

Portage La Prairie
Evaluation
Form

2017

**Manitoba
Communities in Bloom**



Manitoba Communities in Bloom Evaluation – City of Portage La Prairie 2017



Community: Portage La Prairie
Province: Manitoba
Category: Population over 5000

The evaluation is based on 6 criteria:

Tidiness	118.00	/	150.00
Environmental Action	97.50	/	150.00
Heritage Conservation	106.00	/	150.00
Urban Forestry	121.50	/	175.00
Landscape	139.50	/	200.00
Floral Displays	122.00	/	175.00
Total	704.50	/	1000.00

Percentage: 70%

Bloom rating: 3 Blooms

Special Mention: Urban Forest With Inclusion of Fruit Trees For All

Bloom ratings:

[Up to 55% -1 bloom: 56% to 63% - 2 blooms: 64% to 72% - 3 blooms: 73% to 81% - 4 blooms: >82%: 5 blooms]

For 5 bloom 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)]

Representative (s) of Community

Name:	James Kostuchuk	Function:	CIB Portage Community Revitalization
Name:	Victoria Olsen	Function:	PCI Student
Name:	Arishya Aggarwal	Function:	PCI Student

Judges

Name: <u>Glenda MacPhee</u>	Name: <u>Wendy Menzies</u>
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Evaluation date: July 28, 2017

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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 evaluation is 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)
- **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 and citizen groups – 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
- 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

We had a very interesting and well organized tour. It was very evident that a great deal of thought and preparation was dedicated to the planning of this tour.

This committee has a very unique membership. All of the representatives, James (teacher), Bill (filmmaker), Victoria (Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation) and Arishya who accompanied us through the day contributed their own expertise and knowledge to this initiative. Arishya, the Youth Ambassador contributed so much to the tour! It was wonderful to experience her passion for this community and enthusiasm the Communities in Bloom program!

We also appreciated having city council representatives, Mayor Irvine Ferris and Councillor Wayne Wall participate in the tour as well. Councillor Melissa Draycott attended the evening barbeque. The support shown by city council is so important to the viability and growth of this program.

The community gardens spread throughout the city are testament to the gardening interests of residents. Senior life lease residents have expressed that they like having control of their own space. What a wonderful gift the initiators of this project have given these seniors.

Kudos, also, to Portage and Area Beautification group for reclamation of industrial areas along main street east.

Members of this Community in Bloom committee have also been able to achieve support and partnership with the local media and with two of the local nurseries. Congratulations upon these endeavors!

Your hardcover photo book offers a marvelous glimpse of the community of Portage. The stories and photos included details to what we were shown as well as added to the parts we may not have been able to see during our tour.

Recommendations:

While the photo book was wonderful, a profile book that describes and documents the historic and present day highlights of this community can include even more details that can't always fit into the tour day. It is an enormous task which could be shared with several organizations throughout the community. It is a bit easier to edit and adapt each year.

In addition, if digital versions are made available to judges in advance, links could be added with extra information such as the following site that the judges stumbled upon <http://www.portagepublicart.com/>. These publications can be part of a tourism package. Many communities have added these to the reading material at local libraries, businesses, offices, waiting rooms etc. It would be another way to promote this wonderful community and a great resource for any visitor to the area.

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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		
Tidiness, order, cleanliness and first impressions	10	8
Community anti-litter awareness programs	10	7
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	8
Cleanliness of public green infrastructure: parks, streetscapes (sidewalks, planters, urban signage and furniture such as benches, litter and recycling containers etc.)	15	12
Visual appeal, and condition of municipal buildings and properties (including City Hall grounds),	15	12
Business & Institutions		
Tidiness, order and cleanliness and first impressions	15	13
Condition of buildings (exterior maintenance), grounds, sidewalks and parking lots	15	12
Condition of urban furniture: benches, litter and recycling containers	5	4
Residential		
Tidiness, order and cleanliness	20	15
Condition of buildings, grounds and yards	15	12
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
Support – financial and/or in-kind or participation by the municipality, businesses and institutions for community clean-up programs	10	7
Tidiness Total	150.00	118.00

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TIDINESS

Observations:

The city of Portage la Prairie is generally quite tidy thanks in part to the 1700 registered participants in the spring community clean-up and a responsible Green Team; who constantly monitor graffiti and are on the lookout for exemplary yards.

By putting interactive artwork on the walls at the William Glesby Centre and library the graffiti problem area was dealt with. The restoration of the Pao Garden with students doing work to develop the area helped to develop pride and responsibility in youth. This is a win-win situation for the community and the business owner. On the other side of the building a hazardous road area was turned into green space. So many practical solutions to downtown issues! Well done!

Effective bylaws are in place to deal with buildings and yards that are not maintained adequately. While this is never a fast process, eyesores were not obvious on the judging tour. Most yards appeared to be well cared for.

