



---

<b>TO:</b>	<b>GENERAL COMMITTEE</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACTION PLAN UPDATE</b>
<b>WARD:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT:</b>	<b>S. SCHLICHTER, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT, EXT. 5036</b>
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	<b>S. SCHLICHTER, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT</b>
<b>GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL:</b>	<b>A. MILLER, RPP, GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL:</b>	<b>M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER</b>

---

**RECOMMENDED MOTION**

1. That Staff Report ECD015-20 concerning an update on the Barrie COVID-19 Economic Recovery Action Plan and the next steps for consultations be received as a follow-up to motions 20-G-061 and 20-G-099.
2. That funding in the amount of up to \$150,000 be allocated from the Community Benefit Reserve in support of the following recovery actions:
  - a) Up to \$75,000 to allocate as municipal contributions to leverage and apply for Provincial and Federal funding programs that will bring additional funding and supports to local business response and recovery; and
  - b) \$75,000 for a pilot partnership with Georgian College's Department of Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, which will deliver programming direct to businesses and entrepreneurs to build resiliency through research and innovation supports; the pilot partnership will aid recovery and help deliver on the strategic priorities of Council and the Economic and Creative Development Department.
3. That staff in the Economic and Creative Development Department report back to General Committee on municipal funds allocated to funding applications, as well as return on investment for any approved applications where funding is allocated.
4. That the Business in the Parks pilot be extended until December 31, 2020, and that staff in the Economic Creative Development Department review the scope of eligible applicants to provide more opportunity for program utilization in consultation with the Operations, Enforcement Services, Legal Services, and Recreation and Culture Services Departments.

---

## **PURPOSE & BACKGROUND**

### **Purpose**

5. The purpose of this report is to provide Council with:
  - a. an update on progress on the Economic Recovery Action Plan and Economic & Creative Development's preparedness for response to a second surge of COVID-19;
  - b. a framework for the second set of business and community consultations, intended to identify new actions that the Economic & Creative Development Department can implement in order to assist with business recovery and long-term resilience strategies for local businesses; and
  - c. approval requests for funding and programming in support of recovery actions.

### **Adopted Motions**

6. On May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Council adopted motion 20-G-061, which stated:

"1. That the Framework and Consultation Process for the COVID-19 Barrie Business Recovery Action Plan attached as Appendix "A" to Staff Report ECD004-20 be received. 2. That staff in the Economic and Creative Development Department report back to General Committee with a proposed Recovery Action Plan for Barrie Businesses that includes recommendations reflective of business and Council input from sector consultation and surveys, public feedback, business service organizations and thought leaders."
7. On June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Council adopted motion 20-G-099, which stated:

"1. That the COVID-19 Barrie Economic Recovery Action Plan attached as Appendix "A" to Staff Report ECD010-20, be received. 2. That funding in the amount of \$50,000 from the Community Benefit Reserve be allocated to Economic and Creative Development to support the resourcing of actions associated with the initial implementation of the Economic Recovery Action Plan. 3. That staff in the Economic and Creative Development Department report back to General Committee in (3) three-months with a progress update on action items and associated recommendations and additional funding requests related to the on-going implementation of the Economic Recovery Action Plan for Barrie businesses."

### **Recovery Action Plan Summary**

8. The Barrie COVID-19 Economic Recovery Action Plan is the outcome of significant consultation, intelligence gathering and Barrie community input. Business leaders, key sectors, stakeholders, the broader public and members of Council contributed to a set of more than 20 recommended actions. Combined with the initial set of actions identified in the initial COVID-19 Response Plan, more than 30 actions have been initiated that will support the acceleration of local businesses re-opening post-lockdown, as well as the return of employees and customers to local establishments in a safe and efficient manner.
9. In the first round of consultations, thought leaders, business executives, Members of Council, and the public provided feedback through online sector-focused meetings, and a survey posted to the Buildingbarrie.ca website. For each stakeholder group, twelve open-ended questions were asked. From there, common themes were identified through which an action plan was developed.
10. The Economic Recovery Action Plan identified three categories of 20 actions and approaches to assist business: Capacity, Confidence and Capital Building. In total, between the initial Response

Plan and the Recovery Action Plan, 33 actions were identified with Council approving an additional \$50,000 in support. Leveraging the existing operating budget of the Economic & Creative Development and additional funding programs through the Small Business Centre, 20 actions have been delivered, 11 actions are in-progress and 2 actions have been explored with **a total investment of approximately \$500,000.**

11. Investment highlights include:

- Business Recovery Support Kits (500 distributed to local businesses): \$18,000
- #Barrietogether shop local campaign and key marketing programs in collaboration with Access Barrie: \$35,000
- Going Digital Program: \$5,000
- Food Safety Training and Certification for Business and Employees: \$1,500 shared cost
- Hey Local Digital Online Platform: \$6,500
- Retained investment in 2020 Arts & Culture Grant Program: \$339,750
- Digital Mainstreet Programs: \$50,000
- Culture Days: \$30,000

12. Since the approval of the Action Plan by Council, the Economic & Creative Development Department has been in close communication with sector partners, entrepreneurs and established businesses regarding the Province of Ontario's regulations on lockdown measures and associated operational challenges, and to build resilience and capacity to support operations in an uncertain future.

13. Staff continue to engage in the market with businesses and stakeholder groups, including the Barrie Chamber of Commerce, Downtown BIA, Barrie and District Real Estate Board, Barrie Construction Association, the Sandbox, Georgian College, Henry Bernick Entrepreneurship Centre, Tourism Barrie, local landlords and the Simcoe County Homebuilders Association to understand market trends and business impacts.

