

# **LEWISTON CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP AGENDA**

**Tuesday, May 12, 2015**  
**City Council Chambers**

## **6:00 p.m. Workshop**

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.  
Moment of Silence.

## **WORK SESSION**

1. Pay as You Throw Update/Presentation
2. Striping Plan - Pine Street

LEWISTON CITY COUNCIL  
WORKSHOP AGENDA  
TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2015  
6:00 P.M.  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, LEWISTON CITY HALL

1. Pay as You Throw Update/Presentation

In a Council workshop in January, a presentation on the Pay as You Throw (PAYT) solid waste system was made and the Council indicated its interest in potentially considering its adoption. Since then, staff has continued to review and evaluate the potential for adopting such a program, including a more detailed evaluation of its potential budgetary and tax rate impacts. At this time, we would like to review this effort with the Council and seek its guidance on how to proceed. Please see the attached background information.

2. Striping Plan – Pine Street

Last year, we installed a bike lane on Pine Street that created some concerns within the Council and the community. As a result of this feedback, staff was asked to review and revise the striping plan for this street. This has been done and sections of the striping plan are attached for your review and comment. The first page shows any section of the street where the striping varies from the standard. This is followed by larger scale pictures of selected areas where the layout can more easily be seen.



## EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

**Edward A. Barrett, City Administrator**  
**Phil Nadeau, Deputy City Administrator**

May 7, 2015

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
Fr: Edward A. Barrett  
Su: Pay as You Throw Solid Waste Proposal

### Background

In January, staff and representatives of Waste Zero made a presentation to the City Council outlining the Pay as You Throw (PAYT) solid waste program and requested Council concurrence in continuing to evaluate such an approach. That memo outlined the following major reasons for moving to a PAYT system:

It would:

- Increase overall equity by moving from a system where all property owners pay property taxes to support the solid waste system with some paying a separate additional amount for waste collection and disposal to a system where everyone pays for the cost of collecting and disposing of solid waste.
- Remove the current cost of municipal solid waste from the property tax, thus helping to stabilize or reduce our property tax rate
- Simplify the administration and oversight of our current program by eliminating the City's multi-family charge for service system.
- Allow MMWAC to replace the waste we reduce with other waste for which a higher tipping fee is charged, improving that facility's financial situation
- From the point of view of the taxpayer, move the cost of solid waste from an uncontrollable expense, where individual actions have no or very limited ability to effect the actual amount paid, to a controllable expense where individual actions can reduce costs, similar to the ability to control energy costs through conservation efforts or gasoline costs through choice of vehicle.
- Reduce energy use and greenhouse emissions through enhanced recycling.
- Based on preliminary pricing estimates, such a program could reduce our solid waste tipping fees by approximately \$200,000 per year and produce about \$1,000,000 in revenue, thus reducing our property tax levy by about \$1.2 million.

Conversely, the major concern about changing to such a system is public reaction to transitioning from what is now considered a "free" service for some to a pay system for all.

A complete copy of the January memo is attached.

## Subsequent Efforts

Since then, we have continued to review and evaluate the potential for adopting such a program, including a more detailed evaluation of its potential budgetary and tax rate impacts. The Committee to Review Public Works' Service Level Standards that was created by the City Council has also reviewed the program, and its recommendation is attached.

## Budget Implications

For Fiscal Year 16, our overall solid waste system operates at a \$1,259,980 operating loss. This amount must be covered by other General Fund Revenues, most notably the property tax.

Implementing a pay as you throw system with 30 pound bags priced at \$2.00 and 15 pound bags at \$1.25 is conservatively estimated to produce \$1,000,000 in revenue on an annual basis. In addition, the reduction in solid waste delivered to the Mid-Maine Waste Action Corporation will reduce our tipping fees by roughly \$275,000. Taking these changes into account, the current deficit in the solid waste system should be completely covered, eliminating the need for any property tax support.

Reducing this amount from our property tax levy will reduce the municipal tax rate by roughly 66 cents. Note, however, that this assumes that the new system is in place for a full year.

Attached you will find a multi-year history of the City's solid waste revenues and expenditures as well as a more detailed spreadsheet showing the budget for more recent years including the recently adopted budget for FY 16.

## Request

At this point, we would request that the City Council consider taking formal action to move the analysis of PAYT forward through authorizing staff to coordinate a series of forums in which the program can be presented to the public for review and comment. We would anticipate that this would be done during the months of May and June with the goal of returning to the City Council in late June or early July with an update. At that time, the Council would have several options including implementing the program, not implementing it, or continuing to review it for potential later implementation. If a decision to proceed is reached prior to the annual tax commitment, the Council would also be able to amend the FY16 budget to reduce the overall property tax rate to reflect the change. Under this scenario, the program could be implemented in October and be in effect for 75% of next budget year. This would reduce the first year impact of the change to a net of about \$937,500. At this level, the first year tax rate impact would be a reduction of about 49 cents.

## Conclusion

City staff and representatives of Waste Zero will be available on Tuesday to review the program with you and provide any further information you may find helpful. Please feel free to let me know in advance if you have any questions.



## EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

**Edward A. Barrett, City Administrator**  
**Phil Nadeau, Deputy City Administrator**

January 7, 2015

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
Fr: Edward A. Barrett  
Su: Pay as You Throw (PAYT)

Over the past few months, a number of staff members have been involved in discussing alternatives to the City's current system of solid waste collection.

### Current System

Under the current system, commercial and larger multi-family properties are required to pay for the collection and disposal of their solid waste while single family and smaller multi-family properties receive the service at no charge. Single stream recycling is provided to single family and small multi-family properties at no charge.

This system raises a number of questions of equity given that owners of some properties are required to pay for collection and disposal where others receive the service at no charge. In addition, the amount of waste generated by individual properties who receive the no charge service varies dramatically, with some residents generating significant larger quantities than others, in part dependent on whether those residents do or do not take advantage of the no charge recycling system.

The City's current recycling rate, which is barely above 10%, is significantly below the state goal of 50%. This low recycling rate:

- Increases the tipping fees paid by the City for waste disposal,
- Underutilizes the recycling system we provide, and
- Does not contribute to the environmental benefits of recycling or the economic benefits associated with the recently opened materials processing facility at our Solid Waste Facility.

### Potential Advantages of a PAYT System

Based on preliminary analysis, a PAYT system would increase our recycling tonnage from the current 1,200 to 3,100; reduce the tons we deliver to the Mid-Maine Waste incinerator from 11,000 to 6,200, and move our recycling rate up to the 50% state goal. Based on data from cities across Maine and New England with PAYT systems that have operated successfully for more than 20 years, these changes are likely to be permanent.

It would also:

- Increase overall equity by moving everyone to a system in which they pay for the cost of collecting and disposing of solid waste
- Reduce energy use and greenhouse emissions through enhanced recycling

- Remove the current cost of municipal solid waste from property taxes, thus helping to stabilize or reduce our property tax rate
- Simplify the administration and oversight of our current program by eliminating the City's multi-family charge for service system.
- Allow MMWAC to replace the waste we reduce with other waste for which a higher tipping fee is charged, improving that facility's financial situation
- From the point of view of the taxpayer, move the cost of solid waste from an uncontrollable expense, where individual actions have no or very limited ability to effect the actual amount paid to a controllable expense where individual actions can reduce costs, similar to the ability to control energy costs through conservation efforts or gasoline costs through choice of vehicle. While initially resistant, residents and councils in other communities have come to embrace PAYT with few if any programs discontinued.
- Based on preliminary pricing estimates, such a program could reduce our solid waste tipping fees by approximately \$200,000 per year and produce about \$1,000,000 in revenue, thus reducing our property tax levy by about \$1.2 million.

#### Future Solid Waste Issues

Solid Waste management in Maine is approaching a crossroads. Incineration, the major alternative to landfilling in Maine, will be challenged financially as long term advantageous energy contracts have or will soon terminate. The incinerator in Biddeford recently closed. Communities in the Bangor area are seeking alternatives that could result in the closure of that facility as well. MMWAC, which has already lost its energy contract, is facing a significant financial challenge and is poised to raise rates by about 40% to its member community owners.

At this point, it is not clear that the remaining incinerators in the state will be able to effectively compete long-term with the cost of landfilling, especially at the point where incinerators face significant capital costs to upgrade or be adequately maintained.

Should MMWAC close, we will lose our current ash for trash arrangement. Under it, the revenue we receive from accepting ash roughly equals our disposal costs. Should we lose the MMWAC option, disposing of our current 11,000 annual tons of residential waste will require that we either reopen our solid waste facility for such materials, at a significant cost, or transport to another landfill where tipping fees are in the \$80 per ton range. With transportation, this would increase our solid waste costs by roughly \$1,000,000 per year. PAYT would significantly mitigate this long term risk while addressing current challenges.

#### Conclusion and Request

There are strong economic and environmental benefits associated with the PAYT approach. It is more equitable than our current system since individuals would pay in proportion to their use. It provides a strong incentive to recycle or reuse materials, both saving energy and resources and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, it is a significant change, and change is often difficult. To put it in perspective, this change process will take just several months while the benefits of fixing the system will bring a set of structurally permanent benefits.

At this point, we are not asking the Council to take any action toward implementing a PAYT system. We are, however, requesting your support to continue to evaluate this approach, gather additional information, answer questions that you or the public may have, and develop a plan for moving this initiative forward, perhaps as an element of the upcoming budget process.

## **EXCERPTS FROM THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW PUBLIC WORKS' SERVICE LEVEL STANDARDS**

### **IV. Solid Waste Division**

Historically, the City has been able to provide municipal solid waste collection and disposal services at a comparatively low cost to the taxpayer due to revenues generated by the City's landfill, a lease between a city development corporation and a firm that processes wood and bulky waste under which the city is permitted to dispose of a significant quantity of such waste at no cost, and certain fees, including charges for collecting waste from certain multi-family properties and miscellaneous revenues at the landfill. Over the period from 2004 through 2014, solid waste collection and disposal has cost the taxpayers between \$870,000 and \$1.65 million per year.

For purposes of this analysis, the figures presented represent those from FY14, the last year for which complete annual data is available.

For FY14, solid waste collection and disposal cost the City \$1,260,000 after taking into account revenues from all sources. The primary reason that Lewiston's costs are so low is the ash for trash program. In FY14, it cost Lewiston \$457,000 to dispose of its solid waste at the MMWAC incinerator in Auburn at a tipping fee of \$42 per ton. Note that this tipping fee is significantly below the market rate for disposal of waste at MMWAC, other such facilities in the state, and landfills. Revenue from accepting the ash from MMWAC totaled \$576,000 in the same year.

Other major costs of the system include: solid waste collection (\$543,000); recyclable collection (\$199,000); and debt service associated with the solid waste facility (\$490,000).

Other system revenues include: multi-family collection fees (\$324,000); sale of punch passes (\$50,000); and fees for accepting certain bulky wastes (\$12,500).

Solid Waste management in Maine is approaching a crossroads. Incineration, the major alternative to landfilling in Maine, is and will continue to be challenged financially as long term advantageous energy contracts have or will soon terminate. The incinerator in Biddeford recently closed. Communities in the Bangor area are seeking alternatives that could result in the closure of that facility. MMWAC, which has already lost its energy contract, is facing a significant financial challenge and is poised to raise rates to its member community owners by about 40%. The City's current agreement with MMWAC expires in 2017 and we anticipate that it will be seeking higher tipping fees for our solid waste.

At this point, it is not clear that the remaining incinerators in the state will be able to effectively compete long-term with the cost of landfilling, especially at the point where incinerators face significant capital costs for upgrades or major maintenance.

Should MMWAC close, we will lose our current ash for trash arrangement. Under it, the revenue we receive from accepting ash exceeds our disposal costs. Should we lose the MMWAC option, disposing of our current 11,000 annual tons of residential waste will require that we either reopen our solid waste facility for such materials, at a significant cost, or

transport to another landfill where tipping fees are in the \$80 per ton range. With transportation, this could increase our solid waste costs by roughly \$1,000,000 per year.

Similarly, the Re-energy recycling facility for wood and bulky waste is also financially challenged. Most recently, the recycled wood produced by this facility lost the renewable energy credits previously available to it. (Such credits are now restricted to green wood.) In addition, the market for metals, a by-product produced at this facility, has fallen by 40% in recent years. Losing this outlet could increase our costs for disposal of these materials substantially.

Finally, the City's current recycling rate, which is barely above 10%, is significantly below the state goal of 50%. This low recycling rate:

- Increases the tipping fees paid by the City for waste disposal,
- Underutilizes the recycling system we provide, and
- Does not contribute to the environmental benefits of recycling or the economic benefits associated with the recently opened materials processing facility at our Solid Waste Facility.

Given the current unrecovered costs associated with our system and the potential for significant additional costs in the future, the Committee reviewed the Pay as You Throw proposal under review by the City Council. Under a PAYT system, residents would purchase garbage bags that then must be used for disposal of their solid waste.

Based on preliminary budget figures for FY16, a PAYT program which produces roughly \$1 million in revenue and \$200,000 in savings on MMWAC tipping fees would allow the solid waste system to be operated as an enterprise fund and remove solid waste expenses from the City's General Fund budget.

It would also:

- Increase overall equity by moving everyone to a system in which they pay for the cost of collecting and disposing of solid waste
- Reduce energy use and greenhouse emissions through enhanced recycling
- Simplify the administration and oversight of the current program by eliminating the City's multi-family charge for service system.
- Allow MMWAC to replace the waste we reduce with other waste for which a higher tipping fee is charged, improving that facility's financial situation
- From the point of view of the taxpayer, move the cost of solid waste from an uncontrollable expense, where individual actions have no or very limited ability to effect the actual amount paid, to a controllable expense where individual actions can reduce costs, similar to the ability to control energy costs through conservation efforts or gasoline costs through choice of vehicle. While initially resistant, residents and councils in other communities have come to embrace PAYT with few if any programs discontinued.

#### Impact Tax Rate/Taxes

Using the current year (FY15) budget, instituting a PAYT system would have reduced the City's tax rate by 64 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value. A home assessed at \$100,000

would have saved \$64 in taxes; one at \$150,000 would have saved \$96; at \$200,000, the savings would have been \$128.

Assuming 30 gallon bags were to be priced at \$2 and a homeowner used one bag per week on average, the cost for that homeowner would be \$104 per year. Under this scenario, the "break even" point for a single family homeowner would be at properties valued at \$162,500. Homeowners who averaged less than one 30 gallon bag or who disposed of just one 15 gallon bag per week could significantly reduce their disposal expense.

Greater savings are not available to homeowners under this program due to the extent that city residential collection and disposal costs are underwritten by property taxes paid by commercial, industrial, and multi-family properties that now pay property taxes but do not receive city solid waste services.

Nevertheless, the Committee recommends that the PAYT system be adopted for the range of reasons outlined above.

City of Lewiston  
Solid Waste Trend - All Divisions

<b>Description</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<i>Expenditures:</i>			
Personnel Services	248,707.84	216,162.00	243,927.00
Fringe	111,004.27	99,859.82	113,673.87
Other	1,164,907.18	1,157,107.00	1,240,981.00
Overhead - PW - 4.9%	10,059.04	10,124.51	10,698.78
Overhead - Finance 2%	18,599.65	18,545.57	19,532.67
Overhead - Admin. - .75%	3,640.79	3,603.06	3,656.52
Overhead - HR 1.1%	1,700.93	1,600.27	1,608.21
Debt Service	489,169.17	468,448.26	443,529.14
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>2,047,788.87</b>	<b>1,975,450.48</b>	<b>2,077,607.19</b>
<i>Revenues:</i>			
	<b>787,808.62</b>	<b>763,390.00</b>	<b>773,430.00</b>
<b>Net Costs</b>	<b>1,259,980.25</b>	<b>1,212,060.48</b>	<b>1,304,177.19</b>

Divisions include: Waste Collection, Waste Disposal & Recycling

Bonds: 19B, 30B-F, 31A, 34M&N, 36P, 39S, 40U&V, 41G, 52Q, 56J&K, 61Q&R, 65J, 67E, 72E

# “Pay-as-You-Throw” for Lewiston



**May 2015**

**Why Pay-as-  
You-Throw**

**How It  
Works**

**Benefits**

# Solid Waste Today

Why Pay-as-  
You-Throw

- **Lewiston has significant room for improvement with solid waste and recycling.**
- **Taxpayers pay \$200,000 too much for dumping each year.**
- **If we don't address the cause of the problem, solid waste costs will continue to rise**
- **The solution involves using incentives to make residents true partners in solving this problem.**
- **Pay as you throw is working with 31% of the population of Maine, with extremely good results.**

How It  
Works

Benefits

# Summary

## Why Pay-as-You-Throw

### A Change in How You Pay for Trash

- **Why?** It is the only way to fix a broken system
- **Today:** Residents pay the same no matter how much they throw away
- **With PAYT:** Residents are empowered and can manage it better; they only pay for what they throw away

## How It Works

### Numerous Benefits

- **City budget savings**—by sending less trash to incinerator
- **Lower taxes** – resulting from lower costs
- **Sustainability**—more recycling is good for the environment, good for jobs, and is the right thing to do
- **Equity**—paying for your own waste, not your neighbors'

## Benefits

### Very Few Changes

- Households simply recycle more; little changes for them
- Relatively simple to implement
- Lasting change is created with little ongoing work

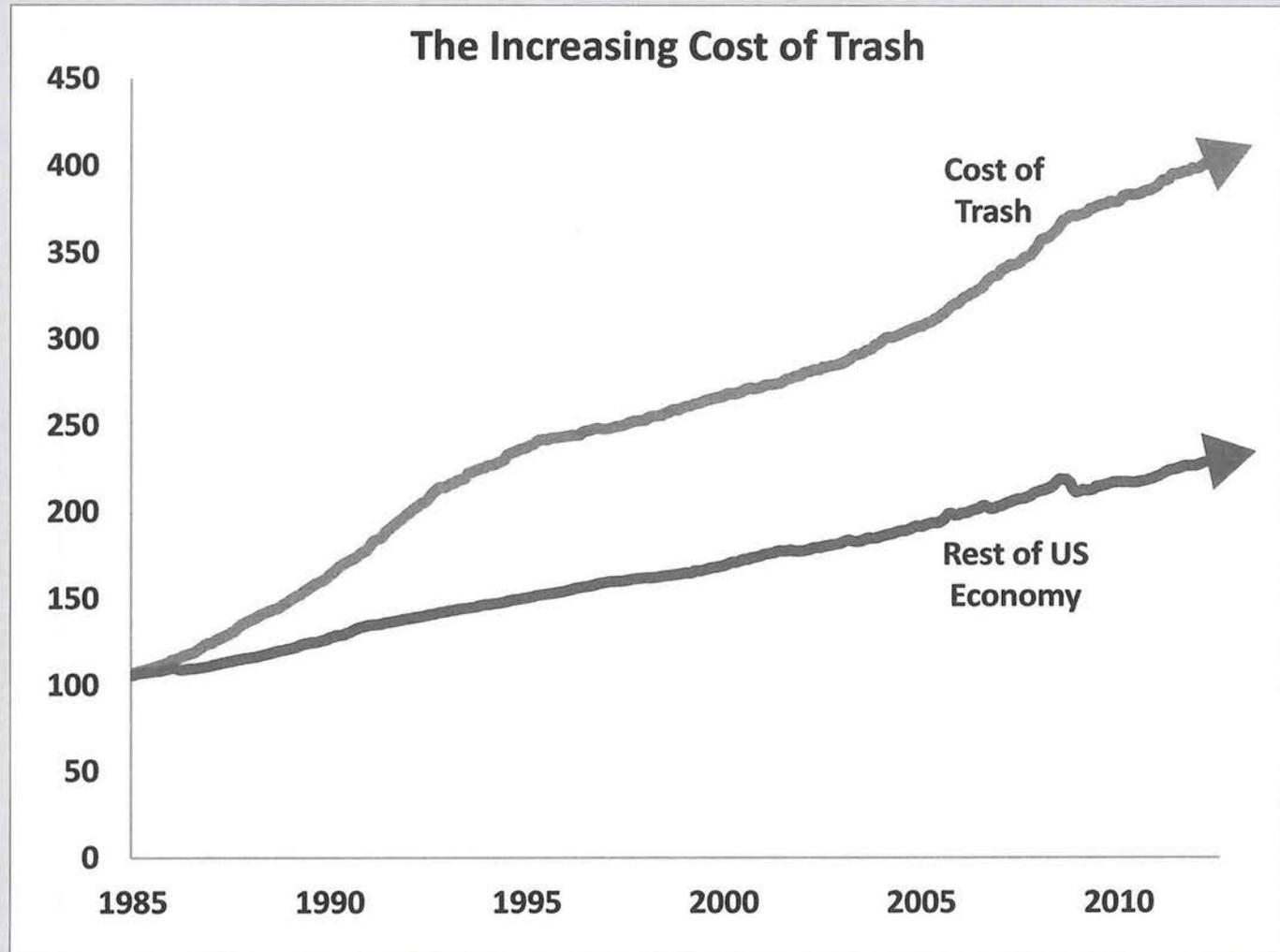


# Solid Waste Costs Rising – Poor Recycling

Why Pay-as-You-Throw

How It Works

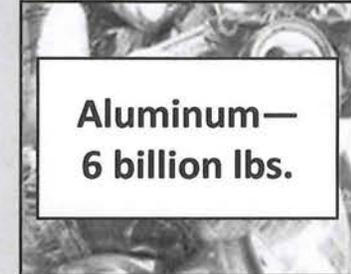
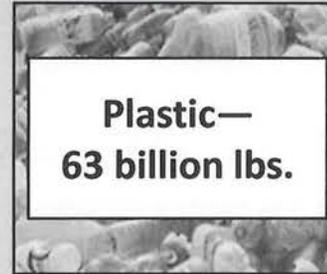
Benefits



