

**Sisson Street Task Force Report**  
**Findings and Recommendations- FINAL**

**April 21, 2026**

**Introduction**

The Sisson Street Task Force (Task Force) was created by Mayor Scott in September of 2025 to review and make recommendations to either keep Sisson Street Drop-Off Center open, close it, or move it. Mayor Scott also directed that if the Task Force recommended moving the Sisson Street Drop-off Center (Sisson Street or just Sisson), the Task Force must also provide recommendations for where the Center could potentially relocate.

The Task Force was created after significant public outcry in August of 2025 when the Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW) presented a plan to move Sisson Street just down the hill from where it is now located. The proposed new site was on property owned by Potts and Callahan, close to the Jones Falls on Falls Road. In response to the expressed concerns, Mayor Scott created the Sisson Street Task Force to examine all options related to Sisson Street and provide recommendations. The Mayor's request also included making sure that any potential new center would not be located in a Black neighborhood and is convenient for residents. The first vote of the Task Force was to remove the Falls Road location from consideration.

Initially, the work of the Task Force was expected to conclude in December 2025. However, as the work progressed, the Task Force realized that it needed more time to fully explore all aspects of Sisson Street, and its role in Baltimore's broader trash, recycling, and zero waste ecosystem. In fact, since the landfill has only 14 years of life left and there is a commitment to close the incinerator, the Task Force moved deliberately to ensure the recommendations for Sisson Street were also in the context of the need to reduce dependence on trash drop-off centers altogether. Mayor Scott granted the Task Force's request for additional time.

This report follows several meetings of the Task Force. Those meetings included robust discussions with a variety of stakeholders, including the DPW and other community stakeholders interested in the subject. The Task Force also held two in-person and hybrid hearings that included public testimony. The list of Members of the Task Force is found on **Appendix A**.

**This report is organized in several sections:**

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## **Summary of Sisson Street Task Force recommendation**

Recognizing the current importance of the Sisson Street Drop off Center to residents and its role in waste management, as well as the challenges the site presents for any improvement, the Task Force recommends closure of the center only after the following seven conditions are met. The Site will remain open until that point. Specific details and justifications for each are found on page 7 of this report.

- Reebird sanitation yard is completely renovated, which may take 3-4 years. Bowley's Lane stays open during construction.
- Some of the recycling operations will be moved to York Road DGS facility, and the Benefits Districts will use a dumpster housed at the York Road DGS facility. The York Road DGS facility will be limited in opening hours and materials collected.
- Hazardous Household Waste drop off will be relocated to Bowley's Lane and an alternative site.
- The roles assigned to Sisson Street in the Less Waste, Better Baltimore plan will be re-assigned to other sites.
- A comprehensive, robust, and consistent education campaign is conducted to help residents know all of the options for taking materials - all the sites, better recycling habits, anti-litter, and more.
- Pilot test the impacts of closure should wind down of Sisson take place. Factors discovered during the testing must be resolved.
- If closed, the Sisson site will be turned to productive use that will include community and public input as to the use of the site.

Additional items that DPW must work toward concurrently:

- An Environmental Justice assessment shall be conducted to ensure that environmental justice concerns are alleviated.
- Accelerate Zero Waste initiatives to meet our zero waste goals to reduce dependence on Sisson and other solid waste sites.
- Take care of the Sisson Street DPW workers.
- Continue to monitor the usage of Sisson and all of the sites to understand the decrease in dependence on the site, and usage of the other sites.
- Increase inspectors and penalties for illegal dumping, providing DHCD and DPW with the resources to continue this work.
- Improve Bulk Trash collection
- Bring the Community Pitch-In program back to how it was run prior to 2025
- The City Council will introduce legislation that all multifamily buildings must supply trash and recycling services to their residents.
- DPW will work with clean Corps and the Community Benefits District on alternative placements for their dedicated dumpsters currently at Sisson.
- If Sisson is sold, proceeds of any potential sale of the property will go toward zero waste goals.

Accountability and oversight belong to the Baltimore City Sustainability Commission and the City Council's Public Health and Environment Committee, or its successor.

## **Current situation**

Baltimore City has a complex set of residential drop-off centers, home bases for our sanitation crews, as well as the landfill and incinerator for processing waste. This section describes the current set of services that each facility provides. A chart of the basic services provided by all the sanitation and drop-off centers can be found on **Appendix B**.

In general, at the residential drop-off facilities, residents can drop-off waste or materials for recycling only two times per day, and five times per week. The DPW attendants request the identification of each user to ensure they are Baltimore City residents, inquire about the type of materials they wish to drop-off, and

record the number of times the person has used the facility. The attendants turn away anyone who does not have proof of residency in Baltimore City, anyone with a commercial logo on the side of their truck or any vehicle that looks like it could be a commercial vehicle. Also, anyone with a U-Haul or other similar rental is not allowed to use the residential sites.

**Sisson Street:** The Sisson Street facility is centrally located and provides the opportunity for residents to drop-off trash and recycling along with other materials for proper handling, such as household hazardous waste five weekends per year, electronics, mattresses, textiles, compost, oyster shells, and more. Sisson is currently the only residential drop-off center that has ramps for ease of pulling up and dropping off materials by reaching over the dumpster. There are 4 bays for trash drop-off, and 4 bays for mixed recycling drop-off. Textiles, mattresses, electronics, and metals are dropped off in separate containers.

Currently, Sisson Street is the most popular of the drop-off centers. As you can see from **Appendix C**, for the past two years, Sisson has double the usage rate of Bowley's Lane related to solid waste drop off. For recycling drop-off, Sisson sees 85% of all the recycling materials dropped off at all facilities.

During this evaluation, Task Force members asked DPW to start collecting data related to who uses Sisson. As **Appendix C** shows, for the period December 17, 2025 to January 9, 2026, users came from all over the city to use Sisson Street. In fact, 50% of the users of Sisson come from zip codes that are closer to the Bowley's Lane or Reedbird sites. The study period was not during Hazardous Household Waste weekends when the site is the most used. DPW is still collecting this data currently and should be included in periodic public reporting. Data regarding where users come from was not collected for the Reedbird site because it was closed during this study period.

Most importantly, the crew at Sisson is second to none. Every resident who talks about Sisson mentions the excellent customer service that the Sisson Street crew provides. Residents have reflected that their experience at Sisson is what they would like to experience across all city services. The Sisson Street crew provide a model for outstanding operations and service.

Sisson Street is also the central location for the residential Community Pitch-In program, where community organizations can reserve dumpsters for residential clean-ups, and for residents to place bulk trash. The program has been a massive success and is in high demand. Requirements for the dumpsters in each neighborhood include that volunteers must be present at the dumpster to ensure that only residents are using it. There is also a requirement that residents are involved in cleaning up the area. The neighborhood dumpsters and trucks are located on the north side of Sisson Street as users exit.

Sisson Street is the smallest drop-off center. Out of the four acres total on the site, only 1.7 acres is usable and has a layout that has created significant challenges. In addition, the staff facilities do not meet the needs of the excellent crew. While a modular was recently placed on site to provide locker rooms, the main building needs significant repair, if not a total teardown. Workers still work outside in the extreme heat and in the extreme cold. In addition, the facility is so busy on weekends, particularly during hazardous household waste drop-off weekends, that queuing occurs on the outside of the facility for several blocks, all the way up to Keswick Road. This situation can lead to dangerous situations at the intersection of Sisson Street and W. 28th Street and Sisson and W. 29<sup>th</sup> Street.

