

Biodiversity Action Plan – Background Information for discussion purposes

Our commitment

As directed by Council, The City of Calgary has agreed to sign the Durban Commitment, an international agreement on biodiversity. The City has partnered with Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) and committed to develop a corporate-wide **Biodiversity Action Plan**. The LAB program places a focus on fostering local innovation and involvement, and on the development of local solutions to local issues.

Our mutual task

The City has demonstrated its commitment to biodiversity through a number of corporate-wide plans and strategies.* The purpose of the Action Plan is to help ensure we are aligned in our goals and to document specific initiatives helping move us towards biodiversity protection and enhancement.

A successful Action Plan will include broad objectives with well-defined and specific implementation strategies to protect and enhance Calgary's ecosystems and biodiversity. The plan will also highlight who is responsible for the actions and showcase three projects demonstrating Calgary's commitment to biodiversity conservation.

*See excerpts on the following pages from the Municipal Development Plan (MDP, imagineCalgary, 2020 Sustainability Direction and Council's Fiscal Plan (2012-2014)

Stakeholder participation and goals

The preservation of biodiversity is recognized as a significant urban issue. Parks is seeking participation from stakeholders and Calgarians, gathering advice and information to assist with the development of the Action Plan. By working together we can determine how it will assist The City's planning and operations. Arriving at a mutual understanding, we hope to detail in the Action Plan responsibilities, roles, methods of ongoing communications and implementation timeframes.

Thank you

Your participation in these discussion groups will assist Parks as we work with stakeholders and citizens, and will ultimately assist in the development of a Biodiversity Action Plan that will help to protect the environment, now and into the future.

Council Direction – Supporting Documents

imagineCalgary

Natural Environment - Plants and animals

Target 1

By 2036, native biological diversity increases to healthy levels, as measured through Habitat Suitability Index indices and local key indicator species.

Strategy 1

Ensure species are protected and managed and that recovery measures are in place for threatened species.

- Establish a linked network of representative reserves in the city and throughout the bioregion, as well as enhance diversity in gardens and in support of ecosystems in the bioregion.
- Monitor and track current and emerging invasive species.
- Develop proactive management strategies to protect species.

Strategy 2

Establish programs and areas that provide for useful and sufficient habitat supplies.

- Develop a long-term plant community inventory program.
- Preserve lands essential to maintaining regional ecosystem functions.
- Protect and restore wildlife corridors.

Strategy 3

Ensure planning policies/bylaws reflect the commitments of the sustainability goal.

- Integrate biodiversity conservation and development planning (low-impact development).
- Protect and improve the carrying capacities of ecosystems.
- Encourage natural landscaping and relax bylaws that restrict natural landscaping.

Strategy 4

Raise public awareness about the importance of protecting biodiversity and ecosystems.

- Give people access to information about ecosystems and decisions affecting their ecosystems.
- Increase transparency and accountability concerning decisions that affect ecosystems, which includes greater involvement of concerned stakeholders in decision-making.
- Increase the co-ordination of multilateral environmental agreements and the co-ordination of environmental agreements with the policies and actions of international economic and social institutions.
- Foster and support local biodiversity-monitoring initiatives.

Council's Fiscal Plan

Investing in great communities and a vibrant urban fabric

P8. Protect natural/environmentally sensitive areas

2020 Sustainability Direction

Sustainable Environment – Biodiversity

1. By 2020, no net loss of unique and environmentally significant habitats
2. By 2020, species at risk are protected and have sustainable populations
3. By 2020, significant landscapes and habitats in Calgary will be restored and/or reconnected
4. By 2020, there will be an increase in the use of native plant xeriscaping in Calgary parks

Municipal Development Plan (MDP)

2.6 Greening the city

Goal: Conserve, protect and restore the natural environment.

2.6.4 Ecological networks

Objective: Maintain biodiversity and landscape diversity, integrating and connecting ecological networks throughout the city.

Biodiversity

- l. Monitor and manage invasive species that pose a threat to biodiversity and undermine an area's ability to protect water resources.
- m. Manage natural areas and open spaces primarily to conserve and promote native biodiversity.
- n. Ensure the systematic conservation of land and water to reduce habitat fragmentation and ensure wildlife and fisheries connectivity.
- o. Re-establish open space connections, where feasible, to link important habitat areas within the city and region.

Links:

Upon the signing of the Durban Commitment, Calgary joins the cities of Edmonton, Montreal and others in the development of a Biodiversity Action Plan, working with a global network of partners through Local Action for Biodiversity.

Local Action for Biodiversity

<http://www.cbd.int/en/subnational/partners-and-initiatives/local-action-for-biodiversity-lab>

Calgary.ca Biodiversity Introduction Page

<http://www.calgary.ca/biodiversity>

City of Edmonton Biodiversity Website

http://www.edmonton.ca/environmental/natural_areas/local-action-for-biodiversity.aspx

City of Montreal Biodiversity Website

<http://www.cbd.int/authorities/lab.shtml>