City of Vaughan

City of Vaughan, ON

Mayor Steven Del Duca

Pledge Summary

The City of Vaughan is a city in Ontario, Canada with a population of over 350,000. The City has supported the Mayors' Monarch Pledge since early 2018 and is committed to protecting pollinators and educating its citizens on the importance of pollinators and their habitats. Mayor Steven Del Duca is committed to continuing to fulfill actions to benefit pollinators as listed in the Monarch Pledge.

Action Items Committed for 2025

Communications and Convening

- Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.
- Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)
- Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.
- Engage with city parks and recreation, public works, sustainability, and other relevant staff to identify opportunities to revise and maintain mowing programs and milkweed / native nectar plant planting programs.
- Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.
- Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat program).

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- Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.
- Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Systems Change

- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.
- Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.
- Launch, expand, or continue an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.
- Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.
- Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Steven Del Duca	2025	4/30/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Steven Del Duca	2024	3/25/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Steven Del Duca	2023	3/2/2023	Leadership Circle
Mr Maurizio Bevilacqua	2022	3/15/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua	2021	12/9/2020	Leadership Circle

Action Items

In total, how many individuals have been reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan-Dec)? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field below (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.).

3500

Of the total number of individuals engaged, how many youth (0-18) were reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan. - Dec.)? If none, please write 0." (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.)

426

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In total, how many acres of monarch habitat have been created in your city in the last 12 months? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 3). Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

0.09

Where was the habitat created this year? Example locations may include residences, schools, places of worship, rights-of-way, roadsides, community gardens, shared public spaces, and more.

Schools, public parks and open spaces, entrance features/ROWs. Garden beds located alongside roadways, in ROWs and in entrances to subdivisions include pollinator-friendly plants, however we do not consider them pollinator habitat/gardens, as included in our total acres listed above.

How are you leveraging the Mayors' Monarch Pledge program to engage marginalized communities, such as low-income communities or communities of color?

Through geospatial analysis we are working to determine which areas of the City are lacking monarch and other pollinator habitat to make sure our programming is equitable and give future priority to those areas. In recent years, the City has obtained access to different mapping tools which lets us filter by metrics such as low income. In future years, these maps will be utilized to target specific communities and perhaps offer incentives or solutions to remove barriers from participating in pollinator initiatives. Additionally, the City published it's first Anti-Black Racism Action Plan in 2024; Environmental Sustainability's projects, including the Mayors Monarch Pledge, are assessed based on this Plan

What was your community's motivation for taking and continuing to work on the Mayors' Monarch Pledge?

For the past 36 years, Vaughan has been one of Canada's fastest-growing municipalities. This trend is expected to continue until at least the 2051 planning horizon. With this transformation comes challenges for maintaining greenspace and conserving and protecting wildlife habitat. The Mayors' Monarch Pledge provides the City of Vaughan with a path forward to conserve and create habitat for the Monarch butterfly, and all other pollinator species

What resources have been most helpful to you thus far and what new resources would you like to see to help meet your goals? What resources would be useful to help expand equitable engagement in community processes and access to high-quality, usable nature?

Since we are a Canadian City, some of the resources are not applicable as they focus on American communities and best practices. Additional Canadian best practices/case studies would be useful. Any lessons learned or best practices for expanding equitable engagement would be great!

What else should we know about your monarch butterfly conservation efforts over the last year?

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Monarch butterfly, and pollinator species, conservation efforts seems to be a growing interest for many departments in the City, with conservation measures included in a variety of different City strategies and plans. A huge opportunity to transform a hydro corridor into a pollinator meadow began taking shape in 2024. Additionally, our Green Guardians community stewardship program closed its third full year in operation and participation by the community to plant pollinator gardens through the program keeps increasing; schools are especially interested in creating spaces for students to learn about pollinators. The Environmental Sustainability team was also approached by a summer camp this year to run and activity and teach the campers about pollinators.

Selected Action Items

Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.

Date of Proclamation:

May 27, 2020

Title of Proclamation (i.e. – Monarch Day or Pollinator Week):

National Pollinator Week and Flight of the Monarch Day

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Pollinator proclamations.pdf

Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Help protect Vaughan's pollinators! _ City of Vaughan.pdf

Please describe the methods of public communication below (e.g., printed materials, social media, print media).

