

Glass Recycling Pilot Project Launches

By Ana Arias

Public Relations Coordinator, Natural Resources Department, City of Fort Collins

Good news, folks! Thanks to a bold pilot project by the City of Fort Collins, Larimer County and the City of Loveland, citizens who want to be assured that their glass is fully recycled back into new bottles jars now have the option to do just that. How? By choosing to take our glass to one of five designated drop-off locations that feature glass-only bins. It's that easy.

Maybe you were just getting used to the arrival of single-stream recycling. But it turns out that glass mixed with other recyclable items ends up breaking into too many pieces, especially during the collection and transport process. These pieces of glass become so contaminated with other non-recyclable debris that it's extremely difficult to supply a clean stream of marketable glass from this material to end users. It's estimated that no more than 30% of all glass collected at the curb actually makes it to market.

Some of the glass taken to landfills is used as a cover that's spread over the landfill at the end of daily operations. Another significant portion is landfilled. Because of the difficulties associated with handling glass, many areas in the US no longer accept it. Add the fact that glass has the lowest economic value of any of the traditional recyclables, and it's not surprising that program managers would rather focus on more marketable commodities such as metal, plastic and paper.

Rather than turning a blind eye to this problem, the area-wide initiative offers citizens an option that creates a clean stream of high quality glass that will be shipped directly to the Rocky Mountain Bottling Company in Wheat Ridge, CO, where close to 100% of the glass from our local drop off facilities will be turned into new glass bottles for Coors Brewing.

You can continue to place your glass in your curb-side commingled bin; but if you want to ensure that your glass is nearly 100% recycled, this is a good time to carpool with a neighbor to one of the five designated locations in Fort Collins and Loveland.

To learn more about glass recycling in our region, drop by <http://fcgov.com/recycling>. You'll find links to an in-depth study on best management practices for glass in our region that was recently completed; specifics on the type of glass that's accepted at the current drop-off centers; a list of Q&As on the glass recycling issue; and a form to send us your questions or comments.