

CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR PLASTIC WASTE TO POLYETHYLENE VIA REFINERY FCC UNIT

BACKGROUND

[0001] The world has seen extremely rapid growth of plastics production. According to PlasticsEurope Market Research Group, the world plastics production was 335 million tons in 2016, 348 million tons in 2017, 359 million tons in 2018, and 367 million tons in 2020. According to McKinsey & Company, the global plastics-waste volume is estimated to be 460 million tons per year by 2030 if the current trajectory continues.

[0002] Single use plastic waste has become an increasingly important environmental issue. At the moment, there appear to be few options for recycling polyethylene and polypropylene waste plastics to value-added chemicals and fuel products. Currently, only a small amount of polyethylene and polypropylene is recycled via chemical recycling, where recycled and cleaned polymer pellets are pyrolyzed in a pyrolysis unit to make fuels (naphtha, diesel), stream cracker feed or slack wax. The majority, greater than 80%, is incinerated, land filled or discarded.

[0003] The current method of chemical recycling via pyrolysis cannot make a big impact for the plastics industry. The current pyrolysis operation produces poor quality fuel components (naphtha and diesel range products), but the quantity is small enough that these products can be blended into fuel supplies. However, this simple blending cannot continue if very large volumes of waste polyethylene and polypropylene is to be recycled to address environmental issues. The products as produced from a pyrolysis unit are of too poor quality to be blended in large amounts in transportation fuels.

[0004] Processes are known which convert waste plastic into hydrocarbon lubricants. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 3,845,157 discloses cracking of waste or virgin polyolefins to form gaseous products such as ethylene/olefin copolymers which are further processed to produce synthetic hydrocarbon lubricants. U.S. Pat. No. 4,642,401 discloses the production of liquid hydrocarbons by heating pulverized polyolefin waste at temperatures of 150-500° C and pressures of 20-300 bars. U.S. Pat. No. 5,849,964 discloses a process in which waste plastic materials are depolymerized into a volatile phase and a liquid phase. The volatile phase is separated into a gaseous phase and a condensate. The liquid phase, the condensate and the gaseous phase are refined into liquid fuel components using standard refining techniques. U.S. Pat. No. 6,143,940 discloses a procedure for converting waste plastics into heavy wax

compositions. U.S. Pat. No. 6,150,577 discloses a process of converting waste plastics into lubricating oils. EP0620264 discloses a process for producing lubricating oils from waste or virgin polyolefins by thermally cracking the waste in a fluidized bed to form a waxy product, optionally using a hydrotreatment, then catalytically isomerizing and fractionating to recover a lubricating oil.

[0005] U.S. Pub. No. 2021/0130699 discloses processes and systems for making recycle content hydrocarbons from recycled waste material. The recycle waste material is pyrolyzed to form a pyrolysis oil composition, at least a portion of which may then be cracked to form a recycle olefin composition.

[0006] Other documents which relate to processes for converting waste plastic into lubricating oils include U.S. Patent Nos. 6,288,296; 6,774,272; 6,822,126; 7,834,226; 8,088,961; 8,404,912 and 8,696,994; and U.S. Patent Application Publication Nos. 2019/0161683; 2016/0362609; and 2016/0264885. The foregoing patent documents are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

[0007] Globally, recycling or upcycling of plastic waste has gained great interest to save resources and the environment. Mechanical recycling of plastic waste is rather limited due to different types, properties, additives, and contaminants in the collected plastics. Usually, the recycled plastics are of degraded quality. Chemical recycling to the starting material or value-added chemicals has emerged as a more desirous route.

[0008] However, in order to achieve chemical recycling of single use plastics in an industrially significant quantity to reduce their environmental impact, more robust processes are needed. The improved processes should establish “circular economy” for the waste polyethylene and polypropylene plastics where the spent waste plastics are recycled effectively back as starting materials for the polymers or value-added chemicals or fuels.

SUMMARY

[0009] Provided is a continuous process for converting waste plastic into recycle for polyethylene polymerization. The process comprises selecting waste plastics containing polyethylene and/or polypropylene. These waste plastics are blended with a petroleum feed material. The resulting blend is generally a stable blend and a homogenous mixture, particularly at a temperature below the melting point of the waste plastic. The blend comprises

about 20 wt. % or less of the selected waste plastic. The blend is then cofed with conventional refinery feed, such as VGO, to a FCC unit in a refinery.

[0010] The incorporation of the process with an oil refinery is an important aspect of the present process and allows the creation of a circular economy with a single use waste plastic such as polyethylene. Thus, the blend is passed to a refinery FCC unit. The blend is passed at a temperature above its pour point in order to be able to pump the blend to the refinery FCC unit. The blend is heated above the melting point of the plastic before being injected to the reactor. A liquid petroleum gas C₃ olefin/paraffin mixture is recovered from the FCC unit. The C₃ olefin/paraffin mixture passed to a steam cracker to produce ethylene, from which polyethylene and polyethylene products can be prepared.

[0011] In another embodiment, a C₄ olefin/paraffin mixture, as well as the C₃ mixture, is recovered from the FCC unit. The two streams are passed together to a steam cracker to produce ethylene. The mixture can also comprise naphtha (C₅-C₈) if desired.

[0012] The refinery will generally have its own hydrocarbon feed flowing through the refinery units. An important aspect of the present process is to not negatively impact the operation of the refinery. The refinery must still produce valued chemicals and fuels. Otherwise, the incorporation of the process with an oil refinery would not be a workable solution. The flow volume must therefore be carefully observed.

[0013] The flow volume of the waste plastic/petroleum blend to the refinery units can comprise any practical or accommodating volume % of the total flow to the refinery units. Generally, the flow of the blend can be up to about 100 vol. % of the total flow, i.e., the blend flow is the entire flow, with no refinery flow. In one embodiment, the flow of the blend is an amount up to about 50 vol. % of the total flow, i.e., the refinery flow and the blend flow.

[0014] Among other factors, it has been found that by adding refinery operations one can efficiently and effectively recycle plastic waste while also complementing the operation of a refinery in the preparation of higher value products such as gasoline, jet fuel, base oil and diesel. But also, by adding refinery operations it has been found that clean ethylene can be efficiently and effectively produced from the waste plastics for ultimate polyethylene polymer production. Positive economics are realized for the overall process from recycled plastics to a polyethylene product with product quality identical to that of virgin polymer.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] FIG. 1 depicts the current practice of pyrolyzing waste plastics to produce fuel or wax (base case).

[0016] FIG. 2 depicts a present process of preparing a hot, homogenous liquid blend of plastic and petroleum feedstock, and how the blend can be fed to a refinery conversion unit.

[0017] FIG. 3 depicts in detail a stable blend preparation process, and how the stable blend can be fed to a refinery conversion unit.

