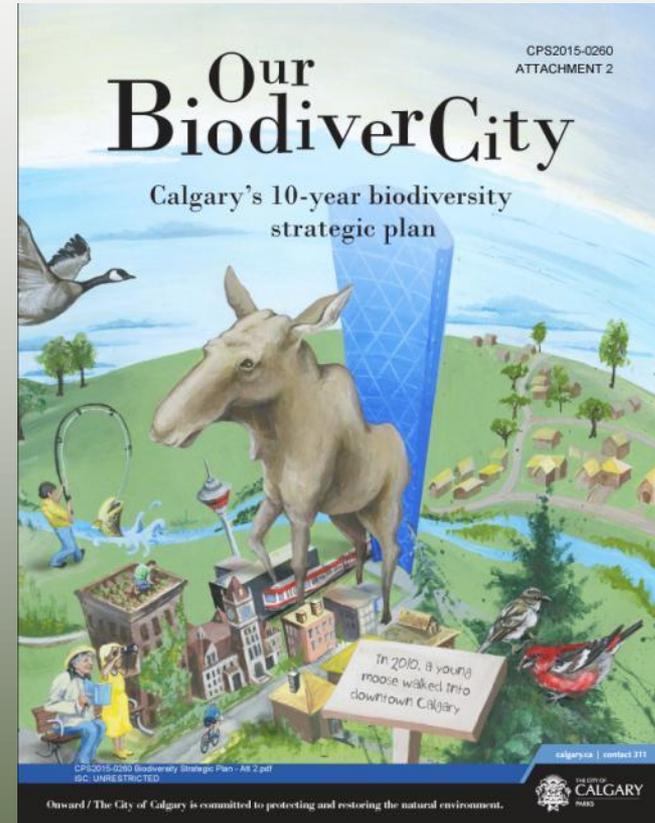
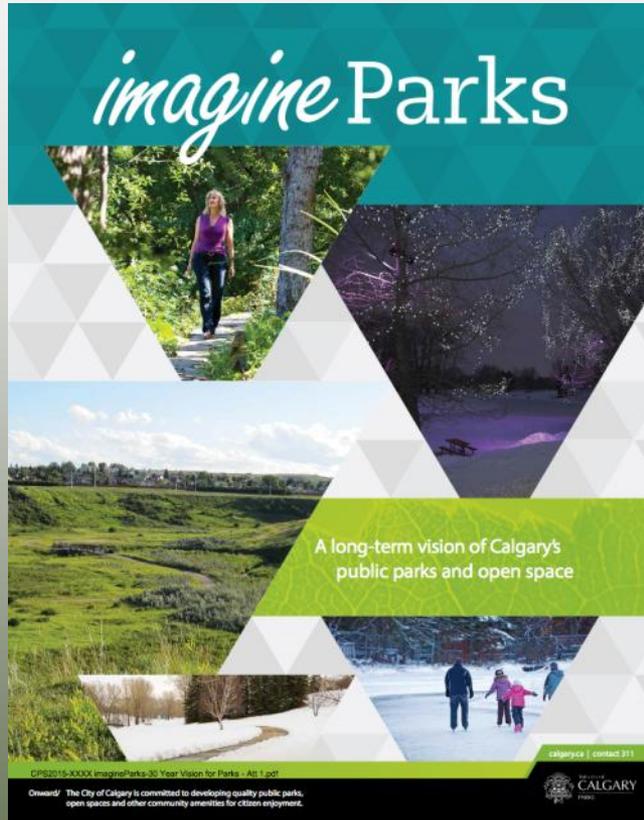


SPC on Community and Protective Services

March 4, 2015



Imagine Parks (CPS2015-0259)

imagine Parks

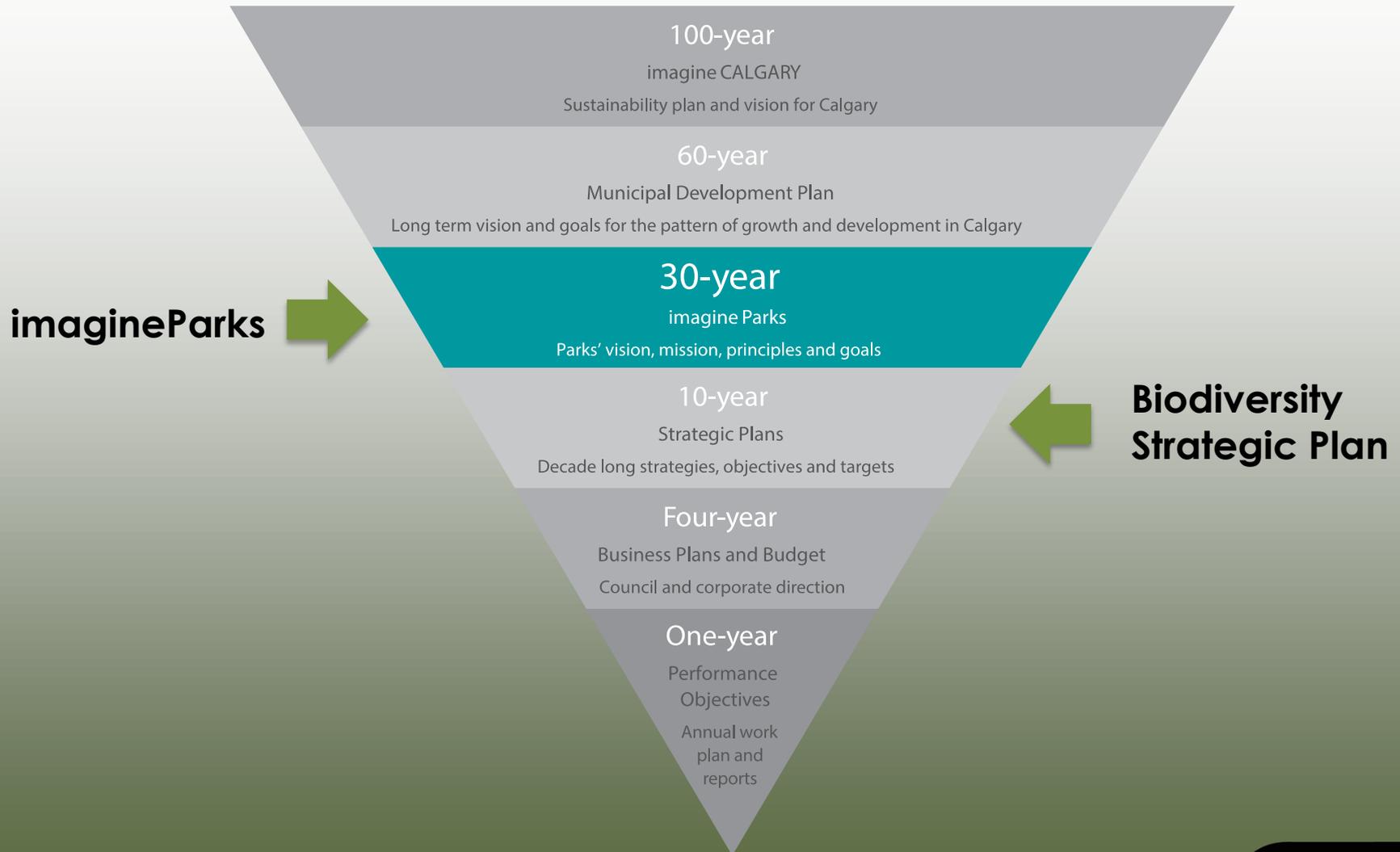
A long-term vision of Calgary's public parks and open space

calgary.ca | contact 311

CPS2015-XXXX ImagineParks-30 Year Vision for Parks - Att 1.pdf

Onward/ The City of Calgary is committed to developing quality public parks, open spaces and other community amenities for citizen enjoyment.

ImagineParks (CPS2015-0259)



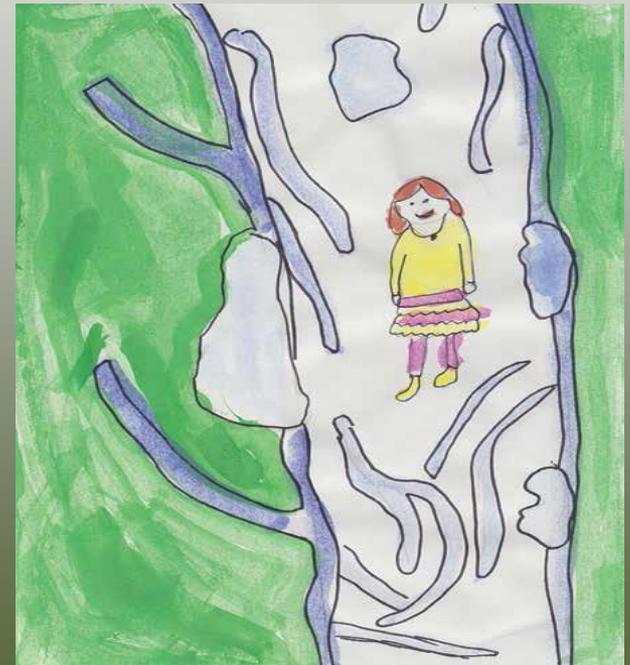
Automatic snow removal on slides



Robot vending machines



Imagining Parks



Animal translators



Heated trails that melt snow

Mission

We enable, contribute to and sustain dynamic communities through great parks and open space.

