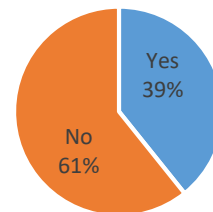


Transfer Station Survey
Ayer Board of Selectmen
November 13, 2018
By Scott Houde

The Board of Selectmen conducted a survey of residents for the feedback regarding the hours of the Ayer Transfer Station. The current transfer station hours are Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday 7am to 3pm. During the summer months, the hours move back one hour to 6am to 2pm. At the 2018 Annual Town Meeting, a Citizen's Petition passed requesting the Transfer Station be open until 3pm. Any changes to the hours at the Transfer Station requires agreement between the town and union. The purpose of this survey was to get feedback regarding the hours as collective bargaining begins for the union contract which expires June 30, 2019.

321 surveys were received in the two weeks it was available on Survey Monkey and hard copy at various locations in town. 293 (92%) of the respondents are current Transfer Station users. The remaining 26 (8%) who are not current users were asked to provide information of why they do not use the Transfer Station. Majority of the comments site affordability as a deterrent to usage. Other comments range from convenience of curbside pickup, inconvenience of the hours, and inability to bring trash to the Transfer Station.

Are you happy with the current hours?



Ayer's Transfer Station is open to the public 3 days for 21 hours per week. Comparing to 20 other communities in the area that provide similar services, the average hours per community is 3.6 days and 25.3 hours per week (*Analysis by L. Nehring*). Of 316 responses, 124 or 39.2% of respondents are happy with the current hours of the Transfer Station while 192 or 60.8% are unhappy with the hours. When

asked if residents want to increase the hours the transfer station is open to the public, 215 or 71% do not want to expand the hours.

Respondents were given options to provide guidance to the Board of Selectmen to move forward with potential new hours at the Transfer Station. 51 of the responses to the survey deviated from the provided answers

Preferred Options for Transfer Station hours	Responses	%
Eliminate the summer hour change and set the Transfer Station hours at 7-3 Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday.	119	45%
Have the Transfer Station open shorter on Wednesdays but longer each day Saturday and Sunday.	67	25%
Keep the hours we have in place now.	64	24%
Have the Transfer Station open shorter on Wednesdays and Sunday but longer on Saturday.	8	3%
Have the Transfer Station open until 3pm each day regardless of the opening time (note: this will incur additional cost)	6	2%
Total	264	

All one off responses removed

and are removed for this analysis. These account for 16% of total responses which cannot be adequately graphed. Of the 264 responses to the provided answers, 38% want to eliminate the summer hour shift and set the hours of 7am to 3pm year round. 21% wish to shorten the hours on Wednesday in favor of longer hour on the weekend days. 20% want the current hours, including the summer shift, in place. 3% wish to have shorter hours on Wednesday and Sunday while providing longer hours on Saturday. The remaining 2% wish to have the transfer station open until 3pm each day regardless of its opening time. This increases cost of the Transfer Station operating budget.

The survey allowed for comments from respondents. The replies are insightful and the Board will take these into consideration as we review the Transfer Station. The comments include support for return to 8am to 4pm hours, longer hours in the afternoon, closing the station for curbside pickup, and a theme that the station services should serve its customer's needs.

The Board of Selectmen thank everyone who participated in the survey. Insight is very helpful as we look to provide the services our residents want.

Survey Comments

Hours are fine with me. I have lived here for 10 years been using the transfer station ever since I moved here. No complaints about the days/hours. The guys there are great!
It is difficult for home owners to get waste/yard waste with 3pm. closing time. Have one worker at the Transfer Station instead of two. That is where you save money.
6 am - 2 pm should be bumped at least 1, preferably 2 hours ahead on days open.
8:00-4:00/9:00-5:00 would be excellent, at least for one of the weekend options to give a little later option without having to raise the fee.
90% OF THE PEOPLE LIKED THE HOURS OF 8-4....I DID A SURVEY 6 MONTHS AFTER THEY CHANGED THE HOURS TO 6-2 ..7-3 AND VERY FEW PEOPLE USED IT DURING THE EARLY HOURS....IF YOU HAVE TO BARGAIN WITH THE UNION THEN JUST TELL THEM YOU WILL NOT ENFORCE THE RULE OF THE EMPLOYEES BEING ON THEIR CELL PHONES OR COMPUTERS FOR PERSONAL BUSINESS DURING WORK HOURS. IT""S THE TOWN (NOT THE UNION) THAT SHOULD SET EMPLOYEE HOURS FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF THE RESIDENTS, NOT THE EMPLOYEE..
Also need to be able to purchase bags/tags at the dump
Also, trash gets caught in the wind and blows into the protected land behind the transfer station. Just thought you should know.

