

**Delegation to City of Hamilton Planning Committee - February 16 meeting**

Bird Friendly City is Nature Canada's national certification program and the Hamilton/Burlington bird team has prepared this statement. Nature Canada hopes to certify at least 30 cities across Canada as Bird Friendly by May 14, 2022, which is World Migratory Bird Day.

Healthy bird populations are of critical importance to biodiversity and ecosystem health. In fact, birds act as *indicator species* - healthy bird populations signify a healthy environment. **Three billion birds or 25% of all birds in North America have been lost in the last 50 years alone.** This dramatic decline in bird populations is a warning that we must protect and preserve our environment and take meaningful action on climate change and conservation.

One way we can support healthy bird populations is to design our cities with sustainability and biodiversity in mind. **Up to 1.5 billion birds are killed every year in North America** as a result of collisions with windows and vehicles. Urban planning therefore plays an extremely important role due to the number of birds killed by colliding with buildings, particularly during spring and fall migration.

In order to receive certification as a Bird Friendly City, the City of Hamilton will need to address several issues, which include:

- **habitat loss**
- **pesticide use**
- **the threat to birds from roaming cats**

Today, we ask you to consider the critical role of responsible and green urban planning in order to reduce bird deaths from collisions with buildings.

To mitigate bird-building collisions, the City of Hamilton needs to address the two main causes, glass and lighting. Birds don't see glass and indoor lighting at night attracts birds to buildings. Both of these issues are the responsibility of our Planning department. There are many simple solutions available such as the use of blinds, effective glass types and window treatments. Turning lights off at night during migration greatly reduces bird deaths. These measures can be very positive economically. For example, a midtown Toronto high-rise commercial building saved over \$100,000 in one year on electricity when they minimized night lighting.

In 2007, fourteen years ago, at the urging of FLAP (Fatal Light Awareness Program), Toronto formed a volunteer committee comprised of public servants, environmentalists and developers to create bird friendly guidelines. Since then, Toronto, and also Markham, have taken the lead in this area and have added **mandatory** requirements to their plans. These standards are based on CSA (Canadian Standards Association) A460, a document that has been published as a National Standard of Canada. CSA A460 was created through the efforts of Toronto and Markham and supported and funded by the Government of Ontario. In Canada, Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa and Burlington all have bird friendly guidelines in place as do many municipalities and states in the USA.

In a recent email to me, Hamilton's Chief Planner stated that our city has **NO** bird friendly guidelines at this time. Currently, a new round of general building guidelines is being developed by City of Hamilton Planning staff. This is a great opportunity to not only catch up to other major Canadian municipalities but for the City of Hamilton to take it's place as a leader in this key aspect of the global climate and biodiversity crisis. CSA A460 and the Toronto and Markham documents are readily available to Hamilton Planning staff.

**We anticipate that the Planning department will mandate bird friendly standards through *site development agreements* so that building permits will only be issued when compliant with these standards.**

**We also ask for a resolution from the Planning committee to support our initiative.**

Hamilton is currently developing an overall biodiversity plan. This must include strong bird friendly planning requirements. Our city will not be green until it is bird friendly.

<https://naturecanada.ca/bfc/>

<https://naturecanada.ca/animals/partners/>