



Executive Summary

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An international leader in solid waste management for decades, Seattle has advanced a zero-waste vision thanks to public support for environmentally focused programs and thoughtful planning. Today, Seattle's vision of a zero waste future builds toward an inclusive and circular economy, where all materials with value are reused or recycled, and nothing is wasted. To advance toward zero waste, Seattle looks at the whole life cycle of how products and packaging are made to eliminate waste and toxics, prevent pollution, reduce carbon emissions, and conserve natural resources from the start.

Seattle's life cycle view of materials reflects industrywide shifts toward solid waste management approaches focused on preventing waste in the first place. We get closer to zero waste by producing and using less. That is why Seattle's *2022 Solid Waste Plan Update: Moving Upstream to Zero Waste (2022 Plan Update)* prioritizes waste prevention in solid waste system planning. As part of our emphasis on waste prevention, Seattle will work to address the root causes of waste to reduce impacts on health and the environment.

Though Seattle plans for a zero-waste future in which resources with value stay out of the landfill, we will have to continue to manage some garbage, recycling, and organic materials. The *2022 Plan Update* describes how Seattle will manage and finance waste management services and facilities over the next six years, and projects system management needs over 20 years. The *2022 Plan Update*:

- Highlights historic solid waste trends, including progress toward goals, and details solid waste system projections
- Describes how Seattle advances waste prevention and diversion from landfill through policy, customer outreach and education, investments in the circular economy, and enforcement of solid waste rules, regulations, and contracts
- Describes the solid waste system and how Seattle provides essential solid waste management services to about 750,000 people in the City



The zero waste component of Seattle Public Utilities' vision (Source: 2021–2026 SPU Strategic Business Plan)

Seattle's 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update

Executive Summary

- Recommends 39 actions for Seattle to continue innovating in solid waste management
- Suggests creating new goals consistent with Seattle's growing emphasis on reducing waste at the source

The *2022 Plan Update* reflects goal areas and guiding principles that are at the center of Seattle's work:

- Understanding and responding to customers and community
- Ensuring affordability and accountability
- Addressing risk and resilience
- Enhancing equity and empowerment
- Delivering service and safety

With the *2022 Plan Update*, Seattle aligns its waste-related goals not only with the City Council-adopted [SPU Strategic Business Plan \(2021-2026\)](#), but also with the City's sustainability and climate goals in the [Climate Action Plan \(2013\)](#), as well as the overarching vision of a [Washington State's Solid and Hazardous Waste Plan - "Moving Washington Beyond Waste and Toxics" \(2021\)](#).¹

Working alongside partners in the community and in the solid waste industry, Seattle is leading the way to zero waste and toward a healthier, more sustainable, and inclusive way of managing resources.

Recommendations

The table on the following page lists the 39 recommendations described in the *2022 Plan Update*. Recommendations cover either a short-term planning period within the next five years, or a long-term planning period of five or more years.

¹ https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SPU/AboutUs/SPB_2021-2026.pdf
http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Environment/ClimateChange/2013_CAP_20130612.pdf
<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/1504019.pdf>

