



**City of Kingston
Report to Council
Report Number 24-069**

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services
Resource Staff: Julie Salter-Keane, Manager, Climate Leadership
Date of Meeting: March 19, 2024
Subject: Signing the Montréal Pledge – Cities United in Action for Biodiversity

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: 2. Lead Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action

Goal: 2.3 Maintain the City's natural heritage and environmental assets.

Executive Summary:

Council's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan includes a commitment to establish a strategy for protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the city, by reviewing models such as the Montréal Biodiversity Pledge, defining existing initiatives and identifying additional actions based on the international framework of Sustainable Development Goals. This report proposes that the City of Kingston becomes a signatory city of the Montréal Pledge and that staff use the CitiesWithNature registry to track the City's progress towards the fifteen actions of the Montréal Pledge.

The Montréal Pledge, inspired by the Global Biodiversity Framework, is an opportunity for communities to declare their intention to contribute to the global initiative. It sets out 15 tangible actions to coordinate biodiversity conservation efforts locally and to inform collaborative and inclusive decision-making processes. These 15 actions are summarized in three broad categories:

1. Reduce threats to biodiversity;
2. Share benefits of biodiversity; and

March 19, 2024

Page 2 of 7

3. Create solutions through cross-cultural governance, management and education.

To become a signatory to The Montréal Pledge requires either an official letter from the Mayor or the adoption of a City Council resolution to this effect.

There are no requirements associated with becoming a signatory city of The Montréal Pledge. All commitments made under the Pledge are voluntary and there is no requirement for annual reporting or progress tracking.

Signatory cities may choose to track their progress towards the 15 Pledge commitments by registering and using the [CitiesWithNature](#) Action Platform. Staff is recommending that the City of Kingston tracks its progress on the [CitiesWithNature](#) registry.

Recommendation:

That the Mayor be authorized to sign and submit a letter of support to the City of Montréal for the City of Kingston to become a signatory of The Montréal Pledge; and

That Council direct staff to register and track the City of Kingston's progress towards the Montréal Pledge on the CitieswithNature Registry, an international platform highlighting the commitments and initiatives undertaken by cities to promote greening and biodiversity protection.

March 19, 2024

Page 3 of 7

Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

**Paige Agnew, Commissioner,
Growth & Development Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services	Not required
Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Major Projects & Strategic Initiatives	Not required
Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Infrastructure, Transportation & Emergency Services	
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

March 19, 2024

Page 4 of 7

Options/Discussion:**Background**

First ratified in 1992 at the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, The Convention on Biological Diversity of the United Nations (CBD) is an international agreement for the conservation of biological diversity that is now ratified by 193 countries (or 'Parties'), including Canada. In the language of the United Nations, a Convention is an international agreement, or treaty, and the governments who sign it are called Parties to the Convention.

In recognition that the conservation of biodiversity is a common concern for all humankind, the overall objective of the CBD is to encourage actions which will lead to a sustainable future for human life. Parties not only agree to meet the goals of the Convention, but from then on, together, they work out and agree on the ways and means to meet those goals. Parties are expected to make National Plans for their own country and to work together to find ways to preserve biodiversity across regions and worldwide.

The CBD's governing body is the Conference of the Parties (COP). This ultimate authority composed of all governments (or Parties) that have ratified the CBD meets every two years to review progress, set priorities and commit to new work plans. Observers representing cities, local authorities, indigenous and local communities, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, press and media and even some youth also attend.

As host city to COP15 (Fifteenth meeting of the COP to the CBD), the Mayor of Montréal issued a challenge to cities across the world to make a commitment to protecting biodiversity, known as The Montréal Pledge. Specifically, the challenge invites cities to commit to 15 tangible actions towards pursuing and accelerating their efforts to preserve ecosystems and biodiversity in their region. Signatory cities of the Montréal Pledge are expected to demonstrate leadership and to act to protect biodiversity.

Currently, 61 major cities from across the world have already committed to the Montréal Pledge, including Paris, France; London, United Kingdom; Berlin, Germany; Sydney, Australia; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Boston, USA, among many others. Many Canadian cities have also signed the pledge including Windsor, Ontario; Vancouver, British Columbia; Toronto, Ontario; Mississauga, Ontario; Hamilton, Ontario; Halifax, Nova Scotia and of course, Montréal, Québec.

Discussion**Becoming a Signatory to The Montréal Pledge**

To become a signatory to The Montréal Pledge requires either an official letter from the Mayor or the adoption of a City Council resolution to this effect.

