

“Cleaning-Up Our Act”

The
Cleaner Chelsea Initiative
for
a Cleaner Community
and a Healthier Environment

City Manager Jay Ash

December, 2010

Foreword:

Cleaning-Up Our Act

As many steps forward as the City of Chelsea makes in areas of economic development, housing, infrastructure, open space and other quality of life issues, many local observers believe Chelsea remains lagging in at least one area: cleanliness. Although gains have been made in cleaning Chelsea, especially on graffiti prevention and abatement, trash and blight is still often mentioned as the single biggest quality of life item upon which stakeholders wish to see improvements. Prior attempts at focusing the community on a comprehensive strategy have engaged some, but not enough to achieve the results those engagers wish to achieve. Most of those prior attempts have relied upon voluntary participation, and I remain grateful to the many that have done so. Perhaps, however, in order to achieve the desired results, the proverbial “carrot and stick” approach must also be emphasized. In the call to action that follows, numerous methods will be encouraged to help us gain a cleaner city and become better stewards of our environment.

At a forum to discuss trash held in September 2009, more than 100 stakeholders convened to offer their thoughts on the placement of household trash out on the sidewalk for pick-up and on the need to improve recycling. City Councillors have held numerous meetings at which time their thoughts about unsightly conditions have been raised and potential solutions offered. Individual residents are regularly queried by the City Administration about their feelings towards the improvement of the city, with doing more about trash being the item most often raised. The City Administration, itself, has attempted to remedy the various clean-up problems that exist. Community based organizations have participated in clean-up days and have sponsored their own meetings and events, like tree plantings or neighborhood meetings about trash. Together, while there has been much talk and a great deal of action, it is obvious that the combined efforts have failed to compel enough stakeholders to make Chelsea the cleaner place it can be.

Frankly, cleaner is a relative term. In fact, many believe that Chelsea is cleaner today than it was ten years ago. Occasionally, I put on my jeans and my favorite Chelsea t-shirt and drive around town in a DPW truck to perform clean-up and abatement actions. Earlier this month, while accompanied by a City Councillor and an engaged youth volunteer who happens to be doubling as my intern, we drove the City for several hours. Ten years ago, that same initiative would have resulted in three trucks-full of trash and debris being picked up and numerous major graffiti abatement actions performed. In those trucks-full would have been a dozen shopping carriages, a handful of tires, a couple of monitors and televisions, six or seven bags of trash and some combination of car parts, furniture and an occasional appliance. Once we picked up a 10’ long house antenna and another time an entire car frame! We’d spend a couple of hours painting over graffiti at the train station, the side of the Midas Muffler shop, the fence on Washington and Carter, every utility box on Central Avenue and the support wall in the 5th Street parking lot. We’ve painted that wall so many times it has seemingly gotten wider!

Yet, on that particular Friday, we were unable to fill just one truck! One shopping carriage was all we could find on a three hour drive. Yes, we found too many televisions still being dumped on the sidewalks, but our trash bag was only half-full. Even our graffiti abatement requirements were minor: a small tag at the train station, clean sites at Midas and on the fence, just one utility box on Central and just the back side of the wall at 5th Street.

That afternoon of playing DPW laborer reflects back positively on what we've been able to accomplish to date. However, it was the words of a different City Councillor that may aptly describe our current situation. "The city is so clean we can now see where all the blight is." While I had to do a double take to make sure that Yogi Berra hadn't been elected to the Council, the sentiment is right on. To rephrase it, and to reflect upon all the clean-ups and Madvacs and paint cans we have used in our fight against blight, we've done so much, but there is still much more to do.

What follows is a 10-point program for getting us to the next level. Some of it is more of the same: continuing to abate graffiti once it appears, for example, is the best way to prevent it from happening again. Most of what follows has been performed by some, but not by others, like recycling, perhaps the single easiest way for one to protect our environment; yet only one in fifteen do so here in Chelsea. Some of it has already been vetted, as the overwhelming support for a barrel and city bag policy proves. Other portions may be controversial, as, I suspect, promoting needle exchange sites may be, although those of us who have been on scores of clean-ups know how prevalent improperly discarded needles are on roadway berms and even in our playgrounds. While volunteerism is front and center in this program, there are mandates that are going to make some grumble, like the requirement for individuals and businesses to clean their own sidewalks, instead of waiting for our DPW to do it for them. DPW needs to do more, too, so this isn't just about one segment of our community: it's all of us. I make no apology for any aspect of this recommendation, instead I thank those who have already done "the right thing" and offer my apology to them that their community pride was not enough to get us to where we collectively should be.

This program will be forwarded to the City Council and the Board of Health for further review, alteration and, hopefully, adoption. By the end of 2011, I would hope that all aspects of "Cleaning-Up Our Act" will be approved and implemented. Like many in the community, I look forward to an even cleaner Chelsea and, equally as important, a healthier environment. In particular, I hope this time next year, when I take that next DPW truck out with a City Councillor for an afternoon's clean-up, I'll return to the yard with an empty truck and a whole lot of satisfaction!



Jay Ash
City Manager

Cleaner Chelsea Initiative
November 2010

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1. Trash – Household Trash Placement

One need look no further than how many place their household trash out for pick-up to understand why there is a nagging litter problem on many streets. Poorly disposed of trash, often placed in containers not designed to hold such trash, tear easily, allow items to blow out of them and are generally unsightly. Too often trash is placed out too early, intensifying the negatives. Prior to pick-up, items litter the sidewalks and gutters, create odors and attract animals and flies. Following pick-up, the remnants of poorly disposed of trash can remain on sidewalks and throughout a neighborhood for days, weeks or even longer. Trash contractors cannot possibly be responsible for cleaning up the mess, and City efforts, including street sweeping, Madvac operations and men with brooms and shovels, cannot possibly reach every location. Trash scavenging just exacerbates the problems of trash falling or blowing out of receptacles.

Adding to the importance of this issue is the regularity for which bulky items, like mattresses and televisions, line sidewalks. While one can assume that some of the bulky items are illegally dumped by out-of-towners looking to avoid disposal charges in their community, it is estimated that a majority of the items are left by residents in front of their dwellings. Mattresses are strewn on private properties until trash day arrives. Televisions, however, appear to be placed on sidewalks whenever some residents wish to discard them. Those and other bulky items are often left on sidewalks in such a manner that it is impossible for the City's trash contractor to completely retrieve them. Their placement blocks passage on sidewalks and leaves a generally blighting sense of a neighborhood.

The City methodically schedules street sweeping for the day after trash pick-up. Unfortunately, though, scheduling limitations do not allow for every side of every street to be swept every week, and during winter months there is no regular street sweeping program at all. Even when the street sweeper manages to collect the remnants of trash pick-up days, private contractors, allowed by current City rules, come different days of the week and often leave behind another mess that may take as many as 13 days for a street sweeper to then pick-up. Generally unregulated with schedules uncoordinated, private contractors are less likely to pick up any mess left behind, and their off-City scheduled days of pick-up mean that trash can appear on neighborhood sidewalks multiple days during a week.

On the subject of what residents place out for pick-up, it is very obvious that recycling is not a high priority for far too many residents. The City's recycling rate was last measured at 7%, a woeful rate that costs the City more in disposal fees, creates more trash to go to landfills and further burdens our environment.

A year-long conversation about these and other issues has resulted in the City proposing an approach that is expected to be effective, but is far less aggressive than is possible. The most aggressive approach might be to adopt a pay-as-you-throw system that would cost residents more money and, therefore, provide residents with a more powerful incentive to reduce the amount of trash that is placed out, thereby increasing their overall

recycling. The approach that follows is just short of that more costly alternative. Combining that approach with more strict and regular enforcement and changes in several policies, City leaders and community residents who have participated in trash discussion do believe the requirements and expectations of those placing out trash to be reasonable, affordable and, perhaps most of all, warranted. The results should be cleaner streets and neighborhoods, as the contribution of trash that fails to get picked up for those reasons and others cited above is substantially reduced.

In order to achieve that goal, the City proposes the following nine items that relate specifically to household trash placement:

1a. Barrel or City Bag Mandate

Initiative:

Discussion: Based upon input received at a community forum and extensive internal discussion, the City recommends a new ordinance for the placement of household trash for curbside pick-up. The recommendation is for trash to be placed out in barrels, with or without lids, or in a City bag, which can be purchased at cost plus a small mark-up for the retailer at numerous stores around the city.

Properly used barrels would have at least some part of the top bag, box or item secured inside the barrel. Put another way, a bag placed on the top of a barrel that was not partially in the barrel would be a citable offense, unless that bag was a City bag. Barrels would be limited to contain no more than 50 pounds of refuse.

