

## **Official Symbol of Calgary – City Bird**

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council adopt the Black-capped Chickadee as the City Bird, an official symbol of Calgary.

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- From 2022 March 29 to 2022 May 2 an online voting system was open to the public to facilitate the selection of a City Bird. Following the online public vote, the Black-capped Chickadee was announced on 2022 May 14 as the winner. Council is being asked to adopt the Black-capped Chickadee as the City Bird, an official symbol of Calgary.
- What does this mean to Calgarians? More than 36,000 Calgarians participated in the online vote to select the City Bird. Calgarians can use the Black-capped Chickadee as a symbol of Calgary, and more broadly, refer to the City Bird to generate interest in Calgary's natural environment.
- Why does this matter? Adopting the Black-capped Chickadee as an official symbol of Calgary ensures that Calgary retains its Bird Friendly City designation from Nature Canada and shows a commitment to Calgary's biodiversity.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A well-run city
- Previous Council Direction is included as Attachment 1.

### **DISCUSSION**

The initiative to designate a City Bird was driven by Bird Friendly Calgary, a volunteer group of community members and organizations. The primary objective of Bird Friendly Calgary is to promote continual improvement to ensure that Calgary is a model city in bird and biodiversity conservation. This group applied to Nature Canada, a conservation charity representing over 1000 nature organizations, for formal certification of Calgary as a Bird Friendly City on 2021 April 30. On 2021 May 7 Nature Canada certified Calgary as a Bird Friendly City, along with London and Toronto, Ontario, and Vancouver, British Columbia. Nature Canada recommended that The City of Calgary ("The City") designate a City Bird via a public vote to retain the city's Bird Friendly certification.

On 2022 March 29, Council directed Administration to support the selection of a City Bird through an online voting system, and that the winner be adopted and recognized as an official symbol of Calgary. To facilitate the public vote, Bird Friendly Calgary consulted with Indigenous groups and local birding organizations for nominations to narrow down the contenders to a shortlist of five birds: the Blue Jay; the Black-billed Magpie; the Northern Flicker; the Black-capped Chickadee and the Red-breasted Nuthatch. Bird Friendly Calgary provided background information and educational material to support the public vote.

The voting period was officially open from 2022 March 29 to 2022 May 2 and the winner of the vote was announced by Bird Friendly Calgary on 2022 May 14, World Migratory Bird Day. The public vote determined the Black-capped Chickadee to be the winner. Full results of the vote are detailed in Attachment 2.

The City currently has a number of official symbols: The City of Calgary crest (approved 1902 March), flag (adopted 1983 October 3), Mayoral chain of office (adopted 1985 January 12), song (adopted 1986), flower (adopted 1991 July 2), and Calgary tartan (adopted 2003 July 14).

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If adopted by Council, the Black-capped Chickadee will be added to the list of Calgary's official symbols. It will be widely accessible for groups, businesses, schools, and individuals to use.

### **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)**

- Public Engagement was undertaken
- Public Communication or Engagement was not required
- Public/Stakeholders were informed
- Stakeholder dialogue/relations were undertaken

Together with Urban Conservation and Bird Friendly Calgary, Customer Service and Communications set up an Engage portal page (<https://engage.calgary.ca/CalgarysBird>) to gather feedback and encourage public participation for selecting Calgary's City Bird.

The following platforms for engagement were included:

1. Conversation Corner: where the public posted about their favorite bird or shared a story.
2. Photo Gallery: where the public posted photos of local birds.
3. Ask the Expert: a place to ask questions about Calgary's bird populations.
4. Feedback form: the public voted for their favorite bird from the top 5 presented by Bird Friendly Calgary. The public could also indicate why they chose the bird and what Calgary could do to be more bird friendly.
5. Link to the Engage email: the public could email [engage@calgary.ca](mailto:engage@calgary.ca) to contact The City of Calgary.

Feedback received regarding what Calgary could do to be more bird friendly has been shared with Bird Friendly Calgary.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Social**

Not applicable.

#### **Environmental**

Calgary has active biodiversity strategies which encourage healthy urban living in balance with the natural areas and creatures that share our city.

#### **Economic**

Not applicable.

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### **Service and Financial Implications**

There are no anticipated financial implications associated with adopting the Black-capped Chickadee as an official symbol of Calgary.

Bird Friendly Calgary has dedicated volunteer hours to apply to Nature Canada for the Bird Friendly City designation, to compile educational materials available for the public, to promote the designation and the public vote, and to work with City Administration to advance this initiative. Once the Black-capped Chickadee is adopted as the City Bird, volunteer hours will continue to be committed by Bird Friendly Calgary as stewards of the continued designation of Calgary as a Bird Friendly City by Nature Canada.

### **RISK**

No risks have been identified.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Previous Council Direction
2. Results of the Vote
3. Council Report Presentation

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Jill Floen	Law and Legislative Services	Inform
David Duckworth	City Manager's Office	Approve