

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Resolution approving the King County 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan for the King County Solid Waste System as presented to the City Council on June 24, 2019.

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DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

King County Solid Waste Division staff will provide an overview of the King County 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (Plan), including amendments adopted by the County Council after the last Bellevue Council briefing on February 25. The Plan outlines goals and policies for managing solid waste in King County over the next six years, including recommendations on potential future disposal methods, new transfer facilities, and recycling goals. Tonight's presentation is an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about the adopted Plan.

ACTION

The Plan was adopted by the King County Council on April 24. In order for the Plan to be forwarded to the state Department of Ecology for final action, cities representing 75 percent of the total population of King County cities acting on the Plan within the 120-day review period must approve the Plan. If a city takes no action, that city's population is not included in the adoption formula. The review period ends on September 16.

Staff is seeking Council action on a Resolution to approve the Plan. Council may also reject the Plan or choose not to act on the Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Move to adopt Resolution No.9628.

If approved, effective date: 06/24/2019

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

On February 25, King County Solid Waste Division Director Pat McLaughlin briefed Council at a Regional Issues Study Session. The agenda memo from that meeting (Attachment A) provides additional background on the King County 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (Plan) (Attachment B).

King County provides solid waste planning, transfer, and disposal services to 37 cities, including Bellevue. The cities of Seattle and Milton are not part of the County's solid waste system. The system is governed by the Amended and Restated Solid Waste Interlocal Agreement (ILA) which is in effect through 2040. The County has provided these services to Bellevue under an interlocal agreement since 1988. The ILA establishes the responsibilities of the County and the City in providing solid waste services. Local collection services are provided by the City through a separate contract with a private hauler. The ILA establishes the County as the comprehensive planning authority, recognizes that the County sets disposal fees for the system, and requires that the County provide for and manage the transfer and disposal of solid waste. The County operates the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill (Cedar Hills), two rural drop boxes and eight transfer stations throughout the county, including the Factoria Transfer Station in Bellevue.

King County 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan Development

The Plan provides an assessment of the County's solid waste system, and documents current and future solid waste demand. The Plan sets the context for key policy choices related to solid waste disposal, transfer and recycling.

The last King County Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan was adopted in 2001. State law directs counties to review and update their plans, as needed, every five years. Since 2001 there have been a series of planning efforts and reports that provided guidance and recommendations that informed the development of the 2019 Plan. The most recent effort by the County to develop an updated plan began two years ago, resulting in the proposed Plan.

Since the February Council briefing, the County Council considered several amendments to the Plan and adopted the Plan with amendments on April 24. The following sections describe the key Plan recommendations as presented to Council in February followed by the County Council adopted amendments.

Plan Highlights

The Plan is organized into chapters with goals, policies and actions contained in each chapter. The chapters are:

- Introduction
- The Existing Solid Waste System
- Forecasting and Data
- Sustainable Materials Management
- Solid Waste Transfer and Processing
- Landfill Management and Solid Waste Disposal
- Solid Waste System Finance
- References and Appendices

Recommendations Consistent with Bellevue City Council Direction on Transfer and Disposal

Several key recommendations in the Plan are consistent with previous Council direction and meet Bellevue's interests. These include future disposal options and the siting and development of future

solid waste transfer capacity in Northeast King County (when the Houghton Transfer Station closes) that reduces potential negative impacts to Bellevue and the Factoria Transfer Station.

The Plan recommends: 1) siting and construction of a new Northeast recycling and transfer station to address transfer capacity needs in addition to the existing Factoria Transfer Station when the Houghton Transfer Station closes; and 2) maximizing the capacity at Cedar Hills to meet disposal needs through 2040.

Transfer

Transfer stations are facilities where garbage and recyclable materials are sorted and consolidated before the garbage is taken to Cedar Hills and recyclable materials are taken to the materials recovery facility.

During the planning process, the County explored several options to address current and future transfer facility needs. The Houghton Transfer Station in Kirkland is over 50 years old, has limited garbage and recycling processing, and it is located in a residential neighborhood. The three alternatives considered in the Plan are: maintain Houghton as-is, build a new Northeast recycling and transfer station, or consider use of a combination of facilities to meet the needs as demand increases.

The Plan recommends building a new Northeast recycling and transfer station and closing the Houghton facility once the new Northeast facility is complete. The Plan meets Bellevue's interests by explicitly recognizing that new Northeast transfer capacity will supplement capacity at the Factoria Transfer Station. This ensures that the Factoria Transfer Station will not be expanded and protects Bellevue and Northeast County residents from negative traffic impacts, inadequate service levels, higher rates and regional inequity.

Disposal

The Plan considers three options for meeting the region's disposal capacity needs through 2040:

- 1) Further develop Cedar Hills by expanding disposal to new areas of the property;
- 2) Waste export by rail to an out of county landfill; and
- 3) Site and build a waste-to-energy burn facility.

