

# Evaluation Form

Competitive,  
Evaluated Friends, and  
Novice Categories

# 2024



Communities  
in Bloom

Collectivités  
en fleurs

Saskatchewan

Provincial Partner



Saskatchewan Parks  
and Recreation  
Association

**THE SASKATCHEWAN PARKS AND  
RECREATION ASSOCIATION INC. (SPRA)**

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**SASK LOTTERIES**

## **Program Disclaimer**

Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA) staff, volunteer judges and all personnel associated with Communities in Bloom (CiB) will not be held liable for any observations, suggestions, or recommendations made in this Evaluation Document or at any time during the delivery of the CiB program. This will also include any resulting activity or events related to participation in the CiB program.



**Community: Eston**

**Province: Saskatchewan**

**Category: Competitive**

**CiB recognizes efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change which is reflected in several criteria including:**

**Environmental Action; Preservation of Natural Heritage; Tree Management and Landscape**

<b>Community Appearance</b>	<b>118.00</b>	<b>/</b>	<b>150.00</b>
<b>Environmental Action</b>	<b>122.00</b>	<b>/</b>	<b>150.00</b>
<b>Heritage Conservation</b>	<b>122.00</b>	<b>/</b>	<b>150.00</b>
<b>Tree Management</b>	<b>131.00</b>	<b>/</b>	<b>175.00</b>
<b>Landscape Plant and Floral Displays</b>	<b>162.00</b>	<b>/</b>	<b>200.00</b>
	<b>Total</b>		<b>802.00 / 1000.00</b>

**Percentage:** 80%

**Bloom rating:** 4 Blooms

**Bloom rating:** Provincial, National and International Participants

Up to 55% 1 bloom	56% to 63% 2 blooms	64% to 72% 3 blooms	73% to 81% 4 blooms	>82% 5 blooms
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**Mention:** Environmental Action: Water Conservation in the Ball Diamonds Project

**Representative (s) of Community**

Name: Val Mohan, Leslie Kraft, Doreen Reaburn, Edna Williams, Clare Oliphant Function: CiB Committee

Name: Jody Schmidt Function: Chief Administrative Officer

Name: Dayton McIvor Function: Public Works Director

Name: Jamie Kleppe Function: Facilities Director

**Judges**

Name: Kathleen Sproat Mickelson Name: Wanda Lyons

**Evaluation date:**

July 23, 2024

## **IMPORTANT NOTES:**

- Evaluation is adjusted to the climate and environmental conditions of the community.
- Evaluation is also adjusted to match the capacity of a community population to the achievements in all criteria – i.e. evaluate what they do (achieve) with what they have (population/ resources).
- Some aspects of the evaluation might not be applicable: scoring will be prorated.
- The score will vary from the previous year based on the facts that the evaluation form is subject to modifications each year and that the scores are based on the perception of the current judges.

## **SECTORS OF EVALUATION**

### **Municipal:**

- Municipal properties, parks and green spaces, streets, streetscapes
- Properties owned and run by municipality such as museums, historical sites

### **Business and Institutions:**

Properties owned and managed by:

- **Business:** commercial sector, shopping centres, Business Improvement Areas (BIA), industrial parks, manufacturing plants
- **Institutions:** schools, universities, churches, hospitals, service and community organization buildings (such as YMCA, Legion), private museums, Government and Crown Corporations buildings (such as Canada Post, provincial and federal parks, etc.)
- **Tourism bureaus and Chamber of Commerce offices**
- **Farms:** in rural communities, farms can be considered in this section

### **Residential:**

- Citizens and citizen groups acting within their own properties
- Residential property owners, rate payer groups including condos and co-ops

### **Community Involvement:**

The principle of community involvement is so fundamental to the program that it is considered in each segment of the evaluation.

- Individuals, community organizations, citizen groups (includes youth programs) – all contributing to various aspects of community improvement, including municipal spaces maintained through the efforts of volunteers and community
- Organized clubs such as horticultural societies, garden clubs, community associations, school groups
- Service clubs such as Rotary, Lions, Optimist
- Participation (financial and/or in-kind or employee participation) by the municipality, businesses and institutions.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Congratulations on 25 years of participating in Communities in Bloom! This is truly a remarkable achievement! Eston has a strong history of extensive work done by the CiB Committee and the Town with support from residents, local service clubs, businesses, and the RM of Snipe Lake.

The CiB group continues to be deeply committed and highly successful in their projects. There is much to be proud of. The CiB Committee was recently inducted into the Wall of Fame at the Heritage Gallery in appreciation for their work within the community. Many members have been with the CiB for several years and, remarkably, there are two members who have been with the program for the entire 25 years: Val Mohan and Doreen Raeburn. Thank you all for your dedication and leadership.

