

Regional Solid Waste Transfer Plan

Bellevue memo re: Solid Waste Draft Transfer Plan
Report – Part 2

DATE: May 11, 2015

TO: Mayor Balducci and City Councilmembers

FROM: Joyce Nichols, Director of Intergovernmental Relations
City Manager's Office

SUBJECT: Regional Solid Waste Draft Transfer Plan Report Part 2

In 2005-2006, the region participated in a multi-stakeholder planning process for the solid waste transfer and disposal system. The process resulted in the 2006 Solid Waste Transfer and Waste Management Plan (approved by the County Council in 2007) that recognized the eight transfer stations in the system and the plans to update or replace the stations (the "Base Plan"):

- Factoria (to be rebuilt on site – currently under construction),
- Houghton (to be closed and replaced with a new northeast county station),
- Bow Lake (rebuilt in 2013),
- Enumclaw,
- Algona (to be replaced by a new south county station),
- Renton,
- Shoreline (rebuilt in 2009) and
- Vashon.

A replacement for Algona is currently in planning, Houghton is still scheduled to close in the early 2020s, and Renton is also again under discussion for closure. Bellevue supported and continues to support this original Base Plan for transfer stations, including the closure of Houghton.

In 2013, the King County Council directed a review of the Transfer Plan (Part 1) in response to several circumstances: the reduction in tonnage due to the economic downturn, a 2011 King County Performance Audit that addressed the cost, number and functionality of the transfer stations, and the revised tonnage forecasts due to the fact that Bellevue, Clyde Hill, Yarrow Point, Medina and Hunts Point did not sign the new extended ILA through 2040.

Bellevue was actively involved in that review and provided feedback to the County in several letters and forums regarding impacts to the City, the Factoria Transfer Station and surrounding area, and the Eastgate Way property owned by the County. Although the final report from the Part 1 review recommended that the new northeast transfer station be kept as a potential future facility to retain flexibility in the system, the County Council directed additional review of the northeast and Renton service area needs (Part 2 review)

through a proviso in the 2015 budget. The direction provided was to analyze operational, policy and capital strategies to provide transfer service to the northeast portion of King County, including the comparison of building a new transfer station versus implementing demand management strategies instead. In other words, the staff's assignment was to find a way to not build a new transfer station in the northeast county. The County Council also requested an analysis of the potential closure of the Renton Transfer Station. The Part 2 review assumes that Houghton will close as planned.

The Transfer Plan Review Part 2 Draft Report was issued on March 31, 2015 and concluded the following:

Based on the data and the analysis the division has done to date, it appears that there are viable alternatives to building a new Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station even when the Houghton Transfer Station is closed (no later than 2023). These alternatives are not without impacts, however, and they require the support and potential policy actions from our City partners. The alternatives require a variety of other actions and decisions that must be taken in order to mitigate the impacts on other transfer stations.

Bellevue and several other cities in northeast King County have serious concerns regarding the proposal to not include a new northeast transfer station in the comprehensive plan. There are significant negative impacts to Bellevue and other northeast cities, and the concerns were captured in letters sent to the County as part of the public comment process on the Part 2 draft report.

Attached are the following comment letters:

- Joint letter to the King County Executive and County Council signed by the Mayors from Bellevue, Beaux Arts, Clyde Hill, Bothell, Hunts Point, Medina, Newcastle, Renton and Yarrow Point, dated May 6, 2015
- Bellevue letter to the Director of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks regarding the Factoria Transfer Station Conditional Use Permit, dated May 6, 2015
- Bellevue comment letter to the King County Executive and County Council regarding the Transfer Plan Review Part 2 Draft Report, dated May 6, 2015

On a related issue, Bellevue and King County have been discussing Bellevue's potential purchase of the County's property located on Eastgate Way in exchange for Bellevue signing the new extended Solid Waste Interlocal Agreement. The City has had a long-standing interest in purchasing that property for many reasons. The Council adopted an Eastgate/I-90 Corridor Plan to implement the City's vision for development of the area. The property is ideally situated for mixed use, transit-oriented development near the Eastgate Park and Ride and Bellevue College. In particular, the property could be developed using a public/private partnership for commercial uses as well as important public uses, such as affordable housing or as a possible homeless shelter.



