



BiodiverCity Advisory Committee

BiodiverCity Advisory Committee

Annual Report 2023-24

MANDATE

To provide Council and Administration with strategic advice on matters affecting urban biodiversity in The City of Calgary and advance the commitments and procedures identified within Our BiodiverCity, Calgary's 10-year Biodiversity Strategic plan (2015-2025), The Durban Commitment: Local Governments for Biodiversity, and the Climate Strategy.

COMPOSITION

15 Members:

- 10 Public Members (including 1 youth)
- 5 Administration

MEETINGS

Since May 2023 the BiodiverCity Advisory Committee has met monthly in-person with the option to join online. The committee does not meet in August. The September meeting was a field trip to the new Haskayne Legacy Park. The March meeting was cancelled to allow administration members time to understand the implications of Report C2023-0762 regarding the merger of the BiodiverCity Advisory Committee with the Climate Advisory Committee. No meetings have been limited by a lack of quorum and BAC members have also participated in additional sub-committee meetings.

WORK, IMPACT & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since June 2023, the committee chair, and some administration members of the BiodiverCity Advisory Committee (BAC) have been involved in meetings with Councillor Penner and the Climate Advisory Committee (CAC) chair to determine the value of a merger of the two committees or the dismissal of the BAC.



BiodiverCity Advisory Committee

The BiodiverCity Advisory Committee delivered a presentation to the Climate Advisory Committee on our mandate and our experience as a city advisory committee. The chairs of the BAC and the CAC met to discuss the overlapping objectives of the two committees and individual BAC committee members have attended some CAC meetings.

Meanwhile, the BAC has continued reviewing City initiatives impacting biodiversity and reviewing progress against the City's strategic plan: Our BiodiverCity, Calgary's 10-year Biodiversity Strategic Plan (2015 -2025). Presentations by City Administration and by other organizations were delivered at BAC meetings, to generate discussions and recommendations by BAC members:

- City Growth Strategy and the new Growth Applications' framework
- Light Pollution, Biodiversity and Lighting Guidelines in the City (by the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Calgary Branch)
- Calgary's 2023 Stormwater Management Strategy
- Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan
- Calgary Captured/Calgary Connect: wildlife, humans, and their dogs in the city.
- U of C study comparing the city government websites of Calgary and seven other metropolitan cities in Canada as sources of information on biodiversity and climate change action in these cities
- Local Area Plans for Riley Communities and Greater Forest Lawn Communities
- Calgary's Food Resilience Plan

Other committee discussions and recommendations centred around:

- Miyawaki forest plantings and Calgary Park's experience with tree planting
- City's Ricardo Ranch hearings
- Communities for Glenmore Landing Preservation
- Naturalization of private property and the Community Standard Bylaw
- Nature Calgary's update of Green Book (listing of species in Calgary's natural areas)
- Upcoming consultation for Canada's Biodiversity Strategy
- Overlapping and separate mandates of the Climate Advisory Committee and the BiodiverCity Advisory Committee
- Possible dismissal of the BiodiverCity Advisory Committee
- City's progress on Our BiodiverCity: Calgary's 10-year Biodiversity Strategic Plan

The ecoliteracy mandate of the BAC has been advanced by:

- Continued participation of a BAC representative in the Calgary Youth Science Fair to present the City of Calgary award to projects that advance the protection of biodiversity.
- The request of the BAC to the City of Calgary to proclaim the International Day for Biodiversity on May 22nd.
- Participation in Inglewood Bird Sanctuary's Migratory Bird Day on Sunday, May 11th, including attracting other participants through committee members' contacts.
- Consideration of participation in the Alberta Biodiversity Festival (a collaboration between the Bow Habitat Station and the Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo) on September 14th



BiodiverCity Advisory Committee

MANDATE ALIGNMENT

Since its inception, the BiodiverCity Advisory Committee has focused on our mandate to provide strategic and practical advice on matters affecting urban biodiversity in Calgary, including ecoliteracy for Calgary's citizens and decision-makers.

Public committee members are active in non-governmental organizations with related mandates or work in the fields of ecoliteracy, environmental protection, and environmental remediation. With this expertise and commitment, they share their ideas and advice with each other and with BAC members from Administration.

The BAC mandate includes providing advice to Council, which has proved difficult. The committee has not been able to determine how to do this in a way that engages Council members with biodiversity issues and provides timely advice that they need for decision-making.

COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION

The BAC has collaborated with the CAC, discussing the possible merger of the two committees and ways to communicate with Council. Consideration was also given to collaboration with the Anti-racism Committee, regarding access to natural areas, but this was put on hold due to other priorities and uncertainty regarding the future of the BAC.

WORKPLAN & PRIORITIES FOR 2024-2025

The BAC's planned workshop to review progress and develop our 2024-2025 workplan was interrupted by the urgent need to discuss the implications of Report C2023-0762. Given the likelihood of the BAC being dissolved, members have decided to focus the next several months on reviewing the City's accomplishments and alignment with Our BiodiverCity. We plan to report to City Council in Q1 2025.

CHALLENGES

Administrative support and participation by BAC's Administration members and the administration contact has been forthcoming and positive. However, the Administration's ability to provide information related to the City's completion of targets in the biodiversity strategic plan has been limited due to their other work priorities.



BiodiverCity Advisory Committee

The BiodiverCity Advisory Committee has struggled in the past few years to get the attention of City Council. In previous years the BAC has sent reports, correspondence, and invitations to meet with us, the BAC has not successfully engaged Councillors on biodiversity issues to the same level as Administration. Other than meetings with Councillor Penner, our last contact with Council was when we presented our annual report at the special Council meeting in June 2023.

The direction received in Report C2023-0762 has disrupted the work of the BAC and has resulted in much of our attention being focused on addressing the direction received. This has been quite discouraging to the BAC and hampered our work towards advancing biodiversity in the City of Calgary.

MEMBER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Fortunately, members of the BAC all participate respectfully in committee discussions, and all attend most meetings. When nominating new applicants for membership and considering members' applications for reappointment, the nominating committee considers the balance of expertise on the committee and the level of member participation in the past.

ATTACHMENTS

None