



Regular Council
Addendum Items

Date: November 18, 2025
Time: 9:30 am
Location: Council Chambers, City Hall, second floor

Pages

11. Delegations

11.1 *Ron Laidman representing Burlington Economic Development and Tourism will speak regarding Findings from third party review of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (CAO-06-25)*

11.2 *Anita Cassidy representing Burlington Economic Development and Tourism will speak regarding Findings from third party review of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (CAO-06-25)*

20. Motion to Receive and File Information Items

20.3 *Delegation material from Ron Laidman representing Burlington Economic Development and Tourism regarding Findings from third party review of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (CAO-06-25)* 1 - 25

20.4 *Delegation material from Anita Cassidy representing Burlington Economic Development and Tourism regarding Findings from third party review of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (CAO-06-25)* 26 - 45

Delegation Letter – November 18, 2025

Re: CAO-06-25 – Third-Party Review of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (BEDT)

Delegation from:

Ron Laidman, Chair, Board of Directors
Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (BEDT)

Mayor Meed Ward and Members of Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to delegate today as Council considers next steps on CAO-06-25, the Third-Party Review of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism. We appreciate the thoughtful questions and attention Council has given to this file over the past several weeks.

Although the public debate has been in focus only recently, it is important to acknowledge that the review itself has already spanned this past year. Burlington Economic Development and Tourism staff, Board members, stakeholders and partners have spent considerable time responding to interviews, document requests, follow-up questions and analysis since last fall. The cumulative impact of the review, formal and informal, has been underway for a significant period, well before the November Committee meetings.

At Committee of the Whole on November 10, Council did not vote to integrate Burlington Economic Development and Tourism. Instead, Council directed the Chief Administrative Officer to return at a future Council meeting in April 2026 with further analysis on two fully developed recommendation options:

1. Integration of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism within the City, with complete costing, rationale, and implementation analysis;
2. A renewed service agreement, maintaining Burlington Economic Development and Tourism as an external agency with updated accountability and performance frameworks.

We understand this motion came as a request for more complete information before any structural decision is made and we are aligned with Council having a more complete understanding. Our concerns relate to the period between now and April, during which uncertainty will continue to affect operations, governance, staff capacity, and stakeholder confidence.

Our intent today is to confirm the Board's previously communicated support for Recommendation 2 above as the preferred direction and

- Clarify comments raised in Committee about funding for BEDT;
- Document the operational, staffing, governance, and stakeholder impacts already experienced through the extended review;
- Clarify that the core gaps relate to alignment mechanisms, not the structure of the organization;
- Bring to council's attention the 2024 Deloitte DMO/EDO Best Practice Scan work already completed to inform decision making; and
- Offer refinements to Council's direction to support a fair, efficient, and evidence-based process between now and April.

These remarks are supported by the Deloitte Best Practice Scan included as Appendix A.

1. Economic Development Budget Comparables and Effectiveness

At the Nov 10th Committee of the Whole, commentary occurred around Economic Development (EcDev) funding in comparable municipalities. We recognize these conversations took place without detailed data, and mostly excluded recognition of BEDT's combined Tourism, TechPlace and EcDev operations. In the interest of comparison, we would highlight the following data for Council's consideration.

Base funding from the City of Burlington to deliver Tourism AND Economic Development Services in the 2025 budget totals approximately \$1.9 million.

City of Burlington funding for only EcDev activities is ~\$1.5M includes BRE, investment attraction, main street business, data, policy analysis/advocacy and TechPlace. TechPlace, while a cost, will also return approx. \$200K of rent as flow back to the City in 2026 with the new rental agreement for Bateman to offset this Techplace funding from the City.

To support Council’s understanding of Burlington’s service capacity relative to neighbouring municipalities, a high-level comparison was completed using the municipal economic development service budgets published in 2025–2026 budget documents. For comparability, Burlington’s figure reflects only municipal funding for economic development services, excluding TechPlace and Tourism, as comparator municipalities do not operate innovation centres or Tourism agencies. This also excludes the in-kind expertise provided by the BEDT board and other stakeholders involved at our committees.

Key Findings

- Burlington invests **\$0.95 million** in municipal funding for economic development (2025), excluding TechPlace funding or rent flow back.
- [Oakville](#) invests **\$2.6 million**, nearly three times Burlington’s core economic development budget.
- [Milton](#) invests **\$1.2 million**, which is higher than Burlington despite a smaller population and narrower economic development mandate.
- [Hamilton](#) invests **\$6.1 million**, reflecting its scale but underscoring Burlington’s comparatively low base-service funding.

Given cost and efficiency are top of mind for Council, its difficult to point to how any future analysis will demonstrate the City can achieve better outcomes for its Economic Development investment when comparing to other municipalities in the broader region.

2. Operational Impacts of the Extended Review Period

Although Council’s discussion of CAO-06-25 has occurred over only a few weeks, the broader review process began much earlier. Interviews and data collection have been underway for almost a year, creating material impacts on Burlington Economic Development and Tourism operations.

These impacts include delays in delivering 2024–2025 workplans, reduced ability to commit resources, significant staff time diverted from core work, hesitation from external partners, and competing internal priorities caused by shifting timelines and uncertainty.

3. Impacts on Governance, Board Priorities, and Volunteer Leadership

The extended review has created significant impacts on governance with volunteer Board members diverted from governance to instead dealing with non-core Board items

such as the review, risks in the uncertainty and additional approvals for non-core items. BEDT's board is a mix of governance experts, business owners, and other community stakeholders and many of them are not those that would necessarily engage at an advisory level, nor offer the narrow focus expected of a municipal advisory model being considered by the City.

4. Alignment Gaps Arise from Governance Infrastructure, Not Organizational Structure

Key alignment gaps arise from the absence of a service agreement (expired in 2011), the pausing of coordination mechanisms established through the 2020 Governance Review, and Red Tape Red Carpet, and the lack of formal communication processes between Council and Burlington Economic Development and Tourism. These gaps relate to governance tools, not structural design.

5. Best Practices Confirm the Strength of the Hybrid External Model

The 2024 Deloitte Destination Marketing Organization and Economic Development Organization Best Practice Scan confirms that hybrid external models are widely used and effective. Independent governance, modern service agreements, and strong Key Performance Indicators are essential foundations. Structural changes should only follow after these tools are in place.

6. Staff Impacts and Organizational Capacity Risks

Uncertainty is affecting staff retention, attraction, decision-making, and workload. Balancing delivery with review support will reduce organizational capacity at a critical time for economic development and tourism.

7. Cost and Resource Considerations – Good Use of Taxpayer Dollars

Council has already invested significantly in the 2022–2024 merger, including

- third-party facilitation,
- legal and Human Resources integration,
- organizational restructuring,
- branding,
- Municipal Accommodation Tax alignment,
- governance development,

- and engaging Deloitte to support in integrating best practices in governance, strategy and KPI development for the organization

Burlington Economic Development and Tourism has spent almost two years delivering on the merger direction from Council with amalgamation only taking place Jan 1, 2025. The current review has imposed further staff and Board time costs.

Before another structural change, it is fiscally responsible to assess merger outcomes, strengthen existing accountability tools, avoid duplicative investments, and ensure sequencing aligns with responsible use of taxpayer funds.

Recommendations and Call to Action

The Board is not asking Council to reopen the November 10 vote and we are appreciative of the desire by Council to have more information. We are asking Council to **refine its direction** to staff to support a balanced, fair and evidence-based process.

The BEDT Board recommends that Council:

1. Affirm Recommendation 2 (BEDT's current state) as the default direction.

The discussion up to this point has centered around integration into the City as the default option being discussed based on the initial staff recommendation report. Given the change in recommendation focus at the Committee meeting, it is requested that the default option instead be the current state and that integration is an option being explored. The ask is rather than waiting to decide on either option in April 2026, we ask Council to recognize that strengthening the existing hybrid model is Council's default recommendation, with Recommendation 1 (integration) to be considered only if the data and analyses warrant further discussion in April.

2. Direct the CAO and BEDT to immediately begin work on a renewed service agreement, KPI framework, and formal reporting mechanisms.

These tools are necessary regardless of structure and we ask these continue immediately and not wait until April.

3. Require the April report to be co-designed with BEDT.

Terms of reference should include service outcomes, stakeholder impacts, and clarity of roles—not only City organizational structure requirements.

