



# CITY OF CONCORD

*New Hampshire's Main Street™*  
General Services Department

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## **(Past)**

I want to start my comments by sharing a history of Concord's experience with solid waste management. As you may know, Concord was a founding member of what was called the Concord Cooperative. The Cooperative was a group of over two dozen municipalities that banded together their solid waste tonnage in an effort with Wheelabrator Inc. to build a waste-to-energy incinerator in Penacook, NH. This was the framework of an agreement that ended in 2014.

The City's experience through much of this agreement was incredibly favorable. For many years, Concord and other Coop towns enjoyed tipping fees that were significantly below the going market rate, saving millions of dollars in disposal costs over the years. That changed however, as the original agreement came to a sunset and Concord was able to find a better trash disposal agreement outside of what the Cooperative could offer to extend the agreement.

This new agreement, one that Concord still remains in, was again unique in its term. We signed a 10 year agreement with Casella Waste for both trash and recycling that ends in 2024. This, once again, has served us well because of the term of the contract.

On the recycling side, in 2004, the City of Concord established a single stream collection method for recycling. I won't spend time rehashing the pros and cons of single stream, just note that from a collection standpoint, it has served us well operationally. That said, its issues are well established and recognized by the City.

## **(Present)**

Presently, the City of Concord remains in a favorable position for the time being. The City implemented a Pay-As-You-Throw program in 2009 whereby residents must buy City-issued trash bags priced \$1.25/\$2.50. The revenues from these bags are used to offset the cost of collection and disposal. In this arrangement, the idea is that because the resident is paying a direct user fee for trash disposal, recycling is collected for free as a means of easing the

financial burden on the resident. Our program of PAYT and single stream collection combined have helped bring the curbside collection recycling rate to a respectable 35%

This model and pricing, you may be thinking, only works as it is currently conceived and priced, because recyclable processing in our current contract is still done at no charge. And that of course brings us to the future...

**(Future)**

So the future for us is unknown. The challenges that are in our minds at the City are two-fold; one is rapidly increasing tip fees for solid waste disposal. This is a reaction to diminishing capacity at existing disposal sites in the state coupled with increasing out-of-state pressure from decreased capacity in Massachusetts.

The second is the unprecedented shift of risk from recycling companies to municipalities due to the upheaval in the markets for recyclable commodities. This will necessarily translate into increased costs for City of Concord residents at the end of the current contract term in 2024.

It is not clear what exactly we as a City can expect in the next few years but it is our hope that this committee is a step in the direction of increasing State support as municipalities go through a significant upheaval in what has been a relatively stable public service in the past.

Thank you.