



King County

1200 King County
Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Meeting Agenda Metropolitan King County Council

*Councilmembers: Girmay Zahilay, Chair;
Sarah Perry, Vice Chair of Policy Development and Review;
Reagan Dunn, Vice Chair of Regional Coordination;
Claudia Balducci, Jorge L. Barón, Rod Dembowski,
Teresa Mosqueda, De'Sean Quinn, Pete von Reichbauer*

1:30 PM

Tuesday, September 9, 2025

Hybrid Meeting

Hybrid Meetings: Attend King County Council meetings in person in Council Chambers (Room 1001), 516 3rd Avenue in Seattle, or through remote access. Details on how to attend and/or provide comment remotely are listed below.

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Sign language and interpreter services can be arranged given sufficient notice (206-848-0355).
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1. **Call to Order**

To show a PDF of the written materials for an agenda item, click on the agenda item below.

2. **Roll Call**3. **Flag Salute and Pledge of Allegiance**

Councilmember Balducci

4. **Approval of Minutes of September 2, 2025**

Pg. 10

Councilmember Perry

5. **Additions to the Council Agenda**6. **Special Items****Legislative Branch Service Awards**

Councilmember Zahilay

Proclamation of September 15 to 21, 2025, as Diaper Need Awareness Week in King County

Councilmember Balducci, Councilmember Perry, and Executive Braddock



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Hearing and Second Reading of Ordinances from Standing Committees and Regional Committees, and of Ordinances related to Collective Bargaining

There will be one public hearing on Items 6 (Proclamation Only) and 7-10.

Budget and Fiscal Management

Councilmember Dembowski

7. [Proposed Substitute Ordinance No. 2025-0182.2](#) **Pg. 17**

AN ORDINANCE relating to solid waste fees charged at recycling and transfer facilities and at the Cedar Hills regional landfill; and amending Ordinance 12564, Section 2, as amended, and K.C.C. 10.12.021 and establishing an effective date.

Sponsors: Zahilay

On 7/8/2025, the Metropolitan King County Council Introduced and Referred to Budget and Fiscal Management Committee.

On 8/27/2025, the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee Recommended Do Pass Substitute.

Public Hearing Required

First Reading of and Action on Emergency Ordinances without Referral to Committee

Councilmember Perry

8. [Proposed Ordinance No. 2025-0275](#) **Pg. 67**

AN ORDINANCE relating to council rules and order of business; amending Ordinance 11683, Section 4, as amended, and K.C.C. 1.24.035; and declaring an emergency.

Sponsors: Zahilay

SUBJECT TO A MOTION TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING LESS THAN SEVEN DAYS AFTER FIRST READING PURSUANT TO K.C.C. 1.24.095 AND A MOTION TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO TAKE ACTION WITHOUT REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE PURSUANT TO K.C.C. 1.24.085



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Motions, from Standing Committees and Regional Committees and Motions related to Collective Bargaining, for Council Action

Consent Item 9

Councilmember Perry

9. [Proposed Substitute Motion No. 2025-0259.2](#) **Pg.73**

A MOTION confirming the appointment of John Rodriguez to the citizens' elections oversight committee as a representative of the Spanish-speaking community.

Sponsors: Zahilay

On 8/26/2025, the Metropolitan King County Council Introduced and Referred to Employment and Administration Committee.

On 9/2/2025, the Employment and Administration Committee Recommended Do Pass Substitute Consent.

Reappointment Consent Agenda Item 10

Councilmember Perry

10. [Proposed Motion No. 2025-0243](#) **Pg. 80**

A MOTION confirming the executive's reappointment of Bilan Aden, who resides in council district five, to the King County Communities of Opportunity-Best Starts for Kids levy advisory board, as a community member who reflects demographic characteristics of the communities that qualify for funding in accordance with Communities of Opportunity funding guidelines and who are grassroots organizers or activists in those communities or who live in or have worked in those communities.

Sponsors: Quinn



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First Reading and Referral of Ordinances

11. [Proposed Ordinance No. 2025-0260](#)

AN ORDINANCE revising the loan agreement between King County and the Pacific Science Center Foundation.

Sponsors: Barón

First Reading and Referral to the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee

12. [Proposed Ordinance No. 2025-0269](#)

AN ORDINANCE approving the City of Redmond Water System Plan dated May 2025.

Sponsors: Perry

First Reading and Referral to the Local Services and Land Use Committee

13. [Proposed Ordinance No. 2025-0270](#)

AN ORDINANCE adopting the 2025 King County real property asset management plan in response to K.C.C. 4.56.350; and amending Ordinance 10810, Section 1, as amended, and K.C.C. 4.56.350.

Sponsors: Dembowski

First Reading and Referral to the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee

14. [Proposed Ordinance No. 2025-0271](#)

AN ORDINANCE authorizing the executive to execute an amendment to an agreement approved under Ordinance 19821 with the Washington state Department of Ecology for loan financing for a wastewater capital project.

Sponsors: Dembowski

First Reading and Referral to the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee



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15. [Proposed Ordinance No. 2025-0276](#)

AN ORDINANCE approving the grant funding allocation for the council-designated projects funded through the WaterWorks grant program, for the 2025 cycle, in accordance with the 2025 Annual Budget Ordinance, Ordinance 19861, Section 59, as amended, and Ordinance 18031, Section 1, as amended.

Sponsors: Quinn

First Reading and Referral to the Committee of the Whole



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First Reading and Referral of Motions

16. [Proposed Motion No. 2025-0239](#)

A MOTION confirming the executive's appointment of Yessica Osorio Duran, who resides in council district five, to the King County children and youth advisory board, as a youth representative.

Sponsors: Quinn

First Reading and Referral to the Health, Housing, and Human Services Committee

17. [Proposed Motion No. 2025-0240](#)

A MOTION confirming the executive's appointment of Megan Walsh, who resides in council district three, to the King County children and youth advisory board.

Sponsors: Perry

First Reading and Referral to the Health, Housing, and Human Services Committee

18. [Proposed Motion No. 2025-0254](#)

A MOTION confirming the executive's appointment of Jeni Johnson, who resides in council district eight, to the King County mental illness and drug dependency advisory committee, as a representative of unincorporated King County.

Sponsors: Mosqueda

First Reading and Referral to the Health, Housing, and Human Services Committee

19. [Proposed Motion No. 2025-0261](#)

A MOTION confirming the executive's appointment of Luz Escalante, who resides in council district five, to the King County immigrant and refugee commission.

Sponsors: Quinn

First Reading and Referral to the Committee of the Whole

20. **Reports on Special and Outside Committees**

Other Business

Adjournment



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Meeting Minutes

Metropolitan King County Council

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Tuesday, September 2, 2025

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DRAFT MINUTES

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1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m.

Councilmember Dembowski recessed the meeting at 1:59 p.m.

Chair Zahilay reconvened the meeting at 2:01 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: 9 - Balducci, Barón, Dembowski, Dunn, Mosqueda, Perry, Quinn, von Reichbauer and Zahilay

3. Flag Salute and Pledge of Allegiance

Councilmember von Reichbauer led the flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Approval of Minutes of August 26, 2025

Councilmember Perry moved to approve the minutes of the August 26, 2025, meeting as presented. Seeing no objection, the Chair so ordered.

5. Additions to the Council Agenda

There were no additions.

6. Special Item

Recognition of the 2024-25 Ruth Woo Fellows: Monica Alfonzo, Zeinab Al-Mohanawy, Priscilla de Andrade, Marissa Maldonado, and Saeed Mahamood

Councilmember Dembowski made remarks and introduced the 2024-25 Ruth Woo Fellows: Monica Alfonzo, Marissa Maldonado, Priscilla de Andrade, Saeed Mahamood, and Zeinab Al-Mohanawy.

Hearing and Second Reading of Ordinances from Standing Committees and Regional Committees, and of Ordinances related to Collective Bargaining

There will be one public hearing on Items 7 - 9

*The following people spoke:
Alex Tsimmerman*

Budget and Fiscal Management Committee

7. **[Proposed Substitute Ordinance No. 2025-0236.2](#)**

AN ORDINANCE relating to the sale of biomethane and related environmental attributes held by the county; authorizing the solid waste division to enter into an agreement for the sale of biomethane and environmental attributes produced at the Cedar Hills regional landfill to Puget Sound Energy.

Sponsors: Dembowski

The enacted number is 19967.

A Public Hearing was held and closed. A motion was made by Councilmember Dembowski that this Ordinance be Passed. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Balducci, Barón, Dembowski, Dunn, Mosqueda, Perry, Quinn, von Reichbauer, and Zahilay

Motions, from Standing Committees and Regional Committees and Motions related to Collective Bargaining, for Council Action

Consent Items

8. **[Proposed Motion No. 2025-0204](#)**

A MOTION accepting the King County 30-Year Forest Plan in accordance with Ordinance 19881, Section 377.

Sponsors: Quinn and Perry

The enacted number is 16870.

A Public Hearing was held and closed. This matter passed on the Consent Agenda.

9. [Proposed Motion No. 2025-0205](#)

A MOTION acknowledging receipt of a Critical Areas Monitoring and Adaptive Management Program plan, in response to the 2025 Annual Budget Ordinance, Ordinance 19861, Section 16, Proviso P1.

Sponsors: Perry

The enacted number is 16871.

A Public Hearing was held and closed. This matter passed on the Consent Agenda.

Passed On The Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Councilmember Perry that the Consent Agenda be passed. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 8 - Balducci, Barón, Dembowski, Mosqueda, Perry, Quinn, von Reichbauer, and Zahilay

No: 1 - Dunn

First Reading and Referral of Ordinances**10. [Proposed Ordinance No. 2025-0266](#)**

AN ORDINANCE relating to contract management and compliance monitoring protocols for the department of community and human services; and amending Ordinance 11955, Section 5, as amended, and K.C.C. 2.16.130.

Sponsors: Dunn and Balducci

This matter had its first reading and was referred to the Health, Housing, and Human Services Committee.

11. [Proposed Ordinance No. 2025-0267](#)

AN ORDINANCE relating to prohibiting algorithmic rent fixing; and adding a new chapter to K.C.C. Title 12.

Sponsors: Mosqueda

This matter had its first reading and was referred to the Health, Housing, and Human Services Committee.

12. [Proposed Ordinance No. 2025-0268](#)

AN ORDINANCE related to doctors office/outpatient clinic uses; and amending Ordinance 19881, Section 162, as amended, and K.C.C. 21A.08.045 and Ordinance 16267, Section 30, as amended, and K.C.C. 21A.12.250.

Sponsors: Mosqueda

This matter had its first reading and was referred to the Local Services and Land Use Committee.

First Reading and Referral of Motions

13. [Proposed Motion No. 2025-0217](#)

A MOTION acknowledging receipt of the third annual report on the second Best Starts for Kids initiative, in accordance with Ordinance 19354.

Sponsors: Mosqueda

This is a dual referral first to the Health, Housing, and Human Services Committee and then to the Regional Policy Committee.

This is a nonmandatory referral to the Regional Policy Committee under KCC 1.24.065.I as an issue that is not a countywide policy or plan but would benefit from interjurisdictional discussion.

This matter had its first reading and was referred to the Health, Housing, and Human Services Committee.

14. [Proposed Motion No. 2025-0237](#)

A MOTION approving the 2024 annual mental illness and drug dependency evaluation summary report, in compliance with K.C.C. 4A.500.309.

Sponsors: Mosqueda

This is a dual referral first to the Health, Housing, and Human Services Committee and then to the Regional Policy Committee.

This is a nonmandatory referral to the Regional Policy Committee under KCC 1.24.065.I as an issue that is not a countywide policy or plan but would benefit from interjurisdictional discussion.

This matter had its first reading and was referred to the Health, Housing, and Human Services Committee.

15. [Proposed Motion No. 2025-0252](#)

A MOTION acknowledging receipt of the summary letter and completion of the online annual report requirement for the Crisis Care Centers Levy, in accordance with Ordinance 19572, Section 7.C.9, and Attachment A to Ordinance 19783, Section VIII.A.

Sponsors: Mosqueda

This matter had its first reading and was referred to the Health, Housing, and Human Services Committee.

16. [Proposed Motion No. 2025-0263](#)

A MOTION confirming the executive's appointment of Zain Jinnah, who resides in council district two, to the King County immigrant and refugee commission.

Sponsors: Zahilay

This matter had its first reading and was referred to the Committee of the Whole.

17. [Proposed Motion No. 2025-0264](#)

A MOTION confirming the executive's appointment of Julie Kang, who resides in council district four, to the King County immigrant and refugee commission.

Sponsors: Barón

This matter had its first reading and was referred to the Committee of the Whole.

18. Reports on Special and Outside Committees

No reports were given.

Other Business**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:04 p.m.

Approved this _____ day of _____

Clerk's Signature



Signature Report

Ordinance

Proposed No. 2025-0182.2

Sponsors Zahilay

1 AN ORDINANCE relating to solid waste fees charged at
2 recycling and transfer facilities and at the Cedar Hills
3 regional landfill; and amending Ordinance 12564, Section
4 2, as amended, and K.C.C. 10.12.021 and establishing an
5 effective date.

6 STATEMENT OF FACTS

- 7 1. The solid waste division of the department of natural resources and
8 parks provides essential public services that protect human health, the
9 environment, and the quality of life in our region.
- 10 2. The solid waste division operates the Cedar Hills regional landfill,
11 eight transfer stations, and two drop boxes. It also provides innovative
12 programs to help customers prevent and recycle waste.
- 13 3. The department of natural resources and parks is proposing to change
14 the rate solid waste collection entity per-ton-rate vehicles are charged for
15 disposal of municipal solid waste from \$165.91 to \$179.18 per ton,
16 effective January 1, 2026.
- 17 4. The department of natural resources and parks is proposing to increase
18 the fixed-annual charge for disposal of municipal solid waste from
19 \$23,337,835 to \$26,838,510, effective January 1, 2026.

20 5. The impact on the average single-family household with a 32-gallon
21 weekly garbage collection service would be approximately seventy-one
22 cents per month in 2026.

23 6. The department of natural resources and parks will not increase the
24 \$13.00 per ton tip fee Surcharge for construction and demolition waste
25 generated within the county’s jurisdiction and disposed of at landfills by
26 designated facilities.

27 7. Fee increases for 2026 enable the solid waste division of the
28 department of natural resources and parks to maintain essential solid waste
29 disposal and recycling services and generate the revenue needed to carry
30 out programmatic responsibilities required under adopted policies.

31 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

32 SECTION 1. Ordinance 12564, Section 2, as amended, and K.C.C. 10.12.021 are
33 hereby amended as follows:

34 Except as otherwise provided in K.C.C. 10.04.020 and 10.12.058, all persons
35 using county-operated solid waste transfer stations, drop boxes and Cedar Hills regional
36 landfill shall pay the service fees in the following schedules:

37 A. Fees for the use of solid waste facilities with scales, excluding Cedar Hills,
38 shall be:

39 1. Solid waste disposal:

40 Fixed-rate vehicles	(((\$32.60)) <u>\$36.69</u> per entry
41 Solid waste collection entity per-ton-rate vehicles	(((\$165.91)) <u>\$179.18</u> per ton
42 Self-hauler per-ton-rate vehicles	(((\$203.81)) <u>\$229.29</u> per ton

- 43 Charitable organizations ~~(((\$156.93))~~ \$176.55 per ton
- 44 Minimum ~~(\$32.60))~~ \$36.69 per vehicle
- 45 Charitable organizations, minimum charge ~~(((\$25.12))~~ \$28.25 per entry
- 46 2. Deposit of source-separated yard waste, clean wood waste, or any
- 47 combination thereof:
- 48 Fixed-rate vehicles ~~(((\$18.00))~~ \$20.70 per entry
- 49 Per-ton-rate vehicles ~~(((\$115.00))~~ \$129.38 per ton
- 50 Minimum charge ~~(((\$18.00))~~ \$20.70 per vehicle
- 51 3. Deposit of major appliances:
- 52 Major appliances with refrigerants \$30.00 per unit
- 53 4. Deposit of mattresses:
- 54 Mattresses \$30.00 per unit
- 55 5. Qualified low-income customers shall receive fee discounts of ~~(((\$18.00))~~
- 56 \$20.00 per entry for deposit of solid waste, yard waste, clean wood waste appliances and
- 57 mattresses. Customers with mixed loads must separate and deposit materials with
- 58 sequential visits to the scale house to receive a discount on the individual waste types.
- 59 B. Each billing entity in the solid waste system will pay a share of the fixed-
- 60 annual charge. The share each billing entity pays, for each service area it serves, is
- 61 directly proportional to the total tons of municipal solid waste, deposited by solid waste
- 62 collection entities at county-operated solid waste facilities in the most recent calendar
- 63 year for which data is available, as shown in the following formula:
- 64 1. $W = X * (Y / Z)$, where:

88	Compacted wastes	((\$33.35)) <u>\$37.52</u> per cubic yard
89	Uncompacted wastes	((\$19.55)) <u>\$21.99</u> per cubic yard
90	Minimum charge	((\$18.00)) <u>\$20.70</u> per vehicle

91 3. Qualified low-income customers shall receive fee discounts of ((~~\$18.00~~))
 92 \$20.00 per entry for deposit of solid waste, yard waste, clean wood waste appliances and
 93 mattresses. Customers with mixed loads must separate and deposit materials with
 94 sequential visits to the scale house to receive a discount on the individual waste types.

