



Together we make a difference

March 9, 2020

BurlingtonGreen's Comments on Burlington's Climate Action Plan

Good evening Chair Galbraith, Mayor Meed-Ward, Members of Council, staff and residents of Burlington.

My name is Scott Kirby and I'm pleased to be here this evening. My professional work focuses on sustainability and climate change and the direct interplay to the insurance industry. I lead Al Gore's Climate Reality presentations, and perhaps most importantly, I deeply care about addressing the implications of climate change because I'm a father of two young boys. I have a genuine fear about what the planet will look like for their future, and that of their kids. The effects of climate change are real and they are scary, but I feel compelled to do what I can to try to find hope in that and I try to be a beacon of positive change.

However, this evening I'll be speaking to you as a volunteer of BurlingtonGreen's Advocacy Committee that I am proud to serve on.

As you know, BurlingtonGreen has already provided significant solution-focused input on the proposed Climate Action plan with written submissions, meetings with each of you, participation at city workshops and delegations. And thus, this evening we will not repeat all those specifics but instead limit our comments to key high-level points:

First, we would like to thank each of you for declaring a climate emergency back in April 2019. This was an important step, and it's important to remember that this IS an emergency, and we all need to continually and ambitiously respond as such.

We would also like to thank city staff and author of the report, Lynn Robichaud, for listening to our input and we appreciate seeing the latest version of the Climate Action Plan reflect some of our recommendations.

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Overall, we support the Climate Action Plan and are pleased to see that stronger details and plans for specific program areas have now been included. We are keen to see the associated work move forward with a speed and scale and accountability focus.

The Plan is a critical one, and we offer the following **7 recommendations** that we believe to be essential if it is to be effective and achieve the desired results:

Number one - ongoing and significant investment \$. We agree with staff that the targets of the plan are ambitious and will require strong commitment, and we urge this Council to provide a long- term financial commitment that extends beyond yearly operating budgets. The plan identifies a number of potential funding partners and lays out several scenarios for funding opportunities and mechanisms, yet it is unclear what the financial commitment expectation from the City is and what the impact on the plan will be if these external funding opportunities do not come to fruition. We encourage staff to put forward specific funding asks to Council both in the short and long term that will yield the required results.

Number two is self-explanatory - ongoing strong and effective political will and leadership with demonstrated action will be essential.

Number three – an associated policy framework to support the Climate Action Plan will be required and we look forward to seeing staff’s policy recommendations. Proactive, collaboration and good strategy between all levels of government will also be important.

Number four - an ecosystem approach where the Plan is fully integrated across city departments and operations is essential. It cannot be siloed within the Sustainability Department. Research, purchasing, operations must reflect the climate emergency and the City must consistently lead by example.

Number five - Advance and highlight more local success stories and demonstration initiatives. Showcasing ‘living’ examples of what low carbon living looks like will provide residents, groups and the business community with the compelling relatable opportunities that will help shift their behaviour, inspiring them to follow suit. Buildings are one of Burlington’s largest GHG emitters, and it is essential the city incent and work with progressive developers to establish smart community, net zero carbon places to live, work and play.

Number six - targets may need to be adapted and more stringent over time to keep pace with science as developments arise on the global and local front.

And finally, number 7 - the Plan must provide a clear, understandable, cohesive roadmap to mobilize the community. We know that not everyone stays up late reading IPCC reports and climate change news – many people know there is an issue, but they don’t

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understand it or know what they can do to contribute. They do not differentiate between climate mitigation and adaptation and are looking for direction on why and how they can (and must), be a part of climate change solutions. Messaging from all departments must be continuous, inclusive, clear and user-friendly, promoting a citywide collective approach to action on climate.

In closing, climate change is the biggest crisis humanity has ever faced. We know that the views of your constituents are incredibly important to you and while they/we are already feeling the effects of the changing climate, and will continue to do so, the ones who will experience it more are the constituents down the line 25 years, 50 years and so on. It's our kids that live with the consequences of our choices today. Our kids deserve a sustainable future on a sustainable planet, and it is up to all of us to make sure that happens.

We thank you again for declaring the climate emergency, for staff preparing the climate action plan and we look forward to continued collaborations to advance it.

Thank you for your time and attention.

BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association