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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: City of Marion to Save Taxpayer Dollars While Creating More Accessible and Efficient Leaf Pickup Method**

MARION, IN: (July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016) – The Citywide Maintenance (Street) Department is implementing a new method for leaf pickup starting this fall, saving tens of thousands in taxpayer dollars while providing a more convenient and accessible pickup process to Marion residents.

Once the leaves start to fall this year, the City’s leaf pickup schedule will follow Marion Utilities’ trash pickup schedule, allowing residents to be served once a week during the leaf pickup season as opposed to once approximately every three weeks previously. Leaves will not be picked up at the same time as trash, but they will be picked up on the same day. Also, residents will be required to bag their leaves and place them on their property by the curb. Residents will no longer be allowed to rake their leaves into the street. Officials are working to revise the city ordinance in order to enforce the change.

Citywide Maintenance Superintendent James Loftis says the new method is more in line with what other cities Marion’s size would do. “I know that this is a change, but we are happy to be providing this free service to the citizens. Many other cities surrounding us have stricter rules, and Carmel doesn’t even provide leaf pickup at all.”

The City will also benefit by saving money due to discontinuing the use of leaf vacuum vehicles which were costly and becoming less feasible to maintain, reducing the amount of manpower and overtime hours, and reducing the cost of fuel. Loftis explained that last year their expenditure for leaf pickup was approximately \$56,000. With the new method, he estimates the cost to be \$16,000...a savings of about \$40,000. City drains will also become clogged less frequently, reducing the cost associated with storm drain cleaning efforts. Additionally, there will be a reduction in heavy City maintenance traffic during the leaf pickup timeframe.

Residents may purchase paper yard bags at any big box store like Walmart and Meijer as well as your local hardware store. As an alternative to bagging leaves, residents are encouraged to mulch leaves while mowing to provide nutrients to the soil.