

**Recommendations to the Town of Burrillville**

**For Reducing Waste Disposal Costs and**

**Improving Recycling Rates**

May 21, 2010

**Summary**

After considerable research, the Rubbish and Recycling Committee (Committee) has concluded that in order to control rising costs of trash collection and to achieve the State-mandated recycling rate of 35%, with a total diversion rate of 50%, by 2012, the Town Council should immediately implement a “No Bin, No Barrel” (NB/NB) program. It is the further recommendation of the Committee that the Town Council implement a “Pay As You Throw” (PAYT) program to commence July 1, 2011. The Committee is prepared to meet with the full council for a workshop to discuss various aspects and options of PAYT. There is no single methodology that must be adopted. A PAYT program can be tailored to fit Burrillville’s particular mix of fiscal and cultural considerations.

**Introduction**

This past year, in response to a State mandate to improve recycling rates and to lower the town’s rising costs related to trash and recycling collection/disposal, the Town Council selected citizen volunteers and town employees to form the Burrillville Rubbish & Recycling Committee. This committee was charged with providing recommendations for long-term options for rubbish and recycling to avoid higher refuse tipping costs in light of the annually decreasing tipping caps.

Lowering the amount of trash each town is allowed to send to the Central Landfill, otherwise known as the “cap,” is part of the State’s efforts to reach final diversion rate requirements on July 1, 2012. Tipping caps and rates are set in April of each year, and Burrillville’s cap has fallen from 6,693 tons in FY2007 to an expected 5,167 for FY 2011. The penalty for exceeding the annual cap is a dramatic increase in the per ton tipping rate for each additional ton of refuse tipped. For an average month in Burrillville, this penalty could easily exceed \$7,000.

Burrillville joins towns across the State that have been revising their recycling policies in an effort to *avoid the higher tipping costs* for trash rates that exceed state mandated cap levels. Because Burrillville already has a longstanding mandatory recycling program, and an average recycling rate of 24%, which is higher than the State average by 7%, the committee’s recommendations are not necessarily aimed at increasing recycling compliance, but are designed to bump residential recycling to the next level. By doing so, the town would avoid inevitable expense increases and save dollars that could be used for other, more beneficial purposes.

## Research/Data & Background Information

To establish a baseline participation rate, a brief informal survey was conducted by DPW, which indicated that approximately 80-90% of Burrillville households put out recycling bins. In light of the recent news from the City of Providence, this is an EXCEPTIONAL starting point for Burrillville indicating that residents have accustomed themselves to the task of recycling, and consider it the duty of a responsible citizen. According to their contract, Coastal should provide the town with more accurate numbers when called for, but when asked by the Committee, they did not respond to our request.

### What is Diversion?

Diversion = Recycling (blue & green bins) + other materials not sent to the landfill as municipal solid waste (measured by tonnage).

### What is the Mandated Diversion Goal?

The State mandates-

50% Total Diversion = 35% Recycling Rate + 15% Diversion Rate (for items not sent to landfill such as mattresses, scrap metal, white goods and other such items).

### Where We Are Now?

Our current  
Diversion rate is 27%  
= 24% Recycling  
Rate + 3% Other  
Diverted Waste.

Goal - 50% Diversion = 35% Recycling + 15% Other Diverted Waste

Current- 27% Diversion = 24% Recycling + 3% Other Diverted Waste

*Goal vs. Current Status*

So we really have 2 goals:

1. Raise our Recycling Rate from 24% → 35%
2. Raise non-recycle diversion rate from 3% → 15%

### Savings to be realized for hitting recycling rates

Currently, we are paying \$32/ton in tipping costs:  
\$32/ton at a 0-23.99% recycling rate.

If the town meets recycling goals the following savings would be realized based on the current FY10 5,565 ton cap:

\$31/ton at a 24%-29.99% recycling rate = \$5,565 savings

\$30/ton at a 30%-34.99% recycling rate = \$11,130 savings

\$29/ton if recycling rate is over 35% = \$16,695 savings

However, in the event that we exceed the cap, the tipping rate would be increased to the lowest *commercial* tier, which is currently \$44/ton. As the State lowers the amount of trash we are allowed to send to the Landfill it is imperative that we, as a town, work to increase the amount of goods that we

recycle or reuse. If we do not do this, we will exceed our cap and find our tipping fees at \$44/ton, or \$12/ton more than where we are now. Such a situation could find the town well outside its budget for trash collection. The town needs to look at this as not only a way to save money if we do well, but as a means to avoid the penalty rates for towns that exceed their caps.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee has concluded that the best way to reach our goal is to follow the demonstrated success of other cities and towns and implement programs with built-in incentives. Currently 16 RI communities have a PAYT component in their waste programs. 11 communities have a No Bin, No Barrel program. This means that more than half of RI communities have implemented programs, and have had, we are told, great success. The Committee recommends that Burrillville join with these communities and continue to lead the state by example in the environmental movement.

