

**Chester Trash and Parks Maintenance/
Grass Cutting Issues Discussion
Part 2 – Options to Solve the Problems**

MFRAC Committee Meeting

June 22, 2021



THE KAPOOR COMPANY
ADVISORS & CONSULTANTS

Presentation Background

- On June 8, 2021, the City and the Receiver jointly presented the current situation facing the City as it relates to trash and basic parks maintenance/grass cutting
- This presentation will focus on options to address the problems described in the June 8th presentation
 - This presentation will also allow the City and the Receiver to get public input on the options presented
- The presentation on July 13th will recommend specific actions for the City and other entities to take
 - The City and the Receiver are already in the process of implementing changes

Lessons Learned From Last Presentation

- By describing areas where we needed the public's help to comply with the rules for trash and recycling pick-up, we did not intend to suggest that the current situation is the fault of residents or that there were not residents who have been complying with these rules
 - We know and have heard from many residents who do follow these rules and who also volunteer their spare time to helping clean up Chester
- In preparing for today's presentation, it became clear that solving these problems requires assistance from other City departments and authorities such as Codes and the Chester Redevelopment Authority (CRA) and the Chester Economic Development Authority (CEDA)
 - The focus needs to be on cleaning up Chester and the City's Public Works department cannot do it alone
- It is also clear that the Public Works department as constituted and managed cannot keep up with all of the job responsibilities that we are asking of them and we need to prioritize those responsibilities

Presentation Outline

- Residential Trash Pickup
 - Representative from J.P. Mascaro will present on what it is doing to address service issues
- Bulk Trash Pickup
- Illegal Dumping
- Grass Cutting – Parks
- Grass Cutting – CEDA Properties
- Street Sweeping
 - Representative from Stormwater Authority will present on street sweeping
- General Litter
- Next Steps

Residential Trash Pickup



Liquidated Damages Provisions for Trash Contract

Violation	Amount
Failure of a truck and crew to operate over and finish a regular route	\$500/day
Failure to collect refuse properly and in specific spots	\$125/location
Using or maintaining trucks in a leaking or unsanitary condition	\$100/offense
Damaging or carrying away permanent receptacles – repair, replace or repay	\$25/offense
Failure to clean up any materials spilled or draining from equipment	\$100/offense
Collection of waste outside of the City of Chester’s service population specified in the contract for solid waste collection and disposal	\$500/collected stop
Failure to submit weight slips/quarterly reports within the specified time	\$500 for each report not made
Mixing recyclables with refuse	\$50/occurrence
Landfilling recyclables	\$50/occurrence
Inclusion of outside-of-City waste in weight slip	\$2,500/occurrence
Changing routes without proper notification	\$50/incident
Failure to deliver any waste materials to the appropriate designated facility as approved by the City of Chester	\$500/incident
Failure to comply with the hours of operations as required by this contract	\$100/incident
Failure to have vehicle operators properly licensed	\$100/incident
Rubbish and garbage dumped on private or public property without permission of owners of such property	\$500 per load or part of load, plus cost of removal

From p. 8 of Specifications and Bid Documents.



Hours of Collection

- The Specifications and Bid Documents set forth the hours of collection as follows:
 - “Rubbish and garbage must be removed from all streets and alleys of the City of Chester where not otherwise provided for, between the hours of 6:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. Collections are not to begin before or after said hours unless advance special authorization is approved by the City of Chester. Emergency or breakdowns are exceptions.” (p. 21)

Residential Trash Pickup Contract

- Under Receivership, the Receiver has authority over City contracts with the power to:
 - “approve, disapprove, modify, reject, terminate or renegotiate contracts and agreements with the distressed municipality or authority, except to the extent prohibited by the Constitutions of the United States and Pennsylvania.” (Section 706(a)(6) of Act 47)

Bulk Trash Options



Bulk Trash

- Because bulk trash comprises such a significant part of the work that public works needs to handle, we need to ask the fundamental question of whether the Public Works department should continue to provide this service or whether the City should contract with a third party to provide the service
 - We provide pros/cons to contracting out vs. in-house as well as information on how other Pennsylvania cities deal with bulk trash
 - Chester's approach to bulk trash is very different from what all of the other cities do
- There also appears to be some confusion with residents as to what and how many items can be put out and why their items are sometimes not picked-up
- Code enforcement must also play a role to enforce the rules on properties where individuals refuse to comply with the rules
 - The City has 6 nuisance inspectors in its Codes department

Chester's Bulk Trash Pickup System

- Bulk trash are larger items such as appliances and furniture
 - Building materials are not acceptable
 - The City's Public Works Department, not J.P. Mascaro, picks up bulk trash.
- Currently, a Chester resident may put out 6 items of bulk trash per week without a charge
- Residents request bulk trash pickup by calling 610-447-7888 Monday through Wednesday
 - Resident provides name, phone number and items being put out
 - City is having problems with people putting out much more than what was originally called in
 - These items generally appear to be residential, not dumped
- Over the last two months, the City is averaging around 100 bulk calls per week
 - Previously, the City had four trucks dedicated to bulk trash service. Now, it has one.