[0018] FIG. 4 depicts the plastic type classification for waste plastics recycling.

[0019] FIG. 5 depicts a present process where the prepared blend is passed to a refinery FCC unit.

[0020] FIG. 6 depicts another embodiment of the present process where the prepared blend is passed to a refinery FCC unit.

[0021] FIG. 7 depicts a present process for establishing a circular economy for waste plastics where the blend is passed to a refinery FCC feed pretreater before a refinery FCC unit.

[0022] FIG. 8 graphically depicts a thermal gravimetric analysis (TGA) of the thermal stability of polyethylene and polypropylene.

[0023] FIG. 9 graphically depicts a thermal gravimetric analysis (TGA) of the thermal stability of four waste plastic samples.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0024] In the present process, provided is a method to recycle waste polyethylene and/or polypropylene back to virgin polyethylene to establish a circular economy by combining distinct industrial processes. A substantial portion of polyethylene and polypropylene polymers are used in single use plastics and get discarded after its use. The single use plastic waste has become an increasingly important environmental issue. At the moment, there appear to be few options for recycling polyethylene and polypropylene waste plastics to value-added chemicals and fuel products. Currently, only a small amount of polyethylene/polypropylene is recycled via chemical recycling, where recycled and cleaned polymer pellets are pyrolyzed in a pyrolysis unit to make fuels (naphtha, diesel), steam cracker feed or slack wax.

[0025] Ethylene is the most produced petrochemical building block. Ethylene is produced in hundreds of millions of tons per year via steam cracking. The steam crackers use either gaseous feedstocks (ethane, propane and/or butane) or liquid feed stocks (naphtha or gas oil). It is a noncatalytic cracking process that operates at very high temperatures, up to 850° C.

[0026] Polyethylene is used widely in various consumer and industrial products. Polyethylene is the most common plastic, over 100 million tons of polyethylene resins are produced annually. Its primary use is in packaging (plastic bags, plastic films, geomembranes, containers including bottles, etc.). Polyethylene is produced in three main forms: high-density polyethylene (HDPE, $\sim 0.940\text{-}0.965\text{ g/cm}^3$), linear low-density polyethylene (LLDPE, $\sim 0.915\text{-}0.940\text{ g/cm}^3$) and low-density polyethylene (LDPE, $(< 0.930\text{ g/cm}^3)$, with the same chemical formula $(\text{C}_2\text{H}_4)_n$ but different molecular structure. HDPE has a low degree of branching with short side chains while LDPE has a very high degree of branching with long side chains. LLDPE is a substantially linear polymer with significant numbers of short branches, commonly made by copolymerization of ethylene with short-chain alpha-olefins.

[0027] Low density polyethylene (LDPE) is produced via radical polymerization at $150\text{--}300^\circ\text{C}$ and very high pressure of $1,000\text{-}3,000\text{ atm}$. The process uses a small amount of oxygen and/or organic peroxide initiator to produce polymer with about $4,000\text{--}40,000$ carbon atoms per average polymer molecule, and with many branches. High density polyethylene (HDPE) is manufactured at relatively low pressure ($10\text{-}80\text{ atm}$) and $80\text{-}150^\circ\text{C}$ temperature in the presence of a catalyst. Ziegler-Natta organometallic catalysts (titanium(III) chloride with an aluminum alkyl) and Phillips-type catalysts (chromium(IV) oxide on silica) are typically used, and the manufacturing is done via a slurry process using a loop reactor or via a gas phase process with a fluidized bed reactor. Hydrogen is mixed with ethylene to control the chain length of the polymer. Manufacturing conditions of linear low-density polyethylene (LLDPE) are similar to those of HDPE except copolymerization of ethylene with short-chain alpha-olefins (1-butene or 1-hexene).

[0028] Today, only a small portion of spent polyethylene products is collected for recycling, due to the inefficiencies and ineffectiveness of the recycling efforts discussed above.

[0029] FIG. 1 shows a diagram of the pyrolysis of waste plastics fuel or wax that is generally operated in the industry today. Generally, the waste plastics are sorted together 1. The cleaned plastic waste 2 is converted in a pyrolysis unit 3 to offgas 4 and pyrolysis oil (liquid product). The offgas 4 from the pyrolysis unit 3 is used as fuel to operate the pyrolysis unit. An on-site distillation unit separates the pyrolysis oil to produce naphtha and diesel 5 products which are sold to fuel markets. The heavy pyrolysis oil fraction 6 is recycled back to the pyrolysis unit 3 to maximize the fuel yield. Char 7 is removed from the pyrolysis unit 3. The heavy fraction 6 is rich in long chain, linear hydrocarbons, and is very waxy (i.e., forms paraffinic wax upon

cooling to ambient temperature). Wax can be separated from the heavy fraction 6 and sold to the wax markets.

[0030] The present process, however, does not pyrolyze the waste plastic. Rather, a stable blend of petroleum feedstock and the waste plastic is prepared. Thus, the pyrolysis step can be avoided, which is a significant energy savings.

[0031] The blend is prepared in a hot blend preparation unit where the operating temperature is above the melting point of the plastic (about 150-250° C), to make a hot, homogeneous liquid blend of plastic and oil. The hot homogeneous liquid blend of plastic and oil can be fed directly to the refinery units.

[0032] Alternatively, a blend is prepared in a stable blend preparation unit where the hot homogeneous liquid blend is cooled to ambient temperature in a controlled manner to allow for easy storage and transportation. By using this method, a stable blend can be prepared at a facility away from a refinery and can be transported to a refinery unit. Then the stable blend is heated above the melting point of the plastic to feed to the refinery conversion unit. The stable blend is a physical mixture of microcrystalline plastic particles finely suspended in the petroleum-based oil. The mixture is stable, and the plastic particles do not settle or agglomerate upon storage for extended period.

[0033] What is meant by heating the blend to a temperature above the melting point of the plastic is clear when a single plastic is used. However, if the waste plastic comprises more than one waste plastic, then the melting point of the plastic with the highest melting point is exceeded. Thus, the melting points of all plastics must be exceeded. Similarly, if the blend is cooled below the melting point of the plastic, the temperature must be cooled below the melting points of all plastics comprising the blend.

[0034] Compared with the pyrolysis unit, these blend preparation units operate at a much lower temperature (~500-600 °C vs. 120-250 °C). Thus, the present process is a far more energy efficient process in preparing a refinery feedstock derived from waste plastic than a thermal cracking process such as pyrolysis.

