

June 04, 2021

Reference No. 397872316-001

To: City Council
Executive Leadership Team

From: Gord Cebryk, P.Eng
Deputy City Manager, City Operations

Subject: **Weed Control Program - Reduction in Funding Response
Follow-up**

At the May 28, 2021 Community and Public Services Committee meeting, Administration presented CO00251 Weed Control Program - Reduction in Funding. At this meeting, a motion was made to return the \$1.14M that was reduced in the horticulture budget as a part of the fall 2020 SOBA. This memo provides additional information on questions asked of Administration.

How much less herbicide will Administration use if the budget is returned?

In 2019, crews performed two mechanical weed pulls in shrub beds in neighbourhoods, along roadways and in parks. For 2020, service was considered an anomaly due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, one mechanical weed pull is currently planned to accommodate for the reduction of both staff and equipment.

Should the \$1.14M be returned to the horticulture budget, Administration will be able to add in a second mechanical weed pull which will lessen the amount of herbicide we had anticipated for the 2021 season. It is important to note that the exact amount of herbicide varies based on environmental factors such as length of growing season and weather. With that said, a reduction of up to 40 percent is anticipated for 2021.

The replacement of funding to the horticulture crews does not affect the provincial requirement to control and eradicate noxious weeds. Due to this requirement, IPM crews are still required to act on regulated species when they are reported or detected, using herbicides when necessary.

Can Administration add a public health voice to the IPM Advisory Group?

Yes, Administration recognizes that a member with specific experience in public health or toxicology does not currently sit in the group, and a number of processes are underway to recruit this perspective. We are aiming to recruit such member by the third quarter of 2021. Recruitment progress and other key updates will be reflected in the annual report this fall. It is the intent of the committee to approach public health this fall for committee participation.

The IPM Advisory Group welcomes presentations from all members of the public by submitting a [request to speak form](#), emailing ipmadvisorygroup@edmonton.ca, or reaching out through the IPM Advisory group's [webpage](#).

Is an enhancement to the Integrated Pest Management Policy required to clarify that saving money is not a consideration or goal of the policy?

Administration relies on an evidence-based decision making framework that accounts for human health and safety, long-term ecosystem sustainability, and efficacy against the targeted pest. Cost efficiency is a consideration of all operational decisions, but is not currently a named driver for decision making in the IPM policy.

Extensive public engagement was performed leading up to the approval by Council of the current Policy. In addition to two drop-in public events and an online survey, four stakeholder workshops were held, one with each of the following groups:

- City of Edmonton staff
- Business owners and operators
- Community groups and school boards
- Technical and scientific experts

As part of the IPM Policy procedure, Administration commits to a review and revision of the policy every 5 years. The process for revision will begin in the next 2 years.

Will Administration use the entire \$1.14 M this year for mechanical weed control in shrub beds, considering the work will have a late start this year, due to the time needed to hire more seasonal staff?

The projected resource requirement for the remainder of the year is approximately \$970,000 which includes funding for employees and leased vehicles. This represents approximately a three week savings in labour and all costs related to that labour. This projection is based on completing two mechanical weed pulls in all shrub beds in neighbourhoods, along roadways and in parks, regardless of the condensed time frame. Horticulture crews will also be scheduled into October to allow time to mulch beds prior to winter. The fall mulch is an Integrated Pest Management technique that prevents emergence of weed seeds in the spring.

For other information regarding weed control in Edmonton, I encourage you to visit [edmonton/herbicides](#) or email Brian Simpson at brian.simpson@edmonton.ca. For other information on the IPM Advisory group, visit their [webpage](#), or contact Mark Brostrom at mark.brostrom@edmonton.ca.

GC/pl

c: Aileen Giesbrecht, City Clerk