



MEMO

To: Advisory Committee on the Environment (ACE)

From: Planning Services

Date: August 22, 2018

Re: Responses to ACE's Plight of the Pollinators and
Bee City Recommendations (2014 and 2018)

In 2014 ACE's Plight of the Pollinators working group made 10 Recommendations. Staff provided ACE with written responses identifying how all 10 Recommendations were successfully addressed, highlighting the City's numerous, ongoing, pollinator habitat initiatives, collaborations, and, policies then met with members of ACE to review and discuss them all on May 31, 2017 at City Hall.

ACE re-circulated their 10 Recommendations from 2014 at their May 2, 2018 ACE meeting, along with 3 additional ACE Plight of Pollinators Recommendations for 2018 and ACE's "Bee City Canada Proposal". Thank you to ACE for these detailed recommendations noting we appreciate ACE's ongoing support for pollinator habitat policy and programs in London. This Memo includes:

- Staff responses for all 13 ACE Recommendations, noting some of Staff's 2017 responses provided to ACE previously have been updated to capture additional pollinator habitat work and new community programs that include opportunities for pollinator habitat initiatives.
- Staff supports ACE's "Bee City Canada Proposal" attached.

ACE Plight of Pollinators, May 2, 2018 - Recommendations

ACE Recommendation 1. For London to become a Bee City by certifying with Bee City Canada. In this way we can be recognized as a leader within Canada in the creation of bee-friendly cities. We can also participate in future activities organized by Bee City Canada.

Staff Response: Agree. The City of London is a leader in habitat and pollinator protection (more than just bees) and we are demonstrating a proactive approach throughout the City and will continue to provide opportunities for residents to plant and enhance additional pollinator habitat on public and private property through a wide range of City and community led programs.

Currently, about 10% of the City (inside the Urban Growth Boundary) is publically owned parkland, and over 60% of that area or about 1,400 hectares is managed as naturalized, non-mowed areas that provide good pollinator habitat and this area increases every year. The City's Parks Operations section with assistance from the community planted over 1000 Milkweed plants on City property in 2016 and 2017.

London's urban forest is a key element in provision of habitat and food for pollinators. The Council approved [Tree Planting Strategy](#) is on track and fully funded to plant 20,000 trees from 2016 to 2019. The strategy outlines the long term plan to increase London's tree canopy cover from 24% to 34%.

Staff will recommend to Council that London become a "Bee City" provided additional Staff time is not required. The focus will be on promoting our good work to date, and, increasing engagement in existing City programs, policies and events that enhance pollinator habitat, and, to highlight the great work by numerous provincial and federal government, non-profit groups, community groups and organizations undertaking pollinator habitat initiatives in the City, primarily on private property.

The City is already doing the good things in the Bee City program and the Staff report will summarize how we will continue to meet Bee City Canada's requirements for:

- **"Bee City" Council Resolution**
- **A "Bee City Working Group"**
- **Designated Staff media contact**
- **Educating community members about the importance of pollinators**
- **Annual event to celebrate pollinators during International Pollinator Week**
- **Publicly acknowledging Bee City Canada designation through the City website, developing and installing permanent signage in a prominent location, and other means.**
- **Annually re-applying for Bee City Canada designation.**

ACE Recommendation 2: Identify potential sites (on public land) across the city where pollinator habitat (garden, meadow) may be planted either by city staff or community groups. These sites may comprise parks or right-of-way areas next to roads and railways.

Staff Response - Ongoing: These areas are identified at a high level through London Plan policy 1378 – "Potential naturalization areas...these areas may include lands suitable to create natural habitats such as wetland habitat, pollinator habitat...Locations are...identified as potential naturalization areas on Map 5."

London Plan policy 1378 – "Naturalization may occur to establish new linkages, or widened linkages, within the green space network. Linkages that support the Natural Heritage System are identified as potential naturalization areas and potential upland corridors on Map 5 of this Plan."

