

MSWAC Advisory Committee Meeting
 Feb. 11, 2026 – 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
 Hybrid Meeting (Zoom and King Street Center)

<u>MSWAC Members</u>		<u>King County Staff</u>	
Troy Linnell	Algona	Nathaniel Bennett, DNRP staff	
Joan Nelson	Auburn	Ali Blum, SWD staff	
Jon Gire	Bellevue	Frances Bothfeld, Haz Waste staff	
Tamie Deady	Black Diamond	Sylvaine Bucher, SWD staff	
Carston Curd	Bothell	Alex Chew, SWD staff	
Emily Warnock	Bothell	Theresa Curry Almuti, SWD staff	
Shellie Bates	Covington	Kristin Elia, SWD staff	
John Searcy	Enumclaw	Tessa Harvey, DNRP staff	
Brian Spindor	Enumclaw	McKenzie Featherstone, SWD staff	
Rob Van Orsow	Federal Way	Patty Liu, SWD staff	
Sam Tarvin	Issaquah	Casey Mellnik, SWD staff	
Tony Donati	Kent	Mark Monteiro, SWD staff	
Jay Arnold	Kirkland	Amy Ockerlander, SWD staff	
Kelli Curtis	Kirkland	Dave Pierce, SWD staff	
Gena Jain	Kirkland	Yolanda Pon, Public Health – Seattle & King County	
Carly Joerger	Kirkland	Caitlin Singer, SWD staff	
Daniel Becker	Mercer Island	Rebecca Singer, SWD Director	
Alana DeRogatis	Mercer Island	Chris Stubbs, SWD Deputy Director	
Dan Marcinko	North Bend	Andy Smith, SWD staff	
Jesse Dunbar	Redmond	Pri Srinivasa, SWD staff	
Aaron Moldver	Redmond	Cailyn Torpie, SWD staff	
Meara Heubach	Renton	Isabelle Trujillo, SWD staff	
John MacGillivray	Renton	John Walsh, SWD staff	
Colleen Minion	Tukwila	Matthew Weintraub, Haz Waste staff	
Sarah Bruemmer	Shoreline	Julie West, Public Health – Seattle & King County	
Jared Hill	Woodinville		
		<u>Guests</u>	
		Laura Belmont, Sound Cities Association	
		Joe Camero, Waste Management	
		Zach Dugovich, Pacific Public Affairs	
		Jeanette Jurgensen, Bin There Consulting	
		Kevin Kelly, Waste Management	
		Linda Lagunas, City of Renton	
		Brad Lovaas, WA Refuse and Recycling Association	
		Chris Reigelsperger, Waste Management	
		Katie Stickels, Dept. of Ecology	
		Kaylie Wallin, Republic Services	
		Josh --	

Call to Order and Introductions

Vice Chair Gire called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Hill moved to approve the January MSWAC/SWAC minutes. Nelson seconded. Minutes passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Stickels shared two items:

1. 2026 Organics Regional Summits

Ecology's Organics team will be hosting another round of summits this spring! This is an all-day, in-person opportunity for city and county solid waste management staff, service providers, facilities, and other organizations to connect with Ecology and come together to collaborate on organics collection and implementing the [organics management laws](#). Each region will address their unique challenges, share opportunities, and discuss how to support each other when diverting and handling organics.

Register for your region:

- Northwest Region - Tuesday, April 28: [Register for Northwest](#)
- Southwest Region - Thursday, April 30: [Register for Southwest](#)
- Central Region - Tuesday, May 12: [Register for Central](#)
- Eastern Region - Wednesday, May 13: [Register for Eastern](#)

2. ORCA Waiver Applications Open Now

The Organics Recycling Collection Areas (ORCA) waiver application is now available for local jurisdictions. Visit Ecology's [ORCA webpage](#) for further instructions and information about the waiver process.

Jurisdictions that implement a solid waste management plan can apply for a waiver. Eligible applicants are counties or cities; though, Ecology recommended the impacted county and cities work together to submit a joint application. For the 2027 requirements, applicants can submit a waiver application in February.

SWD Updates

Singer provided the SWD update.

Tonnage update

Garbage tonnage in January was equivalent to last year (70,253 tons in 2026 vs. 70,251 tons in 2025). Please note that the Black River (Republic) tons are included in the 2025 tonnage. There were 1,662 tons to Black River in January of last year.

The recycling tonnage collected and diverted at transfer stations was at 29,600 tons through the end of 2025.

Flood debris disposal and recovery

SWD provided additional free flood disposal opportunities in January and early February:

- Bow Lake, Shoreline, and Enumclaw Transfer Stations: Saturdays and Sundays through Feb. 8
- Snoqualmie Valley Drop off Event: Feb. 8-9

We continued collecting free flood debris at three of our transfer stations and hosted a special collection event last weekend for people in the Snoqualmie Valley to drop off their flood debris. This event was requested by members of the farming community, who are still in recovery and working to clean up their land.

With any disaster we experience, we undoubtedly learn something new. SWD conducted an after-action review with our internal team to identify areas in our planning, preparation, and disaster response that we want to sustain and build upon for future incidents or improve.

We will also coordinate after action reviews with partners. We can bring this information to this committee too.

Transfer Station Signage Refresh

SWD has been updating and unveiling new signage for each of our transfer stations.

The new signage is a massive improvement that will improve safety and customer wayfinding. It also improves accessibility through visual communication and translations and creates a more unified customer experience across all of our transfer stations.

