



NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

# Brush and Bulky Waste Management Options

Solid Waste Management Administration and  
Solicitation Support

PROJECT NO. 172934

MAY 1, 2025



# Contents

---

1.0	Introduction.....	3
2.0	Current Landscape of Brush and Bulky Management .....	3
2.1	Regulatory Framework .....	3
2.2	Collection Options for Brush and Bulky Waste Services .....	4
2.2.1	Scheduled Curbside Collection.....	4
2.2.2	On-Call or By-Appointment Collection.....	5
2.2.3	Drop-off Centers .....	5
2.2.4	Seasonal Collection Events.....	5
2.2.5	Combination of Services .....	5
2.3	Costs Associated with Services .....	6
2.3.1	Collection Frequency and Method .....	6
2.3.2	Volume and Weight of Waste .....	6
2.3.3	Processing and Disposal Methods .....	7
2.3.4	Administrative and Overhead Costs.....	7
2.3.5	Equipment and Infrastructure .....	7
3.0	Strategies for Brush and Bulky Management .....	7
3.1	Optimizing Collection Schedules .....	8
3.2	Implementing Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) Strategies .....	8
3.3	Encouraging Waste Reduction and Diversion.....	8
3.3.1	Composting Programs .....	8
3.3.2	Mulching Services .....	8
3.3.3	Reuse and Recycling Initiatives .....	9
3.4	Regional Collaboration.....	9
3.4.1	Shared Services .....	9
3.4.2	Joint Contracts.....	9
4.0	Incorporating Brush and Bulky Management into RFPs .....	9
4.1	Defining Service Level Options.....	9
4.2	Cost Comparison and Evaluation.....	10
4.3	Flexibility in Contracting .....	10
4.4	Comprehensive RFP Components .....	10
4.5	Innovative Technologies and Sustainability Practices .....	10
4.6	Key Considerations for Effective RFPs .....	10
5.0	Case Studies .....	10
5.1	Case Study 1: City of Dallas, Texas.....	11
5.2	Case Study 2: City of Richardson, Texas .....	11
5.3	Case Study 3: City of Irving, Texas .....	12

5.4	Case Study 4: City of Garland, Texas .....	13
5.5	Case Study 5: City of Granbury, Texas .....	13
6.0	Action Steps for Communities .....	14
7.0	Conclusion .....	16
8.0	Additional Resources .....	16

# 1.0 Introduction

---

Brush and bulky waste management is a vital service for residential communities, particularly in urban and suburban areas. In many North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) communities, brush and bulky waste collection is a valued part of municipal services. It provides residents with convenient disposal options, helps maintain community aesthetics, and reduces illegal dumping. However, offering these services can be expensive and logistically challenging, especially for smaller communities or those with limited resources.

Brush waste typically includes leaves, plants, small cuttings, tree limbs, and shrubbery. Curbside collection of brush often comes with restrictions on both dimensional size and volume. Brush does not include stumps, roots, or dirt. Some programs classify grass as part of brush management, while others exclude it, encouraging on-site management of grass clippings through composting or accepting them at municipal composting facilities.

Bulky waste includes large household items such as furniture, carpets, appliances (excluding hazardous components), and other oversized items that regular waste collection services cannot accommodate. It is typically defined as any non-putrescible household item that cannot fit inside a solid waste container when the lid is closed. Only items associated with residential use, such as household furniture and appliances, are considered bulky waste.

This white paper explores various collection options and associated brush and bulky waste services costs for the NCTCOG. It highlights strategies for providing these services efficiently and cost-effectively and offers guidance to solid waste managers and personnel on best practices. Additionally, the paper discusses how to incorporate different program types and service levels into Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to compare options and make informed decisions.

## 2.0 Current Landscape of Brush and Bulky Management

---

The landscape of brush and bulky item management in NCTCOG is evolving, with various cities and local government units adopting different strategies to manage these wastes. As Texas continues to grow and urbanize, managing brush and bulky items presents challenges and opportunities for local government units.

