

# Kittitas County

## Solid & Moderate Risk Waste Management Plan Update

**DRAFT**

April 2026



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# **1.0 Introduction**



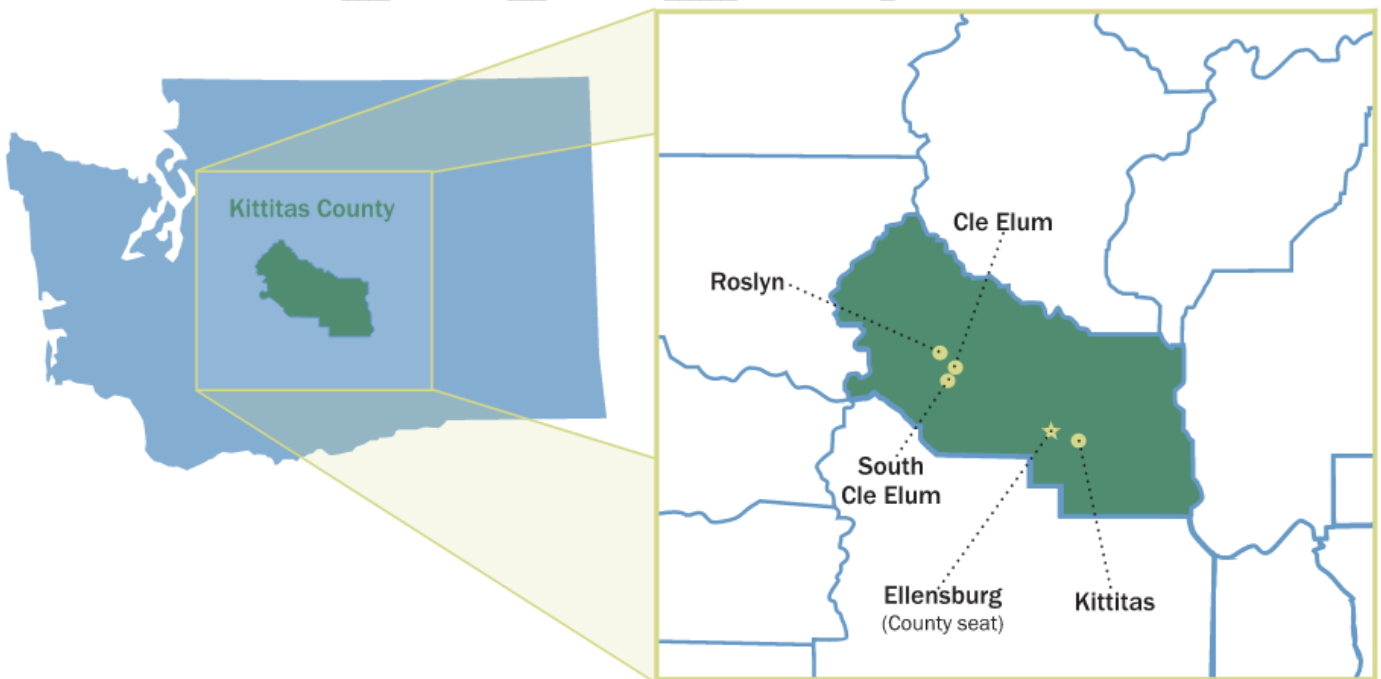
# 1.0 Introduction

The Kittitas County Solid Waste Management Plan (Plan; SWMP) provides a guide for the short- and long-term management of the solid waste system within the Kittitas County, Washington (County) planning area. The Plan documents the existing solid waste programs and facilities, describes the opportunities for improving the existing solid waste system, evaluates alternatives and recommends programs and facilities capable of achieving the County's goals, and describes the strategy for implementing the recommended programs and facility improvements. This 2026 Plan provides data through calendar year 2025. Formal adoption and approval of this plan is scheduled for 2026. Annual informal reviews may take place under solid waste advisory committee (SWAC) guidance with minor amendments (if any) following the prescribed process as described in **Appendix F**. A formal five-year review, as required by law, should be scheduled to begin in 2031.

## 1.1 Planning Area & Demographics

Situated near the geographic center of Washington State (State), Kittitas County encompasses a diverse range of landscapes in its 2,333 square miles. It extends from the crest of the Cascade Mountains in the west, to the Columbia River in the east. Chelan County borders Kittitas County to the north and Yakima County lies across the southern border. The major highways within the County are Interstate 90, which crosses from Snoqualmie Pass to Vantage; Interstate 82, which connects Interstate 90 at Ellensburg with the City of Yakima and the Tri-Cities area to the south; and U.S. 97, which runs north through Ellensburg, into Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan counties.

An understanding of the environmental, land use, and demographic features of Kittitas County assists in providing baseline information regarding existing and potential future solid waste handling needs. This chapter provides land use and demographics information on the County and outlines impactful industry events, recent legislature changes, and solid waste planning and facilities in Kittitas County.



**Figure 1 - Planning Area Map**

### 1.1.1 County Landscape

Kittitas County is largely rural in nature with most of the urban development located primarily in Ellensburg, and to a lesser degree in the towns of Cle Elum, Roslyn, South Cle Elum, and Kittitas. In Ellensburg, commercial development is found in the central business district and near I-90 along Canyon Road. Central Washington University (CWU), which has an enrollment of about 11,000 students, is in Ellensburg on a 350-acre campus. Industrial activities tend to be located along the Burlington Northern Railroad, I-90, and in the airport industrial park. A military reservation used for training purposes covers a 155 square mile area in the southeast corner.

Under current zoning regulations, densities range from one unit per 7,200 square feet to one unit per 80 acres. The Urban Residential zone allows a density of one unit per 7,200 square feet. The Agricultural-3, Agricultural-5, and Agricultural-20 zones allow a density of one unit per 3, 5, and 20 acres, respectively. The Forest and Range Zone allows for a density range of one unit per 20 acres. The lowest density in the County is in the Commercial Forest Zone where the assigned density is one unit per 80 acres. **Table 1** summarizes the County's zoning by acre as of 2023.

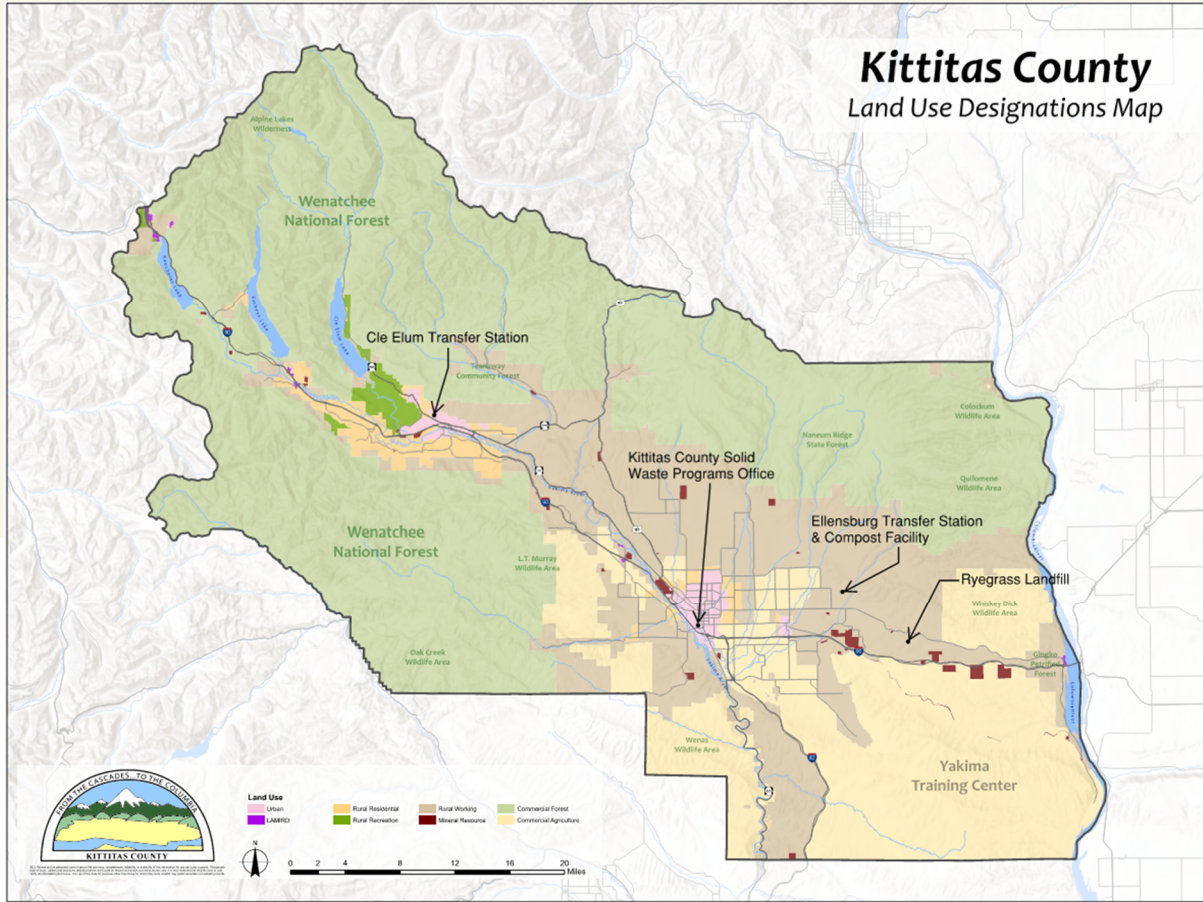
**Table 1 - Land Use in Kittitas County**

Zone	Acres	% of Total Land Use
Commercial Agriculture	289,577	19.5%
Commercial Forest	800,377	54.0%
Rural Recreation	10,659	0.7%
Mineral Lands	5,691	0.4%
Rural Residential	30,134	2.0%
LAMIRD - Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Development	1,168	0.1%
Urban	15,225	1.0%
Rural Working	328,892	22.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,481,723</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Kittitas County Land Use1 GIS Map, 2023

Forests cover approximately 54% of the County, primarily at the higher elevations in the west and north portions of the County. Agricultural and urban development is in the lower elevations along river valleys and account for approximately 20% of the County's land use. An exception to this pattern is recreational development near Snoqualmie Pass. Recreational, retirement, and second or summer homes have developed near Cle Elum and Roslyn. This type of development is rapidly increasing in that part of the County. The County land use map in

Figure 2 shows the location of County-owned facilities and their respective adjacent land uses from the 2021 Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan.



