**Headline:** Recycling Study Takes to the Streets

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**Description**: Recycling carts on many city routes will get a quick look inside this summer as part of a study aimed at identifying and reducing contamination in our curbside program.

**Promotion Title:** Recycling Study Takes to the Streets

**Promotion Description:** Armed with smart phones and clipboards, “cart taggers” will hit the streets this summer to study recycling behaviors on select Spokane routes. Educational tags will be left behind to help inform residents on what does and does not belong in the blue cart.

**Tags:** recycling, cart tagging, contamination reduction, blue bins, The Recycling Partnership

**Body:**

Ever since Spokane residents got a blue cart to put their recyclables in, the problem with putting the wrong thing in has grown. Changing lists of what is acceptable, confusing messages printed on packaging, and lack of immediate feedback when the wrong thing is put into the cart are all reasons for growing contamination concerns. Guessing wrong on what goes into the cart is costing us money. To help better educate residents and keep recycling affordable, the City of Spokane is partnering with Spokane County on a “Feet on the Street” cart tagging program.

Small teams of cart taggers will be out on select Spokane County routes beginning in June looking at carts and leaving behind educational messages. Routes will be studied and tagged four consecutive times and data will be collected to see if the messaging works. In the city, that means about 29,000 households could receive the personalized feedback.

The cart tagging program is just one activity the City of Spokane and Spokane County are doing to reduce contamination in curbside recycling this year. Utility bill inserts, direct mailings, informative videos and social media messaging are also being used in this outreach campaign. The study is funded by *The Recycling Partnership*, a national non-profit working to improve recycling in the United States. Spokane is the first community in the Pacific Northwest to receive funding from *TRP* for cart tagging. Similar projects conducted in Akron, Atlanta, and Baltimore have all shown a significant decrease in recycling contamination collected at curbside when tagging carts supplements traditional forms of outreach.

The study will conclude in September and data will be released in early November. It is the goal of the city’s Solid Waste Department to reduce recycling contamination from 13% to 5% by 2021. If we all work together, we can meet that goal.

For more information about this program, see FAQs [link]