

City of Ottawa Green Building Strategy—Mayoral candidate responses

Clive Doucet's response:

An Ottawa that will be successful in the future needs to begin getting ready now and that isn't hard. I've laid out many of the simple, important policies that can take us there in this campaign. Part of the problem though isn't so simple. Part of the problem as many have noticed is attitude. City Hall today takes a pejorative view of the kind of planning that have made cities like Portland great successes.

It is foolhardy to plan as if 2010 was still 1970 with ever more buses using diesel fuel, cars that gobble gas and development that devours greenspace. It's a pretty simple relationship, more roads, more buses, more costs, more taxes.

Ottawa needs to grow up and join the cities that are changing in the right ways to cope with environmental decline and inevitable energy shortages. The first step is taking the need to change seriously and elect people whose work and life reflects that need.

My view of sustainability is purely practical but it is fundamental to every plank of my campaign platform. We must move to light rail that is self-sustaining financially and environmentally. We must encourage bicycles with all the infrastructure and regulation that we can muster. We must set an example in our use of water. We must change the way we build and locate buildings to account for the steady rise in temperature that is creating both a different summer and a different winter.

I would draw on the resources of the National Research Council, our universities and community colleges, and exploit the knowledge and expertise of local high tech pioneers like Rod Bryden to create a new R&D technology hub specializing in green urban infrastructure—an up-and-coming industry with excellent growth potential. Working in this way, other Canadian cities have transformed themselves into world class centres in particular sectors, including Quebec City (biotechnology) and Montreal (pharmaceuticals). I would also strengthen the roles of economic development groups such as the Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation (OCRI) and the City's Entrepreneurship Centre, and create a new economic development group paying particular attention to new business possibilities and economic vitality as a whole.

This would be a practical, effective way to achieve results in areas like the private sector adoption of green roofs as well as efficiencies in city buildings to reduce operating costs and greenhouse gases.

Robert Gauthier's response:

I'm with you every step of the way.

When I was publishing The National Capital News Canada, we were using totally battery-operated vehicles for distribution and other activities as early as 1990.

Anything I can do to help will be done.

Fraser Liscumb's response:

Sustainability is all about learning to use what you already have to go create what you need to compete in a Global economy. I own a sustainability software that if transformed into cloud technology can monitor a budget or evaluate a budget in real time and you don't need to be an accountant. Designed it in 1995 to help support the first Innovation Hub in the Ottawa region based on the realities of the 1989 economic down turn. The city of Ottawa was one of the first members. Convinced the Ontario government to change investment legislation to allow the Hub to support something that the community of Ottawa believed was someone else's responsibility. 14 years and over 50 projects later and a lot of people that said thanks. Two of those projects supported by the community of Ottawa. Are the key to bringing down the cost of living and giving Ottawa the means to survive in a Global economy. One is a 21st century

investment system that the Feds in 2002 called the most innovative investment system they had seen in a long time, but did not support that type of innovation. When ask to support the request by a lot of Canadians to put in all Canadian communities. Why it not get support. speculation. Because it gave full economic control back to the community. The second is a 21st century Transit system. Go see what 1000 drivers had to say www.fmlcoach.ca. Most experts have no idea what sustainability is about. They do know how to make money using the words. met a few at city hall this year. I have been part of sustainability for 40 years. Good enough CEO walk out of their restructuring the company meeting to ask me if they got it right. Two levels of government over the last two decades seem to like my means to stimulate the economy during economic down turns. As they keep using a lot of suggestions I have sent in over the last few decades. The PMO office even had me send one proposal to the UN. To allow the G7 to help Russia out of financial trouble. I am now sitting on a 21st century investment system called a Resource Based Investment System and refuse to let the government screw this one up. As they always allow self interest to get in the way of what is in the best interest of the community.

Sustainability is all about having the means to maintain what you already have . If we cannot get the cars off the road then that means the oil companies and the speculators in control of the stock market have already shown you what will happen if our economy recovers. As the price of gas at the pump went up to \$1.08 from 98 in a few days. So ask yourself one question only. Where will the money come from when over 78% of all your working people are already surviving. I have a long recorded history of being part of change or creating things that stimulate change. Our cost of living has increased over 7% per year for over 7 years. You had better understand why. Mr Watson as Minister can take some of the responsibility. I have rented a house for 22 years. Last year our property tax went up 30 per cent and this year 35% thanks to Mr Watsons speculation property tax. I picked up 1 million tons of garbage in 1971/72 and proposed to the government in the mid 70ths that they use the gas to make electricity. I built a 21st century corporation in 1995 that used recycle everything to do over a million dollars in Grass Roots R&D and marketing across North America. That had U.S. inventors wanting to bring their products to Canada to be developed. With a technology R&D background. I more than understand all the green technologies. I also know there is a lot of ways to do all of it a lot cheaper and better. Do I support Green Yes, but I also understand everything is there to do it a lot cheaper and better. I work at a job that every week I watch tons of things being thrown into the garbage. The reason is simple. Money and nothing in place affordable in this town to change some of it and contract signed that we as a community would go broke trying to get out of. As for forming partnerships the innovation Hub allows all off its partners and supporters to remain independent to compete, but come together when need be to work on finding a solution to their over project 50 projects it has supported over the last 14 years. So I believe I can handle forming partnerships, but have the ability to assure the community is the big winner.