**Figure 2 - Kittitas County Land Use - 2021**

### 1.1.2 Population

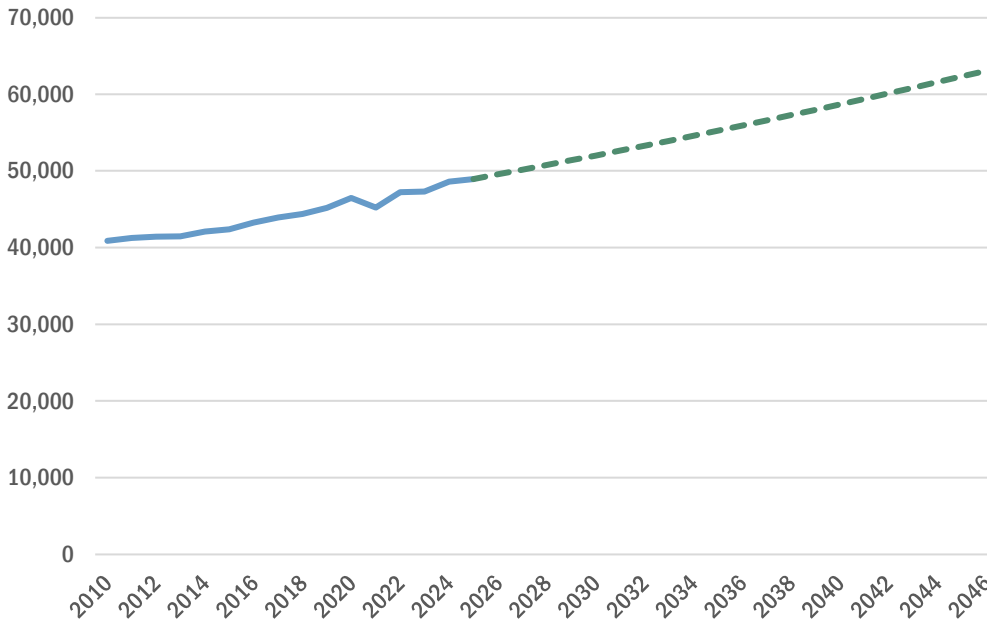
The Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) prepares annual population estimates. **Table 2** summarizes the OFM population estimates from 2010 to 2020. In 2025, the County population was estimated to be 48,950, with 46% of the population residing in the unincorporated areas.

**Table 2 - County & City Population Estimates & Growth Rates 2010-2025**

Jurisdiction	2010 Census	2020 Census	2010-2020 Growth Rate	2025 Population Estimate	2020-2025 Estimated Growth Rate
Cle Elum	1,872	2,157	15.2%	2,300	6.6%
Ellensburg	18,174	20,797	14.4%	21,260	2.2%
Kittitas	1,381	1,438	4.1%	1,445	0.5%
Roslyn	893	950	6.4%	965	1.6%
South Cle Elum	532	559	5.1%	575	2.9%
<b>Incorporated Subtotal</b>	<b>22,852</b>	<b>25,901</b>	<b>13.3%</b>	<b>26,545</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
<b>Unincorporated Total</b>	<b>18,063</b>	<b>20,567</b>	<b>13.9%</b>	<b>22,405</b>	<b>8.9%</b>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>40,915</b>	<b>46,468</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>48,950</b>	<b>5.3%</b>

Source: Washington State OFM April 1, 2025 Official Population Estimates, 2025

The average annual growth rate (AAGR) from 2010 to 2025 was calculated at 1.214%. Using this rate, Kittitas County’s population is expected to reach approximately 63,000 by 2046. **Figure 3** provides this 20-year population projection. These population forecasts were utilized in developing a 20-year forecast for municipal solid waste (MSW) through 2046 which can be referenced in **Chapter 7.3**.



**Figure 3 - Kittitas County Population Projections Through 2046**

**POPULATION SERVED**  
44,337

**LAND AREA**  
(square miles)  
2,297.3

**DENSITY**  
(people per square mile)  
19.3

### 1.1.3 Demographics

**Table 3** shows the approximate percentage of Kittitas County’s population by age groups in 2014 and 2024. The County’s population aging trends are somewhat parallel to that of the State of Washington.

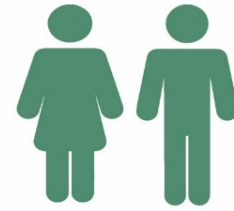
**Table 3 - Population by Age Group**

Age Group	% of Total Population	
	2014 <sup>(1)</sup>	2024
Under 18 years	18.4%	16.4%
18 to 24 years	22.1%	18.2%
25 to 34 years	11.6%	13.1%
35 to 44 years	10.4%	10.1%
45 to 54 years	11.2%	11.4%
55 to 64 years	11.9%	11.6%
65 years & over	14.5%	19.1%

Notes:

<sup>(1)</sup> Data from U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Population by Age for the years 2014 and 2024, respectively.

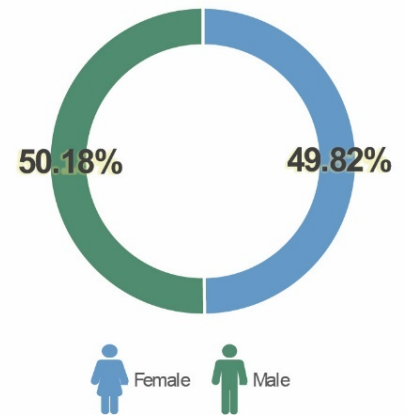
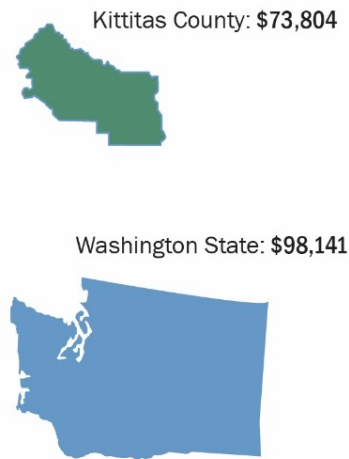
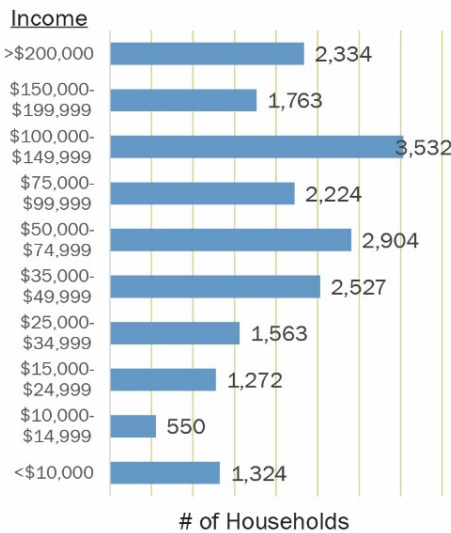
See Kittitas County demographics summarized below:



### Household Income Distribution

### Median Household Income

### Gender Distribution



Living Below the Poverty Threshold

**14.4%**  
RESIDENTS

**7.0%**  
FAMILIES

### 1.1.4 Economy

Government is the largest employment sector in Kittitas County, accounting for more than 5,000 of the County's nearly 25,000 jobs (Headwater Economics, Socioeconomic Trends Report, 2022). The accommodation and food services sector is the second-largest employer, followed closely by the retail trade

sector. See **Table 4** for a more detailed breakdown of the total number of jobs in each employment sector in 2010 and 2022.

**Table 4 - Employment by Industry Since 2010**

Employment Sector	2010	2022	% Growth
<i>Non-Services Related</i>			
Farm	1,441	1,641	14%
Construction	1,184	2,055	74%
Manufacturing	683	783	15%
<b>Non-Services Related Total</b>	<b>3,308</b>	<b>4,479</b>	<b>--</b>
<i>Services Related</i>			
Utilities	48	59	23%
Wholesale trade	604	731	21%
Retail trade	2,158	2,650	23%
Transportation & warehousing	436	708	62%
Information	216	268	24%
Finance & insurance	469	635	35%
Real estate & rental & leasing	845	1,669	98%
Professional & technical services	739	1,249 <sup>(1)</sup>	69%
Administrative & waste services	502 <sup>(1)</sup>	767	53%
Educational services	269	306	14%
Health care & social assistance	1,258	1,578	25%
Arts, entertainment, & recreation	443	489	10%
Accommodation & food services	2,354	2,660	13%
Other services, except public admin.	1,041	1,272	22%
<b>Services Related Total</b>	<b>11,382</b>	<b>15,041</b>	<b>--</b>
<i>Government</i>			
Government	4,987	5,069	2%
<b>Total # of Jobs</b>	<b>19,677</b>	<b>24,589</b>	<b>--</b>

Notes:

<sup>(1)</sup> All employment data are reported by place of work. Estimates were given for data that were not disclosed.

