

Sidewalk and Roadway  
Vegetation Management Plan (IVM)  
City of Haverhill, MA  
2013-2017

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## **OBJECTIVES AND GOALS**

The Integrated Vegetation Management Plan (IVM) establishes a five year plan to control vegetation along sidewalks and roads in the City of Haverhill in compliance with the Rights of Way Management regulations (333 CMR 11.00).

The goal of the IVM is to assure that the vegetation management practices along public sidewalks and roads are conducted in the most environmentally sound manner through an Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) program which will minimize the reliance upon herbicides. Vegetation management along sidewalks and roads is necessary to control unwanted vegetation that deteriorates public ways, create a public nuisance and/or creates a hazard that obstructs pedestrian and vehicular travel. The operational goal of this IVM is to utilize an IVM program designed to maximize control of undesirable vegetation while minimizing the use of herbicides. In order of preference by the Haverhill Department of Public Works (DPW), the IVM program will involve the use of cultural, mechanical and chemical control techniques to control undesirable vegetation in an ecologically sound manner. The choices of the target vegetation and appropriate control techniques are at the heart of the program. Achievement of this goal will be made through annual inspection and maintenance programs of all public ways, and control of the areas as needed by the most environmentally sensitive means possible.

## **TECHNIQUES TO MINIMIZE THE AMOUNT AND FREQUENCY OF HERBICIDE APPLICATION**

IVM as it applies to roadside maintenance involves utilizing a variety of techniques to control unwanted vegetation in the most ecologically based manner. Implementation of IVM will result in a reduced reliance on chemical pesticides by encouraging the vegetation management technique that will result in establishment and stabilization of beneficial vegetation. The resulting cultural control will reduce the need for vegetation management in the future. Vegetation management activities will place the non-chemical techniques as the methods of choice in light of the goal of controlling the undesirable vegetation and establishing a stable, beneficial vegetation community. If and when used, herbicide use will be minimized through timing of applications to maximize control, and avoiding fixed application schedules while protecting non-target organisms and environmentally sensitive sites. The specific components of the roadside IVM program include:

**Monitoring** – All roadsides will be viewed prior to any scheduled treatment program. Monitoring will be done by foot, vehicle and as the result of requests from the public.

**Record Keeping** – Areas maintained, through mechanical or chemical control, will be recorded and a log of areas surveyed will be kept for future planning and reference. This is in addition to the record keeping requirements of the DAR. Decisions to maintain vegetation, either mechanically or chemically, will be based on the following:

- Vegetation that interferes with traffic safety at intersections.
- Vegetation that interferes with pedestrian safety.
- Vegetation that interferes with traffic safety along the length of the roadway.
  - Nuisance grass growing in between guardrails, established plantings or in cracks of sidewalks.
- Poison ivy on or within ten feet of sidewalks or roadways.

Control Tactics – The decision to use one of the vegetation control techniques will depend on evaluating the specific situation. Emphasis will be given to the control tactic which will address the vegetation problem in the most environmentally sound manner and in a way to minimize vegetation control in the long term.

#### Cultural Controls

- City of Haverhill Adopt a Park program

#### Mechanical Controls

- Selective pruning
- Ground cutting
- Mowing
- Street sweeping
- Crack Sealing

#### Chemical Controls

- Cut stump treatments
- Pre-emergent application
- Foliar application

## **IDENTIFICATION OF TARGET VEGETATION**

Target vegetation along sidewalks and roadways is vegetation that includes public health nuisance vegetation, nuisance grass and weeds and vegetation posing a risk to safety.

#### Public Health Nuisance Vegetation

Public health nuisance vegetation includes vegetation that grows along public roads and sidewalks, which could cause health problems. The overwhelming majority of plant material to be controlled is poison ivy. Under this IVM, poison ivy and other “nuisance” vegetation growing within 10 feet of the Rights of Way (ROW) will be considered target vegetation.

#### Nuisance Grass & Weeds

Along the shoulders of roads, grass growth will be encouraged and maintained through mechanical mowing. However in some instances, grasses and weeds may grow in areas where control is limited to the use of herbicides. These areas include cracks in asphalt, brick, concrete, planting beds and along guardrails. In these instances, grass will become target vegetation if the stem density and height impacts established plantings, impedes movement, hampers visibility and/or if the roots undermine asphalt, brick, concrete or other surface material used for pedestrian and vehicle travel.

