



2014 PROJECT SUMMARY

Multifamily Property Manager Recycling Toolkit and Recognition Program Development

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Prepared for

Waste Management and Snohomish County Solid Waste

Prepared by

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2014 Project Summary

This summary report describes the Multifamily Property Manager Recycling Toolkit and Recognition Program development project, and includes a description of the project background, goals and objectives, toolkit development, recognition program development, focus group results and recommendations, and the program implementation plan.

WM and Snohomish County worked with Cascadia to develop a recycling toolkit and recognition program for multifamily property managers in Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) areas of Snohomish County served by WM. The purpose of the WM Recycling All Stars program is to enable and motivate property managers to address onsite infrastructure issues and support the onsite distribution of recycling education materials to residents by equipping property managers with the information and resources needed to increase recycling at their property.

This project was designed using information gathered during research and pilot projects conducted in 2012 and 2013, and creative thinking to overcome the barriers learned during these pilots. The overarching goal was to develop a cost-effective approach to improving recycling and infrastructure improvements at all multifamily properties in the UTC areas of Snohomish County served by WM. The specific goal of the toolkit and recognition program is to employ a means with which to empower and reward multifamily property managers to undertake infrastructure improvements and education themselves, thereby speeding up the infrastructure changes and reducing WM staff and consultant time needed to make the changes. The program, named the WM Recycling All Stars Program, is designed to empower all property managers, as well as help WM better focus its resources where property managers and residents need the most assistance.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The following steps led to development of the WM Recycling All Stars Program:

- International research was conducted to identify leading programs and strategies with measurable success in increasing recycling in the multifamily sector.
- Onsite visits at a sample of multifamily properties were completed in Snohomish County to determine specific barriers to recycling.
- Strategies were identified, pairing the international research with barriers identified during the onsite visits, to develop two outreach approaches to pilot: door-to-door outreach and technical assistance.
- Both strategies were tested and evaluated to determine best management practices (BMPs) for property manager engagement. Findings from the door-to-door outreach pilot indicated that many barriers to recycling were related to infrastructure - signage, container location and recycling collection capacity - thus confirming that door-to-door outreach alone was not sufficient to increase resident recycling. Findings from the technical assistance (TA) pilot

indicated that TA was successful at increasing recycling volumes, but was cost-prohibitive because of the required amount of WM staff and consultant time, and not likely to be scalable to all UTC multifamily properties in Snohomish County (approximately 540 properties).

- The team considered creative and different options for implementing a program that would be scalable, reach all properties quickly and cost-effectively, use lessons from social marketing and gamification, and minimize the need for WM staff and consultants.
- The resulting idea was to develop a toolkit and recognition program to engage property managers directly to play a more proactive role in making needed infrastructure changes and connecting residents with recycling education resources and tools; thereby minimizing the need for WM staff or consultants to undertake this effort themselves, which was shown to be too costly. As the primary decision makers and gatekeepers around property infrastructure and access to residents, property managers have the most influence in the success of their onsite recycling programs.
- Post-pilot interviews in 2012 and 2013 with property managers indicated interest in a toolkit and recognition program.

PROJECT GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

The goal of Phase I of the project included creating a toolkit, developing a recognition and incentive program, testing effectiveness of the toolkit and recognition program through a focus group with property managers, and developing a plan for program implementation. Phases II and III will include toolkit production, development of the corresponding website, program launch, and evaluation.

TOOLKIT DEVELOPMENT

Using text and materials drafted in early 2014, Cascadia worked with WM and Snohomish County Solid Waste to outline a development plan and design all elements of the toolkit. The final “Property Manager Recycling Program Toolkit” will be delivered in spring 2015.

The hardcopy form of the toolkit is a three-ring tabbed binder with easy-to-use information and resources. The binder and binder materials are made from 100% post-consumer recycled materials. The entire contents of the toolkit will be available on the program website as individual PDF documents that can be downloaded for printing.