Major employers in the County include CWU, Ellensburg School District, Kittitas County government, the Kittitas Valley Community Hospital, Shoemaker Manufacturing, and Twin City Foods, Inc. There is also a new Winco Foods distribution center opening in Ellensburg in 2027.

### 1.1.5 Environment

Kittitas County, like the rest of Washington State, has a wet winter season and a dry summer season. Approximately one-half of the total precipitation measured within the County falls between November and January. In the lowlands of the County, less than 1 inch of rain generally falls between May and September. Temperatures are cool in the winter and warm in the summer, with wide ranges in daily temperatures as well as summer heat waves and winter cold spells. Continental air masses cause countywide cold spells with below zero temperatures almost every year. The generally dry air results in clear skies during much of the year.



**Figure 4 - Kittitas County Planning Area Map**

## 1.2 Impactful Industry Events

Several key events have occurred over the past decade affecting the solid waste industry as a whole and subsequently solid waste management in Kittitas County. In addition to these global and national occurrences, state-level planning and legislation have also influenced waste management practices in the County.

### 1.2.1 National Sword Policy

Historically, the U.S. shipped most of its plastic scrap overseas, particularly to China. In 2013, China introduced the “Green Fence”, which included more inspections of incoming loads of scrap material. In 2016, China announced that recyclables imports would be restricted. In 2017, China followed this announcement with the launch of the National Sword program. Finally, in March 2018, China imposed a 0.5% contamination limit along with a ban on some commodities, including plastics and mixed paper.

Since this change, the cost and risk of exporting plastic materials increased significantly due to a higher likelihood of shipments being rejected and returned to the United States. While some in the industry resorted to stockpiling or landfilling materials, WM continued to process recyclables as intended. Because WM processes plastics in the County, none of Kittitas County's plastics had to be stockpiled or landfilled. The industry as a whole is now reevaluating collection methods, processing standards, and how recyclability is defined – especially for items that lack long-term, stable markets.

### **1.2.2 Pandemic**

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted nearly every aspect of life for people around the world. Several factors contributed to a shift in the amount and type of solid waste being generated in the United States. Many businesses closed, leaving thousands of Americans unemployed and at home. This spike in unemployment hit Kittitas County in a way that reflects what was seen across the rest of the country. With more people at home to slow the spread of the virus, waste streams around the country were seeing increased tonnages for several waste categories including plastic and cardboard (home deliveries) packaging, food waste, and medical waste to name a few. This increase in waste production strained solid waste management systems all around the world. Charts that show the unemployment rate and waste tonnages for Kittitas County reflect this trend. Other impacted categories of waste that were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic are recyclables packaging due to increased online shopping and construction and demolition (C&D) waste production from changes in the construction industry. The County also saw an increased tonnage of organics during this time that may have been a side effect of people doing yard work while at home. Additionally, equipment delivery time was significantly impacted during this time. In general, waste production across all categories either stabilized or returned to pre-pandemic levels once businesses began to re-open. Because of the health concerns surrounding the pandemic, loss of staff was also a huge concern for solid waste management. In fact, staffing and solid waste collection vehicle production continue to be an issue when it comes to Plan management.

### **1.2.3 Local Fires**

Fires have been an issue in the Kittitas County region for many years. In 2017, the Jolly Mountain Fire burned nearly 37,000 acres in the Wenatchee National Forest, about 6 miles northwest of the City of Cle Elum. In the summer of 2020, the Evans Canyon Fire started near Naches and spread into Kittitas. This fire burned almost 70,000 acres and forced evacuations for more than 400 homes. In September of 2025, 43,000 acres were burned just north of Cle Elum in the Labor Mountain Fire. These fires all caused an influx of fire-related debris which often needs testing for hazardous materials. Many structures in the Kittitas County area contain asbestos, and fire-damaged asbestos waste is extremely harmful and must be disposed of at a moderate-risk waste facility.

### **1.2.4 Regional Storms**

While Kittitas County is located in Western Washington, it has a comparatively low average annual precipitation of just 39" per year (11" of rainfall and 28" of snowfall). Several winter storms have affected Kittitas County in recent years, however, with significantly higher snowfall. In late 2020 and early 2021, for example, severe winter storms and heavy snows resulted in flooding, landslides, and mudslides in the region. This storm caused slick roads, property damage, and excess amounts of water on the ground once the snow had melted and made collection of waste difficult and even dangerous. Due to roof collapses, broken fences, and other damages to houses and buildings, storms like these often cause an influx of debris from structures. Organic waste often sees an increase as well as vegetation is destroyed in the path of the storm.

## **1.3 Industry Legislation Changes**

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Pertinent local and state regulations were reviewed and assessed for updates and/or amendments that have occurred since the 2020 SWMP. These regulations and associate updates/amendments are outlined in **Table 5**.

**Table 5 - Overview of Regulatory Updates**

Title/Section	Year	Amendment/Explanation
Safe Medication Return, House Bill 1047	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created a statewide Safe Medication Return program to ensure the secure disposal of unused medications.</li> <li>Provides free drop-off kiosks and mail-back envelopes for residents to safely dispose of prescription and over-the-counter drugs, helping prevent misuse, accidental poisonings, and environmental harm.</li> </ul>
Food Waste Reduction, House Bill 1114	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established ambitious goals to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030, including halving edible food waste.</li> <li>Directed Ecology to develop the Use Food Well Washington Plan, a comprehensive strategy created in collaboration with over 100 experts and multiple state agencies. The plan outlines 30 actionable recommendations across sectors such as agriculture, retail, and hunger relief, focusing on policy reform, public education, infrastructure investment, and funding.</li> </ul>
Paint Stewardship, House Bill 1652	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established a statewide paint stewardship program to manage leftover architectural paint through an industry-funded and operated system.</li> <li>Requires paint manufacturers to implement a stewardship plan (approved by Ecology) that ensures convenient, no-cost collection sites for residents and qualifying businesses. The program, operated by PaintCare, accepts interior and exterior paints, primers, stains, and sealers in containers of five gallons or less.</li> <li>Collected paint is reused, recycled, used as fuel, or properly disposed of.</li> </ul>
Plastic Bag Ban, Senate Bill 5323	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established a statewide ban on single-use plastic carryout bags to reduce plastic pollution and contamination in recycling systems.</li> <li>Effective October 1, 2021, the law prohibits retailers and food service businesses from providing thin plastic bags and instead requires them to offer recyclable paper bags or reusable plastic bags for a minimum charge of \$0.08 per bag. All allowed bags must meet specific standards, such as including at least 40% post-consumer recycled content and being properly labeled.</li> </ul>
Responsible Management of Plastic Packaging, Senate Bill 5397	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Directed Ecology to conduct a comprehensive study on the management of plastic packaging in the State. The law aimed to evaluate the amount, types, and life cycle impacts of plastic packaging sold or distributed in Washington, including its environmental and economic costs.</li> <li>The study assessed infrastructure needs, contamination issues, and the effectiveness of existing recycling and stewardship programs. It also reviewed innovations in plastic reduction, reuse, and recycling (such as chemical recycling technologies) and identified using recycled plastics.</li> <li>The findings were used to develop policy recommendations for reducing plastic waste through product stewardship, industry initiatives, and improved systems, with the goal of implementing actionable solutions by 2022.</li> </ul>
	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthens regulations on how products, especially packaging and food service ware, can be marketed in terms of degradability.</li> </ul>

Title/Section	Year	Amendment/Explanation
Marketing Product Degradability, House Bill 1569		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prohibits the use of misleading terms like "biodegradable", "degradable", and "oxo-degradable" unless the product meets strict scientific standards for composability. To be labeled "compostable", products must be certified by a recognized third party and clearly marked with specific color signals and labeling.</li> </ul>
Food Waste Reduction, RCW 70A.205.715	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stems from House Bill 1114 (see above).</li> <li>The law requires Ecology to create a food waste reduction plan with current food waste data. The State's food waste reduction progress will be measured annually, leading toward the goal to reduce all edible food waste by 50% by the year 2030.</li> </ul>
Disposable Wipes Labeling Requirements, House Bill 2565	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established clear labeling requirements for disposable wipes to prevent environmental harm caused by improper flushing.</li> <li>The law mandates that non-flushable wipes (including baby wipes, cleaning wipes, and similar products) must display a prominent "Do Not Flush" label on both the front and back of the packaging. The label must follow specific design standards for visibility and durability.</li> </ul>
Solar Panel Stewardship, House Bill 2645	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established the Photovoltaic Module Stewardship and Takeback Program, requiring manufacturers of solar panels sold in the State to finance and operate a recycling and disposal program for their products.</li> <li>Beginning July 1, 2025, no photovoltaic module may be sold in Washington unless its manufacturer has an approved stewardship plan on file with Ecology. These plans must ensure convenient, no-cost collection for consumers and outline how modules will be safely reused, recycled, or disposed of at the end of their life.</li> </ul>
Encouraging Compost Procurement and Use, House Bill 2713	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotes the use of compost in public projects to support soil health and reduce organic waste. The law requires state agencies and local governments to consider using compost products in landscaping, construction, and soil maintenance for government-funded projects, where feasible.</li> <li>Also encourages local governments that offer residential compost collection to establish purchasing agreements with compost processors, creating a closed-loop system for organic waste reuse.</li> </ul>
Plastic Bag Ban, RCW 70A.530	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stems from Senate Bill 5323 (see above).</li> <li>Washington passed a ban on single-use plastic bags in 2020 throughout the state in an effort to combat plastic contamination of our environment and recycling stream.</li> <li>If businesses want to provide plastic bags, they are required to enforce an 8-cent charge for a durable, reusable plastic bag. There are new material and thickness requirements for these bags as part of this law as well.</li> </ul>
	2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive law targeting plastic waste reduction through multiple strategies. Bans the sale and distribution of expanded polystyrene (EPS) products such as packing peanuts (effective June 2023) and foam food containers, plates, and coolers (effective June 2024).</li> </ul>

