

CITY OF ST. CATHARINES

Horticulture Management Plan

January 2022



Executive Summary

Since the early 1840s, the City of St. Catharines has been recognized as the “Garden City” for its location in the Niagara Peninsula (which was known as the “Garden of Canada”) and for its many gardens, orchards and nurseries. Today there are approximately 1,000 acres of parks, gardens, trails and open green spaces designed and maintained by the City.

The City’s horticulture inventory includes historic sites, unique geographical features and newer landscape installations. Horticulture has been recognized as a vital component of a municipality’s green infrastructure. It adds environmental, economic and social value to the community and its residents. As with any type of infrastructure, horticulture requires strategic goals, adequate resources and planning to ensure it provides benefits to its maximum capacity.

To maximize resources while maintaining and improving horticulture assets throughout the City, a Horticulture Management Plan (HMP) prioritizes assets based on guiding principles and service levels. The intent is to provide direction for the improvement, maintenance, and evolution of horticulture assets and programs. In addition, it identifies the steps necessary to improve the horticulture program and how these actions will serve as a framework for a successful management strategy to ensure a healthy, sustainable operation.

Section 6.6 of the Parks Policy Plan provides direction for beautification, including floral beds and gateways, and identifies the following action items:

- 1. Recognize the City’s floral beds as an important element in the City’s public image as the “Garden City”.**
- 2. Assign priority to floral gardens in the following locations:**
 - 1. Gateway locations**
 - 2. The Core Area**
 - 3. Tourism Attractions**
 - 4. Public Buildings and Facilities**
 - 5. City-wide parks**
- 3. Encourage neighbourhood associations and business associations to “adopt a garden”, particularly in locations which do not conform to the above guidelines. This could include a ‘volunteers in partnership program’.**
- 4. That gateway improvements be assigned a “City” priority with various municipal departments coordinating the implementation.**
- 5. Where possible, gateway improvements be undertaken in partnership with the community and that the identified projects be given first consideration before undertaking any new projects.**

Table of Contents

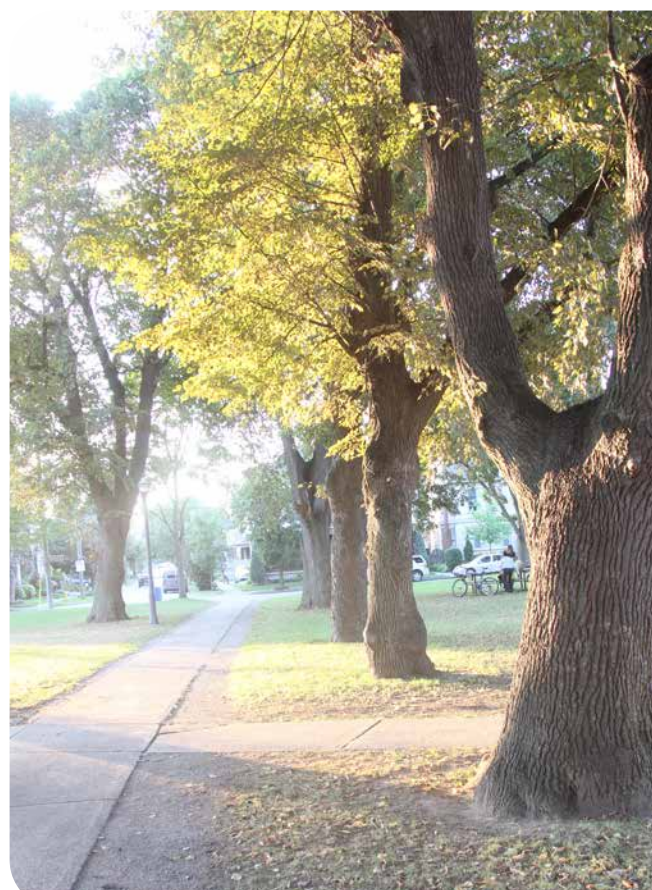
1.1	Importance of Horticulture	5
1.2	Guiding Principles of the Horticulture Management Plan	6

KEY INPUTS

2.1	The City’s Horticultural Inventory	9
2.2	Relevant Trends	10
	Map 1 – Horticultural Assets Relevant Trends	12

HORTICULTURAL ASSETS AND PROGRAMS

3.1	Bee Initiatives	14
3.2	Boulevards and Medians	15
3.3	Horticultural Displays at Cenotaphs	15
3.4	Cemetery	16
3.5	Community Gardens	17
3.6	City Facilities	18
3.7	City-Wide Displays	18
3.8	City-Wide Parks	19
3.9	District Parks	19
3.10	Downtown Core	19
3.11	Edible Gardens	20
3.12	Gateways	20
3.13	Grass & Turf Maintenance	21
3.14	Hanging Baskets and Streetscapes	21
3.15	Naturalization Areas	22
3.16	Neighbourhood Parks	22
	Map 2 – Opportunity of Naturalization	23
3.17	New Assets	24
3.18	Parkettes and Gores	24
3.19	Pollinator Gardens	25
3.20	Specialty Plantings and Display Areas	25
3.21	Trails and Greenways	26
3.22	Trillium Awards	26



SERVICE LEVELS

4.1	Service Levels	28
	Community Driven Partnerships	30
4.2	Inventory Criteria Assessments	30

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY

5.1	Horticultural Assets and Programming versus Service Levels	32
5.2	Implementation of Strategy	32
	Figure 2 – HMP Recommendations	33

CONCLUSION

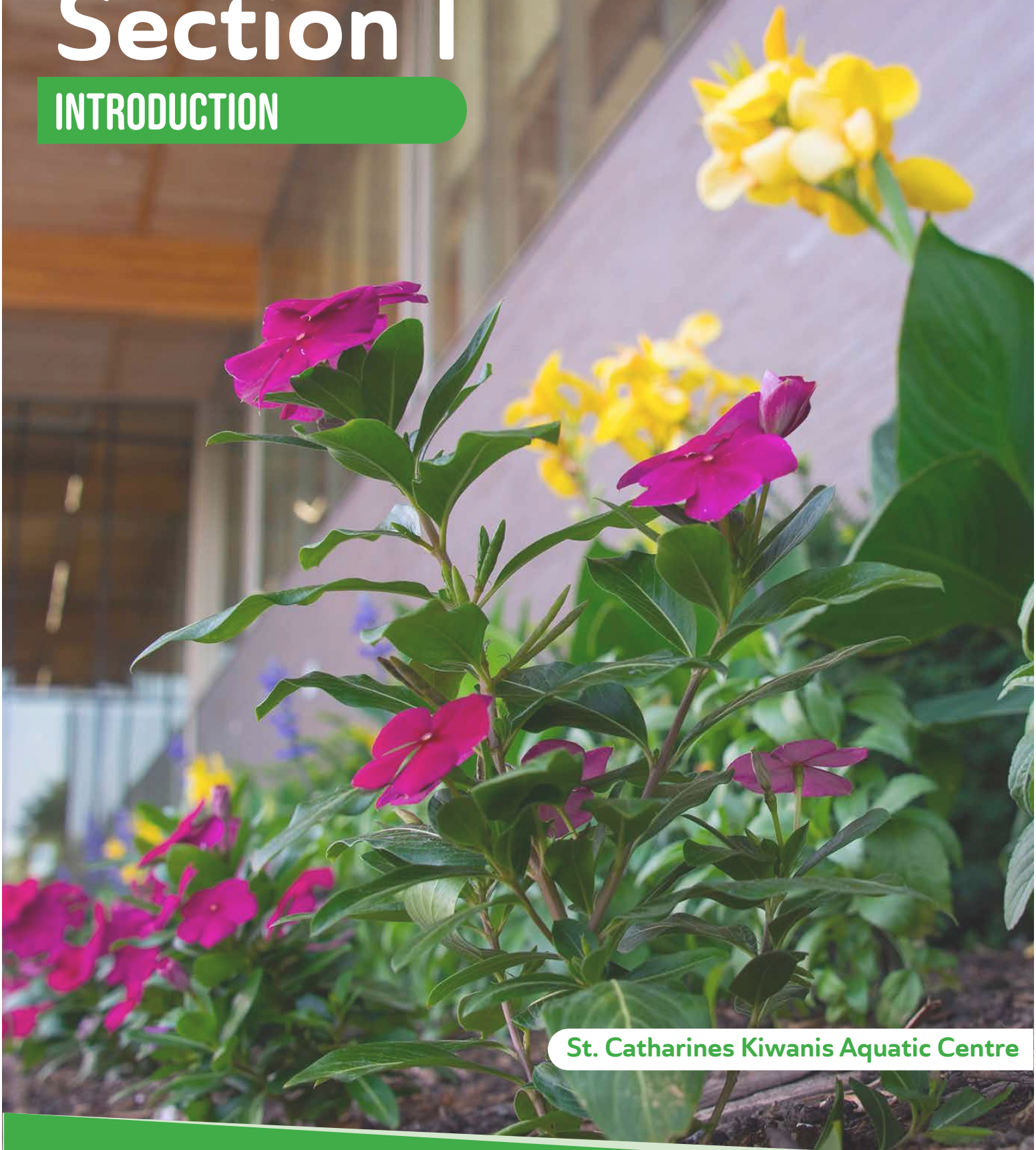
6.1	Future Direction	40
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APPENDICES

