

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council**July 19, 2011**

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**SUBJECT: PATTERN MOWING IN PARKS**

The purpose of this Informal Report is to outline the Parks and Community Services Department's operational cost savings program of reduced mowing in selected areas within parks called "pattern mowing".

As a result of a \$386,969 budget reduction package implemented in FY 2009, the staffing level of park operations was reduced by six positions. To compensate, the trimming and edging of parks was reduced from twenty times per year to one time per year after the first freeze of the winter dormant season.

The City received many complaints from citizens who preferred to see a completely mowed, edged and trimmed park even if the overall maintenance frequency had to be extended. On October, 12, 2010, staff presented Informal Report No. 9308, to outline a plan to expand the pattern mowing program throughout the park system to free up funding for the restoration of more frequent trimming and edging.

Under normal circumstances, the majority of parks are mowed on a 14 day cycle, while areas identified for pattern mowing are on a 28 day cycle. Areas that are used for active recreation such as playgrounds, shelters, ball fields, soccer fields, etc., are mowed every 14 days, The areas that are less utilized or are not conducive to active recreation are mowed every 28 days. The criteria used to determine suitability for pattern mowing include:

- Size of park (Generally 20 acres or larger, which will exclude most neighborhood parks)
- Undeveloped or remote areas of parks
- Areas of low use or with small usable space
- Undeveloped/reserve parks
- Natural areas/wildlife areas
- To enhance erosion control efforts
- To enhance storm water management best management practices

This summer, due to the abnormally dry weather conditions, mowing cycles throughout the city will also be temporarily extended from 14 days to 21 days through August 28. This will eliminate one full mowing cycle at a cost savings of \$20,882.

Should you have any questions regarding this report, please contact Richard Zavala, Parks and Community Services Department Director or Susan Alanis, Assistant City Manager.


Tom Higgins
Interim City Manager