

Evaluation Form

2018

Town of Maple Creek,
Saskatchewan



2018 Evaluation Form

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Community: Town of Maple Creek
Province: Saskatchewan
Category: Circle of Excellence - Evaluated

Tidiness	124.75	/	150.00
Environmental Action	126.25	/	150.00
Heritage Conservation	134.25	/	150.00
Urban Forestry	142.00	/	175.00
Landscape	167.00	/	200.00
Floral Displays	153.25	/	175.00
	Total		847.50 / 1000.00

Percentage : 84.75%

Bloom rating: 5 Blooms – Bronze

Five Blooms - Bronze

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

National and International Edition, for evaluated communities only.

82 to 83.9%: 5 Blooms. 84 to 86.9%: 5 Blooms (Bronze). 87 to 89.9%: 5 Blooms (Silver). 90% and over: 5 Blooms Gold

Mention: Downtown Retrofit and Tourism Promotion

Representative (s) of Community

Name: Michele McKenzie Function: Acting Mayor
Name: Royce Pettyjohn Function: Chair of CiB
Name: Gillian Moch Function: CiB Volunteer

Judges

Name: Cliff Lacey Name: Cynthia Boyd

Evaluation

date: July 21, 2018

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IMPORTANT NOTES:

Evaluation is adjusted to the climate and environmental conditions of the community.

Some aspects of the evaluation might not be applicable: scoring will be prorated.

The score will vary from the previous year based on the facts that the evaluation form is subject to modifications each year and that the scores are based on the perception of the current judges.

SECTORS OF EVALUATION

Municipal:

- Municipal properties, parks and green spaces, streets, streetscapes
- Properties owned and run by municipality such as museums, historical sites

Business and Institutions:

Properties owned and managed by

- **Business:** commercial sector, shopping centres, commercial streets, industrial parks, manufacturing plants
- **Institutions:** schools, universities, churches, hospitals, service and community organization buildings (such as YMCA, Legion), private museums, Government and Crown Corporations buildings (such as Canada Post, provincial and federal parks, etc.)
- **Tourism bureaus and Chamber of Commerce offices**
- **Farms:** in rural communities, farms can be considered in this section

Residential:

- Citizens and citizen groups acting within their own properties
- Residential property owners, rate payer groups

Community Involvement:

The principle of community involvement is so fundamental to the program that it is considered in each segment of the evaluation.

- Individuals, community organizations, citizen groups (includes youth programs) – all contributing to various aspects of community improvement, including municipal spaces maintained through the efforts of volunteers and community
- Organized clubs such as horticultural societies, garden clubs, community associations, school groups
- Service clubs such as Rotary, Lions, Optimist
- Participation (financial and/or in-kind or employee participation) by the municipality, businesses and institutions.

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GENERAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Congratulations, Maple Creek, on achieving 5 Blooms – Bronze in the Circle of Excellence, Evaluated category. You continue to exhibit a high standard of excellence that has captured exemplary results over the years you have been involved in the provincial and national Communities in Bloom Program. The judges recommend you enter the Class of Champions category of the national program in 2019 and build upon your history of success in this program.

It is clear Maple Creek is experiencing a revitalization. Recent work on the facades on Jasper St. in the Town's Heritage District gives the impression of a frontier Town. The addition of a log building at the back of the museum further promotes this image, and the banners attached to the light posts complete the picture. Spectacular street trees, many of them American Elms, add to the "old cow town" theme.

The Old Armory is a wonderful building and the largest assembly hall in the community. With extensive improvements to the kitchen, and further plans for the hall itself, the building is popular for weddings and Town gatherings. It hosts the Maple Creek Communities in Bloom Soiree each year. This event is a major fund raiser for the CiB initiatives undertaken by the local organization.

The new Southwest Integrated Healthcare Facility offers work for the townspeople and excellent healthcare for the region. The garden courtyard in the hospital is a pleasant place for families to meet with loved ones, or patients to simply sit and reflect.

The warm hospitality extended to the judges during our visit was very much appreciated. Maple Creek is a lovely small Town with an engaged and enthusiastic group of local CiB volunteers. We do hope we see the Town entered in future Communities in Bloom National endeavors. You may even wish to consider entering the program at the International level.

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TIDINESS		
<p>Tidiness includes an overall tidiness effort by the municipality, businesses, institutions and the residents throughout the community. Elements for evaluation are parks and green spaces, medians, boulevards, sidewalks, streets; municipal, commercial, institutional and residential properties; ditches, road shoulders, vacant lots, signs and buildings; weed control, litter clean-up (including cigarette butts and gum), graffiti prevention/removal and vandalism deterrent programs.</p>		
	Max	Actual
Municipal		
Overall Impressions Tidiness, order, cleanliness and first impressions	10	8
Anti-litter Community anti-litter awareness programs	10	8
Regulations Effective bylaws, programs and policies and enforcement; litter control, unsightly private property maintenance by-laws, graffiti prevention and eradication, graffiti removal kits to residents	10	7.75
Cleanliness Of public green infrastructure: parks, streetscapes (sidewalks, planters, urban signage and furniture such as benches, litter and recycling containers etc.)	15	13.25
Municipal Properties Appearance Visual appeal and condition of municipal buildings and properties (including city hall grounds),	15	13
Business & Institutions		
Overall Impressions Tidiness, order and cleanliness and first impressions	15	13.25
Site Conditions Condition of buildings (exterior maintenance), grounds, sidewalks and parking lots	15	12.25
Furniture Appearance Condition of urban furniture: benches, litter and recycling containers	5	4
Residential		
Overall Impressions Tidiness, order and cleanliness	20	16.25
Property Conditions Condition of buildings, grounds and yards	15	12.25
Community Involvement		
Public Participation In community, neighbourhood or individual street tidiness, clean-up programs, activities and annual maintenance (including promotion, organization, innovations involving youth and seniors, etc.)	10	8.25
Community Support Financial and/or in-kind or participation by the municipality, businesses and institutions for community clean-up programs	10	8.5
Tidiness Total	150.00	124.75

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TIDINESS

Maple Creek has undertaken a variety of initiatives that have really improved the tidiness of the Town. The Judges commend the community for these initiatives.

