



BRANCHING OUT

Our Path Forward 2018-2023



burlingtongreen.org

BRANCHING OUT

BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association's Strategic Plan 2018-2023

BurlingtonGreen is recognized as an award-winning leader in environmental sustainability. As a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization, BurlingtonGreen provides the largest presence of environment-related programming, services and impact in the City of Burlington with 10,000+ participants contributing to the annual Clean Up event alone.

All sectors of the community have come to rely on our organization to address their questions about the environment, advocate for a healthier, more sustainable city, and to provide engaging educational experiences and rewarding volunteer opportunities. We are guided by a solution-focused and results-oriented philosophy, which informs our work and is demonstrated through the positive impact BurlingtonGreen has had on the community and health of the environment over the last 10 years.

Achieving our goals has largely been driven internally with contributions from the general public, city leaders, corporate partners, community stakeholders, funders and countless volunteers. We have operated on minimal resources, leveraged opportunities and avoided duplicating the efforts of others.

OUR MISSION

Together with the community, protect the environment, mitigate climate change and create a healthier, more environmentally responsible Burlington.

OUR VISION

Everyone in Burlington recognizes we are all connected to, and dependent on the environment, and acts on this understanding to ensure a good quality of life and a sustainable future.

OUR APPROACH

We deliver our mission through a 'triple A' (Awareness, Advocacy and Action) approach.



OUR VALUES

Respect for Nature

We are a part of nature and must live in harmony with it.

Leadership

We provide positive, effective, and educational environmental leadership.

Integrity

We operate with transparency, accountability, professionalism and a solution focus.

Steadfastness

We stand by our convictions and persistently strive for our goals.

Inclusiveness

We welcome those who share the vision and values of our organization.



OUR IMPACT

We are proud of the impact we have made which has been achieved thus far through our “Triple A” approach.

AWARENESS

- More than 7,000 children empowered in Kids Go Green Workshops and 4,900 youth and citizens inspired at 6 Youth Summit/Eco-Award Celebrations
- Over 40 engaging Eco-Film Festival events
- Tens of thousands informed through a fully integrated community outreach program
- Implemented online “Eco-Score” tool and “Make the Switch” program to help users learn about and lower their environmental footprint

ACTION

- **Clean Up:** 7 citywide annual events engaging 77,000+ residents to retrieve mountains of litter from Burlington parks, creeks and neighbourhoods
- **Event Greening:** Services to 52 festivals/events diverting 61 tonnes of organics and recyclables from the landfill
- **Youth Environmental Network:** Established award-winning network for hundreds of high school youth to make a positive impact on the environment through local stewardship projects, eco-awareness campaigns and Youth Summit engagement
- **Healthy Habitats:** Planted almost 30,000 native trees, shrubs and plants combined, strengthening local biodiversity
- **Local Food:** Established the first public community garden in Burlington, serving as a model for additional city-run gardens
- **Grow to Give:** Spearheaded innovative program supplying 6,000+ lbs of community garden produce to local food banks

ADVOCACY

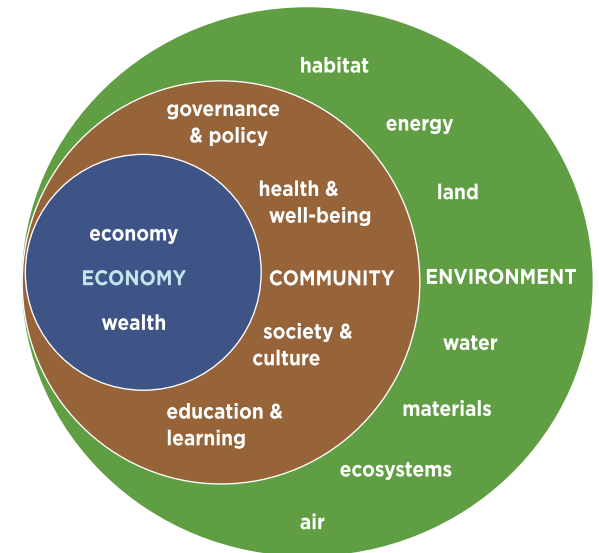
- Provided a solution-focused voice for the environment on more than 100 issues
- Educated more than 10,000 citizens with our Greenprint for the Future campaign on 5 key issues
- Partnered with the David Suzuki Foundation advocating for a healthy environment for Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Helped to rescue 11 acres of urban green space from development
- Provided comprehensive input for various city plans including the 25 year Strategic Plan and emerging Official Plan
- Secured a policy discontinuing the sale of bottled water at city facilities
- Ensured a Community Energy Plan was created for Burlington and advocated for climate change action at all levels of government



