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CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON BUDGET AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
Budget Hearing for the Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation
October 26, 2016
Commissioner Charles L. Williams

Honorable Chairman Austin, Vice Chairman Ervin and members of the Chicago City Council:

In 2016, the Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) delivered more than one million City services to the residents of Chicago. From garbage collection to snow removal; from tree trimming to rodent baiting—our crews worked tirelessly to deliver the resources communities needed to help maintain healthy and clean neighborhoods. And while we have accomplished a great deal, we can always do more.

As we plan for the future, I know that every decision we make must work for the taxpayers. Therefore, in 2017, we will reform where we can; cut where we must; and reinvest where it matters to ensure we are providing the highest-quality services to the residents of Chicago. We will achieve this by working with our union partners to reduce redundancies and improve productivity wherever possible. When operational savings are realized, the savings will be reinvested back into the department to assist us in providing the most cost-effective, timely and quality resources. This is what our neighborhoods need and what our residents deserve.

BUREAU OF SANITATION

Grid 2.0

From day one, Mayor Emanuel has worked to reform City service delivery to increase efficiency and provide the most cost-effective, quality services possible to Chicago taxpayers. DSS continues working to help achieve this goal through the enhancement of one of the department's most significant operational reforms—the implementation of the grid refuse collection system. The grid system has enabled the City to continue providing quality garbage collection services while identifying \$30 million in operating savings that were reallocated to support other key City services.

In 2016, the Department completed the roll-out of Grid 2.0 that allows us to reduce the average daily deployment of garbage trucks from 310 to 292. We will continue evaluating the grid system by assessing time-in-alley reports, monitoring daily tonnage collection reports, and conducting field audits; and we will make any continued changes as needed.

New Chicago Recycling Ordinance

In 2016, the City updated its 20-year-old recycling ordinance which takes effect on January 1, 2017. The ordinance provides greater clarity to property owners regarding their recycling requirements while also giving City officials stronger enforcement capabilities. DSS will lead the implementation and enforcement of the ordinance, which includes a 30-day warning period and graduated penalties for non-compliance. DSS will also continue working with residents through community-based outreach and marketing efforts to encourage proper recycling habits and participation in our Blue Cart Recycling Program.

BUREAU OF STREET OPERATIONS

Mayor Emanuel's One Summer Chicago

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In 2016, DSS proudly participated in Mayor Emanuel's One Summer Chicago summer jobs program, which helps keep youth safe and engaged during the summer while providing valuable job training and work experience. Approximately 1,700 youth aged 15 to 19 helped DSS beautify Chicago by taking part in various Forestry and Street Operation assignments. In total, the youth collected 9,101 bags of debris and delivered 546 cubic yards of mulch for outdoor greening projects. New in 2016, 40 Recycling Ambassadors also visited local libraries, Park District camps and other community locations to provide residents with information about Chicago's Residential Blue Cart Recycling Program.

Graffiti Removal

In 2015, DSS eliminated the graffiti removal backlog, and is now responding to requests for removals within 3 business days. In 2016, the department continued utilizing the strategic grid-based graffiti removal system that allows crews to address outstanding calls in targeted geographic areas in each ward. The Graffiti Removal Program has an on-time completion rate of 99 percent.

Sheriff's Work Alternative Program (SWAP)

A key resource that supports DSS' mission is the Cook County Sheriff's Work Alternative Program (SWAP). Under the supervision of specially trained Sheriff's deputies, the crews work throughout Chicago on a variety of public works projects such as cleaning parks, viaducts and streets. In 2016, SWAP participants provided assistance to DSS by cleaning more than 7,000 locations around the city. We look forward to continuing to work with SWAP in 2017.

BUREAU OF FORESTRY

Eliminating the Tree Trimming Backlog

The City continues working to provide the best services possible to the residents of Chicago, which includes maintaining our urban canopy.

In 2015 and 2016, DSS was allocated \$700,000 for weekend forestry work. Utilizing the investment for additional forestry work, the Bureau of Forestry reduced its backlog by nearly 80 percent. DSS is now working to address requests submitted to 311 within the last 90 days.

In addition to eliminating the backlog, the Bureau is on pace to plant 3,000 new trees in 2016. DSS also continued to inoculate and treat over 61,000 trees over the past three years in efforts to manage the damaging effects of the Emerald Ash Borer. Of the trees that have received treatment, nearly 91 percent were deemed still viable after inspection for retreatment. In 2017, the Bureau will continue to inoculate thousands of trees.

BUREAU OF RODENT CONTROL

Additional Resources for Rodent Control

Under the leadership of Mayor Emanuel, DSS has taken a more proactive approach to fighting rodents in Chicago. In 2016, DSS began a new pilot program that uses dry ice to combat rodents. Crews will be evaluating variables like storage and longevity, overall success rates and potential cost saving to determine whether the product could become a permanent tool for the Bureau of Rodent Control.

Also in 2016, DSS redirected 10 crews from refuse collection to the Bureau of Rodent Control as a result of Grid 2.0. The new crews have enabled DSS to complete approximately 40 percent more rodent

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abatement over last year; increase preventive re-baiting by 22 percent; and begin working toward the goal of ensuring all requests are addressed within five days of receipt.

This year the Department continued enforcing the "Construction Site - Rodent Abatement Ordinance" that mandates a rodent abatement plan be maintained throughout the excavation process of any new construction within City limits. And education remained a top priority with new informational posters being placed at every baiting location to help show residents how they can eliminate food sources for rodents.

BUREAU OF TRAFFIC SERVICES

Traffic Services

The Bureau of Traffic Services continues to keep Chicago's streets safe through towing and relocation of vehicles, responding to calls for abandoned vehicles, and offering support services for many large scale civic events and emergency operations. In 2016, Traffic Services has provided traffic and crowd support at more than 700 civic events in every community of the city.

In closing, I want to reaffirm my commitment to delivering the highest-quality services to our residents. We will work to provide those resources in the most efficient and cost effective manner possible. But in order to achieve this goal, we need your help. We need to continue working together to find innovative ways to provide City services. DSS will do its part, and we welcome the opportunity to discuss the unique needs of your community. Together, I am confident we can help keep Chicago safe, clean and vibrant for generations to come.

Thank you.

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