



COUNCIL POLICY

Policy Title: **Biodiversity Policy**
Policy Number:
Report Number:
Approved by: **Council**
Effective Date:
Business Unit: **Parks**

BACKGROUND

1. The City of Calgary joined the Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) program in 2010. As a part of that program, Council directed (UE2011-19) the Mayor to sign the Durban Commitment on Biodiversity as a demonstration of Calgary's continuing commitment to conserve urban biodiversity and to integrate biodiversity considerations into governance and planning. The five steps in the program are identified below
 - 1.1 Develop a biodiversity report documenting the current state of biodiversity and its management in Calgary;
 - 1.2 Ensure long-term commitment by Council to sustainable biodiversity management through formally signing a local government biodiversity declaration (The Durban Commitment, UE2011-19);
 - 1.3 Develop a 10-year biodiversity strategic action plan and framework that includes commitments to biodiversity implementation plans and integration within broader city plans;
 - 1.4 Have Council formally accept the 10-year biodiversity strategic action plan and framework; and
 - 1.5 Implement three new on-the-ground biodiversity initiatives by the end of the 10-year program.
2. Biodiversity can be defined as "the variability among living organisms—animals, plants, their habitats and their genes—from all sources including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part. This includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems." (The International Union for the Conservation of Nature).

PURPOSE

3. The purpose of this Council Policy is:

- 3.1 To guide biodiversity conservation decision-making and act as a foundation for municipal actions towards biodiversity conservation.
- 3.2 To outline how The City of Calgary is dedicated to support its vision for biodiversity and provide a finer scale of action to move towards the biodiversity vision.

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4. Vision for biodiversity:

- 4.1 Calgarians value their city's diversity and richness in wildlife, vegetation and landscapes; The City of Calgary and citizens work to integrate their actions and the built environment with an ecological network that is healthy, connected and well managed.

5. Biodiversity principles:

- 5.1 **Ecological literacy:** The City of Calgary supports the conservation and appreciation of biodiversity by cultivating knowledge and understanding about ecological processes, personal stewardship actions and Calgary's natural heritage.
- 5.2 **Ecological resilience:** The City of Calgary plans, protects, manages and restores open space in Calgary for productive, diverse, healthy ecosystems with the capacity to recover from disturbance and adapt to change.
- 5.3 **Collaboration:** The City of Calgary works jointly and shares responsibility with individuals and groups to advance biodiversity and ecological resilience locally, regionally and globally.
- 5.4 **Integration:** The City of Calgary works with communities and businesses to build neighbourhoods that support local biodiversity conservation, healthy ecological processes and provide equitable access to nature.

6. Biodiversity commitments:

6.1 Ecological literacy:

- a) Develop volunteer initiatives and education programs to support environmental stewardship and biodiversity conservation in collaboration with schools, communities and citizens.

- b) Ensure appropriate City of Calgary staff, Council, businesses and communities have access to training and information to advance the goals of biodiversity conservation, through procurement practices; building and site design; open space planning and management, as well as awareness of invasive species, habitat fragmentation and loss, indirect pressures on biodiversity and how they disrupt ecological processes.
- c) Set objectives and targets for biodiversity conservation across appropriate literacy initiatives.
- d) Make biodiversity conservation a common element in municipal decision-making.

6.2 **Ecological resilience:**

- a) Monitor The City's natural areas and water bodies to develop an approach that ensures they are more resilient to disturbance while retaining healthy function, structure, feedback loops and integrity.
- b) Retain, acquire and maintain large contiguous or connected natural areas, with supportive built environments, providing connections with the greater region.
- c) Reduce direct pressures on biodiversity through managing appropriate access and use in areas rich in biodiversity and natural heritage.
- d) Reduce invasive species through identifying threats, implementing measures to prevent their establishment while monitoring and controlling the species where necessary.
- e) Conserve habitat function by supporting native and non-invasive locally adapted species.
- f) Maintain significant ecological processes such as fire and flood in appropriate natural areas.

6.3 **Collaboration:**

- a) Recognize the financial, social and environmental cost of removing or modifying natural systems in developing Calgary and include consideration of these costs in municipal decision-making.
- b) Recognize biodiversity and healthy natural systems as an aspect of good economic development in Calgary.
- c) Partner with researchers, government and institutions to advance research and innovation in biodiversity conservation.
- d) Remove knowledge and institutional barriers to protecting biodiversity.

6.4 Integration:

- a) Increase habitat diversity in private, public and institutional open space to support ecologically healthy neighbourhoods and aid appropriate access to and use of nature for citizens.
- b) Develop a database that integrates land use and biodiversity data to support strategic management of Calgary's ecosystems.
- c) Plan and manage Calgary's parks and open space as a connected network of habitats and wildlife movement corridors, with the aim of reducing roadway collision threats and related human-urban wildlife conflict.
- d) Develop infrastructure that mimics and incorporates ecological processes.
- e) Manage open space to positively respond to both sudden and gradual environmental changes, such as extreme weather events and climate change.
- f) Preserve rare landscape features and critical habitats within and between neighbourhoods.

PROCEDURE

- 7. **Foster ecological literacy:** Increase public understanding of biodiversity and ecological processes to encourage positive actions that support environmental conservation.
- 8. **Improve The City of Calgary's ecological functions:** Restore degraded habitats and manage biodiversity to increase the overall health, function and resilience of Calgary's open space and neighbourhoods.
- 9. **Instill biodiversity values across The City of Calgary:** Collaborate to establish conservation values and practices into planning, managing and operating The City of Calgary and living in Calgary neighbourhoods.
- 10. **Integrate with wildlife, plants and natural heritage:** Conserve lands and waters that are critical in retaining essential local ecosystem function, structure, quality and resilience, while ensuring appropriate access and use.

AMENDMENTS

New policy.