	Mapping of All Horticultural Assets and Programming	41
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Section 1

INTRODUCTION



St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatic Centre

Introduction

The City of St. Catharines experienced an accelerated growth rate from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s, resulting in an increase in municipal assets that included additional parks and horticulture amenities.

The City maintains a robust horticultural inventory with approximately 1,000 acres of parks, gardens, trails and open green space within the urban boundary. As the existing infrastructure ages, assets may need to be redesigned, moved or added to provide maximum benefit to the community. In this way, a horticulture management plan is essential to ensure that all assets are managed properly.

1.1 Importance of Horticulture

Horticulture can be defined as a combination of science, art, technology and the business of cultivating ornamental plants and crops. Horticulture is closely linked to us in our everyday lives and while not always obvious, it exists in the backgrounds of everywhere we live, work and play. Horticulture is particularly important in urban and suburban environments for reasons that benefit us socially, economically, environmentally and culturally and can help to offset the negative impacts of living within those urban environments. Healthy and attractive landscapes within green spaces are vital to community wellbeing and promote healthy lifestyles for all residents.

Healthy landscapes and streetscapes can improve property values in both residential and commercial areas through aesthetic contribution and improved privacy and security. Further, it can benefit municipalities in offsetting maintenance costs by increasing tourism and use of parks, sporting facilities, museums, shopping areas, etc.

A healthy horticulture inventory works to; sequester carbon and produce oxygen, moderate extreme urban temperatures in both summer and winter and can reduce noise pollution in high traffic areas. It helps prevent flooding by slowing stormwater runoff and provides habitats for wildlife and pollinators in highly urbanized areas. In some instances, it provides space for residents to grow their own fresh produce and learn about gardening, which encourages communities to come together in unique ways they may otherwise have not.



1.2 Guiding Principles of the Horticulture Management Plan

As defined, a Horticulture Management Plan standardizes policies and practices related to horticulture on a City-wide basis, is supported by all City departments, local stakeholders and the community and provides a structured approach to managing current and future horticulture assets. The “Garden City” is moving into a new environmentally responsible era and there must be a change in the City’s accepted principles regarding beautification. Below are 10 guiding principles that will lead the City’s horticultural program into the new era:

Guiding Principle #1 – Environmentally Friendly Horticultural Program

The City will plan, provide and maintain horticultural areas in an environmentally responsible manner for future generations to enjoy. The City will continue to embrace its natural surroundings and build upon the opportunities provided by these assets through the exploration of programming options and the promotion of environmentally friendly initiatives.

Guiding Principle #2 – Encouraging Community Partnerships

By recognizing the role horticulture plays in promoting healthy lifestyles and social interaction, the City will provide the community support to ensure services are properly delivered, maintained and enhanced. The City will prioritize initiatives that leverage community partnership and engagement, leveraging partnerships to achieve all goals established in this plan.

Guiding Principle #3 – Ensuring Horticulture Distribution is City Wide

The City will provide horticultural displays and community gardens that are distributed city wide to ensure access to residents in all wards.

Guiding Principle #4 – Efficient and Effective Service Levels

Through service delivery, the City will ensure required tools, resources and supports are available so the HMP is implemented in an efficient and effective way. The City will prioritize and implement new maintenance schedules to increase efficiencies and effectiveness for staff and residents. The City will ensure new or revitalized assets are designed and funded in a sustainable manner.

Guiding Principle #5 – Embracing History of Beautification

Known as the Garden City, St. Catharines has a long history of beautification, including historic sites, unique geographical features and newer landscape installations which will continue to be embraced.



Guiding Principle #6 – Enhancing Community Education

The City will continue to recognize the role it plays in enhancing community horticultural education and environmentally friendly practices for residents.

Guiding Principle #7 – Leaders in Horticultural Practices and Trends for Climate Change Adaptation

The City will be a leader in the latest horticultural practices and trends for climate change adaptation. The City will continue to provide the public with ideas and options within the theme of environmental sustainability. To achieve this goal, the City will explore innovative ideas, emerging trends and technologies, and new approaches and best practices across the industry.

Guiding Principle #8 – Champions of Native Species

The City will continue to champion native species and help reduce the impacts of invasive plant materials.

Guiding Principle #9 – Sustainable Investment into Horticultural Infrastructure and Operations

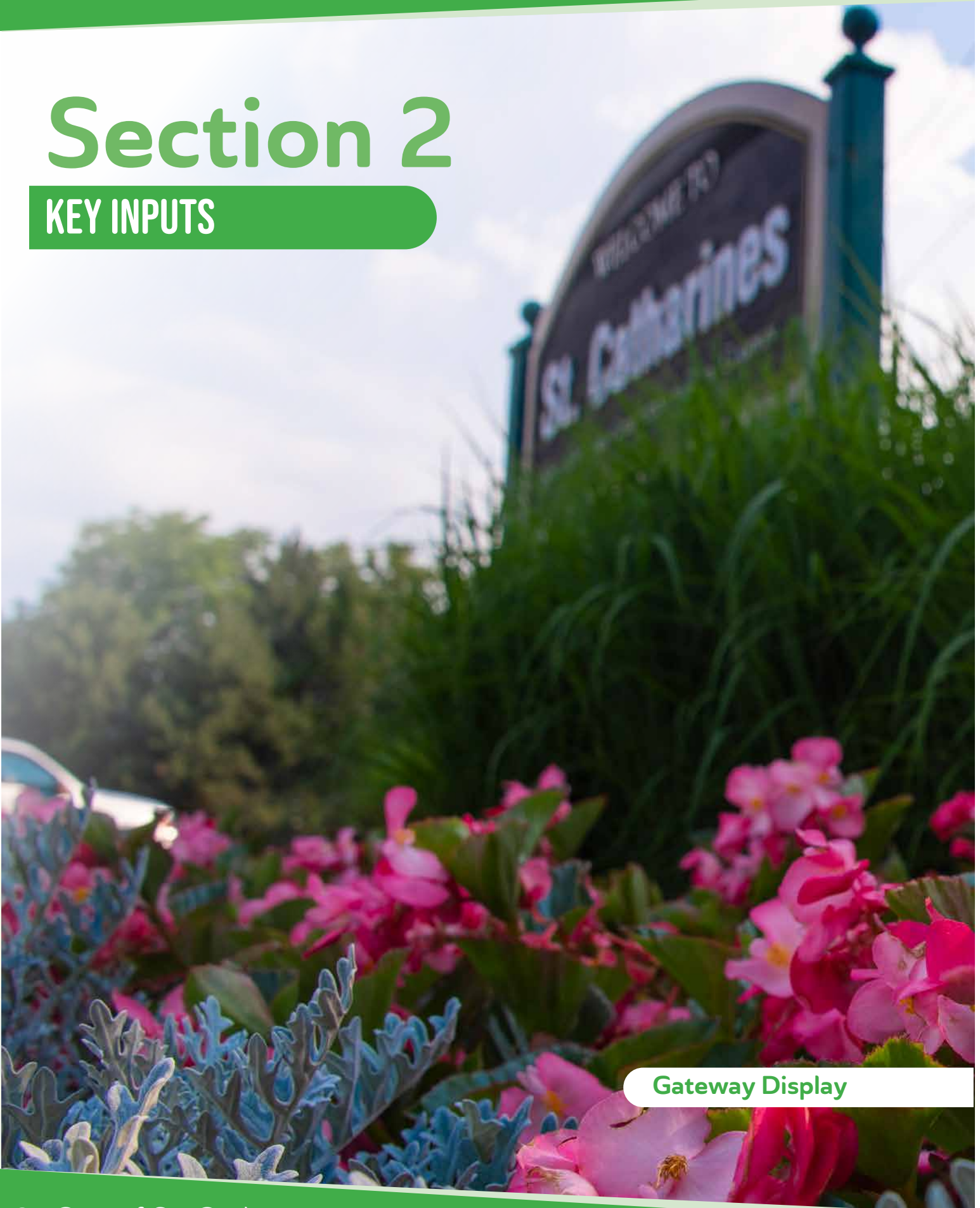
The City will provide effective asset management to ensure the long-term availability and sustainability of its horticultural infrastructure, and the achievement of best value from available capital funding resources. The City will champion design and implementation strategies that reduce carbon footprint, conserve resources, and improve operational requirements.

Guiding Principle #10 – Working with our Community for our Community

The City will collaborate with Committees of Council, community groups, stakeholders, and the public to pursue the above horticultural principles in an innovative and safe manner which is both environmentally and financially sustainable for residents.

Section 2

KEY INPUTS



Gateway Display

2.1 The City's Horticultural Inventory

The City maintains over 1,000 acres of parks and trails. These sites include gardens and greenspaces with significant botanical collections, historically significant sites, and sites of community significance.

The following horticultural assets and programs are included in the City's inventory:

- **250** floral displays at **115** sites
- **One** specialty planting floral display at Lester B. Pearson Park
- **Five** community gardens on City land – Buchanan House, Catherine Street Park, Dunlop Older Adults Centre, Torosian Park and Richard Pierpoint Park
- **Seven** bee hives on City land
- **Three** horticultural displays at cenotaphs and multiple war memorials
- **10** gateway floral displays
- **12** city wide floral displays
- **Three** edible gardens that support community food banks
- **185** hanging baskets throughout the city, including Merritton, Port Dalhousie, and the downtown streetscape
- **27** display planters with seasonal plantings along the St. Paul streetscape
- **22** seasonal floral displays in Victoria Lawn Cemetery
- **Five** community-driven pollinator gardens within City greenspaces
- **12** City facilities with seasonal displays
- **One** annual Trillium Awards program
- **Six** City parks with seasonal displays.
- **One** commemorative rose garden and rose collection at Montebello Park

Note: the above horticultural assets and programming are an approximation and may change on a seasonal basis.

2.2 Relevant Trends

There are many trends that are relevant to the horticulture sector. The following articulate some of the trends the City is exploring, monitoring and/or maintaining and can be found geographically on *Map 1 - Horticultural Assets Relevant Trends*:

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Increasing the use of native plant material in floral displays will help reduce the amount of resources necessary to maintain them. When planning for floral displays, special thought will be given to purchasing native pollinator plants to help increase habitats for pollinators and other wildlife. Staff will regularly review floral displays that could be converted into more natural plantings where appropriate and where service levels required currently outweigh the benefits to residents and the environment.

Staff will develop educational materials including videos for residents on planting native plants and pollinator friendly gardens in their home gardens.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Community involvement with horticulture assets takes many different forms including passive enjoyment, attendance at community events / educational programs and active volunteering. An engaged community is essential to the culture of the city. Horticulture spaces provide residents a place to connect with the environment and each other.

Volunteering and participating by way of Committees of Council or neighbourhood / park associations nurtures this social fabric of the community and the City of St. Catharines continues to strengthen the existing relationships and attract new participants.

The City's floral displays and landscapes help facilitate a wide range of social uses. For example, the City has hosted various events, including weddings, annual festivals, and community events. Parks also offer an ideal setting for education, and the City has hosted programs for primary school children and field work opportunities for post-secondary school students.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Urban agriculture is beneficial to the environment and to the health and wellbeing of community members. The City will continue to work with and encourage community groups who wish to start up a community garden either on City-owned land or on private lands through the Community Garden Funding Program. There is an increasing need for community gardens in St. Catharines to help provide community members with available green space to grow fresh, healthy produce at low cost and to increase food security in urban areas.

BEE INITIATIVES

Urban beekeeping is on the rise with the movement aimed at helping to reverse the declining honey bee population. Urban beekeeping can improve pollination for plants and biodiversity within urban city-limits. It also provides valuable educational opportunities for residents to understand the importance of bees and the pollination of food crops.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

As environmentally friendly initiatives become further engrained in Canadian culture, there has been an increase in grant opportunities. In keeping with the Strategic Plan, City staff explore funding opportunities that may help to enhance both existing and planned horticulture projects throughout the city. To strengthen grant applications and the execution of horticulture projects, the City collaborates with community groups and committees as required.

ROOFTOP GARDENS

With increased development and lack of space for parks and landscapes in urban environments, rooftop gardens are becoming increasingly popular, particularly in larger and more developed cities. Rooftop gardens provide many benefits to the environment such as improved air quality, effective use of rainwater; urban heat island control; energy efficiency for buildings; safe habitats for wildlife and migrating birds; and controlling noise pollution.

TREES

The City's Tree Management Framework outlines the significance of trees and the important role they play in a Horticulture Management Plan. The City of St. Catharines has a goal to increase its urban tree canopy to 30 percent. Plantings of native shrubs and flowering trees will help reach this urban tree canopy goal while also mitigating the impacts of climate change.