Signatories are asked to commit to the following 15 tangible actions as illustrated in Exhibit A:

Reducing Threats to Biodiversity

March 19, 2024

Page 5 of 7

1. Integrate biodiversity into territorial and regulatory planning.
2. Restore and rehabilitate ecosystems and their connectivity.
3. Conserve existing natural environments through protected areas and other effective and equitable measures.
4. Ensure the conservation and recovery of vulnerable species, both wild and domestic, and effectively manage their interactions with humans.
5. Control or eradicate invasive alien species to eliminate or reduce their impacts.
6. Reduce pollution from all sources to levels that do not adversely affect biodiversity, ecosystem functions or human health.
7. Aim to eliminate plastic waste.
8. Aim to reduce pesticide use by at least two-thirds.
9. Contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation measures through ecosystem-based approaches.

Sharing the Benefits of Biodiversity

10. Aim to ensure that urban agriculture, aquaculture, and forestry zones are accessible, sustainably managed and contribute to food security.
11. Prioritize nature-based solutions to protect against extreme weather events and hazards and to regulate air and water quality.
12. Increase the amount of green and blue spaces and improve equitable access to them.

Solutions, Governance, Management and Education

13. Integrate biodiversity into governance frameworks and public policies, and increase financial resources allocated to its conservations and sustainable use.
14. Through citizen education and participation, help ensure that people and businesses are encouraged to make responsible choices toward biodiversity and have the resources and knowledge to do so.
15. Ensure the equitable and effective participation of Indigenous peoples and local communities in decision-making and in the process of knowledge acquisition and transmission.

After becoming a signatory, cities are invited to voluntarily track their progress towards the 15 Pledge commitments by registering and using the [CitiesWithNature](#) Action Platform. [CitiesWithNature](#) is recognized by the CBD in its Plan of Action on Subnational Governments,

March 19, 2024

Page 6 of 7

Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity (2021-2030) 3 as the place where cities should monitor and report on their voluntary commitments.

City of Kingston's Ongoing Work to Support Biodiversity

As illustrated in Exhibit B, Kingston is currently engaged in a variety of pilot programs, ongoing projects and strategic initiatives that align with the Montréal Pledge.

Requirements of The Montréal Pledge

There are no requirements associated with becoming a Signatory City of The Montréal Pledge. All commitments made under the Pledge are voluntary and there is no requirement for annual reporting or progress tracking.

Signatory cities may choose to track their progress towards the 15 Pledge commitments by registering and using the 'CitiesWithNature' Action Platform. Staff is recommending that the City of Kingston tracks its progress on the CitiesWithNature registry.

In becoming signatory to the Montréal Pledge, the City of Kingston would be formally committing to continuing its work supporting and protecting biodiversity. While the City of Kingston is already undertaking projects and developing policies supporting many of the commitments of the Montréal Pledge, explicitly working toward its stated goals as a signatory will provide a rubric against which our progress can be judged, and a road map for improvement in areas where more can be done.

Pledging to meet the commitments of the Montréal Pledge represents a positive environmental vision for the City of Kingston that will directly and positively impact our local environment now and into the future, building further resilience to the effects of a changing climate.

Existing Policy/By-Law

Kingston's Strategic Plan 2023-2026

Financial Considerations

There are no direct or immediate financial impacts associated with the recommendations of this report and there is no fee for joining the [CitiesWithNature](#) registry. Budget will be required to undertake and develop a biodiversity conservation strategy. The scope of the planning and related costs will be reviewed by staff and will be brought forward to Council as part of future annual budgeting.

Contacts:

Julie Salter-Keane, Manager, Climate Leadership 613-546-4291 extension 1163

March 19, 2024

Page 7 of 7

Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Brandon Forrest, Director, Business, Real Estate and Environment

Luke Follwell, Director, Engineering Services

Tim Park, Director, Planning Services

Brodie Richmond, Manager, Environment Operations and Programs

Karen Santucci, Director, Public Works and Solid Waste

Exhibits Attached:

Exhibit A The Montréal Pledge, Cities United in Action For Biodiversity

Exhibit B Summary of existing City of Kingston initiatives that address one or more of the 15 Montréal Pledge commitments

THE MONTREAL PLEDGE CITIES UNITED IN ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY



Cities are at the forefront in observing biodiversity loss and being impacted by its effects. As local governments, they are also well placed to take rapid, concrete action to halt this decline.

At the COP-15 conference on biodiversity, taking place in Montréal from December 7 to 19, 2022, the countries of the world will adopt the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. As this major event approaches, Montréal Mayor and ICLEI Global Ambassador for Local Biodiversity Valérie Plante is calling on cities to continue and accelerate their actions towards protecting biodiversity and ecosystems.

Cities are invited to commit to 15 concrete actions, in coherence with the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. These actions are also coherent with the CitiesWithNature initiative and the C40 Urban Nature Accelerator.

With this strong commitment, the signatory cities of the Montréal Pledge will demonstrate the leadership and ambition of cities around the world to act swiftly and influence their partners to do the same, in order to reverse the trend and protect our biodiversity.

REDUCE THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY

- 1 Integrate biodiversity into territorial and regulatory planning
- 2 Restore and rehabilitate ecosystems and their connectivity
- 3 Conserve existing natural environments through protected areas and other effective and equitable measures
- 4 Ensure the conservation and recovery of vulnerable species, both wild and domestic, and effectively manage their interactions with humans
- 5 Control or eradicate invasive alien species to eliminate or reduce their impacts
- 6 Reduce pollution from all sources to levels that do not adversely affect biodiversity, ecosystem functions or human health
- 7 Aim to eliminate plastic waste
- 8 Aim to reduce pesticide use by at least two-thirds
- 9 Contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation measures through ecosystem-based approaches

SHARE THE BENEFITS OF BIODIVERSITY

- 10 Aim to ensure that urban agriculture, aquaculture and forestry zones are accessible, sustainably managed and contribute to food security
- 11 Prioritize nature-based solutions to protect against extreme weather events and hazards and to regulate air and water quality
- 12 Increase the amount of green and blue spaces and improve equitable access to them

SOLUTIONS, GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

- 13 Integrate biodiversity into governance frameworks and public policies, and increase financial resources allocated to its conservation and sustainable use.
- 14 Through citizen education and participation, help ensure that people and businesses are encouraged to make responsible choices toward biodiversity and have the resources and knowledge to do so
- 15 Ensure the equitable and effective participation of Indigenous peoples and local communities in decision-making and in the process of knowledge acquisition and transmission

THE MONTREAL PLEDGE In order to inspire other cities to follow in taking bold action for biodiversity, Pledge signatory cities will be invited to voluntarily track their progress towards the Pledge commitments on the [CitiesWithNature Action Platform](#), a platform recognized by the [CBD](#) to report on cities' commitments to global biodiversity target.

Summary of existing City of Kingston initiatives that address one or more of the 15 Montreal Pledge commitments. *

Reducing Threat to Biodiversity

Pledge #	Pledge Description	City of Kingston Program or Ongoing Project
1	Integrate biodiversity into territorial and regulatory planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official Plan • Upcoming development of a Natural Heritage Study (Strategic Priority 2.3.1) • Upcoming development of a Biodiversity Strategy (Strategic Priority 2.3.2)
2	Restore and rehabilitate ecosystems and their connectivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterfront Master Plan
3	Conserve existing natural environments through protected areas and other effective and equitable measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official Plan • Review of the Tree By-law
4	Ensure the conservation and recovery of vulnerable species, both wild and domestic, and effectively manage their interactions with humans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upcoming development of a Biodiversity Strategy (Strategic Priority 2.3.2)
5	Control or eradicate invasive alien species to eliminate or reduce their impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify option to reduce impacts of invasive species in 2026
6	Reduce pollution from all sources to levels that do not adversely affect biodiversity,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Leadership Plan

Exhibit B to Report Number 24-069

Pledge #	Pledge Description	City of Kingston Program or Ongoing Project
	ecosystem functions or human health.	
7	Aim to eliminate plastic waste.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid Waste Strategy
8	Aim to reduce pesticide use by at least two-thirds.	
9	Contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation measures through ecosystem-based approaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Leadership Plan • Goal to increase the Tree canopy to 30% by 2030 • Inclusion of green infrastructure in municipal right-of-ways (Strategic Priority 2.3.4)

Share the Benefits of Biodiversity

Pledge #	Pledge Description	City of Kingston Program or Ongoing Project
10	Aim to ensure that urban agriculture, aquaculture and forestry zones are accessible, sustainably managed and contribute to food security.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upcoming development of a forestry Management strategy • Pilot little forest project(s) on public lands, first one on Seniors Association Property • Community Gardens, Pollinator Gardens & Boulevard Gardening
11	Prioritize nature-based solutions to protect against extreme weather events and hazards and to regulate air and water quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan (Strategic Priority 2.2.1) • Inclusion of green infrastructure in municipal right-of-ways (Strategic Priority 2.3.4)
12	Increase the amount of green and blue spaces and improve equitable access to them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Trees in Trust Program

Solutions, Governance, Management and Education

Pledge #	Pledge Description	City of Kingston Program or Ongoing Project
13	Integrate biodiversity into governance frameworks and public policies, and increase financial resources allocated to its conservation and sustainable use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Leadership Plan • Strategic Plan 2023-2026 • Climate Lens
14	Through citizen education and participation, help ensure that people and businesses are encouraged to make responsible choices toward biodiversity and have the resources and knowledge to do so.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Climate Action Champions • Kingston Community Climate Action Fund • Community Gardens, Pollinator Gardens & Boulevard Gardening • Climate Leadership Plan • Neighbourhood Tree Program
15	Ensure the equitable and effective participation of Indigenous peoples and local communities in decision-making and in the process of knowledge acquisition and transmission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Gardens & Boulevard Gardening • Climate Leadership Plan

*not intended to be a comprehensive list of all Municipal projects, but rather a short-list of the Municipal initiatives that directly relate to one or more of the 15 pledge commitments.