

Santiago Hills IPM Assessment District Survey Comments

Each property received one survey and up to one opportunity to provide input on selecting an option. Some households submitted more than one survey for their corresponding property. As a result, some households offered more than one comment. The following tables include all comments submitted to the City in their entirety, with each cell representative of one address. Consequently, some cells contain multiple comments as these households submitted more than one survey.

Comments submitted with “Maintain Current IPM” Selections

In total, 174 survey respondents selected the “Maintain Current IPM” option. Of these, 88 respondents did not leave additional comments. A total of 86 respondents did leave comments. The following table displays all 86 comments in their entirety.

Table 4: Comments Submitted with “Maintain Current IPM” Selections

Comment:
I would like to keep the Current IPM Program for the Santiago Hills Landscape District. During this time of the pandemic we should not even be considering raising fees as there are a lot of people who lost their jobs. We care more for people's welfare and how they can put food on their table and not just look for something for the sake of raising fees. We should be more sensitive to our unfortunate fellow citizens.
I vote to maintain the current IPM program.
Please maintain the current IPM. No increase in assessment fees.
Do not raise anymore assessments please!
We prefer to: Maintain Current IPM
We support maintaining the current IPM. Thank you.
Although this would be nice to do, I constantly hear about how high our dues are already and don't think the majority of the residence want to see their dues increase anymore. Especially with the economic worries and so many neighbors that don't know if they will have a job moving forward. Now may not be the best time for this.
Unnecessary cost that we cannot afford at this time.
Maintain Current IPM
It doesn't make sense to increase the fee by 50% while increasing the weed tolerance to 35-40% and more rodents and insects. As long as we are within EPA standards let's leave it alone.
We have reviewed the IPM program comparison and we are comfortable with maintain the current IPM
Thank you

Comments: Given the fact that it took two times to increase district rates when a more demonstrative monetary deficit was plainly apparent, I question the wisdom of asking for a rate increase so close to the last increase and for a single arcane aspect. While I understand why you are doing this, the City is once again trying to appease a small vocal group of residents that have either just moved here or simply do not understand what it takes to actually approve a rate increase. This tends to disappoint the rest of us who have had to endure the vitriol of people who think they deserve something for nothing. The City needs to maintain more contact with the residents through face-to-face meetings. I realize that the pandemic limits that, but once the pandemic is in the rear view mirror, the current level of contact is too low, and the City needs to up its game. Comments on Landscaping: I feel that the City is currently doing a good job on maintenance and I encourage the continued use of drought tolerant plant replacement. Once again, I want to see more trees, many trees that have died or were damaged by high winds have not been replaced, and the City should seek to increase the number of trees to create more shade and reduce ground temperatures. We also need to reduce the use of turf, I think the newly landscaped areas at the corner of Skylark and Canyon View exceed the 25% maximum for turf use. Please provide how those areas were figured to meet the City's ordinance. Further, the turf used in parkways along Skylark is doing very poorly. A combination of poor maintenance and gophers has left the turf in a sad state. The turf should either be removed and replaced with drought tolerant plants, or replace with artificial turf. While I am not an advocate for artificial turf, it may have some application in areas such as the parkways and in very limited fashion. It will save on water and maintenance cost, and a good quality brand will look good for years. Plus, gophers don't like it.

Assessment cost is already extremely high compared to other HOAs. I would not like to pay more.

I am a homeowner impacted by the Santiago Hills IPM. Given the pandemic and our nation's economic situation, I would like to go with Option 1 - Maintain Current IPM.

Thank you!

You all must be nuts! At a time when people are being laid off and suffering you want to increase rates? Get real. No, no, no! City - I think this is incredible. As for as the rats are concerned - we were invaded by a rat family. The [REDACTED] people got 10 rats! You - they are not controlling them. I had to hire people to exterminate the RATS. You want less pesticides? Get informed. (Or put out more traps.) Do a better job so homeowners don't worry and pay so much for exterminations! Rats right now are looking for warm houses to raise their families over here mon Mulberry. We are near the Peters Canyon Park. I already paid for your ineptitude. Organics are the future but this expense and poor rodent control is awful. Wake up.

The quality of landscaping has greatly decreased. Santiago Hills Park and greenbelts grass look terrible, ground cover dying, trees die and are not replaced. Patches of dirt - no grass is planted. Worst it has looked in 30 years!

