



# City of Markham's Wildlife Services

Inventory of Programs and Services

General Committee

Monday April 9, 2018

# Purpose:

- Provide an overview of all the current programs, practices and services that the City has in place to promote and protect its wildlife.
- Identify what we do well in the City to promote and protect our wildlife.
- Identify areas for improvement to our current programs and services.



# Background:

City of Markham's interactions with wildlife are guided by the following principals:

1. Wildlife has intrinsic, ecological, economic, social and cultural **value**.
2. Markham **residents desire healthy** and sustainable wildlife populations.
3. **Identify** and **protect** natural heritage systems and wildlife habitats.
4. The City recognizes **the importance of planning and managing** natural heritage resources
5. **Everyone is responsible** for preventing and managing human-wildlife conflicts.
6. Prevention of **human-wildlife conflict is achieved through proactive efforts** and an adaptive management approach.
7. Effective **outreach and education** are important for mitigating for human-wildlife conflicts.



# Animal Services – What we do?

- Responsible for the welfare of both domestic and wild animals.
- Enforces the City's Animal Control By-law.
- Provides through our service provider Shades of Hope, wildlife services including rehabilitation.
- Facilitate educational opportunities for residents on living with wildlife.



# Animal Services – What we do well?

- A leader in wildlife rehabilitation well above what other municipalities provide.
- To-date, Markham remains one of only two Ontario municipalities that provides funding for wildlife rehabilitation.
- The City is one of the only municipalities in the Province to have an Advisory Committee solely dedicated to animal welfare.
- The City's Animal Care Committee (ACC) has played an integral part in framing Markham's animal services delivery model and the ACC's fundraising efforts contributed to the establishment of the innovative opportunities like the Cat Adoption and Education Centre.
- ACC's participation was instrumental in the City becoming a leader in wildlife rehabilitation at the municipal level.



# Animal Services – Where we can improve?

## Public Education

- Preventing harmful interactions between residents and wildlife.
- An opportunity to increase awareness of wildlife issues in Markham.
- The City has, over the past several months, increased public education around wildlife issues and currently two sessions are booked for 2018, one specifically on coyote behaviors and management.



## Amendments to Markham's Animal Control By-law

- Staff identified gaps in current By-law's wildlife regulations including the feeding of wildlife.
- Feeding of wildlife can create a nuisance for residential areas by attracting wildlife and makes wildlife dependent on the un-natural food source.
- Staff plan to bring forward by-law amendments to correct these gaps in 2018.

## Conflicting City Regulations

- Staff identified conflicting municipal regulations regarding the treatment of wildlife.
- Animal control By-law prohibits the removal of wildlife from City Property, Parks By-law permits fishing in certain Markham parks.



# Operations and Environmental Services – What we do?

- Responsible for the maintenance, repair, restoration and management of City owned or managed parks, roads, and their related infrastructure.
- Especially those within valley lands, provide habitat and serve as corridors to support and facilitate the movement of wildlife.
- Follow a regulatory framework of five Federal and four Provincial Acts, serve to govern and inform any work activity that has the potential to cause harm to wildlife or their habitat.



# Operations and Environmental Services – What we do well?

- Identify instances and areas where the endangered species are at risk and take steps to protect the species through habitat protection and rehabilitation.
- Plan our work in sensitive areas to both ensure that it is in compliance with the Provincial and Federal legislative framework and minimize any negative impact on wildlife.
- Working with the local residents associations to create and install park signage to enlist the help of park visitors to protect and minimize the impact of residents sharing the wildlife's homes
- Since 2007, Markham's Trees for Tomorrow Program has helped to support a large number of habitat restoration projects in parks and natural areas across the City.
- A 2015 woodland assessment by the Region determined that the City's inventory of woodland habitat increased in area by more than 230 hectares since 2009, the second highest increase of the Region.
- In collaboration, with the David Suzuki Foundation, the City became Canada's first 'Monarch Friendly City' in April 2016.



# Operations and Environmental Services – Where can we improve?

- Working with Animal Services to ensure that City by-laws are not in conflict with operational practices.
- Work to ensure that sensitive areas are identified and properly and consistently signed to protect wildlife and educate residents.
- Responding to issues with wildlife getting into City waste receptacles with the addition of lids which to deter them on an as identified basis.



# Planning and Urban Design – What we do?

- Responsible for preparation and implementation of Markham's Official Plan (OP) to guide future development and to manage growth.
- A key component of the OP is the identification of a City-wide Greenway System which are protected lands that are not available for urban land uses and development.
- Protect and preserve this connected network of natural heritage and hydrologic features to maintain viable wildlife populations over the long term.
- Work with outside agencies like the Toronto Region Conservation Authority to ensure all development applications and studies meet the policy requirements and follow best practices.



