



BiodiverCity Advisory Committee

Mandate and Composition

Mandate	<p>The BiodiverCity Advisory Committee provides Council and Administration with strategic advice on matters affecting urban biodiversity in The City of Calgary.</p> <p>The Committee advances the commitments and procedures identified within <i>Our BiodiverCity</i>, Calgary's 10-year biodiversity strategic plan and <i>The Durban Commitment: Local Governments for Biodiversity</i>.</p>
Composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 members who represent the technical industry or research field with a background in biology, ecology, horticulture, applicable field in engineering (e.g. waste management, storm water management, hydrology, etc.), planning, economics, community health, recreational management or similar• 2 members who represent the ecological literacy field with a background in art, education and/or communications• 2 citizens-at-large with an interest in biodiversity and ecological literacy• 4 members of City Administration from the following Departments: Planning and Development; Law; Community Services; Transportation; and Utilities & Environmental Protection

BiodiverCity Advisory Committee: Q1 2019 Special report to Council

1. Number of meetings in the last two years.

The Committee meets once every month, not including August

11 meetings in 2017 (includes annual workshop to develop annual work plan)

11 meetings in 2018 (includes annual workshop to develop annual work plan)

2017/18 total meetings = 22

Subcommittee meetings

10 (total for two years)

Field trips

2 (1 site visit/year)

1. Do you have any subcommittees? If yes, please list.

As per its Terms of Reference, committee members are to represent the “technical, industry or research” and “ecological literacy” fields, as well as citizens-at-large and City Administration. Therefore, the Committee has subdivided into two sub-committees to further execute its work:

- Technical/conservation focus
- Ecological literacy focus

2. Summary of initiatives, projects, or work completed or ongoing in the last two years.

See attachment 1

3. Outline of 2019 work plan.

See attachment 2

4. Challenges to fulfilling mandate.

The Committee’s mandate is to provide,

Council and Administration with strategic advice on matters affecting urban biodiversity in The City of Calgary. 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.

The Committee acts as a conduit between Council and Administration to advance biodiversity conservation and awareness. There has been challenges fulfilling this mandate. In brief they are,

- a) The targets to monitor the efficacy of implementing strategic plan are incomplete.
- b) Capital funding is not allocated within The City's current budget for a naturalization/restoration program, which is foundational to increasing biodiversity in Calgary.
- c) Biodiversity conservation requires cross-corporate coordination and thus prioritization. Generally, this work has been associated with Calgary Parks, but needs to be cross-corporate for success.
- d) Understanding Calgarians' need in biodiversity conservation and awareness.

The Committee has developed solutions to these challenges:

- a) A BiodiverCity Action Plan has been developed. Gaps remain, but acting on the plan is on Calgary Parks' 2019 work plan.
- b) Restoration projects are provided through a variety of sources. Although specific naturalization capital budget has been eliminated, opportunities for funding may exist within cross-corporate operating and capital budgets.
- c) Calgary Parks is currently developing a Corporate Habitat Restoration Program to leverage cross-departmental resources to achieve the biodiversity restoration target.
- d) The Committee met with members of Council in the summer of 2018 to understand biodiversity needs for their constituents. See Attachment 1, Councillor meetings, for details.

5. Additional information you would like to share with Council.

The Committee is keenly interested in The City's habitat restoration target. Currently capital funding is not allocated for The City to meet this target. Thus funding needs to be allocated or the target should be adjusted accordingly.

One of the three performance measures identified in the BiodiverCity Strategic Plan is to restore 20 percent of Calgary's current open space to increase biodiversity. Habitat restoration is a type of land management activity intending to recover a degraded habitat to initiate or accelerate its succession towards a habitat with increased biodiversity such as replacing turf grass with native grasses and wildflowers. Restoration is considered cost-effective recognizing that the initial cost to restore land will be recouped via decreased ongoing management costs.

Although habitat restoration was unfunded in The City's current capital budget cycle, The Committee recognizes efficiencies and priorities could be found through City operational expenditure. The Committee continues to push for increased restoration projects in Calgary to meet the City target.

