

Section 3: The 20-Year Plan

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SECTION 3 – 20 YEAR PLAN

The 20 Year Plan

This Twenty-Year Plan served as the source of the Five-Year Action Plan, presented previously in Section 2. It was the "menu" from which the five-year plan's activities were selected. In particular, the Five-Year Action Plan consists of those activities from this Twenty-Year Plan that will be most effective in resolving the planning issues developed earlier in the planning process. At any time during the five-year planning horizon, activities listed in this Twenty-Year Plan may be undertaken upon a majority vote of the County Council. A major plan amendment process will be required if the system desires to undertake activities not listed in the Twenty-Year Plan within the current five-year planning horizon. This process includes the involvement of all plan signatory cities and towns as well as Department of Ecology approval.

This Twenty-Year Plan was developed by first developing a mission for solid waste management in Whatcom County. Next, that mission led to a number of goals, and then production of those discrete activities necessary to accomplish each goal. In developing these goals the cost or political desirability of implementing any element was not considered. However, these criteria were considered in developing Section 2 of this Plan, the Five-Year Plan. Furthermore, as future Five-Year Plan updates are developed to account for changing conditions these criteria will be considered.

Constituent activities are inherently included within each activity. For instance, if the activity says "assess the need for...", that activity includes all activities required to assess the need, such as "develop the research plan" or "design and implement a survey and analyze results".

Finally, the relationship between the mission, goals, subgoals, and activities is hierarchical. Conditions imposed by a higher level classification apply to component lower level classifications. For example, Goal I is concerned with reducing or eliminating wastes, and problems associated with wastes, to protect human health or environmental quality. Since that goal controls all of its component subgoals and activities, those activities must be service-oriented and cost-effective, and only undertaken where human health or environmental quality will benefit.

The mission of solid waste management in Whatcom County is:

1. Facilitate an economically efficient waste prevention, recycling, and disposal system that protects human health and the environment for the citizens of Whatcom County.
2. Assure compliance with local, state, and federal regulations pertaining to solid waste.

Goal 1

Reduce, or prevent where possible, the generation of solid and moderate risk wastes and their associated problems to protect human health, safety and environmental quality.

Subgoal 1.A. Solid and Moderate Risk Waste Prevention and Recycling

Prevent the generation, and encourage the recycling, of solid and moderate risk waste.

Activity

1. Assess needs and educate children, the general public, and businesses and institutions, including governmental entities, concerning solid and moderate risk waste prevention and recycling.
2. Develop and implement programs that will make waste prevention and recycling easier and more convenient for the general public and businesses and institutions, including governmental entities.
3. Assess the desirability and feasibility of legal mandates designed to encourage or require solid and moderate risk waste recycling, and implement as appropriate.
4. Ensure that residents, businesses, and institutions have the opportunity to recycle solid and moderate risk wastes, through public or private measures.
5. Develop, and where feasible implement, or recommend to the WUTC or other appropriate party, garbage and recycling rate incentives, or other financial incentives, which will encourage solid and moderate risk waste prevention and recycling.
6. Assess present and future recyclable collection, transport, processing, and remanufacturing needs and opportunities, and encourage such capability through coordinated actions with private enterprise.
7. Encourage the development of markets for recyclables and products with recycled content composed of materials collected under system auspices or with system encouragement.

Subgoal 1.B. Waste Collection

Ensure the provision of collection services for recyclables and solid and moderate risk wastes where appropriate in light of economic and environmental criteria.

Activity

1. Continue to implement mandatory curbside garbage and recyclable collection for all or designated parts of the county, or have cities or towns implement, if appropriate.
2. Maintain effective working relationships with haulers and WUTC staff, and comment on proposed WUTC regulatory actions, or otherwise interact with the WUTC where appropriate.

3. Continue to ensure the availability of self-haul MRW disposal opportunities for residents and SQG's.

Subgoal 1.C. Waste Transfer, Processing, and Transport

Ensure the availability of customer-oriented and cost-effective facilities and means, designed and managed to ensure the safety of the public and system employees, as well as environmental quality, for the acceptance and processing of solid waste and transport to the disposal site.

Activity

1. Ensure the operation of solid and moderate risk waste transfer and processing facilities, including those operated by the private sector, sufficient to handle wastes generated within the county in an environmentally safe and economical manner.
2. Assess existing and projected waste generation patterns, including the generation of special wastes, and waste prevention and recycling trends, to determine future transfer, processing, and transport needs.
3. Assess the ability of facilities to meet existing and future needs, including for CDL, MRW and special wastes.
4. Design and implement planning processes, including public involvement, when modification to existing facilities or the overall system will enable the system to meet future needs, or when new construction will be necessary, and implement the resulting activities.
5. Anticipate and react in a timely manner to Health Department inspection reports detailing environmental-related problems at the system moderate risk waste facility.

Subgoal 1.D. Waste Disposal

Ensure the safe, cost-effective disposal of solid and moderate risk waste generated within Whatcom County.

