



Long-term Waste Management Strategy Update – Phase 1

Public Consultation Report April 2025



Contents

Executive Summary	3
Overview	4
Notification & Consultation Activities	5
Notification Activities.....	5
Consultation Activities	6
Online Survey and Public Opinion Research	10
Public Drop-in Event.....	23
Virtual Public Meetings	24
Interest Group Workshops.....	25
Email and Phone Comments	28
Appendix: Online Survey Participant Demographics	30
Appendix: Public Opinion Research.....	34
Appendix: Public Drop-in Event Summary Notes.....	48
Appendix: Public Meeting Summary Notes.....	51
Appendix: Interest Group Workshops.....	62

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Executive Summary

This report details the activities and feedback received during Phase 1 consultation on the Long-term Waste Management Strategy Update (Waste Strategy Update) that took place from November 18, 2024 to January 6, 2025. During consultation, members of the public and interest groups representing residential, commercial and institutional, and community organizations were provided with opportunities to provide feedback on the vision and guiding principles for the Waste Strategy Update, existing programs and services provided by the City of Toronto's Solid Waste Management Services, and ideas to improve waste reduction and diversion in the City.

Public consultation activities engaged more than 4,600 individuals through a public drop-in event, virtual public meetings, online survey, and independent public opinion research, receiving broad feedback on many aspects of waste management. Interest group consultation activities included participation from 35 organizations through virtual workshops and meetings.

Overall, public and interest group feedback identified:

- General agreement with the existing vision, guiding principles, programs, services and initiatives.
- Support for creating new waste management programs and services along with increasing participation in existing programs and services to keep items out of landfill.
- Strong interest in protecting the community's health and the environment, along with reducing greenhouse gases and mitigating climate change impacts by managing our waste.
- A need to address waste diversion barriers and improve participation in waste diversion programs in multi-unit residential buildings.
- A desire for stronger accountability and enforcement measures.
- Interest in adopting best practices from other cities and countries.
- Strong interest in increasing outreach, education, and community engagement efforts.
- A need to sustainably fund both City and community programs and services that support waste diversion.
- Consideration of appropriate legislative measures at the municipal level to incentivize waste diversion.

Overview

The City of Toronto's (the City) Long-term Waste Management Strategy (Waste Strategy) guides City actions to reduce the amount of waste requiring management and includes recommendations for:

- reducing single-use items and promoting reuse
- enhancing educational tools
- exploring policies to encourage participation in waste diversion programs
- undertaking technology feasibility studies
- implementing short- and medium-term actions to reduce the amount of garbage requiring management.

The City is updating the 2016 Waste Strategy to better anticipate future needs, identify options to reduce waste produced by a growing population and minimize the amount of garbage requiring disposal as the City's Green Lane Landfill approaches its capacity by 2035.

It is critical to start updating the Waste Strategy now, as planning and implementation may require additional consultation or regulatory approvals, and construction of any potential new waste management infrastructure can take more than ten years. The Waste Strategy will include a workplan to guide the implementation period of 2026 to 2036 and will:

- assess how well programs are working and where improvements may be needed;
- explore options for the continued reduction and diversion of waste; review and identify new measures of success and ways to track progress;
- help inform the long-term disposal of residual waste; and
- continue to work towards the aspirational goal of zero waste and a circular economy that aims to maximize resources by moving away from a linear take-make-and-disposal approach.



The Waste Strategy Update is being prepared in three phases, each including public consultation to capture input from the public and interest groups. The first consultation phase sought feedback on the City's progress and implementing the 2016 Waste Strategy and ideas to further reduce and divert waste from landfill.

This report summarizes consultation activities and feedback received during Phase 1 consultation, which took place from November 18, 2024 to January 6, 2025.

Notification & Consultation Activities

Notification Activities

A variety of methods were used to notify interest groups and members of the public about Phase 1 consultation from November 18 to December 20, 2024:

- Project web page: toronto.ca/wastestrategy (8,004 unique views)
- City of Toronto public engagement calendar: toronto.ca/getinvolved
- Email to Long-term Waste Management Strategy list (7,391 contacts)
- Email to interest group list including resident's associations, community groups, organizations, institutions, and businesses (610 contacts at 437 interest groups)
- 3Rs Ambassador Program Monthly Newsletter Email to 3Rs Ambassador Volunteers (294 contacts)
- Social media posts via City accounts on X and Facebook.
 - X: 13,166 impressions and 26 clicks
 - Facebook: 9,389 impressions and 243 clicks
- Instagram: Digital advertising via Thestar.com, CP24, CTV news, The Weather Network, Rogers, PrimeDataLytics, mobile news and weather apps and multi-lingual (Chinese, Tagalog, Spanish, Tamil)
- Mentions in City Councillor newsletters



What's next for waste management in Toronto?

Have your say and help update the City's long-term strategy.

Complete the survey and attend one of three public consultation events.

Survey open until December 20. For assistance in other languages, call 311.



 toronto.ca/WasteStrategy



What's next for waste management in Toronto?

Have your say and help update the City's long-term strategy. Find out how.





¿Y ahora, cuál será el próximo paso en la gestión de residuos en Toronto?

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Consultation Activities

Online Survey and Public Opinion Research

A survey was made available on the City's webpage from November 18 to December 20, 2024 and received 2,003 responses. Participation was anonymous and printed surveys were available upon request. The survey included eight questions asking about level of awareness and importance of the Waste Strategy along with awareness and participation in waste management programs and services and ideas to encourage participation, followed by optional demographic questions.

In addition, public opinion research was conducted by an external vendor from November 28, 2024 to January 6, 2025 with 2,015 participants, using both telephone polling and an online survey. The public opinion poll used the same questions asked in the City's online survey, listed below, and half of the participants lived in single-family homes while half lived in multi-residential buildings. An additional 569 online surveys were also completed with participants who are proficient in Cantonese, Mandarin, and/or Punjabi.

1. Were you aware that the City of Toronto has a Long-term Waste Management Strategy?
2. How important is it for the City to have a Long-term Waste Management Strategy?
 - a. Why do you feel it is important for the City to have a Long-term Waste Management Strategy? Please select your top three options. *(Only asked to those who selected "very important" or "somewhat important" in Question 2)*
 - *To encourage the use of waste as a resource.*
 - *To ensure waste is managed in a way that protects the community's health and the environment.*
 - *To create new programs and encourage participation in existing programs to keep items out of landfill.*
 - *To help the City become a change leader in waste management.*
 - *To help the City financially plan for major infrastructure.*
 - *To provide a road map to Toronto's waste reduction and diversion goals.*
 - *Other*
 - *Not sure*
 - b. Why do you feel it is not important for the City to have a Long-term Waste Management Strategy? Please select all that apply. *(Only asked to those who selected "not very important" or "not at all important" in Question 2)*
 - *There are more important issues in the City of Toronto*
 - *The City is doing enough to manage waste.*
 - *I am doing as much as I can to manage waste.*
 - *There are more important issues in the city.*
 - *Other*
 - *Not sure*
3. In your opinion, how important are the following aspects of waste management programs and services?
 - *Waste programs and services are easy to understand and take part in.*
 - *Information on waste reduction, reuse and recycling is easy to find and access.*
 - *Proper sorting of waste materials is enforced.*
 - *Residents and businesses have different options to help them reduce, reuse and recycle waste.*

4. What do you believe the City should focus on to achieve its waste goals? Please select your top two options.
 - *Reducing the amount of recyclables and organic waste in the garbage.*
 - *Improving waste diversion in multi-residential buildings (i.e. apartments, condominiums, and co-op buildings)*
 - *Diverting new materials such as textiles that are currently going to landfill.*
 - *Making waste programs more accessible, conveniently located or mobile.*
 - *Exploring opportunities for policies or mandatory measures to further increase diversion.*
 - *Other*
 - *Not sure*
5. Please tell us if you have ever participated in or used these City of Toronto waste programs and services. Select all that apply.
 - *Community Environment Days*
 - *Drop-off Depot*
 - *Toxic Taxi*
 - *TOWaste App*
 - *Waste Wizard (on the City's website)*
 - *City of Toronto Waste Reduction website*
 - *Any of the Community Reduce and Reuse Programs: Bicycle Repair Hubs, Sewing Repair Hubs, Sharing and Reuse Spaces, Urban Harvest and Community Composting*
 - *3Rs Ambassador Program for multi-residential buildings*
 - *I have not participated in or used any of these programs or services.*
 - a. Are there specific reasons why you have not participated in or used any of those program(s) or service(s)? Please select all that apply. (*Only asked to those who selected "I have not participated in or used any of these programs or services"*)
 - *Not conveniently located*
 - *Too much effort required*
 - *Not interested in the programs/service*
 - *Do not need the programs/services*
 - *Not sure how the programs/service work*
 - *Was not aware of the programs/service*
 - *Other, please specify:*
 - *Not sure*
6. Food and organic waste and recyclables still regularly end up in the garbage. Please share your ideas on what might encourage people to sort properly.
7. If you live in an apartment, condominium, or co-op building, we want to better understand factors that influence how you dispose of your waste. What barriers, if any, limit your ability to sort and separate different types of waste in your building?
8. Please share any other comments, ideas, or suggestions for the Long-term Waste Management Strategy and for improving waste management in Toronto.

Public Drop-in Event and Virtual Public Meetings

A public drop-in event took place in-person on December 3, 2024, from 2 to 8 p.m. at St. Paul's Bloor Street, and was attended by 17 people. The event allowed participants to engage with staff one-on-one and view information panels that covered the 2016 Long-term Waste Management Strategy, reasons for updating the Waste Strategy, information on Toronto's waste system including some program data, how waste is currently managed and long-term residual waste options the City is exploring along with next steps. The information panels were also posted to the project webpage in advance.



Virtual public meetings took place on December 5 from 2-3:30 p.m. and December 11 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. via Webex and were attended by 63 people. With similar information as the in-person event, a presentation was provided, and participants had the opportunity to ask questions and share comments through small group break-out discussions.

Interest Group Workshops

Three workshops were held online on December 4, 10 and 12, 2024 for interest groups representing residential, community, and commercial and institutional organizations. Each meeting featured a presentation on the Waste Strategy. Opportunities for questions and a facilitated discussion followed the presentation. Participants were also invited to share additional feedback afterwards.

More than 437 resident associations, community groups, organizations, institutions and businesses were invited to attend, and 44 representatives from the following 35 organizations participated in the workshops.

Residential Organizations

- Dream Unlimited
- Homes First Society
- Liberty Lakeview Towers
- Margarets Housing and Community Support Services
- Palmerston Area Residents Association
- Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
- St. Felix Centre
- Summerhill Residents Association
- Toronto Community Housing Corporation

Community Groups and Organizations

- Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services
- Citizens Climate Lobby Toronto West
- Daily Bread Food Bank

- EcoGreen Interactive Inc.
- Etobicoke Climate Action
- FoodShare Toronto
- North York Harvest Food Bank
- Progress Place
- REGENESIS
- Rexdale Community Health Centre
- Rexdale Women's Centre
- Scarborough Zero Waste
- Stop Plastics
- Toronto Financial District BIA
- TRCA/Partners in Project Green

Commercial and Institutional Organizations

- Dream Unlimited
- Emery Village Business Improvement Area
- Graham Construction
- Innovate Waste Solutions Corp
- Kennedy Business Improvement Area
- Lake Erie Green Power (Tallgrass Energy)
- McMillan Vantage
- Oxford Properties Group
- Toronto District School Board
- Waste to Resource Ontario (W2RO)
- Wright Strategies

Email and Phone

Members of the public and interest groups were invited to share comments and ask questions via email, phone or written letters. Comments were received from 19 people between November 19 and December 16, 2024. All comments were recorded and reviewed for consideration and response by the project team.

What We Heard

Online Survey and Public Opinion Research

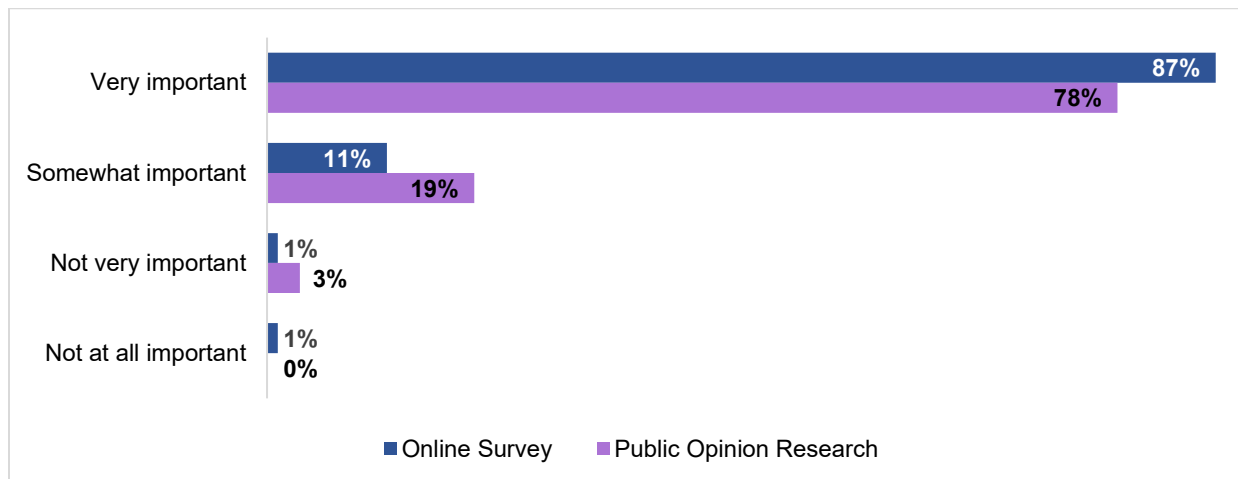
Responses received to each question in both the online survey and through public opinion research are described in this section. Responses to demographic questions in the online survey are available in Appendix A. Responses received to each question in the third-party public opinion research are available in Appendix B.

Question 1. Were you aware that the City of Toronto has a Long-term Waste Management Strategy?

Responses to the City's online survey were evenly split (50%) between those who were aware of the Long-term Waste Management Strategy and those who were not. Higher levels of awareness were reported by persons who work in the field of solid waste management or environment (77%) and property managers/superintendents (64%).

The public opinion research found that 59% were not aware of the strategy, with awareness higher among those age 60 and over (46%) and those who later indicate they have taken part in City waste services (52%).

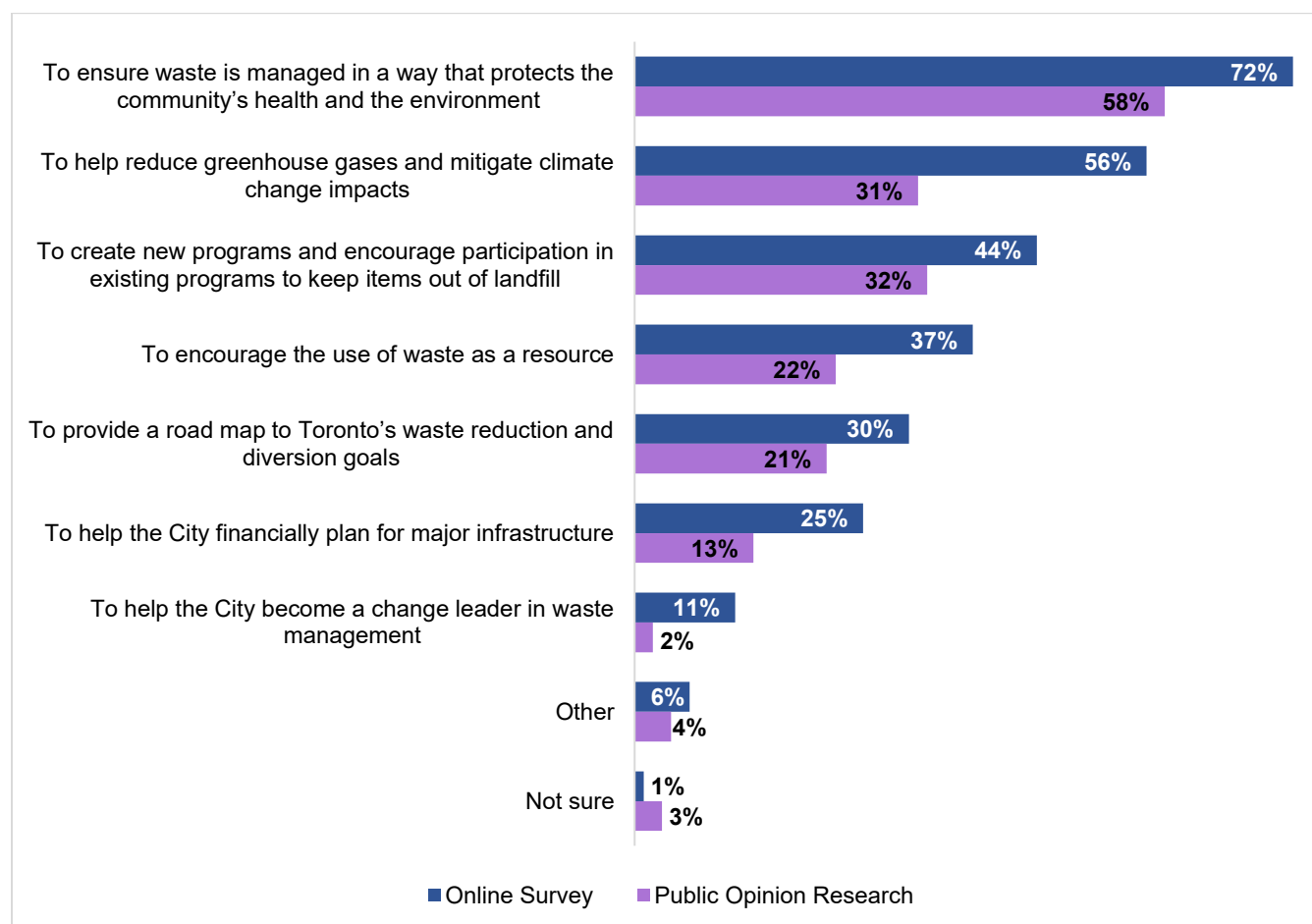
Question 2. How important is it for the City to have a Long-term Waste Management Strategy?



In both the online survey and public opinion research, a high percentage of respondents believe that it is very important or somewhat important for the City to have a Long-term Waste Management Strategy.

Question 2a. Why do you feel it is important for the City to have a Long-term Waste Management Strategy? Please select your top three options.

(Only asked to those who selected “very important” or “somewhat important” in Question 2)



Respondents who selected “very important” or “somewhat important” for Question 2 were able to select up to 3 of 7 potential reasons for the City to have a Long-term Waste Management Strategy.

