

TIME TO TALK TRASH!

WASTE WORKING GROUP, SUSTAINABLE WH COMMISSION



SUSTAINABLE WH COMMISSION

WASTE WORKING GROUP



INTRODUCTION

E ECONOMICS
E ENVIRONMENT
E EQUITY

WASTE CRISIS

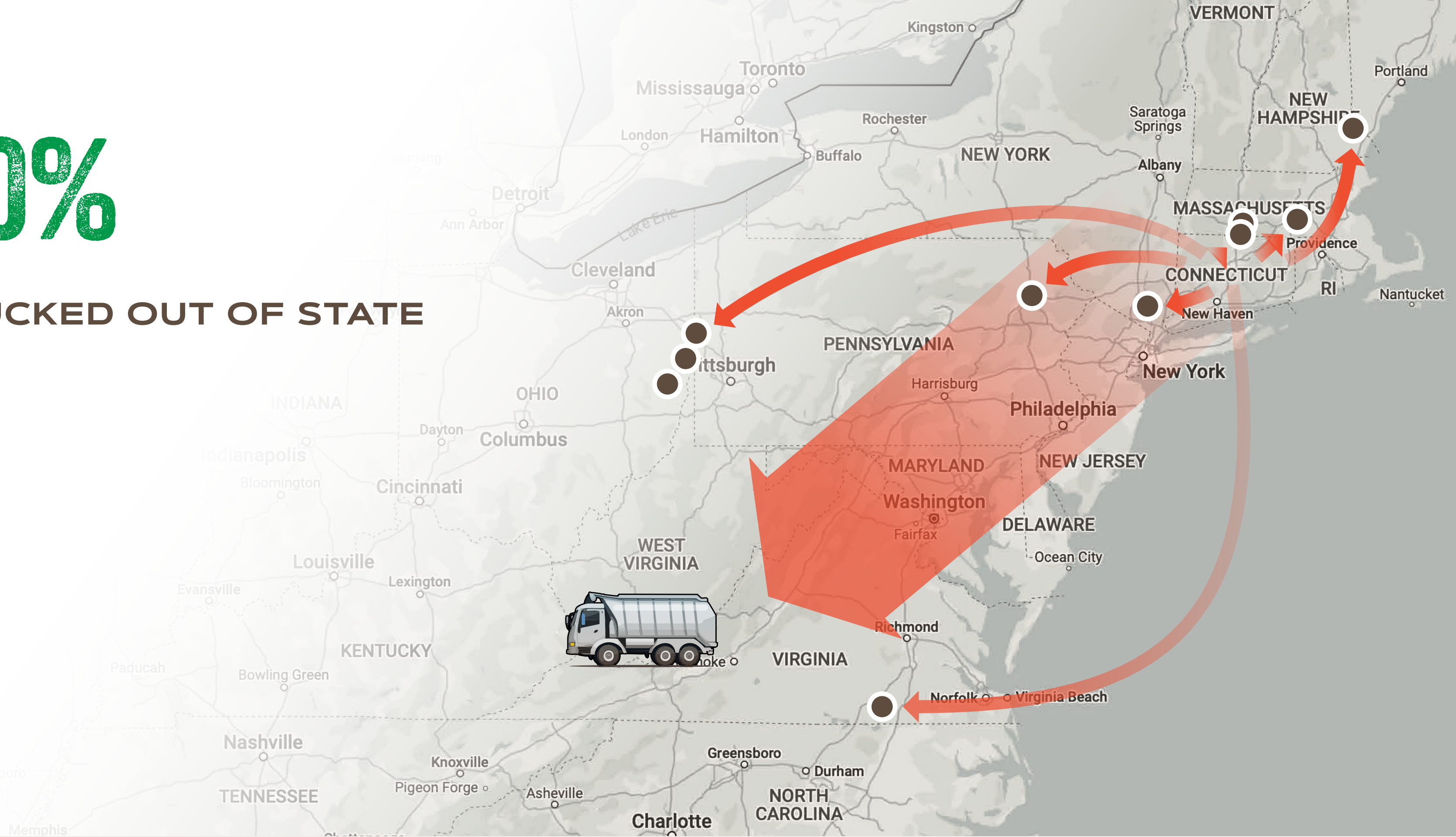
OUR MOST URGENT SUSTAINABILITY ISSUE:

