



Fall Leaf Collection Transition

Frequently Asked Questions

Beginning in 2024, the Village of Oak Park is transitioning the Fall Leaf Collection program to improve safety, sustainability and efficiency for all residents, Village staff, and contracted workers. This document aims to answer to commonly asked questions regarding the implementation plan for the Fall Leaf Collection Program transition to a bagging program model. For more information, please visit www.oak-park.us/faqlaef.

Q: How will bags/containers of leaves be picked up?

A: The Village's residential waste hauler, [LRS](#), will have dedicated compost trucks and leaf crews that will manually collect bags and empty rigid landscape containers from the parkway according to the route and schedule set by Public Works staff. A Village-wide make-up day is included in the weekly Fall Leaf Collection schedule to supplement areas with higher leaf volumes or catch up after inclement weather events.

Q: Are landscape bags my only option for Fall Leaf Collection?

A: No, while the Village will no longer pick up piles of leaves on the street, we understand that bagging leaves might not be the preferred option for everyone. Here are a few alternative methods for disposing of your leaves this Fall:

- Residents may use a rigid container labeled "Yard Waste Only" to collect their leaves. The container may not exceed 32 gallons or 50 pounds and shall be placed in the parkway for pickup alongside the landscape bags. The container may be reused throughout the season, but the waste hauler is not responsible for damages or replacement. Complimentary "Yard Waste Only" stickers are available at the Public Works Center (201 South Blvd.).
- Sign up for the Village's CompostAble Program. Participants receive a large 96-gallon bin for weekly collection of yard waste and food scraps. Fall leaves can go directly into your compost bin for removal on your regular service day. No bags are required, and your other organics will also be diverted from the landfill. Visit www.oak-park.us/compost to learn more about the program and sign up for your bin.
- Leave the leaves. The Village announced a pledge drive during International Compost Awareness Week to increase education on the benefits of allowing leaf litter to decompose naturally in your yard or garden this winter and feed your soil. This is a great opportunity to support regional biodiversity, save money on fertilizers, connect with your neighbors, and reduce the number of landscape bags needed during Fall Leaf Collection. Visit www.oak-park.us/leavetheleaves to learn more about the initiative and sign the pledge.

Q: What do I do with my leaves if I live in a multi-family building?

A: The Fall Leaf Collection Program is funded by residential refuse fees and is intended to service single-family residents in Oak Park (buildings with five or fewer dwelling units). Other types of buildings such as multi-family, commercial, or institutional are responsible for their own leaf removal and disposal. The Village will not remove leaf piles in the street or collect landscape bags from these types of property owners. However, enforcement is focused on education and supporting compliance, not issuing fines.

Q: What if I contract with a landscaping service?

A: Leaves collected by landscapers for residential refuse customers during the Fall Leaf Collection Program may be bagged and placed in the parkway for pickup. If the landscaper does not want to bag the leaves, they are responsible for removal and disposal. Village staff is currently developing multi-lingual materials for residents to share with their landscapers.

Q: Are green stickers required?

A: No, green stickers are not required for Fall Leaf Collection.

Q: How many landscape bags would I need for Fall Leaf Collection and how much would it cost?

A: Based on staff research, averaged across the six-week Fall Leaf Collection Program and approximately 11,200 households, each family would amass one (1) to (3) three landscape bags per week and purchase a total of five (5) to 16 bags for the year. At \$0.50 per bag, this amounts to \$2.50 to \$8 in costs per household per year. A greater number of bags may be required for larger properties with more trees than the average. Given the cost per bag, five to 10 landscape bags per week for the six-week period would amount to \$15 to \$30 annually.

Q: What will happen if I place piles of leaves in the street?

A: In the case that a leaf pile is spotted or reported to be in the street, all Village staff will be trained and knowledgeable of the bagging program guidelines and be equipped with educational materials and supplies to encourage compliance on the spot. While the priority of transition is compliance by providing information and support, if a leaf pile remains after multiple engagements with Village staff it is possible that a citation may be issued. A Fall Leaf Collection reporting platform will be developed for residents to notify the Village of leaf piles and for staff to track the status of violations.

Q: How will the Village support residents that are not physically able to bag leaves or financially able to contract a landscaper?

A: The Village currently has a Sidewalk Shoveling Program to assist income-eligible residents that physically cannot shovel snow nor afford to hire a shoveling service. The shoveling contractor has agreed to expand the program to provide leaf services as well. Village staff is currently working to update the contract, program guidelines, and application.

Q: What are the positive aspects of the historic pile program model?

A: The benefits identified while evaluating the historic Fall Leaf Collection model of placing large leaf piles in the street for collection include lower physical impact for residents, familiarity to long-term residents and minimal additional costs to residents.

Q: What are the negative aspects of the historic pile program model?

A: Several conflicts, hazards and challenges were identified during the evaluation process. There were 14 identified by staff, including large piles blocking crosswalk and sidewalk access; incidents of impacted visibility for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists caused by large leaf piles that are in close proximity to and intersections; vehicle and truck fires from parking atop loose piles or hot engines being in proximity to loose leaf litter; heavy machinery producing harmful and avoidable greenhouse gas emissions; lack of enforcement due to inability to identify violators and more. For a complete list, please visit www.oak-park.us/faqleaf.

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