

CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER - AGENDA ITEM DATA SHEET

Agenda Item: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 321 Relating to Control of Weeds, Grasses and Brush

Requested & Presented by: Darcy Perkins, Municipal Services Specialist

Meeting Date: Public Works on 01-15-2026

Finance and Common Council on 02-03-2026

Committee Review:

Background: Chapter 321 of the Code of Ordinances governs the control of weeds, grasses, and brush on private property. Staff reviewed the existing provisions to improve clarity, consistency, and enforceability while maintaining alignment with Wisconsin law and peer municipal practices.

The current ordinance includes outdated procedural requirements, reliance on a Weed Commissioner, and duplicative or overly detailed provisions that have hindered timely abatement and cost recovery. These limitations have reduced the City's ability to address nuisance conditions efficiently and equitably.

The proposed ordinance repeals and recreates Chapter 321 in a simplified, modernized format. The revised Chapter establishes a clear six-inch height standard, preserves natural landscape allowances and aligns enforcement authority with current municipal practice by removing reliance on a Weed Commissioner.

Procedural barriers are removed while preserving courtesy notice as an option, not a prerequisite. Clear billing, delinquency, and tax roll placement procedures are established, allowing the City to recover actual abatement and administrative costs and ensuring those costs are borne by responsible property owners rather than the general taxpayer.

Cost Basis and Justification: Staff evaluated the City's actual labor and equipment costs incurred when performing weed, grass, and brush abatement to ensure the proposed are reasonable, defensible, and proportionate.

Abatement Costs: A minimum labor and equipment charge of one-half (½) hour per occurrence is proposed to account for mobilization, travel, equipment setup, safety measures, and documentation. Based on standardized municipal equipment rates and typical field operations, the City's minimum direct abatement cost is approximately \$45–\$60 per occurrence, depending on required equipment.

Legal Authority Wis. Stat. §§ 66.0407 (noxious weeds); 66.0517 (nuisance abatement); 66.0627 (special charges); and Ch. 74 (tax roll collection).

Department Recommendation: Staff recommends adoption of Ordinance 2026-____, amending Chapter 321 relating to control of weeds, grasses, and brush.

Financial Impact: The ordinance improves the City's ability to recover abatement and administrative costs when enforcement is necessary. Under the prior ordinance, delays and procedural barriers often resulted in costs being absorbed by the City rather than the responsible property owner.

Requested Action:

PUBLIC WORKS: Motion to forward Ordinance 2026-____, amending Chapter 321 relating to control of weeds, grasses, and brush, to the Finance Committee for review and recommendation to the Common Council.

FINANCE: Motion to recommend to the Common Council adoption of Ordinance 2026-____, amending Chapter 321 relating to control of weeds, grasses, and brush.

COUNCIL: Motion to adopt Ordinance 2026-____, amending Chapter 321 relating to control of weeds, grasses, and brush, as presented.

Attachment(s):

- Ordinance #2026-XX_Amending Chapter 321 Relating to Control of Weeds, Grasses and Brush