


FROM	NAME & TITLE	Henry Raymond, Director of Finance <i>HRM</i>	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Bureau of the Budget and Management Research Room 454, City Hall (410) 396-4940		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill #17-0024R		

DATE:

TO

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

June 23, 2017

City Council Bill 17-0024R has been introduced for the purpose of determining the annual cumulative calls of service for the upkeep and maintenance of vacant lots and green spaces and whether a single City agency should be responsible for mowing all City-owned lots, parcels, parks, and green spaces.

The agencies responsible for the maintenance of vacant lots and green spaces are the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Public Works – Bureau of Solid Waste, the Department of Housing and Community Development – Code Enforcement.

Department of Recreation and Parks

The Department of Recreation and Parks (BCRP) has one mowing contract with Lorenz; the latest contract was worth \$1,139,584. Lorenz mows the City’s parks, completing approximately 16 mowing cycles each season. Prior to July 1st, Lorenz mows on a 10-day schedule. After July 1st, Lorenz mows on a 14-day schedule. BCRP maintains 25 pieces of mowing equipment to ensure tidiness in between mowing cycles, especially with respect to the City’s ball fields.

Department of Transportation

The Department of Transportation (DOT) is responsible for mowing and maintenance of the City’s Right-of-Ways (ROW’s) and medians. There are 870 median strips throughout the City, which are mowed on a cycle of 14 days. DOT also cuts grass on tax sale lots that are not assigned to any specific agency. Ninety percent of DOT’s mowing is handled by Lorenz, whose latest contract was worth \$7,796,943.

In Fiscal 2016 the department received 1,046 requests from 311. Of these, 85% (889) were addressed by DOT and 15% (157) were referred to other agencies (e.g. BCRP – Urban Forestry, HCD Code Enforcement).

Housing and Community Development – Code Enforcement

Housing and Community Development – Code Enforcement (HCD) is charged with identifying properties that are in need of maintenance (cleaning and mowing). HCD is alerted to these properties via 311, acting on each request within three days. If a property is privately owned and occupied, a citation is immediately given to the occupant/owner. If a property is privately owned and vacant, a notice is delivered to the property owner who has 10 days to reply. If the owner does not respond within 30 days, a work order is issued to the Department of Public Works – Bureau of Solid Waste (DPW). If a

property is vacant, HCD issues a work order to DPW. The order must be completed within 15 days if the property is in a Transformation Zone and 30 days if not.

Department of Public Works – Bureau of Solid Waste

The Department of Public Works – Bureau of Solid Waste (DPW) is responsible for the maintenance and mowing of 18,000 vacant, abandoned, and unoccupied private properties/lots. Most of DPW's mowing is driven by complaints registered with 311 and is performed by staff; contractors are only used for overflow work. DPW also cleans 81% and mows 54% of the unimproved City-owned properties acquired by tax sale.

DPW contracts overflow mowing with Evergreen Landscape and Design Corporation and Lorenz, whose most recent contracts were worth \$1,453,200 and \$641,000, respectively. Please note that these contracts cover only mowing and not the maintenance/cleanliness of the lots DPW is responsible for, the status of which may change within the time frame allowed by the type of citation DPW prepared. If a property/lot is obstructed by refuse, mowing cannot be completed until the lot is cleaned, which can often prolong and complicate the process of completing a 311 request.

Please note that Enoch Pratt Free Libraries also has a contract for mowing with A.S.B. worth \$20,525.

The Department of Finance recommends a full analysis of external and internal mowing processes in Baltimore City, which should include the full costing of doing all mowing in-house.

cc: Henry Raymond
Kyrion Banks