

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Albany County - New York

RECYCLING OFFICE

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August 7, 2012

Transfer Station Survey – August 2012

Summary:

A one-page survey for users of the Town's Rupert Road Transfer Station was developed in early July 2012 by the Recycling Coordinator under the direction of the Highway Superintendent. Free consultation on survey design and methodologies was provided by a Research Associate from the SUNY Research Foundation.

Surveys were completed anonymously and in person by Transfer Station users during the week of July 31 – August 3, 2012. Ninety six percent of the 459 Transfer Station customers that week chose to complete the survey, resulting in 439 completed surveys. This is a very representative sample of the households that utilize the facility regularly.

Results of initial analysis are presented in detail below. But in summary, there is wide consensus from survey respondents that they feel the Transfer Station is an important Town asset that provides a vital service, for which there is no real viable alternative. Numerous comments detail how survey respondents feel that private haulers are an unaffordable option to them, and in some of the more outlying areas of Town, only one hauler—and reportedly, in some cases no haulers—are willing to service their address, if such service was desired.

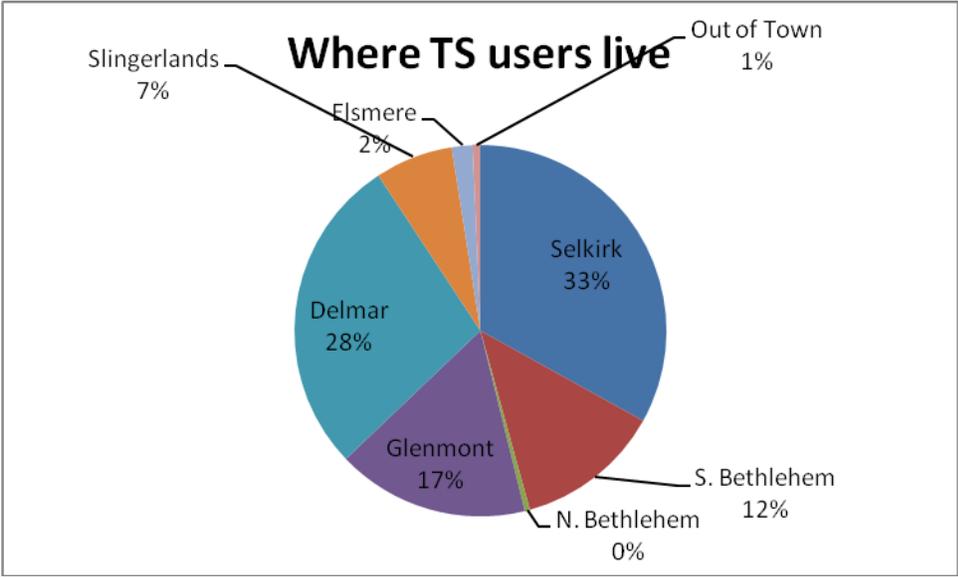
The Transfer Station (and Compost Facility, which was frequently mentioned in survey comments here as well) are two facilities which many regular users see as primary benefits realized from their tax dollars.

A significant majority of survey respondents would be willing to pay higher fees and/or see reduced hours/days per week at the facility, if necessary, to keep it open. This is detailed below.

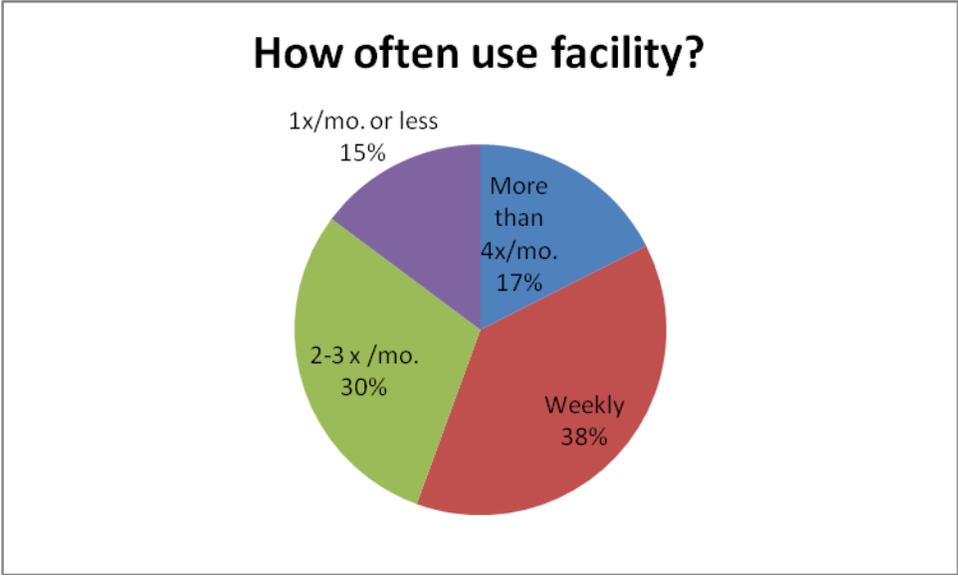
Results:

1) Where do you live

You can see the distribution in the following chart. The largest group of Transfer Station (TS) users live in Selkirk or South Bethlehem, but significant percentages live in Delmar and other hamlets as well.

