

**2. RESPONSE TO BEE CITY MOTION**

**RÉPONSE DU PERSONNEL À LA MOTION VISANT À FAIRE D'OTTAWA  
UNE VILLE RESPECTUEUSE DES ABEILLES**

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AS AMENDED**

That Council:

1. Receive the information provided within this report, which outlines how the City and local partners currently support native pollinator health;
2. Direct staff to implement the short-term actions identified in this report, which can be accommodated within existing budget envelopes, including a pollinator garden and/or bee hotel at City Hall or suitable city-owned facility, education and outreach, and an exhibit to celebrate and promote pollinators at the 2019 Mayor's Rural Expo;
3. Direct staff to examine the feasibility of longer-term actions identified in this report and provide an update, including any new recommendations, to Committee in 2020; and,
4. Direct staff in the Natural Systems and Rural Affairs unit to work with the Mayor's Office to develop a proclamation declaring an annual Pollinator Appreciation Day or similar occasion in the City of Ottawa starting in 2019.

**RECOMMANDATIONS MODIFIÉES DU COMITÉ**

Que le Conseil :

1. Prenne connaissance du présent rapport, qui indique comment la Ville et les partenaires locaux protègent actuellement la santé des pollinisateurs indigènes;
2. Demande au personnel de mettre en œuvre les mesures à court terme relevées dans le présent rapport, qui peuvent être financées dans la limite des enveloppes budgétaires existantes, notamment l'aménagement d'un jardin pour les pollinisateurs ou d'un hôtel pour abeilles à l'hôtel de ville ou à une installation municipale adéquate, une campagne d'éducation et de sensibilisation et une exposition visant à mettre en valeur et à promouvoir les pollinisateurs dans le cadre de l'Exposition rurale du maire 2019;
3. Demande au personnel de déterminer s'il sera possible de mettre en œuvre les mesures à plus long terme relevées dans ce rapport et de fournir au Comité, en 2020, une mise à jour, notamment toute nouvelle recommandation; et,
4. Demande au personnel de l'Unité des systèmes naturels et des affaires rurales de travailler avec le Bureau du maire pour élaborer une proclamation déclarant une journée de reconnaissance des pollinisateurs ou occasion similaire dans la Ville d'Ottawa à compter de 2019.

DIRECTION TO STAFF:

That staff in Legal Services be directed to review whether Ward Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland funding can be used to fund pollinator gardens, and to provide this information prior to the report being considered by Council.

That staff be directed to engage with other City Departments to provide additional direction on guidance on preserving milkweed and pollinator mix during maintenance of City-owned properties;

That staff reach out to leaders of Ottawa's Community Gardens, to Hydro One and to Ottawa Hydro, to expand opportunities for pollinator species on their properties.

**DIRECTIVES AU PERSONNEL :**

Que le personnel des Services juridiques examine si le règlement financier des frais relatifs aux terrains à vocation de parc peut être utilisé pour financer des jardins pour pollinisateurs, et de fournir cette information avant que le rapport soit étudié par le Conseil.

Que le personnel fasse appel à d'autres directions générales de la Ville pour fournir une orientation supplémentaire pour des directives visant à préserver la combinaison d'asclépiades et de pollinisateurs lors de l'entretien des propriétés de la Ville;

Que le personnel communique avec les cadres des jardins communautaires de la Ville d'Ottawa, de Hydro One et d'Ottawa Hydro afin d'accroître les possibilités de développement des espèces de pollinisateurs sur leurs propriétés.

**DOCUMENTATION / DOCUMENTATION**

1. Director's Report, Economic Development and Long Range Planning, PIED, dated 4 April 2019 (ACS2019-PIE-EDP-0017).

Rapport du Directeur, Développement économique et Planification à long terme, PIDE, daté le 4 avril 2019 (ACS2019-PIE-EDP-0017).

2. Extract of Draft Minutes, 16 April 2019.

Extrait de l'ébauche du procès-verbal, le 16 avril 2019.

