



Budget Office

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

April 14, 2023

The Honorable Darrell Clarke
City Council President
City Hall, Room 490
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Dear Council President Clarke,

This letter is in response to questions raised by Councilmembers regarding the Proposed FY24 Operating and Capital Budget.

Streets Department

Councilmember Gauthier: What tools is the Streets department using to measure its success in curbing illegal dumping activity?

***Response:** The Streets Department utilizes a variety of data sources to measure success in curbing illegal dumping activity. This includes our geographic litter index, which tends to be higher in locations known for higher incidences of illegal dumping. More specifically however, the Department maintains very specific data on illegal dumping locations serviced, allowing us to maintain and track frequency of incidents, tonnage collected, and types of material collected. This enables the Department to review and analyze trends in illegal dumping in the city overall, as well as specific geographic areas and illegal dumping hot spot locations.*

Councilmember Gauthier: Status report on the alleyway lights that can be easily repaired through the Department's maintenance contractor.

***Response:** In FY23, through the end of February 2023, 37 alley lights were repaired by contracted forces and 171 alley lights were repaired by city crews. Bids were opened this month for the annual street lighting contract. This contract includes an additional \$1M in FY23 funding for new alley light installations. That work will begin this summer.*

Councilmember Jones: What is the timeline for getting flashing lights when school gets let out for Gideon Community School.

***Response:** Traffic Engineering's signal technician checked out all 3 existing school flashers around Edward Gideon Elementary School, which is located on 2800 Block of Glenwood Ave. They are all fully energized and working/operating as per design. Since programming them is the jurisdiction of the School*



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District, we have sent a request for them to double check the programs to make sure they reflect Gideon School current academic year's start, recess and quitting times.

Councilmember Gilmore-Richardson: Zero waste goal - can you detail the department's steps to prioritize waste reduction and who or what entities are responsible for implementation?

Response: *The Department's current primary focus has been to market and re-educate residents about Streets' curbside recycling program. This effort has been particularly emphasized as the City recovers from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, when overall trash tonnage was exceedingly high and, simply maintaining continually operating recycling program was a significant challenge. We have made substantial progress and improvement since then, to such an extent that curbside recycling material tonnage is projected to increase by about 24%.*

The Department has retained a consulting firm that has been performing ongoing waste and recycling composition studies to better understand how the waste stream is evolving so that new strategies can be developed to target various components of the waste stream. This work also includes an analysis of commercial waste and the Department partnered with PADEP for the preparation of a statewide waste and recycling report.

The Department also has a consulting firm that conducted a zero waste benchmarking study of other cities and has found that in general other cities are having similar challenges concerning zero waste.

In an effort to reconfigure how zero waste goals can be attained, the Department has coordinated with the Office of Sustainability to create a series of action plans focused on different components in the waste stream to maximize reuse and recycling efforts for City collected waste and recycling as well as commercially collected waste and recycling. This planning effort is based on a series of workshops conducted by Sustainability in partnership with the Streets Department.

Additionally, the Department is also working with a PGW and the Water Department on a long-term project to investigate the viability and utilization of renewable natural gas (RNG) as a source to manufacture hydrogen which could involve organics processing and the utilization Water Department digestors to manage organics which account for about 30% of the waste stream.

Councilmember Gilmore-Richardson: Where are we with performance in terms of recycling.

Response: *On-time performance collecting recycling materials by 3PM has been steadily increasing, to the point where we are consistently near or at a 90% on-time rate. The Department's recycling diversion rate is also steadily moving in a positive trajectory from a low of 8% during the COVID-19 pandemic and increasing to a projected 11.5 to 12% by the end of this fiscal year. The Department anticipates that this rate will continue to grow steadily in future fiscal years.*



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Councilmember Thomas: What is the estimated tonnage of illegal dumping the Department projects is in Philadelphia?

***Response:** Estimated tonnage of illegal dumping materials collected this fiscal year is 9,000 tons. Streets continues to build capacity in addressing illegal dumping. The Mayor's recommended FY24 operating budget will allow the Department to increase illegal dumping capacity by 33% to more quickly and efficiently respond to illegally dumped materials throughout the city. As illegal dumping response capacity increases, Streets will be better positioned to proactively assess and measure the extent and scope of dumping and respond to hot spots more quickly. This will potentially enable the Department to conduct city-wide analysis and estimate annual overall illegal dumping.*

Councilmember Thomas: On average, how much tonnage of illegal dumping does the streets department pick up each year?

***Response:** Streets collects approximately 9,000 tons of illegal dumping materials from about 2,700 sites.*

Councilmember Johnson: Future Track employees - can you look at a cost scenario between \$18-\$20 per hour for 100 individuals?

***Response:** Streets currently has \$1.17 million for 40 Future Track Program employees incorporated in our FY24 operating budget request. This is based on a \$15 per hour pay rate.*

To the extent Streets increases our hourly rate for the program to \$18 per hour for 100 employees, this will increase program staffing costs by about \$2.3 million to a total cost of over \$3.5 million. Should the hourly rate increase to \$20 per hour, program costs will increase by \$2.7 million to a total cost of \$3.9 million.

It is important to point out that newly hired Sanitation Laborers will make approximately \$20 per hour starting July 1st. Future Track participants' hourly compensation should be not meet or exceed Laborer pay, as the work is more physically demanding and Laborer employees are union represented.

Councilmember Gilmore-Richardson: Is there an update regarding the school crossing guards? The recent school district meeting discussion mentioned how there are not enough crossing guards and how school principals/teachers are stepping into this role.

As of March 27, 2023, Streets HR has hired 149 new crossing guards since assuming responsibility for the program's hiring and selection process this past summer. New hires were initially appointed August 2022. There are 661 active crossing guards and nine (9) crossing guard supervisors currently, for an overall total of 670. The Department has initiated a hiring plan that projects hiring 50 new crossing guards every two months going forward, or an average of 25 per month.

One of the unexpected staffing challenges the Street's Department is facing is consistent and significant, attrition. Approximately three to four crossing guards are separating from employment weekly, at a rate of about 14 to 15 per month. This has significantly mitigated the overall impact of new hires. While the



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Department has made consistent progress and continue to hire one to two classes each month, there are 362 vacancies remaining.

Managing Director's Office

Question: What is the status of the City's water stockpile in an emergency situation?

Response: *Thousands of cases of water are maintained among OEM, PWD, Prisons and PFD combined for public, incarcerated individuals, and personnel needs. In addition, the City assesses that 20,000 cases of water could be available within 24 hours for a water emergency. Resupply would occur every 24 hours with 11,000 cases of water received per day. In the case of a bona fide citywide or regional emergency, we would plan to work with the Federal government and industry to draw on their significant water resources.*

We have also put in place a Water Distribution plan, which is scalable and identifies models for how drinking water would be supplied to impacted residents. The plan has strategies for points of distribution, mobile delivery for those unable to leave home, bulk delivery to congregate settings and other sensitive locations like senior housing and hospitals, public water fill stations, and retail store distribution.