### 2.1 Regulatory Framework

Federal, state, and local laws govern Texas's brush and bulky waste management regulatory framework. States play a lead role in ensuring the federal criteria for operating municipal solid waste landfills regulations are met and they may set more stringent requirements. Here is an overview of key elements of the framework:

- Federal Regulations
  - Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)
    - Under RCRA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates the management and disposal of non-hazardous waste.

- In the absence of an approved state program, waste facilities must meet federal requirements.
- Texas State Regulations
  - Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ):
    - TCEQ oversees the transportation and disposal of municipal solid waste (MSW), which includes brush and bulky items.
    - The agency provides technical guidance for MSW permits.
    - The TCEQ oversees debris management from declared disasters, often including brush.
  - Texas Administrative Code (TAC):
    - Chapter 330 of the TAC governs MSW collection, transportation, and operational standards for landfills.
    - Composting and mulching are regulated under Chapter 332 of the TAC.
    - Outdoor burning of brush is regulated under Chapter 111 of the TAC.
- Local Government Regulations
  - Local governments in Texas may have additional rules or ordinances for solid waste management, including collection and disposal.

As listed above, the regulatory framework for brush and bulky waste management is governed by state and local rules to ensure public health, environmental protection, and efficient waste disposal. The TCEQ sets overarching guidelines for waste classification, handling, and disposal, including non-putrescible and oversized waste rules. Local governments and municipalities can implement specific collection and disposal programs, often defining brush and bulky waste parameters, volume limits, and acceptable materials. These programs may include curbside collection, drop-off sites, and recycling or composting initiatives. Additionally, regulations emphasize excluding hazardous materials, such as chemicals or appliances containing refrigerants.

## **2.2 Collection Options for Brush and Bulky Waste Services**

Effective brush and bulky waste management is essential for maintaining clean and sustainable communities. Municipalities and local governments offer a variety of collection options tailored to meet residents' needs while promoting proper disposal and recycling practices. These options include scheduled curbside pickups, on-call or scheduled pickups, designated drop-off centers, seasonal collection events, and combinations of these approaches. Each method addresses unique challenges in waste collection, balancing convenience, environmental sustainability, and resource efficiency.

### **2.2.1 Scheduled Curbside Collection**

Several cities in the NCTCOG offer scheduled curbside collection services to manage brush and bulky waste. These programs are designed to provide residents with convenient, predictable waste disposal options while reducing illegal dumping or burning. Scheduled collection is also efficient for routing collection services. Typically, these services include specific days, volume limits and guidelines. Below are examples of how communities in the NCTCOG manage curbside collection:

- City of Irving: Brush and bulky items are collected once per week.
- City of McKinney: Yard waste collection, including brush, is collected weekly on regular trash collection days.

- City of Allen: Bulky items are collected monthly. Yard waste, including brush, is collected weekly on the assigned trash day.
- City of Denton: Yard waste, including brush, is collected on the scheduled garbage collection day.

### **2.2.2 On-Call or By-Appointment Collection**

Several cities in the NCTCOG offer on-call or scheduled by-appointment curbside collection services to manage brush and bulky waste. These programs are designed to provide residents with convenient, reliable waste disposal options only when needed. This method reduces unnecessary collections but may require more administrative coordination. Typically, these services include volume limits and guidelines. Below are examples of how communities in the NCTCOG manage on-call curbside collection:

- City of McKinney: Residents can request bulky item collection up to twelve times yearly at no additional cost.
- City of Denton: As a resident, up to two bulky items may be scheduled for collection each week for no additional fee.

### **2.2.3 Drop-off Centers**

Drop-off centers provide residents a convenient way to dispose of brush and bulky waste, such as yard trimmings, furniture, and appliances. These facilities can reduce collection costs but may be inconvenient for some residents. Below is an example of how a community in the NCTCOG manages drop-off centers:

- City of Granbury: Bulk items are accepted for a fee at the Citizen's Collection Station operated by Hood County. In addition, brush is accepted at the Hood County Brush Yard for a fee.

### **2.2.4 Seasonal Collection Events**

Seasonal collection services offer smaller communities a targeted approach to managing brush and bulky waste during peak periods, such as spring cleaning. These events provide residents with convenient disposal options for large items and yard debris. Below are some examples of how communities in the NCTCOG offer seasonal collection events:

- City of Granbury: A bulk trash and brush pick-up day is held annually.
- City of Ponder: A bulk trash pick-up day is held annually in the spring.
- City of Boyd: The city-wide cleanup is held annually in the spring.

