



DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER
750 17TH STREET, WEST VANCOUVER BC V7V 3T3

8.2.

COUNCIL REPORT

Date:	May 26, 2023
From:	Trevor Doré, Policy & Programs Planner
Subject:	Cigarette Butt Disposal Bins/Outdoor Ashtrays Update
File:	1700-09

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report dated May 26, 2023, titled “Cigarette Butt Disposal Bins/Outdoor Ashtrays Update” be received for information.

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the District of West Vancouver’s (District) cigarette butt bin pilot program.

2.0 Legislation/Bylaw/Policy

The District’s *Smoking Regulation Bylaw No. 4607, 2009* regulates smoking in the District and restricts smoking within six metres of building openings, public transit stops, and in all District parks.

The *Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act and Regulation* are administered by the BC Ministry of Health to regulate the use, sale, and display of tobacco products in the Province of British Columbia.

Other public sector organizations that operate in the District, including BC Ferries and the West Vancouver School District, have smoking policies in compliance with provincial legislation.

3.0 Council Strategic Objective(s)/Official Community Plan

The cigarette butt bin pilot program aligns with the Council’s Strategic Objectives:

- 3.5: Reduce community and corporate waste.
- 3.5.5: Report back on the feasibility and implementation of introducing disposal bins for cigarette butts. (2021–2022)

4.0 Financial Implications

Costs for the pilot program were estimated to be approximately \$7,000 for the first year. Actual costs were \$2,875 for the first year of the program. These costs include the provision of butt bins (\$920), installation (\$858), and servicing (\$1097). After the first month of the pilot, the service

frequency was reduced from daily to monthly, resulting in lower than estimated servicing costs.

While the results of the pilot were inconclusive, Engineering and Parks staff will coordinate on a small, strategic expansion of the cigarette butt bin pilot in locations where smoking is allowed and will continue to monitor progress.

Additional funding will be included in the annual solid waste utility rate setting for 2024. Projected costs of continued operation of the pilot locations and strategic expansion are not expected to have a significant impact on utility rates.

5.0 Background

5.1 Previous Decisions

Council, at its **October 4, 2021, regular meeting** received a report titled “Cigarette Butt Disposal Bins/Outdoor Ashtrays” and approved the following recommendations:

THAT

- 1. staff implement a pilot cigarette butt disposal bin program in 2022;*
- 2. staff work with Vancouver Coastal Health on communication strategies to increase awareness of smoking regulations and reduce cigarette butt litter; and*
- 3. staff report back to Council with an update on the pilot program in Q2 of 2023.*

Council, at its **June 28, 2021, regular meeting**, passed the following motion:

THAT council request that staff provide a report on the implications (financial and otherwise) of providing cigarette butt disposal bins/outdoor ashtrays in our community and if any objectives on the strategic plan will have to be re-prioritized to accommodate this motion.

5.2 History

Cigarette butts have been identified as a common type of litter in West Vancouver. Cigarette butts leach toxic chemicals, and the filters contain micro plastics that are not biodegradable. When littered on the ground, cigarette butts can make their way into waterways and negatively impact the environment. Additionally, carelessly discarded cigarette butts can cause fires.

The District has historically addressed cigarette butt litter through the Parks and Engineering departments’ regularly scheduled and on-going street and beach maintenance programs, which include dedicated staff

and cleaning equipment such as a Surf Rake to remove cigarette butts and other debris from Ambleside and Dundarave beaches.

Since 2018, the District has also been a Clean Shoreline Community with the Ocean Wise Shoreline Cleanup (formerly called the “Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup”). Through this partnership, the District supports multiple public and private litter cleanup events throughout the year.

In 2022, staff were directed by Council to implement a cigarette butt disposal bin pilot program. Six cigarette butt bins were installed on existing streetside recycling bins, and pilot results are discussed further below.

Prior to the pilot, the District did not provide cigarette butt bins in most public places such as parks and bus stops because the District’s Smoking Bylaw No. 4607, 2009 prohibits smoking in these places. The Smoking Regulation Bylaw restricts smoking within six metres of building openings, public transit stops, and in all District parks.