4. Include an explicit errors-and-omissions review of CAO-06-25.

Ensure the April analysis reflects an accurate baseline and corrects inaccuracies in the initial report and that any recommendations submitted use accurate information.

5. Engage an independent, qualified management consultant if Recommendation 1 remains in scope.

Independent expertise is essential to ensuring both options are evaluated fairly, transparently, and using consistent criteria.

6. Direct that MAT governance, TechPlace alignment, regional downloading responsibilities, and Destination Stewardship Plan implementation be addressed through Recommendation 2.

These operational issues require clarity and planning, regardless of structure.

Closing

We are not asking Council to revisit its earlier decision. We are asking Council to shape the next phase in a manner that protects organizational capacity, respects taxpayer investment, maintains strong volunteer governance, and aligns Burlington with established best practices.

Thank you for your continued collaboration.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Laidman
Chair
Burlington Economic Development and Tourism

cc:

Curt Benson, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Burlington
Andy Scott, Chief Transformation Officer, City of Burlington
Terry Caddo, President & CEO, Burlington Chamber of Commerce
Anita Cassidy, Executive Director, BEDT
BEDT Board of Directors



Burlington Economic Development / Tourism Review

Best Practices Scan for KPIs and Organizational Structures



Overview and Purpose

A strategic organizational structure and alignment in key performance indicators (KPIs) ensures that economic development and tourism work towards common goals. Alignment facilitates smoother integration while maximizing synergies and the potential of success.

In support of the overall goal of a joint mandate for economic development and tourism in the City of Burlington, a review of KPIs and organizational structures was prepared by Deloitte. Other economic development organizations and destination marketing organizations were reviewed. Municipal oversight and integration points between organizations was also reviewed. The following insights provide perspective and insights for action planning and assist Burlington in developing a pathway to shared governance.

Comparator communities include:

- Vaughan
- Winnipeg
- Saint John region
- Hamilton
- Kingston
- Markham
- Sudbury

Deloitte.

Key Findings

Summary of Findings

Key Performance Indicator Themes

The following common themes/buckets of economic development, tourism and relevant organizational KPIs were captured among all comparators. Examples are provided for additional context and a full list of relevant KPIs can be found under the detailed Scan section.

Economic Development KPIs

- Economic Performance and Growth (GDP, value of imports/exports, net business openings, etc.)
- Employment and Workforce (jobs, vacancies, labour force size and diversity, etc.)
- Business Development and Support (client services delivered, number of small businesses supported, leads, prospects, and qualified opportunities)
- Real Estate and Infrastructure (property tax base, serviced employment land, vacant employment land inventory in acres, commercial vacancy)
- Economic Well-Being and Quality of Life (household income, average commute time, increasing transit ridership, etc.)
- Efficiency and Process Management (timing of development application approvals, capital contracts awarded, etc.)

Tourism Destination KPIs

- Events and Conferences (attendees, sponsors, bids won, film productions, etc.)
- Economic Impact and Financial Metrics (event impact, visitor retail sales, hotel nights and revenue, etc.)
- Marketing and Media Impressions (Earned media, impressions by social media, clicks on website, media views etc.)
- Partnerships and Sponsorships (Number of partners, Dollars invested in events by partners, number of partner referrals, etc.)
- Financial Grants and Funding (Grants received, applications for Tourism Development Funds, funded projects)

Organizational KPIs

- Citizen Satisfaction and Engagement (satisfaction with services, value for tax dollars, services available online, visits to engagement platforms)
- Employee Engagement and Development (recruitment and retention, DEI and reconciliation, check-ins per year, employee turnover, training budgets)

Key Findings – Key Performance Indicators

Economic Development

Economic Performance and Growth

- **GDP (total) in relation to neighbouring jurisdictions**
 - Provides a benchmark for economic performance relative to nearby areas, guiding policy and strategic decisions.
- **Increased average household income**
 - Indicates economic prosperity and the effectiveness of economic policies at a household level.

Investment and Finance

- **Capital invested in dollars (\$)**
 - Measures the attractiveness of the region to investors and can signal economic growth and future employment opportunities.
- **Credit rating**
 - Indicates financial health and stability, impacting the ability to attract further investment.

Workforce and Employment

- **Number of jobs secured**
 - Reflects the success of employment initiatives and economic health.

Community and Infrastructure Development

- **Percentage of development applications processed on time**
 - Reflects the efficiency of the local government in supporting development, which is crucial for economic growth.

Key Findings – Key Performance Indicators

Tourism and Destination Marketing/Management

Economic Impact and Investment

- **Economic impact metrics (dollars)**

- Quantifies the financial benefit to the destination, crucial for justifying marketing expenditures and securing further funding.

- **Visitor spending and total visitor sales**

- Helps gauge the direct economic contribution of tourists, essential for understanding market segments that yield the highest returns.

Tourism Analytics

- **Hotel occupancy rates and room nights**

- Assesses the accommodation sector's performance, reflecting visitor volume and duration of stays.

- **Number of total visitors and visitor demographics (leisure vs business)**

- Helps to tailor marketing strategies and resource allocation.

Marketing and Communications

- **Marketing campaign impressions and engagement**

- Reflects the reach and effectiveness of promotional activities, vital for optimizing marketing efforts.

Key Findings – Key Performance Indicators

Joint-Effort Organizations

Financial Management and Accountability

- **Secured funding and annual balanced budget**
 - Ensures the financial health and sustainability of the organization.
 - Impacts the ability to fund projects and maintain service levels.

Service Efficiency and Accessibility

- **Percentage of services available online:**
 - Reflects the organization’s adaptation to digital trends and can improve accessibility and efficiency, which are crucial in modern governance.
- **Satisfaction with delivery of services among businesses and citizens:**
 - Indicates effective service delivery and can enhance public perception and trust, which are essential for the support of future initiatives.

Employee Engagement and Development

- **Employees recommend the organization as a place to work**
 - Indicates employee advocacy, and organizational health.
 - Influences employee recruitment and retention.

Key Findings – Organizational Structures

Review of Organizational Structures

City Oversight / Integrated City Division

- **Advantages:**

- Direct alignment with municipal strategies, streamlined decision-making.
- Comprehensive integration with city's overall development plans.

- **Challenges:**

- Possible bureaucratic delays, less agility and flexibility compared to private sector-led boards.
- May lack specialized focus.

Private-Sector Led Board

- **Advantages:**

- Agile, business-focused strategies, potential for innovative funding models.

- **Challenges:**

- Risk of prioritizing business interests over broader community needs.

Municipality-Linked Corporation

- **Advantages:**

- Strong municipal support, alignment with city's long-term goals.

- **Challenges:**

- Possible political influence in decision-making, may lack independence

Key Findings – Municipal Interface

Improving Linkages between Independent Organizations and Municipal Government

Centralized Governance Model

- A single department or agency oversees both economic development and tourism, ensuring aligned strategies and decision-making.
- **Advantages:**
 - Streamlines decision-making and reduces bureaucratic inefficiencies.
 - Ensures cohesive strategy implementation and branding for the city.
 - Facilitates easier budgeting and resource allocation from a central point.
- **Challenges:**
 - Potential for conflict between tourism and economic development priorities.
 - Risk of reduced specialized focus on tourism-specific issues due to broader goals.

Public-Private Partnership Model

- Formation of non-profit corporations or commissions to manage both economic development and tourism.
- **Advantages:**
 - Access to private sector innovation and funding.
 - Flexibility in operation and potential for aggressive marketing strategies.
- **Challenges:**
 - Accountability and transparency issues with less public oversight.
 - Potential prioritization of profit-oriented goals over community-centric values.

Approaches to Improving Linkages

- **Regular Updates:** Hold frequent meetings with all stakeholders to keep everyone informed and engaged.
- **Clear Documentation:** Develop clear and detailed documentation such as strategic plans, performance updates, and roles/responsibilities descriptions that can be easily accessed by all relevant parties.
- **Use of Technology:** Implement collaborative tools and platforms for seamless communication and data sharing among organizations, departments and stakeholders.
- **Training and Development:** Provide regular training for municipal staff and stakeholders on the integrated strategies and their roles in successful implementation, ensuring alignment and efficiency.
- **Public Engagement:** Engage the local community and businesses through public consultations, feedback mechanisms, and informational campaigns to foster transparency and community support.

