

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT:
PLANNING STUDY FOR PROPOSED GREEN BIN
ORGANICS PROCESSING FACILITY 2007**

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Introduction and Background

Public consultation activities described in this report were undertaken in support of the City's planning study for expanded public source separated organic material processing capacity.

Acting on its commitment to divert waste from landfill and recognizing that approximately 30 percent of residential waste is organic materials, the City started the Green Bin program to collect and divert this material. The Green Bin Program now serves all Toronto single-family households. The City is testing different ways of collecting organic materials from multi-unit dwellings, with the goal of extending the Green Bin Program to residents living in high-rise apartments and condominiums.

Each year, approximately 100,000 tonnes of organic materials are collected and processed into compost. Some of this material is processed at the City's own Dufferin Organics Processing Facility and the remainder at several privately owned facilities located outside Toronto. This current arrangement for organic materials processing is short-term and is not the best long-term solution.

That is why the City initiated the SSO (Source Separated Organics) Materials Planning Study – to determine what new processing facilities are required and where they should be located.

Public consultation was undertaken to guide the City's selection of preferred sites. Subsequent consultations will be required to support applications for environmental approvals, and possibly also municipal planning approvals, at those sites directed by City Council to receive new Green Bin organic material processing facilities.

The City short-listed five potential City-owned properties within Toronto at which one or more new facilities could be located. Public consultation Open House events were held during March-April 2007 to gather input from site neighbours.

The five short-listed sites are:

Disco Road Transfer Station (Etobicoke community)

3301 Markham Road (Scarborough community)

Closed Morningside Landfill/Works Yard (Scarborough community)

Ingram Transfer Station (North York community)

Dufferin Waste Management Facility (North York community)

1.0 General Description and Results of Public Consultation Process

1.1 Definitions

For public consultation purposes, the term 'Green Bin organic material' was used in place of 'source separated organic material' to benefit from the public's familiarity with the City's Green Bin organics collection program.

1.2 Privacy

The personal information on our sign-in forms is collected under the authority of the *City of Toronto Act*, 2006 and By-law No. 167-2006. The information is used to contact the public about future meetings and to provide updates regarding the SSO siting project. Questions about this collection can be directed to Public Consultation, 55 John St., Metro Hall, 19th Floor, Toronto, ON, M5V 3C6 or by telephone at 416-392-4390.

2.0 Open House Events

Five Open Houses were organized in the communities surrounding or nearby the proposed SSO plant site. An additional consultation was added at the request of Councillor Cho, bringing the total of public meetings to six. The following communications strategies were exercised:

2.1.1 Open House Event Locations and Times

Open Houses

Disco Road Transfer Station, 120 Disco Road
Open House: Wednesday March 7, Disco Road Transfer Station, 4pm-6pm
Ward 2, Councillor Ford

Ingram Transfer Station, 50 Ingram Drive
Open House: Thursday March 8, Charles E Webster JR PS, 1900 Keele Street,
7pm-9pm
Ward 12, Councillor di Giorgio

3301 Markham Road
Open House 1: Monday, March 19, Milliken Park CRC, 4pm – 7pm
Open House 2: Wednesday April 4, Malvern Recreation Centre, 7:30-9pm
Ward 42, Councillor Cho
Ward 41 (border) Councillor Lee

Dufferin Transfer Station
Open House: Wednesday March 21, 4330 Dufferin St (EMS Atrium), 7-9pm
Ward 8, Councillor Perruzza

Morningside Yard
Open House: Thurs, March 22, Moorish Public School, 61 Canmore Blvd., 7-9pm
Ward 44, Councillor Moeser

2.1.2 Public Notification of Open House Events

Flyer drops

Disco Road Transfer Station
Flyer boundaries: South – Rexdale, North/East – Highway 401, West – 427