We have also created station specific fold out maps that are color coded to match the signs and guide customers through each location. These new fold out maps will replace about a half dozen of our brochures with the same content, but in a more user-friendly, site-specific way.

CAT Shack – Salvage and Reuse Effort

SWD has a large, deconstructed steel frame structure, known as the CAT Shack (52' x 52' x 27') -- that is being offered to King County cities for reuse through the Sound Cities Association.

The structure was assembled in 2017 for the maintenance of large equipment at the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill. The structure is in good condition, but is no longer needed by the division or other county departments

SWD is offering this structure for reuse, instead of demolition and recycling, in line with its commitments to reduce embodied emissions and demonstrate sustainable materials management.

SWD is hosting an informational meeting on Feb. 23 at 9 a.m. for King County cities that might be interested in receiving this structure. Immediately following the meeting, SWD will issue a short proposal/plan template for interested cities to complete and send to SWD by March 6.

A lottery system will be used to select a city to receive the structure. The selected city will have a couple of weeks to further assess feasibility and officially make the commitment to receiving the structure. If the selected city ends up declining, SWD will go to the next city in the lottery drawing.

Mayors and city managers received this information, but please reach out to Blum if you have questions or would like the invitation to the information session on Feb 23.

Gire thanked the county for coming up with a creative reuse for this building.

Heart of Marymoor Restoration Project

King County Parks and SWD launched The Heart of Marymoor Restoration Project, an innovative three-year pilot project within one of King County's most visible parks.

The project will transform an existing drainage swale located in a highly visited portion of Marymoor Park into a heart-shaped feature that serves as both a symbol of stewardship and a living laboratory for restoration science.

The project will evaluate compost and soil amendment treatments as part of the County's zero waste goals, demonstrating how locally produced compost can enhance soil health, infiltration, and native plant establishment. The site will also function as a public demonstration area—an accessible, visually engaging space that highlights sustainable restoration practices, supports pollinators, and preserves key view corridors within the park's open landscape.

Upcoming repair events

Each year, SWD hosts a series of 10-12 community repair events at locations throughout the county.

At repair events, skilled volunteer "fixers" try to repair and mend small household and personal items, such as electronics, small furniture, and clothing. These events help keep items in use and out of the landfill.

We are sharing the first five scheduled events; additional events will be scheduled later this year, and we will share the dates and locations with committees.

- Saturday, March 14, 9:30 am-12:30 pm
 - White Center Fieldhouse, Steve Cox Memorial Park
- Wednesday, April 15, 3-6 pm
 - Covington Library
- Tuesday, April 28, 3-6 pm
 - Tukwila Community Center
- Saturday, May 16, 1:30-4:30 pm
 - Woodinville Library
- Saturday, June 6, 1:30-4:30 pm
 - Renton Library

Government Relations Administrator job posting

SWD is recruiting for a new Government Relations Administrator to join Ockerlander and Blum on the Government Relations Team. This person will play a key role in staffing the division's Advisory Committees and working with our partners.

This is an important role that will work directly with you all, so we invite you to please share the [job posting](#) with your networks. The job closes on Feb. 25.

MacGillivray asked for an update on the Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station (NERTS) project. Singer shared that the County and the City of Kirkland are currently collaborating on the project. After evaluating various alternatives, the team is now focusing on design aspects, including the facility's specific features. The goal is to ensure the site aligns with the city's preferences and meets the community's needs. Further updates will be provided at future meetings.

Joerger affirmed that negotiations have been conducted in good faith. However, due to an ongoing appeal, certain details remain confidential and cannot be shared at this time.

Linnell thanked Singer, noting that the Project Manager at the South County Recycling and Transfer Station (SCRTS) has been excellent to work with. As an example of this responsiveness, Linnell shared that after requesting reflectors for the newly paved West Valley Highway, the PM had them installed within a week.

SWAC Update

No update.

Operations Update

Monteiro provided an update of recent activities at the transfer stations.

Tonnage/staffing look ahead

- SWD transfer stations municipal solid waste (MSW) and Yard Waste (YW) tonnage is seasonal
 - We've refined our approach over the years, learning how to best deploy staff and coordinate resources across our projects.
- March begins the "busy" season for both MSW and YW
- Transfer station operator and scale operator staffing largely remain constant
 - Transportation staffing is directly related to inbound tonnage and Cedar Hills Regional Landfill projects
- We are increasing staff to be less reliant on overtime and provide more consistent service

Current Construction: Transfer Station Impacts

- Complete: Vashon Tipping Floor Resurfacing Project
- Underway: Factoria Tipping Floor Repair and Resurfacing – Dec. 1 to mid- Feb.
 - Project on schedule
 - Monday-Friday: Open for commercial and closed for self-haul
 - Saturday-Sunday: Open for self-haul and closed for commercial
 - ♣ Exception made for holiday make-up days: Saturdays Dec. 27 and Jan. 3
 - Yard waste self-haul closed throughout the construction period
 - Household hazardous waste services will remain open during normal hours
 - Anticipate work to be done and normal operations to resume on 2/14

Gire expressed appreciation on behalf of the City of Bellevue, noting that SWD's commitment to the project timeline and the strong collaboration maintained throughout. Monteiro attributed this success to the project management and engineering teams, as well as on-site staff who provided critical solutions to keep the project moving, including strategic scheduling to account for cold weather and concrete curing times.

