

Findings from the Boulevard Gardening and Maintenance Guidelines Review

BACKGROUND

Current Program Summary

In 2015, the Administration adopted the *Boulevard Gardening and Maintenance Guidelines* (2015 Guidelines). The 2015 Guidelines describe acceptable gardening and landscaping practices on separate boulevards such as in-ground gardening of vegetables, flowers, and grasses; and use of small temporary structures such as bird baths and steppingstones. Gardeners are not permitted to disturb existing or plant their own trees, use pesticides, leave materials on their garden site over the winter, or garden on centre medians or other City of Saskatoon (City) rights-of-way. Prospective boulevard gardeners are directed to read the Guidelines and complete the online *Boulevard Garden Agreement* on the City's web page. Program inquiries are directed to the Sustainability Department, which coordinates the response with other work groups when needed (e.g., Bylaw Compliance, Parks).

As of 2020, there were approximately 100 registered boulevard gardens in the city. However, the true number of boulevard gardens is higher, as not all gardeners are aware of or wish to complete the *Boulevard Garden Agreement*. This agreement is the only mechanism through which boulevard gardens are tracked. Gardens on centre medians are not currently allowed by the Guidelines, although they do exist in the city.

Review Initiation

During the 2020 growing season, there was increased public interest in boulevard gardening and related inquiries such as what bylaws apply on boulevards, acceptable gardening materials, options to plant wildflowers in public space, and gardening options for city-owned green spaces beyond boulevards. Concurrently, there was an opportunity to align the 2015 Guidelines with other City plans and strategies (e.g. Green Infrastructure Strategy Implementation Plan, Median and Boulevard Asset Management Strategy). A review after a few years of operations was also part of the original plan when the 2015 Guidelines were adopted. While there had been minor updates, there had not been a comprehensive review. These factors prompted a review of the 2015 Guidelines and associated program in 2020-21.

Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2020

City Council unanimously approved a new OCP for Saskatoon in June 2020, followed by provincial approval in August 2020. It includes the following objectives and policies relevant to this review.

2.5 Food Systems

Food is not just a basic human need; it also plays an important role in promoting health, building communities, protecting the environment, and strengthening the economy. Considering how food is grown, processed, distributed, acquired, and disposed of in the city and region can help build a more sustainable city.

Objective (a): To participate in coordinated community efforts to develop a sustainable food system within the city and region.

Policies (d): Support efforts to produce food locally, as well as the development of urban agriculture throughout Saskatoon.

HISTORY

Previous reports and recommendations to the City of Saskatoon that inform boulevard gardening include:

- The endorsement by City Council of the Saskatoon Regional Food System Assessment and Action Plan in 2014; and
- Recommendations for boulevard or median landscaping in several Local Area Plans.

Saskatoon Regional Food System Assessment and Action Plan

At its regular business meeting on March 3, 2014, City Council considered the report, “Towards a Food Strategy for Saskatoon: Saskatoon Regional Food System Assessment and Action Plan”, and adopted the following recommendations:

“That the 12 key strategies as outlined in the attached report of the General Manager, Community Services Department, dated February 12, 2014, be endorsed; and

That the General Manager, Community Services Department co-ordinate an implementation plan for the city-related strategies and report back to City Council with a timeline and process for action.”

The Assessment and Action Plan included recommendations specific to the services and programs provided by the City, such as:

- Recommendation #3: Garden everywhere: expand capacity in urban agriculture.
 - Develop a program to foster rooftop, balcony, and boulevard gardens. Let people know that front yard gardens are allowed.
 - Actively inform residents about what practices are currently allowed in urban agriculture and what practices would be welcomed. For example, the City can support and educate its population about growing food in front yards, boulevards, vacant lots, right of ways, traffic circles, etc.

Local Area Plans

Several Neighbourhood Local Area Plans reference community interest in maintaining or enhancing boulevards and centre medians. These are described in Table 1.

