

PAYT QUICK FACT #2: The Town arrived at the recommendation for a hybrid PAYT program with free 35-gallon cart and fee-based overflow bags after thorough research, public meetings, and multiple public input opportunities.

- The [Budget Task Force final report](#), following a collaborative effort by staff, elected and appointed officials, and resident volunteers and issued October 18, 2023 recommended the Town of Westford consider implementing a PAYT program to control costs and reduce waste. PAYT had been actively considered the Select Board going back to 2021 ([PAYT Program Timeline](#)).
- Following through on this recommendation, a series of public presentations, public discussions, and resident surveys were conducted. A detailed timeline is available on the Town's [PAYT webpage](#) and includes links to the public meetings and all materials presented.
- [October 2024 resident survey](#) (1,300 responses of 8,000 households served curbside) was designed to gauge typical household waste volumes and preferences for different fee-for-service options. The principal goal was to inform a decision on set annual fee or variable rate fee (PAYT). Key takeaways were:
 - Most households, most of the time, would only need a 35-gallon cart (Questions #5&6).
 - When presented with different fee-for-service options, 43% preferred PAYT vs. 31% preferred set monthly fee. (Question #7)
 - When presented additional options for cart-based fee-for-service, 53% preferred to pay low fee or no fee for a 35-gallon cart with overflow bags vs. 24% preferred a higher fee and 65-gallon cart with overflow bags. (Question #8)
 - When asked about overflow trash, 63% preferred paying for bags as needed vs. 7% preferred to pay more on a set monthly basis for larger carts. (Question #9)
- The survey information, with additional financial and operational data on the different fee-for-service options, was presented to the Select Board for public discussion on [November 12, 2024](#). The Board decided to move forward with further evaluation of a PAYT-based program rather than monthly or annual fee.
- Staff [presentation to Select Board](#) on September 2025 outlined operational and financial impacts of different PAYT recommendations. Combined with prior survey data, availability of MassDEP implementation grants, and goal of waste reduction, the most appropriate and feasible option was determined to a “hybrid” PAYT program with free 35-gallon cart as Basic Service provided under the tax levy. Staff directed to return with options for overflow trash.
- [October 2025 resident survey](#) gauged resident preferences for disposal of overflow trash. This survey also repeated several questions from the prior survey to confirm typical household trash volumes (which align with trend data from Town disposal tonnages) to confirm suitability of 35-gallon carts. Key takeaways were:
 - Confirmed most households (73%) most of the time, would only need 35-gallon cart.
 - 48% of respondents indicated no need for overflow; 35-gallon basic service met all needs.
 - 34% preferred bags to use as needed, while 14% preferred to have an additional cart.
- Survey data, along with detailed financial analysis, [presented to Select Board](#) along with a [memorandum with a comprehensive review](#) of the program and process. The Board voted to move forward with 35-gallon cart Basic Service (no charge) and \$2.75/bag overflow bag program.