<p>Andrew and his staff work their tails off and are always friendly and professional. The current schedule is perfect and there is no need to expand hours or days of operation. The current hours allow Andrew and staff to efficiently ?clean up? after days the station is open to the public. Keep up the good work!</p> <p>Bill Adamson</p>
<p>Any possibility of changing the material of the bags? They seem to rip more easily than they used to.</p>
<p>As a family of 5 we have allot of trash and recycling materials - especially in the summer with cookouts. I feel that 24 hrs is perfect, but would recommend 8-4 on sat and sundays - Wed hours should be split for night hours (4/8) two nights a week. This would ensure we all can get to the transfer station.</p>
<p>Bring back the idea of curbside pickup. I think it failed because people thought public access to the dump would close if curb pickup passed. That would be the best way to make access more convenient for residents.</p>
<p>cindy test</p>
<p>Go back to 8 am - 4 pm Sun., Sat., Wed. We needed to show ID to purchase bag stickers. I can buy blue bags at Shaws/Groton with no Ayer ID! Vehicle stickers not consistently checked. Where can good used furniture be donated vs trashing at the end of the weekend?</p>
<p>Go back to the hours you had before when they were 8 - 4.</p>
<p>Hours start and stop wrong. Go back in fall open til 4:00.</p>
<p>How much MORE would additional hours cost? Ideally, Station would be open 7am to 4pm Wed, Sat, Sunday.</p> <p>We are willing to pay a bit more, through town tax levy that is spread out over everyone (not by increasing bag prices). Much like the athletic field override that just passed - the benefit is for a minority of residents, but we ALL helped to pay for it! Managing the TRansfer Station for the Residents IS an essential town service that, by RIGHT, should support residents (and serve to benefit the environment, with recycling!) .</p>
<p>I am in favor of any of the options above that lead to LATER hours open on the weekends. I do not use Wednesday at all, nor do I ever get to the transfer station before 9 am on the weekend. Getting my yard work underway to the point of having a load to take to the dump before 2 is a real struggle (I live alone). I am almost always tearing in at the last minute, holding up closure, and I feel like a burden.</p>
<p>I cannot see how any working person could get there on Wednesdays. So I do not want MORE hours. Just one day during the week open later to help workers. Open 10-5. 11-6 ?</p>
<p>I feel that the transfer station is not open enough. On the weekend i typically have plans out of town, and if i forget to drop, it""s one more week with trash on my porch - because who can go before work on Wednesdays?!</p> <p>Typical work schedules are Mon-Fri, 8-5p... so I feel that they should think of some evening hours, two days a week to alleviate the weekend madness. Maybe instead of Wednesday for 8 hours, make it</p>

Tuesday 4-8pm and Thursday 4-8pm. Or a combination of 4 hours on one weekday morning 8a-12p, and one weekday evening from 4-8pm.

I liked the hours we had when Curt ran the place. 8 to 4 was perfect o. Weekends and 6 to 2 on wednesdays

I never understood the need to change the hours during the summer. Was this as a convenience to the employees, or the town? Or, is this simply a holdover "tradition" that really doesnt serve a purpose?

I only use the transfer station to dispose of yard waste. Having it close at 2 pm in the summer is really challenging. Additionally, the fee for disposal of household waste are very costly. I actually have weekly curbside pickup as it is far cheaper. Perhaps the fee would be more reasonable if the station was only open on the weekend.

I think the transfer station should stay open longer so that there is time to get there after doing household projects.

I think trading Wednesday afternoons for longer hours on the weekend makes the most sense for busy Ayerheads who can't get to the dump during working hours.

I vote to close the transfer station altogether and employ ""regular"" trash removal at each residents home on a regular schedule. I use Waste management personally and feel the \$500/year is quite affordable compared to the tax, sticker and bag cost (not to mention convenience) of the transfer station. Please provide information as to WHY we still employ a transfer station in Ayer!

I wish the town would evaluate curbside pickup again. I pay for private trash pickup. Shirley does it so what can't Ayer?

I would like to eliminate the summer hours change entirely. 7-3 Wed, Sat, & Sun all year round would be better than what we have now but what I'd really like to see would be to go back to what we always had before which was 8-4 on Wed, Sat, & Sun with so summer change. Every taxpayer who uses the TFS that I've spoken to feels the same way. PLEASE do the right thing and change back. I don't recall any dissatisfaction among users with that schedule!

I would prefer the latest hours possible, so I'd actually most prefer we return to the hours we had for many years, when the transfer station was open till 4 pm year round.

Thanks for seeking our input!

If residents pay such a high price for yearly fee how come there is not either a evening hour 1-2 evenings per week? The days/hours set now put everyone in a box of when they work and when they are off. Not everyone is off on Saturdays for instance. There are residents that may work on Sundays or go to church during morning hours. It would be more fair to residents if you had the option of one or two days during the week with afternoon to evening hours such as 3 or 4pm-7pm. Thank you.

I'm in favor of awarding a contract for curbside pickup of trash and recyclables. Pick up of yard waste and large items could be charged on an ad-hoc basis.
Increase the number of hours so that people who work can use it after work. Was the decision to change the opening to 6am based on any data? If not, that change should never have taken place. We should be more in line with towns across the commonwealth who are drop-off only towns of the same population. as shown in the survey that I did and gave to the BOS after the May town meeting. --Laurie Sabol
It should be open seven days a week. Pay someone. Create jobs. How about curbside pick up? That would be ideal.
It would be appreciated if there were options other than the weekend. If i happen to miss the weekend to bring it, one day during normal work hours will not cut it.
It would be great to have one longer weekend day(especially for the times of year for yard work/clean ups). If there is a shorter day could it open later and be open later?
It would be nice to have clearer marked areas for other things besides the recycling, metal and trash. Such as batteries, wood, oil?, etc.
It would be nice to have it open on Wednesday from 3pm-7pm. Sometimes we can't make it on weekends and we work during the week. Having the same hours on Wednesday makes no sense. I can?t be the only one with that issue.
It would be nice to offer an evening time, like tiwn hall does.
Keep up the great work. Never thought I would feel a connection/community in a transfer station.
Keep Wed., Sat & Sun 7 am - 3 pm
Move the summer hours to 7am-3pm
Need it to be open earlier in winter.
need to be able to buy tags and bags at the transfer station.
No

No increased hours until there is over site to better management.

To the Board of Selectmen

There should be no increased money for the Transfer Station until we change the current situation.

Problems: It's wide open. No one checks stickers, in fact many cars don't have stickers. People leave bulk items with no green bulk tags on them. No place for residents to park who want to use the swap shed (DPW vehicles & personal vehicles are parked in the area formerly used by residents. Get rid of the 55 gallon trash bags. Go back to the hours we had for years (8-4) that worked well. If staff is unhappy about the hours, remember we don't hold anyone hostage.

Only open to 2 on the weekends is horrible. EVERY TAX PAYER HATES IT! Make it later. We don't need more hours either.

People do their clean up primarily on the weekends; closing 2:00 is not at all helpful to the taxpayer.

Please keep the swap shed.

Prefer 7 - 3 summer and winter.

Really have no problems with any of the days or hours. My main concern is shorter hours on the weekend.

Responder noted in question 4 that Curbside needed instead of expanding the hours.

Same sat sun. 10-5 on wed ?

Saturday and Sunday opening at 6am/7am does not seem to serve the residents (customers) that well who sign up to use the Transfer Station. The Transfer Station being customer-facing, should have open hours that are conducive to the time of day that residents would be more likely to visit the Transfer Station. For example, I only have time to do yard clean up on the weekends. If I don't have time to finish yard chores early on Sat or Sun, then I am at risk of having to hold yard waste on my property until the following week because the Transfer Station closes so early in the day at 2pm/3pm. Having a later close such as 4pm (as it was in the past) worked much better for families like mine. Weekends are very busy days for families like mine with many other errands/obligations. I am constantly faced with the Transfer Station closing before I get a chance to hurry up, bag up all the trash and recycle materials (that is also a chore in itself that takes a lot of time), and yard waste, pack up the car and get to the Transfer Station before closing time. I cannot imagine there are too many residents visiting the Transfer station upon opening at 6am/7am on a Saturday or Sunday. Seems like a waste to have the Transfer Station open so early, especially on the weekends. I really wish the open times could revert back to 8am-4pm.

