

City of Toronto Litter Audits

A Summary of Toronto's Litter Audits
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March 25, 2024



Overview

1. Background
2. Methodology
3. 2022 Findings
4. Audit Applications



Background

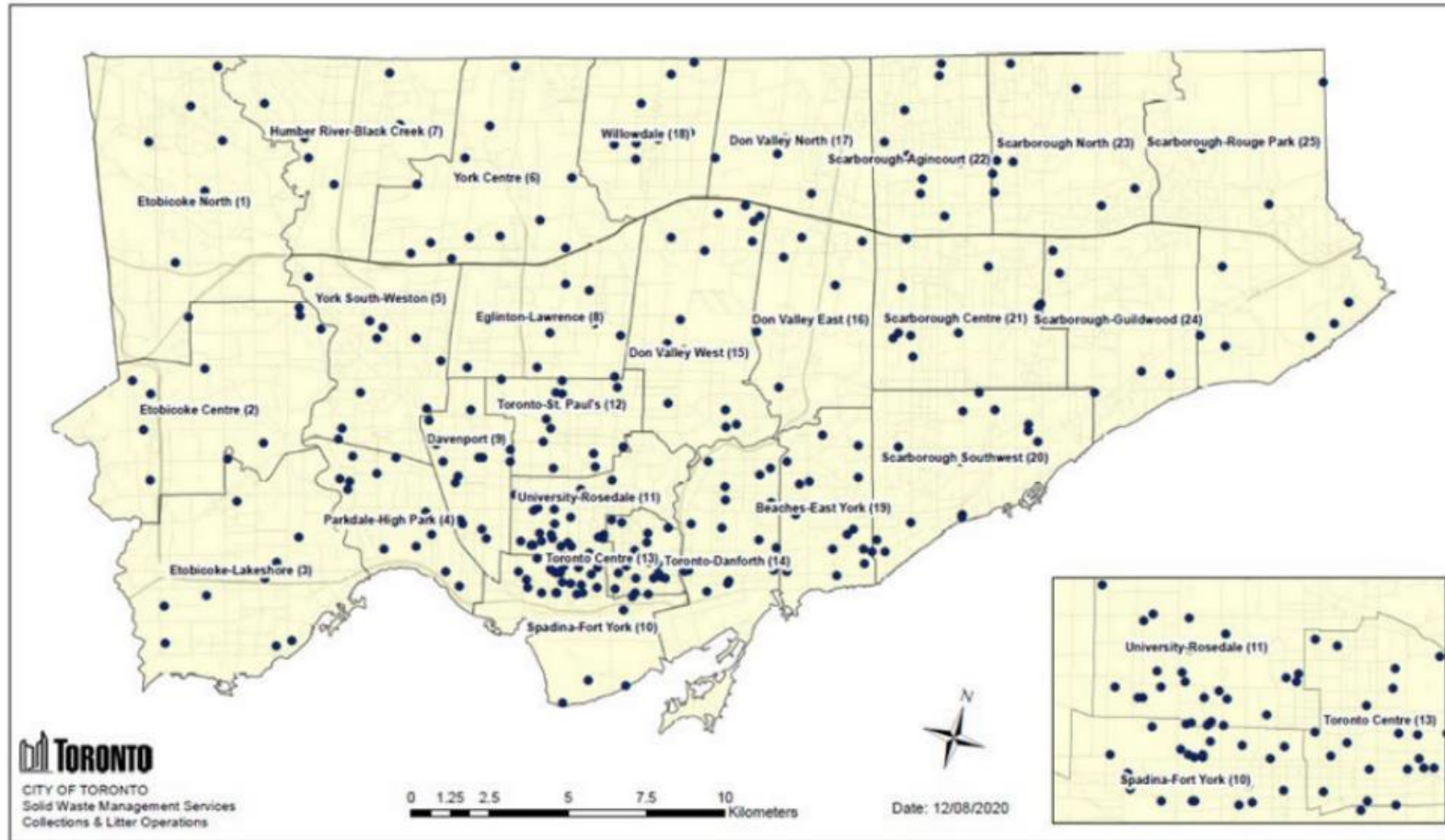
Audit History

- Completed in 2002, 2004, 2006, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2020, and 2022
- Methodology has remained consistent throughout all years making this one of the most comprehensive litter audit data sets in Ontario and nationally
- Audits focus on # of litter items found, material composition, size and brand (where it can be identified)



