

Summer 2020 COVID-19 Park Maintenance Work Plan

As a result of layoffs and a hiring freeze, Park Maintenance will have 14,800 labor hours from May 1 to October 1, down two thirds from the 45,000 labor hours provided for in the original 2020 budget.

Staff reductions of this magnitude require adjustment of Park Maintenance work plans. Until staff reductions are lifted, Parks Maintenance will proceed with the following summer 2020 goals:

1. **Preserve public health and safety in park spaces** by, for example, removing or mitigating hazards, and supporting efforts to prevent disease transmission.
2. **Preserve assets** for future years by, for example, keeping athletic field turf alive, preventing destructive proliferation of weeds, and targeted pruning of ornamental perennials.
3. **Maintain minimum standards of tidiness** in all major park spaces by, for example, infrequently mowing, dealing with downed trees, removing graffiti, and collecting garbage.
4. **Adapt park and trail facilities for pandemic use** to the extent that the reduced workforce permits.

In practice, Park Maintenance crews will focus primarily on mowing and garbage collection. The decreased level of service will be noticeable. Some less used sites may receive no service in 2020.

Sample Summer 2020 Redeployment of Parks Maintenance Workforce (For Illustration Purposes Only)

	Mowing	Garbage/ Recycling	Athletic Fields	Rose Garden	Enger	Lakewalk	Bayfront	Graffiti	Tree Work
Original Hours	8,000	3,882	6,904	4,244	1,999	2,704	2,492	394	4,686
Reduced Hours	3,000	1,800	2,400	2,000	1,000	1,000	650	350	2,600

Representative Impacts of Budget Reductions on Parks Maintenance Services

1. **Reduction in locations and frequency of garbage/recycling service.** Hours devoted to garbage/recycling service will be decreased 50%. Many sites that normally have garbage pickup will not have service in 2020. The City appeals to citizens to bring waste home for disposal.
2. **Reduction in locations and frequency of mowing service.** Hours devoted to mowing will be decreased by approximately 70%. To meet that target, Park Maintenance will reduce the mowed area in some parks, forego mowing altogether in others, and reduce the frequency of mowing everywhere. Citizens can expect to see significantly higher grass than usual.
3. **Athletic field service focused on asset preservation.** Turf will be irrigated only if necessary to keep turf alive. Fields will not be usable for organized sports.
4. **Minimal landscaping and horticulture.** There will be no new planting and minimal tending in 2020.
5. **Minimal general maintenance, carpentry, and painting.** Activities will be limited to essential work such as placement and repair of failing picnic tables carried out as absolutely necessary.
6. **No playground service** (except maintenance and replacement of closure signage)
7. **Minimal support for Park Maintenance partners.** Support will be limited to tasks that are essential to protect public safety or support the provision of essential services such as nutrition.
8. **Reduction in boulevard tree plantings** (to the extent that grants permit)
9. **Reduction in EAB tree removals** (to the extent that public safety and grant obligations permit)
10. **Trail maintenance reduced to public safety and asset preservation**

Options for Partial Restoration of Park Maintenance Workforce on July 1

Option 1 – End lay-off of four Park Maintenance Workers effective July 1. The additional four FTEs would help Park Maintenance better meet the goals outlined above, but would not materially change the maintenance plan for 2020.

Option 2 – End lay-off of Park Maintenance Workers and hire ten seasonal employees. Because many temporary Park Maintenance employees are college students many of whom finish with the City in mid-to-late August, it may not make sense to expend the effort to hire the usual 20+ temporary employees for a reduced season of as little as six weeks. The addition of ten seasonal employees available to work into October would allow Park Maintenance to better care for park assets and support limited resumption of park programs, camps, sports leagues, and volunteer projects. Under Option 2, the level of service will still be less than usual.

To increase levels of service in 2020, the City will need to decide at the beginning of June whether to bring back laid off workers and hire seasonal employees effective July 1.