



## **MANAGER'S MEMORANDUM**

Prepared for: **Naperville City Council**

By: City Manager's Office

5/22/2025

### **A. MANAGER'S MEMORANDUM**

**Source:**

1. Ben Mjolsness,  
Sustainability Manager

**Subject:**

Food Scrap Composting Program  
and Clothing and Textile Recycling  
Program

**Action:**

FYI

# CITY OF NAPERVILLE

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** May 22, 2025

**TO:** Doug Krieger, City Manager

**FROM:** Ben Mjolsness, Sustainability Manager

**SUBJECT:** Food Scrap Composting Program and Clothing and Textile Recycling Program

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**Purpose:**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information regarding two new recycling opportunities to further the community's commitment to sustainability.

**Background:**

The City, in partnership with several area organizations, is providing residents with two new recycling opportunities to further the community's commitment to sustainability.

The Food Scrap Composting Program and Clothing and Textile Recycling Program will run from Monday, June 2, to Friday, Aug. 29. The temporary addition of these two free programs open to Naperville residents supports the City's goal of providing easy and convenient ways to recycle.

**Discussion:**

**Food Scrap Composting Program**

Compost is organic material that can be added to soil to help plants grow. The EPA's *From Field to Bin* report notes that food scraps comprise more than 20% of what people throw away and could be composted instead. Making compost helps keep wasted food out of landfills where it takes up space and release methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

The City has again partnered with its refuse and recycling contractor, Groot Industries, to reduce the amount of food waste sent to landfills with the free Food Scrap Composting Program. Building on the 2024 pilot program, this year's program again offers two accessible drop-off locations at the CNG Station, 1720 W. Jefferson Ave., and the City-owned parking lot at 91st Street and Wolf's Crossing Road for residents to drop off food scraps.

The 2024 pilot program, which ran for 11 weeks, provided valuable insights into resident participation. A total of 228 carts that hold 65 gallons each of compost material were collected across both sites. While this shows a modest start, it is important to note that there are over 14,000 households within a five-minute drive of a compost drop off site. There is a significant opportunity for increased participation in the Food Scrap Compost Program.

Unlike the 2024 pilot program, yard waste, including grass clippings, will **not** be permitted in the compost bins at either drop-off location. The pilot program identified yard waste as a

challenge. Overall, yard waste (e.g., grass clippings) constituted 76% of the total collected material, with food scraps making up 24%. This change helps maintain the quality of composted material and ensures that unacceptable items do not impact the data collected, which could ultimately affect the program's evaluation. The focus on accepting only food scraps is expected to improve the program's overall effectiveness and sustainability benefits.

To support the success of the program and minimize contamination, it is important for residents to only drop off food scraps, including fruits, vegetables, pastas, breads, crackers, meat/bones and cereals. Residents should bring their food scraps in their own containers and empty them into the marked bins, which Groot will regularly empty and process the materials for compost. A complete list of acceptable and unacceptable items is available at [www.naperville.il.us/food-scrap-compost](http://www.naperville.il.us/food-scrap-compost).

Groot will track the volumes of material collected and note any contamination. The success of this program will be evaluated to determine its continuation.

### Clothing and Textile Recycling Program

According to the Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles (SMART) Association, roughly 85% of clothing material that could be recycled ends up in landfills across the nation, even though 95% can be recycled. The City is partnering with DuPage County, eWorks, and RewearAble to collect clothing and textiles for reuse and recycling at an easy and familiar location. Naperville residents can drop off accepted items at the City's Environmental Collection Campus, 156 Fort Hill Drive, on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. The City and its partners will evaluate the success of the program, which also launches June 2 and concludes on Aug. 29, to determine whether it will continue.

Accepted items include clothing, shoes, bedding, towels, and other household textiles in worn condition. Shoes must be matched and tied or banded together. Items should be bagged or boxed but not tied or taped closed. Items not able to be reused will be repurposed into cleaning/painting rags, or reused in insulation, packing material and/or carpeting. Due to processing limitations, heavily soiled and/or wet items, pillows, pet beds, and curtains will not be accepted. A complete list of acceptable and unacceptable items is available at [www.naperville.il.us/textile-recycling](http://www.naperville.il.us/textile-recycling).

A press release with details about both programs will be prepared and the information will be shared on the City's social media platforms. A map of the food scrap drop-off locations is attached.

### **Recommendation:**

I recommend that this information be shared with the City Council through the Manager's Memorandum.

Attachment: Map of Food Scrap Compost Program Drop Off Sites