Table 1 – Local Area Plan Recommendations

Local Area Plan	Recommendation or description
Pleasant Hill	Boulevard Maintenance Recommendation: That the Parks Branch, Turf Maintenance Section be requested to meet with the Pleasant Hill Community Association to discuss options (strategies) to improve the appearance of boulevards in the neighbourhood.
Varsity View	That the Community Services Department, Parks Division, and Transportation & Utilities Department, Transportation Division, schedule a meeting with representatives

	from the University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program, Varsity View Community Association, and Varsity View Bishop Murray Community Garden Committee to discuss the feasibility of developing an urban orchard to be located within the University Drive median south of College Drive.
Caswell Hill	The boulevards in Caswell Hill are treated with special care and attention. The Caswell Hill Community Association and property owners who front the boulevards have organized benches and large flowerpots to be placed on the boulevards for additional beautification of the boulevards and for the enjoyment of residents.
City Park	That the Infrastructure Services Department, Parks Branch, explore the feasibility of developing boulevards containing landscaping features such as trees and shrubs in the following locations: 7th Avenue from Duchess Street to 33rd Street, 300 to 800 block of Duchess Street and 3rd Avenue North as part of the road widening project, provided that the locations conform to appropriate horticultural standards for the planting of trees and shrubs.
Nutana	Nutana has both a wealth and a deficit of parks and open space. Nutana was part of the original survey of Saskatoon which provided for wide streets and boulevards. Early in the city's history the Riverbank was protected through public policy as open space and park land. Nutana enjoys access to these resources. The boulevards that are a feature of the neighbourhood contain mature plantings and add to the sense of green space in the neighbourhood. These resources contribute to the neighbourhood wealth of green and open space. On the other hand, Nutana, like other core neighbourhoods, was developed at a time when the standard for providing recreational parks in neighbourhoods was much less than it is today.

REVIEW PROCESS

Technical Advisory Committee

An Administrative Technical Advisory Committee (The Committee) oversaw the Guideline review. The Committee was composed of representatives from various Departments including Sustainability, Parks and Urban Forestry, Transportation, Roadways, Bylaw Compliance, Saskatoon Water, Planning, Community Development, Water and Waste Operations, Saskatoon Light and Power, and Solicitors. Additional subject matter experts such as representatives from Saskatoon Fire were consulted as needed. A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of the 2015 Guidelines was completed by the Committee in August 2020. The results of the SWOT analysis, summarized below, identified several themes that guided the remainder of the review. These are described in Table 2.

Table 2 – SWOT Analysis of the 2015 Boulevard Garden Guidelines and Program

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Guidelines responded to several Local Area Plan recommendations and the Saskatoon Regional Food System Assessment and Action Plan. • Many residents are following the Guidelines to grow gardens near their homes. • The Guidelines represent a partnership between multiple work groups and offer flexibility for residents regarding landscaping options on city-owned spaces.
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Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaps and ambiguity in the Guidelines should be addressed, especially regarding acceptable temporary structures on boulevards, and rules for gardening around trees. • There is a need to streamline Administrative processes and clarify who is responsible for the Guidelines and program at the City. • More clarity is needed on a potential application process, enforcement of non-compliant gardens, overlap with other policy such as the Traffic Bylaw, and other regulatory questions. • Maintenance standards on boulevards are sometimes confusing because so many work groups touch on this work.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are opportunities to align the Guidelines with other City documents and operations, consider an expansion of the program, and support boulevard gardening through incentives and education. • There is an opportunity to expand the current program to additional types of City-owned spaces. • There is an opportunity to develop a common city list of acceptable and unacceptable materials, and how these differ on public or private properties.
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other uses of boulevards that require City access can create a risk to both garden sites and City crews or equipment. These risks should be identified and mitigated wherever possible. • Centre median gardens are not currently allowed, but residents are nonetheless gardening on these spaces. By not providing criteria to these gardeners, there are ultimately more risks for gardeners and the City than there would be to allow these gardens with clear criteria. • Boulevard and medians are generally sites that experience difficult growing conditions due to poor soil quality and salt from nearby roads. Gardeners should be aware of this before getting started.

