

The City of Los Angeles lies within the California Floristic Province, which is globally recognized as one of thirty-five biodiversity hotspots on the planet and the only hotspot in the Continental United States. The City is home to a number of threatened and rare species and provides habitat for a wide range of native vegetation and wildlife.

The survival and well-being of the City's residents depends directly on ecosystem services, including food production, oxygen generation, water purification, topsoil creation, biodegradation, and waste removal. These and many other services are built directly from an integrated community of natural biodiversity.

Access to natural landscapes which support local biodiversity contributes to quality of life, educational opportunities, restorative recreational activities, economic growth, and City character. Biodiverse landscapes provide benefits to residents such as increased productivity, fewer sick days, greater sense of place and community, and a shared sense of history.

Unfortunately, opportunities to access biodiversity are not equitably distributed across the City's neighborhoods. Underserved communities, in addition to disproportionately bearing the burden of environmental pollution, also lack opportunities to connect with nature and biodiversity. Additionally, inner-city biodiversity is often not studied, entire wildlife communities are ignored and human communities remain unengaged in the work.

The City does not currently have a cross-cutting, equitable, and integrated program to protect, manage, restore and enhance the unique biodiversity within the larger urban ecosystem in the City and region. Recognizing this, Mayor Garcetti's Sustainable City pLAn of 2015 specifically calls for development of a "no-net-loss" biodiversity strategy.

The City Biodiversity Index (also known as the Singapore Index) has been developed by international experts in urban biodiversity planning and management under the Convention on Biological Diversity and provides a self-assessment tool for cities. It is a voluntary, transparent, and objective framework to document and enumerate a city's existing native biodiversity and the ecosystem services such as climate regulation provided by that biodiversity. The Index also provides frameworks for setting conservation targets and developing biodiversity management and education programs.

The City, recognizing the importance of native biodiversity for its intrinsic, educational, scientific, and socio-ecological values, should commit to implementing the City Biodiversity Index.

The City should also develop habitat-based geospatial strategies for incorporating the conservation and equity of biodiversity in specific plans, development permitting, connectivity, planning, urban forestry, and the design and maintenance of parks and streets.


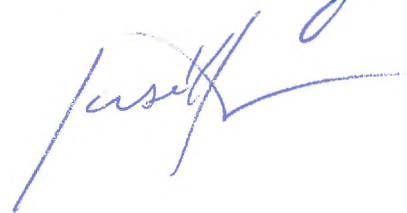
I THEREFORE MOVE that the Chief Legislative Analyst's office, in partnership with the Mayor's Sustainability Team, be directed to convene a working group of City departments, including LA Sanitation, the Planning Department, the Bureau of Street Services and its Urban Forestry Division, the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Port of Los Angeles, the Department of Water and Power, the Zoo and other relevant departments, to report back on their current and future strategies and matrices for protecting biodiversity in all City practices.

I FURTHER MOVE that LA Sanitation with the assistance of the Planning Department, the Bureau of Street Services (Urban Forestry Division), the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Port of Los Angeles, the Zoo and other relevant departments, be directed to convene a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of local universities, NGOs, and relevant governmental agencies including the LA County Natural History Museum, to report back with recommendations for strategies to protect and improve biodiversity in the City and on the feasibility of implementing the City Biodiversity Index.

I FURTHER MOVE that the TAC should develop and implement best practice strategies for community engagement and outreach on biodiversity including implementation of equity-minded citizen science projects that serve the full range of City neighborhoods.

PRESENTED BY: 
PAUL KORETZ
Councilmember, 5th District

SECONDED BY: 

APR 22 2015

ORIGINAL