



OLIVIA CHOW MAYOR

April 13, 2026

To: The Executive Committee

Re: Protecting migratory birds at Metro Hall and all City-owned buildings

In the last 50 years, North American bird populations have declined by more than 25%. Of all the threats birds face, buildings top the list. In Canada, at least 42 million birds die from window strikes each year. In Toronto, more than 5,000 birds collided with glass in 2025 alone.

The bulk of collisions happen during Spring and Fall migration, when thousands of birds are travelling through the city between their breeding and wintering grounds.

The good news is, collisions can easily be prevented by treating windows and glass railings with visual markers that make glass “visible” to birds so they will avoid it. Bird Friendly glass and Window film has been proven to reduce collisions by up to 95%.

The City of Toronto has already taken steps to protect migratory birds. Starting in 2005, City Council launched the Lights Out Toronto campaign to raise public awareness about turning off unnecessary lights during migratory seasons. In 2007, Toronto became the first city in North America to publish Bird-Friendly Development Guidelines, introducing design strategies to reduce bird collisions. The Toronto Green Standard (TGS) was established in 2010, mandating bird-collision deterrence for new developments and updated best practices for bird-friendly glass and lighting. Scientific research has shown that the vast majority of fatal bird-window collisions occur below 16 metres. City Hall has been retrofitted up to the fifth floor (16 metres) and new buildings in the City’s real estate portfolio incorporate the TGS bird friendly guidelines into their design.

Despite Toronto’s leadership on reducing bird collisions, there is much work to be done. Many buildings in Toronto predate the Bird-Friendly Development Guidelines and remain untreated. These include City-owned buildings like Metro Hall, which is a known collision hotspot, which has had only some of the windows and railings retrofitted.

Collisions have been documented at Metro Hall for decades. Volunteers from the Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP Canada) patrol the site during migration, collecting birds that

have fatally collided with glass and rescuing those that are injured. Some of the building's windows and glass railings have not been treated and they continue to cause fatalities.

The following recommendations set out to ensure that Metro Hall, and other City-owned buildings meet the very standards that we designed. We have the responsibility to demonstrate leadership, and the power to save the lives of countless birds.

Recommendations:

1. Executive Committee request the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management to ensure the retrofitting of the windows and glass railings up to at least the fifth floor of Metro Hall is completed as soon as possible.
2. Executive Committee request the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management to continue to implement suitable mitigation measures at Metro Hall and City Hall this spring, including any additional possible measures to protect migratory birds.
3. Executive Committee request the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management to undertake a risk assessment for other City buildings and implement a plan to retrofit the remaining City buildings that are not retrofitted, starting with the buildings and facades that pose the greatest risk to birds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Olivia Chow", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Olivia Chow
Mayor of Toronto