



## Motion Memorandum

**SUBJECT:** Bird Friendly City Resolution

**TO:** Environment, Infrastructure & Community Services Cttee.

**FROM:** Councillor Paul Sharman, Ward 5

**Date to Committee:** April 7, 2022

**Date to Council:** April 19, 2022

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### **Motion for Council to Consider:**

On behalf of the Sustainable Development Committee, I present the following resolution for approval by City Council:

1. Support Burlington being certified a Bird Friendly City by Nature Canada as nominated by the Bird Friendly Hamilton Burlington group; and
2. Direct the City Manager or designate to report back on the additional actions identified by the Bird Friendly Hamilton Burlington group to support the Bird Friendly City certification.

### **Reason:**

A member of the Bird Friendly Hamilton Burlington (BFHB) recently made a presentation to the Sustainable Development Committee to share their research and reasons why Burlington should be certification a Bird Friendly City by Nature Canada. A request was made for the SDC to support the certification.

The [Bird Friendly City](#) program by Nature Canada provides recognition to municipalities that have worked to save bird lives. It also provides a framework for continual improvement, with the opportunity to earn higher levels of certification. The program is community-driven, but requires collaboration with the local municipality. The first four Canadian municipalities were certified in May 2021:

- Toronto (High Level)
- London (High Level)

- Vancouver (Intermediate Level)
- Calgary (Entry Level)

Certifications must be renewed every two years (with a one-year grace period permitted). An annual progress update “Report Card” is also required. There is no fee required for certification.

Based on information provided by Bird Friendly Hamilton Burlington, Burlington is known for its natural areas, one of the most biodiverse communities in Canada, with the following examples of natural features:

- Lake Ontario and Burlington Bay/Hamilton Harbour
- Forested greenspace and farmland in the north part of the city, part of which is protected by the provincial Greenbelt
- A transition zone between Carolinian forest and Great Lakes-St. Lawrence forest.
- The Niagara Escarpment (a UNESCO designated World Biosphere Reserve) which cuts through the north, rural part of the city (along with its associated Bruce Trail hiking network).
- The Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) natural lands and wetland sanctuaries, which straddle the west end of Burlington and Hamilton.
- The Cootes to Escarpment Eco-Park System – a land conservancy initiative which straddles an even larger area of the west end of Burlington (Aldershot) and Hamilton, and includes the RBG lands.
- 10 creeks that run north-south through the city to Lake Ontario and Burlington Bay.
- Burlington Beach & Beachway Park: a 1 km natural beach and small dune system (baymenth sand bar) on the Lake Ontario shoreline – one of the few dune habitats in Ontario, and the only one in Halton Region.

Burlington is located within the [Atlantic Flyway](#) migration corridor and also along the eastern edge of the Mississippi Flyway corridor. Due to the natural habitat around us, and a suitable migratory ‘rest and refuel’ area between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, we have many species passing through our city during spring and fall migration, in addition to several year-round residents. Winter brings an additional 20+ species of northern and arctic waterfowl to our shores. In all, around 280 species of wild birds can be expected to use the area each year (Burlington/Hamilton and nearby area); as many as 400 bird species have been recorded here historically, including wayward “vagrants”, according to records maintained by the Hamilton Naturalists’ Club.

In its extensive research, BFHB has documented actions and initiatives that local residents, organizations, schools, businesses, and government have taken that make Burlington a Bird Friendly City. The following are a few highlights:

- Designating a firm urban/rural boundary in the Official Plan to protect greenspace and farmland;
- Implementing citywide Private Property Tree and Public Property Tree By-laws;
- Policies, targets, and actions to grow the city's tree canopy and maintain its health;
- Mandatory bird-friendly design guidelines for new buildings in certain designated areas of the city, via the Sustainable Building and Development Guidelines and Official Plan 2020 with suggested voluntary guidelines for the remainder of the city;
- Mandatory Outdoor Lighting Design Guidelines which aim to reduce light pollution and "up-light", thus reducing the risk to birds during migration;
- Bird-friendly glass (dot markers) have been installed at Mountainside Recreation Centre and the new Cityview Park pavilion;
- The City is a key partner in the Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan, thus helping the many waterfowl, shorebirds, and birds of prey (Eagles, Ospreys) that use our Bay;
- The City is a key partner in the Cootes to Escarpment Eco-Park System to connect and restore natural habitat;
- The City is a key supporter of Conservation Halton's work to protect our watersheds, plus community initiatives such as BurlingtonGreen's annual Clean Up Green Up, and Field and Stream Rescue Team's work, to clean and restore our greenspaces and wildlife habitat; and
- The City is currently developing its climate adaptation plan Climate Resilient Burlington, but has already implemented some adaptation measures.

Additional actions identified by BFHB which could further assist and support the certification of Burlington as a Bird Friendly City include:

- Supporting the certification and resolving to work both collaboratively to in parallel with BFHB to make Burlington bird friendly and maintain and possibly elevate certification BFC status in future years;
- Designate a liaison as a point-of-contact person between the City and BFHB;
- Post a Bird Friendly City information webpage on the City of Burlington website (a certification requirement; and
- Support and collaborate with BFHB on various initiatives and projects, particularly related to engaging community members and groups on how they can ensure Burlington remains a Bird Friendly City.

**Outcome Sought:**

The Sustainable Development Committee recommends that council support the resolution that Burlington be certified a Bird Friendly City for the following reasons:

- 1) Be recognized for bird-friendly efforts the City, community members and local organizations have made so far;
- 2) Fosters a mindset of protecting birds and continual improvement going forward;
- 3) Appreciation of birds is good for mental health, encouraging people to go outside and enjoy nature;
- 4) Birds are beneficial as pollinators and insect control;
- 5) Helps Burlington achieve its strategic goal of being a Healthier and Greener City, where nature thrives; and,
- 6) Aligns with other Canadian municipalities aiming to become Bird Friendly Cities.

**Vision to Focus Alignment:**

(check those that apply)

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
- Improve integrated city mobility
- Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment
- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture
- Deliver customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation

Motion Seconded by: as required  
Share with Senior Staff

Approved as per form by the City Clerk,

Reviewed by the City Manager - In accordance with the Code of Good Governance, Council-Staff Relations Policy and an assessment of the internal capacity within the City to complete the work based on a specific target date (quarter/year).

**Comments:**

City Clerk:       Approved as per Form

City Manager:    Approved