

## **TORRINGTON FAQ LIST**

**Updated April 18, 2018**

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>RESPONSE</b>
<b>Program Coverage</b>	<b>What residents will be included in the SMART program?</b>	All residents that currently receive collection from the City's waste service program will be part of the SMART program. These include: all single family homes, multi-family houses with 4 units or less; the housing authority and condominium complexes that are collected through City service. Commercial businesses and apartment complexes will not be included.
<b>Bags – Average Usage</b>	<b>How many SMART Trash bags does the average household use in a week?</b>	Because a SMART Trash system gives people incentives to throw away less and recycle more, they produce less trash—less than 1 large bag or slightly more than 1 small bag per week, on average.
<b>Cheating</b>	<b>Won't my neighbors just place their trash in my container?</b>	If someone is caught placing their trash in your container it will be considered illegal dumping the that person will be subject to illegal dumping fines for the state of Connecticut. SMART programs have very high compliance rates. Similar to other utility services like electricity, water and gas if your neighbors are not borrowing those services from your house without permission it is unlikely that they will dump their garbage into your containers.
<b>Compliance</b>	<b>What happens if I don't use the bag?</b>	If Torrington moves forward with the SMART program all residents will be required to use only the special bag for trash placed inside the curbside cart. If a home is found to have non-compliant bags they will receive a series of warnings. If the non-compliance is chronic than there will be a system of fines similar to the illegal dumping fines.
<b>Cost - Bags</b>	<b>How much do the bags cost?</b>	The retail cost for SMART bags are \$2.70 for a 30-gallon bag; \$1.70 for a 15-gallon bag; and \$1.20 for an 8-gallon bag.
	<b>Why are they more expensive than the bags that I normally buy in the store?</b>	SMART bags cost more because the price of the bag also includes the cost of waste collection and disposal. Almost 90% of the purchase price of each bag goes to the City to offset the City's

		trash collection and disposal costs.
	<b>How many SMART bags could an average-size household expect to use each week?</b>	The average Torrington household would use less than one large SMART bag per week.
<b>Cost-Double Taxation</b>	<b>How is this a benefit if taxpayers already pay for garbage pickup, isn't this an additional tax for homeowners?</b>	The average household currently pays about \$201 per year in taxes to pay for the pick-up and disposal of trash and recycling per a year. They also pay separately for trash bags. Under SMART, residents will just pay about \$64 in taxes to cover recycling, yard waste, and bulky waste collection per year. In addition, they will spend between \$62 and \$140 on SMART trash bags for a total annual cost of \$126-\$204. As a result, taxpayers will get comparable service at less cost under the new system.
<b>Cost – Sales Tax</b>	<b>Is there Sales Tax on the Bags?</b>	No sales tax on bags
<b>Enforcement</b>	<b>Is there going to be a camera on the truck?</b>	The current trucks have cameras to watch for hazardous material as it is dropped into the hopper. These cameras will allow the solid waste employees to also view the colored bags as they drop into the truck.
<b>Fairness - General</b>	<b>Is SMART fair?</b>	One goal of this program is to reduce how much the town pays and therefore how much tax money is spent on the overall cost of providing trash collection services. A second goal of the program is to allocate the cost of the service more fairly among residents based on how much trash residents throw away and how much they recycle. This program achieves both of those goal.
<b>Fairness – To renters</b>	<b>Is SMART less fair to renters?</b>	Whether directly or indirectly renters pay for trash collection. Landlords charge rents based on their costs to own and manage a property. This includes the taxes they pay to the city. If the cost of waste increases than the taxes will increase and this will be passed along to renters in the form or higher rents. SMART both reduces the amount of taxes needed for covering waste collection and also allows renters to control their costs by giving them the option to recycle for free.