Observations:

The Town has endorsed innovative ways to keep the Town neat and clean. Besides the obvious recycling and waste removal, Maple Creek has a week in spring and fall when extra organic matter (grass, leaves and trees) can be put to the curb for collection. This material is then turned into garden mulch or compost at the Town's landfill.

The Property Maintenance and Nuisance Amendment By-law 2014 empowers the Town to issue notices and tickets to residents who do not keep their property clean. The Town can even send in a crew if there is non-compliance with the letter and ticket as well as adding clean-up costs to the taxes for the residence involved.

The Earth Day Clean-Up Week is a great opportunity for the community to take a good look at any unsightly mess that might exist in Town, and clean it up. It is also a clever way to add to the list of workers for the local CiB group, since anyone who registers to help is invited to the Saturday Volunteer Appreciation event where they are asked if they wish to have their names added to the list of Maple Creek CiB volunteers.

The initiatives to involve children in any form of local CiB undertakings is to be applauded. Having the kids from the Sidney Street Elementary School pick litter on the school grounds every Friday encourages them not to litter.

The black "Cowpoke" banner, cut out of steel and featured on the archway entrance on Pacific Avenue, is repeated in many areas. The banners and themed street signs further the Western motif established by the banner. The Main Street Program has tidied up several buildings in the downtown core and greatly improved the visual appeal of this area.

Recommendations:

The Town has a by-law to deal with unsightly properties and it was reported that letters have been issued to those homes that are unkempt (of which the judges saw several). It may be beneficial to speed up the process of identifying these properties earlier in the year and having them tidied up before the bulk of the tourist traffic travels through Town. You can only make a first impression once. It would also be helpful to the judging process if Town officials could accurately indicate to the judges which properties have received the attention of the by-law officer.

On the tour of the Town, it was clear many residents were not taking responsibility for the strip of boulevard between the curb and the sidewalk. The judges were told this was, indeed, the homeowner's responsibility. Typically, these boulevard strips are on municipal land. Some residents of Town are choosing to ignore this responsibility, or they just do not know their role in maintaining these

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areas. The Town should have an educational campaign to make the residents aware of this task, and ensure they have a by-law to back up their position.

The Town has a variety of benches, tables and waste cans of various qualities and vintage. Understandably, some of these are linked to certain projects like the Community Walking Trail and the Land of the Living Skies Park. However, the judges recommend that the Town and local CiB volunteers determine a style of park furnishings that can be used as a standard for all future purchases, acquisitions and donations. Adopting a standard will allow for easier replacement of damaged parts in the furniture and the ability to stock a smaller inventory of repair items.

Dog droppings can be a problem in any green space, whether it is private or public land. Having a bag to pick up after your dog is a necessity. The judges noted a doggie bag dispenser in Centennial Park that was empty. Perhaps the '5 for 5' crew could take responsibility for checking all doggie bag dispensers and ensuring they are kept filled with empty bags.

The judges picked up broken glass near the new pergola of the Post Office Pocket Park, and unfortunately, some of the 2X2's forming the roof of the pergola have been damaged or broken. It is hoped that this new addition will be repaired to complete this worthwhile initiative and that a garbage receptacle be placed in this area to avoid the accumulation of litter.

The alleyways are maintained by dedicated CiB volunteers eager to clean and tidy these unseen spaces behind residential homes. It was noted by the judges that despite the efforts of the local CiB, there was one alley in which the dead tops of Scots' pines, bags of garbage, and construction refuse had been left in a large pile. While the CiB volunteers do an admirable job keeping most of these spaces clean, the public should be made aware of their responsibility to clean up their own alleyways.

The judges noticed that many private gardens need attention. Weeds, unkempt lawns, and trees that require heavy pruning were evident in some areas of the Heritage District. While the By-Law for Unsightly premises is in place, it needs to be rein-enforced as many untidy properties could be seen side by side. Lilac bushes on one private property located opposite the Cobble Creek Hotel have become so overgrown, residents pushing strollers or children riding bikes cannot stay on the sidewalk and pass by these bushes as they overhang onto the sidewalk. It was noted by one of the judges that pedestrians were choosing the more dangerous alternative of walking in the street to avoid pushing through the unruly foliage. Although the judges were made aware that the property was due to be demolished, this does not alleviate the problem that pedestrians face every day in attempting to walk on a sidewalk with an overgrown shrub or tree. If there is an extensive period in which a house and property must wait to be destroyed, the Town should enlist the Parks and Recreation Crew to trim back the overgrown shrubs or trees so that there is a clear walkway, at the very least.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION		
<p>Environmental action pertains to the impact of human activities on the environment and the subsequent efforts and achievements of the community with respect to: policies, by-laws, programs and best practices for waste reduction and landfill diversion, composting sites, landfill sites, hazardous waste collections, water conservation, energy conservation, and environmental stewardship activities under the guiding principles of sustainable development pertaining to green spaces.</p>		
	Max	Actual
Municipal		
Sustainable Development Strategies Policies, programs, guidelines, long-term planning/vision; effective bylaws/policies and their enforcement; and public education programs and activities	20	17
Waste Reduction Reduction of waste going to landfill and results (3-R: reduce, reuse and recycle), municipal composting programs, including activities such as composting sites, yard waste collections, mulching of wood debris (Christmas trees, hedge trimmings, etc.) & reclamation of cut trees. Handling of hazardous waste including e-waste collection and reuse of compost material.	20	18.5
Water Conservation Use-reduction programs such as promotions, efficient irrigation, use of non-potable water, water restriction policies	15	13.25
Energy Conservation Programs such as alternate forms of energy (ex. geothermal, biomass, wind, solar) and initiatives such as: energy-efficient appliances, shielding for night skies, efficient street lighting	15	12
Environmental Initiatives, Innovations and Actions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development and expansion of sustainable mobility and active transportation network such as bike lanes and multi-used pathways; - Horticultural practices such as green roofs, green walls, green lanes, living fences, buffer zones; re-use of sites; engineered wetlands, bio-swales, permeable surfaces and rain water management - Brownfield redevelopment, remediation, land reclamation - Air quality programs such as anti-idling, reduction of greenhouse gas emission (carbon reduction). 	10	8
Business & Institutions		
Participation in The Environmental Effort Waste management (reduce, reuse and recycle), water conservation, energy conservation, brownfield management	10	7.75
Corporate Environmental Action Innovation/stewardship, initiatives, activities (for example: environmental clean-up activities)	10	7.75
Residential		
Participation in Environmental Initiatives 3-R (reduce, reuse and recycle), composting	10	8.5
Water Conservation Practices such as water use reduction, rainwater collection and rain gardens	15	13
Community Involvement		
Public Participation – Civil Action Participation in public forums and policy development on environmental issues	5	4
Public Participation in Activities Community (including children/youth), neighbourhood or individual street environmental activities and programs (including promotion, organization and evidence of taking ownership, etc.)	10	8.25
Community Support Financial and/or in-kind or participation by the municipality, businesses and institutions in public environmental activities and programs	10	8.25
Environmental Action Total	150.00	126.25

