



CUSTOMER STORY | Cary, NC

Between Raleigh and the famed Research Triangle Park is Cary, North Carolina, where about 168,000 people call home.

There, Town of Cary crews service about 55,000 households, collecting trash and yard waste at the curb each week, recycling every other week, and bulky trash, electronics and more by appointment. The town also owns and operates their own drop-off site, too, called the Citizens Convenience Center.

To keep citizens informed and up to date on these services, Cary utilized a GIS search for addresses, collection routes and such - paired with printed calendars, mailers and brochures. But multiple channels of communication can create myriad issues and make it difficult for municipalities to deliver information smoothly and conveniently for customers.



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Cary now has a more effective way to engage citizens and keep them informed on solid waste and leaf pickup collection schedules, solid waste services and disposal/recycling guidelines through one comprehensive tool. With Cary Collects, citizens may now search "what goes where" and find proper recycling or disposal instructions, while the Collection Calendar offers the option to set reminders and notifications for their collection days.

The app is very helpful "with collection day changes," said Cary's Solid Waste Manager **Bob Holden**.

"Reaching so many people so fast about the changes has been positive, and our citizens appreciate that"

Contamination is a concern across every state in the U.S. and Cary is no exception. They are committed to continuing recycling education efforts for citizens to reduce contamination.



Because of its diligence and the community's commitment to green, Cary is seeing contamination numbers drop, and is well on its way to reaching its goals. Between April and November 2019, the combination of hard work by Cary staff, community commitment, educational campaigns and the rapid and wide-spread adoption of Cary Collects helped drive a reduction in contamination.



Tools that rise to the challenge — and help citizens do the same

Technology plays a large role in Cary, where



More than two-thirds of adults hold a college degree



About 97 percent of citizens have access to the Internet

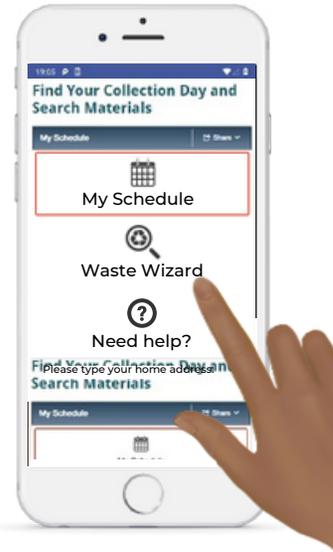


Moving from paper mailers and schedules to a digital platform simply made sense

Making the switch was a strategic move that was well coordinated, staff said, and to help aid the transition, it enlisted some smart, strategic marketing and timing. The app and website tools launched at the end of September, about five weeks before leaves were collected, and just before annual leaf and schedule-related mailers hit mailboxes.

This round of mailers did not include the printed recycling calendars as in years past, but staff left the leaf map in, while promoting the Cary Collects app and watched for adoption with citizens.

Because citizens were no longer receiving printed calendars or recycling guides, a large number of people began using the app and website to find the information they needed. The marketing team was able to use well-engaged social channels to promote the tools to citizens, which helped generate early adoption.



Real solutions for real change you can see

Cary's work and success have not only been realized on a local level, but at the state level, too. For all of its efforts and the change it has affected, Cary received a **2020 Annual Recycling Award from the Carolina Recycling Association**. Each year, the association honors top performers that advance waste reduction and recycling in the Carolinas, which Cary certainly is doing through its innovative app.



In the first two weeks following the Sept. 2019 launch, there were



1,800 mobile app downloads, surpassing the town's anticipated 9-month benchmark of 1,400 downloads for similarly sized municipalities.



Some 5.5% of households searched their address

"The tools have also helped build better educational outreach and answer questions that citizens are asking," said Cary's Solid Waste Manager **Bob Holden**



4,500 Waste Wizard searches.

"These statistics reflect our environmentally-minded and tech-savvy community embracing their new digital tool," said Cary Environmental Communications Specialist Srijana Guilford.

Three months after its launch, 44% of the households in Cary already were using the app and website with tools from ReCollect to access their solid waste collection schedules. April thru November that same year, Cary's efforts helped to yield a nearly 3% decrease in its recycling contamination rate.



Just six months after its launch, 50% of households were using the app to access their collection schedule. Among 144 medium-sized municipalities (with 20,000 to 80,000 households) across the U.S. and Canada, Cary at that time ranked



Addresses searched in the app



Reminder signups, with 9,779 recycling pickup reminders



Mobile installs, with nearly 9,000 downloads.

Not only do these tools benefit citizens and the environment, they're helping Cary's bottom line, too.

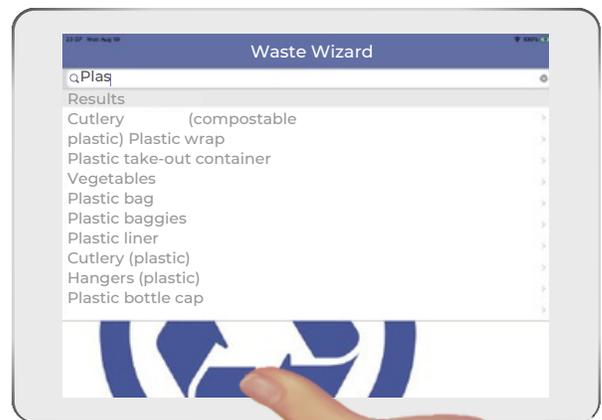
Taking Cary's waste information and notifications to a digital platform has replaced more than 50,000 printed and mailed recycling schedules and materials lists, which will yield a cost savings of more than \$5,000 annually on print, design, and paper costs while also generating less waste.



In line with their commitment to go paperless, plans are now in place to discontinue its mailed leaf schedule in the fall of 2020, saving over \$15,000 in design, print and postage. Seeing success and citizens' positive response confirmed that their goals and trajectory made sense.

Cary staff have appreciated the top-searched materials list, notifications and campaign features within ReCollect's tools. Notifications have especially been useful as collection days may change due to events such as storms, and campaign features have come in handy to help the Town convey to citizens which services are on hold due to COVID-19.

"One challenge we had was not knowing how people were searching, or their nomenclature. We didn't know what we didn't know," he said. "With the app, we can quickly determine what terms people are searching and their synonyms, and build helpful campaigns around those." said Cary's Solid Waste Manager Bob Holden



Effective — and easy



ReCollect's tools are as effective as they are easy to use. ReCollect helps people learn the tools through videos and training, which municipality officials can then share with staff so everyone is on the same page. The Academy training videos - supported by ReCollect Customer Success Manager Jenica Nelson - helped Srijana quickly learn how to leverage the tools to help reach their goals.

Srijana said Cary worked with ReCollect's Customer Success Manager Jenica Nelson, who was easily accessible whenever anyone needed help. "Her response rate was amazing," Srijana said.

"It was a challenge for us creating and printing costly calendars each year. ReCollect totally helped us solve that by unifying our communications in one place," Srijana said. "Our goal was to increase the connection and education with our community. The app helped us do this."

Continuing to build a better future



Now that it has offered its citizens instant, digital access to waste and recycling information with the help of ReCollect, Cary will continue to build on its success to further connect and engage with its community.

Cary staff are currently trying to further define their solid waste management initiatives and future projects, and plan to use the metrics from Cary Collects to continue identifying specific campaigns in the future.

As time passes, Cary plans to maximize the use and impact of ReCollect's tools to reach its waste management goals.

"Cary Collects will continue to enhance communications by syncing our messages with citizen needs and providing valuable data as the solid waste programs evolve," Srijana said.

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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