

POLICY, RESEARCH AND EDUCATION GROUP

Adaptation and Preparedness

Objective

Minimize and prepare for the impacts of climate change.

Action Items

1. **Prepare an adaptation plan** to determine Burlington's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.
2. **Coordinate and include climate change considerations** in the city's emergency operations plan so that Burlington is ready for important climatic events.
3. **Work with regional organizations** to prepare for the impacts of climate change on a more regional basis.
4. **Develop a warning system** through the use of radio, television or phone (reverse 911) to caution residents and others in case a severe climate related event occurs.
5. **Encourage the Burlington Electric Department (BED)** to pursue the development of local power generation to reduce the city's vulnerability to climate change and its impacts.
6. **Take into consideration the effects of climate change** when writing stormwater management policies and regulations.

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Economic Development

Objective

Cultivate economic development opportunities for all including the creation of green jobs as part of an energy efficient and renewable energy economy.

Action Items

The City of Burlington should, in partnership with other entities as appropriate:

1. **Review the status of the local economy** in relation to its current level of green economic activity;
2. **Encourage green economic development** as a goal of its Community and Economic Development Office, consistent with the goal of promoting the creation of jobs with a livable wage;
3. **Leverage city policy, purchasing, and regulation**, and deepen local university partnerships, to promote local research, development, and production of green technology and products.

4. **Pursue the development of green technology**, the renewable energy industry, and energy efficiency improvements in the Burlington area, with methods such as direct investment, grants and other funding opportunities;
5. **Support the development of targeted programs** to train residents of low and middle income communities for jobs in the green economy;
6. **Collaborate with local educational institutions** such as universities, community colleges, adult education programs and job training programs to create more curricula that provide students with the skills and knowledge to work for competitive green business;
7. **Establish a database** or other suitable dedicated information source for public use **of green builders/contractors** and available renewable energy options and other green technology;
8. Continually **review City zoning ordinances** to ensure appropriate encouragement of green building practices.

POLICY, RESEARCH AND EDUCATION GROUP **Climate Change Education and Empowerment**

Objective 1

Engage, educate, and empower all those who live, work, or play in Burlington to reduce GHG emissions.

Action Items

City Government

- **Create a climate action stakeholder database** that identifies the stakeholders or sectors that are vital to local climate protection strategies (including civic and service organizations, NPAs, faith communities, educational organizations, senior centers, condo and homeowners' associations, etc.).
 - Establish community outreach teams to engage and communicate with these stakeholders and sectors.
- **Conduct a public education campaign** to inform residents, elected officials, community leaders, media, businesses, and non-profit institutions about the causes and impacts of climate change and actions they can take to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- **Develop a Burlington Climate Action website** as a tool for households and organizations to learn about the causes and impacts of climate change, estimate their current GHG emissions, identify strategies to reduce GHG emissions, locate resources to support GHG reductions (such as rebates and federal tax credits), take the Climate Action Pledge, report GHG savings, and track the city's progress toward climate protection goals.
- **Educate City employees about "Sustainability at Work and at Home,"** including strategies to reduce GHG emissions, as part of employee orientations and ongoing professional development. Establish GHG reduction targets for city departments and create incentives and recognition for departments and individuals that reduce GHG emissions.

- **Use City Hall, schools, and other public buildings** as demonstration sites for energy efficiency, renewable energy, and other GHG reduction strategies.
- **Support the development of a “green collar jobs”** tech program for Burlington High School.
- **Work with Burlington schools** to expand opportunities to learn about and take action on climate change for administrators, teachers, staff and students, including professional development, teaching resources, events, contests, and demonstrations.

