



## City Council

### Special Recognition - Awards for Waste ReSources Utility from Washington State Recycling Association and Resource Recycling Magazine

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#### **Title**

Special Recognition - Awards for Waste ReSources Utility from Washington State Recycling Association and Resource Recycling Magazine

#### **Recommended Action**

##### **Committee Recommendation:**

Not referred to a committee.

##### **City Manager Recommendation:**

Recognize the Waste ReSources Utility staff for receiving two recycling awards in 2021.

#### **Report**

##### **Issue:**

Whether to recognize staff for receiving these prestigious awards.

##### **Staff Contact:**

Gary Franks, Waste ReSources Director, Public Works, 360.753.8780

##### **Presenter(s):**

Gary Franks, Waste ReSources Director

#### **Background and Analysis:**

On May 25, 2021, the City of Olympia Waste ReSources Utility received an award from the Washington State Recycling Association (WSRA) as Public Sector Recycler of the Year. WSRA is a nonprofit membership organization that has been dedicated to supporting waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting in Washington since 1976. The organization spotlights individuals, businesses, government agencies and community organizations that are making outstanding contributions to expanding and strengthening recycling and waste prevention programs.

On August 3, 2021, the Waste ReSources Utility also received the Small City (<150K population) Program of the Year Award, for our efforts in contamination reduction and changes to how glass is

collected within the City. Resource Recycling is a national publication, producing a Resource Recycling magazine, Plastics Recycling Update, and E-Scrap News, as well as hosting a national recycling conference.

Olympia Waste ReSources Utility received these awards because of our efforts that started in mid-2018 when Olympia launched a contamination reduction program for its commingled recycle program. It involved designing a creative program, applying for and receiving a grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology.

The "lid lift" program involved using college interns, specializing in geographic information systems (GIS), to design a system that would allow the city to run a small-scale pilot in various neighborhoods and measure the success. The pilot ran one summer and reduced contamination from around 15 percent to approximately 7 percent.

In 2019, following the initial pilot, the Utility met with the Utility Advisory Committee and Council to share recommendations and changes to the City's acceptable items list, which included the removal of glass and poly-coated materials. The Utility fast-tracked the roll out to January 1, 2020, by spreading the word through direct mail, post cards and its mobile and web-based app - Recycle Coach. Three glass drop-off sites were established to give customers options. Within two months, Olympia reduced glass in commingled recycling containers from 22 percent to around 7 percent.

These changes have reduced costs by nearly \$100,000 dollars annually and helped reduce rate impacts to customers in 2021. The City now collects about one-third of the roughly 1,050 tons of glass previously collected in commingled containers. This glass is very clean and currently goes as aggregate material to concrete recyclers.

The Waste ReSources Utility is proud to be the recipient of both Resource Recycling Inc. and the WSRA's Recycler of the Year Award.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

None.

**Options:**

1. Recognize the Waste ReSources Utility staff for receiving two recycling awards in 2021.
2. Do not recognize the Waste ReSources Utility staff for receiving two recycling awards in 2021.
3. Recognize the Waste ReSources Utility staff for receiving two recycling awards in 2021 at another time.

**Financial Impact:**

There is no financial impact for this recognition.

**Attachments:**

None