



Date: January 27, 2025
To: Mayor and Council
Author: Karen Loney
RE: Communities in Bloom - 2025 Judging

RECOMMENDED ACTION

That the recommendation from the Communities in Bloom (CIB) Committee, with the support of Administration, to not enter the 2025 National CIB judging competition and any budget funds previously identified for competition expenses be redirected towards increasing native tree and plant cover in Kingsville **BE APPROVED**.

BACKGROUND

The Kingsville Communities in Bloom Committee of Council (Committee) is a member of the National Communities in Bloom program. The National program "...consists of communities receiving information and being evaluated either provincially or nationally by a volunteer jury of trained professionals on the accomplishments of their entire community (municipal, private, corporate and institutional sectors, citizens) on six key criteria: Community Appearance, Environmental Action, Heritage Conservation, Tree Management, Landscape and Plant & Floral Displays" (CIB website).

The Committee participated in the Provincial judging process in 2015, 2016, and 2017 and the National judging competition in 2019 and 2022. After the judging in 2022, Administration was informed that for the Committee to remain a member of the National CIB program, Judging must occur in 2025. As such, the Committee worked under this assumption and requested an additional \$9,000 in its 2025 budget to bring the National judges to Kingsville.

DISCUSSION

During the 2025 Council budget deliberation, several questions were raised about the increased funds for the judging. While Council approved the CIB budget, which included \$9,000 for competition expenses, the CIB Committee interpreted the discussion that Council may not see the judging as a top priority. This discussion had also occurred at the committee meeting, but no action was taken as the assumption was that judging was mandated by Council.

In light of the Committee questioning the benefits of judging and Council's discussion at budget deliberations, Administration reached out to the Communities in Bloom National office to confirm if Kingsville needed to be judged this year. The reply received stated, "If your community feels that participating in the evaluated category for 2025 isn't feasible, we can extend your invitation to participate in the non-evaluated category for an additional year to provide more flexibility" (Email Correspondence December 4, 2024).

On January 7, 2025, the Committee convened and reflected on the pros and cons of judging. Based on this discussion, the Committee unanimously approved that, pending the Council's approval, the Committee would not proceed with judging in 2025 and that any funds budgeted for competition expenses should be redirected to increasing native tree and plant cover in Kingsville.

The Committee will continue to work on activities that support the CIB National organization goals while investing in educational, interactive, sustainable and long-lasting activities. Items on the Committee's work plan include the following,

- Hosting a Nature and Garden Show on May 3, 2025, that will consist of speakers and vendors,
- Hosting a front garden/business foral display contest,
- Cleaning a portion of the ERCA trail,
- Promotion of the Mediation Trail,
- Ribbon Cutting for the new pollinator garden at Greenhill Cemetery,
- Developing a story-book trail to increase connection with nature,
- Hosting the Annual Pumpkin Parade on November 1, 2025, at Lakeside Park, and,

Should Council approve that the Town will not enter the 2025 Communities in Bloom National judging competition, the Committee will reallocate the funds to increase native trees/plants in Kingsville.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

No changes have been proposed to the overall Committee budget. The recommended action reflects a reallocation of the existing budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Communities in Bloom Committee of Council focuses on supporting the environment. Multiple projects have increased tree coverage, increased habits for pollinators and focused on education and engaging the community in supporting Kingsville to be a Happy, Healthy Place to live, play and work.

CONSULTATIONS

Communities in Bloom Committee of Council
Senior Management Team

PREPARED BY:



Karen Loney, M.A.
Manager of Recreation Programs and Special Events

REVIEWED BY:



Ryan McLeod, CPA, CA
Director of Financial and Corporate Services

REVIEWED BY:



John Norton
Chief Administrative Officer