

**APPENDIX E**

# **Solid Waste by Rail in the Pacific Northwest**

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Currently, the City of Seattle ships solid waste by train to the Columbia Ridge Landfill located about 320 miles away in northern Oregon. The City requires that waste be shipped on a dedicated train destined for the landfill, also referred to as a unit train, as opposed to a merchant train that hauls different cargo to different locations. This requirement ensures that the train cars will all remain together and reduces the chance that a rail car could become separated from the group and end up in another location. Five trains per week are currently sent to the landfill by way of Union Pacific Railroad.

About 63% of the tonnage shipped through Union Pacific's Argo Yard to the Columbia Ridge Landfill comes from Seattle, while the remaining 37% comes from King County and other counties to the north. Table 1 shows the distribution of solid waste tonnage passing through Argo Yard in Seattle.

TABLE 1  
Waste Transferred at Argo Yard to  
Columbia Ridge Landfill in Year 2000

Source	Tons Per Year	Percent
Seattle Municipal Solid Waste (MSW)*	476,132	58%
Seattle Construction, Demolition, and Landclearing (CDL) Waste*	40,670	5%
King County Non-Municipal Waste***	168,232	21%
Whatcom County**	47,027	6%
Snohomish County Non-Municipal**	39,651	5%
Island County**	33,360	4%
San Juan County**	9,107	1%
TOTAL	812,493	100%

\*Data Source: Seattle Public Utilities 2000 Waste Summary data.

\*\*Data Source: Washington Department of Ecology waste disposal summary by county, Year 2000 summary.  
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/solidwastedata/disposal.asp>

\*\*\*King County total minus Seattle MSW and C&D.

Waste is trucked into Seattle from surrounding counties because Seattle is one of the few cities with rail yards large enough to consolidate freight into full-length trains. It is less expensive to add onto a train than build a separate train with only a small quantity of waste, due to the economies of scale. Therefore, it is anticipated that Seattle will continue to remain a location where freight of various kinds will be consolidated for shipment, including solid waste.

Also, waste is transported through Seattle on the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe rail line, as can be seen in Table 2. Most of the waste coming from counties north of King County is loaded onto

a train in Everett. Most of the waste coming from King County is loaded onto rail cars at the Black River Transfer Station and Rabanco's Recycling, Transfer, and Intermodal Facility. The rail sections are combined into a single train in the Seattle Interbay Rail Yard. A map showing the location of intermodal rail facilities and rail yards in the Seattle area is shown in Figure 1.

TABLE 2

Waste to Roosevelt Landfill (through Seattle) in Year 2000

Source	Tons	Percent
King County (w/o Seattle CDL)	379,808	32%
Seattle Construction & Demolition (CDL)	160,968	14%
Snohomish	492,009	42%
Skagit	80,282	7%
Whatcom	55,662	5%
Total	1,168,729	100%

The total tonnage shipped by rail is expected to increase in the future as more landfills close and the waste is shipped to large regional landfills. In 2004, the Port Angeles Landfill is scheduled to close and it is likely that the waste will be trucked to the Olympic View Transfer Station in Port Orchard and transported by rail to the Columbia Ridge Landfill. The Port Angeles landfill receives about 50,000 tons per year. In the year 2012, King County is expected to close the Cedar Hills Landfill and begin shipping about one million tons per year out of King County. It is anticipated that over 3 million tons of solid waste will be transferred through trains in Seattle beginning in 2012.

There are four regional landfills within reasonable travel distance by rail from Seattle. They include the Roosevelt, Columbia Ridge, Finley Buttes, and Simpco Road landfills. The location of these landfills can be seen in Figure 2. The Roosevelt Landfill is accessible from the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe rail line and the others are accessible from the Union Pacific rail line. The two largest regional landfills serving Washington by rail are the Roosevelt Landfill owned by Allied, and the Columbia Ridge Landfill owned by Waste Management Incorporated. According to year 2001 data, the Roosevelt Landfill received 1,959,360 tons of waste and the Columbia Ridge Landfill received 1,904,820 tons. Most of this waste was shipped to these landfills by rail. The Finley Buttes Landfill is located farther east of the Columbia Ridge Landfill in Oregon and received about 350,000 in 2001. The Simpco Road Landfill is located in Idaho and is fairly new. It currently does not have rail access into the site, but the Union Pacific line runs nearby.