It was a pleasure to visit the Town of Eston and we very much appreciated the opportunity to meet with several Committee members, the Chief Administrative Officer, Public Works Director, and Facilities Director. Enthusiasm, commitment, and pride were evident throughout our discussions and tours, and we thank you for your candor. In addition, the 2024 Community Profile was detailed and informative. It appears that the Town is very responsive toward its residents and works to meet their needs and expectations through programming, town maintenance, and future planning. Good efforts are being made to share information through media and print formats.

During 2023-2024, work on some complex and multi-stage initiatives has continued, and new projects were completed. Throughout the season, upgrades were made to the ball diamonds, additional trees were planted in many locations, new sprinklers were installed, efforts at waste reuse and reduction were continued, and the list goes on. Many projects initiated in previous years were well-maintained and some, such as Centennial Park, were further enhanced.

Eston continues to have strong community involvement in projects. For example, the School Community Council has voluntarily taken on the task of refurbishing the football field adjacent to the Composite School and are developing a multi-purpose space that will accommodate soccer, football, and baseball.

The Village of Hope, a non-profit organization, has been a much-appreciated source of volunteers who have assisted in the upkeep and development of the town through actions such as mowing, watering, and tree planting. The program was moved into the former Eston Bible College last fall and has since established a bakery.

It is notable that consideration of the environment and of sustainable development strategies appear to be an integral part of many initiatives and activities within Eston. The ball diamond project is worthy of special mention for the reuse of backwash water from the water treatment plant to water the ball diamonds.

## COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

Community appearance reflects an overall effort by the municipality, businesses, institutions and the residents throughout the community to create great first impressions and a sense that there is continuous attention and upkeep to critical elements of a community that benefit quality of life and economic vitality. Elements for evaluation are: parks and green spaces, medians, boulevards, sidewalks, streets; municipal, commercial, institutional and residential properties; ditches, road shoulders, vacant lots, signs and buildings; weed control, litter clean-up (including cigarette butts and gum), graffiti prevention/removal and vandalism deterrent programs.

	Max	Actual
<b>Municipal</b>		
<b>Gateway Impressions</b> First impressions of the community including gateway/entrance landscape treatments	10	6
<b>Overall Impressions</b> Order, cleanliness, curb appeal and first impressions	10	8
<b>Anti-litter/Graffiti Prevention and Removal</b> Community anti-litter/graffiti awareness programs	10	9
<b>Regulations</b> Effective bylaws, programs and policies and enforcement; litter control, private property maintenance by-laws, vandalism, graffiti prevention and eradication, graffiti removal kits to residents	10	9
<b>Asset Appearance</b> Including public green infrastructure: parks, streetscapes (sidewalks, planters, urban signage, and furniture such as benches, litter, and recycling containers etc.)	10	8
<b>Municipal Properties Appearance</b> Visual appeal and condition of municipal buildings and municipal owned properties	10	8
<b>Business and Institutions</b>		
<b>Overall Impressions</b> Curb appeal, order, and cleanliness	15	12
<b>Site Conditions</b> Condition of buildings (exterior maintenance), grounds, sidewalks, and parking lots	15	12
<b>Furniture/Amenities Appearance</b> Condition of urban furniture: benches, litter, and recycling containers	5	3
<b>Residential</b>		
<b>Overall Impressions</b> Curb Appeal, order, and cleanliness	20	16
<b>Property Conditions</b> Condition of buildings, grounds, and yards	15	11
<b>Community Involvement</b>		
<b>Public Participation</b> In community, neighbourhood or individual streets, clean-up programs, activities, and annual maintenance (including promotion, organization, innovations involving youth and seniors, etc.)	10	8
<b>Community Support</b> Financial and/or in-kind or participation by the municipality, businesses service groups, and institutions for community clean-up programs.	10	8
<b>Community Appearance Total</b>	<b>150.00</b>	<b>118.00</b>

## **COMMUNITY APPEARANCE**

### **Observations:**

Eston presents as a clean, tidy, and very well-maintained town. Pocket Gardens, floral displays, and banners on Main Street create an appealing impression. Businesses appear well cared for and, although there have been several business closures over the years, the empty buildings continue to be well-maintained.

Green spaces and public parks such as Jamieson Park and Henry Hamilton Park are also well-cared for, and municipal buildings and grounds are clean and orderly.

The town has expanded and improved the process for street sweeping. They now have two skid steers that combine to provide spraying, sweeping, and debris removal. The town continues to work on a five-year plan for sidewalk removal and the replacement of long-term sidewalks. Eston is also developing a plan to upgrade back alleys to improve water drainage and aesthetics.

Signage throughout the town is generally well done and well placed, with some need for repairs and enhancements on entrance signs.

