

BurlingtonGreen 

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 – 2029

Empowering Action For A Greener Tomorrow



Introduction



BurlingtonGreen's 2024 to 2029 Strategic Plan provides the roadmap to guide us in our focus, decision-making, and impact so that together with the community, we can achieve collective action to help realize our Vision.

Our Vision is a Burlington where everyone recognizes that we are all connected to, and dependent on the environment, and acts on this understanding to ensure a sustainable future for all life.



Acknowledging. Honouring. Acting.



In Burlington, our work with the community takes place within the treaty lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, and we recognize this land as being home and the traditional territory to Indigenous people since time immemorial.

We honour all past and present First Nation, Métis and Inuit people, and we recognize their leadership in protecting and caring for Mother Earth. We join them in honouring and respecting the land, waters, plants, animals, four directions, and all of the wonderful elements of creation that exist.

BurlingtonGreen has much to learn from Indigenous People and we encourage everyone to continually learn from and about the Indigenous community where you live, and how we can each meaningfully honour the calls to action for Truth and Reconciliation.



Contents



Our Journey

Our Impact

Our Process

Our Findings

Our Plan

Our 2030
Goal

Implementation



Our Journey



Together we make a difference

"Together we make a difference" guides our mission and vision at BurlingtonGreen.

We've experienced the power of people working together and we've been proud to help shape and improve the lives of others while protecting and improving the health of the local environment.

BurlingtonGreen provides the largest presence of environment-related programming, services, and impact in the City of Burlington. Since our inception in 2007, we have continued to grow the scope and scale of our vital work.

As a non-partisan, award-winning charity we have remained true to our roots, grounded in the understanding that positive, meaningful change starts locally. Our solution focus continues to propel us forward as we work with all sectors of the community to create positive change for a better today and a more sustainable future.



Our Impact



Throughout our journey, we have worked with all sectors of the community (residents, schools, businesses, organizations, government) and thousands of volunteers, to join us in advancing our mission to protect nature, mitigate climate change, and create a healthier, more environmentally responsible Burlington. The many far-reaching impacts we have achieved together since 2007 have resulted in protected and restored habitat, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, strengthened local biodiversity, cleaner creeks, parks and neighbourhoods, the diversion of tonnes of waste from the landfill, improved and new government policies, a more engaged and empowered community, and more.



Creating Our Plan



As a community-based organization, gathering input from the diverse community we serve has been essential to informing the new Plan, as well as examining how we can move forward applying an authentic diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) lens to our work and collaborations.

Developing this Plan following the multi-year Covid pandemic also inspired a resiliency focus when conducting the analysis of BurlingtonGreen's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), so that we can proactively design and execute adapted programming ongoing including during future precarious times.



Our Findings

The following high-level outcomes are just a few resulting from the 7-month strategic plan process that informs the key framework for our next 5 years of prioritized work:

- Our expertise lies in strategically engaging individuals and communities to swiftly and broadly adopt sustainable living choices—a critical need highlighted by our stakeholders.
- We remain the leading ‘go to’ environmental organization for Burlington. There are relatively few environmental organizations in the Hamilton/Halton area, with the associated threat of insufficient capacity to keep pace with growing and forecasted demands for resources and services as environmental issues and implications escalate.
- Community surveyed feedback underscores a critical gap in Burlington: the need for sustained, well-supported environmental advocacy and mobilization including amplified efforts for rural and escarpment land protection.
- Our long-standing “Triple A” approach of Awareness, Advocacy, and Action remains unique among regional environmental organizations. Action ranked as the top priority area from community survey results.
- Underpinned by the priority for accelerated, effective action for the climate change emergency and the ecological crisis, the advancement of sustainable communities, the protection and care for local nature, and circular economy/low waste strategies remain the 3 primary areas for continued leadership and programming by BurlingtonGreen.
- Our organization has ongoing work to do to further establish and nurture meaningful relationships with local Indigenous community members and leaders, for our journey to honour the calls to action for Truth and Reconciliation.
- Grounding our work more fully in our values, and establishing a longer-term financial and succession plan are essential to our organization’s integrity and resilience.



Our Plan

The science is in. As a global community, we know what we need to do to mitigate and adapt to the escalating ramifications of interrelated climate change and biodiversity loss. So why aren't we accelerating the necessary actions with the speed and scale required to avoid this threat to all life on the planet?

Among other factors, we believe **human behavior and political will to be the crux of the issue**, and thus moving forward, BurlingtonGreen's strategic work will focus on these two key areas. With our deeply established roots in the community, 16 years of extensive experience visioning and implementing a wide range of solutions-focused programming, we are well-positioned to advance our Plan with a **community empowerment to action focus**.

During the next 5 years we will broaden and deepen our engagement work, empowering all sectors of the community to **demonstrate actions for the environment** by:

- **spreading awareness** to others about opportunities and benefits of living more sustainably
- **speaking up** for important issues, and voting for environmental champions
- **demonstrating tangible actions** for the environment at home, work, and play

Our environmental priorities directly support the City of Burlington's Climate and Urban Forestry goals, and Halton, Ontario's and Canada's Waste strategy objectives.



BurlingtonGreen adopts this nested circle concept of sustainability that recognizes that social and economic activity occurs **within** ecological limits.

NEW

We updated our Vision, Mission and Values to better reflect our journey forward.

Our Vision

A Burlington where everyone recognizes that we are all connected to, and dependent on the environment, and acts on this understanding to ensure a sustainable future for all life.

Our Mission

Through awareness, advocacy and action we work with the Burlington community to protect and care for the environment, for all life, now and for the future.

Our Values

COMMUNITY-BASED

We prioritize meaningful community engagement and evidence-based solutions to empower local collective action for the environment.

INCLUSIVE

We embrace DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging), and everyone is valued, respected, and treated with kindness and compassion.

COLLABORATION

We are welcoming and respectful with our relationships, recognizing the collective impact achieved with diverse experiences and contributions.

GRATITUDE

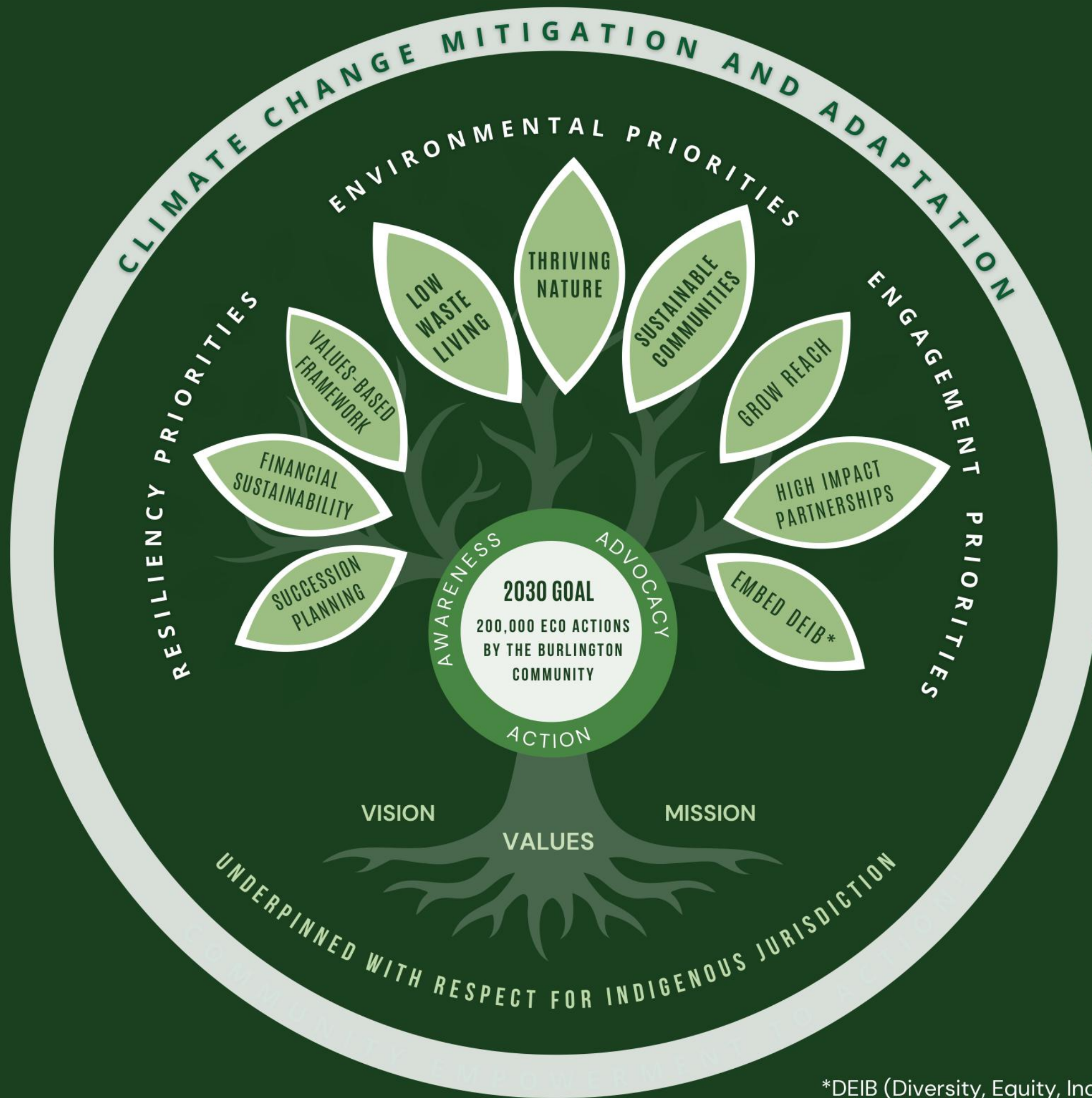
We are honoured and humbled to carry out our work, deeply appreciative and respectful of Mother Earth, our interconnectedness with nature, and how we must live in harmony with it.