Community-Wide

- **Promote a Burlington Climate Action Pledge** for individuals or organizations to commit to specific reductions of their own emissions through targeted actions.
 - Create a “constant contact” system to send updates and resources to those who have pledged.
- **Partner with NPAs, PTOs and other neighborhood groups** to promote neighborhood initiatives to reduce GHG emissions, such as Eco-Teams and Low Carbon Diet working groups.
- **Provide resources for employers** to educate their employees about GHG reduction strategies, encourage employees to take the Climate Action Pledge, and create incentives and recognition for employees to reduce GHG emissions.
- **Create a Burlington Business Climate Protection group** to share expertise, successes, and lessons learned in reducing GHG emissions.
- **Launch a “Green Neighborhood Challenge,” “Green Household Challenge,” and “Green Organization Challenge”** program to recognize neighborhoods, households, and organizations who achieve the largest GHG savings.
- **Create high profile events** to celebrate community progress toward climate protection goals and provide recognition to those in the community who are taking a leadership role.
- **Create a Teen Climate Protection Corps**, in association with Youth on Boards, to enable youth to play a leadership role in moving Burlington toward its climate protection goals.
- **Collaborate with local educational institutions** such as universities, colleges, and adult education programs to create more opportunities that provide residents with the skills and knowledge to work for competitive green businesses, including targeted programs to train residents of low and middle income communities for jobs in the green economy.
- **Partner with organizations** such as Efficiency Vermont and the Vermont Green Building Network to provide training in energy efficiency, renewable energy, and green building techniques to key players in the residential, commercial, and industrial sector.

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Climate Action Plan Implementation

Objective

Ensure the implementation of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) through constant coordination with stakeholders and regular annual assessment of the city's progress.

Action Items

City Government:

1. **Dedicate a city position** responsible for the management of Burlington's Climate Action Plan. This position will involve assessing progress as well as overseeing the involvement of partner agencies such as the Burlington Sustainability Action Team (BSAT) and the Energy and Environmental Coordinating Committee (E2C2).
2. **Identify progress assessment metrics** for each Climate Action Plan item.
3. **Create an Implementation Matrix** to clarify how action items will be accomplished and how assessment metrics will be used to track progress.
4. **Develop a progress assessment structure.** We recommend:
 - a. Doing an annual progress report using the Implementation Matrix
 - b. Updating Burlington's greenhouse gas inventory every three years using the ICLEI Clean Air and Climate Action tool to measure progress on reduction targets.
 - c. Periodically revisit the action items identified for Burlington's Climate Action Plan to assess relevance.
5. **Integrate climate protection into all department levels citywide.**

Community Wide:

1. **Make the Climate Action Plan** and all related documents **easily accessible** and widely publicized to familiarize the community with the work that is occurring and help make it visible.
2. **Provide a community forum** that invites the participation of all stakeholders that will facilitate community engagement with and connection to the Climate Action Plan.

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Social Equity

The 5 Principles of Just Climate Change Policies

The Environmental Justice movement has demonstrated that pollution's effects often fall disproportionately on the health of people of color, Indigenous Peoples, and low-income communities. The effects of global climate change, which is caused in large part by fossil fuel emissions, are no exception. Climate change, in fact, could have broader and more severe impacts. For example, people of color, Indigenous Peoples, and low-income communities are the first to experience negative climate change impacts like heat death and illness, respiratory illness, infectious disease, and economic and cultural displacement. Climate policy must protect our most vulnerable communities.

Here are 5 PRINCIPLES FOR JUST CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES that will ensure the protection of our livelihoods:

1. **Protect and Empower Vulnerable Individuals and Communities**

Low-income workers, people of color, and Indigenous Peoples will suffer the most from climate change's impact. We need to provide opportunities to adapt and thrive in a changing world.

2. **Ensure Just Transition for Workers and Communities**

No group should have to shoulder alone the burdens caused by the transition from a fossil fuel-based economy to a renewable energy-based economy. A just transition would create opportunities for displaced workers and communities to participate in the new economic order through compensation for job loss, loss of tax base, and other negative effects.

3. **Require Community Participation**

At all levels and in all realms, people must have a say in the decisions that affect their lives. Decision-makers must include communities in the policy process. U.S. federal and state governments, recognizing their government-to-government relationship, must work with tribes as well.

4. **Caution in the Face of Uncertainty**

No amount of action later can make up for lack of action today. Just as we buy insurance to protect against uncertain danger, we must take precautionary measures to minimize harm to the global climate before it occurs.

5. **Protect Future Generations**

The greatest impacts of climate change will come in the future. We should take into account the impacts on future generations in deciding policy today. Our children should have the opportunity for success.

* Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative (http://www.ejcc.org/cj/ten_principles/)