95 D. Fees at the Cedar Hills regional landfill shall be:

96	Cedar Hills Regional Direct	((\$163.05)) <u>\$194.89</u> per ton
97	Solid waste collections entity per-ton-rate	
98	vehicles	((\$165.94)) <u>\$179.18</u> per ton
99	Per-ton mattress	\$1,090.00 per ton

100 Disposal by other vehicles is at the discretion of the division director.

101 E. A moderate-risk waste surcharge shall be added to all solid waste disposed by
 102 nonsolid waste collection entities using county operated solid waste facilities. The fee
 103 schedule is as follows:

104 1. For facilities with scales:

105	Per-ton-rate vehicles	\$5.84 per ton
106	Minimum charge	\$2.23 per entry
107	Fixed-rate vehicle	\$2.23 per entry

108 2. For facilities without scales:

109	Compacted	\$1.28 per cubic yard
110	Uncompacted	\$0.73 per cubic yard

111 Minimum charge \$2.23 per entry

112 Fixed-rate vehicles \$2.23 per entry

113 F. As determined by the division director, a special waste fee shall be charged for
114 special waste including asbestos-containing waste material and other wastes requiring
115 clearances in accordance with King County Board of Health Code Title 10 or rules
116 adopted by the department. The fee schedule is as follows:

117 Special waste fee ((~~\$244.57~~)) \$275.14 per ton

118 Special waste fee minimum charge ((~~\$39.09~~)) \$44.02 per entry

119 Special waste fee, extra handling ((~~\$285.33~~)) \$321.01 per ton

120 Special waste fee, extra handling

121 Minimum charge ((~~\$45.61~~)) \$51.36 per entry

122 G. In the absence of exact weights or measurements, the estimate by the division
123 director is binding upon the user.

124 H. The division director may establish fees for handling and processing of
125 recyclable materials for which no other fee has been established by ordinance. The fees

126 need not recover the full cost of handling and processing.

127 SECTION 2. This ordinance takes effect January 1, 2026.

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Girmay Zahilay, Chair

ATTEST:

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, ____.

Shannon Braddock, County Executive

Attachments: A. Proposed Solid Waste Disposal Fees for 2026

Proposed Solid Waste Disposal Fees for 2026

June 2025



King County

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III. Executive Summary

The Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) is proposing an 8 percent increase on the commercial tipping fee, a 12.5 percent increase on the self-haul tipping fee, a 12.5 percent increase on the yard waste fee, and a 15 percent increase on the fixed annual charge. These increases are necessary due to rising costs to provide essential solid waste services, including recycling and waste disposal services at transfer stations, continued operations at the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill (CHRLF), recycling and waste-prevention programs, and to fund the department's capital improvement program. The impact of King County rate increases for a typical residential customer with a 32-gallon can, after commercial haulers pass along these costs, is forecasted to be \$0.71 per month in 2026.

Thirty-seven partner cities and 1.5 million people depend on these disposal services. The proposed increase also provides for investments necessary to achieve the goals contained in the 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (Comp Plan) and the 2020 King County Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP).¹ This increase will allow DNRP to continue the services and programs customers have come to expect and rely on, and that have helped this region become one of the best for recycling in the nation.

DNRP is in a period of significant capital investment that will last several biennia and will modernize aging solid waste infrastructure, which will result in increased efficiency and opportunities for diverting recyclable materials from the landfill. These capital improvements will help facilitate shifting the solid waste division's (division) paradigm from solid waste management to one that prioritizes the recycling and reuse of materials. This proposed rate increase would support DNRP making an estimated investment of \$865 million for critical infrastructure projects between now and 2031. These investments will yield long-term financial benefits for rate payers, boost the local economy, and reduce the impact of waste on the environment. The department is also investing in its Re+ Plan, which is aimed at diverting or recycling the 70 percent of useful materials that are currently being thrown away.² King County's goal is to achieve zero waste by 2030, which will provide significant environmental and financial benefit to the region. This proposed rate increase funds these key initiatives while also positioning the department to maintain a smooth and steady rate path in future years, as requested by partner cities.

As rate pressure from the growth in capital spending has increased, the division has been exploring ways to mitigate the impact to rate payers. One approach is to defer appropriate projects into the future to more evenly distribute spending over several years rather than have a spike in spending, with the associated high debt service. One such project is the Permanent Facilities Relocation, which would build a new permanent maintenance facility to replace facilities that will be demolished during the development of Area 9 at the CHRLF. The project was originally estimated to spend more than \$100 million through 2029, but is being deferred to the early 2030s.

DNRP reached a settlement in March 2025 with the owner of the renewable natural gas processing facility at the landfill that will allow the County to acquire the plant later this year. The acquisition would enable the County to put the landfill gas it collects to beneficial use, displacing virgin fossil fuel extraction, and will generate additional revenue that can offset rate increases.

¹ [2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan](#); [2020 King County Strategic Climate Action Plan](#).

² Additional information about Re+ can be found on the County's [Re+ website](#).

The division is planning no increases in existing operating expenses beyond inflation. Any emergent needs will be funded out of existing outlays. Minimal growth in operating expenses will help mitigate the upward pressure from capital growth.

The overarching goal of the fiscal planning work for this 2026 rate proposal has been to maximize value for customers while mitigating financial impacts on rate payers. This rate proposal follows months of partner engagement that began in January 2025. The department’s advisory committees – the Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee (MSWMAC) and Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) – expressed support of a rate increase that would allow the department to maintain current service levels, fund key investments in climate and environmental programs, and fulfill the commitments made in the Comp Plan.³

The proposed increase for 2026 is consistent with the projection from the 2025 Rate Proposal, which had forecasted that a similar level of increase would be necessary to fund the capital and operating expenditures, meet the department’s commitments to regional partners, successfully implement actions in the Comp Plan and SCAP, and fulfill the mandate to maintain essential services.

IV. Background

Department Overview: The King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) works in support of sustainable and livable communities and a clean and healthy natural environment. Its mission is to foster environmental stewardship and strengthen communities by providing regional parks, protecting the region’s water, air, land, and natural habitats, and reducing, safely disposing of, and creating resources from wastewater and solid waste.

DNRP’s Solid Waste Division (SWD, or the division) is guided by its vision to achieve zero waste of resources and enhance the environment through collaboration and innovation.⁴ The department operates eight transfer stations, two rural drop boxes, and the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill (CHRLF), which is the only operational landfill in the county. DNRP serves residents and business owners in unincorporated King County and 37 cities throughout the county, except the cities of Seattle and Milton, which are part of separate solid waste systems. The department’s solid waste mission is to “deliver value to its customers and stakeholders, and to continuously improve waste prevention, resource recovery, and waste disposal.”⁵ The DNRP solid waste rate supports ongoing services and operations as well as new investments in solid waste infrastructure and capital projects to serve its customers.

Key Historical Context: Historically, the department proposed rate increases on a biennial basis, but DNRP has been proposing annual increases over the past several years, typically ranging between 5 percent and 15 percent. During development of the 2019-2020 solid waste rate, interested parties and partner cities requested that DNRP take a more incremental approach to rate setting, to create a more predictable path for rate increases. Because of the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, the division deferred the 2021 rate increase, in consultation with the advisory committees, but returned to annual increases in 2022. The preference for more incremental adjustment has been reiterated in each

³ More information about the advisory committees can be found [here](#) and the Comp Plan can be found [here](#).

⁴ DNRP has rebranded these [zero waste of resources efforts as Re+](#).

⁵ More about the Solid Waste Division is found [here](#).

subsequent round of rate proposal discussions. The previous rate increase was a one-year adjustment for 2025. The current proposal covers 2026. The division expects to ask for additional rate increase in 2027, after a comprehensive examination of its revenue requirement and consideration of additional options for rate mitigation.

The primary drivers of the increased costs of services provided at transfer stations are the funds needed for capital projects, inflation, higher bond rates, and the ongoing cost to meet environmental and safety controls at the CHRLF and the closed landfill properties managed by the County.

Figure 1 shows the history of basic fee rate increases since 2021, along with the proposed increase for 2026 and projections through 2031. By staggering rate increases over one-year increments, they are more gradual over time. This avoids a single large rate increase over several biennia. Figure 1 shows that the projected rate increases following 2022 are expected to be greater than typical annual increases due to continued implementation of major capital projects approved of in the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (Comp Plan), such as building the South County Recycling and Transfer Station (SCRTS), which is now under construction, building the Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station (NERTS), and developing Area 9 at the CHRLF.⁶ SCRTS, NERTS, and extending the life of the landfill—the County’s least costly garbage disposal option – were approved by the cities through the Comp Plan adoption process. While these investments carry significant costs, they remain popular with MSWAC and SWAC. MSWAC and SWAC have provided letters, which accompany this proposal.

Starting in 2024, a change was made to the way disposal fees are charged to commercial haulers. Instead of the basic fee, commercial haulers now pay a commercial per-ton tip fee and a fixed annual charge (FAC). The commercial fee and FAC together are designed to collect the same amount of revenue previously collected solely through the basic fee. However, because the FAC is a fixed value that does not vary based on tonnage, it is a more stable revenue stream.

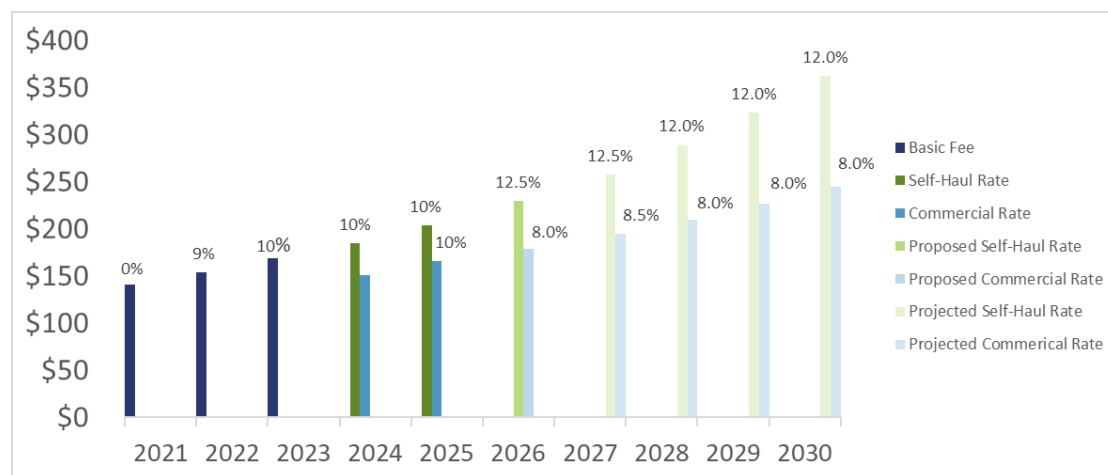


Figure 1: Overview of Basic Fee/Self-Haul Rate Increases⁷

⁶ Area 9 is the capital project which will develop a new and final waste cell at the landfill. This project is expected to add eight years of useful life to the landfill.

⁷ The rate increase percentage shown for 2021-2023 represents a change in the basic fee. In 2024 and beyond, due to the revised rate structure, the percentage increase shown represents an increase in the self-haul fee.

Key Current Context: The proposed rate and the projected rate path for the commercial tip fee, the self-haul rate, and the FAC are listed below:

Fee/Rate	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Self-Haul Rate	\$203.81	\$229.29	\$257.95	\$288.90	\$323.57	\$362.40	\$405.88
Commercial Rate	\$165.91	\$179.18	\$194.41	\$209.97	\$226.76	\$244.90	\$264.50
Fixed Annual Charge	\$23.3M	\$26.8M	\$30.9M	\$35.5M	\$40.7M	\$43.1M	\$45.1M

Figure 2: Proposed and Projected Rates, 2026-2031

Landfill Gas Processing

Historically, DNRP has earned several million dollars a year in revenues from the sale of landfill gas (LFG) and the accompanying environmental attributes associated with converting LFG to pipeline-quality natural gas.⁸ In 2023, those revenues essentially ceased as the processing plant, owned by Bio Energy Washington (BEW), suspended operations. In March 2025, the County reached a settlement agreement with BEW that would include acquisition of the plant by the County. The County plans to resume operations after purchase, and the landfill gas revenues would be used to cover the cost of operations and debt service for the acquisition. The net income from the processing plant will provide additional revenue that would benefit rate payers.

Capital Spending and Cost of Borrowing

DNRP has entered a period of heightened capital investment. Between 2025 and 2031, SWD forecasts spending approximately \$865 million on capital projects, including SCRTS, NERTS, expanding landfill capacity, and making significant upgrades to its landfill infrastructure. The pandemic recovery was accompanied by significant supply chain disruptions and permitting delays, which pushed capital spending on many projects into the present. Unfortunately, the cost of these capital expenditures has grown significantly over the last few years due to inflation and now higher interest rates on bonds issued to fund this work. Additional details on interest and inflation impacts are included below in the Financial Projections section of this report.

One way to approach this increase in capital spending is to defer appropriate projects into the future to more evenly distribute spending over several years rather than have a spike in spending, with the associated high debt service. One such project is the Permanent Facilities Relocation. This project would build a new permanent facility to replace the existing maintenance facilities that will be demolished to make room for development of Area 9 at the CHRLF. The project was originally estimated to spend over \$100 million through 2029. The division revisited this decision and has chosen to pause the project and search for other potential alternatives that meet future business needs. The pause would defer spending on this project out into the 2030s.

⁸ The division has primarily monetized the environmental attributes as Renewable Identification Numbers (RINs), which are credits used in the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) program managed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Parties needing to comply with RFS regulations purchase RINs, which are registered and regulated by the EPA.

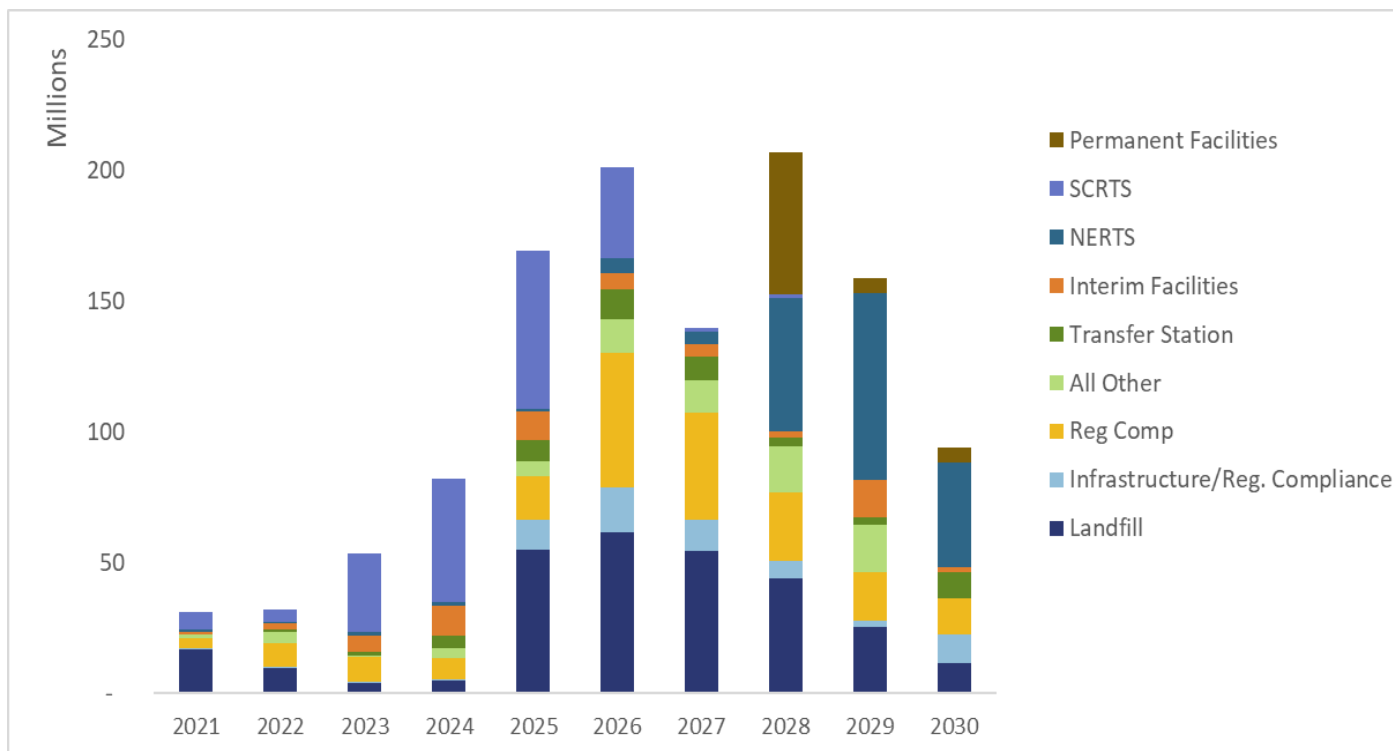


Figure 3: SWD Projected Capital Project Spending, 2025-2030⁹

Interlocal Agreement Extensions

An additional factor putting upward pressure on rates are the Interlocal Agreements (ILAs) DNRP has with 37 cities in the King County disposal system. These ILAs are set to expire in 2040, and with them the guaranteed revenue backing needed to issue long-term general obligation bonds to support the division's capital improvement program. In 2022, partner cities indicated they did not want to begin ILA extension discussions until after a decision has been made on what will be done with waste after the closing of the CHRLF, expected to occur around 2040. Without ILA extensions past 2040, debt currently issued for capital projects will have ever-shorter repayment periods that will increase rates. The County will continue to engage with its city partners to confirm a timeframe for the extensions and will also look at other means of mitigating the debt impact of the ILA term.