Public service announcements, local Councillor newsletters and social media posts are utilized to raise awareness about protecting our pollinators and encouraging residents to plant pollinator gardens at home. The largest campaign surrounded National Pollinator Week (example attached), however education was also promoted around a local campaign, called Flight of the Monarch Day, in August. The City's sustainability website also hosts information

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about planting pollinator gardens which stays online year-round (Vaughan.ca/environment). The City's Sustainability team attended a variety of events throughout the year, and promoted planting pollinator gardens and handed out seed packets.

Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.

Please describe the groups you engaged with and how you engaged with these groups below.

The City Hall community garden group was engaged through York Region Food Network, a non-profit that manages two of the City's community gardens. The group actively maintains the pollinator garden on site, planting additional nectar producing plants to the garden annually. The Growing to Give community garden group was also engaged through York Region Food Network, and the group planted milkweed in the garden in 2022. The Bathurst Clark community garden group started in 2024, and through the Garden Coordinator, they have been encouraged to include nectar producing plants within the garden space.

Engage with city parks and recreation, public works, sustainability, and other relevant staff to identify opportunities to revise and maintain mowing programs and milkweed / native nectar plant planting programs.

How many community organizations and groups participated? Please list them below.

- Parks, Forestry and Horticulture Operations - Environmental Sustainability - Woodbridge Pollinator Group

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and revisions/maintenance implemented for mowing or planting programs.

In 2019, the City of Vaughan's Parks, Forestry and Horticulture Operations (PFHO) department piloted a revised mowing program to leave strategic "Grow Zones" un-mowed. These Grow Zones focus on converting specific areas in City parks covered by grass into naturalized meadows and pollinator gardens. There are currently 24 "Grow Zones" designated throughout the City. Staff in Parks, Forestry and Horticulture Operations undertake an annual exercise to determine which areas are suitable for new Grow Zones, or which Grow Zones are suitable for tree planting or to be seeded with native and pollinator plants. In 2022, 845 trees were planted in select Grow Zones. In 2023, a new Grow Zone initiative was piloted in which 12 kg of wildflower seeds were added across a 1.1 acre park. Grow Zones continue to be evaluated, and based on public engagement some of the original 28 Grow Zones have been converted for other purposes. In 2024, a community group, The Woodbridge Pollinator Group, planted milkweed in 2 Grow Zones. In 2025, a new 0.69 hectare Grow Zone was created.

Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.

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How many community organizations and groups participated? Please list them below.

- Concord West Ratepayers Association - local schools

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and revisions implemented for mowing and maintenance programs.

The Concord West Ratepayers Association (CWRA) has the right kind of profile to be able to influence maintenance and mowing in their neighbourhood. This group produces a newsletter that includes information about pollinators, additionally they run an event in May where they release butterflies in honour of loved ones lost. The City provided 300 seed packets for this event, in which attendees added the seeds to existing garden beds in local parks. In 2025, through Green Guardians, the City's environmental stewardship program, four local schools received funding to plant pollinator gardens.

Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Attachment 1- Draft Sustainability Metrics Guidebook March 2022.pdf

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and associated opportunities to create monarch habitat.

The City's Sustainability Metrics Program (SMP) includes a pollinator metric (NE-6 Supporting Pollinators, see attached) encouraging developers to designate space for pollinator habitat. Recent Provincial legislation has changed how the City can enforce the SMP – it remains a voluntary program until further notice. For new city buildings and retrofits projects, Policy Planning staff have included the need to plant pollinator species in the specifications; for new buildings it is encouraged that spaces for pollinator gardens and education programs be incorporated. For Streetscape Master Plans, the design of new parks and trails development, Policy Planning staff have also requested that areas be set aside to plant pollinator gardens. In 2024, Parks Planning staff worked on 2 private development projects that will include pollinator habitat as part of the parkland dedication. The City recently completed a Greenspace Strategic Plan that notes pollinator gardens contribute to resilient parks and cities and includes an action to design parks to promote plant diversity and pollinator species.

Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

City Hall polinator garden.png

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Where is the demonstration garden located and how does this location relate to the cultural significance of the monarch (if relevant)? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible)

2141 Major Mackenzie Drive, Vaughan, ON, L6A 1T1

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

York Region Food Network, local bank employees and residents from Mapleglen Residences.

What is the size of the demonstration garden (in acres)? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 0.5 acres). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones. Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

0.01

Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat program).

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Bird Friendly City - Vaughan.png

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Extract_30cw(2)0621_22ex_48.pdf

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

Nature Canada

What program was launched or maintained to complete this effort? (Please include a link to the program, if possible)

In June 2023 the City of Vaughan was recognized as a certified Bird-Friendly City by Nature Canada. https://naturecanada.ca/defend-nature/how-you-help-us-take-action/bfc/#certified

Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.

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What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

York Region Food Network, Human Endeavour, Reena, Mapleglen Residences

How many plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

323

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

This action is complete. The City Hall pollinator garden is located within a community garden. In 2019, an additional pollinator garden was planted at Vellore Park, a future location for a community garden. The City Hall community garden group actively maintains the pollinator garden on site and plants additional nectar producing plants each year. Environmental Sustainability staff have compiled a best practices document for Community Gardens that will guide future expansion and current operations of our community gardens. Moving forward, all new community gardens will include a pollinator garden. The Growing to Give community garden group was also engaged through York Region Food Network, and the group planted milkweed in the garden in 2022. The Bathurst Clark community garden group started in 2024, and they included nectar producing plants within the garden.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

PollinatorsSignage_22x11 FINAL 2024.pdf

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

TH SNAP Clark Ave Pollinator Way Sign1-36x24_vF (1).pdf

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

SNAP small pollinator sign example2.png

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

SNAP small pollinator sign example3.png

How many garden signs are being displayed and where are they located? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

21

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Please describe the educational information on the sign(s), and provide any links to externally purchased sign(s).

The pollinator signs are located in parks and open space (12 on public property), as well as on private property including schools and religious institutions. Every Grow Zone also has a sign. The standard sign includes information on why the pollinator garden is there, with a link for more information. Some of the gardens have more detailed interpretive signage which have more information on the importance of pollinators and pollinator gardens. We also include some small signs within the gardens denoting specific species.

Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.

How many plants were sold and/or given away at your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

3194

How many people attended your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

3000

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

Note on # people - 3194 seed packets were given away at events, mailed out upon request, provided to schools and ratepayers associations, etc but rounded down to account for individuals who may have grabbed more than 1 seed packet. Woodbridge Pollinator Group, York Region Food Network, schools

Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.

Where are the medians, roadsides and public rights-of-way? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible, or describe the location)

Coordinates can be provided upon request. The plantings are located as entrance features to public buildings, entrance features to subdivisions and in Grow with Vaughan planters, across the city.

How many milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

4972

What is the total acreage of median and public right-of-way that has been planted with milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

available upon request

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Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

Maintenance occurs between 5-10 times per bed, per year and includes wedding, pruning, mulching and watering.

Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.

How many estimated individuals participated in your community science effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 150).

0

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

Bumblebee Watch, Journey North, David Suzuki Butterflyway, eButterfly, iNaturalist, EcoSpark

Please describe the community science program that you supported or initiated. Provide a link to any relevant programs, if possible.

Rather than initiative our own program, we provide information about existing citizen science programs to our residents about how to get involved. Our Pollinator Projects website contains the information, the education campaign for Pollinator Week included the information, and Environmental Sustainability staff promote the programs at events.

Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Green Guardians - Engage, Educate and Expand.pdf

What is the total acreage of land treated to remove invasive plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

varies

Please describe the extent of revisions or maintenance to invasive species removal programs, as well as the practices or techniques used to remove the invasive plants.

Invasive species removal community events were unable to be piloted in 2024 and 2025, however this concept is outlined in the City's Green Guardians Community Program Strategy document (attached). The Vaughan Gardeners initiative, expected to launch in 2026,

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includes invasive species management education and skills training and the Vaughan Green Helpers initiatives proposes a volunteer-driven initiative with a focus on tree planting, removal of invasive species and restoration of wildlife habitat, piloting in North Maple Regional Park in 2028. Our current removal programs come in the form of the City's Horticulture team removing anything invasive as they come across it. Typically, these species are garlic mustard, buckthorn suckers, knotweed. Invasive species removals also occur at a project scale, when new garden, shrub or tree plantings and/or clearing and safety work is planned. Additionally, the City's Forestry team has completed its first Urban Forest Management Plan and Woodlot Management Strategy that includes recommendations and strategies for invasive species removal and management. Internal and external groups also flag invasive sightings to Vaughan's Horticulture team for them to remove

Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Council extract -Beautification Strategy 2.0.pdf

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

none, internal City departments

What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.

complete

If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.

2021 with update in 2024. This action is complete. It is standard City practice to include native plants, shrubs and trees in City landscaping. The City has a list of approved tree species and pollinator species for homeowners and contractors planting trees, flowers and shrubs on private property. Year to year, the City has increased the number of pollinator plants purchased, to be included in entrance features and planters. The Urban Forest Management Plan, approved in 2024, includes strategies to protect biodiversity, notes limiting species diversity in woodlots to native species, and sets out a framework for evaluating the urban forest considering native species planting (too large to attach, link: https://www.vaughan.ca/sites/default/files/2024-03/Urban%20Forest%20Management%20Plan.pdf?file-verison=1766077642091

Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.

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What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

Clean Air Council, Bylaw, Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services, other municipalities

What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.

in progress

If this action is In Progress, please describe your progress and a target date when you plan to complete action.

In 2023 a university student completed a term in the Policy Planning and Sustainability department and undertook a review of City of Vaughan bylaws to determine what guidelines we have for native prairie and plant habitats and conducted a municipal scan of other municipalities to determine their weed or mowing ordinances. In 2025, the City's Bylaw team began drafting Bylaw updates that would allow residents to plant pollinator or native-plant gardens on their properties, without being fined for "weeds or long grass". This work is still underway.

Launch, expand, or continue an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

all residents were engaged in master planning process for park designs and for the development of the Greenspace Strategic Plan. Internal departments main partners.

What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.

Complete

If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.

Sustainability staff are actively engaging City Project Mangers in the planning of various building upgrades, park revitalization plans and streetscape plans to encourage planting pollinator habitat. The Greensapce Strategic Plan (2025) outlines an action to include native and pollinator gardens in park designs, and the City is currently creating Master Plans for two parks/open spaces in which the concept designs include pollinator habitat/meadows. (https://www.vaughan.ca/about-city-vaughan/projects-and-initiatives/community-projects/macmillan-farm-master-plan and https://www.vaughan.ca/about-city-vaughan/projects-and-initiatives/community-projects/north-maple-regional-park-nmrp/nmrp-master-plan). Greenspace Plan too large to attach: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.vaughan.ca/sites/default/files/2025-

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06/Vaughan%20Greenspace%20Plan_June2025_FINAL-compressed.pdf?file-verison=1751029457503&file-verison=1766078003470

Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

none, internal City departments

What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.

complete.

If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.

2019 (Green Directions Vaughan) and 2025 (Greenspace Strategic Plan). Pollinator conservation is part of Green Directions Vaughan, the city's community sustainability plan. Other master plans, such as the North Maple Regional Park Master Plan and the Greenspace Strategic Plan, include the need for pollinator gardens/habitat and language around species conservation. Files too large - vaughan.ca/greendirections and vaughan.ca/greenspaceplan

Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

88-2008 COV Pesticide Bylaw.pdf

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

unsure, this Bylaw has been in effect since 2008.

What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.

complete

If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.

The City's Pesticide Bylaw (Bylaw 88-2008) has been in effect since 2008.

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Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

231-2011 Property Standards Bylaw.pdf

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Bird Safe Design Standards.Mar 2022.pdf

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

FLAP Canada, City's of Richmond Hill and Markham

What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.

complete

If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.

2011 - the City’s Property Standards By-law states that light cannot spill out from property lines. Through the City’s LED Streetlight retrofit program, Dark Sky Compliant lights were installed, assisting to reduce light pollution. 2022- In June 2022, Council endorsed that Bird-Safe Design Standards (PDF) be a requirement for all new private and City-owned developments, through the Sustainability Metrics Program. The Bird-Safe Design Standards regulate interior and exterior lighting to reduce light pollution. Additionally, environmental sustainability staff provide comments related to reducing light pollution to benefit wildlife is included on all park design and facility design concept drawings.

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