

Town of West Hartford

50 South Main Street
West Hartford, CT 06107-2431

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Public Meetings to Explore West Hartford’s “Trash Challenges” and Potential Solutions

West Hartford, CT (January 9, 2017) -- The Town of West Hartford will be holding three public meetings in the coming weeks to share information about the “trash crisis” in Connecticut, its impact on West Hartford, and how a Save Money and Reduce Trash (SMART) program might be able to help. Town officials are also interested in hearing public input, and providing a forum in which residents can ask questions about the trash issue and SMART program.

The meetings are scheduled for the following times and locations:

- Jan. 18 at 7:00 pm: Town Hall Auditorium
- Jan. 25th at 7:00 pm: King Philip Auditorium
- Feb 1st at 2 pm: Elmwood Community Center

Each year, Connecticut businesses and residents generate 3.4 million tons of trash. About 2.4 million tons of that is residential trash, the vast majority of which is incinerated in five burn facilities around the state. Those facilities are running out of capacity, and the state is working to dramatically reduce the amount of trash generated.

The goal is to divert 60% of waste into recycling, composting, or reuse by 2024 (currently, CT diverts 35%). Otherwise, CT would have to ship up to one-third of its garbage out of state by 2024, which would drive up disposal costs by 60%.

West Hartford is one of several cities and towns working closely with the CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) to explore solutions. The most promising solution is a program known as SMART, which stands for Save Money and Reduce Trash.

According to John Phillips, Director of Public Works, “SMART programs comes in various forms, but all share one thing in common: they charge residents for trash service based on the amount of waste they generate.” Phillips adds, “This treats trash like other utilities (such as gas, electricity, or water) and creates an economic incentive to reduce, reuse, and recycle.”

Phillips said that SMART programs are used extensively in New England, particularly in Massachusetts and Maine, with some examples in New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New York State, and elsewhere. “We’ve been working with DEEP and a waste reduction consultant to understand their impacts,” he said, adding that waste reductions of 44% or more are quite common with SMART programs.

At the upcoming public meetings, the Town will have a number of people on hand to present information about SMART and answer residents’ questions. Attendees will include officials from West

Hartford's Public Works Department, as well as representatives from CT DEEP, waste reduction consultant, WasteZero, and officials from other cities who have firsthand experience with SMART.

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