

# Landscaping & Property Improvement Grant Program Guidelines



Adopted June 2021

City of Owen Sound  
Community Services Department  
Planning & Heritage Division

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# 1.0 Program Goals & Purpose

The City of Owen Sound is committed to protecting, preserving, maintaining, and enhancing the City's scenic and natural heritage.

A key objective of the City's Strategic Plan is to enhance the City's resiliency and capacity for mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change and supporting and promoting healthy lifestyles. The City is committed to offsetting 100 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year by annually planting 100 hardwood tree species.

Similarly, the policies of the City's Official Plan encourage a high standard of design in public works and in the design of private and public development to achieve an appealing, comfortable, accessible, safe living and work environment for residents and visitors.

In 2021, the City, in partnership with the River District Board of Management ), adopted the River District Action Plan (the "Action Plan"). The Action Plan encourages actions that will animate and activate the City's River District and encourage the appeal of the area.

Specific actions identified by the Action Plan for increasing the approachability and creating a warm ambiance for the River District include:

- Beautify the River District's public spaces by implementing streetscaping upgrades such as benches, garbage receptacles, bike racks and lighting (Section 6b).
- Encourage River District business owners and landlords to beautify their property by leveraging Community Improvement Plan (CIP) programs (Action 7).
- Continue implementation of use of a policy that encourages sidewalk cafes and patio dining (Action 2b).
- Beautify arterial public spaces by increasing the focus on landscaping along 10<sup>th</sup> Street throughout the entire city, along 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue East from the entrance to the City to 10<sup>th</sup> Street East, and along 16<sup>th</sup> Street east (Action 8a).

The City intends to utilize the Landscaping and Property Improvement Grant Program as a means to achieving the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan, the Official Plan, and the River District Action Plan by incentivizing private investment in aesthetic improvements to properties that are desirable over the long-term and which represent a positive contribution to the streetscape and improve pedestrian friendliness.

**The purpose of the Landscaping and Property Improvement Grant Program is to** encourage property owners and tenants of land to improve their properties, including parking areas, through the installation of appropriate landscaping, fencing, exterior lighting, pedestrian connections, street furniture, and patios.

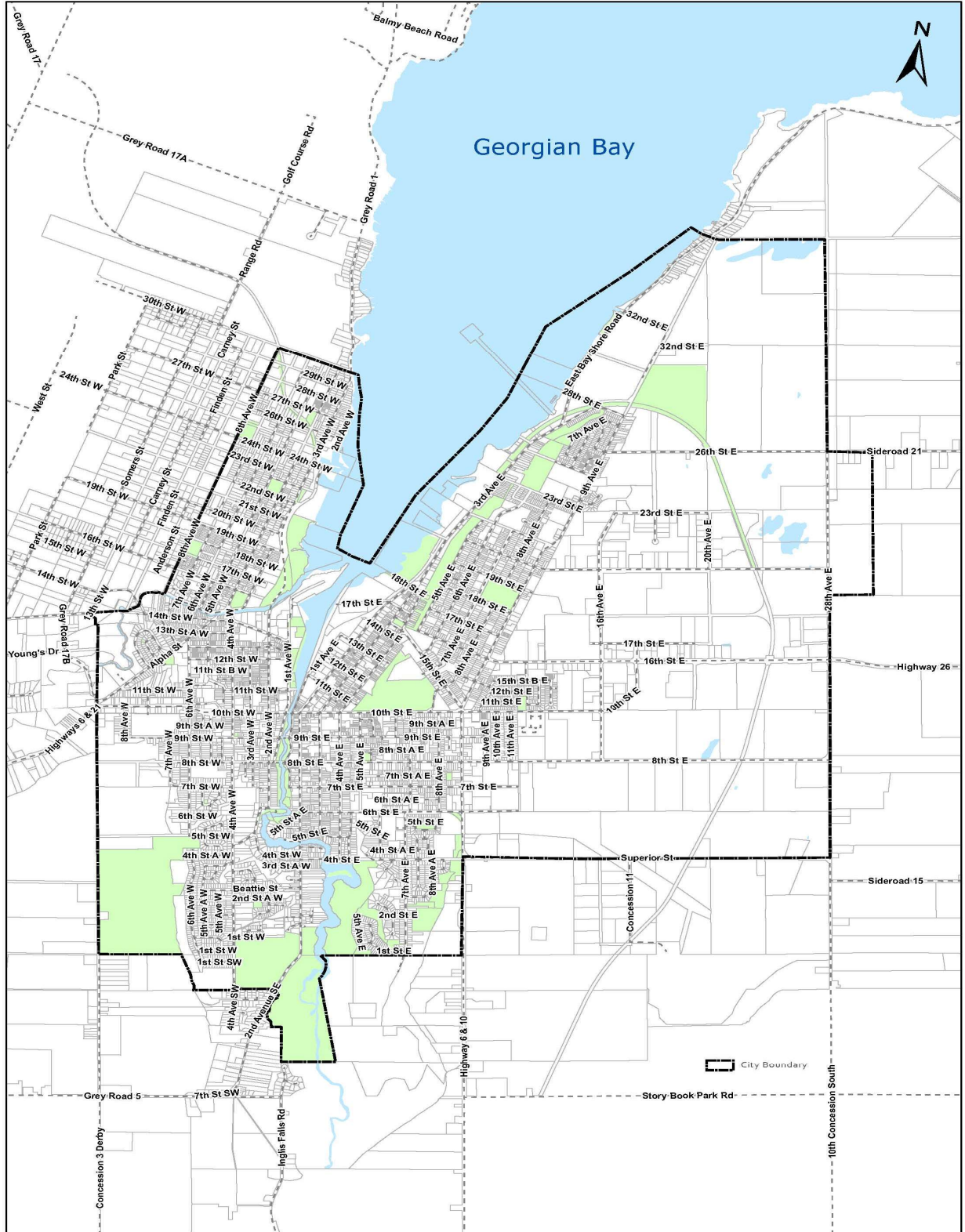
## 2.0 Program Area

The Program Area establishes the boundaries for which the Landscaping and Property Improvement Grant Program applies. These boundaries are set by the City's Community Improvement Plan, which establishes a framework for the City's support and implementation of programs to encourage private investment and implement functional and aesthetic improvements to properties.

For the purposes of this program, all lands within the municipal boundary of the City of Owen Sound, as shown in Section 2.1, are within the Program Area.



