

Right-of-Way Mowing

Overview

This Procedure will outline all aspects of Public Works & Assets' mowing program and provide direction to the Roads & Operations team on the proper actions to be taken through the course of the mowing season. This procedure is established to ensure that routine maintenance of grass in and around the public Right-of-Way (ROW) is efficiently and effectively executed to improve both the aesthetics and safety of the area. Tall grass and weeds near an intersection can restrict the sight distance of a driver and result in collisions if not properly maintained.

Purpose

The purpose is to maintain and preserve the public right-of-way and roadways of Louisville/Jefferson County Metro (Metro) to ensure the safety of the motoring, cycling and pedestrian public.

Mowing of the public ROW is essential to maintain and preserve the roadways of Metro Louisville and ensure the safety of the motoring and pedestrian public. Metro encompasses a very diverse landscape ranging from an urban inner city environment to suburban neighborhoods and rural farm lands and country side settings. Due to this wide range, there are several different types of mowing activities that must occur along the public ROW.

Mowing is conducted by utilizing internal Roads crews and also by using contract services. Roads crews primarily handle the finer turf mowing areas that require a more aesthetically pleasing finish while the contractors are primarily used to perform the larger volume tractor (bush hog) cutting cycles. The mowing contracts are written and executed in a manner to include both types of mowing (bush hog and turf style) should the need arise. Litter pick-up is performed before mowing cycles begin by both Metro crews and contractors.

Scope

The Roads & Operations Division is responsible for Right-Of-Way mowing activities throughout Metro. This also includes all “non-interstate” State-owned surface roads belonging to the Kentucky Department of Transportation. This partnership is possible due to a written agreement between Metro Louisville Government and the Department of Transportation.

As mentioned, Metro Louisville is a very diverse community having a wide range of geography. As a result, there are several different types of mowing activities that must occur along the ROW. For instance, there are selective areas (such as the median on 9th Street) that require 9 to 10 mowing cycles per year of turf quality mowing. There are approximately 304 acres of Metro Right-of-Way, 867 acres of State Right-of-Way and 44 acres of State parcels that receive heavy-duty tractor mower cutting and are mowed 4 to 5 times per year.

Roads & Operations (Roads) is responsible for ROW mowing activities and scheduling for predetermined locations throughout Metro. Decisions regarding changes in the schedule will be determined by Public Works management prior to beginning the scheduled mowing cycles.

Roads maintain a current list for three types of mowing areas in Metro:

- Bush hog cut quality is type one and two (1 & 2) and is performed 4 cycles per season. This is roadside ROW mowing and mowing of designated properties.
- Turf quality mowing is type (3) three and is performed 9-10 cycles per season. These are varying locations of a more lawn quality condition.

District Managers working with the Operations Administrator will make proper notification to the Contractors for when mowing cycles should begin in an area. A district road maintenance coordinator will then monitor and stay with in constant contact with the contractor while the mowing operation is going on in his district. The Metro mowing contract language and specifications are be utilized as the guide by which the coordinator shall use to inspect and ensure quality control requirements are being met by the mowing contractor.

Between mowing cycles it is the responsibility of each Road District Manager to monitor ROW vegetation growth by utilizing staff and the service request system. This ensures all site distance concerns are addressed in a priority and timely manner as it relates to safety concerns for the required site triangle at intersections.

Responsibilities

There are other Metro Divisions and Agencies that mow grass in specific locations and areas. Please see the list below of responsible Metro Departments that also provide mowing services.

1. Roads & Operations Division of Public Works is responsible for mowing the public ROW along roadways
2. Facilities mows Metro-owned buildings and grounds
3. Metro Parks mows Metro parklands, golf courses and bike trails
4. Department of Codes and Regulations, Vacant Lots Division mows a maintenance list of Metro-owned vacant properties and privately owned vacant properties that have been referred to abate code violations
5. Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) mows and maintains all the flood control levee trails, retention and detention basins, drainage easements throughout Metro Louisville and Jefferson County.

Prerequisites

1. Before starting the mowing cycle operation, all areas must be inspected and all litter, trash and debris cleared before mowing begins. For contracted areas, any litter which is not removed and becomes scattered during mowing will be the responsibility of the contractor to remove or will be assessed a penalty. The contractor is not responsible to clear illegal dump sites but must report locations to Public Works supervision.
2. Verify all equipment is in good working condition prior to leaving the yard.
3. Once on the job site, erect Work Zone signage in accordance with the MUTCD. The exact design of the work zone and signage will depend on the location of the job site and the type of operation occurring.

4. Once the work zone is established, begin mowing and trimming. Mowing shall be performed on all areas where vegetation exists along the roadways and ramps of interchanges extending to an average width of 10'. The height of the vegetation shall be a maximum of 4" at the completion of each cycle.
5. String trim around all appurtenances in the ROW such as sign posts, utility poles, guardrails, fire hydrants and trees.
6. Use blower to remove trimmings and vegetation thrown into the roadway during the operation.



