



# Boulevard Garden Guidelines Review

*What We Heard – Close the Loop*

March 26, 2021



## Engagement Summary

The City of Saskatoon is reviewing the Boulevard Gardening and Maintenance Guidelines (Guidelines), which provide information to residents on how to garden on City of Saskatoon (City)-owned boulevards in accordance with current bylaws and policies. This review and update of the Guidelines will provide more clarity on acceptable boulevard gardening practices, what is and is not allowed on boulevards and other types of City-owned rights of way, and bring the document into alignment with other City plans and strategies.

Engagement on the Guidelines review is taking place from December 2020 to March 2021. Administration will update the Guidelines and look at options to expand the program based on what we hear from stakeholders, research in best practices from other cities, and an analysis of requirements and uses of City-owned rights-of-way across multiple departments. The Guideline updates and options for program expansion will be presented in a Decision Report to the Standing Policy Committee for Environment, Utilities & Corporate Services (EU&CS) in April 2021.

A total of 210 respondents participated in a survey during the third phase of engagement, which was focused on sharing components of the Guidelines with the public to validate the changes made and key findings. Guideline preferences that emerged from the online survey are discussed in this report.

### Guideline Information

Respondents strongly supported all the proposed options for better providing information to the public, including a one-page reference guide for boulevard gardening (74%), a communication campaign on the guidelines (54%), and associated education programs (54%). Respondents also supported (66%) streamlining and improving the application process on the boulevard garden website.

### Where the Guidelines Apply

When asked whether the respondents agreed with the Guidelines only applying to separate boulevards and not frontages (the City-owned land touching the properties), 87% agreed.

Comments provided by respondents suggested that even though frontages will not require an application they should still follow the same standards as other boulevard gardens in regards to maintenance and upkeep. Respondents also identified that it is hard for residents to know where the frontage ends on their properties; therefore, there needs to be more education on this topic including what can and cannot be done on frontages.

### Garden Maintenance and Enforcement

When asked whether respondents supported the proposed options to minimize the impacts of regular City maintenance (i.e., snow removal, salting, street sweeping, etc.) around garden sites, respondents strongly supported (90%) the City offering education tips and reminders about the associated risks. Although not as strongly supported, respondents also favoured (66%) allowing gardens on sites that are less impacted by snow removal.

### Wildflowers and Native Plants

Respondents were asked whether they supported planting native plants and wildflowers not requiring an extra application process, to which 84% stated yes. 84% also supported the City exploring options to increase support for citizens to plant native plants in the future.

### Raised Beds

Out of the proposed options to mitigate the issues surrounding raised beds in boulevard gardens respondents marginally favoured (64%) allowing temporary raised beds that must be removed annually over allowing year-round raised beds that are clearly marked (56%).

Overall, 63% of respondents disagreed with the City not allowing raised beds at all. This was supported further in the comments where most were supportive of raised beds if owners were responsible for maintaining them, design standards were developed and clearly communicated/enforced, and they did not become visual obstructions.

In regards to the impacts on City maintenance (i.e., snow removal, street sweeping, etc.) and administration of the program, respondents suggested sharing the locations of raised beds with City maintenance crews in the future and reducing the administrative burden for enforcement/applications as best as possible.

### Other City-Owned Spaces

Previous engagement activities showed support for expanding the program to other types of City-owned spaces; therefore, expanding the program first to centre medians with an application process was proposed. Most respondents strongly supported (80%) this option as well as the City exploring options to expand to other spaces in the future (87%).

In regard to the application process, greater support (77%) was given to the application process only being needed for spaces where there is no clear owner (ex. centre medians).

Out of the proposed names for expansion of the program into other spaces, the following were ranked in order of their support:

1. Street Garden Guidelines (34%)
2. Green Street Guidelines (31%)
3. Boulevard and Centre Median Garden Guidelines (27%)
4. Street Side Garden Guidelines (12%)
5. Hellstrip Garden Guidelines (8%)

### User Agreements for Expanded Garden Applications

Respondents were supportive (81%) of the City requiring gardeners to sign a user agreement for centre median gardens and the City checking in with the resident during the application process about their plan to access the median safely (74%). They were also strongly supportive (90%) of the City creating a simple website form and user agreement to identify who is responsible for the garden.

