




STAFF REPORT

DATE: APRIL 3, 2012
TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: ROD FOSTER, CITY MANAGER 
PREPARED BY: TIM McHARGUE, ACTING FIRE CHIEF
SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEARING TO DISCUSS THE CITY'S ANNUAL WEED ABATEMENT PROGRAM

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Conduct a Public Hearing for those property owners who wish to protest the abatement of weeds on their property.
2. Close the Public Hearing and direct the Fire Chief or his designee to abate the stated nuisance by having the weeds, rubbish, refuse or dirt removed.

GOAL STATEMENT

The proposed action will support the City's goal to provide a comprehensive annual weed abatement program for the City.

BACKGROUND

As allowed by the Government Code, each year the City conducts a comprehensive weed abatement program to address the annual growth of weeds and the accumulation of trash and debris on the vacant lots located within the City. By means of the declaration by Resolution of the Public Nuisance, notification by mail and the Public Hearing, the City is authorized to enter upon private vacant/unimproved properties and provide for the abatement.

Twice a year, in the Spring and again in the Fall, a list and mailing labels of all unimproved parcels within the City is obtained from the County Assessor's Office. Notices conforming to the Government Code are sent to approximately 1,600 parcels identified as unimproved within the City, approximately 400 of which are actual qualified parcels for the Program. Property owners are given a due date to complete the abatement, after which a physical inspection of each parcel is conducted to check for compliance. Those properties not in compliance are then

scheduled for abatement by the City's appointed contractor. Owner compliance has increased over the years and last season we received an approximate 80% owner initiated compliance rate.

The properties that require abatement through the City are then invoiced for the cost of the contractor and an administrative charge of \$100. The costs recovered through the direct billing method fluctuate from year to year, with an average collection rate of approximately 30%.

Those invoices which are not paid by the designated deadline are then placed upon the County Tax rolls for collection with the owner's annual tax bill.

ISSUES/ANALYSIS

At the regular City Council Meeting on March 20, 2012, the City Council approved Resolution Number R-09-12 declaring weeds, rubbish and trash a public nuisance and directing the Fire Chief to give notice and provide for the abatement.

At this time, the City is entering into the Spring Program. Notices have been sent to all vacant property owners as identified and reported from the San Bernardino County Tax Assessor. Abatement proceedings are scheduled to begin June 1, 2012.

FISCAL IMPACTS

Total contractor fees for the 2012 Weed Abatement Program are estimated at approximately \$35,000. Additional associated operating costs are estimated at \$2,000 and include items such as mailings and like incidental costs. These "pass-through" costs are recouped through direct billing and the County Tax Rolls. Funds budgeted in 2011-2012 Fiscal Year will cover the initial program costs associated with office supplies. Funds yet to be budgeted for the 2012-2013 Fiscal Year will cover those contractor costs billed beginning on July 1, 2012.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS

None.