



Recommendations from the Native Plants and Pesticide- Reduction Subcommittee

Presented by Commissioners Allen, McGuire, and Ranney
September 27, 2023



Agenda

- Subcommittee Objectives
- Review of relevant city referrals and commitments
- Recommendations for further action
- Next Steps

The role of Native Plants in Berkeley

Native plants and pollinator habitats are an important – and visible – element of Berkeley's commitment to environmental and climate action.

Native plants (plants that evolved to live in this region) promote biodiversity of insects and birds and make Berkeley more resilient to extreme weather events.

They are low-maintenance; this reduces the noise and emissions of lawn mowers, water demand, and the expense of regular upkeep.

Integrated into the city, they serve as a visual reminder that Berkeley is taking action to address climate change rather than ignore it.

Process

Meeting with Eryn Diehm, Park, Recreation and Waterfront Commissioner, vocal supporter of native plants.

Plant and maintain a native garden as a volunteer with Transition Berkeley.

Adopt a traffic circle.

Meeting with Margo Schueler, West Berkeley, in dialogue regarding trees on Ninth Street.





Existing Referrals and Commitments

September 24, 2019, Pollinators and Habitat Referrals from Councilmembers Harrison, Wengraf and Bartlett to the Mayor and Members of the City Council - Liaison to Bee City program, Adopt-A-Spot, transition medians to non-turf.

April 12, 2022, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 70,301-N.S., requiring Native & Drought Resistant Plants in all City Landscaping. The guidelines highlight the important role of native plants and pollinators and require these plants in the landscaping of City property *where possible*.

Proposed further recommendations to Council



Update Municipal Code to Incorporate Native Plants

Title 23 of the Municipal Code consists of the City's existing Zoning Ordinance, which includes requirements for open space, usable open space, public open space and landscaped areas. These requirements and associated definitions should be reviewed for opportunities to require native plants.

Will include example of text changes.

And/or - ask Planning Commission to address as minor text edit



Update Municipal Code to Address Pervious Surfaces and Increase Available Planting Areas

The City's existing Zoning Ordinance does not include a requirement for pervious areas. Increasing pervious surfaces would increase available planting areas and could reduce the urban heat island effect as well as runoff.

Will include example of text changes to Lot Coverage.



Include Native Plants in Standard Specifications

Require Native Plants in Standard Specifications for Projects Implemented by Public Works and Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Divisions



Update Tree Planting Standards

The Urban Forestry staff determines the location and species of any trees to be planted in the City right-of-way. From staff “...We take measure measurements, observe obstacles (infrastructure, soil qualities, traffic, etc.), and consider the optimized canopy shape for a future tree. We also take into account the existing legacy species on the block, if applicable.”

Will request the addition of prioritization natives which support a high number lepidoptera species (an order of insects that includes butterflies and moths).

If not a fit for tree, require another larger pollinator.



Mapping Habitat Pilot Programs

Adopt-a-Spot, Native Plant Pollinator Program, Trees Make Life Better Program

Request update on Pilot Programs that feature native plantings

Request mapping to locate future suitable sites for Pilot programs



Replacement of non-native turf with native turf or groundcover

Request an update from City Staff on the outcomes of citywide irrigation control system installation undertaken as a project in Measure T1

Request an update from City Staff on Resolution 70,301's incorporation into Measure T1 and Measure F projects

Where non-native grass is planted and needs significant maintenance or replacement in parks, large medians, and other spaces, it should be replaced with an appropriate native plant that allows for continuation of existing use if so desired.



Consider and Implement Other Opportunities for Incorporation of Native Plants

Request update on Bee City USA Liaison

Consider joining No Mow May



Next Steps

- Present to other Commissions for input:
 - Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront
 - Transportation
- Review written referral (incorporating feedback from today) in October or November ECC Commission meeting
- Ask city staff to consider equity impacts of these referrals and existing programs
- Follow status of AB57 (CA Pocket Forest Initiative) and other potential resources