

BIRD FRIENDLY CITIES

Hamilton/Burlington Team 2021

Statement to Hamilton General Issues committee on March 29, 2021

The Bird Friendly City Hamilton/Burlington Bird Team opposes this development on the grounds of irretrievable habitat loss. Our team partners with Environment Hamilton, Conservation Halton, Hobbitstee Wildlife Refuge, Burlington Green, Ontariogreen, Trumpeter Swan Coalition, and the Hamilton Aviary and is supported by the Hamilton Naturalists' Club.

The fields, streams and woodlots of Elfrida host a significant population of resident and breeding birds and support a large number of migratory bird species on their journey from Central and South America to the boreal forest and tundra. The welfare of many of these species is of critical concern.

Habitat loss is listed by the Birds Canada organization as one of the five key threats to healthy bird populations. It's scientifically proven that a healthy bird population is essential to biodiversity.

On March 29, a Biodiversity Action Plan will be presented to this General Issues committee. We hope that this plan will be adopted. However, the loss of the Elfrida lands to a development that is the antithesis of current and progressive urban planning will detract greatly from any effort to protect and increase badly needed biodiversity in our region.

Scores of bird species use the Elfrida lands and these include year-round residents, breeding birds, winter residents and migrants.

In the past week, American Kestrels have returned to the Elfrida lands to breed. These small falcons are a **Priority** species, which controls rodent populations. They have experienced a **large decrease** in population since 1970. This decrease is primarily due to loss of habitat. This species will no longer breed on the Elfrida lands if the proposed development is approved.

Killdeer, a plover that has adapted to agricultural lands, is also a **Priority** species and has suffered a **large decrease** in population. The Elfrida lands host a significant population of breeding Killdeer, which will also lose their vital habitat.

Winter visitors to the area include other **Priority** species such as Snow Bunting and Snowy Owl. These species have also suffered **large decreases** in their numbers.

If this proposed development is approved, many bird species will still attempt to migrate through the area. They will be subject to other key threats, specifically deadly collisions with windows and predation by outdoor, roaming cats. These two threats combine for hundreds of millions of bird deaths annually in North America.

We thank the committee members for their time and attention and repeat our objection to the development of the Elfrida lands. Hamilton will only be a Green city when it is a bird friendly city.