DNRP has already begun work with consultants, partner cities, and advisory groups to update the 2019 Comp Plan, the process through which the long-term disposal decision will be made. It is currently estimated that the updated Comp Plan will be submitted to the Council in early 2028 and adopted by mid-2029. Seeking extensions to the ILAs will occur in the latter part of that process.

Re+, Tonnage, and Rates

As outlined in the King County Code, it is the County's goal to "achieve zero waste of resources by 2030 through maximum feasible and cost-effective prevention, reuse, and reduction of solid wastes going into its landfills and other processing facilities."¹⁰ In 2022, DNRP published the Re+ Plan, which outlines the primary actions the County and its partners (cities, haulers, businesses, etc.) will take to achieve the zero waste of resources goal. However, successful implementation of this plan could significantly

⁹ Project spending shown is unadjusted for the accomplishment rate.

¹⁰ [King County Code 10.14.020](#).

reduce landfill-bound municipal solid waste (MSW) tons and associated revenue, meaning rates will need to increase.

Figure 4 shows two forecasts for total MSW, in thousands of tons, that the County anticipates would be generated over the next 10 years. The baseline forecast assumes no Re+ actions are taken, while the Re+ forecast shows significant diversion of MSW.

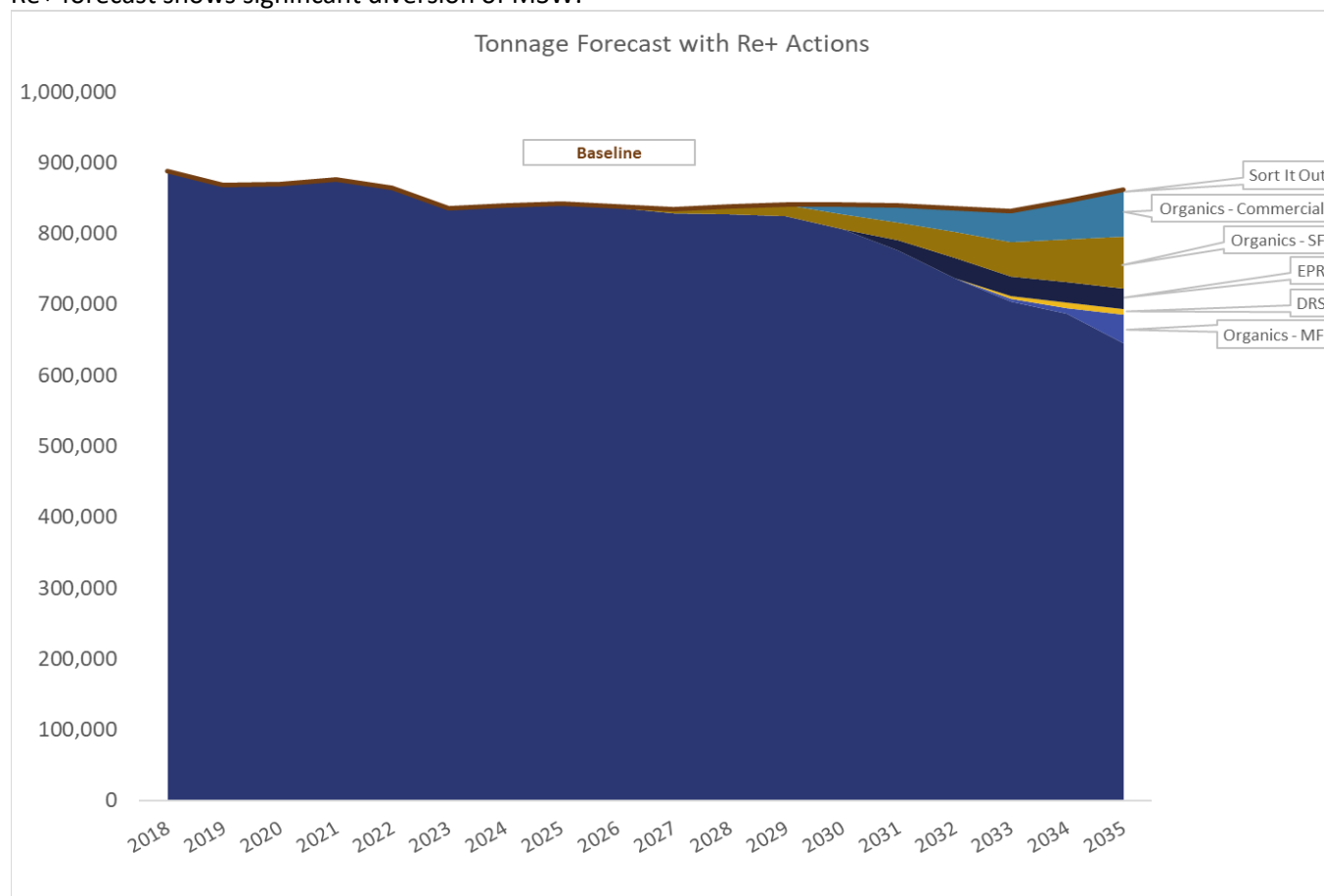


Figure 4: Tonnage History and Forecast, 2018-2035

SF=single-family; EPR=extended producer responsibility; DRS=deposit return system (for beverage containers); MF=multi-family

The Re+ forecast includes recoverable organics diversion, including food waste diversion resulting from the statewide organics legislation passed in 2022 as HB 1799; reduction due to extended producer responsibility and deposit return system legislation (anticipated in 2031); expanded recycling efforts at transfer stations; and new sorting technologies such as mixed-waste processing.¹¹ These estimates are based on the 2022 Waste Characterization Study, comparisons with historical DNRP efforts and similar programs in other jurisdictions, and consultant studies.¹²

Report Methodology: DNRP gathered data from various internal and external systems, including from the cashing system used at solid waste facilities for tonnage and revenue information (Paradigm), King County accounting and budget systems for expenditure information (Oracle), and the PRISM

¹¹ [HB 1799 – 2021-22](#)

¹² [2022 Waste Characterization Study](#)

database, which provides expenditure forecasts for capital projects. Ideas and additional information were gathered through internal DNRP collaborations and from various partners. Briefings with the DNRP solid waste advisory committees – the Metropolitan Solid Waste Advisory Committee (MSWAC) and the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) – started in January 2025 and continued monthly through development of this proposal. The committees provided input on a variety of topics, including communications, rate options, and capital spending. Letters from the MSWAC and SWAC are included in this legislative package. This proposal was also developed with input and direction from the County’s Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget.

The methodology used in formulating the rate proposal is explained in detail below.

V. Report Requirements

A. Rate Model Methodology

Revenue generated by the rates charged supports all the services provided by SWD, including:

- The garbage (MSW) transfer system
- Disposal of MSW and Special Waste at the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill
- Recycling and yard waste collection at most transfer stations
- Hazardous and moderate-risk waste collection (at transfer stations)
- Waste-reduction programs
- Education and outreach

The vast majority of revenues to the Solid Waste Fund are comprised of disposal fees and the FAC. Three primary variables drive the revenue received from disposal fees: 1) the FAC, 2) tonnage, and 3) the tipping fees charged for tonnage. When tonnage decreases, revenue is reduced. Revenue generated by the rates must align with costs to ensure services are available for customers and jurisdictions.

To align revenue and costs, the cost to provide services (also referred to as the revenue target, revenue requirements, or expenditures) is determined by analyzing SWD’s spending patterns; updating assumptions about inflation and interest rates; factoring in changes in central rates; reviewing proposals for budget adds and reductions; identifying the level of reserve cash to maintain each year; and examining a host of other factors that influence the cost of solid waste services.¹³

Next, the amount of the FAC must be determined. This is done through a cost-of-service analysis at the customer class level. A customer class is “a grouping of solid waste customers with similar usage characteristics who are served at similar costs.”¹⁴ The cost-of-service analysis looks at the cost to provide services to each customer class, including both disposal and non-disposal related costs.

For example, to provide disposal service to commercial haulers, the County employs scale house and transfer station operators, drivers, mechanics, and landfill crews, and it builds, operates, and maintains

¹³ The Solid Waste Fund has three reserves. The rainy-day reserve, recession reserve, and rate stabilization reserve. Each reserve account has rules for the amount of cash that must be held in reserve and when those monies can be spent. More information about reserves is provided in Section C of this report and in Appendix B.

¹⁴ [FCS report](#), Section V.B. Solid Waste Classes of Service

transfer stations and the landfill. A portion of each of these costs is allocated to each of the customer classes based on their usage of that resource, usually determined by the number of tons or transactions a class generates.

Non-disposal costs include expenses, such as administration, regional planning, Re+ actions, and regulatory compliance. The FAC is based on the commercial haulers' portion of the non-disposal services costs. For example, if the sum of all non-disposal costs totaled \$100 million dollars, and the commercial customer class share of those costs was 30 percent, the FAC would be set at \$30 million dollars.

Nearly all other Solid Waste Fund revenues (other than the FAC) come from tonnage received at transfer stations. The remaining "other" revenues include rents on County-owned property, interest incomes, grant funding, and landfill gas revenues (currently zero). Once the FAC and other revenues are subtracted from the overall cost of service, or revenue requirement, the remaining cost must be divided by the projected tonnage to set the per-ton rates. At a high level, the relationship between the cost to provide services (expenditures), revenue, tonnage, and rates can be characterized as shown in the equation below:

$$\text{Expenditures} + \text{Reserves} = \frac{\text{Revenues Required} - (\text{FAC} + \text{Other Revenues})}{\text{Tonnage}} = \text{Per Ton Rate}$$

B. Proposed Fees for 2026

Per Ton Fees	2025	2026
Commercial Tipping Fee	\$ 165.91	\$179.18
Self-Haul Tipping Fee	\$203.81	\$229.29
Regional Direct	\$ 163.05	\$194.89
Special Waste	\$ 244.57	\$275.14
Yard Waste	\$ 115.00	\$129.38
Fixed Fee (in millions)	2025	2026
Fixed Annual Charge (FAC)	\$ 23.34	\$26.84
Curbside Impact	2025	2026
Avg monthly increase ¹⁵	\$ 0.93	\$0.97

Figure 5: 2025 Adopted Rates and 2026 Proposed Rates

Solid waste customers and jurisdictions have historically asked for and have come to expect some measure of the impact a rate increase proposal would have on the average retail rate of residents' waste collection bills. This is referred to as "curbside impact." The curbside impact measure identified in the table above is the average monthly curbside financial impact for all residents in the County's service area. This calculation is inclusive of all can sizes and based on average household garbage generation by weight. Notably, because all cities have different starting rates and distribute the disposal costs across their customer bases differently, the impact shown in this table will likely not match the actual curbside impact in any given city. However, it should be accurate in the aggregate across the entire SWD service area.

¹⁵ See Appendix A for additional information on the curbside impact calculation.

Fee	2025	2026
Self-Haul Garbage*	\$32.60	\$36.69
Yard/Wood Waste	\$18.00	\$20.70

*Fee shown is pre-tax and without a Hazardous Waste Fee surcharge.¹⁶

Figure 6: Proposed Minimum Fees for Self-Haul Garbage and Yard/Wood Waste

The department also charges a minimum fee on self-haul and yard/wood waste charges on weights of 320 pounds or less. Some vehicles, such as passenger vehicles, are automatically charged at the minimum fee.^{17, 18}

In 2026, the division is proposing to increase the Cleanup LIFT low-income customer discount from \$18 to \$20, roughly 50 percent of the minimum fee (including taxes and fees) for garbage transactions.¹⁹ Since the program began in 2019, the County has provided over 75,000 discounts to self-haul customers. In 2024, approximately 3.3 percent of all self-haul transactions were Cleanup LIFT transactions, up from 3.14 percent in 2023 and 2.7 percent in 2022.

Construction and Demolition Fee

The King County Construction and Demolition (C&D) Materials Diversion Program is funded through a \$13-per-ton fee on C&D waste sent to the landfill. Revenues collected through this fee can only be spent on expenses related to the handling and disposal of C&D.²⁰ Although there is no C&D rate increase proposed for 2026, the program anticipates future revenue increases by smaller, more incremental changes to the rate over time. King County contracts with C&D waste transfer and processing facilities to manage these materials, requiring those facilities to pay the C&D fee. C&D materials that are recycled or go to beneficial use are not subject to the fee.

C. Financial Projections: Expenditures, Reserves, and Revenue

The expenditure, reserve and revenue assumptions used to develop this proposal are detailed in this section.

¹⁶ The King County Board of Health (KCBH) sets the moderate-risk waste surcharge amount that funds hazardous waste programs throughout the county. The KCBH is not recommending any increases to this fee for 2026.

¹⁷ [KCC 10.40.020 NN](#) defines fixed-rate vehicles.

¹⁸ The minimum fee is typically set at 16 percent of the self-haul per-ton fee and assumes the customer is bringing 320 pounds or less to the station for disposal (320 pounds is 16 percent of one ton).

¹⁹ For self-haul customers, the County offers a discount for low-income individuals on their transaction if they can provide an Orca LIFT, Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, or Medicaid card.

²⁰ [KCC 4A.670.300](#) establishes the value of the fee and [KCC 10.30.050](#) establishes approved uses of the revenue.

As expressed through the adopted 2019 Comp Plan, it is the policy of King County to achieve zero waste of resources by 2030, replace transfer stations built in the 1960s, and maximize the life of the landfill. The new transfer stations will expand access to recycling and hazardous waste services, reduce wait times, and increase safety. The department evaluated existing SWD programs and projects to ensure alignment with the Comp Plan's strategic goals and commitments. DNRP identified several investments that would fulfill or strengthen these goals. In addition, several key factors contributed to increases in the revenue requirement for 2026. These are outlined below.

Economic Uncertainty: The county is facing economic conditions that could reduce revenues and increase costs. While inflation has cooled over the last year compared with 2022 and 2023, it may be exacerbated by increases in tariffs imposed by the U.S. on imported goods. This prolonged period of economic uncertainty has also reduced consumer confidence to its lowest point in more than a decade.²¹ These factors and other concerns about the economy could reduce expected tonnage and the attendant revenues; historically, economic downturns have correlated with decreased waste volumes delivered to the system. At the same time, economic uncertainty, declining consumer confidence, and inflation all put upward pressure on bond rates as the county enters a period of significant capital spending on solid waste infrastructure.

Debt service vs. operating growth: One trend that will emerge over the next six to eight years is the ratio of debt service to operating costs as the driving force behind rate increase proposals and as a proportion of SWD's budget. Growth in capital costs is largely a function of implementing the actions called for in the 2019 Comp Plan. These include building the SCRTS and NERTS facilities and maximizing the life of the landfill. Capital costs are also disproportionately larger due to the ILA time constraint on debt discussed above.

Capital Equipment Replacement Program Transfer. The department maintains reserves equal to 10 percent of the value of its rolling stock in the Capital Equipment Replacement Program (CERP) to ensure adequate funding is available to replace vehicles and other equipment that has reached the end of its useful life. The division has reviewed planned spending levels relative to the current fund balance and is proposing to increase its transfer to the fund by \$1 million, or \$7.5 million annually, for 2026 and 2027. The increase reflects planned purchasing and will better allow the division to absorb impacts from tariffs, which are expected to increase equipment costs substantially. The transfer is projected to increase incrementally in 2028 to \$9 million, and to escalate further in the outyears.

²¹ *New York Times*, March 25, 2025. "Consumer Confidence is Tumbling as Financial Concerns Mount"



Environmental: The regulatory requirements for waste disposal and landfill management are complex and continuously evolving. SWD has 37 operating permits and works closely with multiple regulatory bodies to ensure its compliance. In recent years, the frequency and intensity for testing, monitoring, and reporting requirements have increased, resulting in increased workload for staff. The division has made efforts to increase its capacity, including replacing term-limited positions with full-time employees, and will continue to do so as requirements warrant. Recently, the Washington State Department of Ecology issued regulations to improve control of methane emissions from landfills. In response to increased sampling requirements, SWD has hired two new landfill gas utility operators, and a new Engineer III position will be filled later this year to oversee the reporting and compliance work associated with the new regulations.

Capital Projects: The department continues to invest in major projects from the Comp Plan. These include the SCRTS, which is currently under construction; the NERTS, which will be built on the existing Houghton Transfer Station site; maximizing

the life and capacity of the CHRLF; and upgrading the landfill gas capture system there. The new transfer stations will expand access to recycling and hazardous waste services, reduce wait times, increase safety, and reduce or eliminate many of the environmental impacts of the older stations they are replacing. The long-term rate path assumes the investment will be needed in new sorting and processing technology, such as mixed waste processing and potential co-digestion that will be needed to reach Re+ goals.

The potential economic impact of the division's projected capital spending for 2025 and 2026 is estimated to be over 2,000 new jobs, according to the Washington State Office of Financial Management's Input-Output Model.²²

Equity and Social Justice (ESJ): The department is currently developing a new low-income discount program for curbside solid waste services in areas of the county regulated by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC).²³ SWD will assess household eligibility and work with haulers to

²² This figure was calculated using Washington State Office of Financial Management's [Input-Output Model](#).

²³ In accordance with state law [RCW 81.77.020](#) and [RCW 36.58.040](#), counties are prohibited from providing curbside garbage collection services. Legal authority for regulating collection is shared primarily between the state, acting through the UTC, and the cities. The UTC sets and adjusts rates and requires compliance with the state and local solid waste management plans and related ordinances.

ensure discounts are applied to eligible residents, as mandated by state law.²⁴ This requires close collaboration with the hauling partners and the UTC to adjust rates as needed without significantly impacting overall rates.