The majority (64%) of respondents supported neighbour feedback only being required for centre median applications where the garden is not close to the applicant's residence. Comments provided by respondents were mixed with some stating the lack of approval will inevitably lead to future complaints and gardens being vandalised; however, tensions between neighbours could lead to gardens never being approved in many cases.

Results for the length of centre median agreements were mixed, with 35% wanting three year terms of renewal through a site photos, 33% wanting yearly renewal with a site photo, and 21% wanting indefinite agreements used until the agreement is canceled or transferred to another gardener.

### Fee for Garden Applications

Out of the two proposed options aimed at application fees for centre median gardens, respondents supported the City not charging a fee for any garden applications and garden clean-up costs being covered from fines (58%). Respondents stressed the need to make the program accessible for low-income groups that might view the application fee as a barrier to participating. Suggestions included waiving the fees or creating a community sponsorship program.

### Final Thoughts

When asked whether the proposed changes described in the survey addressed any concerns they had with the current Guidelines a slightly majority of respondents stated yes (51%). Comments on why the Guidelines did not address their concerns included uncertainty surrounding the associated fees, the ability for individuals not living in the neighbourhood to still apply for a garden, considerations for renters, and logistics surrounding waste and watering.

Overarching comments included the following themes:

*Aesthetics:* there are many different opinions what looks acceptable or appealing, the Guidelines will need to specify what an unkept/unmaintained boulevard garden looks like

*Enforcement:* numerous respondents questioned how enforcement will occur for unkept gardens, accountability and the associated responsibilities need to be clearly defined to applicants

*Low-income and senior considerations:* respondents generally felt that support systems and incentives should be made available to encourage uptake and increase accessibility

*Native plants:* are highly supported by the public with many interested in increasing the local biodiversity in Saskatoon, some respondents clarified that although native plants are generally viewed as being beneficial they can also be an issue depending on their growth and ability to overtake other plants

*Simple:* keep the process as simple as possible and with a limited amount of bureaucracy, this will make the program more accessible to a wider group of participants

*Support:* the most commented on theme, generally there is a lot of support from the public with many interested in participating in boulevard gardening within the near future

### Next Steps:

Following approval by City Council and education and communication campaign will be used to ensure the Guidelines are marketed to residents effectively.

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## 1 Background

The City of Saskatoon is reviewing the Boulevard Gardening and Maintenance Guidelines (Guidelines), which provide information to residents on how to garden on City of Saskatoon (City)-owned boulevards in accordance with current bylaws and policies. This review and update of the Guidelines will provide more clarity on acceptable boulevard gardening practices, what is and is not allowed on boulevards and other types of City-owned rights of way, and bring the document into alignment with other City plans and strategies.

Project outcomes include:

1. Updating the Guidelines for bylaw and policy requirements through engagement with internal/external stakeholders and a best practise scan of other municipalities.
2. Aligning with goals from associated City strategies (i.e., Green Infrastructure Strategy, Low Impact Development Guidelines, Boulevard and Median Asset Management Strategy, etc.) and updating City documents (i.e., Tree Protection Policy, Traffic Bylaw, Community Garden Guidelines, etc.)
3. Developing best practises and educational materials for communicating the Guidelines to internal and external stakeholders and the diversity of participants in time for the 2021 gardening season.

Engagement on the Guideline review is taking place from December 2020 to March 2021. Administration will update the Guidelines and look at options to expand the program based on what we hear from stakeholders, research in best practices from other cities, and an analysis of requirements and uses of City-owned rights-of-way across multiple departments. The Guideline updates and options for program expansion will be presented in a Decision Report to the Standing Policy Committee for Environment, Utilities & Corporate Services EU&CS in April 2021.

### 1.1 Strategic Goals

This project supports the Strategic Goal of Environmental Leadership, contributing to responsible land use. This work also addresses the City's goal of regular continuous improvement and performing a review of the guidelines after approximately three years.

