

# REDUCING CARBON

## UPCOMING DATES

### MARCH

- 11 Brampton Council, 9:30 a.m.  
Durham Region Committee of the Whole, 9:30 a.m.  
Halton Region Council Workshop/Meeting, 9:30 a.m.  
Mississauga General Committee, 9:30 a.m.  
Richmond Hill Council, 9:30 a.m.  
Vaughan Council, 1:00 p.m.
- 12 Hamilton Design Review Panel, 9:30 a.m.  
Peel Region Council, 9:30 a.m.  
York Region Committee of the Whole, 9:00 a.m.
- 16 Brock Committee of the Whole, 9:30 a.m.  
Clarington Planning & Development Committee, 7:00 p.m.
- 23 Brampton Planning & Development Committee, 1:00 p.m.  
Brock Council, 6:30 p.m.  
Clarington Council, 7:00 p.m.  
King Council/Committee of the Whole, 6:00 p.m.  
Markham General Committee, 9:30 a.m.  
Newmarket Committee of the Whole, 12:30 p.m.  
Oakville Council, 6:30 p.m.  
Oshawa Development Services Committee, 9:30 a.m.  
Pickering Council, 7:00 p.m.  
Scugog Council, 6:30 p.m.  
Uxbridge Council, 7:00 p.m.  
Whitby Committee of the Whole, 7:00 p.m.



**Rob Jowett**

**A** proposed climate action plan for the **City of Burlington** focuses on reducing the carbon emissions from buildings and the burning of fossil fuels for transportation as the city aims for more aggressive climate change mitigation targets.

At its meeting March 30, Burlington council will consider the climate action plan, which lays out a series of steps for the municipality to take in order to begin reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Burlington has a target of producing net-zero emissions by 2050, and the new climate plan sets an additional interim target of a 50 per cent reduction in emissions from reported 2016 levels by the year 2030. The plan focusses on emissions produced by buildings and transportation, and sets out actions that can be taken by the city, homeowners, and developers. It was developed by **Sustainability Solutions Group** and **whatIf? Technologies**.

“We’re looking at ways that residents and the community

can reduce their impact on climate, and we’re also looking at what we, in the city, can do,” Burlington mayor **Marianne Meed Ward** told *NRU*. “We know that about 90 per cent of emissions are private, or community-based... [and] about 10 per cent are based on the activities of city hall. So we’re taking a two-pronged approach, recognizing that even if the city [assets] were to be net carbon neutral, if there were no other changes [to buildings or transportation in Burlington], we’ve only made a small dent in what we need to do.”

The climate action plan contains seven main focus areas, including constructing low carbon buildings, conducting deep energy retrofits on existing buildings, developing a

renewable energy cooperative, electrifying privately-owned transportation vehicles and equipment like lawn mowers and leaf blowers, developing an integrated mobility plan to diversify safe and available methods of transportation, coordinating waste reduction efforts with Halton Region, and assisting various industries in finding new ways to reduce emissions. Burlington senior sustainability coordinator **Lynn Robichaud** told *NRU* that the city, as per the consultant’s recommendation, will focus its immediate efforts on improving the carbon footprint of older buildings, switching building, vehicle, and equipment power sources to renewable energy, and helping city residents switch to

CONTINUED PAGE 3 ■

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- Mariane Meed Ward

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

low-emission vehicles and equipment.

“[The seven program areas] pretty much all focused on reducing the use of fossil fuels in our community,” says Robichaud. “We need to update our sustainable building and development guidelines that we have in place, and really try to get to a point where we’re getting the builders to building... low-emission or net-zero buildings and integrated mobility.”

The plan recommends that the city develop a low carbon, new building guideline that draws from existing standards, such as the **City of Toronto’s** green standard or the international Passivhaus standard, which reduces energy use by maximizing the efficacy of passive systems (such as air flow and heating) through design, to inform the new policy. The plan sets a goal for all new homes to be net-zero by 2030, and for all multi-residential, industrial, commercial, and institutional buildings to achieve the Passivhaus standard by that time. The new building guideline is intended to be considered by council in 2021.

