

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

SHARE YOUR VOICE SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton

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This is your city.

We welcome your input on how we maintain, grow and build Edmonton.

We believe engagement leads to better decision-making.

We are committed to reaching out to our diverse communities in thoughtful and meaningful ways.


We want to understand your perspectives and build trusting relationships with you.

We will show you how you help influence City decisions.

Share your voice with us and shape our city.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Policy – Phase 1 Engagement

January 2019

Project/Initiative Background The Integrated Pest Management Policy C501, adopted in 2004, directs the appropriate use of pesticides by the City of Edmonton. The City has always sought multiple options for every pest problem to reduce the overall use of pesticides. The policy is being updated to provide more clarity and consistency for City staff, residents and local business owners.	
Name Date Location	Phase 1 Policy Priorities Online Survey September 11-18, 2018 Online via Edmonton Insight Community
Contact information	ipmpolicyupdate@edmonton.ca
Level of public engagement	
Description	This phase of public engagement was held to advise the project team on overall policy priorities held by a spectrum of Edmonton citizens.

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SUMMARY

A multi-phase engagement program has been developed to support an update to the City of Edmonton's Integrated Pest Management Policy C501. The first phase of engagement involved an online survey that was delivered through the existing Edmonton Insight Community from September 11-18, 2018. Nearly 2500 responses were received, which provided input in several key areas:

- Overall pest management program satisfaction and support
- Pest management outcome priorities
- Acceptable levels of weeds in various public spaces

Using the results from the survey, a draft policy document has been created that will be presented for public and stakeholder feedback in an upcoming phase of engagement slated for late January/early February 2019.

WHAT WAS DONE

This phase of public engagement was held to advise the project team on overall policy priorities held by a spectrum of Edmonton citizens.

The public engagement included and encouraged participation that reflects Edmonton's diverse population through the use of the existing Edmonton Insight Community, an inclusive and accessible online citizen panel made up of diverse Edmontonians who provide feedback on City policies, initiatives and issues. As of the September 2018, the Insight Community has 9,522 individual members, representing a wide demographic range.

The mixed topic survey – which included questions related to pest management ran from September 11-18, 2018 and was completed by 2431 individuals.

