



Large-Scale Residential Outreach Program

Monika Mojelski – City of Calgary

Kentson Yan – Tetra Tech

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Agenda

- I. Introduction and Background
- II. Problem and Our Approach
- III. What We Tested and Learned
 - i. Outcomes
 - ii. Additional Benefits
- IV. Summary

Presenter Bio's



Monika Mojelski is a **Waste Diversion Specialist** for The City of Calgary. She has led and supported the implementation of strategy actions focused on improving waste diversion, including residential spot checks, community cleanups, and waste composition studies.

Kentson Yan is a **Project Engineer** at Tetra Tech. He has developed specialized expertise in data collection and analysis in the waste management sector. He has designed and implemented multiple waste monitoring programs across Canada.



Background

- The City of Calgary provides residential collection services for more than 365,000 households
- Uses three cart system to divert material:
 - Blue for recycling
 - Green for food and yard waste, and
 - Black for garbage
- Blue Cart program was implemented in 2009 and Green Cart program 2017



Problem

Challenges to the City's waste system:

- Large and rapidly growing city
- Three stream cart-based system
- Different waste systems in surrounding regions
- Multi-generational and multi-cultural communities

Contamination in the carts results in:

- Risks to staff safety
- Decreased operational efficiency at facilities
- Increased program costs
- Decreased market value of recyclables

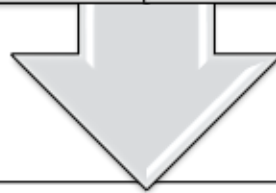


Why We Care?

Historically, The City of Calgary paid financial penalties

~\$1.2 million in penalties annually due to contamination in the blue carts and landfilling costs.

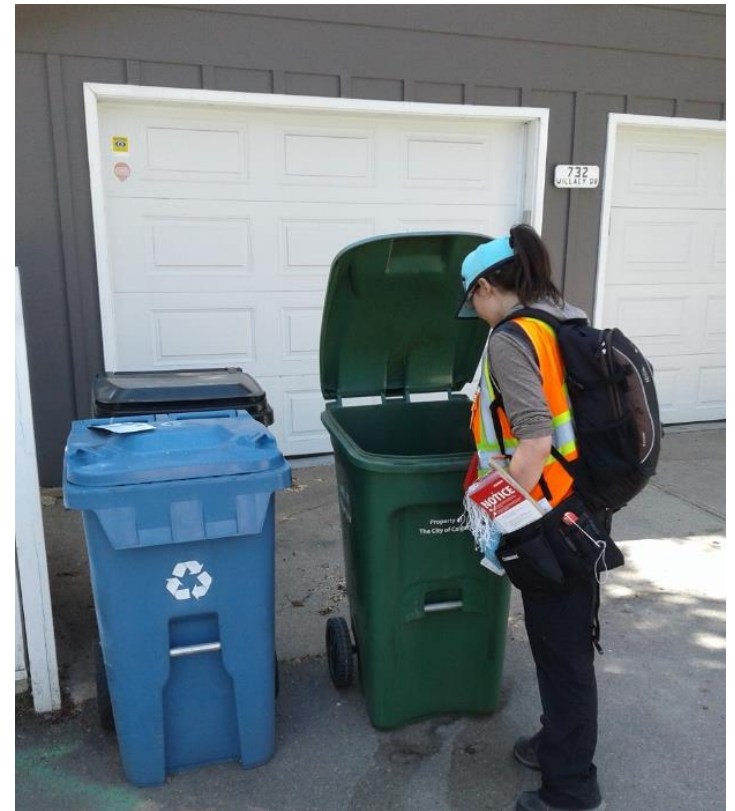
Facility and equipment down time, safety incidents, fires, etc.



Spot checking is a fraction of the cost compared to the cost of penalties and system disruptions, about 10-15%.