One of the reasons Sisson is so popular is that the systems designed to collect trash and recycling from residents are not always working, thus forcing residents to utilize Sisson. During the public comment period, residents described several situations where they need Sisson because of systems not working. For instance, tenants in some large apartment buildings indicated they recycle using Sisson because recycling is not provided in their buildings. When looking into this, the Task Force discovered that owners and property managers in multi-family buildings are only required to provide sanitation services for their

tenants but are not required to provide recycling service. In addition, residents talked about needing to use Sisson if the curbside recycling pick-up is missed or when bulk trash cannot be removed timely.

One final note; there is a development plan in place for the area in which Sisson is located. The Remington Neighborhood Plan calls for the land to be part of a significant mixed-use redevelopment. This plan has been in place since 2011, and conversations regarding relocating the Sisson site have been ongoing since 2019. In fact, there were two RFP processes conducted by the Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC), the most recent of which was in 2024. Bids that came in are sealed and unable to be shared with the Task Force. Council Bill 25-0094 was introduced in 2025 to allow the City to sell the property. However, during the Task Force process, BDC said clearly that the 2024 RFP has been canceled. The City Council bill has been placed on hold.

**Bowley's Lane or Eastern Recycling Center:** The Bowley's Lane facility is a capped landfill. The site offers residential drop-off and is the home for the sanitation and recycling crews and trucks that service East Baltimore. At the Bowley's Lane center, there are no ramps to help residents easily access the trash and recycling bins. Residents either toss materials over the side, or the back is opened for residents to walk their waste into the dumpster. Bowley's Lane also collects electronics, textiles, compost, and mattresses similar to Sisson.

**Reedbird or Western Recycling Center:** The Reedbird facility is located on a capped landfill. The site was closed during the study period for extensive renovations that are anticipated to last three to four years. However, As of April 11, 2026, it is re-opened for one day per week while extensive renovations occur. When it was fully opened before May of 2025, Reedbird provided the same services as Bowley's Lane and had similar facilities. Reedbird was also the home for the sanitation and recycling crews that service East Baltimore. The crews are currently relocated to an alternative site during renovations. During the new limited opening, Reedbird is only providing trash and recycling drop-off, and not the other specialized recycling collections.

**Northwest Transfer Station:** This is one of three facilities where the sanitation crews take waste collected during curbside collection, and small haulers take the waste they collect as well. It is considered a substantial transfer station because eventually the waste does not stay there; it goes to the Quarantine Landfill or the BRESKO incinerator. There is a residential recycling center located here.

**Quarantine Land Fill:** The Quarantine Land Fill is the primary land fill for Baltimore City. Our sanitation crews and small haulers dump their trash at the site. There is a residential recycling center there as well.

**BRESKO Incinerator:** The Baltimore Refuse Energy Systems Company (BRESKO) Incinerator is used by Baltimore City and surrounding counties to dispose of trash and process it into high-pressure steam. The steam is used to power City Hall, City buildings, and a good portion of downtown. There are substantial concerns about air quality and a clear mandate to shut down BRESKO soon.

#### **Additional solid waste services outside of residential curbside pick-up:**

**Bulk trash** is picked up by appointment, and the wait is usually 3 months. Residents contact 311 to make the appointment, outline the materials they have, and receive a confirmation number and date to put the materials out on the curb for pick-up.

**Community Pitch-In program.** Neighborhoods are able to reserve dumpsters 4 times a year, per neighborhood. There was recently a change to the program that residents feel has not worked. Instead of community associations reserving the dumpsters, now anyone can call to reserve the dumpsters and yet

only four are allowed per neighborhood per year. This has caused a lot of confusion as the community associations generally have the capacity to organize the volunteers and already have their systems for where the dumpsters are located each time. The change made it impossible for some neighborhoods to request dumpsters, including the neighborhoods closest to Sisson Street that utilize the program to clean up illegal dumping that gets rightfully turned away from the site.

**Small Haulers program.** Small haulers are defined as anyone with vehicles less than 7,000 pounds who are hired to pick up trash by residents and contractors. DPW encourages these haulers to get a Small Haulers license so that the waste disposed can be tracked. Small haulers with the license are able to use Northwest Transfer Station and Quarantine Road landfill for a discounted rate lower than the typical tipping fees. It is \$20 per load as opposed to the \$150 per load. Because these haulers use the same places where our sanitation crews take the trash, there are often long lines for weighing and disposal of their loads.

**Clean Corps.** This program started with funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) after a successful pilot in Coldstream Homestead Montebello. Residents are hired by Clean Corps to assist with cleaning alleys, vacant lots, curbs, inlets, illegal dumping, etc. The program is designed not only to assist with cleaning our neighborhoods, but as a pipeline for training to enter a job with the DPW. The program is in 20 neighborhoods and has been a huge success. The program will continue with city general funds starting in the new fiscal year. Waste collected from the Clean Corps teams go into one dumpster at Sisson which is used daily.

### **Plans for Solid Waste and Recycling**

DPW is working to implement the recommendations in the Less Waste Better Baltimore Plan <https://www.baltimorecity.gov/publicworks/our-work/zero-waste/less-waste-better-baltimore> which outlines the City's Zero-Waste goals. More recently, during the capital budget discussions, DPW has been clear that the Quarantine Landfill is 75% full with only 14 years of life available. DPW does not want to throw more money at expansion, and it is illegal in the State of Maryland to create new landfills. In addition, residents and elected officials across the city are interested in closing the BRESKO Incinerator to address air quality issues in the area. Running out of room in the landfill and the desire to close the incinerator by 2031 creates the urgency to implement our Zero-Waste plans which will also reduce dependence on the drop-off sites.

The FY2027 capital budget and six-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) articulate the current thinking of the DPW. The Capital budget are investments in buildings, roads, and infrastructure that have at least 15 years of life. **Appendix D** has the capital budget CIP plan recommendations from the Planning Commission. As you can see, there is no further investment planned for Quarantine Landfill. Similarly, there are no further capital investments planned for Sisson Street. There is significant funding for the investment in Bowley's Lane and finishing the renovations to the Reedbird site. Construction of the composting facility at Bowley's Lane is included in the budget. DPW already has the majority of the funding for both sites. What is included in the Capital Budget and plan is the remainder needed.

DPW has begun to talk about the residential drop-off centers as residential "Recycling Centers", as they become the hub for residents to bring all recyclable materials. The CIP has potential investment in a construction and demolition site, which will help divert the significant construction waste that enters the landfill and incinerators. There are also funds to conduct a "long haul" study of the management of facilities and zero-waste.

Significant renovations to the Reedbird and Bowley's Lane sites are planned to upgrade the facilities for the trash and recycling pick up crews and trucks, trash drop-off, mixed recycling drop-off, and recycling materials such as mattresses, textiles, electronics, and hard plastics as they currently do. Renovations will expand each site to accommodate more residential users, and include ramps like Sisson has for ease of drop-off. In addition to the composting facility, Bowley's Lane renovation includes a place for the small haulers to drop off their materials. This action adds another location for small haulers, resolving a persistent issue of haulers and our trash trucks dropping of waste at the same time and causing extremely long lines

Below are more details about each site and the related infrastructure plans. DPW believes that when both sites are renovated, all of the waste and recycling that comes to the Sisson Street site can be accommodated. **Appendix E** has diagrams of the plans. **Appendix F** has the chart of all of the DPW facilities and the services planned in the future for those sites.

**Reedbird** is located in Cherry Hill at 701 Reedbird Avenue. The facility is only open one day a week for limited trash and recycling drop-off for residents while the facility undergoes significant renovations.

