

Calgary



# Residential Boulevard Garden Guidelines

June 1, 2018

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# 1.0 Introduction

Residential boulevard gardens add character to neighborhoods, beautify streets and support environmental benefits such as increasing ecological diversity, providing butterfly, bee and bird habitats. Gardening in the residential boulevard increases community and social cohesion and contributes to healthy active living.

## **The boulevard is part of The City's road rights-of-way, and includes:**

The area between the property line and the sidewalk, or sidewalk not separated by a sidewalk or pathway (Type I);




The area between the sidewalk and the curb (Type II);

The area separating roadway lanes, such as medians and islands;

The greenspace adjacent to closed/gated roads/lanes; and

The area within traffic circles and roundabouts.

## **Please review the Residential Boulevard Garden Guidelines before you start your boulevard garden project.**

The Residential Boulevard Garden Guidelines apply to ALL gardens in the boulevard, not just gardens where permission is needed. Any activity taking place in the boulevard is subject to the  [Streets Bylaw 20M88](#),  [Traffic Bylaw 26M96](#), and  [Tree Protection Bylaw \(23M2002\)](#).

The residential boulevard is a shared public space and gardens must be maintained, to ensure these spaces are safe and accessible for passers-by. The boulevard also contains underground utilities. The City of Calgary and other utility companies

may require access to the boulevard to maintain utilities, repair or replace sidewalks, prune boulevard trees or install street signs.

## **Who can create a boulevard garden?**

Property owners of a residential parcel can create a boulevard garden in the boulevard immediately adjacent to their property. Residents may only do so with the property owner's permission. The adjacent property owner will be deemed responsible for any issues arising from the placement and maintenance of the boulevard garden.

If you wish to create a garden in Type II boulevards – in the areas between the sidewalk and the curb – you must obtain permission first. To begin this process, please contact 311. 311 Service Requests (SR's) will be responded to within 14 days by a Maintenance Boulevard Technician.

## **Procedure:**

1. Read the Boulevard Garden Guidelines;
2. If permission from the City is required or if you have further questions, please contact 311; and
3. Call Before You Dig.



## 2.0 Permitted Boulevard Gardening Area

Gardening is **NOT** permitted in:

The area in-between roadway lanes (medians, islands); and  
The area within traffic circles.

You may garden on the front and side boulevard areas:

### TYPE I Boulevards

Between the property line and the sidewalk (Figure 1.0), or curb not separated by a sidewalk (Figure 2.0) or pathway – **No permission needed if the guidelines for Type II Boulevards are followed.** Boulevards must be contained in a temporary raised bed, garden pot or planter only.

Note: Sections **5.4**, **5.8**, and **6.0** do not apply to Type I Boulevard Gardens.

*Figure 1.0 – Type I Boulevard showing potential boulevard garden space between the property line and sidewalk.*



*Figure 2.0 – Type I Boulevard showing potential boulevard garden space between the property line and curb.*



## TYPE II Boulevards

Between the sidewalk and the curb (Figure 3.0) – **Permission Required from The City.**

Figure 3.0 – Type II Boulevard showing potential boulevard garden space between the sidewalk and curb.



Gardens in Type II Boulevards must be contained in a temporary raised bed, garden pot or planter only (as per the guidelines in Sections 5.0 and 6.0).

## 3.0 Preparing the Boulevard

3.1 In Calgary, residential properties often have road rights-of-way that extend 1 to 3 metres into the front or side yards. These rights-of-way are for shallow utility placement and can contain gas lines, electrical lines, and telephone and internet cables for homes and businesses. Refer to the property's Real Property report for the specific measurements at your location.

- Trees and shrubs are not permitted to be planted in the rights-of-way.
- *Before any ground disturbance, always contact [Alberta One-Call](#) so a representative can come to the property to mark the location of shallow utilities.*
- *The homeowner must make sure the work being carried out does not contravene the requirements of restrictive covenants, caveats, or any other restrictions that are registered against the property.*

Always remember to call or click before you dig. For more information on this free service or to submit a utility locate request, visit [Alberta One-Call](#).

## 4.0 Setbacks and Public Access

4.1 The property owner shall maintain a 1.5 metre clearance around any/all permanent items/structures within the boulevard including trees, fire hydrants, community mailboxes, utility poles, traffic signs, street lights, and transformer boxes. Make sure boulevard gardens are easily visible and accessible from both the street and the sidewalk.