### 1.2 City Project Team

- Jeanna South, Director, Sustainability
- Jessie Best, Project Manager, Sustainability
- Katie Burns, Manager Community Leadership and Program Development, Sustainability
- Megan Quintal, Marketing Consultant, Communications & Public Engagement
- Kenton Lysak, Engagement Consultant, Communications & Public Engagement

### 1.3 Spokesperson(s)

- Jeanna South, Director, Sustainability
- Katie Burns, Manager Community Leadership and Program Development, Sustainability

## 2 Summary of Engagement Strategy

The following engagement goals were identified to help inform the review of the Boulevard Garden Guidelines:

- Guidelines review and options identification
  - Review pre-existing program guidelines with internal stakeholders and boulevard garden users
  - Identify new program elements that enhance opportunities and mitigate barriers.
- Refinement of current guidelines
  - Review guidelines with a wider stakeholder base
  - Validate key findings and identify missed opportunities
- Close the Loop
  - Share components of the guidelines with stakeholders to validate changes and provide opportunities to identify any red flags.
  - Validate key findings and test with wider stakeholder base.
- Education and Communication
  - Work with key stakeholders to ensure all education and communication materials are effective for a wide range of user groups

We Are Here

### 2.1 Stakeholder Groups

Four stakeholder groups were identified with the potential to be impacted by the Boulevard Garden updates. These groups include:

#### 2.1.1 Internal Stakeholders

- Internal stakeholders with associated knowledge or correlated projects involving boulevard gardens, including:
  - Bylaw Compliance
  - City Solicitors
  - Communications and Marketing
  - Community Development
  - Sustainability (Community Leadership and Program Development)
  - Community Standards
  - Compost Facilities
  - Indigenous Initiatives
  - Neighbourhood Safety
  - Parks – Urban Forestry and Maintenance
  - Roadways and Operations
  - Saskatoon Light and Power
  - Social Development
  - Transportation
  - Utilities

#### 2.1.2 Subject Matter Experts

- Internal and external stakeholders with experience or knowledge related to boulevard gardens, permaculture, and using green spaces for food security. These include:
  - Community Garden Groups:

- CHEP Community Garden Network
- Conservation Advocates:
  - Lichen Nature
  - Meewasin Valley Authority
  - Saskatchewan Environmental Society
  - SOS Trees
  - Wild About Saskatoon
- Existing boulevard gardeners
- Healthy Yards Partners:
  - CHEP Good Food and Community Garden Leaders
  - Little Green Thumbs
  - Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan
  - Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council's Compost Coaches
  - Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Center's Garden Patch
  - Saskatoon Food Council
- University of Saskatchewan:
  - College of Agriculture and Bioresources
    - Plant Science
    - Soil Science
  - Master Gardeners
  - MOST Facility
  - Office of Sustainability

### 2.1.3 Key Stakeholder Groups

- Key Stakeholder Groups are those who have potential to be disproportionately impacted (either positively or negatively) by the changes to the Guidelines and any residual or cumulative impacts that could be affected by the initiative. Specific stakeholders within this group will be identified as the engagement program progresses. The following groups have been identified to date:
  - Equity, Low Income and Newcomer Residents/Organizations
    - Low to moderate income residents and others who have difficulty accessing programs were identified as stakeholders who may experience disproportionate barriers to accessing boulevard gardens
    - Groups include:
      - Local Immigration Partnership
      - Newcomers Information Centre
      - Open Doors Society
      - OUTSaskatoon
      - Saskatoon Council for Aging
      - Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership – First Voice Group
      - Saskatoon Services for Seniors
  - Indigenous Groups/Organizations
    - Potential contacts include:
      - Central Urban Métis Federation Inc.
      - City of Saskatoon – Indigenous Technical Advisory Group



- Indigenous food security advocates
  - Decolonizing Food Access and Land Use Group
  - Saskatoon Health Authority
  - University of Saskatchewan College of Indigenous Studies
- Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre
- Saskatoon Tribal Council
- Specific Community Groups/Organizations:
  - Accessibility advocates
  - Dog walkers
  - Safety advocates
  - Senior citizens

#### 2.1.4 Active and Potential Program Users

- Includes those stakeholder groups who currently use boulevard gardens and currently participate in Boulevard Gardening. Examples of target audiences for engagement under this category include:
  - Businesses and organizations
    - Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)
  - Community Associations
  - Developers
  - Industry Professionals:
    - Irrigation installers and suppliers
    - Landscaping businesses
  - Property Managers
    - Saskatchewan Landlords' Association
  - Residents (renters and homeowners)
  - Schools

A summary of stakeholder groups, level of engagement, engagement objectives, engagement goals and engagement activities completed are provided below.

