

Incineration not like 30 years ago: region

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The United Kingdom, Germany, and Sweden have producer responsibility programs, which require industry to take care of the garbage it produces, and have achieved a higher waste diversion rate, she said.

York's current target is to divert 60 per cent of trash, using blue box recycling and green organics programs. The diversion strategy increases that goal to 75 per cent.

That's the best rate possible using current practices, regional waste management director Andy Campbell said.

"If 100 per cent of people did a 100 per cent job it could be higher... but it's going to take strict rules that we don't have today," he said.

Markham has achieved a 68-per cent diversion rate with its green box program, but other municipalities are below 40 per cent, Mr. Campbell said.

The region's challenge in getting a thermal treatment plant approved is to change perceptions about incineration, Mr. Campbell said.

"People think it's something that it isn't, that's one of our challenges. Incineration 30 years ago was bad, but that's not the reality today," he said.

He points to a facility at Hwy 407 and Bramalea Road in Peel, similar to the one proposed for York.

While many people envision smoke stacks billowing toxic smoke into the air, he says most people in Peel hardly realize the facility is there.

Ms Shapero disagrees, saying incineration still has implications for air quality.

"At the end of the day you still have smoke stacks going into the air affecting people's health," she said.

You can reach Serena Willoughby at swilloughby@ymg.com

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

You can have your say on the waste strategy at consultations next month. Information sessions are:

- May 9: Ray Tunney Recreation Complex, 100 Eagle Street W., Newmarket;
- May 10: York Region South Services Centre, Richmond Hill;
- May 11: St. Joan of Arc Catholic High School cafeteria, 1 Saint Joan of Arc Ave., Vaughan.

Following these sessions, residents can make a deputation at York Region's solid waste management committee at 9 a.m. May 17 or York Region's joint waste management group meeting at 7 p.m. May 17.

A draft report of the proposal can be obtained at www.durhamyorkwaste.ca and comments can be submitted in writing until May 19 at any municipal office, by e-mail at info@durhamyorkwaste.ca or by mail to: Attn: Durham/York Residual Waste Study Co-ordinator, c/o Region of Durham, 605 Rossland Rd. East, Whitby, ON, L1N 6A3.

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