



COLLECTION, PROCESSING, AND DISPOSAL

Reduce emissions from waste management activities, including collection, processing, and transportation, and from landfill disposal.

GHG emissions from MSW management and disposal arise from three different sources: in-city collection, processing and transfer; long-distance transport; and from methane released from a landfill. Although the City has already made great strides in reducing emissions from these sources, even more can be done in the coming years.

Across all waste management activities, the City can monitor and adapt programs and management practices to incorporate new technologies and markets as they become available.

COLLECTION AND PROCESSING

Identify, test, and adopt practices that maximize efficiency in collection, processing, and transfer operations.

DISPOSAL AND LANDFILL MANAGEMENT

Explore opportunities to reduce methane emissions from landfills, and consider the City’s ability to influence methane capture rates through contracting.

TECHNOLOGY AND MARKET INNOVATION

Monitor and adapt programs and management practices to incorporate new technologies and markets as they become available.



COLLECTION AND PROCESSING

Maximize efficiency in collection, and processing, and transfer operations.

Seattle Public Utilities has already taken steps to reduce the GHG emissions from collection operations. Examples of actions already taken include optimizing route efficiency, and requiring clean truck fuels as part of the 2009 collection contracts. The City can continue to look for opportunities to maximize the efficiency of collection and processing operations, and can also increase diversion of materials for recycling at City-operated transfer stations while maintaining efficient and convenient service for users.

KEY ACTIONS BY 2020

Pilot and consider transitioning to every-other week single-family garbage collection.

Make reuse and recycling drop-off more convenient at transfer facilities.

Evaluate opportunities for efficiency gains through alternative contracting approaches.

DISPOSAL AND LANDFILL MANAGEMENT

Explore opportunities to reduce methane emissions from landfills, and consider the City’s ability to influence methane capture rates through contracting.

Since 1990, waste collected by the City has been sent by rail to the Columbia Ridge Landfill in Eastern Oregon. Environmental considerations guided the selection of both the landfill location and the method of transportation: arid conditions reduce methane emissions from landfills and rail transport results in fewer GHG emissions than transport by truck, even when transporting materials over longer distances. In addition, a landfill gas-to-electricity system was installed at the Columbia Ridge Landfill in 2008, and is estimated to capture approximately 75 percent of all methane produced. Seattle City Light purchases the electricity generated as part of its clean energy portfolio.

Because the current disposal contract goes to 2028, disposal alternatives are limited. However, the City can learn more about landfill methane capture and emissions reduction practices at other landfills to inform contracting process in advance of 2028, and can include a review of current methane capture and emissions reduction practices at Columbia Ridge in the existing contract review process.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS BY 2020 (NOT PART OF SWMP)

Learn more about landfill methane capture and emissions reduction practices at other landfills to inform contracting process in advance of 2028.

Include a review of landfill methane capture and emissions reduction practices in the contract review process.

Monitor and adapt programs and management practices to incorporate new technologies and markets as they become available.

Best practices and technologies for increasing recycling and composting, reducing waste generation, and further reducing methane emissions associated with waste disposal are rapidly evolving, and may lead to additional opportunities to reduce the GHG emissions and other environmental impacts of waste generated in Seattle. The City can continue to monitor developments in the field, and adapt programs and practices as appropriate to achieve its goals for waste diversion, source reduction, and climate action.