

Environmental Sustainability Strategy (ESS) Review

Reviewing 9 Years of Progress and Implementation (2016 to 2025)

Prepared by: Andrew Yan, UBC Sustainability Scholar, 2025

Prepared for: Mark Sloat, Senior Environmental Planner, Environmental Planning, City of Burnaby;
Hafsa Salihue, Environmental Planner, Environmental Planning, City of Burnaby

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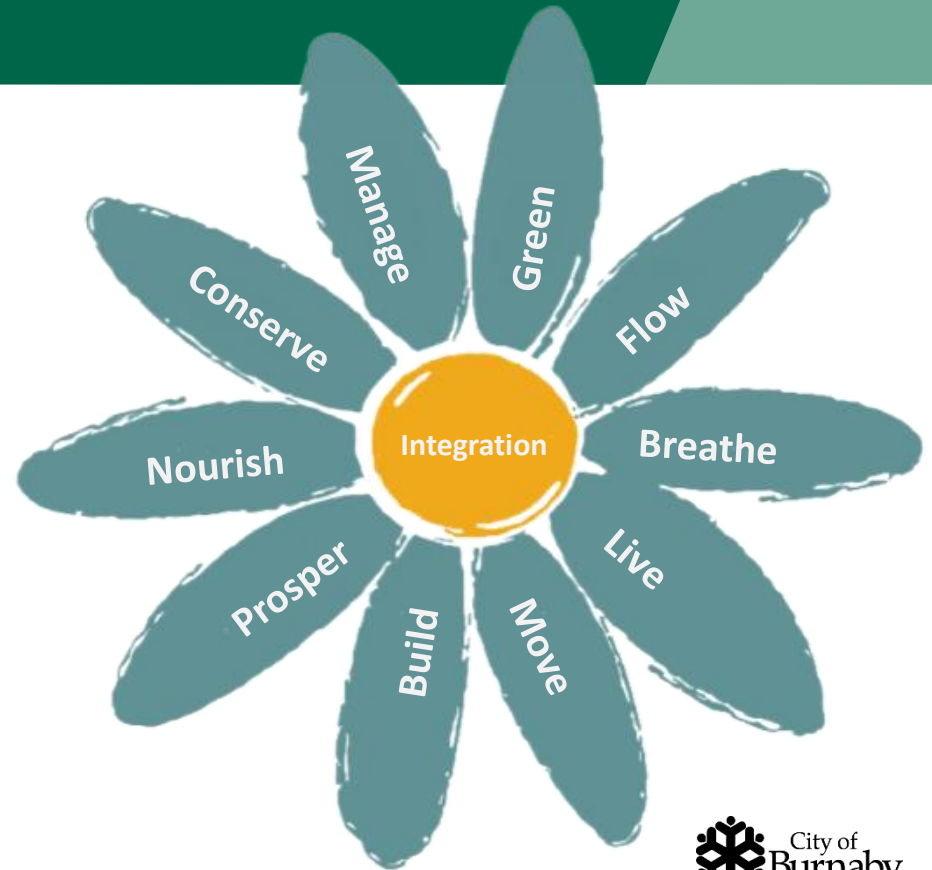


This report was produced as part of the UBC Sustainability Scholars Program, a partnership between the University of British Columbia and various local governments and organizations in support of providing graduate students with opportunities to do applied research on projects that advance sustainability and climate action across the region. This project was conducted under the mentorship of City of Burnaby staff. The opinions and recommendations in this report and any errors are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the City of Burnaby or the University of British Columbia.

We respectfully acknowledge that the work for this project with the City of Burnaby took place on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), and kʷikʷəłəm (Kwikwetlem) Peoples. Each Nation has distinct histories and distinct traditional territories that fully or partially encompass the city. We encourage you to learn more about the Host Nations whose ancestors have occupied and used these lands, including parts of present-day Burnaby, for thousands of years.

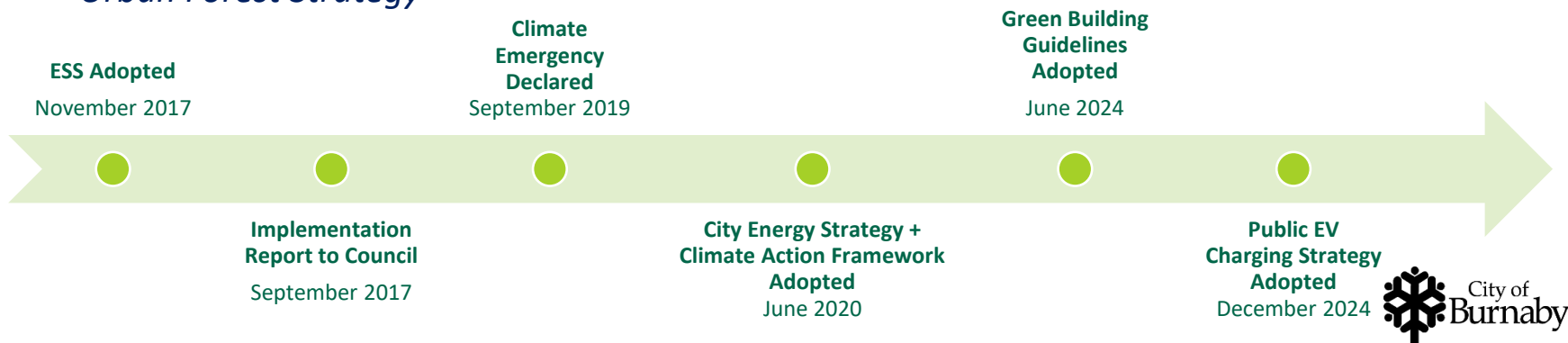
ESS Background

- Adopted by Burnaby City Council in November 2016
- Developed over four years, beginning in 2013, through extensive community and stakeholder engagement
- Represents a collaborative vision shaped by City staff and the Burnaby community
- Uses a layered framework to articulate a vision with supporting goals and actions
- Forms the third pillar of sustainability along with Burnaby's Social and Economic Sustainability Strategies
- Fosters a unified approach to sustainability across departments

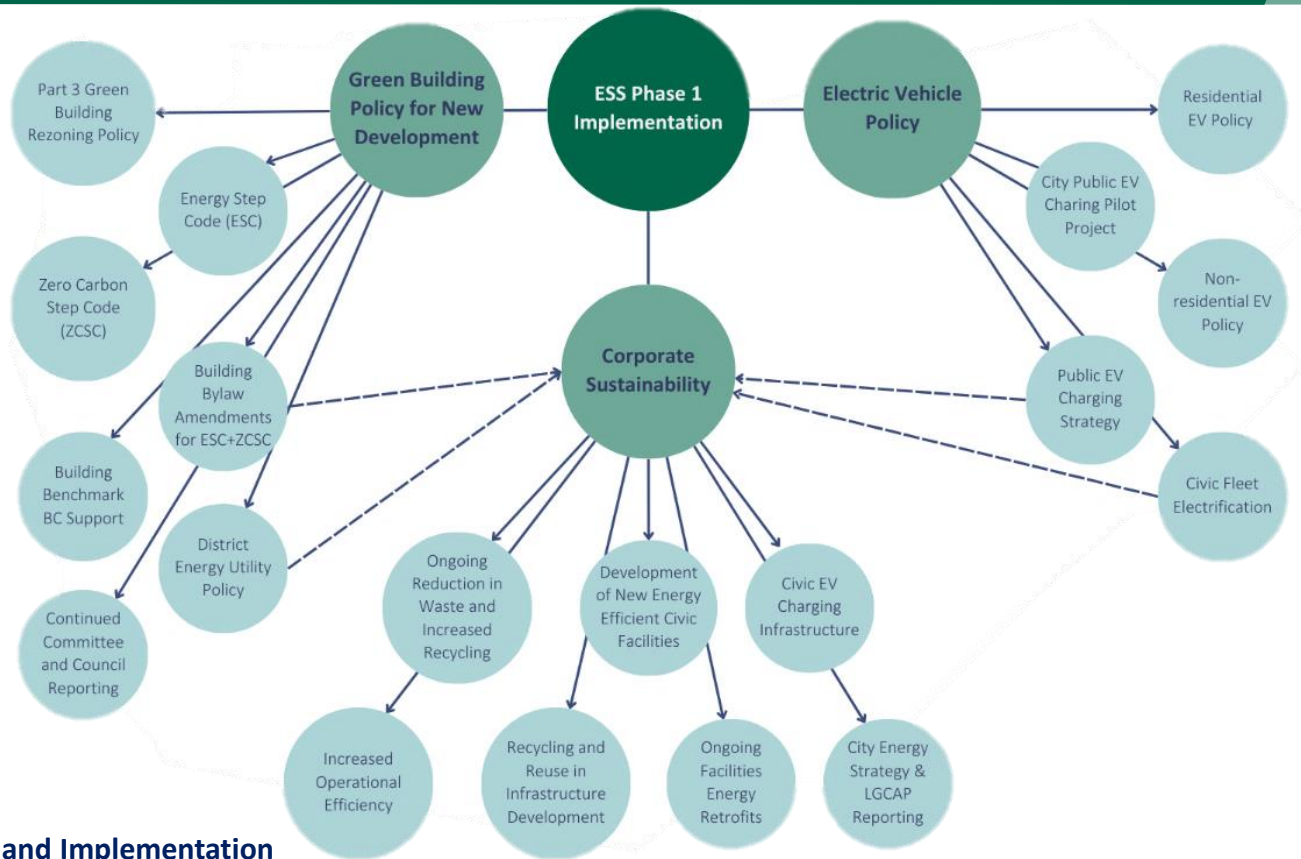


ESS Implementation

- Implementation began in September 2017, focusing on approach and priority-setting
 - Initial efforts centered on **Green Buildings**, **EVs**, and **Corporate Sustainability**
- Staff working groups launched in 2017, later evolving into smaller, task-specific teams
- Limited policy capacity dedicated to green buildings, EVs, and greenhouse gas emissions reductions; other areas like ecosystems and tracking received less focus
- Progress achieved through intentional implementation, now aligning with newer frameworks, including the *Climate Action Framework*, *City Energy Strategy*, *Transportation Plan*, and the *Urban Forest Strategy*



