



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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August 25, 2022

Stephanie Schwenger  
City of Seattle  
Solid and Hazardous Waste Lead Planner  
700 Fifth Avenue  
P.O. Box 34018  
Seattle, WA 98124

**RE: City of Seattle Solid Waste Management Plan Cost Assessment Questionnaire  
TG-220526**

Dear Stephanie Schwenger:

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) has completed its review of the preliminary draft of the City of Seattle Solid Waste Management Plan (Plan), submitted July 1, 2022.

Although the Commission does not regulate the City of Seattle (City), [RCW 70A.205.065](#) requires the Commission to complete a review of the Plan. The 2021-2026 Plan will have no rate impact to ratepayers served by solid waste collection companies regulated by the Commission.

Staff notes the City has increasingly focused on waste prevention by setting goals to reduce the environmental and health impacts of waste. Action items that promote waste reduction and diversion include working with a consultant to calculate environmental impact of waste prevention and recycling. There is ongoing focus on waste prevention and reuse and the environmental impacts of solids waste.

The City's population growth was more rapid than the City forecasted; the population in 2020 was 761,000, and forecasted to be nearly 798,000 in 2035. As of October 2021, updated forecasts are not available for Seattle, but regional forecasts for King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap counties project the population will grow by 37 percent and households will grow by 46 percent from 2020 to 2050.

Staff notes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, waste generation in the commercial sector decreased 20 percent from 2019 to 2020, at 286,000 tons, the sector produced the lowest number of tons in

21 years. While residential population increased by 35 percent between 2000 and 2020, residential waste generation increased 13 percent. The City expects overall generation of commercial, residential, and self-haul waste to rebound and steadily increase over the next 20 years.

Staff also noted the City is expanding its outreach and education by concentrated efforts to refocus on a life cycle view of materials to move toward its zero waste goals and emphasizing waste prevention through actions such as reducing wasted food and using reusable items. These goals are to reduce landfill material below 438,000 tons per year, with the baseline year of 2006, and to reduce landfill tonnage 10 percent from 2018 levels by 2028.

The City has a focus of environmental impacts, and a top priority is greenhouse gas emissions due to their impact on climate change. The City has a goal for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 58 percent from 2008 levels by 2030.

Commission Staff have no further comment on the cost assessment questionnaire. Please direct questions or comments to Rachel Stark at (360) 664-1272 or by email at [rachel.stark@utc.wa.gov](mailto:rachel.stark@utc.wa.gov).

Sincerely,

AMANDA MAXWELL  
Executive Director and Secretary

cc: Diana Wadley, Ecology NE Regional Office, Plan Coordinator