

City of Dallas

CODE COMPLIANCE STRATEGIC ILLEGAL DUMPING PLAN



July 2020

Prepared by:
The Department of Code Services

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



City Manager T.C. Broadnax,

The Code Compliance Services Department is committed to providing the highest level of customer service to the citizens of the City of Dallas through effective partnerships and teamwork. The information found within this document provides specific short-term immediate relief plans as well as long-term sustainable strategies that are intended to reduce and mitigate illegal dumping. The Plan will be proposed and implemented with data measuring tools and will be evaluated for continuous improvement.

As Director of the Code Compliance Services Department, I recognize that illegal dumping in the City of Dallas is a chronic challenge. This Citywide problem is difficult to manage since the issues are often obscured due to multiple agencies and City Departments and nonprofit volunteers attempting to address the same problem.

This document will highlight the importance of implementing a Citywide, “Teamwork” Vision and describes the need for City business partners to collaboratively work together.

Finally, this Plan will outline Code Compliance Services Department strategic modules that should include long-term partnerships, a marketing campaign, deployment of additional camera resources, ordinance implementation/revisions, community drop off centers, and stricter regulatory enforcement.

The Code Compliance Services Department is resolutely focused on reducing and abating illegal dumping violations. It is our hope that this Plan is adopted and supported by all City partners in close collaboration with our efforts. We look forward to taking the lead and welcome the challenge of proactively addressing ongoing blight. In the spirit of, “Service First” we understand the role we play in partnering with one another to build and maintain vibrant communities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Code Compliance Services Department has received over 13,600 Illegal Dumping Code Concerns in the past three years. Historically, the Code Compliance Services has struggled with tracking data related to these complaints. This has had a direct impact on the Department's ability to respond to complaints and more importantly proactively address the underlying issues. In partnership with the Code Compliance Department, the Dallas City Marshall's Office also investigates illegal dumping complaints. This compounds the City's turnaround times and can hinder the City's ability to quickly address these locations. Finally, the City currently does not have a comprehensive way to track the costs associated with illegal dumping on an enterprise wide platform.

ILLEGAL DUMPING REDUCTION GOALS AND OUTCOMES

This Plan provides measurable goals and improvements targeted at reaching an improved level of service and responsiveness. We are endeavoring to accomplish the following goals:

60%

Reduction in Code Compliance and Dallas Marshall's Office response times.

66%

Reduction in abatement response times occurring on or adjacent to the Right of Way.

20%

Reduction in illegal dumping 311 Service Requests.

20%

Reduction in total tires illegally dumped.



OBJECTIVES

It is very clear that there is no one solution to this chronic challenge. This Plan attempts to incorporate a multi-faceted, multi-departmental, and multi-agency approach with both short-term and long-term success measures. The Department seeks to accomplish these reductions by implementing and executing the following objectives:

01

Facilitate and coordinate communication/partnership opportunities with internal and external work groups.

02

Incorporate a comprehensive data driven approach to identify hot spots, measure prevention efforts, and track desired performance goals.

03

New and update existing City Ordinances that align with stricter regulatory oversight.

04

Strategically utilize Departmental camera resources.

05

Implement a robust marketing Illegal Dumping Campaign.



The Department wants to utilize this approach and transparently communicate it with the community and all City Departments. Data driven desired outcomes and quarterly reporting tools will heighten awareness while allowing the City to measure success and improvement opportunities.

OBJECTIVE 1



FACILITATE AND COORDINATE COMMUNICATION/PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES WITH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL WORK GROUPS.

Beginning June 2020, the Code Compliance Services Department has been consistently working and collaborating with internal and external business partners. Below is a list of Departments that have participated in the ongoing discussion surrounding the City's Illegal Dumping Plan. The Code Compliance Services Department has coordinated these meetings and have been occurring twice a month. The conferences are designed to bring a creative and innovative way of addressing the illegal dumping dilemma. The initial discussions included external agents from local utility and public transportation agencies.

- Kris Sweckard, Director Sustainable Development
- Michael Zander, Dallas Customer Service, Oncor Electric
- Michael Rogers, Director, Transportation
- Robert Perez, Director, Streets Department
- Roxana Rubio, Sr. Public Affairs Officer, Office of Public Affairs and Outreach
- Timothy Oliver, Director, Sanitation
- Terry Lowery, Director, Dallas Water Utilities

- Carl Simpson, Director, Code Compliance
- Edie Diaz, Vice President, Government Relations DART
- Gary Lindsey, Director, Dallas Marshall Office
- John Jenkins, Director, Parks and Recreation
- John Johnson, Director, 311
- Kevin Oden, Interim Director, Office of Homeless Solutions



City Departments

The Code Compliance Services Department recommends that this Plan be shared across the organization and that a cooperative alliance be formally established with the identification of Department Liaisons being assigned as agents representing their respective teams. The Mission and Goals of this initiative should be communicated and supported and embraced by City Management and Department Directors. It is recommended that designated agents be responsible for communicating challenges, policy updates, and creative ideas to help reduce illegal dumping with a, “Teamwork” and “Innovative” approach to this community threat. The dissemination of information across Departments will facilitate faster response and abatement times, while establishing an environment that fosters strategic synergy designed to drive performance desired outcomes and long-term solutions.

