



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE TOWN OF BURLINGTON

The following document outlines the key economic development initiatives undertaken by the Economic Development Office over the last year (2020/21). The goal is to share the work being done, how it connects to our community's goals, and what is the status or the outcome of these initiatives today.

Melisa Tintocalis, Economic Development
Director

EDO Initiative	Rationale	Summary & Status
<p>Website & Social Media: BringMeToBurlington</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of local economic development best practices per the Massachusetts Municipal Association • According to Northeastern University’s Dukakis Center, marketing is one of the key factors that correlates with an increase in establishments and employment • Marketing investments and initiatives are within the Town’s control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Economic Development Office (EDO) launched a commercially focused website, BringMeToBurlington, in Q2 of 2021. • Accounts have been created on Instagram; Twitter; Facebook; and Linked In with regular postings to drive traffic to the website. • Currently, most organic searches relate to those looking for commercial office space. • A presentation to the Select Board by Sperling Interactive on the website and analytics is planned for December 2021.
<p>Town Center Placemaking Initiative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Burlington’s Master Plan Recommendations E2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote Town-oriented businesses that provide services, employment and opportunities ○ Provide measures to promote businesses along Cambridge Street ○ Support promotion events & participation of businesses in civic programs • Stakeholder interviews conducted by the Economic Development Director in January 2020 reinforced that the vitality of the Town Center and the strengthening of small neighborhood-serving businesses were critical economic development objectives for the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EDO was awarded a Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Grant in 2021. • Innes Planning Group worked with the EDO and conducted surveys with over 500 responses and developed the “Town Center Placemaking Playbook.” • Based on the Playbook’s recommendations, the EDO collaborated with local property owners and engaged with the area’s business tenants to develop a proposal for a “proof of concept” pocket park • Ken Gordon and Cindy Friedman secured a \$50K earmark to support the Town Center placemaking initiative • The proposed pocket park will convert approximately four parking spaces adjacent to Sweet Ginger into an area for people to gather and offer a venue for programming and civic engagement • A proposal for a business open house and beer garden will be presented to the Select Board on 9/13

<p>Burlington's Town Center</p> <p>Rapid Recovery Program (RRP):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with the Master Plan Recommendations E2.2 and E2.3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide and support infrastructure and streetscape [...] intended to support local-serving businesses ○ Prepare an economic development study for Terry, Moran, Grant and Murray • The RRP was developed through the Mass Office of Business Development to respond to COVID impacts • The program intends to develop actionable, project-based recovery plans tailored to the unique economic challenges in the Town Center and COVID-19 related impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EDO submitted a proposal for the Town Center and it was selected to be part of the RRP program. • Nelson\Nygaard was the project consultant assigned to Burlington's Town Center. • Nelson\Nygaard conducted business surveys and presented results, discussed their site visit, and other data compiled for the RPP at a virtual online meeting on June 3, 2021. • Through this effort, the EDO connected with MassDOT, District 4 and Howard Stein and Hudson to discuss the 3A repave project and how a larger scale overhaul of 3A is needed, in particular the section of the road that runs through the Town Center. • One of recommendations that has come from the RRP effort is to fund a land use and traffic plan for Town Center so that Burlington can be eligible for TIP project funding. A funding source for this effort, approximately \$30K, has not yet been identified.
<p>MAPC Pilot Project: A long-term redevelopment analysis of Town Center</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with Master Plan Recommendations E2.2 and E2.3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide and support infrastructure and streetscape [...] intended to support local-serving businesses ○ Prepare an economic development stud for Terry, Moran, Grant and Murray 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EDO has been working with MAPC on a pilot project that explores the potential for long-term redevelopment of the Town Center. • MAPC staff conducted outreach to better understand the feasibility of redeveloping the area into a more walkable village center and presented their initial analysis Town Center property owners in the spring of 2021. • MAPC staff would like to present to Select and Planning Boards in October, 2021. • Two recommendations from this effort is for the Town to revisit the Town Overlay zoning as well as fund a study to position the Town for a TIP project to help fund a large scale overhaul of Route 3A that runs through the Town Center.

