

# Vancouver Bird Strategy Update

Wednesday, December 9, 2020



- To provide Council with information on the background, progress and updates for the proposed Vancouver Bird Strategy and related guidelines
- To seek Council's approval of the proposed Vancouver Bird Strategy Update (2020)
- To seek Council's approval for recommendations on revising strategy guidelines, researching best management practices on bird-friendly rodent control, establish tracking metrics, and integrate Vancouver into the BC Bird Trail.

- Background
- Policy Context
- Vancouver Bird Advisory Committee
- 2015-2020 Achievements
- Purpose of Update
- Recommendations



## Vancouver **Bird Strategy**

January 2015 (Updated December 2020)

# Background

**2011** – 1<sup>st</sup> World Migratory Bird Day proclaimed in Vancouver

**2013** – Development of the Bird Strategy & 1<sup>st</sup> Bird Week proclaimed

**2015** – Bird Strategy adopted

**2018** – Mayor proclaimed August as Vancouver Bird Month



2011 – 1<sup>st</sup> World Migratory Bird Day

2013 – 1<sup>st</sup> Bird Week & Bird Strategy is started

2015 – Bird Strategy is adopted

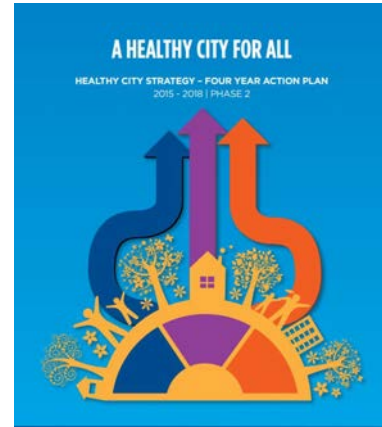
2018 – Mayor proclaims August as Bird Month

2019- Bird Strategy Review & Evaluation

2020 – Bird Strategy Update



# Policy Context



# Vancouver Bird Advisory Committee

- Birds Canada
- Environment & Climate Change Canada
- Stanley Park Ecology Society
- Nature Vancouver
- Stewardship Centre for BC
- Pacific Wildlife Foundation
- Society for the Prevention of the Cruelty of Animals (SPCA)







