



**DEPARTMENT OF STREETS AND SANITATION
CITY OF CHICAGO**

**COMMITTEE ON BUDGET AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
Budget Hearing for the Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation
October 5, 2021
Acting Commissioner Cole Stallard**

Honorable Chairwoman Dowell and members of the Chicago City Council:

It is an honor to be here for my first budget hearing as Acting Commissioner. As you know, the Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) fulfills over one million service requests from residents each year. Our dedicated staff works 365 days of the year, through the challenges of every season. Under the guidance of Mayor Lori Lightfoot, our crews continued to be flexible and adjust to changing pandemic circumstances, all while working more efficiently to deliver vital services and resources to residents.

In 2021, DSS continued its support of the City's COVID-19 response and was an integral and unseen part of the logistics and outreach for the vaccine distribution. Then, as the city began to reopen, DSS jumped right back into special events providing resources to make 731 events possible to date this year. Refuse tonnage also remains higher than pre-COVID-19 years and the Bureau of Sanitation continues to meet the challenge of this increase.

One of our biggest successes this year was the 2020-2021 snow season. DSS responded to nearly an entire season's worth of snow in three weeks, in addition to dealing with record low temperatures. The Bureau of Street Operations is fully prepared for this winter's operations. We maintain salt stations across the City, which allows us to store 425,000 tons of salt for this year's season. We will also have access to a new salt dome at 2555 W. Grand Ave., built in partnership with the Public Building Commission. The new dome will be able to store up to 40,000 tons of salt, a significant help to our operations.

The Department has made strides to improve recycling and sustainability and we will continue to make this a top priority in the coming year. We are prioritizing several recommendations from the recent Delta Institute's Waste Strategy to help address our material management strategy. We have improved our contracted recycling collection services with more stringent reporting requirements, clear language on contamination, and better accountability. The department has also requested additional funds in this year's budget to expand our recycling program.

As you know, the City's urban tree canopy is a priority in Mayor Lightfoot's budget, and additional funds have been requested for the Bureau of Forestry to both maintain existing trees and plant new trees. DSS continues to support the creation of the Urban Forestry Advisory Board, which we hope will be helpful in updating City ordinances, finding corporate funding for tree planting, and educating residents on the importance of trees in our fight against climate change.

DSS also continues to proactively address rodent abatement while responding to the increase in complaints received since the onset of COVID-19. Crews are out working daily to bait alleys and backyards and we are reallocating our resources to help ensure adequate coverage. Recently, we opened two new regional rodent control offices, bringing our total to three offices: South Side, North Side and Central.

DSS is also dedicated to prioritizing racial equity. We have worked closely with the Office of Equity and Racial Justice to find new ways to include equity in the work we are doing ranging from special projects and extending through community outreach and engagement. We look forward to meeting the goals we have laid out through 2022, ensuring that services are delivered through an equity lens.

We are working with Local 1001, the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) and Department of Human Resources (DHR) to bring on 30 new seasonal laborers. We have also allocated additional funding to the Re-Entry Program, allowing the program to keep up with the minimum wage increase and provide uninterrupted service from April 15 through October 31.

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. We have had a change in leadership this year and a lot of movement happening in our department, but they have taken it in stride. I am grateful for their dedication.

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