#### Vegetation Posing a Risk to Safety

Vegetation that hampers visibility or impedes movement along sidewalks and roads is considered posing a risk to public safety. M.G.L. Chapter 87, section 5 authorizes the tree wardens to have control of all “public shade trees, shrubs and growths” along public ways. Plants interfering with traffic and visibility will be controlled by removing and/or hand cutting. However, due to topography, rate of growth, or physical characteristics, certain plant species may require control by herbicides.

Targeted vegetation includes tall growing species including trees. Hardwood and softwood species that are capable of interfering with pedestrians and traffic safety are either selectively pruned or ground cut. Occasionally conditions will not allow the use of a stump grinder and require treatment of these cut stumps with an herbicide if re-cutting is not practical to control resprouting. When planting trees in the ROW species that are unlikely to interfere with the ROW will be selected.

## **METHODS OF VEGETATION MANAGEMENT**

Sidewalk and roadway vegetation management will involve first mechanical methods (hand cutting, mowing, selective trimming) and secondly, chemical treatments (foliar herbicide treatments, cut stump treatments and preemergents usage). The methods listed below will be chosen based on a variety of factors. The method chosen for a given vegetation problem will attempt to achieve vegetation suppression while reducing the reliance on herbicides.

### **1. Mulching**

Proper mulching techniques will be applied to planting beds and roadside areas to prevent undesirable weeds. This is done in the spring.

### **2. Selective Trimming**

Selective trimming consists of the mechanical pruning of encroaching limbs of tall trees that may hamper access to the roadway. This trimming will be accomplished using aerial lifts mounted on trucks or tractors or, if terrain or obstructions prevent equipment access, by climbing crews. This is done all year.

### **3. Hand Cutting**

Hand cutting consists of the mechanical cutting of targeted woody species using chain saws and brush saws. Targeted species are cut as close to the ground as practical. Hand cutting is used to protect environmentally sensitive sites or on target woody vegetation greater than 12 feet tall. Hand cutting is used on those restricted sites where terrain, site size or sensitivity renders mowing impossible or impractical. Hand cutting may be used at any time of the year.

### **4. Hand Pulling**

Hand pulling will consist of pulling targeted grass and weeds by hand, when economically feasible in planting beds on town traffic islands. This will be done during the summer.

### **5. Mowing**

Mowing consists of mechanical cutting of target vegetation using machines. Depending upon the resources available, mechanical cutting may be made using a power trimmer, push mower, riding mower, or a tractor driven brush hog or flail mower. Selection of specific equipment is based on terrain, target vegetation size and equipment availability. Mowing will be used in most areas where herbicide use is prohibited by regulation.

### **6. Foliar Treatments**

Foliar treatments involve the selective application of herbicide per label, to the foliage and stems of the target vegetation. The foliar treatments will be made using truck mounted sprayer, squirt bottles or manual pump application equipment. This treatment will use low pressure, below 60 pounds per square inch (psi) at the nozzle, for application. The herbicide solution is applied to lightly wet the target plant. Foliar applications will take place when plants are in full leaf and actively growing, and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

### **7. Pre-emergent Treatments:**

This involves the use of pre-emergent herbicides using the same equipment described in the foliar treatments above. Pre-emergent applications are used where season long vegetation control requires “vegetation-free conditions” such as along curbing, sidewalks, under guardrails and on paved traffic islands. Usually, pre-emergent treatments are used in conjunction with foliar applications, unless the goal is to prevent the growth of vegetation in the spring, to reduce the amount of applied herbicides and applications. This method is used from the early spring to early fall.

8. Cut Stump Treatment

Cut stump treatments consist of mechanical cutting of target species using chain saws immediately followed by a herbicide treatment applied with a squirt bottle or painted on the freshly cut surface of the stump. The herbicide is limited to the freshly cut surface of the remaining stump. Cut stump application is preferred during the dormant period. This type of treatment would only be done if stump grinding is not practical and for concern that stump sprouts would out compete more desirable vegetation. This will be done when a tree is removed any time of year.

