

WORKING WITH US

In 2020 Burlington
EcDev fulfilled:

331

REQUESTS
FOR SUPPORT

ACROSS

150+

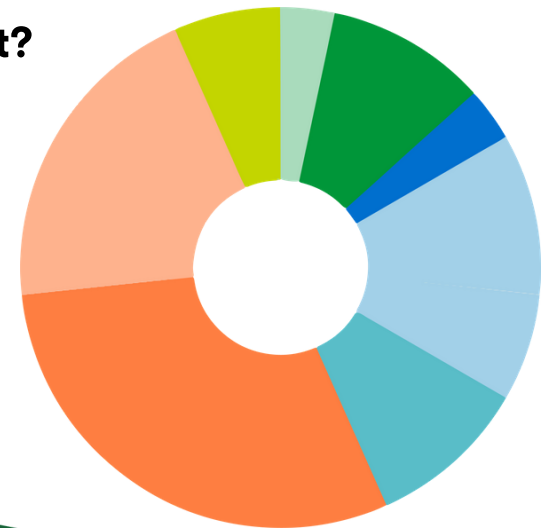
COMPANIES

100%

Of businesses we surveyed said Burlington EcDev was able to help them achieve their desired outcome.

What sectors did we support?

3%	Advanced Manufacturing
10%	Biomedical & Life Sciences
3%	Clean Technologies
10%	Food & Beverage
7%	Government
10%	Information & Communications Technology (ICT)
30%	Professional and Technical Services
20%	Retail, recreation, hospitality etc
7%	Other



Burlington EcDev was instrumental in sharing with us evolving guidance during the lockdowns and helped with much-needed clarification on the definition of essential workplaces and available funding/support during COVID-19."

Established Burlington Technology Company

SHIFTING FOCUS

Alongside Team Burlington partners and the City of Burlington, Burlington EcDev will continue to shift focus to support small and main street businesses. Our Board of Directors supports the integration of this into our long-term economic strategy. Key actions in 2021 will include:

- Continue digitization support for Burlington businesses. This includes supporting the Digital Main Street Program well into 2021 and looking for new opportunities to support the digitization of sales and marketing for Burlington's traditional businesses in the manufacturing sector.
- Pivoting our supports for the start-up and scale-up sector through TechPlace. We will adapt programming and advocacy work based on feedback from the entrepreneurial community.
- Supporting Burlington's existing businesses to innovate and rethink their business models and customer needs to address the impacts of COVID-19.
- Reviewing how Burlington EcDev manages and reports performance achieving economic goals and ensuring they have the right metrics in place to measure long-term success and properly communicate the value of economic development to stakeholders including the broader Burlington community.

Key Projects in 2021

- Burlington EcDev will continue to work with Brock University and the City of Burlington to support the establishment of Brock's new campus location. Brock's relocation has been an ongoing project for Burlington EcDev and in 2021 we will work to develop a long-term engagement strategy that leverages Brock's resources and find them a suitable location in the City.
- Encourage the development of employment lands through Community Improvement Plans (CIPs). By designating Community Improvement Areas Burlington, can activate a number of policies that will support the private sector in making lands shovel ready for businesses. The Brownfield CIP project is currently underway as a policy document and we hope to roll out the incentive programs in early 2022, pending Council endorsement. This CIP will have the dual goal of supporting employment lands to be shovel ready while addressing environmental impacts and supporting the City of Burlington's Climate Action Plan.
- We will be working jointly with the City of Burlington to create a framework and long-term sequencing plan for future CIPs to support employment land development.

MOVING FORWARD

“Burlington EcDev will continue to put business needs first in our advocacy work, service offerings, and strategic goals.”

Anita Cassidy, Executive Director,
Burlington Economic Development

The changes that 2020 have brought to the economy and Burlington community as a whole have highlighted the importance of responsive economic development and partnerships. During 2020 Burlington EcDev focused on nurturing partnerships, increasing engagement to understand the needs of the business community and taking a data-based strategic approach to understanding future impacts and opportunities.