Section 1

# 2015-2020 Achievements

Strategy Implementation





# Landscape Design Guidelines



Habitat Improvements in Parks & Development Properties

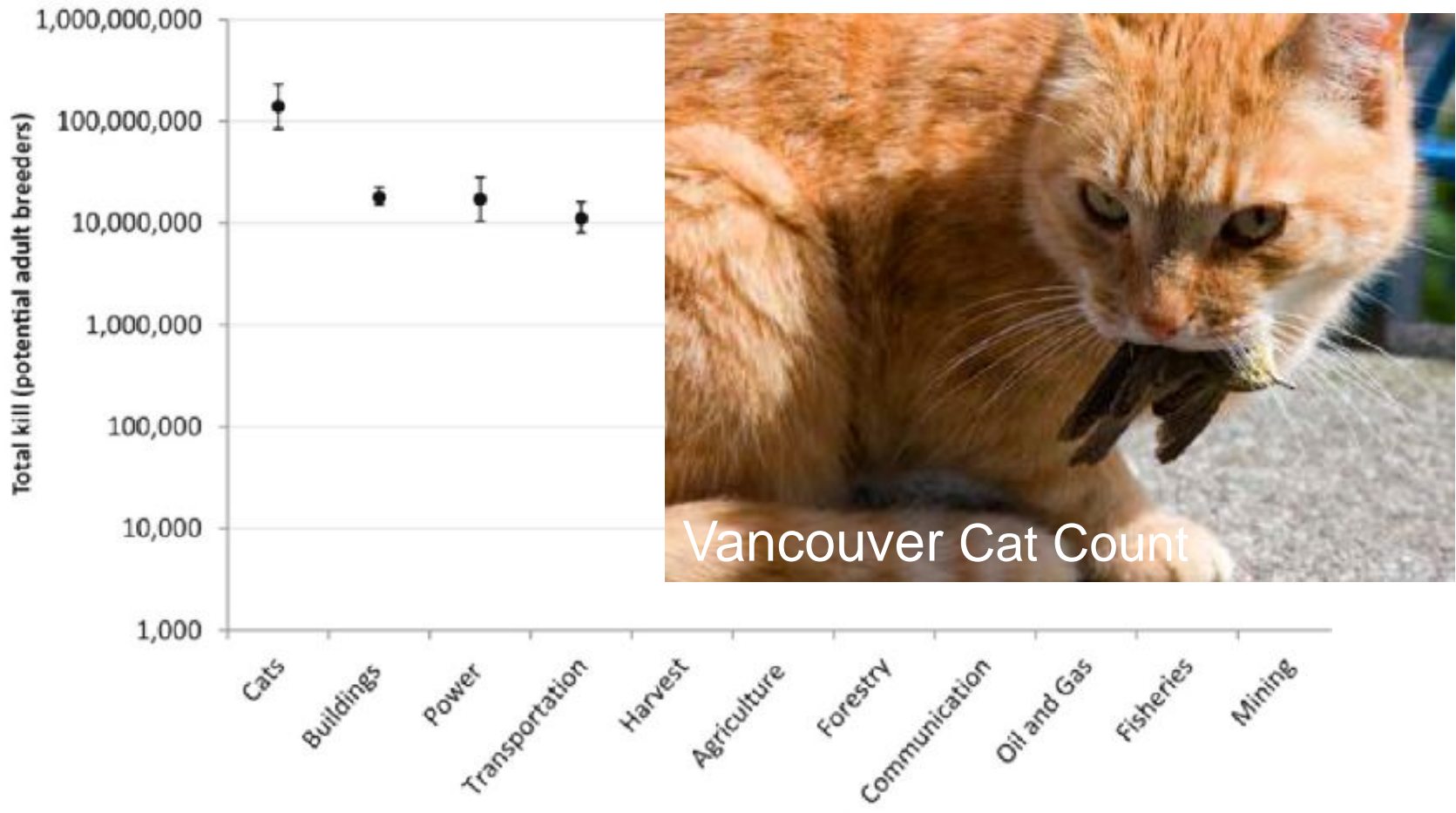


# Building Design Guidelines



Window Collision Retrofits & Engagement

# Research & Monitoring





## City of Vancouver's **CITY BIRD**

Anna's Hummingbird



Bird Week Programming



# Economic Growth & Tourism



Rockwood Adventures



# 2018 Ornithological Congress





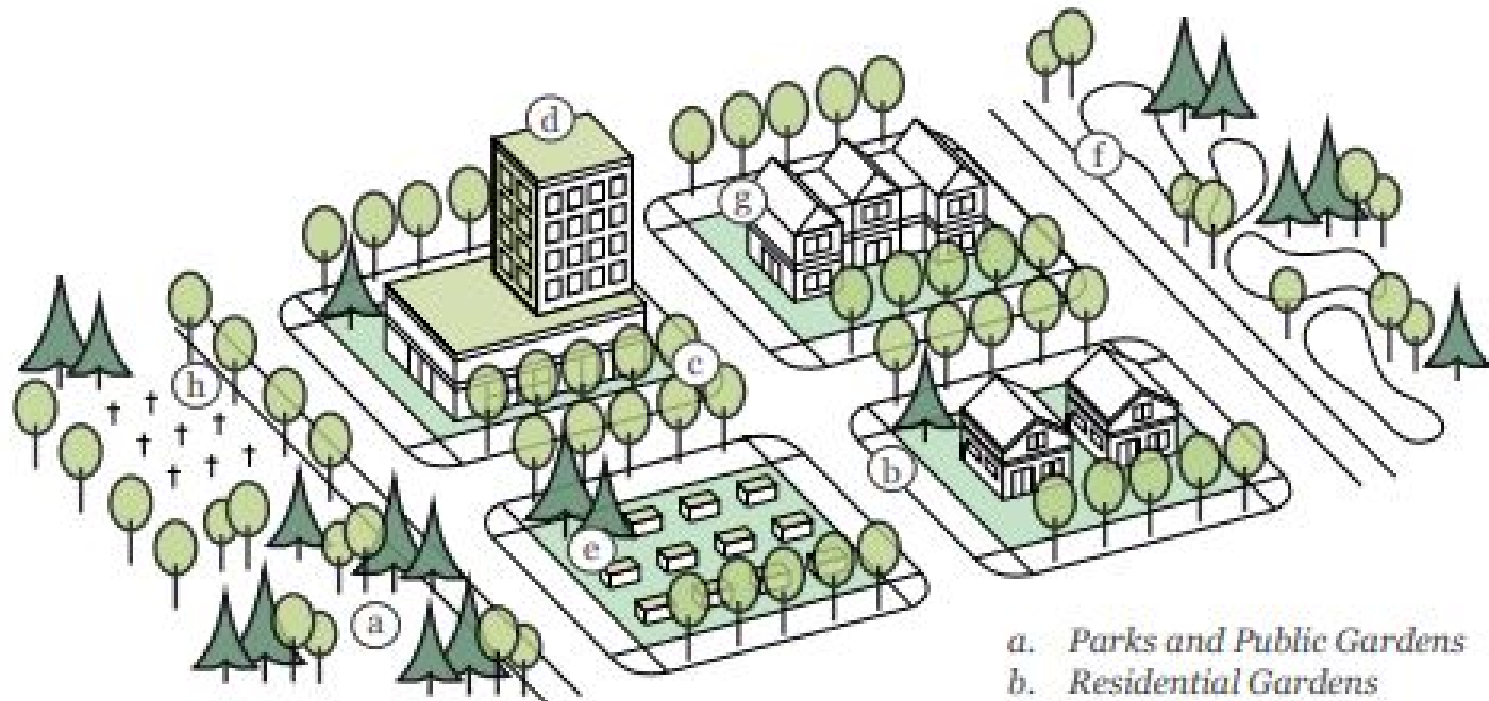
# Bird Strategy Update 2020

Recommended Directions





# Review Landscape & Building Guidelines



- a. *Parks and Public Gardens*
- b. *Residential Gardens*
- c. *Green Streets*
- d. *Green Roofs and Walls*
- e. *Community Gardens*
- f. *Golf Courses*
- g. *School Grounds*

# Update Operational Guidelines

### NATURALISED MEADOWS

**PART 1: PURPOSE AND DEFINITION**  
 For the purpose of these City of Vancouver Park Board (PB) "Naturalised Meadow" is an area of existing lawn that has its maintenance reduced to one or two mows per year to increase the diversity of native and introduced wildflower species to germinate, bloom and set seed.

**Part 1a: Purpose** - The standard regular maintenance of lawn cuts back fragile flowering species and favours the more aggressive grass species that can withstand heavy treatment. Over time, this regular mowing reduces the flowering plant count and leaves lawn areas devoid of species diversity and offers little forage or habitat for wildlife.

**Part 1b: Definition** - Mid summer mows are acceptable if there is a risk of fire and can in some cases encourage native species to germinate and bloom. A mowing strategy on a park by park basis.

