

TOWN OF WINDSOR AGENDA REPORT

Joint Windsor Town Council, Windsor Redevelopment Successor Agency and Windsor Water District Meeting Date: July 19, 2023

To: Mayor and Town Council
From: Olivia Lemen, Parks and Recreation Director
Subject: Integrated Pest Management Policy Exemption Extension

Recommendation to Council:

Adopt a resolution approving a two-year extension to the exemption to the Integrated Pest Management Policy for pesticide application for Town-owned streetscape landscape areas for a pilot program.

Strategic Plan Element:

The recommended action supports the goal of Organizational Effectiveness. Goal Statement: Achieve a high performing organization by nurturing an engaged workforce committed to a shared vision of public service.

Background:

Over the last four years, the Town has successfully implemented the Integrated Management Policy (IPM Policy) and has achieved the goal of minimizing harmful pesticides throughout Town properties – in some areas, eliminating them all together. The Town has also experienced a number of negative impacts as a result of this implementation process which staff continue to seek solutions to mitigate. Some of the impacts include:

- Significant increase in maintenance costs
- Regular resident complaints regarding landscaping aesthetics
- Increased concern of fire hazards and danger
- Increase in workplace injury claims
- Late season rains and drought conditions

Town staff and contractors have implemented many different techniques and OMRI certified products for vegetation management within the landscape bedding. This includes application of organic products such as cinnamon and clove oil and use of techniques such as heavy mulching, mechanical trimming, manual hand pulling and, in some areas, removing plant material to allow areas to go native or natural. Each technique has come with a new set of challenges for staff to overcome. Unfortunately, public perception of the landscaping expectations has not changed and the increased fear of fire danger following the Kincadee fire in 2019 has kept public pressure on Town staff to keep up with the weed growth in the springtime.

In November 2022, the Town Council approved a pilot program to explore the feasibility of using pre-emergent in select areas to help with weed management. The proposed pre-emergent, Corteva Gallery SC (Isoxaben) addresses the seed before it germinates. The proper application of this pre-emergent is to apply it to bare soil after weeds have been removed. This is compatible with the California Department of Fish and Game recommendation to avoid application of herbicides [directly] to pollinator host plants. This pre-emergent is applied before a shallow rain to allow it to soak into the soil while not running off

into the storm drains. The product is applied based on Department of Pesticide Regulations by a certified applicator, according to the instructions on the label, and Town staff will use Best Management Practices to protect the water quality of stormwater runoff.

Discussion:

The one-time exemption (Attachment 2) for the pre-emergent pilot program was approved for November 2022 – March of 2023 for streetscapes only. It was anticipated to take multiple applications over the course of years to fully address the seed bank weed pressure in the soil, however the pilot program would allow staff to observe the impacts of the limited usage during the pilot program. The pre-emergent exemption is not applicable within the parks.

Unfortunately, due to the record-setting winter weather, staff had only four days where conditions were appropriate for spraying. This limited application did not allow staff to gather the data needed to identify and understand any significant impacts on labor to maintain these areas. Staff are requesting a two-year extension (Attachment 1) to the pilot program to determine whether this can be a permanent and sustainable tool for the maintenance of the streetscape landscape areas.

The pilot program would run from July 2023 – June 2025. Application must be watered into the ground and will occur during the winter months before a light rain. Staff will follow all product label requirements and will post signage at the time of application.

Fiscal Impact:

No immediate fiscal impact will occur by this action taken by Council. Implementation of this exemption extension may have positive fiscal impacts long-term related to reduction in costs for other herbicide applications and a reduction in employee injuries.

Environmental Review:

The Integrated Pest Management Policy is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15307 (the activity is taken by the Town pursuant to the Clean Water Act for protection of a natural resource).

Attachment(s):

1. [Resolution](#)
2. [Resolution No. 3803-22](#)

Prepared by:

Olivia Lemen
Parks and Recreation Director

Reviewed by:

Cristina Goulart
Environmental Programs Manager

Reviewed by:

Shannon Cotulla
Public Works Director/Town Engineer

Recommended by:

Jon Davis
Town Manager