# Planning and Urban Design – What we do well?

- Require prior to development adjacent to the Greenway System, Environmental Impact Studies (EIS) to address potential impacts to natural heritage features.
- The purpose of the EIS is to provide recommendations to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the impacts of development.
- The City has been an early adopter of progressive natural heritage planning policy as demonstrated through the approval of various Official Plan Amendments and through policy studies such as the City's Bird Friendly Guidelines.



# Planning and Urban Design – Where we can improve?

## Research of the Impacts of Road Design on Wildlife Movements

- Staff are working with the TRCA to better understand how to build these ecological principals into our development practices.

## Inventory of Wildlife Species

- The sole City-wide inventory of wildlife species in Markham was undertaken in the early 1990s and at the time, 77 bird species, 7 amphibian/reptile species, and 12 mammal species were identified.
- An updated wildlife study and inventory may provide useful insights and information on species and habitat diversity and help inform future updates to the Official Plan or other policy documents.

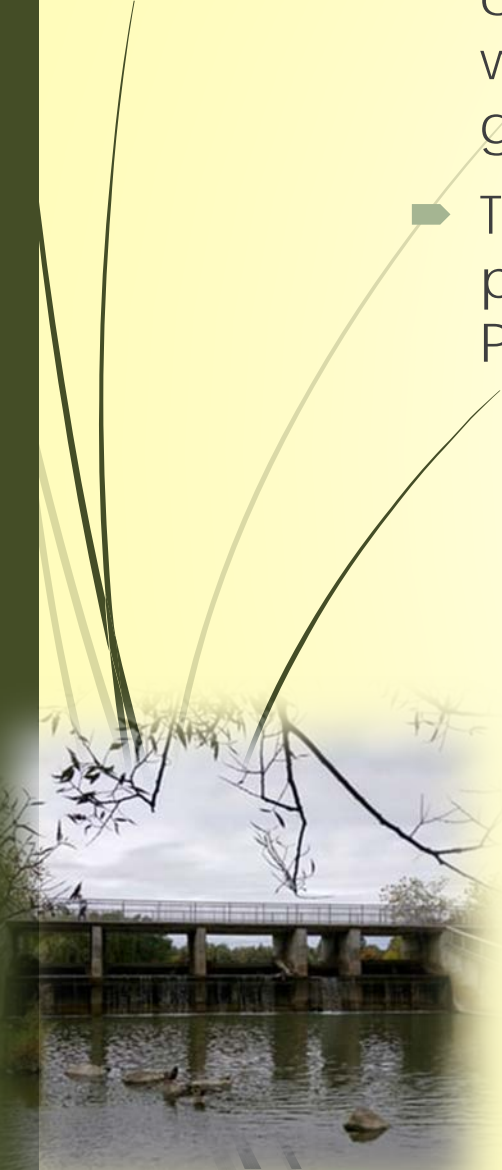
## Identification of Specialize Habitats

- The City's data on natural areas is generally only available at a fairly coarse level and more detailed studies would assist in managing these assets.



# Engineering – What we do?

- The Engineering department is responsible for ensuring that the design and construction of municipal infrastructure such as roads, bridges, sewers and watermains comply with applicable Provincial and Federal legislation and guidelines.
- This is achieved through the planning, review, approval and permitting processes established by the City and the applicable agencies at the Provincial and Federal levels:
  - Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change
  - Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
  - Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
  - Fisheries and Oceans Canada
  - Transport Canada



# Engineering – What we do well?

- Mitigating impacts and protecting wildlife and wildlife habitat on projects like the Birchmount Road bridge and Verdale Crossing
- The design and construction of these projects adhered to all legislative requirements including obtaining permits from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.
- Implementing mitigation measures specific to the protection of terrestrial natural features were considered during the design of the bridges to ensure:
  - Maximize the opening size beneath the bridge to preserve wildlife passage through the Rouge River Valley.
  - Maximize the height of the opening below the bridge to ensure passage of large mammals.
  - Construction materials will not be a barrier to wildlife movement beneath the bridge.



# Engineering – Where can we improve?

- Reach out to other levels of government and public agencies (TRCA) to work on solutions to better protect wildlife habitats affected by development that are not already under legislative controls such as woodlots.
- Work with our other City colleagues on projects to maximize the protection of wildlife and habitat



# Sustainability and Asset Management – What we do?

- Responsible for championing the implementation of the Greenprint, Markham's Community Sustainability Plan.
  - The Greenprint is Markham's long term plan to make our community one of the most sustainable in North America and recognizes the need to Protect, Restore and Enhance Biodiversity.
- Liaising with Parks Canada to establish the Rouge National Urban Park.
  - Rouge National Urban Park is the culmination of many decades of environmental conservation by community groups and various levels of government including the City of Markham.
- Implementing Bird-Friendly measures on City of Markham buildings and stewards the pest management contract for all City facilities.
  - SAM is responsible for implementing Markham's Bird Friendly guidelines on City buildings, to date we have installed Bird Friendly film on 10 buildings including the Civic Centre, 8100 Warden Administration Building and most recently Angus Glen Community Centre and Library.



