

RE: Committee of the Whole Meeting, CW#08-24
Wednesday, May 15, 2024, Agenda11.1

I am writing to inform you that the Richmond Hill Bird Friendly team, consisting of 34 volunteers, supports the city staff report and recommendations for bird-safe design standards as identified in the May 15, 2024, agenda and below.

Recommendations

SRPBS.24.018 – Bird-Safe Design Standards Recommendations Report

- a) That Staff Report SRPBS.24.018, regarding Bird-Safe Design Standards Recommendations Report be received;
- b) That the proposed Bird-Safe Design Standards (April 2024) be endorsed as mandatory requirements for new private and public development and become effective as of May 22, 2024;
- c) That staff be directed to develop a Bird-safe Retrofit Assessment Program to evaluate and prioritize existing City-owned buildings and determine budgetary needs for bird-safe design retrofits, and report back to Council;
- d) That the capital budget to pilot bird-safe design retrofits at the Richmond Hill Public Library Central Branch be submitted for consideration through the 2025 Capital budget prioritization process; and
- e) That staff be directed to review and update the Bird-Safe Design Standards to address new best practices, as needed.

Importance

According to the federal government, up to 42 million birds die each year in Canada from window collisions. Many of these deaths could be prevented by implementing bird safe building design standards. Protecting our declining bird populations is essential. They provide many benefits besides the joy of watching and listening to them. Some of their services include pollinating plants, dispersing seeds, cleaning up carrion and controlling insects. They are early indicators of environmental hazards. Birds support the economy, to the tune of billions of dollars, through people purchasing bird food and equipment, hospitality and travel. Birds feed us, their feathers keep us warm, and they connect us to nature. There continues to be community support to protect birds. As of the fall of 2023, Nature Canada has certified 24 cities and towns as Bird Friendly including Richmond Hill, King Twp., Vaughan and Toronto. Incorporating bird safe design standards is a simple and important step forward. It complements the City's bird friendly mandate and environmental sustainability goals.



On behalf of Richmond Hill Bird Friendly,

Cheryl Lewandowski,
Chair, Richmond Hill Bird Friendly