

# EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



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### Work Session: Enhancing Current Integrated Pest Management in Parks (Pesticide Use as a Last Alternative)

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Meeting Date: February 26, 2014  
Department: Public Works  
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Agenda Item Number: A  
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#### **ISSUE STATEMENT**

This item is in response to council direction to hold a work session to discuss enhancements to the integrated pest management practices implemented in the City's parks.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The council has asked several questions related to current parkland management practices, the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies, implementation of the Pesticide-Free Parks Program, and the possibility of expanding that program. These questions are addressed in a memo to the Mayor and City Council (Attachment A). In this agenda item summary, staff provides an overview of current pest management practices and outlines a proposed resolution (Attachment B).

#### **Integrated Pest Management**

Parks and Open Spaces staff follows the principles of IPM to manage stinging insects, invasive plants, and other weeds, pests, and pathogens on over 4,400 acres of parklands. IPM is a coordinated decision-making and action-taking process that uses the most appropriate pest control methods and strategies in an environmentally and economically sound manner to meet the City's pest management objectives. The IPM strategy is based upon monitoring of pest levels, establishing thresholds for actions against the pest, evaluation of control options, selection of the most effective control method (chemical or non-chemical) with the lowest non-target impacts, and timing control actions according to the pest's life cycle and biology. Once a control action has been taken, results are monitored and future actions are informed by the results. A commitment to IPM does not preclude the use of chemical pesticides, but the application of the IPM strategy results in the pesticide option being exercised only when necessary.

When IPM is implemented, cultural practices are modified to reduce pest populations and least toxic non-chemical control methods are tried before pesticides are applied. Cultural practice modifications might include approaches such as using heavy mulches to reduce weeds, sealing up potential wasp nesting sites to reduce stinging insects, or pruning to increase air flow. If a pest

cannot be controlled without the use of pesticides, IPM strategy allows use of the least toxic effective pesticide that will have the fewest non-target impacts. For example, staff might try hand-pulling and sheet-mulching invasive weeds at Hendricks Park before using a pesticide. If non-chemical methods are not successful in controlling the invasives, staff might reconsider whether control of the plant is critical to the function of the plant community. If it is critical, staff will choose the least toxic herbicide that is known to be effective against the weed in question and make the application at the time the weed is most vulnerable.

### **Parks and Open Space's IPM Policy**

City staff has used an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy to manage parklands since the early 1980s, and have been leaders in the IPM field for thirty years. The POS IPM Policy and Operations Manual (IPM POM) was published in 2007 and has been updated several times, most recently in June 2013. The IPM POM document is over 100 pages and contains detailed guidelines for the management of pests in many types of developed landscapes, vacant lands, natural habitats, rights-of-way and medians, the golf course and rose garden, as well as bioswales and waterways. The manual contains information on cultural practices to prevent or limit the impacts of each pest and describes the effective control methods for the pest, including non-chemical methods, and where applicable, the pesticides which are known to be effective against the pest.

The use of pesticides in the management of the athletic fields which POS maintains provides a good example of POS' implementation of the IPM Policy and Operations Manual. Staff monitors weeds in 48 softball fields, and soccer fields, with a goal of providing a safe playing surface with a minimum of pesticide inputs. Occasionally a pest problem cannot be controlled with cultural practices and in the past four years POS staff made five herbicide applications on or near sports fields. Three of the applications involved use of glyphosate (Roundup) to eradicate weeds during the renovation of an overgrown, unused infield; one application was made to eliminate thistles at a field where mowing and other methods were not achieving control; and one application involved using glyphosate to kill weeds along the fence lines near a play field.

### **Pesticide-Free Parks and No-Pesticide Zones**

The IPM POM also outlines two programs which further limit the use of pesticides on parklands: the Pesticide-Free Parks Program and the No-Pesticide Zone policy. In partnership with the Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP) the City launched the Pesticide-Free Parks Program in 2007. Staff chose six parks distributed throughout the City which could be reasonably maintained without the use of pesticides, obtained the support of the neighborhood association for each park, and launched the program. Additional parks have been added to the program and the City currently has nine pesticide-free parks which are managed entirely without the use of pesticides, often with the assistance of neighborhood groups or other volunteers. Additional parks are added to the program when volunteer groups adopt them, committing to help with weed control on the site.

The No-Pesticide Zone policy establishes no-pesticide zones from 25 to 100 feet wide around certain park features, including: playgrounds, picnic areas, dog parks, swimming and wading pools, and spray play areas. These areas are managed without pesticides, and weeds are pulled by hand, burned or controlled with other non-chemical means.

### **Development of the Proposed Resolution**

Parks and Open Space staff met twice with Councilor Claire Syrett to learn about her concerns and goals for the work session and to develop the resolution language. With Councilor Syrett's input, staff developed a draft resolution (Attachment B) for council consideration. The draft resolution:

- Outlines the history and policy context for the development of the resolution,
- Explains concerns related to the use of pesticides in general and neonicotinoids specifically
- Endorses the ongoing implementation of POS' Integrated Pest Management policy and procedures,
- Endorses the expansion of the Pesticide-Free Parks program,
- Requires all City departments to adopt an IPM policy and procedures, and
- Bans the use of neonicotinoid insecticides on City property.

### **RELATED CITY POLICIES**

The Eugene City Council has adopted goals and policies that direct the City to conserve and enhance the natural environment and provide an attractive and healthy place to live (Council Goals, adopted in 1999), pursue sustainability (Resolution #4618, adopted in 2000), protect natural resources (Growth Management Policy #17), and support recovery of threatened Upper Willamette Spring Chinook Salmon (Resolution #4615, adopted in 2000).

As part of its role in implementing these policies, and to implement sound land management practices, it is the policy of the City of Eugene Parks and Open Space Division to practice Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

### **COUNCIL OPTIONS**

The Council can:

1. Adopt the proposed resolution as presented,
2. Request changes to the resolution before approval, or
3. Take no action.

### **CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION**

The City Manager recommends adoption of the resolution as presented.

### **SUGGESTED MOTION**

Move to adopt Resolution No. 5101.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Memo to Mayor and Council re: Enhancing Current Integrated Pest Management Implementation
- B. Proposed Resolution

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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