CITY OF OAKLAND

Illegal Dumping Idea-A-Thon Community Recommendations

Sep. 29, 2026, Summary Report by OpenOakland

Context

On Sep. 29, 2026 Northeastern University and OpenOakland hosted an Illegal Dumping Idea-A-Thon in collaboration with Kristin Hathaway (Public Works Dept.), Councilmembers Kevin Jenkins, Ken Houston, and Rowena Brown, John Brockett (Faith in Action), Brian Johnson (AerBits), and 70 residents with all districts represented. This is a summary of the recommendations from all attendees.

Key Takeaways

- The most convenient, and familiar, method for residents to dispose of waste is placing it at the curb.
- Oakland's bulky curbside pickup service is exceptionally restrictive for multi-unit residences.
- The complexity of restrictions make bulky pickups hard to understand and use.

Bulky Pickups – Reduce Restrictions for Multi-Unit Residences

Problem

The current contract hauler franchise agreement imposes excessive restrictions on bulky pickups for multi-unit residences (where they are most needed and least used).

Solution

The City of Oakland could amend the current agreement, or otherwise work around it to reduce restrictions on bulky pickups for multi-unit residences such as:

- Allow 2 bulky pickups per tenant/unit per year
- Allow for commonly dumped items to be accepted in bulky pickups (ex. bags of trash)
- Offer multi-unit residents the same 2-week appointment window that single-family homes receive

Impact

- Delivers on City Auditor's recommendation (#3)
- Convenient, legal waste disposal will be expanded, and more equitably distributed, for the residents that need it the most
- The largest sources of illegally-dumped waste (multi-unit residences) will be reduced by increased curbside collection
- Bulky pickups will be easier to use and understand which will increase adoption and better ensure that Oakland reaps the full benefits of the program

Bulky Pickups – Simplify Communication

Problem

Current communications (ex. flyers) advertising bulky pickups are overly complex, full of descriptions of what *not* to do, and fail to present a compelling invitation to use the service.

Solution

- Create & distribute new flyers with a simpler message highlighting the benefits of bulky pickups, a clear call to action, and prominent display of the steps needed to use the service.
- Apply removable stickers to curbside collection bins with the bulky pickup phone number and QR code to access the web form.
- Translate the flyers and stickers into more of the common languages spoken in Oakland.

Impact

- (impact dependent on reduced restrictions)
- Delivers on City Auditor's recommendation (#3)
- Increased awareness and use of bulky pickups, especially for residents of multi-unit buildings and those who speak languages other than English.

Opportunity for Community Support

OpenOakland, Northeastern University, and community members can help increase use of bulky pickups by creating flyers/stickers, translating these assets into multiple languages, and distributing them throughout the community.

Additional Solutions

- Reduce restrictions on weekly curbside collection (ex. extra bags of trash next to curbside bins)
- Reduce fees & restrictions at dump
- Partner w/ community orgs to host monthly use of allocated dumpster bins in each district
- Create a zero-waste facility and zero-waste material exchanges at local events

Next Steps

OpenOakland's volunteers can help. Please contact us at:

leads@openoakland.org

www.openoakland.org

Additional Community Ideas

Beautification

- "Beautiful Oakland" – public online portal for city-supported beautification projects that allows community members to suggest locations and volunteer on project days
- More beautification projects in most-affected areas & major corridors, partner with community centers to implement cleaning initiatives
- More landscaping of parks & streets (with CA native plants & trees)
- More public murals in communities

Education

- A city-sponsored program for the collaboration between school districts and community organizations to create/curate education materials on waste reduction and legal waste disposal to be included in educational curriculums for Oakland students
- Invite students to participate in the solution through art, essays, and creative competitions
- Offer community service credit to students who educate other students about legal/illegal dumping
- Workshops on illegal dumping
- Field trips to waste disposal sites

Communication

- Community advocacy campaign to pressure renegotiation of Waste Management franchise agreement for reduced restrictions on bulky pickups
- Communicate to landlords and tenants the responsibilities of the landlord to legally dispose of waste
- Translate illegal dumping informational content into more languages

Data

- "Illegal Dumping Dashboard" – public online portal integrating illegal dumping data and info: 311 calls, drone imagery, self-reported & geotagged human reports, registry of legal haulers, city & county/state data
- Use data to place enforcement cameras
- Determine external sources of waste being dumped in Oakland
- Place tracking devices in waste piles of suspected illegal dumpers

Data (cont.)

- Conduct research and outreach to illegal dumpers to identify why they do it

Waste Collection

- Reduce restrictions on bulky pickups (see previous page)
- Reduce restrictions on weekly curbside collection (ex. extra bags of trash next to curbside bins)
- Reduce fees & restrictions at dump
- Partner w/ community orgs to host monthly use of allocated dumpster bins in each district
- Create a zero-waste facility and zero-waste material exchanges at local events
- Larger residential trash bins, especially in illegal dumping hotspots
- Subsidize trash pick-up in "hot zone" neighborhoods
- Faster 311 ticket turn-around time will reduce add-on dumping
- One free-use roving dumpster per city block or by density
- Partner with private companies that have a use for certain waste types
- Automatic bulky pickup on monthly basis
- Increase staff to pickup trash

Enforcement

- Require rental agreements to specify landlord's responsibilities for waste disposal
- Require businesses to have waste collection service, with increasing fines until they do
- Enforce landlords/property managers responsibility to provide enough bins for apartment buildings
- Identify Illegal dumpers in public-facing communication
- Impound vehicles used for illegal dumping

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