[0035] The use of the present waste plastic/petroleum blend further increases the overall hydrocarbon yield obtained from the waste plastic. This increase in yield is significant. The hydrocarbon yield using the present blend offers a hydrocarbon yield that can be as much as 98%. To the contrary, pyrolysis produces a significant amount of light product from the plastic waste, about 10-30 wt. %, and about 5-10 wt. % of char. These light hydrocarbons are used as

fuel to operate the pyrolysis plant, as mentioned above. Thus, the liquid hydrocarbon yield from the pyrolysis plant is at most 70-80%.

[0036] When the present blend is passed into the refinery units, such as a FCC unit, only a minor amount of offgas is produced. Refinery units use catalytic cracking processes that are different from the thermal cracking process used in pyrolysis. With catalytic processes, the production of undesirable light-end byproducts such as methane and ethane is minimized. Refinery units have efficient product fractionation and are able to utilize all hydrocarbon products streams efficiently to produce high value materials. Refinery co-feeding will produce only about 2% of offgas (H₂, methane, ethane, ethylene). The C₃ and C₄ streams are captured to produce useful products such as circular polymer and/or quality fuel products. Thus, the use of the present petroleum/plastic blend offers increased hydrocarbons from the plastic waste, as well as a more energy efficient recycling process compared to a thermal process such as pyrolysis.

[0037] The present process converts single use waste plastic in large quantities by integrating the waste plastic blended with petroleum product streams into an oil refinery operation. The resulting processes produce the feedstocks for the polymers (naphtha or C₃ and C₄ for ethylene cracker), high quality gasoline, jet fuel and diesel, and/or quality base oil.

[0038] Generally, the present process provides a circular economy for polyethylene plants. Polyethylene is produced via polymerization of pure ethylene. Clean ethylene can be made using a steam cracker. Either naphtha or a C₃ or C₄ stream can be fed to the steam cracker. The ethylene is then polymerized to create polyethylene.

[0039] By adding refinery operations to upgrade the waste plastic to higher value products (gasoline, jet fuel and diesel, base oil) and to produce clean ethylene for ultimate polyethylene polymer production, positive economics are realized for the overall process of recycled plastics to polyethylene products with product quality identical to that of the virgin polymer. And, by integrating the present recycle process with an oil refinery operation, a more energy efficient and effective process is achieved while avoiding any issues with the refinery operation.

[0040] The integration of a refinery operation becomes quite important in another aspect. Waste plastics contain contaminants, such as calcium, magnesium, chlorides, nitrogen, sulfur, dienes, and heavy components, and these products cannot be used in a large quantity for blending in transportation fuels. It has been discovered that by having these products go through the refinery units, the contaminants can be captured in pre-treating units and their

negative impacts diminished. The fuel components can be further upgraded with appropriate refinery units using chemical conversion processes, with the final transportation fuels produced in the integrated process being of higher quality and meeting the fuels quality requirements. The integrated process will generate a much cleaner and more pure ethylene stream for polyethylene production. These large on-spec productions allow “cyclical economy” for the recycled plastics to be feasible.

[0041] The carbon in and out of the refinery operations are “transparent,” meaning that all the molecules from the waste plastic do not necessarily end up in the exact olefin product cycled back to the polyolefin plants, but are nevertheless assumed as “credit” as the net “green” carbon in and out of the refinery is positive. With these integrated processes, the amount of virgin feeds needed for polyethylene plants are reduced significantly.

[0042] In some cases, the conversion of waste plastic into clean fuels takes less energy than production of fuels from a virgin petroleum feedstock. As the collection and processing of waste plastic improves the gain in energy efficiencies will further improve. Such fuels produced from a blend of waste plastic and oil will have recycle contents and lower carbon footprints than corresponding fuels made from pure petroleum feedstock. The present process can produce clean gasoline, jet fuel and diesel with recycle contents and a lower CO₂ (lower carbon) footprint from waste plastic.

[0043] FIG. 2 illustrates a method for preparing a hot homogenous blend of plastic and petroleum feedstock for use in the present process for direct injection to a refinery unit where a hot, homogeneous liquid blend of plastic and oil is prepared in a hot blend preparation unit. The preferred range of the plastic composition in the blend is about 1-20 wt. %. If high molecular weight polypropylene (average molecular weight of 250,000 or greater) waste plastic or high-density polyethylene (density above 0.93 g/cc) is used as the predominant waste plastic, e.g., at least 50 wt. %, then the amount of waste plastic used in the blend is more preferably about 10 wt. %. The reason being that the pour point and viscosity of the blend would be high.

[0044] The preferred conditions for the hot homogeneous liquid blend preparation include heating the plastic above the melting point of the plastic while vigorously mixing with a petroleum feedstock. The preferred process conditions include heating to a 250- 550° F temperature, with a residence time of 5- 240 minutes at the final heating temperature, and 0-10 psig atmospheric pressure. This can be done in the open atmosphere as well as preferably under an oxygen-free inert atmosphere.

[0045] Referring to FIG. 2 of the Drawings, a stepwise preparation process of preparing the hot homogeneous liquid blend is shown. Mixed waste plastic is sorted to create post-consumer waste plastic 21 comprising polyethylene and/or polypropylene. The waste plastic is cleaned 22 and then mixed with an oil 24 in a hot blend preparation unit 23. After the mixing in 23, the homogeneous blend of the plastic and oil is recovered 25. Optionally a filtration device may be added (not shown) to remove any undissolved plastic particles or any solid impurities present in the hot liquid blend. The hot blend of the plastic and oil can then be combined with the refinery feedstock, such as VGO 20, and become a mixture of the plastic/oil blend and VGO, 26, which can then be passed to a refinery unit. In the present process, the refinery unit in one embodiment is a FCC unit.

[0046] FIG. 3 illustrates a method for preparing a stable blend of plastic and oil for use in the present process. The stable blend is made in a stable blend preparation unit by a two-step process. The first step produces a hot, homogeneous liquid blend of plastic melt and petroleum feedstock, the step identical to the hot blend preparation described in Figure 2. The preferred range of the plastic composition in the blend is about 1-20 wt. %. If high molecular weight polypropylene (average molecular weight of 250,000 or greater) waste plastic or high-density polyethylene (density above 0.93 g/cc) is used as the predominant waste plastic, e.g., at least 50 wt. %, then the amount of waste plastic used in the blend is more preferably about 10 wt. %. The reason being that the pour point and viscosity of the blend would be high.

[0047] The preferred conditions for the hot homogeneous liquid blend preparation include heating the plastic above the melting point of the plastic while vigorously mixing with a petroleum feedstock. The preferred process conditions include heating to a 250- 500° F temperature, with a residence time of 5- 240 minutes at the final heating temperature, and 0-10 psig atmospheric pressure. This can be done in the open atmosphere as well as preferably under an oxygen-free inert atmosphere.