**NOT ENOUGH SPACE
FOR THE WASTE
WE CREATE**

THE PROBLEM

40%

TRUCKED OUT OF STATE



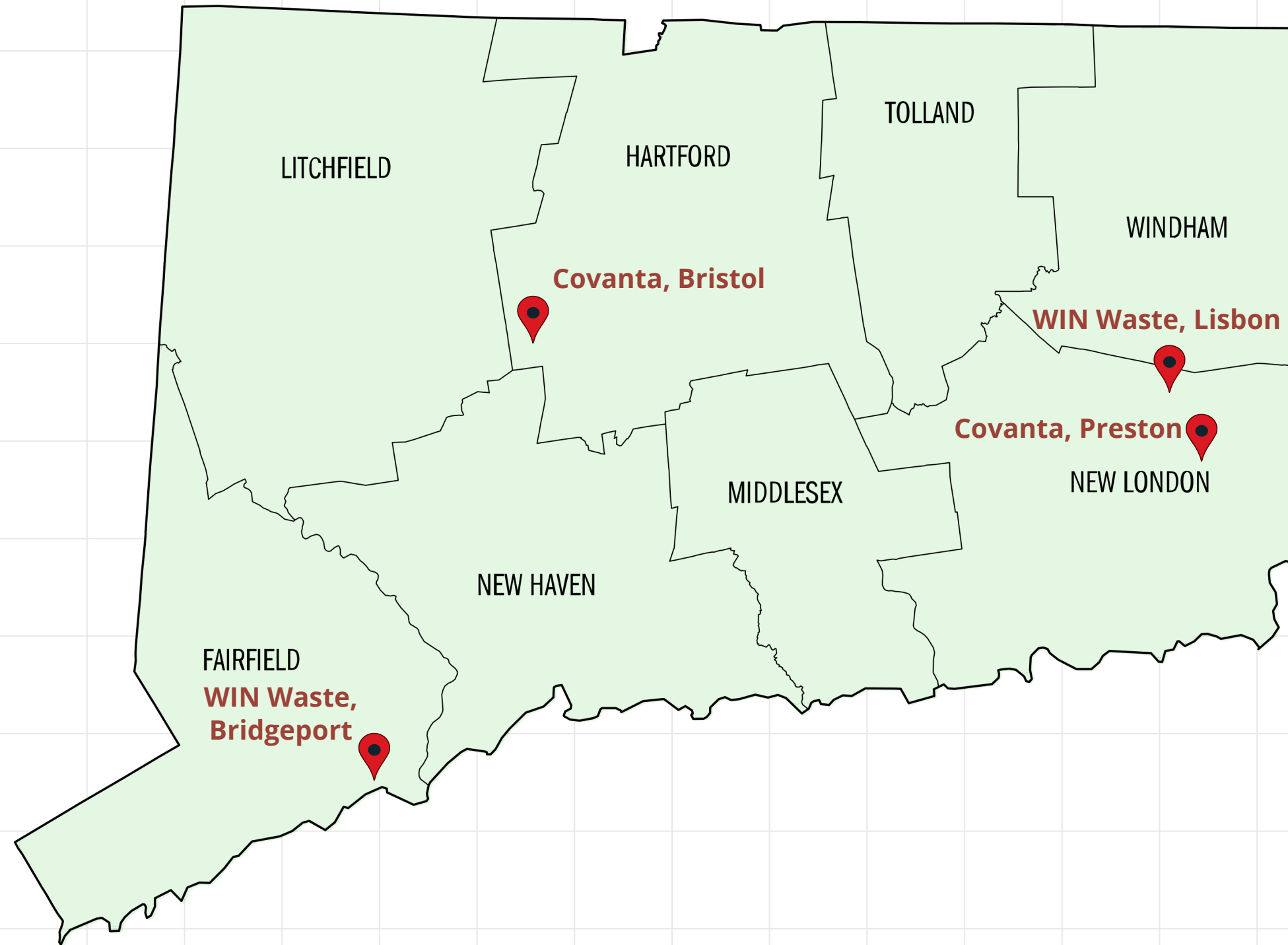
