

How Well DO YOU Recycle? - Survey Results

The Recycling Incentive Committee thanks all who took the time to complete the survey this summer. The results provided the committee with invaluable information about trash management in our community. The data compiled represents the recycling habits of 274 Old Lyme residences. Many respondents also took the time to comment on matters such as our current collection services, and suggest ways to help increase recycling efforts. Results of the survey are bulleted and summarized the by the committee.

According to the survey:

- 70% felt they recycle all the time and utilize the green carts for recycling. 14% requested larger recycling carts. The majority recycle paper, cardboard, newspaper, junk mail, aluminum, plastics, glass and milk cartons.
- Although a low percentage actually use the transfer station, most are aware of services offered. The most common items brought to the transfer station are fluorescent light bulbs, small appliances and electronics, scrap metal and bulky waste.
- 72% are aware of the Household Hazardous Waste facility in Essex.
- 91% routinely place trash in the blue cart and the majority leaves yard waste in the yards. Trash included plastic bags, shipping materials, and food waste.
- The majority does not compost but there was interest in learning more about composting.
- 61% were unaware that Old Lyme's trash related annual costs are over 1 million dollars a year. Much of this cost is related to the weight of our trash.
- Currently, a household that does not produce much trash pays the same rate for trash disposal as one who produces a lot of trash. About 50% support examining ways to manage this problem which could include paying for trash based on how much you throw away.

It is evident that we are an informed community making reasonable efforts to reduce trash. However, results also indicate the need for greater community and visitor awareness of the local recycling program and the state mandated goal to reach 60% recycling of all household waste by the year 2024. The Recycling Incentive Committee has asked the Board of Selectmen to develop a charge for a standing waste management committee and support a budget for educational programs which focus on increasing recycling and reducing trash.