[0048] In the second step, the hot blend is cooled down below the melting point of the plastic while continuously vigorously mixing with petroleum feedstock, and then further cooling to a lower temperature, preferably ambient temperature, to produce a stable blend of plastic and oil.

[0049] It has been found that the stable blend is an intimate physical mixture of plastic and petroleum feedstock. The plastic is in a “de-agglomerated” state. The plastic maintains a finely dispersed state of solid particles in petroleum feedstock at temperatures below the melting point of the plastic, and particularly at ambient temperatures. The blend is stable and

allows easy storage and transportation. At a refinery, the stable blend is heated in a preheater above the melting point of the plastic to produce a hot, homogenous liquid blend of the plastic and petroleum. The hot liquid blend can then be fed to a refinery unit as a cofeed with conventional refinery feed.

[0050] In FIG. 3, further details of the stable blend preparation are shown. The stable blend is made in a stable blend preparation unit 100 by a two-step process. As shown, clean waste 22 is passed to the stable blend preparation unit 100. The selected plastic waste 22 is heated and mixed with a refinery feedstock oil 24. The plastic waste is heated above the melting point of the plastic to melt the plastic. The petroleum feedstock is mixed with the heated plastic at 23. The mixing is often quite vigorous. The mixing and heating conditions can generally comprise heating at a temperature in the range of about 250-500° F, with a residence time of 5-240 minutes at the final heating temperature. The heating and mixing can be done in the open atmosphere or under an oxygen-free inert atmosphere. The result is a hot, homogenous liquid blend of plastic and oil 25. Optionally a filtration device may be added (not shown) to remove any undissolved plastic particles or any solid impurities present in the hot homogeneous liquid blend.

[0051] The hot blend 25 is then cooled below the melting point of the plastic while continuing the mixing of the plastic with the petroleum oil feedstock 101. Cooling generally continues, usually to an ambient temperature, to produce a stable blend of the plastic and oil 102. At a refinery, the stable blend can be fed to a preheater, 29, which heats the blend above the melting point of the plastic to produce a mixture of plastic/oil blend and VGO, 26, which is then fed to a refinery conversion unit.

[0052] The preferred plastic starting material for the present process is sorted waste plastics containing predominantly polyethylene and polypropylene (plastics recycle classification types 2, 4, and 5). The pre-sorted waste plastics are washed and shredded or pelleted to feed to a blend preparation unit. FIG. 4 depicts the plastic type classification for waste plastics recycling. Classification types 2, 4, and 5 are high density polyethylene, low density polyethylene and polypropylene, respectively. Any combination of the polyethylene and polypropylene waste plastics can be used. For the present process, at least some polyethylene waste plastic is preferred. Polystyrene, classification 6, can also be present in a limited amount.

[0053] Proper sorting of waste plastics is very important in order to minimize contaminants such as N, Cl, and S. Plastics waste containing polyethylene terephthalate (plastics recycle

classification type 1), polyvinyl chloride (plastics recycle classification type 3) and other polymers (plastics recycle classification type 7) need to be sorted out to less than 5%, preferably less than 1% and most preferably less than 0.1%. The present process can tolerate a moderate amount of polystyrene (plastics recycle classification type 6). Waste polystyrene needs to be sorted out to less than 20%, preferably less than 10% and most preferably less than 5%.

[0054] Washing of waste plastics can remove metal contaminants such as sodium, calcium, magnesium, aluminum, and non-metal contaminants coming from other waste sources. Non-metal contaminants include contaminants coming from the Periodic Table Group IV, such as silica, contaminants from Group V, such as phosphorus and nitrogen compounds, contaminants from Group VI, such as sulfur compounds, and halide contaminants from Group VII, such as fluoride, chloride, and iodide. The residual metals, non-metal contaminants, and halides need to be removed to less than 50 ppm, preferentially less than 30ppm and most preferentially to less than 5ppm.

[0055] If the washing does not remove the metals, non-metal contaminants, and halide impurities adequately, then a separate guard bed can be used to remove the metals and non-metal contaminants.

[0056] The petroleum with which the waste plastic is blended is generally a petroleum feedstock for the refinery. It is preferred that the petroleum blending oil is the same as the petroleum feedstock for the refinery. The petroleum can also comprise any petroleum derived oil or petroleum based material. In one embodiment, the petroleum feedstock oil can comprise atmospheric gas oil, vacuum gas oil (VGO), atmospheric residue, or heavy stocks recovered from other refinery operations. In one embodiment, the petroleum feedstock oil with which the waste plastic is blended comprises VGO. In one embodiment, the petroleum feedstock oil with which the waste plastic is blended comprises light cycle oil (LCO), heavy cycle oil (HCO), FCC naphtha, gasoline, diesel, toluene, or aromatic solvent derived from petroleum.

[0057] FIG. 5 shows one embodiment of a present integrated process, where the blend is sent to a fluid catalytic cracking (FCC) unit. The same numbers in FIG. 5 that correspond to FIGS. 2 and 3 refer to the same items/units. As shown, the blend is prepared 25 and then mixed with co-feed Vacuum Gas Oil (VGO) 20. The blend is generally heated to a temperature above the melting point of the plastic before mixing with the co-feed VGO. This co-feed mixture 26 of the blend and conventional VGO refinery feed is then sent to a FCC unit 28 in a refinery. In

another embodiment, the heated blend and the VGO co-feed are each passed directly, but separately, to the FCC unit.

[0058] The fluid catalytic cracking (FCC) process is widely used in the refining industry for conversion of atmospheric gas oil, vacuum gas oil, atmospheric residues and heavy stocks recovered from other refinery operations into high-octane gasoline, light fuel oil, heavy fuel oil, olefin-rich light gas (LPG) and coke. FCC uses a high activity zeolite catalyst to crack the heavy hydrocarbon molecules at a 950-990° F reactor temperature in a riser with a short contact time of a few minutes or less. LPG streams containing olefins (propylene, butylene) are commonly upgraded to make alkylate gasoline, or to be used in chemicals manufacturing. A conventional FCC unit can be used.

[0059] The refinery will generally have its own hydrocarbon feed flowing through the refinery units. In this case, as shown in FIG. 5, the hydrocarbon feed is VGO 20. The flow volume of blend to the refinery units, here an FCC unit, can comprise any practical or accommodating volume % of the total flow to the refinery units. Generally, the flow of the blend, for practical reasons, can be up to about 50 vol. % of the total flow, i.e., the refinery flow and the blend flow. In one embodiment, the flow of the blend is an amount up to about 100 vol. % of the total flow. In another embodiment, the volume flow of the blend is an amount up to about 25 vol. % of the total flow. About 50 vol. % has been found to be an amount that is quite practical in its impact on the refinery while also providing excellent results and being an amount that can be accommodated. Avoiding any negative impact on the refinery and its products is important. If the amount of the plastic in the final blend (comprising the plastic/oil blend and co-feed petroleum) is greater than 20 wt. % of the final blend, difficulties in FCC unit operation might ensue. By the final blend is meant the present plastic/oil blend and any co-feed petroleum. The plastic/oil blend can comprise up to 100 vol. % of the feed to the refinery units.

