




# COMMUNICATION UPDATE

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members City Council
<b>DATE:</b>	April 18, 2023
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Parks Summer Program - Service Level and Operations Schedule (ES23007) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Cynthia Graham Acting Director, Environmental Services Public Works Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

This update is being provided to highlight the annual Council approved service levels in the City of Hamilton's (City) parks, performed by the Parks and Cemeteries Section of the Environmental Services Division.

## Waste Collection Service

Trash receptacles are distributed to strategic locations throughout our parks to encourage litter control. This service level is variable with the seasons with May-October representing the summer season and November-April representing the winter. Where sites are inaccessible over the winter months, the garbage receptacles are removed and replaced in the spring. This affects approximately 670 receptacles annually.

There are a total of 1,347 winter trash receptacles, and a total of 2,017 summer receptacles throughout the parks system which are often moved around to meet needs such as events, or to respond to illegal dumping or vandalism.

## Ground Litter Removal

Ground litter removal is performed in all parks before the grounds are mowed and trimmed. Removal of ground litter prior to cutting is instrumental in helping to prevent damage to machinery, and injury to operators. It also helps protect public safety and enhances the overall aesthetics of the park. This task is mainly completed by hired

---

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

**SUBJECT: Parks Summer Program – Service Level and Operations Schedule (ES23007) (City Wide) – Page 2 of 3**

---

summer students, but significantly supplemented by the efforts of many volunteer groups.

### **Spring Clean-Up**

Prior to the commencement of the mowing season (late April), staff undertake to perform a major clean-up of the general parkland, and where time allows in woodlots, and naturalized areas. Ground litter, refuse and debris, and winter kill are collected and removed from the site. This activity usually lasts for approximately 4 weeks. The intensity of the clean-up is often dependent upon the location, weather, and staff availability, recognizing that most hired summer students arrive in May.

### **Turf Management Program**

Mowing and trimming of parks and sports fields is an important part of any Turf Management Program and plays an integral role in all Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Programs. It should be noted that pesticides are banned from use in parkland, so staff work to ensure healthy turf growth as a weed management strategy. In 2023, City staff will service various park sites across the City. The goal of this program is to support healthy turf grass systems for safe and enjoyable public use of sports fields and general park grounds and amenities. The program includes monitoring and assessment of general turf health, the application of fertilizers, topdressing materials and grass seed, aeration of sports fields, ground litter/debris control and regular mowing activities.

Mowing and trimming activities are the foundation of the turf management and IPM Programs. Park mowing service levels are tiered relative to the type of playing fields or parks as outlined in the table below:

<b>Park Type</b>	<b>Mowing/Trimming Frequency Maintenance Standards</b>	<b>Anticipated Number of Cycles *</b>
	Late April/May - October Only	
Class A and B Sports fields	1 time / 5 working days	21 or 22 cycles
Class C and D Sports fields	1 time / 7 working days	17 or 18 cycles
Citywide, Community, Neighbourhood general parklands	1 time / 7 working days	17 or 18 cycles
Parkette	1 time / 7 working days	17 or 18 cycles

\* Cycles completed per year are weather dependent and can be influenced by equipment breakdowns.

Parks staff will commence cutting once the fields and parks are dry enough to support heavy equipment without causing damage to the turf. Damage caused by machinery

tires will severely impact the quality of sports field for the entire season. Prior to the full commencement of the grass cutting program, full-time and seasonal staff will be utilized by completing infrastructure and asset inspections, litter and illegal dumping control, spring clean-up (which includes leaf and debris removal and small-scale pruning and trimming), storm clean up, over-seeding and fertilizing.

Mowing and trimming activities are performed by Parks maintenance staff and equipment/resources are shared across district boundaries where necessary to respond to issues such as equipment breakdowns or park event programming in order to maintain consistent program service levels. Please be aware all parks are being cut in a specified order to maximise efficiency based on geography and daily workload. Dandelion growth in the coming month may impact on the visual aesthetics of the park, but for overall efficiency and equity for all customers, service delivery schedules require strict adherence.

### **Naturalized Areas**

The City of Hamilton is rich with natural open spaces that include valued natural heritage features, corridors and habitats. Many parks include naturalized areas or are adjacent to natural open spaces and require natural buffers. Maintenance in the natural areas or adjacent natural buffer areas is controlled to provide opportunities for self-sustaining native vegetation to thrive. Where requested, or associated with a particular naturalization initiative, signage may be present to help educate the residents who are curious about the maintenance of the areas.

### **Staffing Shortage and Possible Service Level Reductions**

With current labour market, and competition for summer student hiring, Parks operations has seen a marked decline in summer student applicants. Since the Parks summer maintenance program depends on summer student labour, it may be necessary to implement some reduction in service. If this is required, aesthetic work will be reduced, including grass trimming around fence lines and other objects. This change will likely generate concerns from the public but has no lasting negative impact on parks properties or program delivery. It can also be corrected quickly later in the season when mowing pressure is reduced when grass growth rates slows down.

Should you require further information, please contact Kara Bunn, Manager, Parks and Cemeteries at extension 4334.

### **APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

N/A