

Burlington Thermal Energy Charter Change FAQ

On Town Meeting Day, Burlington voted YES on a charter change that would allow the city local control over heating in buildings



Here's why the Legislature and Governor should accept these charter changes and make them law



Why is the City pursuing this Charter Change?

Building energy use is the largest single source of carbon pollution in Burlington.

The City's goal is to promote clean heating and cooling and ensure that new buildings are designed to use renewable energy for heating, which reduces climate pollution and avoids costly future retrofits.



How many BTV voters support this?

64.5%

On March 2nd, 2021, Burlington voters overwhelmingly voted YES (8,931 to 4,910) to give the City this authority.

The Mayor and 10 out of 12 City Councilors also support this bi-partisan initiative.



Would it require switching current heating systems?

No.

It would give the City authority to develop a proposal for encouraging cleaner, more efficient energy systems, which the voters would then need to approve.

The City's first area of focus is ensuring that new buildings are designed to use clean heating in order to meet the Net Zero by 2030 climate goals and avoid costly future retrofits.



Does this mean a new tax?

No.

The City could consider assessing carbon impact fees to encourage cleaner heating, but any proposed fee must be approved by the voters in a future election before going into effect.

In practice, the City is focused on new construction.



Isn't electric heat inefficient?

The City is not requiring a switch to any given heating system. And it is not promoting a transition to the old, costly, resistance electric heat found in buildings decades ago.

New policy proposals could support switching to modern, efficient renewable heating sources. These sources include high-efficiency, cold climate heat pumps, which hundreds of Burlingtonians already are installing to heat homes and buildings, and which work even at temperatures well below zero degrees.

Cold climate heat pumps are far more efficient and less costly to operate than the old resistance electric heat, and, as a bonus, they also provide efficient and reliable air conditioning during our increasingly warm summers.

What can I do?

Send your legislators a message encouraging them to approve this charter change and pass them into law!

