

An Analysis of Solid Waste and Diversion Programs in Portsmouth, Rhode Island

[Solid Waste / Recycling Study Committee](#)

February 8, 2021

SWRC INTRODUCTION

- Assisted with drafting and analyzing townwide [survey](#) summer of 2017.
 - 917 respondents.
 - 94% of respondents used Transfer Station (TS).
 - 79% exclusively, 15% partly.
 - ~43% of respondents stated would prefer Transfer Station.
 - Over 50% of respondents stated would prefer curbside pick-up.
- Presentation and Analysis of Cost, MSW, and Recycling in Portsmouth.
 - Town Workshop [29AUG2017](#).
- Recommended PAYT.
 - Town Council implemented [13NOV2017](#).
- Recommended prorated Transfer Station stickers.
 - Town Council implemented [13AUG2019](#).
- All meeting minutes and agenda available at [RI SoS Open Meetings Dashboard](#).

PROPOSED OBJECTIVES

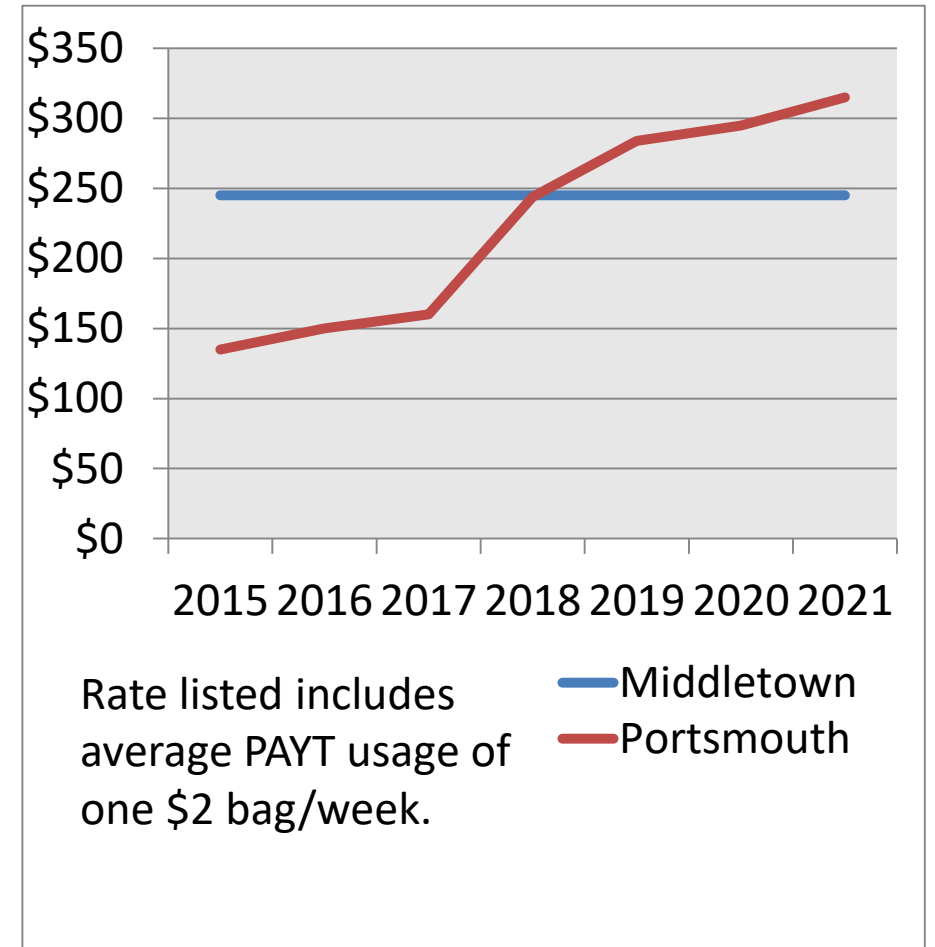
1. Reduce the cost of living and doing business in Portsmouth.
2. Increase the rate of diversion from the waste stream townwide.
 - a) RIRRC landfill reaching capacity.
 - b) Expect tipping fees to continue to rise accordingly.
3. Make illegal dumping pointless.
 - a) Indirect costs due to ad-hoc DPW hours and truck rolls.
 - i. Opportunity cost as diverted from other tasking.
 - b) Volunteer citizens proud of their Town conduct ad-hoc and ongoing pick ups.

TRANSFER STATION “TAKE RATE”

- In 2017, the forecasted sales of Transfer Station stickers was 3,500 households ([27NOV2017](#)).
- Actual sales as reported:
 - 2018: 3069 HH
 - (through October - before prorated sales)
 - 2019: 2592 HH
 - (through October - before prorated sales)
 - 2020: 2399 HH
 - (through October - before prorated sales)
- The wastewater count is 6,979 premises per Tod Drake (as of 07NOV2019). This represents a town wide “take rate” for the Transfer Station of just 34% for 2020.

