



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Edward D. Reiskin
City Administrator

FROM: David Ferguson
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Public Works Department

SUBJECT: City Efforts Regarding Litter, Illegal
Dumping, Graffiti, Blight, and
Abandoned Autos

DATE: May 5, 2021

City Administrator Approval

Date: May 13, 2021

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report On The City's Efforts Regarding Illegal Dumping, Graffiti, Blight, and Abandoned Autos From Oakland Public Works (OPW), Planning And Building Department (PBD), And The Oakland Police Department (OPD).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report will list the efforts OPW undertakes to address litter, illegal dumping, and graffiti, the PBD role in dealing with blight, and how OPD responds to abandoned autos. Staff will provide a more comprehensive report that will outline the details of each activity performed to develop Clean, Healthy, Sustainable Neighborhoods.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

What is the City doing to address litter?

OPW's Keep Oakland Clean and Beautiful Division (KOCB) has installed over 1,300 street litter containers (Containers) on City streets for the general and exclusive use of pedestrians to dispose of litter and trash. Containers are placed in the downtown area and neighborhood business districts throughout the City, on main thoroughfares, and commuter or mass transit routes. The Containers are also placed on or near street corners, crosswalks, and bus stops. KOCB mechanical street sweepers remove litter that is in the roadway. Containers are serviced seven days a week.

On November 10, 2020, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 88381 C.M.S., authorizing the City Administrator to enter into a contract to implement the Excessive Litter Fee Program (ELF). The ELF deployment was initially designed to target the areas around each fee-paying business. The scope of service required that staff clean 50 feet on either side of the designated business's front door totaling 100 linear feet. However, the approach implemented in 2018

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changed the program from a fixed route deployment to a new proactive response that focused on known locations that suffer from excessive amounts of litter and illegal dumping volumes. In addition, the contractor and staff reached an agreement that the contractor will perform services and deploy the crew on a rotating basis each month as follows:

Week one of each month	Council Districts 1 and 2
Week two of each month	Council Districts 3 and 4
Week three of each month	Council Districts 5 and 6
Week four of each month	Council District 7 and areas identified by the At-Large Office

In addition, the Adopt a Spot program, which is housed in OPW's Environmental Services Division, has volunteers who have civic pride and eagerly remove litter from corridors that have been adopted.

What measures are the City taking to reduce illegal dumping?

The City utilizes a three (3) pronged approach to reduce illegal dumping that focuses on eradication, education, and enforcement.

Eradication

KOCB's Illegal Dumping Unit is responsible for removing illegal dumping from the right-of-way. This unit operates 7-days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekdays and 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on weekends. The program uses a hybrid approach to remove illegal dumping. This consists of reactively removing illegal dumping by executing service requests that are generated by the community and is complemented by proactively removing illegal dumping from main thoroughfares, noted hot spots, and block by block.

The goal of the Illegal Dumping Unit is to resolve 85% of the illegal dumping service requests received within three (3) business days.

Table 1: Illegal Dumping Service Requests

Fiscal Year	Completed Service Requests	Percentage Completed Within 3 Business Days	Average Number of Days to Complete a Service Request	Total Number of Completed Work Orders
2019-20	30,476	90%	2	59,215
2018-19	27,134	92%	1	38,754
2017-18	27,033	88%	2	31,225
2016-17	26,758	81%	3	27,392
2015-16	24,038	86%	2	23,050
Average	27,087	87.4%	2	35,927

As a reference, after a service request is created, the request is submitted to the Illegal Dumping Unit, who completes a work order and submits it to staff to provide the service. Some illegal dumping piles have items (mattresses, appliances, tires, and e-waste) that must be source-separated before entering the Davis Street Transfer Station. This may cause one (1) service request to lead to multiple work orders. In addition, all proactive work is done using the work order format. Garbage blitz crews are assigned to perform the proactive work which is to

remove illegal dumping from known "Hot Spots," major arterials, and block by block. A crew is assigned to each of the four work zones that OPW has identified.

Education

The Environmental Enforcement Officers (EEO) Program is housed in KOCB and consists of four (4) EEOs and one (1) Clean Community Supervisor. The EEOs ensure that businesses and residents know the proper way to dispose of their waste and the full impacts of unlawful dumping, which helps to change behaviors. They utilize several platforms to achieve this goal, including attending community meetings, conducting zone walks, and providing outreach at events. The EEOs have also spoken at press conferences and promoted services via social media. They also do a great job of promoting the Bulky Block Parties, which allow Oaklanders to bring their unwanted debris to a designated location on the last Saturday of each month. This service is free to all Oakland residents. Additionally, staff will use social media to inform residents and business owners on proper disposal of items and upcoming City-sponsored events to discard unwanted items.

Enforcement

The EEOs are also tasked with enforcing illegal dumping and issuing citations. They use various tactics to hold dumpers accountable for their actions, including forensic investigations involving thorough inspections of illegally dumped piles of debris. Surveillance cameras have been used to catch dumpers in the act and to assist with determining the appropriate time to conduct stakeouts. The Reward for Reporting Program is a tool that incentivizes witnesses to report dumpers when they are observed in the act or when they have compelling evidence.

What is the City doing to abate Graffiti?

The KOCB Graffiti Abatement Unit operates Monday – Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and consists of three (3) Painters dedicated to abating graffiti on public property. They use a hybrid approach to abate graffiti by removing tags reactively, service requests that are received from the community at large, and proactively by searching for graffiti and abating it. Their performance measure goal is to resolve 85% of the graffiti service requests received within three (3) business days.

The Painters respond to graffiti vandalism in parks, on litter containers, benches, retaining walls, fences, street light poles, and signal boxes located in the public right-of-way.

Graffiti is removed by high-pressure washing. Runoff water from this process is captured through a recovery system and disposed of in accordance with stormwater best management practices. If high pressure washing cannot remove the graffiti, the tag is painted over with standard colors.

Urgent Abatement Provision - When OPW becomes aware of graffiti that is deemed gang-related and or contains explicit/offensive language, it is given a higher priority and is scheduled to be abated within twenty-four (24) hours of notification.

How does the City deal with Blight?

The Department of Planning and Building (PBD) is responsible for ensuring private properties are free of blight, including graffiti. During Quarter 1 through Quarter 3 of this reporting period for the Fiscal Year 2020-2021, a cumulative of 380 Graffiti specific complaints were received. These complaints ranged from minor residential defacement of property fencing by graffiti to larger-scale residential and commercial defacement of property. Of these 380 cases, as stated in Quarters 1 through 3 of Fiscal Year 2020-2021, 239 were abated following code enforcement response.

Table 2: Graffiti Complaints

Graffiti Complaint Counts by Quarter		Abated Graffiti Complaints
Quarter 1 – FY 7/2020 to 9/2020	116	70
Quarter 2 – FY 10/2020 to 12/2020	137	66
Quarter 3 – FY 01/2021 to 3/2021	127	103
Totals:	380	239

How does the City address Abandoned Autos?

The Oakland Police Department (OPD) is responsible for ensuring abandoned autos are removed from the public right of way. During the current fiscal year, OPD has conducted 14 Vehicle Enforcement Operations (Tow Sweeps), two (2) in each Council District, averaging 65 tows per operation, removing blight from the community. There were 17,503 service requests closed in 2020. This number increased by 13% when compared to 15,320 in 2019.

The number of tows also increased by 18%. There were 4,468 in 2020 compared to 3,697 in 2019.

There are challenges in ensuring abandoned vehicles are removed in a timely manner. Currently, there are five (5) Police Service Technicians for the entire city; and one (1) person recently retired. This staff shortage has led to an increase in days to respond, from 24 days to 50 days. There has also been an increase in the number of service requests related to parking complaints – Gone on Arrival (GOA) on first visits 14%, compared to 2019.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

There have been several council approved policy alternatives that has assisted in dealing with litter and blight issues. For example, the ELF Program. This program continues to be a success. In addition, OPW has hired staff to form an additional proactive Garbage Blitz Crew. Areas known as "hot spots" are visited more frequently by the crew and this lessens the accumulation of large amounts of illegal dumping. Graffiti is managed under the blight abatement program in PBD Code Enforcement where the abatement may occur across reporting Quarters.

FISCAL IMPACT

This item is for informational purposes only and does not have a direct fiscal impact.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

No outreach was deemed necessary for the proposed policy action beyond the standard City Council agenda noticing procedures because this is an Informational Report.

COORDINATION

The Public Works Department, Planning and Building Department, and Oakland Police Department collaborated to produce this report. This report and legislation have been reviewed by the Office of the City Attorney and the Budget Bureau.

PAST PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

A supplemental report will be presented at a future date, per City Council request.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: Providing these services and managing adverse impacts is an investment that has an immeasurable return when the quality of the lives of the community at large is taken into consideration.

Environmental: This report lists services that are provided to help minimize environmental degradation caused by litter, illegal dumping, graffiti, blight, and abandoned vehicles.

Race & Equity: Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) are disproportionately impacted by litter, illegal dumping, graffiti, blight, and abandoned vehicles. BIPOC neighborhoods are riddled with these various forms of blight, and many BIPOC businesses shoulder the brunt of these immoral behaviors.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report On The City's Efforts regarding Illegal Dumping, Graffiti, Blight, And Abandoned Autos From Oakland Public Works (OPW), Planning And Building Department (PBD), and The Oakland Police Department (OPD).

For questions regarding this report, please contact Frank Foster, Operations Manager, at (510) 434-5109.

Respectfully submitted,



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