SUSTAINABILITY

BurlingtonGreen has adopted the County of Oxford's definition of sustainability as a lens to create an integrated and effective approach to addressing challenges, including economic and social inequities, human health, ecosystem decline and sustainable community development.

This concept of sustainability contrasts with the three legs of the stool approach, which was based on the premise that the social, ecological and economic legs were equally important. The nested circle framework recognizes that social and economic activity occurs **within** ecological limits.



KEY LEARNINGS FROM OUR 10 YEAR JOURNEY

The community is increasingly reliant on our organization for leadership, services and support, yet does not fully appreciate the resources required to achieve our common and shared success. Given the state of the environment globally and locally, and the critical need to address climate change, our value to the community going forward is more important than ever before.

In order to identify the environmental priorities of Burlington and determine those we can most effectively address over the next 5 years, Board Directors and staff carried out a community and environmental scan, as well as extensive stakeholder consultation and a SWOT analysis.



Key learnings arising from the review and engagement process are as follows:

- We are seen by others as a necessary, effective organization that accomplishes a lot, with our greatest strength being our community based focus and ability to mobilize others
- We are seen as leaders in green space protection, the largest local player on waste initiatives and an effective voice on a range of issues about the environment
- Our unique “triple A” approach strengthens our credibility and effectiveness
- Establishing and articulating a clear, compelling, and achievable plan is essential to engage our audience and potential funders
- Our new Strategic Plan should be aspirational yet achievable, thus not demoralizing for the team and the community to implement
- We are professionally resourced with solid governance and management, poised to more fully advance our mission
- A larger proportion of people and sectors in Burlington need to be aware of and engaged in the work we do
- The widespread integration of youth into our programming stands out and is valued by others
- Strengthening partnerships and developing new ones will become increasingly important to advance our mission and achieve our plans
- Our staff and volunteer capacity and financial resources have been outstripped by demand
- Fundraising will continue to be a challenge in a competitive not-for-profit environment and new strategies and efforts are required

GOALS AND STRATEGIES 2018 to 2023

Our focus and actions for the next five years will centre on 3 interdependent goals and their associated strategies, to be implemented through a directly aligned Operations Plan.

Successful advancement of the 3 goals will rely on community participation, relevant partnerships, a high functioning core team of staff, and the securement of ongoing funding.

The Operations Plan will include associated measurables to evaluate ongoing progress. Each of the goals will advance our mission and address climate change in specific ways.