2026 Construction Projects: Look Ahead

- Enumclaw Tipping Floor Resurfacing Project
 - Anticipated timing: late 2/16-3/23
 - ♣ Work was slated to begin in early January but was pushed back due to flood debris collection at compactor sites, followed by further delays to avoid a conflict with the Factoria repairs.
 - Minor impact anticipated; we anticipate top-loading for portion of project
- Houghton Chute Scales
 - Anticipated timing: 3/23 - 3/27
 - We will divert the public while working on commercial chutes
 - We are distributing Title X to the affected cities and will install local signage as part of the outreach
- Bow Lake Compactor Rebuild
 - Anticipated timing: 3/2026-5/2026
 - ♣ With procurement and SSI schedules, this was pushed out
 - Minor impact anticipated
 - ♣ During this time, one compactor will be rebuilt while the other remains in operation. The operating compactor will be fully inspected and repaired as needed to ensure it remains functional throughout the project. We often run off one compactor.
- Generator Tie Ins for Compactor Sites
 - During the October 2024 bomb cyclone, all our sites switched to generator power; however, compactors at the compactor sites could not operate on generator power. In response, we initiated a project to install tie-ins that allow mobile generators to be connected at those sites in the event of a power outage

- o Anticipated timing: 3/2026 - 6/2026
- o No anticipated impact for haulers or the public
- o SCRTS will get a tie-in too
- SCRTS Access Road via Broadway
 - o Anticipated timing: Q2
 - o Impact TBD; potential congestion and wait times for haulers and public closure. SWD will have traffic flaggers on site to direct traffic and mitigate impacts

Arnold requested clarification regarding the Houghton Chute scales. He asked whether the planned public diversion implied full closure of the site or a redirection of traffic at the entrance and exit. Monteiro confirmed that self-haul traffic would be diverted to other facilities, effectively closing the site to the public during that period.

Operations Updates: Look Ahead

- Operations All-Staff Meeting: Sunday, March 22
 - o Delayed opening of SWD facilities
 - o Majority of sites will be opening at 11:30 with some opening at 12:30
- Bow Lake South Processing Area
 - o Timing TBD – contract currently out for bid
 - o Impact TBD – impacts will likely be contained to recycling area
 - o Work will be divided into two halves; we will complete one side before transitioning to the other, following the same phased model as the floor resurfacing
- Hiring transfer station operators to transition from Algona Transfer Station to SCRTS
- Hiring truck drivers to decrease reliance on overtime

Cedar Hills Regional Landfill Area 8 Tipping

- The tipping area uses a standard gravel surface, but we know it can become muddy. In response to hauler feedback, we are exploring options to minimize wetness and improve the area's usability.
- Heavy equipment operators perform daily maintenance on the active area which can change depending on the weather
- During periods of heavy rains, freezing temperatures, or other adverse weather, maintenance is limited to what can be safely performed
- 2026 construction season will begin in March; changes to landfill conditions may affect on-site traffic patterns
 - o A: Pay close attention to all posted traffic signage
 - o B: Follow designated traffic routes and instructions
 - o C: Comply with site traffic control measures at all times

2026 MSWAC Work Plan Approval

Blum led this.

Blum shared the updated workplan last week, which now includes the feedback members provided on the November draft. The edits include:

- Quarterly update by the hazardous waste program
- Flood response debriefing
- Moving Title 10 work into Q2
- Clarification of some language

As a living document, this workplan remains open to additional topics and reviews based on committee feedback.

Arnold expressed concern regarding the lack of actionable items or milestones leading toward the 2027 Long-Term Disposal (LTD) decision and requested a clearer committee process. Blum explained that upcoming discussions are designed to navigate the SEPA process and refine the decision-making framework. Arnold further inquired whether there would be incremental decisions to review or if all efforts were centered solely on the 2027 finalization. Blum confirmed the current focus is on the 2027 decision but committed to checking with the team for further detail.

Regarding the Regional Utility Affordability Summit, Arnold asked if it would be added to the work plan. Singer noted that follow-up from the regional summit is currently being managed by John Taylor, Director of DNRP. While SWD is not directly handling the plan at this time, Singer noted that committee discussion topics may emerge from future meetings and offered to contact Director Taylor for a timeline on upcoming summit or committee updates.

Linnell moved to approve the work plan. Nelson seconded. The workplan was approved unanimously.

MSWAC Chair and Vice Chair Elections

Blum provided this section.

In the February meeting, members elect the MSWAC Chair and Vice Chair. The term is one-year and is unlimited.

We asked for nominations prior to this meeting and Van Orsow nominated Gire for Chair. Gire was unanimously elected for Chair.

Gire shared how much he valued his time serving with Chair Sweet, highlighting her profound understanding of solid waste as a highlight of their collaboration.

Blum asked for nominations for Vice Chair. Van Orsow nominated Nelson. Nelson was unanimously elected for Vice Chair.

Nelson thanked for the nomination and was encouraged by how many elected officials joined the meeting today and hopes that they can have an elected official as chair/vice chair in the future.