Our Approach

- Large Outreach Program
- A large-scale behaviour change intervention
- Multi-year, multi-district, city-scale program
- Cart spot checking and door knocking
- Since 2019, we have:
 - 1.2 million+ spot checks
 - 55,000+ door knocks
 - Over 10 million data points



Blue Cart Contamination

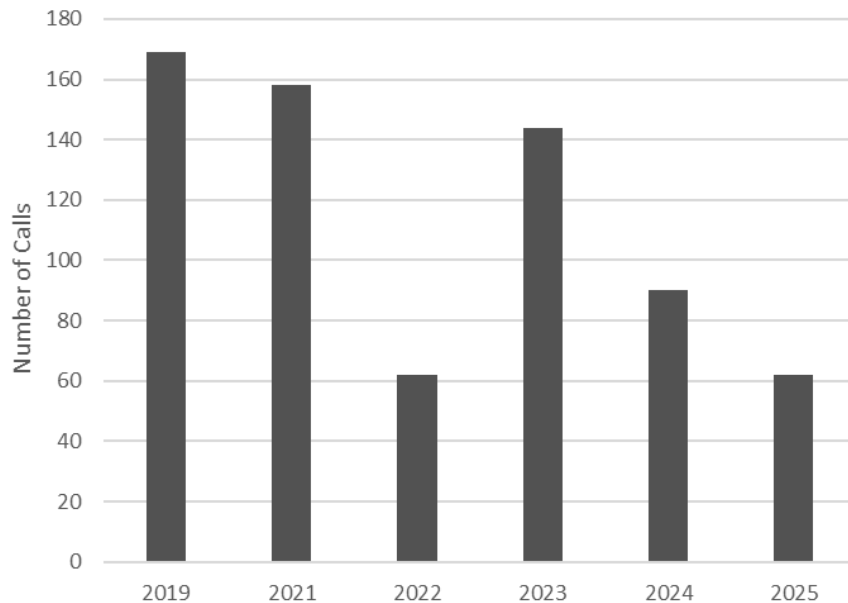


Top Contamination Types

- Non-Stretchy/Mixed
- Household/Clothing
- Bagged Recycling
- Loose Plastic Bags
- Foam

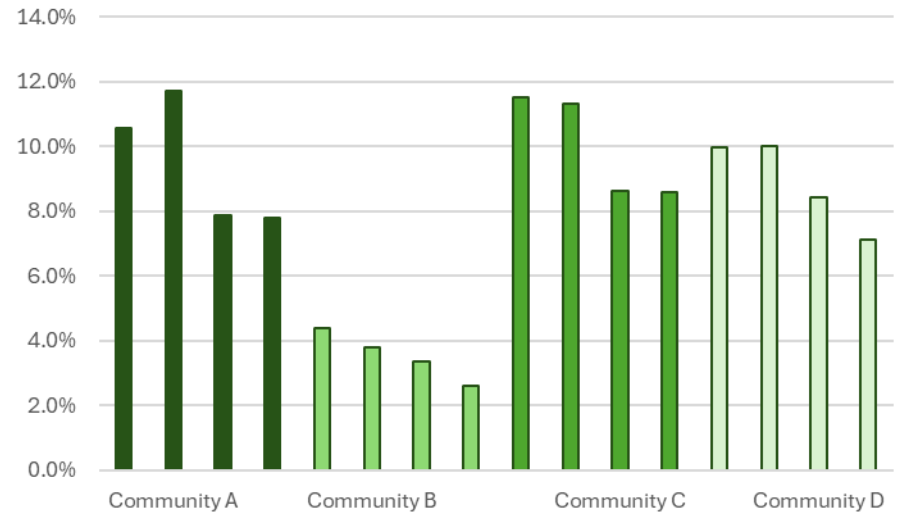
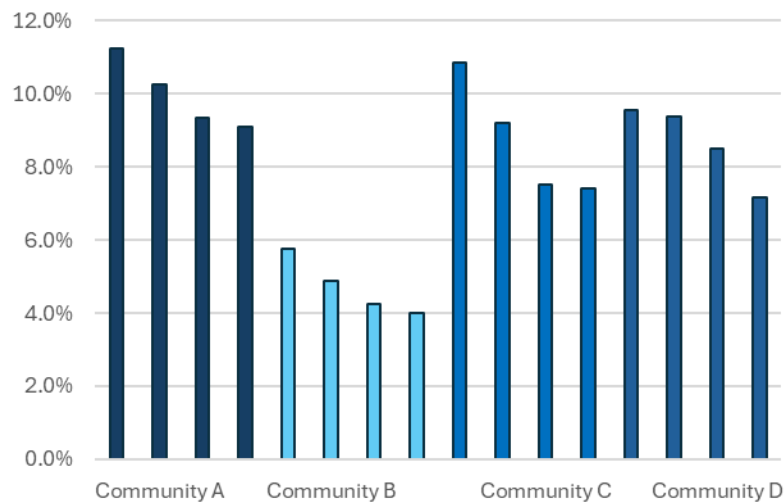
What We Tested and Learned

