



## ***MEDIA RELEASE***

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### ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

## **City Council approves plan to attract business, create jobs**

(Barrie, ON) On April 26, City Council approved a strategy to ensure large parcels of land in the city are ready for future business and employment opportunities in Barrie. As part of the strategy, Council committed \$18.6 million to advance planned infrastructure servicing on some of the employment lands.

"Growing our economy is Council's top priority," said Mayor Jeff Lehman. "To recover strong from COVID, Barrie needs to have a broad supply of market-ready, serviced lands for our manufacturers and other major employers to grow. This strategy is a big step forward in helping Barrie compete as a location for business and is a major commitment to attracting new jobs."

The Greater Toronto Area is the third largest industrial market in North America. The strength of the market places a premium on the price of available employment lands. This is compounded in Barrie where there are very few larger shovel-ready parcels of employment lands available for purchase. In September 2020, City Council directed staff to explore fiscal tools and strategies to increase Barrie's competitiveness in attracting business and investment.

To advance local servicing costs to be incurred within the next five years for lands identified in the Barrie Employment Lands Strategy, staff will work on developing a program to incentivize strategic economic development on employment lands. The program could include grants and other financial incentives permitted under the Community Improvement Plan framework.

"Taking a more aggressive and proactive approach to fostering the availability of employment lands in the city provides the opportunity for Barrie to position itself more competitively in the marketplace and stand out amongst other Ontario municipalities who all generally rely on similar investment tools to attract development and investment, said Stephannie Schlichter, Director of Economic Development."

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