See above. My suggestion:

6-2 on Wednesdays

8-4 on Saturday and Sunday

Hours to stay the same all year.

Spring, summer and fall are busiest clean up periods. Closing at 2 limits the number of trips residents can make to drop off trimmings, shrubs, etc. Once upon a time, it was open til 4 all the time. Then it had gotten shortened to 3, and then to 2 in the summer - the busiest period. Didn't make sense.

stop the madness. The hours are too early for the summer when people do most yard work. Keep it consistent, at least until 3pm

Thank you for asking.

Thank you for having this survey for town feedback. Thank you also for the hard copies at Town Hall for those who can't get the internet. It would be nice if the newspaper covered it; plus it would have been nice to send out a mail in version as well.

Thank you for soliciting feedback from the users.

Thank you for what you do every day in helping Ayer residents.

You do a great job for the cost.

The constantly playing loud music makes it impossible for neighbors to talk to each other, so the transfer station can no longer serve as the informal meeting place it used to be. Please discontinue the music.

There seems to be no daily clean up protocol: the same trash can be seen and smelled under the recycling dumpster from week to week, let alone from day to day. The area should be cleared (swept) every day. The attendant could use some of the time he spends polishing his truck.

Feedback to transfer station users tends to be negative and spotty. I suggest training the attendant to frame requests positively, instead of as orders. Further, he needs to be consistent. I have twice seen a friend engage him in conversation and then slip garbage into the recycling dumpster (once a plastic bag of corn husks, and once a large rigid plastic container with garbage).

The current hours seem to work fine. It allows the community to dispose on weekends and for those that work weekends an opportunity to dispose during the week. We use it only on Wed, and are surprised by the amount of people also there during the week. I don't think it is necessary to change the hours, esp. since doing so will increase costs for residents and place more of a strain on family budgets. Please try to keep the schedule as is. "If it's not broke, don't fix it."

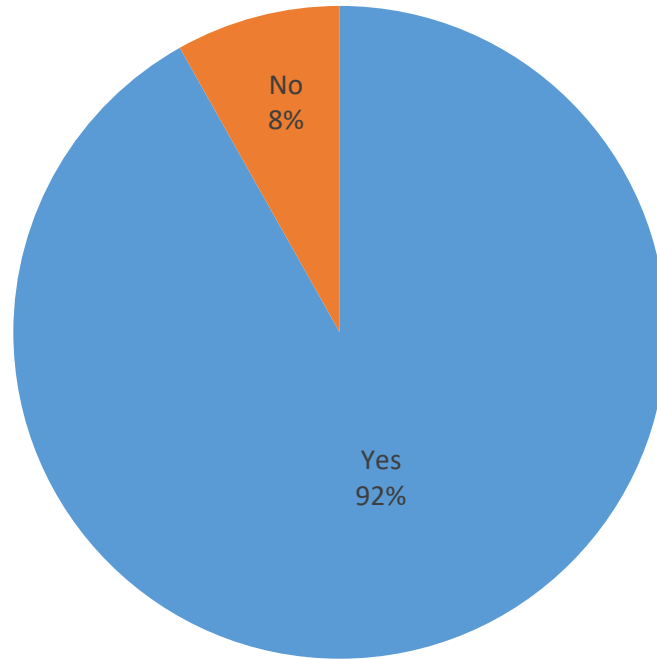
The current Transfer Station hours are convenient for retirees, not for the residents who commute to work. I leave my house at 5 am and get back at 5 pm. Often in the summer I go away on the weekends.....I found myself transporting 2 weeks of trash in the summer, YUK!!!; the main reason WM now picks up my trash.

