

HYBRID WASTE COLLECTION PROPOSAL *FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS*

Process and Program Inquiries

1. What are some other alternatives?
Throughout the series of public workshops, the Town has investigated mandatory recycling, focusing only on recycling education, privatization, a full variable rate structure, and a hybrid waste system.

2. Are the phases and charges set in stone?
The proposed phases are not binding and must be approved by Mayor and Town Council through resolution at future meetings each time a new phase and price were to be enacted. The Council may adopt one phase and subsequently deem the future phases unnecessary.

3. With whom has the Town consulted?
The Town has consulted with various industry analysts, county and state officials, recycling managers, private haulers, and municipal leaders including Perkasio Borough, Penn Township, West Donegal Township, Poquoson, Mt. Airy, Aberdeen as well as with town residents.

4. Why now?
Current waste output by residents has remained relatively constant, despite the County's and Town's education initiatives and increase in recyclables accepted. Financing tipping fees has grown considerably

5. What are our goals and how do we achieve them?
The Town outlined its goals through a resolution approved in November and are identified as:
 - A) Reducing residential solid waste by 10%
 - B) Increasing Recycling participation to 90%
 - C) Increasing the Proportion of Recyclables to 28%.These goals have crafted the Hybrid Waste Collection program and as such, the aforementioned components specifically address the manner in which the goals could be pursued.

6. Are these goals merely ideals, or are they binding? Could taxes be reduced if these goals were attained? Could Phase III be averted should the goals be attained utilizing Phase II and enhanced education?
As expressed, the resolution is non-binding, but forms the base which will guide the direction of any substantive program that the Town pursues. The efficacy of any proposal will be evaluated on its prescribed methods for achieving these goals. In fact, during the evaluation of Phase II, the Town would withdraw Phase III from consideration should these goals be attained by December 2009, or if

demonstrative progress is apparent. The tentative dates for the phases are intentionally designated to afford an evaluation on their effectiveness and as to whether any subsequent measures are even necessary. Additionally, a tax reduction could occur as an incentive for substantial progress made in reducing the amount of tipping fees incurred.

7. Why is the weight limit set at 35lbs/45lbs?

The weight limits are standard in most municipal codes and are a means to limit the amount of waste disposed as well as protect our maintenance workers. While the workers will not weigh each receptacle/container, this will act as a guide as to how to properly dispose of one's waste.

8. How is this program equitable?

Our current operations place the burden of financing excess tipping fees and fuel costs on all residents, regardless of how much garbage they actually produce. In recent fiscal years when the cost of tipping fees and fuel outpaced revenue and reasonable forecasts, the proportion of each resident's tax dedicated to solid waste increased at the expense of funding other programs, departments or staff. The proposed Hybrid approach would use funds generated from those utilizing the collection service the most without penalizing those who only produce one container to two containers a week. Essentially, the excess costs would be borne by those contributing to the increased costs, much like any other utility.

9. Could a pilot program be initiated before implementing the current proposal town-wide? What about evaluating the affects of recycling education with relation to the decrease in MSW output?

In fact, the Town is challenging residents to make a dent in the aggregate solid waste stream for the town and increase recycling rates by the end of the year. A combination of program incentives and recycling education can provide this impetus, and their effects will be evaluated before any further phases would be implemented.

10. I agree that there needs to be changes, but would like to see more incentives and less punitive approaches. Could other incentives be considered?

The aim of the Hybrid approach is to incentivize recycling and waste-reduction, while creating a consciousness of the impacts, both environmentally and economically of waste creation. A reasonable cost for excess waste would provide the necessary impetus for many residents to increase their recycling and become more proactive in reducing wasteful habits. An extension of services, and a recycling contest would reward residents for aggressively reducing waste. Throughout the program, additional incentives will be explored to achieve the desired results.

Background Information

11. How much do private haulers charge?

While the included chart provides for the cost of hauling services to private residences, a previous Town survey of public works privatization concluded that haulers would not be able to offer a cost savings for solid waste and recycling services (this includes group/organization contractual discount).
12. What portion of my tax bill goes toward trash collection?

Each household differs in its overall contributions, but an average of \$255 per household pays for one year of solid waste and recycling services. However, some residents dispose of far more waste than others, and are essentially subsidized by residents who produce very limited quantities of waste.
13. How has the Town financed the rising charges up until this point?

The Town has absorbed unanticipated cost increases through the general fund at the expense of appropriating monies toward equipment and capital needs.
14. Has privatization been explored?

Yes. A committee chaired by Council Member Debby Ellis extensively explored privatization of public works services in 2007 and concluded that the economies of scale make our current department a more cost-effective and dependable operation.
15. How much trash does the average household produce?

The average household produces approximately 1.4 tons of garbage per year, excluding recyclables.
16. What is the scope and process of the County's current solid waste and recycling operations?

Carroll County maintains two drop-off recycling facilities and a swap shop at the Northern Landfill and the Hoods Mill Landfill. The Town and private haulers transport their recyclables to the Northern Landfill where the items are then shipped en masse to the Recycle America Resource Recovery Facility in Jessup. It is there where most items are sorted and cleansed. The County also contracts with metal dealers and cardboard and newspaper manufacturers for those products, and maintains separate, long-term contracts with each company. This will ensure continued revenue for the County for at least the next year, despite the dire commodities markets.

Administration & Implementation of Program

17. Will the Town need to hire additional staff?
No. There will be only marginal new administrative and enforcement tasks under the Hybrid Waste program.
18. How will the Town know who has paid for their trash?
A town-sanctioned, 32 gallon waste bag would be purchased by residents ahead of their collection date. This bag will be of a distinct, bright color and possess an identifiable mark.
19. What about illegal dumping, how will it be mitigated?
The overwhelming majority of municipalities the Town has consulted with, found that there was no more instances of illegal dumping than before implementing a variable rate system. The Town will continue to monitor and enforce any violations as provided for in the Code. Complimentary sanctioned bags may also be distributed to ensure residents are accustomed to the new policy.
20. Is there a threat of neighbors placing their trash in front of my house instead of paying for it? What about shared driveways?
Addresses can be displayed on the bags or containers to mitigate this concern. The Town will work with these specific homeowners before implementation.
21. Where can I purchase these bags? Will there be any markup? Are they tax exempt?
Initially the Town will sell sanctioned bags through the Town House and Old Main Line Post Office & Visitor Center. During this period the Town would consider extending its operational hours to allow commuting residents the opportunity to purchase bags at their convenience. The Town will also collaborate with local merchants to sell these tax-exempt bags in their stores during Phase II.
22. Am I being charged per bag or per can for additional waste?
Per 32 gallon container.
23. While the property tax rate remains the same, the Town has not adopted a constant yield, so revenue has increased with assessments....
While property values have increased, the cost of services has outpaced their rise. The same level of services cost drastically more to fund. Oil fluctuations and inflation have made many purchases, such as asphalt and road salt rise two-fold in the course of a year. This is especially evident with the increase in tipping fees and fuel costs that the Town has absorbed recently.
24. Will improperly marked containers be left at the curb?
Homeowners would be contacted should a container not be paid for. The Public Works Department would then make the necessary arrangements to secure payment for that unit and then collect it within one day.

25. Could there be a holiday “grace period” or allocation?
Certain provisions will be made to accommodate heavier output immediately following the Christmas and New Year’s Day period.
26. Will the Town provide several bags to each household at no cost to commence the program’s operations?
The Town will grant numerous sanctioned bags through recycling contests and at events. There will also be either a “grace period” during the initial implementation or a complimentary bag may be distributed.
27. Volume vs. Weight
Although imperfect, the volume-based limitations are the most efficient determination without investing in costly scaling equipment. To that end, the weight restrictions will serve as a guide.
28. Would the Town House and/or Post Office be opened extended hours to accommodate the sale of bags?
Yes. Bags would also be sold during Town-wide events.
29. Will merchants sell the bags with no markup?
Many municipalities have arranged contracts with merchants to sell sanctioned bags at the same price as sold at their town hall stressing the benefits of incidental purchases while others have allowed a commission of 1-2 cents per bag.
30. Could tags be utilized rather than bags?
There is still a consideration to utilize tags, however they may be more easily ripped, can fail to adhere to surfaces in inclement weather and would be more difficult to track.
31. To what line items or budget will the revenue derived from bag sales be allocated?
Revenue from the sanctioned waste bags would offset tipping fees paid to the Northern Landfill and partially fund larger and better-equipped recycling containers.
32. What would happen to bulk pickup? Yard waste pickup?
Bulk pickup will still be collected under the current charges, with prior arrangement. Large items that are not considered bulk and collected curbside will need a sanctioned waste bag attached, if they exceed the container limitation. An additional “Cleanup Day” will be scheduled in November to collect bulk items at no cost to residents. Yard Waste will continue to be collected during your garbage pickup day in Kraft brown bags, and will not be counted toward your waste container limit.

33. From where will the initial funds come?
Initial funds will be transferred from the solid waste tipping fees line item and supplemented through the reserve fund then reimbursed as revenues from bag sales are collected.
34. How were the charges per bag calculated?
The charges reflect a balance between creating a cost consciousness of waste disposal and remaining competitive in the cost of service per resident as compared to private haulers. The goal of this program is to collect only a marginal amount of fees from bags, but in the process create an incentive for residents to waste less, recycle more and in the process save the Town money in avoiding tipping fees. The average resident would either incur no charges or still pay less than what private hauler customers pay. No matter which phases are approved, this will still hold true.
35. Couldn't the Town purchase side or rear loading garbage trucks?
This option has been explored, but would cost between 60%-90% more than our current trucks and would eliminate manpower needed for building maintenance, plowing, road servicing, stormwater management and park maintenance.

Recycling-Related Questions

36. What are the incentives for the average resident to recycle?
Unfortunately, there is little current incentive for the “casual recycler” to participate in waste diversion, other than their concern for the environment. The goal of the Hybrid Waste program and recycling contest and challenge is to give residents a financial incentive to reevaluate their waste habits and increase recycling output.
37. Why is the Town providing larger recycling containers?
The Town currently allots money for the replacement of the 18 gallon recycling containers every odd-numbered fiscal year. Many residents have voiced their concern over the current containers inadequately handling their recycling output and that some recyclables blow freely about during gusty conditions. Additionally, the larger containers will have lids and possible wheels to make them more accessible. There is also confusion over the single-stream recycling process, as some residents continue to unnecessarily separate their recyclables. A single container would alleviate that confusion and create a connection that residents SHOULD be able to fill the container with recyclables. Old containers and personal containers will still be collected.
38. Can I use any container to place recyclables in?
Yes! Any container 32 gallons or under will be collected for recyclables.
39. How will recycling services be enhanced? Could there be a drop-off center? Rigid plastics collection?
Used electronics will be collected curbside under the program, as would tires. The Town will also make arrangements for rigid plastics to be collected curbside.
40. Would the Town explore developing community service projects for area students on recycling awareness, to earn money from recyclables, etc.?
The Town has and will continue to employ the talents of local students in promoting recycling to residents. As part of the “Get Psyched About ReSYKELing” Campaign, a Recycling Volunteer Corps will be organized to conduct demonstrations, disseminate educational information, create visuals, and conduct recycling contests, specifically at town events and festivals.
41. What is the potential to earn income from the sale of our recyclables?
The present market conditions with respect to commodities and recycled material have declined precipitously since peaking in July. The Town has explored contract negotiations with several resource recovery firms, but will be unable to pursue the selling of its recyclables until the market recovers. However, the Town will continue to transport its recyclables to the Northern Landfill, at no charge, thanks to the County’s long-term contracts.

42. Could there be a paper shredding, hazardous waste, organic waste event?
Yes! These events will be planned by the Town for the coming year, in concert with the events already sponsored by Carroll County.
43. What steps will the Town take to educate residents on proper recycling and reuse habits?
The Town will continue to present articles dealing with various aspects of recycling and waste diversion in each of its newsletters and letters to residents. Demonstrations will also be presented, much like the one featuring Carroll County Recycling Manager Maria Myers. A chart of acceptable recyclables is posted on the Town website and a visual will be developed with students and the County. Contests will also contribute to the educational component of the “Get Psyched About ReSYKELing” Campaign.

Circumstantial Inquiries

44. If I’m away on vacation for a week, will I have to pay for last week’s trash this week?
The Town will cooperate with any residents with vacation plans, provided they contact the Town House prior to their vacation.
45. What happens if I go over the threshold, but am unable to obtain a bag prior to pickup?
You may contact the Town House or Public Works Department and they will bring extra bags to your house the day of collection. Once merchants begin selling bags, you may also purchase the bags from them after office hours.
46. I use 13 and 20 gallon kitchen trash bags only. How will they be accounted for?
You may consolidate smaller bags into one 32 gallon bag.
47. What can I do if my bag is defective (ripped)?
Residents will be able to exchange any ripped bags at no cost by contacting the Town House or Public Works Department who will then deliver a new bag or set of bags to your house.