Code Department Initiative

The Code Compliance Services Department will reduce its internal Estimated Response Time (ERT) to three (3) calendar days and has affirmed its commitment to abate confirmed illegal dumping within ten (10) calendar days at locations where property owners do not voluntarily comply with cleanup efforts. The Department was previously abating illegal dump sites within thirty (30) calendar days. This represents a potential reduction of 66% in the Code Compliance Services abatement turnaround times and reduces community blight that typically welcomes and encourages additional dumping violations. In addition, the Department recommends that property owner compliance periods be reduced from ten (10) calendar days to five (5) calendar days in order to expedite voluntarily compliance.

Dallas Marshall's Office Initiative

The Dallas Marshall's Office has reduced its internal Estimated Response Time (ERT) from ten (10) business days to three (3) business days. This aligns with the Code Compliance Services Department response times. This represents a potential reduction of 70% in the Environmental Crime Unit response times.

The Marshall's Office in coordination with the Code Compliance Services has affirmed its commitment to abate confirmed illegal dumping within one (1) business day.

Sanitation Department Initiative

The Department is exploring convenient spots for community disposal centers. The Sanitation Department will spearhead a new collaborative effort to establish, “Community Drop Off Centers” in areas identified with historical high levels of Illegal Dumping 311 Service Requests. These locations will be temporary in nature and allow residents within specific communities to dispose of their bulky items. These locations are not intended to allow Citywide residents to dispose of their bulky items. Rather they are designed to allow residents in a specific neighborhood community to partner with the City and help proactively prevent Illegal Dumping in their areas by properly disposing of items. This effort will be coordinated with various city departments, neighborhood groups, and City Council Representatives.

Sustainable Development Department Initiative

The Department will ensure that project applications for new and remodeling projects include an acknowledgment statement indicating that contractors will properly dispose of remnant and removed construction materials. The attestation statement should include an educational component that clearly identifies the possible revocation of City permitting privileges and criminal penalties allowed by State and Federal Laws when proven in a court of law. The Department should incorporate opportunities to share information regarding the City's efforts to combat Illegal Dumping along with educational material focused on the appropriate way to dispose construction debris.

Information Systems Department Initiative

The Department will need to continue to offer information solutions for the harvesting of data, developing software architecture, and integration of systems that will facilitate the Goals and Vision of this Plan. It is critical that the appropriate private industry tools are acquired to support the collection of intelligence information that will allow the Code Department to analyze, forecast, map, and collect data. Business partners should progressively evaluate the Department's needs and support the continuous development of dashboards, automated reporting tools, and GIS public infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE 2

INCORPORATE A COMPREHENSIVE DATA DRIVEN APPROACH TO IDENTIFY HOT SPOTS, MEASURE PREVENTION EFFORTS, AND TRACK DESIRED PERFORMANCE GOALS.

Data

The Code Compliance Department has implemented and retired several Customer Management Systems in the past twenty-four (24) months. This has led to an ineffective way to manage, respond, and track Illegal Dumping Code Concerns. Recently the Department deployed the initial phase of the new Salesforce Inspection Module software platform. Additional enhancements are currently being implemented to improve Service Requests and abatement workflow. It is critical that maintenance enhancements be identified. This includes the prioritization and scheduling of Illegal Dumping inspections and abatement Service Requests. The software platform challenges have had a direct impact on the Department's ability to be responsive and remain informed. The Department should continue to work with the vendor and the City's Information Systems agents to identify resolutions. The final software product should facilitate the following goals and desired outcomes.

- Develop an open and transparent public real-time Code dashboard and "Illegal Dumping" Dallas website.
- Share and report on monthly and quarterly illegal dumping response and abatement times.
- Utilize predictive data to proactively deploy Code Officers into pre-determined locations known for illegal dumping.
- Incorporate real-time data from the Department of Sanitation for bulk trash that was not collected on vacant lots.
- Outsource research group to determine the accurate costs associated with citywide illegal dumping dilemma.
- Shared full-time ArcGIS/Data Analyst assigned to the Code Compliance Services Department and Dallas Marshall's Office.
- Effective identification of City owned properties.