THE PROBLEM



THE PROBLEM

60%

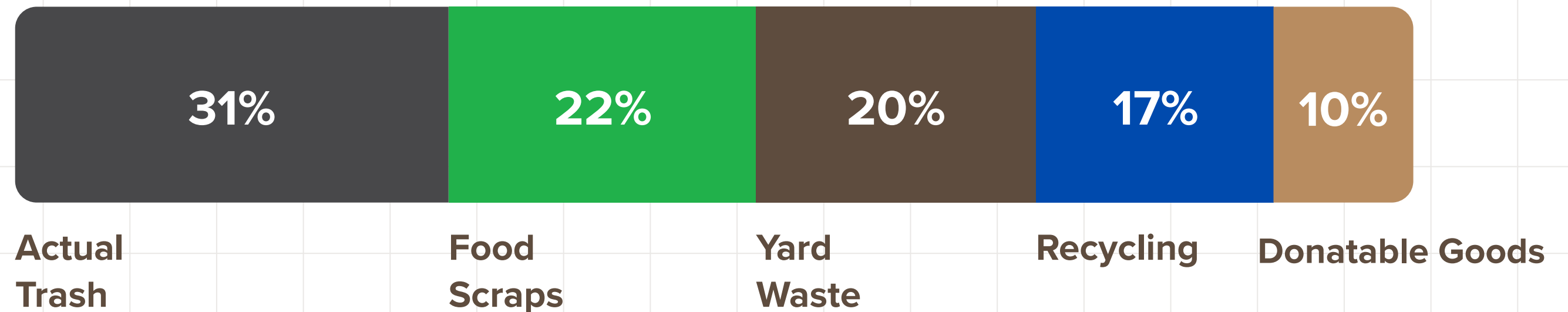
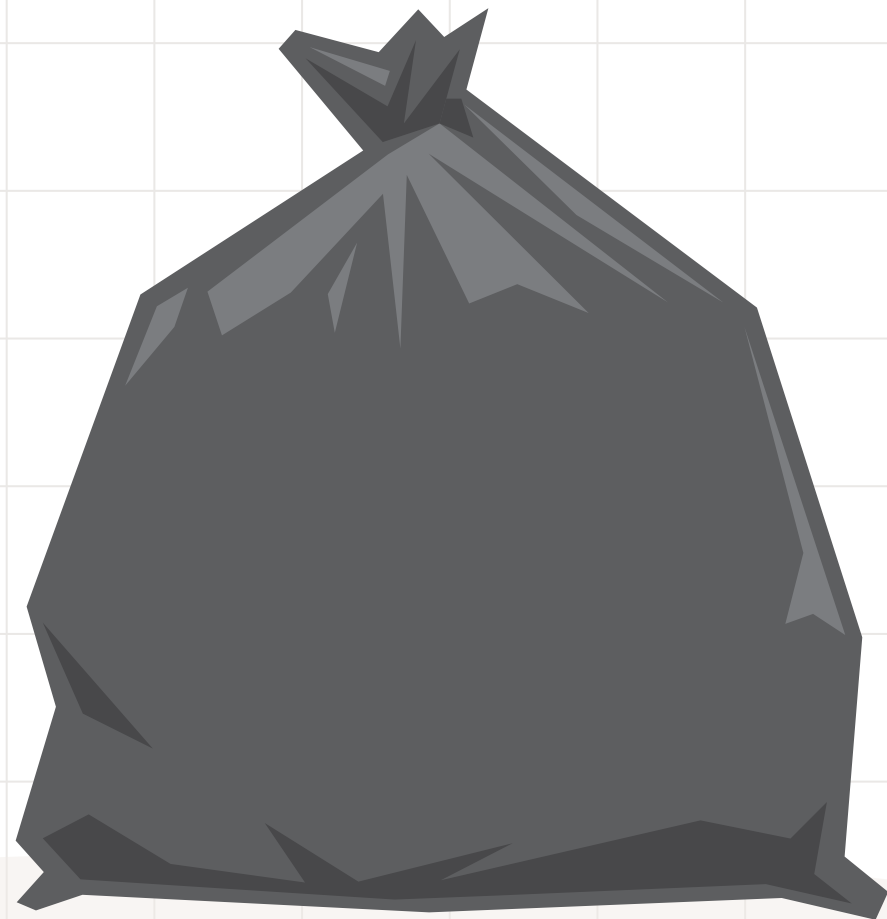
IN-STATE