Operating Expenditure Increases: The division is planning no increases in existing operating expenses beyond inflation. Minimal growth in operating expenses will help mitigate the upward pressure from capital growth.

Reserves

The department has three reserve funds. The Rainy Day fund is required by County policy and is intended to cover unexpected expenses. The Recession Reserve was established by SWD to mitigate revenue losses from reduced tonnage. The Rate Stabilization Reserve is used to mitigate future rate increases caused by spikes in forecasted spending, such as those from large capital projects.

Rainy Day Reserve: The Rainy-Day Fund level is equivalent to 30 days of operating expenses. In 2025, the division intends to draw down the reserve by \$5 million for the legal settlement of claims with BEW. The division expects to replenish this reserve by the end of 2026.

Recession Reserve: The Recession Reserve is meant to provide a buffer to rate payers in the event of a recession. This reserve is typically equivalent to 5 percent of annual disposal revenue and is intended to be drawn down over the course of two years. After a period of recovery, the department gradually replenishes the reserve. With the onset of a recession in 2020, the department fully drew down the reserve and subsequently fully replenished it to 5 percent of annual disposal revenues at the end of 2024. In 2025, SWD is projecting that the reserve will be \$5.5 million, below the 5 percent threshold. The division has downgraded its expected revenue forecast for the year, anticipating diminished economic activity as tariff impacts become more widely felt. Currently, the division is expecting to fully replenish the reserve by the end of the 2026 and 2027 biennium, resulting in approximately \$8 million in reserve to mitigate against future recessionary impacts.

Rate Stabilization Reserve: The department has been slowly drawing down the Rate Stabilization Reserve over the past five years in order to mitigate rate increases. It is expected that this reserve will be fully exhausted in 2025 and 2026. The reserve will begin to replenish starting in 2027, and outyear projections show the balance should increase to over \$10 million by 2031.

²⁴ [RCW 81.77.195](#)

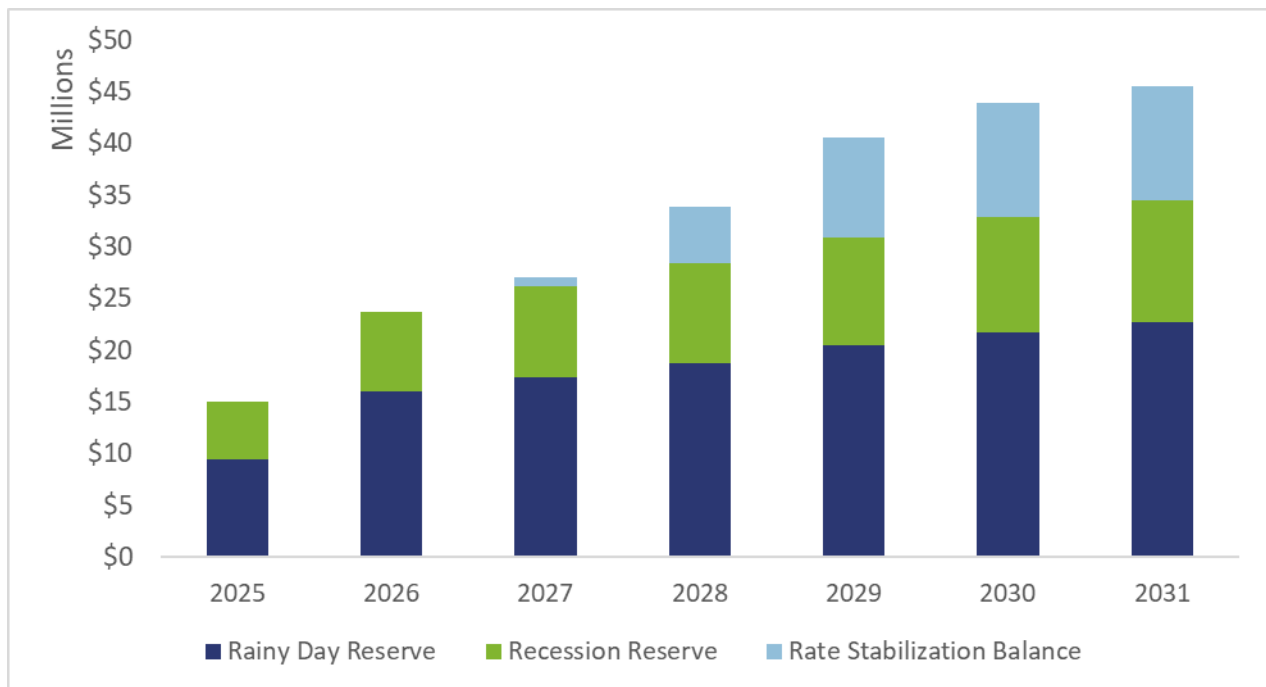


Figure 7: Solid Waste Operating Fund Balance, 2025-2031

Revenues

Disposal Fee Revenue: DNRP is proposing an increase in its tonnage-based fees for garbage and the FAC. Historically, the department had proposed rate increases on a biennial basis, but DNRP has been proposing annual increases over the past several years. Smaller, more frequent increases are preferred by cities to minimize the burden on rate payers and create a smoother, more predictable situation for customers.

The description and revenue projections for each fee are summarized as follows:

- **Commercial Fee:** The Commercial Fee is the per-ton fee charged to commercial hauler customers disposing of MSW at transfer facilities and to curbside collection vehicles at the CHRLF. The department is proposing to change this fee from \$165.91 to \$179.18 in 2026.
- **Fixed-Annual Charge:** This was a new charge implemented in January 2024. The department proposes increasing the FAC from \$23,337,835 to \$26,838,510 in 2026.

NOTE: The Commercial Fee and the FAC are both disposal charges. Together, they are projected to increase revenues in the 2026 budget by approximately \$11 million above what they would be if there were no rate increases.

- **Self-haul Fee:** The self-haul fee is a per-ton fee charged to individual customers disposing of MSW at transfer facilities. All loads greater than 320 pounds pay the per-ton fee, and customers with less than 320 pounds of waste are charged the minimum fee. The department is proposing to raise the self-haul fee from \$203.81 per ton in 2025 to \$229.29 per ton in 2026. This increase is expected to bring in \$4 million more in revenues in 2026.

- **Regional Direct Fee:** This is a discounted fee charged to contract commercial collection companies that haul solid waste to the CHRLF in transfer trailers from their own transfer stations and processing facilities, thus bypassing County transfer stations. Regional Direct tonnage is typically composed of nonrecyclable material removed from recyclables during processing. Regional direct fees are typically set at 85 percent of the self-haul fee and, accordingly, this fee is increasing from \$163.05 per ton in 2025 to \$194.89 per ton in 2026.
- **Special Waste:** This fee is charged for certain materials that require special handling, record keeping, or both, such as asbestos-containing materials and contaminated soil. The fee is typically set at 120 percent of the self-haul rate, and thus would increase from \$244.57 per ton in 2025 to \$275.14 per ton in 2026.
- **Yard/Wood Waste Fee:** This fee is for separated yard waste and clean wood delivered to facilities that have separate collection areas for these materials. To keep pace with increasing costs, under this proposal the fee would increase from \$115.00 in 2025 to \$129.38 in 2026. If approved, these increases are expected to generate approximately \$250,000 in additional revenue over the next biennium.
- **Construction and Demolition Fee:** This fee is collected at designated C&D collection facilities on each ton of C&D waste that is sent to the landfill and then remitted to the County. It does not apply to C&D waste that is recycled. The fee was set at \$13 per ton in 2025 and the fee will remain unchanged for 2026.

Other Revenues: DNRP collects revenues in other ways not related to disposal.

- **Rental Income:** The department generates additional income through rental income at Harbor Island and other leases for the use of small spaces for cell phone towers and the like.
- **HHW Reimbursement:** DNRP receives reimbursement income from the Hazardous Waste Management Program in exchange for providing household hazardous waste collection services.
- **Seattle Residual Payments:** In 2024, the County and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) signed an ILA regarding Regional Direct tons attributable to the King County Solid Waste Service Area that are sorted at material recovery facilities located in Seattle. These tons originate as garbage incorrectly placed in recycling bins (alongside good recyclable material) collected within the King County system, before being sorted out from the recyclable materials at facilities within Seattle city limits. The agreement between DNRP and SPU states that the disputed tons will stay within the SPU disposal system, but SPU will pay DNRP a portion of the disposal fee revenue they collect on this material. The department estimates that the County will receive about \$600,000 in revenue for these tons.
- **Sale of Landfill Natural Gas:** Previously, landfill gas was captured at CHRLF and converted to pipeline-quality natural gas by BEW. It was then sold to Puget Sound Energy, and the revenue shared between BEW and the department. As discussed above, those revenues essentially ceased in 2023, as BEW suspended operations. In March 2025, the County reached a settlement agreement with BEW that would include acquisition of the plant by the County. The County is expected to complete the sale by August 29, 2025, and the department plans to contract with a third party to oversee operations. The exact timeline for resumption of regular operations is not known at this time, but for financial planning purposes, the division is assuming no revenue generation in 2025. In the 2026-2027 biennium, the department expects to net \$5 million in revenue to rate payers, including debt service, operating expenses, and settlement costs.

The most recent total revenue projected in the rate model for 2026 is \$233.3 million. Revenue from disposal fees is projected to be \$162.8 million. The FAC is set at \$26.8 million, and an additional \$43.1 million is projected from other revenue sources.

D. Rate Determination

Each budget period, DNRP needs to raise revenue equal to its projected expenditures and required reserves. The amount of revenue required can be buffered by the existing balance in the Rate Stabilization Reserve but, at the end of each budget cycle, the department must have enough cash on hand to fund its required reserves.

The County's solid waste system is in the early stages of redefining how solid waste is managed. The 2019 Comp Plan and the 2020 SCAP guide this transformation. The NERTS and SCRTS projects will replace aging infrastructure and expand access to recycling. Investments in Re+ will reduce the County's carbon footprint, including new technologies that will reduce waste and expand processing capacity of recyclable materials, as well as investments in capturing landfill gas through the building of new capture wells. So, too, will construction projects at County-managed closed landfills and the building of electric charging infrastructure in preparation for the electrification of the department's fleet of vehicles. Re+ activities and the Area 9 project will expand the life of the landfill and provide time for the County to decide on and implement a long-term disposal alternative to be implemented once the landfill closes.

Completing these projects will be a key part of the County's effort to combat climate change and reduce waste, but success requires sustained funding. The department's capital spending plan is estimated to need \$865 million in funding between 2025 and 2031, leading to a significant increase in debt service.

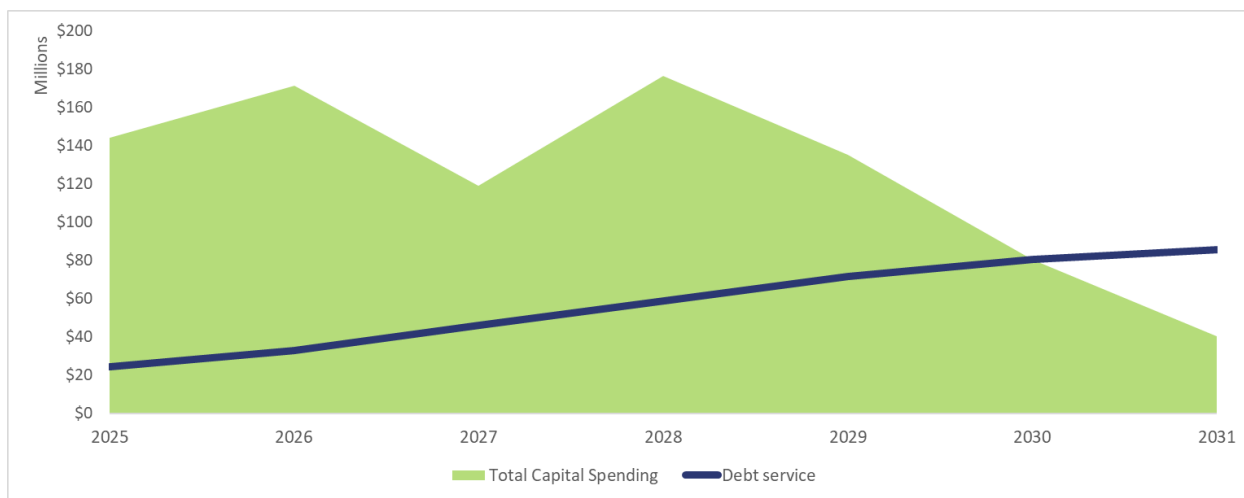


Figure 88: Projected Capital Spending and Debt Service, 2025-2031

Figure 8 shows the projected capital investment across the solid waste system over the next five years and the corresponding increase in projected debt service costs.

Ultimately, the department has sought to balance economic uncertainty in the short term with the long-term financial health of the department and the environmental health of the region. DNRP believes that its current proposal strikes a solid balance between these important goals while ensuring continued progress on regional commitments to system partners.

VI. Conclusion/Next Steps

DNRP is in a period of significant capital investment that will last several biennia and reorient the outlook from a waste management perspective to a materials management leadership perspective. This proposed rate increase would support DNRP making an investment in critical infrastructure projects between now and 2031. Investments in infrastructure like the SCRTS, extending the life of the landfill, and improving the efficiency of landfill gas capture, to name a few, will yield long-term financial benefits for rate payers, boost the local economy, and reduce the impact of waste on the environment.

Spending has been prioritized to focus on maintaining delivery of essential services and delivering on the commitments made in the Comp Plan and the SCAP. Re+ could create hundreds of new green jobs while the spending on the major capital projects in the Comp Plan (transfer stations and maximization of the landfill) is expected to create about 2,000 new jobs, according to the Washington State Office of Financial Management's Input-Output Model.

The focus on the revenue side has been one of mitigating the impact of increased pace of capital spending. The economic turbulence caused by inflation and higher borrowing costs is impacting the cost of operations and capital spending, as well as resulting in a lower tonnage forecast than expected. During this rate-setting process, the department has been sensitive to the needs of its customers and other partners and worked to reduce the need for rate increases. Despite increased cost pressure in King County's capital program and reduced tonnage due largely to high interest rates, DNRP has been able to maintain a rate increase proposal consistent with projections from the last two rate cycles – all while preserving essential services and providing investments needed to reach the County's strategic goals and commitments.

VII. Appendices

Appendix A–Curbside Impact Calculation

Appendix B–Rate Methodology

Appendix C–Tonnage Forecast Through 2031

Appendix D–Summary of Rate Model Through 2031

Appendix A—Curbside Impact Calculation

Solid waste customers and jurisdictions have historically asked for and come to expect a measurement of the impact a rate increase proposal would have on residents' waste collection bills, referred to as "curbside impact." To fill this need, the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) created a curbside impact measure that generates an average monthly curbside impact for all residents in the county's service area, based on amount of garbage generated by a typical household. It will not match the actual curbside impact in any given city because all cities have different starting rates and distribute the disposal costs across their customer bases differently. However, it should be accurate in the aggregate across the entire Solid Waste Division (SWD) service area. In addition, SWD has gathered rate data and modeled the impact in different jurisdictions for the most common can size, the 32/35-gallon cart. This provides more context for the potential variability of impacts across the service areas.

Fixed Annual Charge	\$26,838,510
Forecast for Commercial Tons	630,734
FAC/Forecasted Tons	\$42.55
Commercial Tipping Fee	\$179.18
Estimated CCR	\$221.73

Table 1: Calculation of Compound Commercial Rate

Currently, most city/hauler contracts split the rates they charge their customers into two parts: the service and disposal components. The service component reflects the cost of collection, while the disposal component represents disposal charges paid to SWD for the disposal of waste transported to the County's landfill. Historically, city contracts adjusted the disposal component by the rate of increase in the County's tipping fees. With the implementation of the rate restructure, cities and haulers had to adjust the contract terms to account for changes in both the tipping fee and the allocation of the fixed annual charge (FAC). Most cities and haulers elected to use a compound commercial rate (CCR), which blended the tipping fee and FAC into a single rate, which could be used to adjust the garbage component.

The estimated CCR in the previous rate cycle was \$202.72, so the rate of increase in 2026 rate would be 9.4 percent. Inclusive of all can sizes, a typical household in King County is estimated to generate about 102 pounds of garbage per month. Using the CCR, and based on the average garbage generation by weight, the estimated monthly impact of the 2026 rate increase would be \$0.97.

The curbside impact to customers varies considerably between cart sizes and collection contract/ Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC)-service areas. To model the potential impact, the division gathered rate data across the service area for the most common residential can size, the 32/35-gallon cart. The amount attributable to the disposal portion of the monthly service cost was not available for all contracts and the UTC areas. The division compiled the most recent available contract data and found that, on average, 26 percent of the cost was attributable to the disposal fee. This factor was then used across the monthly service cost to estimate the monthly increase. On

average, a 32/35-gallon customer would be expected to see a \$0.71 increase per month due to the proposed 2026 rate increase.