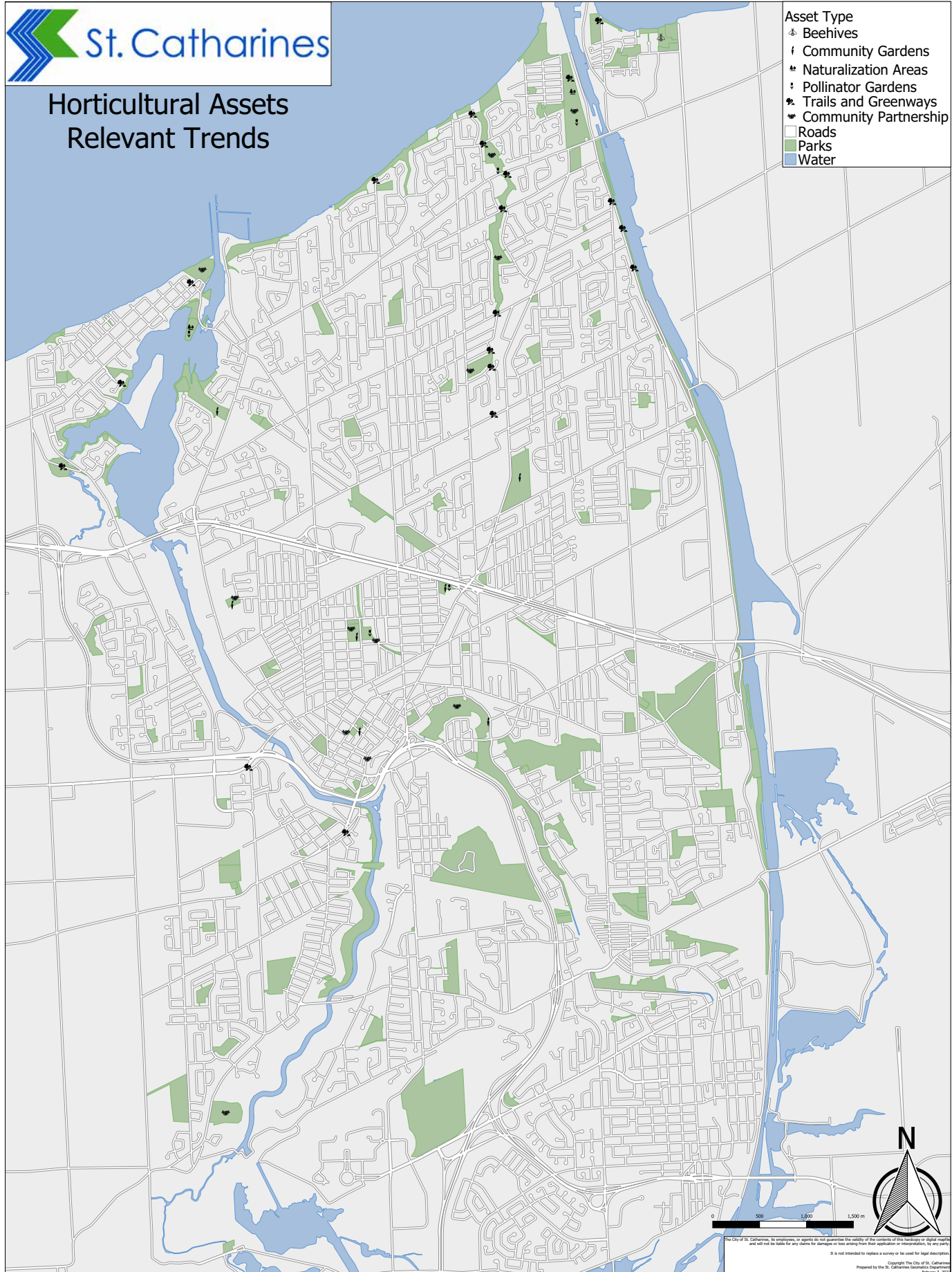
GROUND COVER

Turf grass requires extensive resources to maintain. This maintenance includes, but is not limited to, watering, fertilizing and mowing. The City will explore and research opportunities to use ground cover where appropriate. A few examples of alternatives to turf grass are white clover, native grasses and fescue grass. Staff are currently exploring the effectiveness of clover as ground cover through a cul-de-sacs pilot program. These are drought resistant ground covers that do not require extensive maintenance. It is important to note they can be labour intensive in the beginning to establish and are not suitable for areas of high traffic or recreational use as they do not hold up well to a lot of foot traffic.

PESTICIDES BAN

The Ontario Cosmetic Pesticides Ban in April 2009 has impacted horticultural activities and standards at the City of St. Catharines. Under the ban, pesticide products and their ingredients have been banned for cosmetic purposes on lands that include municipal parks and green spaces. The deployment of natural alternatives to pesticides and proactive landscape maintenance practices have been required to maintain the assets.

Map 1 – Horticultural Assets Relevant Trends





Section 3

HORTICULTURAL ASSETS AND PROGRAMS

The City's horticultural inventory contains a broad range of horticultural assets and programs and are examined through this section.

Downtown Cenotaph Veterans Memorial



Bee Hive at Happy Rolph's

3.1 Bee Initiatives

BACKGROUND

The bee initiative promotes honey bee hives in moveable frames located on City-owned land, and that are maintained by a beekeeper through a lease agreement with the City.

In 2017, the City of St. Catharines officially received the Bee City designation in which we declared to do our part in reversing declining bee populations through public education, partnerships and pollinator friendly plantings. The City is collaborating with local groups and continues to seek new locations for bee hives where appropriate. Future locations will be dependent on the safety of the public and staff with regards to proper signage, distance from property lines, locations where recreational activity may take place and where fencing is possible around the hives. Another important factor when considering future locations is proximity to pollinator rich areas to ensure success of the hives. Staff will refer to the Ontario Bees Act, which regulates honey bees and beekeeping in Ontario, when seeking new locations and partnerships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **The City continues to provide leadership as a Bee City champion.**
2. **City staff work with community groups to foster partnerships for bee hives on City property.**

3.2 Boulevards and Medians

BACKGROUND

Boulevards and medians can be described as landscape strips adjacent to a roadway and/or walkway. Staff have begun focusing resources and efforts towards removing high maintenance plant material from boulevards in favour of tree plantings, where appropriate. The City will continue to work with neighbourhoods in locations where landscaped medians are maintained by residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. Continue to review all landscaped medians and boulevards and remove any that pose health and safety concerns for staff.
4. Encourage tree planting as an alternative to landscaping in boulevards to help reduce the intensity of the urban heat sink.
5. Ensure new development, both public and private, shall encourage boulevard tree plantings where space permits. Where additional landscaping is warranted in larger boulevards, landscaping shall be native and low maintenance.
6. Work with the Niagara Region to ensure horticultural assets on Niagara regional roads, such as medians or tree maintenance, are the responsibility of Niagara Region.

3.3 Horticultural Displays at Cenotaphs

BACKGROUND

The three main cenotaphs in the city are located in downtown, Merritton and Port Dalhousie. There is also a veteran's area with plantings and war memorials in Victoria Lawn Cemetery. These locations are maintained to a high standard and given priority when planting and ordering plant material. Special thought is also given when designing and selecting plant material for these displays to ensure appropriate plantings and colours are selected. Remembrance Day ceremonies take place at these monuments every year on November 11 with various government officials attending to lay wreaths.

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. Continue to maintain a high level of service, including priority planting schedules, regular watering and plant material.
8. Review regularly for updating horticulture displays and perennial plantings when necessary.

3.4 Cemetery

BACKGROUND

Victoria Lawn Cemetery was established in 1856. To date, this site remains the main cemetery in St. Catharines. Victoria Lawn Cemetery consists of 170 acres of grave sites today, with more than 90,000 people interred. Victoria Lawn Cemetery has approximately 22 floral displays located within it. This location is maintained to a high standard and receives priority with annual planting schedules and plans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. Continue to maintain existing floral displays within the cemetery at a high standard, including priority planting and regular watering.



Victoria Lawn Cemetery

3.5 Community Gardens

BACKGROUND

The City supports and encourages the development of community gardens to grow produce on City-owned parkland and other municipal properties, where appropriate, by community groups and organizations. A Community Gardens Policy was developed in 2017 to establish protocols for entering into lease agreements with community garden coordinators on City-owned land. The policy also outlines the roles and responsibilities of City staff and the community garden coordinators.