Concurrent City Work

Further work with the Committee involved smaller group meetings with specific work groups to provide feedback in more detail. This identified several additional projects related to the review that are currently underway at the City. These include the following:

1. Green Infrastructure Strategy Implementation Plan

An Implementation Plan for the Green Infrastructure Strategy is currently underway, which will identify ways, per Action 3 of the Strategy, to *increase food production in the Green Network*. Action 2.3 further recommends that the administration *develop a program and funding model to support community-led green infrastructure projects, citizen science, and bio-cultural management*. The boulevard garden program and potential expansion relate to these actions.

2. Healthy Yards Program

This program encourages healthy yard and boulevard gardening practices for residents including no-till and low-water gardening and how to go pesticide-

free. Public education materials about boulevard gardening will be developed following the adoption of the new Guidelines.

3. Median and Boulevard Asset Management Strategy

An Asset Management Strategy is underway for medians and boulevards, which defines typical landscaping treatment, maintenance practices, and asset preservation for these areas. A common list of acceptable landscaping treatments was developed by the Administration.

4. Community Garden Program

Boulevard gardening is considered distinct from community gardening. For example, while community gardening emphasizes multiple citizens growing food collectively, boulevard gardening is primarily a household activity. Nonetheless, it was important to identify the similarities between the two programs to understand what situations would better apply to the Community Garden or Boulevard Garden Guidelines. Representatives from Community Development provided guidance on how the City's Community Garden program operates, and how this related to the Guidelines review. Specific criteria to distinguish the two programs were developed and incorporated into a new Administrative Procedure.

5. Naturalized Park Program

Representatives with the Naturalized Parks program provided guidance on how the City might provide best practices for naturalized plantings to residents for boulevard gardening.

MUNICIPAL SCAN

The Administration reviewed municipal boulevard gardening programs across Canada and selected five for further analysis because of their relevance to the Saskatoon context (e.g. similar climates or street types). The municipal review focused primarily on boulevard gardening programs. However, due to public interest in the City offering an expanded program, additional municipal programs, including one outside Canada, that permitted gardening or landscaping on other types of City property were surveyed as well.

The municipal scan results are summarized below, and are categorized into:

- Technical best practices of boulevard gardening programs (e.g. allowances for raised beds, garden height restrictions, offsets from streets and trees, acceptable materials).
- Administrative components of boulevard gardening programs (e.g. whether gardeners required permission from their City, and whether approval processes included a fee).
- Additional gardening or landscaping programs on public land (e.g. what types of City-owned spaces were permitted, what type of gardening or landscaping was permitted, program administrative components).

Technical Best Practices of Boulevard Gardening Programs

Results of the scan of technical best practices are summarized in Table 3. Where applicable to the Saskatoon context, technical best practices were incorporated into the 2021 Guidelines.

Table 3 – Summary of best practice scan - Technical Best Practices of Boulevard Gardening Programs

City	Height Restrictions	Offsets	Soil amendments	Digging into the soil	Tree Protection	Temporary Structures
Calgary	1 meter	60 cm from curb, 30 cm from sidewalk, 1.5 m from alleys, and 7.5 m from intersections	Allowed if contained within a raised bed, pot, or container	Not permitted – raised beds and container gardens only.	No disturbance, damage, or spraying of trees allowed.	Raised beds allowed (approval required)
Edmonton	1.05 meter	Specific offsets not provided	Allowed if contained within a raised bed, pot, or container	Not permitted – raised beds and container gardens only.	Not specified	Raised beds allowed (approval required)
Winnipeg	1 meter	1 meter from the curb and 0.5 meters from sidewalk	Allowed and encouraged as an alternative to digging in the boulevard	Permitted if resident checks for underground lines first	No trees may be planted, disturbed, or removed	Objects less than 10 kg permitted
Vancouver	1 meter in most areas, 60 cm near driveways and crossings	30 cm from curb, 1.5 m around city structures	Compost allowed up to 20 cm	Allowed up to 15 cm	Gardens allowed near trees including soil amendments up to 10 cm	Temporary structures allowed
Victoria	1 meter in most areas, 60 cm near driveways and crossings	60 cm from curb, 1.5 m around city structures	Compost allowed up to 20 cm, mulch up to 40 cm	Permitted if resident checks for underground lines first	Gardens allowed near trees including soil amendments up to 10 cm	Allowed with certain height and size restrictions

Administrative Components of Boulevard Garden Programs

Program administrative components are described in Table 4. These were considered by the Administration for the program expansion options, and, when appropriate, were proposed to the public during engagement.

