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APPENDIX

D

Stakeholder Engagement Summary

Contents

Appendix D Stakeholder Engagement Summary.....	D.3
Purpose	D.3
Background	D.3
Centering Racial Equity	D.4
SPU Environmental Justice and Service Equity	D.4
EJSE's Community Connections Program	D.4
Relationship-Based Community Engagement	D.5
Audiences and Stakeholders.....	D.6
Key Messages	D.7
Key Project Messages.....	D.7
Plan Narrative.....	D.8
Key Plan Highlights	D.8
External Stakeholder Engagement Strategies	D.8
Stakeholder Input Themes.....	D.10
Public Comment Communications Tactics	D.11
Online Public Comment Form	D.11
Press Release and Daily Journal of Commerce Notice	D.11
Social Media and Paid Advertisements	D.11
Website	D.12
Printed Handouts, Posters, and Flyers.....	D.12
Partnering with SWAC, Other Departments, and Organizations	D.13
Emails	D.13
Historically Underrepresented Communities	D.13
Language Access.....	D.13
Public Comment Results	D.14
Publishing the Final 2022 Plan Update.....	D.14
Stakeholder Engagement Materials and Summaries.....	D.15
SPU Racial Equity Toolkit Summary	D.15
Community-Based Organizations Discussion Summaries	D.19
Industry and NGO Stakeholder Interview Summary.....	D.26

Seattle's 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update
Appendix D – Stakeholder Engagement Summary

Public Comment Form.....	D.33
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Figures and Tables

Table D.1	<i>2022 Plan Update</i> Stakeholder Groups.....	D.6
Table D.2	Engagement Strategies by External Stakeholder Group	D.9
Table D.3	Follow-up Tasks from Racial Equity Toolkit and Stakeholder Analysis.....	D.16
Table D.4	Recommended Action for Upstream Management.....	D.18
Table D.5	Lessons Learned from Racial Equity Toolkit and Stakeholder Analysis	D.18

Appendix D Stakeholder Engagement Summary

This stakeholder engagement summary describes efforts by Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) to engage stakeholders, build public awareness, and invite comment on the draft of *Seattle's 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update (2022 Plan Update)*.

Purpose

SPU's main goal for engagement efforts was to create meaningful opportunities for a variety of stakeholders to provide feedback on the draft *2022 Plan Update*. SPU also used this opportunity to reflect on how to use that feedback to shape decision-making. In particular, SPU aimed to begin a dialogue with historically underserved communities to build a relationship between SPU and its community partners, to inform the *2022 Plan Update*, and to support future efforts to improve service delivery in these communities.

Background

On June 11, 2013, the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) approved the City of Seattle's *2011 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan Revision: Picking Up the Pace Toward Zero Waste (2011 Plan Revision)*. State law requires all Ecology-approved local solid waste management plans be reviewed at least every five years. After completing a review in February 2016, SPU's Solid Waste Utility and Ecology determined that the *2011 Plan Revision* required an Amendment. In 2018, SPU started drafting what was intended to be the *2019 Solid Waste Plan Amendment*, but the document was not completed due to impacts of COVID-19 and other factors. Following these delays, Ecology updated its guidance in November 2020, requiring SPU to submit a revision rather than an amendment. SPU's revised comprehensive solid waste management plan from 2011 is now the *2022 Plan Update*. The Solid Waste Utility worked with a consultant team led by Cascadia Consulting Group (Cascadia) and with internal and external stakeholders described below to prepare a draft *2022 Plan Update*.

Centering Racial Equity

In keeping with our commitment to embed racial equity perspectives throughout the *2022 Plan Update* process and in the content of the *2022 Plan Update*, the Solid Waste Utility worked closely with SPU's Environmental Justice and Service Equity (EJSE) Team to identify ways to engage communities through the Community Connections Program, while using resources efficiently and effectively.

SPU Environmental Justice and Service Equity

The EJSE Team helps SPU and partner departments carry out the City of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative, as well as Racial Equity Toolkits. EJSE's aim is to deliver inclusive and equitable service to customers across the city. Three key strategies guide EJSE's work:

- 1 Embed race and social justice and service equity across SPU
- 2 Work to include under-represented groups when working with communities
- 3 Continue to align SPU efforts with City, County, and community efforts

Additional information about the EJSE Team and its programs can be found on the SPU [EJSE web page](#).¹

EJSE's Community Connections Program

In 2016, the EJSE Team developed the Community Connections Program to better support People of Color and immigrant, refugee, and low-income customers. To do this, Community Connections funds multi-year partnerships with trusted community-based organizations (CBOs) and leaders – called Community Connections partners – that serve a variety of ethnic and language groups. Partners receive paid training on SPU and solid and hazardous waste. In turn, Community Connections partners adapt and deliver in-language, culturally appropriate presentations and activities to their communities. Partners ask community members for input about SPU's services and approach. EJSE and other SPU staff work with partners to respond to community input.

¹ <https://www.seattle.gov/utilities/about-us/spu-and-the-community/environmental-justice-and-service-equity>

Seattle's 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update
Appendix D – Stakeholder Engagement Summary

The goals of the Community Connections program are to:

- Build deep and lasting relationships with historically marginalized communities.
- Collect and report community input on SPU Solid Waste and the Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County.
- Create an authentic line of communication between partners and SPU.

At the time of the *2022 Plan Update* process, the Community Connections Program had active partnerships with three CBOs. The EJSE Team partnered with these three organizations to engage some of Seattle's historically underserved communities:

- 1 CISC (formerly known as Chinese Information and Service Center)
- 2 ECOSS (formerly known as Environmental Coalition of South Seattle)
- 3 Horn of Africa Services

Relationship-Based Community Engagement

During the *2022 Plan Update* planning phase, SPU used [SPU's Racial Equity Toolkit](#)² to identify and explore tactics for engaging historically underserved communities. In addition to identifying engagement tactics for the *2022 Plan Update* itself, this process revealed that achieving the City's long-term recycling goals requires building and maintaining sustainable relationships with *all* Seattle communities, including – and especially – those who have historically been underserved. These relationships will enable planning and program managers in the Solid Waste Utility to center race in program design and decision-making that happens between solid waste plan updates.

The strategy of engaging with CBOs through Community Connections partners sought to:

- Respect and reinforce existing, authentic community relationships held by Community Connections partners
- Acknowledge and build on learnings from previous engagement with these communities
- Enable CBO staff to tailor engagement approaches for each community organization based on its unique interests
- Lay the groundwork for the Solid Waste Utility to incorporate racial equity into planning and implementation work going forward, as well as to inform the Solid Waste Utility's best practices for community engagement

² Seattle Public Utilities, "Racial Equity Toolkit," 2012,
https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/RacialEquityToolkit_FINAL_August2012.pdf.

