



BALTIMORE HOUSING

CATHERINE E. PUGH
Mayor

PAUL T. GRAZIANO
Executive Director, HABC
Commissioner, HCD

MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
c/o Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary

From: Michael Braverman, Acting Commissioner

Date: June 21, 2017

Re: **City Council Bill 17-0024R - Upkeep and Maintenance of Vacant Lots and Public Green Spaces**

The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has reviewed City Council Bill 17-0024R, for the purpose of requesting the Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Director of the Department of Transportation, the Commissioner of the Department 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.

HCD does not provide vacant lot maintenance services, however the Housing Code Enforcement (HCE) team works closely with the Department of Public Works (DPW) to insure the upkeep and maintenance of vacant lots in the city. Parks and Public Green spaces are the responsibility of the Department of Recreation and Parks or the Department of Transportation.

This report will include information on HCD's role concerning the maintenance responsibility for City owned vacant lots, privately owned vacant lots, City owned lots that are part of the Adopt-A-Lot Program and vacant lots as a result of demolition.

For City owned lots, HCE inspectors either in response to 311 calls or during routine inspections request work orders for DPW, as appropriate, to perform the required maintenance on lots where the grass and weeds are over eight inches high or requires trash to be removed.

For privately owned vacant lots and buildings an inspector will issue notices and/or citations and if code enforcement efforts fail to get the responsible property owner to maintain the vacant lot, the inspector submits a work order to DPW to mow the lot and a lien is placed on the property for the cost of the work performed by the city crew.



HCD's Vacants to Value Office of Marketing and Community Outreach manages the Adopt-A-Lot Program, which is a program that allows organizations to submit a request to use a city owned vacant lot to support community activities such as community gardens or memorial gardens. The maintenance of the adopted lots is the responsibility of the entity that enters into the adopt-a-lot agreement. A list of lots that have been "adopted" is provided to the HCE team and to DPW so they are aware that the maintenance of the lots is not the responsibility of the City.

All demolition is coordinated with Planning's Office of Sustainability. Sustainability receives an alert when any demolition is released to a contractor. Following the completion of that demolition, Sustainability meets with community members and determines any additional greening or maintenance that will be implemented at a given site. This may include fencing, trees, playgrounds or ball fields. If a site is turned into a community amenity that should not be mowed by DPW, Planning alerts HCD and HCD puts a tag in the internal management system so that no cleaning work orders will be issued at the site.

The Department of Housing and Community Development looks forward to participating in the hearing to explore options for insuring proper maintenance and upkeep of vacant lots, parks and green spaces in the City.

MB:sd

cc: Ms. Karen Stokes, *Mayor's Office of Government Relations*
Mr. Kyron Banks, *Mayor's Office of Government Relations*