City bags would come in two sizes, one a kitchen-type size and a larger one for bigger trash barrels. The bags may cost 25 cents plus another couple of pennies for retailer handling. City bags would be the only bags the City's trash contractor would pick up on a sidewalk. Any other bag could be placed in a barrel for pick-up, again, as long as a portion of the bag rested inside the barrel. Although other communities charge up to \$2 or more for such bags, the City's interest is to not make a "profit" off of bags, but instead to ensure the thickness of the bags so that spillage is reduced. More flimsy bags, like plastic bags for groceries or dry cleaning bags, are the chief culprits the City seeks to be control by enforcing a greater thickness requirement. However, thinner bags do exist in the marketplace and are more difficult for inspectors to detect. Therefore, simply requiring a thicker bag may not be enough to address the concerns raised. A single, readily identifiable bag, on the other hand, will make enforcement much more effective. Pricing is very comparable to similarly sold bags, so the cost of participation in the bag purchase program should not be prohibitive. To the extent, though, that one wishes to avoid the expense, the smaller bag option exists, as does the option of just using a barrel.

Primary City Action Required: BOH will be requested to review and adopt an initiative to accomplish this goal.

Secondary City Action Requested: DPW to meet with Russell Disposal to coordinate implementation issues.

Targeted Date for Implementation: April 1, 2011

1b. Fee for Bulky Items

Initiative: Issue a new fee schedule for the pick-up of bulky items.

Discussion: It has been suggested that the City's fees for the disposal of bulky items may be less costly than neighboring communities or private haul away fees, and, as a result, more bulky items may find their way onto local sidewalks for pick-up. This suspicion includes a belief that friends may allow out-of-town friends to dispose of bulky items here, and that property owners with properties outside of the city may find it less expensive to use this City's service for disposal. In many cases, retailers who sell a customer a mattress or a refrigerator do offer to take away the old item for a fee. If the City's fee is less than that charged by a retailer, the old item is more likely to be left behind for City pick-up.

Through changes in prices, it would be the City's hope that more bulky items would be disposed of in other, legal manners. Some concerns exist that higher costs might result in more illegal dumping of the items. That will need to be monitored. It may be a free disposal option should also be created at the City Yard.

Primary City Action Required: Review by DPW, including a public hearing, recommend a new fee schedule.

Secondary City Action Requested: City Manager review of recommendation and adoption if warranted.

Targeted Date for Implementation: April 1, 2011

1c. Recycling Initiative

Initiative: Institute a coordinated campaign to increase the City's recycling rate.

Discussion: Chelsea's recycling rate is 7% (CY 08) versus a statewide average of 26% (CY 08).

Recycling is the right thing to do for the environment, and that, in and of itself should be enough reason for more people to choose recycling. However, there are financial benefits to be derived by the City, as less waste is directed to costly disposal operations. That financial benefit then allows the City to spend more on other areas, which ultimately means residents get more services for their tax dollars. Moreover, if a recycling incentive program is offered, residents derive direct financial benefits. In terms of the issue of

cleaner streets, it is also felt that more residents becoming attuned to recycling would translate into more general awareness of other trash related issues.

A survey of writings about municipal recycling suggests that a coordinated community effort is more likely to produce higher recycling results. The City had a solid waste coordinator for almost 2 years beginning in late 2000. During that period of time, the City's recycling rate increased from 7% to 19%. Since the coordinator left, recycling has dipped back down to 7%. Some of the gain may have been attributable to other factors, including changes in reporting methodologies. Nevertheless, some increase was experienced at a time when there was someone working on recycling. Furthermore, while the City's rates have trended down since the elimination of the position as a result of budget considerations, general trends are moving to higher rates of recycling being achieved on average elsewhere. Some of that upward trend is a result of better coordinated efforts, which could include penalties and incentives for people to recycle, as well as more extensive public education.

Residents participating in the community trash forum indicated a great desire to improve the City's recycling rates, and favored a benefits approach versus a penalty. Mandatory recycling was discussed but not as favored as was an approach that encouraged more participation through both education and rewards. The City, again, will not yet move on the more aggressive approach of mandatory recycling, and, instead, will design and implement a program that focuses on education and rewards.

Work has already begun on the latter. The City has implemented a single stream pick-up for recycling. That was recommended by residents at the forum, although it is not as financially beneficial to the City as sorted recycling would be (higher rates are paid for recycling which has already been sorted). Utilizing federal dollars, the City is funding the design of an education campaign by a local youth environmental organization, which will begin in September. A State grant has been obtained for to help fund a part-time recycling coordinator who might be assigned to a full-time solid waste coordinator to also be hired. The City has an agreement with Russell Disposal, the City's new trash hauler, to help fund some recycling education initiatives. The City has reached out to owners/residents of large buildings that do not participate in the City's trash pick-up program to offer participation in a recycling pick-up program (although increased participation in this manner would skew the City's recycling rates upward).

Primary City Action Required: City Manager and DPW should work to secure funding for the hiring of a part-time recycling coordinator.

Secondary City Action Requested: City Manager should work with Chelsea Green Space and others on the development of a recycling initiative which could be the basis for work by the part-time recycling coordinator and others to improve the recycling rate.

Targeted Date for Implementation: April 1, 2011

1d. Trash Scavenging Prohibition

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Initiative: Adopt an ordinance prohibiting trash scavenging and enforce that ordinance.

Discussion: Trash scavengers go from street to street, opening bags and rummaging through barrels to look for items of value, particularly cans and bottles to be returned for collection of a five-cent deposit. By disturbing even the neatest pile placed out for pick-up, scavengers cause trash to fall out of containers and onto the public way. The City's efforts to keep streets clean are thwarted by such action.

If an ordinance was to be adopted, enforcement will be necessary to carry out the directive. The dissemination of public information should be the first order in the process of enforcement, followed by a warning to any violators and then, if necessary, the weight of enforcement. The City's efforts should be firm but sensitive, with an understanding that individuals who engage in scavenging may do so as a source of income to support themselves and their families. Additionally, the City and its residents should attempt to increase recycling activities, as scavengers do perform a service-of-sorts by taking cans and bottles out of the waste stream.

Primary City Action Required: Law Department to make a recommendation on a new ordinance for Council review and approval, if warranted.

Secondary City Action Requested: Departments involved in enforcement (DPW, ISD and Police) should meet to develop a coordinated plan for that enforcement.

Targeted Date for Implementation: May 1, 2011

1e. General Enforcement

Initiative: Designate and enable the enforcement of all rules above and below, and track enforcement data to determine direction for future policy.

Discussion: The City needs to adopt a straightforward and consistent approach to enforcement that includes proper staffing levels and clear charges for enforcement. Achieving such a goal will likely require a staff addition.

Enforcement and education are related. The better the education, the better is the compliance and the less enforcement is required. To the extent that enforcement is required regularly for the same offenses, additional education may be required to obtain the desired level of compliance.

General enforcement includes encouraging inter-departmental cooperation. For example, anti-scavenging may require Police assistance to DPW or ISD.

Primary City Action Required: The municipal representatives from the City's Trash Task Force, which includes DPW, ISD and Planning, should be joined by Police, Fire, City

Manager and Law Department staff to review coordinate implementation of recommendations.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: April 1, 2011

1f. Trash Contractor Improvements

Initiative: Identify and implement additional methods for improved trash contractor collections.

Discussion: The City has recently contracted with Russell Disposal for trash/recycling collection and hauling. The early performance of Russell has been good, with several efforts, like lining up empty barrels on the back edge of sidewalks, winning general resident approval. Russell has a difficult job in the cleanliness chain, as the method by which many residents use to place trash out for pick-up creates the potential and/or real experience of trash remnants being left after the trash is picked up. While Russell is responsible for any mess it creates, the lines between what its operators create and what they may have inherited are not always clear.

The pick-up of trash is not a clean operation. Even when trash is neatly placed out, the emptying of barrels can cause the wind to blow loose trash or truck operations can leave trash in the middle of the street. It is unfair to hold Russell to one standard, say not leaving any trash behind, when resident after resident violates that standard.

Additional discussion should take place with Russell about methods by which the company can further contribute to a cleaner Chelsea. It is possible that those methods may require the additional expenditure by the City. Such efforts could include more sweeping of trash that happens to fall out of barrels or trucks during the disposal process, the identification of problem properties for City inspector review and an improvement in the appearance of the operation, among other possibilities.

Primary City Action Required: DPW and Russell should perform a brainstorming session to identify ways in which Russell's enhanced operations can improve the cleanliness of the community.