Increased too much money last time

My daughter says the school she works at has organic pesticides and it doesn't work. Every teacher brings her own can of black 7 log to keep the bugs out and it now works.

More work, time, and cost going to organic and increasing weed tolerance and insects/rodents. Not a good choice.
Keep cost increase to a minimum
Lived here for 23 healthy years and love the greenbelt improvements. No need for me to help absorb an extra \$150,000 in unnecessary fees
I don't want anything that would increase assessment fees that would continually lead to increasing my local and property taxes
No more increases please
No
Most people are short on money during COVID-19
I do not wish assessment increase for this purpose
Maintain current IPM. Do not want to increase any fees of any kind. Thank you.
We have authorized 2 "assessments" and have not seen much progress. Would like to see an improvement!
No organics.
Lots of extra work and expense to go organic. Not worth it.
We reviewed the program comparison document and have concluded that organic is not necessary for community landscaping. Organic is more expensive and less effective in eliminating insects/rodents. Our vote is NO on organics.
I support the raise in costs to address the terrible increase of rodents but not to the extreme cost of the Organic Pesticides
It is going to take at least five years for individuals and businesses that employ those individuals to recover from the horrific lockdowns imposed upon us by the governor. There could not be a worse time than now to embark upon a review of measures beyond the required scope of CA law, particularly at an increased expense. Furthermore, I don't believe we should work with criteria of a "non-profit" out of Eugene, Oregon. (As we all know, non-profit does not mean that someone isn't get paid vast sums of money). CA standards are strict enough, we don't need to go looking to adopt stricter measures. Post when spraying has occurred and the area is NOT overrun with rodents. Quite the opposite, coyotes all too frequently get them and pets. I was out there today and the weed situation is out of control. This must be a requirement of the new landscape company. Our current landscaper is below subpar. Thank you for your attention.
Organic is a good idea by the pandemic and post pandemic recovery (whenever it occurs) is not the right time for many struggling households
Quit screwing this up
Current IPM: less \$, less weeds and less labor
An increase to accommodate "organic" pesticides is ludicrous. I am assuming the people in our District who are in favor of these type of very expensive options are public employees who have not had their finances impacted over the past year. The rest of us who Pay the taxes which PAY the salaries of Public Employees have been impacted. Lost jobs, cut in pay. NO, NO,NO on the options to increase assessment fees to transition to an organics only IPM. What a joke. How do we find out when this

will be on the council agenda? 2 dates a month apart do not allow for planning to attend and object to an increase in person.
45% increase to the landscape is a burden especially people parking on our streets to go to Peters Canyon are not contributing any dime. They litter and damage the trail. There are more things to take care of instead of using organic pesticides.
Feel the City should stay with current IPM
Thank you for giving us the option to vote on this.
Keep as is
HOA fee is already high with the recent plumbing issue
Please maintain the current IPM. The proposed organics only IPM is unnecessary
You should have a reserve from our previous increase. There should be no increase. You should find a new landscape company, the current group does not do a very good job.
Organics only IPM is just too expensive
We would like to go to organics but feel the price is too steep
The higher cost does not justify the projected benefits or proposed organic pesticides
The medians look beautiful on Skylark. Thank you.
It is too early to consider an increase because many people are struggling financially due to COVID-19. I would consider approving increasing assessment fees next year.
I work at a facility who changed to turf and it is more expensive and cumbersome to maintain. I would be fine, if natural greenery would remain.
The fee is already too high for landscaping in or community. Please keep current IPM to maintain or keep costs down.
The change does not make financial sense given the additional labor cost to do maintenance. As businesses and people are struggling for revenue this is the wrong time to look increases but look to maintain or reduce costs.
The current costs are to much as it is.
No more taxes.
Too expensive
Waste of money to use organic. The current one is EPA compliant.
Organic option is less effective and more expensive. The science behind the organic benefit in this use case is inconclusive. Bottom line is the alternative plan would be a waste of resources.
Don't want any increase in taxes. Send out for additional bids.
Thanks for asking!
This is not the time to raise rates. So many people are suffering due to the pandemic.
No increase
Thank you for sharing the information and reaching out to homeowners.
It is no reason to pay more
Stay the same
Well well intention now is not the time to consider such a costly program that is not completely proven yet. Especially in an assessment district. Wh

