



Santa Clara Valley Chapter
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



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June 18, 2026

Subject: Item 6.1 on the June 23 agenda: Biodiversity and Urban Forest Master Plan

Dear Mayor Ramos and Councilmembers,

Thank you for your continued commitment to biodiversity and for advancing the Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan alongside the recently approved Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. Together, these plans position Mountain View as a regional leader in integrating biodiversity and urban forestry into city planning.

We particularly commend the inclusion of a Biodiversity Anchor in every park. This is a significant and forward-looking step. It recognizes that parks are not only places for recreation and gathering, but can also contribute to nature and ecological health. Even small parks can contribute meaningfully to habitat, environmental education, and ecological function.

Importantly, neither plan requires every plant in every park, and every tree in the Urban Forest, to be native. Biodiversity anchors simply ask that every park include some area that supports local ecological function and the species that evolved here.

Biodiversity anchors are a powerful and achievable concept. This matters because biodiversity is not simply a measure of how many plant species are present. Biodiversity depends on the ecological relationships among plants, insects, birds, pollinators, and other wildlife that together form a functioning ecosystem.

The Plan currently includes several sub-definitions under the “Native Species” definition, including Regionally-native species, California-native species, Near-native species, and Non-native species. To clarify the definitions and to ensure that biodiversity anchors deliver the ecological benefits envisioned by the City, we recommend:

- The definition of Native Species should include only Regionally-Native Species and California Native Species. This distinction should be reflected consistently throughout the Plan.
- The term "Near-Native Species" should be removed or renamed. This term blurs the distinction between native and non-native species.
- If the City wishes to identify non-native plants and cultivars that provide benefits to diversity, urban forestry, or other management benefits, those species should be placed in a separate stand-alone category that does not imply native status. We suggest the term "Beneficial Species" for this category.
- Only Regionally-Native Species should be eligible to contribute toward Biodiversity Anchors. The purpose of biodiversity anchors is to support the local food webs and ecological relationships that evolved in our region. Therefore, while many plant and tree species may have a beneficial role in the urban forest and in city landscapes, only Regionally-Native Species should be counted toward Biodiversity Anchors.
- Proposed definition for Biodiversity Anchor: A designated area managed to support local biodiversity and ecological function through the use of Regionally-Native Species and habitat features that sustain native food webs and provide food, shelter, breeding resources, and ecological connections for native wildlife.
- If necessary, corresponding changes should be made to the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan to ensure consistency between the two plans.

These revisions would create a clearer and more transparent framework, preserve the distinction between native and non-native plants, and help ensure that biodiversity anchors remain focused on supporting local ecological relationships and food webs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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