Secondary City Action Requested: Enforcement by appropriate authorities (DPW and ISD) of the rules and regulations governing the placement of trash for pick-up.

Targeted Date for Implementation: May 1, 2011

1g. Additional Regulation on Private Trash Pick-up

Initiative: Place further limitations on private trash pick-up, including requiring contractors to register with the City, conform to City standards and provide notice to the City when pick-up contracts expire or are cancelled.

Discussion: The City current allows property owners to contract with private trash contractors to pick-up trash. Presumably, property owners who do so find the cost of private trash pick-up to be less than if they paid the City's trash fee, which is assessed to all non-owner occupied units requiring City pick-up. While the cost avoidance for some property owners may be attractive, the unregulated and uncoordinated pick-up of trash by private contractors does leave neighborhoods dirtier. Additionally, abuses in the program exist, including some property owners not paying either for public or private pick-up, but having their trash picked up by the City's contractor.

Regarding the former, the private pick-up of trash can happen on any day of the week. That causes trash to be placed out on sidewalks daily, an unsightly occurrence that increases the opportunity for neighborhoods to be impacted by blowing trash. Because the City's street sweeping schedule is set-up to occur the day after public trash pick-up, the trash left behind by private pick-up could be in a neighborhood for days or more.

In addition to the abuse cited above, private trash contractors have been spotted violating motor vehicle regulations, as well as allowable hours of operation. They are less likely to clean-up after themselves in the case where they create a mess. Their trucks are less likely to be newer (the City requires the public contractor to maintain a fleet of no less than 5 years old) and less likely to have diesel emissions controls consistent with the City contractor's fleet.

The City should strive to develop a process by which private contractors register with the City and certify that their operations conform to City standards, including for diesel emissions, days and hours of operation, pick-up of bulky items, recycling availability and general cleanliness. A nominal fee may be assessed to private contractors for registration, with that fee paying for routine inspections of the private operations. A full list of requirements should be developed and made available 90 days in advance of the regulations being effective.

By some estimates, as many as 20% of those who claim to be paying for private pick-up are not. The City needs to better record and review the private pick-up reporting, and may find it most useful to have those contractors who are receiving and losing contracts to also report the same to the City, as one of perhaps several ways to aid the City in auditing private pick-up claims and creating a fair system for all those use it.

Primary City Action Required: Development of a set of polices or regulations, to be coordinated between Treasury, ISD and DPW, as assisted by the Law Department.

Secondary City Action Requested: ISD and DPW to convene a meeting of all private trash contractors to secure their input and cooperation in conforming to the standards which will be set.

Targeted Date for Implementation: April 1, 2011

1i. Review of City pick-up policies

Initiative: Undertake a review of pick-up policies and options for disposal with the goal of providing the community with a pamphlet on how and where to dispose of various items.

Discussion: The City will review its policies regarding the pick-up and disposal of various items to determine if curbside pick-up should continue for the items. Possible alternatives include allowing for items to be dropped off at the City Yard, either as an alternative or a requirement, or items may be taken off the list of pick-up altogether. Among the goals of this review will be to examine how illegal dumping might be better controlled. For instance, it is possible that much illegal dumping could be eliminated if the City accepted all material to be dumped at the City Yard. That option is not practical, but illustrates how a review and change in procedure could encourage a positive outcome.

Also, it is important to examine the impact of some items being left for curbside disposal. Mattresses, for example, often block the passageway of sidewalks. Additionally, reports suggest that some mattresses may be picked up and resold, creating potential public health problems. A change in procedure for disposal, therefore, may provide a benefit for the general public and, hopefully, not be too inconvenient for those disposing of items. In the case of disposing of a mattress, maybe the City would prohibit mattresses from being placed out curbside, require mattresses to be disposed of at the City Yard. In the alternative, perhaps contractors who would pick up the mattresses at the properties of those needing the service.

Primary City Action Required: DPW to review current policies regarding the pick-up of items and the potential for alternative disposal methods for those items that may no longer be picked up curbside.

Secondary City Action Requested: DPW and Planning to develop a pamphlet for community education purposes.

Targeted Date for Implementation: April 1, 2011

2. Graffiti

The City has been waging a “war” on graffiti for nearly two decades. A variety of initiatives have resulted in a generally successful campaign. Those initiatives have included: the City subsidizing private clean-up contractors; hiring City employees to coordinate and perform clean-ups; conducting community clean-up days; allowing for murals to be painted on walls that are routinely tagged; sending out notes of encouragement to property owners to voluntarily clean-up their properties ahead of enforcement efforts; utilizing 21D tickets to force non-compliant property owners to

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bring their property into conformance; focused police investigations, including the use of surveillance cameras, resulting in prosecution or other outcomes, including community based justice discussions; providing a hotline for reporting on graffiti on public properties, and performing individual abatement activities on an as needed basis. All of this has been reflected in and advanced the City's basic philosophy on graffiti: the best way of avoiding the next tag is to remove the last one ASAP.

Numerous locations remain graffiti free for months at a time or longer. The commuter rail station, support walls in the Fifth Street parking lot and on Everett Avenue, the embankment onto the Tobin Bridge from Fifth Street, the rear of the Revere Beach Parkway store and the fence on Washington Avenue are some of dozens of sites that were once tagged and left to be evidence of the problem and today remain tag free and an example of the solution. Among one of the best utilized "tools" the City has to eliminate the blight is to encourage those painting over graffiti to use the same color paint that allows for future remediation to blend in with past efforts. Another tremendous success has been the use of murals, a handful of which have been painted and none thereafter tagged on spots that once were regularly targeted by vandals.

Graffiti still poses a problem, however, as utility and mail boxes are regularly tagged and numerous brick structures, which can only be remediated through a cumbersome and expensive process, still bear the scars of vandalism. The effort of keeping graffiti in check requires a seemingly quarterly renewal, as one tag does appear to beget a second and more. So, in the process of maintaining a Cleaner Chelsea, graffiti issues must remain a priority.

2a. Prevention

Initiative: Encourage additional murals on large walls that are visible and therefore tempting for vandals to tag. Create a program for similarly painting utility cabinets. Also emphasize youth programs to discuss graffiti in terms of a crime of vandalism, and to utilize peer pressure to discourage graffiti.

Discussion: Perhaps the best prevention effort is swifter remediation, but there are other items that are also important. The success that has been achieved with the painting of murals must be recognized and should be emulated. Some believe that murals, themselves, are blighting. However, for most, the sight of a well-done mural can be pleasing and provide a sense of satisfaction in knowing that the mural is helping to discourage graffiti. Among the targets for future murals should be the Everett Avenue support wall to the Tobin Bridge, the Fifth Street parking lot support wall to Route 1, the support walls at the commuter rail station at Arlington and Sixth Streets and the maintenance house at Voke Park. Regarding the commuter rail station, the City has an interest in seeing the frame-like lines scored into the cement utilized for multiple canvases, perhaps as a community arts project.

Utility cabinets on city sidewalks can provide a similar opportunity to discourage graffiti while adding to the color of a neighborhood. The City has partnered with a youth group

at the Chelsea Collaborative to have two-dozen new barrels painted by youth with environmental themes, in part to discourage those barrels from being tagged. Depending upon the reception and success of that program, perhaps another effort targeting utility cabinets can be made. Additionally, work with the US Postal Service to keep mailboxes free of graffiti is also necessary.

Primary City Action Required: A Graffiti Committee should be established by the City Manager, including the Planning, DPW, ISD and Police departments, to coordinate responses to this need.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: March 1, 2011

2b. Enforcement

Initiative: Establish a program with Chelsea District Court to provide community based sentencing for those identified as vandals.

Discussion: As CPD investigates graffiti, it is important that the certainty of punishment awaits those found guilty of tagging. While the court system has been supportive, the severity of the crime, weighed against the many other offenses the criminal justice system must prosecute, can mean that little or no action is taken on vandals.

In the alternative, the City has utilized an informal community based justice system, relying upon a “circle” at Roca to make vandals accountable for their actions. A circle brings together vandals and their families, victims, the police and program leaders to discuss their perspectives on the incident and hear from others. Together, an outcome is devised for the offender. That outcome is typically community service and/or restitution, and is monitored outside of the court process.

By getting the affirmation of the courts to this process, the community based justice system could gain additional credibility and standing, making it a more effective punishment for violators and deterrent for others.

Primary City Action Required: CPD and the Chelsea District Court need to agree on the parameters of cases that should be directed to a community based justice system.

Secondary City Action Requested: CPD and Roca need to develop a formal model that can be presented to the court as the community based justice model.

