



Seattle
Public
Utilities



Moving Toward Zero Waste

2025 ANNUAL SOLID WASTE REPORT

Table of Contents

At a Glance: 2025 Key Metrics Results	3
An Evolving Waste Landscape	4
Recycling Reform Act: A Win for Recycling and Waste Reduction	5
SPU Solid Waste Metrics and Targets	6
Performance Snapshot: 2025 Highlights	7-11
2025 Policy Wins	12
Shaping a Community-Centered Waste Prevention Plan	13
Another Growth Year for Reuse Seattle	14
Help Seattle Get to Zero Waste	15

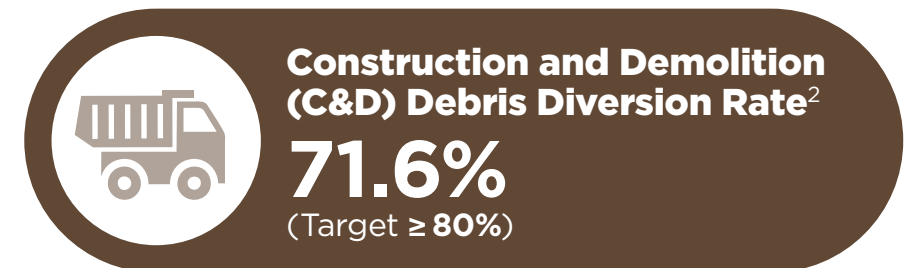
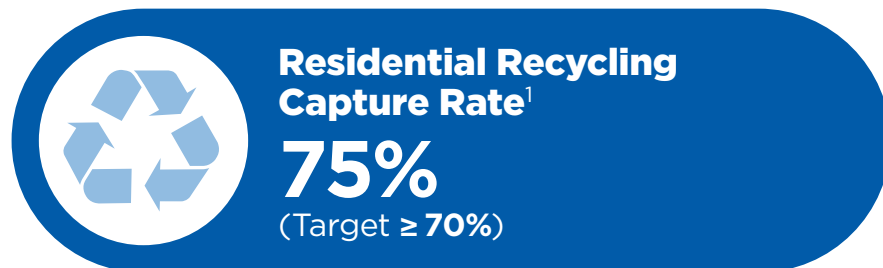
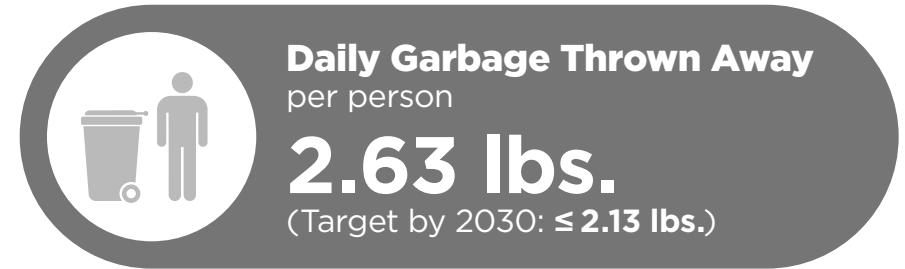
APPENDICES

Appendix I: Key Metrics Results Detail and Data
Appendix II: Tonnage by Customer Sector—Summary Analyses and Data
Appendix III: Solid Waste Advisory Committee Letter



At a Glance: 2025 Key Metrics Results

The figures in this report are estimates based on currently available data.



¹**Recycling Capture Rate** is calculated by dividing total tons of collected residential recyclable material by tons of recyclable material in overall residential waste (garbage, recycling, and compost).

²**C&D Debris Diversion Rate** is the percentage of C&D materials kept out of the landfill for reuse, recycling, or another beneficial use.

An Evolving Waste Landscape

Seattle's population is growing, and more people are moving into apartments and condos instead of single-family homes. This presents unique challenges for recycling and composting. At the same time, Seattle's municipal solid waste (MSW) stream is changing, with packaging and nonrecyclable materials increasing. Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) is responding to these shifts by adapting how we plan, operate, and support our customers.

For decades, SPU has advanced policies and programs that reduce the amount of waste that ends up in the landfill and improve recycling and composting. But to keep Seattle a leader in sustainable waste management, we need to do more than manage waste after it's created. We need to work upstream to keep waste from being produced in the first place.

The 2025 Solid Waste Report shows how SPU is doing on this shift toward waste prevention. The report includes prevention-focused metrics established in 2024 that track our progress toward Seattle's zero waste goals. It also highlights key policy developments, including the Recycling Reform Act, a state law that sets standards for residential recycling systems, drives investments in recycled content and reuse, and requires companies to reduce how much packaging they produce.

The transition from focusing mainly on managing waste to preventing it will take years to carry out, but real gains are already being made. For example, in 2025 Seattle hit its per-person waste generation target for the first time. As Seattle continues to grow, SPU remains committed to advancing waste prevention and leading the way in sustainable waste management.



Municipal Solid Waste

MSW includes all the garbage, recyclable materials, and compostable materials collected in Seattle at home or work or hauled to a transfer station.

It includes some materials that need special handling, such as old refrigerators and tires. It does not include construction and demolition debris hauled to third-party facilities or hazardous waste taken to a household hazardous waste facility.

Recycling Reform Act: A Win for Recycling and Waste Reduction

SPU played a key role in helping pass the 2025 Recycling Reform Act, a new state law that will make recycling easier, more affordable, and more effective for Washington residents.

The law establishes a statewide Extended Producer Responsibility system that places the responsibility for managing and improving residential recycling on the companies that create packaging and paper products. Instead of cities and utility customers paying for the costs of managing discarded packaging, producers will now fund the majority of residential recycling system costs. The law also encourages producers to reduce how much packaging they use in the first place.

SPU shaped and supported this law in partnership with a broad coalition of environmental organizations, local governments, labor unions, Tribes, physicians, companies, and residents. Their voices, and support from our customers, helped get this law passed.

This is a transformational step forward for Seattle and Washington state. It's about fairness, sustainability, and a recycling system that works better for people and the planet.



Governor Bob Ferguson signed the Recycling Reform Act into law on May 17, 2025.

What the Recycling Reform Act Means for Seattle Residential Customers

Seattle already has one of the longest-running and most comprehensive recycling programs in the country. The new statewide law will help build on that success. For Seattle customers, the benefits include:

- **Clear, consistent recycling guidance:** Simple, uniform rules for every household across the state will make it easier to recycle right and reduce waste.
- **Lower utility costs:** Beginning in 2030, producers will cover most of the cost of residential recycling services and fund reuse and waste reduction systems, saving our customers money while advancing a more sustainable Seattle.
- **Increased transparency and accountability:** The program will include oversight to ensure that materials are responsibly recycled. It will also hold a Producer Responsibility Organization accountable for demonstrating improvements in recycling and waste reduction outcomes over time.

These changes will help make Seattle's recycling system stronger, more equitable, and ready for the future.

SPU Solid Waste Metrics and Targets

The table below summarizes SPU's solid waste performance metrics and targets.³

Detailed explanations of each metric and 2025 results can be found in Appendix I: Key Metrics Results Detail and Data.

METRIC		DESCRIPTION OF MEASUREMENT (All Measurements are Estimates)	TARGET
	DAILY POUNDS OF MSW GENERATED PER PERSON	Total garbage + recycling + compostables per person ⁴ per day in pounds ⁵	15% reduction (2015–2030) to 5.07 lbs/person/day
	DAILY POUNDS OF MSW DISPOSED PER PERSON	Garbage thrown away per person ⁴ per day in pounds ⁵	15% reduction (2015–2030) to 2.13 lbs/person/day
	ANNUAL TONS OF FOOD WASTE DISPOSED (RESIDENTIAL + COMMERCIAL)	Total tons of food waste thrown out (residential + commercial) ⁶	Tracked every 4–5 years
	RESIDENTIAL RECYCLING CAPTURE RATE	Percentage of residential recyclables correctly sorted as recycling	≥ 70%
	CONSTRUCTION & DEMOLITION DEBRIS DIVERSION RATE	Percentage of C&D debris diverted to reuse/recycling/beneficial use ⁷	≥ 80% by 2030 and increase proportion reused

³SPU is evaluating several opportunities to improve the existing methodology and data sources used to calculate total tons of annual MSW and plans to implement the revised methodology in the 2027 Annual Solid Waste Report, which will be published in 2028.

⁴Based on [City of Seattle Annual Growth Stats \(residential\)](#) from the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM).

⁵Excluding construction and demolition debris hauled to third-party facilities and hazardous waste materials hauled to household hazardous waste facilities.

⁶Through City-contracted garbage collection services.

⁷Beneficial use is diverting C&D debris from landfills in a way that replaces another material in a manufacturing process. A common example is using untreated wood waste as a fuel for industrial boilers to replace other fuels. SPU defines “beneficial use” in Administrative Rule #SPU-DR-01-07. The Washington State Department of Ecology may also approve a specific use as beneficial use under Washington Administrative Code 173-350-200.

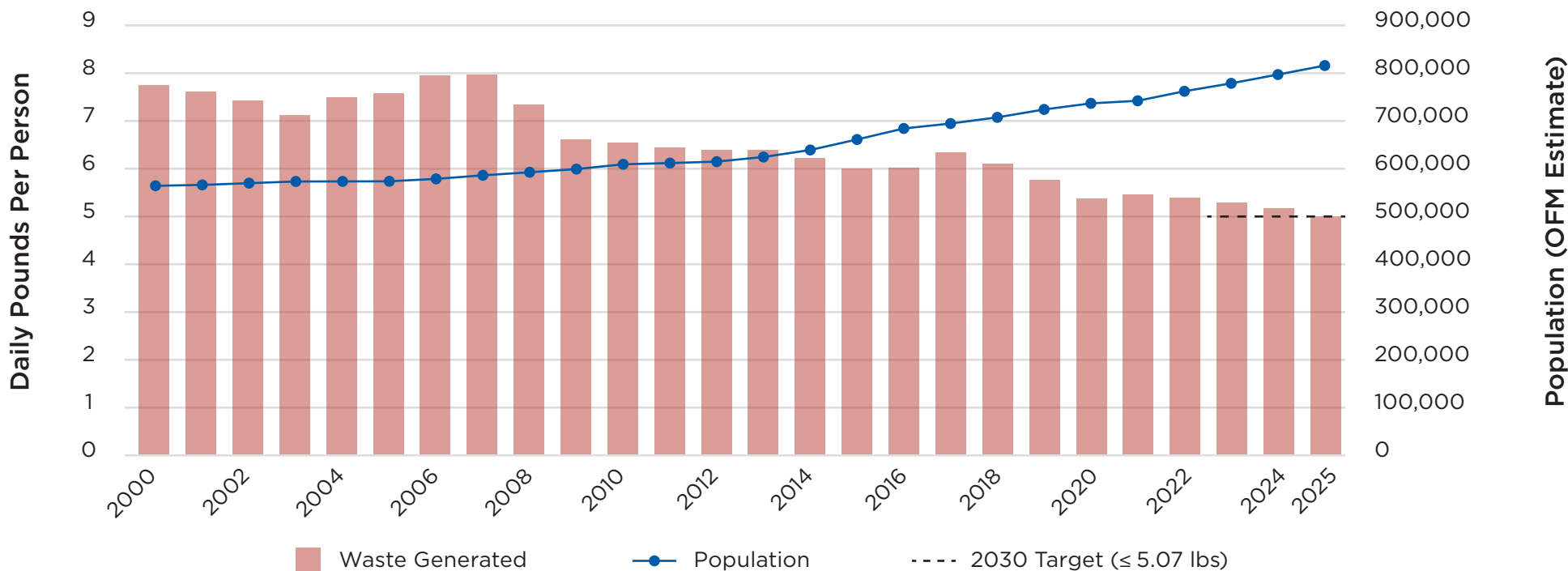
Seattle Achieved its Daily Per-Person Waste Generation Target

In 2025, population growth continued to outpace waste generation, bringing the amount of MSW generated per Seattleite per day to 4.97 pounds, down from 5.14 pounds in 2024. This is the first year we have met our target of 5.07 pounds per person per day or less. (See Appendix I, page 1 for details.)



Daily Pounds MSW Generated Per Person and Population

Generated = Disposed + Recycled + Composted

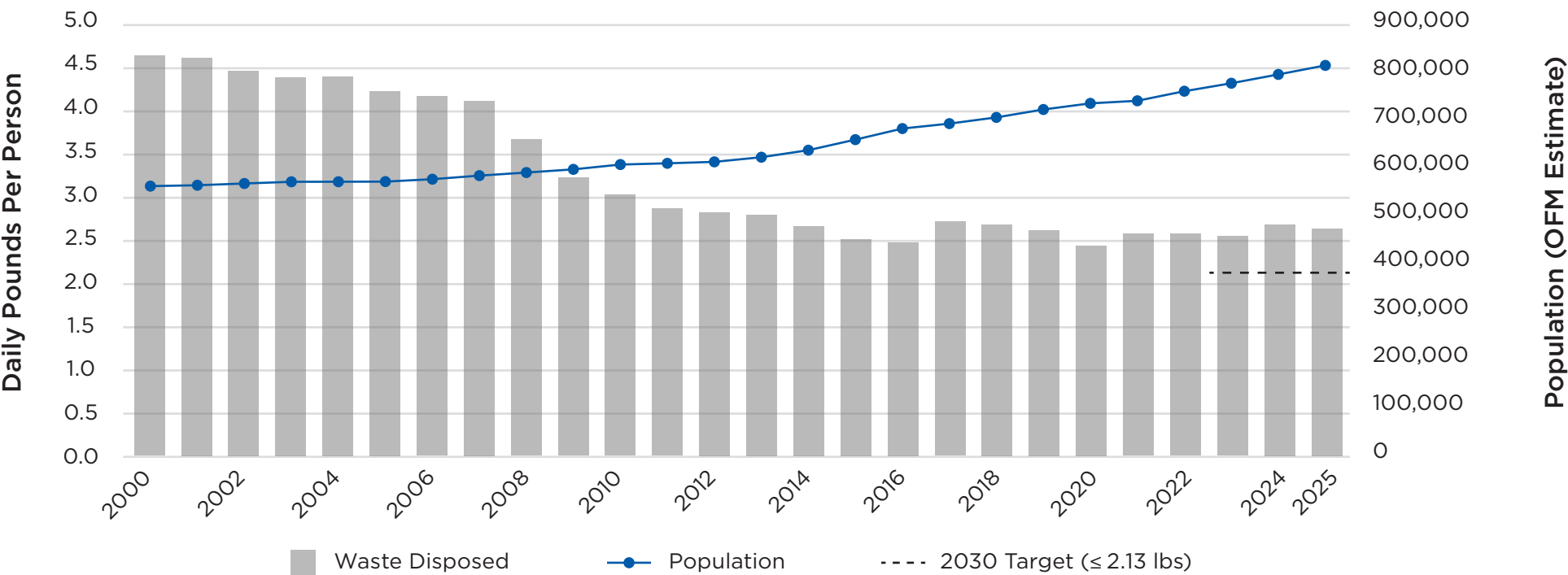


Daily Waste Disposed Per Person Remained Stable

People threw away about 2.63 pounds daily in 2025, nearly the same as 2024 (2.68 pounds). Daily waste disposal has remained relatively flat over the past 10 years, which puts us off track to reach SPU’s target of 2.13 pounds of trash per person per day by 2030. (See Appendix I, page 1 and Appendix II, page 1 for details.)



Daily Pounds MSW Disposed Per Person and Population

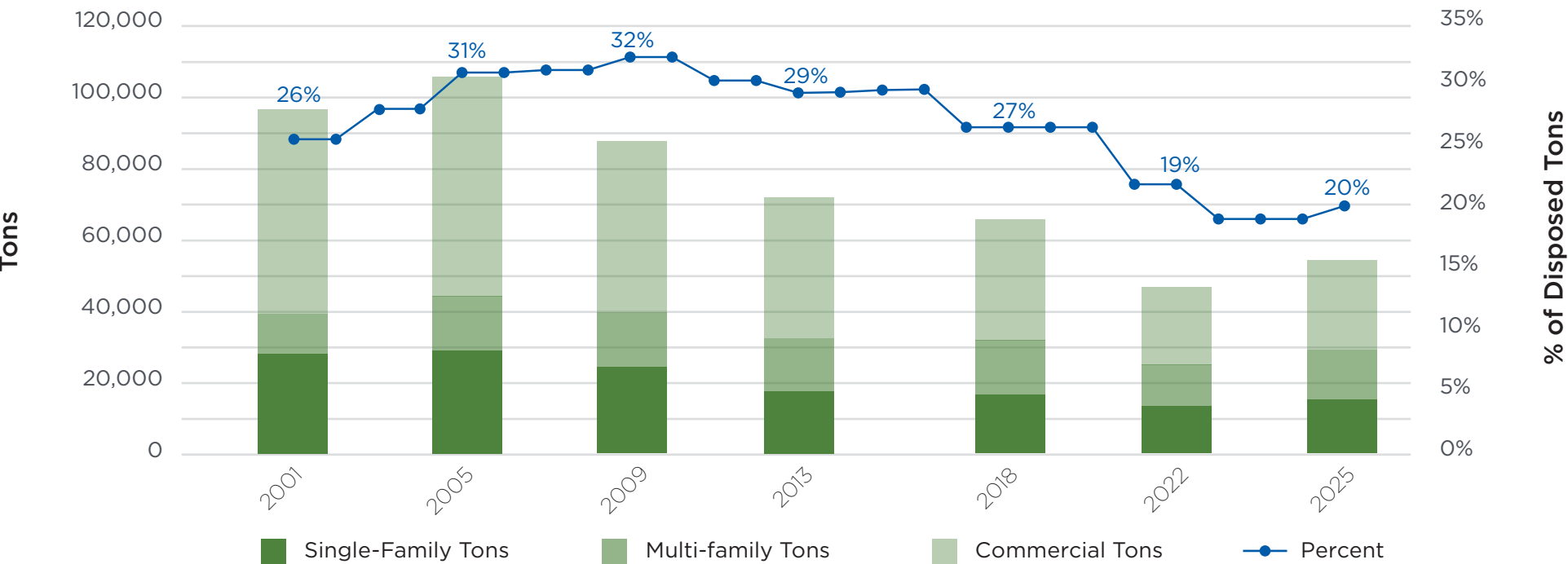


Disposed Food Waste Tons Increased

Seattle residents and businesses threw away about 53,700 tons of food waste into the garbage in 2025, representing about 20% of all landfill-bound waste. Based on new residential waste composition study data, the residential share of food waste in the landfill climbed from 19.4% to 22.3%, a significant increase.⁸ While this is a step in the wrong direction, it remains well below the 2009 peak, when food made up one-third (32%) of all landfill-bound waste. (See Appendix I, page 3 for details.)



Annual Tons of Food Waste Disposed and Percent of Disposed Tons



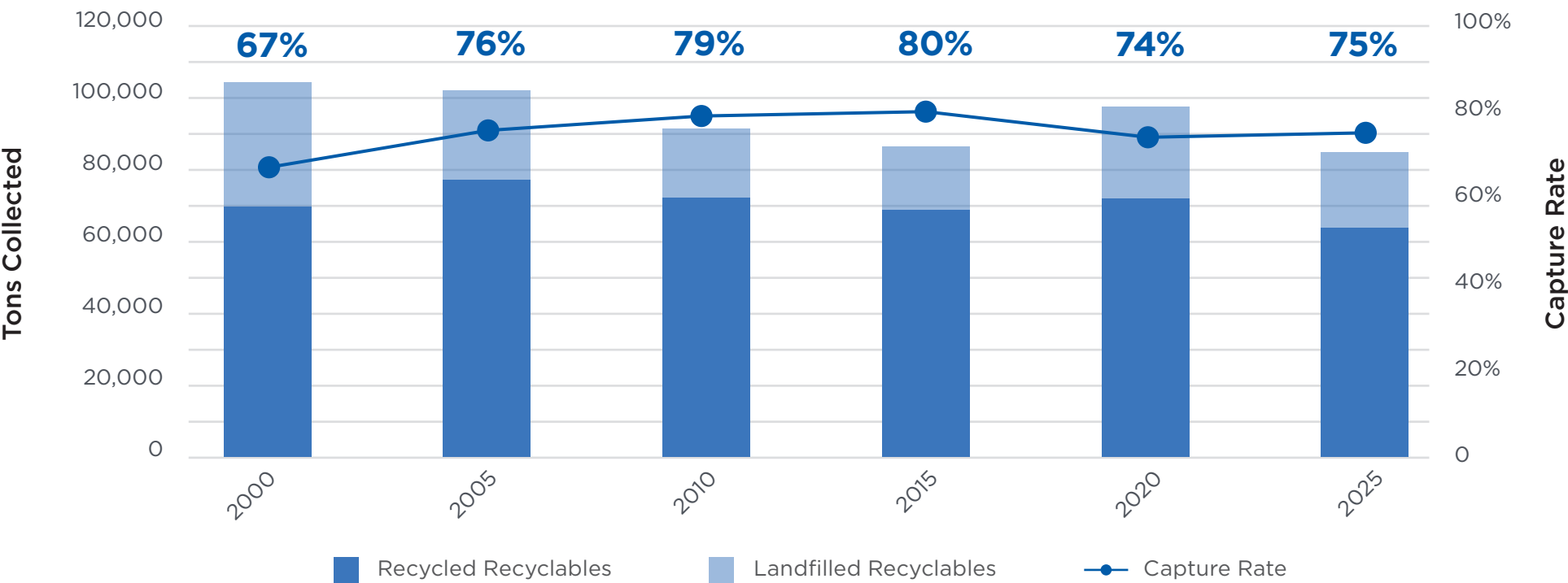
⁸ The data required to calculate the amount of food waste disposed to landfill is collected by SPU through waste composition studies conducted at approximately five-year intervals. SPU conducted a residential garbage study in 2025. SPU will conduct a commercial garbage study in 2027.



Three-Quarters of Recycling Was Properly Sorted

In 2025, Seattle residents correctly sorted 75% of their residential recyclables, consistent with 2020 levels, when SPU last measured this metric.⁹ Although the total tons of recyclable material declined, Seattle residents continued to vastly outperform the average U.S. household with access to a curbside recycling program, which correctly sorts about 57% of their recyclable materials.¹⁰ (See Appendix I, page 4 for details.)

Residential Recycling Capture Rate and Tons Collected



⁹ SPU collects the data required to calculate residential recycling capture rates through waste composition studies conducted at approximately five-year intervals. SPU conducted the most recent residential recycling study in 2025.

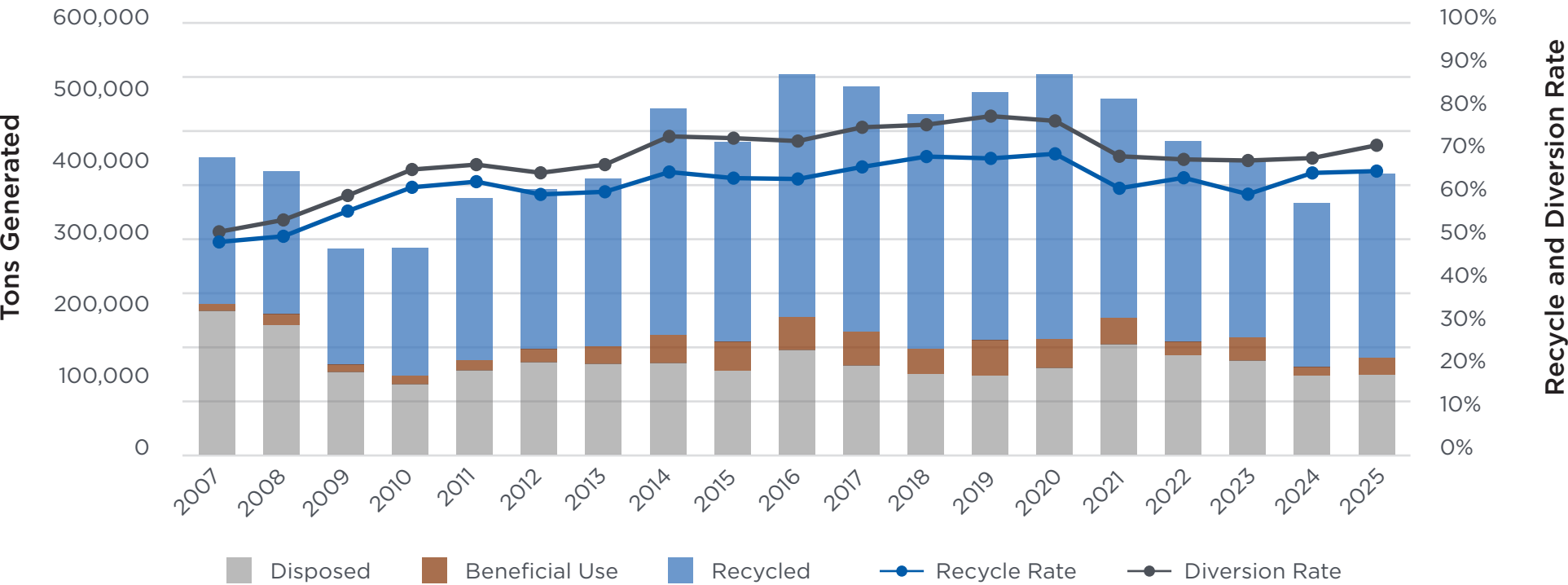
¹⁰ Recycling Partnership. (2024). [State of Recycling: The Present and Future of Residential Recycling in the U.S.](#)



The Construction and Demolition (C&D) Debris Diversion Rate Increased

Driven by increased concrete recycling, C&D diversion from the landfill to third-party recycling facilities rose to 71.6%, up from 68.6% in 2024. While consistent with the 10-year average for C&D diversion rates, this result falls short of SPU’s 80% diversion goal for C&D debris. (See Appendix I, page 5 for details.)

