



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: Bird Friendly City Certification, Report PEAC22-013

Purpose

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

Recommendations

That PEAC approve the recommendations outlined in Report PEAC22-013, 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 attached in Appendix A.

Budget and Financial Implications

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

Background

Birds are integral species that support and maintain the function of healthy ecosystems. Since 1970, North America has lost 3 billion birds because of human activity and built environments. Bird populations are highly susceptible and vulnerable to urban centres due to collisions with buildings, cat predation, degraded habitats, and tree canopy loss. Higher risk factors in urban environments have increased bird species mortality as a result.

Bird Friendly City Program

To mitigate the further decline of urban bird species, Nature Canada, a national environmental organization, founded the Bird Friendly City (BFC) program in 2020. The BFC program certifies municipalities that are actively reducing the risk factors facing urban birds, restoring habitat, and promoting local bird awareness. Nearby BFC communities include the City of Toronto and the City of London.

[A 50-point comprehensive standard](#) is used to assess municipal applications to determine if a minimum threshold of bird-related policies and measures is being met for entry into the program. Once certified, each municipality is allowed to increase its score from its initial benchmark by implementing additional measures to improve bird-health outcomes. Additionally, six mandatory objectives, regardless of assessment ranking, must be met by each participating municipality, which includes:

- Establishment of a community bird friendly team with one City staff liaison,
- Provide the indigenous territory that the municipality is located on,
- Pass a Council resolution nominating the municipality to the BFC program,
- Submit annual reports of bird-related activities before February 1 in the following year after attaining BFC status,
- Include one paragraph about participation in the BFC program on the municipal website,
- Celebrate annual World Migratory Bird Day within the community

On September 15, 2021, PEAC reviewed Report PEAC21-022, which summarized the BFC program requirements and potential corporate impacts for the City of Peterborough. The Committee voted in support of pursuing BFC certification.

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

Bird Friendly Peterborough

In December 2020, the Bird Friendly Peterborough (BFP) steering committee was formed to explore the opportunity for Peterborough to enroll in the BFC program. A coalition of community organizations comprises the BFP steering committee, including representatives from the Kawartha Wildlife Centre, Peterborough Field Naturalists, Riverview Zoo and Park, Camp Kawartha, and GreenUP. A City staff liaison is also part of the steering committee as mandated by BFC guidelines to provide support. The BFP

steering committee is responsible for undertaking community outreach to promote local bird awareness during seasonal events such as World Migratory Bird Day. The steering committee will also lead the annual report submission to Nature Canada.

Since its launch, the BFP steering committee has established a website as a resource for residents to learn more about the [impact that cities have on bird populations and provide helpful solutions to reduce bird mortality](#). On May 8, 2021, BFP held an inaugural virtual World Migratory Bird Day that featured bird-related content submitted by community members that was shared on social media and the website. Recently, the BFP team supported Riverview Zoo and Park by reviewing its grant application to Community Foundations of Canada which was successful in securing \$18,000 for development of an [accessible bird trail](#) for residents. Lastly, BFP has been successful in receiving two grants from Nature Canada valued at \$6,000 in total.

Benefits of Peterborough Joining the Bird Friendly City Program

Joining the national BFC program would demonstrate municipal leadership in addressing the decline in bird populations. A rebound in local bird populations would directly benefit Peterborough, ensuring that a healthy ecosystem is being stewarded. Municipalities that enroll in the BFC program will have access to a network of BFC members to learn how other communities are advancing bird-related policies and measures. Bird Friendly City certification may also be leveraged to better position Peterborough when applying to external granting opportunities. Lastly, potential eco-tourism opportunities to attract birders to Peterborough through the promotion of bird-focused tourism and events are possible outcomes.

Estimated Cost and Staff Commitments

Gaining certification in the BFC program does not require any budgetary commitment from the City of Peterborough. City staff time to liaise with the BFP during steering committee meetings and annual report card submissions is estimated to be 15 hours per year. Budget and staffing implications to complete additional corporate initiatives or programs to advance the certification score would have to be determined case-by-case.

Summary

Reducing the inherent risks to birds in urban landscapes is important to safeguard bird populations, protect biodiversity, and maintain resilient ecosystem functions. Joining the BFC program through endorsing the resolution would demonstrate municipal leadership and result in the eventual reduction of bird fatalities in Peterborough.

Submitted by,

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Attachment:

Appendix A – Draft Council Resolution

Appendix A – Draft Council Resolution

Bird Friendly City Resolution

Whereas the goal of Bird Friendly City certification is to provide local partners with a clear standard to measure the impact and progress needed to make the City of Peterborough safe for birds; and

Whereas the certification standard is a tool that allows for an independent assessment of key issues by establishing benchmarks and allowing for measurement of progress over time and comparison with other cities; and

Whereas birds throughout Canada and North America have experienced dramatic declines due to habitat loss, window strikes, climate change, and the spread of diseases and invasive species, with serious implications for the future health of our ecosystems; and

Whereas through certification, the City of Peterborough and its residents have the opportunity to reduce human-related threats to birds; and

Whereas supporting bird-friendly initiatives fosters environmental awareness and sustainability and increases interactions and engagement for habitat protection, restoration, and climate resiliency; and

Whereas by becoming a Bird Friendly City, the City of Peterborough can highlight initiatives already in place and further engage local communities in education and awareness of successful coexistence strategies with birds; and

Whereas community bird friendly initiatives are to be undertaken and led by the Bird Friendly Peterborough team; and

Whereas the Bird Friendly Peterborough team will propose any corporate bird friendly initiatives within municipal jurisdiction through a City staff liaison for consideration through the annual Budget process;

Now, therefore, be it resolved:

That the Bird Friendly Peterborough team be authorized to submit the certification application to Nature Canada to designate the City of Peterborough as a Bird Friendly City; and

That the City of Peterborough accepts the designation and commits to the entry-level standards of the Bird Friendly City program.