**Part 1c: Maintenance** - Ideally, dead matter and cuttings should be left on site for up to one week after cutting, allowing seeds to drop, native species to forage within the cuttings or escape should they be trampled. These cuttings should then be removed and composted. Grassland meadows benefit from low nutrient soils as it restricts seed growth. The removal of cuttings limits the decomposition and return of nutrients to the soil.

**Part 1d: Planting** - Weeds are aggressive, opportunistic species and should be removed within any meadow given. To limit the impact these weeds have, ensure they are regularly removed prior to setting seed or spreading tap roots at which point they will multiply considerably. Depending upon the species, this can be done with weed whackers, carefully dug up, or treated with a safe herbicide.

**Part 1e: Encouraging** - To encourage a diverse wildflower count and greater public interest, native wildflower seeds can be sown throughout the meadows in spring or fall, in coordination with the annual mow. Cut back the vegetation and scatter seed throughout, ideally just before seasonal rains to promote the seed for germination. Germinated seeds should not be allowed to completely dry out as they are weak and will fall prior to establishment. Consider partnering with community groups, schools and green spaces to provide seeds to other parks and meadows. Seed balls can be created with these groups, with instructions on how to use them. This measure helps the distribution of wildflower and forbs moisture for germinated seeds, reducing drought impact.

