1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This chapter provides an introduction and background to this Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The chapter is divided into eight sections. Section 1.1 describes the purpose of the document. Section 1.2 describes the background of King County Department of Natural Resources, Solid Waste Division (SWD) solid waste activities. Section 1.3 provides the project description including the purpose and need for the project and the objectives of the proposal. Section 1.4 summarizes the alternative site selection process. Section 1.5 describes the environmental and public review process for this proposal. Section 1.6 presents the potentially required permits and approvals for the project. Section 1.7 summarizes regulatory and compliance requirements. The final section, Section 1.8, provides a description of how impacts are analyzed and organized within the Final EIS, provides the reader with definitions of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, as well as significant and less than significant effects.

1.1 Introduction

This Final EIS for the Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station Project (NERTS) has been prepared by SWD. The purpose of this Final EIS is to identify and evaluate the potential significant adverse environmental impacts of two action alternatives for a new facility. The potential impacts of the action alternatives are compared with each other and with the potential impacts of the No Action Alternative. This Final EIS also proposes reasonable mitigation measures to minimize identified impacts.

1.2 Background

SWD operates a system of eight recycling and transfer stations, two drop box facilities, one facility and one Wastemobile that accept moderate risk waste (MRW)[3] from residents and small businesses, and one regional landfill in King County, Washington. Solid waste from businesses and residences in unincorporated King County and 37 King County cities, all but Seattle and Milton, is delivered by commercial collection companies and self-haulers to the transfer stations and drop boxes, transferred into large tractor-trailers or shipping containers, and then transported to the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill in Maple Valley, Washington. KCSWD also maintains responsibility for nine closed landfills throughout King County.

The County 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (2019 Solid Waste Comp Plan), which was adopted by cities per the adoption process described in the interlocal agreements between King County and incorporated cities in King County (see next section) and approved by Ecology, identified the need for a new transfer station to replace the aging Houghton Recycling and Transfer Station (RTS)(King County 2019).

[3] Moderate Risk Waste: relatively small quantities of hazardous waste generated by households and small businesses. Moderate risk waste includes household hazardous waste.

1.2.1 Existing Interlocal Agreements

RCW 39.34 permits a local government to enter into interlocal agreements (ILAs) with other public agencies in the interest of cooperatively sharing resources for their mutual benefit. Under RCW 39.34 , KCSWD has executed ILAs with other public agencies for various purposes over the years. As referenced above, the adoption process for the 2019 Solid Waste Comp Plan is described in Section 11.6b of each ILA, available at the links provided.

Current City and County ILAs for the cooperative management of solid waste in King County are listed in Table 1-1 and 1-2.

Table 1.1. Current City ILAs.

City	Agreement Document
Algona	Algona – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Auburn	Auburn – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Beaux Arts Village	Beaux Arts Village – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Bellevue	Bellevue – 2017 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Black Diamond	Black Diamond – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Bothell	Bothell – 2014 Amended and Restated ILA Bothell – 2014 Amendment No. 1 to the Amended and Restated ILA
Burien	Burien – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Carnation	Carnation – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Clyde Hill	Clyde Hill – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Covington	Covington – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Des Moines	Des Moines – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Duvall	Duvall – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Enumclaw	Enumclaw – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Federal Way	Federal Way – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Hunts Point	Hunts Point – 2018 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Issaquah	Issaquah – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Kenmore	Kenmore – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Kent	Kent – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Kirkland	Kirkland – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Lake Forest Park	Lake Forest Park – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Maple Valley	Maple Valley – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Medina	Medina – 2018 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Mercer Island	Mercer Island – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Newcastle	Newcastle – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Normandy Park	Normandy Park – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
North Bend	North Bend – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Pacific	Pacific – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Redmond	Redmond – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Renton	Renton – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments

Table 1.1. Current City ILAs.

City	Agreement Document
Sammamish	Sammamish – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
SeaTac	SeaTac – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Shoreline	Shoreline – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Skykomish	Skykomish – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Snoqualmie	Snoqualmie – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Tukwila	Tukwila – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Woodinville	Woodinville – 2013 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments
Yarrow Point	Yarrow Point – 2018 Amended and Restated ILA and Amendments

Table 1.2. Current County ILAs.

City	Agreement Document
Kittitas County	King County and Kittitas County Solid Waste Disposal ILA
Snohomish County	King County and Snohomish County Solid Waste Disposal ILA relating to City of Bothell Annexation as of January 1, 2011. King County and City of Bothell – Amendment #1 to the Original 40-year Solid Waste ILA

In addition, King County Solid Waste Division and the City of Kirkland entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2005 that established agreements on neighborhood mitigation projects and operational guidelines for the existing Houghton RTS. Unlike the ILAs, the MOU is not legally binding, but it did set the intent of both parties to adhere to the agreement given the existing conditions, population, and service demands at the time.

