

Brooklyn CB7 Sanitation and Environment Committee Report, May 25, 2021

The committee convened to hear a presentation from Andy Moss, Northeast Division Government Affairs Manager for Waste Connections, a solid waste management services company that operates a transfer station at 110 50th Street.

The presentation was part of the companies public outreach efforts in conjunction with the submission of a permit application to the NYSDEC, Division of Environmental Permits. Waste Connections seeks a modification of its permit that will allow its Sunset Park facility to handle construction and demolition debris. Currently the facility handles putrescible solid waste exclusively. The company insists it does not seek an increase in the permitted amount of tonnage they are allowed to handle at the facility and that the addition of C & D debris will not increase truck traffic, nor does the company seek a physical modification of the facility. Waste Connections believes that there will be no increase in noise levels.

In the Q & A after the presentation the company spokesperson, Andy Moss, was grilled about the possibility of increased truck traffic. He insisted there would not be an increase because the facility is regulated and granted an operating permit based on weight, tonnage. Since the total weight that the facility is allowed to handle will not increase and since construction and demolition debris generally weigh more than putrescible waste, truck trips might very well decrease, and since there is only one other facility permitted to handle C & D debris in Brooklyn, in north Brooklyn, the company feels it will reduce heavy truck traffic on highways/major arterials and result in fewer vehicle miles driven, reducing emissions.

What is construction and demolition debris? According to the NYSDEC it includes the following:

Bricks, concrete, and other masonry materials

Soil and rock

Wood

Land clearing debris (but not yard waste)

Wall coverings (not including asbestos insulation)

Roofing shingles and other roof coverings

Asphaltic pavement

Glass

Plastics that are not sealed in a manner that conceals other waste

Empty buckets ten gallons or less in size and having no more than one inch of residue remaining on the bottom

Electrical wiring and components containing no hazardous liquids, and pipe and metals that are incidental to any of the above

Solid waste that is **not** considered C & D debris and won't be allowed under the modified permit includes the following:

Asbestos

Garbage

Electrical fixtures containing hazardous liquids

Fluorescent lights

Carpeting and furniture

Appliances

Tires

Drums

Containers greater than 10 gallons in size, any containers having more than one inch of residue remaining on the bottom and fuel tanks

Other concerns noted by the community are the health issues related to respirable crystalline silica (RCS). These are very fine particles that can be inhaled, become lodged in the lower respiratory track. It occurs from the activity of pulverizing concrete, brick and stone. Concrete, brick and stone certainly will be some of the primary materials transferred to the facility for sorting (recycling or landfill). It's unclear how much further breakdown of these materials is done at the facility and it has been noted that RCS is mostly a health concern at construction and demolition sites. Waste Connections seeks to cart and dispose of these materials after demolition. It is not in the demolition business. But again it is not known by the committee how much of these materials are processed at the transfer station and what safety precautions are in effect to reduce the risk of inhalation.

The criteria used by the NYSDEC in granting permits are in part based on the safety and environmental records of the entities requesting a modified permit.