



SUBJECT: Alignment and monitoring of Council approved recommendations and Council Workshops

TO: Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk & Accountability Cttee.

FROM: Office of the City Clerk

Report Number: CL-12-23

Wards Affected: n/a

Date to Committee: May 3, 2023

Date to Council: June 13, 2023

Recommendation:

Receive and file office of the city clerk's report CL-12-23 providing alignment and monitoring of Council approved recommendations and Council Workshops.

PURPOSE:

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture
- Deliver customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation

Background and Discussion:

The City of Burlington's Council is responsible for ensuring strategy, policy, budgets and advocacy are aligned to accomplish the short- and long-term goals of the City. In doing so, it has a number of tools through which these objectives are accomplished. Chief among these tools is approval of recommendations made through staff reports and the supplementary staff directions made by Council. With over 200 reports received by Council in any year, there is a significant number of recommendations and staff directions considered. In addition, the City has its strategic directions set in [Vision 2040](#), outlines its corporate workplan in [Vision to Focus](#) (V2F) and outlines the service objectives in annually updated [Service Business Plans](#).

The tracking and monitoring of all of this work is important to ensure accountability and achievement of goals. Through discussions, staff have been working to systematically align and integrate the various staff directions, report recommendations and other decision items to be executed as a result of Council's decisions.

In reviewing the sources of information (e.g. staff directions, report recommendations, V2F actions, service objectives, etc.), we have identified where the information is or is not available and is or is not tracked. This analysis has highlighted opportunities for improvement based on the following categories:

1. Staff Directions

In 2021, The Office of the City Clerk solidified a new process to record and track staff directions through eScribe. Once a month, a report of outstanding staff directions is distributed to the Burlington Leadership Team (BLT) for their review and requests for changes to dates to be advised to the Office of the City Clerk. Additionally, once a quarter, the outstanding staff directions are reviewed by BLT as part of our regular agenda/report management preparation and review to ensure staff directions are addressed as required. As staff directions are addressed, the disposition is indicated in eScribe to close the loop.

For Council, the procedure by-law references section "40.2 The Clerk shall keep a list of approved staff directions. After each Council meeting a list of approved staff directions arising from that meeting will be entered into the municipality's meeting management system, and a report will be issued to Council and the Burlington Leadership Team. 40.3 Quarterly, a full listing of outstanding staff directions will be issued by the Clerk and the list will be circulated by way of memorandum in the Council Information Package."

CONCLUSION: This process is working as intended and no changes are recommended at this time.

2. Staff Report Recommendations Approved by Council including Budget Related

In this area, there is no formal recording and tracking process established. There is no question accountability for reporting back at a later date is important to ensure open matters are closed and commitments are kept. At this point, these commitments are managed and followed by the named position within the recommendation.

CONCLUSION: Opportunity for improvement - The City Clerk will work with our partners in Burlington Digital Services (BDS) and with other relevant stakeholders to design and implement a process to record and track recommendations contained within reports specifically where such recommendations contain a commitment to report back. Such process will include the necessary monitoring and review similar to the process established for staff directions.

3. V2F and Vision 2040 Actions

V2F contains the key actions having the most impact in advancing our progress towards our aspirational goals. In 2021, the Corporate Strategy Team engaged initiative leads and established semi-annual updates and reporting to Council on the status of key actions identified in V2F. In addition, a dashboard was implemented in collaboration with our Data Analytics and Visualization team (in BDS) and accessible by Council, management and staff.

CONCLUSION: Opportunity for improvement - As our processes become more mature in the development of V2F 2.0, there is continued work with our partners in BDS to introduce an updated version of the dashboard with a new and improved look and feel. This new version will first provide the measures to show how the City is progressing to target and permit the user to drill down to understand the initiatives underway to drive the progress. This version of the dashboard will be public facing so all can be aware of the progress.

