



Zeke Cohen

Councilmember

First District

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August 14, 2020

Dear Director Garbark,

I am writing to communicate my great concern with the state of the Department of Public Works' trash and recycling collection services. I request that DPW develop an effective communication plan for the duration of time when services are impacted and share that plan with neighborhood leaders and City Council offices. Regular accurate updates to Councilmembers and community leaders are critically important. Additionally, if DPW is unable to meet trash and recycling pickup deadlines, I would request that they contract with outside providers until our workforce is fully recovered.

In the past four days alone, my office has received more than 50 emails and calls from community members across our district asking when their trash and recycling will be picked up. Many of these community members have not received trash or recycling collection for more than two weeks. Trash and recycling have been left out in the rain and are now contributing to unsanitary conditions in our neighborhoods. We are seeing an increase of insects and rats creating major public health concerns. This is completely unacceptable.

I recognize the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on DPW's workforce and that staffing shortages, along with inclement weather, have contributed to some of these delays and missed collections. I genuinely feel for the DPW workers who are putting in long days under stressful conditions and I thank them for their service. They are heroes, and we all owe them a debt of gratitude. But management must commit to finding solutions, otherwise the situation will further deteriorate. The delays, missed collections, and poor communication with our communities must change immediately.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zeke Cohen".

Councilmember Zeke Cohen