Sustainable Development Principles and Objectives[1]

The goal of Sustainable Development is to create the built form and systems that support the kinds of communities and connections that provide social, economic and environmental well-being now and in the future. The City of Burlington has adopted the following Principles and Objectives to guide the citizens and leadership of the City in their discussions about how to achieve sustainable development. Note that these Principles and Objectives were first endorsed by Council in 1994 and this is the second edition.

Principles

- **Principle 1:** Recognize the interdependence of humans and the rest of nature in a common ecosystem; seek to prevent and reverse degradation of the earth, air, water, plants and animals by human activity.

- **Principle 2:** Recognize the urgency of climate change and take measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt.

- **Principle 3:** Promote conservation, stewardship and responsible use of resources. Discourage processes and practices that result in natural resources being consumed at a rate faster than they can be replenished.

- **Principle 4:** Discourage the production and use of persistent and harmful substances. Reinforce proper disposal practices for such substances.

- **Principle 5:** Affirm and promote practices that provide a safe and healthy environment and build resilience, and engage our community in not only meeting the economic and social needs of all citizens but enhancing quality of life.

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[1] April 2017 Version – endorsed by the Sustainable Development Committee

Objectives

1. **Leadership:** Take a leadership position on sustainability issues both within and outside of the City of Burlington. Recognize that our local actions can have global implications.

2. **Protection and Enhancement of Natural Features:** Protect and enhance Burlington's natural features to ensure that shorelines, natural water courses, wetlands, flood plains, woodlands and forestry tracts, as well as notable landmarks such as the Niagara Escarpment, are preserved for future generations. Improve the connectivity of natural features to enhance the natural heritage system. Preserve habitat to maintain and increase biodiversity and protect species at risk.

3. **Protection of Natural Resources:** Sustainably manage and protect natural resources such as water, minerals and fertile lands. Reverse degradation of natural resources when feasible.

4. **Responsible Use of Natural Resources:** Reduce the consumption of natural resources and ensure users are responsible for the full local costs of services such as water, electricity and sanitary sewers. Provide educational programs to encourage conservation of natural resources and increase awareness of the full costs of services.

5. **Waste Reduction**: Reduce waste generation and increase resource recovery. Minimize waste in designing, building, operating, renovating, demolishing and re-purposing buildings.

6. **Greening of the City:** Promote the preservation, management and planting of trees and other vegetation on private and public property within the City. Encourage the use of native, non-invasive and diverse species.

7. **Natural Features and Green Space:** Ensure natural features and greenspace are fundamental components of the City including new developments and redevelopments.

8. **Superior Neighbourhood Design:** Make land-use decisions considering the natural features, site characteristics and location relative to employment, transportation and amenities. Apply an ecosystem approach to assess the impacts of development and to ensure environmental integrity, diversity and resiliency. Create vibrant, equitable communities that are healthy, walkable and transit supportive.

9. **Sense of Community:** Create sustainable and appropriate forms of development that reflect the human scale, promote a sense of community, and connect and integrate urban development and natural surroundings.

10. **Neighbourhood Connectivity:** Promote community development where residents can easily access necessities and amenities, such as housing, employment, locally produced food, retail, green spaces, education, recreation, and arts and culture through active or public transportation.

11. **Sustainable Transportation System:** Prioritize walking, cycling and public transit and make the best use of the existing road system for the safe movement of goods and people.   Support multi-modal connectivity within the City and with neighbouring municipalities.

12. **Efficient Urban Design:** Increase the efficiency of land use in the urban community with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas and other air emissions and provide efficient, well connected routes for active transportation and transit. Promote urban intensification and development policies, rather than suburban policies that generate sprawl.

13. **Natural Storm Water Management:** Protect water courses in their natural state and encourage the restoration of water courses that have been degraded. Encourage low impact development design and use of best practices to improve storm water quality and reduce the quantity of storm water sent to traditional storm water infrastructure.

14. **Energy Conservation, Efficiency and Generation:** Promote net zero carbon energy generation and usage. Increase energy conservation through efficient land use planning and building design. Encourage sustainable local thermal and electrical energy generation and the supporting distribution network. Adopt low emission forms of transportation. Take all opportunities to switch from fossil fuel to renewable and electricity-based technologies.

15. **Agriculture and Food:** Promote policies that improve long-term food security with sustainable local agriculture in urban and rural communities. Increase the supply of local, accessible, affordable, culturally diverse and nutritious food. Protect agricultural land from loss and fragmentation.

16. **Healthy Lifestyles:** Promote and support healthy and active lifestyles through the development of complete neighbourhoods, active transportation infrastructure, recreational facilities and parks.

17. **Community Engagement:** Seek and encourage public participation and education, and consider public input in city decision-making. The economic, environmental and social aspects of proposed developments should be considered. Decisions should address all aspects and build consensus among stakeholders.

18. **Evaluation of Development:** Continuously monitor and evaluate community development to assess its sustainability in relation to social, environmental or economic impacts.

19. **Sustainability Assessment:** To assess progress towards sustainability, the City of Burlington should prepare a performance review of the entire municipality at regular intervals and develop and implement an action plan based on the findings.