



## Staff Report – CP-2-17

### Comprehensive Plan Amendment

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The request is to amend Policy EP 9.8 of the Environmental Protection element of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. This policy currently recommends strategic selection of plants for landscaping and gardening such that environmental impacts are minimized. Environmental impacts identified include water consumption and pesticide use. The change to the policy would supplement the recommendations with considerations for pollinator-friendly species of plants.

#### Policy EP 9.8 - Landscaping and Gardening

Encourage environmentally responsible landscaping and gardening practices to reduce water use and water pollution, including increased use of drought-resistant plants and reduced use of pesticides, **and increased pollinator supportive habitat including native and pollinator-friendly species to proliferate healthy pollinator populations. Strive to maintain best practices by promoted pollinator programs such as Bee City USA and support interactions among community advocates and public programs.**

Pollinators include bees, butterflies, birds, and other animals that transport pollen in the course of their life cycles. According to the USDA, three-fourths of the world's flowering plants and 35% of the world's food crops depend on animal pollinators to reproduce. Some types of pollinators have experienced population decline in recent years as a result of pollution, habitat loss, and other factors. Honey bees and monarch butterflies are among the most well-known examples of this phenomenon.

Local food systems are growing in popularity on a national level as a means of achieving goals in the areas of community development, placemaking, economic development, public health, and education. Community gardens and urban farms are common elements that contribute to the development of local food systems. Healthy pollinator populations help these small, urban, and often fragmented agricultural operations to be consistently productive over the long term. Honey bees, if managed properly, have the added benefit of producing honey which supplements the output of the local food system.

The City of Raleigh is investing in the creation and redevelopment of parks and open spaces throughout the city. In addition to regular streetscaping and landscaping at public facilities, these park improvements offer a continuing opportunity for the City to pursue environmentally sensitive planting practices that create tangible public benefits.

At its June 20 meeting, the Raleigh City Council adopted a resolution making Raleigh a participant in a program called BeeCity USA. Participation in BeeCity USA will be coordinated by the Office of Sustainability and the Environmental Advisory Board. The City has committed to a range of activities related to pollinator vitality and public education. As part of its resolution, the

City Council authorized the Environmental Advisory Board to review the 2030 Comprehensive Plan with regard to pollinators.

**CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER’S REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION:**

The following list of considerations for the Planning and Development Officer’s review and recommendations regarding a proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment are not all-inclusive. Review and recommendations of proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments may consider whether:

**1. The proposed amendment corrects an error or meets the challenge of some changing condition, trend or fact;**

Pollinator species have been threatened by environmental factors in recent years. The proposed amendment would encourage activities that counter this trend and increase public awareness of threats to pollinator species.

**2. The proposed amendment is in response to changes in state law;**

N/A

**3. The proposed amendment constitutes a substantial benefit to the City as a whole and is not solely for the good or benefit of a particular landowner or owners at a particular point in time;**

The proposed amendment promotes practices that may have public benefits in the form of healthier and more vibrant plantings in public open spaces, facilities, and rights-of-way. Secondary benefits may be created for community gardens and urban farms that support local food systems. These food systems in turn can be enjoyed by a wide range of Raleigh residents through increased socialization, access to healthy food, and reduced environmental impact of food production.

**4. The proposed amendment is consistent with other identified Plan policies and adopted area plans;**

The proposed amendment is **inconsistent** with the following relevant Comprehensive Plan and area plan policies:

**Policy T 3.2 – Accommodating Multiple Users**

Ensure that all new roadway projects and major reconstruction projects provide appropriate and adequate right-of-way for safe and convenient movement for all users including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and motorists. Manage the use of rights-of-way to best serve future travel demand (e.g., Multimodal Streets—incorporate wider sidewalks where appropriate).

Residents who are allergic to bee stings may be deterred from using rights-of-way planted with vegetation that attracts bees.

**Policy PR 4.6 – Universal Access**

Develop recreational facilities that are universally accessible to all residents. Update existing facilities when new construction is planned, or when renovations are undertaken to be compliant with new City and federal regulations as they come into effect.

Residents who are allergic to bee stings may be deterred from visiting facilities that have resident populations of bees.