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ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

Observations:

No evaluation of the Town would be complete without a mention of the innovative approach taken at the Town's landfill. Lynn Needham, Manager of Environmental Services (or a staff person) meets every vehicle that enters the landfill site and inspects each load. Any material that can be recycled is set aside for future use, any organics are sorted by the need to chip or not and any metal is piled for crushing. The only thing buried is unusable waste. Lynn has recycled pallets into bird houses and had school children come to the site to paint them with unwanted paint. The fence along the drive to the "dump" is decorated with bird houses and cast off Christmas lights. Lynn says the effect of having the birds in the vicinity has resulted in a marked reduction in the mosquito population! With the introduction of curb side recycling, there is a 50% reduction of material going into the landfill. Due to the addition of the work done by the purchase of a compactor, the life of the landfill has been extended from 27 years to 75 years, when the new pit is ready for use.

The Town should be recognized for taking action on wasting water though the passage of By-law # 2014-MC-05 that restricts the use of watering between the hours of 9 AM and 6 PM and imposes watering days to odd dates for odd numbered houses and even dates for even numbered houses. These water controls are a move in the right direction, needed in such a dry climate.

The earlier rain barrel \$25 rebate program and now the rain barrel giveaway program are great examples of forward thinking by the Town. While the water supply may be sufficient for now, ensuring residents can collect rain water for their gardens when water is in short supply is wise.

The Bags in Bloom program, where the Co-op store puts aside \$.05 every time a customer uses a recycled bag is a fantastic system of raising funds for Maple Creek CiB. This is a great idea and one that others should follow.

Recycling the spray deck water to be used to water the flower beds in the same park is very progressive. Much larger communities have not succeeded in accomplishing this goal but might gain some inspiration from Maple Creek's actions.

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Recommendations:

Bee hive collapse is a great concern in the bee industry, but an equal problem is failing to have pollinators to complete the production of seed crops. Solitary bees have become very important in providing a back-up system of pollinators. The judges suggest the local CiB develop a workshop for aiding the population of solitary bees and disseminate this information into the community through sessions with school children and adults at the public library.

The local CiB workshop series touches on some excellent topics that have been shared with the public. However, the judges noted any information pertaining to future workshops was difficult to find on the library website and encourage the Maple Creek CiB to explore all means available for disseminating information about upcoming workshops to the public.

While a diversion to recycling and composting of 50% of the waste going to the landfill is an excellent start, constantly monitoring this number and seeking to improve upon it would be a reasonable goal.

There is a great opportunity to collect rainwater from two of the three downspouts in the courtyard at the hospital. Installing rain barrels at this location will not only save water, it will provide warmer water for the plants and provide an opportunity to promote the use of rain barrels to those visiting the hospital's occupants. When barrels are installed, signs promoting the use of rain barrels should be placed at this location.

Setting watering restrictions is simply a first step in a process of reducing water use. The Town should oversee the installation of water meters on all businesses and residences to ensure utility customers are fully aware of the water they are consuming. This approach has produced water conservation elsewhere.

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION		
<p>Heritage conservation includes efforts to preserve natural and cultural heritage within the community. Preservation of natural heritage pertains to policies, plans and actions concerning all elements of biodiversity including flora and fauna ecosystems and associated geological structures and formations. Cultural conservation refers to the heritage that helps define the community including the legacy of tangible (built/hard assets) elements such as heritage buildings, monuments, memorials, cemeteries, artifacts, museums and intangible elements such as traditions, customs, festivals and celebrations. The participation of groups such as historical societies and conservation groups is considered.</p>		
	Max	Actual
Municipal		
Natural Heritage Strategic Plans Policies, by-laws and their enforcement and effective programs	10	8.75
Natural Heritage Management Plans Management and preservation initiatives: including eco systems, eco parks, protection of sensitive habitats, species at risk, support for at risk pollinators, grasslands, naturalization, wetlands, urban agriculture/farming, and wildlife	15	13.5
Natural Heritage Promotion Management and promotion of natural heritage (through communications, information and support programs, economic development/tourism) including activities and programs (year-round) for education and use of natural heritage sites for and by the public	15	13.75
Cultural Heritage Strategic Plans Policies, by-laws and plans and preservation initiatives for heritage buildings, cemeteries, artefacts, museums, monuments, heritage trees and gardens, including their integration with streetscapes and landscape	15	13.5
Cultural Heritage Activities Initiatives throughout the year including festivals and celebrations along with preservation of traditions and customs	10	8.75
Business & Institutions		
Natural Heritage Assets Conservation, restoration and integration of natural heritage, including eco parks, conservation areas, heritage gardens, trees and landscapes.	15	13.5
Cultural Heritage Assets Conservation, restoration and reuse of heritage buildings and artefacts including their integration with the built/hard?, streetscapes and green landscapes	10	8.5
Residential		
Cultural Heritage Initiatives Conservation/restoration and reuse of heritage buildings, artefacts on residential lands	10	8.5
Community Involvement		
Natural Heritage Public Participation Participation in community (including children/youth), neighbourhood or individual natural heritage programs including developing policies and plans, site improvements and management, conservation and education initiatives	15	13.5
Natural Heritage – Community Support Financial and/or in-kind or participation by the municipality, businesses and institutions (including environmental groups) in community-initiated natural heritage activities and programs	15	13.5
Cultural Heritage - Public Participation Participation in community (including children/youth), neighbourhood or individual cultural heritage programs including year-round heritage community events/activities, festivals and celebrations along with preservation of traditions and customs	10	9.25
Cultural Heritage - Community Support Financial and/or in-kind or participation by the municipality, businesses and institutions (including historical societies) in community-initiated cultural heritage activities and programs.	10	9.25
Heritage Conservation Total	150.00	134.25

