



## DEPARTMENT OF STREETS AND SANITATION CITY OF CHICAGO

### COMMITTEE ON BUDGET AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS Budget Hearing for the Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation November 1, 2019 Commissioner John F. Tully, Jr.

#### **Honorable Chairman Dowell and members of the Chicago City Council:**

The Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) fulfills hundreds of thousands of requests from residents each year. Our dedicated staff works 365 days of the year, through the challenges of every season. In 2019, our crews have worked more efficiently to deliver the services and vital resources that residents need. Our mission every day is to make Chicago cleaner and safer to improve the quality of life for all residents.

The Department has seen recent success in collaborating to improve the condition of neighborhoods citywide and in 2020 we will continue working to streamline processes and services that keep the city running. In 2020, efficiency will remain a top priority for DSS operations to ensure we are making every dollar count. We will continue working collaboratively with unions to develop our skilled workforce and leverage available technological resources to increase productivity.

#### **COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE**

##### **Neighborhood Outreach**

The Department's neighborhood outreach team works to engage residents to increase education of services offered by the Department. In 2019, the neighborhood outreach team worked to support the Department's recycling education and community outreach goals. DSS also assigned an additional four Field Sanitation Specialists (FSS) to monitor recycling contamination in alleys in addition coordinating tours of recycling facilities for residents, educational presentations at Aldermanic and community events and CAPS events.

#### **BUREAU OF SANITATION**

##### **Refuse**

DSS has sustained a daily deployment average of 291 garbage trucks since the inception of Grid 2.0 in 2016. We continuously monitor the grid system by assessing time-in-alley, daily tonnage reports and conducting field audits and will continue to make any necessary changes to the system.

Crews address cleaning concerns in between sanitation loads and through the Extra Mile initiative. Through Extra Mile, crews have cleaned more than 1,400 normally untapped areas in all 50 wards.

In 2019, the Department swept more than 180,000 miles of streets and alleys citywide. Residents can view the Department's sweepers in real time through the online Sweeper Tracker tool. Improved

placement and management of dumpsters used by this program has resulted in more than \$2.5 million of savings since 2016.

### **Recycling**

Improving recycling and sustainability remains a top priority for the Department. In 2019, DSS launched a citywide recycling public awareness campaign on bus shelters, CTA buses and trains, radio, community and digital billboards and social media to increase awareness and participation in the City's Blue Cart Recycling program. The Department has also maintained a partnership with Recycle by City to keep residents engaged through online tools like the recycling and garbage pick-up schedule and email reminders.

In 2019, DSS launched a year-round yard waste collection service in order to reduce recycling contamination after yard waste was found to be a top contaminate in the recycling stream. The Department has responded to more than 5,100 requests for yard waste removal in 2019.

## **BUREAU OF STREET OPERATIONS**

### **Snow**

The Bureau of Street Operations is fully prepared for winter operations. DSS will add 20 new spreaders and four new front-end loaders to its fleet this year and all equipment will remain at the ready to ensure that arterial and residential streets are safe and passable during snow events. The Department maintains salt stations across the City throughout the year and has more than 370,000 tons of salt prepared for deployment when needed.

The Department is working to expand the turn-by-turn snow routing pilot for residential snow clearing. This software allows for real time tracking of the percentage of completion during snow clearing programs providing a means for measuring efficiencies and identifying issues with residential snow removal. The expansion of turn by turn this season will bring a total of 92 sections in 22 wards utilizing the navigation software.

### **Operation Clean**

In 2019, DSS in partnership with the Chicago Police Department, relaunched the Operation Clean initiative to provide service blitzes to neighborhoods with the most need. Since the kick-off of Operation Clean during the Memorial Day weekend, DSS has trimmed 472 trees, removed 442 abandoned vehicles, baited 548 alleys for rodents, and removed graffiti from 508 locations through this coordinated initiative. DSS crews also cut weeds at 794 locations, completed 152 hi-lift jobs and cleaned 185 alleys, 449 lots and 734 parkways, removing 5,976 bags of debris.

### **Graffiti**

DSS continues to respond to graffiti removal requests in four days or less to deter the spread of vandalism on public and private property. In 2019, DSS collaborated with the Illinois Department of Transportation to remove graffiti on and near expressways in the city. DSS also worked with Aldermen and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events to develop a registry for murals to ensure they are protected during our graffiti removal efforts.

### **Fly Dumping**

The Department continues to use Flash Cams as a deterrent for fly dumping and graffiti vandalism in areas with chronic activity. Since the inception of the Flash Cam program, 61 offenders have pled liable

resulting in more than \$125,995 in revenue to the City. We are confident that this program will continue to yield return on our initial investment of \$150,000 and help support our street operations.

#### **BUREAU OF FORESTRY**

The Bureau of Forestry maintains more than 500,000 trees each year to protect the City's urban canopy. In 2019, the bureau trimmed more than 17,000 trees and removed more than 14,000 dead or diseased trees. The bureau also planted nearly 4,000 trees this year to restore the canopy and keep Chicago a Tree City USA for the 37<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. The Bureau of Forestry supports the Chicago Department of Transportation in the citywide Smart Lighting project as they convert old halogen lamp technology to new, more cost-effective LED lamps.

#### **BUREAU OF RODENT CONTROL**

DSS continues to proactively address rodent abatement in addition to responding to requests from residents. Crews work daily to bait alleys, backyards and sewers and place dry ice in parks and along the Riverwalk.

In 2019, DSS redirected seven crews to the Bureau of Rodent Control to increase productivity by servicing more neighborhoods each day and proactively addressing rodent issues through door-to-door abatement projects. A total of 89 abatement projects have been completed thus far in 2019.

After eliminating the cart backlog on 2018, DSS has been able to successfully manage cart deliveries in 2019. DSS has delivered more than 42,000 black garbage carts in 2019 and continues to refurbish carts where possible to respond to the high volume of requests from residents. Cart refurbishment and a new vendor buy back credit program have yielded a cost savings of more than \$92,000 in 2019.

#### **BUREAU OF TRAFFIC SERVICES**

The Bureau of Traffic Services continues to keep streets safe through towing and relocation of vehicles, abandoned vehicle removal and support for emergency operations and special events. In 2019, Traffic Services removed more than 21,000 abandoned vehicles and provided support to 700 special events throughout the city.

In closing, the Department of Streets and Sanitation remains committed to efficiently delivering the highest quality of services to residents to ensure our investments are working for us all. We welcome your ideas and input as we move forward. By working together, we will continue to make a greater impact on neighborhoods throughout Chicago, keeping them healthy and thriving.

I would like to thank the entire staff of the Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation for their tireless efforts and commitment to the residents of Chicago.

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