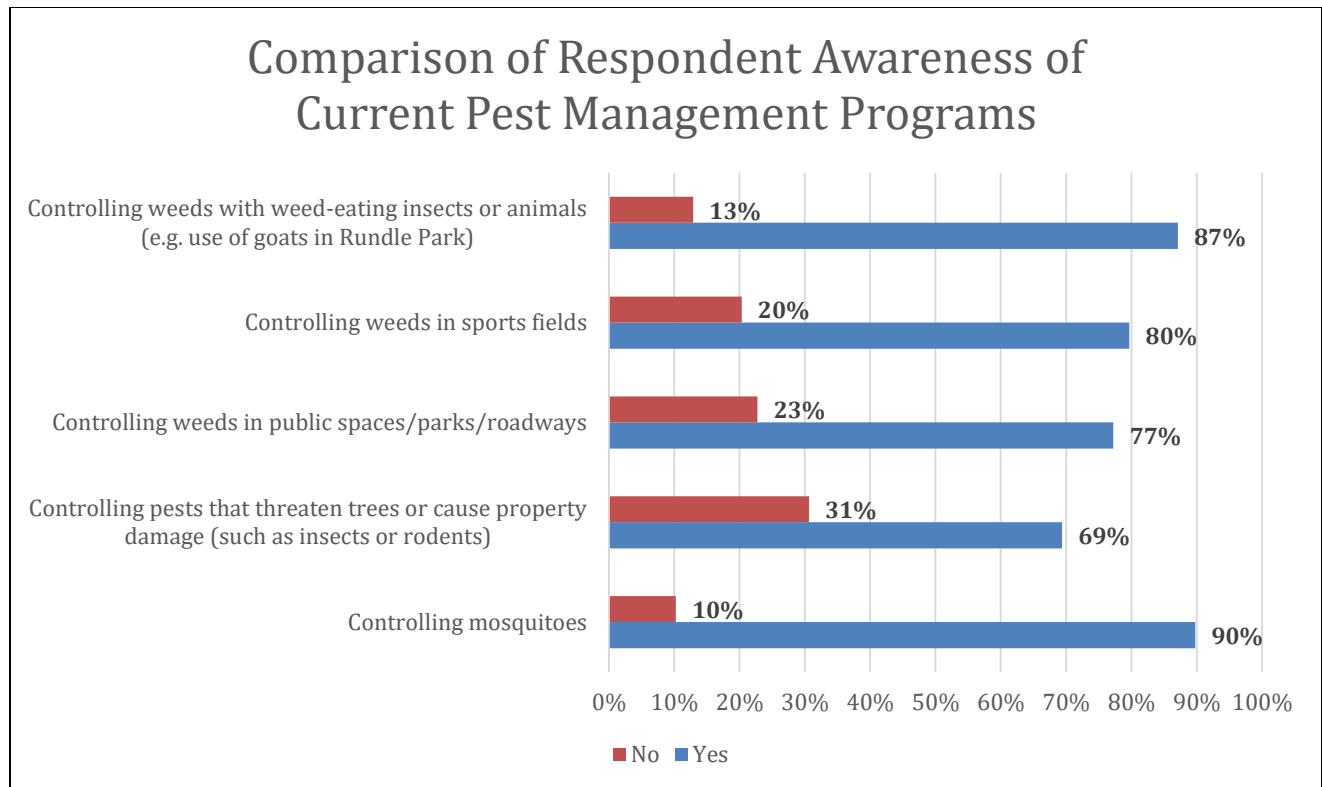
ENGAGEMENT RESULTS AND FINDINGS

What was said...

Participant survey results: The survey contained a series of eight questions covering both policy-related and demographic questions, as well as an opportunity to provide general comments. The policy-related questions ranged from questions on basic awareness to respondent satisfaction with current practices and pest management priorities. Most of the questions were presented as variations of the Likert scale (i.e. a range of responses ranging from strong support to strong disapproval) as well as an image preference question to show varying levels of weed control.

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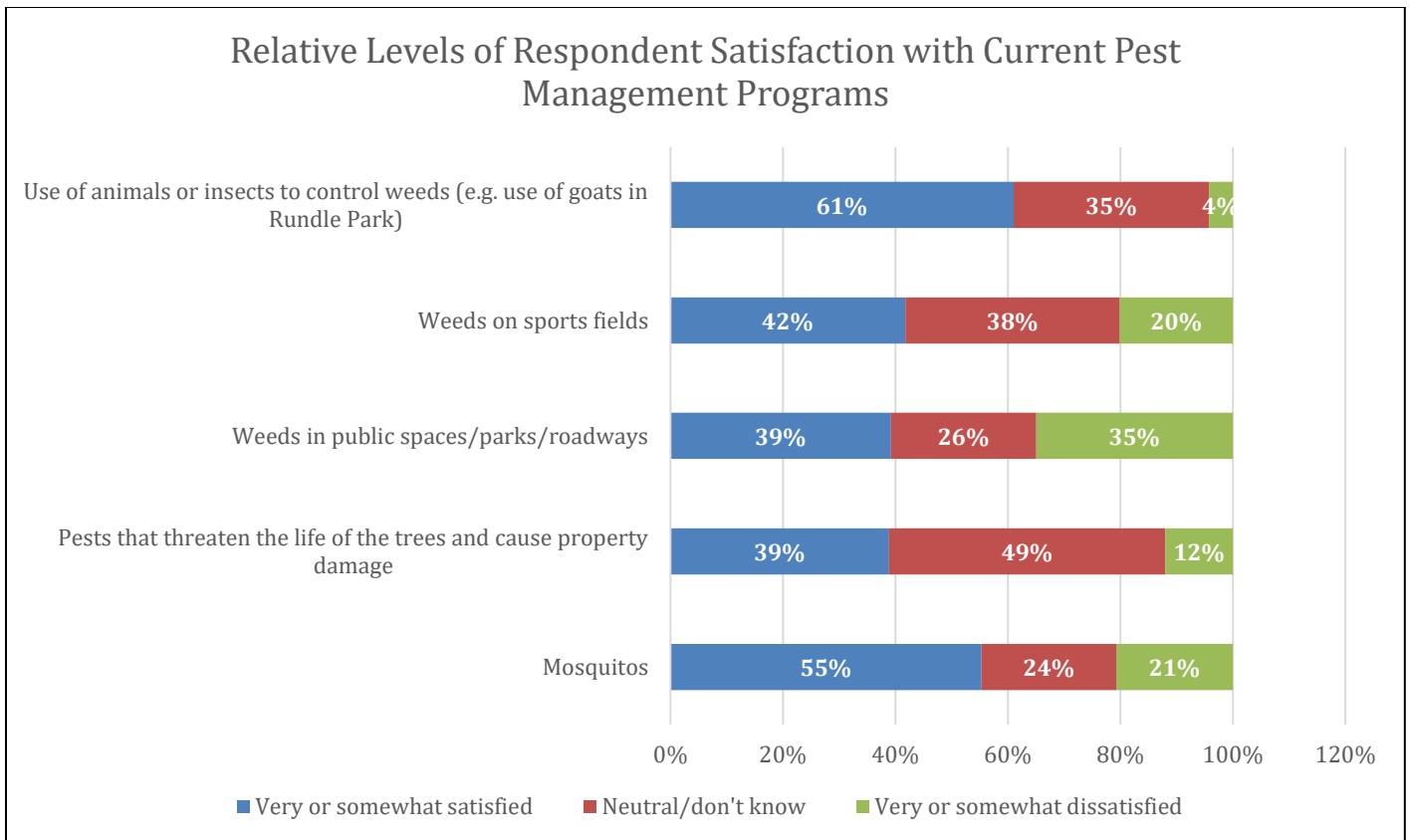
Question 1 – Program Awareness