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION

The judges enjoyed the experience of seeing the Maple Creek Heritage District from a horse-drawn wagon. What an inspiring way to view the public and private properties of the Town of Maple Creek.

Observations:

The Jasper Cultural & Historical Centre features an inviting series of special rooms devoted to the historic narrative of Maple Creek, primarily from the early 1900s onward. As there are hundreds of artefacts from several private collections on display, Chair of the Board of Directors, Donny White, is to be commended for maintaining fascinating vignettes which highlight the working lives of the people of Maple Creek and nearby communities. From ranching, farming, telegraph and railway occupations to educators, nurses, and dressmakers, the Jasper Cultural & Historical Centre has more than one story to tell, to all who enter its doors.

Contemporary art work and photography is on display in two other areas of the Centre. Mr. White has been working in partnership with other museums to allow for a more diverse range of exhibits with which to draw in residents and tourists alike. Several other areas of the Centre showcase natural history with fossils and bird and animal specimens. In addition, an impressive display of leather saddles has been situated alongside a series of beautiful black and white photographs of ranch life in the early twentieth century. Having actual horse saddles with period photographs documenting the saddles in use is practical and accessible museum staging; such a display coordinates a balance between material culture, occupational folklore, and photographic history.

The judges were also impressed with the tribute to women's millinery in combination with china tea cups and saucers in a large oak dresser. Viewed through this dresser's clear glass and wooden shelving, the colorful silk and organdy hats can be seen sitting harmoniously next to floral-patterned cups and saucers. Though a temporary exhibit, it portrays the domestic lives of women of Maple Creek (and other communities) in a playful manner while allowing a large quantity of artefacts to be on display at the same time.

The Southwest Saskatchewan Old Timers' Museum has, in its temporary location, a large collection of late nineteenth century artefacts, farming equipment, and several period vehicles. Its actual facility, a log building, has been refurbished and expanded through a CO-OP Community Spaces Project. This will be an exciting new space for the Old Timers' Museum which the judges hope will encourage even more traffic from residents and visitors. The Facebook page of this museum offers a font of information to the public on the Museum's events and activities, but it is an especially useful tool for the Museum because so many people comment and/or provide valuable input on recent acquisitions that the Museum posts images of, on the Facebook page.

CiB volunteers have maintained the Maple Creek Cemetery, and it is situated with a beautiful view of the prairie. The older, historic graves, monuments and the newly built columbarium are beautifully tended by volunteers. There are helpful maps identifying gravesites and headstones that are mounted on signs and are near completion.

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The judges were very interested to hear how children and youth from local schools participate in a scavenger hunt in the cemetery as part of a heritage appreciation school group program. What an innovative way to engage younger residents of Maple Creek in learning about the history of their community! This event is organized by the Visitor Centre of Maple Creek and it is a wonderful initiative. The Visitor Centre also offers self-guided walking tours of the Maple Creek Heritage District.

The judges recognize the excellent relationship that the Town of Maple Creek has with the Nekanee First Nation. It is a partnership that revitalizes the cultural and living heritage of our First Nations. There are many heritage festivals, rodeos, and other historic events in Maple Creek which indicate that this is a community with tremendous pride in what it has to offer.

The Ghost-Town Blues Bed and Breakfast is an innovative accommodation paying tribute to the early days of ranch living. The owner has created a veritable gem for visitors and residents who are looking for that extra special 'something' in a vacation or travel experience. This is a fantastic tourist haunt of Maple Creek as well as being a regular stop-over for family reunions and honeymoon trips.

The Grotto, also, is an economic boon to Maple Creek and surrounding communities. Today's travelers want to experience something unusual in a community and the Grotto's many offerings will attract all ages. These two tourist ventures will have visitors returning time and again to Maple Creek.

The Town and businesses have a huge investment in restoring many heritage buildings in the Heritage District; this is a tribute to the commitment this community has made to keeping its slogan: "where past is present." On viewing the interiors of several businesses, the judges were amazed at the business owners' maintenance of tin type ceilings. These features add to the allure of a "Western Town" appeal throughout the Heritage District.

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Recommendations:

The judges understand that the Jasper Cultural and Historical Centre is over thirty years old. Through fundraising and grant-writing, some monies have been acquired to mount exhibits and/or conserve artefacts which have been donated by townspeople and families of Maple Creek and beyond. We also learned that the Centre has applied for other grants and has been unsuccessful because there are few, if any, environmental controls in the Centre at present. It would be in the interest of the Town to offer some financial assistance to the Centre to enable the donated artefacts currently on display (and in storage) to remain in good condition. The textiles, especially, need to be conserved and placed in environmentally controlled rooms and/or storage containers. As the judges viewed this Centre in mid-July and found that it was not air-conditioned, it was evident that the textile artefacts, especially, were being exposed to high temperatures and both natural and artificial light: none of these conditions are ideal to the longevity of these kinds of artefacts.