Construction and Demolition Debris
Tons Generated and Recycle and Diversion Rate



2025 Policy Wins

While the Recycling Reform Act topped the list of state policy victories in the 2025–2026 legislative session, there were two additional wins for sustainable materials management:

- **Right to Repair:** [House Bill 1483](#) requires manufacturers to provide consumers and independent repair shops with the necessary tools, parts, and information to fix digital devices like smartphones, laptops, and tablets. This helps people keep their electronics longer instead of replacing them, which reduces waste and makes repairs more accessible and affordable to everyone.
- **Organics Management:** Recognizing that keeping food waste out of landfills is one of the most effective ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and seeing the success of SPU's organics program, the state legislature passed [House Bill 1497](#). The new law establishes food waste collection and diversion programs throughout the state, supporting SPU's broader goals of reducing emissions and decreasing contamination. HB 1497 requirements include standardized collection bin colors, a statewide food scraps education campaign, dedicated food waste reduction initiatives for K-12 schools, and updates to the state building code to facilitate organics collection in newly constructed buildings.



Shaping a Community-Centered Waste Prevention Plan

Community input is important to helping shape Seattle's new Waste Prevention Plan. In 2025, we engaged more than 1,000 residents, businesses, and organizations from communities most affected by pollution and historically left out of decision-making. We used their feedback to refine the goals and strategies of our Waste Prevention Plan and define four key action areas to guide progress through 2033. These action areas, described below, will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prevent pollution, and conserve valuable resources.

- 1 Prevent Edible Food Waste:** Reducing edible food waste is one of the most meaningful steps we can take to support our environment. It also helps people save money and reduces hunger in our communities.
- 2 Reduce Single-Use Items:** Transitioning to reusable products reduces litter in our streets and waterways. SPU will help food businesses switch to reusable dishware and takeout containers.
- 3 Reuse Building Materials:** When buildings are torn down quickly with heavy machinery, valuable materials such as lumber, metal fixtures, and windows, go to waste. By contrast, deconstruction involves taking buildings apart piece by piece. By supporting the growth of deconstruction in Seattle, we can save and reuse valuable materials, protect our environment, and create local jobs.
- 4 Increase Reuse, Repair, and Sharing:** Sharing, reusing, and repairing items instead of buying new ones reduces waste, saves energy and water, and keeps harmful toxins out of our environment. It also saves money and supports the local economy.

SPU will gather final community input in 2026 before releasing the completed Waste Prevention Plan in 2027.



Another Growth Year for Reuse Seattle



In 2025, [Reuse Seattle](#) reached new milestones in expanding reusable food and beverage systems throughout the city. Led by SPU and supported by four reuse service providers and a growing network of local businesses, the program continued building a coordinated, citywide approach to collecting, transporting, washing, and reusing food service containers.

Reuse Seattle's 2025 program accomplishments included:

- Replacing over 200,000 single-use items with reusable dishware at 148 events, including West Seattle Summer Fest, farmers markets, and Festa Italiana at Seattle Center.
- Providing up to \$500 in incentives to 29 businesses, including cafes and restaurants, to switch from single-use to reusable food service products.
- Expanding the "borrow a cup" network from 12 to 21 coffee shops. The network gives coffee shop customers the option to borrow a reusable cup and return it to any participating location.
- Providing 15+ hours of expert consultation on Climate Pledge Arena's successful new reusable cup program, which prevents millions of disposables from being wasted each year.
- Making reuse easier and more enjoyable for Husky fans at Alaska Airlines Arena with 25+ hours of expert consultation on its reuse program and \$12,000 in improvements to on-site collection of reusable beverage containers.



Help Seattle Get to Zero Waste



SPU is committed to reaching Seattle's zero waste goals, but we can't do it without you. Check out these resources to do your part and help our city build a more sustainable future:

- **Waste Prevention Tips**

Recycling and composting are great. But not creating waste in the first place is even better! Actions like donating and buying used items can save you money and do good for the planet.

[Visit our website for more tips for preventing waste.](#)

- **Recycling Tips**

As important as it is to recycle, it's more important to recycle right. For example, make sure your recyclables are empty, clean, and dry before they go in the bin.

[Get more tips to prevent recycling contamination on our website.](#)



Appendix I: Key Metrics Results Detail and Data

The following section contains detailed results, data figures, and tables for each of Seattle Public Utilities' five key solid waste metrics. For a fuller explanation of how the metrics and targets were developed, see the [Solid Waste Metrics and Targets report](#) (PDF).

The figures in this report are estimates based on currently available data.

Daily Pounds of MSW Generated Per Person

Municipal solid waste (MSW) generation is the total amount of materials disposed, recycled, or composted by Seattle residents and businesses. It does not include construction and demolition (C&D) debris hauled to third-party facilities.

SPU has set a target of reducing daily pounds of waste generated per person from 6.00 pounds per person per day in 2015 to 5.07 pounds per person per day in 2030.¹

Results: In 2025, Seattle's population grew 2.3%, while solid waste generation fell by 1.0% compared to 2024. As a result, daily MSW generated per person dropped to 4.97 pounds, down from 5.14 pounds in 2024. This marks the first time Seattle has achieved its per person generation target of 5.07 pounds or less. The overall trend in Seattle's daily per person MSW generation has shown a steady decline since the peak of 7.94 pounds per person per day in 2007.

Daily Pounds of MSW Disposed Per Person

Daily MSW disposed per person measures how much garbage Seattle residents and businesses throw away each day, per person. It includes waste collected for landfill disposal across all customer sectors—commercial, self-haul (hauled directly to the City's transfer stations by both residential and nonresidential customers), single-family residential, and multifamily residential. It does not include C&D debris hauled to third-party facilities.

SPU has set a target of reducing daily MSW disposed per person from 2.50 pounds per person per day in 2015 to 2.13 pounds per person per day by 2030.

Results: In 2025, daily MSW disposed per person remained relatively stable at 2.63 pounds compared to 2024 levels of 2.68 pounds. Since 2010, this metric has stayed around 2.50 to 3.00 pounds per person per day, reaching a low of 2.43 pounds per person per day in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. With daily disposed pounds per person holding steady, the overall decrease in waste generation per person was driven by declines in both recycling and composting pounds per person per day. Reaching SPU's 2030 target of 2.13 daily pounds of MSW disposed per person will require additional action by SPU to reduce waste generation and waste disposal.

¹ The global network, C40, of which Seattle is a member, identified per person MSW generation as a key metric for cities interested in reducing waste and associated climate pollution. Using the baseline year of 2015 aligns with the C40 network and many other jurisdictions. The target year of 2030 signifies a significant international milestone for reducing worldwide climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions as detailed in Seattle's Climate Action Plan (2013). Cities such as Vancouver, Boston, Toronto, and San Francisco have also pledged to reduce waste generation to this target on this timeline.

The observed decrease in daily per person MSW disposal in 2025 is largely due to the South Transfer Station construction closure from August 1 through September 9, 2025. Rather than delay their trips until after the closure, self-haul customers appear to have used other disposal facilities, diverting at least 5,700 tons from Seattle's South Transfer Station. Although self-haul accounted for 18.7% of Seattle's MSW generation in 2025, it continued to make up a third (32.3%) of Seattle's landfilled MSW.

SPU is evaluating strategies to reduce rising self-haul disposal and lower overall MSW disposal, such as redirecting C&D haulers to dedicated C&D recycling facilities and strengthening enforcement to ensure materials originating from outside Seattle are not accepted.

Table 1. Daily Pounds MSW Generated and Disposed Per Person, 2000-2025

Year	Generated (tons)	Disposed (tons)	Population (OFM Estimate)	Daily Per person Generated (lbs.)	Daily Per person Disposed (lbs.)
2000	793,842	476,132	563,376	7.72	4.63
2001	782,974	475,270	565,228	7.59	4.61
2002	768,462	462,996	568,908	7.40	4.46
2003	741,337	458,011	572,472	7.10	4.38
2004	780,346	458,405	572,595	7.47	4.39
2005	790,456	440,694	572,857	7.56	4.22
2006	836,499	438,381	577,921	7.93	4.16
2007	848,759	439,407	585,436	7.94	4.11
2008	789,688	394,828	591,870	7.31	3.66
2009	719,424	351,689	598,539	6.59	3.22
2010	724,469	335,570	608,660	6.52	3.02
2011	715,996	319,341	611,249	6.42	2.86
2012	713,821	315,983	614,283	6.37	2.82
2013	724,385	317,259	624,045	6.36	2.79
2014	721,270	309,515	638,784	6.19	2.66
2015	720,705	302,467	660,908	5.98	2.51
2016	748,051	308,379	684,136	5.99	2.47
2017	800,380	343,922	694,513	6.31	2.71
2018	785,223	346,321	707,555	6.08	2.68
2019	757,426	345,559	724,144	5.73	2.61
2020 ²	720,061	327,114	737,015	5.35	2.43
2021 ²	737,635	347,549	742,400	5.44	2.57
2022 ²	746,586	358,268	762,500	5.37	2.57
2023 ²	749,144	360,585	779,200	5.27	2.54
2024 ²	747,948	390,353	797,700	5.14	2.68
2025	740,707	391,849	816,600	4.97	2.63

² In 2026, SPU updated commercial recycling estimates for 2020-2024 after finding and correcting a calculation error in glass recycling estimates.

Annual Tons of Food Waste Disposed (Residential + Commercial)

SPU measures food waste in the garbage using residential and commercial waste composition studies that SPU conducts approximately every five years.³

RESULTS: In 2025, residents and businesses in Seattle disposed of about 53,715 tons of food waste, representing 20% of all garbage sent to the landfill that year. This was up from 19% in 2022, the last time this metric was measured.

Based on residential waste composition study data, residential disposed food waste climbed from 19.4% in 2022 to 22.3% in 2025. Most of the increase came from two key categories—edible nonpackaged food disposed in the single-family sector (increased from 3.3% to 5.1%), and packaged food disposed in the multifamily sector (increased from 8.6% to 10.5%).

Seattle has made significant progress in reducing food waste in the garbage over the past 20 years, but challenges remain. SPU will continue using prevention and diversion strategies described in Seattle’s [2022 Solid Waste Plan Update](#), the [SPU Strategic Business Plan](#) (2025-2030), and the [Seattle Food Action Plan](#) (2024 Update). In 2025, SPU also began focusing resources on the largest generators of food waste in the commercial and multifamily sectors to ensure large businesses and big residential buildings comply with the food waste disposal requirements.

Table 2. Annual Tons of Food Waste Disposed⁴ (Residential + Commercial), 2000-2025

Based on waste composition studies done at approximately five-year intervals

Year	Residential Disposed	Residential Food Waste Proportion	Commercial Disposed	Commercial Food Waste Proportion	Food Waste Disposed
2001	144,559	0.267	228,405	0.25	95,699
2005	134,557	0.329	205,637	0.299	105,755
2009	118,725	0.334	151,398	0.316	87,496
2013	110,839	0.29	132,401	0.298	71,599
2018	107,485	0.295	138,009	0.245	65,520
2022	126,365	0.197	117,061	0.186	46,667
2025	130,925	0.219	134,503	0.186	53,715

³ Food waste disposed is the percentage, by weight, of the sector-specific garbage waste stream that is food multiplied by the total tons of garbage collected from each sector in a year. Because waste composition studies are conducted at approximately five-year intervals, the percentage of the garbage stream that is food waste will remain constant between study years but the tons of food waste disposed will vary with total tons disposed.

⁴ Tons of food waste disposed is calculated based on the proportion of food waste derived from residential and commercial garbage composition studies, which SPU conducts at approximately five-year intervals. Because residential and commercial disposal waste composition studies are conducted on separate years, reported results align with the closest available study year. SPU uses proportions from residential and commercial garbage composition studies to estimate food waste.

Residential Recycling Capture Rate

The recycling capture rate⁵ is the percentage of residential recyclables correctly sorted as recycling. SPU aims to maintain at least a 70% residential capture rate. This target is consistent with the historic 70% recycling rate target while better accounting for accomplishments in waste prevention and acknowledging that the City has limited ability to influence the recyclability of products and materials in the MSW stream.

