

## **TOWN OF BEDFORD'S NEW PROPOSED WASTE/RECYCLING PROGRAM**

Bedford's Town Board is proposing a new Waste and Recycling program that calls for single stream recycling, Pay-As-You-Throw waste disposal and a single town wide private hauler partnership. Over the past year, Bedford's Town Board has been working with professional waste consultants and members of Bedford 2020's Waste/Recycling Task Force to determine how Bedford can most effectively address the issues and concerns with the present system and adopt best practices from neighboring municipalities and other locations to increase recycling; reduce costs to residents and Town; make our system more efficient and benefit from new technology in the processing and sale of recyclables.

Based upon the collected data, Bedford's present recycling rates are very low (only 17% recycling), the cost of basic service is higher and collection is less efficient compared to nearby towns in Westchester County and many other locations in New York and elsewhere. At last Tuesday evening's Town Board work session, the Town Board decided to address these issues by exploring the possible formation of a town wide Waste and Recycling District.

**The following Q and A sets forth the details of the proposed new system and its impact on residents and the Town.**

### **What Will the New System Be?**

- Single stream recycling will be mandatory
- Residents who recycle more and have less trash will be able to save money in a simple Pay-As-You-Throw program (if you throw out less garbage, you will pay only a basic fee)
- Instead of four or five separate haulers, many serving the same neighborhoods, there will be one private hauler who services all residents and partners with the Town to increase recycling, reduce costs and create a more efficient waste/recycling system. The hauler will be chosen after submitting bids in a competitive process to identify the best qualified hauler with the lowest prices.
- It is anticipated that residents will receive essentially similar service as is currently provided, including choices for extra back yard or driveway service if desired. The contract hauler will provide 24/7 assistance call service to help with or resolve any issues of concern. Information about single stream recycling will be distributed so that everyone will understand the program, and it is expected that more types of materials can be collected as a result.
- The Town will form a Waste and Recycling District, and all residents and small business (residential equivalent) will be included. A fee for basic services will be paid to the Town: this is not a tax. Any additional services desired (such as back yard or driveway pickup) will be available and paid directly to the hauler at bid prices.

### **What is Single Stream Recycling?**

It's simple and easy. All recycled materials can be put in one container. You do not need to separate tie up or bag. Acceptable recyclable materials will include paper, cardboard, phonebooks, juice and cereal boxes, junk mail, cards, glass, cans, yogurt cups, plastic (#1-7) and aluminum. The hauler takes all these materials to a new Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), which has advanced technology to separate all materials on site and bale them for sale as commodities. In today's world of materials management, these recyclables can be processed for less than half the cost of waste disposal and potentially will generate revenues that the Town can share in.

### **What is Pay-As-You-Throw?**

Less trash means lower cost. You will only pay the basic collection fee for all trash in one 32 gallon bin per week. Recycling is unlimited. If, on a regular basis or for special occasions, you have extra waste or more than will fit in one bin, you will pay an additional known amount to accommodate the extra waste. But if you recycle more and stay with one container, there is no additional cost. This method is equitable and like electricity, gas and other utilities, the less you throw away – the less you pay.

## **How Does the Town Anticipate Saving Residents Money with a Single Private Hauler?**

- The Town will prepare a contract for competitive bidding to private haulers – the lowest price from a responsible qualified hauler will win the contract. The contract will include all residents and small businesses and Town facilities bringing economies of scale, and a term of three to six years, which is anticipated to be attractive to bidders. In three neighboring towns with a similar, single hauler system, residents' costs for garbage and recycling pick up is about 20 to 25% lower than Bedford's current costs for basic services.
- It is anticipated that under a long term contract a hauler will be able to optimize his routing for collection, will be able to compact single stream recyclables enabling more efficient collection and will have the benefit of a significant volume of business for several years, enabling him to reduce his costs and those of the Town. The Basic Fee contract will include some extra services, such as on call bulk pick up for residents. This saves residents money and will also help the Town save money it expends today on cleaning up illegal dumping of bulk items.
- A Town contract will also include provision for revenue sharing from recyclables sales, when commodity markets support this, and the hauler will be asked to assure proper recyclables processing and provide accurate Town data, which will assist us in promoting recycling. Over the life of the contract, since recycling is less costly than waste disposal, an increase in recycling is beneficial to both the Town and the hauler.

