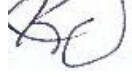





Memorandum

TO: Kevin J. Jackson, Village Manager 
FROM: Lindsey Nieratka, Chief Sustainability Officer 
FOR: Village President and Board of Trustees
DATE: October 16, 2025
SUBJECT: EEC Support of Sustainable Practices under the Fall Leaf Collection Program

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to summarize the Environment and Energy Commission's (EEC) support of sustainable practices under the Fall Leaf Collection Program.

Background

On October 7, 2025, the Environment and Energy Commission of the Village of Oak Park considered a memo that stated the Commission's support for sustainable practices under the fall leaf collection program. Under the new leaf collection program initiated in 2024, residents have multiple options to manage the fall leaves, including bagging the leaves, placing leaves in the Village's compost bins, or mulching or leaving the leaves in their yards.

The EEC's memo of support to the Village Board includes encouragement for residents to choose to utilize the Village's CompostAble program to dispose of leaves or "leave the leaves" to enhance soil health and biodiversity on their properties. The EEC voted unanimously (6-0) to present the memo as written to the Village Board of Trustees.

For questions, please contact Lindsey Roland Nieratka, Chief Sustainability Officer, at lnieratka@oak-park.us or by phone at 708-358-5785.

Attachments:

1. Memorandum: EEC Support of Sustainable Practices under the Fall Leaf Collection Program.

cc: Lisa Shelley, Deputy Village Manager
Ahmad Zayyad, Deputy Village Manager
Jack Malec, Assistant to the Village Manager
Christina M. Waters, Village Clerk
All Department Directors

Memorandum

To: Oak Park Village Board of Trustees

From: Environment & Energy Commission

Date: October 7, 2025

Subject: EEC Support of Sustainable Practices under the Fall Leaf Collection Program

Dear Board of Trustees:

On Tuesday, September 2, at its regularly scheduled meeting, the EEC engaged in a discussion regarding the Village's fall leaf collection program. This program replaces the previous method of fall leaf collection, where residents raked leaves into large piles on the Village streets, and then these piles were consolidated into larger piles at the ends of the blocks, where they were then shoveled by front-end loaders and dumped into large trucks to be hauled away at certain times. It was frequently noted that the large piles created traffic obstacles to the vision of drivers and to vehicles turning into the streets. The fall leaf collection program initiated in 2024 provides multiple options for leaf management including bagging or binning leaves, placing leaves in compost containers, or to "leave the leaves."

The EEC would like to encourage residents to choose sustainable leaf management methods under the current leaf collection program.

- Compost leaves using the Village's "CompostAble" program. Using the Village's large compost bins eliminates the need for lawn bags and consolidating all compostable material in one place for regular weekly pickup for convenience and efficiency.
- Leave the leaves, providing ecological benefits. By using mulching mowers, the soil is naturally enriched for healthier lawns and gardens. Additionally, by raking leaves into landscape beds and bushes, the soil is again naturally enriched, and habitat for garden-friendly insects is preserved over the winter.

By choosing a sustainable leaf management practice, the need for the heavy equipment previously used to consolidate, load, and transport large loads of leaves is eliminated.

Based on its discussion of these points highlighted above, the EEC stands in full support of the Village's fall leaf collection program and encourages the Board to continue the program. When residents choose sustainable leaf management options, and when done in conjunction with the "CompostAble" program, the Fall Leaf Collection program will provide the most ecologically and environmentally friendly result for the Village and its residents.