Attachments

Attachment 1: 2017/18 work summary

Ongoing work

- Expert advice

The Committee was involved in two key areas of work intended to advance the BiodiverCity Strategy and increase biodiversity in Calgary. The BiodiverCity Action Plan provides a structure for work planning to meet the commitment of The City of Calgary's BiodiverCity Strategic Plan. It outlines how The City is to achieve biodiversity conservation outcomes through the execution of biodiversity programs and initiatives. It establishes program targets, work plans, decision-making tools, and a method to monitor implementation progress using indicators. The Committee drove elements of the project to ensure appropriate performance measures are in place for the biodiversity program.

The other key area of work was reviewing The City's restoration target. One of the three performance measures identified in the BiodiverCity Strategic Plan is to restore 20 percent of Calgary's current open space to increase biodiversity. Habitat restoration is a type of land management activity intending to recover a degraded habitat to initiate or accelerate its succession towards a habitat with increased biodiversity such as replacing turf grass with native grasses and wildflowers. Restoration is considered cost-effective recognizing that the initial cost to restore land will be recouped via decreased ongoing management costs. The Committee has been pushing for increased restoration projects in Calgary.

- SPC CPS reports

The Committee was established by Council in October 2015. As guided by its Terms of Reference, it advances the commitments and procedures identified within the Council-adopted Biodiversity Policy (CSPS037). The Committee presented its first annual progress report in May 2016. Since that time, The Committee continues to pursue three categories of work: engaging stakeholders, communications and reviewing City policies related to biodiversity. The outcome of this work has been to advance biodiversity awareness within the Corporation and to support Calgarians fostering more resilient, biologically diverse communities.

2017 work

- Bee City Canada proposal

The Committee prepared a letter to Calgary Parks regarding The City becoming a "Bee City." The letter included an evaluation with three key points: 1) The Bee City Canada mandate aligns with Our BiodiverCity strategic plan; 2) The City may wish to pursue "Bee City" designation, depending on resource requirements and benefit/cost evaluation; and 3) If The City does pursue designation, The Committee recommends that the Bee City mandate and objectives are not confused with those of beekeepers. Although The Committee's recommendation was made in December 2016, developing pollinator habitat through restoration projects is an ongoing issue; therefore, it continues to be on The Committee's radar.

- Calgary Youth Science Fair Info

The Calgary Youth Science Fair is an annual event held for Calgary students with research interests in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Since 2017, The Committee has been supporting the

event through Biodiversity Awards for three age categories for projects related to ecological literacy, resilience, or collaboration.

- Staff survey

A staff survey was developed and issued to approximately 700 City staff in early 2017. The intent of the survey was to understand biodiversity touch points within The City and how these can be leveraged to advance The City's biodiversity goals. Respondents were asked about their area of work, familiarity of biodiversity, and what ties their work could have to biodiversity conservation. The Committee continues to understand how best to apply survey results; a communications plan is currently under development.

- Walk 21 Conference

Walk21 is the international organization supporting and promoting walking. It hosts an annual international conference that seeks to encourage and support walking as a part of daily transport, recreation and health through effective policies, programs and planning. Committee members Meaghan Brierley and Polly Knowlton Cockett presented, "Urban Biodiversity as Strategy for Walkability." They presented that a plan for biodiversity is a plan for walkability. Habitat connectivity considers the movement of flora and fauna across landscapes; that scale is the human movement scale. The ability to move represents a level of physical health, and a broader ecological implication of biodiversity. As a core component of strong, cohesive, and inclusive communities, we need biodiversity to be personally and socially healthy. Urban biodiversity can thus be intimately connected to walkability.

2018 work

- Councillor meetings

The committee held meetings with members of Council to gain insight into the needs for biodiversity identified by councillors and their constituents. The objective was for the Committee to better understand what is required to support biodiversity awareness and conservation to inform future actions in the Committee's work plan.