## 2.1 Map of the Program Area

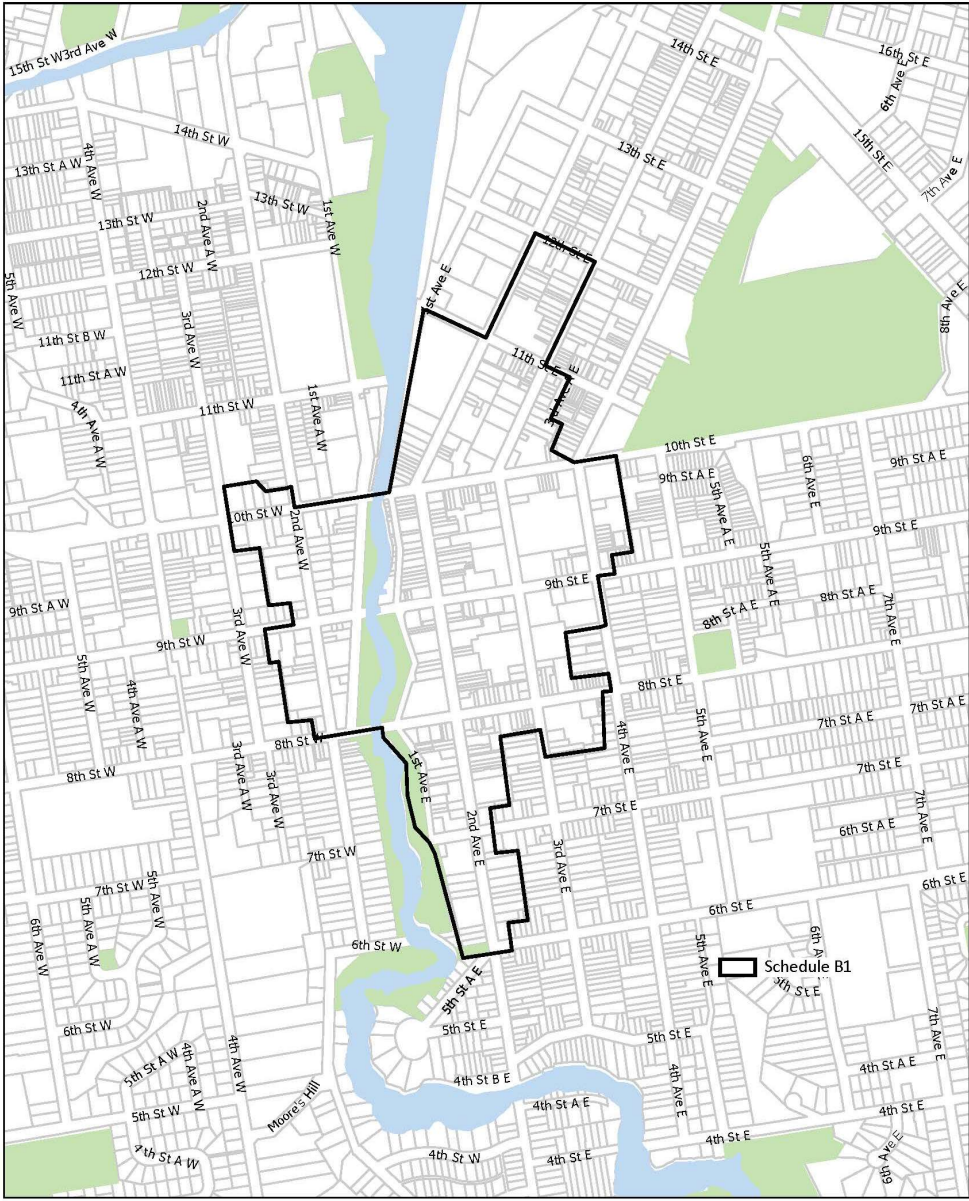


# 3.0 Priority Areas

In addition to the Program Area identified in Section 2.1, five (5) key Priority Areas are identified that warrant enhanced improvements or landscaping treatments. Priority Areas are identified in Section 3.1 to 3.6. Projects located within one of these five areas will be given priority and are eligible for enhanced incentives under this program.

## 3.1 Priority Area 1: River District

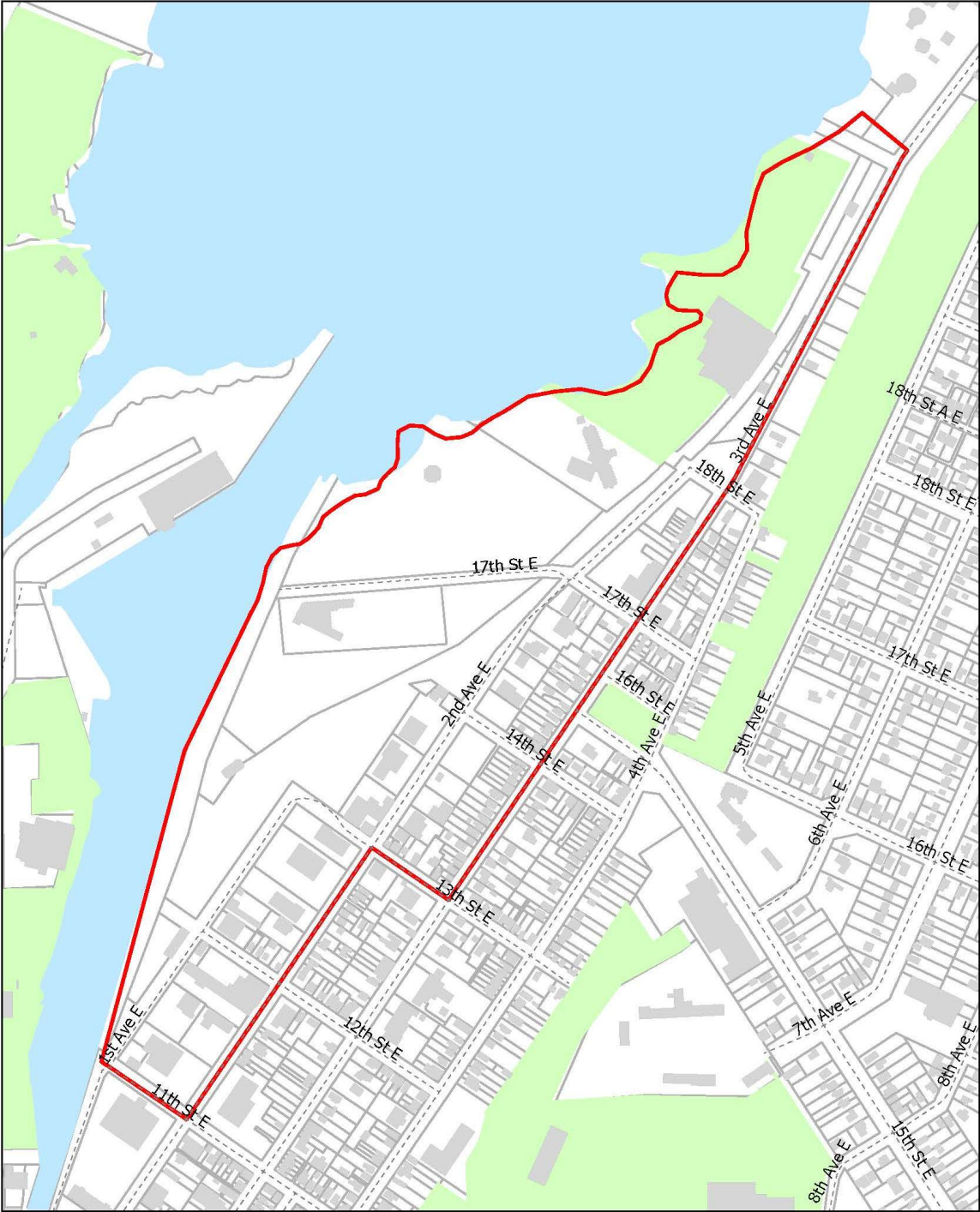
Priority Area 1 includes the City's River District which generally includes all lands designated River District Commercial in the City's Official Plan.