Audiences and Stakeholders

In partnership with SPU's Community Affairs Division and EJSE Team, the Solid Waste Utility identified eight stakeholder groups to engage in the *2022 Plan Update* process. These stakeholder groups are outlined in Table D.1. SPU should continue to seek ways to engage all stakeholders in future efforts like this one.

Table D.1 *2022 Plan Update* Stakeholder Groups

	STAKEHOLDER GROUP	ORGANIZATIONS OR COMMUNITIES INCLUDED
INTERNAL	SPU employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Solid Waste Utility▪ Community Affairs Division▪ Environmental Justice and Service Equity Division▪ Andrew Lee, Interim SPU General Manager and CEO
	City, County, and State agencies and departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ King County Solid Waste Division▪ Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County▪ Seattle and King County Public Health▪ Washington State Department of Ecology
	Local elected officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Seattle Mayor's Office▪ Seattle City Council
EXTERNAL	General public	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Seattle residents, businesses, and solid waste customers
	Community-based organizations for historically underserved communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Community Connections partners:<ul style="list-style-type: none">— CISC— ECOSS— Horn of Africa Services
	Local solid waste, recycling, and composting organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Contracted City of Seattle haulers▪ Materials brokers▪ Organics (food and yard waste) processors▪ Recycling facilities▪ Construction and demolition facilities

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	ORGANIZATIONS OR COMMUNITIES INCLUDED
SPU Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Seattle community members, including residents, businesses, waste management industry, and public interest groups
Nongovernmental environmental organizations (NGOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sustainable Packaging Coalition▪ Zero Waste Washington

Key Messages

Below are the key messages that SPU included in the stakeholder engagement activities described in this document:

Key Project Messages

- 1 The purpose of Seattle's *2022 Plan Update* is to protect the public health and the environment by identifying how Seattle's solid waste services and facilities will be managed and financed over the next twenty years.
- 2 The *2022 Plan Update* will address how Seattle plans to meet its recycling and waste diversion goals while reaffirming Seattle's commitment Race and Social Justice Initiative priorities.
- 3 The *2022 Plan Update* will identify potential new metrics for measuring success with a renewed focus on waste prevention strategies, including describing how metrics will inform SPU's solid waste management programs and processes going forward.
- 4 The *2022 Plan Update* will identify areas of anticipated future risk and guide the Solid Waste Utility in developing strategies to reduce those risks. Risk areas include but are not limited to climate change, disasters, global recycling market fluctuations, technological advances, affordability challenges, systemic and institutional racism that disproportionately impacts historically underserved communities, and workforce availability and capabilities.
- 5 The *2022 Plan Update* will reflect updated economic and environmental analyses of existing and future waste management programs using the Recycling Potential Assessment Model and Measuring the Environmental Benefits Calculator (MEBCalc™), respectively.

Plan Narrative

An international leader in solid waste management for decades, Seattle has advanced a zero-waste vision thanks to public support for environmentally progressive programs and thoughtful planning. To move upstream toward zero waste, SPU is looking at the whole life cycle of materials to eliminate waste and toxics, prevent pollution, reduce carbon emissions, and conserve natural resources as early as possible. We get closer to zero waste by producing and using less.

Key Plan Highlights

The 2022 Plan Update:

- Emphasizes centering racial equity and building resiliency in our approach to solid waste management
- Aligns with zero waste policy in SPU's *Strategic Business Plan*, Seattle's *Climate Action Plan*, and Washington State's *Solid and Hazardous Waste Plan: Moving Washington Beyond Waste and Toxics*
- Explains SPU's lifecycle view of solid waste management that focuses "upstream" on minimizing waste at the source to reduce harmful impacts
- Discusses limitations of the recycling rate to measure waste prevention and offers alternatives
- Calls for development of metrics and targets to measure climate, programmatic, and policy impacts

External Stakeholder Engagement Strategies

In partnership with SPU's Community Affairs Division and EJSE Team, the Solid Waste Utility designed and tailored engagement strategies for each of the four external stakeholder groups and SPU's SWAC. These strategies are described in Table D.2 on the next page.

Seattle's 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update
Appendix D – Stakeholder Engagement Summary

Table D.2 Engagement Strategies by External Stakeholder Group

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY	SUMMARIES
CBOs for historically underserved communities	Solid Waste Utility and EJSE partnered with Community Connections partners to develop tailored discussion guides for each of the three CBOs. Topics included awareness of solid waste services, barriers and motivators to service usage, and desired communication channels for future engagement.	Summaries of CBO engagement are in the Community-Based Organizations Discussion Summaries section on page D.19.
Local Solid Waste, Recycling, and Composting Organizations	Cascadia interviewed five industry stakeholder organizations – identified by the Solid Waste Utility – representing waste haulers and processors. Cascadia developed interview questions and received responses in the form of emails, phone interviews, and in-person interviews.	A summary and the list of organizations interviewed is in the Industry and NGO Stakeholder Interview Summary section on page D.26.
Partner Agencies and NGOs	Cascadia interviewed three partner agencies and two environmental interest organizations identified by the Solid Waste Utility. Cascadia developed interview questions and received responses in the form of emails, phone interviews, and in-person interviews.	A summary and the list of organizations interviewed is in the Industry and NGO Stakeholder Interview Summary section on page D.26
Seattle residents, businesses, and solid waste customers (“General Public”)	SPU provided a four-week public comment period and advertised it through various channels outlined in the Public Comment Communications Tactics section on page D.11.	The online public comment form is presented on page D.33.
SPU SWAC	The project team provided briefings and solicited input at 26 SWAC meetings leading up to the public comment period.	SWAC meeting notes can be found on Seattle Public Utilities' website . ³

³ Seattle Public Utilities, “SWAC Meeting Schedule, Agenda and Notes,” <https://www.seattle.gov/utilities/protecting-our-environment/volunteer/solid-waste-advisory-committee> .