For both the online survey and public opinion research, respondents chose “*to ensure waste is managed in a way that protects the community's health and the environment*” as the most important (72% and 58%). Online survey respondents chose “*to help reduce greenhouse gases and mitigate climate change impacts*” as the second highest (56%) followed by “*to create new programs and encourage participation in existing programs to keep items out of landfill*” (44%). Public opinion research respondents selected both items as closely matched in importance (31%, 32%).

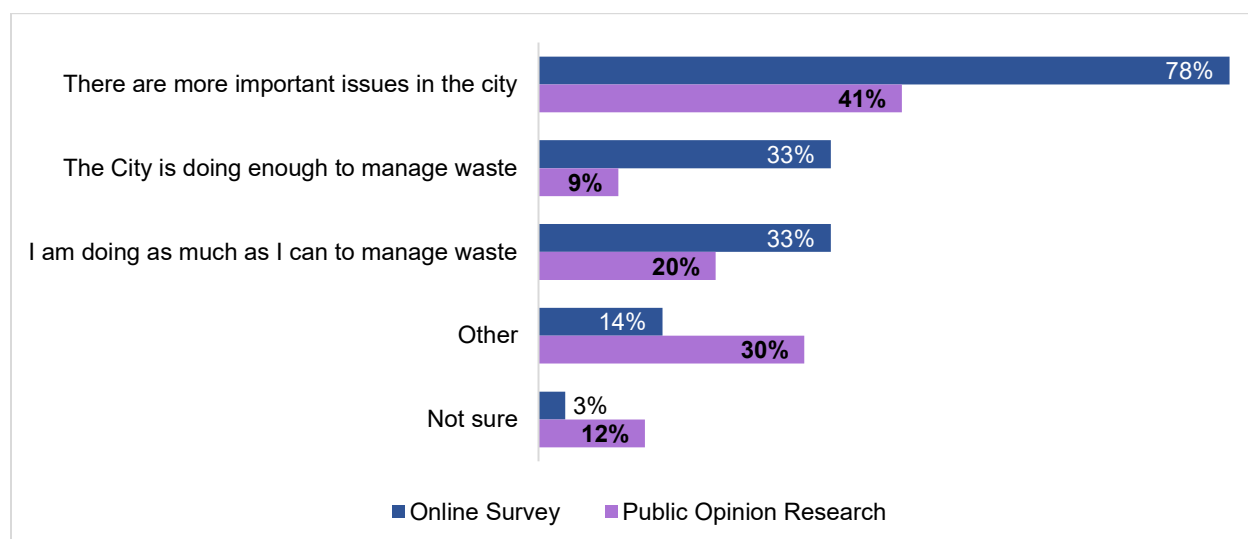
In the online survey, those who worked as a property manager/superintendent rated “*To encourage the use of waste as a resource*” and “*To ensure waste is managed in a way that protects the community's health and the environment*” equally” (59%). Whereas those who worked in the field of solid waste management or environment included “*encourage the use of waste as a resource*” in equal ranking with the most selected options.

In the online survey, additional comments with other reasons for the City to have a Long-term Waste Management Strategy included the following:

Topic	Comment Summary
Increase efficiency (30%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To collect data and research on efficient waste management • To promote more effective waste reduction, including in businesses, schools and multi-residential buildings • To reduce garbage contamination in recycling and organics streams • To avoid crises caused by uncertainty • To ensure we have landfill capacity, including by creating new landfills • To find alternate solutions to landfilling, including through incineration • To avoid incineration, pyrolysis or burning of any kind • To aim for a circular economy, with measurable milestones
Accountability (18% of comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To hold producers and manufacturers accountable for the waste they produce, including in their packaging • To hold individual households and multi-residential buildings responsible for both their consumption and their diversion efforts • To hold the City responsible for what is working and not working with regards to waste management • To ensure that Toronto's waste is dealt with by Toronto
City cleanliness (13%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure a clean city • To protect parks, ravines, and watersheds from litter • To prevent waste from piling up in the streets and inviting pests like rats
Cost savings (13%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce City spending and ensure fiscal responsibility • To maintain or reduce waste management fees for residents
Better serve residents (6%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that waste is collected in a timely manner and according to set guidelines • To reduce the congestion, air pollution and noise pollution from garbage trucks on highways • To improve convenience • To make the best use of taxpayer funds
Out of scope (16%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions about bin cleaning, recycling rates, and landfill siting • Comment that recycling has been a failure • Request to remove bike lanes

Question 2b. Why do you feel it is not important for the City to have a Long-term Waste Management Strategy? Please select all that apply.

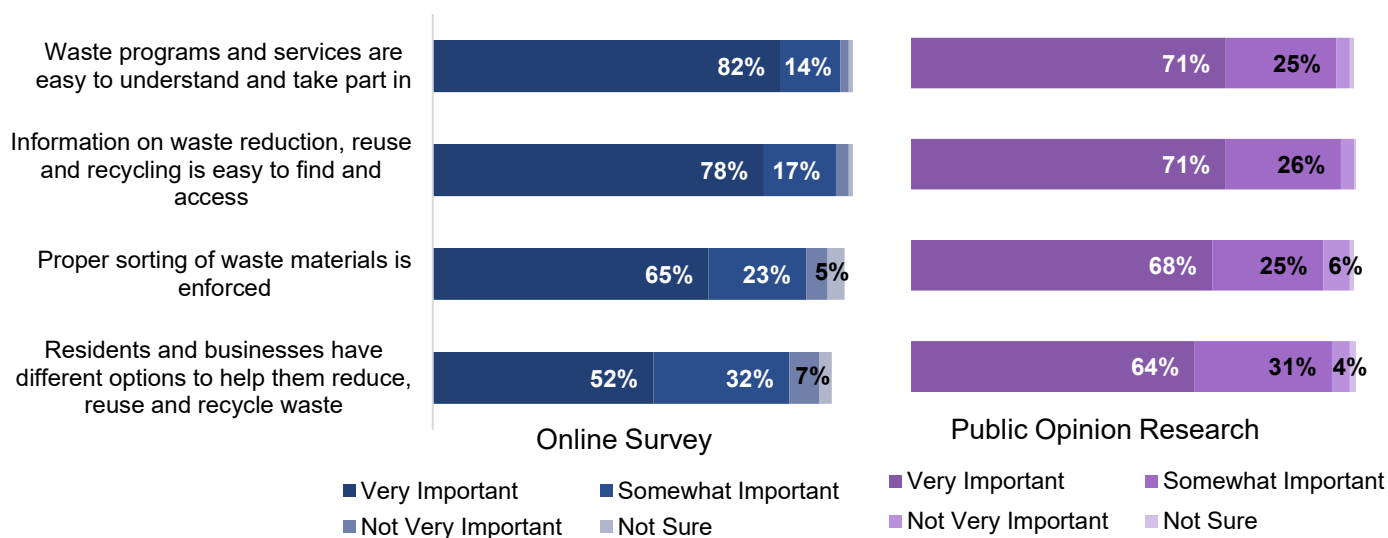
(Only asked to those who selected “not very important” or “not at all important” in Question 2)



Respondents who selected “not very important” or “not at all important” for Question 2 were able to select from 3 potential reasons that it was not important for the City to have a Long-term Waste Management Strategy.

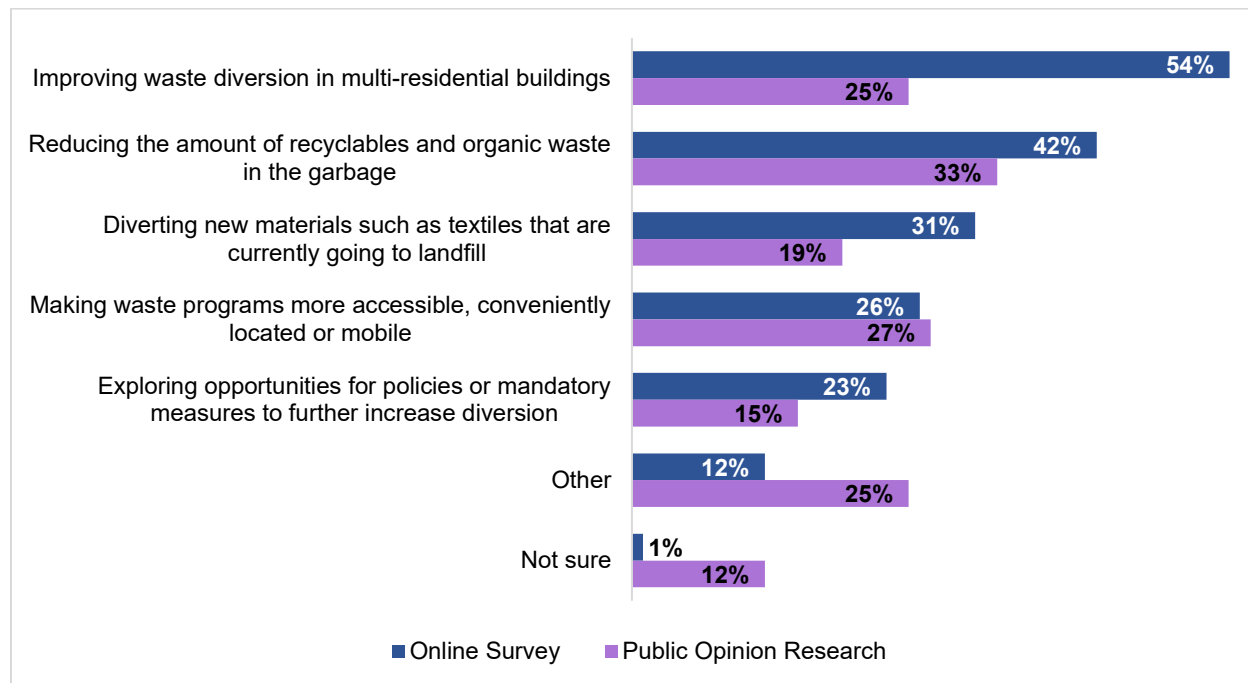
Most online survey respondents (78%) selected “*there are more important issues in the city.*” Whereas public opinion research showed a lower percentage of people who believed “*there are more important issues in the city*” (41%) and far less people who believed “*the City was doing enough to manage waste*” (9%). Additional comments with other reasons for the City not to have a Long-term Waste Management Strategy included that funding should go towards infrastructure and crime prevention and a lack of confidence in City decision-making.

Question 3. In your opinion, how important are the following aspects of waste management programs and services?



Respondents were asked to rate the importance of four aspects of waste management programs and services. Most online survey and public opinion research respondents rated all as “very important” or “somewhat important”. Importance among survey respondents was highest among property managers/superintendents for having programs and services that are “easy to understand and take part in” as very important (96%), followed by “easy to find and access information” (89%). Businesses receiving City services also identified “easy to understand and take part in” as very important (88%).

**Question 4. What do you believe the City should focus on to achieve its waste goals?
Please select your top two options.**



Respondents were able to select up to two of five potential goals for the City to focus on.

The majority of online survey respondents selected “improving waste diversion in multi-residential buildings” (54%), followed by “reducing the amount of recyclables and organic waste in the garbage” (42%).

Respondents in the public opinion research showed more variation in preference by selecting “reducing the amount of recyclables and organic waste in the garbage” followed closely by “making waste programs more accessible, conveniently located or mobile”, which decreased with age, and “improving waste diversion in multi-residential buildings”, which was higher among multi-residential respondents.

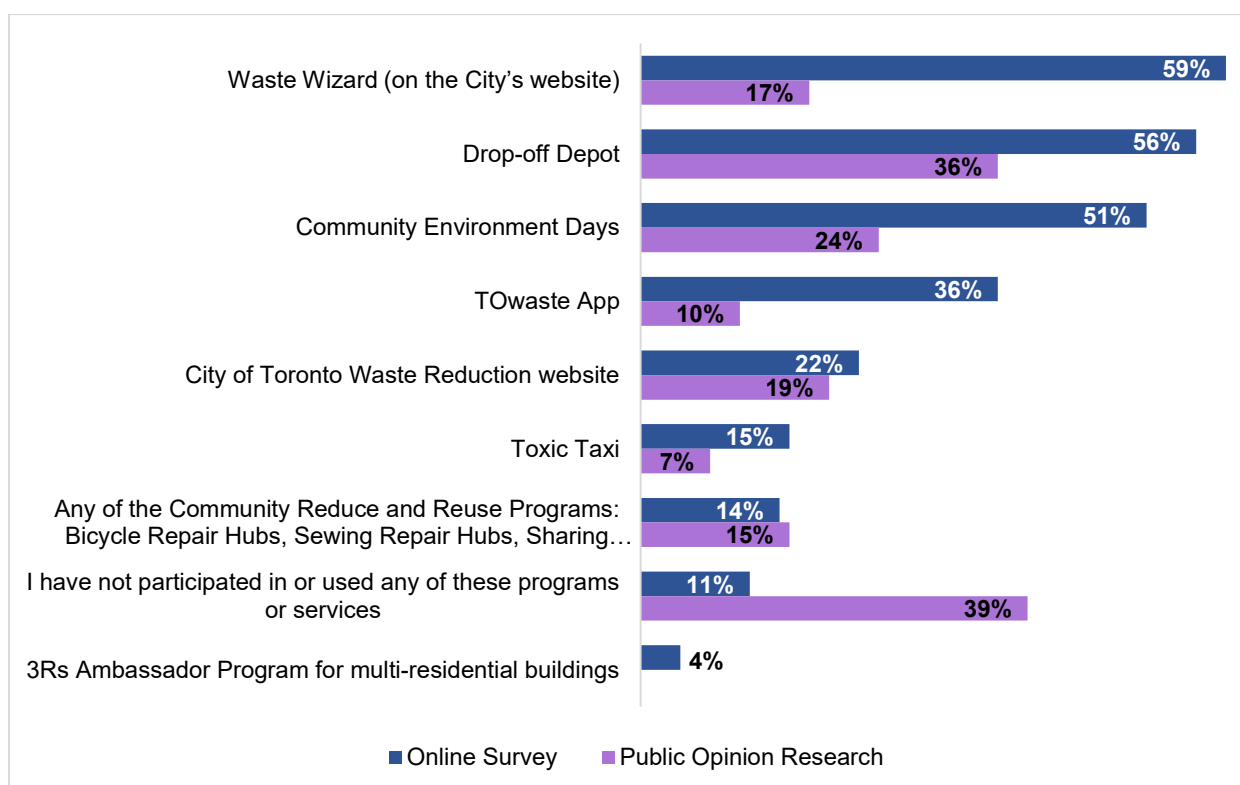
Additional comments included the following:

Topic	Comment Summary
Enforcement and accountability (31%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce sorting requirements, e.g. with inspections • Enforce littering by-laws, especially around multi-residential buildings and in green spaces • Require compostable bags instead of allowing plastic bags for organic waste collection • Do not enforce waste guidelines for residents; make it easier for residents to comply instead • Enforce waste reduction and waste sorting for businesses • Incentivize waste reduction • Ban plastic bags, plastic utensils, clamshells, unnecessary Styrofoam trays, etc. in restaurants, cafes, grocery stores and food delivery • Ban black plastic • Ban or tax unrecyclable or uncompostable materials, and work with other levels of government to stop their production • Ban disposable diapers and don't allow diapers in organic waste • Tax the waste from construction sites and home renovations to encourage reuse instead • Designate garbage as eligible for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) as well, so that producers are accountable for all of their waste, including excessive packaging waste • Hold retailers accountable for their waste through taxation • Work with producers to reduce packaging • Ensure that commercial and industrial organizations improve waste diversion • Ensure that all buildings have accessible waste facilities and coordinated systems, e.g. strip malls with residential attached are dysfunctional and lack coordination for waste pickup • Eliminate planned obsolescence • Set an example as the municipal government, including with ambitious goals to minimize waste to landfill
Alternatives to landfilling (16%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition to “energy from waste” technologies, also referred to as waste to energy and/or incineration, rather than landfilling • Research other jurisdictions that generate energy and/or electricity from waste, e.g. Singapore, Japan, and Europe • Educate the public about environmental benefits of energy from waste facilities • Ensure that waste is managed close to Toronto rather than landfilling far from the city or across borders

Topic	Comment Summary
Improve waste diversion programs (12%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in systems or practices that properly sort waste, and make it a municipal responsibility rather than an individual responsibility • Improve waste diversion for businesses, including corporate buildings that do not currently have organics diversion • Work to reduce manufacturing and packaging waste • Partner with companies that make counter-top composters to supply them to entire multi-residential buildings and divert organics • Do not permit disposable serving material at restaurants and cafes if patrons are consuming food or drinks onsite • Create a tax on plastics or anything that is difficult to recycle • Incentivize waste recovery similar to the Beer Store returns
Enhance promotion and education, and dissemination of information (11%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create education and signage in multiple languages about waste sorting and diversion for multi-residential buildings and throughout neighbourhoods • Run public communication and education campaign(s) to ensure city-wide understanding about waste diversion and management, foster a city culture of reduction, and elicit public cooperation to execute waste management plan • Collect and share data on waste diversion to reassure the public (e.g. on whether recycled items are actually being recycling) and help focus on higher impact efforts • Simplify language for waste sorting • Educate public about reducing consumption rather than simply recycling (educate about “wish-cycling”) • Work with Ministry of Education to make waste management a compulsory subject in schools, including discussion of consumption choices, disposal methods and sustainable living
Cost effectiveness (8%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain, reduce or eliminate costs for residents • Avoid tax increases • Generate cash flow for the City to use towards infrastructure • Remove recycling fee and incentivize recycling instead • Recognize that waste cannot be diverted economically • Privatize all waste disposal in the city
Expand recycling list (3%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand list of recyclables to include items like K-cups and black plastic (suggestion to change conveyor belts at sorting facilities to a neon colour rather than black in order to permit recycling of black plastic) • Expand recycling of construction materials like gypsum • Ensure that all packaging materials used in the city are recyclable
Increased pickup schedule (2%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up weekly garbage pickup, rather than biweekly, in order to reduce pest concerns • Ensure that municipal bins are in good working order and emptied regularly

Topic	Comment Summary
Accessible options (2% of comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create better donation programs for used appliances, furniture, etc. • Provide easier and more accessible options for unusual waste • Provide accessible waste drop-off facilities for those without private vehicles • Provide more waste bins in parks • Require less sorting by residents • Create better waste infrastructure
Out of scope (10%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ship waste to landfill by rail rather than by truck • Abandon recycling programs • Remove, or change this survey question; instead, make the decision internally based on staff analysis • Remove bike lanes • Use AI instead of City staff

Question 5. Please tell us if you have ever participated in or used these City of Toronto waste programs and services. Select all that apply.

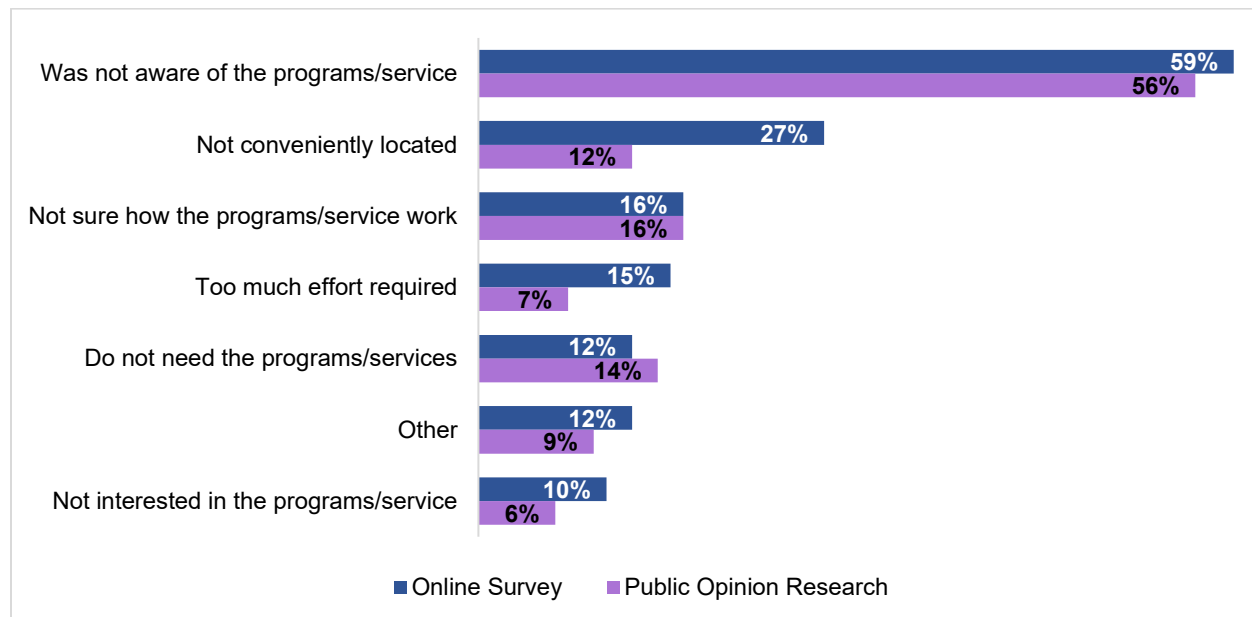


Online survey respondents participated in or used the following City of Toronto waste programs and services - Waste Wizard, Drop-off Depot and Community Environment Days.

Public opinion research showed substantially less participation in Waste Wizard (17%), Drop-off Depots (36%) and Community Environment Days (24%). While roughly 61% had at least used one program/service, a large percentage of respondents had not participated in or used any programs or services (39%).

Question 5a. Are there specific reasons why you have not participated in or used any of those program(s) or service(s)? Please select all that apply.

(Only asked to those who selected “I have not participated in or used any of these programs or services”)



Respondents who had not participated in any programs or services were able to select from up to five potential reasons for not having done so, and a total of 324 respondents in the online survey completed the question. The majority selected “*was not aware of the programs/service*” (59%).

Public opinion research showed similar results. Lack of awareness decreased as age increased with 67% age 20-39 down to 37% age 60+.

Question 6. Food and organic waste and recyclables still regularly end up in the garbage. Please share your ideas on what might encourage people to sort properly.

For respondents in single-family homes, the most common responses were:

- Increase education on what goes in the blue bin, green bin, etc. (18% of comments);
- Consider incentives, financial penalties/fines, greater enforcement, and auditing and monitoring (27% of comments);
- Make system easier to use (8 % of comments)

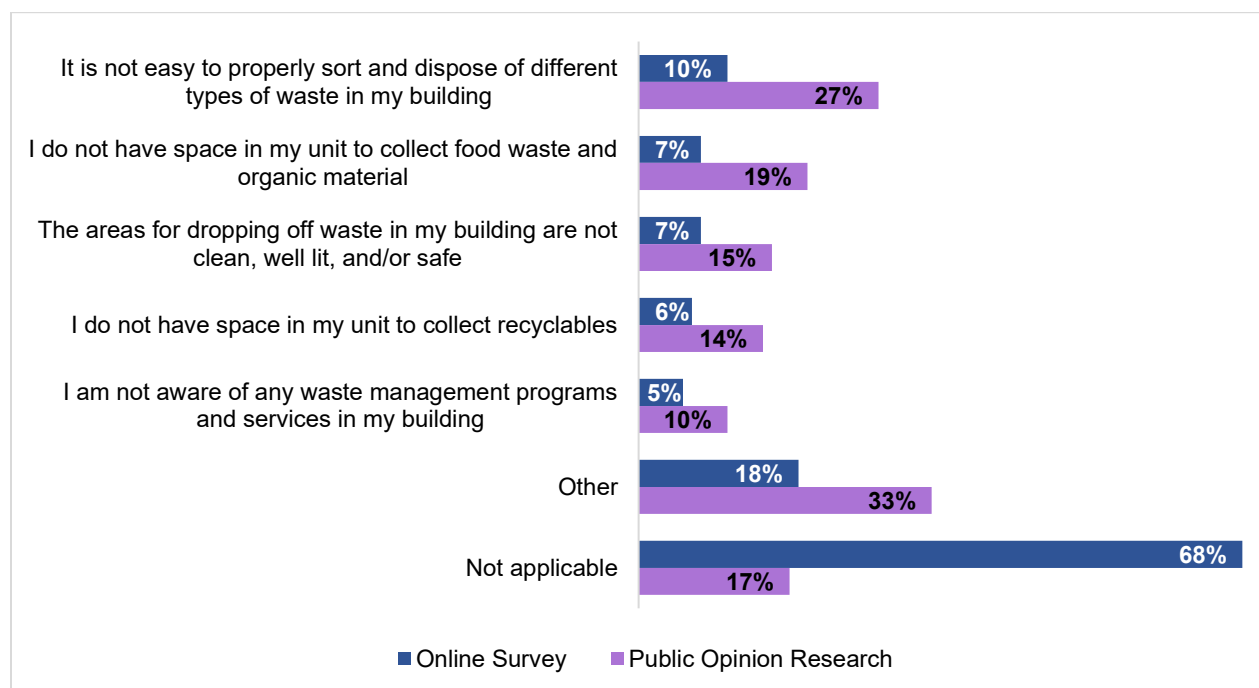
For respondents in multi-residential, the most common responses were:

- Improve infrastructure in multi-residential buildings (16% of comments);
- Increase education what goes in the blue bin, green bin, etc. (14% of comments);
- Consider incentives and penalties/fines (13% of comments); and
- Make system easier to use (12% of comments).

Almost all comments related to one of four topics (behaviour change and education, programs and services, enforcement and financial and waste processing). The table below provides a summary of comments in each topic.

Topic	Comment Summary
Behaviour Change and Education (35%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about recycling/compost being landfilled • Increase education in general • Increase education on importance of waste management and environmental benefits • Increase education on proper sorting of garbage, recycling and organics • Increase waste education in schools • Lack of motivation/interest
Programs and Services (35%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change frequency of garbage, recycling and organics collection • Comments on waste reduction programs including Community Reduce and Reuse Programs (e.g. Community Environment Days, Toxic Taxi, community composting) • Implement programs to divert special materials such as hazardous waste, electronics and textiles • Improve infrastructure in multi-residential buildings • Improve waste collection in public spaces and parks • Increase types of materials that can be recycled • Make producers more responsible (e.g. Extended Producer Responsibility) • Make system easier to use (e.g. easier to understand what goes where) • Suggestions for more innovative solutions to review global best practices • Suggestions for residential bin enhancements
Enforcement and Financial (26%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentivize desired behaviour and penalize unwanted behaviour • Greater enforcement, auditing and monitoring • Decrease cost/fees for users
Waste Processing (2%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider energy-from-waste/incineration • Consider mixed waste processing (e.g. "collect all materials and sort it later")
Other (1%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsure/don't know

Question 7. If you live in an apartment, condominium, or co-op building, we want to better understand factors that influence how you dispose of your waste. What barriers, if any, limit your ability to sort and separate different types of waste in your building?



Respondents were able to select from up to five potential barriers, and a total of 1,026 respondents completed the question.

Results varied between online survey and public opinion research. Approximately 33% of online survey respondents provided additional comments regarding barriers they faced, while 27% of respondents in public opinion research selected *“It is not easy to properly sort and dispose of different types of waste in my building”*.

Additional comments:

Topic	Comment Summary
Lack of infrastructure (25%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building lacks an organics bin • Bins are often full or broken • Tri-sorters are often broken • No space for waste bins, so must use garbage and recycling bags, but no option for organic waste • Toxic Taxi will not come to their building • No options available to dispose of non-household waste • No space provided to share items for neighbours to reuse • Unit is too small to accommodate multiple bins

Topic	Comment Summary
Non-compliance (23%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbours are indifferent, unmotivated and/or “lazy” • Building management misrepresents waste sorting, e.g. organics chute goes to waste stream and/or recycling bin is tossed into garbage dumpster • Building management does not provide sorting bins due to concerns about cross-contamination and instead sends everything to garbage • Need penalties to enforce sorting requirements for multi-residential buildings • Need penalties to enforce sorting requirements on individual residents
No issues (19%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No barriers experienced • Waste disposal room is easily accessible and well-managed • Resident-run waste management committee ensures that waste is properly managed
Education & Outreach (12%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more education to understand what is recyclable • Need recycling rules to be simplified • Need better identification for bins, with images • Need more and better literature about sorting available to residents • Need more communication from building management regarding disposal processes, especially for non-household waste • Need better education for renters who may not know where bins are located • Need better education for those who believe that recycling and organics bins are simply taken to landfill anyway
Accessibility and safety (9%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste disposal bins are on the ground floor or on a parking level; in some cases, specific bins for recycling and/or organics are downstairs while each floor has a chute for garbage, so using the garbage chute is more convenient than sorting • Waste disposal room is located in an inconvenient location, e.g. a long walk away from unit • Waste disposal room is unpleasant, smelly and/or unsafe, possibly due to fire regulations that require the room to be closed-in • Recycling and organics bins require residents to throw items over a high wall or fence • Waste disposal bins are not accessible to residents with disabilities • Waste disposal bins are located in an area in or around the building that feels unsafe or uncomfortable
Pest and odour concerns (7%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping organics bin on kitchen counter attracts bugs and smells, and keeping it in the freezer is not possible due to size of fridge; residents do not want to hold on to organics in their unit until it is time to take the bag down to the waste disposal room • Building does not provide green bins due to concerns about attracting pests like rats • Organics bins provided by City do not prevent odour release

Topic	Comment Summary
Out of scope (6%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black plastics should be recyclable • Non-residents dump their waste in the building's bins • Respondent does not live in a multi-residential building

Question 8. Please share any other comments, ideas, or suggestions for the Long-term Waste Management Strategy and for improving waste management in Toronto.

For respondents in single-family homes, the most common responses were:

- Make producers more responsible and reduce packaging (18% of comments);
- Consider incentives and penalties/fines (13% of comments);
- Increase education on what goes in the blue bin, green bin, etc. (12% of comments);
- Look to global best practices and use innovative solutions (11% of comments); and
- Greater enforcement, auditing and monitoring (10% of comments).

For respondents in multi-residential buildings, the most common responses were:

- Improve infrastructure in multi-residential buildings (19% of comments);
- Make producers more responsible and reduce packaging (16% of comments);
- Look to global best practices and use innovative solutions (14% of comments);
- Increase education on what goes in the blue bin, green bin, etc. (12% of comments); and
- Consider incentives and penalties/fines (10% of comments).

Almost all comments related to one of four topics (behaviour change and education, programs and services, enforcement and financial, and waste processing and disposal). The table below provides a summary of comments in each topic.

Topic	Comment Summary
Programs and Services (73%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change frequency of garbage, recycling and organics collection • Comments in support of waste reduction programs including Community Reduce and Reuse Programs (e.g. Community Environment Days, Toxic Taxi, community composting) • Implement programs to divert special materials such as hazardous waste, electronics and textiles • Improve infrastructure in multi-residential buildings • Improve waste collection in public spaces and parks • Increase types of materials that can be recycled • Make producers more responsible (e.g. Extended Producer Responsibility) • Make system easier to use (e.g. easier to understand what goes where) • Suggestions for more innovative solutions to review global best practices • Suggestions for residential bin enhancements

Topic	Comment Summary
Behaviour Change and Education (28%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about recycling/compost being landfilled Increase education in general Increase education on importance of waste management and environmental benefits Increase education on proper sorting of garbage, recycling and organics Increase waste education in schools Lack of motivation/interest
Enforcement and Financial (24%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentivize desired behaviour and penalize unwanted behaviour Greater enforcement, auditing and monitoring Decrease cost/fees for users
Waste Processing and Disposal (10%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider energy-from-waste/incineration Consider mixed waste processing (e.g. "collect all materials and sort it later")
Other (5%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsure/don't know

Public Drop-in Event

During the public drop-in event, participants expressed comments as summarized below. Full meeting notes are included in Appendix.

Topic	Comment Summary
Infrastructure, equipment and technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transform the process at transfer stations to offer better assistance and repurposing of materials received Revamp recycling systems to allow for separation of materials Find ways to recycle plastic wraps used for food Better maintain litter bins along streets Use smaller trucks for collection Build organics and mixed waste processing facilities Consider energy-from-waste as a form of diversion and way to manage waste within our own borders Require dumpsters to have lids securing in place to avoid waste from blowing into ravines and nearby waterways Use food waste as fuel source for City vehicles
Education & Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make improvements to the City website using story telling Educate residents on single-use items and its impact on the environment Provide details on amount of waste per capita and trends/progress Offer increased education for school aged children Increase frequency and locations of Community Environment Days Get celebrities involved in helping make it cool to promote reuse Need more prominent signage to discourage littering

Topic	Comment Summary
Enforcement, Bylaws and Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be bold, act with urgency and spend less time doing studies • All policies and practices should promote clean air and clean water • Make manufacturers responsible for waste • Encourage industry action to repurpose mattresses • Increase charges for reusable bags • Enforce plastic bag ban for businesses that continue to use them or implement higher charges • Require businesses to have a dishwasher for dining in and reusable cups • Ban cheap bottled water • Require clear bags for garbage
Program ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot an electronics donation box where filmmakers can bring their equipment • Establish a deposit return program for aluminum in grocery stores • Offer textile collection • Add instructions on pizza boxes to identify what components can be recycled and what can be composted • Better invention for lining green bins • Add more places to recycle batteries • Recognize the value of materials brought to transfer stations (wood, tires, etc.) • Add water fountains in food courts, festivals/events to discourage plastic water bottle purchases • Create a reuse centre for broken appliances that public can purchase and repair • Better sort waste in workplaces and better train cleaning staff

Virtual Public Meetings

During the two virtual public meetings, participants had the opportunity to break-out into small groups and discuss a series of questions.

Below is a summary of comments. Full meeting notes are included in Appendix.

What should the City focus on to manage waste in the long-term?

- Look to other cities/countries for inspiration and examples
- Make zero waste our goal
- Promote reduction and reuse
- Reduce plastic waste
- Collection system and programs need to be convenient and easy to use
- Focus efforts on increasing rates of diversion in Multi-Residential Buildings
- Study Energy-From-Waste and energy production that can help reach net zero goal
- Explore alternatives to landfills needed; minimize landfill use
- Support imaginative and innovative companies and programs
- Perform audits, and find ways to encourage more diversion as bans are difficult to do

- More education needed to help people understand how waste is managed, working with groups and organizations, like school boards, province

Ideas on waste programs and services the City should consider to help achieve our long-term waste management goals

- Help promote projects and start-ups
- Engage with industries working to improve diversion and 3Rs
- Incentivize people to recycle - Grocery stores should collect aluminum cans in exchange for cash

Experiences with City Waste Programs and Services

- Focus on transfer stations/drop-off depots
- Reuse of oversized items
- Expand waste app to include collection schedules, recycling guidelines, etc. for improved user experience and access to information
- Promote Toxic Taxi
- Residential waste from multi-unit buildings goes into one container
- More Community Environment Days spread across City, especially in high density neighbourhoods
- City should evaluate its education program and share information on what's working and what's not
- Consult with school boards, children, hospitals, people without computer access and provide more in-person sessions

What are the elements or barriers impacting the success of the current waste programs and services to help waste reduction/diversion?

- Create incentives
- Enforcement
- Condo board management and property management firms need more information and outreach
- Access to vehicles to access drop-off locations

Interest Group Workshops

During the December 4, 10 and 12, 2024 interest group workshops, input was gathered through a question and answer session and facilitated small group discussions summarized below.

