



COUNCIL REPORT

Langdon Centre Street Landscaping

Electoral Division: 7

File: 1028-400

Date:	March 12, 2024		
Presenter:	Jeannette Lee, Manager		
Department:	Capital and Engineering Services		
Approved by:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Executive Director / Director	and/or	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chief Administrative Officer

REPORT SUMMARY

Centre Street in Langdon underwent reconstruction in 2020, expanding the roadway to a four-lane cross-section from Highway 560 to Railway Avenue. Establishing grass along the corridor has proven difficult, leaving scarred and barren boulevard landscaping due to the high content of clay mixed with gravel with high salt content. Efforts were made in the summer of 2023 with the addition of imported topsoil and seeding. Some improvements were realized successfully in the fall, but full grass catch may still be a gradual process requiring several years to be established.

By motion of Council November 29, 2023, Special Council Meeting, Council requested Administration to review alternative options for the completion or improvement of landscaping along Centre Street.

MOVED by Councillor Shule that Administration be directed to prepare a report to be presented to Council, no later than the end of Q1 2024, with additional information on the completion of landscaping on Centre Street in Langdon.

Administration has provided two concept plans and estimated costs for the stretch of Centre Street from Brander/Anderson Avenue to 3rd Avenue. This area was identified for the completion of landscaping due to the commercial and recreational use (Langdon Park) along it borders, bringing users and pedestrians to the area aside from vehicular traffic. The proposed concept plans include options for perennial (softscape) landscaping or hardscaping with paver stones along the west boulevards, and naturalized treatments for the east side dry-ponds included a rip-rap dry creek bed, plantings that are drought resistant, and wildflower seed mixes. Costs for these treatments are \$310,000 and \$505,000 respectively.

ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approves the budget adjustment for \$310,000 from the Road Program Reserve to complete the landscaping along Centre Street as per Attachment C.

BACKGROUND

In 2023, efforts were made to repair the boulevards along Centre Street, including the removal and replacement of soils, and seeding with a seed mix more resistant to the contaminants and salts that are common along roadsides. Full seed capture was not realized last fall but should be monitored through the start of 2024 to evaluate any progress. A reduced mow schedule should be implemented in these areas, allowing for growth and root establishment. While some areas may see weed invasion, the presence of green, living plants will improve the aesthetic quality of the boulevard.

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It is recommended that no further landscaping be completed to areas north of Brander/Anderson Avenue to Highway 560, based on the limited pedestrian travel and use along the boulevards. Areas south of 3rd Avenue transition to a mono-walk (curb and sidewalk) along the driving lanes, allowing for a hardscape buffer to any landscaping.

ANALYSIS

Option 1 – Softscape Boulevard and Landscaped Dry Ponds

The narrow west boulevards between the curb and separate walk would be treated with an ornamental reed grass (Karl Foerster) and short paver sections at curb corners in order to maintain driving site lines. The two (2) dry ponds along Langdon Park would be reconstructed with a rip-rap (rock armouring) dry-creek bed along the base and upper slopes treated with a wildflower seed mix and limited plantings of ornamental reed grass. This option is estimated to cost \$310,000.

Option 2 – Hardscaped Boulevard and Landscaped Dry Ponds

The narrow west boulevards between the curb and separate walk would be treated with paver stones, with an option to place raised planters or other furniture (approximately 25 pieces). The two (2) dry ponds along Langdon Park would be reconstructed with a rip-rap (rock armouring) dry-creek bed along the base and upper slopes treated with a wildflower seed mix and limited plantings of ornamental reed grass. This option is estimated to cost \$505,000.

Landscape Benefits

1. Softscape
 - a. The suggested Karl Foerster grasses are:
 - i. Able to provide aesthetic interest year-round
 - ii. Requiring minimal maintenance (trim in Spring)
 - iii. tolerant to Alberta's extreme weather of hot/dry summers and cold dry winters
 - iv. able to thrive in urban settings with pollution and salt.
2. Hardscape
 - a. Paving stone along high-use corridors will ensure longevity of the streetscape, as pavers are more durable and flexible than poured concrete, especially when we experience frequent freeze-thaw cycles.
 - i. year-round aesthetic interest may be added with inclusion of raised planter beds. These beds require additional maintenance, watering and yearly or twice-yearly planting.
3. Dry-Ponds
 - a. The rip-rap dry creek bed would aid to protect against erosion when the pond fills and may stay wet for a duration, as well as not require growth in soils with the highest concentrations of contaminants.
 - b. A native wildflower seed mix can provide a variety of benefits:
 - i. Ensure an aesthetic quality along the busy area of Langdon Park.
 - ii. Requires less maintenance than grass which needs regular mowing (once a year cut back).
 - iii. Can outcompete weeds for space, reducing maintenance.
 - iv. Provide food and habitat for native pollinator species.

COMMUNICATIONS / ENGAGEMENT

No communication or engagement is required.

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IMPLICATIONS

Financial

A budget adjustment in the total of \$310,000 is required to proceed with Option 1, Softscape Boulevards and Landscaped Dry Ponds to be funded through the Road Program reserve.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Key Performance Indicators			Strategic Alignment
Effective Service Delivery	SD2: Services are resourced and delivered to specific groups as intended, and citizens are satisfied with the outcomes	SD2.1: Percent of citizens satisfied with the range of County services available/delivered	Creating aesthetically pleasing boulevard landscaping while reducing further financial requirements for maintenance and watering.

ALTERNATE DIRECTION

THAT Council direct Administration continue monitoring the seed catch along Centre Street and bring a report back to Council in Q4 of 2024.

Benefits

Should the work and seeding completed in 2023 be sufficient to gain a green boulevard, no further expenditure is required.

Disadvantages

That another growing season could pass without grass establishment along the boulevards.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Site Plan – Boulevard Treatment Summer 2023

Attachment B: Landscape Concept Plans

Attachment C: Budget Adjustment