Table 4: Summary of best practice scan – administrative components of boulevard garden programs

Municipality	Program Scope	Program Administration	
		City permission required?	Administrative Fee
Calgary	Allows standard gardening and landscaping in continuous boulevards	No	No
	Allows raised beds and container growing in separate boulevards	Yes	No
Edmonton	Allows planters on public rights-of-way (sidewalks, boulevards, roadways, or alleys)	Yes	No
Winnipeg	Allows non-standard landscaping (i.e., gardening) on separate boulevards within the scope of provided guidelines	No	No
	Allows non-standard landscaping (i.e., gardening) on separate boulevards outside the scope of provided guidelines	Yes	\$43 permit fee
Vancouver	Allows standard gardening and landscaping in continuous boulevards	No	No
Victoria	Allows standard gardening and landscaping including raised beds on continuous and separate boulevards	No	No

Additional Gardening or Landscaping Programs on Public Land

Both the stakeholder SWOT analysis and public engagement results indicated an opportunity to expand the Boulevard Gardening program to additional types of City-owned spaces, and consider options to allow citizens to garden, landscape, or naturalize public spaces. A municipal scan of other programs revealed the following applicable programs, described in Table 5. Note that community garden programs on public land were not included in the municipal scan because a community gardening program already exists in Saskatoon and was considered out of scope for this review.

Table 5: Summary of best practice scan – other gardening or landscaping programs on public land

Municipality	Type of City-owned space	Program Scope	City permission required?	Admin Fee
Vancouver	Rights-of-way including traffic	Green Streets program - volunteers plant and maintain gardens on traffic circles and other rights-of-ways	Yes	No

	circles			
Montreal	Back lanes	Green Alleyway Program supports citizen groups to complete green infrastructure upgrades in their back lanes.	Yes	No
Melbourne, Australia	Rights-of-way including medians	Street Garden program allows gardens on public land (e.g. medians, separate boulevards, and other spaces upon approval)	Yes	\$50 application fee and \$75 bond
Calgary	Parks	Community habitat restoration and naturalization volunteer program – trained volunteers may work with City and Park staff to restore sites on public land to improve biodiversity outcomes.	Yes	No
Edmonton	Parks	Partners in Parks program – volunteers plant and maintain shrub beds, plant trees, and complete naturalization work.	Yes	No

Public Engagement

After the initial Committee review and municipal scan, proposed updates to the program were developed and brought to residents in a public engagement campaign over two phases between December 2020 and February 2021. Full details of the public engagement process and results are available in Appendix 1 – Comprehensive Engagement Report.

Options Not Pursued

Certain alternative approaches to the Boulevard Garden Program were considered but ultimately excluded from the final options because of low stakeholder support, potential legal challenges, high administrative costs, or the lack of precedent from other jurisdictions. The options excluded are described in Table 6.

Table 6 – Options rejected from the Boulevard Garden Review

Rejected Option	Reason
Status quo – Keep 2015 Guidelines	A status quo option would be to not update the 2015 Guidelines. However, this would mean important feedback from the public and Committee would not be addressed. Internal and public stakeholders both wanted to see increased clarity on certain issues and processes.
Empower the Guidelines through a Bylaw or Bylaw Amendment	This option was initially proposed so that the Guidelines would be enforceable. This was ultimately rejected because an alternative option was found to incorporate wording that references Bylaw No. 7200, <i>The Traffic Bylaw</i> Section 58.2(1). This will allow infractions of the Guidelines to be enforced in the same way that Bylaws are, without the additional process needed to pass a new Bylaw or Bylaw Amendment.

