

Sudbury

Abandoned shopping cart bylaw in Sault to streamline retrieval time, councillor says

Retailers must submit management plan to city for who to contact about errant carts off property

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Dozens of shopping carts abandoned in a snowbank in Sault Ste. Marie in February 2021. (Supplied by Matthew Shoemaker)



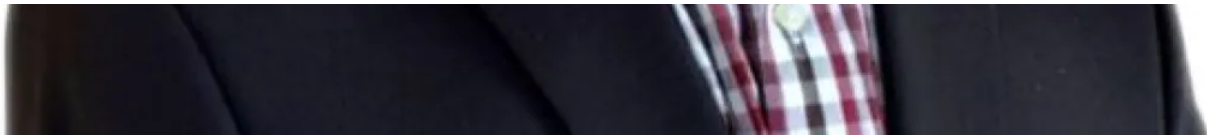
Many retailers and communities have trouble corralling errant shopping carts. They end up abandoned in ditches, on city streets, or on public or private property.

The City of Sault Ste. Marie is tackling the issue, with a bylaw councillor Matthew Shoemaker hopes will fix the problem once and for all. He says it's a constant issue in his ward.

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- [**Shopping cart regulations work in other cities and might be on their way to Thunder Bay**](#)

"They're unsightly; oftentimes they'll be filled with garbage, if people bring them home, put their garbage in them and then push it off into the woods," he said. There could also be a liability issue for the city or a retailer if someone is hurt, involving a shopping cart.





Matthew Shoemaker is a city councillor in Sault Ste. Marie. (Facebook/Matthew Shoemaker)

Shoemaker says there is an area in the city where at least five retail outlets are located and all have their own shopping carts. Customers walk off the store property with a shopping cart to help carry their purchases home, and then abandon the cart.

"Either in their own yard, on the boulevard, on the sidewalk, on the side of the road, in a pathway, in a park, there is never any shortage of places where they ditch them," Shoemaker said. "There have been reports of carts 10 to 12 kilometres away from these stores, so they travel."

Streamline time frame for retrieval

Under the [new bylaw](#), each retail store must submit a management plan for retrieval and return of abandoned carts found outside their property boundaries. This plan includes who to contact at the store when there is a complaint about an errant cart. They will have a set time frame to pick it up.

"It can't be once every three months," Shoemaker said. "It's got to be timely. It's got to be a system where once they're notified a process is triggered that gets the cart off of the boulevard, off of the sidewalk, off of the private property."

Most retailers already have some sort of a process for collecting shopping carts that have been taken off store property, but time frames for collection are all different.

"What we're trying to do is streamline the process," Shoemaker said the time frame will likely range from between five and ten days for retailers to pick up the cart. There could also be a fine for the store if the cart isn't picked up within the set timeline.

Two years to find solution

It was in November 2019, Shoemaker put forward a resolution after doing some research into what other municipalities had done to reduce abandoned shopping cart problems. The bylaw

was approved on Monday night.

"It's taken almost two years to bring a proposed bylaw forward on actually implementing a correction or a solution to the problem," he said.

"I think that having something in place is a better starting point than simply complaining about it at council for the past decade, which is what has happened in the past," Shoemaker said.

- [Kitchener council wants a shopping cart bylaw](#)
- [People who steal shopping carts could be fined under proposed Moncton bylaw](#)

One grocery store, Pino's, says in an average year, it loses about 25 carts valued at about \$200 each. Store management hires someone to pick up its abandoned carts.

The bylaw in Sault Ste. Marie comes into effect in September.

With files from Sam Juric

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