Results: SPU's latest data shows that single-family and multifamily customers correctly sorted 75% of their recyclable materials. By contrast, the average U.S. household with curbside recycling service correctly sorts about 57% of their recyclable materials.⁶ Seattle's residential recycling capture rate has stayed above 70% since 2005, hitting a high of 80% in 2015.

In 2025, Seattle collected 64,292 tons of residential recyclables, down 3,619 tons from 2024. While more single-family and multifamily households are recycling and our recycling capture rate has improved, the total weight of our recyclables has declined, down 13,810 tons since 2018. This is likely because the recyclable materials stream is changing, as indicated in our waste composition studies. For example:

- Manufacturers increasingly use flexible and film plastics in place of recyclable packaging such as steel cans, paper boxes, and rigid plastic containers.
- Glass containers are being replaced with lighter materials, such as aluminum or plastic.
- Packaging of all types is getting lighter, so the same number of items weighs less.

The declining use of paper products, especially newsprint, is also a major factor. In 2015, newsprint accounted for 14% of residential recycling (11,963 tons). By 2025, it had fallen to less than 3% (1,987 tons).

These changes in packaging and paper to reduce overall recycling tons have more than offset population and household growth, resulting in fewer residential recycling tons overall.

Table 3. Residential Recycling Capture Rate, 2000-2025

Based on waste composition studies done at approximately five-year intervals

Year	Total Recyclables Collected (tons)	Recycled Recyclables (tons)	Landfilled Recyclables (tons)	Capture Rate
2000	104,935	70,209	34,726	67%
2005	102,659	77,552	25,106	76%
2010	92,113	72,540	19,573	79%
2015	86,930	69,199	17,731	80%
2020	98,085	72,426	25,659	74%

⁵ The residential recycling capture rate is the total tons of recyclable materials in the recycling stream divided by the total tons of recyclables across the garbage, recycling, and organics streams. Calculating the capture rate requires waste composition studies, which are done at approximately five-year intervals. Cost and time constraints limit the frequency of waste composition studies.

⁶ Recycling Partnership. (2024). *State of Recycling: The Present and Future of Residential Recycling in the U.S.*, https://recyclingpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2024/01/Recycling-Partnership-State-of-Recycling-Report-1.12.24.pdf.

Year	Total Recyclables Collected (tons)	Recycled Recyclables (tons)	Landfilled Recyclables (tons)	Capture Rate
2025	85,371	64,292	21,079	75%

Construction and Demolition Debris Diversion Rate

C&D activities produce a lot of waste. The C&D diversion rate measures the estimated weight of C&D material diverted from the landfill through recycling and beneficial uses like incineration for energy recovery.⁷ The diversion rate is calculated as the total tons diverted (recycled + beneficial use) divided by the total tons of C&D debris generated (diverted + disposed)⁸.

SPU aims to achieve a C&D diversion rate of at least 80% or higher.

RESULTS: C&D debris generation increased 10% in 2025, from 352,715 tons in 2024 to 393,180 tons. Diversion accounted for most of the increase. Recycled material increased 11%, mainly due to concrete recycling, while disposal rose only 1%. Overall, 71.6% of C&D debris was diverted from disposal (6.0% beneficial use + 65.6% recycled), up from 68.6% in 2024. This is in line with the 10-year average but still falls short of the 80% target.

To achieve the 80% diversion rate goal for C&D debris, SPU is evaluating existing incentives, policies, and programs to find ways to reduce the amount of C&D material sent to the landfill. This includes expanding opportunities for material reuse by ramping up deconstruction in 2027 through a potential requirement or expanded incentives, which would drive more material to the [Salvage Lumber Warehouse](#) and other reuse resellers. SPU is also focused on improving compliance with existing requirements for targeted construction and demolition material recovery. This includes improving communications and technical support to C&D companies and potentially proposing new policy to increase diversion rates and send more recyclable material to the [Qualified C&D Receiving and Recycling Facilities](#).

Table 4. Construction and Demolition Debris Tons and Diversion Rate, 2007-2025

Year	Generated	Disposed ⁹	Recycled ¹⁰	Beneficial Use	Recycle Rate	Diversion Rate
2007	415,801	201,156	204,907	9,738	49.3%	51.6%
2008	397,052	181,241	200,851	14,961	50.6%	54.4%
2009	288,551	115,446	162,742	10,362	56.4%	60.0%

⁷ Beneficial use is diverting C&D debris from landfills in a way that replaces another material in a manufacturing process. A common example is using untreated wood waste as a fuel for industrial boilers to replace other fuels. SPU defines “beneficial use” in [Administrative Rule #SPU-DR-01-07](#). The Washington State Department of Ecology may also approve a specific use as beneficial use under [Washington Administrative Code 173-350-200](#).

⁸ SPU estimates C&D debris disposal, beneficial use, and recycled tons based on C&D companies’ self-reporting via the [Qualified Facilities Report](#) and the [Annual Recycling and Reuse Report](#).

⁹ SPU estimates C&D debris disposal and beneficial use tons based on C&D companies’ self-reporting via the [Qualified Facilities Report](#) and the [Annual Recycling and Reuse Report](#). C&D data reflects materials sent to third-party facilities and excludes C&D taken to Seattle transfer stations for disposal, which is counted as self-haul garbage.

¹⁰ SPU estimates C&D debris recycled tons based on C&D companies’ self-reporting in the [Annual Recycling and Reuse Report](#).

Appendix I: Key Metrics Results Detail and Data

Year	Generated	Disposed ⁹	Recycled ¹⁰	Beneficial Use	Recycle Rate	Diversion Rate
2010	288,957	98,309	178,794	11,854	61.9%	66.0%
2011	359,390	118,216	227,049	14,125	63.2%	67.1%
2012	371,962	129,383	224,060	18,519	60.2%	65.2%
2013	386,200	127,040	234,982	24,178	60.8%	67.1%
2014	485,242	128,024	317,331	39,887	65.4%	73.6%
2015	437,883	117,343	280,205	40,336	64.0%	73.2%
2016	532,126	146,139	339,478	46,509	63.8%	72.5%
2017	514,858	125,074	342,755	47,029	66.6%	75.7%
2018 ¹¹	476,433	112,900	328,568	34,965	69.0%	76.3%
2019 ¹¹	507,793	110,275	348,032	49,486	68.5%	78.3%
2020	533,002	121,636	370,942	40,424	66.3%	73.5%
2021 ¹²	498,030	154,227 ¹³	307,050	36,752	61.7%	69.0%
2022	438,387	138,935 ¹³	280,909	18,543	64.1%	68.3%
2023	413,189	132,006 ¹³	249,116	32,067	60.3%	68.1%
2024	352,715	110,703	229,936	12,076	65.2%	68.6%
2025	393,180	111,801	257,976	23,403	65.6%	71.6%

¹¹ In 2020, SPU updated disposal estimates for 2018 and 2019 following additional data analysis.

¹² In 2022, SPU updated disposal estimates for 2021 after finding and correcting a calculation error.

¹³ In 2025, SPU identified an inconsistency in how C&D facilities were reporting disposal numbers, resulting in an underestimation of disposal from 2021 through 2023. The error was not present in years prior to 2021. The correction of the disposal numbers resulted in lower C&D recycling and diversion rates than previously reported.

Appendix II: Tonnage by Customer Sector – Summary Analyses and Data

The following sections present a summary analysis of MSW generation, followed by data figures and tables, for overall MSW and for each customer sector: commercial, self-haul (hailed directly to the City's transfer stations by both residential and nonresidential customers), single-family residential, and multifamily residential.

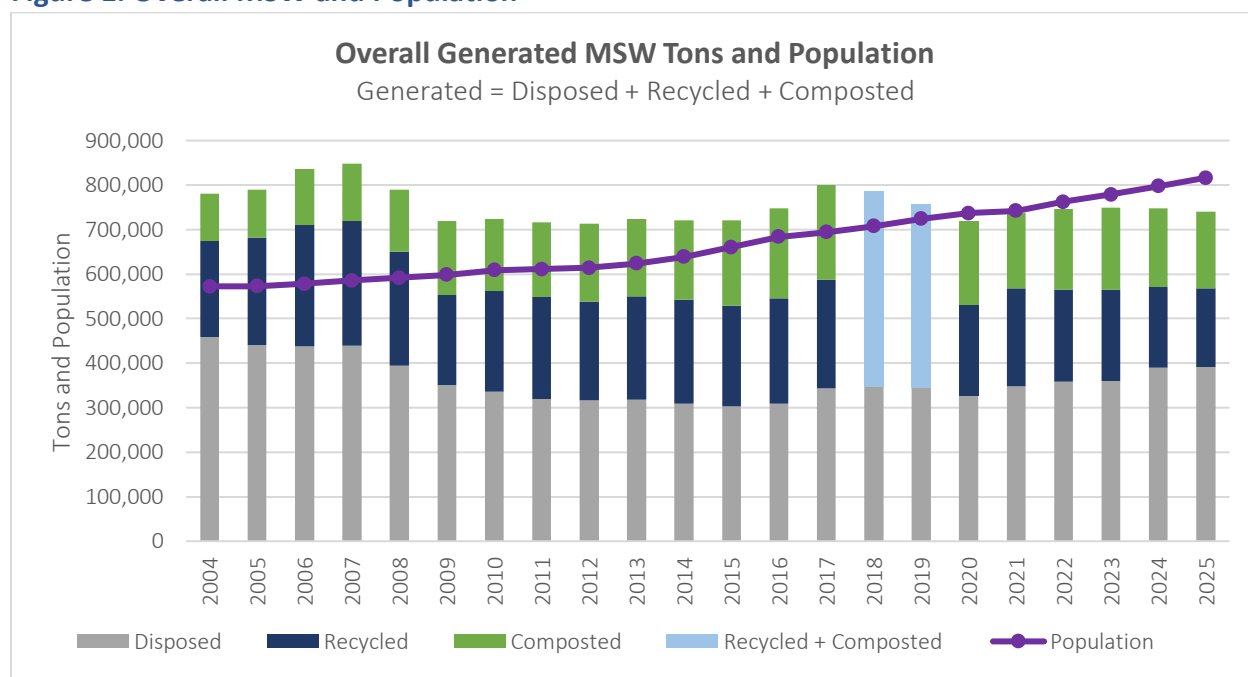
The figures in this report are estimates based on currently available data.

Overall MSW

Summary Analysis

- Despite population growth of 2.3% from 2024 to 2025, overall MSW generation in Seattle fell by 1.0% over that same period ([Figure 1](#)). Except for a small increase in the multifamily sector (962 tons), MSW generation decreased by 0.6% to 2.3% in all other customer sectors. Commercial (-1,845 tons), self-haul (-1,820 tons), and single-family (-4,538 tons) sectors all declined, resulting in a net reduction of 7,241 tons in overall waste generation in 2025.

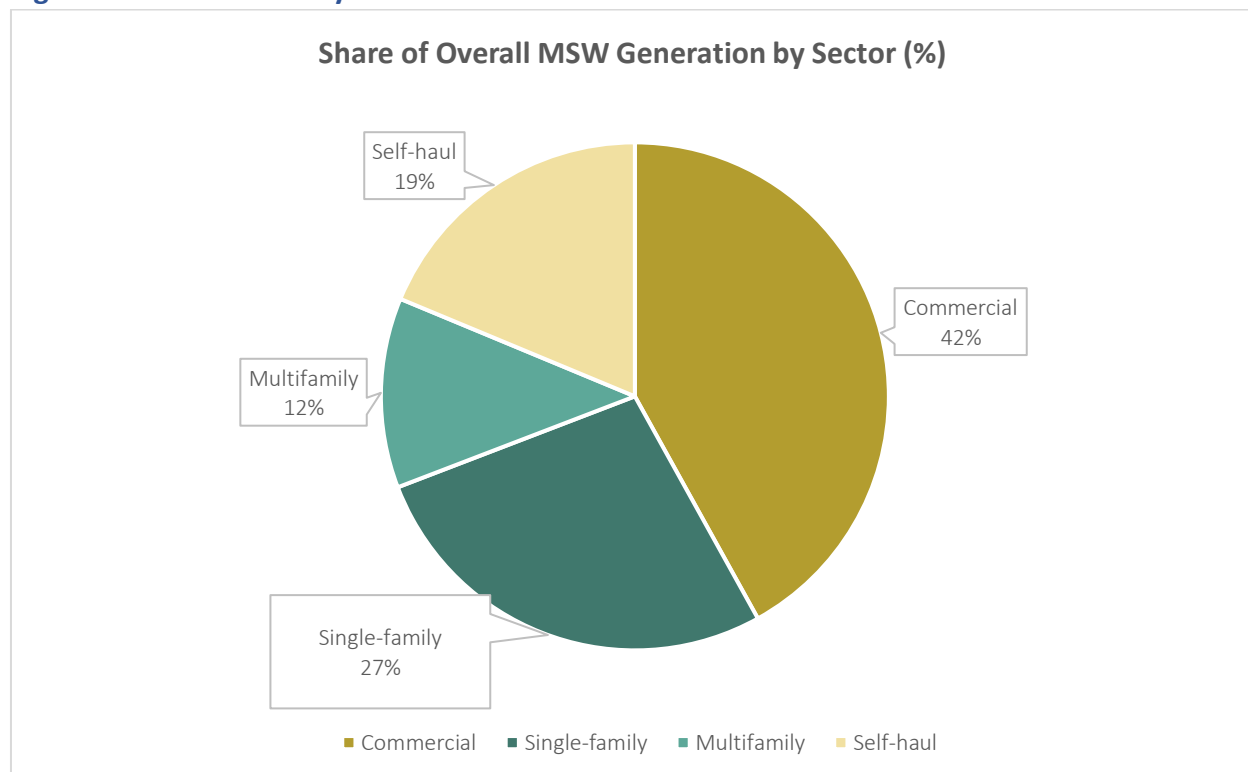
Figure 1. Overall MSW and Population¹



¹ SPU used an econometric regression analysis to estimate the open market portion of commercial diversion (recycled and composted) overall in 2018 and 2019 due to poor response rates of mandatory recycler reporting (Seattle Municipal Code 6.250). As such, a breakdown of recycled versus composted tonnage is not available for those years.

