REPORT FOR ACTION WITH CONFIDENTIAL ATTACHMENT

Solid Waste Management Services' Operational Plan for Delivering the Street Litter Bin Program

Date: November 17, 2026
To: Executive Committee
From: General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services
Wards: All

REASON FOR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

The confidential attachment to this report contains a position, plan, procedure, criteria or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the City.

SUMMARY

The City of Toronto's Coordinated Street Furniture (CSF) program has been operating under a 20-year agreement with Astral Media Outdoor (Toronto) G.P. (Astral) to install and maintain approximately 25,000 pieces of street furniture, including approximately 10,500 street litter bins. The CSF program is managed by Transportation Services and the agreement with Astral is due to expire on August 31, 2027.

In March 2026, the Executive Committee adopted item 2026.EX29.5 which asked the City Manager to consider de-coupling the litter bins from the rest of the CSF program upon expiry of the Astral agreement (the agreement) and requested Solid Waste Management Services (SWMS) to consider a process to procure litter bins and parts and develop and implement all programmatic and service requirements for SWMS to deliver the litter bin program.

The purpose of this report is to outline the operational plan for SWMS to begin delivering a comprehensive street litter bin program as of September 1, 2027, including the staffing, vehicles, budget and space required, as well as the associated service levels. The litter bin program's operational plan sets out service standards to ensure litter bins are kept clean and in a state of good repair and will also address improvements to accountability and public transparency over the litter bin assets. The report also includes the procurement approach for the supply and repair of litter bins.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services recommends that:

1. City Council adopt the recommendation contained in the Confidential Attachment to this report.

2. City Council authorize:

    A. the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, to adjust Solid Waste Management Services staff complement by 105 Full-Time Equivalent (FTEs) and report back to City Council on the related staff complement change through the 2027 Budget.

    B. the General Manager, Fleet Services, to adjust Fleet Services staff complement by 3 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) funded through the 2027 budget process to support the operation of the litter bin program.

3. City Council direct the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, to report back to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee in the second quarter of 2028 with an update on the transition of the program and implementation of the service model.

4. City Council direct that the Confidential Attachment to this report remain confidential at this time as it contains information concerning a plan, procedure, criteria or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the City and City Council authorize that Confidential Attachment be made public on September 1, 2027.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The transition of the Litter Bin Program from Astral to SWMS will require significant investment and ongoing operating expenditures. The estimated full operating cost for the litter bin program over a ten-year period from 2027 to 2036 is approximately $438.4 million. Details of the capital and operating financial implications of implementing the litter bin program operational plan can be found in the Confidential Attachment. Major cost categories of the program include staffing, fleet, real estate, equipment, and the cost to contract out the manufacturing of the litter bins, including installation, removal, and repair services. The financial impact of the future litter bin program will be included in the 2027 budget process for consideration.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact section.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on March 10, 2026, the Executive Committee adopted item 2026.EX29.5 entitled "Street Furniture and Litter Bin Program Update" which requested the City Manager to consider de-coupling the litter bins from the rest of street furniture agreement and requested the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services to consider a procurement process for bin parts and stock of bins and to develop and implement all programmatic and service delivery requirements, including but not limited to additional vehicles, equipment, staff, real estate and supplies, any operational realignments, agreements and all other capital and operational aspects that would allow delivery of the litter bin program by Solid Waste Management Services.

https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2026.EX29.5

COMMENTS

Background

Since 2007, the City of Toronto's Coordinated Street Furniture (CSF) program has operated under a 20-year agreement with Astral Media Outdoor (Toronto) G.P. (Astral) to install and maintain approximately 25,000 pieces of street furniture, including approximately 10,500 street litter bins. The CSF program is managed by Transportation Services and SWMS is responsible for the collection of waste from the litter bins. The agreement with Astral (the Agreement) is due to expire on August 31, 2027.

On March 10, 2026, the Executive Committee adopted item 2026.EX29.5 which requested the City Manager to consider de-coupling the litter bins from the CSF program upon expiry of the Agreement. The item also requested the General Manager, SWMS to consider a procurement process for litter bin parts and stock and to develop and implement all programmatic and service delivery requirements, including but not limited to additional vehicles, equipment, staff, real estate and supplies, any operational realignments, agreements, and all other capital and operational aspects that would allow SWMS to assume service delivery of the litter bin program. In April 2026, the City's Senior Leadership Team directed SWMS to proceed with the development of a future service delivery model and assume responsibility for major decisions related to the litter bins. This report provides the operational plan developed by SWMS to deliver the comprehensive street litter bin program (litter bin program) starting on September 1, 2027.

Litter Bin Program Operational Plan Development

SWMS has undertaken a comprehensive review of the litter bin activities under the CSF program, developed an operational plan for City delivery of the litter bin program (including inspections and cleaning), and has developed and issued a procurement call for the manufacture, supply, installation, repair, and removal of street litter bins. The procurement call was informed by market engagements undertaken with the Purchasing and Materials Management Division and by working with Transportation Services and

Astral to better understand existing operations, asset condition and quantities, service requirements, program successes, and operational challenges.

Standardizing the Street Litter Bin Design

Over the course of the 20-year CSF program, there have been five different designs of the litter bins (WR1 to WR5). Each design change has aimed to improve the durability, functionality, user experience, and serviceability of the litter bin. Attachment 1 provides an overview of the litter bin design evolution. The WR5, in use since 2024, is the most recent design and incorporates the following enhancements: wider openings to reduce the likelihood of items getting stuck, a stronger self-closing door hinge, reinforcement of the frame and doors for added durability, and adjustments to the locking mechanism.

The five litter bin designs are currently deployed across the city in varying quantities. Through planned and as-required (due to damage, vandalism etc.) replacements, the WR5 litter bin will be the most common litter bin design in use by September 1, 2027, and will account for approximately 4,000 of the estimated total 10,500 litter bins on city streets.

Staff reviewed both the benefits of continuing with the existing WR5 litter bin and the potential to develop and procure a new litter bin model. Staff determined that designing and procuring new litter bins was not feasible within the limited transition and implementation timeline. A redesigned litter bin would require market engagement, testing (i.e. for ergonomics, collection health and safety considerations etc.), consultation with the public and City Council, procurement, manufacturing, delivery and installation, as well as the development of a repair plan to maintain existing WR1 to WR5 bins until they could be replaced to ensure program continuity.

Continuing with the WR5 litter bin was determined to be the preferred approach for the transition, as it maintains program continuity, builds on an established litter bin design and supporting operations, and avoids the additional implementation risks associated with introducing a new model within a limited timeframe. However, SWMS will work with the newly contracted supplier to investigate functional design modifications to the WR5 litter bin to improve the usability and durability of the litter bins, after the September 1, 2027, transition of the litter bin program.

Older litter bin designs will be proactively replaced with WR5 litter bins when the litter bin program is decoupled from the CSF program and SWMS becomes responsible for program delivery beginning September 1, 2027. Standardizing the litter bin design will support a more seamless transition and provide greater consistency across the system, enabling more efficient manufacturing, repair and maintenance by the contracted supplier and streamlined inspection and cleaning by City staff.

To better understand the condition of the existing litter bins assets currently in use, SWMS staff began inspecting all litter bins in August of 2026. The inspection work is anticipated to be completed in Q1 2027. This will provide SWMS with a verified data set to establish a baseline on asset condition, provide insights that will help with future contract management activities and will document any issues or deficiencies with the current litter bins before transition.

Litter Bin Program Activities

There are distinct areas of work associated with the litter bin program: manufacturing of the WR5 litter bins; installation, removal and repair; cleaning and proactive inspection to ensure a state of good repair; and ensuring access during the winter. SWMS reviewed and considered each component of the program to assess the most effective service delivery model (e.g. in-house or by a contractor).

