

## Dandelion Control Report (CPS2016-0825) – Q & A

2016 October 13

**1. Dandelions are not considered to be a weed by the province, and I understand that they were prior to 2010. Can you explain the rationale behind this?**

- The provincial Weed Act was amended in 2010. One of the changes was to drop a number of species that didn't meet the new criteria as being a threat from an ecological or economic perspective. Dandelions would be acknowledged as a species that are i) non-native and ii) invasive in disturbed areas (which includes lawns), but unlikely to spread beyond those areas

**2. Why did you propose mowing in the first place if you didn't know it was going to be an effective control technique?**

- In conversations with members of Council last year, we were asked to identify ways to address what was seen as an immediate concern – namely a short-term strategy to help reduce the visual impact of dandelions and therefore reduce the number of complaints we receive about dandelions. It was identified as a short-term strategy only
- We presented a number of options, one of which was to look at whether or not increased mowing would help this. This is a reasonable question to ask – complaints tend to come in the form of a request for mowing and/or weed control, it would follow that additional mowing could help address the situation
- The budgeted amount included funds for a late summer/fall mow. Dandelions typically will flower then as well. After reviewing the results of the early mow, we elected not to continue

**3. Was the \$1M wasted on mowing? Did you learn anything?**

- The intent of the mowing was a short-term strategy to address citizen complaints. It was clear that this was not a control strategy, but an approach to addressing Citizen SRs
- In order to answer that question (does mowing reduce SR volume), it's necessary to mow the entire Parks and Roads inventory (just under 3900 hectares), which costs about \$770K. We didn't think it would be effective in answering the question if we only mowed a portion of the city – we were concerned that we wouldn't be able to readily compare two regions effectively
  - We rejected the idea of only mowing parks that we get complaints on – you can then only show how effective you are at addressing complaints, you can't say anything about how extra mowing helps reduce complaints overall
  - We considered mowing one part of the City and not the other – we elected to do an entire system mow so that we'd have good data to compare with other years
- Lessons Learned (to be outlined in presentation):
  - Growing Degree Day model for dandelion growth may be a useful way to be more strategic with when we start mowing
  - 311 analysis completed and informed decision to not mow in late summer/fall
  - Citizen survey completed
  - Pilots (goat grazing, alternative weed control methods, trial grasses, etc) are useful, science-based ways to inform advancements in weed management
  - Lessons to be applied in revision of Integrated Pest Management Plan

**4. Are dandelions a larger concern on private property or on public land?**

- This has not been evaluated – it is difficult to equate the volume of calls with the magnitude of the issue. They're present everywhere, and a number of factors influence population on any given site
- Good horticultural practices are the most effective long-term control

**5. Is there an education opportunity here?**

- Absolutely. One of the best outcomes that came from the grazing pilot was the interest and excitement from the public. It was a great opportunity to show that the City is actively exploring alternative means to control weeds
- The survey work showed that most Calgarians' knowledge of weed control tends to be herbicide applications. We can talk about other ways of managing our landscape including naturalization, bio-control, grazing, and alternative products