2027 Rate Early Look and Context Setting

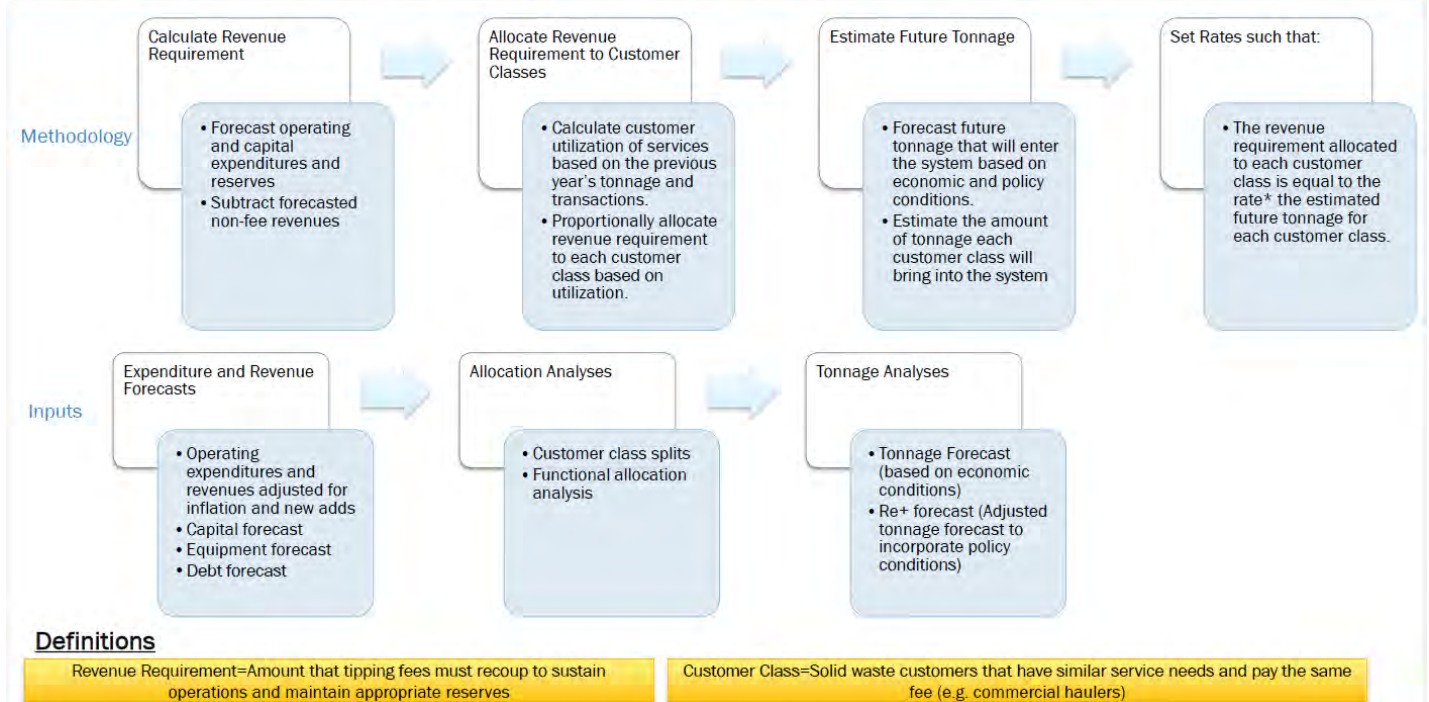
Singer emphasized that SWD is prioritizing rate stabilization through a comprehensive reevaluation of spending plans. She noted that implementing the new financial system will require approximately one year, while the development of a robust capital program plan is estimated to take 1.5 years. Until these systems are fully operational, SWD is committed to minimizing expenses. Singer expressed pride in the current rate and the ongoing efforts to maintain fiscal efficiency during this transition.

Pierce and Chew led this discussion.

Chew stated that the presentation will begin by starting with a high-level overview of the rate process and methodology. After reviewing our current timeline, we'll discuss the primary drivers behind rate growth and provide an early outlook on the 2027 proposal. Please note that the six-year forecast is still being finalized as several key inputs remain under development. We will conclude with a Q&A session.

Rate model-methodology and inputs

Rate Model-Methodology and Inputs



The rate-setting process is driven by two primary objectives:

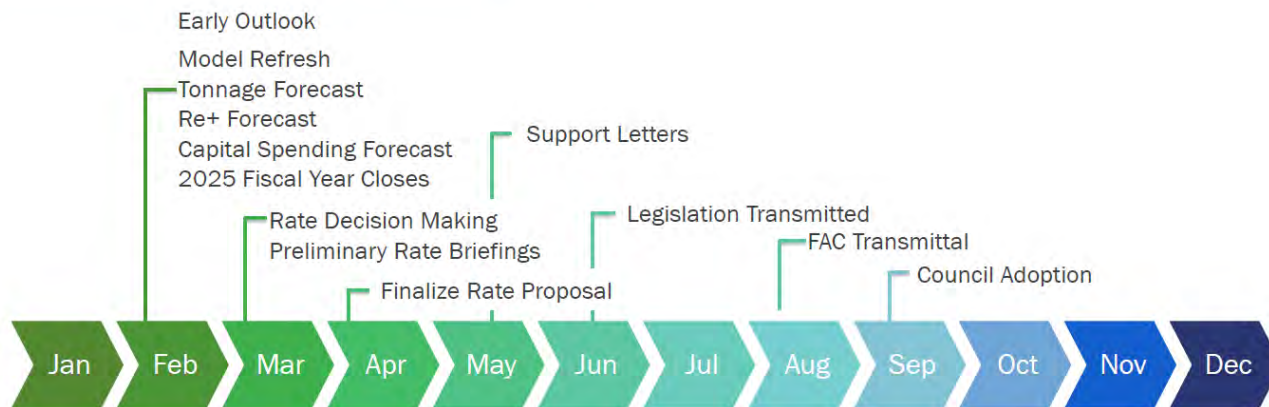
1. **Resource Adequacy:** Ensuring the division can meet current and future operational needs while maintaining healthy reserves.
2. **Equity:** Aligning tipping fees and customer rates with actual system utilization.

To achieve this, our methodology consists of four key components:

1. **Determining the revenue requirement**
 - a. We calculate the total funding needed based on:
 - i. **Operating Costs:** Existing expenses adjusted for inflation.
 - ii. **Strategic Adds:** New resources required to meet evolving regulatory mandates.
 - iii. **Capital & Equipment:** Forecasted costs for infrastructure and machinery.
 - iv. **Reserve Targets:** Funding necessary to maintain financial stability.
2. **Allocating costs**
 - a. We distribute the revenue requirement across customer classes based on system usage. By analyzing the tonnage each group brings into the system, we ensure that costs are allocated proportionally to historic utilization.
3. **Forecasting tonnage**
 - a. Using sophisticated modeling, we estimate future system utilization. This allows us to predict how much volume we will manage across different customer segments in the coming years.
4. **Establishing rates**
 - a. Finally, we set tipping station rates designed to recoup the allocated revenue requirement. This ensures that the fees charged to each customer class are directly aligned with their projected tonnage and the costs they impose on the system.

Timeline for 2027 rate development

Timeline for 2027 Rate Development



Our current timeline mirrors the previous rate-setting cycle, keeping us on track to transmit the rate proposal to the Council in June 2026. We are currently finalizing the key inputs for the rate model, including our tonnage and capital spending forecasts. Additionally, we are refreshing the rate model itself; while this may lead to minor changes in the materials accompanying our legislative transmittal, the primary goal is to increase transparency and more clearly communicate specific rate drivers to our customers.

Although not explicitly detailed on the timeline graphic, our engagement with MSWAC and SWAC remains a priority. We will provide further details regarding our planned work with these advisory committees at the conclusion of this presentation.

Rate drivers

- Inflation + regulation = mostly out of our control
 - During the rate development process, we identified three distinct categories of influence. The first category includes external factors beyond our control, such as inflation and new regulatory requirements. As seen in the 2026/27 budget, evolving compliance standards often mandate additional testing or certifications. While these requirements sometimes necessitate new positions, we remain committed to working within our existing resources, only authorizing additional expenditures when essential for regulatory adherence.
- Tonnage + labor costs = limited control
 - The second category involves factors where we have limited influence. While programs like "Sort It Out" can affect tonnage to some degree, overall system utilization is primarily driven by consumer behavior. Similarly, although we provide input during labor negotiations, final labor costs are largely dictated by broader market and contractual trends.
- Capital expenditure needs + operating expenditures = somewhat in our control
 - We are focusing our efforts on this category: internal factors within our control, specifically capital and operating expenditures. We are currently performing an intensive evaluation of our capital program to ensure every investment is a sound business decision that provides value through the rate. On the operational side, we are continually reviewing our processes and staffing to ensure we are utilizing our existing FTEs as efficiently as possible to deliver a high-quality product to our customers.

Rate growth-push and pull

- Actions we are taking to control rate growth:
 - Our primary focus is reprioritizing and reassessing capital needs; delaying costs where possible to keep near term rates lower and to lower debt service.

- Capital debt is a significant factor currently driving the rate. For example, by adjusting the timeline for our permanent facilities, we are taking the necessary time to ensure our long-term infrastructure investments are both fiscally responsible and strategically sound. Our goal is to make the best possible decisions for the division's future footprint.
 - Limiting operational adds (our goal for 26-27 is to live within our existing appropriation, decisions for outyears pending)
 - Exploring operational options to control costs (e.g. evaluating vacated positions for potential repurpose to fit business need)
 - Opening new revenue streams (CHRG, estimated ~\$6M in net revenue for 2027).
- Risks we face that could lead to rate growth:
 - Inflation spike
 - Policy actions that reduce tonnage coming into our system (e.g. state Organics laws passed in the last two years HB 1799, HB 2301)
 - New regulatory requirements
 - Need to maintain/replace aging infrastructure
 - We are building contingencies to safeguard our service levels against potential equipment downtime or unexpected failures.

Heubach requested a reminder regarding which permanent facilities were being referenced. Pierce explained that the development of Area 9 at Cedar Hills necessitated moving the shop and maintenance staff to the Far West facility in Tukwila. While this was initially a temporary move, the division is currently evaluating whether to continue leasing that space or to purchase land and build new permanent facilities.

This evaluation is still underway; however, the decision was made not to rush the process or prematurely build those significant capital expenditures into the current rate. Director Taylor expressed a clear preference to pause the permanent facilities project and defer those costs to focus on tightening the immediate budget.

Early look at 2027 rate (tentative)

Division staff are working on strategies to minimize rate increases while ensuring that critical infrastructure and reserves are supported.

Fee Revenue	UOM Type	2026 Rate Adopted	2027 Prior Model	% Increase	2027 Preliminary Rate
Commercial (Tipping Fee)	Per Ton	\$179.18	\$194.00	8.27%	\$192.00
Self-Haul	Per Ton	\$229.08	\$258.00	12.62%	\$245.00
Regional Direct	Per Ton	\$194.89	\$219.30	12.52%	\$209.00
Yard Waste	Per Ton	\$129.38	\$129.38	0.00%	\$138.00
Special Waste	Per Ton	\$275.14	\$310.00	12.67%	\$294.00
Cedar Hills Other excludes Reg. Direct	Per Ton	\$179.18	\$194.00	8.27%	\$192.00
Minimum (self-haul)	Transaction	\$36.62	\$41.28	12.73%	\$39.00
Appliances	Transaction	\$30.00	\$30.00	0.00%	\$32.00
Mattresses	Transaction	\$30.00	\$30.00	0.00%	\$32.00
Cleanup Lift	Transaction	\$20.00	\$20.00	0.00%	\$20.00
Fixed Annual Charge - Calculated		\$26,838,510	\$30,864,287	15.00%	\$28,717,206

Following the feedback received on the significant increases presented last year, we have spent the past several months evaluating our 2027 projections. Our primary goal was to determine if we could meet our revenue requirements while adjusting the overall rate increase down to approximately 7% across the board.

For example, self-haul and special waste categories previously showed much higher percentage increases for 2027 as we worked to close the gap between program expenditures and incoming revenue. While expenditure still slightly exceeds revenue in those areas, we are making progress and feel comfortable with the current 7% target. These figures are preliminary, but we are hopeful that a further review of our capital program may allow us to maintain or even reduce this percentage.

Searcy expressed appreciation for the effort to minimize rate increases but raised concern regarding the deferral of capital projects. Specifically, Searcy asked if the current rate structure includes measures to compress revenue bond issues. With the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) term approaching its end, pushing out projects that require long-term debt could be counterproductive; it effectively compresses what should be 20-year debt into a 13-year window.

Pierce acknowledged this concern, noting that the team is currently analyzing the debt service schedule. It remains a challenge to balance the potential for higher long-term costs due to deferrals against the immediate feedback and budget constraints identified by partners, leadership, and the Council. The upcoming six-year rate forecast will more clearly illustrate the impact these deferral decisions will have on future rates.

Searcy shared a concern on behalf of the group, noting that these issues are compounded when considering the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) alongside the long-term disposal (LTD) decision. Because these factors are deeply interconnected, the current situation underscores the critical need for a definitive LTD decision and a formal extension of the ILA.

Joerger inquired whether the division could share, either today or at a future meeting, the specific factors that led to the reduction in the overall revenue requirement. Pierce noted that the upcoming six-year forecast will explicitly highlight these changes and provide the requested clarity.

Van Orsow echoed Searcy's concerns regarding the difficulty of rate planning when large, potential bond issues remain uncertain. He expressed that delaying key decisions is creating a significant challenge for the division and urged for more tangible progress. With the Comprehensive Plan now delayed until 2030, he noted that continually "pushing things down the road" makes it difficult to see a clear resolution on the horizon.

Nelson aligned with the points made by Searcy and Van Orsow, reflecting on the December Rate Summit and the ongoing push to keep costs low for ratepayers. Drawing on the history of the ILA, she noted that the original incentive for cities to sign on was to secure better bonding rates. She emphasized that a definitive decision on long-term disposal is likely a prerequisite before cities commit to an ILA extension. Furthermore, she suggested moving toward multi-year rate setting in the future—noting that the City of Auburn sets three-year rates—to provide cities with more stability for their own retail rate scheduling.

Pierce stated that this detailed information, including finalized capital forecasting, will be presented at the next meeting.

Rate development next steps

Timing	Process Milestone
Today	Early Rate Outlook (MSWAC/SWAC)
By 2/27/26	Rate Model and Forecast Development Complete
By 3/31/26	Rate Decision Making Complete
By 3/31/26	Preliminary Rate Briefings Complete
By 4/30/26	Final Rate Agency Proposal Complete
By 5/13/26	Draft Support Letter Shared at SWAC/MSWAC meetings (5/8 and 5/13)
By 6/20/26	Final Support Letter Approved at SWAC/MSWAC meetings (6/10 and 6/20)
By 6/30/26	Executive Proposed Legislation transmitted; Council deliberations begin
By 8/31/26	Fixed Annual Cost Allocation Transmittal Complete
By 9/30/26	Council Rate Adoption

Please note that several of these milestones are target dates. We are currently projecting to have the formal agency rate proposal completed by the end of April, which will allow us to share the proposal with the committees during their May meetings. At that time, we also plan to submit the first draft of the recommendation letters to the group. Our goal is to have the final version of the letter approved by the June meeting, ensuring we are positioned to transmit the final legislation to the King County Council by the end of June.

Heubach raised concern regarding monthly disposal invoices, noting that while they show the total amount due and daily tonnage breakdowns, they currently lack a clear summary of the total monthly tonnage. For cities like Renton, including this monthly total is essential for efficiently reconciling internal records with the data provided by the SWD.

Pierce responded that the county had previously re-engaged the analyst who designed the original invoice to develop a new template based on this specific feedback. While the goal was to streamline the reconciliation process, Heubach noted that the January invoice still reflects the old format. Pierce committed to following up internally to determine why the new template has not yet been implemented and will share an update as soon as more information is available.

Arnold inquired whether policy considerations, such as incentives for recycling and diversion, are built into the rate development process. He noted that at the retail level, cities like Kirkland structure rates specifically to encourage diversion, and he questioned how the county's rates might be used as a tool to reverse the declining recycling trends shown in earlier slides.

Pierce clarified that there is currently no direct recycling incentives built into the rate structure. The only existing policy-based adjustment is the "Low-Income Lift" discount, which reduces revenue to support affordability. While the current rates do not explicitly incentivize recycling, Pierce acknowledged this as a valuable point for future consideration.

Chew added that while the rate itself does not include a recycling cost-offset, the division's tonnage forecasts do account for policy actions taken at the state and local levels. These estimates assume that tonnage directed to the landfill will be slightly lower than baseline projections due to partner and legislative efforts regarding organics and recycling.

Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan Update

Liu gave this update.