The toolkit contents follow a step-by-step approach for property managers to evaluate their recycling infrastructure, educate and motivate residents, track and sustain their recycling program, and apply for WM Recycling All Stars recognition. It provides resources and sample resident communication and education materials. The binder is organized into five tabs, as described below.

Step 1: Evaluate Recycling Infrastructure

- Guidance on how to perform a site assessment, including current and optimal garbage and recycling service levels, effective and ineffective container placement, and how to effectively use garbage and recycling container decals
- Links to a custom online site assessment worksheet (Recycling Program Checklist)

Step 2: Educate and Motivate Residents

- Communication tips and tools, including placing recycling posters on bulletin boards, distributing letters and door hangers, and using a newsletter to announce the recycling program
- Education tips and tools, including providing residents with recycling guides, providing residents with reusable recycling tote bags and instructions, and holding a resident recycling event

Step 3: Track and Sustain Your Recycling Program

- Ideas to keep recycling programs running smoothly throughout the year and in future years, including setting and communicating annual recycling goals to residents, acknowledging residents for doing a good job recycling, and doing an annual recycling program refresh
- Recommendation to provide collection options and referrals for reusable items, bulky items, electronics, and other items
- A Recycling Program Checklist for conducting an annual evaluation of the property's recycling program

WM Recycling All Stars Recognition Program: Rules and Requirements

- Information about the WM Recycling All Stars Recognition Program, including rules and participation requirements and rewards
- List of recycling actions that property managers must choose from to qualify for recognition

Resources and Samples

- Resources that can be ordered from WM, including garbage and recycling posters, bilingual recycling guides, Snohomish County household hazardous waste guidelines, and bilingual Move-in/Move-out flyers
- Samples of communication and education materials, including recycling tote bag instructions, a sample block party flyer, a sample resident recycling pledge, and sample newsletter announcements

To test the effectiveness of the toolkit, a total of 15 sample toolkits were produced and presented to property managers in a facilitated focus group. See Property Manager Focus Group Outcomes below. The full toolkit can be found in *Appendix A: Property Manager Recycling Program Toolkit*.

RECOGNITION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Cascadia worked closely with WM and Snohomish County Solid Waste to develop a property manager recognition program that would motivate property managers to make changes and encourage ongoing use of the toolkit.

Development of the program included creation of a program name and logo, rules and participation requirements, an incentive structure for property managers, a plan for publicly recognizing the properties and property managers, and a program website plan where all of the toolkit resources would be accessible anytime.

PROGRAM NAME AND LOGO

WM and Snohomish County Solid Waste decided on “WM Recycling All Stars” as a program name, which encompasses both the recognition program and the toolkit. A logo was developed that appears on the toolkit and sample resident communication and education templates.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS AND INCENTIVE STRUCTURE

Cascadia worked with WM and Snohomish County Solid Waste to develop program requirements and an incentive structure that would motivate property managers to sign up for the WM Recycling All Stars Program, complete specific recycling actions, and re-enroll in the program annually.

An initial incentive structure and program rules were developed that included two levels of incentives:

ACTION	INCENTIVE
1. Property manager signs up online and pledges to complete a minimum of 3 recycling actions	Property manager receives a \$50 gift card
2. Property manager submits photos of completion of pledged recycling actions	Each residential unit and the PM receives a gift card; the property receives a program window cling, certificate of accomplishment and recognition in the Everett Herald; and the property manager is entered into a grand prize drawing for a \$1,000 Alaska Airlines voucher

Based on input from property managers through a focus group (see Property Manager Focus Group Outcomes), the requirements and incentives were modified to include a three-level structure:

ACTION	INCENTIVE
1. Property manager signs up online	Immediate email follow-up with directions on next steps
2. Property manager submits Recycling Program Checklist and pledges to complete a minimum of 3 recycling actions	Property manager receives a \$50 gift card
3. Property manager submits photos of completion of pledged recycling actions	Property manager receives a \$15 gift card for each residential unit; the property manager receives a \$50-\$400 gift card (incentive is scaled to property size); the

	property receives a program window cling, certificate of accomplishment and recognition in the Everett Herald; and the property manager is entered into a grand prize drawing for a \$1,000 Alaska Airlines voucher
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PUBLIC RECOGNITION PLAN