# Sustainability and Asset Management – What we do well?

- Identifying opportunities to reduce the conflicts between the City's physical assets and wildlife with the implementation of programs like the Markham's Bird Friendly guidelines
- Educating the community on the impacts of wildlife like how to prevent bird strikes at homes at community events like the Unionville Festival and Markham Jazz Festival.
- Being a leader in the responsible application of pest management protocols for all City facilities to mitigate unwanted and adverse affects on unintended species.



# Sustainability and Asset Management – Where we can improve?

- Undertake a gap analysis of the inventory of measures and by other external stakeholders compared with the recommended actions in the Ecological Integrity priority of the Greenprint and report back with areas of focus. Additional resources and specific expertise will be required to undertake this work, if supported by Council, staff will bring forward a project budget as part of the 2019 budget process.
- Partner with Animal Services to integrate bird friendly public education into their planned seminars and residential wildlife audits.
- Include Animal Services educational materials in our public engagement initiatives.



# Conclusion

- Effective wildlife management addresses Humans, Wildlife and Habitat.
- It has been determined that the City is a leader in wildlife rehabilitation and preservation.
- Although the City doesn't currently have a comprehensive wildlife management approach in place, we do have a fulsome program to best address wildlife mitigation and management and steps are being taken to enhance the services offered.
- With an increase in development Citywide, improved communications and education should remain a major focus of the organization.
- Staff are continuing to work collaboratively on improving our service delivery model while ensuring legislative frameworks are followed and all stakeholders are held accountable.

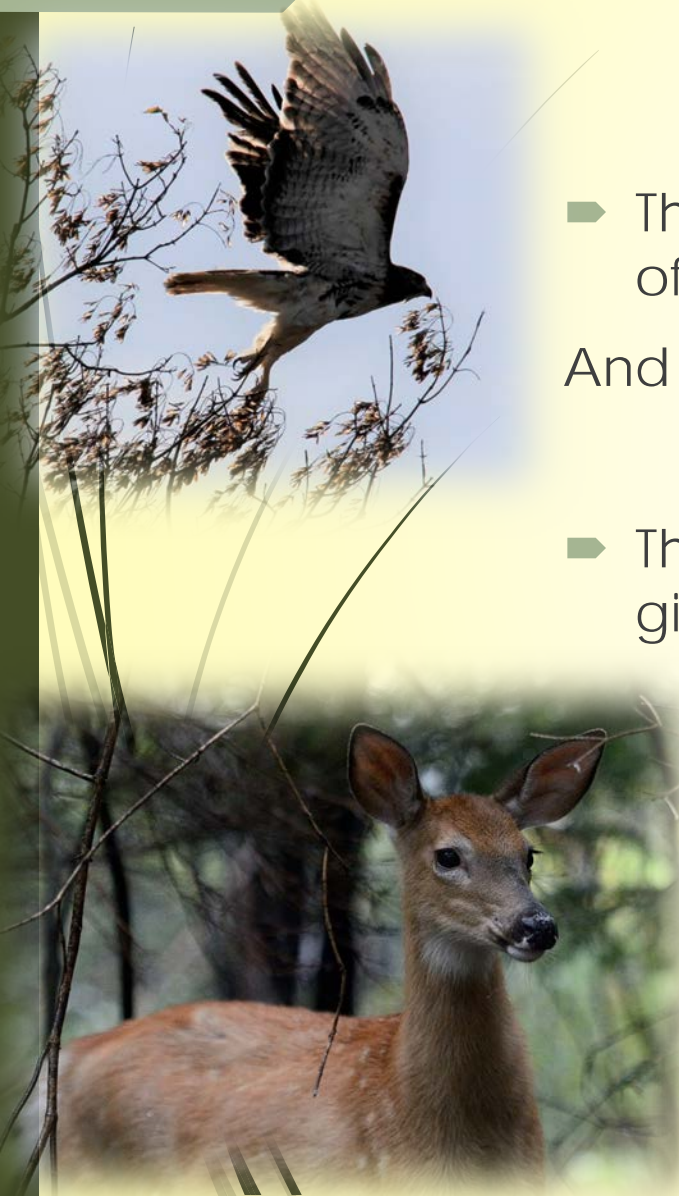


# Recommendation:

- That report entitled "City of Markham's Wildlife Services – Inventory of Programs and Services" be received for information;

And

- That staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.





Questions?