The Town of Maple Creek should work with the Jasper Cultural and Historical Centre in acquiring a grant in which to purchase – at the very least - some archival quality storage containers and archival tissue in which to store textile artifacts. These can be purchased through Carr McLean, a company based in Toronto that has been selling products to Canadian museums, libraries, and archives for over fifty years (www.carrmclean.ca).

The Old Timers' Museum, while currently in its temporary location, should also consider how it will display and store textiles. The judges understand that the Nekaneet pow wow regalia is on loan to the Old Timers' Museum. This is a special and sacred collection and undoubtedly it is in excellent condition. This specific kind of textile, however, should be meticulously cared for, and there should be appropriate archival quality tissue and storage containers in which to store and/or transport these items on temporary display (again, consider Carr McLean for archival products). In addition, this Museum's Facebook page is visited often and receives sizable comments and questions. The Museum staff should have a system in place to document the information provided by visitors to the Facebook site. As more and more museums utilize the power of social media, the comments, suggestions, questions, and pertinent oral history supplied by on-line visitors needs to be recorded in perpetuity.

Heritage or heirloom trees can be seen in many areas of Maple Creek. The community profile indicates that a tree survey and/or inventory has begun, but since there are at least one or two specimens considered to be the 'oldest trees' within living memory, the judges recommend that these be documented immediately. Information on these heirloom trees should be accessible on the Town's website and Facebook page, as well as being made available in hard copy in the Town Hall and public Library. The natural heritage of Maple Creek is just as important to conserve as the artefacts within local museums.

The Town has done a tremendous job of identifying and protecting a heritage district in the largely commercial downtown area. However, on the horse drawn wagon ride the judges were shown what appeared to be a number of residential properties that had historical significance that fell outside the existing historical district. The judges recommend that properties of historical significance outside of the current by-law, be identified and included in the protection afforded to the heritage district properties.

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URBAN FORESTRY		
<p>Urban forestry includes the efforts of the municipality, businesses, institutions and residents with regards to written policies, by-laws, standards for tree management (selection, planting, and maintenance), long and short-term management plans, tree replacement policies, pollinator-friendly tree selection, tree inventory, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM), heritage, memorial and commemorative trees.</p>		
	Max	Actual
Municipal		
Overall Impression Overall impact, benefit and first impression of the urban forest	10	8.75
Strategic Plans Policies, regulations and tree by-laws, tree protection and planting on public and private lands	15	12.75
Urban Forestry Plan Plan, design and inventory management including integration with overall green infrastructure landscape plan, and measures to preserve, protect, manage and expand overall tree inventory, including woodlots	20	16
Plan of Action Procurement, species diversity (including native trees), selection of hardy and pollinator habitat tree species, recommended tree list and tree planting standards.	10	8.25
Integrated Pest Management (IPM) / Plant HealthCare (PHC): plan of action for invasive pest detection and control, information on current infestations and diseases	10	7.75
Public Information Programs Provides information on good planting techniques, best practices and maintenance programs	15	13
Maintenance Quality Best practices with demonstrated results	10	8
Qualified Resources Qualified personnel (including seasonal staff and/or qualified experienced contractors) and/or in place training programs	5	3.75
Business & Institutions		
Tree inventory Contribution to expanding overall tree inventory, with consideration of design and diversity including native and hardy species of trees, on properties owned by businesses and institutions.	15	11.25
Maintenance Quality Programs, best practices with demonstrated results: watering, pruning, IPM	10	7.5
Residential		
Tree Planting Contribution to expanding overall tree inventory, with consideration of design and diversity including native and hardy species of trees on residential properties	15	13.25
Maintenance Quality Best practices with demonstrated results	10	7.75
Community Involvement		
Public Participation Participation (including children/youth) in tree planting and conservation programs such as Green Streets Canada, Arbor Day, Maple Leaf Day, and other tree planting and maintenance programs and activities on public lands (including promotion, organization etc.)	20	16
Community Support Financial and/or in-kind or participation or promotion by the municipality, businesses and institutions for community tree planting and conservation programs on public lands	10	8
Urban Forestry Total	175.00	142.00

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URBAN FORESTRY

Observations:

This is a difficult climate in which to grow trees, but Maple Creek has managed to create an oasis on the plains. There are blocks in this Town that exhibit incredible streetscapes of mature American Elms, reaching for the sky and providing much shady relief on a hot day. These places are incomparable and a real benefit to the Town.

The Town noted that park and street trees are monitored by a contract arborist. It is critical that this process be continued to ensure Dutch Elm Disease does not get established in the towns Elm population. Being so close to the Trans-Canada Highway, it would be very easy for the vector beetles to be transported across the prairie in a load of firewood.

The judges were further made aware that the Town has a comprehensive tree pruning program in place so that experienced crews and professional arborists address the needs of Maple Creek's trees every four years. The local CiB provides workshops on proper pruning techniques for residents that are especially helpful to new community members.

By making trees available to homeowners, the Town is taking a step towards maintaining its tree inventory. Ensuring biodiversity by offering a variety of trees is very beneficial.

The search for, and the designation of, the Town's oldest living tree is useful in bringing the public's attention to the urban forest that the Town enjoys.

Planting the lone apple tree at the Community Garden is a good first step in an awareness campaign to make known to residents the potential of planting fruit trees in the community.

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Recommendations:

Tree planting has occurred in some of the park areas and a good selection of tree species and varieties have been used. The location in which the trees have been planted would benefit from grouping the trees: the establishment of mulch beds around the base of the trees would help reduce water loss on a hot day, as well as eliminating mower damage to the actual tree trunk and the possibility of soil compaction of the roots of the trees.

There was no specific mention of an Arbor Day event in the Town. The judges recommend that the local CiB group organize an event where each grade 1 student is given a small tree to plant (appropriate for this horticultural zone) and the urban forest is recognized in some way. Events like this serve to strengthen public awareness of the trees in the community and the value they add to the real estate and to everyday lives.

It was indicated to the judges that it is not always possible to burn waste wood due to burning restrictions in hot weather. When DED is detected in Elms, it is vital that the trees be destroyed by burning as soon as possible to eliminate the grubs and fungi that are living in the tree. The Town needs a response plan in place, in case DED is detected in the Town's urban forest and immediate steps must be taken to cut down and burn the affected trees. The Town should also mount an awareness campaign to ensure residents do not transport firewood from DED infected areas, as that is the most likely means by which the disease will enter the Town. The Town should also be ready to remove diseased trees from private property in the Town.

Residents in new areas of Town qualify for one free tree to be planted on their property. This is the same offering for residents living in the older areas of Town. In time, the inventory of available trees runs out, and trees are not available for new home owners. The judges suggest that residents in new areas should be guaranteed a tree upon occupancy of their home, thus ensuring the urban forest will extend into the new areas at a quicker pace.

The judges recommend the Town in partnership with the local CiB, develop their tree inventory to incorporate not only what trees (including heritage trees) exist in the community, but it should also feature an approximate location of all trees, along with information on the tree species and the overall condition. This can be done simply by using street addresses to tie the tree to a location. More sophisticated GPS location systems are available but are not needed in a first step towards developing a tree inventory.

Although the Town has a tree pruning program in place and residents have access to pruning workshops through the efforts of the local CiB, the judges recommend that many trees in Centennial Park need attention because of damage from scorching heat and high winds.

While it can be very difficult to establish fruit crops in the area, the judges suggest an urban orchard might be a worthwhile initiative, especially if it could be located next to a school. Newer varieties of apples and cherries coming from government and university sponsored research offer opportunities for producing fruits that have not previously existed for Zone 3 climatic conditions. Fruit production and processing would be a great addition to the already existing Horticulture and Home Economics courses in the school.

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LANDSCAPE		
<p>Landscape includes planning, design, construction and maintenance of parks and green spaces suitable for the intended use and location on a year-round basis. Elements for evaluation include: native and introduced materials; balance of plants, materials and constructed elements; appropriate integration of hard surfaces and art elements, use of turf and groundcovers. Landscape design should harmonize the interests of all sectors of the community. Standards of execution and maintenance should demonstrate best practices, including quality of naturalization, use of groundcovers and wildflowers along with turf management.</p>		
	Max	Actual
Municipal		
Gateway Impressions First impressions of the community including gateway/entrance treatments	10	7.5
Sustainable Designs – Soft Landscape Sustainable designs (seasonally adjusted year round): energy efficient, use of green materials, naturalization, xeriscaping, suitable plant varieties (including pollinator friendly) , traffic calming, bank stabilisation	10	8
Sustainable Designs - Hard Landscape Urban and civic design standards for streetscape and public places: flags, banners, public art, fountains, site furnishings, signage, seasonal design and décor, walkways and paving materials	10	8.25
Landscape Plan Integrated and implemented throughout the municipality	10	8
Turf Management Programs Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Plant Health Care (PHC), alternative solutions to diseases and infestations when appropriate, increased naturalization and adapted maintenance programs	10	8.5
Landscape Maintenance Policies, Standards, Best Practices and Programs	10	8.5
Landscape Quality Landscape maintained to appropriate standards, specs and best practices.	5	3.75
Qualified Resources Qualified personnel (including seasonal staff) and/or in place training programs and/or qualified experienced contractors	10	7.5
Year-round use Demonstrated year-round opportunities and programs for education and use of parks and green spaces (urban agriculture, community gardens, parks and recreation programs)	10	8
Business & Institutions		
Sustainable Designs (Seasonally adjusted year-round): energy efficient, use of green materials, naturalization, xeriscaping, alternate groundcovers, urban agriculture	10	8.25
Integrated Plan Contribution to urban & civic design and public green spaces above requirements: such as public art, streetscape, site furniture, fountains & innovation in concept & design	15	13
Maintenance Quality Adequate ongoing life cycle management (ongoing maintenance, ground & asset management, rehabilitation & replacement) of all landscape elements	10	8.25
Residential		
Streetscape Appeal Of landscapes (year-round, seasonal, themed)	15	13.25
Maintenance Quality Lawn care, trees and shrub maintenance (with demonstrated results)	15	12.25
Plant Selection Selection of plant material (native, local, innovative, edible & pollinator friendly plants)	10	8.25
Community Involvement		
Public Participation in community programs (including children/youth) such as: urban agriculture, community gardens, "yard of the week", volunteer park maintenance, holiday illumination & decoration (promotion, organization, etc.)	20	17.75
Volunteer Recognition Recognition (by municipality and/or volunteer groups) of volunteer efforts in all aspects of the Communities in Bloom program including activities in all evaluated criteria	20	18
Landscape Total	200.00	167.00

2018 Evaluation Form

LANDSCAPE

Observations:

The landscaped areas of the Town of Maple Creek have many challenges due in large part to drought conditions. Most of the turf in the public parks, however, appears to be in good condition. The Walking Trail initiative developed by the Town and the local CiB is widely enjoyed by residents of Maple Creek, not to mention tourists in the area. The sign and detailed map of the Walking Trail features the following message: “Connect with your health, connect with your community, connect with your environment.” This is a fantastic slogan in which to inspire residents and tourists who walk and ride this series of trails.

What a boon for the children and youth of Maple Creek to have both a Splash Park and a Skate Park! This is a fabulous venture of the Town of Maple Creek, but even more so because the youth and members of the community were consulted for input. The Centennial Park has amenities for all ages, encourages healthy living, and offers shade and picnic areas because of many mature and newly planted trees. The local CiB volunteers have designed a stunning bedding scheme at the entrance and the informative native species sign is helpful to visitors interested in the kinds of plants that work best in Maple Creek.

The judges noted many xeriscape gardens in the Town. Congratulations on promoting this initiative.

The huge success of the community garden would indicate more garden plots might be needed in the community. The judges suggest gradually expanding the program to provide greater opportunity to residents in obtaining a garden plot and produce their own fresh vegetables.

