



Town of Westport

IA-19-02 Assessment of Transfer Station Findings and Recommendations

Final Report – Version 4.0

December 2019

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II. Town of Westport – Transfer Station Assessment – Project Overview

Project Overview

A. Background

The Town of Westport (hereinafter referred to as “the Town”) engaged blumshapiro to provide internal audit services related to the operations of the Transfer Station. blumshapiro performed a review of the collection processes, hauler/vendor relationships, fee protocols, resident validation procedures, and policies/procedures/controls in place at the Transfer Station. As part of this review, blumshapiro validated operations against best municipal practices and has identified opportunities for improvement. Our services specifically included:

1. Identify revenue sources of the Transfer Station
2. Map the current process flows for any revenue/fee collections for Transfer Station services
3. Review current automated systems used to support the Transfer Station
4. Confirm regulations and procedures used to validate residency with Transfer Station use
5. Identify security practices as they pertain to opportunities for theft or fraudulent activities
6. Confirm protocols for managing and validating licensed haulers
7. Identify where technology may eliminate inefficiencies or better manage data
8. Discuss/outline the benefits and drawbacks to charging resident tipping fees
9. Document findings and operational/control gaps observed
10. Provide recommendations for improvements that will lead to more effective and efficient operations

B. Project Approach & Tasks

This review included the following project tasks:

- Review Current Processes and Operations
- Confirm Current Technologies
- Evaluate Core Systems and Functions
- Confirm Roles and Responsibilities of Staff

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- Identify Business Process Re-engineering Opportunities
- Develop Findings and Recommendations
- Management Review and Approval

C. Acknowledgements

blumshapiro would like to thank the Westport staff for their participation, support, on-going dialogue, and feedback during this project.

III. Town of Westport – Transfer Station Assessment – Department/Operations Overview

Department/Operations Overview

Below is a description of the operations of Westport Transfer Station:

1. Physical Locations
 - a. Transfer Station Operations include two (2) physical sites
 - i. Transfer Station – 300 Sherwood Island Connector
 1. Hours are 7AM-2:30PM (Monday-Friday) and 7AM-12PM (Saturday)
 - ii. Yard Waste/Brush Dump Site – 180 Bayberry Lane
 1. Hours are 7AM-3PM (Monday-Friday) and 7AM-12PM (Saturday)
 - a. In early November through December, Saturday hours extend to 3PM
 - b. Starting the second week in January and running until the first weekend of March, the winter hour schedule begins (7AM-3PM Tuesday-Thursday & 7AM-12PM Saturday)
 - b. Tickets/Coupons for transfer station disposal fees must be purchased at Westport Town Hall (110 Myrtle Avenue)
 - i. Hours are 8:30AM-4:30PM Monday through Friday
2. Organizational Structure/Staffing
 - a. Overseen by the Director of Public Works
 - b. Managed by the Highway Superintendent
 - c. Solid Waste Department consists of three (3) full time employees
 - i. One (1) employee to oversee the Scale House
 - ii. One (1) employee to assist residents with large items and fee collections at the Transfer Station
 - iii. One (1) employee to oversee the Yard Waste Site

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- d. Two (2) Public Works Administrative Assistants support Transfer Station operations
 - i. One (1) Engineering Assistant
 - ii. One (1) Bookkeeper
 - e. The Department is also supported by one (1) part time Administrative Assistant
 - f. As part of the Enviro agreement (third party vendor), one (1) Enviro staff person is assigned to the Town of Westport to inspect, operate, and maintain operations at the Transfer Station
3. Software Systems, Tools, and Technology/Security
- a. PC Scale (now owned by AMCS Group)
 - i. Waste and recycling management software
 - ii. Runs the ticket system and scale
 - b. MUNIS
 - i. Financial management system
 - ii. Used by Department Heads for budgeting and purchasing
 - c. Cameras
 - i. There are security cameras in operations at all Westport Transfer Station locations
 - 1. Enviro provides general security for the Transfer Station. Security includes maintaining the gate and fencing around the Transfer Station in good repair, and ensuring that all equipment and all vehicles are secured inside a gate and that the gate is locked after Enviro's personnel have left the premises
4. Sticker Process
- a. While Transfer Station use is free to residents, proof of residency is required. Westport's (WP) Transfer Station sticker can be obtained directly from the Transfer Station once proof of residency is provided (License, Car registration, Utility bill, etc.)

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- i. Those who adhere the sticker to their vehicle are generally “waved through” or can easily enter/dispose of garbage at the Transfer Station while those without a sticker may be stopped by an Attendant and asked to show proof of residency each time
 - ii. At this time, Westport Transfer Station generally only performs a quick “spot check” on random vehicles that go through the Transfer Station (not every vehicle is checked)
 - b. It was noted during our interviews and review of documentation, that the Town Code requires the use of stickers (CD 46:7-F)
 - c. The sticker process workflow is provided in Appendix B
- 5. Ticketing Process
 - a. Tickets, also referred to as “coupons” must be purchased by residents to dispose of particular items (e.g. tires, washing machines, dryers; a list is provided on the Town’s website)
 - b. All tickets must be purchased at Westport Town Hall in the Public Works Department main office
 - i. Tickets have associated dollar values (\$2.50, \$10, \$20, \$50); tickets must be paid for in cash or by check
 - ii. When the ticket is provided to a resident from Town Hall, an “Origination Form” is also given to the resident. This form identifies the dump load fee for the good(s), resident name, phone number, date, and address
 - c. Residents present tickets and completed origination forms to the Transfer Station Attendant at time of disposal. Ticket collections are later summarized on the Weekly Weight Sheet by the Transfer Station. The Weight Sheet lists all bulk goods disposed, associated fees, confirmation of an origination form, and the total of each ticket type (dollar value) collected for the week
 - i. This is provided to the Public Works Administrative Assistant who reconciles the value and number of outgoing tickets sold/origination forms created by Town Hall with the number/value of goods disposed and recorded on the Weight Sheet
 - d. Commercial vehicles/haulers are also provided with tickets as they go over the Westport Transfer Station scale. These are also totaled by the Administrative Assistant (part time) with recycling

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information provided to the Engineering Assistant and solid waste information to the Bookkeeper for recording

e. The ticketing process workflow is provided in Appendix B

6. Collection Processes

a. Residential Drop-Off

i. Westport residents may dispose of conventional household garbage as well as recycling for no charge at the Westport Transfer Station

1. For the various household goods that require a fee, tickets must be presented to the Transfer Station Attendant

ii. Residents whose vehicles (including pickup trucks, vans, and tag-along trailers) display a valid Town transfer station sticker are allowed disposal of up to six (6) 30-gallon bags/containers of trash to the Transfer Station. Vans, pickup trucks, or vehicle trailers that exceed the six (6) bag garbage limit are charged \$50 per load. Vehicles/trailers larger than a standard pickup truck (4x8 foot bed) are charged a fee of \$110 per ton