The respondents showed a high level of awareness for all current pest management programs, ranging from a low of 69% for the control of property-damaging pests up to a high of 90% for control of mosquitoes. Given the diverse respondent group in the Insight Community, this result provides a high level of validity to the other survey results as the respondents have shown a strong initial sense of understanding of the overall topic.

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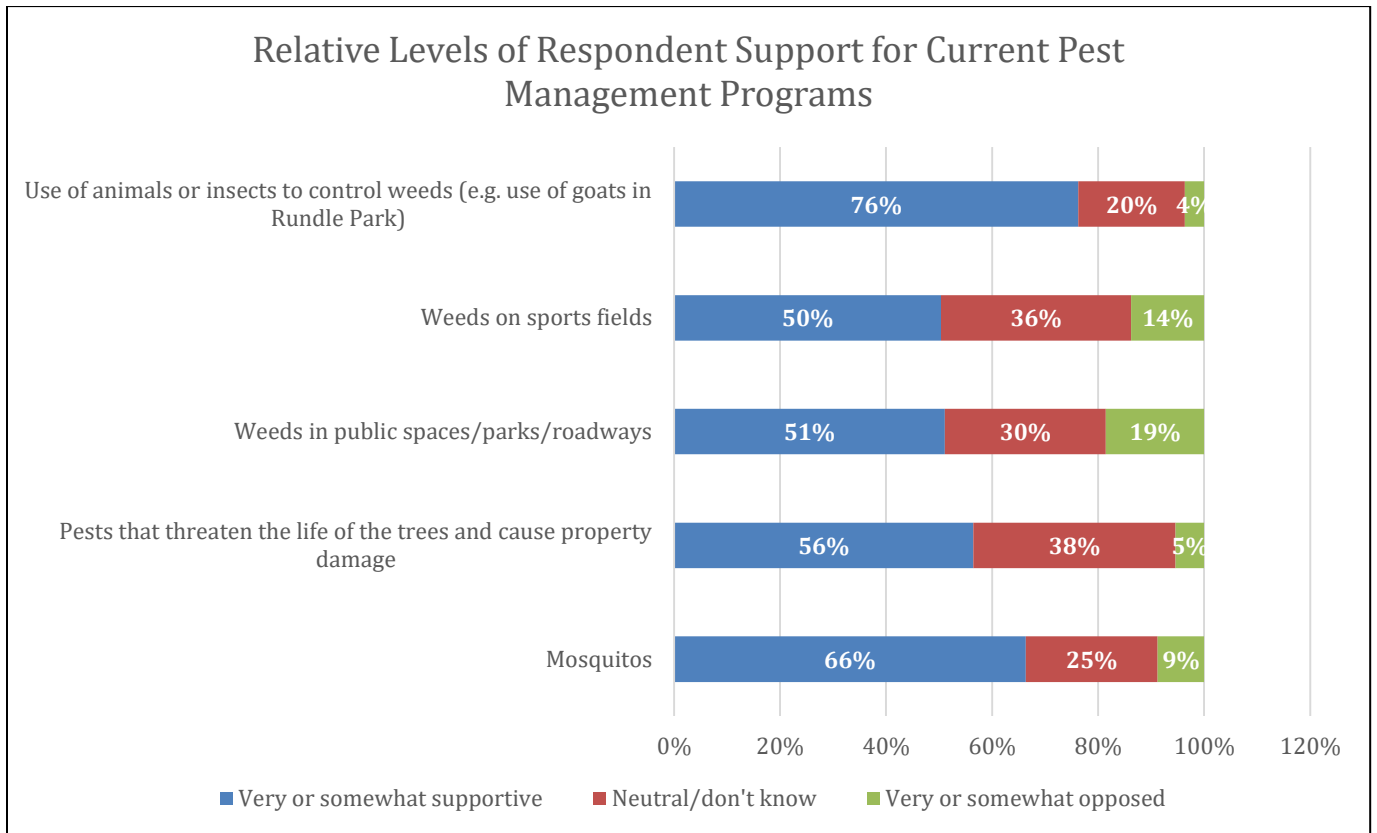
Question 2 – Program Satisfaction



