

Attachment C

City of Palo Alto Weed Abatement

The City of Palo Alto contracts with the Santa Clara County Department of Agriculture and Environmental Management (SCCDAEM) to remove and destroy weeds in its efforts to mitigate potential fire hazards (as defined in Palo Alto Municipal Code Chapter 8.08). The entire weed abatement program is coordinated by the SCCDAEM. Abatement proceedings must follow a legally established course. This is an annual process with weed abatement occurring in late Spring. City of Palo Alto involvement is limited to the following three steps for City Council:

- 1) (Nov-Dec) Palo Alto City Council adopts a resolution declaring weeds a nuisance to allow for County abatement efforts and setting a later date (Jan-Feb) for a public hearing to review the Annual Commencement Report (list of local “nuisance” parcels prepared by County).
- 2) (Jan-Feb) City Council holds a public hearing to review the Annual Commencement Report and approve the County abatement proceedings. At this public hearing, property owners may appear and object to the proposed weed destruction or removal. After the hearing and consideration of any objections, the Council may sustain or overrule any or all objections. Upon Council adoption of the final weed abatement commencement report, the County will be asked to perform the abatement work to destroy and remove any weeds.
- 3) (June) City Council holds a public hearing to hear any objections from affected property owners before approving the assessments for the abatement work performed by the SCCDAEM.

The Santa Clara County Weed Abatement Program

The Santa Clara County Department of Agriculture and Environmental Management and the City of Palo Alto work together to protect our community from fire. The purpose of the Weed Abatement Program is to prevent fire hazards posed by vegetative overgrowth and the accumulation of combustible materials.

Typically, a property is placed on the program list by a County Weed Abatement Inspector who identifies a potential fire hazard on the property. The Palo Alto Fire Department (PAFD) & Code Enforcement also report addresses of concern and forward (verified) complaints from residents to the SCCDAEM.

Residents can report addresses of concern to PAFD, Code Enforcement, or directly to the County Weed Abatement Program. The County issues the final property list for the Annual Commencement Report.

Santa Clara County program staff annually inspect “nuisance” parcels at the beginning of the fire season, which is typically April 30th for CPA parcels.

The Weed Abatement program is entirely funded from fees charged to residents. All parcels on the list will be charged a basic inspection fee. If the parcel is not in compliance at the time of inspection, the property owner will be charged an additional failed inspection fee, and they will receive a final courtesy notice as a reminder to abate their weeds within two weeks.

If the weeds are not abated by the property owner, the work will be completed by the County contractor. The property owner will be assessed for the contractor’s fees plus a County administrative fee. All fees will be included in the parcel’s property tax bill.

Properties that meet and maintain the minimum fire safety standards will only be charged for the annual inspection fee. These properties will be removed from the list after three years of compliance.