

May 26, 2020

Mayor and Council  
City of Burnaby  
4949 Canada Way  
Burnaby, BC  
V5G 1M2

Dear Mayor and Council,

**Note from Dir. Planning and Building:** Staff are represented on the BBOT's Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force, and are aware of the many initiatives being discussed and pursued. Appearing elsewhere on Council's agenda is a report seeking Council approval of three initiatives that are generated by the City's recovery plan firstly, but which are closely aligned with the directions of the Task Force. Additional initiatives will be brought forward for Council consideration in the coming weeks.

As you may be aware, a few weeks ago the Burnaby Board of Trade struck the *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force*. The Task Force, composed of representatives from government, major employers, small businesses, non-profits, labour unions, and post-secondary institutions, will identify actions that can help businesses cope with the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and ultimately rebuild the local economy for the long-term. The Task Force is facilitated by the SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue and is made possible with the help of our Business Recovery Partners: *ABC Recycling, BCIT School of Business + Media, Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers, Pacific Blue Cross, and Electronic Arts Canada*.

On May 25, the Burnaby Board of Trade, on behalf of the Task Force, has released the initial "quick start" priorities which the Task Force will work on immediately to advance, execute, and advocate for. The full "quick start" statement is enclosed for your further reference, and the priorities include:

- *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*

I would like to highlight in more detail three "quick starts" which directly involve the City of Burnaby and its municipal jurisdiction, and encourage your consideration of our recommendations. The Burnaby Board of Trade, on behalf of the Task Force, welcomes any opportunity to engage with, discuss and collaborate on these and other ways of supporting our local economic recovery.

### ***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

Copy to: City Manager, Dir. Corporate Services, Dir. Finance, Dir. Planning and Building,  
Dir. Public Safety and Community Services

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.

Building on that, the *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force* is asking the City of Burnaby to:

- Prioritize above other uses the safe implementation of after-school, summer camp, and childcare-like programming when Burnaby recreation and leisure centres re-open and resume operations
- Explore any other City initiatives that could support the resumption or creation of private after-school, summer camp, and childcare-like programming

### ***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 non-restaurant business uses of public areas such as laneways, sidewalks and green spaces

Again, we would welcome any further opportunity to engage with the City of Burnaby on these recommendations and how they may be quickly and successfully implemented to support our local economic recovery from COVID-19.

Sincerely,



Paul Holden  
President & CEO  
Burnaby Board of Trade

## **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**

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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:

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The *Burnaby Business Recovery Task Force* therefore:

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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.*