



SYNOPSIS

Committee: Public Safety and Government Operations

City Council Resolution: 22-0130R

Informational Hearing - Routine Maintenance of City-Owned Lots and Buildings

Sponsor: Councilmembers Burnett et al.

Introduced: September 12, 2022

Purpose:

For the purpose of inviting representatives from the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department of Planning, the Department of Transportation, the Office of the Comptroller, the Department of Real Estate, the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Department of Public Works, the Department of General Services, and other interested parties to discuss the current condition of City-owned lots and buildings, how maintenance of such properties can be improved, and the impact poorly-maintained City-owned lots and buildings have on Baltimore City as a whole.

Effective: Upon enactment

AGENCY REPORTS

City Solicitor	No Objection
Department of Planning	No Position
Department of Housing and Community Development	Favorable
Department of Real Estate	No Objection
Department of Transportation	No Objection
Department of Public Works	No Objection
Department of General Services	Favorable
Department of the Comptroller	
Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks	No Objection

ANALYSIS

The resolution invites government agencies as well as all other interested stakeholders to come and discuss the current condition of City-owned lots and buildings, how maintenance of such properties can be improved, and the impact poorly maintained City-owned lots and buildings have on Baltimore City as a whole.

The Baltimore City Department of Transportation manages over 400 acres of green space in the city. The department has a landscape section in its Maintenance division which operates on a two-week schedule with its own team as well as contractors to maintain vegetation and mow its areas of responsibility. Mowing season is from April 15th – October 15th.

The Department of Real Estate is responsible for 1300 City-owned parcels. The department does not have a budget for the maintenance of these properties and so refers maintenance to other departments.

The Baltimore City Department of Recreation & Parks does not oversee the maintenance of vacant lots or abandoned buildings. The department is responsible for the maintenance of nearly 3000 acres of property in the city which it has mowed on a weekly basis by a local contractor. Additional maintenance is coordinated with the Department of Public Works.

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) does not directly maintain lots or properties. They do work closely with DPW on the 1,047 (out of 14,188 total lots) vacant properties owned by the city. 92% of vacant properties are privately owned. DHCD manages the Adopt-A-Lot program. DHCD also has a code enforcement division that conducts over 200,000 Property Maintenance Code Enforcement inspections and responds to over 60,000 Code Enforcement Service Requests.

The Department of General Services (DGS) is responsible for the maintenance of operational and surplus facilities throughout the City. One of the largest of which is the downtown campus. Roughly a third of DGS's portfolio is surplus schools. The department is tasked with keeping these properties as well-maintained as possible – but in the case of surplus schools, the department does not have the budget capacity for the capital improvements these buildings would need to be usable. The department has requested security panels and fences around surplus schools to deter theft and break-ins.

The Department of Planning does not have a role in property maintenance but works with the Baltimore Green Network Plan to help communities recreate vacant lots into amenities for the communities.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) created two offices in 2023 that look after buildings under its purview. The Office of Facilities Management and the Office of Environmental and Safety Compliance. They work to address facilities and safety concerns. Consultants have also been hired to conduct safety and compliance audits at all DPW facilities estimated to be completed in the next six months.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Fiscal Note: None

Information Source(s): Council Resolution 22-0130R

Agencies Reports

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Analysis Date: May 23, 2023