

Seattle Public Utilities

2015 Recycling Rate Report

Seattle City Council
Civil Rights, Utilities, Economic Development
& Arts Committee



July 12, 2016

Background

- Report is called for in Resolution 30990.
- Set 60% recycling goal for municipal solid waste (MSW) by the year 2012; 70% by 2025.
- City Council in 2013 revised recycling goals for MSW to recycle 60% by the year 2015, and 70% by 2020.

About the Recycling Rate

Seattle's recycling rate is the percentage of MSW diverted from the landfill by reuse, recycling and composting.

- Organics managed onsite by Seattle residents (yard debris and food scraps).
- All garbage, organics, and recyclables generated by businesses and residents set out for collection.
- All garbage, organics, and recyclables hauled to the City's recycling and disposal stations for reuse, recycling or composting.

About the Recycling Rate, Cont'd

- **60% goal combines separate goals for each of the four primary MSW sectors:** single family residential, multi-family residential, self-haul and commercial.
- Specific recycling goals for each sector are different since waste stream materials, opportunities to recycle, and likelihood of participation vary among the sectors.

Consistent Improvement

- We continue to make steady progress in our city-wide recycling rate.
- Recycling rate has risen 19.8 percentage points since 2003 low of 38.2%.
- In 2015, Seattle recycled 58% of its MSW, an increase of 0.9 percentage points over 2014.
- Biggest source of improvement was the composting requirement.

Single Family Recycling

- Recycling in the single family sector increased by 3.0% to 74.3%, due primarily to 2015 prohibition on disposing food waste and compostable paper.
- 1.3% decrease in total tons generated. Recycled tons increased by 4,648 (3.2%), and disposed tons decreased by 7,243 (12%).

Single Family tonnage 2000-2015

Year	Generated	Disposed	Recycled	Recycle Rate
2000	208,468	87,499	120,969	58.0%
2001	211,982	91,072	120,910	57.0%
2002	206,474	87,834	118,640	57.5%
2003	205,748	87,426	118,322	57.5%
2004	209,132	86,029	123,103	58.9%
2005	208,675	80,478	128,197	61.4%
2006	216,946	78,078	138,868	64.0%
2007	220,128	77,494	142,634	64.8%
2008	213,889	73,961	139,928	65.4%
2009	215,015	67,229	147,786	68.7%
2010	216,484	64,309	152,175	70.3%
2011	212,861	62,779	150,082	70.5%
2012	211,030	60,906	150,124	71.1%
2013	206,592	60,291	146,301	70.8%
2014	206,992	59,772	147,220	71.1%
2015	204,397	52,529	151,868	74.3%

2015 Program Highlights – Single Family

- Outreach campaign to raise awareness of new food waste requirements and increase diversion
- Media partnerships
- Direct mail including citywide newsletters and reminder notices to non-compliant households
- Community engagement including 50 community events, distributing 8,000 free kitchen compost containers, outreach multiple languages

2015 Program Highlights – Multi-Family

- Multi-family sector increase 2.2% to 36.8%, setting a record high for the fourth year in a row.
- Generation decreased 1,911 tons (-2.4%).

Multi Family Tonnage 2000-2015

Year	Generated	Disposed	Recycled	Recycle Rate
2000	208,468	87,499	120,969	58.0%
2001	211,982	91,072	120,910	57.0%
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2015 Program Highlights – Multi Family

- Multifamily residents were very aware of food waste requirements and 71% reported regularly using food waste carts.
- Provided technical assistance to 75 large apartments or condos, serving nearly 5,000 residents. Supported 920 buildings with educational resources and information.
- Delivered 15,000 free kitchen compost containers to multifamily properties and trained 175 new Friends of Recycling and Composting volunteers. On-site presentations to 27 properties and 28 community groups.

Self-Haul Sector

- Includes material brought by residents, businesses and governmental agencies to the two City-owned transfer stations.
- Self-haul recycling includes organics (food and yard waste, clean wood), appliances and metals, and other recyclable material.
- Self-haul recycling rate fell 0.2%, continuing the trend of annual decreases since 2007. Generation increased 5.1%. Disposal increased by 5.3%.

Self-haul Tonnage 2000-2015

Year	Generated	Disposed	Recycled	Recycle Rate
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2000	123,024	101,883	21,141	17.2%
2001	124,453	102,305	22,148	17.8%
2002	125,710	102,981	22,729	18.1%
2003	123,597	101,232	22,365	18.1%
2004	122,819	99,750	23,069	18.8%
2005	124,364	100,499	23,865	19.2%
2006	127,444	103,429	24,015	18.8%
2007	132,545	107,098	25,447	19.2%
2008	111,229	90,814	20,415	18.4%
2009	97,893	81,565	16,328	16.7%
2010	91,618	79,293	12,325	13.5%
2011	81,776	71,033	10,743	13.1%
2012	80,568	70,474	10,094	12.5%
2013	84,341	74,019	10,322	12.2%
2014	64,681	57,847	6,834	10.6%
2015	67,993	60,938	7,055	10.4%

2015 Program Highlights – Self-haul

- Significant self-haul recycling increases not expected until solid waste facility improvements are complete.
- **North Transfer Station (NTS) remained closed for rebuild all of 2015.** Self-haul customers were directed to take materials to the new South Transfer Station.
- Construction and Demolition Waste (C&D) sorting pilot improved.

Commercial

- The commercial sector includes garbage, recyclables and compostable materials collected from businesses.
- The commercial sector's recycling rate increased very slightly to 62.3%, or 0.1 percentage points. Considering that we know that organics diversion increased in 2015, non-composting recycling must have decreased.
- Total commercial generation increased for the third year in a row, up 837 tons in 2015. Recycling rose 737 tons, and disposal, increased 107 tons.

Commercial Tonnage 2000-2015

Year	Generated	Disposed	Recycled	Recycle Rate
2000	391,406	228,417	162,989	41.6%
2001	377,927	228,405	149,522	39.6%
2002	366,224	217,195	149,029	40.7%
2003	339,844	213,247	126,597	37.3%
2004	375,739	216,112	159,627	42.5%
2005	385,093	205,637	179,456	46.6%
2006	416,564	201,231	215,333	51.7%
2007	418,979	198,968	220,011	52.5%
2008	390,267	176,774	213,493	54.7%
2009	335,992	151,398	184,593	54.9%
2010	345,692	142,180	203,511	58.9%
2011	351,214	135,536	215,678	61.4%
2012	347,673	134,089	213,584	61.4%
2013	356,480	132,401	224,079	62.9%
2014	369,407	139,457	229,950	62.2%
2015	370,237	139,557	230,680	62.3%

2015 Program Highlights – Commercial

- Continued growth in commercial food waste diversion with approximately 8,000 new tons of commercial food waste diverted.
- Provided technical assistance to 750 businesses through ‘Green Business’ program. Conducted 370 recycling and composting program site visits to businesses. Conducted 80 food service business visits to support compostable food packaging implementation.
- Provided outreach via 15 business community events or tradeshow. Supported public food and recycle diversion at special events
- Provided technical assistance to 250 ethnic businesses; provided in-Language support in Vietnamese, Ethiopian, Somali, Korean and Spanish, as well as translated printed materials.
- Mailed postcards to 16,000 business, to provide information regarding new recycling and food waste composting requirements

Construction and Demolition Debris (C&D)

- Construction, demolition, and land clearing debris collected by a firm under contract with the City, or are self-hauled, to recycling facilities.
- Generation correlates closely with economic and building activity cycles.
- C&D generation decreased particularly for concrete which has a large impact on the C&D recycling rate.
- Overall, C&D recycling rate fell from 64% to 57% and the amount of wood recovered for beneficial use increased from 7.4% to 9.9%.
- Estimated diversion rate from landfill disposal is estimated at 67.2%.

Construction & Demolition Debris Tonnage 2000-2015

Year	Total Generated	Disposed*	Recycled	Beneficial Use
2007	415,801	201,156	204,907	9,738
2008	397,052	181,241	200,851	14,961
2009	288,551	115,446	162,742	10,362
2010	288,957	97,241	178,794	11,864
2011	359,390	118,216	227,049	14,125
2012	376,328	129,383	224,060	18,519
2013	386,200	127,040	234,982	24,178
2014	494,055	136,837	317,331	39,887
2015	408,395	133,804	234,255	40,336

2015 Program Highlights – Construction and Demolition Debris

- Clean wood added to the recycling requirement in 2015 for construction job sites.
- Seattle and the King County continued C&D processing facility residuals sampling as part of the certification process for C&D recyclers.
- Waste diversion reporting by construction and demolition project improved from 25% in 2014 to 60% in 2015.
- City and King County staff presented at trade associations, architecture firms, and construction companies to educate stakeholders about requirements.

Waste Prevention

- Waste prevention programs work to reduce waste volumes from households and businesses and toxics purchased by people, institutions and businesses.
- When possible, SPU seeks to quantify results, and reflects these results in the MSW recycling rate.

2015 Waste Prevention Program Highlights

- **Reuse:** Began with charitable and for-profit reuse organizations to quantify reuse activities, including sales of donated reusable goods.
- **Packaging:** Engaged with industry organizations to address packaging design, labeling, tinting and recyclability and compostability issues.
- **Food Waste Prevention:** 450 residents educated through booth outreach, presentations, classes, and door-to-door outreach; reduced 4.5 tons of apples from the waste stream through a partnership with City Fruit
- **Commercial Food Waste Prevention & Recovery:** Partnered with OSE to conduct analysis of commercial sector barriers and opportunities for food waste prevention and recovery.

2015 Program Highlights – Waste Prevention, cont'd

- **Threadcycle:** launched campaign with textile collection partners to raise awareness about recycling damaged textiles when donating used clothing.
- **Junk Mail Opt Out Service:** 30,147 total opt out accounts, an increase of 433 accounts in Q1 2015 (no data available for Q2-4); 415,366 total opt outs, an increase of 28,463 in 2015.
- **Master Composter/Soil Builder Volunteers:** 1,206 hours served contacting 8,893 residents in 2015; 34 new volunteers recruited and trained from across the city.
- **Garden Hotline:** 9,432 public contacts in 2015, including Hotline staff attending 159 events and classes.
- **Pesticide Reduction:** 255 landscape professionals attended fall IPM workshop; trained 122 staff at 8 area nurseries; reached 32 Spanish-speaking landscape professionals in targeted trainings.

Recycling & Waste Reduction Activities for 2016-17

SPU's major areas of emphasis in 2016/17 to get the rest of the way to the goal are:

- Compostables diversion in the multi-family and other sectors.
- Reducing customer contamination of recycling.
- Sorting construction and demolition material at our South Transfer Station to recover more.
- Opening our new Reuse and Recycling Center at North Transfer Station this year.
- Potential refinements to the SMC to make it easier for Customers to know what is compostable.

Questions?