Table 1: Summary of Engagement Strategy

Phase	Stakeholder	Level of Influence	Objective	Engagement Goal	Potential Engagement Activities
1	Internal Stakeholders Subject Matter Experts	Collaborate	Review guidelines and identify opportunities/barriers.	Guidelines Review and Options Identification	Emails Meetings Phone Calls Survey (Optional)
2	Internal Stakeholders Key Stakeholders Potential Users Subject Matter Experts	Involve	Review program elements with a wider stakeholder base to refine new program elements and identify red flags	Refinement	Emails Meetings Phone Calls Surveys
3	Internal Stakeholders Subject Matter Experts	Collaborate	Obtain feedback and validate key findings	Close the Loop	Emails Meetings Phone Calls
	Key Stakeholders Potential Users	Involve	Obtain feedback.	Close the Loop	Emails Phone Calls Survey
4	Key Stakeholders Subject Matter Experts	Consult	Obtain feedback.	Review Content	Emails Meetings Phone Calls

### 3 Engagement Activities

Stakeholder meetings and a public survey were used to collect feedback on the changes made to the Guidelines based on previous engagement activities. The public were also able to provide input through the City of Saskatoon Engage page forum, or contact the Project Manager directly via email, mail, or telephone.

#### 3.1 Stakeholder Meetings

Consultations were held with select Key Stakeholder Groups to identify any missed opportunities or barriers surrounding the proposed changes to the Guidelines.

##### 3.1.1 Intended Audience

The stakeholders that participated in the Individual Stakeholder Meetings included the following:

- Healthy Yards Partners
- Internal stakeholders and committees

##### 3.1.2 Marketing Techniques

No marketing techniques were employed for these activities. Participating stakeholders were contacted individually by the project leads to organize meetings.

##### 3.1.3 Analysis

Meeting notes were provided by the project team.

##### 3.1.4 What We Heard

Results from stakeholder meetings were already captured within the Public Survey comments and therefore were not expanded upon in this report.

#### 3.2 Public Survey

The Administration conducted an online public survey from February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The public survey comprised a total of 20 closed- and open-ended questions to identify their support for the changes made to the Guidelines.

##### 3.2.1 Intended Audience

The Public Survey was intended for all stakeholders and potential program users.

##### 3.2.2 Marketing Techniques

A variety of marketing techniques were employed to reach the intended audience.

1. City Website
  - a. Updates to the Engage Page were made to encourage participation in the online survey.
2. Social Media
  - a. Social media posts were boosted to increase reach throughout Saskatoon. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram “stories” were all used.
3. Email
  - a. Personalized emails were sent to organizations and community members asking them to share the information with their members.

### 3.2.3 Analysis

The suggested changes and review of the Guidelines were analyzed for the following indicators:

- Most popular program changes and recommendations (count)
- Thematic analysis of comments provided for individual program changes
- Analysis of suggestions that might improve or reduce program uptake

Mixed methods were used to analyze the data. Qualitative methods included the thematic analysis and open coding of responses.

### 3.2.4 What We Heard

#### *Demographics*

A total of 210 respondents participated in the Public Survey. The largest group of participants were those that were not current boulevard gardeners (47%), followed by individuals planning to be boulevard gardeners (36%) and those that were (15%).

Most neighbourhoods within the City were represented, with representation being the highest in the following areas: Nutana, City Park, Haultain, and Varsity View.

#### *Guideline Information*

In previous engagement activities respondents stressed the need to provide more information about what the Guidelines allow while also keeping the process as simple as possible. The majority of respondents strongly supported all of the proposed options for better providing information to the public, including a one-page reference guide for boulevard gardening (74%), a communication campaign on the guidelines (54%), and associated education programs (54%). Out of these options respondents favored the one-page reference guide.

Respondents also supported (66%) streamlining and improving the application process on the boulevard garden website.

#### *Where the Guidelines Apply*

Previous engagement results indicated a strong apprehension for the guidelines applying to property frontages (the City-owned land touching the properties), due to frontages being viewed by respondents as an extension of their yards. When asked whether the respondents agreed with the Guidelines only applying to separate boulevards and not frontages, 87% agreed.

Comments provided by respondents suggested that even though frontages will not require an application they should still follow the same standards as other boulevard gardens in regards to maintenance and upkeep. Respondents also identified that it is hard for residents to know where the frontage ends on their properties; therefore, there needs to be more education on this topic including what can and cannot be done on frontages.

#### *Garden Maintenance and Enforcement*

When asked whether respondents supported the proposed options to minimize the impacts of regular City maintenance (i.e., snow removal, salting, street sweeping, etc.) around garden sites, respondents strongly supported (90%) the City offering education tips and reminders about the associated risks. Although not as strongly supported, respondents also favoured (66%) allowing gardens on sites that are less impacted by snow removal.

