



Engineering Services Committee Meeting

Meeting Date: March 11, 2025

Environmental Services Operations – Vacant Lots Management

Revision to Fees Structure

File Reference: 24-014(A)

Department:	Engineering & Environmental Services
Presenter:	Dr. Hameed Malik, Director
Caption:	Approve Vacant Lot Program Fee Charge Updated Rate Structure, depicted as attached Exhibit A, effective April 1, 2025 to cover the current cost of the vacant lot program Services. AE
Background:	<p>The Environmental Services Operations (ESO) have providing the Vacant Lot management Services (inspection, enforcement & grass cutting & disposal) since 2012. The fees for this service were set at that time and adjusted only one time in 2018 (Augusta Commission action dated July 17, 2018). 2012 Fee was \$20 Administrative fee and \$50 per hour for contract and/or inmate services. In 2018 fees increased to \$100 Administrative fee per job per property, and \$200 per hour for contractor services or inmate crew services. However, COVID-19 resulted in significant cost escalation and post-Covid-19 contract vacant lot management services cost escalated almost double. Pe-Covid contract services cost was \$3,000/3men crew/week, and that escalated now to \$6,000/3men crew/week. Also, there is cost increase in the program administrative cost.</p>
Analysis:	<p>The cutting and cleaning vacant lots is an ongoing issue for Augusta. There are roughly 14000 vacant lots needing cutting & cleaning services. ESO presently providing cutting and cleaning services on average 77 per month; however there are so many more that still need to be cut. Current vacant lot vegetation management contracted services cost is \$6,000/3men crew/week. One crew on average cuts roughly 18 to 20 vacant lots/week that equates to around two (2) hours per lot. The current fees \$100/\$200 rate structure is not a deterrent, and the fees do not cover the cost of the program. Hence the Department is recommending increase in fee rate structure. The recommended adjusted rate is \$175 Administrative fee per job per property, and \$350 per hour for contractor services or inmate crew services.</p>
Financial Impact:	<p>There is no additional cost to the Department at this time, however the increase in fees will allow the program to become more financially viable.</p>
Alternatives:	<p>1) Do not approve recommend fee new rate structure and find alternative path for continuity of services at desired level of service.</p>

Recommendation: Approve Vacant Lot Program Fee Charge Updated Rate Structure, depicted as attached Exhibit A, effective April 1, 2025 to cover the current cost of the vacant lot program Services. AE

**Funds are available in
the following accounts:** N/A

**REVIEWED AND
APPROVED BY:** HM/sr