

Flynn, Allison

From: Peking Lee
Sent: Wednesday, June 29, 2022 6:06 PM
To: Parks and Recreation Commission; jsmhome@comcast.net; Ronit Bryant; stevefilios@gmail.com; sandysommer@dslextreme.com; jongdavis@gmail.com
Cc: Marchant, John; Sylvia, Brenda; Youngberg, Tim; Lo, Ria; Whyte, Brandon; McCarthy, Kimbra; Glaser, Heather; Bruce England
Subject: GreenSpacesMV Comment on PRC 5.2 Biodiversity Strategy and Updated Urban Forest Plan
Attachments: 6-29-22 GreenSpacesMV Letter for PRC 5.2 Biodiversity and Updated Urban Forest Plan.pdf

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Dear Chair Bryant, Vice Chair Filios, and Parks and Recreation Commissioners,

On behalf of GreenSpacesMV, Bruce England and I are submitting our group's comments on today's PRC agenda item 5.2 Biodiversity Strategy Proposed Scope of Work, Including an Updated Urban Forest Plan.

We appreciate all the work on the City's first Biodiversity strategy and on enhancing our urban forest.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment!

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Peking Lee, she/her/hers



June 29, 2022

Re: 5.2 Biodiversity Strategy Scope of Work, Including an Updated Urban Forest Plan

Dear Chairperson Bryant, Vice Chair Filios, and Parks and Recreation Commissioners,

Thank you for working to enhance biodiversity and urban forestry in Mountain View. We are excited for the City's first Biodiversity Strategy.

Please consider incorporating the following comments and recommendations for the Strategy's scope of work.

Coordinate and align with other city projects currently in progress (Tasks 1 and 2).

We look forward to the Biodiversity Strategy and Urban Forest Plan to support the Sustainability and Climate Resilience strategic priority. We also believe that the Biodiversity Strategy and Urban Forest Plan can help advance other City strategic priorities like Livability & Quality of Life, Mobility & Connectivity, Economic Vitality, and Intentional Development & Housing Options.

- We understand the importance of SFEI's work for Biodiversity Strategy, Davey Resource Group's work for the 2021 CTMP Update, and Nelson\Nygaard's work for the Active Transportation Plan. We strongly support robust coordination of work in progress by them and others and alignment of anticipated outcomes.

We strongly support updating the City Street Tree List and developing a Web-Based Tree Selection Tool (Task 9).

- Please consider updating the City Street Tree List to be provided on a webpage, which could be more easily and quickly modified than when published in a PDF document, which can be challenging to navigate and find content.
- Tree characteristics should be categorized for understanding the value of different trees, and for determining the right trees for the right places. For example:
 - Shade trees for pedestrians that are an appropriate size and root structure to fit the planting place and avoid expensive road repair costs.
 - Listing of plant droppings to strategize for pedestrians and bicyclists.
 - Identification of and encouraging the planting of native trees.

- Trees that provide high habitat value (for identified species of insects and birds).
- An interactive selection tool will be immensely helpful in selecting trees that support biodiversity and other benefits to people, wildlife, and ecosystems; we are inspired by [Canopy's Tree Library](#) and [Cal Poly San Luis Obispo's SelecTree](#). Since these tools already exist, perhaps they can be considered by the City rather than developing a new tool. Tools such as these allow information to be dynamically updated as needed; plus, example images for each of the trees would be a great visual aid.
- In spite of the memorandum statement that "Inclusion of this task is dependent on project budget, including the final scope and costs for Tasks 1 to 8," the City currently enjoys a significant budget surplus, including through Federal funding such as the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). We are encouraged by some of our City Council members to work toward seeing this money used where applicable to achieve goals we're discussing here as shared by us and other stakeholders in the community.

Prioritize the Updated Urban Forest Plan (Tasks 5 and 6).

As the City is planning for parks, housing, and transportation infrastructure now, we are very eager to save existing healthy, mature trees in development projects and to plant more trees where needed most. We support native, drought-tolerant, pollinator-friendly trees and plants. We hope that when developing an Urban Forest Plan that the update will include the following:

- Explore funding opportunities for urban forestry enhancement, including increasing number of trees and providing incentives for shade trees for private projects and tree plantings in neighborhoods more vulnerable to urban heat island effects and climate impacts.
- Exploring funding opportunities to aid in the maintenance of street trees, and possibly allow private owners to apply for need based support for private tree maintenance.
- A database to track number, size, species of tree removals, reason for removal, replacements, and the total trees inventory for the city over time.

Add lighting and Hetch Hetchy Right of Way considerations to Background Review and Existing Conditions (Tasks 2 and 3).

As you likely know, GreenSpacesMV worked with a student group from the Presidio Graduate School Experiential Learning Program last year to develop proposals for revised lighting ordinances for our city. The goal of this project has been to update our ordinances for both public and private projects to reflect recommendations from the International Dark Sky Association and other relevant advisory organizations in the interests of wildlife and human-health protections. We are in the process of finalizing that documentation and will formally submit this to the City for consideration very shortly.

Historically, the City has faced challenges with gaining approval through the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission for changes and additions to Hetch Hetchy Right of Way areas in Mountain View. Nonetheless, it is in our interests to apply the guidelines provided in the new documentation you are developing to *all* parts of Mountain View, including these. Accordingly, we ask that you include the 2007 Feasibility Study for Extending Hetch-Hetchy Trail in your list of existing plans, studies, reports, and data. In spite of the age of the study, the details remain largely current. This material can help the City continue to strategize for these important and contiguous parts of what we consider our city, even if under external jurisdiction controls.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment!

Sincerely,

Peying Lee and Bruce England
for GreenSpacesMV

cc:

Brenda Sylvia, Assistant Community Services Director

John R. Marchant, Community Services Director

Tim Youngberg, Parks & Open Space Manager

Brandon Whyte, Active Transportation Planner

Ria Lo, Transportation Manager

Kimbra McCarthy, City Manager

Heather Glaser, City Clerk