

City closes two dumps, opens two new ones

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With two temporary garbage dumps nearly full just 12 days into the civic workers' strike, Toronto is opening two new temporary dumps today.

The new sites are at Centennial Arena at 1967 Ellesmere Ave. in Scarborough and at Wilket Creek-Sunnybrook Park near Eglinton Ave. and Leslie St. They will operate from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day just like the 17 other residential drop-off locations.

The York Mills Arena site at York Mills Rd. and Bayview Ave. is almost full, so it will close at the end of today.

The Christie Pits park site - which has been the scene of many protests from neighbours who objected to their park being turned into a garbage dump - is nearly full, and will close at the end of day on Sunday.

Protesters there have blocked pest control operators for days from entering the site to spray chemicals to keep insects or rodents away.

While Dr. David McKeown, the city's medical officer of health, has repeatedly insisted that a well-managed temporary garbage site need not cause a health hazard, he said at a briefing at Metro Hall today there is evidence of an insect infestation at Christie Pits.

He issued a work order today to the city to implement an effective insect control program at the site, and urged neighbours to cooperate and allow pest control officials into the area.

While the garbage will remain at the sites until the end of the strike, periodic spraying will take place to keep vermin away.

Mayor David Miller, who also appeared at the news briefing, had a simple message for the striking unions and the people they represent.

"Enough is enough," he said. "There has been progress at the bargaining table this week, and now is the time to end this strike."

Miller noted that the city has bargained with the unions for six months, and there has been a strike for two weeks.

"Any agreement has to be affordable to the city of the Toronto, and it has to allow us to run this government and our services effectively and efficiently," he said. "I believe that kind of agreement can be reached, and I believe it can be reached quickly if the parties work extremely hard and recognize the fiscal constraints of Toronto."

On strike are about 24,000 inside workers - half full-time, half part-time - who are members of Local 79 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, and about 6,200 outside workers, members of CUPE's Local 416.

Both unions have said the city's demands for concessions on seniority rights, job security and sick leave are blocks to a settlement.