1.3 Project Description

King County Solid Waste Division proposes to site, design, build, and operate a modern transfer station in northeast King County[4] to meet the region's growing demand for environmentally responsible waste

[4] This EIS refers to northeast King County or northeast area of King County as the area proposed for siting and building the Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station (NERTS) consistent with the 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan. The 2001 Solid Waste Comp Plan, the 2007 Solid Waste Transfer and Waste Management Plan, and the 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan all make a distinction between the urban and rural areas served by KCSWD facilities, with urban areas (incorporated areas and areas within the urban growth boundary) served by transfer stations and rural areas served by drop-box facilities or transfer stations to reflect services appropriate to those areas of King County with both high and low population densities, respectively. The 2007 Solid Waste Transfer and Waste Management Plan focused on modernizing the five aging urban facilities (in the incorporated areas or within the UGA, including one for the northeast Lake Washington service area (SWD 2007), and recommended that the rural facilities (drop boxes and Vashon and Enumclaw) be kept as-is or as already replaced. The 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan recommends that "the 1960s era Houghton station in Kirkland be replaced with a modern station so that equitable levels of service are available throughout the urban area including the fast growing Northeast part of King County." Between the 2007 Solid Waste Transfer and Waste Management Plan and the 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan, terminology for the area was shortened, dropping Lake Washington, and changing to either the northeast service area, northeast area, northeast county, northeast King County, or northeast area of King County.

management services. The new station would replace the existing Houghton RTS with a new recycling and transfer station, referred to as NERTS in this document. The new facility would make full recycling and waste disposal services more convenient for many customers in this area who currently must drive 30 minutes or more to reach a transfer station or drop box.

The new NERTS facility would include an enclosed solid waste transfer and processing area, enclosed solid waste compactor units, a recycling collection and sorting area, employee facility, scale house and weigh station, space for on-site customer queuing, a possible fueling station, and possible moderate risk waste disposal for products from homes and small qualifying businesses.

The new facility would be designed and constructed to meet today's building and environmental standards and standards for service, operational efficiency, and customer and employee safety. The facility would provide improved recycling services to meet the County's environmental goals, and waste would be cost-effectively compacted for efficient transport. The facility would also have space for waste storage in the event of a major regional disaster and sufficient off-street queuing space for private and commercial vehicles.

1.3.1 Purpose and Need for the Project

1.3.1.1 Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to replace the existing Houghton RTS with a new recycling and transfer station, to be located in the northeastern area of King County. KCSWD operates a system of eight recycling and transfer stations, two drop box facilities, one facility and one Wastemobile that accepts MRW from residents and small businesses, and one regional landfill to serve residents and businesses with solid waste transfer and disposal services, and MRW collection services. KCSWD provides these services throughout King County, Washington (the County) in accordance with the King County Council approved 2019 Solid Waste Comp Plan and the King County Board of Health approved 2021 Hazardous Waste Management Plan.

1.3.1.2 Need for the Project

The County's 2019 Solid Waste Comp Plan was adopted by cities per the adoption process described in the interlocal agreements between King County and incorporated cities in King County (see Section 1.2) and approved by Ecology. The Solid Waste Comp Plan identified the need for a new transfer station to replace the aging Houghton RTS. The nearly 60-year-old Houghton RTS is one of the busiest in terms of tonnage and transactions, yet it has outlived its useful life and lacks capacity for the type of recycling collection services that are increasingly in demand, and for the growing northeast community.

Additional factors contribute to the need for modern solid waste transfer infrastructure:

- The proposed project is needed so KCSWD can continue to provide reliable and cost-effective solid waste transfer services to residents and businesses in the northeastern solid waste service area of King County, an area illustrated in Figure 5-4 of the 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (King County 2019) and in Figure 1-2 of this EIS.

- Within King County, 37 cities (all cities in the county except Seattle and Milton) have signed Interlocal Agreements (ILAs) with King County that run through 2040 and commit King County to provide transfer and disposal services for participating cities for the life of the agreements.
- The proposed project is needed so KCSWD can help enhance the regional solid waste management system and move the region toward carbon neutrality targets and circular economy goals.

1.3.2 Proposed Action

King County SWD proposes to site, design, build, and operate a modern transfer station in northeast King County to meet the region's growing demand for environmentally responsible waste management services. The alternatives that were identified to be studied in this EIS include:

- No Action Alternative
- Action Alternative 1: The existing Houghton RTS property at 11724 NE 60th Street in Kirkland. Two options:
    - 1A – a facility constructed after the existing transfer station building is closed and deconstructed or demolished; and
    - 1B – a facility constructed while the existing transfer station building is open and operating, and then the existing transfer station building would be closed and repurposed, or deconstructed or demolished and replaced after the new station is open.
- Action Alternative 2: A site comprised of six tax parcels in the 15000 block of Woodinville-Redmond Road NE in Woodinville

1.3.3 Objectives of the Proposal

SWD's objectives for the new NERTS facility include 1) optimizing opportunities for the community to recycle; 2) meeting modern service levels for capacity, convenience, and accessibility; and 3) integrating safely into the host community. These are described in more detail below.

1.3.3.1 Objective: Modern Recycling Services

Unlike older transfers stations, modern recycling and transfer stations built by KCSWD are designed to 1) provide for the collection of curbside recyclables (including glass and plastic containers, tin and aluminum cans, mixed waste paper, newspaper, and cardboard); and textiles, clean wood, scrap metal, and appliances, 2) where feasible, provide areas for source-separated yard waste collection, and 3) maintain the capacity to add collection of additional materials such as foam blocks, plastic film and bags, separated food waste, or salvaged/reused items, based on market opportunities and community needs.

1.3.3.2 Objective: Capacity, Convenience, and Accessibility

SWD's modern recycling and transfer stations are designed to:

- Optimize station capacity for vehicle traffic and solid waste tonnage now and 20 years into the future, such that they are able to accommodate vehicle and tonnage throughput at all times of the day, except for occasional peak hour times, and that they will have at least three days' waste storage space in the event of a major regional disaster.