Vision

Calgary's parks and open space are cherished places that connect us to nature, our heritage and one another.

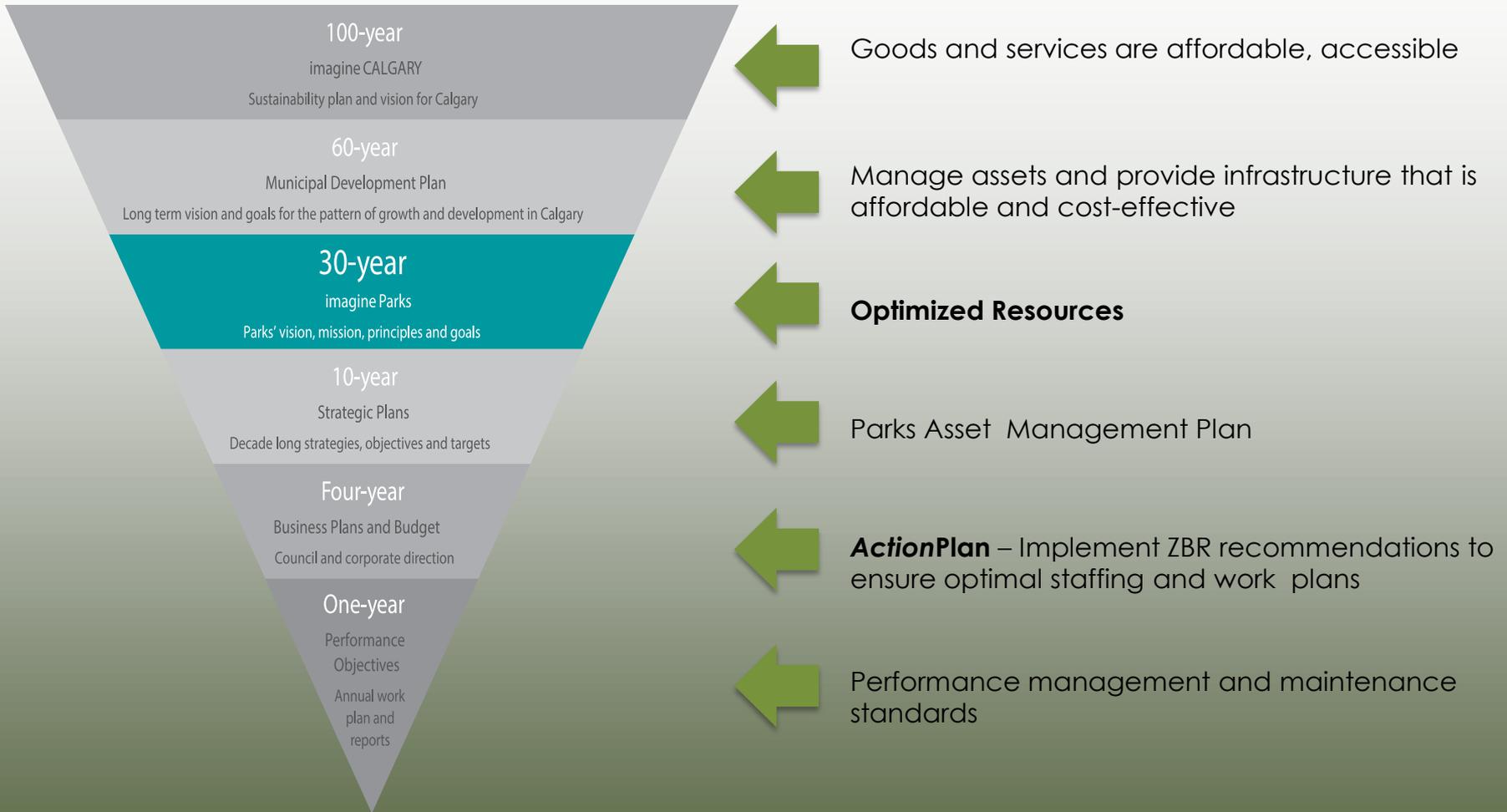


ImagineParks

Focus on People

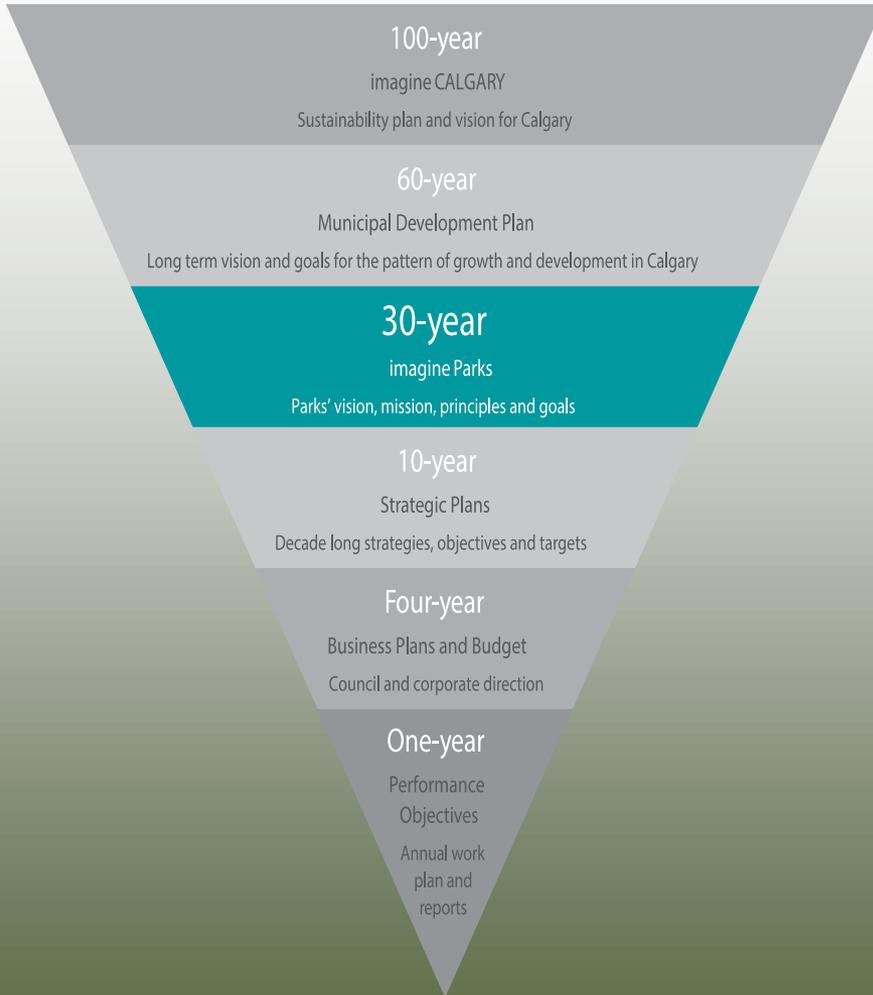


ImagineParks Governance & Management



ImagineParks

Focus on Open Space



Healthy levels Native biological diversity as measured through Habitat Sustainability index



Protecting, conserving & restoring environmentally significant areas, & providing a sustainable, connected & diverse open space system



Natural Environment Conservation



Biodiversity Strategic Plan



Action Plan – Protect and enhance our urban forest and natural landscape throughout Calgary.