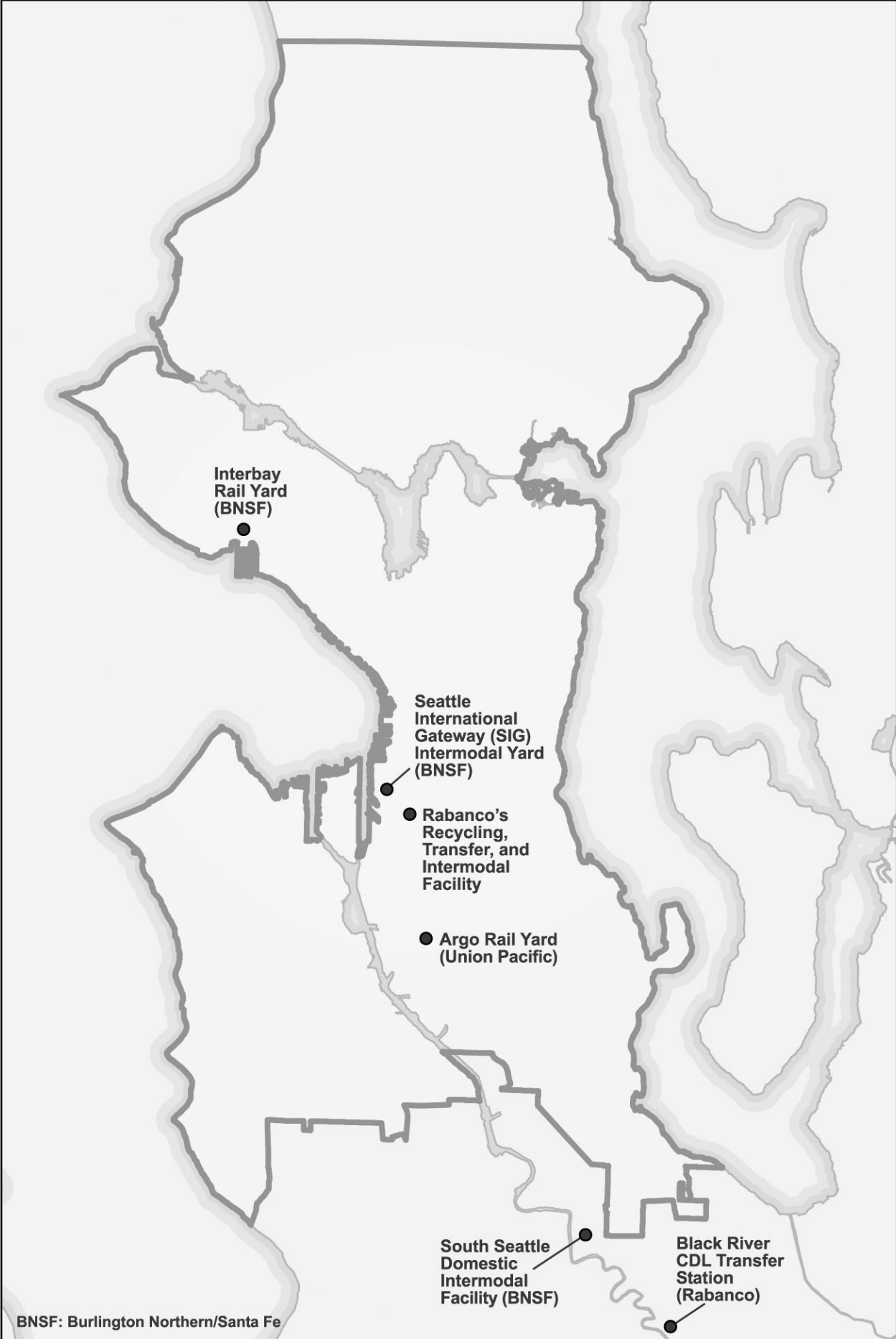


Figure 1  
Intermodal Rail Facilities in the Seattle Area

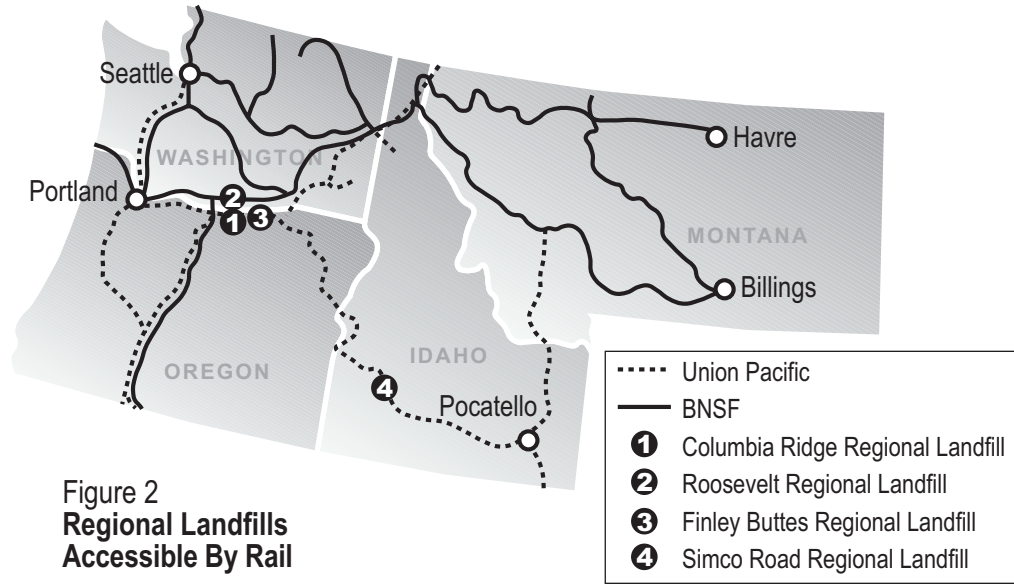


Figure 2  
**Regional Landfills  
 Accessible By Rail**

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 Fig 2 Regional Landfills Accessible by Rail / 8-28-03 / LW