

## COMMUNITY & PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE

**To:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
COMMUNITY & PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE

**From:** GEORGE KOTSIFAS, P, ENG.  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, DEVELOPMENT & COMPLIANCE SERVICES &  
CHIEF BUILDING OFFICIAL

**Subject:** SUPPRESSING CRIME – THEFT OF GASOLINE & SCRAP METAL

**Date:** MARCH 2, 2021

### Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Development & Compliance Services & Chief Building Official, this report **BE RECEIVED** for information purposes.

### Executive Summary

Since the initial Community & Protective Services Committee (CPSC) February 2020 report related to suppressing crime through business licencing regulations for the theft of gasoline and scrap metal, there have been some promising industry consultations and proposed regulatory actions at the Provincial level as possible solutions to these criminal matters.

### Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

To improve regulatory processes – implement a review of by-laws with a risk based protocol focussing on municipal purposes.

### Analysis

#### 1.0 Background Information

##### 1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

On March 2, 2020 Municipal Council directed that the issue of gasoline theft be referred back to Civic Administration for further research, and that Civic Administration continue to consult with scrapyards licensees and prepare possible amendments to address the issues of scrap metal theft.

#### 2.0 Discussion and Considerations

##### 2.1 Theft of Gasoline

Gas and dash thefts, also referred to as gas drive offs, are a form of theft in which motorists intentionally drive away from gas service stations without paying. In the previous report, Civic Administration, in consultation with London Police Service, recommended amendments to the Business Licencing By-law to require prepayment regulations at licenced gas stations operating in London. At that time, there were similar discussions occurring Provincially on this matter. Civic Administration opined that a Provincial regulation would be preferable to a patchwork of Municipal regulations.

On November 18, 2020, Bill 231 ('Bill'), an Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to provide safety measures in respect of workers at gas stations received second reading and was referred to the standing committee on justice policy. The Bill requires customers to pre-pay for the purchase of gasoline. The employer is required to provide notice on pre-payment requirements. Civic Administration was consulted by the Province during the preparation of Bill 231.

##### Theft of Catalytic Converters

In late 2020, London Police Service issued a press release on the increase in the theft of catalytic converters due to the price of the precious materials in this automotive device. The following chart presents reported theft of catalytic converters over the past five years.

## **Theft of Catalytic Converters reported to London Police Service**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Reported Theft</b>
2016	6
2017	17
2018	48
2019	81
2020	204

Civic Administration consulted with licenced salvage yard operators on proposed administrative licencing regulations requiring licenced salvage yard operators maintain a registry of purchased catalytic converters including information on the vehicle from which the catalytic converter was removed and information on the licenced automotive repair garage which undertook the removal. Comments were received from the Ontario Automotive Recyclers Association (OARA) as well as salvage yard operators.

Current Provincial regulations under the *Highway Traffic Act* require all vehicles sold to scrap yards be logged in a formal Garage Registry and be made available for review to Ontario Motor Vehicle Industry Council (OMVIC) officers, Police Services and Ministry of Transportation staff during business hours. Creating a licensing regulation specific to London would have no impact on reducing the theft of catalytic converters as these stolen items would be taken to scrap yards in surrounding municipalities. Similar to the issue of gasoline theft, a Province wide approach would be the ultimate solution to this criminal matter. Civic Administration will continue to partner with OARA to lobby Provincial ministries to seek an Ontario wide regulatory solution to this matter.

## **Conclusion**

One of the Municipal principles of the Business Licencing By-law is to suppress conditions conducive to crime. The theft of gasoline (drive offs) and a theft of catalytic converters due to the high priced metal content continues to be an emerging issue in London, and in fact nationally and globally. Over the past year Civic Administration has been working with London Police Services and consulting with the Province on solutions to these matters. A proposed Provincial Bill addressing the theft of gasoline is a preferable solution to a patchwork of Municipal by-law regulations. Civic Administration will continue to work with the vehicle recycling industry to seek a Province wide solution on the theft of catalytic converters.

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