

Toronto city workers should end strike, mayor says

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LEGEND:  Temporary garbage drop-off  Permanent garbage drop-off

Toronto Mayor David Miller said Friday "enough is enough" and city workers should end their walkout.

"Now is the time to end this strike," said Miller.

"There has been some progress [on a new contract] at the bargaining table in the past couple of days," he said, pushing the unions to reach a deal with the city.

At a mid-afternoon news conference the mayor of Canada's largest city said he is confident a deal with its striking civic employees "can be reached quickly.

"I want to say to the unions and to the people they represent, enough is enough."



Children play during a protest against the use of Christie Pits as a temporary dump site on Sunday, June 28th. (Contributed by Monica Gupta)

Miller, who has voiced "frustration" that the two CUPE locals that represent inside and outside workers chose to walk off the job on June 22 to support their negotiating position, said the city wants to reach a fair agreement, but one that it can afford.

CUPE Local 416 and CUPE Local 79 represent about 30,000 municipal workers. Garbage collectors, daycare workers, clerks and some members of the city's emergency medical services are on the picket lines.

Miller alluded to the two main issues that seem to be keeping the two sides apart: sick leave and wages.

The union says the city wants to remove a condition in its

existing contract which allows some union members to bank sick-leave days. For its part, the city says it cannot afford the wage increases the union negotiators are seeking.

2 temporary dump sites to close

Geoff Rathbone, the manager of the city's solid waste department, announced that two of the city's 19 temporary garbage dump sites will be closing, including the Christie Pits site which has been the subject of an incessant campaign by local residents.

Toronto's chief medical officer of health repeated his view that neither the spraying of chemicals nor the existence of the temporary sites poses any health problems for Torontonians.

In spite of that the city said it is changing its spraying protocol. For the foreseeable future spraying for rodents will be on an as-needed basis and spraying a deodorizer will take place every day.

That was one of the complaints of some groups who wondered if the spraying for pests was causing more problems than it was solving.

The other dump site to be closed immediately is York Mills Arena in north Toronto which the city says is full.

Two new dump sites will be opened — at Centennial Arena in Scarborough and at Wilkett Creek in Sunnybrook Park.

Miller said no when he was asked if he would be willing to allow the dispute to be settled by binding arbitration.

"You never know what will happen with arbitration," he said.