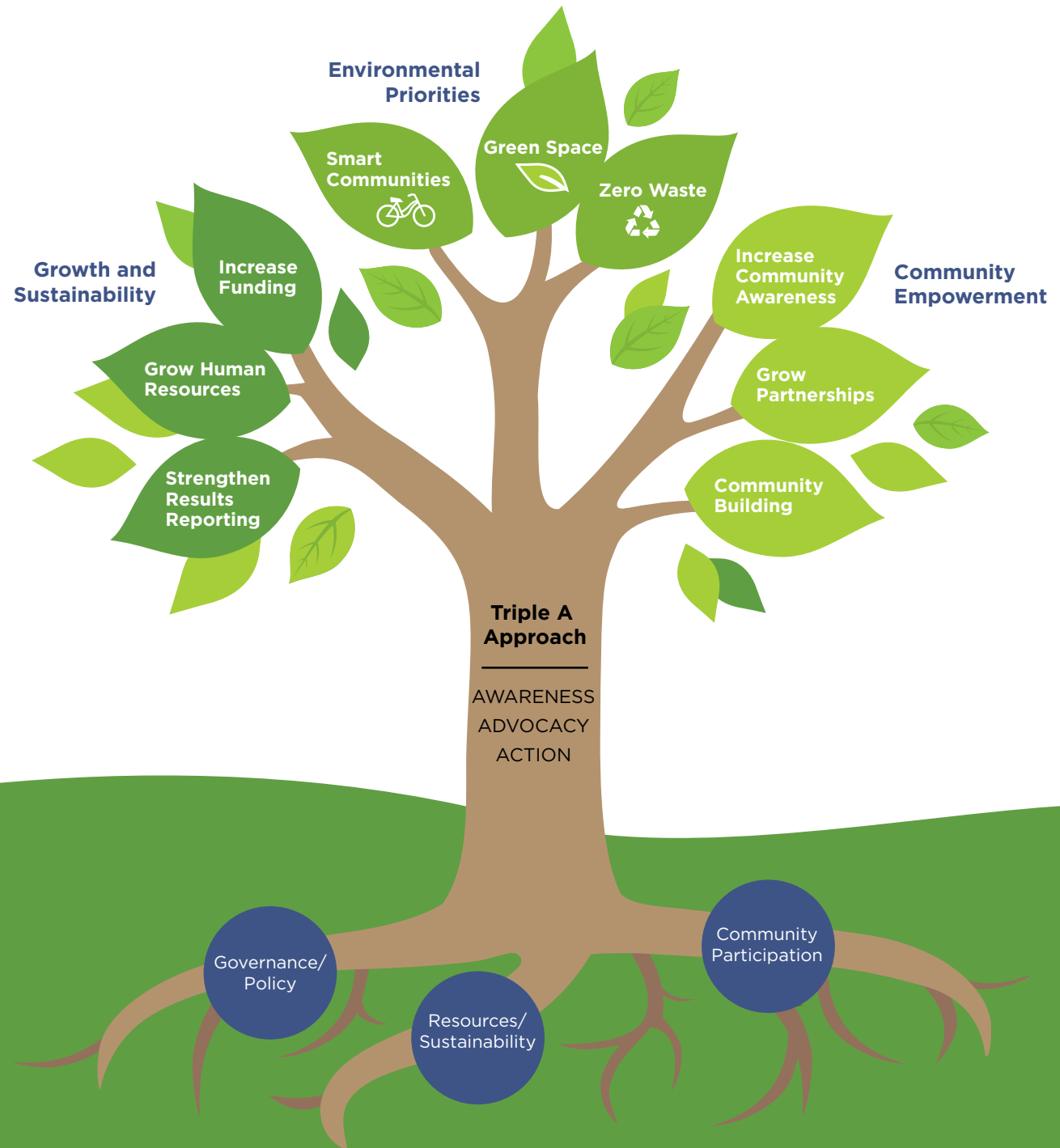


With the community,
we will continue
to advocate on
significant local
environmental issues.



DURING 2018-2023 WE WILL AIM TO:

- Move the needle on our identified environmental priorities
- Grow our team and become more financially sustainable
- Adopt an outward facing focus serving as enablers versus doers
- Further integrate the community into more of what we do
- Create and build on partnerships



ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

Burlington is in transition as we face the conflicting challenges of build out and population growth that include intensification, pressures on local green space, increased consumption of resources and the critical need for effective public transportation.

Through an extensive consultation process in the summer of 2017 with twenty-seven partners and stakeholders, BurlingtonGreen has identified 3 areas where, over the next 5 years, we believe we can make the most significant contribution to advancing Burlington's ability to address climate change.