Annual workplans—restoration, naturalisation and habitat management

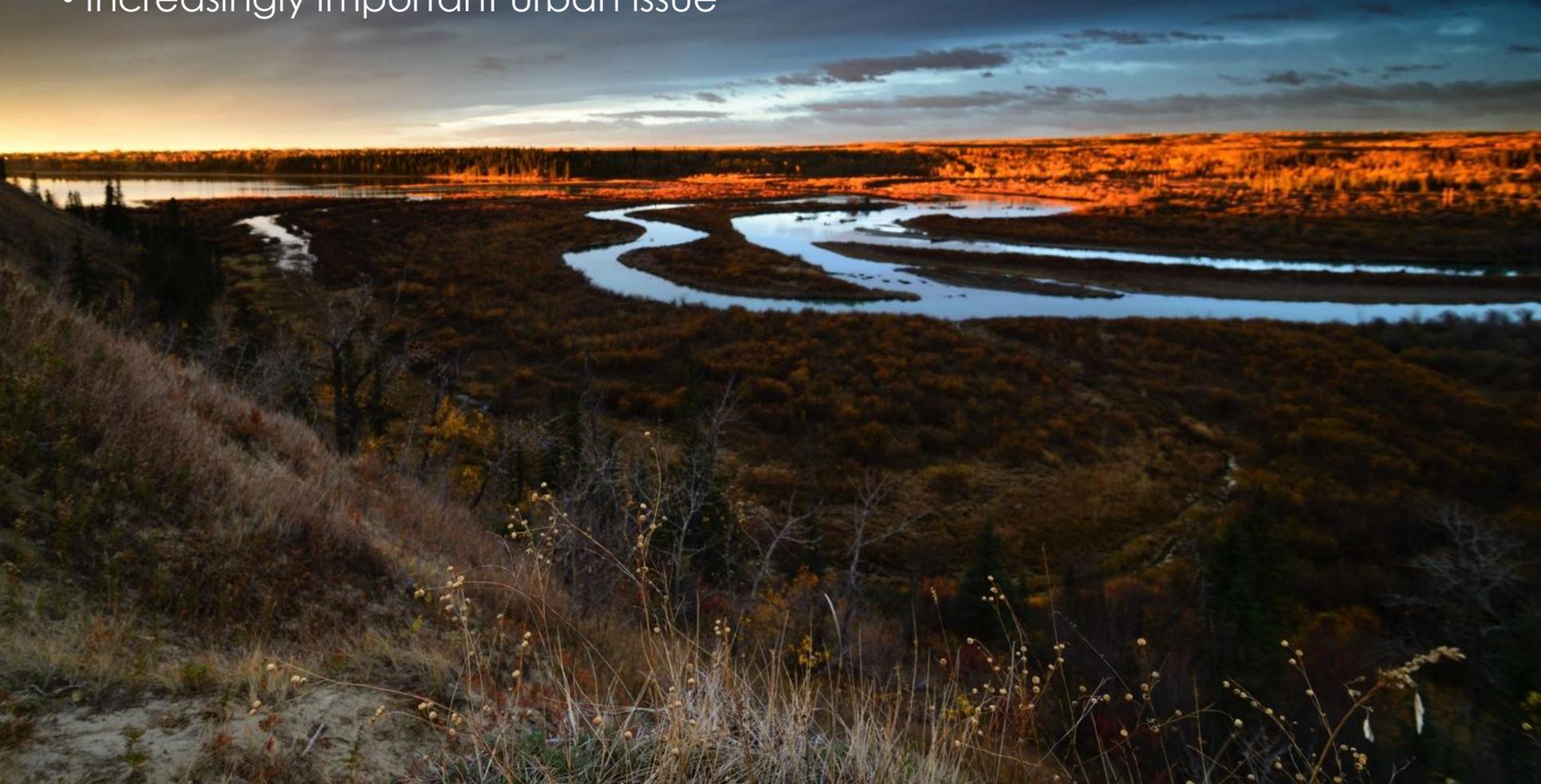
Biodiversity Strategic Plan (CPS2015-0260)

- Based on principles of protection, development & management of Calgary's parks for biodiversity
- Has a city-wide focus – healthy communities need healthy parks and ecosystems



Biodiversity — What is it?

- The species and habitats in a given region
- Important for our own well-being
- Vital ecosystem services – food, shelter, clean air and water
- Increasingly important urban issue



What have we done already?

- Strong history of public & policy support
- Builds on direction from MDP/CTP/Imagine Calgary
- Fits into *imagineParks* 30 year vision
- Consistent with planning at provincial/federal/international levels

...Conservation in urban areas becomes more important in order to improve human health and economic benefits to Canadians, and to minimize habitat loss and fragmentation.

—Hon. Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of the Environment, 2013
(*Response to the Parliamentary Report on Urban Conservation*)

Calgary's approach

- **Part of the Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) program**
 - **International group focused on building local capacity for conservation in cities**
 - **Provided international experience and opportunities for benchmarking**
 - **Development of plan and policy done through this framework**

LAB Commitments

- **Durban Commitment on Biodiversity (UE2011-19)**
- **Status Report on Calgary Biodiversity**
- **Strategic Action Plan**
- **Biodiversity Policy**
- **Implementation of 3 new biodiversity projects**



Development of the Plan

- **Stakeholder engagement**
- **Four Guiding Principles**
 - Ecological Literacy
 - Ecological Resilience
 - Collaboration
 - Integration
- **Principles and Recommendations form the basis of the Strategic Plan & the Biodiversity Policy**



Implementation

- **3 Biodiversity Initiatives at the core of the work program**
 - **Ecological Integrity Index**
 - **Landscape ecosystems**
 - **Citizen engagement and education**



Measuring Success

- **By 2025, we will**
 - **Evaluate landscapes and set conservation targets**
 - **Restore/naturalize 20% of Calgary's open spaces**
 - **Comprehensive strategies for the management of invasive species**



ImagineParks (CPS2015-0259) Biodiversity Strategic Plan (CPS2015-0260)

Administration Recommendations:

CPS2015-0259

- Approve in principle, *ImagineParks*

CPS2015-0260

- Receive for Information, *The City of Calgary Biodiversity Report 2014*, and *Our BiodiverCity, Calgary's 10-year Biodiversity Strategic Plan*
- Approve the proposed Biodiversity Council Policy.



