

Steps from Pimlico, residents say city doesn't care

by Christian Schaffer, *abc2news.com*, May 21, 2011

City crews have been working hard to make the area around Oimlico shine for the Preakness Stakes.

But some people who live near Old Hilltop say those crews must have missed a few spots.

Tyrone White has lived on Denmore Avenue – just two blocks from Pimlico -- for 17 years. We found him cutting his grass on Friday. It's a different story across the street.

Property records show the city of Baltimore owns the vacant lot across from White's home -- and White says it hasn't been mowed in more than a year.

“It's irritating, to be honest with you, it's very irritating,” he said.

Haywood Single's lawn is immaculate -- from the potted flowers, to the ceramic frogs. But he lives right next door to that city owned jungle.

“It's very frustrating,” Single said. “Because I try to keep up my property and the surroundings, it makes my property look bad.”

Both men say city crews mow these lots about once a year -- usually, right before the Preakness. This year, even that didn't happen.

“I don't know whether the city doesn't care or they don't have the funds, or what it is I really don't know,” White said. “Someone should look into it and see why do we have to have this.”

“One of the problems is that when people call to complain about lots like the one on Denmore Avenue, it's not clear which city agency is supposed to come out and take care of it.

“There are five to six city agencies that are responsible for cutting certain parcels and it's very confusing,” said Baltimore City Councilman William Cole.

Another problem is volume -- there's more than 30,000 vacant properties in Baltimore City, and many other areas that need to be mowed.

There's no quick fix for that, but Councilman Cole has introduced a resolution that would consolidate mowing services into one department. “There should be one entity that everybody can call to report these unmowed lots so that we can get it done,” he said.

In the meantime people who live near Pimlico -- and all over the city -- continue to take care of their properties. While in many cases the property owner next door doesn't.

“This is a great area that people come late at night, and dump all their trash and stuff. Because they see that nobody else cares so they don't care,” White said.

Councilman Cole said he expects to schedule a hearing on that proposal to consolidate the city's mowing services in about two weeks.