

June 10, 2019 – Delegation regarding Climate Action Update Report for Burlington TO: Report Number: CW-21-19

Good afternoon Chair Kearns, Mayor Meed-Ward, Committee Members, staff and citizens of Burlington

On behalf of BurlingtonGreen, I appreciate the opportunity to offer some input about the very important next steps for the Climate Action Plan and once again we thank all of you for recognizing and acting on the climate crisis by declaring a climate emergency on April 23, 2019.

Our input regarding the Climate Action Update Report is as follows:

1. **We are pleased to see that The Community Energy Plan will transition to the new Climate Action Plan.** BurlingtonGreen has been pleased to serve on both the City's Community Energy Plan Stakeholder Advisory Committee and the CEP Community Engagement task group since their inception and believe the move to a carbon reduction focus to be absolutely essential, and an obvious next step given the recently declared climate emergency.
2. **We support Option 1 with respect to the time required to develop the Climate Action Plan by the December 2019 date.** This was the timeline communicated to the community at the time the Declaration was made and should be honoured. A delay would be at odds with the "emergency" priority. No need to reinvent the wheel here. Good best practice engagement tools and tips already exist. Hot off the press example via [Enviromentum](#) Community Hubs [report](#) (funded by The Atmospheric Fund), speaking to the value of community hubs in building climate friendly communities.
3. We are pleased with Council's direction "That Council and staff immediately increase the priority of the fight against climate change and apply **a climate lens** to the plans and actions of the City of Burlington including the Council strategic work plan and future budgets but would **like to see it expanded to include ALL research, reporting and decision making at city hall**, and we have been pleased to provide you with best practice examples of this via our volunteer Anna that would allow you to adopt this framework sooner than later. (see past emails to Council providing the examples and links). This reporting framework can be adopted immediately, can include training for staff, thereby providing Council with information you require **now** about how issue recommendations clearly align with the City's adopted Strategic Plan Priorities and values. (unsure when or why the City removed the former "Environment Matters" from

their reports?). Now more than ever before, it is imperative you are transparent and accountable in how you 'connect the dots' between the declared climate emergency and day to day reporting and decision-making.

4. We are pleased to see that the City recommends The Climate Action Plan will include highlights of **city actions** to reduce the operational carbon footprint to show local leadership, but the **primary focus will be on community wide actions** – we support this noting **speed and scale are key here..** Must be outward facing, consistent, city-wide messaging emphasizing how government AND residents and ALL sectors must take action contributing to the critical emergency on climate, collectively contributing to a target (that aligns with the IPCC target).

The Burlington community will respond well to and rally around a city-wide solution-focused campaign. Every emissions reduction achieved, every environmental policy implemented, and every carbon-capturing tree planted could be tallied up with a running total continually communicated to the community, ensuring climate action stays top of mind and the first priority for the City, Council and the community. (share examples of how BurlingtonGreen has and will continue to share reader-friendly messaging via our various mediums of how everyday actions connect to addressing climate – recent example of tree planting work at Brant Hills – how investing in growing our tree canopy =increase carbon sequestration etc)

5. In terms of the Quick Wins outlined in the report, we propose the following additions be considered:
 - Given the GHG inventory work conducted to date confirmed that transportation is the top contributor of GHG's for Burlington, **fast track/prioritize the City's Transportation master plan**, ensuring the work conducted and content produced is via climate lens – consistent with the urgency of the declared climate emergency.
 - **Implement city-wide private property tree by-law ASAP** – protection of mature trees is one of the fastest carbon capture measures you can implement. (Noting: Council's adoption of the pilot tree bylaw was pre-climate emergency declaration. Inconsistent messaging and accountability here now. Cannot afford to wait and let mature trees come down while a tree pilot in one community is 'tested'. No other municipality that we are aware of has this piece-meal tree protection practice in place. Need to put the resources where they are needed to align with the stated time-sensitive Declaration.)
 - **Significantly ramp up tree planting programs on both public and private lands** – leverage strong community support, other funding partners and readiness to invest (ICI sector, etc.) BG can help get the work done via corporate tree planting program but require the City tree planting map and project costs etc.

- **Energy retrofits** – continue to support residential, but ramp up work with ICI and MURB (multi-unit residential buildings) sectors = biggest payback and can quickly access other investment ready partners
- **Red Tape Red Carpet Task Force/Communications to Businesses** – business community are big GHG contributors and must be part of the solution, clear expectations they too must lead and take ACTION and expected to contribute to the overarching Climate Action targets. The City has sent a message to the community via the Declaration that action on climate is top priority, and you’ve also sent a message to the business community that Burlington is ‘open for business’. Another example of the critical need to ‘connect the dots’ and your messages, at this and every opportunity. Ensure the framework of the RTRC task force, next step strategies and ongoing communications reflect the objectives and urgency of the Declaration. (include a representative on the Task Force with Green Economy expertise, and ensure all workshops and communications include climate mitigation priority for Burlington)

And finally, in the paragraph at the bottom of page 5 describing the climate change action plan, where it states: ‘flexibility to adapt to changing government policies and programs at the senior level, please **add AND EVOLVING CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS**. This is a crisis and control is not always in our hands...nature will continue to set the pace and we need to be nimble.

Thank you for your time and attention.



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