The majority of residential properties have well-maintained buildings and yards, and many are immaculate. Others provide a significant contrast and are characterized by buildings in need of repair, overgrown grass and weeds, and storage of scrap lumber or unused vehicles. Although the Nuisance Bylaw outlines a process for notification and remedy of contraventions of the bylaw and reminders are provided in *Gopher Bites*, it is reportedly an ongoing challenge. Town personnel are currently mowing yards of thirteen residences.

### **Recommendations:**

Minor repair is needed on the mounting of the sign at the west entrance to town, and the east entrance would benefit from some trimming of the bushes. You might also consider adding commercial solar lights at both entrances to enhance the nighttime appearance.

We recognize that enforcement of the Nuisance Bylaw is an ongoing challenge for Town personnel. One option for consideration is to contract a bylaw officer from outside the community to assist Town staff in addressing issues.

The broken bench outside the CIBC needs to be repaired or removed.

We encourage you to resurrect the community spring clean-up, and to think about who may be available to organize the clean-up on an ongoing basis.

We suggest that you also reinstate the Local Yard Competitions to encourage residents to maintain their buildings and yards, and to recognize residents, businesses, and institutions whose properties are well maintained. It may be timely to present the initiative as a celebration as you enter the next 25 years of Communities in Bloom in 2025. You could also apply for the Miracle-Gro Best Garden Selection Program as a ready to use contest program: <https://www.communitiesinbloom.ca/best-garden-selection/>. SPRA will send out information about this contest when it launches in 2025.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

Environmental action pertains to the impact of human activities on the environment and the subsequent efforts and achievements of the community with respect to: environmental stewardship, policies, by-laws, programs and best practices for waste reduction and landfill diversion, composting sites, landfill sites, hazardous waste collections, water conservation, energy conservation, and activities under the guiding principles of sustainable development pertaining to green spaces.

	Max	Actual
<b>Municipal</b>		
<b><u>Sustainable Development Strategies</u></b> Policies, programs, guidelines, long-term planning/vision; effective bylaws/policies and their enforcement; and public education programs and activities. This includes activities such as: the creation of Active Transportation networks, fleet management, and recognition of the importance of biodiversity to mitigate and adapt to climate change.	20	17
<b><u>Waste Reduction</u></b> Reduction of waste going to landfill and results (3-R: reduce, reuse and recycle), municipal composting programs, including activities such as composting sites, yard waste collections, plastics reduction programs, mulching of wood debris (Christmas trees, hedge trimmings, etc.) and reclamation of cut trees. Handling of hazardous waste including e-waste collection and reuse of compost material. Officially mandating the greening of public events such as on-site recycling bins, biodegradable drink containers, food service dishes, utensils, etc to minimize the use of plastic.	20	17
<b><u>Water Conservation</u></b> Use-reduction programs such as promotions, efficient irrigation, use of non-potable water, water restriction policies	15	14
<b><u>Energy Conservation</u></b> Programs such as alternate forms of energy (ex. geothermal, biomass, wind, solar) and initiatives such as: energy-efficient appliances, shielding for night skies, efficient street lighting	15	12
<b><u>Environmental Initiatives, Innovations and Actions</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development and expansion of sustainable mobility and active transportation networks such as bike lanes, multi-use commuter pathways, and recreational trails</li> <li>- Horticultural practices such as planned biodiversity, green roofs, green walls, green lanes, living fences, buffer zones; re-use of sites; engineered wetlands, bioswales, permeable surfaces and rain water management</li> <li>- Brownfield redevelopment, remediation, land reclamation</li> <li>- Air quality programs such as alternate energy sources, sustainable design of facilities, sustainable fleet management, reduction of greenhouse gas emission (carbon reduction), anti-idling by-laws.</li> </ul>	10	8
<b><u>Business &amp; Institutions</u></b>		
<b><u>Participation in The Environmental Effort</u></b> Waste management (reduce, reuse and recycle), water conservation, energy conservation and audits (fleet management, electric conservation), brownfield management	10	8
<b><u>Corporate Environmental Initiatives and Action</u></b> Innovation/stewardship, initiatives, activities (for example: environmental clean-up activities, plastic reduction) carbon emissions, green roofs	10	7
<b><u>Residential</u></b>		
<b><u>Participation in Environmental Initiatives</u></b> 3-R (reduce, reuse and recycle), composting	10	8
<b><u>Water &amp; Energy Conservation</u></b> Practices such as water use reduction, rainwater collection and rain gardens, alternate forms of energy, thermostat reduction	15	11
<b><u>Community Involvement</u></b>		
<b><u>Public Participation – Civil Action</u></b> Participation in public forums and policy development on environmental issues, such as climate change adaptation and mitigation	5	4
<b><u>Public Participation in Activities</u></b> Community (including children/youth), neighbourhood or individual street environmental activities and programs (including promotion, organization and evidence of taking ownership, etc.)	10	8
<b><u>Community Support</u></b> Financial and/or in-kind or participation by the municipality, businesses and institutions in public environmental activities and programs	10	8
<b>Environmental Action Total</b>	<b>150.00</b>	<b>122.00</b>



## ***ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION***

### **Observations:**

As previously mentioned, consideration of the environment and of sustainable development strategies appear to be an integral part of many projects and activities within Eston.

The Town is making a change in garbage and recycling pick-up which will involve the use of lighter trucks. These trucks will minimize damage done to the streets and will reduce the need for road maintenance in the long term.

The Eston and District Landfill uses several practices to reduce waste. A list of materials that may not be included in the town pick-up and a list of those that are prohibited for deposit in the landfill are provided on the Town website. The landfill serves as the location for an Eco-Center that accepts oil and antifreeze, filters, and other waste containers. The landfill also has an area for depositing yard waste.

The Town has a back-alley enhancement plan that involves collaboration with oil companies to reuse concrete from former oil well casings. The large concrete slabs are deposited in the landfill where they are then crushed into small pieces and concrete dust. Current plans include levelling the alleys and using the crushed material in the upgrade.

The town is to be commended for its increasing range of water conservation practices and projects. Examples of some such projects include the use of desert planters and hanging baskets, Waterless Wednesday, guidelines and reminders in *Gopher Bites*, application of mulch on some beds and tree belts, and re-use of water from the swimming pool and in Jamieson Park. The ball diamond project is worthy of special mention. Three large tanks were installed between the ball diamonds and water treatment plant such that backwash water from the treatment plant is transferred to the tanks. Water from the tanks is used to water the existing diamonds. The tanks will have the capacity to water all six diamonds once they are complete.

There continues to be some issues with the pool, specifically pertaining to solar heating which is not currently functioning. Core samples of concrete will be taken to inform decision making and planning. Repair of the solar heating has been deferred until a decision is made.

### **Recommendations:**

The landfill has a designated area for yard waste. You may want to explore composting systems to convert organic waste into useable compost.

We encourage you to continue to apply a sufficient layer of mulch to flower and tree beds. Mulch saves water, mediates soil temperature, suppresses weed growth, reduces winterkill, and contributes to healthy soil. Guidelines for mulch application are provided by the University of Saskatchewan College of Agriculture and Bioresources at <https://gardening.usask.ca/articles-and-lists/articles-healthysoils/mulch--more.php>.

You might consider using a chipper for branches/tree trimmings to create a source of mulch.

As indicated in previous CiB reports, the use of rain barrels on municipal, commercial, and residential properties would add to water conservation methods.

Consider locations around the community where there might already be a fence that is a prime candidate to be a green wall. Simply adding Virginia Creeper (or another hardy vine) to an existing fence is a great way to create a green wall and soften the landscape.

## HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Heritage conservation includes efforts to preserve and protect both natural and cultural heritage within the community. Preservation of natural heritage pertains to policies, plans and actions concerning all elements of biodiversity including flora and fauna ecosystems and associated geological structures and formations. Cultural conservation represents the "persona" of a community and refers to the heritage that helps define the community including the legacy of tangible (built/hard assets) elements such as heritage buildings, monuments, memorials, cemeteries, artifacts, museums and intangible elements such as traditions, customs, festivals and celebrations. The participation of groups such as historical societies, traditional cultural groups, and conservation groups is considered.

	Max	Actual
<b>Municipal</b>		
<b>Natural Heritage Plans</b> Management and preservation policies, plans, programs and initiatives, including eco systems, eco parks, trail networks, grasslands, naturalization, wetlands, urban agriculture/farming, wildlife and wildlife corridors, protection of sensitive habitats, species at risk and support for at risk pollinators.	20	17
<b>Natural Heritage Promotion</b> Management and promotion of natural heritage (through communications, information and support programs, economic development/tourism) including year-around activities and programs for education and use of natural heritage sites (including trail networks) for and by the public.	15	12
<b>Cultural Heritage Plans</b> Policies, by-laws, plans, and preservation initiatives for heritage buildings, cemeteries, artifacts, museums, monuments, heritage trees and gardens, including their integration with streetscapes and landscape	15	13
<b>Cultural Heritage Activities</b> Initiatives throughout the year including festivals and celebrations along with preservation of traditions and customs	15	14
<b>Business and Institutions</b>		
<b>Natural Heritage Assets</b> Conservation, restoration and integration of natural heritage, including eco parks, conservation areas, trails, heritage gardens, trees and landscapes.	10	7
<b>Cultural Heritage Assets</b> Conservation, restoration and reuse of heritage buildings and artifacts including their integration with the built/hard streetscapes and green landscapes	10	8
<b>Residential</b>		
<b>Cultural Heritage Initiatives</b> Conservation/restoration and reuse of heritage buildings and artifacts on residential lands	10	7
<b>Community Involvement</b>		
<b>Natural Heritage Public Participation</b> Participation in community (including children/youth), neighbourhood or individual natural heritage programs and initiatives including developing policies and plans, site improvements (including trails, eco parks, reforestation and management, maintenance, conservation and education initiatives	20	15
<b>Natural Heritage - Community Support</b> Financial and/or in-kind or participation by the municipality, businesses and institutions (including environmental groups) in community-initiated natural heritage activities and programs	10	7
<b>Cultural Heritage - Public Participation</b> Participation in community (including children/youth), neighbourhood or individual cultural heritage programs including year-round heritage community events/activities, festivals and celebrations along with preservation of traditions and customs	15	13
<b>Cultural Heritage - Community Support</b> Financial and/or in-kind or participation by the municipality, businesses and institutions (including historical societies) in community-initiated cultural heritage activities and programs.	10	9
<b>Heritage Conservation Total</b>	<b>150.00</b>	<b>122.00</b>

## ***HERITAGE CONSERVATION***

### **Observations:**

Hanson Lake is a wetland area within Jamieson Park. It has native grasses and plants and receives storm water runoff from the East side of town. The trail encircling the lake is available for year-round use and the lake is turned into a rink in winter.

Prairie West Historical Centre is an example of combined cultural and natural heritage conservation. The museum provides a range of historical displays, the Heritage Art Gallery, homesteader house, Lovedale School, and vegetable and wildflower gardens. The Museum is the location of Canada Day celebrations, teas, and Saturday hot dog sales in the summer months.

Ball appears to be a large part of the culture of Eston and the judges heard accounts of commitment and enthusiasm that date back generations. Community members have reportedly been actively involved in past and current initiatives to develop, maintain, and improve the ball diamonds. The town is currently working on an ambitious plan to have six ball diamonds to accommodate Eston's 15 ball teams. Extensive work has been completed on two diamonds, two more will be refurbished, and two will be added. It should be noted that individuals from the Village of Hope have been involved in the initiative.

The ball diamonds are part of a larger recreational area that includes the AGT Community Center and the Motocross Track. The Center houses a large rink, four curling sheets, a fitness centre, and a four-lane bowling alley. It also provides space for summer activities such as gymnastics, wrestling, pickle ball, dance classes, and an indoor baseball practicing facility. The Annual Bull-a-Rama and Minor Sports Day takes place in the area and includes a carnival, bull-riding, and ball games.

The Eston Wheatland Regional Library is a hub of community service. It offers a selection of books and traditional library materials while also housing a small library of the local genealogical society. The library offers a range of programs including Tiny Tales Time, the After-School Program, and summer craft activities. The Little Free Pantry is a self-serve free pantry located in the back of the library that offers non-perishable and frozen food items for those in need. Finally, the Library has a unique and very extensive collection of costumes in the lower level that are available to the community for a range of events, gatherings, performances, and celebrations.

### **Recommendations:**

The wildflower garden at the Museum needs upgrading. It may be helpful to include other prairie flowers that are chosen for their suitability to the growing conditions. A small group of volunteers could be established to familiarize themselves with plants that will flourish in the location and to take responsibility for planting and ongoing maintenance.

The Museum is a rich source of the history of Eston and of the surrounding area. Perhaps the volunteers would consider putting an item of interest in *Gopher Bites* each month. This could be a photo or brief article that provides an interesting piece of Eston's history.

As we toured the town, we noted that two parks and a pocket garden are named after individuals: Henry Hamilton Park, Jamieson Park, and Andrea's View. It would be helpful to provide a plaque in each location with brief information on the respective contribution or inspiration that led to the naming.

<b>TREE MANAGEMENT (formerly Urban Forestry)</b>		
Woodlands, Canopy Management, Urban and Rural Forestry includes the efforts of the municipality, businesses, institutions and residents with regards to written policies, by-laws, standards for tree management protection (selection, planting, and maintenance), long and short-term management plans, tree replacement policies, pollinator-friendly tree selection, tree inventory including heritage, memorial, and commemorative trees, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs.		
	<b>Max</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Municipal</b>		
<b>Overall Impression</b> Overall impact, benefit and first impression of the urban forest	10	8
<b>Strategic Plans</b> Policies, regulations and tree by-laws, tree protection and planting on public and private lands	15	11
<b>Urban Forestry Plan</b> Plan, design and inventory management including integration with overall green infrastructure landscape plan, and measures to preserve, protect, manage and expand overall tree inventory, including woodlots and managed forests	20	15
<b>Plan of Action</b> Procurement, species diversity (including native trees), selection of hardy and pollinator habitat tree species, recommended tree list and tree planting standards	10	7
<b>Integrated Pest Management</b> (IPM) / Plant HealthCare (PHC): plan of action for invasive pest detection and control, information on current infestations and diseases	10	7
<b>Public Information Programs</b> Provision of information on good planting techniques, best practices and maintenance programs	15	11
<b>Maintenance Quality</b> Best practices with demonstrated results	10	8
<b>Qualified Resources</b> Qualified personnel (including seasonal staff and/or qualified experienced contractors) and/or in place training programs	5	4
<b>Business and Institutions</b>		
<b>Tree inventory</b> Contribution to expanding overall tree inventory and canopy, management of hedgerows and forests, with consideration of design and diversity including native and hardy species of trees, on properties owned by businesses and institutions.	15	12
<b>Maintenance Quality</b> Programs, best practices with demonstrated results: watering, pruning, IPM	10	8
<b>Residential</b>		
<b>Tree Planting</b> Contribution to expanding overall tree inventory, with consideration of design and diversity including native and hardy species of trees on residential properties	15	11
<b>Maintenance Quality</b> Best practices with demonstrated results	10	7
<b>Community Involvement</b>		
<b>Public Participation</b> Participation (including children/youth) in tree planting and conservation programs such as Green Streets Canada, Arbor Day, Maple Leaf Day, and other tree planting and maintenance programs and activities on public lands (including promotion, organization etc.)	20	15
<b>Community Support</b> Financial and/or in-kind or participation or promotion by the municipality, businesses and institutions for community tree planting and conservation programs on public lands	10	7
<b>Tree Management Total</b>	<b>175.00</b>	<b>131.00</b>

# **TREE MANAGEMENT**

## **Observations:**

Congratulations on planting hundreds of trees over the past few years. Planting continued this year, with 80 additional trees around the two refurbished ball diamonds and an adjacent future shady area. Trees were also added to other areas around the town and some dead seedlings/young trees were replaced. Irrigation was added to Henry Hamilton Park.

An arborist was contracted last October to trim trees. The town now does the pruning of public spaces and reportedly have an experienced pruner on staff. Shrubs in pocket parks have been well-maintained by CiB Committee members.

The town has a supply of mulch and have applied mulch to some of the tree beds. Rototilling is used to control weeds in areas that have not been mulched. It should be noted that rainfall in Eston has been considerably higher than average this spring. As a result, mowing is taking a disproportionate amount of staff time, which impacts other areas such as mulching and pruning.

The Urban Orchard is an area of concern. The regular and substantial watering that was required during the first years was reportedly difficult to maintain. In addition, the property was plagued with gopher invasions. As a result, many trees were lost and those that survived have grown at a very slow rate over the 12 years since it was first established.

The town has adopted policies for tree management that focus on the selection and the placement of trees relative to properties, boulevards, curbs, etc. Guidelines and considerations for planting and care are not yet included.

## **Recommendations:**

Town personnel are encouraged to continue to apply mulch in treed areas rather than rototilling for weed control around trees. It will be important to ensure that the trees are well watered before mulch application, that a sufficient layer of 4 to 6 inches of mulch is applied, and that the mulch is not placed against the tree trunks. Additional information is provided on the USask College of Agriculture and Bioresources website.

We suggest that the community be provided with guidelines and considerations for tree planting and care. These could be provided on a variety of sites or formats such as the town website, Facebook, and *Gopher Bites*. There are many research-based guidelines available on university websites such as: <https://gardening.usask.ca/articles-and-lists/articles-trees-and-shrubs/how-to-plant-a-tree.php>; and <https://treecanada.ca/how-to-plant-a-tree/>.

Now that irrigation has been added to Hamilton Park, it may be a good time to add more trees to increase the canopy and to provide more shaded areas.

The Legion has made significant improvements to the grounds in recent years. They may want to consider the addition of trees to create future shade for the benches.

At some point, there may need to be a discussion of whether the orchard can be successfully maintained and to determine if there is need to identify another way to honor the memorial donors.

