



# BURNABY BUSINESS RECOVERY TASK FORCE



## FINAL ACTION PLAN



BUSINESS RECOVERY  
SUPPORTERS:



### **About the Burnaby Board of Trade**

As Burnaby's chamber of commerce and the City's economic development partner, the Burnaby Board of Trade (BBOT) is one of the region's largest and most active business associations. Working closely with the municipality, its members, and various community stakeholders, the BBOT supports the growth of business and fosters a socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable business environment. The Burnaby Board of Trade acts as a Catalyst for economic development in Burnaby and across the region, a Convener of business, community and political leadership and a Champion for the businesses who make Burnaby their home.

### **About the SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue**

Simon Fraser University's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue fosters shared understanding and positive action through dialogue and engagement. As a trusted convener and hub for community initiatives, we have engaged hundreds of thousands of participants to create solutions for many of society's most pressing issues.

### **About this Document**

The purpose of this document is to provide a detailed overview of the process, vision and final action plan of the Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force. This document was compiled by Zaria Alibhai and the SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Simon Fraser University. Any works referring to this material should cite:

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# **BURNABY BUSINESS RECOVERY TASK FORCE FINAL ACTION PLAN**

July 16, 2020



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# A Message from the Chair of the Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force

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As President & CEO of the Burnaby Board of Trade and Chair of the *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force*, I am delighted to present this final report.

When the impacts of COVID-19 were first felt by the business community in March of this year, the Burnaby Board of Trade's purpose as the champion for local business came into clearer focus than ever. Our immediate efforts were to advocate for the needs of Burnaby businesses and provide resources and support to our business community. As businesses across the city were being forced to temporarily close their doors and find ways to reduce costs, we fought for financial supports from all levels of government and worked to provide businesses with the most timely and relevant information and resources available.

As closures and curtailments began to ebb, the establishment of the *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force* was a key next step in helping our business community move beyond immediate survival measures and to look at ways to build out our recovery. Members of the Task Force included representatives from a broad range of business sectors and employer sizes, post-secondary institutions, local government, labour and the non-

profit sector, and the outcomes reflect that diversity of thought and experience.

Over the last two and a half months, Task Force members have worked diligently to develop, refine and, ultimately, ratify the actions and initiatives you will find in this report. I am confident that these plans will help businesses return to profitable operations, make our local economy stronger and more resilient, and position Burnaby as a model for post-COVID-19 recovery.

My team and I at the Burnaby Board of Trade and our volunteers, along with our many excellent partners, will be laser-focused on the implementation of the contents of this report and look forward to working with you all as we move forward together.

I'd like to thank Mayor Hurley for his and the City of Burnaby's considerable support, and all Task Force members for contributing so much of their valuable time and expertise to this process. The Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue provided world-class facilitation and program development, supported effectively by members of the Secretariat. The support of our Business Recovery Partners was also paramount in making this effort possible, and I thank them for their leadership: ABC Recycling, BCIT School of Business and Media, Electronic Arts Canada, Pacific Blue Cross, Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers, and TD Canada Trust.

Finally, I offer a thank you to all who form part of the most diverse, dynamic, resourceful and entrepreneurial business community I can imagine. If we continue working together and collaborating on executing this plan and future initiatives, then the sky really is the limit.

Sincerely,  
**Paul Holden**  
**President & CEO, Burnaby Board of Trade**

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# A Message from the Mayor

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To our Burnaby community,

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our way of life; from the way we interact with family and friends, to the way we do business in our City. But it has also illustrated the strength and resilience of the Burnaby community.

The final report published by the Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force represents a community-wide effort to help Burnaby businesses get back on their feet. Task Force members include Board of Trade members, major employers, small businesses, labour and non-profits, post-secondary institutions and senior members of our own City staff.

The diversity of the Task Force helped to generate creative and innovative recommendations contained in this report. Each Task Force member went above and beyond to contribute to this report. Their work is a testament to their dedication to lifting up our community in times of crisis.

The City of Burnaby is fortunate to enjoy a close working relationship with the Burnaby Board of Trade, especially during this critical time. It has enabled us to move quickly on solutions to get businesses moving again in Burnaby and to spur economic activity in our community.

And on a personal level, this process has given me a greater sense of the challenges and opportunities our local businesses face on a daily basis.

I am confident that the recommendations proposed in this final report will help local businesses navigate this moment and lead to greater prosperity in the future. I anticipate that the creation of new resources, such as the Centre for Business Recovery, will lead to lasting opportunities for Burnaby businesses.

I'd like to thank our partners at the Burnaby Board of Trade for bringing this Task Force together, the SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue for facilitating our discussions and to my fellow task force members for your commitment and hard work.

As a City, we will continue to work with the Board of Trade to ensure we do everything we can to support our local business community.

Sincerely,  
**Mayor Mike Hurley**







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# Table of Contents

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<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Context Statement .....	10
Task Force Members .....	11
Task Force Secretariat .....	12
Task Force Process .....	14
Task Force Vision .....	16
<b>Task Force Outputs</b> .....	<b>17</b>
Quick Starts.....	17
Action Areas For Economic Recovery And Stabilization:.....	18
1. Create a “Burnaby Centre for Business Recovery and Resilience” .....	18
2. Advocate for new grants or WorkSafeBC rebates to pay for PPE and safety equipment .....	19
3. Launch a Burnaby PPE supplier list.....	19
4. Create more opportunities for patios and outdoor dining.....	20
5. Enable business use of public property unrelated to the sale of food and beverage .....	20
6. Work with the childcare sector and employers to support parents returning to work.....	21
7. Launch a “Recovery Policy Working Group” to advocate to senior government for additional financial supports.....	22
8. Develop a “Business Digital Development Support Program” .....	22
9. Explore the potential to pilot a “Digital Main Street” initiative in Burnaby .....	23
10. Expand communications efforts to connect businesses with existing economic recovery information & resources .....	23
11. Engage with & advocate to financial institutions on ways unlock capital for business loans.....	23
12. Create incentives and supports to position Burnaby as a hub for new businesses and entrepreneurs .....	24
13. Expand the “#BuyLocalBuyBurnaby” Program.....	24
<b>Next Steps</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Appendix I: Quick Start Action Plans</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>Appendix II: Action Plans for Economic Recovery and Stabilization</b> .....	<b>31</b>

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# Executive Summary

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The Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force (the “Task Force”) was created as an initiative of the Burnaby Board of Trade, the City of Burnaby’s chamber of commerce and economic development organization. The work of the Task Force was sponsored by Pacific Blue Cross, BCIT School of Business + Media, Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers, ABC Recycling, TD Canada Trust and Electronic Arts Canada, and was facilitated by Simon Fraser University’s Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue (the “Centre for Dialogue”). The Task Force comprised of senior representatives from local government, major employers, small businesses, non-profits, labour unions and post-secondary institutions. The mandate of the Task Force was to develop a strategy to help businesses cope with the ongoing crisis, plan their recovery once current COVID-19 restrictions are relaxed and lifted, and ultimately rebuild the local economy for the long term.

The Task Force developed a detailed plan with 13 actions for economic stabilization, recovery and rebuilding, including six actions that the Task Force identified as “Quick Starts” (QS) during early deliberations. These actions support the Task Force vision for an economic future that promotes equity and sustainability, creates jobs and financial opportunity, supports major employers and generates pride in local, independent, and community-involved businesses.

The full list of actions developed include:

1. Create a “Burnaby Centre for Business Recovery and Resilience”
2. (Quick Start) Advocate for new grants or WorkSafeBC rebates to pay for PPE and safety equipment
3. (Quick Start) Create a Burnaby PPE Supplier List
4. (Quick Start) Create more opportunities for patios and outdoor dining
5. (Quick Start) Enable business uses of public property beyond the sale of food and beverage
6. (Quick Start) Work with the childcare sector and employers to support parents returning to work
7. (Quick Start) Launch a “Recovery Policy Working Group” to advocate to senior government for additional financial supports
8. Develop a “Business Digital Development Support Program”
9. Explore the potential to pilot a “Digital Main Street” initiative in Burnaby



10. Expand communications efforts to connect businesses with existing economic recovery information & resources
11. Engage with & advocate to financial institutions on ways unlock capital for business loans
12. Create incentives and supports to position Burnaby as a hub for new businesses and entrepreneurs
13. Expand the “#BuyLocalBuyBurnaby” program.