Stakeholder Input Themes

All stakeholder groups that SPU engaged while developing the draft *2022 Plan Update* shared these recommendations with the Solid Waste Utility:

- Continue to invest in education but also prioritize upstream efforts to address root causes of waste, focusing especially on promoting extended producer responsibility and other initiatives with manufacturers and retailers
- Continue to lead on equity and racial justice, especially in customer engagement and service delivery
- Be consistent and collaborative, both within the utility and with other city agencies and partners, when developing and implementing messaging and engagement strategies

Community Connections partners shared the below recommendations:

- Foster ongoing, mutually beneficial relationships with community leaders that acknowledge their wealth of knowledge
- Provide culturally relevant engagement through trusted community organizations
- Provide more capacity for spoken, in-language customer service
- Provide signage on containers that is culturally relevant and picture-based

Industry stakeholders, including local solid waste, recycling, and composting organizations and NGOs shared the below recommendations:

- Clearly articulate SPU's vision for sustainable materials management, design and implement supportive policy, and hold all stakeholders accountable to make the vision a reality
- Adapt to and support changing recycling markets by staying flexible, minimizing contamination, and promoting strong (and ideally, local) end markets

SPU's SWAC shared the below recommendations:

- Look for alternatives to weight-based recycling metrics to measure progress against goals, such as waste prevention and greenhouse gas emissions

SPU used stakeholder input to inform and affirm the goals, priorities, and recommendations in the *2022 Plan Update*. SPU has followed up with stakeholders to communicate how their input was used.

Public Comment Communications Tactics

The Solid Waste Utility released the draft *2022 Plan Update* for public comment with the goals of generating public awareness of the *2022 Plan Update* process, explaining changes since the *2011 Plan Revision*, and providing the opportunity for comment.

Online Public Comment Form

SPU provided an online comment form to gather input on the draft *2022 Plan Update* in a structured way for efficient review and synthesis of the input. The form was published on SPU's website, accessible via a link on both the homepage and the *2022 Plan Update* page.

Press Release and Daily Journal of Commerce Notice

SPU issued a press release at the start of the public comment period inviting the public to review the draft *2022 Plan Update* and comment using the online comment form. SPU sent the press release to a media advisory list that is maintained by SPU's Public Information Office and includes a diverse set of media contacts. Contacts include mainstream news, community blogs, community-specific in-language publications, radio, and television outlets. As required by SPU's policy, SPU also published an announcement of the public comment period to the Daily Journal of Commerce.

Social Media and Paid Advertisements

SPU's Community Affairs Team worked with staff to share key messaging about the *2022 Plan Update* through SPU's social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Ask Evelyn IG Live Show, and Nextdoor. Promotion also included paid ads with ethnic media social outlets. Promotion across SPU's social media channels resulted in engagement with over 200,000 customers, a relatively high rate of engagement for the timeframe and budget spent.

SPU also promoted the public comment period with ethnic media partners including NW Asian Weekly, Daybreak Star Radio, Mas Radio, South Seattle Emerald, and Seattle Medium. This media outreach focused on diverse communities, as described below. The *2022 Plan Update* received 80 live radio mentions, over 75 radio spots, boosted promotions across social media channels, six ads on websites, four ads in newsletters, and two templates (also called "copy") for emails. Combined across all partners, the ads reached over 330,000 viewers, listeners, readers, and followers. For the amount of budget spent and the timeframe for running ads, this

is considered a relatively high rate of engagement across SPU's customer base, focused on the target communities.

Website

SPU updated its website, including its *2022 Plan Update* page, with relevant information about the *2022 Plan Update* process, a link to the draft *2022 Plan Update*, and a link to the public comment form. SPU also announced the public comment period on SPU's [At Your Service blog](#).⁴ Through the four-week public comment period, the website had 798 page views and 597 new visitors.

Following the public comment period, SPU updated the website to reflect the next phase of work on the *2022 Plan Update*. Following adoption, the website will be the primary source of information about the approved *2022 Plan Update*.

Printed Handouts, Posters, and Flyers

SPU distributed flyers to self-haul transfer station customers. These printed materials contained key messages and a scannable digital code (called a quick response, or QR code) or that linked to the draft *2022 Plan Update* and public comment form. In addition, SPU staff created several digital and print materials for outreach:

- [One-Pager](#)⁵ with a quick summary of the plan and description of the public comment periods
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)⁶ section on the *2022 Plan Update* web page
- [Chapter Summaries](#)⁷ with short descriptions of the contents of each chapter
- [Partner Toolkit](#)⁸ with sample blogs posts, sample social posts, and customizable emails and scripts

⁴ <https://atyourservice.seattle.gov>

⁵ <https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/SPU/Documents/Plans/2022SolidWasteDraftOnePager.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.seattle.gov/utilities/about/plans/solid-waste/2022-plan-update>

⁷ <https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/SPU/Documents/Plans/2022SolidWasteDraftChapterSummaries.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/SPU/Documents/Plans/2022SolidWasteDraftPartnerToolkit.pdf>

Partnering with SWAC, Other Departments, and Organizations

SPU's Community Affairs Team worked with staff to create an outreach toolkit to share with other departments including the Office of Sustainability, Office of Economic Development, and Department of Neighborhoods, as well as Council Districts Newsletters. SPU also partnered with interested organizations including Zero Waste Washington, Ecology, and SWAC members to promote the public comment period using the Partner Toolkit.

Emails

SPU emailed all stakeholders who completed an interview as part of the *2022 Plan Update* process an invitation to participate in the public comment period. SWAC members used email to send invitations to their connections. SPU's solid waste staff emailed invitations to their industry message boards, partner agencies, consultants, and contractors.

Historically Underrepresented Communities

SPU's EJSE Team reached out to the CBO partners in the Community Connections Program to deliver project messages to historically underserved communities in culturally relevant ways. Community Connections partners chose the best format to share this information within their communities and provided opportunities for their community to comment via the online form.

In addition, SPU's strategy for paid advertisements focused on working with ethnic media to provide additional outreach to underserved communities (described on page D.11). This media outreach focused on populations including Hispanic/Latinx, Asian, Persons of Color, Indigenous, and South Seattle residents. Combined across all partners, the ads reached over 330,000 viewers, listeners, readers, and followers.

Language Access

Through the Language Line, the survey was available in Seattle's top-tier languages: Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish, Vietnamese, Somali, Amharic, Korean, and Tagalog. Stakeholders could call a phone number printed on materials and the website to hear and answer the survey questions thought an interpreter. In addition to the ethnic media ads described in the section above, SPU also worked with Spanish language radio, MRadio, to purchased ad spots in Spanish to promote public comment and to show Spanish-translated ads on their website and social media.