Rail impacts – additional analysis we are conducting

- Both waste export by rail and mass burn will create additional rail traffic from either MSW or ash export
- The LTD study acknowledged more rail analysis would be beneficial

- SWD has heard requests for more information on rail impacts from:
 - Partner cities
 - Sound Cities Association Public Issues Committee
 - Regional Policy Council
- SWD is working with a consultant to conduct a study that addresses partner needs

Timeline



Rail traffic study – supplemental environmental impact statement

- Proposed study will analyze the impact of new marginal train traffic for both waste export and mass burn plus ash export:
 - Create a rail crossing inventory and map
 - Group crossings into three tiers based on potential impacts
 - Assess frequency, duration, and time of day for train blockages
 - Vehicle queuing impacts at the highest volume crossings

We don't have a defined route yet. Liu will send a draft out of the scope.

Van Orsow questioned how current studies will impact the final LTD decision, noting that data suggests Waste Export by Rail (WEBR) could be half the cost of other alternatives. He pointed out that previous studies already identified WEBR as the preferred alternative and asked what benefit ratepayers receive by delaying a definitive decision on this transition.

Liu responded that several cities have requested more detailed information before committing to a specific disposal method. She emphasized that this is a critical discussion for the cities to engage in collectively to reach a consensus. Walsh added that, historically, cities requested that the formal planning and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be completed before finalizing these discussions. While acknowledging that there are still technical details to refine regarding WEBR, Walsh noted that if cities have already reached a conclusion on their preferred alternative, the division is eager to receive that feedback.

Van Orsow noted that, regardless of individual city positions, the current study presented by Liu indicates that WEBR is the most viable choice. He expressed concern that ratepayers are being burdened by the costs of redundant studies and urged for a move toward a final decision.

Singer acknowledged the feedback and explained that the LTD selection involves several mandatory internal processes and a variety of decision-making components. In addition to technical data, the process must incorporate input from the King County Council and the Executive's office, both of which are currently receiving briefings. Singer emphasized the need to be respectful of the member cities, ensuring that the impacts identified by consultants align with each city's

specific needs before a final determination is made. While the process may seem straightforward, much of it involves external stakeholders and factors beyond the Solid Waste Division's control.

Engagement – we really want to hear from you

- SWD will reach out to most impacted cities to discuss this scope
- Others can feel free to reach out to:
 - Amy Ockerlander – aockerlander@kingcounty.gov or (206) 253-6701
 - Ali Blum – ABlum@kingcounty.gov or (206) 253-6995

Moldver suggested that it would be beneficial to know Seattle's current waste export volume and assess the potential impact of integrating similar operations into the county's system. Liu confirmed that the division will examine Seattle's current practices to provide a baseline for comparison.

Van Orsow inquired whether cities with existing rail lines have previously raised concerns with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) or the Executive's office. He questioned if a "tipping point" regarding community impact has already been reached or if there are known issues with the models currently used by Seattle, Pierce County, or Snohomish County. He expressed concern that the current timeline feels like an unnecessary delay. Liu noted that while she previously consulted SPU regarding community complaints, those inquiries did not specifically cover feedback from neighboring cities. She committed to re-engaging with SPU to gather more targeted information.

2026 State Legislation Update

Ockerlander gave this update.

The 2026 legislative session will be a short session (60 days). It started Jan. 12, 2026, and the last day is expected to be March 12, 2025.

Cutoffs are coming fast:

- House of Origin Policy: **Feb. 4 - PASSED**
- House of Origin Fiscal Policy: **Feb. 9 - PASSED**
- House of Origin: **Feb. 17**
- Opposite House Policy: **Feb. 25**
- Opposite House Fiscal: **March 2**
- Opposite House: **March 6**
- Sine Die: **March 12**

Solid waste related bills in process 2026:

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Textiles (building on HB 1420)
 - The bill failed to advance before the legislative deadline and is considered dead for the current session. We expect this bill to come back next year.
- Improving the end-of-life management of Electric Vehicle Batteries (building on HB 1550/SB 5586)
 - The bill failed to advance before the legislative deadline and is considered dead for the current session.
- Increasing Solid Waste Collection Tax (building on HB 2018)
 - The bill failed to advance before the legislative deadline and is considered dead for the current session.
- Deposit-Return System (DRS) for Beverage Containers (HB 1607)
 - This is on its way to approval for House of Origins and is in the rules committee.
- EPR for Mattresses (building on HB 1901)
 - The bill failed to advance before the legislative deadline and is considered dead for the current session.
- EPR for Sharps (building on Safe Sharps Advisory Group)
 - This bill will be moving on.

- Amending the single-use plastic bag ban (HB 2233)
 - The bill failed to advance before the legislative deadline and is considered dead for the current session.
- Post-consumer recycled content requirements (2271)
 - This bill is moving forward and would add more recycled content requirement into plastics.
- NEW: Providing local governments tax resources and fund flexibility (HB 2442/SB6294)
 - The bill is moving forward and is currently in the rules committee.
 - We are not taking a stance on this, deferring to our partners' concerns regarding rate increases.
- NEW: Concerning naturally occurring fibrous silicate materials (HB2605/SB6213)
 - This bill changes the asbestos levels allowed in construction products and removes the labeling requirements.

Gire inquired if the projected cost increase was associated with HB 2271. Ockerlander clarified that the cost concerns pertain to HB 2244, noting that this remains a primary area of focus for SWD.

Hazardous Waste Management Program Update

Weintraub, Stewart and Bothfold provided this update.

