

POUNDS OF WASTE DISPOSED AND RECYCLED PER CAPITA

Outcome: Decrease Waste Disposal and Increase Recycling

Countywide Planning Policy Rationale

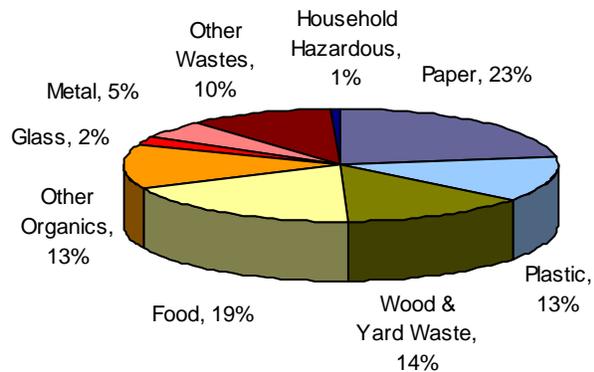
Although the Countywide Planning Policies do not include policy direction for reducing solid waste or promoting recycling programs, the Benchmark Task Force added this Indicator, because recycling and reductions in solid waste save resources and landfill space, and reduce the potential for soil and water contamination due to leakage from landfills.

Due to changes in data collection, information is only available for the service area of King County's Solid Waste Division, an area that covers King County without Seattle. Comparison with data in previous Benchmark reports should be made with caution.

Most of the disposed waste in King County comes from residents and businesses in the form of municipal solid waste (MSW). Industrial waste, construction and demolition materials, and petroleum contaminated soils also contribute to the total waste disposed each year. Figure 20.1 shows the types of materials that residents and businesses threw away in 2007 as MSW. Residential waste, either commercially collected or self-hauled, accounted for 53% of MSW. Paper made up the largest share in both the residential (19%) and non-residential (27%) portions of MSW.

Figure 20.1

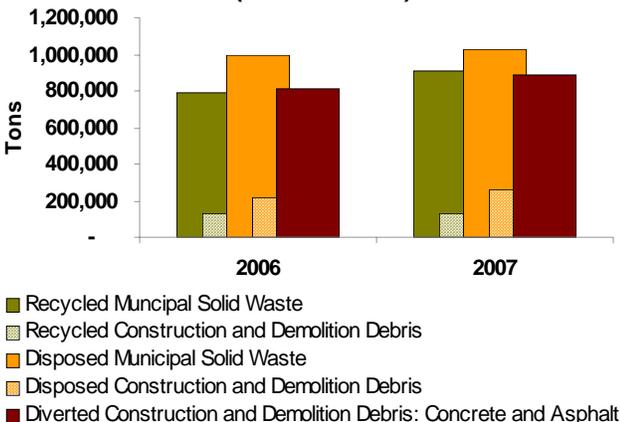
Waste Characterization in King County (2007)



More than 2.3 million tons of waste were generated in the service area of King County's Solid Waste Division in 2007, excluding asphalt and concrete (see notes). Waste generation grew about 10% from 2006 to 2007; the recycling rate increased from 43% to 45%. Figure 20.3 shows per capita waste disposal increased to nearly 2,000 pounds annually in 2007, while per capita recycling increased to just over 1,600 pounds. Previous Benchmark reports provided per capita data only for single-family homes; in this report, per capita data include commercial and multifamily customers, and include construction and demolition debris (excluding concrete and asphalt). Influenced by the economy, both disposal and recycling are expected to decline with the recent economic downturn.

Figure 20.2

Annual Waste Disposed and Recycled in Service Area of King County Solid Waste (2006 and 2007)



*King County Solid Waste service area does not include Seattle.

Figure 20.3

Annual Waste Disposed and Recycled in Service Area of King County Solid Waste Per Capita (2006 and 2007)