### **Wildflowers and Native Plants**

Respondents were asked whether they supported planting native plants and wildflowers not requiring an extra application process, to which 84% stated yes. 84% also supported the City exploring options to increase support for citizens to plant native plants in the future.

### **Raised Beds**

We heard from previous engagement activities that raised beds should be permitted to address concerns about soil contamination and garden accessibility. However, raised beds can damage snow removal equipment and result in delays to snow removal for residents. Out of the options presented to mitigate this issue respondents marginally favoured (64%) allowing temporary raised beds that must be removed annually over allowing year-round raised beds that are clearly marked (56%). Overall, 63% of respondents disagreed with the City not allowing raised beds at all, with 21% being in favour. This was supported further in the comments where most were supportive of raised beds if they were maintained, did not become visual obstructions.

Comments regarding raised beds included the following themes:

**Accessibility considerations:** not allowing raised beds would be unfair to accessibility/mobility groups

**Administration:** this process could contribute to a greater administrative burden in enforcement and applications, enforcement for what is “clearly marked” will be difficult due to differing definitions

*“Allowing raised beds of a certain type will require enforcement as well as the question of grandfathering existing ones - also year-round ones may stay when the resident has moved and not be maintained.”*

**Compliance:** making residents move their raised beds annually is not practical and could create issues with noncompliance, containers filled with dirt will not be easily moved, how will their removal be enforced, especially difficult for senior and accessibility participants

*“It is not simply a matter of removing the walls of the raised bed, but also having a plan for the soil that was in the bed. If this needs to be removed as well, it is a lot to have to store over winter. It’s also a lot more work to have to reinstall all of the soil into the raised bed in the spring.”*

*“I can’t even begin to imagine where people will store their raised beds and all the soil if they have to be removed each fall. It defeats the purpose of having a raised bed. Also, letting dead plants break down in the soil over winter creates a beneficial habitat for insects. Snow is rarely, if ever, removed from many residential streets in the city. As long as they are set back from the curb and are clearly marked with flags, that should suffice.”*

**Maintenance:** one of the main issues commented on, gardens can look unappealing if raised beds are not maintained or properly built

**Necessary for healthy gardens:** they potentially maintain warmer/healthier soils and promote better growth of plants

**Obstructions:** raised beds can create issues for parking and getting out of vehicles, inhibit pedestrian traffic, can contribute to added damage in motor vehicle accidents

**Priorities:** some respondents suggested snow removal was a higher priority than raised beds or that the options presented provide a happy medium between potential costs to equipment while still allowing for raised beds, raised beds should be more encouraged on frontages rather than medians



*“My garden is in-ground, but still got damaged during snow removal because the equipment scraped below the grass line. I was upset but I would rather have a garden that gets accidentally dug up in the winter than have to get rid of it completely and let the weedy grass take over.”*

**Responsibility:** owners should be responsible for taking the appropriate action to ensure damage to their raised beds are prevented, this is not the responsibility of the City

**Shared information:** if participants need to apply for a raised bed then the City will have a record that they can share internally with City maintenance crews, could limits be placed on how far they are from the street so this standard can be used by snow removal operators

*“Having done snow removal, I know that it is possible to steer around an object like a raised bed and not damage it. In terms of needing the space for storage, having a clear way to mark the beds even once they are covered in snow would be useful, maybe including some kind of flag that is taller than the raised bed so that is visible even when it is covered in snow. Removing the beds each fall poses a problem for the homeowner.”*

**Standardize building requirements:** they should be built out of long-lasting materials, use biodegradable materials (no treated lumber, liners, etc.), be a certain distance from any roadway to prevent interaction with snow removal equipment

### **Other City-Owned Spaces**

Previous engagement activities showed support for expanding the program to other types of City-owned spaces; therefore, expanding the program first to centre medians with an application process was proposed. The majority of respondents strongly supported (80%) this option as well as the City exploring options to expand to other spaces in the future (87%).

In regards to the application process, greater support (77%) was given to the application process only being needed for spaces where there is no clear owner (ex. centre medians) compared to there being no application process for boulevard gardens (51%).