Recommendation	Short-Term (S) / Long-Term (L)	Chapter and Page
Overarching		
Rec 01. Lead with race and incorporate racial justice in solid waste programs, education, and outreach in support of SPU's commitment to providing racially equitable, inclusive, and culturally competent services.	S	1.24
Maximizing and Measuring Impact		
Rec 02. Keep developing overarching goals consistent with waste prevention and reduction activities instead of continuing to emphasize recycling rate goals focused on diversion.	S	2.13
Rec 03. Expand solid waste data analytics, metrics, and evaluation to improve assessment of services and operations.	S	2.25
Waste Prevention and Reuse		
Rec 04. Prioritize and support waste prevention with program research, data analysis, and metrics.	S	4.6
Rec 05. Increase community awareness of waste prevention through coordinated outreach.	S	4.7
Rec 06. Expand food waste prevention to reduce food waste.	S	4.17
Rec 07. Expand efforts to rescue safe, edible food from the waste stream by getting it to those that need it most.	S	4.18
Rec 08. Reduce single-use items and promote durable or reusable alternatives.	S	4.30
Rec 09. Expand support for community organizations working to prevent waste.	S	4.34
Rec 10. Expand support of the City's sustainable and green purchasing policies.	S	4.42
Rec 11. Explore and expand market opportunities for reused material and repair services.	S	4.46
Rec 12. Promote and support waste prevention for textiles and monitor emerging textiles recycling technologies.	L	4.47
Recycling and Composting Policy and Markets		
Rec 13. Advocate for responsible recycling policies recommended by the Responsible Recycling Task Force.	S	5.14
Rec 14. Continue and expand efforts to reduce the amount of contamination, or non-recyclable material, in the recycling and food and yard waste.	S	5.14
Rec 15. Support market and infrastructure development for recycling.	S	5.18
Rec 16. Continue to explore and implement product stewardship policies and programs that require producers, manufacturers, and/or retailers to take back and recycle the products they sell.	S	5.35
Rec 17. Continue to support and expand industry-led, voluntary retail take-back of plastic wrap and bags.	S	5.36
Rec 18. Require all single-use food service packaging to be compostable and harmonize acceptance standards for compostable products.	S	5.40
Rec 19. Continue to refine and develop strategies to keep more food waste and compostable paper out of the garbage.	S	5.41
Rec 20. Continue to support market development for compost products.	S	5.41
Rec 21. Assess options for diaper and pet waste recovery.	L	5.42

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Executive Summary

Recommendation	Short-Term (S) / Long-Term (L)	Chapter and Page
Solid Waste Handling, Collection, and Removal		
Rec 22. Conduct research to inform future collection, processing, and disposal contracts.	L	6.22
Rec 23. Adopt collection infrastructure incentives or requirements in multifamily construction to ensure tenants have sufficient solid waste services and convenient access to solid waste containers.	S	6.22
Rec 24. Explore collection infrastructure requirements for new construction of townhomes and live-work units.	S	6.23
Rec 25. Improve alley and public right-of-way access for collection vehicles.	S	6.23
Rec 26. Expand the Clean City education campaign to increase awareness of the City's litter and cleanup programs.	L	6.30
Solid Waste Transfer, Processing, Disposal, and Emergency Management		
Rec 27. Continue to explore opportunities for adaptive reuse of historic landfills, including opportunities to control costs at closed landfills and to bring the land into productive use.	S	7.25
Construction and Demolition Debris		
Rec 28. Expand construction and demolition debris industry outreach and education.	S	8.7
Rec 29. Improve enforcement of and incentives for compliance with construction and demolition system rules.	S	8.7
Rec 30. Promote salvage and deconstruction for reusable building materials.	S	8.9
Rec 31. Require deconstruction (instead of demolition) for select project sizes and/or project types to increase construction and demolition debris recovery.	S	8.9
Rec 32. Expand recycling market development construction and demolition debris to support diversion of these materials from landfill.	S	8.21
Rec 33. Enhance diversion of construction and demolition debris at transfer stations.	S	8.21
Outreach, Education, Code Enforcement, and Compliance Support		
Rec 34. Continue and expand use of large, color-coordinated, multilingual, and icon-based container decals to encourage proper sorting of waste.	S	9.11
Rec 35. Continue and expand use of available metrics to inform outreach strategy and measure outcomes.	S	9.19
Rec 36. Continue participating in the regional Communication Consortium to unify solid waste messaging between Seattle and King County municipalities.	S	9.20
Rec 37. Expand waste prevention and diversion outreach and education in schools.	S	9.21
Rec 38. Expand efforts to increase compliance with solid waste code and requirements across customer sectors.	S	9.30
Administration and Financing of the Solid Waste System		
Rec 39. Continue to regularly review rates to ensure they provide incentives for program success, are set equitably, and balance affordability and program costs.	L	10.16