9. Street Sweeping

Subject to annual budgetary appropriation, the City will regularly sweep streets with a mechanical street sweeper to remove soils and weeds built up at the edges of the asphalt berm thereby removing a place for weeds to germinate.

10. Crack Sealing

Subject to annual budgetary appropriation, crack sealing will be done whenever possible to limit weed growth by filling in the cracks with a suitable sealer.

11. Cultural Treatment – Adopt a park. Residents adopt a green space and maintain it throughout the season

**SUMMARY**

TARGET	TECHNIQUES	COMMENTS
Poison Ivy	foliar	May be growing within 10 feet of the public way. Spot treatment will be made using foliar method, in most cases, except no spray areas around sensitive areas.
Grass & Broadleaf Weeds	mulching	Preventive measure for planting beds.
	mowing	In most cases will be the preferred method.
	hand pulling	When economically feasible in planting beds along traffic islands.
	foliar	Spot treatment of grass growing along guardrails or in cracks where mowing or cutting is not practical or safe.

Low growth	mulching	Mulch as a preventive measure along roadsides.
	mowing	In most cases, preferred option for sensitive areas.
	foliar	Terrain prevents mowing or hand-cutting rapid resprouting species.
	hand cutting	Terrain prevents mowing and resprouting is not a concern; option for sensitive areas.
Tall growth	selective trimming	in cases where the visibility or interferences does not warrant removal of entire vegetation; option for no spray areas
	hand cutting	Terrain prevents mowing or mowing not effective due to stump size. Option for no spray areas.
	cut stump	For species that are capable of re-sprouting.
	preemergents	used to cover undesirable seeds to prevent their germination thereby minimizing their growth
Street Sweeping	Mechanical	Sweeping of roadways
Crack Sealing	Contractor	filling of pavement cracks to minimize weed habitat

## **JUSTIFICATION OF HERBICIDE USE**

The goal of vegetation management on the public rights of way is the management of nuisance vegetation and other vegetation that risk public safety. Mechanical cutting and mowing in most instances will achieve the desired goals of controlling nuisance vegetation and vegetation that poses a safety risk.

### Public Health Nuisance Vegetation

As previously noted, the control of public health nuisance vegetation along the right of way is a major objective of this IVM plan. Due to the low growing nature of poison ivy, and the fact that it grows along stolons, it is nearly impossible to control poison ivy through cultivation, hand pulling or mowing at the height generally used in roadside mowing operations. Moreover, the climbing characteristics of this plant over stone walls tree trunks and guardrails, make mechanical control out of the question for safety and economic reasons. Through the judicious use of herbicides, the development of herbaceous communities that crowd out nuisance vegetation can be achieved by roadside mowing.

### Other Species

Woody vegetation (low and high growth species) growing along the rights-of-way that interfere with pedestrian or vehicles is controlled by pruning or ground cutting using hand tools or chain saws. Depending upon the species of plant removed and its proximity to other vegetation, these stumps along the road shoulder in

an accessible location will be mowed along with the roadside grass on an annual basis. Woody plants that are growing over obstacles that would impede the mower, or have a viney growth habit so that they cannot be hand cut and chipped, or that grow very rapidly will be eliminated through the use of a foliar applied herbicide.

Grass and weeds will be controlled primarily by mowing whenever possible. However, nuisance grass that may grow in between guard rails, in planting beds or cracks in asphalt may best be controlled by spot treatment of herbicides if hand pulling or mechanical control is not feasible and the stem density and height warrant control.

