

CHALLENGE

The City of Oshawa became a Bee City in 2018. A Bee City is committed to:

- 1) Pollinator protection and increasing pollinator habitats on private and public lands;
- 2) Educating citizens on what actions to take to help pollinators in the community; and
- 3) Recognizing and celebrating pollinator initiatives in the community and hosting an annual celebration.

One downtown business owner has requested information about the installation and operation of an appropriate number of bee hives on the roof of his building.

At the current time, there are no urban bee keeping programs in the City of Oshawa. For the most part across Durham, municipal and zoning by-laws regarding the keeping of animals restrict the keeping of insects in general or certain insects specifically, including bees, in urban areas.

Despite this increase in public engagement and support for urban beekeeping, there are also studies that point out concerns and controversy around the focus on non-native honeybees, which is taking away from the awareness over native species of which a portion are at risk of extinction. In addition, similar studies raise concern that increasing the number of hives in cities or natural areas could lead to the spread of diseases into surrounding areas and may outcompete native bees for pollen and nectar.

OPPORTUNITY

The City of Oshawa is interested in exploring TeachingCity Oshawa partnerships focused on any one of the following challenge questions. Partnerships could consist of research proposals, ideas for experiential learning opportunities or other collaborations.

1) How can the City establish an urban beekeeping program that ensures the health and wellbeing of our community and pollinators?

This could be a review of the level of public interest, relevant by-laws, including the City's zoning by-law, and other relevant legislation, in order to recommend changes and the development of an approach that will guide an urban beekeeping program in Oshawa. This should also consider recommendations on where the City might be able to incorporate beekeeping in urban areas now while meeting the City's current by-laws for example on municipal property.

2) Can urban beekeeping be done in a way that does not have an impact on native pollinators? Do the benefits outweigh the potential risk?

This could include a literature and research review surrounding the impacts of urban beekeeping on native pollinators. Recommendations to communicate the potential misunderstandings associated with urban beekeeping and helping pollinators.

- 3) How might the city continue to support, educate and celebrate pollinator populations and health? How can the City measure the success?**

The City is also interested in exploring other partnerships and actions that would support conservation of wild pollinators and advance the goals of the Bee City designation.

- 4) Future consideration – In the event that bee hives are approved and established on City land, the City is also looking for interest in partnerships for maintaining through curriculum or student placements.**

Interested researchers and faculty should complete a TeachingCity Project Proposal form. See Project Proposal Form for contact information.

For more information, contact teachingcity@oshawa.ca

Deadline for proposal submission: June 22, 2020