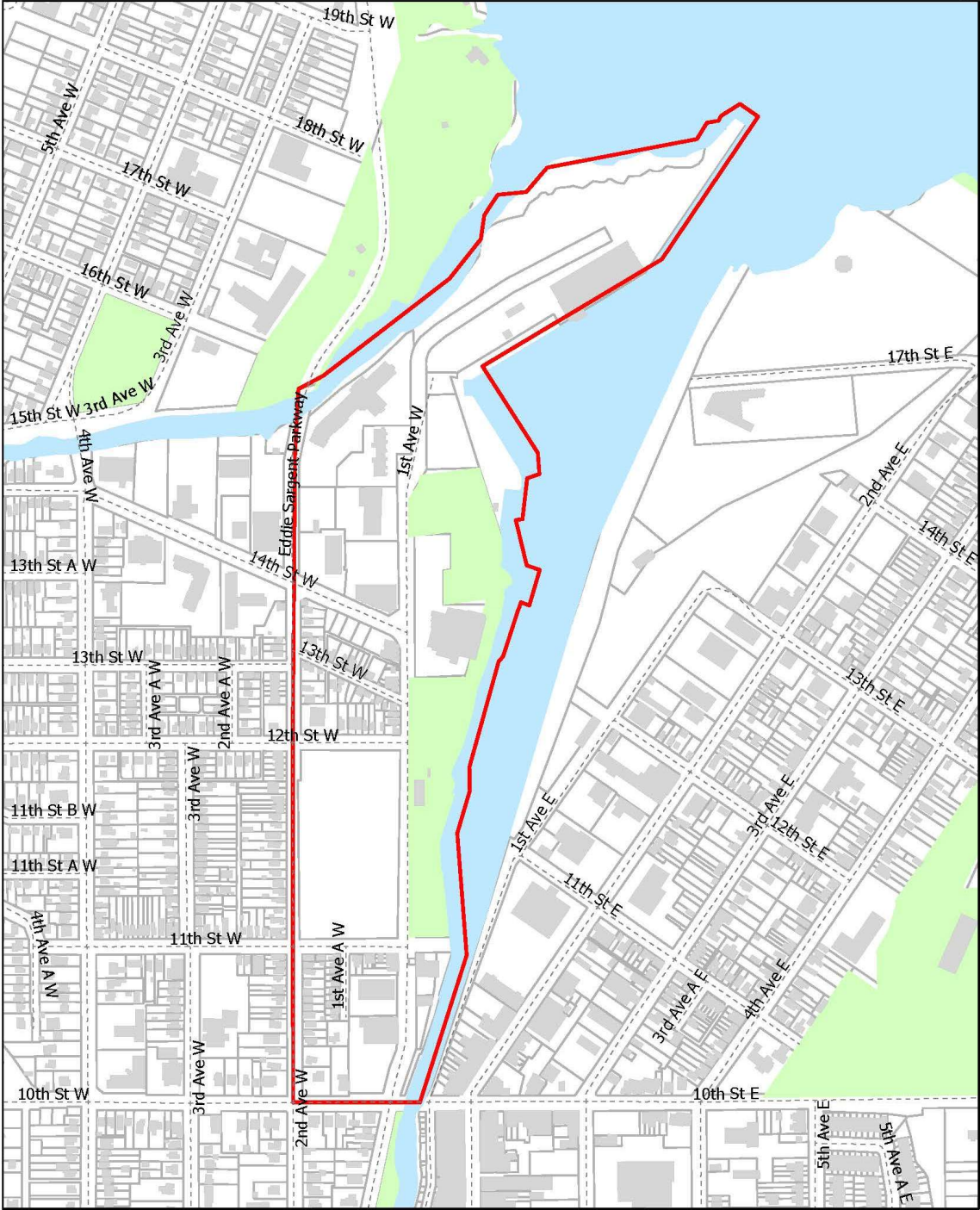
### 3.2 Priority Area 2: East Harbour Planning Area

Priority Area 2 includes the City’s East Harbour Planning Area. This area generally includes 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue East and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue East from 11<sup>th</sup> St E, north to the Bayshore Community Centre.



### 3.3 Priority Area 3: West Harbour Planning Area

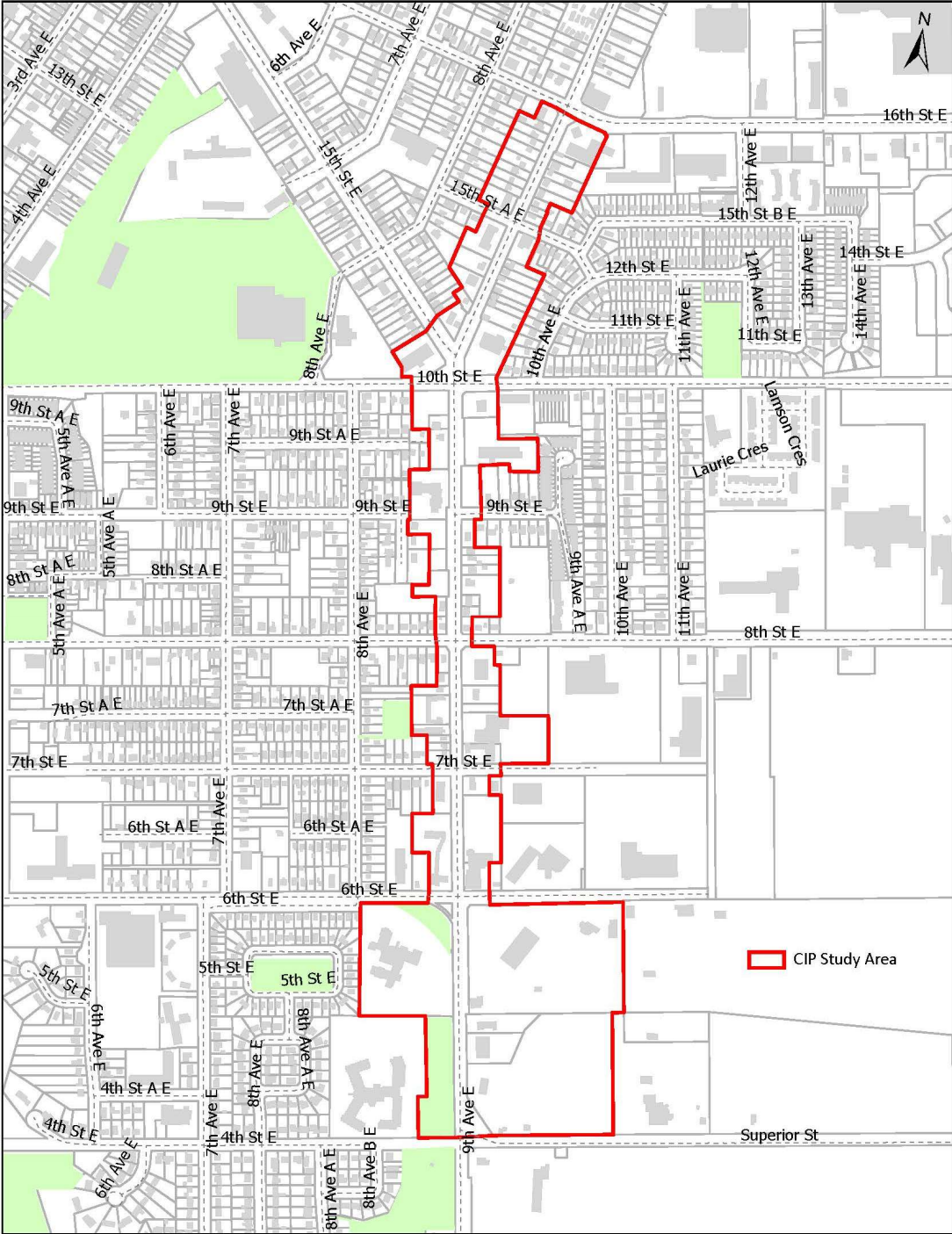
Priority Area 3 includes the City’s West Harbour Planning Area. This area generally includes 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue West and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue West, north to 14<sup>th</sup> Street West.