The “Business of the Month” and the “Yard of the Week” are great initiatives in which to celebrate success in the community. Upon visiting one of the Yards of the Week, it was very clear that residents were proud of their yards and to have been chosen as the yard of the week.

The container plantings throughout the Heritage District of Maple Creek are extremely attractive. The judges were impressed by the work of CiB volunteer, Ellaine Hawrylak and her husband Gordon for their dedication in refurbishing the public space that has since become the Land of the Living Skies Park. This Park is in such a prominent position and thus, is the heart of the community. The rectangular container planters sourced out of Winnipeg (Equinox) are lushly planted and doing extremely well because they are water-efficient “Desert” planters and because Ellaine and CiB volunteers wisely monitor these plantings and pick up litter in the Park. The Christmas lights, picnic benches, and many fine trees in this park are healthy and attractive, making it the “go to” spot for business employees, residents, and visitors. The active Farmer’s market draws in crowds on the Fridays when the stalls are all occupied with vendors. This site is an old CPR garden that was given to the Town and has undergone much upgrading in recent years. This very active space is an integral part of downtown Maple Creek.

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The Maple Creek Golf Club is a beautiful nine-hole green that members and visitors enjoy. A reservoir beyond a line of trees in the distance is used to water the green.

The community garden is a beautiful public space in the middle of the Heritage district. Sally Chant and her team of CiB volunteers assist members of the community in maintaining small plots of vegetables that were very lush and productive in mid-July. This series of gardens provides a small habitat for a variety of birds and pollinators in the Heritage District. The Community Garden is an excellent initiative of the local CiB and sets an example for other communities in the area.

The Cenotaph has been given some loving attention by CiB volunteers and it is a pleasant space with trimmed hedges and tidy container plantings. The beautiful painted mural behind the Cenotaph is a remarkable achievement.

The judges commend the work of Vicki Flannagan and Nola Sanderson in their creative design of the Courtyard Garden at the Nursing Home and hospital. How lovely for the residents to have access to this small garden in which they can sit and relax outside or enjoy viewing from inside their rooms surrounding the garden.

The main bedding scheme at the formal entrance to Centennial Park is a lush planting filled with drought tolerant plants. An excellent sign with a listing of the native heritage plants can be viewed in this bed.

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Recommendations:

Though the Cowpoke theme of the benches in Centennial Park is interesting, it is highly impractical for visitors and residents who need a comfortable bench on which to rest and enjoy this beautiful park. More importantly, these benches are unattractive to visitors because they are located right next to garbage containers. While the judges appreciate that vandalism of park property is an on-going issue, these benches are not an asset to Centennial Park. The large blue benches located near the formal entrance are extremely durable and located away from rubbish bins. The judges recommend that more of these practical benches be purchased and used throughout the park (please see additional recommendations re: standardizing park furniture).

The judges recommend that the youth of the community be approached to work in partnership with seniors by helping them plant small container plantings or hanging baskets filled with drought tolerant plants or foliage plants, or annuals which they could place next to their homes or at the hospital or nursing home where they reside. Combining the strength of youth and the wisdom of seniors, another set of container plantings could be planted and then located just outside the doors of the assisted living homes or the Hospital and nursing home which the judges noticed could use some colorful plants to soften the hard landscaping.

All the trees and shrubs planted in Centennial Park need to have labels. While the judges appreciate the difficulty of maintaining labels in a public park, the Town and the local CiB should investigate durable labels for their beautiful trees. If this is not feasible, the judges suggest that an alternative solution may be to provide a large sign with a map (in the same style as the excellent Walking Trails Map) in which key tree species (and/or shrubs) are identified in the Park with illustrations so that visitors can find and identify these species for themselves. This would be an exceptional educational tool for residents or visitors who walk, play, or sit in Centennial Park.

The approach in to Town from the Trans-Canada Highway has some very unattractive businesses on each side of Highway 21. The Town should work with those businesses to clean up their properties to present a much more attractive face for the community for those tourists passing through Town to the Cypress Hills. This area makes a very poor first impression of the community.

During the judges' visit, there was no mention of an Integrated Pest Management Program. In the future the judges should hear from the Town staff what sort of pest control measures are used to control both insect pests and weeds.

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FLORAL DISPLAYS		
<p>Floral displays evaluates efforts of the municipality, businesses, institutions and residents to design, plan, execute, and maintain floral displays of high quality standards. Evaluation includes the design and arrangements of flowers and plants (annuals, perennials, bulbs, ornamental grasses, edible plants, water efficient and pollinator friendly plants) in the context of originality, distribution, location, diversity and balance, colour, and harmony This pertains to flowerbeds, carpet bedding, containers, baskets and window boxes.</p>		
	Max	Actual
Municipal		
Floral Display Plan of Action Integration into overall landscape plan and distribution through community. Concept and design including sustainable design	15	13.75
Diversity of Displays Flowerbeds, raised beds, planters, hanging baskets, window boxes, carpet bedding, mosaics	20	18
Diversity of Plants Annuals, perennials, bulbs, grasses, woody plants, natural flora, pollinator friendly plants	10	8.75
Maintenance Quality Maintenance to appropriate specifications and standards, best practices: watering, weeding, edging, dead heading, etc.	20	17.5
Qualified Resources Qualified personnel (including seasonal staff) and/or in place training programs and/or qualified experienced contractors	10	8.5
Business & Institutions		
Design Concept and design (including arrangement, diversity, colour of display and plants) on grounds	15	12.25
Overall Plan Contribution to, and integration with, overall community floral program	10	8.75
Maintenance Quality Of planting and maintenance: watering, weeding, edging, dead heading, etc. with demonstrated results.	10	8.25
Residential		
Concept and Design (including arrangement, diversity, colour of display and plants) on residential properties including Pollinator gardens and/or inclusion of pollinator plants in gardens	20	17.25
Maintenance Quality Of planting and maintenance with demonstrated results.	15	12.75
Community Involvement		
Public Participation In community projects, volunteer initiatives (including children/youth), outreach programs in floral displays (including promotion, organization, etc.)	15	13.5
Community Support Financial and/or in-kind or participation by the municipality, businesses and institutions for community floral displays activities	15	14
Floral Displays Total	175.00	153.25

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FLORAL DISPLAYS

Maple Creek offers an array of gorgeous container plantings, hanging baskets, tree-lined streets, and public and private garden spaces. The judges enjoyed the many floral displays in the Town's parks especially. The '5 for 5' is an on-going initiative, and it was most in evidence in the Maple Creek Heritage District.

