

Attachment A: Summary of initiatives, projects or work completed or ongoing in the last year.

Ongoing work

Expert advice

The BiodiverCity Advisory Committee (Committee) continues to provide review and advice to Calgary City Administration to advance Council-approved Our BiodiverCity, Calgary's 10-year Biodiversity Strategic Plan (referred to below as BiodiverCity Strategic Plan). The working document, BiodiverCity Action Plan, provides a structure for Calgary to meet the biodiversity commitments in the BiodiverCity Strategic Plan. The Committee supports The City with moving forward each of the four biodiversity principles outlined in the BiodiverCity Strategic Plan: Ecological Literacy, Ecological Resilience, Collaboration, and Integration. The Committee has also encouraged inclusion of targets, performance measures, indicators and key actions in the BiodiverCity Action Plan that can contribute to sustaining Calgary's biodiversity.

A key area of work that the Committee remains keenly engaged in is The City's restoration target of 20 percent of Calgary's open space by 2025, as outlined in the BiodiverCity Strategic Plan. 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. The Committee is concerned that City Administration will be unable to meet Calgary's BiodiverCity Strategic Plan 2025 target for habitat restoration (see Attachment C).

The Committee has also raised concern about on-going losses of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) leading to a decline in biodiversity (see Attachment C). ESAs are key natural components of the regional landscape, providing essential ecosystem functions and services. These include flood mitigation, drinking water supply, maintenance of regional biodiversity, preservation and connectivity of unique habitats and landscapes, and provision of culturally and economically valued resources and opportunities (CMRB Environmentally Sensitive Areas Background Report, 2019).

Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services reports

The Committee was established by Council in October 2015. As guided by its Terms of Reference, it advances the commitments and procedures identified within the Council-adopted Biodiversity Policy (CSPS037). The Committee presented its first annual progress report in May 2016. Since that time, The Committee continues to pursue three categories of work: engaging stakeholders, communications and reviewing City policies related to biodiversity. The outcome of this work has been to advance biodiversity awareness within the Corporation and to support Calgarians fostering more resilient, biologically diverse communities.

March 2020 – March 2021 Work

Calgary Youth Science Fair

Since 2017, the Committee has attended and supported the Calgary Youth Science Fair event through judging and presentation of awards for projects in three age classes that align with Calgary's BiodiverCity Strategic Plan principles of ecological literacy, ecological resilience and collaboration.

The 2020 edition of the Calgary Youth Science Fair was cancelled due to COVID-19. The BAC will continue to provide support for the 2021 edition, which will be held virtually.

City Administration Updates on City Biodiversity Initiatives

The Committee received several updates and presentations from City staff working on biodiversity related projects and programs and provided feedback on these initiatives. Included in City staff updates were:

- Value Proposition of Biodiversity (Timothy Walls and Carol Stefan, Urban Conservation).
- Biodiversity Action Plan – implementation risks (Chris Manderson, Urban Conservation)
- Habitat Connectivity (Heather Rudd and Lynette Hiebert, Urban Conservation)
- Habitat Restoration Program Update (Timothy Walls, Urban Conservation)
- Environmental Strategy and Engagement (Jen Silverthorn, Environmental Safety Management)
- ESA Loss (Heather Rudd and Dave Hayman, Urban Conservation)

BiodiverCity Strategic Plan – Concordance with BiodiverCity Action Plan - Five Year Review

Between Q4 2020 and Q1 2021 the Committee compared the Biodiversity Action Plan content and implementation with the Commitments, Procedures and Targets of the BiodiverCity Strategic Plan with input from City Administration representatives on the BAC. A survey of the BAC was conducted to identify priority aspects of the BiodiverCity Strategic Plan after five years of BAC operation. The review generally indicated that either the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) concurs with the Biodiversity Strategy Plan or other city initiatives are addressing the Strategy either directly or indirectly, or are in planning or progress. For some priority commitments and procedures that are not addressed in the BAP, given that some of them are being implemented by other City Business Unit initiatives, updates to the BAP are recommended. Meaningful biodiversity targets, performance measures, and indicators need further development as mentioned in Attachment C.

Committee Recruitment

The Committee recruited two new public members to replace those leaving the Committee. The Committee also has a new Administrative Contact.