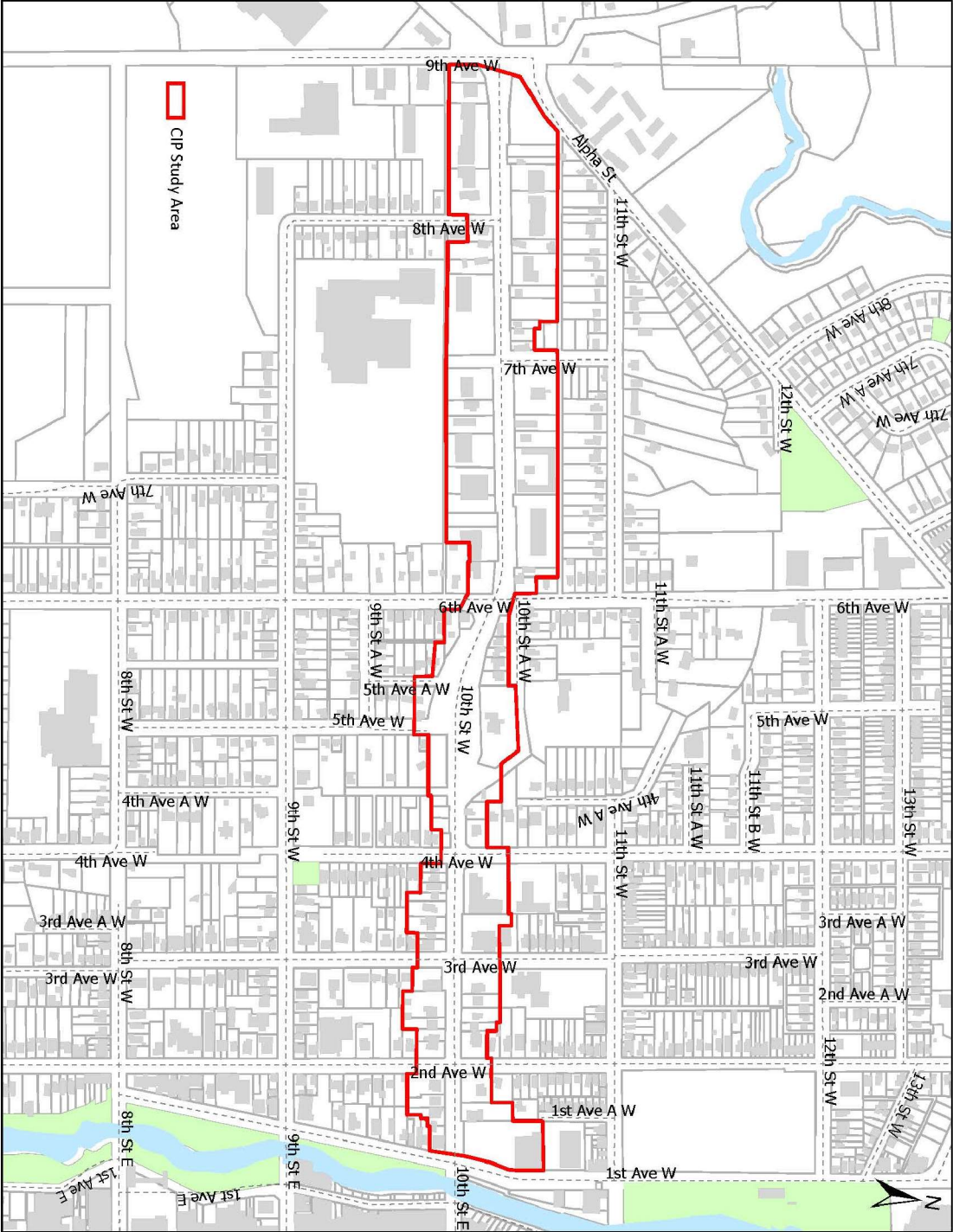
# 3.4 Priority Area 4: Gateway 1 – 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue East from Superior Street to 16<sup>th</sup> Street East

Priority Area 4 is considered a gateway into the City from Highway 6. It includes 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue East from Superior Street to 16<sup>th</sup> Street East.



### 3.5 Priority Area 5: Gateway 2 – 10<sup>th</sup> Street West from 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue West to 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue West

Priority Area 5 is considered a gateway into the City on the west side from Highway 21. It includes 10<sup>th</sup> Street West from 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue West to 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue West.





## 4.0 Program Incentives

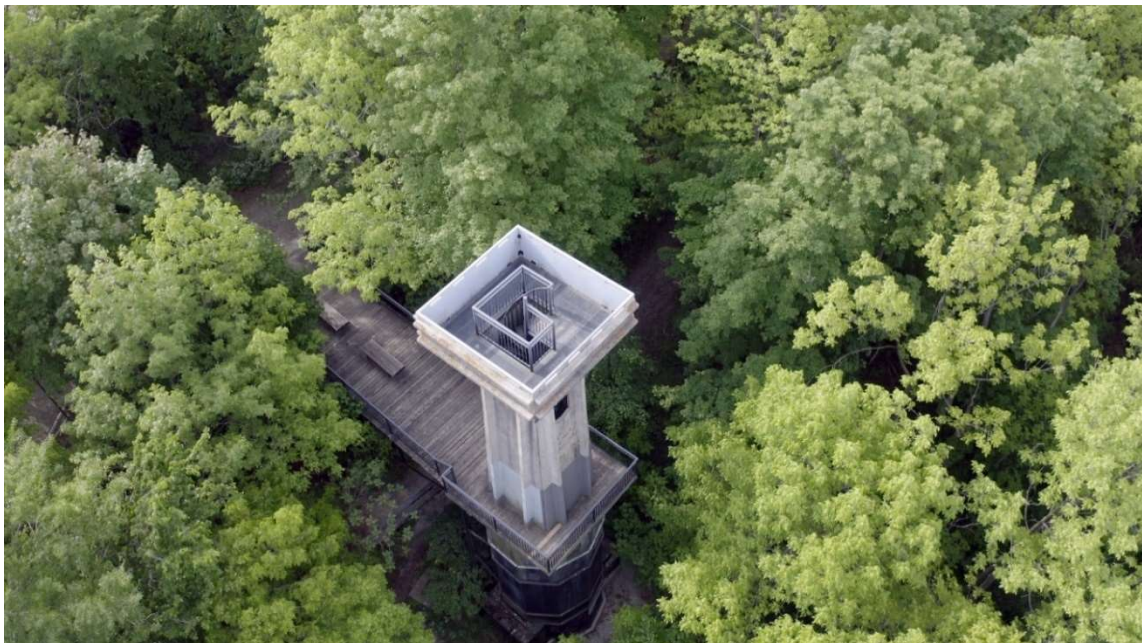
The Landscaping and Property Improvement Grant Program provides the following incentives:

1. A capital grant, up to 50 percent (50%) of the eligible costs, to a maximum of \$5,000, whichever is less, for eligible projects located outside of a Priority Area identified in Section 3.0 (per project, per year); or,
2. A capital grant, up to 50 percent (50%) of the eligible costs, to a maximum of \$10,000, whichever is less, for eligible projects located within a Priority Area identified in Section 3.0 (per project, per year).

Applications to the Landscaping and Property Improvement Program are processed on an intake window basis. The deadlines to apply are as follows:

<b>Application Deadline</b>	<b>Consideration by Community Services Committee</b>	<b>Consideration by City Council</b>
October 31	First meeting in February	First meeting in March
March 31	First meeting in July	First meeting in August

Projects must have a minimum cost of \$5,000 in order to be considered eligible.





# 5.0 Who is Eligible?

Property owners and authorized tenants of existing **commercial, industrial, mixed-use, and multi-unit residential properties**, as defined by the City’s Community Improvement Plan (CIP), are eligible to apply to receive grant funding under this program. For clarity, single-detached dwellings and other residences are ineligible.

Landscaping and property improvements to eligible properties that are vacant may be considered eligible, provided the property is an infill lot. In all cases, Greenfield properties, as defined by the City’s CIP, are ineligible.

New infill mixed-use and multi-unit residential development that satisfies the definition of **Affordable/Attainable Housing** and the redevelopment or remediation of a **Brownfield** or **Greyfield** property, as defined by the City’s CIP, will also be considered eligible.

A Community Garden Executive, acting on behalf of a Community Garden Collective, is considered an authorized tenant where an approved community garden is located on City Park Pre-Approved for Community Gardens (under a Licence Agreement with a three (3) year term) and is eligible.