In providing this new and improved dashboard, there is collaborative work with initiative leads and other partners to ensure a regular routine and pace for updates to information is established. In addition, as part of the preparations and planning for developing Vision 2050, there will be more focus on the headline measures to demonstrate where the City is making progress towards its aspirational goals. This work will leverage the V2F dashboard work.

4. Service Business Plan Objectives

These are the initiatives identified in service business plans and these are the responsibility of the service leads/managers, directors and executive directors to track, monitor and revise as needed based on the business needs and changes. Each year, service leads are responsible for updating their service business plans and indicating through the continuous improvement section how the objectives they accomplish have translated into more effective, efficient and economical delivery of the service and how it has improved the customer's experience.

CONCLUSION: Opportunity for improvement – While the responsibility and accountability rests with the service leads/managers, the functional requirements to track and monitor progress towards achieving service objectives will be identified as part of continuous improvement in deploying a technology solution to support the business plans and associated performance measures.

5. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

In May 2021 when the City refined its strategic plan Vision 2040, Council and staff had the discussion about the UNSDGs and how they relate to the City's own aspirational goals. Mapping the UNSDGs to the four strategic directions provided a starting point in furthering our understanding of how the UNSDGs and our aspirational goals align. There is an outstanding staff direction – “Direct the Executive Director of Strategy, Risk and Accountability to hold a workshop by the end of 2023 on the role of SDGs in municipalities in Canada. (SD-12-21)” and this will be addressed during the work to update the City's strategic plan to Vision 2050. As indicated in the milestones in [CS-01-23 Appendix A](#), this work will take place in 2024. As V2F 2.0 is developed, there will be a lens as to how our initiatives align to the UNSDGs.

6. Deputy Mayor Workplans

With the work underway to define V2F 2.0, it is very likely the Deputy Mayor workplans will evolve and be rooted in V2F initiatives. With this will be the tracking, monitoring, and reporting as defined under V2F and Vision 2040 Actions above. As the Deputy Mayor role continues to evolve, further refinement of what is needed to support the tracking, monitoring, and reporting will be identified.

Council Workshops

At the start a new term of Council, an unprecedented 15 council workshops are scheduled for the remainder of 2023, including three new workshop dates added for May, June, and July to accommodate time-sensitive/prioritized matters and Vision to Focus. At the time of writing, there is one additional workshop request in Q2 for Vision to Focus. The most up-to-date list of council workshops is attached as appendix A.

The City's procedure by-law describes council workshops as meeting for:

“training, discussions with other levels of government and outside agencies, workshops on complex matters or strategic planning.”

This definition casts a wide net for what may come forward as a topic for a council workshop. Presently, council workshops are requested by staff through the office of the city clerk and reviewed by BLT on a quarterly basis. The function of the clerk's office is

administrative and limited to scheduling and assisting with meeting logistics. There is no mechanism in place for determining the need for a workshop as opposed to alternative methods of communicating with Council.

Clerk's staff are working with corporate strategy to develop a review process, and a rubric to ensure the need for a workshop related to that matter is substantiated and aligns with Council's priorities. The procedure will include:

- Definitions to clarify the purpose of a council workshop (in alignment with the City's procedure by-law);
- Criteria and a rubric for assessing council workshop requests;
- Method for scheduling and prioritizing council workshop items;
- Standardized workshop formats and room layouts;
- Alternative options to provide information to Council including staff reports, presentations to committee, and CIP memos.

This new procedure will give structure to the council workshop booking process, ensuring council workshops are available for the most relevant purposes. Implementation is targeted for Q3 2023.

Financial Matters:

Not applicable.

Climate Implications:

Not applicable.

Engagement Matters:

Not applicable.

Conclusion:

The City of Burlington's confidence in achieving its short- and long-term goals is a function of its ability to deliver on Council's decisions and directions. In the spirit of continuous improvement, there are opportunities to enhance and refine the monitoring and tracking of Council recommendations and directions and to align Council workshops to Council priorities.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendices:

A. 2023 Council Workshop Requests - May to December

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.