

PERSONNEL, AUDITS, AND ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE REPORT relative to illegal dumping in the public right-of-way.

Recommendations for Council action:

1. NOTE and FILE the March 24, 2021 Controller's Report, inasmuch as this report is for information only and no Council action is required.
2. INSTRUCT the Bureau of Sanitation (BOS), Bureau of Street Services (BOSS), Los Angeles Police Department and Department of Recreation and Parks to reconvene the previously formed interdepartmental illegal dumping working group.
3. INSTRUCT the BOS, with the assistance of the City Administrative Officer (CAO) as needed, to report in 60 days in regard to:
 - a. The number of existing vacancies within the BOS's Watershed Protection, Livability Services and RecycLA divisions, as well as the number of permanent, dedicated illegal dumping crews, including a camera crew, required to meet demand for services and enforcement.
 - b. The creation of a dedicated sworn public officer classification for Environmental Compliance Officer positions to improve recruitment and retention.
 - c. The feasibility of purchasing, installing and maintaining 60 additional illegal dumping cameras in order to more effectively investigate and enforce illegal dumping incidents in the City of Los Angeles.
4. INSTRUCT the BOS, with the assistance of the City Attorney as needed, to report in 60 days with an analysis of existing fees to ensure cost recovery for commercial facility inspection services, as well as fine levels to ensure a sufficient deterrence for illegal dumping activity.

Fiscal Impact Statement: None submitted by the Controller. Neither the CAO nor the Chief Legislative Analyst has completed a financial analysis of this report.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

(The above matter has been waived by the Energy, Climate Change, Environmental Justice, and River Committee.)

Summary:

On May 19, 2021, your Committee considered a March 24, 2021 Controller report relative to illegal dumping in the public right-of-way. According to the Controller, the health and

environmental wellbeing of a city can be measured in a variety of different ways. One basic yardstick that can be used by even casual passersby is the presence of trash and debris in public places. The City of Los Angeles is responsible for maintaining the sidewalks, streets and alleyways within its boundaries, collectively known as the public right-of-way (PROW). It does this by fixing cracks and potholes, trimming trees and paving streets. The PROW is open for use by anyone, giving pedestrians, cyclists and drivers the opportunity to get where they need to be. But what is open for use by everyone is being abused by too many. Businesses and individuals are illegally dumping more and more garbage, debris and harmful substances in the City's PROW, contributing to urban blight and public health risks and leading to a lesser quality of life in impacted neighborhoods. Illegal dumping is also a serious environmental crime, as trash dumped into the City's drains flows untreated into our local waterways. Common illegally dumped materials include paint, appliances, construction and demolition waste, household trash and used motor oil.

In recent years, as illegal dumping service requests have climbed, the City has put more resources into PROW cleanup efforts spearheaded by the BOS. But even with funding for new cleanup crews and equipment, BOS is struggling to keep up with the high demand for services. Illegal dumping service requests have spiked nearly 450%- going from an average of 457 requests per month in 2016 to approximately 2,500 requests per month in 2020. And the amount of solid waste picked up by the BOS in the PROW has similarly piled up, increasing from nearly 9,200 tons in 2016 to 14,500 tons through the first eight months of 2020.

The fact that the BOS manages both illegal dumping and homeless encampment cleanups has compounded its logistical and operational challenges. It is taking the BOS an average of five days to respond to illegal dumping service requests- a considerable amount of time to leave unsightly and potentially dangerous waste sitting in the City's PROW. And while there is a nexus between illegal dumping and encampments, the issues are distinct, although scofflaws can and do use encampments as dumping grounds, worsening living conditions for unhoused individuals.

Also, the BOS is tasked with investigating illegal dumping incidents with limited capacity. There are only 19 illegal dumping surveillance cameras stationed across our 470 square mile metropolis. Enforcement too is problematic as there is no comprehensive strategy to approach the issue, despite the fact that enforcement involves several departments, including BOS, the BOSS, the Los Angeles Police Department and the City Attorney's Office. There is also currently little work put into educating the public about the impacts of illegal dumping and the need to properly dispose of business, construction and household waste. A coordinated and concerted awareness campaign is needed to notify residents about the right way to dispose of excess trash, underscore that illegal dumping is both harmful and criminal, and encourage people to report it if they see it. Such a campaign should involve input from residents and stakeholders in communities that disproportionately bear the brunt of illegal dumping. After consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to make a series of

recommendations as detailed above in the above recommendations. This matter is now submitted to Council for its consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,
Personnel, Audits, and Animal Welfare Committee

COUNCILMEMBER VOTE

KORETZ: YES

HARRIS-DAWSON: ABSENT

BONIN: YES

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5/19/21

-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-