

DATE: June 29, 2022

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Brenda Sylvia, Assistant Community Services Director
John R. Marchant, Community Services Director

SUBJECT: Biodiversity Strategy Proposed Scope of Work, Including an Updated Urban Forest Plan

RECOMMENDATION

Review the proposed scope of work for the Biodiversity Strategy, which includes an Urban Forest Plan, and provide staff with feedback.

BACKGROUND

Based on direction from the City Council, City staff will engage a consultant team to develop a comprehensive Biodiversity Strategy (Strategy) to preserve and enhance the diversity of plants, trees, and wildlife in parks and on other public and private lands. The Strategy will create guiding principles and build upon the City's existing plans and projects that affect and influence biodiversity. In addition, the Strategy will articulate a vision that incorporates the principles of protection, restoration, design, and community engagement.

Multiple departments, including Community Services, Public Works, and Community Development, are collaborating on this project as the Strategy will influence a number of City plans, policies, and projects, including the Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan, Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Heritage Tree Ordinance, Landscaping Ordinance, Lighting Ordinance, and City Capital Improvement Program and projects.

The Community Tree Master Plan (CTMP) was developed and adopted in 2015 and serves as a guide for managing, enhancing, and growing Mountain View's tree canopy. The 2015 CTMP was intended to serve the City for 10 years, with a modest data analysis to be completed at the five-year mark to provide an update on the City's tree canopy status and an opportunity to make minor recommendations to relevant guidelines and practices. The five-year update was scheduled to begin in 2020; however, it began in 2021 due to COVID-related impacts. The original consultant team that created the 2015 plan, Davey Resource Group, began working on the update to the CTMP. Based on input and feedback received on the progress of the CTMP by the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) and the public for a more robust update compared to

the modest update originally scheduled, a new Urban Forest Plan will be included into the overall development of the Strategy.

ANALYSIS

On June 8, 2021, Council adopted the City's Strategic Roadmap, which included seven strategic priorities, including "Sustainability and Climate Resilience." Two projects identified for this priority include "Define biodiversity requirements for landscaping in Mountain View" and "Update the Community Tree Master Plan and review existing guiding policies and ordinances in coordination with the update."

Biodiversity Strategy

The identified project called "Define biodiversity requirements for landscaping in Mountain View" within the Strategic Roadmap provided an opportunity for staff from various departments to meet and further refine the parameters and anticipated outcomes of such a project. Staff completed research to determine how best to meet Council's direction. The research included reviewing notes from previous Council meetings regarding biodiversity, reviewing biodiversity-related documents from other agencies, both nationally and internationally, and reviewing input from the community. The Strategy will include a review of existing policies and procedures as well as reviewing best practices to provide recommendations to protect and enhance biodiversity in the City.

Through the research that staff conducted, few local and national examples of a strategy met expectations; however, several were found internationally. Based on a suggestion received, City staff contacted the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI), which has a history of working with local agencies to provide research-based environmental consulting services. SFEI was able to provide examples of work completed that reflects similar work done in the international examples. Based on SFEI's proven ability to develop the type of Strategy desired and their history of working in the San Francisco Bay Area, staff requested a proposal from them to provide consulting services to create the City's first Biodiversity Strategy.

SFEI has provided City staff with a proposal that includes a scope of work that can be used to guide the process of developing the Strategy. The scope includes a list of deliverables, meetings with staff from several departments to understand current conditions, and public input opportunities for the public to be engaged. The proposed scope of work is listed later in this memorandum. The scope of work is a starting point, and through direct meetings with staff and the community, SFEI will be able to take this high-level scope of work and further refine it based on input received to meet the City's existing and future needs.

Anticipated outcomes of the Strategy include:

- A summary of habitats and species in Mountain View;
- Overview of challenges and threats related to biodiversity in Mountain View;
- List of key benefits of preserving biodiversity;
- A vision and goals for biodiversity with measurable targets and success metrics;
- Outline trends and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, including landscaping requirements, green streets/infrastructure, and wildlife corridors; and
- Outline of strategies related to integrating biodiversity outcomes into private development and City policy documents and projects.

Community Tree Master Plan

As previously stated, the process to update the 2015 CTMP began in fall 2021. At the PRC's November 2021 meeting, the PRC expressed interest in creating an ad hoc subcommittee to assist staff with the CTMP update. The ad hoc subcommittee was created at the PRC's January 2022 meeting, and work plan items for the subcommittee included review of the City's policies, procedures, and City ordinances related to the urban forest that were not part of the scope of work for the consultant as part of the CTMP update. At the PRC's April 13, 2022 meeting, an update on the subcommittee's work plan and a summary of work completed to-date was reviewed. During the meeting, the PRC and the public expressed a desire for a more robust update to the CTMP than currently identified. As the Strategy and Urban Forest Plan develops, the project team will determine how best to include the PRC subcommittee outside of the comprehensive public outreach and input process. On May 10, 2022, staff provided Council with a parks and open space update, which included the approach for the Strategy to include a new Urban Forest Plan.

Scope of Work for the Biodiversity Strategy and Urban Forest Plan

Staff is currently working with the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) on a proposal for them to provide consulting services for the project. A secondary consultant group will be retained to assist with the public outreach element of the project. The draft scope of work for the Biodiversity Strategy with an Urban Forest Plan is summarized below:

- **Task 1: Project Management and Coordination**—The consultant will prepare and facilitate a kickoff meeting with City staff to refine the work plan and schedule. The consultant will

also conduct monthly (and additional) project meetings with staff and the public outreach consultant, manage subconsultants, and provide regular progress reports to City staff.

- **Task 2: Background Review**—The consultant will review all relevant City background materials, plans, studies, reports, and data as well as applicable State and Federal regulations, with a focus on the intersection of existing plans with biodiversity needs and strategies. The consultant will also provide an in-depth review of the City Code and standard details to identify key policies or standards in need of updating. City staff and SFEI have developed the following summary of existing plans, studies, reports and data that will be reviewed by the SFEI:

City of Mountain View Plans	Studies, Reports, Data
General Plan 2012 Housing Element 2023-2031 (currently being updated)	City GIS data on canopy and street trees
Mountain View Municipal Code, including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 32—Trees, Shrubs and Plants • Chapter 36—Zoning, Article XI—Landscaping • Chapter 41—Parkland Dedication or Fees in lieu thereof 	Technical reports from Precise Plan EIRs El Camino Real Streetscape Plan 2019
Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan	E-birds Database for Mountain View
Shoreline Burrowing Owl Preservation Plan 2012	Calflora and/or Calscape Database for Mountain View
North Bayshore Precise Plan 2014, including Appendix A, Biological Resources	California Natural Diversity Database
Parks and Open Space Plan 2014	Sea Level Rise Study
Pedestrian Master Plan 2014	Technical reports from Precise Plan EIRs
Community Tree Master Plan 2015	iNaturalist Database for Mountain View
Bicycle Transportation Plan 2015	Nature-Based Solutions Master Plan and Tree Strategy
Plant Palette Recommendations for the North Bayshore Precise Plan 2015	Historical Vegetation And Drainage Patterns of Western Santa Clara Valley (SFEI)

- Task 3: Existing Conditions—The consultant will examine and summarize existing conditions related to biodiversity in Mountain View. The consultant will identify distinct habitat zones and important features in order to establish key assets, needs, and priorities for biodiversity protection and improvement. This work will include scientific and technical analysis of threats and constraints, including barriers, existing land cover, fragmentation, and climate change. This analysis will summarize opportunities and strategies for biodiversity enhancement as it relates to landscaping, private development, enhancements to existing parks and suggestions for new parks, tree planting, green streets, wildlife corridors, park ecological restoration and habitat management, and providing tools and creative approaches to achieve biodiversity goals while achieving other critical City goals (such as housing, redevelopment, transportation, and infrastructure).
- Task 4: Vision and Goal Setting—The consultant will lead a participatory visioning process to develop the goals and desired outcomes of the Strategy and Urban Forest Plan. The efforts will include a visioning workshop with City staff as well as a community workshop with stakeholders and residents. The visioning process will build upon the priorities and opportunities identified in Task 3 and be firmly rooted in City needs and community values.
- Task 5: Recommendations for an Implementation and Evaluation Plan—The consultant will work with City staff to develop recommendations for an implementation and evaluation plan to include priority actions, such as parks, urban forestry, transportation, new development, private landownership, etc. The consultant will also develop science-based targets and success metrics to allow the City to measure progress toward achieving goals set in the Strategy.
- Task 6: Develop an Urban Forest Plan—The consultant will analyze information and data from Tasks 1 through 5 to develop an Urban Forest Plan which will focus on promoting biodiversity through tree planting, replacement, and protection. The consultant will review relevant landscaping and tree-related ordinances, policies, and procedures and provide recommended updates. The consultant will also review surrounding agencies' urban forest policies to identify best practices and background data and material that was part of the 2015 CTMP and 2021 CTMP update. The Urban Forest Plan will include guidelines that will inform ordinances related to landscaping and tree removal and planting in the City's Municipal Code.
- Task 7: Community Outreach and Engagement—The consultant will work collaboratively with City staff and the Public Outreach consultant to develop and implement a community engagement plan with opportunities for stakeholders and residents to provide input through meetings, website, surveys, messaging, and other tools.
- Task 8: Draft and Final Biodiversity Strategy—The consultant will prepare a highly graphical, compelling report that will highlight the engagement process and include key findings and

summarized deliverables in a format that will enable the document to reach a broad audience.

- (ADDED ALTERNATE) Task 9: City Street Tree List and Web-Based Tree Selection Tool—The consultant will research street tree options and develop a new City Street Tree List to align with the Urban Forest Plan in the Strategy. Criteria will be developed for preferred tree types and tree types to be considered for removal and replacement, and the list will be incorporated into an interactive web-based selection tool that will provide information and attributes about each species, including tree form, site requirements, issues, biodiversity support, maintenance needs, and ecosystem benefits. Inclusion of this task is dependent on project budget, including the final scope and costs for Tasks 1 to 8.

The Strategy will be developed in concurrence with other City plans, including the Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan, Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, and Active Transportation Plan. As mentioned, the Strategy will influence these plans as well as City policies, such as the ordinances in the City's Municipal Code related to landscaping, trees, lighting, etc.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will finalize the scope of work and bring a recommendation to Council on August 30, 2022 to authorize an agreement with SFEI to provide professional services for the development of a Biodiversity Strategy and Urban Forest Plan.

BS-JRM/AF/6/CSD

224-06-29-22M