


FROM	NAME & TITLE	Rudolph S. Chow, P.E., Director	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Public Works 600 Abel Wolman Municipal Building		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 17-0024R		

DATE: June 21, 2017

TO

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 17-0024R introduced by Council Member Middleton, President Young, Council Members Henry, Costello, Clarke, Sneed, Dorsey, Scott, Burnett, Bullock, Pinkett, Cohen, Stokes, Schleifer, and Reisinger.

The purpose of the Bill is to request the Directors of Recreation and Parks and Transportation, the Commissioner of Housing and Community Development, the head of the Bureau of Solid Waste, 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; and to recommend to the Administration a single City agency 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 backyard with discarded furniture and overgrown weed trees and vines. The simple chart below shows the current mowing responsibilities by agency.

AGENCY	GRASS CUTTING RESPONSIBILITIES
DPW	DPW facilities (e.g. wastewater treatment plants, water filtration plants, pumping stations, reservoirs), City-owned vacant lots and properties, privately-owned vacant lots and properties referred to DPW for cleaning and mowing by DHCD Code Enforcement
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

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The Department of Public Works manages its operational facilities, which includes mowing and other exterior maintenance responsibilities. Each agency listed in the above chart knows its own property's needs better than anyone else and therefore can exercise the appropriate oversight and control for how frequently and how best to maintain their green spaces. Apart from the maintenance of Public Works facilities, the Bureau of Solid Waste provides cleaning and mowing services to Mayor and City Council-owned vacant lots, as well any Housing Code Enforcement referrals for nuisance (vacant) private lots and properties. Before a private property may be referred for City mowing services, the Department of Housing and Community Development 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. The Bureau of Solid Waste currently has a list of City-owned lots and potential nuisance vacant private properties that exceeds 18,000 in number. Obviously, rainfall patterns greatly influence the growing season and the frequency of return mowing requests.

In order to manage this largely seasonal workload, the Bureau of Solid Waste has cleaning and mowing crews assigned to the four Solid Waste quadrants to respond to both City-owned and privately-owned vacant lots and properties referrals. These crews have access to riding mowers, bush cutters, tractors and weed whackers. In addition, the mowing effort is supplemented by contracts with a private company and the Living Classrooms.

Representative of the Department of Public Works will be present at the hearing on City Council Resolution 17-0024R to answer any questions the Council may have.



Rudolph S. Chow, P.E.
Director

RSC/MMC