In 2021 Burlington EcDev will stay committed to being flexible to the needs of the business community while maintaining strong partnerships with Team Burlington and the City of Burlington. We will continue working in tandem with all levels of government to advocate for business needs and develop new programming where necessary. Supporting economic recovery, business survival and sustainability will continue to be our key focus.

Burlington EcDev saw a fundamental shift in resource allocations due to COVID-19 in 2020, with around 30% of resources dedicated to COVID-19 business response and economic recovery support. This percentage may jump to 70% in 2021. Guided by the Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN), we will pivot core resources and add additional programming where needed to ensure business needs in our community are being addressed.

2020 marked the 5-year milestone of Burlington EcDev's 2015-2020 Economic Vision and 5 years into the 2015-2040 City of Burlington Strategic Plan, both key documents in designing the direction of economic recovery in Burlington. With the support of Burlington City Council, City staff, the business community, Team Burlington, and the Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN), Burlington EcDev will continue to look at the long-term implications of COVID-19 and adapt our strategic plan priorities and short-term tactics to be aligned with recovery efforts.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We asked our Board of Directors to answer the following question: This has been an unprecedented year for our economy. Over the last year, what initiatives or supports undertaken by Burlington Economic Development or Team Burlington do you think have had the most positive impact on businesses?

The establishment of BERN to provide resources and undertake advocacy for businesses to City, Regional, Provincial and Federal governments was invaluable – and resulted in hard cash in the pockets of our local businesses. In addition, the Team Burlington initiative to provide a one-stop shop online for access to grants and programming made it faster and easier for businesses to find the information and support programs they needed.

MAYOR MARIANNE MEED WARD
CITY OF BURLINGTON, MAYOR

Our ability to engage and pull together all sectors and size of business has made a profound difference in delivering actionable solutions to the Burlington business community in the face of the pandemic.

RON LAIDMAN
VICE PRESIDENT INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES,
OAKVILLE ENTERPRISES CORPORATION
VICE CHAIR

The strengthening of Team Burlington as a result of a closer working relationship with Burlington Economic Development, the Burlington Chamber and the other team members has yielded huge support for our Burlington businesses. The community appreciates the strong support given to businesses in regard to the Digital Main Street program and other support for PPE. Team Burlington's information portal has been the go to place for small businesses trying to maneuver all of the government programs and subsidies.

RANDALL SMALLBONE
PRESIDENT & CEO, ASTRON CONNECT INC.
BOARD CHAIR

2020 was a year nobody could have possibility envisioned in terms of the impact on Burlington's economy and in particular small businesses. I am so impressed and proud as a board member of the leadership and awesome work by Anita and the entire Burlington EcDev team in leaving no stone unturned to assist local businesses through the COVID 19 pandemic. In particular, the joint and dynamic work with Team Burlington was an absolute best practice...so well done!

TIM COMMISSO
CITY OF BURLINGTON, CITY MANAGER

No business could have predicted the economic impact of COVID-19 when they created their 2020 business plans. This includes Burlington Economic Development. When the pandemic hit in early 2020, our staff had to delay the start of several planned initiatives and assume a leadership role to support existing businesses in Burlington suffering from COVID-19. The Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN) initiative included the administration of \$250,000 of financial support to businesses hardest hit by COVID-19. Working together with our Team Burlington partners, we created and implemented a digital service to distribute funding support to keep these businesses viable.

GORDON KACK

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, COLLIERS
PROJECT LEADERS
FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR

The bringing together of the various partners in our city to create BERN which gave a common voice and focus on managing the best outcomes to help the community with communications, gathering the needs, providing concise messaging of funding available, listening to the businesses to help with economic impacts of the pandemic.

ELAINE GERRIE

CO-PRESIDENT & CEO, GERRIE ELECTRIC
WHOLESALE LIMITED

There are two that come to mind: One is the movement toward a Municipal Development Corporation, the other is the assistance given to small businesses, especially getting them in the IT world. We should be delighted to be associated with both.

