

## **DRAFT**

### **Neither rain nor heat... nor microburst... can keep Tempe crews from collecting residents' green waste**

As many Tempe residents are all too aware, parts of the city – specifically south of Elliot Road – were hit hard by a mid-July monsoon storm that included a microburst and caused considerable damage to neighborhoods. The storm uprooted hundreds of trees, brought down sizeable limbs and branches, and wreaked havoc on residents' yards, as well as landscaping along city streets and in parks.

The storm hit on the evening of Sunday, July 13; before it even cleared, City of Tempe crews were out clearing debris, working through the night to make sure our streets were safe for the morning commute. When it is all said and done, the city will have collected nearly 1,000 tons of storm-related debris, with virtually all of it being turned into compost. And all of this is being done on top of maintaining our regular trash, recycling, bulk trash and green waste collection schedule.

Stepping back and looking at the bigger picture, Tempe made significant changes to our bulk trash and green waste collection program just over a year ago. Since then, we have been listening to residents and hearing your concerns. Through online surveys, community forums, many neighborhood association meetings, and hundreds of one-on-one conversations, you told us you want more opportunities for bulk trash collection and that you value the city's efforts to collect and compost green organics. We listened.

In June, we supported modifications to the city's bulk trash and green organics collection program to include more mixed waste (bulk trash) collections while retaining a significant green-organics composting component. Beginning in January, Tempe will provide six mixed waste collections per year, up from two during the last year.

For residents wishing to participate in our green-organics-to-compost program, the new schedule will feature up to three collections per year of green organics within the six mixed waste collections. Residents who choose to participate will separate green organics from their mixed waste piles for collection within that same week. These separated green piles will be composted.

Our goal is to deliver residential solid waste services that are financially and environmentally sustainable. These modifications strike a balance between meeting the needs of our residents, helping to offset rising operational costs, and delivering sustainable services. The modified program will still allow Tempe to reduce miles driven, reduce fuel use, save fuel costs and reduce greenhouse emissions; it will still allow the city to reduce the number of collection vehicles, resulting in significant savings over the next few years.

We want to ensure that city services meet the bulk trash and green organics collection needs of our residents. In addition to scheduled collection, Tempe provides residents with access to two transfer stations where they can bring their bulk materials – twice per month, up to 2,000 pounds – at no charge. As evidenced over the last month, Tempe provides increased collection of green organics in the event of weather events (e.g., monsoon storms and frost) that create increased yard waste.

The city also provides on-call collection services at a reasonable cost for residents whose bulk trash and green waste collection needs exceed scheduled services. For our many residents who live adjacent to alleys, our staff is committed to providing direct and strategic response through abatement and enforcement when illegal dumping or misuse of bulk trash collection affects our quality of life.

Until the enhanced schedule begins in January, the city will continue collecting every other month, with two collections dedicated to green organics (vegetation) and one for mixed waste (bulk trash and green organics) between July and December.

As a Council, we are proud to work on behalf of the residents of the City of Tempe. We appreciate your patience and your encouraging words for city staff during the monsoon cleanup. We also appreciate the critical feedback you have provided about our ongoing bulk waste and green organics collection program. It is this kind of collaboration between the council, city staff and the residents we serve that makes Tempe great.

For collection schedules and more information, visit [tempe.gov/slashthetrash](http://tempe.gov/slashthetrash) or call 480-350-4311.