

CITY OF CALGARY  
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IN COUNCIL CHAMBER

SEP 11 2015

ITEM: CPS2015-0738

CITY CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

Calgary



## Dandelion Control on City Property



CPS 2015-0738  
SPC on Community and Protective Services  
Sept 11, 2015

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## Council Direction

NM2015-12: *Dandelion Control on City Property* (June 16, 2015)

*...prepare a report on effective dandelion control for the entire City including financial ramifications and return to Council through the Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Service no later than October 05, 2015.*

### 311 Service Requests (SRs)

#### Annual SRs (2011–2015)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015*	Total
Parks & Roads	2,777	1,473	1,519	1,522	1,400	8,691
Total Private Property	5,036	4,164	3,348	3,882	3,899	20,329
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,813</b>	<b>5,637</b>	<b>4,867</b>	<b>5,404</b>	<b>5,299</b>	<b>29,020</b>

#### Monthly SRs (City property only)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015*	Average
May	149	233	147	148	271	190
June	1,748	530	675	783	649	877
July	473	427	322	354	480	411
Aug	301	210	258	174	-	236*
Sept	106	73	117	63	-	90*

\* Partial data only

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### Weed management on City-owned Property

Management is done in accordance with the Integrated Pest Management Plan


- An ecological approach to suppression of pest populations, using effective, economically and ecologically sound techniques
- Pesticides used for protection of assets or public safety, not cosmetic treatment
- Decision to treat based on weed density thresholds



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## Private Property (weeds and tall grass)

- Regulated through the *Community Standards Bylaw*
- Does not require control of weedy species except those listed under the *Alberta Weed Control Act*
- Dandelions are not considered to be a weed



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## Challenges

Balancing concerns:

- Citizen concerns about pesticide use
- Managing water use
- Cost of conventional vs. alternative management
- Changing perceptions of open space (naturalized vs. manicured)



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## Alternatives to pesticide use

Evaluation of new methods is core part of IPM practices, e.g.

'Green' alternatives to conventional herbicides

- Corn gluten meal
- Iron Chelate
- Eco-Clear (acetic acid)

Soil and turf health programs

- Compost tea
- Soil Food Web program

Challenges

- Efficacy
- Cost
- Application timing and logistics

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## Best Practices

Proper turf management is the best long-term strategy for management of turf and open space

Typically includes:

- Irrigation
- Aeration
- Improving soil health and fertility

Healthy turf can outcompete weeds, reducing the need for herbicide treatments



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## Proposed approach

- Mowing as an interim approach
  - Evaluate effectiveness of additional mowing cycles when conditions warrant
- Continue best practice turf management
- Continue evaluation of alternative methods, new products
- Update and review IPM standards and policies

### Near-term

- Additional mowing cycles in peak season
- Costs and efficacy reported Oct 2016

### Long-term

- Develop expanded program of pilots and trial
- Costs and program plans reported Oct 2016



## Other initiatives

- Review of the IPM Policy (in concert with Biodiversity Advisory Committee)
- Seek better understanding of public perception/attitudes towards pesticide use
- Continued alternative control trials in herbicide free parks
- Soil health and biodiversity research (academic and technical partnerships)
- Naturalisation program
- Evaluation of new grass cultivars and ground covers



### Example pilot projects (underway or new)

Mowing Reserve	Additional mowing reserved used when/if growing conditions warrant additional mowing cycles	Parks, Roads
Alternative herbicide trials	Evaluate new products in concert with enhanced turf maintenance	Parks, Roads
Soil health & biodiversity research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue trials, evaluate new products</li> <li>• Soil amendments</li> <li>• Research collaboration on quantifying impact of soil health on vegetation health</li> <li>• Impact mitigation (salt, compaction, etc.)</li> </ul>	Parks, Roads, Research Institutions
Turf and groundcover varietal trials	Test of new varieties of salt/drought tolerant grasses Effectiveness of alternative ground covers	Parks, Roads, Research Institutions
Naturalisation	Conversion of mowed turf to native or naturalised cover that are more resistant to weeds Healthy, drought-tolerant landscapes appropriate drought-tolerant	Parks, Roads
Prescribed Grazing & fire	Re-introduction of natural processes to aid in weed control and vegetation management	ABS, Office of Sustainability, Parks,

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### Recommendations

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

1. This report be forwarded to the 2015 September 28 Council meeting to be considered at the same time as the 2016 Resilience Budget; and
2. Direct Administration to report back through the Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services no later than October 2016 on the short-term suppression program's effectiveness and costs, and on long-term recommendations for best practices on pest management including weed and dandelion control.

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