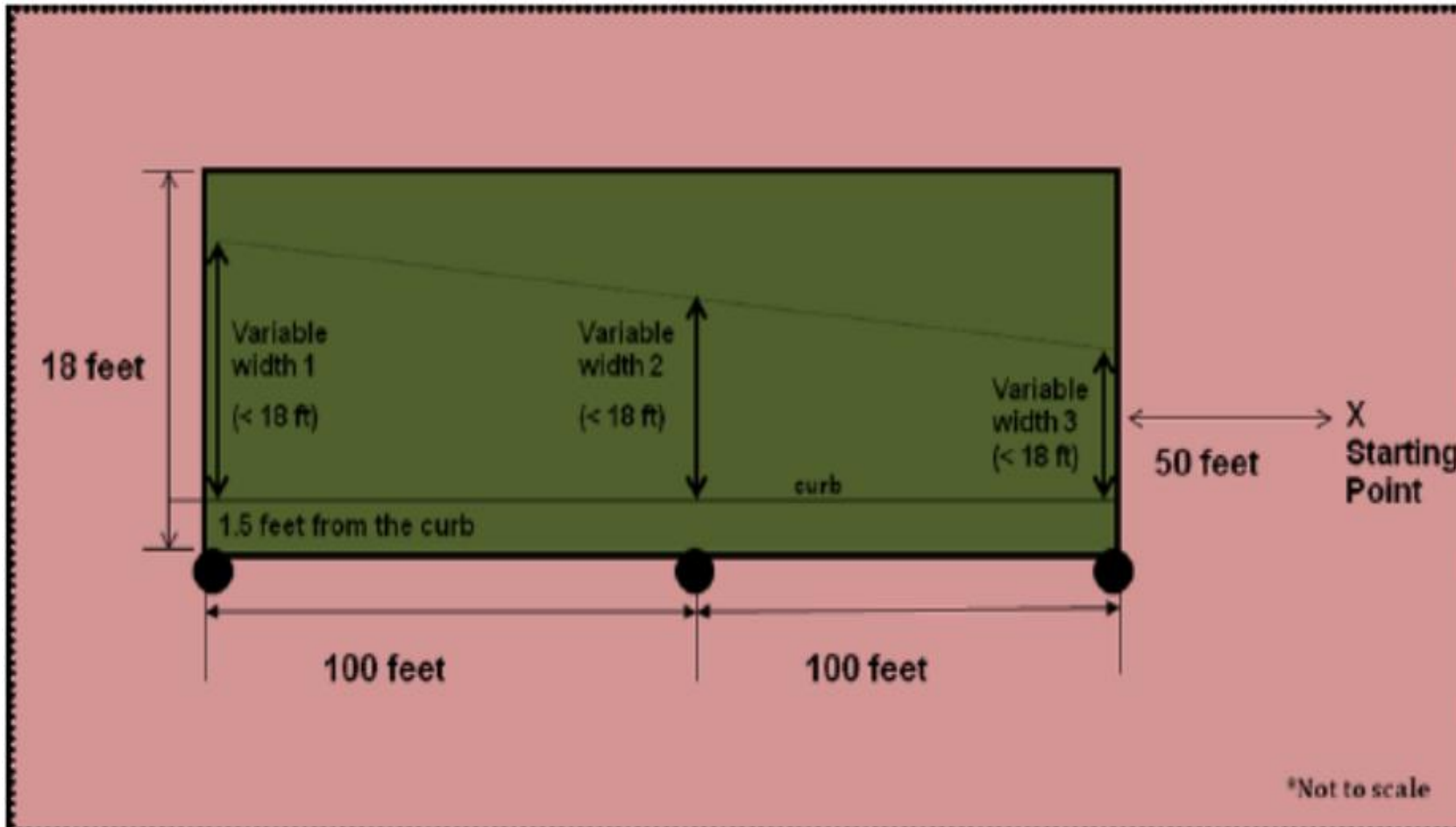
Methodology

2022 Street Litter Audit Locations



- 300 predetermined sites across the City of Toronto,
- Consistent with sites audited in previous years (2020, 2016, 2014)
- Site selection completed through randomly focused center of public street locations.
- Audits are then conducted 50 ft away (to be off the street).
- Each ward had a number of sites, with additional sites added in densely populated areas