## **What are the major benefits of the proposed improvements?**

- Lower costs and better service
- Higher recycling rates: contribute to cost savings
- Less traffic and more efficient collection
- Uniform good service and help with more recycling
- Bulk pick up service at no extra charge
- Revenue share from recyclables sales
- Reduced emissions and overall environmental benefits
- Prices known for several years
- Assured recyclable processing at new Material Recovery Facilities
- Hauler accountability and partnership with the Town for our mutual benefit
- No increase in taxes – User fee payment

## **Why Does the Town Board Want to Change our System?**

The reason why the Town Board is proposing changes to our present waste system is twofold.

- First, our existing system is inefficient, outdated and costly.
- Second, our current recycling rates are surprisingly low, and the existing system does not help us improve recycling.

The world of “waste” (materials) management and disposal has changed, with new technology and materials markets offering benefits to Towns. The Town of Bedford and our present haulers have not kept up with these changes and we should be updating our program to make it more efficient, by recycling more and sharing in revenues generated by sales of recyclables.

## **What are the current waste and recycling issues with the existing system in the Town of Bedford?**

- Cost of service to Bedford residents is more expensive than several neighboring towns
- Recycling has historically been a low priority for the private carters who serve Bedford, and residents have rightly had concerns as to whether recycling is being done properly. Some drivers have been observed throwing recyclable in with trash

- Many recycled materials have considerable value. Many communities are sharing the revenues from recyclables sales with materials processors.
- We have some, but very limited, data and no accurate accounting of recycling town wide,
- Inefficient refuse truck traffic from multiple carters is a concern; often with several carters serving the same neighborhoods
- The Town has had no say over where recyclables are taken and whether they are efficiently processed.
- Many Bedford residents would like to recycle more materials that other communities are doing, but have little or incomplete information
- There is no enforcement or encouragement for those who do not recycle, since the private carters do not do this and do not provide the Town with information
- While the town would like to plan for and promote more recycling, this is difficult to accomplish with multiple private carters.
- Collection trucks presently used by private carters were mostly not made for high recycling quantities and are not efficient for recycling. At worst, they limit the amount of recyclables that can efficiently be collected on their routes.

### **How do other towns and cities handle waste and recycling?**

While sanitation services have traditionally been considered as a municipal service, there are essentially three service models that are widely used today.

1. **Municipal collection and disposal:** The town or city owns and maintains collection equipment and facilities, and collects with its own employees. Mt. Kisco, Peekskill, White Plains, Hastings and several others in the County have municipal programs.
2. **Private subscription carters:** Individual residents make separate arrangements with their own hauler, with little or no town involvement. Bedford, Pound Ridge, Somers and Lewisboro use this method, each having several carters, who may change with family or business conditions
3. **Town-wide single contract:** The town or city decides to provide this service by public competitive bidding usually over several years and one private carter provides all services. North Castle, New Castle and North Salem use this method locally.

### **What other towns have gone to a single contract system?**

Neighboring towns that have a town wide contract with a single carter include; North Castle, New Castle and North Salem. Other Westchester towns with contract collection are Pelham, Yorktown, and Mt. Pleasant. Beyond our county, this type of arrangement is very common.

### **Why Is the Town Considering a Single Contract Waste and Recycling Collection System?**

Single contract waste and recycling collection are anticipated to:

- Reduce costs for residents and the Town.
- Provide consistent quality and flexible services that can be tailored to suite each residence needs
- Improve recycling rates by partnering with one hauler to promote recycling.
- Reduce truck traffic by eliminating multiple routes
- Create an opportunity for the Town to share in the revenues from the sale of recyclable materials.
- Provide consistent quality service town-wide with a single point of responsibility
- Provide a known price structure for several years
- Allow the Town to have enforcement provision for any non-performance of services
- Reduce emissions and greenhouse gasses

### **Where do the Single Stream recycled materials go?**

Single stream collection has been made possible by the introduction of Single Stream Processing Facilities near Bedford. Bedford, NY has a new Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) and a new MRF is planned in Stamford, CT. Other single stream MRF's are operating in several NY, CT and NJ locations. These facilities can now receive and separate all materials mechanically or with some hand sorting into separate commodity materials to be sold to markets. Their efficiency has been proven in the marketplace and they can handle the minor amounts of contaminants in single stream materials.

### **What are the advantages to Single Stream Recycling?**

- By eliminating sorting, recycling becomes easier in our homes and easier to put out for collection, thereby potentially increasing participation and recovery rates.
- In many communities, recycling has increased 15 to 30% or more above present levels by switching to Single Stream Recycling.
- Single Stream also reduces collection costs because haulers can use compactor trucks to collect recyclables, as opposed to older multi compartment bins for loose recyclables (presently used) that collect far less material and are therefore more costly to operate.
- Additionally, while there are conversion costs, long term costs to haulers and customers can be lower, since the cost of recyclables processing is much lower than waste disposal.

### **Why Is Now the Time to Make Improvements to Our Current System?**

Recycling and Waste Management Has Changed:

- Recycling is the law in Bedford and in New York State.
- New York State has a goal of 85% recycled materials by 2030
- Bedford's present town wide average rate of recycling is **less than 20%**. When compared with most other nearby communities this is a fairly low rate and far below what NY State and the Town of Bedford are aiming towards. In fact, this is well below what many other communities are now achieving. In other words, we can and should be doing much better.
- It makes economic sense: Recyclable materials are valuable commodities that can be sold into the marketplace for a profit, which reduces our dependence on more expensive raw materials. This is a strong and growing market right now that is the future.
- Recycling reduces disposal costs, as disposal of the trash portion of our materials is 2 to 3 times more costly than recyclable materials processing.
- New technology is responsible for new facilities known as "Material Recovery Facilities (MRF) that have advanced technology to separate all materials and bind them up to be sold separately as commodities. In today's world of waste management, these recycled materials are worth a lot of money and generate significant revenues. Many towns with single contract haulers are able to share in these revenues.
- Since the cost to dispose of waste is so much higher than recyclables, if a resident reduces waste he should be able to pay less. This is the basis of the Pay-As-You-Throw program. Like water or electricity, you only pay for what you use.

### **How will my garbage and recycling service change?**

- We expect your service to be essentially the same, but more efficient with single stream recycling. We anticipate lower prices.
- Your recycling will be easier. You will put all acceptable recyclables in one or more containers. There is no limit to the amount you can recycle.

- You will continue to have either basic weekly curbside or optional backyard or driveway services. Escalation of fees for curbside or backyard or driveway services for several years will be set in the contract, so you will know in advance what the prices for all services will be for the life of the contract.

### **What will Basic Services include?**

- Once a week curbside pickup of one 32 gallon container of trash as well as single stream recycling pickup. Under the Pay-As-You-Throw provisions the cost for extra (or larger) cans or carts of trash will be an additional service, but there will be no additional cost for any amount of recyclables.
- Bulk item pickup will be available at no additional charge.

Yard waste will not be picked up and will continue to be collected by the Town Highway Department on their usual schedule.

Additional services will be bid so that prices are known and fixed, and will include backyard or back door service, twice a week pickup. These additional services will be arranged for and paid directly to the carter by the resident with no Town involvement other than to receive a list of services and prices provided by the carter.

### **Will My Taxes Go Up?**

No, the fees for basic service will be paid to the Town and are fees for services, not taxes. Your taxes are not connected to waste fees in any way.

### **What about Senior Citizens and Low income residents?**

Provisions will be included for reduced rates for service fees for eligible senior citizens and low income residents

### **How will my additional questions be addressed and what opportunities for public comment will be made available?**

This Q & A is a first part of the Town's effort to begin the process of public participation in the process. Additional comments and questions are welcome. You may write or email the Town at [supervisor@bedfordny.gov](mailto:supervisor@bedfordny.gov). An information meeting is scheduled on April 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM in the Bedford Court Room, 321 Bedford Road, where comments will be received and additional questions about the proposed new program noted or answered.