

Strategy to Reduce Litter in the City of Toronto

Date:	October 29, 2013
To:	Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
From:	General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:\2013\Cluster B\SWM\November\015PW (AFS#17523)

SUMMARY

The purpose of this staff report is to report back to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee on a strategy to reduce cigarette butt litter in Toronto. This report also reports back on the review of the City's current initiatives and provides recommendations to increase community engagement and discourage littering in the City of Toronto year-round.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, recommends that:

1. The Public Works and Infrastructure Committee receive this report for information.

Financial Impact

This report has no financial impacts.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of March 19, 2013, Public Works and Infrastructure Committee, Item PW21.12 entitled "Littering Issues" requested the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, the General Manager, Transportation Services, in consultation with Municipal Licensing and Standards, to report back to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee by the end of 2013 on a strategy to reduce cigarette butt litter in Toronto. The General Manager, Solid

Waste Management Services was also requested at this meeting to review and make recommendations, as appropriate, on the City's current initiatives to increase community engagement and discourage littering in the City of Toronto year-round.

Public Works and Infrastructure Committee Decision document can be viewed at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.PW21.12>

At its meeting of September 30, 2013, Board of Health, Item HL24.3 entitled "Smoke-Free Toronto: Strengthening Protection" requested the Medical Officer of Health, in consultation with the General Manager of Solid Waste and the Executive Director of Municipal Licensing and Standards, to report on options for reducing tobacco litter.

The Board of Health Decision document can be viewed at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.HL24.3>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Several City Divisions work collaboratively to deliver services and programs to manage litter in public spaces throughout the year including Economic Development and Culture, Municipal Licensing and Standards, Solid Waste Management Services, and Transportation Services. Services and programs include, but are not limited to, manual and mechanical litter collection along streetscapes and roadways, maintenance and collection of a network of public space litter and recycling bins and collection of bags of garbage and recycling generated from annual and City-wide community clean up events.

To monitor the success and performance of the services and programs, a number of key indicators have been established. They include the following:

- Service requests by 311 are recorded and can be analyzed to determine trending over a given period;
- The number of organizations that register to participate in the annual community clean up is documented every year; and
- The weights of litter and recycling collected are recorded and used for tonnage forecasting and analysis.

Litter Audits have also been conducted to gauge the rate, extent and composition of litter in City-maintained public space. Recent litter audits were completed in 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2012. The audit methodology classifies litter in large and small categories. In 2012, the quantity of large litter was reduced by 21% and small litter by 67% when compared to 2006 litter audit data. The 2012 audit data showed that miscellaneous paper was the largest component of large litter at 21.5% and cigarette butts was the largest component of small litter at 31%.

Solid Waste Management Services has consulted with Toronto Public Health in order to address the September 30, 2013 Board of Health motion requesting the Medical Officer of Health, in consultation with the General Manager of Solid Waste and the Executive Director of Municipal Licensing and Standards, to report on options for reducing tobacco litter. As a result, Toronto Public Health has reviewed and commented on this report and are recommending that this report be forwarded to the Board of Health for information.

COMMENTS

Current Divisional Litter Management Services

Solid Waste Management Services

Solid Waste Management Services has a dedicated Litter Operations unit with an annual operating budget of \$25.5 million and a complement of approximately 209 full time and seasonal staff. This unit is responsible for litter collection along major arterial streets, sidewalks and laneways, as well as the collection of waste and recyclables from public space bins. Services also include year-round mechanical “litter-vac” collection (weather dependent), manual bag-and-broom litter collection (weather dependent) and collection of approximately 6,200 street furniture litter and recycling bins. In 2012, 3,286 tonnes of litter was collected by manual bag-and-broom squads and 2,265 tonnes of waste and 2,211 tonnes of recyclables were collected from public space bins. Approximately 3,194 tonnes of waste and 508 tonnes of recyclables were also collected from litter and recycling bins in City Parks.

Municipal Licensing and Standards

Municipal Licensing and Standards has ten full time employees dedicated to specific enforcement of solid waste management issues such as illegal dumping and collection set-out standards. Municipal Licensing and Standards works in partnership with Solid Waste Management Services to further investigate reports of illegal dumping in litter bins and take enforcement action where applicable.