On the heels of a global financial crisis, we cannot afford to increase assessments. There is not enough data to support the rationale that organic only products generate any net positive benefit to our community. Please vote to maintain the IPM as-is.
Don't want to pay more
I do not approve of the increased cost of landscape maintenance.
While I personally love the idea of organic IPM, I think the current option is too expensive for a lesser outcome than non-organic. I favor waiting a few years for the cost to drop, and/or for the outcome to be more promising. Or take piece by piece, wherever going organic now is equitable to non-organic.
I do not find benefits to changing landscape to organic
Organic approach is less effective based on information provided, drives costs higher due to more frequent application and maintenance.
Stay with current IPM. Organic makes no sense - 50% more costs and 'increased tolerance for visual rodents' 'increase in insects' and '40% weed tolerance'. Makes no sense. Spend more and get less 'pest management'. Please stay with current IPM. Thanks.
Don't want increasing assessment fees
Organic usually doesn't work well and we have a financial crisis right now, so why would we want to put a cost burden during this pandemic on people?
Please do not let a small group of vocal homeowners push us to this very costly organic IPM which will result in a less desirable looking landscape. Thank You!
We are already paying to much.
Need to keep yearly fees the same.
no further increases
The price increase is exorbitant and does not provide the same coverage. It is not worth the extra expenditure to receive inferior rodent and weed control
Stop trying to increase our taxes. Figure out how to use what is already budgeted and make it work. How about not having street sweeping every week? How about using resources wisely? This isn't Rocket science
No increase!!!
WE ARE IN A PANDEMIC. MONEY IS TIGHT AS IT IS.
The assessment is already to high, and the current IPM is perfectly safe
I am happy with the current landscaping and do not want to increase our property assessment.
Thanks for your communication.

Comments Submitted with “Evaluate the Option to Increase Assessment Fees to Transition to an Organics Only IPM” Selections

In total, 24 survey respondents selected the “Evaluate the Option to Increase Assessment Fees to Transition to an Organics Only IPM” option. Of these, 11 respondents did not leave additional comments. A total of 13 respondents did leave comments. The following table displays all 13 comments in their entirety.

Table 5: Comments submitted with “Evaluate the Option to Increase Assessment Fees to Transition to an Organics Only IPM” Selections

Comments:
Hello - I received your February 9, 2021 letter regarding the two landscape proposals. I am in favor of the organic pesticides only. Although the cost is significantly higher, I believe it is in the best interests of residents to reduce the use of poisons as much as possible.
My name is [REDACTED] and I am a lifelong resident of the City of Orange, where I am a homeowner with my 3-year-old son in the Santiago Hills area. I continue to be disappointed in the city’s “management” of our assessment district. No justification/support was offered to homeowners on why organics should even be considered – this document is incredibly misleading/in favor of synthetics and no sources are provided apart from a link to OMRI.org. Conveniently city staff did not mention they HEAVILY spray our city with RoundUp/Ranger Pro and Speedzone. RoundUp/Ranger Pro is a known carcinogen in the state of California. Speedzone contains 2,4-D, which is the same active ingredient in Agent Orange. None of the bids received are available for public viewing on your website. I do not trust that an organic IPM would cost on average 50% more. Where’s the data to support that? I have submitted a public records request to review the costs myself, but of course it will take longer than your extremely short feedback period for me to receive a reply from the city clerk. Referencing the footnote on your first page, these costs are “estimates” – estimates from where? Per your RFP, vendors were also asked to submit an alternate IPM-2 for no pesticide usage. Where is the transparency in those bids and why was this option not shared with homeowners? As you know, three of our parks in Orange are now pesticide-free and maintained by the same landscape company as the Santiago Hills Landscape District, at NO INCREASE IN COST -- Santiago Hills park has proudly been pesticide-free for 1 1/2 years. Yet, we are supposed to believe a possible 45% increase in our assessment fee would happen for a transition to organics? Is it possible you and the vendors are taking advantage of a wealthier part of Orange to “increase” the assessment? Of course no one wants their taxes to go up, certainly not in a pandemic. But many of us don't want to be poisoned either - is there no other mutually satisfying solution? Perhaps at least a trial of organic pesticides in ONE area? City staff were boasting last year about a cost savings in our landscaping district - why was a test of organics not even considered? Many residents are confused about the letter you sent out – some even referring to it incorrectly as a “vote” – how are we to make informed decisions about our assessment fees when you don't even give us hard data to review? Residents have

