



Boulevard maintenance and planting tips

Well maintained boulevards and boulevard gardens add character to neighbourhoods and enhance community pride. Boulevard gardens can also support benefits such as increasing ecological diversity and providing habitat for birds, butterflies and pollinators. The boulevard is the area between your property line and the street curb or shoulder, which may or may not include a sidewalk.

Boulevard maintenance – do's

Property owners must maintain the boulevard adjoining their property. The boulevard is the area between the property line and the curb or shoulder of the roadway, which may or may not include a sidewalk. Property owners must:

- Mow or trim grass or weeds within the boulevard to a height of less than 15 cm.
- Keep the boulevard free of weeds, invasive plants, litter, loose materials including leaves or debris, and in a tidy condition.
- Keep any rain garden within the boulevard free of litter, loose materials including leaves or debris.
- Other than grass, keep landscaping within the boulevard, trimmed or pruned:
 - below a maximum height of 1.0 m, measured from the grade of the boulevard;
 - below a maximum height of 1.5 m, measured from the grade of the boulevard, when greater than 3.3 m distant from the curb or shoulder of the roadway;
 - and setback 0.5 m from the edge of any sidewalk;
 - where there is no sidewalk, setback 1.5 m from the curb or shoulder of the roadway; and
 - provide a clearance of 2.0 m from any fire hydrant or fire hydrant valve.
- Follow Capital Regional District water regulations to establish or maintain health of landscaping and trees.
- Ensure any landscaping and native vegetation within the boulevard does not interfere with the passage of pedestrians, cyclists or vehicles, and maintain sight lines to intersections, driveways, sidewalks, vehicle and bicycle travel lanes, and traffic control devices.

Boulevard maintenance – don'ts

Please review the following:

- Do not prune or cut trees located on the boulevard. Contact parks@saanich.ca or 250-475-5522 with questions or concerns regarding boulevard trees.
- Do not remove native vegetation from the boulevard unless it affects the passage of pedestrians, cyclists or vehicles or is impeding sight lines. In this case pruning native vegetation is acceptable.
- Do not dig up or remove plants and rocks or change the grade of a rain garden.
- Do not litter on the boulevard or damage municipal infrastructure (e.g., signs, street light poles, hydro poles, street furniture).
- Do not damage the boulevard.
- Do not park on the boulevard. Parking on a boulevard is prohibited under the Street and Traffic Bylaw and the Motor Vehicle Act.
- Do not alter the surface, add new landscaping, surface materials, or change the grade of a boulevard without first obtaining a Boulevard Permit.

Boulevards are shared public space, so please respect your neighbours and street users by keeping your boulevard maintained. For more information about maintenance, see the [Boulevard Regulation Bylaw No. 9487](#).

Boulevard planting tips

Residents who want to landscape the boulevard area adjacent their homes need a Boulevard Permit. A Boulevard Permit application is available on saanich.ca or at the Municipal Hall.

Remember that underground utilities and other storm water management features such as rain gardens, swales, ditches and culverts are located in the boulevard. Saanich may require access to maintain these features or to build new sidewalks, install street signage, maintain street lights or plant or prune street trees, part of the reason why fences and other types of built features are not allowed.

The following boulevard planting tips will assist residents who would like to landscape or garden in boulevard along their street frontage. This information aligns with the Boulevard Regulation Bylaw, 2018 No. 9487 as well as other Saanich bylaws and policies.

Before you landscape or plant:

- Review the list of plants approved by Saanich for use in the boulevard [Approved List](#). The District encourages the use of native plants as well as endorses sustainable landscape practices known as "[naturescaping](#)" or natural landscaping. Choosing the right plants also ensures that our underground infrastructure isn't damaged by extensive roots.
- Get a Boulevard Permit. An application is available online or at the Municipal Hall. Submit an application to the Engineering Department customer service counter at engineering@saanich.ca or in person. There is no fee for a Boulevard Permit. Please include photos of your existing boulevard as well as a plan of your proposed changes.

District staff will review before issuing a Boulevard Permit. Please allow 10 working days for the review process.

- If you wish to plant a tree in the boulevard in partnership with the District, please fill out a Boulevard Tree Planting Request application. Parks staff will review your application and contact you to discuss tree selection and further arrangements
- If you want to install a rain garden in the boulevard, this requires a different process, permit and fee (i.e., Permit to Work on the Road Allowance).

Note: Fences, individual rocks, parking areas, retaining walls and hedges on a boulevard do not qualify as acceptable landscaping features.