The plan also recommends that the city develop financing plans or incentives to help building owners retrofit

their properties to improve energy efficiency, with a goal of retrofitting almost all Burlington buildings within 30 years. Meed Ward and Robichaud say staff and council are open to all possible forms of incentives and other programs that would incent and support these retrofits, which could include upgrades to air circulation and other mechanical systems, and adding heat pumps, solar panels, and other renewable energy capture technologies to buildings. A plan laying out the different proposed financial incentives is expected to be presented to council by 2022.

“Our next step is to reach out to private sector entities, especially in the building sector,” says Robichaud. “There’s certainly opportunity for job creation on energy retrofits of existing buildings. And I think what we are really hoping is that the federal government steps up their support... [for a] deep energy retrofit program.”

City staff are already developing an integrated mobility plan which will incentivize the use of more efficient forms of transportation and active transportation, with the climate action plan setting a target of at least a 20 per cent modal shift away from car travel by 2021. A technical working

group will be established to assess ways of helping individuals upgrade their vehicles and other equipment as well. A plan to increase sustainable energy use in the city will be presented to council by 2022.

There are no financial commitments associated with the plan at this time. Meed Ward says that any costs will be considered as part of the more specific programs to come out of the climate action plan, and adds that elements such as the new sustainable building guidelines will likely not come with a major cost.

The climate action plan is likely to help reduce the city’s carbon emissions and address climate change, **BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association** advocacy volunteer **Scott Kirby** told the community planning, regulation and mobility committee when it considered the plan March 10. The group made several recommendations to the committee as to how the plan could be improved, such as by laying out a more specific policy framework, through greater communication with the public on the benefits of reducing emissions, and by making funding requests to council as soon as possible.

“Overall, we support the Climate Action Plan and are

pleased to see that stronger details and plans for specific program areas have now been included,” said Kirby. “We are keen to see the associated work move forward with a speed and scale and accountability focus.”

However, **Residential Construction Council of Ontario** president **Richard Lyall** says that he is concerned that the plan could wind up raising housing prices without addressing climate change issues. Lyall says he is not familiar enough with Burlington’s proposed plan to comment on it specifically, but says that in general, municipal climate change action plans tend to lay extra burdens on developers because they create a new set of policies to be navigated by homebuilders while being developed by city departments that may not be best suited to be able to find the best solutions and practices to address the issue. He says it would be better for the development industry to have a province-wide standard than to have municipalities develop their own plans, which has been happening recently across Ontario.

“What we’re advocating for and have been advocating for is a consistent set of policies,” says Lyall. “Green building and net-zero and things like that...”

CONTINUED PAGE 4

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- Richard Lyall

# HAMILTON DESIGN REVIEW PANEL AGENDA

The panel will consider the following matters at its meeting Thursday, March 12 at 2:30 p.m. in committee room 264, city hall.

2:35 P.M.

415 Main Street West—Panel

will undertake its review of 415 Main Inc.'s proposed mixed-use development at 415 Main Street West. The proposal consists of a seven-storey building with 112 condominium units and 236-square metres of commercial space.

Presentations will be made by City of Hamilton senior planner **Andrea Dear**, as well as **Weston Consulting** associate **Martin Quarcoopome** and **Urban Architecture** principal **Steven Kirshenblatt**. 🌱

## REDUCING CARBON

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

should be handled through the Ontario Building Code so we have a consistent set of rules and objectives and timelines through the code development process. The advantage of that is that it doesn't matter which municipality you go to. The net-zero, green building, [and] climate change measures are all going to be consistent."

Meed Ward says recent changes to the building code "go a long way" to achieving the sustainability goals of the city, but feels that municipalities should be leaders in finding climate change solutions. She adds that many energy efficiency measures can make buildings

more marketable as well, and that many developers are already achieving many aspects of the plan simply because it makes business sense.

"I've always believed—and the evidence has shown—that good environmental stewardship is also good business," says Meed Ward. "Developers have told us when they can market their building as net-zero or energy efficient—especially in a condo where you have shared infrastructure like geothermal heating... [and] people wanting to have electric vehicle charging stations as a selling feature to the condo unit—it makes for good business." 🌱

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