

Case Study: Kirkland, Washington



Sustainability Early Adopter Continues to Lead the Way

Society is going green, and more and more, residents expect their leaders to plan for a sustainable future. The city of Kirkland, Washington, has partnered with Waste Management for decades – in that time, they have become an innovator and a leading example of how a city can be green today and for the generations to come.

Kirkland was the first in the country to implement full-scale curbside programs for waste, recycling and yard waste in the late 1980s, allowing residential customers to conveniently direct their waste for beneficial reuse when they dropped it at the curb. This model has become the standard across the country, and Kirkland still has the highest residential recycling rate in western Washington today.

The city also has food waste programs in place – both commercial and multi-family – to handle the organic waste produced around the city. Working closely with city staff, Waste Management's food waste collection program is carefully managed to ensure that the material is clean and that customers are well-educated about the program.

In 2008, Waste Management worked with Kirkland city staff to redesign their alley collection process in order

to clean up the alleys. It replaced multiple containers in alleys with larger single containers shared by multiple businesses. This reduced the number of containers in the alleys, improving aesthetics dramatically.

Kirkland recently invested in a new Waste Management offering: solar powered compactors. Placed in

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the city's busy downtown beach community area, these compactors hold up to 200 gallons of trash, reducing the number of service calls and the amount spent on service to empty the compactors. Kirkland is excited about the results at the beachfront and is considering placing more of these units around the city.

Kirkland's relationship with Waste Management goes beyond waste stream innovations and out into the community. Waste Management works closely with city staff and elected officials on "Party in the Park," a popular local event that includes a five mile race, entertainment and other family-oriented activities. The

event relies solely on volunteers. Waste Management donates carts for food waste and recycling, as well as small garbage containers, then staffs the site during the day, answering visitors' questions. Garbage has all but disappeared at the day-long event. In September, Waste Management helps to sponsor a parks cleanup project, putting senior management from the region to work in the parks, helping make Kirkland a cleaner, more beautiful place. The company also sponsors Kirkland's Performing Arts Center and supports a number of city programs.

With over 9,000 households about to join the city in an annexation, Waste Management is planning an extensive education program and additional services that will ensure that the city's newest residents understand the city's innovative recycling programs.

Kirkland has always been a model for other cities wishing to go green. With Waste Management as their partner, they have been a success in recycling and organics, and now they are discovering all the new benefits to be gained from solar power and other creative solutions. By thinking green, Kirkland has become the leader that other cities look to follow!

