

The Natick PAYT Experience

Sustaining Town Services

Presentation to the Town of Norwell
Joshua Ostroff, Natick Board of Selectmen
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***The opinions in this presentation are those of the presenter
and do not reflect the official position of the Town of Natick
Please feel free to contact me at 508 654-3330 or joshua@ostroff.net***

The Natick PAYT Experience

- Budget context
- Challenge and response
- Implementation and acceptance
- Trends
- Current status and outlook

Curbside service

- Town Landfill closed mid 1990s
- Weekly residential pickup (4 and fewer units)
- Millbury incinerator
- Biweekly curbside recycling (single stream)
- Seasonal yard waste pickup (“free”)
- Bulky waste pickup (fees charged)
- Recycling center (“free” for most items)

2002 Budget context

- Budget shortfall/local aid cuts
- 7/1/2002 new fees to preserve services
 - School transportation (partly subsidized)
 - One year, opt-out flat trash fee of \$150
 - PAYT Task Force constituted by BOS
- Disposal costs rising
- PAYT extensively studied to examine best practices and alternative models
- Public meetings and broad input

Recommendations / Implementation

- Tax subsidy to cover fixed costs
- Fees to cover variable costs (e.g. tipping fees)
- Implemented with 3+ months notice
- 2 bag sizes: 15 gallon @ \$1; 33 gallon @ \$1.75
- Maintain bag pricing for as long as possible
- Sold through retail stores
- Wide publicity

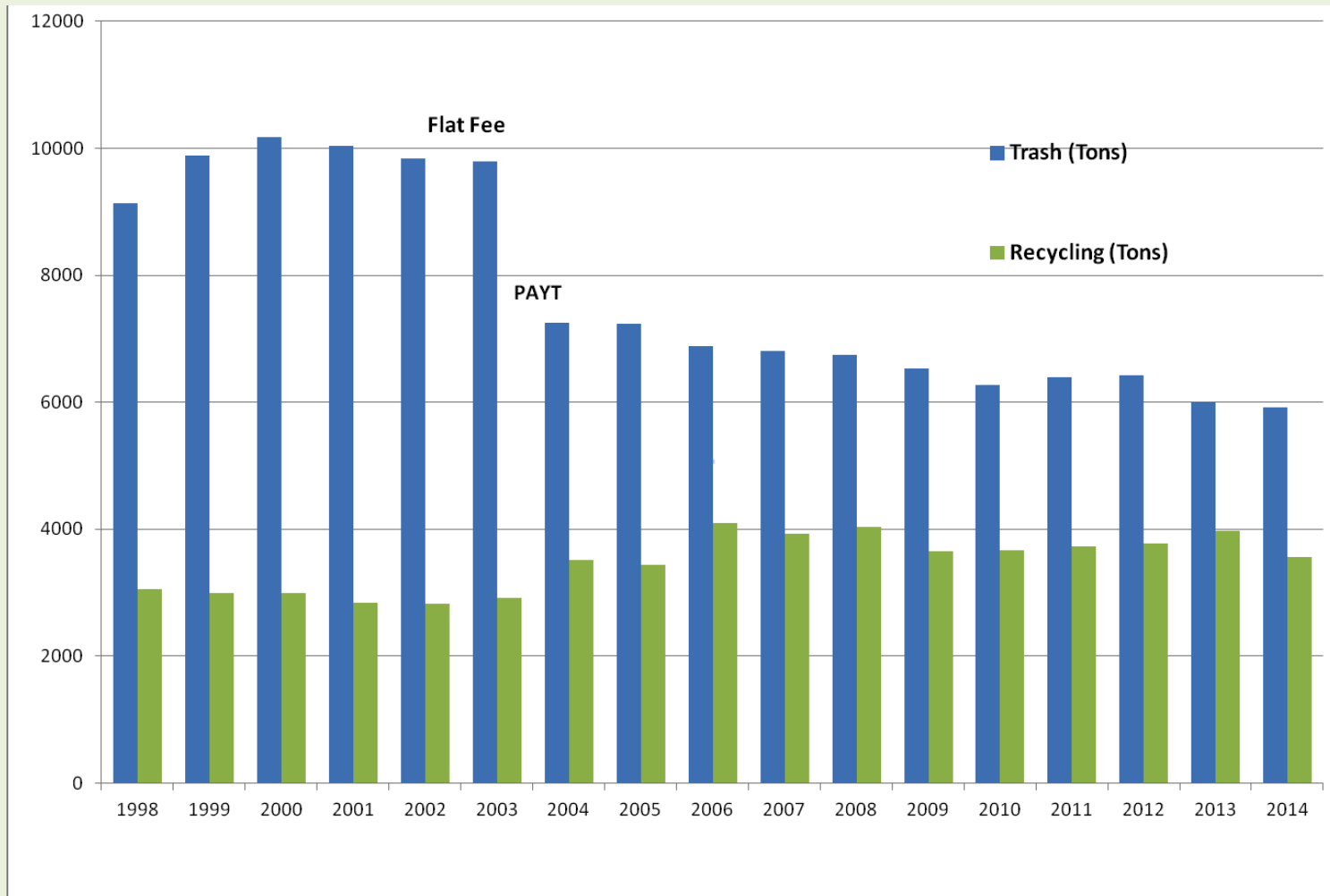
Political Backlash

- Isolated resistance
- Attempts to disrupt BOS meetings
- Push poll to show 86% opposition to PAYT
- Citizen's Town Meeting article to mandate and extend "free" trash pickup to entire town (based on 1932 Lexington bylaw) – defeated at TM
- FinCom, Town Meeting boycott by proponent
- Referendum process with 1000+ signatures
- Special Election in December 2003

Special Election

- 6 week campaign
 - 20% turnout threshold to overturn TM action
- ***Natick Saves*** ballot question committee to promote education and information
 - Objective: affirm responsible process and decision
 - Mailings, flyers, debates, web site (naticksaves.org), lawn signs, standouts, email, news coverage
- Result:
 - 27% turnout; 72% voted No (keep PAYT)

Natick Trash Trends



Current Status

- Natick has moved to in-house recycling pickup
 - Less cost, better service, revenue source
- New side-loading, robotic recycling packers
- Maintaining 2-man crews on trash packers
 - Flexibility for yard/bulky waste, crews available for snow removal
- Extensive community recycling efforts
- Free bags available for qualifying residents

Looking Ahead

- Ongoing budget pressure, especially for “discretionary” services
- Expand curbside service (add 5+ unit buildings)
- PAYT bag fees cover about 60% of all costs
- Have considered increasing fees after 10+ years
- PAYT fees to cover fixed costs is legal per Counsel
 - Many communities have two-tiered pricing

PAYT Lessons

- ~~“We’ve always done it this way”~~
- With good communication, people accept change
- PAYT promotes responsibility + cost control
- Natick benefits by a municipally run system
 - Good value for residents and taxpayers
- Publicize a plan, and stick with it
- Provide alternatives for low income residents
- Every town is different – but everyone cares about trash and recycling