THE PROBLEM

WASTED WASTE

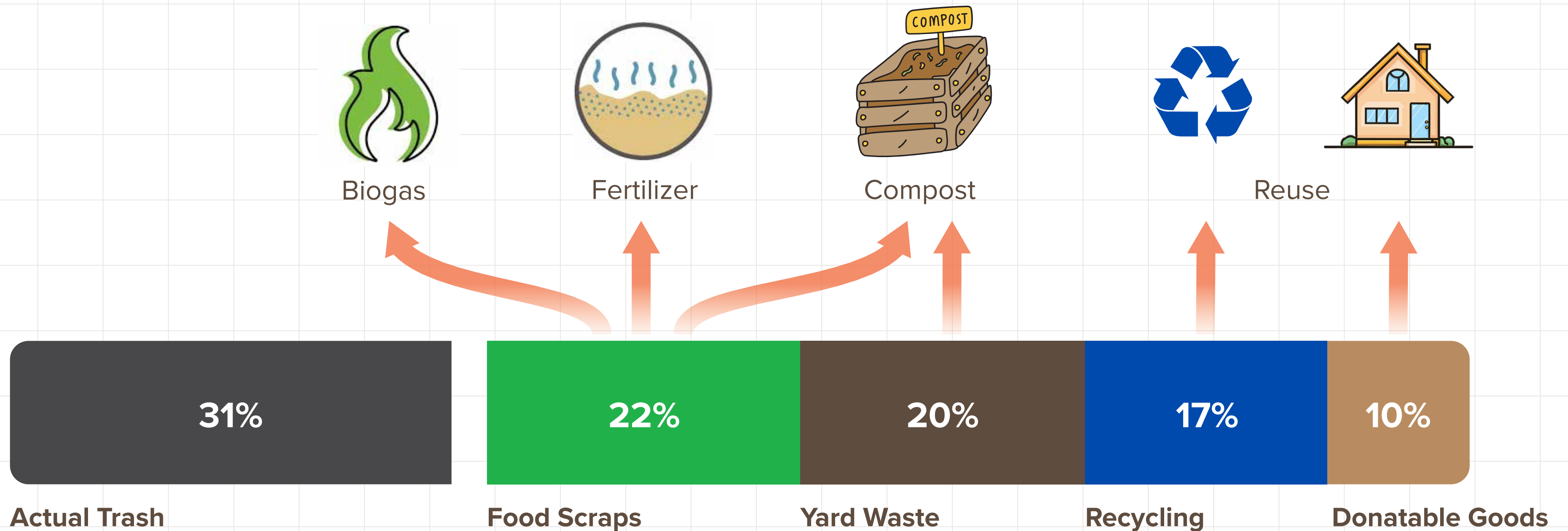
ANATOMY OF A TRASH BAG



**69% OF WHAT GOES INTO TRASH BAGS
SHOULDN'T BE THERE**

THE PROBLEM

WASTED WASTE



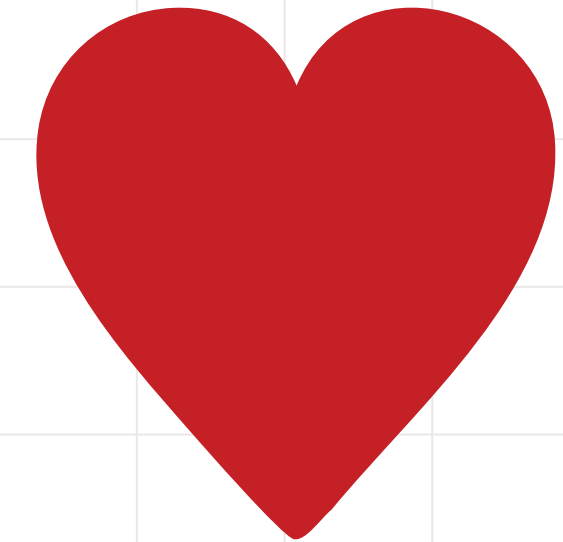
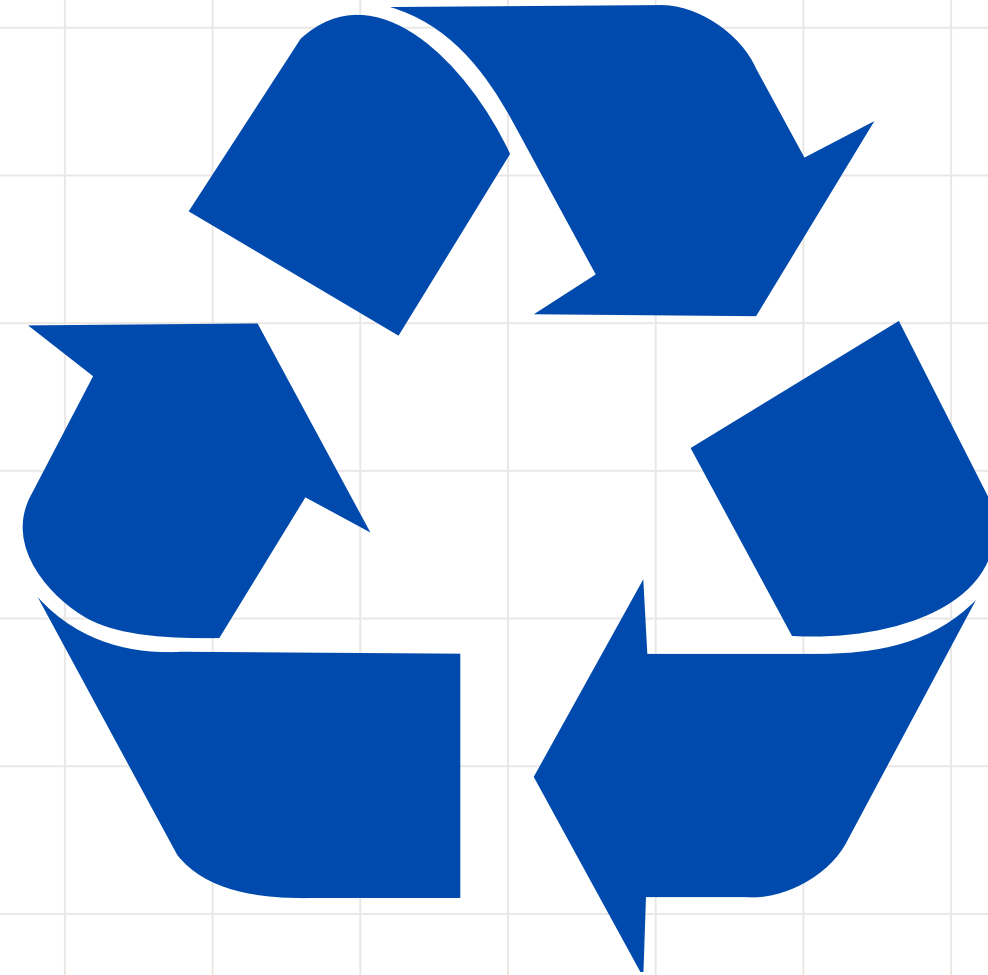
THE PROBLEM



