

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JENNIFER BURKE, DIRECTOR
SANTA ROSA WATER
SUBJECT: INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT POLICY

AGENDA ACTION: NONE

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council conduct a study session to receive information about the purposes of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program and development of a city-wide IPM policy. No action will be taken, but the Council may discuss this item and provide direction to staff.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study session will provide information on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and seek input from City Council on the development of a city-wide IPM policy. A successful IPM program is one that manages landscapes in a manner that is safe for the community, staff, and the environment. In this study session, staff will present information on different ways to control pests and how to identify and implement methods to reduce the need for pesticide application in landscape management.

BACKGROUND

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a science-based approach to reduce the quantity of harmful pesticides used in landscape management. The key reasons cited for developing IPM policies are to reduce impacts to humans and the environment. While pesticides have been developed to help manage pests in the environment and dramatically increase crop yields around the world, their over-use has been linked to many environmental catastrophes including the near extinction of the bald-eagle due to wide use of DDT and other issues. IPM programs are designed to help strike a balance between pest control and chemical use.

The purpose of this study session is to explore options to include in an IPM policy that will ensure the policy provides the greatest amount of protection to city staff and the community. There have been concerns about the use of certain chemicals including the active ingredient in Roundup (glyphosate) as well as a broadly used group of

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insecticides called neonicotinoids. The focus on Roundup and other chemical formulations utilizing glyphosate has grown due to its wide use in agricultural and landscaping. The most disturbing health claim has come from the International Agency for Research on Cancer, which has identified glyphosate as a probable carcinogen harmful to humans. This categorization has led to successful lawsuits against the chemical manufacturer of glyphosate. Neonicotinoids are broad-spectrum insecticides that impact all insects, not just the target species, and have been shown to negatively impact bee populations located near to where these chemicals have been sprayed. Because neonicotinoids have also been shown to have respiratory effects in humans, these chemicals are being phased-out state by state and will be banned for over-the-counter sales in California by 2025.

The purpose of an IPM policy is to design landscapes that are naturally resistant to pests and utilize non-chemical controls where possible. This includes installing pest-resistant species, controlling weeds with mulch and dense plantings, mechanical removal with powered equipment or grazing animals, and only using chemical controls when all other methods have been determined to not be effective in eliminating the pests to the desired levels. IPM policies typically specify using the least toxic pesticide first before applying more toxic pesticides.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On August 21, 2018, Council approved the tenth renewal of the Golden Gate Landscape contract for one year and directed contract and city staff to discontinue the use of glyphosates.

On September 24, 2019, Council held a study session on citywide contracted landscape services and landscape maintenance options for city sites. Council provided feedback discouraging the use of products with glyphosates and neonicotinoids.

On October 1, 2019, Council approved a contract with Signature Coast Holdings, LLC dba Coast Landscape Management with a scope of work limited to mowing operations. The landscape portion of the scope of work was not funded or approved.

ANALYSIS

An IPM policy will have impacts on many of the ways that the City of Santa Rosa (City) manages pests. It will provide a consistent approach to management throughout the City and will help to prevent over-use of pesticides on City-owned and managed properties. Should a blanket ban of glyphosate be adopted as a part of the IPM policy, it could have impacts ranging from potential aesthetic decline in City parks and civic landscapes, impacts to public safety in areas where invasive species that are considered fire fuels could accumulate, and impacts to employee safety in areas where there are safety concerns, such as street medians. Neonicotinoids are being phased out in California. The City is not using neonicotinoids, so a complete ban on its use would have little impact on the City's landscape management activities.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact from conducting the study session. Fiscal impact of the IPM policy will vary depending on direction given by City Council.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

There is no Environmental Impact associated with this study session. The activity is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b), in that the activity would not constitute a project; Section 15061(b)(3), where it can be seen with certainty that the activity would not have a significant effect on the environment; and Section 15306, where the activity is limited to information and data collection.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On October 4, and December 6, 2023, staff presented options for developing an IPM policy to the Climate Action Subcommittee, which approved moving this study session to the City Council.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- None

PRESENTERS

Sean McNeil, Deputy Director of Environmental Services

Paul Lowenthal, Fire Marshal

Jen Santos, Deputy Director of Parks