



City of Racine, Wisconsin
Agenda Briefing Memorandum
Ordinance 0020-25 – Littering, Illegal Dumping,
and Incentivized Reporting

AGENDA DATE:

According to 2026 Budget Consideration Calendar

PREPARED BY: Robin K. Zbikowski, Senior Assistant City Attorney

REVIEWED BY: Scott R. Letteney, City Attorney

SUBJECT: Communication sponsored by Mayor Mason requesting an ordinance that prohibits illegal dumping within the city and creates an incentive to report incidents of illegal dumping.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS:

Chapter 66 of the Code prohibits certain behaviors within the city, including littering under article XIV. The language thereunder provides some specifics as to what qualifies as “littering,” including the placement or throwing of handbills and circulars. This language is not only outdated but also suggests that littering is only a minor infraction of the law (e.g. a fast-food wrapper on a park bench). This piece of legislation revitalizes these outmoded aspects of the code.

Also addressed by this proposed ordinance is the city’s growing concern over incidents of “illegal dumping.” Like littering, illegal dumping is the unlawful depositing of solid waste, but in greater volume (e.g. dozens of used tires dumped on a vacant lot). This behavior impacts the environment, property values, and costs taxpayer dollars to clean up, among other concerns.

This proposed legislation recreates article XIV of chapter 66 to govern both littering and illegal dumping. It defines these behaviors and differentiates them by the volume of solid waste that is improperly deposited in each instance. If the volume of illegally deposited solid waste can fit inside the average kitchen-size garbage-can (a 20-gallon container), then it is littering. Conversely, if such cannot fit, then it is illegal dumping. Upon conviction, a person shall forfeit up to \$1000 for littering and \$5000 for illegal dumping.

Additionally, this legislation creates a reward program to incentivize a person with information about an incident of illegal dumping to provide identification and file a report with the police department. If the information provided contributes to an enforcement action for the illegal dumping violation, the director of city development may issue a reward in an amount up to \$1000. The issuance of any reward, no matter the amount, cannot be contingent on the outcome of any litigation over the illegal dumping violation.

Further, the format of this legislation is formatted like the newer provisions of the code, which enhances uniformity in and ageless application of the code.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: To approve.

FISCAL NOTE & BUDGETARY IMPACT: The discretionary payment of reward money up to \$1,000 in exchange for information that contributes to the prosecution of the illegal dumping violation.