

2021

ANNUAL REPORT



Burlington
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT


A LETTER FROM OUR MAYOR

Businesses in Burlington showed remarkable resilience and flexibility as we continued to battle the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. They were quick and effective in how they adapted and responded in the face of a constantly shifting landscape and work environment - while continuing to see immense support from the community they serve.

The City, in partnership with the Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN), never rested in finding ways to support our business community. We left no stone unturned to provide support, including advocacy with upper levels of government and partner stakeholders; business grants; the distribution of free rapid COVID-19 tests, and digital support initiatives like the Digital Service Squad (DSS). The squad offered technical support to small business owners, helping them digitally transform and serve their customers effectively online. The City also offered grants of \$245,000, administered through BERN, to help businesses install protective measures during COVID - the only Halton municipality to do so.

City business continued throughout the pandemic, including establishing the Burlington Lands Partnership (BLP) to focus on economic development, community amenities, and affordable/attainable-housing opportunities. Recently, the BLP provided an assessment of the opportunity for the City to purchase the former Robert Bateman High School site. That assessment supported the value to the community to proceed. The BLP also created a tool to help us assess any land purchase opportunity that comes in future, to ensure it checks one of our boxes of jobs, housing or community amenities.

I often say one of the silver linings of the past two years has been seeing how the people in our local community, businesses and organizations have come together, to collaborate and support each other. These relationships are continuing well past the pandemic and help us serve our community better.



Burlington Mayor
Marianne Meed Ward
Board Member, Burlington Economic Development

A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

2021 marked the second year of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Throughout every wave and lockdown, our commitment to supporting the Burlington business community was steadfast. We leaned into partnerships for stronger advocacy, administered key government programs that put non-repayable contributions in the pockets of small businesses, and we delivered on a major strategic objective that will see Brock University open its doors in Burlington.

As the COVID-19 pandemic persisted and the effects of lockdowns continued to take a toll on businesses, Burlington Economic Development (Burlington EcDev) played a leadership role in strengthening the Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN). This included advocating to higher levels of government for changes to restrictions that would allow more businesses to stay open. Through the Digital Mainstreet program we provided critical support to 266 businesses in 2021 alone.

We also supported the City of Burlington in activating the Burlington Lands Partnership (BLP) and through it we achieved the key goal of attracting a post-secondary institution. The announcement of Brock University's intention to relocate some of its academic programming to the Robert Bateman High School site was the culmination of years of relationship building and business case development by our team. This milestone demonstrates the active role we are playing in generating impactful economic opportunities and ensuring a prosperous future for Burlington.

Looking ahead, we will continue to work with Team Burlington to respond to concerns around the supply chain crisis, talent and supporting Main Street business. We will also continue to work with City Hall to revamp our customer service strategy. We are also celebrating 5 years of operations at TechPlace and are launching innovative programs like Acceleration+ that support innovation and entrepreneurship across the region.

I would like to thank the Board of Directors for their commitment, as well as our Executive Director and members of staff for a year defined by resilience, collaboration, and impact.



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

BY THE NUMBERS

65

NEW
EXPANSIONS
AND
INVESTMENTS

\$168,317,511

Total construction value of industrial, commercial and institutional building permits

279

Number of industrial, commercial and institutional building permits approved in 2021

18 %
Increase from 2020

Number of requests for assistance received by Burlington EcDev in 2021

348

849

**JOBS ADDED TO
THE BURLINGTON
COMMUNITY**

Industrial 70%
Office 22%
Institutional 6%
Retail 2%

CENSUS UPDATE

In 2020 Statistics Canada conducted its first census since 2016. Key findings included:

186,948

Burlington's population in 2021. A 2% growth from 2016. Burlington now accounts for 31% of Halton Region's total population.

8.9%

Growth of total median household income from 2015 (\$101,000) to 2020 (\$110,000).

8%

Growth in working age population since 2006.



2021

Burlington Economic Recovery Network

COVID-19 continued into 2021, marking the second year of the global pandemic. The year kicked off in another provincial lock-down and Burlington EcDev forged ahead on key business supports. As a key member of the Burlington Economic Recovery Network, Burlington EcDev successfully advocated for:

- Adjustments to restrictions for retail and hospitality businesses that would ultimately allow them to stay open under some conditions.
- Renewed funding for the Digital Main Street (DMS) Future Proof program.