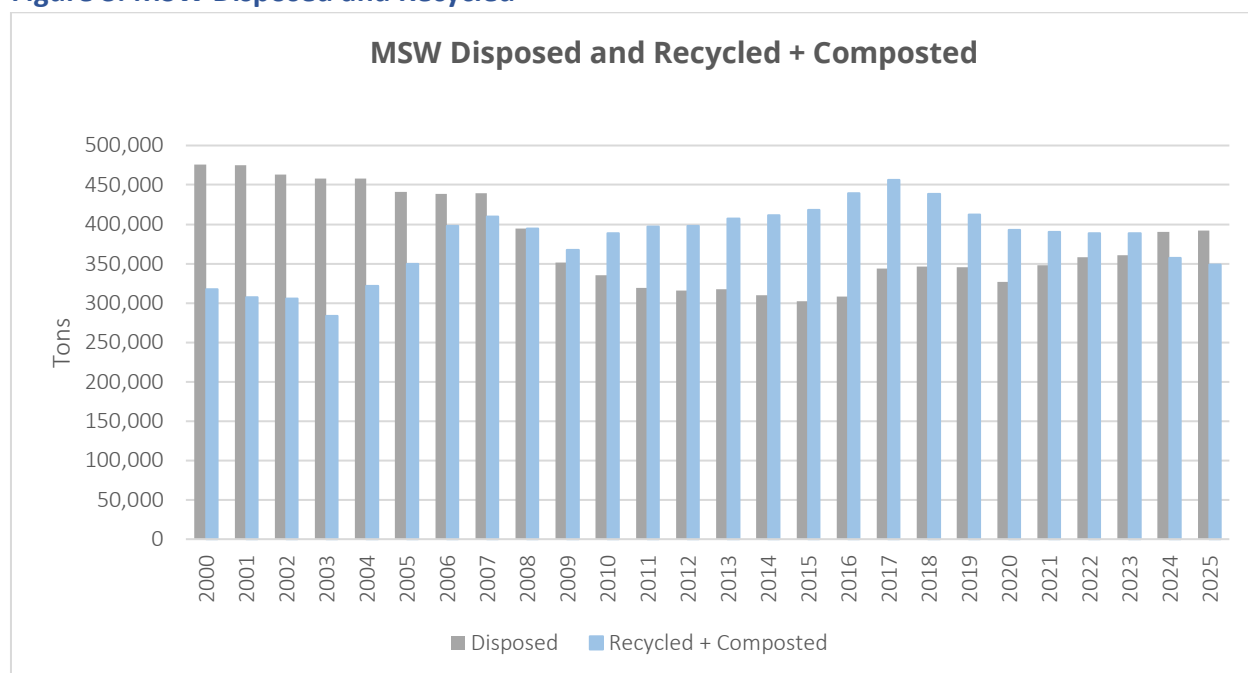
- Consistent with recent trends, commercial customers generated the most waste of the four sectors (42.0%), followed by single-family residential customers, which held steady at 27.2% of MSW generated, then self-haul customers (18.7%), and multifamily customers (12.1%) ([Figure 2](#)).

Figure 2. Overall MSW by Customer Sector



- Disposal increased for the fifth consecutive year, while recycling declined for the fourth and composting for the second year. The tons disposed once again exceeded the tons diverted through recycling and composting in 2025, as they did in 2024, the only two times this has occurred since 2007.
- Year over year, overall MSW disposal increased by 0.4% in 2025 (1,496 tons) ([Figure 3](#)). Multifamily and commercial disposal rose (1,794 tons and 440 tons, respectively), while single-family (-110 tons) and self-haul (-628 tons) saw slight declines. In total, 391,849 tons of garbage were collected in 2025—the highest amount since 2009, when weekly organics collection and expanded curbside recycling began. Had the South Transfer Station not been closed for floor replacement during the peak months of August and September, SPU estimates total disposal would have been at least 5,700 tons higher.
- Overall recycled tons decreased by 2.5% from 2024 levels (-4,433 tons), driven primarily by declines in single-family recycling. Composted tons also decreased by 2.5% (-4,304 tons) ([Figure 3](#)). Taken together, total tons diverted from landfill through recycling and composting dropped by 2.4% (-8,737 tons) to 348,858 tons, the lowest level since 2004 ([Table 1](#)).

- The decline in recycling may be driven by the decreasing weight of recyclable materials over time (see [Recycling Capture Rate](#)).
- Total composting tons increased steadily through 2017. The apparent peak in 2020 reflected unusually high residential generation during COVID-19 lockdowns. After 2020, total tons declined, driven primarily by reduced commercial contributions. Commercial tonnage, last reported in 2017 before the two-year data gap, reappeared at lower levels in 2020 and continued to fall. Single-family tons also decreased modestly as pandemic-related behaviors normalized. Overall, the post-2020 decline in total composting tons was chiefly due to reduced commercial activity.

Figure 3. MSW Disposed and Recycled**Table 1. Overall MSW Tons, 2000-2025**

Year	Generated	Disposed	Recycled	Composted	Recycle Rate
2000	793,842	476,132	230,939	86,771	40.0%
2001	782,974	475,270	211,591	96,113	39.3%
2002	768,462	462,996	221,381	84,085	39.8%
2003	741,337	458,011	186,439	96,888	38.2%
2004	780,346	458,405	215,369	106,572	41.3%
2005	790,456	440,694	241,896	107,867	44.2%
2006	836,499	438,381	272,578	125,540	47.6%
2007	848,759	439,407	280,515	128,838	48.2%
2008	789,688	394,828	255,842	139,017	50.0%

Appendix II: Estimated Tonnage by Customer Sector - Summary Analyses and Data

Year	Generated	Disposed	Recycled	Composted	Recycle Rate
2009	719,424	351,689	201,814	165,921	51.1%
2010	724,469	335,570	227,204	161,694	53.7%
2011	715,996	319,341	229,828	166,826	55.4%
2012	713,821	315,983	222,713	175,125	55.7%
2013	724,385	317,259	232,281	174,845	56.2%
2014	721,270	309,515	232,587	179,168	57.1%
2015	720,705	302,467	226,337	191,901	58.0%
2016	748,051	308,379	236,555	203,118	58.8%
2017	800,380	343,922	243,936	212,522	57.0%
2018	785,223	346,321	NA ²	NA ²	55.9%
2019	757,426	345,559	NA ²	NA ²	54.4%
2020	720,061	327,114	203,661 ^{3,4}	189,285	54.6%
2021	737,635	347,549	220,175 ^{3,4}	169,912 ⁵	52.9%
2022	746,586	358,268	207,581 ^{3,4}	180,737 ⁵	52.0%
2023	749,144	360,585	203,887 ^{3,4}	184,672	51.9%
2024	747,948	390,353	180,891 ⁴	176,704	47.8%
2025	740,707	391,849	176,458	172,400	47.1%

² SPU used an econometric regression analysis to estimate the open market portion of commercial diversion (recycled and composted) overall in 2018 and 2019 due to poor response rates of mandatory recycler reporting (Seattle Municipal Code 6.250). As such, a breakdown of recycled versus composted tonnage is not available for those years.

³ In 2025, SPU adjusted commercial recycling estimates for years 2020-2023 after identifying a calculation error. The error was not present in years prior to 2020.

⁴ In 2026, SPU updated commercial recycling estimates for 2020-2024 after finding and correcting a calculation error in glass recycling estimates.

⁵ In 2022 and 2023, SPU adjusted commercial recycling and commercial composting estimates for 2021 and 2022 after conducting additional quality checks.

MSW by Sector: Commercial

Summary Analysis

- The commercial sector generated more tons overall in 2025 (310,726 tons) than any other sector except the C&D sector (393,180 tons) ([Figure 4](#)).
- Commercial MSW generation was similar in 2025 (310,726 tons) compared with 2024 (312,571 tons) ([Figure 5](#)).
- Both commercial disposal and recycling were similar in 2025 (134,503 and 106,021 tons, respectively) compared to 2024 (134,063 and 106,241 tons, respectively). By contrast, composting declined -2,065 tons ([Table 2](#)). Commercial garbage, recycling, and organic collection have not returned to pre-COVID-19 levels.

Figure 4. Commercial MSW by Stream

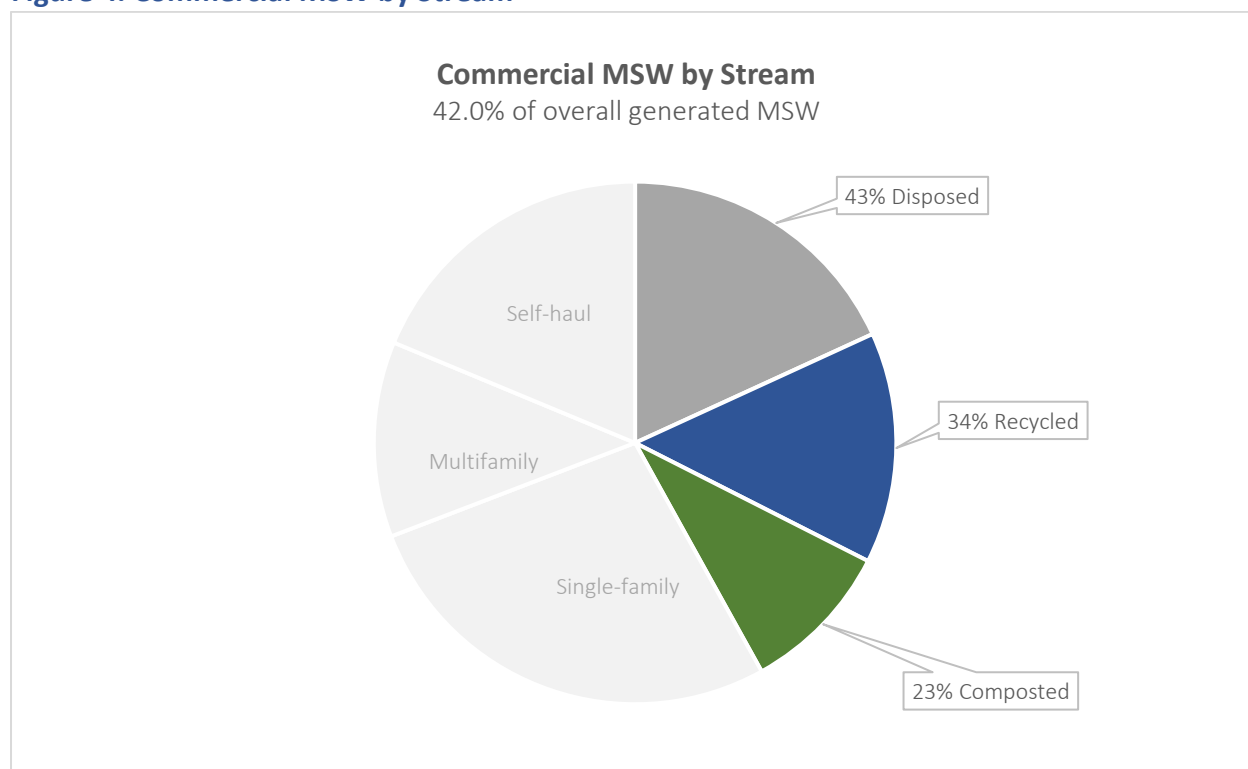
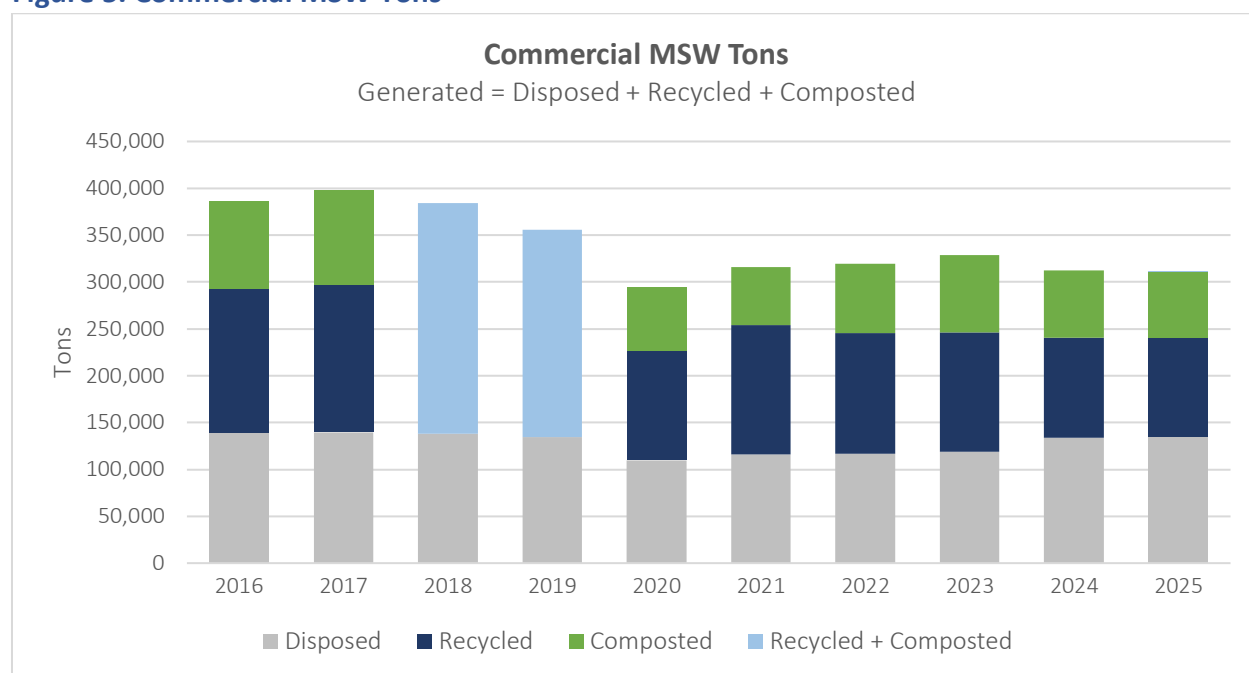


Figure 5. Commercial MSW Tons⁶**Table 2. Commercial MSW Tons, 2000-2025**

Year	Generated	Disposed	Recycled	Composted	Recycle Rate
2000	391,406	228,417	150,949	12,040	41.6%
2001	377,927	228,405	132,095	17,427	39.6%
2002	366,224	217,195	140,475	8,554	40.7%
2003	339,844	213,247	104,450	22,147	37.3%
2004	375,739	216,112	130,345	29,282	42.5%
2005	385,093	205,637	150,817	28,639	46.6%
2006	416,564	201,231	178,309	37,023	51.7%
2007	418,979	198,968	182,694	37,317	52.5%
2008	390,267	176,774	165,432	48,060	54.7%
2009	335,992	151,398	119,051	65,542	54.9%
2010	345,692	142,180	145,450	58,061	58.9%
2011	351,214	135,536	150,102	65,576	61.4%
2012	347,673	134,089	143,296	70,288	61.4%
2013	356,480	132,401	152,340	71,739	62.9%
2014	369,407	139,457	151,982	77,967	62.2%

⁶ SPU used an econometric regression analysis to estimate the open market portion of commercial diversion (recycled and composted) overall in 2018 and 2019 due to poor response rates of mandatory recycler reporting (Seattle Municipal Code 6.250). As such, a breakdown of recycled versus composted tonnage is not available for those years.

Appendix II: Estimated Tonnage by Customer Sector - Summary Analyses and Data

Year	Generated	Disposed	Recycled	Composted	Recycle Rate
2015	370,037	139,557	146,256	84,224	62.3%
2016	385,846	138,804	153,871	93,171	64.0%
2017	398,422	139,317	158,480	100,626	65.0%
2018	384,139	138,009	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	64.1%
2019	355,453	134,686	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	62.1%
2020	294,890	109,891	117,044 ^{8,9}	67,955	62.7%
2021	316,097	115,869	138,525 ^{8,9,10}	61,704 ¹⁰	63.3%
2022	319,673	117,061	128,389 ^{8,9,10}	74,223 ¹⁰	63.4%
2023	329,019	118,662	127,698 ^{8,9}	82,659	63.9%
2024	312,571	134,063	106,241 ⁹	72,267	57.1%
2025	310,726	134,503	106,021	70,202	56.7%

⁷ SPU used an econometric regression analysis to estimate the open market portion of commercial diversion (recycled and composted) overall in 2018 and 2019 due to poor response rates of mandatory recycler reporting (Seattle Municipal Code 6.250). As such, a breakdown of recycled versus composted tonnage is not available for those years.

⁸ In 2025, SPU adjusted commercial recycling estimates for years 2020-2023 after identifying a calculation error. The error was not present in years prior to 2020.

⁹ In 2026, SPU updated commercial recycling estimates for 2020-2024 after finding and correcting a calculation error in glass recycling estimates.

¹⁰ In 2022 and 2023, SPU adjusted commercial recycling and commercial composting estimates for 2021 and 2022 after conducting additional quality checks.

MSW by Sector: Self-Haul

Summary Analysis

- The South Transfer Station closed to self-haul customers from August 1 through September 9, 2025, for replacement of the tipping floor on the commercial side. During this time, self-haul customers were asked to delay trips or use other facilities, including the North Transfer Station, King County transfer stations, and WM's Eastmont Transfer Station. SPU estimates that at least 5,700 tons of self-hauled material were disposed outside Seattle's system during the closure, based on comparisons with the same period in 2024.
- As a result of the South Transfer Station closure, self-haul disposal at Seattle's two transfer stations fell slightly (-628 tons or -0.5%) ([Figure 6](#)). Even so, self-haul disposal reached 126,421 tons, the second-highest total in 26 years, exceeded only by disposal tons in 2024 ([Table 3](#)).
- Consistent with past years, most (91%) of 2025's self-hauled waste was disposed of at the landfill. The self-haul sector accounted for 18.7% of MSW generation in 2025 but comprised nearly a third (32.3%) of Seattle's landfilled MSW ([Figure 7](#)).
- SPU has identified the self-haul disposal waste stream as a priority for decreasing the City's landfilling and is researching the key drivers and potential interventions to curb the year-over-year increase.
 - Regional factors are influencing disposal trends: King County's Solid Waste Division increased [rates by 10% for solid waste disposal on January 1, 2025](#). New minimum fees changed to \$32.50 per vehicle for up to 320 pounds of waste and \$203.81 per ton for self-haul customers.¹¹ Comparatively, Seattle charges minimum fees of \$35 per vehicle for up to 420 pounds and \$165 per ton for self-haul customers.

¹¹ As of June 2026, King County's minimum disposal fee increased to \$40.25 per vehicle for up to 320 pounds and \$243.38 per ton.

Figure 6. Self-Haul MSW Tons¹²

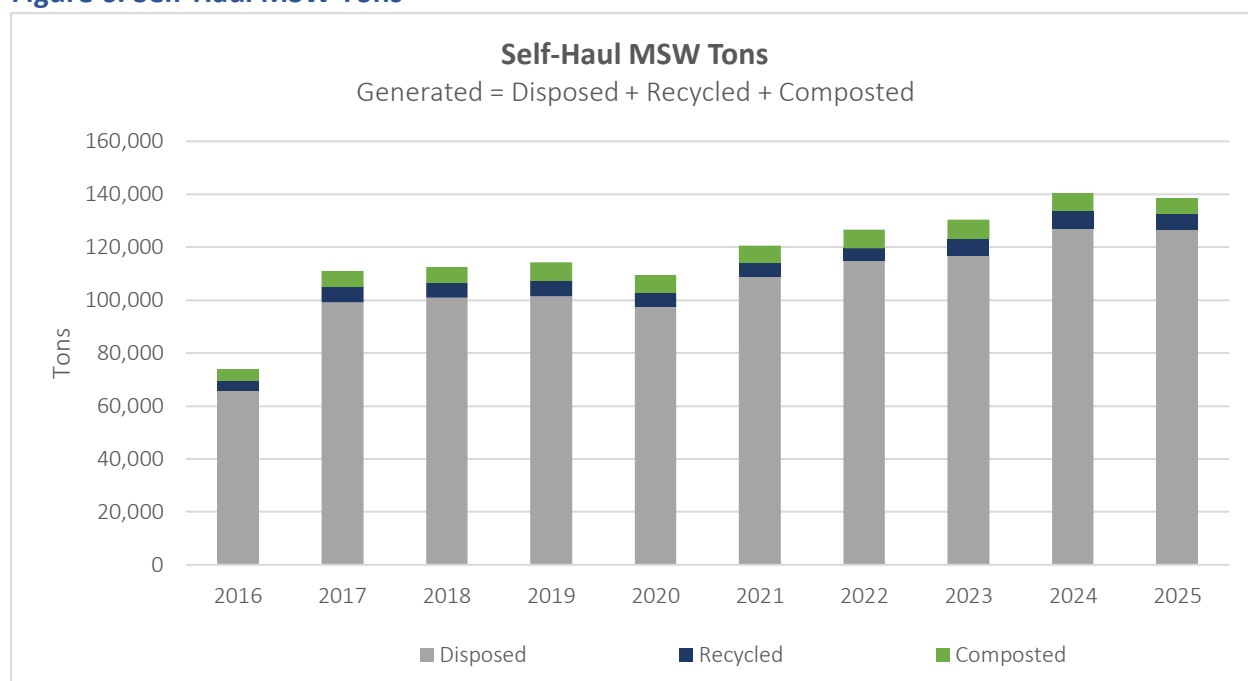
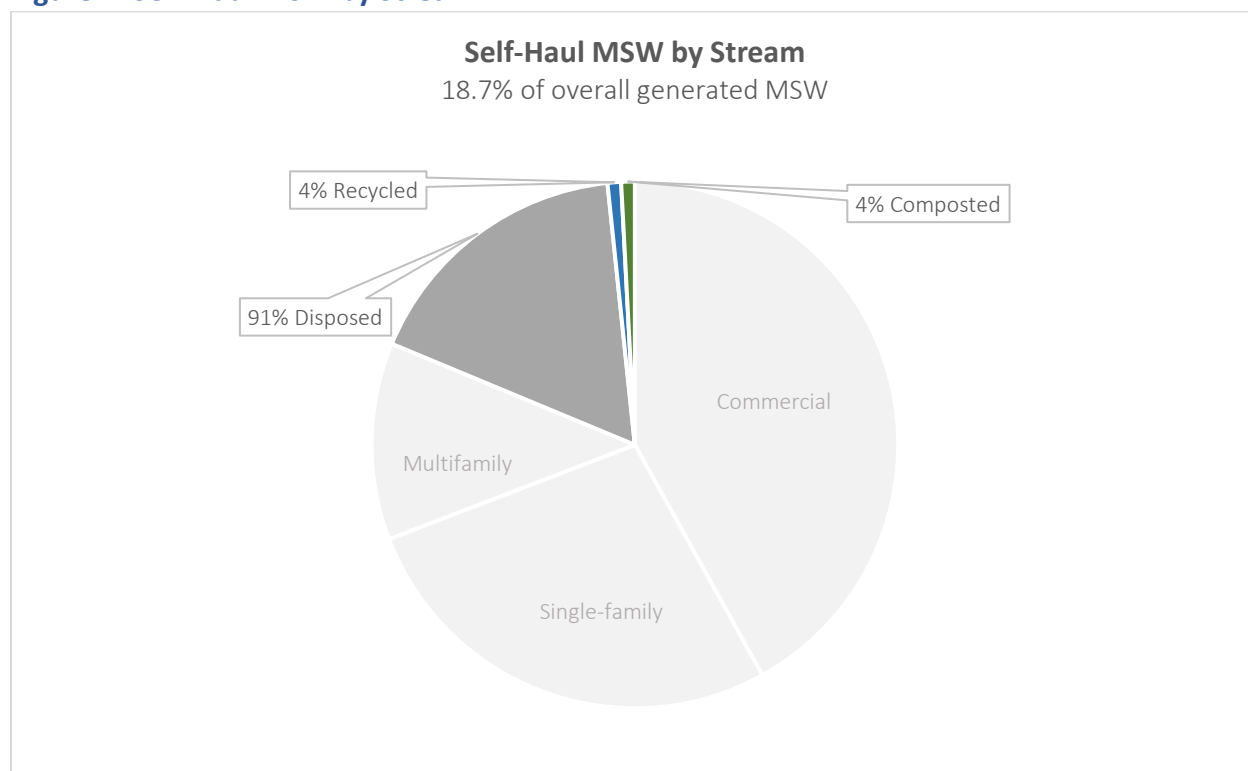


Figure 7. Self-Haul MSW by Stream



¹² The North Transfer Station was closed from 2014-2016 for construction of the new station.

