

Subject: Communities in Bloom Final Report

Recommendation:

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report #2024-0222-
Communities in Bloom Final Report, for information.**

Background:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Communities in Bloom Working Group 2024-2026, as well as reviewing the Judges' Tour of Pelham and the Final Report provided by the Judges post-tour.

Communities in Bloom is a volunteer and partnership-driven organization that uses a multi-tiered competitive evaluation process to foster community strength, involvement, and continuous improvement. This is accomplished by nurturing environmental sustainability, enhancement of green spaces, and heritage conservation in cultural and natural environments encompassing municipal, residential, commercial, and institutional spaces.

Analysis:

The Communities in Bloom working group began meeting in January of 2024, once registration for the Communities in Bloom Ontario Judging Program was completed. The working group consisted of both municipal employees and community members who provided a wonderful variety of perspectives and representation. Working Group members included:

- Lois LaCroix, Volunteer Member
- Heather Wilson, Volunteer Member
- Heather Hamilton, Volunteer Member
- Vilma Moretti, Volunteer Member
- Katie Kilbreath, Seniors and Community Services Programmer, Staff Representative
- Vickie vanRavenswaay, Director of Recreation, Culture and Wellness, Staff Member
- Halee Braun, Supervisor of Recreation Programs, Staff Member
- Dave Nichols, Supervisor of Beautification, Staff Member

- Ryan Cook, Manager Public Works, Staff Member
- Jason Marr, Director of Public Works, Staff Member
- Leah Letford, Communications and Public Relations Specialist, Staff Member
- David Cribbs, CAO, Staff Member

The Judges' Tour took place on July 11th and 12th, 2024, in which an extensive itinerary was planned and put together by the committee. The Tour featured different Pelham sites and locations that highlighted key elements from the six criteria that were being judged:

- Community Appearance
- Environmental Action
- Heritage Conservation
- Tree Management
- Landscape
- Plant/Floral Display

The community was then rated based on a points system that ranges from 1 to 5 blooms.

During the two days of the tour, Staff, Volunteers and Community Members hosted the judges and provided informative and educational experiences that gave insight to what the Town of Pelham offers its community through local parks, seasonal events, businesses, natural spaces and other municipal services. The Judges were also given copies of a Town of Pelham Profile Book – a document that presents achievements and information on all related initiatives. The full Town of Pelham Profile Book can be viewed online at <https://www.pelham.ca/en/recreation-and-leisure/communities-in-bloom.aspx#Town-of-Pelham-Profile-Book>

On September 19th, 2024, Staff attended the Communities in Bloom Symposium and Awards 2024, hosted at Landscape Ontario's headquarters in Milton. This event hosted communities across the province that participated in the Communities in Bloom program to present each area their final reports and awards.

Bloom rating: Up to 55%: 1 bloom. 56%-63%: 2 blooms. 64%-72%: 3 blooms. 73%-81%: 4 blooms. 82%-100%: 5 blooms.

The Town of Pelham received 71.4% 3 blooms with a special mention for Landscape, as well as receiving a criteria award for Urban Forestry.

A final Evaluation Report was also provided with detailed feedback and breaking down the points given in each category of the tour and evaluation.

Feedback provided will be used to prioritize enhancement projects and tasks across the Town moving forward. Unless Council directs otherwise, staff are of the view

that the Town should not participate in 2025 so as to have an opportunity to perform enhancement work and presumably again compete during 2026.

Financial Considerations:

Approved funds were built into the 2024 budget through Beautification and Recreation, Culture and Wellness to be utilized towards the Communities in Bloom working group initiatives.

Strategic Plan Relationship: Environmental and Climate Change Adaptation

By focusing on environmental and climate adaptation, the Town of Pelham will prioritize actions that will continue to protect and conserve the natural heritage and resources in Pelham. Priorities of the Town in this area will provide the foundation for a clean, safe, and sustainable environment for present and future generations.

Consultation:

Martin Quinn, Communities in Bloom Ontario

Pelham Garden Club

Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:

- Communities in Bloom Final Evaluation Form
- 2024 Pelham Tour Agenda

Prepared and Recommended by:

Katie Kilbreath
Seniors and Community Services Programmer

Vickie vanRavenswaay, CRFP
Director of Recreation, Culture and Wellness

Prepared and Submitted by:

David Cribbs, BA, MA, JD, MPA
Chief Administrative Officer