Residential Sector Workshop

Topic	Comment Summary
Waste Strategy Vision and Guiding Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General agreement with vision and principles • Importance of resident associations in communicating and advocating for City programs • Need for specific training at Toronto Community Housing Corporation buildings • Importance of effective tenant education and outreach • Focus on multi-residential diversion • Rethinking about waste as a resource

Topic	Comment Summary
Waste Strategy Programs and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the frequency of Community Environment Days • Support for services and programs like the Drop-off Depots, Toxic Taxi Service, the Waste Wizard and TOwaste App, 3Rs Ambassador Program, and web pages • Importance of accessible educational resources • Improve awareness of waste programs and services • Interest in obtaining diversion data and reporting for individual properties • Expressed concerns with disposal challenges and educational awareness about proper disposal for items like medications, sharps, and electronics
Ideation for Waste Reduction and Diversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of educational awareness and promotional campaigns • Support for tri-sorters in buildings • The complexity of packaging is a challenge for proper sorting • Provide incentives for turning waste into energy • Concern expressed for accurate waste reporting

Community Groups/Organizations

Topic	Comment Summary
Waste Strategy Vision and Guiding Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the issue of new non-recyclable products coming onto the market • Eliminate single-use plastics from grocery stores • Focus on collaboration and partnerships with community organizations for outreach and education • Enhance public messaging to encourage waste and litter reduction • Develop a Waste Strategy that is user-friendly, especially for newcomers and those without access to personal electronics • Incorporate additional “R-words” e.g. refuse, rethink, and repair into the vision statement • Revise the language in the vision to be stronger and more definitive and connect waste management to human health and well-being • Include a sustainable financial model • Support food waste reduction and capacity issues in food banks • Increase capacity to support community composting programs • Improve awareness of City programs • Improve waste diversion infrastructure in buildings • Provide funding for small businesses to create sustainable upcycled products • Address cost of living and food donations • Bring clarity to the meaning of expiration date to help reduce food waste • Improve plastic waste management • Support the circular economy

Topic	Comment Summary
Waste Strategy Programs and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make Community Environment Days more accessible, especially in areas with multi-unit dwellings and encourage more interaction between residents and staff to bolster an educational environment • Simplify the Waste Wizard tool • Minimize the need for incineration and landfilling by focusing on reduce and reuse • Consider a clear bag program to combat contamination • Stricter enforcement of littering Bylaw • Reduce plastic waste • Focus on furniture reuse instead of its disposal • Promote success stories and the circular business directory • Create videos that showcase the work involved in managing waste • Increase capacity for funding to help organizations apply waste management best practices • Provide financial support to the 3Rs Ambassadors Program for upcycling • Promote thrifting
Ideation for Waste Reduction and Diversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide education on best before dates to reduce food waste • Provide financial support to organizations to improve waste diversion

Commercial and Institutional Organizations

Topic	Comment Summary
Waste Strategy Vision and Guiding Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision statement should reflect the ability to enforce rules and include the impact of provincial and federal jurisdictions on waste management in the Industrial, Commercial & Institutional (ICI) sector • Improve regulation and management of multi-residential buildings • Establish clear frameworks and targets for long-term waste management including energy-from-waste • Discuss the roles and responsibilities around data capture • Strengthen guiding principles to address the urgency of landfill capacity challenges

Topic	Comment Summary
Waste Strategy Programs and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider partnerships with third parties to breakdown silos • Engage BIAs in City related waste programs • Concerns with compliance with Hazardous Special Products and Information Technology, Telecommunications and Audio-Visual equipment waste disposal in multi-residential buildings that don't have access to City services • Consider how taxes from businesses are being used for waste management • Apply a broader perspective when providing businesses waste management direction to address the issues of contaminants and leachate
Ideation for Waste Reduction and Diversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate deposit returns • Improve partnerships with schools to enhance waste diversion education and participation • Work collaboratively with Toronto Water in updating the Toronto Green Standard • Advocate at the provincial and federal levels for waste management improvements

Email and Phone Comments

Comments received via email or phone from members of the public are summarized below:

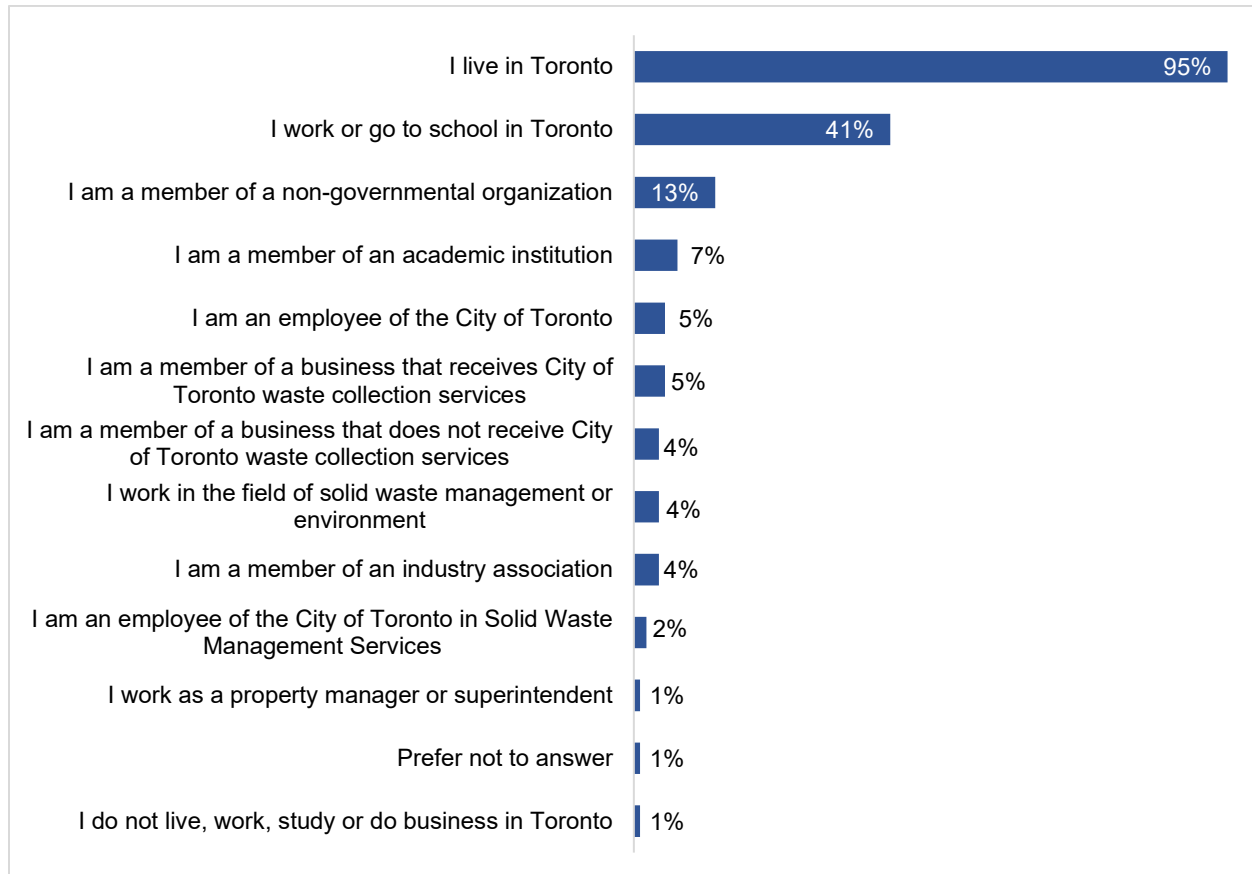
Topic	Comment Summary
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direct links to survey in public materials rather than linking to project webpage • Hold public consultation events at less busy time of year than December
Education and Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide education to better understand waste management and proper sorting guidelines • Provide education on better consumer behaviour, including reducing consumption of single-use items, and rejecting delivery and grocery store packaging • Provide education on avenues for reuse rather than disposal • Make use of Live Green volunteers or other volunteers to act as Waste Wizards at community events • Install QR codes in malls, parks, and other public spaces with information about waste sorting • Create video and augmented reality content to educate residents about waste management
Municipal accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not mail out Mayor or City Councillor holiday cards • Ensure that City Councillor events are Zero Waste, i.e. use reusable cups and plates • Ban plastic water bottles on City property

Topic	Comment Summary
Program and partnership ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create lotteries to encourage noncompliant neighbourhoods to sort their waste: each month, select a new neighbourhood for the lottery and have each household's waste inspected, and then give those that sort properly the chance to win a weekly prize • Host city-wide event in which items can be placed at curbside for free for two days and then remaining items are collected by City • Support collaboration with climate action groups
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid incineration and/or energy from waste • Encourage residents to eat plant-based whole foods, which do not have as much packaging and health concerns as meat and processed items • Use vehicles for waste disposal with large front and side windows and low profiles in order to have smaller blind spots • Use clear garbage bags • Look into external research regarding reducing food waste

Appendix: Online Survey Participant Demographics

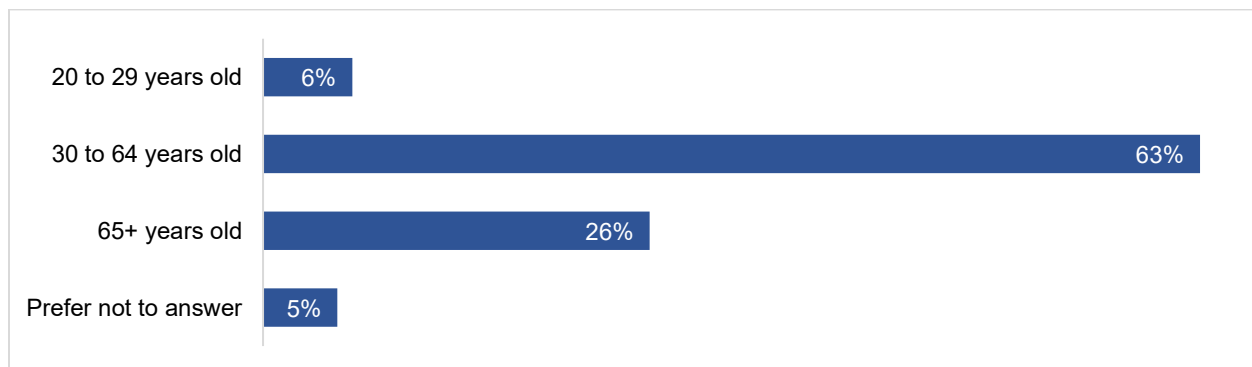
A total of 1,976 survey respondents provided optional demographic information described below.

Relationship to the City | n=1976



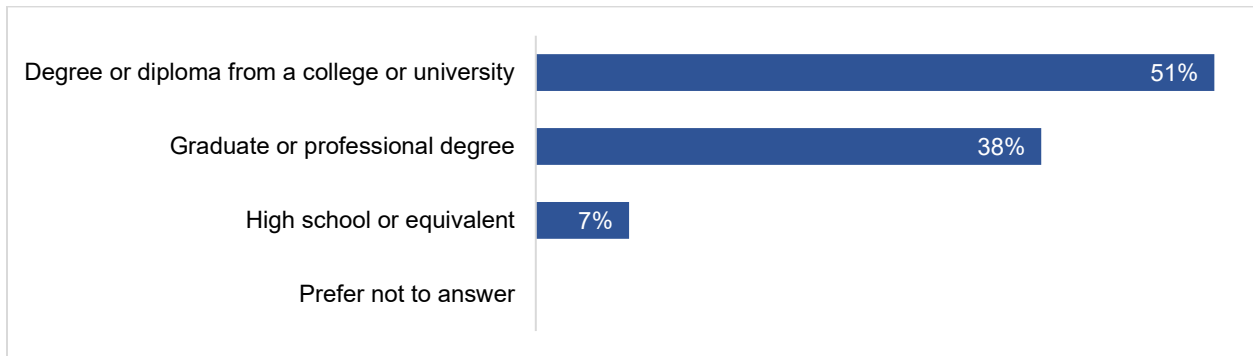
Almost all respondents (95%) identified a relationship with the City.

Age | n=1893



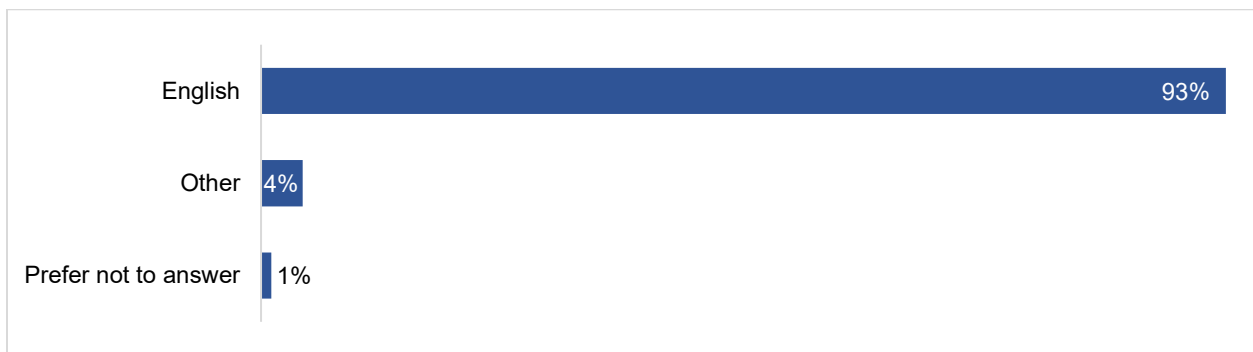
Most survey respondents (63%) are in the 30-64 age category. Compared to the latest census data and general City consultation trends, youth were underrepresented.

Highest Level of Education | n=1901



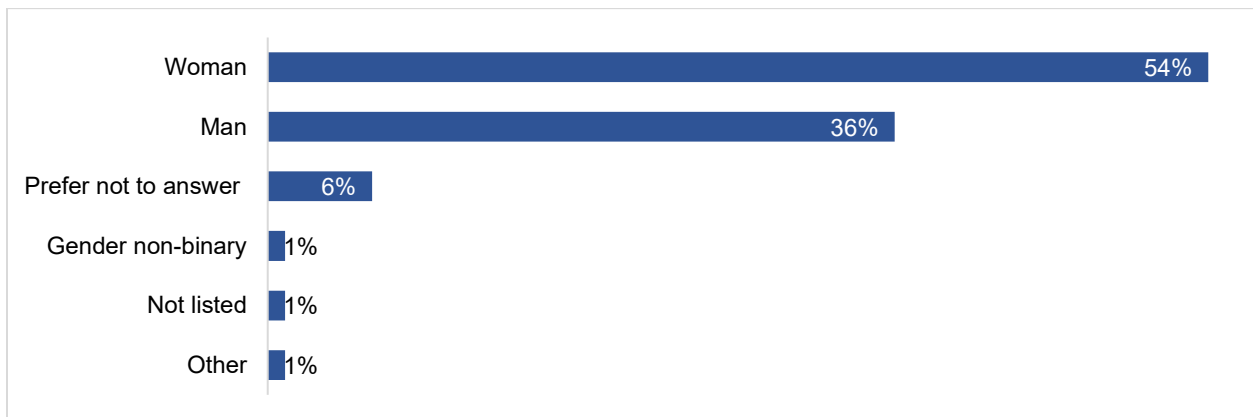
Most respondents (89%) had post-secondary education, which is higher than the latest City census data.

Preferred Speaking Language | n=1957



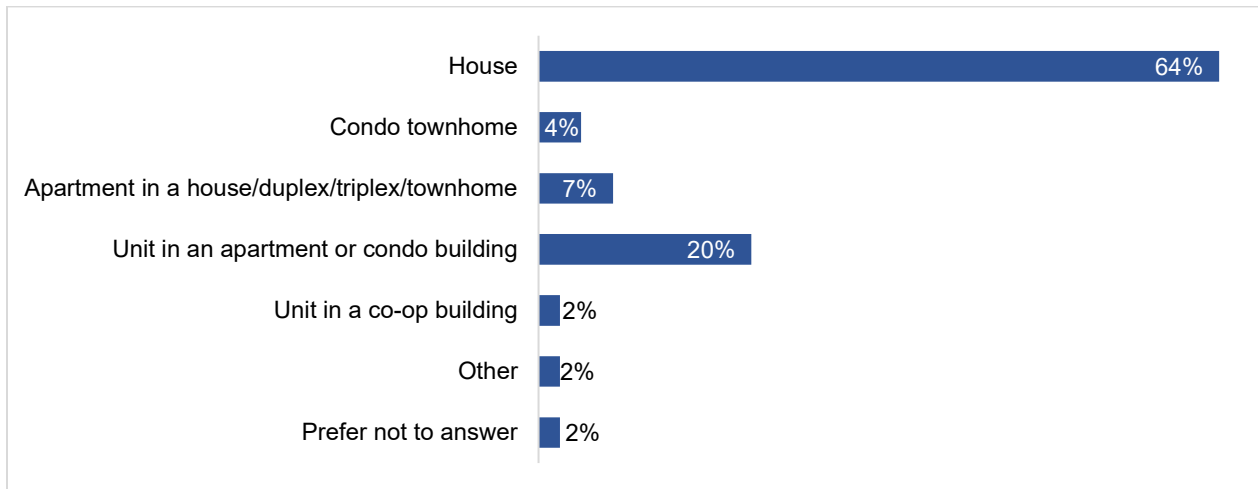
Most respondents (93%) prefer to speak in English. Compared to the latest census data and general City consultation trends, minority languages were underrepresented

Gender | n=1861



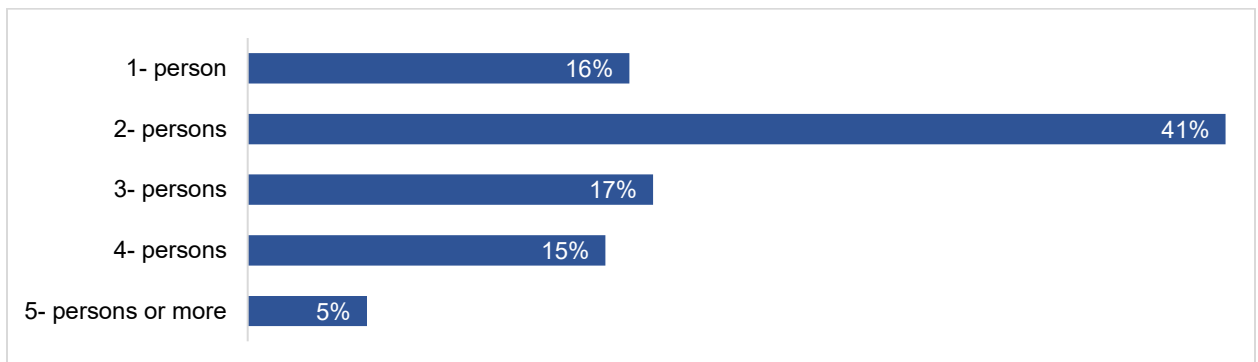
Most respondents (54%) identify as a woman.

Housing Type | n=1955



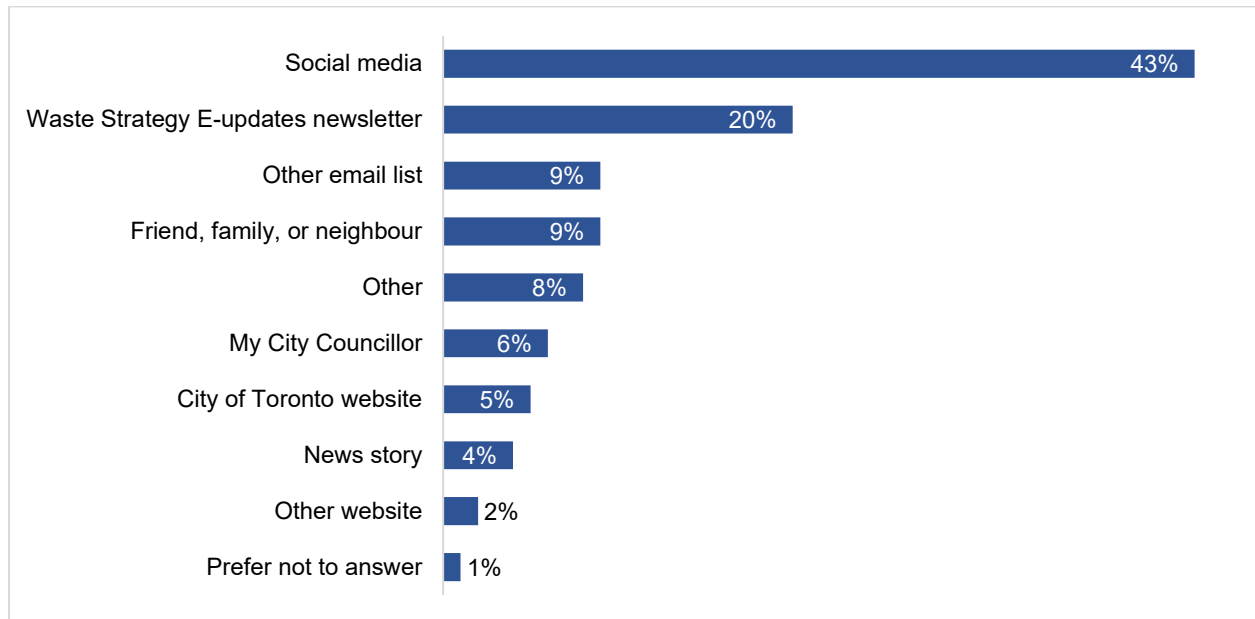
Most respondents (64%) live in a detached, semi-detached, or freehold townhome. Compared to the latest census data and general City consultation trends, people living in multi-residential housing were underrepresented.