Title/Section	Year	Amendment/Explanation
Plastic Waste Reduction, Senate Bill 5022		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Also requires that single-use food service ware items (like plastic utensils, straws, and condiment packets) be provided only upon customer request, helping to curb unnecessary plastic waste.</li> <li>Mandates minimum post-consumer recycled content in plastic beverage bottles, household cleaning containers, and trash bags, with phased increases over time to support recycling markets and reduce reliance on virgin plastics.</li> </ul>
Enhancing Litter Control Along State Highways, Senate Bill 5040	2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Welcome to Washington Act", aims to strengthen litter control efforts along state highways.</li> <li>Mandates greater coordination among key state agencies including Ecology, WSDOT, and Washington State Patrol to improve the efficiency and visibility of litter cleanup operations.</li> <li>Prioritizes highway litter removal as a public-facing environmental issue and seeks to enhance perception of the State's cleanliness. Also supports expanded use of litter crews, public education campaigns, and enforcement of anti-littering laws to reduce roadside waste and promote civic pride.</li> </ul>
Reducing Methane Emissions from Landfills, House Bill 1663	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established methane emission requirements to be met by both MSW landfills as well as limited purpose landfills.</li> <li>Owners of covered landfills of different sizes now need to calculate the quantity of gas generated by the fill and could possibly have to install a gas collection system.</li> <li>Landfills in Washington State cannot exceed a methane surface emission value of 200 parts per million by volume at any location on the landfill property.</li> </ul>
Organic Materials Management, House Bill 1799	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Washington sets state goals related to the management of organic materials and requires local governments to establish a volumetric capacity for its organic materials management.</li> <li>Certain businesses and local governments are required to arrange or provide organic waste collection services.</li> <li>The Washington Center for Sustainable Food Management was created under the Department of Ecology.</li> <li>Created requirements regarding the funding and execution of waste management, such as the updating of plastic and compostable products labeling standards.</li> </ul>
Compostable Project Usage, House Bill 1033	2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluates compostable product usage in Washington.</li> <li>Requires that Ecology creates a legislatively outlined advisory committee and hire a facilitator to review issues on compostable products, mainly food related compostable products.</li> <li>Cascadia Consulting Group was hired to be the lead facilitator, and the Advisory Committee has been meeting since October 2023. A final report with recommendations from the Advisory Committee to be completed.</li> </ul>

Title/Section	Year	Amendment/Explanation
Reducing Plastic Pollution, House Bill 1085	2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires that Ecology oversees restrictions on beauty and single-use health products provided in lodging establishments and restricts the construction and installation of overwater plastic foam structures like boat docks.</li> <li>The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will be required to conduct a study on sustainable alternatives for the foam structures.</li> <li>Certain public buildings will be required to install water bottle filling stations in an effort to reduce single-use plastic bottles.</li> </ul>
Labeling Requirements for Wipes, House Bill 1213	2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthens enforcement of labeling requirements for non-flushable wipes, ensuring compliance with the State's earlier "Do Not Flush" labeling law (see HB 2565 above).</li> <li>Clarifies that manufacturers of wipes sold in Washington must clearly and consistently label products that are not intended to be flushed, using standardized language and placement of packaging.</li> <li>Empowers Ecology to monitor compliance and take enforcement actions, including issuing penalties for violations.</li> </ul>
Reducing Environmental Impacts Associated with Lighting Products, House Bill 1185	2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bans certain mercury-containing lights from being sold starting January 1, 2029, but allows in-state distributors, retailers, and wholesalers to sell existing stock through July 1, 2029.</li> <li>The mercury-containing lights collection and recycling program is extended until 2035 rather than ending in 2025. A consumer fee is also added to purchases of mercury-containing lights at the end of 2028.</li> </ul>
Battery Stewardship, Senate Bill 5144	2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishes a comprehensive battery stewardship program to ensure responsible environmental management of batteries.</li> <li>Requires battery producers to implement a statewide collection and recycling system for portable batteries by January 1, 2027, and for medium-format batteries (like those in e-bikes and mobility devices) by January 1, 2029. Producers must submit a stewardship plan to Ecology by July 1, 2026, detailing logistics, funding, safety protocols, and public outreach strategies.</li> <li>Mandates a study on electric vehicle battery management, with final recommendations delivered in May 2024, addressing end-of-life handling, regulatory gaps, and stakeholder responsibilities.</li> </ul>
Sale of Cannabis Waste, Senate Bill 5376	2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authorizes the sale of cannabis waste that is not classified as dangerous or hazardous waste under state law.</li> <li>Cannabis producers and processors may now sell non-hazardous cannabis waste such as stems, leaves, and trim provided they first notify the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board and the Department of Agriculture with details including the quantity, price, and buyer's name.</li> <li>All sales records must be made publicly available. If the waste is not sold under this provision, the original disposal requirements still apply.</li> </ul>

Title/Section	Year	Amendment/Explanation
Organic Material Management Systems, House Bill 2301	2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The following organics materials management laws were updated, including the following summary from Ecology:</li> <li>• Establishing five grant programs within Ecology's Center for Sustainable Food Management to support food waste reduction, food rescue, and other organic material management system improvements</li> <li>• Establishing the Washington Commodities Donation Grant Program within the Department of Agriculture</li> <li>• Increasing award thresholds for the Waste Not Washington School Awards</li> <li>• Mandating organic materials collection in jurisdictions that implement local solid waste plans</li> <li>• Requiring Ecology to adopt rules to establish permitting requirements for organic management facilities that accept food waste and that also are required to have a solid waste handling permit, to address contamination</li> <li>• Amending product degradability restrictions</li> <li>• Changing compost reimbursement eligibility requirements</li> <li>• Increasing reporting frequency for jurisdictions with a Compost Procurement Ordinance</li> <li>• Adding a requirement for products labeled as “home compostable”</li> <li>• Establishing a work group to study how to improve rescue of edible food from businesses submit a legislative report by Sept. 1, 2025</li> <li>• Studying produce sticker technology including composability, performance, printability, and cost and submit a report to the legislature by Sept. 1, 2025</li> </ul>
Organics Management Law	2022 & 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprised of House Bills 1799 (2022), 2301 (2024), and 2713 (2020), these laws aim to reduce methane by diverting organic materials away from municipal landfills by saving food for people or livestock and composting.</li> <li>• The goal is for 20% of previously disposed edible foods to be recovered for consumption by 2025 and for 75% of these foods to be diverted from landfills by 2030.</li> <li>• Five different grant programs that will support these various organics management requirements will begin to be developed in January 2025.</li> </ul>

Title/Section	Year	Amendment/Explanation
Recycling Reform Act, Senate Bill 5284	2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="499 326 1339 350">• Awards for supporting waste reduction in public schools will be increased in 2026.</li> <li data-bbox="499 383 1961 440">• Establishes an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program for consumer packaging materials, shifting financial and operational responsibility for recycling from local governments and ratepayers to the producers of packaging materials.</li> <li data-bbox="499 464 1913 553">• Packaging producers must join a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) by early 2026. The PRO will be responsible for financing and managing the State's recycling system, including curbside recycling, public education, infrastructure support, and a statewide recycling list of acceptable materials.</li> <li data-bbox="499 578 1598 602">• Ecology will oversee implementation, supported by a 17-member advisory council representing stakeholders.</li> <li data-bbox="499 626 1871 683">• Mandates statewide curbside recycling access for all households with existing trash service, including up to 500,000 underserved homes, particularly in rural and multi-family housing.</li> <li data-bbox="499 708 1955 821">• A statewide needs assessment will be completed by 2027 to identify infrastructure and service gaps and define the true costs of running the system. Implementation is phased, with reimbursement to local service providers beginning at 50% in 2030, increasing to 75% in 2031, and 90% by 2032. Exemptions apply for specific categories of food, medical, and hazardous packing, as well as if producers independently achieve a 70% reuse or recycle rate by 2030.</li> </ul>
Organics Management Law, House Bill 1497	2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="499 854 1612 878">• Strengthens the State's efforts to reduce landfill-bound organic waste and improve waste system performance.</li> <li data-bbox="499 902 1881 959">• Builds upon earlier organics legislation and introduces several key updates, including requiring that all solid waste carts under 101 gallons purchased after August 1, 2025, must follow a standardized color scheme by January 1, 2028.</li> <li data-bbox="499 984 1881 1040">• Addresses a critical service gap by mandating that updated local solid waste management plans include phased implementation of source-separated organics collection for multifamily residences, particularly new or substantially remodeled buildings.</li> <li data-bbox="499 1065 1948 1154">• Requires jurisdictions to report performance metrics, such as the percentage of food waste properly separated and contamination rates, to qualify for state funding. Ecology is tasked with developing an outreach and education toolkit and formalizing data reporting requirements through rulemaking.</li> </ul>

## 1.4 Planning Congruency

Consistent with RCW 70.95.090(3), all relevant plans within the planning area were evaluated to determine their potential impacts to the solid waste management system. See **Appendix G** for the reviews and summarizations of each of these plans.