Chester's Bulk Trash System - Fees

- While the City's ordinance requires residents to pay \$25.00 per call after the first call (i.e., first call free), the City does not collect this fee
- Section 925.09 of City Code. Special Collection of Abnormal Objects
 - (a) No large or abnormal metal, wooden or similar objects will be collected by the City in the course of normal refuse collection. Each owner, tenant or occupant of every residential property in the City will have to call the Department of Streets and Public Improvements for the collection of such items, with a maximum limit of six (6) items per call
 - (b) Each owner, tenant or occupant of every residential property in the City is permitted one initial call per year; for every call thereafter the City will impose a fee of \$25.00 per call. (Ord. 20-2016. Passed 10-26-16).
- Additionally, the City is not charging for bulk trash in its annual rubbish fee for residents. Consequently, the costs of collecting bulk trash are not being accounted for in the City's budget

Pro/Con of Third Party Bulk Collection

Pro Having a Third Party Provide Bulk Trash Service	Con Having a Third Party Provide Bulk Trash Service
Would allow Public Works employees to focus on grass cutting, streets and illegal dumping	Could result in increased illegal dumping
Would eliminate the need for scheduling responsibilities in City which takes up a significant amount of time	Would be a cost to residents
Would eliminate time needed to transfer bulk trash at "The Pit" or to go to the dump	
Would cover the true cost of the service	

Summary Observations on How Other Cities Handle Bulk Trash

- Chester's system is very different than how other cities handle bulk trash
- The most common arrangement is to use a private contractor that picks up one bulk item per week as part of the regular collection cycle with the cost included in the residents' regular trash fee
- Most (5) use private contractors. None of the cities uses a private contractor for residential trash service and its own staff for bulk trash like Chester
- Most (5) do not require residents to schedule collection in advance. Some require advanced scheduling for certain items
 - The 5 places that do not require advanced scheduling all have once-per-week pick-up, generally on regular trash night
- Every city charges some type of fee and most (5) include the cost of 1 bulk item in the regular trash fee. No one charges a fee for residential trash pick-up and then does bulk trash for free like Chester

How Do Other Cities Deal with Bulk Trash?

Contracted Out or In-House?

City	Residential Trash Pick-up Contracted Out or In House?	Bulk Trash Pick-up Contracted Out or In House?
Chester	Contracted Out	In-House
Allentown, PA	Contracted Out	Contracted Out
Bethlehem, PA	Residents must contact private haulers	Residents must contact private haulers
Easton, PA	Contracted Out	Contracted Out
Harrisburg, PA	In-House	In-House
Lancaster, PA	Contracted Out	Contracted Out
Reading, PA	Contracted Out	Contracted Out
Upper Darby, PA	In-House	In-House
York, PA	Contracted Out	Contracted Out

How Do Other Cities Deal with Bulk Trash?

Fee, Number of Items, Frequency, Need to Call?

City	Must Schedule Ahead of Time?	Frequency	Fee	Item Limitations
Chester	Yes	Per call	Should be \$25 for each call after first call, but not enforced	6 items per week
Allentown, PA	Only for appliances and metal items	Once a week	\$15 per item if more than 1 item. \$20 for freon- containing items	1 item or 40 pounds of construction material per week
Bethlehem, PA	Depends on hauler	Depends on hauler	Depends on hauler	Depends on hauler
Easton, PA	No, part of regular pick up	Once a week	Included in monthly fee	1 item per week. No tires or electronic items. Will collect "white goods" if freon removed
Harrisburg, PA	No, part of regular pick up	Once a week	If more than 1 item	1 item per week

How Do Other Cities Deal with Bulk Trash?

