

Trash collections returning to normal in Holyoke as residents complain of delays

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A Holyoke sanitation crew at work on Stanford Street, March 10, 2021. (Don Treeger / The Republican)

By [Dennis Hohenberger](#) | [Special to The Republican](#)

[HOLYOKE](#) — The city’s winter of discontent turned from snow to delayed trash and recycling pickups, but Mayor Alex B. Morse expects service to improve in the coming days.

Residents continue to voice complaints about trash and recycling sitting on tree belts for days, long past the scheduled weekly pickups. Officials attribute the delays to a staff shortage and equipment problems at the Department of Public Works.

In the neighborhood around McMahon School in Ward 5, the Thursday trash collection dragged on until the following Monday, with recyclables picked up the next day.

Morse said trash collection now appears to be on time, with recycling a day behind. Holyoke operates on a [dual-stream model](#), separating trash and recycling collection times.

“Long term, I have presented an appropriation to the (City Council) to purchase a new recycling truck, and I’ve also signed a contract to hire temporary workers at the DPW in the event we are severely short-staffed,” Morse stated.

The latest Department of Public Works union contract allows for hiring temporary workers to cover staff shortages.



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DPW Superintendent Michael McManus, who appeared recently before the City Council, cited an aging truck fleet prone to breakdowns and staff shortages due to illness or injuries.

Even with updates, including [Facebook](#) postings and robocalls, the DPW collection efforts have fallen short at times.

City Council President Todd McGee said trucks have been around the last few days in his Ward 7 neighborhood.

“It is our understanding that they are looking to be back on schedule this week. If areas have been missed, we encourage residents to let us know so we can get it resolved as soon as possible,” McGee said in an email.

Ward 2 Councilor Terence Murphy said, “I believe that it has finally gotten better, especially the communication, although that still needs to be more widespread. I think we have gotten to within a day or less of being on time, but it is important that we keep up and not fall behind again.”

He added, “If we see any delays, we need to make sure that we do whatever is necessary to get back to schedule and never just cancel the service, and we inform the public of any delays.”

[Denis Luzuriaga](#), who lives on Pinehurst Road, said the regularly scheduled Wednesday trash pickup occurred Saturday. He said he is unsure when to put out his recyclables as the collections are infrequent or don’t happen.

While he understands the DPW is strained, he would like a better understanding of when regularly scheduled recycling collections would happen. Luzuriaga also needs more recycling bins, but realized the DPW is closed to visitors due to [COVID-19](#).

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