Newspaper and radio participation in community efforts is a huge asset. This helps relay the message for positive community action. Many hands make light work.

The public art benches created with local artists as part of your *Canada 150* projects are nicely spread throughout the city and so unique. They are well thought out and have practical placements. Be sure that the public knows about the *Canada 150* artwork benches and mural.

Recommendations:

While the judges were shown many beautiful public spaces it would be helpful to see a bit more of the residential areas in order to effectively determine tidiness scores.

Some litter was observed in the duck pond duckweed. Try to have such removed regularly so that it doesn't become a dumping ground.

Your Chamber of Commerce is obviously active in your community. Could Chamber come on board to encourage businesses to manage weed control in front and behind their buildings? We can walk by areas so often they become too familiar and may not realize that the growing weeds are not leaving positive first impressions. While many businesses clearly address this on a regular basis, there are a few that could benefit from these reminders. Perhaps a group of keen students could volunteer to help out with weed management when business owners are not able to add this to their already busy lives.

We would encourage more financial support from the city council.

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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 strategy: policies, programs, guidelines, long-term planning/vision; effective bylaws/policies and their enforcement; and public education programs and activities	20	16
Waste reduction 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, and handling of hazardous waste including e-waste collection and reuse of compost material	20	14
Water conservation and use-reduction programs such as promotions, efficient irrigation, use of non-potable water, water restriction policies	15	9
Energy conservation programs such as alternate forms of energy (ex. geothermal, biomass, wind, solar) and initiatives such as: efficient appliances initiatives, shielding for night skies issues, efficient street lighting	15	10
Environmental initiatives, innovations and actions such as: - 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: such as waste management (reduce, reuse and recycle), water conservation, energy conservation, brownfield management	10	5
Corporate environmental innovation/stewardship, initiatives, activities (ex. environmental clean-up activities)	10	5
Residential		
Participation in the 3-R (reduce, reuse and recycle) initiatives and composting	10	7
Adoption of water conservation practices such as rainwater collection and rain gardens	15	8
Community Involvement		
Public participation in public forums and policy development on environmental issues	5	3.5
Public participation in community, neighbourhood or individual street environmental activities and programs (including promotion, organization and evidence of taking ownership, etc.)	10	6
Support – financial and/or in-kind or participation by the municipality, businesses and institutions in public environmental activities and programs	10	6
Environmental Action Total	150.00	97.50

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ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

Observations:

All told, there are about 22 km of walking trails which will eventually be connected throughout the city. With some kept clear in winter, this active transport system provides an excellent opportunity for the public. When groups such as the Junkyard Dogs groom cycling paths it shows the importance of these trails.

Ten percent of all new developments must be designated green space. Trees were already planted in the courtyard of the new development on 4th Ave East. Having them in place before anything else begins speaks to the commitment to this requirement.

Most of the waste in Portage is managed effectively. Recycling is sorted to reduce recycling errors and cross contamination. This makes it a much more profitable business. Compost is sifted so it is ready and available for use, while old asphalt is ground and made available for repurposing. The city is looking at kitchen waste management. Commitments have been made for water and waste treatment upgrades, Memorial parks have been rehabilitated and repurposed and beet juice has effectively replaced road salt. At the museum, even the Richardson ground squirrel has found refuge. While wood branches are burned, mulch from the arborist is available to public. Continue to explore ways to better manage the wood and branches brought to the compost sites.

Crescent Lake is being effectively managed and monitored despite public misconceptions that it needs to be changed. Rotary Park bioswales deal with drainage for a very extensive area. The LED lights are providing safety to the public without light pollution and high energy consumption.

Consider sharing the environmentally responsible example of Percy Gregoire-Voskamp's yard with the public. While few home gardeners would venture into such an immersed extent, his xeriscape and permaculture concepts are very sustainable practices. Perhaps he already shares this information through his library programs.

Recommendations:

Continue workshop development for environmental issues such as home composting. Green action centre provides free composting workshops if mileage is covered. <http://greenactioncentre.ca/do-more/composting-workshops/> . These would be helpful for home gardeners and school programs. Pursue kitchen waste pick-up for those who cannot compost at home.

Is there a way the city could encourage use of rain barrels? Could the city explore rainwater collection for planters and newly planted trees? The 8th Street NW Community Gardens need adequate water sources. Perhaps a large water supply could be placed, such as the tank which was placed by the Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation at the Good Shepherd Church Community Garden.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

Recommendations (continued)

It would be good to know more information about La Verendrye School outdoor courtyard grant and in-school garden.

We would like to hear more about the chemical free turf management. Does this apply only on Island Park or is this practice used on Rotary sports fields as well? How are weeds managed?