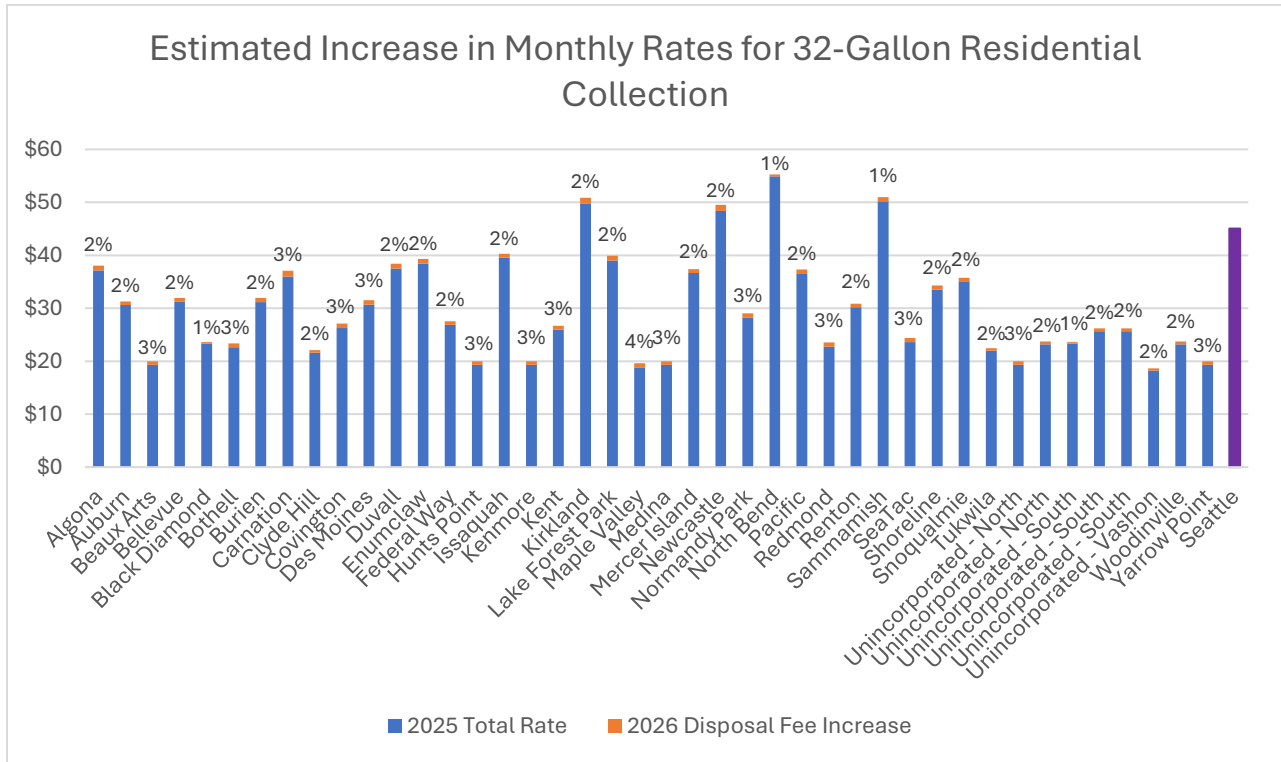


Figure 1: Comparison of the Impact of the Proposed Rate Increase on Monthly Solid Waste Service Fees

City	2025 Estimated Monthly Cost	2025 Estimated Disposal Component	2026 Estimated Monthly Increase	Estimation Method
Algona	\$37.17	\$9.03	\$0.86	3
Auburn	\$30.59	\$7.43	\$0.71	3
Beaux Arts	\$19.31	\$7.03	\$0.67	5
Bellevue	\$31.25	\$7.58	\$0.72	1
Black Diamond	\$23.28	\$3.17	\$0.30	5
Bothell	\$22.64	\$5.92	\$0.70	2
Burien	\$31.14	\$6.52	\$0.79	2
Carnation	\$35.97	\$8.74	\$1.09	3
Clyde Hill	\$21.59	\$5.24	\$0.50	3
Covington	\$26.27	\$8.69	\$0.83	4
Des Moines	\$30.66	\$6.98	\$0.88	2
Duvall	\$37.53	\$9.12	\$0.87	3
Enumclaw	\$38.40	\$9.33	\$0.89	3
Federal Way	\$26.90	\$6.53	\$0.62	3
Hunts Point	\$19.31	\$7.03	\$0.67	5

Issaquah	\$39.55	\$7.33	\$0.73	2
Kenmore	\$19.31	\$7.03	\$0.67	5
Kent	\$25.94	\$8.02	\$0.76	2
Kirkland	\$49.70	\$12.07	\$1.15	3
Lake Forest Park	\$39.02	\$9.48	\$0.90	3
Maple Valley	\$18.86	\$5.77	\$0.78	2
Medina	\$19.31	\$7.03	\$0.67	5
Mercer Island	\$36.64	\$6.16	\$0.73	2
Newcastle	\$48.41	\$11.76	\$1.12	3
Normandy Park	\$28.18	\$8.83	\$0.84	2
North Bend	\$54.89	\$8.50	\$0.39	2
Pacific	\$36.50	\$8.87	\$0.84	3
Redmond	\$22.76	\$8.47	\$0.81	4
Renton	\$30.19	\$6.72	\$0.64	4
Sammamish	\$50.21	\$8.26	\$0.79	1
SeaTac	\$23.63	\$5.74	\$0.78	3
Shoreline	\$33.52	\$6.27	\$0.79	2
Snoqualmie	\$35.07	\$6.98	\$0.66	2
Tukwila	\$21.97	\$6.34	\$0.49	2
UKC - North (Republic of Bellevue)	\$19.31	\$7.03	\$0.67	5
UKC - North (WM - Northwest)	\$23.18	\$5.63	\$0.53	5
UKC - South (Republic of Kent)	\$23.28	\$3.17	\$0.30	5
UKC - South (WM - Seattle)	\$25.64	\$6.23	\$0.59	5
UKC - South (WM - South Sound)	\$25.64	\$6.23	\$0.59	5
UKC - Vashon	\$18.24	\$4.43	\$0.42	5
Woodinville	\$23.18	\$5.63	\$0.53	5
Yarrow Point	\$19.31	\$7.03	\$0.67	5
Seattle	\$45.05	-	-	6

Figure 2: 32/35 Gallon Service Rates and Proposed Rate Impact

Estimation Method	
City disposal percentage is based on the current year rate sheet.	1
City disposal percentage is based on the most recent past year rate sheet disposal component out of total rate. This percentage is then applied to published current year rates to calculate the current disposal component.	2
City disposal percentage is based on the average disposal percentage across all current year and recent past year, for available City and UTC rate sheets. This percentage is then applied to published current year rates to calculate the current disposal component.	3

City disposal percentage is based on most recent past year rate model. This percentage is then applied to published current year rates to calculate the current disposal component.	4
Unincorporated King County (UKC) disposal percentage is estimated as the hauler cost of disposal out of total hauler costs as outlined in Rate Case Sheets. Defaults to average disposal percentage when recent estimated costs are unavailable. This percentage is then applied to published current year rates to calculate the current disposal component.	5
Provided for comparison.	6

Figure 2 Key: City Disposal Rate Estimation Method

Appendix B—Rate Methodology

The solid waste rate model seeks to balance expenditures and reserve requirements with anticipated revenues. The ending fund balance can be carried over from prior years to smooth out demands on revenues from one biennium to the next.¹ Descriptions of each of the major components of the rate model are provided below.

Expenditures

Expenditure—funds the Solid Waste Division (SWD) spends to provide public services—are divided into two major categories: operating and capital expenditures. Within operating expenditures, the solid waste rate model distinguishes between expenditures for existing work and those for new work that expands or augments existing operations.

Operating Expenses

Existing Work – Projected spending levels for existing operations are calculated by reviewing the current biennial budget, actual spending levels for the biennium, and the pro forma budget for 2026.² Differences between the existing budget, pro forma budget, and actual spending levels are reconciled to create the projected expenditure for the upcoming biennium. For example, some expenditure levels are directly related to tonnage or revenue projections. For those items, expenditures are calculated based on the tonnage forecast and/or revenue projections. The business and occupation tax the division must pay is, for example, based on the projected revenue in the coming budget period, which is not provided as part of the pro forma budget, while the transfer to public health and the landfill reserve fund are both projected based on tonnage.

New Programs or Expansion of Existing Work – As part of the rate development process, SWD identifies the need for new or additional services across each section of the division. Once new programs or bodies of work to meet County goals are identified, they are evaluated and prioritized based on whether they meet a regulatory mandate, their cost, and environmental and social justice impacts.

Operational Efficiencies – King County and DNRP are committed to financial stewardship. Employees are empowered to find ways to operate more efficiently and save money for rate payers. The department continually looks for operational efficiencies and evaluates options for expenditure reduction as part of its biennial budget and rate-setting process.

Capital Expenditures, Landfill Reserve Fund, and Debt Service

Solid waste capital projects and post-closure obligations at the landfill are funded through direct cash transfers to capital funds or by using bond funding to raise revenue. DNRP has three capital funds, the

¹ A fund is a financial accounting unit used to control and monitor the planned use of resources, usually with a specific scope and often in compliance with legal and administrative requirements. Ending fund balance, or fund balance, refers to the amount of money left in a fund at the end of an operating period. In this document, it refers to a calendar year or biennium.

² A pro forma budget is a baseline budget projection provided by the County's Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget (PSB). The pro forma provides a common starting point between PSB and other County departments as they begin to develop their biennial budget proposals.

solid waste capital improvement fund (CIP), the solid waste capital equipment replacement program fund (CERP), and the landfill reserve fund (LRF).

Construction Fund Transfer

Typically, \$4 million per biennium is transferred from the operating fund to the construction fund to pay for small capital projects when bond financing is not the appropriate funding instrument. The transfer amount is evaluated by DNRP during each rate-setting process.

CERP Fund Transfer

DNRP develops an annual spending plan, the CERP, to address solid waste equipment replacement needs over the rate-setting period and the two subsequent biennia. The transfer rate is calculated to provide the necessary funding for the planned spending above the required reserve amount.

LRF Transfer

The LRF transfer amount is calculated on a per-ton basis. Key variables include the tonnage forecast, the estimated date that Cedar Hills Regional Landfill (CHRLF) reaches capacity, and the projected cost for post-closure activities. Traditionally, new landfill development and closure projects were cash-funded from the LRF. Given the desire to keep rates low and the projected cost of planned development of Area 9, it became apparent that debt-financing these projects (instead of cash financing them) would provide significant relief to rate payers.³ King County Code 4A.200.390, which governs the LRF, was updated in 2020 to explicitly allow bond proceeds to fund these projects.

Debt Service

DNRP, in consultation with the Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget (PSB), annually reviews its CIP to update planned spending on existing projects and decide what other projects are needed. The cash flows are then multiplied by an accomplishment rate (typically between 75 and 85 percent), and these amounts are used to project the needed bond issuances to estimate the cost of debt service over the next six years.⁴ The projected amount of new debt service is added to the scheduled debt service to arrive at an estimated expenditure in the rate model.

Reserve Requirements

DNRP has three financial reserves: the Rainy Day Reserve, the Recession Reserve, and the Rate Stabilization Reserve.

Rainy Day Reserve

³ While cash funding projects is less expensive overall due to no interest cost, debt financing spreads those costs over time, so the rate does not have to increase sharply for a few years to cash fund expensive projects like transfer stations or new landfill cells. By employing bond financing in place of cash financing (where permitted), rates are kept lower in the near term.

⁴ The capital accomplishment rate is how much of the forecasted project cost was spent in a given year. For example, if one forecasts spending \$100 million in a year but only spends \$85 million, the accomplishment rate for that project for that year is 85 percent. Assuming an accomplishment rate below 100 percent means the rate model will forecast that less debt will need to be issued (in this example, 15 percent less), the resulting debt service payments—and, by extension, the rate—will be lower.

King County Comprehensive Financial Management Policies require that operating funds include a Rainy Day Reserve sufficient to cover operating expenditures for up to 60 days but no less than 30 days.⁵ The department has set this reserve amount equal to 30 days of operating expenditures.

Recession Reserve

In case of a recession, this reserve provides a buffer for the rate to protect the rate payers from the financial impacts of falling tonnage so that customers are not faced with major rate increases during a recession. It is set at 5 percent of annual disposal revenue. In years with a recession, this fund is intended to be drawn down by no more than 50 percent per year. After the recession has ended, the fund is gradually refilled over a five-year period.⁶

Rate Stabilization Reserve

The Rate Stabilization Reserve allows for ending fund balances to be carried over between budget periods, which, when utilized, can help smooth revenue demands over time. This creates a more predictable path for rate payers. For example, when a department spends less than it collects in a given year, it can carry that savings over into future years through the Rate Stabilization Reserve. This reserve can be used to cover costs in future years and reduce the impact of cost increases in future years, helping to keep rates from spiking from one year to the next.

Revenues

Since 2024, about 90 percent of the solid waste program's revenue has come from a combination of disposal fees and the proposed fixed annual charge (FAC). Other sources of revenue include the sale of gas gathered at the CHRLF; rental income from real property owned by the department; a fee from construction and demolition waste collected at third-party recycling facilities; and the commodity value of recyclables collected at the stations.⁷ DNRP also receives reimbursement income from the Hazardous Waste Management Program in exchange for providing household hazardous waste collection services. Miscellaneous sources of revenue include various grants, interest earnings, and other small-dollar sources.

Disposal and Recycling Fees

Disposal and recycling fees are collected on a per-ton and per-item basis, depending on the material. The projected revenues for these sources are calculated using the tonnage forecast. The rate model is used to determine the revenue requirement and fee schedule needed to balance the expenditure and reserve requirements once all other revenue sources are incorporated into the model.

Per-Ton Fees

- **Commercial Fee.** The per-ton fee charged to customers disposing of municipal solid waste at transfer facilities and to curbside collection vehicles at the CHRLF. Until 2024, the basic fee was charged to both commercial and self-haul customers. However, since the 2024 implementation of the rate restructure and its FAC, the basic fee was split into the commercial tipping fee and

⁵ [Financial Management Policies](#)

⁶ Per [King County Comprehensive Management Policies](#)

⁷ DNRP is not currently receiving landfill gas revenue because the plant that converts it to pipeline-quality natural gas, Bio Energy Washington (BEW), ceased operating in 2023. In March 2025, the County reached a settlement agreement with BEW that would include acquisition of the plant by the County. As a result, the rate model for this proposal does not assume landfill gas revenues in 2025.

the self-haul fee. The commercial fee dropped in 2024 (relative to the 2023 basic fee) to offset the revenue that now accrues from the new FAC.

- **Fixed Annual Charge.** Beginning in 2024, the fee charged to each of the primary curbside collection haulers based on the share of total tons brought in from each of their service areas. The FAC is based on the share of the cost of non-disposal activities allocated to the commercial solid waste hauler customer class.
- **Self-Haul Fee.** The per-ton fee charged to customers disposing of municipal solid waste at transfer facilities. The minimum fee that a customer would pay is equivalent to 320 pounds. Until 2024, the basic fee was charged to both commercial and self-haul customers. However, in 2024, upon the implementation of the rate restructure and its FAC, the basic fee was split into the commercial tipping fee and the self-haul fee. Since the FAC is not collected from self-haul customers, the self-haul tipping fee is higher than the commercial tipping fee.
- **Regional Direct Fee.** A discounted fee charged to commercial collection companies that haul solid waste to Cedar Hills in transfer trailers from their own transfer stations and processing facilities, thus bypassing County transfer stations. This fee is set at 85 percent of the self-haul rate.⁸
- **Special Waste Fee.** The fee charged for certain materials that require special handling, record keeping, or both, such as asbestos-containing materials and contaminated soil. This fee is set at 120 percent of the self-haul rate.
- **Yard Waste and Clean Wood Waste.** A fee for separated yard waste and clean wood delivered to facilities that have separate collection areas for these materials.

Per-Item Fees

- **CFC Appliances.** Appliances with CFCs, such as refrigerators, are charged on a per-item basis.
- **Mattresses.** Mattresses, box springs, and other mattress like items are charged on a per-item basis.
- **Unsecured Loads.** Customers that arrive at our stations with unsecured loads are charged a \$25 fee.

Cleanup LIFT

For self-haul customers, the County offers a discount for low-income individuals on their transactions if they can provide an Orca LIFT, Electronic Benefits Transfer card (often referred to as an EBT card), or Medicaid card.

Other Revenue

Sale of Landfill Natural Gas

Methane, which is a natural byproduct of the decomposition of waste, is captured at CHRLF and converted to pipeline-quality natural gas at the renewable natural gas (RNG) facility located at the

⁸ The new rate restructure for commercial revenues creates a challenge when comparing pre-restructure rates to the new format. To do so, the restructured commercial fee and the FAC can be combined to create a rate value called the composite commercial rate (CCR), which can then be compared directly with the pre-restructure basic fee. The CCR is used solely to facilitate equal comparisons between pre-restructure rates with rates under the new structure; it is not for billing customers.

landfill. The processed gas has value as both a commodity that can displace the use of conventional fossil fuels and an environmental attribute, which monetizes the environmental benefits of the gas. Energy markets are relatively volatile and disputes between the division and landfill gas producer have introduced additional uncertainty. However, the County and the producer have recently reached a settlement agreement that includes potential acquisition of the plant by King County, which will result in resumed production and sale of the gas and its environmental attributes.

Rental Income

DNRP receives revenue from a variety of rental properties. The rent from the schedule for each lease is modelled and properties that are near the end of their lease terms are re-evaluated for income potential.

Construction and Demolition Fee

DRNP collects a small fee from each ton of construction and demolition waste collected at third-party sorting and reclamation facilities. This revenue funds the cost of administering the construction and demolition recycling program.

Moderate-Risk Waste Reimbursement Expense

DNRP receives reimbursement income from the Hazardous Waste Management Program in exchange for providing household hazardous waste collection services.