In addition to areas identified on Map 5 there are many City programs and policies being implemented by Staff that empower community groups to plant a variety of pollinator habitats on a City property and right of ways (noting railways are located on private property) including:

- **NeighbourGood London programs including [TreeMe](#) and [Neighbourhood Decision Making](#) program that empowers residents to plant trees, shrubs and [pollinator gardens](#), and has funded over half a million dollars in pollinator habitat projects since 2015. The [Adopt a Park](#) and [Adopt a Street](#) and [Adopt a Pond Program](#)**

engages communities to plant trees, shrubs and gardens that include milkweed etc. on City property.

- [Active & Green Communities](#) program promotes environmental awareness and stewardship through community engagement. This program provided funding to support aspects of the community led Pollinator Pathway Project.
- [The Growing Naturally Program](#) to help London homeowners reduce their property's environmental footprint. The goal is to improve the landscapes of London homes using environmentally sustainable methods and provide a healthier environment for our residents, their neighborhoods and watershed.
- [Adopt-an-ESA](#) program which partners the City of London with interested community groups, working together to improve the environmental integrity of our Environmentally Significant Areas through stewardship. This includes managing invasives and planting native species that benefit pollinators.
- [Urban Forest Strategy](#) and [Tree Planting Strategy](#) and [Boulevard Tree Planting Program](#). The benefits provided by the urban forest include food production, and the provision of habitat and food for pollinators. The guiding principles to implement the strategy are to plant more, protect more, maintain better and engage the community.
- The [Urban Agriculture Strategy](#). The City has a number of existing, related plans, policies, and strategies—for example, for pollinator protection and for the promotion of naturalization—and these plans, policies, and strategies complement the urban agriculture strategy and, together, help build a healthy city.
- [London Community Gardens](#) -15 Community Gardens on City property as of 2018 with a simple process for residents to start a new one.
- [Friends of the London Civic Garden Complex](#) – The City greenhouse is used by local environmental groups to propagate native herbaceous plants, and trees for sale and/or use in residential gardens, and in local naturalization / pollinator habitat projects.
- [London Invasive Plant Management Strategy](#) and associated funding approved by Council improves the ecological integrity of our natural areas and includes restoration plantings to improve the diversity of native species, improving habitat for pollinators.

In addition to the community empowering and/or City led pollinator habitat initiatives listed above there are numerous provincial and federal government, non-profit groups, community groups and organizations undertaking pollinator habitat initiatives primarily on private property, and some (but not all) are also supported with City funding. These include but are not limited to:

- [Pollinative](#) – Their “mission is to restore, replant and preserve natural “Pollinative Pathways” to ensure the survival of bee, insect and bird populations.” Pollinative’s restoration efforts already provide over 700 acres of pollinator habitat in London since 2016.
- [Reforest London](#) – “A non-profit organization dedicated to partnering with our community to enhance environmental and human health in the Forest City, through the benefits of trees.” Over 375,000 native trees (and thousands of native, flowering shrubs) planted in London to date.

- [Upper Thames River Conservation Authority](#) – “Communities for Nature program creates connections between businesses and industries, schools, and the local community, and improves the environment for everyone. Our staff meet with local partners to identify sites that can be restored, then coordinate community involvement in planting trees, shrubs, aquatic plants, wildflower meadows, and prairies. Projects range from small neighbourhood sites to large multi-year corporate and municipal initiatives.”
- [Kettle Creek Conservation Authority](#) – “Is committed to planting a minimum of 40,000 trees per year.” Education and stewardship programs include opportunities for planting trees and pollinator wildflower meadows.
- [Lower Thames Conservation](#) - Education and stewardship programs include opportunities for planting trees and pollinator wildflower meadows.
- [Carolinian Canada](#) “In the Zone” and Landowner Leader programs are promoting the benefits of native plants and pollinator gardens. The City participates in their annual “Grow Wild Go Wild” event to engage residents in conservation initiatives and distributes native milkweed seeds.
- [Pollinator Pathway Project](#) in London “envision[s] multiple back-yard, front-yard and boulevard gardens along particular pathways that link together larger natural heritage features such as woodlands and meadows.”
- [Dancor Bring Back the Bees Project](#) - “Dancor’s goal is to use native trees, wildflowers and grasses to create an environment in which bees, butterflies and birds will flourish and develop. Students and staff will be planting 1,000 native trees and shrubs. Native wildflowers will also be planted...”
- [Julia Hunter Fund](#) - Supports community garden and pollinator initiatives.
- [St. Georges Presbyterian Church](#) – Converted a fifth of a hectare of lawn into a garden featuring hundreds of species of wildflowers and native wild plants.
- [Ontario’s Pollinator Health Action Plan](#) – The plan identifies many opportunities for engaging Ontarians of all ages in our efforts to help pollinators. From individuals to schools, community groups and businesses - everyone has an important role to play.
- [Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program](#) - Supporting species at risk on agricultural land through habitat creation, enhancement and protection.
- [Species at Risk Partnership on Agricultural Lands](#) - Grassland Stewardship.
- [Wildlife Preservation Canada](#) - Native Pollinator Initiative.
- [TD Friends of the Environment](#) Grants - Butterfly gardens and pollinator programs.

ACE Recommendation 3: Set aside funds in the next 4 year budget cycle to support the implementation of the pollinator-related policies identified in the London Plan.

Staff Response: Done. All of the City policies and City led programs outlined in response to ACE Recommendation 2 above will continue to be funded through the next 4 year budget cycle, and, 10 year budget forecast (subject to Council’s approval) to support all of the London Plan pollinator policies below:

- Policy 68, Direction 16. Establish London as a key pollinator sanctuary within our region.
- Policy 239, Opportunities will be explored for supporting pollinators and food production through landscaping and street tree planting.

- ***Policy 410, Direction 14. Where possible and as appropriate, parks and open spaces will be used to support our food system – creating opportunities for food production and distribution and helping to support pollinators.***
- ***Policy 659, Promote London as a pollinator sanctuary, considering how we can create and support environments that are conducive to pollinators in all of the planning and public works we are involved with, recognizing the important role that pollinators play in our long-term food security.***

London's urban forest is a key element in provision of habitat and food for pollinators, and, is closely tied to achieving the London Plan pollinator policies. The Council approved [Tree Planting Strategy](#) is on track and fully funded to plant 20,000 trees from 2016 to 2019. The strategy outlines the long term plan to increase London's tree canopy cover from 24% to 34%. Council approved an additional \$1.8 million (\$450,000/year) for tree planting in the 2016-2019 budget cycle. Funding for the strategy has been accommodated within the 10-year capital budget forecast.

London as a Pollinator Sanctuary

Submitted by ACE Working Group on Plight of Pollinators (2014)

There are further actions the city can take in order to help the plight of pollinators. Here are our recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Identify London as a Pollinator Sanctuary in the City's Official Plan.

Staff Response 2017: Done. The [London Plan](#) policy 659 reads: "659_ Promote London as a pollinator sanctuary, considering how we can create and support environments that are conducive to pollinators in all of the planning and public works we are involved with, recognizing the important role that pollinators play in our long-term food security."

Recommendation 2: Include explicit language throughout the London Plan that references the importance of creating suitable habitat for pollinators on private and public lands as well as reducing pesticide pressures.

Staff Response 2017: Done. London Plan policies 58 (16.), 239, 410 (14.) and 1378 cover the creation of pollinator habitat. The Province regulates the use of pesticides and recently identified that through the Pollinator Health Strategy there will be an 80 per cent reduction in the number of acres planted with neonicotinoid treated corn and soybean seed by 2017.

Recommendation 3: Modify City bylaws concerning property standards, streets, trees and parks to reflect the city's proposed status as a Pollinator Sanctuary.

Staff Response (updated in 2018): Done. London City By-laws permit naturalizations, perennial gardens and wildflower gardens on private property including planting of pollinator species such as milkweed. Current City programs in place that provide or improve Pollinator Habitat include:

- ***[NeighbourGood London](#) programs including [TreeMe](#) and the [Neighbourhood Decision Making](#) program, empower residents to plant trees, shrubs and pollinator***

gardens. The City has funded over half a million dollars in pollinator habitat projects since 2015 through these programs. The [Adopt a Park](#) and [Adopt a Street](#) and [Adopt a Pond Program](#) engages communities to plant trees, shrubs and gardens that include milkweed etc. on City property.

- [Active & Green Communities](#) program promotes environmental awareness and stewardship through community engagement. This program provided funding to support the community led Pollinator Pathway Project.
- [The Growing Naturally Program](#) to help London homeowners reduce their property's environmental footprint. The goal is to improve the landscapes of London homes using environmentally sustainable methods and provide a healthier environment for our residents, their neighborhoods and watershed.
- [Adopt-an-ESA](#) program which partners the City of London with interested community groups, working together to improve the environmental integrity of our Environmentally Significant Areas through stewardship. This includes managing invasives and planting native species that benefit pollinators.
- [Urban Forest Strategy](#) and [Tree Planting Strategy](#) and [Boulevard Tree Planting Program](#). The benefits provided by the urban forest include food production, and the provision of habitat and food for pollinators. The guiding principles to implement the strategy are to plant more, protect more, maintain better and engage the community.
- The [Urban Agriculture Strategy](#). The City has a number of existing, related plans, policies, and strategies—for example, for pollinator protection and for the promotion of naturalization—and these plans, policies, and strategies complement the urban agriculture strategy and, together, help build a healthy city.
- [London Community Gardens](#) -15 Community Gardens on City property as of 2018 with a simple process for residents to start a new one.
- [Friends of the London Civic Garden Complex](#) – The City greenhouse is used by local environmental groups to propagate native herbaceous plants, and trees for sale and/or use in residential gardens, and in local naturalization / pollinator habitat projects.
- [London Invasive Plant Management Strategy](#) and associated funding approved by Council improves the ecological integrity of our natural areas and the associated restoration plantings improve the diversity of native species for pollinators.

Recommendation 4: Create a Natural Heritage Master Plan which should have an extensive section not just about protecting but also on restoring and creating pollinator habitat across the city.

Staff Response 2017: Done. The London Plan is London's Natural Heritage Master Plan and includes direction on restoring and creating pollinator habitat.

Recommendation 5: Provide more forage and habitat areas around the city (including park lands, backyards, rooftops, boulevards), increase the amount of meadow space, and support the creation of habitat corridors between forage areas. Plant more native and pollinator friendly plants such as milkweed.

Staff Response (Updated in 2018): Ongoing. The City of London protects and enhances more pollinator habitat every year by providing opportunities for engagement in planting pollinator habitat on public and private property (described in Staff Response 3), by protecting our natural areas, by reducing mowing, and by planting native species including milkweed. Currently, about 10% of the City (inside the Urban Growth Boundary) is publically owned parkland, and over 60% of that area or about 1,400 hectares is managed as naturalized, non-mowed areas and this area increases every year. The Parks Operations section planted over 1000 Milkweed plants on City property in 2017 with volunteers and staff.

London City By-laws permit naturalizations, perennial gardens and wildflower gardens on private property including planting of pollinator species such as milkweed. London's City Hall has a green roof and green roofs are encouraged throughout the London Plan in policies 445, 667 and 1126.

Recommendation 6: Collaborate with the City's many organization and business contacts to encourage planting and development of biodiverse areas on their properties, with special emphasis on native plants.

Staff Response 2017: Ongoing. The City provides funding and collaborates with ReForest London, UTRCA and others to encourage planting of native species on private property. [ACE's Pollinator Brochure is on the City website](#). The [Growing Naturally Program / Home Visit Program](#) and [Brochure](#) all promote reducing the amount of lawn, increasing the use of native plants and providing pollinator habitat.

Recommendation 7: The City of London can ensure that plants used in its own gardens are purchased from local suppliers who are not using neonicotinoid insecticides. The City can encourage or require its affiliated schools, libraries and community centres to use locally grown, neonicotinoid free plants.

Staff Response 2017: Done. The City grows many plants for City parks in the greenhouse and does not use neonicotinoids or treated seeds. All plants sourced and planted by Parks Operations are free from neonicotinoids. Health Canada has proposed a ban of 2 neonicotinoid pesticides in the next three to five years.