Public Comment Results

During the public comment period (April 11 to May 6), SPU received 16 responses through the online public comment form. Most commenters strongly supported the *2022 Plan Update* (13 people), two commenters supported it, and one person said they had no opinion. Many comments provided requests or suggestions that related to the implementation phase for recommendations and have been shared with relevant program managers at SPU. Those comments addressed the following themes:

- Requests for more details on potential solutions for waste collection in dense neighborhoods, such as those with townhomes, where curb space is limited
- Request for more active language in racial justice messaging
- Expressions of gratitude for SPU's grant support of a specific program that prevents food waste
- Requests for more information on where, how, and whether materials collected for recycling are recycled
- Requests for more garbage and recycling collection options
- Request for updates on progress toward goals in the *2022 Plan Update* and for a summary of the impact it has on the community
- Concern about implementing recommendations, particularly those related to contamination reduction and waste prevention
- Support of more zero waste stores to reduce packaging waste

Based on public comment feedback, SPU added clarifying language to some of the text in Chapter 2, *Maximizing and Measuring Impact: Moving Upstream, Beyond the Recycling Rate*, and made a few additional minor edits to the text. SPU did not receive any comments during public review of the State Environmental Protection Act Determination of Non-Significance.

Publishing the Final *2022 Plan Update*

After the City Council adopts the *2022 Plan Update*, SPU will share it with the public using the below tactics:

- Publish to the SPU website
- Provide physical copy at Seattle Public Utilities in the General Managers Office
- Provide physical copies in all Seattle public libraries

Stakeholder Engagement Materials and Summaries

This section describes stakeholder engagement materials and presents summaries of engagement efforts that occurred before the public comment period.

SPU Racial Equity Toolkit Summary

Before beginning the 2022 Plan Update, SPU conducted a Racial Equity Toolkit, summarized below.

Project Problem Statement: This project will amend the approved *2011 Plan Revision* to ensure it protects the public health and the environment by identifying how to manage and finance Seattle's solid waste services and facilities over the next twenty years. As part of this process, the project team will facilitate a transparent and inclusive process to elicit input from everyone who contributes to the success of Seattle's solid waste management programs and operations, both within SPU and among the public. The purpose of this inclusive engagement process will be to inform the *2022 Plan Update* on both traditional solid waste planning and program topics and new considerations related to resilience and racial equity.

Racial Equity Vision: The project team shares a vision to apply and embed racial equity perspectives throughout the planning process and in the content of the *2022 Plan Update* using the framework of targeted universalism. Further, the project team envisioned that its work will assist in laying the groundwork for how the Solid Waste Utility incorporates racial equity into planning and implementation work going forward, possibly leading to the creation of Solid Waste Utility best practices for community engagement.

By applying the Racial Equity Toolkit and Stakeholder Analysis to the *2022 Plan Update*, SPU identified several follow-up tasks listed in Table D.3.

Seattle's 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update
Appendix D – Stakeholder Engagement Summary

Table D.3 Follow-up Tasks from Racial Equity Toolkit and Stakeholder Analysis

TASK DESCRIPTION	INTENDED BENEFITS OF DESCRIBED TASK	STAFFING/RESOURCE NEEDS
1. Identify priority public audiences – specifically racial or ethnic groups – for engagement	Ensure input from customer stakeholder groups that historically have not provided input.	Consultant team, SPU project manager, SPU Solid Waste Utility staff, and EJSE (including Community Connections partners).
2. Determine business engagement needs, particularly from small and women and minority-owned business enterprises (WMBE)	Ensure input from customer stakeholder groups that historically have not provided input.	Consultant team, SPU project manager, SPU Solid Waste Utility staff, and EJSE (including Community Connections partners). Possibly also leverage SPU EnviroStars or ECOSS relationships with small and ethnically owned businesses.
3. Engage Community Connections partners	Ensure input from customer stakeholder groups that historically have not provided input and that the <i>2022 Plan Update</i> can better meet the needs of these stakeholder groups.	Consultant team, SPU project manager, SPU Solid Waste Utility staff, EJSE (including Community Connections partners), and potentially Department of Neighborhoods (DON) Community Liaisons (CLs).
4. Identify cohorts or focus group topics for SPU division engagement. As part of this, identify whether stakeholders outside of Solid Waste Utility also should participate (such as, Customer Service)	Obtain more detailed feedback on key planning topics and themes identified in the stakeholder survey (such as, waste prevention, contamination reduction) to inform the <i>2022 Plan Update</i> .	Consultant team, SPU project manager, SPU team members (to participate in meetings). EJSE to provide racial equity orientation prior to each meeting/cohort to ensure racial equity is centered and considered in all planning discussions.

Seattle's 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update
Appendix D – Stakeholder Engagement Summary

TASK DESCRIPTION	INTENDED BENEFITS OF DESCRIBED TASK	STAFFING/RESOURCE NEEDS
5. Follow-up with SPU Government Affairs to identify whether Tribal input and review is needed and appropriate for the <i>2022 Plan Update</i>	Ensures these stakeholder groups are informed of and able to provide input as appropriate and needed.	SPU Government Affairs, Consultant Team, SPU project manager.
6. Develop and implement report-back process for all stakeholder groups identified as collaborators	Maintain relationships with stakeholder groups by ensuring SPU reflects their input accurately and communicate how their input is incorporated into the <i>2022 Plan Update</i> . Failure to do so could result in loss of willingness of key target audiences to participate in future stakeholder engagement efforts.	Consultant team, SPU project manager, SPU Solid Waste Utility staff, EJSE (including Community Connections partners), and potentially nonprofit organizations and DON CLs.
7. Confirm the review and approval process from SPU Executive Leadership and elected officials: confirm the who does final approval and on what timeline.	Ensure timely completion and acceptance of the preliminary draft and final <i>2022 Plan Update</i> . Communicate with elected officials and other approving bodies early and often about the approach used and results from centering racial equity in the <i>2022 Plan Update</i> .	Consultant team, SPU project manager, SPU Solid Waste Utility management.

By applying the Racial Equity Toolkit and Stakeholder Analysis to the *2022 Plan Update*, SPU identified a related recommended action for reporting back to reporting back to stakeholders about how their input was used. The Racial Equity Toolkit includes a question about how and when this recommendation action will be presented to the appropriate upstream management or governing body for the project (Table D.4).