There are currently five community gardens on City-owned land, Buchanan House, Catherine Street Park, Dunlop Older Adults Centre, Torosian Park and Richard Pierpoint Park. The City has funded these gardens through the Community Gardens Funding Program since 2017 and assists operationally when required.

The Community Gardens Funding Program provides matching funds to incorporated charities and not-for-profit organizations for the capital costs of community gardens. Applications are submitted in Q1 annually and are reviewed through the Green Advisory Committee based on evaluation criteria and the ability to prove matching funds. Reports and receipts are required at the end of the growing season to ensure funds are appropriately spent.

The City also supports a variety of community-led initiatives such as a seed giveaway to assist and educate residents on the importance of food security. Other initiatives include reviewing proposals to plant community-maintained pollinator gardens, supporting native plant sales and other various horticultural activities to help benefit the environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. Continue to support and encourage new and expanding community gardens led by resident groups through the Community Gardens on City-Owned Land Policy.
11. Maintain or improve current levels of funding to ensure the Community Gardens Program remains accessible and affordable.



St. Catharines City Hall

3.6 City Facilities

BACKGROUND

Any City-owned building or structure including (but not limited to) older adult centres, hockey arenas, fire stations, libraries, administrative buildings, museum, recreation centre, aquatics centre, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

12. Keep areas of City facilities that see high traffic (i.e. main doors and entrances) maintained to a high standard.
13. Promotion of native perennials and grasses, graduating away from annual bedding plants to alternative plant materials for low traffic portions of City facilities.
14. Prioritize the provision of additional staffing levels to accompany any new City facilities.

3.7 City-Wide Displays

BACKGROUND

Floral displays of high visibility that foster civic pride and bring value to the community in specific areas of the city and are known for seasonal displays with bulb or annual plantings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. Maintain and improve on these areas with the promotion of vibrant native perennials and grasses, graduating away from annual bedding plants to alternative plant materials
16. Ensure where irrigation exists that it is programmed and working efficiently for optimal outcomes.
17. Reduction of resources such as water, fertilizer, single use plant materials and limit maintenance displays to reduce the City's production of greenhouse gasses and carbon emissions.

3.8 City-Wide Parks

BACKGROUND

A park accessible to the entire community with unique characteristics. Often a destination park for residents to attend community events. This is a multi-purpose or specialized site of significance. Frequently visited parks and consists of a variety of horticulture displays.

RECOMMENDATIONS

18. Maintain and improve on the high traffic and main entrance areas with the promotion of vibrant native perennials and grasses, graduating away from annual bedding plants to alternative plant materials
19. Ensure where irrigation exists that it is programmed and working efficiently and for optimal outcomes.
20. Reduction of resources such as water, fertilizer, single use plant materials and limit maintenance displays to reduce the City's production of greenhouse gasses and carbon emissions.

3.9 District Parks

BACKGROUND

Have a service radius of 20 minutes walking distance and is accessible by public transit. Could offer soccer fields, baseball diamonds, and community centres. Seasonal parks, containing perennial designs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

21. Remove floral displays in district parks and encourage tree planting or naturalization where appropriate.

3.10 Downtown Core

BACKGROUND

Various plantings around the downtown core including City Hall, St. Paul Street, planters, PAC centre plantings, Memorial Park Cenotaph. Maintenance is a priority with these displays given their location.

RECOMMENDATIONS

22. Continue to plant and maintain the downtown streetscape to a high degree with vibrant seasonal plantings.
23. Ensure where irrigation exists that it is programmed and working efficiently and for optimal outcomes.
24. Ensure limited watering schedules for those locations without irrigation systems to reduce the City's production of greenhouse gasses and carbon emissions.

3.11 Edible Gardens

BACKGROUND

Two edible landscapes were installed in the library courtyard downtown on James Street in 2015. The edible landscaping replaced existing non-edible perennials and was successful in its pilot year with the produce being harvested and donated to a local food bank. The following year an additional edible garden was installed at Ontario Jaycee Gardens Park with produce being harvested and donated to a local food bank. These edible sites are planted, maintained and harvested by City staff on an annual basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

25. To continue to plant and maintain the existing edible garden sites.
26. Look for the potential to convert existing horticulture displays into edible gardens or plant new locations where deemed appropriate only if staffing levels are increased to where staff can maintain it on a daily basis.

3.12 Gateways

BACKGROUND

Gateways highlight the entrance to St. Catharines and to each of the six wards. Currently, there are five “Welcome to St. Catharines” displays, as well as multiple displays serving as gateways into significant areas or wards in the City.

RECOMMENDATIONS

27. Maintain and improve the gateways with the promotion of vibrant native perennials and grasses, graduating away from annual bedding plants to alternative plant materials

City of St. Catharines Welcome Sign



3.13 Grass and Turf Maintenance

BACKGROUND

Grass cutting throughout the City is the responsibility of City staff. Grass cutting falls mainly on the horticulture department and for peak grass growing weeks in the spring and fall the majority of staff time from the horticulture department is spent cutting and trimming grass.

RECOMMENDATIONS

28. Examine ways to reduce the amount of grass requiring cutting and trimming, where appropriate, with eco-lawn alternatives that are drought resistant, low maintenance or through naturalization efforts.

3.14 Hanging Baskets and Streetscapes

BACKGROUND

Horticulture displays in high pedestrian traffic areas that could include a mixture of hanging baskets, flowerpots, display planting beds and ground level floral displays. Located in areas with a focus to make them attractive places to walk, shop, dine, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

29. Continue to seek partnerships and funding opportunities for the hanging baskets and flowerpots program through sponsorship and donations.
30. Continue to explore environmentally friendly hanging baskets and drought resistant material options to reduce the environmental impact.
31. Ensure appropriate seasonal staffing resources are available to provide appropriate water supplies to the displays to ensure the displays show well throughout the summer months.
32. Ensure where irrigation exists that it is programmed and working efficiently for optimal outcomes. Ensure limited watering schedules for those locations without irrigation systems to reduce the City's production of greenhouse gasses and carbon emissions.



Downtown Flowerpots and Hanging Baskets

3.15 Naturalization Areas

BACKGROUND

Naturalization areas within the city consist of natural plantings throughout parks, floral displays and green spaces. Naturalization is a process of ecological restoration that involves returning an altered or degraded site to a more natural condition through use of trees, shrubs, sod, grasses, pollinators and flowers that are native to the area. Naturalization of existing parks, floral displays and green spaces creates an eco-friendly alternative that also lowers maintenance costs. Staff have recommended 16 sites for naturalization beginning in the 2022 season (see *Map 2 – Opportunity for Naturalization*).

RECOMMENDATIONS

33. Identify low-traffic locations at City facilities and parks which may be naturalized to reduce maintenance requirements and improve environmental benefits. Protect our community through plant materials that are drought tolerant, wind tolerant, fire resistant. In addition, appropriate plant materials for creek and shoreline plantings for stability and erosion mitigation.
34. Annually review the City's planting sites for opportunities to convert existing floral displays into eco-friendly naturalized states such as trees, shrubs, sod, grasses, pollinators and flowers that are native to the area.

*Staff have recommended 16 sites for naturalization beginning in the 2022 season.
See Map 2 – Opportunity for Naturalization following page*

3.16 Neighbourhood Parks

BACKGROUND

Have a service radius of within five minutes walking distance, serves as a social and recreational focal point for neighbourhoods and include the basic units of a park system. Natural plantings, primarily for activities and passive recreations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

35. Remove floral displays in neighbourhood parks in favour of tree planting or naturalization where appropriate.

Map 2 – Opportunity for Naturalization

Further to section 3.15 Naturalization Areas, staff have recommended 16 sites for naturalization beginning in the 2021 season.