May 6, 2015

Dow Constantine, King County Executive
King County Chinook Building
401 – 5th Ave, Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: Comments on Transfer Plan Review Part 2 Draft Report

Dear Executive Constantine:

In response to the request for comments on the Transfer Plan Review Part 2 Draft Report, we are writing to strongly urge King County to retain the option of a new northeast transfer station as a potential future facility in the Solid Waste Comprehensive Plan. Retaining this option in the Plan ensures that upon closure of the Houghton and Renton Transfer Stations, there are sufficient facilities capable of handling the future tonnage and traffic generated in the northeast region of the County in an efficient and equitable manner.

Without the option of a new northeast transfer station, the negative impacts to the remaining transfer stations, traffic, the environment, regional equity, system efficiency, local collection rates and station users are significant and unacceptable, including the following:

- **Regional equity is not achieved:** The Draft Report is inconsistent with the County Code requirement for regional equity in siting transfer stations. The result will be that one area of the County will absorb an undue share of impacts. Of particular concern is that the proposals are inconsistent with the Factoria Transfer Station Conditional Use Permit, and Bellevue has indicated it will be enforcing the permit as necessary.
- **Disproportionate impacts:** The concepts and strategies relied upon will result in disproportionate impacts across the County, creating a two class transfer station system with inconsistent and unfair policies, services and rates across the system. The northeast portion of the County will be underserved due to restricted self-haul and recycling opportunities. It will be overburdened with increased traffic and negative environmental impacts to air quality and noise. Higher fees and rates, both at the transfer stations and through increased costs to local collection contracts due to longer hauling distances and


traffic congestion, will also disproportionately impact the northeast County. The fees and rates paid by customers in northeast King County will be supporting higher levels of service and increased capital investments in other parts of the County, but not the northeast.

- **Assumptions and mitigation strategies do not appear to be viable:** The Draft Report is based on a combination of assumptions and strategies that are untested. Regional support for sweeping policy changes is uncertain at best. This is particularly true for the County's assumption that the region will reach a 70% recycling rate based on behavioral changes that are notoriously hard to influence. Even if all of the mitigation strategies are successfully implemented, there is no data to support the County's conclusion that the operational and policy changes will fully mitigate the decision not to build a new northeast station, and there is no contingency plan if the strategies fail.
- **Self-haul impacts are not adequately addressed:** The proposed strategies did not adequately consider impacts to large institutional self-haulers or small business owners. King County has failed to consider that self-haul includes large institutions that run their own collection, such as cities, school districts or Boeing. Self-haulers also include small business landscape companies that depend on easy access to self-haul at the end of each business day. These stakeholders need to be specifically targeted to identify concerns and obtain buy-in to the proposed restrictions and rate impacts.

The Draft Report identifies significant impacts to all of northeast King County that have not been adequately addressed nor vetted with stakeholders. We urge the County to carefully consider the future and plan a system that provides a geographically balanced, flexible system of transfer stations that is able to meet the needs of a growing County without placing undue burden on just one area.




Mayor Richard Leider
Town of Beaux Arts Village



Mayor Claudia Balducci
City of Bellevue



Mayor George Martin
City of Clyde Hill



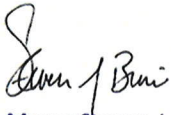
Mayor Joshua Freed
City of Bothell



Mayor Joe Sabey
Town of Hunts Point



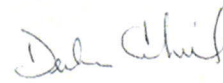
Mayor Patrick Boyd
City of Medina



Mayor Steven J. Buri
City of Newcastle



Mayor Denis Law
City of Renton



Mayor Dicker Cahill
Town of Yarrow Point

cc: King County Councilmembers
Diane Carlson, Director of Regional Initiatives, King County Executive
Christie True, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)
Pat McLaughlin, Director, Solid Waste Division, DNRP



