

MEMORANDUM

WMPSC-C 10-2021

Subject: 2020 Illegal Dumping Summary and 2021 Mitigation Measures

Date: Monday, February 22, 2021

To: Waste Management Planning Steering Committee

From: Kate Ashbridge, Supervisor, Waste Management

This memorandum is intended to provide an update to members of the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee regarding illegal dumping statistics in 2020 and ongoing mitigation measures to address illegal dumping in Niagara Region.

2020 Summary

A total of 678 illegal dumping reports were received in 2020. A high-level summary of the 2020 statistics are provided below, with further details noted in the report.

- 84 of the 678 illegal dumping reports were received via the Online Reporting Tool.
- 42 warning letters were issued.
- Seven (7) offence notices were issued as a result of illegal dumping.

Since the establishment of the Illegal Dumping Working Group in 2012, staff have tracked the number of reports of illegal dumping. In 2020, 678 illegal dumps were reported compared to 2019 where 677 illegal dumps were reported. The number of reported illegal dumps can be highly influenced by the amount of proactive monitoring undertaken by Regional staff. This is especially true for illegal dumping that occurs in or around public space litter bins. A further break down of the illegal dumps by area municipality are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: 2020 Illegal Dumping Investigations by Municipality Total Summary

Municipality	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Fort Erie	3	3	2	2	8	5	6	5	5	2	11	20	72
Grimsby	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	11
Lincoln	0	1	2	0	0	2	0	3	5	1	2	1	17
Niagara-on-the-Lake	8	7	2	4	2	2	0	0	3	0	2	2	32
Niagara Falls	2	10	8	13	14	12	11	8	11	17	22	23	151

Municipality	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Pelham	2	0	3	1	3	1	0	2	0	4	1	1	18
Port Colborne	2	2	4	3	5	0	1	3	0	4	1	3	28
St. Catharines	16	9	18	20	7	12	10	7	14	19	28	67	227
Thorold	1	1	4	5	5	3	3	1	7	6	6	3	45
Wainfleet	0	2	1	0	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	11
Welland	3	1	7	10	4	2	2	3	2	7	7	3	51
West Lincoln	1	0	1	2	1	2	3	2	1	2	0	0	15
Total	39	36	52	63	51	43	37	37	51	63	82	124	678

Illegal Dumping In Public Space Litter Bins

In 2020, Waste Management staff responded to reports of illegal dumping at public space litter bins throughout the year. However, the frequency of monitoring of public space litter bins was increased in November and December, with the assistance of a student. Additionally, the 2020 litter bin blitz was also conducted at the end of November and into December. 149 of the reported 678 or 22% of illegal dumps that occurred in 2020, were found to be in or around public space litter bins. Table 2 below shows the monthly breakdown of illegally dumped material found in public space litter bins.

Table 2: 2020 Illegal Dumping In Public Space Litter Bins

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
# of dumps in litter bins	11	7	4	7	1	4	2	4	6	6	23	74	149
% of total dumps	28%	19%	8%	11%	2%	9%	5%	11%	12%	10%	28%	60%	22%

Some municipalities have noted an increase in the amount of material being dumped in their public space litter bins. Waste Management staff have responded to all reports of illegal dumping in litter bins, regardless if the public space litter bins are serviced by the municipality or the Region's waste collection contractor.

In Niagara Falls, an enhanced service level change may have resulted in a perceived increase in illegal dumping in and around public space litter bins. Prior to October 19, 2020 the City of Niagara Falls received year round, seven (7) day per week collection of their mainline public space litter bins. The mainline is comprised of four (4) of the Niagara Falls Designated Business Areas; Lundy's Lane, Main Street, Clifton Hill and Victoria Centre and Queen Street. The waste collection contractor is required to collect all material in and around the litter bin. This resulted in some businesses and residents

in the area receiving seven (7) day per week collection of any waste that they illegally set out beside a public space litter bin.

With the new collection contract, the City of Niagara Falls elected to have the mainline public space litter bins collected once per week in the off peak season (Thanksgiving to Victoria day) and seven (7) day per week collection occur during the peak season (Victoria day to Thanksgiving). Municipal staff have reported an increase in the amount of garbage being found in and around public litter bins that may be attributed to this service level change. Waste management staff are proactively monitoring the Niagara Falls' public space litter bins in the mainline, in order to identify material that is set out on the wrong collection day or being placed into litter bins. As part of the service level changes, businesses and property owners, along the Niagara Falls' mainline, received collection details by mail. Designated business area collection guides were hand delivered in advance of the contract transition. The business area collection guides include reminders that litter bins are not intended for waste generated at a business or residence. Businesses and residents, who are found to be setting out their waste in a litter bin are issued a warning letter, notifying them that this is an act of illegal dumping.

Illegal dumping is also prevalent in public space litter bins within the City of St. Catharines. This may be a result of the number of public space litter bins placed along roadways and within City parks, and individuals see this as a convenient way to get rid of materials. Over the last two years, Regional staff have been working with City staff to remove public space litter bins in areas where illegal dumping is prevalent. More recently, a request has come forward to look at installing lids on these bins (currently the bins are open). Staff will be following up with the City staff on this issue.

