



BiodiverCity Advisory Committee Annual Report 2024-25

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 Public Members

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

MEETINGS

Since May 2024 the BiodiverCity Advisory Committee has met monthly in-person and online except for August when the committee does not meet. The September meeting was a field trip to the Marlborough mini forest, which was attended by BAC members, former BAC members, several City Administration staff and one City Councillor. Due to difficulties in engaging members in person with the hybrid model, meetings were moved online exclusively in November 2024. The December meeting was limited by a lack of quorum, delaying the approval of previous meeting minutes from November.

Members of the public can access meetings and meeting minutes through the BAC's administrative contact and online.

A subcommittee consisting of five public members has been meeting weekly since January 2025 to work on the final report to council assessing progress on the BiodiverCity Strategic Plan (2015-2025).

The committee Chair and Vice Chair attended a meeting in February 2025 with the Climate Advisory Committee to discuss the inclusion of biodiversity in the committee's TOR.

WORK, IMPACT & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The BiodiverCity Advisory Committee has been an important forum for City Administration to consult with Calgarians who are active in biodiversity research, education, advocacy, and consulting, as well as citizens who care about the natural world. We have discussed and advised staff on land development and city programs. It has also served as a forum for non-governmental organizations active in biodiversity conservation in the city. While Administration



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has been very active in engagement, the Committee has continued to face challenges connecting directly with Councillors.

Since learning of the sunset of the BAC upcoming at the end of Q2 2025, the focus of the BAC has been to look back at the accomplishments of The City since 2015 on biodiversity. A subcommittee consisting of five public members has been meeting weekly since January 2025 to work on the final report to council assessing progress on the Our BiodiverCity Strategic Plan (2015-2025).

To ensure that biodiversity continues to be considered in decision making, the BAC Chair and Vice Chair attended a meeting in February 2025 with the Climate Advisory Committee to discuss the inclusion of biodiversity in the committee's TOR.

The Committee continued to engage with public groups throughout the year. This included ensuring the City's continued support for a biodiversity award at the Calgary Youth Science Fair. Winners from 2024 presented their projects to the BAC in June 2024.

In July 2024, Administration presented to the committee the Calgary Plan and the Committee provided feedback on biodiversity related topics in the plan. A master's student also presented to the BAC on her study looking at rare plants and provided information to members on how they can help native plant communities.

September was the committee's annual field trip which this year took place at the Marlborough Mini Forest. With support from Administration members, the committee learned about the establishment, maintenance, successes and challenges of mini forests in the urban landscape.

October highlighted opportunities for engagement including public engagement for rezoning bylaws, the Alberta Nature Strategy and the Calgary Plan.

The November meeting had presentations from Nature Calgary and one of the Committee members on their coyote graduate work. The presentation from Nature Calgary was not only an opportunity for members to learn about the non-profit and how they can take part, but Nature Calgary was able to connect with administration members on a number of topics and move forward on some of their initiatives through this opportunity. Nature Calgary also provided input on how they feel on the progress of the Our BiodiverCity Strategic Plan.

In December Bird Friendly Calgary (BFC) presented, providing members once again with a connection outside of the committee for biodiversity related projects. BFC also provided to the committee their thoughts on the progress of the Our BiodiverCity Strategic Plan.

January 2025 was an opportunity to focus on the report to Council and discuss the incorporation of biodiversity to be proposed for the CAC TOR.

In February the Calgary Urban Species Response Team presented and invited BAC members to join their downtown surveys, and the YYC LRT Red Line Extension team also shared an update, with the BAC providing recommendations on what meaningful consideration of the impacts to the Priddis Wetland might entail.



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March saw the Calgary Climate Hub presenting their work and providing BAC members with opportunities outside of the committee to engage in meaningful work in the city.

The Eco literacy 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. Administration has agreed to continue this initiative after Q2 2025.

At the request of the BAC the City of Calgary proclaimed the International Day for Biodiversity on May 22nd.

MANDATE ALIGNMENT

Throughout this final year, the BAC has worked with Administration to provide feedback on upcoming plans and policies in accordance with our mandate. In addition, given the upcoming dissolution of the committee, the team has worked to learn more about groups working on biodiversity in the City and connect them with Administration to maintain a connection with City staff.

COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION

The BAC has been working with the Climate Advisory Committee throughout the year to advocate that biodiversity continues to be included in advice to council after this committee sunsets.

To encourage BAC members to participate in community projects and events related to biodiversity beyond the committee, several groups were invited to present and discuss their activities including Nature Calgary, Bird Friendly Calgary, the Calgary Urban Species Response Team and the Calgary Climate Hub.

WORKPLAN & PRIORITIES FOR UPCOMING YEAR

The BiodiverCity Advisory Committee will be disbanded at the end of Q2 2025. The focus of the Committee until that time is assessing progress on the Our BiodiverCity Strategic Plan to provide a final report to Council. The Committee is also encouraging members to learn about and engage with groups continuing to work on biodiversity issues in the City.

CHALLENGES

Challenges for the committee through this final year are similar to past years where connecting directly with City Council to provide advice has proven difficult. The Committee provided clear communication to Council regarding the importance of continuing with this committee going forward but the decision to sunset was made. The continued engagement with every public member of the committee following this decision has been difficult. Newer members were not told this was a possibility prior to being appointed, leaving some feeling misled. Others who have been on the committee for multiple terms have had other commitments and opportunities, lessening their time availability for this committee. Despite this the committee was able to reach quorum every meeting except for December.



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Moving forward, there is not a definitive timeline for a new biodiversity strategy nor the guarantee that biodiversity is included in decision making at the level of council. Administration continues to put in effort to ensure the inclusion of ecological connectivity, but challenges remain for having this connectivity considered in planning or policy implementation.

MEMBER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Fortunately, members of the BAC all participate respectfully in committee discussions, although participation and attendance from public members has dropped since learning that the BAC will no longer be in existence after Q2 in 2025. Due to the impending sunset of the committee, all members had their terms extended until Q2 of 2025 and no new members were sought.

ATTACHMENTS

The Biodiversity Advisory Committee's final report on the City's progress on Our BiodiverCity is attached.