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION,  
WATER AND WASTE MANAGEMENT**

**122**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DE LA  
PROTECTION DE  
L'ENVIRONNEMENT, DE L'EAU ET  
DE LA GESTION DES DÉCHETS  
RAPPORT 2  
LE 24 AVRIL 2019**

**REPORT 2  
24 APRIL 2019**

**Report to  
Rapport au :**

**Standing Committee on Environmental Protection, Water and Waste Management  
/ Comité permanent de la protection de l'environnement, de l'eau et de la gestion  
des déchets**

**April 16, 2019 / 16 avril 2019**

**and Council / et au Conseil  
April 24, 2019 / 24 avril 2019**

**Submitted on April 4, 2019  
Soumis le 4 avril 2019**

**Submitted by  
Soumis par :  
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**Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA  
VILLE**

**File Number: ACS2019-PIE-EDP-0017**

**REPORT 2  
24 APRIL 2019**

**SUBJECT: Response to Bee City Motion**

**OBJET: Réponse du personnel à la motion visant à faire d'Ottawa une ville respectueuse des abeilles**

### **REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Standing Committee on Environmental Protection, Water and Waste Management recommend that Council:**

- 1. Receive the information provided within this report, which outlines how the City and local partners currently support native pollinator health;**
- 2. Direct staff to implement the short-term actions identified in this report, which can be accommodated within existing budget envelopes, including a pollinator garden and/or bee hotel at City Hall or suitable city-owned facility, education and outreach, and an exhibit to celebrate and promote pollinators at the 2019 Mayor's Rural Expo; and**
- 3. Direct staff to examine the feasibility of longer-term actions identified in this report and provide an update, including any new recommendations, to Committee in 2020.**

### **RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT**

**Que le Comité permanent de la protection de l'environnement, de l'eau et de la gestion des déchets recommande au Conseil :**

- 1. de prendre connaissance du présent rapport, qui indique comment la Ville et les partenaires locaux protègent actuellement la santé des pollinisateurs indigènes.**
- 2. de demander au personnel de mettre en œuvre les mesures à court terme relevées dans le présent rapport, qui peuvent être financées dans la limite des enveloppes budgétaires existantes, notamment l'aménagement d'un jardin pour les pollinisateurs ou d'un hôtel pour abeilles à l'hôtel de ville ou à une installation municipale adéquate, une campagne d'éducation et de**

**sensibilisation et une exposition visant à mettre en valeur et à promouvoir les pollinisateurs dans le cadre de l'Exposition rurale du maire 2019.**

- 3. demander au personnel de déterminer s'il sera possible de mettre en œuvre les mesures à plus long terme relevées dans ce rapport et de fournir au Comité, en 2020, une mise à jour, notamment toute nouvelle recommandation.**

## **BACKGROUND**

On September 18, 2018, the Environment and Climate Protection Committee (now the Standing Committee on Environmental Protection, Water and Waste Management) directed staff to investigate the feasibility and desirability of Ottawa applying to join the Bee City Canada program, and report back to Committee in 2019.

Urban beekeeping is not a requirement of the Bee City program, and was not addressed in the Committee motion. It was included in the original public petition that led to the Committee motion. It has also been in the news lately due to a recent decision by the City of Gatineau to further relax their rules on urban agriculture, including beekeeping. As a result, some of the potential issues associated with urban beekeeping are identified in this report.

## **DISCUSSION**

Bee City Canada is an offshoot of an organization that started in the United States. It aims to promote support for bees and improve bee habitat in cities. To become a Bee City, a municipality must form a working group and commit to undertake specific actions each year to create habitat, educate residents, and celebrate bees and other pollinators. Participating municipalities must report back annually to Bee City Canada on their accomplishments, and re-apply for Bee City status each year. In return, municipalities are entitled to declare themselves a Bee City and their accomplishments are featured on the Bee City Canada website. The City of Toronto was the first Canadian Bee City, and several other southern Ontario municipalities have also joined the program.