[0060] In FIG. 5, cracking of the plastic/petroleum hot blend combined with the co-feed petroleum feed in the FCC unit 28 produces liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) of C₃ and C₄ olefin/paraffin streams 31 and 32, and a gasoline 33 and heavy fraction 30. The C₃ olefin/paraffin mix stream of propane and propylene mix 31 is sent via 38 to a steam cracker 36 to produce ethylene 37. The ethylene 37 is fed to an ethylene polymerization unit 40 to produce polyethylene and ultimately polyethylene products 41.

[0061] The C₄ 32 and other hydrocarbon product streams, such as the heavy fraction 30 from the FCC unit 28, are sent to appropriate refinery units 34 for upgrading into clean gasoline,

diesel, or jet fuel. The gasoline 33 from the FCC unit may be passed directly to a gasoline pool 35 or further upgraded before sending to a gasoline pool (not shown in the figure).

[0062] FIG. 6 illustrates another embodiment of the present process. The numerals in FIG. 6 which are the same as in FIG. 5 refer to the same streams or refinery units.

[0063] As in FIG. 5, cracking in the FCC unit 28 in FIG. 6 of the plastic/petroleum blend and co-feed petroleum feed 26 produces an LPG C₃ olefin/paraffin stream 31, a C₄ stream 32 comprising C₄ olefins and paraffins, a gasoline fraction 33 and a heavy fraction 30. The C₃ olefin/paraffin mix stream 31 is sent via 38 to a steam cracker 36 to produce ethylene 37. The ethylene 37 is fed to an ethylene polymerization unit 40 to produce polyethylene and ultimately polyethylene products 41. Additional feed to the steam cracker 36 can be sent via 45. C₄ paraffins and naphtha (C₅-C₈) taken from streams 32 and 33 can also be sent to the steam cracker 36 to make ethylene 37. The portion of stream 32 not sent to the steam cracker can be sent to various upgrading processes 34 in the refinery, while the portion of stream 33 not sent to the steam cracker can be sent to gasoline, jet fuel and diesel pools 35.

[0064] FIG. 7 shows a present integrated process such as that shown in FIG. 5, where the co-feed of the blend and hydrocarbon refinery flow 26 is sent first to a fluid catalytic cracking (FCC) feed pretreater unit 27. The numerals in FIG. 7 which are the same as in FIG. 5 refer to the same streams or refinery units.

[0065] The FCC Feed Pretreater typically uses a bimetallic (NiMo or CoMo) alumina catalyst in a fixed bed reactor to hydrogenate the feed with H₂ gas flow at a 660-780 °F reactor temperature and 1,000-2,000 psi pressure. The refinery FCC Feed Pretreater Unit is effective in removing sulfur, nitrogen, phosphorus, silica, dienes and metals that will hurt the FCC unit catalyst performance. Also, this unit hydrogenates aromatics and improves the liquid yield of the FCC unit.

[0066] The pretreated hydrocarbon from the feed pretreater unit 27 can be distilled to produce LPG, naphtha and heavy fraction. The heavy fraction is sent to FCC unit 28 for further production of C₃ 31, C₄ 32, FCC gasoline 33 and heavy fraction 30. The C₄ stream and naphtha from the feed pretreater unit can be passed to other upgrading processes within the refinery.

[0067] The steam cracker and ethylene polymerization unit are preferably located near the refinery so that the feedstocks (propane, butane, naphtha, or propane/propylene mix) can be

transferred via pipeline. For a petrochemical plant located away from the refinery, the feedstock can be delivered via truck, barge, rail car, or pipeline.

[0068] The benefits of a circular economy and an effective and efficient recycling campaign are realized by the present integrated process.

[0069] The following examples are provided to further illustrate the present process and its benefits. The examples are meant to be illustrative and not limiting.

[0070] Example 1: Properties of Virgin Plastic Samples, and Feedstocks Used for Blend Preparations

[0071] Four plastic samples, low density polyethylene (LDPE, Plastic A), high density polyethylene (HDPE, Plastic B), two polypropylene samples with average molecular weight of ~12,000 (PP, Plastic C) and ~250,000 (PP, Plastic D) were purchased, and their properties are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
Properties of Plastics Used

	LDPE (Plastic A)	HDPE (Plastic B)	PP (Plastic C)	PP (Plastic D)
Form	Pellets	Pellets	Pellets	Pellets
Melt Index	25 g/ 10 min (190 °C/2.16 kg)	12 g/ 10 min (190 °C/2.16 kg)	-	12 g/ 10 min (230 °C/2.16 kg)
Melting Point, °C	116	125 – 140	157	160 – 165
Transition Temp, °C	93, Softening	125, softening	163, softening	-
Density, g/mL at 25 °C	0.925	0.952	0.9	0.9
Hardness	-	66	-	100
Average molecular weight, M_w	-	-	~12,000	~250,000
Average molecular weight, M_n	-	-	~5,000	~67,000

[0072] Petroleum feedstocks used to prepare the stable blends with plastic includes hydrotreated vacuum gas oil (VGO), Aromatic 100 solvent, light cycle oil (LCO), and diesel. Their properties are shown in Table 2 below. Aromatic 100 is a commercially available aromatic solvent manufactured from petroleum-based material, and mainly contains C9-C10 dialkyl and trialkyl benzenes.

Table 2
Properties of Petroleum Feedstocks for Blend Preparation

	Hydrotreated VGO Petroleum Feed #1	Aromatic 100 Petroleum Feed #2	LCO Petroleum Feed #3	Diesel Petroleum Feed #4
Specific Gravity	0.897	0.872	0.956	0.811
Carbon, wt%	87.84	89.90	90.50	86.4
Hydrogen, wt%	12.69	10.10	9.50	14.6
H/C Molar Ratio	1.73	1.33	1.26	2.0
Bromine Number	2	-	-	0.1
Total S, ppm	150	0	900	<2
Total N, ppm	273	0	N/A	<0.1
Ni, ppm	<0.6	0	<0.2	<0.2
V, ppm	<0.6	0	<0.2	<0.2
Simdist, °F				
IBP (0.5%)	462	297	235	536
5 wt%	573	325	405	553
10 wt%	616	327	441	563
30 wt%	706	330	490	601
50 wt%	775	336	541	638
70 wt%	854	344	607	673
90 wt%	962	355	689	702
95 wt%	1008	362	718	709
FBP (99.5%)	1107	376	786	717

[0073] Thermal Gravimetric Analysis (TGA) was conducted with Plastic A (LDPE) and Plastic C (Polypropylene) to verify the plastic materials are thermally stable well above the blend preparation temperature for dissolution of plastic. TGA results shown in Figure 8 indicate the LDPE sample is stable up to 800° F and the polypropylene sample up to 700° F.

[0074] Example 2 – Direct Conversion of Plastic and VGO via FCC using USY Catalysts

[0075] To study the impact of processing waste plastics and vacuum gas oil in a refinery FCC unit, laboratory tests with a fluidized catalytic cracking (FCC) process were carried out with stable blends of plastic and VGO using an FCC catalyst containing USY zeolite. Plastics used were low-density polyethylene (LDPE, Plastic A) with 0.925 g/mL of density at 25°C, and polypropylene (PP, Plastic C) with 12,000 average molecular weight. A base case with only VGO feed (Example 2-1) was compared with three blend runs comprising a 5/95 % blend of LDPE/VGO (Example 2-2); a 10/90 wt. % blend of LDPE/VGO (Example 2-3) and a 5/95 wt. % blend of PP/VGO (Example 2-4 3). The catalyst was an equilibrium catalyst removed from a commercial FCC plant.

[0076] The FCC experiments were carried out on a Model C ACE (advanced cracking evaluation) unit fabricated by Kayser Technology Inc. using regenerated equilibrium catalyst

(Ecat) from a refinery. The reactor was a fixed fluidized reactor using N₂ as fluidization gas. Catalytic cracking experiments were carried out at the atmospheric pressure and 975° F reactor temperature. The cat/oil ratio was varied between 5 to 8 by varying the amount of the catalyst. A gas product was collected and analyzed using a refinery gas analyzer (RGA), equipped with GC with FID detector. In-situ regeneration of a spent catalyst was carried out in the presence of air at 1300° F, and the regeneration flue gas was passed through an IR cell to determine the flue gas composition which is used to calculate coke yield. A liquid product was weighted and analyzed in a GC for simulated distillation (D2887) and C5- composition analysis. With a material balance, the yields of coke, dry gas components, LPG components, gasoline (C5-430° F), light cycle oil (LCO, 430-650° F) and heavy cycle oil (HCO, 650°F+) were determined. The results are summarized below in Table 3.

Table 3
Evaluation of Plastic Cofeeding to FCC with USY Catalyst

Example Number	Example 2-1		Example 2- 2	Example 2-3	Example 2-4
	Base Case		Blend Feed #1	Blend Feed #2	Blend Feed #3
Feed	100% VGO Feed Base		5/95 wt% Blend LDPE/ VGO	10/90 wt% Blend LDPE/ VGO	5/95 wt% Blend PP/ VGO
Temperature (°F)	975		975	975	975
Cat/Oil, wt/wt	6.0		6.0	6.0	6.0
Conversion, wt%*	79.8		81.6	81.2	80.5
Yields, wt%					
Coke	4.58		5.19	5.65	4.99
Total Dry Gas	2.06		2.14	2.00	2.10
Hydrogen	0.12		0.13	0.10	0.13
Methane	0.66		0.69	0.65	0.68
Ethane	0.45		0.46	0.43	0.46
Ethylene	0.78		0.81	0.76	0.78
Total LPG	20.77		21.75	21.55	21.48
Propane	2.00		2.06	1.94	2.03
Propylene	5.06		5.24	5.33	5.20
n-Butane	1.66		1.70	1.65	1.67
Isobutane	6.92		7.30	7.10	7.21
C4 Olefins	5.13		5.45	5.52	5.36
Gasoline (C5 – 430 °F)	52.38		52.48	52.04	51.93
LCO (430-650 °F)	14.19		12.95	13.21	13.69
HCO (650 °F+)	6.02		5.49	5.56	5.81
Gasoline Octane Number					
RON-GC	94.4	93.8	92.5	93.8	

MON-GC	82.6	81.9	80.9	82.0
(R+M)/2	88.5	87.9	86.7	87.9

*: Conversion – conversion of 430°F⁺ fraction to 430°F⁻

**: Octane number, (R+M)/2, was estimated from detailed hydrocarbon GC of FCC gasoline.

[0077] The results in Table 3 show that 5 - 10 wt. % cofeeding of plastic only makes very slight changes for the FCC unit performance indicating co-processing of plastic up to 10 wt.% is readily feasible. Up to 20% could be run without any performance issues, but appropriate equipment with good control is needed to handle the increased viscosity and pour point. To lower the viscosity and pour point, light cycle oil (LCO), heavy cycle oil (HCO), FCC naphtha, gasoline, diesel, toluene, and/or aromatic solvent derived from petroleum may be added to the blend preparations.

[0078] The plastic cracked more easily than VGO, thus the conversion increased slightly for the blends. The plastic added to the FCC feed led to a very slight increase of coke yields, but no significant change in dry gas yields. A moderate increase in LPG, C₃ and C₄ olefin yields was observed. A slight decrease in LCO and HCO yields. The gasoline yields were similar. With paraffinic nature of cracked products made from the plastic, the blends with plastic lowered the Octane number by about 1-2 numbers. With refinery operational flexibility, such octane number debits can be easily compensated with blending, or by adjusting FCC process operations and catalyst/additive formulations. The hydrocarbon compositions of all the cofeeding products are well within the typical FCC gasoline range.

[0079] Example 3: Properties of Waste Plastic Samples

[0080] Four waste plastic samples were purchased for blend preparations and their properties are summarized in Table 4. FT-IR was used to identify the general nature of the plastic. In addition to identification of the predominant polymer species, the FT-IR data also revealed that all these recycled plastic samples contained varying amounts of calcium carbonates and talc. To estimate the amount of potentially recoverable hydrocarbon, each sample was calcined under N₂ at 1000 °F for 3 hours. It was assumed that the recoverable hydrocarbon equaled the % loss-on-ignition (LOI). The inorganic residue from the calcination was analyzed with ICP analysis. Using the LOI value and ICP analysis, wt% impurity in the as-received plastic was estimated and reported in Table 4 below. The most common impurities in waste plastic are Ca, Mg, Si and Ti that may come from plastic consumer product manufacturing as calcium

carbonate, silica, and talc, which are commonly used as filler materials. Al, Fe, P, Zn are also present in substantial quantities.

