

AGENDA INFORMATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regular Meeting	Date: June 21, 2021
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Dept. Manager	GM/ Director	CAO
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The District of North Vancouver REPORT TO COUNCIL

June 8, 2021

File:

AUTHOR: Megan Curren

SUBJECT: Biodiversity Action Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council support a Biodiversity Action Plan as an overarching strategy for monitoring, protecting, enhancing and restoring biodiversity and natural systems in the District of North Vancouver;

AND THAT staff are directed to report back to Council on the Biodiversity Action Plan.

REASON FOR REPORT:

In July 2019, Council unanimously declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency and called for transformative action. The District of North Vancouver has not yet adopted a Biodiversity Action Plan to provide a coordinated response to the biodiversity and ecological crises. The need for a coordinated strategy was identified in the Official Community Plan and the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. While the District has demonstrated leadership through implementation of a number of environmental initiatives over the years, a coordinated strategy is required to advance the District's leadership in a structured, strategic, and accountable way.

SUMMARY:

Habitat fragmentation, urban tree canopy loss, trail degradation/management, equitable/sustainable access to nature, species decline, invasive species, species protection, watershed health, poor forest health, climate change impacts (forest fires, increased heat, flooding), human/wildlife conflicts, pesticides, rodenticides, plastics and pollution are frequently cited concerns in our community. All of these concerns are connected to biodiversity and its role in sustaining all life.

The Official Community Plan defines biodiversity as the diverse forms of life and the habitats and natural processes that support them and form the ecosystems that sustain life on this planet. Biodiversity is the foundation of the ecological services we depend on, such as photosynthesis, oxygen, the purification of air and water, and pollination of crops.

Biodiversity is vital for human existence. It supplies us with the basic necessities for life like food, water, energy and building materials. It also contributes to our quality of life and wellbeing, enhances our sense of place and provides us with natural beauty. The survival of

humanity entirely depends on a balanced and harmonious relationship with nature. (*Sources: IPBES, National Environmental Treasure/Our Safety Net.*)

A Biodiversity Strategy is vital for many reasons including:

- Creating a baseline of current health of biodiversity and monitoring progress over time;
- Embedding biodiversity and ecological health considerations within and among all departments, bylaws, policies, and in staff/council reports;
- Integrating climate action in the Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) with ecological protection/restoration;
- Reporting and transparency;
- Quantifying benefits and value of natural assets to inform policy and planning;
- Integrating Indigenous Knowledge/Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) into District practice;
- Coordinating biodiversity strategies with Tsleil-Waututh Nation, Squamish Nation, the District of West Vancouver, City of North Vancouver and Metro Vancouver;
- Aligning policies with Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES);
- Educating and engaging community members and fostering biodiversity awareness;
- Fulfilling the mandate of the Climate Action Committee to enhance natural areas, preserve ecosystems, and increase biodiversity;
- Fulfilling the objectives of the Official Community Plan and the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy;
- Informing advocacy for policy changes at the provincial and federal level;
- Promoting positive physical and mental health;
- Adapting to climate change, improving resilience, reducing infrastructure costs;
- Informing green/blue infrastructure policies/priorities; and,
- Integrating programs and certifications including Bird Friendly Cities (Nature Canada), Creating Safe Cities for Salmon, Butterflyway Pollinator project (David Suzuki Foundation), etc.

The newly formed Climate Action, Natural Systems, and Biodiversity department is ideally suited to champion this work through collaboration with other departments including, but not limited to, Finance, Environment, Engineering, Planning and Parks.

BACKGROUND:

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) issued an urgent call to action in 2019 with the release of The Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. The report included 150 selected experts from all regions of the world, including 16 early career fellows, assisted by 350 contributing authors. More than 15,000 scientific publications were analyzed as well as a substantive body of Indigenous and local knowledge. (*Source: IPBES*)

“The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide. It is not too late to make a difference, but only if we start now at every level from local to global. Through ‘transformative change’, nature can

still be conserved, restored and used sustainably – this is also key to meeting most other global goals. By transformative change, we mean a fundamental, system-wide reorganization across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values.” (Watson, IPBES, Chair)

EXISTING POLICY:

The Climate Change Adaptation Strategy adopted in 2017 indicated that a number of areas in the District would benefit from a strategic approach to ensuring ecological integrity and called for a Biodiversity Conservation strategy.

Area-specific guidelines within a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy are needed to identify these areas and recommend management options, such as acquiring sensitive areas, restoring existing lands with native species, or increasing connectivity between biodiversity hubs. (Source: Climate Change Adaptation Strategy)

The Official Community Plan Section 9: Environmental Management and Section 10: Climate Action are both connected to a Biodiversity Action Plan.

Section 9.1 of the Official Community Plan is dedicated to Biodiversity and indicates that the District’s objective is to “protect the ecological integrity of our diverse ecosystems” and includes the following:

- Identify and map ecologically important features and develop an Ecological Management Strategy to protect these features;
- Manage land uses to protect the ecological values of parkland while providing recreational opportunities;
- Consider the acquisition of environmentally sensitive areas for addition to the parkland system;
- Encourage and facilitate the protection of rare, endangered and vulnerable species and ecosystems through habitat management, enhancement and restoration;
- Use conservation tools including covenants, eco-gifting, land trusts and tax incentives to conserve lands supporting biodiversity on private property where appropriate;
- Facilitate the connection and restoration of ecologically important areas, natural features, and urban habitat areas to create a comprehensive network of diverse habitats and wildlife corridors within the District;
- Promote environmentally friendly landscaping practices through the development review process and through stewardship initiatives;
- Develop and implement an integrated invasive species management strategy, with partners, to reduce the spread of invasive species;
- Support measures to prevent conflict between people and wildlife through community education initiatives and enhancements to wildlife corridors; and,
- Collaborate with other levels of government, First Nations governments, and community organizations to identify, manage and conserve ecologically important areas.

Relevant DNV Bylaws and Policies:

- Official Community Plan;
- Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP);

- Climate Change Adaptation Strategy;
- Integrated Stormwater Management Plan;
- Pesticide Use Control Bylaw;
- Natural Environment Development Permit Area (DPA);
- Streamside Protection Development Permit Area (DPA);
- Invasive Plant Management Strategy;
- Parks and Open Space Strategic Plan;
- Tree Protection Bylaw;
- Zoning and Building Bylaws;
- Environmental Protection and Preservation Bylaw; and,
- Sediment and Erosion Control.

Conclusion:

A Biodiversity Action Plan will provide a response to the unanimously declared Climate and Ecological Emergency (July 2019) and will enable the District of North Vancouver to begin with a science and evidence-informed baseline, and to track the health of biodiversity and natural systems over time. Additionally, a Biodiversity Action Plan will advance the objectives of the Official Community Plan and the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and will provide an integrated framework for all policy and action that relates to biodiversity and natural systems.

Options:

1. That council support the motion for Biodiversity Action Plan, as presented.
2. That council not support the motion for a Biodiversity Action Plan.

Respectfully submitted,



Megan Curren
Councillor

REVIEWED WITH:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Planning | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Development Planning | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Development Engineering | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering Operations | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parks | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Review and Compliance | _____ |

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Clerk's Office | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Services | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ITS | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Solicitor | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GIS | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bylaw Services | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planning | _____ |

External Agencies:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Library Board | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NS Health | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RCMP | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NVRC | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Museum & Arch. | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | _____ |