Size of Household | n=1897



Most respondents (41%) live two-person households.

Point of Engagement | n=1920



Most respondents heard about this consultation through social media (43%), followed by the Waste Strategy E-updates newsletter (20%).

Appendix: Public Opinion Research



TORONTO RESIDENT SURVEY TO SUPPORT PHASE 1 CONSULTATION OF THE WASTE STRATEGY UPDATE

SURVEY RESULTS
February 12, 2025

ENVIRONICS
RESEARCH



IMAGE CREDIT: VLAD NAMOSHIKO ON UNSPLOSH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROJECT OVERVIEW	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
RESEARCH METHODS	5
IMPRESSIONS ABOUT LONG-TERM WASTE MANAGEMENT	8
PRIORITIES FOR LONG-TERM WASTE MANAGEMENT	15
USE OF WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	17
HOW TO ENCOURAGE AND INCREASE WASTE DIVERSION	20
DEMOGRAPHICS	25

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City of Toronto (the City) is updating the Long-term Waste Management Strategy (LTWMS) approved by City Council in 2016, for the next implementation period of 2026 to 2036. The Waste Strategy serves as a roadmap for developing and implementing environmentally sustainable, socially acceptable, and cost-effective waste management policies and programs.

The City manages approximately 830,000 tonnes of waste annually. Updating the Waste Strategy is necessary to accurately reflect Toronto's current and future waste management needs and to progress towards the aspirational goal of zero-waste. The Waste Strategy Update will explore options for reducing, reusing, and diverting waste to minimize the amount of garbage requiring management over the next 30 to 50 years.

The Waste Strategy Update is being developed through a combination of comprehensive waste management research, active engagement with the community, and the application of strategic planning best practices.

The Waste Strategy Update will be developed in three phases:

- Phase One – Build the Foundation (present state)
- Phase Two – Evaluate Possibilities (future direction)
- Phase Three – Create a Roadmap (path forward)

This report documents the findings of the public survey conducted during Phase One of the Waste Strategy Update.

3 | **ENVIRONICS**
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The results of the survey indicate that, although most have used City of Toronto waste programs and services, a majority of six in ten residents do not know the City has a LTWMS. Still, almost all think such a strategy is important (and over three-quarters think it is very important), especially to ensure waste is managed in a way that protects the community's health and the environment.

Strong majorities of around two-thirds or more think aspects of waste management are very important, notably that programs should be easy to understand and take part in, and information about waste diversion be easy to find. The top priority they would like to see the City focus on is to reduce the amount of recyclables and organic waste that ends up in the garbage.

Suggestions for improving diversion include more educational efforts, more publicity about services, and clearer instructions on how to use them, including use of illustrations. Other ideas include providing sorting resources, implementing fines & incentives, and building trust in the outcomes by demonstrating sorted recyclables and organic waste do not ultimately end up in the garbage.

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RESEARCH METHODS

Environics conducted a mixed-mode survey with 2,015 adult Toronto residents. The telephone phase of n=1,000 was conducted from November 28 to December 21, 2024. The online survey of n=1,015 was conducted from December 2, 2024, to January 6, 2025. Quotas were established for single- and multi-family dwellings, for regions of the city, and for age and gender.

	Total	Single-Family*	Multi-Family*	Scarborough	Etobicoke/York	North York	Old Toronto/East York
# telephone interviews	1,000	580	394	207	229	240	324
# online interviews	1,015	566	438	228	171	292	324
# interviews total	2,015	1,146	832	435	400	532	648
% of interviews	100%	57%	41%	22%	20%	26%	32%

* There were 26 additional telephone and 11 additional online respondents who chose "other" as their housing type and are thus not counted in either the single-family or multi-family categories but are included in the total.

NOTE: Results may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses. All results are based on the entire sample unless otherwise noted. **Data labels for values less than 4% may not be shown on some charts.**

RESEARCH METHODS CONT'D

In addition to the general public survey, additional online surveys were conducted with individuals who completed the survey in Mandarin, Cantonese or Punjabi. While there was a target of n=100 for each of these languages, respondents were permitted to complete the survey in English if that was their expressed preference. The following table shows the numbers of those who indicated they spoke one or more of these three languages (collectively referred to as "language speakers") responding in-language vs. in English. The stand-alone language speaker data tables are unweighted due to their different locations in the City and different age and gender distributions than those of the general population. Note that those responding in English are also included in the general population tables.

	Total	Completed in English	Completed in-language
Cantonese speakers/Traditional Chinese	144	81	63
Mandarin speakers/Simplified Chinese	101	57	44
Speak both Cantonese and Mandarin	185	84	101*
Punjabi speakers	139	66	73
Total	569	288	281

*The majority of those who can speak both Mandarin and Cantonese who did the survey in-language preferred Mandarin (n=70) over Cantonese (n=31). There were three respondents who indicated they spoke a three languages, who are counted in the Punjabi group. The languages were selected as they are spoken by significant proportions of Torontonians.

IMPRESSIONS ABOUT LONG-TERM WASTE MANAGEMENT

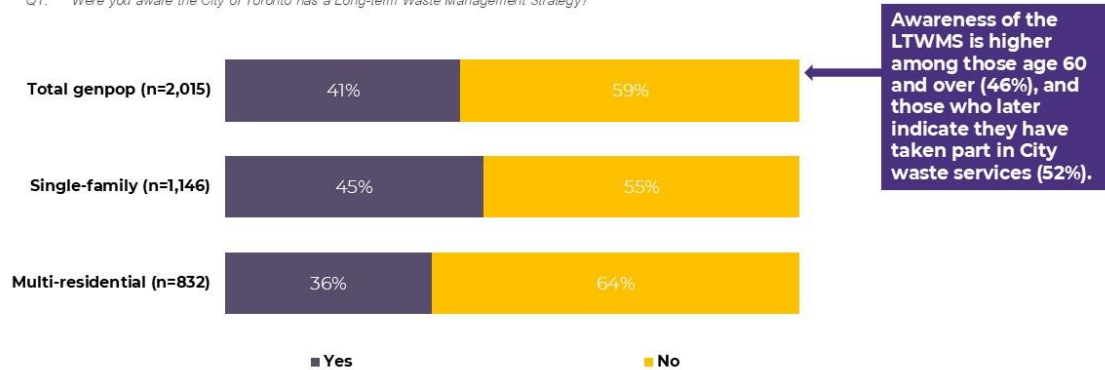


IMAGE CREDIT: UNSPLASH

IMPRESSIONS | AWARENESS OF LONG-TERM WASTE STRATEGY

Among members of the general population, the majority of residents are not aware the City has a Long-term Waste Management Strategy. This proportion does not significantly differ by location in the City, but single-family home dwellers are more likely to be aware than those in multi-residential units.

Q1. Were you aware the City of Toronto has a Long-term Waste Management Strategy?



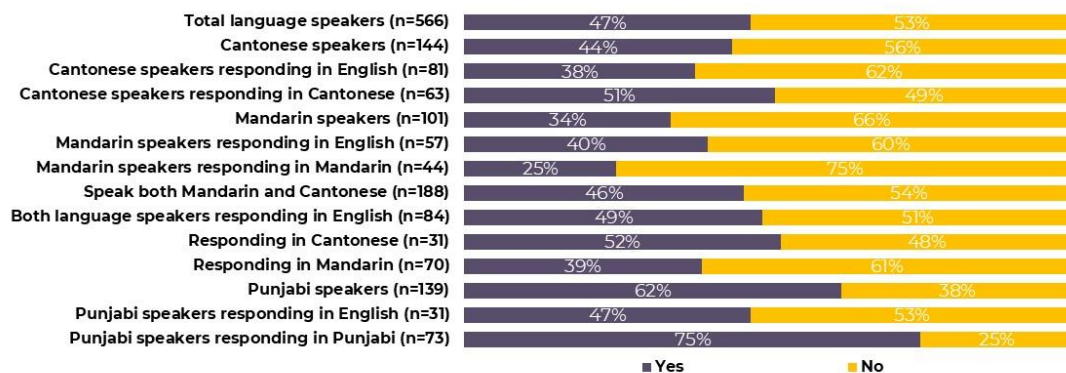
GHD – TORONTO RESIDENT SURVEY TO SUPPORT PHASE 1 CONSULTATION OF THE WASTE STRATEGY UPDATE
INSIGHTS CREDIT: ENVIRONICS RESEARCH | JUNE 2024

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IMPRESSIONS | AWARENESS OF LONG-TERM WASTE STRATEGY

Speakers of Punjabi, Mandarin and Cantonese are as likely as other Torontonians to know the City has a Long-term Waste Management Strategy (47%, similar to 45% of all single-family home dwellers and marginally higher than 41% of Torontonians in general).

Q1. Were you aware the City of Toronto has a Long-term Waste Management Strategy?



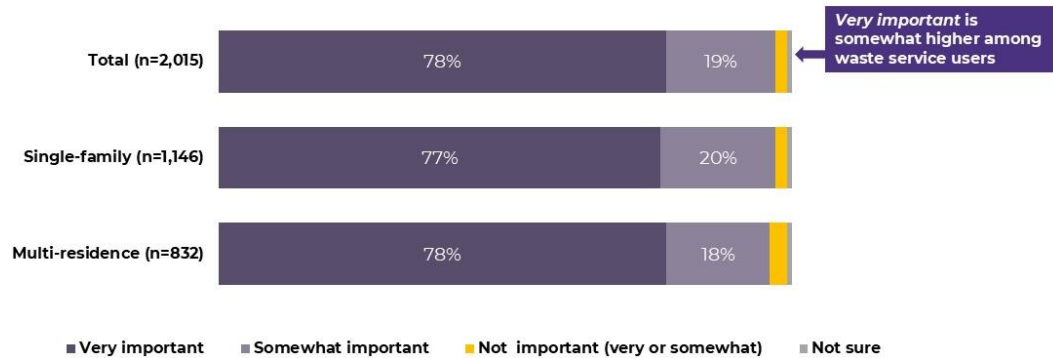
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IMPRESSIONS | IMPORTANCE OF LONG-TERM WASTE STRATEGY

Strong majorities of Torontonians across all subgroups agree it is very important for the City to have a Long-term Waste Management Strategy, and almost all say it is at least somewhat important

Q2. How important is it for the City to have a Long-term Waste Management Strategy?



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IMPRESSIONS | WHY LONG-TERM WASTE STRATEGY IS IMPORTANT

Torontonians who think a Long-term Waste Strategy is important are most likely to say this is to ensure the community's health and the environment are protected.

Q3. Why do you feel it is important for the City to have a Long-term Waste Management Strategy? (Multiple responses were permitted)

Base: Those saying the City having a Long-term Waste Management Strategy is very or somewhat important (n=1,941)



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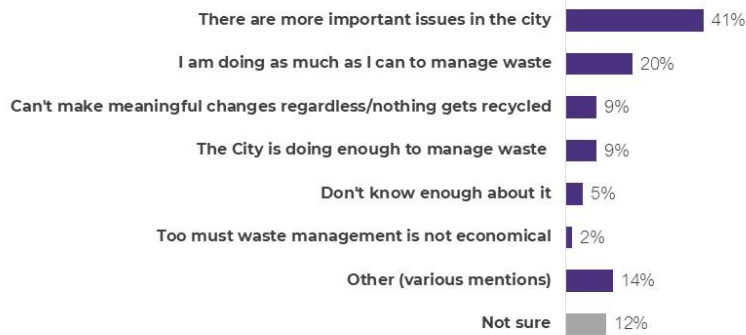
12 | ENVIRONICS RESEARCH

IMPRESSIONS | WHY LONG-TERM WASTE STRATEGY IS NOT IMPORTANT

Among the very small minority who did *not* think a LTWMS is important, the chief reasons are that there are more important issues in the city, or that they are doing as much as they can to manage waste.

Q4. Why do you feel it's not important?

Base: Those saying the City having a Long-term Waste Management Strategy is not very or not at all important (n=51)



Subgroup sizes are too small for further analysis

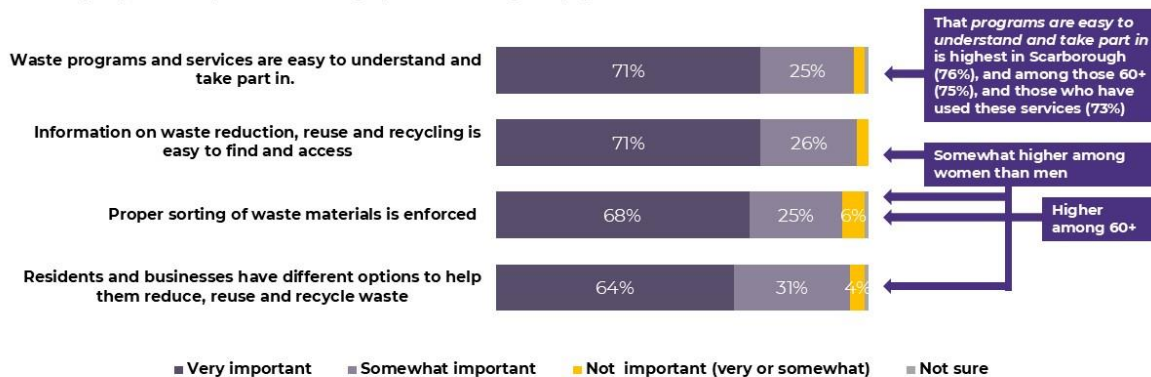
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IMPRESSIONS | IMPORTANCE OF WASTE MANAGEMENT ASPECTS

Strong majorities of Torontonians think four aspects of waste management are very important, notably that programs have to be easy to understand and take part in, and that information is easy to find.

Q5. In your opinion, how important are the following aspects of waste management programs and services?



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PRIORITIES FOR LONG-TERM WASTE MANAGEMENT

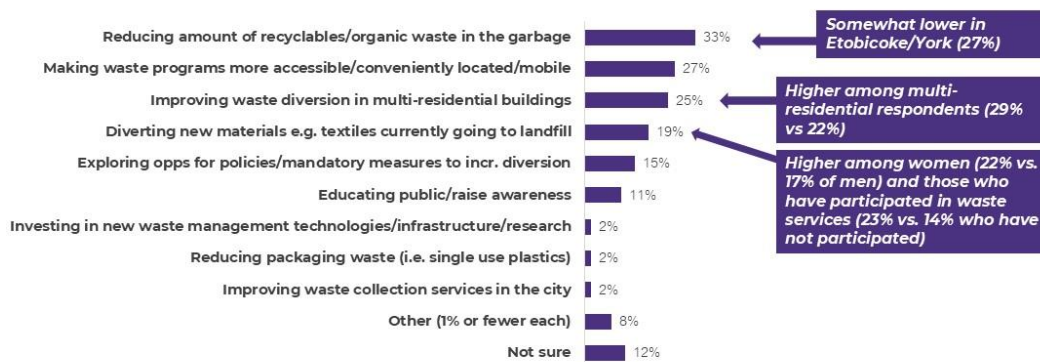
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IMAGE CREDIT: UNSPLASH

PRIORITIES | WHAT CITY SHOULD FOCUS ON RE WASTE GOALS

The top priorities identified by Torontonians, from an initial list of five, is reducing the amount of divertible waste that ends up in the garbage, and improving waste diversion in multi-residential buildings. Respondents wrote in several other responses, the most mentioned being public education.

Q6. What do you believe the City should focus on to achieve its waste goals?



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16 | ENVIRONICS RESEARCH

USE OF WASTE SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

17

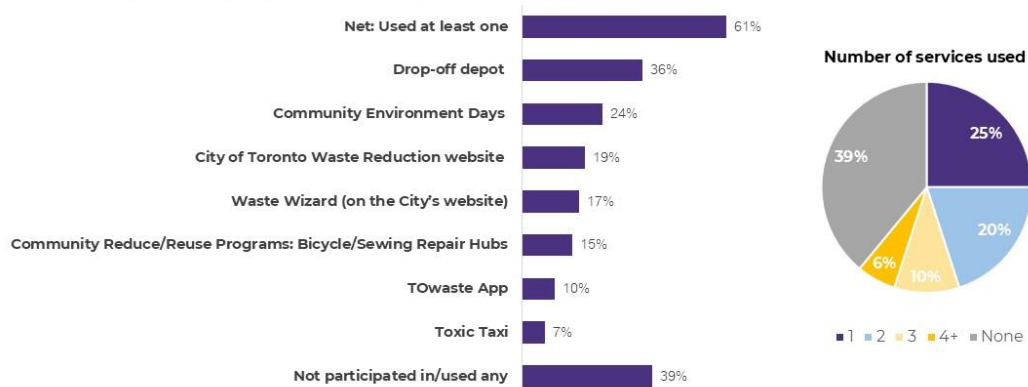
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IMAGE CREDIT: UNSPLASH

SERVICES | WASTE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES USED

Around six in ten Torontonians indicate having used at least one of a list of seven City of Toronto waste programs and services, with the most used being the drop-off depot, and the least used the Toxic Taxi.

Q7. Please tell us if you have ever participated in or used these City of Toronto waste programs and services.



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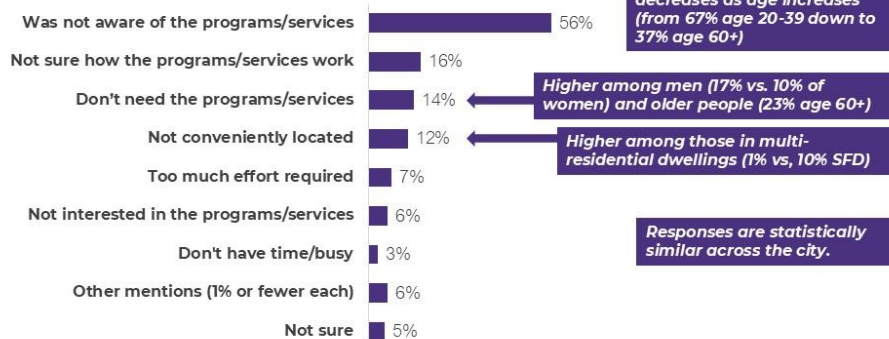
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RESEARCH

SERVICES | REASONS FOR NOT USING WASTE PROGRAMS

Not being aware of waste programs and services is by far and away the top reason for not using them. Considerably fewer indicate other reasons, like being unsure how they work, inconvenient locations, or lack of need.

Q8. Are there specific reasons why you haven't participated in or used any of those program(s) or service(s)?

Base: those who have not used any City of Toronto waste programs and services (n=771)



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19 | ENVIRONICS RESEARCH

HOW TO ENCOURAGE AND IMPROVE WASTE DIVERSION

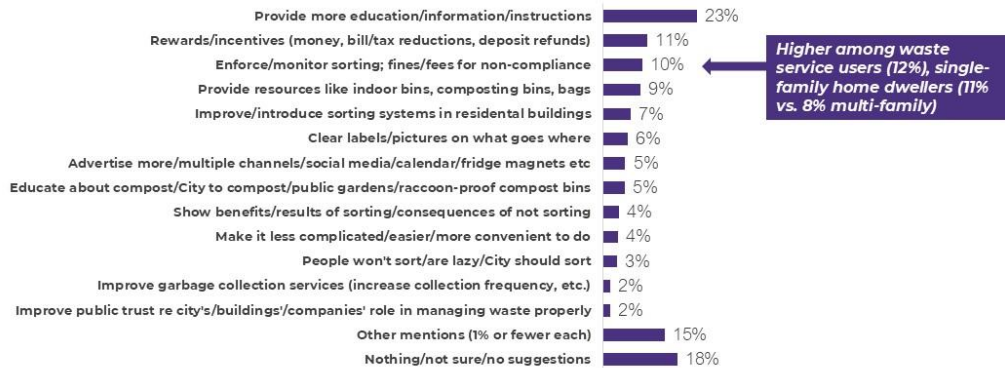
20 | ENVIRONICS RESEARCH

IMAGE CREDIT: UNSPLASH

PROMOTION | ENCOURAGING SORTING OF WASTE

Torontonians provide a range of suggestions for reducing the amount of food and organic waste that ends up in the garbage, but the main ones are to provide more information/instructions, to reward compliance, to enforce and fine those who are non-compliant, and to provide resources like small bins.

Q9. Food and organic waste and recyclables still regularly end up in the garbage. Please share your ideas on what might encourage people to sort properly.



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21 | ENVIRONICS RESEARCH

PROMOTION | ENCOURAGING SORTING OF WASTE

Below is a selection of the offered responses for how to encourage sorting, broken down by type of residence. These comments were selected to reflect the most mentioned ideas/themes.

Q9. Food and organic waste and recyclables still regularly end up in the garbage. Please share your ideas on what might encourage people to sort properly.



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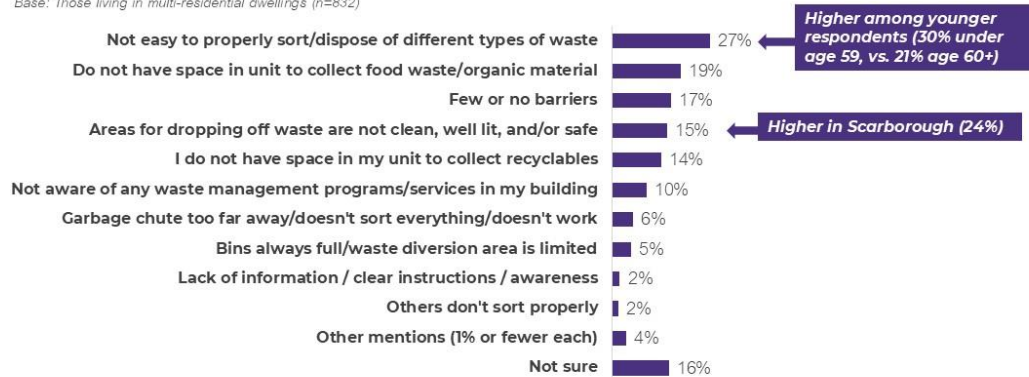
Single family Multi-residential 22 | ENVIRONICS RESEARCH

MULTI-FAMILY | BARRIERS TO SORTING AND SEPARATING WASTE

Those in multi-residential dwellings say the difficulties of sorting and lack of space to collect food waste are the top factors influencing how they dispose of waste; just under two in ten indicate few or no barriers.

Q10. As you live in an apartment, condominium, or co-op building, we want to better understand factors that influence how you dispose of your waste.

Base: Those living in multi-residential dwellings (n=832)



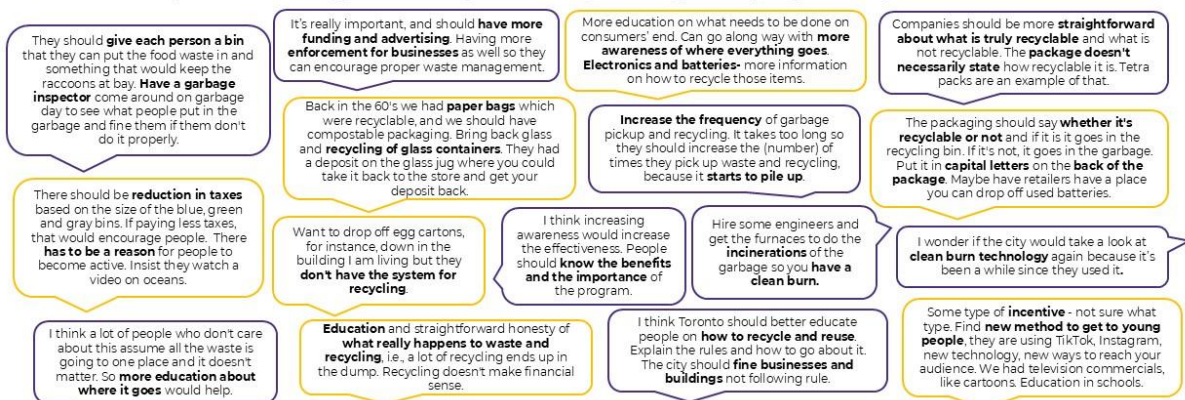
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23 | ENVIRONICS
RESEARCH

SUGGESTIONS | IMPROVING WASTE MANAGEMENT IN TORONTO

Suggestions for managing waste in the long-term largely coincided with respondents' ideas for encouraging people to sort waste. Additionally, these suggestions also emphasized promoting reusable packaging and having clear labels on them, and finding landfill alternatives such as incineration.

Q11. Please share any comments, ideas, or suggestions for the Long-term Waste Management Strategy and for improving waste management in Toronto.



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Single family Multi-residential

24 | ENVIRONICS
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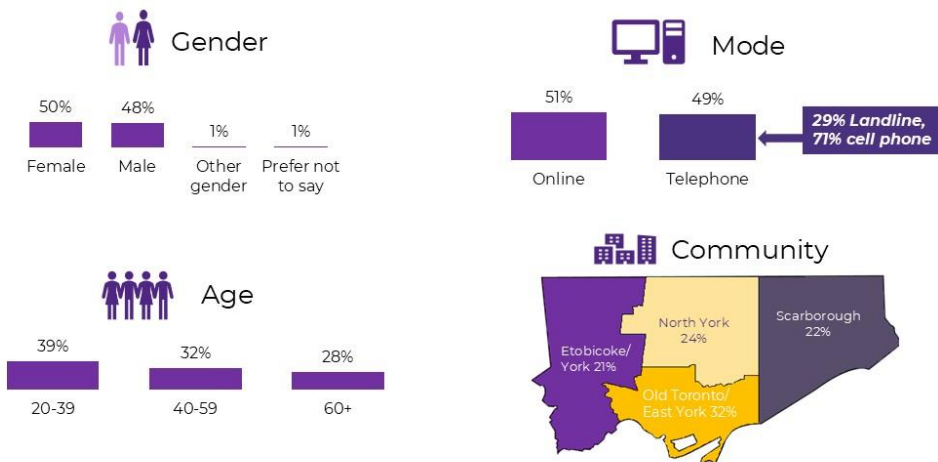
DEMOGRAPHICS

25

ENVIRONICS
RESEARCH

IMAGE CREDIT: UNSPLASH

DEMOGRAPHICS – General population

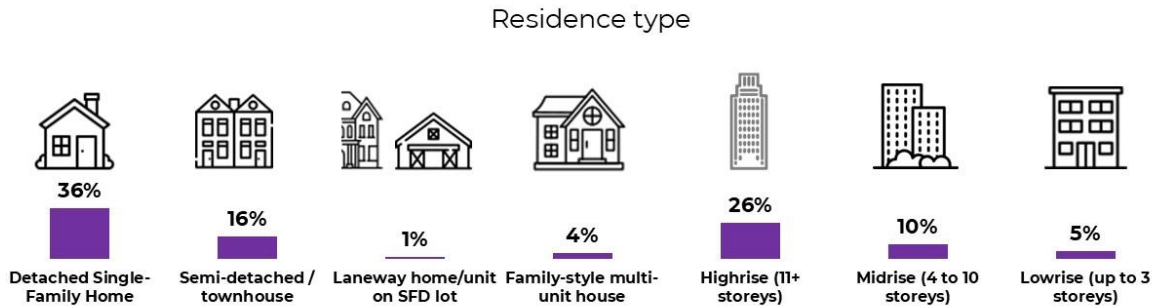


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26

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DEMOGRAPHICS – General Population



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Appendix: Public Drop-in Event Summary Notes

Waste Strategy Update – Public Drop-in Event

Date: Tuesday, December 3, 2024

Meeting Type: In-Person

Start time: 2:00 p.m. **End Time:** 8:00 p.m.

Project Overview:

The City of Toronto's (the City) [Long-term Waste Management Strategy \(Waste Strategy\)](#) is a roadmap that guides the City's actions to reduce the amount of waste requiring management and includes recommendations about how to get there.

Meeting Overview:

A public drop-in event was held at St. Paul's Bloor Street (227 Bloor Street East). Participants were able to speak with project team members and view information panels that covered the 2016 Long-term Waste Management Strategy, reasons for an update, information on Toronto's waste system including program data, how waste is currently managed, and information related to garbage disposal options, along with next steps of updating the Waste Strategy.

A total of 17 members of the public attended the drop-in event. Below is feedback received.

Topic	Comment Summary
City infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Material at transfer stations have value (wood, tires, etc...)• Need to transform the process at transfer stations, concerns that little help and more bins needed and repurposing materials that come in• Need more litter bins along streets that are properly maintained and with better labelling• City should use smaller trucks for collection• Build organics and mixed waste processing facilities• Consider incineration so that city can manage its own waste within its borders• Require dumpsters to have lids securing in place to avoid waste from blowing into ravines and nearby waterways
Education and Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve website – very bureaucratic, use more story telling approach• Educate residents on how to put waste away and manage it properly so it does not end up in our streets or waterways• Show details on amount of waste per capita and trends/progress• More education for school aged children, especially ages 7-12• Increase frequency and locations for Community Environment Days• More education on impact of single-use items on environment• Get celebrities involved in helping make it cool to promote reuse• Clean-ups work well as an outreach tactic• Need more prominent signage to discourage littering

Topic	Comment Summary
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be bold, act with urgency and spend less time doing studies • Can't wait on province to make decisions, City should move forward • Consider energy from waste as a form of diversion • All policies and practices should promote clean air and clean water • Make producers/manufacturers responsible for waste • Increase charge for reusable bags • Address issue of plastics with a ban. Focus on balloons. • More enforcement needed • Behaviour change needed to encourage sorting of waste
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot an electronics donation box where filmmakers can bring their equipment • Amsterdam has large grocery stores which offer deposit return program for aluminum to be recycled in store • Encourage more deposit return programs as in Hong Kong and Germany • Require clear bags for garbage as done in Guelph and cottage country • Textile collection is needed • Glass should be sorted into another stream not garbage • Pizza boxes should have instructions on what components of the box can be recycled and what can be compost • Need an invention to replace the plastic liner for green bins and making it affordable • Use food waste for fuel sources for City service vehicles or make electric • Mattresses in Holland are repurposed after industry brought together to look at opportunities to avoid waste leading to creation of new industries and jobs • More places needed for recycling batteries • Need plastic wraps that can be recycled • Enforcing plastic bag ban for businesses that continue to use them • Need more water fountains in the city to discourage people from buying plastic water bottles, e.g. in food courts, festivals and events • Implement bylaw that retailers/businesses charge \$2 per reusable bag and \$1 per disposable cup • City should provide a reuse centre where broken appliances can be dropped off and public can purchase for repair • Enforce having a dishwasher in businesses which offer dining in and reusable cups • Work on getting companies to reduce packaging sizes and shipping items together to reduce number of packages • Better sorting of waste is needed in workplaces and better training of cleaning staff • Ban cheap bottled water • City Hall café operations need to align with City single-use reduction priorities

Topic	Comment Summary
Program Continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More ground-up programs such as seniors drop-in centre which collect face masks, pens, computer toner, batteries (about 60 people come to centre) set-up by community with grants from federal program • Recycling system should be revamped to allow for separation of paper and metal/glass rather than everything going into one bin

Attendees – 17

City of Toronto:

Solid Waste Management

Christina Arunasalam

Daniel Boulos

Marie Helen Brillinger

Sophia Chang

Connie Choy

Angela Doyle

Atif Durrani

Alykhan Ladak

Emily Leung

Hana Omar

Erwin Pascual

Tim Sharp

Charlotte Ueta

Jessica Yau

Public Consultation Unit

Michele Blackwood

Daniela Castellanos Forero

Dominic Cobran

Robyn Shyllit

Aadila Valiallah

Sivahami Vijenthira

Strategic Public & Employee Communications

Siobhan Ramsay

Consultant - GHD

Brian Dermody

Sunil Issac

Blair Shoniker

Erika Brown

Appendix: Public Meeting Summary Notes

Waste Strategy Update – Public Meetings

Dates: December 5, 2-3:30 p.m.
December 11, 7-8:30 p.m.

Meeting Type: Virtual

Project Overview:

The City of Toronto's (the City) [Long-term Waste Management Strategy \(Waste Strategy\)](#) is a roadmap that guides the City's actions to reduce the amount of waste requiring management and includes recommendations about how to get there.

Meeting Overview:

The meeting was facilitated by Sivahami Vijenthira, Senior Coordinator Public Consultation Unit. A presentation was provided by Sophia Chang, Erwin Pascual, Atif Durrani and Daniel Boulos of Solid Waste Management Services followed by an opportunity for participants to ask questions and hear responses from City staff and participate in a breakout session that focused on key discussion questions.

Question & Answer

There was an opportunity for questions and comments from participants following the presentations.

Questions & Comments	Project Team Response
How often does the City monitor toxic gases in landfill sites to ensure safety for residents? What's the acceptable safety standard?	There are different requirements and standards for land, water and air as well as closed landfills as set out by the provincial Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks. Depending on which requirement is being met, testing may occur daily, weekly or monthly and is reported annually.
Does the 89% of waste that comes from residential sources include multi-residential buildings that are privately serviced? If not, then where does that waste factor in?	The information provided only reflects waste collected by the City. We do not have access to data from locations that receive private collection.
Why don't we have data collected from the private companies? Is there any move to get them involved?	Post-meeting note – The City does not have access to data from locations that receive private collection.
What is the name of the company that collects waste in the City, west of Yonge Street?	GFL (Green for Life) Environmental Inc is contracted by the City to collect from daytime curbside City customers west of Yonge Street.