#### **No Bin, No Barrel (NB/NB) – Recommended Immediate Implementation**

As its name implies, NB/NB means that if a household does not put out a recycling bin, their trash will not be picked up. Given that Burrillville already operates at a 24% recycling rate with 80%-90% participation rate, it is unlikely that we will achieve more than a 2-3% increase over the current rate with NB/NB. The actual increase would be validated during the program. An added means of reducing waste that would go hand in hand with NB/NB would be to limit the number of trash bags that each residence can put out from the current five to four, or even fewer. The Committee recommends that the Town Council implement an immediate No Bin, No Barrel program as a first step in reforming our recycling program. The cost for this implementation is minimal and will be discussed in workshop.

#### **Pay As You Throw (PAYT) – Recommended Start Date July 1, 2011**

A well organized and properly implemented Pay As You Throw (PAYT) program can fund itself! The current trash, recycling and tipping budget is \$1,064,000. With the Town facing \$2.8 million in lost motor vehicle State aid and \$696,583 in lost school aid, a PAYT program is a possible solution to budgetary problems. PAYT places the responsibility of waste disposal costs on the consumer who pays only for what he is using—much like purchasing electricity. PAYT can be implemented at several possible levels so that the impact to the individual taxpayer can be tailored to the Council's discretion. The various options and cost-benefit relations will be discussed in the workshop.

### **Conclusion**

The Rubbish & Recycling Committee is a cohesive group that is passionate about this subject. We like to think that we are not alone and many other townspeople feel strongly that recycling and reducing our waste is imperative, not only as a means to lowering costs of trash collection/disposal, but also as a step toward preserving the earth. As part of our commitment, we would continue to serve the town in assisting Kim Grant, the part-time Recycling Coordinator, in developing public outreach and education programs.

To date, we have obtained a URL, [www.strivefor35.org](http://www.strivefor35.org), that links to the updated Town of Burrillville's Refuse & Recycling webpage. We have also initiated an article in the Woonsocket Call to educate townspeople of our undertaking. We sold many recycling bins at the Burrillville Family Fair this month, as well as disseminated information about the need to increase recycling efforts. Our table will be at the Burrillville Farmer's Market in June. We have written a segment in the Burrillville Bugle, and initiated monthly ads in the Bargain Buyer as a replacement to the popular Recycling Calendar of past years. Other ideas are on the table for bringing residents on board.

We look forward to meeting with you to present the options discussed in this report.

### **Committee Members**

The Rubbish and Recycling Committee is comprised of Burrillville resident volunteers:

Donald Fox, Chair  
Colleen Joubert, Vice Chair  
Robyn Volpini, Secretary

The following Town of Burrillville employees attend meetings and answer questions related to town government, assist with gathering information, provide administrative support, and act in their own interest as residents of the town:

Christine Mulligan  
Greg Mislick  
Allison Gelfuso

In addition, after convening the committee, the Town hired the following staff, whose jobs are directly connected to the recycling program. They provide valuable information to the committee:

Jeff McCormick, Director of the Department of Public Works and Engineering  
Kim Grant, Recycling Coordinator

Town Council Liaisons:

Mike Karmozyn  
Wallace Lees



# No Bin No Barrel (NB/NB) & Pay As You Throw (PAYT)

Options for the Town of Burrillville

# Strive for 35

- State-mandated recycling rate of 35%, with a total diversion rate of 50%, by 2012.
- **Recycling** rate includes green and blue bins
- **Diversion** rate includes green and blue bins plus:
  - Mattresses
  - Scrap Metal
  - Rigid Plastics
  - Tires
  - Yard waste
  - Appliances, etc.

# NB/NB Definition

- Definition – No recyclables; no pick-up. Residents must put out one recycling bin, with items in them, with their trash on collection day each week. Bins must remain out until trash is collected.

# NB/NB Purpose

- Purpose of the program is to change behavior – getting residents to produce less solid waste (SW) and recycle more.
- Recycling is FREE at RIRRC. We only pay for the hauler.
- SW costs \$32/ton plus hauling fees.

# NB/NB Exceptions

- There are none.
- Every resident is required to participate.
- We will work with residents who have special needs.

# NB/NB Success Stories

- Currently 11 RI communities have a NB/NB.
- Smithfield, Lincoln and East Providence saw a recycling rate increase of about 6%.

# NB/NB Benefits

- No Bin, No Barrel is a Good First Step because:
- It places value on trash and recycling collection services, leading to...
- Easier community acceptance of PAYT, leading to...
- Lower costs, greater recycling, and more waste diversion.

