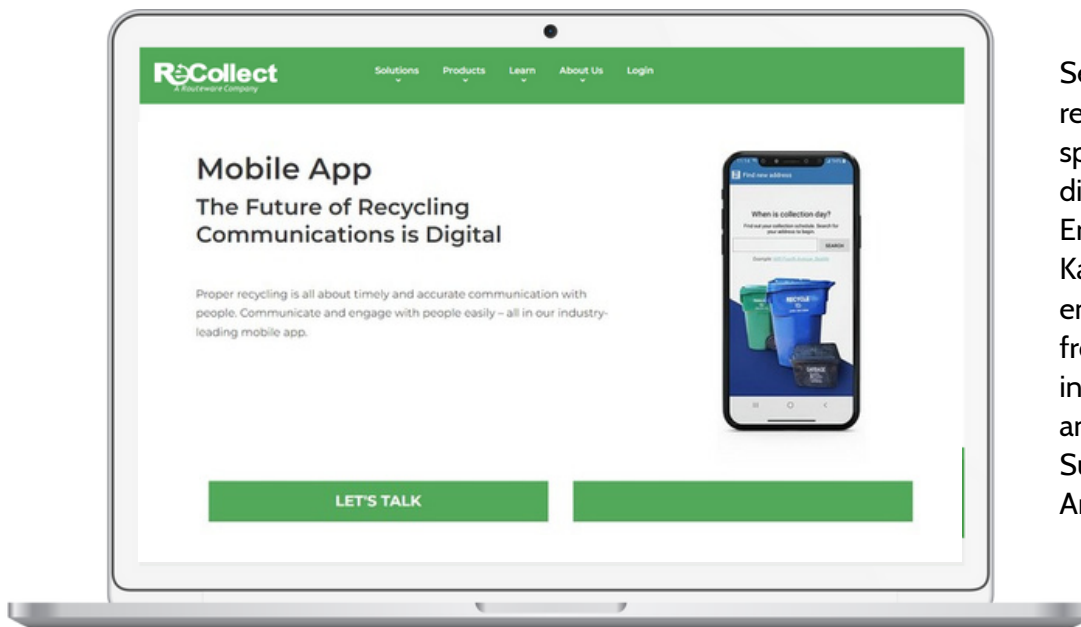




CUSTOMER STORY | Sunnyvale, CA

Sunnyvale, California, is the second largest city in Santa Clara County. There, the city services around 150,000 people, providing curbside collection services for single- and multifamily homes, as well as commercial properties.



Several years ago, to stave off recycling confusion and better spread the word about how to dispose of large items, Sunnyvale Environmental Programs Manager Karen Gissibl says the city employed [digital tools](#) and an [app](#) from ReCollect. This lineup included the [Collection Calendar](#) and the [Waste Wizard](#), known in Sunnyvale as [How To Get Rid of Anything](#).

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As you can imagine, it was very popular in the beginning,” she says. While requests only increasing since, “I think people really appreciate it.”



Today, Gissibl says the folks who get the most use out of the app are people who live in single-family and multifamily housing.

That’s “who we designed it for,” Gissibl says.

Gissibl says Sunnyvale has offered curbside collection services for recyclables and food scraps for some time now for single-family residences and commercial properties. They have now extended food-scrap collection services to multifamily homes and complexes to align with the state’s Senate Bill 1383 mandates, which took effect in January 2022.



To improve their programming for the people they serve and alleviate stress on staff, Sunnyvale has added a couple of new program features for the community — including a very popular clean cart exchange program and bulky item collection — and acquired a couple more ReCollect tools to help them spread the word and facilitate their work.



A little while after Sunnyvale rolled out its suite of ReCollect tools, the city added a Bulky Item Collection [scheduling tool](#) to improve community access to their twice-yearly special collections.



Customer service representatives were fielding some 50 to 100 requests for collections per week, Gissibl says, and even more toward the end of the year as the community tried to schedule their remaining allotted bulky pickups.



Now, people in the community may schedule their special collection appointments by typing their address into the widget, selecting the bulky items they wish to dispose of, and choosing a date and time. The tool has reduced the incoming calls to customer service tremendously.



More recently, Sunnyvale introduced its Clean Cart Replacement program. Gissibl says the city’s food-scrap carts are split into two sections, one for food scraps and one for garbage. “Some food scraps programs allow customers to put their food in with the yard trimmings so it’s not as messy,” Gissibl says. But “because we only take food in our program – the food side of the cart gets really dirty and stinky pretty quickly.”



So much so that people have complained about the condition of their carts, Gissibl says, adding that dirty, smelly carts are a barrier to community participation in the program.

“So we’re like, hey, why don’t we see if we can do a cart exchange, where twice a year customers can get their dirty cart exchanged by the hauler, for a clean one? We worked with ReCollect to create a tool so customers could go through the app to schedule the exchange.”

Alleviating stress across the board

Providing the community with self-service tools simultaneously reduced call volumes for employees while alleviating frustration for customers, allowing people to access the information they need whenever and wherever they need it, and providing them the opportunity to swap their carts.

“Having those tools makes it more efficient for us. We’re not spending as much staff time picking up the phone and we are hoping the cart exchange will increase participation. And customers know they can just go to the website or use the app; it’s super convenient for them and they know it’s there,” Gissibl says.

Between the Waste Wizard / How To Get Rid of Anything and the clean cart exchange, Gissibl believes that the community is learning “how to recycle better so it keeps our materials cleaner.”



Sunnyvale is then able to collect cleaner recyclables and decrease contamination rates, which for the “bigger picture, benefits the environment” and helps the city get closer to meeting their Zero Waste goal of 90% diversion of material to the landfill by 2030.



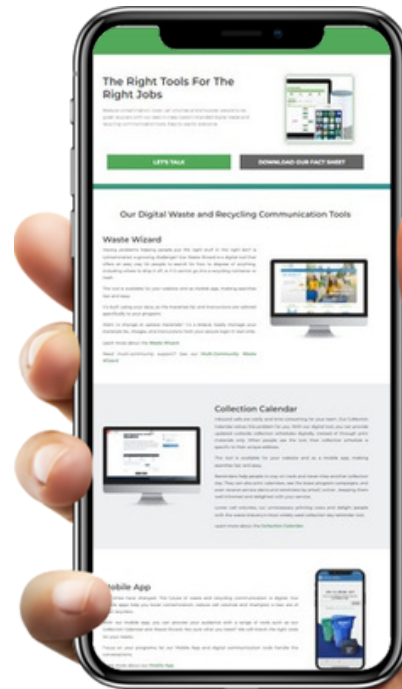
From the inception of Sunnyvale's partnership with ReCollect in 2017 to the end of 2020, bulky item requests went from 6,923 to 11,377, an increase of 64.34%, while call volumes went from 4,866 to 4,693, a decrease of 3.56%. This saved customer service representatives time while providing real-time, anytime, anywhere access for residents.

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The tools have “been in place for so long that ... it's just part of our family now,” she says. “We just rely on this tool; we know it's there. I'm glad we have it.”

Bit by bit

While Sunnyvale continues to work to meet the requirements of SB 1383, “right now, we're really focused on implementing food-scrap services for both multifamily and commercial customers and trying to help them get on board with the program,” Gissibl says. “We are doing a lot of education and outreach, and we promote the app whenever we can.”



About ReCollect

ReCollect Systems is a technology company specializing in digital solutions for the waste management sector.

With a focus on meeting and surpassing the expectations of residents, ReCollect has the proven experience to deliver digital products that also meet the needs of waste managers, communicators, IT specialists and governmental officials.

Launched in 2009, today ReCollect is used by millions of residents across North America. From small villages to large urban centres, from municipal services to private haulers, ReCollect is ready to make your waste management programs more efficient and successful.



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