The early hours on Wednesday allow me to drop off before work. To use the current schedule only takes a little planning.
The guys there do a great job! Thanks!
The guys who run the transfer station are unbelievably great! Andrew and Frank really are the best - we are lucky to have them.
The sticker for transfer station should be affordable for residents; coz we are already paying for stickers then we buy the bags too; this is so much cost for average resident. why pay for bags if we pay for the stickers? Or vice versa.
The third choice above says "open until 3pm each day". This is unclear. Does this mean each Wed, Sat & Sun? Or does it mean each day of the week, or seven days a week?
<p>The Transfer Station was open until 4.00 PM for many years. There was no good reason to change this. I would like to see these hours return but will settle for a year round 3.00 PM.</p> <p>The multiple references to increased costs do not ring true. 8 AM to 4 PM = 8 hours. 6 to 2 = 8 hours. 7 to 3 = 8 hours. Why / how will this incur additional cost ?. If anything, the later hours are closer to standard hours, and should minimize any overtime payments.</p>
Transfer station staff is excellent. The service is very well run.
Trash bags should be available at the transfer station.
<p>Wed hours 6a-2p</p> <p>Sat/Sun hours 8a-4p</p>
What is the actual volume of residents using the xfer station between 6-7am on summer days versus 2-3 on winter days? I would be curious to see what the actual data reflects for use during those two hour variants.
What would be the cost for trash and recycle pickup and have the transfer station open shorter hours for brush/leaves and big items drop off?
Whatever solution we take I don't think we should incur additional cost. The hours are already quite convenient.
When i moved to AYER hours were ? To 4PM and that was great, especially in fall and spring during cleanup. I could never understand why the change to 2pm and 3pm respective.
When I signed the period for the hours to be changed to 7-3 there was nothing said of the hours being 6-2 in the summer. I find those hours very inconvenient especially working all week and trying to do yard work on weekends and getting the yardwaste to the dump, and no I have no where else to put it.. One later day would be nice too if that is being considered. Has a survey been done to see if people really use that 6 am summer opening time?
Would be nice for 1 really late evening.

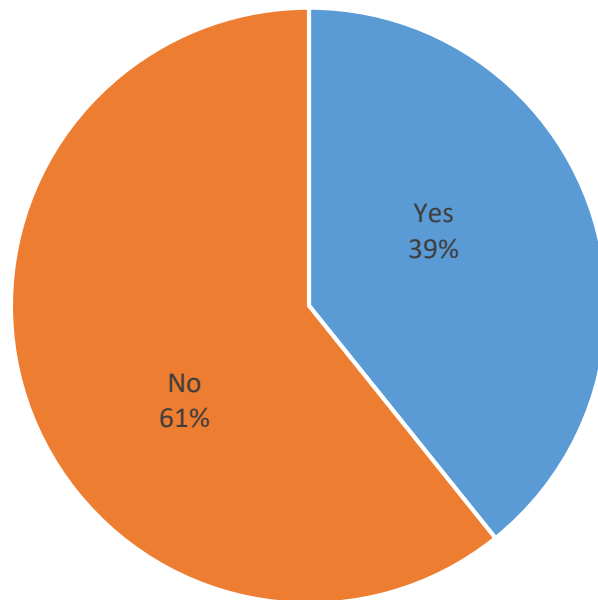
THIS KIND OF INPUT IS AWESOME, KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

Graphs

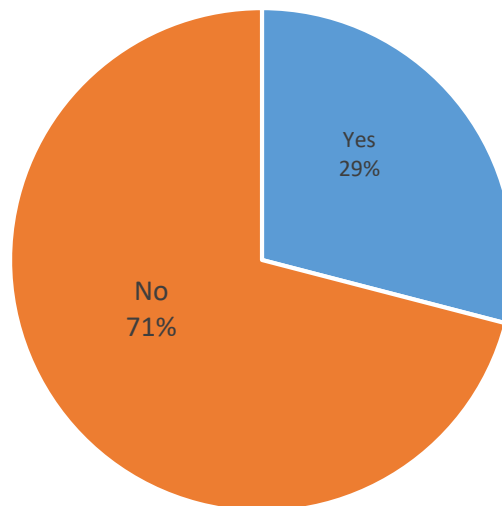
Question 1: Are you a current user of the Ayer Transfer Station?



Question 2: Are you happy with the current hours?



Question 3: Are you in favor of expanding the total hours the Transfer Station is open?



Question 4: Preferred Options