Retract the Guidelines and administer boulevard gardening through bylaw enforcement	This option was initially proposed in response to some stakeholder feedback that boulevard gardening could operate more efficiently and be more cost-effective through bylaw enforcement processes alone. This was rejected after further analysis because current Bylaws do not contain criteria specific to gardens, so removing the Guidelines would create confusion about what is and is not allowed. This would ultimately lead to more inefficiencies and lost time, the opposite of the intent. Bylaw enforcement staff also stated a preference that the subject matter experts (Sustainability) administer the program.
Stop allowing boulevard gardens	While some survey respondents would like the city to stop allowing boulevard gardens, citing maintenance, access, and aesthetic concerns; most respondents (97%) would like this program to continue. Frequently cited concerns with boulevard gardens can be addressed through other means addressed in the Guideline review such as tree protection and setback criteria. Since many boulevard gardens already exist in the City, disallowing them would create many non-compliant situations that the Administration has no capacity to enforce or return to turf.

REVIEW FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended Elements

The finalized recommended program elements are shown in Table 7. More information about each element, as well as the rationale for choosing the recommendation, are provided in the corresponding sections.

Table 7 - Boulevard Gardening Program

Section	Program Element	Recommendation(s)
1	Updated Program Name	That the program name be updated to “Street Garden Guidelines” with program expansion.
2	Definitions and Scope of the Guidelines	That the Guidelines only apply to separate boulevards and (if approved) centre medians. That frontages (i.e. continuous boulevards) continue to be exempt from the Guidelines.
3	Soil preparation	That excavation up to 30 cm into the soil be allowed. That soil and amendments (compost, mulch) up to 15 cm be allowed.
4	Tree Protection	That only hand digging be allowed within 3 meters of street trees. That no materials be allowed to be piled within 60 cm (2 feet) of tree trunks.
5	Accessibility, height restrictions, and offsets	That height restrictions and offsets be updated and illustrated in a diagram.
6	Acceptable materials and accessories	That synthetic or toxic mulches and soil covers not be allowed. That impermeable materials be capped at 25% of the garden footprint. That only temporary raised beds be allowed. That examples of allowable temporary structures be provided.

7	Seasonal considerations	That a specific date (October 15) be added by which temporary structures and materials must be removed from the garden site.
8	Guideline enforcement	That a reference to the <i>Traffic Bylaw</i> and any other applicable Bylaws or Policies be added to the Guidelines.
9	Community building	That a new section with tips for community building be added to the Guidelines.
10	Program Expansion	That the program be expanded to centre medians through an application process, and feasibility and criteria for future sites be explored.
11	Future considerations: snow removal level of service	That future changes to the snow removal level of service consider impacts to boulevard and median gardens through a Triple Bottom Line assessment.

1. Updated Program Name

Recommendation: that the program name be updated to “Street Garden Guidelines”

Upon Council’s approval, the scope of the Guidelines may expand to include additional rights-of-way such as centre medians. Alternative program names such as "Boulevard and Median Gardening and Landscaping Guidelines" could be used but there is a need to balance specificity with plain language. Other municipal program names were investigated and presented to the Committee and public during engagement. "Street Garden Guidelines" was the most preferred options of the Administration and the public.

2. Definitions and Scope of the Guidelines

Recommendation: that the Guidelines only apply to boulevards and (if approved) centre medians. That frontages (i.e., continuous boulevards) continue to be exempt from the Guidelines.

Frontages are the City-owned strip of land within residential yards that are sometimes also called boulevards. The 2015 Guidelines only apply to separate boulevards and side yards, so the Administration considered expanding the Guidelines to property frontages as well. However, many residents view the boulevard abutting their property as extensions of their own yards where there may be different landscaping allowances. Certain Guideline criteria for separate boulevards would create non-compliant situations if applied to attached boulevards. Further public engagement and review would be needed to apply the guidelines to these spaces.

