

## Media Release

# Town of Midland joins the Bee City Canada program; No-Mow Zones in low-use park lands will create pollinator habitat, reduce costs and GHGs

March 8, 2021 – The Town of Midland has committed to protecting pollinators as a designated Bee City. A Bee City municipality commits to provide pollinator habitat within the municipalities' boundaries.

As part of this commitment, the Town is starting a pilot project to test the outcomes of No-Mow and Reduced-Mow Zones. These Zones are areas of Town land that will either no longer be mown or will be mown less. This is being done to save resources, reduce pollution and create pollinator habitat. As the watershed's leading environmental agency, the Severn Sound Environmental Association (SSEA) will support the Town in this initiative.

By allowing these areas to grow, the Town is creating sustainable landscapes, saving energy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), and limiting noise from mowers. No-Mow Zones reduce storm-water runoff, protect water quality and are a safe place for bees, butterflies and other pollinators.

As a member of the Sustainability Committee which prepared the Town's Climate Plan, Midland Councillor Jonathan Main was keen to have the Town join the Bee City Canada program. "Municipalities influence up to half of Canada's GHGs, making local action key to the success of the climate fight. This effort helps to mitigate the Town's carbon emissions by developing green and vibrant public spaces that protect and expand our pollinator habitat and biodiversity," said Councillor Main. According to data from the Government of Canada, a gasoline powered lawn mower emits about 48 kilograms (106 lbs) of GHGs in one season. Gas-powered lawn mowers are inefficient and produce a lot of air pollution.

In 2019 the Town invited residents to have their say on the future of the municipalities' management of their 26 plus parks and trails. The updated Parks and Trails Master Plan includes comments from stakeholders that the Town's program was not cost effective, and that staff needed to find ways to reduce those costs. Recommendations included limited mowing and naturalization of some park areas to realize environmental benefits and reduce costs, as unnecessary mowing uses staff time, equipment and fuel. The Town will continue to mow most areas with only select areas designated as No-Mow or Reduced-Mow Zones. The sites will not interfere in any way with the enjoyment of the Town's parks and trails.

### Quotes

Mayor Stewart Strathearn, Town of Midland:

*"The Town of Midland is committed to applying a 'sustainability' and 'climate-lens' to our corporate decision-making process. The No-Mow and Reduced-Mow Pilot Project will allow our team to assess the opportunities in our parks and public spaces to develop aesthetically pleasing pollinator habitat which will also provide valuable environmental services, not only for pollinators, but for the ecosystem as a whole. The decline in pollinator populations requires action, and as a member of the SSEA Services Board, the Town is responding in an efficient and fiscally-responsible manner while utilizing the knowledge and science-based services of the SSEA Team."*

Andy Campbell, Executive Director of Environment and Infrastructure, Town of Midland:

*“The Town’s decision to commit to the Bee City Canada program has given our staff a platform to investigate alternatives to traditional turf-management through learning and sharing of best-practices for pollinators among the other Ontario and Canadian Bee City municipal program members. The resources available through the Bee City program combined with the valuable services of the SSEA will ensure our actions are effective and that the results are evaluated to justify the Town’s efforts.”*

Julie Cayley, Executive Director, Severn Sound Environmental Association:

*“By supporting the Town of Midland in their membership to the Bee City Canada program, the Severn Sound Environmental Association (SSEA) is supporting the health of our important pollinator species. Our collaborative efforts will contribute to a healthy and resilient environment, and establish long-term, pollinator habitat. We thank the Town for this demonstration of their commitment to sustainable land management and to the implementation of their municipal Climate Change Action Plan.”*

To find out more about the Bee City Canada Program, and to access pollinator information and resources, visit: <https://beecitycanada.org/>

To learn more about the actions and recommendations in the Town of Midland’s Climate Change Action Plan, visit [www.sustainablesevernsound.ca](http://www.sustainablesevernsound.ca).

To view the Midland’s Parks and Trails Master Plan, visit <https://www.midland.ca/Pages/Parks-and-Trails-Master-Plan.aspx>.

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