When the Smoking Regulation Bylaw was adopted in 2009, the staff report indicated:

“Residents are frequently requesting amendments to our smoking bylaw regulations to include outdoor smoking requirements, in particular for outdoor patios in restaurants and in some areas of our parks. From complaints that have been received it appears that the community is becoming less tolerant of smoking and of secondhand smoke intrusion.”

“Smoke-free public places reduce smoking rates and protect people from the hazards of second hand smoke. Furthermore they model healthy behaviour for children and youth and help smokers to smoke less, possibly quitting altogether.”

In 2018, the Bylaw was amended to update the definition of smoking to include the regulation of new methods of smoking such as use of e-cigarettes, vapourizing, and cannabis.

It is challenging to find locations on public property where smoking is permitted, and cigarette butt litter is common. Cigarette butt litter is often found in locations where smoking is prohibited. Installing cigarette butt bins to address the litter issue sends a message that smoking is acceptable in these locations.

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH)

District staff consulted Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) when developing the cigarette butt bin pilot, including bin type and communication plan key messages. While VCH was supportive of the District’s cigarette butt bin pilot, they expressed concerns that installing cigarette butt bins could have unintended consequences of encouraging smoking and recommended a comprehensive approach to reduce cigarette litter.

Strategies for reducing cigarette litter include collection, enforcement, and education. Research has shown that a combination of these tools is most effective at reducing cigarette litter.

With the pilot bins, the District also launched an accompanying communication campaign that encouraged cigarette butt litter reduction and promoting smoking cessation resources. When cigarette consumption decreases, cigarette butt litter decreases overall.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program:

The District sent a letter dated May 11, 2022, to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy advocating for a provincial Extended Producer Responsibility program that includes cigarette butts, **Appendix A.**

Provincial EPR programs shift the responsibility of collecting and recycling from residents and municipalities to industry. The District's residential blue box recycling program, now the responsibility of Recycle BC, is an example of a successful EPR program.

The response from the Ministry dated June 13, 2022, indicates that cigarettes are not currently a priority EPR item, **Appendix B.**

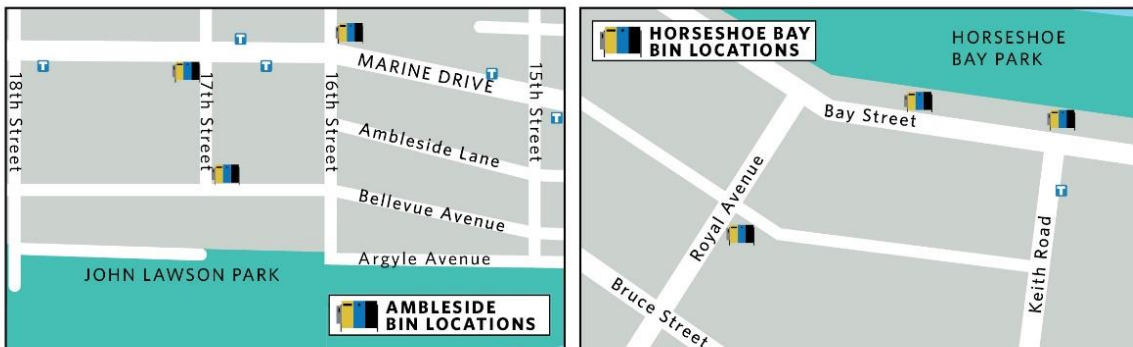
6.0 Analysis

6.1 Discussion

Pilot Cigarette Butt Bins and Communication Campaign

The pilot program allowed staff to test the effectiveness of cigarette butt bins, understand the resource requirements, and identify potential challenges in scaling the program.

The six pilot cigarette butt bins were placed on existing streetside recycling bins to facilitate servicing by the District's streetside collection contractor. Bins were located where smoking is permitted, or close enough to a location where smoking is permitted that people will walk to the bins to dispose of cigarette butts.



During the pilot, staff conducted bin audits to assess the effectiveness of the bins in reducing cigarette litter. Audits included a count of cigarette

butts in the bins and a count of butts littered in the area surrounding the bins.

The audit results showed the butt bins are being used, with an average of 100 butts in bins per month. However, cigarette butts also continue to be littered in the areas surrounding the butt bins. During the pilot period, the Ocean Wise Shoreline Cleanup reported an increase in cigarette butt litter collected during shoreline cleanups in West Vancouver. The effectiveness of cigarette butt bins at reducing litter is inconclusive.