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Chester	Yes	Per call	Should be \$25 for each call after first call, but not enforced	6 items per week
Lancaster, PA	No, part of regular pick up	Once a week, except "white goods" which are collected once a month	Included in quarterly fee, except for white goods (\$15 each)	City allows 6 garbage bags per week for regular trash. Can have 1 item in exchange for 2 of the 6 bags
Reading, PA	Only for tires and electronic items	Once a week	Included in monthly fee	1 bulky item or 1 bundle of construction material per week. No items containing freon
Upper Darby, PA	Yes	Per call	\$10 per item	No tires or hazardous waste. Will accept metal, white goods and electronic devices
York, PA	Yes, 8-12 days in advance	Per call	Included in refuse fee. Uses fee to cover illegal dumping costs	5 items per call. No electronic items or very large items

Short-Term Options - Periodic Dumpsters

- One possible action that may bring some short-term relief is to partner with organizations who will put dumpsters around the City so that residents can bring their bulk trash which would eliminate the need for a bulk trash call to the City
 - The City and these groups have placed these dumpsters out in the past and they have been received very favorably by residents. One option is to schedule them more frequently and in targeted areas of the City
- One issue that has come up with these types of dumpster events is that the dumpsters need to be monitored or else contractors will come and dump construction materials into the dumpsters or the dumpster will be filled and people will place trash around the dumpster

Illegal Dumping



Illegal Dumping

- The City is also facing a severe crisis of individuals illegally dumping garbage throughout the City on both private and public land
 - Most of the items dumped are building materials or apartment clean-outs
 - The Public Works staff responds to these dumping sites – even sometimes on private property – in order to address the mess
- While the City has always had a problem with illegal dumping, it has gotten much worse recently
- The City has used some cameras in the past, but they have required batteries which would run out
- We need the public's help to catch people who are illegally dumping and disrespecting the residents of Chester

Illegal Dumping

Pennsylvania sees rise in illegal dumping during pandemic

The average cost to clean and dispose of these items is 614 dollars per ton of waste.



Credit: wpmt

Illegal Dumping is a Crime

- Under Title 18 Chapter 65 Section 6501(b), a person who is guilty of illegal dumping:
 - For the 1st offense: Summary offense which includes a fine and a requirement to pick up litter or illegally dumped trash for not less than 5 nor more than 30 hours to be completed within six months, or to imprisonment for not more than 90 days, or both
 - For the 2nd and subsequent offense: Misdemeanor which includes a fine and may also be sentenced to imprisonment or be required to pick up litter or illegally dumped trash for not less than 30 nor more than 100 hours to be completed within one year

Use of Cameras to Catch Those Dumping

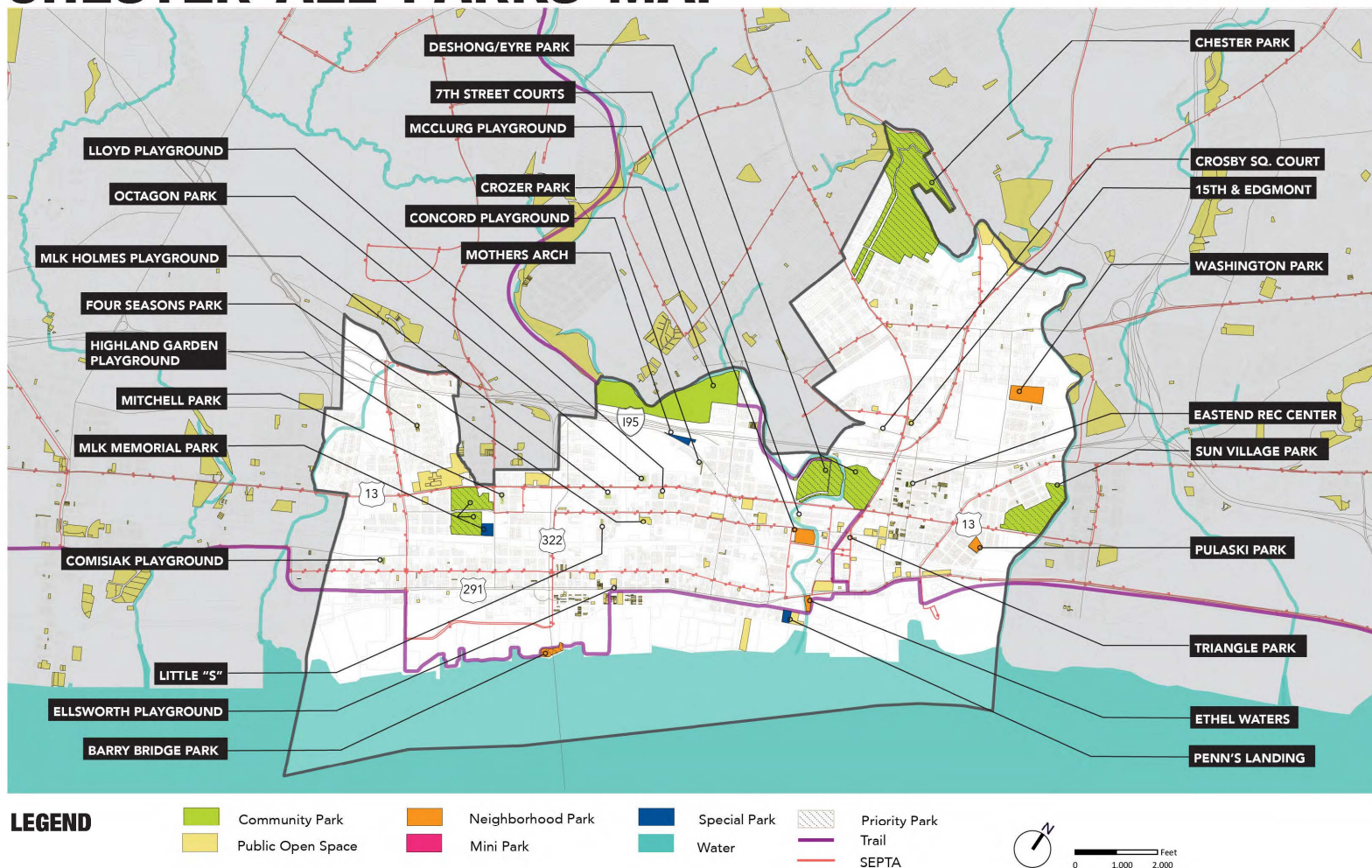
- Many cities across the country who are facing this same problem have turned to cameras to help catch and prosecute those who are dumping illegally
- Approximately 4 or 5 years ago, the City did receive a camera through the Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful program
- While that camera did help to catch some violators, there were a couple of problems that resulted in the program being discontinued
 - The cameras were really more for observing wildlife and took photos rather than videos so it was hard to identify individuals
 - The cameras were battery-powered and needed to have those batteries replaced frequently
- There is newer technology now that could assist the City with catching those who dump illegally