# Wasted Resources

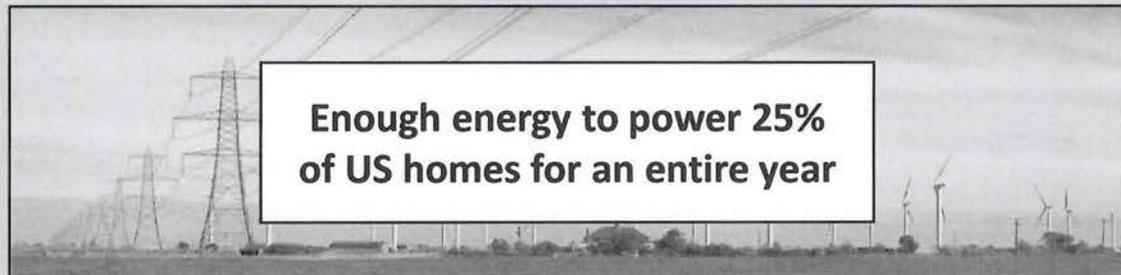
**Why Pay-as-You-Throw**

**Natural Resources**



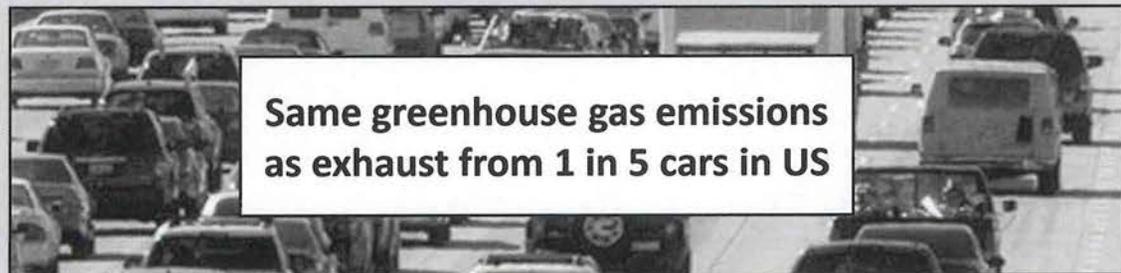
**How It Works**

**Energy**



**Benefits**

**Carbon Emissions**



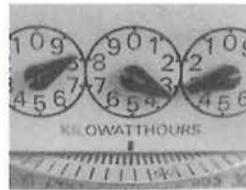
# Solid Waste is a Utility, But is Not Priced That Way

Why Pay-as-You-Throw

We Pay Based on How Much We Use



Water



Electricity



Gas

We Pay a Set Amount No Matter How Much We Use



Garbage



Residents are motivated to conserve



Residents are less motivated to conserve

How It Works

Benefits

# The Result: Unfairness

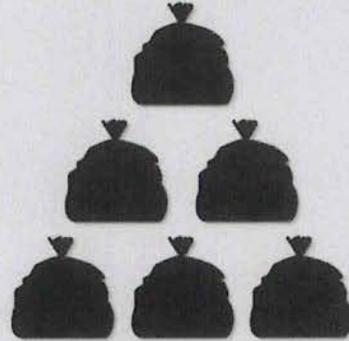
Why Pay-as-You-Throw

How It Works

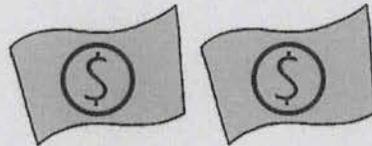
Benefits

**Some Neighbors:**

Recycle Little and  
Throw Away More



Cost Lewiston Millions;  
Costs Shifted to Others

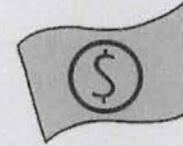


**You:**

Recycle Responsibly  
and Throw Away Less



Save Lewiston Millions



# You Currently Have No Control Over Costs

Why Pay-as-You-Throw

**Now:  
You Pay a Set Amount No Matter  
How Much You Throw Away**

**CITY OF LEWISTON  
REAL ESTATE TAX STATEMENT**

Fiscal Year 2015  
JAN 1 2015 TO DEC 31 2015

PARCEL NUMBER	ACCOUNT NUMBER	DATE OF BILLING	TOTAL TAXES
00-002006	37596	01/15/2015	5,247.27

LOCATION OF PROPERTY AND DESCRIPTION  
**01000 LISBON ST  
LAND & BLDG - 110X116**

**1008 LISBON STREET LLC  
1008 LISBON ST  
LEWISTON, ME 04240**

TAX TYPE	TAX AMOUNT
2014 SEPTEMBER 15, 2014	2,623.64
2014 MARCH 15, 2014	2,623.63
DELINQUENT FINE TO DATE	0.00
INTEREST FINE	61.35
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,308.66</b>

Valuation  
Homestead Exemption  
Other Exemptions  
Taxable Valuation  
Tax Rate  
TOTAL TAX

**1008 LISBON STREET LLC  
1008 LISBON ST  
LEWISTON, ME 04240**

LOCATION: 01000 LISBON ST  
LAND & BLDG - 110X116

PARCEL NUMBER: 00-002006

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 37596

DATE OF BILLING: 01/15/2015

2014 SEPTEMBER 15, 2014: 2,623.64

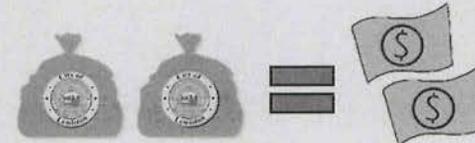
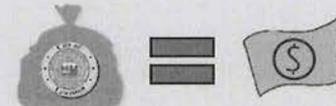
2014 MARCH 15, 2014: 2,623.63

PAYMENT ACCOUNT:

**Solid Waste Costs Buried  
in Property Taxes –  
But You Are Still Paying!**

**No Control Over Costs Passed  
Along in Tax Bill**

**With Pay-as-You-Throw:  
You Pay Based on How  
Much You Throw Away**



**It's like giving you your own  
electric meter rather than  
sharing one with all your  
neighbors.**

How It  
Works

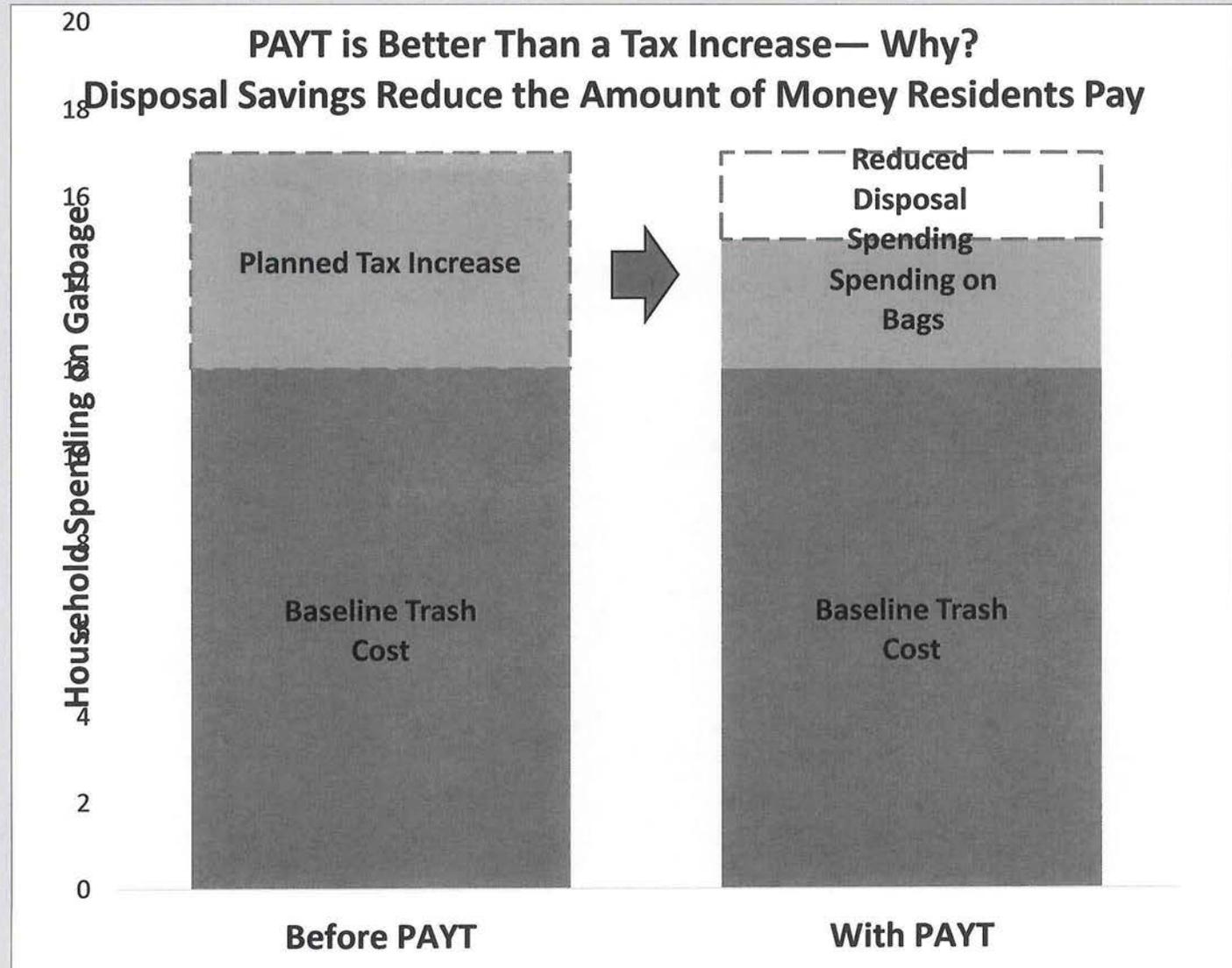
Benefits

# Impact on Household Finances

Why Pay-as-You-Throw

How It Works

Benefits



# A Manageable Expense

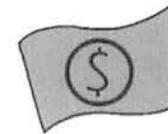
Because people *recycle more* and *throw away less* with pay-as-you-throw, the *cost of bags is minimal* in the average PAYT household:

1 Small Bag per Week  
1 Large Bag per Week



=

\$1.25 per Week  
\$2.00 per Week



With PAYT, residents can choose how much they spend by recycling more. Tax increases and flat fees don't permit that.

Why Pay-as-You-Throw

How It Works

Benefits

# Simple for Residents

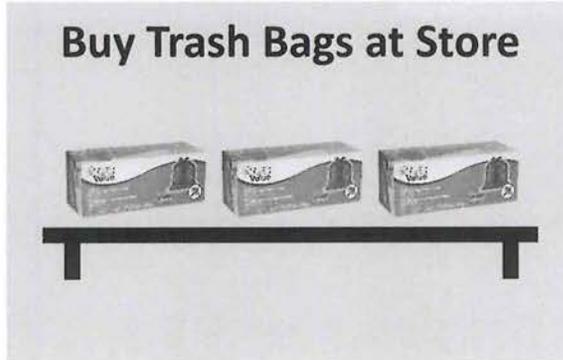
Why Pay-as-You-Throw

How It Works

Benefits

Now

Buy Trash Bags at Store



Take Bags to Curb



With Pay-as-You-Throw

Buy Trash Bags at Store



Take Bags to Curb



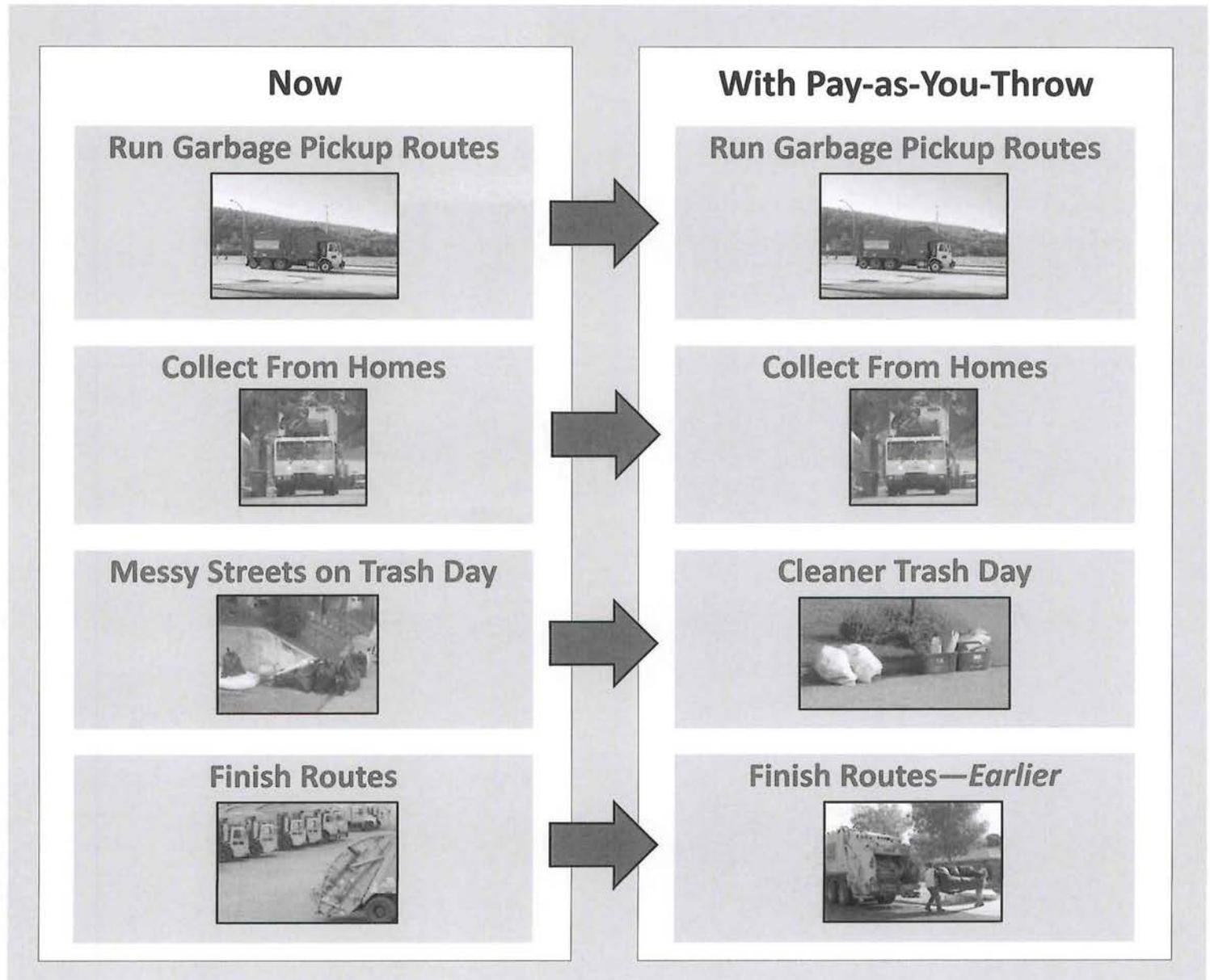
The only change is that you have more recycling.

# Streamlined Operations

Why Pay-as-You-Throw

How It Works

Benefits

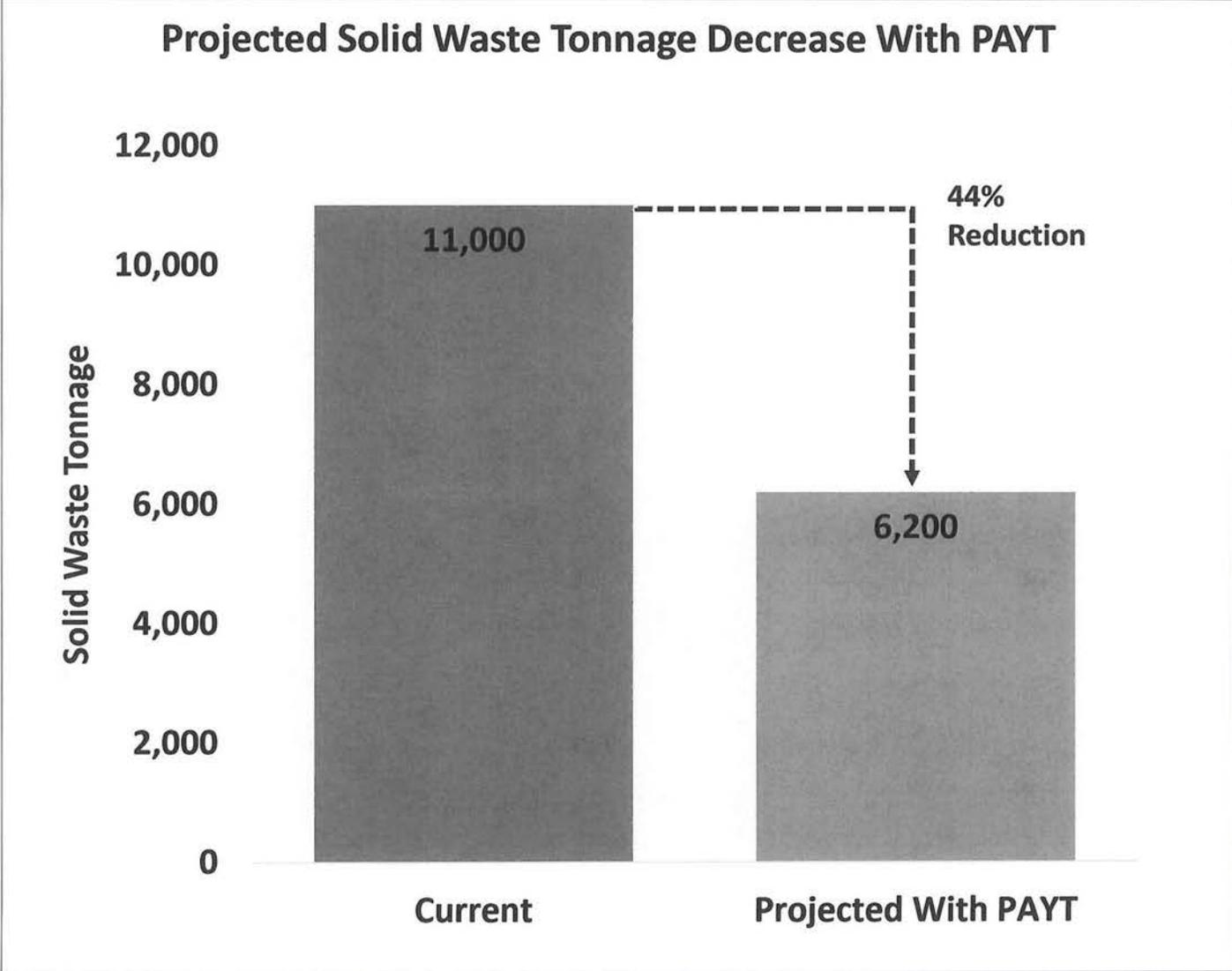


# Large Drop in Trash Tonnage

Why Pay-as-You-Throw

How It Works

Benefits

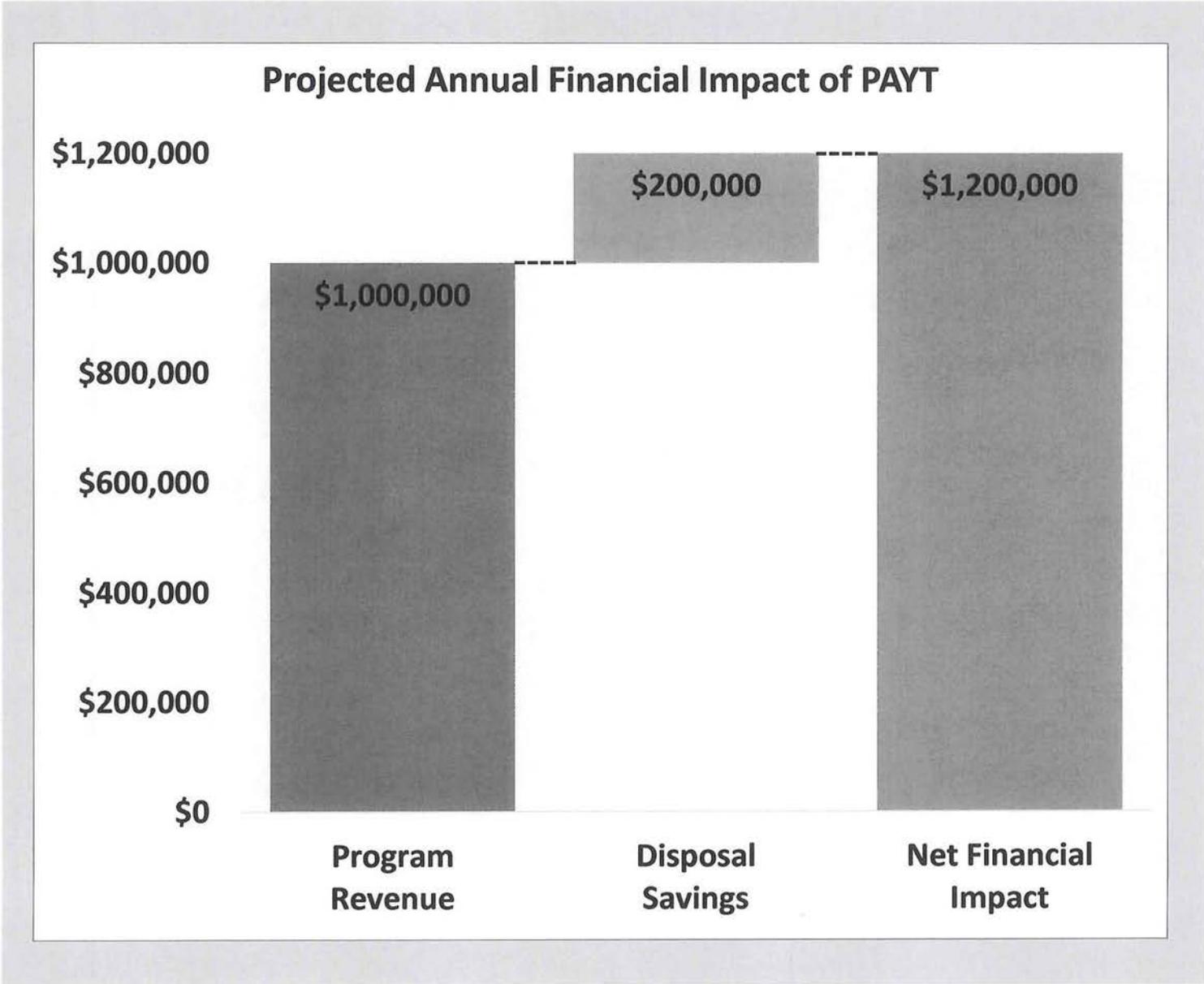


# Financial Impact

Why Pay-as-You-Throw

How It Works

Benefits



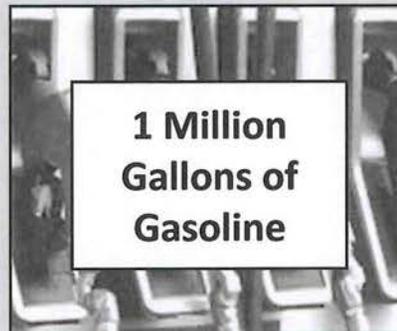
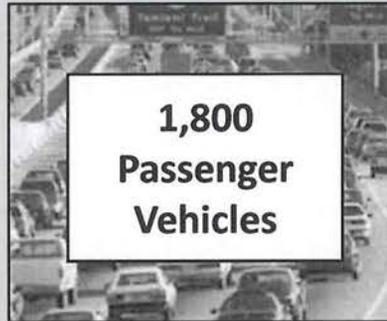
# Environmental Savings

Why Pay-as-  
You-Throw

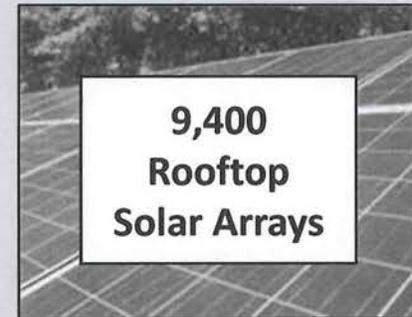
How It  
Works

Benefits

**Savings in Greenhouse  
Gas Emissions—  
Like Taking Away...**



**Energy Savings—  
Like Capturing  
the Energy From...**



# Conclusion

**Why Pay-as-  
You-Throw**

With PAYT, the City can generate \$1.2 million in annual impact while only charging residents \$1 million.