# 6.0 Eligible Projects

The following examples of landscaping and property improvements are considered eligible for grant funding under this program. These examples are not intended as an exhaustive list. In all cases, applicants should discuss their respective project with City staff prior to submitting an application.

## 6.1 Professional Landscaping

Professional landscaping projects are considered eligible for grant funding under this program. Eligible landscaping improvement projects may include:

- Installation of alternative ground cover treatments, such as permeable and/or decorative paving stones, sod, or mulch.
- Re-sodding and/or re-mulching may be considered eligible provided it is a component of a larger landscaping improvement project.
- Planting of flower beds, shrubs and/or trees.

Priority will be given to projects that result in beautification of existing parking areas and that improve buffering of these areas from the City street or surrounding properties.

### 6.1.1 Low Impact Development (LID)

Low Impact Development (LID) practices deal with stormwater by mimicking natural water cycles. It increases the infiltration of stormwater into the soil, where it can be filtered and/or absorbed by plants. LID is a lower-cost alternative to conventional grey infrastructure and provide several ecological, economic, and social benefits.

Professional landscaping projects that prepare for the impacts of climate change through LID strategies are highly encouraged and will be given priority.

Examples of eligible LID projects include:

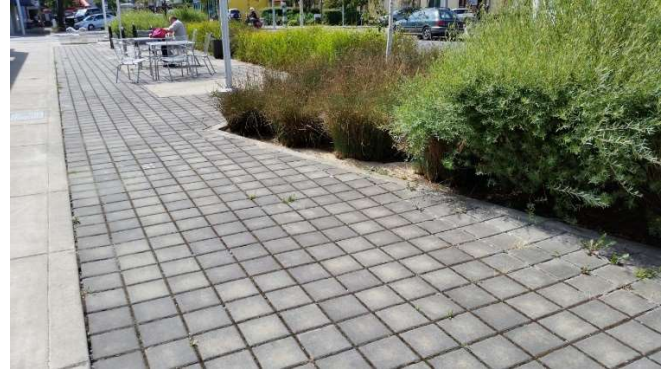
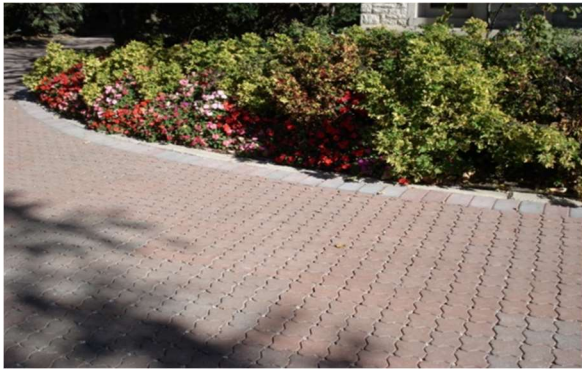
- Xeriscaping (planting of native species)
- Rain gardens
- Bioswales
- Infiltration trenches
- Permeable pavement
- Green roofs/walls
- Rainwater harvesting



## Examples of Low Impact Development







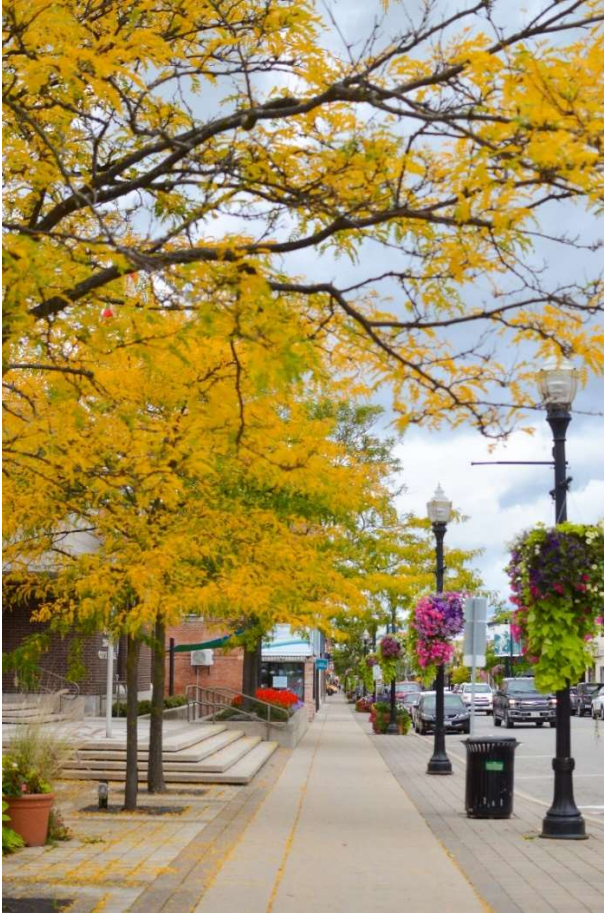
## 6.2 Tree Planting

Tree planting is considered an eligible project under this program. It may be completed as part of a larger landscaping improvement project identified in Section 6.1 or may be completed on its own, provided minimum project costs are met.

Projects that propose the planting of street trees within the City road allowance or elsewhere on City-owned property will be considered eligible, subject to consultation with City Staff.

Tree species must be chosen from the Native Species Tree Selection List provided in Appendix A of these Program Guidelines. Other species not listed may be deemed suitable as determined by City Staff.





## 6.3 Driveways, Parking Areas & Pedestrian Pathways

Improvements to existing driveways, parking areas and pedestrian pathways are considered eligible. Types of eligible improvements may include:

- The repair or replacement of existing asphalt or concrete surfaces.
- Installation of new exterior light standards to better illuminate parking areas and pedestrian walkways.
- Landscaping of concrete parking lot islands or curbs.

Generally, where the repair or replacement of existing asphalt or concrete pedestrian walkways is proposed, replacement with permeable or decorative pavers, or a combination thereof, is encouraged.

Projects that result in beautification of existing driveway and parking areas and that improve the buffering of these area from the city street and/or surrounding properties are highly encouraged and will be given priority.

## 6.4 Permanent Street Furniture

The installation of permanent street furniture on private property, such as benches, planters, and bike racks are considered eligible. The installation of permanent street furniture within the City road allowance or elsewhere on City-owned property may also be considered eligible, subject to consultation with City staff.

Permanent street furniture located within the City's River District (Section 3.1), East and West Harbour Planning Areas (Section 3.2 and 3.3), shall be consistent with the Architectural and Streetscape Guidelines (Section 5.4) of the City's Harbour and Downtown Urban Design and Master Plan Strategy.



