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METRO VANCOUVER MOVES TO TACKLE ILLEGAL DUMPING

New research from Metro Vancouver shows that while most people hate seeing couches, mattresses and appliances littering the streets, many still engage in illegal dumping and often consider it a valid form of recycling.

Illegal dumping is a costly problem for local municipalities, who are saddled with \$5 million per year in costs associated with clean-up and the operation of bulky item pick up programs. In an effort to reduce illegal dumping throughout the region, Metro Vancouver is teaming up with its members to better educate residents on how to properly dispose of unwanted items.

“Our residents all want to keep their communities clean, but many aren’t aware of the options available for properly disposing of bulky items,” said Malcolm Brodie, Chair of the Metro Vancouver Zero Waste Committee. “Our aim is to provide residents with information to help them properly recycle or dispose of their old items, eliminating a common eye-sore and reducing costs for their community.”

This month, Metro Vancouver will launch an initiative with the goal of encouraging residents to move past their rationalizations for abandoning waste. Residents will be directed to a new website wasteinitsplace.ca providing information on legal disposal options, including municipal programs such as large-item pickup services, pop-up junk days and spring cleaning events. The initiative will also be supported via social media and advertising.

Local residents, rather than businesses, are responsible for the majority of abandoned waste in their communities, with large household items being most commonly discarded. In 2016, municipalities reported 37,257 incidents of abandoned waste with the most frequently dumped items noted as mattresses, furniture, appliances, carpeting, tires, green waste and larger amounts of household garbage.

Metro Vancouver surveyed members and the public to evaluate and find out attitudes towards disposal of unwanted household items.

“Alarmingly, 60 per cent of residents told us they have in the past, or likely will in the future, illegally dump items, with inconvenience being the deciding factor,” said Metro Vancouver Chair Greg Moore. “We were also surprised to learn that a large proportion of residents – 40 per cent – also thought it was okay dump items in public spaces, believing it is just another form of recycling.”

“We hope people will use our new ‘Waste in Its Place’ resource to help to keep our region clean,” he added.

Residents of Metro Vancouver can find out more about how to dispose of their unwanted items at www.wasteinitsplace.ca

