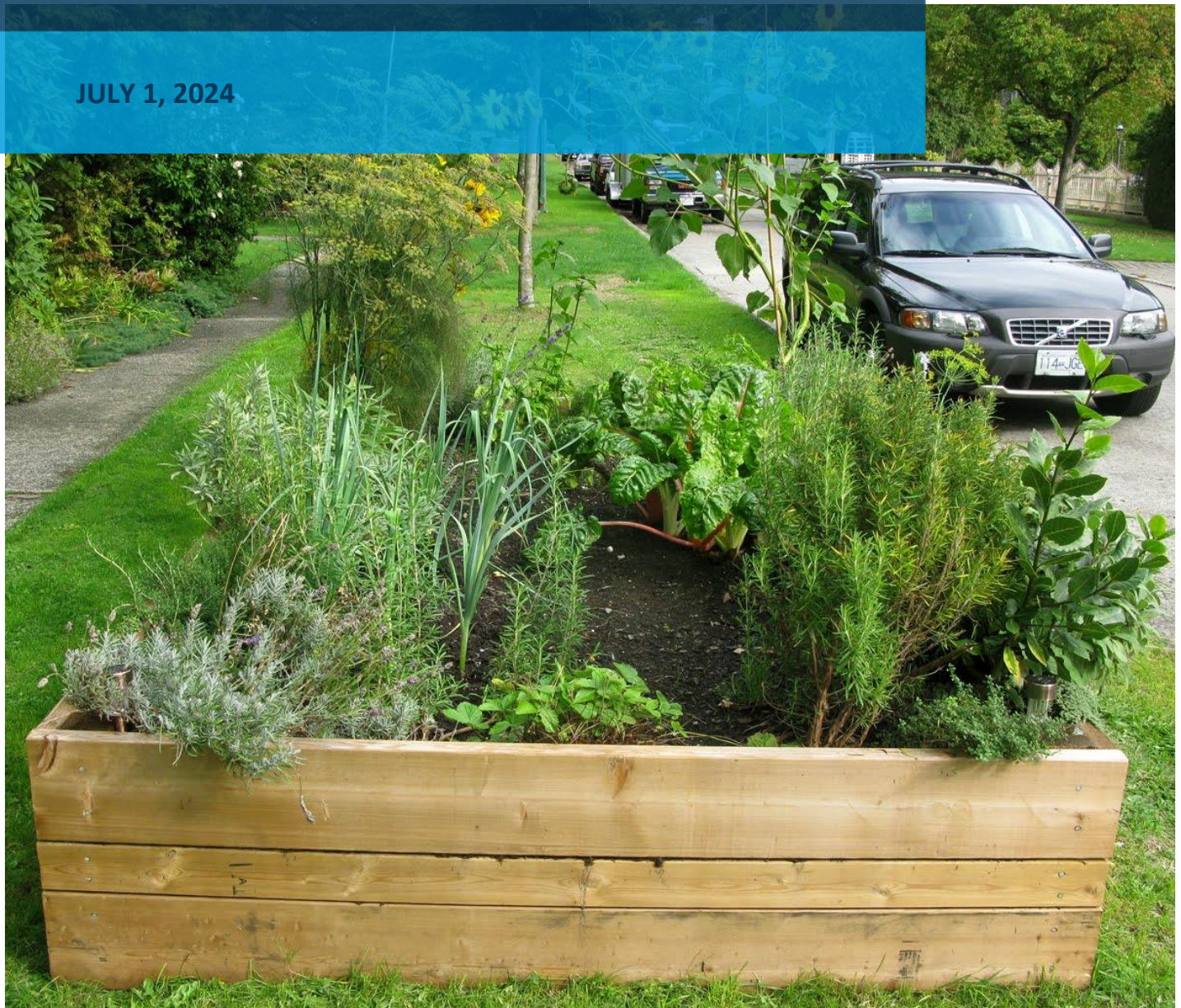




# RESIDENTIAL BOULEVARD GARDEN GUIDELINES

JULY 1, 2024



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 1.0 Introduction

What is a boulevard garden?

Who can create a boulevard garden?

What are the steps for creating a boulevard garden?

## 2.0 Permitted Boulevard Gardening Areas

Type I Boulevards

Type II Boulevards

## 3.0 Preparing the Boulevard

## 4.0 Setbacks and Public Access

## 5.0 Structures

## 6.0 In-Ground Gardens

## 7.0 Plant Selection

## 8.0 Growing Food

## 9.0 Watering and Maintenance

## 10.0 Boulevard Trees

## 11.0 Pets and Passers-By

## 12.0 Non-Compliance

## 13.0 Boulevard Work

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## What is a boulevard garden?

