



Darren Dunkle, Director of Parks, Recreation & Forestry

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TO: University City Parks Commission
FROM: Darren Dunkle, Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry
DATE: March 13, 2020
SUBJECT: Mulch Services Recommendation

As you may be aware, the City has been providing mulch service to the residents of University City in two different formats. One is the Mulch Delivery Service where the Parks Maintenance Division schedules and makes home deliveries to residents' homes. The other service the City provides is free mulch (leaf compost, shredded wood, and wood chips), which a citizen can pick up at the Heman Park distribution area.

Mulch Delivery Service

Since 2016 these services have been provided by the Parks Maintenance Division (Prior to 2016 these services were provided by the Street Division). Although this service has been offered on a year-round basis, the bulk of the deliveries take place during the months of March, April, May and June (The busiest time of the year for the Parks Maintenance Division). Since most of the residents want mulch for weekend projects, all deliveries take place on Fridays (One of our busiest days of the week). The average price per delivery runs around \$96.28, and the average cost per delivery is around \$221.97 per delivery. As you can see, the City is losing approximately \$126.00 per delivery or a loss of approximately \$17,470.46 per year.

In addition to the financial loss, the Parks Maintenance Division is losing approximately seven manhours every Friday, which basically takes one maintenance worker out of park related maintenance every Friday for four of the busiest months of the year.

Free Mulch

As previously stated, the City provides residents free mulch (leaf compost, shredded wood, and wood chips) at the Heman Park distribution area. The shredded wood and wood chips are byproducts of trees and limbs the Parks Forestry Division has collected as part of our forestry services. The leaf compost is purchased by the City and placed at Heman Park for the use of our residents. Although the leaf compost is beneficial to the residents it does cost the City to purchase the leaf mulch, and we have encountered numerous issues with landscapers and non-residents taking the leaf mulch for their use.

Furthermore, as part of our contract with UCity In Bloom, the City provides UIB with leaf mulch to be placed in City owned landscapes.

These are ancillary services that are currently being provided by the Parks Maintenance Division, and although these services are beneficial to the community, they create both a financial and manpower problem for the Parks Maintenance Division. It is staff's recommendation that the Mulch Delivery and Leaf Mulch programs be eliminated, as these services can be readily obtained through the private sector. Furthermore, this would free up Parks Maintenance Staff and allow them to focus on maintenance tasks that have been deferred in the past. The shredded wood and wood chip program would continue as materials remain available.