The Committee recognised that it should continue a dialogue with members to Council to best understand how it could assist in building awareness and understanding some of the issues pertaining to biodiversity. Councillors provided key actions for Committee members to consider, which informed future work.

- Vital Signs report

The Calgary Foundation produces an annual Vital Signs report on the qualities of life important to Calgarians. The Committee worked with the Foundation to add a biodiversity measure to this report. As a component of the Environment section, a question on biodiversity was added: Are you familiar with the term "biodiversity"? The result were:

- 67% were familiar with the term (25% very familiar; 42% familiar)
- 33% had never heard of or were unsure of the term (24% heard of but unsure what it is; 9% never heard of it)

The survey identified there could be a language barrier to understanding the term biodiversity. Additionally, almost three quarters (72%) of Calgarians under 35 are familiar with the term versus 63% of Calgarians that are 35 years or older. Eighty-five per cent of students are familiar with the term biodiversity.

Attachment 2: 2019 work

2019: BiodiverCity Advisory Committee - Annual Work Plan				
Project / Initiative / Activity	Biodiversity Program Area	Biodiversity Program	Start Date	End Date
Develop work plan for 2019	NA	NA	Q1	Q1
Review BiodiverCity Action Program and identify priorities and updated schedule for achieving objectives	(all)	(all)	Q1	Q1
Review on ad hoc basis Calgary Parks, Urban Conservation documents (e.g., BiodiverCity Action Plan Report, Environmental Policy, Pest Management Plan, Biodiverse Communities)	(all)	(all)	Q1	Q4
Review documentation from other business units relevant to biodiversity	(all)	(all)	Q1	Q4
Determine framework for progress reports from Administration and review reports	NA	NA	Q1	Q1
Youth science fair, support and award	Ecological literacy	Stewardship	Q2	Q2
Develop communication strategies (council, public/stakeholders)	Ecological literacy	Staff awareness, Public awareness	Q2	Q3
Site visit to restoration site and understanding of restoration site selection and process	Ecological literacy	Stewardship	Q2	Q2
Annual report to SPC CPS	Ecological literacy	Staff awareness	Q3	Q3
SME presentations to BAC	Ecological literacy	Public awareness	Q1	Q4

An overview of two key elements within The Committee's 2019 follow.

- BiodiverCity Action Plan report

The Committee has requested regular reporting on the status of *Our BiodiverCity: Calgary's 10-year biodiversity strategic plan*. An implementation plan was developed, which contains biodiversity programs; headline measures are needed, as well as reporting requirements. The plan forms the framework for developing the report.

The implementation plan consists of three broad program areas: Ecological Resilience, Ecological Literacy, and Ecological Planning. These align with the strategic plan principles: ecological resilience, ecological literacy and integration, respectively. Collaboration is a principle from the strategic plan which spans the three program areas and thus does not have its own program of work. The following table displays the connection of the programs.

Program area	Program	Our BiodiverCity principle	
Ecological Resilience	Habitat Connectivity	Ecological resilience	Collaboration (Each program area and program incorporates this principle)
	Habitat Restoration		
	Invasive Species Management		
	Aquatic and Riparian Habitat Resilience		
Ecological Literacy	Public Awareness	Ecological literacy	
	Stewardship		
Ecological Planning	Biodiversity Planning	Integration	
	Biodiversity and Habitat Protection and Management		

- Biodiversity initiatives

The Committee will identify key initiatives and documents with strong supporting biodiversity alignment for review. Administration members are compiling current documentation and will report to Committee in Q1.

- Communications

The Literacy sub-committee continues to advance its Calgary Council engagement strategy, which includes the following:

Outcome

City Council members are more aware of biodiversity, consider biodiversity issues in making decisions and integrate biodiversity objectives into City policies and programs.

Strategies

1. Integrate business language to communicate biodiversity's value proposition.
2. Customize communications based on City Councillors' knowledge and respective ward issues.

Tactics

Developing community profiles for biodiversity and biodiversity Councillor ward maps