"Burlington Economic Development was very helpful to us navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the early days. Their teams assisted us in understanding and navigating through changing circumstances and new regulations as they got put into place. We worked collaboratively to make our facility and team safe. As an essential workplace it was important that we stayed operational during lockdowns and other operational challenges. We are appreciative of Burlington EcDev's continued support."

Ron Harper, President and CEO at JFE Shoji Power Canada Inc.

Digital Main Street Program

266

BUSINESSES SERVED
THROUGH THE
DIGITAL MAIN STREET
PROGRAM

The Digital Main Street (DMS) program helped small main street businesses improve their online presence. Through squads of trained specialists, DMS assisted businesses 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.

"We believe in strong partnerships with local stakeholders and are always searching for opportunities to improve. The Digital Service Squad helped us with social media support and access to additional resources. Their team was great to work with and we appreciated the extra support."

Vincent Sowa, Co-Founder at Backed By Bees

COVID-19 SUPPORTS

Continuing the momentum from 2020, Burlington EcDev continued their partnership with Burlington's other business support organizations, including the Burlington Chamber of Commerce, Burlington Downtown Business Association, Aldershot Village BIA, and Tourism Burlington to offer support and help the business community navigate the economic impacts of COVID-19.

In partnership with Team Burlington, Burlington EcDev was able to distribute free COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Screening Kits to small and medium-sized businesses in Burlington as part of Ontario's COVID-19 Rapid Screening Initiative.



117,363 Rapid COVID-19 test kits distributed to **877** Unique businesses

NEW & NOTABLE

VOILÀ BY SOBEYS

Voilà is a cutting-edge online grocery home delivery service owned by Sobeys, the second largest supermarket chain in Canada.

In 2021 their team responded to increased growth brought on by COVID-19 and expanded to Burlington adding 120 new jobs at the facility.

120

NEW JOBS

ASTOUND GROUP

60,000

SQUARE FOOT
EXPANSION

ASTOUND Group is a global brand experience agency that specializes in the design and execution of memorable experiences for companies to share with their customers.

The new Burlington facility offers all fabrication services under one roof and will be able to work efficiently with any material.

The technology-driven 60,000 sq. ft. space emphasizes the use of industry-leading software to create 3D models that are constructed with the highest level of accuracy and precision.

The expansion has added **60** NEW JOBS

Photos left show new Burlington facility. Photos from CNW Group/ASTOUND Group



OUTCAST FOODS

Outcast Foods is an upcycling technology company that is actively reducing food waste.

The East Coast based company saw online sales increase by 3,872% over 2020. To meet the demands they looked to expand and found Burlington.

40,000

SQUARE FOOT
EXPANSION

Brock University finds a home in Burlington

Brock University and the City of Burlington signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in fall 2020. This MOU was dedicating to having the organizations work together to find a site and realize the intention for the relocated satellite campus. A year later, the City of Burlington expressed interest in purchasing the former Robert Bateman High School site and Brock was identified as one potential user of the facility.

This acquisition would push forward key objectives laid out in the City of Burlington's 25-year strategic plan. Key pillars of this plan include making Burlington a city that grows by attracting talent, good jobs, and economic opportunity to the community. To support this, Burlington EcDev has developed and championed the city's post-secondary strategy. The formal announcement of Brock's new Burlington location is the culmination of years of work, relationship building and business case development done by EcDev and represents a significant milestone for Burlington.

In addition to exploring a relationship with Brock, the City of Burlington also plans to partner with other institutions, ensuring there is an adaptive reuse strategy for the site. This includes the Burlington Library relocating its Appleby Line branch to this location, and TechPlace to develop a hub for learning and education.

"Brock University is excited to relocate our satellite campus to the City of Burlington, a growing urban and business centre. This new campus will allow the University to serve our students and the wider community in a meaningful and lasting way. We look forward to supporting the economic, social, and cultural vitality of Burlington, while providing students in the area an opportunity to access quality education offerings in their local community."

Lynn Wells
Interim President and Vice-Chancellor
Provost and Vice-President, Academic

FUNDICA PARTNERSHIP

9

Businesses leveraged AI technology to the get access to more funding opportunities

Launched in June 2021, Burlington Economic Development partnered with Fundica to help businesses better access government and private sector funding. Fundica is an AI-powered funding tool that connects businesses with available grants, tax credits, loans and equity; while increasing visibility for public and private funders.



CONNECT WITH OUR TEAM

InvestBurlington.ca
invest@burlington.ca



Burlington Economic
Development



@BurlingtonEcDev

