

## City Council

### Notice of Motion

MM24.4	ACTION			Ward: 3
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### **Authorization to Release Section 37 Funds for a Heritage Plaque to Recognize the Extinct Passenger Pigeon and its Connection to Mimico - by Councillor Amber Morley, seconded by Councillor Chris Moise**

*\* Notice of this Motion has been given.*

*\* This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

### **Recommendations**

Councillor Amber Morley, seconded by Councillor Chris Moise, recommends that:

1. City Council increase the 2024 Operating Budget for Heritage Toronto on a one-time basis by \$10,000 gross, \$0 net, fully funded by Section 37 community benefits obtained from the development at 2151-2155 Lake Shore Boulevard West (Source Account: XR3026-3700647), secured for streetscape improvements, for the production and installation of a heritage plaque to recognize the extinct passenger pigeon and its connection to Mimico (Cost Centre: HG0001).

### **Summary**

The now-extinct passenger pigeon was one of the most abundant birds in what is now Toronto.

These birds famously congregated around the banks of Mimico Creek in Etobicoke. The word Mimico comes from the Algonkian word omiimiikaa, meaning “resting place of wild pigeons,” which is a reference to the passenger pigeon.

Passenger pigeons were smart, possessing a powerful homing instinct; they were fast and could fly up to 100 km/h over short distances, and they were also a staple food - fried, roasted, stewed, and turned into soups and pies.

According to accounts by Elizabeth Simcoe, Samuel de Champlain, and J. J. Audubon, massive flocks of passenger pigeons could darken the sky. The birds may have been the most abundant bird on earth with an estimated population of five billion at their peak.

However, despite their abundance, they fell victim to overhunting and habitat destruction, leading to their eventual extinction. In 1914, Martha, the last passenger pigeon, died in captivity at the Cincinnati Zoological Garden.

The passenger pigeons were last recorded in Toronto in 1890 and in Canada in 1902. However, people can still see a taxidermied bird at the Royal Ontario Museum. The Royal Ontario Museum has 150 Passenger Pigeon specimens, the largest collection in the world.

## **Background Information (City Council)**

Member Motion MM24.4