Post Office Box 90012 • Bellevue, Washington • 98009 9012

May 6, 2015

Christie True, Director
King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks
201 South Jackson Street, Room 700
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: Adequacy of Analysis and Mitigation for the Factoria Recycling and Transfer Station
Permits

Dear Ms. True:

This is to provide you with information about the City of Bellevue's concerns regarding revisions currently under study to transfer service plans in the northeast portion of King County. After review of the Transfer Plan Review, Part 2, Draft Report, it is apparent that modifications to the regional system now under consideration by the County will result in environmental impacts to the Factoria Recycling and Transfer Station (RTS) that were not addressed by the Conditional Use Permit applications submitted to City of Bellevue for review in 2012. At that time, the Factoria RTS was characterized as one of eight existing King County transfer stations, and analyzed as such. As described in the new Draft Report, significant changes in (1) existing and planned stations and (2) operational strategies are under consideration. If these changes are implemented, the City will need to require a new Conditional Use Permit in order to analyze and address the anticipated impacts. In addition, a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that evaluates the alternatives being considered by the County will be necessary BEFORE options are foreclosed or actions set in motion that would make the impacts identified in the Draft Transfer Plan a virtual certainty in Factoria.

The Conditional Use Permit (12 110986 LB) and Critical Area Land Use Permit (12 110987 LO) for the Factoria RTS were approved by the City of Bellevue on November 21, 2012. The Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance for these applications was issued by King County on March 8, 2012. The Transportation section of that DNS primarily referenced traffic impacts during construction. Traffic impacts during operation of the site were addressed in the DNS by this statement: "Due to anticipated volume growth at the Factoria RTS, evaluation during operation may be required to assess the need for an additional inbound scale to minimize traffic queuing under future conditions."

Although the City of Bellevue did not issue the DNS for this application, City staff did review and assess long term, mid-range, and short term operational impacts during review of the CUP

application. An approval of the CUP relied upon project disclosures provided by the County. With regard to long term traffic impacts, staff determined that the proposal was consistent with the City's Transportation Facilities Plan EIS. Payment of a traffic impact fee alleviates traffic congestion caused by the cumulative impacts of development. Analysis of mid-range traffic impacts, typically assessed through a Traffic Standards Code (BCC 14.10) concurrency analysis, was not undertaken since the proposal's net p.m. peak hour trip generation of 12 trips did not meet the 30 p.m. peak hour threshold. Information as to short term operational impacts was provided in the "Factoria Recycling and Transfer Station Replacement Project Traffic Impact Analysis" dated January, 2012, by HDR Engineering, Inc. This traffic impact analysis (TIA) was reviewed by City staff, is included in the City's file for this project, and was one of the bases upon which the CUP was conditioned and approved.

Day-of-opening (assumed to be 2014) trip generation was determined to be 12 net new p.m. peak hour trips. Additional trips anticipated for the long term (assumed to be 2042) were forecasted to be 44 net new p.m. peak hour trips. The TIA analyzed both the 2014 and 2042 scenarios and determined that all the study intersections would remain at the same level of service with and without the proposed Factoria RTS improvements.

The County's consultant also provided a Queuing Analysis Technical Memorandum, dated November 3, 2011. This Memorandum indicated that the average queue at the entrance would not produce any negative effects to the adjacent commercial driveway on either the weekdays or the weekends in 2014, but would spill back to the commercial driveway for 10% of the station's operating hours on the weekdays and 60% on the weekends in 2042. The Development Services Department (DSD) of the City of Bellevue concurred with the conclusions reached in the County's DNS and the technical memoranda submitted in support of the County's CUP application. In addition to the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Solid Waste Division (KCSWD), Mitigated DNS and the queuing and traffic impact analyses described above, the following technical memoranda were also used as the bases upon which the CUP was conditioned and approved:

- Visual Quality Impact Assessment
- Geotechnical Report
- Biological Evaluation
- Critical Areas Report
- Noise
- Air Quality

KCSWD is now considering operational, policy, and capital strategies for providing transfer service to northeast King County. These Concepts and their resulting impacts, described in the Transfer Plan Review, Part 2, Draft Report, include abandonment of a Northeast Transfer Station project, closure of the Houghton Transfer Station, closure of the Renton Transfer Station, and various operational strategies regarding hours of operation and restrictions upon classes of users. These strategies prioritize customer wait time and efficient usage of transfer stations.

Unfortunately, these priorities would result in unmitigated impacts on the operation of the Factoria RTS and the surrounding public facilities and on the use of private property in the vicinity. For example, Concept 2 restricts the hours that self-haulers can use the Factoria RTS, and also extends the hours, so that self-haulers are encouraged to use those extended hours. As documented in spreadsheets in Attachment 3 of the Draft Report, this restriction shifts trips to Bellevue's street system peak hours, increasing volumes between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. by hundreds of trips. This operational change pushes self-haul access to the Factoria RTS into the p.m. traffic peak for the City of Bellevue. This impact was not analyzed as part of the Factoria RTS application review, is not consistent with the terms of the County's CUP approval, represents an unmitigated impact that would be inconsistent with SEPA and GMA, and will not be permitted to occur in the City.

Additionally, as noted in the Draft Report, weekday queues at the Factoria RTS of 130 vehicles and Saturday queues of over 180 vehicles are predicted to occur with closing of the Houghton Transfer Station. Mitigation strategies for these queues are referenced, but are not otherwise detailed. Not only would these queues represent another unmitigated impact on properties in the vicinity of the Factoria RTS, the queue lengths would not meet the County's own level of service standards and would significantly reduce customer functionality at the Factoria RTS and other remaining transfer stations in the system.

The impacts of the range of strategies now contemplated by the County's plan for providing transfer service were not addressed by the Conditional Use Permit approved by Bellevue for the Factoria RTS. Therefore, to the extent that program changes to the transfer station system by KCSWD change assumptions upon which the Factoria RTS CUP was issued and conditioned, the County will be held to impact levels disclosed in the CUP. Modification to the approved CUP will be necessary based on updated analysis of the above-referenced technical memoranda before any operational changes can be made to Factoria. Given the information contained in the Transfer Plan Review Draft Report, the operational changes contemplated in several of the identified Concepts appear likely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact for which mitigation cannot be easily identified. Therefore, a full EIS that evaluates the alternatives being considered by the County will be necessary.

Should the County commit to pursuing any of the Concepts that would change the currently eight station system, a new CUP application would be required based on analysis contained in an EIS. This new application would, at a minimum, need to address increased p.m. peak hour trip generation, queuing, and levels of service at affected City of Bellevue intersections, the air quality impacts associated with the queuing, and the redistribution of regional traffic that would be necessary to access a more distributed system of transfer station facilities as well as the noise impacts associated with expanded station operations that would be necessary to redistribute the solid waste tonnage to fewer stations. It is anticipated that a concurrency analysis would be required as a component of this review. In addition, payment of an updated traffic impact fee, currently anticipated to be \$5000 per p.m. peak hour trip as of January 1, 2016, would be

required with any approval of expanded usage at the Factoria RTS. It is our expectation that the County would pursue all necessary approvals and environmental review before any changes are made to the existing system plans that would change Factoria RTS operations disclosed by the County in its application for CUP approval. Please be advised that the City will begin proceedings necessary to enforce the terms of the existing CUP approval should it become necessary.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol V. Helland".