Friends of Nose Hill Society
Suite 171
130 - 5403 Crowchild Trail NW
Calgary AB T3B 4Z1

Feb. 23, 2015

Re: the *ImagineParks* 30-year planning framework and *Our BiodiverCity*, Calgary's 10-year biodiversity strategic plan, on the agenda of the Standing Policy Committee for Community & Protective Services, on Wednesday, March 4, 2015.

I am writing to support, in principle, two vision documents: the *ImagineParks* 30-year planning framework and *Our BiodiverCity*, Calgary's 10-year biodiversity strategic plan. Both are crucial planning instruments which will envision and make possible the maintenance, implementation, conservation, and preservation of parkland for future generations of Calgarians.

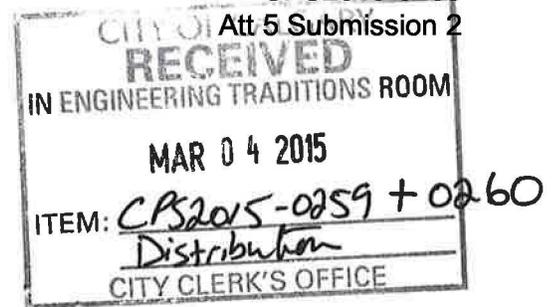
Nose Hill is to Calgary what Citadel Hill is to Halifax; Battlefield's Park to Quebec City; Mount Royal to Montreal; Stanley Part to Vancouver; and Beacon Hill Park to Victoria. This Hill is a dominant geographical feature in Calgary since its southern slopes can be seen from most locations in the City; providing a constant reminder to citizens of the prairie landscape surrounding them which has played such an influential role in our economic and cultural development.

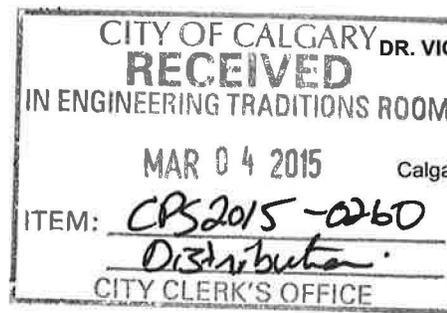
The source for this comparison is *Re: Nose Hill, a Brief* which was presented at the "Nose Hill Hearings" to the Calgary City Council in June, 1972, respectively submitted by Calgary Local Council of Women.

The brief goes on to indicate that visitors to our City attending the "new" convention centre will probably have little opportunity to sense the unique landscape flavour of the prairie surrounding Calgary, except to visit the natural grassland of Nose Hill or to view it from a distance.

Yours truly,

Anne Burke
President
Friends of Nose Hill Society





Department of Geography
University of Calgary
2500 University Drive NW
Calgary, Alberta Canada T2N 1N4
E campbelv@ucalgary.ca

March 3, 2015

Mayor Nenshi and Members of the Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services
The City of Calgary

c/o
City Clerk #8007
The City of Calgary
P.O. Box 2100, Station "M"
Calgary, Alberta T2P 2M5

Dear Mayor Nenshi and Members of the Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services

Re: Biodiversity Strategic Plan, CPS 2015-0260

I am writing in support of the City of Calgary's 10-year Biodiversity Strategic Plan: "Our BiodiverCity." As a citizen of Calgary and as a University of Calgary postdoctoral research associate working in the area of coupled human and natural systems (e.g., urban biodiversity), I was invited to serve as a stakeholder in the development of this strategic plan document. The plan, an effective combination of large-scale systems thinking and on-the-ground concrete projects and initiatives, will serve the citizens of Calgary well in moving us toward a successful integration of biodiversity, ecosystem function, and the needs of a growing and dynamic city.

The world's population is expected to increase by 2.3 billion over the next 30 years, with the majority of this growth occurring in urban centres. While cities presently account for <3% of the earth's surface, urban areas are expected to triple in size by 2030 to accommodate the needs of a growing population. Within Canada, the location of population growth follows these same patterns, with over 80% of Canadians residing in urban areas. Calgary mirrors these trends, with projected population growth to be absorbed through the expansion of suburban development and concomitant increase in the amount of land area occupied by the city, as well as housing densification in the urban core.