THE PROBLEM

24%

WH RECYCLING RATE



**BUT PEOPLE CARE
AND WANT SOLUTIONS**

THE PROBLEM

ECONOMICS

SUPPLY & DEMAND

tip fees up 62% over past 10 years

UTILITIES HAVE TO BE PAID FOR

no flexibility in the budget

TRASH IS A PUBLIC BAD

taxpayers want to pay for public goods

THE PROBLEM

ENVIRONMENT

NOTHING BECOMES COMPOST IN A LANDFILL

landfills are designed for storage, not decomposition

LANDFILLS EMIT TOXIC METHANE

reducing food waste ranked #1 out of 93 global solutions for reversing climate change

INCINERATORS HAVE BYPRODUCTS

leftover ash is landfilled, and facilities emit noise and air pollution

THE PROBLEM

EQUITY

"AWAY" IS A PLACE

It's someone's home, usually near marginalized communities

WH AFFECTS ITS NEIGHBORS

It's a regional game of musical chairs

TRASH IS A UTILITY

Paying for what you use is fair

THE PROBLEM

CHANGE

TIME FOR A TRANSITION



WORKING TOGETHER

KEEPS COSTS DOWN FOR EVERYONE



THE SOLUTION

MORLEY PILOT PROGRAM

FOOD SCRAP DIVERSION + UNIT-BASED PRICING

THE SOLUTION

Metering individual usage using designated bags
“UBP Lite” (no cost thus far)

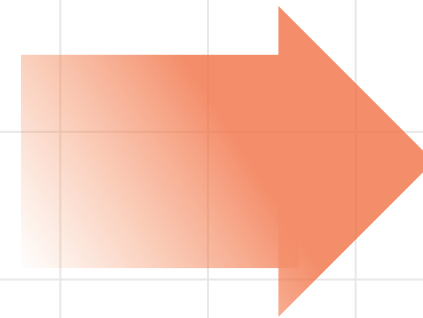


THE SOLUTION

SORTING PROPERLY:



Before: 10 regular bags



After: 2 UBP bags, 1 food scrap bag, recyclables

THE SOLUTION

UBP



VS



**TWICE THE
POPULATION,
HALF THE TRASH**

TRADITIONAL

UBP

THE SOLUTION

FOOD SCRAP DIVERSION

- \$97/TON TO DISPOSE AS TRASH
- \$61/TON TO DISPOSE AS FOOD SCRAP



THE SOLUTION

UBP + FOOD SCRAP DIVERSION

A WINNING COMBINATION FOR WASTE REDUCTION



THE SOLUTION

RESULTS

PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS PRODUCED HALF THE TRASH!