## **PROCESS, REFERENCES AND SOURCES FOR IDENTIFYING SENSITIVE AREAS AND CONTROL STRATEGIES PROPOSED FOR SENSITIVE AREAS**

### Identifying Sensitive Areas

*Sensitive Areas* regulated by 333 CMR 11.04 is as follows:

...any areas within Rights-of-Way, including No-Spray and Limited-Spray Areas, in which public health, environmental or agricultural concerns warrant special protection to further minimize risks of unreasonable adverse effects

Sensitive Areas regulated by 333 CMR 11.00 include the following:

#### Water Supplies:

- Zone I's
- Zone II's
- IWPA's (Interim Wellhead Protection Areas)
- Class A Surface Water Sources
- Tributaries to a Class A Surface Water Source
- Class B Drinking Water Intakes
- Private Wells

#### Surface Waters:

- Wetlands
- Water Over Wetlands
- The Mean Annual High Water Line of a River
- The Outer Boundary of a Riverfront Area
- Certified Vernal Pools

#### Cultural Sites:

- Agricultural Areas
- Inhabited Areas

#### Wildlife Areas:

- Certified Vernal Pool Habitat
- Priority Habitat.



## Identification Methods

Two simple descriptions guide the complex identification of the *sensitive areas* defined in 333 CMR 11.04: *Readily identifiable in the field* and *Not readily identifiable in the field*.

Readily identifiable in the field areas will be identified, marked when appropriate, and treated according to all applicable restrictions listed in 333 CMR 11.00. Not readily identifiable in the field areas will likewise be identified, marked when appropriate, and treated when appropriate, but they are identified by the use of data marked on maps and collected included in the Yearly Operational Plan (YOP) and notification processes before the time of treatment.

The individuals assigned the task of identifying and treating *sensitive areas* not readily identified in the field will use the appropriate sources and methods from the following list:

- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Watershed Maps which delineates the perimeter of public watersheds and the location of public wells
- Massachusetts DEP Wetland Conservancy Maps
- Municipal maps and records, Board of Health, Request for Determination with Conservation Commission and water supplier
- Regional Planning Agencies maps and records
- Haverhill Geographic Information System (GIS)
- A copy of the YOP and IVM
- Correspondence, meetings and input within the forty-five day YOP and twenty-one day municipal right-of-way notification letter review and comment periods and the 48 hour newspaper notification (under 333 CMR 11.06 & 11.07 and Chapter 85 of the Acts of 2000)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory Maps, available from the University of Massachusetts, Cartographic Information Research Services, Amherst

The following is a description of how the sensitive areas will be identified for required protection.

- Consult the appropriate reference materials and sources to determine the precise location of these areas.
- Place the boundaries of these sensitive areas on Haverhill's GIS
- Prior to commencement of herbicide application operations, provide the treatment crew with a GIS map which denotes these sensitive areas.
- A City of Haverhill representative familiar with these sensitive areas shall accompany the treatment crew throughout the treatment process.

Sensitive areas readily identifiable in the field include surface waters, inhabited areas, and agricultural. The method utilized to identify these sensitive areas will be as follows:

- Consult USGS topographic maps to locate any of these sensitive areas that may already be identified on these maps.
- Prior to commencement of herbicide application operations, the treatment crew will be provided the marked topographic map.
- The treatment crew will visually survey the area to be treated for any sensitive areas.
- Review of the National Heritage and Endangered Species Act

## SENSITIVE AREA RESTRICTIONS (333 CMR 11.04)

In any sensitive area:

- The minimum labeled rate of herbicide for the appropriate site, targeted pest, and application method shall be applied.
- Herbicides shall be applied selectively by low pressure foliar techniques or stem application only or other method approved for use by the Department of Agriculture Resources.
- Treatment in the limited spray areas requires the use of herbicides from the Sensitive Area Materials list available at [www.mass.gov/agr/pesticides/rightofway/index.htm](http://www.mass.gov/agr/pesticides/rightofway/index.htm) .

### Sensitive Area Restriction Guide (333 CMR 11.04)

Sensitive Area	Limited Spray or No-Spray Areas (feet)	Control Method	Time Between Treatment(s)
Public Ground Water Supplies	400'	Mechanical Only	None
Primary Recharge Area Designated Zone II	Designated buffer zone	Mechanical, Approved Herbicides*	24 months
Public Surface Water Supplies (Class A & Class B)	100'	Mechanical Only	None
	100'-400'	Approved Herbicides	24 months
Tributary to Class A Water Source, within 400' upstream of water source	100'	Mechanical Only	None
	100'-400'	Approved Herbicides	24 months
Tributary to Class A Water Source, greater than 400' upstream of water source	10'	Mechanical Only	None
	10'-200'	Approved Herbicides	24 months
Class B Drinking Water Intake, within 400' upstream of intake	100'	Mechanical Only	None
	100'-200'	Approved Herbicides	24 months
Private Drinking Water Supplies	50'	Mechanical Only	None
	50'-100'	Approved Herbicides	24 months
Surface Waters	10'	Mechanical Only	None
	10'-100'	Approved Herbicides	12 months
Rivers	10' from mean annual high water line	Mechanical Only	None
	10'-200'	Approved Herbicides	12 months