Deloitte.

Scan

Vaughan

Economic Development KPIs	Tourism Destination KPIs	Organizational KPIs	Organizational Structure	Municipal Oversight / Integration Point
<p>Vaughan Economic Development has operationalized the Term of Council Strategic Plan and included the following output metrics to Ignite economic prosperity and advance Vaughan as an entrepreneurial City. More granular KPIs are set under specific objectives set by the department.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDP (total) in relation to neighbouring jurisdictions. • Increased Average Household Income. • Decreased Household Income Gap • Amount of Trade Conducted by Vaughan Businesses (total and as a percentage of York Region's activity). • Diversification of the City's Economic Sectors • Increase in Employment (broken down by age, gender, education, etc.) • Diversification of Workforce (age, gender, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events, activations and festivals • Number business conferences • Number of sports tournaments • Number of familiarization tours • Number of recipients awarded mentorship and grant funding through the Vaughan "Spark" Mentorships and Grants Program, in partnership with Tourism Innovation Lab • Number of impressions for seasonal campaigns to drive leisure visitation using social, digital, television, out-of-home and print ads, and other owned channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of citizens with overall satisfaction with services • Percentage of citizens who believe they receive good value for their tax dollars • Percentage of citizens satisfied with service delivery • Percentage of citizens satisfied with accessibility of services • Value for tax dollars • Ability to Influence Municipal Decisions • Satisfaction with Delivery of Services • Awareness of Services Provided to Local Business 	<p>Under the Office of the City Manager, under the Office of Communications and Economic Development, has direct oversight from the City manager and houses services by Vaughan Economic Development. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurship & Small Business Advisory • Invest, Expand or Relocate • Networking and Corporate Partnerships • Support for Tourism Organizations (Tourism Vaughan) • International and Economic Partnerships • Programs and Initiatives <p>Vaughan Economic Development / Tourism Staff by Service Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Services (Senior manager, small business advisor, tourism development officer x2 (one senior), economic services representative, entrepreneurship representative, tourism development coordinator) • Economic Development (Manager, senior EDO, EDO, coordinator) • Strategic Economic Initiatives (manager and program managers for partnerships and corporate initiatives, smart city, Strategic Economic Relations, Public Art and Corporate Art Curator and Demonstration Zone Associate) • Department and Corporate Management (Director and Administrative and Program Coordinator) <p>Tourism Vaughan Board 2023-26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and Regional Councillor – Chair; Local and Regional Councillor - Vice Chair; Councillor; Element Vaughan Southwest; Canada's Wonderland, Cedar Fair <p>Tourism Vaughan Corporation (TVC) is the official destination marketing organization (DMO) for the city of Vaughan (Vaughan Economic Development). Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business and events advisory: activation planning, resources, opportunities • High-quality tourism development programs: training, planning, funding opportunities • Strategic partnerships and collaborations: leveraging partnerships for collaboration, information sharing • Destination marketing and promotional campaigns: promotional campaigns, itineraries, year-round events calendar • Investment attraction: lead servicing, bid submissions, tour planning 	<p>Member of the City Manager's portfolio.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EcDev works with a variety of departments across the municipal corporation on an as needed basis. • EcDev works with municipal colleagues to support their decision-making by providing comments on impacts to the business community and economy; deliver programs and services; and the advance placemaking and city building. <p>Budget for Tourism Vaughan is \$1,983,235, of which \$119,397 comes from City EcDev. The remainder is covered by the MAT tax. Memorandum of Agreement between City and Tourism Vaughan Corporation sets out governance, including secondment of employees. City of Vaughan is the sole "Voting Member" of Tourism Vaughan Corp.</p>

Winnipeg

Economic Development KPIs	Tourism Destination KPIs	Organizational KPIs	Organizational Structure	Municipal Oversight / Integration Point
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of client services delivered. Number of Economic Outcomes Facilitated (EOF) Number of jobs secured Capital invested in dollars (\$) Number of supporting investors Investor contributions in dollars Number of leads, prospects and qualified opportunities Overall dollar value of economic impact on the City of Winnipeg through strategic initiatives. <p>Talent strategic initiatives (2023 Work in Manitoba job portal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of participating businesses Number of job seekers Number of international applicants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic impact of conferences and events in dollars (\$) Number of Participants and delegates at conferences and events Number of bids/proposals Number of room nights Number of partners dollars invested in events by partners promoting the City Number of impressions on social media Number of clicks to tourismwinnipeg.com Number of articles promoting Winnipeg as a great place to live and invest Earned media value in dollars (\$) 	<p>Categories of Key Performance Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure & increase employee engagement Embody reconciliation Increase employment equity, diversity, & inclusion Improve workplace safety, health, & wellness Strengthen financial management & accountability Enhance employee development (Performance review participation rate) Improve employee recruitment and retention Improve communication with elected officials and businesses across departments Customer service satisfaction rate Internal services satisfaction rate 	<p>Economic Development Winnipeg Inc. (EDW) is Governed by a private-sector board. EDW's focus on growing the local economy by attracting business, investment, events and people to our city is supported by the YES! Winnipeg business development team and Tourism Winnipeg, the city's official destination marketing organization.</p> <p>Core Teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive/Corporate Team (President, 4x vice-presidents, director, HR manager, admin assistant and project coordinator x3) Market Intelligence team (Director, senior economics, manager, 4x staff) YES! Winnipeg Team (Director x2, senior manager, manager x7, staff x 13) Tourism Winnipeg (Director, Manager x5, staff x3) + Marketing and branding team (Director x2, Manager x4, staff x3) Corporate Communications Team (Director, manager, staff x 3) Marketing team (Director, manager x4, staff x3) <p>Board composition / expertise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounting and Tax Aviation Financial services Arts and culture Energy/utilities Legal services Indigenous Relations and Communications Provincial government City leadership Business and entrepreneurship support Agribusiness 	<p>EDW is a commission of Winnipeg City Council established under by-law in 2006 based on a report in 2002.</p> <p>The City of Winnipeg's Senior Manager of Economic Development and Policy (organized within the CAO Department) is an ex-officio member of EDW's Board of Directors.</p> <p>EDW received \$5.2 million in revenue from the City of Winnipeg in 2023, representing 45% of total revenues.</p> <p>Centre Venture Development Corporation is a separate non-profit organization. Its goal is to promote and foster economic, residential and cultural growth and development in the downtown district of The City of Winnipeg. CVDC provides a variety of development incentive programs. Mayor of Winnipeg is the "honorary chair". Services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitation, Coordination, & Planning (including one-stop-shop and concierge service for development projects in the downtown) Property Assembly Project Financing Housing Construction Programs Ground Floor Retail Support Heritage Building Adaptive Re-Use

Saint John Region

Economic Development KPIs	Tourism Destination KPIs	Organizational KPIs	Organizational Structure	Municipal Oversight / Integration Point
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of housing units in real estate development portfolio Assessed value of housing units in real estate portfolio No. of views of regional growth dashboard No. of visitors to regional growth dashboard No. of impressions – youth talent retention campaign No. of impressions – other talent attraction campaigns No. of attendees (jobseekers /employers) at career fair No. of entrepreneurs supported by programs Value of impact loans approved Number of new businesses started Value of exports and imports Port cargo in metric tonnes Net business openings Gross regional income Goods producing jobs Employment levels / Labour force size Rate of unemployment Job vacancies Median hourly income Labour force age migration Property tax base Rental vacancy rate Housing starts / Building permit values Single family home price Office vacancy rate Housing price to income ratio Average commute time Crime rate Physicians per 100,000 Incidence of low income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing Campaign impressions Event Promotion impressions Number of events and festivals sponsored Economic impact of meetings and conventions hosted Number of meetings and conventions secured for future years Economic impact of meetings and conventions assisted Number of sports events secured for future years <p>Dashboard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit Nights Visitor Spending Hotel Occupancy Rate Hotel Revenue Cruise Ship Passengers Air Passenger Traffic Visitors to Local Attractions Hospitality sector jobs per 100,000 Appeal as a place to live (annual survey of citizen perception) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual audit Annual balanced budget Annual plan Secured funding Annual individual employee work-plans with KPIs 3 formal employee check-ins per year to focus on objectives and results 90% participation in employee survey 90% of employees recommend Envision Saint John as a place to work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing population by 25,000 in ten years Increasing municipal tax base by 30-35% in ten years Positive change to pride of place baseline metric in ten years 6 clearly defined platforms for areas of opportunity with a minimum of 3 achieving outcomes. 	<p>Regional Growth Agency that delivers Economic Development and Tourism Promotion Services on behalf of the Fundy Region Service Commission.</p> <p>Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Real Estate Development Economic Intelligence Regional Destination Marketing & Sales Population Growth Entrepreneurship & Business Growth Workforce Development <p>Board composition / expertise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taxation / audit VP for major employer (chair) Investor / mentor of startups Law (labour / organizational governance) Construction / property management VP Energy / utilities Logistics professional / supply chain director at city port University VP Wealth management Human resource support services (newcomer) <p>Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEO + COO Executive Director, Economic Intelligence & Real Estate 4 x Directors (Finance; Population Growth & Workforce Development; Destination Marketing; Entrepreneurship & Business Growth) 6 x Managers 6 x Coordinators 1 Assistant 	<p>Under a Master Service Agreement, Envision Saint John delivers economic development and tourism services on behalf of the Fundy Regional Services Commission (FRSC), which is a body corporate under the New Brunswick Regional Service Delivery Act. Members of FRSC include one rural district and six local governments.</p> <p>In 2023-2024, ESJ's 15-member board, which included municipal and provincial representatives and community members, was replaced with an 11-member community board.</p> <p>ESJ's budgets, strategic plans and performance updates require approval through a members meeting where municipalities will be represented by their CAOs.</p> <p>Development applications, zoning, and building permits are coordinated by individual municipalities.</p>

Kingston

Economic Development KPIs	Tourism Destination KPIs	Organizational KPIs	Organizational Structure	Municipal Oversight / Integration Point
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of outreach to external companies for investment opportunities • Number of new investment leads generated • Number of new business support inquiries • Number of business consultations to support their growth • Number of events and workshops hosted • Number of event and workshop attendees • Number of active investment opportunities • Number of countries diplomatic visits to Kingston 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of total visitors • Economic impact in dollars (\$) • Room nights booked • Number of leisure vs business visitors • Number of bids submitted for events • Number of bids submitted for won • Number of events hosted (music, sports, film etc.) • Number of event attendees • Number of contracted room nights • Number of event leads • Number of film productions • Number of tier 1 productions • Number of local film productions • Number of scout tours • Number of Kingston facilitated roadshows • Number of visitors serves • Visitor retail sales in dollars (\$) • Total visitor sales in dollars (\$) • Number of webpages views • Number of social media, advertising and earned media impressions. • Number of Partner referrals 	<p>Key factors in the City's ability to meet taxation targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City will experience average growth of no less than 1% annually and will give priority to initiatives that will increase growth as a method for limiting tax rate increases. • Service levels will remain generally stable and there will be no major transfer of responsibilities from the Provincial Government. • The City's tax rate increases will be positioned among the lowest of other Ontario municipalities, based on available date 	<p>Kingston Economic Development Corp. staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO • Director of Business Development • 5x Manager (Investment Manager x2, Business Development x2, Marketing & Communications) • 5x staff (coordinator and assistant) <p>Economic development Board composition / expertise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales and Marketing • Manufacturing • Founders • Post-secondary • Agri-business • Mayor (1) and councillors (3) • Senior City leadership (CAO, ex-officio) • CEO, Tourism Kingston (ex-officio) <p>KEDCO Committees: Human Resources / Nominations Committee; Finance / Audit Committee; Other Committees</p> <p>Tourism Kingston board composition / expertise (Works in collaboration with key partners such as KEDCO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real estate • Software development • Media and digital • Post-secondary • Business improvement area (ex-officio) • Tourism and accommodations (Kingston Accommodation Partners, ex-officio) • Regional tourism organization 9 (ex-officio) • Mayor (1) and councillors (2) • Senior City leadership (CAO, ex-officio) <p>Tourism Kingston Committees: Attractions, Sales, Kingston Destination Marketing, Creative Committee for Digital and Visual Communicators, Cruise Committee, Music Advisory Committee</p>	<p>The City of Kingston lists KEDCO and TK among its Other Committees and Boards and in its annual budget under Agencies and Boards.</p> <p>Kingston's Strategic Plan 2023-2026 includes "Drive Inclusive Economic Growth" as one of five strategic pillars. Within the pillar, Tourism Kingston is mentioned under "Consider opportunities to enhance sports tourism." Mayor and Councillors, City CAO, Tourism Kingston CEO serve on Kingston Economic Development Board.</p> <p>Kingston's Integrated Destination Strategy (2018) was developed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the Growth & Development Services Group and "Business Support Office," the City operates Planning and Building Services, reviewing and issuing permits. The City also coordinates industrial lands, rural economic development, and neighbourhood and community data. • The Infrastructure, Transportation and Emergency Services Group handles Engineering and Major Projects, Public Works and Solid Waste, Transportation and Transit. • Under the Corporate Services (CS) group, the Information Systems and Technology Department provides technology support and consulting services to Kingston Economic Development Corporation and Tourism Kingston. • Under the Finance & Administration group, the Office of the City Treasurer / Financial Services Department provides financial and business support as well as accounting, reporting and financial support services to Kingston Economic Development Corporation and Tourism Kingston.

Hamilton

Economic Development KPIs	Tourism Destination KPIs	Organizational KPIs	Organizational Structure	Municipal Oversight / Integration Point
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add seven million square feet of new Industrial/Commercial space • Generate a total of \$2.5 billion in Industrial/Commercial construction value • Increase new gross commercial/industrial assessment by 1.5 % per year • Triple the municipal tax assessment on the Stelco lands • Increase Hamilton's shovel-ready land supply by 500 acres • Increase immigration to Hamilton by 25% by 2025 (2019 IRCC reported immigration admissions for Hamilton as the baseline) • Create and maintain a list of 1,000 living wage employers in Hamilton • Achieve an average ground-floor commercial storefront occupancy of 90% across the Business Improvement Areas • Reduce downtown office vacancy rate to pre-pandemic levels (2019 as benchmark) • Increase transit ridership to pre-pandemic ridership levels by 2023 • Generate \$1 million in direct City revenue from film production activity within Hamilton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snapshots shared on website • Number of visitors to Hamilton • Number of meetings, conventions, and sporting events hosted in Hamilton • Visitor spending in dollars (\$) • Invest a minimum of \$1 million in tourism development from the Municipal Accommodation Tax program • Attract five major events that generate a total combined economic impact of at least \$50 million 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased funding from provincial and federal partners and advocate for a new fiscal framework for municipalities • Exploration and introduction of new City revenue models and efficiencies • Accelerated reduction in the City's GHG emissions • Assessment of infrastructure projects against their impact on the City's climate resilience and readiness • Established city-wide customer service strategy that improves response times, accessibility and public satisfaction • Improved clarity, legibility, availability and accessibility of City communications, reports and products • Clear service backlogs, including property standards complaints and FOI requests 	<p>City Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Corporate Real Estate Officer • 2x Senior Project Manager (Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council, Urban Renewal) • 4x managers (Commercial Districts and Small Business, Business Investment and Sector Development, Municipal Land Development Office, Commercial Real Estate Office) • 2x Senior Business Development Consultant (Investment and Trade, Urban Renewal & Finance, Insurance and Real Estate Industries) • 14 x Staff (Officer, consultant (including tourism), coordinator) 	<p>The City of Hamilton oversees Economic Development and Tourism & Culture, which are two separate divisions within the municipality's Planning and Economic Development Department.</p> <p>The Hamilton Tourism Development Corporation receives the MAT tax. As a non-profit corporation, the HTDC is accountable to the City of Hamilton, which serves as the sole voting member. The Board of Directors, consisting of council members and appointed officers, oversee the Corporation's operations, ensuring transparent and effective utilization of funds in accordance with approved policies and regulations.</p> <p>The President of HTDC is the Director of Planning and Economic Development for the City.</p>