Services that will be provided at the renovated Reedbird:

- Residential drop-off of trash with 12 vehicle bays for residents to pull into to dispose of their trash.
- Residential drop-off of recycling with 12 vehicle bays for residents to pull into: paper/cardboard, cans, bottles, plastic. In separate bins, the textiles, electronics, mattresses, and hard plastics will continue to be collected.
- Residential drop-off of motor oil year-round.
- Composting drop-off
- Vaulted ramps like those at Sisson so residents can drop their waste or recycling more easily.
- Trash and Recycling trucks and crews for regular curbside pick-up for the west side of the city will be based here. However, the waste itself is not stored here, it is transported to the incinerator or Quarantine Landfill.
- Household hazardous waste will not be collected at Reedbird because the location is extremely close to the cove area wetlands that are being preserved.
- 22 acres including the resident drop-off, the trucks and crews for the trash collection for the west side of the city, and traffic queuing in the facility.
- No small haulers at Reedbird

Timeframe for completion: 3-4 years.

Capital Budget: Reedbird has roughly \$10 million allocated in the FY2027 budget. There is currently funding available for the design and construction, and this year's allocation will complete the funding.

Note about Reedbird: The site is located directly across the street from residential properties. DPW stated that renovations include strategies to make the site more appealing. Streetscaping, murals, materials that are consistent with development in the area, and anything that improves the view that residents who live across the street see are planned. In addition, the Task Force noted that if there is an opportunity to close Reedbird to assist with growth and preservation in the area, that option should also be available.

**Bowley's Lane.** Bowley's Lane is located on 6101 Bowley's Lane in East Baltimore.

Services that will be provided at the renovated Bowley's Lane:

- Residential drop-off of trash, with 12 bays for residents to pull up and remove their trash.
- Residential drop-off of recycling with 12 bays: paper/cardboard, cans, bottles, plastic. In separate bins: textiles, electronics, mattresses, metals.
- Household Hazardous Waste Drop-off
- Baltimore City's central composting facility and processing plant

- Small Haulers will be allowed to drop off in a separate section of the site, removing them from the NW Transfer station.
- Our sanitation workers and trucks will continue to be based here for east side trash collection. Their collected waste is transported to the landfill or incinerator.
- 82 acres, including the resident drop-off, future composting site, and trash/recycling trucks and crews for the east side, and ample room for queuing within the facility once completed.

Timeframe for completion: 6-7 years from today. The site will remain open during renovations.

Capital Budget: The renovations will be in stages, with completion by 2032. The capital budget contains funds for the renovations throughout the next few years.

A note about Bowley’s Lane site. The site is located near a tributary of the Herring Run – called Moore’s Run - and inside the Herring Run Watershed. Because of the topography, the site is not in a flood plain.

### **Sisson Street Task Force Process and Early Decisions**

The Task Force met roughly two times per month since October. Each meeting is recorded and can be found on the Sisson Street Task Force website <https://www.baltimorecity.gov/mayor/boards-commissions/sisson-street-task-force> The Task Force received public testimony at the 2nd meeting to get feedback on the current situation at Sisson and thoughts on the alternative sites that DPW had proposed. The Task Force then spent several meetings fact finding, including requesting tonnage and usage data collected at Sisson, Bowley’s and Reedbird, hearing from stakeholder groups that are users of the site, hearing from the head of the DPW crew at Sisson, Planning Department, BDC, and explored all of the alternatives that DPW considered as well as sites suggested by the public. Members of the Task Force visited Sisson, Bowley’s Lane, and Reedbird sites in February.

The Task Force evaluated all the alternative locations for Sisson Street that were considered by DPW, and those proposed by the public. The list can be found on **Appendix G** with the reasons each was rejected by the Task Force. The first official vote of the Task Force was to remove the controversial Falls Road location from consideration as an alternative.

### **Sisson Street Task Force Options for Public Consideration**

At the February 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, the Task Force discussed and considered three options for review by the public in addition to the findings in the draft document. These were sent to the public for comment on February 18<sup>th</sup> via the Task Force website and promotion by Task Force members. The options were:

**Option 1:** Keep Sisson Open Permanently with some upgrades

**Option 2:** Eventual closing of Sisson once certain metrics have been met

**Option 3:** Move Sisson to a new location. The Task Force ruled out all alternative locations brought to our attention, and so no alternative location was offered.

The full description of the three options can be found on **Appendix H**.

A public meeting took place February 23<sup>rd</sup> with over 40 residents providing oral or written testimony. Over 400 emails came into the Sisson Street Task Force email through the March 4<sup>th</sup> public comment deadline. The feedback was productive. The general tally was:

| Option 1 | Option 2 | Option 3 | Other/No explicit |
|----------|----------|----------|-------------------|
| 44%      | 46%      | 8%       | 2%                |

## **Sisson Street Task Force Recommendation in Detail**

On March 7, 2026, the Task Force met in person to discuss all of the feedback from the public comment period, all of the information provided by the DPW and the numerous stakeholders that the Task Force heard from. During this meeting, the group deliberated for three hours and unanimously approved the following recommendation to Mayor Scott. While the recommendation is summarized at the beginning of this report, the description below outlines specific considerations for each recommendation, as well as proposed timeline for implementation.

Recognizing the current importance of the Sisson Street Drop-off Center to residents and its role in waste management, as well as the challenges the site presents for any improvement, the Task Force recommends closure of the center only after the following seven conditions are met. The Site will remain open until that point. Specific details and justifications for each are found on page 7 of this report.

### ***Reedbird sanitation yard is completely renovated and fully operational and Bowley's Lane stays open during construction.***

Reedbird sanitation yard is only open one day a week while renovations continue. When the site was fully operational, it was the west side sanitation yard, housing the crews that collected trash and recycling from the west side of the city, as well as a small residential drop-off facility. When renovated, it will continue to be the sanitation yard for the west side of the city, as well as full-service recycling and trash residential drop-off center with proper ramps for ease of drop-off. No hazardous waste will be sent to Reedbird, and the exterior aesthetics of the site will be improved. It is anticipated this center will reopen in the next three to four years.

Bowley's Lane sanitation yard houses the sanitation and recycling crews for east Baltimore, with a drop-off site for trash, mixed recycling, and containers for electronics, mattress, and motor oil recycling. Bowley's Lane is also slated for renovations and will be opened during construction. Renovations include ramps similar to Sisson, as well as an area for small haulers to bring their waste, and full-service composting facility.

### ***Some of the recycling operations will be moved to York Road DGS facility, and the Benefits Districts will use a dumpster housed at the York Road DGS facility.***

The Department of General Services (DGS) facility is located on York Road just north of 41st Street. It is one of the areas where plows come to get their instructions during snowstorms, and is used by DGS for some of their fleet. This proposal relocates some of the recycling drop-off to York Road on a very limited basis and a limited schedule. This recommendation still needs further planning, and conversations with the community are needed.

The Charles Village and Midtown Benefits Districts will have a dumpster for their needs on a limited basis at the York Road DGS site. Currently, the Charles Village Community Benefits District and Midtown Community Benefits District have an agreement with DPW to use Sisson for convenience. Midtown only uses the site for bulk trash, and Charles Village uses the site for trash and recycling drop-off in a separate dumpster. The Task Force recommends this solution to be implemented within the next 18 months.

### ***Hazardous Household Waste drop off will be relocated to Bowley's Lane and an alternative site.***

The Household Hazardous Waste program is a very valuable resource for residents across the city and is only located at Sisson Street. It is so popular that traffic jams are consistent during each hazardous household waste day because Sisson does not have enough room for queuing in the facility. Currently the

plan is to move hazardous household waste drop-off to Bowley's Lane. The Task Force recommends this solution shall be implemented for the calendar year 2027 Hazardous Household drop-off weekends.