Recyclable Materials Proceeds

Recycling collected at the transfer stations is sent to materials processing facilities, and DNRP pays for hauling costs and processing. The department then receives the commodity value of the processed material as revenue. After China implemented a policy that effectively banned the importation of recyclable materials, values for many common materials fell precipitously. Thus, the proceeds from the sale of recyclable material are projected to be a declining revenue source for the department.

Appendix C—Tonnage Forecast Through 2031

The rate proposal was developed using a forecast of the amount of waste that will be disposed of at department facilities during the rate period. The forecast relies on established statistical relationships between waste being disposed and some economic and demographic variables that affect it, namely population, employment, and consumption.¹

Year	Type	Transfer Station Tons	Other Waste	Regional Direct	Special Waste	Yard Waste
2017	Actual	895,672	19,898	12,161	3,446	21,966
2018	Actual	849,506	18,336	17,039	3,632	19,150
2019	Actual	840,878	17,422	7,542	2,690	22,739
2020	Actual	813,703	21,390	32,553	1,504	23,583
2021	Actual	827,211	22,792	24,736	2,130	24,838
2022	Actual	821,860	25,578	15,730	1,988	23,588
2023	Actual	798,765	30,521	3,741	2,206	17,780
2024	Actual	797,128	29,718	10,81	1,950	19,016
2025	Forecast	797,950	30,000	11,000	2,000	18,400
2026	Forecast	793,755	30,000	11,000	2,000	18,400
2027	Forecast	785,910	30,000	11,000	2,000	18,400
2028	Forecast	784,810	30,000	11,000	2,000	18,400
2029	Forecast	781,895	30,000	11,000	2,000	18,400
2030	Forecast	763,463	30,000	11,000	2,000	18,400
2031	Forecast	732,949	30,000	11,000	2,000	18,400

¹ Consumption measured in dollars spent for retail sales, excluding automobiles.

Appendix D – Summary of Rate Model Through 2031¹

	Projected	Proposed	Estimated				
Fund Account Summary	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Commercial Tipping Fee	\$165.91	\$179.18	\$194.41	\$209.97	\$226.76	\$244.90	\$264.50
Percent change		8.0%	8.5%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%
Fixed-Annual Charge (in millions)	\$23,337,835	\$26,838,510	\$30,864,287	\$35,493,930	\$40,668,623	\$43,061,868	\$45,091,910
Self-Haul Fee	\$203.81	\$229.29	\$257.95	\$288.90	\$323.57	\$362.40	\$405.88
Percent Change		12.5%	12.5%	12.0%	12.0%	12.0%	12.0%
REVENUES							
Disposal Revenue	\$147,499,867	\$162,719,702	\$176,865,878	\$192,905,689	\$210,010,769	\$224,534,286	\$236,492,313
FAC Revenue	\$23,337,835	\$26,838,510	\$30,864,287	\$35,493,930	\$40,668,623	\$43,061,868	\$45,091,910
RNG Processing Revenues		\$28,537,339	\$25,268,247	\$26,185,383	\$26,529,889	\$23,941,123	\$22,452,370
Non-Disposal Revenue	\$11,811,227	\$14,577,565	\$12,492,116	\$12,026,554	\$12,326,073	\$12,633,808	\$12,952,644
Total Revenues	\$182,648,929	\$232,673,117	\$245,490,528	\$266,611,556	\$289,535,354	\$304,171,084	\$316,989,237
EXPENDITURES							
SWD Operating Expenditures	\$148,545,509	\$149,495,396	\$152,810,418	\$157,057,627	\$163,948,161	\$165,452,573	\$171,899,304
RNG Processing Facility Expenses	\$6,902,446	\$18,489,479	\$18,974,790	\$19,190,033	\$19,410,656	\$19,636,795	\$19,868,588
Landfill Reserve Fund Transfer	\$13,886,900	\$16,140,656	\$17,512,612	\$19,001,184	\$20,616,285	\$22,368,669	\$24,270,006
Capital Equipment Recovery Program	\$6,500,000	\$7,500,000	\$7,500,000	\$9,000,000	\$10,500,000	\$11,025,000	\$11,576,250
Construction Fund	\$2,000,000	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
Debt Service	\$25,594,004	\$32,826,152	\$45,890,448	\$58,573,666	\$71,387,033	\$80,231,690	\$85,399,622
Total Expenditures	\$203,428,859	\$228,951,684	\$247,188,268	\$264,822,510	\$287,862,136	\$300,714,727	\$315,013,770
RESERVES							
Rainy Day	\$9,482,581	\$16,004,321	\$17,390,455	\$18,799,688	\$20,437,320	\$21,717,474	\$22,724,032
Recession Reserve	\$5,548,863	\$7,748,556	\$8,843,294	\$9,645,284	\$10,500,538	\$11,226,714	\$11,824,616
Rate Stabilization Reserve	\$0	\$0	\$821,388	\$5,399,211	\$9,579,543	\$11,029,570	\$11,000,577
Total Reserves	\$15,031,445	\$23,752,877	\$27,055,137	\$33,844,183	\$40,517,401	\$43,973,758	\$45,549,225



King County

Metropolitan King County Council Budget and Fiscal Management Committee

REVISED STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item:	6	Name:	Terra Rose
Proposed No.:	2025-0182	Date:	August 27, 2025

COMMITTEE ACTION

Proposed Substitute Ordinance 2025-0182.2, which would increase County disposal fees for solid waste, clean wood and yard waste, and special waste; the fixed annual charge; and the low-income discount, effective January 1, 2026, passed out of committee on August 27, 2025, with a “Do Pass” recommendation. The Proposed Ordinance was amended in committee with Amendment 1 and Title Amendment T1, which made technical corrections to the legislation and title.

SUBJECT

Proposed Ordinance 2025-0182 would increase County disposal fees for solid waste, clean wood and yard waste, and special waste; the fixed-annual charge; and the low-income discount, effective January 1, 2026.

SUMMARY

The County’s regional solid waste system is supported by a variety of fees that are approved by the Council and that vary based on the type of material being collected (e.g., garbage/solid waste, yard waste), the type of customer vehicle (e.g., certain vehicles pay a flat fee versus a per-ton fee), and the facility receiving the material (e.g., facilities with/without scales). The current fees were approved in 2024 and went into effect on January 1, 2025.¹

In 2022, the Council approved Ordinance 19413, which restructured how the Solid Waste Division (SWD) collected revenue from solid waste collection entities,² which largely refers to commercial haulers serving cities and the unincorporated areas under contract or certificate. Under the restructure, solid waste collection entities pay a reduced per-ton fee relative to self-haul per-ton customers for solid waste disposed at

¹ Ordinance 19805

² “Solid waste collection entities” include certificated haulers operating under UTC certificates, any city using its own employees for solid waste collection within its jurisdiction, and commercial haulers operating under a contract with or franchise from a city or town.

County facilities. Their billing entities – either the commercial haulers themselves or cities, whichever bills customers directly – also pay a proportionate share of the Fixed-Annual Charge (FAC). The FAC is a set dollar amount that SWD collects from the billing entities and is independent of tonnage received.

Proposed Ordinance 2025-0182 would, effective January 1, 2026, increase:

- Fees to dispose of solid waste. For *solid waste collection entities*, the fee would increase from \$165.91 to \$179.18 per ton and for *self-haul customers with per-ton-rate vehicles*, such as a pickup truck, the fee would increase from \$203.81 to \$229.29 per ton. The minimum fee is proposed to increase from \$32.60 to \$36.69 per vehicle.
- The amount of the Fixed-Annual Charge from \$23,337,835 to \$26,838,510, an increase of 15 percent.
- Fees for yard waste, clean wood waste, or a combination thereof from \$115.00 to \$129.38 per ton.
- The low-income discount for qualified customers from the current \$18.00 to \$20.00 per entry.
- Fees for special waste, which require special handling and/or record keeping, from \$244.57 to \$275.14 per ton.

The narrative accompanying the proposed ordinance (Attachment A to PO 2025-0182) indicates that the increases are necessary due to rising costs to provide essential solid waste services and to fund the Division's capital improvement program. The fee narrative indicates that the Division is planning no increases in existing operating expenses beyond inflation and plans to cover any emergent needs out of salary savings and operating expenditure reductions.

Both the Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee and the Solid Waste Advisory Committee issued advisory notes (Attachments 6 and 7) that state their recognition of the continuing need for an adequate revenue stream to support essential solid waste services and to fund key priorities. However, both notes also raise concerns related to the impacts of increasing fees on residents and support a one-year rate setting approach to provide an opportunity for SWD to complete a comprehensive review of operating and capital expenditures and evaluate options for rate mitigation.

Executive staff are seeking Council action in early September to allow haulers and cities sufficient time to incorporate the County's fee changes into their billing and other systems, as well as notify the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, which requires 90 days' notice for changing fees.

BACKGROUND

Regional Solid Waste System Overview. The King County Solid Waste Division (SWD) is responsible for providing solid waste planning, management, transfer, and disposal services through 2040 for 37 partner cities³ that have signed interlocal

³ All cities in King County except Seattle and Milton participate in the County's regional system through executed ILAs.

agreements (ILAs), a service area that encompasses approximately 1.5 million people.⁴ SWD operates eight transfer stations and two drop boxes distributed throughout the region, the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill, which is the only operating landfill in the county, as well as waste prevention and recycling programs for the unincorporated area and partner cities.

By ILA and state law,⁵ the partner cities manage solid waste handling within their jurisdictions. Most cities contract with a commercial hauler for curbside collection within city limits. Cities may also do their own waste collection using city employees. In the unincorporated area and in cities that have opted not to use their contracting authority for collection services, curbside services are provided by commercial haulers operating under certificates issued by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC).

The County receives solid waste or garbage at its transfer stations and drop boxes from contract, certificated, and municipal haulers, as well as self-haul customers. These waste loads are consolidated, transferred onto trailers, and transported by truck by the County to the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill (CHRLF) in unincorporated Maple Valley.

Long-Term System Planning. The regional solid waste system is currently in a period of transformation from one focused on disposal of materials to a system with greater emphasis on waste reduction, recovery, recycling, and regeneration. Following several years of relatively flat recycling rates,⁶ in 2022 the Solid Waste Division released the Re+ Strategic Plan, which describes the County's approach to meeting its adopted goal to achieve zero waste of resources by 2030.⁷

Concurrent with its efforts towards Re+ and zero waste, SWD in partnership with cities and a consultant are in the process of evaluating options for and determining the next disposal method to be used when the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill reaches capacity, which has been projected between 2037 and 2046.⁸ Last year, the Division had tentatively estimated that an update to the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan with a recommendation for the next disposal method would be transmitted to the Council in 2026. However, it is now currently estimated that the transmittal will occur in 2028.

These two elements of solid waste planning both have an influence on future solid waste fees. Successful implementation of Re+ and zero waste efforts could reduce annual tons of waste disposed, as well as the revenue associated with those tons. This could put an upward pressure on fees. Additionally, depending on what long-term disposal option is selected, the County and regional system may need to incur additional capital and/or operating costs related to the chosen method.

⁴ 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan

⁵ R.C.W. 81.77.020 and 36.58.040

⁶ The transmitted 2025 Strategic Climate Action Plan notes that preliminary estimates for 2021 indicate that King County recycling rates remain flat at 56 percent. Data from the state Department of Ecology on recycling lags by several years.

⁷ K.C.C. 10.14.020.

⁸ Cedar Hills Regional Landfill 2020 Site Development Plan and Facility Relocation Final Environmental Impact Statement

Solid Waste System Revenues. SWD is primarily supported by a variety of fees that are approved by the Council and that vary based on the type of material collected (e.g., solid waste, yard waste), the type of customer vehicle (e.g., certain vehicles pay a flat fee versus a per-ton fee), and the facility receiving the material (e.g., facilities with/without scales). The current fees were approved in 2024 and went into effect on January 1, 2025.⁹

SWD offers a discount of \$18.00 per entry to low-income, self-haul customers at the County's transfer stations for the disposal of solid waste, yard/wood waste, appliances, and mattresses. Qualified customers must live in households at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level and qualify by presenting their ORCA LIFT card, Electronic Benefits Card (EBT card), or Medicaid (ProviderOne) card at the transfer station.

Revenue Restructure. In 2022, the Council approved Ordinance 19413, which changed how SWD collects revenues from “solid waste collection entities,” which includes certificated haulers operating under UTC certificates, any city using its own employees for solid waste collection within its jurisdiction, and commercial haulers operating under a contract with or franchise from a city or town. Self-haul customers were not impacted by this fee restructure and continue to pay either a per-ton fee or minimum fee to dispose of solid waste at County transfer stations.

Ordinance 19413 introduced the Fixed-Annual Charge (FAC), which represents a total dollar amount independent from tonnage received that SWD will collect annually from billing entities – either haulers or cities, whichever entity bills customers directly. Figure 1 provides further illustration on how the restructured way of collecting revenues has been implemented, along with an example. Cities and haulers have the ultimate authority to determine how to pass along the FAC costs to its customers.

**Figure 1.
Example of the Fixed Annual Charge Implementation**

Under the Adopted Restructure, Billing Entities Pay:	
<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Variable Fee (weight-based)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px auto; width: 80%;"> <p>Per-ton-rate fee: \$165.91 per ton (2025 fee)</p> </div> <p style="font-size: 2em; margin: 10px 0;">+</p> <p>Fixed Fee (non-weight-based)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px auto; width: 80%;"> <p>Proportional share of Fixed-Annual Charge (FAC for 2025 = \$23.3 million)</p> </div> </div>	<p>Example: Republic Services currently has a contract with the City of Bellevue to provide curbside collection services to residents and businesses/institutions and bills those customers directly. Under the new adopted fee structure, Republic Services receives a monthly invoice from SWD with two components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The variable component, which covers the tons of waste Republic Services brings from the Bellevue service area to the transfer stations using the current per-ton-rate fee of \$165.91 per ton; and 2) The fixed component, which is Republic Services' proportional share of the Fixed-Annual Charge for its Bellevue service area. For example, if Bellevue residents, businesses, and institutions generated 10 percent of all commercially hauled tons countywide in the most recent calendar year for which data is available, its billing entity -- in this case, Republic Services -- would be billed 10 percent of the FAC of approximately \$23.3 million over the course of the year, or approximately \$2.33 million.

⁹ Ordinance 19805

According to Executive staff, the per-ton fee charged to solid waste collection entities and the FAC together are designed to collect the same amount of revenue as the per-ton fee did alone under the previous fee structure, as updated for current costs. Executive staff indicate that because the FAC is a fixed value independent of tonnage received, a portion of SWD's revenues is more stable and predictable in times of volatility, such as in the case of tonnage declines during a recession or with successful waste reduction and recycling efforts.

Auditor's Letter to the Council. In March 2025, the Auditor's Office issued a letter to the Council, *Capital Projects Drive Rate Increases: Solid Waste Rates Could Double by 2034*.¹⁰ This letter indicates that rates for solid waste disposal are increasing significantly, in part due to several large capital projects. Between 2025 and 2040, according to the letter, the Division estimates that capital projects in planning and underway will cost over \$1.36 billion. Further, the letter states that SWD's current rate projections only include capital projects through 2033 and that SWD also expects future capital costs associated with the next disposal method when the landfill reaches capacity and potentially a project related to treating landfill leachate to remove PFAS.¹¹ Additionally, the letter notes that the costs for a mixed waste processing facility could be higher than the current \$400 million estimate.¹² This project, which is assumed in the rate model but not yet proposed in a budget ordinance to the Council, assumes that SWD would build and operate a facility that takes municipal solid waste and further separate materials following curbside garbage collection.

The Auditor's Office estimates that SWD's planned capital spending will increase annual debt service from around \$20 million, or 11 percent of the Division's revenue requirement in 2024, to over \$115 million, or 32 percent of the revenue requirement by 2034, which will constrain SWD's ability to control rates due to the fixed nature of payments. As a result, the Auditor's Office estimates that fees could more than double to over \$413 per ton by 2034.

The letter indicates that since most of the Division's large capital projects are in early phases such as planning and design, decision-makers could still decrease rate impacts on customers by scoping back, eliminating, or delaying projects. The letter makes no new recommendations but emphasizes the renewed importance for the Division to implement the recommendations from a 2015 audit to improve its communication of rate forecasts to increase transparency and better inform decision-making. Specifically, the 2015 recommendation suggests that the Division:

- Identify key assumptions affecting long-term rate forecasts;
- Conduct sensitivity analysis around the key assumptions; and

¹⁰ <https://kingcounty.gov/en/independents/governance-and-leadership/government-oversight/auditors-office/reports-papers/reports/2025/swd-rates-cpo>

¹¹ SWD discharges leachate from the landfill to the South Treatment Plant, which is regulated by King County Industrial Waste under an Industrial Discharge Permit. According to the letter, SWD staff report they anticipate these permits will include PFAS limits in the future.

¹² The letter indicates that SWD's rate model estimate includes capital costs only and not necessarily additional operating expenditures. It goes on to state that SWD acknowledge that there are inherent uncertainties with the cost of mixed waste processing, given lack of widespread use of the technology and that the final costs is dependent on both the technology and capacity of the system. According to the letter, SWD could use the system to manage only a portion of the County's waste stream.

- Present long-term rate forecasts to decision-makers portraying a range of potential rate outcomes reflecting different values for key assumptions.

