

# Bird Friendly Hamilton Burlington

Presentation to the  
Burlington Sustainable Development Advisory Committee (SDC)

September 15, 2021

On the subject of:  
**Burlington becoming a certified Bird Friendly City**



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# What is Bird Friendly City?



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+ ECCC + FLAP  
Canada + Feather  
Friendly



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## A certification program

- 5 mandatory categories
- 25 "Rubric" scoring categories
- 3 certification levels: Entry, Intermediate, High
- Annual report card required.



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## A certification program

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Driven by  
community  
“bird team”

+

Efforts of community  
organizations and  
residents

+

City Council & Staff  
efforts, policy,  
collaboration, support



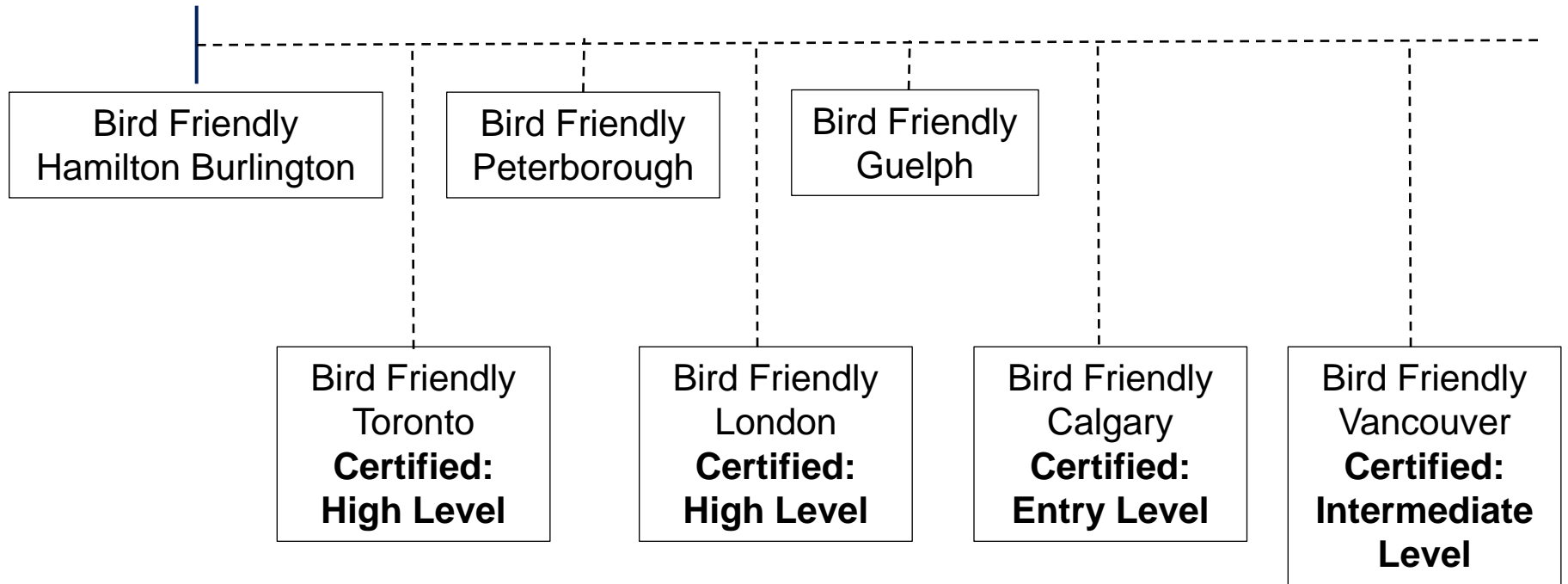
## Bird Friendly Hamilton Burlington

- Conservation Halton
- BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association
- Trumpeter Swan Coalition
- Ontariogreen Conservation Association
- Hobbitstee Wildlife Refuge
- Environment Hamilton
- The Hamilton Aviary
- and citizens who care about birds

with supporters:

- RBG
- Hamilton Conservation Authority
- Hamilton Naturalists' Club
- Hamilton 350
- A liaison from Nature Canada
- City of Burlington?
- City of Hamilton?





# Why become a Bird Friendly City?

- Protect, appreciate, celebrate birds!

(280 species visit locally each year, including Species at Risk. We border 3 IBAs. 3 billion net loss in North American bird populations in past 50 years. 25 million birds die from Bird Window Collisions (BWCs) in Canada annually.)