- Be conveniently located for customers, measured by the maximum travel time to the closest facility in their service area. The standard is established as 30 minutes for at least 90 percent of the customers.
- Handle customers efficiently, measured as the time from when a customer crosses the inbound scale to when a customer crosses the outbound scale, including unloading time. The standard is established as 16 minutes for commercial haulers and 30 minutes for business and residential self-haulers. It provides an indicator of whether a transfer station can manage customers efficiently.
- Be accessible based on SWD's and customer usage needs. Currently, the only days that the entire system is closed are Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

These standards were developed by KCSWD through a series of milestone reports to support the 2007 Solid Waste Transfer and Waste Management Plan (initiated by King County Ordinance 14236 and 14971 and completed to implement policies adopted in the Final 2001 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan) and re-stated in the 2019 Solid Waste Comp Plan.

1.3.3.3 Objective: Safe Integration into the host Community

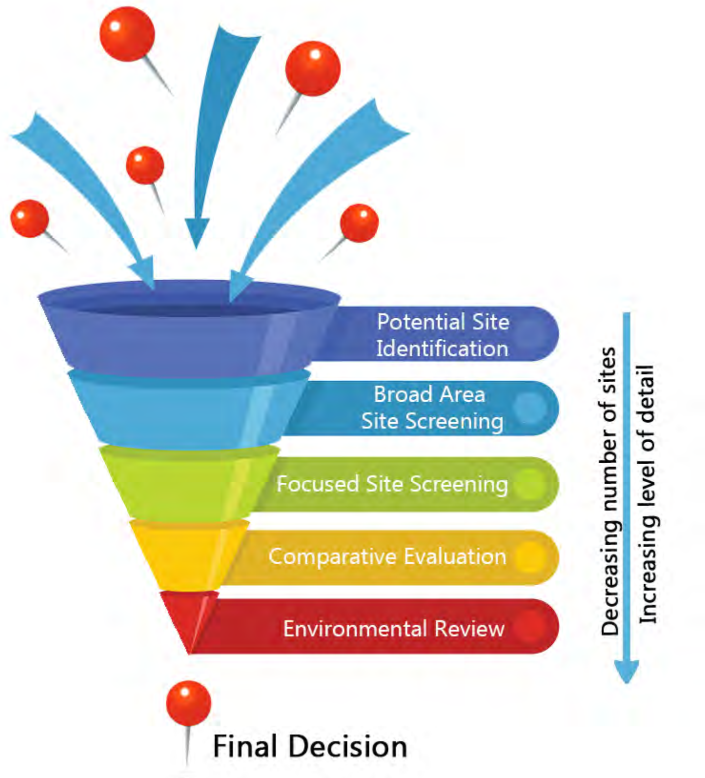
Unlike older transfers stations, SWD's modern recycling and transfer stations are built as fully enclosed buildings, resulting in reduced external dust, noise, odor, and litter. New transfer stations offer sufficient queuing space for customers and modern systems for minimizing traffic impacts within the station and on local streets. Modern stations also incorporate sustainable building features and serve as a resource for the community.

These three objectives for the NERTS facility will be used as the basis for evaluating the features of the proposed project and action alternatives, along with the No Action Alternative.

1.4 Alternative Site Selection Process

SWD initiated a siting process for the new NERTS facility in March 2020, including establishing a siting advisory group (SAG) that included 16 appointed members representing the Core Cities (Kirkland, Redmond, Sammamish, Woodinville), and six at-large members (with total participants varying over time). As shown on Figure 1-1, the siting process had six main steps. The first three steps identified and screened potential sites within the study area using site selection criteria specifically developed for this project. Next, the sites that best met the screening criteria were assessed on a comparative basis during Step 4, and the most desirable sites were identified for further investigation during Step 5, which is the current SEPA environmental review process. Additional detail about the steps described above and shown below can be found at the KCSWD website (www.kingcounty.gov/northeast). In Step 6, occurring after the EIS process is completed, a site will be selected by the County taking into account the contents of this EIS, stakeholder input, a separate equity and social justice review, a separate socioeconomic assessment, sustainability goals, operational considerations, and cost.

Figure 1-1. Six-Step Siting Process–Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station Project.



1.4.1 Project Study Area

The study area for the alternative site selection for the new NERTS station was the northeast part of King County, including unincorporated King County and areas in or around the cities of Kirkland, Redmond, Sammamish, Woodinville (Core Cities), east Kenmore, and south Bothell within the Urban Growth Boundary (Figure 1-2).

1.4.2 Public Involvement During Siting

The County implemented a public involvement process with the communities in northeast King County to understand and consider their aspirations, values, concerns, and insights about NERTS siting, design, construction, and operation. Frequent and ongoing outreach and communications, reaching out to key stakeholders and historically underrepresented communities, and an adaptive, informational approach allowed King County to assess community concerns and adjust strategies, as necessary.