While the formal mandate of the Task Force has concluded, work to advance the Action Plans presented in this report continues. Over the coming months, the Burnaby Board of Trade and its partners will continue to monitor and evaluate the needs of the Burnaby business community, engage with diverse businesses and take steps to ensure the successful implementation of the Task Force’s Final Action Plan.

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# Introduction

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## CONTEXT STATEMENT

On March 11<sup>th</sup> 2020, the World Health Organization officially announced COVID-19 as a global pandemic. As this new coronavirus spread respiratory infections across the globe, concerns around health impacts, transmission, travel, supply chains and the economy began to rise. Business closures and curtailment became more common as public health restrictions tightened and social distancing became the new norm.

The creation of the Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force came at a moment where a once strong business community began facing significant financial, operating and employment hardships due to the pandemic. Businesses in Burnaby reported experiencing decreased sales volumes, layoffs or reduced staff hours and deferred marketing or capital spending more than the provincial average. By April, applications for business licenses in Burnaby also decreased by 46% compared to 2019. Burnaby businesses required immediate support and they needed a roadmap to rebuild and recover from the crisis.

The Task Force was created with the mandate to identify actions that could support local businesses in coping during the immediate crisis, plan their recovery once social isolation measures have been relaxed or lifted, and ultimately rebuild for the long-term.

## TASK FORCE MEMBERS

With a large geographic size and multiple town centres, Burnaby has a dynamic and diverse business community. The broad-based group of 15 Task Force members included senior representatives from the City of Burnaby, major employers, small businesses, non-profits, and post-secondary institutions, to name a few. The full membership of this Task Force was as follows:

<b>Roberto Aiello,</b>	<b>Director – Customer Solutions Delivery, TELUS</b>
<b>Joanne Curry,</b>	<b>Vice President - External Relations, Simon Fraser University</b>
<b>Leelah Dawson,</b>	<b>Dean – School of Business + Media, British Columbia Institute of Technology</b>
<b>Paul Holden,</b>	<b>President &amp; CEO, Burnaby Board of Trade</b>
<b>Steve Hunt,</b>	<b>Director – District 3, United Steelworkers</b>
<b>Mike Hurley,</b>	<b>Mayor, City of Burnaby</b>
<b>Mike Kaerne,</b>	<b>Owner, HollyNorth Production Supplies</b>
<b>Isabel Kolic,</b>	<b>Executive Director, Heights Merchants Association</b>
<b>Ed Kozak,</b>	<b>Director of Planning, City of Burnaby</b>
<b>Dana Martin,</b>	<b>District Vice President, Scotiabank</b>
<b>Molly Mason-Boule,</b>	<b>Vice President, Electronic Arts</b>
<b>Michael McKnight,</b>	<b>CEO, United Way of the Lower Mainland</b>
<b>Leza Muir,</b>	<b>COO, Pacific Blue Cross</b>
<b>Chris Peters,</b>	<b>Executive Director, Tourism Burnaby</b>
<b>Andrew Scott,</b>	<b>Board Chair, Burnaby Board of Trade</b>



## TASK FORCE SECRETARIAT

A secretariat consisting of the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, the Burnaby Board of Trade and the City of Burnaby convened to plan the agendas for each meeting on a rolling basis. The Secretariat also researched policy and programs, designed and conducted a survey of businesses, presented data and information, developed actions, and guided the work of the Task Force. The members of this secretariat were:

<b>Lee-Ann Garnett,</b>	<b>Assistant Director - Long Range Planning, City of Burnaby</b>
<b>Paul Holden,</b>	<b>President &amp; CEO, Burnaby Board of Trade</b>
<b>Robin Prest,</b>	<b>Program Director, SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue</b>
<b>Cory Redekop,</b>	<b>Director of Policy &amp; Stakeholder Relations, Burnaby Board of Trade.</b>



*Photo of Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force Members meeting via Zoom. Absent from the photo: Roberto Aiello, Molly Mason-Boule, and Chris Peters*







## TASK FORCE PROCESS

The work of the Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force was conducted over a series of 10 virtual meetings, which were chaired by Paul Holden, President and CEO of the Burnaby Board of Trade, and facilitated by Robin Prest, Program Director of the SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. The mandate of the Task Force was to work on the following actions:

1. Mapping economic impacts and areas of need for Burnaby businesses
2. Creating a vision and principles to guide Burnaby's economic recovery and the work of the Task Force
3. Identifying quick starts that can begin immediately to fill critical needs
4. Surfacing potential strategies that can support the current stabilization, short-term recovery and longer-term rebuilding of Burnaby's economy
5. Developing a Final Action Plan and next steps, including the Task Force's role going forward.

To fulfil this mandate, the Task Force's meetings were grouped in three stages:

- Stage 1 – Goals, Problem Statement and Mapping;
- Stage 2 – Idea Generation;
- Stage 3 – Action Plan Development.

In Stage 1, the Task Force developed a vision and guiding principles, then proceeded to work on identifying the critical needs of Burnaby businesses. By meeting three, the Task Force had already produced a series of six Quick Start Priorities for immediate action. A full list of Quick Starts can be found in Appendix I of this report.

As part of Stage 2, the Task Force asked the Burnaby business community to participate in a survey to generate ideas and evaluate the importance of the developed Quick Starts. The survey asked for input on the supports, new ideas and special initiatives that could support the business community in the short term. The public input collected from this survey was presented to the Task Force and guided the creation of a set of Economic Recovery and Stabilization Action Ideas.



Some of the feedback collected from the survey included:

- 78% of respondents identified guidance on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be important or very important for their reopening;
- 86% of respondents deemed Buying Local an important facet of reopening; and
- 92% identified addressing cash flow issues as important.
- Additionally, several new ideas were suggested through the survey, such as:
  - Provide assistance and guidance for businesses to go online or pivot their model of business;
  - Turn Burnaby into a hub for new businesses, including developing supports/coaching, waiving first-year license fees, accelerating permits and approvals, finding vacant spaces that can be donated to pilot storefronts, etc.;
  - Create more parklets and add more tables/benches to high streets to enable more outdoor dining/living space; and
  - Launch a campaign to rebuild consumer confidence.

The last four meetings of the Task Force fell under Stage 3 – Action Development. With the community’s priorities in mind, the Task Force worked to develop 13 detailed plans for action. Through volunteer work by Task Force members and group deliberations, the Task Force spent the last two meetings validating, finalizing and ratifying the series of actions within this report.



*Photo property of Heights Merchants Association: <https://www.burnabyheights.com/about/history/swing-on-by/>*

## TASK FORCE VISION

The Burnaby Economic Recovery Task Force works to support Burnaby businesses as they recover and rebuild from the impacts of COVID-19 and to promote innovation and resilience for the future economy. We envision an economic future that promotes equity and sustainability, creates jobs and financial opportunity, supports major employers and generates pride in local, independent, and community-involved businesses.

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# Task Force Outputs

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## QUICK STARTS



As its first output, the Task Force developed and released six Quick Start priority actions for the business community to begin its recovery from COVID-19, several of which have already been accomplished. In selecting these immediate priority actions, the Task Force was asked to ensure the following criteria were able to be met:

**Targets high-impact sectors:** The Quick Start responds to the needs of a large portion of the Burnaby economy or sectors that have especially high COVID impacts.

**Fast results:** The Quick Start action can take place quickly to create immediate results for affected businesses.

**Sphere of influence:** The Task Force has a high degree of influence or control to ensure the Quick Start action takes place.

**Viable:** The Quick Start action is viable given available staff and financial resources, or has a clear pathway to attract additional resources in the near future

The Quick Start Priority actions identified were:

1. New Grants or WorkSafeBC rebates to pay for PPE and safety equipment
2. Launch a Burnaby PPE Supplier List
3. Create more opportunities for patios and outdoor dining in Burnaby
4. Enable business use of public property unrelated to the sale of food and beverage
5. Work with the childcare sector and employers to support parents returning to work
6. Advocate to senior government for additional financial supports



## ACTION AREAS FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND STABILIZATION:

The Task Force is pleased to recommend 13 areas of action to promote the economic recovery and stabilization of the Burnaby Business Community. These action areas build upon the Quick Starts, as well as address the additional needs Burnaby businesses identified through the survey conducted in Stage 2. All Action Areas identified fall within the Burnaby Board of Trade or its partners' jurisdictions to implement. Detailed plans for each Action Area can be found in Appendix II of this report.