Table 3. Self-Haul MSW Tons, 2000-2025

Year	Generated	Disposed	Recycled	Composted	Recycle Rate
2000	123,024	101,883	7,109	14,032	17.2%
2001	124,453	102,305	7,114	15,034	17.8%
2002	125,620	102,891	8,363	14,366	18.1%
2003	123,597	101,232	8,209	14,156	18.1%
2004	122,835	99,766	8,164	14,905	18.8%
2005	124,364	100,499	9,940	13,925	19.2%
2006	127,444	103,429	9,738	14,277	18.8%
2007	132,545	107,098	11,200	14,247	19.2%
2008	111,309	90,894	8,522	11,893	18.3%
2009	97,893	81,565	6,179	10,149	16.7%
2010	91,618	79,293	4,643	7,682	13.5%
2011	81,776	71,033	3,949	6,794	13.1%
2012	80,568	70,474	3,501	6,593	12.5%
2013	84,341	74,019	4,032	6,290	12.2%
2014 ¹²	64,681	57,847	2,635	4,199	10.6%
2015 ¹²	67,993	60,938	2,888	4,167	10.4%
2016 ¹²	73,923	65,840	3,693	4,390	10.9%
2017	111,098	99,290	5,681	6,127	10.6%
2018	112,550	100,827	5,595	6,127	10.4%
2019	114,207	101,506	5,744 ¹³	6,957	11.1%
2020	109,432	97,320	5,332 ¹³	6,780	11.1%
2021	120,544	109,046	4,985 ¹³	6,513	9.5%
2022	126,636	114,842	4,647 ¹³	7,147	9.3%
2023	130,419	116,751	6,447 ¹³	7,221	10.5%
2024	140,554	127,049	6,739 ¹⁴	6,766	9.6%
2025	138,733	126,421	6,145	6,167	8.9%

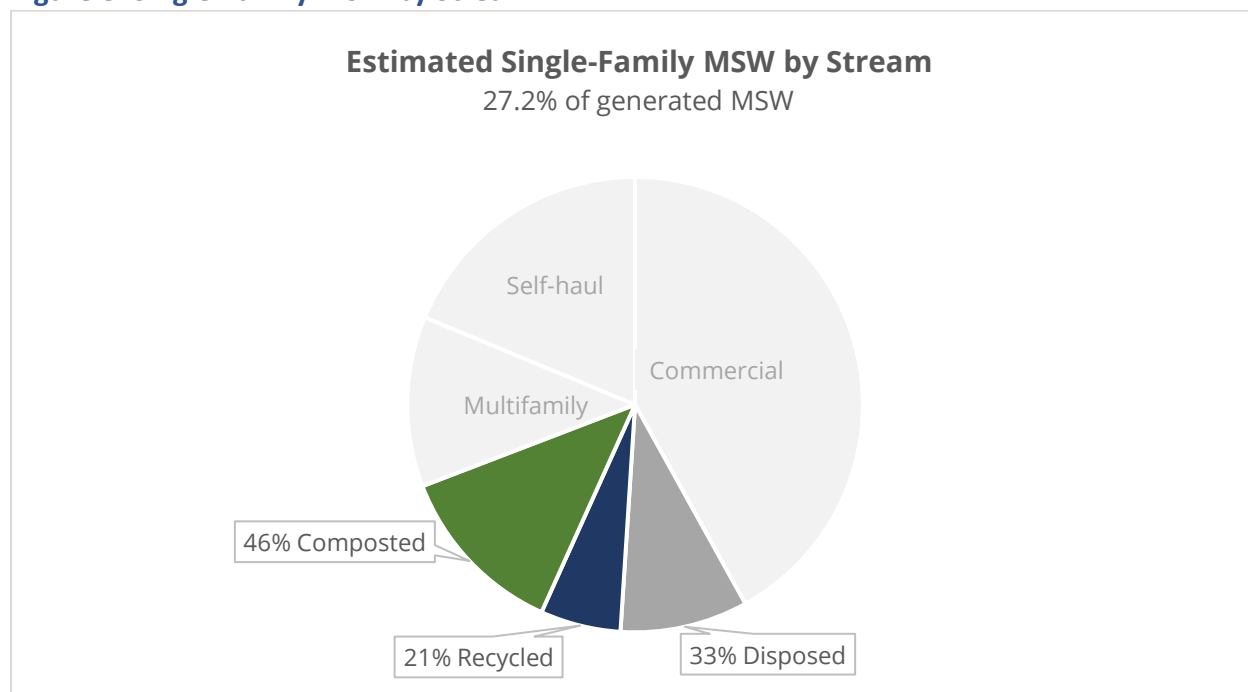
¹³ In 2025, SPU adjusted self-haul recycling estimates for 2019-2023 after additional quality checks.¹⁴ In 2026, SPU adjusted self-haul recycling estimates for 2024 after finding and correcting a calculation error in appliance recycling estimates.

MSW by Sector: Single-Family

Summary Analysis

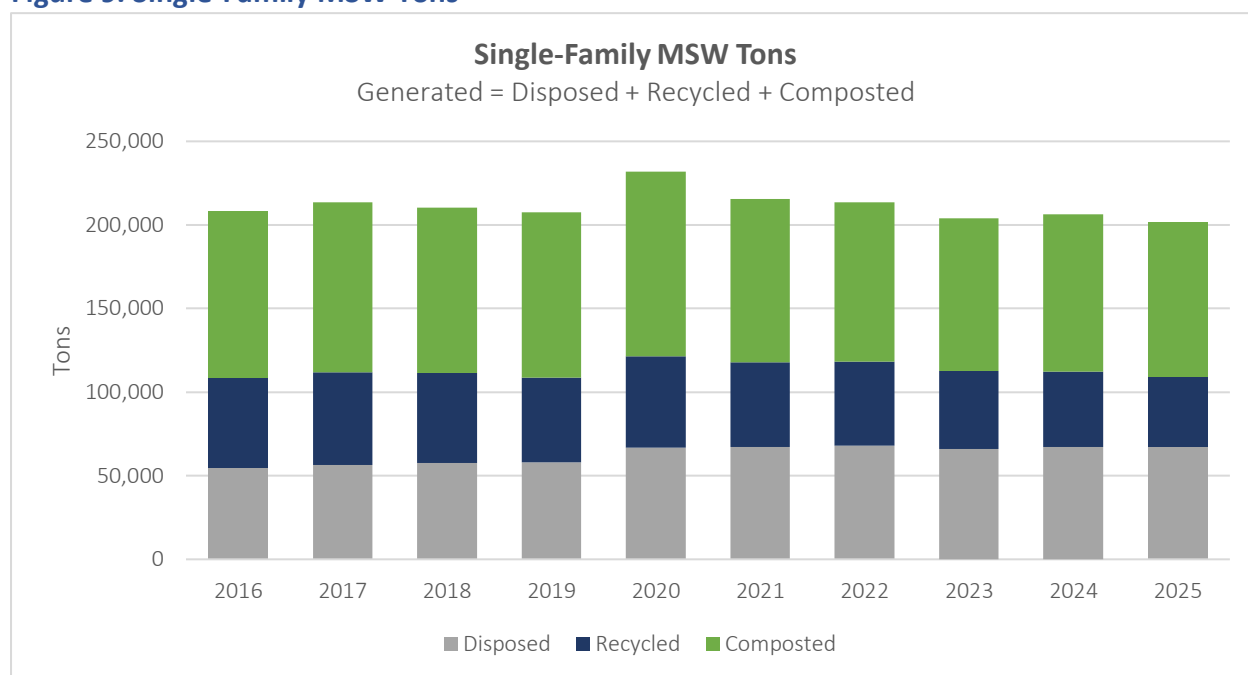
- In 2025, waste generation among single-family households decreased, down 2.3% (-4,538 tons) from 2024. Disposal held steady, down just -0.2% (-110 tons).
- Recycled tons continued to decline (-6.4%; -2,695 tons) reaching their lowest point in 26 years. Single-family recycling tons have been declining since 2018, when the number of multifamily housing units exceeded single-family homes for the first time.
- Composted material decreased by 1.9% (-1,733 tons) compared to 2024. Single-family compost tons have been trending downward by 3.3% on average over the past 10 years. This decline reflects an overall reduction in yard waste collected from single-family curbside compost bins, which fell by 3% from 2015 to 2022. The drop in single-family compost tonnage follows a shift toward smaller single-family yard size¹⁵ and a growing number of accessory dwelling units in residential zones.¹⁶ Since 2015, the City has issued 2,898 permits to build detached ADUs on single-family properties. ADU permit activity has increased rapidly, from 120 permits issued in 2016 to 450 permits issued in 2024.

Figure 8. Single-Family MSW by Stream



¹⁵ Gatea, M. (2021). "Seattle metro lot size decreasing by over 30% over the past two decades." StorageCafe Blog <https://www.storagecafe.com/blog/seattle-lot-sizes-drop-to-20-year-lows/>

¹⁶ City of Seattle. (2024). Accessory Dwelling Units Report 2023 Annual Report. <https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/OPCD/OngoingInitiatives/EncouragingBackyardCottages/OPCD-ADU-Report-2023.pdf>

Figure 9. Single-Family MSW Tons**Table 4. Single-Family MSW Tons, 2000-2025**

Year	Generated	Disposed	Recycled	Composted	Recycle Rate
2000	208,468	87,499	61,972	58,997	58.0%
2001	211,982	91,072	59,107	61,803	57.0%
2002	206,474	87,834	59,200	59,440	57.5%
2003	205,748	87,426	59,433	58,889	57.5%
2004	209,132	86,029	61,474	61,629	58.9%
2005	208,675	80,478	63,715	64,482	61.4%
2006	216,946	78,078	65,371	73,496	64.0%
2007	220,128	77,494	66,121	76,513	64.8%
2008	213,889	73,961	61,956	77,972	65.4%
2009	215,015	67,229	58,786	89,000	68.7%
2010	216,484	64,309	57,578	94,597	70.3%
2011	212,861	62,779	57,234	92,848	70.5%
2012	211,030	60,906	55,317	94,807	71.1%
2013	206,603	60,302	55,023	91,278	70.8%
2014	206,992	59,772	56,065	91,155	71.1%
2015	204,397	52,529	54,314	97,554	74.3%
2016	207,804	54,298	54,213	99,293	73.9%
2017	213,709	56,541	55,123	102,045	73.5%
2018	210,289	57,725	53,582	98,982	72.5%
2019	207,538	58,191	50,505	98,842	72.0%

Appendix II: Estimated Tonnage by Customer Sector - Summary Analyses and Data

2020	232,038	66,877	54,433	110,728	71.2%
2021	215,678	67,073	50,677	97,928	68.9%
2022	213,512	68,131	49,976	95,405	68.1%
2023	203,841	66,098	46,566	91,177	67.6%
2024	206,175	67,329	45,035	93,811	67.3%
2025	201,637	67,219	42,340	92,078	66.7%

MSW by Sector: Multifamily

Summary Analysis

- Relative to other customer sectors, multifamily residents continued to make the least waste of any MSW sector, contributing only 12.1% to the overall generated MSW and 16.3% of the overall disposed MSW in 2025.
- Relative to 2024, multifamily household MSW generation rose by 1.1% (962 tons) in 2025, reaching a 26-year high of 89,610 tons. Disposal grew at a faster rate of 2.8% (1,794 tons), meaning that a larger share of the material was disposed rather than diverted to recycling or composting.
- Multifamily recycling tons declined in 2025 (924 tons or 4.2%) for the fifth year in a row and composting tons for this sector increased slightly from 2024 (92 tons or 2.3%).
- Between 2010 to 2025, the share of multifamily homes increased from 44% to 58% of Seattle's housing stock. As the growth of multifamily housing units continues to outpace the construction of single-family homes, SPU anticipates that multifamily disposal (63,706 tons in 2025) could surpass that of single-family households (67,219 tons in 2025) within the next year.

