



Press Release

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14000 City Center Drive, Chino Hills, CA 91709

CONTACT: Nicole Freeman
Ph: (909) 364-2609

Valerie McClung
Ph: (909) 364-2618

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CITY OF CHINO HILLS INVESTS \$63,000 IN NEW REMOTE-OPERATED MOWER TO INCREASE FIRE PREVENTION EFFORTS AND REDUCE COSTS



City of Chino Hills' new remote-operated mower clears weeds in Chino Hills open space.

Chino Hills, CA – The City of Chino Hills has invested \$63,000 to purchase a new remote-operated slope mower, a tool that will allow the City to perform weed abatement services throughout open space areas and steep slopes more effectively and reduce costs. The innovative slope mower will help enhance the safety and productivity of the City's Public Works landscaping staff while simultaneously increasing the City's fire prevention efforts.

"We are continuously looking for new technology and methods to enhance our fire prevention efforts and reduce the potential for wildfires, especially near our residential areas," said Public Works Director Daniel Bobadilla. "This new tool will improve our City's weed abatement operations by providing all-around improvement in efficiency and functionality at a lower cost as one staff member will be able to accomplish the same amount of work as an entire crew in less amount of time."

The City of Chino Hills Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining approximately 3,000 acres of open space as part of its right of way maintenance each year. Most of the

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open space maintenance revolves around seasonal weed abatement to protect residential areas that are more vulnerable to wildfires. Weed abatement adjacent to homes typically begins before fire season in March and continues until completed. The work is performed to provide a buffer, or fuel modification zone, between structures and the open space.

Chino Hills partners with the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department Glen Helen Rehabilitation Center by participating in the Work Release Program to use community service workers for weed abatement. The labor provided by Glen Helen workers is typically free to the City, however, the program is not functioning at pre-pandemic levels due to fewer participants. During Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-20 and FY 2020-21, the City was forced to purchase contracted weed abatement services and consider alternative ways to accomplish the much-needed weed abatement, especially after an intense rainy season.

The new mower was purchased from RC Mowers, a leading manufacturer of remote-operated robotic mowers. The machine is a safer alternative to using a traditional mowing tractor as it can be operated from 1000-feet away and mow steep slopes up to 50 degrees. The remote-operated mower can also be used inside culverts, ditches, difficult terrain, and other confined areas to clear vegetation that large traditional mowers cannot reach. The robotic mower was purchased at a cost of \$63,000 funded by the City of Chino Hills Open Space Capital Outlay Fund, General Fund, and various Landscape and Lighting District Funds.

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