The most common approach in other municipalities surveyed was to not include continuous boulevards in gardening programs, or, in the case of Calgary, to have a more flexible approach to frontages (Calgary refers to these spaces as Type 1 Boulevards, and there are fewer restrictions to these spaces).

Information about the Bylaws and Policies that do apply to frontages (e.g. Property Maintenance Bylaw) are provided in the updated Guidelines.

3. Soil Preparation

Recommendation: That excavation up to 30 cm (1 foot) into the soil be allowed. That soil and amendments (compost, mulch) up to 15 cm (6 inches) be allowed.

The 2015 Guidelines provide clear guidance on the need to locate utilities prior to excavation, and do not recommend rototilling. However, residents sometimes asked for further clarification on what type of excavation would be permitted to establish gardens, and whether soil amendments (e.g. compost, wood chips) are allowed. In response, the updated Guidelines clarified that gardeners:

- Can hand dig up to 1 foot into the soil and add soil amendments (compost, wood chips);
- Must not rototill within 3 meters of trees, and that rototilling in other locations is discouraged except to establish a new garden; and
- Can add soil amendments like compost, but not within 2 feet of street trees.

These updates were reviewed and approved by Urban Forestry, Saskatoon Light and Power, and Waste Operations. The updates were also in alignment with Saskatoon and other municipal best practices. For example, the Healthy Yards program encourages no-till gardening.

4. Tree Protection

Recommendation: That tilling not be allowed within 3 meters (9.8 feet) of street trees. That no materials be allowed to be piled within 60 cm (2 feet) of tree trunks.

The 2015 Guidelines specify that markings, structures, or signage must not be affixed to street trees, that rototilling is not permitted on the boulevard, and that raised beds are not permitted to reduce smothering to tree roots. However, residents sometimes asked for further clarity on what activities were permitted near trees. The Administration reviewed other municipal best practices. The updated Guidelines clarified that:

- Rototilling not be allowed within 3 meters of trees, but that hand digging is allowed within this zone; and
- Materials must not be placed within 60 cm of tree trunks, but that top dressing with soil amendments such as compost and wood chips would be permitted near trees.

These changes were reviewed with Urban Forestry and the other Committee members and are in alignment with other municipal best practices.

5. Accessibility, Height Restrictions, and Offsets

Recommendation: That height restrictions and offsets be updated and illustrated in a diagram.

Several height and offset criteria were added or changed in the review based on feedback from stakeholders. These included additional criteria for distance from gardens to hydrants (2 m) to align with feedback from Saskatoon Fire. The offset between garden and street curb was also increased from 30 cm (1 foot) to 60 cm (2 feet) to ensure that passengers can exit parked vehicles and to reduce the risk of gardens being damaged during snow removal. Information about height restrictions and offsets were illustrated in a diagram in the 2021 Guidelines for easier reference.

6. Acceptable Materials and Accessories

Recommendation: That synthetic or toxic mulches and soil covers not be allowed. That impermeable materials be capped at 25% of the garden footprint. That only temporary raised beds be allowed. That examples of allowable temporary structures be provided.

Synthetic Mulches and Soil Covers

After a review of best gardening practices, it was determined that synthetic mulches and soil covers such as rubber mulches and artificial turfs would not be allowed on the boulevard as they may have a negative impact on soil quality, permeability, and the heat island effect.

Impermeable Materials

For alignment with current practice at the City, a cap of 25% maximum allowable impermeable materials would be specified in the Guidelines.

Raised Beds

Engagement results indicated support for raised beds for greater accessibility and to address concerns with soil quality. Other municipalities such as Calgary and Edmonton do allow raised beds through an application process. However, there is a risk that raised beds left over winter will both be damaged by and cause damage to city equipment which could have significant negative impacts to snow removal operations. Generally, snow removal only occurs on priority streets but the winter of 2020-2021 demonstrated that there are exceptions. Allowing permanent raised beds on the boulevard would require changes to the snow removal level of service that are beyond the scope of this review. Therefore, only moveable raised beds or containers that are removed by October 15 are allowed on the boulevard and median.