4.2 All raised garden beds, pots and planters must be set back a minimum of (Figure 4.0):

- 60 cm from the curb edge of the road;
- 30 cm from the edge of a sidewalk;
- 1.5 m from the edge of an alley/lane; and
- 7.5 metres from a street corner or intersection.

4.3 Plants must be pruned or trimmed to ensure they do not grow over the sidewalk, into the street or encroach into the minimum setback requirements specified in Section 4.2.

4.4 If plants are deemed to be a visibility, mobility or safety concern by The City, or do not meet the Residential Boulevard Garden Guidelines, The City may direct the property owner to prune or remove the plants from the problem location.

## 5.0 Structures – Type II Boulevards Only

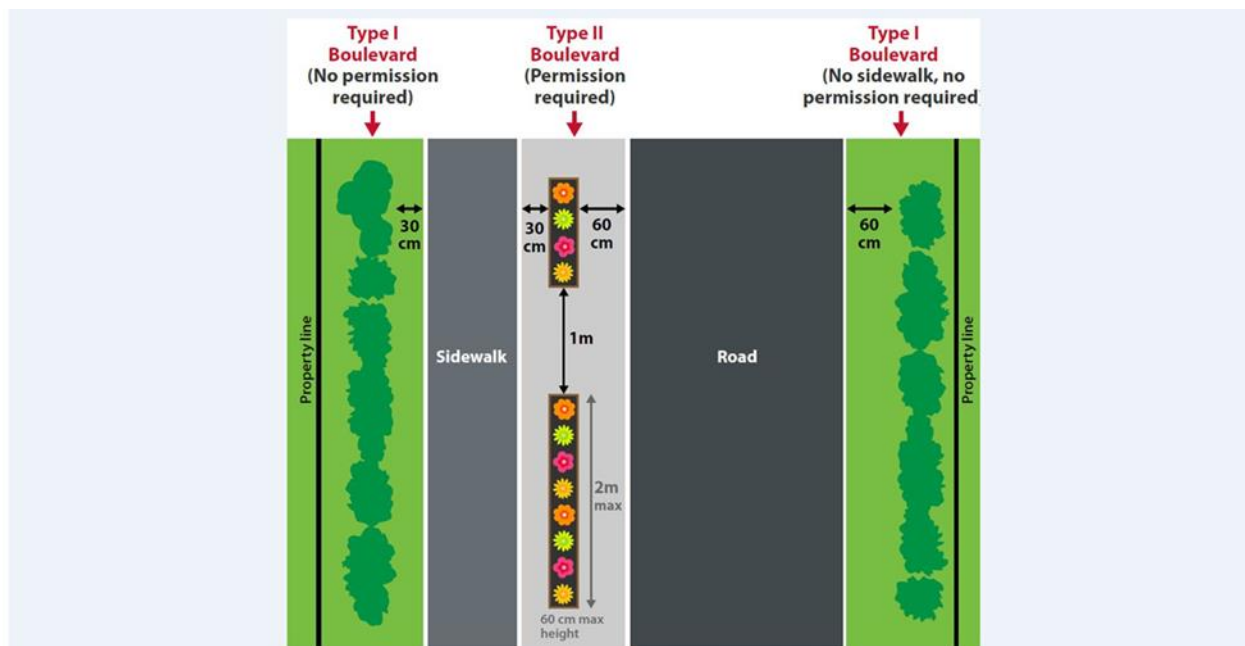
5.1 Gardens placed on Type II boulevards (between the sidewalk and the curb) must be in raised garden beds, garden pots or a planter. Planting directly into the ground of a boulevard is prohibited.

5.2 Raised garden beds must be temporary, free standing structures, constructed of wood or plastic, and not anchored in the soil. Raised beds must be easily movable and do not interfere with access, safety, visibility or height restrictions.

5.3 The recommended height for a raised garden bed is between 15 cm and 45 cm. Raised garden beds/planters/pots may not exceed 60 cm in height, measured from the ground level of the boulevard. The maximum length of a raised garden bed is 2 metres.

5.4 Placement must provide a 1 metre-wide space (at minimum) (Figure 4.0) between raised garden beds, planters or pots to ensure people have access between the sidewalk and the road.

Figure 4.0 – Type I & II Boulevards showing planter minimum setbacks and spacing requirements.



5.5 Raised garden beds must not remain in the boulevard if they are broken, unsafe or unsightly.

5.6 Permanent structures such as in-ground irrigation systems are prohibited.

5.7 The City of Calgary is not liable for any damage to temporary structures that have been placed on the boulevard.

5.8 Permission for a boulevard garden is only granted for the calendar year it was submitted. An application and permission for a boulevard garden must be completed/granted each calendar year. Boulevard gardens must be removed by October 31<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year. If a boulevard garden is not removed by October 31<sup>st</sup> you may not be granted permission in future years for a boulevard garden.