Out of the proposed names for expansion of the program into other spaces, the following were ranked in order of their support:

1. Street Garden Guidelines (34%)
2. Green Street Guidelines (31%)
3. Boulevard and Centre Median Garden Guidelines (27%)
4. Street Side Garden Guidelines (12%)
5. Hellstrip Garden Guidelines (8%)
6. Verge Garden Guidelines (6%)
7. Street Park Guidelines (3%)
7. Right of Way Garden Guidelines (3%)
8. None of the above (2%)

Other suggestions for names provided by respondents included:

- Keep it Green and Beautiful
- Living Green Street Guidelines
- Green Boulevard Garden Guidelines
- Centre Median Garden Guidelines
- Public Greening Guidelines

- Boulevardens

### **User Agreements for Expanded Garden Applications**

Respondents were supportive (81%) of the City requiring gardeners to sign a user agreement for centre median gardens and the City checking in with the resident during the application process about their plan to access the median safely (74%). They were also strongly supportive (90%) of the City creating a simple website form and user agreement to identify who is responsible for the garden.

The majority (64%) of respondents supported neighbour feedback only being required for centre median applications where the garden is not close to the applicant's residence, followed by respondents being neutral (23%) to this decision.

Results for the length of centre median agreements were mixed, with 35% wanting three year terms of renewal through a site photos, 33% wanting yearly renewal with a site photo, and 21% wanting indefinite agreements used until the agreement is canceled or transferred to another gardener.

### **Fees for Garden Applications**

Out of the two proposed options aimed at application fees for centre median gardens, respondents supported the City not charging a fee for any garden applications and garden clean-up costs being covered from fines (58%). It should be noted that the second option where the City charges an application fee was somewhat supported (32%).

Respondents provided comments on the need to make the program accessible for low-income groups that might view the application fee as a barrier to participating. One individual suggested that there should be an option for people to self-disclose that the fee is a barrier in order to potentially have the fee waived. Another respondent suggested allowing residents to "sponsor" low-income gardeners, allowing them to provide assistance and community support if needed.

*"I'm glad you are considering waiving the \$50 fee for median gardeners if someone is low income. Please just use an honour system to determine low income, i.e., don't make people send in tax statements or paycheque stubs."*

### **Final Thoughts**

When asked whether the proposed changes described in the survey addressed any concerns they had with the current Guidelines a slightly majority of respondents stated yes (51%), followed by somewhat (27%) and unsure (15%). Comments on why the Guidelines did not address their concerns included the following themes:

**Appeals:** if the program has an application process then it must also have a formal appeal process in place, how will this be conducted and who will administer the process

**Fees:** unclear whether the \$50 fee is a yearly or one-time fee, the \$50 fee is too high especially for low-income participants, consider lowering the fee to \$15 – \$30 instead

**Maintenance:** uncertainty around who will maintain or return abandoned gardens to their former state

**Multi-housing:** still does not address spaces near multi-housing/condos/apartments and accessibility for renters, would renters need to consult their condo boards/building managers for areas adjacent to the property

**Vicinity of participants:** some respondents expressed apprehension for participants having the ability to garden on streets where they do not reside

**Waste material:** will considerations be made for the disposal of the waste material at the end of the gardening season, could there be links to the Green Bin program

**Water use:** numerous respondents suggested providing an incentive program for water use in boulevard gardens, there are potential links to the upcoming City Water Conservation Strategy, what considerations have been made for water catchments, how will centre median gardens be watered without causing a hazard for vehicles that drive over water hoses

Final comments regarding the changes to the Guidelines included the following themes:

**Aesthetics:** there are many different opinions what looks acceptable or appealing, the Guidelines will need to specify what an unkept/unmaintained boulevard garden looks like

**Community applications:** could communities or neighbours apply for larger gardens in spaces that could allow for it, the project team should work closely with Community Associations to further support and administer the program

*“Please try and find opportunities to work with Community Associations to develop and administer this program. Many CA’s are already involved in running Community Gardens and have volunteers who could possibly manage additional Boulevard Garden regulations. Leverage these associations as a way to push “ownership” of this program to the local level, as well as reduce or eliminate costs”*

**Enforcement:** numerous respondents questioned how enforcement will occur for unkept gardens, accountability and the associated responsibilities need to be clearly defined to applicants

*“Although I am sure that there are a few negligent gardeners, I think that you need to weigh the cost of policing them against the many, and I hope, vast majority of gardeners who are responsible and respectful of the city’s green spaces.”*

**Fees:** are generally viewed as not being needed since the City is saving money by not having to maintain these areas, however some respondents felt that the fees provide a level of accountability for the participants