### **2.2.5 Combination of Services**

A combination of services for brush and bulky waste collection provides residents with flexibility and convenience by integrating multiple disposal options, such as curbside pickup, drop-off centers, and seasonal events. This approach allows municipalities to address diverse community needs, enhance participation, and promote efficient waste management. Below are some examples of how communities combine services:

- City of Ennis: Bulky items can be scheduled for a 48-hour bulk pick up after being placed at the curb for a fee, which depends on how many cubic yards are set out. Ellis County Disposal Landfill offers the City of Ennis residents two free monthly disposal days, including bulky items, appliances containing freon, and brush.
- City of Fort Worth: Fort Worth provides monthly curbside collection of bulky items and brush at no extra charge. Drop-off Stations are open to homeowners for free brush and bulky item disposal with some limitations on the amount excepted.
- City of Richardson: Brush and bulky collection is a requested service. The city requests that residents limit service requests to eight calls per year for free. Member cities of the North Texas Municipal Water District, including the City of Richardson, may use one of four Citizen Convenience Centers to dispose of bulky items and brush for free. The service is limited to twice per month.

## **2.3 Costs Associated with Services**

Managing brush and bulky waste involves various costs that reflect the complexity of collection, processing, and disposal operations. These costs are influenced by collection frequency and methods, the volume and weight of waste handled, and the technologies used for processing and disposal. Additionally, administrative and overhead expenses and investments in equipment and infrastructure play a significant role in determining overall service costs.

### **2.3.1 Collection Frequency and Method**

As noted above, the collection frequency and method of brush and bulky waste collection can range from weekly to monthly pickups to on-demand services based on the resident request. Some municipalities offer seasonal or event-based collections during peak periods of yard waste or household cleanups. Methods can include curbside collection and centralized drop-off points for residents to bring their waste. Choosing the right frequency and method involves balancing operational costs, community needs and environmental considerations to ensure effective waste management.

### **2.3.2 Volume and Weight of Waste**

Managing the volume and weight of waste significantly impacts collection strategies, particularly in routing and scheduling. Larger and heavier loads require more sophisticated logistics to optimize collection routes, which can help minimize fuel consumption, labor, and vehicle wear. Additionally, the nature of the waste influences the type of collection equipment needed. Heavier and bulkier items may necessitate stronger bins and specialized vehicles like grapple trucks equipped to manage large volumes efficiently and safely. Together, these factors play a critical role in the operational planning of waste management services, ensuring both effectiveness and safety in waste collection.

The volume and weight of waste also directly affect transportation costs and operational efficiency. Heavier loads lead to higher fuel costs and can require more trips due to regulatory weight limits on roads, thus increasing the overall cost of waste management. Strategically reducing the volume through compaction or improving waste separation at the source can lead to significant cost savings and operational efficiencies.

### 2.3.3 Processing and Disposal Methods

Different processing and disposal methods can significantly vary in cost. For example:

- *Composting and mulching*: Turning green waste, along with brush, into compost not only proves to be cost-effective by reducing landfill fees but also creates an opportunity for generating revenue by selling compost or mulch as a marketable product. While initial and ongoing processing costs are involved in composting, the potential income from selling compost or mulch can offset some of these expenses.
- *Landfilling*: Often the least expensive upfront but can incur long-term costs.
- *Recycling and repurposing*: These can be costly due to sorting and processing requirements, but they can also reduce future purchasing costs and waste disposal fees.

### 2.3.4 Administrative and Overhead Costs

These costs encompass planning, managing, and monitoring waste management operations. They include salaries of administrative personnel, customer service for scheduling and management of on-demand collections, and regulatory compliance, which might require specialized staff or consultant support. Additionally, these administrative costs extend to the management of contracts, which involves negotiating and finalizing terms and overseeing the fulfillment of these contracts to ensure services meet the agreed standards and adapt to changes as required.

