

# Shorewood Composts!

## ORGANICS COLLECTION PILOT—FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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*How long is the pilot running and what is the commitment?*

The pilot is currently planned for one year. We are asking that subscribers commit to a full year.

*What about rodents? Isn't a bin full of kitchen waste an open invitation for critters?*

No, but this is a common myth about compost collection. The fact is that your organics bin will be no more attractive to rodents than your typical garbage can or dumpster. The mere concentration of food scraps does not make them more inviting than a single chicken bone mingled in with your regular trash. Indeed, some scavenging rodents are more interested in pet waste than carrot peelings. Moreover, the organics bins will be furnished with a locking lid to provide extra assurance to subscribers *and* skeptical neighbors.

*How frequent is collection?*

Organics collection will follow a weekly schedule from April through November, moving to every other week from December through March.

*What is included with the monthly subscription fee?*

All subscribers will be provided with a 32-gallon rolling cart with a locking lid and a welcome kit that includes a comprehensive list of yes/no items, a kitchen caddy, and a starter supply of compostable bags.

*Do kitchen scraps need to be bagged?*

Technically, no. Kitchen scraps can be placed loose in the collection cart, but many customers may find it tidier and more convenient to bag scraps within an indoor collection container, using either BPI-certified compostable liners, paper grocery bags, or sheets of newspaper.

*Can the pilot accommodate apartment buildings?*

No. The proposed pilot program is designed to gather data on Village waste hauling patterns and learn about possible savings and environmental benefits associated with food waste diversion. Since the Village does not serve apartment buildings in refuse collection, the pilot won't specifically target apartment dwellers. Shorewood apartment dwellers are encouraged to use community compost sites located at Atwater, Lake Bluff, and Shorewood High School community gardens, talk to their landlords about establishing a service for the building, or seek out a commercial collection service as individual customers.

*I already compost in my backyard. What is the benefit for me?*

First, curbside service expands the list of compostable items considerably beyond what we are advised to toss in our backyard bins: spoiled leftovers, pasta and rice, oily food, bread and bakery items, dairy, bones,

meat scraps, animal skin, larger quantities of spoiled or expired prepared items. Second, many composters are restricted in winter months by space and other conditions, but curbside service is year round. While the program is designed and probably ideal for households who lack the space, time, or interest to compost themselves, there is something for everyone who is motivated to reduce a waste footprint.

*I use the garbage disposal for many items. What is the benefit for me?*

It's true that Shorewood is connected to the MMSD/Veolia Milorganite operation at Jones Island, so our sink disposals are a viable option for some resource recovery, but there are many items we don't put down the disposal: bones, fruit pits (olive, avocado, peach, etc.), egg shells, nut hulls, meat scraps, animal skin, coffee grounds, tea bags, larger quantities of spoiled or expired prepared items. Picture a whole burnt pizza as a possible example or an entire tray of casserole gone bad. All these can be composted at a commercial facility and returned as a soil resource. Plus, commercial-scale composting may offer a higher environmental return over the wastewater treatment process, which is very energy intensive and yields a product intended primarily for fertilizing turf grass and golf courses, whereas organic compost is something any gardener or landscaper can readily use. Note that unlike compost, fertilizer does not build soil structure or add long-term nutrient benefits and is only useful as a short-term boost.

*Why does the cart also take yard waste? Doesn't the Village already pick up yard waste?*

It's true that the Village already offers regular collection of loose brush and bagged yard waste and even sells rolling collection carts for \$10 to motivated residents. But loose brush and bagged yard waste collection imposes considerable labor burdens and some injury risks to DPW staff. This pilot will allow us to see the benefits of automating more of the Village's yard trimmings collection, which is convenient to users and staff alike. The comingling of yard waste and kitchen scraps also helps to reduce odors.

*Will subscribers be provided with finished compost at some point during the year?*

The short answer is no, not at the moment. The pilot as currently constructed makes no provision for compost to come back to the Village. Finished compost, however, is something the Village could easily arrange for bulk delivery to one of the community gardens and the Conservation Committee is looking into options, as our initial survey data revealed this as a popular request.

*Can the carts be shared among neighbors?*

Yes. We are encouraging potential subscribers to the pilot to share carts, with maybe two or three neighbors splitting the monthly fee and mingling their scraps, thereby maximizing cost efficiency. Note that only one household would be billed, and the splitting of payment is therefore handled on the customer side. Also, only the household billed would receive the starter kit, but otherwise, there's no downside to sharing.

**Do you have more questions? Ask the Shorewood Conservation Committee for help.**