Table D.4 Recommended Action for Upstream Management

RECOMMENDATION AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION	HOW AND WHEN WILL THIS RECOMMENDATION BE PRESENTED TO THE APPROPRIATE UPSTREAM MANAGEMENT OR GOVERNING BODY?
<p>1. Ensure including a report-back process for all key stakeholder groups from which SPU solicits input to summarize what was heard from them and how their input was incorporated into the <i>2022 Plan Update</i> (or if not, why not).</p> <p><i>This report-back process was not explicitly included in the initial project scope, but the project team sees this as a best practice that helps maintain (and even strengthens) SPU's relationship with key stakeholder groups.</i></p>	<p>We will share plans and include updates about our stakeholder report-back process in regular internal monthly project updates to upstream management during regular check-ins with Solid Waste Utility and SPU management. The planning team has agreed to design stakeholder report-back processes in a manner suitable for the available project budget and timeline.</p>

By applying the Racial Equity Toolkit and Stakeholder Analysis to the *2022 Plan Update*, SPU identified several lessons learned that should be applied to future related plans, projects, programs, or services (Table D.5).

Table D.5 Lessons Learned from Racial Equity Toolkit and Stakeholder Analysis

LESSONS LEARNED	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Many of the discussion topics in the Racial Equity Toolkit and Stakeholder Analysis are directly relevant to the public involvement plan (or similar public engagement document) required by these types of projects. Future efforts could potentially integrate the toolkit and stakeholder analysis more into the public involvement plans to reduce the time needed to complete both.2. The Racial Equity Toolkit and Stakeholder Analysis are critical to informing project scope, particularly for public involvement. They should be completed before releasing a Request for Proposals (RFP) and selecting an external consultant. Information uncovered in the process of the toolkit and stakeholder analysis can alter the scope of work.	

LESSONS LEARNED
3. Effective and inclusive public engagement requires complex coordination between SPU, other City departments, the consultant team, CBOs, and other groups. SPU should consider this coordination when designing the project schedule and budget for similar work, especially given the emphasis on reaching People of Color, people with low incomes, and other historically underserved communities within the competing demands on and constrained resources of Community Connections and CBOs for this type of community work.
4. At project initiation, the project team should expect there will be unknowns and uncertainty when undertaking a process like this one. For example, the specific approach for activities like community engagement are often not determined until later in the process after gathering input from several organizations (see #3 above). Keep this in mind when setting project budget and timeline.
5. A process to report back to community members who provide input into the <i>2022 Plan Update</i> is critical both to the success of both the current project and also to lay groundwork for successful future community engagement. Project scopes and budgets for future work of this kind should account for returning to community groups and stakeholders in a feedback loop.

Community-Based Organizations Discussion Summaries

CISC

Overview

CISC is a community-based nonprofit organization that helps immigrants throughout King County achieve success in their new communities. They serve the Chinese immigrant community and immigrants from Eastern Europe, Latin America, and other parts of Asia. In the spring of 2019, CISC hosted a stakeholder conversation about solid waste services as part of the Community Connections outreach contract. This conversation both informed the *2022 Plan Update* and established a baseline framework for future outreach projects including suggestions for improving communications with their communities. Contributing stakeholders included single-family residents, multifamily residents, and property managers. Some conversation highlights include:

- Language and cultural relevancy are crucial elements to education and outreach
- Fostering relationships with community leaders will help create more consistent two-way communication

Seattle's 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update
Appendix D – Stakeholder Engagement Summary

- Providing question-and-answer sessions in local communities would help build trust and the feeling that SPU is responsive

Awareness of SPU Solid Waste Services

Community members categorized SPU services by awareness level (low to high):

- Availability of waste collection services: **low**
- Availability of recycling for common materials: **low**
- Availability of SPU communication and reporting tools: **low**
- Requirement to use the correct bin for waste and recycling food and yard waste: **medium**
- Ability to prevent waste by using durable items: **medium**

Identified Opportunities

- SPU should involve trusted community resources in educating both adults and children. SPU should support or provide curriculum in public schools.
- If sorting is perceived as too complicated or if the culturally relevant items are difficult to sort, people stop trying to sort. Culturally relevant signage and tools for property managers would increase implementation rates.
- SPU can align recycling and composting guidelines with other counties' implementation plans to simplify outreach efforts.

Feedback on Bin Signage and Locations

- Waste containers hardly ever have pictures on them, which creates a lack of clarity.
- Signage and pictures, when they are present, are rarely culturally relevant or in-language.
- Composting is particularly confusing for residents due to a lack of container signage. Container labels quickly become unreadable.
- Bins are more accessible in single-family homes and multifamily units when garbage is located on the same floor as their living space.

Barriers

The biggest barriers outlined by community members include:

- Confusion when sorting items
- Difficulty communicating with customer service due to language barriers, timely access to interpreters, and lack of familiarity with technical reporting tools

Seattle's 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update
Appendix D – Stakeholder Engagement Summary

Community members identified the following opportunities for reducing barriers:

- In-language materials
- Visual aids for bins and consistency of signage
- Required participation by property owner or manager
- Bins and containers that are clearly marked
- Onsite, hands-on recycling assistance and training

Motivators

Motivators for participating in recycling, composting, and waste prevention programs vary by community. Community members identified the following motivators as most relevant:

- Protecting the environment, particularly in relation to its impact on health
- Preserving the planet for future generations
- Ensuring affordability and saving money
- Addressing concern over growing landfills and lack of space to dispose of waste
- Working together as a community to collectively protect our planet and connect with each other

Information Needs

It is crucial to work in partnership with community members to share information through appropriate channels. Social media and apps rated relatively low among community members. Community members identified the following as their most preferred information channels:

- Transcreated labels on bins
- In-language mailers
- Word of mouth by other community members
- Trusted community organizations
- Property owners or managers
- In-language workshops by community members

ECOSS

Overview

ECOSS is a community-based nonprofit organization that educates and empowers businesses and diverse communities to implement environmentally sustainable practices. They work with Asian, Southeast Asian, Pacific Islander, African, and Hispanic/Latinx communities. In the spring of 2019, ECOSS hosted a conversation with their staff about solid waste services as part of the

Seattle's 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update
Appendix D – Stakeholder Engagement Summary

Community Connections outreach contract. This conversation both informed the *2022 Plan Update* and established a baseline framework for future outreach projects including suggestions for improving communications with their communities.

