



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Jestin Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Liam Garland
Director, Public Works

SUBJECT: Resolution to Authorize Aerbits Inc.
Pilot Program to Strengthen Illegal
Dumping Remediation

DATE: March 12, 2026

City Administrator Approval


Michelle Phillips (Mar 13, 2026 11:55:48 PDT)

Date: Mar 13, 2026

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution 1) Approving The Surveillance Impact Report And Amended Surveillance Use Policy, Incorporating Recommendations Of The Privacy Advisory Commission, For The Aerbits System; 2) Authorizing The City Administrator To Negotiate And Enter Into An Agreement With Aerbits Inc. For A Pilot Program To Detect And Report Illegal Dumping; 3) Waiving The Local/Small Local Business Enterprise Program And Competitive Multi-Step Technology Acquisition Requirements Due To The Unique Nature Of The Service; And 4) Directing The City Administrator To Return Within One Year Of The Adoption Of This Resolution To Provide An Informational Report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Illegal dumping is a serious violation which harms our communities in multiple ways, including damaging public health, impeding pedestrian access, undermining economic development and business success, and harming our neighborhoods. Oakland's personnel and leadership are committed to keeping the town clean, remedying the problem of abandoned trash and illegal dumping, and protecting our communities, including those who are disproportionately impacted by problems related to trash on the sidewalks, streets, parks, waterways, and more.

The Oakland City Council set aside funding in the adopted budget for innovative solutions to help remedy illegal dumping and gave direction to the Administration to pursue strategies to strengthen enforcement, eradication, and education, including through the use of new technologies and best practices. The proposed project provides for implementation of that direction by authorizing a contract for a pilot program of an innovative technology with Aerbits, Inc., (Aerbits) to more effectively identify, track, and remedy abandoned trash on streets, sidewalks, and public spaces in Oakland. This technology, which flies aerial cameras that contain no surveillance, private property, or personal information identification abilities, can identify exact locations, volumes, and types of illegal dumping piles located in the city's right of way to help quickly deploy the correct equipment and crew size to remediate the issue.

Aerbits has been shared through Statewide, county, and Bay Area regional illegal dumping task forces, reports, and conventions, and has a history of success in dramatically reducing trash on

Public Works and Transportation Committee
March 24, 2026

the streets in a hard-hit neighborhood of San Francisco as was presented at a recent illegal dumping convention. The legislation includes adopting OPW's Surveillance Use Policy for this system, as amended and approved by the Privacy Advisory Commission **Attachment A** and the Surveillance Impact Report **Attachment B**.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

City of Oakland leadership and community have expressed urgency to act to remedy illegal dumping and abandoned trash, which undermine and harm our communities. The Mayor has launched the Keep the Town Clean Initiative, including neighborhood cleanups, and has worked to strengthen partnerships and support with State agencies and others to help remedy illegal dumping in Oakland. Community members, local organizations, and the City's own personnel have encouraged action to improve the response to illegal dumping, and to make it more equitable, timely, and effective, in order to provide for a cleaner and healthier community. The Oakland City Council has expressed the importance of remedying illegal dumping, including through enforcement, education, and eradication, and set aside funding in the adopted budget to invest in innovative solutions to improve Oakland's response to abandoned trash.

Evaluations and research regarding best practices have been conducted to identify strategies and solutions to strengthen city systems. Conventions and meetings on illegal dumping, at the countywide, Bay Area regional, and statewide level have further contributed to the knowledge base and opportunities to explore innovations. One of the identified innovations, for the Identification and Tracking of Abandoned Trash ("system"), from Aerbits, has been piloted in our region, presented at a local convention, and provides for an opportunity to comprehensively identify locations, volumes, and types of abandoned trash on Oakland streets and sidewalks, and to deploy responses to clean up areas in a proactive manner.

This solution would enable cleanups to be timelier and more effective, to equitably identify and respond to hard-hit areas, accurately clear complaints that have been cleaned, and help solve the problems that occur when relying primarily on a complaint-based system. The Aerbits technology was presented as an example of an innovative best practice with a successful example of use at Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley's annual Illegal Dumping Convention in Oakland. The presentation from that convention is posted online at: https://district4.alamedacountyca.gov/wpcontent/uploads/sites/14/2023/05/IDCon23_Presenter_Day2_BrianJohnson.pdf

The impacts of illegal dumping on Oakland are profound. With regard to City spending, OPW's FY 2025-26 budget includes approximately \$28.2 million in funding for the divisions directly responsible for abating and enforcing illegal dumping. This includes more than \$1.5 million in new investments to expand enforcement and education.

Illegal dumping also harms public infrastructure, the environment, and human health and safety. These costs are more difficult to quantify but no less significant and are disproportionately borne by Oakland's historically disinvested communities.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Aerbits facilitates a proactive approach to remediation by providing comprehensive and accurate information about the locations, amounts, and types of waste found on the public rights of way, and improved mapping and data analysis. Aerbits is an aerial camera system and data analysis tool to identify and track dumped trash, locations, volumes, and types, and identify cleared locations, provide confirmation photos of work accomplished, and clear complaints. This strategy is anticipated to save time, provide for better routing and deployment of the needed vehicles, equipment, and personnel, for clean-ups, and improve safety both for city staff and for the public. This project will advance the Citywide priorities of **holistic community safety** and **vibrant, sustainable infrastructure** and being a **responsive, trustworthy government**.

Staff worked with the proposed provider to ensure that the technology would protect privacy and community interests by incorporating strong privacy protections, including that it will not include and will not use any personally identifying information. The technology itself is not equipped with facial recognition nor license plate reader systems. Cameras will operate from a high height (typically around 120 vertical feet), thus substantially reducing the likelihood of any incidental capture of faces or related information. Flying at this height also avoids disruption or annoyance to the public, as the camera will not be near enough to be noisy or in the way of other activities. The camera is aimed to provide photographs of public locations to identify abandoned trash, and downloaded images will exclude private property and personally identifying information. Protections are included to ensure that in the unlikely event that the camera incidentally captures an image of a person's face or other personally identifying content, that such images would be deleted and redacted, and not used or retained by the City. The technology does not include audio, does not include video, (it uses still photographs), does not include license plate recognition and does not include facial recognition.

The proposed pilot project with Aerbits is to test the ability to use this system to enhance illegal dumping remediation and response through a six-month pilot period. This will enable more detailed evaluation and decision-making, and the opportunity for the involved staff in Oakland Public Works to work with the consultant and the data, to enhance its response to illegal dumping, and comprehensive data analysis for strategic solutions. It will allow areas to be cleaned in a more proactive manner, and for more comprehensive waste characterization and analysis. The raw photographic information will not be transmitted or retained, rather, only redacted information, on trash in the public right of way or public properties, will be retained and used for designated purposes to remediate illegal dumping.

This project is important to more effectively, and more equitably, clean up the town, and remove abandoned trash/illegal dumping from our streets, sidewalks, and other public areas. One of the issues that has been raised by many stakeholders is that relying primarily on public complaints can be a less accurate and less equitable way to deploy for removal. By investing in a pilot program for a system to proactively, systematically, and equitably identify the locations, types, and amounts of abandoned trash, and using a proactive and more effective method to deploy and route for removal, we can enhance removal activities and provide a cleaner city and a more equitable and more timely response. More information on the Aerbits technology and capabilities are shown in the attached presentation, **Attachment C**.

FISCAL IMPACT

Sufficient funds are included in the Fiscal Year 2025-2027 Biennial Adopted Budget for the Aerbit's Pilot program. Funding in Fund 1720 was budgeted by City Council for technology improvements to address illegal dumping.

A breakdown of the appropriated project funding sources is included in Table 1:

Table 1: Aerbits Pilot Funding Source

Fund Source	Organization	Account	Project	Program	Amount
(Fund # and Name)	(Org # and Name)	(Account # and Name)	(Project # and Name)	(Program # and Name)	\$
1720 – Comprehensive Cleanup	30686 – Environmental Services		1005964 – Illegal Dumping Surveillance	SC17 – Recycling and Solid Waste	\$150,000
Total Project:					\$150,000

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

Public outreach and community input regarding the proposed project has come from multiple sources, including many strong expressions of community interest in remedying illegal dumping. This includes comments and input shared at a Faith in Action East Bay meeting at Allen Temple Baptist Church with many hundreds of participants, the large Bay Area Regional Illegal Dumping Convening hosted by Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley, meetings of the Statewide Illegal Dumping Technical Advisory Committee (IDTAC), input from meetings with neighborhood associations and community groups, examples from other jurisdictions, and more.

The request to use this technology and approval for the Use Policy was taken to Oakland's Privacy Advisory Commission (PAC) on March 5, 2026. The PAC recommended the proposed Use Policy with minor modifications as shown the redlined version of the Use Policy in ***Attachment A***

COORDINATION

Coordination on this effort has included leadership of Oakland Public Works (OPW), the City Administrator's Office, and the Department of Race and Equity. This report and legislation have been reviewed by the Office of the City Attorney and the Budget Bureau.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: By reducing waste on the streets and sidewalks, this project can help strengthen Oakland's economy, including by creating an environment that is more welcoming and conducive to residents, businesses and customers. Expanding access to, knowledge about, and use of, appropriate waste disposal methods, can also improve business climate and community well-being.

Environmental: By reducing waste on the streets, sidewalks, waterways, parks and other public areas, this Resolution can help improve environmental quality, and reduce hazardous runoff into our waterways, green spaces, and air. Abandoned trash attracts insects, rats, and other animals that carry diseases and can contaminate water and cause serious health issues. Another example of the impacts of illegal dumping is soil contamination, which occurs when hazardous chemicals meet the soil, and so reducing illegal dumping also help protect the environment.

Race & Equity: Illegal dumping and abandoned trash have been over-concentrated disproportionately on lower-income neighborhoods, and especially in Black and Latino communities¹. The dumped piles of waste create blight, attract other trouble, and worsen public health and neighborhood ambiance, and undermines respect for impacted communities. By helping to remedy illegal dumping, this project will help remedy these inequities. In addition, by providing for deployments of proactive cleanups of abandoned trash, without relying primarily on complaints, the proposal will improve the equity and effectiveness of the response.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Recommendation That The City Council Adopt A Resolution 1) Approving The Surveillance Impact Report And Amended Surveillance Use Policy, Incorporating Recommendations Of The Privacy Advisory Commission, For The Aerbits System; 2) Authorizing The City Administrator To Negotiate And Enter Into An Agreement With Aerbits Inc. For A Pilot Program To Detect And Report Illegal Dumping; 3) Waiving The Local/Small Local Business Enterprise Program And Competitive Multi-Step Technology Acquisition Requirements Due To The Unique Nature Of The Service; And 4) Directing The City Administrator To Return Within One Year Of The Adoption Of This Resolution To Provide An Informational Report.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Kristin Hathaway, Assistant Director, Oakland Public Works, Bureau of Environment at (510) 238-7571.

Respectfully submitted,



[Liam Garland \(Mar 13, 2026 11:44:52 PDT\)](#)

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Attachments:

- A: Revised Use Policy, as amended
- B. Impact Report
- C. Aerbits Presentation