

# Durban Commitment for Biodiversity

## Recommendation:

That the Durban Commitment on Biodiversity, including the Countdown 2010 Declaration and Edmonton's specific biodiversity targets, be endorsed.

## Report Summary

**This report outlines Edmonton's commitment, as a member of the international Local Action for Biodiversity initiative, to endorse the Durban Commitment on Biodiversity, and by extension, the Countdown 2010 Declaration and Edmonton's specific biodiversity targets.**

## Report

This report presents:

1. An overview of Edmonton's commitments through the Local Action for Biodiversity initiative.
  2. An overview of the Durban Commitment on Biodiversity.
  3. An overview of the Countdown 2010 Declaration.
  4. An overview of Edmonton's proposed biodiversity targets.
1. Local Action for Biodiversity
    - Edmonton is one of 21 international cities participating in the Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) program, an ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability) initiative to engage municipal governments in the conservation of urban biodiversity.
    - Participation in the LAB initiative includes a commitment by each city to sign the Durban Commitment

(Commitment) on Biodiversity in September 2008, in Durban, South Africa. To date, eight of the 21 LAB cities have formally endorsed the Durban Commitment.

2. Durban Commitment on Biodiversity
  - The Durban Commitment is a declaration that acknowledges threats to urban biodiversity and the importance of its protection. (See Attachment 1).
  - Cities that endorse the Commitment declare their intention to conserve and enhance urban biodiversity and to integrate biodiversity considerations into governance and planning.
  - Through endorsement of the Commitment, cities also express their support for the Countdown 2010 Declaration.
3. Countdown 2010 Declaration
  - Countdown 2010 is an initiative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) with a target to halt or significantly reduce the loss of global biodiversity by 2010. (See Attachment 2).
  - Cities that endorse the Countdown 2010 Declaration commit both to supporting this global target and to setting their own local targets to conserve biodiversity.
4. Edmonton's Biodiversity Targets

The following local biodiversity targets are proposed for Edmonton:

By 2015, the City of Edmonton, working with our partners will:

  1. Secure ten significant natural areas that contribute to the city-wide ecological network.

2. Engage Edmontonians in ten demonstration projects that support biodiversity, strengthen the ecological network, and foster a culture of stewardship. (See Attachment 3).

### **Policy**

This recommendation complies with the Natural Areas Systems Policy (C-531) and the Environmental Policy (C-512).

### **Focus Area**

This report relates to the focus area of 'Environment' and the strategic issue of 'Healthy Ecosystem.'

### **Public Consultation**

The Natural Areas Advisory Committee (NAAC) provided extensive input into the development of Edmonton's biodiversity targets. The NAAC is comprised of seven citizens at large, as well as representatives from the University of Alberta, the Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Edmonton, Government of Alberta, and the Urban Development Institute.

### **Budget/Financial Implications**

Funding needed to meet Edmonton's biodiversity targets will be acquired through the annual budgeting process between 2009 and 2015.

### **Justification of Recommendation**

The endorsement of the Durban Commitment for Biodiversity fulfills one of Edmonton's commitments as a member of the Local Action for Biodiversity initiative.

### **Attachments**

1. Durban Commitment: Local Governments for Biodiversity
2. Countdown 2010 Declaration

3. Edmonton's Biodiversity Targets

### **Others Approving this Report**

- J. Tustian, Deputy City Manager, Office of the City Manager

## The Durban Commitment: Local Governments for Biodiversity

**The Durban Commitment: Local Governments for Biodiversity** was developed, founded and signed by 21 Local Action for Biodiversity Local Governments:

- Barcelona City Council (Spain)
- City of Amsterdam (Netherlands)
- City of Bonn (Germany)
- City of Cape Town (South Africa)
- City of Curitiba (Brazil)
- City of Edmonton (Canada)
- City of Johannesburg (South Africa)
- City of Joondalup (Australia)
- City of Nagoya (Japan)
- City of Tilburg (Netherlands)
- City of Zagreb (Croatia)
- eThekweni Municipality (South Africa)
- Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality (South Africa)
- Île de France (France)
- King County (U.S.A)
- Leicester City Council (England)
- Liverpool City Council (Australia)
- Municipality of Walvis Bay (Namibia)
- São Paulo City Hall (Brazil)
- Seoul Metropolitan Government (South Korea)
- Waitakere City Council (New Zealand)

as a commitment and model by local government, for local government and the communities they serve, to protect and enhance biodiversity at the local level.