INTEGRITY

We uphold the highest ethical standards, demonstrating transparency, accountability, and professionalism in all our actions.

OPTIMISM

We maintain a team spirit of hope to nurture morale and we engage others with optimism to broaden our reach and to achieve greater outcomes.



The diagram provides the **framework** for our approach and priorities for the next 5 years with a central focus on community empowerment to advance our mission to protect and care for the environment for all life, now and for the future.

*DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging)





Our Central Goal



We invite everyone in Burlington to join us in advancing our mission by empowering 200,000 environment benefitting actions by 2030.

Reflective of the escalating urgency for greater environmental action, and with our longstanding *"Together we make a difference"* focus, the purpose of the 2030 goal is to provide an inclusive, unifying campaign to mobilize city-wide ACTION to improve the health of the environment while growing a 'movement' of positive collective impact in Burlington.

We will track, report, and celebrate local actions such as the following examples:

-  *"I planted two native trees on my property"*
-  *"I ride my bike to work"*
-  *"My students planted a pollinator garden"*
-  *"My workplace made the switch to electric company vehicles"*

The project is scalable, and metrics can be adapted year over year providing value-added flexibility to ensure we leverage new high-impact opportunities as they arise.



Environmental Priorities



Goal: Reduce GHG emissions and improve climate resiliency through the acceleration of sustainable ('complete') communities and low-carbon living in Burlington.



Amplify community awareness of solutions and benefits to adopt climate-friendly living choices (active transit, flood proofing your home, adding a rain garden, etc).

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: ✓ # of BurlingtonGreen-led plus community-led awareness campaigns, promotions, events, presentations, workshops, etc.



Advocate for policies, investments, and implementation of climate-friendly infrastructure and development features in Burlington.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: ✓ # of BurlingtonGreen-led plus community-led advocacy campaigns, delegations, submissions, issue petitions, peaceful rallies, etc., and the resulting policies strengthened and/or established



Implement and champion climate-friendly features in Burlington communities. (EV's purchased, solar panels installed, shade trees planted, etc).

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: ✓ # of BurlingtonGreen-led plus community-led features and developments implemented in Burlington and their associated GHG reductions/environmental benefits
of people in Burlington taking action on climate

Environmental Priorities



Goal: Strengthen Burlington's natural environment by protecting, restoring, and expanding green space, caring for Lake Ontario and local waterways, and improving local biodiversity by planting more trees and vegetation, and caring for local habitat.



**tree carbon absorption based on 80% survival rate of 2500 trees planted @ 4080kg/per year*



Amplify community awareness of solutions and benefits to adopt nature-friendly living choices such as planting native vegetation, water conservation, etc.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: ✓ # of BurlingtonGreen-led plus community-led awareness campaigns, promotions, events, presentations, workshops, etc.



Advocate for policies, investment, and implementation of green space protection, expansion, and nature-friendly infrastructure and features in Burlington.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: ✓ # of BurlingtonGreen-led plus community-led advocacy campaigns, delegations, submissions, issue petitions, peaceful rallies, etc., and the resulting policies strengthened and/or established



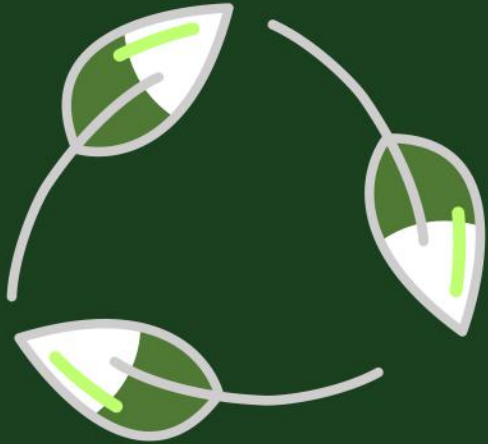
Implement and champion nature-friendly restoration and improvements in Burlington communities.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: ✓ # of BurlingtonGreen-led plus community-led nature-based features, projects, and enhancements implemented in Burlington
-A minimum of 2500 native trees planted via BurlingtonGreen and 61,200 kg of carbon absorbed *
of natural habitats restored or new habitats created
of shoreline and creek clean-ups and volume of debris removed
of people in Burlington protecting and caring for local nature

Environmental Priorities



Goal: Create a cleaner, healthier environment through waste prevention, reduction, diversion, and circular economy and zero waste strategies and actions.



