



TOWN OF
HALTON HILLS
Working Together Working for You!

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

FROM: Erin Kaiser, Manager of Economic Development and Innovation

DATE: October 20, 2022

MEMO NO.: BEC-2022-0004

SUBJECT: Economic Support and Recovery Task Force – Accomplishments and Update

PURPOSE OF THE MEMORANDUM:

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide Council with an overview of the comprehensive supports provided to the local business community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic through the Economic Support and Recovery Task Force.

BACKGROUND:

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Town has taken early, decisive and coordinated action to support the local business community. The pandemic has impacted the global and local economies in unprecedented ways. As one of the responses, the Town established the [Economic Support and Recovery Task Force](#) in April 2020. Chaired by the Mayor, the Task Force included Councillors, and representation from the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Acton Business Improvement Area (BIA), Downtown Georgetown Business Improvement Area (BIA), and Andrews Scenic Acres Farm Market & Winery.

Goals of the Economic Support and Recovery Task Force included:

1. Continued engagement of the business community;
2. Coordination of communication;
3. Data collection, analysis and reporting on business needs;
4. Minimizing economic impacts of COVID-19 by investigating potential support measures and best practices;
5. Exploring actions to support long-term economic recovery;
6. Advocating to other levels of governments to address local business needs; and

7. Developing and implementing an Economic Recovery Action Plan to position Halton Hills for an accelerated economic recovery.

COMMENTS:

Throughout the pandemic, the Task Force has established, supported and/or amplified numerous initiatives and achieved many accomplishments with the goal of supporting the local business community, including:

- Economic Development's '[Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan](#)' (ERRP) to address business needs and supports required as a result of the pandemic, including reopening safely and staying in business while increasing business resiliency over the longer term.
- New [Invest Halton Hills](#) website, including a webpage dedicated to [COVID-19 business updates and supports](#).
- [Al Fresco in the Hills Patio Program](#) which supported supplementary outdoor dining space to eligible food establishments.
- Updated [Community Improvement Plan \(CIP\)](#) and its financial incentives to encourage and leverage private sector investments focused on building improvements and key strategic developments.
- [Digital Toolkit for Small Businesses](#) which included three downloadable resources for local business to learn about and leverage current Town programs and opportunities related to tourism, including visitor readiness and marketing.
- Partnership with the [Culinary Tourism Alliance](#) to help grow food tourism across Halton Hills with over 20 restaurants featured in the Great Taste of Ontario passport.
- [Digital Main Street Program](#) which has provided one-on-one support and about \$150,000 in grants to local businesses to support their e-commerce and digital business needs. An additional phase of the Digital Main Street program is currently underway.
- [Shop Local Campaign](#) with the additional collaboration and partnership of the Halton Hills [Chamber of Commerce's campaign](#). Town initiatives included:
 - "Explore the Hills" Contest – a weekly scavenger hunt throughout the Town
 - Print and Digital Ad Campaign showcasing local businesses
 - Reusable 'Shop Local' tote bags and new window decals provided to local businesses
 - Social Media Campaign
- Continued advocacy to other levels of government on issues of importance to the local business community.

Additional detail and information on the Economic Support and Recovery Task Force and related initiatives is available through the following links:

- [Town Establishes Economic Support and Recovery Task Force to Continue to Support Local Businesses](#)
- [Advocacy Efforts Support Local Businesses](#)
- [Al Fresco in the Hills Program Supports Patio Dining](#)
- [Al Fresco in the Hills Program Extends Temporary Patios with Added Warming Options](#)
- [Halton Hills Mayor Supports Vaccination Passport](#)
- [Mayor's Message - July 2020](#)
- [Mayor Asks Residents to 'Keep it Local'](#)
- [Mayor Bonnette Appeals to the Province for Increased Support for Businesses in Halton Hills](#)
- [Town Focused on Recovery with Launch of Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan](#)
- [Town Celebrates Small Business Week with Two Exciting Initiatives](#)
- [Town Implements Over 20 New/Modified Initiatives to Support Businesses](#)
- [Shop Local Campaign Encourages Residents to Support Halton Hills' Businesses](#)
- [Shop Local Campaign Encourages Local Spending to Support Businesses](#)
- [Town Launches New Economic Development Website](#)
- [Economic Development, Innovation and Culture 2021 Annual Report](#)

Recognizing the current state of the pandemic, the Economic Support and Recovery Task Force has been sunset.

CONCLUSION:

The Economic Support and Recovery Task Force has been key to ensuring prompt, effective and coordinated action to support the local business community in response to the unprecedented impacts of COVID-19. The time, commitment, advice and support of the Task Force members is greatly appreciated.

As part of implementing a comprehensive Economic Development workplan, staff will continue to assess current economic data, and take proactive, decisive and coordinated action to respond to COVID-19, as appropriate. This will include the continued implementation of the [Economic Development and Tourism Strategy](#).

For further information on Economic Development & Tourism initiatives and supports visit [InvestHaltonHills.com](https://investhaltonhills.com) or [VisitHaltonHills.ca](https://visithaltonhills.ca).

Reviewed and approved by,

Damian Szybalski, Commissioner of Business, Environment & Culture

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer