



# Solid Waste Program Updates 2026



# Agenda

- State of Solid Waste
- Review of Program Changes
- Financial State
- Community Communications
- 2026 Proposed Operational Changes for Consideration
- Questions



# State of Solid Waste



- The business of trash and recycling is complex.
  - 2023 former MRF transitions of recycling created an additional \$1.35M burden on a balanced fund.
  - Fund attempted to live within its means for 14 months without service modifications.
  - Operations staffing and employee concerns were top of mind.
  - The market and business is fluid and has significant regional limitations.
  - Peer community understanding and best practice services were in evaluation.

# State of Solid Waste



- Operational changes to offset the financial conditions.
  - Rate and fee study was premature and competing studies were in progress.
  - Demonstration of operational efficiencies was paramount prior to rate study.
  - Time allowed for stabilization and true costing realities of service.
  - Reviewed the plan with Leadership December 2024.
  - Changes ensured we meet all statutory requirements

*Currently trending in a positive trajectory after changes*

# Recycling Transfer Facility



- Transfer facility is staffed with 2 personnel, 1-FTE supervisor and currently 1-temp
- Facility transfers an average 379 tons of material per month.
- Material audit –
  - Fall 2023, 20.25% contamination rate
  - Fall 2025, 19.98% contamination rate
  - Current national average is at 25% per EPA
- Recycling commodity is a highly volatile market.
- Closest market for this commodity is Phoenix.
- Transportation fees are expensive.



# Recap of Program Changes 2025

Holiday  
Schedules

Commercial  
Collections

Hoist and Haul  
Service

Bulk Trash

Hazardous  
Product Center

Green Waste  
Program

Community  
Communications

# Holiday Schedules

- All Solid Waste programs have observed all 13 city recognized holidays.
  - Some holidays/special events have required limited service in the downtown core.
- Landfill is closed on all holidays.
  - Messaging plan includes press releases (city & county), Constant Contact, new signage at landfill, social media, website updates, direct HOA communications.
- No bulk trash collections on holiday weeks.
  - Limited services for downtown.



## Upcoming Modified Schedule

Hello Samuel,

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz - City of Flagstaff Public Works -  
Notice of Change in Services – Monday, October 13th, 2025

In observance of Indigenous People's Day, we will be operating on a modified schedule Monday October 13th:

### RESIDENTIAL COLLECTIONS

For Monday October 13th, we will be running a modified schedule. If your regular TRASH pickup falls on Monday, 10/13/2025, your service will be moved to Tuesday, 10/14/2025. Please have your containers out by 6:00 AM on Tuesday to ensure pickup.

# Commercial Collections



- Commercial collections has found better stability after changes
- Significant reduction in overtime
- Continued service provided to existing customers without adding any new sites.
- No Sunday services outside of the downtown core.
- Equipment maintenance has improved.
- Continue to serving existing customers.



# Hoist and Haul Services



- Open market has supported this transition well.
- We continue services to local partners, municipal government, existing IGA holders.
- Staffing from this program is now able to support other collections services.
- This program has a low-cost recovery at current rates.
- This shift has given us the ability to defer larger equipment capital purchases until financial stability.

# Bulk Trash Services



- Quarterly service continues and no bulk pick up on holiday weeks.
- Constant Contact and social media platforms are key to education campaign of appropriate and use of bulk program.
  - Direct communications with HOAs on changes and education opportunities have helped.
- Bulk equipment operators are assigned commercial and residential routes on holiday weeks.
  - This helps with previous weekend overtime concerns.
- We partnered with Flagstaff Fire on targeted pine needle clean up events.
- Continued coordination with Code Enforcement for community education.

# Residential Collections



- Why were there no changes made to this program?
- Arizona mandates that cities and town's provide residential collections or contract with a provider.
- Residential refuse service is an overall predictable and routine common service.
- Commercial operators shift to residential collections to support and lower operational costs.

# Community Communications



- Constant Contact
  - Communications for holiday flex schedules. 2-3 notifications leading up to the holiday week
- Public Affairs provides the press releases on city closures
- Social media platforms
- Radio programming/advertising
- New signage at the Landfill
- Direct meetings and HOA focus
- Individual follow up by email and phone

# Current Financial State

# Financial State



- Operational deficit began with the acceptance of recycle center on Butler Ave. in 2023.
- Solid Waste made several cost saving shifts immediately.
  - Reducing contracted services (temp labor, vendors, hauling)
  - Deferred Capital projects and fleet purchases to out years.
  - Tried to reduce overtime.
- Ultimately, we needed to make more significant changes starting January 2025.

# Financial State



	Budget	Actual	Deficit	%
FY22-23 Operation	\$10,899,096.00	\$12,256,497.94	(\$1,357,401.94)	-12.45%
FY23-24 Operations	\$11,288,849.00	\$12,220,217.37	(\$931,368.37)	-8.25%
FY24-25 Operations- changes implemented mid-year	\$12,269,637.00	\$12,709,528.15	(\$439,891.15)	-3.59%

# Financial State



- We continue to work closely with finance and budget to ensure continued success and financial stability.
- Capital and Fleet costs are still programmed when high priority.
- FY 2027-28 Rate Study is tentatively programmed for evaluation.
  - This will allow us to set the operational expectation moving forward.

# 2026 Proposed Operational Changes for Consideration

# Residential Recycling

- Every other week Recycling collection
  - This is projected to bring in the same volume of material while reducing weekly vehicle miles traveled and overtime.
  - Driver audits report 60% of carts half full or less weekly.
  - Further study is needed to understand the economic benefit.
- This would not change until July 2026 to allow for customer and community communications.
- Commercial collections are based on service subscription, and no changes are proposed.



# Curbside Glass Recycling



- Less than 300 of the 27,000 customers subscribe for curbside glass collections.
- Shift to drop off locations only, ending curbside subscription. Cost savings and consolidated service.
- Restricted and limited market for glass.
  - Current market is in Las Vegas. Product is very heavy which is costly to ship.
- Continue shipments shift to alternatives in the local market including use for daily cover at Cinder Lakes Landfill?

# Questions and Discussion