

**Subject:** RPCC Gardening & Beautification Committee Summer Activity Report

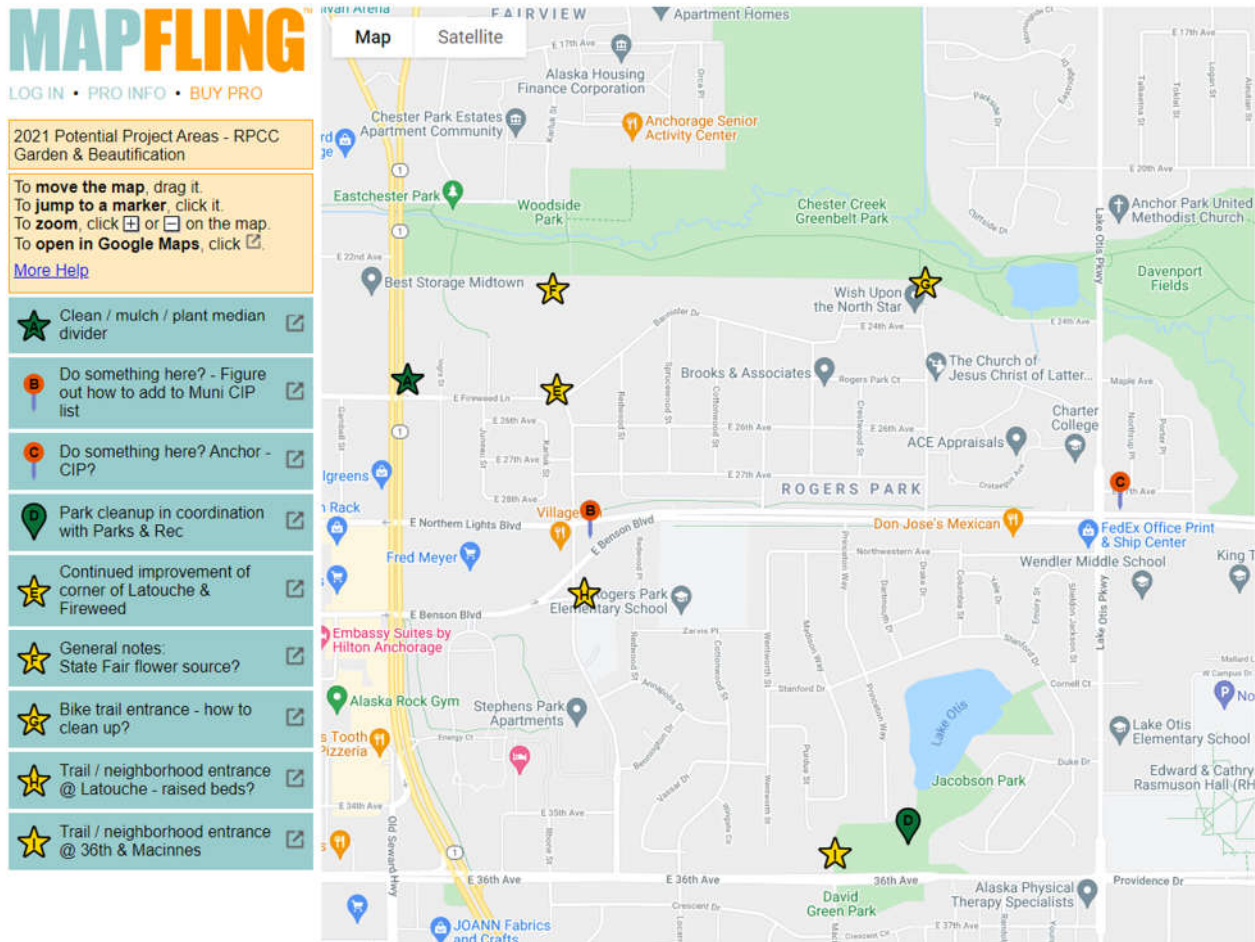
**Date:** September 1, 2021

## Summary

The Rogers Park Community Council Gardening and Beautification Committee planned and executed a garden cleanup and flower planter placement between January and June of 2021, with ongoing watering and care for the planters throughout the summer.

## Planning

The committee met formally via Zoom six times from initial through final execution planning between late January and late May. The team brainstormed options for neighborhood beautification both large and small scale, and ultimately decided to tackle the project at an achievable level in hopes of not biting off more than we could chew. Brainstormed options are shown in the figure below.



## Designs & Budgets

Committee-member and landscape architect Stephanie Brown developed multiple options for how to clean up the pedestrian island at the Fireweed-Seward Highway intersection, with a budget between \$150 and \$500+. Based on the limited funds available, the committee opted for a modest clean-up

scope with mulch and edging, long grasses, and a 4'x4' green planter box. All-in cost for the island work was approximately \$150, including planting soil, grasses and mulch costs. Donated materials (edging, planter box, volunteer time) are not included in the cost. A subset of the option summaries are presented below.