PAYT is fair, allowing residents to pay their own cost for solid waste.

**How It  
Works**

By increasing recycling, PAYT will reduce the City's costs and help create jobs in recycling businesses.

**Benefits**

PAYT is no different than the metering we have done for electricity, water and other public services.

# Will PAYT Cause Illegal Dumping?

City leaders and other experts agree:  
PAYT does not increase illegal dumping.

All the things people said could happen and would happen—illegal dumping, throwing of trash across the city—**never happened.**

—Bob Moylan, Commissioner (retired), Worcester MA Public Works

**“Overall, PAYT does not lead to increased illegal dumping....**  
Communities report that illegal dumping is a ‘perceived’ barrier and not an actual barrier.”

Econservation Institute  
“Fact Sheet: Pay-As-You-Throw and Illegal Dumping”

“Most communities with PAYT have found that illegal diversion has proven to be **less of a concern than anticipated**—and that there are steps they can take to minimize its occurrence..”

US Environmental Protection Agency

Concerns that implementing a pay-as-you-throw system would bring an increase in illegal dumping have been **largely unfounded.**

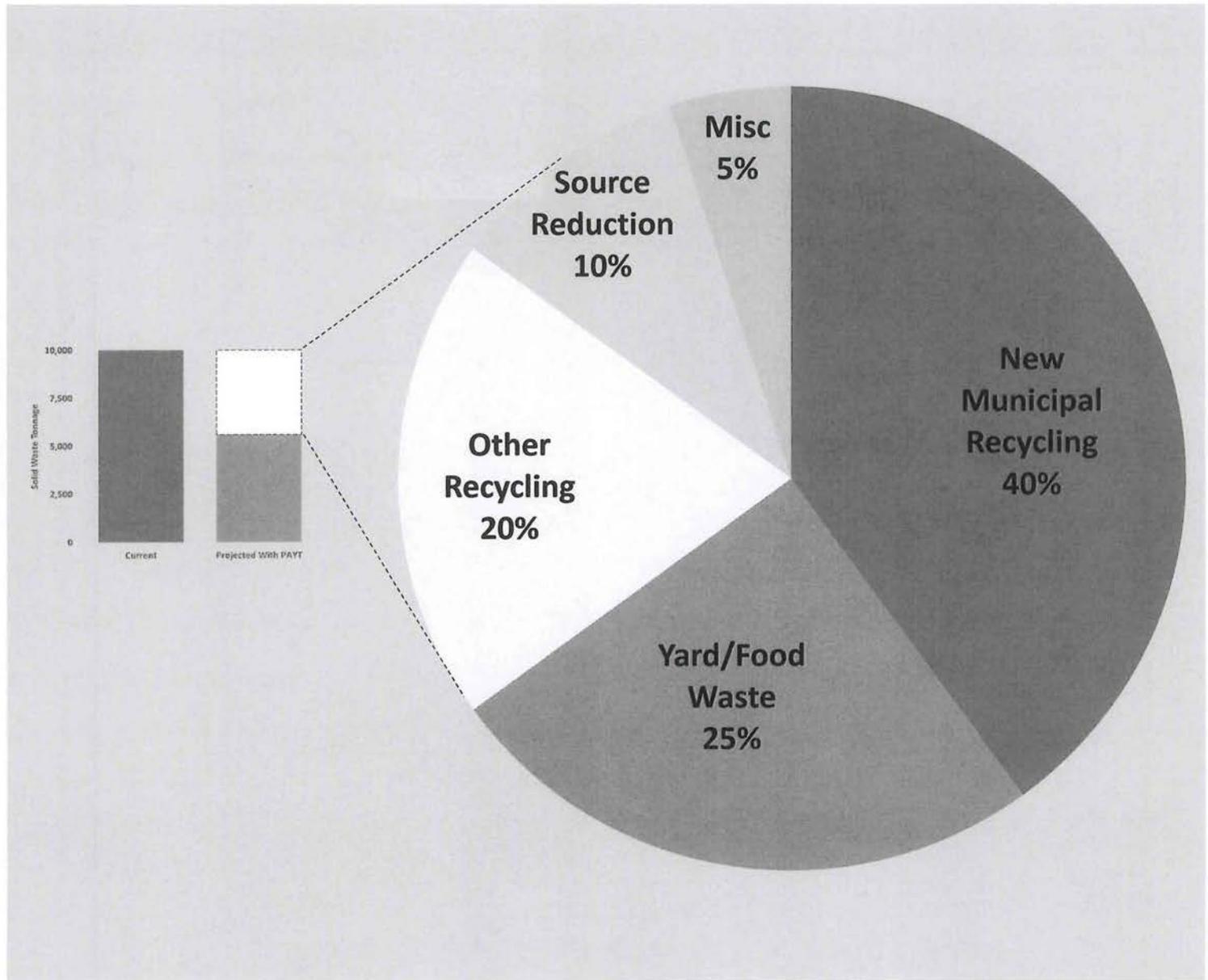
—Chip Chesley, General Services Director, Concord NH

**80% of illegal dumping is actually commercial material, not residential.**

Frequently  
Asked  
Questions

# Where Does the Trash Go?

Frequently  
Asked  
Questions



# Public Engagement Overview

**Public engagement is very important for a successful program.**

Council Budget  
Modification /  
PAYT

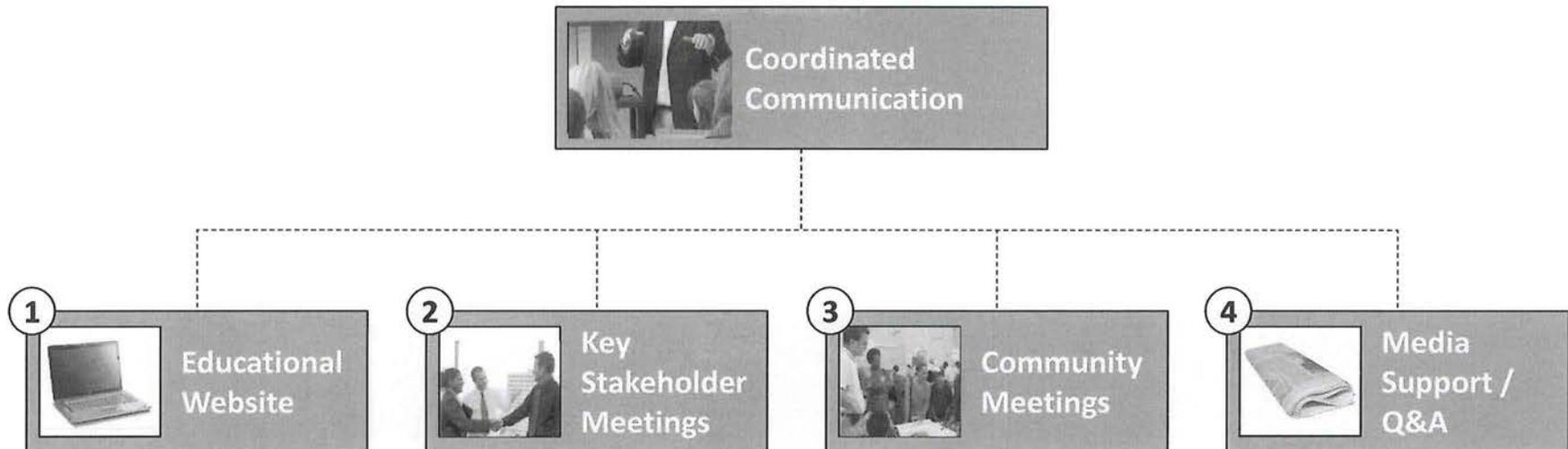


Public Engagement

- Highlight the solid waste challenge & the need to solve it
- Introduce PAYT
- Outline benefits of PAYT
- Collect resident input & feedback
- Encourage dialog about waste reduction & recycling

# Public Engagement

The city needs to engage with residents to explain why the “trash problem” is important, and why PAYT is the best way to solve it.



# Public Engagement Educational Website

## Key Purposes:

- Describe the city's challenges or goals, and how they could be addressed by "cutting the trash 44%"
- Introduce PAYT as a solution
- Show how a successful PAYT program works
- Outline the program's estimated benefits to the city and to residents
- Describe the resident experience with PAYT
- Show results from other, similar towns and cities
- Address common concerns or questions
- Provide a mechanism to give feedback, ask questions, and get involved.



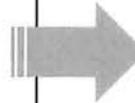
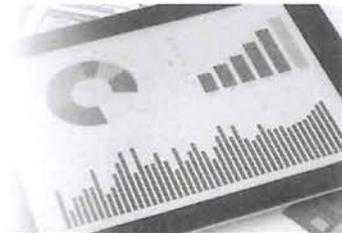
*The website can be a **critical tool** for educating the public, addressing questions and concerns, collecting feedback, and motivating grassroots participation.*

# Public Engagement Stakeholder Briefings

It is important to meet with a range of community leaders to educate them about why it's important to "cut the trash and increase recycling," how the program will benefit the community, and to engage in helpful dialog.

## Key stakeholders may include:

- Elected Officials
- City Staff Members
- Individual Business or Community Leaders
- Local Organizations
  - Advocacy Groups
  - Business Organizations
  - Service Clubs
  - Community Groups
- Others (as appropriate)



## Main topics addressed include:

- Why this is important
- What PAYT is and how it works
- Benefits to the city
  - Financial
  - Environmental
- Fairness and convenience for residents
- Feedback
- Questions

*These meetings are extremely helpful in producing a **common understanding** of the need and the program, as well as for **boosting support** throughout the community.*

# Public Engagement Community Meetings

**These public forums can provide good opportunities to educate residents, as well as gather their feedback and answer questions.**

- Three public meetings
- City staff and vendor
- Attend and deliver presentations regarding
  - PAYT Overview
  - Financial and Environmental Benefits
  - Resident Experience
  - Other (as appropriate)
- Address questions and concerns
- Provide literature for the attendees
- Engage with media (as appropriate)



# Public Engagement

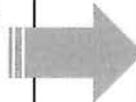
## Media Support

**Educating the media is, by extension, educating residents. Lewiston needs to ensure that the media fully understands the need and the solution.**

### Objectives:

- Ensure that city officials have what they need to effectively meet the needs of the media
- Ensure that local media channels are fully briefed on the need for the program and how it works

*The Auburn Globe*



### Key Components:

- Value and benefits of the program
- Key logistical issues
- Frequently asked questions (FAQs)
- Editorial board briefings for local media
- Background documents for the media
  - Key messages and statistics
  - FAQs
  - PAYT Primer / Backgrounder
- Press release for the city

# Public Engagement

## Community Education & Engagement

### Message/ Talking Point Development

- Combine City specifics with WasteZero experience



### Community Outreach Meetings

- Neighborhood- and/or affinity-group based



### Resident Education Materials

- Existing library
- Customizable for City



### Resident-Facing Web Site

- Program information
- How-to's/FAQs
- List and map retailers selling bags

Pre-Implementation Support

Ongoing Support

## Public & Media Relations



### Coordination With Local Media

- Convey specific and general messaging points
- Editorial board meetings
- Serve as resource for media



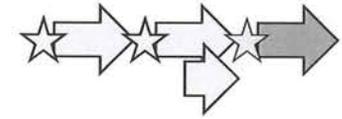
### "Success Stories" at Program Milestones

- Steady flow of news on program successes

# Public Presentation Material

- The following is a presentation meant to demonstrate why PAYT is was chosen as a way to increase recycling, save money and reduce solid waste.
- This presentation would also work well presented alongside a piece on all of the recyclables that are accepted through curbside collection.

# Ongoing Progress Reports & Media Outreach



As the program generates significant and positive results, WasteZero can help city leaders communicate that to the media and to residents.

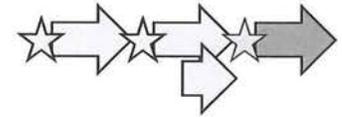
## WasteZero offers

- Regular reporting to the city regarding program results (requires the city to share some ongoing data with WasteZero)
- Notification when key milestones are achieved
- Press releases and media outreach announcing achievement of key milestones
  - For the municipality to release
  - For WasteZero to release, as well, with municipal approval
- Development of a case study highlighting the program's success



*WasteZero's media outreaches often result in positive coverage of the program's results in local media. With larger "first mover" cities in a region, positive national press is also possible.*

# Ongoing Communications



After launch, many communications tools created during the pre-launch phase will remain in effect, and additional support is added.

## Continued from pre-launch period:

### Program Website



### Toll-Free Line

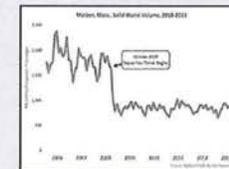


### Educational Materials



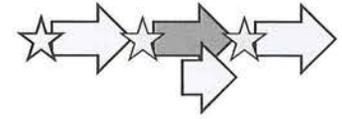
## Added after launch:

### Progress Reports & Media Outreach



# Public Engagement

## Logistics-Related Communications



In the ~3 months leading up to launch, the strategy shifts to giving residents all the information they need to participate in the program. WasteZero provides a range of tools and support.

Program Website	Toll-Free Line	Launch Materials	Educational Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customized for the city</li> <li>• Program overview &amp; benefits</li> <li>• Bag prices &amp; sizes</li> <li>• Retail locations</li> <li>• FAQs</li> <li>• Recycling &amp; trash collection guidelines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24/7 availability</li> <li>• Pre-recorded self-service</li> <li>• Menu-driven</li> <li>• Key program information</li> <li>• Available option to speak live with customer service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postcard mailed to each home (city covers postage)</li> <li>• Launch flyer (provided to city electronically)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customized with the city's name &amp; seal</li> <li>• Wide range of useful tips &amp; topics for residents</li> <li>• Electronic format for easy printing</li> </ul>

## ***A Guide to Pay-as-You-Throw in Maine***

This document serves as a guide to understanding the “how’s” and “why’s” of the pay-as-you-throw model for solid waste—both in general and specifically in Maine, where it has already helped transform a number of cities and towns, and has the potential to do so in many more.

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# PAYT in Maine

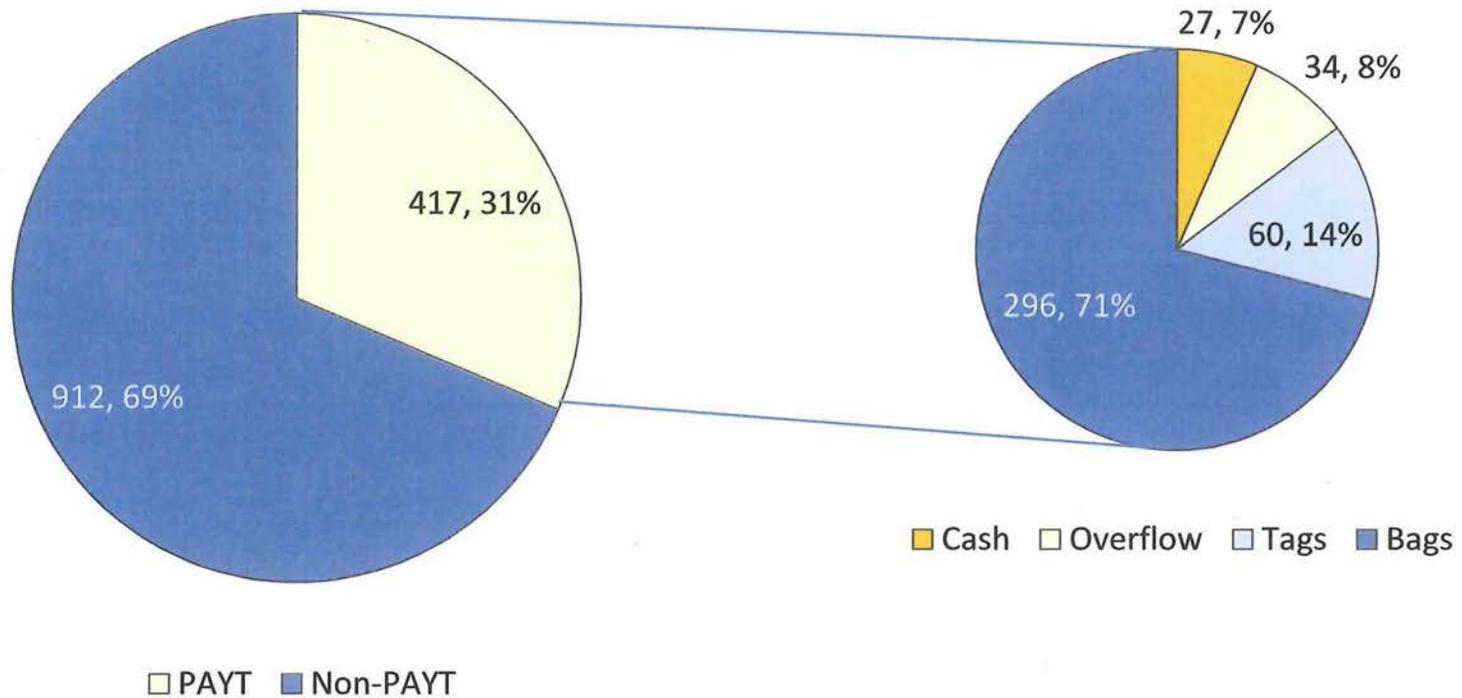
## Overview

31% (or 417,000) of the 1.33 million people in Maine live in towns that have some form of PAYT.

### Payment Method for Trash Service in ME

By pop. in thousands and percent of pop.

Total pop. = 1.33 million

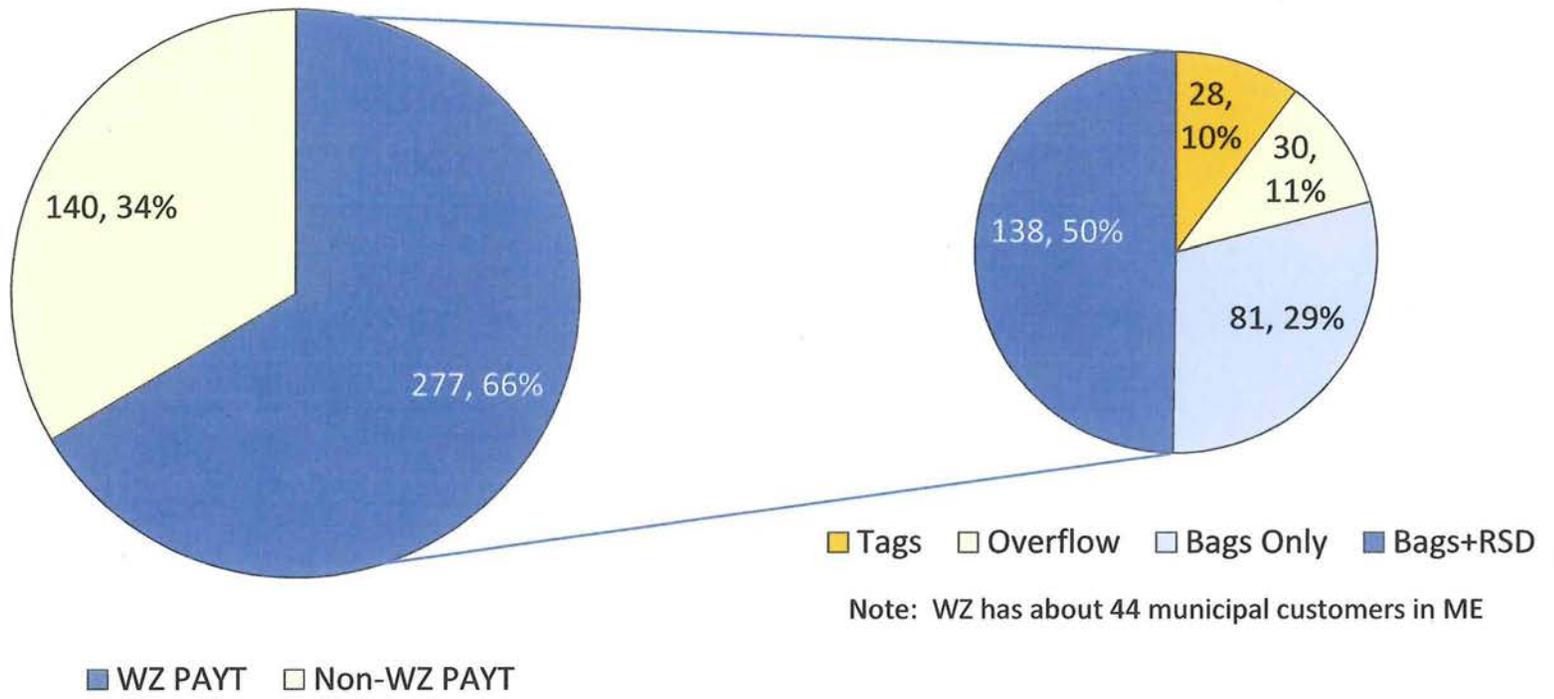


# PAYT in Maine

## WasteZero's Presence

Of the 417,000 who live in PAYT towns, WasteZero serves municipalities encompassing fully two-thirds of them.

**WasteZero's Share of PAYT**  
 By pop. in thousands and percent of pop.  
 PAYT pop. = 417,000

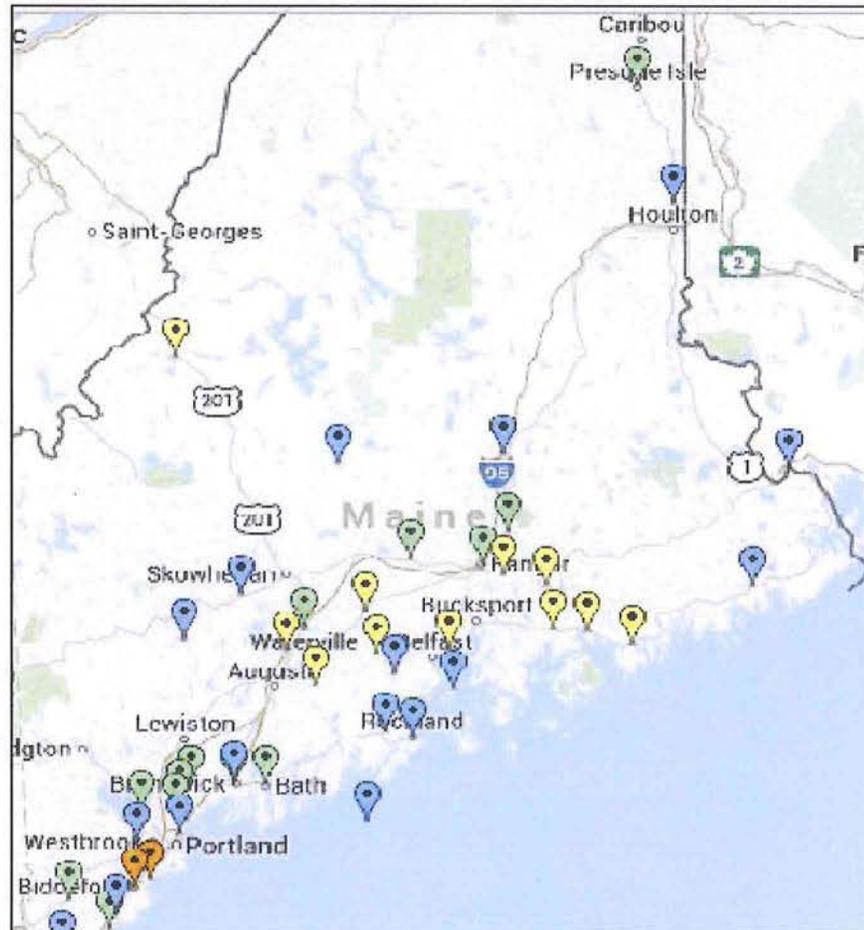


Note: WZ has about 44 municipal customers in ME

# PAYT in Maine

## WasteZero's Presence

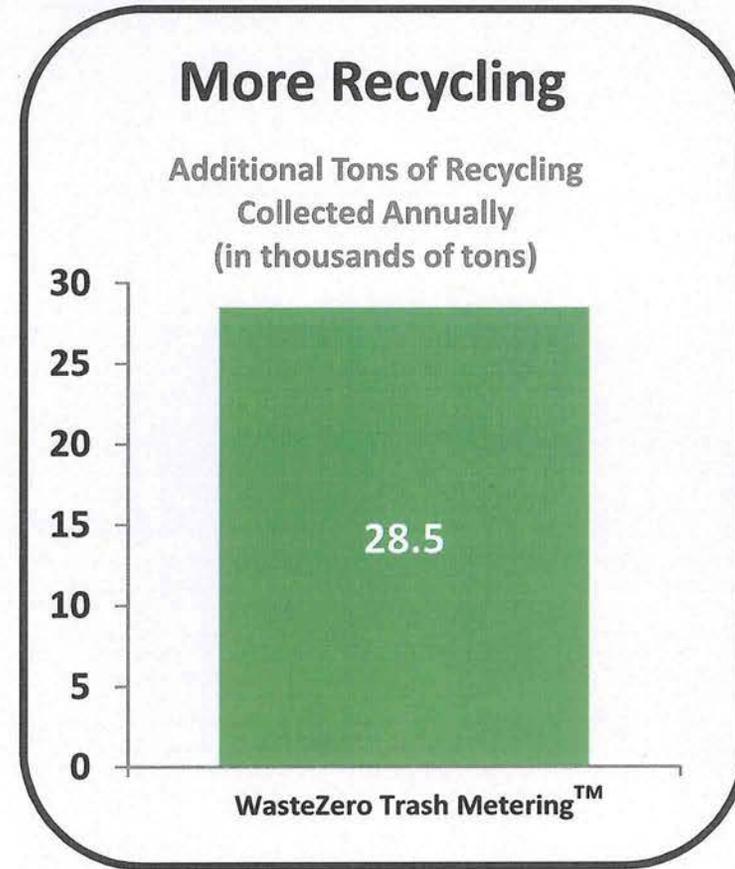
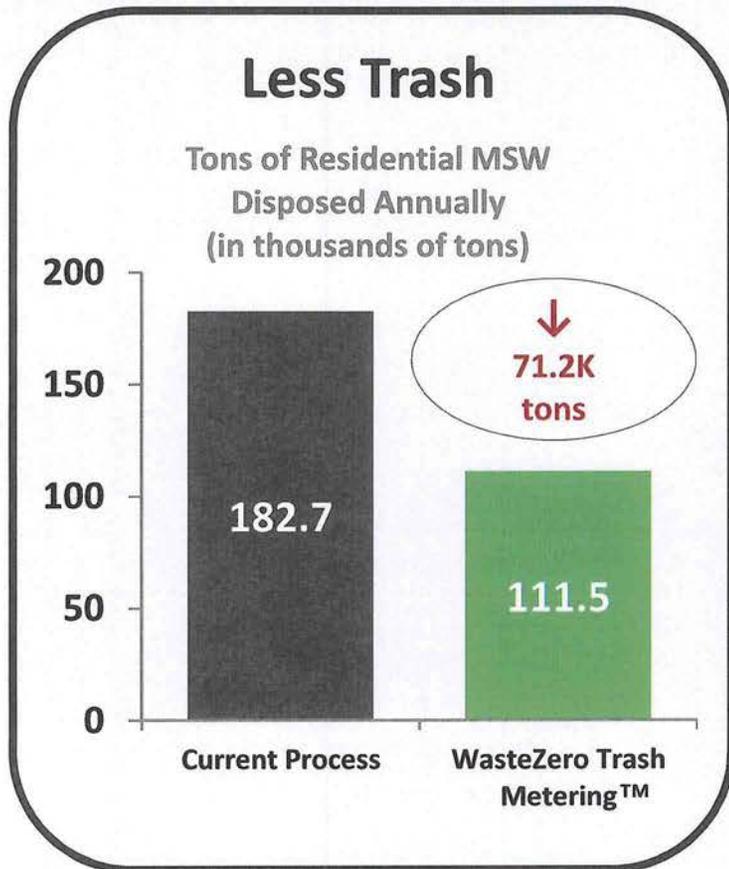
WasteZero's 44 partner communities in Maine encompass 277,000 people and are spread throughout the state.



# PAYT in Maine

## Projected Annual Financial Impact of Statewide PAYT

If the remaining non-PAYT towns (only those with pop. >5,000) were to go to Trash Metering—and tag and overflow towns were also to convert—the projected annual trash diversion would be 71,200 tons, with \$5.95 million in annual tip fee savings, as well as \$22 million+ in revenue for \$28M in financial impact.



# PAYT in Maine

## Projected Annual Environmental Impact of Statewide PAYT

### CO2e (Greenhouse Gas)

Annual  
Reduction

**134,000**  
Metric Tons

- Reduced carbon footprint
- Less pollution
- Healthier environment for residents



Equivalent to:



Removing  
**26,000**  
passenger vehicles from the road

or

Reducing gasoline consumption by  
**15,051,000**  
gallons



### BTUs (Energy Used)

Annual  
Reduction

**1,117,000**  
Million Units

- Reduced costs
- Reduced carbon footprint
- Increased energy security



Equivalent to:



Powering  
**9,900**  
residential homes

or

Installing  
**139,000**  
rooftop solar panel arrays



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WasteZero®  
Save Money. Reduce Waste.

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ABOUT  
**PAY-AS-  
YOU-THROW**





**WasteZero** is the leading provider of municipal solid waste reduction programs in the US. The company is on a mission to cut residential trash in half across the nation. It helps municipalities design, launch, and manage next-generation pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) systems, known as WasteZero Trash Metering™ programs. Under these programs, municipalities often eliminate or reduce fixed residential fees for trash collection. WasteZero Trash Metering™ programs require residents to pay for trash based on how much they generate, by disposing of waste only in official, pre-paid bags. These programs consistently cut residential solid waste volume by an average of 44%. They also help to double and sometimes triple recycling rates.

## **INTRODUCTION TO PAY-AS-YOU-THROW**

Under the traditional municipal solid waste (MSW) payment model, residents pay a flat fee to dispose of their waste. These fees can often be “hidden” in utility or property tax bills. With this approach, all residents pay the same, regardless of the amount of waste they generate or how much they recycle. This model gives residents little incentive to reduce the volume of their waste and divert items from the waste stream toward productive uses such as recycling and composting.

Many variations of the PAYT concept exist, and all require that residents pay for trash collection based on how much trash they throw away. All PAYT programs attempt to create economic incentives to recycle more and generate less waste. However, they aren't all equally effective.

# PAYT SOLUTIONS – UNDERSTANDING THE OPTIONS

“Pay-As-You-Throw” is an umbrella term for programs that can take many different forms. Any community weighing the decision to move to a PAYT system needs to understand the different options available to them. Popular PAYT options include cash, overflow, variable-rate carts, tags, and bags.

## CASH

In a cash-based PAYT model, residents pay a set fee in cash for each bag they dispose of at a convenience center or transfer station. Cash-based programs are fair for residents; people who create less garbage pay less to dispose of it. Because there is a cost associated with each bag, these programs also give residents incentives for waste reduction and diversion.

Cash programs can be effective, but they do have their drawbacks. Primarily, cash-based programs have inherent operational and accounting inefficiencies, as cash—often in the form of coins—must be collected, counted, and deposited. Cash programs also put convenience center attendants at risk of theft due to the often large amounts of cash they have on hand. There have also been cases reported of convenience center/transfer station attendants stealing from the cash collection. Finally, cash programs are entirely impractical for municipalities that have curbside trash collection.

## OVERFLOW

In an overflow program, residents pay a flat fee that covers everything they can fit into a certain size cart, and then pay extra (usually by the bag) to dispose of anything that does not fit into the cart. Overflow programs can be useful in collecting revenue from the minority of residents who regularly fill their carts beyond capacity, but given the large size of many carts (often up to 96 gallons), many residents do not often reach the point where they need to resort to overflow—making it difficult for overflow

programs to achieve their waste reduction and diversion goals.

## VARIABLE-RATE CARTS

Variable-rate carts (VRCs) are another pay-as-you-throw option that communities can consider. Under these programs, residents choose from among different sizes of carts—frequently 35, 65, and 96 gallons—paying more for the larger carts and less for the smaller ones. One benefit of this system is that it offers some of the inherent fairness that is a hallmark of PAYT.

Variable-rate cart programs can be expensive and include high start-up costs to purchase new equipment. Variable-rate cart programs can be operationally complicated as communities deal with the ongoing logistics of distributing different cart sizes, accounting for them, and maintaining all cart sizes.

Perhaps the biggest drawback of variable-rate cart programs is that they often do not achieve communities’ waste reduction and waste diversion goals. This happens largely because each resident will usually select the cart size that fits his or her existing waste disposal pattern, rather than changing their habits and further reducing waste.

The practice of resident “snow-coning” is also common in variable-rate cart programs. In “snow-coning,” residents will select the smallest and lowest-priced cart, and then overstuff it with bags of trash piled on top like the scoop of ice on a snow cone. This adds litter problems to an approach that is not known for generating positive results in the first place. To help

treat this symptom of VRC programs, municipalities will sometimes combine an overflow program with variable rate carts. This simply adds greater complexity, and usually fails to reduce waste in any meaningful way.

## TAGS

Another PAYT option is tags (or stickers). Under these programs, residents pay by the bag by affixing a pre-paid tag or sticker to each bag of trash, much like using an oversized postage stamp. Tag-based systems are fairer for residents than flat fees and they create incentives for waste reduction and diversion.

Enforcement of tag or sticker programs can be challenging, which limits their effectiveness. Communities with automated collection cannot effectively use a tag-based system, due to the need to closely inspect each bag as it is collected. It can also be difficult for collection crews to detect bags that are larger or heavier than permitted, that have split stickers, and that are untagged but hidden beneath bags with the proper tag. Under a tag or sticker-based program, waste collection crews are sometimes forced to decide between collecting slowly—and detecting non-compliance—or collecting quickly and letting unpaid-for waste get collected.

Tag-based programs can reduce waste by 5-20% although there are significant drawbacks, most of which relate to enforcement difficulties and the resultant “cheating” by some residents.

Bag-based pay-as-you-throw programs usually offer the greatest range of benefits and have the fewest drawbacks.

**BAGS**

Bag-based pay-as-you-throw programs usually offer the greatest range of benefits and have the fewest drawbacks. In the bag-based system, residents dispose of their waste in specialized bags approved by the municipality and clearly marked with the municipal seal or other unique instructions or information. These programs are fair, with residents paying only for the trash they dispose of without having to subsidize the habits of more wasteful neighbors. As a result, they provide the necessary incentives for residents to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

Operationally, bag-based programs are the simplest option and require no changes to existing collection systems. Bag-based programs are also less expensive because they do not require the purchase of new equipment. They are also easier to enforce, due to the readily identifiable nature of the bags, even in communities that use automated collection systems.

Most significantly, bag-based pay-as-you-throw programs are highly effective in reducing waste and in driving up recycling rates. WasteZero Trash Metering™ programs, which are bag-based, reduce waste by an average of 44% and can double or triple recycling volume.

**WITH BAG-BASED PAY-AS-YOU-THROW**



City may reduce fees or reallocate General Fund dollars for disposal/collection



Residents purchase municipality-specific bags at local retail stores (typically \$1-2/bag)



Only pay-as-you-throw bags are collected curbside or at drop-off centers



Behavior changes: waste is reduced and recycling increases

**CONVENIENT**

**EASY**

**EFFECTIVE**

## AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR PACKAGING AND THE ENVIRONMENT STUDY

A 2013 study by the American Institute for Packaging and the Environment (AMERIPEN), titled “AMERIPEN Analysis of Strategies and Financial Platforms to Increase the Recovery of Used Packaging,” focused on the ways that local, state, and federal governments reduce waste and increase recycling.

AMERIPEN analyzed techniques used across the US, Canada, Australia, and Europe. Those techniques included:

- Disposal bans
- Mandatory recycling
- Unit-based pricing, or pay-as-you-throw (PAYT)
- Advance recycling/disposal fees
- Container deposits/bottle bills
- Landfill taxes/surcharges
- Extended producer responsibility (EPR) for packaging

The study found that PAYT is extremely effective, and recommended it as one of the three best approaches to reduce solid waste and increase recycling. The study also cited data showing that about 90% of residents approve of PAYT programs<sup>1</sup>.

## PAY-AS-YOU-THROW AND POPULAR OPINION: A WINNING COMBINATION

A study conducted by the public opinion research firm Public Policy Polling (PPP) sheds light on resident attitudes toward PAYT—and shows those attitudes to be overwhelmingly positive.

Among the survey’s findings:

- **Favorability:** 79% have either a very or somewhat favorable opinion of PAYT, with an outright majority (52%) having a very favorable opinion.
- **Fairness:** More than two-thirds—68%—see the program as fair.
- **Ease of Participation:** 74% think it is easy to take part in PAYT.
- **Effectiveness:** 89% said PAYT is performing better than or as well as they expected.

## WASTEZERO TRASH METERING™

Under the WasteZero Trash Metering™ program, the company’s proprietary approach to PAYT, residents purchase municipality-issued trash bags to meet their waste needs.

Trash bags are priced at levels that encourage residents to use fewer bags by diverting more waste into recycling, composting and/or other disposal methods. The WasteZero Trash Metering™ program incentivizes residents to produce less trash and use fewer bags in order to lower their trash-related costs.

### MANUFACTURING

WasteZero manufactures all supplies for its programs—including customized plastic trash bags made from recycled content—in the U.S. The company customizes the bags to municipal specifications, including size, color, customized art (typically municipal seals), thickness, and more.

### LOGISTICS

Through its retail store distribution offering, WasteZero provides all the back-end logistics necessary for implementation. This includes warehousing the trash bags, as well as shipping them to local grocery, convenience, and hardware retailers so that residents can easily purchase them. The company also manages inventory, accounting, and reporting.

### COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT

WasteZero recognizes that educating residents gives them the resources they need to succeed. The company provides custom materials (web/phone/announcements/handouts) to educate residents about the program.

<sup>1</sup> Skumatz, Lisa A., Ph.D., Recycling Update Workshop, Presentation to Northern California Recycling Coalition, March 27, 2012

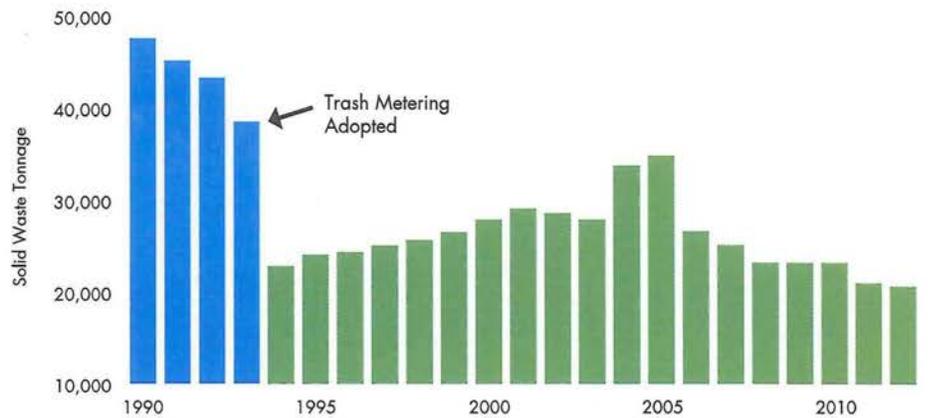
# WASTEZERO TRASH METERING™ SUCCESS

WasteZero's waste reduction experience has produced real and meaningful results for its municipal partners.

**Typical results include:**

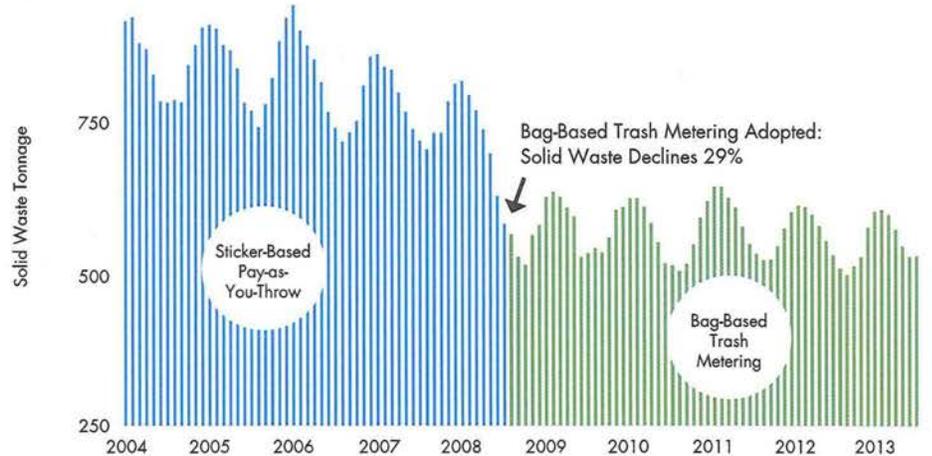
Municipality	Solid Waste Tonnage	Recycling Rate
Ashland, MA	-38%	+98%
Dartmouth, MA	-59%	+50%
Decatur, GA	-42%	+79%
Duxbury, MA	-43%	+20%
Malden, MA	-49%	+74%
Sandwich, MA	-48%	+74%
Tiverton, RI	-50%	+100%
Wells, ME	-59%	+47%

**Worcester, Mass. Solid Waste Volume 1990 - 2012**



Source: Worcester Department of Public Works

**Gloucester, Mass. Solid Waste Volume 2004-2013**



Source: Gloucester Public Works Department

Programs generate significant results within three months of launch and last as long as the program is in effect.

Municipalities support our programs because they

- Require no up-front costs for cities and towns
- Require no additional personnel, facilities, or other resources to implement or run
- Use existing technologies—no need for additional municipal investment
- Transcend partisan politics
- Are quickly implemented and generate significant results within 90 days

## WASTEZERO QUICK FACTS

### KEY LOCATIONS

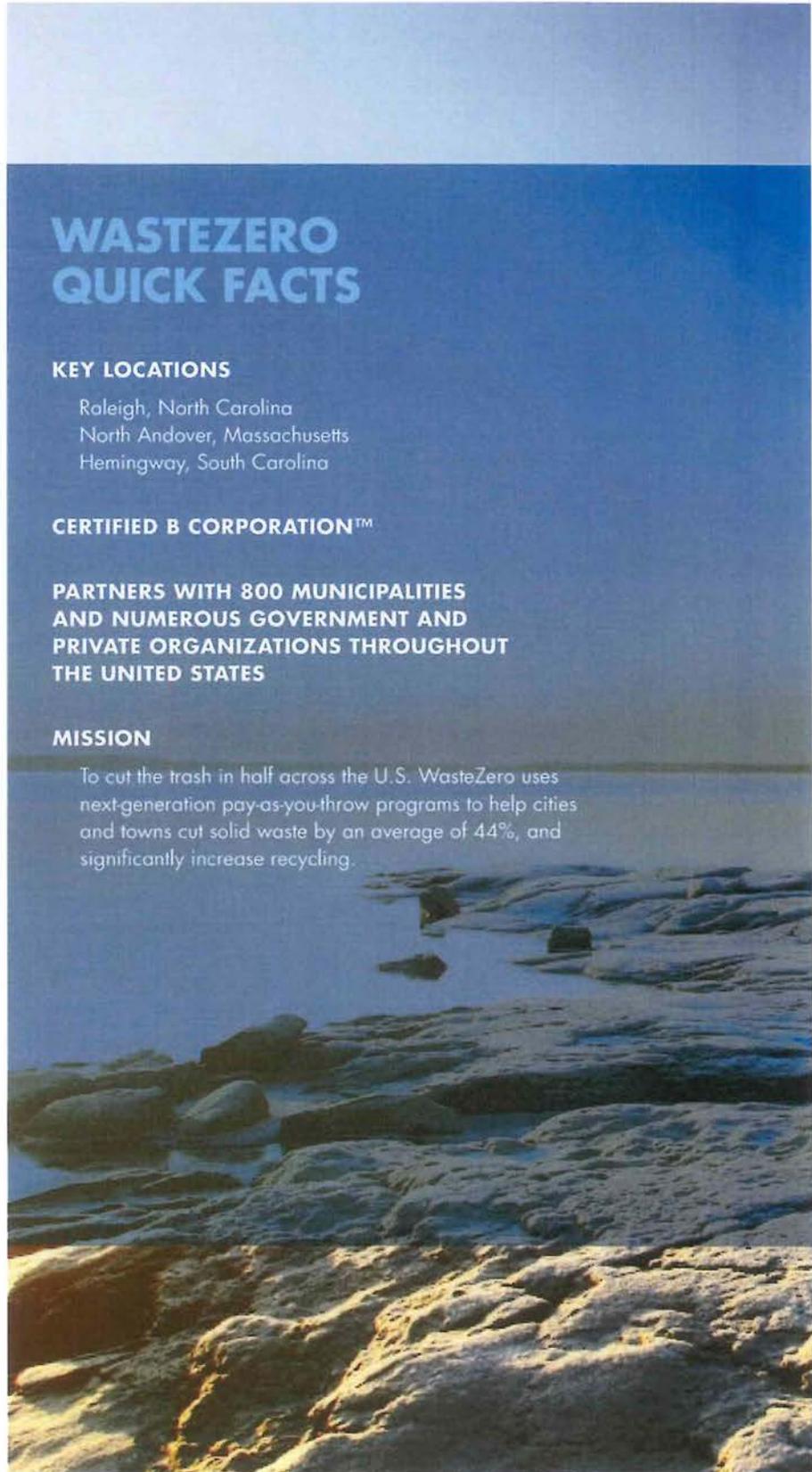
Raleigh, North Carolina  
North Andover, Massachusetts  
Hemingway, South Carolina

### CERTIFIED B CORPORATION™

**PARTNERS WITH 800 MUNICIPALITIES  
AND NUMEROUS GOVERNMENT AND  
PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT  
THE UNITED STATES**

### MISSION

To cut the trash in half across the U.S. WasteZero uses next-generation pay-as-you-throw programs to help cities and towns cut solid waste by an average of 44%, and significantly increase recycling.