- Continue to be a leader in protecting local biodiversity (eg. Jefferson Salamander)
- Create a city that co-exists with nature.
- Align with several Canadian municipalities aiming to become Bird Friendly Cities.
- Be recognized for bird-friendly efforts the City and community have made so far.
- Foster a mindset of protecting birds and continual improvement going forward.
- Appreciation of birds is good for mental health, and gets people outdoors for exercise.
- Birds are beneficial to us as pollinators, insect control.
- Help achieve strategic goals of being a Healthier and Greener City, where nature thrives.





# What is required to be a BFC?

## Mandatory components (5):

- Form a community 'bird team' to drive the program forward. That's us! Bird Friendly Hamilton Burlington (done).
- Encourage participation from the local indigenous community (in progress).
- **Pass a City Council resolution** supporting being a Bird Friendly City (to do).
- Produce an annual report card, following certification (our team can do).
- Create a web page about being a Bird Friendly City on City's website (to do).



# BFC points scoring opportunities

(Rubric: 25 categories in 3 sections)

## Section 1: Threat Reduction

- Addressing roaming cats (By-law exists. More info., action, awareness needed).
- Bird-window collision (BWC) avoidance & mandatory building guidelines (Some good progress here. More action and awareness needed.)
- Lights out actions during migration & curbing light pollution. (Light pollution by-laws exist. More awareness needed during migration.)
- Reducing non-essential pesticide use that may harm birds. (Look into more).
- Reducing plastic waste, single-use plastics. (Good progress here).
- Reducing bird-vehicle collisions. Encouraging walking, cycling. (Some progress here re: active transportation, transit).
- Reducing bird disturbance (people, pets, sensitive 'no-go' breeding areas).  
(Some known opportunities here).





**Bank Swallow nesting habitat  
(Threatened Species).  
Burloak Waterfront Park**



**BIRD FRIENDLY  
CITY**  
HAMILTON BURLINGTON





BIRD FRIENDLY  
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## Section 2: Habitat Protection, Restoration, & Climate Resiliency

- Protecting Natural Areas in *Official Plan*. (Good progress. Hard urban boundary. Natural Heritage System.)
- Biodiversity Protection Strategy (Needs an overall cohesive strategy)
- Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (Climate mitigation done. Climate adaptation in progress).
- Habitat Management Strategy (Good progress. Growing tree canopy. Private tree bylaw. Restorations. More to be done. eg. policy on vegetation management during breeding season?)
- City has at least 1 official Important Bird Area (IBA)? (Yes! We border 3)
- Planting native, bird-friendly species on municipal lands, new developments. (Good progress. Listed in development guidelines?).
- Widespread community participation in planting native, bird & pollinator-friendly plantings, growing tree canopy on private property. (Good progress. More to do).
- Conserving habitat for priority bird species. (Some progress Needs more attention. Chimney Swifts, Barn Swallows, Bank Swallows, Meadowlarks, Bobolinks, etc.).



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## Section 3: Community Outreach/Education

- Hold (and officially proclaim) a World Migratory Bird Day event each May. (Our team can organize. City to make official proclamation for WMBD)
- School programs promote connecting with birds and nature. (A few good programs. Must engage underprivileged youth, racialized youth, new arrivals to Canada).
- Colleges/Universities have adopted bird-friendly practices. (Degroote School of Business? Newly proposed Brock U. campus? Look into more.)
- Promoting bird-friendly plants and yards to public. (Good progress).
- Demonstration displays for public re: bird friendly actions. (To do. Several opportunities).
- Good locations that facilitate appreciation of birds? (Yes! Opportunities to improve further.)
- Checklist of birds in city available? (Yes! A few.)
- Businesses leading by example (eg. treated windows, sells bird-friendly coffee) (A few examples. Needs more work.)
- A “City Bird” selected via public engagement process. (To do. Our team can lead).
- Citizen science monitoring of birds; bird counts? (Yes! Several).



## Next Steps

- 1) Our team to work on Bird Friendly City application document.
  - Submit application to Nature Canada in late October 2021.
  - Possible certification awarded late November 2021.
- 2) SDC to consider the Bird Friendly City program for Burlington, and make a recommendation to Committee/Council to support?
- 3) Burlington City Council to consider a motion of support. Motion should include:
  - An expression of support for The City of Burlington being a certified Bird Friendly City under the Nature Canada program, and working with the Bird Friendly Hamilton Burlington community team to maintain/elevate certification status in future years.
  - A commitment to designate a City representative to act as a liaison with the Bird Friendly Hamilton Burlington Team, as an information resource and main point of contact, as needed periodically.
  - A commitment to post a Bird Friendly City information page for Burlington on the City's website.

