

CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON BUDGET AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
Budget Hearing for the Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation
October 31, 2017
Commissioner Charles L. Williams

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

In 2017, 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 hard to deliver the essential resources to communities so that residents enjoy healthy and clean neighborhoods. While we have accomplished a tremendous amount of work this past year, we are always looking for ways to improve our operations.

As we plan for the future, I know that every decision we make must work for the taxpayers. Therefore, in 2018, 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.

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

Neighborhood Outreach

Field Sanitation Specialists, working in conjunction with CDOT's public way inspectors, have focused on refuse dumpster enforcement and recycling education across the city. Improved recycling participation and increased awareness of the need to keep dumpsters closed will help control the city's rodent population.

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. Since Grid 2.0's completion in 2016, 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 2017, the Department sustained an average daily deployment of 291 garbage trucks, as a result of the grid-garbage efficiencies. We continuously monitor the grid system by assessing time-in-alley reports, monitoring daily tonnage collection reports, conducting field audits, and we will make any continued changes as needed.

In 2017 the bureau swept over 198,000 miles of streets city-wide. Improved placement and management of dumpsters used by this program has resulted in over \$1.5 million of savings since 2016.

New Chicago Recycling Ordinance

On January 1, 2017, the updated recycling ordinance came into effect, mandating that property owners of businesses and multi-dwelling buildings (five units or more), provide recycling for their occupants, or face penalties for non-compliance. In the summer of 2017, DSS launched the “It’s All You” recycling campaign, which included the placement of everyday lifestyle recycling images on various media citywide, in addition to implementing a captivating and compelling social media campaign, to help promote the recycling pledge website and spirit of the campaign. “It’s All You” aims to educate residents about the common mistakes that residents make in the Blue Cart Recycling Program in an effort to lower contamination, and to recruit new or non-recyclers by reinforcing the concept that their individual participation is impactful. In 2016, DSS diverted over 85,000 tons of waste in the Blue Cart Program, saving over \$4 million in waste disposal costs.

BUREAU OF STREET OPERATIONS

Mayor Emanuel’s One Summer Chicago

In 2017, DSS proudly participated in Mayor Emanuel’s One Summer Chicago jobs program, which helps keep youth safe and engaged during the summer while providing valuable job training and work experience. Approximately 600 youth, ages 15 to 19, helped DSS beautify Chicago neighborhoods by taking part in various Forestry and Street Operation assignments. In total, the youth collected 722 bags of debris and mulched over 3,300 trees for sustainability projects.

Neighborhood Blitz Program

In 2017, DSS, along with CDOT, completed 15 cleaning blitzes during the summer and fall, providing a sweep of vital services to neighborhoods citywide. Crews trimmed hauled away over 4,100 bags of debris, baited over 500 alleys, removed over 640 instances of graffiti, and removed more than 150 abandoned cars. These swift services help maintain safe and healthy neighborhoods for residents.

Graffiti Removal

In 2017, DSS added eight new chemical trucks to its graffiti-removal fleet, to keep the fleet as modern and environmentally-friendly as possible. As a result of the new fleet, crews continue to respond to requests for removals within three business days. In 2017, 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, and has completed over 79,000 removals. The Graffiti Removal Program has an on-time completion rate of 99 percent.

Fly Dumping

Earlier this month, the City Council passed an ordinance to assist DSS and the Department of Public Health to crack down on fly dumping by significantly increasing fines on those who illegally discard materials. This effort paired with the installment of 15 security cameras this summer in areas prone to chronic fly dumping. Two cases are already pending against offenders, revealing the method is an effective way to catch and fine violators.

Snow Removal

As always, the Bureau of Street Operations is prepared to implement its winter operations. Snow plows and salt spreaders will patrol the streets of Chicago to keep them safe and passable throughout the winter season. DSS has over 375,000 300,000 tons of salt in inventory and ready to be deployed when needed.

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 2017, SWAP participants provided assistance to DSS by cleaning almost 2,300 locations around the city. We look forward to continuing to work with SWAP in 2018.

BUREAU OF FORESTRY

Addressing Emerald Ash Borer

The City continues working to provide the best services possible to the residents of Chicago, which includes maintaining our urban canopy. By the end of this year, DSS will have planted over 3,200 trees and trimmed over 25,000 trees.

In 2017, DSS also continued to inoculate ash trees in the current treatment cycle, bringing the two year total to 34,000 trees, in its efforts to manage the damaging effects of the Emerald Ash Borer. DSS will continue treatments in 2018 to complete inoculations of the remaining viable ash trees. Of the trees that have received treatment, over 80 percent were deemed viable after inspection for retreatment.

In 2017 the Bureau of Forestry, working closely with CDOT, began a four-year project to completely re-lamp all city streets and alleys. Forestry crews will trim or remove trees in advance of CDOT electricity crews so all streetlights can convert the old halogen lamp technology with new less expensive LED lamps.

BUREAU OF RODENT CONTROL

Pilot Programs for Rodent Control

Under the leadership of Mayor Emanuel, DSS has taken a more proactive approach to fighting rodents in neighborhoods. In 2017, DSS began a new pilot program that uses fertility bait to combat rodent reproduction. Also in 2017 and into 2018, crews will revive a dry ice pilot program in parks and neighborhoods. Crews will be evaluating variables like storage and transporting requirements, overall success rates, and potential cost saving to determine whether these products could become a permanent tool for the Bureau of Rodent Control.

Using traditional baiting methods and capitalizing on the additional crews added in 2016, crews have been able to maintain a response time of five days or less.

In 2017, the Department continued enforcing the "Construction Site - Rodent Abatement Ordinance" that mandates a rodent abatement plan be maintained throughout the demolition and excavation process of any new construction within City limits. Education also remained a top priority with the placement of new informational posters at every baiting location to help show residents how they can eliminate food sources for rodents, in addition to an updated brochure for crews to share with residents and property owners.

In 2018, DSS will increase the number of crews dedicated solely to rodent baiting by 5 crews, making a total of 30 rodent abatement and rodent prevention crews operating in neighborhoods citywide. This over \$1 million investment is achieved through operational efficiencies within the Department since the implementation of Grid Garbage.

In 2018, DSS will improve its refuse cart efficiencies with continued monitoring of the current refuse cart inventory and with more citywide cart assessments to determine if there are excess unused carts that

can get filtered back into the existing cart inventory. In 2018, with an investment of an additional \$500,000, DSS will purchase more than 32,000 carts. This represents the purchase of an additional 10,500 carts than 2017.

In 2017, DSS performed an Excessive Refuse Cart Inventory Pilot in two wards to assess whether residents had excessive carts. The pilot will continue in 2018 to collect and analyze the data to help DSS more efficiently manage the cart inventory in the City.

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 2017, Traffic Services has provided traffic and crowd support at more than 700 civic events in every community of the city, and will provide the necessary support needed in 2018.

In closing, DSS' commitment to delivering the highest quality services to our residents is reflected in our continued investments to your communities and in this budget. We appreciate your ideas, your input, and your continued partnership to address the needs in your community to keep it safe, clean, and vibrant for generations to come.

I would like to personally thank our employees for their tireless efforts to continuously improve on the services we provide.

This concludes my prepared statement. My staff and I are pleased to answer any questions you or the members of the City Council may have on our presented budget.

Thank you.

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