Targeted Date for Implementation: July 1, 2011

2c. Remediation

Initiative: Utilize the graffiti hotline and visual observations to develop a list of properties requiring remediation, and providing property owners with a 21 day notice to remediate their properties or else face municipal fines.

Discussion: As noted above, the City believes the best way of avoiding the next tag is to remove the last one ASAP. Thus, remediation needs to be prioritized.

Currently, ISD enforces graffiti remediation as part of its overall responsibilities. A re-emphasis on graffiti remediation by the City will re-educate the public regarding graffiti removal and re-invigorate the enforcement aspect of the process. It has been the City's experience that such a process of renewal needs to occur periodically to re-fresh the entire community's attention on the need to remediate.

Primary City Action Required: City Manager should undertake a public education campaign regarding graffiti.

Secondary City Action Requested: ISD should develop a list of properties where graffiti has been left visible, in order to first provide a 21 day notice to remove the graffiti and then after to direct ISD ticketing efforts.

Targeted Date for Implementation: March 1, 2010

3. Litter

Consumer trash, like scratch tickets, non-returnable bottles and coffee cups, is everywhere, especially in the downtown. In addition to the efforts directed through the better placement and pick-up of trash anticipated from the above, more needs to be done by the community to address littering in the community.

DPW efforts have been augmented over the last decade with the purchase of 3 Madvacs. Those drivable vacuum-operating carts allow DPW to be more efficient during clean-up operations. In addition to an annual community clean-up, the City also contracts with third party crews for neighborhood clean-up work. Yet, even with that added capacity, the city's streets are still too dirty. Of course, the best way to keep streets clean is to encourage litterers not to litter. In addition, though, individual property owners must take more responsibility for creating a cleaner community, especially businesses whose consumer trash is often found on sidewalks and in gutters.

While there never is a good reason to throw trash on the ground, the City remains sensitive to the calls of some to provide more trash barrels in high volume areas so that people will find it more convenient to dispose of trash. Past problems with additional barrel placement, including residents using the barrels for household trash and thus overflowing the barrels, need to be addressed in order to assure that barrels do not become more of a problem than a solution.

More education and community cooperation is always cited as a need when it comes to littering. In the past, the City has coordinated efforts in that direction through its participation with the national Keep America Beautiful program. The City's initiative has become stale, though, so an examination of how best to engage the community around littering may be necessary to achieve maximum success.

It is important to note, though, that city streets appear to be cleaner after a decade of participation in Keep America Beautiful. Large items dumped on sidewalks or vacant lots and left for long periods have been largely eliminated. In fact, a recent volunteer effort to pick-up such objects found the city relatively free of dumped goods. While the bigger items may be gone, though, there is no disputing that litter is still more pervasive than is acceptable. Thus, a revised approach to the issues that remain must be advanced.

3a. City Cleanliness Baseline

Initiative: Establish a cleanliness baseline and then identify an expectation for the City for cleanliness and measure the City's performance against that expectation.

Discussion: It is important that the City continue to accept responsibility for cleanliness and direct the appropriate resources to meet that responsibility. Those resources include manpower and equipment in DPW, with the latter including the use of street sweepers, Madvacs and other equipment to more efficiently and effectively address litter. It also includes quality of life inspectors in ISD performing enforcement work.

A baseline should be established as to the cleanliness of the community, and the City, through DPW and ISD, should be regularly judged against that baseline. The failure to achieve cleanliness goals should be met with additional resources or other programming, including those impacting residents and businesses. Success on the baseline should serve as a method by which successful programming can be advanced even further.

In order to establish the cleanliness baseline, the City should assemble an ad-hoc committee comprised of all stakeholders.

Primary City Action Required: Create a cleanliness baseline with the establishment of an ad-hoc committee directed by the City Manager and including representatives from City Council, DPW, ISD, business, community based organizations and residents.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: May 1, 2010

3b. Business Cleaning

Initiative: Require businesses to develop, file and have approved a trash management plan for their property, the public abutments to their property, and, in the case of those engaged in selling convenience or fast food goods to the public, neighboring properties.

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Discussion: Gone are the days when storeowners would regularly clear their gutters of debris or wash down their sidewalks. In order to promote a cleaner community, though, businesses must play a role in cleanliness, especially those selling scratch tickets, water bottles, cups of coffee and fast food. Those items are among the most found on streets in front of those businesses and within walking distance of them.

Especially in the downtown, the City spends an inordinate amount of time cleaning up. DPW should be part of the solution, but only part of the solution to maintaining cleaner streets. Businesses have a responsibility to do so as well as they are the primary generators of the consumer goods. Businesses should educate their patrons about proper disposal and regularly clear a reasonable perimeter around their businesses.

Some businesses perform daily clean-ups voluntarily, and the City is appreciative of that service. However others do not do enough or anything at all, and that is concerning. Yes, consumers have a responsibility as end users of the scratch ticket or coffee cup, but the City or the unfortunate property owner who has the litter discarded on his property should not have the sole responsibility for clean-up.

Thus, the City will develop a classification system for trash management plans. Those engaged in retail sales of consumer convenience and fast food goods will be required to clean their properties and beyond, and perhaps place barrels outside of their establishments and empty those barrels regularly. Those who might generate little or no litter, like a law office, would have a reduced requirement to clean just in front of their property. The City will work with the business community, as well as other stakeholders, to develop the standard for various levels of cleanliness plans, and then ask the Licensing Commission to approve and manage those plans. Those plans could include the need to wash down sidewalks, place and empty barrels in front of stores and pick-up trash in gutters within walking distance of their properties. ISD would be the enforcing agent regarding those clean-up plans once adopted.

Presumably, the process would involve coordination of efforts. For illustration, neighboring fast food or convenience retailers might have different days or hours of responsibility for clean-up so that their efforts are most efficiently put to work in keeping streets clean.

Primary City Action Required: ISD, Planning and the Law Department should work with the Licensing Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning Board on the establishment of tiered trash management plan requirements for business by a special committee organized by the City.

Secondary City Action Requested: Review and approval, if merited, of the tiered system by the appropriate boards, with ISD enforcement to then follow.

Targeted Date for Implementation: May 1, 2011

3c. Homeowner Clean-ups

Initiative: Require all residential property owners to clean their sidewalk weekly, and maintain their private property free of trash.

Discussion: Property owners have a responsibility to a cleaner neighborhood. Some property owners and/or their tenants do maintain clean properties. Unfortunately, though, that action can be discouraging when neighbors do not do the same. The City remains committed to street sweeping, and will expand street sweeping as noted below, but that may not be enough to keep some streets as clean as they should be.

Cleaning in front of one's property takes only a few minutes, yet, if left for the City to do, it can be an impossible task for the City to perform. Thus, the City would hope that all property owners would spend those few minutes each week on a clean-up, and the combined efforts of all property owners would make neighborhoods so much cleaner than just relying on the street sweeper or an occasional clean-up by the City or its partners. However, it is unlikely that this hope will occur, so a mandatory requirement may be in order.

The requirement for weekly clean-up will not be easily enforced. Certainly, if the same litter remains stuck in a fence in front of the property for more than a week that can be documented. Perhaps the worst of offenders could be required to maintain a log of clean-up activity or assigned a time when clean-up must occur for an inspector to be able to witness it occurring. Such details should be reviewed and developed by a committee organizing the residential property owner clean-up regulation.

Primary City Action Required: Review of recommendation of residential property trash management regulation by the City Manager and the Trash Task Force.

Secondary City Action Requested: Law Department to present a new ordinance request to Council for its review and adoption, if warranted.

Targeted Date for Implementation: July 1, 2011

3d. Community Clean-ups

Initiative: Establish a clean-up committee that would plan and host both a spring and fall community clean-up.

Discussion: The annual spring clean-up coordinated around Earth Day and the Great American Clean-up has been well attended and most successful. In fact, over the last two years, non-city, public properties (i.e. MA DOT) that were the previous focus of community volunteers have not been clean-up sites because they have been largely trash free. That said, there is much more that could be done to beautify the community with the addition of another community clean-up day. For example, if there were two clean-

ups, perhaps the spring clean-up could focus more on planting flowers and mulching, while the fall effort might focus more on general clean-up activities.

A clean-up committee should be established to help plan and host the two community clean-up efforts.

Primary City Action Required: City Manager and DPW to coordinate another community clean-up for the fall.

Secondary City Action Requested: City Manager and DPW to establish a clean-up committee to perpetuate the spring and fall clean-ups.

Targeted Date for Implementation: March 1, 2011

3e. Additional Barrels

Initiative: Place additional barrels in the community for pedestrian convenience in discarding trash.

