



## City Council Agenda Report

**Meeting Date:** November 12, 2024

**Prepared By:** Nick Zornes

**Approved By:** Gabe Engeland

**Subject:** Weed Abatement – Annual Property Identification

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### COUNCIL PRIORITY AREA

- Business Communities
- Circulation Safety and Efficiency
- Environmental Sustainability
- Housing
- Neighborhood Safety Infrastructure
- General Government

### RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Los Altos Declaring Weeds, Brush and/or Rubbish on Certain Described Properties to be a Public Nuisance and find that this action is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15301(h) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

### FISCAL IMPACT

No direct fiscal impact to the City of Los Altos is associated with participation in the Weed Abatement Program as the cost to perform the work is covered by a Property Tax Assessment to the Parcel of land where the violation occurs.

### ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Adoption of this resolution is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15301(h) of the State Guidelines implementing the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 as this action involves maintenance of existing landscaping and native growth.

### PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

On June 25, 2024, the City Council authorized the City of Los Altos' participation in the County of Santa Clara Weed Abatement Program.

### BACKGROUND

Participation in the County of Santa Clara Weed Abatement Program was authorized on June 25, 2024. As part of the City's participation within the program, annually the City Council must adopt a resolution confirming the properties identified by the Santa Clara County Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency for abatement of known violations. Adoption of this resolution is mandatory for County enforcement of the Weed Abatement Program.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Santa Clara County Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency works with several cities throughout Santa Clara County on the Weed Abatement Program. The purpose of the Weed Abatement Program is to prevent fire hazards posed by vegetative growth and the accumulation of combustible materials.

The Weed Abatement program is entirely funded from fees charged to residents. Fees will be assessed for any property in the program. This is to cover the cost of the compliance inspection for the property. Properties that fail the compliance inspection will be charged a failed inspection fee, even if the resident completes the weed abatement. If the property requires abatement by the County contractor, the property owner will be responsible for the actual cost of abatement plus an administrative fee. Properties that meet and maintain the minimum fire safety standards will not be charged other than the annual fee.

Santa Clara County program staff annually inspect parcels at the beginning of the fire season, which is typically in March or April depending on the jurisdiction. If the parcel is not in compliance at the time of inspection, the property owner will be charged a failed inspection fee, and the owner will be sent a courtesy notice as a reminder to abate the weeds. If the weeds are not abated by the property owner, the work will be completed by the County contractor. The property owner will pay the contractor's fees plus a County administrative fee. All fees will be included in your property tax bill.

When a property is placed in the Weed Abatement Program, it will remain in the program for up to three years for ongoing monitoring, and if after three years no abatement has been required on the site the property will be removed from the program. The intention of the Weed Abatement Program is to achieve Voluntary Compliance. Vegetation must not exceed 6 inches in height any time after the compliance deadline. Maintain grasses and weeds below 6 inches for 10 feet horizontally on both sides of all roadways, including driveways and access routes.

## **ANALYSIS**

On October 30, 2024, the City of Los Altos received the 2025 Weed Abatement Program, Commencement Report (Attachment 2). Contained within that report are 136 parcels within the City of Los Altos which will be sent a Notice of Abatement for any weeds, brush and/or rubbish that is not resolved by the due date established by the Santa Clara County Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency.

As part of adoption of the draft resolution the City Council is setting January 28, 2025, at 7:00 PM as the date for any appeal of this action. At that time properties and parcels which have been identified by the County of Santa Clara for the need of Weed Abatement will have the opportunity to provide justification for the removal of their property.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- 1. Draft Resolution**
- 2. 2025 Commencement Report**