



# Citywide Garbage Program 2021 Annual Summary

## Garbage Service

All Saint Paul residential 1–4-unit properties are required to participate in the City’s Garbage Program per City Ordinance.

Having a Citywide Garbage Program benefits residents by setting uniform rates, protecting public health, reducing wear and tear on streets and alleys, and reducing pollution by having fewer trucks on the street.

### 2021 by the Numbers:

**73,701** households received garbage service: a 1.9% increase

**0.7%** reported missed collections: a 0.03% increase

**58,257** tons of garbage collected: a 2.7% decrease

**4.35** average pounds of garbage generated by households daily: a 4% decrease

**19,493** bulky items collected at no additional charge to residents: a 7.7% decrease

**125** average temporary service holds per month: no change

**22,568** delinquent bills turned over to City for payment: a 0.2% increase

Saint Paul’s Garbage Program improved resident services, increased processing efficiencies, reduced erroneous assessments for delinquent accounts, and lowered the amount of waste generated.

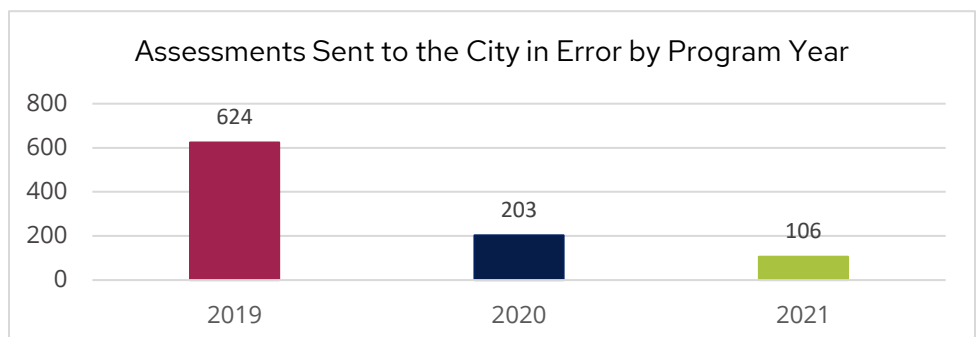
## Process Improvements: Customer Service and Data Tracking

In October 2021, the Garbage Program piloted a new customer service management system, Zendesk. This technology tracks all interactions between residents and the City, as well as the City with St Paul Haulers LLC. The improved reporting features allow staff to run reports to identify and address service issues more quickly. Improvements include:

- Expanded options for residents to contact the Garbage Program, through website, phone, or email, increasing users’ convenience.
- Decreased staff processing time for complaint resolutions - 58% of tickets resolved in under 5 hours, 71% of contacts either resolved on the same day or by the next day.
- Reduced the processing time for delinquent accounts by 20%.
- Improved the City’s ability to hold garbage haulers accountable for service issues through more detailed data records.

## Delinquent Accounts: Erroneous Assessments Decreased by 48%

If the garbage haulers do not receive payment for a resident’s account by the end of the billing cycle, the outstanding amount is turned over to the City for collection through the tax assessment process. In 2021, 9% of all accounts were sent to the City for payment which was a decrease of 1% from the past year. Of these, fewer than 1% were assessed in error. The City provides feedback and education to the garbage haulers on these errors. This feedback has reduced the number of errors by 48% in the past year and by 83% since 2019.



## Communication and Engagement: Food Waste Reduction Challenge



The garbage team led a virtual six-week Food Waste Reduction Challenge with 145 households. The Challenge was a success! Participating households reported an average decrease in food waste of 45%, and 100% reported an increase in knowledge of practices to prevent food waste. Program staff developed and implemented tools and resources to assist households in reducing their food waste. These tools and resources are available at [stpaul.gov/foodwaste](http://stpaul.gov/foodwaste). Each document has been translated into Hmong, Somali, Karen, Spanish, and Oromo as part of our strategy to increase accessibility for all residents of Saint Paul.

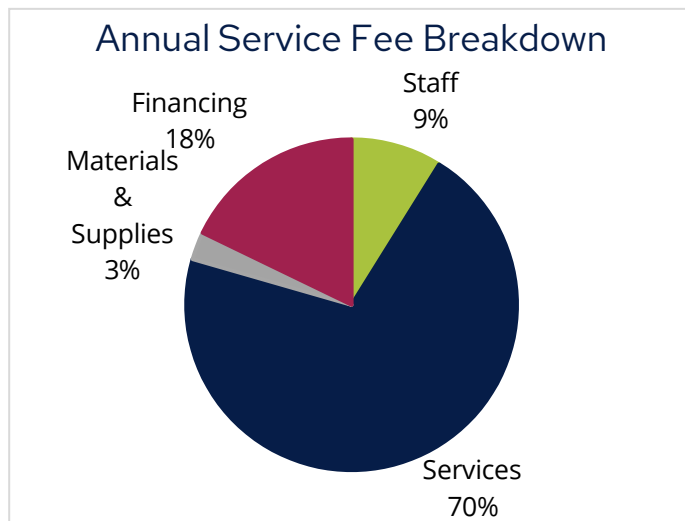
Despite the pandemic, there were many opportunities for communication and community engagement. This year, the City of Saint Paul Garbage and Recycling Programs produced a combined Annual Report to update the public on hauling operations and program activities, an Annual Garbage and Recycling Guide, a Spring Disposal Guide, and a Holiday Disposal Mailer.

### Frequently Asked Questions About Garbage Rates

*What does the annual solid waste service fee on my property taxes pay?*

The City assesses an annual solid waste fee on Ramsey County property taxes. This fee is separate from the quarterly fee haulers charge to collect and dispose of garbage. In 2021 this fee was \$27.12 per residential unit. The fee provides funding for:

- Staff: 5 full-time staff salaries and benefits.
- Services: delinquent account payments (9% of category total), City administration, program expenses, outreach and education, and technology.
- Materials and Supplies: Carts
- Financing: transfer to general fund, debt service fund, and internal service fund



*How are garbage rates set?*

Garbage rates are set annually for the City's Residential Solid Waste, Yard Waste and Bulky Waste Collection as part of the agreement with the St. Paul Haulers, LLC. The Agreement includes specific components of pricing shown in the chart below for a medium cart and 2022 rates.

### 2022 Rate Calculation for a Medium Cart

| Collection |          | Non-Collection |         |          | Taxes   |        | Total Resident Fee |
|------------|----------|----------------|---------|----------|---------|--------|--------------------|
| Fuel       | Non-Fuel | Billing        | Bulkies | Disposal | County  | State  |                    |
| \$11.44    | \$1.23   | \$1.99         | \$1.99  | \$67.75  | 28%     | 9.75%  | \$110.86           |
|            |          |                |         |          | \$19.63 | \$6.83 |                    |