Climate Resilience & Our Environment

Protecting Burlington Today — Preparing for Tomorrow

Burlington is fortunate to have an extraordinary natural environment — our Lake Ontario waterfront, parks and green spaces, tree canopy, creeks and ravines, the Niagara Escarpment and extensive rural lands.

Protecting that environment is fundamental to maintaining the quality of life that makes Burlington such a desirable place to live.

But environmental responsibility also means preparing our city for changing weather, protecting homes and infrastructure from flooding and extreme events, reducing emissions where we can do so effectively, and ensuring that the actions we take are practical, measurable and affordable.

My approach can be summarized in four words:

Protect. Adapt. Reduce. Measure.

Protect What Makes Burlington Special

Almost half of Burlington's geographic area is rural. Decades ago, previous generations made the important decision to protect much of this land from urban development.

Today, Burlington's rural area encompasses agricultural lands, forests, natural heritage features and portions of the Niagara Escarpment.

We must continue to protect these lands, our urban parks and green spaces, natural areas, creeks and tree canopy.

As Burlington evolves, environmental protection and responsible city planning must work together.

That means ensuring new development includes appropriate infrastructure and green space, protecting established neighbourhoods and natural features, expanding the urban tree canopy, and incorporating approaches such as rain gardens, naturalized areas and permeable surfaces where they can improve stormwater management.

Protect Lake Ontario and Burlington's Waterfront

Lake Ontario and Burlington's waterfront are among our city's most important environmental and community assets.

Protecting them requires more than maintaining parks along the shoreline. What happens throughout Burlington ultimately affects the lake through our creeks, stormwater systems and watersheds.

We need to continue protecting water quality, natural shoreline areas, creek systems and habitats while improving the resilience of waterfront infrastructure to severe storms, erosion, changing lake levels and other environmental pressures.

Our waterfront must also remain accessible and enjoyable for future generations.

Environmental protection, public access and responsible investment in waterfront infrastructure should therefore continue to be considered together as Burlington plans for the decades ahead.

Protecting Lake Ontario begins well beyond the shoreline.

Climate Resilience Is Already a Burlington Issue

For Burlington residents, climate resilience isn't an abstract future concern.

We have experienced severe storms, flooding, extreme heat and other changing weather conditions.

The devastating August 2014 storm demonstrated how vulnerable homes and municipal infrastructure can be when extraordinary rainfall overwhelms drainage and sewer systems.

In response, Burlington and Halton Region undertook major improvements to stormwater and wastewater infrastructure, including approximately $120 million in sewer-system investments, together with programs to help homeowners reduce basement-flooding risks.

That experience reinforced an important lesson:

We cannot control the weather, but we can make Burlington better prepared for it.

Burlington's Climate Resilient Burlington plan now provides a 2022–2032 framework for adapting to warmer, wetter and wilder weather. Its 32 actions

address infrastructure, flooding, the natural environment, extreme heat, disaster resilience, agriculture and the local economy.

I support continuing this work.

Climate resilience should be incorporated into the way we design, maintain and replace infrastructure — not treated as a separate environmental program.

Adapt Our Infrastructure and Communities

As roads, sewers, parks, facilities and other infrastructure are renewed, climate resilience should increasingly become part of their design.

That includes improving stormwater management and flood protection; protecting and expanding the urban tree canopy; using natural infrastructure where appropriate; improving the resilience of City facilities and critical infrastructure; preparing for extreme heat and severe weather; supporting residents in reducing risks to their own properties; and ensuring emergency planning reflects changing weather conditions.

This is also why maintaining Burlington's infrastructure cannot be postponed indefinitely.

Deferring necessary renewal may reduce today's budget, but it can create much larger costs tomorrow.

Responsible environmental policy and responsible financial management often lead to the same conclusion: **maintain what we have, protect it properly and invest before failure becomes more expensive.**

Reduce Emissions Where We Can Make a Difference

Burlington has two distinct long-term climate objectives.

The City has established a goal for **municipal operations to become net carbon neutral by 2040**, covering areas such as City buildings, facilities, fleets and operations.

For the broader Burlington community, the target is **net carbon neutrality by 2050**.

These are ambitious objectives and achieving the community target will require action well beyond municipal government. Residents, businesses, utilities, other levels of government and technological innovation will all play important roles.

The City's Burlington Climate Plan for 2026–2031 appropriately concentrates its actions primarily on **Buildings & Energy, Integrated Mobility and the Local Economy**, recognizing the importance of buildings and transportation to local emissions.

