

# Memorandum

Date: September 17, 2019

To: Members of Council

From: Katelyn McFadyen, Manager, Energy and Environment

Subject: Review of the Town's Participation in the Blue Dot Movement

Through resolution 2019-105, Staff were directed to review the Town's participation in the Blue Dot movement, in response to correspondence from the public expressing interest in the initiative. The purpose of this Memo is to provide a review of staff's analysis of the Blue Dot Initiative.

## Blue Dot Initiative

The David Suzuki Foundation in collaboration with Eco Justice founded the Blue Dot Movement in 2014. The core objective of the movement is to amend the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to include a right to a healthy environment. This is done through creating a groundswell of grassroots support to help Canadian's act to encourage municipalities to pass a declaration requesting this amendment from the Federal Government.

The Right to a Healthy Environment includes:

- The right to breathe clean air;
- The right to drink clean water;
- The right to consume safe food;
- The right to access nature;
- The right to know about pollutants and contaminants released into the local the local environment;
- The right to participate in decision-making that will affect the environment.

The Blue Dot movement indicates that over 110 nations globally have recognized the right to live in a healthy environment, however Canada does not. In addition, to date approximately 174 municipal declarations have been passed in support of the Blue Dot movement. Amongst these municipalities include the Town of Halton Hills, Town of Oakville, City of Mississauga and the City of Brampton. It is important to note, that many of these municipalities altered the model resolution to align with their jurisdictional authority and better align with the goals, objectives and policies of key plans and strategies (i.e. Official Plan and Climate Change Plans).

## Alignment with the Town of Caledon's Strategic Plans and Policies

In conducting a review of the Blue Dot Resolution Energy and Environment staff engaged with internal departments including Policy and Sustainability, Economic Development, Engineering and Road Operations to understand alignment and impact on the Town's policies, programs and initiatives. It was concluded after this consultation that there is strong alignment with the Blue Dot's core objectives of the

Right to a Healthy Environment, as outlined in Table 1 below. It was also revealed through consultations, that aspects of the resolution were outside of municipal jurisdiction.

<b>Table 1: Blue Dot Alignment with Town Policies and Objectives</b>	
<b>Blue Dot Focus Area</b>	<b>Town Alignment</b>
Breath Clean Air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-Idling By-Law: To prohibit the idling of vehicles for longer than 2 minutes;</li> <li>• Encouraging zero emissions vehicles: To encourage the uptake of electric vehicles, the Town currently has 13 public EV charging stations and is working collaboratively with the Peel Climate Change Partnership (comprised of the Region of Peel, City of Mississauga, City of Brampton, the Credit Valley Conservation Authority, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the Town of Caledon) on the development of a zero emission vehicles strategy;</li> <li>• Corporate GHG Reduction Strategy: Council recently endorsed a five-year strategy to reduce corporate emissions within the areas of fleet, waste, water and buildings;</li> <li>• Climate Change Plan: The Town is currently updating its Community Climate Change Action Plan to outline strategies to reduce community GHG emissions;</li> <li>• Transportation Initiatives: The Town promotes active transportation through the Transportation Master Plan, active transportation task force, and recently received the Bike Friendly Community designation. The Town is also starting a transit service in September 2019;</li> <li>• Incentive Programs: The Town offers incentive programs to existing businesses through Community Improvement Plans for energy retrofits, and for large industrial commercial developments for renewable energy and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification;</li> <li>• Clean Air Council (CAC): The Town is a member of CAC, committing to take action to improve air quality and address climate change in the Greater Toronto Area;</li> <li>• Air Quality Steering Committee: The Town participates in the Regional Air Quality Steering Committee to provide oversight, offer advice and identify priorities of the Regional Air Quality Modelling Program.</li> </ul>
Drink Clean Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Source Water Protection: The Town implements the Regional Wellhead Protection Program through Official Plan policies and zoning by law provisions to regulate potential water contaminating land uses within the Town;</li> <li>• Official Plan: Other policies contained within the Official Plan promote the protection management and enhancement of water resources, through the requirement of studies (i.e. hydrogeological investigations) prior to approval of new developments;</li> <li>• Stormwater Management: This plan promotes the safe and effective management of stormwater and runoff and to improve surface and groundwater quality, and to protect, restore and replenish surface and groundwater resources;</li> <li>• Salt Management Plan: This Plan, in accordance with the <i>Environmental Protection Act</i> "Code of Practice for the Environmental Management of Road Salts" promotes winter road safety and the efficient use of salt to reduce environmental impacts. The Plan also identifies salt vulnerable areas that require enhanced protection through the reduced application of salt or use of other materials.</li> </ul>

