

Program Options Considered

During the course of its review, Calgary Parks considered whether alternatives to the current program exist that would achieve similar results and could be applied on a larger, citywide basis. The following potential options were considered; however, in general, the funding and workforce alternatives were considered to be more viable on a limited basis with the refreshed existing program rather than on a larger scale:

- **Community Endowment Funds:** The potential for communities to assemble funds for enhanced maintenance through donations or endowments is limiting, in the sense that it does not provide a steady or reliable source of funds. Without the certainty of a regular and substantial funding source, it would be challenging to maintain a consistent level of maintenance, or to enter into contracts for service provision. Reliance upon annual fundraising drives would also add pressure to community volunteers who are frequently already overcommitted.
- **Community Sponsorships:** Although there is the potential for local private enterprises to donate funds toward enhancements in communities of their choice, such an arrangement would present challenges, including whether or not such activities would be attractive to sponsors and, if they are, to what extent, as a substantial amount of funding would typically be required. As well, questions concerning how to appropriately recognize such donors on public spaces would need to be investigated. Similar to endowments, the potential for communities to assemble funds for enhanced maintenance through corporate sponsorship is limiting, as it would potentially not provide a steady or reliable source of funds, and would require additional volunteer coordination.
- **Volunteerism:** Community volunteerism is often mentioned as a potential alternative to fundraising for enhanced maintenance. Past experience, however, has provided insight into the significant amount of Administrative oversight and resources that this strategy entails to be successful. As well, the duties associated with enhanced maintenance would require a level of expertise and access to heavy equipment that are beyond the ability of community volunteers. The constant nature of such maintenance would also demand steady and reliable groups of volunteers, which has been typically difficult to gain commitment for.
- **Flower and Banner Pilot Project:** In November of 2016, Calgary Parks brought forward a report that investigated the costs and feasibility of expanding enhanced maintenance of local parks and green spaces citywide. As the associated cost to expand the program was significant, Calgary Parks successfully proposed a 'Banner and Flower' pilot project to Council. This pilot program will see modest beautification measures introduced into up to forty communities over a two year period to analyze costing, community response and value. Should the pilot program be successful, this program could be introduced in a permanent form and be expanded to include volunteer opportunities. The program could serve as an avenue for communities who would otherwise not be involved in enhanced maintenance to improve their communities, or could serve as a more modest method of beautification for current enhanced communities.