



## **Garbage & Recycling Rate Increase for Residential Food Scraps Composting Program: Frequently asked consumer questions**

November, 2019

### **Why is my garbage bill going up again?**

Each year, customer rates increase for many reasons. In 2018, income was adequate to account for cost increases in labor, health care, landfill, and other costs. No increases were needed without the consideration of a new program addition.

After closely studying the benefits and costs of beginning a residential food scraps composting program, the City Council elected to begin that program in 2020. A modest increase in residential rates is needed to develop that program. For most residents, that will mean an increase of 1.9 percent, or 49 cents. There are no increases to commercial rates this year.

### **I thought food scraps composting is already a service in Hillsboro.**

Businesses, schools, City facilities and other organizations are separating their food for composting under a voluntary program. This new service will now provide curbside food composting for residential customers.

### **When will the food scraps program begin?**

The City of Hillsboro's residential food composting program is set to begin in February 2020.

In January, your waste hauler will deliver a small countertop composting pail to your home. Each pail will include instructions on how to compost and what types of food scraps can be composted. Beginning in February 2020, you can empty food scraps from your countertop pail into your yard debris roll cart — but please don't do so until February.

### **What if I don't have yard debris service, do I still have to pay for the rate increase?**

The rate increase applies to all residential customers who have curbside garbage service, whether you have a yard debris bin or not. Hillsboro's garbage and recycling service is bundled, meaning residents pay for all of the curbside services together. Reducing the amount of garbage you produce is the main factor in reducing your overall garbage and recycling rates.

### **Will my apartment/condo have compost service?**

Most apartments and condos will not have compost service initially. The City is working on a way to include these complexes in the future. Residents in these complexes will not see a rate increase. For smaller multi-family apartments and condos that have yard debris carts, composting will be available and the increase will apply.

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### **How do I compost?**

You will receive a small counter-top container to throw your food scraps. Then simply put those food scraps in your yard debris container. That's it. From there, the mixed yard debris and food will be collected by your waste hauler and taken to the composting facility in North Plains. The result is a nutrient-rich compost that gardens love.

### **What can go into the yard debris container?**

In addition to the yard debris, any food scraps. This includes bones, meat, dairy, fruit/vegetable scraps. Just no fluids, oils, or anything that is not food, please.

### **Won't my yard debris cart get really gross?**

The average proportion of food scraps to yard debris is around 5 percent. Your food scraps will mostly blend in with your yard debris and not create a big change.

### **Will my cart attract pests, like rodents?**

Your yard debris bin is already designed to prevent this. If it is used properly, you will not have any issues with pests.

### **How much does it cost?**

The food composting program will increase rates by 1.9 percent, or 49 cents per month for most customers based on a 35-gallon roll cart, beginning on August 1, 2019.

### **Why do rates increase in August but service begins in 2020?**

The program requires up-front funding to make capital investments in equipment needed for service delivery, including the distribution of a kitchen counter-top container for food scraps to residences.

### **Is there an opt-out option to not pay the increased rate?**

The short answer is no. Hillsboro garbage and recycling service is a bundled rate, so there is no option to opt out of the food composting rate.