Carol Helland, Director, Land Use Division
Development Services Department

Cc: Bellevue City Councilmembers
King County Councilmembers
Dow Constantine, King County Executive
Diane Carlson, Director of Regional Initiatives, King County Executive
Pat McLaughlin, Director, King County Solid Waste Division
Bob Burns, Deputy Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Kevin Kiernan, Assistant Division Director, Solid Waste Division, DNRP
Diane Yates, Intergovernmental Liaison, Solid Waste Division, DNRP



Post Office Box 90012 • Bellevue, Washington • 98009 9012

May 6, 2015

Dow Constantine, King County Executive
King County Chinook Building
401 - 5th Ave, Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: Bellevue Comments on Transfer Plan Review Part 2 Draft Report

Dear Executive Constantine:

In response to the request for comments on the Transfer Plan Review Part 2 Draft Report, transmitted to the King County Council on March 31, 2015, Bellevue is writing to strongly urge the County to retain the option of a new northeast transfer station as a potential future facility in the Solid Waste Comprehensive Plan. Although the final report from the Part 1 review recommended that the new northeast transfer station be kept as a potential future facility to retain flexibility in the system, the County Council directed additional review of the northeast and Renton service area needs, which led to the current Transfer Plan Review Part 2 Draft Report ("Draft Report").

The City has the following serious concerns about the true viability of closing the Houghton (and potentially Renton) Transfer Stations without a plan to replace the capacity and service provided by those stations with a new transfer station in the northeast region of the County at some point in the future:

1. The Draft Report is inconsistent with the County Code requirement for regional equity in siting transfer stations.
2. The concepts and strategies relied upon will result in disproportionate impacts across the County and system inefficiency.
3. The Draft Report is based on a combination of assumptions and strategies that are untested and lack the regional support that would be needed for implementation. Even if successfully implemented, there is no data to support the County's conclusion that the operational and policy changes will fully mitigate the decision not to build a new northeast station when Houghton closes.
4. The proposals in the Draft Report are inconsistent with the Factoria Transfer Station Conditional Use Permit (CUP).
5. The Draft Report does not support the County policy of equity and social justice.
6. It is unrealistic to assume that the region can achieve a 70% recycling rate, and there is no contingency plan if the region does not reach that goal.
7. The proposed strategies did not adequately consider impacts to large institutional self-haulers or small business owners.

8. The concepts and strategies relied upon in the Draft Report will cause significant adverse environmental impacts.
9. Northeast cities will experience increased rates in local collection contracts.
10. Public outreach on potential operational and policy changes was inadequate.

Additional information about each of the City's concerns is included below.

1. The Draft Report is inconsistent with the County Code requirement for regional equity in siting transfer stations.

King County Code 10.08.030 requires that "to the extent practicable, solid waste facilities shall be located in a manner that equalizes their distribution around the county, so that no single area of the county will be required to absorb an undue share of the impact from these facilities." (emphasis added)

Both the provision of services and the responsibility for supporting those services should be equitably distributed. The proposals in the Draft Report shift an undue share of the impacts from the system to the Factoria Transfer Station and Bellevue, violating County Code.

Localized impacts include long traffic queues and long wait times at Factoria Transfer Station. Queue lengths would cut off all access to businesses along SE 32nd Street and disrupt traffic all the way to the intersection with Richards Road (a ¼ mile backup on a local street). The Draft Report also proposes to shift self-haul traffic away from the transfer station peak time to later in the afternoon – right into the afternoon rush hour peak. Intersections in the vicinity of Richards Road will likely be severely impacted and were only addressed in a cursory manner in the Draft Report. The environmental impacts associated with the increased traffic in the vicinity of the Factoria Transfer Station include at a minimum air quality and noise, which were also not adequately addressed in the Draft Report.

In addition to Bellevue, all of the northeast region will experience undue impacts through increased drive times to reach a transfer station, increased queues and wait times, increased traffic congestion, negative air quality impacts, and rate impacts as haulers will charge more in local collection contracts to account for increased travel and wait times to reach transfer services.

2. The concepts and strategies relied upon will result in disproportionate impacts across the County and system inefficiency.

The proposals effectively create a two class transfer station system in King County, with a lack of consistent policies, services and rates across the system. The northeast portion of the County will be both underserved and overburdened while the other areas of the County will be fully served by transfer stations that are geographically distributed for maximum system efficiency. In fact, currently the County is actively working on the siting and replacement of the Algona Transfer Station, which will serve south King County along with the Bow Lake Transfer Station.

System users in south King County will have a complete range of transfer and recycling services available to them, better and more convenient access to such services, shorter queues, shorter wait times, shorter drive times, fewer environmental impacts and potentially lower fees and rates. These users will not be sharing the impacts that those in the northeast County will be.

Northeast County users will have restricted self-haul and recycling opportunities, restricted access due to operating hours changes and/or peak pricing, longer queues and wait times, negative environmental impacts, and higher fees and rates, both at the transfer station and through increased costs to local collection contracts due to longer hauling distances and increased traffic congestion. At a minimum, the northeast County will be paying the same tipping fee as the rest of the County for services and capital construction projects that they will not benefit from. And, as discussed in more detail below, institutional or business self-haulers will be hit particularly hard by the proposals. Overall, the proposals will result in lower service levels for those that are bearing the most burden of hosting transfer facilities.

3. The Draft Report is based on a combination of assumptions and strategies that are untested and lack the regional support that would be needed for implementation. Even if successfully implemented, there is no data to support the County's conclusion that the operational and policy changes will fully mitigate the decision not to build a new northeast station when Houghton closes.

The conclusion drawn in the Draft Report that the option to not build a new northeast station is viable is based on a combination of assumptions and strategies that rely heavily on behavioral changes that are notoriously hard to influence and not entirely under the control of the County. Examples include the assumption that the region will achieve a 70% recycling rate by 2030 (discussed in more detail below) and that demand management strategies will significantly change self-haul behavior.

The County primarily relied on a very limited and flawed data set to support its conclusions. The primary data was drawn from a self-selected transfer station survey that was conducted in less than two months, in the winter time and spanned the holiday season. Such a survey is unlikely to capture the true range of transfer station stakeholders, and it is unwise to rely on such a limited sample to draw conclusions that have very significant and wide-ranging impacts if not successful.

Several of the strategies assumed in the Draft Report rely upon significant policy changes and other actions by every city in the system and King County. These include adopting mandatory collection ordinances and reducing bulky waste fees in each city's private hauling collection contract. The 70% recycling goal assumption in and of itself is likely to require many more such actions by all cities, including mandates, bans and the funding of garbage "police." There is no evidence and no assurances that cities will be willing to undertake such sweeping policy changes. The County should not rely on contract changes for mitigation when those changes are not under the County's control. Opening up collection contracts could also prove to be problematic for cities. Initiating changes to bulky waste fees may impact other terms in city contracts and lead to higher costs, which

may be compounded if at the same time haulers look to recoup increased costs due to increased drive and wait times.

Even if cities were willing to adopt mandatory collection ordinances and reduce bulky waste fees for curbside pickup, there is very little evidence to suggest that such policy changes will significantly reduce self-haul trips. Only 1/3 of the cities in King County's system have mandatory collection ordinances. Many of those cities have self-haul rates that are similar or even higher than cities that do not have mandatory collection ordinances. The County's data shows that self-haulers in mandatory collection cities represent 40% of the total self-haul traffic at the County's transfer stations.

4. The proposals in the Draft Report are inconsistent with the Factoria Transfer Station Conditional Use Permit (CUP).

The City will be providing an official letter under separate cover regarding the Factoria Transfer Station Conditional Use Permit because the Draft Report is inconsistent with the CUP approval, which was based on an eight station system and underlying traffic and technical analyses that formed the basis of the approval. Modification of the CUP will be required if and when the County acts on the new transfer plan as part of the Solid Waste Comprehensive Plan to close Houghton and/or Renton and remove the new northeast station from the plan. These actions will trigger a requirement for a full Environmental Impact Statement. The new application will need to address the shift of traffic trips to Bellevue's afternoon peak hours, queuing levels of service at intersections, redistribution of regional traffic, noise and other environmental impacts. The City will begin proceedings to enforce the terms of the CUP should it become necessary. Please see the City's CUP letter for more specific details on enforcement of the CUP.