As such, cities can present a significant threat to biodiversity and ecosystem function. Urban expansion destroys and degrades habitat, increases predation and competition, and inhibits ecosystem function. These trends are exacerbated by the fact that urban expansion often occurs in ecologically sensitive and unique habitats, e.g., grassland and riparian ecosystems. Our city, however, can make significant positive contributions to the viability of animal and plant populations and the health and resilience of our urban ecosystems. For example, backyards, urban gardens, greenways, and parks can provide important habitat for animal and plant populations, and this importance is enhanced through efforts to ensure connectivity and movement between these smaller habitat patches.

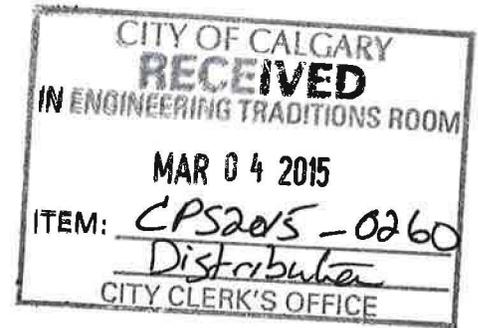
Yet, the question remains. *Why* should we work to integrate healthy biodiversity into a fast growing city? The answers are compelling. Besides our commitment to ICLEI's Local Action for Biodiversity Initiative, we should strive to make biodiversity a part of how Calgary grows and evolves because biodiversity contributes to human health and well being in countless ways.

While it is beyond the scope of this letter to recount all of these benefits, I will touch on a few categories of biodiversity benefits that speak directly to my personal and professional experience.

March 4, 2015

Standing Policy Committee, Community and Protective Services
City of Calgary

Re: Biodiversity Strategic Plan, CPS 2015-0260



President
Steve Meadows

Vice President
Michael Kenny

Secretary
Bill Morrison

Treasurer
Dave McIver

Director
Muhan Guna

Director
Terry Klassen

Director
Mike Murray

Director
Sarah Nevill

Dear Committee members;

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report.

The City of Calgary Biodiversity Report 2014 is a well written, comprehensive document. It gives an overview of Calgary's various habitats, plant and animal species and conservation tools in place to enhance our biodiversity. It also recognizes that partnerships with community organizations are extremely important to reach our biodiversity goals.

The 10 year implementation plan "Our BiodiverCity" builds on current City and Provincial policies . The Calgary River Valleys want to move our biodiversity initiatives to the next level. The plan sets out realistic goals, commitments and recommendations to enhance our natural biodiversity.

Calgary River Valleys supports the approval of the proposed Council Biodiversity Policy to direct early and ongoing implementation of the recommendations and initiatives proposed in these documents. It is important that Council and all Calgarians support these initiatives so we can continue to build a vibrant, sustainable healthy and diverse city.

Advisor
Brian Pincott
(Councillor, Ward

Advisor
Harpreet Sandhu

Advisor
Darrell Sargent

Advisor
Robin Sauve

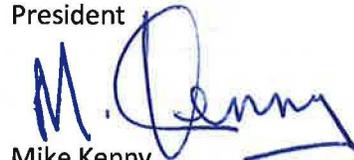
Advisor
George Stalker

On behalf of Calgary River Valleys we look forward to working with the many stakeholders involved. We would like to volunteer to sit on the biodiversity steering committee when it is formed. This will enable us to continue our work of the past 30 years to protect our natural landscapes.

Yours truly,



Steve Meadows
President



Mike Kenny
Vice President



Comments in support of the general initiative to conserve biodiversity

My name is Linda Stewart – private citizen

In reviewing the plan – I thought it might be useful to consider some actual examples of biodiversity decline right here in our own city.

To do so, I contacted several field naturalists who have been studying nature over many years to gather some first-hand information about the state of biodiversity in Calgary.

Two members I contacted who have extensive field experience at Nose Hill Park (North America's largest urban grassland park) have noted a marked decline or disappearance of a variety of species such as the Richardson Ground Squirrel (our native gopher), which provides food for other species such as owls, hawks, coyotes and badgers. The biodiversity action plan itself notes the disappearance of the Sharp-tailed Grouse from the park.

A breeding bird census was conducted by volunteers on a 60-acre portion of the SW corner of Nose Hill each May and June from 2003 to 2009. Of special interest was the Clay-coloured sparrow – a grassland bird species that should be attracted to this large grassland park. Results showed a decrease in numbers of Clay-coloured sparrows by approximately 40% over the 6-year study, compared to the relatively stable population in Alberta in general. Previously nesting species that are no longer seen in the park include Western Meadowlark, LeConte's and Baird's Sparrow, Spotted Towhee and Brown Thrasher.

