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MEMORANDUM

TO: Joan Shannon, City Council President
Burlington City Councilors
Mayor Miro Weinberger

FROM: Sandrine Thibault, AICP, Comprehensive Planner
Scott Gustin, AICP, Senior Planner
Jennifer Green, Sustainability Coordinator

DATE: Wednesday, February 12, 2014

RE: Proposed Municipal Development Plan Amendment: **MDP-14-01 Burlington Climate Action Plan; Open Space Protection Plan; Amendment and re-adoption of the Burlington Municipal Development Plan**

Two public hearings have been scheduled on **Monday, January 27, 2014** and **Tuesday, February 18, 2014** to hear public comment on the **Climate Action Plan; Open Space Protection Plan, their adoption and incorporation into the Burlington Municipal Development Plan (MDP) by amendment of the Introduction, Land Use Plan, Natural Environment, Energy and Relationship to Other Plans chapters of the MDP and the re-adoption of the MDP.**

Climate Action Plan

The Climate Action Plan is a detailed and strategic framework for measuring, planning, and reducing Green House Gas (GHG) emissions and related climatic impacts. It is a customized roadmap for making informed decisions and understanding where and how to achieve the largest and most cost-effective emissions reductions that are in alignment with other municipal goals. The plan includes an inventory of existing emissions, reduction goals or targets, and analyzed and prioritized reduction actions.

As you will recall, the Council reviewed and held two public hearings on the Climate Action Plan last spring, but did not take action until the proposed amendment expired. Therefore, the adoption process needed to begin again with the planning commission and this is now coming back to the Council for adoption. There has been **one minor change** to the document since last spring. A "box" was added at the bottom of page 9 of the document to speak to the McNeil Station emissions.

The *Burlington Climate Action Plan* is the result of a collaborative inter-departmental effort over more than 4-years involving the Legacy Project, Planning & Zoning, Burlington Electric Department and others. The planning process has included the following steps:

- Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventories preparation (2007 & 2011), as well as analysis tool development
- Reduction targets establishment
- GHG mitigation strategies development
- GHG mitigation strategies analysis
- GHG mitigation strategies prioritization
- Plan and website development and preparation

This Plan has received public input beginning with the formation of eight workgroups that generated 200+ mitigation strategies in the fall of 2008. These strategies were presented and refined at the Legacy Town Meeting on December 9, 2008.

The Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee (TEUC) recommended adoption of the 2013 Climate Action Plan and associated Energy Chapter update of the MDP back in the spring of 2013.

Open Space Protection Plan

The update of the Open Space Protection Plan, rather than a wholesale replacement of the 2000 plan, adapts the original vision and goals to reflect progress made on past goals and changes in the public perception of needs for open space. It also provides greater analysis and policy guidance for natural areas, urban agriculture, and green infrastructure - items contemplated, but not fully articulated, in the original plan. The fundamental components of open space planning established in the 2000 plan – Conservation Education, Land Conservation, and Planning and Development Review - are retained. This update is an addendum to the 2000 Open Space Protection Plan and both are incorporated by reference into the MDP.

The Burlington Conservation Board initiated the update of the City's Open Space Protection Plan in the summer of 2012. The city's original Open Space Protection Plan had been adopted in 2000 and had not been amended since. The original Open Space Protection Plan assembled a city-wide inventory of open spaces on public, private, and institutional lands. It also established the Conservation Legacy Program to oversee the city's Urban Wilds and the newly formed Conservation Legacy Fund for open space acquisition and protection. The original Plan was the basis for the city's Significant Natural Area zoning overlay intended to limit developmental impacts to ecologically significant lands in the city.

The 2013 update of the Open Space Protection Plan has updated the open space inventory, reflecting changes in land use and development, but also depicting open spaces at a much finer scale than in the original inventory. Within the framework of that updated inventory the Plan addresses the following key points:

- Identifies significant natural communities and includes assessment of underrepresented natural communities
- Identifies prime agricultural soils (state and federally significant)
- Identifies green infrastructure opportunities within the city's downtown core
- Maps formal and informal recreational trails
- Includes proximity analyses of residents within ¼ mile of community garden, public parkland, and the waterfront

The new data in the updated Plan will enable improved decision making relative to new development and acquisition of additional open spaces. New community garden opportunities can be identified and implemented in underserved areas of the city. Improvements can be made in the connectivity of the city's trail network. Significant natural communities may be preserved, and green infrastructure may be expanded within the city's downtown core.

The updated Open Space Protection Plan has been built on extensive public outreach and input. Two rounds of public outreach formed the basis of the update. Presentations were made to each NPA in the winter of 2012 to convey initial ideas and to solicit guidance from citizens as to what the update should accomplish. City boards and commissions, including the Conservation Board, Parks & Recreation Commission, and the Planning Commission were also consulted. A meeting of county-wide array of environmental groups was also held to garner input and guidance. The second round of public outreach took place in the spring and summer of 2013 and involved presenting refined open space goals and objectives for the Plan update to all NPA's. As with the first round of public outreach, city boards and commissions were also consulted during the second round of outreach.

A dedicated webpage was established and involved the use of an online public input tool such as that used for PlanBTV. People were able to see a map of the city with the open space inventory and post comments on the map for

others to review and comment on. This input tool proved very popular and useful in identifying priorities for the Plan update.

The updated draft of the Open Space Protection Plan was completed in the late summer of 2013. The Planning Commission reviewed the draft twice and ultimately held a public hearing on November 12, 2013 wherein the plan was approved and forwarded to the City Council for public hearing and adoption.

Municipal Development Plan

All City plans and programs which effect transportation and development, including the Comprehensive Development Ordinance (zoning and subdivision regulations), Impact Fees and Capital Improvement Plan, must be in conformance with the policies and directives found in the MDP.

The following sections of the MDP have been updated and all are being readopted:

[*Introduction & Burlington Demographic Profile](#)

[*I. Land Use Plan](#)

[*II. Natural Environment](#)

[*VIII. Energy Plan](#)

[*Relationship to Other Plans](#)

The **Introduction** and **Relationship to Other Plans** chapters of the MDP have been updated at the request of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) to ensure that factual data and information was correct.

The **Land Use**, **Natural Environment** and **Energy** chapters have been updated to remove any redundancy between the MDP chapters and the Climate Action or Open Space Protection Plan.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on November 12, 2013, on the proposed amendments to the Climate Action Plan, Open Space Protection Plan and the Municipal Development Plan, wherein the plans and other amendments were approved and forwarded to the City Council for public hearing and adoption.

Staff from CEDO and Planning & Zoning Department will be available at Monday's meeting to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.