

Residential Tipping Fee Holiday Pilot Project Update

Presented To:	Operations Committee
Meeting Date:	August 11, 2025
Type:	Managers' Reports
Prepared by:	Robyn White Environmental Services
Recommended by:	General Manager of Community Infrastructure

Report Summary

This report provides a recommendation to formalize a once-per-year Spring Tipping Fee Holiday to enhance program efficiency given the successful outcomes of the pilot project that adjusted the Residential Tipping Fee Holiday from two weeks to one.

Resolution

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury directs staff to formalize the residential tipping fee holiday once per year in the Spring as detailed in the report entitled “Residential Tipping Fee Holiday Pilot Project Update” from the General Manager of Community Infrastructure presented at the Operations Committee meeting on August 11, 2025.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Climate Action Plans

This report refers to Asset Management and Service Excellence as well as Climate Change as outlined in the 2019-2027 Strategic Plan and to the Community Energy and Emissions Plan goal to achieve 90% solid waste diversion by 2050.

The recommendation to formalize a single, spring-only Residential Tipping Fee Holiday supports the City’s strategic objectives by promoting waste diversion, reducing operational strain at landfill sites, and enhancing the effectiveness of existing roadside collection services. These outcomes demonstrate alignment with the City’s broader goals of delivering high-quality municipal services while protecting environmental and financial resources for the future.

The Community Energy and Emissions Plan identifies waste management as a key area for reducing community emissions. By promoting the use of existing roadside collection programs and reinforcing waste diversion through graduated tipping fees, the report supports the goal of minimizing landfill-related emissions and encouraging more sustainable waste practices.

Financial Implications

Maintaining the tipping fee holiday at one week per year on a permanent basis will result in ongoing tipping fee revenue of \$66,000.

Background

The residential tipping fee holiday was originally introduced in 2005 as part of a broader strategy to reduce litter and illegal dumping. The program initially offered residents one week in the spring during which they could dispose of waste at the landfill without paying tipping fees. In 2007, a second week was added in the fall, establishing a bi-annual event.

While the program has become a popular service among residents, there is no clear evidence to suggest that it has effectively reduced littering or illegal dumping in the community.

Waste Diversion and Fee Structure

The City employs a graduated tipping fee structure to promote waste diversion. Divertible materials—such as cardboard, tires, electronics, and scrap metal—are not subject to tipping fees when properly separated and deposited in designated diversion areas at the landfill. Conversely, mixed loads incur higher fees: garbage containing blue box recyclables is charged at three times the standard rate, while garbage mixed with electronics or scrap metal is charged at double the standard rate.

During the tipping fee holiday, however, these financial incentives for waste separation are suspended, reducing the effectiveness of the City's diversion strategy.

Recent Developments

As part of the 2024/2025 budget process, Council approved Resolution FA2023-75-A26 from the Finance and Administration Committee, which introduced a pilot project to reduce the tipping fee holiday to one week in the spring. This change aims to improve operational efficiency and better allocate municipal resources. The resolution also included a directive to implement a public education campaign to increase awareness of available roadside collection services.

Analysis

Public Education Campaign

Between September 2024 and January 2025, staff conducted a public education campaign aimed at increasing awareness of the comprehensive roadside waste collection services available to low-density residential households. The campaign utilized a range of communication strategies and advertising channels to effectively reach the target audience. A detailed overview of the campaign tactics is provided in Appendix "A". The ad reach data is provided for paid social media ads only.

Tipping Fee Holiday Feedback

In 2024, the City held a single residential tipping fee holiday in May, foregoing the typical fall event. The 2025 spring tipping fee holiday occurred from May 12 to May 17.

Between January 1, 2024, and May 30, 2025, the City received 80 complaints through the 311 call center regarding the cancellation of the fall tipping fee holiday. When compared to the historical volume of residential landfill visits during the holiday period, this represents a relatively low level of concern from the public.

Operational Impacts During Residential Tipping Fee Holidays

During residential tipping fee holidays, landfill usage increases significantly, resulting in extended wait times for both residential and commercial users. To address potential customer service challenges and ensure safe and efficient site operations, additional measures are required. These include:

- Deployment of supplementary security personnel and traffic control staff to manage on-site vehicle queues and traffic flow on adjacent public roads.

- Implementation of bypass routes for waste haulers and other operational vehicles essential to the delivery of other municipal services.
- Engagement of paid duty police officers to manage traffic congestion and ensure public safety, along the Kingsway corridor.

