






Update on Dandelion Control on City Property



CPS2016-0825
SPC on Community and Protective Services
2016 October 14

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Council Direction

NM2015-12 (Dandelion Control on City Property)

On 2015 June 15, Council directed Administration to prepare a report on effective dandelion control for the entire City including financial ramifications and return to Council no later than October 2015.

CPS2015-0738 (Dandelion Control on City Property)

On 2015 September 28, Council approved \$1.7 million in one-time operating for a short-term dandelion suppression program and Administration was to report back no later than October 2016 on the program's effectiveness and costs, and on long-term recommendations for best practices on pest management including weed and dandelion control.

CITY OF CALGARY
RECEIVED
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER

OCT 14 2016

ITEM: 3.4 CPS2016-0825
Dandelion

CITY CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

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Lessons learned

Mowing

Logistics of an extra mow cycle on all assets.

311 Service Request analysis

The pilot additional mow cycle allowed a cross-comparison of SR data to determine impact on SRs.

Growing degree days

Weather analysis can be used to establish a more strategic, ecologically-based mow cycle.

Survey

Citizen survey informed priority areas and education opportunities.

Pilots

Need to continue experimenting in science-based projects to inform advancements in weed management.

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Short-term mowing program

Normal mowing cycles

- Roadway boulevards 5 times per year (780 hectares).
- Calgary Parks has a 14-day mowing cycle (3100 hectares).
- Both Calgary Parks and Roads mobilized to use funding during the first peak dandelion flowering period in May.

2016 weather overview

- Dry, warm spring favoured dandelion growth over grass growth – selecting a starting date was a challenge.

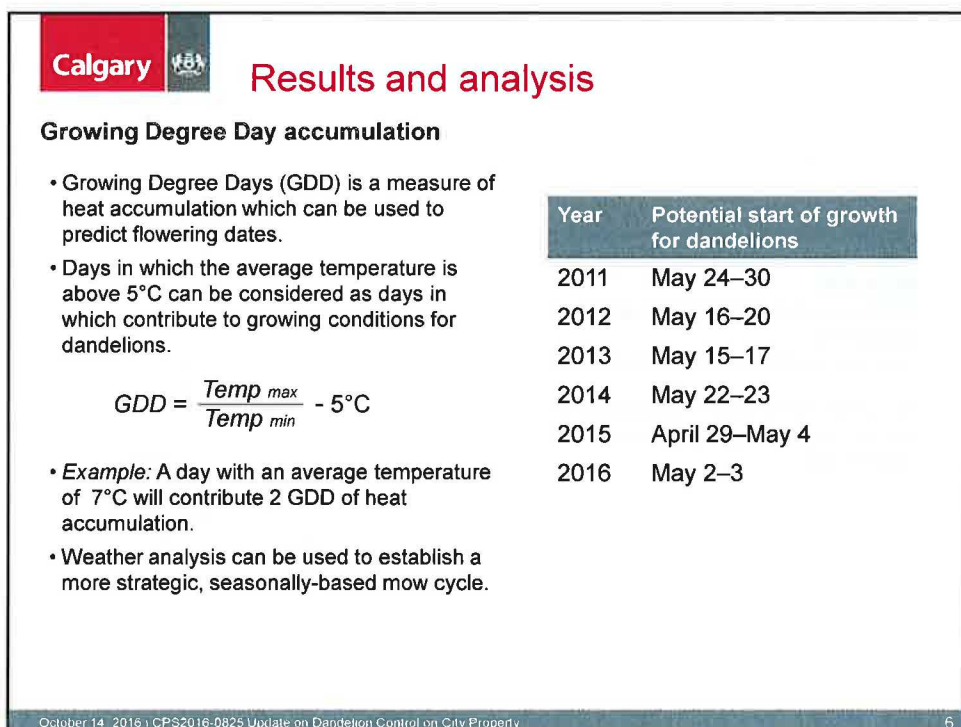
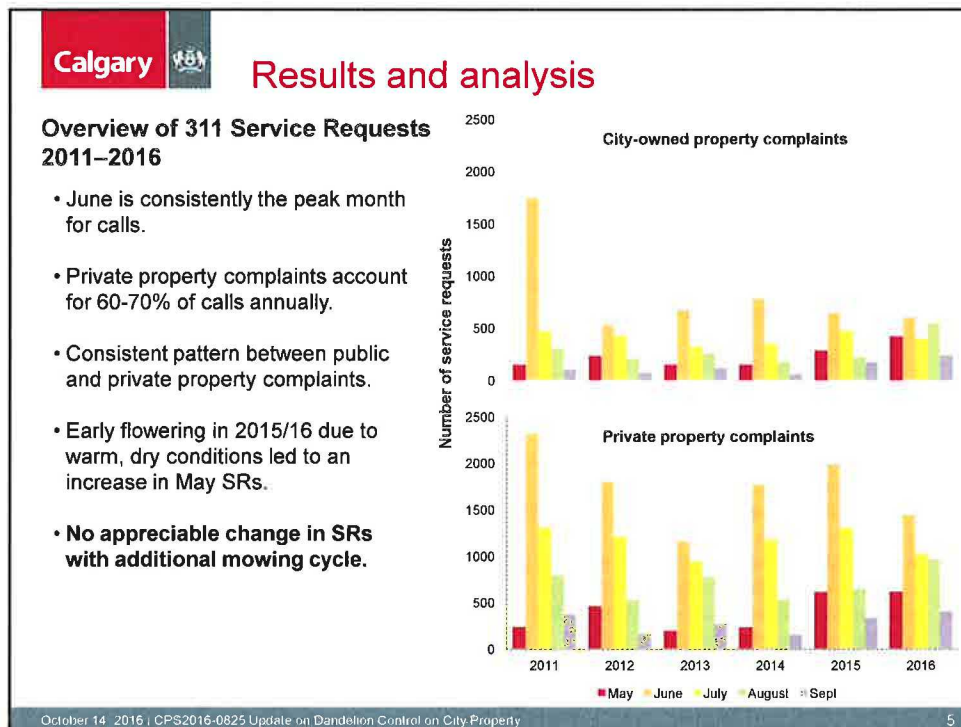


