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Town of Oliver seeks grant for xeriscape garden

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Contributed photo

By Times Chronicle Staff

Town council has directed staff to apply for a grant to build a xeriscape demonstration garden adjacent to the Station Street plaza project.

A \$200 million Natural Infrastructure Fund supports projects that use natural or hybrid approaches to protect the environment. Projects eligible for funding include planting or restoring green space.

Randy Houle, the Town’s director of development services, said staff worked with a landscape architect to design a garden that features xeriscape plantings, interpretive signage, wooden benches, seating stumps, shade structures and trellis poles.

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Houle said placement of the 3000 square foot garden leaves space for a future community pavilion and concession/washroom building.

The estimated cost is \$280,000, but after a maximum contribution of 80 per cent from the federal government,

The director said the garden will be an educational platform to promote low water gardening.

“High water use within residential properties is a large issue for the Town and will only become more of an issue with climate change,” Houle said.

According to the Okanagan Basin Water Board, the average Okanagan resident uses twice as much water than the Canadian average, with 86 per cent of this water being used outdoors.

Houle said Oliver, in recent years, has seen the adoption of rock and gravel landscaping in the community. While this spells success for water conservation, it is the “worst possible outcome,” he said.

[Oliver looking at water conservation strategies](#)

Firstly, rocks and gravel create inhospitable spaces for local species such as pollinators that need plant life to survive, Houle said.

Secondly, these gardens contribute to increased heating in our neighbourhoods, he added.

Thirdly, they increase runoff pollution which flows directly into the water system.