1. There is no limit (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.) to the number of trips a vehicle can make to the Westport Transfer Station

b. Household Hazardous Waste

i. Some general household hazardous waste can be disposed of at the Westport Transfer Station during normal operating hours (e.g. antifreeze, batteries, paint, fluorescent bulbs, electronics)

ii. Other hazardous waste items (rodent killers, pesticides, gasoline, insecticides, etc.) can be disposed of at any of the Westport “Hazardous Waste Day” disposal events (held throughout the year at a number of sites throughout Westport and surrounding Towns)

c. Curbside Collection/Leaf Pickup

i. Generally, from early November through the first weekend in December, the Transfer Station operates a curbside collection service for residents for seasonal leaves

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1. Residents can bag their own leaves in paper bags only (no bag limit) for collection by the Public Works Department during this period at no charge. Westport also utilizes a contractor to subsidize and help with this collection period
 2. Leaves can also be bagged and emptied at the Yard Waste site directly by residents showing valid Westport Transfer Station stickers at no charge for up to six (6) 30-gallon bags or containers. Vans, pickup trucks, or vehicle trailers that exceed the six (6) bag leaf limit are charged \$40 per load. As a rule of thumb, trucks are allowed to fill the truck bed to the “water level of the truck.” Vehicles/trailers larger than a standard pickup truck (4x8 foot bed) are charged a fee of \$90 per ton
 - There is no scale at the Yard Waste site so staff simply use best judgement
 - There is no limit (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.) to the number of trips a vehicle can make to the Westport Yard Waste site
 - d. Enviro Express, Inc. (private garbage collection company) currently operates and maintains the Transfer Station and hauls portions of the disposal of Westport’s solid waste through the Wheelabrator Resco Waste to Energy facility in Bridgeport, CT and recycling materials to the Oak Ridge facility in Shelton
7. Haulers
- a. Haulers are divided into two (2) categories: Residential and Commercial
 - i. Residential Haulers are those roadside commercial entities who pickup and dispose of Westport resident solid waste
 1. These are generally the smaller trucks capable of maneuvering through driveways, tight or windy neighborhood roads, etc.
 2. Trucks/companies carrying Westport residential solid waste is disposed of free of charge at the Town Transfer Station
 3. Residents pay the haulers for service but not for the actual amount of garbage they dispose

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4. Westport currently has 12 licensed trash haulers for services throughout Town for 2018-2019
 5. Residential Haulers are charged an annual license fee based on the capacity of each truck; they are not charged per ton for garbage dropped at the Transfer Station
 - ii. Commercial Haulers are typically the larger-sized garbage trucks that pickup garbage from businesses (restaurants, shops, grocery stores, etc.)
 1. These haulers are charged a tipping fee (per the weight of their hauler) at the Westport Transfer Station
 2. The hauler drives over the scale at the Westport Transfer Station and is weighed in order to determine tonnage. A ticket is created at the Transfer Station that identifies the hauler weight. The ticket is provided to the Public Works Department (Town Hall) for billing to the commercial hauler company. The hauler then proceeds to dump at the transfer station
 3. Westport currently has approximately four to five (4-5) primary, large commercial haulers they work with
 4. Commercial Haulers are charged an annual license fee per vehicle based on its capacity and an additional \$110/ton of garbage dropped
8. Hauler Licensing Process
- a. Haulers that are used for the Yard Waste program are not licensed by Westport
 - b. Residential and Commercial Haulers are licensed by the Town per the following annual process:
 - i. In mid-July, Public Works sets aside two 4-hour morning blocks where all Haulers can show up to obtain a license (Haulers are notified weeks in advance)
 1. Haulers interested in licensing mid-year are set up via appointment
 - ii. A District Health Inspector, Police Officer, Public Works Staff attend the event to perform their specific inspections (Health inspects gaskets for safety, Police verifies registration/insurance and vehicle safety, etc.)

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- iii. If passed, Haulers are provided a license sticker or updated annual sticker on the spot that indicates Hauler-type (refuse, recycling, or both, and the year)
- iv. Depending on the cubic yard capacity of the vehicle, they are charged an annual fee; the Engineering Assistant collects this fee via cash or check on the day of inspection (she notifies the Haulers of their anticipated fee in advance). The money/checks are provided to Town Finance for deposit and the transaction is recorded in the Transfer Station revenue account
- c. All Haulers (Residential/Commercial) are checked for their licensing sticker when using the Transfer Station
- d. The licensing process workflow has been documented in Appendix B

IV. Town of Westport – Transfer Station Assessment – Findings & Recommendations

Findings and Recommendations

blumshapiro identified the following findings and recommendations pertaining to the Westport Town Transfer Station operations.

1. **Finding** – Conflicting Operating Hours and Location Pose Difficulties with the Ticket/Coupon Purchase Process
 - a. Given the current operating hours and locations of Town Hall vs. the Transfer Station, residents can have difficulty coordinating the purchase of coupons and disposal of goods. For example, Saturday is noted as one of the busiest Transfer Station days but Town Hall is closed. Additionally, many people prefer to use the Transfer Station in early hours at first open (7AM), prior to the typical work day but Town Hall is not open until 8:30AM
 - b. Residents cannot purchase the coupons directly from the Transfer Station
 - i. Staff have noted that there are times where residents show up at the Transfer Station with large goods to dispose of only to be sent to drive to Town Hall to pay for the coupon and return back to the Transfer Station for disposal
 1. In some instances, for ease ability (and customer service), these residents will ask (and be allowed) for the ability to drop the item with Transfer Station staff prior to obtaining to the coupon from Town Hall with the intention of returning but they may not follow through
 - c. Lastly, tickets must be paid for by cash or check; Public Works Department does not accept credit cards
 - i. This results in frustration and inconvenience for customers who are turned away when they arrive with payment cards for ticket purchase
1. **Recommendation** – Consider the use of a Ticket/Coupon Self-Serve Kiosk at the Transfer Station
 - a. Depending on how frequently this problem occurs, Westport could consider purchasing and implementing a self-serve kiosk where residents can select the item they intend to dispose from a menu of items on the kiosk, pay via card, and receive a printed ticket “on the spot”

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- i. This would alleviate the hours and location confliction between Town Hall and the Transfer Station
 - ii. A kiosk that handles credit/debit cards would also alleviate the Town from the risk of cash theft
- b. If kiosks are not implemented, the Town should equip the Public Works Department with a merchant swipe terminal in order to safely and securely process credit cards
- c. A third option for the Town is to consider changing Town Hall hours

2. **Finding** – The Bag Pricing Policy Needs Revision

- a. Currently, residents can dispose of up to six (6) 30-gallon bags in one (1) trip to the Transfer Station or Yard Waste site but there is no limit to the number of trips a person can make in a day
 - i. Therefore, a resident could make unlimited trips each day with well over six (6) bags in total
 - ii. It was noted that residents that are aware of this “loophole” often leave a few bags of trash at the entrance of the Transfer Station and then make multiple trips of six (6) bags up to the Attendant/scale house