*“Any fees must be quite reasonable in order to avoid barriers to growing. Similarly, excessive fees will result in people simply ignoring the process and doing their own thing. Result could be chaotic.”*

*“I support an application fee for non property spaces because I worry some people get enthusiastic but it’s work to maintain and a fee would maybe help people feel serious.”*

**Impacts of pollution:** planting edible gardens next to cars could lead to issues, soil testing must be made available

**Invasive species:** participants must be deterred from planting invasive species, programs to educate residents on the identification and removal of invasive species must be implemented

**Low-income and senior considerations:** respondents generally felt that support systems and incentives should be made available to encourage uptake and increase accessibility, however some respondents noted that these supports should not be offered since the additional costs of the plants/supplies and maintenance could ultimately lead to the gardens being abandoned after they are developed

**Native plants:** are highly supported by the public with many interested in increasing the local biodiversity in Saskatoon, some respondents clarified that although native plants are generally viewed as being beneficial they can also be an issue depending on their growth and ability to overtake other plants

*“I would like to see planting of more indigenous plants along with these gardening endeavours. This can provide connectivity as through the corridor concept for populations of insects and habitat for wildlife and enhance local biodiversity. These can be plantings of herbaceous plants, shrubs, or trees as communities as suited to particular site conditions.”*

**Neighbour input:** there were conflicting views in regards to whether neighbour feedback should be needed for approval, the lack of approval will inevitably lead to future complaints and gardens being vandalised, however tensions between neighbours could lead to gardens never being approved

**Safety:** accessing centre median gardens is a concern, median gardens should have stronger limitations such as only being allowed on low traffic streets, hindering snow removal is an issue

**Seed heads remain:** seed heads should be allowed to remain overwinter to allow food for a variety of bird and insect species

**Simple:** keep the process as simple as possible and with a limited amount of bureaucracy, this will make the program more accessible to a wider group of participants

*“These gardens have value and shouldn’t be deterred by a complex process.”*

**Support:** the most commented on theme, generally there is a lot of support from the public with many interested in participating in boulevard gardening within the near future

*“I really appreciate the city’s desire to increase gardening opportunities on city-owned property, for aesthetic as well as food security reasons.”*

*“I had no concerns with the current Guidelines. You have done a great job of asking good questions. Thanks for your diligence on this. Such a respectful process you have developed thanks for that. Let’s get gardening!”*

*“This initiative is wonderful, I look forward to seeing what people do with these unused spaces!”*

*“I am definitely looking forward to the implementation of this program. How lovely it would be to see gardens throughout the city everywhere. This would also have more folks meeting neighbours. A more social, friendly area would also be a sort of neighbourhood watch. Makes me smile to think about it.as well as the beauty and tasty veggies. Good work, City of Saskatoon.”*

### 3.3 Data Limitations

Due to the public health orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic, all engagement activities were restricted to Individual Stakeholder Meetings and surveys with the public. The goal of this phase was to identify a range of perspectives, needs and concerns across sectors to help inform refinement of the options. The sample size of all engagement activities potentially limits the validity of the results in terms of providing a full representation of the population under consideration; however, the results provide the best available indication of how stakeholders perceive the program elements of the Boulevard Garden Guidelines.

Additional considerations for low-income, Indigenous and equity groups will need to be incorporated into future engagement opportunities. Online engagement has its limitations in not being as


inclusive to those individuals with limited to no internet access, including low-income groups. Multiple avenues were available to the public for providing input to help mitigate potential issues of inclusivity due to the inability to conduct in-person activities; however, engagement practises and procedures were limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in conducting physical meetings with individual stakeholders.



## 4 Next Steps

The next steps for development of Boulevard Garden Guidelines are described below:

- Guidelines review and options identification
  - Review pre-existing program guidelines with internal stakeholders and boulevard garden users
  - Identify new program elements that enhance opportunities and mitigate barriers.
- Refinement of current guidelines
  - Review guidelines with a wider stakeholder base
  - Validate key findings and identify final concerns
- Close the Loop
  - Share relevant components of the Boulevard Garden Guidelines with stakeholders to close the loop and provide opportunities to identify any concerns.
  - Validate key findings and test with wider stakeholder base.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Education and Communication<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Work with key stakeholders to ensure all education and communication materials are tailored to their associated groups</li></ul></li></ul>
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