Resolution adopting citywide biodiversity goals and articulating the role of the Department of Environment in protecting San Francisco’s natural heritage.

WHEREAS, Biodiversity or 'biological diversity,' according to the United Nations Environment Program, means the variability among living organisms and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, the City and County of San Francisco is located in the California Floristic Province, a global biodiversity hotspot, and still has indigenous ecosystems comprised of many different types of natural ecological communities; and

WHEREAS, the City’s parks, natural areas and various open spaces still harbor hundreds of species of indigenous plants, birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, untold diversity of insects, and ten federally listed endangered species, including uniquely San Francisco species such as the Presidio and Franciscan manzanitas; and

WHEREAS, biodiversity loss along with climate change are among the most significant environmental challenges facing our planet; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity designated 2010-2020 the UN Decade on Biodiversity, and adopted the UN Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-
2020, which includes the vision of “living in harmony with nature” as well as the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets; and

WHEREAS, the Living Planet Index, managed by the World Wildlife Fund to measure progress toward the Biodiversity Targets, has documented a 58% reduction in global vertebrate species diversity since 1970; and

WHEREAS, to help urban areas contribute to the Aichi Targets and the UN Strategic Plan, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Stockholm Resilience Center published the Cities Biodiversity Outlook, which identifies 10 key findings, including “maintaining functioning urban ecosystems can significantly enhance human health and well-being” and “urban ecosystem services and biodiversity can help contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation”; and

WHEREAS, the Golden Gate National Parks and the City’s watershed lands are part of the Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve, a unit of the United Nations’ Man and the Biosphere Program, the goal of which is the overall improvement of the relationship between people and their environment; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco’s Climate Action Goals of 0-50-100-ROOTS identify city and community greening as integral to local climate mitigation and adaptation; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco is a founding member of the international Wild Cities and Biophilic Cities networks, which promote conservation, awareness and stewardship of biodiversity in cities and a global conservation vision of “Nature
Needs Half," which calls for half of Earth’s lands and waters to be permanently protected for nature and biodiversity; and

WHEREAS, the Children and Nature Network and the National League of Cities jointly created the Cities Connecting Children to Nature initiative, and San Francisco is one of a seven city cohort whose mission is to address equity in nature connection in cities; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco has long championed and sustained a tradition of wildland and natural resources management and stewardship in its City, State and National Parks and watershed and public trust lands; and

WHEREAS, 2017 is the 20th anniversary of the Sustainability Plan for the City and County of San Francisco, and conservation and restoration of our local biodiversity is integral to the city’s long-term environmental sustainability; and

WHEREAS, in order to fulfill the vision and goals of the 1997 Sustainability Plan, the Commission on the Environment articulated a significant commitment to biodiversity in Resolution 2011-05-COE; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors approved a new Recreation and Open Space Element of the General Plan in 2014, which includes a Biodiversity Objective that recognizes that biodiversity exists throughout San Francisco in parks, natural areas, backyards, and in the streets, and that wildlife and pollinator diversity can be supported by local and California native plants as well as non-native non-invasive climate appropriate plants; and

WHEREAS, in 2014 the Board of Supervisors signed a resolution endorsing the San Francisco Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights, which promotes
every child's right to connect to nature in the City and advocates the critical
importance of human connection to nature for individual, community and public
health; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, the Recreation and Parks Commission approved the
Natural Resources Management Plan, and the Planning Commission certified its
Final Environmental Impact Report; and

WHEREAS, in 2016 the Board of Supervisors passed a resolution urging
City Departments, including the Department of Environment, to conduct
education and outreach to foster knowledge and appreciation of San Francisco’s
pollinators and their interconnected role in the City’s natural ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, various City Departments, in collaboration with communities
and non-profit organizations, are restoring local biodiversity; connecting San
Franciscans to nature in the city; and actively bringing nature into the built
environment; and collectively have coalesced around a unified vision for
conservation and stewardship of San Francisco’s natural heritage; now,
therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, that the Commission on the Environment hereby adopts the
following citywide biodiversity vision and goals:

VISION

All San Franciscans connect to nature daily and are inspired to participate in
some form of ecological stewardship of the City’s natural heritage. San
Francisco’s biodiverse, climate resilient, and verdant ecosystems are integrated
throughout its natural and built environments.
GOALS

1. Biologically Rich Ecosystems: Restore and maintain robust and interconnected indigenous habitats, natural areas, open spaces, watersheds, marine ecosystems, and urban forests that support a rich web of life, and mitigate climate change impacts to rare species and communities;

2. Equitable Access, Awareness and Experience of Nature: Connect all residents, workers, and visitors with nature every day in neighborhood green spaces, parks, and natural habitats;

3. Community and Ecological Stewardship: Empower people and partnerships to promote, cultivate, enjoy, and restore nature in every neighborhood;

4. Ecological Planning and Design: Incorporate biodiverse, purposeful greening into all building and open space development, with a priority on creating diverse habitats for many species of wildlife;

5. Resilience in a Living City: Leverage local natural ecosystems to sequester carbon, conserve water, prevent flooding, manage pests, and improve air quality to support San Francisco’s adaptation into a climate-protected and ecological city; and, be it,

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission urges the Department of the Environment to realize the five biodiversity goals, as part of its overall climate strategy, by employing the following strategies and programs, among others:
1. Serve as the hub and resource for San Francisco city government and the community at large for local biodiversity initiatives and programs, such as the Nature in the City Map and celebrating the City’s efforts;

2. Lead interagency initiatives to develop, align, and implement plans, policies, practices, guidelines, trainings, and other strategies to achieve biodiversity goals, all consistent with environmentally healthy and protective integrated pest management practices and the reduced risk pesticide list;

3. Work with City Departments, other public agencies including the Presidio Trust and the National Park Service, the California Academy of Sciences and other non-governmental organizations and stakeholders to produce a citywide inventory of the City’s biodiversity and develop key indicators and monitoring protocols for ecosystem health;

4. Promote biodiversity in major development projects by, for example, encouraging wildlife-friendly landscaping, and biophilic, nature-based urban design;

5. Lead the Environment Department’s Pollinators Program to include expanding the use of the San Francisco Plant Finder website and the application of Bay-Friendly Landscaping;

6. Promote biodiverse greening of the built environment through facilitating collaborative and community-based implementation of the Green Connections Plan, the Urban Forest Plan, and others that support natural carbon sequestration and climate resilience;
7. Support the Urban Forest Council in its advocacy for full funding of the Urban Forest Plan and its four primary recommendations, including the street tree planting goal and maximizing street tree benefits like biodiversity;

8. Participate in relevant local-to-international networks to share San Francisco’s urban biodiversity best practices with cities everywhere.

I hereby certify that this Resolution was adopted at the Commission on the Environment meeting on May 23, 2017.

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Anthony Valdez, Commission Affairs Manager

Vote: 5-0 Approved

Ayes: Commissioners Bermejo, Hoyos, Stephenson, Wald and Wan

Noes: None

Absent: None