The Task Force recommends considering an additional location for Hazardous Household Waste, since it cannot be collected at the Reedbird site. The new site should be in the northern part of the city for convenience for residents there. The Task Force recommends the location be in an area with a low Environmental Justice score. The Environmental Justice scores are allocated according to set criteria to identify areas most at risk for health impacts of anything that creates an environmental threat as well. More about the state's Environmental Justice Index can be found <https://tinyurl.com/MDEJScores>

Several years ago, hazardous household waste was collected at Poly/Western parking lot. However, consulting historical records indicates the Baltimore City Public School System and parents were opposed to the waste being there. Nonetheless, the Task Force recommends consideration of an additional household hazardous waste drop-off location with a low Environmental Justice score to be designated within two years.

***The roles assigned to Sisson Street in the Less Waste, Better Baltimore plan will be re-assigned to other sites.***

Sisson Street, Bowley's Lane, and Reedbird play significant roles in our Less Waste Better Baltimore plan. As the Office of Sustainability prepares for an update of the plan, dependence on Sisson should be eliminated. It is anticipated an updated plan will be drafted within the next two years.

***A comprehensive, robust, and consistent education campaign shall be conducted to help residents know all the options for taking materials – including all the sites, better recycling habits, anti-litter, and more.***

The Task Force recommends significant financial resources should be invested in strategic, intentional, widespread, and effective communications. DPW has already begun a public education campaign around better recycling habits. The Task Force challenges DPW to allocate significant resources to public education campaigns not only around better recycling habits, but also where residents can take materials once Reedbird and Bowley's Lane sites are completed, promoting zero-waste as the ramp up of implementation occurs, and more.

Community residents and stakeholders must be involved in the creation of the campaign. Some of the public testimony had great ideas for a campaign, and the City Council has advocated for several years that a clear campaign is needed. DPW should not take this on alone. DPW should engage stakeholders and the public in a working group to create the campaign and be the ambassadors. Significant resources and funding needs to be allocated in the upcoming operating budgets for this work.

The Task Force recommends the campaign should be in phases depending on the implementation of the recommendations in this report. The public stakeholder working group should be in place sometime in fiscal year 2027.

***Pilot test the impacts of closure when the wind down of Sisson takes place. Factors discovered during the testing must be resolved.***

If the closure of Sisson is considered after these conditions are met, a pilot process with periodic closure to understand the difficulties in behavior changes must take place. Closure could be a few days or weeks to assist with monitoring the behavior and messaging needed for successfully ensuring that users are aware of the alternatives. For instance, illegal dumping can be monitored and resolved. Another example includes understanding the truck routes and additional education is needed. Such discoveries and

challenges need to be fully addressed prior to full closure of the site. The plan and details need to be fully worked out and transparent. The Task Force recommends this be a well-planned strategy and taking place as part of the wind down of Sisson. DPW has already committed to this strategy.

***If closed, the Sisson site will be turned to productive use that will include community and public input as to the use of the site.***

Conversations about the alternative uses for Sisson have occurred for several years. As the process for DPW to accomplish the seven conditions occurs, residents can begin planning for an alternative to the site. Community input will happen concurrently with other efforts at Sisson Street.

**Additional items that DPW must continue to move forward on:**

***An Environmental Justice assessment is conducted to ensure that environmental justice concerns are alleviated.***

One of the fundamental parts of the sanitation conversation is the placement of drop-off sites in Black neighborhoods. Reedbird and Bowley's Lane sites are in Black neighborhoods and have been for decades since the landfills there were capped. The Task Force requires an Environmental Justice assessment to ensure that the neighborhoods wherein these sites are located are not negatively impacted by the increased use of the sites. According to Maryland state law, the definition of Environmental Justice includes "equal protection from environmental and public health hazards for all people regardless of race, income, culture, and social status." Items for consideration in the Environmental Justice assessment includes:

- The neighborhoods should have a chance to request relocation or closure of the use of these sites
- The trucks that take waste to and from the sites should not directly impact Black neighborhoods,
- The traffic in the area should not be detrimental to the neighborhoods,
- The aesthetics of the sites should be significantly improved.

Additional analysis is needed to ensure all Environmental Justice concerns are addressed.

***Accelerate Zero-Waste initiatives to reduce dependence on Sisson and the other solid waste sites. Baltimore City's Zero-Waste goals include:***

- Full implementation of compost processing facility which will lead to opportunities for curbside compost collection and multiple drop-off sites, as well as encouraging our large institutions to compost. The goal is to redirect the large percentage of the waste in the land fill and incinerator.
  - Full implementation of deconstruction rather than demolition for full rehabs or demolished buildings
  - A bottle/can collection and payment program of some sort, including reverse vending machines or passage of the Bottle Bill in Maryland.
  - Other items outlined in the upcoming "Long Haul" study and the Less Waste, Better Baltimore plan.
- The Task Force recommends significant accomplishment of zero-waste goals within the next 10 years.

***The Sisson Street DPW Crew must be taken care of.***

The Task Force recommends that our Sisson Street crew be assured they are valued and appreciated by all residents who use Sisson Street. Their focus on customer service has made the experience in using this city service one of Baltimore City's favorite. Should the site close, these workers must be assigned to Bowley's or Reedbird where they can make a significant impact on providing the customer service residents have come to rely on. The Task Force recommends that all Sisson workers must be offered similar or better jobs within DPW.

***Continue to monitor the usage of Sisson Street and all of the drop-off and transfer station sites to understand the usage for trash and recycling at each site.***

At the Task Force's request, DPW began to monitor usage of the Sisson Street and Bowley's Lane sites by recording the zip codes of residents using the sites. Tonnage of materials was also measured. Tonnage and usage measurements should continue to be collected so that DPW can monitor the use of each drop-off and transfer station site with reporting to occur publicly on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. Trends in usage and tonnage will assist in understanding the impact of the public information campaign and implementation of the zero-waste goals. DPW should include in the reporting the increases or decreases of illegal dumping by geographic region as well. The Task Force recommends this as an ongoing initiative.

***Increase inspectors and penalties for illegal dumping, providing the Department of Housing and Community Development and DPW with the resources to continue this work.***

The City Council continues to advocate for more inspectors for the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for a variety of reasons. In addition, Mayor Scott and his team have advanced legislation in the General Assembly that changes the fines from \$1,000 per infraction to no cap on the amount of the penalty for infractions. The fines are set in Article II of our Charter. That section is the section of the Charter that can only be changed by the General Assembly. Both actions will have a significant impact on illegal dumping and catching illegal dumpers across the city. Efforts are also being made to redirect the collection of penalties to DHCD to enhance their resources. The Task Force recommends the increase in inspectors be included in the FY2027 budget and legislation be introduced that changes the fine for illegal dumping to a substantial amount higher sometime in 2026.

***Improve Bulk Trash collection***

To continue to reduce the dependence on our drop-off sites, the bulk trash collection program needs to be significantly improved. Bulk trash collection was halted during the COVID-19 pandemic. It returned two years later in a very limited fashion. A resident can schedule a bulk trash pick-up using 311, but often the pick-up is scheduled three months in advance, and only on Saturdays. The Task Force recommends that DPW ensure an appointment can be made no later than 30 days in advance and that one other day of the week should be included for pick up. Additional resources may be needed for DPW to accomplish this. The Task Force recommends implementation within the next two years.