Pollinators such as bees, wasps, flies, butterflies and moths, ants, beetles and some birds provide essential services to farmers, gardeners, and natural ecosystems. The

City of Ottawa recognises the value of pollinators and supports them through many existing policies, programs and practices. Examples include:

- The City's Official Plan includes a suite of policies aimed at preserving Ottawa's natural heritage system and greenspaces, most of which provide habitat for pollinators. It also includes policies promoting the use of native plant species in landscaping, for both public and private projects;
- The Park Development Manual establishes specific targets for naturalisation in new parks, which supports biodiversity and pollinators;
- The Maintenance Quality Standards for roads, sidewalks, parks and sports fields explicitly recognise the importance of maintaining some areas in a naturalised state to support biodiversity;
- Use of pesticides on City property is limited, in accordance with provincial legislation (before this legislation took effect, the City had restricted pesticide use through its own corporate policy);
- Several pollinator gardens have been established on City-owned land by community groups, with support from ward Councillors and/or municipal grants such as the Community Environmental Projects Grant Program;
- Community gardens for local food production have been established on City-owned lands and elsewhere in the city through the Community Gardening Network, with the City's support and assistance; these gardens both rely on and support local pollinator populations;
- The City's web page provides residents with information about pollinator-friendly native plants for landscaping, and links to other resources.

These actions are consistent with those required by the Bee City program and the Mayors' Monarch Pledge (another pollinator-oriented initiative). Staff are concerned, however, that formal participation in the Bee City program would not add substantive value to the work already being done, and could divert resources towards reporting rather than results. External recognition programs such as Bee City and the Mayors'

Monarch Pledge, while laudable in their goals, create new administrative requirements without providing commensurate benefits to the City. They also tend to focus attention on one target species or group of species, which may inadvertently exclude or impact others (e.g., butterfly gardens with extensive use of mulch are unsuitable for ground-nesting native bees). Staff therefore recommend that the City continue to work with local partners to better promote and support pollinators in Ottawa, without participating in either the Bee City program or the Mayors' Monarch Pledge.

The Wildlife Speaker Series provides an excellent opportunity to strengthen partnerships and raise public awareness about wildlife living within the City. Organized by the Natural Systems and Rural Affairs unit, the next event in the series (on April 26, 2019) will focus on pollinators. This event will feature presentations by local researchers about native bees and flower flies, as well as displays by groups such as the Wild Pollinator Partners, the Ottawa Stewardship Council, the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, the Monarch Teachers' Network, etc.

To further demonstrate the City's commitment to pollinators, staff have identified several action items to pursue this year that can be accommodated within existing budgets, including:

- Develop a publicly accessible pollinator garden at Ottawa City Hall or suitable city-owned location, with interpretive signage to educate and inspire visitors;
- Establish a native "bee hotel" at Ottawa City Hall or suitable city-owned location, preferably alongside the pollinator garden. This could be through a third-party supplier, or paired with an educational program and outreach to young audiences as a design or naming competition;
- Develop educational and outreach materials for the City's website and social media platforms to raise awareness of native pollinators, and encourage pollinator-friendly gardening;
- Celebrate native pollinators and apicultural industries in the City at the annual Mayor's Rural Expo and Food Aid Day, recognising their contributions to our food supply and rural economy. The Rural Expo will occur on June 7 this year,



shortly after World Bee Day (May 20) and before International Pollinators Week (June 17-23).

A formal proclamation declaring the City's support for pollinators, and recognising the benefits provided by pollinators, could also be made at one of the above events.

Other potential opportunities would require greater investment of staff time or additional resources to complete, and could be considered for inclusion in future work plans and/or budgets if desired by Committee and Council. Staff will review the feasibility of these projects and return to Committee with updated recommendations in 2020:

- Opportunities to better support pollinator habitat, while still providing acceptable levels of service, could be considered through future reviews of roadside and parkland maintenance quality standards;
- Increasing financial support for pollinator gardens or other pollinator-friendly initiatives through the existing Community Environmental Projects Grant Program or other funding mechanisms;
- Developing a more streamlined process for reviewing and approving proposals for pollinator gardens or habitat creation on City property.

