



November 2, 2024

Dear Mayor Meed Ward and Members of Council

BurlingtonGreen is pleased to provide input regarding the City's 2025 Budget, and we thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration.

As per last month's [major report](#) authored by the world's top climate scientists, " We are on the brink of an irreversible climate disaster. This is a global emergency beyond any doubt. Much of the very fabric of life on Earth is imperiled. We are stepping into a critical and unpredictable new phase of the climate crisis."

Burlington's latest flooding disaster is just one of what unfortunately will be an escalating series of severe weather events impacting the lives of all residents, now, and in future years. It is essential that necessary, continuous investments in climate action be made by municipalities and all levels of government to safeguard community interests, ensuring a livable future for everyone.

BurlingtonGreen commends Burlington Council for the leadership, vision and accountability you have demonstrated across many budget cycles, making those difficult and sometimes less popular decisions to make the investments that are required **now** to help the City and community adapt to our changing environment, while not burdening future taxpayers with insurmountable costs. We know you recognize that a healthy and just economy prioritizes investments in green economy solutions.

The City attains the necessary 'roadmap' to ensure a healthier environment and sustainable future through the implementation of the priorities identified in various approved plans such as (and not limited to), the [Climate Action Plan](#), [Climate Resilient Plan](#), [Urban Forest Management Plan](#), and [Integrated Mobility Plan](#). **Ensuring the 2024 Budget (and future budgets) sufficiently fund these top priorities is crucial.**

Some examples for priority investment include:

- Continued improvements for expanded, frequent, free transit services
- Safe bike lanes maintenance and expansion
- Active transportation and road safety programming
- The continuation and expansion of Climate Action Plan priorities of deep energy retrofit incentives (Better Homes Burlington), renewable energy projects, and electric mobility and equipment programs and initiatives
- The advancement of climate resilience priorities such as the development of a city-wide biodiversity action plan, expanded capacity for community gardens, and community climate resilience education programming
- More robust and effective full tree life cycle management of the urban forest canopy including priority woodlots
- Stormwater infrastructure enhancements, and the development of mandatory Green Development Standards

**Central to all of the above listed plans and associated initiatives is the necessity for active community participation, the importance of which cannot be overstated.** It is not a 'nice-to-have'; rather, it is crucial to making the necessary individual and collective behavioral shifts that are required to ensure a liveable future. Effective engagement that is inviting, relatable and accessible can galvanize participation which in turn contributes to the successful advancement of the City's strategic priorities. This is where BurlingtonGreen's expertise and extensive services provide the greatest value and far-reaching, measurable benefits.

Developed in collaboration with City staff, **all** service deliverables detailed in the 2024 Services Agreement directly advance the City's strategic priorities, and although 2 months remain in the contract period, we are pleased to share that all identified services have been achieved, with one final service on track for completion. We look forward to submitting the Agreement accountability report at the close of 2024, detailing all KPI measured outputs.

In addition to the financial savings achieved by the City outsourcing the delivery of these key services by BurlingtonGreen, we are also pleased to share the value-added contribution of a \$9800 grant we secured to help finance fall 2024 tree planting projects at local parks that would have otherwise been paid for via the City's budget. We also continue to pay \$12,000 annually to rent the pump house, benefitting the City and the diverse community we serve at the popular location. The increased pressures on the ecologically-unique dune environment from growing visitation at the area amplifies the importance of BurlingtonGreen's on site educational services and ongoing habitat restoration activities.

The scope, quality, reach, and impact of services BurlingtonGreen provides throughout the city are essential, and if absent, would result in significant negative impacts for the health of the local environment along with gaps in established programming the community and various City departments have come to rely on. Thus, we are very pleased to see the inclusion of a 2-year fees for services contract in the City's 2025 Proposed Budget so that these essential services can continue, while providing cost-savings to Burlington taxpayers.

From a state of the environment perspective, the stakes have never been higher. And from a community perspective, all sectors we serve need us and the services and solutions we provide more than ever before.

Respectfully,



**Amy Schnurr (She/Her)**

Co-Founder / Executive Director

[amy@burlingtongreen.org](mailto:amy@burlingtongreen.org)

904-466-2171