Discussion: The placement of additional barrels for pick-up is not as free of problems as some might suspect. Barrels should be a clean and convenient way for passersby to dispose of consumer trash. Unfortunately, some residents use barrels as their own household waste disposal containers, causing barrels to overflow with trash. Barrels can be tagged with graffiti, defaced with stickers, damaged by objects, blown around an area or, even, stolen. Decorate barrels are expensive, and plain barrels are just plain unsightly.

Yet, most parties asked about how to make the community a cleaner place often cite the need for more public trash barrels. The City will comply with that request, and, through a trial basis, attempt to control the negatives while turning barrels into a community resource.

Several decorative metal barrels have already been placed out at bus stops through an initiative sponsored by the MBTA. Two dozen additional barrels, which are made of a less expensive, but visually appealing plastic, have been placed out as well. Those barrels also serve as an artistic expression and public education effort by youth involved in promoting a better environment.

The City will track the usage of these barrels and determine if more barrels are merited. Among the determining factors will be maintenance issues for the barrels, usage and cleanliness in the surrounding area. Enforcement efforts will be stepped up to address illegal usage of public barrels for household trash. In fact, reminders of that prohibition will be placed on the top of the new barrels. The City is also interested in securing public participation in maintaining the barrels by finding volunteers to regularly empty the barrels and place whatever trash is collected out for regular curbside collection.

Primary City Action Required: Install two-dozen plastic barrels, track barrel usage, perform enforcement activities – if necessary, and assess the overall effectiveness of the program, to be performed by DPW.

Secondary City Action Requested: DPW to develop another plan for the placement of barrels elsewhere.

Targeted Date for Implementation: March 1, 2011

3f. Prevention

Initiative: Adopt a community education program around litter.

Discussion: Litter prevention is the best solution to the city's litter problem. Unfortunately, prevention programs take a long time to produce results, so other aspects of an anti-litter program must be implemented while a prevention program is advanced.

The City will turn to its community partners to help develop and advance a litter prevention campaign. That program should aim at a reduction in litter and an increase in recycling. The City will seek the involvement, cooperation and leadership of the Summer Youth Employment Program to make this effort a major initiative for program participants in the summer of 2011. Planning meetings should occur in April, with a program to be rolled out in August.

Primary City Action Required: City Manager and DPW to establish a community education program in conjunction with community partners.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: June 1, 2011

3g. Enforcement

Initiative: Prepare additional enforcement activities for the various litter initiatives once implemented

Discussion: City officials need to coordinate enforcement responsibilities and ensure the necessary staff time is available for effective enforcement. Additionally, an appeal process that does not tie-up the courts should be established and a community-based justice approach considered. Regarding the latter, a discussion with community partners may be in order to establish such an approach.

Primary City Action Required: The City Manager needs to convene City officials to address enforcement issues and establish the appropriate timetable for enforcement activities.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: July 1, 2011

3h. Plastic Bag Ban and Paper Bag Surcharge

Initiative: Seek a local ordinance or home rule petition to allow the City to ban the use of plastic shopping bags at local retailers and assess a \$.05 per bag surcharge on the use of paper bags.

Discussion: Plastic shopping bags are everywhere, in our waste stream, blowing around our streets and stuck in our vegetation, including on vacant properties and in our trees. Unfortunately, while paper bags are not the blighting influence in neighborhoods, their manufacture may be even worse for the environment. Numerous communities throughout the country and globe are tackling the huge problems these bags present by banning or otherwise surcharging the use of the bags as a way of encouraging consumers to utilize reusable bags.

Thinking locally, for a moment, plastic bags are a constant source of blight. Banning their use would limit, but not eliminate that blight, as local consumers visiting stores in other communities could bring plastic bags back Chelsea. While plastic bags are less likely to be recycled, their paper counterparts can be recycled conveniently through curbside pick-up, and, in fact, can make the recycling of other paper more convenient by serving as a container for that paper. Thus, it is possible that while the manufacture of paper bags is worse for the environment, that net impact of paper bags to the environment is less than that of plastic.

The banning of plastic and surcharging of paper could encourage consumers to use reusable bags. The funds derived from the surcharge could be used to make reusable bags available at no cost, and could also fund educational efforts to make consumers more understanding of the impacts of relying upon store bags, be they plastic or paper.

The process of adopting this propose initiative should first engage residents and businesses, as well as environmental experts, in a discussion about the impacts of such an initiative on consumers and retailers. Consideration should include not only the environment but the impact of a single community program on the commerce of this community. For example, if a result of the initiative is to push local consumers to a neighboring community for food shopping, not only would the local economy lose, but the environment would lose as well with more pollution being generated with longer drives to the supermarket being the culprit.

Notwithstanding the previous concerns, City officials need to be concerned with environmental impacts of local actions, and spend far too much time now cleaning up the mess that plastic bags create. Thus, a thoughtful consideration of the alternatives is warranted.

Primary City Action Required: The Board of Health should conduct a thoughtful and thorough process to determine if a local ordinance banning or surcharging bags is warranted and desirable. The BOH may wish to consider whether the desirable outcome should happen through a statewide policy initiative instead of a local ordinance.

Secondary City Action Requested: The City Council and Law Department should consider if a home rule petition or advocacy on the state level is desirable or necessary, and consider engaging in such an effort.

Targeted Date for Implementation: July 1, 2011

4. Street Sweeping

Street sweeping is an integral component of the City's overall cleanliness program. A street just swept looks great. Unfortunately, some streets get cluttered with trash quicker than others, so street sweeping alone cannot be the City's answer to cleaner neighborhoods. This is especially true in neighborhoods with high pedestrian activity or that are more densely populated. Neighborhoods with parking on both sides of the street experience higher levels of trash because only one side of the street is done per week. Areas that border commercial areas, especially those near fast food restaurants or convenience stores, often experience a higher level of trash that a single street sweeper cannot remedy. Street sweeping also poses a major inconvenience for car owners, especially those on a street with only one side of parking available.

The City proposes adjusting street sweeping to make the program even more effective. Those adjustments include:

4a. Expansion on Particularly Dirty Routes

Initiative: Perform street sweeping on more than one day a week in neighborhoods that need it the most.

Discussion: Because of its efficiency, street sweepers can clean an entire neighborhood in a matter of minutes. Although the inconvenience of moving one's car more than once a week to accommodate a street sweeper may be significant, the results may be even more significant. Several streets, especially in and around the downtown, appear to need such a service. The City would propose to start sweeping those streets more often, until such time that other trash and litter initiatives have the long-term impact of reducing the build-up of litter on those streets.

Primary City Action Required: DPW will propose an expansion of routes which will ultimately require Traffic Commission approval.

Secondary City Action Requested: DPW should conduct a public hearing for residents of streets to be impacted to gain input and encourage support of the initiative.

Targeted Date for Implementation: March 1, 2011

4b. Expanded Months of Cleaning

Initiative: Expand the months that street sweeping is in effect to include December and March.

Discussion: The months of December and March were originally left off of the street sweeping schedule because of possible winter conditions that could inhibit the street sweeper operation. After nearly twenty years of observation, the City believes that many days in December and March would be acceptable for street sweeping. In fact, the City will often send out a street sweeper on those days, but the operation does not provide for a parking prohibition and, therefore, is not as effective as it could possibly be. By extending the official period of street sweeping, cars will still be required to move or be fined for not doing so, allowing the street sweepers to be more effective for longer periods. Of course, in the event that winter conditions prohibit the sweeper from being used, the City can cancel the use of the sweeper. Some provision should be made to notify residents when street sweeping will not be in effect during those winter conditions so as to not inconvenience those parking their vehicles.

To effectuate this expansion, street sweeping signs will need to be modified.

Primary City Action Required: DPW will repost new dates for the beginning and end of the street sweeping program.

Secondary City Action Requested: Confirm Traffic Commission support and approval, if necessary, of the change.

Targeted Date for Implementation: December 1, 2010

4c. Reduce the Window of Cleaning

Initiative: Reduce the hours when parking is prohibited for greater neighborhood convenience.

Discussion: Although not directly related to making the streets cleaner, this item relates to improved efficiency of the street sweeping process. Currently, parking is prohibited on streets for as long as eight hours on street sweeping day. The City policy is to not ticket after a street sweeper has passed, so more experienced parkers know that it is okay to park then. For some, though, the passing of the street sweeper is not as obvious or they are unfamiliar with the informal process of the parking prohibition. To better inform and to lessen the inconvenience, the City should strive to reduce the hours of parking prohibitions by working with the street sweeping contractor to so identify opportunities. Given that every street sweeping sign will need to be adjusted for the addition of sweeping in December and March, the opportunity to adjust hours at the same time makes for the best efficiency.

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Primary City Action Required: DPW will repost new times for street sweeping days.

Secondary City Action Requested: Confirm Traffic Commission support and approval, if necessary, of the change.

Targeted Date for Implementation: December 1, 2010

5. Eliminate Blight

Trash and litter are blighting influences, but so too are many other matters that lessen the quality of life in the city's neighborhoods. Significant strides have been made in eliminating blight, from smaller lot clean-ups to major building demolitions. More can and should be done to further rid the community of blight, including:

5a. Clean It or Lien It

Initiative: ISD to undertake a quarterly review of properties and issue a Clean It or Lien It ticket for those found to be out of compliance with City standards.

Discussion: Many residents and businesses care for their property. However, it only takes one person on a block to not trim bushes, leave trash in the yard or allow appliances or cars to sit in driveways in order for a neighborhood to feel the downward pressure that blight can have. Several commercial/industrial properties owners similarly do not take care of their properties.

Quarterly, ISD inspectors could be asked to create a list of properties which are out of conformance and begin the process of bringing those properties into conformance by first warning and then ticketing properties. ISD does warnings and tickets now, but a formal process, which might include public notification of scofflaws, might cause more property owners to take independent action prior to the City getting involved. The actions may also provide some support to those who are cleaning their properties regularly by reassuring them that the City is taking action against those that do not.

To better secure a good start to the quarterly initiative, some thought should be given to hiring inspectors on an overtime basis to exclusively focus on assembling the quarterly list. This action may be necessary as regular job demands may limit the ability of inspectors to focus on this particular issue in a timely and coordinated manner. It is possible that increased fines could cover the cost of the program.

Primary City Action Required: ISD and the Law Department should review existing ordinances and determine if additional City Council action is required to provide ISD with the enforcement power required to carry out the spirit of this initiative.

Secondary City Action Requested: ISD and the City Administration will need to fund the initiative and determine timetables for activities and dissemination of public information.

Targeted Date for Implementation: July 1, 2011

5b. Dumpster Screening and Maintenance

Initiative: Require that all dumpsters be screened on all sides and the screening be regularly maintained to prevent the view of the dumpster from the street. Additionally, dumpsters must remain closed so as to not be able to have any trash be viewed from above, and graffiti free on the top.

Discussion: Dumpsters generally cause blight. They are often haphazardly placed on properties, frequently tagged with graffiti and can expose trash to the public for days. In two very visible instances, dumpsters are seen by every automobile entering Bellingham Square via Hawthorn Street. Their presence engenders a negative attitude, and when they are unkempt, the perception becomes even worse.

Dumpsters are currently regulated by Section 4-185- 201 of the City Ordinances. Although the regulations can be broadly interpreted to address the concerns that result in the recommendation contained within, more specific language in several areas and additional regulations may be required to fully address the problems this initiative seeks to remediate.

Primary City Action Required: Law Department and ISD to review and make recommendations to the extent that amendments are required of any existing ordinance or a new ordinance needs to be proposed.

Secondary City Action Requested: City Council review and approval, if warranted or necessary, for any updates or new ordinances.

Targeted Date for Implementation: September 15, 2011

5c. Shopping Carts

Initiative: Create a fine for shopping carts recovered by the City in public areas, as well as a daily holding fee for the carts, exempting those carts which have an anti-theft device from the fines. Also create a fine for those found in possession of a shopping cart off of shopping center property.

Discussion: It is hard to ride through a neighborhood without finding a shopping cart. The incidences are certainly down, as Market Basket has installed a theft prevention system for their carriages. Even then, though, determined users are able to overcome the theft deterrent system. The result is that a vacated shopping cart creates a negative image in a neighborhood.

Shopping carts are expensive, costing as much as \$150. Technically, the cart is being stolen by the person who takes the cart off of the property. Practically, stores do not want to press charges against their patrons, but the community does not want to see shopping carts in their neighborhoods. Some stores have installed theft devices, while others have shopping cart retrieval companies drive through neighborhoods searching for carts. The latter is inefficient, and not exactly good for the environment.

Primary City Action Required: DPW and the Law Department will review existing ordinances and make any recommendations required to comply with the initiative.

Secondary City Action Requested: City Council review and approval, if warranted or necessary, for any updates or new ordinances.

Targeted Date for Implementation: September 15, 2011

5d. Newspaper Dispensers

Initiative: Revisit existing free newspaper dispenser regulations, update those regulations for today's standards and issues notices of the revised regulations to those companies utilizing dispensers.

Discussion: Both the free newspaper dispensers and the newspapers inside of them cause blight and litter. The dispensers are haphazardly left on sidewalks and can become trash receptacles themselves. Their original contents, free papers, often end up on sidewalks and in gutters. While the City maintains regulations regarding these dispenses, a review and update may be merited as they remain a source of blight and litter.

Primary City Action Required: DPW will revisit, update and reissue revised free newspaper dispenser regulations.

Secondary City Action Requested: City Council review and approval, if warranted or necessary, for any updates or new ordinances.

Targeted Date for Implementation: July 1, 2011

5e. Illegal Car Repairs

Initiative: Identify a location to establish a community garage, to allow for the legal repair of cars, and begin greater enforcement of a prohibition against car repairs on city streets.

Discussion: Illegal car repairs are generally considered to be the activity of making any minor or major maintenance or repair to a vehicle, ranging from oil changes to brake jobs, on public ways. In a community where older car-owning residents reside, congested neighborhoods without driveways or garages often end up resulting in

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residents making such repairs out on the public street. The action of making those repairs on public streets is illegal, and yet, while they are the cause of consternation by some and the source of blight, including by leaving oil or parts behind, they have not been the top priority of enforcement efforts.

In situations like this, where a public needs and wants to do an action which may, at times, be counter to the interests of others, a reasonable approach is to ban the current practice but try to find an alternative for the activity to continue. One such approach might be to locate a community garage, perhaps maintained by a non-profit, which would allow those in need of space to repair their vehicles legally in a place at a reasonable cost. For sure, many issues exist, including acquisition and maintenance costs, clean-up and disposal of parts and hazardous waste, insurance and others. However, in order to try to find that reasonable approach, the City should engage its partners in an examination of the possibilities.

Primary City Action Required: The Planning Department should convene a working group to examine the potential of opening a community garage.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: May 1, 2011

5f. Needle Disposal Sites

Initiative: Identify and establish one or more needle disposal sites to decrease the dumping of needles in public spaces and to improve public health.

Discussion: Needle disposal and needle exchange sites are controversial, no doubt. While the City's position is that both are prudent methods to improve public health, the major issue seeking to be addressed through this initiative is to reduce the occurrence of needles being discarded in vacant parcels, parking lots, and, most disturbingly, city parks. Regarding the latter, it is not unusual for needles to be found in places where children play, providing for a potentially tragic consequence for the most innocent of residents among us. During community clean-ups, needles are spotted in many places. While not condoning their use or careless disposal, it is possible that the number of improperly discarded needles could be greatly reduced if a public method of disposal was identified.

A secondary benefit to this initiative is obviously the public health aspect. Dirty needles are a source of so many diseases. Additionally, even those using needles for legal injections, like insulin, have difficulty disposing of needles and may be discarding them in the waste stream. That action presents dangers for unintended victims, from scavengers to trash disposal workers. Even if those dangers do not present themselves, the needles are products that should be diverted from incinerators and landfills. Back to those using needles for illegal drug use, it is possible that a needle exchange program, with an education component, could help provide the encouragement to get those drug users to adopt healthier lifestyles.

Primary City Action Required: Secure BOH and Council approval of a needle disposal and exchange initiative.

Secondary City Action Requested: Should an initiative go forward, BOH should secure community based partners to institute a program that results in more needles being appropriately discarded, thereby reducing the potential harm to innocent children and others who frequent public spaces.

Targeted Date for Implementation: March 1, 2011

5g. Public Weeds and Mulching

Initiative: Develop a plan that can be implemented safely and effectively to reduce weeds on public sidewalks and encourage more mulching of city tree pits.

Discussion: Weeds are a blighting influence. The City does not have the manpower to cut weeds regularly, so weeds in sidewalk cracks and open tree pits, among other places, create blight in neighborhoods.

Weed killer is often applied in private areas to prevent weeds from growing or kill the weeds once sprouted. An herbicide or pesticide can be applied on public ways, but only after a plan has been developed locally and approved by the State. The development of such a plan is not without controversy, as some believe the spraying of weed killer to be unhealthy. Care, therefore, must be taken to balance the benefits of the initiative with any potential environmental or public health damage that could be caused.

