



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the Peterborough Environmental Advisory Committee

**From: Michael Papadacos
Interim Commissioner of Infrastructure and Planning Services**

Date: May 18, 2022

Subject: Bee City Canada Certification, Report PEAC22-014

Purpose

A report to provide the Peterborough Environmental Advisory Committee (PEAC) with an overview of the Bee City Canada program and the process to achieve certification as a Bee City Canada community.

Recommendations

That PEAC approve the recommendations outlined in Report PEAC22-014, dated May 18, 2022, of the Interim Commissioner of Infrastructure and Planning Services as follows:

- a) That the report be received for information; and
- b) That the Peterborough Environmental Advisory Committee endorse the draft Council resolution in Appendix A.

Budget and Financial Implications

There are no budgetary or financial implications associated with the recommendation.

Background

Pollinators are fundamental to a healthy and functional ecosystem because they provide essential environmental services like plant pollination. Insect pollinators support the reproduction of 75 to 95 percent of flowering plants, vegetables, and fruiting trees. In Canada, insect pollinators face several challenges leading to significant population declines due to habitat loss, reduced food sources, invasive diseases, unrestrained pesticide use, and climate change. Specifically, one-third of all Ontario bumblebee species populations have been recorded to have decreased since 1990, along with a significant number of butterfly species being in decline.

Urban centres can be a stronghold for pollinators because of cosmetic pesticide bans restricting usage compared to the permitted use of pesticides on conventional farms in surrounding areas. However, urban pollinator habitats may not be as abundant or adequate to support sizable populations due to limited naturalized environments for ground-nesting, overwintering, and food foraging. Correspondingly, pollinator-friendly flowering plants like native weeds that can flower from spring to autumn are needed in communities to enhance year-round food availability for pollinators. Improving pollinator habitats in urban landscapes can increase populations and preserve species biodiversity to become sanctuaries surrounded by adverse rural conditions.

Bee City Canada

To support thriving pollinator populations in urban settings, Bee City Canada (BCC) was formed in 2015 as a national organization to champion insect pollinators. Bee City Canada seeks to protect pollinators by maintaining and creating pollinator habitats in communities. A certification program designated for cities is administered by BCC to approve municipalities that commit to expanding pollinator habitat, increasing public education about the benefits and plight of pollinators, and committing to annual celebrations during International Pollinator Week. Additionally, developing a five-year pollinator strategy (see the [City of Toronto's pollinator strategy](#)) is optional for municipalities seeking to improve pollinator health significantly.

Presently, there are 56 'Bee City' certified municipalities in Canada, with nearby communities including Selwyn Township, Trent Hills Township, and the City of Kawartha Lakes.

Bee City certification requires all municipalities to adhere to the following criteria to achieve approval by BCC:

- Creation of a Bee City Pollinator Team with one City staff liaison,
- Submission of supporting pollinator initiatives that have been completed or ongoing in the community,
- Submission of an introductory statement describing the importance of Peterborough becoming a Bee City,
- Signed council resolution nominating the municipality as a Bee City.

On September 15, 2021, PEAC reviewed Report PEAC21-022, summarizing the BCC program requirements and potential corporate impacts. The Committee voted in support of pursuing BCC certification after a review of corporate regulatory and legislative requirements was completed by staff. In March 2022, the corporate review was finalized and determined that the City could proceed with BCC certification because participation in the program would not impact requirements to spray pesticides on harmful or invasive plant species such as poison ivy or common buckthorn. In addition, By-law 05-077 established a ban on cosmetic pesticide spraying, which eliminates the requirement for the City to develop a plan to reduce non-essential pesticide usage in the community.

A draft Council resolution for consideration has been presented in Appendix A.

Collaboration with Peterborough Pollinators

To rapidly expand pollinator habitat and public education events community-wide, the City of Peterborough will be collaborating with Peterborough Pollinators, a local business that builds pollinator gardens and advocates for pollinators in the region. The Bee City Pollinator Team (BCPT) will be led by Peterborough Pollinators and supported in conjunction with the City staff liaison. All requirements after certification, such as creating educational material, hosting events for International Pollinator Week, and annual reporting to BCC, will be carried out by the BCPT.

Benefits of Peterborough Joining Bee City Canada

The benefit of joining BCC aligns with existing municipal commitments to improve environmental sustainability in Peterborough. Specifically, section 5.3.1.b of the updated Official Plan commits to City-owned land in an 'environmentally conscientious manner' by maintaining natural buffer strips adjacent to natural heritage features and limiting pesticides and herbicides. Expanding pollinator habitat with native plants on municipal-owned land would reduce annual lawn maintenance equivalent to the size of the pollinator habitat. Adding pollinator habitats on public and private property can also enhance neighbourhood aesthetics, boost the mental health of residents, and increase the pollination of locally grown food.

Estimated Cost and Staff Commitments

Receiving BCC designation will incur a \$400 annual certification renewal fee after the first anniversary of joining the program. City staff time to liaise with the BCPT and achieve the required commitments is estimated to be 25 hours per year. Additional staff time may also be deployed to achieve pollinator milestones.

Summary

Pollinators need support to ensure that populations remain viable to carry out ecosystem functions throughout the community. Joining BCC would demonstrate municipal leadership by committing to improving pollinator habitat and joining peer municipalities that have already been designated as a Bee City.

Submitted by,

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Appendix A – Draft Council Resolution

Bee City Canada Resolution

Whereas the goal of Bee City Canada designation is to promote healthy, sustainable habitats and communities for pollinators;

Whereas bees and other pollinators around the globe have experienced dramatic declines due to land fragmentation, habitat loss, use of pesticides, industrialized agriculture, climate change and the spread of pests and diseases, with serious implications for the future health of flora and fauna; and

Whereas cities, townships, First Nation communities and their residents have the opportunity to support bees and other pollinators on both public and private land; and

Whereas supporting pollinators fosters environmental awareness and sustainability, and increases interactions and engagement among community stewards; and

Whereas by becoming a Bee City, the City of Peterborough can highlight initiatives already in place and further engage local communities in an environment of creativity and innovation which will promote a healthier life for our community;

Now, therefore, be it resolved:

That staff be authorized to submit the Bee City Canada Application to designate the City of Peterborough as a Bee City; and

That the City of Peterborough accepts the designation and commits to the standards of the Bee City Canada Program.