



CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL

**RESOLUTION REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEAST TOXIC
METHOD OF MAINTAINING THE SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR PARK AND
OTHER PUBLIC PARKLANDS AND OPEN SPACES IN JAMAICA PLAIN**

**Offered by Councillors
JOHN M. TOBIN, JR. & FELIX D. ARROYO**

- WHEREAS:* The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances has stated that “all pesticides are toxic to some degree, . . . and the commonplace, widespread use of pesticides is both a major environmental problem and a public health issue”; and
- WHEREAS:* Long-term exposure to pesticides has been linked to cancer; liver, nerve, and kidney damage; developmental toxicity; and disruption of the endocrine system; and
- WHEREAS:* Pesticides have been shown to pose special risks to children, seniors, and people with asthma, chemical sensitivity, and compromised immune systems; and
- WHEREAS:* The EPA Office of Inspector General (OIG) has stated that sewage sludge contains “toxic pollutants and disease-causing organisms” and that the “EPA cannot assure the public that current land application practices [of sewage sludge] are protective of human health and the environment”; and
- WHEREAS:* The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled that "experts have yet to reach a consensus on the safety of land application of sewage sludge"; and
- WHEREAS:* More than 60,000 toxic substances and chemical compounds have been found in sewage sludge – including PCBs, pesticides, heavy metals, industrial solvents, bacteria, viruses, and parasitic worms – with many sludge experts maintaining that “Class A” sludge is just as unsafe as “Class B”; and
- WHEREAS:* Agencies of the Commonwealth that maintain the Southwest Corridor Park and other public parklands and open spaces in Jamaica Plain use toxic chemicals in their land-maintenance and pest-prevention practices – for example, the Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Division of Urban Parks and Recreation currently uses two pesticides in Boston’s Southwest Corridor Park that are classified by the EPA as either “highly” or “very” toxic, two that contain ingredients known to cause cancer in humans, and another that is linked to birth defects and such conditions as learning disabilities and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); and
- WHEREAS:* In Albany, New York; Santa Barbara and San Francisco, California; Seattle, Washington; and the towns of Newton, Wellesley, and Marblehead surrounding the city of Boston,

policies have been adopted to ensure safer methods of land maintenance and pest prevention; and

WHEREAS: These safer methods, including organic pest management (OPM) – which uses no synthetic pesticides or other toxic products – and integrated pest management (IPM) – which limits pesticide use to application of the least toxic products at the lowest frequency for efficacy – have been proven effective over time at pest and weed control, while ensuring the health of applicators, land users, and the land itself; and

WHEREAS: All citizens have a right to protection from exposure to hazardous chemicals on public lands; **THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED: The Boston City Council urges the Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Division of Urban Parks and Recreation to (1) make a commitment to discontinue its current use of pesticides, and continue to refrain from applying all products derived from and including sewage sludge, in the Southwest Corridor Park; (2) implement the least toxic method of park maintenance in the Southwest Corridor Park, using OPM as its predominant technique and adopting IPM in the case of emergencies only; and (3) ensure that clear and accurate notification about the use of any pesticide or other toxic product in the Southwest Corridor Park be made available to the users of the park, as specified in the Massachusetts Pesticide Control Act; **AND BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: The Boston City Council urges the City of Boston to make the same commitment to all other public parklands and open spaces in Jamaica Plain (JP), naming that neighborhood as a pilot for the possible future use of safer alternatives in other neighborhoods of Boston. This commitment shall be for a trial period of three years and cover properties within JP that are maintained by agencies of the Commonwealth, not privately maintained properties. These agencies include Boston Parks and Recreation, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Suffolk County Mosquito Control, and the Metropolitan Boston Transit Authority. After the three-year trial period, an OPM/IPM Advisory and Oversight Committee will evaluate the transition in JP for its success in that neighborhood and the efficacy of its expansion to all other neighborhoods of Boston; **AND BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: The Boston City Council and an OPM/IPM Advisory and Oversight Committee will work with the parties involved to ensure that the transition take place in a timely and appropriate manner. Within six months of adoption of this resolution, all agencies of the Commonwealth involved with maintenance of parks, parkways, rights of way, and other green spaces in Jamaica Plain shall report to an OPM/IPM Advisory and Oversight Committee with an implementation plan.

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