Wetlands	10'	Mechanical Only	None
	100' or with approved Wetlands Determination 10' - 100' [per 310 CMR 0.05(3)(a) & 310 CMR 0.03(6)(b)]	Low-pressure Foliar, CST, Basal, Approved Herbicides	24 months
Inhabited Areas	100'	Approved Herbicides	12 months
Agricultural Area(Crops, Fruits, Pastures)	100'	Approved Herbicides	12 months
Certified Vernal Pools	10'	Mechanical Only when water is present	None
Certified Vernal Pool Habitat	10'-outer boundary of habitat	No treatment without approval	
Priority Habitat	No treatment outside the 4 foot paved road exemption without approval of the Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program (NHESP)		

\*Massachusetts Approved herbicides for sensitive sites

### **APPROVED, REGISTERED HERBICIDES FOR USE WITHIN SENSITIVE AREAS on RIGHTS of WAYS**

Due to the ongoing changes in the chemical industry it is inappropriate to list herbicides based on today's standards. DEP and Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) are continually upgrading their standards, eliminating some chemicals and adding others. Therefore, the City's herbicide recommendations will appear in our Yearly Operational Plan, based on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and DAR recommendations in place at the time of our YOP application.

### **OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATORS**

As required by regulation, applicators to the rights of way must hold a valid pesticide certification from the Department of Agricultural Resources. In addition to the applicable rules and regulations, applicators will adhere to the following operational guidelines:

Weather - Herbicide applications will be restricted during certain adverse weather conditions, such as rain or wind. Herbicide applications will not be made during periods of moderate or heavy rainfall. Foliar applications are effective in light mist situations, however, any measurable rainfall that creates leaf runoff will wash the herbicide off target. If foliar applications are interrupted by unexpected rainfall, the treatment will not resume until the rain ends and active leaf runoff has ceased. Cut stump treatments will not be made during measurable precipitation. Cut stump treatments will cease during measurable precipitation and will not resume until precipitation has ceased. Excessive wind can create drift during foliar applications. Significant herbicide drift can cause damage to desirable vegetation on or off the roadside. Cut stump treatments are much less affected by the wind, as they are applied in close proximity to the ground level.

To minimize off-target drift, the applicator will comply with the following restrictions:

- During periods of wind which are strong enough to bend the tops of the main stems of tree species on the roadside, the applicator will periodically observe the application of the foliar treatment to insure that there is no significant movement of the herbicide. If the applicator can see the herbicide moving off target, the application will immediately stop until the wind has subsided enough to permit further applications.
- All herbicide solutions to be used for a foliar application will contain low drift agents. Low-drift agents will be added to the foliar herbicide mixture as per the low-drift agent label. In moderate wind conditions, as per label recommendations, more low-drift may be added, at the discretion of the applicator to control increased drift. Foliar treatments will not be made to target vegetation that exceeds twelve feet in height.

Calibration - Foliar application equipment will be calibrated at the beginning of the season, in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Foliar application equipment will be calibrated to maintain pressures not exceeding sixty PSI at the nozzle and applicator nozzles will be adjusted to apply a coarse spray to minimize drift. Cut stump treatment squirt bottle nozzle will be adjusted to minimize the herbicide splash and overspray.

Cleaning- Cleaning of any equipment used by any sub-contractor of the City of Haverhill shall be done at the City of Haverhill facility or the contractor's facility and in accordance with EPA guidelines and product and equipment labels.

Mixing – Cleaning the amount of herbicide necessary to carry out the vegetation control, based on monitoring results, will ensure that there will be no waste and minimize potential problems.