While there is generally a prevailing level of satisfaction for all five existing programs, this margin is very small for control of weeds in public spaces/parks/roadways and the level of dissatisfaction is by far the highest. This aligns with the comments that were provided in the survey, which will be summarized later in this document.

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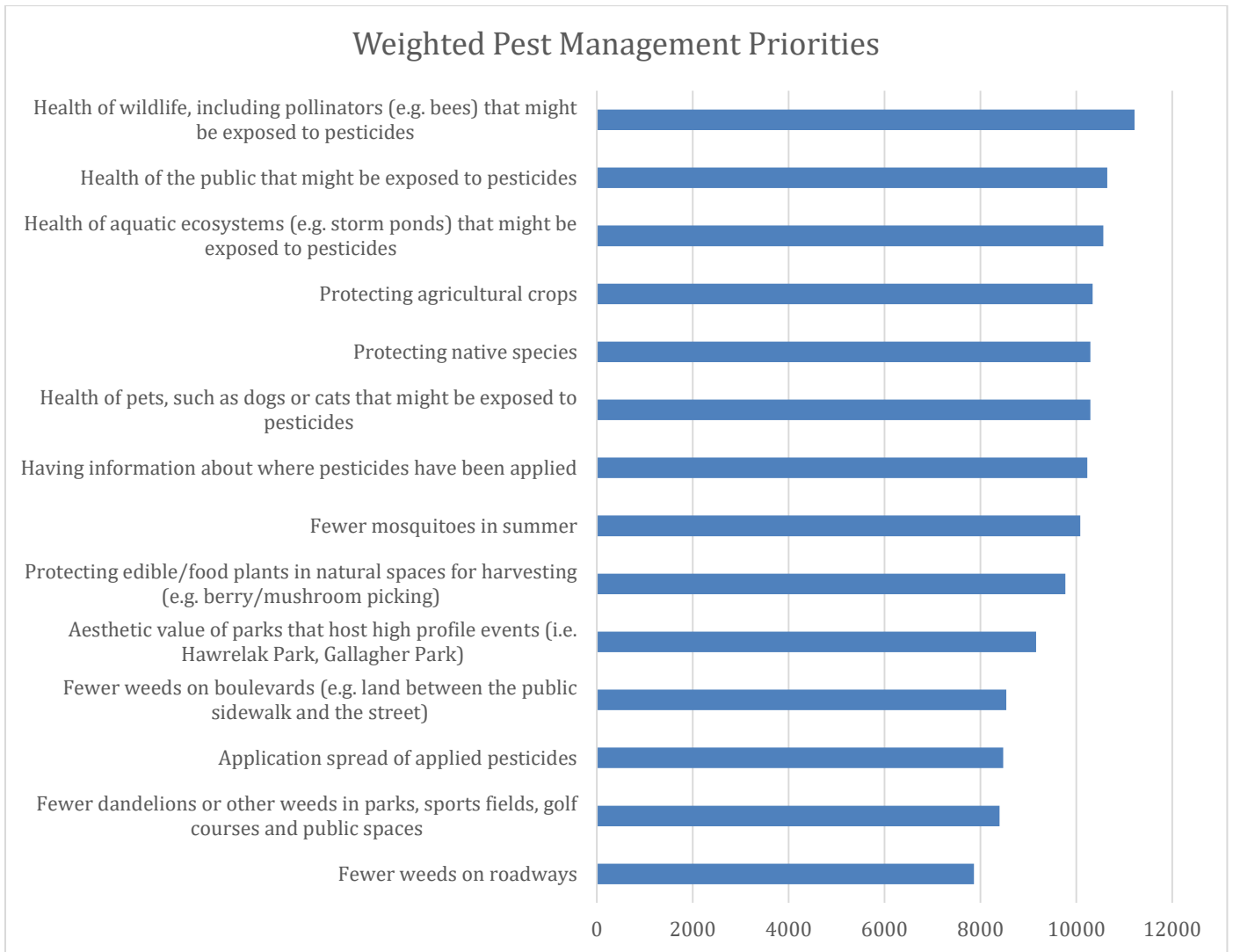
Question 3 – Program Support