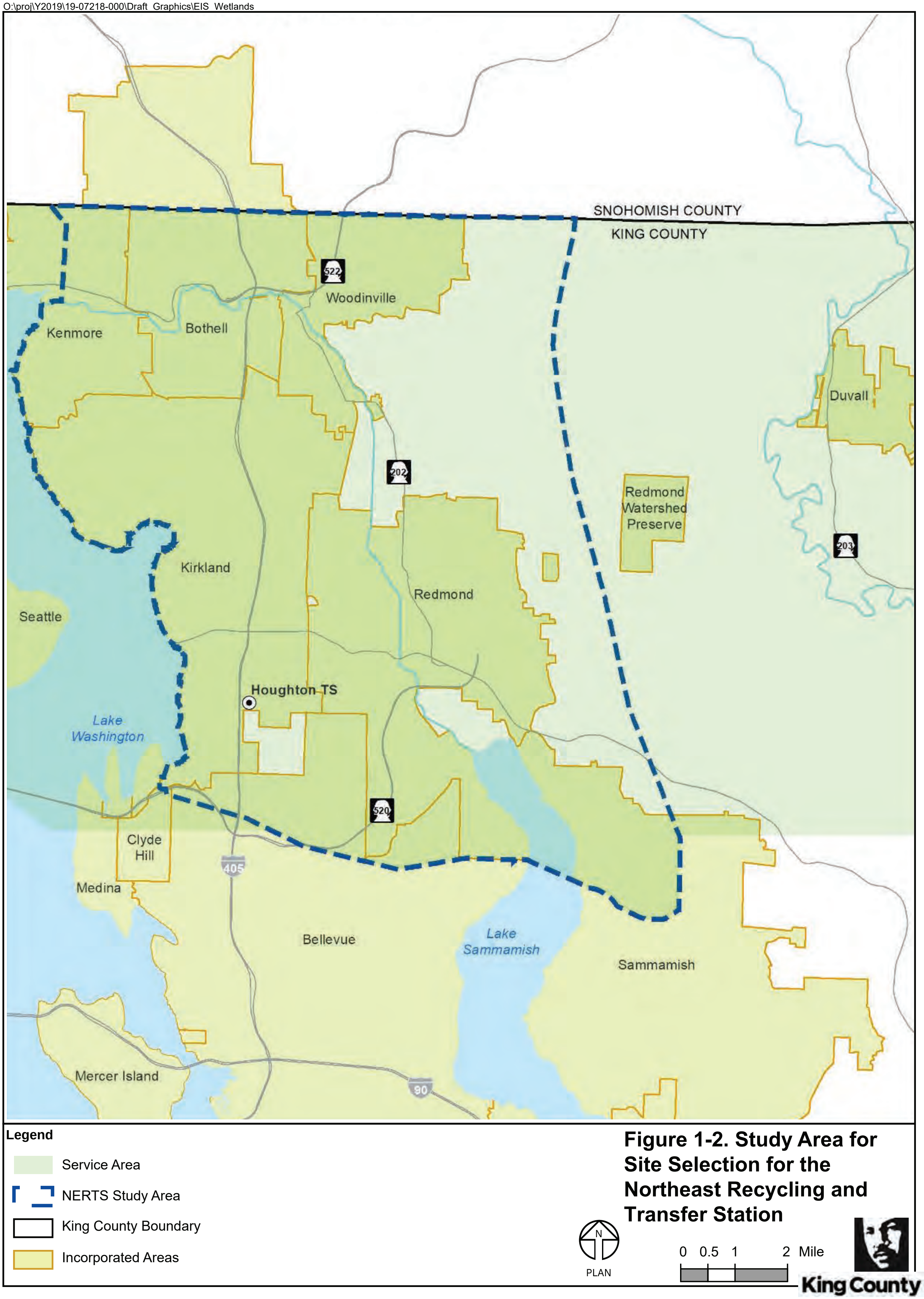


Figure 1-2. Study Area for Site Selection for the Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station

1.4.2.1 Core Cities

The County holds regular meetings with representatives of the cities of Kirkland, Redmond, Sammamish, Woodinville, and unincorporated King County, the Core Cities within the NERTS study area. At these meetings, Core Cities senior staff receive project updates and information from the County, can provide input and feedback on siting, communication, and public outreach, and engage with the County and each other.

1.4.2.2 Siting Advisory Group

The County established a Siting Advisory Group (SAG) that included 16 appointed members representing the Core Cities, and six at-large members (with total participants varying over time). The SAG helped develop and apply their own site selection criteria, identified community concerns and impacts, created public awareness about the project, provided general review and input, and expressed opinions and preferences to King County decision-makers.

SAG members represented a variety of interests and perspectives in northeast King County. The group met nine times between mid-October 2020 and November 2022, and had their final meeting in February 2024. Part of its work was to evaluate the sites during Focused Site Screening (see Section 1.4.5), and to provide input to the SEPA scoping process (see Section 1.5.3). All SAG meetings were open to the public, and a public comment period was included as part of each meeting. More information on the SAG's work during site selection is located at the following link: www.kingcounty.gov/northeast.

1.4.2.3 Broad Public Outreach

SWD conducted broad public outreach using a variety of media and other public information tools, including briefings, tabling events at farmers markets and community events, community Q&A events, email updates to subscribers through GovDelivery, online surveys, press releases, newsletters and publications, postcard direct mailings, and notices on the project website and SWD's social media platforms. See the project website for more details: www.kingcounty.gov/northeast.

1.4.3 Potential Site Identification

SWD began by identifying potential sites in the northeast county service area according to specific pass/fail criteria that established minimum standards for potential sites to qualify for further consideration, and consistent with KCC 10.08.030. The criteria were developed based on the 2007 Solid Waste Transfer and Waste Management Plan and the South County Recycling and Transfer Station siting criteria, with input from the Core Cities to adapt the criteria to meet community needs in the northeast service area. Details on criteria, scoring, and screening are provided in the Siting Summary Report in Appendix K. Criteria included:

- Site is within the study area (as depicted in the 2019 Solid Waste Comp Plan).
- Site is within the urban area of the contiguous King County Urban Growth Area.
- Site is located outside of a Federal Emergency Management Agency-defined 100-year flood plain.

- Site is free of known historical, archeological, or cultural designations.
- Site is outside of farmland preservation program and agricultural production district areas.

These criteria were used along with the following geographic information system (GIS) filters to identify sites for further analysis.

- Site is at least eight acres in size and not more than 20 acres in size or a combination of smaller parcels totaling at least eight acres. (This criterion was amended later in the process to include potential sites of five to 20 acres).
- Site is not zoned agricultural or residential.
- Site is within one mile of a major arterial or highway with appropriate truck routes.
- Property cost is within project budget (based on assessed value).
- Parcels designated as park or open space that meet other criteria will be reviewed to assess any potential opportunity.

