

How Will West Boylston's Green Bag Program Work?

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How will Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) work in West Boylston?

A: The only change to the current system will be that you'll put your trash in the **Official West Boylston Green Bag** instead of the trash bags that you've been buying at the supermarket. West Boylston's *collection* of trash and recycling at the curb will continue to be covered by the tax base. Given the town's current fiscal crisis, switching to PAYT is good fiscal management, to help pay for *disposal costs*.

Q: When will the PAYT program start?

A: July 1, 2009

Q: Where can I purchase these special PAYT bags?

A: These bags can be purchased at area supermarkets and local stores. Residents will receive a mailer before the program starts on where the bags can be purchased.

Q: How much do West Boylston's PAYT Green bags cost?

A: The 15-gallon bags will cost \$.50 and the 33-gallon bags will cost \$1.00.

Q: Where will the money go?

A: Money will go into a PAYT revolving fund, which will be used toward future bag purchases and trash disposal costs.

Q: What would this mean for my family?

A: Using large bags at \$1 each would cost a family of 4 that recycles and limits trash output to about \$52/year. Households that produce less trash and limit themselves to 1 small bag per week will spend \$26 annually. Families that produce more trash might pay \$104-150 each year.

Q: Will there be a Senior Discount?

A: Not at this time, as the proposed bag fee is much lower than most PAYT towns.

Q: Can we put the bags in our trash barrels?

A: YES!! With the **Green bag program**, residents will still be able to use a trash barrel; you will just need to put your trash in an official West Boylston bag before placing it in barrel. You can also just place your trash in an official bag at the curb.

Q: What's wrong with what we are doing now?

A: Trash costs rose 68% in just 5 years. We now spend over \$400,000/year for the trash program. In the current system there is no incentive to reduce or recycle. Switching to **Green bags** will encourage more recycling and save about \$120,000, due to reduced trash disposal costs and increased revenue from bag sales.

Q: What are the benefits of changing to PAYT?

A: Together, we can expect 2400 households to contribute about \$120,000 to the community through bag fees. By recycling more & tossing less trash we can also SAVE disposal fees. If we typically produce 2100 tons yearly, and pay the upcoming disposal fee of \$84 per ton at the incinerator, we'd pay \$176,400 just for disposal every year!!! **FY2010 disposal costs:**
10% less trash decreases COST > \$17,500
20% less trash decreases COST > \$35,000
30% less trash decreases COST > \$52,000
Shrewsbury lowered trash by 40% due to PAYT.

Q: A box of 20 Hefty bags costs \$5.49. Why am I paying \$5 for 5 bags?

A: The \$.50 for the small bag and \$1.00 for the large bag is defraying the cost the town pays to provide trash disposal. West Boylston pays \$84 for every ton of trash it disposes at the incinerator. PAYT will encourage residents to reduce the amount of trash they generate.

Q: At the October 2008 town meeting residents approved PAYT with 50 free bags. Why the change now to pay for all bags?

A: The Town needs more revenue and cannot afford to provide free bags. The proposed program, though, will have a lower fee for bags.

Q: What's to stop the BOS from increasing fees to as much as \$5 per bag?

A: In towns where bag costs got too high the program became self-defeating. Learning from experiences of other towns can help the WB program continue smoothly.

Q: I am concerned that the bags will not be as strong as the ones I currently use.

A: The bags that WB will be using will be at comparable strength. Again, lessons from other PAYT towns will help the WB program.

Q: Why are we encouraging the use of plastic bags? I'll be putting my kitchen trash, which is already in a plastic bag, into ANOTHER plastic bag? This seems very environmentally non-green to me.

A: Empty all your household trash into your PAYT bag so you don't double bag or spend \$ on extra bags. Also, PAYT bags contain recycled content, making them the "greener" choice.

Q: What is a bulk item?

A: Bulk items are things that are not considered hazardous waste, are not recyclable, with weights or volumes greater than those allowed in the approved bag such as: furniture, carpet, mattresses, baby cribs, appliances and electronics. 33-gallon bags must close and weigh 40 pounds or less to be picked up.

Q: How do I dispose of bulk items that won't fit into a bag?

A: Donating bulk items helps you and good causes. Try Savers in Worcester, Wachusett Recycling Resource Center in Holden, Lutheran Social Services Office for Refugee resettlement in Worcester, Goodwill, Salvation Army, Big Brother Big Sister (does pick-ups), churches thrift shops, library sales...Call ahead for times.

Or via computer: www.Freecycle.org is an on-line yard sale and many people will even take items broken for the parts. Resell: using Craig's list, ebay, want-ads.

Other ideas: Have a yard sale, put items at curbside on non-trash days with a FREE sign.

Q: What about "white goods" (appliances such as stoves, refrigerators, washers, dryers, dishwashers, air conditioners, de-humidifiers, hot water heaters)

A: Drop off at the Department of Public Works for a fee or consider donating – see above.

Q: What about Computer Monitors and Televisions?

A: Savers takes them or call the DPW (835-4820).

Q: Will the recycling program change?

A: No. See the recycling brochure or www.westboyiston-ma.gov/DPW for schedules and lists of recyclable materials.

Q: What Can I Do If My Recyclables Won't Fit in My Recycling Bin?

A: You can label any boxes, bins—even trash barrels—"RECYCLING" and put your recyclables in

them. It helps to keep two recycling bins for alternating weeks: paper one week, then metal/glass/plastics (#1,2,3,6,7) the next week.

Q: What if trash is not in the proper bag?

A: Allied Waste will not pick up this trash and will place a rejection sticker on the non-conforming bag/trash item informing you that you must have an official [West Boylston Green bag](#) in order to have trash picked up.

Q: Can I hire my own hauler and choose not to participate in the PAYT program?

A: Yes. A resident may choose a private hauler at any time. However, there will not be a tax reduction for doing so since trash/recycling pickup is currently built into the tax base for residents. Private companies typically charge \$300-500/year

Q: How will the town deal with illegal dumping?

A: The DPW will regularly monitor areas that have historically had issues. We encourage residents to report offenders to the DPW and cooperate with neighbors for success of the program.

Q: Do other cities and towns in Massachusetts have PAYT programs?

A: Yes! Currently, there are 125+ municipalities in Massachusetts with PAYT programs. Many of them are in our area, like Sutton, Upton, Clinton, Shrewsbury, Northborough and Worcester.

Q: Do residents in other communities like PAYT?

A: In every municipality where the PAYT program is proposed, some residents feel certain that they won't like the program. However, once residents experience the program in action, they often come to support the program due to its inherent fairness and cost savings.

Q: How can I save on the number of bags?

A: Compost, donate, consider choosing products with less packaging when shopping. Call the DPW to ask for the flyer that identifies recyclable materials. Look at the MassDEP website: www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/

**More questions:
See the town's website**

www.westboyiston-ma.gov/swat
(Solid Waste Advisory Team)

www.westboyiston-ma.gov/DPW
(Department of Public Works)