<b>Households Management of Trash</b>	<b>Does SMART Trash change anything about how a household manages its trash?</b>	No—Residents would still put their trash out in the same cart they use now, and there is no limit to the amount they can throw away; the only change is the color of the bag they use.
<b>Illegal Dumping</b>	<b>Will this cause illegal dumping?</b>	No- According to multiple studies, public works directors and other city leaders with similar programs. Currently most illegal dumping is related to items like mattresses and tires not bagged household waste. Illegal dumping is not permitted in the State of Connecticut. If a resident is caught illegal dumping than he or she will be prosecuted.
<b>Low Income Households -Impact</b>	<b>What will happen if someone cannot afford the bags?</b>	A resident who cannot afford the average bag cost per week is already being served through Social Service agencies.
	<b>Does SMART Trash help low-income residents?</b>	Yes—Expenses are low because the average household buys just 1 large bags per week. Because recycling remains free, SMART will give all residents the ability to control what they spend on trash today and in the future.
<b>Multifamily Housing - Impact</b>	<b>How will this work in apartment complexes?</b>	Multifamily condo complexes that are part of city services will use the same bags. Similar to single family collection, when the container is dumped the driver will monitor to make sure only colored bags are dumped. Complexes with non-compliant bags will receive notice so that they can work on educating the residents.
	<b>How prevalent is SMART Trash across the US?</b>	In more than 7,000 cities and towns (according to US EPA)
<b>Program - Rationale</b>	<b>Why is Torrington exploring a bag-based SMART Trash program?</b>	Multiple studies around the country have proven that bag-based SMART Trash is the most effective system for reducing waste, increasing recycling, and having a positive financial impact.
<b>Program - Timing</b>	<b>Has Torrington already decided to adopt SMART Trash?</b>	No—We are simply exploring the feasibility of the program (with support from the state).
<b>Purchasing Bags</b>	<b>Where would residents buy SMART Trash bags?</b>	SMART Trash bags would be available at the full range of retail outlets in and around Torrington where people currently buy their trash bags:

		grocery stores, big-box stores, hardware stores, convenience stores, and others.
<b>Recycling</b>	<b>I already recycle a lot, why should I need to do this?</b>	If you are a good recycler you will benefit the most from this program. It currently costs the City over \$3.1 million dollars to manage solid waste. With a SMART program the cost to manage waste will be reduced by about \$427,000 to \$2.7 million. The only difference is how solid waste management is funded. Rather than be funded solely by taxes under SMART it will be funded in two ways. Tax revenue will pay for about \$1 million of the budget and the remaining \$1.7 million will be paid for by bag revenue.
	<b>Why not just increase recycling pickup to weekly versus bi-weekly?</b>	Increasing recycling pick up to weekly, will cost the city approximately \$300,000 annually and data suggests that it will only increase recycling rates by a few percentage points. By contrast, the SMART program will collectively save city residents \$425,000 and will require no new investment. In the process it will also reduce waste by 44% and boost City's curbside recycling rate from 17% to 40%.
	<b>How can the town help us recycle more?</b>	The town will offer free 'second' recycling Toters for those that need them and the town will begin a new free bi-weekly curbside textile program for used clothes and household soft goods.
	<b>If the goal is to increase recycling why not just hand out larger recycling bins and smaller garbage bins?</b>	Purchasing larger recycling bins and smaller garbage bins would cost the City significantly. The experience of other municipalities and data from those programs demonstrate that simply changing the container size has a very minimal effect on increasing recycling. What the data clearly shows is that providing a transparent financial incentive to recycle significantly increases recycling rates and volumes.
<b>Recycling - Enforcement &amp; Education</b>	<b>Why not just better educate and enforce recycling to avoid a SMART program?</b>	For decades communities across the US, have been trying to decrease waste through education, but results are limited. Education is important but unfortunately without a SMART rate structure there will be minimal behavior change.

<b>Seniors</b>	<b>Does SMART Trash help seniors?</b>	Yes—Seniors throw away much less than the average household and save money with SMART Trash. This is particularly true for seniors that also recycle heavily.
<b>Tax Reduction</b>	<b>Would homeowners get a refund from their taxes for the garbage bags they have to purchase?</b>	City expenditures would go down and so taxpayers will benefit by receiving comparable trash collection service at lower cost.
<b>WasteZero's Role</b>	<b>What is WasteZero's role in this initiative?</b>	WasteZero is a national leader in municipal waste reduction that CT DEEP has contracted to help the city evaluate how a SMART Trash system could help Torrington.

## LINKS TO ARTICLES

### **SMART General**

The Trash Crisis is not just in CT. It's worldwide, & SMART trash is helping: <http://lat.ms/1TnTdLs>

SMART trash helps MA cut trash. Here's a TV news story from @Chronicle5 on how it's going: <http://bit.ly/2kti0SR>

Article in @Governing Magazine says SMART trash is almost a "magic bullet" for cutting trash: <http://bit.ly/219epvJ>

Boston Public Radio discusses SMART trash & calls it a win-win-win for people, cities, & the #environment: <http://bit.ly/2k9Rm3C>

Here's a great resource on SMART trash systems, how they cut trash, increase , & the results they get: [www.payasyouthrow.org](http://www.payasyouthrow.org)

The NH Municipal Association explains how SMART trash helps the #environment & is financially smart: <http://bit.ly/2jxmWBr>

@TheAtlantic says SMART trash is the way of the future for towns & the #environment: <http://theatlantic.com/2kbcsix>

@CommonWealthMag describes the trash problem in MA & how SMART trash helps: <http://bit.ly/1BjyRvI>

Here's what people are saying about SMART Trash aka : <http://bit.ly/2jG3tT3>

What does a Harvard Business School study say about SMART trash? <http://hbs.me/2jy6Opw>

Information from @ConnDEEP on SMART Trash & how it can reduce trash & increase : <http://bit.ly/2kbhJ9g>

Survey of residents in SMART trash programs finds them popular & effective: <http://bit.ly/2jnv76c>

Study by AMERIPEN finds that SMART Trash aka extremely effective at reducing trash: <http://bit.ly/2kdb2g1>

### **CT Trash Crisis and DEEP**

Here's a great website about the Trash Crisis in CT & how SMART could help West Hartford: <http://smartrashwh.com/> #WestHartford

We face a Trash Crisis in CT, & #WestHartford looking at ways to reduce trash: <http://bit.ly/2kbmLDi>

The @ConnDEEP CT Statewide Solid Waste Mgmt Plan outlines the trash crisis & why we must all work to reduce waste: <http://bit.ly/2kbGbrx>

In this press release, @ConnDEEP explains why aging infrastructure & rising costs mean CT must reduce trash: <http://bit.ly/2kbBb6t>

### **Case Studies and Successful SMART Implementations**

Brattleboro, VT started its SMART trash system in 2015, & cut trash by 60%: <http://bit.ly/2jcczLh>

Brewer, ME says SMART trash a “resounding success” <http://bit.ly/21VMGMA>

Eliot, ME cut trash 56% with SMART trash: <http://bit.ly/2kb55aJ>

Waterville, ME cut trash 54% and saved money with SMART trash: <http://bit.ly/2kBevgs>

Vernon, VT cut trash 59% with SMART trash: <http://bit.ly/2kb4lmg>

Hanson, MA doubles its recycling rate with SMART trash: <http://bit.ly/1Vwn1q9>

Sandwich, MA cuts trash 49% & nearly doubles with SMART trash: <http://bit.ly/1U9oIfS>

The @BangorDailyNews explains how ME towns & cities use SMART trash to cut trash, boost , & save \$\$: <http://bit.ly/1NR26sU>

SMART Trash is good for the budget-conscious, says this article in Frederick, MD @FredNewsPost: <http://bit.ly/1qpykoG>

SMART trash’s positive incentives in Worcester, MA: <http://bit.ly/2jxnYnr>

CBS Boston discusses the popularity of SMART trash in MA: <http://cbsloc.al/11WEly2>

Dartmouth, MA used SMART to cut trash by almost 60%, & received #sustainability award for its success: <http://bit.ly/2jFdpMw>

SMART Trash Case Study 1: Asland, MA cut trash 33% <http://bit.ly/2jenROY>

SMART Trash Case Study 2: Worcester, MA cut trash 47% <http://bit.ly/2kC43RY>

SMART Trash Case Study 3: Malden, MA cut trash 49% <http://bit.ly/2kCwtiR>

SMART Trash Case Study 4: Natick, MA cut trash 35% <http://bit.ly/2kceeQC>

SMART Trash Case Study 5: Sanford, ME cut trash 40%+...twice <http://bit.ly/2jG4hYc>

SMART Trash Case Study 6: Dartmouth, MA cut trash 59% <http://bit.ly/2kC524C>

SMART Trash Case Study 7: Waterville, ME used SMART to pay for curbside : <http://bit.ly/2jeswjX>

### **International SMART Programs**

SMART Trash overseas: South Korea uses a version of SMART & other solutions to get rate to 80%  
<http://bit.ly/1NOMISZ>

SMART Trash overseas: Taiwan & it's version of SMART trash: <http://on.wsj.com/2jFa5B5>