

To: Environment and Climate Commission and the Urban Forestry Team
From: Erin Diehm
Date: March 27, 2024
RE: Item #7 - Presentation & Discussion: Urban Forestry Programs

Dear Commissioners and Urban Forestry Staff,

Thank you for all you do! Your work makes our lives better!

The Urban Forestry Team is pursuing and has completed important and very impressive work:

- Aquatic Park Tree and Vegetation planting - 400-500 total plants in the ground
- Successful applications for grant money - critical funds to supplement the unit's budget, focus on underserved areas
- Of special note - successfully applied for and received grant funding for watering, essential for success of newly planted trees.
- Plan to add 10,000 trees

However, the tree canopy in Berkeley is 80-85% non-native species. (per 2013 survey)

This is a concern as native vegetation is essential for the survival of biodiversity.

To address biodiversity declines we need to increase the percentage of native tree species.

4 requests

1. How do we define "native"?
 - North America?
 - California Floristic Province?
 - Suggest using Calscape - tool of the CNPS (8,000 plants with 216 trees)
2. Prioritize CA-natives in parks and medians
 - strive for 70%
 - irrigation a challenge - designate some areas as "native habitat" and turn off irrigation after establishment?
3. Trees in streetscape is a challenge - but strive to increase CA-natives
 - Could a pilot be done on a couple blocks of all-natives?
4. Expand the selection criteria
 - In addition to site-conditions, like "overhead wires" and "sidewalk"
 - Add "habitat value" to Selection Criteria
 - Use Calscape to identify the # of Butterflies and Moths supported.
 - Reminder that caterpillars are the primary food of baby birds, 6,000-9,000 for a clutch of chickadees

Thank you again for your service!

Best regards,
Erin