***Improve the Community Pitch-in program by going back to how the program was run prior to 2025***

The Task Force recommends that the Community Pitch-In program should go back to the scheduling pattern that took place prior to 2025. The program worked much better when the community association could reserve four dumpsters per year. They organized volunteers, got the word out about the opportunity for the residents, and ensured that their residents used the dumpsters wisely. The 2024 system change that allowed any individual to call 311 to schedule a dumpster for their neighborhood has failed. There is constant confusion as to who called, no reliable volunteers, and no reliable publicity of the opportunity in neighborhoods. The Task Force recommends this change occur immediately.

The Task Force also recommends DPW consider increasing the number of dumpster days in certain areas that may need it most based on data such as illegal dumping, bulk trash requests, and any additional considerations. This should be implemented in the next 18 months.

***The City Council will introduce legislation that all multifamily buildings must supply trash and recycling services to their residents.***

Multifamily buildings are required to provide sanitation services to tenants through their own private companies. The members of the Baltimore City Council who sat on the Task Force will introduce legislation to change the code to require that multifamily buildings also provide recycling services for their residents. The change will be in Article 23 sections 2-1 and 2-2. Currently the language says “In all places where mixed refuse is accumulated, a sufficient number of receptacles to contain the mixed refuse between collections must be provided ...” The language will change to clarify that recycling and trash bins and service must be provided. Enforcement and education will be needed. The Task Force recommends this legislation to be introduced and passed in 2026.

***DPW will work with Clean Corps and the Community Benefits Districts on alternative placements of the dedicated dumpsters.***

Currently, Clean Corps uses one dedicated dumpster per week to dispose of materials collected in the 20 neighborhoods where they are located. This dumpster is at Sisson Street. DPW will work with Clean Corps to relocate that dumpster to another location. Bowley’s Lane may be that location, but this has yet to be determined. The Task Force recommends this solution is found within 18 months.

The Charles Village Benefits District and Midtown Benefits District solutions were discussed earlier. Their dedicated dumpster will be relocated to York Road DGS facility within 18 months.

***If Sisson is sold, proceeds of any potential sale of the Sisson property will go toward implementation of zero waste goals.***

The Task Force recommends that if the Sisson Street property is sold for redevelopment, the proceeds shall be directed toward investments in our zero-waste infrastructure. While it is unknown what the potential revenue from the site will be, the priority for the Task Force is for our zero-waste goals to be accomplished in an urgent manner, and investment toward that end is necessary.

**Conclusion**

The Sisson Street Task Force process was not just an exercise about the Sisson Street site itself. It provided the Task Force members insight into the considerations for our City’s sanitation infrastructure. Keeping our neighborhoods clean is one of the main functions of local government. Conversations about all aspects of our sanitation infrastructure were lengthy and robust.

Thank you to Mayor Scott for the opportunity to work on this project and provide our recommendations. While the Task Force work is complete, the Task Force recommends that accountability for implementation of these recommendations rests the responsibility Department of Public Works, with the oversight from the Office of Sustainability and the Baltimore City Council’s Public Health and Environment Committee or its successor.

## Appendices

|   |         |
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| B. Current services provided by DPW sanitation and recycling centers    | Page 15 |
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**Appendix A.** List of Sisson Street Task Force Members

Odette Ramos, Baltimore City Council, District 14, Chair

Samantha Horn, Greater Remington Improvement Association, Vice Chair

Jermaine Jones, Baltimore City Council, District 12

James Torrence, Baltimore City Council, District 7

John Ellsberry, Stonehill Community Association

Mary Ann Henderson, Midtown Community Benefits District

Kevin Macartney, Charles Village Civic Association

Keondra Prier, Reservoir Hill Association

Alan Robinson DPW, Deputy Director/Mayor's Office

Kristin Sinclair, Hampden Community Council

Sandy Sparks, Friends of the Jones Falls

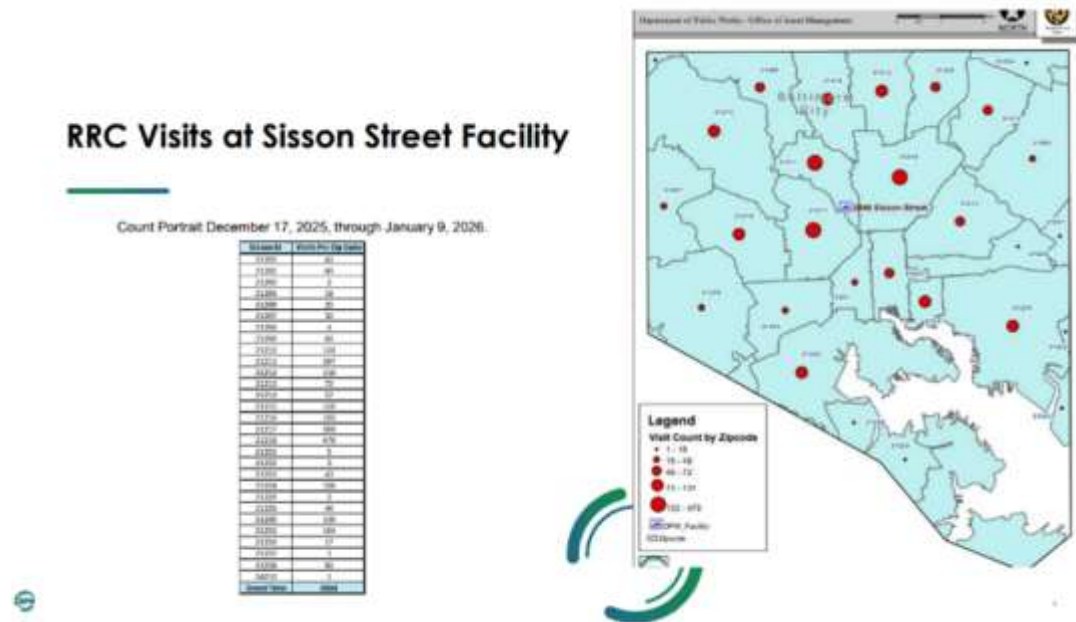
Jed Weeks, Bikemore

**Appendix B. Current services provided by DPW centers.**

| <b>Service</b>  | <b>Sisson</b> | <b>Reedbird</b>                     | <b>Bowley's</b> | <b>NW Transfer</b> | <b>Quarantine</b> |
|---|---------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Resident drop-off of trash in dumpsters, taken to incinerator   | Yes           | One day a week during renovations   | Yes             | Yes                | Yes               |
| Resident drop-off of mixed recycling (paper, cardboard, cans, bottles) Recycling facility in Elkridge | Yes           | One day a week during renovations   | Yes             | Yes                | Yes               |
| Residential drop-off of other recyclables (mattresses, electronics, textiles) - contracts to pick up  | Yes           | No                                  | Yes             | Yes                | Yes               |
| Residential drop-off of compost - contractor pick up  | Yes           | One day per week during renovations | Yes             | Yes                | Yes               |
| Hazardous Waste Drop Off  | Yes           | No                                  | No              | No                 | No                |
| Curbside trash and recycling staff and trucks   | No            | Before it closed for renovations    | Yes             | No                 | No                |
| All waste from small private haulers (if it didn't go to incinerator)                                 | No            | No                                  | No              | Yes                | Yes               |
| All trash waste from curbside collection (if it does not go to incinerator)                           | No            | No                                  | No              | Yes                | Yes               |