## 6.0 Plant Height – Type II Boulevards Only

6.1 Plants may grow to a height no taller than 1 metre, measured from ground level of the boulevard. Any garden stakes, props or cages that are used to support plant growth must also be no taller than 1 metre from the ground.

## 7.0 Plant Selection / Recommended Plant List

7.1 Property owners are not permitted to plant trees or shrubs in the boulevard. Trees and shrubs may outgrow the space and are costly to remove. Only trees and shrubs planted by The City are allowed on the boulevard.

7.2 Only ornamental flowers, herbs or food producing plants are permitted to be planted in Type II boulevard gardens.

7.3 Noxious weeds and invasive plants are prohibited in any garden. Learn more about [invasive plant prevention and management](#).



7.4 An ecological approach to vegetation and pest management that strives to reduce reliance on pesticides as well as integrate preventative measures should be used. Learn more about The City of Calgary's [Integrated Pest Management Plan](#).

7.5 The City of Calgary is not liable for any damage to plants that are grown in the boulevard or any damage or injury resulting in a boulevard garden. The adjacent property owner assumes all liability and risk.

## 8.0 Growing Food

8.1 Any food grown on the boulevard is consumed at your own risk.

8.2 It is possible for contaminants to be present in boulevard soils at potentially unsafe levels. Snow, water, gravels and sediments which have migrated from the street onto the boulevard can contain hydrocarbons, heavy metals, chlorides, etc. The likelihood and presence of soil contamination is unknown.

**Therefore, The City of Calgary cannot guarantee the suitability of the boulevard for growing food.**

8.3 If you are not certain that your soil is safe, have a soil test done.

8.4 If you are building raised garden beds to grow food, avoid using treated lumber or creosote lumber as they may be toxic.

8.5 Use new, clean soil and compost to avoid weeds and soil contamination.

## 9.0 Pets and Passers-by

9.1 The boulevard is a public space where you have little control over the activities of neighbors, passers-by and animals. Plants and produce may be picked, damaged and garden beds may be contaminated by pets, birds and other wildlife.

## 10.0 Watering and Maintenance

10.1 City-owned infrastructure such as fire hydrants may not be used for watering.

10.2 Determine a plan for watering your boulevard garden before you get started.

10.3 Unattended watering with sprinklers on boulevards between the curb and sidewalk is prohibited. Garden hoses may not be left on the sidewalk as they can be a tripping hazard for pedestrians. Also, take precautions and do not leave tools or gardening materials lying on the boulevard or sidewalk.

10.4 Street sweeping or City of Calgary maintenance activities can pose a risk to boulevard garden.



## 11.0 Boulevard Trees

11.1 All trees growing on the boulevard belong to The City of Calgary and are under the care of Parks. For more information: [City of Calgary Urban Forestry](#)

Under The City's [Tree Protection Bylaw \(23M2002\)](#), the maintenance of trees on public property is the sole responsibility of The City. This bylaw prohibits people from actions such as:

- Cutting, removing, moving or pruning City trees;
- Penetrating the bark or attaching any object or sign to City trees;
- Planting trees on City land; and
- Spraying trees with any substance except water.

For more information, please click the link above, or call 311.

11.2 When planting around trees, consider that work crews may need access to the tree for placement of ladders, pruning and maintenance.

## 12.0 Non-Compliance

12.1 The City of Calgary reserves the right with due notice to require that a boulevard garden be removed and returned to The City's turf grass standard at any time and, at the property owner's full expense. Failure to comply will result in The City removing the boulevard garden and remediating the boulevard to The City standard at the full expense of the adjacent property owner. Noncompliance of an adjacent property owner with the Boulevard Garden Guidelines can result in future boulevard garden applications being denied.

## 13.0 Boulevard Work

13.1 In the event that emergency works are required that will disturb an existing boulevard garden, no notification will be provided. The City of Calgary assumes no responsibility for the cost of repairs or any damages to a boulevard garden.

In the event of scheduled boulevard works, and where The City has a record of a permitted Type II boulevard garden in that area, city staff will attempt to notify the homeowner 14 days in advance, giving them the opportunity to move the raised beds or salvage plant material. The City of Calgary assumes no responsibility for the cost of repairs of any damages to the garden or raised bed on the boulevard.

Following any City required boulevard operations, the boulevard will be restored to the City standard grade and turf.