

FROM	NAME & TITLE	Rudolph S. Chow, P.E., Director
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Public Works 600 Abel Wolman Municipal Building
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 14-0173R

CITY of
BALTIMORE
MEMO



TO

DATE: August 19, 2014

The Honorable President and Members
of the Baltimore City Council
c/o Natawna Austin
Room 400 – City Hall

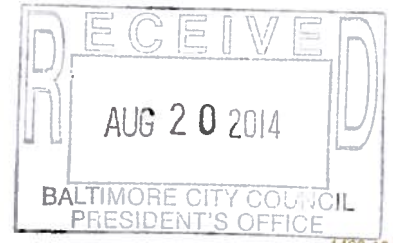
I am herein reporting on City Council Resolution 14-0173R introduced by Council Members Branch, Henry, Holton, Spector, Middleton, Welch, Clarke, Reisinger, Cole, Curran, Kraft, President Young, Council Members Scott, and Stokes.

The purpose of the Resolution is to call on representatives from the Department of Public Works' Solid Waste Bureau and the Department of Transportation to appear before the Council to discuss the new citywide street sweeping plan, the lessons that can be drawn from its early operations, and what steps can be taken to more fully educate communities about the new plan.

The Department of Public Works is the agency that, through the Bureau of Solid Waste, keeps the public rights-of-way clear of debris. {Article VII § 35, Baltimore City Charter; Article 23 § 104, Baltimore City Code} Property owners are, by Code, responsible for cleaning the front of their properties, including sidewalks and the curb area. If properties adjoin an alley, the property owners are responsible for cleaning to the middle of the alley. {Property Maintenance Code § 305.1; §§ 306.1 and 306.3; Building, Fire and Related Codes} These overlapping responsibilities work well when all parties do their part. However, cleaning these rights-of-way is a challenge for most urban environments due to commercial and other areas that have a lot of foot and vehicular traffic, busy mass transit locations and transfer points, and communities with areas that invite illegal dumping or which have been subject to significant disinvestment. The lack of trash cans with tight fitting lids, casual littering, abuse of corner cans, and other behavioral patterns also contribute to the challenge of keeping our City clean.

Mechanical street sweeping has been the employed method to efficiently clean streets that are heavily used. Streets are posted with the days and times prohibiting curbside parking along designated routes and those who do not move their vehicles can be cited and the vehicles towed. In addition to Department-established street sweeping routes, communities could invite mechanical street sweeping into their neighborhoods by circulating petitions for securing buy-in from residents to routinely move parked vehicles on certain days and for certain time periods. While the petitioning process was a good gauge of community support for the service, the routes themselves were challenging because some community selected streets were a mix of participating and non-participating blocks.

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Beginning in April, 2014, the Bureau of Solid Waste launched a new initiative with the goal to mechanically sweep 90% of the City's streets. Building on the already established posted streets as well as the Gateway and commercial areas cleaning efforts, the program divided the City into a central core, a Downtown district, and four quadrant areas. The central core and Downtown district include most of the posted streets. Rather than posting signs all over the City, the quadrant areas rely on residents moving their vehicles voluntarily two times a month. In establishing a voluntary program, it was recognized that some of the more densely populated and parking-challenged neighborhoods' participation rates would need to be reassessed once the program had time to take hold. Most of the new sweeping routes never received mechanized street sweeping so it was anticipated that the amount of debris would be considerable in the initial months, making completing routes more difficult to achieve.

The following is a brief summary of information encompassing the first four months of the expanded mechanized street sweeping program:

- 43,694.2 miles of streets were swept which resulted in the removal of 4,968.28 tons of debris. This impressive tonnage made up of litter, bottles, grit, sediment and organic matter was cleared from our neighborhoods and did not end up in our storm drain system, our streams or our Harbor.
- During this period approximately 65% of the routes were completed. The Department will be receiving 11 new street sweepers by early November. Including the new sweepers in the street sweeping rotation will help ease the burden on older equipment, some of which has been stressed by more frequent use under the City-wide program.
- With the occasional car or two along some streets, most residents in the quadrant areas are voluntarily moving their vehicles. As expected, however, there are still some neighborhoods that continue to have a high number of vehicles left on the street.
- Communities have taken it upon themselves to post reminder signs for their neighbors and for visitors who are looking for parking space in their communities. To support these neighbors, the Department has signs that communities can use to help with these monthly reminders.

The Honorable President and Members
of the Baltimore City Council
August 19, 2014
Page 3

The initial results of this new street sweeping program are encouraging and reinforce the need for regular cleaning of streets beyond the commercial and Downtown areas of the City. More time is needed for our residents to adjust to the routine of new parking behaviors before considering posting routes. To help improve participation and cooperation, the Department will need to do more outreach and education to help all of our communities to participate fully in keeping our City cleaner and healthier. The Department of Public Works looks forward to discussing with the City Council the progress made to date with the City-wide Street Sweeping program.

Sincerely,



Rudolph S. Chow, P.E.
Director

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