

LCC Meeting Summary

The purpose of this in-person meeting was to develop a long term strategy for the LCC board members to work towards.

The Landscape Canada Committee (LCC) reports to the Canadian Nursery and Landscape Association (CNLA) Board of Director's through via its chairperson. The LCC assist the Board in its function of governance by:

- - Recommending, implementing, and evaluating programming policies,
- - Developing long and short-term association strategies,
- - Planning, monitoring, and evaluating CNLA's programs pertaining to landscaping,
- - Advising the Board on programming options, based on committee research and evaluations.

The LCC is composed of provincial landscape associations that are members of CNLA.

All meeting attendees were tasked with identifying problems concerning members within their provinces. The following are seven consistent themes echoed across the provinces.

1) Labour – both the attraction and retention of workers – was consistently identified as a challenge to the prosperity and sustainability of the entire ornamental horticulture sector (lower-skilled workers in particular). Not only is it a major challenge finding workers domestically but the national programs to hire foreign workers are overly complex and insufficient. Increased wage pressures and seasonality were also identified as a challenge in attracting potential employees. Members suggested the following as potential solutions to address the labour challenge:

- Work with federal departments to simplify access to the TFWP, immigration, and refugee programs and to transition foreign workers to Canadian citizens,
- Seek amendments to Employment Insurance so that seasonal employment is recognized as a contribution to the Canadian economy,
- Provide sufficient training and education opportunities,
- Promote the sector as a positive environmental contributor to attract recent graduates,

- Promote nature-based solutions to attract various skilled labourers,
- Promote the sector's seasonality as a positive employment aspect for those who don't want full year employment,
- Develop an employer of choice program that could include the promotion of Red Seal,
- Identify a variety of communication methods to reach prospective employees,
- Develop profiles on the needs of retirees and students to entice them to work in the landscape sector, e.g., seasonality, contribution to a green economy.

2) Environmental sustainability was seen as promotional aspect of the landscape sector. For example, products installed and maintained by the landscape sector provide considerable ecosystem benefits and enhance the resilience of communities and infrastructure to floods and heatwaves. Conversely, the landscape sector is also challenged to improve its environmental sustainability. For example, more and

more municipalities are banning or considering banning lawn care pesticides and gas power tools; the federal government and retailers are moving towards phase-out of single-use plastics; and there is uncertainty regarding the access to water. Members suggested the following as potential solutions to address environmental sustainability challenges:

- Promote the sector's positive impact on climate change mitigation through its nature-based solutions,
- Proactively search for alternatives to gas power tools and plastics,
- The potential ban of herbicides and gas motors used in landscape maintenance could be used as an argument to have changes made to the TFWP due to the potential increase in labour demand,
- Red Seal program could benchmark climate change emissions which could align with government's climate change goals and promote the sector's greenness. This could also increase sector participation in the program.

3) Communication of information to industry members and non-members, public, and students was identified as a challenge and an impediment to raising the profile and standards of the sector. Potential solutions identified included:

- Developing communication products using the various forms of media,
- Developing more targeted communication products with less money,
- Utilizing existing resources, such as Communities in Bloom and the Garden Council, to get messages out,
- Providing consistent messages to sector members who are the first point of contact to the public. Landscape designers must be included. Unified, consistent messages would help brand the sector and promote service standards,
- Develop communication products highlighting successful sector programs underway nationally or provincially to promote the sector as an employer of choice and generate enthusiasm with the sector.

4) The lack of industry participation in various initiatives or programs designed by provincial and national landscape associations to address challenges is an issue. For example, Red Seal was developed to provide a common standard throughout the sector. It was believed that the adherence to standardized good practices would help promote the sector, reduce the number of fly-by-night operations, and protect clients. Since there is no requirement for landscape companies to be members of landscape associations and approximately 90% of landscape companies have less than 5 employees, increased and more targeted communication was seen as a solution. Potential solutions identified included:

- Develop a variety of communication products targeted to small landscape companies,
- Promote nature-based solutions as a way to increase national and provincial member participation and create synergies to influence change in business practices,
- Promote the national masters specification program to increase construction standards.

5) Federal Regulatory impediments were identified as challenging to the sector. Specifically cross-border regulations and regulations that dictate the time period for LMO approvals were mentioned.

6) Post-planting product survivability was identified as a challenge because it tarnished the green reputation of the sector and has repeat business implications. Efforts to increase tree survival are needed.

7) Data collection was identified as a challenge, specifically data that would help benchmark the sector’s environmental and economic performance. Potential solutions identified included:

- Undertaking a life-cycle cost analysis that would identify the sector’s positive contribution to climate change mitigation.

At the conclusion of the group discussion, the following priorities were identified to focus on moving forward:

PRIORITY #1 LABOUR

Objective: The attraction and retention of sufficient human resources. **Actions:**

<p>1. Participate in CNLA’s Government Relations and Human Resources Committees meetings and collaborate on actions to increase accessibility to the TFWP, Refugee Program, and Immigration Program.</p>	<p>Time: September 2022. Champion:</p>
<p>2. To attract labour, work collaboratively with provinces to develop a school education program that would be delivered nationally.</p>	<p>Time: September 2022-September 2023. Champion:</p>
<p>3. To retain labour, develop BMP’s for employers and business owners that would include wage strategies, certification, training programs, and mentorship.</p>	<p>Time: September 2022-September 2024. Champion:</p>
<p>4. Communicate the results of these attraction and retention actions through a variety of methods to peers, public and media.</p>	<p>Time: January 2023. Champion:</p>

PRIORITY #2 ENVIRONMENT

Objective: Greening the Canadian landscape sector through improvements of its environmental performance.

Actions:

1. Undertake a feasibility study regarding the performance of non-gas combustion landscaping tools and including Canadian user experiences.	Time: November 2022-May 2023. Champion:
2. Develop BMP's to improve the sector's environment performance, including methods to reduce: the carbon footprint of operations, the use of plastics, water wastage, and the use of pesticides.	Time: October 2022-October 2024. Champion:
3. Communicate the results of these greening actions through a variety of methods to peers, public and media.	Time: May 2023-September 2024. Champion:

The complete strategic plan will be finalized on the next scheduled meeting of October 18th, with committee members focusing on specific tasks of the strategic plan.