



Massachusetts  
Department  
of  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION

## case study

# Town of Wrentham Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) Program

*In a Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) solid waste program, residents purchase preprinted stickers or bags for disposal of trash, thereby paying directly for the amount of solid waste that they generate. There is no direct fee for recycling.*

<b>Community Population:</b>	10,554
<b>Households Served:</b>	3,735 (FY05), 3,831 (FY06)
<b>Services Provided:</b>	Weekly curbside trash and recycling collection

### Program Overview

- There is no annual curbside trash or recycling collection fee for residents. This solid waste collection service is paid for through the tax base.
- Curbside collection of trash is limited to one container of trash (maximum of 34 gallons or 40 pounds). After one container, residents pay \$2 per 33-gallon bag of trash.
- Residents are provided with unlimited weekly recycling collection.
- Purple PAYT bags with the town seal are sold in packages of five.
- Program serves all residential dwellings, including condominiums, with eight units or fewer.

### History

- Before implementing a PAYT program, Wrentham paid for solid waste management exclusively through its tax base.
- A mandatory recycling bylaw, developed years ago and updated significantly in 2002, was never enforced.
- Wrentham's solid waste and recycling collection contract expired in July 2005. At that time, there was also an increase in the trash-tipping fee per ton at the SEMASS combustion facility (where Wrentham takes its trash).
- PAYT was considered as a way to control costs, make the trash and recycling collection program more equitable, and reduce waste.

### Implementation

- The PAYT bag vendor manufactures bags, warehouses inventory, and delivers Pay-As-You-Throw bags to stores, at no cost to the town. The PAYT bag vendor collects \$2 per bag for all bags sold to stores, keeps proceeds in a lock box, and sends monthly revenue checks to the town.
- Bags are distributed to eight local retailers, who sell them to residents in packets of five for \$10: Shaw's, Stop & Shop, Cumberland Farms and three smaller stores. Retailers receive a two percent discount for paying invoices on time.
- Wrentham Town Hall sells individual bags at \$2 each as a courtesy to residents who do not want or need packages of five.
- Town revenues (FY05) from bag sales were \$1.79 per bag sold (\$2 less \$0.17 in manufacturing and administration costs and up to \$0.04 in store discounts).
- The trash and recycling collection hauler has been able to maintain pre-PAYT service levels with one trash truck and one recycling truck.
- Nine months after PAYT implementation, Selectmen placed a non-binding referendum on the town election ballot: "Should the town continue the pay-as-you-throw waste reduction program?" By an overwhelming 1,302 to 507 margin, 72 percent of the voters who cast their ballots answered "yes."

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## Administration & Enforcement

- With funds from a Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) grant, Wrentham hired two interns for approximately four months to assist with program implementation and resident education.
- Interns worked with the hauler and its drivers, local schools, and residents to ensure a smooth transition to PAYT. Interns also followed trash and recycling trucks along their routes to track bag use, evaluate resident compliance with new program, and assist with implementation challenges.
- For the first two weeks of the program, the hauler left door hangers with PAYT program information, including a number to call with questions, at households with trash and recycling containers that did not meet program requirements, but still collected trash and recyclables.
- After this two-week period, the hauler placed "failure to meet program requirement" stickers on trash and recycling containers and left bags and bins at the curb when they did not meet program requirements.
- Wrentham's Recycling Committee and Department of Public Works (DPW) Superintendent now work with the hauler to maintain ongoing program enforcement.
- There has been no increase in illegal dumping in Wrentham since the town implemented its PAYT program.

## Additional Waste Services

- White goods, metals, cathode ray tubes (CRTs): Residents may call hauler to schedule pick-up (no charge).
- Bulky waste: One item per week may be collected curbside at no extra charge.
- Waste oil and mercury-containing products: May be dropped off at the DPW on the first Saturday of each month at no charge.
- Yard waste: Drop off at the DPW yard, open Monday through Saturday.

### Waste Reduction Results in First Two Years (FY'05 & FY'06)

- FY05: trash tonnage reduced 33 percent: 4,451 tons to 2,998 tons; 46 pounds to 31 pounds per household weekly.
- FY06: trash remains at average of 31 pounds per household per week.
- **On any given week**, eight of ten households fit all trash into first container, so don't need to buy PAYT bags.
- Recycling increased 25 percent in first year: 1,202 tons to 1,447 tons annually; 12 pounds to 15 pounds per household weekly.
- Year 2 recycling collection averaged 13 pounds per household per week.
- Increase in town's overall recycling rate: 21 percent to 33 percent (Year 2 at 30%)

### Financial Results

- Wrentham's FY05 trash disposal costs dropped \$133,803 and in FY'06 the trash disposal costs dropped about \$130,000 lower than they were prior to implementing the Pay-As-You-Throw program.
- Average annual revenue from bags (years 1 and 2): \$94,484.

## For More Information

- David Cyr, Recycling Committee Chair
- Irving Priest, DPW Superintendent
- Recycling Hotline: (508) 384-5418
- Email: [recycling@wrentham.ma.us](mailto:recycling@wrentham.ma.us)
- Web site: [www.wrentham.ma.us](http://www.wrentham.ma.us)