## 1.5 Solid Waste Management Planning History



**Figure 5 - History of Solid Waste Planning in Kittitas County**

There were also several program implementations and studies that affected the Kittitas County solid waste system:

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATIONS	STUDIES
Due to House Bill 1799 (Solid Waste, Organic Materials & Food Waste Management), the County established a Compost Procurement Policy – Ordinance No. 2022-014	Kittitas County staff performed an audit of their recycling drop boxes located at the transfer stations. The first audit was completed April 2022, staff sorted and weighed recyclables; noted and weighed contaminates/garbage placed in the boxes. Staff put out an educational campaign focusing on common contaminates and purchased clearer signage to place on the boxes. A second audit was conducted in April 2023 to measure the campaigns’ successes and shortcomings.
Established Kittitas County Code Title 8.21 for Recycling & Yard Waste Service Level – Ordinance 2023-008	
Contamination Reduction & Outreach Plan (CROP) – Ecology’s approval 2021	
In accordance with FEMA guidelines, Kittitas County Public Works & Solid Waste developed a Debris Management Plan – Resolution 2015-116	
	Secondary Recycling Market Feasibility Study and Preliminary Action Plan – June 2021
	Transfer Station Relocation Feasibility Study/ Kittitas County Transfer Station Site Selection Report – August 2018

**Figure 6 - Kittitas County Solid Waste Program Implementation & Studies**

### 1.5.1 Previous (2020) Plan

Goals for the previous (2020-2025) Kittitas County Solid Waste Management Plan can be found in **Appendix A**. To support the previous plan goals, several recommendations for improving the County’s overall management of waste were included in the previous SWMP. These options are listed below in **Table 6** along with their implementation status as of 2025.

**Table 6 - Implementation Status of 2020 SWMP Recommended Options**

Option	Summary	Status
<i>Waste Reduction</i>		
Waste Reduction Policies	Track progress of the procurement policy.	Ongoing.

Public Education & Outreach	<p>Continue to implement electronic, print, and presentation recycling outreach elements including moderate risk waste (MRW).</p> <p>Consider preparing videos to discuss various solid waste related topics. Videos will be posted to the County website.</p>	Ongoing.
Commercial Technical Assistance	Continue to offer more technical assistance and provide a case study of high-performing businesses.	Ongoing.
Institutional & Nonprofit Assistance	Support community activities and local organizations to expand their programs through sponsorships and presentations.	Ongoing.
Purchasing	Develop procurement policies for agencies, ensure the success of the plastic bag ban, and promote smart purchasing options.	Ongoing.
<i>Recycling</i>		
Collection	Work with haulers and cities to provide recycling services that support the viability of those programs and are economically feasible based on market conditions.	Ongoing.
Commercial Programs	Provide technical assistance to large businesses. Target agricultural activities. Develop a recognition program to increase recycling.	Ongoing.
Large Venue & Special Event Recycling	Continue reviewing event plans and develop best management practices for event planners.	Ongoing.
Self-Haul	Provide recycling services that support the viability of those programs and are economically feasible based on market conditions.	Ongoing.
Rate Structure	Maintain the PAYT (pay-as-you-throw) structure. Evaluate if rate changes are necessary to adequately cover the cost of recycling.	Ongoing.
Recycling Initiatives	Assist organizations in applying for grants.	Ongoing.
Evaluation & Monitoring	Conduct annual assessment of progress meeting the goals and objectives of the Plan.	Ongoing.
Identify Funding & Other Nonmonetary Resources	Identify and pursue funding and non-monetary resources for developing and implementing recycling programs and promotion.	Ongoing.
Formal Working Relationships	Encourage the establishment of formal working relationships between the County and other agencies, institutions, and organizations.	Ongoing.
Sustainable Community	Promote complementary programs like green building and food waste reduction.	Ongoing.
Evaluate Expansion of Programs	Evaluate the expansion of programs to target specific waste generators; evaluate curbside recycling.	Ongoing. Expanded curbside recycling (Level of Service Ordinance 2023-008).

Recycling Public Education & Outreach	Continue existing outreach to increase recycling rates and reduce contamination and expand program resources online.	Ongoing.
<i>Composting</i>		
Composting Public Education & Outreach	Continue to develop, distribute, and post composting education materials. Expand the Master Composter program and offer additional workshops.	Ongoing.
Compost Facility	Develop new Compost Facility at the new transfer station that is being developed.	Ongoing. New Compost Facility opened in Spring 2026.
Vermicomposting	Continue composting workshops and recruit small-scale pilot composting projects.	Ongoing.
Residential Yard Waste Collection Programs	Continue existing green waste collection programs and evaluate expanding curbside services.	Ongoing. Expanded curbside organics (Level of Service Ordinance 2023-008).
Commercial Collection of Organics	Conduct a feasibility study to evaluate collection of pre-consumer food waste.	Ongoing.
Marketing of Finished Compost Products	Evaluate the marketing of finished compost.	Ongoing.
Tiered Rate Structure for Organics	Review the green waste tipping fee and implement a higher charge for contaminated green waste.	Ongoing. Implemented Contaminated Yard Waste Fee (Resolution 2021-139).
<i>Solid Waste Collection</i>		
Routing of Collected Waste Through County Facilities	Continue to route all municipal solid waste to the County.	Ongoing.
Curbside Solid Waste Collection	Evaluate curbside program outside served areas.	Ongoing.
Review Collection Contracts	Periodically review hauler contracts to confirm obligations are met. Review complaints to confirm resolution is met and fees are paid.	Ongoing.
Funding Sources	Identify and procure additional funding sources to meet minimum level of service requirements.	Ongoing.
<i>Transfer Stations</i>		
Replace Ellensburg Transfer Station	Complete the design, permitting, and construction phase of the Ellensburg Transfer Station Replacement project.	New Transfer Station Opened in Spring of 2026.
Use of Transfer Stations	Continue to route all municipal solid waste through facilities within the County and ensure collection of program fees.	Ongoing.
Expand Cle Elum Operations	Evaluate options to expand the existing Cle Elum transfer facility and/or expand operating hours.	Ongoing. New entrance plan and design started in 2024.
<i>Landfill Disposal</i>		
Long-Term Disposal Opportunities	Evaluate disposal opportunities like waste-to-energy (WTE) and rail transport to other landfills.	Ongoing.
Contractual Arrangements	Evaluate landfills with lower tipping rates or long-term pricing; evaluate the escalation rate for the transfer stations to manage future budgets.	Ongoing.
<i>Alternative Disposal Technologies</i>		

Future consideration & Feasibility	Review the feasibility of developing a WTE facility in the County.	Ongoing.
Alternative Energy Technologies	Track advancements in alternative technologies.	Ongoing.
<i>Special Waste</i>		
Recovery of Construction & Demolition (C&D) Debris	Evaluate the recovery of debris at Ryegrass and the two transfer stations with private recyclers.	Ongoing.
Materials Exchange Program	Continue working with nonprofit organizations to promote materials exchange and reuse stores for C&D material.	Ongoing.
Evaluate Flow Control Measures	Write a flow control ordinance to keep all solid waste within the County.	Ongoing.
<i>Agricultural Waste</i>		
Evaluate Opportunities for Beneficial Reuse of Biomass	Maintain biomass as an option; review feasibility of developing biomass facilities in the County.	Ongoing.
Agricultural Pests & Other Nuisances	Operate within the apple maggot quarantine rules. Enforce commercial and residential onsite solid waste storage.	Ongoing.
<i>Tires</i>		
Public Education Programs for Tires	Provide the public lists of facilities that accept tires with the web and apps; target education of companies with commercial fleets.	Ongoing.
Evaluate Diversion Options for Tires	Evaluate whether tire diversion options are viable.	Ongoing.
Continue Current Tire Ban	Continue to promote the tire ban from landfills.	Ongoing.
<i>Biomedical Waste</i>		
Public Education of Residential Medical Waste	Develop and distribute educational materials for the correct management of residential medical waste.	Ongoing.
Monitoring Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) for Biomedical Waste	Encourage the Health Department to monitor the MSW program.	Ongoing.
Pharmaceutical Waste	Evaluate options for drop-off sites. Support private efforts for take-back programs.	Ongoing.
<i>Veterinary Waste</i>		
Large Animal Disposal	Support development of programs for large animal disposal alternatives.	Ongoing.
Education and Outreach - Large Animal	Provide information on County disposal options including proper composting techniques onsite.	Ongoing.
<i>Petroleum-Contaminated Soils (PCS)</i>		
In-County PCS Site	Support the development of a site that can convert remediated soil to a daily cover.	Ongoing.
Street Sweepings Management	Evaluate management of street sweepings to become remediated and then used as daily cover.	Ongoing.
Feasibility Study for PCS Management	Conduct a feasibility study about the options to handle PCS effectively.	Ongoing.
Import PCS	Explore the import of treated PCS for daily cover at Ryegrass.	Ongoing.
<i>Asbestos</i>		

Public Education on Asbestos-Containing Materials	Allow current private solid waste hauler to inform the public on proper handling of ACM.	Ongoing.
<i>Liquid Waste</i>		
Expand Septage Capacity	Transition Pond 3 leachate lagoon into a septage lagoon.	Ongoing. Liner testing completed in Winter 2025.
<i>Electronic Waste</i>		
Monitor & Evaluate E-Waste Program	Submit annual Satisfaction Report summarizing program.	Ongoing.
E-Waste Education	Promote the drop-off locations for educational materials from the E-Cycle Toolkit.	Ongoing.
<i>Moderate Risk Waste</i>		
MRW Facilities	Expand existing MRW facilities to accommodate more waste types. Increase participation by hosting regular business hours.	Ongoing. New MRWF opening Spring 2026.
Commercial Outreach, Education, & Technical Assistance	Implement outreach education and technical assistance to commercial entities.	Ongoing.
Funding for MRW Programs	Seek additional funding sources from the State as well as increasing handling and disposal fees.	Ongoing. Implemented SQG hourly fee (Resolution 2025-145).
<i>Administration and Enforcement</i>		
Staffing & Resources	Utilize a cooperative approach to staffing and program evaluation with the SWAC.	Ongoing.
Administration Funding	Explore additional grant funding.	Ongoing.
Other Long-Term Needs	Consider other policies between Plan updates.	Ongoing.
New Regulations & Ordinance Requirements	Update other policies when regulations change between Plan updates.	Ongoing.
Permit Procedures, Policies, & Fee Structures	County Health Department to continue to implement relevant policies, procedures, and fees for solid waste facilities.	Ongoing.
Permit Review	SWAC to review all new solid waste facility permit requests.	Ongoing.
Emergency Debris Management Plan	Connect SWMP with Emergency Debris Management Plan	Ongoing.