### **1. Create a “Burnaby Centre for Business Recovery and Resilience”**

The Task Force seeks to create a *Burnaby Centre for Business Recovery and Resilience* to position Burnaby as a business hub. This combined virtual and physical Centre would house a number of initiatives, resources and supports for businesses of all types, sectors and sizes, initially to assist through the current COVID response and recovery period, but ultimately transitioning into a longer-term program consistent with the Task Force's vision for an economic future that promotes equity and sustainability, attracts major employers, creates jobs for Burnaby residents and generates pride in local, independent, and community-involved businesses.

This *Centre for Business Recovery and Resilience* would enhance the role currently held by the Burnaby Board of Trade by creating a single, easy access point for businesses to seek support. Examples of potential services could include training opportunities, access to technical advice and coaching, and support in adapting business models to the new economy. The Centre could also provide an umbrella and brand under which many other business recovery action items could be organized and communicated.



## **2. Advocate for new grants or WorkSafeBC rebates to pay for PPE and safety equipment**

With requirements from WorkSafeBC that all businesses develop and implement COVID-19 safety plans, many businesses are scrambling to find, secure and pay for personal protective equipment (PPE) and other COVID-19 safety equipment. According to a Task Force survey of Burnaby businesses, 34% of organizations spent more than \$1000 in the first month following the re-opening announcement on PPE equipment, not including staffing or personnel costs.

To help businesses afford this new equipment, the Task Force is calling on the provincial government to provide support to businesses who may be struggling with the up-front costs related to purchasing and installing PPE and other COVID safety equipment through either a direct grant or a rebate on WorkSafeBC premiums.



## **3. Launch a Burnaby PPE supplier list**

As a requirement of safe re-opening, many businesses have to source and implement personal protective equipment, or PPE, such as masks and hand sanitizer. In addition, COVID-19 related signage and physical barriers are often also required.

To help businesses source PPE, the Task Force should create a PPE and COVID-19 Safety Equipment Supplier List with direct connections to local suppliers and manufacturers.



#### **4. Create more opportunities for patios and outdoor dining**

As restaurants have been restricted to 50% capacity by an order of the provincial health officer, allowing for more patios to be set up in Burnaby will help them to recoup some of that lost seating and increase their potential for sales. Beyond helping the restaurants themselves, more patio space will enable residents and visitors to Burnaby to enjoy the city's food offerings more safely by providing greater physical distancing, and more enjoyably by creating more outdoor dining in the warmer summer months.

To facilitate setting up or expanding patios in Burnaby, regulations and processes will need to be relaxed and/or streamlined. The Task Force understands the City is currently exploring these options and encourages City staff in these efforts. Without regulatory changes to make patio space easier, faster, and cost-effective to set up, many restaurants will struggle to recover from the restrictions imposed during COVID-19.

The Task Force therefore encourages the City of Burnaby to continue its work on permitting and licensing changes to allow restaurants, breweries, caterers, and other food service businesses to quickly set up new, or expand existing, patios throughout the city.



#### **5. Enable business use of public property unrelated to the sale of food and beverage**

Social distancing regulations have caused a challenge for many businesses that offer group classes or activities. Additionally, some retail businesses face the challenge of inadequate parking near their place of business that would facilitate quick and convenient transactions for their customers. The Task Force has identified two solutions to these challenges:

- 1) Using the existing framework for reserving park space, the City of Burnaby could streamline and communicate opportunities for businesses to use designated areas in Burnaby parks for classes and small events while observing safety protocols.
- 2) Providing extended hours and more easily accessible parking in high traffic areas such as Hastings, Kingsway and the North Road area.



## 6. Work with the childcare sector and employers to support parents returning to work

With the school year over and many after-school and summer camp programs postponed, curtailed or cancelled, a lack of available childcare is one issue facing many businesses and employees as they consider re-opening. When schools restart in September, children may only be attending part-time, and childcare will be needed by some families to fill in the gap. The Task Force emphasizes the impact that the education system and childcare have on our local economy. The productivity of workers is hampered if they have to balance work, childcare, and educational responsibilities, and without access to after-school, summer camp, and childcare-like programming, many employees will struggle to return to pre-COVID employment. The Task Force also recognizes that, in our current society, childcare disruptions and shortages have disproportionate and inequitable impacts on women. To address these issues, the Burnaby Board of Trade and partners would:

- ***Work with the Burnaby Child Care community*** to inventory summer childcare/camp opportunities and communicate this to its networks, AND to explore other opportunities to work with the business community and the City on childcare space creation.
- ***Engage employers*** about flexible workplace policies to support families with childcare needs, and explore opportunities for employers to repurpose workspace into childcare space.
- ***Advocate to the provincial and federal government*** to continue to provide financial supports that enable employees to work.





## **7. Launch a “Recovery Policy Working Group” to advocate to senior government for additional financial supports**

The Task Force would like to augment the lobbying efforts already underway at the Burnaby Board of Trade by creating a special working group to focus on providing feedback and recommendations on government policies around COVID-19 business support and recovery. More needs to be done to help businesses with high overhead costs, constricted business operations, deferred rents, taxes, licenses and utilities, as well as those businesses that have fallen through the cracks. This working group would advocate to:

- 1) Extend the duration of existing business support programs;
- 2) Extend or adjust the breadth of existing business support programs to cover businesses that have fallen through the cracks and to maximize impact; and
- 3) Create new programs to cover other COVID-19 costs/revenue losses that are not covered by existing programs.

## **8. Develop a “Business Digital Development Support Program”**

The Task Force identified a digital presence as an essential component of small business resiliency during both the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. However, small businesses have varying levels of digital literacy and many do not have e-commerce sites, websites, Google My Business profiles, or social media profiles.

A made-in-Burnaby “Business Digital Development Assistance Program” should be developed and implemented by the Burnaby Board of Trade to assist local companies in bolstering their digital presence and furthering the adoption of technology in their operations. Leveraging the availability of skilled students of BCIT and SFU, our local, world-class post-secondary institutions, the “Business Digital Development Assistance” program would directly support small businesses in enhancing their digital presence.

## **9. Explore the potential to pilot a “Digital Main Street” initiative in Burnaby**

Capacity for e-commerce is essential to the resilience and success of small business retailers. In light of COVID-19 and the economic impacts of new restrictions, generating sales through online and digital platforms is critical to the success and survival of many small businesses.

However, small businesses have varying levels of digital literacy and many do not have e-commerce sites set up. To address these immediate needs, the Burnaby Board of Trade would explore the potential to pilot with Digital Main Street use of the turn-key *SHOPHERE* platform to provide businesses in Burnaby access to e-commerce sites quickly and at reasonable costs.

## **10. Expand communications efforts to connect businesses with existing economic recovery information & resources**

Currently, the Burnaby Board of Trade has a section on its website devoted to COVID-19 resources. The Task Force would like to ensure this resource is widely distributed, as it would benefit many businesses in understanding what programs they may access. This would include information on personal protective equipment, webinars, key programs and available supports. Information would be shared through applicable organizations, push emails and news outlets.

## **11. Action Plan: Engage with & advocate to financial institutions on ways unlock capital for business loans**

Many small businesses don't have a choice but to continue operations through and beyond COVID-19, and thin margins and high fixed or operating costs make finances a huge concern for many. In addition, carrying costs due to deferred payments, potentially reduced opportunities for revenue generation and higher costs for cleaning and PPE have threatened many small businesses' opportunities for recovery. The Task Force intends to engage with financial institutions to explore ways of further supporting these critical, entrepreneurial businesses and assist them through the recovery process.

## **12. Create incentives and supports to position Burnaby as a hub for new businesses and entrepreneurs**

The COVID-19 crisis and its impacts on business could potentially have a chilling effect on future entrepreneurship. To combat this, the Task Force would like to research and develop a strategy to encourage entrepreneurs to set up new businesses in Burnaby. This strategy could include a program of supports and incentives to make it even more advantageous to start new businesses in Burnaby. This will add to Burnaby's already dynamic business community and will help to mitigate any business closures that have occurred during COVID-19.

## **13. Expand the “#BuyLocalBuyBurnaby” Program**

As we move into a stage of business recovery it is essential that as much support as possible be given to Burnaby businesses by the citizens and companies in the city in order to maintain a vibrant and sustainable community for all. A number of initiatives have already been developed under a broad “#BuyLocalBuyBurnaby” branding program and the Task Force seeks to expand on these existing initiatives and to introduce new opportunities. These initiatives would include:

- An “Open for Business” directory and map;
- A local procurement campaign; and
- Continued promotion on the benefits and importance of supporting local Burnaby businesses.

