Town of Westford

PAYT Program Recommendation

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November 25, 2025

Agenda

- PAYT Recap
- Public Input Survey Excerpts
- Hybrid PAYT Recommendation
- Hybrid PAYT Financial Model
- Hybrid PAYT Program Impact
- Next Steps & Timeline
- What is Request to Select Board?
- Questions

Recap of Public Discussion & Input

- October/November 2024 Resident PAYT Survey
- October/November 2025 Resident PAYT Survey – focus on excess trash preferences and recycling needs
- Public Meetings & Presentations to Board & WRC
  - March 9, 2021 - Board presentation on PAYT options
  - February 14, 2023 – Board presentation on PAYT options
  - October 18, 2023 – Budget Task Force recommends PAYT be considered
  - November 12, 2024 - Board presentation on fee-for-service options
  - December 2024 - Strategic Plan Sustainability workshops
  - September 11, 2025 - WRC presentation & discussion
  - September 23, 2025 - Board presentation on PAYT options
- Direction from Select Board
  - Move forward with evaluating Hybrid PAYT model with no-charge 35-gallon cart basic curbside household service
  - Make recommendation on fee-based overflow trash program
  - Develop fee proposal for housing authorities and non-profit housing providers

Recap of Fee for Service/ Trash Metering Strategy

- As a waste reduction tool…
  - Household standard based on target tons per household
- As a tool to improve service delivery…
  - Move majority of collection to automated pickup with standardized cart
  - Provide cost-effective way to allow residents to dispose of excess waste
- As a tool to support housing and economic development goals…
  - Shift a portion of tax burden from businesses and multi-family taxpayers that are not eligible for curbside program
- As a revenue tool…
  - Recommendation to use only for trash in excess of waste targets; current tax levy should cover basic household service

Resident survey responses
Typical Household Weekly Trash

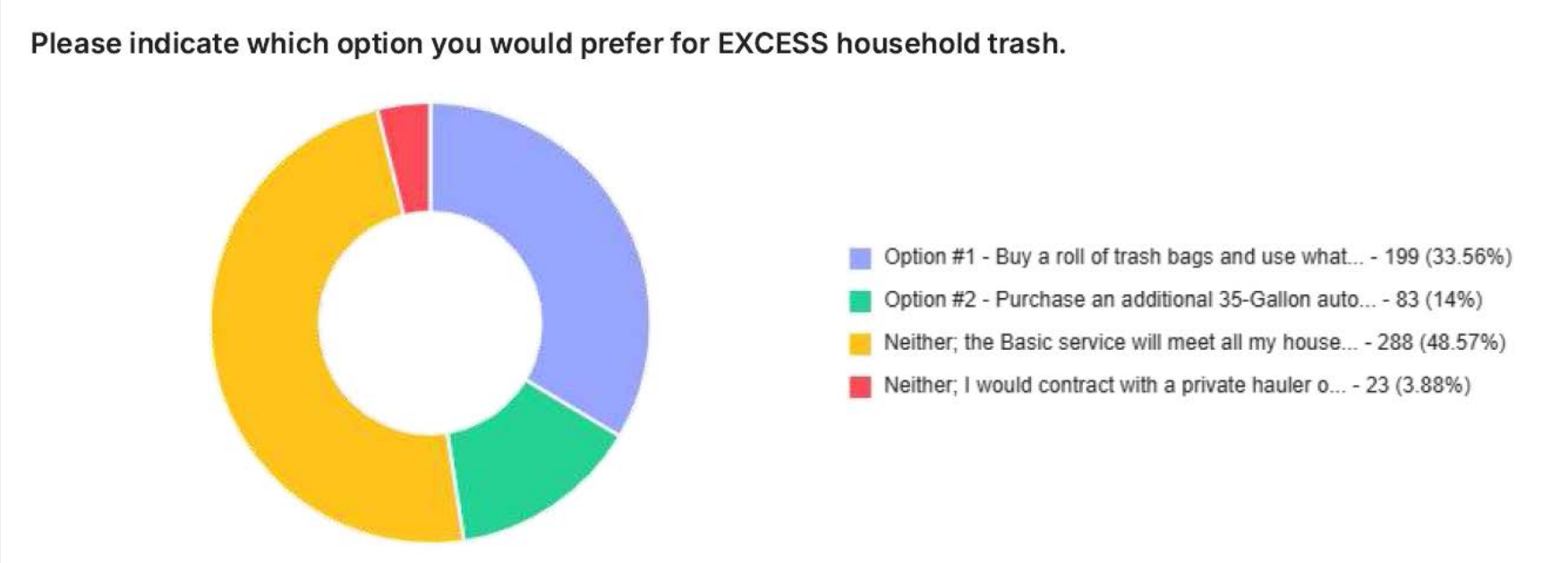
PAYT Resident Survey Question

How many tall kitchen garbage bags (13-gallon) does your household dispose of in the trash in a typical week? (please don't include occasional high-volume weeks, special occasions or seasonal cleaning…just a normal week). Filtered for eligible households, excluding MF 4 units and over.

		Oct. 2024			Nov. 2025	
1 bag or less	64%	248	17.35%	73%	155	25.16%
2-3 bags		664	46.47%		295	47.89%
4-6 bags		384	26.87%		128	20.78%
7-10 bags		90	6.30%		29	4.71%
More than 10 bags		8	0.56%		4	0.65%
I don't know		7	0.49%		5	0.81%
Total		**1,401**			**616**	

Note Nov. 2025 results are draft through Nov. 18; full results when survey closes will be available at https://www.westfordma.gov/1643/Curbside-Recycling-and-Trash

Resident survey responses
Excess Preferences



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Hybrid PAYT Recommendation
Program Description

- Program would launch July 2026
- Each household would receive, at no charge, a 35-gallon automated Town-branded cart for free, weekly Basic Service
  - Cart will be delivered to their home mid-June
  - Trash that fits within this cart will be collected at no charge
- 33-gallon Town-branded bags will be available for excess/overflow trash for a recommended fee of $2.75 each
  - Bags sold in rolls of five (5) at area retailers (grocery, convenience and hardware stores)
  - No weekly limit
  - Bags can be place on ground or in an uncovered container curbside
- No changes to curbside recycling or current bulky waste collection program

Hybrid PAYT Recommendation
Program Description

Hybrid PAYT Recommendation
Why Bags and not Additional Cart?

- Resident preferences – 2:1 margin in favor of bags over carts based on survey responses
- Flexibility in service delivery for residents; can choose what their household needs on a week-to-week basis
  - Carts would not provide for occasional large volumes of trash
- Flexibility in future program changes; allows for consideration of introducing variable cart sizes later
- Allows for a gradual change in household trash behavior
- Carts require a significantly higher level of staff support inventory management

Hybrid PAYT Financial Model
Assumptions

FY2027 Residential Solid Waste Projection

Projected Tons - FY2027	6,157	
Less School Dumpsters	(380)	
Less Municipal Dumpsters	(153)	
Less Housing Authority	(218)	
Adjusted Residential Tons - Curbside	**5,407**	
Total Curbside Eligible Households	7,848	
Per household average (tons)	0.69	tons/year
Per household average (lbs.)	1,378	lbs./year
Loose residential lbs. per gallon	0.990	lbs.
35-gallon cart will hold and estimated	34.66	lbs.
35-gallon cart annual capacity	1,802	lbs/year

Hybrid PAYT Financial Model

Residential Curbside Collection w/Overflow Bag

Trash Tonnage and Bag Projections

Projected FY2027 Tons	5,407
PAYT Impact Reduction	-15%
Projected Reduction	(811)
Adjusted Tonnage	4,596
Tons under levy (35G carts; curbside only)	2,933
Tons requiring overflow (curbside only)	1,663
Pounds requiring Overflow	3,325,358

PAYT Bag Projections	**WasteZero**	**MassDEP**
Pounds per bag	19	25
# of bags, projected by weight	175,019	133,014
Average, projected by weight	154,017	
# of bags, WasteZero projection	164,157	
Average Bags per Household	22	17
Average annual cost per household @ $2.75/bag	$ 61.33	$ 46.61

Hybrid PAYT Financial Model

Per Bag Cost Breakdown

		Low (WasteZero)	High (MassDEP)
Disposal Costs for excess trash			
FY2027 Cost Per Ton		105.33	
Cost per lb.		0.05	0.05
Disposal Costs per bag (ReWorld)		1.00	1.32
Bag Cost (WasteZero)		0.46	0.46
Collection Cost (E.L. Harvey)		0.25	0.25
Total Cost Per Bag		**1.71**	**2.02**
	Average	1.90	
Program Costs			
Add'l Recycling Programs & Cart Mgmt.		0.31	
Program Management		0.50	
	Total Program Costs	**2.71**	
Recommended price per 33-gallon PAYT Bag		**$ 2.75**	

Hybrid PAYT Financial Model

Financial Projection

FY2027 Projected Bag Sales (number of bags)	**160,000**
Projected Revenue	**440,000**
Program Start-up Costs	
Initial Cart Purchase, net of $246,000 grant	121,830
Bag purchases (1st Order)	21,888
Subtotal - startup	**143,718**
Operating Cost Impacts	
Per bag collection	40,000
Program Management	80,000
Additional Recycling Programs	30,000
Bag purchases	72,960
Cart Management	20,000
Tipping fee reduction	(85,420)
Subtotal - operating cost impact	**157,540**
Total Expenditure Impact - Year 1	**301,257**
Net Revenue	**138,743**

Hybrid PAYT Program Impact
Westford Households

- According to survey responses, most households would pay nothing extra most of the time
  - 73% of respondents across all household sizes dispose of 1-3 bags per week; this amount would fit within a 35-gallon cart (compared to 64% in October 2024 results) and result in no additional costs in a typical week
  - Staff is working on distribution plan using Town social services departments to distribute no-cost or discounted bags to households in need
  - Housing Authority properties would not be impacted by PAYT (dumpster collection, not curbside service)
- At $2.75/bag, one bag per week would cost $11.92 on average per month
- Based on public input survey results:
  - Households with 1-2 people: 85% = no cost; 11% = 1 bag; 3% more than 1 bag
  - Households with 3-4 people: 67% = no cost; 27% = 1 bag; 5% more than 1 bag
  - Households with 5-6 people: 37% = no cost; 46% 1 bag; 13% more than 1 bag

Hybrid PAYT Program Impact

Westford's Goals

- Reduction of overall trash tonnage:
  - Projected tons per household metric = **.66** *(includes all collections)*
  - FY2027 projection 15% reduction in collection for eligible households with curbside service = 811 tons
  - Tipping fee (disposal cost) savings of $85,000
  - CO2 emissions reduction of 726-973 metric tons

FY2027 - Key Performance Indicator	
Tons per household (ReTrac Data)	
Total Tons	6,157.00
Total Households Served	8,050
Projected Reduction	(810.98)
Projected total tonnage	5,346.02
Tons per household	0.66

- Revenue from bag sales cover costs of excess waste disposal and fund additional recycling and waste programs

Next Steps & Timeline

- **December 2025** - Begin public outreach and education campaign.
  - Phase 1 – Education on “why” leading up to Town Meeting
  - Phase 2 – Information on “how” and “what”
- **January 9, 2026** – Finalize list of eligible households and provide for public review
- **January 13, 2026** – Draft Comprehensive Waste Reduction Plan completed; PAYT implementation plan completed.
- **January 16, 2026** – Submit MassDEP PAYT grant application.
- **January-March, 2026** – Complete procurement process and finalize contracts for carts, bags, and hauler contract amendments.
- **April 14, 2026** – Contracts on Select Board agenda for approval.
- **June, 2026** – Cart deployment by vendor and bags delivered to area retailers expected by mid-month.
- **1st Week of July 2026** – Program launch; this may be shifted up or back to a Monday.

Questions for Select Board

- Do we move forward with a 35-gallon cart and overflow bags with a target for a July 1, 2026, implementation?
  - Bag vendor contract
  - Contract amendment with E.L. Harvey
  - Cart contract
- Authorize TMO to apply for MassDEP PAYT grant and plan for budget transfer for matching funds?

Questions?

PAYT RECOMMENDATION

MIKE EDWARDS

ASSISTANT TOWN MANAGER – STRATEGIC OPERATIONS

NOVEMBER 25, 2025