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**BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL
EDUCATION, WORKFORCE, AND YOUTH
COMMITTEE**

Mission Statement

The Committee on Education, Workforce and Youth (EWY) is responsible for creating opportunities for our young people, ensuring economic opportunity and prosperity for Baltimore's workforce, and supporting our most vulnerable neighbors. The committee's areas of jurisdiction include public education, labor relations, workforce development, employment, public parks, recreation, and youth affairs. Issue areas include, but are not limited to: education, including adult education, higher education, workforce development, labor, senior affairs, veterans, childcare, accessibility and disability issues, recreation and parks, and historical landmarks.

**The Honorable Robert Stokes, Sr.
Chairman**

PUBLIC HEARING

**THURSDAY, MAY 05, 2022
10:00 AM**

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Council Resolution 22-0098R

**Upkeep and Maintenance of Vacant Lots
and
Public Green Spaces**

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Staff: Richard Krummerich



BILL SYNOPSIS

Committee: Education, Workforce and Youth

Resolution: 22-0098R

Upkeep and Maintenance of Vacant Lots and Public Green Space

Sponsor: Councilmember Burnett, et al

Introduced: March 21, 2022

Purpose:

For the purpose of requesting the Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Director of the Department of Planning, the Director of the Department of Transportation, the Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Head of the Bureau of Solid Waste, the Sustainability Coordinator, a representative from the Office of the Comptroller, and the Chief of the Bureau of Budget and Management Research to report on the annual cumulative total of calls for service for the upkeep and maintenance of vacant lots and green spaces.

Effective: Upon enactment.

Agency Reports

Law Department	Favorable
Department of Finance	<i>None as of this writing</i>
Department of Recreation and Parks	<i>None as of this writing</i>
Department of Transportation	<i>None as of this writing</i>
Planning Department	Unfavorable
Department of Real Estate	<i>None as of this writing</i>
Department of Public Works	<i>None as of this writing</i>
City Administrator	<i>None as of this writing</i>

Analysis

Current Law

Baltimore City Code – Article 1, Subtitle 1-City Council, Section 1-6

§ 1-6. Agencies to provide legislative information.

It shall be the duty of the head of every City department or bureau established by the Baltimore City Charter or by ordinance to provide all technical materials, plats, drawings, and information that are requested by any member or the President of the City Council for the purpose of introducing legislation into the Council.
(City Code, 1976/83, art. 1, §6.) (Ord. 76-080.)

Background

Per the primary sponsor of the Resolution, “Mowing season is coming and/or upon us! Over pasted years there have been a few problems with contractors. City lots are controlled and/or managed by several agencies. I was told new strategies are underway. This is a good time to have a conversation about the upkeep and maintenance of vacant lots and public green space. I am interested in what we (councilmembers) can rely on to communicate to concerned constituents.”¹

On Thursday, May 5, 2022, several agency representatives will come before the Committee to report on the number of calls received on an annual basis for services relating to the upkeep and maintenance of vacant lots and green spaces. And to discuss the possibility of consolidating all mowing operations in a single agency.

The Department of Planning does not believe consolidating all mowing operations in a single agency is feasible and therefore disapprovals of it. *See attached agency report*

Additional Information

Fiscal Note: None

Information Source(s): City Code, Council Resolution 22-0098R and all agency reports received as of this writing.

Analysis by:  Marguerite M. Currin
Analysis Date: May 2, 2022

Direct Inquiries to: (443) 984-3485

¹ The Honorable Kristerfer Burnett, Councilmember, District 8.

Council Resolution 22-0098R
Agency Reports

See attached

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON M. SCOTT
Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF LAW
JAMES L. SHEA, CITY SOLICITOR
100 N. HOLLIDAY STREET
SUITE 101, CITY HALL
BALTIMORE, MD 21202

April 26, 2022

The Honorable President and Members
of the Baltimore City Council
Attn: Executive Secretary
Room 409, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Council Bill 22-0098R – Informational Hearing – Upkeep and
Maintenance of Vacant Lots and Public Green Spaces

Dear President and City Council Members:



The Law Department has reviewed City Council Bill 22-0098R for form and legal sufficiency. It is for the purpose of requesting the Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Director of the Department of Planning, the Director of the Department of Transportation, the Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Head of the Bureau of Solid Waste, the Sustainability Coordinator, a representative from the Office of the Comptroller, and the Chief of the Bureau of Budget and Management Research to report on the annual cumulative total of calls for service for the upkeep and maintenance of vacant lots and green spaces.

A resolution is an appropriate way for the City Council of Baltimore to conduct an informational hearing. *See, e.g., Inlet Assocs. v. Assateague House Condominium*, 313 Md. 413, 428 (1988). Therefore, the Law Department approves this Resolution for form and legal sufficiency.