The initial GIS screening process identified 109 parcels of land of eight to 20 acres in size that met the exclusionary criteria and GIS filters. A second GIS screening included searching for groupings of adjacent (or adjacent separated by right-of-way) two-acre minimum parcels that could be combined to result in a potential site of at least eight acres. This process resulted in 96 parcel clusters. A five-acre parcel was identified and added as a potential site during a Core Cities discussion. The result was a total of 206 potential sites – 110 single parcels and 96 parcel clusters. Later in the process, a third GIS screening was conducted to identify parcel combinations of at least five acres in size throughout the entire study area (see Section 1.4.6). (see the Siting Summary Report in Appendix K)

1.4.4 Broad Area Site Screening

The Broad Area Site Screening (BASS) involved a desktop review of each single parcel and the parcel clusters closest to the center of the study area to select sites for further evaluation. This review considered criteria for site characteristics, cost, environmental constraints, and nearby sensitive receptors and land uses such as schools, high traffic retail, or campuses such as Microsoft. In addition, parcels adjacent to those initially identified were reviewed to consider if their addition could prove to be beneficial for RTS development. The result of applying the criteria was to narrow the 206 parcels identified in the two initial screening analyses to 15 parcels or parcel clusters for further analysis. After screening the 15 parcels or parcel clusters for additional criteria, County decision-makers chose four potential sites to move forward for further consideration (see the Siting Summary Report in Appendix K).

1.4.5 Focused Site Screening

Similar to the approach taken in the BASS, the project team, with input from regional stakeholders, developed a set of functional criteria and a measurement scale for each criterion. The Focused Site Screening (FSS) evaluated and ranked the top four sites according to site shape, size, and characteristics; city economic impact/zoning; off-site receptor impacts; equitable distribution of facilities; transportation; and cost and utilities. Details on criteria, scoring, and measurement rationale are provided in the Siting

Summary Report in Appendix K. Concurrent with evaluation of sites against the functional criteria, the SAG conducted a similar evaluation against criteria important to the community and provided a recommendation about the relative merits of each site to the County for further deliberation.

1.4.6 Comparative Evaluation

A comparative evaluation of the top four sites from a variety of perspectives was conducted following the FSS results. County management reviewed the results of the FSS, input from the Core Cities, community criteria analysis from the SAG, and input from the community, including the results of the community survey. After considering these materials, the County selected the top three sites for presentation to the SAG, which identified a fifth potential site that had been previously removed from consideration as a parcel cluster due to its distance from the centroid of the service area. Review of the site showed some promise in meeting other NERTS objectives. In addition, to be conservative, KCSWD re-screened the group of parcel clusters farther from the center of the study area against BASS criteria to confirm that no other viable options existed. After review of the KCSWD data, the Core Cities identified a sixth potential site. Initial reviews of the site identified it as a highly utilized transportation site that was part of the future King County Metro Eastlink Connections project and the Sound Transit Bus rapid transit project. The site also had documented environmental constraints that reduced the developable area below feasible size, and the County elected to drop the site from consideration. An additional GIS screening was conducted to confirm that no other potential parcels or parcel combinations of at least five acres were overlooked. No sites were identified. Of the four sites remaining, County decision-makers chose to advance three for evaluation in SEPA environmental review:

- 7024 116th Avenue NE, Kirkland
- 11724 NE 60th Street, Kirkland
- Six tax parcels in the 15000 block of Woodinville-Redmond Road NE, Woodinville[5]

The site located at 7024 116th Avenue NE, Kirkland was subsequently eliminated from further consideration following the SEPA scoping period, after it was determined that it was not a reasonable alternative and could not feasibly attain the Project's objectives due to future plans for the property by its current owner the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and the City of Kirkland.

1.4.7 Conclusion

After evaluating sites in the alternative site selection process, KCSWD determined that, along with a No Action Alternative, the sites evaluated in this EIS will include:

- 11724 NE 60th Street, Kirkland
- Six tax parcels in the 15000 block of Woodinville-Redmond Road NE, Woodinville

[5] This site is also referred to as 15801 Woodinville-Redmond Road NE, one of the parcels included in the site, in other KCSWD NERTS project documentation.

1.5 Environmental Review Process

1.5.1 Overview

SEPA is intended to ensure that environmental values are considered during decision-making by state and local agencies. SEPA mandates a process to identify and analyze alternatives, potential environmental impacts, and mitigation measures associated with governmental decisions.

For any proposal involving a decision on a specific project, the state SEPA Rules require that a threshold determination be made to determine whether implementation of the project has the potential to result in significant adverse impacts on the environment (WAC 197-11-310(1)). For the current proposal to build a new NERTS facility, KCSWD has determined that one or more of the alternatives under this proposal has the potential to result in significant adverse impacts on the environment. A SEPA EIS is therefore required (WAC 197-11-330(4)). The purpose of an EIS is to “ensure that SEPA's policies are an integral part of the ongoing programs and actions of state and local government” (WAC 197-11-400(1)).

King County issued a SEPA Determination of Significance (DS) on November 3, 2022, indicating it had determined that the proposal was likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment. The notice also included a Scoping Notice (SN) and request for comments on the scope of the EIS pursuant to WAC 197-11-408. An optional revised DS/SN was issued on March 20, 2023, pursuant to WAC 197-11-408(4) when the property at 7024 116th Avenue NE in Kirkland was removed from consideration.