The provincial *Bees Act* prohibits the placing or keeping of beehives within specific distances of residential properties, public parks or other places of public assembly or recreation, community centres, and roads. The cumulative effect of the *Act* is essentially to prohibit beekeeping in most urban or suburban contexts. If the Province changed the *Bees Act* to allow urban beekeeping at some point in the future, the City could amend its Zoning By-law to include apiculture as a permitted urban agricultural use (subject to public consultation and Council approval). However, there are environmental concerns with urban beekeeping that should be considered, along with anticipated public concerns over human health risks and legal liability.

Research suggests that domestic honeybees compete with native bees and other pollinators. In urban settings, where suitable pollen and nectar sources are limited, the negative impacts of honeybees on native pollinators may be particularly severe.

European settlers introduced domestic honeybees to North America. Unlike native bees, which live singly or in small colonies, honeybees live in large perennial colonies with tens of thousands of worker bees. They collect enormous quantities of nectar in order to produce stockpiles of honey to support themselves during the winter. Most native bees and other pollinators overwinter in a dormant state, and do not stockpile food. This basic biological difference means that honeybees can out-compete native pollinators. They can also transmit pests or diseases to native bees. Several native pollinators, including the Monarch butterfly and various bumblebees, are species at risk both provincially and nationally due to various factors. While honeybee colonies have also suffered losses, they are not at risk of extinction. Staff note that the City of Toronto has explicitly recognised the potential negative impacts of beekeeping on native bees and other pollinators and has chosen to focus on initiatives that support all pollinators rather than pursuing urban beekeeping.

In conclusion, staff recommend that the City continue to support pollinators through existing policies and programs, and work with local partners to engage residents in pollinator-friendly activities. If the *Bees Act* is amended or repealed by the Province at some point in future and Ottawa City Council wishes to consider allowing urban beekeeping, the issue should be subject to extensive consultation to address potential concerns regarding native pollinators, human health, legal liability and regulatory compliance.

## **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

Initiatives that support pollinators in Ottawa should not be limited to the urban area, since many of the benefits that pollinators provide contribute directly to the rural economy. Beekeeping is well-established in Ottawa's rural area, in compliance with existing provincial and municipal regulations, and is expected to continue. Ottawa's extensive rural landscape includes abundant habitat for pollinators in both natural and agricultural settings. Many crops depend on pollination by bees and other insects, and local honey producers often work cooperatively with farmers. Since native bees and other pollinators do not produce honey, they are not often cultivated. Interestingly, research suggests that native pollinators are highly effective and may provide better quality pollination than domestic honeybees.

## **CONSULTATION**

During the preparation of this report, staff consulted with local groups interested in pollinators to obtain their views on the Bee City program, City practices and programs relating to pollinators, and urban beekeeping. Scientists from York University and the University of Ottawa also contacted Councillors and/or staff independently, to express their concerns regarding the possibility of urban beekeeping being allowed in Ottawa.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal impediments to Committee and Council's approval of the recommendations of this Report.

As discussed above, in Ontario, the *Bees Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.B.6 sets out the regulatory framework for bee keeping and apiaries. Additionally, in the City of Ottawa, bee keeping constitutes an agricultural use of the land pursuant to the City's Zoning By-law No. 2008-250.

Therefore, any plans for the establishment or maintenance of bee hives, must be in compliance with the regulatory framework.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

## **ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct asset management implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The short-term actions and the examination of the feasibility of longer-term actions identified within the report will be accommodated from within existing resources.

## **ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS**

There are no accessibility impacts associated with this report.

**REPORT 2  
24 APRIL 2019**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The recommended actions in this report support pollinators and their habitat in the City, and therefore contribute to Ottawa's overall environmental health and sustainability.

## **TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

The priorities for the current Term of Council have not yet been announced. However, the recommendations in this report support the following 2015 –2018 Term of Council priorities:

- Environmental Sustainability;
- A Healthy and Caring Community;
- Planning and Decision Making.

## **DISPOSITION**

Natural Systems and Rural Affairs staff will work with colleagues in other affected teams and departments to carry out the recommendations in this report.