In 2011, the Litter Bin project (a joint initiative between Municipal Licensing and Standards, and Solid Waste Management Services to target illegal dumping in litter bins), resulted in approximately ten charges and the issuance of one Notice of Violation. In 2012, no charges or Notices of Violation were issued.

Transportation Services

Since 2008, as part of the co-ordinated street furniture program, approximately 6,200 litter and recycling bins have been installed on major streets and arterial roadways. In order to support their use and accessibility, the bins are cleaned and maintained on a weekly basis. In addition, specific maintenance and repair requests are addressed over and above the weekly cleaning and provided to Astral Media, the City’s co-ordinated street furniture program partner. Over the next 14 years, the number of litter receptacles

will increase to over 12,000 to further support litter abatement and increased access to recycling within the City.

Economic Development and Culture

The Economic Development and Culture Division do not have a dedicated budget or staff responsible for litter reduction and abatement. However, the City's Business Improvement Area Office works together with Municipal Licensing and Standards, Solid Waste Management Services, and Transportation Services to identify and address litter "hot spots" within Business Improvement Areas. This is done by collectively developing solutions to resolve any litter related issues such as placing additional bins in litter "hot spots".

As noted above, the City's Business Improvement Area Office liaises with Business Improvement Areas representatives and other City Divisions to identify and resolve litter hot spot issues. Some Business Improvement Areas hire dedicated personnel to augment existing City litter-related services and improve their surrounding aesthetics. Some Business Improvement Areas have also installed streetlight pole wraps to help address postering.

Interdivisional Litter Management Initiatives

Solid Waste Management Services, Transportation Services, Municipal Licensing and Standards, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and Toronto Water work together annually on an interdivisional spring clean up. The four week long initiative takes place in April, prior to the Clean Toronto Together Program. It features events that engage residents, businesses and community groups to participate in local clean ups. The interdivisional clean up focuses on removing and collecting litter and debris as well as graffiti and vandalism. In 2013, 6,000 tonnes of litter and debris were removed from public spaces, parks, school grounds, and arterial roadways.

Current Initiatives Targeting Cigarette Butt Litter

Municipal Fines for Littering

Littering, which includes improper disposal of a cigarette butt, in the City of Toronto is a ticketable offence under Municipal Chapter Code 548 – Littering and Dumping Refuse (By-law 1066-2009). Individuals that are charged with this offence can face fines of up to \$365.00. Enforcement of the By-law is carried out by Municipal Licensing and Standards By-law Officers.

Increasing Visibility of Cigarette Butt Receptacles on Bins

Transportation Services is implementing an initiative to highlight the ashtray located on litter and recycling bins under the co-ordinated street furniture program. To establish a baseline for measuring program success, Solid Waste Management Services staff monitored 73 bins in the Financial District, Entertainment District and Kensington Market Business Improvement Areas from September 9 to 15, 2013, where pedestrian traffic and cigarette litter is prevalent. Staff recorded the number of cigarette butts found within several feet of the bin. Special visibility decals will be applied in late October 2013, and staff will again record the number of cigarette butts to determine the effect of the decals on the cigarette butt litter. The pilot may be expanded to other areas pending the success of the pilot.

Cigarette Butt Recycling Pilot

Solid Waste Management Services is currently investigating recycling cigarette butts collected from litter bins through TerraCycle Inc. TerraCycle Inc. receives and recycles problematic waste materials that are difficult to recycle or not accepted in the Municipal Recycling Programs. Solid Waste Management Services will also be initiating discussions with Terracycle Inc. regarding product stewardship opportunities.

Work with Business Improvement Areas

Some Business Improvement Areas have installed cigarette butt receptacles in cigarette butt litter hot spots in order to provide increased accessibility for proper disposal and to reduce cigarette butt litter. Participating business are responsible for maintaining and emptying the receptacles.

Jurisdictional Scan of Cigarette Butt and Litter Reduction Strategies

Staff has reviewed strategies and initiatives undertaken by other municipalities to reduce litter. Like Toronto, many municipalities engage residents and businesses in annual clean up events that take place during the spring or fall months. The review also found that similar municipalities have engaged in campaigns to further educate residents on cigarette butt and litter issues. Appendix A attachment lists examples of litter reduction initiatives that employed creative promotion, communication and engagement strategies.