3.17 New Assets

BACKGROUND

New horticultural assets can be created with the addition of new City facilities and parks, roads, signage, boulevards or additional horticultural displays within existing parks and facilities. New elements which are considered for addition to the City's horticultural assets shall comply with the goals and objectives of this plan. Where new assets are added, Council should be aware that, in the absence of additional staffing, maintenance for a new asset will detract from other assets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

36. Ensure new horticultural assets comply with the provisions of this plan. This includes the promotion of native perennials and grasses, graduating away from annual bedding plants to alternative plant materials.
37. New assets shall be accompanied by associated funding for ongoing maintenance to a standard established in this plan.

3.18 Parkettes and Gores

BACKGROUND

Horticulture displays that serve the entire population in highly visible areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

38. Maintain and improve the parkettes and gores with the promotion of vibrant native perennials and grasses, graduating away from annual bedding plants to alternative plant materials
39. Ensure where irrigation exists that it is programmed and working efficiently for optimal outcomes. Ensure limited watering schedules for those locations without irrigation systems to reduce the City's production of greenhouse gasses and carbon emissions.



Planters in Montebello Park



St. Catharines **POLLINATOR HABITAT**

This garden contains pollinator plants that are native to the Niagara Region, and help to provide food and shelter for pollinator insects including butterflies, bees and hummingbirds.

Why "Bee" concerned about pollinators and native plants?

Native plants and Pollinators go hand-in-hand. Our local pollinators and other insects rely on native nectar and host plants.

- Pollinators are needed for the reproduction of 90% of all flowering plants.
- Pollinators are responsible for the production of 1/3 of our food supply.
- In general, non-native plants, support fewer native insects and birds than native plants do. Always plant native when you can!
- Some pollinators cannot survive without the presence of a specific plant or plant group, such as the Monarch butterfly and the Milkweed plant. And, similarly, some plants require specific pollinators.
- Pollinators are in decline due to pesticide use, a decrease in natural habitats, and increasing use of non-native invasive plants.

For more information on planting a pollinator garden you can visit: stcatharines.ca/en/livein/bee-city.asp

Pollinator plants in this garden:

Special thanks to our sponsor:

 TD Friends of the Environment Foundation

3.19 Pollinator Gardens

BACKGROUND

A garden planted predominately with flowers that provide nectar or pollen for a wide range of pollinating insects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

40. Increase the number of pollinator friendly plants used in plantings every year and convert resource intensive planting areas where appropriate to pollinator friendly gardens or naturalized sites.
41. Continue to foster community-led pollinator plantings and gardens on City lands to help increase pollinator plantings in different areas of the City that may not have been considered by staff. Formalized agreements will be required with community partners in accordance with the maintenance standards established in the HMP.
42. Develop a Pollinator Protection Strategy with guiding principles, priorities and actions that the City and community can take to protect our diverse native pollinator community.

3.20 Specialty Plantings and Display Areas

BACKGROUND

The specialty display located at the corner of Niagara Street and Carlton Street, at Lester B. Pearson Park, is considered a specialty planting due to the special plant materials required for carpet bedding displays, as well as the time and consideration on a staff level when it comes to designing and selecting a community group or organization celebrating a significant milestone. Planning for this display begins late in the previous year of the display and the carpet bedding plant material is ordered from a specialty supplier.

RECOMMENDATIONS

43. As a display that serves the community to recognize groups and organizations in a high-visibility location this floral display should be rehabilitated in the coming years and continue to be planted on a yearly, if not seasonal basis.
44. Ensure irrigation is programmed and working efficiently for optimal outcomes.
45. Develop and implement a fee for organizations to pay in order to help assist with the cost of the specialty plantings.

3.21 Trails and Greenways

BACKGROUND

Through a network of City trails and greenways, the Bruce Trail and Short Hills Provincial Park, there are approximately 90 km of pathways that crisscross the city. Significant paths and trails in the city are Walker's Creek Trail, the Waterfront Trail, Green Ribbon Trail, the Merritt Trail and the CNR Spur Line. These trails are inspected and maintained by City staff throughout the year when trails are accessible for equipment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

46. Continue to follow the City's Parks Policy Plan, which charts a course for providing a balanced and integrated system of parks, open space, and trails for St. Catharines. It includes strategies for planning, maintaining, and managing the City's parks, open space, trails and associated facilities.
47. Follow the Transportation Master Plan's recommendation of an Active Transportation Master Plan once developed.

3.22 Trillium Awards

BACKGROUND

The Trillium Awards program began in 1984 to recognize those individuals and properties that exemplify a commitment to beautifying our neighbourhoods and contributing to the community in a positive way with specific emphasis on sustainable gardening. Typically, nominations are received in June and are accepted from property owners, family, friends, neighbours and the general public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

48. To continue the Trillium Awards Program on an annual basis and continue to look for new and innovative ways to recognize residents committed to beautifying their properties in a sustainable way.



Section 4

SERVICE LEVELS



Spring bulbs at City Hall

4.1 Service Levels

In order to better maintain and prioritize the horticulture sites throughout the City, staff have considered the following elements in a review of horticultural assets:

1. **Asset Classification**
2. **Historical Significance**
3. **Environmental Impact**
4. **Community Involvement**
5. **Visual Impressions**
6. **Visitors to Site**

Based on the above criteria, assets are grouped into four categories to determine an appropriate level of service. Staff can also provide the best value for resources and ensure that the decommissioning, replacement or enhancements of inventory is a practical decision.

Historical Additional Services

Duties for the horticulture division vary depending on the time of year and can often include providing services to residents reaching beyond strictly horticulture tasks such as planting and maintaining City floral displays and greenspaces. As these duties are not included in the core of the horticultural program, service levels are often on a needs-based or complaint basis and at the expense of other core horticultural duties not being performed.

These duties include, but are not limited to:

- Grass cutting and trimming and seasonal maintenance
- Spraying noxious weeds
- Pest removal (i.e. wasp nests)
- Playground base maintenance (i.e. mulching and weed removal)
- Beach grooming
- Supply deliveries
- Event setup / takedown
- Litter pickup including needle pickup and tracking
- Custodial duties
- Traffic plan setup / take down
- Winter control
- Assisting with community events
- Indoor plant maintenance
- Watering duties
- Roadside mowing
- Happy Rolph's Animal Farm maintenance
- Tree maintenance (i.e. pruning, stake removal, watering)
- Memorial tree planting and tree planting with community groups
- Leaf pickup
- Trail grooming

4.2 Inventory Criteria Assessments

Figure 1 outlines the City's Horticultural asset types and identifies a corresponding level of service.

CATEGORY #1

Asset Classifications

- Horticultural displays at cenotaphs
- Cemeteries
- City Facilities
- City Wide Park
- Downtown Core
- Gateways
- Hanging Baskets and Planters
- Parkettes and Gores
- Specialty Plantings and Display Areas

Service Levels

- High service levels.
- First-class appearance, always impeccably clean and well groomed.
- Consistent attention and upkeep is given to the area.
- No weeds or debris.
- Irrigation and/or water truck service is provided.

CATEGORY #2

Asset Classifications

- City-Wide Display
- District Parks
- Pollinator Gardens

Service Levels

- Medium service levels.
- The area is well taken care of but not to the same service levels as a #1 Inventory space.
- The area is maintained frequently (weekly or bi-weekly basis).
- Limited weeds or debris.
- Limited irrigation and/or water truck service is provided.