Some conversation highlights include:

- Education of community members on solid waste programs is important, but education does not address the root causes of waste
- To create a more consistent communication program, SPU must foster relationships with community leaders and organizations
- SPU should incentivize and pay community members for their time to participate in ambassador neighborhood programs, focus groups, and feedback sessions

Awareness of SPU Solid Waste Services

ECOSS staff categorized SPU services by awareness level (low to high):

- Availability of composting programs for food and yard waste, including compostable products: **low**
- Ability to use the correct bin for waste and identify which items are recyclable: **low to medium**
- Availability of garbage collection and yard waste composting services: **high**

Identified Opportunities

- Currently, customer service is available only in English. SPU should provide additional spoken language capacity through customer service.
- SPU's focus should not just be on education of community members. SPU is in a powerful position to also push big corporations to commit to waste prevention.
- SPU should guide businesses to zero waste by setting up model stores and rewarding those who reduce, recycle, and compost.

Feedback on Bin Signage

- Waste containers hardly ever have pictures on them, which creates a lack of clarity
- Signage and pictures, when they are present, are rarely culturally relevant or in languages other than English
- Waste containers are usually marked only by color to signify stream, and those colors often vary between bins (especially compost colors), which can be very confusing

Seattle's 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update
Appendix D – Stakeholder Engagement Summary

Barriers

The biggest barriers outlined by community members include:

- Bins are not clearly labeled with pictures to show where items go
- Property managers do not provide tools or education materials for residents
- Bins are not accessible or available to multifamily residents or businesses
- Multifamily building common areas may have limited or inconvenient space for recycling and food and yard waste containers
- Homes have limited space inside, such as in the kitchen, for multiple waste containers
- Community members have experienced difficulty communicating with customer service due to language barriers, timely access to interpreters, and lack of familiarity with technical reporting tools

Community members identified the following opportunities for reducing barriers:

- In-language materials
- Visual aids on what goes in each bin
- Participation by property owners or managers
- Bins and containers that are clearly marked and fit into small spaces

Motivators

Motivators for recycling, composting, and waste presentation vary by community. Community members identified the following motivators as most relevant:

- Protecting the environment
- Preserving the planet for future generations
- Ensuring affordability and saving money
- Working together as a community to collectively protect our planet and connect with each other

Information Needs

It is crucial to work in partnership with community members to share information through appropriate channels. Social media and apps rated relatively low among community members. Community members identified the following as their most preferred information channels:

- Transcreated labels on bins
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- Word of mouth by other community members

Seattle's 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update
Appendix D – Stakeholder Engagement Summary

- Trusted community organizations
- Property owners or managers
- In-language workshops by community members

Horn of Africa Services

Overview

Horn of Africa Services is a community-based nonprofit organization that serves East African immigrant and refugee communities in Seattle. In the spring of 2019, Horn of Africa Services hosted a community conversation about solid waste services as part of the Community Connections outreach contract. This conversation, which included both Horn of Africa Services staff and community members, both informed the *2022 Plan Update* and established a baseline framework for future outreach projects including suggestions for improving communications with their communities.

Some conversation highlights include:

- Outreach to their community is most successful through trusted community-based organizations, like Horn of Africa Services
- SPU should utilize billing (both paper and digital) processes and mailers to connect with customers in language and receive ongoing feedback

Awareness of SPU Solid Waste Services

Community members categorized SPU services by awareness level (low to high):

- Availability of garbage collection and disposal, and recycling of food and yard waste: **low**
- Ability to access information via social media and apps: **low**
- Availability of recycling for common materials: **medium**
- Requirement to sort trash, recyclables and food and yard waste, and waste prevention: **medium**

Identified Opportunities

- SPU should expand community training on identifying recyclable items
- SPU should work with manufacturers to label recyclable products to help consumers easily identify them

Feedback on Bin Signage

- Bins are accessible in multifamily, single-family, and business units but are rarely labeled
- Waste containers do not have pictures unless they are provided at an SPU or City event
- Signage is rarely culturally relevant or in-language at large events
- Waste containers are usually marked only by color to signify stream (green, blue, and black)

Barriers

The biggest barriers outlined by community members include:

- Bins are not clearly labeled with pictures to show where items go
- Property managers do not provide tools or education materials for residents
- Multifamily building common areas may have limited or inconvenient space for recycling and food and yard waste containers
- Homes have limited space inside, such as in the kitchen, for multiple waste containers

Community members identified the following opportunities for reducing barriers:

- In-language materials
- Visual aids on what goes in each bin
- Participation by property owner/management
- Bins and containers that are clearly marked and fit into limited space
- On-site, hands-on training

Motivators

Motivators for recycling, composting, and waste presentation vary by community. Community members identified the following motivators as most relevant:

- Protecting the environment
- Preserving the planet for future generations
- Addressing concern for growing landfills and lack of space to dispose of waste
- Working together as a community to collectively protect our planet and connect with each other

Information Needs

It is crucial to work in partnership with community members to share information through appropriate channels. Social media and apps rated relatively low among community members. Community members identified the following as their most preferred information channels:

- Transcreated labels on bins
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- Word of mouth by other community members
- Trusted community organizations
- Property owners or managers
- In-language workshops by community members

Industry and NGO Stakeholder Interview Summary

This section summarizes the input received from industry and NGO stakeholders, which helped to inform the *2022 Plan Update*.

Overview

To collect stakeholder feedback for the *2022 Plan Update*, Cascadia developed key questions and received responses from ten respondents in the form of email, phone interviews, or in-person interviews from February through April 2019. SPU identified the stakeholders to engage, which included haulers and processors, partner agencies, and NGOs.

Cascadia asked each stakeholder the following four questions:

- 1 In your mind, what, if anything, was missing from the *2011 Plan Revision* and its summary list of recommendations?
- 2 Where is the waste industry headed in 5 years? In 10 years? In 20 years?
- 3 What do you see as your organization's role and most important actions in shaping this future vision?
- 4 What do you see as SPU's role and most important actions in shaping this future?

Cascadia also tailored a few questions for specific stakeholder groups, listed below:

- 5 For **partner agencies**: What current efforts of collaboration between King County and SPU should be expanded? What future opportunities for collaboration should be explored?
- 6 For **non-governmental organizations** and **partner agencies**: One of SPU's goals is to minimize lifecycle environmental impacts through waste prevention (beyond reuse). What do you see as the most impactful strategies or actions needed to achieve this?

7 For **haulers and processors**: Given that disruption and risk in recycling and compost markets are likely long-term issues, what do you see as the role for King County? SPU? Collectors and processors? Others?

Representatives from ten organizations identified by Seattle Public Utilities provided input:

- Cedar Grove Composting
- Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County
- Lenz Enterprises
- Northwest Product Stewardship Council (NWPSC)
- Public Health Seattle and King County (PHSKC)
- Recology
- Republic Services
- Sustainable Packaging Coalition
- Waste Management
- Zero Waste Washington

Summary Themes from Stakeholder Input

The following sections summarize key themes expressed by respondents across stakeholder groups during the interviews.