Climate Change Mitigation/Adaptation

Together with the community, our efforts will focus on 3 areas in order of priority:

- **Green space** protection and improvement including the urban forest
- Advancement of **smart communities**
- A local shift towards **zero waste**

Green Space: Identified as the top priority by residents in the city's 2017 Official Plan survey, together with the community we will work to protect and create local green space including the urban tree canopy.

STRATEGIES

Advocacy: Support the community to achieve an effective city wide plan for green space protection, acquisition and design

Awareness: Strengthen public awareness to foster community stewardship for Burlington green space

Action: Connect the community to opportunities to improve the health of local green space





Smart Communities: Recognizing that Burlington is growing and that there will be very few new single family homes or roads built, it is essential that Burlington adopt a model that provides: efficient urban design; appropriate infrastructure including transportation; local distributed energy; and, recognition that integrated solutions bring environmental, health, economic and social benefits.

STRATEGIES

Advocacy: With the community, ensure government policy, planning and decision making reflects the Smart Community model

Awareness: Heighten public awareness of the multitude of benefits that come with innovative urban design, sustainable green building, landscape and transportation options

Action: Help to establish and showcase smart community demonstration projects in Burlington to inspire the advancement of similar developments where residents can live, work and shop local, while minimizing their impact on the environment

Zero Waste: Bringing Ontario's Waste Free Strategy to life in Burlington

STRATEGIES

Advocacy: With the community, ensure government policy, planning and decision making reflects Ontario's Waste Free Strategy to shift to a circular economy

Awareness: Help consumers recognize the role they play in reducing waste, to influence lifestyle changes that will advance a shift towards zero waste in Burlington

Action: Connect the community to local hands-on opportunities that reduce waste such as festival greening and community clean ups



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Our ability to effectively advance our mission is directly dependant on our community based approach. Among the various sectors that comprise the Burlington community, our primary audience and engagers will continue to be the residents of Burlington including youth.

Goal 2

Community Empowerment

Increase community awareness of our organization, as well as the need for active participation in the various strategies outlined in this plan.

STRATEGIES

- Advance community building opportunities, tools to convert awareness to self-directed action
- Grow online reach and engagement (social media, newsletter and website) using more story-based marketing strategies
- Grow community outreach and speaking opportunities
- Establish and leverage more partnerships in the community
- Increase media coverage





ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

Our ability to successfully advance the identified goals in this Strategic Plan, and achieve measurable impact, is directly dependant on our organizational capacity. Additionally, as a community-based organization, integrating the public in all we do, and at times, representing its collective voice, it is essential we consistently operate with integrity and transparency, accountable to those we aim to serve.



Capacity, Accountability and Impact

Strengthen and grow our organizational capacity, accountability and impact.

STRATEGIES

- Increase our funding, partnerships and human resources to the level required to effectively implement the Strategic and Operations Plans
- Create and implement an improved staff, board and volunteer recruitment, retention and succession plan
- Consistently act on our 'Together we make a difference' focus
- Improve reporting to the community on our plans, progress and results
- Assist staff, board and volunteers to lead by example by adopting more environmentally responsible behaviours

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

A strategic plan is only as good as an organization's ability to execute it in the spirit and timelines expected when it was created. The Board of Directors and staff are committed to working diligently to create and execute operational plans that effectively advance high impact deliverables that embrace community participation. Ongoing fundraising will be an integral part of our efforts to ensure the success and sustainability of the work we invest in.

On a regular basis, in keeping with our solution-focused and results-oriented philosophy, BurlingtonGreen will review and measure outcomes, consulting with the public, stakeholders, staff and volunteers, collecting input to gauge how well the plan is meeting its objectives and where improvements and adjustments should be made.

THE PATH FORWARD

We are grateful to the various community members and stakeholders that shared their valuable input with us about BurlingtonGreen's future directions. The outcome is a better plan and one that is reflective of our shared interests to create a cleaner, greener, more environmentally responsible Burlington.

With 10 years of tremendous impact under our belt, we are excited to embark on a journey forward that welcomes more community participation and collaboration than ever before.

Together we make a difference!







burlingtongreen.org

Printed on FSC certified paper.