Table 4
Properties of Waste Plastics

	Waste Plastic #1 (Plastic E)	Waste Plastic #2 (Plastic F)	Waste Plastic #3 (Plastic G)	Waste Plastic #4 (Plastic H)
Form	Pellets	Pellets	Pellets	Pellets
General Identification	PP, PE Mix	Polypropylene	PE, PP mix	PP, PE mix
LOI, wt%	93.35	99.38	96.86	98.1
Impurities, wt%				
Al, wt%	0.15	-	0.03	0.05
Ca, wt%	1.41	-	0.51	0.49
Fe, wt%	0.06	-	0.01	0.11
Mg, wt%	0.34	-	0.02	0.04
P, wt%	0.01	-	0	0
Si, wt%	0.82	-	0.06	0.12
Ti, wt%	0.24	-	1.0	0.52
Zn, wt%	0.01		0.01	0.01

[0081] Thermal Gravimetric Analysis (TGA) was conducted with the waste plastic samples to verify the plastic materials are thermally stable well above the melt preparation temperature.

TGA results shown in Figure 9 indicate these waste plastic samples are stable up to 700-800° F.

[0082] Example 4: Direct Conversion of Waste Plastic and VGO via FCC using USY Catalysts

[0083] To study the impact of processing waste plastics and vacuum gas oil in a refinery FCC unit, laboratory tests with a fluidized catalytic cracking (FCC) process were carried out with stable blends of waste plastic and VGO using an FCC catalyst containing USY zeolite. Plastics used were Waste Plastic #1 (Plastic E), and Waste Plastic #2 (Plastic F). A base case with only VGO feed (Example 4-1) was compared with two blend runs comprising a 5/95 % blend of Plastic E/VGO (Example 4-2) and a 5/95 wt. % blend of Plastic F/VGO (Example 4-3). The catalyst was an equilibrium catalyst removed from a commercial FCC plant.

Table 5

Evaluation of Waste Plastic Cofeeding to FCC with USY Catalyst

Example Number	Example 4-1	Example 4- 2	Example 4-3
	Base Case	Blend Feed #4	Blend Feed #5
Feed	100% VGO Feed Base	5/95 wt% Blend Waste Plastic #1/ VGO	5/95 wt% Blend Waste Plastic #2/ VGO
Temperature (°F)	975	975	975
Cat/Oil, wt/wt	6	6	6
Conversion, wt%*	82.0	84.2	84.1
Yields, wt%			
Coke	4.90	6.00	6.03
Total Dry Gas	2.11	2.09	2.16
Hydrogen	0.13	0.11	0.13
Methane	0.69	0.69	0.71
Ethane	0.46	0.46	0.48
Ethylene	0.80	0.79	0.81
Total LPG	21.84	22.61	22.93
Propane	1.97	1.92	1.99
Propylene	5.51	5.73	5.79
n-Butane	1.73	1.72	1.77
Isobutane	7.02	7.16	7.32
C4 Olefins	5.61	6.08	6.05
Gasoline (C5 – 430 °F)	53.13	53.47	52.98
LCO (430-650 °F)	12.32	10.56	10.76
HCO (650 °F+)	5.69	5.28	5.14
Gasoline Octane Number			
RON-GC	94.94	93.41	93.86
MON-GC	83.70	82.41	82.78
(R+M)/2	89.32	87.91	88.32

*: Conversion – conversion of 430°F⁺ fraction to 430°F⁻

**: Octane number, (R+M)/2, was estimated from detailed hydrocarbon GC of FCC gasoline.

[0084] The results in Table 5 show that 5 wt. % cofeeding of waste plastic makes only a slight change in the FCC unit performance indicating co-processing of waste plastic at 5 wt.% is readily feasible.

[0085] The waste plastic cracked more easily than VGO, thus the conversion increased slightly for the blends. The waste plastic added to the FCC feed led to a very slight increase of coke yields, but little change in dry gas yields. A moderate increase in LPG, C₃ and C₄ olefin yields and a slight decrease in LCO and HCO yields were observed. The gasoline yields were similar. With the paraffinic nature of cracked products made from the plastic, the blends with plastic

lowered the Octane number by about 1-1.5 numbers. With refinery operational flexibility, such octane number debits can be easily compensated with blending, or by adjusting FCC process operations and catalyst/additive formulations. The hydrocarbon compositions of all the cofeeding products are well within the typical FCC gasoline range.

[0086] Example 5: Fluid Catalytic Cracking of Plastic and Petroleum Oil Blend for Production of Fuels with Recycle Contents and Low CO₂ Footprint

[0087] Gasoline, LCO, HFO from Examples 2 and 4 can be sent to a corresponding blending pool to be blended to a finished gasoline, jet fuel, diesel or marine oil with recycle contents and a lower CO₂ footprint. Portions of the LCO and HFO can be further processed in other refinery units to produce clean gasoline, jet fuel and diesel with recycle contents and a lower CO₂ footprint.

[0088] Example 6: Feedstocks of C₃-C₄ and/or Naphtha Generation from Waste Plastics/Oil Blend Cofeeding to Refinery FCC Unit

[0089] By feeding the present plastic/oil blend, with or without a cofeed, to a fluid catalytic cracking unit, the blend will be converted and fractionated into multiple components. The refinery FCC unit produces substantial amounts of clean propane, butane, and naphtha streams, for polyethylene production as shown in Examples 2 and 4.

[0090] Example 7: Feeding of Recycle C₃-C₄ and/or Naphtha to Steam Cracker for Ethylene Production, Followed by Productions of Polyethylene Resin and Polyethylene Consumer Products

[0091] The propane, butane and naphtha streams, produced via cofeeding of a plastic/oil blend to a FCC unit per Examples 2 and 4, are good feedstocks to cofeed to a steam cracker for production of ethylene with a recycle content. At least a portion of the streams, if not all, can be fed to a steam cracker. The ethylene can be processed in a polymerization unit to produce polyethylene resin containing some recycled-polyethylene/polypropylene derived materials while the quality of the newly produced polyethylene would be indistinguishable to virgin polyethylene made entirely from virgin petroleum resources. The polyethylene resin with the recycled material can then be further processed to produce various polyethylene products to fit the needs of consumer products. These polyethylene consumer products now contain chemically recycled, circular polymer while quality of the polyethylene consumer products would be indistinguishable from those made entirely from virgin polyethylene polymer. These

chemically recycled polymer products are different from mechanically recycled polymer products whose qualities are inferior to the polymer products made from virgin polymers.

[0092] As used in this disclosure the word “comprises” or “comprising” is intended as an open-ended transition meaning the inclusion of the named elements, but not necessarily excluding other unnamed elements. The phrase “consists essentially of” or “consisting essentially of” is intended to mean the exclusion of other elements of any essential significance to the composition. The phrase “consisting of” or “consists of” is intended as a transition meaning the exclusion of all but the recited elements with the exception of only minor traces of impurities.

