



1A-625 Hillside Ave
Victoria, BC V8T 1Z1
Tel: 250-383-5800
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June 12, 2014

Mayor and Council
City of Victoria
c/o 1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Re: Boulevard gardens

LifeCycles understands that a grassroots effort is underway to create a set of boulevard gardening guidelines in Victoria, based primarily on Boulevard Gardening Guidelines in effect in Vancouver (at: <http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/gardening-on-boulevards.aspx>). We have reviewed a document received from community members, entitled "City of Victoria Interim Boulevard Gardening Guidelines", version 7 (Draft Guidelines).

LifeCycles would like to express our support for boulevard gardening in general, and for the Draft Guidelines in particular. Boulevard gardening holds the potential to offer economic, social, and ecological benefits to the City of Victoria.

The Draft Guidelines are consistent with LifeCycles' mission to cultivate community health from the ground up by connecting people, the food they eat and the land it comes from. The Draft Guidelines are also consistent with the City's Official Community Plan, in a variety of respects. We encourage Council to support and adopt the Draft Guidelines.

We would also like to offer two suggestions for the Draft Guidelines:

Community Orchards

Section 2.5 generally forbids tree-planting in public spaces. We see this section as an opportunity to grow the City's Community Orchard Pilot Program. Perhaps a new paragraph could be added to section 2.5, along these lines:

For those interested in planting fruit trees in visible, public places, the City of Victoria is running a Community Orchard Pilot Program. For more information, including how to volunteer in an existing community orchard, visit: [LINK](#) The Pilot Program involves community groups, and new initiatives are proposal-driven. If you would like to get involved in preparing a proposal to submit to the City, with a view to establishing a new community orchard, consider engaging community members near you. In turn, this community group can contact LifeCycles at: info@lifecyclesproject.ca for support gaining relevant knowledge, skills and resources.



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Ongoing Maintenance

One risk associated with boulevard gardening is that those doing the work lose interest in gardening, or move away. LifeCycles is regularly in contact with many individuals who would like to get involved in local gardening projects. As more boulevard gardens are planted, LifeCycles could play the role of 'match-maker'. We are well suited to this role, and feel that in the long-term it may be of use for us to be included in the guidelines:

If you are involved with a boulevard garden but find it difficult or impossible to maintain, consider contacting LifeCycles at: info@lifecyclesproject.ca. LifeCycles keeps a list of volunteers who wish to work in local gardens. If LifeCycles is able to provide contact information to you regarding a potential volunteer, it would be up to you to contact the potential volunteer, screen them, and work out some maintenance arrangement (including a basic understanding of the work expected, and how you might share food or flowers). Likewise, if you are interested in gardening but have no access to a garden plot, consider contacting LifeCycles at: info@lifecyclesproject.ca. LifeCycles would add your name and contact information to its list of potential garden volunteers. LifeCycles may be in a position to play a more hands-on role (e.g.'s leading remediation; planting perennials), if funding and other resources permit

A Growing Partnership

LifeCycles envisions playing a more active role in relation to boulevard gardens and community orchards in the City. With over 20 years of experience in facilitating community engaged work in this City and a highly skilled team of project coordinators and volunteer leaders, we are well situated to do this work. However, LifeCycles currently has no support to mount such efforts.

Working with the City, we are confident that we could arrive at a simple, long-term, sustainable economic arrangement that would enable LifeCycles to perform the baseline services indicated above. We are confident that the economic benefits provided to the City in this case would outweigh the *minor* costs associated with delivering these essential community services.

Looking forward, we are excited to continue to encourage, support, and develop a partnership that can enable a proliferation of ecological diversity and community nourishment in all the public spaces of this great, Garden City. LifeCycles' already partners with the Town of View Royal to collaboratively develop, manage and maintain a large public orchard. We also work collaboratively with the Municipality of Saanich to offer residents food literacy education and engagement opportunities. Both regional governments feel that LifeCycles' is able to leverage their investment and achieve significant impact with scarce public resources. We are very interested in working with the



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City of Victoria to enable community members to engage in stewarding the places in which they live.

In closing, we would like to reiterate our support for the Draft Guidelines. LifeCycles is optimistic that Council will be able to finalize and implement the Draft Guidelines, with or without further improvements.

Feel free to contact the undersigned with any questions or concerns.

Kind regards,

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