Charlie Taylor's response:

I am running as a green candidate and sustainability candidate, so obviously I share your concerns. You can read my platform concerning environmental sustainability including green buildings by following this link: http://www.charlietaylor.ca/?page_id=42

Jim Watson's team responded with a press release, and we excerpted the "Sustainable Growth" section here :

1. Sustainable Growth

One of the keys to ensuring that we have a livable city both now and in the future is to put the focus on sustainable growth.

The Green Team

"Sustainable growth begins with innovation," said Watson. "One area of innovation that Ottawa can become a leader in is green building materials. Becoming a leader will require the city to grow and/or attract leading green building materials companies and make sure that builders can choose to use their products without crippling bureaucratic delays," he added.

Watson would create a “Green Team” in the Planning Department that is knowledgeable and motivated to work efficiently on approvals for sustainable projects and materials. This team would focus both on homes and on commercial buildings, and act as a planning express line for those projects striving to achieve more in green building.

Green Roofs

Watson would work with the province to establish a bylaw to turn our roofs from asphalt eyesores to green gardens or efficient solar panels. Toronto already has such a Bylaw in place for new buildings with a minimum floor area of 2000 m², that requires them to have a green roof on between 20% to 60% of their total roof space. The benefits of green roof policies include a reduction in storm water flows, improvement in air quality, and reductions in direct energy use. “City Hall needs to be a champion of such innovation; not a barrier to it,” said Watson.

Green Buildings

The City needs to do a far better job at encouraging higher building standards. The North American standard for green buildings is known as the LEED standard. This standard has four levels from bronze to platinum. “If 6000 room hotels in Las Vegas can achieve LEED silver status then it should be possible for new high rises in Ottawa to achieve a similar standard,” said Watson. “We will work with builders and the province to set a higher efficiency standard for new construction.”

The types of housing and commercial buildings that are encouraged will determine how much energy and other infrastructure residents consume now and in the future. As such, it is important to make smart decisions now so that residents do not pay more than they have to for these important services.

Smarter, Faster Planning Approvals

In addition to the “Green Team” there needs to be a better approach to planning in general. Right now the planning department is organized geographically. This may have once made sense, but it no longer reflects the needs of residents and builders. “We need to organize the department so that people with different types of knowledge and expertise, ranging from commercial buildings to a home to major subdivisions of many homes, are located and work together,” said Watson. The city can dramatically improve our smart growth planning and reduce needless frustration by overhauling the way the planning department organizes itself to support growth. This is key to the intensification that is at the heart of smart growth in Ottawa.

“Right now there is no sensitivity to small builders and it is very difficult for residents who want to take on a renovation to do so without spending tens of thousands on planning consultants and process,” he added.

Balanced Growth

There is simply nothing of more importance to a city than maintaining a sensible and balanced approach to growth. As Mayor, Jim Watson would stand up for the recently renewed Official Plan and stand by the Urban Boundary it entails. “We need to stand by our existing communities, and especially our suburbs who deserve an equally high quality of life and in many cases are still waiting for recreation and library service,” said Watson. “Rather than forcing anyone who lives in the suburbs to burn a litre of gas to go get a litre of milk, no matter where you live you deserve the same balance of services, workplaces and jobs. That is why balanced economic development is so important,” he added.

Copy of Letter sent to Mayoral Candidates

Dear Candidate,

I am writing to you as President of the Ottawa Region Chapter of the Canada Green Building Council to request your support for a municipally led sustainable building strategy for the City of Ottawa.

On October 17th Jim Watson laid out four areas in which he would make a difference as Mayor of Ottawa including: Sustainable Growth; Sustainable Transportation; Sustainable Power that Works and other Sustainability Priorities. The Canada Green Building Council is very interested in hearing your platform on sustainability.

The Canada Green Building Councils (CaGBC) mission is to lead and accelerate the transformation to high-performing, healthy green buildings, homes and communities throughout Canada.

The CaGBC's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ has become a familiar name in the real estate community. In Canada there are over 2,500 buildings registered for LEED certification as well as over 10,000 professionals who have qualified for the LEED AP (Accredited Professional) designation.

