
NYC Parks, Central Park Conservancy, and DCAS Test Automated Tractors

By Keith T. Kerman and Alfredo Melian



Lawn mowing is a hard, repetitive, and time-consuming function that can take critical resources away from services that directly interact with the public like playground operations and park security, or that beautify our public spaces like horticulture and gardening.

In partnership with NYC Parks, the Central Park Conservancy, and Riverside Park, DCAS recently completed a three-month pilot of autonomous mowing technology, the first extended period test of this technology for active public parks and ballfields. The goal of the pilot was to evaluate how autonomous mowing

could support and streamline routine landscape operations while maintaining high standards for safety and turf quality.

The pilot paired a commercial grade mower from Wright Manufacturing with an advanced autonomous guidance system from Greenzie. The system was designed to achieve centimeter-level accuracy. Outdoor rated and stereo depth infrared cameras were used to detect obstacles and navigate complex outdoor environments. The system was also designed to stop if a person got near it, which was demonstrated effectively on many occasions.

The system uses machine-learning algorithms to support real-time decision-making and achieve pattern consistency. Its robotic operating framework uses ruggedized hardware and has been used commercially for more than 5 years. The system's mantra was "map once, mow many times." Once a route was inspected, mapped, and tested once, the mower could independently repeat the mowing service on any schedule needed.

Crews manually mapped each mowing zone. After that, the mowers operated autonomously within those boundaries, following designated patterns and avoiding obstacles while remaining under staff supervision. Over three months, the autonomous mowers completed 53 total hours of mowing, covering approximately 80 acres. These results showed that the technology is particularly effective in large, open spaces such as athletic fields and broad lawns where predictable mowing patterns can be repeated regularly. See [here](#) a video of the unit in action.





Field engineers worked closely with park and conservancy staff throughout the pilot, helping refine operations, enhance mapping workflows, and troubleshoot site-specific challenges. This pilot suggested that autonomous technology could play a future role handling mowing for large repetitive lawn tracts, enabling staff to focus on smaller plots, plots with uneven terrain, weeding, and beautifying. The unit also proved effective at mulching leave piles in Riverside Park. In the future, these systems could provide essential support to parks staff.

This was DCAS Fleet's first robotics project. Many thanks to NYC Parks, the Central Park Conservancy, Riverside Park, and our vendors for their support through the pilot.

This show highlights vendors who support the New York City's Clean Fleet and Vision Zero initiatives, and daily operations. Vendors will offer a wide array of products to improve vehicle safety. The show will also highlight vehicles and equipment with alternative fuels and emissions-reducing technologies, along with the latest in light and heavy-duty vehicles, trucks, horticultural equipment, tools, fleet services, and more!

Thursday,
May 21, 2026
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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by May 6, 2025



<https://www.nyc.gov/site/dcas/agencies/nyc-fleet-upcoming-events.page>

37th Annual Equipment & Vehicle Show

Flushing Meadows Corona Park
(by the Unisphere), Queens, NY





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Week in Review | November 29 - December 5



New York City has the greatest skylines in the world, but that doesn't mean the city is only made of concrete and steel. We have beautiful, spacious green spaces in every neighborhood, and last week, our announcements invested in the nature all working-class families turn to for fun and relaxation:

- We unveiled the new "[Harlem Field of Dreams](#)" at Brigadier General Charles Young playground, where a \$4 million investment has built a state-

of-the-art artificial turf field where our young people will play sports, learn life skills, and stay engaged in positive activities.

- Brooklyn got its first “bluebelt” ever, and it will be built throughout Prospect Park. These [flood mitigation tools](#) use the natural environment of our city to divert water from communities, and this project will protect nearby neighborhoods from heavy rains to come.
- [Alongside Staten Island Borough President Vito Fossella](#), we unveiled several projects to enhance the parks, recreation, and culture across the borough. From new funding for the Staten Island Zoo to improved playgrounds, we’re giving Staten Islanders the spaces they deserve!

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