



June 26, 2020

Re: IE 12.4 Mixed Waste Processing Study Update

Dear Members of Toronto City Council and the Infrastructure and Environment Committee,

We are writing to urge you to continue to work towards zero-waste, improved waste diversion and to reject waste treatment options that include “thermal treatment” and incineration.

Over the past 20 years the South Riverdale Community Health Centre (SRCHC) has engaged with the City of Toronto on a range of waste management strategies. We have embarked on our own waste audits and have engaged numerous community organizations in waste reduction strategies.

We are quite familiar with waste management and diversion strategies. SRCHC has prioritized work on the environment and in particular air quality. Research consistently identifies connections between poor health and elevated levels of air pollution from various sources including incineration of waste. Historically we worked with government, community and the City of Toronto to reduce incineration of waste including mixed waste and sewage bio-solids. Two years ago we pilot-tested the City’s draft guide for waste reduction in multi-unit residential buildings.

We urge you to stay consistent with the City’s commitment to a circular economy. Thermal treatment and incineration moves the City in the opposite direction by transforming mixed waste (including plastics) into harmful emissions and toxic ash.

We have also been involved in the City’s TransformTO climate change strategy. Thermal treatment will increase greenhouse gas emissions - taking the City in the opposite direction.

Research consistently shows incineration/thermal treatment to be far more expensive than strategies to improve waste reduction (e.g., ramping up organics separation and by-laws to reduce single-use plastics). This increased economic burden will result in funds being diverted away from other important City programs.

Again, we urge you to reject thermal treatment for health reasons but also for economic reasons. Should you have any questions about this letter or our experiences working in community-based waste reduction, please don’t hesitate to email or call.

Yours sincerely,

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Paul Young, Health Promoter, South Riverdale Community Health Centre pyoung@srchc.com