

FROM	NAME & TITLE	Robert Cenname, Chief 	CITY of BALTIMORE <b>MEMO</b>	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Bureau of the Budget and Management Research Room 432, City Hall (410) 396-4774		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 21-0047R – Upkeep and Maintenance of Vacant Lots and Public Green Spaces		

DATE:

TO

The Honorable President and  
Members of the City Council  
City Hall, Room 400

August 16, 2021

The Department of Finance is herein reporting on City Council Bill 21-0047R, Upkeep and Maintenance of Vacant Lots and Public Green Spaces, the purpose of which is to invite representatives from various agencies to appear before the City Council to report on the annual cumulative total of calls for service for the upkeep and maintenance of vacant lots and green spaces and to discuss whether a single City agency should be exclusively responsible for mowing all City-owned lots, parcels, parks, and green spaces.

The Department of Finance has identified the following agencies as being responsible for the maintenance of vacant lots and green spaces: the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Public Works – Bureau of Solid Waste and Water/Wastewater, the Department of Housing and Community Development – Code Enforcement, the Department of General Services, and the Enoch Pratt Free Library.

***Department of Recreation and Parks***

The Department of Recreation and Parks (BCRP) is responsible for overseeing the mowing operations of six park clusters throughout Baltimore City, with mowing operations totaling over 2,900 acres. In June 2021, BCRP signed a contract through June 2024 and valued up to \$4,500,000 for mowing and landscaping services with vendor Lorenz. The new contract awarded to Lorenz is for a seven-day mowing cycle, shifting to a ten-day cycle after July 1<sup>st</sup>. BCRP also maintains approximately 25 pieces of mowing equipment to ensure tidiness in between mowing cycles, especially with respect to the City’s ball fields.

***Department of Transportation***

The Department of Transportation (DOT) is responsible for mowing and maintaining the City’s right-of-ways, medians, soft shoulders, and out-of-warranty capital projects. DOT’s official mowing season is annually from April 15<sup>th</sup> to October 15<sup>th</sup>, but may be extended depending on weather conditions in any given year. Of the locations that DOT is responsible for maintaining, 474 are contracted out to vendor Lorenz and 74 locations are maintained by DOT crews, with all locations on a two-week mowing cycle. The current contract with Lorenz went into effect in April 2021 and expires in May 2024, with a value up to \$13,000,000. DOT also has 49 employees assigned to the Landscaping Section, including supervisory and clerical staff.

***Housing and Community Development- Code Enforcement***

Housing and Community Development – Code Enforcement (HCD) is charged with identifying properties that are in need of maintenance (cleaning and mowing). HCD is alerted to these properties via 311 requests, acting on each request within three days. If a property is privately owned and occupied, a notice or a citation is issued to the owner of record. If a property is privately owned and vacant, a notice is delivered to the property owner who then has 10 days to reply. If the owner does not respond within 10 days or if the property is vacant, a work order is issued to the Department of Public Works – Bureau of Solid Waste (DPW). The work order must be completed within 30 days.

### ***Department of Public Works***

The Department of Public Works – Bureau of Solid Waste (DPW) is responsible for the maintenance and mowing of approximately 22,000 vacant, abandoned, and unoccupied city-owned and private properties/lots. Most of DPW's mowing is driven by complaints registered with 311, which are inspected by HCD Code Enforcement. The Housing Inspector can generate a work order on private property when an owner fails to abate a violation. The work orders are then forwarded to Solid Waste crews to perform the abatement on the vacant lots or property. On average, DPW is assigned about 1,600 mowing work orders per month between April and June. A work order is not needed for city-owned lots. The number of lots maintained and work orders generated can vary from year to year, and can be heavily dependent on 311 calls and weather conditions.

DPW's Bureau of Solid Waste contracts overflow mowing with Evergreen Landscape, whose most recent contract is worth \$4,336,120, and P2 Cleaning, whose most recent contract is worth \$3,370,000. The contracts are through April 2022 and cover both the mowing and the maintenance/cleanliness of the lots for which DPW is responsible. If a property or lot is obstructed by refuse, that can prolong the process of completing a 311 request.

In addition to mowing operations overseen by Solid Waste, DPW Water/Wastewater also holds a contract with Lorenz for approximately a dozen locations. The contract is due to expire in July 2022 and is currently valued at \$298,400.

### ***Department of General Services***

In addition to the agencies cited in this Council Bill, the Department of General Services (DGS) is responsible for mowing at 35-40 locations across Baltimore City. DGS contracts mowing and landscaping services out to The Garrison Company, which has held the Department's contract since 2016. The current contract is due to expire November 1, 2021, and is valued at \$220,000.

### ***Enoch Pratt Free Library***

The Enoch Pratt Free Library also has a contract with The Garrison Company for landscaping services, which includes mowing at 16 library branch locations. The contract was approved by the Board of Estimates in June 2020 for \$43,850 and covers a two-year period with one additional two-year renewal option.

With the procurement and operational concerns about a single agency being responsible for mowing operations citywide, the Department of Finance supports further review of City processes related to the upkeep and maintenance of vacant lots and public green spaces. The Department will attend the hearing for this Resolution and will be available to address fiscal concerns as needed.

cc: Henry Raymond  
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