

May 7, 2024

Dear Mayor Sutcliffe and Councillors

Re: CITY OF OTTAWA WILDLIFE STRATEGY – GETTING IT RIGHT

Ottawa residents, in two Surveys and two public Engagement Sessions that were held by the City, involving close to 1,000 participants, expressed overwhelming support for a progressive and proactive Wildlife Strategy.

The majority of Ottawa city councillors have said they want to see *“a revised Wildlife Strategy that reflects modern day practices to coexist with wildlife”*.

To ensure a Wildlife Strategy that will fulfill these expectations, it is critical for the City to close the consultation loop.

Engagement is not a one-way street. It is not enough to ask the public for their opinion and then disengage. Waiting for a staff report that won't be available until a week before it goes to Committee(s) and then providing residents and community organizations only 5 minutes to respond at Committee to that report is not the way to obtain a modern Wildlife Strategy in Ottawa. What is essential in advance of the staff report being finalized:

- 1) **Transparency:** The Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre's (OCWC) recommendations for a revised Wildlife Strategy, supported by environment, conservation and community organizations in Ottawa, that are listed below, were formally submitted to the City and have been available on the Centre's website since October 2023 <https://www.wildlifeinfo.ca/>

There needs to be an equivalent amount of transparency in making public the recommendations of the other organizations the City lists as having been consulted in the 'As We Heard It' report. The report is incomplete because it does not refer to the OCWC's position papers nor the recommendations from the *“subject matter experts, municipalities and interest groups”* who were consulted.

- 2) **Collaboration:** We request that the Wildlife Strategy draft report be presented to a joint meeting of stakeholder organizations that have submitted recommendations together with city staff from relevant departments, i.e. stormwater engineers, etc. This meeting should include what actions or choices were made or changed as a result of the inputs provided.

In the consultation process, feedback was solicited but there is now a need to report on what was heard and/or submitted and involve stakeholders in a collaborative manner.

Collaboration involves the groups working together to find the best solutions. For a successful Strategy, an open dialogue to discuss options, resources, and partnerships for implementing progressive policies will be the effective way to meet the expectations of councillors and the public for a modern Wildlife Strategy.

The lack of an effective Wildlife Strategy has been a very controversial issue in Ottawa for over a decade. There is an opportunity before it goes to Committee(s) to take the time to get it right through transparency and collaboration.

The significant investment by the City in the community engagement process to date will only be enhanced by re-engaging the community before a formal report to the Committee(s). This will result in enormous dividends of goodwill and trust.

We look forward to your response to our request that the Wildlife Strategy draft report be presented to a joint meeting of stakeholder organizations.

Many thanks,

Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre
Ecology Ottawa
Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital
CPAWS OV (Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Ottawa Valley Chapter)
Friends of Stittsville Wetlands
Citizens for the Protection of Wetlands and Wildlife
Crystal Beach Lakeview Community Association
For Our Kids Ottawa-Gatineau

c.c. Mayor Sutcliffe and Councillors
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