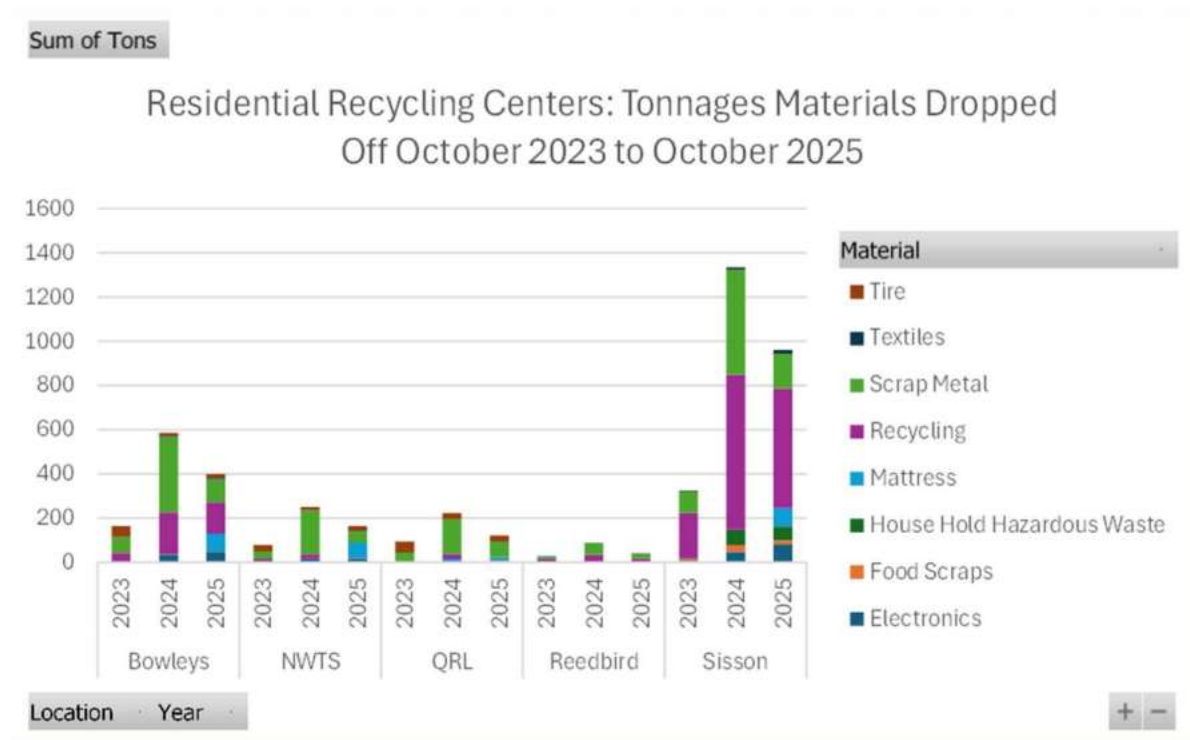
## Appendix C. Usage data

- Data by users of Sisson.** Usage data was collected for the first time during this process. For the time between December 19, 2025 and January 9, 2026, DPW mapped out the number of visits and where the residents were coming from who used the site. This data only included Sisson and Bowley's because Reedbird is closed.

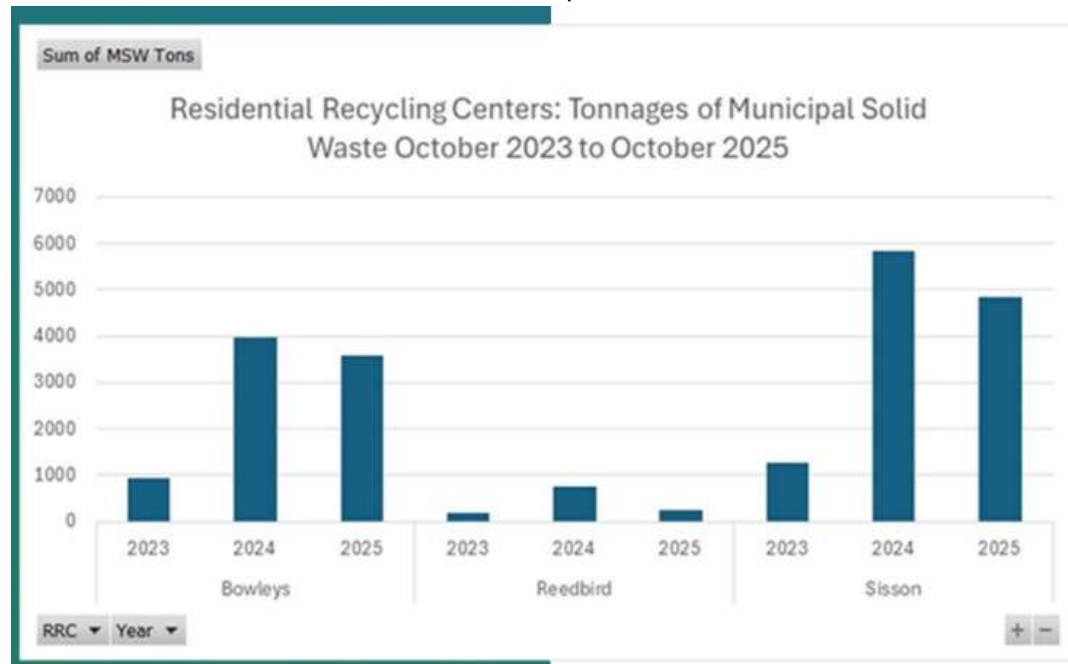


- **Usage Data by tonnage of Recycling and Solid Waste.** Data was reported for the time period between October 2023 and October 2025 measuring the tonnage of recyclables and also the tonnage of solid waste dropped off to all drop-off sites.

Users clearly use Sisson for dropping off recycling. 85% of all of the recycling dropped off at the centers goes to Sisson Street.



Sisson Street is also the favorite location to drop off solid waste.