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## Next Steps

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With the adjournment of the tenth meeting, the official mandate of the Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force is now complete. Work to advance the Action Areas presented in this report however, is far from over. Over the coming months, the Burnaby Board of Trade and its partners will continue to monitor and evaluate the needs of the Burnaby Business Community and take steps to ensure the successful delivery of the Task Force’s outputs.

In the coming weeks, Task Force members will continue to champion, inform and implement measures that are in the spirit of this plan. The Task Force will also work to ensure that supports made available as a result of this process are shared widely and made accessible to members of Burnaby’s diverse business community. The Burnaby Board of Trade will present this report to its Board of Directors and Burnaby City Council, and will continue to monitor the ever-fluid state of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the Burnaby Board of Trade works with its partners to deliver on the Final Action Plans for Economic Recovery and Stabilization, it may call upon the Business Recovery Task Force to reconvene as a group to conduct a progress review.



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# Acknowledgements

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The Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force was sponsored by Pacific Blue Cross, BCIT School of Business + Media, Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers, ABC Recycling, TD Canada Trust and Electronic Arts Canada.

The Burnaby Board of Trade would like to recognize the 14 Task Force members who volunteered their time to attend ten meetings during a period of significant disruption. The ideas in this report would not have been possible if not for the dedication and diverse perspectives they brought to the table.

The following guest speakers and presenters provided research, insight and actionable ideas to help with Burnaby's economic recovery. Thank you to Renee De St. Croix (City of Burnaby), Julia Smith (Faculty of Health Sciences – Simon Fraser University), Shawn Smith (Executive Director RADIUS SFU – Beedie School of Business, Simon Fraser University), Jeremy Stone (Community Economic Development Programs – Simon Fraser University) and Mark Desormeaux (Senior Economist, Scotiabank).

Thank you also to Paul Holden and Cory Redekop from the Burnaby Board of Trade, Lee-Ann Garnett from the City of Burnaby, and Robin Prest, Zaria Alibhai and Julie Bezar from the SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, for their support in planning and organizing the Task Force process.

Business Recovery  
Supporters:



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## **Appendix I: Quick Start Action Plans**

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## **Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force Releases “Quick Start” Priorities as First Step in Recovery Strategy**

The *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force* is releasing a number of priorities for the business community as it begins its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, including a call for help to source and pay for PPE and safety equipment, the need for greater supports for commercial rent payments, and the importance of childcare and a return to school for the economy. These priorities are in addition to expanded patio space and more flexible use of public parks, streets, and plazas by businesses which the Task Force released last week.

“The Task Force has only met three times, but has quickly identified priorities for the business community’s recovery, including actions that support cash flow, assist with safe reopening, support employees’ return to work, and create new economic opportunities,” says Paul Holden, Chair of the *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force*.

The Task Force is currently developing its full strategy for economic recovery, and in the process is surveying the business community on its ongoing needs and consulting with subject matter experts on tactics to reinforce the local business community. Today it is releasing these initial priorities as “quick starts” it will continue to work to help get off the ground soon:

- *Better Government Supports to Cover Commercial Rent Payments*
- *New Grants or WorkSafeBC Rebates to Pay for PPE and Safety Equipment*
- *Re-launching the Burnaby PPE Supplier List*
- *The Importance of Childcare to a Returning Labour Force*
- *Creating More Patios and Outdoor Dining Opportunities*
- *Flexibility for More Business Uses in Public Spaces*

### **Better Government Supports for Commercial Rent Payments**

The *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force* is calling on the provincial and federal governments to provide greater supports to businesses struggling to keep up with their rent payments despite the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) launching today. While the CECRA aims to provide 75% reductions in commercial rent, the eligibility criteria are too onerous (70% decline in revenues) and the application process is too dependent on landlords to deliver meaningful results for most businesses fears the Task Force.

The Task Force knows continuing to make rent payments is a challenge for many businesses that have only recently re-opened and are still facing reduced revenues and cash flow. Therefore, the Task Force is urging the federal and provincial government to:

- Lower the 70% revenue decline threshold to allow more businesses to qualify for CECRA
- Develop a mechanism for business tenants to apply for CECRA support directly, regardless of their landlord’s participation
- Deliver more supports directly to businesses themselves, either through expanding the forgivable amounts through the Canada Emergency Business Account / Regional Relief and Recovery Fund loans, or through a new direct grant program to help businesses pay for ongoing overhead such as rent, equipment lease, electrical/gas, etc.

### **New Grants or WorkSafeBC Rebates to Pay for PPE and Safety Equipment**

With requirements from WorkSafeBC that all businesses develop and implement COVID-19 safety plans, many businesses are scrambling to find, secure and pay for personal protective equipment (PPE) and other COVID-19 safety equipment.

To help business afford this new equipment, the *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force* is calling on the provincial government to provide support to businesses who may be struggling with the up-front costs related to purchasing and installing PPE and other COVID safety equipment through either a direct grant or a rebate on WorkSafeBC premiums.

The compliance costs associated with COVID-19 safety plans can quickly add up. The *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force* is currently surveying the broader business community on out-of-pocket costs, but some businesses are spending hundreds or thousands of dollars on purchasing protective equipment, installing barriers and signage, and hiring security to manage crowds in accordance with WorkSafeBC's new requirements. For businesses which have been closed or drastically curtailed, this new up-front expense is a barrier to their re-opening and recovery which should be removed. The *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force* is calling on the provincial government to:

- Create a new program to provide direct financial grants to businesses to help them pay the up-front costs associated with purchasing and implementing PPE and other COVID-19 safety equipment
- Alternatively, work with WorkSafeBC to implement either a partial rebate of 2019 employer premiums or a refund of the 2020 Q1 employer premiums paid to WorkSafeBC to similarly provide revenue that can be used to offset the costs of COVID-19 compliance

### **Launching the Burnaby PPE Supplier List**

Before affording PPE and safety equipment, businesses have to succeed in finding and securing it. To help business source PPE, the *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force* is launching a *COVID-19 Safety Equipment Supplier List* with direct connections to local suppliers and manufacturers.

Made accessible as a free download at [www.BBOT.ca/PPE](http://www.BBOT.ca/PPE), this supplier list contains dozens of local companies which can provide masks, gloves, sanitizer, signage, decals and plexiglass barriers, among other items, and will help local businesses find the equipment they need to re-open and operate safely.

### **The Importance of Education and Childcare to a Returning Labour Force**

With schools closed and many after-school and summer camp program postponed or cancelled, a lack of available childcare is one issue facing many businesses and employees as they consider re-opening or expanding their hours. The Burnaby Board of Trade has advocated for years that childcare is a business issue, and plays a direct role in the breadth and availability of talent in our labour force.

As BC prepares for a re-start of the public school system on June 1, the *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force* is



emphasizing the role that the education system and childcare have on our local economy. The productivity of workers is hampered if they have to balance work, childcare, and educational responsibility, and without the planned June 1 return to school and without after-school, summer camp, and childcare-like programming, many employees will struggle to return to pre-COVID employment.

In light of the importance of education and childcare to the returning labour force, the planned June 1 resumption of public school is a positive and vital development for our recovery. Building on that, the *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force* is calling for:

- Initiatives that support the resumption of previously planned after-school, summer camp, and childcare-like programming
- Prioritizing after-school, summer camp, and childcare-like programming when Burnaby recreation and leisure centres re-open and resume operations

### **Creating More Patios and Outdoor Dining Opportunities**

As restaurants have been restricted to 50% capacity by an order of the provincial health officer, allowing for more patios to be set-up in Burnaby will help them to recoup some of that lost seating and increase their potential for sales. Beyond helping the restaurants themselves, more patio space will enable residents and visitors to Burnaby to enjoy the city's food offerings more safely by providing greater physical distancing, and more enjoyably by creating more outdoor dining in the warmer summer months.

To facilitate setting up or expanding patios in Burnaby, regulations and processes will need to be relaxed and/or streamlined. The *Burnaby business Recovery Task Force* understands the City is currently exploring these options and encourages City staff in these efforts. Without regulatory changes to make patio space easier, faster, and cost-effective to set-up, many restaurants will struggle to recover from the restrictions imposed during COVID-19.