Gus Yaki and a number of volunteers have been conducting a monthly birding survey along a stretch of the Elbow River from Stanley Park to Glenmore Dam since the summer of 1993. Over the last 21 years, they have found that at least 15 once-common species of birds have totally disappeared along the route, while many other once-abundant species have greatly declined.

Suzanne Visser observes, after 20 years of plant surveys in Calgary's natural areas a noticeable reduction in abundance of certain species. For example, flowering plants like Hookers Townsendia, Moss Phlox and Yellow Umbrella Plant are species which are susceptible to disturbance from trampling and may be declining as a result of increased soil compaction due to foot and bicycle traffic in sensitive

areas. Others, such as Yellow Lady Slipper, Bracted Bog Orchid and Prairie Gentian may be declining in numbers as a result of habitat fragmentation caused by too many trails and too much disturbance by humans, dogs and bike activity. The greatest concern is the potential disappearance of rarer species which are the most sensitive to human disturbance.

Many relatively hardy native plants are disappearing from some of our parks and natural areas because they are simply being beaten down by over-use in areas such as the upper plateau of Edworthy Park, or being out-competed by non-native invasive plant species. If plants cannot grow to maturity, blossom and set seed, they are doomed. So what is the problem if we lose a few (or a lot) of native plants? Well it means, for example that we are losing the biodiversity of insects that pollinate most of our plants. The larvae of the native insects need to feed upon the leaves of native plants – they cannot survive on invasive plant species. The lack of insect larvae means that many of our nesting birds and amphibian species are dying from lack of food. When adult birds die without replacement the species becomes extirpated. Time is of the essence.

As an example, there is an area of about 4 or 5 hectares on the north side of the Weaselhead Natural Environment Park that has been totally taken over by Caragana – a very hardy and aggressive European invader. Gus Yaki describes this area as a “biological desert” with little living there except Caragana. In 10 years it will dominate a much larger area of the park - every seed of invasive plants survives because none of our native wildlife feed on them, so these plants increase exponentially.

The greatest concern of those who know and love Calgary’s natural areas is the concern over timing. The reports we have before us have been 5 years in the making. Now it seems we still have an implementation plan to come and some targets for 10 years in the future. The measures suggested seem minimal in scope and the timeline far too lengthy. We need to be thinking about what we can do right now!

Nature Calgary brief on the City of Calgary's
10 year biodiversity Strategic Plan
March 4, 2015

Madam Chair thanks to you and the committee for the opportunity to speak to this plan and to Calgary Parks for giving Nature Calgary (Calgary Field Naturalists' Society) the opportunity to have meaningful input into the plan.

1. Nature Calgary

- Established in the early 1950's, 500 members
- Promote the understanding, appreciation and conservation of Calgary's Natural Areas
- Inglewood Bird Sanctuary (its creation and nature centre), Nose Hill
- Provide speaker series and nature walks
- Publish many books related to Calgary Natural areas.
-

2. Importance of Calgary Natural Areas to Calgarians

- Natural Areas full of Calgarians unplugging from the virtual world, recreating and de stressing.
- Many of the natural areas have local community groups who's focus is the protection of their local natural area
- Thousands of Calgarians volunteer in helping the city maintain the quality of its parks
- Thousands of Calgarians, especially our children, take part in natural history educational opportunities within Calgary's natural areas.
-

3. Important Role that Council has played in protecting:

- Glenmore Reservoir/Weaselhead – Grant MacEwan while on council played a very important role in protecting this natural area.



- Inglewood Bird Sanctuary
- Nose Hill
- Griffith Woods
- Ralph Klein Park, Legacy parks – Haskayne and Bearspaw Natural Areas
- River Valleys Plan, Urban Parks Master Plan, Nose Hill Master Plan, Natural Areas Plan, Urban forest Plan, Greenway Plan, Calgary's Wetland Management Plan

4. Biodiversity Strategic Plan

- Logical follow up to councils previous efforts.
- Monitoring the biodiversity of Calgary's natural areas with the establishment of an Ecological Integrity Index for each natural area is fundamental to the success of the plan. The sooner the better.
- Nature Calgary has a lot of expertise and a volunteer base that can be of great assistance to Calgary Parks in monitoring the health of the Natural Areas.
- Think globally act locally – e.g. Neotropical migrants
- LAB Durban Accord for Biodiversity adopted by City Council 2011

5. Legacy

- By accepting this plan and sending it on for council's approval you will be performing a vital link in the process of protecting Calgary's biodiversity now and most importantly as a legacy for Calgary's future generations.

“In Wildness is the Preservation of the World”

Henry David Thoreau.



Nature Calgary Box 981 Stn M Calgary, Alberta T2P 2K4

www.naturecalgary.com