Weintraub explained that the program operates as a coalition of government agencies authorized by the King County Board of Health to fulfill statutory requirements mandated by the Washington State Department of Ecology. The program utilizes a "matrixed" staffing model, drawing expertise from the Water and Land Resources Division, the Solid Waste Division, Seattle Public Utilities, and Public Health—Seattle & King County. Oversight is provided by a coordination committee with representatives from these agencies and the Sound Cities Association. Functionally, the program serves as the hazardous waste authority for the entire King County geographic area, rather than operating as a singular, independent government department.

Program overview

- Mission: protect and enhance public health and environmental quality in King County by reducing the threat posed by production, use and storage of hazardous materials
 - Their vision is for the Puget Sound region to be the cleanest in the nation, ensuring an environment free from hazardous chemical exposure
- Authorized by:
 - County: King County Board of Health
 - State: WA State Dept. of Ecology
- Service Area: 2.3M residents and more than 70,000 businesses across King County, and unincorporated areas
- Unified program: managed by a multi-jurisdictional coordinating committee
 - Established in the 1990's, the program is now entering its 35th year. It operates under a 10-year management plan, reaching a significant five-year milestone in 2026. This midpoint provides an opportunity to evaluate the accomplishments of the first half of the cycle and to strategize for the five years ahead.

Program services

- Policy: systems change through strategic policy initiatives
 - EPR for all household hazardous waste (HHW)
 - Lead exposure reduction
 - PFAS and chemical restrictions
- Prevention: public education and outreach programs
 - Awareness and education
 - Best practices training
 - Customer supporter centers

- o Small business assistance (tech support & vouchers)
- Collection: safe disposal services
 - o Year-round collection facilities
 - o Mobile collection across King County including unincorporated
 - o City and Tribe sponsored collection and education events

The program focuses on these three specific areas because they converge to create a comprehensive framework. By integrating responsible hazardous waste management, proactive committee engagement, and strategic advocacy, the program ensures that policy and practice align to enhance safety for both the public and ratepayers.

Local services and partnerships

- Community education and direct services
 - o Direct education and information sharing in coordination with cities, chambers of commerce and CBO's
 - ♣ A prime example of this alignment is the recent collaboration with the City of Shoreline. This partnership expanded HHW programming and "Safer Cleaning" classes for families. By distributing non-toxic cleaning supplies to participants, the initiative moves beyond simple awareness to potentially facilitate long-term behavior change.
 - o Wastemobile
 - ♣ The 2026 schedule is now live
 - ♣ Rather than a mobile vehicle, this program consists of a series of scheduled waste collection events held across various King County communities. These events provide residents and businesses with safe, convenient, and free opportunities to dispose of HHW
 - o Partner with residents to support families with children who have elevated blood lead levels
- Services and resources for businesses
 - o Spill management and prevention
 - o Voucher incentive programs
 - ♣ Eligible businesses can receive up to \$599 in financial incentives to implement workplace changes that protect employees and the environment. This program focuses on reducing the risks associated with the improper disposal of hazardous products through technical assistance and cost-sharing.
 - o Technical assistance to small quantity generating businesses
 - ♣ They offer free, onsite consultations for safe management of hazardous waste
 - ♣ Small businesses can receive customized recommendations to improve their hazardous waste management practices. These tailored solutions help prevent harm to employees, the local community, and the environment while ensuring regulatory compliance.
- Support compliance with state for hazardous waste management
 - o Build awareness of hazardous materials and safer alternatives
 - o Partner and collaborate with customers, communities and businesses
 - o Engage and communicate with customer
- Community support and engagement embedded across all program LOBs

City + Tribal grants

- Grants for hazardous waste collection and education
 - o They have identified that while internal communication is effective, formal documentation of standard practices requires further development. Addressing these gaps in documentation is a priority to resolve administrative delays, such as the lag in response times and reimbursement processing.
 - o New grant coordinator Frances Bothfeld
- Allocated \$1,105,786 for grants in 2026-2027
 - o Last year, the program awarded \$544,000 in grants to 30 cities, resulting in the collection of over 100,000 pounds of hazardous waste. While these results are significant, the program's goal is to expand

participation to include all 38 cities and both federally recognized tribes within the county to ensure comprehensive regional funding and service coverage

- Renewed emphasis on City+Tribal workgroup
 - Meetings scheduled March 19, June 18, Sept. 17, and Dec. 10
 - Revisiting of grant program assessment

Emerging items

- 2026 legislative session
 - One of the more challenging legislative items is SB 5975, which concerns lead content in cookware. If passed, this bill would roll back several of the nation-leading health protections that our coalition successfully championed last year. They are currently working closely with stakeholders to oppose this rollback and maintain the state's rigorous safety standards.
- Facilities Needs Assessment
 - This assessment is needed to help understand what the next decades of hazardous waste collection facilities will look like in King County.
- SCRTS opening/Auburn Wastemobile closure
- EPR for all HHW
- 2026 natural yard care launch
- Light recycle Washington program discontinued

Program information sources:

- Website: kingcountyhazwasteWA.gov
- Management plan
- Annual work plans
- Annual performance reports
- Quarterly performance and financial reports
- Public newsletter (quarterly)

Contact information

- Matthew Weintraub, Government Relations Manager
 - Mweintraub@kingcounty.gov, 206-263-5939
- Frances Bothfeld, Policy Analyst, Grants Coordinator
 - Fbothfeld@kingcounty.gov, 206-775-593

Member Comment

Minion announced an upcoming [Recycling Partnership Workshop](#) scheduled for March 1. The event will be held at the University of Puget Sound.

Moldver announced that recruitment for an Environmental Compliance Supervisor will be posted in the near future.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.