

City Council**Notice of Motion**

MM35.13	ACTION			Ward: All
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Go Tell It To the Birds Time to Stop Overfeeding Toronto’s Pigeons - by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Paul Ainslie

** Notice of this Motion has been given.
* This Motion is subject to referral to the Economic and Community Development Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Paul Ainslie, recommends that:

1. City Council direct Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards to report back to the March 2022 meeting of the Economic and Community Development Committee on the following matters:

- a. the feasibility of expanding the pigeon-feeding prohibition by-laws to all public and private spaces in the City of Toronto;
- b. the requirements needed to initiate rapid-response investigation and enforcement which would prioritize any 311 complaints related to pigeon feeding; and
- c. consultation with Toronto Public Health, as appropriate, when developing health and safety strategies to address unsanitary conditions due to excessive amounts of droppings when pigeons are gathered in large numbers.

Summary

Undoubtedly, Toronto's pigeon (properly known as the Rock Pigeon *Columbia Livia*) population has access to abundant food sources – primarily due to their co-existence in spaces heavily occupied by humans. Pigeon feeding by residents is a common practice for reasons ranging from a genuine concern for the birds' well-being, to engaging in social activities and preventing food wastage. Those feeding Toronto’s pigeons may not be conscious of the adverse implications and unintended consequences resulting from their well-intended behaviour.

Large flocks of birds in public and private spaces create harmful nuisance because they interfere with the enjoyment and use of public and private property and can cause significant property damage. Copious amounts of food such as carbohydrates (e.g. rice, pasta, bread, seeds) are not only a messy eyesore, but attract vermin (e.g. rats) who sustain themselves through these discarded food scraps. Rats are well known carriers of disease that can be

transmitted to humans. In addition to the issues of social annoyance, excessive pigeon droppings from hundreds of birds concentrated in small areas can create unhealthy and unsanitary conditions.

Currently, the City of Toronto Parks bylaw prohibits the feeding or attempt to feed or deposit food for consumption by wildlife in parks. However, there are no specific City by-laws that restrict or prevent individuals from feeding wildlife outside of a City park. As a result, public spaces such as sidewalks, plazas, boulevards, squares, and laneways are overwhelmingly inundated with pigeons who continue to be attracted to these spaces because their food source is abundantly scattered and spread out by residents. Even in the City parks, where such activities are prohibited, the lack of active and ongoing enforcement has rendered scarce green space as unusable. This is especially difficult to accept in densely populated neighbourhoods where such well-maintained and accessible parkland is desperately needed by Toronto families.

While Municipal Licensing and Standards can investigate the dumping of food sources in relation to the contravention of Chapter 548, Littering and Dumping, this option is not sufficient to mitigate the larger issue at hand. There is a pressing need to review the current Parks By-law and extend the prohibition of attempting to feed or deposit food for consumption by wildlife - particularly pigeons - in all private and public spaces, not just parks, across the City.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM35.13