One-Year Fee Proposal. At the May meeting of the Metropolitan Solid Waste Advisory Committee, SWD announced that they were putting forward a single-year rate proposal, instead of the biennial proposal with two annual increases that had previously been discussed. The Division noted that this was to reevaluate the capital program and explore opportunities for rate mitigation, as well as in response to concerns the two advisory committees shared about rising rates across utilities in King County.

While Council-adopted rates do not expire and are in place until a new rate is adopted and effective, Executive staff expect to transmit an ordinance next year to request another fee increase that would go into effect in 2027.

ANALYSIS

Proposed Ordinance 2025-0182 would, effective January 1, 2026, increase:

- Fees to accept solid waste, clean yard/wood waste, and special waste that have additional handling requirements, as summarized in Figures 2 and 4;
- The amount of the Fixed-Annual Charge to be collected by SWD annually from billing entities; and
- Increase the low-income discount amount.

According to the fee narrative (Attachment A to the proposed ordinance), the increases are necessary due to rising costs to provide essential solid waste services and to fund the Division's capital improvement program. The fee narrative indicates that the Division is planning no increases in existing operating expenses beyond inflation and plans to cover any emergent needs out of salary savings and operating expenditure reductions.

Proposed Fee Increases – Solid Waste. Figure 2 summarizes the current and proposed fees to dispose of solid waste and other materials.¹³ Most fees to dispose of solid waste are proposed to increase by 12.5% in 2026.

According to the fee narrative, the average monthly curbside impact for all residents in the County's service area, after haulers pass along the increased disposal fee, is forecasted to be approximately \$0.71 per month for customer with a 32-gallon can size. However, because all cities have different starting rates and distribute the disposal costs across their customer bases differently, the forecasted impact will not match an actual customer impact in a given city but is expected to be accurate in the aggregate across the entire County service area. The Division did some additional estimated modeling for this rate proposal broken out by city, which estimated a low-impact of \$0.30 per month and a high-impact of \$1.15 per month.

Figure 3 provides the history of Council-adopted self-haul per-ton fees from 1997 through the proposed ordinance, along with the percentage increases. Note that this

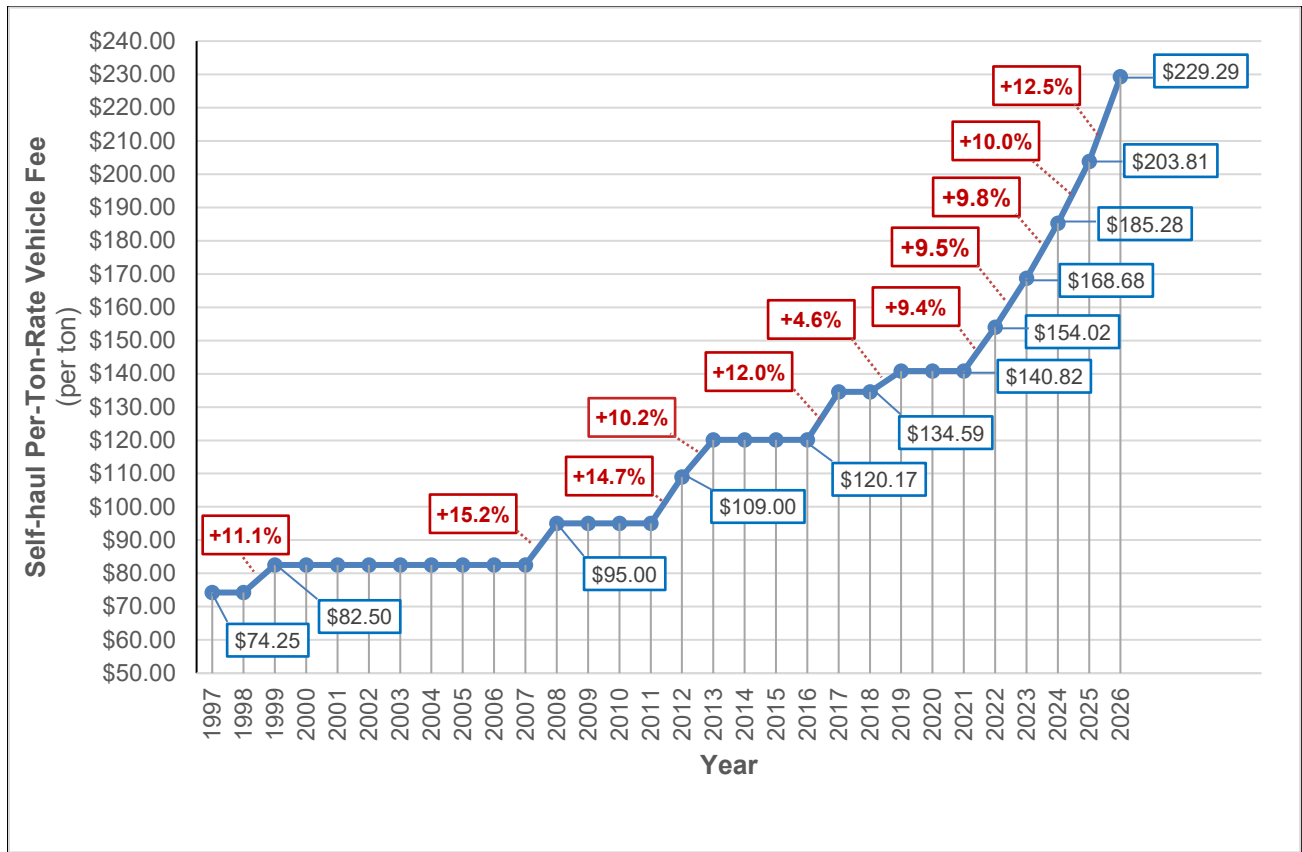
¹³ Pre-tax and without the moderate-risk waste surcharge that funds hazardous waste programs throughout the county.

staff report does not include a similar visual for the fees charged to solid waste collection entities as the revenues are now split between the FAC and the per-ton fee and therefore, a similar historical illustration has less comparative value.

**Figure 2.
Current 2025 Disposal Fees vs. Proposed Fees for 2026**

Facility Type	Material Type	Customer Type	Current 2025 Fee	Proposed 2026 Fee	% Change
Fees for use of facilities <u>WITH SCALES</u> (not including Cedar Hills landfill)	Solid Waste	Fixed-rate vehicles (e.g., hatchback or sedan)	\$32.60 per entry	\$36.69 per entry	12.5%
		Solid waste collection entity per-ton-rate vehicles (e.g., contract haulers, certificated haulers)	\$165.91 per ton	\$179.18 per ton	8.0%
		Self-hauler per-ton-rate vehicles (e.g., SUVs, trucks)	\$203.81 per ton	\$229.29 per ton	12.5%
		Charitable organizations	\$156.93 per ton	\$176.55 per ton	12.5%
		Minimum (<320 lbs.)	\$32.60 per vehicle	\$36.69 per vehicle	12.5%
		Charitable organizations - minimum charge	\$25.12 per entry	\$28.25 per entry	12.5%
	Source-separated yard waste, clean wood waste, or combination	Fixed-rate vehicles	\$18.00 per entry	\$20.70 per entry	15.0%
		Per-ton-rate vehicles	\$115.00 per ton	\$129.38 per ton	12.5%
		Minimum	\$18.00 per vehicle	\$20.70 per vehicle	15.0%
Disposal of solid waste at facilities <u>WITHOUT SCALES</u>	Solid Waste	Fixed-rate vehicles	\$32.60 per entry	\$36.69 per entry	12.5%
		Per-ton-rate vehicles (Compacted waste)	\$59.10 per cubic yard	\$66.49 per cubic yard	12.5%
		Per-ton-rate vehicles (Uncompacted)	\$34.65 per cubic yard	\$38.98 per cubic yard	12.5%
		Minimum	\$32.60 per vehicle	\$36.69 per vehicle	12.5%
	Source-separated yard waste, clean wood waste, or combination	Fixed-rate vehicles	\$18.00 per entry	\$20.70 per entry	15.0%
		Per-ton-rate vehicles (Compacted waste)	\$33.35 per cubic yard	\$37.52 per cubic yard	12.5%
		Per-ton-rate vehicles (Uncompacted)	\$19.55 per cubic yard	\$21.99 per cubic yard	12.5%
		Minimum charge	\$18.00 per vehicle	\$20.70 per vehicle	15.0%
Cedar Hills Landfill	Solid Waste	Regional direct	\$163.05 per ton	\$194.89 per ton	19.5%
		Solid waste collection entity per-ton-rate vehicles	\$165.91 per ton	\$179.18 per ton	8.0%

Figure 3.
Self-Haul Per-ton-rate Vehicle Fee Increases (1997-2026 Proposed)
 (Percentage increases in red boxes)



Proposed Fees – Yard and Clean Wood Waste. The proposed fees for yard and clean wood waste are summarized in Figure 2. Depending on the customer vehicle type, these fees are proposed to increase either 12.5% or 15.0%.¹⁴

Between 2011 and 2021, the fee for yard and clean wood waste remained unchanged at \$75 per ton, at which point the Division proposed and the Council approved an increase to \$100 per ton in 2022 and to \$115 per ton in 2023 to begin to bring the fee more in line with the cost of service. Executive staff indicate that the proposal to increase the fee to \$129.38 for 2026 furthers that effort, but that revenues for yard waste collection are still only equal to about half the cost of providing the service.

Proposed Fees – Special Waste Fees. The proposed ordinance would increase the special waste fees for materials that require special handling, record keeping, or both, such as asbestos-containing materials and contaminated soil. These changes are summarized in Figure 4. The special wastes are proposed to increase between 12 and 13% in 2026.

¹⁴ Pre-tax and without the moderate-risk waste surcharge that funds hazardous waste programs throughout the county.

**Figure 4.
Current vs. Proposed Special Waste Fees**

Fee Type	Current 2025 Fee	Proposed 2026 Fee	% Change
Special waste fee	\$244.57 per ton	\$275.14 per ton	12.5%
Special waste – min. charge	\$39.09 per entry	\$44.02 per entry	12.6%
Special waste fee, extra handling	\$285.33 per ton	\$321.01 per ton	12.5%
Special waste fee, extra handling min. charge	\$45.61 per entry	\$51.36 per entry	12.6%

Proposed Fixed-Annual Charge (FAC). The FAC is the amount SWD collects annually and cumulatively, independent of tonnage received into the system, from billing entities – either commercial haulers or cities, depending on which entity bills curbside customers directly.

The proposed ordinance would increase the FAC from \$23,337,835 to \$26,838,510, an increase of 15.0%. For comparison, this proposed increase is larger than the increase between 2024 and 2025, which was 3.2%. According to the fee narrative, the amount of the FAC is equal to the commercial haulers' portion of the non-disposal service costs (e.g., administration expenses, regional planning, Re+ actions, and regulatory compliance). For example, if the sum of all non-disposal costs totaled \$100 million, and the commercial customer class share of these costs was 30%, the FAC would be set at \$30 million.

Executive staff indicate that how a billing entity's share of the FAC is passed onto their curbside customers is determined by the collection entity and city through their collection contracts.

Proposed Low-Income Discount. The proposed ordinance would increase the Cleanup LIFT discount amount from the current \$18.00 per entry to \$20.00 in 2026, which would be equivalent to roughly half of the minimum fee including taxes and fees for garbage transactions. The fee proposal narrative indicates that the County has provided over 75,000 discounts to self-haul customers since the program began in 2019. In 2024, approximately 3.3% of all self-haul transactions were discounted, up from 3.14% in 2023 and 2.7% in 2022.

Key Drivers of Increased Costs to Provide Services. The fee proposal narrative indicates that the primary drivers of the increased costs of services are the financial needs of capital projects and higher interest rates on bonds, inflation and economic uncertainty, and the ongoing costs to meet environmental and safety controls at the Cedar Hills landfill and closed landfills managed by the County. Additional information about these drivers is provided below:

- *Financial needs of capital projects and higher bond rates:* SWD continues to be in a period of heightened capital investment to implement actions called for in the 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan, including the construction

of the South County and Northeast Recycling and Transfer Stations, expanding landfill capacity, and making upgrades to landfill infrastructure.¹⁵ According to the fee narrative, the pandemic recovery was accompanied by significant supply chain disruptions and permitting delays, which delayed projects. The fee narrative also indicates that “the cost of these capital expenditures has grown significantly over the last few years due to inflation and now higher interest rates on bonds issued to fund this work.”¹⁶ The fee narrative notes that while the investments approved in the 2019 CSWMP carry significant costs, they remain popular with the advisory committees and partner cities.

Further, the bond length used by the Division is currently limited to the duration of the ILAs with partner cities, which are in effect through 2040 and guarantee the revenue backing needed to issue General Obligation bonds. According to the fee narrative, until the ILAs are extended, debt issued for capital projects in the near term will have ever shorter repayment periods, which puts an upward pressure on rates. The fee narrative states that in 2022 partner cities indicated they did not want to begin ILA extension discussions until after a decision has been made for long-term disposal after the closure of Cedar Hills.

- *Inflation and economic uncertainty:* According to the fee narrative, the County is facing economic conditions that could reduce revenues and increase costs. The narrative notes that while inflation has cooled over the last year compared to previous years, it may be exacerbated by increases in tariffs imposed on imported goods. The narrative also notes that tariff impacts coupled with consumer concerns about the economy could result in fewer annual tons than projected and therefore lower revenues, as historically economic downturns have correlated with lower waste volumes received by the County. As a result, the Division has downgraded its expected revenue forecast for the year, according to the fee narrative, and is anticipating diminished economic activity as tariff impacts become more widely felt.
- *Environmental compliance at the Cedar Hills landfill and closed landfills:* The fee narrative states that the frequency and intensity for testing, monitoring, and reporting requirements for environmental and other regulations has increased. In response to recent Department of Ecology regulations to improve the control of methane emissions from landfills, SWD indicates they have hired two new landfill gas utility operators and expect to fill a new Engineer III position to support the increased sampling and reporting requirements.

Key Rate Model Assumptions. Key assumptions included in the rate model are described below:

- *No long-term disposal costs assumed:* According to Executive staff, they did not

¹⁵ Ordinance 18893

¹⁶ Attachment A, p. 7

include costs for the next disposal method to be used when the landfill reaches capacity in the rate model because there is a significant difference in estimated capital costs for the options being considered and because the majority of these costs would likely occur outside of the rate model planning window.

- *Plans for a spend down of Rainy Day and Rate Stabilization Reserves:* Executive staff indicate that the rate model projects drawing down the Rainy Day Reserve to support the \$5 million settlement payment related to the dispute with Bio Energy Washington, the owner and operator of the landfill gas processing facility onsite at Cedar Hills.¹⁷ Under the County's adopted Comprehensive Financial Management Policies:

*Rainy Day Reserves may be drawn down when the County is in a period of economic contraction, as defined in the recession preparation and response policies and adopted by the Forecast Council, and the fund's total revenue for the current year is or is projected to be less than 97 percent of adopted revenue estimates, with the decrease reasonably related to the economic contraction. Requests for drawing down Rainy Day Reserves require the approval of the [Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget] Director prior to an appropriation request being transmitted to Council. A fund's Rainy Day Reserves should begin to be replenished once the Forecast Council has adopted that the County is exiting the period of economic contraction.*¹⁸

Executive staff note that they may not end up tapping the Rainy Day Reserve depending on actual revenues and expenditures for 2025, indicating that if it is necessary, the Division will coordinate with the Office of Performance Strategy and Budget Director to ensure compliance with County financial policies.

Additionally, the Division has been slowly drawing down the Rate Stabilization Reserve over the past five years to mitigate rate increases and expects to continue to do so in 2025 and 2026, when it is expected to be fully exhausted. However, Executive staff anticipate that all reserves will be fully replenished by the end of the 2026-2027 biennium.

- *Assumes tonnage reductions associated with Re+ efforts:* Executive staff indicate that the rate model is based on a tonnage forecast that assumes a range of Re+/zero waste actions will be undertaken. According to the fee narrative, this tonnage forecast assumes: organics diversion, including food waste diversion from the statewide organics legislation passed in 2022; reduction due to extended producer responsibility and deposit return system legislation (anticipated in 2031); expanded recycling efforts at transfer stations; and new sorting technologies such as mixed-waste processing.

¹⁷ Ordinance 19959

¹⁸ Motion 16041

- *Landfill gas revenue assumed beginning in 2026:* The rate model assumes revenues for the sale of renewable natural gas and the associated environmental attributes will begin in 2026 and that year generate approximately \$28.8 million in new annual revenue.

Future Outlook. Executive staff indicate that according to their near-term rate model, which spans 2026-2031, they are forecasting that fees for disposal will need to increase approximately 12% each year, with the projected self-haul per-ton-vehicle rate rising to \$405.88 per ton in 2031. However, according to Executive staff, they expect that this fee trajectory will change as they reevaluate their capital program and expenditures prior to transmitting a 2027 fee proposal.

Advisory Committee Involvement. The fee proposal was discussed at monthly meetings between January and May of both the Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Committee (MSWAC), composed of city representatives, and the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC), which represents a range of interests, including haulers and environmental organizations. Both committees provided advisory notes (Attachments 6 and 7) that state their recognition of the continuing need for an adequate revenue stream to support essential solid waste services and to fund key priorities. However, both notes also raise concerns related to the impacts of increasing fees on residents and support the one-year rate setting approach in order to allow SWD an opportunity for a comprehensive review of operating and capital expenditures and options for rate mitigation. MSWAC and SWAC also express support for a Regional Utilities Affordability Summit proposed by Executive Braddock's 200 Day Plan.