**1. By signing this Commitment,** ..... joins these leading local governments from across the world as a partner and we acknowledge accountability and responsibility for the health and well-being of our communities through protecting, sustainably utilizing and managing biodiversity and recognizing its role as the foundation of our existence.

This Commitment recognizes that biodiversity is the variety of life on earth on which human well-being is dependent and that biodiversity provides ecosystem services that underpin all of our community's needs. Furthermore, it recognizes that the value of biodiversity is multi-faceted—including ecological, economic, tourism, recreational, environmental, heritage, stewardship, spiritual, intrinsic, medicinal, nutritional, health, educational, scientific, cultural and social dimensions.

**2. Through signing this Commitment we acknowledge that:**

2.1 Biodiversity is increasingly under pressure with unprecedented rates of loss due to human activities including the over-consumption of natural resources;

2.2 Increasing global trends towards urbanization are placing increased direct pressure on biodiversity at both the local area level and globally through increased resource consumption and ecological footprints;

- 2.3 The impacts of climate change on biodiversity pattern and process will be significant and therefore we need to build appropriate programmes to address, mitigate and adapt to these changes;
- 2.4 Future sustainable development and human well-being are dependent on our ability to meet the biodiversity challenges we face;
- 2.5 Ecosystem services can play an important role in poverty alleviation and as a result the consequences of biodiversity loss and ecosystem disruption are harshest for the poor;
- 2.6 It is our collective responsibility to reverse the current trends of biodiversity loss; and
- 2.7 Local government, which works most closely with communities and biodiversity, has a critical role and responsibility (globally, nationally and locally) to ensure that biodiversity is conserved, protected, restored and sustainably used for the benefit of current and future generations.
- 3. By signing this Commitment** we commit to promoting, increasing and enhancing biodiversity within our administrative area and recognize that our ecological footprint extends beyond our administrative area: we will therefore integrate biodiversity considerations into all aspects of our governance and development planning.
- 4. By signing this Commitment we declare our intention to:**
- 4.1 Regularly publish *biodiversity reports* on the state of biodiversity within our administrative area and our progress in protecting biodiversity, which will stand as public record;
- 4.2 Contribute towards the formulation of globally relevant local authority biodiversity good practice guidelines;
- 4.3 Develop and implement a long-term local *biodiversity strategy* for our administrative area and governance practices, which will address, for example:
- 4.3.1 The consideration of biodiversity in all aspects of local planning including, amongst other things: land-use planning, mobility planning, economic development planning, and conservation planning;
- 4.3.2 The management of natural areas and green spaces, including the restoration and rehabilitation of degraded natural areas and the control of invasive species;
- 4.3.3 The provision of municipal services, including fresh and waste water treatment, energy generation and housing;

4.3.4 Public procurement strategies, including purchasing of eco-certified goods and services and the ban of hazardous products;

4.3.5 Social development including poverty alleviation and job creation;

4.3.6 Awareness-raising of the value of biodiversity and the need for its protection in all sectors of society;

4.3.7 Stakeholder participation in all relevant aspects of local biodiversity governance; and

4.3.8 The inclusion of biodiversity in city partnerships and cooperation projects with public and private partners.

4.4 Remain committed to ongoing implementation of that long-term local *biodiversity strategy* through the enactment of guiding policies;

4.5 Actively engage with, and ensure participation and involvement of all stakeholders; and

4.6 Actively participate in the ICLEI Local Action for Biodiversity Initiative as the global network of local governments for biodiversity.

**5. As a local government, we support** efforts to promote greater recognition by national governments and international bodies of the critical role local government plays in protecting biodiversity at the local and global level. We recognize our own role within the global environment and by signing this Commitment we entrench our dedication to global biodiversity. We recognize the need to contribute actively to the implementation of the objectives of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and the objectives of the 2010 biodiversity target, adopted at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and a part of the Millennium Development Goals, aimed at reducing the rate of loss of biodiversity on our planet. We entrench our dedication to global biodiversity by becoming a formal partner to Countdown 2010 (if not already a partner) and by signing the Countdown 2010 Declaration, thereby committing to its targets, goals, objectives and principles.

