

**City of Toronto**  
**Public Works and Infrastructure Committee**  
**Meeting # 6 (Special)**  
**Item PW6.1 Core Service Review**  
**July 18, 2011**

Good morning Councillors, staff and members of the public.

My name is Heather Marshall and I am the Toxics Campaigner for the Toronto Environmental Alliance.

The Mayor's consultants, KPMG, released a report recommending the elimination of the City's Toxic Taxi and Community Environment Days, two important services provided to the public by the Solid Waste department. I will spend most of my deputation explaining how and why these two services ensure that the City of Toronto continues to fulfill its Household Hazardous Waste obligations.

But first, I feel it is important to explain why I need to do this. Sadly, KPMG failed to provide any detail to the public about the risks and costs associated with cutting these services. They also failed to explain why the City provides these services in the first place.

Every level of government in Canada acknowledges that Household Hazardous Wastes must be disposed of safely. Throwing these wastes in a landfill, burning them in an incinerator or dumping them down the drain all impact our health and the environment. The words 'hazardous' and 'toxic' should not be taken lightly. You should connect them with descriptions like 'poisonous', 'corrosive', 'flammable' and 'explosive'. Most Household Hazardous Waste fits into one of those four categories and you can easily find these labels on products around your home.

For this reason, the Province of Ontario requires these types of waste to be managed through a mandatory waste diversion program. The City of Toronto gets external funding through this program, which helps to keep our solid waste utility rates low and our service standards high. Eliminating these services will surely reduce our funding, which doesn't sound like the cost saving 'opportunity' KPMG has made it out to be.

The City of Toronto has a by-law that prohibits these hazardous wastes from going into our landfill. A resident in Toronto can be fined for throwing Household Hazardous Waste in their garbage can or their recycling bin. It is illegal to dump them down the drain and it's dangerous to stockpile them in our homes.

Knowing this, you can see why the City of Toronto has a duty to provide safe and convenient ways for their residents to dispose of Household Hazardous Waste. Our city provides three methods for safe disposal: Community Environment Days, the Toxic Taxi and drop-off depots.

In total, 44 Community Environment Days are held every year which works out to one per Ward. These events are highly efficient because they provide multiple free services to residents such as drop-offs for household hazardous waste, electronic waste and items that can be reused or donated to charities; and pick up free compost from the city's own Green Bin program, rain barrels and water efficiency kits.

The City of Toronto's statistics show that Community Environment Days bring in over 30% of the total Household Hazardous Waste tonnage each year. That's incredible!

The Toxic Taxi is a free pick-up service that any Toronto resident can request if they have 10 - 50 litres of Household Hazardous Waste that needs to be safely disposed of. Unlike Community Environment Days, this is a year-round service. The Toxic Taxi is particularly important for residents in high-rise buildings, people who don't have cars, and individuals that are unable to attend Community Environment Days.

Provincial statistics from Waste Diversion Ontario show that events (like Community Environment Days) and value-added programs (like Toxic Taxi) are much more successful in collecting large amounts of Household Hazardous Waste compared to drop-off depots.

It makes sense. Drop-off depots are fine if you own a car and can drop-off items during the hours of operation, but a lot of people can't make it there. Even if you could technically take a bus to the drop-off depot, who's going to carry up to 50 litres of hazardous waste on a bus? Are you even allowed to?

Nonetheless, the Mayor's consultants suggest eliminating both of the free, convenient and accessible city services (Toxic Taxi and Community Environment Days) - leaving drop-off depots as the only way to dispose of hazardous wastes.

Regardless of your ability, income, or residence, all residents are required and expected to safely dispose of these wastes. People are willing to do their part but how can people do that if their only option is to drive to a desolate drop-off depot? The City of Toronto has a responsibility to provide equitable services to Torontonians. Those services include Toxic Taxi and Community Environment Days.

With respect, Councillors of this committee, I must ask you:  
How can you make any recommendations to eliminate hazardous waste services today without a firm understanding of the legal, financial, health, safety and environmental risks of doing so?

I sincerely hope that no City Councillor will ever recommend cutting services that uphold the City's own by-laws and protect the health and safety of all Toronto residents.

Thank you.

**FINAL NOTE:** I have provided a copy of my deputation to the clerk. Please ensure that the City Manager also receives a copy so these comments can be considered for further review.