The *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force* therefore:

- Encourages the City of Burnaby to continue its work on permitting and licensing changes to allow restaurants, breweries, caterers, and other food service businesses to quickly set up new, or expand existing, patios throughout the city

### **Flexibility for More Business Uses in Public Spaces**

In addition to restaurants, the *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force* is investigating what other businesses may benefit from expanded access to public spaces such as sidewalks, laneways, roads, or parks. With many businesses, especially in retail settings, required to limit customers to maintain physical distancing, having access to public space for business activities or for the queuing of customers may be vital to their success during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Potential solutions could include a local gym being able to have more participants in a class if they can hold it outdoors or in public plazas, or a retail shop having more space for customers and inventory if it is allowed to hold a sidewalk sale. The *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force* is currently conducting a survey on the types of

businesses which could be helped by allowing them to use public spaces, and what that potential use could look like, and while it will be important to maintain appropriate access to public spaces for residents, it is imperative that we be creative and flexible in our thinking in order to provide support for our businesses and entrepreneurs to cope with and work around the current COVID-19 restrictions.

The *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force* therefore:

- Encourages the City of Burnaby to continue exploring ways to allow for more creative and flexible business uses of public areas such as laneways, sidewalks and green spaces

These six “quick starts” are the initial priorities identified by the *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force*, which is working towards developing a full economic recovery strategy for the Burnaby business community.

*The Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force is an initiative of the Burnaby Board of Trade, the city's chamber of commerce and economic development organization, and is facilitated by the SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. The Task Force is comprised of senior representatives from local government, major employers, small business, non-profits, labour unions, and post-secondary education and will develop a strategy that can help businesses cope with the ongoing crisis, plan their recovery once current COVID-19 restrictions are relaxed and lifted, and ultimately rebuild the local economy for the long-term.*

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# Appendix II: Action Plans for Economic Recovery and Stabilization

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## 1. Action Plan: Create a “Burnaby Centre for Business Recovery and Resilience”

The Task Force seeks to create a *Burnaby Centre for Business Recovery and Resilience* to position Burnaby as a business hub. This combined virtual and physical Centre would house a number of initiatives, resources and supports for businesses of all types, sectors and sizes, initially to assist through the current COVID response and recovery period, but ultimately transitioning into a longer-term program consistent with the Task Force’s vision for an economic future that promotes equity and sustainability, attracts major employers, creates jobs for Burnaby residents and generates pride in local, independent, and community-involved businesses.

This *Centre for Business Recovery and Resilience* would enhance the role currently held by the Burnaby Board of Trade by creating a single, easy access point for businesses to seek support. Examples of potential services could include training opportunities, access to technical advice and coaching, and support in adapting business models to the new economy. The Centre could also provide an umbrella and brand under which many other business recovery action items could be organized and communicated.

### How would it work?

- The Centre would be housed within the Burnaby Board of Trade as a virtual entity, as part of the existing “Business Resource Centre” as a new section on the website. In-person work may not be possible or viable for some while, so it would be logical to pursue a virtual option.
- Areas within this “Centre” would include, but would not be limited to the following:
  - Classes, courses and other instruction around creating resilience for your business;
  - The “Business Digital Development Program”;
  - Supporting the Social Purpose work currently being conducted (in partnership with the United Way of the Lower Mainland and the City of Burnaby);
  - A Centre for technology to help businesses improve their understanding and usage of technology solutions;
  - Access to finance experts for both advice and funding;
  - Assistance with potentially closing a business;

- Access to resources for HR and legal support;
- A co-working environment to stimulate collaboration and reduce rental costs;
- “Mastermind” groups for each of Burnaby’s main business sectors;
- Coordinate and manage events, classes, meetings as required during the execution of action items.

### **What does success look like?**

- Target number of businesses “sign up” to access support.
- Businesses are attracted to Burnaby in order to access the Centre, and participate in classes/courses, access affordable workplaces, etc.
- The Centre should only be accessible to BBOT members and Burnaby-based businesses.
- Number of active business licenses achieves agreed target levels.

### **Who would benefit from the action?**

- The Centre would offer services for all business types, irrespective of size or sector.

### **How much money or human resources would it take?**

- The main initial requirement would be for a human resource to be allocated to building the virtual structure of the “Centre” under direction from BBOT leadership.
- This would be an additional resource to current BBOT staffing and would require funding.

### **Who would need to be involved and what would they be responsible for?**

- Burnaby Board of Trade: Coordinating and managing the Centre;
- Post-Secondary Institutions: Providing expertise, instructors, funding;
- City of Burnaby; and
- Subject matter experts: Providing technical, financial, legal and HR training and support.

### **What is the timeline?**

- Planning on the establishment of the “Centre” could start soon after the Task Force has completed its work and the Burnaby Board of Trade Board of Directors has approved the project. Some aspects could be up and running shortly thereafter.
- As a Recovery and Resilience Centre it would exist as long as is relevant at which point it could transition to a Centre of Excellence within the Burnaby Board of Trade.



## 2. Action Plan: Advocate for new grants or WorkSafeBC rebates to pay for PPE and safety equipment



With requirements from WorkSafeBC that all businesses develop and implement COVID-19 safety plans, many businesses are scrambling to find, secure and pay for personal protective equipment (PPE) and other COVID-19 safety equipment. According to a Task Force survey of Burnaby businesses, 34% of organizations spent more than \$1000 in the first month following the re-opening announcement on PPE equipment, not including staffing or personal costs.

To help businesses afford this new equipment, the Task Force is calling on the provincial government to provide support to businesses who may be struggling with the up-front costs related to purchasing and installing PPE and other COVID safety equipment through either a direct grant or a rebate on WorkSafeBC premiums.

### How would it work?

- The Task Force would make a public recommendation to the provincial government to issue new, direct financial support to businesses to help them pay the ongoing costs of PPE and COVID-19 related safety equipment.
- The aid would either be through a new grant program from the province, which would be developed and implemented by the provincial government and deliver support to businesses/applicants, OR
- The aid could be delivered and the support achieved through a rebate via WorkSafeBC of premiums either already collected or through a reduction in future premiums that will become due.

### What does success look like?

- Direct financial support is delivered from government to the business community with the explicit intent of mitigating the costs of PPE and COVID-19 related safety equipment

### Who would benefit from the action?

- All businesses and organizations with physical premises that have had to purchase PPE and COVID-19 related safety equipment

### How much money or human resources would it take?

- No independent Task Force funding would be required, but either existing government revenues would be directed to fund this grant or future revenues forgone to provide

this financial support.

**Who would need to be involved and what would they be responsible for?**

- The Task Force would need to engage with the provincial government and the Ministry of Labour.

**What is the timeline?**

- This recommendation should be fast-tracked as the PPE requirements and costs are being borne by businesses immediately upon re-opening.

**What are the immediate next steps?**

- Burnaby Board of Trade to issue public statement on this recommendation, and directly contact provincial government representatives to advocate for this measure.

### 3. Action Plan: Launch a Burnaby PPE Supplier List



As a requirement of safe re-opening, many businesses have to source and implement personal protective equipment, or PPE, such as masks and hand sanitizer. In addition, COVID-19 related signage and physical barriers are often also required.

To help businesses source PPE, the Task Force should create a PPE and COVID-19 Safety Equipment Supplier List with direct connections to local suppliers and manufacturers.

#### **How would it work?**

- A list will be compiled of local companies which can provide masks, gloves, sanitizer, signage, decals and plexiglass barriers, among other items, and will help local businesses find the equipment they need to re-open and operate safely.
- The list should be made available online for easy and free download by businesses and organizations.

#### **What does success look like?**

- A PPE supplier list is created and distributed to local businesses.

#### **Who would benefit from the action?**

- All businesses and organizations with physical premises that have had to purchase PPE and COVID-19 related safety equipment.

#### **How much money or human resources would it take?**

- No funding will be required to create the list, but considerable staff time may be needed to identify and confirm suppliers, and to create and update the list.
- Some limited funding may be needed to promote the PPE Supplier List through advertisements or other promotional activities.

#### **Who would need to be involved and what would they be responsible for?**

- The Burnaby Board of Trade will be the primary organization responsible for creating and distributing the PPE Supplier List.

#### **What is the timeline?**

- This recommendation should be fast-tracked as the PPE needs of businesses are immediate.

**What are the immediate next steps?**

- Burnaby Board of Trade to create and distribute a supplier list, and commit to regular updates and re-issuances.