Methodology (cont'd)



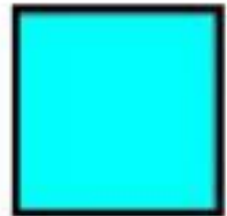
- Audit sites
 - 200 feet x 18 feet (fixed site) where possible
- From the starting point, the auditor would walk 50 feet until the beginning of the first 100 feet measurement
- They then marked the midway point of the site and then the other 100 feet

Methodology (cont'd)



Frame for
Small
Litter
Count

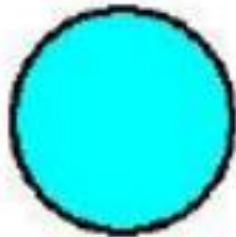
PVC 1' x 6 ft.



2" x 2 " (4 sq.in)



1" x 4 " (4 sq.in)



4 Square inches
Round

Templates
for Small
Litter
Count

- Templates help define large or small litter categories
- Items measured based on the opening that they would fit through

2022 Findings

Large Items	% in Large Litter	Item Count (out of 3887)	Rank
No Brand Name Towels/Napkins/Serviettes	10.5	407	3
Misc. Paper	8.5	330	4
Plastic Packaging	8.1	315	5
Cup Lids, Pieces Lids, Straws	5.5	213	7
Receipts & bus transfers	4.5	174	8
Misc. Plastic (incl. Hard Plastic)	4.3	166	9

Small Items	% in Small Litter	Item Count (out of 3110)	Rank
Cigarette Butts	29.6	922	1
Paper	18.4	571	2
Plastic Film	8.6	266	6
Glass	4.3	134	10

- Cigarette butts were the most found item
- All items categorized as large or small litter
 - Large litter are pieces equal to or more than 4 square inches in size
 - Small litter is less than 4 square inches in size

Applications of the Litter Audits

Tracking Plastic Litter Trends

- Audits allow for the continual tracking of material trends
 - Material categories have changed over the years, but are mostly consistent
- Can utilize this information to mark success of policies and programs

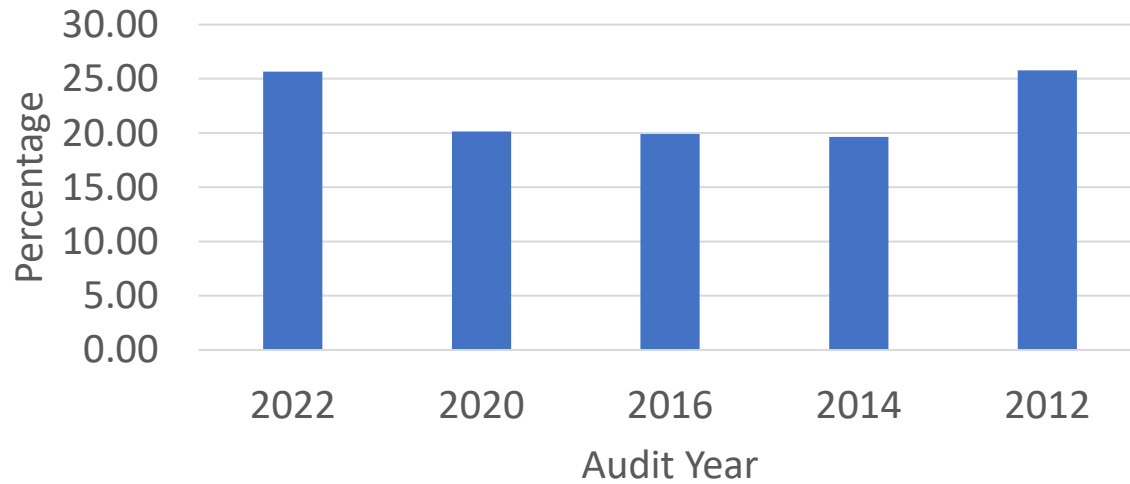
Year	2022	2020	2016	2014	2012
Material Category	Number of Items	Number of Items	Number of Items	Number of Items	Number of Items
Plastic Packaging Other	315	107	235	47	92
Cup Lids, Pieces Lids	213	136	247	180	292
Misc. Plastic	166	135	189	267	397
Water (Plastic)	97	82	98	101	91
Plastic Wrap	87	79	62	207	79
Plastic Drink Cups	49	51	44	26	46
Plastic Bags - Not Retail	49	20	67	27	30
Utensils	41	39	33	25	24
Zipper Bags/ Sandwich	22	31	19	20	12
Plastic Jars / Bottles / Lids	22	13	24	9	11
Other Plastic Shells/Boxes	21	18	0	6	20
Plastic Retail Bags	20	38	26	24	29
Polystyrene Trays	20	1	17	4	2
Polystyrene Clamshells	9	6	11	11	9
Polystyrene Cups (Foam)	8	12	15	21	26
Straws	6	6	4	10	6
Total Plastic Litter	1237	934	1124	1020	1211