These actions are critical to maintaining service levels and minimizing disruptions during peak usage periods.

Landfill Usage Trends

An analysis of the 2018 to 2025 residential landfill visits during the residential tipping fee holidays between indicates no notable increase in the number of visits or in the total tonnes of waste delivered (refer to Appendix “B”).

As demonstrated in Appendix “C”, further analysis of the total number of residential visits and tonnes delivered over the months of May and September indicates no notable increase. In May 2020 (during COVID) and September 2024 when no residential tipping fee holiday weeks were held there were fewer overall visits and tonnes delivered to the landfill site. This suggests that the reduction to a single tipping fee holiday week did not result in a surge in landfill usage.

Over the last five years, over 51% of residential loads that were delivered to the landfills during the residential tipping fee holiday weighed 100 kilograms or less and 22% of total deliveries weighed 50 kilograms or less. This suggests that much of the waste delivered to the landfill during the holiday could have been managed through the City’s existing roadside collection programs. These services include unlimited Blue Box recycling, green cart organics, leaf and yard trimmings, and large furniture, appliances, and electronics. Additionally, residents may use an unlimited number of garbage bag tags for waste exceeding the standard bag limit.

In September 2024, following the cancellation of the fall tipping fee holiday, both the number of residential landfill visits and the volume of waste disposed decreased significantly (Appendix “C”). This trend suggests that, rather than concentrating visits within a single week, residents may have distributed their landfill visits over a longer period or used their roadside collection services rather than delivering small loads to the landfill. This likely contributed to reduced wait times and improved customer service delivery.

Illegal Dumping Trends

An analysis of the number of illegal dumping complaints received by Environmental Services between 2022 and 2024 is provided in Figure 1. There are no indications that the cancellation of the Fall 2024 residential tipping fee holiday increased illegal dumping.

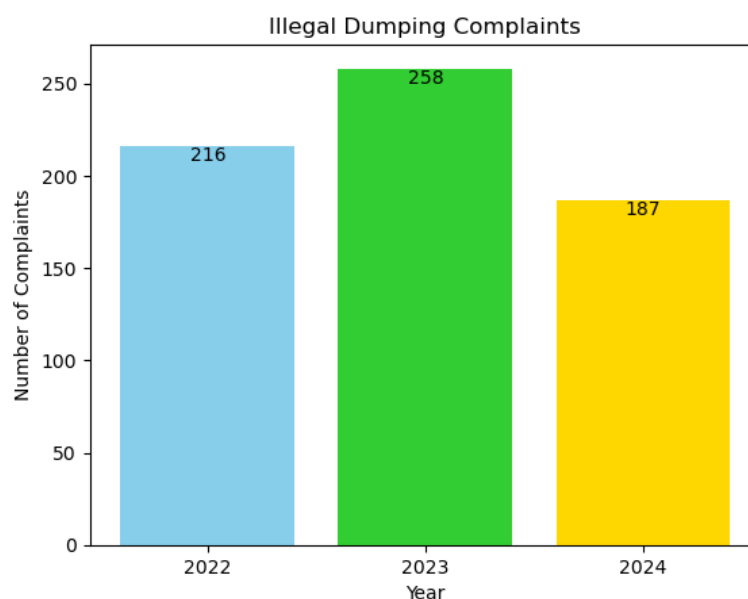


Figure 1.

Conclusion

The pilot project to reduce the Residential Tipping Fee Holiday from two weeks to one has demonstrated positive outcomes in terms of operational efficiency, customer service delivery, and resource management. The change did not result in increased landfill usage or waste tonnage, and public feedback regarding the cancellation of the fall event was minimal. Operational challenges, such as long wait times, were reduced when the tipping fee holiday did not take place. Spreading residential landfill visits over a longer period helps alleviate congestion and improves the overall user experience.

The accompanying public education campaign further supported the transition by increasing awareness of existing roadside collection services and helping residents make informed and sustainable waste disposal choices.

These findings support the recommendation to formalize a single, spring-only tipping fee holiday. This approach aligns with the City's strategic goals of environmental stewardship, fiscal responsibility, and improved service delivery, while also enhancing the effectiveness of waste diversion programs.

Resources Cited

December 19, 2023 City of Greater Sudbury Finance and Administration Committee Resolutions available at:

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=52123>