



LEGISLATIVE ANALYST MEMORANDUM

From: Rachel Force with Gabe Cabrera, Office of the Legislative Analyst (OLA)
Date: October 10, 2008
Re: **Street Sweeping** (OLA No. 017-08)

SUMMARY OF REQUESTED ACTION

Analyze the impacts of reduced mechanical street sweeping in residential neighborhoods, including fiscal impacts.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based upon recommendations from three independent sources – the Controller, the Budget Analyst, and a private consultant (SEH) – the Department of Public Works (DPW) is implementing changes to its mechanical street sweeping schedule. Reports by the three sources, as well as DPW's own analysis, shows that street sweeping frequency could be reduced along certain residential corridors without significantly affecting street cleanliness. These corridors were previously swept, on average, four times per month, but will now be swept twice per month. Benefits of the reduction include annualized personnel cost savings of approximately \$1 million. In addition, some neighborhood residents have reacted favorably to the increased availability of street parking two days per month, according to DPW.

The street sweeping reduction program has potential fiscal impacts. These include:

- Annualized Personnel Cost Savings of \$1 Million to the City. The DPW budget included estimated savings achieved through implementation of the program, approved for Fiscal Year 2008-09. Reversal of the street sweeping reductions would require re-allocation of these funds.
- Enforcement Revenue. The Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA) does not have an estimate of the likely impact of street sweeping reductions on enforcement revenue. Instead MTA plans to track it as the program is implemented. Notably, enforcement revenue generated in support of street sweeping operations totaled approximately \$26.6 million in Fiscal Year 2007-08.
- Cost Savings to Neighborhood Residents. Residents who park on these residential streets will not have to move their cars every week, saving them time and the \$50 cost of a ticket.

The OLA concurs with the recommendations of the Controller, Budget Analyst, and SEH that DPW should reduce street sweeping frequency along certain residential corridors. If MTA experiences revenue shortfalls as a result of the changes, those losses should be weighed against

the cost savings achieved by DPW; however, it is not advisable to perform unnecessary street cleaning for the sole purpose of generating fines. Instead, other enforcement efforts should be improved. The OLA recommends that an impact study be performed after the program has been in place for six months to a year. The update should examine the real fiscal impacts and measure the success of the reduced sweeping runs.

BACKGROUND

Highlights of DPW's Street Sweeping Reduction Plan¹

- Reduction in sweeping from, on average, four times per month to twice per month in low-density residential neighborhoods
- Changes apply to low-density residential neighborhoods only, based upon studies showing them to be cleaned more than necessary
- No change to commercial corridors, which will continue to be cleaned per existing schedules
- Neighborhoods included in the change: Bernal Heights, Cow Hollow, Diamond Heights, Forest Hill, Glen Park, Ingleside/Ingleside Terrace, Japantown, Jordan Park, Lakeside, Laurel Heights, Marina, Noe Valley, Pacific Heights, Park Merced, Parkside, Presidio Heights, Richmond/Inner Richmond, St. Francis Wood, Sea Cliff, Sunset, West Portal, Westwood Park
- Personnel cost savings of \$750,000 during fiscal year 2008-2009, with annualized savings estimated at \$1 million every year thereafter
- Implementation costs to change signage and perform outreach estimated at \$270,000
- The plan was specifically noted during Budget Committee hearings in June 2008
- Phased schedule changes began in some neighborhoods in August 2008 and will be complete by December 2008
- Recommendations to reduce street sweeping in certain residential areas were made by the Controller, the Budget Analyst, and an outside consultant (SEH) – this plan implements those recommendations

¹ Edward D. Reiskin, Director of the Department of Public Works, letter to Supervisors Michela Alioto-Pier and Jake McGoldrick, "Ref: Mechanical Street Sweeping Program Changes," 22 September 2008. Copy in OLA File No. 017-08.

Previous Studies/Recommendations

Controller's 2005-06 and 2006-07 Parks, Streets and Sidewalks Maintenance Annual Reports

- “Reallocate DPW resources to high-need streets, away from routes that score well before and after street sweepings.”²

Budget Analyst's 2007 Management Audit of the Department of Public Works

- “The data also show that some routes are consistently clean prior to sweeping, indicating the fact that these routes could be altered so that they are swept by mechanical sweepers less frequently.”³
- “Recommendation 2.7: Use the data from the Proposition C⁴ inspections to reallocate resources where prudent, such as to alter the frequency of certain street cleaning schedules”⁵

Short Elliott Hendrickson (SEH) 2007 Report:

“Evaluation and Analysis of Street Sweeping Operations, City of San Francisco, California”

- “Recommendation: That BSES [Bureau of Street Environmental Services] give serious consideration to reducing sweeping frequency to monthly in the low priority, primarily residential, service areas.”⁶

Comparison with other Jurisdictions

- A majority of the cities surveyed by DPW, including San Diego, San Jose, and Los Angeles, performed residential street sweeping on a monthly basis (see Attachment provided by DPW)
- According to SEH:
 - “‘Best Practices’ within the public works industry with regards to street sweeping frequency varies widely due to climate, zoning, land use, water quality concerns, and budget considerations. Generally, in most large cities, commercial/high density areas . . . are swept on a daily to weekly basis. Low to mid-density residential areas are swept 3 to 5 times per year.”⁷

² San Francisco Controller, “Parks, Streets, and Sidewalk Maintenance Annual Report,” October 2007, Recommendations on page 3 of the PDF, retrieved from:

<http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/controller/reports/ParksStreetsSidewalk.pdf>

³ <http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/sfdpw/director/DPWAuditReport.pdf>, page 18.

⁴ From the Budget Analyst report, page 6 of 26: “Proposition C, which was approved by the voters in November 2003, required the Department of Public Works to set standards for street maintenance, publish maintenance schedules, and regularly evaluate Bureau performance based on the standards and schedules.”

⁵ Ibid, page 25.

⁶ SEH, “Evaluation and Analysis of Street Sweeping Operations, City of San Francisco, California” (14 August 2007, Copy in OLA File No. 017-08), 7.

⁷ SEH, page 4.

Potential Impacts

Street Cleanliness

The numerous studies noted above indicate that a reduction in street sweeping along certain residential corridors will not have a negative impact on street cleanliness. DPW has indicated that they “are monitoring the outcomes very closely, and will certainly adjust as needed to ensure the continued cleanliness of our streets.”⁸

Abandoned Vehicles

According to a representative of MTA, abandoned vehicle citations are primarily complaint driven. Therefore the reduction in street cleaning is not likely to have an impact on the number of such vehicles that are cited.⁹

Enforcement Revenue

A large proportion of parking citations issued each year is for street-sweeping violations. For instance, of approximately 1.9 million parking citations issued in Fiscal Year 2007-2008, 646,000 or 34% were in support of street sweeping operations.¹⁰ Enforcement revenue from these citations totaled approximately \$26.6 million during the same year. Recent media accounts have suggested that enforcement revenue may remain stable even with a 50% reduction in sweeping in some residential areas. This is because Parking Control Officers (PCOs) can use the same time previously spent accompanying street cleaners to issue other types of citations, such as for vehicle abandonment and obstruction of bus lanes.¹¹ However, the above-noted MTA representative advised us that the Department does not have an estimate of the likely fiscal impact of street sweeping reductions on enforcement revenue. Instead MTA plans to track it as the program is implemented. The Board of Supervisors should require the MTA to monitor enforcement revenue starting now and to report its findings to the Board as soon as they are available.

Residents may see some economic relief because of the reduced sweeping, as it will allow them access to neighborhood on-street parking an additional two days per month. The loss of enforcement revenue from street sweeping violations can therefore be seen as a financial benefit for residents.

Budget Savings

The reduction of street sweeping frequency began in the 2008-2009 Fiscal Year, following approval of the DPW budget that included \$750,000 in savings based on the program. Implementation of the program is currently approaching Phase Three of a four phase schedule. To date, 9,250 signs have been changed to reflect the new sweeping schedule, and 6,000 signs remain to be changed. In addition, 144,000 mailers have been sent, with around 25,000 still to be sent. Newspaper ads have also been placed. The total cost of implementation is estimated at \$270,000.¹²

⁸ Reiskin, page 5.

⁹ Judson True, MTA Media Relations Manager, conversation with author, 7 October 2008.

¹⁰ Sonali Bose, MTA Chief Financial Officer, conversation with author, 14 October 2008.

¹¹ John Cote, “To save money, S.F. Cuts back street sweeping,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 26 August 2008, B-2; “Street sweeping: Less is more,” *San Francisco Examiner*, 10 August 2008; Judson True, 7 October 2008.

¹² Christine Falvey, DPW Director of Communications and Public Affairs, email to author, 7 October 2008.

Other Savings to the City

While not yet quantified, DPW expects to realize savings related to decreased fuel use and vehicle acquisition and maintenance through implementation of the program. However, these savings are likely to be offset by rising fuel costs, according to DPW. Notably, DPW's Bureau of Street Environmental Services, which is responsible for street sweeping, spent a total of \$1,405,420 for fuel in FY 2007-08.