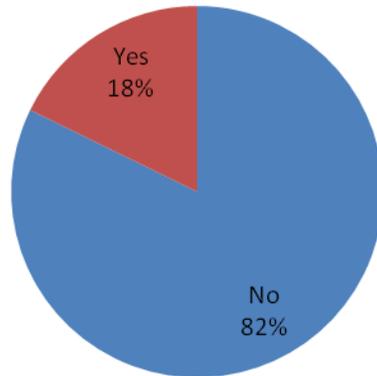


2) How often do you use the Transfer Station?



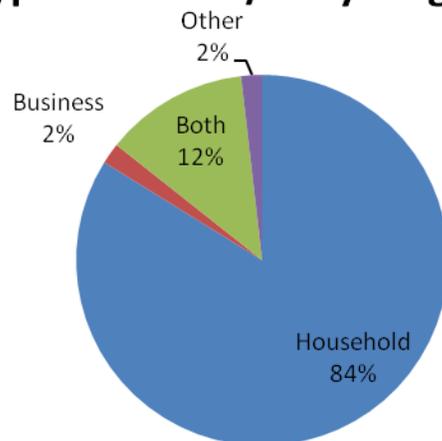
3) Does a private hauler currently pick up trash at your home/business?

Private Hauler Currently?



4) Do you primarily use the Transfer Station for (what type of waste/recycling):

Type of Waste/Recycling to TS



5) If the TS was closed, what would you do with the waste and/or recycling you currently bring to the facility?

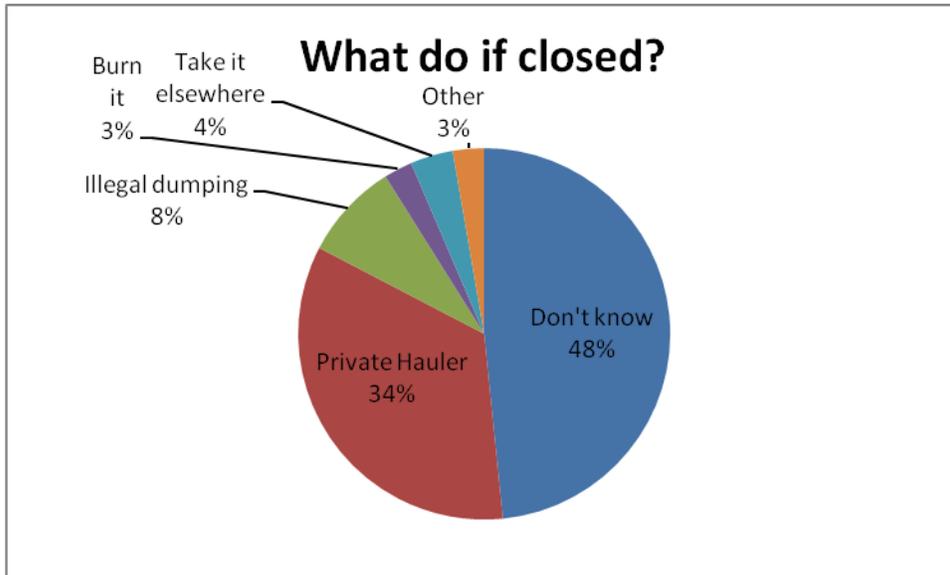
As you can see from the chart below, almost 50% of respondents don't know what they would do if the facility closed; many added they don't have any other affordable or viable options.

Of those who said they would need to use a private hauler, many added that they would be "forced to," but are adamantly opposed to this. Many mentioned what they consider to be a monopolistic waste hauling situation in town.