An accompanying communication campaign was implemented to raise awareness for the pilot program, encourage a reduction in cigarette butt litter, and to connect smokers with smoking cessation resources. The communication campaign included social media posts, a project webpage, and QR codes on cigarette butt bins that directed users to the project webpage and smoking cessation resources, such as quitnow.ca. The social media promotion received over 1000 impressions and the project webpage received over 300 page views during the pilot year.

While the communications campaign was successful in raising awareness for the program, it is not clear that the campaign was effective at reducing cigarette butt litter in the community.

Next Steps and Opportunities for Program Expansion

The balance between reducing cigarette butt litter, observing local smoking regulation bylaw, and supporting provincial public health objectives remains an on-going challenge.

VCH recently provided a letter to the District reiterating their position, including concerns with expanding the cigarette butt bin program and support for strategies that focus on discouraging smoking, **Appendix C**.

Staff will continue to maintain and monitor the six pilot bins and evaluate expanding the program strategically where smoking is allowed. Strategic expansion could include a small number of additional cigarette butt bins on streetside waste containers in locations where smoking is permitted. Infrastructure at parks entrances is another option to evaluate, helping to reinforce the District's Smoking Regulation Bylaw to butt out before entering the park.

Staff will also continue to work with VCH and the District's communications team on campaigns to reduce cigarette litter in the community. This will include working with VCH on strategies and programs that reduce smoking overall, which may result in greater overall benefits and longer-term gains in reducing cigarette litter in the community.

6.2 Sustainability

Cigarette butts make up a small portion of the total waste generated in the District but are environmentally impactful when littered. Programs that focus on reducing the prevalence of smoking are most beneficial for public health and cigarette litter reduction.

6.3 **Public Engagement and Outreach**

Staff consulted with local businesses associations when implementing the pilot program and incorporated feedback where possible. The District's Community Engagement Policy will be used should further engagement take place.

6.4 **Other Communication, Consultation, and Research**

Staff will continue to work across District departments, as well as with other Metro Vancouver municipalities and Vancouver Coastal Health to apply best practices when implementing initiatives to reduce cigarette butt litter.

7.0 **Options**

7.1 **Recommended Option**

THAT the report dated May 26, 2023, titled "Cigarette Butt Disposal Bins/Outdoor Ashtrays Update" be received for information.

7.2 **Considered Options**

Council may request further information or provide alternate direction.

8.0 **Conclusion**

This report provides an update on the District's cigarette butt bin pilot program. A combination of tools, including butt bins and communication campaigns is most effective at reducing cigarette butt litter. Staff recommend this report be received for information.

Author:



Trevor Doré, Policy & Programs Planner

Appendices:

- Appendix A: letter to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy Regarding Extended Producer Responsibility program for cigarettes
- Appendix B: response from the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy Regarding Extended Producer Responsibility program for cigarettes
- Appendix C: letter from Vancouver Coastal Health letter regarding feedback on the West Vancouver Cigarette Butt Bin Pilot Project



THE CORPORATION OF THE
DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

May 11, 2022

File: 09.1775.02

Honourable George Heyman
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Room 112 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Via email: ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Heyman:

RE: Extended Producer Responsibility program for cigarettes

Further to the District of West Vancouver (District) Council motion and subsequent Council Report (attached), I am writing to request the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (Ministry) implement an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program for cigarettes to accelerate efforts to eliminate cigarette litter.

Cigarette butts have been identified as a prevalent type of litter collected in cleanups across West Vancouver. When littered, cigarette butts leach toxic chemicals, such as arsenic and lead into the environment and the filters contain micro plastics that are not biodegradable. Additionally, carelessly discarded cigarette butts can cause fires and their cleanup creates a significant and ongoing cost to taxpayers.

The District currently addresses cigarette butt litter through regular street maintenance programs. Research has shown that an integrated approach is most effective to manage cigarette butt litter. As such, the District will be implementing a pilot cigarette butt bin project and education campaign. However, Vancouver Coastal Health has concerns that installing cigarette butt bins could have unintended consequences of encouraging smoking and recommends a comprehensive approach, including EPR, to reduce cigarette litter.

