



## TOWN OF MILTON

# PAY AS YOU THROW CASE STUDY

In a [Pay-As-You-Throw \(PAYT\)](#) solid waste program, residents purchase official bags or preprinted stickers for disposal of trash, thereby paying directly for solid waste they generate. A barrel or cart limit of 35 gallons (35G) before the PAYT fee applies is considered a “Hybrid” or “Modified PAYT” program. There is no direct fee for recycling.



**Community Population:** 27,003

**Households Served:** 8,937 (trash program customers FY2022)

**Services Provided:** Weekly automated curbside collection of solid waste in town-issued 35G wheeled carts; weekly curbside collection of single-stream recycling in 64G carts; seasonal curbside collection of yard waste; and a year-round recycling drop-off center.



Curbside collection is provided under municipal contract with a private hauler. The Town holds separate contracts for curbside collection, MSW disposal, and processing of curbside recyclables.

The solid waste program is funded through a combination of tax dollars and PAYT user fees.

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

- The Town of Milton began a curbside PAYT solid waste program in 1991, one of the first towns in the Commonwealth to do so. Before the 2019 conversion to automated collection, residents were required to use a \$3 sticker on every bag or barrel of trash.
- In July 2019, Milton transitioned to automated collection of solid waste using 35G trash carts purchased and owned by the Town.
- For overflow trash, residents may use a \$3/trash sticker (32G bag limit), or they may request an additional PAYT cart (for which they are billed an additional \$156 per year).
- Residents are allowed to Opt Out of the cart collection program; in doing so they must affix a \$3/trash sticker to each bag or barrel of solid waste set-out at the curb.
- Curbside collection costs are primarily covered through the tax levy. Residents who use 35G trash carts are assessed an annual fee of \$156 (equivalent to \$3 x 52 weeks). Trash stickers (\$3/each) must be affixed to all bagged trash that is not in an official 35G cart.
- Revenue from the annual trash fee and trash bag stickers covers 41% of the solid waste program budget (balance is covered by the tax levy).

### IMPLEMENTATION:

- An annual fee was implemented in 2019 when the 35G trash cart program was rolled out. This required a structural change to the billing system at the start of the fiscal year.
- With this new contract/program change, the Town went from a 2-day collection cycle to a 5-day collection cycle.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**Milton:** Meera Patel, [mpatel@townofmilton.org](mailto:mpatel@townofmilton.org);  
[www.townofmilton.org/trash-recycling-yard-waste](http://www.townofmilton.org/trash-recycling-yard-waste)

**MassDEP:** Rachel Smith, [Rachel.Smith@mass.gov](mailto:Rachel.Smith@mass.gov);  
[www.mass.gov/lists/pay-as-youthrow-paytsave-money-and-reduce-trashsmart](http://www.mass.gov/lists/pay-as-youthrow-paytsave-money-and-reduce-trashsmart)

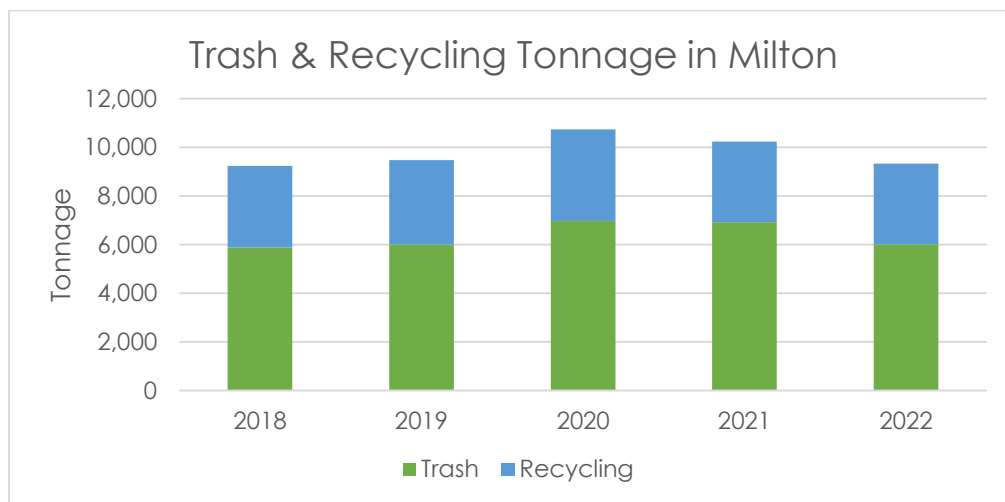
- Milton issued two town-wide mailings in May 2019 with program details and opt out provisions. An additional mailer was targeted to landlords.
- The published deadline for residents to opt out (of cart collection) was June 1, 2019, so that DPW staff could prepare a final list for cart delivery.
- Fee abatement is available for residents over 65, with annual rate of \$94.
- Collection and cart program announcements were made through the Town website, social media, the Milton Times, School Department, Milton Scene (a local news website), Milton Access TV, the Patriot Ledger, and neighborhood groups.
- Outreach was provided to the Council on Aging to make sure senior residents were aware of the new program and the abatement available to those over 65.
- New PAYT carts were distributed to households during the third week of June.
- Each cart contained an information packet with a brochure on the new cart system and reminders about what material is recyclable, using [Recycle Smart MA](#) graphics.
- DPW office staff and interns fielded phone calls and resident questions about the program changes.

## ENFORCEMENT

- The Town's hauler was given primary responsibility for enforcement at the curb.
- Town provided the hauler with rejection stickers so that drivers and collectors could tag rejected trash and bulky items. Reasons for rejection include unstickered trash/bulky items, trash in too large a barrel, and contamination in recycling.
- When trash is rejected, residents are expected to return it to their property and set it out the following week with correct stickers.

## RESULTS:

- Providing carts with an annual fee creates efficiencies in the Town's solid waste program through annualizing revenue more predictably.
- Uniform carts create a fairer system for residents – use of the 35G cart is easy to enforce, and the cart itself supports compliance (as compared with resident-provided bags with trash stickers).
- The annual fee is a convenience for residents who prefer a onetime payment rather than several times throughout the year, but the opt-out option provides flexibility for people who may spend part of the year somewhere else, or who prefer to pay as they go.
- Initial results for the 35G cart program were difficult to assess as it coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw a general increase in trash from the residential sector throughout the Commonwealth, as more people were working from home. Results from 2022 are back in-line with pre-cart trash and recycling tonnages (see chart below).



### Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

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