Seattle has been and should continue to be a leader.

Stakeholders across all subgroups noted Seattle's past and present leadership and said that SPU should continue to push the envelope around waste prevention and sustainable waste management, such as by setting a benchmark for others, testing new innovations, and modeling actions for the state and beyond. Some opportunities stakeholders identified for SPU to continue to demonstrate its leadership include:

- Communicating a strong vision and implementing supportive policies, including new metrics for measuring success in materials management
- Continuing to focus on upstream waste management efforts, such as supporting local and state efforts on waste prevention and product stewardship and engaging manufacturers
- Supporting end-market development through broad efforts, as well as through the City's own procurement practices

As described further below, SPU's key stakeholders and partners also express a willingness to collaborate, advance new technology and ideas, and demonstrate leadership with the City.

Flexibility is vital to adapt to changing markets, technologies, materials, workforces, and other factors.

Stakeholders emphasized a need for flexibility to adapt to changing conditions, such as market fluctuations, a changing waste stream, workforce changes, and rapid technological advancements. They noted recent commodity market disruption due to China's scrap import policies and labor market challenges related to workforce shortages. Looking to the future, stakeholders anticipated shifts in packaging trends that will make material recovery more challenging, such as an increase in flexible packaging and fewer cans and glass. They also anticipate that Seattle will need to be ready to adopt or adapt to changes in processing technologies, collection technologies, workforce availability, and commodity end-markets. They mentioned a role for Seattle in testing new technologies and promoting end-markets in Washington. They also mentioned a need to build flexibility and sustainability into cost structures and contracts in the context of a continued trend of decreasing waste generation, as well as in the event of unforeseen disruptions.

Focus on the biggest net environmental impacts and choose quality over quantity when it comes to waste prevention and recovery.

Stakeholders expressed an interest in focusing on actions that maximize broad environmental benefits. They mentioned putting more focus on upstream waste prevention, for example, by promoting the use of durable goods. Some also suggested that SPU consider all environmental costs and benefits of system decisions, such as when deciding which materials to accept for curbside recycling. Other actions related to broader environmental benefits that stakeholders recommended include:

- Engage the public on the big picture and issues such as waste prevention, recycled content, and circular economy, instead of engaging them around individual products, to move upstream and make a larger environmental impact
- Increase waste prevention efforts through City procurement guidelines as well as targeted, material-specific programs and policies
- Engage manufacturers voluntarily to redesign products for recycling and waste prevention
- Promote additional extended producer responsibility programs to incentivize product designs that reduce waste and improve recyclability
- Maintain the value of the recycling stream through a responsible recycling framework and focusing on materials with the greatest benefits

In recycling, close the loop with marketable commodities, reduced contamination, and strong (ideally local) end markets.

Stakeholders noted the importance of creating marketable commodities and reducing contamination. Specifically, they mentioned the need to:

- Ensure that materials put in the recycling cart actually get recycled by having recycling processors account for materials through the supply chain.
- Invest in processing equipment and automation for material recovery facilities (MRFs).
- Engage customers to reduce contamination, using both education, feedback, and enforcement.
- Better manage contamination at transfer stations to improve the quality and value of recovered materials.
- Increase attention on end-markets and engage in market development. For food and yard waste, this could involve sending finished compost back to customers who use food and yard waste collection or to City departments that could use compost.
- Focus on quality over quantity.
 - In recycling, this may mean focusing more on capture rates than recycling rates and revising the accepted materials list or collecting some materials at depots based on end-markets.
 - In composting, this could include regulating or creating a certification system for compostable products.

Stakeholders are willing partners who see many opportunities to collaborate with SPU and increase regional consistency.

Stakeholders across all subgroups expressed interest in collaborating with Seattle to advance sustainability. Haulers and processors mentioned ways they have or could increase sustainability in their operations. For example, most haulers anticipate a switch to renewable fuel, such as landfill natural gas, and/or electric collection fleets in the near future. They also mentioned opportunities such as investing in technological innovations, using their drivers to monitor for contamination, engaging customers proactively, helping develop markets, and providing their perspectives when SPU considers changing programs or policies.

Seattle's 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update
Appendix D – Stakeholder Engagement Summary

Partner agencies identified opportunities to increase their collaboration with SPU both to use resources efficiently and to increase consistency in regulations and programs. They saw opportunities to collaborate to:

- Support regional efforts (including implementation of recommendations from the Responsible Recycling Task Force, which is now called RE+) to improve recycling quality, reduce contamination, and strengthen end markets and to promote waste prevention and other upstream efforts
- Implement new policies, such as disposal bans or extended producer responsibility programs, and harmonize waste-related regulations across the region
- Reinforce and expand efforts around equity and racial justice in service delivery, including working in and with communities and community networks, to maximize partnership opportunities, provide coordinated messaging, and avoid duplicative engagement
- Gather and analyze data on waste streams and research new technology to reduce contamination and expand domestic processing opportunities

NGOs also mentioned opportunities to collaborate with local government agencies, such as the Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County, as well as with their organizations, with manufacturers on product redesign for waste prevention and recycling, and with local community groups through increased funding for zero waste grants.

Engage the public to “recycle right” and think about the bigger picture of waste prevention and recycled content.

Stakeholders noted the importance of engaging the public both to ensure they are recycling right and to broaden their enthusiasm for recycling into enthusiasm for waste prevention. They saw opportunities to expand and improve public education around contamination reduction and recycling right, including through harmonizing messages regionally. They also mentioned engaging the public on bigger picture issues such as broad waste prevention beyond individual materials like straws, lifecycle impacts of materials, and the circular economy.

New models are needed to ensure funding is sustainable in the future. One model may be product stewardship and extended producer responsibility.

Stakeholders mentioned the need to explore new funding models to ensure sustainable funding as waste decreases and to combat the notion that recycling is free. Commodity markets fluctuate and, while change is expected, the levels and types of changes are unpredictable. Stakeholders emphasized that a willingness from SPU to build flexibility into cost structures and contracts with partners will help in adapting rapidly to unforeseen changes. In the long term, as

garbage quantities decrease and recycling and composting increase, new cost structures may be needed to ensure sustainable funding for recycling and composting.