The Ministry has an opportunity to show leadership in supporting environmental and public health outcomes by implementing a cigarette butt EPR program. A cigarette EPR program could include implementing a cigarette butt deposit-return program and/or a cigarette waste tax added to the sale of cigarettes to help reduce cigarette butt litter. On behalf of District Council, I express our support for a province-wide EPR program for cigarettes.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and we look forward to working with the Ministry to further reduce cigarette litter and promote a healthy environment.

Sincerely,



Mayor Mary-Ann Booth

cc:

Bob McDonald, Director, Extended Producer Responsibility
Robert Bartlett, Chief Administrative Officer, District of West Vancouver
Jenn Moller, Director, Engineering & Transportation Division, District of West Vancouver
Emily Willobee, Senior Manager, Engineering Services
Trevor Dore, Acting Policy and Programs Planner
Council, District of West Vancouver



Reference: 390062

June 13, 2022

Her Worship Mayor Mary-Ann Booth
and Councillors
District of West Vancouver
750-17th Street
West Vancouver BC V7V 3T3

Sent via email: mbooth@westvancouver.ca

Dear Mayor Booth and Council:

Thank you for your letter of May 11, 2022, requesting the implementation of an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program for cigarettes. I share your desire to keep British Columbia's environment free of cigarette litter.

Some British Columbians have asked our government to create a recycling program for cigarette butts to discourage cigarette litter, and I would like to provide you with some information about the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy's position.

As you know, B.C.'s Recycling Regulation requires producers of various products to take responsibility for them at end of life. This involves developing and paying for province-wide collection and recycling programs. To date, these EPR programs cover packaging and paper products, beverage containers, electronics, tires, pharmaceuticals, paint, oil, pesticides and other household hazardous wastes.

Expansion of EPR to a substantial list of potential products has been under consideration by the ministry for several years which, as part of this effort, included stakeholder engagement in 2019. In September 2020, the ministry also issued a [Recycling Regulation Policy Intentions Paper](#) that sought feedback on several items that were potential products to be captured under EPR programs or other policy initiatives.

The feedback was consolidated in the [Summary of Feedback Report](#) and made publicly available in June 2021. The feedback helped inform the development of a [Five-Year EPR Action Plan](#) for EPR expansion in B.C, which was announced in September 2021.

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The ministry received substantive feedback from key partners and stakeholders. Adding cigarette butts to the Recycling Regulation was not identified as a priority product for EPR expansion in B.C. during this process. However, we are always open to valued input on future products to be considered. As noted in the Five-year EPR Action Plan, we will act on any opportunity to accelerate implementation of the plan, thereby allowing for consideration of future products at that time.

In the meantime, please do keep us informed of your collection program's progress. Documentation of your results can help support consideration of such programs being under EPR in the future.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "G. Heyman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

George Heyman
Minister



Vancouver Coastal Health
 5th floor - 132 West Esplanade
 North Vancouver, BC V7M 1A2
 604 983 6701

April 27, 2023

Mayor and Council
 District of West Vancouver
 750 17th Street
 West Vancouver, BC V7V 3T3

Dear Mayor Sager and Councillors,

Thank you for reaching out to Vancouver Coastal Health to provide feedback on the West Vancouver Cigarette Butt Bin Pilot Project. As detailed in our letter dated September 10, 2021, the evidence continues to suggest that the most impactful strategies are comprehensive approaches that include smoke-free spaces.

Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable mortality and morbidity worldwide. Cigarette butts are the leading littered item in cities and on our shorelinesⁱⁱ. Moreover, while smoking rates have decreased in Canada, the popularity of new tobacco industry products continues to increase, particularly among youth. Vapour products (electronic nicotine delivery systems) are non-recyclable and contribute to the waste produced by the tobacco industry. The latest and most popular type of vapour devices are disposable and are comprised of plastic, heavy metals, and lithium ion batteries. These newer devices are non-recyclable and non re-refillable. Vapour products are more popular among youth than adults. In a local [survey](#), 34% of youth on the North Shore and Coast Garibaldi reported they had used a vapour product in the past 30 days.