- The vehicles performing the spray operations will be equipped with a bag of absorbent, activated charcoal, leak-proof containers, a broom and a shovel in case of minor spills; and
- A clipboard log of the herbicides on the vehicle will be kept on the vehicle; and
- Herbicide labels, fact sheets, the IVM, current YOP and Herbicide Spill Check List (Appendix 5) will be carried on-site by the applicator(s).

Private Properties – Trees located on private property will not be treated.

Sensitive Area Restrictions – In defined sensitive areas, there exists a no-spray area where herbicide use is prohibited and a limited spray area where herbicide use is allowed under certain conditions. In areas around sensitive areas where herbicide use is allowed, only the minimum labeled rate of application for the control of target species can be applied.

333 CMR 11.00 - The Department of Public Works shall notify the City of Haverhill Mayor, Board of Health, Conservation Commission and the Haverhill Water Department at least 21 days in advance of the application of herbicides to City ROW. The notice shall include but not be limited to the approximate date on which such spraying shall occur, provide however that said spraying shall not conclude more than ten days after said approximate date; a copy of a DAR approved Herbicide Fact Sheet on the active ingredient(s) of the herbicide(s) used; and the name of the certified applicators and name of the company hired who would be making the applications.

## **ALTERNATIVE LAND USE PROVISION**

Every effort will be given for alternative land use options. However, there are specific criteria to be met for adoption of alternative land use options. The alternative land use option must control the undesirable vegetation in a similar manner, ecologically and successfully as allowed in this IVM. For example, a common practice of abutters to roadways is to mow them and maintain road shoulders. In this instance, the monitoring program would reveal that the area does not warrant vegetation control. A written agreement with landowners for alternative vegetation control methods will be obtained. This agreement would clearly specify that the DPW would not treat vegetation in these areas and outline the landowner's responsibilities for vegetation control.

## **REMEDIAL PLAN / SPILLS AND RELATED ACCIDENTS**

All mixing and loading of herbicides will be conducted at the contractor's central facility, or at the City of Haverhill facility. Mixing only the amount of herbicide necessary to carry out the vegetation control, based on the monitoring results, will ensure that there will be no waste and minimize potential problems. The vehicle carrying out the spray operation will be equipped with a bag of absorbent, activated charcoal, leak-proof containers, a broom and a shovel in case of minor spills. A clipboard log of herbicides in the vehicle will be kept in the vehicle. Herbicide labels and fact sheets should be carried on-site by the applicator.

As soon as any spill is observed, immediate action will take place to contain the spill and protect the spill area. The cause of the spill must be identified and secured. Spill containment will be accomplished by covering the spill with adsorptive clay or other adsorptive material, or, for large spills, building clay or soil dikes to impede spill progress. Until completely clean, protection of the spill area will be accomplished by placing barriers, flagging or crew members at strategic locations. If a fire is involved, care will be taken to avoid breathing fumes from any burning chemicals.

In the event of a spill, information on safety precautions and clean up procedures may be gathered from the following sources:

- Herbicide label
- Herbicide Material Safety Data sheet  
Herbicide Manufacturer: refer to label contact
- Massachusetts Pesticide Bureau 617 626-1781
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health 617-624-5757
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental  
Emergency Response Section 888-304-1133
- Chem Trec 800-424-9300
- Haverhill Fire Department 911
- Haverhill Health Department 978-374-2325
- Pesticide Hotline 800-858-7378
- Clean Harbors 800 OIL-TANK
- Massachusetts Poison Information Centers 800-682-9211

Minor spills will be remedied by soaking up the spill with adsorptive clay or other adsorptive material and placing it in leak proof containers for proper disposal. Activated charcoal will be incorporated into the soil at the spill location at a rate of seven pounds per thousand square feet to inactivate any herbicide residue. Any minor spill will be reported to the Pesticide Bureau.

Major spills will be handled in a similar manner as minor spills, except in cases where the spill cannot be contained and/or removed by the crew. Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection will be contacted when there is a spill of a reportable quantity, and in accordance with 310 CMR 40.0000, Massachusetts Contingency Plan.