City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

18-0857 **Agenda Date:** 3/7/2019

2019 COUNCIL STUDY ISSUE

NUMBER
ESD 17-01

TITLE Eliminate the Use of Chemical Pesticides on City Owned or Leased Property

BACKGROUND

Lead Department:	Environmental Services
Support Departments:	Office of the City Manager
	Office of the City Attorney
	Public Works
	Library and Community Services
Sponsor(s):	Sustainability Commission
History:	1 year ago: Below the line
	2 years ago: Ranked Priority C

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

What precipitated this Study?
The Sustainability Commission raised concerns that using chemicals to control weeds and pests may contaminate water and soil leading to negative long-term impacts to human health and non-targeted species (e.g., bees, aquatic life, birds, pets, and beneficial insects). Other cities in the region are investigating or piloting the elimination of pesticides in city parks (Reference Menlo Park action in February 2018 <https://www.menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/16607/I2---Herbicide-Free-Parks?bidId=>).

What are the key elements of the Study?
The purpose of this Study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the City's current Integrated Pest Management Policy, levels of pesticide use on City property, assess community support for eliminating pesticide use on City property and identify the potential impact on City operations. Additionally, the study will also consider opportunities for educating residents about chemical pesticide alternatives.

Key study elements include:

- Identify current costs to the City for purchasing and applying pesticides (i.e., insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and rodenticides) that are covered in the Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM). Separately identify costs of "Pesticides of Concern" and other chemical pesticides (for example glyphosate) used that are not on the 'concern' list. Identify expected net costs of further reducing and eliminating all pesticide use on City property (increased cost of mechanical weed removal, physical barriers, etc. as prescribed in the IPM plan minus savings from not purchasing pesticides, using mulch etc.).

- Identify benefits to community and environment. These will not be monetized since it is beyond the scope of this study to assess the value of environmental benefits.
- Identify cost of a pilot study in selected parks or City properties to measure costs/savings in a real application.
- Study cost of implementing a public outreach program to encourage pesticide elimination at homes, schools and businesses and provide information on alternative control means.
- Through a survey of residents and businesses, identify level of awareness and concern by the public on this topic and the desire for the City to devote attention to further pesticide reduction and eventual elimination.
- Benchmark and monitor progress of other cities in the region who have undertaken similar actions.
- Review the City's IPM Plan (effective June 1, 2010) and consider cost/benefit to add:
  1. Public notification prior to the application of pesticides in public areas;
  2. Reporting measures to allow the public to be informed on the quantities of each chemical pesticide used by the City (or associated contractors) on an annual basis; and
  3. Annual targets for reduction of pesticide use down to zero.

Estimated years to complete Study: 1 year

FISCAL IMPACT

Cost to Conduct Study

Level of staff effort required (opportunity cost):	Major
Funding Required for Non-Budgeted Costs:	$100,000
Funding Source:	Would seek budget supplement

The Study would be completed with existing staff time and additional consultant services. DPW is responsible for landscape management including the application of pesticides and herbicides on City property. ESD, with support from DPW, will take the lead in evaluating the public outreach aspects of the study and complete a survey of residents and businesses. The consultant, with management from ESD and support from DPW staff, will survey and monitor what other cities in the area have undertaken for similar projects, complete a cost analysis for current practices and possible changes, and identify options for a pilot project and costs associated with it. The cost does not anticipate a time-in-motion study to estimate potential cost impacts of chemical alternatives such as mechanical weed removal. The determination of the net cost impact of chemical alternatives, as identified in the study scope, would be estimated based on research of cost impacts experienced by the benchmarked communities. Additional funding beyond the $100,000 would be needed to conduct time-in-motion studies and such costs will be included in the development of the potential pilot project to measure costs/savings in a real application as identified in this Study Issue.

Cost to Implement Study Results

Unknown. Study would include assessment of potential costs, including capital and operating, as well as revenue/savings.

EXPECTED CITY COUNCIL, BOARD OR COMMISSION PARTICIPATION

Council-Approved Work Plan: No
Council Study Session: No
Reviewed by Boards/Commissions: Sustainability, Parks and Recreation

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Support. This policy issue merits discussion at the 2019 Study Issues Workshop.

The City's current IPM policy has been in place since 2010. City maintenance staff receives annual training on the IPM policy and contractors are required to also comply with the policy when working on City property. In accordance with the IPM policy, pesticides are used only after other controls have been considered and applied. Additionally, the City provides education on IPM at environmental outreach events and participates in regional educational campaigns and hosts sustainable landscaping classes in partnership with the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Associate in spring and fall. While staff believes that the City's IPM Policy has been effective and overall use of pesticides of concern is minimal, staff supports the Study and an evaluation of the program.

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