Is there a group that monitors and controls invasive species such as purple loosestrife? There were several sightings of this plant that should be removed throughout the community. With your lake being such a central focus it would be disappointing if loosestrife gained a foothold.

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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 policies, by-laws and their enforcement and effective programs	10	6
Natural heritage management plans 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	10
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	9
Cultural heritage 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
Cultural heritage initiatives throughout the year including festivals and celebrations along with preservation of traditions and customs	10	8
Business & Institutions		
Conservation, restoration and integration of natural heritage, including eco parks, conservation areas, heritage gardens, trees and landscapes.	15	10
Conservation, restoration and reuse of heritage buildings and artefacts including their integration with the built/hard, streetscapes and green landscapes	10	8
Residential		
Conservation/restoration and reuse of heritage buildings, artefacts on residential lands	10	8
Community Involvement		
Public participation in community, neighbourhood or individual natural heritage programs including developing policies and plans, site improvements and management, conservation and education initiatives	15	10
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	9
Public participation in community, neighbourhood or individual cultural heritage programs including year-round heritage community events/activities, festivals and celebrations along with preservation of traditions and customs	10	8
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	7
Heritage Conservation Total	150.00	106.00

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Observations:

What a beautiful city, rich in culture and heritage! The first notable evidence of historic conservation is the mature cottonwoods that line the main street, Saskatchewan Avenue. These tall sentinels, along with the native oak, remind us of the efforts of the forefathers of the area so many years ago. The city contains many various examples of heritage trees that provide shade and splendor for all residents. Congratulations on the efforts in establishing an inventory of the heritage trees that exist within the city.

We were so pleased to visit the natural forest, a feature of Island Park. Natural forests are precious to the health and well-being of any eco-system along with providing a much needed space for reflection and rejuvenation for any human being. We enjoyed the historical facts presented to us by Darryl and Cornel, the opportunity to visit the graves of the three Indigenous Chiefs and appreciated the collaboration between cultures. This was one of the many special moments of our tour.

This Park is surrounded by an oxbow of the Assiniboine River known as Crescent Lake. This “lake” was created in the late 1800 early 1900’s and exists as an important part of the city’s historical, commercial, recreational, environmental and scenic attractions. Having Mayfair farm that supplies local, fresh produce within these same city limits is an extra bonus.

In addition to the natural heritage, Portage la Prairie has several heritage buildings and homes that have been preserved. The Land Titles building, built in 1889, remains an impressive part of the commercial area of the city. Its vaults contained precious historical information regarding settlement of the city and surrounding agricultural areas. In addition to the Land Titles building, the community has committed to preserving other heritage buildings such as the City Hall (1885-1898) and the Bank of Montreal (1907). These buildings are architectural treasures of the past.

Driving through many of the streets of Portage la Prairie, there is evidence of many homes that were built in the late 1800’s. One of these homes, the Arthur Meighen Home has been thoughtfully and carefully restored by its owner. This restoration is the result of over 20 years of effort. Many other majestic, older homes also appear well maintained. In another location a church was converted to a home.

The railway system through Portage has been a historical hub of economic activity for the city of Portage, the province, the prairies and the nation. It was great to see the efforts made to make this area an inviting space to enjoy with the wonderful trails, shrubs and trees while restoring the ecosystems along tracks. Volunteers are coordinating efforts to preserve the Canadian Pacific Railway Station (1893) constructed of Manitoba sandstone and brick.

Fort la Reine Museum exhibits many architectural and historic buildings of the area. We were impressed by the extent and variety of buildings and plans for a natural, prairie tall grass habitat and efforts to co-exist with the wildlife of the area.

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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		
First impressions of the community including gateway/entrance treatments	10	7.5
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	7
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	7
Landscape Plan: integrated and implemented throughout the municipality	10	7
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	7
Landscape maintenance policies, standards, best practices and programs	10	7
Landscape maintained to appropriate standards, specifications and best practices.	5	3.5
Qualified personnel (including seasonal staff) and/or in place training programs	10	7.5
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	6
Contribution to urban and civic design and public green spaces above requirements: such as public art, streetscape, site furniture, fountains & innovation in concept & design	15	9
Adequate ongoing life cycle management (ongoing maintenance, ground & asset management, rehabilitation & replacement) of all landscape elements	10	6
Residential		
Streetscape appeal of landscapes (year-round, seasonal, themed)	15	12
Maintenance of properties: lawn care, trees and shrub maintenance (with proven results)	15	12
Selection of plant material (native, local, innovative, edible and pollinator friendly plants)	10	7
Community Involvement		
Public participation in community programs such as: urban agriculture, community gardens, "yard of the week", volunteer park maintenance, holiday illumination & decoration (promotion, organization, etc.)	20	14
Recognition (by municipality and/or by volunteer groups) of volunteer efforts in all aspects of the Communities in Bloom Program including activities in all evaluated criteria	20	12
Landscape Total	200.00	139.50

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LANDSCAPE

Observations:

There are a variety of nicely landscaped areas scattered throughout Portage.

