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Village to launch pilot food scrap composting program

With the goal of decreasing the amount of organic refuse sent to landfills, the Village of Oak Park will launch a voluntary pilot food scrap composting program in one garbage collection route on the south side of the community.

The pilot program will be available by subscription from April 2 to November 30 to the 1,300 residences in one yardwaste route in Friday's regular refuse collection area south of the Eisenhower Expressway from Harlem Avenue to East Avenue.

Neighborhood forums to explain the program are scheduled for 7 – 8:30 p.m., Wed., Feb. 8 at Irving Elementary School, 1125 S. Cuyler Ave.; Mon., Feb. 13 at Lincoln Elementary School, 1111 S. Grove Ave.; and Thurs., Feb. 16, at Ascension Catholic School, 601 Van Buren Street.

Residents who sign up for the pilot program must agree to participate through November. The subscription cost will be \$12 per month, which is less than the cost of one yardwaste sticker per week.

"Oak Park currently diverts about 38 percent of its solid waste from landfills through recycling and yardwaste collection efforts," said Karen Rozmus who manages the Village's refuse and recycling programs. "This pilot program will help us determine if we can increase the diversion rate significantly by adding food scraps to the organic mix sent to a commercial composting facility."

Participants will receive a special 96-gallon mobile cart for organics, an under-sink collection bucket and a box of compostable bags for food scraps. The cart is comparable in volume to three bags or containers of yardwaste collected in the current program, according to Rozmus. Food scraps are not accepted in the Village-wide yardwaste collection program.

Both yardwaste and food scraps may be placed in the organics cart. However, food scraps must be contained in a bag that meets [American Society for Testing and Materials \(ASTM\)](#) standards for compostable materials. Subscribers who use the organics cart for their yardwaste and food scraps will not be required to purchase yardwaste stickers, she said.

Rozmus recommends that residents who maintain backyard compost piles or who mulch grass clippings investigate sharing organics carts and costs with neighbors.

For more information, call 708.358.5700 or e-mail publicworks@oak-park.us.

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