

How RouteSmart helped support Woodbridge, NJ in reducing costs by \$4 million per year

➔ The Woodbridge Township Public Works Department optimized their routes with RouteSmart when automating their entire truck fleet and now saves almost \$4 million annually.



THE BACKGROUND

Woodbridge Township, New Jersey is a town 25 miles outside of New York. The service area encompasses 29 square miles with approximately 29,000 homes and 6,000 multi-family units. Each day, between 600 and 800 homes are serviced for garbage collection and 800 to 1,200 are serviced for recycling.

THE CHALLENGE

In 2007, Mayor John McCormac contacted Woodbridge Township's Department of Public Works because his administration felt they could gain a number of efficiencies in the Sanitation Department. At the time, the division was spending about \$10,000,000 for operations.

Director of Public Works, Dennis Henry, and his Sanitation Supervisors, Bill Schroeder and Joe Annuzzi, evaluated the situation. Henry saw the bigger challenge driving the push for cost savings — competition. "Privatization was knocking on the door. We had to become competitive with what it would cost to privatize," he says.

The team presented an automation scenario to Mayor McCormac that would shave time off the routes and reduce operating costs with automated trucks. They also made the case for changing garbage service from twice per week to once per week. The time savings would make it possible to consolidate waste collection days. The same trucks would be used for solid waste and recycling, with solid waste collected on three days and recycling on the other two days each week.

Another factor complicated the process — additional work. When Carteret Borough was added to their responsibilities, Woodbridge Township needed to incorporate these routes without hiring employees or purchasing additional equipment.

Once the automated trucks were in place, the routes needed to be optimized. Many had great overlap and were unevenly distributed. This inefficient routing also compounded noise issues for customers because multiple trucks would drive through their neighborhoods throughout the day.

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“It started out as a five-year plan, went to a three-year plan, and ended up being less than three years by the time we got done with it, because it was so successful.”



“Working with RouteSmart has been great. They will bend over backwards to get you through your situation.”



THE SOLUTION

The department’s Programmer Analyst, Frank Heslin, recommended RouteSmart to help consolidate and optimize their routes. The Public Works team considered other routing software and approaches, but Director Dennis Henry says, “RouteSmart seemed to fit with our plan.”

Schroeder concurs, “RouteSmart was very instrumental in letting us take on Carteret without hiring any more employees or purchasing more trucks. The RouteSmart program makes it a lot easier because you don’t have to sit in front of a map and then draw colored lines. If you want to move so many residents over here, it instantaneously shows you how many numbers you have on one route versus another, and how much time this route should take versus this one.”

Big Picture Planning Leads to Big Success

Henry says, “We completely changed the whole way we did garbage and recycling collection in Woodbridge.” Prior to implementing RouteSmart, trucks overlapped territories on different days. After implementing RouteSmart, the overlaps disappeared. Schroeder notes that this was crucial for setting up their fleet. “When we started to go for an automated process, we had to come up with a game plan on how we were going to get it done, so utilizing RouteSmart’s knowledge base, I ran all of our routes by ZIP codes with the region and sector functionality.”

THE RESULTS

Henry praises Annuzzi and Schroeder’s work with RouteSmart, “Even when it changed and we all of a sudden got six trucks instead of three, these guys were able to get these trucks routed and it went smoothly. Every time it is smoother. I couldn’t imagine it being as smooth as it was. It was amazing.”

Significant Savings and Increased Volume

“We are doing more with less,” says Schroeder. The Public Works department has reduced their sanitation employee count from 107 on the road (plus support personnel) to 44. And their daily routes decreased from 20 to 14. Henry says, “Our savings in sanitation is approximately \$4 million a year, which is astronomical. Our recycling, which we changed to single stream recycling at the same time, has gone from probably 8,000 tons a year to almost 12,000 tons a year, so it has really taken off.”

Keeping the Workforce

Woodbridge Township was able to keep employment levels up by making their routes more efficient. “If we didn’t make the changes we did, we probably wouldn’t be a public entity right now. It would be private. We were able to save sanitation — make it competitive with the outside,” says Henry.

Support from RouteSmart

The team found it easy to work with RouteSmart throughout the implementation and beyond. Annuzzi says, “Working with RouteSmart has been great. They will bend over backwards to get you through your situation.” Schroeder agrees, “Those guys make us feel like family. After they give you the answer, they will give you a day or two to make sure that it was the problem and it’s solved.” The team takes advantage of RouteSmart’s training and classes to learn about new tools and hone their skills for the tools on which they depend.

Next Up?

The team is constantly fine-tuning routes to keep the routes optimized. As loads change, they change routes to accommodate them. And, in a world where time is money, knowing how to improve your routes is worth a ton.

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