### 2.3.5 Equipment and Infrastructure

Investment in equipment and infrastructure is a significant part of the initial and ongoing costs. This includes:

- *Collection vehicles*: Specialty vehicles adapted to manage bulky items and brush are more expensive than standard waste collection trucks. This includes adding grapple trucks, which are essential for picking up large, bulky waste efficiently, reducing the need for manual labor and enhancing worker safety.
- *Bins and containers*: There are distinct types for different waste streams (e.g., yard waste versus construction debris).
- *Facilities*: Investment in sorting facilities, transfer stations, and recycling centers can be substantial but necessary for efficient operations. Furthermore, including specific processing equipment like chippers for brush helps reduce the volume of waste, making it easier and more cost-effective to transport and process.

## 3.0 Strategies for Brush and Bulky Management

---

Communities aiming to enhance the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of their brush and bulky waste management services can adopt several strategic approaches. These strategies improve service delivery and foster sustainability and community involvement.



### **3.1 Optimizing Collection Schedules**

Optimizing collection schedules is crucial to managing brush and bulky waste efficiently. Implementing a data-driven scheduling approach allows municipalities to analyze waste generation patterns and adjust collection schedules to meet actual community needs. This optimization conserves resources and ensures that service timing is aligned with seasonal variations, such as increased waste during fall leaf collections or spring clean-ups.

Adopting a zone-based collection strategy can significantly enhance operational efficiency. By dividing the community into specific zones, waste management services can streamline their operations, reduce transit times, and save on fuel costs while reducing carbon emissions. This method improves the routing and allocation of resources, making the collection process more efficient across different community areas.

Another effective strategy involves limiting the volume or weight of waste collected per household. This policy encourages residents to be more mindful of their waste generation, potentially reducing the total waste produced. Limiting collection quantities not only supports the sustainability of waste management programs but also helps manage community expectations, ensuring that the services provided are effective and sustainable.

### **3.2 Implementing Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) Strategies**

Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) strategies are becoming increasingly important in reducing waste and promoting recycling. These models charge residents based on the amount of waste they produce, which is a direct financial incentive for them to generate less waste. This fee structure not only encourages residents to think more carefully about what they discard but also promotes the segregation of recyclables, as it becomes more cost-effective to reduce the regular trash output.

The benefits of PAYT strategies extend beyond just waste reduction. By effectively encouraging recycling and other sustainable waste management practices, these models can reduce the dependency on landfills. PAYT programs can save money for communities by creating a direct financial incentive for residents to reduce waste, which lowers the costs associated with collection, transportation, and disposal.

### **3.3 Encouraging Waste Reduction and Diversion**

Several programs can significantly aid in reducing the total waste headed for landfills, each tailored to leverage specific types of waste:

#### **3.3.1 Composting Programs**

Composting programs are highly effective in diverting organic waste from landfills. By providing residents with composting carts, communities can facilitate collecting and processing organic materials like food scraps and yard waste. This not only diverts waste from landfills but also reduces the overall volume of brush waste. The resulting compost can enrich local soils, lowering disposal costs and minimizing environmental impact.

#### **3.3.2 Mulching Services**

Mulching services transform brush waste, such as tree limbs and garden trimmings, into mulch, which is then available for use in landscaping. This process not only recycles organic waste but also provides a valuable product that can be used locally or sold, generating additional revenue for the community. By

converting waste into mulch, municipalities can reduce the volume of waste requiring disposal and provide an eco-friendly product for improving soil health and moisture retention.

### **3.3.3 Reuse and Recycling Initiatives**

Encouraging the reuse and recycling of bulky items through partnerships with local charities or thrift stores is another effective strategy. This approach extends the life of items such as furniture, appliances, and other large objects by facilitating their donation or resale. Not only does this reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills, but it also supports community resources and helps lower-income families access needed goods.

## **3.4 Regional Collaboration**

Regional collaboration among neighboring communities can significantly enhance the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of managing brush and bulky waste. This collaborative approach typically involves two key strategies:

### **3.4.1 Shared Services**

Municipalities can share services such as waste collection, processing, and disposal by partnering with neighboring communities. This reduces the individual costs for each participating community by spreading out expenses and enhances their bargaining power when negotiating with service providers. Shared services might include joint waste processing facilities, shared staffing for specialized roles, or communal educational programs about waste reduction and recycling.

### **3.4.2 Joint Contracts**

Collaborating communities can issue joint Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for waste management services. This approach attracts more competitive bids from service providers who value the larger, consolidated contracts. Municipalities can secure more favorable terms and lower prices by pooling their needs, benefiting from economies of scale. This reduces costs and leads to improved service quality due to the increased financial incentive for contractors.

## **4.0 Incorporating Brush and Bulky Management into RFPs**

---

When incorporating various program types and service levels into RFPs for brush and bulky waste management, it is essential to comprehensively define the scope of services to ensure proposers understand the community's needs clearly. This approach facilitates the selection of capable contractors and enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided.

### **4.1 Defining Service Level Options**

RFPs should specify different service levels for brush and bulky collection, including:

- **On-Call Service:** Residents can request pick-up as needed, with defined response times.
- **Scheduled Collection:** Regularly scheduled pick-ups, such as monthly or quarterly, with clearly communicated dates.

- **Drop-Off Programs:** Designated sites where residents can bring brush and bulky items for proper disposal.

Additionally, enhanced service options, such as expanded pick-up limits or expedited services, should be detailed with associated costs. Proposals should encourage innovative service models that optimize efficiency and reduce costs.

## **4.2 Cost Comparison and Evaluation**

Requesting detailed cost breakdowns within the RFPs is crucial, as is ensuring pricing transparency that includes all capital and operational costs. Evaluating these costs against service quality and potential long-term savings will aid in assessing the value provided by different proposers.

## **4.3 Flexibility in Contracting**

RFPs should allow for contractual flexibility to accommodate varying community needs over time. This includes clauses for adjustments based on performance reviews, incentives for exceeding efficiency targets and penalties for non-compliance, ensuring contractors are held to their commitments.

## **4.4 Comprehensive RFP Components**

A well-crafted RFP should outline not just the service expectations but also scheduling options. These could include by-appointment collections with specified response times or fixed schedules with clear guidelines on frequency, dates, and acceptable items. Additional pick-up costs, composting and mulching services, and provisions for community drop-off events should be detailed to provide a full spectrum of waste management services.

## **4.5 Innovative Technologies and Sustainability Practices**

It is crucial to encourage the integration of technology, such as routing software and mobile apps, for efficient collection scheduling and customer interaction. Proposals should also emphasize sustainability practices, including minimizing environmental impact and providing metrics for sustainability performance.

## **4.6 Key Considerations for Effective RFPs**

Finally, the RFP should clearly define the scope of services, contractor qualifications, pricing and cost transparency, and performance metrics. Compliance with regulatory standards and active community engagement and education should also be highlighted to ensure the program's success.

# **5.0 Case Studies**

---

The following case studies showcase diverse approaches to brush and bulky collection and disposal, each tailored to meet the unique needs and resources of its respective area.

## 5.1 Case Study 1: City of Dallas, Texas

2023 Population (estimate<sup>1</sup>): 1,302,868

Residents of single-family dwellings and duplexes in the City of Dallas are entitled to a monthly curbside collection of up to 10 cubic yards, with an annual option for a 20-cubic-yard collection. Bulky items are defined as items too large for the roll cart, such as household furniture, carpets, mattresses, stoves, washers, and other appliances that do not contain coolant, gasoline, and other chemicals. Brush is defined as tree limbs and shrubbery not exceeding 8 inches in diameter or 10 feet in length.

### Key Strategies Implemented:

- *Optimizing Collection Schedules:* Brush and bulky item collection is split into collection areas, which represent locations where crews are deployed to service available setouts. When a crew is deployed to the collection area, they travel through all the streets within that boundary until all setouts are collected.
- *Implementing Pay-As-You-Throw Strategies:* To increase collection efficiency and decrease material disposed of, the city adopted set-out limits of 10 cubic yards and fees for oversized setouts.
- *Encouraging Waste Reduction and Diversion:* The city has a webpage dedicated to composting. The webpage provides resources for composting in an apartment and backyards and offers different construction techniques.