## 4. Action Plan: Create more opportunities for patios and outdoor dining



As restaurants have been restricted to 50% capacity by an order of the provincial health officer, allowing for more patios to be set up in Burnaby will help them to recoup some of that lost seating and increase their potential for sales. Beyond helping the restaurants themselves, more patio space will enable residents and visitors to Burnaby to enjoy the city's food offerings more safely by providing greater physical distancing, and more enjoyably by creating more outdoor dining in the warmer summer months.

To facilitate setting up or expanding patios in Burnaby, regulations and processes will need to be relaxed and/or streamlined. The Task Force understands the City is currently exploring these options and encourages City staff in these efforts. Without regulatory changes to make patio space easier, faster, and cost-effective to set up, many restaurants will struggle to recover from the restrictions imposed during COVID-19.

The Task Force therefore encourages the City of Burnaby to continue its work on permitting and licensing changes to allow restaurants, breweries, caterers, and other food service businesses to quickly set up new, or expand existing, patios throughout the city.

### **How would it work?**

- The City of Burnaby would create new, streamlined processes to allow businesses to apply to expand existing patios or build new ones onto both public property (sidewalks, laneways, plazas), and into private property (on-site parking).
- Businesses would apply and use this new space to allow them to make up for any lost indoor capacity which may be restricted due to required physical distancing measures.

### **What does success look like?**

- The City of Burnaby has an expedited outdoor patio program, and local businesses have successfully applied and implemented patios.

### **Who would benefit from the action?**

- Primarily restaurants and food-service businesses will benefit, but creating a livelier dining scene will benefit adjacent, unrelated businesses if it attracts more people to a particular high street of business district.

**How much money or human resources would it take?**

- Staff time and human resources at the City of Burnaby would be required.

**Who would need to be involved and what would they be responsible for?**

- The City of Burnaby would be the primary organization involved in implementing this action.
- The provincial government, in particular the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation branch, to relax/amend rules around the sale and consumption of alcohol on the patios once built.

**What is the timeline?**

- This recommendation should be fast-tracked as the restaurant and hospitality sector have been particularly negatively impacted by COVID-19 restrictions.

**What are the immediate next steps?**

- Burnaby Board of Trade to issue statement and position to the City of Burnaby and submit recommendation to Mayor and Council.
- Burnaby Board of Trade to engage with the province where necessary.

## 5. Action Plan: Enable business use of public property unrelated to the sale of food and beverage



Social distancing regulations have caused a challenge for many businesses that offer group classes or activities. Additionally, some retail businesses face the challenge of inadequate parking near their place of business that would facilitate quick and convenient transactions for their customers. The Task Force has identified two solutions to these challenges:

- 1) Using the existing framework for reserving park space, the City of Burnaby could streamline and communicate opportunities for businesses to use designated areas in Burnaby parks for classes and small events while observing safety protocols.
- 2) Providing extended hours and more easily accessible parking in high traffic areas such as Hastings, Kingsway and the North Road area.

### How would it work?

- City of Burnaby would create a webpage similar to its Picnic Sites webpage for hosting classes and events. The page would include the guidelines required for conducting classes and maintaining social distancing, as well as a list of available amenities (power, water, bathrooms, covered area, etc.).
- The City of Burnaby would increase parking and accessibility by:
  - Reducing or eliminating pay parking during non-peak hours;
  - Reducing the hours, or temporarily eliminating the opening of curb lanes during morning and evening rush hours to provide longer hours for parking;
  - Ensuring that any road closures to facilitate walking/cycling do not diminish available parking in commercial areas.

### What does success look like?

- Outdoor Classes Initiative: The total number of bookings registered with the City of Burnaby from July through to the end of 2020.
- Extended Parking Initiative: A business survey should be completed prior to and then one week and one month after changes to ensure that business levels (total revenue) have increased with new parking measures.

### Who would benefit from the action?

- Businesses such as gyms, yoga studios, art studios, martial arts schools, boot camps, music classes would be able to move some classes and/or offer additional classes outdoors during the better weather.

- Retail stores, professional services and other commercial businesses in heavily trafficked areas such as Metrotown, the Heights and Lougheed would benefit from enhanced measures for parking.

### **How much money or human resources would it take?**

- The “hard cost” of the Outdoor Classes Initiative would be minimal, and could be managed by existing City staff as part of their regular duties:
  - The existing structure for booking picnic space on the City of Burnaby website could be used, with the addition of another page to the website, specific to this business use.
  - Guidelines and maps of suitable areas and allowable uses would need to be reviewed and published by the City.
- Changing parking hours and availability would require approval from the Province/TransLink, and then the cost of manufacturing and installing signage:
  - Dependent on what measures would be approved, the cost of the creation and installation of signage would vary substantially.

### **Who would need to be involved and what would they be responsible for?**

- The Parks and Recreation department for the City of Burnaby would be responsible for all aspects of the Outdoor Classes Initiative.
- The City of Burnaby, BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, TransLink, and the local Business Improvement Areas would be involved to move the Extended Parking Initiative forward.

### **What is the timeline?**

- Changes to the website for using parks should be complete by mid-July 2020 in order to make full use of the summer weather.
- Changes and installation of parking signs would be complete on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 to allow for consultation and installation.

### **What are the immediate next steps?**

- Finalize the details around costs and resources needed by the City.
- Determine the exact process required by the Province and City to make changes.
- Identify plan for program development, assign lead and necessary supports.



## 6. Action Plan: Work with the childcare sector and employers to support parents returning to work



With the school year ending and many after-school and summer camp programs postponed or cancelled, a lack of available childcare is one issue facing many businesses and employees as they consider re-opening. When schools restart in September, children may only be attending part-time, and childcare will be needed by some families to fill in the gap. The Task Force emphasizes the role that the education system and childcare have on our local economy. The productivity of workers is hampered if they have to balance work, childcare, and educational responsibilities, and without access to after-school, summer camp, and childcare-like programming, many employees will struggle to return to pre-COVID employment. The Task Force also recognizes that, in our current society, childcare disruptions and shortages have disproportionate and inequitable impacts on women.

### How would it work?

- The role of the Burnaby Board of Trade is three-fold:
  - **Work with the Burnaby Childcare community** to inventory summer childcare/camp opportunities and communicate this to its networks, AND to explore other opportunities to work with the business community and the City on childcare space creation.
  - **Engage employers** about flexible workplace policies to support families with childcare needs, and explore opportunities for employers to repurpose workspace into childcare space.
  - **Advocate to the provincial and federal government** to continue to provide financial supports that enable employees to work and to review childcare regulations to provide flexibility in order to create temporary childcare spaces.

### What does success look like?

- Increased childcare spaces in Burnaby.

### Who would benefit from the action?

- All employees with children who need care, and their employers.

### How much money or human resources would it take?

- At this time, no funding would be required to move this initiative forward.
- Staff capacity would be required to:
  - gather summer childcare space inventory and work with partners to promote and communicate it;

- engage the childcare community and work with them to create opportunities for supporting childcare together;
- engage employers about flexible workplace policies and explore opportunities to repurpose their unused workspace for childcare; and
- advocate to senior levels of government to continue funding to childcare operators, and to continue capital funding to build more childcare spaces.

### **Who would need to be involved and what would they be responsible for?**

- Burnaby Planning Department to compile summer camp inventory.
- Burnaby Planning Department and BBOT staff to liaise with Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) group to share information and discuss opportunities for collaboration.
- CCRR, BBOT and others to disseminate information to parents.
- BBOT to work with employers and also to advocate to senior levels of government.

### **What is the timeline?**

- Immediate attention required.

### **What are the immediate next steps?**

- BBOT and City of Burnaby staff, to meet with childcare operators group to discuss initiative and action next steps.
- BBOT to meet with Minister of State for Child Care to discuss childcare opportunities, funding, and regulations.

## 7. Action Plan: Launch a “Recovery Policy Working Group” to advocate to senior government for additional financial supports



The Task Force would like to augment the lobbying efforts already underway at the Burnaby Board of Trade by creating a special working group to focus on providing feedback and recommendations on government policies around COVID-19 business support and recovery. More needs to be done to help businesses with high overhead costs, constricted business operations, deferred rents, taxes, licenses and utilities, as well as those business that have fallen through the cracks. This working group would advocate to:

- 1) Extend the duration of existing business support programs;
- 2) Extend or adjust the breadth of existing business support programs to cover businesses that have fallen through the cracks and to maximize impact; and
- 3) Create new programs to cover other COVID-19 costs/revenue losses that are not covered by existing programs.