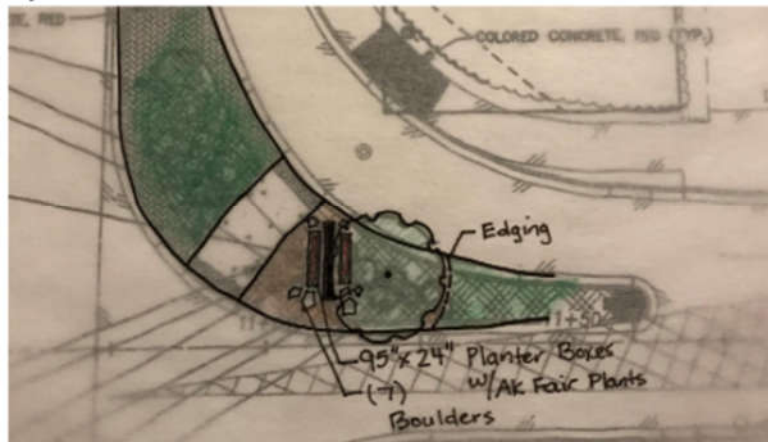
**Option A**



Cost: \$548 for 47 Catmint and 4 Snow Pavement Rosa rugosa (also need to include edging). \$310 for (3) Rose and (23) Catmint, to be placed west of sign = \$310. Assume: Add 3" depth mulch from free source. Grass seed? Not sure what existing ground cover is?

Pros	Cons
Would be noticeable to fast moving traffic.	Initial maintenance would be needed (watering)
Rosa rugosa would tie into existing neighborhood landscaping.	Will muni give us permit for the plantings?
Perennials would require little maintenance after initial period (2 years of watering)	Cost (need to reduce number of plants)
	Plants in this location will trap trash. Snow is also stored in this area.

**Option B**



Cost: \$15 for 1 C.Y. of topsoil (Green Earth), plus price of AK Fair flowers. Boulders range in cost, but are relatively expensive. Does anyone have a source of these? Need to add edging to cost. Assume: Add 3" depth mulch from free source. Grass seed? Not sure what existing ground cover is?

Pros	Cons
Would be inexpensive if we can get the AK Fair flowers	Planters dry out quickly and would need to be watered often. Could construct water capacity at bottom of planters.
Muni would probably have very little problem with planters being put in.	Not sure what kind of flowers they have available. Need something for full sun and dry conditions. Small plants could be hard to see.
Can be modified over time with more money.	Need to store planters somewhere during the winter. But plants won't get crushed under snow.

## Option B Phase 2



Cost: \$406 for (10) Calamagrostis and (43) Iris (also need to include edging)  
 Assume: Add 3' depth mulch from free source. Grass seed? Not sure what existing ground cover is?

Pros	Cons
Would be noticeable to fast moving traffic.	Initial maintenance would be needed (watering)
Iris would tie into existing neighborhood landscaping.	Will muni give us permit for the plantings?
Perennials would require little maintenance after initial period (2 years of watering)	Snow is stored in this area, which is hard on the plants.

The committee identified multiple locations to place the planters along the Fireweed-Latouche corridor and attempted to site additional planters at Carlson Park. For 2021, a lack of right of way corridors and lower volunteer counts / water access points in College Village truncated plans for planters there.

All told, the committee spent approximately \$250 on the beautification effort, not inclusive of in-kind donations. In-kind donations (plants from UAA< planters, fertilizer, seeds, potting soil, etc.) were of approximately \$1,500 in value.

### Planting / Cleanup Day

The committee worked on Saturday, June 5 to both prepare the planters and clean flower beds / medians between Fireweed and Latouche St. Approximately 20 volunteers helped for some or all the time between 9am and about 2:30pm when the work wrapped up. A few pictures of the cleanup day are included below.







## **Volunteers & Donors**

The committee thanks the many, many volunteers, donors and plant-hosts and who made this effort happen, including but certainly not limited to:

John & Sandy Kristopherson (greenhouse space for starts)

Ron Alleva (planters, materials, fertilizer and infinite other things)

Stephanie & Sy Cloud (planning, plant starts and landscape architecture, an F150 full of dirt and more)

Gretchen Cuddy (planning, plant starts, ongoing plant care and feeding)

Bob & Liz Butera (planning, care and feeding)

Susan & David Levy (planning and planting)

Zach & Zelda Zaletel (organizing, plant starts, ongoing plant care and feeding)

## **End of Season**

We plan to collect the planters for off-season storage the weekend of 9/25. While they may appear to be potentially heavy, they're only about 1/3 full of soil for the flowers with the remainder being space-filling materials.

## **Plans for 2022 and Learnings**

For 2022, the committee hopes to expand the breadth of planters further around the community council area, plan and execute another neighborhood cleanup in late spring, work to inform the community about and eradicate invasive species, potentially organize a community BBQ as part of the end of summer resumption of community council meetings, and evaluate other opportunities to enhance the community and foster interpersonal connections.

Key learnings from the initial effort this year include the following:

1. Don't believe everything Lowenfels says – start those flowers earlier than his March 1 suggestion!
2. More flowers per planter – we assumed 9-12 flowers per planter would be sufficient to give room to fill out available space. The last planter placed, at the corner of Ingra and Fireweed, had the benefit of getting all the remaining plants and was certainly the fullest of the bunch. The generally cool summer weather probably didn't help on the filling-out part either.
3. An informal watering schedule worked, but a better plan will be needed for 2022 – the cool weather and comparatively compact placement kept watering manageable.
4. More volunteers needed for 2022 – need to start volunteer recruitment earlier and hopefully more broadly based so that we can spread our efforts further across the RPCC area.

Respectfully submitted,

Zach Zaletel

RPCC Gardening & Beautification Committee Chair