OBJECTIVE 3

NEW AND UPDATE CURRENT CITY ORDINANCES THAT ALIGN WITH STRICTER REGULATORY OVERSIGHT.

Ordinance Implementation

On average the Code Compliance Services Department cleans and mows a total of 36,000 lots, abates 4,500 graffiti sites, and secures 650 open and vacant structures each Fiscal Year. Therefore the Department is working in close coordination with the City Attorney's office to research and develop a proposed Draft of a Vacant Lot/Vacant Building Ordinance. The Code Compliance Department has identified approximately 8,000 vacant properties in the City. In the past twenty-four (24) months the Department has incurred an estimated cost of over three (3) million dollars in service and private property maintenance. The proposed Ordinance would facilitate the following desired outcomes:

- Partnership with property owners and Code.
- Allow for improved and faster voluntary compliance.
- Permit the Code Compliance Services Department to recover ongoing costs associated with egregious problem properties.
- Ensure the social, economic, and safety of community neighborhoods.

In addition, on average the Code Compliance Services Department abates 2,500 tons of illegally dumped materials each Fiscal Year. Therefore, the Code Compliance Services Department is recommending that a, "Small Hauler" registration program be implemented to educate and monitor business owners who are hauling brush, junk, construction waste materials, bulky items and other debris in small quantities that typically end up illegally dumped.

The Code Compliance Services Department abates approximately a total of 20,000 illegally dumped tires per Fiscal Year. Therefore, the Department is recommending that the current, "Tire Ordinance" be revised to include some of the following components and would apply to Tire Shops operating in the City of Dallas.

- Continuing Education prior to Licensing / Renewal.
- New tire storage requirements reducing blight from public view.
- A Performance Goal established to perform proactive Tire Shop Inspections.
- Scrap tires will be identified with the Tire Shop's unique identification number to increase accountability and tracing of tires illegally dumped.

OBJECTIVE 4

STRATEGICALLY UTILIZE DEPARTMENTAL CAMERA RESOURCES.

Camera Resources

Currently the Code Compliance Department has deployed a total of thirty-four (34) cameras located at seventeen (17) locations throughout the City of Dallas. These cameras are designed to work in tandem and are deployed in pairs to ensure documentation of criminal activity. In addition, the Dallas City Marshall's Office has deployed fifteen (15) cameras throughout the City of Dallas. The Marshall's Office also utilizes five (5) real-time cameras monitoring chronic locations.

The Code Compliance Department recently secured funding to acquire an additional thirty (30) cameras. These cameras will be deployed to monitor fifteen (15) additional sites. After deployment the Department will only monitor approximately thirty-two (32) locations. The addition of these resources provides limited coverage to the third largest City in Texas which encompasses an area of 285 square miles. Between both Departments, this equates to one (1) camera set for every seven (7) square miles of City area. Therefore, it is recommended each Budget Cycle should intentionally include an allowance for adding resources to our current camera inventory.

Resources should be deployed in areas known for chronic dumping supported through data validation and tracked for effectiveness. The Department is recommending the purchase of a rapid-deployment tower type solar powered surveillance camera systems that are designed to offer mobile and flexible monitoring solutions. This alternative can be utilized temporarily while property owners or the City provides recommendations in problem areas.

Signage Resources

During the 2019 Fiscal Year, the Code Compliance Department installed approximately one hundred (100), "No Dumping" signs in response to a City Council Request or ongoing complaints from citizens. This is a reactive process and is typically a result of direct customer correspondence. These signs are installed in the Right of Way or on City property. The Department is recommending that the current signage be updated to heighten awareness of the penalties, rewards, and possible recording of illegal dump sites. In addition, the Department should implement a more proactive approach to the installation of these communication tools.

***OBJECTIVE 5
IMPLEMENT A ROBUST MARKETING
ILLEGAL DUMPING CAMPAIGN.***

Marketing Campaign

Crime Stoppers Rewards

Advertisements

Criminal Prosecutions

To date successful prosecutions

SUMMARY



This Plan is intended to provide a frame work that will be supported by a Citywide “Teamwork” approach while emphasizing the importance of a transparent data-driven approach. Clearly defined goals and performance measure for all City Departments must be established with an emphasis placed on accountability and follow through.

The recommendations in this Plan focus on immediate and long-term solutions. The Plan is not all inclusive and should be revisited for future adjustments, improvements, and evaluations. Since the ongoing illegal dumping problem facing our City is a complex and ever changing, the City should also progressively implement technology, resources, regulations, and best practices to minimize the illegal dumping dilemma.



PARTNERING WITH YOU TO IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN VIBRANT AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES