

Report to Committee

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Jeff Renaud, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: July 16, 2025

SUBJECT: Recommendation to Remove Clothing Donation Bins from Municipal Property

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Committee's direction regarding the continued placement of clothing donation bins on municipally owned property. Staff recommend the removal of these bins due to ongoing concerns related to property maintenance, misuse, and lack of formal agreements with bin operators.

Background

Clothing donation bins have been placed on several municipally owned properties over the years. These bins, operated by external charitable or for-profit organizations, are intended to collect used clothing and textiles for reuse or resale. While initially viewed as a convenient public service that aligns with waste diversion and charitable goals, operational challenges have become increasingly evident.

Discussion

1. Maintenance and Aesthetics

Staff have received numerous complaints regarding overflowing bins, surrounding litter, and the general untidiness of the areas in which the bins are placed. This negatively impacts the visual appearance of municipal properties and requires additional staff time to address cleanup concerns.

2. Misuse and Illegal Dumping

The bins are frequently used for the disposal of non-clothing items, including household garbage, furniture, and electronics. This misuse constitutes illegal dumping and presents public health and safety risks.

3. Lack of Accountability and Oversight

The majority of the bins are not authorized by formal agreement, and there is limited or no communication with the operators. As a result, the Municipality has no ability to ensure that collections are managed responsibly or that the proceeds are directed toward legitimate charitable causes.

4. Liability Concerns

The presence of unattended bins on public property exposes the Municipality to potential liability should injuries or property damage occur in relation to the bins or their surrounding areas.

5. Alignment with Municipal Priorities

The unregulated presence of clothing bins does not align with Council's commitment to responsible land use, beautification of public spaces, and ensuring that third-party use of municipal property is appropriately authorized and monitored.

Financial Implications

Ongoing staff resources are required to address complaints and clean up litter. The removal of bins would reduce these indirect costs and allow staff to focus on core operational responsibilities.

Recommendation

THAT Committee of the Whole recommend to Council that clothing donation bin operators be notified that all bins currently located on municipally owned property must be removed no later than [insert date];

AND THAT staff be authorized to remove and dispose of any remaining bins after that date, with all reasonable attempts made to notify the responsible organizations in advance;

AND THAT moving forward, no clothing donation bins be permitted on municipal property unless authorized by a written agreement approved by Council.