- Leaving carts uncollected for significant contamination
- Tags alone vs. tags + unacceptable items bag
- Decrease in calls



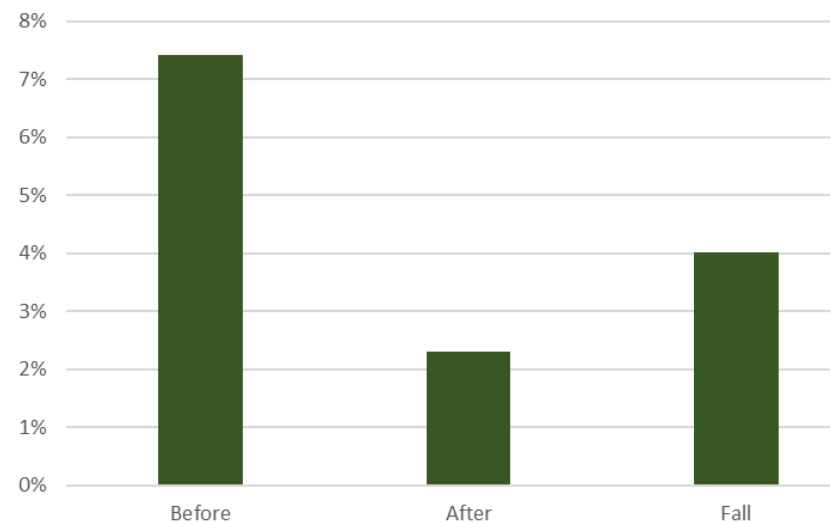
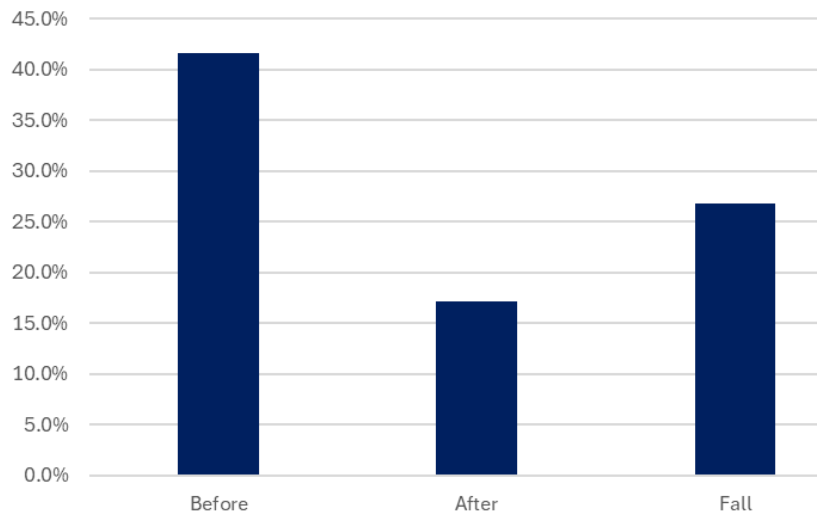
What We Tested and Learned

- Advance notification has limited impact
- 3 visits is the “sweet spot” for behaviour change



What We Tested and Learned

- Inbound facility study – data shows contamination reductions
- Persistence and consistency matter more than intensity



What We Tested and Learned

Additional program benefits

- More than 5,000 in-person resident interactions
- Promote Waste App. (with collection schedule)
- Free giveaways, e.g., compostable bags
- Community connection



Summary

Six years of continuous improvement and delivery integration with other groups

Collaborative effort - Collection Services buy-in and consistency

1.2 million spot checks completed and 55,000 direct resident conversations

The importance of tagging and leaving carts uncollected when required

Behaviour change requires persistence, not one-time interventions

Thank you
for all those who
supported this
project!

