



BRIEF

Oakland, CA looking for solutions to illegal dumping epidemic

By **Cole Rosengren** • Nov. 22, 2016

Dive Brief:

- Oakland, CA spends \$5.5 million per year cleaning up illegal dumping with no clear solution in sight. The city currently has 38 full-time employees working seven days per week to address the problem, as reported by KTVU.
- Between October 2015 and October 2016, nearly 20,000 calls were made to the city about illegal dumping. During that same timeframe only 65 citations were issued and \$209,000 in fees were collected.
- Residents have been offered rewards for catching any dumpers in the act, though few have stepped forward so far. Officials say that four new mobile cameras with license reading technology, which were purchased at a cost of \$100,000, are expected to help.

Dive Insight:

Instances of illegal dumping have become so brazen that Oakland residents say it's not uncommon for large trucks to pull up and start throwing waste onto sidewalks. Vehicles, household refuse, dead animals, hazardous waste and many other things have been reported. Residents of certain neighborhoods feel they're being neglected based on income or demographics and some recently brought bags of waste to the steps of Oakland City Hall in protest.

High profile instances of commercial or construction waste being illegally dumped receive lots of attention, but the issue can often be more pervasive throughout cities. When this is allowed to occur for extended periods of time — especially in areas such as East Oakland — it can raise questions about environmental justice and public health.

Cities have had to get creative in their approaches to this ongoing issue. Los Angeles has mapped out the incidents in a public database, San Jose sent out targeted mailers telling residents they'd been selected for free large item pick-ups, and Flint, MI built blight remediation requirements into its new collection contract.

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