

Houston Parks and Recreation Department

Mowing Responsibilities 2024

Presented to Government Operations Committee Meeting

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HPARD
HOUSTON PARKS
AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
A CAPRA Accredited Agency

Maintenance of Esplanades in City Right-of-Way

Other than Section 32-4 in City Ordinance, HPARD finds no instrument that explicitly conveys the maintenance responsibility for esplanades to the Parks Department.

Sec. 32-4. - General duties of director.

*It shall be the duty of the director to direct, control and manage all parks, parkways, **esplanades**, trails, playgrounds and recreation buildings and other improvements on park and playground property belonging to or under the control of the city and such other grounds as may be placed under his control, from time to time, by the mayor and city council, and to direct the improvement and maintenance of all such properties.*





Mowing Operations **Overview**

The composition of the HPARD maintenance inventory for esplanades is as follows:

- 1,550 acres of maintained esplanades, plus 950 acres of adopted esplanades for a total of 2500 acres
- 800 linear miles of maintained esplanades
- 7,000 esplanade islands maintained
- The island size can range from .1 to 4.3 acres



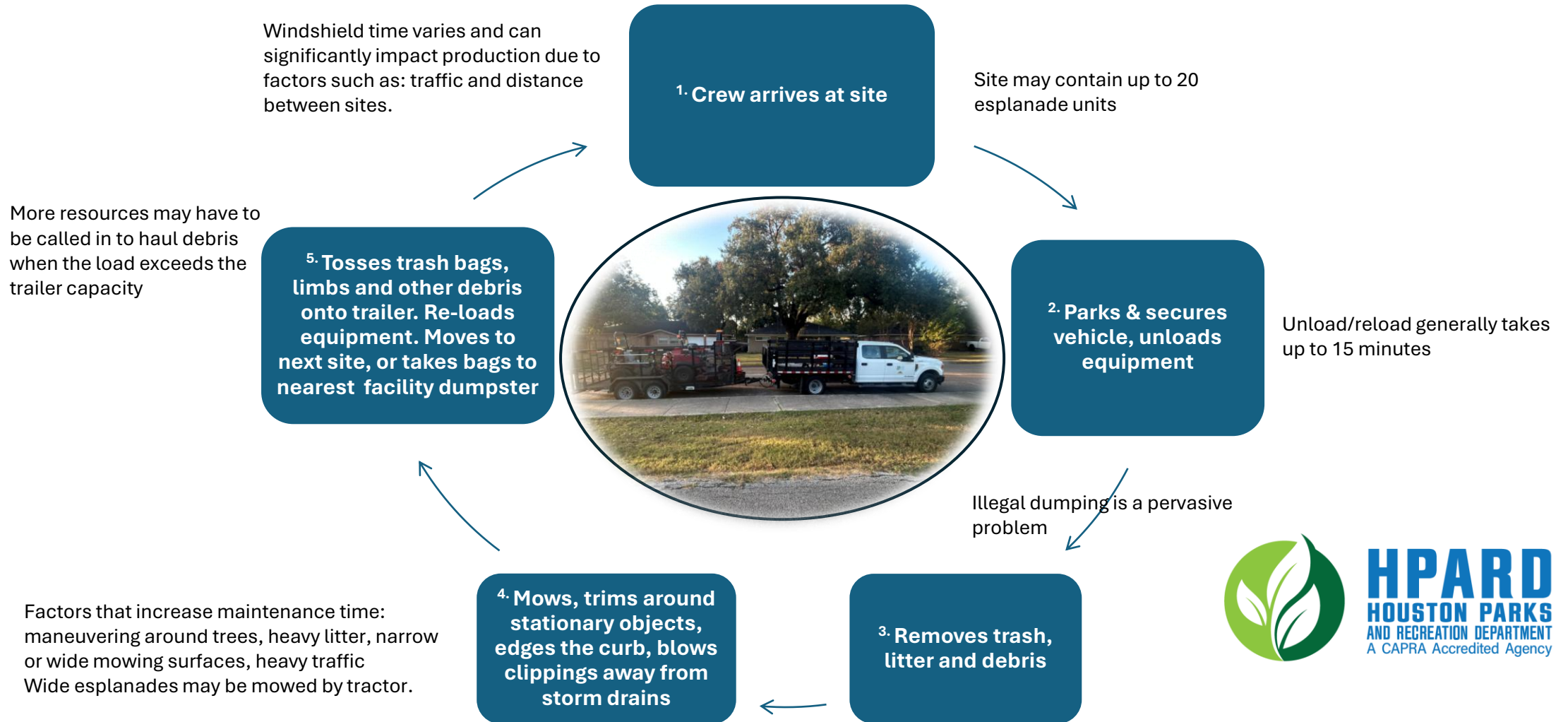
Mowing Operations Overview

Maintenance Standards Goals and Practices

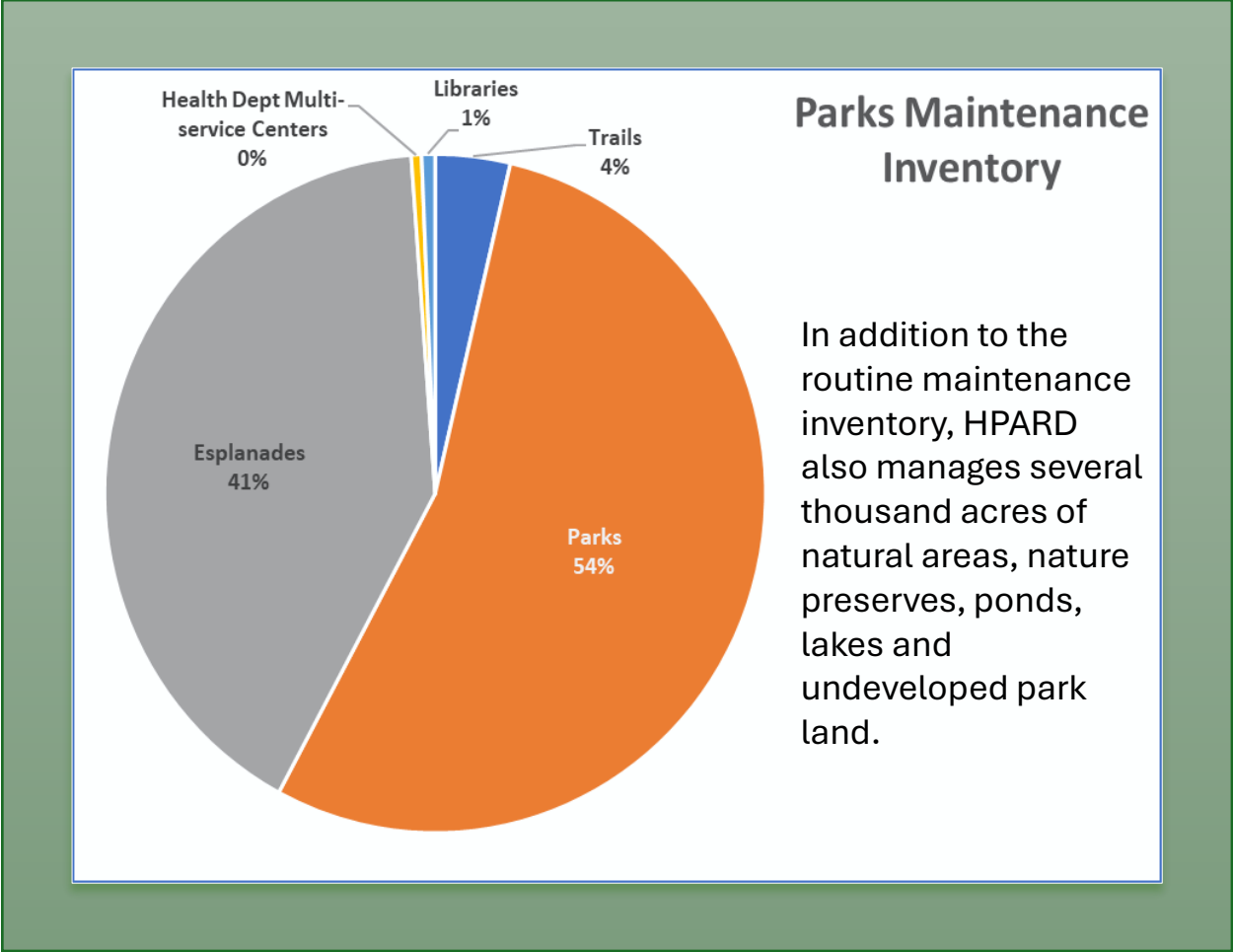
- Mow and de-litter every 30 days
- Bermuda release program – broadcast herbicides twice annually to control seasonal weeds and to slow the growth of turf grass.