**Part 2: Applications & Limitation**  
 Naturalised meadows should be given in areas of footpaths and lawns that are away from heavier foot traffic. Ideally, given adjacent to trees, paths and other physical elements, grassland meadows can allow difficult to mow areas of lawn and aid the reduction of regular maintenance.

**Part 3: Design & Maintenance**  
**Spring Mow** - Cutting meadows back in spring before the mowing season starts leaves native wildlife with areas for forage during the winter months.

**Fall Mow** - Character meadow aesthetic can be understood in some areas and so a fall mow can clean the site before the lowest winter months. However, in some summer just before the fall rains to allow the vegetation and seeds to establish on the time to grow and establish themselves before the first frost.

### MAINTENANCE CALENDAR

**MEADOW ACCESS**  
 Encourage public support for meadows via improved access into the vegetation and aesthetic appearance through four elements. Scattering native seed in spring and fall will help improve the flower count and build an understanding of naturalised areas being intentional spaces. Clearly marked boundaries will also create a sense of control and instill trust and allowing clearer access for members of the public and maintenance crews.

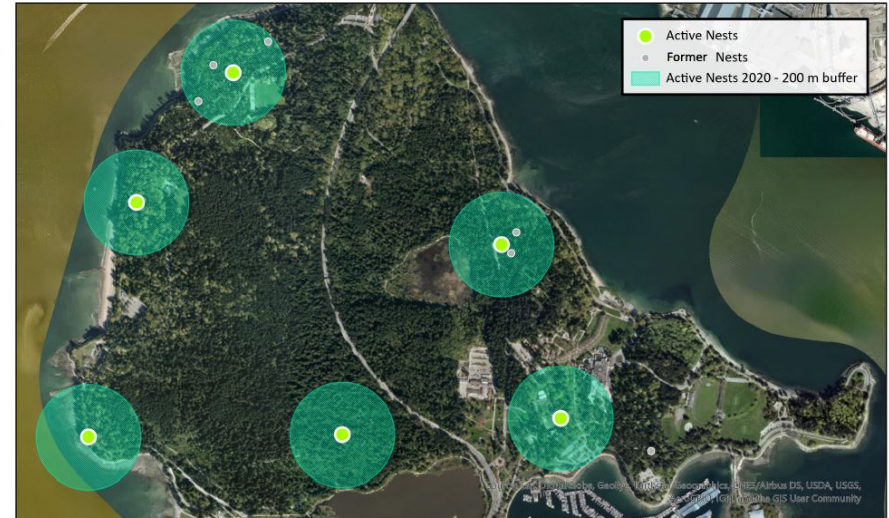
For the first few years of a meadow's existence, place clearly visible signs explaining the Park Board's intention to the public, include interesting information and imagery.

**Improve Tree Health** - Consider leaving meadows to grow around the base of trees to stimulate roots for soil mixing. Meadows have been shown to both retain moisture and cool temperatures in the soils to the benefit of trees.

**Public Access** - Encourage the public to interact with the naturalised areas by mowing techniques and buffer picnic areas in the middle of meadows. These can be coordinated with firebreaks and dense trees. Minimum 2m width paths along local boundaries.

**Edge Treatment** - Consider periodic mowing regimes around roadways and high visibility areas.

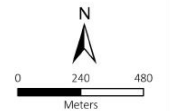
- Regular mow the first segment as per standard lawn practices.
- Mow zone 2 every second mowing of zone 1, or at approximately 1/3 stage. Grouped mows allow for plants to flower.
- Mow third zone once or twice per year.