It's significant that 11% of survey respondents admit they would dump it illegally or burn it on their property (which is also illegal). While some of the illegal dumpers are probably joking ("dump it at Town Hall" or "dump it on the Supervisor's lawn"), if this percentage

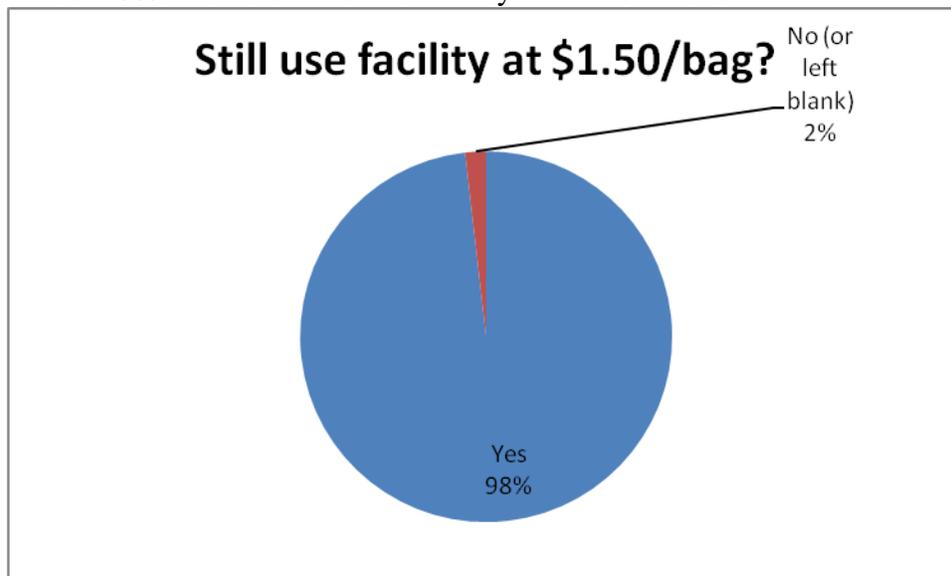
admits to the sentiment in writing, there may be a larger percentage of people who would dispose of their waste illegally than who will admit to it.

A significant number of the “take it elsewhere” folks mentioned other Town’s transfer stations, at greater expense...that would also be illegal by most Town’s laws, however. There are a couple of legal options in Albany and Troy, but at \$75+ minimum charge for residential waste--and no putrescible waste allowed--these aren’t viable options for the majority of residents.



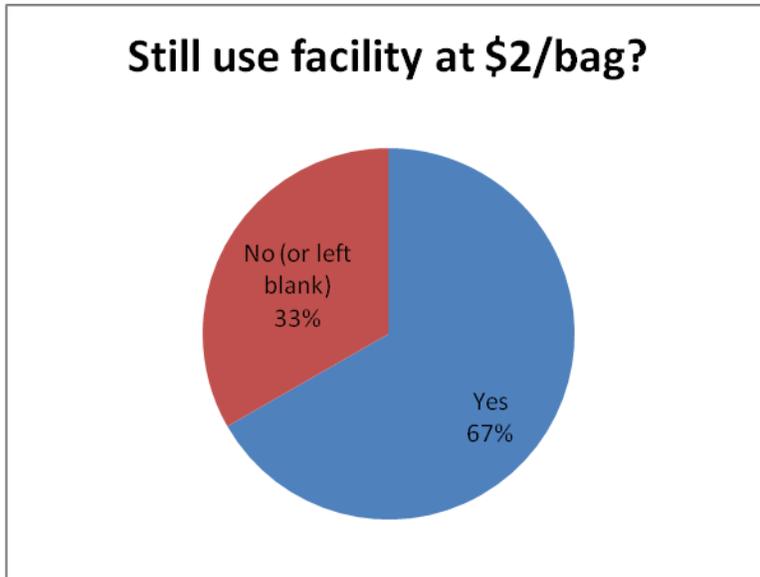
6a) Would you still use the facility if the per bag/container disposal fee increased from \$1.00 to \$1.50?

Almost 100% would still use the facility with this increase!



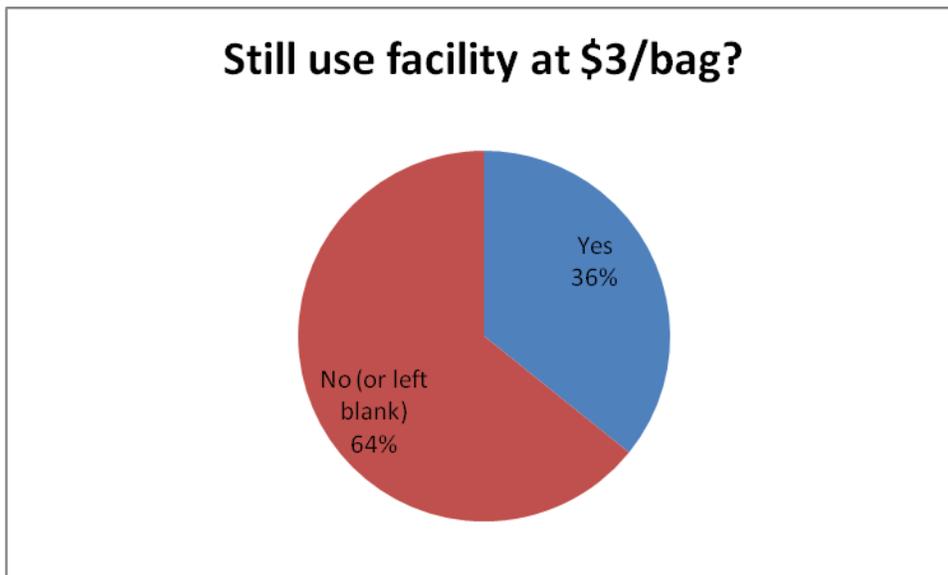
6b) ...at \$2/bag

A significant majority would still use the facility at double the per bag/container rate.



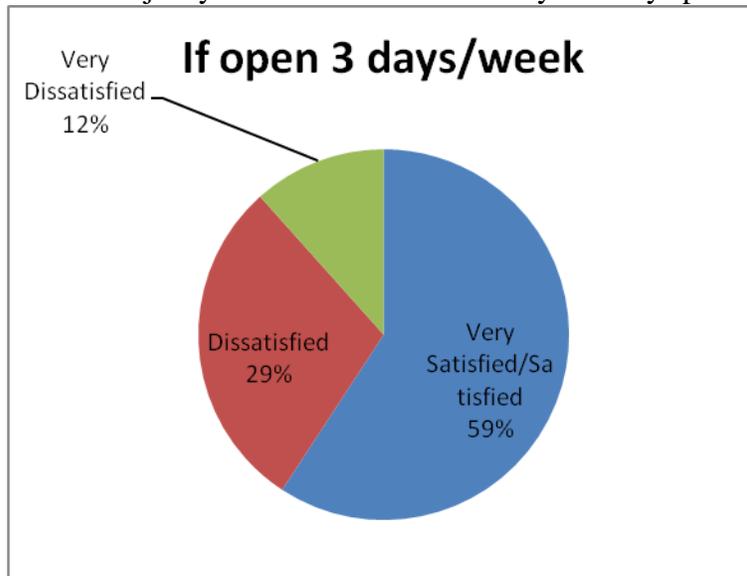
6c) ...at \$3/bag

This price point is almost the reverse as far as popularity from \$2/bag.

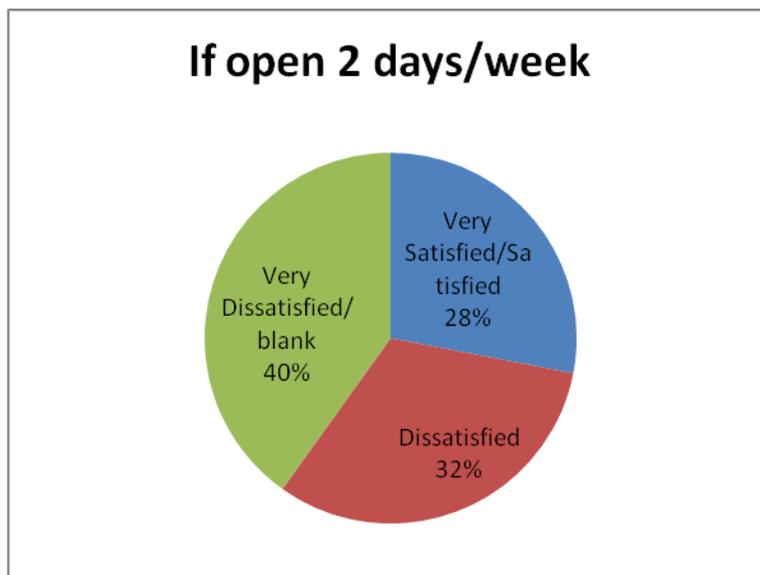


7) **If the Transfer Station was open 3 days per week instead of 5 days/week, would you be:**

A clear majority would still use the facility at 3/days per week.



8) **If the Transfer Station was open 2 days per week instead of 5 days/week, would you be:**



9) **Other ideas/comments:**

This write-in question is more difficult to summarize statistically, but frequent answers to this question included a plea to please keep the facility open, reiteration of increasing the disposal

fees and/or reducing hours (but MANY people mentioned keeping it open on Saturday no matter what), descriptions of how valuable the facility is to them, and various ideas for reducing costs.

Here is a sampling of some of the more frequent comments:

Need to keep it open on Saturdays

Close something else but not this

Advertise it more. You'd be surprised how many people are unaware.

Charge for annual permit

I would be extremely resentful if I no longer had this option.

Cut other departments

As a taxpayer I would like to use the transfer station

I'd bring my trash to Town Hall before I pay \$60 every two months for private hauler

Do not close this station. I would be very dissatisfied with town government

Charge all vehicles by weight.

Charge more

Charge commercial haulers and businesses more than residents