ESS Implementation



ESS Review Methods

- Conducted a comprehensive review of major work aligned with the ESS, over the past nine years
- Connected with staff across six departments to share ESS background and set up meetings
- Carried out 20 in-depth interviews, engaging with over 30 staff members
- Interview questions focused on:
 - Staff familiarity with the ESS
 - Key actions undertaken by their teams that align with ESS strategies
 - Challenges and barriers encountered in advancing ESS-related work
 - Opportunities or areas of interest for future exploration



Engineering



**Planning and
Development**



**Parks,
Recreation, and
Cultural Services**



**Lands and
Facilities**



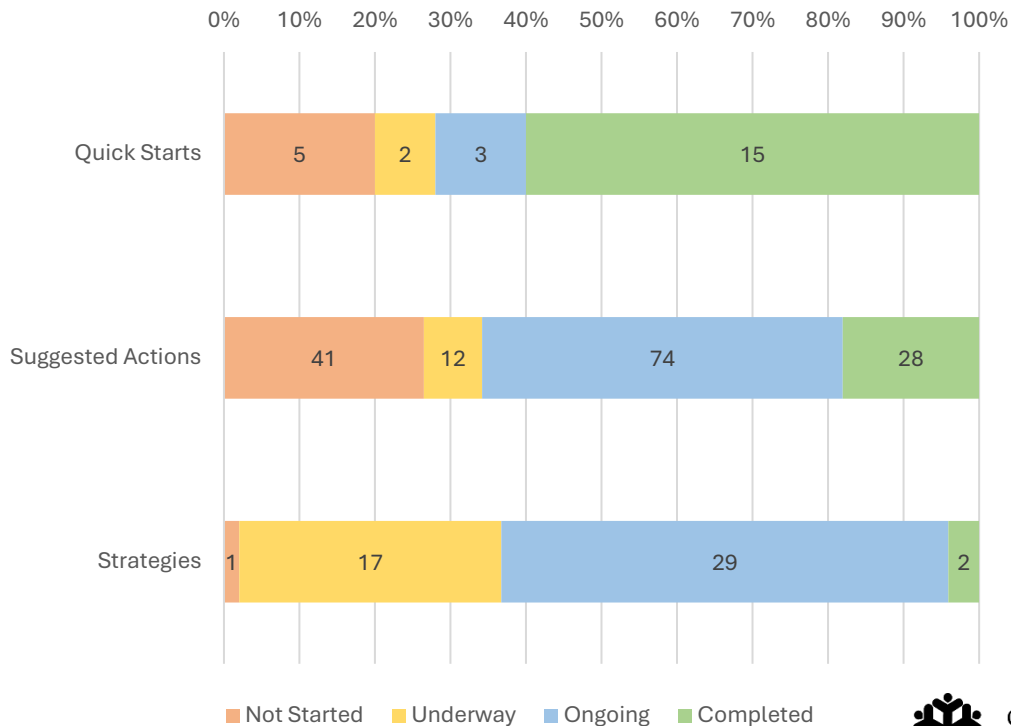
**Indigenous
Relations and
Reconciliation**



Finance

Tracking Progress

- Actions with limited progress are often delayed due to shifting priorities or reliance on external partners such as businesses, community groups, and other levels of government
- Many actions are ongoing, demonstrating the City's long-term commitment to addressing complex challenges



Notable ESS Actions



Electrification



Complete Communities



Invasive Plant Management



IRR Referral Office



Water Metering



Protecting Nature



Green Buildings

Challenges



Budgets, Resources, and Competing Priorities



Internal Capacity and Reliance on External Consultants



Shared Standardized Sustainability Metrics



Cross-Departmental Communication and Collaboration

Future Opportunities

Local Investment for Local Solutions

Measuring the Fiscal Benefits of Sustainability

Connection Between Burnaby Nature and Culture

Rethinking Communities in a Changing World

Growing and Integrating the Host Nation's Perspectives

OCP Development and Collaboration



Summary

- Staff support reintroducing the Strategy, with a practical Implementation Plan that includes actions, targets, funding, and staffing – aligned with existing frameworks.
- Strong interest in a shared sustainability vision with clear priorities – Council direction will be key to moving this forward.
- OCP update offers a timely opportunity to revisit unfinished actions and rebuild cross-departmental collaboration.
- Significant sustainability progress has been made both within and beyond the ESS, reflecting city-wide departmental commitment.