Procedures

Mowing Schedule Information

A tentative mowing schedule is developed annually before each mowing season. This schedule is utilized as a template for when to begin each cycle and assist with budget preparation for the upcoming season. This schedule is flexible and may be altered based on the varying weather conditions that occur. For example, if spring and early summer rains are above normal, then the second cycle may need to be moved up due to faster growing vegetation. By the same token, if drought conditions present themselves, then mowing schedule may need to be moved back or even eliminated if grass goes dormant and is not growing. These decisions are made using a delicate balancing between Mother Nature and budget constraints (See the tentative mowing schedule below).

In the event climatic conditions either limit or enhance the growth of vegetation, Metro Public Works may either reduce or increase the number of ROW mowing cycles. For contractor-performed mowing, Metro Public Works may require that a partial mowing cycle be performed at the unit bid price for ROW mowing. The mowing cycle list is not to be considered guaranteed work and may be altered as needed by Metro. Contractor payments will only be made for actual work directed and performed.

In the event there is a construction project in progress, or if a construction project is awarded during the ROW mowing contract period, which interferes with ROW mowing operations, the construction contract will have priority. No claim will be allowed for interruptions to the ROW mowing contractors' schedule or operations.

The Public Works Supervisor/Inspector may direct the ROW mowing contractor to perform ROW mowing operations on an area previously skipped due to the construction contractors' operations. In such situations, no additional compensation will be allowed for moving back to accomplish this work.

A full cycle or cycles on specific segment or route may be deleted from this contract by the Public Works Supervisor/Inspector due to the operations of the construction contractor without invalidating the remainder of this contract. No additional compensation will be made to the ROW mowing contractor for anticipated profit on such elimination of a cycle.

Metro Right of Mowing occurs four times a year starting in April and ending in September.

State ROW & State-Owned Odd Lots mowing occurs five times a year beginning in April and ending in September/October.

Public Works 2019 Tentative Mowing Schedule

Metro Right of Way		State Right of Way		State Owned Odd Lots	
1st Cycle	April 15, 2019	1st Cycle	April 15, 2019	1st Cycle	April 15, 2019
2nd Cycle	June 10, 2019	2nd Cycle	May 20, 2019	2nd Cycle	May 20, 2019
3rd Cycle	July 22, 2019	3rd Cycle	June 24, 2019	3rd Cycle	June 24, 2019
4th Cycle	September 9, 2019	4th Cycle	August 5, 2019	4th Cycle	August 5, 2019
		5th Cycle	September 23, 2019	5th Cycle	September 23, 2019

During Turf Mowing (Metro Crews)



During Bush Hog Cutting (Contractors)



Litter Removal Underway



After Turf Mowing



After Bush Hog Cutting



Additional Mowing Cycle Request Procedures

The Department of Public Works will work diligently to stay within the limits of the budget to perform ROW mowing operations by utilizing both internal crews and contractors. However, Metro Council and other Governmental entities have the option to request and fund additional mowing cycles through Public Works. The proper and most efficient process to ensure this service is performed in a timely and efficient manner is listed below:

1. Contact the Public Works Operations Administrator or designee with a specific mowing request.
2. The Administrator will then review the specified locations. He or his back up will field measure the unit quantities as listed within the existing mowing contracts so that an accurate cost estimate for the mowing locations can be provided.
3. The aforementioned unit cost information will be provided to the person(s) making the request so they may take the appropriate actions to secure funding.
4. Once the additional funding is secured and dedicated for this purpose by the Department of Public Works, the additional mowing will be scheduled to proceed as requested.
5. In the case of multiple Metro Council mowing requests, it is recommended that they be discussed as a whole and consolidated together into a single request, if possible. This will allow Public Works to be more efficient in scheduling and conducting additional mowing cycles.



Definitions

- **Articulated Mower** – a mower unit in which the tractor frame pivots in the center, allowing the rear tires to follow the same path as the front tires. This allows the tractor/mower to navigate around obstacles without damage to the turf. This is unlike a zero-turn, skid-steer or straight frame mower.
- **Batwing Mower** – a mower unit that is comprised of a center mowing deck, with a mowing deck attachment on each side combined into a single unit, and which has the capability of raising the side-mounted mower decks to a point that is ninety degrees perpendicular to ground level.
- **Bush Hog** – rotary or spindle cutter attached to a tractor or other equipment that uses a heavy steel blade or chain to cut thicker vegetation with the momentum of the spinning blade. Not as clean as a turf mower, but can quickly clear thick vegetation. This is referred to as a Type 1 & Type 2 mowing in the annual contract.
- **Slope Mower (or over-the-rail mower)** – a tractor unit equipped so as to have an articulated arm mower attached with a minimum reach of 15' and have the capability of mowing over ditches and guardrails, up on the back slope, or down the fill slope.
- **Turf Mowing** – a finer cutting procedure using conventional lawn mowers for a more uniform finish. This is referred to as a Type 3 mowing in the annual contract.