Long-term Waste Management Strategy Update – Phase 2

Public Consultation Report

October 2025

TORONTO

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Executive Summary

This report details the activities and feedback received during Phase 2 consultation on the Long-term Waste Management Strategy Update (Waste Strategy Update) that took place from May 21, 2025 to June 29, 2025.

During consultation, members of the public and interest groups representing Residential Associations, Property and Facilities Management, Environmental, Social Service and Community Organizations; Businesses and Business Associations; Waste Industry (Waste Management and Processing); Indigenous Community Organizations and Accessibility Organizations were invited to provide feedback on the options the City is considering to achieve long-term waste management goals, criteria for an evaluation framework and perceptions on energy-from-waste (incineration).

Public consultation activities engaged approximately 11,259 people through a public drop-in and livestreamed event, interest group meetings, an online survey and public opinion polling. Interest group meetings included participation from 94 organizations through virtual meetings.

Overall, public and interest group feedback expressed:

- **Strong support for producer and contractor accountability:** While individual waste reduction efforts were seen as important, many emphasized that long-term change must begin upstream, with producers held accountable for packaging waste through stronger regulations, deposit-return systems, and incentives for low-waste product design. Respondents called for mandatory waste audits, public reporting of contamination rates, and greater City oversight of waste services operating outside the municipal system, particularly in commercial and multi-residential settings where collection is managed privately. There was clear demand for enforcement tools such as fines, performance tracking, and report cards to ensure transparency and compliance. Education campaigns promoting the five Rs (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle) were also recommended to support individual and community action.
- **Broad support for a clear and inclusive evaluation framework:** Participants emphasized the importance of a clear, accessible, and values-based evaluation framework to guide decision-making. There was strong interest in ensuring that environmental, social, and financial impacts are weighted equally, with many calling for the inclusion of community voices particularly from equity-deserving and Indigenous communities in shaping the criteria. Respondents also suggested that the framework should prioritize long-term sustainability, climate alignment, and public health outcomes, and be supported by transparent data and reporting.
- **Public skepticism and apathy toward individual diversion efforts:** Many participants expressed doubt that personal actions significantly impact overall waste diversion, citing a lack of visible results and mistrust in the system. This underscores

the need for more compelling education and storytelling particularly around the limited lifespan of the Green Lane Landfill. Suggestions included multilingual campaigns, visual signage, and school-based programs to build long-term awareness.

- **Multi-residential buildings identified as high-priority areas for intervention:** Feedback emphasized the need to modernize often broken tri-sorters and single-stream chutes, ensure participation in organics diversion programs across both City-serviced and privately serviced buildings, and provide equal access to diversion services. Participants also called for targeted outreach, lobby-level engagement, and incentives for property managers to improve sorting and reduce contamination.
- **Widespread enthusiasm for community-based waste reduction programs:** Many expressed interest in expanding Community Environment Days through roaming pop-ups, partnerships with food courts and schools, and localized drop-off depots. Additional ideas included repair cafés, reuse markets, and Freecycle-style events to promote circular economy practices and reduce barriers to participation.
- **Support for energy-from-waste (incineration) facilities as a method to manage Toronto's residual waste with conditions that facilities meet stringent environmental and public health standards.** Supporters of energy-from-waste point out that the practice could help manage residual waste closer to home, reduce reliance on landfilling and create usable energy from garbage. Those in support of energy-from-waste facilities also emphasized that as the Green Lane Landfill nears capacity, it is important for the City to adopt residual waste management technologies that minimize impacts to neighbouring communities, specifically Indigenous and equity-deserving communities. Supporters further pointed to the advanced technology seen in leading European and Asian jurisdictions that could be adopted by the City of Toronto. Concerns raised about the environmental and social impacts of energy-from-waste highlighted the need to prioritize the health of vulnerable populations when choosing the type and location of any future waste management facilities. Participants also emphasized the importance of ensuring that any future energy-from-waste facilities maintain stringent environmental protections, safeguard human health, meet best-of-class standards, and align with Toronto's Net Zero Strategy and climate goals.
- **Interest in alternatives to landfilling.** A majority of respondents support the City further exploring energy-from-waste technologies, with 72% of public polling participants and 79% of survey respondents citing interest in generating usable energy from garbage and reducing reliance on landfilling as key motivators. Many voiced concerns about the long-term viability of landfilling, including land use impacts, leachate risks, and disproportionate effects on Indigenous communities. There was notable interest in exploring innovative technologies from around the world, such as those implemented at CopenHill in Denmark and the Reppie Plant in Ethiopia. Interest in alternatives to landfilling is driven by a desire for local waste management. Most respondents (64% of polling participants and 67% of survey

participants) prefer that Toronto manage its waste within city limits rather than sending it elsewhere for disposal.

- **Concerns raised that energy-from-waste (incineration) facilities may have greater climate change impacts than other waste management approaches.** Participants opposing this option emphasized that incineration could result in higher greenhouse gas emissions compared to landfilling. There were calls for the City to conduct a comprehensive climate impact assessment of all residual waste strategies through a climate change lens.
- **Focus on upstream solutions including the five Rs (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle).** Participants emphasized the importance of upstream solutions to reduce waste before it is created. This includes promoting the five Rs and holding producers accountable for the types and amounts of waste they generate. Participants called for greater investment in programs like Community Environment Days to support and strengthen these principals within individuals, while many felt targeting producers would be most impactful to reduce waste and in turn reduce residual waste.
- **Strong support for regulatory oversight and accountability.** Participants called for robust regulatory oversight for any future energy-from-waste facility, including regular audits, performance tracking and public reporting of emissions and air quality impacts. Suggestions included implementing fees and fines for non-compliance and ensuring facilities meet high performance and environmental standards.
- **It is unlikely that energy-from-waste (incineration) facilities will impact individual waste sorting behaviours.** Most participants (93% of polling participants and 94% of survey respondents) indicated their behaviours would remain unchanged while some said they would be more likely to sort waste correctly if the City adopted energy-from-waste technologies. Some respondents believe it could improve sorting habits if paired with strong public education and enforcement. However other respondents worry that the adoption of energy-from-waste facilities could reduce individual motivation to sort waste properly, Familiarity with energy-from-waste technology is relatively high, with 78% of survey and public opinion polling respondents indicating they are either very familiar or have a limited degree of familiarity with energy-from-waste (incineration).

Overview

The City of Toronto (the City) is updating the Long-term Waste Management Strategy (Waste Strategy) 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 3 phases:

- **Phase 1** – Build the Foundation
- **Phase 2** – Evaluate Possibilities
- **Phase 3** – Create a Roadmap

As part of broader consultation on the Waste Strategy Update, in Phase 1 and Phase 2, the City also consulted on perceptions of energy-from-waste as a potential option to manage residual waste. Feedback was also sought on the values that influence these perceptions.

Long-term availability of landfill space across Ontario is limited and is expected to reach full capacity within ten years. This is also the case for the City, as the Green Lane landfill has an estimated lifespan of approximately 10 years, with closure anticipated in 2035. As the largest municipality in the province, the City needs to secure the best solutions to meet the needs of our growing population while mitigating unnecessary financial risk and environmental and social impacts. Residual waste management planning is focused on identifying solutions to the City's residual waste management needs as Green Lane Landfill nears capacity.

In 2023, City Council approved the Residual Waste Management Work Plan, which outlines strategic long-term options to manage residual waste. It also presents short- and medium-term actions that Solid Waste Management Services can initiate to extend the lifespan of Green Lane Landfill, which will provide time to study, develop and operationalize long-term options.

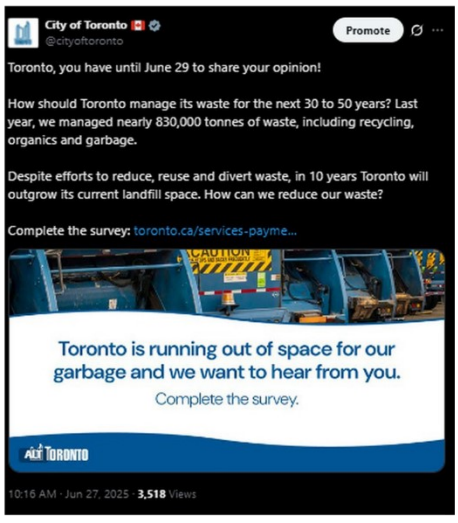
This report summarizes consultation activities and feedback received during Phase 2 consultation on the Long-term Waste Management Strategy and the Residual Waste Management Work Plan, which took place from May 21, 2025, to June 29, 2025.

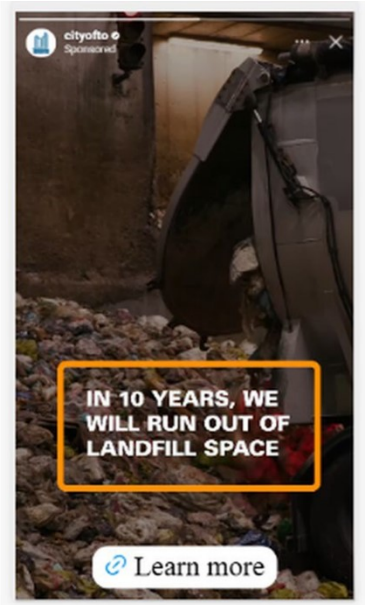
Notification & Consultation Activities

Notification Activities

As part of the Waste Strategy Update, a variety of methods were used to notify interest groups and members of the public about Phase 2 consultation between May 21, 2025 to June 29, 2025:

- Project web page: toronto.ca/wastestrategy (46,352 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 3Rs Ambassador Program (3Rs Ambassador Volunteer – City of Toronto), Residential Associations, Property and Facilities Management, Environmental, Social Service and Community Organizations, Businesses and Business Associations, Waste Management and Processing, Indigenous Community Organizations and Accessibility Organizations (1,239 contacts)
- Social media posts via City accounts on X, Instagram, and Facebook.
    - X: 15,816 impressions and 89 clicks
    - Facebook: 85,561 impressions and 386 clicks
    - Instagram: 18,757 views and 250 clicks
- Digital advertising via Thestar.com, CP24, CTV news, The Weather Network, Rogers, PrimeDatalytics, mobile news and weather apps in multiple languages (Chinese, Tagalog, Spanish, Tamil)
- Mentions in City Councillor newsletters



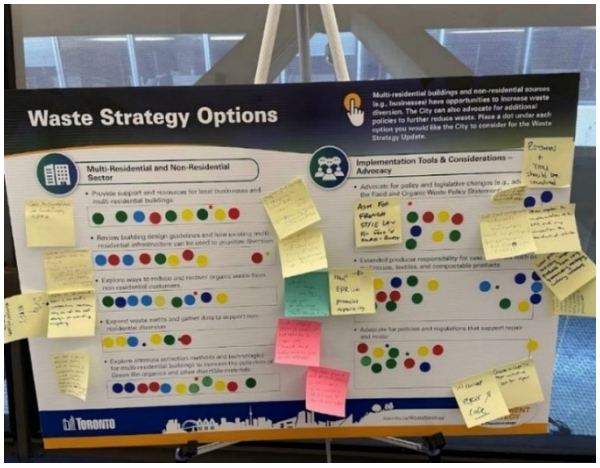


Consultation Activities

Online Survey and Public Opinion Polling

A survey was made available on the City's webpage from May 21, 2025 to June 29, 2025, that received 11,073 responses. Participation was anonymous and printed surveys were available upon request. The survey included 16 questions asking about waste strategy options, evaluation frameworks and residual waste management. Statistically representative Public Opinion Polling was conducted by Environics between June 3 to June 29, 2025, and received 1,143 responses.

Public Meeting



A public meeting took place in-person on June 10, 2025 from 5 to 8 p.m. at Toronto City Hall and was attended by 61 individuals in-person. A virtual livestream of the event was made available on YouTube and was attended by 21 individuals. A recording of the event remains available on YouTube, which has 748 views as of July 30, 2025.

The event featured presentations on the Waste Strategy Update and Residual Waste Management, as well as opportunities to provide feedback on these projects. Additional presentations were provided on related City initiatives, such as the Circular Economy Road Map and the Single-Use & Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy.

Information panels displayed at the event provided attendees the opportunity to engage further with project materials and City staff before, during and after the presentations. Information panel topics included Waste Strategy options, evaluation methodology and Residual Waste Management. Presenters at the public meeting included Charlotte Ueta, Acting Director Policy, Planning and Outreach who provided opening remarks, followed by Meaghan Davis, Manager of Circular Economy and Innovation, presenting on the Circular Economy Roadmap, Myron McLelland, Senior Project Manager in Solid Waste Policy and Planning, provided a presentation on the Single-Use & Takeaway Item Reduction Strategy followed by Michael Cant, Principal and Vice-President at GHD who presented on the Waste Strategy Update and Residual Waste Management projects.

Following the presentations, a question-and-answer period allowed for virtual and in-person attendees to ask questions of project staff. Both Atif Durrani, Acting Project Director of Business Transformation and Erwin Pascual, Manager Solid Waste Policy and Planning, joined the presenters as panel members for the question-and-answer period. The comments received via the information panels and question-and-answer period are summarized in this report.

Interest Group Workshops

Five virtual interest group workshops were held on June 6, 9, 12 and 13, 2025 for interest groups representing the waste industry, and residential, commercial, institutional, community, environmental and Indigenous organizations. Each workshop featured a presentation on the Waste Strategy Update and the Residual Waste Management Work Plan. Opportunities for questions and a facilitated discussion followed the presentations. Participants were also invited to share additional feedback through the survey or by email.

More than 904 interest groups were invited to attend and 187 representatives from the following 94 organizations participated in the virtual workshops.

Category	Organization	
Accessibility, Community, Environmental, Indigenous & Social Service Organizations	• Astra Burka Design Ltd • Black Creek Community Farm • C40 Cities • Citizens Climate Lobby • Delta Family Resource Centre • Don't Mess with the Don • Environmental Defense • ESS Support Services • Etobicoke Climate Action • Furniture Bank • Metro Vancouver and the National Zero Waste Council • North York Harvest • Oceana Canada	• Project Swallowtail • Progress Place • Seniors for Climate Action Now • Street Haven • Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre • Toronto District School Board • Toronto Environmental Alliance • University of Toronto • University of Guelph
Business & Business Associations	• Art Gallery of Ontario • Bloor-Yorkville BIA • Blue Mountain Plastics Recycling/ Ice River Springs • Broadview Danforth BIA • Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers • Clear Strategy representing Restaurants Canada • Dart Container Corporation • Downtown Yonge BIA • Emery Village BIA • Fairbank Village BIA • Good Judy • Green Standards • Home Depot	• Kraft Heinz • Lafarge Canada • Mount Pleasant Village BIA • Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association (ORHMA) • Pathway Group • Queen Street West BIA • Suppli • West Queen West BIA • Yonge + St. Clair BIA • Yonge Lawrence Village BIA
Residential Associations, Property & Facilities Management	• Bay Cloverhill Community Association • Bayview Village Association • BILD • Canary District Neighbourhood Association • CEED Canada • Equity in Green • EWCA Member • FoNTRA	• M&R Holdings • MetCap Living Management Inc. • Presentation Manor for Seniors • Scarborough Retirement Residence • Seaton Village Resident Association • Shibley Righton LLP

Category	Organization	
	• GBRE • Greater Toronto Apartment Association • Greenwin Corporation • Highland Creek Community Association • Homes First Society • Houselink & Mainstay Community Housing • Kipling Residential Management	• St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association • Starlight Investments • Summerhill Resident Association
Waste Industry	• Blue Mountain Plastics Recycling/Ice River Springs • Enwave • Generate Upcycle • Green Shields Energy • H20 Group Inc • Innovate Waste Solutions • Lake Erie Green Power	• Lake Erie Green Power • McMillan Vantage • Republic Services • Walker Industries • Waste Management of Canada • Wright Strategies

What We Heard

Online Survey and Public Opinion Polling

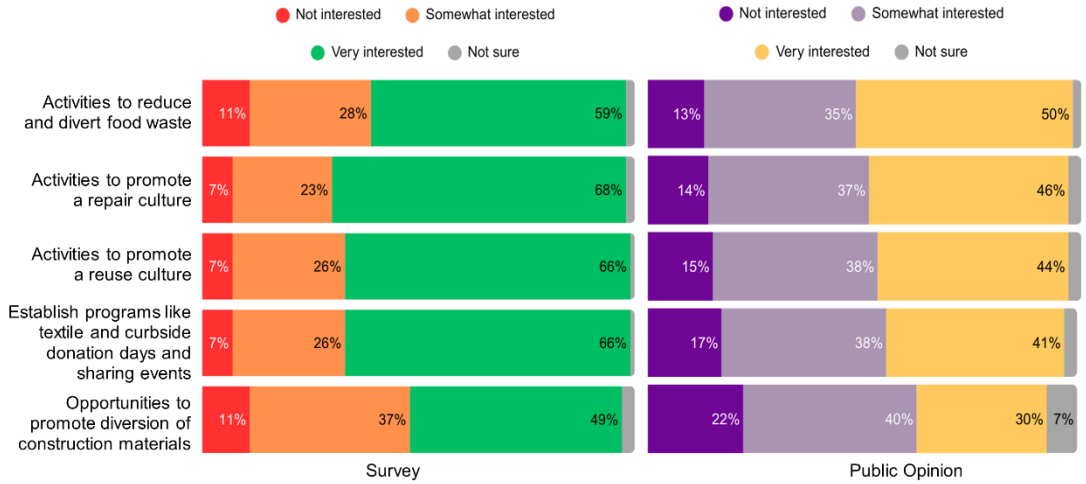
The following questions were part of the City of Toronto's Long-term Waste Management Strategy Update survey, which was open for comment from May 21 to June 29, 2025. Responses received to each question in the survey are described in this section.

Public opinion polling was conducted by Environics between June 3 and June 29, 2025, to complement the online survey. The results of both the public opinion polling and the survey are shown in comparison below.

See Appendix A and B in the Public Consultation tab at toronto.ca/wastestrategy for additional detailed on survey demographics and public opinion polling.

- **Appendix A:** Survey Demographics
- **Appendix B:** Public Opinion Polling

What types of waste reduction programs would you be most interested in participating in if offered by the City?



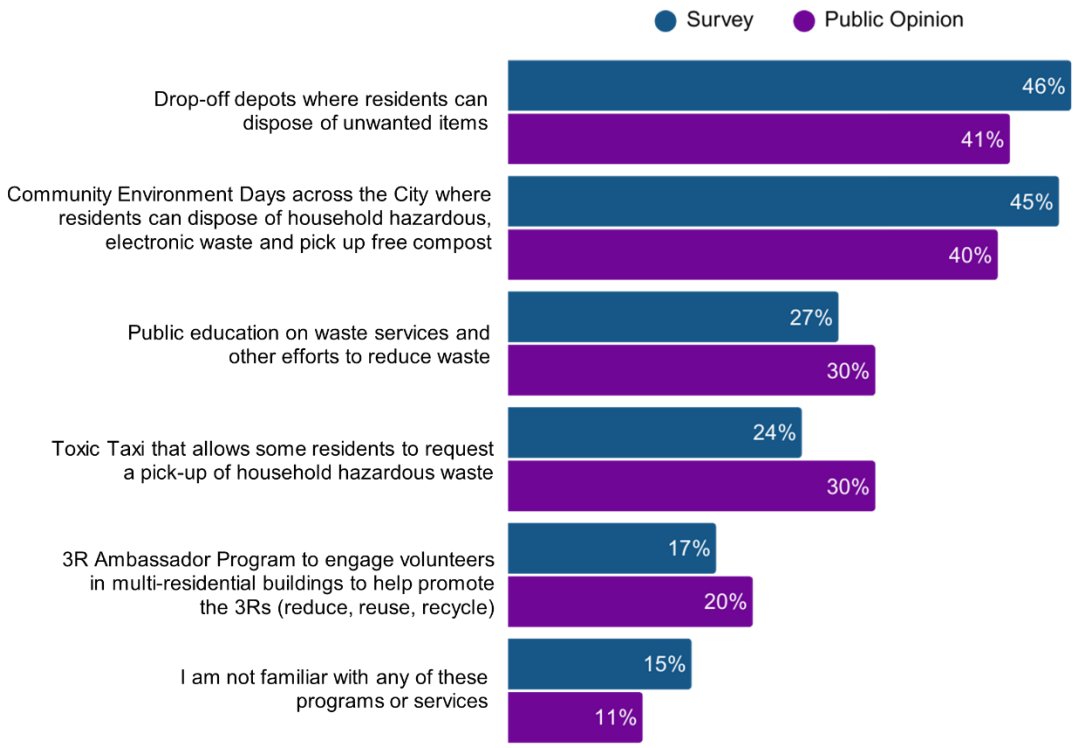
Repair and reuse programs are the most popular, indicating strong public interest in extending the life of consumer goods and reducing waste at the source. Textile recycling and donation events received high interest while construction and demolition waste diversion had slightly lower interest, possibly reflecting its relevance to fewer residents.

In the survey, additional comments shared under “Other” include the following:

Theme	Comment Summary
Communication, Education & Engagement	• Create publicly shareable lists of where to donate clothing, textiles, household goods • Create an education campaign that shows how disposable, single-use items are not sustainable and how to sort and dispose of waste properly, including toothbrushes, coffee pods and organics • Education is needed around soiled pizza boxes that end up in recycling. Residents don't know that they are contaminated and non-recyclable • Create an art exhibit of waste to express the crisis of single-use items and waste contamination in Toronto • Share more messaging on how Green Lane is at capacity and it is adjacent to Indigenous communities • The biggest confusion for Torontonians is about what is recyclable and what is garbage
Energy-from-Waste (incineration)	• Support for incineration over landfilling • Adopt the incineration model of CopenHill in Copenhagen, Denmark • Incineration practices can generate revenue
Ideas & Innovation	• Introduce a returnable glass and can vending machine
Implementation Tools & Considerations	• Concerns that small businesses will be impacted financially by switching to different, compostable packaging • Fees and fines should be applied to any waste disposal contractors that contribute to waste contamination by mixing recycling and garbage • Create incentives for producers to adopt environmentally friendly packaging • Strong support for holding manufacturers accountable for packaging waste • Create a by-law that will require cafes to provide glass, metal and ceramic plates and utensils for those dining in
Programs & Partnerships	• Partner with Tim Hortons and McDonalds for awareness that some takeout containers are not recyclable • Create a reuse centre where artists can come pick over usable scraps

Theme	Comment Summary
	• Partner with food courts to strategize around waste reduction and proper sorting technologies and to introduce reusable dishware. • Partner with UofT Trash Team for programming support

Which of the following existing waste management services and programs should be further reviewed to identify potential improvements? Select up to 2 programs and services



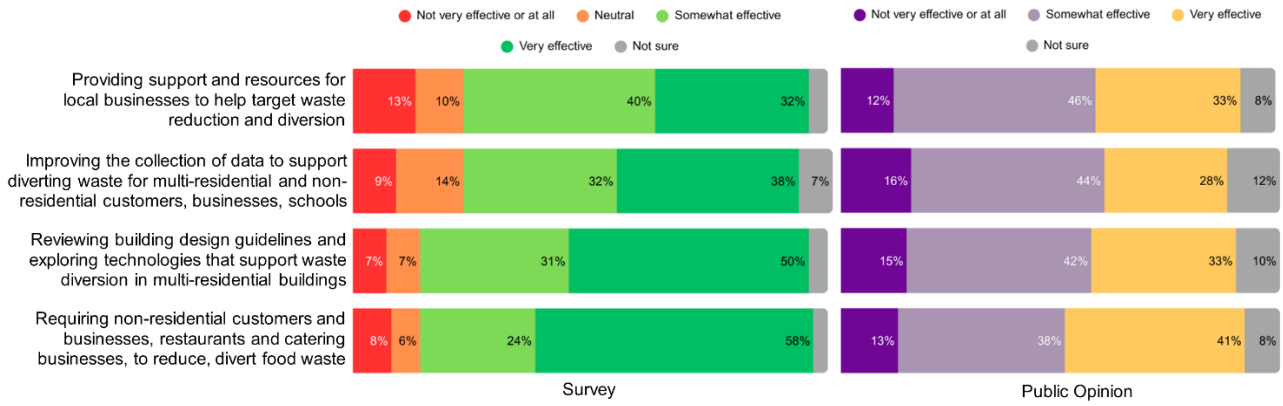
Both survey respondents and public opinion polling identified drop-off depots and Community Environment Days as having potential for improvements. Additional suggestions for Community Environment Days include the creation of roaming pop-up style events at multi-residential buildings to make accessing these services easier.

In the survey, additional comments shared under “other” include the following:

Theme	Comment Summary
Communication, Education & Engagement	• Calls for better public education on sorting, recycling, and waste reduction • Skepticism about whether recycling is happening and where waste ends up • Support for better communication and education on what is recyclable and what is not, focusing on black plastics and

Theme	Comment Summary
	Styrofoam • Protect the pollinators with strong education through the City's waste calendar
Ideas & Innovation	• Create a freecycle day where community is encouraged to drop-off household items • Improve accessibility of drop-off depots by adopting a roaming pop-up style Community Environment Day • Improve yard waste collection practice to protect pollinators, pick up yard waste later in the season and Leave the Leaves
Implementation Tools & Considerations	• Suggestion to work directly with retailers and businesses to train them on the benefits of accepting and encouraging bring your own items from customers • Support for a deposit fee on plastic drink containers • Support for the TOwaste app and website as resources
Residual Waste (landfilling & incineration)	• Mixed opinions on using incineration as a waste management strategy • Concerns for the air quality and health of communities adjacent to landfills
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recovery – Multi-Residential, Institutional & Commercial Buildings	• Expand the Green Bin program to all multi-residential buildings • Expand the role of the Toxic Taxi to include a regular pick-up to buildings with high contamination rates

How effective do you think the following types of new programs would be in helping to reduce landfill waste if the City were to implement them? Please select one response for each option



Respondents were able to select one response for each option to rank the perceived effectiveness of programs and strategies to help reduce landfill waste if adopted. The majority of survey respondents selected requiring non-residential customers and businesses, such as restaurants and catering businesses, to reduce and divert food waste (82%) as the most effective program to reduce landfill waste. This is a top response also expressed in the public opinion polling (79%), followed by providing support and resources for local business and multi-residential communities to help target waste reduction and diversion (79%).

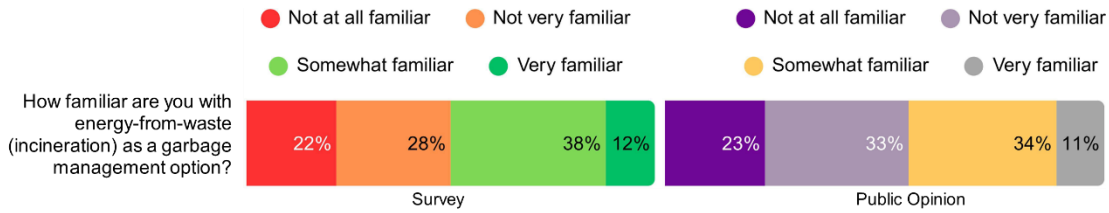
The second most effective new program according to the survey (81%) and the public opinion polling (75%) is reviewing building design guidelines and exploring technologies that support waste diversion in multi-residential buildings.

In the survey, additional comments shared under “other” include the following:

Theme	Comment Summary
Communication, Education & Engagement	• Education campaigns will be key to waste diversion • The City should enlist local green non-profits to support communication and education activities
Ideas & Innovation	• Include mandatory food donation and incentives for reducing spoilage and encourage composting • Create community composting in public parks • Suggestions for can and bottle deposit-return systems
Implementation Tools & Considerations	• Strong demand for holding businesses accountable for the waste they generate, especially packaging and food waste • Calls for stricter enforcement, including fines for non-compliance in sorting and waste diversion • Reducing waste downstream can only be done by actions taken by producers • The plastic bag ban was effective and adopting similar strategies could reduce long term waste generation

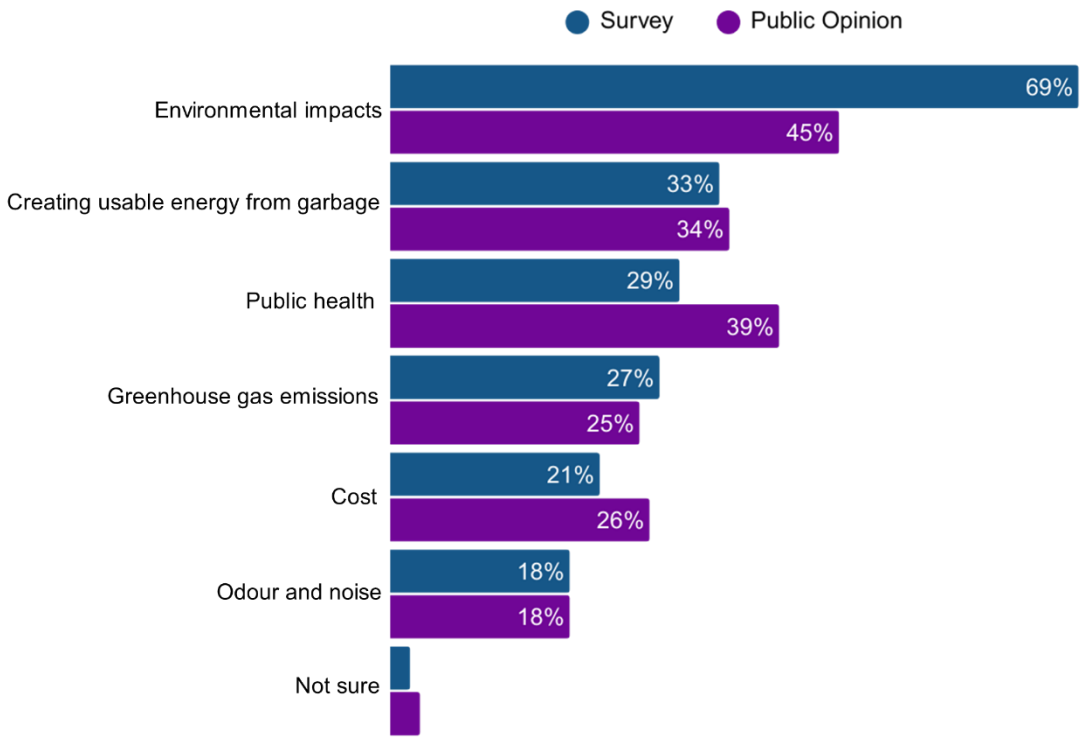
Theme	Comment Summary
Programs & Partnerships	• Provide support for existing waste diversion programs like repair cafes
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recovery – Multi-Residential, Institutional & Commercial Buildings	• Concerns that office buildings experience significant waste contamination • Suggestion to audit the waste of businesses and give them a report card with fees • Calls for multi-residential buildings without tri-sorters to be modernized to reduce waste contamination
Residual Wate (Landfilling & Incineration)	• Support for incineration to generate power • Concerns about air quality and incineration

How familiar are you with energy-from-waste as a garbage management option?



Only 12% of survey respondents said they were very familiar with energy-from-waste (incineration), while 66% reported having limited familiarity (including “somewhat familiar” and “not very familiar”) and 22% said they were not familiar at all. Similarly, the public opinion polling showed that 11% of respondents reported being very familiar with energy-from-waste, while 67% reported having limited familiarity, and 23% said they were not familiar at all.

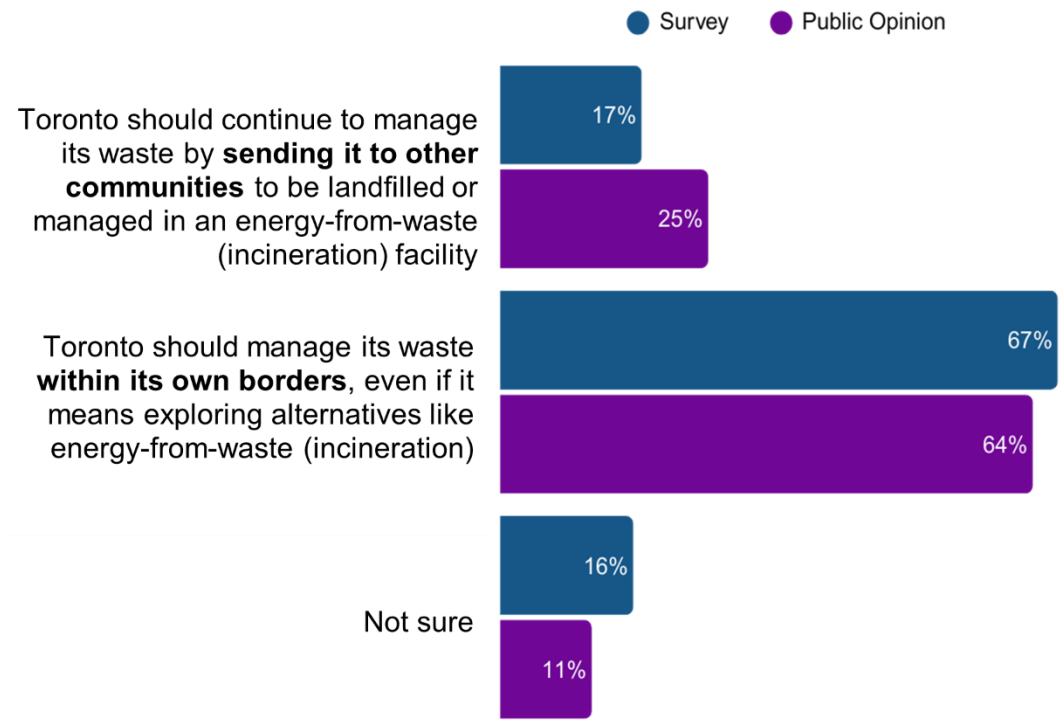
There are many considerations when the City makes decisions about how to dispose of waste. Select the top two considerations most important to you.



Across all survey respondents, environmental impacts were the most important consideration when deciding how the City should dispose of residual waste, followed by creating usable energy from garbage and public health.

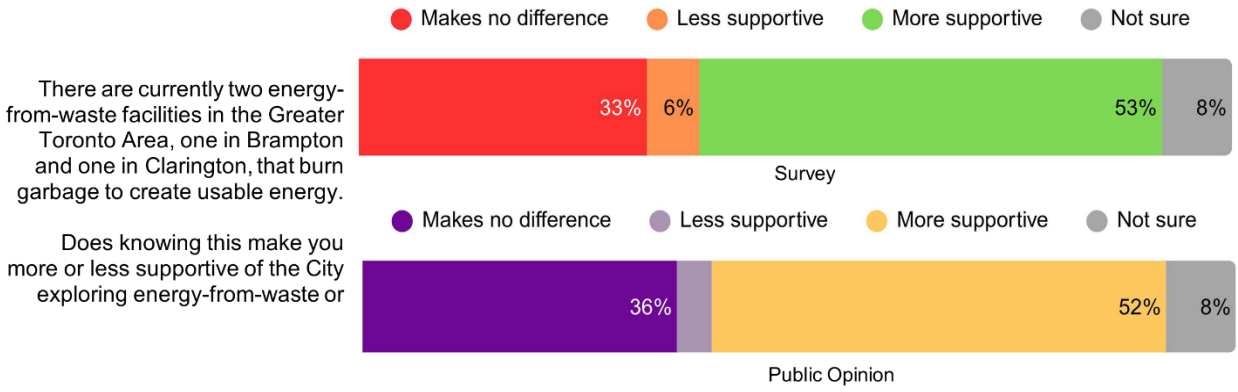
In the survey, the second most important consideration was creating usable energy from garbage, followed by public health. In the polling, public health was the second most important consideration, followed by creating usable energy from garbage. Survey respondents between the ages of 20 and 29 placed more emphasis on public health and greenhouse gas emissions, while respondents over 55 years of age showed stronger support for creating usable energy from garbage.

There are many considerations when the City makes decisions about how to dispose of waste. Select the top two considerations most important to you.



In both the survey and public opinion polling, the preferred option is for Toronto to manage its waste within its own borders, even if it means exploring alternatives, such as energy-from-waste, with strong support shown across all age groups. Support is highest among those aged 30–54.

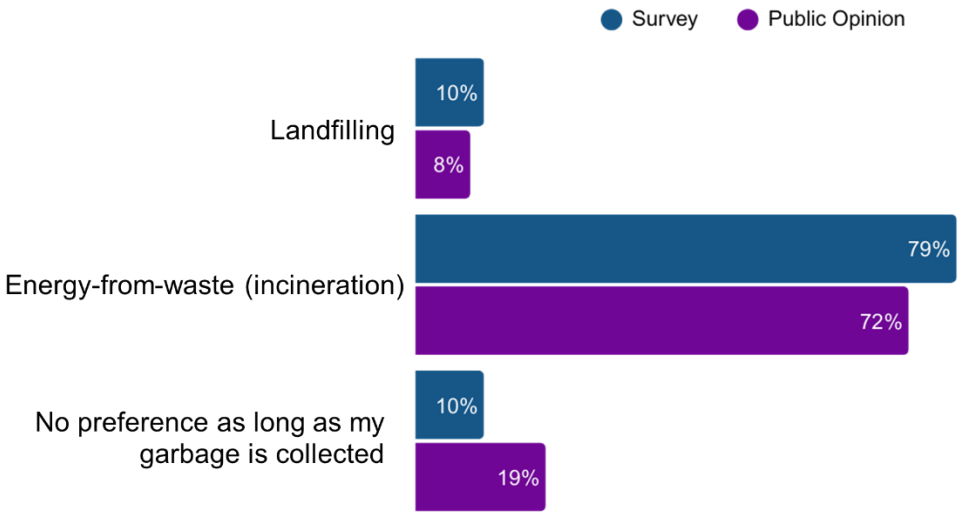
There are currently two energy-from-waste facilities in the Greater Toronto Area, one in Brampton and one in Clarington, that burn garbage to create usable energy. Does knowing this make you more or less supportive of the City exploring energy-from waste or does it not make a difference? Please select one of the options below.



In the survey, most respondents expressed that they are more supportive of the City exploring energy-from-waste facilities knowing that these strategies are already employed in Brampton and Clarington (53%). A comparable sentiment is found in the public opinion polling with over half of respondents expressing support for energy-from-waste facilities after knowing the strategies are employed elsewhere in the Greater Toronto Area (52%).

Survey respondents under the age of 29 show relatively higher uncertainty and less support, while respondents aged between 30 - 54 shared the strongest support. Survey respondents over the age of 55 tended to be more supportive or neutral.

If you had to choose between sending garbage to landfill or to an energy from waste facility, which would you prefer? Please select one of the options below.



The majority of survey and public opinion polling respondents prefer energy-from-waste over landfilling. In the survey, businesses who receive City of Toronto waste collection services shared strong preferences for sending garbage to an energy-from-waste facility (80%). Similarly, property managers and superintendents expressed preference towards sending garbage to energy-from-waste facilities over landfilling (81%).

Survey respondents who live in multi-residential buildings expressed preference for energy-from-waste over landfilling (80%). Survey respondents living in single-family homes expressed similar levels of preference for energy-from-waste over landfilling (79%).

Respondents, whether familiar or unfamiliar with energy-from-waste, were equally likely to prefer this waste management strategy over landfilling (80% and 78.6% respectively).

In the survey, the question above about preference between energy-from-waste facilities and landfilling was followed by an open-ended prompt inviting respondents to explain their choice. The following summarizes comments shared in response.

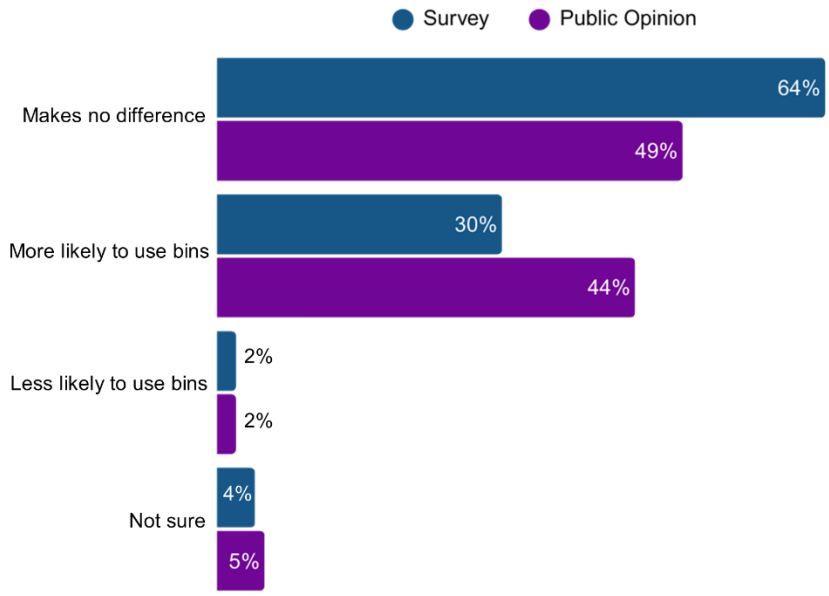
Please explain your response to the previous question:

Theme	Comment Summary
Communication, Education & Engagement	• Concerns about misleading public messaging, greenwashing and promotion of incineration without fair consideration of alternatives • Strong calls for transparent, unbiased and updated information before decisions are made on energy-from-waste versus landfilling, desire for independent experts to explain the risks, limitations and environmental impacts of each waste management option • Need for better public education on how energy-from-waste technologies work, their environmental impacts and its place in the waste hierarchy • Interest in alternatives to incineration and aligning with broader City sustainability goals • Improve education, enforcement and incentives around recycling, sorting and waste minimization
Energy-from-Waste (Incineration) - Opposition	• Incineration is seen as undermining recycling and diversion efforts and can divert resources from more sustainable solutions like reduction, reuse and composting • Skepticism about pollution controls, data transparency and the City's ability to manage facilities safely and long-term viability due to declining waste volumes and costly infrastructure • Strong opposition to siting near residential areas due to concerns about air quality, odours and impacts to property value
Energy-from-Waste (Incineration) -Support	• Incineration is seen as a way to reduce landfill use, lower emissions, convert waste into energy and valuable materials, supporting circular economy goals, offer cost savings by reducing transport/export costs and generating revenue through energy sales and material recovery • Support is conditional on strict safeguards to protect public health and the environment

Theme	Comment Summary
Environmental & Public Health Concerns	• Air emissions and toxic outputs from incineration (e.g., dioxins, heavy metals, microplastics) are major concerns, especially for vulnerable populations like children, elders and those with pre-existing conditions • Calls for assurance that modern pollution control technologies (e.g., scrubbers, filters, high-temperature combustion) are effective, supported by real-world data • Preference for locating facilities in industrial zones, away from homes, schools and parks
Ideas & Innovations	• Scandinavian countries and Japan are cited as leaders in energy-from- waste, using advanced, space-efficient systems to generate energy and reduce landfill use with minimal pollution • Cities like Vienna and Copenhagen are praised for integrating incineration facilities into urban design, making them functional and publicly accessible (e.g., ski hills, recreation spaces) • Interest in alternative technologies (e.g., biofuels, fermentation) that may offer lower health and environmental risks • Emphasis on ensuring financial benefits remain public, reinvested into City services or used to reduce living costs
Landfill - Opposition	• Continued reliance on landfills is considered unsustainable, delaying real solutions and burdening future generations • Landfill gas recovery systems are seen as inefficient and prone to failure, contributing to fugitive methane emissions • There is a trade-off between air pollution from incineration and soil/water contamination from landfilling
Landfilling - Support	• Landfilling is often viewed as more familiar, stable and manageable than incineration • Some argue that landfilling creates less greenhouse gas emissions when compared to energy-from-waste • Landfills are seen as better aligned with waste reduction goals since they don’t require a constant waste supply
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recovery	• Strong support for waste reduction as a priority, with calls for systemic changes, such as regulating packaging, promoting reuse and rewarding sustainable behaviour • Emphasis on improving sorting and separation of recyclables and organics and investing in systems that reduce landfill-bound waste • Support for extended producer responsibility, harmonized packaging standards, deposit-return schemes and stricter

Theme	Comment Summary
	rules for high-waste businesses • Managing waste locally can reduce emissions from hauling, increase accountability and encourage waste reduction

If garbage were sent to an energy-from-waste facility, would you be more or less likely to use the Blue Bin for recycling and the Green Bin for organics, or would it make no difference? Please select one of the options below.



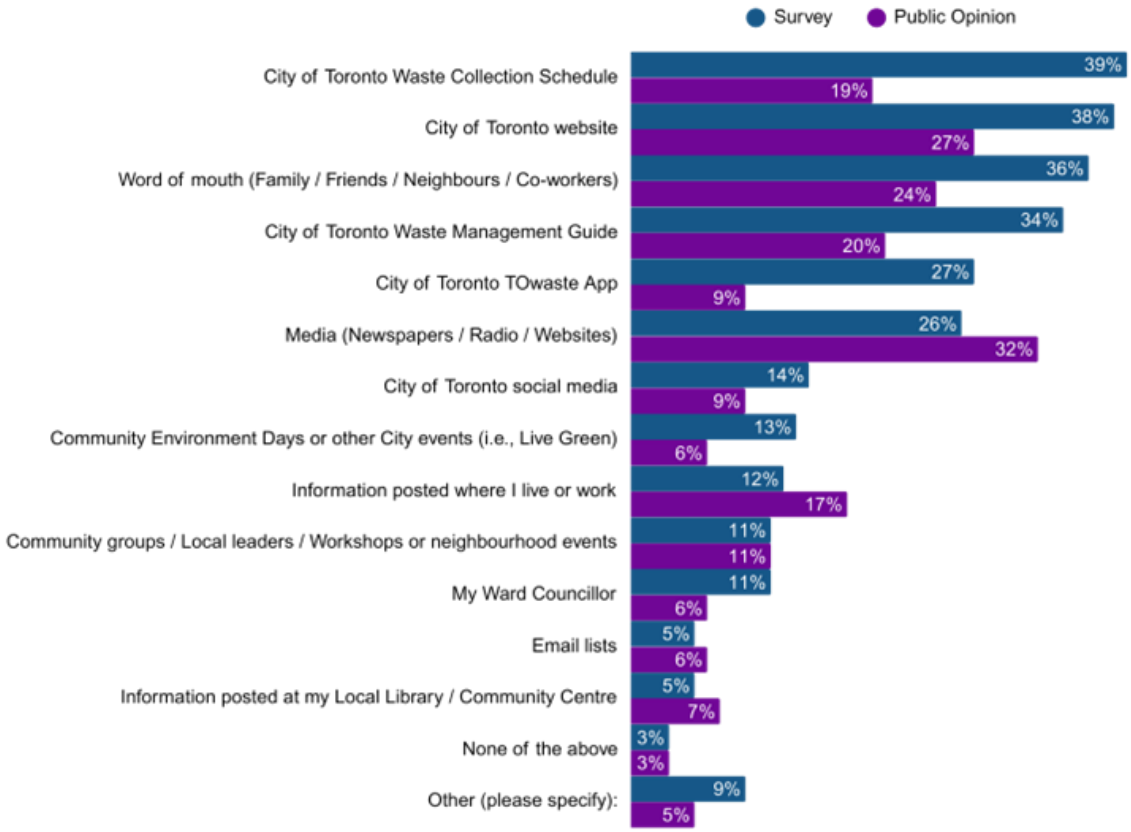
Most survey respondents expressed that if garbage were sent to an energy-from-waste facility, it would make no difference in their usage of the Blue Bin and the Green Bin (64%). Similarly, public opinion polling also indicates that most respondents feel that the adoption of energy-from-waste facilities would make no difference in their usage of the Blue Bin and Green Bin (49%).

Survey respondents between the ages of 20-29 were more likely to say they would increase their use of the Blue and Green Bins if energy-from-waste were adopted (42%). Residents of multi-residential buildings were more likely than those in single-family homes to say they would increase their use of the Blue and Green Bins if energy-from-waste were implemented.

One third of businesses that receive City waste services expressed they would be more likely to use the Blue Bin and Green Bin, a sentiment also shared by one third of businesses who do not currently receive City waste services. However, the majority of

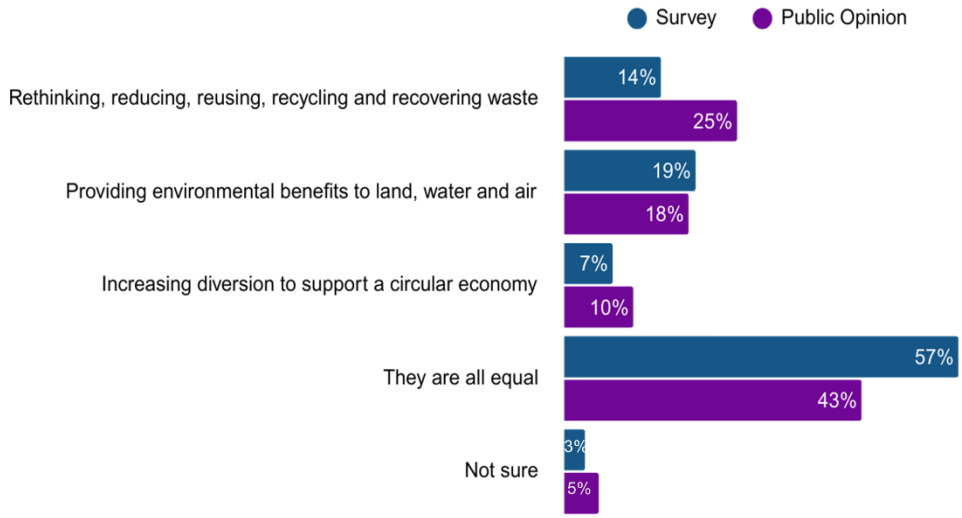
businesses that do and do not receive City waste services said that it would make no difference in their recycling behaviours if waste were sent to an energy-from-waste facility. Similarly, most survey respondents who work as property managers or superintendents stated that sending garbage to an energy-from-waste facility makes no difference in their usage of the Blue Bin and Green Bin (68%).

How do you currently learn about waste management programs, such as Blue Bin (recycling), Green Bin organics (compost), and Yard Waste in Toronto? Select all that apply.



The survey indicates that the City of Toronto's Waste Collection Schedule (39%) and the City's website (38%) are the top tools used to learn about waste management programs. In contrast, the public opinion polling indicates that media, including newspapers, radio and websites are effective tools for learning about waste management programs (32%).

Which of the following Environmental Impact considerations is the most important, or are they all equal? Please select one of the options below.

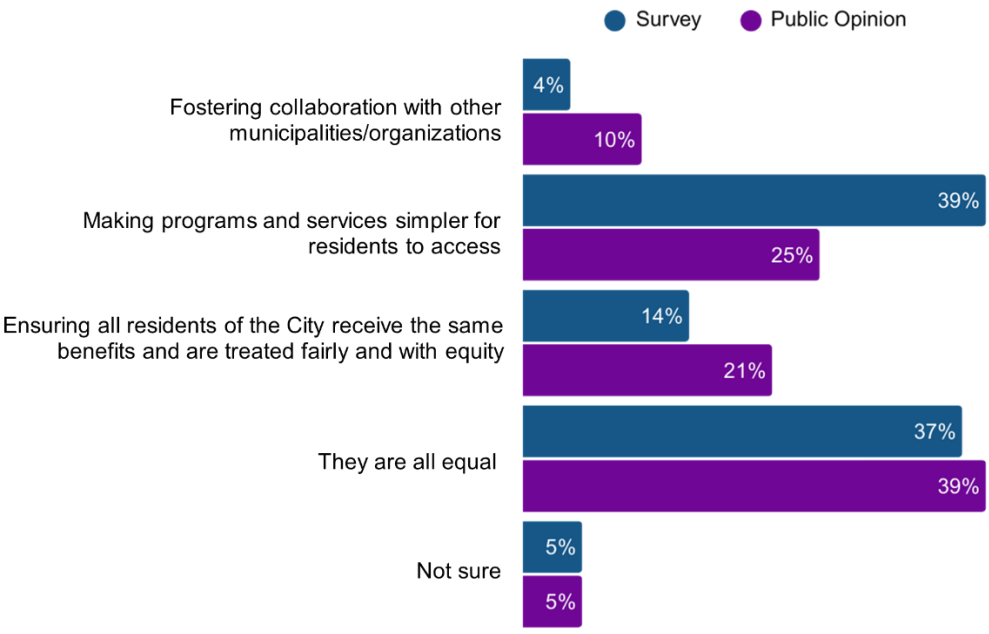


Most survey respondents feel that the considerations are all of equal importance (57%) compared to the 43% of public opinion polling respondents who share this sentiment.

Survey respondents who indicated in question four that they are somewhat or very familiar with energy-from-waste (incineration) technologies indicated that all Environmental Impact considerations are equal (56%).