The Residential Boulevard Garden program is intended for simple, low-impact boulevard gardening so that your garden can be started quickly and safely. This resource only applies to developed residential boulevards that are maintained by residents or a residential complex. **This program does not apply to residential boulevards that are mowed by the City, currently under construction, or under contract or warranty by a developer or contractor.**

Boulevard gardens are annual and perennial gardens planted within residential street boulevards. They can add character to neighborhoods, beautify streets and provide environmental benefits like increasing ecological diversity, creating pollinator habitat, and improving climate resiliency. Gardening in residential boulevards can also strengthen community connections and contribute to healthy active living.

**The boulevard is any portion of the City’s road right-of-way which is not paved for vehicular or pedestrian use. This includes:**

- The area between the private property line and the public sidewalk, or between the private property line and the curb of road if there is no public sidewalk. *(This is a “Type I” boulevard);*
- The area between the public sidewalk and the curb of road. *(This is a “Type II” boulevard);*
- Medians, islands and roundabouts. (not permitted)

Residential boulevards are shared public spaces and gardens must be maintained to ensure these spaces are safe and accessible for passers-by. Boulevards also contain underground utilities. The City and other utility companies may require access to boulevards to maintain utilities, repair or replace sidewalks, prune boulevard trees or install street signs.



## Who can create a boulevard garden?

An owner or occupant of a residential parcel can create a boulevard garden in the boulevard immediately adjacent to their private property. Residents who do not own the property where they live will require the property owner's permission to create a boulevard garden. Property owners adjacent to boulevard gardens are deemed responsible for any issues arising from the placement or maintenance of the garden.

**To create a garden in a *Type II* boulevard (the area between the sidewalk and the road curb) residents must first obtain permission from the City.**

## What are the steps for creating a boulevard garden?

**Please review the Residential Boulevard Garden Guidelines before starting any boulevard garden project.**

Although City permission is only required for *Type II* boulevards, the *Residential Boulevard Garden Guidelines* apply to ALL gardens in any residential boulevard. Any activity taking place in the boulevard is subject to the following City of Spruce Grove bylaws:

- Community Standards Bylaw
- Traffic Bylaw
- Tree Protection Bylaw
- Land Use Bylaw (Section 50)

**The procedure for creating a boulevard garden is:**

- 1) Read the *Residential Boulevard Garden Guidelines*.
- 2) Email [icap@sprucegrove.org](mailto:icap@sprucegrove.org) to begin the permit application process for *Type II* boulevard gardens, or for more information.

## 2.0 PERMITTED BOULEVARD GARDENING AREAS

Gardening is NOT permitted in medians, islands or roundabouts. Residents may garden on the front and side boulevard areas of *Type I* and *Type II* boulevards.

### Type I Boulevards

No permission is needed for gardens within *Type I* boulevards, however the *Residential Boulevard Garden Guidelines* must be followed.

### Type II Boulevards

Permission is needed for gardens within *Type II* boulevards. Gardens must adhere to the *Residential Boulevard Garden Guidelines*.

There is a one-time permit application and fee for a residential boulevard garden. The City has the right to request that the garden be removed at any time.

## What happens when a participant moves?

This program is intended for Spruce Grove residents that are interested in gardening within their resident boulevard space (this is the space that the resident is already responsible for maintaining). If an applicant or gardener moves or leaves their residence, the new resident must reapply, where required, and continue to boulevard garden or revert back to more traditional boulevard maintenance.



Type I boulevard showing potential boulevard garden space between private property line and sidewalk.



Type I boulevard showing potential boulevard garden space between private property line and curb of road.



Type II boulevard showing potential boulevard garden space between public sidewalk and curb of road.

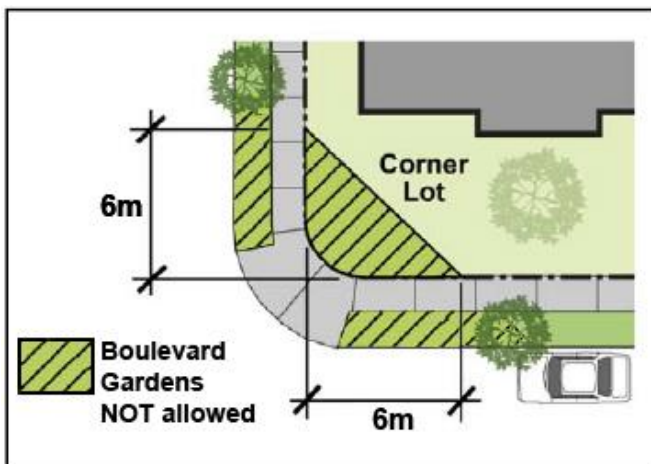
## 3.0 PREPARING THE BOULEVARD

Residential properties have road rights-of-way located between the road curb and the front (and sometimes side) of house. These rights of way vary in width from 4.25m to 6.0m and contain shallow utilities such as gas lines, electrical lines, and telephone and internet cables for homes and businesses. Refer to the property's [Real Property Report](#) for the specific measurements at the proposed location.