Very truly yours,

Ashlea Brown
Chief Solicitor

cc: James L. Shea, City Solicitor
Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office of Government Relations
Elena DiPietro, Chief Solicitor, General Counsel Division
Victor Tervalá, Chief Solicitor
Hilary Ruley, Chief Solicitor

FROM	NAME & TITLE	CHRIS RYER, DIRECTOR 	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 TH FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #22-0098R/ UPKEEP AND MAINTENANCE OF VACANT LOTS AND PUBLIC GREEN SPACES		

TO

The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400
100 North Holliday Street

DATE: April 27, 2022

The Department of Planning is in receipt of City Council Bill #22-0098R, which is for the purpose of requesting the Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Director of the Department of Planning, the Director of the Department of Transportation, the Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Head of the Bureau of Solid Waste, the Sustainability Coordinator, a representative from the Office of the Comptroller, and the Chief of the Bureau of Budget and Management Research to report on the annual cumulative total of calls for service for the upkeep and maintenance of vacant lots and green spaces.

The Department of Planning recommends **disapproval** of City Council Bill #22-0098R, and defers to the Department of Recreation and Parks as the more directly impacted agency. We understand that while it may seem that it would be better to have one agency in charge of the process, in practice it would be difficult for one agency to manage all of the different sites within time schedules that work for those using the spaces and the reduced opportunity for local small businesses to bid and be selected for the maintenance of some and/or all of these green spaces.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Eric Tiso, Division Chief, Land Use and Urban Design Division at 410-396-8358.

CR/ewt

cc: Ms. Natasha Mehu, Mayor's Office
Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office
Mr. Ethan Cohen, Mayor's Office
The Honorable Eric Costello, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
Mr. Matthew Stegman, City Council President's Office
Ms. Nikki Thompson, City Council President's Office
Mr. Colin Tarbert, BDC
Ms. Kathleen Byrne, BMZA
Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration
Ms. Stephanie Murdock, DHCD
Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.
Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC
Mr. Liam Davis, DOT
Ms. Natawna Austin, Council Services

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 22-0098R
(First Reader)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Burnett, Porter, Middleton, Bullock

Introduced and read first time: March 21, 2022

Assigned to: Education, Workforce, and Youth Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Department of Finance, Department of Recreation and Parks, Department of Transportation, Planning Department, Department of Real Estate, Department of Public Works, City Administrator

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Upkeep and Maintenance of Vacant Lots and Public Green Spaces**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting the Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks, the
4 Director of the Department of Planning, the Director of the Department of Transportation, the
5 Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Head of the
6 Bureau of Solid Waste, the Sustainability Coordinator, a representative from the Office of the
7 Comptroller, and the Chief of the Bureau of Budget and Management Research to report on
8 the annual cumulative total of calls for service for the upkeep and maintenance of vacant lots
9 and green spaces.

10 **Recitals**

11 According to data provided by the Department of Housing and Community Development and
12 the Department of Planning, there are currently 9,297 vacant or abandoned properties owned by
13 the City of Baltimore and 7,946, or over 85%, of these are vacant lots requiring mowing. With
14 the total number of vacant City-owned lots hovering around 8,000, a single bureau would
15 increase both the efficiency and effectiveness of this City service.

16 In 2010, 4,000 lots owned by the Mayor and City Council, which are managed by the
17 Department of Housing and Community Development, averaged \$760 per lot for 3 grass cutting
18 seasons and \$1,015 per lot for annual trash and debris removal, totaling a little over \$7,000,000
19 for total average maintenance cost for all the lots.

20 Consolidating all mowing operations in a single agency will eliminate confusion in
21 determining which City agency is responsible for mowing which City-owned parcel. It would
22 also create opportunities for the City to provide better service with greater efficiency in both cost
23 and response time.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Council Bill 22-0098R

1 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the City
2 Council requests the Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Director of the
3 Department of Planning, the Director of the Department of Transportation, the Director of the
4 Department of Housing and Community Development, the Head of the Bureau of Solid Waste,
5 the Sustainability Coordinator, a representative from the Office of the Comptroller, and the Chief
6 of the Bureau of Budget and Management Research to report on the annual cumulative total of
7 calls for service for the upkeep and maintenance of vacant lots and green spaces.

8 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
9 Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Director of the Department of Planning,
10 the Sustainability Coordinator, the Director of the Department of Transportation, the Director of
11 the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Head of the Bureau of Solid
12 Waste, the Office of the Comptroller, the Chief of the Bureau of Budget and Management
13 Research, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.