Litter Reduction Strategy Moving Forward

In order to effectively increase community engagement and discourage littering all year round, Municipal Licensing and Standards, Economic Development and Culture, Transportation Services, and Solid Waste Management Services staff will be working to support a litter abatement strategy which targets cigarette butt litter and includes:

- a) multi-stakeholder engagement;

- b) comprehensive, consistent and focussed communications;
- c) public presence, education and enforcement;
- d) continued benchmarking and tracking of key indicators of program success;
- e) targeted strategy for cigarette butt litter.

a) Multi-Stakeholder Engagement

Establishment of an interdivisional working group will help coordinate divisional efforts and resources to increase community engagement and reduce littering all year round. Municipal Licensing and Standards, Economic Development and Culture, Transportation Services and Solid Waste Management Services staff has formed a Multi-Divisional Litter Working Group to discuss and address litter issues with a focus on cigarette butt litter. This working group will continue to meet quarterly and may expand to include other Divisions where required, such as Toronto Public Health, the Toronto Police Services, and Parks, Forestry and Recreation. For example, Toronto Public Health, will be consulted when updates are made to Toronto's smoking By-law in order to discuss and address any impacts this may have on the generation of cigarette butt litter.

b) Comprehensive, Consistent and Focussed Communications

The Communications Plan will guide the strategy for a promotional and educational campaign that has the overall goal of further reducing littering across the City year-round, in particular the presence of cigarette butts. We must impress upon the public that cigarette butts are indeed litter. Education and increasing awareness regarding the impacts cigarette butts have on the environment, including our waterways, aquatic life and lack of biodegradable ability are key messages. Ideally, the responsibility for implementing and funding such a campaign will be a shared one involving various City divisions and potential partnerships with external organizations that share a mutual concern for a clean, safe, litter-free City. Such collaboration will strengthen the campaign's impact, exposure and allow for consistent key messaging.

The following tactics will be considered, where appropriate, in this campaign to the public and businesses:

- Advertising;
- Dedicated City web site (promotion of current/future litter audits, litter prevention tips, reporting results of pilot projects);
- Education regarding the health and environmental effects of cigarette butt litter;
- Media Relations;

- Work with Business Improvement Area staff to use members as messengers and role models;
- Corporate newsletter stories;
- Prepared articles for Councillors' distribution;
- Social media opportunities.

c) Public Presence, Education and Enforcement

To complement the comprehensive, consistent and focused communications, the Multi-Divisional Litter Working Group will work with the Energy and Environment Office to coordinate the introduction of LiveGreen Toronto Volunteers at more City events, street festivals and parades. The Volunteers will create a public presence on site at the event and will help educate participants on how to properly discard their cigarette butts and encourage participants to help make the event litter-free.

A notable challenge in enforcement and issuing fines for littering is that a Municipal Licensing and Standards officer must witness an individual committing the act and issue a ticket at the time of action. Without dedicated resources to monitor and issue fines for littering, enforcement of the By-law is ineffective.

d) Continued Benchmarking and Tracking of Key Indicators of Program Success

The Interdivisional Working group will continue to use existing metrics to track programs and services that are in place to manage and support the abatement of litter in public space. Information will be shared and used by the Multi-Divisional Litter Working Group to monitor trends and identify potential issues that may require implementation of new initiatives. New metrics will be added and tracked as new initiatives are implemented.

e) Targeted strategy for cigarette butt litter

The Multi-Divisional Litter Working Group will seek opportunities for industry partnerships and sponsorship and will continue meeting with City of Toronto Business Improvement Areas.

Potential opportunities focusing on cigarette butt litter include funding for litter receptacles to be used outside food and drink establishments. Business Improvement Areas can assist by identifying where the receptacles can be installed and help monitor their effectiveness. Additionally, the Multi-Divisional Litter Working Group will be working to identify cigarette butt “hot-zones” and will seek ways to work with the Toronto Police Department to educate smokers on fines applicable to litter.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A – Jurisdictional Scan of Litter/Cigarette Butt Initiatives