<b>LANDSCAPE</b>		
Landscape includes planning, design, construction and maintenance of parks, green spaces and cemeteries suitable for the intended use and location on a year-round basis. Elements for evaluation include native and introduced materials; biodiversity, materials and constructed elements; appropriate integration of hard surfaces and art elements, use of turf and groundcovers. Landscape design should harmonize the interests of all sectors of the community and provide safe and secure public spaces. Standards of execution and maintenance should demonstrate best practices, including quality of naturalization, use of groundcovers and wildflowers along with turf management.		
	<b>Max</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Municipal</b>		
<b>Sustainable Designs – Soft Landscape</b> Sustainable designs: energy efficient, use of green materials, naturalization, xeriscaping, suitable plant varieties (including pollinator friendly), traffic calming, bank stabilization	15	13
<b>Sustainable Designs - Hard Landscape</b> Urban and civic design standards for streetscape and public places including considerations for public safety: flags, banners, public art, fountains, site furnishings, signage including wayfinding and directional, seasonal design and décor, walkways and paving materials including use of artificial turf and its protocols	15	13
<b>Landscape Plan</b> Integrated and implemented throughout the municipality	10	8
<b>Landscape Management Programs</b> Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Plant Health Care (PHC), alternative solutions to diseases and infestations when appropriate, Invasive Species Management, increased naturalization and adapted maintenance programs	10	8
<b>Landscape Maintenance</b> Policies, standards, best practices and programs including irrigation water management	10	8
<b>Landscape Quality</b> Landscape maintained to appropriate standards, specifications and best practices, as an example as shown in the Canadian Landscape Standards	5	4
<b>Qualified Resources</b> Qualified personnel (including seasonal staff) and/or in place training programs and/or qualified experienced contractors	10	8
<b>Year-round use</b> Demonstrated year-round opportunities and programs for education and people being active and using parks and green spaces (urban agriculture, community gardens, parks and recreation programs and accessible public washrooms )	10	9
<b>Business and Institutions</b>		
<b>Sustainable Designs</b> Energy efficient, use of green materials, naturalization, xeriscaping, alternate groundcovers, urban agriculture	10	7
<b>Integrated Plan</b> Contribution to urban and civic design and public green spaces above requirements: such as public art, streetscape, site furniture, fountains and innovation in concept and design	15	12
<b>Maintenance Quality</b> Adequate ongoing life cycle management (ongoing maintenance, ground and asset management, rehabilitation and replacement) of all landscape elements	10	8
<b>Residential</b>		
<b>Streetscape Appeal</b> Residential yards (year-round, seasonal, themed)	15	12
<b>Maintenance Quality</b> Lawn care, trees and shrub maintenance (with demonstrated results)	15	12
<b>Plant Selection</b> Selection of plant material (native, local, innovative, edible and pollinator friendly plants)	10	7
<b>Community Involvement</b>		
<b>Public Participation</b> Participation in community programs (including children/youth) such as: urban agriculture, community gardens, "yard of the week", volunteer park maintenance, holiday illumination and decoration (promotion, organization, etc.)	20	16
<b>Volunteer Succession Plan and Recognition</b> Succession Plan and Recognition (by municipality and/or volunteer groups) of volunteer efforts in all aspects of the Communities in Bloom program including activities in all evaluated criteria	20	17
<b>Landscape Total</b>	<b>200.00</b>	<b>162.00</b>

# **LANDSCAPE**

## **Observations:**

New initiatives include projects undertaken by the Town, CiB, and the School Community Council. New sprinklers were installed at Henry Hamilton Park, and CiB collaborated with the RM of Snipe Lake to clean up the area west of the town mascot and replace it with a boulder and rock feature. The School Community Council has voluntarily taken on the task of refurbishing the football field adjacent to the Composite School and are developing a multi-purpose space that will accommodate soccer, football, and baseball. The area is irrigated, and the Eston Farming Co. Hutterite Colony has offered to assist in building an encasement for irrigation controls. The project is another example of strong community involvement in Eston.

The CiB pocket parks provide visual highlights throughout the town, and they continue to be very well tended by the CiB Committee. Public spaces are well-maintained by town personnel. Weeds have reportedly flourished with the above average rainfall. Weed control in public spaces is done by spraying and rototilling on some boulevards, and they appear to be in check.

Environmental considerations and sustainability are incorporated within designs such as the reuse of wastewater in the baseball diamond projects, incorporating multiple purposes into the SCC project, and planning for the use of reclaimed asphalt and crushed concrete in future walkway development.

As previously mentioned, landscape maintenance quality on residential properties varies. While some yards were pristine, appearance would be further enhanced by incorporating a wider range of plant material.

Year-round recreational opportunities are available in public spaces such as Jamieson Park, where the walking path is available, and Hanson Lake which is used for skating when frozen.

## **Recommendations:**

Benches in Jamieson Park may be more inviting if there were more plantings around them. Specifically, consider planting trees to provide future shade.

The brick pathway at Hamilton Park remains a concern as it is becoming increasingly uneven and will impact accessibility.

The CiB Committee has acquired three new members through their concerted efforts. Committee members are devoted and work tirelessly on planning, designing, planting, and maintaining projects. If they are to continue to take on more projects, they will need more volunteers. Some prospective volunteers may not be able to commit to becoming a member of the committee, so various levels of involvement could be considered. Are there some who may be interested in volunteering for a single project or event, a specific day/time, or for a short term such as a month or two in the spring?