AWARENESS Amplify community awareness of solutions and benefits to adopt low-waste living choices such as unnecessary consumerism, reducing food waste, etc.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: ✓ # of BurlingtonGreen-led plus community-led awareness campaigns, promotions, events, presentations, workshops, etc.

ADVOCACY Advocate for policies, investment and implementation of green procurement and waste prevention and management solutions in Burlington, Halton, Ontario, and Canada.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: ✓ # of BurlingtonGreen-led plus community-led advocacy campaigns, delegations, submissions, issue petitions, peaceful rallies, etc., and the resulting policies strengthened and/or established

ACTION Implement and champion city-wide litter clean-ups, waste diversion services at events, and various zero or low-waste actions in Burlington.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: ✓ # of BurlingtonGreen-led plus community-led low-waste actions
of Burlington community locations cleaned of litter/volume waste retrieved
of items repaired/repurposed
30 tonnes of e-waste collected for reuse, recycling
25 tonnes of recyclables/compost from events diverted from landfill
of people in Burlington demonstrating low-waste living actions

Engagement Priorities



We will grow our community reach and high-impact partnerships while authentically actioning diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging through empowering awareness, advocacy and action opportunities and initiatives.

*DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging)

MEASURES OF SUCCESS:



- Track and report the annual progress of our governance and community engagement diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging goals and activities (establish policies, recruitment strategies to attract diverse talent, culturally sensitive promotional materials, etc.)
- Increase engagement across all sectors (youth, businesses, groups, schools, general community)
- Increase the number of partnerships and/or collaboration projects by 10% and establish at least 1 new high-impact partnership/collaboration
- Increase our online audience reach from 17,000 to 20,000
- Increase our community outreach and events attendance by 25%
- Increase the # of annual speaking engagements/presentations by 25%
- Grow media coverage annually



Organizational Resiliency Priorities



We will be grounded on an ethical, values-based decision-making model to support a strong and diverse staff, Board and volunteer team, ongoing, while planning for the future. We will also amplify and accelerate our financial sustainability goals.

VALUES-BASED FRAMEWORK

We will “live our values” by integrating and actioning our 6 established values throughout our governance and operations planning, communications and implementation.



MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- Staff, Board, and Volunteers consistently perform and action decisions based on BurlingtonGreen’s values and ethics framework
- Values metrics and indicators are applied across annual workplans for ongoing measure and accountability
- Annual reports and financials are transparent, and accessible ongoing



Organizational Resiliency Goals



FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

We will consistently apply top-notch accounting standards with transparency and execute fundraising efforts in adherence with our gift acceptance policy.



MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- Our Time is Now Fundraising campaign achieves the goal of \$300k by 2026
- A long-term plan for financial future-proofing is implemented (emergency fund established and investment strategy explored)
- New donors and funding partnerships are established
- Greater diversity of funding sources is secured ongoing

SUCCESSION PLANNING

We will establish and execute a succession plan for Board and staff recognizing our team is our top priority to advance our mission and achieve our strategic plan goals.



MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- A Succession Plan is implemented that includes but is not limited to:
 - Ensuring a culture of future-readiness key (competencies and skills for business continuity)
 - Identification of critical positions and establishment of a payscale framework (updated ongoing)
 - Investment in internal talent including professional development and mentorship to create a strong talent pipeline



Implementation



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 BurlingtonGreen Team is committed to working diligently to create and execute annual operational plans that include detailed activities, key performance indicators, and associated fiscally responsible plans to make this strategic plan achievable.

We will continue to conduct environmental scans, consult with stakeholders, and invite community sector input, ongoing, to help ensure the Plan continues to best deliver on our overarching aim to achieve our Vision.

Some Next Steps:

**Q1-Q2
2024**

- Prioritize opportunities generated from SWOT analysis
- Finetune goal(s) metrics
- Develop Indigenous Consultation Policy
- Develop Communications Plan
- Produce Operations Handbook
- Launch 2030 Goal Campaign

**Q3-Q4
2024**

- Establish 5 year financial plan
- Develop long-term succession plan
- Determine strategic plan informed 2025 operations plan



We must act with focus to address root causes of the environmental crises.
We must act together to benefit from the multiplier effect of collective action.

We must act now before it's too late.

~David Suzuki Foundation

A sustainable future cannot be achieved alone.

BurlingtonGreen would like to thank the community, volunteers, donors, funders, project partners, staff, and our board of directors for their contributions to this work and to our collective action to come.

Together we make a difference.