Timing. In order for the proposed fees to go into effect on January 1, 2026, the Council would have to act prior to October 1st to allow for the state notice period of 90 days for changing fees, as required by WUTC. However, Executive staff are seeking Council action on the proposed ordinance in early September to allow the Division to communicate the final fee amounts to haulers and cities and also to allow for sufficient time to incorporate the County's fee changes into their billing and other systems and notify the WUTC.

AMENDMENT

Amendment 1 would make a technical change correcting the original ordinance number being amended.

Amendment T1 would also make technical corrections to remove the reference to construction and demolition fees, which are not proposed to be changed by the ordinance, and also correct the original ordinance number being amended.



Signature Report

Ordinance

Proposed No. 2025-0275.1

Sponsors Zahilay

1 AN ORDINANCE relating to council rules and order of
2 business; amending Ordinance 11683, Section 4, as
3 amended, and K.C.C. 1.24.035; and declaring an
4 emergency.

5 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

6 SECTION 1. Findings:

7 A. Section 220.40 of the King County Charter requires the council to adopt by
8 ordinance rules of procedure governing the time, place and conduct of its meetings.

9 B. Consistent with the county charter, the council adopted by ordinance rules of
10 procedure, which are codified in K.C.C. chapter 1.24, and passed motions related to the
11 organization and administration of the council.

12 C. The rules of procedure and the organizational motion have been amended
13 from time to time to reflect changes desired by the council.

14 D. As is tradition, during the council's consideration of a biennial or annual
15 budget, the standing committees, except for the committee of the whole, stand down so
16 that members may meet as members of the budget committee, in a series of budget
17 panels, to review the executive's proposed budget prior to final action. Historically, the
18 committee of the whole has continued to meet during the council's budget process to
19 handle matters that would benefit from committee action.

20 E. For the 2026-2027 biennial budget, the budget panels will meet on Tuesday
21 mornings, at the time designated by the rules of procedure for the committee of the whole
22 to meet, causing a conflict that can be alleviated by moving the date and time of the
23 regular committee of the whole meeting for only that period that the council is expected
24 to be considering the biennial budget. Such an action is in support of the council's
25 consideration of the 2026-2027 biennial budget and also preserves a regularly scheduled
26 committee of the whole meeting during this same period.

27 SECTION 2. Ordinance 11683, Section 4, as amended, and K.C.C. 1.24.035 are
28 each hereby amended to read as follows:

29 **Rule 4: Meetings.**

30 A.1.a. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the time of regular meetings
31 of the council is 1:30 p.m. on the first, second, third, and fourth Tuesdays of each month.
32 However, the regular meetings of the council shall not take place: from April 7, 2025,
33 through April 11, 2025; from August 4, 2025, through August 15, 2025; and from
34 December 10, 2025, through January 2, 2026. All regular or special meetings of council
35 committees shall be regular or special council meetings, in accordance with subsection F.
36 of this rule.

37 b. A committee chair may call a special committee meeting with either the prior
38 written consent of the council chair or the consent of a majority of the members of the
39 committee. This subsection A.1.b. does not apply to special meetings of the budget and
40 fiscal management committee for purposes of considering the county executive's budget
41 proposal for the upcoming fiscal period, which shall be called by the chair of the budget
42 and fiscal management committee.

2.a. All regular meetings of the King County council and the council's committees, except for employment and administration committee meetings, shall be held in the council chambers on the tenth floor of the King County Courthouse in Seattle, Washington. All regular meetings of the employment and administration committee meetings shall be held in the southwest conference room on the twelfth floor of the King County Courthouse in Seattle, Washington.

b. Whenever, due to an emergency, as defined in K.C.C. 12.52.010, it is imprudent, inexpedient, or impossible to conduct the affairs of the council at the regular or usual place or places, the council may meet at any place within or without the territorial limits of the county on the call of the chair or any two members of the council. After an emergency relocation, the affairs of the council shall be lawfully conducted at the emergency location for the duration of the emergency.

B.1. Except as provided in subsection B.2. of this rule, the times for regular and special committee meetings are as follows:

a. Budget and fiscal management committee: the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 9:30 a.m.;

b. Committee of the whole: the fourth Tuesday of each month at 9:30 a.m. except that, for October 6, 2025, through November 3, 2025, the regular committee meeting shall occur on the first and third Mondays of each month at 9:30 a.m.;

c. Employment and administration committee: the first Tuesday of each month at 2:00 p.m.;

d. Government accountability and oversight committee: the second Tuesday of each month at 9:30 a.m.;

66 e. Health, housing, and human services committee: the first Tuesday of each
67 month at 9:30 a.m.;

68 f. Law and justice committee: the first Wednesday of each month at 9:30 a.m.;

69 g. Local services and land use committee: the third Wednesday of each month
70 at 9:30 a.m.;

71 h. Regional policy committee: the second Wednesday of each month at 3:00
72 p.m.;

73 i. Regional transit committee: the third Wednesday of each month at 3:00 p.m.;

74 j. Regional water quality committee: the first Wednesday of each month at 3:00
75 p.m.; and

76 k. Transportation, economy, and environment committee: the third Tuesday of
77 each month at 9:30 a.m.

78 2. The regular meetings of the committees shall not take place during the times
79 when the council meeting does not take place, as prescribed in subsection A. of this rule.

80 C. Council and committee meetings must be held in accordance with the Open
81 Public Meetings Act of 1971, chapter 42.30 RCW.

82 D. A meeting may be continued, in accordance with chapter 42.30 RCW, to
83 another date and does not conclude until adjourned in accordance with these rules.

84 E.1. An executive session may be held during a council or committee meeting if
85 one of the specific grounds under chapter 42.30 RCW for an executive session exists.

86 2. Before convening in executive session, the chair of the council or committee
87 shall publicly announce the purpose for excluding the public from the meeting place and

88 the time when the executive session will be concluded. The executive session may be
89 extended to a stated later time by announcement of the chair.

90 3. Only members of the council or committee, special invitees, and those
91 employees or staff members the council or committee determines to be necessary are
92 allowed to remain in the room. Persons attending an executive session shall maintain the
93 confidentiality of the proceedings.

94 F.1. A legal analysis of the Open Public Meetings Act by the office of the Attorney
95 General, 2010 AGO No. 9, has advised that when a committee meeting is attended by a
96 quorum of the governing body it must be noticed not only as a committee meeting but also
97 as a meeting of the governing body. For this reason, all meetings of council committees
98 shall be noticed both as committee meetings and as council meetings whose agenda is
99 limited to the committee business.

100 2. In all committee meetings, which are council meetings in accordance with
101 subsection F.1. of this rule, only the rules and procedures applicable to committees apply,
102 and not those rules and procedures applicable to full council meetings. This includes, but is
103 not limited to:

104 a. only those members who serve on the committee have the right to exercise
105 parliamentary rights in the meeting, including, but not limited to, raising points of order,
106 making motions, and voting;

107 b. attendance shall be recorded only for members serving on the committee, and
108 the quorum for the meeting shall be the committee quorum; and

109 c. committee meetings shall be chaired by the committee chair.

110 SECTION 3. The county council finds as a fact and declares that an emergency
111 exists and that this ordinance is necessary for the immediate preservation of public peace,
112 health or safety or for the support of county government and its existing public
113 institutions.

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Girmay Zahilay, Chair

ATTEST:

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, ____.

Shannon Braddock, County Executive

Attachments: None



Signature Report

Motion

Proposed No. 2025-0259.2

Sponsors Zahilay

1 A MOTION confirming the appointment of John
2 Rodriquez to the citizens' elections oversight committee as
3 a representative of the Spanish-speaking community.

4 WHEREAS, the King County council's employment and administration
5 committee has identified John Rodriquez to represent the Spanish-speaking community
6 on the citizens' elections oversight committee, and

7 WHEREAS, King County is committed to conducting open, accurate and fair
8 elections, and

9 WHEREAS, the citizens' elections oversight committee helps to ensure that
10 accountability and performance of the department of elections is provided in a transparent
11 manner that is meaningful to King County residents, and

12 WHEREAS, in accordance with K.C.C. 2.53.021, the employment and
13 administration committee appoints members to the citizens' elections oversight
14 committee, and

15 WHEREAS, in accordance with K.C.C. 2.53.021, appointments to the citizens'
16 elections oversight committee are subject to confirmation by the full council by motion,
17 and

18 WHEREAS, on September 2, 2025, in accordance with K.C.C. 2.53.021, the
19 employment and administration committee will appoint John Rodriquez to the citizens'

20 elections oversight committee to fill the vacant position for a representative of the
21 Spanish-speaking community to a new three-year term, to expire on July 31, 2028;

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

23 The appointment of John Rodriquez to the citizens' elections oversight committee
24 as a representative of the Spanish-speaking community to a new three-year term, to
25 expire on July 31, 2028, is confirmed.

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Girmay Zahilay, Chair

ATTEST:

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

Attachments: None



King County

Metropolitan King County Council Employment and Administration Committee

STAFF REPORT

Agenda Items:		Name:	Erica Newman
Proposed No.:	2025-0258 2025-0259	Date:	September 2, 2025

SUBJECT

The proposed motions would confirm the following reappointment and appointment to the Citizens' Elections Oversight Committee (CEOC):

- Reappointment of Hilary De La Cruz, as a registered King County voter, for a three-year term ending July 31, 2028.
- Appointment of a candidate as a representative of the Spanish-speaking community for a new three-year term ending July 31, 2028.

BACKGROUND

In May 2006, Council adopted Ordinance 15453, which established the CEOC and added a new chapter King County Code (K.C.C).¹ The ordinance allows the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council to solicit nominations to the Committee.

Ordinance 17273. In March 2012, the Council adopted ordinance 17273, to comply with the additional language requirement that was placed on King County by Section 203 of the federal Voting Rights Act, which required political subdivisions to provide alternate language ballots and voter education materials if there were more than ten thousand or over five percent of the total voting age citizens who were members of a single minority language group with limited English language proficiency. Following the results of the 2010 Census, the County amended the CEOC membership representation to include a representative of the Vietnamese-speaking community and a representative from each of any other language minority community for which the Director of the Bureau of the Census determines by publication in the Federal Register that King County is required to provide minority language assistance under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act. The ordinance also outlined the process for filling vacancies on the CEOC.

¹ The ordinance allowed for twelve committee members and the CEOC duties and membership representation are outlined in K.C.C. 2.53

Ordinance 18795. In September 2018, the Council adopted ordinance 18795, which updated the CEOC's membership composition from twelve to sixteen members. In addition to increasing the number of and changing the composition of CEOC members, the ordinance changed the mission of the committee to "help King County maintain public confidence in elections". The ordinance also outlines the CEOC's tasks and support provided by staff within the Department of Elections.

Ordinance 19823. In June 2024, Council adopted ordinance 19823, which added new CEOC guidelines under the King County Code.² The new guidelines are as follows:

- At least twenty-eight days before any election, the department of elections shall request from the citizens' elections oversight committee a list of committee members designated as observers.
- At least a reasonable time before any election, the department of elections shall notify the citizens' elections oversight committee of when ballot processing will begin and shall request observers from the committee for the processing of ballots at the counting center. The absence of observers from the committee will not prevent the processing of ballots.
- The department of elections shall notify the citizens' elections oversight committee of opportunities to observe official logic and accuracy tests for each vote tallying system to be used at elections.
- The department of elections shall notify the citizens' elections oversight committee of opportunities to observe recounts.

The ordinance amended language regarding the CEOC's membership. The ordinance outlines the composition of the CEOC as listed below.

1. *One representative sponsored by a nonpartisan organization active in King County that evaluates candidates and ballot measures, such as the Municipal League;*
2. *One representative sponsored by a nonpartisan organization active in King County that provides elections information to the public, such as the League of Women Voters;*
3. *One representative from the disability community;*
4. *One representative sponsored by either a junior taxing district or a city with a population of under twenty thousand;*
5. *One representative of the Chinese-speaking community;*

² K.C.C. 2.16

6. *One representative of the Vietnamese-speaking community;*
7. *One representative of the Spanish-speaking community;*
8. *One representative from the Korean-speaking community;*
9. *One representative from each of any other language minority community for which the Director of the Bureau of the Census determines by publication in the Federal Register that King County is required to provide minority language assistance under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act;*
10. *Two King County registered voters who are not representatives of any of the groups listed in subsection A.1. through 9. and 11. through 16. of this section;*
11. *One representative from the King County Democratic Party;*
12. *One representative from the King County Republican Party;*
13. *One ex officio, nonvoting representative from the Office of the Secretary of State;*
14. *One representative sponsored by an academic institution and has knowledge of elections;*
15. *One representative who has experience in technology; and*
16. *One representative sponsored by a nonpartisan organization in King County that promotes equality and the advancement of Black or African Americans, such as the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle.*

Also, the ordinance updated the process for filling vacancies on the CEOC that included the following changes:

- Except the positions for the King County Democratic Party and the King County Republican Party, vacant positions shall be advertised at a minimum in the county's newspaper of record.
- Except for the ex officio position, members are required to reside in King County. However, members, who during their tenures on the committee temporarily live outside the United States but maintain King County as their residences, may continue to serve on the committee during their temporary absences from the county.
- The representative from the King County Democratic Party and the King County Republican Party are not eligible to serve as the chair of the committee.

ANALYSIS

Proposed motions 2025-0258 and 2025-0259 would confirm the reappointment and appointment to the CEOC. As outlined under K.C.C. 2.53, appointments and reappointments to the CEOC are subject to review by the Employment and Administration Committee, who make a recommendation to the full Council for final confirmation, via motion.

Table 1 below, lists the current membership of the CEOC and the organization or constituency they represent.

Table 1: CEOC Membership as of August 2025

MEMBER	ORGANIZATION/CONSTITUENCY
Mike Flood	representative sponsored by a nonpartisan organization active in King County that evaluates candidates and ballot measures, such as the Municipal League
Kathy Sakahara	representative sponsored by a nonpartisan organization active in King County that provides elections information to the public, such as the League of Women Voters
Carolyn Stevens	Disability community
LeAnn Blanco	representative sponsored by either a junior taxing district or a city with a population under 20,000
Stanley Tsao	Chinese-speaking community
<i>Vacant</i>	Vietnamese-speaking community
<i>Vacant</i>	Spanish-speaking community
Julie Kang	Korean-speaking community
<i>Vacant</i>	representative from each of any other language minority community for which the Director of the Bureau of the Census determines by publication in the Federal Register that King County is required to provide minority language assistance under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act
Hillary De La Cruz Christoper Hays	registered King County voters
Hanna Floss	King County Democratic Party
Mathew Thomas Vice Chair, Election Monitoring	King County Republican Party
Stuart Holmes	ex officio, nonvoting representative from the Office of the Secretary of State
Jason Lambacher	representative sponsored by an academic institution and has knowledge of elections

MEMBER	ORGANIZATION/CONSTITUENCY
Tyson Hartman	representative who has experience in technology
Latasha Mae	representative sponsored by a nonpartisan organization in King County that promotes equality and the advancement of Black or African Americans, such as the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle.

Reappointment.

Proposed Motion 2025-0258 would reappoint Hilary De La Cruz to the CEOC as a King County registered voter, for a three-year term ending July 31, 2028. Ms. De La Cruz has served on the CEOC since 2019 and is a graduate of the University of Washington. Currently, Ms. De La Cruz is employed as a Senior Management Analyst and has previous internship experience with Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness, Statewide Poverty Action Network, and Seattle Children’s Hospital. Ms. De La Cruz is passionate about creating a more just community by listening to the diverse needs and ideas of community members, supporting antiracist policies and budgets that meet those needs, and building bridges between people and policy makers.

Appointment.

Proposed Motion 2025-0259 would appoint a candidate to the CEOC as a representative of the Spanish-speaking Community to a new three-year term ending July 31, 2028. The position has been vacant since June 2024. The Council provided notice of the vacancy and accepted applications to fill the position from July 31, 2025 through August 13, 2025, and one application was received. The Employment and Administration Committee intends to interview the candidate, Juan Rodriguez at the September 2, 2025 meeting.

AMENDMENT

Proposed Motion 2025-0259. An oral amendment would be required to insert the name of the appointee on line 4, line 18, and line 22 of the proposed motion, and to insert “King County Council’s Employment and Administration Committee” as the governing body that identified the candidate on line 4 of the proposed motion.

An oral title amendment would be required to insert the name of the appointee on line 1 of the proposed motion.

INVITED

- Juan Rodriguez, Applicant for appointment to the CEOC

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Motion 2025-0258
2. Proposed Motion 2025-0259



Signature Report

Motion

Proposed No. 2025-0243.1

Sponsors Quinn

1 A MOTION confirming the executive's reappointment of
2 Bilan Aden, who resides in council district five, to the King
3 County Communities of Opportunity-Best Starts for Kids
4 levy advisory board, as a community member who reflects
5 demographic characteristics of the communities that qualify
6 for funding in accordance with Communities of
7 Opportunity funding guidelines and who are grassroots
8 organizers or activists in those communities or who live in
9 or have worked in those communities.

10 BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

11 The county executive's reappointment of Bilan Aden, who resides in council
12 district five, to the King County Communities of Opportunity-Best Starts for Kids levy
13 advisory board, as a community member who reflects demographic characteristics of the
14 communities that qualify for funding in accordance with Communities of Opportunity
15 funding guidelines and who are grassroots organizers or activists in those communities or

- 16 who live in or have worked in those communities, for a three-year term to expire on June
17 30, 2028, is hereby confirmed.

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Girmay Zahilay, Chair

ATTEST:

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

Attachments: None