- Residents are not permitted to plant trees or shrubs in any road right-of-way.
- Residents must make sure the work being carried out does not contravene the requirements of restrictive covenants, caveats, or any other restrictions that are registered against the property.

## 4.0 SETBACKS AND PUBLIC ACCESS

**4.1** All boulevard gardens must comply with the requirements for traffic sightlines at intersections as outlined in *Section 50 of the City of Spruce Grove's Land Use Bylaw*. (see illustration below)



**4.2** A minimum 1.5m clearance shall be maintained between boulevard gardens and all permanent items/structures within the boulevard including boulevard trees, fire hydrants, community mailboxes, utility poles, traffic signs, street lights, and transformer boxes. Make sure boulevard gardens are easily visible and accessible from both the street and the sidewalk.

**4.3** Boulevard gardens must be set back a minimum of:

- 60cm from the curb edge of the road;
- 50cm from the edge of a sidewalk;
- 1.5m from the edge of an alley/lane; and
- 30cm from property lines which are shared between private property owners.

**4.4** Plants must be pruned to ensure they do not grow over the sidewalk, into the street or encroach into the minimum setback requirements specified in Section 4.3.

**4.5** If plants are deemed to be a visibility, mobility or safety concern by the City, or do not meet the *Residential Boulevard Garden Guidelines*, the City may direct the owner of the boulevard garden to prune or remove the plants from the problem location.

**4.6** A minimum 1m wide clearance must be provided between each *Type II* boulevard garden to ensure people have access between the public sidewalk and the road and to allow for drainage of surface water.

**4.7** Mulch, rock, concrete, rubber, plastic, wood or metal is not permitted in or around residential boulevard gardens, unless fully contained within in a raised planter.

## 5.0 STRUCTURES

**5.1** Raised garden bed planters are strongly recommended to help prevent boulevard grasses, tree roots and weeds from spreading into residential boulevard gardens.

**5.2** Raised garden bed planters must be temporary, free-standing structures constructed of wood or plastic, and not anchored in the soil. Raised beds must be movable and must not interfere with access, safety, visibility or height restrictions.

**5.3** The recommended total height for a raised garden bed planter is between 15cm and 45cm. Planters may not exceed 60cm in height, measured from the ground level of the boulevard. The maximum length allowable of a raised garden bed planter is 2m. Width of boulevard gardens shall meet minimum setback requirements specified in Section 4.3.

**5.4** Raised garden bed planters must not remain in the boulevard if they are broken or if the City deems them to be unsafe or unsightly.

**5.5** Vertical stakes and fences (including but not limited to screens, lattice, mesh, netting, chicken wire, wood or plastic pickets, etc.) of any height is not permitted in or around boulevard gardens.

**5.6** The City is not liable for any damage to temporary structures that have been placed on the boulevard.

## 6.0 IN-GROUND GARDENS

**6.1** The maximum allowable length of an in-ground boulevard garden is 2m. Width of boulevard gardens shall meet minimum setback requirements specified in Section 4.3.

**6.2** No more than 2.5cm (2") of soil depth may be excavated for **any** in-ground residential boulevard gardens.

**6.3** Motorized equipment is not permitted for excavation within the boulevard; only hand-digging is permitted.

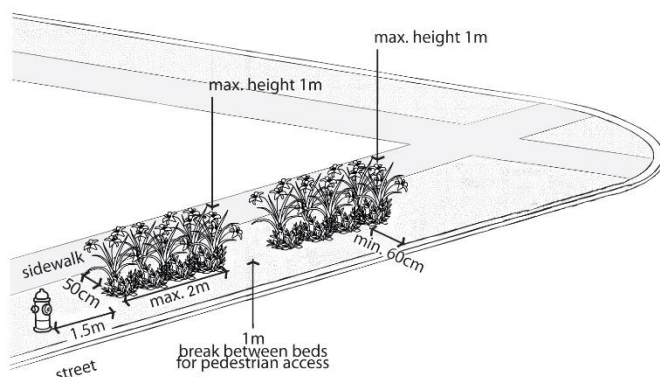
**6.4** Landscape and garden edging (including but not limited to plastic, metal, fabric, and wood) are not permitted within the boulevard.

**6.5** Soil used for in-ground boulevard gardens must be either screened topsoil or garden mix. Potting soil, gravel, and rock are not permitted.

**6.6** In-ground *Type II* boulevard gardens may not be raised higher than 2.5cm (2"), measured from the ground level of the boulevard to the top of soil within the boulevard garden.