### 1.5.2 2026 Plan Update Process

For this update, the Solid Waste Management Plan and the Moderate Risk Waste Management Plan are being combined into a single plan (the “Plan”), similar to the set-up of the 2020 SWMP. This Plan will be used as a guiding document for decision-making regarding future needs of the solid waste system, as well as an educational tool for citizens to better understand how solid waste is being managed locally. Along with adhering to laws and regulations, this Plan aligns with the County’s comprehensive plan for future planning.

Required contents for this Plan are outlined in RCW 70A.205.045 and are addressed throughout this Plan. This Plan also includes implementation strategies and community outreach programs, all designed to adapt to evolving regulatory requirements (see **Appendix D**) and sustainability goals, all of which are detailed within these Plan chapters. To assist with reading this plan, a list of acronyms and abbreviations, along with a glossary of terms can be found in **Appendix B** and **Appendix C**, respectively.

### **1.5.3 Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)**

The Solid Waste Planning Guidelines address SWAC roles and state that this Solid Waste Management Plan is to specify the procedures and operations of the local SWAC, including what specific documents the SWAC is to review and provide comment on. SWACs are to be ongoing committees, with meetings to be held at least four times per year during development of a SWMP, and at least twice a year at other times. Notice to the media is to be given stating the SWAC meeting times.

The SWAC operates under bylaws (see **Appendix E**) adopted by the Committee, elects its own chairman, and has a regular rotation of new members appointed by the Board of Commissioners. The Solid Waste Department (Solid Waste) provides staff support to the SWAC, including meeting arrangements, minutes and agenda preparation, and supplemental information. A current roster is provided in **Appendix E** along with meeting minutes.

The primary function of the SWAC is to review all significant policy and program development issues and recommend a position to the Board of Commissioners and Board of Health. Specific documents to be submitted for SWAC review prior to action by the Board include:

- 1) Solid Waste and Moderate Risk Waste Management Plans and Plan amendments.
- 2) Proposed changes in the County regulations on solid waste handling, and in the Board of Health regulations relating to solid waste.
- 3) Annual budgets and work plans that are related to implementation of current Solid and Moderate Risk Waste Management Plan recommendations.
- 4) Rates and rate revisions concerning solid and moderate risk wastes.
- 5) Annual operating data concerning solid and moderate risk waste diversion, recycling, and disposal.
- 6) Provide an ongoing mechanism for evaluation and feedback of the County's solid waste management system, including proper documentation of activities.
- 7) Maintain sufficient funding mechanisms to support selected program options.
- 8) Evaluate strategies for managing specific waste streams.

In Kittitas County, meetings are typically held semiannually, but more frequent meetings are held as necessary. Meeting notices are provided to the media and the public is encouraged to attend and participate.

The SWAC will consider issues, concerns, and possible amendments to the Plan at their regular meetings, as follows:

- Complete, factual written information is submitted to Solid Waste Staff.
- Solid Waste Staff will review with SWAC Chair for completeness.
- Information is disseminated to each SWAC member 2 weeks in advance of the next SWAC meeting (see **Appendix E** for Kittitas County Solid Waste Advisory Committee Bylaws and Meetings Procedures, Section VIII Amendments).

### 1.5.4 Goals

With assistance from Kittitas County Solid Waste Staff and the SWAC, four goals were identified for this 2026 Solid Waste Management Plan Update:

#### 1. Maintain Affordability and Fiscal Stewardship



Ensure solid waste services remain affordable for Kittitas County residents while upholding strong fiscal responsibility and transparency in the management of public resources.

#### 2. Ensure Full Regulatory Compliance



Meet all applicable federal, state, and local regulations for waste disposal and environmental protection, ensuring continued compliance across all Kittitas County Solid Waste operations.

#### 3. Enhance Community Engagement and Education



Strengthen community involvement and environmental awareness through targeted outreach, educational events, and consistent communication efforts.

#### 4. Leverage Local Knowledge for Long-Term Solutions

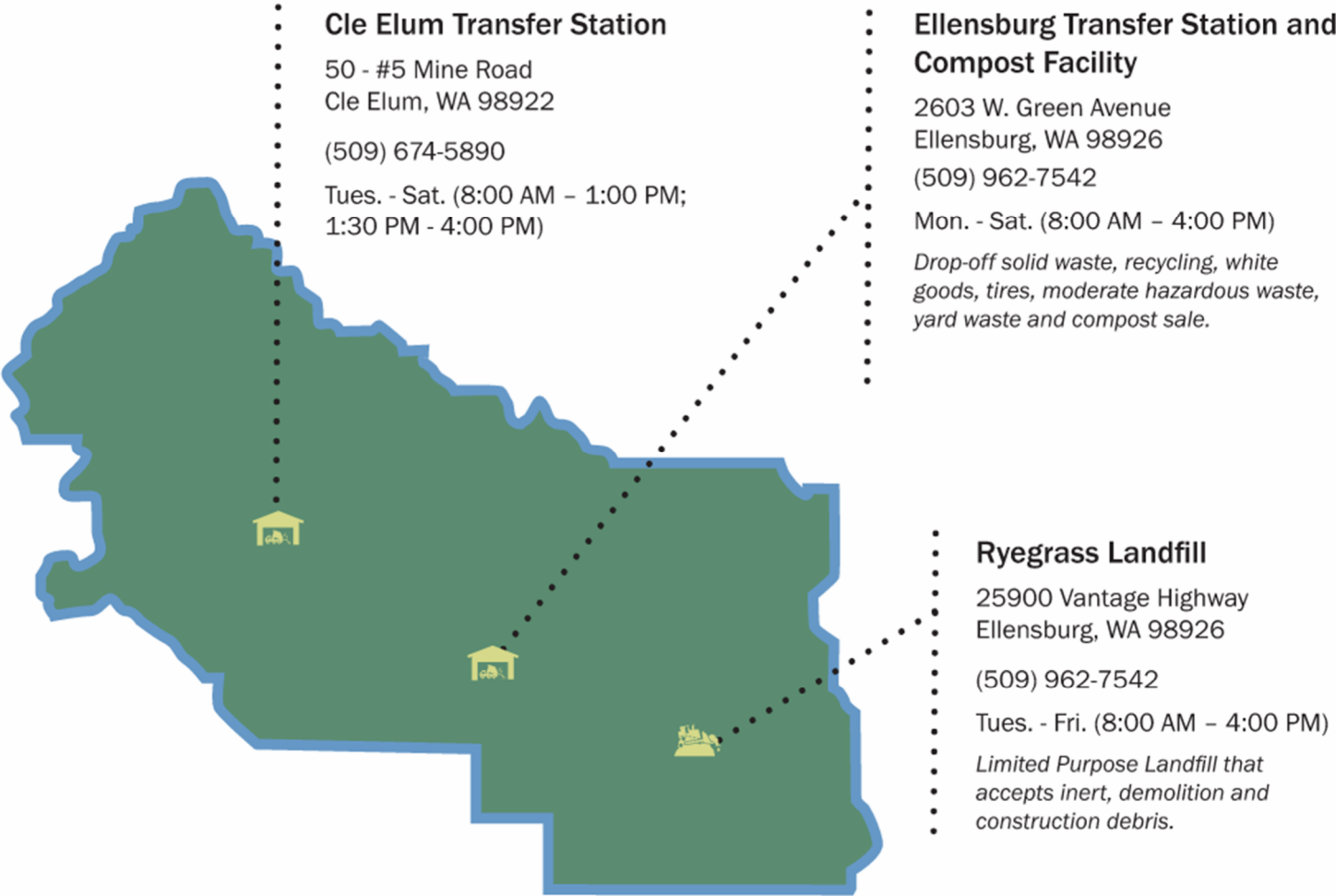


Apply Kittitas County's operational experience and regional knowledge to continually develop and deliver long-term, effective, and sustainable solid waste services that meet the evolving needs of the community.