In 2020, staff completed a Litter Bin Blitz. This involved staff auditing various litter bins across the region to look for evidence of illegal dumping. If any illegal dumping was discovered during the Litter Bin Blitz, warning letters were issued. During the week of November 30, 2020, 457 litter bins were inspected as part of the Blitz. As a result of the blitz, 111 household bags of garbage were collected and inspected for generator evidence. Sixteen warning letters were issued as a result of the Litter Bin Blitz. Educational material, regarding illegal dumping and waste sorting guides were also included with the warning letters. Inspections show that the materials that are illegally dumped in and around public space litter bins is mostly comprised of divertible material, including food waste and packaging.

The litter bin blitz helps Niagara Region proactively communicate that illegal dumping into public litter bins is not permitted. Regional staff previously conducted blitz's in 2012, 2017, 2018 and 2020. The results of these blitz as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Litter Bin Blitz Results

Year	Litter Bins Examined	Bags Collected	Warning Letters Issued
2012	680	134	32
2017	654	118	33
2018	704	176	43
2020	457	111	16

In 2021, staff, primarily students, will continue to proactively monitor public space litter bins and repeat the Litter Bin blitz in order to reach more residents who are not aware that dumping household material into a public space litter bin is an act of illegal dumping. Public space litter bins will be audited throughout St. Catharines, Grimsby, Thorold, Fort Erie, Port Colborne, Pelham and Niagara Falls. The statistics from this blitz, coupled with data from previous blitz efforts, will be tracked on a map and used to identify hot spots. These hot spots will then be monitored on a more frequent basis.

Illegal Dumping Working Group

Since inception in 2012, the Illegal Dumping Working Group has met biannually. It is composed of Local Area Municipalities, Regional staff from Transportation and Waste Management, representatives from Crime Stoppers and the Seaway Authority. The group works to address the issue of illegal dumping across the region. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no in-person working group meetings were held in 2020, and staff resources were spread over other bylaw issues related to the pandemic.

Promotion and Education

In 2020, the Illegal Dumping Campaign artwork was refreshed in order to keep the messaging relevant and eye catching. This new artwork was featured in the 2020 Collection Guide as well as in promotional material targetting illegal dumping. The artwork and slogan See It. Report It. Stop It, which ties into the new campaign slogan for the service level changes Box It Bin It Sort It.

A new Illegal Dumping communications campaign will be rolled out this spring. The illegal dumping campaign will focus on informing residents that illegal dumping is a crime and that any illegal dumping found by residents should be reported. Timely reports of illegal dumping result in faster clean up, avoiding the potential to attract more dumping in an area.

Mitigation Measures

Reporting, Investigating And Tracking

Residents have three (3) options to report illegal dumping:

1. Report online at niagararegion.ca/waste;
2. Call the Region's Waste Info-Line at 1-800-594-5542; and
3. Call Crime Stoppers of Niagara at 1-800-222-TIPS

Residents are encouraged to provide as much details as possible when reporting an illegal dump. However, residents are able to provide reports of illegal dumping even when only a location is known. All reported illegal dumps are investigated and tracked using a mobile app. The mobile app tool, was rolled out in January 2020. This tool allows staff to efficiently record information in the field about each incident. The tool also provides accurate location information that is used to track hot spots and identify areas where illegal dumping is routinely occurring.

Monitoring And Enforcement

In 2020, the Niagara Region Waste Management By-Law was amended in order to reflect the changes to waste service levels, which came into effect on October 19, 2020. As part of the By-Law review process the set fine for illegal dumping on public property was increased from \$500 to \$750. The set fine for illegal dumping in a public litter bin remains \$150. A victim fine surcharge and a court fee will also be applied and charged in addition to the set fine. Niagara Region has jurisdiction to enforce acts of illegal dumping on any road or public property.

During an illegal dumping investigation, if sufficient evidence is found then staff are directed to issue an offence notice for the illegal dumping. Alternative enforcement actions include, gaining compliance by allowing a suspect to clean up illegally dumped material or issuing a warning letter when evidence available is not sufficient on order to obtain a conviction.

Reward System

In an effort to promote and encourage residents to report witnessed illegal dumping, Niagara Region offers a reward system for reporting illegal dumping on public property where compliance was achieved and/or there has been a successful conviction. Any person whose report results in an act of compliance is entitled to a \$50 reward. Further, any person whose report leads to a conviction is entitled to a \$200 reward. By-law

officers investigate and enforce reported issues as soon as possible and get them cleaned up quickly. In 2020, two (2) rewards were awarded.

Conclusion

Similar to other municipalities, illegal dumping continues to be a concern throughout the region. Although Every-Other-Week (EOW) collection did not appear to have a large impact on the number of reported illegal dumps in 2020, the Region is aware that there is a tendency to observe increased illegal dumping as a short term impact to the service level change. This is based on comments from other municipalities that have transitioned to EOW collection. In 2021 Waste Management staff will continue to respond to reports of illegal dumping and conduct proactive monitoring of hotspots and public space litter bins. Niagara Region's proactive illegal dumping monitoring, communication campaign and enforcement measures in conjunction with the on-going work by the Illegal Dumping Working Group as discussed in this memo will continue to focus on deterring acts of illegal dumping.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

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