**6.7** Artificial turf is not permitted within the boulevard.

**6.8** Mulch, rock, concrete, rubber, plastic, wood or metal is not permitted in in-ground gardens.



## 7.0 PLANT SELECTION

**7.1** Food must be grown in raised garden planters only. In-ground boulevard gardens are not suitable for growing food.

**7.2** The maximum allowable plant height is 1m, measured from ground level of the boulevard. Garden stakes, props or cages that are used to support plant growth must also be no taller than 1m from the ground.

**7.3** Residents are not permitted to plant trees or shrubs in the boulevard. Trees and shrubs may outgrow the space and are costly to remove. Only trees and shrubs planted by the City are allowed on the boulevard.

**7.4** Only ornamental flowers, herbs or food producing plants are permitted to be planted in *Type II* boulevard gardens.

**7.5** Noxious weeds and invasive plants are prohibited in any garden as outlined in the [Alberta Weed Control Act](#).

**7.6** An ecological approach to vegetation and pest management that strives to reduce reliance on pesticides as well as integrate preventative measures should be used.

**7.7** The City is not liable for any damage to plants that are grown in the boulevard.

## 8.0 GROWING FOOD

**8.1** Any food grown in a *Type II* boulevard garden must be grown in a raised planter as per the guidelines in the "Structures" section of the *Residential Boulevard Garden Guidelines*.

**8.2** Any food grown on the boulevard is consumed at one's own risk.

**8.3** It is possible for contaminants to be present in boulevard soils at potentially unsafe levels. Snow, water, gravels and sediments which have migrated from the street onto the boulevard can contain hydrocarbons, heavy metals, chlorides, etc. The likelihood and presence of soil contamination is unknown.

**Therefore, the City cannot guarantee the suitability of the boulevard for growing food.**

**8.4** If you are not certain that your soil is safe, have a soil test done.

**8.5** If you are building raised garden beds to grow food, avoid using treated lumber or creosote lumber as they may be toxic.

**USE NEW, CLEAN SOIL AND COMPOST TO AVOID WEEDS AND SOIL CONTAMINATION.**

## 9.0 WATERING AND MAINTENANCE

**9.1** City-owned infrastructure such as fire hydrants may not be used for watering.

**9.2** Determine a plan for watering the boulevard garden before getting started.

**9.3** Permanent structures such as in-ground irrigation systems are prohibited.

**9.4** Unattended watering with sprinklers on boulevards between the curb and sidewalk is prohibited. Garden hoses may not be left on the sidewalk as they can be a tripping hazard for pedestrians. Also, take precautions and do not leave tools or gardening materials lying on the boulevard or sidewalk.

**9.5** The City is not liable for any damage or injury either caused by or happening within a residential boulevard garden. The owner of the boulevard garden assumes all liability and risk.

**9.6** Street sweeping, snow removal or other City maintenance activities can pose a risk to residential boulevard gardens.

## 10.0 BOULEVARD TREES

All trees growing on the boulevard belong to the City. Under the City's *Tree Protection Bylaw*, the maintenance of trees on public property is the sole responsibility of the City. This bylaw prohibits people from actions such as:

- Cutting, removing, moving or pruning City trees;
- Penetrating the bark or attaching any object or sign to City trees;
- Planting trees on City land; and
- Spraying trees with any substance except water.

## 11.0 PETS AND PASSERS-BY

The boulevard is a public space where there is little control over the activities of neighbors, passers-by and animals. Plants and produce may be picked or damaged by passers-by and garden beds may be contaminated by pets, birds and other wildlife.

## 12.0 NON-COMPLIANCE

**12.1** The City of Spruce Grove reserves the right with due notice to require that a boulevard garden be removed and returned to the municipal turf grass standard at any time, at the boulevard garden owner's full expense.

**12.2** Failure to comply with the *Residential Boulevard Garden Guidelines* will result in the City requesting compliance for the boulevard garden or the City removing the boulevard garden and remediating the boulevard to the city standard at the full expense of the adjacent property owner. Noncompliance may also result in penalties as outlined in the Community Standards Bylaw.

## 13.0 BOULEVARD WORK

**13.1** The City is not responsible for damages to residential boulevard gardens resulting from maintenance operations, emergency utility work, or scheduled boulevard work. The City assumes no responsibility for the cost of repairs nor any damages to a residential boulevard garden.

**13.2** If emergency utility or City work is required that will disturb an existing residential boulevard garden, notification may not always be provided.

**13.3** In the event of scheduled boulevard work, and where the City has a record of a permitted *Type II* boulevard garden in that area, the City will attempt to notify the owner of the boulevard garden five business days in advance, giving them the opportunity to move the raised beds or salvage plant material. Following any City required work, the boulevard will be restored to the municipal standard grade and turf.