Markham

Economic Development KPIs	Tourism Destination KPIs	Organizational KPIs	Organizational Structure	Municipal Oversight / Integration Point
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDP in dollars (\$) • Number of small business seminars hosted supporting entrepreneurs • Number of development applications approved • Number of development submissions processed by Engineering to support growth • Number of small businesses supported by Digital Main Street team • Number of assisted businesses qualify for grants totaling over \$1.1 million • Value of key sectors in dollars (\$) • Number of businesses in key sectors • Number of job in key sectors • Construction value of building permits in dollars (\$) • Average Price of Vacant Land in Markham per Acre in dollars (\$) • Commercial and office investor vacancy rate • Vacant Employment Land Inventory in acres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surplus in revenue after expenses in dollars (\$) • Ministry of Ontario grants awarded in dollars (\$) • Number of pieces of content shared • Number of online impressions • Number of online engagements • Number of online followers • Number of online clicks • Number of contacts for email marketing • Number of events and festivals • Number of sold out shows • Number of online contests • Number of in-person attendees to engagements with partners • Percentage of event/festival guests coming to events from outside Markham • Percentage of event/festival guests staying overnight • Week over week revenue increase for local restaurants • Percentage of overall Hotel occupancy during the year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of visits to “Your Voice Markham) • Number of customer service surveys • Percentage of residents that agree City facilities are in good condition • Percentage of Residents agree that City services represent good value for tax dollar 	<p>Department of Economic Growth, Culture and Entrepreneurship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director • Manager, Economic Development • Business Development Officer • Senior Business Development Officer • Economic Development Coordinator • Small Business Manager • Small Business Advisor • Small Business Assistant • OVIN Demonstration Zone Manager • 2x OVIN Demonstration Zone Coordinator <p>Destination Markham Board of Directors Representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor, Deputy Mayor, City Council • 2x Hotel and Accommodation • Health and Athletics • Regional Tourism Organization 6 • Post Secondary <p>Destination Markham Executive Team and Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director • Business Manager • Business Development manager • Stakeholder Relations & Marketing Manager • Event Specialist • Executive Admin Assistant • Content Creator <p>Destination Markham Strategic Pillars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination management, organizational development and internal governance • Research and investment attraction • Product and experience development • Destination marketing 	<p>Destination Markham is a non-profit, municipal services corporation established as the DMO for the City. Mayor, Deputy Mayor + Councillors serve on Board. It has a marketing agency: Interkom.</p> <p>City’s Director of Economic Development served on the Project Advisory Group for the Destination Markham Tourism Strategic Master Plan.</p> <p>In the Master Plan, one of the Strategic Actions is “ensure DMC is consulted by and advises Council and Municipal Departments on policies and processes that impact the visitor economy” and “develop a tourism education and awareness plan for ... City Council members, and key City staff on the benefits of a visitor economy to Markham.”</p> <p>The Master Plan also calls on DMC to “schedule regular meetings with Markham’s Economic Development Department to ensure strategies align with DMC’s Vision and Mission.”</p> <p>The Master Plan also says DMC should work with Economic Development and Planning “to define boundaries of the Cultural and Visitor Hub,” “work with Economic Development to provide business advisory support to existing businesses, while working to attract new businesses...”, “work with ED to identify and prioritize tourism-align infrastructure”, “establish a Sport Tourism task force with Recreation Services and ED”, “support ED’s investment attraction efforts”</p>

Sudbury

Economic Development KPIs	Tourism Destination KPIs	Organizational KPIs	Organizational Structure	Municipal Oversight / Integration Point
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investments through the Community Economic Development Fund in dollars (\$) Starter Company through the Regional Business Centre Number of applications Number of participants Number of intake sessions Grants distributed in dollars (\$) Financial support for strategic initiatives (Ex. Employment land Strategy) Square feet of New Non-Residential Development Percentage of Development Applications Processed On Time Percentage of capital contracts awarded Percentage of Capital Funds Committed or Spent Hectares of Serviced Employment Land Credit Rating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of attendees at activities and events Revenue generated with support from Arts and Culture Grant Programing Dollars funding the development and expansion of tourism attractions in dollars (\$) Number of applications for the Tourism Development Fund (TDF) Number of funded projects for the Tourism Development Fund (TDF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transit On-Time Rate (in %) Employee turnover (in %) Number of Information Technology (IT) Devices per Employee Percentage of Services Available Online Average Days to Hire (Union and Non-Union) Training Expenditures as a Percentage of Wages and Benefits 	<p>Greater Sudbury Development Corporation Executive Committee Representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial service sectors Post-Secondary Finance and Sales Experiences and attractions Architecture City of Sudbury <p>Board of Directors Representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Sudbury Construction Mining Engineering Indigenous Tourism and Hospitality Business Support <p>Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Economic Development 2x Manager (Investment and Business Development, Tourism and Culture) Program Manager - Northern Ontario Exports Program 7x Business Development Officers (3x General, Tourism and Culture, Human Capital, Investment and Business Development) 3x additional Officers (Major Events, Physician Recruitment, Film) 2x Coordinators (Regional Business Centre, Tourism Marketing) <p>Sudbury Tourism is the Destination Marketing Organization for the City of Greater Sudbury. It is part of the Economic Development Division, under the CAO. Sudbury Tourism operates the Marketing Partnership Program for businesses, at \$150 per year.</p>	<p>The municipality's Director of Economic Development serves as the Secretary of the Secretary/Treasurer of the Greater Sudbury Development Corporation.</p> <p>Under the Office of the CAO, the municipality's Economic Development division is focused on investment attraction, community promotion, improved quality of life and support for local business. They also provide support to, and receive guidance from, the 18-member community board of the Greater Sudbury Development Corporation (GSDC). This division includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment and Business Development Section Tourism and Culture Section Regional Business Centre <p>Several staff members on the GSDC team are municipal employees.</p> <p>MAT tax funds tourism efforts and flows to GSDC through the Tourism Development Fund.</p>



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Delegation Letter – November 18, 2025

Re: CAO-06-25 – Third-Party Review of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (BEDT)

Delegation from:

Anita Cassidy, Executive Director
Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (BEDT)

Mayor Meed Ward and Members of Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written submission to support Council’s deliberations on CAO-06-25, the Third-Party Review of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (BEDT). The intent is to offer Council a clear operational perspective on BEDT’s services, KPIs, alignment mechanisms, regional downloading responsibilities, and the operational impacts currently being experienced during the extended review period. This letter complements the governance-focused delegation provided by the BEDT Board Chair by responding directly to themes raised at the Committee of the Whole and questions asked by Council regarding operations, service alignment, and accountability.

This submission provides clarity and new information on the following matters, addressing questions from the Committee of the Whole discussion on CAO-06-25:

- (1) the current operational context for BEDT during the review period;
- (2) the full scope of BEDT services under the merged structure;
- (3) BEDT’s 2025 KPIs, objectives, and performance to date;
- (4) opportunities to clarify roles, services, KPIs, and alignment; and
- (5) operational risks emerging from the extended review period.

BEDT’s Operational Reality in 2025

On January 1, 2025, Burlington Economic Development and Tourism formally merged into a single, integrated organization. This followed 18 months of preparation, restructuring, and alignment across strategy, KPIs, customer experience (CX) workflows, and tourism service integration.

The year 2025 is a foundational integration year, centered on:

- aligning KPIs across all service areas;
- rebuilding CX pathways following internal City restructuring;
- finalizing TechPlace’s long-term mandate in coordination with the City and Horizon 2050;
- integrating rural and agricultural business services following regional downloading;
- delivering the Destination Stewardship Plan’s 3-year roadmap;
- and launching the new Destination Brand in Q2 2025, including full partner onboarding and campaign rollout.

Although the public discussion of the Third-Party Review has intensified recently, the operational review process has been underway for several months, beginning with consultant interviews and a thorough analysis of substantial documents in early 2024. This extended review period has already created measurable operational impacts. These impacts are present-day operational realities. Without a clear framework between now and April, these risks will compound during critical investment attraction, event sales, brand launch, and CX periods.

BEDT’s Services and Operational Responsibilities

BEDT delivers integrated economic development, tourism, and innovation services. Council requested greater clarity on these services through questions at the Committee of the Whole. The following reflects the updated service model under the merged organization.

Economic Development — Investment Attraction, Business Growth & Regional Downloading

Investment Attraction (Domestic and Foreign Direct Investment):

BEDT leads Burlington’s municipal investment attraction program, coordinating with Toronto Global, Invest Ontario, Global Affairs Canada, and federal FDI channels. Responsibilities include lead development, sector-specific investment cases, site selection support, corporate expansions, relocations, international delegations, and competitive analysis.

Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) / Corporate Calling: BEDT provides proactive support to Burlington companies through 100-plus annual corporate calls, risk analysis, workforce planning, rural and agricultural business engagement, and alignment with City departments.

Data, Analytics & Policy: BEDT maintains Burlington’s economic indicators dashboard, labour market analysis, industrial/commercial vacancy tracking, business surveys, competitiveness, and economic risks/opportunities analysis, and joint policy alignment work with City departments.

Tourism & Visitor Economy

BEDT oversees destination marketing, visitor services, tourism sales and event attraction, meeting and event concierge, Tourism Investment Fund (TIF) administration, seasonal campaigns, product development, Destination Stewardship Plan execution, and industry partnerships.

Innovation & Entrepreneurship — TechPlace

Startup, Scale-Up, and Soft-Landing Support: TechPlace supports companies through programming with colocation partners, including Innovation Factory and Angel One, providing programming and mentorship to entrepreneurs, scale-up support through the soft landing program, and soft-landing services for foreign investors.

TechPlace as Burlington’s One-Stop Entrepreneurial Hub: TechPlace provides centralized support for companies to start, scale, and grow, including programming, events, innovation ecosystem navigation, and integration with Burlington’s emerging post-secondary commitments. Its relocation to Bateman strengthens alignment with Horizon 2050 and delivers on recommendations from the 2020 Governance Review.

BEDT’s KPI Framework and 2025 Performance

BEDT follows a two-tier KPI model aligned with best practices and consistent with the KPI framework provided to the Council in the January 31, 2025, Council Information Package (CAO-02-25).

BEDT's 2025 Objectives align with three strategic pillars:

Investment Attraction: Attract \$300M in new ICI assessments (market and direct), directly attract through programs and services 300+ jobs, and 2,000+ room nights.

Business Support: Support the retention of 5,000+ jobs and 750+ businesses through programs and services.

Visitor Experience: Attract 500,000+ visitors and maintain an NPS score of 50+.

In 2025, organizational resources have been focused primarily on business retention and expansion supports, guiding businesses through new programs and support services to offset the impacts of economic uncertainty, including supply chain disruptions, tariff and trade impacts, and inflationary pressures on business financial models. The KPI framework used by BEDT is outlined in Appendix B.

BDET Budget – Economic Development and Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT)

Base funding from the City of Burlington to deliver Tourism and economic development services was combined as part of the 2025 budget, totaling approximately \$1.9 million. The total BEDT budget for 2025 is roughly \$4 million, inclusive of City of Burlington Funding, MAT grants, revenues, and draws from reserves.

Economic Development City of Burlington funding (~\$1.5M) includes BRE, investment attraction, Main Street business, data, policy analysis/advocacy, and TechPlace costs. TechPlace rent of approx. \$200K will flow back to the City in 2026 with the new rental agreement for Bateman.

MAT Funding (~\$1M annually) with a \$1.5M 2025 reserve draw supports the destination brand, DSP, TIF, sales, marketing, promotion, and visitor services.

Opportunities to Clarify Roles, Services, KPIs, and Alignment

The themes and questions raised at Committee point to the need for more precise definitions of responsibility, shared KPIs, and modern alignment mechanisms. The BEDT board fully supports establishing these elements jointly with the City.

Clarifying Roles and Services with Regional Downloading

The Business Growth and Renewal (BGR) Committee report, attached as Appendix A, demonstrates the expanded economic development responsibilities that have been absorbed following regional devolution. These services lack precise long-term direction alignment between BEDT and the City of Burlington, without formal integration into council strategic planning and staff workplans.

Joint KPI Framework and Accountability

A shared KPI framework will bring together:

- **Direct, attributable BEDT outcomes** such as jobs attracted/retained, Tourism Investment Fund and concierge room nights, sector development results, partner leverage, grants, and investment files; and
- **Broader economic indicators** (employment rates, permit values, visitor spend, OCC/ADR/RevPAR) which provide a holistic view of the city's overall financial health. While BEDT does not directly control these metrics, they can be indirectly influenced through BEDT's programs and services.

Appendix B presents a consolidated KPI framework, drawing on earlier work from Deloitte, MDB Insight, and Rubicon, which demonstrates why BEDT is considered best-in-class in measuring direct economic and tourism impacts. The best practices analysis completed by Deloitte on EDOs and DMOs in 2024 to support best practices in governance, strategy, and performance management for the newly merged economic development and tourism organization is included as an appendix to the separate delegation made by the Chair of BEDT.

Integrated CX – Need for Formal Process Renewal

BEDT and the City have made significant progress through the implementation of the Red Tape Red Carpet recommendations and the Integrated CX model, aligning high-impact business support across departments. However, recent organizational changes at the City have altered the original structure. This includes formally adopted Integrated Customer Experience processes, roles, and workflows developed jointly by the City of Burlington and BEDT, which are included as an appendix to this report.

The removal of the Customer Experience Manager – Business Development role, along with the associated loss of formal high-impact file tracking and concierge oversight, has resulted in BEDT staff coordinating informally with City staff to support businesses outside the intended structured pathways. Direction was provided at the November Business Growth and Renewal Committee meeting for BEDT to work jointly with City staff to review and update the Integrated CX processes and workflow. The approved integrated CX workflows developed by the City of Burlington and approved by the BEDT board are included in Appendix C. Review and updating of the existing approved CX workflows should include the additional context of regional downloading and evolving economic development responsibilities.

A formal review of the Integrated CX will:

- Clarify responsibilities for concierge and high-impact files, removing any duplication,
- Restore coordinated workflows and accountability,
- Ensure businesses receive consistent, timely support across the system, and
- Rebuild a shared, modern CX model that reflects both City and BEDT roles.

TechPlace – Strategic Alignment to Vision 2040, V2F, and Horizon 2050

TechPlace was launched based on direction from the City under Vision 2040 and its implementation through Vision to Focus. As an innovation hub supporting entrepreneurs, foreign investors, startups, and talent, TechPlace has delivered strong outcomes for Burlington.

TechPlace has represented approximately one-third of BEDT’s Economic Development budget from the City of Burlington since its launch in 2017. It has a 2025 operating budget of roughly \$600,000, including labour and program costs. Importantly, approximately \$200,000 of this budget will be returned directly to the City as rent at the Bateman Community Centre.

As the City develops Horizon 2050, clear direction is needed on TechPlace’s long-term alignment:

- Should TechPlace continue to lead Burlington’s innovation and entrepreneurship strategy?
- What KPIs should Council prioritize?

- How should TechPlace’s role evolve, considering regional downloading and the innovation ecosystem across Halton?

Formal Engagement Mechanisms

Over the past year, adjustments to BEDT’s services, such as withdrawing from the Burlington Lands Partnership, have been made based on informal discussions and interpretation of Council/staff feedback through BEDT board and committee discussion, in addition to direction through one-on-one conversations with City staff, rather than direct engagement with Council to provide prioritization and direction on how BEDT resources are applied.

Earlier mechanisms for Council alignment identified in:

- the Red Tape Red Carpet reports,
- the 2020 Governance Review, and
- subsequent governance updates

Have been diminished due to recent organizational restructuring within the City and the removal of BEDT’s ability to bring reports directly to council through standing committees.

BEDT’s Track Record of Alignment and Delivery

BEDT has consistently demonstrated alignment with Council direction, including:

- Securing **Green Municipal Fund** support for the Brownfield CIP
- Developing and delivering the City’s [Safe Restart Program](#), utilizing funds received by the City during COVID-19
- Adapting to regional downloading
- Supporting integrated CX, tourism sales, and event attraction
- Reprioritizing or discontinuing programs and service areas (e.g., BLP, development facilitation) based on City feedback

These examples reflect BEDT’s responsiveness and commitment to delivering value. Direct mechanisms to engage jointly with the city on advocacy, government relations, and grant applications have been paused since the structural changes at the City of Burlington in 2024.

Operational Risks if Uncertainty Continues

BEDT is already experiencing operational impacts, including slower CX resolution, hesitancy from investors and tourism partners, risks to long-lead tourism and event cycles, talent attraction challenges, uncertainty affecting TechPlace partnerships, and potential disruption to the new Brand launch in Q2 2026.