### Program Outcomes:

- Implementing PAYT strategies, such as limiting setouts to 10 cubic yards and charging fees for oversized items, encourages residents to dispose of waste responsibly. This results in less material being placed at the curb and promotes waste reduction behaviors, such as recycling, donating usable items, or composting.
- The city's efforts to encourage composting through dedicated resources on its webpage provide residents with practical tools and knowledge to divert organic waste. This leads to increased use of composting practices, reducing the amount of organic material entering the waste stream and further supporting the city's sustainability goals.

## 5.2 Case Study 2: City of Richardson, Texas

2023 Population (estimate<sup>2</sup>): 117,435

Residents of Richardson can take advantage of the service referred to as Brush and Bulky Item Collection (BABIC). The service is provided by request to dispose of yard waste and large bulky items. Brush, tree trucks and other green waste can be up to 8 feet long and 2 feet in diameter. In addition, cacti are also accepted if boxed up, and each box is under 25 pounds. Bulky waste is defined as over 50 pounds. The city refers to this

---

<sup>1</sup> [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Dallas city, Texas](#)

<sup>2</sup> [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Richardson city, Texas](#)

as “Think Big.” The city requests that residents limit service requests to eight calls per year. The city also always residents to take brush to the Custer Transfer Station.

Key Strategies Implemented:

- *Optimizing Collection Schedules:* The city implements the strategy of setting limits on the weight of waste collected per household. The city encourages items under 50 pounds, including small appliances, to be placed with the twice-weekly refuse collection.
- *Encouraging Waste Reduction and Diversion:* Residents denote when they request a BABIC if they have compostable material to be picked up. When compostable material is set out along the curb, it must be in a separate pile from non-compostable, bulky items to ensure it goes to the correct place. Compostable items are composted and turned into mulch.
- *Regional Collaboration:* Richardson residents can drop off certain types of waste twice monthly at one of four convenience centers operated by the North Texas Municipal Water District.

Program Outcomes:

- In 2023, the BABIC program diverted approximately 12 percent of residential material from the landfill.
- The program helps prevent yard waste from ending in landfills by converting leaves, grass clippings, and other yard debris into mulch and compost. This reduces the volume of waste in landfills and recycles it into valuable products for gardening and landscaping.
- The mulch mowing practices promoted by the city’s Parks and Recreation Department under this program encourage the decomposition of grass clippings back into the soil. This natural recycling process enhances soil health without additional fertilizers and reduces water usage, contributing to resource efficiency.
- The program is responsive to residents' needs, providing easy access to services such as the BABIC request line and online tools for scheduling pickups. This level of engagement helps maintain high levels of resident satisfaction and participation.

## 5.3 Case Study 3: City of Irving, Texas

2023 Population (estimate<sup>3</sup>): 254,373

The City of Irving allows four bulky items each collection week. A bulky item is a household item that is easily moveable around the house, such as a sofa, chair, mattress, etc. Brush is limited to tree and shrub trimmings less than 4 feet long and under 50 pounds.

Key Strategies Implemented:

---

<sup>3</sup> [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Irving city, Texas](#)

- *Optimizing Collection Services:* The city has implemented a zone-based collection strategy. Its website hosts a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) interactive map with collection instructions.
- *Encouraging Waste Reduction and Diversion:* Residents, businesses and landscape companies can purchase mulch, which is ground from brush debris collected from residential customers.

Program Outcomes:

- Regular collection schedules can prevent the accumulation of large waste items in the city, reducing illegal dumping and maintaining a cleaner environment.
- The program supports the city's recycling efforts by separating brush made into mulch.

## 5.4 Case Study 4: City of Garland, Texas

2023 Population (estimate<sup>4</sup>): 243,470

The City of Garland offers weekly brush and bulky goods curbside pick-up on the same day as regular trash collection. Bulky items include carpet, furniture, mattresses, appliances, etc. Appliances such as refrigerators, washers and dryers are included if contents have been removed. Construction and demolition waste may be set out four times per calendar year. All bagged items need to weigh less than 40 pounds. Brush includes limbs, tree trucks and brush trimmings. Brush needs to be between 3 and 7 feet.