50 Ingram Dr
Flyer boundaries: South – Eglinton, North – Lawrence, East – Dufferin, West – Black Creek Drive.

3301 Markham Road
Flyer boundaries: South - McNicoll/Finch (both sides), North - Steeles (south side only), East - Rouge River, West - McCowan (east side)

Dufferin Transfer Station
Flyer boundaries: South - Sheppard, North - Finch (south side), East - Wilmington, West - Derrydown (west side)

Morningside Yard
Flyer boundaries: South - Ellesmere, North - 401, East - Neilson, West -- Meadowvale

Newspaper Ads

Disco Road Transfer Station
Etobicoke Guardian (north zone)
Wednesday, Feb 28; Friday March 2

Ingram Transfer Station
North York Mirror (west zone) Wed. Feb 28
York Guardian, Friday March 2

3301 Markham Road
Scarborough Mirror (north and east zones)
Friday March 9; Wednesday March 14

Dufferin Transfer Station
North York Mirror (west end)
Wednesday March 14; Friday March 16

Morningside Yard
Scarborough Mirror (east zone)
Wednesday March 14; Friday March 16

2.3 Other Notification

Councillors received advance notification prior to consultations.

2.4 Email, Website and Phone Line

A phone line was set up for this project (416-392-4331) so that people could call and leave messages and questions about the project 24 hours a day. Most phone calls were returned within 24 hours by the Public Consultation Coordinator. An email address was also set up (works_consultation@toronto.ca) for the submission of questions and comments. The email inbox was also checked on a regular basis and most emails were responded to within 24 hours. Feedback received via telephone and email has been incorporated into this report.

A website was also set up for the project. The website contained information about the Open Houses and was linked to the “Get Involved” and Solid Waste Management websites. After the Open Houses, all of the publicly available material was posted to the site. The Public Consultation Report has also been posted to the site. http://www.toronto.ca/involved/projects/new_organic/index.htm

2.5 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was distributed at each Open House event to solicit opinion on the potential siting of a SSO processing facility in their communities. The questionnaires were distributed with postage-paid envelopes, or could be faxed into the City. We received 44 completed questionnaires in total. See Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire and a compilation of responses received.

2.6 Staffing

Each Open House was staffed by at least two members from the Public Consultation Unit and two staff members from Solid Waste Management, including the Project Manager, Brian Van Opstal and Supervisor of the Dufferin Organics Processing Facility, Anne Wheatley.

3.0 Public Consultation Results

3.1 Summary of Key Themes

The public consultations revealed several key themes in public opinion regarding SSO facility siting. The following is a summary of these general responses from the public. A compilation of all public comment via the Open House questionnaire as well as comments submitted by email and by telephone message is presented in Appendix A.

Key Themes for all Proposed Sites

1. Odour

There is a strong and widely held concern that odours from a SSO processing facility will impact local residents and businesses. People worried about not being able to open their windows in the summer and about “unbearable” smells carried on the wind towards their houses.

2. Traffic

Residents are concerned that a new SSO processing facility will increase truck traffic. Many people feel that there is already too much traffic in their communities and that additional traffic cannot be accommodated. People are also concerned that trucks hauling organic material to the facility would release odours into their neighbourhoods.

3. Health concerns

Many residents are worried about public health risks that might be associated with the processing of organic waste. Some residents feel that air-borne bacteria might be prevalent while others felt that there may be unknown dangers of living in proximity to these facilities.

4. Property value

Residents are concerned that locating a new SSO processing facility in their community would reduce property values.

5. Should be sited in Industrial Area, not Residential

Residents and business owners located in close proximity to the to the proposed sites feel that new facilities plant should be sited in industrial areas where noise, smell, and traffic would not pose as great a disturbance. Proximity to places of worship, schools and retirement homes were pointed out as particularly problematic.

6. Public participation

In order to help mitigate the impacts of new facility sitings, many residents feel that public education and outreach would be necessary to ensure good relations between the facility and the surrounding community. Some suggestions included a newsletter containing regular updates, site tours for residents, school children and interested members of the public, and holding regular public meetings.