## 6.5 Patios

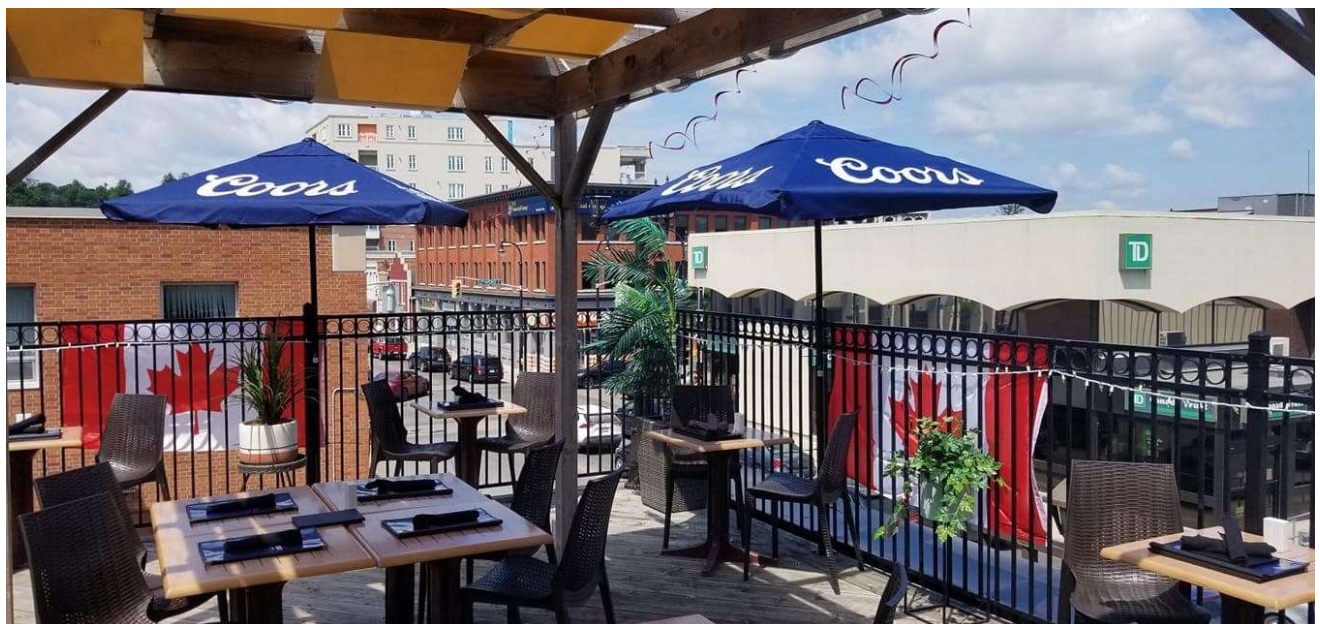
The installation of permanent street-level and rooftop patios on private property located within the River District (Section 3.1), East and West Harbour Planning Areas (Section 3.2 and 3.3) are considered eligible.

Patios located along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue East and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue West facing the inner harbour will be given priority.

Projects that propose improvements to existing street-level and rooftop patios within the City's River District, East and West Harbour Planning Areas, are also considered eligible. Improvements may include:

- Installation of new railings or guards.
- Installation of new non-migrating base (e.g., pavers, wood decking).
- Installation of an outdoor patio heating source.
- Required structural repairs to the permanent patio.

For clarity, outdoor sitting areas located on municipal property and temporary patios or temporary/moveable components of a patio (e.g., furniture), are ineligible to receive grant funding.



## 6.6 Fencing

The installation of fencing to buffer a property, parking area, or garbage and recycling area from the street or surrounding land uses is considered eligible.

Where a fence is proposed to buffer a property from the street or surrounding land uses, trees or shrub plantings shall be placed on the inside of the fence to soften its unvaried appearance.

Fencing and garbage/waste enclosures must be consistent with the City standards provided in Appendix C. Fencing located within the City's River District (Section 3.1), East and West Harbour Planning Areas (Section 3.2 and 3.3) shall consist of wrought iron and masonry posts, consistent with the City's Harbour and Downtown Urban Design and Master Plan Strategy (Appendix C, Figure 3).

## 6.7 Public Art

Public art plays a role in beautifying the community, engaging residents, and creating a sense of place, creating links to economic growth and strengthening tourism.

The City's [Public Art Policy](#) defines Public Art as meaning, "original artworks, permanent or temporary, placed or incorporated in publicly accessible indoor or outdoor locations in response to the site and for the benefit of the public".

For the purposes of this program, the installation of Public Art that is **permanent and located in publicly accessible or viewable outdoor locations** are considered eligible.

Public art installations, particularly murals, along the rear of buildings that are currently lacking in visual appeal will be given priority to make them more approachable and enticing.

Specifically, public art/mural installations at the rear of buildings along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue East and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue West facing the Sydenham River and inner harbour, and along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue East between 10<sup>th</sup> Street East and 8<sup>th</sup> Street East will be given priority.

The installation of public art on city-owned lands, such as parks or trails, that is consistent with the City's [Public Art Policy](#) may also be considered eligible for grant funding under this program subject to

consultation with City staff and approval by the Community Services Committee and City Council.

## 6.8 Plans & Studies

It is recommended and, in some cases, may be required, that professional landscape plans be prepared by a qualified professional, such as an Ontario Landscape Architect (OLA). Costs associated with preparation of professional plans and studies are considered eligible under this program.

## 6.9 Municipal Water Servicing Installation to Community Gardens

Community gardens support community improvement by enhancing the natural setting and built heritage of the City. Community garden projects rely on community groups and volunteers, who are interested in establishing and maintaining gardens within the City. These projects are often the result of partnerships between community members, municipal governments, and private stakeholders.

“Community Garden” means any planter, bed (raised or otherwise) or piece of land, which is used to demonstrate horticulture techniques, cultural gardens, or to produce flowers, and/or food, as a community, neighbourhood or group initiative. Community Gardens may be comprised of plots that are shared communally and/or allotted individually and may include:

- a. food gardens or orchards;
- b. pollinator gardens;
- c. ornamental gardens; and
- d. Indigenous gardens.

Where a community garden has been approved and the community garden collective has entered into a licence agreement with a three (3) year term with the City, community garden projects may be considered eligible for grant funding under this program subject to consultation with City staff.

Specifically, Community Garden Collectives with a licence agreement with a one (1) year term are not eligible.

The City may provide up to one (1) Landscaping & Property Improvement Program grant for Community Garden projects per year.

Eligible community garden projects shall include water servicing installation subject to the criteria described in the Community Garden policy.



## 7.0 Contact Information

For further information on the Landscaping & Property Improvement Grant Program or to discuss your project with a City staff member, please contact:

**Community Services Department**  
**Planning & Heritage Division**  
808 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue East  
Owen Sound, ON N4K 2H5  
Phone: 519-376-4440 ext. 1250  
Email: [planning@owensound.ca](mailto:planning@owensound.ca)

## 8.0 Appendices

Appendix A – Native Species Tree Selection List

Appendix B – Harbour and Downtown Urban Design and Master Plan Strategy

Appendix C – Fence & Garbage Enclosure Detail

## Appendix A – Native Species Tree Selection List

Tree Spacing Along Property Boundary Requirements (one tree required every interval)						
Proposed Land Use	Commercial	Industrial	Institutional	Residential	Municipal Street	Open Space or Park
Municipal Street	7.5 m	7.5 m	7.5 m	7.5 m	N/A	N/A
Open Space or Park	9 m	9 m	9 m	9 m	N/A	N/A

### 4.6.3 Tree Selection – Planting of Native tree Species

Planting of native tree species is identified as a best management practice. As part of the implementation of this policy, the following tables shall be the approved Municipal Tree Lists for trees planted within the City of Owen Sound.

**Table 4.6.3a – Native Species Tree Selection – Boulevard Trees**

Latin Genus	Common Name	Nursery	Comments
<i>Acer freemanii</i>	Autumn Blaze Maple	U, C	
<i>Acer rubrum</i> “Karpick”	Karpick Red Maple	C	Slow growing, needs room for development
<i>Acer rubrum</i> “Morgan”	Morgan Red Maple	U, C	Planted at Kelso Beach Playground
<i>Acer saccharinum</i>	Silver Maple	U, C	Needs room for development
<i>Amelanchier</i>	Serviceberry	U, C	Alleghany variety only, salt resistant, fast growing, room for development
<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	Common Hackberry	U, C	Fast grower, tolerates dry alkaline condition
<i>Crataegus</i> spp.	Hawthorne	U, C	Thornless varieties only
<i>Fraxinus americana</i>	Ash	U, C	White variety only
<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	Globe Ash	U, C	Green or Red variety only
<i>Gymnocladus dioica</i>	Kentucky Coffee tree	U, C	Winter interest
<i>Platanus x acerifolia</i>	London Planetree	U, C	Room to develop
<i>Quercus macrocarpus</i>	Burr Oak	U, C	
<i>Sorbus decora</i>	Showy Mountain Ash		Unavailable from these nurseries
<i>Sorbus thuringiaca</i>	Oakleaf Mountain Ash	U, C	Substitute for above
<i>Pyrus calleryana</i>	Ornamental Pear	U, C	Excellent street tree
<i>Syringa reticula</i>	Japanese Tree Lilac	U, C	Excellent street tree

