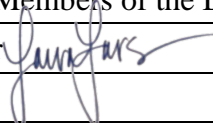




CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Laura Larsen, Budget Director 
DATE	6/26/2024
SUBJECT	23-0466 Recyclable Materials and Yard Waste – Disposal

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

Position: Oppose

The Department of Finance is herein reporting on City Council Bill 23-0466, Recyclable Materials and Yard Waste – Disposal, the purpose of which prohibiting the disposal of recyclable materials and yard waste in a landfill or an incinerator; and providing for a special effective date.

Background

Currently, recyclable materials and residential yard waste are banned from being disposed of at the Quarantine Road Landfill; however, these materials can be taken to the WIN Waste (BRESCO/the incinerator). Under the current service delivery model, yard waste is collected by load packers along with mixed refuse on trash collection days. There is a five-bag limit of leaves per household for curbside collection. From October through January, residents may make a service request through 311 for special Monday picks of up to 20 bags of yard waste. All collected yard waste is then disposed at the incinerator. Recyclables when collected with recycling are not brought to the incinerator; they are brought to a sorting facility for processing. Recyclables are only brought to the incinerator when they are placed in trashcans for weekly mixed refuse (trash) pickup by residents. Trash and recycling are picked up once a week Tuesday through Friday throughout Baltimore.

Under this proposal, the City will either need to discontinue yard waste collection or offer collection through a new Yard Waste Collection Program. The Department of Public Works has proposed to pilot a Yard Waste Collection program and then scale up into a City-wide program. This would allow for the development of the program to allow both the agency and the public to adjust to the new system.

In the most recent 10-Year Solid Waste Management Plan (10-Year Plan), DPW estimated that

there are about 305,400 tons of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) that is managed by the City, an additional 320,600 that is managed by the private sector. Of this, yard waste is approximately 35,300 tons or 12% of the City’s total tonnage, and 22,800 tons, or 7%, of the private sector’s solid waste. The law would prevent these recyclables and yard waste from being disposed of at the incinerator. This analysis only examines the City’s portion of solid waste that Baltimore handles.

Fiscal Analysis

This analysis aims to estimate the cost of collecting yard waste separate from solid waste and recycling collection. The total estimated cost of the proposed program is \$1.6 million.

Route Assumptions

Unlike trash and recycling collection, yard waste collection varies across the City based on the landscape of the neighborhood. Based on current service request volume and seasonality trends, the Department of Public Works estimates needing 53 crews to offer curbside yard waste collection for 35 weeks per year (March-October). Given the seasonal nature of the service, it would likely be staffed through overtime on a specific day of week rather than dedicated full time staff.

Cost Assumptions

Personnel Costs

Routes would be staffed with 1 Solid Waste Driver and 2 Solid Waste Workers. There would be one crew assigned to each route, crew members would perform this work through overtime shifts. The table below summarizes the cost assumptions of this staffing model.

	Solid Waste Worker	Solid Waste Driver	Total
Positions/Crew	2	1	
Number of Crews	53	53	
Daily Cost/Route	516.72	322.95	
Weekly Cost/Route	27,386	17,116	
Number of Weeks	35	35	
Annual Cost	958,515	599,072	
Total Annual Estimate			\$1,557,588

Equipment Costs

Crews would utilize existing equipment to service these routes. While there may be additional wear and tear costs on equipment, the primary cost driver is fuel. Estimates are based on current loadpacker fuel usage on trash and recycling routes. Amounts presented below are based on current fuel rates.

Fuel Usage/Route	17.4 Gallons
Cost/Gallon	\$2.77

Cost/Week	\$2,555
Number of Weeks	35
Total Annual Estimate	\$84,407

Other Considerations

Discontinuing sending yard waste to the incinerator requires an operational composting facility as a diversion point for the waste. Planning for a new composting facility is underway, but it is not anticipated the new facility would be online by the date identified in the original legislation. If the legislation went into effect with the current effective date, the City would likely have to send yard waste to a collection site outside the City and as a result incur additional costs.

It is also important to note, operating costs for the new composting facility have not been planned in the City’s operating budget. While there will be savings from the tipping fees associated with diverting yard waste, it is likely these savings will not fully offset the operating costs of the composting facility.

Conclusion

BBMR supports the intent of the legislation; however, the proposal needs to identify savings and/or a new revenue stream to make the proposal cost neutral.

For the reasons stated above, the Department of Finance opposes City Council Bill 23-0466.

cc: Michael Mocksten
Nina Themelis