7. Aesthetics

Many residents are of the opinion that, should the facility be sited in their community, they would like to see appropriate landscaping to help blend the building into its environment. Some recommendations included planting trees and shrubbery to hide the facility, placing a wall between the facility and the sidewalk/road, and using latest LED lighting technology.

8. Support for Green Bin and Green Bin Products

There was wide-spread support expressed for the Green Bin Program at the consultations. There was also interest in the generation of renewable energy from biogas. Some members of the public expressed that they walked away from the Open Houses more educated on how their Green Bin material is processed

3.2 Site-Specific Public Response

The following summaries cover issues that fell outside of the general key themes. Please see Appendix A following this report for a full index of public comments, organized by site.

Disco Road Transfer Station

Attendance, based on optional sign-in sheet: 2

- Educate the local community on organic waste processing
- Block/beautify the facility visually

Ingram Transfer Station, 50 Ingram Drive

Attendance, based on optional sign-in sheet: 41

- Existing transfer station already generates bad smell
- Existing transfer station has not been sensitive to surrounding community
- Proposed facility will compromise green/open space
- Community already does its part hosting the transfer station, does not want to host an SSO plant
- City must ensure low emissions from proposed plant – pollution is already high as a result of local companies and manufacturers
- Concern about organic waste transported through the community
- Existing streets inadequate for handling transport trucks
- Community is inundated by transport trucks already
- Community is most residential of all proposed sites, therefore least ideal
- Transport trucks are dangerous to neighbourhood children
- If a biofilter can mitigate the smells of the SSO plant, why can't they mitigate the smells of the transfer station?
- Worsening air quality as a result of increased traffic and garbage fumes

3301 Markham Road

1. Attendance, based on optional sign-in sheet: 16

2. Attendance, based on optional sign-in sheet: 24

- Scarborough already has two transfer stations, they don't want more
- Odours from the existing transfer stations are terrible
- Community is targeted because they are low-income
- Must be compatible with Rouge Park
- Markham Rd is gateway to Toronto, should not include an SSO facility
- Traffic volume is already too high
- Development north and west of the proposed site is already taking place
- This proposed site cannot be expanded, so it is not ideal
- Morningside Heights could use this location as a site for a needed library
- Landmark development nearby is purported to be largest retail enterprise in the GTA, traffic conflicts will ensue
- Markham bypass, if approved, will also flood area with more traffic
- Site could be better used as a "transportation node" for 905 commuters
- Markham Road and Markham and Steeles intersection cannot safely accommodate more traffic
- Site was previously promised to residents for a new community centre
- Development will minimize potential for increased tax revenue, land rents and job creation on site and in the neighbourhood
- Already a low-level radioactive material on a site nearby
- Other proposed sites better meet City selection criteria

**A petition in opposition to the proposed Markham Road site was submitted to the Public Consultation Unit and Councillor Raymond Cho by the Morningside Heights Community Association. There were 119 signatories to the statement of opposition that can be found in Appendix A.

Dufferin Transfer Station

Attendance, based on optional sign-in sheet: 8

- This will depress and upset the community if property values are driven down
- Invite the public to observe how the facility functions

Morningside Yard

Attendance, based on optional sign-in sheet: 51

- Community fought hard to have a leaf and yard composting site shut down years ago
- East side of the proposed site is the proposed future site for the Highland Creek Community Centre, which members fear they will lose if the SSO plant is built
- The area will lose respectability
- Increased traffic will increase danger for pedestrians due to the high population of students within 1km of proposed site
- Concerns about gas and potential fires because gas is being pumped near the site
- Concern about animal infestation
- Concern about uncleanness the proposed site will bring to the community
- Prevailing north-westerly winds into dense residential neighbourhood

List of Appendices

Appendix A: SSO Questionnaire and Verbatim Public Comments Received

Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Sheet

Appendix C: Definitions Sheet