<p>Mall Road & MTP Economic Development & Land Use Plan (MassDevelopment Grant)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with the Master Plan Recommendation E1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support the ability of Burlington’s enterprises and institutions to adapt to changing market and service conditions and continue as a regional leader in the commercial, retail and health sectors • Stakeholder interviews conducted by the Economic Development Director in January 2020, prior to the pandemic, revealed concern about the mall’s future and how the Town can ensure its relevancy; there was interest in how to evolve the mall and its surroundings for the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EDO was awarded \$85,000 from MassDevelopment under the Site Readiness Program to develop an economic development and land use plan. • The plan is intended to guide future development in the shape of what the community would like to see and what is possible. • As a result of this effort, the EDO plans to propose by-laws for more sustainable growth and economic integrity. • We kicked-off the start of this effort in mid-August with a tour of the area • The Economic Development Liaison Group will be the steering committee for this effort. • Staff has provided assessment data; stakeholder data; and other business related information • EDO needs to prepare a webpage and develop outreach material to let people know about the project.
<p>B2Life Workforce Development Program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to the impacts of COVID on our local economy and particularly on the hospitality industry, the EDO developed partnerships with Bedford and MassHire to provide workforce training funds to those in need. • Aligning this effort with Burlington’s goals of enhancing the workforce in our target industries of life sciences and healthcare, the program offers up to \$8K in funding for those who qualify and would like to study in the fields of healthcare or life sciences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDO received funding from the Community Development Block Grant COVID funding program as well as the state’s Regional Pilot Partnership Program for this workforce program • A total of 11 people have been enrolled in the program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4 are Burlington residents; ○ the remaining are either from Bedford or have worked in Burlington and/or live in neighboring communities • Outreach was conducted with flyers to the local food pantry and the Burlington Library’s newsletter. • A webpage was also developed that facilitated the outreach B2Life; applications are still being accepted

<p>Micro Business Grant Program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to COVID impacts on small businesses, the state provided funding for micro businesses – those with five employees or fewer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EDO participated in a regional effort with 23 other communities to secure \$100K for funding for Burlington’s micro businesses • 9 grants have been issued for a total of \$87,500 • The remaining \$17K was pooled with other communities to optimized the funding for micro businesses still in need • The next round is currently underway; final applications are due December 1, 2021; qualifying Burlington micro businesses may still apply via the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation
<p>COVID Business Task Force</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to business requests due to COVID, and under the authority of the state, the EDO collaborated with Town department heads to form a task force to review temporary requests proposed by businesses – primarily related to outdoor dining or activities outside the storefront 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Task Force met regularly from April 2020 to June 2021 • The Task Force included staff from Planning, Building, Health, Fire, Police and Economic Development. • Most requests were for outdoor dining or exercise activities. • Approximately 40 temporary permits were approved • Based on the Governor’s extension, these approvals will be honored through April 2022.
<p>Proposal for Outdoor Dining/Seating & Temporary Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the successful implementation of the Task Force and business feedback, the EDO has been asked how to make some of the COVID-era practices, in particular, the allowance of creative outdoor dining/seating options and other season activities a regular part of Burlington without an extensive permitting process, but similar to the Task Force process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EDO has met with and discussed this topic with the Task Force, members of the Zoning By-Law Review Committee and Town Administrator. • The goal is to craft a proposal for Town Meeting to consider that would allow the Town to approve seasonal requests related to seating or new programming that supports businesses in an easy manner. • The timeline would be to bring this proposal to the January 2022 Town Meeting -- prior to the extension of April 2022.
<p>Community Chats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage public engagement • Offer transparency in the Economic Development Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized two community chats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ November 24, 2020 ○ March 24, 2021 • The chats are online with an average 35 people attending

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay connected to the community and their interests regarding economic development issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next one planned is October 2021; the main topic will be on the Burlington Mall
CRE Roundtable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gauge impacts of working from home and other shifts due to COVID directly from Burlington's commercial real estate community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EDO held an online meeting with representatives from the Town's largest property owners, including RJKelly, Duffy, Nordblom, Piedmont, Lahey, Gutierrez, Oracle and National Development; also in attendance was Steve Morin At the time of the meeting the feeling was still positive for the area's commercial offices. Although many were waiting until September to get a better sense of occupancy in their buildings. However, the Delta variant has pushed that date back now. They acknowledged there had been shifts in office tenancy yet the life sciences market and other industries have been making up for that with new demand.
New Business Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indication of the strength of Burlington's market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relocation of Butterfly Network, a medical device company, from Connecticut to Burlington, MA will result in approximately 275 jobs They will occupy approximately 61K of square feet at 1600 The District The EDO met with state and company representatives regarding incentives and resources; however, the company decided not to pursue incentives at this time The EDO has collaborated on press releases and connections to state resources.
Business Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with business owners understand their needs and be a resource for them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visits to Primark, Simon Mall, Scandic, Hey Chica, The District, Evergreen, Hallal Shack, Murray Hills Inc., DB Dance Studio, Archer Hotel, Marriot, Hyatt, RJKelly

<p>ED Liaison Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The EDO has an Economic Development Liaison Group made up of two Select Board members, two Planning Board members, the Town Administrator, the Planning Director, as well as two business leaders that have been meeting regularly to support and guide the EDO.• Their role is to help promote and develop business and industry for the purpose of strengthening the local economy, providing jobs, and strengthening the tax base over time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The group meets monthly on the third Tuesday of each month; the group receive EDO updates and offers input on large scale projects• The goal is to evolve this group into regular committee
-------------------------	--	--