### How would it work?

- The Burnaby Board of Trade would create a working group to focus solely on providing feedback and recommendations on government policies around COVID-19 business support and recovery.
- The Working Group would consist of individuals who have the ear of government and can influence policy (i.e. senior government leaders and individuals with government relations/lobbying experience).
- A survey would be launched to identify businesses that are not being helped sufficiently, by the existing programs, or will face critical hardships by the discontinuation of existing programs.
- Task Forces would be created by the committee to pursue the most critical program areas for new support initiatives and develop an execution plan for the initiative.
- The execution plans would likely entail direct discussions with governments, but also broadening the lobbying effort through the BC and Canadian chambers of commerce and other industry groups.

### What does success look like?

- The creation of additional federal, provincial and municipal funding/financing programs to help businesses survive the challenging COVID-19 business environment.

**Who would benefit from the action?**

- Initially the working group would support businesses with the hope that employees would be substantial beneficiaries of these programs as more employment opportunities arise.

**How much money or human resources would it take?**

- At this time, no or little funding would be required to move this initiative forward.
- Potentially, small amounts of money may be required for surveys, etc.

**Who would need to be involved and what would they be responsible for?**

- The Burnaby Board of Trade would be responsible to strike and manage the working group.
- Local business professionals and subject matter experts would be asked to sit on the working group.

**What is the timeline?**

- This is a longer-term project and additional information will be needed to craft amendments to existing programs.
- In part, new programs and adjustments to existing programs will depend on the progress of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**What are the immediate next steps?**

- The Burnaby Board of Trade will establish a working group to start prioritizing the parts of businesses that need support immediately.

## 8. Action Plan: Develop a “Business Digital Development Support Program”

The Task Force identified digital presence as an essential component of small business resiliency during both the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. However, small businesses have varying levels of digital literacy and many do not have e-commerce sites, websites, Google My Business pages, or social media profiles.

A made-in-Burnaby “Business Digital Development Assistance Program” should be developed and implemented by the Burnaby Board of Trade to assist local companies in bolstering their digital presence and furthering the adoption of technology in their operations. Leveraging the availability of skilled students of BCIT and SFU, our local, world-class post-secondary institutions, the “Business Digital Development Assistance” program would directly support small businesses in enhancing their digital presence.

### How would it work?

- Burnaby Board of Trade would work with Simon Fraser University and BCIT to identify and recruit students from a variety of digital and business areas of study to action the goals of the Business Digital Development Program.
- Student’s participation would include a mixture of volunteer, work-integrated-learning, and paid co-op placements.
- A ‘menu’ of digital development supports would be developed based on the needs of businesses and the abilities/expertise of the students.
- Businesses would apply to the Business Digital Development Program; their needs would be assessed and a service plan would be developed.
- Students would work remotely to support the businesses to develop and implement the chosen digital enhancement.

### What does success look like?

- A target number (40-50) of Burnaby businesses have successfully been provided with digital development services through the program.
- The number of businesses with websites, Google My Business sites and social media profiles, increases.
- The percent of sales of businesses represented by e-commerce increases.
- Businesses are more resilient by having an enhanced digital presence.
- Students develop meaningful, marketable skills and experience.



### **Who would benefit from the action?**

- Businesses receive low cost/voluntary assistance in developing their online presence in an effective way over the short term.
- Students/recent graduates benefit from getting hands-on experience supporting businesses in crisis.
- BBOT is seen positively because of pro-active support of Burnaby organizations.

### **How much money or human resources would it take?**

- Funding would be required to cover paid placements.
- Time would be needed to make the connections at BCIT and at SFU.
- Coordination of immediate needs, consolidation of requests and administration of the program.

### **Who would need to be involved and what would they be responsible for?**

- SFU/BCIT Business Liaison/Co-op personnel would be main contacts with the schools.
- BBOT would be responsible for collecting, consolidating, and sending requests and administering the business-facing side of the program.

### **What is the timeline?**

- Program could begin in September with the recruitment of businesses during July and August.
- Development of the program could commence immediately.

### **What are the immediate next steps?**

- Finalize the details around costs and resources needed and identify sources of that funding.
- Secure buy-in from all required organizations as noted above.
- Identify plan for program development, assign lead and necessary supports.
- Develop and map out the program, its structure and mechanisms, and prepare for mid-summer 2020 launch.

## 9. Action Plan: Explore the potential to pilot a “Digital Main Street” initiative in Burnaby

Capacity for e-commerce is essential to the resilience and success of small business retailers. In light of COVID-19 and the economic impacts of new restrictions, generating sales through online and digital platforms is critical to the success and survival of many small businesses.

However, small businesses have varying levels of digital literacy and many do not have e-commerce sites set up. To address these immediate needs, the Burnaby Board of Trade would explore the potential to pilot with Digital Main Street use of the turn-key SHOPHERE platform to provide businesses in Burnaby access to e-commerce sites quickly and at reasonable costs.

### How would it work?

- The Burnaby Board of Trade could partner with Digital Main Street to bring their turn-key SHOPHERE platform to businesses in Burnaby.
- Local businesses would apply to the Burnaby SHOPHERE program, and a SHOPHERE team member would contact them to begin setting up an e-commerce site on Shopify.
- As part of the program, businesses would receive:
  - Their choice of an online store customized with their information, branding, logo, etc.
  - Hands-on assistance setting up and launching their online store.
  - Training to support their online store, including digital marketing, shipping and inventory management.
  - Access to free tools to help support the launch of their online stores.

### What does success look like?

- The target number of Burnaby businesses have successfully been provided with an e-commerce platform.
- The percent of sales of those Burnaby businesses represented by e-commerce increases.
- Businesses are more resilient by having a new income stream.

### Who would benefit from the action?

- Small to medium retailers, independent merchants and artists.

### How much money or human resources would it take?

- There is a fixed cost to engage “Digital Main Street” and use their e-commerce development program

- Limited staff resources would be required in sourcing the businesses.

### **Who would need to be involved and what would they be responsible for?**

- Digital Main Street – to execute the program;
- Governments – as funding partner; and
- Burnaby Board of Trade and Business Improvement Association partners – to determine level of interest/potential target market and attract applicants.

### **What is the timeline?**

- This would be an immediate action.

### **What are the immediate next steps?**

- Determine the viability and desirability of rolling-out Digital Main Street service to some Burnaby businesses.
- If yes, determine sources of funding and administrative requirements to launch the program.

## **10. Action Plan: Expand communications efforts to connect businesses with existing economic recovery information & resources**

Currently, the Burnaby Board of Trade has a section on its website devoted to COVID-19 resources. The Task Force would like to ensure this resource is widely distributed as it would benefit many businesses in understanding what programs they may access. This would include information on personal protective equipment, webinars, key programs and available supports. Information would be shared through applicable organizations, push emails and news outlets.

### **How would it work?**

- The Burnaby Board of Trade would package all resources and links, and distribute to all applicable associations that could also reinforce the key programs available to support small businesses.
- The Burnaby Board of Trade would continue to do webinars on these available resources with its members.
- Push emails would also be sent with resources from business/media organizations as well as shared on their social media sites.
- The Burnaby Board of Trade would reach out to news agencies to cover COVID-19 programs to do regular articles/news stories.
- The Burnaby Board of Trade would also interview businesses who have used resources to highlight the success stories as well as value of the programs.

### **What does success look like?**

- An increased digital footprint on websites.
- Increased views of shared content on social media.
- A measure of overall plan success would see renewed business licensed for Burnaby.

### **Who would benefit from the action?**

- All businesses and employees.

### **How much money or human resources would it take?**

- Minimal resources are required as resources are already in place.

### **Who would need to be involved and what would they be responsible for?**

- The Burnaby Board of Trade would be the owner of this initiative. They would be responsible for:

- Contacting other organizations to request that the links are added to sites and push emails are sent to the organizations network; and
- Keeping online resources up to date.

### **What is the timeline?**

- By the end of July 2020, the Burnaby Board of Trade to contact relevant business/media organizations
- By September 2020, organizations that would agree to share this information should have a link on their website, social media presence and have pushed out messages.

### **What are the immediate next steps?**

- The Burnaby Board of Trade to send out content for associations to link to their own.