<b>PLANT AND FLORAL DISPLAYS (Formerly Floral Displays)</b>		
This category evaluates the efforts of the municipality, businesses, institutions and residents to design, plan, execute, and maintain plant and floral displays of high-quality standards. Evaluation includes the design and arrangements of flowers and plants (annuals, perennials, bulbs, ornamental grasses, edible plants, water efficient and pollinator friendly plants) in the context of originality, distribution, location, diversity and balance, colour, and harmony. It also pertains to flowerbeds, carpet bedding, containers, baskets, and window boxes.		
	<b>Max</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Municipal</b>		
<b>Floral Display Plan of Action</b> Integration into overall landscape plan and distribution through community. Concept and design, including sustainable design	15	14
<b>Diversity of Displays</b> Flowerbeds, raised beds, planters, hanging baskets, window boxes, carpet bedding, mosaics	20	17
<b>Diversity of Plants</b> Annuals, perennials, bulbs, grasses, woody plants, natural flora, pollinator friendly plants	10	8
<b>Maintenance Quality</b> Maintenance to appropriate specifications and standards, best practices: watering, weeding, edging, dead heading, etc.	20	19
<b>Qualified Resources</b> Qualified personnel (including seasonal staff) and/or in place training programs and/or qualified experienced contractors	10	8
<b>Business and Institutions</b>		
<b>Design Concept</b> and design (including arrangement, diversity, colour of display and plants) on grounds	15	13
<b>Overall Plan</b> Contribution to, and integration with, overall community plant and floral program	10	8
<b>Maintenance Quality</b> of planting and maintenance: watering, weeding, edging, dead heading, etc. with demonstrated results.	10	8
<b>Residential</b>		
<b>Concept and Design</b> (including arrangement, diversity, colour of display and plants) on residential properties including Pollinator gardens and/or inclusion of pollinator plants in gardens	20	15
<b>Maintenance Quality</b> of planting and maintenance with demonstrated results.	15	12
<b>Community Involvement</b>		
<b>Public Participation</b> in community projects, volunteer initiatives (including children/youth), outreach programs in plant and floral displays (including promotion, organization, etc.)	15	12
<b>Community Support</b> Financial and/or in-kind or participation by the municipality, businesses and institutions for community plant and floral displays activities	15	13
<b>Plant and Floral Displays Total</b>	<b>175.00</b>	<b>147.00</b>



## ***PLANT AND FLORAL DISPLAYS***

### **Observations:**

The attractive floral displays are the first thing noticed on Main Street. The barrel planters, hanging baskets, and large concrete planters are beautiful and well-maintained by CiB and the businesses. We noted that there have been additions to the plantings in some of the CiB pocket parks on Main Street as well as those in other public spaces. Centennial Park includes a range of shrubs, perennials, grasses, tulips, and annuals. Several businesses have also created beautiful potted floral displays or in-ground plantings where space is available.

Many residential properties have extensive and well-maintained floral displays that include a variety of plantings; others have limited plantings or none. The CiB is considering presenting gardening awards later in the summer to recognize the efforts of residents and businesses.

It was good to see that the seed exchange at the library has been reinstated.

Caring Hands, a volunteer group of Health Center Staff, previously raised money to create an outdoor sitting space with several raised planters at the Jubilee Lodge Care Home. In the past, the planters have been filled with vegetables and some flowers. Unfortunately, we did note that the area has not been maintained this year.

### **Recommendations:**

We encourage consideration of multiple options for planting and maintaining the planters at Jubilee Lodge. Perhaps there is a youth or other group at one of the four local churches that would be interested in providing and maintaining beautiful plantings for the residents. Perhaps there are friends or relatives of residents who might want to support their family member in caring for plants if they are able. There may be some members of a local service club or community group that would take responsibility for this one area. Is this something the Village of Hope may be available to help with? There may be many more options to choose from.

It's great to see that you are increasing the variety in your planted beds. Keep up the great work! Are you getting color throughout the season or is there a need to look for longer blooming perennials or those that remain attractive after they bloom?

Keep a future perennial plant exchange on order; that could be a welcome project for a "one-time" volunteer.

Consider whether it would be worthwhile to add some spring prep sessions in *Gopher Bites* or Facebook pages. This could include planting tips, recommendations for flowers/shrubs, information on pollinators, user-friendly varieties, and so on.



## **THANK YOU FOR YOUR INVOLVEMENT**

“Within the context of climate change and environmental concerns, communities involved in the Communities in Bloom program can be proud of their efforts, which provide real and meaningful environmental solutions and benefit all of society.”

## **COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM IS MADE POSSIBLE BY**

- The commitment of local, provincial, and national volunteers
- The support of elected officials and of staff in municipalities
- The dedication of our judges, staff, and organizations
- The contributions of our sponsors and partners