5. The Draft Report does not support the County policy of equity and social justice.

The County's equity and social justice ordinance requires the County to "consider equity and social justice impacts in all decision-making so that decisions increase fairness and opportunity for all people, particularly for people of color, low-income communities and people with limited English proficiency or, when decisions that have a negative impact on fairness and opportunity are unavoidable, steps are implemented that mitigate the negative impact."

The County included several maps in the Draft Report that display the communities in the County using various demographic factors. Several of the maps highlight the disparity between the areas near the Factoria Transfer Station in east Bellevue and the rest of the northeast service area of the County where a new northeast station would need to be sited. In particular, the maps show that median household incomes are significantly lower and the percent of the community below 200% of the federal poverty line is significantly higher in the east Bellevue/Factoria Transfer Station area as compared to the rest of the northeast service area. When combined with the disproportionate impacts discussed above, it appears that the less affluent area of the County is being sacrificed for the benefit of the wealthier service area.

The proposed restrictions to self-haul hours, a potential ban on yard and wood waste disposal at Factoria Transfer Station and peak pricing are all strategies that will disproportionately negatively impact small business landscape companies in northeast King County. These small companies tend to be minority-owned, and the proposed strategies conflict with the County's social justice policies by unfairly burdening the business operations of these landscapers. The landscapers need convenient, fairly priced opportunities to dispose of the yard and/or wood waste from their businesses each day – the same opportunities that are available to landscapers who operate in south King County.

6. It is unrealistic to assume that the region can achieve a 70% recycling rate, and there is no contingency plan if the region does not reach that goal.

King County has set an ambitious goal of achieving a 70% recycling rate County-wide, across all customer sectors (i.e., single-family, multifamily, and commercial) by 2030. Today's recycling rate in the County is 53%. As mentioned above, it will take drastic restrictions, bans, and mandates to achieve – most of which have never been tested alone, much less in combination, and there is no commitment by the cities throughout the County to take such drastic actions on behalf of their customers.

Until all policies, restrictions, bans, and mandates have been adopted, and actual data establishes that progress is being made in a timely fashion towards achieving the 70% recycling rate, this cannot serve as a foundational assumption for such a significant change in the solid waste transfer system plan. The most striking omission in the Draft Report, given the large uncertainty associated with this key assumption, is that there is no recognition that the new northeast station should be kept as an option in the Solid Waste Comprehensive Plan as a contingency in case the region does not achieve the target goal.

The Draft Report states that “a ten percent lower recycling rate by 2030 would equate to an approximate 33 percent increase in tonnage.” (pages 3 & 16) Even a small failure to make progress in achieving the recycling goal has a huge impact on tonnage that will need to be handled through the transfer system. Yet the Draft Report concludes that “it is not expected to have a substantial effect on transactional volume.” It is not realistic to conclude that a 33% increase in tonnage would not have a substantial effect on transactional volume. This highlights the large risk associated with reliance upon the assumption that the region will achieve the 70% goal.

The City of Seattle has had mandates and bans for years, yet Seattle's recycling rate is only 60% (data taken from Seattle website; the Draft Report states Seattle's rate as 56%). In addition, the Draft Report cites no data from the City of Seattle correlating Seattle's actions and changes to its recycling rate. The King County road to 70% is guaranteed to be more difficult given the diversity of jurisdictions and approaches to recycling, so Seattle's experience should serve as a warning to those who want to rely on recycling as the alternative to building a new northeast station.

Given that the region has not established the policies and actions that will need to be implemented to achieve the 70% target, it is unknown how much of the anticipated

recycling will occur at the curb and how much will be captured through materials processing at the transfer stations through on-site separation. If the latter, then that material has to be accounted for in the tonnage that is being processed through the transfer system, even if it is not garbage. It is unclear if these materials are being accounted for in the volume calculations and impacts on the transfer system.

