

Collection Bins Code Amendment

Q&A | October 20, 2017

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What is the purpose of the Collection Bins Code Amendment?

The purpose of the Collection Bins Code Amendment is to establish regulations related to permitting, maintenance, and placement of Collection Bins, as well as penalties for violations of these regulations.

What are Collection Bins?

Collection Bins, or donation bins as they are sometimes called, are receptacles used for collecting salvageable personal property, such as clothing, shoes, books or housewares. The items collected are typically resold either for profit or to raise funds for charitable causes.

Why is the Collection Bins Code Amendment needed?

Currently, Collection Bins are not regulated and have proliferated throughout the City, resulting in many problems and complaints. Many of these Collection Bins are not maintained or monitored regularly, resulting in the overflow of donations, illegal dumping of trash, and accumulation of toxic materials. When left unattended, Collection Bins can often attract vermin and pests, and thus pose a danger to public health and safety.

In addition to problems associated with the materials inside the bins, the bins themselves have become problematic in some cases. Sometimes installed without permission from property owners, these Collection Bins often attract graffiti. Furthermore, they are often placed in inappropriate locations, such as within required parking spaces or setbacks, or in locations that block sight-lines of street signs and traffic signals, contributing to unsafe conditions for vehicular and pedestrian circulation.

Finally, Collection Bins often lack information about the operator/owner of the bin, and how the donations are intended to be used. Common perception is that these bins exclusively benefit charitable causes, however this is not always the case. In response to these issues, City Council introduced a motion to amend the Zoning Code for the regulation of Collection Bins.

What are the key elements of the Collection Bins Code Amendment?

The Collection Bins Code Amendment establishes requirements for permitting, placement, and design of Collection Bins, as well as requirements for owners and operators.

Permitting Requirements

- A building permit from the Department of Building and Safety is required in order for a Collection Bin to be installed and operated.

Placement Requirements

- Collection Bins can only be placed in commercial zones, and they must be at least 100 feet from any A or R zoned property, at least 10 feet from any property line, and at least 20 feet from a public right of way.
- No more than one Collection Bin is allowed to be placed on a property, which must have a main building with at least one operating business.
- Collection Bins must be placed on an approved concrete pad and cannot be placed on any required landscaping area, diminish any required parking spaces, impede access to trash enclosures, or interfere with the functioning of ventilation, exhaust, or fire extinguishing systems.

Operator Requirements

In order to obtain a building permit for a Collection Bin, operators must provide the following to the Department of Building and Safety:

- Contact information
- Proof as to whether they are a legitimate 501(c)(3) non-profit organization or a for-profit entity with a Certificate of Good Standing from the California Secretary of State
- Proof of general liability insurance for the Collection Bin
- A valid Business Tax Registration Certificate from the City of Los Angeles
- A signed acknowledgement of responsibility from the property owner and Collection Bin operator
- A covenant and agreement between the operator and property owner recorded with the Los Angeles County Recorder that the Collection Bin operator has the property owner's permission to place the bin on the property.
- Site plan and elevations of the proposed placement of the bin and buildings on the property

Structural, Material, and Dimensional Requirements

- Collection Bins must display the following:
 - Property owner's name and contact information
 - Address of property
 - Instructions for how to report complaints
 - Type of donations accepted at the Collection Bin
 - Directions for where not to leave donations
 - Pickup schedule for the Collection Bin
 - Whether the bin is owned and operated by a non-profit or for-profit entity

- Warnings against placing anything other than donations in the bin and leaving donations or trash outside the Collection Bin.
- Bins are not to exceed 82 inches in height, 50 inches in depth, and 60 inches in width
- The Collection Bin must be made of durable, non-combustible, waterproof materials with an opening that is tamper resistant and not mechanized
- Collection Bins must be provided with a light source to illuminate the bin

Maintenance

- The areas surrounding Collection Bins must be maintained free of litter, debris, dumped material, posted bills, and graffiti.
- Collection Bins are subject to annual inspections and inspection fee.

What are the next steps? How can I get more information or share my input?

The Planning Department will give a presentation, answer questions, and conduct a public hearing on the proposed Code Amendment at 10 a.m. on November 2, 2017 at City Hall in Room 1050 (200 N. Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012).

The public hearing will be held to obtain testimony from affected and/or interested persons regarding this project. The hearing will be conducted by a Hearing Officer who will consider oral testimony and any written communication received regarding this proposed Code amendment. After the hearing, a recommendation report will be prepared for consideration by the City Planning Commission.

The City Planning Commission will consider the Code amendment at a public meeting tentatively scheduled for December 21, 2017, and will make a recommendation to the City Council. The Code amendment will then be considered by the City Council's Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee, followed by the full City Council.

Please submit comments or questions to: Patrick Whalen at Patrick.Whalen@lacity.org, (213) 978-1370. In order to be considered in the report to the City Planning Commission, comments should be received by Friday, November 17, 2017. Comments received after November 17, 2017 should be addressed to the City Planning Commission at CPC@lacity.org for its consideration.