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Mayor

Baltimore City Department of Public Works

Press Release



For Immediate Release

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DPW Announces Plan to Modify Recycling, Ensuring Timely Trash Collections *Temporary Community Recycling Centers to Open in Each City Council District*

Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW) Acting Director Matthew W. Garbark today outlined **the Solid Waste Continuity of Service Plan** to allow the Department to continue to provide residents with recycling collections, and to solidify the Bureau of Solid Waste's long-term trash collection operations.

"As the issues related to trash and recycling collections have continued to accumulate, Mayor Young directed the Department of Public Works to develop a plan to ensure trash is collected timely and consistently," said Acting Director Garbark.

Effective Monday Aug. 31, all DPW recycling collections' crews will be diverted to trash collections on a full-time basis. Unfortunately, this means recycling operations must be modified. While this plan is in effect, recycling will no longer be collected from residences.

"We know Baltimore must recycle, and many of residents want to do so. That is why we will be establishing Community Collection Centers for recycling in each of the 14 City Council Districts. This will allow residents to continue to recycle," said Acting Director Garbark.

Recycling Center Locations, Hours

The Community Collection Centers will consist of a roll-off dumpster or a trash vehicle and will be in operation Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Two of the recycling collection centers include DPW's Citizens' Convenience Drop-off Centers located on Reedbird Avenue and Bowleys Lane. These locations will be reopened to accept trash and recycling and will be open Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. along with DPW's other Convenience Drop-off Centers located at the Northwest Transfer Station, Sisson Street and the Quarantine Road Landfill (hours of operation vary at convenience drop-off centers).

- District 1: DPW Maritime Operations Facility, 311 Eastbourne Avenue
- District 2: DPW Eastside Sanitation Yard, 61013 Bowleys Lane
- District 3: Hamilton Elementary, 5807 Harford Road
- District 4: Chinquapin Middle, 900 Woodbourne Avenue
- District 5: Former Police Academy, 3500 W. Northern Parkway
- District 6: Greenspring Middle School, 4701 Greenspring Avenue

- District 7: Westside Elementary, 2235 N. Fulton Avenue
- District 8: Westside Skills Center, 4501 Edmondson Avenue
- District 9: DPW Meter Shop, 200 N. Franklinton Road
- District 10: DPW Southwest Sanitation Yard, 701 Reedbird Avenue
- District 11: Digital Harbor High School, 1100 Covington Street
- District 12: Dunbar High School, 601 N. Central Avenue
- District 13: DPW Property Management Facility, 1825 Edison Highway
- District 14: Mergenthaler (“Mervo”) High School, 3500 Hillen Road

Solidifying Solid Waste Operations

Modifications to Solid Waste operations come at a critical time for DPW, which continues to face staffing shortages due to the impact of COVID-19, extreme summer weather conditions, and an increase in the amount of waste that DPW’s crews are collecting.

“More importantly, this July set a record for the hottest month in Maryland history. It also set a 148-year record on number of days in a month with temperatures at or above the 90-degree mark,” Acting Director Garbark said. “So, as we moved through July, we had increased tonnage, significant fear, anxiety, and oppressive heat.”

Trash and recycling collections were occurring Tuesday through Friday. Each day, DPW had about 70 collection routes (50 trash and 20 recycling). For each route, there are three workers: a driver and two laborers. A minimum of around 210 workers are needed to perform trash and recycling collections. However, over the past few weeks, there has been an average of 133 workers each day.

This past weekend, DPW was behind by 49 recycling routes on Friday, Aug. 21. Solid Waste workers planned to make them up on Saturday, but only had enough employees to collect 21 routes. On Monday, looking to finish the backlog, there were only enough employees to collect six routes.

“Unlike other cities, DPW tried to sustain its solid waste operations at a pre-pandemic level which became very challenging given the COVID-19 impacts. The changes that we are outlining at the direction of Mayor Young today will help remove the strain on our crews, who are working extended hours, six days a week, and ensure timely trash collections,” Garbark said.

The Department has been actively pursuing additional solutions to the Solid Waste staffing and collection challenges, including seeking contractors to help support operations.

“We have been constantly seeking contractors, and have only gotten two to commit to handling a total of 12-16 routes per week. That is about 3-4 per day,” Acting Director Garbark said.

Contractors are dealing with many of the COVID-19 related challenges that DPW is facing, the Acting Director said. In addition, many contractors do not have specialized vehicles that can drive down the narrow alleys in many Baltimore City neighborhoods.

Finally, DPW is convening a Solid Waste Command Center located at our Park Terminal

facility. Here, we will monitor the Community Collection Centers, direct routes, and manage disposal throughout the day as needed. We will also monitor daily operations and develop informative and regular communications updates to share with the public by social media.

The Continuity of Service plan will remain in effect until at least November 1st. We will be monitoring daily operations and anticipate that operation will stabilize so we can resume normal functions before that time, however.

“Throughout this pandemic, as Baltimore has faced crisis after crisis, our residents have stood together to support each other. We are asking that the residents continue to look out for their neighborhood and neighbors to ensure that we have a clean city,” Acting Director Garbark said.

DPW will provide residents with information on the status of trash and recycling collections and operations on its website: publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/collectionupdate.

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