The Draft Report includes banning yard debris and wood waste from Factoria Transfer Station without a plan for where those materials will go. If banned, it is possible that yard debris and wood waste would end up in the garbage. Landscapers and others may not be willing to drive to less convenient alternative sites, and this could result in these materials being improperly disposed of as garbage.

7. The proposed strategies did not adequately consider impacts to large institutional self-haulers or small business owners.

King County defines “self-haul” as “[a]nyone who brings garbage, recyclables, and/or yard waste to a transfer facility except a commercial collection company.” King County fails to account for the fact that self-haul includes large institutions that run their own collection, like Boeing, the Bellevue School District, and Bellevue Community College. Every jurisdiction in the County, including the City of Bellevue, is a self-hauler. Self-haul is not just the mom/pop/weekend warrior hauling their garbage to the transfer station, and the Draft Report does not address this distinction. There has been no outreach to the larger institutional self-haulers to identify their concerns and get their buy-in to the proposed restrictions, changes, and rate impacts.

Additionally, the potential impacts to small businesses in the area, such as the small landscaping companies that depend on being able to dump their loads at the end of the day, have not been evaluated. Illegal dumping may increase, and then jurisdictions are left to try and solve yet another problem with limited resources.

8. The concepts and strategies relied upon in the Draft Report will cause significant adverse environmental impacts.

As mentioned above, the proposals result in long wait times at Factoria Transfer Station, with cars idling in long queues on local streets. This has a significant environmental impact to air quality, noise and greenhouse gasses. Changing operating hours to shift self-haul traffic to peak commute times further exacerbates these impacts. The entire northeast region will experience negative air quality and greenhouse gas environmental impacts from increased traffic congestion on regional and local roads as commercial haulers and self-haulers travel further to reach transfer services.

Traffic and queues also increase pollution in stormwater runoff and negatively impact surface water quality in Bellevue’s Greater Kelsey Creek Basin, an important basin for salmon habitat. These significant impacts were not addressed at all in the Draft Report.

9. Northeast cities will experience increased rates in local collection contracts.

The reduction in the number of transfer stations in the northeast area of the County will result in local commercial haulers traveling further to reach transfer services. The increased travel and wait times will result in haulers charging more in local collection contracts for the impacted northeast cities. In addition, one of the strategies relied upon by the County for mitigation is lower bulky waste fees for curbside pickup. This could require all cities opening up local collection contracts to renegotiate services, costs and customer pricing, which is not necessarily an easy or straightforward process for cities to undertake.

10. Public outreach on potential operational and policy changes was inadequate.

The County's public outreach on the Draft Plan was very limited. Given how heavily the County is relying upon behavioral changes, significant outreach would be required to educate various stakeholders on the potential changes and impacts and obtain meaningful feedback. As mentioned above, the limited two month self-selected survey of transfer station users was inadequate in even capturing a true survey of transfer station users. The County did not even attempt to educate and obtain feedback from the general public or the variety of stakeholders that will be impacted regarding the other mitigation strategies it is considering. At a minimum, the County should have conducted several public hearings and meetings with city councils on its transfer station mitigation proposals along with the policy changes that would be needed to achieve a 70% recycling rate.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Plan. We trust that our concerns will be addressed as the County's moves forward in finalizing its transfer plan and Solid Waste Comprehensive Plan.

Sincerely,



Brad Miyake
City Manager

cc: Bellevue City Councilmembers
King County Councilmembers
Diane Carlson, Director of Regional Initiatives, King County Executive
Bob Burns, Deputy Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Christie True, Director, DNRP
Pat McLaughlin, Director, Solid Waste Division, DNRP
Kevin Kiernan, Assistant Division Director, Solid Waste Division, DNRP
Diane Yates, Intergovernmental Liaison, Solid Waste Division, DNRP