14. Given uncertainty surrounding the second wave of COVID-19 and the Province of Ontario's corresponding regulatory measures, the Economic & Creative Development Department will continue to implement the Action Plan while monitoring and adapting to the current climate.

Preparedness for a Second Wave and New Recovery Measures

15. Staff in the Economic & Creative Development Department have also been preparing ways to assist businesses in the event of a second surge of COVID-19, resulting in renewed business restrictions.

16. Helping businesses to adopt digital platforms for selling and delivering their products and services is essential to this preparation. Several established initiatives will provide turn-key digital platform support, including:

- Digital Main Street
- Going Digital
- Virtual Learning Series

17. The Small Business Centre (SBEC) continues to assist and consult local businesses. The SBEC has been approved for \$50,000 in funding from the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association to implement a second round of the Digital Main Street program. This will enable staff

to provide up to 10 hours of digital training to 200 bricks-and-mortar businesses that are zoned as C1 or C2.

18. The HeyLocal platform is in the process of rolling out, which will provide local businesses with an opportunity to join a virtual marketplace to sell their products. The HeyLocal ecommerce platform is an online marketplace focused on providing businesses a simple platform that connects them to local consumers who are encouraged to shop locally. This solution came out of a challenge issued from ecosystem partners for an online platform. Out of a talented pool of applications, an independent panel of judges selected HeyLocal.
19. Invest Barrie continues to leverage its social media channels to promote the “support local” message across the City and has been regularly showcasing businesses through its regular blog posts on the Investbarrie.ca website. Invest Barrie will continue this activity, seeking new opportunities to support local business through messaging.
20. Working with all business stakeholders to develop, deliver, and promote programming, information and resources will remain critical throughout the second surge and into recovery.

#### Framework for the Second Set of Business and Community Consultations

21. Economic & Creative Development staff had proposed completing a second set of consultations with businesses and the impacts of COVID-19 for September 2020; however, staff determined it would be prudent to continue to assess the impacts of students returning to school, changes to business program subsidies and how the second surge of COVID-19 is affecting businesses before proceeding with consultations.
22. As such, staff are proposing undertaking a comprehensive consultation process in partnership with business community stakeholders in November 2020. An updated report will be brought forward to Council in January 2021, including findings and new recommendations in support of furthering recovery and building business resilience.
23. The goal of the November consultations will be to collect similar information on how businesses have been fairing since lockdown measures have eased, in order to gauge key needs, challenges in recovery and building resilience strategies, and how various factors (back to school, government subsidies, etc.) have impacted operations as a result of the second wave.
24. The first consultation process was a two-week period. Staff will be looking to extend the data collection period to approximately four weeks to provide more opportunity for business and public engagement.
25. Anticipated timing for consultations will begin the week of November 9<sup>th</sup> and carry through to Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup> with opportunities for businesses to engage through virtual sector focus groups or online survey methods; these will be conducted in partnership with key business service organizations including Tourism Barrie, Downtown BIA, Chamber of Commerce, the Sandbox, Barrie and District Real Estate Board, Simcoe County Homebuilders Association, Barrie Construction Association and the Henry Bernick Entrepreneurship Centre.
26. Members of the public will also have the opportunity to engage and provide feedback and suggestions through the City's website.

#### Requests for Funding and Programming in Support of Recovery Actions

#### ***Municipal Commitments to Funding Applications for Recovery***

- 
27. As all levels of government are rallying to deliver COVID-19 recovery supports and resources to businesses in support of stabilizing the economy, various funding applications are being released via Provincial and Federal programs that local business-support organizations can apply for to directly bring more funding into the business community.
  28. Staff are monitoring all applications and working with community partners, the County and the City of Orillia to complete applications for additional programming and funding supports that can be delivered into the local community. Examples include FedDev, OMAFRA Regional Development Programs and others.
  29. For some funding applications, a fiscal contribution may be a required or preferred criteria to be eligible for approval consideration. Being prepared to commit to a fiscal obligation ensures that funding applications can be turned around in a timely manner and that supporting businesses remains a top priority.

***Pilot Partnership with Georgian College's Department of Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship***

30. Economic & Creative Development and Georgian College's Department of Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship have been collaborating to deliver projects and programming in support of the local business community, and see greater opportunities to drive more short-term results and longer term resilience in the local economy as part of COVID-19 recovery.
31. As outlined in Appendix 'A' Georgian College's Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship team has requested a funding commitment through Economic & Creative Development of \$120,000 per year for two years according to the following allocations:
  - \$30,000 in a shared business development resource to specifically support companies in channeling high-potential companies into Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship programs, with a primary focus on applied research and innovation co-op streams.
  - \$15,000 to support entrepreneur/innovation co-op programming.
  - \$25,000 to support current delivery and expansion of the Further Faster entrepreneur training program that would include an online/remote delivery option.
  - \$50,000 to support mentorship programming. Funds would help offset the costs of specialized mentoring for innovative companies associated with the Henry Bernick Entrepreneurship Centre. Specific focus would be around unlocking investment, building intellectual (IP) strategies and commercializing innovation
32. Staff are recommending a one-year pilot to assess impact of funding, outcomes and benefits to business and will report back with future recommendations for a second year of funding.
33. Staff are also recommending a year one funding allocation of \$100,000, with \$25,000 being allocated and redeployed from existing Economic & Creative Development budgeted funding and \$75,000 to be funded from City Reserves.

