

Ward 2 Candidate: Jeremy Gaetan



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	Protecting Ward 2 families and businesses from extreme weather is a top priority. The 2014 storm proved our local infrastructure must be upgraded. As Councillor, I will champion accelerating Burlington's Stormwater Management Master Plan using practical council tools. I will leverage the Municipal Act to update engineering standards for new developments, ensuring they are built for modern climate realities rather than outdated baselines. I will also advocate for directing capital funds toward aging downtown culverts and maximizing development charges so growth pays for its infrastructure impacts. I am committed to delivering proactive flood protection.
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	Expanding transit is essential for Ward 2, home to our downtown core and the Burlington GO Station. To achieve net-carbon neutrality, Council must use its annual operating budget and capital reserve tools to fund fleet electrification and increase service frequency. I will advocate for maximizing provincial and federal gas tax allocations to improve route reliability and regional connectivity. Through the Official Plan, Council can also implement transit-supportive development policies, ensuring high-density growth around our major transit stations directly funds local infrastructure. Making transit a reliable, competitive alternative protects our environment while easing Ward 2 traffic congestion.
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	Protecting our most vulnerable residents from the unequal impacts of climate change is a core duty of local government. As your Ward 2 Councillor, I will support the necessary budget investments for Burlington's Climate Plan. Council can utilize its annual operating and capital budgets to fund community-resilience hubs, expand public cooling spaces, and improve emergency response systems. I will also advocate for leveraging municipal community grants to partner with local non-profits already assisting those facing financial and social barriers. Ensuring equity in our climate adaptation and emergency plans means creating a safer, more resilient Burlington where no one is left (100 word limit reached).
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	As an avid hiker, mushroom forager, and passionate advocate for forest ecology, I know firsthand how urgently our local ecosystems need protection. Invasive species threaten the delicate balance of our native flora and fungi. I commit to directing staff to develop a Biodiversity Action Plan by 2028. Council can utilize its municipal planning authorities under the Planning Act and update our tree protection bylaws to shield fragmented green spaces. By prioritizing capital funds toward urban forestry and ecological restoration, we can systematically combat habitat loss. Protecting Burlington's rich natural heritage is a structural responsibility we owe to future generations.
Question 5		Aggregate Moratorium: To safeguard Burlington's groundwater, air quality, and the Escarpment ecosystem, will you commit to support the <u>Reform Gravel Mining Coalition's call for a provincial moratorium</u> (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:	Yes	Protecting Burlington's groundwater, air quality, and the sensitive Escarpment ecosystem is a primary duty of local government. As someone dedicated to forest ecology, I know how deeply connected our water tables are to the health of our woodlands and natural habitats. A temporary pause on expanding aggregate operations allows for necessary, science-based consultation. While licensing rests provincially, Council can aggressively use its Official Plan policies, zoning bylaws, and environmental impact assessments to strictly

		regulate haul routes and industrial encroachment. Fulfilling our ecological responsibility means ensuring that resource extraction never compromises our community's water security or natural heritage.
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 <u>City's 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	Despite provincial restrictions, Burlington must creatively navigate the Ontario Building Code to build a resilient community. While we cannot mandate performance upgrades outright, Council has powerful planning mechanisms. I will advocate for expanding the Burlington Sustainable Building and Development Guidelines by integrating them tightly into our Site Plan Approval process. We can use Community Benefits Charges, density bonuses, and fast-tracked development approvals to incentivize green development. By optimizing our local zoning bylaws and offering financial incentives for net-zero energy design, we can push developers to build responsibly, protecting our environment and keeping our long-term climate commitments on track.
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	Transparency and systemic accountability are vital for good governance. Implementing an environmental, social, and economic lens ensures that every staff report aligns directly with our Horizon 2050 goals. Council has the administrative authority to direct the City Manager to restructure reporting templates to mandate this triple-bottom-line analysis by 2027. This framework ensures that municipal capital spending, zoning choices, and bylaws are fully vetted for long-term ecological and financial sustainability. Grounding council decisions in data-driven reporting prevents short-sighted planning, protects our environment, and guarantees that taxpayer dollars are invested responsibly to secure Burlington's future.
Question 8		Personal Commitment: What are some actions you personally take to minimize your environmental footprint?
Response:		I walk to the grocery store unless it is on the way home from work appointments. I forage my own plants and fungi whenever possible, reducing the consumption of plastic-packaged goods that were transported great distances. I run foraging hikes to teach other people how to do likewise.