Eat Safe Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food Charters: Council has endorsed two Charters (Region of Peel and the Headwaters Food and Farming Alliance) to promote safe, local and healthy food;</li> <li>Community Climate Change Action Plan: The Plan contains actions to promote local food and food security;</li> <li>Community Green Fund Program: This program has supported the installation and ongoing maintenance of community gardens managed by local volunteer organizations and not-for-profit groups.</li> </ul>
Access Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caledon is home to over 260km of publicly accessible trails and over 65 public park spaces;</li> <li>West Bolton Sustainable Neighbourhood Retrofit Action Plan: Key themes within this plan focus on bringing people and nature together through an integrated trails system;</li> <li>Bike Friendly Community: The Town continues to make investments towards Caledon's Bike Friendly Community Strategy;</li> <li>Tourism Promotion: The Town highlights outdoor experiences, trails and camping opportunities as part of local tourism promotions.</li> </ul>
Be Aware of Pollutants and Contaminants Released in the Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate Waste Management: The Town banned the sale of water bottles at Town Hall, implemented a waste retrofit program at facilities, expanded composting to four facilities, and has battery collection at four locations (Work Yard 1, Town Hall, Mayfield Recreation Complex and Caledon East Community Complex);</li> <li>Regional Waste Management Group: The Town currently participates with area municipalities within the Region of Peel to identify opportunities to improve corporate and community waste management;</li> <li>Emergency Spills Program: When a contaminant is reported, the Town's operation team remediates the spill accordingly in accordance with the <i>Environmental Protection Act</i>;</li> <li>Excess Soils Management: The Town ensures excess soils for construction projects are managed in accordance with the <i>Environmental Protection Act</i>.</li> </ul>
Participate in Decision Making that will impact the Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate Change Action Plan Task Force: A Task Force made up of Town stakeholders and community members representing different sectors collaborate with Town staff on the update of the Climate Change Action Plan;</li> <li>Public Information Centres (PIC): The Town hosts public information centres for any major engineering projects. The Town presents project alternatives that assess the technological, social, economic and natural environment impact and costs to the public to help inform decision making;</li> <li>Development Applications: All development applications must go before Council for approval. In support of decision making, developments are subject to a series of environmental studies, outlined in section 6.2 of the Town's Official Plan. The Town is also required to host PIC's with the public on major planning decisions.</li> </ul>

## Agricultural Community Engagement

Due to the prominence of the agriculture community in Caledon, Staff also engaged with the Peel Federation of Agriculture and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, for their position on the Blue Dot Resolution. Both organizations were not supportive of the Blue Dot initiative, noting concerns about:

- Business competitiveness if additional regulations were imposed on the agricultural community;

- Potential banning of pesticides, which are a fundamental pest management tool used by farmers and are regulated by upper tier levels of government;
- Noted that the agricultural community already participates in extensive food, soil and water testing by government agencies to ensure safe food and drinking water and a healthy surrounding natural environment;

## **Motion Requirements**

The Blue Dot Resolution highlights additional requirements for the Town to monitor progress towards promoting the right to a healthy environment locally. These requirements include the identification of objectives, targets and timelines that the Town will take to address the residents right to a healthy environment, and to review progress towards these requirements every five years. The resolution also highlights the need to engage with residents as part of this process. As highlighted in Table A to this Memo, staff have numerous existing plans in place, each with their own unique actions and objectives and timelines that relate to the Right to a Healthy Environment. Core to the development of many of these initiatives is an extensive community and agency stakeholder engagement process.

Second, there is also a requirement for the Town to forward the resolution to the Provincial and Federal Government to enshrine a citizen's right to a healthy environment into the *Ontario Environmental Bill of Rights* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in addition to other applicable legislation and policies.

## **Made in Caledon Blue Dot Resolution**

After a thorough review, Staff have concluded that many of its existing initiatives, policies and plans align well with the Blue Dot Resolution. Staff have however highlighted the following concerns with adopting the resolution in its model form:

- Staff capacity to address the requirements of reporting on the Town's progress on the Blue Dot motion every five years. Specifically, the initiatives outlined in Table A, each have their own unique objectives, actions and timelines, often governed by provincial and federal legislation. Aligning these within a five-year timeframe, and introducing additional progress monitoring, on top of what is already undertaken, will be a challenge for staff;
- As noted above, the Town is currently undertaking numerous initiatives that align with the Blue Dot resolution. There is opportunity to better align the resolution with existing Town Plans and policies that promote a healthy environment (i.e. Climate Change Action Plan and the Town's Official Plan);
- Aspects of the Blue Dot resolution go beyond the jurisdictional authority of the municipality;
- Feedback from the PFA and OFA highlighted concerns related to additional rules and regulations that may burden the agriculture community.

These concerns can be mostly addressed by developing a "Made in Caledon" resolution, similar to the approach taken by surrounding municipalities in Ontario.