***Extended Business in the Parks Program***

34. The Business in the Parks Pilot Program is open from September 8th to October 31st. The Economic & Creative Development Department is recommending extending the pilot program until

December 31st, 2020 to have outdoor space available for business use, should operating restrictions increase due to a second wave.

35. Further, given that overall demand has not been high for the program, staff will review uses and opportunities under the current application authority to identify additional options for use during the winter that can benefit businesses, as well as other internal departments or organizations such as Operations or the Downtown BIA.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Economic Context**

36. Overall, from April to September 2020, the City has retained an unemployment rate that is below the Provincial and Federal average. Barrie's unemployment rate averaged 9.97% over the April to September period, while the Provincial rate averaged 10.92% and the Federal rate was 11.1%.
37. Recently released statistics from the Labour Market Survey (Statistics Canada's monthly job report for August), identifies that Barrie was one of only four urban areas with a higher level of employment compared to August 2019. This trend has proven to be the case throughout the pandemic, with Barrie showing the best performance on employment of any Canadian CMA (Census Metropolitan Area) every month since April 2020. This is likely due to a growing local labour force and Barrie companies effectively maintaining or growing their workforce.
38. Nevertheless, COVID-19 has left a devastating effect on certain sectors of the national economy, and the impacts are consistent across Barrie. The Economic Recovery Action Plan identified six (6) key sectors on which to focus recovery efforts: Tourism, Manufacturing, Construction, Arts & Culture, Downtown, and Service-Based Businesses. The Tourism, Arts & Culture, and Service-Based sectors have been especially hard hit.
39. *Tourism* - Tourism Barrie recently released their recovery strategy with a focus on promoting local and encouraging residents to shop and support local. Hotel occupancy was higher than expected given pandemic concerns and outpaced Ontario market occupancies, driven by both leisure and construction markets. Despite these positive early results, room rates and occupancy levels are not expected to return to pre-COVID rates for some time. Indoor attraction businesses have been some of the hardest hit by the pandemic as health restrictions challenge re-opening; business closures have resulted.
40. *Manufacturing* - Several manufacturers were able to add new production lines to support COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE) efforts. Examples include Innovative Automation, Redline Breweries, Theta TTS, SBS Drivetec, Aeroex Technologies and Busch Systems. Some businesses have experienced challenges getting staff to return to work due to childcare obligations and the impact of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) program. While the sector has fared relatively well overall throughout the first wave of the pandemic, the typical contract cycle is generally longer for contract work commitments, and as such, impacts to this sector may be delayed and not emerge until Q4 2020 or Q1 2021. Global economic conditions will also impact this sector for an unknown period of time going forward.
41. *Construction* - The construction sector continues to be busy. The sector is facing product shortages due to supply chain issues, including delays at ports and back-up caused by other sectors that had to shut down. Currently, there is a lumber shortage which is affecting home construction and renovation projects. Companies in this sector are also facing ongoing challenges in finding skilled workers. Construction activity overall in Barrie is expected to remain strong despite these



challenges.

42. *Arts & Culture* - The Arts & Culture sector continues to struggle through the pandemic, as live performance events were one of the first to be shut down and will likely be one of the last to open. Many of the local City organizations had planned performances scheduled for 2020 that were not delivered, although costs were committed. While some have been able to move to online performances, the ability to generate revenue is limited. The MacLaren Art Centre has also been limited in its ability to deliver programming, visits and events due to gathering restrictions. Organizations continue to look to pivot and seek unique ways to deliver programming. Not all art forms are functional in the virtual performance space, such as orchestral and choir performances. All organizations will be significantly challenged in 2021 to maintain operations with lost ticket revenue and reduced sponsor revenues.
43. *Downtown* – Since the return of in-person dining, downtown restaurants and bars experienced strong patronage on warm days, especially during the last few weeks of August with patios open. Other types of shops are still struggling from diminished foot traffic. Childcare and the CERB have affected employee returns to retail jobs; as a result, owners have had to take on additional roles to keep their businesses open. Additional costs associated with PPE also remain a factor for businesses. The BIA continues to champion support local programs that bring patrons downtown safely. Construction of the Dunlop Streetscape project is expected to be complete in late November in time for holiday shopping.
44. *Service-Based Businesses* – Opening restrictions between Stage 2 and 3, as well as the nature of services offered, have resulted in some sub-sectors remaining relatively stable, such as professional service firms, while others have been more severely impacted, such as personal service firms like indoor gym/recreation and food services. Challenges related to capacity, costs of PPE and overall profitability remain, and result largely from the costs incurred due to early pandemic closures and reopening. Uncertainty around impacts of a second wave are also being heard through client interaction at the Small Business Centre.

#### Effectiveness of Actions - Highlights

45. A complete listing of the actions from the Economic Recovery Action Plan are listed in Appendix 'B'. The following are highlights of impacts of actions taken.
46. Barrie Recovery Kits were created to boost consumer and business confidence, as well as to help businesses in their journey of re-opening to the public. The kits included items such as face shields, wall decals, floor stickers and hand sanitizer. The recovery kit also provided digital tools and resources to champion and support local messaging and the #Barrietogether messaging being used on Invest Barrie's social channels.
  - 500 kits distributed in six weeks with distribution support from the Barrie Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Barrie BIA and Tourism Barrie offices were used as pick up locations;
  - Invest Barrie staff visited 244 businesses to conduct business retention & expansion (BR&E) connections while dropping off kits;
  - LinkedIn statistics: Recovery toolkit posts included posts from companies receiving toolkits as well as those populated through Invest Barrie. Posts experienced a 15% engagement rate (2% is considered healthy by industry standards).