Non-Participant

38 lbs/wk

Pilot Participant

19 lbs/wk

THE SOLUTION

90% POSITIVE FEEDBACK

- I am paying a lot more attention to what I recycle
- I hadn't realized how much food I throw away
- I only throw away one bag a week now
- My trash is less stinky
- I love the program
- I had always wanted to try composting
- We really like it

- Took a few weeks to get used to but much easier than the way we did stuff before
- Marvelous
- Love the program. Hardly use garbage disposal
- Can't believe how much (food) we were wasting. We really like it.
- The program has been great and we have definitely reduced our non-food trash.

- We have no trouble sorting out our food scraps and I do feel like I'm taking the trash out less.
- I feel like we are wasting less food because we are aware of it.
- Once you get used to it it's easy to do.
- I'm not good with change but this was an easy change
- We already have very high taxes
- Too much plastic
- It's just one more thing the town asks us to do.

THE SOLUTION

FLEXIBLE

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR NEEDS

- ECONOMIC HARDSHIP
- ADULT DIAPERS
- TRIPLETS



THE SOLUTION

TOWN-WIDE PILOT

ONE-YEAR TRIAL (FUNDED BY DEEP):



THE SOLUTION



**1 FREE
TRASH BAG/WK.**
(15 gallon, orange)



**1 FREE
FOOD SCRAP BAG/WK.**
(8 gallon, green)



**1 FREE
FOOD SCRAP PAIL**
(and weekly collection)

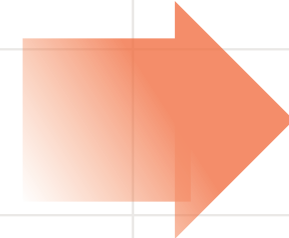
AFFORDABLE ADDITIONAL TRASH BAGS (IF NEEDED)

THE SOLUTION

AFFORDABLE



10 BAGS/WK. @ \$0.12/BAG* =
\$1.25



1 ORANGE BAG/WK. @ \$1/BAG =
\$1

THE SOLUTION

AFFORDABLE

NO NEW TAXES



1-YEAR PILOT: COSTS COVERED BY DEEP

GOING FORWARD: SELF-FUNDING

(Operates outside the general fund, not a revenue source)

THE SOLUTION

WE'VE TALKED TRASH BEFORE

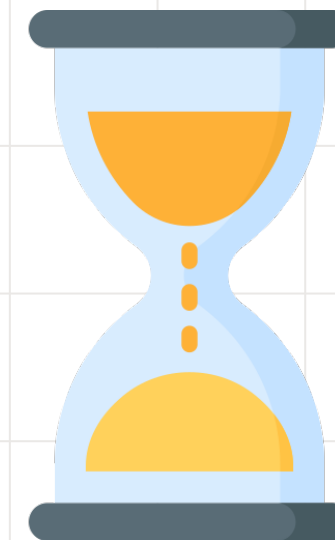
IN 2016 WEST HARTFORD DECIDED TO:



STUDY



**TRY OTHER
SOLUTIONS**



WAIT

WHY NOW?

WE STUDIED...



- MULTIPLE CITIES (HALF OF MA)
- DECADES (OVER 30 YEARS)
- WH PILOT (SUCCESSFUL)

UBP CONSISTENTLY CUTS TRASH IN HALF

WHY NOW?

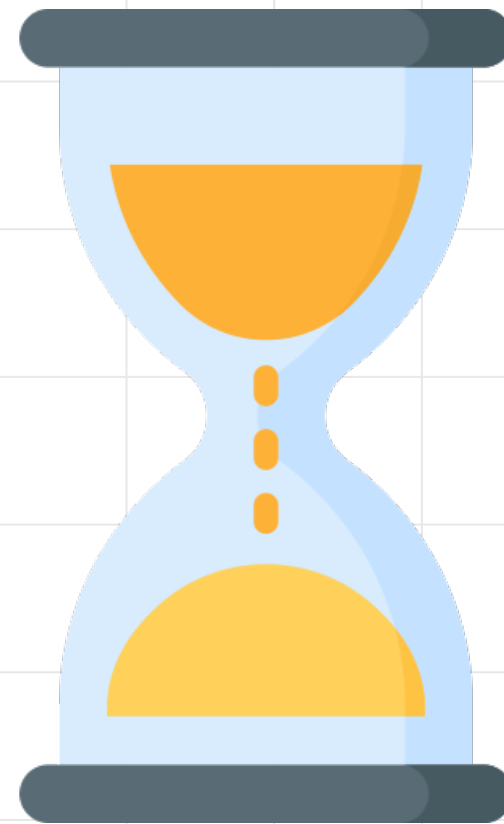
WE TRIED OTHER SOLUTIONS...