In addition to offering individual incentives, Cascadia worked with WM and Snohomish County Solid Waste to develop a plan for annual public recognition of properties and property managers that successfully complete their pledged recycling actions. The recognition plan includes a full-page ad in the Everett Herald listing all eligible WM Recycling All Stars properties, a WM Recycling All Stars window cling, and Certificates of Accomplishment for each property manager and the corresponding property.

Templates for the print ad, window cling, and certificates can be found in *Appendix B: WM Recycling All Stars Recognition Program Materials*.

WEBSITE PLAN

Cascadia developed a website site map for the WM Recycling All Stars Program. The program website will include the ability for property managers to submit and request information, download PDFs and access links to the main WM website and other online resources. The program website will consist of a program landing page, a sign-up form, the Recycling Assessment Checklist, all of the resources found in the hard copy of the toolkit, an order form for educational resources and a recognition page.

PROPERTY MANAGER FOCUS GROUP OUTCOMES

Cascadia conducted a focus group with Snohomish County property managers to help gauge the clarity and appeal of the WM Recycling All Stars toolkit and recognition program, its incentives for property managers, and the usefulness and likelihood of use of the recycling toolkit by property managers. Participants included a mix of on-site property managers, off-site property managers, and onsite staff/residents who serve as their property's main point of contact, but who are not a property manager.

A total of six property managers participated in the focus group. Key findings included:

- Participants identified common infrastructure challenges, including lack of clear container differentiation, accessibility, and lack of effective indoor recycling systems for residents.
- Participants felt the required recycling actions were sufficiently easy to accomplish.
- The recognition program expectations and rewards structure were not clear.
- Participants were overwhelmingly receptive of the toolkit, but were unclear how to acquire more copies of the resources featured in the toolkit binder.

Recommendations from the focus group included:

- Make completion of the Recycling Program Checklist mandatory for recognition.
- Clarify recognition program requirements and incentives.
- Prominently highlight the availability of downloadable resources in the toolkit binder.
- Better frame the introduction to the toolkit around the WM Recycling All Stars Program and participation incentives.
- Determine who the on-site property liaison is at each property, and make the program available to them.

A complete summary report of focus group findings and recommendations can be found in *Appendix C: Snohomish County Property Manager Focus Group Report*.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Based on focus group outcomes and additional information needed, Cascadia developed a two-phase plan for implementation in 2015: Preparation and Production (Phase II); and Delivery, Evaluation, and Reporting (Phase III).

Phase II will occur January-March 2015 and include the following activities: revising elements of the toolkit content and structure, resources, and recognition program incentives; producing 600 toolkit binders; developing the WM Recycling All Stars website; calling all Snohomish County property managers to determine the primary liaison for each property and the best toolkit delivery method (in-person or mail); and developing a budget for toolkit delivery.

Phase III will occur March-December 2015 and include the following activities: toolkit delivery; processing WM Recycling All Stars sign-ups; sending reminder emails; fulfilling orders for print materials, decals, and tote bags (this will be completed by WM staff); notifying and sending recognition collateral and rewards; collecting feedback from property liaisons; and writing a final report.

Appendices

- A. Property Manager Recycling Program Toolkit
 - B. WM Recycling All Stars Recognition Program Materials
 - C. Snohomish County Property Manager Focus Group Report
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APPENDIX A: PROPERTY MANAGER RECYCLING PROGRAM TOOLKIT

APPENDIX B: WM RECYCLING ALL STARS RECOGNITION PROGRAM MATERIALS

Print ad

Window cling

Certificate of accomplishment for property manager

Certificate of accomplishment for property

APPENDIX C: SNOHOMISH COUNTY PROPERTY MANAGER FOCUS GROUP REPORT