

Boulevard Garden Program Expansion

Project Definition

The [Boulevard Gardening & Maintenance Guidelines](#) (the Guidelines) are being reviewed and updated, with reporting to the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services planned for April 2021. The program currently permits residents to garden on the front and side boulevards adjacent to their home. The first phase of engagement for the update heard from over 1,600 residents, indicating strong support for gardening on boulevards with many suggested improvements and an interest in expanding the program to other City-owned rights-of-way. Options for the program expansion will be included in the April 2021 report. Once approved, implementation of an expanded program in 2021 would be limited due to available funding, and a request to the 2022-2023 multi-year budget would be required for an expanded service level.

Scope and Budget

This application to the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative is for the expansion of the Boulevard Garden program as approved in April 2021. The updated Guidelines - which are being finalized through a survey of options that is currently open - propose updates to address raised beds, inclusion of native plants, wildflower, and native grasses and reaching a broader range of residents. The update is also exploring the expansion to other categories of City-owned rights-of-way. The application's expenses will be focused on education and encouraging gardens in alignment with the guidelines. The preliminary budget includes:

	Scope	Budget
Administration	Staff time (primarily from Sustainability and Communications Departments) to oversee implementation of the updates	\$100,000
Education & Communications	One-page information sheets on Guidelines, workshops, videos, how-to-guide	\$50,000
Demonstration Garden Materials	Install and maintain demonstration gardens throughout the city, including examples of native plants, wildflower, native grasses, edible landscapes, and traditional foods and medicines	\$50,000
Garden Materials for Residents (compost, mulch, seeds)	Address equity concerns for areas of the City where residents are less likely to have access the dig-your-own compost and mulch program (such as no private vehicle) and using existing Civic facilities to distribute seeds such as leisure centres and libraries	\$50,000

Evaluation Criteria Alignment

This project demonstrates alignment with the funding application as follows:

Project Rationale

Responds to the impacts of COVID-19 according to local needs and context

- In 2020, interest in Saskatoon's community gardens increased significantly with COVID-19, exceeding the capacity of available plots. The expanded boulevard garden program will provide additional garden opportunities to meet this demand.

Considers public health measures in project design

- In 2020, community gardens operated with COVID-19 protocols in place and can easily be applied to any communal gardens that may be on City-owned rights-of-way as part of the expansion.

If applicable, considers collaborators or partners to strengthen the project

- The City's Healthy Yards program, in partnership with the University of Saskatchewan, The Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre, CHEP Good Food Inc., and the Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council as well as the Native Plant Society are potential partners that will be approached for the application.

Community Engagement

Demonstrates meaningful community engagement, including with those disproportionately affected by COVID-19, and considers equity

- The update to the Guidelines was developed through community engagement, including over 1,600 survey respondents and an engagement strategy that sought input from lower-income, seniors, Indigenous, and newcomer groups. The Guidelines also used the City's Triple Bottom Line Policy.

Demonstrates local leadership in decision-making and project delivery

- The updates to the Guidelines respond to engagement from residents as well as learning from best practices from other cities. It will be implemented using the City's project management framework.

Demonstrates how it will engage and generate participation in its project

- A comprehensive communication and education strategy will be developed as part of the project. The updated Guidelines specifically address barriers to boulevard gardening identified through engagement.

Outcomes

Demonstrates positive community impact(s) through one of the Healthy Communities Initiative theme(s)

- This project addresses the safe and vibrant spaces theme.

Demonstrates knowledge of community pressures and needs

- The update to the Guidelines was initiated through community feedback on the current program and engagement through the Green Infrastructure Strategy. The current engagement has confirmed the interest in gardening on City-owned rights-of-way and the challenges in finding suitable garden space.

Demonstrates a plan, if applicable, to sustain the project long term

- The project would seek sustaining funding in the 2022-2023 multi-year budget as part of the Healthy Yards Program.

Considers a plan to capture community impact, including gathering stories and lessons learned for future projects, where applicable

- The Boulevard Garden Agreement would be used to track participation and get feedback on the project. Part of the communications and education strategy will capture and tell stories of successful gardens and tips.

Project Implementation and Readiness

Provides a responsible budget including clear costing, procurement decisions and equity considerations

- The project budget balances staff costs, education and materials. Procurement will be done in alignment with the City's Procurement Policy, including the Indigenous procurement procedure.
- Managed by the Sustainability Department and will continue to draw on the expertise of a multi-departmental technical advisory committee during implementation.
- The Guidelines clearly will outline processes for establishing new gardens in alignment with all City policies and bylaws.

Demonstrates the project can be completed in realistic timelines

- Guidelines will be completed and ready to implement in April 2021. Leveraging existing community partnership will allow for quicker mobilization