**Table 4.6.3b – Native Species Tree Selection – Greenspace Trees**

Latin Genus	Common Name	Nursery	Comments
<i>Acer freemanii</i>	Autumn Blaze Maple	U, C	
<i>Acer rubrum</i> "Karpick"	Karpick Red Maple	C	Slow growing, needs room for development
<i>Acer rubrum</i> "Morgan"	Morgan Red Maple	U, C	Planted at Kelso Beach Playground
<i>Acer saccharinum</i>	Silver Maple	U, C	Needs room for development
<i>Acer saccharum</i>	Sugar Maple	U, C	Intolerant to pollution, needs room for development
<i>Amelanchier</i>	Serviceberry	U, C	Alleghany variety only, salt resistant, fast growing, room for development
<i>Betula papyrifera</i>	Paper/Canoe/White Birch	U, C	Susceptible to disease and insects
<i>Carpinus carolinia</i>	Blue Beech	U, C	
<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	Common Hackberry	U, C	Fast grower, tolerates dry alkaline condition
<i>Crataegus</i> spp.	Hawthorne	U, C	Thornless varieties only
<i>Fraxinus americana</i>	Ash	U, C	White variety only
<i>Fraxinus nigra</i>	Black Ash	U, C	
<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	Globe Ash	U, C	Green or Red variety only
<i>Gymnocladus dioica</i>	Kentucky Coffee tree	U, C	Winter interest
<i>Juglans cinerea</i>	Butternut	U	Short lived
<i>Juglans nigra</i>	Black Walnut	U, C	
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Eastern Red Cedar	U, C	Coniferous
<i>Larix laricina</i>	Tamarack	U, C	Coniferous
<i>Liriodendrom tulipifera</i>	Tulip Tree	U, C	Lawn or park setting, room to develop, weak limbed
<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	Ironwood	U, C	Slow growing
<i>Picea clauca</i>	White Spruce	U, C	Coniferous, large tree, very tall
<i>Picea clauca</i>	Eastern White Pine	U, C	Coniferous
<i>Platanus x acerifolia</i>	London Planetree	U, C	Room to develop
<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	American Sycamore	U, C	
<i>Populus</i> spp.	Poplar	U, C	Trembling Aspen variety, use on poor soils
<i>Quercus alba</i>	White Oak	U, C	
<i>Quercus bicolor</i>	Swamp Oak	U, C	
<i>Quercus macrocarpus</i>	Burr Oak	U, C	
<i>Quercus palustris</i>	Pin Oak	U, C	



Latin Genus	Common Name	Nursery	Comments
Quercus ruba	Red Oak	U, C	
Salix spp.	Willow	U, C	
Sorbus decora	Showy Mountain Ash		Unavailable from these nurseries
Sorbus thuringiaca	Oakleaf Mountain Ash	U, C	Substitute for above
Tilia americana	Basswood	U, C	Large tree, very tall
Thuja occidentalis	White Cedar	U, C	
Tsuga canadensis	Eastern Hemlock	U, C	
Ulmus americana	White/American Elm	U, C	Disease
Ulmus thomasii	Rock Elm	U, C	Disease

Nursery: U = Uxbridge; C = Conan

#### 4.6.4 Invasive Non-Native Plant Species

The planting of aggressive non-native species within or adjacent to woodlands or natural areas is discouraged in order to help safeguard the long-term ecological integrity of these areas. The plant species identified in Table 4.6.4 are not suitable for restoration and landscaping within and adjacent to Storm Water Management areas, Woodlands and Natural Areas.