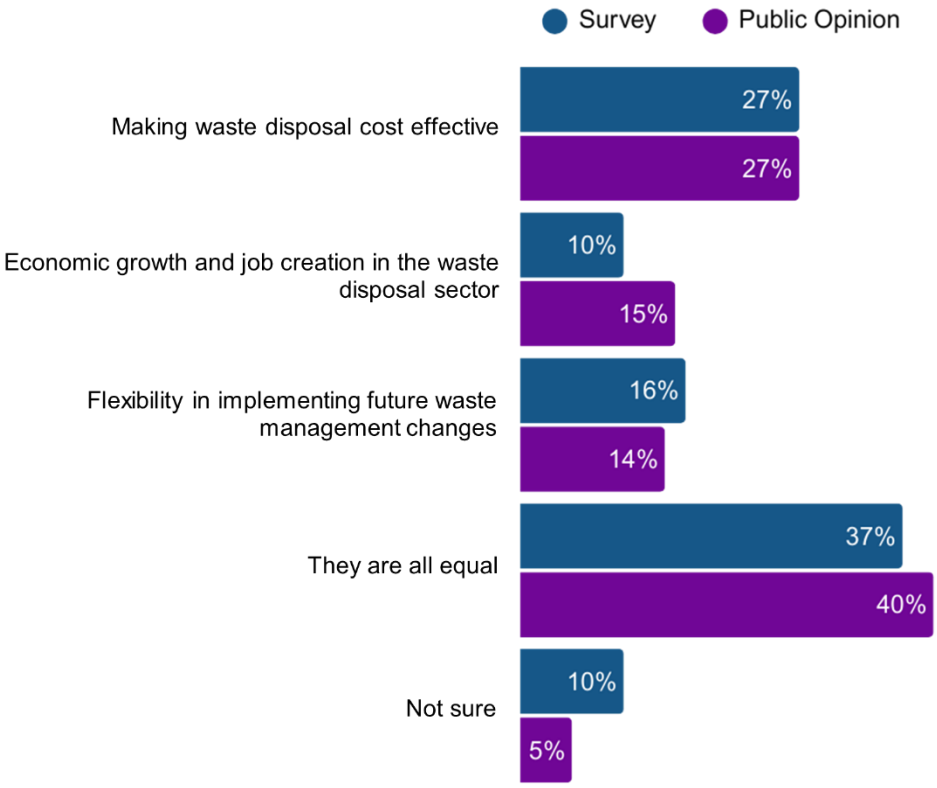
While survey respondents ranked providing environmental benefits to land, water, and air as the second most important consideration (19%), public opinion polling respondents felt that rethinking, reducing, reusing, recycling, and recovering waste was the second most important (25%).

Which of the following Social Impact considerations is the most important, or are they all equal? Please select one of the options below



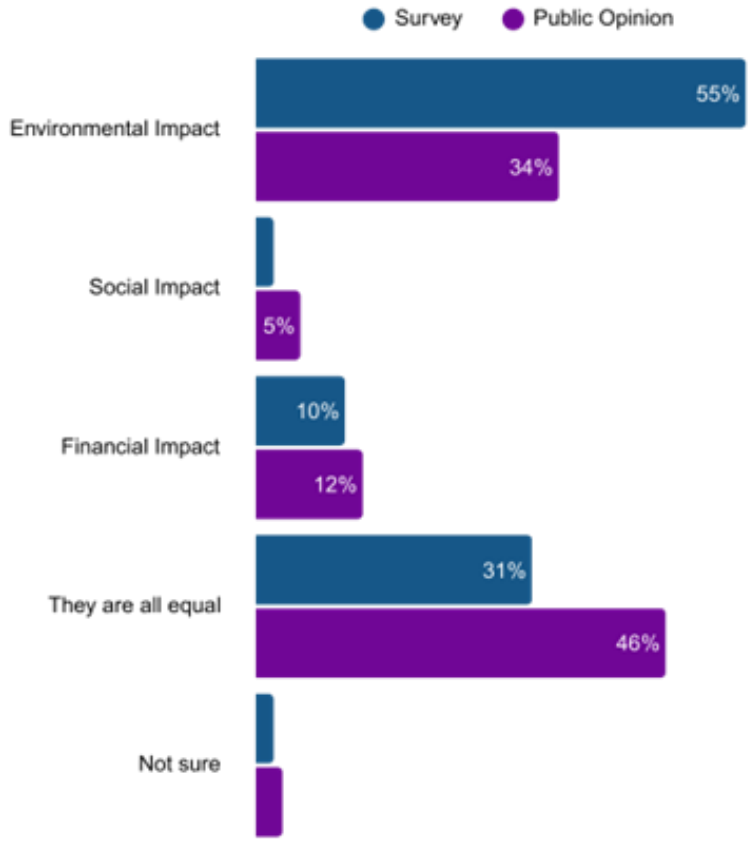
The survey indicates that making programs and services simpler for residents to access was most important to 39% of respondents, while 37% felt that all considerations were equally important. Similarly, public opinion polling showed that 39% of respondents believed all considerations were equal.

Which of the following Financial Impact considerations is the most important, or are they all equal? Please select one of the options below.



Public opinion polling found that 40% of respondents view all listed considerations as equally important, and this view is shared by 37% of survey participants. Tied for second most important consideration for both the survey and public opinion polling is making waste disposal and diversion cost effective (27%).

Of the three types of criteria, which is the most important, or are they all equal?
Please select one of the options below.



The majority of survey respondents indicated that Environmental Impact is the most important type of impact criteria (55%) while public opinion polling shows that 46% of respondents feel all criteria are equal. Similarly, those who represent a business expressed that Environmental Impact criteria are most important (56%).

Survey respondents were provided with an open-ended question to provide any additional feedback. Comments received are summarized below.

Do you have any other feedback to share on how the City can manage its waste?

Theme	Comment Summary
Communication, Education & Engagement	• Strong support for greater public education on waste management, including multilingual campaigns, visual signage, and community outreach • Emphasis on early and ongoing education, such as school programs, facility tours, social media content, and storytelling to build long-term awareness and responsible habits • Calls for city-wide standards, honest communication about system limitations, and consistent visual and multilingual education
Ideas & Innovations	• Support for exploring emerging waste technologies, including plastic-eating enzymes, chemical recycling, plastic-to-fuel conversion, and collaboration with

Theme	Comment Summary
	universities and startups • Invest in broadening the availability of repair cafés, reuse depots, and community exchange programs to promote circular economy practices • Improve public bin design in parks and busy areas, add additional bins in high-volume areas • Proposals for deposit-return systems (e.g., bottles and cans) and expanded Blue Bin programs to include more materials • Interest in partnerships with organizations like TerraCycle to manage hard- to-recycle items • Collect expired food from grocery stores and restaurants for donation or composting
Implementation Tools & Considerations	• Incentives like tax rebates, deposit-return systems, and rewards for low-waste households and businesses can help individual waste reduction behaviours • Stronger enforcement of waste sorting rules, including mandatory recycling and composting should be applied to building types • Calls to shift financial responsibility from individuals to corporations and large waste producers, especially those using non-recyclable packaging • Stricter packaging regulations to reduce waste upstream, focusing on the materials that are difficult to recycle downstream • Make the Green Bin program mandatory in all multi-residential buildings
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recovery – Single-Family, Multi-Residential, Institutional & Commercial Buildings	• Support for mandatory green bin programs and retrofitting older buildings, with enforcement in multi-residential, commercial, and new developments • Calls for better regulation of private waste contractors and incentives for businesses to adopt sustainable practices • Concern about infrastructure limitations like single-stream chutes and lack of storage in older buildings • Desire for comprehensive recycling and organics programs in apartments and condos
Waste Strategy Update	• Shift from disposal to systemic waste reduction, with stronger producer responsibility and legislation aligned with global best practices • Emphasis on connecting waste decisions to climate action, clean air, and green job creation • Call for transparent evaluation of waste management options based on both environmental and financial outcomes

Public Meeting

During the public meeting, participants expressed comments as summarized below.

Theme	Comment Summary
Communication, Education & Engagement	• Launch a city-wide education campaign on recycling, composting, and waste reduction, using subway ads, signage, and multilingual materials • Provide targeted outreach and tools for multi-residential and underserved communities, including demonstrations and simplified composting guidance • Improve waste literacy by explaining contamination impacts and connecting individual actions to broader goals like climate action and clean air • Host waste strategy consultation events in North York, Scarborough and Etobicoke
Energy-from-Waste - General	• Emissions calculations are complex and depend heavily on waste composition
Energy-from-Waste (Incineration) - Opposition	• The term “energy-from-waste” can be misleading and may downplay environmental and health impacts • Incineration facilities raise concerns about air quality, greenhouse gas emissions especially from organics and the adequacy of emission controls • Toronto’s waste stream may not be suitable for incineration due to contamination (e.g., electronic waste), highlighting the need to remove hazardous and organic materials beforehand • Incineration may conflict with Toronto’s Net Zero strategy and could reduce public motivation to sort waste properly • Concerns that older technologies may lack proper carbon capture systems
Energy-from-Waste (Incineration) - Support	• Energy-from-waste can generate offset income, bottom ash can potentially be used in construction projects, and facilities tend to have longer lifespans than landfills • Landfilling delays environmental impacts, while incineration may offer more immediate solutions • Strong regulatory models, like those in Southern California, could guide Toronto in setting high standards
Ideas & Innovation	• Create pop-up Household Hazardous Waste collection sites in buildings across the city • Adopt Peel Region’s cigarette disposal design in Toronto’s public bins • Expand waste education and composting initiatives in

Theme	Comment Summary
	public spaces like the Toronto Islands • Replicate successful reuse models like The ReMarket at St. Lawrence Market in other neighbourhoods • Invest in clean energy and recycling technologies to promote green jobs and long-term sustainability
Implementation Tools & Considerations	• Support for enhanced producer responsibility, especially to reduce plastic production • Calls for City oversight of private waste and energy-from-waste companies, including transparency on landfilling and contamination rates
Programs & Partnerships	• Host community thrift and swap events, including “buy nothing” markets • Promote and expand Repair Cafés and Community Environment Days, including pop-up versions at community centres and local events • Launch pilot projects in high-impact areas (e.g., Toronto Islands, hotels, schools) to engage youth and tourists in circular economy practices • Make the 3R’s Ambassador program more accessible to lower-income families • Improved programs and services can make waste diversion easier and more accessible
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recovery - Multi-Residential, Institutional & Commercial Buildings	• Improve sorting infrastructure in multi-residential and commercial buildings, address broken tri-sorters and poor bin design that lead to improper waste sorting and contamination • Regulate private waste management companies to ensure proper separation of recyclables and garbage
Residual Waste Management Work Plan	• Improve organics management to reduce the amount of waste going to the landfill for disposal • Include data on the Green Lane Landfill’s remaining lifespan and explore strategies to extend it • Prioritize environmental outcomes in all decision-making
Waste Strategy Update	• General support for updating the waste strategy and its guiding principles • Include the impact on communities near existing landfills as part of the waste strategy’s evaluation framework • Host waste strategy consultation events in North York, Scarborough and Etobicoke

Interest Group Meetings

Between June 6 and June 13, 2025, five interest group meetings were held, and input was gathered through two question-and-answer periods per meeting and facilitated small group discussions that are summarized below.

See **Appendix C** in the Public Consultation tab at toronto.ca/wastestrategy for notes categorized by theme and grouped by meeting type including Residential Associations, Property and Facilities Management, Environmental, Social Service and Community Organizations, Businesses and Business Associations, Waste Industry Indigenous Community Organizations and Accessibility Organizations

- **Appendix C:** Interest Group Workshop Summary Report

Theme	Comment Summary
Communication, Education & Engagement	• Ensure that Ontario's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) reporting about recycling and contamination data is accessible and easy to understand for the public • Provide targeted education and demonstrations in high-rise buildings to improve sorting practices • Deliver clear messaging on accepted plastics and how to prevent contamination in both residential and commercial settings • Address public mistrust by communicating what's working, what's not, and how residents can contribute to better waste management • Ensure consultation materials are unbiased, especially regarding incineration • Engage Indigenous communities near existing and future waste facilities • Communicate seasonal messages (e.g., leave leaves for pollinators) through tools like the waste calendar) • Expand the role of schools in waste education to build early awareness and habits • Expand education and outreach in high-rise communities, including graphic based sorting instructions and lobby-level engagement
Energy-from-Waste (Incineration) - General	• Strong regulatory frameworks for energy-from-waste exist as seen in the South Coast Air Quality Management District in Southern California. Suggestion for Toronto to adopt standards that meet or exceed this framework • Ash from energy-from-waste can be reused in construction materials • Concerns about Toronto's waste whether it is clean enough to incinerate

Theme	Comment Summary
	• Emphasis on the importance of removing hazardous and organic materials from the waste stream prior to incineration to allow for cleaner outputs • Interest in potential offset income streams from incineration
Energy-from-Waste (Incineration) - Opposition	• Incineration does not align with the City's Net Zero strategy • Air quality around incineration facilities, including methane gas release • The term "energy-from-waste" can be misleading and not fully represent environmental and health impacts • Calculations of greenhouse gas emissions are complicated and depend on the type of waste that enters the system. Concerns about organics entering the residual waste stream resulting in higher greenhouse gas emissions • Individuals may be less incentivized to sort properly if they believe waste will end up in an incineration facility • Concerns that older and less advanced technologies may be used for energy-from-waste processing that are not equipped with adequate carbon capture or emission control systems
Energy-from-Waste (Incineration) - Support	• Landfilling pushes the problem further down the road • Suggestion that in West Palm Beach, Florida, the launch of an energy-from- waste facility led to improved recycling rates • Energy-from-waste facilities can be built faster with less land use impacts than landfilling • Energy-from-waste technologies have longer lifespan than landfills
Ideas & Innovation	• Add more downtown waste drop-off locations, including pop-ups in multi- residential buildings • Encourage building/property managers to collaborate with the City on waste diversion • Support for deposit-return systems and reverse vending machines for cans and glass bottles • Install street bins with organics compartments to support public composting • Offer free or subsidized waste audits and eco-friendly supplies for businesses to reduce contamination and improve education • Explore vermiculture and composting technologies, and adopt QR code tracking (e.g., Washington, D.C.) to monitor waste behaviors • Expand the Toxic Taxi program to include pickup of bulky or hazardous items not suitable for residential disposal • Promote seasonal strategies like "Leave the Leaves" to support pollinators and reduce unnecessary yard waste

Theme	Comment Summary
	collection • Suggestions for biotechnology-based solutions, insect-based food waste processing and gasification • Interest in pilot programs and academic partnerships to explore new technologies • Interest in incentives and support for businesses to adopt on-site food waste processing infrastructure to reduce organics waste down the road
Implementation Tools & Considerations	• Align with the 2021 Auditor General's recommendation to ban organics from landfills • Increase municipal oversight of recycling and organics management in businesses using private waste contractors • Conduct regular waste audits to identify high-waste sectors and improve accountability • Incentivize packaging reduction, especially in industries like cannabis dispensaries that generate excessive plastic waste
Landfilling - General	• Suggestion that incineration is adopted in countries where there is not enough space for additional landfills
Landfilling - Opposition	• Suggestion that social impacts of incineration and landfilling are highest in underserved communities • Suggestion that landfilling may be a cheaper option but the perpetual care, runoff, land use consumption and impacts to nearby Indigenous communities should be weighed as costs when considering residual waste management options
Program & Partnerships	• Private sector partnerships can ease the City's waste management burden • Start organic composting programs in multi-residential buildings and partner with community gardens
Multi-Residential, Institutional & Commercial Buildings	• Bring the Green Bin program to all multi-residential buildings to reduce contamination and improve diversion • Improve waste sorting infrastructure in multi-residential buildings, including fixing broken tri-sorters and considering closure of garbage chutes • Ensure multi-residential and small-scale commercial buildings follow City waste collection requirements even when serviced by private contractors • Address high contamination rates in Blue Bin programs, especially in multi- residential buildings and schools • Provide equal access to waste diversion programs for multi-residential buildings, similar to single-family homes

Theme	Comment Summary
	• Recognize that cost and convenience are key factors for businesses and property managers, and offer incentives to support compliance • Improve organics management by expanding business collection and minimizing green waste contamination
Waste Strategy Update	• Reduce waste at the source by targeting producers • Explore alternatives to incineration and landfilling, including better metal removal and baling methods to reduce vermin • Clarify how the Toronto Green Standard aligns with the Waste Strategy Update • Include data on the Green Lane Landfill's remaining lifespan and explore strategies to extend it • Prioritize environmental outcomes in all decision-making

Email and Phone Comments

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 39 people between May 21 and June 29, 2025. All comments were recorded and reviewed for consideration and response.

Theme	Comment Summary
Communication, Education & Engagement	• Suggestions for public education, multilingual outreach, better signage, clearer sorting instructions, and more accessible public engagement • Interest in school programs, community ambassadors, and educational materials • Concerns about greenwashing, that "energy-from-waste" is misleading and not truly sustainable
Energy-from-Waste (Incineration) - Opposition	• Concerns about air quality, greenhouse gas emissions and health risks as a result of incineration • Some believe incineration undermines waste diversion efforts by reducing motivation to sort waste properly • Concerns that greenhouse gas emissions will be higher than anticipated due to organic waste contamination in the incineration stream
Ideas & Innovation	• Proposals for pilot programs, new technologies (e.g., black soldier fly composting, BagEZ), and reverse vending machines • Suggestions for gamification (e.g., waste sorting lotteries), augmented reality education, and circular economy models

Theme	Comment Summary
	• Interest in e-waste processing and reuse infrastructure and programs
Implementation Tools & Considerations	• Calls for stronger enforcement of bylaws, fines for non-compliance, and better oversight of private contractors • Concerns about contamination, lack of accountability, and the need for performance tracking • Requests for data transparency and regulatory clarity on the standards private companies are held to
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recovery	• Interest in reuse centres, donation directories, and community swap events • Confusion over recyclable materials (e.g., Tetrapaks, coffee cups) • Suggestions for expanded recycling categories
Multi-Residential, Institutional & Commercial	• Frustration with inconsistent access to green bins and tri-sorters in multi- residential buildings • Concerns about private waste haulers not following City protocols • Support needed in schools, offices, and restaurants to improve sorting and diversion
Landfilling - General	• Calls for upstream waste reduction to avoid reliance on landfilling • Concerns about Green Lane Landfill nearing capacity and the lack of viable alternatives
Landfilling - Opposition	• Strong concerns that landfilling is unsustainable, citing impacts on Indigenous communities, leachate, groundwater contamination, land use consumption
Waste Strategy Update	• Interest in aligning with TransformTO and Net Zero goals

For appendices, see toronto.ca/wastestrategy under the Public Consultation tab.