Mulching of tree pits is a way to reduce weeds and also increase the attractiveness of the pit and the neighborhood. The City is planting more trees, but lacks the manpower to regularly mulch tree pits. Finding a way to do so, perhaps during a community clean-up day, will help achieve an anti-blight goal.

Primary City Action Required: DPW should develop an herbicide plan for submission to the BOH as well as the State. DPW should also develop a mulching plan.

Secondary City Action Requested: BOH should review and, if appropriate, adopt an herbicide plan. If a plan is not adopted, BOH should consider and recommend a potential alternative.

Targeted Date for Implementation: March 1, 2011

5h. DPW Yard

Initiative: Institute public drop off days for bulky items at the DPW Yard, thereby securing the proper disposal of the blight that is caused by mattresses and other items being stored in public sight awaiting trash pick-up days.

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Discussion: Notwithstanding the review of the bulky item issues cited above, the current method of disposing of bulky items creates blight. Mattresses, in particular, and other items, even when they are properly placed for future trash pick-up, are the culprits. Mattresses, for example, left in a side yard for a week awaiting disposal on trash day can give-off a blighting appearance to neighbors and passersby. Opportunities, therefore, exist to get larger, bulky items creating a blighting feel to them out of yards and neighborhoods by providing a legal and convenient means of dumping them. The DPW Yard may provide such an opportunity.

Primary City Action Required: DPW should review staffing and space issues to determine if a public drop-off of bulky items is practical, and then develop a plan to implement such an option.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: March 1, 2011

6. Beautification

The City's efforts to remove blight have been substantial. The City's efforts to promote beautification, however, have not been as substantial. Thus, while the blight may be reduced, there is still work to enhance the community through beautification efforts. Those efforts might double as blight prevention and elimination efforts as well. To promote the next step in making the community a more pleasing place to be, several beautification initiatives may be of assistance.

6a. Property Enhancement Initiative Grants

Initiative: Develop and offer enhancement funding to encourage and help finance the beautification of private properties. The grants would take two forms: Property improvement loans and property improvement grants.

Discussion: Some property owners do a marvelous job in beautifying their property, and elevating the look of their entire neighborhood. The City should support those efforts and provide small enhancement grants to provide a financial and civic enticement to others to similarly upgrade their properties. Additionally, some property owners have their properties devalued by public uses that may take place at them, like bus stops or heavy pedestrian activity. As a way of partnering with those property owners, in part as a thank you for putting up with the public use, the City could utilize grants to make such spaces more pleasing. In doing so, not only would the property owner derive a benefit, but so too would the public who frequent the space. The result could then be the improved treatment of the public space by the public, like less littering that then falls into the abutting private property.

Regarding loans, the City should develop a plan to provide low or no interest financing to aid property owners in upgrading their properties from a beautification perspective. The funding would not necessarily be for major capital repairs, but instead to improve plantings or fencing. Perhaps the City might designate a district for a multicolor exterior painting program or an iron fencing program, and make loans available to encourage property owners to be part of the program. Such funding could come from existing community development funds, which may be augmented by other sources of funding.

On the matter of grants, the City should consider using revenues received from a bus shelter advertising contract with Cemusa to provide grants to properties in which bus stops are located. Another source of funding could be utilized to encourage the placement of window boxes for flower planting on buildings or whiskey barrels for yards.

The loan and grant program cannot be overly costly to the City, as budgeting issues and core municipal service responsibilities require the City's financial attention to those matters. However, as the City and its stakeholders consider how to upgrade the look of the community, such a nominal partnership could improve the visual appearance of the community, as well as the sense of cooperation and appreciation among all the city's stakeholders.

Primary City Action Required: The City's Planning & Development Department will be requested to develop standards, guidelines and an application process and engage the Keep Chelsea Beautiful Committee in carrying out the process.

Secondary City Action Requested: The City Manager should review potential sources of funding and create a funding pool to support the program.

Targeted Date for Implementation: March 1, 2011

6b. Utility Box Art

Initiative: Discourage graffiti vandals by securing permission from utility box owners to allow for artist to paint their boxes.

Discussion: Utility boxes are constant targets for graffiti vandals. Volunteers regularly paint over the tags, but the boxes are often tagged again. Even when they are not tagged, the boxes can be unsightly and contribute to the blight of a neighborhood. By working with the utility companies to secure their permission, the City can help discourage tagging of boxes by having local artists paint murals or other expressions on the boxes.

Primary City Action Required: DPW should identify the owners of utility boxes and then secure permission from utility companies to allow their utility boxes to be painted over by artists.

Secondary City Action Requested: The City Manager should request the Keep Chelsea Beautiful Committee to seek proposals and coordinate artist painting activities.

Targeted Date for Implementation: May 1, 2011

6c. Beautification Awards

Initiative: Create a beautification program by appointing a committee and creating criteria for the award.

Discussion: Recognizing the efforts of those who are beautifying their property and are otherwise contributing to the betterment of the community is an excellent way to say thanks, encourage others and generally educate the public.

Primary City Action Required: City Manager to re-establish the Keep Chelsea Beautiful Committee and provide as one of its charges the creation of a beautification awards program.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: August 1, 2011

6d. Adopt an Island

Initiative: Create a sustaining adopt-an-island program.

Discussion: The City and many stakeholders have longed desired to see an adopt-an-island program put in place. There are numerous small traffic islands and other sides of roadways that are good candidates for planting and maintaining, but a program has yet to take hold. Previous programs may have failed because they required too much volunteer help to get off the ground. In this latest incarnation, the City will first consider if a volunteer committee can be effective and if not, will then engage a landscape company to do the work. Either way, sponsor support will be necessary for the adopt-an-island to be successful.

The first step will be to ask the beautification committee appointed by the City Manager to review the likelihood of a successful volunteer effort. Based upon those findings, either volunteers or paid landscapers will be engaged to create beauty where now there is asphalt and weeds.

Primary City Action Required: City Manager to re-establish the Keep Chelsea Beautiful Committee and provide as one of its charges the creation of an adopt-an-island program.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: April 1, 2011

6e. Community Clean-ups

“Cleaning-Up Our Act” – The Cleaner Chelsea Initiative for a Cleaner Community and a Healthier Environment
City Manager Jay Ash – December, 2010

Initiative: Emphasis beautification during community clean-up days by hiring a landscaper for additional assistance.

Discussion: An above recommendation is to hold two community clean-up days annually. While the clean-up portion of community clean-ups is important, there exists an opportunity to also emphasize beautification. The City will contract with a landscaper, if necessary, to provide the assistance necessary to do so.

Primary City Action Required: DPW should review the City's contract with its current landscaper to determine the viability of engaging that contractor for two community clean-up days.

Secondary City Action Requested: DPW should engage a different landscaper if the primary action will not be successful.

Targeted Date for Implementation: April 1, 2011

7. Community Partnerships

The City is blessed to have outstanding community partners, whose multitude of efforts is valued by the City. Partners bring commitment, resources and educational tools to the process of augmenting the City's agenda and further advancing their own. For this Cleaner Chelsea plan to be successful existing partnership will need to be strengthened and new partnerships need to be developed.

7a. Re-establish a Keep Chelsea Beautiful Committee

Initiative: Re-establish a Keep Chelsea Beautiful Committee.

Discussion: Keep Chelsea Beautiful (KCB) was established upon the City's affiliation with Keep America Beautiful (KAB). While KCB was initially successful, it has been dormant, of late, although the annual spring clean-up it originally sponsored continues to be held. KCB can be a valuable source of community engagement and success. KAB provides excellent programming and technical assistance that can help KCB again have an impact on clean-up and beautification needs.

A lesson learned from the withering of KCB is that staff involvement and volunteers who demonstrate a high level of engagement are required for KCB to be successful. One source of engaged volunteers could be the Youth Commission.

Primary City Action Required: City Manager to re-establish the Keep Chelsea Beautiful Committee.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: February 1, 2011

7b. Build Upon Current Partnerships

Initiative: Conduct bi-annual meetings with current partners to attempt to provide City support for their efforts and additional cooperation on City-identified goals.

Discussion: A number of organizations are already active in undertaking community building initiatives around trash, litter, blight and beautification. Most notably, the Chelsea Collaborative, through Chelsea Green Space, and Chelsea Neighborhood Developers have been especially active and successful in these areas. The City discusses initiatives with both on an as-necessary basis, but a regular meeting would help advance mutual areas of interest and create more formal discussions that could lead to additional partnership activities.