In Ottawa there are over 75 buildings registered for LEED certification and over 450 LEED APs. LEED buildings in Ottawa include places that are familiar to you such as the Ottawa Paramedic Headquarters, the Rideau Valley Conservation Centre, and the Minto South Merivale Business Park.

LEED's success can be attributed to its effectiveness in encouraging and accelerating the adoption of sustainable green building and development. It provides building owners and operators the tools they need to have an immediate and measurable impact on their buildings' performance.

A property owner's decision to evaluate and implement the benefits and cost savings of buildings designed or operated with LEED high performance design features will be the single most significant action they can take to have a positive impact on climate change.

According to the World Green Building Council, buildings account for 40-50% of the world's consumption of raw materials, 30-40% of its energy use and 33% of its CO₂ emissions. While vehicles get the most attention, buildings use more energy--and contribute more to global warming--than cars, trucks, and buses combined. In Canada, the commercial building sector alone accounts for about 14% of all end-use energy consumption and 13% of the country's carbon emissions.

There is a need for all levels of Government in Canada to embrace the reality of climate change and to include sustainability as part of every aspect of their interactions with real property. A solid commitment from government to adopt and encourage green buildings is the simplest and most effective way to reduce energy consumption and green house gas emissions (GHG).

Municipalities across Canada are encouraging stakeholders to adopt sustainable strategies to reduce energy consumption and GHG and most have made buildings a core part of their strategies. Following are some great examples:

- Partners in Project Green - The Pearson Eco-Business Zone is a joint partnership with Greater Toronto Airport, Toronto Conservation, Region of Peel, City of Toronto, Brampton and the City of Mississauga - <http://www.partnersinprojectgreen.com>
- Toronto Green Development Standard - A set of performance measures with supporting guidelines related to sustainable site and building design for new development. - <http://www.toronto.ca/planning/environment/greendevlopment.htm#bbp>
- Toronto Better Building Partnership - A City of Toronto program that works with building owners, managers and builders to ensure that buildings achieve high energy performance and low environmental impact. - <http://bbptoronto.ca/>
- Mayor's Tower Renewal is a Toronto project that combines green technologies with neighborhood revitalizations projects to make over the City's residential apartment buildings many of which were built between the 1050's and 1980's. -<http://www.towerrenewal.ca/>
- Vancouver is requiring rezoning applicants comply with a LEED Gold equivalent - <http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20100204/documents/penv3.pdf>
- Vancouver has set a number of climate protection targets:
 - o 2010 - Reduce municipal operations emissions by 20% (achieved)

- o 2012 - Carbon neutral operations
- o 2012 - Reduce community emissions by 6% (on track to achieving)
- o 2020 - Reduce community emissions by 33%
- o 2030 - All new buildings are carbon neutral
- o 2050 - Reduce community emissions by 80%

U.S. Mayors have long been leading the effort to address climate change and the need to promote sustainability. Recently the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) Embrace a Green Building Policy Agenda. This *represents a powerful endorsement for implementing green building; spurring economic savings and green jobs nationwide in the USA.*

These resolutions, passed unanimously in Oklahoma City during the USCM annual meeting, represent a powerful endorsement of support for implementing a green building agenda. *The full press release is attached for your reference.*

The resolutions that passed include:

- o Financing Mechanisms to Pay for Energy Retrofits of Existing Buildings
- o Greening of School Districts
- o Sustainable Development in Cities
- o Green Affordable Housing and Financing
- o Calling on U.S. Cities to Adopt Green Building Codes and the International Green Construction Code

Research also shows that corporate leaders around the World are implementing sustainability strategies. A recent study conducted by Accenture in partnership with the United Nations Global Compact found 93% of the 766 CEO's polled said sustainability issues will be critical to their firm's success in the next ten years. (GreenBiz.com, June 22, 2010)

Municipal leaders across Canada have taken tangible steps to act on climate change and reduce greenhouse gases through programs offered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities including the Green Municipal Fund and Partners for Climate Protection (PCP). The FCM Partners for Climate Protection is the Canadian Component of the International Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI.org) Cities for Climate Protection Program which involves 900 communities worldwide.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has also has a section of its website that lists 'sustainability policies', many dealing with the building sector, that have been adopted by Canadian cities.

As the Nation's capital Ottawa should be taking a lead role by becoming a world-class region for eco-innovation. It would be an opportunity to gain a competitive advantage where all stakeholders - government, business and the public - would work together to create an internationally recognized 'eco-business city' - a "green beacon" for economic development in sustainability both nationally and internationally.

We need a champion who can turn this vision into reality. Are you this Champion?

We would like to inform our membership and other stakeholders about how you intend to address this issue of vital importance to our future. Would you please provide me with written description of your campaign platform for a City of Ottawa Green Building Strategy.

I would be pleased to discuss this idea with you further.

James McNeil, President, Ottawa Region Chapter Canada Green Building Council