Pilot mowing program costs

	One-time operating received (000s)	Year-to-date spending (000s)	Remaining (000s)
Calgary Parks	\$1,100	\$496 (mowing) \$50 (summer students, public opinion survey)	\$554
Roads	\$600	\$279 (mowing) \$95 (summer students/technician)	\$226
Total	\$1,700	\$920	\$780

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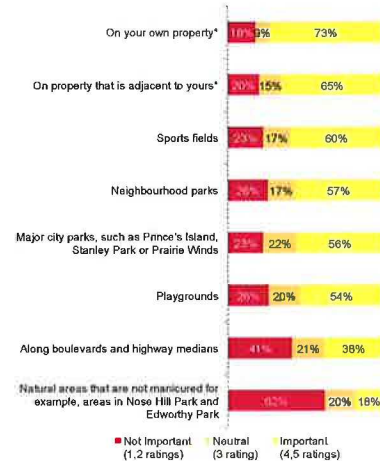


Results and analysis

Public opinion survey

- Split on the level of concern that Calgarians have towards the presence of dandelions:
 - 38% 'unsatisfied'
 - 34% 'satisfied'
- Calgarians expressed clear preferences on where control efforts should be prioritized:
 - Sports fields
 - Neighbourhood Parks
 - Regional Parks
 - Playgrounds
- Preference for the use of alternative methods to control dandelions
 - Naturalisation with native plant species (87%)
 - Grazing (82%)
 - Naturalisation with non-native species (80%)
 - Hardy/competitive turfgrasses (79%)
 - Improved horticultural practices (75%)
 - Alternative control products (67%)

Question: how important is it for you that dandelions are controlled in each of the following areas of the city:



Base: Calgarians
*Only asked to home owners (n=423)

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Long-term Recommendations

Continue to invest in turf health management

- Turf management is the best long-term strategy for healthy turf.

Integrated Pest Management Plan revision

- Update weed control strategies and build a priority framework.
- Communication and outreach about weed control alternatives.
- Consider results of public opinion survey.

Weather Modelling and Strategic Mowing

- Use of Growing-Degree Day model to inform spring mowing start.

Continue alternative control pilots

- Continuation of grazing pilot.
- Amendments to relevant bylaws to allow grazing for weed management.
- Trialing alternative control products and cover species.
- Continue to naturalize select parks/roadways.
- Soil health and consideration of community geography.



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Administration Recommendations

That the SPC on Community and Protective Services recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report for information;
2. Direct Calgary Parks to report through mid-cycle budget adjustments with a one-time carry-forward of \$150,000 for pilot projects;
3. Direct Calgary Parks and Roads to return the un-used portion of the one-time funding to the Fiscal Stability Reserve at the end of 2016; and
4. Direct Administration to investigate the necessary bylaw amendments to allow The City to use livestock grazing as a land management and weed control tool on City of Calgary lands in 2017.