The proposed amendment is **consistent** with the following relevant Comprehensive Plan and area plan policies:

**Vision Theme: Managing Our Growth**

Raleigh will foster quality growth through more integrated land uses, alternative transportation modes, green building technologies and development practices, open space acquisition, and resource conservation. We will manage growth and provide desirable spaces and places to live, work, and play while also cooperating with other jurisdictions in the region. Adequate infrastructure will be planned and in place as development comes on line.

The proposed amendment seeks to address the loss of pollinator habitat that occurs as a consequence of growth and development. Pollinators support the long term sustainability of vegetated spaces that make public and private spaces desirable.

**Vision Theme: Greenprint Raleigh – Sustainable Development**

Raleigh will be nationally recognized as a model green city. Environmental sustainability and stewardship—the protection and wise use of resources for existing residents and future generations—will be institutionalized. Individuals, institutions, businesses, and government will work together and enhance the natural environment through policies, decisions, and investments. The City will significantly improve its environmental policy framework and land management practices; protect sensitive lands; and preserve water, air, and land resources.

The proposed amendment enhances the portfolio of City policies related to environmental stewardship by including consideration for pollinators. Healthy pollinator populations improve the quality of other environmental resources by aiding the reproduction of flowering plants. Pollinators also contribute to biodiversity and ecological stability. The proposal maintains Raleigh’s position as a model city because it responds to an emerging issue.

**Policy EP 1.8 – Sustainable Sites**

Encourage the use of environmentally-friendly site planning and landscape design approaches and techniques such as those developed by the Sustainable Sites Initiative.

The proposed amendment encourages the use of landscaping that is environmentally friendly.

**Policy EP 2.2 – Environmentally Sensitive Development**

Ensure Raleigh's growth and land development practices are compatible with the City's natural form, vegetation, topography, and water bodies and streams. This will decrease erosion, reduce stormwater run-off and flooding, improve water quality, protect wildlife habitat, and provide buffers and transitions between land uses.

The proposed amendment encourages the use of landscaping that provides wildlife habitat and is compatible with the City's endemic ecology.

**Policy EP 6.3 – Special Status Species**

Place a high priority on protecting rare, threatened, and endangered species habitats and migratory corridors, as defined by Federal and State agencies, from development and its impacts through methods such as land acquisition, park and greenway stewardship, improved development regulations, intergovernmental coordination, and mitigation.

In February of 2017, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the Rusty-Patched Bumblebee as an endangered species. The range of this bumblebee included North Carolina as recently as 2000. The proposed amendment would increase the priority of preserving and creating habitat for this and other pollinator species.

**Policy EP 6.4 – Biodiversity and City Park Lands**

Strive to maintain and improve species diversity and populations in the parks inventory through enhanced plantings and habitat management.

The proposed amendment would encourage maintenance and increase in pollinator species diversity through plantings and habitat management.

**Policy EP 9.3 – Environmental Stewardship**

Optimize the appreciation, use, and stewardship of Raleigh's natural resources including its wildlife and habitats, flora and fauna, and waterways and floodplains to foster broad public awareness of the connection between humans and nature. Enlist the support of local colleges and universities in targeted research and other projects to meet regional environmental goals.

The proposed amendment would promote stewardship of wildlife habitats and public awareness of the natural world.

**Policy PR 5.3 – Interpretive Conservation Activities**

Maximize ecosystem conservation and promote interpretive and educational activities in unique ecological areas and habitats in partnership with other governmental and nongovernmental agencies.

The proposed amendment would promote educational activities related to pollinator habitats in partnership with other agencies. The proposal also encourages ecosystem conservation and improvement.

**5. The impact the proposed amendment has with regard to:**

**A. Established property or proposed development in the vicinity of the proposed amendment;**

The proposed amendment applies to the entire city. Impacts to property or proposed development would largely be positive in the form of more robust flowering plants in public and private spaces. Other positive impacts may accrue to agricultural operations such as community gardens and urban farms in the form of improved pollination of crop plants.

One negative impact that may occur in areas where the policy is applied would be the presence of insects and other animals that property owners and residents find undesirable. This impact is heightened for individuals who are allergic to bee stings.

**B. Existing or future land use patterns;**

The proposal would work within existing land use plans and patterns.

