



LOCAL GOVERNMENT CASE STUDY: CITY OF EDEN - PAY-AS-YOU-THROW PROGRAM

Jurisdiction:	City of Eden
Best Management Practice:	Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) Program
Purpose:	Reduce waste, increase recycling, decrease city subsidy for waste services, and provide a more equitable trash disposal pricing program for residents.
Ordinance:	Solid waste ordinance is currently being updated and the revised ordinance will include the PAYT system.
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DESCRIPTION

The city of Eden Solid Waste Management Division put in place a citywide Pay-As-You-Throw program in July 2002 following a three-month implementation process and the completion of a pilot program in 1998. The city of Eden has a population of 15,500, and 6,675 households receive waste disposal services. The main benefits of the PAYT system include greater cost coverage for waste disposal services, reduced waste and increased recycling. The program is based on variable rate pricing depending on the assigned waste disposal level of each residence. The waste disposal level and corresponding monthly fee are based on the superintendent's assessment of the average waste disposal amount as indicated by the volume of the container used. The program utilizes the city's fully automated weekly curbside trash collection services and the 90-gallon carts used in the previous collection service.

The PAYT program encourages citizens to reduce the amount of household waste generated by utilizing the city's free, drop-off recycling services. Six drop-off recycling centers are located throughout the city and are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These centers accept newspaper, mixed paper, aluminum and tin cans, and #1 and #2 plastics. In addition to these materials, the city of Eden also accepts clear, brown and green glass, cardboard, steel cans, waste oil, auto batteries and oil, and water-based paint at the main recycling center that is open 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

PURPOSE

The main goals of the PAYT program are to reduce waste, increase recycling, decrease city subsidy for waste services, and provide a more equitable trash disposal pricing program

for residents. The city of Eden recognized the need for a program to generate more revenue to cover waste collection and disposal. Prior to implementing the PAYT program, only 26.4 percent of waste disposal costs were covered by the previous fee structure. General fund revenues accounted for the remainder of the solid waste services operating budget. The PAYT program was designed to cover approximately 60 percent of waste disposal costs.

IMPLEMENTATION

Before initiating a citywide PAYT program, the city of Eden completed a pilot program of 2,000 households in 1998. Through the pilot program, the city did not actually implement the PAYT system, but instead simulated the program in order to educate residents about the system. (More information on the pilot program is available at <http://www.p2pays.org/payt>).

The implementation process for the fully operational citywide PAYT program started in April 2002 and was completed in July 2002. During the implementation stages of the PAYT program, it was first necessary to establish an initial rate for each residence by assessing each household's average trash volume. The rates were then based on four service level groups for 0-30 gallons, 30-60 gallons, 60-90 gallons, and senior citizens. To eliminate the need to purchase new variable sized containers, color-coded stickers were used to identify the allowable volume for each 90-gallon container. Each residence was also issued two color-coded tags to request a reassessment of waste volume where necessary.

During implementation, the city made significant changes to the billing system in order to accommodate the new pricing program. The city also had to account for major changes in initial service levels as residents experienced the new pricing



program and became aware of the waste reductions necessary to control costs. Some initial public resistance to the program was mainly due to unrelated increases in sewer and water bills occurring at the same time. Following the completion of implementation, the billing system is running smoothly and there remains little opposition to the program. However, some issues still remain associated with the monitoring and enforcement system. City solid waste management staff is currently working to establish a successful monitoring program to keep residents accountable for the allotted waste disposal volume and to ensure that waste reduction continues to occur.

RESULTS

As of September 2002, there has been an average decrease of approximately one truckload of waste, or 7.5 tons, per collection day. The city experienced a 203.53-ton decrease in waste disposal in the first month following implementation, as compared to the same month of the previous year. Also, since implementation began in April 2002, recycling has increased by approximately 20 percent. The six drop-off centers have had an increase in servicing with almost twice the amount of recyclable materials collected from these sites. In addition, the new program targets approximately 60 percent of waste disposal costs as opposed to the 26.4 percent covered previously.



The N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance provides free, non-regulatory technical assistance and education on methods to eliminate, reduce, or recycle wastes before they become pollutants or require disposal. Call DPPEA at (919) 715.6500 or (800) 763-0136 or e-mail nowaste@p2pays.org, or visit DPPEA's Web site at www.p2pays.org for assistance with issues in this case study or any of your waste reduction concerns.