Temporary Equipment, Furniture or Structures

A list of approved temporary equipment, furniture or structures was provided to offer more clarity to residents.

7. Seasonal Considerations

Recommendation: That a specific date (October 15) be added by which temporary materials and accessories must be removed from the garden site.

The Committee reviewed seasonal considerations that can pose a risk to both boulevard gardens and snow removal equipment or processes. For example:

- Boulevard gardens may be damaged by equipment as a result of snow removal and other road maintenance.
- Snow removal equipment may be damaged by gardening structures which could seriously impact snow removal operations and have significant cost implications.

It was found that these risks can be mitigated but not eliminated for everyone by requiring that residents remove all structures from the boulevard by October 15 to avoid snow removal season.

8. Guideline Enforcement

Recommendation: That a reference to The Traffic Bylaw and any other applicable Bylaws or Policies be added to the Guidelines.

A reference to *The Traffic Bylaw* Section 58.2(1) has been added to the 2021 Guidelines. This will allow infractions of the Guidelines to be enforced in the same way that Bylaws are, without the additional process needed to pass a new Bylaw. This provision prohibits the placement, disposal, or direction of material to a boulevard or street unless permission is granted by the General Manager. The Guidelines provide such permission, subject to compliance with the Guidelines.

9. Community Building

Recommendation: that a new section with tips for community building be added to the Guidelines.

This section was added after public input on the need to navigate neighbour complaints and be a "Good Garden Neighbour". The section was connected directly to the City's new *Good Neighbour Guide*. Additional content in the Bylaw Compliance section of the Guidelines included an updated recommendation for what garden neighbours should consider before filing a bylaw complaint.

10. Program Expansion

Recommendation: that the program be expanded to centre medians through an application process, and feasibility and criteria for future sites be explored.

Following the Committee's SWOT analysis that identified program expansion as a possibility, residents were asked about their level of support for expansion in the public engagement campaign. Residents were supportive of program expansion by a wide margin (86%). Residents suggested several options for types of spaces to expand the program to including centre medians, back lanes, and other types of rights-of-way. The Committee opted to focus on centre medians during the review because, while median gardens are not permitted by the 2015 Guidelines, residents are nonetheless gardening in these spaces.

Various options to expand the Guidelines to centre medians were considered, including allowing centre medians gardens with no application process. This was supported by public engagement results. However, due to maintenance and safety concerns, it was not possible to allow centre median gardens through the current approach. For example, there are traffic safety considerations to address before allowing residents to cross streets to garden on medians. Additionally, Parks staff must know about garden sites so they can avoid mowing them; and the Administration needs a clear “owner” of the garden to ensure that it is maintained.

Other municipal approaches to similar programs were explored. The Vancouver Green Streets program, which permits residents to garden on traffic circles, has addressed many of the considerations. For example, to ensure that residents cross streets safely they require volunteer gardeners to apply with the City and sign a letter of agreement which includes a waiver of liability. The City also provides traffic safety tips to the registered gardener. This approach was presented to the Committee and refined during small group discussions to fit with the Saskatoon context. The outcome was a special use application process that was proposed to residents during engagement. While residents wanted a process that was as simple and straightforward as possible, survey respondents generally agreed with the suggested approach in public engagement and expressed interest in the City allowing other spaces in future.

11. Future Considerations: Snow Removal Level of Service

Recommendation: that future changes to the snow removal level of service consider impacts to boulevard and median gardens through a Triple Bottom Line Assessment.

During years with average snowfall, generally only boulevards along priority streets are impacted by winter maintenance activities. However, separate boulevards on local streets are used for snow storage in winters with high snowfall such as 2020/2021. If Council updates the snow removal level of service in future (i.e. regularly providing snow removal on local streets), the Guidelines should be updated to reflect the increased risk to both gardens and equipment. A Triple Bottom Line analysis is recommended so that future decisions about snow removal considers the implications for boulevard gardeners.