

NO: R128

COUNCIL DATE: June 27, 2022

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **June 23, 2022**

FROM: **General Manager, Engineering
General Manager, Corporate Services**

FILE: **5360-15**

SUBJECT: **Illegal Dumping Update and Proposed Mitigation Actions**

RECOMMENDATION

The Engineering Department and Corporate Services Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report for information;
2. Endorse the proposed illegal dumping mitigation actions, as described in this report; and
3. Authorize staff to bring forward for Council's consideration amendments to the *Waste Management Regulations and Charges Bylaw 2015, No. 18412* and the *Property Maintenance and Unsightly Premises By-law 2007, No. 16393*, as generally described in this report.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement to proceed with the illegal dumping mitigation actions and associated bylaw amendments, as generally described in this report, and to enhance enforcement and fines related to illegal dumping activity.

BACKGROUND

Dealing with illegal dumping is a constant challenge within populous and urbanized municipalities. Illegal dumping has serious effects on the environment, wildlife habitat, human health, and the safety of our community. The adverse economic impacts include costs associated with the collection, transportation, and disposal of abandoned materials. Within the Metro Vancouver region, the cause of this activity is generally attributed to a lack of awareness of curbside collection options, inconvenient disposal locations, transportation challenges (i.e. securing an appropriate vehicle to transport the waste to a licensed facility), and the perceived high cost of disposal combined with an unwillingness to pay the associated tipping fees.

Prior to 2015, the City was responding to approximately 10,000 illegal dumping incidents annually, resulting in upwards of \$1 million in annual cleanup costs. The most frequent illegally dumped items included mattresses, furniture, household garbage, yard trimmings, scrap metal, hazardous household items, electronics, and construction materials.

In an effort to address the increase in illegal dumping, in 2016 the City launched multiple initiatives that were implemented over a five-year period, including enhancing convenient collection services and programs for residents to dispose of material that was commonly being dumped illegally. These initiatives included:

- Streamlining illegal dumping cleanup operations;
- Hosting waste drop-off events which offered free disposal of large items and renovation materials to Surrey residents;
- Updating the Large Item Pickup Program (“LIPU”) and implementing LIPU at apartment buildings; and
- Initiating the Love Where You Live Campaign to promote community cleanups.

These new programs and services initially reduced illegal dumping and associated costs by an annual average of 30%. However, since the COVID-19 pandemic, illegal dumping has increased by approximately 15%.

DISCUSSION

While it is challenging to eliminate illegal dumping, a continuous review of City policies aimed at mitigating illegal dumping is necessary to ensure that appropriate operational strategies are engaged to minimize its impact.

Based on a recent assessment of illegally dumped waste, it has been determined that the types of materials that have increased during the pandemic include drywall, home renovation materials, appliances, and furniture.

Accordingly, staff has developed a strategy that builds on the success of the approaches taken prior to the pandemic. The key focus areas that have been identified are described below:

New Central Surrey Recycling and Waste Centre

The new Central Surrey Recycling and Waste Centre located at 6711 – 154 Street is anticipated to open this summer. The new facility will provide residents and businesses a year-round, convenient, and centralized location to drop-off recycling and garbage. The facility will have a pivotal role in reducing illegal dumping and diverting waste from the landfill, as it will accept mattresses, electronics, drywall, furniture, appliances, paints, textiles, books, and green waste.

As part of the opening of the facility, the City will sponsor a new drop-off event for Surrey residents to replace the former Pop-Up Junk Drop event previously held at the Surrey Operations Centre. This will help promote the new Central Surrey Recycling and Waste Centre, help residents get familiar with the new facility and continue to provide residents with a cost-effective way to dispose of unwanted materials for free or at a reduced tipping fee.

Amendments to Existing Bylaws

Staff has the discretion to issue Municipal Ticket Information’s (“MTIs”), Bylaw Notices, or pursue other forms of enforcement to enforce the City’s bylaws. The decision to use any particular method of enforcement will depend on the circumstances of the case, including whether it will assist in effecting compliance.

Staff is developing an administrative process for Bylaw Notices related to illegal dumping to be added to the established adjudication system, wherein disputed Bylaw Notices can be heard before an adjudicator appointed by the Province. In addition to this administrative process change, staff recommend an update to the following existing bylaws:

Currently, the City is limited to issuing fines under the *Waste Management Regulations and Charges Bylaw 2015, No. 18412* (“Waste Management Bylaw”) to persons directly involved in the unpermitted disposal of waste such as a driver or operator of a vehicle being used to deposit waste. Upon review, staff has determined that the Waste Management Bylaw should be amended to expand this provision to prohibit “an owner, registered owner, lessee or operator of a vehicle” from causing, permitting, or otherwise allowing their vehicle to be used for illegal dumping. This amendment allows enforcement against all those responsible for the illegal dumping and not simply the operator of the vehicle. Accordingly, amendments will be required to the *Surrey Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaw, 2016, No. 18691* and the *Surrey Municipal Ticket Information Utilization By-law, 1994, No. 12508* to permit the issuance of MTIs and Bylaw Notices for these infractions.

It is recommended that the *Property Maintenance and Unsightly Premises By-law 2007, No. 16393* be amended to include requirements that commercial waste dumpsters at businesses be locked at all times when not used by the owner, securely stored and maintained regularly. This approach has been successful in a number of municipalities located within the region. These provisions will help prevent scattered garbage from falling onto City property while also preventing access to the contents of the dumpster. These measures will also help with reducing illegal dumping and unwanted activity on the property. Enforcement of the provisions would occur at businesses that are consistently non-compliant.

Public Awareness and Education

A public awareness and education campaign will be developed to change illegal dumping behaviour and raise awareness of the impacts of illegal dumping. The focus of the campaign will be to highlight the City’s actions that will be taken to curb this activity including:

- a) changes to bylaws;
- b) increased enforcement;
- c) promoting available disposal options; and
- d) educating customers on proper disposal requirements and disposal locations for renovation materials.

The campaign will utilize social media, newsletters, transit shelter advertisements, digital boards, direct mailouts, and media promotion including radio and television. In addition, a more targeted campaign will be developed to educate business owners on the requirements to ensuring commercial waste dumpsters remain locked as per the proposed bylaw change.

NEXT STEPS

If Council approves the recommendations in this report, staff will bring forward a future report with the applicable bylaw updates for Council’s consideration.

LEGAL SERVICES REVIEW

This report has been reviewed by Legal Services.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The introduction of new mitigation actions to reduce illegal dumping support the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter 2.0. In particular, the recommendations relate to the Sustainability Charter 2.0 theme of Ecosystems and Infrastructure. Specifically, the recommendations support the following Desired Outcomes ("DOs").

- Natural Areas, Biodiversity and Urban Forest DO₂: Surrey actively protects, enhances and restores its natural environment and habitats
- Materials and Waste DO₂₀: Materials and resources are used efficiently, sourced locally where feasible, and repurposed or recycled at the end of their life cycle; and
- Community Safety and Emergency Services DO₁: Residents are safe and have a strong sense of security in all neighbourhoods and throughout the city.

CONCLUSION

Illegal dumping impacts our City and many other municipalities in negative ways. It has serious effects on the environment, wildlife habitat, human health, safety of our community and has significant financial costs associated with collecting, removing, and disposing the dumped materials.

Data from 2016 to 2021 indicates that illegal dumping incidents and associated costs have decreased on average by 30%; however, the City has experienced an average upward trend of 15% since the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the increasing trends, staff have identified enforcement actions and a new drop-off event as described in this report that will assist in curbing this activity and decreasing the current dumping trends.

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