

Honorable Chair Ervin, Vice Chair Lee and members of the Chicago City Council:

Good morning. I am Cole Stallard, Commissioner for the Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS). I continue to be grateful for the opportunity to serve Mayor Brandon Johnson, the members of the Chicago City Council and Chicago residents in the delivery of vital services that keep our great City operating, including but not limited to Sanitation, Recycling, Forestry, Street Operations, Graffiti Removal, Rodent Control and Traffic Services. I also want to acknowledge the valuable DSS leadership team, who because of their dedication, we have achieved the 2024 accomplishments we are highlighting for you today.

Prior to the Democratic National Convention (DNC), DSS worked with the Mayor's Office, Chicago DNC 2024 and multiple City, State and Federal stakeholders for months to prepare Chicago to be featured on the world stage. Work included tree trimming and planting, collecting garbage from public areas and vacant lots, removing graffiti, and sweeping streets. The Bureau of Traffic Services also worked closely with the Chicago Police Department, the Office of Management and Emergency Communications (OEMC), the State of Illinois and the U.S. Secret Service to provide barricades and post parking restrictions that helped meet transit demands and helped protect both motorists and pedestrians during the event.

In collaboration with the Mayor's Office, LiUNA 1001, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and Chicago Public Schools (CPS), DSS launched an innovative Laborer Trainee Program designed to provide CPS high school students with a valuable hands-on laborer experience in public service and to bridge the gap between education and the workforce. Seventy participants were selected to work alongside experienced DSS employees, who offered the students exposure to real-world job functions critical to the City's day-to-day operations. The students worked hard to help DSS clean in neighborhoods across Chicago for the DNC. Today, over 50 of these students are Local 1001 union members and general laborers at DSS.

DSS also assisted with logistics for nearly 2,610 film and special events, including the Chicago Pride Parade, NASCAR, Lollapalooza, Bud Billiken Parade and the Chicago Marathon.

Our recycling team continues to expand on waste diversion opportunities to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions. The Food Scrap Drop-Off Program recently celebrated its one-year anniversary to great success. Due to growing demand, DSS added two new locations in March and another three in August, bringing the total to 20 locations. To date, over 5,800 Chicago households have signed up to participate, and since the program launch, over 246 tons of food scraps have been composted and 161 MTCO₂E (metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent) of greenhouse gas emissions have been prevented. This is equivalent to preventing emissions from burning roughly 18,150 gallons of gasoline.

This fall, we launched a Backyard Compost Bin Giveaway to provide free backyard compost bins to residents living in homes with four units or less. These bins allow residents to turn materials such as fruit/vegetable scraps, fall leaves, and grass clippings into compost through natural decomposition. Every ward received an initial allocation of 20 bins to kick off the program. With

the high level of demand citywide, we are now providing an additional 40 bins per ward and have plans to relaunch the program in the spring.

The Bureau of Forestry, along with the Departments of Transportation (CDOT), planted over 13,000 trees across Chicago so far this year, bringing the total trees planted to nearly 57,000 through Our Roots Chicago, a groundbreaking initiative to equitably increase the City's urban tree canopy. The Departments of Public Health and Environment collaborated with us to get the word out across stakeholders. This effort helps improve air quality, reduces urban heat and enhances green spaces for Chicago residents and visitors.

The Bureau of Forestry also continued its citywide area tree trimming this year. Crews scheduled and trimmed all trees in one geographic area, creating a more efficient and equitable process for Chicago residents, and allowing for the proper maintenance of the City's overall urban tree canopy. This strategy continues to show results, with the Bureau of Forestry trimming over 134,000 trees since program inception in April 2023, or 121 grids, which reflects approximately 23 percent of the overall tree canopy.

The DSS Quality of Life program cleans areas with overgrown and unsightly weeds and debris in or near viaducts, alleys and vacant lots. Since the program inception in 2016, the team has expanded from five to 30 employees and is equipped with six vans, three of which are electric, allowing them to service multiple communities in the City simultaneously. This year, DSS completed 716 larger jobs and 4,966 smaller jobs.

DSS also worked with the Mayor's Office, CPD and other City departments in a full force of government approach at all the 'Take Back the Block' events, held last summer, to engage and clean targeted areas as part of the City's public safety efforts.

Our Bureau of Street Operations manages graffiti operations and is fully prepared for this winter's operations. We will also be hosting our third annual "You Name a Snowplow" contest. Information for this year's contest is forthcoming and will be announced soon.

The Bureau of Rodent Control continues to respond to 311 requests and proactively address rodent baiting through door-to-door abatement, face-to-face engagement with residents, and informational materials in four different languages.

Looking ahead to 2025, DSS will shift resources to provide the Bureau of Rodent Control with five extra crews during the winter season, helping to maintain a presence in each ward every other day, enhancing coverage and response efficiency across the City.

We will continue to leverage the great success of the Laborer Trainee Program with additional student participants.

DSS will expand composting and waste diversion efforts, such as adding locations for Food Scrap Drop-Off to further reduce our environmental impact.

To build on the citywide beautification results showcased at the DNC, DSS will work with DOE to find innovative and cost-efficient methods to implement the proposed plan for the Keep Chicago Clean anti-litter campaign submitted to the Committee on Environmental Protection and Energy in September.

We are also developing several technology applications, specifically for towing, tree inventory, and basket collection routing, showcasing our ability to operate effectively across both digital and operational platforms.

In closing, I would like to thank all City Council members and staff for your continued support, especially for our Spring Clean & Green event and the Backyard Compost Bin Giveaway. I also want to acknowledge the entire Streets and San staff for their tireless efforts and commitment to the residents of Chicago.

My staff and I are happy to answer any questions you may have.