Applications of the Litter Audits

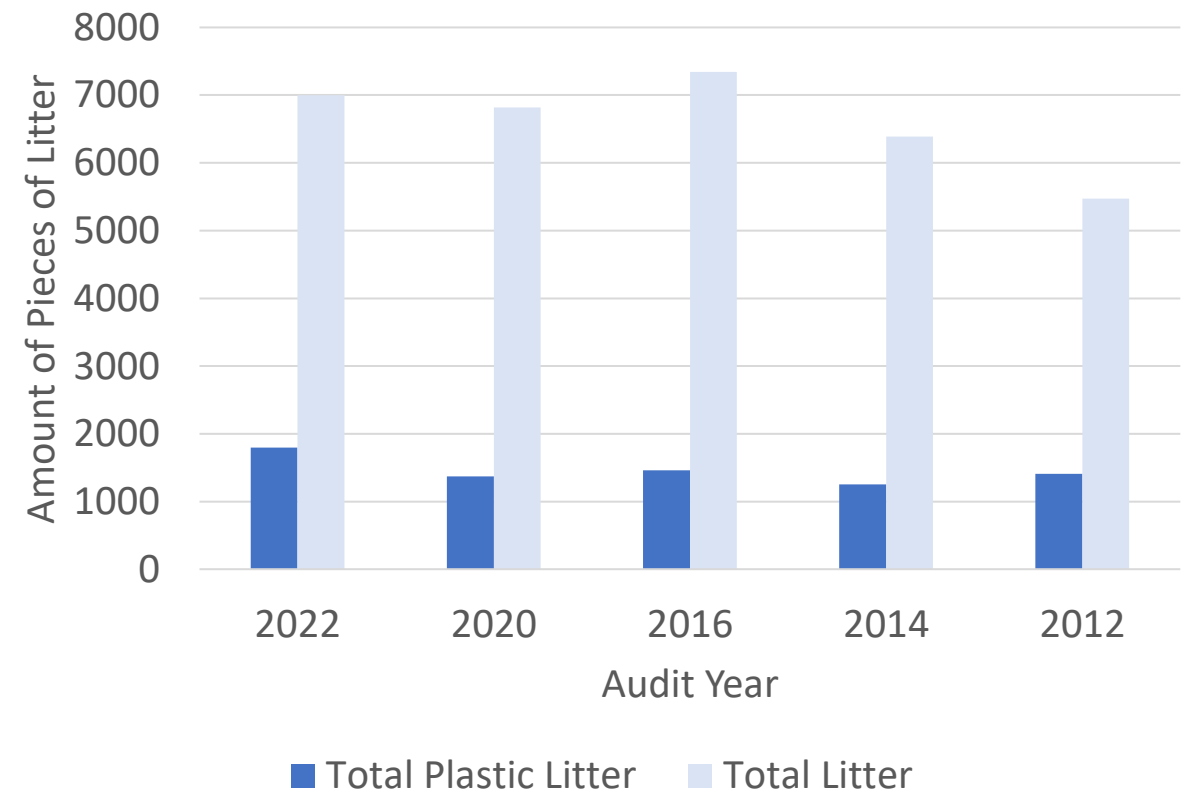
Tracking Plastic Litter Trends

- Can also compare yearly trends of plastic litter proportion of total litter

Plastic Percentage of Total Litter



Comparing Total Plastic Litter and Total Litter



Applications of the Litter Audits

Informing the Single-Use & Takeaway Items (SUTI) Bylaw

- SUTI Bylaw came into effect on March 1, 2024
- Council asked SWMS for a review of litter items from the 2022 Litter Audit
- Review will identify prevalent items
- Will be used to monitor impact of bylaw as well as identify new items that could be proposed for restrictions in the future as part of bylaw review and updates

