

## New: Communities in Bloom

<b>Initiative Title:</b>	Communities in Bloom/Front Yards in Bloom
<b>City Council Sponsor(s):</b>	Councillor M. Nickel
<b>Supporting Department and Lead Staff:</b>	Community Services, Heather McRae & Doug Costigan

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### BACKGROUND:

#### ***Front Yards in Bloom (FYiB) (local program)***

The Edmonton Horticultural Society (EHS) is the primary partner, with the City of Edmonton and Canadian Union of Postal Workers, to promote this Council Initiative. The Realtors' Association is a program sponsor. Edmonton has participated in this program since 1999. Front Yards in Bloom highlights and recognizes beautiful, natural, and edible front yards maintained by residents. Category partners include Sustainable Food Edmonton and Edmonton Naturalization Group.

#### ***Edmonton in Bloom (EiB) (local program)***

Executive Committee of Council approved the Edmonton in Bloom initiative Terms of Reference in 2010, with updates provided in 2011 and 2013. Edmonton has participated in the national Communities in Bloom program since 1995. The ideas gained from this program have fostered several successes in local beautification: Front Yards in Bloom, "Ride the Wave" planters with BRZs, and Partners-in-Parks projects.

Edmonton in Bloom is an annual event and award ceremony that highlights and showcases select programs, projects, events, and initiatives that contribute to making Edmonton beautiful. Selected initiatives may be nominated by the City of Edmonton, the Edmonton Horticultural Society, stakeholders, or the general public.

#### ***Communities in Bloom (CiB) (national program)***

CiB is a national program that supports enhanced community beautification. Participating municipalities promote community engagement, enhance green spaces, and foster environmental responsibility. This creates beautiful communities both in look and in spirit.

Participating communities annually host national judges who evaluate the community's efforts, provide feedback, and recognize exemplary communities. From 2002 Edmonton has received a 5/5 bloom rating, the Circle of Excellence designation since 2010, and hosted the CiB National Symposium in 2012.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES:

Outcomes focus on enhancement of green spaces (landscapes, trees, natural areas, and streetscapes) to enhance the look and feel of Edmonton; increased community engagement and community-based beautification of outdoor spaces in both groomed and natural areas; greater environmentally-responsible actions; increased vibrancy of urban areas; and improvement in civic livability.

- 1) Administration to receive continued input from stakeholders, community groups and City units related to forestry, horticulture, and natural history.
- 2) Administration is working on promotional plans to increase the reach and public participation in the Edmonton in Bloom Initiative. Partnering with additional businesses and not for profit groups in the Greater Edmonton Area will allow for increased capacity to deliver the program.
- 3) Administration is working with communities in the Alberta Capital Region to recognize initiatives that should be recognized for their contributions that meet our proposed outcomes, and to host the Edmonton In Bloom Awards in August 2014.
- 4) City of Edmonton will be developing a communications strategy to promote Edmonton's Circle of Excellence evaluation and recognized beautification initiatives by Communities in Bloom
- 5) Front Yards in Bloom committee is developing and introducing a winter-themed Front Yards in Bloom Program (called Front Yards in Bloom: Winterscapes) in 2014 as a means to encourage community engagement and year-round beautification in Edmonton.

#### **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC DIRECTION:**

- In Bloom programs (CiB, EiB, FYiB) along with partners and stakeholders, align with The Way We Live, and The Way We Green
- Front Yards in Bloom: Winterscapes aligns with Winter City Edmonton, the implementation plan developed from the Winter City Strategy.
- Objectives:
  - To positively position Edmonton and the Capital Region as a municipality committed to beautification initiatives, and promote/increase public engagement with these initiatives
  - To build capacity and recognition amongst organizations about Communities in Bloom and beautification initiatives
  - To strengthen relationships and collaboration among Edmonton Capital Region organizations and municipalities

#### **START-UP BUDGET REQUIREMENTS:**

- No new budget allocation is required.

#### **TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION OF PROJECT PLAN:**

- April 2014: Implement and evaluate pilot program (Winterscapes)
- August 2014: Support local & existing programming, including Front Yards in Bloom, and Edmonton in Bloom Awards.
- October 2014: Continue participation in CiB national program through formal evaluation
- Dec 2014: Develop strategy to communicate and promote Edmonton's excellence and commitment to municipal greening and beautification