If the program were to be reversed now, an additional \$750,000 would need to be re-allocated to DPW this fiscal year, and the estimated \$1 million in annualized personnel cost savings would not be realized.¹³ The funds spent on implementation would be lost, and additional monies would likely be needed to reverse the signage and again notify residents about the change.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The actual financial costs and savings of the reduced street sweeping program are not currently known. Projections indicate that the City will save approximately \$1 million per year through implementation of the program, without significantly affecting street cleanliness. The OLA recommends that DPW monitor the effected streets and make adjustments to the frequency of sweeping if necessary. This includes reducing the sweeping schedule even further if it can be shown that once-monthly service would be sufficient. Enforcement revenue should also be monitored by MTA and a report on the fiscal impact should be prepared. However, if revenues are shown to decrease as a result of the reduced street sweeping, efforts should be focused on identifying strategies to improve other enforcement efforts, rather than increasing street cleaning for the sole purpose of generating citation revenue for the City. It should be remembered that the loss of this type of City funding is actually a gain for residents who avoid costly fines.

For Fiscal Year 2009-2010, both DPW and MTA should report back to the Board of Supervisors about the status of the program and its impacts (fiscal and otherwise).

¹³ Ibid.

ATTACHMENT

**San Francisco Department of Public Works
MECHANICAL SWEEPING RESTRUCTURING PROJECT**

Street Sweeping Frequency in Low Density Residential Areas of Various Jurisdictions

<p>Note: Based on population size, the principal cities of California included in the list below are Los Angeles, San Diego, San Jose, San Francisco, and Oakland. Portland, Seattle, and New York are regularly used as SF comparables. Other cities were included in the list for various informational purposes.</p> <p>(Sources: agencies' websites; phone calls to departments' staff)</p>							
No.	Jurisdiction	State	Frequency of Street Sweeping				Comments
			Weekly	Semi-monthly	Monthly	Less Frequently	
1	Alameda, City of	CA	X				All residential streets are swept weekly (2 of 3 routes). They have parking restriction signs for twice a month, but streets are swept weekly. [Population size is approximately 71,000.]
2	Albany	CA			X		
3	Baltimore	MD		X			Twice a month in areas with low pedestrian traffic; other residential areas 4x or 2x a week
4	Berkeley	CA			X		
5	Boston	MA		X			Twice a month for 8 months (Apr 1-Nov 30) (Ex. 1st & 3rd week of month-right side of the street; 2nd & 4th week-left side of street)
6	Las Vegas	NV		X			Every two weeks
7	Los Angeles, City of	CA			X		Four-week frequency in open routes (without parking restrictions; 8,050 curb miles). In open routes, frequency changes during heavy leaf fall season (Oct-Feb). Weekly frequency in restricted parking routes (4,721 curb miles).
8	Menlo Park	CA			X		Monthly: Mar-Oct (8 months); Weekly: Nov-Feb (4 months)
9	Minneapolis	MN				X	Twice a year (spring & fall)
10	New York	NY				X	80% of Staten Island area is swept on an "as needed" basis; remaining 20% of the area is swept at least once a week. Staten Island doesn't have parking restrictions for street cleaning. In NYC, property owners are responsible for cleaning sidewalks and gutters (18" from the curb into the street). Park Slope area in Brooklyn, NYC suspended street cleaning (alternate side parking regulations) on 5/19/08 as DOT posts new, reduced street-cleaning restrictions.
11	Oakland	CA			X		Monthly in residential areas with low traffic and out of main streets, usually not dirty areas; weekly or twice a week in high traffic areas
12	Portland	OR				X	All curb residential streets get swept 6-8 times per year. All major arterials get swept 11-12 times per year.
13	Redwood City	CA			X		
14	San Diego	CA			X		Monthly in residential streets; weekly in commercial streets
15	San Francisco	CA	X				Weekly in low density residential areas; more often in other areas
16	San Jose	CA			X		
17	Seattle	WA			X		Minor arterials are swept once a month; some are swept only when requested. Dept. of Transportation does not sweep nonarterial streets, but does limited leaf cleaning in the fall.
18	Sunnyvale	CA			X		
19	Washington, DC	DC			X		Weekly in heavily trafficked residential sections (In other residential areas, unscheduled cleaning takes place on an "as needed" basis—generally monthly or quarterly.)
		Count:	2	3	11	3	19

AB 6/16/08