An inviting outdoor classroom at Ecole Crescentview School offers a lovely, shaded place for children to learn in an outdoor setting. While it needs a little maintenance, the maturity of the trees insures the plantings can withstand the rigors of little children playing nearby.

Gladys Crampton Memorial Garden at Douglas Campbell lodge offers seniors and their visitors beautiful shrub borders that are well pruned and free of weeds with rock mulch; perennials such as peonies carefully mulched with wood chips; beds of annuals; benches for sitting and paths for strolling all surrounded by shady trees. In addition there are raised planters of flowers and vegetables for the residents to adopt, plant and tend.

Portage is host to so many lovely landscaped areas. The grasses, shrubs and hostas at Good Shepherd Catholic Church were sustainable, low maintenance choices. The carpet of impatiens beneath the sign attracts immediate attention. Low maintenance shrubbery and grasses were also used at Fort la Reine museum. The wildflower and grass meadow will be an addition to look forward to.

Pao garden's trees, shrubs and sustainable perennials offer a shady retreat in the heart of the city and soften the sharp edges of nearby concrete buildings. The Sunset Palliative Care Garden in Island Park is a calm and relaxing place to remember loved ones. The benches along the water of Crescent Lake are very inviting and appear to be in excellent shape.

The eye-catching Yard of the Week sign draws the focus of passersby. Showcasing these yards will help to encourage others to put that extra effort into yard beautification and start conversations. With photos from a keen Green Team, publicity from the local paper and Jeffries gift certificates to give out your recognition program should be off to a wonderful start. The yard that was toured displayed lush growth and careful maintenance. A fine example for others.

Recommendations:

Be sure that all city planters are on the watering route. Some around Stride Place seemed to be struggling in the heat.

The city maintains many beautiful planters and baskets on Saskatchewan Avenue. In ground plantings seem to be mostly limited to trees and shrubs. While these are well maintained with good variety, well planned and mulched perennial beds of grasses such as the grass on the south side of Stride Place, and low maintenance perennials can be manageable and add dramatic interest as well. An area that could benefit from tall swaying grasses and colourful daylilies or Echinacea is at the base of the sign at Rotary Park.

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Canada 150 Special Edition Award



NOTE: The Heritage – Canada 150 Special Edition is scored separately and is not included in the overall bloom calculation. The community with the highest score out of 100 will receive the Canada 150 Special Edition Award.

Canada 150 Special Edition Award		
Canada 150, includes all community activities celebrating the 150 Anniversary of Canadian Confederation and/or celebrating the heritage of the community in Canada's Confederation. Elements for Canada 150 evaluation include legacy projects, special events, festivals and activities, special green projects (floral displays, tree planting) and special museum/heritage displays.		
	Max	Actual
Municipal		
Canada 150 projects: legacy projects, events, activities and festivals and special green projects such as floral displays and tree planting	50	40
Business & Institutions		
Canada 150 projects: legacy projects, events, activities and festivals and special green projects such as floral displays and tree planting	20	15
Residential		
Canada 150 projects: special green projects such as floral displays and tree planting	10	5
Community Involvement		
Participation in Canada 150 programs: public participation in community, neighbourhood or individual events, activities, festivals and celebrations	20	17
Canada 150 Points Total	100	77

Maple Leaf rating:

- Up to 55%: 1 Leaf.
- 56% to 63%: 2 Leaves
- 64% to 72%: 3 Leaves
- 73% to 81%: 4 Leaves
- >82%: 5 Leaves

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CANADA 150 SPECIAL EDITION AWARD

Observations:

Portage la Prairie has completed significant projects in celebration of *Canada 150*. Grants were obtained to bring some of the projects to fruition.

1. Wheelchair accessible playground
2. Expansion of Splash Island
3. City-wide Community Breakfast
4. Special Fireworks
5. Coordinated City Floral Displays
6. Display of 150 red and white artworks at local art centre. (Yvette Cuthbert-artist)
7. 400 trees donated by the Canadian National Railway
8. Canada 150 Community Mosaic (Stride Place) Here is a link to the story on the Stride Place Mural: <https://www.portageonline.com/local/portage-la-prairie-s-canada-150-mural-unveiled>

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR INVOLVEMENT

Communities in Bloom is made possible by:

The commitment of local, provincial and national volunteers

The support of elected officials and municipal staff

The dedication of judges, staff and organizations

The contribution of sponsors and partners

Thank you to our Sponsors

National

Scotts Canada - Home Hardware – CN

Provincial

Equinox Industries Ltd. ▪ **Gold**

Jeffries Nurseries ▪ **Silver**

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People, Plants and PrideGrowing Together