

Dec 2/19 address to Burlington Committee of the Whole

My name is Roman Talkowski.

I am a Ward 2 Burlington resident and I am here to speak to the Burlington Climate Action Plan released on Friday, Nov 29/19.

I am happy to see that the transition to a carbon neutral future has started. Lasting change demands a systemic shift in the way city frameworks are shaped, how funds are invested, how buildings are built, how we move and how resources are allocated for high impact action.

By **embedding a permanent** “climate lens” to all municipal decisions and investments, Burlington will permanently define a process that addresses carbon neutrality and climate change resilience in its day-to-day business operations.

I see good things in this plan. I see a considerable shift in the way people live and move. I see that infrastructure investment be assessed from a resilience, low carbon and longevity perspective. Between the lines, I see buildings that are hubs for climate action: being near zero, zero carbon or even “energy-positive”. Instead of being one of the biggest consumers of resources, I see buildings as efficiency hubs, relieving ecosystems and being at the forefront for climate action. I also see the continuous involvement of the community (private and business) without which there can be no lasting change. All this is very good.

What the report also points out is that is that carbon abatement investments are sound financial decisions (pg. 39) which yield positive financial returns. In other words, making these investments up front will make Burlington both cleaner and wealthier in the long run. I’m convinced and optimistic about the soundness of the economic

paybacks and the high-paying Burlington jobs that will be created. This is all good news.

No doubt, the Climate challenge is multi-faceted and complex. The big question is ..How successful will we be?... How well will we execute on the plan? Although the plan does call for regular indicator reports, there are no milestones or KPI's that I could see for 2020, 2021, 2022 and so on. Are they being developed?

If I read the report correctly, the plan is to reduce carbon emissions by ~50% by 2030 (pages 27 & 29). That's a major reduction in 10 short years, so milestones and KPI's must be established and followed.

I also see that after 2030, the efforts to keep us within 1.5C "requires action beyond those considered in the BCAP" (page 30). Why is this? I respectfully propose that a scenario be drawn up that outlines the steps required to reach carbon neutrality for the entire city by 2040.

Because as the report points out, we have a fixed global carbon 'budget' left to expend if we are to avert catastrophe - it is imperative that we get at the 'low-hanging fruit' like energy retrofits for existing buildings VERY SOON, so that we don't have those assets continuing to consume part of that fixed carbon budget.

The seven key programs outlined on pages 44–57 is critical. It is clear to me that a plan of this scope requires a major mobilization which, in turn, requires more manpower and more funding. I hope that this is forthcoming.

The major challenge will be devising and implementing truly effective programs for non-municipal assets – primarily buildings and transportation. It is success in these two categories that will determine whether we achieve carbon neutrality or not.

I fully understand the challenges are great and that co-operation from other levels of government is important. But Burlington has sufficient resources quickly to put some programs in place, e.g., an energy retrofit program which uses 3RD PARTY FINANCING. We cannot wait for other levels of gov't to come to the rescue.

Just to remind everyone, a major theme of the federal election by all except one party was Climate Change. Well, it has been about 42 days since the federal election and I haven't heard one word on climate change programs. The speech from the throne is on Dec 5 – we'll see.

On Nov 5, 2019, less than month ago, 11,000 scientists from 153 countries signed a declaration (published in the journal BioScience) stating that “The climate crisis has arrived and is accelerating faster than most scientist expected. It is more severe than anticipated, threatening natural ecosystems and the fate of humanity.” Climate feedback loops are kicking in. “To secure a sustainable future, we must make major changes to the way our global society functions and interacts with natural ecosystems.”

I like where the plan is going. It just came out, so I will read it a few more times and come back later. The issues are existential and time is not on our side. If cities have to go it alone, I urge you and the FCM to take leadership, and fully execute these plans alone, if need be.

National Observer, June 27, 2019

The \$70-billion plan

Here's what the Canadian government has already committed to do, according to the Department of Finance:

- \$26.9 billion in green infrastructure over 12 years
- \$28.7 billion in public transportation infrastructure over 10 years
- \$2 billion in the Low Carbon Economy Fund over two years, starting in 2017-18
- \$1.5 billion in the Oceans Protection Plan over five years, starting in 2017-18
- \$1.3 billion in the Nature Legacy over five years, starting in 2018-19
- \$2.3 billion in clean technology funding over five years, starting in 2017-18
- \$1.0 billion in energy efficiency initiatives through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in 2018-19 through investments in green infrastructure and the development of a Pan-Canadian Framework on Climate Change

Pricing pollution is far more effective when consumers and industry have a competitive clean-energy alternative.