

City scales back trash collection

By Annie Linskey, *Baltimore Sun*, June 2, 2009

The Baltimore City Council approved a new plan to reduce trash collection to once a week, passing one of the mayor's top legislative priorities on an 8-to-5 vote.

"It is really a mind-set; people have to change," Baltimore Mayor Sheila Dixon said after the vote. The legislation also increases recycling pickup to once a week, from once every other week, a move that fits with the mayor's goal to promote a "greener" city.

The new plan goes into effect July 14 and coincides with a broader shift in collection routes, which will mean almost every neighborhood will have a new trash day. Those dates will be unveiled in coming weeks.

More than 100 employees of the Department of Public Works protested outside City Hall before the vote. They rented a jumbo-size inflatable skunk for their rally, to convey a message that the city will start to smell bad when trash pick up is cut back from the current, twice-weekly schedule.

At the hearing, Councilman William H. Cole IV said the council members who voted against the plan represent districts that are clustered in the urban city center. "This is about being able to walk out of your front door and not seeing piles of trash," he said.

Administration officials disagreed, saying the changes would free DPW to devote 22 crews to cleaning alleys.