Manufacturing, Installation, Removal and Repair of Litter Bins

The City will contract out the manufacturing of WR5 litter bins to a supplier as this is beyond the scope of service delivery by SWMS. Experienced metal fabricators and suppliers are best positioned to scale up and down the production of the litter bins as required during the contract period.

The installation, removal and repair activities will be contracted out to the same supplier that is manufacturing the WR5 litter bins. Contracting this work to the manufacturer of the litter bins facilitates alignment between the manufacturing and repair, bin warranty administration, product availability and access to litter bin parts. However, there will be a small number of SWMS staff that will be trained with the necessary skills to perform an emergency or immediate removal of any damaged or unserviceable litter bins that pose an imminent risk to the public.

On October 10, 2026, a negotiated request for proposals (nRFP) was issued. The nRFP scope of work includes the:

- manufacture of new WR5 litter bins
- installation of new WR5 litter bins
- removal of WR1 to WR4 litter bins
- repair and replacement of new and existing WR5 litter bins.

The scope of work also enables the successful supplier and the City to explore continuous improvement modifications for the WR5 litter bin design. Modifications will aim to improve the usability of the litter bins, the durability of the litter bins, and reduce the number of repairs and replacements required.

The award recommendation for the nRFP will be brought to Committee and Council for approval in Q1 2027. At the same time, staff will recommend and seek Council direction to proceed with a 2-year, 3-year, or 4-year replacement schedule to proactively replace WR1 to WR4 litter bins with WR5 litter bins. The replacement schedule options will enable Council to decide on a preferred timeline to have a harmonized litter bin model.

Inspection and Cleaning of Litter Bins

Inspection and cleaning activities will be delivered by SWMS staff. In-house service delivery for the inspection and cleaning of the litter bins supports opportunities for consistent oversight and increased flexibility and responsiveness to ensure the litter bins are maintained in a state of good repair. SWMS staff will proactively inspect the litter bins to ensure they are in good condition and identify damage requiring repair by

the contractor. While inspecting the litter bin, SWMS staff will assess the cleanliness of the litter bin and clean on-demand as required. Staff will be trained on various cleaning procedures and supplied with all the necessary equipment to perform the cleaning. This allows the management of litter bin cleanliness standards to be under the direct control of the City and scaled, as needed. Staff performing the inspection and cleaning activities will also have the flexibility to be deployed to other areas of SWMS operations as needed to support keeping Toronto public spaces clean.

The inspection service levels establish a consistent standard for assessing the comprehensive condition and cleanliness of the litter bins. Additional information about the inspection service levels and litter bin program operations can be found in Attachment 2.

Improving Cleanliness and Enhancing Service Delivery

As SWMS takes on the day-to-day operations of the litter bin program and its associated activities, significant insights will be gathered and used to inform improvements and adjustments to the litter bin program. With direct oversight of the program, SWMS will aim to improve accountability and public transparency for the program.

Through dedicated and consistent inspections, SWMS will ensure the litter bins are clean and maintained in a state of good repair. This oversight, in addition to contract monitoring, will ensure that issues are reported and addressed in a measurable and timely manner. City staff will be responsible for cleaning the litter bins, tailoring the cleaning method to address the needs of the bin. This allows SWMS to scale and adjust the approach to cleaning the litter bins to be more responsive and dynamic.

Opportunities to modify or adjust services will be identified through reviewing work orders, inspection and cleaning records, and using technology where possible. Staff will gather up-to-date information for each litter bin, including metrics such as the cleaning frequency, condition, and service requests, and use this data to make continuous program improvements and adjust service delivery.

To improve transparency and reporting, SWMS will have a publicly identifiable unique number on each litter bin. This will make it easier for members of the public to report service requests and support data gathering and reporting. Additionally, pictures of each litter bin will be taken when services are performed to support appropriate tracking and documentation of work. These new measures will allow members of the public to search and access service information related to each litter bin.