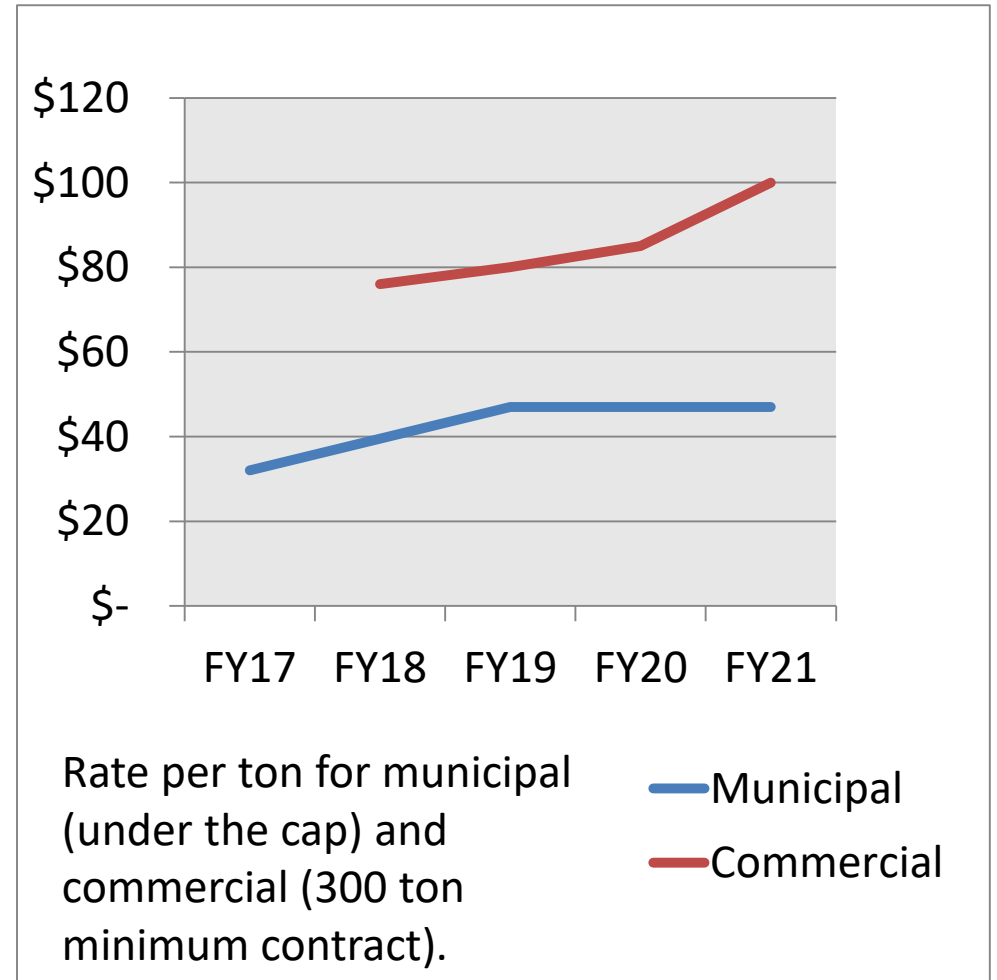
COST ANALYSIS

- Portsmouth residents that select curbside pickup are forced to pay vastly more than if a municipal curbside option was offered.
 - Best known promotional rate offered to Portsmouth residents is \$384/year, with other private plans in excess of well over \$400/year.
- Portsmouth Transfer Station sticker fee has risen significantly.
 - Over 56% increase from \$135 in 2015 (no PAYT) to \$211 in 2021 (with PAYT).
 - A 133.33% increase if accounting for one large \$2 bag/week (add \$104 = \$315/year).
- Middletown's per household fee \$141 for 2021 (with PAYT).
 - If accounting for one large \$2 bag/week (add \$104 = \$245/year).
 - \$70 a year less than Portsmouth (22.22% less).
 - After being lowered from \$156 for 2014, has been flat at \$141/trash bin sticker since 2015.



TIPPING FEES

- Rising RIRRC “tipping fees” creates upwards pressure on end-user pricing.
 - Municipal tipping fees started rising from \$32 in FY17 to current \$47/year rate.
 - 46.875% increase.
 - Potential jumps to \$50.50 FY22 then \$54 FY23.
 - Last increase before July 2017 was in 1992.
 - Commercial haulers must pay RIRRC significantly higher tipping fees.
 - At \$100/ton, more than double the municipal rate.



STATUS QUO

- Currently, eight private haulers observed as operating in Portsmouth.
 - Residents only: ABC (apartments), Cleanway, Mega/Patriot Disposal (owned by Waste Connections), J.R Vinagro, Republic, and Waste Management.
 - Businesses only: Island Rubbish and Lawrence Waste Services.
- Indirect costs borne by all Portsmouth taxpayers.
 - Town roads excessive wear and tear from duplicative trash runs.
 - Additional congestion and CO2 emissions.



PROPOSED WAY AHEAD

- Present further results of SWRC analysis for future options designed to:
 - Lower costs.
 - Include essential services that residents and businesses want.
 - Increase diversion townwide.
 - Disincentivize misuse and illegal dumping.