

Ward 1 Candidate: James Kerr



Question 1		Flood Infrastructure & Stormwater: Burlington has faced repeated severe flooding, including the 2024 storm that impacted over <u>1,600</u> homes and businesses. Will you support accelerating the City's stormwater planning, flood-mapping and infrastructure investments needed to reduce the risk and impacts of future flooding?
Response:	Yes	Yes, absolutely. Burlington's repeated flooding — including the 2024 storm that impacted over 1,600 homes and businesses — makes this urgent. I will support accelerating the City's stormwater master plan, updated flood mapping, and green infrastructure solutions like bioswales and permeable paving across Burlington's most vulnerable areas. I'll work with council colleagues to prioritize capital investment in drainage infrastructure rather than deferring it. Residents across the city shouldn't have to wait for the next storm to prove the need. This is exactly the kind of responsible, long-term planning I'm running on.
Question 2		Transit Investment & Emission Reductions: With vehicle emissions generating <u>over 40%</u> of Burlington's greenhouse gases, improving and expanding public transit is central to reaching the target to be a net carbon neutral community by 2050. Will you commit to supporting increased funding investments and service enhancements – such as fleet electrification, increased frequency, route reliability, and network connectivity – to make transit a competitive alternative to driving?
Response:	Yes	With vehicle emissions at over 40% of Burlington's greenhouse gases, transit investment is essential to reaching net carbon neutrality by 2050 — a target I'm committed to. I will work with council colleagues to support fleet electrification, improved frequency, and stronger route reliability across the network. Relocating Burlington's main transit hub to a more central location — something I advocated for during the 2022 election and has since been acted on — is exactly the kind of systems-level thinking that improves connectivity and makes transit genuinely competitive with driving. Good transit policy and climate policy are the same policy
Question 3		Climate Equity & Vulnerable Communities: While every resident in the city of Burlington will be impacted by climate change, not every resident will be impacted equally. The most vulnerable residents who are facing financial, social, mental and physical barriers will experience compounding effects and bear disproportionate impacts of the

		climate crisis. (Burlington Climate Plan 2026-2031) Will you commit to supporting the budget investments required for the implementation of the City's climate mitigation, adaptation, and emergency response plans to protect these disproportionately impacted communities, and all residents?
Response:	Yes	Climate change will not impact every Burlington resident equally — those facing financial, physical, or social barriers will bear the heaviest burden, and that reality must be reflected in how the City plans and spends. I will support the implementation of Burlington's climate mitigation, adaptation, and emergency response plans, including targeted investments that protect the most vulnerable. I'll also hold the City accountable for delivering those outcomes efficiently and transparently — because the residents most at risk are often the same ones least able to absorb a tax increase. Smart climate investment and fiscal responsibility are not opposites.
Question 4		Biodiversity Action Plan: Burlington currently has no municipal Action Plan to protect and care for local nature, and yet the implications of the biodiversity crisis (such as the acceleration of invasive species) continue to grow. Will you commit to directing staff to develop a Biodiversity Action Plan by 2028 with associated budget investments required for its implementation?
Response:	Yes	Burlington's lack of a municipal Biodiversity Action Plan is a gap that needs to close. The acceleration of invasive species, the loss of natural corridors, and the pressure of intensification on environmentally sensitive land are not abstract concerns — they are visible across the city right now. I will support directing staff to develop a Biodiversity Action Plan with a 2028 target. I'll also push for that plan to be developed efficiently and transparently, with clear outcomes tied to every dollar invested — because a plan without accountability is just a document. Protecting Burlington's natural heritage and respecting taxpayers are not competing priorities.
Question 5		Aggregate Moratorium: To safeguard Burlington's groundwater, air quality, and the Escarpment ecosystem, will you commit to support the Reform Gravel Mining Coalition's call for a provincial moratorium (temporary pause) on new and expanding aggregate operations? (The purpose of a moratorium is to allow time to conduct a broad consultation process, with Indigenous Nations, affected communities, independent experts and scientists, to chart an improved path forward.)
Response:	Partially / Other	I support strong environmental safeguards for aggregate operations, meaningful remediation, and protection of the Escarpment ecosystem. I do not support new quarry approvals in Burlington — but I do support responsibly managed expansions of existing licensed operations, where local aggregate supply is already part of the landscape. The materials for roads, housing, and public infrastructure have to come from somewhere, and sourcing them locally reduces environmental costs. My commitment is to push for a higher, consistently enforced bar for how that activity is conducted, with genuine consultation with Indigenous Nations and affected communities built into every approval process.

Question 6		Green Building & Development Standards: Provincial legislation <u>restricts municipalities' authority to mandate green building performance</u> beyond the Ontario Building Code. Consistent with the City's <u>Horizon 2050 net -zero commitments</u> , will you proactively advocate for stronger energy-efficiency and sustainability standards in Burlington's new developments, with associated incentives, planning processes, and legal tools available to the City?
Response:	Yes	I bring a perspective most candidates don't. As past CFO for an alternative energy company, I understand that green building outcomes are shaped as much by financial incentives as by regulation. Burlington should be using every tool available: density bonusing tied to sustainability performance, expedited approvals as an incentive for exceeding OBC standards, and green development conditions built into site plan agreements where legally permissible. I will advocate at the provincial level — through AMO and directly — for restored municipal authority to set stronger standards. Horizon 2050 is a commitment, not a suggestion, and I intend to treat it that way.
Question 7		Accountable Reporting: To ensure all Council members receive staff reports that are consistently accountable to the City's <u>Horizon 2050 Vision and 25-year Strategic Plan</u> guiding principles, will you direct staff to adopt an environmental, social, and economic lens to all reports, starting 2027? (example: <u>UN Sustainable Development Goals Framework</u>)
Response:	Yes	Yes — with one important clarification. As councillor for Ward 1, I cannot unilaterally direct staff, but I will bring a motion to Council requiring that all staff reports include an explicit environmental, social, and economic impact assessment aligned with Horizon 2050 and the City's 25-year Strategic Plan. Burlington already has the framework — what's missing is the accountability mechanism that makes it operational. I would push for implementation beginning with the 2027 budget cycle, with a reporting standard that Council can measure and staff can apply consistently across every file that comes to the table.
Question 8		Personal Commitment: What are some actions you personally take to minimize your environmental footprint?
Response:		Limiting car use is a daily habit — I walk or combine trips wherever possible. At home I use an energy monitoring system to track consumption and shift usage away from peak hours. I've added trees to the property for shade, cleaner air, and wildlife. As a past CFO of an alternative energy company, that experience helped shape how I think about consumption at home and across industries — my interest in energy efficiency goes back decades, and as a university student I designed and modelled a high-efficiency energy system for vehicles. I compost, avoid single-use plastics, and buy local when I (100 word limit reached).