Grass Cutting – Parks and City-Owned Property



Chester Parks

CHESTER ALL PARKS MAP



CHESTER CITY PARKS, TRAILS, + OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN UPDATE: RESILIENCE THROUGH RECREATION
 MERIDIAN LANDSCAPE STUDIO | ANNI TOOLE RECREATION | NATURAL LANDS | PENNSYLVANIA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

Map from p. 6 of Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan.



Parks to Maintain

Park	Acreage	Type
Chester Park	82.74 acres	Community
Crozer Park	51.17 acres	Community
Sun Village Park	21.58 acres	Community
Veterans Memorial Park	21.13 acres	Community
Eyre Park	11.24 acres	Community
Washington Park	7.09 acres	Community
7th Street Courts	3.94 acres	Neighborhood
Barry Bridge Park	1.66 acres	Neighborhood
Pulaski Park	1.56 acres	Neighborhood
Mothers Arch	1.52 acres	Special Use Park
MLK Memorial Park	1.45 acres	Special Use Park
Penn's Landing	1.34 acres	Special Use Park
Ethel Waters Park	1.12 acres	Public Space
Four Seasons Park	1.04 acres	Mini Park
Mitchell Park	0.49 acres	Mini Park
Eastend Rec Center	0.43 acres	Mini Park
Octagon Park	0.43 acres	Mini Park
15th & Edgmont	0.42 acres	Mini Park
MLK Holmes Playground	0.39 acres	Mini Park
McClurg Playground	0.37 acres	Mini Park
Lloyd playground	0.33 acres	Mini Park
Highland Gardens Playground	0.28 acres	Mini Park
Comisiak Playground	0.21 acres	Mini Park
Triangle Park	0.18 acres	Mini Park
Concord Playground	0.17 acres	Mini Park
Little "S"	0.12 acres	Mini Park
Crosby Square Court	0.10 acres	Mini Park
Ellsworth Playground	0.04 acres	Mini Park
Swedish Graveyard/Columbus Monument		Monument
TOTAL	212.11 acres	29



Grass Cutting – Parks & City-Owned Property

- Because Chester's parks differ in size from playgrounds that are .04 acres to large parks that are almost 83 acres, there is not a one-size-fits-all approach
- Options here include:
 - Have a third party provide grass cutting for the parks so that Public Works can focus on other areas
 - Have Public Works continue to cut all the parks
 - Would require reducing the workload in other areas
 - Have Public Works cut some of the parks and have other entities cut others
 - Assistance from the County or other stakeholders
 - Have third parties, community stakeholders, or community groups agree to adopt smaller parks
 - Look at reducing the number of parks by selling land and using proceeds to buy public works equipment