CATEGORY #3

Asset Classifications

- Boulevards and Medians
- Naturalization Areas
- Neighbourhood Parks
- Trails and Greenways

Service Levels

- Low service levels and subject to staff capacity.
- Category #3 assets are reviewed yearly and could be reduced in order to meet Category #1 and #2 assets service levels.
- The space is neatly kept and visited on a bi-weekly or monthly basis.
- Will include more naturalized areas that require a seasonal cleanup and periodic maintenance throughout the season.
- Weeds and debris are tolerated between regular visits.

COMMUNITY DRIVEN PARTNERSHIPS

Asset Classification

- Bee Hives
- Pollinator Gardens
- Community Gardens
- Other community-driven horticultural initiatives

Service Levels

- The area is established and generally maintained through partnership with community groups.
- City provides assistance with location, design and construction preparation.
- The space is maintained in a condition suitable for use by the community group.
- The City may provide assistance with grass cutting, seasonal set up / cleanup, mulch delivery as staff resources permit.

RECOMMENDATION

49. Review the historical additional services duties the horticultural division provides and ensure the focus remains on horticultural assets and programming.
50. Report to Council the operating costs of providing the historical additional services to residents.
51. Review and consider contracting certain historical additional services.
52. Review locations that require watering and consider irrigation options other than a water truck to reduce the environmental impact.
53. Review and pursue opportunities to recycle water for irrigation purposes at specific locations.
54. Consideration of the Horticulture Management Plan in the development of the City's Asset Management Plan.



Community Gardens

Section 5

IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN



St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatic Centre

5.1 Horticultural Assets and Programming versus Service Levels

Certain horticulture assets throughout the city require more resources than others based on location, size, and plant material. It is important that displays considered high priority receive an adequate level of service, while those deemed lower priority through the classification and ranking system are reviewed to be made more manageable. By reducing or converting the size and number of some horticulture displays, residents will notice a more consistent level of service throughout the city and an overall higher and sustainable level of service.

5.2 Implementation of Strategy

The HMP recognizes that priority is generally synonymous with timing – the higher the priority, the sooner the recommendation should be implemented. All recommendations are important and, if properly implemented, will benefit the horticultural program in St. Catharines. The priority of recommendations is organized into three categories:

- S** Short-term (S) = High Priority (1-3 years) – 2022 to 2025
- M** Medium-term (M) = Medium Priority (4-6 years) – 2026 to 2028
- L** Longer-term (L) = Lower Priority (7-10 years) – 2029 to 2032
- O** On-going (O) = Priority Recommendation with no definitive end date

The HMP recognizes the need for phased implementation for certain action plans as they are based upon what is needed and not necessarily what is financially achievable at the present time. As such, the timing proposed for some action plans may not align with funding capacities as time goes by. As part of the annual budget process, the HMP will be reviewed to identify areas where the availability of resources may affect the timing of implementation.

Figure 2 – HMP Recommendations

HORTICULTURE MANAGEMENT PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Bee Initiatives

- 1. The City continues to provide leadership as a Bee City champion.
- 2. City staff work with community groups to foster partnerships for bee hives on City property.

Boulevards and Medians

- 3. Continue to review all landscaped medians and boulevards and remove any that pose health and safety concerns for staff.
- 4. Encourage tree planting as an alternative to landscaping in boulevards to help reduce the intensity of the urban heat sink.
- 5. Ensure new development, both public and private, shall encourage boulevard tree plantings, where space permits. Where additional landscaping is warranted in larger boulevards, landscaping shall be native and low maintenance.
- S 6. Work with the Niagara Region to ensure horticultural assets on regional roads, such as medians or tree maintenance, are the responsibility of Niagara Region.

Horticultural Displays at Cenotaphs

- 7. Continue to maintain at a high level of service, including priority planting schedules, regular watering and plant material.
- 8. Review regularly for updating horticulture displays and perennial plantings when necessary.



S
Short-term (S)

M
Medium-term (M)

L
Longer-term (L)

O
On-going (O)

Cemetery

- 9. Continue to maintain existing floral displays within the cemetery at a high standard, including priority planting and regular watering.

Community Gardens

- 10. Continue to support and encourage new and expanding community gardens led by resident groups through the Community Gardens on City-Owned Land Policy.
- 11. Maintain or improve current levels of funding to ensure the Community Gardens Funding Program remains accessible and affordable.

City Facilities

- 12. Keep areas of City facilities that see high traffic (i.e. main doors and entrances) maintained to a high standard.
- 13. Promotion of native perennials and grasses, graduating away from annual bedding plants to alternative plant materials for low traffic portions of City facilities.
- 14. Prioritize the provision of additional staffing levels to accompany any new City facilities.

City Wide Displays

- 15. Maintain and improve on these areas with the promotion of vibrant native perennials and grasses, graduating away from annual bedding plants to alternative plant materials
- 16. Ensure where irrigation exists that it is programmed and working efficiently for optimal outcomes.
- 17. Reduction of resources such as water, fertilizer, single use plant materials and limit maintenance displays to reduce the City's production of greenhouse gasses and carbon emissions

City Wide Parks

- 18. Maintain and improve on the high traffic and main entrance areas with the promotion of vibrant native perennials and grasses, graduating away from annual bedding plants to alternative plant materials
- 19. Ensure where irrigation exists that it is programmed and working efficiently for optimal outcomes.
- 20. Reduction of resources such as water, fertilizer, single use plant materials and limit maintenance displays to reduce the City's production of greenhouse gasses and carbon emissions.

District Parks

- S** 21. Remove floral displays in district parks and encourage tree planting or naturalization where appropriate.

Downtown Core

- O** 22. Continue to plant and maintain the downtown streetscape to a high degree with vibrant seasonal plantings.
- O** 23. Ensure where irrigation exists that it is programmed and working efficiently for optimal outcomes.
- O** 24. Ensure limited watering schedules for those locations without irrigation systems to reduce the City's production of greenhouse gasses and carbon emissions.

Edible Gardens

- M** 25. To continue to plant and maintain the existing edible garden sites.
- M** 26. Look for the potential to convert existing horticulture displays into edible gardens or plant new locations where deemed appropriate, only if staffing levels are increased where staff can maintain on a daily basis.

Gateways

- O** 27. Maintain and improve the gateways with the promotion of vibrant native perennials and grasses, graduating away from annual bedding plants to alternative plant materials.

Grass & Turf Maintenance

- S** 28. Examine ways to reduce the amount of grass requiring cutting and trimming, where appropriate, with eco-lawn alternatives that are drought resistant, low maintenance or through naturalization efforts.



S
Short-term (S)

M
Medium-term (M)

L
Longer-term (L)

O
On-going (O)

Hanging Baskets and Streetscapes

- 29. Continue to seek partnerships and funding opportunities for the hanging baskets and flower pots program, through sponsorship and donations.
- 30. Continue to explore environmentally friendly hanging baskets and drought-resistant material options to reduce the environmental impact.
- 31. Ensure appropriate seasonal staffing resources are available to provide appropriate water supplies to the displays to ensure the displays show well throughout the summer months.
- 32. Ensure where irrigation exists that it is programmed and working efficiently for optimal outcomes. Ensure limited watering schedules for those locations without irrigation systems to reduce the City's production of greenhouse gasses and carbon emissions..

Naturalization Areas

- 33. Identify low-traffic locations at City facilities and parks which may be naturalized to reduce maintenance requirements and improve environmental benefits. Protect our community through plant materials that are drought tolerant, wind tolerant, fire resistant. In addition, appropriate plant materials for creek and shoreline plantings for stability and erosion mitigation.
- 34. Annually review the City's planting sites for opportunities to convert existing floral displays into eco-friendly naturalized states such as trees, shrubs, sod, grasses, pollinators and flowers that are native to the area.

Neighbourhood Parks

- 35. Remove floral displays in neighbourhood parks in favour of tree planting or naturalization where appropriate.

