

2015 BIODIVERCITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The BiodiverCity Advisory Committee (the Committee) was established by Council on 2015 October 19 at their annual Organizational Meeting. As guided by its Terms of Reference, the Committee will advance the commitments and procedures identified within the Council-adopted Biodiversity Policy and The Durban Commitment: Local Governments for Biodiversity. Three key stages have been achieved since the Committee was established: setting a monthly schedule; information gathering with regards to City structure and reporting; and the development of a work plan. The Committee has also created two sub-committees focused on ecological literacy and conservation practices. An infographic has been prepared by the Committee to highlight their structure and function and the work they've undertaken to date (Attachment 1).

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services recommends that Council receive this report for information.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

On 2015 October 19, Council appointed the members of the BiodiverCity Advisory Committee at the annual Organizational Meeting of Council.

On 2015 July 27, Council approved the proposed BiodiverCity Advisory Committee Terms of Reference (CPS2015-0608).

On 2015 March 30, Council adopted the Biodiversity Policy, and received for information Our BiodiverCity, Calgary's 10-year biodiversity strategic plan and directed Administration to "research the appropriate Terms of Reference and framework of a Biodiversity Advisory Committee [involving] broad representation across Calgary (CPS2015-0260)".

BACKGROUND

Through its Terms of Reference, the Committee is mandated to provide Council and Administration with strategic advice on matters affecting urban biodiversity. 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.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

The following summarizes the three key stages of the Committee's work since November 2015:

1. Orientation

- Committee member introductions including creating an inventory of member skills and capabilities (Attachment 2);
- Reviewing the biodiversity strategic plan and Committee Terms of Reference;
- Establishing a monthly meeting schedule; and
- Establishing two sub-committees with monthly meetings: one with a focus on community-based biodiversity awareness (Literacy sub-committee) and the other with a focus on conservation practices (Conservation sub-committee). These align with the

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biodiversity strategic plan's four main procedure areas (awareness, education, conservation and collaboration).

2. Corporate alignment

- Overview of the legislative and City of Calgary organizational structure context within which the Committee functions;
- Welcome by the Director of Calgary Parks and a member of Council; and
- Presentations given by City of Calgary business unit representatives on various corporate biodiversity programs and initiatives (including relevant Calgary Parks biodiversity plans, tools, processes and documents).

3. Work planning

- Reviewing and prioritizing the planned practices and projects described in Our BiodiverCity, Calgary's 10-year biodiversity strategic plan on which the Committee can provide advice;
- Assessing City of Calgary biodiversity initiatives to understand gaps that can serve as a basis for the Committee's work planning;
- Conducting a day-long workshop to prioritize gaps and finalize the Committee's initiatives for its 2016 work plan (Attachment 3); and
- Advancing scope and schedule within both sub-committees for the planned initiatives.

Next steps

The next steps for the Committee include:

- Providing advice on habitat restoration projects and prioritization of biodiversity conservation initiatives;
- Providing advice on The City's biodiversity policies and frameworks (e.g. Integrated Pest Management Plan, Natural Area Management Plan, Urban Wildlife Strategy);
- Developing recommendations to improve The City's biodiversity communications, awareness and citizen science work;
- Engaging City business units to identify ways to advance biodiversity awareness and positive actions; and
- Reviewing and analyzing potential local partnerships for the Committee to engage people in biodiversity, private property conservation measures and related research.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

Through its Terms of Reference, the specific responsibilities of the Committee include advising Council on integrating biodiversity objectives into policies and programs as part of The City's operations, citizen outreach and community development. It is also mandated to collaborate with researchers and institutions to advance innovation in conserving Calgary's biodiversity, as well as ensuring appropriate City of Calgary staff, Council, communities and local businesses have access to information to advance actions supported by the biodiversity strategic plan and The Durban Commitment: Local Governments for Biodiversity.

2015 BIODIVERCITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Strategic Alignment

The Committee is mandated through its Terms of Reference to provide Council and Administration with strategic advice on the Council-adopted biodiversity strategic policy.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

The mandate of the Committee encompasses acting on the biodiversity strategic plan, which contains four principles that capture the social, environmental and economic accounting objectives expressed by Council. Biodiversity conservation has been connected to contributing to a collective sense of history and improving social inclusion for peoples. Conserving lands provides recreational opportunities for Calgarians, as well as contributing to environmental and human health. These areas also add important sites to Calgary's park system, which economically benefits The City through desirable neighbourhoods.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

The Committee's draft work plan does not impact current or future operating budgets.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

The Committee's draft work plan does not impact current or future capital budgets.

Risk Assessment

Risk is mitigated through the Committee's mandate to act on the Council-adopted 10-year biodiversity strategic plan policy. The Committee's first work plan has clarity based on an understanding of City of Calgary biodiversity planning and management and The City's organizational structure and processes. Risk is further mitigated by open and transparent dialogue between public and staff Committee members and the plan for members to have outreach sessions with City business units.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

The BiodiverCity Advisory Committee reports to the SPC on Community and Protective Services, and provides an annual progress report. In conjunction with other civic partner and Community Services annual progress reports, this report outlines the Committee's progress to date along with its 2016 work program, which establishes a reference for future reporting.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Committee Infographic (prepared by the BiodiverCity Advisory Committee)
2. Committee Skills Matrix
3. 2016 Work Plan (prepared by the BiodiverCity Advisory Committee)