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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Storm Response Update October 7, 2020**

CEDAR RAPIDS, IA – October 7, 2020 – Storm response updates for October 7, 2020. A full list of resources can be found on the City’s website: [www.cedar-rapids.org](http://www.cedar-rapids.org).

### **Tree Debris Removal**

To date, crews have hauled nearly 1.5 million cubic yards of tree debris, and have finished an initial first pass on over 86 percent of streets, with two additional passes anticipated. The first pass is intended to grab as many large, bulk piles as possible and make assessment on where crews need to return. They are moving as quickly as possible in order to reach the most streets for an initial pass. Debris not collected during a first pass – whether it was blocked by a parked car, or located underneath a utility wire or tree limb – will be picked up in future passes. Crews are also currently working their way back into cul-de-sacs and dead end streets, which typically require smaller vehicles that can get in and turn around.

The City has crews dedicated to removing debris at intersections, where piles pose a safety hazard and make it difficult for motorists to see. Once the pile is removed, we ask residents to assist by not placing additional debris piles at intersections. Please place new piles away from intersections so it doesn’t continue to be a safety issue.

Mulch is currently being removed from our haul sites, where a contractor will continue the process of exploring methods of reuse or recycling. Removing the mulch will provide additional room for tree debris, as well as room to handle the presence of additional hauling vehicles. There are approximately 50 large haul trucks/trailers dedicated specifically to tree debris pickup, and this number will continue to expand in the coming days. This is in addition to City crews, who also continue to work on debris cleanup.

We anticipate being well into second pass operations before winter settles in; tree and nonorganic storm debris pickup operations will continue in the event of an early snowfall.

Website for tree debris removal: [http://www.cedar-rapids.org/tree\\_debris\\_removal.php](http://www.cedar-rapids.org/tree_debris_removal.php)

### **Street Trees (City-owned)**

Crews are working quickly in order to address the needs of more than 40,000 street trees, and are prioritizing hazardous limbs that are at risk of falling and creating further safety issues. The crews’ process will focus on safety and efficiency, trimming hazardous limbs and moving quickly onto the next tree. Tree debris will be left behind for pickup later to expedite hazardous limb removal. Residents can assist with cleanup efforts by moving tree debris to the curb once it is cut down. Right now, crews are focused on

trimming hazardous limbs; complete tree removals will wait until hazardous limbs have been addressed. For safety, hazardous limbs may be removed from trees that are marked for complete removal at a later date. Crews will work in multiple neighborhoods across the community at once. Residents can view a map where work is occurring on the City's website.

While the City is committed to picking up tree debris and removing trees and stumps, the current priority must be on addressing safety hazards as quickly as possible. We appreciate the public's understanding.

While the Parks and Recreation Department is focused right now on removal of safety concerns, work is also underway on a comprehensive plan for replanting. Information related to replanting efforts will be made available to residents through the City's website and social media outlets.

Website for street trees: [http://www.cedar-rapids.org/tree\\_inspections\\_info.php](http://www.cedar-rapids.org/tree_inspections_info.php)

### **Nonorganic Storm Debris Removal**

As crews continue to focus on tree debris removal, work is also underway on the collection of nonorganic storm damage such as storage sheds, decking, fencing, etc. Additional resources will be dedicated to the removal of inorganic debris following a first pass of tree debris in all areas. Solid Waste and Recycling staff are assisting the contractor with inorganic debris removal in areas that are difficult to reach with the large claw trucks. This includes cul-de-sacs, smaller streets, etc.

To date, approximately 270 tons of inorganic storm debris have been removed from approximately 6 percent of our streets. Clearing work is also underway in an additional 14 percent of street areas (this number reflects changes made to clarify the verification of completed map areas).

We have been working closely with our contractors to provide an accurate forecast of completed, in-progress, and future debris-removal zones. This remains a fluid process, as it is difficult to estimate how quickly we will reach every neighborhood. Residents can find a map on the City's website, as well as a list of inorganic materials eligible for curbside collection.

General reminders: routine weekly garbage, recycling, and yard waste collection continues from the STREET and NOT the alley at this time. Leaf vacuum collection will begin on October 19. The leaf vacuum trucks cannot collect piles of twigs and sticks, residents are asked to make sure leaf piles are free of branches, sticks and other debris. Customers are encouraged to make full use of their green yard waste carts and paper lawn and leaf bags to ensure successful collection of leaves this season. Customers should fully utilize their YARDY cart before turning to lawn and leaf bags.

Website for nonorganic storm debris: [http://www.cedar-rapids.org/nonorganic\\_debris\\_info.php](http://www.cedar-rapids.org/nonorganic_debris_info.php)

### **Burn Ban to Remain in Effect**

The burn ban is still in effect. It will continue until at least the first round of tree debris removal has been completed throughout the city. The Fire Department does not want to risk large tree debris fires or rapidly spreading brush fires because of a spark from a recreational fire. The Fire Department is allowing Liquid Petroleum (LP) gas and natural gas fire pits to be used. However, no wood-fired recreational fires are allowed due to the possibility of sparks and the large amount of debris still in place. While many locations no longer have debris piles, a burn ban for just certain sections of the city is not practical. The Fire Department will evaluate fire risk and whether the burn ban needs to continue after the first round of tree debris removal is completed throughout the city.

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