- 
47. With support from Access Barrie, the #Barrietogether campaign was delivered; Invest Barrie's LinkedIn and Twitter accounts were leveraged to push out the campaign and support local themes. The campaign included an Explore Barrie video series to showcase various unique shopping activities in Barrie and feature new and long-standing businesses in different areas of the city. Invest Barrie is also featuring local companies and their stories of survival throughout the pandemic on a weekly basis.
48. During April and May the Small Business Centre delivered the Going Digital Project, intended to address urgent deficiencies in e-commerce capabilities by leveraging the existing resource of the Digital Service Squad to provide quick assessments of a business' online presence, provide feedback and, where appropriate, connect the business with a local Digital Agency capable of conducting the necessary improvements. In all, the program serviced 55 Barrie-based businesses and provided direction on actions for them to successfully pivot their operation to an online model.
49. Peer Mentorship Program - B.Line is a custom online peer mentoring platform underway to connect business owners with an experienced 'lifeline' in their time of need. This platform has been developed because of the pandemic. Staff in the Economic & Creative Development Department were able to negotiate a no-cost pilot with the technology vendor. The B.Line platform pilot will consist of 100 owners and entrepreneurs from the Barrie region, who will be matched based on skills, experiences and learning needs. The program involves five strategic partners and is slated to go live in October. Offering this service digitally allows mentorship conversations to take place in a safe and physically-distanced manner and provides users the opportunity to connect with each other in their own time.
50. The Small Business Centre partnered with Tourism Barrie and the Downtown BIA to deliver a 5-hour Food Safety Certification Course. The course was introduced as a webinar, and each partner purchased an equal share of 200 promotional codes which were distributed to businesses.
51. Economic & Creative Development repurposed funding normally allocated to the Arts Awards Program to focus budget and programming on delivering an extended Culture Days program that would help to infuse funds to local artists. Culture Days is being held in conjunction with the Open Air Dunlop pedestrianization pilot. Culture Days programming will include self-guided, passive experiences and online screenings, performances, readings, workshops and activities, engaging a broad swath of artists and arts organizations. The Arts Awards Program will return in 2021.
52. Council honoured their funding commitment to local arts organizations through the 2020 Cultural Grants Program. Some organizations have been applying their 2020 funding to new programs that can be completed digitally. Examples include:
- Theatre by the Bay utilized their project funding for the Emerging Directors Project to reflect the new realities of social distancing in an online, digital format.
  - Ontario Musicians Cooperative leveraged their funding to support the Emerging Musicians Program and moved their programs to an online presence for the summer of 2020. The focus is presently on training artists through webinars and online concerts, and working to create digital assets that can be used by the artists, program partners and the City.
  - Northern Appeal used their first ever cultural grant to develop their website when they could no longer print and distribute paper copies of the quarterly journal.



- 
53. Staff have completed focus groups with 2020 Cultural Grant Recipients to discuss their organizational needs and receive recommendations on the 2021 Cultural Grant Program. Staff are reviewing feedback for a simplified application process focusing on ensuring organizational sustainability and recovery and will be reporting back on a revised recommended application process.
54. Championing the arts remains a priority, and staff are focused on ensuring the connectivity of arts organizations, particularly for information sharing purposes and maintaining resource information on funding and other support programs. Economic & Creative Development will continue to pursue initiatives in support of the above as part of recovery.

Justification for Funding and Programming Requests in Support of Recovery Actions

***Up to \$75,000 for Municipal Commitments to Funding Applications for Recovery***

55. Being prepared to leverage all funding programs to draw resources and dollars into the community to support business is a top priority. New funding programs are being announced as part of the second wave to support PPE and hard-hit sectors, and others may follow. Being in a position to respond and apply quickly and commit to any municipal fiscal contribution where required or preferred will help secure funding supports into the City.
56. Should the City be able to secure \$1 million in funding investments through Provincial and Federal programs, that would represent a 1500% return on investment if the City were to commit \$75,000 to the delivery of recovery programming.

***\$75,000 Pilot Partnership with Georgian College's Department of Research, Innovation & Entrepreneurship***

57. The Georgian College Henry Bernick Entrepreneurship Centre (HBEC) was established in 2012 and has engaged with more than 1,200 local innovators and entrepreneurs. HBEC serves approximately 300 students and businesses annually and associated companies have generated \$19 million in revenue and created more than 750 full and part-time jobs.
58. Through Research and Innovation, more than 285 projects have been completed, engaging 49 faculty researchers and more than 800 students, and attracting more than \$2.5 million in funding for the College between the 2018/19 and 2019/20 fiscal years.
59. In preparing Barrie's economy for an extended period of national and global uncertainty, Invest Barrie and Georgian College can boost success rates of local companies for the immediate and long-term future. This unique and timely proposal would deliver on-the-ground supports for companies to:
- Save time and money by streamlining processes with advanced technologies (and often government funding), leading to increased productivity and decreased costs.
  - Increase revenues by identifying and developing new markets/opportunities and developing/securing their intellectual property, leading to sustainable long-term business growth.