Activity

1. Monitor the system's existing moderate risk waste collection/disposal contracts to be certain that all contractual obligations are met by both the system and the contractor.
2. Utilize the Moderate Risk Waste Facility to provide economic year-round disposal of MRW, and to maximize opportunities for reuse, recycling, pollution prevention, and education.
3. In conjunction with the Whatcom County Health Department and other jurisdictions, ensure that solid and moderate risk waste originating within the county is disposed of, either within or outside the county, by generators or transporters acting independently of the system, in a manner meeting all applicable standards and regulations,

Subgoal 1.E. Facility Monitoring and Maintenance

In conjunction with the Whatcom County Health Department, ensure that all facilities currently or historically used for system solid or moderate risk waste, or for system recycling purposes, are monitored and maintained to ensure protection of environmental quality.

Activity

1. Maintain and monitor all landfill gas and leachate facilities at system facilities, as required.
2. Monitor groundwater and surface/storm water quality at all relevant system facilities and take corrective action as appropriate.
3. Ensure that other facilities currently used for system solid or moderate risk waste, or for system recyclables, are monitored and maintained appropriately.

Goal 2

To solve problems related to solid waste and moderate risk waste through service oriented, cost effective actions that protect human health and safety and environmental quality.

Subgoal 2.A. Illegal Dumping

In conjunction with the Whatcom County Health Department, support the cleanup of existing illegal dump sites and seek to minimize future illegal dumping.

Activity

1. Define the system's role in dealing with illegal dumping, as well as the roles of other County, state and federal agencies, other jurisdictions, and private entities.
2. Develop and apply an overall strategy to fulfill the system's role concerning illegal dumping and coordinate that role with the roles of other jurisdictions.
3. Develop and implement educational programs aimed at those who illegally dump solid and moderate risk wastes as well as landowners who suffer illegal dumping and could secure their land to reduce the problem.
4. Develop and implement a program to provide financial assistance to citizens and citizen groups who voluntarily clean up lands they do not own, to certain landowners who have had waste illegally dumped upon their lands, and to certain cities, towns and community groups which have community cleanups.
5. Develop and implement a program which ensures that any identified illegal dumper will be assessed the cost of cleanup plus a penalty sufficient to discourage future illegal dumping.
6. Develop a program to identify and implement increased or enhanced service by the system which will lead to reduced illegal dumping, if research indicates service modifications are desirable.

7. Develop and implement a comprehensive program to ensure that illegal dump sites are identified and cleaned up in a timely manner.

Subgoal 2.B. Other Environmental Problems

Identify and remediate other problems resulting from moderate risk waste activities.

Activity

1. Control or otherwise ameliorate other problems resulting from system moderate risk waste activities.

Goal 3

Provide necessary support for the other two system goals.

Subgoal 3.A. Upgrade, Maintain and, As Needed, Repair Facilities and Equipment in a Timely and Efficient Manner

Activity

1. Ensure the safe operation of system facilities and equipment by regularly inspecting and maintaining closed landfill.
2. Maintain the ability to perform, and undertake major repairs, including emergency repairs, of landfill facilities and associated equipment, other facilities and associated equipment, and mobile equipment, in a timely and efficient manner.
3. Plan, schedule, budget, and modify or update facilities and equipment to conform with new or altered regulatory requirements.

Subgoal 3.B. Maintain Effective Communications With Other Organizations and Coordinate System Activities Where Appropriate

Maintain effective communications with other governments, governmental agencies and private groups, and coordinate the system's activities with those of these other organizations when appropriate.

Activity

1. Seek to maintain the effectiveness of, provide staff support to, and maintain good working relations with the Solid Waste Advisory Committee as well as ad hoc advisory groups developed to provide advice on particular solid waste issues.
2. Maintain effective communications and working relationships with, and where appropriate coordinate actions with, relevant private parties, other subdivisions of Whatcom County government, cities, towns, special purpose districts, and other state subdivisions within the county, other relevant county and city governments, and relevant state and federal agencies.

3. Monitor relevant developments in the state legislature, Congress, federal and state courts, and administrative law panels, and as appropriate interact with these groups and/or adjust system policies and procedures accordingly.

Subgoal 3.C. Public Input, Information and Education Function

Develop and maintain an effective public input, information and education function.

Activity

1. Develop and implement a program to encourage, gather, analyze and use public input into proposed and ongoing system operations as well as special one-time projects.
2. Develop and implement a program to provide information to the public concerning system operations and policies and, as appropriate, educate the public on relevant solid and moderate risk wastes and environmental issues.

Subgoal 3.D. Administrative, Financial Management, and Legal Support

Ensure the provision of administrative, financial management (budget development, financial expenditure), and legal services to support other system goals, while simultaneously seeking to reduce unnecessary or excessive related burdens.

Activity

1. On an ongoing basis, have project managers review the administrative, financial management and legal burdens associated with their projects, and if the function of those burdens is unclear, or associated workload seems excessive, discuss that issue with relevant system and other staff.
2. Have relevant system staff work with others as appropriate to remove or alter those burdens with minimal purpose or whose burden is excessive.
3. Ensure the long-term financial ability of the system to accomplish mandated and desired activities and to fulfill financial obligations which the system has assumed as a result of its solid waste management, recycling, or moderate risk waste activities.