had ongoing concerns about the landscaping maintenance in this area for ages. The landscapers and city staff continually attempt to spray when it's raining and/or windy. If concerns were not brought forward by residents, I fear Nieves would do even more damage than they already do to our area. Regardless of whether residents support synthetics or organic, we are all in agreement that the landscaping is mediocre in the area. The more you continue to spray our area, you damage the soil, along with harming the health of your residents. I see so many dead bees now when I walk in our neighborhood – I'm certain from the pesticides heavily sprayed. We now have no forum for our assessment district as city staff do not hold regular town halls with us - you cannot tell me a Zoom town hall cannot happen right now! Residents should be actively included in decisions affecting our assessment fees. Given the extremely quick turn-around time from when you are requesting homeowner feedback and when you plan to award the bid, it would appear that your "request" for input is merely intended to silence a group of homeowners who deeply care about the health of our residents, our children, our pets, and our wildlife. I have lost faith in my city's staff – these feedback forms won't even be acknowledged or probably even counted. Even if everyone in Santiago Hills voted for organic, you would still move forward with poisoning us. Could it be that you are receiving incentives from the manufacturers of these poisonous synthetic pesticides? Although you've only asked for homeowner input, residents in neighboring areas are also considered about pesticide drift. I honestly don't know how city staff are able to sleep at night, knowing they continue to poison innocent children and pets in the City of Orange. What's it going to take? A lawsuit? New York State just BANNED glyphosate (RoundUp/Ranger Pro) from all of its parks. I wish the City of Orange would be on the right side of history and ban these TOXIC chemicals everywhere in our beautiful city.

Why was there no transparency on these bids? Where is the complete nontoxic option which was noted to be included in the bids but was NOT mentioned in this letter. I support non-toxic option similar to our park which has occurred with no cost increase. Where is that option? I am very disappointed by this letter. I am happy to see that organics are being explored. However, the letter is so obviously biased toward keeping the use of toxic synthetic herbicides and pesticides such as Roundup and Speedzone. It basically uses fear tactics to say if we go with organics our taxes will increase by 45%, we will be covered in weeds and we will be overrun with insects and rodents. Where does this information come from? The letter states the bids were obtained and an approximate increase was calculated. However, there has been zero transparency on these bids and the community was not able to review the bids. The community needs to be more involved in this process. It is our tax dollars and it simply does not cut it to ask for our input with no transparency to how decisions are made. Even more frustrating is the fact that our park is one of 3 parks in the city that is maintained without synthetic herbicides and pesticides by the same landscaping company that manages Santiago Hills currently. The letter to residents makes no mention of the success of our non-toxic park at NO INCREASED COST. Why then would a 45% tax increase be needed in our neighborhood to go non-toxic? RoundUp is classified as a probable carcinogen and Bayer Monsanto has been found negligent in several court cases, where cancer patient's have been awarded millions of dollars from the company. Roundup is not only dangerous to humans but has been found to kill honey bees and other insects, and is dangerous to other mammals including pets. Speedzone which is sprayed copiously on the grass in our neighborhood shares the same active ingredient as Agent Orange. Commonly used rodent poison is very dangerous to other animals up the food chain. This is particularly concerning in our neighborhood being so close to the beautiful canyons. We only have 15-20 mountain lions left in the nearby Santa Ana mountains and they roam Irvine park and Peters canyon (which border our neighborhood) eating small mammals that could have ingested rat poison left out by the city, putting the lions lives in danger. This is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to environmental and human impacts of using these synthetics. With all that we know it is simply irresponsible to continue to expose your citizens to these chemicals, especially our children!! Many HOA's in Orange have shifted away from toxic synthetic chemicals for landscaping in favor of organics such as Fiesta at nominal increases. Our own park is non-toxic with no increased costs. Several of our surrounding cities have gone organic including Irvine and Tustin. New York state recently banned Roundup in all state parks and other state owned property. It is time to transition away from these chemicals and look for a better way. It is outrageous that the city's staff continues to support the use of these chemicals and not the citizens of this great city. I am sorry but if it can happen in a huge state like New York, our small city has no excuse.

