



TO: Development and Infrastructure Committee
FROM: Capital Works
**SUBJECT: Report recommending endorsement of the Blue Dot
Movement: Declaration for Right to a Healthy Environment**

Report Number: CW-13-15 Wards Affected: None

File Numbers: 210-09

Date to Committee: June 15, 2015 Date to Council: June 22, 2015

Recommendation:

Endorse the Blue Dot Declaration for the right to a healthy environment in Appendix A of capital works department report CW-13-15.

Purpose:

To present a declaration for council's endorsement for the right of citizens to a healthy environment.

Background:

The David Suzuki Foundation along with Ecojustice (formerly the Sierra Legal Defense Fund) has organized a campaign to engage citizens and their communities to issue declarations of the right to a healthy environment. At the time of writing this report, approximately 50 communities across Canada have endorsed a declaration, including Hamilton, Richmond Hill, Ajax and King. The ultimate goal is an amendment to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that guarantees Canadians the right to a healthy environment. A request was made by Councillor Craven on behalf of a constituent, supported by Mayor Goldring, for a declaration to be drafted for council's consideration. The Sustainable Development Committee supports the attached declaration (Appendix A), shown in a letter in Appendix B.

Discussion:

The community of Burlington has a history of leadership in environmental sustainability. This year, Recycling Revisited is celebrating the 45th anniversary of a grassroots residential recycling program in Burlington, prior to the municipal government taking it on. Long before the Greenbelt legislation, the city recognized the importance of protecting the rural lands and Niagara Escarpment by having a firm urban/rural boundary in its Official Plan.

In 1990, city council declared the City of Burlington a sustainable development community and created the Sustainable Development Committee (SDC). In 1994, it adopted the principles and objectives of Sustainable Development. The SDC has shown its commitment to an environmentally sustainable community by providing comments to staff on proposed developments and land use policies; hosting workshops and information sessions to engage the community; participating in special events; and researching and preparing the State of the Environment reports for Burlington.

Burlington has been an active member in a number of organizations and partnerships to protect and enhance our local environment, such as the Bay Area Implementation Team (to help meet Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan targets); Halton Partners for Clean Air; Partners for Naturally Green; and the GTA Clean Air Council. City staff also work closely with our local partners Conservation Halton and Halton Region to conserve and protect natural resources.

In 2001 the city joined Partners for Climate Protection, a program administered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to assist municipalities in their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The city has also financially supported significant environmental initiatives such as the remediation of Randle Reef and the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark.

Individuals and community groups are very active in the community, participating in and delivering environmental programs, such as BurlingtonGreen, the Field and Stream Rescue Team, Friends of Kerncliff Park and Sheldon Creek, and the Halton Environmental Network.

The city has implemented several environmental policies, programs, and strategies to ensure city operations are delivered in a sustainable manner and improve the local environment for the community:

- Anti-idling by-law and community engagement program;
- Corporate energy management program;
- Zero Waste strategy and bottled water restrictions;
- Healthy Green Spaces strategy;
- Urban Forest Management Plan;

- Green Fleet Transition Strategy;
- Corporate Sustainable Building Policy;
- Green Procurement Policy and Guideline;
- Yellow Fish Road™ program;
- Community Trails Strategy and active transportation initiatives;
- Community Gardens, urban agriculture and local food;
- Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark;
- Smoke Free Parks; and,
- Community Energy Plan.

The attached declaration (Appendix A) is timely as it coincides with the city's 25th anniversary of the Sustainable Development Committee and reflects many of the same principles of Sustainable Development approved by city council in 1994:

- **Support Responsible Development** that promotes efficiency and enhances the quality of life;
- **Protect the Environment** in both a proactive and remedial manner, with emphasis on anticipation and prevention.
- **Make Decisions** which recognize the interdependence of humans and nature in a common ecosystem.
- **Promote Sustainable Resource Use** and conservation practices.
- **Have Regard for Environmental, Economic and Social Costs and Benefits** in the development use of resources, products and services.
- **Promote Responsible Stewardship** to ensure equitable use of natural and environmental resources in order to meet essential needs of both present and future generations.

Strategy/Process

City staff on the Building Complete Communities team and members of the Sustainable Development Committee were consulted on the attached declaration.

Financial Matters:

N/A

Environmental Matters:

As noted in this report, Burlington has implemented a number of policies, programs and strategies to protect, enhance and restore our natural environment. Clean air, water and land are necessary to sustain our quality of life.

Public Engagement Matters:

Staff will work with Communications staff to publicize the city's declaration to a clean and healthy environment through social media.

Conclusion:

Endorsement of the attached declaration shows the city's commitment to implement and deliver policies, programs and strategies to ensure a clean and healthy environment.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Robichaud, Sr. Sustainability Coordinator
335-7600 ext. 7931

Appendices:

- a. Declaration for the Right to a Healthy Environment
- b. Letter from the Sustainable Development Committee supporting the declaration

Approved by:

Allan Magi, Executive Director of Capital Works
Joan Ford, Director of Finance
Nancy Shea Nicol, Director of Legal Services & City Solicitor
Scott Stewart, General Manager of Dev. and Infrastructure
James Ridge, City Manager

Reviewed by:

Appendix A

City of Burlington

Declaration for the Right to a Healthy Environment

Whereas the David Suzuki Blue Dot Tour has inspired many Canadians to request that the right to a healthy environment be enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedom through support of the following motion; and

Whereas the City of Burlington understands that people are part of the environment, and that a healthy environment is inextricably linked to the well-being of our community; and

Whereas the City of Burlington's Official Plan, Strategic Plan, Community Energy Plan, Urban Forest Management Plan and other policies and strategies provide a strong foundation to pursue actions and initiatives that contribute toward a healthy environment; and

Whereas the City of Burlington declared itself a Sustainable Development Community in 1990 and adopted the principles and objectives of sustainable development in 1994; and

Whereas the City of Burlington has the opportunity to endorse the Declaration of the Right to a Healthy Environment joining other Canadian cities in re-affirming our commitment to social, environmental and economic sustainability.

Therefore be it resolved that the City of Burlington endorses the following declaration:

1. All people have the right to live in a healthy environment, including:
 - a. The right to breathe clean air;
 - b. The right to drink clean water;
 - c. The right to consume safe food;
 - d. The right to access nature;
 - e. The right to know about pollutants and contaminants released into the local environment;
 - f. The right to participate in decision-making that will affect the environment.
2. The City of Burlington has the responsibility, within its jurisdiction, to respect, protect, fulfill and promote these rights;
3. The City of Burlington shall continue to work with community members, partners and agencies to take action to protect, enhance and restore the local environment;
4. The City of Burlington will work with the Sustainable Development Committee to monitor and report on the health and sustainability of the local environment;

5. That the Mayor, on behalf of City Council, be directed to correspond with the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, and the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario, calling for the development of federal and provincial legislation that recognizes all people have the right to live in a healthy environment; and,
6. That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Association of Municipalities.

APPENDIX B



City Hall, 426 Brant Street, P.O. Box 5013
Burlington, Ontario L7R 3Z6



May 25, 2015

To the Chair and Members of the Burlington Development & Infrastructure Committee of City Council:

On behalf of the Burlington Sustainable Development Committee, I am writing to support the staff recommendation requesting council to endorse the Blue Dot Declaration for a right to a healthy environment in Appendix A of report CW-13-15.

The Blue Dot declaration is timely as our committee celebrates its 25th anniversary. The declaration reinforces many of the principles and objectives of Sustainable Development approved by city council in 1994, as noted on page 3 of the report. "Sustainable Development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (UN Report on the World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987)

Clean air, land and water are fundamental to our quality of life. Many jurisdictions around the world continue to suffer the impacts of environmental degradation. In comparison, Burlington enjoys a fairly healthy local environment, but it is imperative that we should not take this for granted. The Sustainable Development Committee has been involved in the development and support of many of the city's environmental initiatives over the years, including anti-idling; zero waste, bottle water restrictions; and healthy green spaces, among others. Much has been accomplished over the past 25 years, but there is still work to do, particularly initiatives related to the mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

We encourage council to endorse the Blue Dot declaration, as other municipal councils have already done. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

Gareth Williams

Gareth Williams, Chair
Burlington Sustainable Development Committee