I support continuing to pursue Burlington's climate objectives while ensuring that individual actions are practical, affordable and capable of producing measurable results.

Modernizing Transit Can Be Climate Action Too

Transportation is an important source of Burlington's community emissions.

But simply operating conventional public transit is not enough.

Transit only produces its full environmental and economic benefit when people actually use it.

That is another reason I support moving toward **smaller, on-demand and increasingly electric transit vehicles**.

Instead of operating large, underutilized buses along fixed routes regardless of actual passenger demand, technology increasingly allows us to match vehicles and service more closely to where and when people need transportation.

A modern on-demand system could make transit considerably more useful to seniors, young people, commuters and residents who do not use Burlington Transit today.

The objective should be straightforward:

Provide better service, attract substantially more riders, reduce the cost of unused capacity and progressively reduce emissions.

Transit modernization can therefore support affordability, mobility and our environmental objectives at the same time.

Climate Plans Must Evolve as Circumstances Change

Burlington's original 2020 Climate Action Plan was an important step forward, but it was based on assumptions about population, development, transportation, technology, energy and behaviour extending decades into the future.

The plan itself recognized that its modelling represented one possible pathway and that actual results would be affected by changes in timing, implementation and technology.

That is exactly why climate planning should never be static.

Technology is changing rapidly. Electric vehicles are improving. Energy systems are evolving. Building technology is advancing. Transportation patterns have changed. Burlington's growth and development outlook has changed.

Our plans must be capable of changing too.

Updating a plan when circumstances change isn't abandoning the objective.

It is good management.

Measure Results — Not Simply Activity

Burlington should continue publicly reporting progress toward its climate and resilience objectives.

But our focus should increasingly be on **outcomes rather than simply actions taken or money spent**.

For major initiatives, residents should be able to understand:

What are we trying to accomplish?

How much will it cost?

What measurable environmental or resilience benefit do we expect?

What results are we actually achieving?

Is there now a better or more affordable way to achieve the same objective?

Burlington's original Climate Action Plan itself called for performance metrics, timelines, milestones and public reporting.

I strongly support that approach.

Where programs are working, we should continue or expand them.

Where technology provides a better solution, we should adapt.

And where programs are expensive but producing limited results, Council should be prepared to reconsider them.

Environmental responsibility and financial responsibility should reinforce one another.

Work With Residents — Not Against Them

Many of the most important environmental decisions are ultimately made by individuals and businesses.

People decide what vehicles to purchase, how to heat their homes, whether to undertake energy-efficiency improvements and how they travel.

Government can provide information, incentives, infrastructure and leadership.

Whenever possible, I favour approaches that **make environmentally responsible choices easier, more practical and more affordable**, rather than simply imposing additional costs on residents.

Successful climate policy needs sustained public support.

That means being transparent about both costs and benefits.

My Commitments for 2026–2030

If re-elected, I will continue to:

Protect Burlington's parks, green spaces, rural lands, natural areas and tree canopy.

Protect Lake Ontario, Burlington's waterfront, creeks and watersheds and support responsible investment in resilient waterfront infrastructure.

Strengthen Burlington's resilience to flooding, extreme weather and changing climate conditions.

Ensure climate resilience is incorporated into long-term infrastructure planning and renewal.

Support Burlington's 2040 corporate and 2050 community climate objectives while continually evaluating the effectiveness, affordability and practicality of the actions being taken.

Advance smaller, on-demand and increasingly electric transit as an opportunity to improve service, attract more riders, reduce underutilized capacity and lower emissions.

Support practical energy-efficiency improvements in City buildings and infrastructure where they provide measurable environmental and financial benefits.

Require meaningful performance measures and transparent public reporting so residents can see what climate initiatives cost and what they accomplish.

Adjust plans when technology, economics, development patterns or other circumstances change rather than continuing programs simply because they were adopted years earlier.

Protect. Adapt. Reduce. Measure.

Burlington has made important environmental commitments.

The challenge for the next Council is to turn those commitments into practical results while recognizing that Burlington and the world around us continue to change.

We should protect the natural environment that previous generations preserved for us — from the Niagara Escarpment and rural Burlington to our parks, creeks and Lake Ontario waterfront.

We should adapt our infrastructure and communities to the climate risks we already face.

We should reduce emissions where municipal action can make a meaningful difference.

And we should measure our results, remain accountable for the money we spend and change course when better solutions become available.

Protect what we have. Prepare for what is coming. Invest wisely. Measure the results.

That is how I believe Burlington can remain environmentally responsible, financially responsible and one of Canada’s best places to live for generations to come.