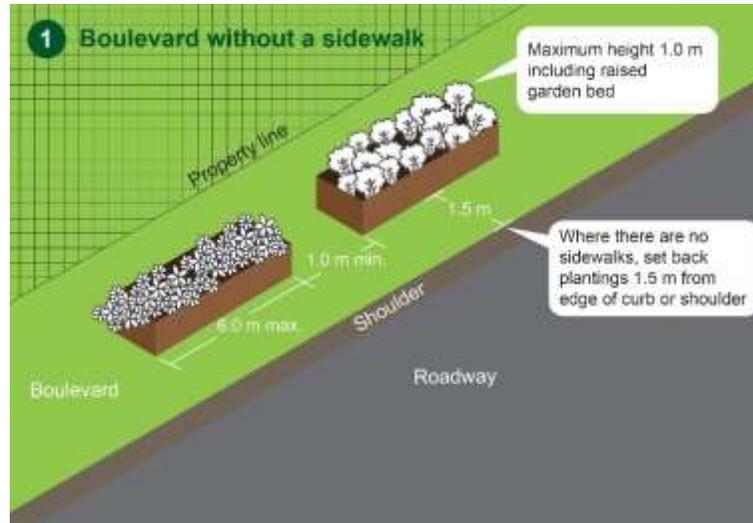
Preparing the boulevard for landscaping or planting:

- Residents will need to confirm the location of underground utilities before disturbing the boulevard by contacting BC One Call at 1-800-474-6886 or bconecall.bc.ca
- To avoid interference with underground utilities and to minimize storm water flow impacts, do not dig down more than 15 cm. Refer to our online [GIS mapping](#) to see locations of utilities.
- Remove existing grass and shake it well to ensure minimal soil loss or you can flip grass over or place a layer of newspaper or cardboard, allowing the grass to decompose in place.
 - The District's Greener Garbage Program and Garden Recycling Drop-off do not accept sod. Compost removed sod.
 - If you think there may be a plant on the boulevard deemed an invasive species which requires removal before planting, please contact parks@saanich.ca for disposal. For information on invasive species, please visit saanich.ca.
- Mound up compost or soil 20 cm above the original ground level to ensure there is adequate soil for plants to root and that underground utilities are not disturbed. Be careful not to place more than 10 cm of compost or soil above existing tree roots as it encourages shallow root growth
- Use new, clean soil or compost to avoid weeds and toxins.

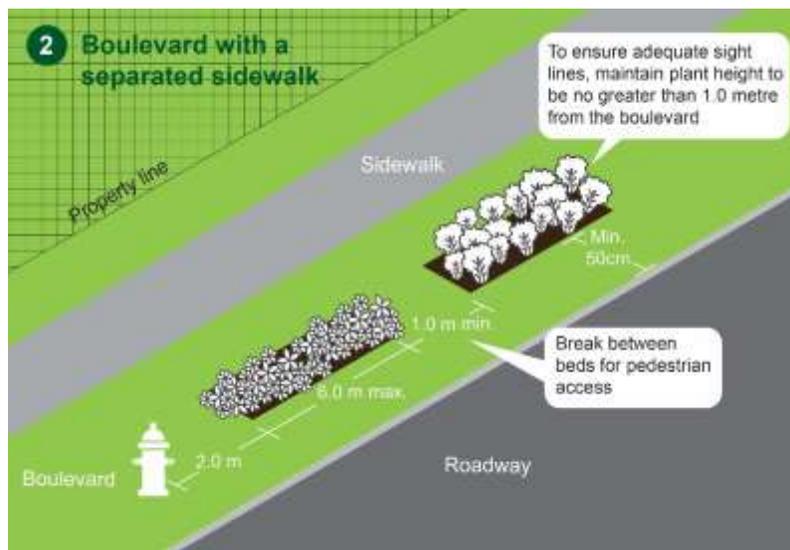
Setbacks and access:

Assess the plant width and height at its maturity. Follow clearance requirements for when a plant is mature and full grown.

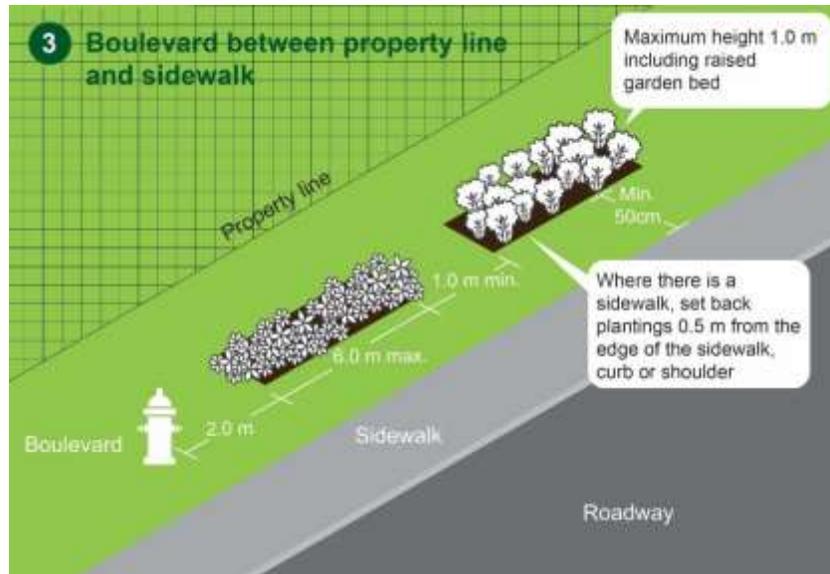
- If there is no sidewalk, pedestrians must have access to they are not forced to walk on the street. At maturity, plantings must be set back 1.5 m from the edge of the curb or shoulder (see Figure 1).