Much like the previous question on levels of satisfaction, relatively high levels of support were shown for all five programs. Taken together, this indicates that while Edmontonians generally agree with the existence of these programs, they may not be overwhelmingly content with how they are delivered in the community.

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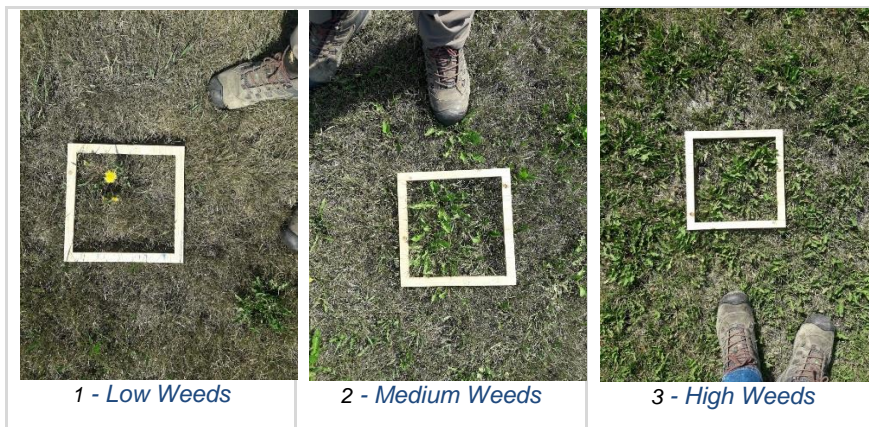
Question 4 – Pest Management Priorities



Respondents were asked to provide relative prioritizations for a series of 14 specific pest management outcomes. As shown in the graph above, the highest levels of prioritization seem to be related to environmental protection and health and safety, with significantly lower prioritization given to outcomes that are more closely associated with aesthetics. The respondents were asked to provide their responses based on a five-point scale ranging from highest priority on the left and diminishing to lowest priority on the right. Each of the outcomes could only receive a single priority for each respondent. A similar weighting (five points for highest priority, ranging down to a single point for lowest priority) was applied to the overall responses and each outcome was then totaled and sorted.

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Question 5 – Acceptable Weed Levels



	1 - Low Weeds	2 - Medium Weeds	3 - High Weeds
On sports fields	53%	23%	25%
Around playgrounds	44%	28%	28%
In natural areas	10%	47%	43%
Around trees and shrub beds	31%	33%	36%
Along roadsides/entrances to communities	34%	32%	34%

Survey participants were shown a series of three pictures that represented different levels of weed infestation and were asked to provide feedback on whether this level was acceptable at a particular location. While there was essentially an even split between the three different levels in relation to certain public spaces (around trees and shrub beds, and along roadsides/entrances to communities), there were markedly different responses for other spaces. Much higher levels of weeds were found acceptable in natural areas than areas that are more carefully manicured, such as playgrounds and sports fields.

Synopsis of general participant comments:

The survey also included additional comment opportunities after questions 2 and 3, and an open comment question to close the policy-related section of the survey. These questions were open to all respondents, however those who indicated they were dissatisfied had to answer this question. The result was an oversampling of negative comments. The respondents were asked to provide input as to why they were not satisfied with the existing pest control programs in Question 2b, and to why they are opposed to the existing programs in Question 3b.

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What we heard...