- **ADDED RECYCLING OF ELECTRONICS, PAINT, MATTRESSES, ETC.**
- **YARD WASTE COLLECTION (2019)**
- **RECYCLING COORDINATOR**
- **WEEKLY RECYCLING COLLECTION (2016-2019)**

WHY NOW?

WE WAITED...



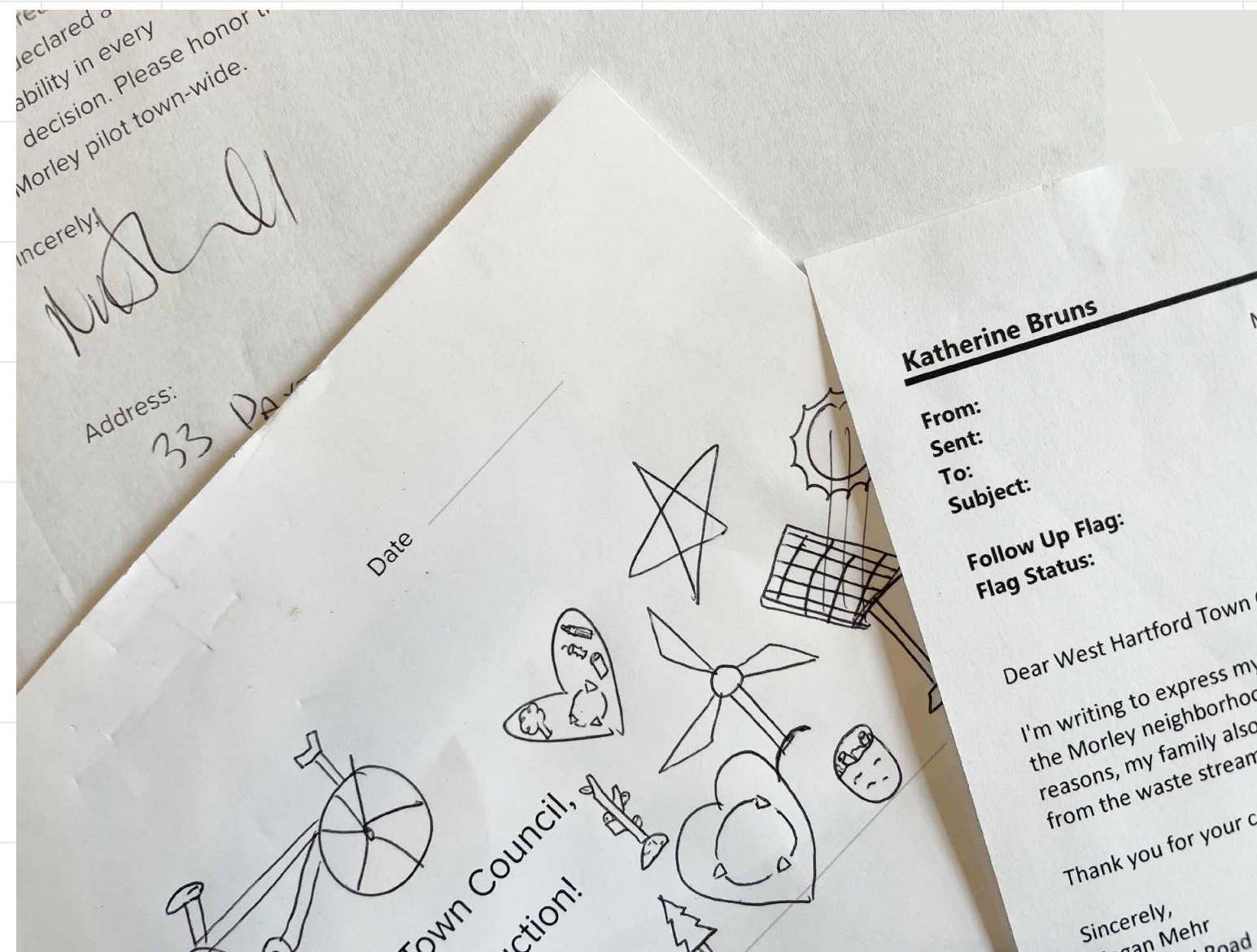
WHY NOW?

NO WASTE REDUCTION



WHY NOW?

THIS TIME IS DIFFERENT



WHY NOW?

LET'S CUT OUR TRASH IN HALF!

