

Toronto civic workers prepare for Wednesday vote



Discarded strike placards lay on the side of the road at the Sunnyside Park temporary dump site after it was announced that the City of Toronto and striking unions had reached a tentative deal to end the strike.

Details about tentative agreement begin to emerge but uncertainty remains over controversial sick-day plan

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Toronto — Globe and Mail Update Last updated on Tuesday, Jul. 28, 2009 05:51PM EDT

Details of the tentative deal between the unions and the city are starting to emerge as city workers prepare for Wednesday's vote to end a 37-day strike.

Sources have confirmed to the Globe and Mail that current unionized workers will have the option of keeping the sick days they've already accumulated, which they've been banking and can cash out upon retirement. New city workers will not have the option of banking sick days under the tentative deal.

But it's uncertain whether workers will be permitted to continue banking sick days once they return to work. They may be faced with two options: either cash out on the sick days they've already accumulated or freeze the banked time and cash out after retirement.

Local 416 member Bill Steele wants to keep his sick plan exactly the way it is and was outraged this morning when he read in the newspapers that union negotiators may have "sold out on the sick time." He said he contacted someone close to the bargaining committee, who assured him the new deal would include an option for him to keep banking his sick days.

Mr. Steele, a heavy equipment operator at Commissioners Street transfer station, said he is 100 per cent confident the new deal will have no concessions on the sick plan.

But if it does, he vote no to ending the strike.

"When I first was hired over 20 years ago I heard about the sick plan that I currently have," he said. "I made a choice that I wanted that and I want to keep that right to the end."