Primary City Action Required: City Manager and Trash Task Force to schedule bi-annual meetings with organizational representatives involved in trash, litter, blight and beautification

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: May 1, 2011

7c. Secure New Partnerships

Initiative: Encourage other community organizations to partner with the City and their peers on trash, litter, blight and beautification efforts.

Discussion: Other partners involve themselves at various levels on the issues of trash, litter, blight and beautification. By strengthening what currently exists and encouraging more involvement, the City could be more successful on the cleanliness agenda and partners could see an advancement of their own agendas.

Primary City Action Required: The City Manager will identify and welcome new potential partners to the bi-annual meetings to be held with existing partners.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: May 1, 2011

8. Education

Educating the public is one of the universally referenced action items suggested when looking at impacting trash, litter, blight and beautification goals. Yet education can be one of the toughest to accomplish, as effective messaging needs to be so much, not the

least of which are universal and constant. If effective, though, education can lead to action, and certainly is at the foundation of a sustainable and successful effort.

8a. Community education

Initiative: Engage the Keep Chelsea Beautiful Committee in a community education initiative.

Discussion: KCB can be the conduit through which community education is undertaken. KAB has time-tested programming and supports that can advance a locally administered initiative.

Primary City Action Required: City Manager to challenge KCB to develop and implement a community education initiative.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: May 1, 2011

8b. Kids

Initiative: Direct a kids education campaign through local organizations, including the Schools.

Discussion: Kids initiatives that rely too heavily on adult intervention are almost sure to fail. Two recent developments, though, the establishment of a Youth Commission and the continuing work of youth engaged by Chelsea Green Space, provide promise. In fact, Green Space youth were recently enabled by the City, allowing for newly placed trash barrels to carry upon them youth expression about the environment. Green Space youth are currently undertaking a new project to develop a recycling campaign for the City's implementation. Those efforts and others that could be made available from KAB or elsewhere are more likely to capture the attention of today's youth and encourage them to keep their city clean.

Primary City Action Required: City Manager to ask the Youth Commission and Chelsea Green Space youth to design and implement a youth education program.

Secondary City Action Requested: Trash Task Force to work with the Schools to implement school-based educational programs on trash, litter, blight and beautification.

Targeted Date for Implementation: June 1, 2011

8c. Business

Initiative: Encourage Chelsea Chamber of Commerce participation in educating their members and other businesses on the Cleaner Chelsea effort.

"Cleaning-Up Our Act" – The Cleaner Chelsea Initiative for a Cleaner Community and a Healthier Environment
City Manager Jay Ash – December, 2010

Discussion: With Chelsea's sizeable business base, a successful community cleanliness program is doomed without business leadership and support. Fortunately, the Chelsea Chamber of Commerce and the City maintain an excellent working relationship and share many of the same goals for the general advancement of the community. The City will engage the business community, through the Chamber, in a discussion about the Cleaner Chelsea agenda and how business can participate in its implementation and success.

Primary City Action Required: City Manager to encourage Chamber of Commerce discussion and agreement on a business education and involvement program.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: June 1, 2011

9. Statewide Policy Advocacy

Community cleanliness can be aided greatly by state policy and action. For example, the bottle bill has all but cleared returnable cans and bottles from city streets and public and private lots. While some of the issues the City is facing can be resolved by local efforts, other aspects of a cleaner community could be better advanced through additional state law.

9a. Bottle Bill for All Consumer Containers of Drinkable Liquids

Initiative: Advocate for passage of legislation to extend deposits on soda to all consumer containers of drinkable liquids.

Discussion: Looking at litter in the streets and lots, water bottles, energy cans and other containers of liquids that do not have a return deposit are among the most likely to be found. Given the success of the Bottle Bill on soda cans and bottles, extending the deposit requirements to other containers would surely provide for a cleaner community and a cleaner planet.

The City Manager has testified in favor of previous legislative efforts to extend the Bottle Bill. In addition to that advocacy, other local stakeholders may be asked to do the same or otherwise engage the public in the cause.

Primary City Action Required: City Manager should develop an action plan for advocacy with KCB and Chelsea Green Space.

Secondary City Action Requested: The City Council should consider endorsing the action plan so developed.

Targeted Date for Implementation: March 1, 2011

9b. Scratch Ticket Recycling

Initiative: Call for the reinstatement of a recycling program for scratch tickets.

Discussion: Like non-returnable consumer containers of drinkable liquid, losing scratch tickets are everywhere, especially in gutters and near benches and bus stops. The Lottery once had, but has abandoned a program to collect losing tickets. The result is more litter on city streets and more scratch tickets being incinerated or placed in landfills.

Primary City Action Required: City Manager and City Council should follow-up with the winning candidate for Treasurer to implement a new program, and, absent that, ask the Legislature to pass a law mandating such a program, with performance standards to be met.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: March 1, 2011

9c. Graffiti Sanctions

Initiative: Request the adoption of a home-rule petition or new statewide law to increase the fines for those found guilty of graffiti vandalism, and to require makers of spray paint to contribute to a fund for graffiti clean-up.

Discussion: Graffiti vandalism costs the City and its property owners tens of thousands of dollars in removal and replacement charges. Additional fines and other penalties for those convicted of vandalism may serve as a further detriment to the vandalism and help owners recover some of the cost involved in remediation. Meanwhile, the spray paint industry makes millions of dollars on spray paint used by vandals, and should be required to direct a portion of their profits to a fund that would also help owners remediate their property.

Primary City Action Required: The City Manager and City Council should request a meeting with the appropriate state officials to discuss filing the necessary legislation, unless that legislation already exists.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: May 1, 2011

9d. Dumping Sanctions

Initiative: Request the adoption of a home-rule petition or new state law to increase the fines for those found guilty of illegal dumping.

Discussion: Illegal dumping creates blight in the community. The penalty for illegal dumping makes the act worth the risk for dumpers. The City and property owners spend tens of thousands of dollars annually on cleaning up after illegal dumpers. Among the items dumped are hazardous waste, which costs more to clean-up and may pollute the land upon which it is dumped. An increase in fines, which could include the forfeiture of the vehicle from which the item is dumped, could create a more successful deterrent to dumping.

Primary City Action Required: The City Manager and City Council should request a meeting with the appropriate state officials to discuss filing the necessary legislation, unless that legislation already exists.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: May 1, 2011

10. Administration

The attention of the City Administration to the Cleaner Chelsea Initiative is critical to its success. More certain focus and staff responsibility is necessary to ensure that the goals of this agenda are met, at minimum. Although fiscal times are challenging, the efforts laid out by the above agenda could be offset by savings in clean-up costs, collections of fines, the establishment of new fees, or the acquisition of grant funding, among other potential sources of revenues.

10a. Cleaner Chelsea Committee Reporting to the City Manager

Initiative: An internal committee shall be established to coordinate City efforts on the Cleaner Chelsea agenda.

Discussion: The identification and appointment of City officials to a Cleaner Chelsea Committee is a key to the Cleaner Chelsea agendas success. The committee should be comprised of a representative from DPW, ISD, Planning, Police and Law, as well as a delegate from the City Council. A quarterly meeting, at minimum, could ensure that the appropriate leadership is exhibited to produce a successful effort.

Primary City Action Required: City Manager to appoint the Cleaner Chelsea Committee.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: February 1, 2011

10b. Full-Time Solid Waste Coordinator in DPW

Initiative: A full-time, Cleaner Chelsea Coordinator should be hired to handle the day-to-day administration of the Cleaner Chelsea Initiative.

Discussion: Experience says that a City staff member needs to have the primary responsibility for the carrying out of such an ambitious agenda. Presently, reductions in DPW and City Manager staffing levels mean that the capacity does not currently exist to manage this program without a hire to staff. It is estimated that funding for the position could come from additional revenues that could be generated by the successful implementation of this agenda and other grant sources. The staff person hired should report to the DPW Director and may have enforcement responsibility.

Primary City Action Required: DPW to secure financing from City and outside sources to hire a position.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: February 1, 2011

10b. Part-Time Recycling Coordinator in DPW

Initiative: A part-time, Recycling Coordinator should be hired to manage recycling education and participation.

Discussion: See 1c.

Primary City Action Required: City Manager and DPW should work to secure funding for the hiring of a part-time recycling coordinator.

Secondary City Action Requested:

Targeted Date for Implementation: February 1, 2011

Index of Responsibilities by Departments

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Law Department

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Secondary: 3c, 3h

Licensing Board

Primary: 3b

Secondary: 3b

Planning Board

Primary: 3b

Secondary: 3b

Planning & Development Department

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Secondary: 8b

Treasurer's Office

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Secondary:

Zoning Board of Appeals

Primary: 3b

Secondary: 3b