

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Thursday, July 24, 2025.

Jefferson County is the last county in the state to still manage its own recycling program, but that's about to change: The *Peninsula Daily News* reports that the Board of Jefferson County Commissioners has elected to move toward privatizing recycling. The county currently spends an estimated \$326,000 annually on its recycling programs: Privatizing would free up those funds and staff time to focus on waste reduction and reuse programs.

One of the main issues contributing to the expense of the county's current recycling program is that county drop-off recycling centers have costly contamination rates of 30% or more, and unstaffed sites are the worst. Port Hadlock, for example, saw 41 tons of illegal dumping in 2024, according to Solid Waste Manager Al Cairns. With privatization, there would be countywide curbside collection, and those drop-off locations will be reduced to a single fee-based location behind the tipping station in Port Townsend.

A flurry of \$102 parking fines at the Port Townsend Plaza has prompted everything from concern for the local businesses impacted to outrage over the size of the fines and has raised questions about whether the signage in the lot meets legal requirements. According to the Port Townsend *Leader*, signage for the system states that customers must scan a QR code and register their vehicle's license plate number within 15 minutes of entering or be subject to a fine. But residents complain that the sign at the entrance includes only vague information and the other signage has letters that are too small. The signs are neither well-lit nor reflective, making them especially difficult to see at night.

In addition, key information is missing or hidden under QR codes, including any mention of a \$102 fine or towing policies. These items remain inaccessible to customers as they enter the plaza and are only revealed after scanning a QR code. This requirement is notably problematic for visitors without smartphones or mobile data, and for those whose providers have poor rural coverage. Both plaza employees and the city have been bearing the brunt of the outrage, as a lot of customers don't realize that it's the new landlord causing the issue. Sadly, the parking issues are resulting in reduced foot traffic, and in turn, less business.

Mark Hall, CEO of Hall Equities Group, which now owns the mall and the lot, has defended the parking system, claiming the lot was being used by "poachers," some of whom parked there for days after leaving on the ferry.

If you do receive a fine you believe is unfair there are steps you can take.

1. Dispute the fine: Parking Revenue Recovery Services, which oversees the lot, allows for online dispute submissions through the link provided or the mailing address listed on the notice.
2. Document everything: Take photos of the signage, your receipt or proof of purchase, and the timeline of your visit.
3. File a complaint: Citizens can report suspected unfair or deceptive practices to the Washington State attorney general's office by calling 1-800-551-4636 or visiting <https://fortress.wa.gov/atg/formhandler/ago/ComplaintForm.aspx>.
4. And finally, reach out locally: Those affected can also contact their city council representatives or reach out to the Jefferson County Department of Community Development.

Jefferson County Public Health would like to remind you that it is only safe to purchase food from permitted vendors. To spot a non-permitted food vendor, watch for these warning signs:

- No Jefferson County food permit displayed
- Operating in isolated road-side location
- Operating from home without a WSDA Cottage Industry permit

If you have questions about a particular vendor or wish to apply for a food permit, email foodsafety@co.jefferson.wa.us or call 360-385-9444.

And finally, due to increased operation and maintenance costs, the rate for solid waste disposal at the Jefferson County transfer station will increase from \$171 to \$187 per ton starting on August 1. The minimum fee weight will be adjusted down from 240 to 220 pounds.

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at noon and 5pm. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Diane Walker. Thank you for listening.