Recommendation 8: Leading by example, London will encourage community organizations, businesses, and institutes of higher education to plant diverse, locally grown, neonicotinoid free plants.

Staff Response 2017: Ongoing. Programs described in Staff Responses 3, 4, 5 and 6 address this. The City grows many plants for City parks in the greenhouse and does not use neonicotinoids or treated seeds. All plants sourced and planted by Parks Operations

are free from neonicotinoids. Health Canada has proposed a ban of 2 neonicotinoid pesticides in the next three to five years.

Recommendation 9: Inform and encourage gardeners to purchase organic plant starts or grow their plants from untreated seeds for their vegetable and flower gardens. Encourage garden centers that do not use treated seeds to publicize this advantage.

Staff Response (Updated in 2018): Ongoing. The Province has partnered with 4 local Horticultural Societies and Master Gardener groups in London and many more across Ontario to leverage these kinds of pollinator initiatives as part of Ontario's Pollinator Health Action Plan. Carolinian Canada has launched the [In the Zone program](#) for gardeners and presented it in London to the London Master Gardeners.

Recommendation 10: Encourage further collaboration between City staff, neighbouring conservation authorities, municipalities and agricultural associations to develop programs which encourage plant diversity and native plants as well as the creation of corridors for pollinator movement.

Staff Response 2017: Ongoing. This has been ongoing for over 20 years and will continue by leveraging the programs described in Staff Responses 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and more. The London Plan policy 58 (16.), 239, 410 (14.) 1378, and Map 5 – Natural Heritage also speak to these initiatives.

Bee City Canada Proposal (ACE)

By Rebecca Ellis, PhD candidate, Geography, Western University; Member, Rotman Institute of Philosophy; Chair, Urban Agriculture Steering Committee; Member of the Community Gardens Advisory Committee; Chair of London Urban Beekeepers' Collective

Proposal: For London to become a Bee City by certifying with Bee City Canada. In this way we can be recognized as a leader within Canada in the creation of bee-friendly cities. We can also participate in future activities organized by Bee City Canada. Bee City Canada is a non-profit organization whose aim is to "inspire cities, towns, First Nations, schools, businesses and other organizations to take action to protect pollinators".

There are currently 12 Bee Cities in Canada: Toronto, Chestermere, Kamloops, Tit'q'et, Stratford, Cambellton, Kawartha Lakes, St. Catharines, Township of King, Whitby, Kitchener, and Waterloo. Bee City Canada is for cities, like London, who are committed to pollinator protection. Why should London become a Bee City if we already have a good plan for pollinators?

- A Bee City is part of a North American movement to support pollinator protection. Bee City communities support collaboration and establish and maintain healthy pollinator habitat within the municipality or First Nation's boundaries.
- Becoming a Bee City will allow London to participate in programming, including the future Bee Ambassadors citizen education program that I am creating with Bee City Canada
- Certifying as a Bee City will inspire schools and businesses to also certify with Bee City Canada, allowing us to go collectively go further as a city (please see Bee City Canada's website for information about Bee Schools and Bee Businesses)

- A Bee City begins conversations about how to grow local healthy food, the importance of biodiversity, how to garden with native plants, and how to grow plants without pesticides.
- People are concerned about the plight of bees. Becoming a Bee City sets an example and inspires residents with the knowledge that they all have a role to play
- Even though London has some great policy around pollinators, as a bee researcher I know we can go further. Many native bees are in decline and are finding refuge in cities. Becoming a Bee City allows us to collaborate and share information with other Bee Cities across the country
- A Bee City enjoys the economic benefits of eco-tourism. The Bee City movement is growing across North America
- Certifying is a simple process with enormous benefits. It involves filling out an application and having a resolution supported by city council. It is a simple and yet powerful act for urban pollinators! For more information about Bee City Canada, please visit their website.

Staff Response: Staff will recommend to Council that London be recognized as a Bee City. London's protection of pollinator habitat and community engagement is rapidly growing, noting London has successfully supported collaboration in protecting healthy pollinator habitat for over 20 years. This is evident in the extensive list of existing pollinator policies, programs, opportunities and successes in London described in Staff's responses to ACE's 13 Recommendations above.