

ASSET TARGETS

NATURAL AREAS



Increasing the diversity of landscapes in parks—including pollinator meadows and wetlands—will better support local biodiversity and offer more diverse experiences in nature.

There are opportunities to expand habitat, restore ecosystems, and improve access to nature throughout the city. There is strong public interest in having more wild spaces in the parks system and in improving stewardship of natural areas. In addition to making big strides in the ecological health of the city, environmental stewardship offers opportunities to recreate through volunteerism and builds social capital through care of natural areas by residents in their leisure time.

This work reflects and is supported by robust strategy; Biodiversity Strategy (2016), Urban Forest Strategy (2014, 2018), Bird Strategy (2015), Water Conservation Action Plan (2017), Environmental Education and Stewardship Action Plan (2014). The following needs are intended to support implementation of this work.

Asset Needs

- Increase the proportion of naturalised areas in the parks system and expand the variety of ecosystems in all park typologies to improve biodiversity, increase connectivity, and increase access to nature throughout the city, with a focus on Initiative Zones (see Equity Chapter).
- Provide enhanced ecological connectivity for birds, pollinators, insects and urban wildlife between natural areas through wildlife corridors and flyways.
- Map the various landscape types and opportunities to access nature with the goal of providing access to a naturally-managed area of at least 0.4 ha (1 acre) within a 10-minute walk of all residents.

NOTES:

The Biodiversity Strategy set an asset target to restore or enhance 25 ha of natural area by 2020, which has now been met. "Natural areas" include marine/shoreline, wetlands, riparian, forested areas and intertidal zones, natural managed areas in parks and street ROW.

- Inventory and map the existing naturally managed areas to identify opportunities to increase wild spaces in parks. Integrate these findings into the upcoming horticultural standards study.
- Create an Invasive Species Policy to establish an integrated approach to managing established and emerging invasive species in parks.
- Establish principles for the integration of green infrastructure in parks where it brings overall benefits to the park and park users, but avoids loss of usable parkland to infrastructure.

Service Needs

- Support reconciliation through learning and incorporating First Nations ways of knowing and co-management of lands.
- Increase the opportunity for community stewardship of existing natural areas.
- Preserve and balance public access to beaches and waterfronts, while increasing environmental protection through environmental stewardship and education.

2040 Asset Targets

- Restore or enhance an additional 5 ha of natural area each capital plan (1-3 ha per year).
- Add at least 5 projects for bird and pollinator habitat each year.
- Grow environmental stewardship (volunteers and advocates) by 25%.