[0093] All patents and publications referenced herein are hereby incorporated by reference to the extent not inconsistent herewith. It will be understood that certain of the above-described structures, functions, and operations of the above-described embodiments are not necessary to practice the present invention and are included in the description simply for completeness of an exemplary embodiment or embodiments. In addition, it will be understood that specific structures, functions, and operations set forth in the above-described referenced patents and publications can be practiced in conjunction with the present invention, but they are not essential to its practice. It is therefore to be understood that the invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described without actually departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention as defined by the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A continuous process for converting waste plastic into recycle for polyethylene polymerization comprising:
 - (a) selecting waste plastics comprising polyethylene and/or polypropylene;
 - (b) preparing a blend of petroleum and the selected waste plastic with the blend comprising about 20 wt. % or less of the selected waste plastic;
 - (c) passing the blend at a temperature above the melting point of the waste plastic in the blend to a refinery FCC unit;
 - (d) recovering a liquid petroleum gas C₃ olefin/paraffin mixture from the FCC unit;and
 - (e) passing the C₃ mixture to a steam cracker to make ethylene.
2. The process of claim 1, wherein a gasoline and heavy fraction is recovered from the refinery FCC unit.
3. The process of claim 1, wherein the blend of (b) is a hot homogeneous blend of waste plastic and petroleum oil.
4. The process of claim 1, wherein the blend of (b) is a stable blend of waste plastic and petroleum oil.
5. The process of claim 1, wherein the waste plastics selected in (a) comprise plastics from classification group 2, 4, and/or 5.
6. The process of claim 1, wherein a C₄ stream and a heavy fraction are recovered from a FCC unit distillation column and further processed in the refinery to clean gasoline, diesel, or jet fuel.
7. The process of claim 1, wherein the volume flow of the blend to the refinery FCC unit in (c) comprises up to 100 vol. % of the total hydrocarbon flow to the FCC unit.
8. The process of claim 1, wherein the volume flow of the blend to the refinery FCC unit in (c) comprises up to 50 vol. % of the total hydrocarbon flow to the FCC unit.
9. The process of claim 8, wherein the blend flow comprises up to 25 vol. % of the total flow to the FCC unit.
10. The process of claim 1, wherein the blend of petroleum and selected waste plastic in (b) is prepared by heating the waste plastic above the melting point of the plastic and mixing with the petroleum, and then cooling the blend to a temperature below the melting point of the waste plastic.

11. The process of claim 1, wherein the petroleum in the blend comprises atmospheric gas oil, vacuum gas oil (VGO), atmospheric residue, a petroleum derived oil, a petroleum based material, and/or heavy stock recovered from refinery operations.
12. The process of claim 1, wherein the petroleum in the blend comprises light cycle oil (LCO), heavy cycle oil (HCO), FCC naphtha, gasoline, diesel, toluene, and/or aromatic solvent derived from petroleum.
13. A continuous process for converting waste plastic into recycle for polyethylene polymerization comprising:
 - (a) selecting waste plastics containing polyethylene and/or polypropylene;
 - (b) preparing a blend of petroleum and the selected plastic, with the blend comprising about 20 wt. % or less of the selected plastic;
 - (c) passing the blend to a refinery FCC unit;
 - (d) recovering a liquid petroleum gas C₃ olefin/paraffin mixture from the FCC unit;
 - (e) passing the C₃ olefin/paraffin mixture to a steam cracker to make ethylene;
 - (f) recovering C₄ paraffin and naphtha from the FCC unit; and
 - (g) passing the C₄ paraffin and naphtha recovered from the FCC unit to the steam cracker to make ethylene.
14. The process of claim 13, wherein a gasoline and heavy fraction is recovered from the refinery FCC unit.
15. The process of claim 13, wherein the blend of (b) is a hot homogeneous blend of waste plastic and petroleum oil.
16. The process of claim 13, wherein the blend of (b) is a stable blend of waste plastic and petroleum oil.
17. The process of claim 13, wherein the waste plastics selected in (a) comprise plastics from classification group 2, 4, and/or 5.
18. The process of claim 13, wherein a C₄ and a heavy fraction are recovered from a FCC unit distillation column and further processed in the refinery to clean gasoline, diesel, or jet fuel.
19. The process of claim 13, wherein the volume flow of the blend to the refinery FCC unit in (c) comprises up to 100 vol. % of the total hydrocarbon flow to the FCC unit.
20. The process of claim 13, wherein the volume flow of the blend to the refinery FCC unit in (c) comprises up to 50 vol. % of the total hydrocarbon flow to the FCC unit.

21. The process of claim 20, wherein the blend flow comprises up to 25 vol. % of the total flow to the FCC unit.
22. The process of claim 13, wherein the blend of petroleum and selected waste plastic in (b) is prepared by heating the waste plastic above the melting point of the plastic and mixing with the petroleum, and then cooling the blend to a temperature below the melting point of the waste plastic.
23. The process of claim 13, wherein the petroleum in the blend comprises atmospheric gas oil, vacuum gas oil (VGO), atmospheric residue, a petroleum derived oil, a petroleum based material, and/or heavy stock recovered from refinery operations.
24. The process of claim 13, wherein the petroleum in the blend comprises light cycle oil (LCO), heavy cycle oil (HCO), FCC naphtha, gasoline, diesel, toluene, and/or aromatic solvent derived from petroleum.
25. A process for converting waste plastic into chemicals useful in preparing polyethylene, comprising:
- (a) selecting waste plastics containing polyethylene and/or polypropylene;
 - (b) preparing a blend of petroleum and the selected plastic, with the blend comprising about 20 wt. % or less of the selected plastic; and
 - (c) passing the blend to a refinery FCC unit.
26. A continuous process for converting waste plastic into recycle for polyethylene polymerization comprising:
- (a) selecting waste plastics comprising polyethylene and/or polypropylene;
 - (b) preparing a blend of petroleum and the selected waste plastic with the blend comprising about 20 wt. % or less of the selected waste plastic;
 - (c) passing the blend at a temperature above the melting point of the plastic in the blend to a feed pretreater unit for a refinery FCC unit;
 - (d) recovering a heavy fraction from the feed pretreater unit and passing the heavy fraction to refinery FCC unit;
 - (e) recovering a liquid petroleum gas C₃ olefin/paraffin mixture from the FCC unit;
- and
- (f) passing the C₃ mixture to a steam cracker to make ethylene.
27. A process for converting waste plastic into recycle for preparation of lower carbon footprint fuels, comprising:
- (a) selecting waste plastics containing polyethylene and/or polypropylene;

- (b) preparing a blend of petroleum and the selected plastic, with the blend comprising about 20 wt. % or less of the selected plastic; and
 - (c) passing the blend to a refinery FCC unit.
28. The process of claim 27, wherein the lower carbon footprint fuels include gasoline, jet fuel, diesel, and/or marine oil.