## Countdown 2010 Declaration

Biodiversity - the web of life on earth - is essential to the quality of human well-being, and it is a crucial element in sustaining the social, economic and spiritual dimension of all societies worldwide. Yet, biodiversity continues to decline. Political commitments have been made to stop this trend by 2010. Further steps need to be taken to honour this commitment and to translate it into action.

### **We the undersigned will take every practical opportunity to:**

**Support** the commitments to halt or significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010, made by:

- World Environment Ministers in the Hague Ministerial Declaration of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in the Netherlands 2002;
- World Heads of State in the Plan of Implementation at the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002;
- World Heads of State in the United Nations World Summit Outcome in New York 2005;
- a number of biodiversity related conventions and regional processes since 2001.

**Encourage** decision makers at all levels, in both the public and the private sector, to contribute to these commitments and to:

- Increase public awareness and participation for biodiversity conservation, including the promotion of exemplary activities towards the 2010 biodiversity target;
- Better integrate biodiversity considerations into all relevant sectors of public policy and economy;
- Undertake serious efforts to adapt human activities to the needs of natural systems;
- Support the development of suitable monitoring and indicator tools to assess the state of biodiversity.

**Commit** ourselves to encourage and assist decision makers and societies in achieving the 2010 biodiversity target, notably through:

- Actively promoting Countdown 2010 to focus attention and mobilise resources for achieving the 2010 biodiversity target;
- Significantly reducing our own impact on biodiversity.

**In particular**, we will: *(insert local biodiversity target(s) here)*

## Edmonton's Biodiversity Targets

**By 2015, the City of Edmonton, working with our partners, will:**

**1. Secure 10 significant natural areas that contribute to our city-wide ecological network.**

In selecting the 10 natural areas, emphasis will be placed on those areas that are significant because:

- they are of suitable size and quality to provide conditions that support entire populations of animals and plants and associated ecological processes, *or*
- they *connect* other natural areas in support of a functioning ecological network.

The areas selected will contribute to local and regional ecological connectivity. As well, the City will attempt to ensure that all of Edmonton's habitat types are represented and to achieve an even distribution of secured areas throughout the city. Where possible, these areas will be above and beyond those that the City is able to acquire through the current planning process – in other words, they will be areas that the City would not otherwise take as Municipal or Environmental Reserve lands.

Examples of natural areas that would be considered significant include: McConachie, Schonsee, Rapperswill, Hamptons and Big Lake. The natural areas to be secured will be identified by the City's Parks Branch, and approved by the Natural Areas Policy Implementation Committee.

This commitment supports the following *Natural Connections* Strategic Plan goal: *The City of Edmonton will secure a protected and functional ecological network.*

**2. Engage Edmontonians in 10 demonstration projects that showcase how we can support biodiversity, strengthen our ecological network, and foster a culture of stewardship.**

The demonstration projects selected will represent a range of conservation models, including partnerships, education and community engagement in management activities.

Emphasis will be on innovative and effective approaches to biodiversity protection that are successfully achieved through partnerships and engage a large number of Edmontonians. The goal will be to build a culture of stewardship in Edmonton that will extend beyond the life of this commitment. All of the projects should support the development and/or maintenance of our ecological network. The projects will be identified by the City's Parks Branch, and approved by the Natural Areas Policy Implementation Committee.

Examples might include:

- City-developer cost-sharing of the purchase of a natural area
- The application of ecological principles to the design of a new neighbourhood
- A community-driven naturalization project
- The engagement of post-secondary students in the design of a naturalized public greenway
- An interpretive signage project at a local natural area
- The collaboration of municipalities in the region on the development of a regional conservation plan
- The development and implementation of a Master Naturalist Program to engage Edmontonians directly in the management of our natural areas

This commitment supports the following *Natural Connections* Strategic Plan goals: *The City of Edmonton will manage Edmonton's ecological network effectively and will work collaboratively with other conservation agencies to do so, and The City of Edmonton will work with the community to support conservation goals, and will form partnerships with conservation leaders in the community.*