**STANLEY PARK**  
**ECOLOGY SOCIETY**

## Active Eagle Nests - Stanley Park 2020

Active Eagle Nests in Stanley Park with 200m buffer placement.  
 Created by Jeannine Johnstone, April 15, 2020



### FALLEN NEST AND INJURED BIRD PROTOCOL

**Stop! Observe First!**  
 For all raptors (eagles, hawks, falcons, and owls) - call OWL 604-946-3171  
 For fallen nests with eggs - place in adjacent tree

If you think you have found an injured bird, stop, observe, and ask yourself the following questions:

- IF FOUND AN INJURED ANIMAL!**
- Is the bird obviously injured? (\*)
  - Can you see exposed bone or blood? (\*)
  - Is the bird on the ground?
  - Is the bird fully feathered?
  - Is it at least all its feathers? (\*)
  - Is the bird able to walk or run?
  - Is the bird vocalizing?
  - Is the bird gaping? (opening mouth for food)
  - Do you see predators or have you witnessed a predator attack? (\*)
  - Is it covered in bugs or insects? (\*)
  - Does the bird look sleepy? (\*)
- FIRST THING I'LL DO: OBSERVE-IT!**

If you have answered yes to any of the above questions indicated by a star (\*) human intervention is required.

- DO**
- Observe what you see before trying to capture
  - Call 604-526-2275 (Wildlife Rescue's Helpline) to leave a message with the details of your observation and your contact information
  - Do take a photo of the scenario and email to info@wildliferescue.ca
  - If capture is necessary, keep in a warm, dark place away from human voices and other pets or noises until a helpline volunteer can call you back (see How to Contain an Injured Bird on reverse)

- DONT**
- Do not hold in your bare hands
  - Do not keep for longer than 24 hours
  - Do not try to care for or fix injuries on your own
  - Do not give food or water without professional advice from a licensed wildlife rehabilitator



Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
 Urban Forestry Section  
 100 Burrard Street  
 Vancouver, British Columbia V6A 6C6  
 604-271-1500 (toll-free Vancouver)  
 604-271-1500 (outside Vancouver)  
 604-271-1500 (toll-free)  
 website: vancouver.ca

### Where Birds Nest





# Ban Anticoagulant Rodenticide Use



# Develop Tracking Metrics

RESEARCH INFORMATION					
RESEARCH ORGANIZATION	PRIMARY CONTACT	RESEARCH PROGRAM NAME	TARGET SPECIES		
STANLEY PARK ECOLOGY SOCIETY	Meghan Cooling & Ariane Comeau	Targeted Nesting Surveys	Active Eagle Nest		
			Heron Colony		
			Barn Swallow		
					Nest Boxes Wood Ducks and Swallows
					Owls - Barred and others
				Point Survey	Various
				Breeding Bird Survey	Breeding Bird
				Coastal Bird Survey	Sea Bird
BIRDS CANADA	David Bradley	Coastal Water Bird Survey (BCCWS)	Sea Birds		
			Raptors		
			Corvids		
					Dead Shore and Sea Birds
					Various
					Various
				Christmas Bird Count	Various
		BIRDS CANADA & CORNELL		Great Backyard Bird Count	All birds
CORNELL UNIVERSITY		e-bird Crowd Source Data Collection	Various		
NATURE VANCOUVER	Bev Ramey & Peter Ward	Targeted Nesting Surveys	Chickadees		
			Woodpecker		
			Tree Swallows		
			Great Horned Owls		
HANCOCK FOUNDATION	Myles Lamont, David Hancock & Mike Seear		Eagles and other raptors		
Wild Research			Various		
Nature BC			Various		
Jericho Stewardship Group	Pirmin Nietlisbach, Susan Fisher, June Ryder				
		Comprehensive breeding survey	Various		
Wildcoast		Nesting Box Surveys	Swallows and Chickadees		
VanDusen Community Association			Various		
BCIT			Various		
WITS - Wilderness Tree Survey			Eagles		
Audubon International		Bird-Friendly Certification for Golf Courses	Various		
Wild Bird Trust			Various		



