

**Date:** 2021-05-19

**Subject:** **Litter Action and Education (RM 20/2021)**

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**Report Number:** Public Works & Engineering-2021-645

**Recommendations:**

1. That the report **re: Litter Action and Education** to the Committee of Council meeting of June 23, 2021, be received.

**Overview:**

- Litter is increasingly becoming a problem in urban areas, and negatively impacts the environmental, social, and economic sustainability of Brampton.
- The City has a number of anti-litter initiatives underway as part of its annual litter reduction strategy.
- On March 24, 2021, Council received a delegation from Bill Godfrey of People Against Littering (P.A.L.) regarding the 5-5-30 Challenge with the goal of achieving a litter-free Brampton by 2023.
- The City will continue to encourage and support community anti-litter champions like Mr. Godfrey and other P.A.L. volunteers, and explore the opportunity to enhance the promotion of P.A.L.'s 5-5-30 Challenge as part of the City's Parks Cleanup Program and anti-litter messaging for 2022.

**Background:**

Litter is increasingly being recognized as an important problem that impacts human health, wildlife, and our build and natural environment. Not only is litter a health and safety hazard to people and animals, it also negatively impacts Brampton's image, which can affect economic investment and reduce property values.

Various forms of litter can take more than one million years to decompose (refer to Table 1). Some products that contain petrochemicals, including biodegradable plastics, never truly breakdown and remain in the environment as micro-plastics forever.

Litter product	Decomposition time
Cigarette Filter	Up to 12 years
Plastic bag	Up to 20 years*
Disposable coffee cup	Up to 30 years
Plastic bottle	450 years*
Aluminum can	Anywhere between 80 and 200 years, to as long as one million years
Disposable diaper	Between 450 and 600 years
*Petrochemical products never truly breakdown and remain in the environment forever	

**Table 1.** Summary of common types of litter and how long they take to decompose

### Brampton Grow Green Environmental Master Plan Update

The City of Brampton recently updated its Environmental Master Plan (EMP), which provides a comprehensive framework for environmental sustainability, organized under the core components of People, Air, Water, Land, Energy, and Waste. The EMP includes the following actions and targets related to Waste:

- Develop and commence implementation of a Waste Diversion Strategy for City indoor and outdoor facilities, including a minimum 75% diversion target;
- Explore the opportunity to develop a waste management team to facilitate a centralized model for waste diversion for City operations;
- Develop and commence implementation of a Green/Sustainable Procurement Strategy; and
- Develop policies/procedures for lifecycle assessments, including lifecycle greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, of major capitals.

In addition, the City has a litter reduction strategy that involves a number of annual initiatives, including the Park’s Cleanup Program, staff-led litter picking, and anti-litter awareness campaigns. These initiatives are detailed below.

### Park’s Cleanup Program

The City of Brampton promotes litter cleanups annually, starting in Spring (April) and ending in Fall (November). The Parks Cleanup program helps remove litter that has

accumulated throughout the year, encourages community stewardship, and creates healthy and vibrant spaces. It also contributes toward achieving Brampton Grow Green goals. Participants that register receive free cleanup kits, including gloves and bags, and the City coordinates the collection of the bags of litter amassed by the volunteers.

For most of 2020 and 2021, community cleanups were initiated but then put on hold due provincial COVID-19 related restrictions, and only self-led cleanups were permitted.

### Staff-led Litter Picking

Every spring, Parks staff conduct citywide litter picking activities in coordination with the Public Works and Region of Peel staff. Litter cleanup is prioritized for areas that see significant litter accumulation, including arterial road boulevards, dead end streets, ponds and ravines, and parks and trails.

### Anti-litter Awareness Campaigns

The City recently launched two anti-litter campaigns, including the “Don’t be Trashy” campaign (2019) and “Be Like Bill” (2020) campaign. The “Be Like Bill” social media campaign, in particular, was a direct reference to Bill Godfrey from People Against Littering (P.A.L.), and his commitment to reducing litter and keeping communities litter-free in Brampton.

Both campaigns were designed to improve litter awareness, encourage proper waste disposal, and reduce the amount of litter in Brampton. The campaigns included street decals, posters, school challenges, and social media posts, and were sponsored by CN. The campaigns were part of the City's ongoing commitment to a clean and green Brampton, and a response to growing community concern about the negative impact litter has on human health, wildlife, and the built and natural environment.

In 2019, the City’s litter reduction strategy resulted in over 45,000 people participating in anti-litter initiatives across Brampton.

### **Current Situation:**

On March 24, 2021, Council received a delegation from Bill Godfrey of People Against Littering (P.A.L.) regarding its 5-5-30 Challenge with the goal of achieving a litter-free Brampton by 2023. Mr. Godfrey requested that the City make a public pledge and commit to the Challenge, which includes encouraging all residents to take 5 minutes to pick up 5 pieces of litter per week for 30 weeks.

Council directed staff to consider the delegation as part of the Brampton Grow Green Environmental Master Plan (EMP) implementation, including enhanced communication support for litter-related initiatives, and report thereon (Recommendation CW124-2021).

During the last year and a half, the COVID-19 pandemic has placed a challenge on our cleanup efforts by limiting the amount of group-led community cleanups. Nevertheless, the City continues to promote anti-litter related initiatives through social media, our website, and the Adopt-a-Park program.

The City will continue implementing its litter reduction strategy, and will continue to encourage and support community anti-litter actions, including champions like Bill Godfrey and other P.A.L. volunteers by providing resources such as gloves, bags, and bag-pickups. In 2022, Park's staff will explore opportunities to enhance the promotion of P.A.L.'s 5-5-30 Challenge as part of the City's Park's Cleanup Program and anti-litter messaging.

### **Corporate Implications:**

#### Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications resulting from the approval of the recommendations of this report.

#### Other Implications:

There are no other implications resulting from the approval of the recommendations of this report.

### **Term of Council Priorities:**

The City's anti-litter initiatives directly fulfill the "Brampton is a Green City" Term of Council Direction, in particular the Council Priority "Implement a Green Framework" that includes the Key Initiative to "Promote community events and outreach programs such as Adopt-a-Park, Community Gardens, Community Tree Planting, and Environmental Stewardship Education programs to give residents opportunities for hands-on community improvement."

### **Conclusion:**

The City's litter reduction strategy is a multifaceted approach to reducing litter in Brampton. The foundation of this strategy is engaging and empowering residents to take

action to remove litter from public spaces. This strategy represents a community-based approach to improving Brampton's image, protecting human health, wildlife, and our build and natural areas. The combination of community and self-led cleanups, awareness campaigns, collaboration with community groups such as P.A.L, and corporate efforts offers the opportunity to effect positive change across Brampton, and in a manner that will help the City achieve its sustainability goals.

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