Key Strategies Implemented:

- *Optimizing Collection Schedules:* The website includes a feature that allows residents to track their collection vehicle. The city is divided into four zones, which can significantly enhance operational efficiency.
- *Encouraging Waste Reduction and Diversion:* Garland requires that brush be placed in a separate pile, which aids in efficient recycling. The city turns eligible yard waste into mulch, which is free for city residents.

Program Outcomes:

- By dividing the community into specific zones, waste management services streamlined their operations, reduced transit times, and saved on fuel costs while reducing carbon emissions.
- The city's waste management operations are optimized using technology and strategic planning, such as route optimization for collection vehicles and the eAssist platform for service requests, enhancing overall service efficiency and customer satisfaction.

## 5.5 Case Study 5: City of Granbury, Texas

2023 Population (estimate<sup>5</sup>): 12,622

---

<sup>4</sup> [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Irving city, Texas](#)

<sup>5</sup> [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Granbury city, Texas](#)

Residents of the City of Granbury can take bulky items to the Citizens' Collection Station operated by Hood County. Brush is also accepted at the Hood County Brush Yard for a fee. Tree limbs and brush must be less than 15 inches in diameter and 16 feet in length. The city also organizes a bi-annual bulk trash and brush event for residents. There is a six-item limit per address for bulky items.

Key Strategies Implemented:

- *Implement Pay-As-You-Throw Strategies:* Residents are charged based on the amount of waste they produce, which is a direct financial incentive for them to generate less waste.
- *Encouraging Waste Reduction and Diversion:* The city's solid waste page provides information about donating used and unwanted items instead of discarding them. Additionally, brush is recycled into coarse and fine mulch.
- *Regional Collaboration:* Granbury citizens can take their bulky items to the Citizens' Collection Stations, managed by Hood County. Brush is also accepted at the Hood County Brush Yard.

Program Outcomes:

- Small communities like Granbury can maximize their resources by partnering with neighboring cities, counties, or private companies to share resources and services.
- Granbury's organizing bi-annual bulk trash and brush events serves multiple purposes. These events not only keep the city clean but also promote recycling and proper waste disposal. They also foster a sense of community and collective responsibility for environmental stewardship.

## 6.0 Action Steps for Communities

---

Based on the reviewed strategies and outcomes from brush and bulky management programs in cities with varying populations within the NCTCOG region, communities can take the following action steps to improve their brush and bulky management systems.

Evaluate and Assess Community Needs:

- *Conduct Surveys:* Implementing regular evaluations of the brush and bulky item program can help cities identify whether the current level of service aligns with community needs. These assessments could involve surveys, community meetings, and analysis of service use data to gauge whether the services offered are either exceeding or not meeting residents' requirements.
- *Review Services:* This feedback can help cities adjust the frequency, type, and scope of services to better match actual needs, potentially reducing unnecessary costs and enhancing resident satisfaction. Such assessments might reveal opportunities to scale back services where they are underutilized or, alternatively, enhance them where there is greater demand.
- *Consider Alternatives:* Evaluate the feasibility based on need. Evaluate new approaches before full adoption. For example, the City of Austin is transitioning to an on-demand collection system beginning in January 2025. This new system will allow residents to schedule pickups for bulk, brush, and household hazardous waste as needed rather than adhering to a predetermined biannual schedule.

#### Adoption of Pay-As-You-Throw Policies:

- *Policy Design and Implementation:* Establish a fee structure that offers multiple service levels at different price points. For example, basic service could include limited monthly waste collection with additional fees for extra pickups or oversized items.
- *Resident Education:* Launch a comprehensive education program to inform residents about how the PAYT program works, the benefits of reducing waste, and how they can lower waste disposal costs through reuse, recycling, and composting.

#### Promote Alternative Disposal Methods:

- *Donate Programs:* Establish partnerships with local thrift stores, non-profits, and community organizations that can accept usable items such as furniture, appliances, and building materials. Promote these donation options through community resources, such as the waste management website and community bulletins, to encourage residents to donate rather than dispose of them in landfills.
- *Repair and Reuse Workshops:* Organize community events and workshops with volunteers that teach repair skills, such as fixing furniture or refurbishing appliances. These workshops can reduce waste by extending the life of bulky items.
- *Composting Initiatives:* Encourage backyard and community composting of yard waste, such as leaves and small branches, by providing residents with composting bins at a discounted rate and offering guidance on composting practices. To close the loop, promote the use of city-produced compost for residential landscaping.