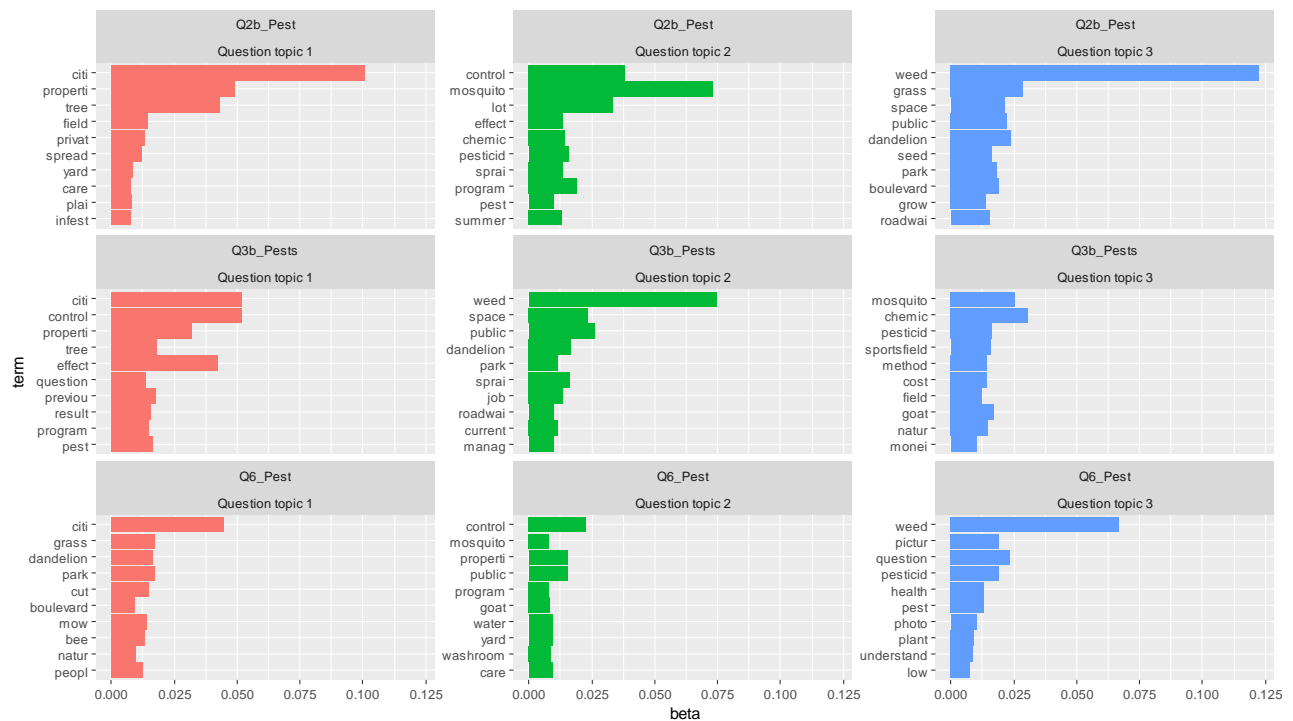
These general responses were analyzed using a technique called natural language processing (NLP). The tools allow a computer to 'read' large volumes of text and provide stakeholders with meaningful, detailed, and concise information about those documents. An additional advantage of NLP tools is that the results are derived through a mathematical operation that is repeatable and less susceptible to any personal bias a reader may have.

This process involves analyzing the data in three distinct ways :

1. Extract 3 topics per question by word importance
2. Cluster words by topic importance and similarity of shared vocabulary in other responses
3. Cluster respondents by similarity of vocabulary within each question