Questions & Comments	Project Team Response
<p>Are you aware of GFL's history of environmental infractions? Their actions - alleged or otherwise - demonstrate a pattern of corporate behaviour which the City must consider before continuing their relationship with GFL. Put quite simply, GFL's operations in the City put the company in clear violation of the City of Toronto's procurement policies. What are you doing to address this?</p>	<p>Post meeting note - The City conducts fair and competitive procurement processes that are open to interested vendors to submit bids for waste collection contracts in accordance with Chapter 195, Procurement. As part of all solicitations and the due diligence process, suppliers must confirm compliance with the City's Supplier Code of Conduct as set out in Chapter 195 of the City of Toronto Municipal Code and its Policies The City includes requirements in its waste collection solicitations to ensure environmentally responsible services.</p>
<p>Where does the waste collected by private companies go? Is it the same landfill as City uses?</p>	<p>Post-meeting note – The City does not have information on privately collected waste. The City accepts some paid private waste at its Transfer Stations and at Green Lane Landfill.</p>
<p>Do you work closely with the City's Climate Resilience and Climate Advisory team?</p>	<p>Yes, we will be reaching out to those groups during this project.</p>
<p>The summary for the presentation refers to a ban on some construction waste. How much of this waste can be reused? Will a ban or partial ban result in an increase in illegal dumping?</p>	<p>Some construction waste such as scrap metal and wood shingles can be recycled. We have not evaluated any ban on any materials at this stage.</p>
<p>What is the percentage of materials collected from blue bins that are recycled?</p>	<p>Post-meeting note - With the transition of the blue box program to Extended Producer Responsibility under Provincial Regulation O. Reg. 391/21, producers of recyclable materials are now responsible for the Blue Box Program and the City does not have access to this data.</p>
<p>Wouldn't the sorting of recyclable items be more effective with separate bins for paper/cardboard, plastics and glass? It must take a lot of effort for the City to do all the sorting.</p>	<p>The City moved to a single-stream program (i.e. containers and fibres go in one blue bin) to make it easier for residents to participate in the recycling program and materials are mechanically separated afterwards at a material recovery facility. However, Provincial Regulation O. Reg. 391/21 transfers recycling management responsibilities from municipalities to producers. The Regulation includes targets that producers must meet and as they take full ownership of all municipal recycling programs by end of 2025, they will be responsible for establishing collection programs to best meet their diversion targets.</p>

Questions & Comments	Project Team Response
<p>Why does the City only collect 50-60% of waste from certain multi-unit residential buildings?</p>	<p>Under Provincial Regulation 103/94 - multi-residential buildings are categorized as an industrial, commercial and institutional locations, and municipalities are not mandated to provide collection services to the ICI sector. As such, multi-unit residential buildings (MURBs) have a choice to receive waste collection services from the City (provided that they meet the City's collection requirements) or hire a private waste company. In 2008, the City introduced the volume-based rate structure, and some multi-residential buildings have chosen to opt out of City waste collection services and selected private waste companies to collect their waste.</p>
<p>Will a program be included for assisting multi-residential units adapting their chutes or other devices to allow residents to increase recycling?</p>	<p>Post-meeting note - The 2016 Long-term waste Management Strategy recognizes the need to address waste generated by the multi-residential sector and the Strategy Update will revisit the related recommendations.</p> <p>The City's Chute Closure Program allows multi-residential buildings on City collection services to close their garbage chutes to have greater control over the waste stream and reduce contamination.</p>
<p>I notice that many people put perfectly good oversize items out to garbage rather than taking them Value Village or Habitat Restore etc. It seems that since the oversize item fee has been added to the utility bill, there are more oversize items put at the curb as garbage. Perfectly good items are being crushed in garbage trucks which I am sure adds to the amount of garbage going to landfill.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>In buildings that have waste collected by the City, they don't have organics pick-up. How easy are we making it for them to sign up?</p>	<p>We are looking for all sorts of ideas and feedback, including how to increase diversion of organic waste from multi-residential buildings during this phase of the consultation.</p>

Questions & Comments	Project Team Response
<p>Will there be some focus on improvement in the separation of recyclables in the waste stream by individual homeowners?</p>	<p>Post-meeting note - With the transition to Extended Producer Responsibility, producers of recyclables materials will be responsible for the management of the Blue Box Program.</p> <p>The Waste Strategy Update will continue to focus on actions to reduce the amount of waste requiring management, including waste reduction and diversion actions.</p>
<p>What does it cost the City, to pick up organics?</p>	<p>Post-meeting note - The 2025 Capital and Operating Budget Notes state that the gross 2025 operating budget for collection of garbage, blue bin recycling, green bin organics, durable goods, yard waste, municipal hazardous and special waste, oversized items, and transfer station management is \$159.918 million.</p>
<p>What about energy from waste facilities with carbon capture and storage technologies?</p> <p>With effective recycling programs, is there sufficient combustible materials remaining for effective power generation?</p>	<p>If the City were to continue to explore energy-from-waste as an option to manage our garbage, we will study the feasibility of the technology in Toronto's integrated waste management system, including examining Toronto's waste composition.</p>
<p>Can anyone comment on the Extended Producer Responsibility program, and how it will affect your considerations about energy-from-waste.</p>	<p>If the City were to continue to explore energy-from-waste as an option to manage our garbage, we will study the feasibility of the technology in Toronto's integrated waste management system, including examining Toronto's waste composition and considering the impact of extended producer responsibility programs.</p>

Small Group Break-out Discussions

In each small group, a series of questions were discussed. All responses are arranged by topic.

What should the City focus on to manage waste in the long-term?

Topic	Comment Summary
Recycling/Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recycling programs seem to be for people with cars to be able to drive to the depots• Reverse vending machines for bottle deposit provide incentive to return them
Organics/Composting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote composting machines (size of bread maker) to cook organics which is then turned into soil and used for gardens – wondering if the City will consider the same process which is used to make methane
Energy from Waste (EFW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incinerators were decommissioned because of the impact on the environment. Need studies to be done that look at the amount of material that remains. Consider as recycling program as energy producing compatible material can be used for a power generation study.• Heating as an energy output of EFW in addition to electricity can be used for district heating in industrial processes. Also helpful in reaching our net zero goals.
Garbage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Garbage should be placed in clear bags so that residents do not mix in recyclables in their garbage• Minimize or get rid of landfills. Green Lane Landfill involves trucking on over-crowded highways, which has an impact on air quality, safety and has City imposing waste outside its boundaries.• Alternatives to the landfill needs to be discussed

Topic	Comment Summary
Multi-residential buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on individuals in condos • Condos mix garbage and recycling • Sometimes food waste bin is on the ground floor and people won't use it • Multi-residential buildings have poor sorting results and persistent issues with a high turnover rate of residents. Buildings/resident organizations are left to do education on their own and should be receiving more support and direction from the City • Education in the multi-residential buildings setting needs to be amplified. Education material and contamination/results have not changed in the last 25 years. • Target apartments and condos where the recycling and diversion rates are poor • Help Toronto Community Housing Corp. residents. The residents want to know how to keep recyclable materials out of the landfill. Work with advocacy groups like Circular Environment Educational Design that works with team of residents in multi residential buildings on education workshops. • Difficult for Property Manager to engage folks and fund this work.
Multi-residential buildings continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turning waste education into a business, people want them to do it for free. Help support groups financially, e.g. offering a space, so that they can reach racialized communities who don't speak the language of climate change. Audits do not incentivize or give residents ownership. • 3R ambassador program is "piecemeal" -want to see more from the program
Collection/Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider having one "dump day" where people can set out whatever waste they have/want to dispose on one day to help address illegal dumping/littering. Recommended for accessibility - may make it easier for residents to set out challenging waste (e.g., household hazardous waste, bulky items etc.). • Collection system and programs need to be convenient and easy to use. This is a big part of the problem.

Topic	Comment Summary
Outreach and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on what materials are being sent for recycling that are actually recycled should be public. Nice to know that my recycling efforts will not go to waste. • Focus on education. Many do not know where to start. • People don't know/understand how their waste is managed. People should know where their waste goes, and who is impacted by the waste (i.e. First Nations communities around the landfill). Applies to private and City collection. • Education needs to happen in conjunction with other groups/organizations around the city, like school boards, provincial ministries, etc. • Use lift report to educate on why waste diversion is important via cost justification to residents • Women for climate group is trying to engage people who don't speak the climate change language and needs help and support • Many residents are new to Toronto and unaware of the waste management programs and services available. They need to know where to dispose of old textiles, reusable items, e-waste, household hazardous waste etc. • A map should be created to show drop-off locations for reusable items, textiles, other donatable items and waste. • When people move they often find that they have accumulated items they no longer need or use. After the moving process, they realize they don't know where to donate these items, resulting in them being thrown away. • Creation of a platform to showcase "Waste Idea of the Month" to inspire residents and encourage sharing of waste reduction experiences. For example, one month could focus on a person's success in reducing waste by compiling it in a jar.
Bans and Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disposal ban on home renovation materials is difficult to do and may encourage illegal dumping • Other ways should be encouraged to divert renovation waste • Address bag ban by doing waste audits • Woven bags have replaced plastic bags and have more impacts on environment. Want to see stores use compostable plastic bags. • Many homes use plastic bags as garbage bags (single use bags are not "single use" for many households)

Topic	Comment Summary
Innovation and New Products/Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada needs to connect with companies that are launching new products that can transform waste and ensure that our markets get serviced and not left out when products take off • Waste is a resource which has material value. We shouldn't be using landfilling as a solution and instead divert waste into something of value. We need to be imaginative and innovative, lofty and bold. City could take inspiration from a company called Pretty Plastics. • Lending libraries • City should support existing local zero waste stores and existing not for profit initiatives, such as Free Geek Toronto, Repair Cafe Toronto, Creative Reuse Toronto, Toronto Tool Library, Second-hand Sunday, Not Far From the Tree, New Mom Project, Red Propeller, and more
Goals and Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal should be zero waste (for residents and every household) • Zero waste and 100% circularity should be adopted across Canada • Take inspiration from Scandinavian countries, Sweden specifically. Less than 1% of waste is sent to landfill, most is diverted or converted to energy • Amplify environmental protection as a principle in waste management • Over the last 30 years, lots of emphasis on recycling but there isn't the same discussion around reduction and reuse. Volume of garbage and plastic is unmanageable. Consumption needs to be addressed or residual waste / any waste issues will just continue on. • Prioritize reducing plastic waste as it is a "dangerous substance with widely available alternatives"
Connection to affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize creating affordable housing so all people have equitable access to meaningfully participate in waste diversion. • City should also ban encampment evictions because destroying tents & other possessions of people who are unhoused, which are disproportionately Indigenous peoples, and trucking to Green Lane Landfill, impacting First Nations and contravening the reconciliation strategy

Please share your ideas on waste programs and services the City should consider to help achieve our long-term waste management goals.

Topic	Comment Summary
Look at success in other cities/countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Amsterdam grocery stores offer machines to collect aluminum cans from residents in exchange for cash. This incentivizes people to recycle. The added benefit of these collection machines being in grocery stores is that residents can use the cash towards their grocery shopping trip.

Topic	Comment Summary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Stockholm they minimize the use of garbage trucks by minimizing waste. • In a downtown park/playground in Montreal there is a communal compost bin. I'd save my compost to go a short distance to a community compost bin.
Partnerships and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City should build onto and promote existing projects/start ups that are also working to improve diversion and promote 3Rs in Toronto. • The City could work with the film industry to make their projects more sustainable. This could include creating a regulation saying no films can be made in Toronto without a sustainability plan etc.

Please share your experiences with City waste programs and services.

Topic	Comment Summary
Reuse and Recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reusable items, like oversized furniture, left on the curb leaving residents to question why these items are collected and compacted by garbage trucks when they could be reused or donated. • People don't know what goes in the recycling bin
Green Bin (Organics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green bin program is more advanced than other municipalities
Multi-Residential Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many residents will not break down boxes, need camera to have penalties for people to pay attention • All waste in our condo goes into one container and there's no sorting as a resident won't know • Considering vacuum systems - look at what's on the market for efficient waste collection in multi-residential buildings • As a 3Rs Ambassador find that some landlords and site staff in these buildings aren't onboard
Toxic Taxi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not know this existed and live near a transfer station • Property management did not know about toxic taxi
Drop-off Depots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City is doing well with services such as having the transfer stations be available for drop offs - well located around the city and easy to use • Visited a drop-off depot to dispose of a broken metal chair and surprised to find there was a \$10 charge. City now allows residents to leave oversized items at the curb for pick-up. • Drop-off depots are great, but I don't have a car, unless its in my neighbourhood forget it. It's shocking to me that it is not in the downtown such as City Place; same with Liberty Village. • Can't walk or cycle up to the depots, must be in a car. Consider how folks with no cars can access depots

Topic	Comment Summary
Education and Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the City's website, let people know what is working and what is not • Older people are not thinking of the Waste Wizard in the moment when they need it • City needs to evaluate its education program as it doesn't seem to be working
Waste App	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste app is good but can be improved by including more materials and photographs • Frustrated that there isn't an all-in-one app for waste management - single app that consolidates core services such as pickup schedules, recycling guidelines, and the ability to file complaints or compliments, in addition to the current app • One-stop app is needed to simplify access to all relevant waste management information, would save time and improve user experience
Environment Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward 10 is long and narrow and we have only two days but could use more. Provide more neighbourhood-scale events in high density neighbourhoods • Environment Days need to be held in many other areas of the city
3Rs Ambassador Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3Rs Ambassador program is understaffed; Facebook page is not active. • 3Rs Ambassadors in underserved communities should be compensated
Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frustrated by rising fees for curbside collection of oversized items • Paying for additional trash tags is a good form of education
Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to capture feedback from school boards, children, hospitals, province, people without access to a computer. Provide more in-person sessions to capture more of Toronto's population.

What are the elements or barriers impacting the success of the current waste programs and services to help waste reduction/diversion?

Topic	Comment Summary
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant barrier for some residents is not having access to a car which makes it harder to drop off items like textiles and reusable goods at designated locations, which results in these items ending up in the landfill.
Condo Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condo boards are big obstacles. I'd like to see the condo boards attend these meetings. Getting direct contact of the board is hard. Share packages of information with condo boards to help their recycling/waste diversion efforts. • Property management companies are not incentivized to do anything. As a resident I ask the property manager to call the toxic taxi. • Cheaper to dump recycling in garbage for condo buildings
Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement works for accountability • More money needed for enforcement
Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create incentives for residents

Attendees – 63

City of Toronto:

Solid Waste Management

Christina Arunasalam

Daniel Boulos

Marie Helen Brillinger

Sophia Chang

Angela Doyle

Atif Durrani

Alykhan Ladak

Emily Leung

Hana Omar

Erwin Pascual

Tim Sharp

Charlotte Ueta

Jessica Yau

Public Consultation Unit

Jayne Armstrong

Michele Blackwood

Maogosha Pyjor

Sivahami Vijenthira

Consultant - GHD

Brian Dermody

Blair Shoniker

Interest Group Workshops Summary Report

City of Toronto Long-term Waste Management Strategy Update – Phase One

May 2025

Introduction

This report summarizes the interest group workshops conducted virtually on December 4, 10 and 12, 2024, during Phase One of the City of Toronto's Long-term Waste Management Strategy Update (Waste Strategy Update). It provides an overview of the three workshops and a summary of the input received from participants representing the residential sector, community groups/organizations, commercial and institutional organizations.

Workshops Overview

Interest group workshops were a key aspect of the Waste Strategy Update engagement strategy. These workshops provided a space for representatives from various interest groups to learn about the Waste Strategy Update, share their opinions on the implementation of the current Waste Strategy, including programs and initiatives, and provide their perspectives on the future of waste management in the city. The insights from participants, along with information gathered through other consultation activities, will be used to identify options to reduce waste and improve waste diversion as part of the Waste Strategy Update.

The workshops began with a presentation followed by a question-and-answer session. Participants then engaged in thematic discussions in small groups, focusing on the Waste Strategy vision and guiding principles, waste programs and services, and ideas for waste reduction and diversion. Following the small group discussions, the highlights were presented to the entire group.

Community members representing the following three interest groups were invited by the City to participate in the workshops:

- Workshop 1: Residential Sector
- Workshop 2: Community Groups / Organizations
- Workshop 3: Commercial and Institutional Organizations

Summary of Input

Participants were asked to provide input to help lay the groundwork for the development of the Waste Strategy Update. Three themes were discussed during the small group discussions:

- Theme 1: Vision and Guiding Principles
- Theme 2: Waste Strategy Programs and Services
- Theme 3: Ideation for Waste Reduction and Diversion

For each theme, facilitators used discussion questions to guide the group discussions, as described in the following table.

Theme	Discussion Questions
Theme 1 Vision and Guiding Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the 2016 Waste Strategy vision statement still resonate and capture what your organization sees as the most important priorities for waste management in the city? What do you believe are the roles your organization and the City can play in creating a sustainable waste management system? What principles are most important to your organization in guiding our collective efforts to manage waste in our city? <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Vision Statement</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Together, we will:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Reduce waste, reuse what we can, and recycle and recover resources to reinvest in the economy.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Embrace a user-friendly waste management system that balances community and environmental needs with financial sustainability.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Ensure a safe, clean, beautiful, and healthy city for the future.</i></p>
Theme 2 Waste Strategy Programs and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What City programs and services have been the most successful to help with reduction, reuse and diversion of waste? What elements or barriers has your organization experienced that has impacted the success of the current waste programs and services to help waste reduction/diversion?
Theme 3 Ideation for Waste Reduction and Diversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divertible waste such as food waste and recyclables still regularly end up in the garbage. Please share your ideas on what the City might do to encourage better sorting behaviours and practices and how your organization could play a role. What else can the City do to reduce the amount of waste we generate and divert more waste? How can we encourage individuals, businesses and organizations to take action?

Overall, participants expressed strong support for initiatives that enhance community education, promote behavioural change, and foster partnerships at both community and government levels. Emphasis was placed on breaking down silos among key stakeholders. Strengthening partnerships, community-level actions such as local workshops, public awareness campaigns, and collaboration with resident associations were also highlighted. At the government level,

necessary measures include policy development, funding for community programs, and improved inter-departmental coordination. Additional themes from the workshop discussions included:

- General consensus on the current vision, guiding principles, programs, services, and initiatives.
- A strong call for increased outreach efforts, engaging resident associations and community organizations to raise awareness, and enhancing public messaging.
- Enhancing the systems for collecting organics and recyclables in multi-residential buildings, such as adding internal sorting rooms and mandatory tri-sorter systems, is key to boosting waste diversion rates.
- Agreement on developing a sustainable financial model to ensure the longevity of programs, support grassroots organizations, and consider legislative measures to reduce waste and support innovative technologies.
- Recognition of opportunities to fund businesses that create sustainable upcycled products, encourage thrifting, and expand community compost programs.
- Support for initiatives like Community Environment Days, drop-off depots, and the Toxic Taxi service, with hopes for ongoing improvement and promotion.
- Consideration of ways to increase Indigenous communities' involvement in the Waste Strategy Update, including their vision, programs, and idea generation.

A summary of the discussion in the question and answer sessions and in the group discussions, organized by workshop participant group, is described below:

Question & Answer Sessions

During the three workshops, participants were given the opportunity to ask questions before the facilitated group discussions. Below is a list of questions raised by each interest group during the question and answer sessions:

- What is the percentage of materials that go into bins (garbage, recycling, organics), and what is the level of organics in garbage bins?
- Why is there a higher amount of garbage from multi-residential buildings compared to residential homes?
- How can community recycling organizations obtain more information on City funding?
- Are the trucks transporting garbage to the Green Lane Landfill environmentally friendly vehicles?
- How many Torontonians have downloaded the TOwaste app, indicating an interest in sorting waste properly?
- Does the City use clear bags for garbage?
- What data gaps exist in the collection services provided by private waste collectors?
- What methods does the City use to hold people accountable?
- Is the City looking at comparisons to other jurisdictions and developing additional metrics to capture volumes produced from private, industrial, and other sectors?

- What type of support does the City offer for the Toronto District School Board, and does the City conduct any audits specifically for the school boards?

Small Group Discussion Theme 1: Vision and Guiding Principles

The objective of the discussion under Theme 1 was to gather input from representatives of each interest group on their vision for the future of waste management in Toronto and to understand how it aligns with and informs the development of the existing Waste Strategy's vision and guiding principles. City staff facilitated discussions on the Waste Strategy vision and guiding principles using the following discussion questions:

- Does the 2016 Waste Strategy vision statement still resonate and capture what your organization sees as the most important priorities for waste management in the city?
- What do you believe are the roles your organization and the City can play in creating a sustainable waste management system?
- What principles are most important to your organization in guiding our collective efforts to manage waste in our city?

The following is the summary of input on the Waste Strategy vision and guiding principles provided by participants representing each interest group.

Residential Sector

Agreement with Vision and Principles

Participants generally agreed with the existing vision and guiding principles. However, they emphasized the need for assistance in keeping garbage bins and containers clean, prioritizing cleanliness in both private and public spaces, and ensuring equal diversion efforts across all building types.

“Garbage attracts garbage”

Residential Sector Workshop Participant

Role of Resident Associations

Resident associations continue to play a key role in communicating and advocating for City programs. They help spread awareness among residents and act as a feedback loop between the City and the community.