**ASK TOWN COUNCIL TO EXPAND THE
UBP + FOOD SCRAP PILOT.**



TOWN-WIDE ONE-YEAR PILOT DECISION JUNE 25

SUPPORT FAIR TRASH REDUCTION



WRITE OUR
TOWN COUNCIL



TOWN-WIDE ONE-YEAR PILOT DECISION JUNE 25

FAQS

COST CONCERNS

Would this program raise my taxes?

No. The one-year pilot is funded by DEEP, and a fully developed program would be self-sustaining, separate from the general fund.

Would this program introduce new costs to renters?

No. Renters already buy their own bags, and their landlords already pass on waste disposal costs through rent fees.

What about an extra burden on young families or the elderly?

The Town will alleviate hardship in buying bags to any residents who request help.

WHY THIS PROGRAM?

Can't we just do food scrap diversion and not unit-based pricing?

Yes, but with no DEEP grant funding. And going forward, it would add a high-cost service without savings from waste reduction. UBP pays for both.

Can't I just put food scraps down my in-sink garbage disposal instead?

No. It gums up the works at MDC.

Why doesn't the pilot program use biodegradable bags?

Quantum Biopower's machinery limitations don't permit the larger bags used in this program. (Blue Earth customers' bags were smaller.)

Can't we pay by weight instead?

No. WH doesn't have a transfer station, and weights measures on moving vehicles are not a viable option with existing infrastructure.

Why can't we just build more waste facilities?

CT won't build any new facilities unless or until we come into compliance with existing laws around trash reduction.

HOW WOULD IT WORK?

When would it start?

Fall 2024.

Do I still use my big green barrel?

Yes. The only change is to put your food in the little green pail.

Where do I buy the bags?

At supermarkets nearby, just like regular trash bags.

What if I already subscribe to Blue Earth?

Existing Blue Earth subscriptions would dissolve, and food scrap service would be free as part of the new program.

Where would the food scraps go?

Quantum Biopower in Southington (creates biogas and fertilizer)

Would I have to use the green plastic bag in my food scrap pail?

No. Go naked and get the environmental gold medal!

Would I have to use the orange plastic bags in my trash?

Yes. This is how you pay for your usage.

WHO ARE THE PLAYERS?

Is the Waste Working Group paid by anyone?

No. All members of the Waste Working Group and the Sustainable WH Commission serve on a volunteer basis.

Does Waste Zero profit on this program?

Yes. They're contracted by DEEP to assist WH with program design and implementation.

Waste Zero does sell the bags, but WH is under no obligation to use them for this program.

How would Blue Earth Compost be affected by this program?

Food scrap hauling would go out to bid, and Blue Earth would be a part of that process.

POTENTIAL ISSUES

How would compliance be managed?

Monitoring will be handled in-house through a combination of cameras on trucks and physical inspections.

Is illegal dumping a problem in other UBP communities?

No. A common worry but a very uncommon problem.

What about items too large to fit in the bags?

Payne's currently provides bulky waste pickup upon request. Additionally, plans are underway to expand the materials accepted at the Town's recycling center on Brixton Street.

Won't this make the bear situation worse?

No. The same amount of food will be going out as before. If anything, bear activity would be reduced, as many residents will keep their food scraps in their odor-resistant pail in their kitchen during the week. Also, if bears get into the pail outside, you don't have to clean up an entire trash bin full of other stuff strewn around.

Won't this attract more rats?

No. Please see "bears" above.

RECYCLING

Why can't we go back to weekly recycling?

Because we had no waste reduction the last time we did (2016-2019).

How can I reduce my trash at home?

Avoid single-use products. Minimize packaging. Recycle, compost, and donate.

What can I do when businesses use so much packaging?

Speak up and ask that they use recyclable containers instead. Decline the bag at checkout. Remember your reusable grocery bags. Try to buy products with less packaging. Shop used.

Where can I take textiles now that the pink bag program is gone?

The Town's recycling center on Brixton St. accepts textiles, electronics, metal, mattresses, paint, books, and more!

Will this increase recycling contamination?

No. Contamination rates actually go down after switching to UBP.

OTHER UBP COMMUNITIES

Who else is doing this?

Half of Massachusetts, all of Minnesota, and many more communities across the nation and the world.

Would West Hartford be the only town in CT to do UBP?

No. Stonington has used UBP for over 20 years, and produced half the trash per capita as West Hartford. Guilford, Kent, and others have also chosen to implement a permanent program.

Is Middletown still doing their UBP program?

Yes. It is still active, and is located in the central business district.