This Final EIS identifies potential significant impacts; describes mitigation measures that can be used (or that would be incorporated into the project design) to avoid such impacts or reduce them below significant levels; and summarizes any significant unavoidable adverse impacts --that is, significant impacts that cannot or will not be mitigated. Beneficial impacts are also discussed where relevant to the choice among alternatives.

1.5.2 Public Involvement Prior to the EIS Process

Public involvement during the siting process and prior to the EIS process is described in Section 1.4.2. The KCSWD website has additional information about outreach efforts and meetings: www.kingcounty.gov/northeast.

1.5.3 SEPA Scoping

Scoping is required to “[i]dentify reasonable alternatives and probable significant adverse environmental impacts” and to “[e]liminate from detailed study those impacts that are not significant (WAC 197-11-408).” The official EIS scoping period for this proposal began on November 3, 2022 with SWD’s issuance of a Determination of Significance (DS) and Request for Comments on Scope of Environmental Impact Statement (Scoping Notice or SN). This DS/SN identified three alternative sites for the proposed location of the transfer station to be evaluated in the EIS. KCSWD held SEPA scoping open houses on December 7, and 8, 2022 and January 11, 2023 during the 75-day comment period, which ended on January 17, 2023. On March 20, 2023, KCSWD issued an optional revised scoping notice pursuant to WAC 197-11-408(4), because an alternative previously identified in the original DS/SN was being removed as a candidate for further consideration and analysis in the EIS. No change to the DS was proposed and the same elements of the built and natural environment were identified for analysis in the EIS. The revised notice provided for an additional 30-day comment period to receive any additional comments on the revised scope of the EIS for the NERTS project. No additional scoping meetings were proposed. The scoping process allowed the public, Tribes, and other agencies to comment on the proposed alternatives, issues of environmental concern, potential adverse impacts, and how the EIS should address those issues, including mitigation measures and permits. A detailed discussion of the comments received may be found in the SEPA Scoping Summary Report (available at the KCSWD project website).

SWD is issuing this Final EIS after consideration of scoping comments and public comments on the Draft EIS, and making appropriate changes, including incorporating the areas of interest into the Final EIS evaluation contained herein. In compliance with SEPA, this Final EIS examines the potential for impacts to earth; air; water; hazardous materials; wetlands; vegetation, fish, and wildlife; energy and natural resources; environmental health; land and shoreline use; noise; aesthetics, light, and glare; historic and cultural resources; transportation; and public services and utilities.

1.5.4 Issuance of Draft EIS and Draft EIS Comment Period

A comment period of 62 days began with the issuance of the Draft EIS (WAC 197-11-502(5)(b)). There were two in-person public hearings on March 6, 2024 and March 13, 2024 to receive verbal and written comments. One virtual public hearing was held on March 7, 2024. Comments were due no later than April 9, 2024 and were submitted in the following ways:

1. Written comments at the in-person public hearings
2. Verbal comments to the court reporter at the public hearings
3. Via the online comment form at the online open house: www.kingcounty.gov/northeast
4. Email to project email: northeast@kingcounty.gov
5. Letters sent to King County Solid Waste Division

1.5.5 Issuance of Final EIS

This Final EIS has been prepared to include modifications to the text of the EIS stemming from the comments received on the Draft EIS. In October 2024, the County completed a soil boring investigation to further characterize the nature, location, and depth of buried refuse and soil at the portion of the site where redevelopment for Alternative 1A or Alternative 1B may occur. The investigation and investigation results are discussed in Section 3.4, other relevant subsections of Chapter 3, and in the revised NERTS Hazardous Materials Assessment in Appendix C. Additional analysis was also conducted to support additional refinement of the Final EIS based on comments on the DEIS. These included additional air modeling and a revised NERTS Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Assessment (Appendix A); evaluation of more recent water quality data and a revised NERTS Water Resources Assessment (Appendix B);

additional wetland investigation and a revised NERTS Critical Areas Assessment (Appendix D); additional noise modeling and a revised NERTS Noise Assessment (Appendix E); additional transportation modeling and a revised NERTS Transportation Assessment (Appendix H); and the addition of a new NERTS Fuel Use Assessment (Appendix M). This Final EIS includes responses to comments received on the Draft EIS in Appendix L.

1.6 Potentially Required Permits and Approvals

Table 1.3 shows the permits and approvals anticipated to be needed for the NERTS. Several permits would be the same whether a transfer station was located in Kirkland or Woodinville. Some permits would vary by site due to local regulatory processes and site conditions.

Table 1.3. Permits and Approvals for the NERTS Project.

Permit/Approval Type	Agency
Federal and State	
Nationwide Section 404 Permit for Compliance with the Clean Water Act (CWA)	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
Hydraulic Project Approval	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Section 7 Endangered Species Act	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries
Section 401 Certification for Compliance with the CWA	Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology)
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction Stormwater General Permit and Coverage	Ecology/U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
NPDES Industrial Stormwater General Permit	Ecology/EPA
Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation Act Approval	NOAA Fisheries
Migratory Bird Act Compliance	USFWS
National Historic Preservation Act clearance	Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
Regional and Local	
Notice of Construction and Approval	Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA)
Solid Waste Facility Operating Permit - Transfer Station (Solid Waste Handling Facility)	Public Health – Seattle & King County (Public Health)
Solid Waste Facility Operating Permit – Moderate Risk Waste Handling Facility	Public Health
Wastewater Discharge Authorization Application	King County Industrial Waste Program (KCIW)
Certificates of available water and sewer services	Woodinville Water District
Building Permit	City of Kirkland, City of Woodinville
Right-of-Way Permit	City of Kirkland, City of Woodinville
Grading Permit	City of Kirkland, City of Woodinville
Conditional Use Permit	City of Kirkland, City of Woodinville
Construction Permit	City of Kirkland, City of Woodinville
Critical Areas approval	City of Kirkland, City of Woodinville
Demolition Permit	City of Kirkland

Table 1.3. Permits and Approvals for the NERTS Project.

