

2024 Provincial Communities in Bloom Results

Presented To:	Community and Emergency Services Committee
Meeting Date:	March 17, 2025
Type:	Correspondence for Information Only
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Report Summary

This report provides information regarding the City of Greater Sudbury's participation in the 2024 Provincial Communities in Bloom (CIB) competition.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Climate Action Plans

This report refers to work within the 2019-2027 City of Greater Sudbury Strategic Plan to Build Community Pride through Internal and External Promotion of the City. The report supports the Community Energy & Emissions Plan as host communities are judged on items such as waste diversion, environmental action and urban forestry.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Background

Communities in Bloom (CIB) is a volunteer and partnership-driven organization that uses a multi-tiered competitive evaluation process to foster community strength, involvement, and continuous improvement. CIB strives to improve the tidiness, appearance and visual appeal of Canada's neighborhoods, parks, open spaces, and streets through the imaginative use of flowers, plants, and trees. The program fosters community pride and promotes involvement and action by citizens of all ages, municipalities, local organizations, and businesses.

CIB offers both provincial and national editions of the program. As part of the provincial edition, communities participate with other communities in their population category within their province. Up to two communities in each province are invited to participate in the following year's national edition. CIB also hosts an annual symposium and award ceremony, highlighting the efforts of participating communities, showcasing achievements and the positive impact of the CIB program.

Staff applied to participate in the 2024 Communities in Bloom program at the provincial level. The

Communities in Bloom program is based on 6 key criteria: Community Appearance, Environmental Action, Heritage Conservation, Tree Management & Trails, Landscape, Plant & Floral Displays.

Volunteer CIB judges visited and toured Greater Sudbury on August 13 and 14, 2024. City staff organized an extensive tour to showcase Greater Sudbury's achievements, meet with businesses and community members as part of the evaluation, and to experience our community's parks and facilities. City staff also produced a Communities in Bloom Profile Book (Attachment 1) to further demonstrate Greater Sudbury's achievements as it relates to the CIB evaluation criteria. A community engagement photo contest also was organized by the City leading up to the judges visit, with over 50 submissions received.

Summary of Evaluation Results

As part of the Communities in Bloom program, the judges provided a report that details evaluation scoring and includes recommendations for the future. The full completed evaluation form is included as Attachment 2.

The City received 3 out of 5 blooms in for our participation in the 2024 provincial Communities in Bloom competition and received a special award for environmental action. The scoring matrix is detailed below:

Tidiness	109.00 / 150
Environmental Action	113.00 / 150
Heritage Conservation	104.00 / 150
Urban Forestry	115.00 / 175
Landscape	137.00 / 200
Floral Displays	131.00 / 175
Total	709.00 / 1000
Percentage:	70.9%
Bloom rating:	3 Blooms

Bloom rating:

- Up to 55%: 1 bloom
- 56% to 63%: 2 blooms
- 64% to 72%: 3 blooms
- 73% to 81%: 4 blooms
- >82%: 5 blooms

Judges were impressed by the understated beauty of Greater Sudbury and the transformation of what was once a barren remote destination is now a truly beautiful community. Several suggestions were made to help strengthen future Communities in Bloom applications, but also to further advance our community as a great place to live, work, play and do business. Summary of recommendations below:

- Improve signage throughout City around gateway signage to increase visibility of CIB program and participation. Additional signage for educational purposes and best practices for compost, pruning methods, native plants etc.
- Increase in the staffing budget and resources to support parks, forestry, and other maintenance related departments to complete the necessary work to ensure a safe and accessible community.
- Develop / create succession planning for key knowledgeable staff in all areas to ensure that qualified personnel are available to continue with the goals/ plans set out.
- Continue work on community involvement in program. There is opportunity to do more with the commercial/business community in relation to the CIB program as well as with schools.
- Remove invasive plant growth.
- Expand and better promote EarthCare Sudbury and materials/promotions to ensure residents know about this work.
- Start a heritage tree program and create a database for significant trees.
- Focus more efforts on identifying heritage buildings and spaces.

- Remove or cut down the 1,800 dead trees on boulevards throughout the city (Note: this work is currently underway).
- Offer enhanced training and learning opportunities to staff on landscape and horticultural best practices etc.

Community of Capreol National Communities in Bloom Participation

The Capreol Communities in Bloom committee, who have previously been participating in the provincial edition of the event, competed nationally in 2024. The Capreol CIB committee received a 5 Blooms Silver rating, with special recognition for the local heritage restoration program.

The Capreol Communities in Bloom committee have also expressed interest in submitting a bid for a hosting opportunity for the CIB National Symposium and Awards Ceremony in 2026 or 2027. To host, the City of Greater Sudbury would be required to be an active Communities in Bloom participant at the National level. The National Symposium is a four-day conference that would attract upwards of 200 participants, the majority of whom would be travelling to Greater Sudbury from out of province.

Summary and Next Steps

The City's participation in the provincial CIB program was an excellent demonstration of collaboration amongst various departments across the organization to engage the community to celebrate our community and receive valuable feedback on areas for future improvement.

The CIB judges' recommendations received will be used to review municipal services. Recommendations may be used as the basis of future business cases for service level changes or enhancements where there is a need for additional resourcing and/or budget. As the City is currently in the second year of a two-year operating and four-year capital budget cycle, the City will look to participate in the program again in 2026 or beyond, to allow sufficient lead time to implement some of the recommendations highlighted, with a goal of improved scoring.

Staff are evaluating the merits of hosting the National Symposium in the future and determining if there is a strong return on investment from an economic development perspective.

Resources Cited

Communities in Bloom official website
<https://www.communitiesinbloom.ca/>