## Appendix D. Proposed Capital Budget

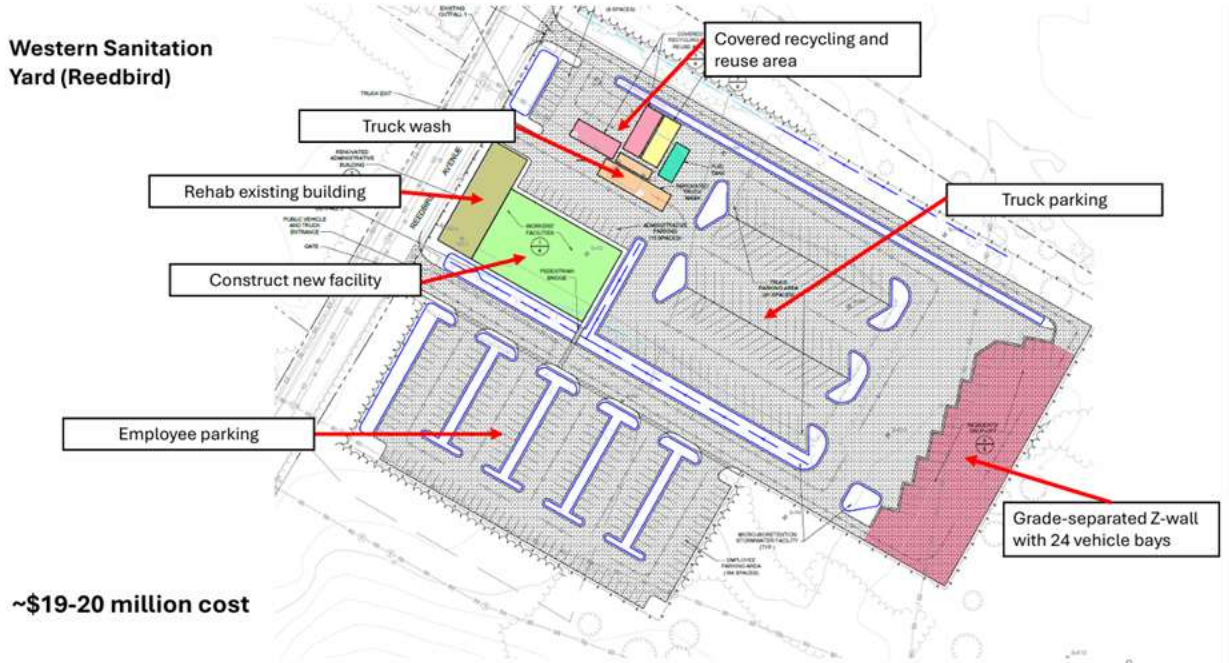
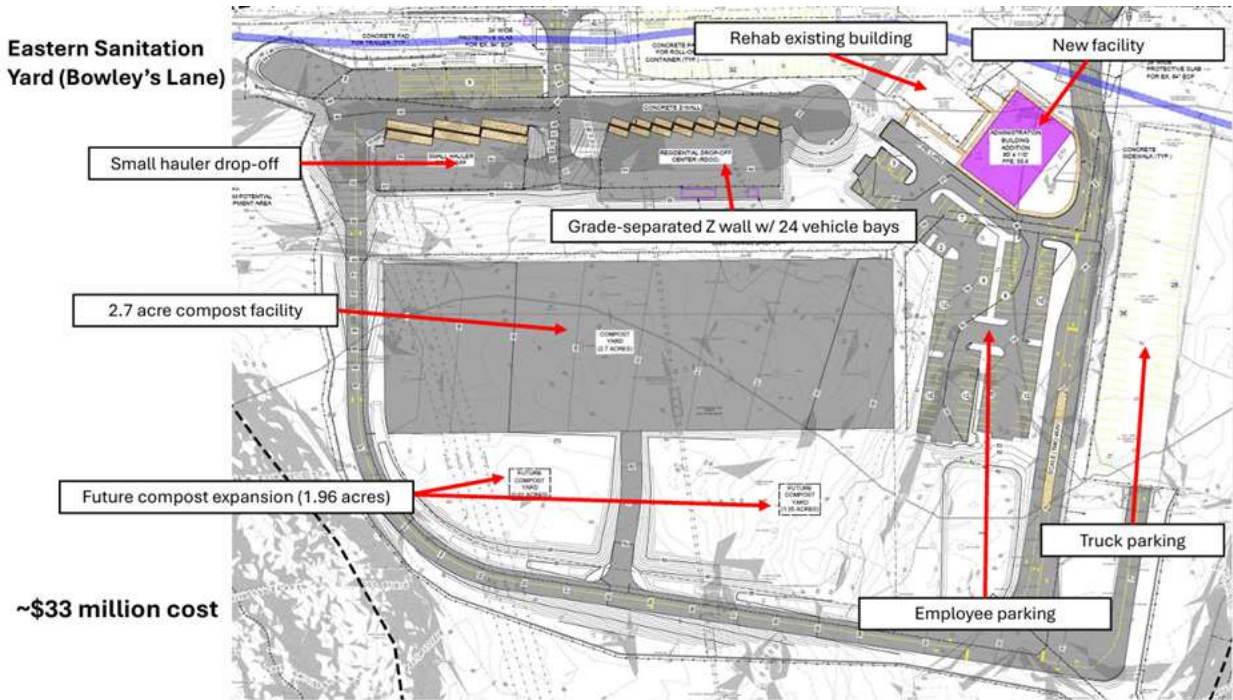
### a. FY2027 Capital Budget and CIP plan recommendations from the Planning Commission

|   | Fy2027         | FY2028         | FY2029         | FY2030         | Fy2031         | Fy2032         |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 545 Department of Public Works  | \$ 486,163,781 | \$ 711,713,792 | \$ 692,986,183 | \$ 459,799,788 | \$ 588,695,896 | \$ 246,136,000 |
| 546 Solid Waste - Facilities  | \$ 12,749,466  | \$ 10,600,000  | \$ 20,000,000  | \$ 6,000,000   | \$ 6,000,000   | \$ 26,000,000  |
| 547 PR000188 902047 Quarantine Road Landfill Expansion                  | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           |
| 548 RC7734 General Obligation Bonds - 3rd Public Infrastructure         | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           |
| 549 PR001160 908119 Waste Diversion Facility                            | \$ 1,000,000   | \$ 3,500,000   | \$ 5,000,000   | \$ 5,000,000   | \$ 5,000,000   | \$ 5,000,000   |
| 550 RC7734 General Obligation Bonds - 3rd Public Infrastructure         | \$ 1,000,000   | \$ 3,500,000   | \$ 5,000,000   | \$ 5,000,000   | \$ 5,000,000   | \$ 5,000,000   |
| 561 PR002510 917035 Solid Waste Facility Health and Safety Improvements | \$ 1,000,000   | \$ 500,000     | \$ 500,000     | \$ 500,000     | \$ 500,000     | \$ 500,000     |
| 552 RC7734 General Obligation Bonds - 3rd Public Infrastructure         | \$ 1,000,000   | \$ 500,000     | \$ 500,000     | \$ 500,000     | \$ 500,000     | \$ 500,000     |
| 560 PR002516 925033 Solid Waste Regulatory Compliance Services          | \$ 1,000,000   | \$ 1,000,000   | \$ 800,000     | \$ 800,000     | \$ 800,000     | \$ 800,000     |
| 554 RC7734 General Obligation Bonds - 3rd Public Infrastructure         | \$ 1,000,000   | \$ 1,000,000   | \$ 800,000     | \$ 800,000     | \$ 800,000     | \$ 800,000     |
| 555 PR002517 961010 517-010 Eastside Sanitation Complex                 | \$ -           | \$ 5,600,000   | \$ 14,000,000  | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           |
| 556 RC0669 General Fund Revenue - Capital                               | \$ -           | \$ 5,600,000   | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           |
| 557 RC7734 General Obligation Bonds - 3rd Public Infrastructure         | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ 14,000,000  | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           |
| 558 PR002682 924037 Western Sanitation Yard Renovation                  | \$ 9,749,466   | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           |
| 559 RC0669 General Fund Revenue - Capital                               | \$ 9,749,466   | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           |
| 560 PR002933 Aerated Static Pile Compost Facilities                     | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           |
| 561 RC7734 General Obligation Bonds - 3rd Public Infrastructure         | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           |
| 562 PR003691 Long Haul Waste Diversion                                  | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ 20,000,000  |
| 563 RC7734 General Obligation Bonds - 3rd Public Infrastructure         | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ -           | \$ 20,000,000  |

#### Notes:

- There is no further investment in expansion of Quarantine Land Fill. Any costs for maintenance and operations comes from the operating budget.
- The Waste Diversion Facility is a new Construction and Demolition site being developed for deconstruction materials to be sorted and inventoried.
- Solid Waste Health and Safety Improvements include upgrades to existing facilities.
- The Eastside Sanitation Complex is the Bowley's Lane site. The \$5.6 million and \$14million are for completing the composting facility and upgrades to the site.
- The Western Sanitation Yard is the Reedbird site. The \$9.75million is to complete the renovations for the facility.
- The line item for the composting facility is blank because it is included in the Bowley's Lane budget.
- The Long Haul study is ongoing, and the \$20million is a place holder for future investments.
- Sisson is not listed at all in this budget. Any upgrades for the short term are included in the operating budget.