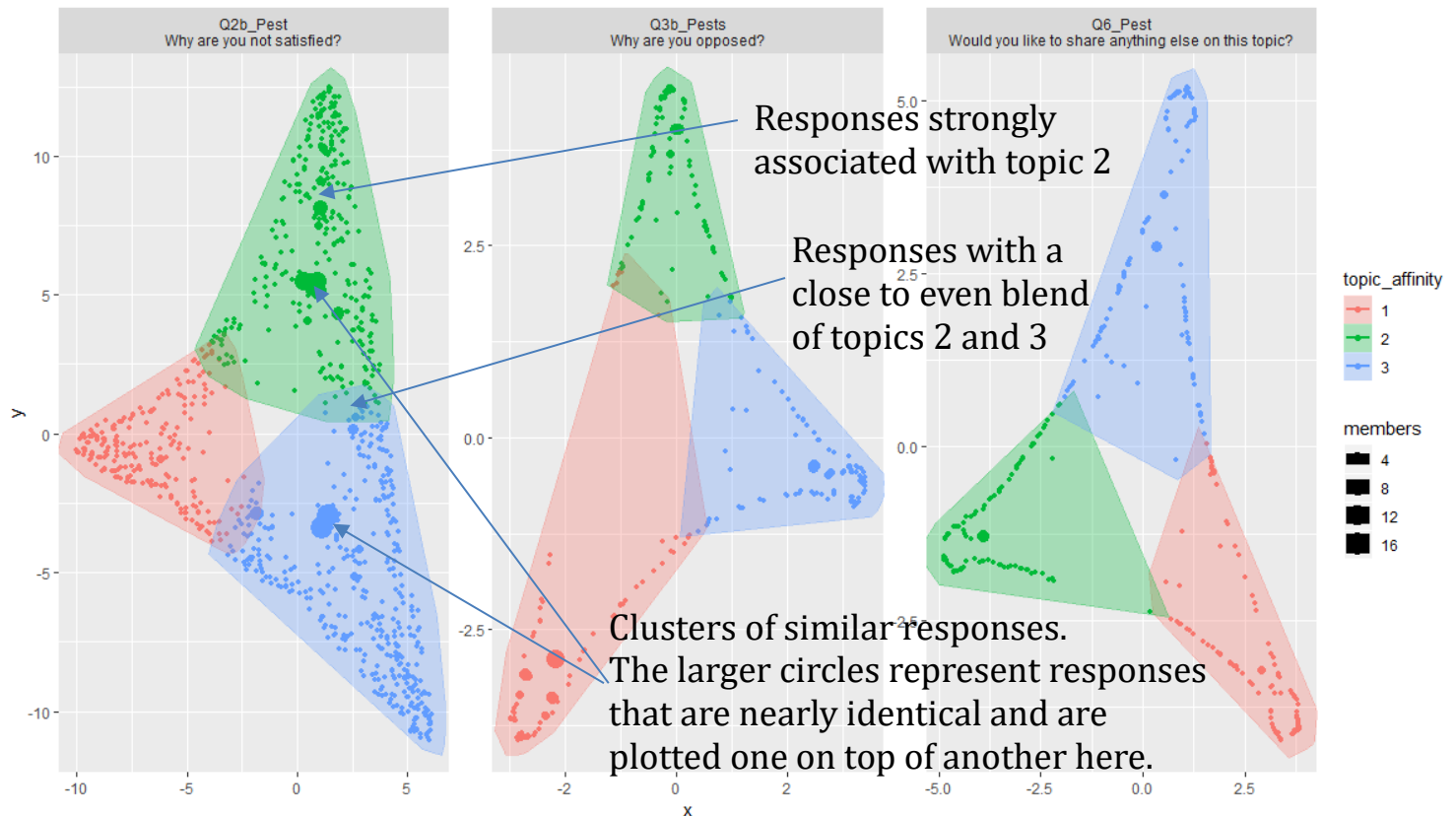
As shown in the graphic below, a high percentage of the responses to all three questions fit within the same three topics, although not necessarily in the same order of priority:

- The City of Edmonton – as a community, a property owner/manager, an administration and an operations group (first in all three questions)
- Mosquitoes and how they are controlled (second in questions 2b and 6, third in question 3b)
- Weeds and how they are controlled (second in question 3b, third in questions 2b and 6)



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When these topics are then clustered to see if the content of the responses is consistent between questions and respondents, there is strong alignment shown.



In the example above for question 2b, the large clusters indicate that there were significant numbers of responses that used identical or very similar language. In this instance, the clusters in the green/mosquito section relate to the words "mosquito" and "effect" most commonly. In the responses to question 3b, the words get more specific – "inadequate", "pesticide" and "mosquito".

AS A RESULT, WHAT HAS CHANGED IN THE PROJECT?

Using the input from this survey, the project team has created a draft policy that focuses on three main areas:

- Improved clarity and definitions of IPM and its associated activities
- Better structure and training for pest management decision-making and actions
- More transparency of reporting

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The logo for the City of Edmonton, featuring the word "Edmonton" in white text on a blue square background.

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WHAT'S NEXT

The next step in the IPM Policy update is the completion of the draft revised policy. Citizens can continue to be involved with this project by participating in a series of public engagement sessions, stakeholder workshops and a related online survey beginning in late January 2019. Further details will be posted on the project webpage at www.edmonton.ca/pests

Thank you for participating in sharing your voice and shaping our city.

For more information on City of Edmonton public engagement, please visit www.edmonton.ca/publicengagement