- Navigate complex challenges at critical junctions of the business lifecycle (e.g., start-up and scale-up) through customized training and mentorship, leading to long-term economic security.
  - Execute innovative projects affordably by efficiently sourcing skilled workers through customized co-op placements, leading to increased employment and a stronger talent pipeline from Georgian to local industry.
60. Economic & Creative Development (ECD) currently invests approximately \$25,000 of its existing budget to support strategic programming within Georgian College's Department of Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship; this funding would be leveraged as part of the pilot partnership funding request. In addition to this \$25,000, ECD is requesting the allocation of \$75,000 from City reserves (totalling a year one funding allocation for the pilot partnership of \$100,000).

#### ***Extended Business in the Parks Program***

61. To date, as part of the Business in the Parks program, one business has taken out a permit for the use of Meridian Place to host yoga classes, which was deemed as successful by both the business owner and staff. There have been several inquiries for the use of the space, however, for various reasons, these businesses did not complete the permitting process.
62. Early feedback regarding the lack of follow-through has been related to weather, program timing, Provincial and Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit gathering limitations, as well as the stipulation that an eligible user must be a commercial operator (rather than resident) within the City of Barrie.
63. If increased operating restrictions are placed on businesses during a second wave of COVID-19, an extended Business in the Parks program could offer local businesses and organizations a potential lifeline for safely offering services. At the same time, staff will be reviewing the program in order to encourage greater uptake.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT MATTERS**

64. There are no environmental and/or climate change impact matters related to the recommendation.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

65. The following alternatives are available for consideration by General Committee:

##### **Alternative #1**

General Committee could decide to not to approve up to \$75,000 for municipal commitments to recovery funding applications.

This alternative is not recommended as the City needs to be prepared to respond to funding programs to support businesses with COVID-19 recovery.



---

**Alternative #2**

General Committee could not approve \$75,000 for a pilot partnership with Georgian College related to research, innovation and entrepreneurship.

This alternative is not recommended as staff have been actively collaborating with Georgian College on several initiatives; investing in an expanded program offering can boost success rates of local companies for the immediate and long-term future. This unique and timely proposal would deliver on-the-ground supports to companies as part of the recovery process.

**Alternative #3**

General Committee could approve another amount of their choosing for a pilot partnership with Georgian College for research, innovation and entrepreneurship.

This alternative is not recommended as staff have appropriately leveraged their existing budget to minimize additional reserve requests. The amount requested will activate a suite of additional programming that will directly impact businesses as part of economic recovery.

**Alternative #4**

General Committee could choose to not extend the Business in the Parks program.

This alternative is not recommended as staff have already developed the framework and application process and the pilot positions the City to be better prepared to leverage its outdoor spaces to support businesses, should there be any new restrictions implemented as part of the second wave.

**FINANCIAL**

66. Economic & Creative Development staff continue to invest in the Economic Recovery Action plan, reallocating existing budget dollars wherever possible in order to balance the City's fiscal position with the need to invest in recovery activities that are locally-focused and compliment financial programs at the Federal and Provincial levels.
67. As the current action plan continues to be implemented, action items requiring further investigation that result in a need for net new funds will be brought back to General Committee for consideration as required.

- 
68. Staff are requesting funding from the Community Benefit Reserve in the amount of \$150,000 - up to \$75,000 to leverage funding programs and \$75,000 for Georgian College Pilot. Funds will be utilized to leverage new or existing investments from other partners/funders to amplify impact of the Recovery Action Plan.
69. Should the City be able to secure \$1 million in funding investments through Provincial and Federal programs, that would represent a 1500% return on investment for the City's \$75,000 commitment to delivering recovery programming.
70. Return on investment for the pilot program with Georgian College can be measured through the increased number of Barrie businesses served through Georgian's research, innovation and entrepreneurship programming; the number of research projects completed; the investment that new, scaling and growing companies are able to realize; and the development and registration of new intellectual property.

**LINKAGE TO 2018-2022 COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN**

71. The recommendation(s) included in this staff report support the following goals identified in the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan:
- Growing Our Economy
72. The Economic Recovery Action Plan is a community effort that provides a set of meaningful recommendations that the City can practically implement to support the recovery of the economy from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

APPENDIX 'A'

Georgian College – Research Innovation & Entrepreneurship Presentation

# GET READY TO...

*Experience*  
 **Georgian**

ACCELERATE  
YOUR SUCCESS

## FROM STUDENT TO CEO

Georgian College and the City of Barrie

Leveraging Research, Innovation & Entrepreneurship for Student & Business Success

Fall 2020

Dept. of Research, Innovation & Entrepreneurship

*Experience*  
 **Georgian** | ACCELERATE  
YOUR SUCCESS

- Georgian and the City of Barrie have a long history of cooperation.
- We see eye to eye on Barrie's potential and the importance of our students and businesses.

## RESEARCH, INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP (RIE)







#### POWERFUL PROGRAMMING



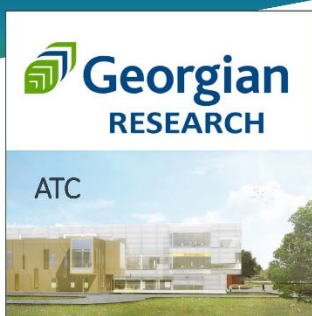
#### The FACTS

- Established 2012
- Engaged >1200 local innovators & entrepreneurs;
- \$4 M invested in Bernick-born companies;
- \$19M in revenue generated by HBEC companies;
- Serving ~300 clients annually (students & businesses)
- >750 jobs created (full-time + part-time);

Experience

Georgian

ACCELERATE  
YOUR SUCCESS



#### The FACTS – 2019-2020 Year

Metrics	2015/16	2016/17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Growth
Projects	50	76	114	120	166	38%
Faculty Researchers	14	26	34	33	49	48%
Student Researchers	80	127	246	352	452	28%
Industry Partners	43	51	76	68	93	37%
Government/ Industry Funding: Awarded	n/a	\$ 552,508	\$ 760,585	\$2,562,500	\$ 170,843	

#### THEMES



Experience

Georgian

ACCELERATE  
YOUR SUCCESS

## Companies are struggling with COVID

- Short-term need to adapt to new guidelines and changes in the market.
- Long-term need for talent & innovative solutions.
- Georgian is committed to helping the City deliver the COVID Recovery Plan.
- Georgian has many tools in our toolbox to help companies.
  - Applied research – funding is available for SMEs to do innovation projects.
  - Students and Faculty are available to help companies develop solutions.
  - Mentorship and network connections are available through HBEC.
  - Companies can access research facilities and equipment they may not have.



## Leveraging RIE to Drive Outcomes for City Initiatives

- City is committed to Innovation – internally and externally.
- The time is now to disrupt industry with top talent and ideas.
- Leverage existing initiatives like the Regional Manufacturing Partners Alliance; Xcelerate Summit; the Sandbox; SBEC.
- Together we are building the Central Ontario Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Cluster to connect the dots.
  - Link resources & people
  - Access funding together
  - Leverage our assets for business growth & expansion; talent attraction & retention.
- These efforts align with our Strategic Plan, called 30,000 Entrepreneurs

**EDUCATE**  
**INSPIRE**  
**ACTIVATE**

Our Mission



## The Gaps

- The pipeline – RIE has limited capacity to do business development so we are missing out on many important opportunities to connect with struggling companies; we need a person on the street to assess needs and channel companies our programs for support.
- COVID creates new co-op opportunities for students to work with companies to solve challenges; there are no funds to cover project expenses or compensate students for their work.
- Further Faster has been great but we need to take it fully online to reach more people; let's use the FF funds to expand FF via Bernick Online.
- RIE's mentor budget is fully allocated so there are few funds available to coach companies doing applied research projects; innovative companies are good at inventing but poor at implementing their IP to grow their business – this is where mentorship can really make the difference. Funds are needed to open up more mentorship for high potential manufacturers and technology companies.



## The Ask - \$120K per year, two year commitment

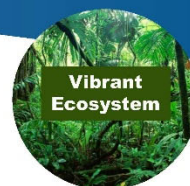
### *Annual Use of Funds*

- \$30K towards a business development officer: to act as a community liaison, channeling high-potential companies into RIE programs (**applied research**, i-co-op, social innovation, Further Faster, XcelerateHer; and linking these businesses with appropriate mentors and external resources and organizations, e.g The Sandbox, OCE, IRAP, FedDev, BDC, etc.)
- \$15K towards eCo-op / iCo-op – funds to support student projects with the City or City partners; funds are used to pay students for their work and buy project supplies.
- \$25K towards Further Faster – funds to supplement the cost of running and expanding this program; including online/remote delivery.
- \$50K Mentorship – funds to help cover the cost of mentoring innovative companies associated with HBEC or R&I; especially around unlocking investment; IP strategy; and commercialization of innovations.



## The Outcomes

- 30,000 Entrepreneurs reached through Bernick Online (by 2025)
- Steady pipeline of high potential companies accessing R&D services.
  - IP development and commercialization
  - Process & production optimization
  - Success stories
- 500 hours of mentorship for SMEs (IP strategy, Scale-up)
- 100 innovation projects; linked to students & industry partners
- Launch of Further Faster Online; with >200 local graduates



30,000 Followers



Experience  
Georgian

ACCELERATE  
YOUR SUCCESS

**APPENDIX 'B'**

**Economic Recovery Action Plan – Table of Actions**

**CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIONS**

Action	Description	Status	Stakeholder Partners	Budget Impacts	Update
ShopHERE Program	The City has recently partnered with Digital Main Street to launch the ShopHERE program in Barrie. This federally funded program is presented in partnership with Google, Shopify, Mastercard and Microsoft and will provide 50,000 business owners across Canada with an e-commerce capable website for free.	Delivered		FedDev Funded Program	Launched June 10th, 2020. 40 Barrie businesses are currently signed up, 7 of which have gone live with their new websites.
Entrepreneurial Programming for Small Business Supports	<p>Development of programs and supports designed to promote and assist small business owners. This is a constantly evolving and ongoing practice.</p> <p>The Small Business Centre will be applying for funding from the expanded Digital Main Street (DMS) program when applications open on July 1<sup>st</sup>. This program provides grants of \$2500 as well as up to 10 hours of expert digital assistance to registered businesses with a physical presence.</p> <p>The Going Digital Project leveraged the existing resource of the Digital Service Squad to provide quick assessments of a business' online presence, provide feedback and, where appropriate, connect the business with a local Digital Agency capable of conducting the necessary improvements. The program serviced 55 Barrie-based businesses.</p> <p>Provided 200 spaces for local busines in certified Retail &amp; Food Service Safety Training by Tourism Barrie and the BIA.</p>	In Progress	The Sandbox, Henry Bernick Entrepreneur -ship Centre (HBEC), Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Barrie, BIA	Currently operating within existing budget	DMS application accepted, providing \$50,000 to the Small Business Centre to deliver up to 10 hours of expert digital assistance. Program to start in October 2020.
Expanded Starter Company Plus Program	The 2020 Starter Company Plus program has been expanded to accept a 50% increase in program entrants along with a 50% increase in available grant funding to the participants. The Small Business Centre is working	In Progress	Province of Ontario (MEDJCT)	\$80,000 allocated existing budget	Intake – September 2020. 30 participants will be