Cigarette waste receptacles will have the most impact when they are part of a comprehensive strategy that endeavors to reduce smoking, exposure to second-hand smoke, fires, and litterⁱⁱ. A comprehensive strategy may include:

- promotion of cessation services such as QuitNow Services and the BC Smoking Cessation Program
- education and support to reduce youth vaping
- promotion of the benefits of smoke-free spaces and creation of smoke-free zones/streets
- enforcement of the Smoking Regulation Bylaw No. 4607 (e.g. fines)
- creation of a campaign to shift public attitudes on cigarette littering
- implementation of a litter clean-up strategy that includes a deposit-return program as an incentive
- creation of a bylaw requiring business owners to clean up the sidewalks adjacent to their businesses (similar to how businesses are required to remove snow etc.)
- consideration of a cigarette waste tax added to the sale of cigarettes to fund cigarette litter clean-up campaigns

We also continue to note concerns and considerations related to cigarette waste receptacles as follows:

Location of Receptacles

Receptacles may become unsanctioned designated smoking areas and create a higher concentration of toxic second-hand smoke wherever they are placedⁱⁱⁱ. We thank the District of West Vancouver for not placing

receptacles in locations where smoking and/or vaping is banned. To reinforce the health benefits of the existing smoking bylaw in the District of West Vancouver, receptacles should continue to be placed more than 6m from any parks or municipal facilities sites listed in the Smoking Regulation Bylaw No. 4607.

Partnering with the Tobacco Industry

We would like to commend the District of West Vancouver for not partnering with TerraCycle's UNSMOKE Cigarette Recycling Program whose financial sponsor is Rothmans, Benson & Hedges Inc. Tobacco companies and their supporters claim that smoking bans have exacerbated cigarette butt waste, however to date that claim has not been supported by empirical research^v. Cigarette filters currently made in Canada are non-biodegradable and cigarette butts are mainly composed of the filter which end up in our environment. The UNSMOKE Cigarette Recycling Program gives the false impression to environmentally conscious consumers and members of the public that the solution to cigarette litter is TerraCycle's UNSMOKE Cigarette Recycling Program rather than a decrease in consumption of tobacco^{vi}. The benefit for Rothmans, Benson and Hedges Inc. by sponsoring this program is a reduction in complaints of the environmental impact of cigarette litter, an argument against increased tobacco regulations, and the renormalization of tobacco use^{vii}.

Vancouver Coastal Health supports a comprehensive strategy to address cigarette butt litter in the District of West Vancouver that is free from tobacco and vapour product industry sponsorship. Our Public Health programs, including the Tobacco & Vapour Reduction Program, are available to collaborate with District staff to develop an effective strategy to reduce smoking, exposure to second-hand smoke, fires and litter. Feel free to contact to contact the Tobacco and Vapour Products Reduction Coordinator on the North Shore at 604-983-6711.

Sincerely,



Alexandra Choi, MD MHSc CCFP FRCPC

Medical Health Officer
Vancouver Coastal Health

mobile 604-816-4944

office 604-983-6701

e-mail alexandra.choi1@vch.ca

ⁱ Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup. (2012). Facts and figures. Retrieved from <http://www.shorelinecleanup.ca/en/content/facts-figures>

ⁱⁱ Patel, V., Thomson, G. W., & Wilson, N. (2013). Cigarette butt littering in city streets: a new methodology for studying and results. *Tobacco control*, 22(1), 59-62.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hwang, J., & Lee, K. (2013). Determination of outdoor tobacco smoke exposure by distance from a smoking source. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, ntt178.

^{iv} Smith, E. A., & McDaniel, P. A. (2011). Covering their butts: responses to the cigarette litter problem. *Tobacco control*, 20(2), 100-106.

^v Badenhorst C, Bhika S, Bye E, et al. (2009). Butt Wait, There's More? A Report on the Interaction Between Cigarette Litter and the Tobacco Industry. Wellington: University of Otago. <http://www.otago.ac.nz/wellington/otago030918.pdf>

^{vi} Forsythe, J. (2010). *Smoke-Free Outdoor Public Spaces: A Community Advocacy Toolkit*. Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

^{vii} Smith, E. A., & McDaniel, P. A. (2011). Covering their butts: responses to the cigarette litter problem. *Tobacco control*, 20(2), 100-106.

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