*Per Practical Programs to Increase Municipal Recycling Rates and Save Taxpayer Dollars presentation from RIRRC*

# PAYT Definition

- Pay-As-You-Throw -- Residents pay for what they use.
- Pay for trash service based on garbage thrown out.
- Pay for waste like a utility.
- Assigns a cost to each bag/can of trash at the curb or at the transfer station.
- Provides a financial incentive to reduce waste through recycling, composting and waste prevention.

*Per Practical Programs to Increase Municipal Recycling Rates and Save Taxpayer Dollars*  
presentation from RIRRC



# PAYT Purpose

- Purpose of the program is to change behavior
  - getting residents to produce less SW and recycle more.
- Make the program self-sustaining.

# PAYT Exceptions

- There are none.
- Residents can choose to participate in the Town's program or hire a private hauler.

# Benefits of PAYT

- Lower Collection Costs – Trucks fill slower, reducing trips to the landfill.
  - Less trash = Fewer trash trucks needed
- Lower Tip Fees– Less trash = Lower tip fees.
- Effectively promotes waste reduction, recycling & composting.
- Stable revenue covers cost of services.

# PAYT Options for Revenue Collection

- Cans: Residents pay higher fees for larger containers
- Bags: Residents pay a fee for garbage bags
- Stickers: Residents pay for stickers affixed to bags/containers or for bulky item pick up
- Annual Fee: Residents pay a fee to participate in the program

# Duke University National PAYT Study

- 14 to 27% average waste reduction
- 32 to 59% increase in recycling

# PAYT Success Stories

- Currently 16 RI communities have a PAYT component in their programs.
- North Kingstown increased their recycling rate 6% in the first year. Over a ten year period, the recycling rate improved 14%.
- Middletown increased their recycling rate about 29% in the first year. Full PAYT program.
- North Attleboro decreased SW 30% in one year. Full PAYT program.



# Middletown Case Study

- Weekly curbside collection – Trash every week; blue cart one week, green cart the next week.
- Automated collection; 65-gal carts
- Voluntary participation
- Subscription service available
- Access to Newport transfer station

*Per Practical Programs to Increase Municipal Recycling Rates and Save Taxpayer Dollars presentation from RIRRC*



# Middletown Case Study

- \$75 annual program user fee
- \$2.00/33-gal. bag; \$1.75/15-gal. bag
- No bag needed for recyclables
- \$15-\$30 per bulky waste item (sticker required)
- \$14/min; \$90/ton at Newport Transfer Station

*Per Practical Programs to Increase Municipal Recycling Rates and Save Taxpayer Dollars presentation from RIRRC*

# Middletown Case Study

- Recycling rate FY07 — 14.5%
- Recycling rate FY08 — 43%
- 75% Middletown residents participate in the PAYT program
- All Town Council members who voted for PAYT retained their seats in the 2008 election

*Per Practical Programs to Increase Municipal Recycling Rates and Save Taxpayer Dollars presentation from RIRRC*



# A well organized and properly set up PAYT program can fund itself

- Burrillville's Current cap is 5,565 tons.
- Current trash, recycling and tipping budget is \$1,150,000
- 5,565 tons = 11,130,000 lbs of trash.
- Approx. 6,000 households participating
- $5,565 \text{ tons} / 6000 \text{ households} = .9275 \text{ tons} = 1,855 \text{ lbs}$  of trash per household per year.
- $1,855 \text{ lbs} / 52 \text{ weeks} = \text{app. } 35.7 \text{ lbs}$  of trash per week. 35 lb bags to be sold.
- $11,130,000 \text{ lbs} / 35 \text{ lbs} = 318,000$  bags needed
- $\$1,150,000 / 318,000 = \$3.62/\text{bag}$  to fund the whole budget.
  
- If we use 20 lb bags the program will require 556,500 bags. (11,130,000 lbs / 20 lbs per bag).
- Cost per bag goes to \$2.07/bag to fund the whole budget.

# Financial Incentive to Increase Recycling

- RIGL § 39-3-11.2 Interim Rates (Tip Fee)
  - – \$32/ton if recycling between 0%-23.99%
  - – \$31/ton if recycling between 24%-29.99%
  - – \$30/ton if recycling between 30%-34.99%
  - – \$29/ton if recycling 35% or greater
- RIRRC to issue a rebate to qualifying municipalities no later than September 1, 2010. This law is in effect July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010.

*Per Practical Programs to Increase Municipal Recycling Rates and Save Taxpayer Dollars presentation from RIRRC*



# NB,NB vs. PAYT

- No Bin
  - Quick to implement
  - Low cost
  - Low political risk
  - Moderate recycling increase
  - Moderate tip fee savings
  - Little to no program cost savings
- PAYT
  - Min. 6 months to implement
  - Low to No cost
  - Potential for moderate to high political risk
  - High recycling increase
  - High tip fee savings
  - Potential high program cost savings

# Thank You

## Rubbish and Recycling Committee