2. **Recommendation** – Set Limits to Number of Trips Allowed at the Transfer Station

- a. Westport may consider limiting the number of trips a resident can make to the Transfer Station on either a daily, weekly, or monthly basis
 - i. It should be noted that by doing this, it will require a means to manage, track, and monitor visits (e.g. a logbook, punch card, etc.)
 - 1. This will require an increase in the amount of time spent with each incoming vehicle by Transfer Station staff that based upon current staffing levels may not be realistic
 - 2. Plate scanning technology (mentioned later in this report, may help to audit the number of vehicle trips)
- b. A second option is to increase the number of bags allowed per trip (e.g. 10 bags)
- c. Any changes to Transfer Station usage will need to be updated in the associated Public Works policies and webpages

IV. Town of Westport – Transfer Station Assessment – Findings & Recommendations

3. **Finding** – Sticker Process Needs Improvement

- a. The current use of WP stickers is not generally effective and poses the ability for fraudulent Transfer Station use for a number of reasons including:
 - i. There is no requirement for stickers to be fixated to vehicles
 1. Therefore, a sticker may be passed from person-to-person or vehicle-to-vehicle including those not living in Westport
 - ii. Stickers are not “uniquely identifying.” Stickers do not have vehicle plate number, resident last name, etc. marked on them
 1. Therefore, stickers can be removed from one vehicle or owner to the next. A Westport car can be sold to a surrounding town resident and continue to be used at the Transfer Station
 - iii. There is no log of all WP stickers distributed
 1. Therefore, a family or individual could obtain multiple WP stickers and distribute them
 - iv. The Town does not require stickers to be changed/updated each year
 1. Therefore, someone could obtain a sticker, move out of Westport, and continue to present the sticker for use of the Transfer Station
- b. There is only one (1) Transfer Station staff who performs the sticker validation checks at this time. Between helping vehicles navigate the Transfer Station, offloading bulk or specialty items (e.g. paint, metal), answering questions, and maintaining a clean and safe site there is physically not enough time for this staff to check every vehicle coming through for residency verification/sticker presence
 - i. For example, the busiest days of the week are Monday and Friday (based upon the data provided), an average of 38 vehicles run through the facility per hour. This leaves the staff approximately 30 seconds per vehicle to inspect, direct, etc.
 - ii. For more details regarding the Transfer Station seasonality, busy hours, etc. see the charts provided in Appendix D

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- c. It was noted during our interviews and through confirmation of “spot-check” documentation that the Westport Transfer Station regularly “catches” vehicles from out-of-town using the Transfer Station to dispose of waste
 - i. During a period where the Transfer Station inspected every vehicle entering the site, an average of 8-12 non-resident vehicles were identified attempting to use the Transfer Station on any given day (primarily Milford, Stratford, Fairfield)

3. **Recommendation** – Consider Technology, such as a Plate Scanner

- a. Ideally, Westport vehicles could be easily identified via their license plates upon entering the Transfer Station or Yard Waste site
 - i. Residents could register online and their plate data could be maintained in a database. Plates would then be scanned as they enter the sites (potentially through an automatic gate) and approved vehicles would be allowed through
 - ii. Attendants would then only need to validate residency on the vehicles that show errors or do not scan properly
- b. It is believed that the Westport Railroad Parking facility may already have the technology/software in place that performs this function (BuyMyPermit.com)
 - i. This site allows residents to purchase parking permits securely over the web
- c. Westport will need to consider the cost/benefit analysis associated with this type of solution

4. **Finding** – Concerns with the Commercial Hauler Processes

- a. Based on our interviews, the commercial haulers that work with the Town have a number of areas in which they can circumvent the formal process without Westport’s knowledge including:
 - i. Skipping the weigh-in (and associated billing) at the Westport Transfer Station
 - 1. The commercial haulers are expected to drive through the Westport Transfer Station scale prior to offloading refuse. If the Transfer Station is unable to accept the load (problems with the scale, etc.) and drivers are diverted to Wheelebrator in Bridgeport, the trash they deliver to Wheelebrator should be declared as “Westport’s”

IV. Town of Westport – Transfer Station Assessment – Findings & Recommendations

- Commercial haulers could go directly to Wheelabrator but fail to declare the tonnage as Westport's, thus throwing off the monthly figures
- 2. If desired, these commercial haulers could just go through the lowest priced tipping area/scale and skip Westport all together
 - Per discussions with Westport's Transfer Station staff, there is no real way to easily identify the trucks that are doing this. Westport can only somewhat impact the likelihood of this happening by maintaining a competitive (lower) tipping fee
- ii. Picking up garbage from non-Westport businesses
 - 1. Commercial haulers are supposed to only pick up garbage from businesses located in Westport
 - 2. At this time, a hauler could pick up garbage from businesses outside of Town without Westport's knowledge
 - This is of lesser concern to management as the hauler would in theory be charged on the tonnage of garbage and thus, would be paying more to the Town of Westport
 - Per discussions with Westport Transfer Station staff, the Town has practiced an audit of the commercial haulers in the past (10 or so years ago) in which they would physically inspect a sample of trash collected from the hauler to validate that it belonged to Westport (e.g. restaurant receipts, mailings, etc.). It was noted that the Transfer Station does not have the capacity to continue these audits regularly with the volume of current business/use of the Westport Transfer Station and one (1) staff member available to conduct audits
- b. Additionally, the commercial haulers that go through the Westport Yard Waste site are not currently licensed by the Town
 - i. Per the Westport Town ordinance (*CD 46:2 Licensing*), all private collectors (Yard Waste not specified) are required to be licensed but this is not the general practice in Town as it pertains to Yard Waste
 - ii. However, it was noted that should all these vehicles be licensed, the Town may lose revenue

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1. For example, a local landscaping company could pay the Town commercial license fee for \$250 and be able to dispose of unlimited brush/yard waste for the year as opposed to paying the disposal fee for any drop-off of more than the six (6) 30-gallon bags (\$90/ton)
 - iii. It was also noted that for the Town to be able to license every local landscaping company, etc. would be a large endeavor
4. **Recommendation** – Consider Tighter Controls Around Commercial Haulers
- a. The Town should consider using seasonal help or light-duty Town employees to help perform “audits” of the commercial haulers on a quarterly basis
 - i. This would involve inspecting a sample of collections from the Commercial Haulers to validate that the collections are only from Westport and not surrounding Towns
5. **Finding** – Financial State of the Transfer Station is Expected to Decline
- a. A number of changes will soon impact the financial state of the Westport Transfer Station including:
 - i. Increasing cost of recycling
 1. Until recently, recycling was a revenue-generating area for the Town at \$20/ton (providing Westport with approximately \$66K in net revenue each year)
 2. Recycling now costs the Town \$65/ton (July 1) and \$72.81 (as of July 30) (about \$214.5K - \$240.3K in expenses per year)
 3. Recycling costs are rising and estimated to soon cost the Town approximately \$200-300K each year at a price of \$80/ton (approximately 3,340 tons of recycling material annually)
 - ii. Transfer Station operating costs have more than doubled
 1. The Transfer Station’s cost to have Enviro run the facility annually was typically around \$186K in 2014 and is now set at \$442,200

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- iii. The Enviro Express contract has been renewed for 2019 through 2024 (currently in draft form). Enviro was the successful bidder for an RFP issued by Fairfield on behalf of Fairfield, Westport, Trumbull, and Milford, CT
 - 1. Westport will be paying Enviro approximately \$245K per year to haul garbage and another \$76.5K per year (approximate) to haul the recycling (in addition to the \$442K for operating the Transfer Station)
 - 2. Under the updated agreement, Enviro will now keep the recycling profits made from textiles and electronics (this used to go back to Westport) as Enviro will be overseeing and managing the contacts for the recycling of these materials
 - This change was noted as nearly a “wash” (\$3,500) for Westport and not a significant loss of revenue
 - 3. Enviro will be paying Westport back for scrap metal (approximately \$24K per year total, \$75 per ton)
 - 4. The contract identifies Westport as currently disposing of approximately 15,300 tons per year of its municipal solid waste at the Bridgeport Wheelabrator Resco Waste to Energy Facility and approximately 3,340 tons per year of its municipal recycling materials at Oak Ridge Waste and Recycling in Shelton, CT
 - iv. Other Costs
 - 1. The Recycling tip fee payable to Oak Ridge is \$250K annually (based on \$75/ton)
 - 2. MSW tip fee payable to Resco is \$1M annually (based on \$65.50/ton)
 - b. The total Transfer Station budget is approximately \$2.7M to run the entire operation including solid waste program, hazardous waste, yard waste, transfer station, and payroll
 - i. Revenues are estimated to be around \$150K
5. **Recommendation** – Consider Implementing Fees or Charges Associated with the Use of the Transfer Station
- a. Primarily due with the rising costs of recycling (which Westport cannot control), the Town will need to consider how to handle and manage these costs in the near future

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- b. Westport may want to consider passing on some of the costs to the resident either through a nominal increase in taxes or through charges for service/use of the Transfer Station. Options may include:
 - i. Imposing a tipping fee for the disposal of solid waste (e.g. fee per bag)
 - ii. Charging a fee for the annual sticker (e.g. \$100)
 1. It should be noted that of the surrounding Towns, Westport is one of the very few that offers free use of the Transfer Station for residents
 - Wilton – free resident sticker & fee per bag (\$4.50 per 32-gallon bag). Tickets are purchased to cover the bag fees.
 - Fairfield - \$20 sticker & bag fee (\$6 per bag under 200 gallons). Tickets are purchased to cover the bag fees
 - Weston - \$1.50 per sticker; one (1) sticker is required per 30lb bag
 - Darien - \$120 for two (2) stickers, no bag fee
 - Norwalk – no fee for services if resident of Norwalk
 2. Several of these towns offer discounted rates for senior citizens
 3. Some of these towns limit the number of trips a vehicle can make to the Transfer Station per week/month (monitored through the use of a punch card)
 4. For a more detailed town-by-town comparison, see Appendix C
 - iii. Charging non-residents, a fee to use the Transfer Station
 1. Westport could consider allowing “out-of-towners” the use of the facility for an increased fee; a non-resident sticker (available for purchase) could also be considered
 - iv. Embedding Transfer Station access as part of Westport Beach stickers
 1. It was noted that when Transfer Station staff identify a Westport beach sticker on a vehicle, they can easily wave cars through as it confirms a person has already been validated by the Town as a resident.
 2. The Town may consider allowing the beach pass/sticker to double as an access pass/sticker for use of the Transfer Station

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3. Residents without beach stickers could purchase a Transfer Station-only sticker for a lesser charge
 - The costs associated with this option should be investigated

6. **Finding** – Current Operations and Staffing Levels Pose a Safety Risk

In fiscal year 2011, the Transfer Station budgeted employees were reduced 4.5 positions to 3 full time employees. The positions of Solid Waste Laborer and 50% of a shared Account Clerk were cut.

- a. Based on our interviews and analysis of the volume and frequency of vehicles passing through the Transfer Station on a daily basis, it is nearly impossible for staff to validate each vehicle and maintain safety/cleanliness of the site
- b. During our onsite visit of the Transfer Station, there was notably significant activity with vehicles pulling through, turning around, backing into spaces and offloading bags and large items in a somewhat compact area
 - i. When the staff are held up near the entrance of the site at the scale house, it is difficult for them to also assist with the bustle that occurs at the top of the site at the disposal/recycle areas
- c. The limited number of employees assigned to the Transfer Station makes managing vacations and personnel absences difficult
 - i. Highway staff are always pulled to fill in which then decreases the productivity and capability of the highway team
- d. The Town has experienced several safety incidents, accidents, and injuries at the site involving both employees and residents
 - i. This is a continuing and serious safety and financial risk for the Town

6. **Recommendation** – Consider Increasing Staffing by One (1) Person and Additional Town Employees or Light-Duty staff

- a. In order to ensure a safer operating environment, it is recommended that the Laborer position be re-instated in the Solid Waste budget

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- b. In the past, the Transfer Station has been able to utilize light-duty Town employees to help manage operations. This includes the capability for the Transfer Station to check more vehicles, monitor and record the presence of non-town vehicles, track busy times and vehicle counts, etc.
 - c. Seasonal employees have been used in years past to assist Transfer Station operations; this could be considered again particularly for busy months
7. **Finding** – Residential Education Regarding Recycling, Composting, and Waste Management Needs Improvement
- a. Based on our interviews and light research, new import policies from China and other foreign countries have created a ripple effect for recycling in municipalities in the United States
 - i. As a result, service providers have reset their pricing conditions and many municipalities are now working to restructure their waste and recycling operations
 - ii. The demand for recycling material (since it no longer is lucrative and actually carries a cost) has decreased; there is less incentive for residents to recycle
 - iii. Many residents are likely uneducated in the complexities of waste management, pricing, and the impact that foreign recycling plants has on their own town
 - b. Other towns, like Wilton have embraced and encouraged recycling, “green” initiatives, and particularly composting (including the use of curbside compost companies)
 - i. The Wilton website includes videos and tutorials for how to reduce waste and properly compost and the School District has implemented a “Zero Waste Program.” A “Zero Waste Faire” is held annually (2 years running) for residents and surrounding communities to educate, engage, and inspire people about “zero waste living”
 - c. Per review of Westport’s Boards, a GreenTask Force was established for the Town in 2006
 - i. This Task Force has launched programs for home energy, solar initiatives, and other “go green” endeavors
 - ii. As part of the GreenTask Force and Westport’s Sustainability program, the First Selectman has affirmed Westport’s sustainability goal to achieve “NetZero by 2050”