- Install and maintain linear forests as funding and sponsors become available



Typical Esplanade Mowing Routine – each site in 30-day intervals



Mowing Operations Overview



The same staff members that are assigned to maintenance crews for routine work must also perform non-routine work with the small Natural Resources Management team on a variety of grant-funded conservation projects.





Mowing Operations Overview

Resources

- Estimated Annual Operating Cost = \$5.65M
- Staffing (15 crews) – Each geographic maintenance district has at least 1 dedicated esplanade crew. Districts that have large esplanade inventories may have 2 crews. Seasonal Laborers supplement the regular crew during the peak mowing season.
- Vehicles – crew cabs, trailers, pick-up trucks, riding mowers, tractors, herbicide tanker trucks, curb dressers
- Equipment -string trimmers, backpack blowers, pole saws, stick edger
- Materials and Supplies -picks, trash bags, PPE, fuel, herbicides



Mowing Operations Overview

Esplanade Maintenance Challenges

- Inventory grows without additional funding as road construction/reconstruction projects add new units where they did not previously exist
- High turnover in staffing
- Safety (*traffic, etc.*)
- Storm cleanup
- Aging equipment
- Broken windshields (*cost of doing business*)
- Excessive litter especially in concentrated retail areas
- Irrigation lines – water use, repairs, etc.
- Illegal dumping (*commercial contractors, private citizens*)
- Equipment damage (*curb jumping is hard on trucks and mowers*)
- High priority requests to trim trees that block traffic line of sight





QUESTIONS?