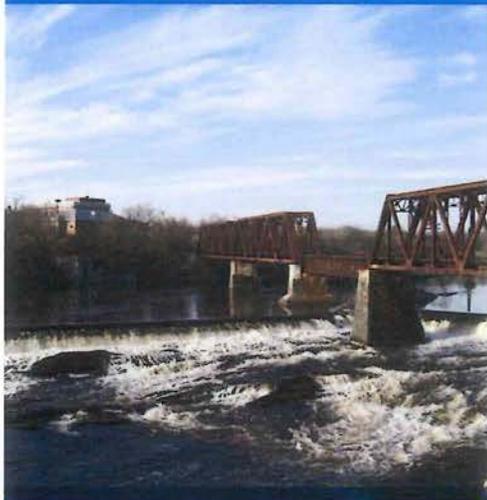
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# USING PAY-AS-YOU-THROW TO BRING CURBSIDE RECYCLING

When the city of Waterville, Maine, began PAYT, it chose to use some of the proceeds of the program to fund a curbside single-stream recycling system that residents had been clamoring for.

At the six-month mark, the program was exceeding all of its waste reduction and financial targets.

**IN THE PROGRAM'S FIRST SIX MONTHS, THE CITY SAW:**

**53%**

decrease in solid waste tonnage

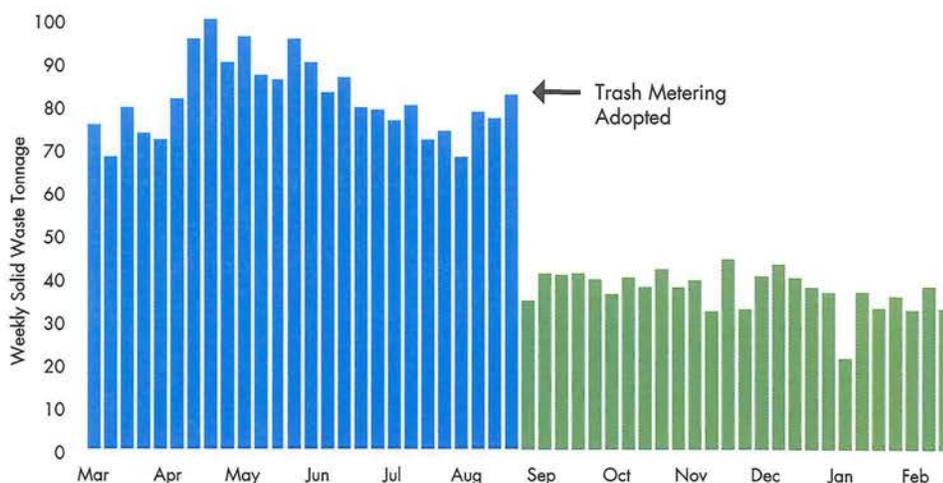
**\$78,000**

in disposal savings

**1,075**

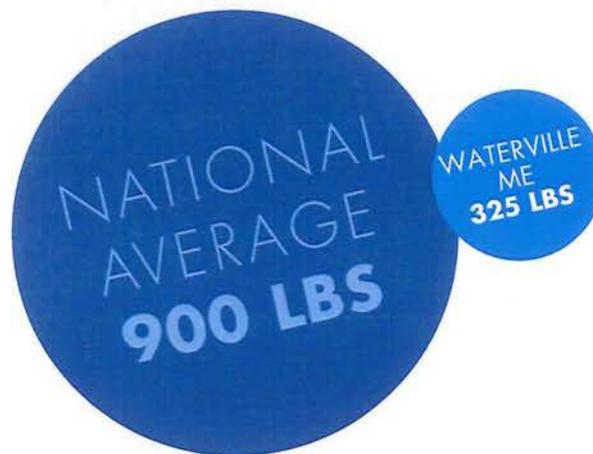
tons of solid waste diverted

## WATERVILLE ME WEEKLY SOLID WASTE TONNAGE



Source: Waterville Department of Public Works

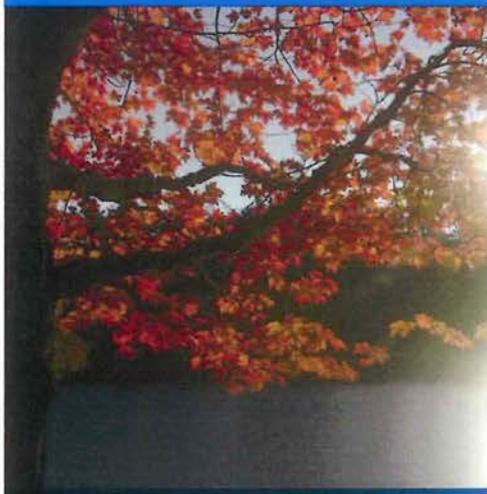
## ANNUAL POUNDS OF TRASH PER CAPITA



**16,000**  
POPULATION

**\$33,000**  
MEDIAN INCOME/HOUSEHOLD

**BAG-BASED PAYT WITH CURBSIDE TRASH & SINGLE-STREAM RECYCLING COLLECTION**



# THE POWER OF PAYT— WORTH COMING BACK TO

In July 2010, the City of Sanford, ME instituted a bag-based pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) program. Immediately, trash volume dropped by half. Four months later, the town repealed the program with predictable results: The amount of trash shot up, almost back to where it started.

In September, 2013, Sanford reinstated PAYT, with impressive results.

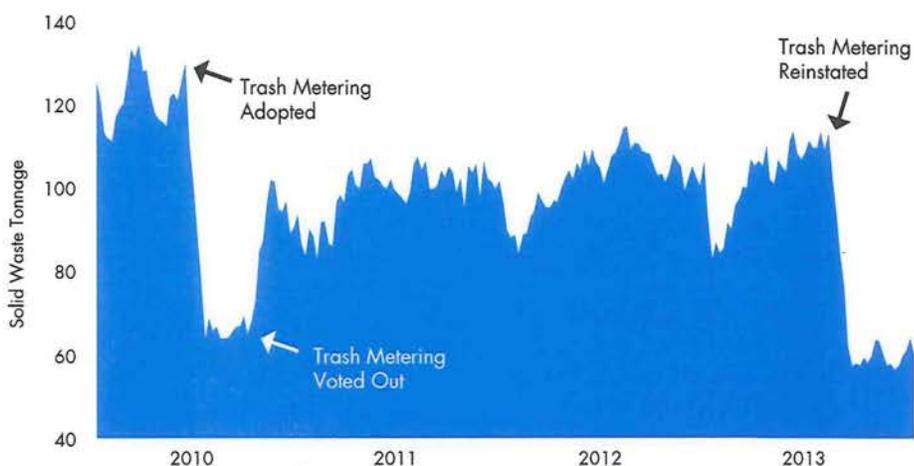
## IN THE FIRST TWO MONTHS OF THE PROGRAM, SANFORD

Cut its municipal solid waste by 42%

Nearly doubled its recycling rate.

Saved more than \$28,000 in solid waste tipping fees

SANFORD, MAINE, SOLID WASTE VOLUME, 2010 - 2014



Source: Sanford Public Works Department

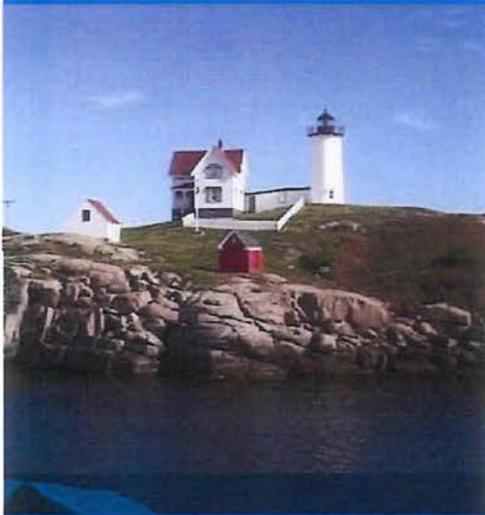
## ANNUAL POUNDS OF TRASH PER CAPITA



20,700  
POPULATION

\$44,000  
MEDIAN INCOME/HOUSEHOLD

BAG-BASED PAYT WITH  
CURBSIDE TRASH AND  
SINGLE STREAM RECYCLING  
COLLECTION



# 57% TRASH REDUCTION- IN JUST FOUR SHORT MONTHS!

The small town of Eliot, ME decided to find a way to reduce the tax burden on residents. To address these efforts, in early September, 2013, the Town kicked off its WasteZero PAYT program.

In four short months, the amount of trash generated dropped by more than half, and the Town saved close to \$9,000, putting them on a path to exceed their projected first-year savings.

## IN THE PROGRAM'S FIRST FOUR MONTHS

Trash volume dropped

# 57%

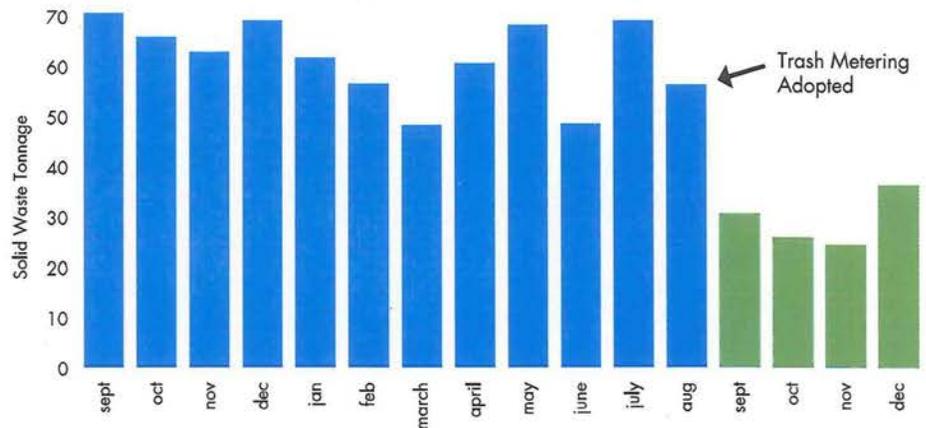
(from 268 tons  
to 116 tons)

The Town saved

# \$8,589

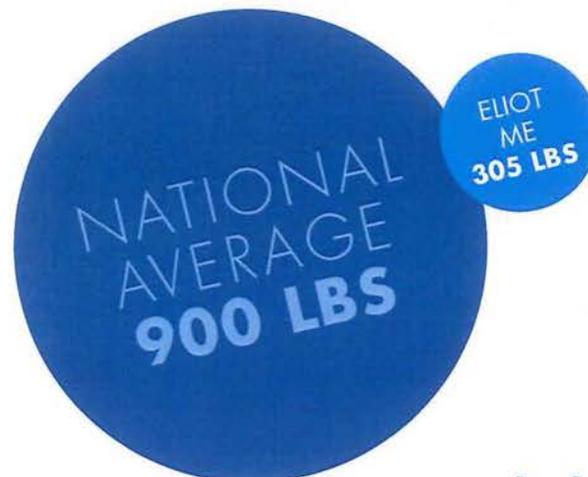
(decreasing their  
incineration expenditure  
from \$15,236 to  
\$6,647)

ELIOT, ME. SOLID WASTE TONNAGE, Sept. 2012 - Dec. 2013



Source: Eliot Department of Public Works

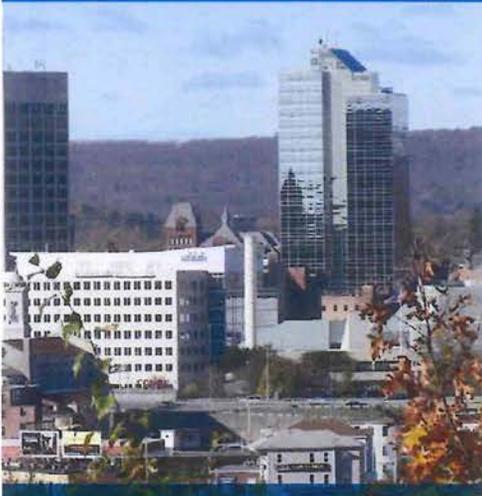
## ANNUAL POUNDS OF TRASH PER CAPITA



6,200  
POPULATION

\$75,000  
MEDIAN INCOME/HOUSEHOLD

BAG-BASED PAYT AT THE  
DROP-OFF CENTER



# A LONG-RUNNING SUCCESS STORY IN A LARGE CITY

In 1993, Worcester's municipal budget crisis forced the City to adopt a bag-based PAYT waste reduction and recycling program.

In the first week, Worcester's recycling rate shot from 2% to 38%, and their solid waste volume dropped 47% between the year before the program and the year after.

## RESULTS OF OVER 20 YEARS OF PAYT IN WORCESTER:

400,000  
tons of trash diverted

200,000  
tons of additional recycling

Savings of more than  
\$10 million  
in waste disposal costs

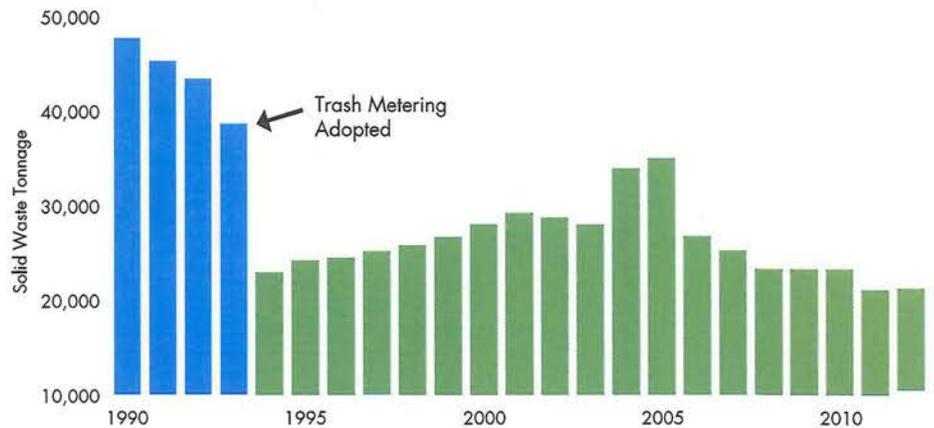
43%  
recycling rate, among the best in MA and far higher than the statewide average of 30%

181,000  
POPULATION

\$46,000  
MEDIAN INCOME/HOUSEHOLD

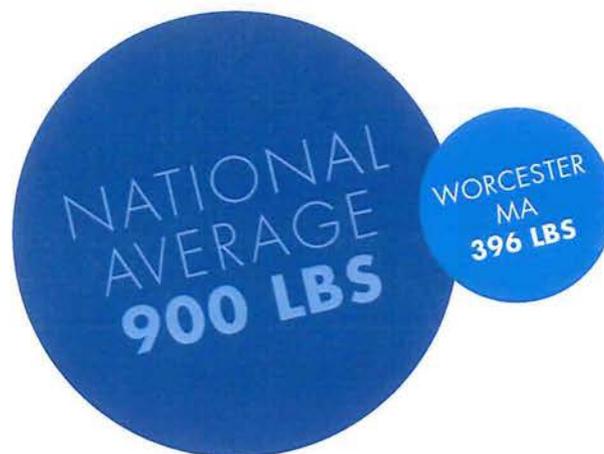
BAG-BASED PAYT WITH CURBSIDE TRASH AND RECYCLING COLLECTION

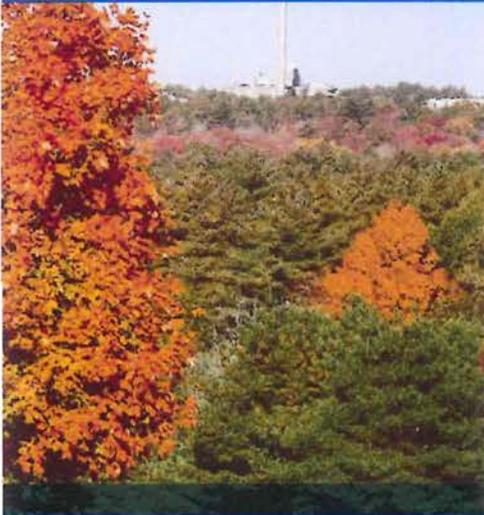
## WORCESTER, MASS., SOLID WASTE VOLUME, 1990 - 2012



Source: Worcester Department of Public Works

## ANNUAL POUNDS OF TRASH PER CAPITA





# TRADING PLACES: TRASH AND RECYCLING

To address fiscal challenges and extend the life of its landfill, the Town of Dartmouth MA introduced its PAYT program with automated recycling collection in October 2007. As a result, the Town reduced its trash budget by paying less in tipping fees and by selling its recycling. Now, the Town's trash collection program is self-sufficient and runs independent of the general fund.

FROM 2006  
TO 2013,  
THE TOWN SAW

59%  
decrease in  
solid waste tonnage

50%  
increase in  
recycling tonnage

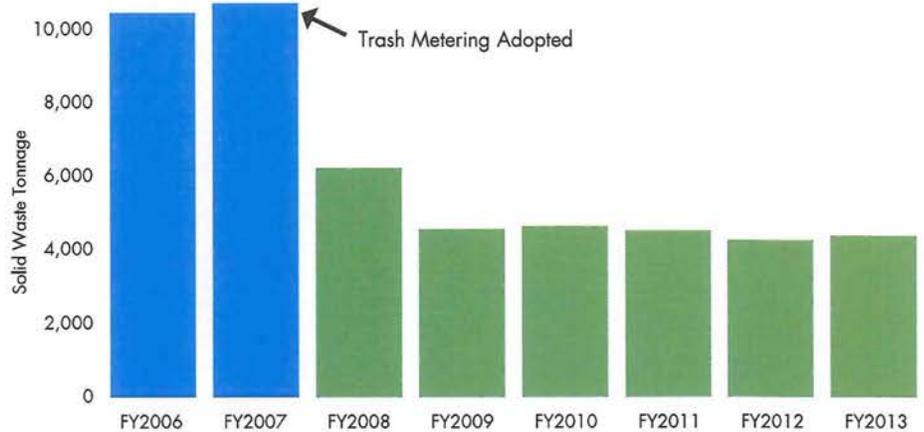
150%  
increase in its  
recycling rate

34,000  
POPULATION

\$71,000  
MEDIAN INCOME/HOUSEHOLD

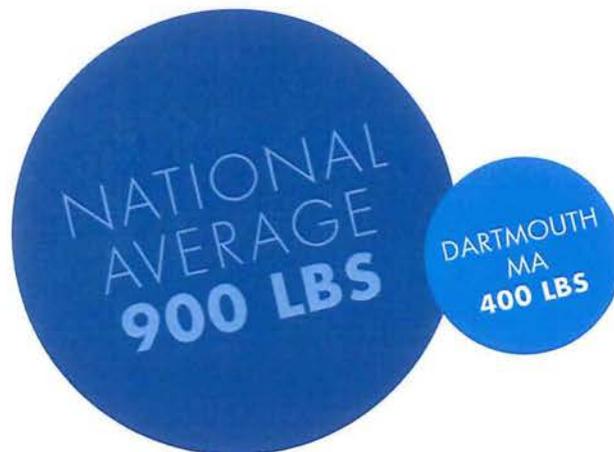
BAG-BASED PAYT WITH  
CURBSIDE TRASH AND  
DUAL-STREAM RECYCLING  
COLLECTION

DARTMOUTH, MASS., SOLID WASTE VOLUME, FY2006 - FY2013



Source: Dartmouth Department of Public Works

ANNUAL POUNDS OF TRASH PER CAPITA



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# Waterville foresees \$430,000 gain with pay-as-you-throw

cm centralmaine.com /2015/03/24/waterville-foresees-430000-gain-with-pay-as-you-throw/

By Amy Calder Staff Writer [email protected] | @AmyCalder17 | 207-861-9247

WATERVILLE — The city expects to generate \$430,000 a year with the pay-as-you-throw trash collection system it launched in September through trash bag sales revenue and reduced tipping fees, according to City Manager Michael Roy.

“We spent quite a few hours last week going through the numbers over and over and over again, so this is our estimate going forward,” Roy said.

Official Waterville trash bags are required by the city’s Pay As You Throw rubbish collection program. Contributed photo  
Search photos available for purchase: [Photo Store](#) →

He was discussing city revenue Tuesday night at a budget workshop with city councilors and some department heads.

The city’s finance director, Chuck Calkins, said revenue from the sale of trash bags through February this year was \$136,000, an amount Roy said is a little less than projected. The amount of trash the city sent to Penobscot Energy Recovery Co. in Orrington dropped 2,400 tons, according to Calkins.

The city had estimated it would reduce its trash tonnage by 40 percent with pay-as-you-throw, but it actually decreased by 55 percent, Roy and Calkins said.

“We used to do 4,400 tons a year, and they’re projecting doing only 2,000 this year — 2015-16,” Calkins said.

The city’s fiscal year is July 1 to June 30, so pay-as-you-throw will not have completed its first full year by the end of June.

Meanwhile, Roy said city officials in the near future should have a workshop to discuss solid waste. Solid waste, he said, is the biggest issue the city will face in the next three years — the “biggest concern on the horizon.”

Councilor Karen Rancourt-Thomas, D-Ward 7, asked whether the city has a backup plan for solid waste disposal, should voters at a referendum scheduled for June 9 decide to repeal pay-as-you-throw.

“If that should happen in June, we’ll have to find \$435,000 in savings in the budget, if we eliminate pay-as-you-throw,” Roy said, adding that \$72,000 must be added to that figure if the city decides to continue the recycling program.

Council Chairman Fred Stubbert, D-Ward 1, said illegal dumping of trash has occurred because of pay-as-you-throw.

“There are apartments full of trash right now,” he said. “I’ve talked to a couple of landlords, and they’re upset. Wait until the snow melts.”

Rancourt-Thomas said there is a lot of trash around buildings in the city’s South End, which she represents. Meanwhile, Roy said a public meeting will be held sometime next month to explain the results of pay-as-you-throw and what repealing it would mean.



Rancourt-Thomas said people need to know exactly what will happen if they vote to continue pay-as-you-throw or if they repeal it.

"We definitely need a meeting to get the facts out — no preaching," she said.

The council last year voted to approve the pay-as-you-throw program as part of the \$37.2 million municipal and school budget, despite opposition from people who spoke at council meetings. As part of their vote, councilors promised to hold a referendum June 9 this year so people could repeal pay-as-you-throw if they weren't satisfied with it.

"I think what happened last year is it was just dropped on people," Rancourt-Thomas said. "It really divided the city in a lot of different ways, so we really don't want to do that again."

Both she and Stubbert last year voted against the budget because pay-as-you-throw was included in it. Rancourt-Thomas said she thought residents should have had a say in the decision to launch the program.

Residents must buy special purple bags for their trash and place them at the curb. As part of the program, their recycling is picked up at the curb on specified days of the month.

During a discussion Tuesday about revenue in the city clerk's office, City Clerk Patti Dubois said that when MaineGeneral Health moved its inpatient hospital from Waterville to Augusta, the revenue generated from people buying birth certificates in her office went from \$45,000 to \$33,000. What used to be Thayer Unit, MaineGeneral Medical Center, on North Street is now Thayer Center for Health, a comprehensive outpatient facility, not an inpatient hospital, so babies no longer are born there. That revenue, according to Dubois, shifted to Augusta, where babies are born.

"A little over \$10,000 hit in our revenue is pretty dramatic," she said.

At her comments, City Councilor Nathaniel White, D-Ward 2, encouraged people to have their babies at Inland Hospital, an inpatient hospital on Kennedy Memorial Drive affiliated with Eastern Maine Medical Center.

"Let's push for Inland," White said. "Let's go."

*Amy Calder — 861-9247*

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Article published Apr 10, 2014

## **Recycling up 20 percent Pay-As-You-Throw statistics 'exactly on target,' says city manager**

SANFORD — City Manager Steven Buck told councilors last week that the amount of trash residents are generating is down more than 40 percent from the same period last year.

Buck pointed out that since the start of the “pay-as-you-throw” waste disposal program in September, residents have increased the city’s recycling rate by 20.3 percent, bringing Sanford’s overall recycling rate to nearly 40 percent of the city’s total solid waste.

Buck said the figures are “exactly on target” for the trash disposal program. Every ton of solid waste that the city sends to the landfill costs \$72 in “tipping fees,” the price the city pays for disposal. The reduction in solid waste disposal, if it continues at the current rate, will result in 2,100 tons not going to the landfill and a savings of \$151,200 for the current fiscal year.

In the first two months of 2014, Sanford residents recycled more than 335 tons, according to the March “T.R.A.S.H. Talk,” the transfer station’s monthly newsletter. That has saved the City nearly \$24,000 in disposal costs in two months, compared to last year’s cost. The Public Works Department is currently offering backyard composting bins for sale for those who want to reduce their solid waste even more. The sanitation department is currently taking orders for home compost bins with “how-to” guides (with a combined value of \$100) at a cost of \$48. The bins are made from 100 percent recycled plastic and have a 10-year warranty.

Bins may be ordered through April 25 by stopping in at the Public Works Department, 156 School St. The bins will be delivered at the end of May. For more information, call the Public Works Department at 324-9135.

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# CommonWealth

POLITICS IN MASSACHUSETTS

Seriously,  
is this the best we can do?

WINTER 2015

\$5.00



[commonwealthmagazine.org](http://commonwealthmagazine.org)

A large landfill of trash under a blue sky with birds. The trash is piled high, with various colors of plastic and debris visible. In the background, a small structure is visible on the horizon. The sky is clear and blue, with several birds flying in the air.

The landfill operated by the Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse District is regarded as a well-run facility, but even so it's a foreboding sight.

# Seriously, is this the best we can do?

BY BRUCE MOHL | PHOTOGRAPHS BY WEBB CHAPPELL

A skewed mindset about trash as well as a political stalemate are undercutting the state's efforts to reduce its wasteful practices.

**F**or years, homeowners in Lynn faced no restrictions on their trash output. Technically, their weekly allotment was six barrels of trash, yet if additional barrels were put out at the curb they were always picked up. Mattresses, couches, and other large items were collected at no cost. But in December new regulations took effect limiting each household to one 64-gallon cart of trash per week. If homeowners need to throw away more, they now have to use special purple bags costing \$3 apiece. Disposing of a mattress or a couch costs \$20.

In a city with one of the lowest recycling rates in the state, Lynn officials are hoping the new trash regulations will make people think twice before they throw items that can be recycled into the trash. The goal is to reduce the amount of trash that has to be burned at a Saugus waste-to-energy plant at a cost of \$64 a ton. Last year, Lynn spent more than \$2 million burning its trash, and city officials say as much as 80 percent of that trash could have been recycled.

Julia Greene, the city's recycling coordinator, says the new regulations recognize that business-as-usual trash policies cannot continue. "Lynn can't afford it," she says. "No one can."

Trash is one of those problems that stares Massachusetts residents in the face on a daily basis. Yet it gets almost no attention because few people are exposed to the ick factor of landfills and trash incinerators. We put our trash out at the curb and it goes away. But now we are starting to run out of places to put it. Landfills, where trash is dumped on the ground and buried, are filling to capacity and shutting down. No new trash incinerators are being built. Exports are the lone growth area; the state currently projects that trash shipments out of state will double over the next six years. Many experts are betting that trash disposal costs will rise sharply as our dumping options become more limited.

What's most alarming about the state's trash problem is that it's so preventable. We know how to cut trash output and we know to turn recycled materials into money and jobs. We just don't do it. "What we've done for the last 30 years hasn't done much at all," says Stephen Lisauskas,

the vice president of government affairs at WasteZero, a North Andover company that works with municipalities to reduce their trash output and increase recycling. "We're throwing away a lot of money we shouldn't be."

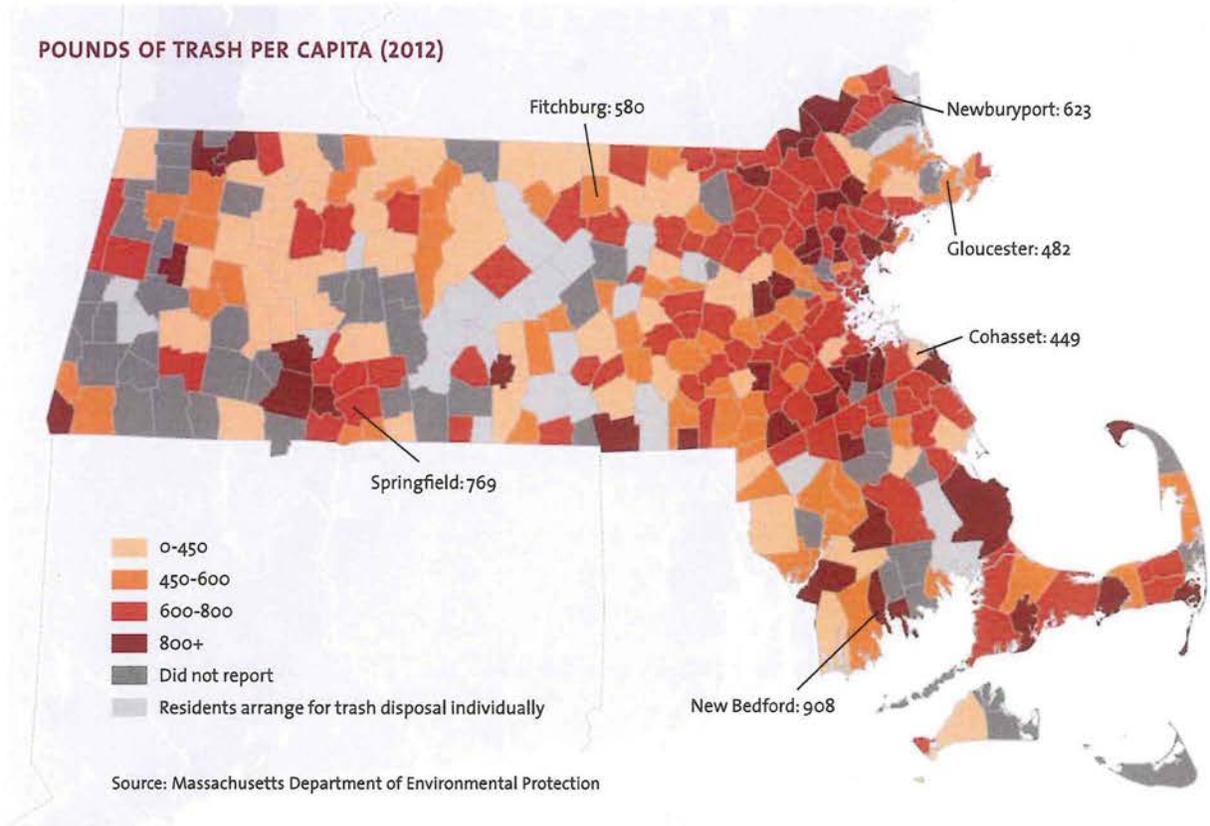
Part of the problem is political. The state's environmental and business communities have been locked in a struggle over the bottle deposit law for most of the last 30 years, first to pass the bill and then to expand its reach. The struggle has tended to overshadow the state's larger trash problems. Voters in November overwhelmingly rejected a ballot question that would have expanded bottle deposits, and there have been some attempts since then to find common ground, but the fight goes on.

The other challenge is the mindset of most state residents. They don't think of trash disposal like other municipal services. Cities and towns charge on a metered basis for water and sewer services — the more you use the more you pay. But only about a third of the state's 351 cities and towns charge for trash the same way. Most municipalities let their residents think there's no limit on the amount of trash they can put out at the curb. As a result, those communities on average throw away about

**Part of the problem is political. The other challenge is the mindset of most state residents.**

55 percent more trash than communities that charge residents a per-bag fee.

Even Lynn officials acknowledge their recent move to limit trash output to one, 64-gallon cart a week is a baby step along the path to trash reduction. The new carts are designed as much to automate the trash pickup process as they are to limit trash disposal. A family putting out one cart of trash per week could still generate an estimated 2,330 pounds of trash per year, or about 863 pounds for each person in a typical Lynn home. That's 45 percent more trash



than the average Massachusetts resident generates.

Andrew Hall, the head of Lynn's Department of Public Works, says the city's approach is a realistic one. There was pretty strong resistance to the new 64-gallon-a-week trash cap, so he says he never seriously considered going with a program that would have charged residents based on the amount of trash they put out at the curb. "People would show up here with knives and pitchforks if I did that," he says.

#### UNMET GOALS

State environmental officials dutifully publish 10-year plans, complete with detailed trash reduction goals, but they always seem to come up short. In 1990, the 10-year plan called for 54 percent of the state's trash to be buried or burned and 46 percent recycled. When 2000 rolled around, the state was burning or burying 66 percent of its trash and recycling 34 percent. By 2010, we were supposed to be burning or burying 2.1 million tons of trash per year. Instead, we did more than twice that amount — 4.7 million tons. By 2020, the current plan calls for getting that number down to nearly 3.8 million tons, and then to 1 million by 2050.

No one is putting much stock in the numbers. Even the Department of Environmental Protection, which develops the 10-year plans, outlines two scenarios for

2020 — a baseline recycling scenario, where recycling keeps pace with trash generation, and an increased recycling scenario, where recycling grows at a much faster pace. The dual scenarios typify a bureaucracy sending out mixed signals.

State environmental officials have the tools to curb the burial and burning of trash, but they lack the money and the clout to put those tools to good use. The budget of the state's environmental protection agency, which has responsibilities that go way beyond trash, was cut 25 percent during the Great Recession and never bounced back. The number of employees working at the agency is down 30 percent from a decade ago, and their absence is reflected in ways big and small. One small example: the state's data on trash and recycling at the municipal level are full of holes; many cities and towns don't even both to file reports with the state anymore.

Waste bans are one of the tools at the disposal of state officials, but they aren't enforced aggressively. In 1990, the state started banning easily recyclable items from landfills and incinerators and the list of banned items has grown over time to include paper, textiles, plastic, metal, glass, and food waste. Yet for years the state enforced the bans with what might be called an honor system. Finally, three full-time inspectors were hired in October 2013, but they seem to spend most of their time educating people about the bans. If a truck drop-

ping trash off at a landfill or an incinerator contains banned items, state officials say the inspectors trace the banned materials back to the source and work with the generator to remove them. A request to accompany an inspector on the job was turned down.

State data indicate nearly half of the trash being burned or buried in Massachusetts could be recycled, which means residents are paying millions of dollars to dispose of valuable commodities. WasteZero estimates municipalities and businesses spent nearly \$163 million in 2013 disposing of just seven types of recyclables — including plastics, textiles, metals, and paper — that could have been sold for \$217 million.

Janet Domenitz, the executive director of the Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group, says the state's trash problems need a lot more visibility. She worked as part of an enforcement committee that helped craft the state's master plan for 2020, and came away thinking that it's time for a highly visible crackdown on trash scofflaws that would make waste disposal a front-burner issue. "I don't want to hear about education anymore. I want someone to pay a fine that hurts," she says. "We need to ratchet it up big time."

Many believe the state's trash issues will gain greater visibility if the cost of disposal rises. Trash generation fell during the recession and disposal prices fell, too. Now that the economy is beginning to recover, the expectation is that people will buy more and throw more things away. But this trash growth is coming at a time when landfills are closing and no new incinerators are being built. An estimated 1.5 million tons of landfill capacity in Massachusetts is expected to be lost by 2020. The only place for the trash to go is out of state to more garbage-friendly locales such as New Hampshire, Maine, Ohio, and North Carolina.

Kurt Macnamara of the Devens Recycling Center, which processes construction and demolition debris and ships a lot of it out of state by train to Ohio, predicts waste disposal costs are going to jump 20 percent this year as waste volumes increase and the space available for trash disposal shrinks. "It's a very quiet, slow-moving storm, but when it hits it's going to be bad," he says.

Others are not so sure. Wheelabrator, which runs a waste-to-energy plant in Millbury, just cut the prices it charges many of its municipal clients from \$76 to \$64 per ton. Thomas Cipolla, the business manager who works for the Covanta SEMASS waste-to-energy plant in Rochester, says disposal costs are down significantly from where they were four to five years ago. "I don't know that there's going to be an increase in the future, but it's possible," he says. "It's all supply and demand."

The supply of trash could be affected by a major new recycling initiative, as well as a new technology to turn waste into a fuel that could replace coal in coal-fired

power plants. The new technology is unfolding at a \$34 million, 100,000-square-foot facility under construction in Rochester that would take as much as 2,000 tons of trash per day and compress it into charcoal-like briquettes. Michael Camara, a waste hauler from New Bedford and an investor in the project, says the briquettes would burn cleaner than coal. The briquettes could only be sold to power plants outside Massachusetts because of a cap on burning trash inside the state.

Meanwhile, state officials are counting on an ambitious new food waste recycling program to reduce the state's trash volume. The program requires any institution generating more than one ton of food waste each week (think restaurants and supermarkets) to divert it to food banks, composting facilities, and anaerobic digesters, which convert food scraps into methane gas that can be used to generate electricity. Officials estimate the pro-

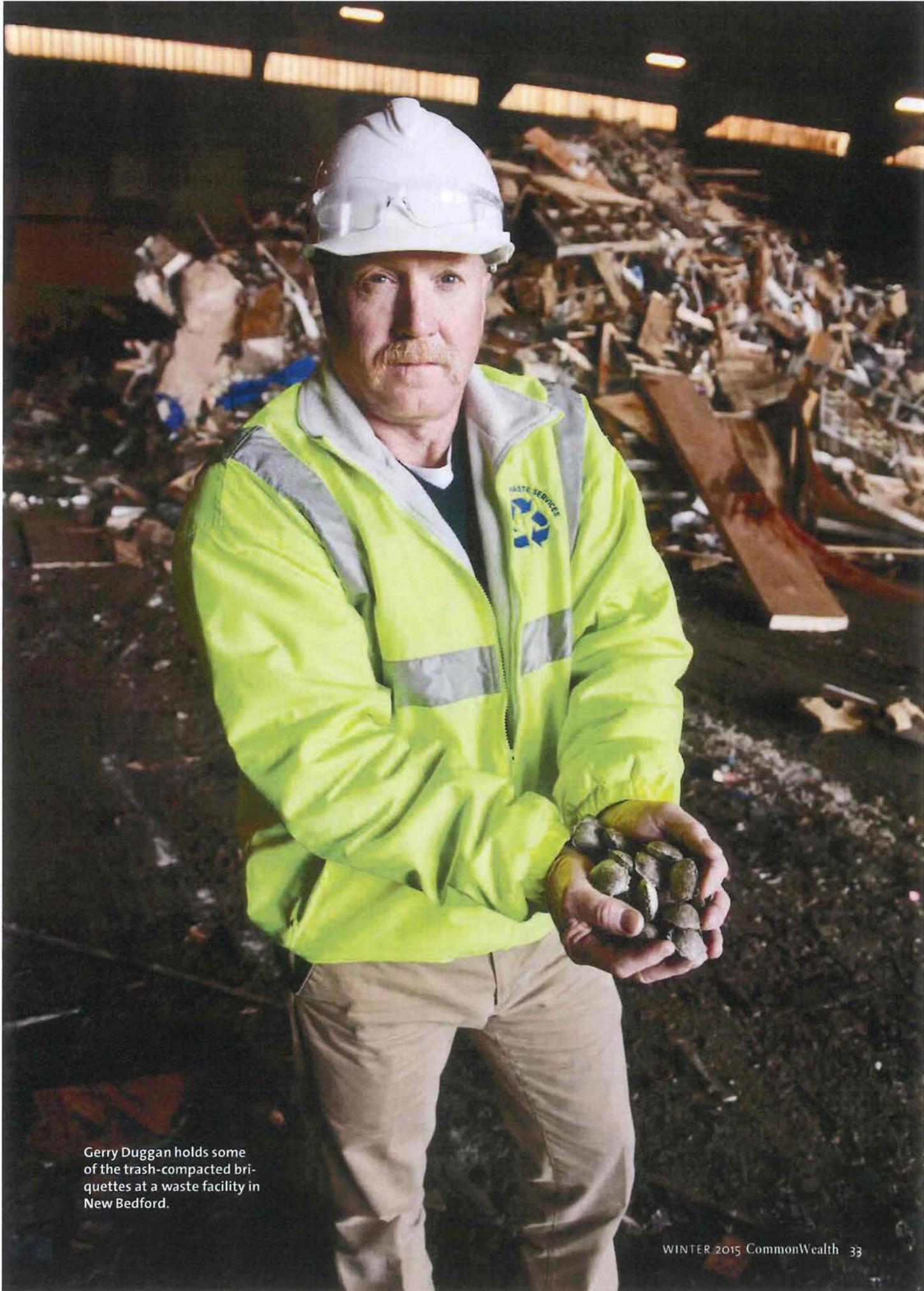
## More than half of the trash being burned or buried in Massachusetts could be recycled.

gram could remove 300,000 tons of organics from the state's waste stream, enough to fill the equivalent of about seven Fenway Parks.

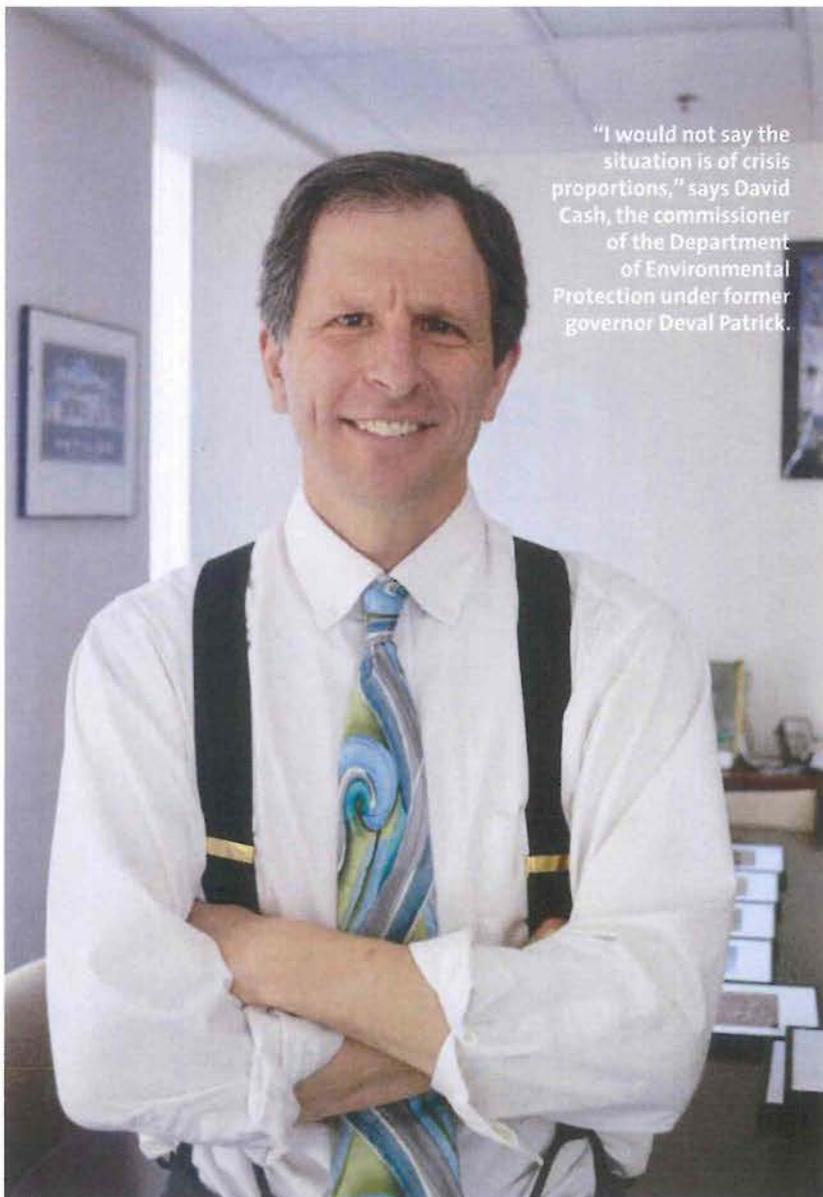
David Cash, the commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection, says the new food waste initiative, along with other state efforts to boost recycling, should be able to curb trash generation and keep disposal costs in check. He acknowledges solid waste is a difficult nut to crack, but he says the state is not facing a sky-is-falling situation. "I would not say the situation is of crisis proportions," he says. "I would say it's serious."

### **PAY-AS-YOU-THROW**

Newton, a well-to-do Boston suburb with 85,000 residents, generates nearly the same amount of trash as Worcester, a gritty municipality in the heart of the state with more than twice as many residents. On a per capita basis, Worcester residents generated 323 pounds of trash in 2012, compared to Newton's 576. Worcester residents aren't more environmentally conscious than those in Newton, but they are more conscious of trash — or at least its cost. Worcester residents pay \$1.50 for each bag of trash they put out at the curb, while Newton residents,



Gerry Duggan holds some of the trash-compacted briquettes at a waste facility in New Bedford.



"I would not say the situation is of crisis proportions," says David Cash, the commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection under former governor Deval Patrick.

out less and save the municipality on disposal costs.

Nearly a third of the state's cities and towns charge their residents a bag fee. Their average trash output is 432 pounds per person. For the state's other cities and towns, the average is 670 pounds per person. Natick shifted to pay-as-you-throw in the middle of 2003. Its trash tonnage over time has dropped from 9,800 tons a year to 5,923 tons, and its savings on disposal have totaled \$3.1 million over the last 11 years. Sandwich made its move to pay-as-you-throw in the middle of 2011 and has seen its trash tonnage drop 48 percent, generating disposal savings of \$425,000.

Fall River moved to pay-as-you-throw last year, and trash output went from an average of 816 pounds per person to an estimated 450 pound. Nevertheless, voters in Fall River recalled the mayor, in part because he pushed through a pay-as-you-throw program.

Moylan, the former Worcester official, acknowledges the political risks in moving to a bag fee, but he says the program works and can work in any community. "What they're doing

like those in Lynn under its new rules, are allowed to fill a 64-gallon cart each week. The difference may not sound like much, but the small bag fee is enough to change the mindset of most homeowners, turning them into big-time recyclers.

"Solid waste, like water and sewer, should be based on usage," says Robert Moylan, who ran the Public Works Department in Worcester in 1993, when the city's pay-as-you-throw program was launched. At the time, the city was facing a financial crisis and Moylan was trying to choose between cutting services or increasing taxes. In the end, he chose pay-as-you-throw. The results were head-turning. The city's trash shipments to the Wheelabrator waste-to-energy plant in Millbury dropped from 45,000 tons a year to 22,500.

There are all sorts of pay-as-you-throw approaches. Some communities require residents to purchase special bags. Others use bag stickers. There is even an approach that utilizes debit cards. Some programs generate money for the city or town; others are revenue neutral. The goal is to put a dollar value on trash, giving residents an incentive to put

now is wasteful," Moylan says of communities without bag fees, "but they've been doing it so long that they don't realize how wasteful it is."

Moylan could be talking about Boston, a city that

## A small bag fee may not sound like much, but it turns most homeowners into big-time recyclers.

generates an average of 674 pounds of trash per person. Some of the city's trash goes to a waste-to-energy facility in Saugus. The rest goes to a transfer station in Lynn, where it is typically trucked to another incinerator or out of state.

Boston officials are trying to bring the trash volume

down by promoting recycling through a number of innovative programs. All recycling materials in Boston are taken to a facility in Charlestown owned by Kti Recycling of New England. City officials say the city used to receive some money back for its recyclables, but currently is paying Kti \$2 a ton to take them because the value of paper, plastics, and glass is so depressed.

Michael Dennehy, the interim commissioner of public works in Boston, currently lives in Milton, which has a pay-as-you-throw program that charges \$3 for stickers. He doesn't have a problem with the Milton program — "there's not much we can't recycle in my house," says the father of five — but he nevertheless opposes moving Boston to a pay-as-you-throw system.

Dennehy, like all of his predecessors, believes a pay-as-you-throw program would never work in Boston, where renters make up two-thirds of the population. His biggest concern is that pay as you throw would lead to illegal dumping by people seeking to avoid a trash fee. "It would take an army of code enforcement officers to police that," he says.

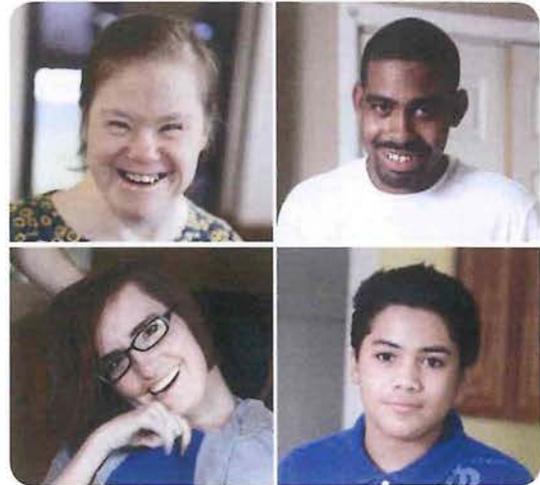
Dennehy's concerns about dumping and cleanliness are typical of officials in communities that don't assess bag fees, but communities that do assess the fees say the concerns are unwarranted. "These questions have all been answered," says Bill Fiore, assistant to the commissioner of public works in Worcester, a regular stop for any community researching bag fees.

Lisauskas of WasteZero, which advises municipalities on pay-as-you-throw programs, says the available evidence indicates dumping is a problem that can be managed. "It's something people are concerned about when they are considering a pay-as-you-throw program, but it doesn't turn out to be a problem," he says.

#### THE POLITICS OF TRASH

George Bachrach, the president of the Environmental League of Massachusetts, is searching for common ground with the supermarket and beverage industries. Bachrach and his fellow environmentalists got their heads handed to them in November, when voters defeated a ballot measure to expand the reach of the bottle deposit law by a margin of nearly 3-1.

Environmentalists had argued the existing bottle deposit law works, and expanding it to most noncarbonated beverage containers would reduce litter and improve recycling. The beverage industry countered that it made no sense to operate two recycling systems, one for beverage containers and one for everything else. The beverage industry, backed by a \$7 million spending advantage, prevailed at the ballot box, and now Bachrach is reaching out to his long-time opponents,



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trying to find common ground. "I'm not interested in fighting old fights," he says.

No one is tipping their hand yet, but reading between the lines, it seems as if the fight over the bottle deposit law is not going to go away, and common ground will be difficult to find. Chris Flynn, the president of the Massachusetts Food Association, which represents the state's supermarket chains, says voters made a clear statement in November that they do not want two approaches on recycling, one for containers and one for everything else.

"We should be looking at a more comprehensive approach," Flynn says. He favors legislation that would do away with the bottle deposit law entirely and replace it with a 1-cent fee on every container, which would provide the revenue to move recycling efforts into high gear. Think of it as a grand bargain: More money for recycling efforts in return for scrapping the bottle deposit law.

"It's fair to say that there's a group of us who feel that's the direction we should head," he says. "There's no need for a bifurcated system."

Bachrach is not in favor of doing away with the bottle deposit law unless a proven alternative is in place and working. He says the bottle deposit law has been suc-



A doll is buried amidst the trash at the New Bedford landfill.

cessful in recycling 80 percent of the covered containers, while the recycling rate for those containers not covered is about 24 percent. If a comprehensive recycling system can be developed that matches the 80 percent figure, Bachrach says then, and only then, would he consider getting rid of the bottle deposit law.

MassPIRG's Domenitz, the bottle deposit law's biggest supporter, says a comprehensive approach to the state's

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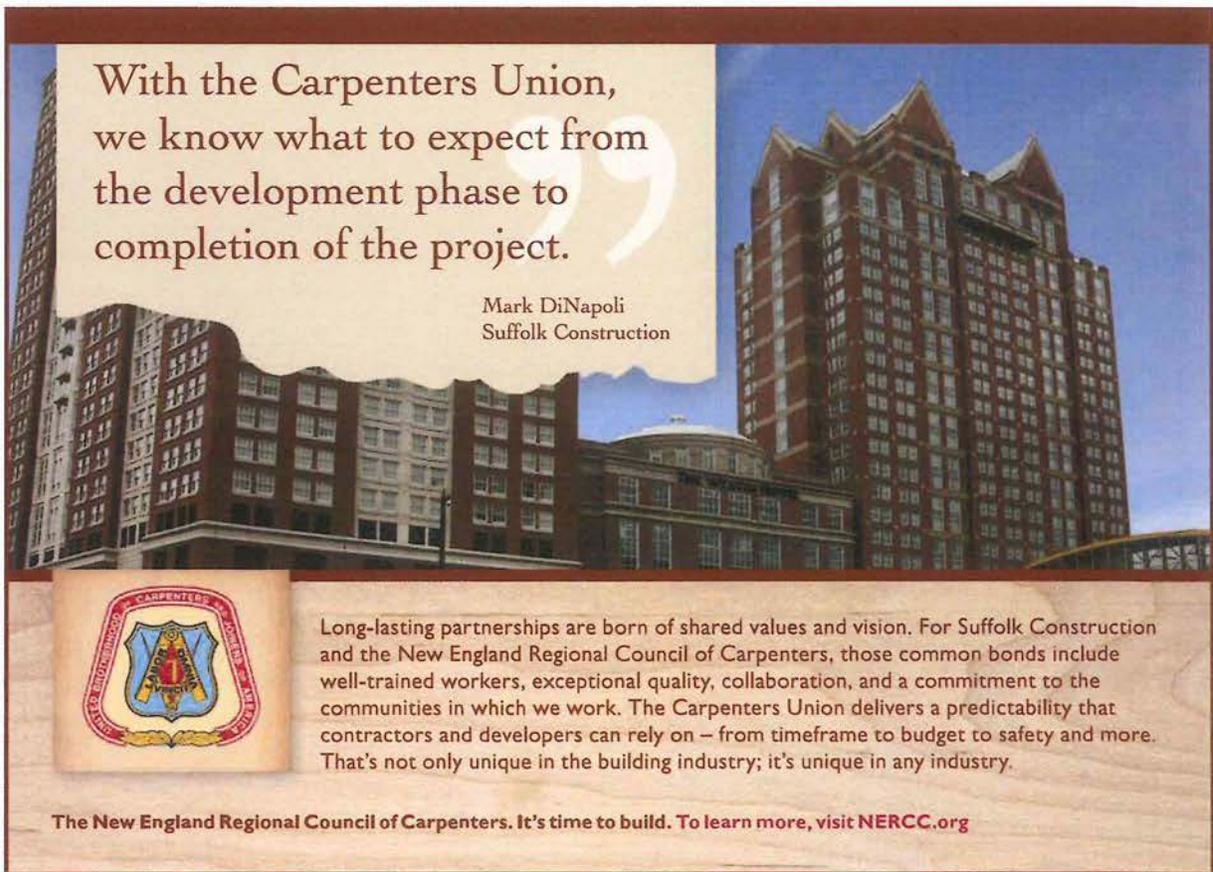
trash problem should include the bottle deposit law along with a host of other measures, including enforcement of the waste bans, organics recycling, and pay as you throw. “The big picture is almost always made up of a 100 different things,” she says. “There is no silver bullet here.”

## Proposed legislation would set benchmark goals for municipal trash per capita.

Sen. Marc Pacheco of Taunton, who has served as Senate chairman of the Legislature’s Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture, says he wants to hold hearings statewide this year on trash, which he calls a “ticking time bomb” for municipalities across the state. With landfills closing, no new incinerators being built, and the cost of trash exports rising, Pacheco says the state needs to deal with its waste problem for both environmental and economic reasons.

Pacheco favors legislation that would set trash performance standards for municipalities, similar in some respects to standards for education, affordable housing, and other state priorities. His bill would require every municipality to reach an average of 600 pounds of trash per capita per year quickly and then ratchet that number down over five years to 450 pounds per capita. The numbers could be a challenge for some communities, but the average pay-as-you-throw municipality is already below the five-year target.

The senator is cautious about how his proposed standards would be enforced. His bill leaves that up to the same Department of Environmental Protection that has had difficulty enforcing the state’s waste bans. Hitting cities and towns where it hurts, by tying some part of state aid to compliance with trash-reducing benchmarks, would be one way of getting their attention, but would be politically difficult to push through the Legislature. A weaker enforcement regime that’s more politically palatable, however, might do little to alter the unsustainable trash-tossing track the state is on. Either way, Pacheco says, it’s time to address the state’s trash system. “The more you find out about it,” he says, “the more you say what a mess the system is.” **CW**



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&gt;

By Anamika Roy  
Daily News Staff

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August 14, 2014 12:01AM

## Ashland reports \$1M in savings from recycling efforts

ASHLAND - The town's recycling and waste reduction program has saved Ashland nearly \$1 million in disposal fees and reduced the amount of trash the town sends to landfills by 37 percent, according to numbers released by the Department of Public Works.

Ashland introduced its pay-as-you-throw program eight years ago to reduce its trash disposal costs. According to Finance Director Michael Herbert, the town has to pay a disposal fee for solid waste but not for recycling.

With the pay-as-you-throw program, residents could use 14- and 33-gallon bags for solid waste disposal. The bags were sold by WasteZero, a company that works with municipalities to improve their trash programs.

The town also offered free, weekly single-stream recycling collection, which according to Herbert, was key to the program's success.

"The single-stream process makes it easier. More people are willing to take advantage of it and do it (recycle)," he said.

The town has not seen an increase in illegal dumping under the program, according to a press release.

In the three years before the program was introduced, the town recycled an average of 1,100 tons per year. That amount has increased to 1,616 tons per year after the program started on July 1, 2006.

"This is a much more environmentally friendly process," said Herbert on Wednesday.

He would like to see Ashland reduce its solid waste by 50 percent in the next few years.

According to a metric provided by the Environmental Protection Agency, the amount of trash Ashland saved from landfills has reduced 5,500 cars-worth of greenhouse gases. The energy saved could be used to power 2,100 homes.

Ashland is a member of the state's Green Communities program, which awards grants to designated cities and towns to be more energy efficient. While the state will not give Ashland any grants for improving its recycling rate, Herbert says it sets a good example.

"This further solidifies our standing commitment to environmental stewardship and a culture of responsibility required to live up to our Green Community status," said Town Manager Tony Schiavi in a press release.

Anamika Roy can be reached at 508-626-3957 or aroy@wickedlocal.com. Follow her on Twitter @anamikaroy.

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# The People Speak

Pay-as-you-throw and resident satisfaction. BY STEPHEN LISAIUSKAS AND JOSHUA KOLLING-PERIN

For years, cities and towns that have considered adopting pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) to address the rising cost of solid waste disposal have needed to do so with little or no information on what people really think about the programs.

As with any public issue, many residents have questions, and sometimes a few vocal residents speak out against the program. However, it is not clear how many people those opponents actually represent. Conversely, it has been hard for leaders to determine how many potential PAYT supporters there are in a community, mainly because most supporters do not take the time to speak up in public forums. For too long, this information gap has forced municipal leaders to make decisions in a vacuum: If they adopt PAYT, how satisfied will their residents be with the program, and will they comply with it? The level of public approval can have a significant impact on the overall success and effectiveness of a PAYT program.

Now, a new study conducted by the public opinion research firm Public Policy Polling (PPP) shows, for the first time, what people think after PAYT is implemented, and what opinions policymakers can expect the public to hold after the new program is implemented. The study sheds light on resident attitudes

toward PAYT—and shows those attitudes to be overwhelmingly positive. This study gives municipal leaders the tools they need to incorporate residents' opinions into their decision-making process, showing them conclusively that people who participate in pay-as-you-throw see it as fair, effective, and easy to do.

## Background on Pay-as-You-Throw

Pay-as-you-throw programs can take many forms, but bag-based programs are the most effective at reducing waste. With bag-based pay-as-you-throw, people dispose of their waste in specially marked city or town bags, usually in easily recognizable, bright colors with a municipal seal imprinted on them. The bags cost a little more than traditional trash bags (often \$1 or \$2, depending on size), because they cover not only the cost of the bag but also all or part of the cost of collection and disposal. Making people aware of the cost of their garbage every time they throw something away makes them think twice about putting easily recycled—and valuable—materials into the trash. People become less likely to throw away those things that have value outside the trashcan—whether through reuse, recycling, composting, charitable donations, or other means. And when people recycle and divert material from their trash, they can save on the cost of disposal. Bag-based pay-as-you-

throw has been proven to cut trash tonnages by an average of almost 50%—helping municipal finances and reducing garbage's environmental toll.

## Methodology

The automated telephone survey asked 27 questions of 991 residents of communities with bag-based pay-as-you-throw programs. The respondents were selected randomly from among 11 communities in four states (Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island). The survey was conducted over four days in February 2014.

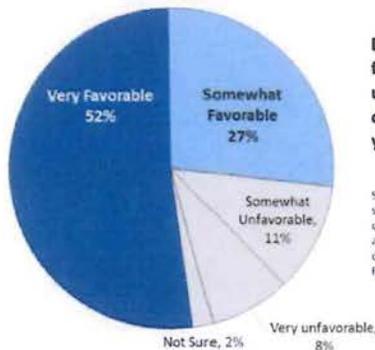
## Overall Findings

The most striking finding of the survey is pay-as-you-throw's extremely high favorability. Overall, 79% of survey respondents said they have either a very or somewhat favorable opinion of PAYT. Additionally, an outright majority said they have a very favorable opinion of PAYT.

Notably, PAYT has high favorability across income brackets. Even in households in the lowest income bracket surveyed (below \$30,000), 80% said they see it as very or somewhat favorable.

Given the obvious operational concerns about changing a core public service such as trash collection, policymakers can take comfort

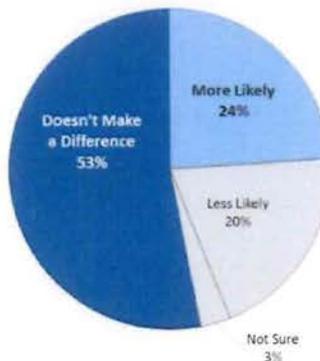
Participants in Pay-as-You-Throw Programs Have a Highly Favorable View of Them.



Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of pay-as-you-throw?

Source: Automated telephone survey of 991 residents of communities with bag-based pay-as-you-throw programs, conducted by Public Policy Polling Feb. 21-25, 2014.

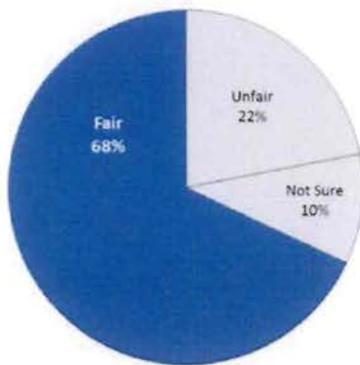
Participants in Pay-as-You-Throw Programs Are Highly Likely to Re-Elect the Officials Who Implemented It.



Does having pay-as-you-throw in place make you more or less likely to vote for the officials who implemented it, or does it not make a difference?

Source: Automated telephone survey of 991 residents of communities with bag-based pay-as-you-throw programs, conducted by Public Policy Polling Feb. 21-25, 2014.

### More Than Two-Thirds of Pay-as-You-Throw Participants See the Program as Fair.



**Do you think pay-as-you-throw is a fair or unfair way for your community to ask residents to pay for solid waste disposal?**

Source: Automated telephone survey of 991 residents of communities with bag based pay-as-you-throw programs, conducted by Public Policy Polling Feb. 21-25, 2014.

### Pay-as-You-Throw Participants Overwhelmingly See the Program as Easy to Participate in.



**Would you say participating in pay-as-you-throw is difficult for you, or not?**

Source: Automated telephone survey of 991 residents of communities with bag based pay-as-you-throw programs, conducted by Public Policy Polling Feb. 21-25, 2014.

in the fact that 89% of respondents say their PAYT program is performing better than or as well as they expected—suggesting that the concerns voiced before implementation largely disappear once people experience PAYT in real life.

The survey also asked about the ultimate measure of public satisfaction: if having PAYT in place makes respondents more or less likely to vote for the officials who implemented it. Overwhelmingly, respondents showed that elected leaders do not face negative repercussions for bringing in PAYT. More than three quarters said that they are either more likely to vote for those leaders (24%) or that it does not make a difference (53%).

#### Findings About Fairness

Respondents overwhelmingly said they believe that pay-as-you-throw is a fair way for residents to pay for their trash disposal. Indeed, the concept of payment based on usage is well understood by residents, as they are already used to water, electricity, gas, and other utilities being paid for in this way. Overall, 68% said it is fair, more than three times the 22% who considered it unfair. Given the general unpopularity of the taxes and fees that fund public services, this 3:1 “fairness ratio” speaks strongly to the public’s support for pay-as-you-throw, and it may reflect residents’ appreciation of their ability to choose how much they wish to pay under PAYT—a choice they are not given for property taxes, building inspection fees, and most other public services.

The perception of PAYT as fair holds up across income levels. Among respondents with household income below \$30,000, the fairness ratio is nearly 2:1 (57% to 32%), and it is almost 3:1 (65% to 25%) for those making between \$30,000 and \$50,000. Households earning between \$50,000 and \$75,000 give PAYT a 3:1 fairness ratio (69% to 22%), those

earning between \$75,000 and \$100,000 give it more than 4:1 (78% to 18%), and fairness ratio from the ones that make more than \$100,000 is almost 6:1 (80% to 14%).

#### Findings About Effectiveness

The survey consistently found that residents understand and appreciate the benefits of their community’s pay-as-you-throw program. Asked if they think PAYT’s environmental impact on their community is positive, negative, or neutral, fully 62% said positive; just 10% said negative.

Fifty percent of survey participants said they see PAYT’s financial impact as positive, and another 33% see it as neutral; just 13% said negative.

Additionally, respondents showed a clear understanding of the degree to which PAYT reduces solid waste volume and increases recycling. Seventy-four percent said they think their community’s solid waste decreased either a lot (44%) or a little (30%) since implementation of PAYT. Ninety percent said they think PAYT led recycling to increase by a lot (67%) or a little (23%).

#### Ease of Participation

Survey respondents consistently said that taking part in pay-as-you-throw fits well into their lives and is not a burden on them. The survey found overwhelmingly that it is easy for people to take part in. Nearly three-quarters of all respondents (74%) said they think it is not difficult to participate in PAYT. Moreover, the study found that the longer people do pay-as-

you-throw, the easier they find it to participate.

Overall, 67% also said they consider the cost of pay-as-you-throw bags to be an affordable part of their household budget. This belief in the affordability of PAYT holds constant across income levels, with a clear majority of even the lowest-income households (those earning less than \$30,000) saying they consider the bags affordable.

Notably, the survey also shows that the concerns that many have about PAYT before implementation largely disappear once they begin participating. Nearly two-thirds of respondents—67%—said taking part in pay-as-you-throw is less difficult than they thought it would be before the program began.

#### Conclusion

In short, this study provides concrete data demonstrating that people who participate in pay-as-you-throw programs strongly support them, for a wide range of reasons and in a large number of ways. Knowing with certainty that people like pay-as-you-throw fills a critical need for municipal decision-makers considering PAYT, because it gives them compelling evidence that they are likely to see similarly strong support for PAYT soon after they implement a program in their own communities. The findings of this survey give them the flexibility to move more freely toward implementation, concentrating their planning and decision-making on important practical and operational concerns, such as when and how best to implement their pay-as-you-throw program. **MSW**

*Stephen Lisauskas is vice president of government affairs and regional vice president of municipal partnerships at WasteZero. Joshua Kolling-Perin is director of public engagement at WasteZero.*

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# TELEGRAM & GAZETTE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2013

FRONT PAGE

## Yellow bags come up with green results



T&G STAFF PHOTO/RICK CINCLAIR

Worcester public works worker Joe Quinn grabs bags of trash on a city street.

### It's been 20 years for the 'pay-as-you-throw' plan

By Nick Kotsopoulos  
TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF

WORCESTER — Twenty years ago today, bright yellow bags began sprouting up on curbsides of city streets.

The yellow bags have since become a familiar site throughout the city, dotting the

landscape in different residential neighborhoods each weekday.

It was the beginning of the city's "pay-as-you-throw" trash collection program — one in which residents pay a per-bag fee to have their trash picked up by the city. It was launched in conjunction with a new curbside recycling program.

Before that, the city's rubbish collection program was funded solely out of tax-levy funds. And recycling was virtually nonexistent.

When the bag fee was launched, there were many who felt it was doomed to failure.

While supporters of the program argued that making people pay for each bag of trash they throw away would give residents the incentive to create less waste and recycle more, opponents believed the trash-bag fee would do the opposite and lead to widespread illegal dumping.

That divisiveness was reflected by the fact that trash-bag fee was narrowly adopted by a 6-5 vote. Even after that vote, attempts were made to repeal it.

Twenty years later, the "pay-as-you-throw" trash collection program has proven the skeptics wrong.

Since the inception of both programs, the amount of residential trash picked up by the city has been cut by more than half, and residential recycling has increased tenfold, according to Robert L. Moylan Jr., commissioner of public works and parks.

Mr. Moylan, who will be retiring at the end of this year after 20 years as the city's public works chief and 42 years with the city overall, said the implementation of the pay-as-you-throw program is one of his proudest accomplishments.

"If communities are serious about recycling, they will embrace pay-as-you-throw," Mr. Moylan said. "It takes political courage, but it's proven to be effective."

The impact of the two programs is reflected in their statistics:

■ Accounting for population growth, Worcester has cumulatively diverted 400,000 tons of trash, moving from 43,228 tons disposed in 1992 to a projected 20,341 tons in 2013. The amount of trash the city picks up today is less than half of what the city picked up before the programs started.

■ The city has captured 200,000 tons of added recycling, moving from 880 tons in 1992 to a projected 9,465 tons in 2013.

■ The city has saved more than \$10 million in waste disposal costs (tipping fees) because it doesn't take as much trash to the Wheelabrator resource recovery plant in Millbury for disposal as before.

■ Worcester disposes of 396 pounds of waste per capita, per year, which is just 44 percent of the national average of 900 pounds.

■ The city now has a 43 percent recycling rate, among the highest in Massachusetts and well above the state average of 30 percent.

Robert Fiore, assistant to the commissioner of public works, said the widespread illegal dumping that opponents had feared would happen never materialized. He added that complaints about the trash-bag program are virtually nonexistent today.

"Curbside recycling collection started the same day as the yellow bag program and when residents saw how much of what they were throwing away in their trash bag could now be recycled, the controversy over how much a household would spend a week on trash bags was put to rest," Mr. Fiore said.

"The fairness and simplicity of the program is what makes it work and we had more faith than others that Worcester residents had the pride and respect for this community to not turn into illegal dumpers," he added.

The cost of the standard-size trash bags started at 50 cents per bag back in 1993. It then went up to \$1 per bag in 2002 and \$1.50 in 2007, where it remains today. Meanwhile, the smaller-size trash bags, which are popular among those elderly residents who generate much less waste, started at 25 cents per bag and is at 75 cents today. "It's still the lowest bag cost

of any community I know," Mr. Fiore said "We've only had two increases in 20 years."

Mark Dancy, president of WasteZero, the leading provider of municipal solid waste reduction programs in the country, said what has happened in Worcester stands not only as a testament to the success of the program, but also to the city's standing as a leader on solid waste. "We couldn't be more proud of Worcester as they celebrate 20 successful years of pay-as-you-throw," Mr. Dancy said.

"They have been a leader from the very beginning and they are continuing to innovate as they look ahead to their third decade." Mr. Fiore said the DPW has always tried to stay on the forefront of municipal waste management practices, and has even added services during the past 20 years.

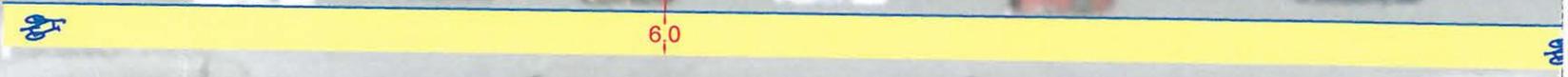
He pointed out that the small yellow trash bags were introduced in 1995, every other week recycling was upgraded to every week recycling in 1996, and annual and semi-annual household hazardous waste collection were expanded to four collections a year with a permanent collection center.

Also, yard waste drop-off site were added in 1998, single stream recycling was established in 2008 and free electronics collection have been held each year since 2009.

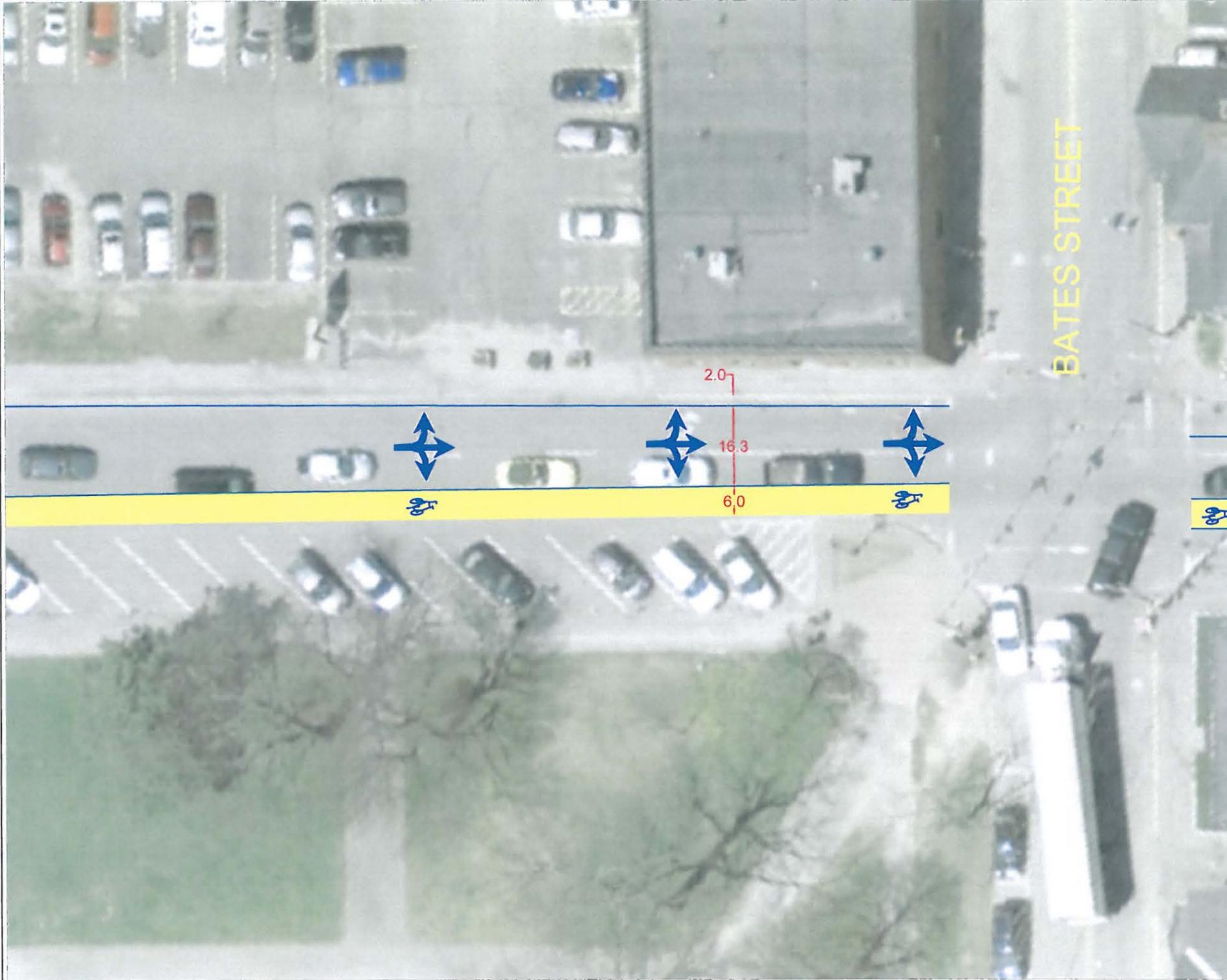
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Contact Nick Kotsopoulos at [nicholas.kotsopoulos@telegram.com](mailto:nicholas.kotsopoulos@telegram.com)

PARK STREET



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PINE STREET STRIPING PLAN				Design: R.B.	Check'd: R.B.
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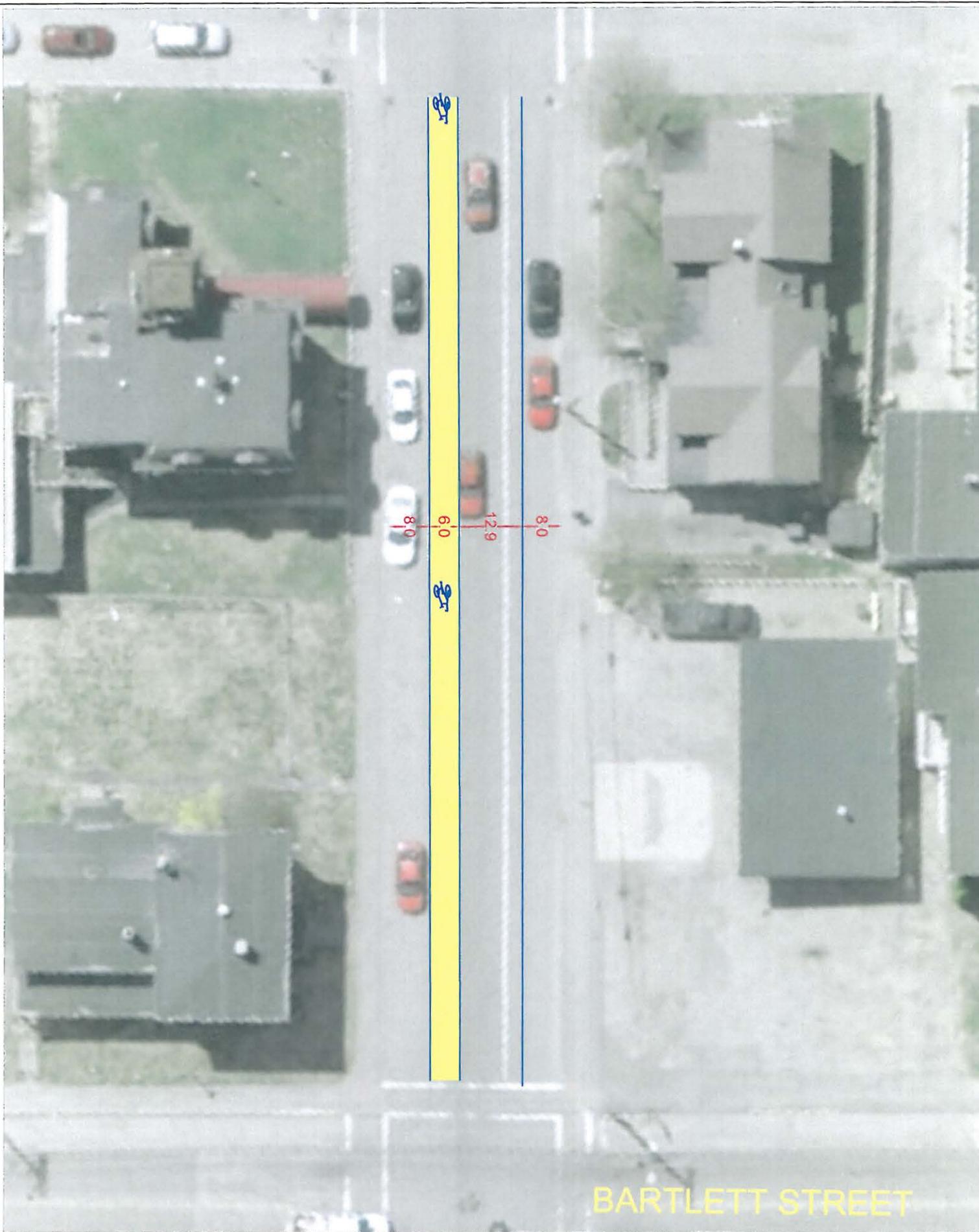
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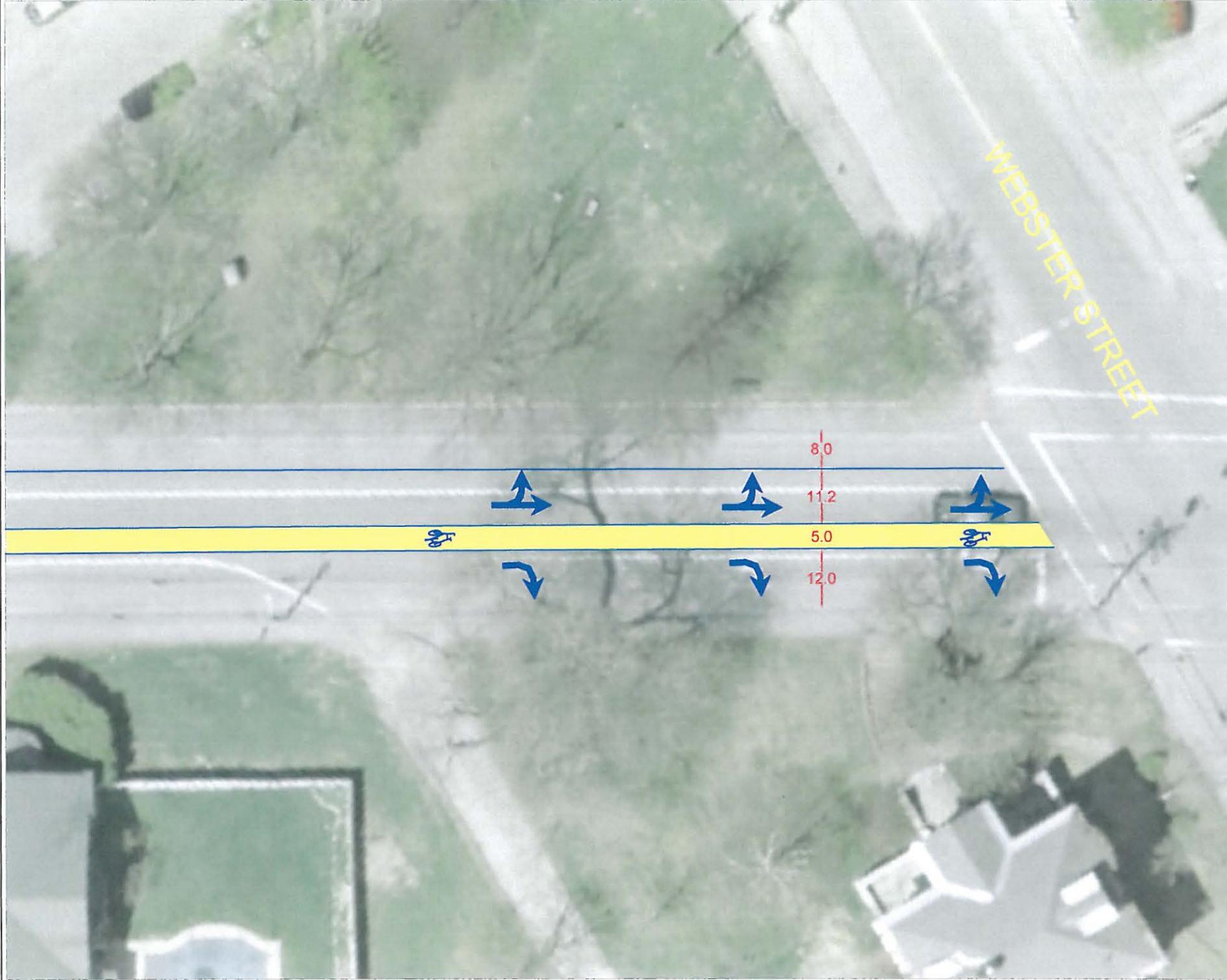
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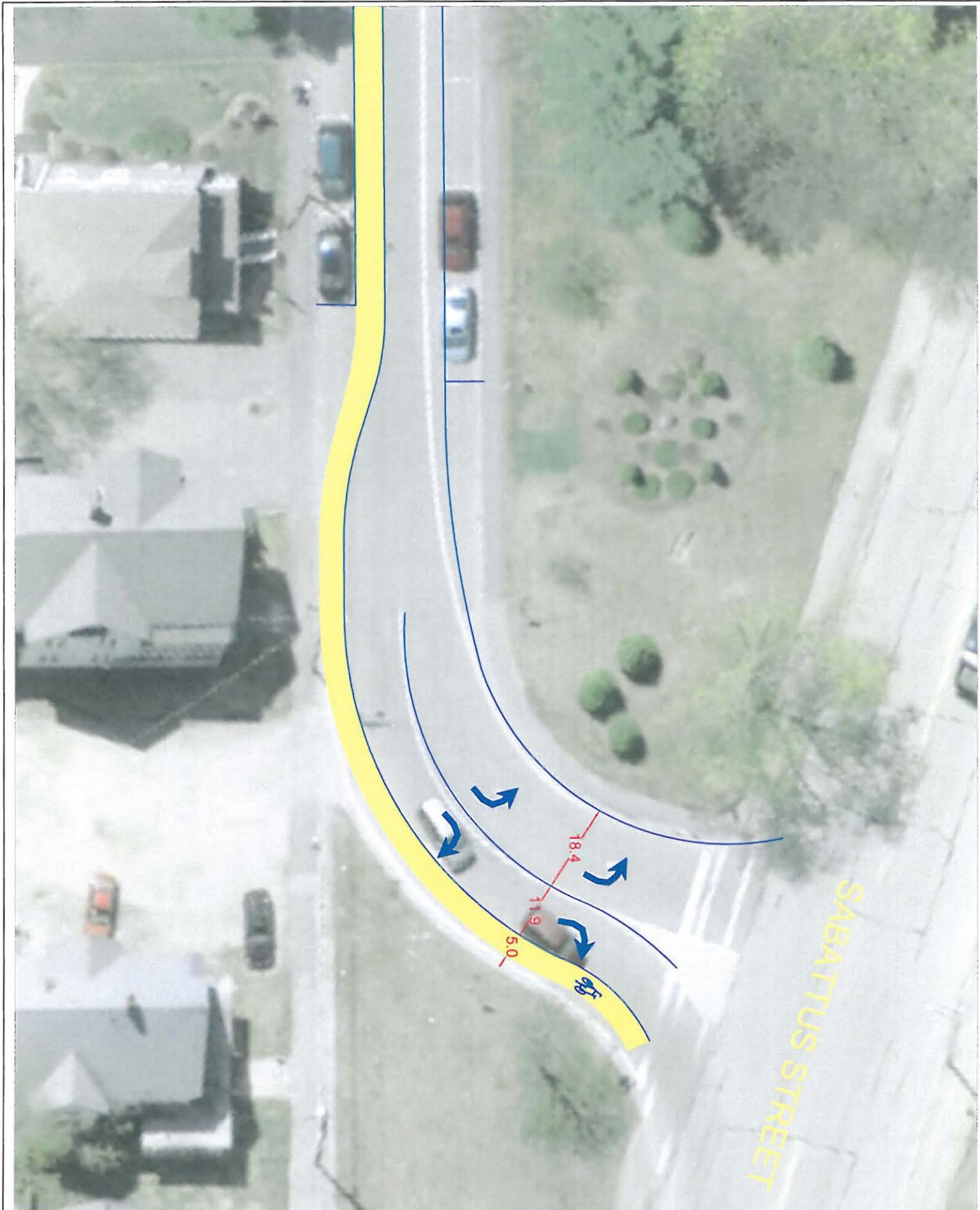
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