



Allentown Environmental Advisory Council

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Allentown City Hall
435 Hamilton Street
Allentown, PA 18101

RE: Allentown Environmental Advisory Council Support for Resolution Encouraging Reduced Herbicide Use

To the esteemed members of Allentown City Council and Mayor Tuerk:

The Allentown Environmental Advisory Council (AEAC) writes in support of the proposed resolution urging the Department of Parks and Recreation to reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides on City-owned lands. We believe this resolution aligns directly with our Council's stated purpose to advise on environmental issues within the City, protect and preserve natural resources, and encourage sustainable design.

This past summer, the AEAC was fortunate to host a dedicated intern, sponsored by the Office of Community Engagement at Muhlenberg College. The intern conducted research on invasive plant species in Allentown, producing [a comprehensive report](#) that examined their ecological, economic, and public health impacts. The report highlighted several pressing findings:

- Invasive plants such as mugwort, Japanese knotweed, and lesser celandine are degrading Allentown's natural areas by displacing native species, reducing biodiversity, and weakening ecosystem resilience.
- These invasives impose economic costs, from property damage to increased flooding risks and higher maintenance expenses.
- Current management strategies rely on both mechanical removal and herbicide use, but herbicides pose well-documented health risks, contribute to water contamination, and threaten pollinators and other wildlife.

- Sustainable alternatives exist, including expanded native planting, smothering techniques, timed cutting, and even innovative practices such as managed grazing. These strategies can reduce reliance on chemicals while supporting healthier ecosystems.

The AEAC recognizes the City's commitment to addressing invasive species and maintaining public lands, but we also acknowledge the growing health, environmental, and ecological concerns associated with herbicide use. Passing this resolution would represent an important step toward safer, more sustainable land management practices.

By adopting this resolution, the City Council would reaffirm its leadership in promoting environmental stewardship, protecting public health, and ensuring the resilience of Allentown's natural spaces. It would also provide opportunities for greater community education and engagement—helping residents better understand invasive plants, the value of native species, and the role each of us can play in improving our shared environment.

The AEAC strongly recommends adoption of this resolution and stands ready to assist the City in advancing non-chemical approaches to invasive plant management.

Respectfully submitted,
Kyle Ropski
Chair, Allentown Environmental Advisory Council

CITY OF ALLENTOWN

RESOLUTION

Introduced by City Council on XXXXXXXX, 2025

A Resolution urging the City of Allentown’s Department of Parks and Recreation to reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides on public lands, in recognition of the health, environmental, and financial harms associated with their use, and to pursue sustainable land management alternatives in order to protect the wellbeing of Allentown residents, City staff, and the local ecosystem.

Resolved by the Council of the City of Allentown, That

WHEREAS, the City of Allentown is committed to fostering a healthy and sustainable environment for its residents and future generations; and

WHEREAS, the City maintains a vast network of parks, playgrounds, and recreational areas that are used daily by residents of all ages, including young children and seniors; and

WHEREAS, scientific research has shown that many herbicides, and chemical lawn treatments pose risks to human health, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children, pregnant women, and individuals with compromised immune systems; and

WHEREAS, these chemicals are also known to negatively impact local ecosystems, including pollinators, birds, aquatic life, and beneficial soil organisms, contributing to biodiversity loss and environmental degradation; and

WHEREAS, the City of Allentown budgeted \$19,285 for “chemicals” in 2020, and that figure has more than quadrupled to \$85,500 in the 2025 Parks and Recreation budget, placing a growing burden on taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, sustainable alternatives to herbicides—including expanded native planting, smothering, timed cutting, and other mechanical strategies—have been shown to effectively control invasive plants while protecting human health, supporting biodiversity, and strengthening the resilience of local ecosystems;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Allentown urges the Department of Parks and Recreation to significantly reduce or eliminate the use of chemical pesticides and herbicides on public lands and to prioritize the adoption of safer, more sustainable land management practices that protect human health, support ecological integrity, and promote fiscal responsibility.