18. City Council request the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, as part of the first quarter of 2024 report back on any recommendations to adjust the Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy to include any recommendations to modify the list of items and measures to reduce Single-use and Takeaway items that may result from:

- a. a review of an item's prevalence in the City's 2022 Litter Audits;
- b. considerations of an item's potential to persist in the environment (i.e. not biodegradable); and
- c. operational challenges and considerations with an item's management as litter by the City.

The City of Toronto is reducing waste from single-use items

As of March 1, 2024, Toronto businesses are required to:

Only provide items you really need
Before receiving single-use items such as utensils, napkins, condiment packages, stir sticks and straws, you will be asked if you need them or they will be available by self-serve or by request.



Accept your reusable cups and shopping bags
They accept clean reusable shopping bags and cups.



Questions?
Contact 311 or email reducewaste@toronto.ca.



 toronto.ca/single-use 



Applications of the Litter Audits (cont'd)

Litter Website

- <https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/recycling-organics-garbage/litter/>

Lists Top Litter Items

- Based on audit findings

Discusses the Effects of Litter

- Environmental damage
- Expenses to the City
- Harmfulness to animals
- Prevalence of certain litter types can emphasize these effects

Explains City Litter Operations

- Clean up
- Collection of waste from public litter bins
- Manual versus mechanical clean up

Litter



Toronto's annual spring clean up is April 19 to 22, 2024. Learn more and register for [Clean Toronto Together](#).

Litter can be a big problem in Toronto. It makes the city look bad, can have harmful effects on the environment and animals, and costs millions of dollars a year to clean up. Small items such as cigarette butts and gum, and large items such as paper towels and napkins, masks, and single-use drink cup lids and pieces are commonly littered items in Toronto. Help keep Toronto's streets, sidewalks, beaches and parks clean by properly disposing of waste in the bins provided.

The City has seen an increase in the amount of litter with more people enjoying Toronto's public spaces. Please keep public spaces clean and safe by using available garbage and recycling bins to dispose of your waste.

The City has increased the amount of waste bins along the waterfront and in high-traffic parks and is emptying those in high-traffic areas more frequently. Littering comes with a fine of up to \$500.

Expand All + Collapse All -

City Litter Operations	+
Top Litter Items in Toronto	+
The Effects of Litter	+
What You Can Do	+

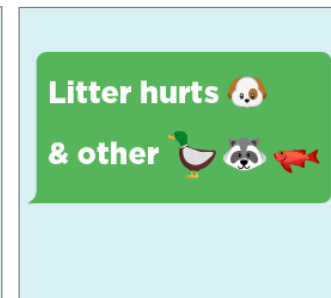
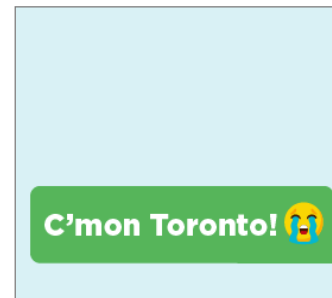
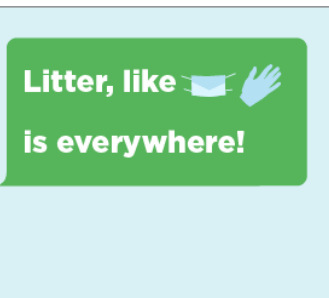
Applications of the Litter Audits (cont'd)

Educational Opportunities

- Aims to inform residents of Toronto about litter impact
- Encourages proper disposal and reusable product use
- Use prevalent litter items from audit info to help inform

Campaigns

- Help Keep Toronto Clean | Bin your litter – Summer 2023
- Litter Public Education (Emojis) – Summer/Fall 2020, 2021, 2022



Thank you!



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