**STAFF REPORT ECD015-20**  
November 2, 2020

Page: 20  
File:  
Pending #:  
P13/20 &  
P22/20

	with the Province to explore ways that this can be tailored to provide an increase in COVID-19 supports.				accepted into the program, with 16 receiving grants. This is a 50% increase in participants.
Online Marketplace Platform	In May 2020 the Xcelerate Challenge called for solutions to provide a Virtual Marketplace, where shoppers could purchase from multiple local stores on one web site. The Challenge attracted 11 entries, and an independent panel of judges selected the HeyLocal platform, an existing shopping platform based in the Kitchener/Waterloo Region. As this platform already exists, the delivery time for a Barrie site is very short (2-3 weeks). This program fits seamlessly with the ShopHERE program and the announcement of the Sandbox's partnership with Shopify, as the HeyLocal platform is designed to work hand-in-hand with Shopify's technology.	In Progress	HBEC, BIA & Chamber	Existing Budget	Local businesses are starting to list on the platform. This will increase significantly in the near future due to the completion of an automated tool.
Wi-Fi Access Waterfront & Downtown	Wi-Fi infrastructure has been installed for waterfront connectivity between Southshore Centre through Heritage Park. Downtown infrastructure will be installed as part of Streetscaping Project.	Delivered	City IT Department	Existing Budget	Dunlop St to be completed, along with completion Streetscaping Project
Rental of City Park Space for Commercial Use	Continued exploration of the potential to utilize public park space to help businesses that require distancing measures. The City of Barrie has moved ahead with the Business in the Parks Pilot Program that will run from September 8th to October 31st. The Business in the Parks Pilot Program operates out of Meridian Place and the Kiwanis Pavillion at the South Shore Park. We are currently gauging the popularity of the program and any feedback.	Delivered	BIA	No budget allocations	Approved by Council August 10, 2020. Pilot runs until end of October 31 <sup>st</sup> . Extension requested.
Pedestrianization of Dunlop Street Pilot	Open Air Dunlop has been taking place over four Saturdays from the last weekend in September to mid-October.	In Progress	BIA	\$10,000 contribution approved by Council in addition to existing staff budget for Culture Days	Approved by Council and mid-way through project with early positive outcomes.





**STAFF REPORT ECD015-20**  
November 2, 2020

Page: 21  
File:  
Pending #:  
P13/20 &  
P22/20

Promoting Curbside Pick-up Downtown through Temporary Loading Zones	In May 2020, Council approved changing downtown parking spaces into temporary loading zones. This allows consumers to park for short periods on downtown streets without the need to pay for parking in order to better enable curbside pickup of meals and other purchases.	Delivered	Waterfront businesses, Tourism Barrie		Completed, BIA has requested that loading zones remain in place
Promoting Accessibility through the Provision of Free Parking in Downtown Parking Lots	In response to COVID-19, the city did not enforce downtown parking lots.	Delivered	BIA, Transit & Parking Services	Net revenue loss	Paid parking
Expanding Transit to Overnight Service - Data Collection with Industry	<p>Working with industry to gather data on shift schedules, current and potential demand in order to assess service solutions.</p> <p>Generally low response rate to the survey. Overnight transit was not identified as an immediate need for those who responded</p> <p>As follow up to the transit survey, Invest Barrie staff, along with transit staff, have reached out to participating businesses to discuss their needs and also to explain and promote the new on-demand transit service being offered on a pilot basis.</p>	Delivered	Chamber of Commerce, Local Industry	Existing staff Resources	<p>Survey conducted from July 17- July 31</p> <p>Invest Barrie staff is reaching out pro-actively to businesses located on the "on-demand" route to explain the benefits and answer questions regarding how it works.</p>
Development Services - Increase Online and Paperless Application Activities	<p>COVID-19 has resulted in all application activity being received online only.</p> <p>This has resulted in no service disruptions in application submission and review, and efficiencies in the review process.</p> <p>Staff are continuing to update the APLI application to improve utility and user experience.</p>	In progress	Barrie Construction Association, Simcoe County Homebuilders Association	Existing staff Resources	Ongoing
Development Action Team	<p>Regular development review meetings with Planning, Economic &amp; Creative Development and Chief Building Official to identify discuss current and upcoming projects to support resource planning.</p> <p>Early issue identification and development timelines, allowing for improved customer responsiveness and a solution-driven approach that supports a "getting to yes" culture with staff.</p>	Delivered	Internal City Departments	Existing staff Resources	Meetings are ongoing and scheduled regularly.



Better Preparing Business for the Building Permit Process	Development of tools and resources that better prepare businesses, especially new businesses, to submit complete applications. Better preparing businesses pre-application about the City's requirements ensures more robust submissions that can be processed more efficiently. Building on the informational bulletins, and checklists, Invest Barrie will work with Building services to develop a series of tips and instructional videos to better prepare businesses pre-lease and pre-application.	In Progress	Barrie Construction Association, Development Community	\$5,000 for material development and promotion in addition to staff resources.	2021 project delivery
Program Review and Adaptation of Arts & Culture Programming for Sector Recovery	<p>Adaptation and development of programming that will support sustainability of the arts &amp; culture community in Barrie.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of 2020 grants program to ensure sustainability of the City's arts organizations;</li> <li>• Provision of City's theatre and performance spaces;</li> <li>• Opportunities to leverage Culture Days, Arts Awards and educational programming to drive recovery; and</li> <li>• Discussion of how public art and the Barrie Public Art Committee can drive initiatives in the recovery process.</li> </ul> <p>Approximately \$30,000 reallocated budget to support extended Culture Days to promote the arts sector, with the 2020 Arts Awards postponed for this year.</p>	In Progress	City Staff, Barrie Public Art Committee, Artists and Arts & Culture Organizations	Additional Staffing Resources: \$15,000 existing budget; additional funding requests to be determined with review process. \$339,750 investment retained in cultural grants in support of recovery.	<p>Culture Days in Progress</p> <p>Focus Group Sessions held with 2020 Culture Grant Recipients to discuss needs for 2021 program.</p>
Care Kitchen	Create efficient food systems for at-risk community members through public-private partnerships. Funds raised for collaborative meal preparation and grocery distribution programs, with food banks and shelters, commercial kitchens, restaurants, and other community organizations and foundations.	In Progress	Barrie Community Foundation, Barrie Colts Foundation, Downtown Barrie BIA, Barrie Food Bank, Ontario Musician's Co-op Inc	Philanthropy Review required to determine opportunity for shared resources.	<p>2 programs launched</p> <p>300 deliveries to date, with plan for annual services</p>
<b>**NEW**</b> Strategic Manufacturing Sector Projects	Includes development and publication of a joint communications initiative, and pursuit of potential funding opportunities to drive sector growth.	In Progress	Simcoe County, Georgian College, Lakehead University, City of Orillia	Allocation of existing budget	Regional Manufacturing Partnership forming, with first communication in October 2020

### CONFIDENCE BUILDING ACTIONS

Action	Description	Status	Stakeholder Partners	Budget Impacts	Update
Marketing Program "Barrie Together"	<p>Respondents across all sectors and feedback avenues voiced their desire for a City-led marketing campaign to champion Barrie businesses and build consumer confidence.</p> <p>With Communications and with support from local stakeholders, Invest Barrie has launched a marketing and messaging campaign to rally business and community in building consumer confidence and shopping local.</p> <p>The 'Barrie Together – the Power of Community' will be a series of messages, demonstrating the power of shopping local, highlighting local businesses that have adapted their business models to adapt to cleaning protocols, tips for business on developing customer experience and champion confidence in business recovery.</p>	Delivered	All	\$35,000 – campaign execution	Campaign is evolving, with Provincial opening measures ongoing.
Recovery Toolkit	<p>As part of the recovery marketing messaging, businesses have received floor decals with branded messaging and physical distancing messaging and window decals championing shopping local.</p> <p>The SBEC, BIA and Tourism Barrie have sponsored 'Safe Service' training and a 5 Hour Food Safety Certification Course for up to 200 participants.</p> <p>Invest Barrie and stakeholders are reviewing other health and safety programming to support businesses with educating themselves and their employees.</p> <p>Provincial and Health Unit health and safety guidelines are being communicated to local businesses.</p>	Delivered	BIA, Tourism Barrie, Sandbox, Chamber of Commerce, HBEC	Within Existing Budget	500 kits distributed to Barrie businesses

	Invest Barrie continues to update the Resources for Business web page to provide a single source of reliable, up-to-date, easy to assimilate information regarding supports, programs and relief efforts.				
Getting a "One Voice" Message out for the Tourism Industry	Ties to the Marketing Plan, but important to separately identify one consistent message for tourism that will be used by all stakeholders once the City is at a stage to welcome tourists to the area (the City, Tourism Barrie, Chamber of Commerce, BIA, etc.).	In Progress	Tourism Barrie, Chamber, BIA, etc.	To be assessed	To be released when local and Provincial restrictions permit.
Improving Wayfinding Signage to Downtown	Identified in Tourism Master Plan and the Downtown Parking Strategy as recommendations to attract patrons to the downtown. Aligning recommendations between strategies, in consultation with BIA and Tourism to determine project scope, timeline and costs.	Explore	BIA, Tourism Barrie	Staff resource to complete analysis  Costs of implementation to be determined	Both plans to be presented to Council in Fall, 2020.
Mayor's Innovation Awards	Annual awards program recognizing achievements of Barrie businesses, organizations, and citizens.  The 2020 program has been evolved to reflect the challenges of this unprecedented year, with 3 new categories encompassing all business sectors, stages, and sizes.	In Progress	City staff	Within existing budget	Nominations to launch with awards in winter 2021.

## CAPITAL BUILDING ACTIONS

Action	Description	Status	Stakeholder Partners	Budget Impacts	Timeline
Provide Education and Information Opportunities for Local Vendors to do Business with the City of Barrie	<p>Staff will be pursuing the following initiatives:</p> <p>Education: helping businesses to understand all our requirements and how to best bid</p> <p>Informing: helping local companies be aware of procurement opportunities, and developing opportunities to provide information exchanges between new, local companies and staff (i.e. trade show format)</p> <p>Invest Barrie staff has been working with Purchasing staff to investigate options available to promoting local. Staff</p>	Explore	Internal – Finance/Purchasing	Staff Resourcing and Existing Budget	Fall/ Winter 2020 - Exploring virtual programs to deliver an outline for delivery 2021



**STAFF REPORT ECD015-20**  
**November 2, 2020**

**Page: 25**  
**File:**  
**Pending #:**  
**P13/20 &**  
**P22/20**

---

	are pursuing options for virtual tradeshow platforms and associated costs.				
--	--	--	--	--	--