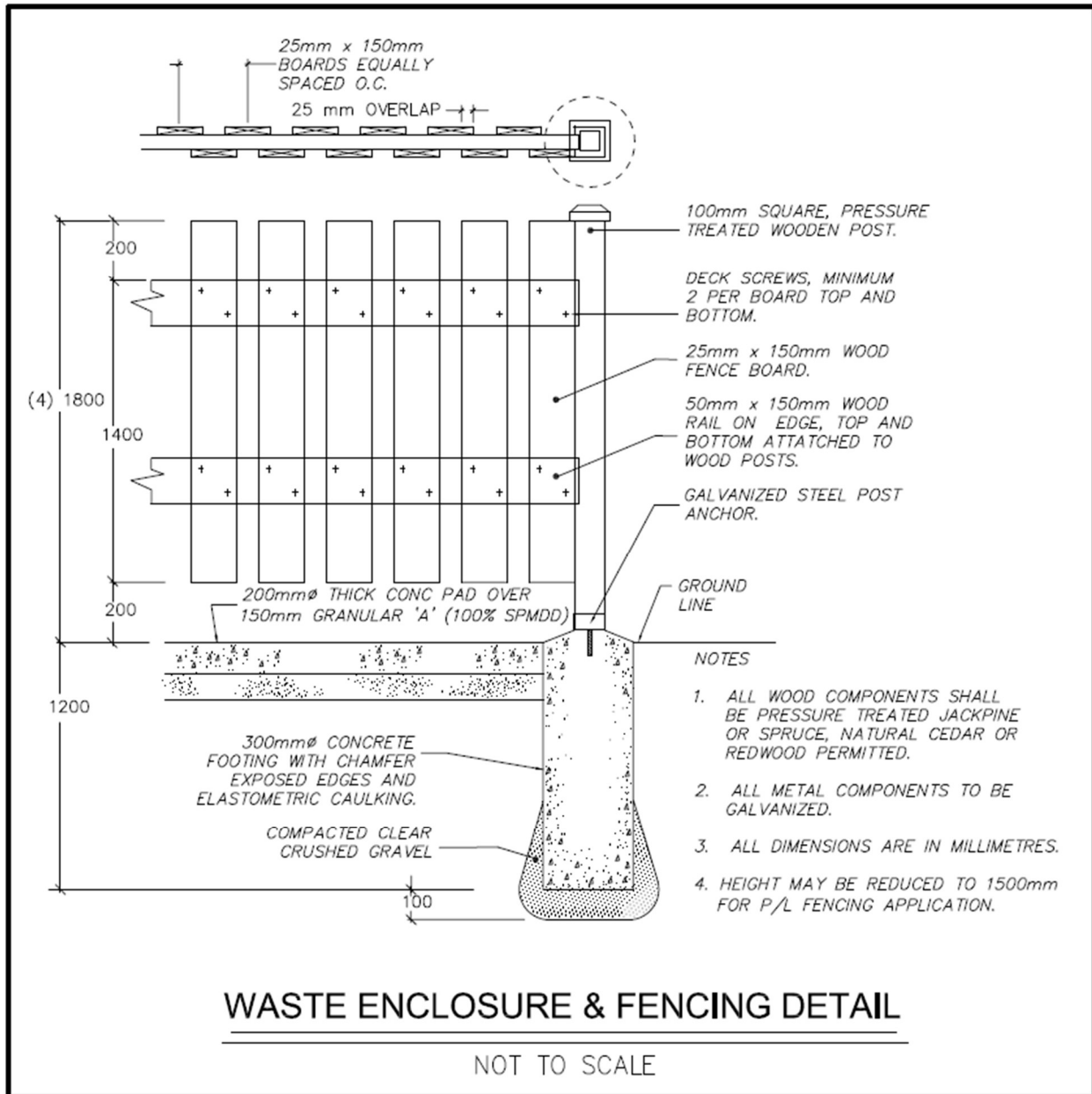
Table 4.6.4 - Invasive Species List

LATIN NAME	COMMON NAME	LATIN NAME	COMMON NAME
<b>HERBACEOUS SPECIES</b>			
Acinos arvensis	Mother-of-thyme	Hedera helix	English ivy
Aegopodium podagraria	Goutweed	Hemerocallis fulva	Orange daylily
Agropyron pectiniforme	Crested Wheat Grass	Hesperis matronalis	Dame's rocket
Ajuga reptans	Bugleweed, Bugle	Hydrocharis morsus-ranae	European frog-bit
Alharia petiolata	Garlic mustard	Hypericum perforatum	St. John's Wort, Rosin
Ambrosia artemisiifolia	Ragweed, Wild tansy	Impatiens glandifera	Himalayan balsam
Angelica sylvestris	Angelica	Iris pseudacorus	Yellow flag
Artemisia absinthium	Absinth, Wormwood	Lathyrus latifolius	Everlasting pea
Asperula odorata	Sweet woodruff	Lunaria annua	Silver dollar, Honesty
Berteroa incana	Hoary-alyssum	Lysimachia nummularia	Moneywort
Bromus inermis	Smooth brome grass	Lythrum salicaria	Purple loosestrife
Butomus umbellatus	Flowering rush	Medicago sativa	Alfalfa
Campanula rapunculoides	Creeping bellflower	Melilotus alba	White sweet clover
Carduus nutans	Nodding thistle	Melilotus officinalis	Yellow sweet clover
Centaurea maculosa	Spotted knapweed	Miscanthus sinensis	Eulalia grass
Chelidonium majus	Celandine, Wartweed	Myriophyllum spicatum	Eurasian water milfoil
Cirsium arvense	Canada thistle	Nymphoides peltatum	Floating heart
Convallaria majalis	Lily-of-the-valley	Origanum vulgare	Wild marjoram
Coronilla varia	Crown vetch	Phalaris arundinacea	Reed canary grass
Cystisus scoparius	Scotch broom	Phragmites communis	Common reed
Dipsacus fullonum	Teasel	Poa compressa	Canada blue grass
Euphorbia esula	Leafy spurge	Poa pratensis	Kentucky blue grass
Galium mollugo	White bedstraw	Polygonum cuspidatum	Japanese knotweed
Glyceria maxima	Great manna grass		

## Appendix B – Harbour and Downtown Urban Design and Master Plan Strategy

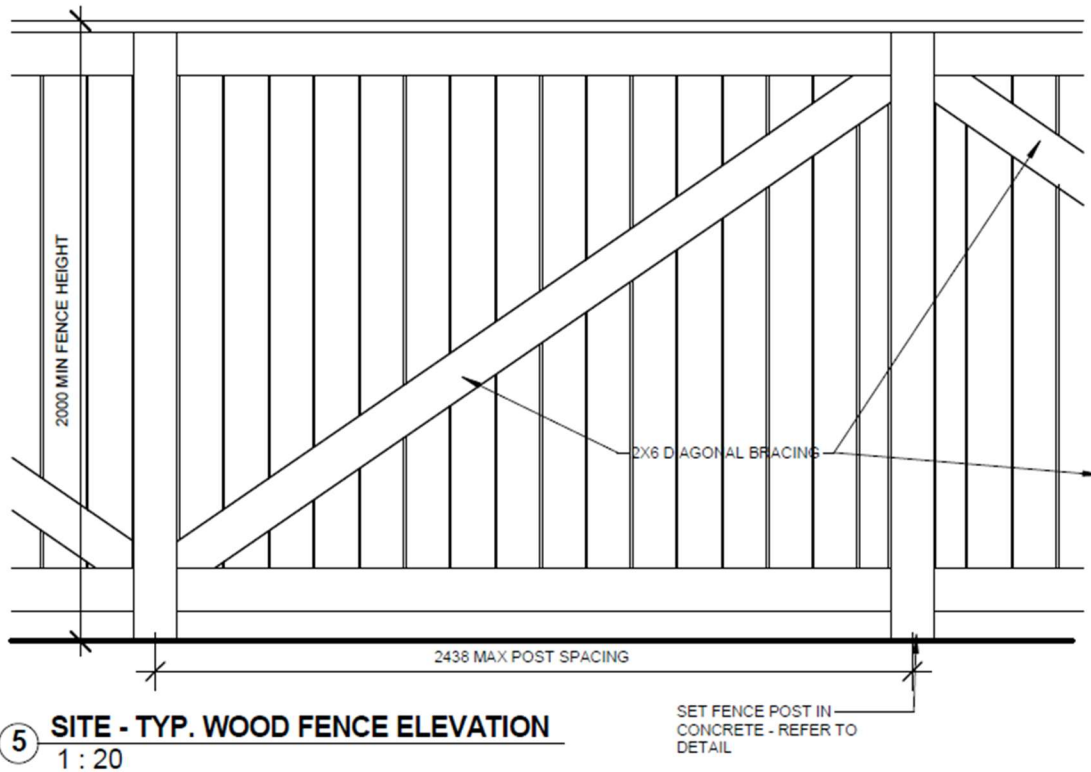
The City's Harbour and Downtown Urban Design and Master Plan Strategy can be viewed on the City's website at [www.owensound.ca/planning](http://www.owensound.ca/planning)

# Appendix C – Fence & Garbage Enclosure Detail

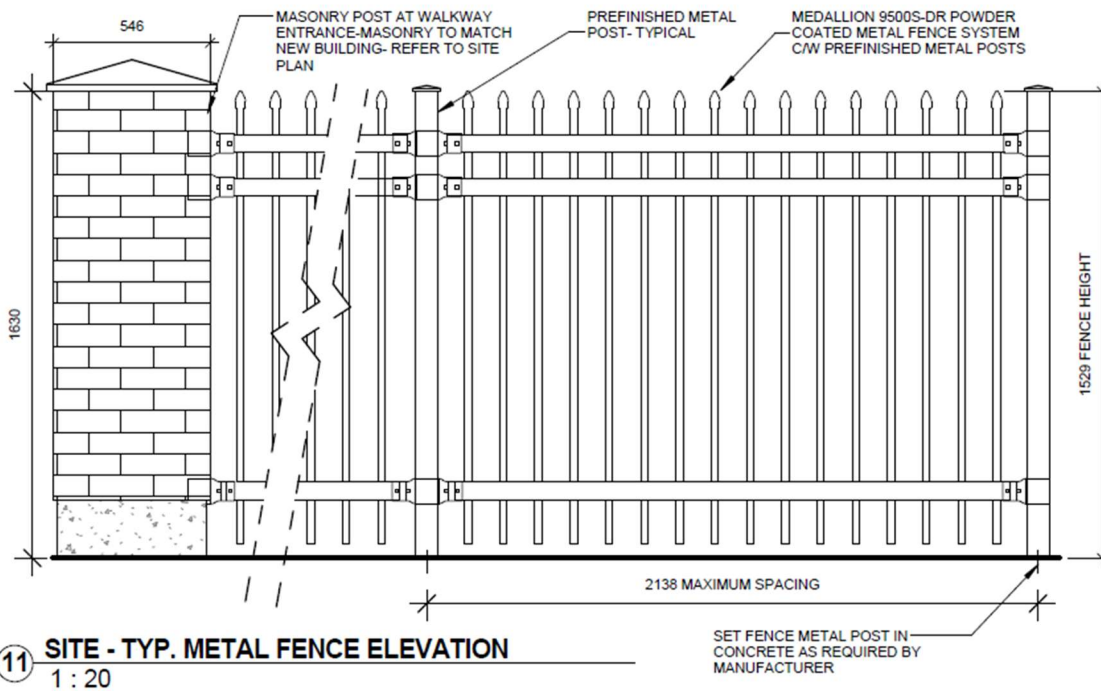


**Figure 1:** City standard for waste enclosures and fencing.





**Figure 2:** City standard for solid wood board fence.



**Figure 3:** City standard for wrought iron and masonry post fence.