**C. Existing or planned public services and facilities;**

The proposal may beautify public facilities through improved health of flowering plant species included in landscaping. Educational programs offered by the City may benefit from the presence of exemplary pollinator management practices.

Negative impacts may be experienced by users of public facilities who are allergic to or uncomfortable with pollinator species.

**D. Existing or planned roadways;**

The proposal may increase the health and fertility of flowering plants in the right-of-way, creating an aesthetic benefit for travelers.

**E. The natural environment, including air, water, noise, stormwater management, wildlife and vegetation;**

The proposed amendment would encourage the creation of habitat for pollinators. Healthy pollinator populations assist the propagation of flowering plants. Environmental benefits of the proposal may include greater biodiversity, increased stability and longevity of flowering plant populations, more resilient food webs and urban ecosystems, and a generally more ecologically robust city.

**F. Other policies of the Comprehensive Plan.**

*(None identified.)*

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Approval, based on the above list of considerations for the Planning and Development Officer's review.

**STAFF COORDINATOR:**

John Anagnost; john.anagnost@raleighnc.gov; (919) 996-2638

# Comprehensive Plan Amendment Petition



Department of City Planning | 1 Exchange Plaza, Suite 300 | Raleigh, NC 27601 | 919-996-2626

A request to amend the 2030 Comprehensive Plan text, maps or content.

### Applicant Information

Name City of Raleigh

Address 220 Fayetteville Street

City Raleigh

State NC

Zip 27601

Phone 919.996.4635

Fax #

Email beth.nooe@raleighnc.gov

### Requested Amendment

Future Land Use Map  
(Cite all affected parcels below)

Plan Text (Cite relevant section/page below)

Area Plan Map/Text (Cite all affected parcels and relevant section/page below)

Other Map  
(Specify name/map number)

Brief Description of Amendment:

This amendment will add language to Policy EP 9.8, that the city will encourage local plant species landscaping to foster pollinator habitats. It also describes the promoting and adopting of best practices that adheres to national pollinator program agendas.

C. Environmental Protection

C.9 Environmental Education, Awareness and Coordination

Policy EP 9.8

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The undersigned applicant(s) hereby certifies that, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, all information supplied with this application is true and accurate.

Signature Beth Nooe (Beth Nooe) Date 5-30-17

Signature (Leslie Bartelbansh) Date 5/30/17

### Office Use Only

File # CP- \_\_\_\_\_ Fee Paid \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Received By \_\_\_\_\_

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT PROPOSAL – POLLINATOR HABITAT LANGUAGE

5/30/17

A. Alter Amendment

This amendment will add language to Policy EP 9.8, that the city will support local plant species to foster pollinator habitats. It also describes the partnering and adopting of best practices that adheres to national program agendas.

**Policy EP 9.8**

*Landscaping and Gardening*

*Encourage environmentally responsible landscaping and gardening practices to reduce water use and water pollution, including increased use of drought-resistant plants and reduced use of pesticide, and increased pollinator supportive habitat including native and pollinator-friendly species to proliferate healthy pollinator populations. Strive to maintain best practices by promoted pollinator programs such as Bee City USA and support interactions among community advocates and public programs.*

(3, 5)

B. Conditions that warrant the plan amendment

With the rising decline of the honey bee population, many environmental initiatives from community advocates and government (state, federal) policies have been proposed to combat the population decline. Awareness, advocacy and promotion of pollinator friendly habitats have become more prominent in the communities and environmental groups. The City of Raleigh has been approached from several organizations to partner or support this movement. The amendment is the first step to show that we will promote and support these types of pollinator initiatives.

C. Relevance of the amendment to the Plan's six vision themes

1. Economic Prosperity and Equity-

The commodities produced with the help of pollinators generate significant income for producers and those who benefit from a productive agricultural community. Amendment will also support relationships and with business startups, local community groups, universities, and private environmental groups for promotion on more sustainable practices and awareness.

2. Expanding Housing Choices

A more robust pollinator population will benefit households that have gardens to support.

3. Managing Our Growth

Provides a land management plan for city properties and responsible planting practices to not only support water consumption but to provide local species to aid in creating natural habitats for pollinators.

4. Coordinating Land Use and Transportation