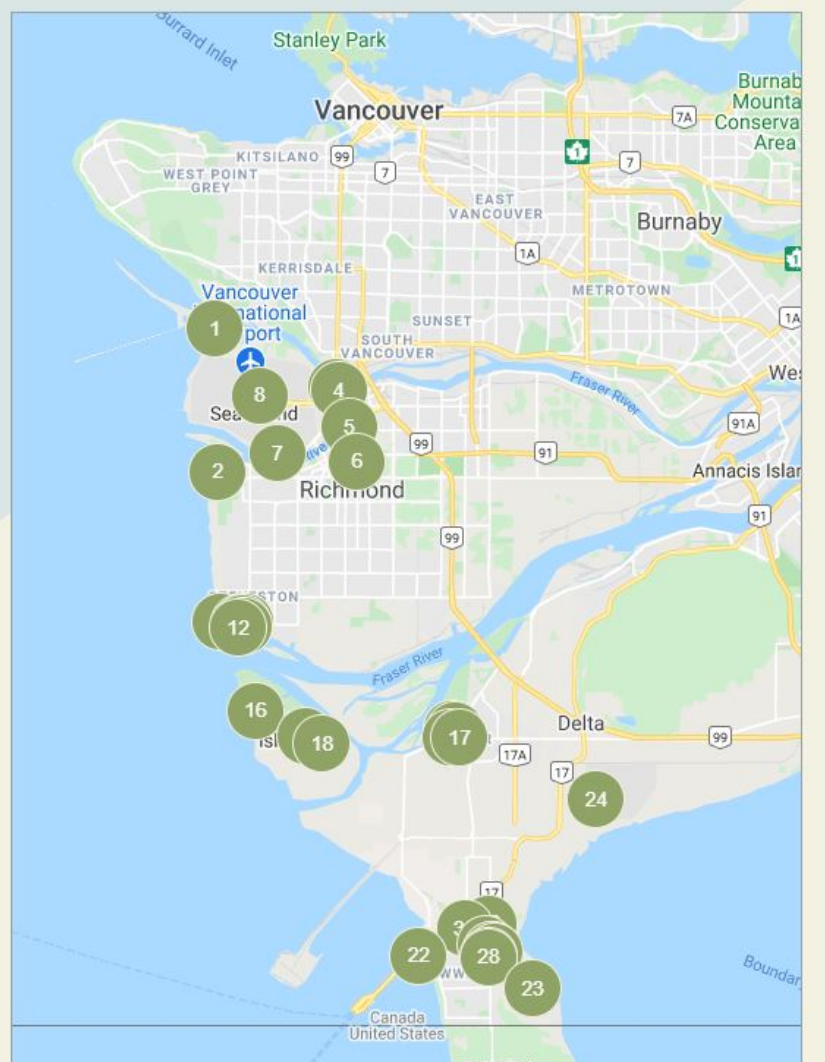
# Participate in BC Bird Trail



## FOLLOW THE RICHMOND DELTA TRAIL

The traditional land of the Coast Salish  
people including the Tsawwassen,  
Musqueam, Stó:lō, Kwantlen, and Katzie  
First Nations

TWO DAY TOUR



- THAT Council adopt the December 2020 updated version of the Vancouver Bird Strategy (Attachment A);
- THAT the Bird Friendly Design Guidelines be reviewed by staff in consultation with the Bird Advisory Committee and through a public consultation process including members of the design and development industry and report back to Council within eighteen months with any revisions to existing or for new regulations that may be required to align the City of Vancouver with other bird-friendly municipalities and improve building and landscape design, including recommendations for mandatory Bird Friendly Building Design standards in particularly sensitive zones of the city;
- THAT the Bird Friendly Landscape Operational Guidelines be updated, in consultation with Park Board operations staff and the Vancouver Bird Advisory Committee, for approval by Council and Park Board within eight months to ensure the most effective bird friendly management practices in parks and other public open spaces;
- THAT staff be directed to report back within eight months on currently available best management practices to reduce rodent populations, including alternative rodent control solutions in and around municipal facilities that do not require anticoagulant rodenticides, and, with a communications strategy to encourage the use of best practices elsewhere in the city;
- THAT an interdepartmental group of staff and members of the Vancouver Bird Advisory Committee develop a comprehensive set of metrics so implementation of the Strategy can be more fully evaluated and report back in eight months with initial findings as a baseline and to report back every two years thereafter on progress and to identify any barriers or challenges to implementing the Strategy; and,
- THAT Council request the Vancouver Bird Advisory Committee and Tourism Vancouver to collaborate with Tourism Richmond and Destination BC to incorporate Vancouver focused content into the BC Bird Trail initiative as means of growing bird tourism in Vancouver.



# Thank you from VBAC





# Questions

