

COUNCIL – AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: 18 September 2023

Subject: Updated Integrated Pest Management Plan

Boards Routed Through: Environmental Advisory Board

Date: 14 September 2023

Issue:

Council is being provided with the updates that have been made to the City's Integrated Pest Management Plan.

Background:

The City's Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM plan) is a document that helps guide staff when making decisions involving pest management and was last updated in 2006. Since then, several of the best management practices included in the IPM have evolved and are no longer accurately represented in the plan document. Due to the high number of changes as well as administrations desire to reformat the IPM plan the document was rewritten as opposed to being updated. The current document can be found on the city's website.
(<https://www.airdrie.ca/getDocument.cfm?ID=10135>).

A Summary of the changes to the IPM are as follows:

1. The implementation of a beaver co-existence strategy. The focus will shift to implementing proactive measures that will aid in co-existence goals. These measures include items such as installing exclusion fencing in problem areas, increasing shrub/tree planting to act as diversionary planting and actively installing and monitoring tree protection measures. The removal of beavers will be now only considered a last resort and will only be carried out when there is a serious threat to infrastructure or public safety (storm ponds).
2. Additional information on coyote management has also been added to the IPM. Coyotes are frequently seen in city greenspaces, and staff receive numerous reports of sightings yearly. These reports are closely analysed to determine the severity. Although these sightings occur frequently, they are seldom a serious in nature. In areas where sightings are more frequent, staff will place signage to help educate and inform the public. In the event of a more serious event, staff will follow the decision-making framework that is included in the IPM. Similar to

the City's approach to beavers, the framework is based on co-existence and the removal of the problem coyote will only be considered as a measure of last resort.

3. Mosquito control will shift from focusing on insecticide applications to eliminating mosquito breeding grounds. Controlling mosquito numbers with insecticide has proven to be expensive and labour intensive and has produced poor results in reducing mosquito populations. Removing pockets of shallow standing water will help reduce numbers and produce longer term results.
4. Since the last update to the IPM, a population of feral rabbits has been established in various communities in Airdrie. Their numbers have reached a point where control is no longer considered a viable option. Staff anticipates their numbers and range to expand in the coming years; however, the population is highly volatile and is affected by seasonal weather conditions.
5. A problem weed section has been included in the updated IPM. These weeds are not provincially regulated; however, they are known to be a problem in the community. These weeds include foxtail, water hemlock, sweet clover and bull thistle. Elevated levels of control will be implemented to help reduce the spread of these plants.
6. Broadleaf weed control remained unchanged. Staff monitor and record weed levels in city greenspaces. Herbicide applications will be considered when the weed population exceed the associated threshold level. Where circumstances allow, the preference is to conduct weed control applications in the fall.

Alignment with South Saskatchewan Regional Plan and AirdrieONE:

The Sustainable Natural Environment section of the AirdrieONE plan reads "Natural Areas along the Nose Creek watershed are particularly valued in the city and are considered to be one of the City's greatest amenities". The recommendations being provided in the Integrated Plan Management Plan are consistent with the stated goals of environmental, social, and fiscal sustainability.

Boards Routed Through:

This was presented to the Environmental Advisory Board on September 14, 2023. Feedback from the board will be provided at Council meeting.

Administration Recommendation:

That Council accepts the report entitled "Updated Integrated Pest Management Plan" for information.

Alternatives/Implications:

Council could choose to not to accept the updated Integrated Pest Management Plan and direct staff to return to Council with additional information.

Implications

This option would create a delay in the implementation of measures outlined in the plan. Additional staff and consultant resources may be required depending on the nature of the request.

Communications Plan:

Administration will work with Communications to map out key messages that can be shared with the community through digital media and signage within the parks.

Recommendation:

That Council accepts the report entitled “Updated Integrated Pest Management Plan” for information.

Phil McNeil
Park Operations Team Leader

Presenter:	Eugene Lund/ Blair Kreiner
Department:	Community Infrastructure
Reviewed by:	ELT
Attachments:	#1: Updated Integrated Pest Management Plan
Appointment:	N/A