



**GRAND VALLEY**

## **STAFF REPORT**

**To:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Meghan Townsend, CAO/Clerk  
**Meeting Date:** October 8, 2024  
**Report Number:** **2024-068**  
**Subject:** Downtown Hanging Baskets Program

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### **Recommendation**

**THAT** Council receive Report – Downtown Hanging Baskets program,  
**AND FURTHER THAT** Council directs staff to collaborate with the Grand Valley BIA Board and present options for reusable decorations for Downtown.

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### **Executive Summary**

#### **Purpose**

To present challenges related to the Town's downtown hanging baskets program and options to address these challenges.

#### **Key Findings**

- In 2024 the Town paid \$5100 to purchase the hanging baskets, plus additional costs for staff time, equipment operation and water from the municipal water system.
- Staff recommend that a collaboration between the Town and the BIA take place to find a reusable option to replace the hanging baskets but still beautify the downtown.

## Financial Implications

One time cost to purchase the reusable decorations, plus annual costs of staff time and equipment to install.

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## Report

### Background

The Town purchases hanging baskets to decorate the downtown area each summer. Many people comment on how these baskets beautify the community. The Town tries to purchase baskets to compliment the street baskets purchased by the Grand Valley Garden Club.

In 2024, these hanging baskets cost \$5100 to purchase. Public Works hangs the baskets then takes them down at the end of the season. Public Works staff water the plants using the one tonne truck with watering tank and sprayer. The Town pays the water system program for the water to water the plants.

### Discussion

A few problems have arisen or been brought to staff's attention.

- 1) Length of hanging material – the posts on which the baskets are hung also have parking enforcement signage. The baskets' plantings overflow the basket and hang down, and while this looks quite nice, the plants block the view of the signage from the cars parking on Main Street.

Basket on post at municipal office:



Basket blocking parking signage:



2 Hour Parking  
Enforcement Sign,  
blocked by vines

- 2) Traffic to water – this year, staff relocated two of the plants away from the road and hung them on the municipal office, when the public commented that they did not feel safe having to go around the water truck on the curves along Water Street.
- 3) Annual purchase costs – costs continue to increase each year to purchase the flowers.

Additionally, in the past, these flowers were purchased using Downtown Improvement funds donated by a local developer, and this fund is now depleted. The hanging baskets have been paid for from general taxation revenues since 2022 and various people have wondered if the baskets should be funded by property taxes, or by some other source, or if there is a better way to decorate our downtown.

It has come to staff's attention that the Grand Valley BIA is considering purchasing new banners for the posts where banners are hung each year (except during the Christmas holidays when lights are hung). The Town could partner with the BIA to purchase reusable decorations to replace the hanging baskets for 2025, or to determine a better way to beautify the downtown with a better use of tax funding.

If the decision is to continue on as we have in the past, staff will request that the greenhouse provide us with plantings that do not overhang the basket so that parking signs are not blocked. This order must be placed by early December.

Alternately, the Town could reduce the number of baskets purchased to reduce costs but continue purchasing live plants for decoration.

**Financial Impact**

If the program does not change, it is expected that the hanging baskets will cost around \$6,000 for 2025, given that we will be asking for different types of plants to be used in order to be eye-catching without hanging over and blocking signs.

The cost for working with the BIA could be more than \$6000 for the first year, but then cost only staff time to hang up and take down in future years, decreasing staff time and water expenses (since the other gardens and the street baskets would still requiring watering).

**Consultations**

Public Works

By-law Enforcement

**Attachments**

None.

**This report was submitted by**

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**This report was approved by**

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