DR. DAVE CONRATH

PRESIDENT, CONRATH COMMUNICATIONS
LTD.

I have been so impressed with how Burlington EcDev was able to pivot and support meaningful initiatives like BERN, Safe Restart and the Digital Service Squad. This direct-to-business support is so critical to supporting Burlington's economy.

HILLARY DAWSON

CHIEF BRAND OFFICER, FP CANADA
HR & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR

I believe initiatives that have been focused on supporting the transition for businesses to a digital platform, such as Digital Main Street program. With the many restrictions put in place as a result of the pandemic, companies that have established an online presence have been able to minimize impacts as much as possible. Burlington EcDev's role in clarifying what programs and funding to support this was critical.

ROBERT BEVINGTON

SENIOR DIRECTOR ENGINEERING &
OPERATIONS, COGECO CONNEXION

The Burlington Economic Recovery Network led by Team Burlington provided a unified strategy to support local businesses this year to address the impact of COVID-19. A key initiative was the Digital Service Squad that helped small businesses in the community increase their online presence to better serve the needs of customers. The Squad supported building websites, enabling social media and e-commerce capabilities along with assisting with the application process for a digital transformation grant. This important initiative ensured Burlington small businesses were better positioned for growth.

SEAN BALLARD

DIRECTOR, RETAIL CLIENT ENGAGEMENT
STRATEGY, SUN LIFE CANADA

2020 IN PHOTOS

One of our favourite things to do is get out in the community, meet our businesses and celebrate the work they're doing. The pandemic made that difficult. However, we adapted to our "new normal" and made the best of the situation throughout the year.



Elected officials and Team Burlington Executive Directors gather for the Safe Restart Announcement.

Photo above from left to right: Carla Y. Nell, President and CEO, Burlington Chamber of Commerce, Aidan Tracey, Founder and Chair of the Board of Directors, POST Promise, Jane McKenna, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development and Member of Provincial Parliament for Burlington at the Safe Restart Announcement, the Honourable Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria, Ontario's Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction, Burlington Mayor Marianne Meed Ward, Lisa Kearns, Ward 1 City Councillor, Brian Dean, Executive Director, Burlington Downtown Business Association and Anita Cassidy, Executive Director, Burlington Economic Development.



Members of Team Burlington and Burlington elected officials visiting EmpowerPharm facility.

Photo from left to right: Anita Cassidy, Executive Director, Burlington Economic Development, Paul Sharman, Burlington Ward 6 City Councillor, Megg Markettos, Director of Business Development and Member Services, Burlington Chamber of Commerce, and Burlington Mayor Marianne Meed Ward.



Team Burlington Support Webinar. Since March 2020, Team Burlington hosted multiple webinars to support and educate the Burlington business community.



PHOTO TAKEN PRE COVID-19

Mark Steffler, Manager of Innovation and Partnerships at Burlington Economic Development (pictured second from right) traveled to Taiwan in early 2020 to speak at the Top 7 Communities of 2020 Announcement hosted by the Intelligent Community Forum. Steffler is joined by three members of the Intelligent Community Forum in the photo above. Following this delegation, TechPlace partnered with Taiwan Startup Stadium 台灣新創競技場 to help Taiwanese and global businesses de-risk their international expansion process through the Soft-Landing Program and help Taiwanese and global businesses succeed in the Canadian market.



Ferene Navarra (left) and Abrar Chowdhry (right) Burlington's two Digital Service Squad members posing for the front page of the Burlington Post.



PHOTO TAKEN PRE COVID-19

Anita Cassidy, Executive Director, Burlington Economic Development speaking to a sold out audience at the third annual #HerHalton International Women's Day Breakfast on March 5th 2020.



Receiving a Gold Award for TechPlace in the Entrepreneurship category of the 2020 Excellence in Economic Development Awards Program.

Get in touch

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**Burlington Economic
Development**