



# **Corporate Report**

*NO: R139*

*COUNCIL DATE: July 10, 2006*

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## **REGULAR COUNCIL**

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **July 7, 2006**  
FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture; and  
General Manager, Engineering** FILE: **6280 - 01**  
SUBJECT: **City Beautification**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council receive this report as information.

## **INTENT**

This report is intended to provide Council with information about current City beautification efforts and to identify other strategies for future beautification of the City.

## **BACKGROUND**

Over the last few years, the City has made significant strides in its effort to beautify the City, especially along streets and in City Centre. Council has identified community beautification as a significant priority. Some highlights of current beautification efforts are discussed below.

### **Street Landscaping**

When arterial road widening occurs, new medians and landscaped boulevards are installed whenever practical. Using new development guidelines, the new medians feature coloured stamped asphalt strips, turf areas and high quality beds filled with trees and shrubs. These new medians and boulevards dramatically enhance the aesthetics of the streetscape along arterial traffic routes within the City where they are viewed by hundreds of thousands of people on a daily basis. In all, the City has installed approximately 24,000 square meters of newly planted medians within the last five years, as well as 10 kilometres of landscaped boulevards.

The City plants boulevard trees in all new residential subdivisions to provide beauty, shade and habitat for songbirds. Approximately 14,500 boulevard trees have been planted in the last five years.



**Older Style Medians**



**Newer Style Medians**

Maintenance programs for streets and street landscaping has been optimized, based on available resources.

### **Whalley Enhancement Strategy**

Council's Whalley Revitalization Strategy has acted to beautify the City Centre and make it more attractive to residents, businesses and visitors. Some of the initiatives of the Strategy have been:

- Re-development of the North Surrey Recreation Centre – this has had a very positive impact on the community, evidenced by substantially greater attendance and reductions in the number of vagrants loitering in front of the facility;
- Landscape and CPTED enhancements - around the Sunrise Pavilion;
- Library – the Whalley Library was renovated and community programs introduced;
- Hanging Basket Program - on 135 Street in front of the SkyTrain station and Recreation Centre;
- Public Art initiatives, at Whalley Athletic Park, and in Holland Park (to be completed in 2006);
- Holland Park – land acquisition and re-development as Surrey's first truly urban park (presently under construction);
- Transit-Oriented Village in City Centre – the design process is nearing completion; recommendations will be brought to Council shortly in this significant plan for the re-development of the City Centre core area (500m radius around the Surrey Central Station).

### **Other Initiatives**

- Adopt-A-Street – this Program enables volunteer groups to "adopt" a specific site or section of road, pledging to keep it free of trash and debris. With volunteer participation from Surrey businesses, community groups, schools, block clubs and other segments of the community, participant's work under the guidance of the Engineering Department and are equipped with safety guidelines and basic litter removal tools. Volunteer groups are acknowledged through the placement of a personalized sign along their adopted road.

Adopt-A-Street presently boasts over 35,000 volunteers, who collectively conduct clean-up activities on over 350 km of City roads, and is one of the largest of its kind in Canada;

- Enhanced litter pick up;
- Bulbs For Beauty/Partners in Parks – staff work with local nursery and bulb production companies who donate bulbs for park volunteers to plant. In the Fall of 2005, 67,000 bulbs were planted on boulevards and in local parks; these made a very positive visual impact when they were in bloom this spring;

Last year, park volunteers donated over 30,000 hours of volunteer efforts to help keep our parks green, clean and safe.

### **2006 Beautification Efforts**

1. In keeping with the high level of residential development in the City, approximately 3,000 new boulevard trees will be planted in 2006 under the City's program.
2. The City has an ambitious program of street beautification for 2006 under the auspices of Council's *Green City Program*; this program, intended to keep Surrey green and beautiful, includes:
  - Median Renovation - There are several older medians that have large pine trees planted in pockets amongst large areas of asphalt. In most cases, the shrub material around the pines is very old and unattractive. Further, the asphalt is generally in poor repair, has cracked or been raised in humps by the roots of the pine trees. The median on the King George Highway between 108 and 104 Avenues is targeted for work in 2006, as is a median on 152 Street north of 105 Avenue. These medians will benefit from having large planting pockets filled with trees and shrubs introduced into them while retaining the mature pines. This work will have a tremendously positive visual impact in Whalley.

Other older grassed medians and boulevard strips will benefit from having new attractive shrub beds installed, providing colour along major arterial streets such as 152 Street north of Highway 10 and 132 Street. In addition, medians with existing trees will be infill-planted to achieve a higher density of trees. Areas such as the Scott Road Overpass on the King George Highway near the Pattulo Bridge that was inherited from the Province will be renovated to eliminate dead trees, dead shrubs, and over-growth of weeds.
  - Trees and Shrubs in New Medians - New medians will be constructed in various locations, and will have shade trees and shrub beds installed to provide year-round colour and interest.

- New Horticulture at the Entrance to Whalley - The City is working in partnership with the Whalley BIA to improve the landscaping and trees at the prominent corner of 108 Avenue and King George Highway.
  - Bark mulch – New mulch will be placed on shrub beds in all existing medians
  - Trees – In addition to the residential boulevard tree-planting program, street trees will be planted on arterial road boulevards in several key areas where road widening has taken place.
3. A partnership has been established with the Whalley Business Improvement Association. The BIA will purchase hanging baskets for 135 Street, from 104 to 102 Avenues; the City will hang the baskets on the street light standards and will maintain the baskets throughout the growing season. The BIA and the City are also collaborating to beautify the corner of the intersection of 108 Avenue and the King George Highway.

### **Other Opportunities For Beautification**

A Staff Beautification Task Force will be established comprised of senior staff of all departments to continue the work of the original Whalley Revitalization Team, but on a broader City scale. This Task Force will prioritize actions to be taken within existing resources, and will make strategic recommendations for additional beautification efforts.

To date staff have identified several areas of the City as the focus of additional efforts to improve the aesthetics of well-travelled streets<sup>1</sup>. Initiatives to improve these areas, and which are not funded in the existing capital or operating budgets, include:

King George Highway Corridor – Sections along this key corridor of the City would benefit from median renovation, with the focus being between 64 Avenue and the Patullo Bridge. Also in this corridor, there are many retail business signs that do not comply with City By-laws, leading to a very untidy appearance. In the section between 128 Street and the Patullo Bridge, there is very limited boulevard landscaping and very few boulevard trees; this area would benefit from additional landscaping and planting.

Newton Bus Exchange – The area north of the Newton Wave Pool experiences considerable vagrancy and vandalism. The north end of the Wave Pool and the adjacent bus exchange should be reviewed to determine what types of changes could be made to improve the appearance of the area. This may include wall murals, enhanced lighting, removal of damaged shrub materials, placement of colourful banners, installation of colourful vandalism-resistant street furniture, and coloured paving materials. The adjacent grove of trees on the east side of the Wave Pool could be lift-pruned to improve sight-lines and increase light penetration. Litter control efforts could also be stepped up at this location.

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<sup>1</sup> Cost estimates for some of the initiatives are listed in Appendix 1.

Cloverdale Town Centre - The triangular block of land within the road allowance at the north end of 176<sup>th</sup> Street in the Cloverdale Town Centre could be beautified with colourful plantings. Year-round twinkle lights could be placed in the trees through the centre of town and hanging baskets could be placed on the light poles through the downtown core.

Flower Beds in City Medians – Seasonal colour could be increased on many medians to provide greater visual interest. This could be achieved by placing bulbs at strategic locations close to the ends of medians, followed by the planting of annuals beds when the bulbs finish.

Spring Clean up – A blitz could be carried out on all arterial streets to remove litter and debris, using summer students and contractors.

Banner Program – Key areas in the City could be considered for additional emphasis with street banners. It is recommended that a minimum of 100 poles on either side of streets in focus areas should be fitted with bright coloured, community-inspired banners.

Hydrangea Volunteer Group – The City's Partners-in-Park Program will work with Elaine Cramer's Hydrangea group to include the planting of hydrangeas in selected neighbourhood parks.

Tree Lighting – LED twinkle lights could be placed in City street trees at key areas in the City, adding year-round visual interest.

The Staff Beautification Task Force will review these items , evaluate their potential impact and bring forward a further report for Council consideration.

## CONCLUSION

The City has made a great deal of progress on cleaning up the Whalley Town Centre and in improving street landscaping in residential areas and on arterial streets. The City has more kilometres of landscaped median than any other community in the region and is continuing to build its program. The type of landscaping currently planted on the boulevards and in medians and the levels of maintenance applied to them, is based on achieving the best visual impact within the availability of ongoing maintenance funding levels.

Other opportunities exist for beautifying key areas of the City. Some of these opportunities have been identified within the Green City Program and other existing City programs, are fully funded, and will be implemented in 2006. Other opportunities have been identified in general, but have not been prioritized and have not yet been funded. Some typical costs are identified in Appendix 1 of this report.

A City Beautification Task Force, made up of senior staff from across the corporation, be struck to continue the highly successful work of the Whalley Enhancement Team, but on a City-wide scale. The Beautification Task Force will evaluate initiatives that will provide the greatest improvements to the City, initiate activities that can be achieved within existing resources and bring forward initiatives that require new resources for Council consideration.

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## Appendix 1

### *Typical Costs of Beautification Initiatives*

Initiative	Details	Costs	Other Costs and Notes
<b>Street Banners</b>	200 poles in total 100 on each side of the street = 400, 3-colour nylon banners	\$45 per banner, plus \$123/pole for contractor to place and remove = \$42,600	Life span is expected to be one year maximum, as they fade and become wind-torn
<b>Hanging Baskets:</b>  -irrigation in place   -no irrigation at pole	Large baskets with multiple plant species for full range of colour and form	- \$163 per basket for purchase, placement, maintenance and removal  - \$525 per basket, due to cost of watering by hand	- If there are no hangers on the poles, there will be an additional one-time cost of \$340 per pole to mount basket hangers. - One-time capital cost to bring irrigation to poles is \$1,000 per pole
<b>Large New Flower Beds in Key Areas of the City</b>	Large angled beds of spring bulbs, and summer annuals	\$86 per square meter; standard bed of \$100 sq. m would be \$8,600 annually	Assumes the planting areas is irrigated and the area has already been constructed to receive the flowers
<b>Twinkle Lights in Trees</b>	Twinkle lights in medium- small trees; staff recommend no less than 10 trees per site for effect	\$300 per tree for initial purchase and installation, with tech cable, strapping, one outlet and two strings of lights. Therefore, a grouping of 10 trees would be \$3,000, with annual operating costs of \$250.	Assumes there is already power to the base of the tree. If power needs to be brought in to the area underground, assume an additional \$500 per tree one-time capital cost