Observations:

Nola Sanderson, a CiB steering committee member, active gardener and flower shop owner led the judges on an informative tour of the homes and gardens of the Heritage District. She pointed out many "Yard of the Week" winners. Along with the "Business of the Week," this is an excellent initiative in Maple Creek and should be continued. The judges enjoyed meeting Mrs. Peterson and viewing her wonderfully efficient cottage garden. Not surprisingly, she has won the Yard of the Week contest on a few occasions. Her vegetable patch, container-grown tomatoes and bountiful apple tree merge beautifully with a lush display of blooming roses, clematis, monarda, and leafy shrubs. Mrs. Peterson's deep blue delphiniums were an amazing sight to behold. Her husband's handmade flower containers and extremely large Adirondack chairs add an element of whimsy to this little oasis.

The initiatives undertaken with grade 8 and 9 children to plant flower barrels and beds should be recognized. Children at the Sidney Street School have also been involved in building raised beds (grades 5 and 6) and in planting those beds (K to 3). These programs lessen the likelihood of vandalism to flower beds in Maple Creek because the children have an invested interest due to their own hard work and thus, appreciate the value of flowers and vegetables in their community

At the Land of the Living Skies park, mounted on the rail fence in front of the park are a series of window boxes filled with a winning combination of chartreuse sweet potato vine, purple petunias and marigolds; these window boxes provide a vital 'punch' of colour to this community park. Even from a distance, visitors are attracted to this public green space because of such an impressive colour scheme.

A flower and vegetable garden owned by Tina Cresswell of The Star restaurant was an impressive and lush garden space demonstrating how waist high raised beds can be both attractive and functional. Unusual annual vines could be seen climbing repurposed trellis in a large whiskey barrel, while Nasturtium and Black-Eyed Susan Vine scrambled up an antique wooden bedstead that had been mounted on the side of a small shed. This was a delightfully inventive and productive home garden.

Due to on-going drought conditions, some gardeners in Maple Creek have embraced xeriscape gardening. As CiB steering committee member, Nola Sanderson, mentioned, many gardeners in Maple Creek choose not to water their lawns, using what water they have for their flower beds and container plantings instead. One resident at the corner of Carter Street and 2nd Avenue designed a garden featuring native species and exceptional drought tolerant grasses; Calamagrostis acutiflora "Karl Foerster" (feather reed grass) created quite an impression in both his front and backyard spaces.

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The Post Office Pocket Garden is a beautiful garden designed by CiB volunteers with assistance from the staff of the Post Office who volunteer their time to maintain this delightful public space.

The “Flower of the Year” initiative is an interesting way to engage community gardeners to adopt the flower chosen at the Annual Soiree of the local CiB. This year’s flower, Rudbeckia Sonora is a beautiful choice, and was seen in “Adopt a Barrel” container plantings throughout the Heritage District and in some private gardens.

Bedding plants and containers are filled with colorful annuals and evergreen shrubs. The Potentillas were doing marvelously in the July heat and a rather useful annual called Kangaroo apple is tall and willowy with lovely purple flowers. This was well chosen by CiB volunteers as it can withstand both the heat and wind characteristic of Maple Creek and Palliser’s Triangle.

The Annual Soiree and personal thank-you notes in recognition of the many contributions made by CiB volunteers, residents, and businesses are excellent ways to offer thanks and appreciation to the Maple Creek community who make this Town a superb place to live and work.

Recommendations:

Although one large bed at the entrance to Centennial Park includes a helpful sign indicating that the bedding scheme is a “Native Heritage Plantscape,” the judges recommend that the local CiB provide more outreach to residents on “what are native heritage plants?” “xeriscape gardens,” and “drought tolerant plants” by offering free workshops and/or illustrated presentations to educate the public. As well, it is recommended that the local CiB create an illustrated pamphlet outlining the many benefits of xeriscaping in Maple Creek along with a list of plants (with descriptions and photographs) of drought tolerant plants and/or native heritage plants. These pamphlets or brochures could also be made available on the Town’s website or Facebook page and through the public library.

In addition, a notice could be made in the local newspaper on a regular basis that reminded the public and especially new residents to Maple Creek that an information leaflet or pamphlet is available from the Town Hall and public library on xeriscaping and drought tolerant plants.

Wild roses are sometimes susceptible to leaf-roller and borers despite their high tolerance to wind and heat. The judges noticed that the wild roses had not bloomed this season and appeared to be under stress; there was evidence that an insect had burrowed well below the surface of the bud and caused bud, stem and surrounding leaves to blacken and die. A mild dish soap and/or vinegar mixture can be applied in early spring before the buds have formed and the leaf roller (for instance) has the chance to mature and cause damage.

Browned tulip stems are unsightly and the judges recommend they be removed from CiB beds as soon as the stalk has deteriorated enough to warrant removal.

The judges suggest the local CiB volunteers make a strong effort to involve more youth in the planting of the various flower beds in the community.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR INVOLVEMENT

“Within the context of climate change and environmental concerns, communities involved in the Communities in Bloom program can be proud of their efforts, which provide real and meaningful environmental solutions and benefit all of society.”

COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM IS MADE POSSIBLE BY

The commitment of local, provincial and national volunteers

The support of elected officials and of staff in municipalities

The dedication of our judges, staff and organizations

The contributions of our sponsors and partners