IV. Town of Westport – Transfer Station Assessment – Findings & Recommendations

1. Part of this initiative is stated as, “We will reduce our waste to the minimum, reuse what we can, and recycle the rest”
7. **Recommendation** – Promote Refuse and Recycling Educational Initiatives for Residents
 - a. Westport’s “Sustainable Westport Advisory Team” should work toward developing and promoting content to better educate the residents in the current waste management challenges (rising costs, contaminated recyclables, single-stream recycling, etc.)
 - i. This can alleviate the frustration residents may experience if the Town decides to start imposing sticker fees, etc.
 - ii. Content can be promoted through the Town’s website and press releases
 - b. The Town may wish to obtain further information regarding Wilton’s “Zero-Waste” program and consider the adoption of similar initiatives

V. Town of Westport – Transfer Station Assessment– Appendix

Appendix A – Interview List

The following staff was directly involved in providing information for the Assessment of the Westport Transfer Station. The blumshapiro team thanks all who participated for their time, knowledge and efforts. The individuals that participated included:

Town of Westport Interview List

Westport Town Staff	
Peter Ratkiewich - Director	Scott Sullivan – Highway Superintendent
Deborah Barbieri – Engineering Assistant	Lynn Scully – Audit Manager/Senior Accountant

Appendix B – Process Workflows

blumshapiro mapped a number of business operating workflows of the Transfer Station’s current operations. Areas of opportunity or where needed improvements are noted have been identified. The following workflows are mapped on the continuing pages:

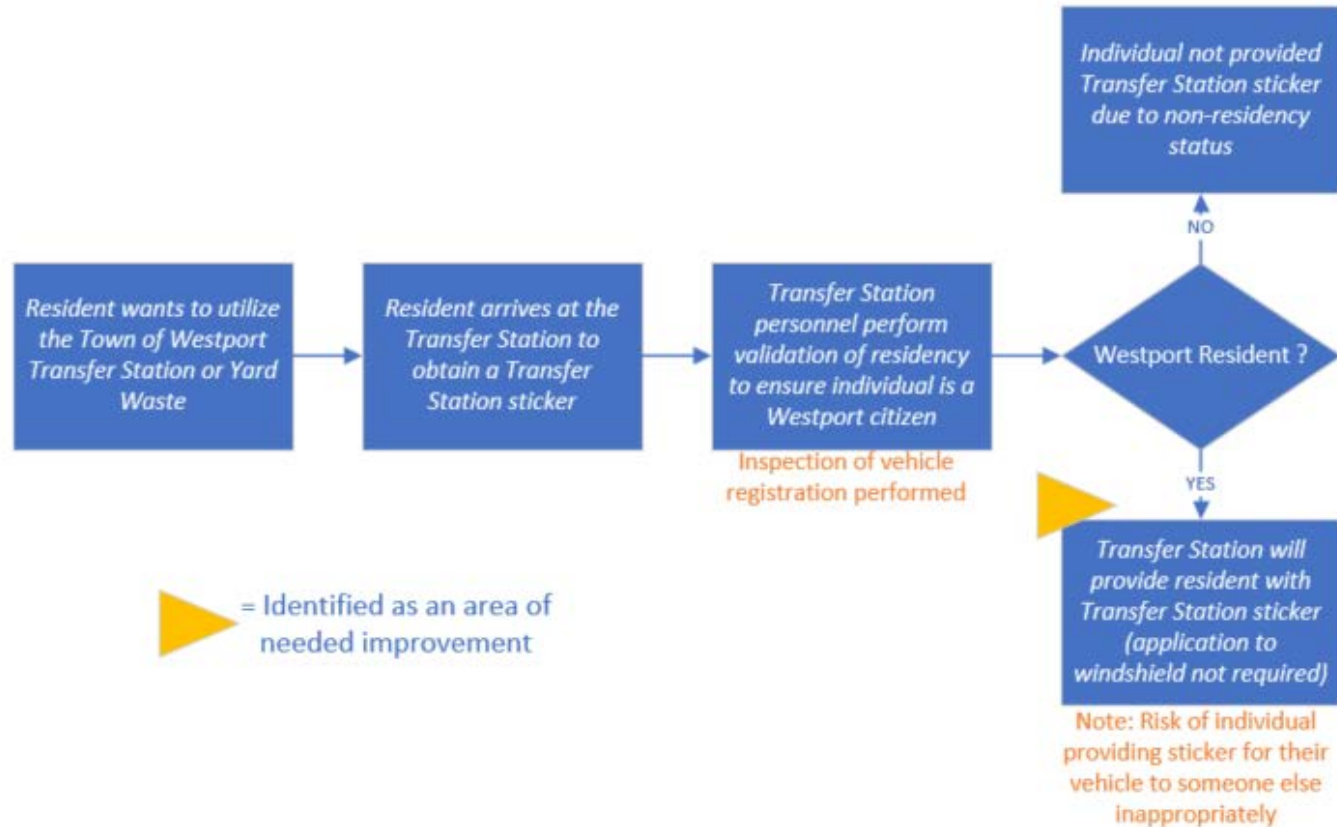
- Sticker Process
- Ticketing process
- Hauler Licensing process

Within the process flows, we have identified a number of areas as “Needed Improvement” using the symbol below.