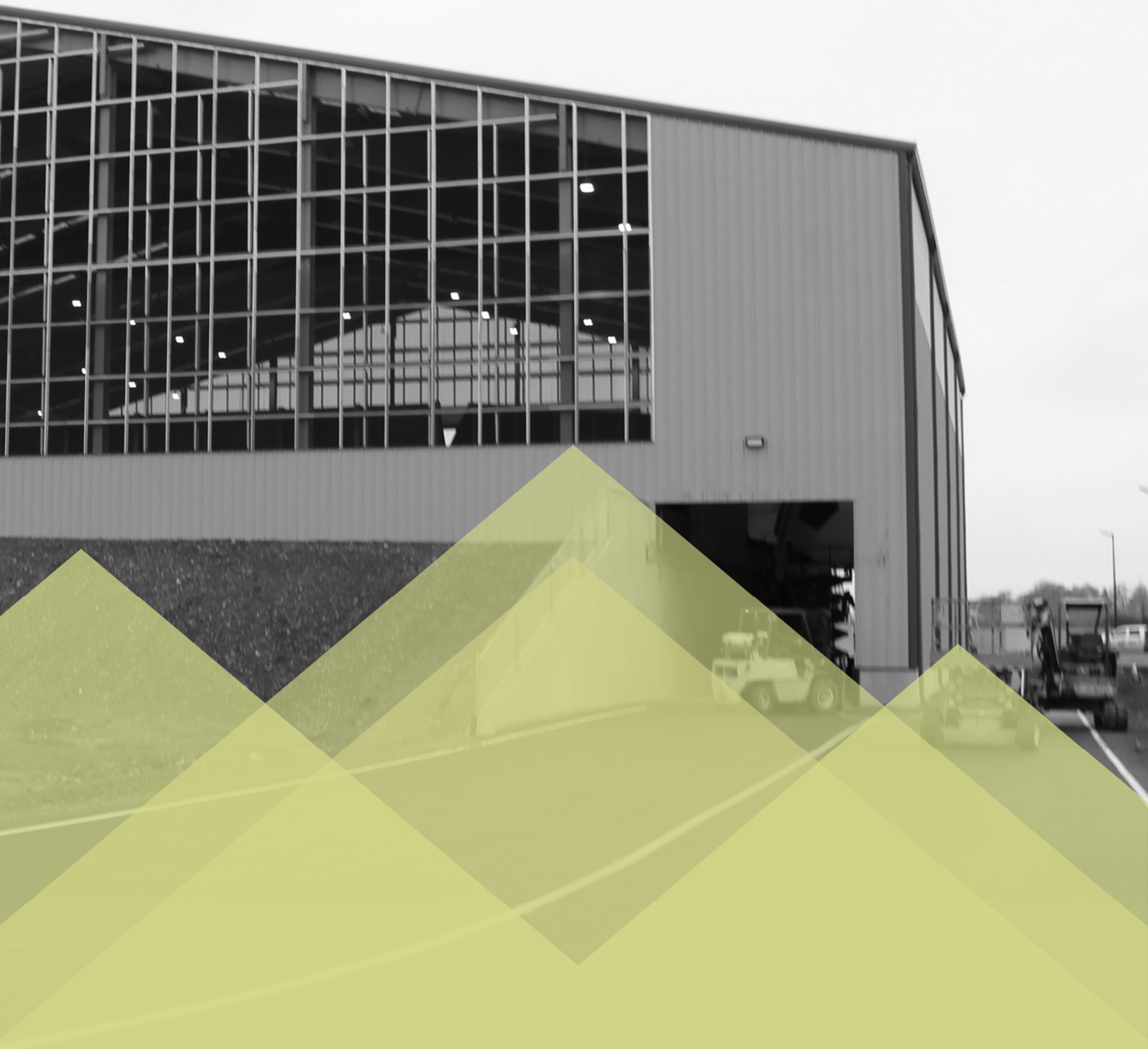
# 1.6 Existing Solid Waste Facilities Inventory

In Kittitas County, there are two transfer stations (Cle Elum Transfer Station and Ellensburg Transfer Station) and one limited purpose landfill (LPL, Ryegrass Landfill). See **Figure 7** for the locations of each of these sites. All three facilities are operated by a private company, although Kittitas County operates the compost facility at Ellensburg Transfer Station.



**Figure 7 - Kittitas County Solid Waste Facilities**

MSW that is collected from residents by a private hauler or self-hauled by residents, businesses, and institutions is taken to one of two transfer stations located within the County, the Ellensburg or Cle Elum Transfer Stations. All MSW generated in the County is transferred from these facilities to the Greater Wenatchee Regional Landfill in Douglas County. Details regarding the County’s MSW collection and disposal infrastructure are included in **Chapter 3.0** of this Plan.



## **2.0 Waste Streams**

## 2.0 Waste Streams

An accurate analysis of the types and quantities of waste generated provides the necessary data for identifying existing and future solid waste system needs, and the policies, facilities, and programs to be implemented to meet those needs. This chapter analyzes Kittitas County’s waste generation trends and uses historical and projected population data to produce a waste generation forecast.

For the purposes of this analysis, waste generation is defined as the sum of tons of solid waste disposed and diverted in Kittitas County. As used in this Plan, disposed solid waste is considered all solid waste placed in landfills or incinerated. Diverted waste includes waste that is recycled, composted, or otherwise diverted from disposal. The largest component of the waste stream is mixed municipal solid waste (MSW) and consists of waste typically generated by residences, offices, and other businesses and institutions. Other wastes include C&D waste, moderate risk waste (MRW), and miscellaneous wastes, such as biomedical wastes, tires and automobiles, electronic wastes, and other types of wastes. Each category of miscellaneous waste has its own characteristics and handling needs. Miscellaneous waste and hazardous wastes produced by households, and by businesses in small quantities, are addressed separately in this Plan.

### 2.1 Municipal Solid Waste (Garbage)

#### 2.1.1 Municipal Solid Waste in Washington

Washington State’s vision for solid waste management is to move beyond waste, transitioning to a society where waste is viewed as inefficient and where most wastes and toxic substances have been eliminated. Part of working towards this vision is establishing baseline data. In 2009 and again in 2016, a statewide waste characterization study was performed to determine the composition of the State’s waste streams and compare how they differed across the State. This data was updated in a new study completed in 2021. These studies included analyzing the waste streams in the West, Northwest, Puget Sound, Southwest, Central, and East regions of Washington.

Ecology’s Waste in Washington story map shows that, as of 2021, 50.9% of the state’s waste ends up in landfills or incinerators, while the remaining 49.1% is diverted through recycling, composting, combustion of source-separated materials, land application, and anaerobic digestion. Figure 8 shows this breakout and includes total annual tonnages from 2021.

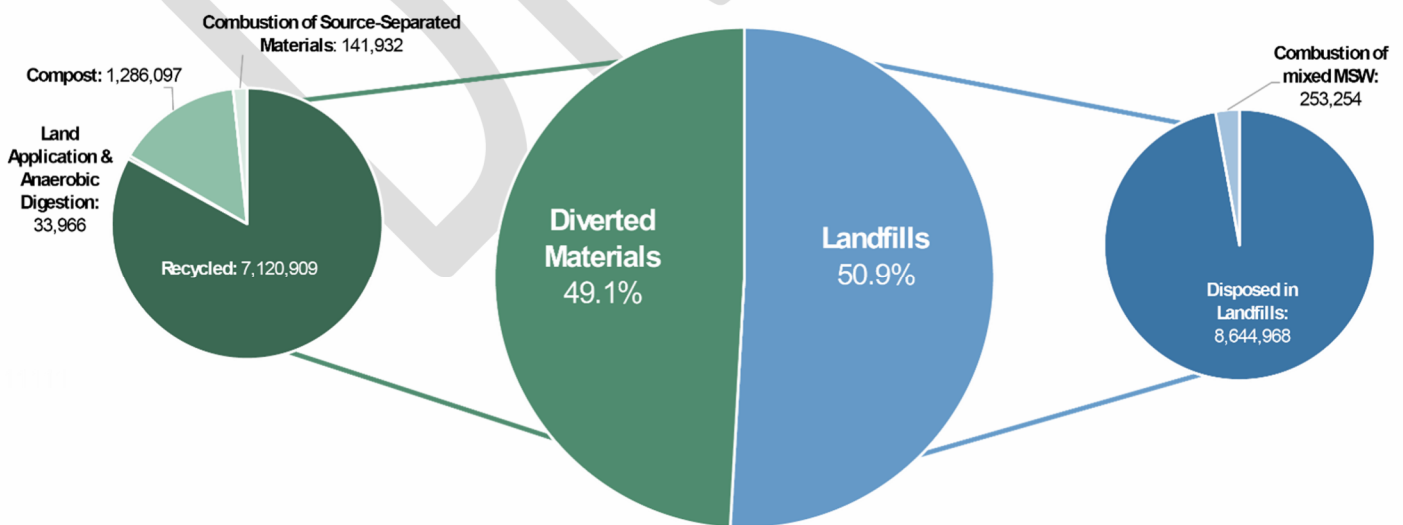
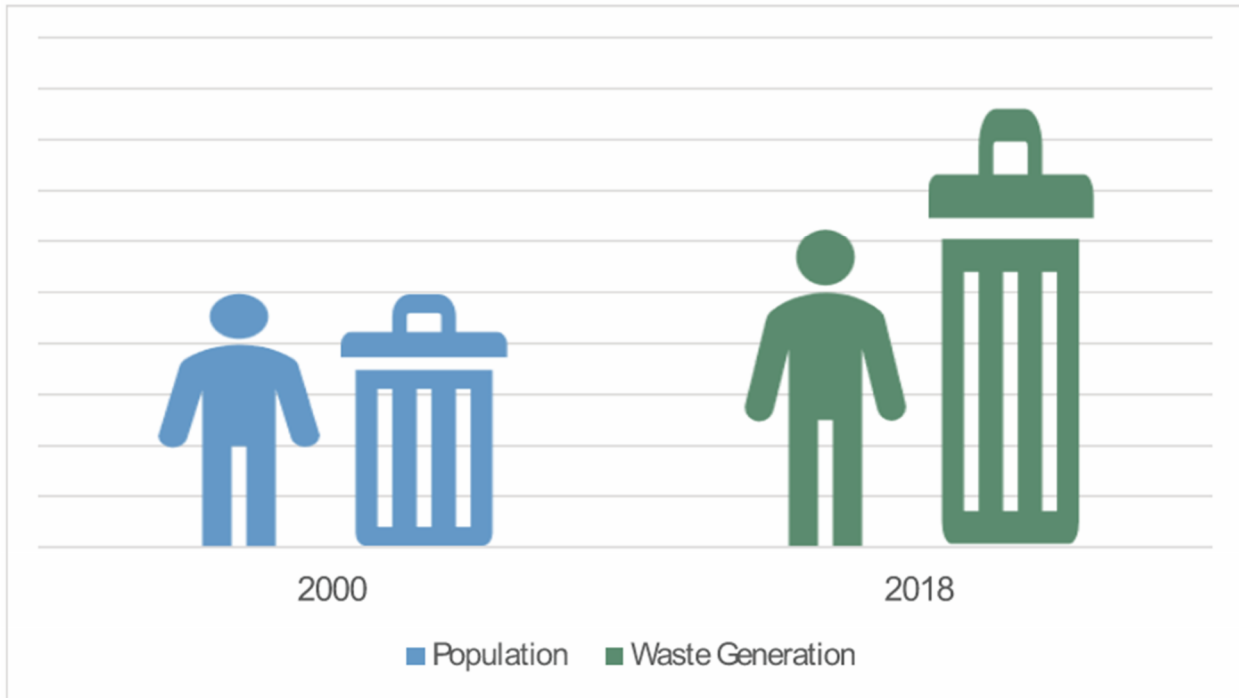


Figure 8 - Washington State Landfilling & Diverting Rates

Between 2000 and 2018, Washington State’s population increased by 26%. Waste generation, however, increased by 74% during this same time span.



