



CITY OF
EAST GRAND RAPIDS

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DOUG LA FAVE
DEPUTY CITY MANAGER

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Commissioners
FROM: Doug La Fave, Deputy City Manager
DATE: March 10, 2026

RE: Yard Waste Rules and Regulations Amendments-Integration of Yard Waste and Food Scraps Composting Service

Action Requested: That the City Commission consider amendments to the Department of Public Works Yard Waste Rules and Regulations to integrate yard waste and food scraps composting service.

Background: The city with the cities of Grand Rapids, Wyoming, Kentwood, Walker, and Grandville partners with Kent County Public Works to send all refuse and recycling to the Waste to Energy Facility (incinerator facility that creates electricity from refuse) and Recycling/Educational Facility. The City of East Grand Rapids is the only community in Kent County that requires a unified fee for private sector haulers to provide refuse and recycling services. The City of East Grand Rapids is currently the only community that mandates recycling service along with refuse service.

Kent County Public Works estimates that 35% of the West Michigan waste stream is organic waste. Kent County has set goals to reduce landfill waste by 90% by 2030. Though refuse and recycling materials from East Grand Rapids and the other metro area five cities do not go to the Kent County Landfill (as noted materials go to the Waste to Energy Facility and Recycling and Educational Facility), alternative processing for organic food scrap materials was requested to be developed by the East Grand Rapids Department of Public Works as a 2022 goal set by the City Commission at the time. The City Commission authorized a food scraps drop-off site as a pilot program from 2022 through the end of 2025. The pilot program registered ~260 households with ~60 household regularly utilizing the service. During the pilot program, city staff worked to better understand regulations, compost processing, and vendor capacities from a variety of industry vendors to develop a curbside composting model that would allow for a “next step forward” to blend food scraps with yard waste at the conclusion of the pilot.

The Department of Public Works collects 16,000 to 25,000 yards of yard waste material each year, with transportation and composting costs ranging between \$94,000 and \$150,000. The food scraps drop-off pilot, 5-gallon bucket drops ranged between 2,050 and 1,600 per year, with a transportation and composting costs of \$3,120 each year. Based on the range of material volume of compostable material collected in a given year and integration food scraps composting into the existing curbside yard waste composting service, city staff estimates that the combined service would have minimal impact to service delivery cost outside of the fluctuation that exists due to nature. No change is needed for the existing transportation and composting contract with Cannonsburg Wood products. This contract runs through 2028.

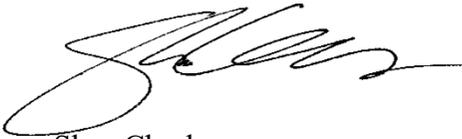
The proposed Yard Waste and Food Scraps Composting Service Rules and Regulations do not reduce existing services but enhance them without the addition of equipment or staffing.

Key items of note for the proposed rules and regulations:

- Food scraps composting would be permitted as noted to combine with yard waste material with some limitations due to regulatory and composting requirements and capabilities.
- The food scraps composting drop-off site would be maintained at the Department of Public Works 24/7/365 to allow for those interested in composting alternative materials not permitted in the curbside service and during service gaps during several winter months.
- Minor changes to container regulations for worker safety.
- Drop-off service enhancement at the Department of Public Works outside of service parameters for brief periods when weather conditions are outside of seasonal norms that do not allow Public Works to transition staffing and equipment from winter operations to yard waste/food scraps composting service.
- More descriptive information about the service and operations for the community.
- No change to service routes.

Excerpts from Chapter 21 of the City Code that regulate combustible waste and solid waste are included and note roles and responsibilities related to this service. The current and proposed rules and regulations are also included. If approved, the enhanced services will commence on April 6, 2026.

REVIEWED & APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shea Charles', written in a cursive style.

Shea Charles
City Manager