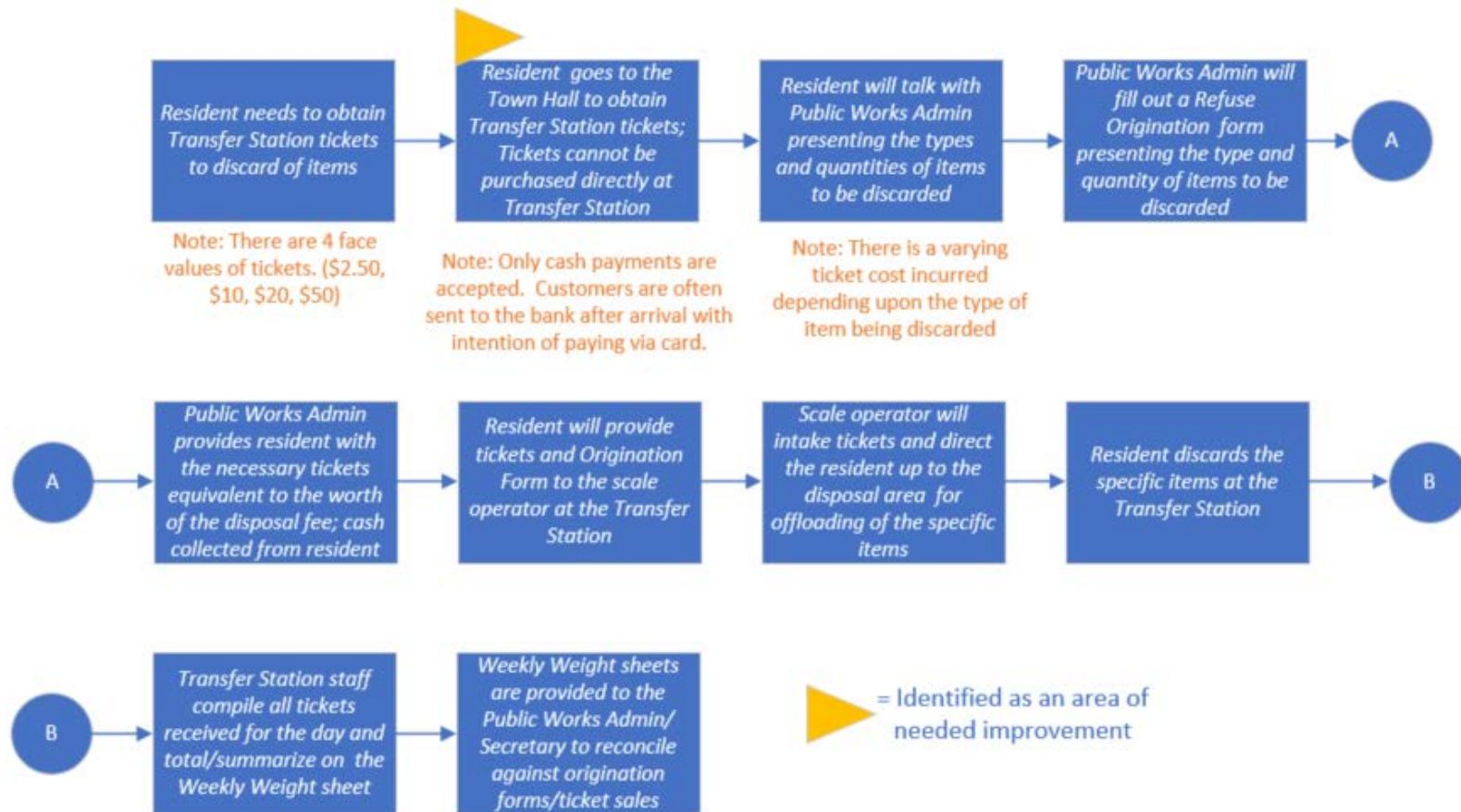
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Town of Westport – Resident Sticker Obtainment Process



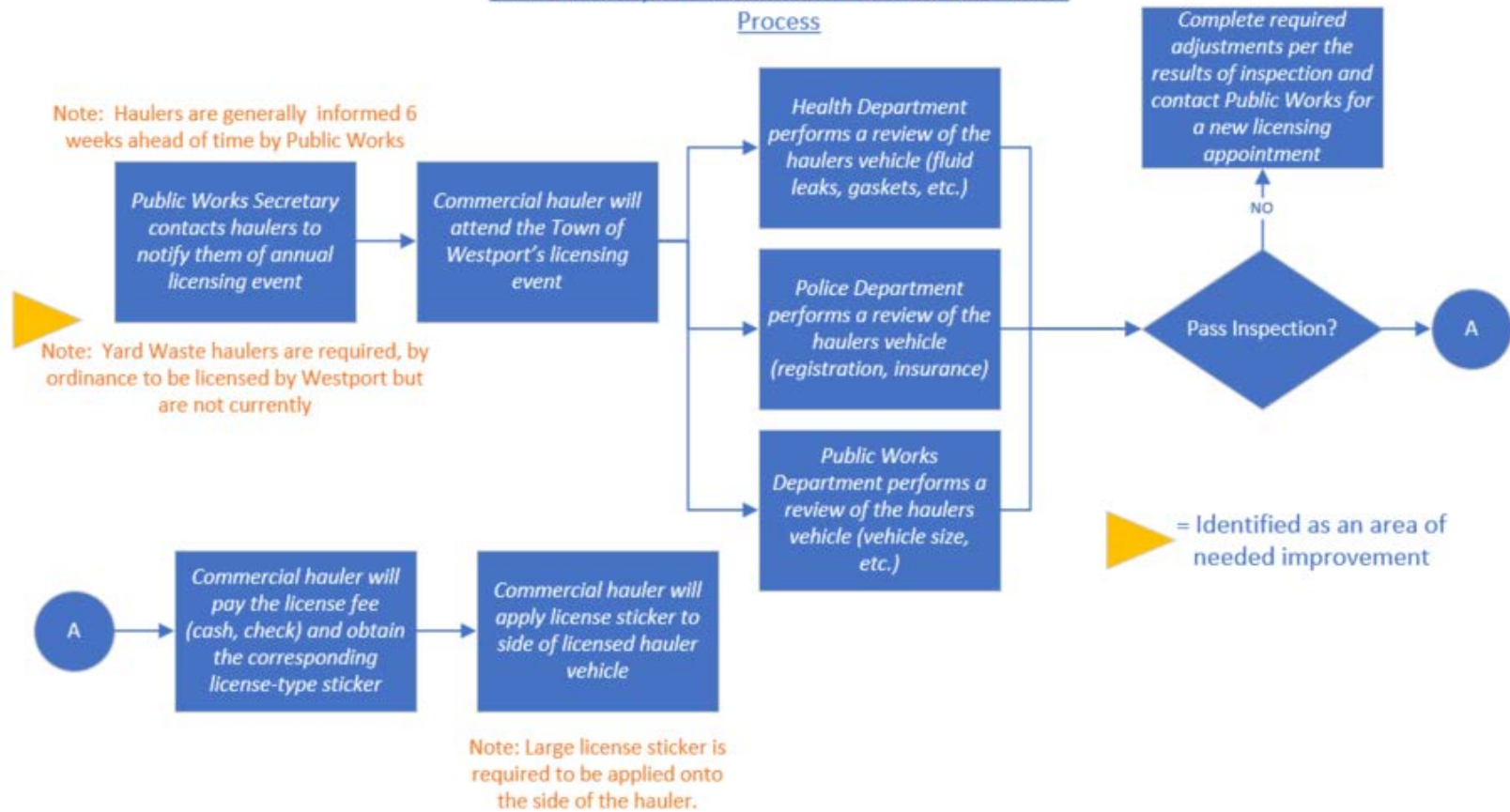
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Town of Westport – Transfer Station Coupon/Ticket Obtainment Process



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Town of Westport – Commercial License Obtainment Process



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Appendix C – Town Comparison

For better insight into the operations of nearby towns, blumshapiro created a matrix that explores some of the basic components associated with Transfer Station operations (e.g. fees, sticker usage). This data was primarily gathered via the web and phone calls to surrounding towns and may have changed since the time of this report.

	Westport	Wilton	Fairfield	Norwalk	Weston	Darien
Hours of Operation	M - F (7 - 230) Sa (7 - 12)	M - F (8 - 4) Sa (9 - 12)	M - F (7 - 3) Sa (7 - 12)	M - F (7 - 3) Sa (7 - 2)	M - F (8 - 345) Sa (8 - 245)	M - Sa (7 - 245)
Educational Content	<p><u>Recycling Flyer:</u> https://www.westportct.gov/home/showdocument?id=1343</p> <p><u>Take 2 Recycling Flyer:</u> https://www.westportct.gov/home/showdocument?id=10658</p> <p><u>Hazardous Waste Disposal:</u> https://www.westportct.gov/government/departments-a-z/public-works-department/hazardous-waste-disposal-schedule</p>	<p>Various (4) pieces of educational content on Recycling: 1) Why You Shouldn't Recycle Plastic Bags at Home 2) Pack a Waste-Free Lunch 3) Composting and Organics Recycling 4) Grass Recycling</p> <p>Website has a video and instructions for how to compost; "Zero Waste Schools" program</p> <p><u>What is allowed as recycling material:</u> https://www.wiltonct.org/sites/wiltonct/files/uploads/transfer_station_info_revised_oct_2018.pdf</p>	<p><u>Single Stream Recycling:</u> https://www.fairfieldct.org/filestorage/10726/10992/16027/43760/RecycleTransferSingleStream.pdf</p>	<p><u>Acceptable Items:</u> https://www.norwalkct.org/499/Acceptable-Non-Acceptable-Items</p> <p><u>Norwalk Guide to Recycling - What's In What's Out:</u> https://www.norwalkct.org/DocumentCenter/View/13716/Norwalk-Guide-to-Recycling---Whats-In-Whats-Out?bidId=</p> <p><u>Household Hazardous Waste:</u> https://www.norwalkct.org/DocumentCenter/View/12591/2019-HHW-Doublesided?bidId=</p> <p><u>Freon Recycling Program:</u> <a "="" href="https://www.norwalkct.org/DocumentCenter/View/7954/Freon-Appliance-Disposal-at-Transfer-Station-?bidId=">https://www.norwalkct.org/DocumentCenter/View/7954/Freon-Appliance-Disposal-at-Transfer-Station-?bidId=</p>	<p><u>What Is Acceptable Recycling Material:</u> http://www.westonct.gov/media/file/Take2Recycling.pdf</p> <p><u>Recycling Guide:</u> http://www.westonct.gov/media/file/RecyclingGuidervised2019.pdf</p> <p><u>Free Electronics Recycling:</u> http://www.westonct.gov/media/file/FreeElectronicsRecycling.pdf</p>	<p><u>Single Stream Recycling (Full List):</u> http://www.darienct.gov/filestorage/28565/28567/29165/29202/2019_Darien_Single_Stream_Recycling_%28Full_List%29.pdf</p> <p><u>Single Stream Recycling Guidelines:</u> http://www.darienct.gov/filestorage/28565/28567/29165/29202/2019_Darien_Single_Stream_Recycling_Guidelines.pdf</p> <p><u>Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days:</u> http://www.darienct.gov/filestorage/28565/28567/29165/29202/2019_Household_Hazardous_Waste_Days_in_Participating_Communities.pdf</p> <p><u>2019 Recycling Information Brochure:</u> http://www.darienct.gov/filestorage/28565/28567/29165/29202/2019_Recycling_Center_Informational_Brochure.pdf</p> <p><u>2019 Recycling Center Schedule:</u> http://www.darienct.gov/filestorage/28565/28567/29165/29202/2019_Recycling_Center_Schedule.pdf</p>

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	Westport	Wilton	Fairfield	Norwalk	Weston	Darien
Resident Permit	No permit required for Residents, only free sticker indicating validation of residency status.	Complete Transfer Station Permit Application (Town Clerk's) in person or by mail with copy of vehicle registration or evidence of residency. Limit two stickers per household. Residential vehicle permit stickers are free.	The Transfer Station is available to Fairfield residents and businesses for solid waste generated within the town. Fees are charged for some items and a vehicle permit is required to gain entry to the facility.	All residential vehicles entering the Norwalk Transfer Station or the Yard Debris Site are required to have a valid city of Norwalk Recreation and Parks Residents Pass (Beach Pass) on their dashboard. Non-commercial pickup trucks, vans, and cars with trailers require a Residential Permit (card). Trucks, pick-up trucks, vans, and vehicles pulling trailers require a Residential or Commercial Disposal Permit (Public Works Department) for regular use of the Transfer Station or Yard Waste Site. Trucks, pick-ups, vans, and vehicles with trailers will be weighed at all times.	Sticker is issued for free to Weston residents with motor vehicle tax bills each June, and is valid for one year.	<u>Resident:</u> The residential Darien Recycling & Refuse Center Permits are available for sale, the permits are valid beginning July 1st and expire on June 30th of each year.
Resident Permit Fee	Free	Free	\$20 per year	Free	Free	with garbage collection service , \$40 (2 permits) without garbage collection service, \$120 (2 permits) all seniors 65 and over are entitled to one free permit per household Seniors may receive one free Recycling & Refuse Center Permit by mail

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	Westport	Wilton	Fairfield	Norwalk	Weston	Darien
Commercial Permit	<p><u>Commercial:</u> Commercial residential haulers and commercial haulers both need to obtain license/permit from the Town, which includes an inspection process with (DPW, Police, and Health) to ensure the vehicle is safe for road use.</p>	No information available	<p>The Transfer Station is available to Fairfield residents and businesses for solid waste generated within the town. Fees are charged for some items and a vehicle permit is required to gain entry to the facility. Haulers must be licensed and are approved by the Solid Waste and Recycling Commission. Click here for a list of licensed commercial haulers that have been approved by the Commission. Note that not all haulers are approved for all streets. Consult the Hauler Street Listing to confirm that an address has been approved for pickup by the hauler.</p>	<p>Commercial permits and renewals are available by appointment only. Trucks, pick-up trucks, vans, and vehicles pulling trailers require a Residential or Commercial Disposal Permit (Public Works Department) for regular use of the Transfer Station or Yard Waste Site. Trucks, pick-ups, vans, and vehicles with trailers will be weighed at all times.</p>	No information available	YES
Commercial Permit Fee	\$250	No information available	\$20 per year	<p><u>License Fee:</u> Less than 12K lbs., \$124 Greater than 12K lbs., \$500 <u>Registration Fee:</u> Less than 5K lbs., \$125 5K - 12K, \$250 12K+, \$750 Roll-off container/compactor, \$25</p>	No information available	The commercial Darien Recycling & Refuse Center Permits are available for sale at a cost of \$150 per vehicle, per year. The permits are valid beginning January 1st to December 31st of each year.

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	Westport	Wilton	Fairfield	Norwalk	Weston	Darien
Resident Fee						
Disposal Fees	<p>Free for residents to drop off garbage, as long as the amount of bags (32 gallon) disposed of is less than 6 per load. \$40 per load in excess of the 6-bag (32 gallon) drop off limit. <u>Note:</u> There is no limit to the amount of free 6-bag loads a person can drop off in a day. <u>General:</u> Any vehicle or trailer larger than a conventional pickup with a 4x8 foot low-bed, will be charged \$90 per ton of waste.</p>	<p><u>Household Garbage:</u> \$4.50 per 1-32 gallon bag</p>	<p><u>Bagged Garbage:</u> Under 200 gallons by volume or 1-125 lbs. \$6 201 - 400 gallons by volume or 126-250 lbs. \$12 <u>Larger Bags, Containers, or loose items:</u> 251 - 300 lbs. \$18 301 - 400 lbs. \$24 401 - 500 lbs. \$30 500+ lbs. (\$30 + \$6 per 100 additional lbs.) <u>Loose Items:</u> Under 200 gallons by volume or 1-125 lbs. \$6 201 - 400 gallons by volume or 126-250 lbs. \$12 <u>Large Items:</u> Less than or equal to 250lbs \$12</p>	<p>If resident permit = no fee if no resident permit = \$20 minimum dump fee, larger charge possible based on weight discharged</p>	<p><u>Appliances:</u> \$10 air conditioners, freezers, refrigerators, humidifiers (freon appliances) <u>Bulky Waste:</u> 20 cents a lbs., paid by check at drop off <u>Solid Waste:</u> \$2.50 per sticker, 1 sticker per bag required <u>Elderly Tax Relief Program:</u> \$1.25 per sticker - town program 83 cents per sticker - state program (max of 50 stickers at reduced price)</p>	<p>None</p>
Ticket Fees	<p>\$2.50 \$10 \$20 \$50</p>	<p><u>Tickets:</u> Tickets are required for disposal of certain waste streams at the Transfer Station. Tickets are available as follows: \$45 for a book of ten (10) or \$4.50 per ticket (32 gallon bag) \$35 for a book of (10) or \$3.50 per ticket (32 gallon bag) for Senior Citizens age 65 and older. Tickets may be purchased in person or by mail at the Wilton Town Clerk's office and are NOT available for sale at the Transfer Station. If purchasing tickets by mail, enclose a check payable to Town of Wilton for the proper number of tickets and a self-addressed, stamped envelope.</p>	<p>No information available</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>No information available</p>	<p>None</p>
Tip Fees	<p>See Other Information section</p>	<p>See Other Information section</p>	<p>No information available</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>No information available</p>	<p>None</p>
Recycling Fees	<p>No information available</p>		<p>No information available</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Free, except tires \$3 per car tire / \$5 per truck tire (no rim)</p>	<p>None</p>

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	Westport	Wilton	Fairfield	Norwalk	Weston	Darien
Out-of-Town Permits	Out of town individuals are not allowed.	No information available	\$135 per year	N/A	No information available	No information available
Out-of-Town Fees	Out of town individuals are not allowed.	No information available	See Commercial Size Fee section	There is a minimum charge of \$20 for each use if the vehicle has no residential or commercial permit	No information available	No information available
Commercial Fee Structure		No information available	<u>Permit:</u> The Transfer Station is available to Fairfield residents and businesses for solid waste generated within the town. Fees are charged for some items and a vehicle permit is required to gain entry to the facility. Propane tanks and Fire Extinguishers may be recycled at the Transfer Station for a fee. For propane cylinders #1 - #5: \$1.00 fee, Propane cylinders #20 and Fire Extinguishers: \$5.00 fee	<u>Disposal Fees:</u> Any out of town residential dumper without a pass, \$20 - disposal fee may be higher, depending on the weight of the material and the location Any pickup truck, van, or vehicle pulling a trailer that does not have a permit, will have to pay either \$20 or tip fee for material, whichever is higher	Purchase stickers at Town Hall or the Transfer Station: \$1.50 per sticker, one sticker per bag is required. Maximum weight of 30 lbs. per bag.	
Licensed Hauler Tip Fees	Free to drop off residential garbage if a licensed residential hauler (already paid for license, and is only dropping of residents garbage).	No information available	No information available	No information available	YES - but no detailed info available on website	No information available
Tip Fees	Tip fee is \$90 - \$110 per tip, if commercial hauler not dropping off residential garbage.	No information available	No information available	<u>Solid Waste:</u> \$85 per ton <u>Yard Waste:</u> \$55 per ton	YES - but no detailed info available on website	No information available

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	Westport	Wilton	Fairfield	Norwalk	Weston	Darien
Size Fee	<p><u>General:</u> Any vehicle or trailer larger than a conventional pickup with a 4x8 foot low-bed, will be charged \$90 per ton of waste.</p>	No information available	<p><u>Bagged Garbage:</u> Under 200 gallons by volume or 1-125 lbs. \$6 201 - 400 gallons by volume or 126-250 lbs. \$12 251 - 300 lbs. \$18 301 - 400 lbs. \$24 401 - 500 lbs. \$30 500+ lbs. (\$30 + \$6 per 100 additional lbs.)</p> <p><u>Loose Items:</u> Under 200 gallons by volume or 1-125 lbs. \$6 201 - 400 gallons by volume or 126-250 lbs. \$12</p> <p><u>Large Items:</u> Less than or equal to 250lbs \$12</p> <p><u>Sofa Bed:</u> \$12</p> <p><u>Larger Bags, Containers, or loose items:</u> 251 - 300 lbs. \$18 301 - 400 lbs. \$24 401 - 500 lbs. \$30 500+ lbs. (\$30 + \$6 per 100 additional lbs.)</p>	No information available	No information available	No information available

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Appendix D – Transfer Station Usage Charts

blumshapiro utilized a sample of data provided by the Public Works Department to chart/graph the busy times, days and seasons of the Westport Transfer Station by resident and commercial for the period September 2018 to April 2019. The following charts and graphs depict the following:

- Breakdown of the number of commercial vs. residential vehicles at the Transfer Station by time of day (on average, for the September through April sample)
 - Number of commercial and residential vehicles passing through the Transfer Station for every hour of the day (this count was performed by a Light-Duty employee while working for the Transfer Station temporarily)
- Pie chart depicts busiest hours of the day at the Transfer Station
- Bar chart depicts busiest seasons of the year at the Transfer Station

Date	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM		8:01 AM - 9:00 AM		9:01 AM - 10:00 AM		10:01 AM - 11:00 AM		11:01 AM - 12:00 AM		12:01 AM - 1:00 PM		1:01 PM - 2:00 PM		2:00 PM - 2:30 PM	
	Commercial	Resident	Commercial	Resident	Commercial	Resident	Commercial	Resident	Commercial	Resident	Commercial	Resident	Commercial	Resident	Commercial	Resident
Totals	905	3532	885	4054	1181	4685	1186	5000	302	2039	314	1780	340	1913	246	1147
	4437		4939		5866		6186		2341		2094		2253		1393	
Totals		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday										
Commercial		1141	1025	1094	970	1129										
Resident		4862	4365	4551	4837	5535										
		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday										
average daily commercial		60	43	46	37	43										
average daily residential		256	182	190	186	213										

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