Request more transparency and clarification around the bidding process for the various options addressed in the aforementioned letter. Specifically, writing to request that the City make the proposals public as residents deserve to more fully understand the cost projections the City noted in said letter.

I have considered evaluating the option to increase assessment fees to transition to an organics only IPM because it would be more beneficial to the community long-term in comparison to maintaining the current IPM. The benefits of an organics only IPM outweigh the costs associated with increasing assessment fees.
Yes, organics only please
Well worth the added cost
<u>Organic Only</u> - this is ridiculous - show us the proof that is <u>50% more</u>
New planting along side Petens Pawyon Park looks good and concerned with vision at Newport and E. Skylark - should be low planting
I favor the implementation of transition to organics only IPM. Better plant selection, weeding, diligence to rodents will provide a safer healthier community
This letter does not mention that Santiago Hills Park now uses non toxic chemicals which is cost saving to the city. Why can't this be done everywhere? I'd like to see more info on the bids. Thank you.
This is very frustrating to see a 50% increase when our park is currently using non toxic chemicals with no increase to the city. There seems to be a lack of transparency on these bids.
Hope they do all what they say
I'm willing to pay the extra money to find a safe alternative that's as good for our kids playing around the area and for the environment as possible.

Comments Submitted related to Selecting Both Options

Three respondents selected both potential options. The following table displays all three comments in their entirety.

Table 6: Comments Submitted related to Selecting Both Options

Comment:
My husband and I are opposed to the increase in the assessment. That said, it shouldn't be all or nothing — organic vs. poison. Organics are not perfectly safe and are expensive, but perhaps some old fashion weed pulling or a solution of vinegar and water in areas where children play would be a step toward alleviating the concerns over harmful pesticides.
Maintain Current IPM in most areas of the community landscape, but transition to organics where children play in the grass- Field and all park grass area adjacent to Chapman Hills and along the paseo across the street from park leading down to Newport & Chapman Ave.
Its not either/or. You could do organics for so much cheaper that is proposed and do organics in areas where kids play only. It would be good to re-evaluate

Other Comments Submitted

Three survey respondents did not make a selection of either option but provided comments. The following table displays all three comments in their entirety.

Table 7: Other Comment Submitted

Comment:
<p>With all due respect I take issue with the City of Orange, Community Services Department requesting an increase in assessment fees for two options in maintaining “Integrated Pest Management” (IPM) for the Santiago Hills Landscape Assessment District. Given you are currently receiving nearly one million in annual fees from our district, I do NOT see the need nor justification for seeking more funding to effectively provide the services as promised. Having said that, I would prefer the option of having organic pesticides used in our landscaped district, but not at any additional expenses at this time. Using organic pesticides will help in the protection of the wildlife that hunts for rodents, such as owls and hawks, which have been observed in our area. Also too, there is a serious problem and lack of supervision for the overall care with the landscape maintenance. The residents have not seen the level of care and knowledge since the former Landscape Assessment Coordinator, Howard Morris. Hopefully, together we can restore the pride in the landscape of the Santiago Hills Assessment District. I would appreciate kindly your consideration to my request.</p> <p>I DO NOT APPROVE OF EITHER OPTION NOR DO I APPROVE OF PRICE INCREASE. I PREFER THE ORGANIC PESTICIDES, BUT NOT AT THE COST QUOTED.</p>
<p>No more increases please. We are approaching retirement soon. "fixed income" you know!!</p>
<p>Of course, being retired/on fixed income of \$30,000 yrly, I'm sick & tired & mad at paying increased Assessments on my Property Tax bill (now it's already more than an additional 1.00% tacked onto my Property Tax bill). The amount we already pay on Property Tax bill for this Landscape Maintenance Assessment is ridiculous-to make the landscape beautiful for all the thousands of commuters who travel these streets through the week. Why do I want to pay/beautify the area for thousands of commuters passing through the area to/from work? Why the heck would I want to keep paying MORE? I'm totally against ANY INCREASE to the very expensive option RFP so 'some rich people' can have their pesticide-free landscape maintenance. By homeowners NOT receiving this correspondence in mail (many Seniors w/o access to email, text. etc.), you are limiting the responses that will be received.</p>