#### Improve Accessibility for Residents:

- *Increase Accessibility of Collection Services:* Offering more accessible services, such as frequent pickups, special accommodations for disabled residents, or drop-off locations for brush and bulky items, can enhance program effectiveness.
- *Use of Technology:* Implementing technological solutions such as route optimization software for collection vehicles can reduce operational costs and improve service efficiency. Additionally, cities can develop apps to provide residents with easy access to waste collection schedules, reminders, and educational materials.

#### Enhance Community Education:

- *Clear Communication:* Simplify messaging about brush and bulky services, including accepted materials, event schedules, and locations. Enhance education with pictures and videos, which are more engaging and can better illustrate the process of waste management. Visuals help demonstrate proper segregation techniques and the environmental impact of waste, making the information more relatable and easier to understand. Share information in multiple languages.
- *Leverage Social Media Platforms:* Use social media to announce upcoming workshops, bulk waste collection days, or special recycling events. These posts can include all the logistical details and benefits of participating. Design content that is easily shareable, increasing its reach. This can



consist of catchy slogans, compelling images, or fun videos that people are more likely to share with their networks.

- *Share Success Stories:* Highlight positive outcomes from community efforts, such as notable reductions in waste or successful recycling initiatives. This not only informs but also motivates the community by showing tangible results.

#### Monitor and Measure Program Success:

- *Set Performance Metrics:* Track participation rates, volumes collected, and cost per participant to assess program effectiveness.
- *Regular Reporting:* Require waste management contractors to submit detailed reports to identify trends and areas for improvement.
- *Feedback Mechanisms:* Collect resident feedback to understand service gaps and improve overall satisfaction.

## 7.0 Conclusion

---

Brush and bulky waste management enhances community aesthetics, promotes environmental stewardship, and meets residents' disposal needs. Effective management of these waste streams keeps our neighborhoods clean and pleasant and supports broader environmental goals by reducing landfill use and encouraging recycling and composting. However, while these services are essential, they can also be costly. To manage these challenges efficiently and cost-effectively, communities must adopt and implement strategic measures that optimize service quality and fiscal responsibility.

For community managers in the NCTCOG region and beyond, several key actions can be instrumental in achieving these goals. Evaluating various collection options to assess community-specific needs and choosing methods that balance convenience with cost is fundamental. Implementing cost-effective strategies such as optimizing scheduling and routing and encouraging waste reduction, diversion and composting can significantly reduce operational costs. Moreover, incorporating detailed requirements into RFPs ensures that service levels and expectations are clearly defined, effectively comparing program types and costs. Engaging residents through education on proper disposal practices and soliciting their feedback for program improvements can foster a community-centric approach that enhances compliance and participation. By planning and executing these effective programs, communities can provide valuable services that effectively control costs and promote sustainability, ensuring environmental health and community satisfaction.

## 8.0 Additional Resources

---

#### Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ):

- Requirements to transport and dispose of municipal solid, industrial, hazardous, and other wastes
- Website: [Waste Management: Requirements and Permits - Texas Commission on Environmental Quality - www.tceq.texas.gov](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/waste-management/requirements-and-permits)

- Managing debris from declared disasters
- Website: [Emergency Response - Texas Commission on Environmental Quality - www.tceq.texas.gov](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/emergency-response)

North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG):

- Regional materials management support, including grants
- Website: [NCTCOG - Materials Management](http://www.nctcog.org/materials-management)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

- Regulatory and guidance information by solid waste topic
- Website: [Regulatory and Guidance Information by Topic: Waste | US EPA](http://www.epa.gov/regulatory-guidance-information-by-topic/waste)

Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA):

- Platform for networking, best practices, and training for solid waste management professionals
- [Solid Waste Association of North America \(SWANA\)](http://www.swana.org)

