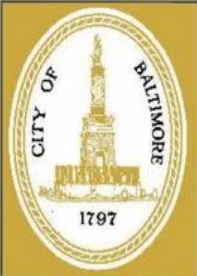


FROM	NAME & TITLE	Jason W. Mitchell, Director	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Public Works 600 Abel Wolman Municipal Building		
	SUBJECT	City Council Resolution 22-0098R		

April 29, 2022

TO:

Education, Workforce and Youth Committee

I am herein reporting on City Council Resolution 21-0098R introduced by Council Members Burnett, Porter, Middleton, and Bullock.

The purpose of the Resolution is to request the Directors of the Departments of Recreation and Parks, Planning, Transportation, Housing and Community Development; the head of the Bureau of Solid Waste, the Sustainability Coordinator, a representative of the Office of the Comptroller, and the Chief of the Bureau of Budget and Management Research; to report on the cumulative total of calls for service for the upkeep and maintenance of vacant lots and green spaces, and recommend to the Administration that a single City agency be charged with the responsibility for mowing all City-owned lots, parcels, parks, and green spaces.

There is great variety in the work performed to clean and mow lots, private parcels, parks, and other green spaces. For example, the manpower and equipment needed to mow a large open, cultivated lawn with planting beds and buffer areas will be different from what is required to access and mow a median strip along a busy street, or tackling a long abandoned private yard with discarded furniture and overgrown weeds, trees, and vines.

The Department of Public Works manages its operational facilities, which includes mowing and other exterior maintenance responsibilities. Apart from the maintenance of Public Works facilities, the Bureau of Solid Waste provides cleaning and mowing services for Mayor and City Council-owned vacant lots. In addition, Solid Waste receives referrals from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Code Enforcement unit for privately-owned lots and vacant houses whose owners do not respond to citations for cleaning and mowing. Before a private property may be referred for City mowing services, DHCD determines whether the property is vacant and then follows a Code-required process of citing for a high grass and weeds violation and providing a remedy period before the City may step in and resolve the issue.

Recently, the Bureau of Solid Waste implemented a Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) process. The purpose of this QA/QC is to evaluate the quality-of-service delivery for mowing and cleaning of properties. Supervisors or assigned personnel are responsible to evaluate

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the service of work performed. Supervisors or assigned personnel shall perform a Quality Control inspection to evaluate the condition of the grass, weed overgrowth and the cleanliness of the vacant lot/property after mowing and cleaning services are delivered. Twelve (12) random work orders are identified to check for satisfactory performance by the crew. Supervisors or assigned personnel take note of areas that need to be corrected. If correction is needed, the Supervisor will send crew back to location within 48 hours to correct unsatisfactory job performance.

The Bureau of Solid Waste received and abated 9,697 High Grass and Weeds work orders and 13,327 work orders for Cleaning to date in FY 2022¹. These work orders include Mayor and City Council-owned lots, as well as referrals from DHCD to clean and mow private properties, nuisance vacant lots and vacant homes. DHCD triages vacant lots based on the size and amount of trash removal required, rating them either as a 1 (small area with little cleaning needed), a 2 (moderately-sized, with some trash), or a 3 (large area or area with a lot of debris). In order to manage this largely seasonal workload, the Bureau of Solid Waste has an average of eight cleaning and mowing crews to respond to both City-owned and privately-owned vacant lots and properties referrals. These crews tackle the most difficult of the lots, and have access to riding mowers, bush cutters, tractors and weed whackers. This mowing effort is supplemented by a contract with one private vendor as well as support from the Living Classrooms Foundation and BMore Beautiful. These organizations are deployed to clean and mow the smaller, cleaner lots.

AGENCY	GRASS CUTTING RESPONSIBILITIES
DPW – Water & Wastewater	DPW Water & Wastewater facilities (e.g. wastewater treatment plants, water filtration plants, pumping stations, reservoirs)
DPW – Solid Waste	City-owned vacant lots/properties; DHCD Code Enforcement-referred privately-owned vacant lots and properties for cleaning/mowing
DOT	DOT facilities, public ways, medians
R&P	Parks, Park property, Recreation centers
DGS	Police stations, Health facilities, Community Action Centers
BCPS	Public school facilities, including public charter schools that occupy City-owned buildings

¹ Data provided of work orders received from July 1, 2021 to April 28, 2022

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Representatives of the Department of Public Works will attend the hearing on City Council Resolution 22-0098R to assist in the discussion about the challenges in the mowing and maintenance of vacant lots and green spaces.


Jason W. Mitchell (Apr 29, 2022 16:36 EDT)

Jason W. Mitchell
Director

JWM/MMC






DPW_CCR 22-0098R

Final Audit Report

2022-04-29

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