Without more precise alignment mechanisms, these risks will compound between now and April.

Operational Recommendations to Support Council's Direction

To ensure stability during the review period, BEDT recommends:

1. Co-develop a modern Service Agreement immediately.
2. Establish a joint KPI and reporting framework, including reporting mechanisms to the council.
3. Review and modernize CX pathways, identifying and eliminating duplication;
4. Affirm the Innovation and Entrepreneurship mandate underpinning the TechPlace strategy in alignment with Horizon 2050;

Closing

BEDT remains committed to serving Burlington's residents, businesses, investors, and visitors with professionalism and a strong focus on results. The goal of this delegation is to provide Council with operational clarity to support informed decision-making during this review period, and to ensure BEDT and the City continue to work collaboratively to deliver economic and tourism outcomes for Burlington.

Thank you for your continued collaboration.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Cassidy
Executive Director
Burlington Economic Development and Tourism

**Appendix A – September Report to Business Growth and Renewal Committee on
Regional Service Downloading**

**Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (BEDT) Report BGR-01-25: Devolution
of Regional Economic Development Services - Impacts on Economic Development
Strategy and Operations**

Business Growth & Renewal Committee

Date to Committee: September 11, 2025

Date to Board: September 18, 2025

Business Growth and Renewal Committee Members September 2025

Elaine Gerrie, BEDT, Gerrie Electric
Kuljit Bhogal, BEDT, BSB Manufacturing
Vanessa Dupuis, BEDT, Brock University
Julie Ellis, BEDT, Julie Ellis Co
Nancy Rowland, BEDT, Royal Botanical Gardens
Kelvin Galbraith, BEDT, City of Burlington
Curt Benson, BEDT, City of Burlington
Marie Nash, City of Burlington
Terry Caddo, Burlington Chamber of Commerce
Ron Laidman (Board Chair ex officio)

Purpose of Report: Decision & Strategic Alignment

Recommendations

1. Endorse BEDT’s integrated approach to address the downloading of regional economic development services in partnership with the City of Burlington, focusing on investment attraction, business retention and expansion (BRE), main street support, rural and agricultural economic development, concierge, and data functions.

2. Approve BEDT Board endorsement of the Halton Region Small Business Centre Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix A), with execution coordinated with the City of Burlington.
3. Support continued negotiations toward a four-way Toronto Global contract and direct staff to report back in Q4 2025 on progress.
4. Receive the Burlington Main Street Business Strategy (Appendix B) for information and integration into BEDT’s service delivery.
5. Affirm BEDT’s commitment to work with the Burlington Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee and City of Burlington to scope rural/agricultural business needs and bring forward targeted programs and budget requests for 2027.

Executive Summary & Background

This report provides the Business Growth & Renewal Committee with an update on the impacts of Halton Region’s service devolution in economic development, effective January 1, 2025. It outlines how BEDT will address potential gaps in service delivery. In September 2024, Halton Regional Council approved report [CA-22-24](#), confirming that the Region would exit the delivery of economic development services effective January 1, 2025, with the exception of the Halton Region Small Business Centre (HRSBC). This decision followed changes under Bill 23 and Bill 185, which redefined Halton as an “upper-tier municipality without planning responsibilities.”

The Region previously coordinated functions such as foreign direct investment attraction, development concierge services, rural/agricultural economic development, and economic data/insights. These services are now fully devolved to the four local municipalities.

With the merger of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism Burlington, BEDT is now a fully integrated organization that provides end-to-end business support—from startups to global investors and established employers. The merger has streamlined operations, expanded BEDT’s scope, and positioned the organization to absorb the downloading of regional services without disruption.

The Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) initiative, launched in 2019, has now been embedded into City operations. Together with BEDT’s Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) and Investment Attraction strategies, this ensures Burlington delivers coordinated, customer-focused, and data-driven economic development services aligned with Council priorities.

Analysis & Considerations

1. Investment Attraction

With Halton Region no longer coordinating FDI, municipalities must define their own roles. BEDT's has an established Investment Attraction Strategy (Appendix C) that has delivered strong results, including:

- Direct partnership with Toronto Global, with joint missions to WebSummit, Consensus, MedTech, and the 2024 Japan Investment Mission.
- Wins such as landing Cultivated B and advancing leads in life sciences, advanced manufacturing, and ICT.

BEDT supports continuation of a Toronto Global contract and will report back on negotiations in Q4 2025.

2. Business Retention & Expansion (BRE)

BRE is now fully localized, with BEDT delivering one of the strongest programs in Ontario, with the expansion of the corporate care program in 2024 to include destination businesses:

- Corporate Calling Program: Previously 35–50 calls annually with top employers, new investors, and strategic businesses. Now delivering 100 plus corporate calls per year across targeted business sectors.
- Over 300 plus Customer Service Requests annually, addressing everything from expansion and permitting to policy advocacy.
- Data, sector analysis, and advocacy to inform City policies (e.g., development charges, brownfield redevelopment, transit).

BRE ensures Burlington retains and grows jobs, representing the vast majority of local job creation.

3. Concierge & Integrated Customer Experience (CX)

Regional development concierge support has ended. Burlington has already embedded Red Tape Red Carpet (RTRC) principles into operations, now delivered through the Integrated CX model with the City:

City Roles: CX Manager, Business Development (High Impact Development Concierge) and Specialist, Business & Economic Development (Main Street Development Concierge).

BEDT Role: Due diligence, investment support, and voice of the business customer, integrating insights from BRE and IA into the City's CX system.

As RTRC principles are embedded across the City of Burlington, BEDT remains a strategic partner ensuring business needs and investment intelligence inform operational concierge delivery.

4. Data & Insights

The Halton Employment Survey continues at the regional level. BEDT integrates these insights into its Business Directory, BRE reporting, and the Economic Indicators dashboard, ensuring Burlington-specific intelligence supports decisions.

5. Rural & Agricultural Economic Development

With Halton's programs ended, BEDT will:

- Partner with Burlington Agricultural & Rural Affairs Committee to identify local rural and agricultural priorities aligned with their [2025 Work Plan](#).
- Work with the City to bring forward any 2027 budget requests for targeted rural/agri-business programs.

6. Small Business Services

The Halton Region Small Business Centre (HRSBC) will continue under a new MOU (Appendix A). BEDT will coordinate with HRSBC to ensure seamless delivery in Burlington, complemented by TechPlace and the Main Street Business Strategy (Appendix B).

Financial Matters

The downloading of regional economic development services has prompted varied responses across Halton's lower-tier municipalities:

- Town of Oakville: Approved new operating resources in 2025, including additional staff positions dedicated to investment attraction, retention/expansion, and sector-specific marketing.
- Town of Halton Hills: Allocated new resources to support agricultural and rural business development and enhanced economic marketing capacity.

By contrast, BEDT has not requested additional resources in 2025. The merger of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism Burlington has expanded BEDT's mandate and capacity, enabling the organization to absorb downloaded responsibilities while streamlining delivery across:

- Business Retention & Expansion (BRE)
- Investment Attraction
- Main Street and Small Business Support
- Tourism and Visitor Economy Development
- Development Concierge & Integrated Customer Experience
- Data and Policy Advocacy

This integrated model ensures delivery of the full suite of economic development services within existing resources.

Looking ahead:

2025: BEDT will manage all devolved responsibilities through efficiencies gained in the merger.

2026: Resource requests may be brought forward to support rural and agricultural economic development, informed by findings from BARACC and City staff.

Action & Next Steps

- Board endorsement of the Small Business Centre MOU (Appendix A).
- Ongoing negotiations with lower-tier partners and Toronto Global on the annual FDI contract, with an update in Q4 2025.
- Implementation of the Main Street Business Strategy (Appendix B) in coordination with the Halton Small Business Centre and City of Burlington to strengthen local business vibrancy.

- Partnership with Burlington Agricultural & Rural Affairs Committee and City of Burlington to scope Burlington’s agricultural business needs and develop 2026 resource proposals.

Note appendices to this report listed below and confidential/financial matters have been removed to adapt this report for the council delegation

Appendices

Appendix A: Draft MOU – Halton Region Small Business Centre (Aug 2025)

Appendix B: Draft BEDT Main Street Business Strategy (2025–2028)

Appendix C: BEDT Investment Attraction Strategy

Appendix B – KPI Framework and Best Practice Review

Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (BEDT)

November 2025

1. Purpose of Appendix

Provide a comprehensive summary of best practices for KPI frameworks used by leading Economic Development Organizations (EDOs) and Destination Marketing/Management Organizations (DMOs), outlining how BEDT’s KPI system aligns with, and in several areas exceeds, national standards. It also consolidates learnings from Deloitte (2024), MDB Insight (2020), and Rubicon (2025), as well as BEDT’s own dashboard and attribution models.

2. Best Practice KPI Structure for EDOs and DMOs

Across all major reviews, a consistent two-tier KPI architecture is recommended:

A. Direct, Attributable Program Outcomes (Organizational Performance)

These KPIs measure results directly caused by the organization.

Examples:

- Jobs attracted or retained through direct contact/supported files
- Private investment secured or influenced
- Conversion of leads and opportunities through CRM
- BRE outcomes and corporate calling results
- Direct room nights attributed to DMO programs (sales, TIF, concierge)
- Event attraction outcomes (bids, wins, confirmations)
- Grants secured
- Marketing performance indicators (impressions, engagement, conversions)
- Visitor servicing conversions (pass downloads, redemptions)

B. Economic & Tourism Indicators (Broader Economic Health of the City)

These indicators reflect the broader economic health of Burlington and while not directly controlled by BEDT, they can be indirectly influenced through BEDT’s programs and services.

Examples:

- Employment rate, labour force, unemployment
- ICI permit value and development activity
- Industrial and office vacancy
- Visitor spending
- OCC/ADR/RevPAR
- Seasonal visitation trends

Best practice requires accountability to organizational performance, not solely macroeconomic trends.

3. BEDT’s KPI Framework – Tiered Model Aligned to Best Practices

BEDT has already adopted the recommended two-tier system.

Tier 1: Direct, Attributable KPIs (Program Impact)

A. Economic Development (Direct Outcomes)

- 552 jobs attracted/retained YTD (2025)
- \$276M in ICI assessment value supported in 2024
- 18,351 m² of new ICI space supported in 2024
- 246 Customer Service Requests resolved in coordination with City staff YTD in 2025
- 120 corporate calls and BRE engagements tracked in Salesforce YTD in 2025
- High-impact files supported through the Integrated CX model
- Opportunity pipeline velocity and conversion metrics

B. Tourism & Destination (Direct Outcomes)

1. Direct Room Nights

- 2025 Target: 2,000 room nights
- Achieved YTD: 1,252 room nights

This includes TIF-supported events, concierge-supported bookings, and confirmed sales activity.

2. Direct Visitor Attraction

- 2025 Target: 500,000 visitors attracted
- YTD: On pace to achieve target based on event impacts, curated itineraries, and marketing conversion funnels.

3. Grants & Partner Leverage

- \$425K in grants secured at Q2
- Leverage ratio: \$1: \$3.5 (public/private partner contributions)

4. Marketing Performance (Full-Funnel Metrics)

- 10M+ impressions YTD
- High engagement benchmarks across social, paid search, TV, and OOH
- Landing page performance: Click-through rate (CTR), bounce rates, average session duration
- Conversions: newsletter sign-ups, seasonal guide downloads, visitor pass activations
- Bandwango performance: pass downloads, check-ins, redemptions
- Earned media & influencer amplification
- Partner amplification through shared campaigns

C. Organizational KPIs

- Customer satisfaction scores
- Partner satisfaction and Net Promoter Score
- Response times and service standards
- Completion of weekly/quarterly/annual performance cycles

Tier 2: Economic & Tourism Macro Indicators

BEDT maintains full dashboards for:

- Employment, labour force activity
- Building permit values
- ICI supplies absorption
- Vacancy trends
- Visitor spend and origin
- OCC/ADR/RevPAR
- Festival attendance (GLI)

- Tourism seasonality and behaviour patterns

These are used for context and strategy to drive and positively influence outcomes, rather than attributing economic indicators to direct program results.

4. KPI Transparency and Public Reporting

BEDT has:

- A complete internal quarterly KPI dashboard
- A public-facing Economic Indicators dashboard
- A public-facing Tourism Data Hub
- A public-facing BEDT organizational KPI dashboard (ready for release)

Publication of the BEDT KPI dashboard has been delayed pending alignment with the City. Discussions with City staff have been ongoing since December 2024 to finalize reporting alignment and expectations.

5. BEDT as a Best-in-Class Measurement Model

The KPI system used by BEDT aligns with every best-practice principle centered on economic impact, identified by Deloitte, MDB, and Rubicon:

1. Attribution clarity
2. Transparent, public reporting
3. Salesforce CRM integration
4. Integrated ED + DMO metrics
5. Multi-year trend analysis
6. Direct room night attribution
7. Direct visitor spending attribution
8. Clear mapping between KPIs and Council objectives

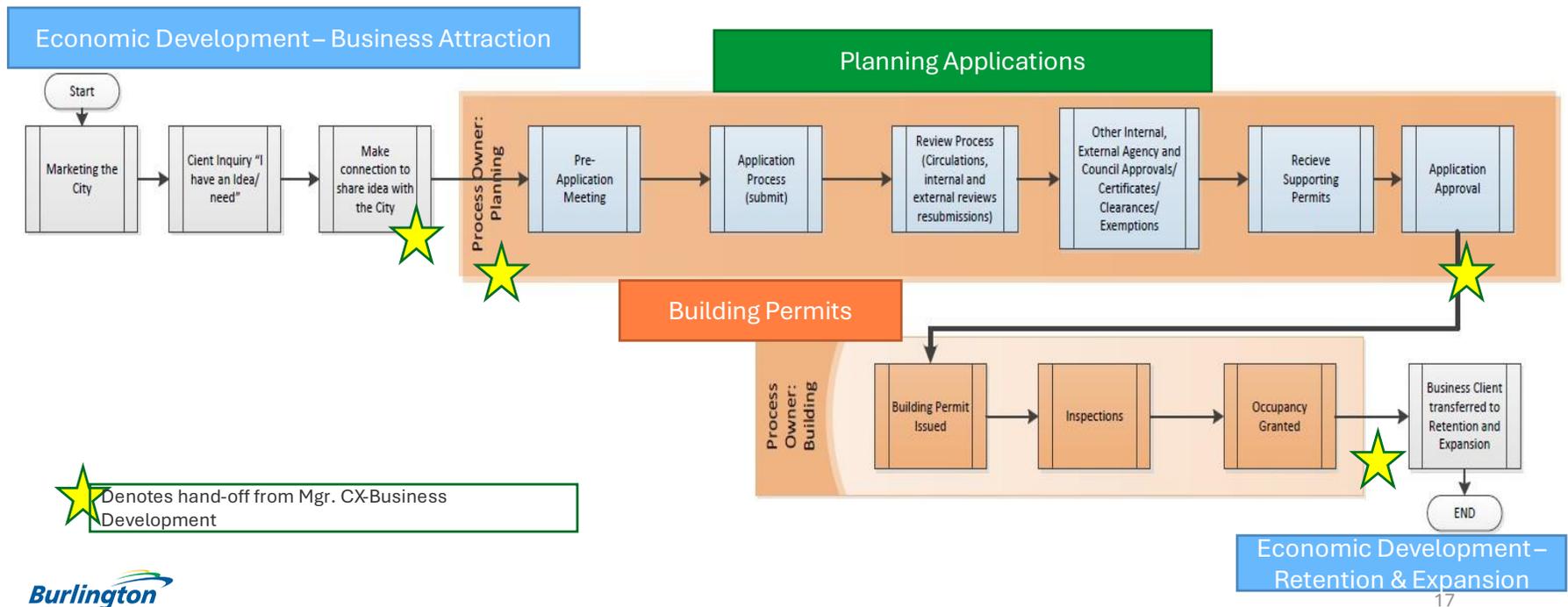
Very few mid-sized municipalities in Canada maintain this level of measurement.

Appendix C – Approved BEDT & City of Burlington Integrated Customer Experience (CX)

Approved CX Workflow 2021-2024

Approved Integrated Customer Experience Workflow

End to End Business Development Process & Touchpoints



Updated and approved CX role definition 2024-2025

Cross Functional Collaboration for Improved Customer Experience

