

CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT OCTOBER 15, 2025

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1 Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan – DRAFT

RECOMMENDATION

That the Environmental Planning Commission review the draft Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan and provide feedback.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The Environmental Planning Commission's (EPC) agenda is advertised on Channel 26, and the agenda and this report appear on the City's website. In addition, notice of the meeting was shared on BiodiversityMV.com, the project website, and widely distributed to stakeholder groups, neighborhood associations, and community distribution lists, ensuring broad public awareness.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

On June 8, 2021, Council adopted the City's Strategic Roadmap with seven strategic priorities, including "Sustainability and Climate Resilience." Two projects identified for this priority included "Update the 2015 Community Tree Master Plan (CTMP) and review existing guiding policies and ordinances in coordination with the update," and "Define biodiversity requirements for landscaping in Mountain View".

Shortly after Council adopted the City's Strategic Roadmap, Community Services staff began simultaneously working on both projects— updating the CTMP with Davey Resource Group, the original consultant, and engaging with San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI), a firm with an established history of working with agencies to provide science-based research and environmental consulting services, to develop a Biodiversity Strategy. Based on input and feedback received from the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) and the public on the progress of the CTMP update, there was a desire for more robust changes than the modest revisions originally scheduled. Based on that feedback, staff identified an opportunity to include a new Urban Forest Plan in the Biodiversity Strategy. As a result, the two projects were combined, and staff partnered with SFEI to expand their scope of services to include

the development of a Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan (Plan) built on science-based guidance and community needs, values and priorities.

The Plan will be the first of its kind in the Bay Area to provide a clear set of priorities, goals, and objectives for increasing and supporting biodiversity for the long-term future, and it integrates and updates the 2015 CTMP into a broader vision and blueprint for the management and enhancement of the urban forest in Mountain View.

Prior Meetings

- June 29, 2022 - City staff presented the PRC with a proposed scope of work for the Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan project consultant, SFEI, and the PRC provided feedback.
- February 14, 2023 – The SFEI presented to the PRC an overview of the project, including team introductions, tasks and milestones, goals, progress to date, and next steps.
- June 14, 2023 – The SFEI provided the PRC with a project status update that listed completed tasks and gave an overview of the public outreach and engagement process.
- Following this, the project timeline included a pause to reassess the outreach and engagement approach, ensuring it was thoughtful, robust, well-timed, collaborative, and aligned with the City's values and vision for the project.
- June 12, 2024 - City staff provided the PRC with a project update that included the schedule of activities planned for the community outreach and engagement process. At this meeting, the PRC provided feedback on the proposed outreach approach.
- September 11, 2024 – The SFEI presented the PRC with project research findings, initial outreach feedback, and the development of a public survey. The presentation also introduced the preliminary draft vision, goals, and objectives for the Plan, and the PRC provided feedback to help guide the next phase of work.

ANALYSIS

Development of a Citywide Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan was again included as a Sustainability and Climate Resiliency initiative in the City Council's adopted Fiscal Years 2023-2025 Strategic Work Plan. City staff have been steadily working with SFEI to develop

a Plan that recommends ways to address vegetation, wildlife habitat, and trees in city processes, projects, ordinances and future development, to promote environmental sustainability, climate resiliency and overall health benefits.

City Project Team

A City Project Team was established to support the development, facilitation, review, and implementation of the Plan. The team is comprised of staff from multiple departments and divisions, including Community Services, Public Works, Community Development, and Sustainability. The team has played an important part throughout each step of the project, including providing information and materials for the background review and existing conditions analysis, assisting with community engagement events and activities, providing draft reviews and feedback, and participating in meetings and discussions, including an Implementation Workshop led by SFEI to help identify actions and metrics for the Plan. The draft Plan reflects the collaboration and contributions of the City Project Team.

Community Outreach and Engagement

The outreach process for the Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan was intentional and inclusive, using creative and collaborative approaches to reach a wide cross-section of the community. This engagement ensured the Plan reflects diverse perspectives and local priorities. The process included three (3) pop-up events, six (6) workshops—including a fully translated workshop for Spanish- and Mandarin-speaking residents, a public survey with over 500 responses, and additional engagement such as sharing information at neighborhood association ice cream socials and block parties and at City special events including Monster Bash and Tree Lighting, providing an interactive ideas portal on the project webpage, and using eye-catching signage and giveaways to generate interest and participation.

The final workshop was a two-hour event stakeholders that drew 40 participants. Designed for community members, volunteers and stakeholders with technical expertise or a strong interest in biodiversity and the urban forest, the workshop featured breakout discussions on topics such as “Designing and Planting around the Built Environment,” “Incorporating Habitat for Biodiversity into Transportation and Transit,” and “Protecting Spaces for Nature.” Participants shared ideas, identified key themes, and submitted recommendations for consideration in the Plan.

The City publicly posted the draft Plan 10 days before the October 8, 2025 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting and invited feedback through a few guiding “prompt” questions highlighting areas where additional input was most valuable. This participatory approach gave the public the opportunity to thoroughly review the draft and provide thoughtful feedback to help shape the final Plan. Beyond the standard agenda posting, the

notice was shared on the City and project websites, BiodiversityMV.com, and widely distributed to stakeholder groups, neighborhood associations, and community distribution lists, ensuring broad public awareness. Together, these outreach efforts—from large community events and multilingual workshops to targeted stakeholder discussions and early public review—created a comprehensive process that reflects both technical expertise and community priorities.

Draft Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan: Vision, Goals, and Actions

The draft Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan outlines the following long-term vision for Mountain View: “Mountain View envisions a healthy, connected, and resilient urban ecosystem with abundant access to nature and its benefits, for people and native species alike.”

At this stage, the draft Plan consists solely of content and does not include graphic design or layout elements. A designed version of the Plan will be prepared and introduced later in the draft review process.

1. Connect People and Nature

- Support a network of connected green space across the City.
- Foster a cultural shift that spotlights biodiversity and integrates it into Mountain View’s sense of place.

2. Foster Places of Refuge

- Foster a healthier built environment for nature and people.
- Balance opportunities for community enjoyment of nature with the needs of native species.

3. Build Resilience

- Grow, protect, and care for a resilient urban forest, continuing progress towards the goal of 22.7% canopy cover by 2030.
- Support quality habitat that sustains a diversity of life.
- Use greening opportunities to adapt to future climate conditions.

4. Activate and Collaborate

- Activate and collaborate with the community.
- Activate and collaborate with design practitioners and large landowners.
- Enhance collaboration across City departments to optimize implementation of the Plan through City programs, projects, operations, and maintenance.
- Coordinate with other agencies to identify opportunities for aligning visions and collaborating on initiatives that enhance shared natural resources.

Overall, the Plan provides a roadmap of short, medium, and long-term priorities to enhance biodiversity, expand tree canopy cover, and integrate nature into the City's fabric while balancing community needs.

Evaluation: Metrics and Targets

The draft Plan establishes a framework of metrics and quantitative targets to track progress toward its goals and objectives. These metrics are aligned with international best practices and adapted to local conditions, positioning Mountain View as a leader in applying cutting-edge science to urban biodiversity.

Two types of metrics are:

- **Recommended metrics** that can be implemented immediately using data the City already collects (e.g., citywide tree canopy cover, number of public trees planted, acres of landscaping converted to native habitat, biodiversity-themed installations, and community participation in programs).
- **Supplemental metrics** that could be pursued in the future as resources allow (e.g., native species richness, percent of native bird species in urban areas, acres restored for native habitat, wildlife-friendly lighting, and staff time dedicated to biodiversity work).

Targets serve as measurable "goalposts" for these metrics. The Plan carries forward and builds on several targets from the 2015 CTMP, including:

- Achieving 22.7% citywide tree canopy cover by 2030 (up from 17.7% reported in the 2015 CTMP; as of 2022 the canopy is at 19.5%).
- Planting 1,575 additional public trees by 2030 and expanding private tree planting through initiatives such as Arbor Day giveaways.
- Increasing shade tree planting in parking areas to shade at least 40% of the paved parking areas as measured at 20 year.

Together, the metrics and targets create a structured system to monitor progress, adapt to challenges, and demonstrate accountability while ensuring the Plan remains responsive to evolving community priorities and environmental conditions.

EPC INPUT

Staff is requesting EPC input on the following:

- Does the EPC have any feedback on the following areas to better align the Plan with the City's priorities?
 - The Plan's Action items and priority levels (page 77)
 - Performance metrics and targets (page 98)

NEXT STEPS

The EPC is asked to review the draft Plan and provide feedback. This version of the draft plan focuses solely on content and does not include design or formatting. The draft Plan will be brought to the City Council for review in April 2026 and adoption in June 2026.

Figure 1 summarizes the steps in the draft review and adoption process



Figure 1: Expected Draft Review and Adoption Timeline

Prepared by:

Brenda Sylvia
Assistant Community Services Director

Lindsay Wong
Senior Management Analyst

Approved by:

John Marchant
Community Services Director

Exhibits: 1. Draft Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan