

01-12-21

ITEM 3.N  
RTC# 21-1203

**Simrat Dhadli**

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**To:** Nora Pimentel  
**Subject:** RE: Information on the Weed Abatement Program

**From:** Nora Pimentel  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 12, 2021 3:06 PM  
**Subject:** Information on the Weed Abatement Program

Good afternoon

Attached is an informational document you on the FAQ's of the Weed Abatement Program.

Thank you

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**City of  
Santa Clara**  
The Center of What's Possible

**POST MEETING MATERIAL**

# **FAQ's-Vegetation Management Program (Weeds)**

## **What defines a hazard under the program?**

- Maintain grasses and weeds below six (6) inches for ten feet horizontally on both sides of all roadways, including driveways and all access routes.
- Keep vegetation cleared from under the eaves of houses.
- Trim tree branches to at least 10 feet from the structure and chimney.
- Clear leaves, pine needles, and debris from roof and gutters.

## **Who does the work?**

- We contractor with the County of Santa Clara, Department of Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency, which uses an Outside Contractor.

## **How long have we contracted with the County?**

- Since 1976 (43-years)

## **Program Goal?**

- Voluntary compliance.

## **How does the process work?**

- After a site inspection is performed, the County will order the necessary abatement work and send the property owner on record with the assessor's office a 15-day courtesy notice indicating work needs to be completed.
- If the work is not completed by the owner within that 15-day period, the work will be completed by the County Contractor.

## **How long is a parcel in the program?**

- Once a Property is in the program for failure to remove a hazard from their property the parcel will remain in the program for three years for monitoring;

- Each year the parcel is in the program the owner(s) will be responsible to pay an inspection fee;
- If the property remains in compliance for three years, the property will be removed from the program

### **What parcels are involved in the program?**

- All commercial and residential parcels within the City.

### **How are parcels reported?**

- The most common mechanisms are for an inspector to see a hazard in person, or to receive a complaint from a concerned citizen.

### **How are the inspections documented?**

An inspector will take photographs of the specific hazards found and record the location of the parcel with a GPS.

### **Average number of parcels in the program at any one time?**

- 50 to 90-parcels.

### **Why have the County do the work?**

- More economical to have County do program;
- Thirteen jurisdictions in the County participate (economies of scale).

### **Does the County Contractor use chemicals?**

- No chemicals are used in abatement of parcels; only hand tools, and equipment such as lawn mowers are utilized.

### **What are property owners billed, and how is the cost recouped?**

- A County administrative fee is added to the contractor's actual costs. The total amount of the abatement, plus County administrative fees becomes a special assessment on the owner's property tax bill following confirmation of the charges by the City.

### **Does the City incur any costs?**

- The City does incur minimal costs in the form of staff time, primarily inspections of complaints, program oversight, and notifications.

### **Can the City cost to manage the program be recouped?**

- Currently, there is no cost-effective means to recoup our costs. This was explored six years ago, and the cost-benefit analysis found it would not be worth the effort.

### **What does the County Charge (2021 Fee Schedule)?**

- Initial inspection = \$84;
- First Administrative Fee (Failed Inspection / Work Order Processing) = \$466;
- Second Administrative Fee (Contractor Invoice Processing) = \$809;
- Abatement = Contractors Abatement Cost, plus County administrative fees.

### **What if the program runs into financial trouble?**

- Thirteen (13) individual jurisdictions taking part in the County program bear the financial burden of any financial shortfalls “the program” may incur;
- Primary reasons for shortfall according to County are:
  - Each fiscal year the County must estimate the number of properties that will require abatement as a basis for their budget (approximately \$900K);
  - If the County overestimates the number of parcels requiring abatement, and fewer parcels are abated the cost recovery targets will not be met;
- To address any future shortfall the County has developed a “**pro-rata share formula**” based on the percentage of work performed in each of the thirteen (13) jurisdictions;
- Since abatement work performed on annual basis within the City makes up an estimated 1.6% that would become our pro-rata share (could change overtime).
- For example, if the County had a shortfall of \$100,000 dollars the City would be required to contribute \$1,600 toward the shortfall.