- Where there are separated sidewalks (Figure 2), maintain a path of at least 50 cm along the curb edge to allow pedestrians to easily open and close vehicle doors, and to cross to the sidewalk from the street. Garden beds should be no longer than 6.0 m without a break of 1.0 m or more.



- At maturity, plantings should be set back 0.5 m from sidewalks (Figures 2 and 3)
- Maintain 2.0 m clearance around fire hydrants, utility poles, bus shelters or bus landing areas or other permanent structures (Figure 3). Make sure they are easily visible and accessible from both the street and the sidewalk.



- Be aware that you may lose landscaping and ornamental features. If emergency or other work crews need to perform work on the boulevard. You may or may not receive advanced notification. In either event, please treat work crews respectfully.

Plant height:

- Plants must be no taller than 1.0 m at maturity, measured from the grade of the boulevard within 3.3 m of the curb of the roadway or where there is no curb, the edge of the shoulder. Keep plants low closer to intersections, driveways, curbs, sidewalk edges and/or where visibility may be a concern.
- If the plant heights are deemed to be a visibility or safety concern or encroach in the path of pedestrians, cyclists or vehicles, the District reserves the right to ask owners to trim plants or trim them at the owners cost. Contact Engineering@Saanich.ca with questions or concerns regarding plant heights or encroachments.
- The District regulates fence heights. Similar expectations exist for landscaped plantings even if they were there when you moved in. Refer to sections 6.3-6.7 of the District's [Zoning Bylaw](#) for more details.

Plant selection and maintenance:

- Choose drought-tolerant plants. See the approved plant list developed by Saanich Parks and Recreation [Approved List \[PDF - 42 KB\]](#). [Saanich encourages](#) principles of nativescape gardening using native plants.
- Plants that are listed as an invasive species are not permitted. For more information on invasive plant types see Invasive Plants on saanich.ca.
- Do not plant trees. Only trees planted by the District are allowed on the boulevard. To request a tree on the boulevard contact parks@saanich.ca or 250-475-5522
- Food producing plants are allowed within certain guidelines. If you intend to grow food, you must follow boulevard plant height restrictions. Food producing plants need more water and maintenance, so require more planning before planting. Pets and wildlife also may impact ability to grow food producing plants.

- Outdoor pesticides are regulated by the District's [Pesticide Bylaw](#). There permitted and restricted pesticides for Boulevard use.

Landscape features, ornaments and raised beds:

- Landscape features that are considered temporary structures are allowed within certain parameters, provided they are easily movable and do not interfere with access or visibility. Proposed features must be clearly described on the permit application.
- All landscape features must be set back 1.0 m from the curb, 0.5 m from the sidewalk and 2.0 m from any pole, fire hydrant, or other permanent structure. If there is no sidewalk, a setback of 1.5 m is required from the curb or shoulder.
- Raised garden beds may be considered. The recommended height for a raised garden bed is between 15 cm and 45 cm.
- Plants in raised garden beds should be no taller than 1.0 m, measured from the boulevard ground level, not the surface level of the raised garden bed.
- If you are building raised beds to grow food, avoid treated lumber or creosoted timbers as they may be toxic. Use wood that is naturally rot-resistant such as cedar or juniper. For low garden beds, materials such as bricks, landscape pavers can be used to retain soil and define the garden edge.

An approved Boulevard Permit issued by Saanich's Engineering Department is required before installing any landscape features, ornaments or raised beds on a boulevard.

Working around boulevard trees:

- All trees growing on the boulevard belong to Saanich and are under the care of the District.
- Take care not to damage or cut roots or branches. Do not cut any roots greater than 5 cm in diameter.
- Keep soil or compost from contacting the bark as moisture causes bark to rot, threatening the health of the tree.
- Do not place more than 10 cm of compost or soil directly above tree roots as it may lead to shallow rooting.
- Use compost or soil with a sandy texture (at least 50 per cent sand by volume) around tree roots for good drainage
- Do not nail or tie signs, trellises or other fixtures to a street tree
- Do not compact soil within the drip line of the tree
- Contact parks@saanich.ca or 250-475-5522 with questions or concerns about street trees.