Figure 10. Multifamily MSW by Stream

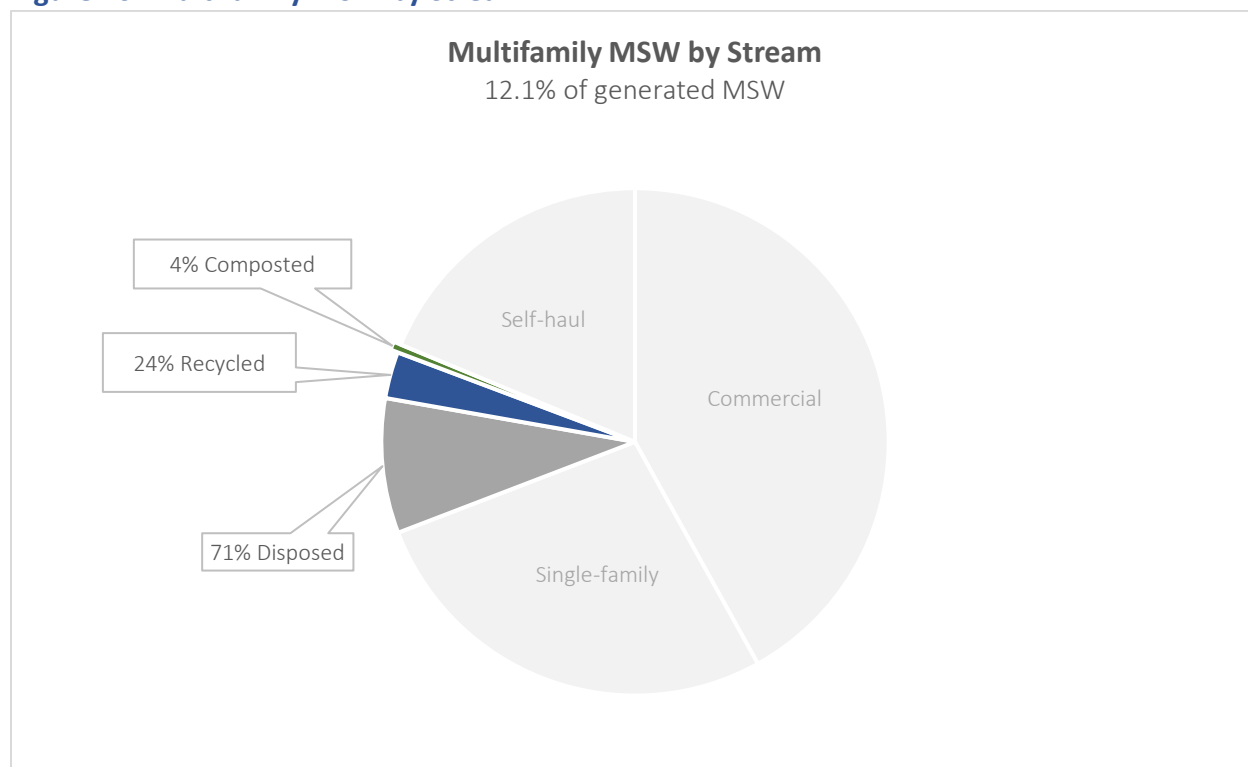
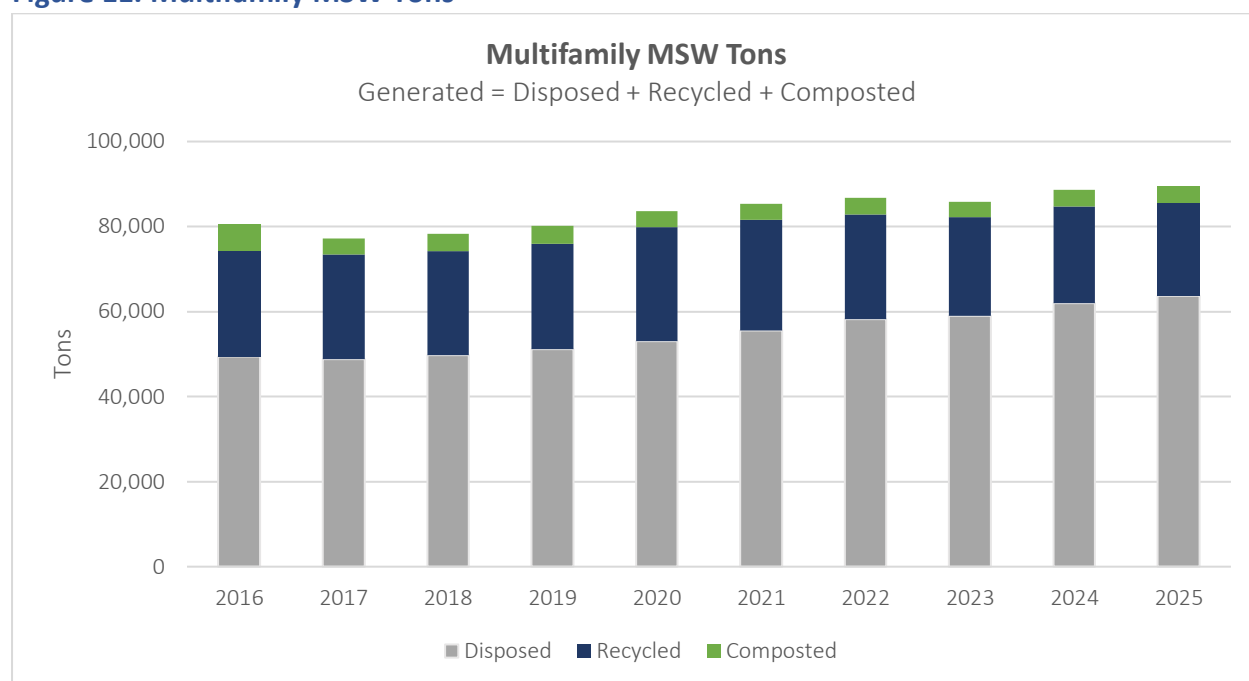


Figure 11. Multifamily MSW Tons**Table 5. Multifamily MSW Tons, 2000-2025**

Year	Generated	Disposed	Recycled	Composted	Recycle Rate
2000	70,944	58,333	10,909	1,702	17.8%
2001	68,611	53,487	13,275	1,849	22.0%
2002	70,144	55,076	13,343	1,725	21.5%
2003	72,149	56,106	14,347	1,696	22.2%
2004	72,640	56,498	15,386	756	22.2%
2005	72,325	54,080	17,424	821	25.2%
2006	75,545	55,643	19,159	743	26.3%
2007	77,108	55,847	20,501	760	27.6%
2008	74,223	53,199	19,932	1,092	28.3%
2009	70,524	51,497	17,798	1,230	27.0%
2010	70,675	49,788	19,532	1,355	29.6%
2011	70,145	49,993	18,544	1,608	28.7%
2012	74,549	50,514	20,599	3,437	32.2%
2013	76,960	50,537	20,886	5,538	34.3%
2014	80,189	52,439	21,905	5,845	34.6%
2015	78,278	49,443	22,880	5,956	36.8%
2016	80,478	49,437	24,778	6,263	38.6%

Year	Generated	Disposed	Recycled	Composted	Recycle Rate
2017 ¹⁷	77,150	48,773	24,652	3,725	36.8%
2018	78,245	49,760	24,520	3,965	36.4%
2019	80,228	51,176	24,802	4,250	36.2%
2020	83,701	53,026	26,853	3,822	36.6%
2021	85,316	55,561	25,988	3,767	34.9%
2022	86,765	58,234	24,569	3,962	32.9%
2023	85,866	59,074	23,177	3,615	31.2%
2024	88,648	61,912	22,876	3,860	30.2%
2025	89,610	63,706	21,952	3,952	28.9%

¹⁷ Before 2017, the combined residential (single-family and multifamily) composted tonnage was measured and then attributed to either the single-family or multifamily sector based on estimates. Starting in 2017, composted tonnage data by individual residential sector became available. The adjustment in calculation methodology likely explains the shift in the recycling rate in 2017.

Appendix III: Solid Waste Advisory Committee Letter

October 1, 2026

Councilmember Joy Hollingsworth
Chair of the Seattle City Council's Parks, Public Utilities & Technology Committee
PO Box 34025
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

Dear Councilmember Joy Hollingsworth and City Council Members:

The Seattle Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) comprises 15 community members, including representatives from waste-related businesses and solid waste haulers, business improvement areas, and community-based organizations and interest groups. This letter shares our feedback and recommendations on the 2025 Solid Waste Report.

We appreciate the work of Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) in advancing the City of Seattle's sustainability and waste diversion goals. We recognize the challenges inherent in these efforts, and the report reflects meaningful progress made toward creating a more sustainable and resilient Seattle.

We also see areas where the City could do more. We ask the City Council to consider providing additional resources and support where they are needed and offer our recommendations as part of the ongoing effort to strengthen Seattle's waste management policies and practices that support SPU's goals.

Highlights:

1. **Advocating for the Recycling Reform Act (RRA).** We are happy to hear about SPU's role in passing statewide legislation in 2025 that will establish Extended Producer Responsibility, a key step towards progress in our waste reduction goals. Without this reform, the City had limited influence over companies that create packaging and paper products. We will be closely following how SPU implements the Act to advance its legislative intent of supporting sustainability, equity, and fairness for our city's residents.
2. **Initiating New Cost Reductions to Customers.** Some of SPU's waste reduction work also reduces costs for customers. A few examples include:
 - **EPR Implementation,** which will reduce customer recycling costs by making producers share responsibility for recycling and disposal. SPU estimates that when the policy is fully implemented in 2032, 90% of recycling costs will be reimbursed to residential ratepayers.

- **Facilitating reuse and repair pilot programs**, which help families secure household goods at low or no cost. For example, opening the Reuse, Repair, and Share Commons in the Lake City neighborhood.
 - **Initiating a battery disposal program**. In the last five years, at least 15 fires have been started by improperly disposed of batteries in transfer stations. The new program should reduce the risks and the costs associated with fire damage, which cause costly delays and ultimately impact service rates.
- 3. Waste Generation Targets:** Municipal solid waste generated per person continues to decline. The target for this metric was met for the first time in 2025. The City of Seattle now generates 20% less waste per person than we did in 2017.

Recommendations:

- 1. Develop Food Waste Reduction Targets.** SPU does not currently have a target for food waste reduction. In 2025, food waste rose as a percentage of total disposed waste compared to 2022. By weight, around 20% of all waste sent to the landfill is food. Food waste in landfills is the largest contributor of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, so reducing it is critical to making progress in our City's climate mitigation goals.

We recognize that measuring and implementing food waste diversion tactics is challenging and that SPU needs more resources to conduct audits. We urge the Council to consider funding for this purpose.

- 2. Increase Construction & Demolition (C&D) Debris diversion from landfill.** C&D diversion is trending in the right direction but still falling short of the 80% diversion goal. Improvements could include changing the rate system to reward contractors who segregate recyclable materials; upgrading transfer station infrastructure (such as bringing in grapple buckets and allocating space) to sort out materials that can be diverted from landfill; and hiring additional staff to direct and record load separation. SWAC understands that SPU continues to review and improve on-site practices, policies, and customer education and hopes that these efforts—plus more direct diversion tactics—will help reduce the amount sent to landfill.

Deconstruction is a very challenging task, and additional investments may be warranted. We are encouraged that SPU was granted money from the EPA to start a Salvage Lumber Warehouse. This program helps to preserve quality, heritage wood for reuse. SWAC would also encourage SPU to consider offering incentives or mandates in the future that would further develop the material recovery and reuse market and remove barriers for additional sustainable businesses.

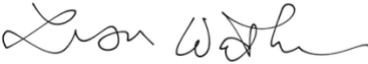
- 3. Increase Transparency in Community Engagement:** SPU has consistently recognized the importance of community engagement, particularly when introducing new policies or educating residents. We suggest three ways to build on that work:
- **Report cost savings.** Several new SPU policies and programs reduce costs for customers. We believe including those savings in the year-end report would garner additional public support. The examples listed above are not exhaustive, and we encourage future reports to share this information with the public.

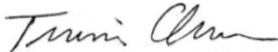
- **Explain metric changes in plain language.** The Report recently changed several metrics to more accurately understand trends. A plain-language explanation of what changed and why would help public stakeholders interpret the results.
 - **Ensure public communication is available to all residents—including non-English speakers**—so that all of Seattle's communities can take part in reducing waste. For example, SPU could include a summary of the findings in this report or translations to help customers understand unplanned service interruptions.
- 4. Publish the Waste Prevention Plan.** We understand that SPU has been developing a waste prevention plan. We encourage SPU to finalize it so that implementation can begin in support of the City's circularity goals.

SWAC commends the City Council and SPU for the ongoing efforts to improve waste management and sustainability in Seattle. We urge the City Council to continue to prioritize investment in Seattle's waste management systems. We appreciate your consideration of our recommendations and look forward to working with you to build a greener, more sustainable future for all Seattle residents.

Sincerely,

Melanie Coerver SWAC Chair 

Lisa Watkins SWAC Vice-Chair 

Travis Close SWAC Secretary 

Seattle Solid Waste Advisory Committee 3