Staff Training at Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) Buildings

A participant observed the need for specifically-designed, waste management-focused trainings for staff at TCHC buildings. These trainings should address waste management in multi-residential buildings and familiarize staff with various City programs and services. Although efforts to engage more agencies in this conversation have not yet been successful, the participant stressed the significance of continuing to encourage engagement and collaboration.

Tenant Education and Outreach

One participant highlighted education as a key strategy to address individual building needs and related technical challenges. They emphasized the importance of crafting effective messaging and involving residents in this process to ensure they feel empowered. The participant suggested designing door-to-door tenant engagement and education approaches tailored to the specific needs of each building or even each floor.

Multi-Residential Diversion

A concern was expressed that multi-residential buildings have fallen behind in waste diversion compared to single-family homes. It was suggested to include a goal to bring all types of buildings to the same level of diversion as single-family homes.

Waste as a Resource

A participant encouraged rethinking what we consider waste by viewing it as a resource. They noted that many types of waste, such as plastics, can be recycled and reused, which could benefit the climate by mitigating negative impacts.

“Rethinking what we think of waste”

Residential Sector Workshop Participant

Community Groups / Organizations

Proactive and Transparent Waste Management

Participants highlighted that the City needs to incorporate an upstream vision focused on addressing the issue of new non-recyclable products/packaging coming onto the market. Additionally, the City should lobby the Federal Government to reduce the production of non-recyclable plastics. There needs to be more transparency in how materials are produced and managed, which could be achieved through awareness and education.

Single-Use Plastics

Participants provided feedback that the City should work towards eliminating single-use plastics from grocery stores to further support sustainable practices.

Strengthening Collaboration and Partnerships

Participants emphasized that collaboration is essential for success. They noted that the City should partner with community organizations to conduct outreach and education on the Waste Strategy Update messages. Increased collaboration between the City and community organizations working towards similar goals is crucial. Furthermore, the City should conduct surveys to identify barriers to reducing waste, with community organizations assisting in data collection through local group meetings.

“Without collaboration we are not going to get far”

Community Groups / Organizations Workshop Participant

Enhancing Public Messaging to Encourage Waste and Litter Reduction

Participants noted that businesses generate a significant amount of waste, which needs to be addressed through targeted initiatives. As well, there is a need to combat the tendency to litter when items are no longer needed by enhancing public messaging in public spaces. This is essential to raise awareness and encourage responsible behaviour, ultimately reducing both waste generation and littering.

Enhancing User-Friendliness

The Waste Strategy needs to be more user-friendly, especially for newcomers who do not speak English and do not have access to personal electronics.

Enhancing the Vision and Mission Statements

There was a suggestion to incorporate additional “R-words” such as refuse, rethink, and repair into the vision statement to emphasize a more comprehensive approach to waste management. Vision statements are typically broad and lofty, while the mission statement should capture the scope and outline key action targets. The current vision statement is not quite hitting the mark. Using stronger, more definitive language will convey commitment and action and should include a specific, tangible goal for the City to reach, such as achieving the aspirational goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. Mission statements, on the other hand, provide a clear scope and outline key action targets necessary to achieve those goals. Examples include the Daily Bread Food Bank's mission to end hunger in our city and Food Share Toronto's mission to create a Toronto where all people can feed themselves and loved ones and community with dignity and joy, focusing on advocacy and education.

“The word embrace doesn’t encourage action – needing more action-oriented language”

***Community Groups / Organizations
Workshop Participant***

Connecting Waste Management to Health and Well-Being

Participants provided feedback that the vision statement should include language connecting waste management to personal health and well-being, addressing both environmental and social pillars. They indicated it should reflect the importance of individual and personal connections, as community organizations often work with people who are physically, mentally, and emotionally affected by waste management issues. By highlighting this well-being aspect, the vision statement can better resonate with the community and address their needs.

Ensuring Sustainable Funding

Participants provided feedback that the Waste Strategy Update should include a sustainable financial model to address the longevity of the program and ensure support from other levels of government. This will help maintain the effectiveness and continuity of waste management initiatives. Additionally, participants expressed that ensuring sustainable funding sources for community organizations that support the mission statement is important.

Supporting Food Waste Reduction & Capacity Issues in Food Banks

Food-related organizations, such as food banks, support food waste reduction goals but face challenges with expired cans of food due to limited capacity to open, divert, and recycle them. They also lack financial incentives and sometimes need private haulers for excess food waste. Participants noted that the City should provide funding and engage in creative problem-solving to support the composting efforts of these organizations. Handling expired canned foods is time-consuming and heavily reliant on volunteer support, highlighting a capacity issue.

Community Compost Programs

Participants pointed out that composting is expensive and that residential waste includes a significant amount of food waste and organics. The City should consider programs to help communities process their organics independently. Increasing capacity to support grassroots organizations in starting and running long-term community compost programs is essential. Collaboration with organizations and businesses to collect food waste for these programs is also needed. Composting is a necessity, and schools should be involved. Training the community on composting is crucial for effective community enforcement.

Improving Awareness of City Programs

Participants indicated that residents sometimes come to their organization with questions about City programs. As such, the participant feels that there is a need for the City to mobilize and communicate these programs effectively to residents.

Infrastructure for Organics and Recycling

Some buildings, especially those with private waste collection, are not designed to collect organics and recyclables. Residents often have to go outside to dispose of organics, which is not accessible for everyone. Internal sorting rooms or bins are needed, and better communication with privately owned buildings on improving diversion and sorting is beneficial.

“If the infrastructure is not there, education can’t always replace this”

***Community Groups / Organizations
Workshop Participant***

Upcycling and Reusing Materials

The City was encouraged to provide funding to help set up small businesses that create sustainable upcycled products. Promoting activities like thrifting can also support waste reduction.

“Thrifting is “cool” right now and City should encourage thrifting as an activity.”

***Community Groups / Organizations
Workshop Participant***

Addressing Cost of Living and Food Donations

The cost of living has increased, but food donations have not risen to match the need, a situation exacerbated by COVID-19. Participants feel that this is a troubling trend that needs attention.

Clarifying Expiration Dates

Participants expressed that expiration dates can be confusing, leading to unnecessary food waste. It was suggested that the City could play a role in facilitating the education of residents on the meaning of expiration dates to help reduce food waste.

Plastic Waste Management

Some participants observed that while plastic waste management has improved recently, there is still a long way to go in managing it effectively.

Supporting the Circular Economy

Participants expressed support for the circular economy. Through the community compost project, one organization was noted to have 60 locations that collect 200 pounds of food waste per month. Participants feel that increasing capacity to help non-profits start composting programs is necessary to support a circular economy.

Commercial and Institutional Organizations

Vision Statement

Participants expressed that the current vision statement is too vague and not addressing the actual problems that the Waste Strategy should be tackling. The statement should reflect the impact of provincial and federal jurisdictions on waste management in the ICI&I sector.

“Vision statement is too “fluffy” doesn’t address the actual problems of what the strategy should be addressing.”

***Commercial and Institutional Organizations
Workshop Participant***

Enforcement

Participants noted that bylaw enforcement has faced challenges over the years with fines and compliance. Examples include compliance in strip-malls, bins being stolen, illegal dumping, and unclear responsibilities among tenants and renters. It is crucial to identify key players in each group and clearly outline who is responsible for enforcement. As well, participants highlighted that the inability to capture the private sector holds the City back and suggested that options such as franchise models should be considered. According to participants, the lack of oversight in multi-residential buildings, where half of the building stock has gone private, highlights the need for better regulation and enforcement.

Impactful Guiding Principles

Participants called for stronger guiding principles to address the urgency of landfill capacity challenges.

“Guiding principles need more “teeth” to reflect the urgency behind the landfill capacity challenges.”

Commercial and Institutional Organizations Workshop Participant

Energy-from-Waste Solutions

There was an emphasis on defining the parameters and frameworks for energy-from-waste solutions. Furthermore, the City was encouraged to consider how to improve existing practices without merely extending timelines, and to establish clear frameworks and targets for long-term waste management.

Data Capture

Data capture is essential for the City and other stakeholders. Participants discussed the need to determine whether data capture should be a collaborative effort or led by the City and the IC&I sector.

Small Group Discussion Theme 2: Waste Strategy Programs and Services

The objective of the discussion under Theme 2 was to gather perspectives from representatives of each interest group on what is working well, what needs to be improved, notable successes, and current challenges in waste programs and services. City staff facilitated discussions on the Waste Strategy programs and services using the following leading questions:

- What City programs and services have been the most successful to help with reduction, reuse and diversion of waste?
- What elements or barriers has your organization experienced that has impacted the success of the current waste programs and services to help waste reduction/diversion?

The following is the summary of input on the Waste Strategy programs and services provided by participants representing each interest group.

Residential Sector

Community Environment Days

These events offer opportunities to recycle, donate reusable items, and pick up free compost. They are popular among residents, with the City organizing multiple events throughout the year, including speciality pickup days for items like electronics and hazardous waste. Participants indicated a desire to increase the frequency of Community Environment Days to better serve the community.

“Would like to see frequency of these days increased”

Residential Sector Workshop Participant

Drop-off Depots

Participants feel that City Drop-off depots, especially for tires, have been successful.

Toxic Taxi

The Toxic Taxi service, which removes hazardous materials from the waste stream, is utilized, though residents may not be aware of the program. There is interest in the Toxic Taxi, and it addresses questions about hazardous waste disposal.

Waste Wizard and TOwaste App

The Waste Wizard and TOwaste app are useful for building management staff and help determine what goes in recycling bins. Many people are familiar with these programs, although packaging complexity can still make navigation difficult.

Webpage

Participants recognized the utility of the City's waste management webpage, which provides information on waste programs and services.

3Rs Ambassador Program

According to participants, the 3Rs Ambassador program, implemented at different locations, has been successful.

Accessible Educational Resources

Several participants emphasized the importance of providing educational materials in accessible language. They also highlighted the need for diverse educational resources to support various identity groups.

City Programs Awareness

Participants felt that awareness of the City's waste programs and services is low but emphasized that these programs are important.

Diversion Data and Reporting

Participants indicated having an interest in monthly data on diversion rates based on properties.

Disposal Challenges

Concerns were expressed about the challenges in disposing of items like medications, medical sharps, and electronics. There is a need for increased educational awareness about the proper disposal of these items. The Waste Wizard provides information on these items, and they can also be picked up by the Toxic Taxi or through the 311 free pickup program.

Community Groups / Organizations

Community Environment Days

Participants feel that Community Environment Days are highly effective and receive significant participation. However, they are more accessible to those with cars or who live nearby. There is a need for more events in areas with multi-unit dwellings. During these events, most people do not get out of their cars to engage with information booths, which provide helpful information. The event could be improved to encourage more interaction. Additionally, staff at the booths need better training on waste sorting complexities. Video tutorials, particularly on sorting plastic waste, could benefit the community.

Waste Wizard

Some participants feel that the Waste Wizard has been ineffective because it cannot encompass all possible waste items. While the creation of the Waste Wizard is a good idea, it needs to be simplified for the public to use more effectively.

Reducing Waste and Incineration Concerns

The discussion underscored the importance of building awareness and knowledge, focusing on ways to reduce and reuse waste to minimize the need for incineration and landfilling. A few residents have expressed concerns about incineration, specifically mentioning Emerald. They also noted that there is no reason for food and yard waste to be burned.

Clear Bag Program

Participants noted that the Clear Bag Program is very effective in combating contamination at the resident level.

Litter Awareness and Enforcement

There is a need for more awareness-raising, especially regarding the use of street litter bins with cigarette receptacles. Participants also called for stricter enforcement of littering by City bylaw enforcement, suggesting a \$200 fine to address this issue. They proposed holding landlords for businesses accountable for litter dropped by their patrons and increasing litter enforcement in general.

Reducing Plastic Waste

Participants highlighted the high volume of plastic waste created by multinational corporations, with no accountability to the City or the Province. There is an expectation that some of these products, including single-use water bottles in parks, could be banned. Participants also emphasized the need to eliminate single-use plastics from grocery stores. During the discussion, it was noted that the Green Neighbours Network and Toronto Environmental Alliance received funding to hire young people to canvass businesses about reducing single-use utensils and containers.

Furniture Reuse

During the discussion, it was mentioned that furniture is often sent for oversized collection needlessly when it could be reused.

Promoting Success Stories and Circular Business Directory

The City needs to better highlight the success stories of sustainable businesses and share information about the businesses procured for services. Although there is a circular business directory, it is underutilized. Efforts should be made to increase its visibility and usage.

Waste Management Videos

The City should create videos showcasing the waste processing facilities and the extensive work involved in managing waste. These videos would highlight the sheer volume of waste handled, encouraging people to reduce their contribution to waste creation.

Toxic Taxi

A participant mentioned that residents often contact Food Share for information on what to do with compost and other materials. They can be pointed to the Toxic Taxi service. During the discussion, the need for increased capacity investments and funding from the City was emphasized to help organizations continue applying waste management best practices.

"I have never heard of the Toxic Taxi until now and I am happy to hear about it."

***Community Groups / Organizations
Workshop Participant***

Educational Workshops and 3Rs Ambassador Program

Participants suggested that educational workshops and the 3Rs Ambassador Program in older apartment buildings that lack chutes for green bin, blue bin, and black bin separated options would support waste diversion. In these buildings, all waste is currently piled together. Retrofitting these buildings would benefit the Waste Strategy.

Financial Support for Upcycling Initiatives

Participants suggested that financial support from the 3Rs Ambassador Program for community members involved in upcycling would be helpful. A Toronto-based organization conducts repair clinics, reuses items, and organizes swaps within the community. They teach upcycling, creating tote bags and pouches from textile waste, and host booths for vendors during waste reduction week. More support for individuals committed to the circular economy would be beneficial.

Promoting Thrifting

There is interest in promoting thrifting through Waste Strategy programs.

Commercial and Institutional Organizations

Role of Third Parties and Jurisdictional Silos

Participants emphasized the essential role of third parties in waste management strategies. There is a need to look beyond the City to other types of partnerships, breaking down silos, and requiring more oversight from the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP). In the IC&I sector, several waste management facilities exist, although their compliance and conformance are questionable. Participants also highlighted the challenge posed by silos between the jurisdiction of the Province and the City, which needs to be addressed.

“Breaking down silos”

***Commercial and Institutional Organizations
Workshop Participant***

Engaging Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) in City-Related Waste Programs

BIAs should be engaged to access businesses involved in City-related waste programs. However, participants recognized that businesses acting as intermediaries between the City and other businesses can often face overwhelming demands.

Challenges in Waste Management for Multi-Residential Buildings

Participants noted that multi-residential buildings that use private waste collection services cannot access City services like the Toxic Taxi. Participants highlighted concerns about the actual level of compliance with Household Special Products and Information Technology, Telecommunications, and Audio-Visual waste in buildings with private waste collection. With Extended Producer Responsibility, the ability of multi-residential building residents to effectively handle recyclables is challenging, especially in older infrastructures.

Cost Implications and Tax Funding

Participants highlighted the cost implications of how taxes are used and encouraged the City to consider how tax funding from businesses is being utilized for waste management.

Contaminants and Leachate

Participants stressed the need for a broader perspective on providing waste management direction to businesses to address the issue with contaminants and leachate.

“Contaminants and leachate, this pollutes our storm sewers and run off...”

Commercial and Institutional Organizations Workshop Participant

Small Group Discussion Theme 3: Ideation for Waste Reduction and Diversion

The objective with the discussions under Theme 3 was to gather ideas from representatives of each interest group on ways to further reduce and divert waste from landfill and achieve the City's aspirational zero-waste goal.

- Divertible waste such as food waste and recyclables still regularly end up in the garbage. Please share your ideas on what the City might do to encourage better sorting behaviours and practices and how your organization could play a role.
- What else can the City do to reduce the amount of waste we generate and divert more waste? How can we encourage individuals, businesses and organizations to take action?

The following is the summary of ideas provided by participants representing each interest group.

Residential Sector

Educational Awareness and Promotion Campaigns

Participants emphasized the importance of promotion campaigns, such as updating the rules on coffee cups (previously only accepted in the garbage, now accepted in the Blue Bin) and raising educational awareness about these changes. They also highlighted the need for educational awareness about expiration dates, explaining that "best before dates" indicate the product is still consumable, which could contribute to reducing waste. Workshops and educational campaigns for recycling, including hearing from other successful recycling organizations, can encourage better sorting behaviours. Training for community associations and interest groups can play a significant role in promoting better sorting practices. Additionally, participants suggested a legislative approach, noting that France has made it illegal for food providers to throw away edible food regardless of expiration dates, and questioned whether similar legislation could be implemented at the municipal level.

Tri-Sorter Systems in Buildings

Participants mentioned that their buildings recently reactivated their recycling program with the City, encouraging residents to use the tri-sorter system. However, there is an issue with some buildings not having tri-sorter or function-sorting systems, which needs to be addressed to improve waste sorting. According to some participants, three single chutes for garbage, recycling, and organics should be the mandatory design choice for high- and mid-rise multi-residential developments.

Complexity of Packaging

Participants pointed out the complexity of packaging as a challenge. The Waste Wizard can help with this, but encouraging producers to provide more information on packaging to assist with recycling can help residents sort their waste better.

Incentives to Turn Waste into Energy

Participants suggested creating incentives to turn waste into energy. For example, creating an incentive to turn organics into energy.

Accurate Waste Reporting

Participants discussed the importance of how waste is reported, distinguishing between uncompacted and compacted waste. They noted that the perspective that more waste is generated may not be accurate. Ensuring that City data is accurate is crucial.

Community Groups / Organizations

Need for Education on Best Before Dates

Participants highlighted a lack of education on what best before dates mean. People accessing their food programs often throw out products past the best before date despite them still being safe to consume. Clients of community organizations are not convinced that “best before” means the product is still good. Organizations need support in sharing educational messaging around best before vs. expiry dates.

Support for Waste Diversion Innovations

Participants mentioned that they deal mainly with fresh food, so their food waste becomes compost. They are looking into investing in a type of worm that eats plastic and need financial support from the City to invest in these technologies. They are already implementing best practices and need further support from the City with grants and educational programs to enhance their waste diversion tactics. Their organizations also help other organizations start waste diversion programs and need continued support from the City to sustain this work.

Increased Demand Due to COVID-19

Participants representing food-based organizations reported a significant increase in clients since COVID-19, with 350,000 individuals using their services a month, compared to 250,000 people prior to the pandemic. They are spending more money on food now than ever due to higher costs. Despite ongoing donations, it is not enough to meet demand. They expressed that they do not have a lot of capacity to deal with this influx. Morally, they are obligated to divert food waste, but due to the volume, limited staffing, and volunteer capacity, some food waste ends up in the garbage.