

Burlington Vision to Focus: Build Back Better

NOVEMBER 2020

Solutions lie in building a healthier, resilient and just Burlington fuelled by a green and sustainable economy.

VISION, VALUES & APPROACHES

- Add 'Care for a Shared Environment' to corporate values
- Adopt a Green, Just Economy Vision (profile on new BEDC website as well)
 - Protect & Restore Nature
 - Act on Climate
 - Transform the Economy
- Adopt an Ecosystem Approach
 - Recognize that community and economic activity occurs **within** environmental, or ecological limits.
 - Apply a climate/biodiversity lens to values, planning, policy, funding and decision-making.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Accelerate and Integrate Climate Adaptation Plan
- Compliment CAP GHG reduction target with carbon sequestration target
- Strengthen CoB Sustainable Development Guidelines & Align to Climate Action Plan Targets
- Model environmental practices, C40 Cities actions and Drawdown solutions to accelerate demonstration projects, leveraging COVID community behavior shifts
- Empower residents and groups to directly/meaningfully contribute. Eliminate excessive permitting process barriers to embrace community efforts to help create a healthier, resilient shared environment.
- Increase/improve public communications (particularly via social media) re: opportunities and progress re: action on climate/environmental sustainability
- Expand V2F Sustainability Focus areas/Performance Indicators
- Establish & Integrate Biodiversity /Green Infrastructure Policies (including SWM/Low Impact Development Goals) as part of V2F and OP land use planning policies & process
- Integrate Sustainability to Asset Management *
- Ensure all pending planning work aligns with the targets of the CAP and are developed via a green, just recovery lens (Integrated Mobility Plan, SWM Plan, Parks and Rec MP, Urban Forest MP, Asset Management Financial Strategy & Asset MP)
- Include Waste/Circular Economy/Green Procurement goals (include food waste, grow and buy local) (dovetail Regional responsibilities vs defer)
- Include local agricultural strategies/efforts (GHG sequestration), including urban agriculture to support climate mitigation and adaptation goals.

ACCELERATE COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

- Adopt 15-Minute City Planning Model to build back better
- Align zoning policies to increase access to different forms of “gentle density”
- Support teleworking , strengthening internet infrastructures, continue government digital services. Promote neighbourhood co-working spaces by upgrading and repurposing city-owned buildings, expanding the role of libraries and community centres.

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- Work with local businesses to support & boost neighbourhood main street to ensure most essential needs and services are met at the neighbourhood level. Identify and address service gaps.
- Establish associated Performance Indicators such as # of services within a 15 minute walk in each ward / neighbourhood (the more the better)

De-carbonize Transportation Systems

- Invest in a robust electric public charging infrastructure to pave the way for green transit and accelerate the shift the electric mobility
- Set targets for complete electrification of city transit buses and municipal fleets
- Invest in a city wide awareness campaign to increase EV (including e-bikes) uptake
- Prioritize the transformation of existing streets and roadways for active transportation
- Invest in updating and enhancing the cycling and pedestrian network.
- Establish “Low Emission Zones” in select parts of the city. Set emission standards in these zones and charge vehicles that do not meet the standards or ban them from the zones
- Consider weekend traffic closures in select locations in the city to support increased foot traffic and boost local businesses ahead of the holiday shopping season.
- Establish associated Performance Indicators such as # of trips under 5 km not in cars (transit, biking, cycling...)

Prioritize Sustainability in Buildings

- Accelerate upskilling and reskilling to facilitate the energy transition and deliver the HERO program. Work with private industry and post secondary institutions to boost this important sector and meet the target of the Climate Action Plan.
- Strengthen the City’s Sustainable Design Guidelines, and shift more guidelines to the “required” designation
- Develop incentive program for green buildings/Low Impact Development
- Invest in the sectors with the highest opportunity for job creation: green retrofits, clean energy, active transportation infrastructure and urban greening and nature based solutions.
- Climate-proof critical infrastructure, to increase the city’s resilience and limit potential damages from anticipated climate or extreme weather events. Climate-proofing infrastructure will also boost the economy and create local jobs.
- See hospitals and healthcare settings as ‘anchor institutions’ and target them as key drivers in helping the community attain net zero
- Integrate/incent green roofs(local food) to SWM goals (green roofs, green curtains, and additional initiatives that do not depend on land availability (and slow growth of trees) - make use of buildings and come up with creative uses of developed spaces.)
- New buildings/condominiums have green roofs which could target climate change mitigation but also support community-based solutions to issues such as poverty/food insecurity (by growing vegetables to donate to food banks/shelters).

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Integrate Nature -Based Solutions

- Need another performance target that isn't just linked to lowering GHGs. Carbon sequestration performance target could be tied to tree canopy improvement
- Green spaces and green corridors are essential components of complete communities and support active transportation by providing green pathways.
- Restoring urban wetland habitats leads to improved water quality and stormwater management, boosting the area's resilience to climate change
- Focus on opportunities to develop green infrastructure over grey where possible
- Embrace community partner and resident driven 'natural solution' community projects by providing a user-friendly, barrier-free framework and process for their participation and valued contributions
- Establish a "blooming boulevards" program strengthening biodiversity and flooding mitigation
- Include a plan to develop a digital (GIS technology), urban forest inventory both projects based for key parks/green spaces around Burlington, and city wide. Including relevant information such as : at risk status, Injury Hazards, DBH Health status, Photos, Species identification Etc. Importantly, this information should be available on-line and accessible to anyone (for example the UMSL for the City of Edmonton). This creates public interest in trees/local biodiversity and can educate the public about the benefits of trees and biodiversity conservation. This can aid in the development of community based-projects: such as planting of trees for birds, bees, and butterflies. This may aid in the development of habitat corridors connecting private and public green spaces.
- Given the length of time for new trees to achieve the carbon absorption capacity of removed mature trees, a 4:1 replacement from 2022 onward should be considered.
- Accelerate tree planting, replicating programs other municipalities have adopted.
- Replace abundant turf areas in parks, bike paths etc with trees
- Leverage federal governments (two billion trees pledge)
- As the City continues to intensify, more emphasis will be on Low Impact Development (LID) and increased green infrastructure to manage changes in social, economic and environmental expectations.

Some References & Resources

- [C40 Global Mayors Agenda for Green and Just Recovery](#)
- [Solved: How the World's Great Cities Are Fixing the Climate Crisis](#)
- [How to build back better with a 15-minute City](#)
- [A green, just and job-rich COVID-19 recovery: How cities can rapidly boost good, local employment](#)
- [*Sustainability integration to Asset Management](#) (pg 9 - How to develop an asset management policy, strategy and governance framework)
- [Project Drawdown - Solutions](#)
- [Green Infrastructure Ontario](#)
- [Green Infrastructure for Climate Adaptation](#)
- [Health, Prosperity and Sustainability: The Case for Green Infrastructure in Ontario](#)
- [ICLEI :Building Adaptive and Resilient Communities](#)
- [Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure \(TCFD\)](#)
- [Communities for Smarter Cities](#)
- [2020 Declaration for Resilience in Canadian Cities](#)
- [Six impactful actions cities can take to reduce transport emissions](#)
- [Cities100 climate solutions](#)