## **11. Action Plan: Engage with & advocate to financial institutions on ways unlock capital for business loans**

Many small businesses don't have a choice but to continue operations through and beyond COVID-19, and thin margins and high fixed or operating costs make finances a huge concern for many. In addition, carrying costs due to deferred payments, potentially reduced opportunities for revenue generation and higher costs for cleaning and PPE have threatened many small businesses' opportunities for recovery. The Task Force intends to engage with financial institutions to explore ways of further supporting these critical, entrepreneurial businesses and assist them through the recovery process.

### **How would it work?**

- The Task Force would reach out to financial institutions to discuss ways of accommodating Burnaby businesses that:
  - Are long-term family businesses (5+ years in business); or
  - Have headquarters located elsewhere, but have at least 50% of operations in Burnaby.
- This initiative would be driven through the Mayor of Burnaby's office through meetings with Senior Executives of financial institutions.

### **What does success look like?**

- A number of Burnaby businesses saved from declaring bankruptcy.

### **Who would benefit from the action?**

- Small business that are the lifeblood of the Burnaby business community.
- Landlords who will not experience real estate vacancies and commercial spaces not generating revenue
- The community at large because:
  - the retail streets, that are the engine of community life, will remain vibrant; and
  - the many small businesses that provide unique products to the community and elsewhere, and provide stable employment, are retained.

### **How much money or human resources would it take?**

- At this point, no funds would be required.
- The major commitment is in time from Task Force Members and Mayor Hurley, as well as MPs/MLAs when engaging with financial institutions, and in any subsequent advocacy to government.

- The Burnaby Board of Trade will need to be engaged for initiating surveys of small Burnaby businesses and financial institutions.
- Contacts in the financial institutions to participate in this effort.

### **Where would funding come from, if required?**

- None required at present.
- The City may be asked to waive some fees/taxes in the future.

### **Who would need to be involved and what would they be responsible for?**

- Mayor Mike Hurley, senior City of Burnaby representatives, federal Members of Parliament (MPs), provincial Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), local business associations/advocates, local representatives of financial institutions.

### **What is the timeline?**

- This could be rolled out as early as summer 2020.
- Key drivers to the timeline will be coordinating times between the necessary parties as outlined above.

### **What are the immediate next steps?**

- Meetings with relevant MPs and MLAs to get buy-in and obtain their support for attending meetings.
- Meeting with the City of Burnaby to determine what flexibility the City has to offer supports along with the financial institutions.
- Build a presentation to kick-off the meetings with the financial institutions.
- Schedule meetings with the financial institutions.
- In the fall 2020, monitor the outcomes from the meetings with the financial institutions.
- As an additional step, it may be worthwhile, following the meetings with the financial institutions, to reach out to small businesses to determine whether the proposed meetings with the financial institutions are bearing fruit.

## 12. Action Plan: Create incentives and supports to position Burnaby as a hub for new businesses and entrepreneurs

The COVID-19 crisis and its impacts on business could potentially have a chilling effect on future entrepreneurship. To combat this, the Task Force would like to research and develop a strategy to encourage entrepreneurs to set up new businesses in Burnaby. This strategy could include a program of supports and incentives to make it even more advantageous to start new businesses in Burnaby. This will add to Burnaby's already dynamic business community and will help to mitigate any business closures that have occurred during COVID-19.

### How would it work?

- A program of supports and incentives would be researched and implemented to make it advantageous to start new businesses in Burnaby.
- Such supports and incentives could include, but are not limited to:
  - Explore with the City the waiving or reducing fees for first-year/new business licenses within Burnaby
  - Update and expand the Burnaby Board of Trades' existing Business Resource Guidebook with more content
  - Work with the City to offer help understanding and navigating permitting and regulatory processes – including licensing, zoning, inspections, and building, plumbing and sign permits
  - Investigate a pilot program with developer or property manager with vacant storefront/commercial space to offer new businesses a pop-up storefront to live-test products and services, to develop proof of concept, and to conduct real-time market research
  - Explore creating a mentorship or advice program to match new business owners with already well-established business owners in their same sector
  - Develop a new business toolkit with resources and webinars to help with common new business/go-to-market challenges such as legal, HR, sales, marketing, IT, etc.
  - Develop a program to offer one-on-one coaching/advice sessions to help entrepreneurs with common new business/go-to-market challenges such as legal, HR, sales, marketing, IT, etc.

### What does success look like?

- The number of new businesses formed in Burnaby following the implementation of this strategy is greater than same time in previous year/against benchmark or trendline.

### **Who would benefit from the action?**

- Entrepreneurs would be supported in creating their new business
- B2B businesses would benefit from having more potential customers in the Burnaby business community
- Property owners would benefit from having commercial space filled
- Community would benefit from having more businesses and less vacancies

### **How much money or human resources would it take?**

- Some of the potential action items would require no funding or in-kind contributions. Some other actions which are more program based would require funding to get the programs implemented.
- Staff time and administrative support for most of the possible actions would be at least significant.

### **Who would need to be involved and what would they be responsible for?**

- The Burnaby Board of Trade would need to design and develop the initiatives it wished to implement as part of this action plan, as it would be responsible for implementing and operating.
- For those tactics involving City of Burnaby fees or processes, the City would need to be engaged and involved in the process to determine what is possible and feasible.

### **What is the timeline?**

- This action is not as time-sensitive as some others, and could be actioned later in 2020 or planned for 2021 implementation.
- Development and design of possible strategies and tactics could be executed during remainder of 2020.

### **What are the immediate next steps?**

- Develop a working group or focus group to help brainstorm possible supports for new businesses.
- BBOT to identify initial priorities for implementation from possible list of tactics
- BBOT to lead development and design of implementation plan for top priorities

### 13. Action Plan: Expand the “#BuyLocalBuyBurnaby” program

As we move into a stage of business recovery it is essential that as much support as possible be given to Burnaby businesses by the citizens and companies in the City in order to maintain a vibrant and sustainable community for all. A number of initiatives have already been developed under a broad “#BuyLocalBuyBurnaby” program and the Task Force seeks to expand on these existing initiatives and to introduce new opportunities. These initiatives would include:

- An “Open for Business” directory and map;
- A local procurement campaign; and
- Continued promotion on the benefits and importance of supporting local Burnaby businesses.

#### How would it work?

- Actions and initiatives that could be included in this plan are:
  - The Burnaby Board of Trade “Open for Business” directory featuring more than 400 local businesses and providing information on how they can be accessed.
    - This directory has been, and will continue to be promoted with the help of partners such as the Heights Merchants Association, the North Road BIA, Burnaby Now and Tourism Burnaby and now includes an “Open with Care” messaging
    - This initiative has been further enhanced with a mapping product displaying the location of the businesses included
    - The BBOT will create a campaign to encourage Burnaby businesses, particularly larger organizations, to look at diverting some of their traditional procurement spending to local suppliers and committing to an approximate amount:
      - A web page would be created to support this campaign, part of which would be a tracker showing how much has been cumulatively committed. Companies would also be encouraged to engage their employees in other Burnaby Buy Local initiatives.
    - The BBOT will continue to work with the above-mentioned partners, and others, to continually reinforce the importance of supporting local businesses in the context of a vibrant, healthy and sustainable community.



- **What does success look like?**
  - The “Open for Business” directory engages a significant and growing number of local businesses, thereby creating a critical mass of shopping and buying options and opportunities.
  - A significant amount of procurement dollars has been pledged by large businesses to be redirected to local businesses.

### **Who would benefit from the action?**

- All Burnaby-based businesses. Although this is targeted principally to helping small businesses, this is a community wide initiative aimed at creating awareness and increased spending across all businesses in the City.
- Everyone in the community clearly benefits from having a strong, vibrant economy that provides jobs and economic stimulation from which everyone benefits

### **How much money or human resources would it take?**

- The partners previously mentioned have already committed some funding to get the directory launched and promoted. Going forward similar, but fairly modest, funding may be required
- The BBOT and partners would provide the human resources needed for these initiatives. The outreach to larger businesses would be conducted by the BBOT.

### **Who would need to be involved and what would they be responsible for?**

- Partners have already been outlined. Their role would be a mix of financial and communication/engagement support

### **What is the timeline?**

- New areas of action could be started by August 2020

### **What are the immediate next steps?**

- Meet with partners to review current impacts of existing supports
- Survey businesses to assess needs
- BBOT to engage with larger businesses to establish best practices to develop a campaign to encourage a diversion towards local procurement.