Several stakeholders specifically called out a need to promote extended producer responsibility and work with manufacturers to redesign products for recycling and waste prevention to:

- Shift the paradigm on how to pay for solid waste management from solid waste utilities and ratepayers to producers
- Enhance the haulers' and processors' ability to manage new products and the changing waste stream, as well as create a structure to pay them for managing new types of waste
- Create a system to manage challenging materials, such as sharps

Other Stakeholder Feedback

In addition to the broad themes detailed above, other stakeholder feedback for the *2022 Plan Update* from specific groups is noted below.

Haulers

[The changing workforce will pose a challenge.](#)

Hauler and processor stakeholders noted a worsening shortage of drivers, mechanics, operators, sorters, and similar workers. They saw a need for the solid waste management industry, including SPU, to work together to build the next generation of workers and to prepare for shortages and changes in the next workforce. Stakeholders also mentioned the need to attract workers by improving driver conditions through increased vehicle automation, for example.

[Exploring new technologies and approaches is important.](#)

Haulers and processors monitor and will invest in new technology and equipment. Haulers and processors described technological advancements as driving business growth and creating new opportunities in the industry. They said that developments in automation will improve collection and sorting processes and lead to greater diversion. Driverless vehicles and advanced sorting equipment, such as material sensors and a “robot MRF” were noted as examples of innovative business advancements expected in the future. Investments in new technology, equipment, and data analysis support other stakeholder priorities, such as reducing contamination, increasing domestic recycling and local composting or other organics processing capacity, and operating more sustainably.

Other topics

Other issues emphasized by individual haulers and processors included:

- Safety should be just as important a part of the plan as the environment
- Seattle should promote policies at the state and local levels to work upstream, such as engaging manufacturers to design for reuse and recycling
- Seattle should better articulate its vision to ensure everyone understands why they should participate in achieving it
- Seattle should review and improve past ordinances, such as food serviceware mandates, based on what has been learned

Partner Agencies

Exploring new technologies and approaches is important.

Partner agencies mentioned exploring new technologies or collection methods, with some focus on local options. Recommendations included:

- Supporting grants or pilot projects for other technologies to manage food and yard waste to address the capacity limitations of local compost facilities
- Collaborating to explore new technologies for processing materials like plastics and paper domestically
- Collaborating to explore alternative moderate risk waste (MRW) collection methods for people who do not drive or who have other barriers to using existing drop-off facilities

One respondent also mentioned that local recycling capacity may decrease in the near future if local facilities are not able to meet new state regulations.

Opportunities for collaboration

In addition to opportunities for collaboration noted above in the Summary Themes from Stakeholder Input, some other opportunities for collaboration specific to partner agencies included to:

- Implement Responsible Recycling Task Force recommendations, with a particular emphasis on harmonizing accepted curbside materials and messaging regionally, and even statewide.
- Coordinate messaging to talk with customers about their waste holistically (in other words, not just “hazardous” versus “not hazardous”) and to promote waste prevention, safer and low-waste alternatives, thoughtful consumption, and proper waste handling.

Seattle's 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update
Appendix D – Stakeholder Engagement Summary

- Reinforce and expand efforts around equity and racial justice. In addition to working in and with communities, expand efforts related to data collection around specific communities, and ensure staff understand the equity and racial justice work underway across the utility to avoid duplicating efforts.
- Explore ways to support expanding and improving regional sorting and processing infrastructure.
- Explore co-locating MRW facilities within Seattle's transfer stations to improve MRW collection and identify alternatives to drop-off facilities to ensure access to proper MSW and MRW disposal for everyone.
- Explore sustainable funding models for solid waste management as garbage and overall waste quantities decrease.
- Make biomedical regulations uniform between Seattle and King County, for example, around sharps collection.
- Coordinate plans for disaster debris management to keep MRW out of disaster debris and promote proper disposal.
- Reduce rodent levels by ensuring waste is set out in downtown alleys only shortly before collection.

Non-Governmental Organizations

Other topics mentioned by individual NGOs included:

- Develop new metrics to calculate the full impact of consumption in Seattle (including residents and business), not just of City agency actions
- Increase enforcement of existing recycling and waste prevention regulations
- Develop procurement guidelines for waste prevention
- Enhance funding for local community groups
- Increase focus on toxic chemicals upstream and downstream; for example, furniture currently entering the solid waste stream may contain toxic flame retardants

Public Comment Form

Shown starting on next page.



Seattle's 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update: Moving Upstream to Zero Waste

Public Comment Form

1. How supportive are you of Seattle's draft 2022 *Solid Waste Plan Update: Moving Upstream to Zero Waste* overall?

- I strongly support
- I somewhat support
- I somewhat oppose
- I strongly oppose
- No opinion

2. What comments or suggestions do you have regarding Seattle's draft *2022 Solid Waste Plan Update: Moving Upstream to Zero Waste*? Please include the page number(s), whenever possible.

3. If you would like to upload a document with your comments, please do so here. Files may be a PDF or Word (DOC or DOCX) document and must be smaller than 16mb.

No file chosen

Make sure to click the "Submit" button at the end of the form before leaving or closing this webpage to fully submit your comments.

Have questions about Seattle's draft *2022 Solid Waste Plan Update*? Email SPU_SolidWastePlan@seattle.gov.

The following questions are for statistical purposes only. Responses are optional.

4. How did you learn about Seattle's draft 2022 *Solid Waste Plan Update* website and public comment opportunity? Select all that apply.

- Seattle Public Utilities website or newsletter
- Social media
- Print media
- Email
- A friend or colleague
- Transfer station flier
- I work for the City of Seattle
- Other (please describe)

5. Which of the following describes you? Select all that apply.

- I live in Seattle in an apartment or condo
- I live in Seattle in a house
- I work in Seattle in the solid waste, construction, or demolition industries
- I work in Seattle, but not in the solid waste, construction, or demolition industries
- Other (please describe)

6. What is your zip code?

7. What is your race(s)/ethnicity(ies)

8. What is your gender?

9. What is your age?

- Under 18
- 18-34
- 35-49
- 50-64
- 65 or older

Thank you for taking the time to comment on Seattle's draft 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update. Click the "Submit" button to submit your comments.

Privacy notice

Information provided in this form is considered a public record and may be subject to public disclosure. For more information, see the [Public Records Act, RCW Chapter 42.56](#). To learn more about how we manage your information, see our Privacy Statement at <http://www.seattle.gov/tech/initiatives/privacy>.



Seattle's 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update: Moving Upstream to Zero Waste

Thank you for taking the time to comment on *Seattle's draft 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update*. Your comments have been recorded and will be taken under consideration as the *2022 Solid Waste Plan Update* is finalized.