The Plan recommends Option 1, to further develop Cedar Hills. In addition, the County Council included a proviso in its 2019-2020 budget to require a study for delivery in October to analyze the feasibility of a waste-to-energy facility in the region. This study will build on the work that has already been done for the Plan and will inform the region's consideration of the next disposal options once Cedar Hills is closed.

Recycling

The Plan contains an aspirational goal to achieve "zero waste" of resources and eliminate the disposal of materials with economic value by 2030. In the interim, a goal of 70 percent recycling is included that would be accomplished through a combination of efforts in the following order of priority: waste prevention and reuse; product stewardship; recycling and composting; and beneficial use. Achieving this goal is complicated by China's recent additional restrictions on accepting recyclable materials.

The County, cities and haulers formed a Responsible Recycling Task Force (Task Force) to identify recommendations to deal with China's restrictions on accepting recyclables. Ongoing restrictions from China could impact the life of Cedar Hills and city solid waste collection contracts. The Task Force released a series of recommendations in January for consideration by cities, the County, and other stakeholders to improve the current recycling system, reduce waste, and reduce contamination in the recycling stream. The Task Force recommendations are not included in the Plan itself, but the Plan's policies and actions would allow for flexibility in the implementation of the recommendations if the region agrees to do so. Additional information about the Task Force recommendations can be found in the February 25 agenda memo (Attachment A).

Some of the Task Force recommendations would have direct impacts to customers' solid waste bills while others would have indirect impacts by increasing the cost of products due to the increased cost of packaging. Solid waste haulers would also be impacted by some of the recommendations. Bellevue staff will continue to monitor the recommendations to identify any potential impacts to customers, the City's local collection contract, and rates.

Finance

The fees charged at County facilities are called "tipping fees" and pay for the operation and maintenance of transfer and disposal facilities, equipment, education to support waste prevention, recycling, grants to cities and administrative operating expenses and overhead. Tipping fees also pay for the construction of transfer facilities. Bonds or loans may be used for large projects, but repayment of this debt is funded by tipping fees.

Although the Plan does not recommend a specific change to the current fee structure, it does discuss future rate studies and a potential rate restructure in the future. Before any changes are proposed, the County will work with cities and stakeholders to study the impact on revenue and costs, equity issues and system-wide financing.

2019 King County Solid Waste Management Plan Amendments

The County Council voted unanimously to adopt several amendments to the Plan on April 1. The seven amendments include the following:

- Provide specificity about maintaining a buffer between Cedar Hills disposal areas and the property boundary;
- Direct the County to develop a Cedar Hills bird management plan;
- Direct the County to produce a report on best practices for landfill cover;
- Clarify the maximum heights for specific areas of Cedar Hills;
- Allow the County Road Services Division to charge the Solid Waste Division for mitigation of Cedar Hills-related road impacts;
- Direct the County to develop a timeline and process for planning the next disposal option that will be necessary once Cedar Hills has reached full capacity; and
- Amend the title of the authorizing ordinance for the Plan to include appropriate code references.

The County Council approved the Plan, as amended, on April 24.

Plan Approval Process and Timeline

The County transmitted the amended Plan to its 37 solid waste system cities for consideration and action on May 20. Cities, including Bellevue, have a 120-day review period ending September 16 to act on the Plan. To move the Plan forward for final approval by the Washington State Department of Ecology, cities representing 75 percent of the total population of the cities which take action on the Plan during the review period, must approve the Plan. A city's legislative body may choose to take no action on the Plan, vote to approve, or vote to reject the Plan. If a city takes no action, that city's population is not included in the adoption formula.

A resolution approving the Plan is attached for Council consideration.

The County anticipates sending a joint City-County approved Plan to the Department of Ecology for final review and approval by November.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

Several recommendations in the Plan are consistent with Council direction regarding future disposal options and the siting and development of future solid waste transfer capacity in Northeast King County when the Houghton Transfer Station closes. These measures would prevent negative impacts to Bellevue or the Factoria Transfer Station.

Fiscal Impact

The Plan recommendation to extend the life of Cedar Hills is estimated to have the lowest cost of the future disposal options that were evaluated. The cost to develop additional disposal and transfer capacity in the County will be reflected in future tipping fees and customer rates. As discussed at the February 25 Council Study Session, there are also potential fiscal impacts related to the implementation of future recycling recommendations. The extent of the fiscal impact is unknown at this time and could impact tipping fees, customer rates and hauling contracts.

OPTIONS

1. Adopt the Resolution approving the 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan for the King County Solid Waste System as presented to the City Council on June 24, 2019.
2. Do not adopt the Resolution and direct staff to prepare legislation to reject the Plan.
3. Take no action on the Plan.

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

- A. Update on the King County 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan, Agenda Memo, 2/25/2019
Proposed Resolution No. 9628

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan