



Community Services Department

DATE: January 21, 2026

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Brenda Sylvia, Assistant Community Services Director
Lindsay Wong, Senior Management Analyst
John R. Marchant, Community Services Director

SUBJECT: **Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan - Updated Draft Review and Recommendation**

RECOMMENDATION

Review the updated draft Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan (Plan), provide feedback, and forward a recommendation to the City Council to adopt the Plan.

BACKGROUND

On October 8, 2025, the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) reviewed the draft Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan and provided feedback on the Plan's vision, structure, actions, metrics, and implementation approach. The PRC's input, along with feedback received from the public and the Environmental Planning Commission on October 15, 2025, informed revisions that have been incorporated into the updated draft.

As previously described, the Plan integrates and expands upon the 2015 Community Tree Master Plan (CTMP), and establishes a comprehensive, science-based framework for advancing biodiversity, strengthening the urban forest, and enhancing climate resiliency across Mountain View. The Plan aligns with the City Council's Strategic Roadmap and Fiscal Years 2023–2025 Strategic Work Plan priorities related to Sustainability and Climate Resilience.

Following the October 8, 2025 PRC meeting, City staff worked closely with San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) to revise the draft Plan to reflect PRC input and direction, reinforce City ownership and accountability, and include an implementation framework that clarifies the feasibility and priority of the action items.

ANALYSIS

The updated draft Plan reflects targeted revisions in response to PRC, EPC, and public feedback on the previous draft that was presented in October 2025. The changes in this updated draft Plan are summarized below.

Strengthened, Clarified, and Corrected Content Across Plan

What Changed:

Language throughout the document was revised to reflect City ownership and accountability.

Directive language was strengthened by replacing conditional terms such as “could” with “should,” or “will”, where appropriate.

Text changes were made to clarify and strengthen language throughout the Plan, particularly in Chapter 5 (e.g., the overused word “prioritize” was replaced with clearer, implementation-focused language).

Repurposed executive summary content into a new section called “A Word from the City.”

“Near-native” species was added to the Definitions section.

Additional references were incorporated related to trade-offs to advancing biodiversity and trees, including invasive species, pollen considerations, and pest pressures.

Some visuals were updated for accuracy and to highlight key City information and reference points.

Updated the estimate of public versus private tree canopy cover in Chapter 3.2. The original estimate reported tree canopy cover on private property, not accounting for management type. The new estimate accounts for the fact that some trees on private property are publicly-managed (e.g., trees in the right-of-way), which this Plan considers “public trees.”

Result:

With these revisions, the Plan more explicitly functions as a City policy document and implementation framework, not a consultant recommendation, and better communicates the City’s long-term commitment to biodiversity and the urban forest. The improved clarity and accuracy enhance the Plan’s usability, support clearer implementation pathways, and directly address PRC feedback related to clarity, practicality, and long-term maintenance.

Chapter 5 Revisions

What Changed:

The vision statement was simplified and strengthened to be more direct, accessible, and inspirational.

Chapter 5 was expanded to include an implementation framework that clarifies leadership, interdepartmental roles, and responsibility for carrying out Plan actions.

A concise implementation matrix was created based on the “Implementation: Vision to Action” framework, grouping actions by short, medium, and long-term timeframes and identifying relative cost ranges.

The “Short-Term” priority category was expanded upon to include “In Progress” and “Upon Plan Adoption” to better reflect current City efforts and near-term actions.

Some action items were refined to create a more focused and realistic set of priorities, addressing concerns that the original list was too long.

Action 18 was expanded to include private landowners, nurseries, landscapers, and contractors, with associated partnership efforts. Language was added to Action 18 to further address privately-managed trees, including potential outreach, programs, data collection, and platforms.

Action 22 was expanded to include the collection of baseline data necessary to establish the recommended metrics in the Target-Setting Worksheet in Guide D, as well as the development of a system for tracking and reporting.

Metrics related to maintenance and care of existing trees were added, complementing metrics focused on new tree planting.

Result:

The revised implementation and action framework is more achievable, transparent, and aligned with available City resources, while still advancing ambitious long-term goals.

NEXT STEPS

If the Parks and Recreation Commission recommends the updated draft Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan, staff will forward the Plan to the City Council for review and input on April 28, 2026, followed by consideration of adoption on June 23, 2026. Upon adoption, staff will begin implementation consistent with the phased priorities, metrics, and actions outlined in the Plan.

Attachments: 1. Updated Draft Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan