



Department Source: Community Development - NS

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: April 2, 2018

Re: Update on weed ordinance review process

Executive Summary

Council heard a report on November 20, 2017 on revising the weed ordinance found in Chapter 11 of the City Ordinances. Staff was directed to move forward on a public process to revise the ordinance to allow for native plantings. This report summarizes the public feedback we have received and reviews next steps.

Discussion

Since the previous Council report in November, staff requested public input via a survey. The survey was available as a hard copy at City Hall and the Department of Health and Human Services as well as online. The survey was accessible to the public from January 1, 2018 to January 31, 2018 and received 265 responses. A public meeting was held on January 25, 2018 at the Columbia Public Library and was attended by more than 40 people.

Survey results showed that 88% of respondents supported an update to the weed ordinance to allow for native plantings and 73% agreed that the ordinance should focus on landscape maintenance instead of type of vegetation. Staff reviewed 103 written comments; 62 were in clear support for an ordinance change, seven desired maintaining the current ordinance or making it more restrictive and 34 had other questions or concerns to consider in the update, although most of those also reflect support for an ordinance update. The complete survey results are attached to this report.

Staff propose a revised ordinance that focuses on landscape management rather than the type of vegetation used in a landscape. An ordinance draft is attached along with public feedback received in February. A draft ordinance was posted on the City's website and shared with those who attended the public meeting and signed up to receive email updates on this subject. Staff have considered many of those comments and revised the draft accordingly (attached).

Changing the focus of this ordinance to landscape management will allow for managed native landscapes, ornamental landscapes, agricultural crops, urban agricultural crops, community gardens, and vegetable gardens that exceed 12 inches in height. Many elements of our existing ordinance would continue: turf grass and turf weeds could not exceed 12 inches in height, nuisance plants, noxious weeds and vermin harborage would need to be controlled, vegetation could not create a safety issue for motor vehicles, bicyclists, or pedestrians, and vegetation cannot obstruct public right-of-way. The City's abatement process for properties in violation would continue.



City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Next steps: While there is public support to revise the weed ordinance, staff ask that approval of an ordinance be delayed until the fall for implementation in 2019. This will allow staff to continue its research during this growing season and allow us to gauge the impact of transitioning to the landscape management ordinance. This delay will also allow City staff to transition to a new software program that was previously scheduled for 2018 and develop a training program on the landscape management ordinance for enforcement staff. Staff will return to Council in the fall with legislation for their consideration to take effect January 1, 2019.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: none
Long-Term Impact: none

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

[Strategic Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Social Equity, Secondary Impact: Not Applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

[Comprehensive Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Environmental Management, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Legislative History

Date	Action
08/06/2001	The weed ordinance found in Chapter 11 of the City ordinances was adopted; Sec. 11-251 through 11-256.

Suggested Council Action

No action requested at this time.