Staff Requirements

To deliver the litter bin program, new staff complement upwards of 105 FTE's will be required. Staff will ensure the inspection and cleaning service levels are achieved, perform contract management activities, and support operations and administration of the program. The new staff will ensure consistent service levels city-wide and will allow for flexibility and responsiveness when needed. Information about the staff requirements can be viewed in the Confidential Attachment.

Bringing in-house the inspection and cleaning operations allows for faster issue resolution and reporting of damaged litter bins. Additional duties for staff include assisting with snow removal around the litter bins so they can be easily accessed in the winter and performing emergency litter bin removals where required.

Dedicated staff are required to support contract administration and for monitoring and managing the contract with the successful supplier. Contract management staff will monitor performance, resolve issues, conduct contract compliance activities, and maintain contract documents. The contract will be managed through activities such as the regular inspections of the litter bins, requiring documentation upon the completion of work orders, and auditing work order completions. These activities will allow the City to have oversight over the service being provided by the contractor and facilitate better accountability and incentivize performance outcomes.

Fleet Requirements

The litter bin operational plan requires dedicated and specialized vehicles (approximately 60) to meet the service standards and contract management work required. This includes pick up trucks with pressure washing equipment and snow clearing equipment and vehicles. These vehicle needs will be new requirements for the SWMS fleet. SWMS and the Fleet Services Division have worked together to ensure vehicles and equipment will be received in time for litter bin program implementation.

Real Estate Requirements

The associated staffing, equipment, and vehicles needed to deliver the litter bin program, require SWMS to secure additional indoor and outdoor space to accommodate the program. This includes considerations for parking, water fill stations, lockers, equipment and supply storage, and workspaces for staff. Securing space for the litter bin program is critical, as space to accommodate staff and vehicles must be in place before SWMS starts to onboard staff and the delivery of vehicles in spring 2027.

CreateTO and Corporate Real Estate Management are supporting SWMS with litter bin program space planning and have identified Ellesmere Yard (2000 Midland Avenue) as a City-owned facility that satisfies the program's current needs with the final portfolio analysis still underway. Ellesmere Yard will continue to be used to deliver District 4 curbside collection operations and some public space cleaning operations. It meets the capacity requirements for night operations, when most of the litter bin inspection and cleaning will occur, and has capacity to fulfill other litter bin program requirements.

Deploying litter bin program operations from Ellesmere Yard will avoid the need for SWMS to lease private industrial space and enhances operational oversight by having the program primarily operate out of one site rather than multiple sites across the City.

Litter Bin Waste Collection

SWMS will continue to be responsible for the collection of waste from the litter bins after August 31, 2027. The majority of the 10,500 street litter bins are collected at night for

safety and efficiency reasons. The frequency of collection varies based on the location and/or usage of each bin, as well as seasonality. There are approximately 50,000 litter bin collections scheduled per week, however, SWMS also receives service requests related to overflowing street litter bins and illegal dumping beside the bins. To mitigate overflow and improve collection efficiency, SWMS has undertaken activities including technology pilot tests and analysis of service requests data to identify and address locations with multiple overflows. Additional information can be found in Attachment 3.

Having the existing litter bin waste collection staff also inspect and clean the litter bins is neither feasible nor operationally efficient. Each function requires different skills, and combining them would slow collection service delivery and make it harder to meet service standards. The work also requires different vehicles: a compacting waste collection truck for collection, and a pickup truck with a 1,200 liter truck-mounted pressure washer for cleaning. Collection staff will still be able to report any issues they notice with the litter bins when performing their work.

Next Steps

Staff will bring forward a report to the General Government Committee and City Council in the first quarter of 2027 seeking approval of the nRFP award recommendation for the manufacturing, installation, removal and repair of litter bins. Funding for the litter bin program will be addressed through the 2027 budget process.

Staff will also report back to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee in the second quarter of 2028 with a comprehensive update on implementation and transition of the litter bin program.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Litter Bin Design Evolution
Attachment 2 - Inspections Service Levels and Operations
Attachment 3 - Litter Bin Collection Information
Confidential Attachment