Permit/Approval Type	Agency
Zoning Permit	City of Woodinville
Master Land Use Permit	City of Woodinville

1.7 Regulatory and Compliance Requirements

Regulations ensure that all solid waste facilities are operated in such a way as to mitigate potential impacts, regardless of location. The Washington Administrative Code (WAC) establishes requirements for the development and operation of solid waste handling facilities, including transfer stations. In addition, Public Health – Seattle & King County (Public Health) regulates transfer stations under the Code of the King County Board of Health – Title 10: King County Solid Waste Regulations. The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) regulates air quality in King County. The following sections discuss regulatory and compliance requirements specific to operation of recycling and transfer stations and MRW facilities. Additional discussion of individual resource protection regulations and compliance requirements, for example meeting requirements of the King County Stormwater Design Manual, are discussed in each element of the environment (see Chapter 3).

1.7.1 Washington Administrative Code

SWD operates the Houghton RTS in accordance with state regulations that set standards for solid waste handling facility and landfill design, development, operation, closure, and environmental protection.

1.7.1.1 Minimum Functional Standards

The primary regulatory standards applicable to the NERTS are contained in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4. WAC Standards Potentially Applicable to Solid Waste Handling at Transfer Stations.

Section	Title
WAC 173-160	Minimum Standards for Construction and Maintenance of Wells
WAC 173-200	Water Quality Standards for Groundwaters of the State of Washington
WAC 173-201A	Water Quality Standards for Surface Waters of the State of Washington
WAC 173-216	State Waste Discharge Permit Program
WAC 173-220	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program
WAC 173-226	Waste Discharge General Permit Program
WAC 173-303	Dangerous Waste Regulations
WAC 173-350	Solid Waste Handling Standards

WAC 173-350, Solid Waste Handling Standards, establishes minimum statewide design, construction, operation, and closure standards for interim solid waste handling facilities such as transfer stations, MRW facilities, and recycling facilities that are applicable to the NERTS project. These criteria also implement regulations under the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), as amended in 1984, and Section 405(d) of the Clean Water Act (CWA), as amended, to ensure the protection of human health and the environment. Facilities handling solid waste, including MRW facilities that handle universal wastes, must also comply with the standards set in WAC 173-303, Dangerous Waste Regulations (see Section 3.4, Hazardous Materials, for more detail).

WAC 173-201A states that transfer stations may not discharge pollutants into waters of the state (including wetlands) that cause a violation of surface water quality standards.

Stormwater discharges from transfer station property within King County must meet the requirements specified in King County's 2021 Surface Water Design Manual (which is equivalent to Ecology's 2019 Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington [SWMMW]) and Ecology's 2025 Industrial Stormwater General Permit (ISGP) to comply with requirements of WAC 173-200, WAC 173-201A, WAC 173-216 and WAC 173-220 (King County 2021a; Ecology 2025). The ISGP specifies implementation of best management practices (BMPs) for maintaining on-site water quality, the quality of water discharges from the site, and water quality monitoring requirements for the station. A stormwater pollution prevention plan is also required under the ISGP. During construction, stormwater discharges from the NERTS construction area must meet the requirements specified in the NPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit, including implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

Standards relating to surface water and groundwater monitoring and stormwater management are described further below.

1.7.1.2 Surface Water Monitoring and Stormwater Management

WAC 173 provides detailed requirements for surface water monitoring and stormwater management at transfer stations including the following chapters:

1. WAC 173-18 through 22 Shoreline Management
6. WAC 173-158 Flood Plain Management
7. WAC 173-201A Water Quality Standards for Surface Waters of the State of Washington.

1.7.1.3 Groundwater Monitoring

WAC 173-200, Water Quality Standards for Ground Waters of the State of Washington, provides detailed requirements for groundwater monitoring at transfer stations including:

- Compliance with the Water Pollution Control Act and the Water Resources Act of 1971.
- Compliance with groundwater quality standards which, together with the state's technology-based treatment requirements, provide for the protection of the environment and human health and protection of existing and future beneficial uses of groundwaters.
- An antidegradation policy maintaining existing and future beneficial uses of groundwater quality.
- Compliance with established groundwater criteria, an enforcement limit, a point of compliance, and an early warning value.
- Recognition of specific special protection areas.

1.7.1.4 Additional State Regulations

Additional state regulations applicable to design, development, operation, closure, and environmental protection at landfills include the following:

1. WAC 173-301 Regulations Relating To Minimum Functional Standards for Solid Waste Handling (repealed)[6]
2. WAC 173-340 Model Toxics Control Act – Cleanup
3. WAC 173-351 Criteria for Municipal Solid Waste Landfills

1.7.2 Public Health – Seattle & King County

SWD must operate its transfer stations in compliance with the King County Board of Health Solid Waste Regulations (Title 10), the conditions of the Solid Waste Permit issued by Public Health, the approved Plan of Operations required by that permit, and consistent with the King County comprehensive solid waste management plan (KCC 10.08.060(A). Title 10 adopts the rules contained in WAC 173-350 for intermediate solid waste handling facilities:

- Location: The regulations do not have specific location standards but require that any transfer station must comply with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
- Design: The owner of any transfer station must prepare engineering reports/plans and specifications to address design standards that:
  - Control public access and limit unauthorized vehicular traffic and illegal dumping
  - Effectively control rodents, insects, birds, and other vectors
  - Effectively control dust and litter
  - Provide protection from the wind, rain, or snow
  - Provide pollution control measures to protect surface and ground water
  - Provide pollution control measures to protect air quality
  - Provide all-weather surfaces for vehicular traffic
  - Provide design to promote health, safety, and welfare of the operators and public
- Operations: The owner of a transfer station must:
  - Protect human health and the environment
  - Prohibit the disposal of dangerous and other unacceptable waste
  - Control vectors and litter
  - Prohibit scavenging

[6] Chapter 173-301 WAC was repealed in 1985 when Chapter 173-304 WAC went into effect. For those landfills that closed before 1985 (the effective date of Chapter 173-304 WAC), including the closed Houghton landfill, the applicable regulations are those of the Code of the King County Board of Health, Title 10

  - Prohibit open burning
  - Control dust and nuisance odors
  - Provide on-site attendants
  - Post a sign that identifies the station and shows hours of operations
  - Have communication capabilities to contact emergency personnel if needed
  - Inspect and maintain the station
  - Maintain daily operating records on the weights and types of waste received and removed from the station
  - Develop, keep, and abide by a plan of operation
- Closure requirements: The owner of a transfer station must notify Public Health 180 days in advance of closure. All waste shall be removed to a station that conforms to the applicable regulations for handling the waste.

1.7.3 Puget Sound Clean Air Agency

PSCAA is the primary regulatory agency for ambient air quality in King County. It implements regulations promulgated by the EPA and Ecology under Regulations I, II, and III. These agencies have established ambient air quality standards for a group of air pollutants commonly referred to as criteria pollutants. Criteria pollutants that are relevant to municipal solid waste transfer stations include:

- Inhalable particulate matter or PM10 (particles less than 10 microns [millionths of a meter] in diameter) and fine particulate matter or PM2.5 (particles less than 2.5 microns in diameter), which is a small component of fugitive dust produced when vehicles and equipment operate on paved surfaces, and particulate emissions in engine exhaust.
- Sulfur dioxide (SO_2), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and carbon monoxide (CO), which are present in the exhaust from transfer station-related vehicles and equipment.
- Ozone (O_3), which is produced in the atmosphere when NO_x and VOCs react in the presence of sunlight. As noted above, NO_x and VOC emissions are present in the exhaust from transfer station-related vehicles and equipment.

To measure existing air quality, Ecology and PSCAA maintain a network of monitoring stations throughout Puget Sound. Based on monitoring information collected over a period of years, Ecology and EPA designate regions as either attainment or nonattainment areas for particular air pollutants. Attainment status is a measure of whether air quality in an area complies with the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS). This designation is given to areas within which the ambient standards have been met over a period of time. The project is located within an area designated by the EPA as an attainment area for all criteria air pollutants.

During the construction phase of the NERTS, the construction contractor will be required to comply with the PSCAA regulations requiring the control of odorous emissions so as to prevent undue interference with nearby uses (Regulation 1, Section 9.11). Contractors will also be required to comply with applicable regulations and take all reasonable precautions to avoid or minimize fugitive dust emissions during construction (Regulation 1, Section 9.15). PSCAA considers transfer stations non-pollution-generating sources, as emissions are based on mobile sources (i.e., transfer station users). Therefore, a PSCAA Notice of Construction application is not required.

1.7.4 King County Industrial Waste Program

KCIW regulates wastewater discharged into King County's regional wastewater system. KCIW functions under King County's Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) and is required to meet NPDES permit requirements for WTD's wastewater treatment plants. KCSWD must discharge wastewater in accordance with RCW 90.48.165, RCW 35.58.180, RCW 35.58.200, RCW 35.50.360, WAC 173-240, KCC Title 13, and KCC 28.84.060. KCC 28.84.060 specifies discharge standards and limitations, including:

- Discharge standards and limitations shall be established to the extent necessary to enable the County to comply with current NPDES requirements.
- Industrial users shall comply with all applicable pretreatment standards and requirements.
- No industrial user shall ever increase the use of process water, or in any way attempt to dilute a discharge, as a partial or complete substitute for adequate treatment to achieve compliance with an applicable pretreatment standard or requirement unless expressly authorized by an applicable pretreatment standard or requirement.
- No industrial user shall introduce or cause to be introduced into the publicly owned treatment works any pollutant or wastewater that causes pass through or interference.

Wastewater discharges are also subject to compliance with Kirkland Municipal Code Chapter 15.36 or approval from the Woodinville Water District with issuance of a Certificate of available sewer services.

1.8 How This EIS Analyzes Impacts

This Final EIS discusses direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts associated with the two action alternatives compared with the No Action Alternative. Ecology's SEPA guidance defines the types of impacts as follows:

1. Direct impacts are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place. For example, a new residential development may include a proposal to place fill in a wetland in order to construct a road (a direct impact).
2. Indirect impacts are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but they are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems. For example, a new road will encourage increased development in an area through improved access (an indirect impact).
3. Cumulative impacts are the impacts on the environment that result from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions

regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time. For example, increased runoff and contaminants from a development would be added to the volumes and levels of contamination from similar developments surrounding the wetland (cumulative impacts).

Under SEPA, a significant impact occurs when there is "a reasonable likelihood of more than a moderate adverse impact on environmental quality" (WAC 197-11-794). A potential impact may be adverse but less than significant. Beneficial impacts are also possible. For each element of the environment (Sections 3.1 through 3.14), the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts for each alternative are evaluated and compared with each other and with the No Action Alternative.