New Assets

- 36. Ensure that new horticultural assets comply with the provisions of this plan. This includes the promotion of native perennials and grasses, graduating away from annual bedding plants to alternative plant materials.
- 37. New assets shall be accompanied by associated funding for ongoing maintenance to a standard established in this plan

Parkettes and Gores

- 38. Maintain and improve the parkettes and gores with the promotion of vibrant native perennials and grasses, graduating away from annual bedding plants to alternative plant materials.
- 39. Ensure where irrigation exists that it is programmed and working efficiently for optimal outcomes. Ensure limited watering schedules for those locations without irrigation systems to reduce the City's production of greenhouse gasses and carbon emissions.

Pollinator Gardens

- 40. Increase the number of pollinator-friendly plants used in plantings every year and convert resource intensive planting areas where appropriate to pollinator friendly gardens or naturalized sites.
- 41. Continue to foster community-led pollinator plantings and gardens on City lands to help increase pollinator plantings in different areas of the City that may not have been considered by staff. Formalized agreements will be required with community partners in accordance with the maintenance standards established in the HMP.
- 42. Develop a Pollinator Protection Strategy with guiding principles, priorities and actions that the City and community can take to protect our diverse native pollinator community.

Specialty Plantings and Display Areas

- 43. As a display that serves the community to recognize groups and organizations in a high-visibility location, this floral display should be rehabilitated in the coming years and continue to be planted on a yearly, if not seasonal basis.
- 44. Ensure irrigation is programmed and working efficiently for optimal outcomes.
- 45. Develop and implement a fee for organizations to pay in order to help assist with the cost of the speciality plantings.



S
Short-term (S)

M
Medium-term (M)

L
Longer-term (L)

O
On-going (O)

Trails and Greenways

- 46. Continue to follow the City's Parks Policy Plan, which charts a course for providing a balanced and integrated system of parks, open space, and trails for St. Catharines. It includes strategies for planning, maintaining, and managing the City's parks, open space, trails and associated facilities.
- 47. Follow the Transportation Master Plan's recommendation of an Active Transportation Master Plan, once developed.

Trillium Awards

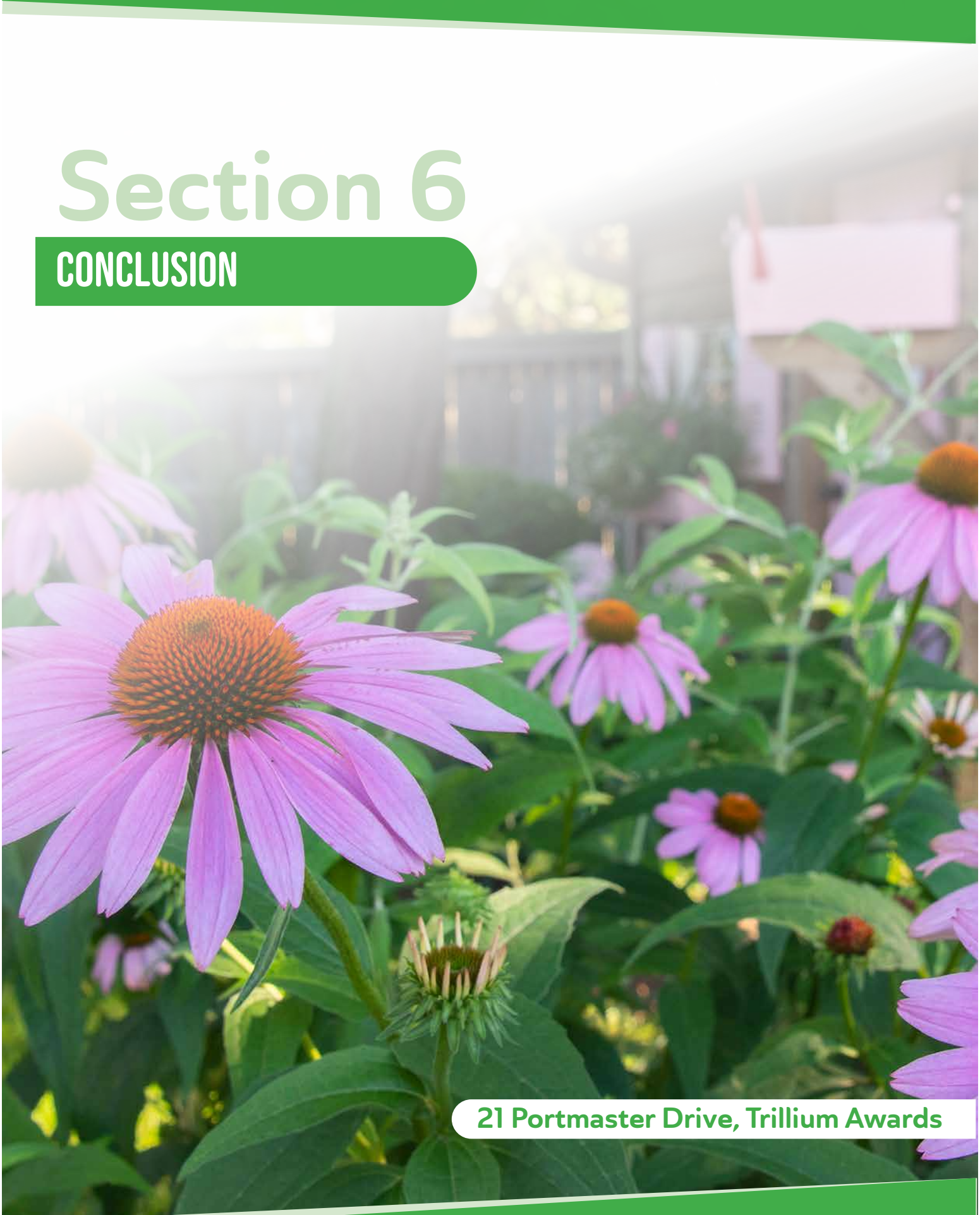
- 48. To continue the Trillium Awards Program on an annual basis and continue to look for new and innovative ways to recognize residents committed to beautifying their properties in a sustainable way.

Service Delivery

- 49. Review the historical additional services duties the horticultural division provides and ensure the focus remains on horticultural assets and programming.
- 50. Report to Council the operating costs of providing the historical additional services to residents.
- 51. Review and consider contracting certain historical additional services.
- 52. Review locations that require watering and consider irrigation options other than a water truck to reduce the environmental impact.
- 53. Review and pursue opportunities to recycle water for irrigation purposes at specific locations.
- 54. Consideration of the Horticulture Management Plan in the development of the City's Asset Management Plan.

Section 6

CONCLUSION



21 Portmaster Drive, Trillium Awards



6.1 Future Direction

The Horticulture Management Plan establishes 10 guiding principles, along with 54 short-, medium- and long-term priorities for implementation. The “Garden City” is moving into a new, environmentally responsible era and there must be a change in the City’s accepted principles regarding beautification. The City of ST. Catharines Climate Change Adaptation Plan’s six climate action goals must be considered with all horticultural decisions including the role that green infrastructure plays in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Over the course of implementation, new horticultural assets will be considered. These may include the addition or modification of municipal facilities but may also include new assets driven by private development. In such instances, the addition of parks, boulevards, and other opportunities for horticultural assets will be reviewed with the guiding principles and implementation tools established in this plan.

Council must be aware that even in a scenario where the development of new assets is driven by private development or community initiatives, the addition of these assets presents the need for ongoing maintenance. Approvals for new horticultural assets or facilities should be accompanied with a commitment to associated budgetary increases.

Mapping of All Horticultural Assets and Programming

