



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 6, 2020  
Commissioner John F. Tully, Jr.

**Honorable Chairwoman Dowell and members of the Chicago City Council:**

As all of you are aware, this year has been unprecedented in many ways. 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 2020, in addition to our crews working more efficiently to deliver the services and vital resources that residents need, our teams have had to be flexible and step up to new challenges and needs in the city. Throughout these challenging times our mission has remained the same: To provide a safe and healthy environment on the streets and alleys of Chicago through effective management of our many responsibilities to improve the quality of life for all residents.

DSS has been an integral part of the City's COVID-19 response. DSS not only continued essential services during the Governor's stay-at-home order, but Sanitation collected 10 percent more waste in 2020 compared to 2019. This was in addition to providing other non-routine support for other departments, including delivering and setting up beds to homeless shelters and delivering 460 emergency food boxes to those most in need.

In response to the national civil unrest in August, DSS had 320 laborers (equipped with rakes, shovels, brooms, black bags and blowers), refuse trucks and street sweepers working 12-hour shifts for 10 days across the city of Chicago to clean up glass, graffiti fire damage, and other debris. BACP provided locations, CDOT, and CDWM provided laborers and CTA provided 19 buses to help DSS as they led these clean-up efforts.

In addition, DSS has been working with CPD to provide support for protecting protestors and combating looting. DSS provided assets at multiple locations across the city during various events of civil unrest throughout the year to assist with blocking where necessary. DSS also participated in trainings and workshops led by the Office of Emergency Management with CPD to bring lessons learned and prepare for future concerns.

This year, the Department's neighborhood outreach team worked to support the Mayor's Census outreach efforts to ensure that all residents were counted in the census, which was no small task during a pandemic.

In 2021, 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.

Refuse collection remained consistent during the Covid-19 pandemic, civil unrest, and the derecho storm clean-up efforts. Refuse tonnage increased this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the bureau of sanitation has responded to this increase.

A weed cutting RFP was released to respond to aldermanic concerns, such as litter removal and edging. The RFP closes in December and contracts will go into effect for the 2021 season.

In 2020, despite a late start to the season because of the Governor's stay-at-home order, the Department swept more than 205,000 miles of streets and alleys citywide. Residents can view the Department's sweepers in real time through the online Sweeper Tracker tool.

Improving recycling and sustainability remains a top priority for the Department. Currently DSS has an RFP out to bid for recycling that will end in November. Those companies selected will have contracts effective in January 2021 for a 3-year term. At the direction of the Mayor's Office, the Delta Institute has started collaborating with DSS and other city departments on a comprehensive waste and recycling study which will review current waste and recycling related policies. In 2021, DSS looks forward to sharing results on the Waste Study and making improvements to recycling in Chicago based on the study.

The Bureau of Street Operations is fully prepared for winter operations. The Department maintains salt stations across the City throughout the year and has more than 400,000 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. DSS will continue to expand its turn-by-turn routing system for the 2020/2021 snow season and by the end of the season, DSS will be ahead of its goal with 40 wards and 164 routes utilizing the technology. The phase-in of the turn-by-turn routing system will be completed in all wards by the 2021/2022 snow season.

In 2020, 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, DSS has conducted 16 blitzes, trimmed 162 trees, removed 221 abandoned vehicles, baited 201 alleys for rodents, and removed graffiti from 317 locations through this coordinated initiative. DSS crews also cut weeds at 152 locations, completed 27 hi-lift jobs, and cleaned 103 alleys, 153 lots and 169 parkways, removing 953 bags of debris.

DSS continues to respond to graffiti removal requests in four days or less to deter the spread of vandalism on public and private property. As a result of civil unrest, DSS graffiti removal request has spiked by 12 percent and DSS has stepped up to the challenge.

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, 85 offenders have pled liable resulting in more than \$141,095 in revenue to the City.

In August 2020, a Derecho storm and Tornado touched down in the City. The Bureau of Forestry, with the support of CDOT and CDWM, responded to the worst storm the city has seen in over 9 years with over 12,000 tree emergencies across all 50 wards. The response to this storm, which includes a survey of the damage and replacing trees will continue into 2021.

DSS continues to proactively address rodent abatement in addition to responding to the increase in requests from residents because of COVID-19. Crews work daily to bait alleys and backyards. DSS crews also continue to recover all dead animals citywide and birds and remove wasp and hornet nest in the parkways. The bureau will start to implement Salesforce One Mobile, which will improve productivity and routing city-wide.

DSS has delivered more than 53,900 black and blue garbage and recycling carts to date in 2020 and continues to refurbish thousands of carts where possible to respond to the high volume of requests from residents. Cart refurbishment and a vendor buy back credit program have yielded a cost savings of more than \$202,100 in 2020 so far.

The Bureau of Traffic Services continues to keep streets safe through towing and relocation of vehicles, abandoned vehicle removal and support for emergency operations. In 2020, the Bureau of Traffic Services posted 4,000 no parking signs and delivered 1,200 traffic cones, and 210 blue barricades and verticades each weekend for violence prevention.

During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, Traffic Services also supplied and helped set up all city COVID-19 testing sites with 500 traffic cones, 20 blue barricades and street postings for no parking at each site, as well as relocated vehicles at sites where necessary.

All of this in addition to Traffic Services removing more than 1,700 abandoned vehicles, answering 24,000 abandoned vehicle complaints, and relocating 13,431 vehicles in 2020. The Bureau's Special Events division has posted 201,525 No Parking Signs, Delivered and picked up over 12,000 blue barricades and 7,903 Iron Barricades.

In closing, 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. They have stepped up and responded to every challenge I have given them this year and for this I am thankful.

To you Chairman Dowell and members of the City Council, I would like you to know that 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. My staff and I are happy to answer any questions you may have.