City of York Comparator

- The City of York, PA provides a good comparison for grass cutting in parks
- York has:
 - 25 parks with approximately 200 acres needed to be mowed
 - Chester has approximately 29 park/monument areas with approximately 212 acres to mow
- York uses:
 - 9 full-time and 3 seasonal grass cutters and trimmers
 - 4 14-foot mowers (Chester does not have any mowers this size)
- York can complete this grass cutting rotation in 7 days
- A significant difference between York and Chester is the number of non-park properties that Chester Public Works needs to maintain and the fact that Chester Public Works is responsible for bulk trash while it is contracted out in York

Grass Cutting – CEDA/CRA Properties



CRA and CEDA Properties

- In addition to parks, the Public Works Department also maintains over 90 Chester Redevelopment Authority and Chester Economic Development Authority properties throughout the City with the list growing each year
- These properties are more difficult to cut than parks because litter and other debris must be taken care of first



CRA and CEDA Properties

- As authorities, the CRA and CEDA should be responsible for maintaining their own properties
 - In Chester, the Chester Public Works department maintains these properties
- The CRA and CEDA do not make annual payments to the Public Works Department for these services. CRA and CEDA have bought 3 mowers over the last two years for the department
- The options here are:
 - Have CRA and CEDA take over responsibility for maintaining their properties
 - Have CRA and CEDA make direct financial contributions for additional staff dedicated to maintaining their properties
 - Develop an inventory and grass cutting plan for the CRA and CEDA properties to understand what the workload truly is

City of Reading Comparator

- Recently, the City of Reading's redevelopment authority discussed how to maintain its properties:
 - In contrast to Chester's CRA and CEDA which have over 90 properties, the City of Reading's redevelopment authority owns about 16 properties
 - Most of Reading's properties are sidewalks and 8 require mowing
 - Reading's redevelopment authority put a RFP out for mowing, trash pick-up, weed pulling and sidewalk cleaning for these properties and received only one bid totaling \$105,300 annually
 - The City of Reading had maintained three lots for the authority at a cost of approximately \$2,000 per year to only mow and pull weeds

Grass Cutting – Non-City or CEDA/CRA Properties



Non-City or CEDA/CRA Properties

- From time to time, the Public Works department mows or picks up trash on properties that are neither City-owned or CEDA/CRA properties
 - These properties must be maintained by the entity that owns them
 - The properties include:
 - On and off ramps from I-95 that are PennDOT's responsibility
 - Land along 291
 - Parts of large CEDA and CRA tracts that have small privately owned plots contained in them (called "partials")
- City and Receiver's team need to determine which properties that the Public Works department is maintaining that are privately owned and contact the property owner to maintain the properties
 - Code enforcement should also play a part to enforce the law

Street Sweeping



Street Sweeping

- The Stormwater Authority of the City of Chester is responsible for street sweeping in Chester and has one modern street sweeper
- The street sweeping schedule is Mondays and Thursdays from 8:30am to 12:30pm
- Per the Stormwater Authority, the following is the upcoming street sweeping schedule:

Date	Location
Thursday, June 24 th	Begin at West 10 th from Engle Street to Yarnall Street. Go West on 9 th Street to McDowell Street.
Monday, June 28 th	Begin at 9 th Street at Flower to Tilghman Streets, sweep both sides of street on Flower, Central Avenue and Tilghman. Travel down Concord Road to 9 th and Lincoln Street.
Thursday, July 1 st	Begin at 10 th & Kerlin to 9 th & Fulton Street. 9 th Street to Parker Street to 12 th & Kerlin Street. 12 th & Kerlin Street to 14 th Street around the circle, back to 13 th & Kerlin Street through Crozer Hills Estate
Thursday, July 8 th	Morton and Melrose Avenues to 22 nd Street. 19 th Street to Providence Avenue to Avenue of the States to Nova Vista.

General Littering



General Littering

- Chester has several community groups that organize block clean-ups
- Some clean-ups are sponsored by the Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful program
- The City and the Receiver's team should work to help publicize those opportunities and engage other groups who might be able to find people who can help

Next Steps

- Obtain public comment on the issues discussed in this presentation – especially as it relates to bulk trash
 - Email the MFRAC group at info+MFRAC@chesterreceivership.com
- Make a presentation at the next MFRAC meeting on July 13th that provides specific recommendations and a more comprehensive plan to address the issues that have been discussed here