



**Delegation from Bird Friendly Hamilton Burlington
to the EICS committee, April 7, 2022, in support of agenda item 4.1**

Thank you, Chair Galbraith. Hello members of council and staff. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today on the subject of a resolution of support for Burlington being a certified Bird Friendly City.

My name is Dave Tourchin. I'm a long-time Burlington resident and Co-chair of a relatively new group called Bird Friendly Hamilton Burlington.

Our group has been in existence since late 2020, and consists of local residents and representatives from local organizations, who care about birds.

Our goals have been to help protect our local wild birds and raise awareness of threats they face, often due to human influences, and also to get both Burlington and Hamilton certified under Nature Canada's "Bird Friendly City" program.

The Bird Friendly City program is quite comprehensive, with 25 scoring categories in which a city can earn points. The program is intended to be community-driven, by a local bird team -- that's us, and it recognizes efforts that both the City and community have made to save bird lives and conserve their habitats. It also provides a framework for continual improvement going forward.

In September 2021, I presented to the Sustainable Development Advisory Committee (SDC), which had been tasked with reviewing the Bird Friendly City program. We're grateful that the SDC and Councillor Sharman have now brought forth a resolution of support for being a Bird Friendly City, for consideration by the standing committee today.

Councillor Sharman's memo to the committee outlines a number of reasons to support being a Bird Friendly City. Birds are beneficial to all of us in many ways. I also feel we have a duty, living in one of the most biodiverse regions of Canada, to be responsible stewards of our local environment. Supporting Burlington being a Bird Friendly City is a great way to demonstrate a commitment to such stewardship, and it aligns perfectly with the City's strategic goal of being a Healthy and Greener City.

Our team has worked hard over the past year to document all the bird-friendly actions, initiatives and policies, by the City and community, that make Burlington a candidate to be a certified Bird Friendly City. We submitted the 60-page application to Nature Canada in early March, and have waited to see if Burlington would join the ranks of Toronto, London, Calgary,

Vancouver, and recently Regina, certified as Bird Friendly Cities. Similarly, our team also submitted an application to Nature Canada for Hamilton. On Friday, April 1st, Nature Canada announced that our good neighbours in Hamilton had become the 6th certified Bird Friendly City in Canada. So, congratulations, Hamilton!

So, where does that leave Burlington? Well, I don't know how often you hear breaking news in a delegation, but as of this morning, Nature Canada issued a media release announcing that Burlington is now the 7th municipality in Canada to be certified as a Bird Friendly City! Congratulations, Burlington!

I also have second piece of news: Nature Canada's system has 3 levels of certification -- Entry, Intermediate and High Level. And, I'm happy to announce that Burlington received **Intermediate Level** certification status. So, that's more great news.

A few of the items that bumped us up to the Intermediate Level are:

- 1) having bird-friendly design guidelines for new developments (with mandatory requirements in some areas of the city),
- 2) having a firm urban boundary to curb urban sprawl, and
- 3) having citywide private and public property tree by-laws to help protect our tree canopy, which is important bird habitat.

This is a great recognition for the collective efforts the City, local organizations, schools, businesses, and individual residents have made to help our birds and their habitats over the years. While it is certainly an occasion to celebrate, we also recognize that there is ongoing work to be done, not only to help protect birds and raise awareness, but also to maintain this new certification.

Our Bird Friendly Hamilton Burlington team is capable of doing a lot of the 'heavy lifting', as I think we've demonstrated so far bringing the application forth, and with such initiatives as our recent City Bird Poll. But, we can't do it alone. We need the co-operation of City Council, City Staff, and the community to keep moving forward, both collaboratively and in parallel. This is why a resolution of support is important. Nature Canada also asks that the Council of a newly certified municipality pass a resolution supporting the certification within 1 year.

So in summary, we ask that the committee, and in turn Council, support the resolution for Burlington being a certified Bird Friendly City.

I thank you for your time and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

birdfriendlyhamiltonburlington.wordpress.com