



## BiodiverCity Advisory Committee

### Mandate and Composition

<b>Mandate</b>	The BiodiverCity Advisory Committee provides Council and Administration with strategic advice on matters affecting urban biodiversity in The City of Calgary. The Committee advances the commitments and procedures identified within Our BiodiverCity, Calgary's 10-year biodiversity strategic plan and The Durban Commitment: Local Governments for Biodiversity.
<b>Composition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 Members who represent the technical industry or research field</li> <li>2 Members who represent the ecological literacy field</li> <li>2 Citizens-at-Large with an interest in biodiversity and ecological literacy</li> <li>4 Members of City Administration</li> </ul>

### Details

<b>Chair</b>	John McFaul
<b>Number of meetings in the last year.</b>	<p>The Committee meets once every month, not including August.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11 Committee meetings in 2018*</li> <li>10 Committee meetings in 2019*</li> <li>4 Literacy Sub-Committee meetings in 2018</li> <li>1 Conservation Sub-Committee meeting in 2018</li> <li>2 Literacy Sub-Committee meetings in 2019</li> <li>1 Conservation Sub-Committee meeting in 2019</li> </ul> <p>2018/19 total meetings = 29</p> <p><i>* Includes ½ day workshop to develop the annual work plan</i></p>
<b>Summary of initiatives, projects or work completed or ongoing in the last year.</b> <b>Outline of 2020 work plan.</b>	See attachment 4.B
<b>Challenges to fulfilling mandate.</b>	<p>The Committee's mandate is to provide,</p> <p>“...Council and Administration with strategic advice on matters affecting urban biodiversity in The City of Calgary. The Committee advances the commitments and</p>

procedures identified within *Our BiodiverCity, Calgary's 10-year biodiversity strategic plan* and *The Durban Commitment: Local Governments for Biodiversity.*"

The Committee acts as a conduit between Council and Administration to advance biodiversity conservation and awareness. There have been challenges fulfilling this mandate. In brief they are:

- a) The targets to monitor the efficacy of implementing strategic plan are incomplete.
- b) Capital funding is not allocated within The City's current budget for a naturalization/restoration program, which is foundational to increasing biodiversity in Calgary.
- c) Understanding Calgarians' need for biodiversity conservation and awareness.
- d) Biodiversity conservation requires cross-corporate coordination and thus prioritization among City business units. Generally, this work has been associated with Calgary Parks, but needs to be embraced cross-corporately for success.
- e) Reduced staffing and budgetary support to Calgary Parks, the lead business unit responsible for the BiodiverCity Action Plan, continues to have adverse effect on the timeliness of document and plan delivery to the Committee, as well as implementation on biodiversity-related projects. In turn, this limits what the Committee can review and bring its expertise to bear on.

In response to the previously listed challenge to the Committee's fulfillment of its mandate, the Committee has:

- a) Reviewed and improved Administration's targets and key actions on biodiversity Public Awareness and Stewardship (Ecological Literacy program area) within the BiodiverCity Action Plan. Other targets are progressing.
- b) Raised concerns with Administration that unless an appropriate level of funding for restoration work is established and ongoing, the fundamental restoration target ( 20% open space restored by 2025) of the Council-approved BiodiverCity Strategic Plan will not be achieved. Furthermore, if this funding is not forthcoming, Council will need to consider revising the target.
- c) The Committee is ensuring that City Administration stays current with new opportunities for Calgarians to participate in biodiversity stewardship and coordinate communications in support of biodiversity conservation with external initiatives such as the City Nature Challenge, Urban Biodiversity Monitoring Hub (UHUB), and the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute.
- d) Discussed Council-directed Corporate Habitat Restoration Project Framework with Administration and received an update on its purpose and status.

Recent public safety precautions pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic have negatively affected the Committee's 2020 work plan timelines and meeting effectiveness, specifically:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• migration of the March Committee meeting to online review of the BiodiverCity Action Plan,</li> <li>• conversion of Literacy and Conservation Sub-Committee in-person working sessions to phone and email document exchanges</li> </ul> <p>These impacts were partially offset by City Administration support in providing virtual meeting space for the March Committee meeting so that Committee could continue to convene to move the 2020 work plan forward.</p>
<p><b>Additional information you would like to share with Council.</b></p>	<p>One of the three 2025 targets identified in the BiodiverCity Strategic Plan is to restore 20 percent of Calgary’s current open space to increase biodiversity. Habitat restoration is a type of land management activity intending to recover a degraded habitat to initiate or accelerate its succession towards a habitat with increased biodiversity such as replacing turf grass with native grasses and wildflowers. In this regards the Committee applauds Council’s recent decision to provide funding to the Calgary Roads restoration pilot project for restoring a portion of the 16 Ave NE boulevards. The Committee agrees with Calgary Roads and Calgary Parks that restoration is considered cost-effective in the long run, recognizing that the initial cost to restore land will be recouped via decreased ongoing management costs.</p>