

BiodiverCity Advisory Committee



Mandate

- Advise Council and Administration on matters of biodiversity
- Advance the 2014 biodiversity strategic plan and the Durban Commitment

Role of BAC

The Committee supports City Council with moving forward on four biodiversity principles:

- Ecological Literacy
- Ecological Resilience
- Collaboration
- Integration

Measuring Success

By 2025, City of Calgary will:

- Evaluate landscapes in Calgary and set targets for conservation measures to identify, protect and manage ecological cores and corridors
- Restore 20 per cent of Calgary's current open space to increase biodiversity

Where is Calgary at?

- Ecological Network developed to inform operational and budget decisions to support biodiversity and identify parks and corridors in greatest need of restoration or naturalization
- Valuation of Natural Assets to quantify benefits natural assets provide to the City of Calgary

Where is Calgary at?

- Restoration often occurs opportunistically but not necessarily in context of priority habitats
- Calgary Parks has identified and prioritized parks in need of restoration
- Only on track to meet about 36% of the 20% target of restoration of open spaces by 2025 (832 ha)

Recommendations to Council

- Build a cross-corporate restoration program
- Greater investment in Parks to meet restoration target
- Extend 2025 target deadline

Environmentally Sensitive Area Loss

ESAs are key natural components of the regional landscape, providing essential ecosystem functions and services:

- flood mitigation
- drinking water supply
- maintenance of regional biodiversity
- preservation and connectivity of unique habitats and landscapes

Where is Calgary at?

- In 2019, the City of Calgary lost about 58% of ESAs identified in Biophysical Impact Assessments
- On-going monitoring of ESA loss
- Updating ESA criteria to make ESA designation more robust
- Developing a comprehensive spatial map of known and potential ESAs and existing rare habitats and track loss

Recommendations

- Develop additional mechanisms or utilize current mechanisms to a greater extent
- Prioritize preserving ESA that is biodiverse or rare ecosystems and habitats and areas that have been identified as important in the Ecological Network

Ecoliteracy Recommendations

- Establish a Biodiversity Day annually on May 22nd in alignment with International Day for Biological Diversity
- Continue to support the City Nature Challenge Calgary
- Update City of Calgary website to communicate biodiversity messaging to citizens

Loss of Urban Forest

- BAC supports densification, but Calgary has lost significant areas of the urban forest through redevelopment, leading to a loss of biodiversity and climate resiliency
 - Recommend that Council establish a biodiversity & climate resiliency fund
- Lack of tree equity; poorer neighborhoods have fewer trees
 - Recommend increasing urban forest in poorer neighborhoods

New Community Growth

- 19 new communities proposed
- 1820 hectares of undeveloped lands
- Proponents asked: “How does the business case provide opportunities to protect or utilize the natural assets of the area?”
- BAC concern: no business cases have proposed to protect any developable lands beyond the minimum requirements for Municipal Reserve and Environmental Reserve

Some good news for biodiversity

- Calgary designated as a Bird Friendly City and Bee City
- Calgary's Bird announced May 14th
- Calgary Captured: inform park management plans and understanding of and ability to maintain urban biodiversity and ecological connectivity
- Call of the Wetland: identify amphibian biodiversity and wetlands with high habitat value and wetland corridors important to amphibian movement to inform new developments and restoration plans