**Appendix E. Plans for Bowley's Lane and Reedbird renovations**



**Appendix F. Services offered in the future once all plans are implemented in 6-10 years**

| <b>Service</b>  | <b>Reedbird</b> | <b>Bowley's Lane</b> | <b>NW Transfer</b> | <b>Quarantine Landfill</b> | <b>DGS York Road</b> | <b>Alt site</b> |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Resident drop-off of trash in dumpsters, taken to incinerator   | Yes             | Yes                  | No                 | No                         | No                   | No              |
| Resident drop-off of mixed recycling (paper, cardboard, cans, bottles) Recycling facility in Elkridge | Yes             | Yes                  | No                 | No                         | Limited              | No              |
| Residential drop-off of other recyclables (mattresses, electronics, textiles) - contracts to pick up  | Yes             | Yes                  | No                 | No                         | Limited              | No              |
| Residential drop-off of compost - contractor pick up  | Yes             | Yes                  | No                 | No                         | No                   | No              |
| Hazardous Waste Drop Off  | No              | Yes                  | No                 | No                         | No                   | Yes             |
| Curbside trash and recycling staff and trucks   | Yes             | Yes                  | No                 | No                         | No                   | No              |
| All waste from small private haulers (if it didn't go to incinerator)                                 | No              | Yes                  | Yes                | Yes                        | No                   | No              |
| All trash waste from curbside collection (if it does not go to incinerator)                           | No              | No                   | Yes                | Yes                        | No                   | No              |
|   |                 |                      |                    |                            |                      |                 |

**Appendix G. Alternative Sites examined and the reason for rejection**

| Site name and address                           | Reason for rejection   |
|---|--|
| 2801 Falls Road                                 | Public outcry against<br>In flood plain  |
| 400 N Avenue                                    | Near Black Neighborhood<br>Privately owned by Amtrak   |
| 25th and Howard/Huntingdon                      | Privately owned<br>Too expensive to lease facility   |
| Closed landfill at Monument and Edison Highway  | Major exciting development project<br>Not centrally located  |
| Camp Small                                      | Too small unless we acquired the Fleishman's vinegar site, which has contamination<br>Given the fire, it would be a bad idea to add recycling/trash there too. |
| 560 W North Avenue - Salt Dome                  | Too small<br>Not enough room for salt dome, salt trucks and for residential drop off.  |
| Guilford/Fallsway site under JFX next to Jail   | In Flood plain<br>Federal Government will not allow waste facility under bridge.   |
| Along Light Rail, entrance on Wyman Park Bridge | Entrance ramp is not sturdy<br>Area not big enough   |
| Old Ball Fields at Druid Hill Park              | No trash / recycling facility in our parks   |
| 401 W 26th Street lot                           | Development pending 150 apartments   |

## **Appendix H. Three Options Released for Public Comment**

At the February 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, the Sisson Street Task Force discussed and considered three options for review by the public in addition to the findings in the draft document. A draft of the Task Force findings plus these options was sent to the public for comment, and a public meeting took place February 24<sup>th</sup>. Public comment remained open till March 4<sup>th</sup>. The options were

### **Sisson Proposal 1: Keep Sisson Open Permanently**

This proposal keeps Sisson open permanently, with some investments to make workers' safety and conditions better, while moving some services to other locations to address the traffic queuing issue and the lack of space. If Sisson is to stay in the same place, DPW should consider the following to make Sisson Street work:

- Move Hazardous Household Waste days to Bowley's Lane site, even before it is renovated. This will reduce the number of cars that are queuing outside of Sisson on hazardous household waste days which causes severe traffic safety concerns.
- Fast track initiatives to remove glass, plastic bottles, and cans from the waste stream, as well as construction and demolition waste. Sisson could be used as a site for drop-off to meet our zero-waste goals.
- Enhance the facilities for the workers through modulars first, then full capital investment in the next few years.
- Consider a robust and targeted educational campaign to encourage the 50% of Sisson users who live closer to the other sites to use those sites once developed and open. Dedicate funding to understand what users need to see at Reedbird and Bowley's Lane and integrate it into the design.

### **Proposal 2: Eventual Closing of Sisson After Certain Metrics are Met**

This recommendation calls for the eventual closing of Sisson after DPW meets specific milestones for reducing the dependence on Sisson Street. If milestones are not met, Sisson stays open until they are met. Bowley's Lane and Reedbird must be open and operational before Sisson closes. In addition, a specific and intentional public relations campaign shall be implemented to assist with aligning residents to use Bowley's Lane and Reedbird instead of Sisson.

**Potential timeframe:** 3-6 years, depending on achieving milestones and the complete renovations and opening of the Reedbird site.

Begin **reducing trash waste** dropped off at Sisson/the transfer centers:

- Collect specific data on the tonnage of trash dropped off at Sisson and all centers. Report each year, and report if the adjustments described below to other collection programs are making a difference in the tonnage dropped off at Sisson. Set a baseline this year.
- Enhance bulk trash collection to allow for less than a month wait time for appointments. Collect baseline data now with the current program, and report on improvements plus tonnage of trash picked up each year.
- More dumpster days in neighborhoods that have the most need. Currently, there are 4 dumpster days per neighborhood. Consider increasing to 6 in areas that we see more need. Report on the

tonnage collected per neighborhood each year. Set the baseline for the data this coming fiscal year.

- Move Household Hazardous Waste drop off to Bowley's Lane within this year to begin the practice of using Bowley's Lane.

Begin **reducing recycling drop-off** at Sisson.

- Set baseline data this year for all recyclables dropped off at Sisson. This includes mattresses, textiles, oysters, composting, and mixed recycling. Continue to report each year as additional locations/methods are implemented
- Fast-track initiatives to remove glass, cans, and bottles through a bottle deposit/reverse vending program.
- Increase urgency of removing materials from the waste stream, including the planned Construction and Demolition waste facility, to reduce construction waste from the solid waste stream.

**Implement a strategic public relations and community engagement campaign** to reduce dependence on Sisson and begin to use Reedbird and Bowley's Lane when they are redeveloped. Consider a robust and targeted educational campaign to encourage the 50% of Sisson users who live closer to the other sites to use those sites once developed and open. Dedicate funding to understand what users need to see at Reedbird and Bowley's Lane and integrate into the design of the renovated sites.

### **Proposal 3: Relocate Sisson to another site - temporarily or permanently**

The Task Force examined several sites that could be alternatives for Sisson Street, using the criteria set out by Mayor Scott, DPW, and the Sisson Street Task Force. These criteria include:

- Any new site cannot be in a Black neighborhood
- Any new site must be near Sisson so it is centrally located.
- Any new site cannot be in a floodplain or watershed
- The size had to be at least 4 acres to accommodate the needs DPW has for the residential drop-off part of the facility.

**Appendix G** has the chart of all of the alternative sites that were considered and why they were rejected by the Task Force. Many of the sites were privately owned, and the owner was actively using the site. One of the sites that is owned by Baltimore City has a really innovative project slated for the site, so it's not available. Other sites were in a flood plain, and others would be too expensive to lease from the owner.

Should an alternative site come about that makes sense, any amenities needed by the neighborhoods should be implemented immediately, such as traffic calming, street scaping, or other needs identified by that neighborhood.

The same list of data collection articulated in the previous proposals should also be considered here to determine if the site is a permanent site or one that will be slowly reduced as Reedbird and Bowley's Lane are renovated. The public relations and community engagement campaign outlined earlier is necessary as well.