**Figure 9 - Population & Waste Generation Trends**

Although Washington’s total waste generation continues to rise due to population growth, recent efforts to increase diversion have led to a drop in how much waste each person throws away. Details on statewide per capita recovery, disposal, and total generation rates from the Ecology’s waste generation and recovery worksheet can be found in **Table 7**.

**Table 7 - Washington State Per Capita Waste Generation Rates 2016-2023**

Year	Per Capita Recovery Rate	Per Capita Disposal Rate	Per Capita Generation Rate
2016	6.1	6.8	12.9
2017	6.2	6.6	12.8
2018	6.4	6.8	13.2
2019 <sup>(1)</sup>	--	--	--
2020 <sup>(1)</sup>	--	--	--
2021	6.2	7.3	13.5
2022	5.4	7.3	12.7
2023	5.2	6.7	11.9

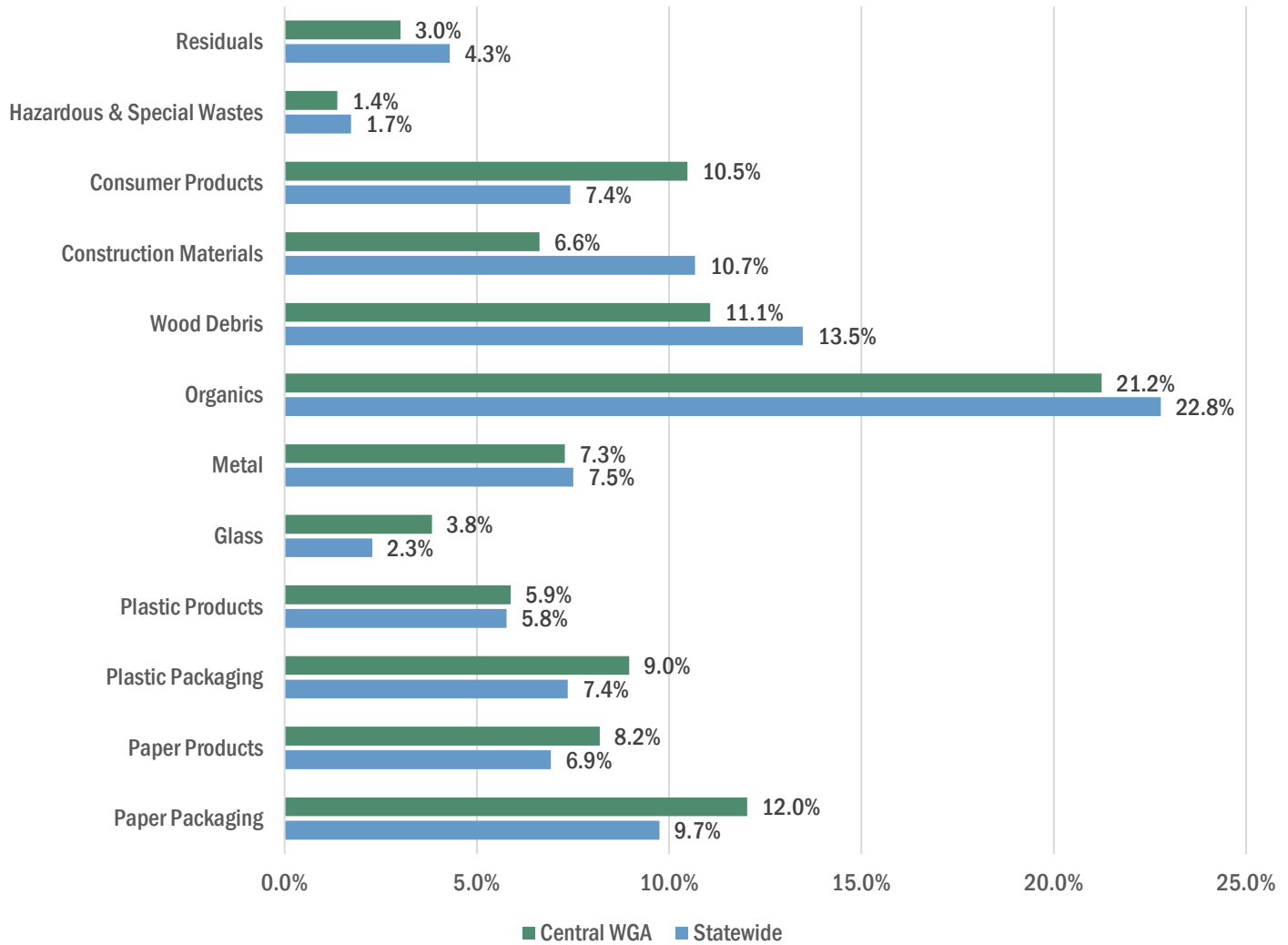
Notes:

<sup>(1)</sup> Solid waste generation and recovery data was not included in this report for the years 2019 and 2020.

### 2.1.2 Municipal Solid Waste in Kittitas County

The Central region of the State's waste characterization study (WCS) was based upon samples taken at the Kittitas County Transfer Station, the Okanogan Twisp Transfer Station, and the Okanogan Central Landfill.

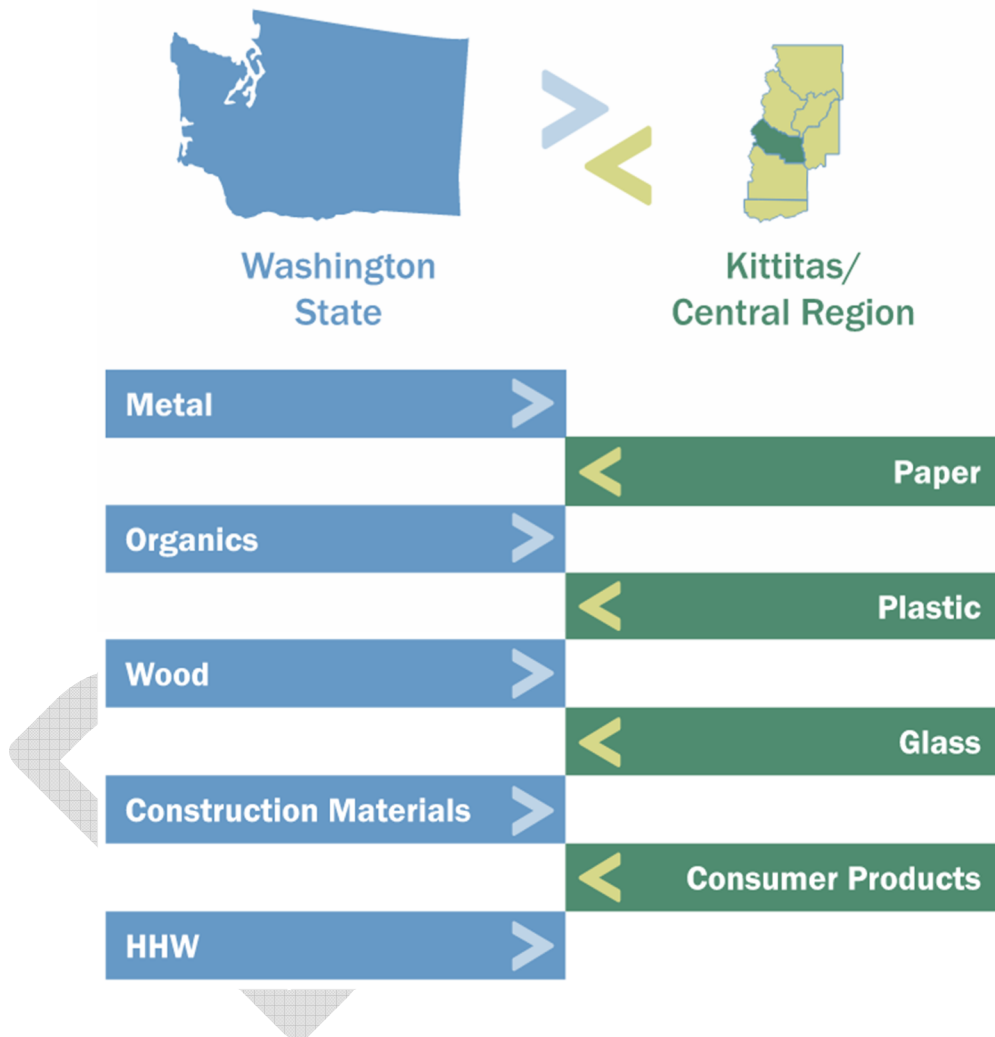
**Figure 10** below compares the statewide waste stream composition to that in the Central region of the state, where Kittitas County is located.



**Figure 10 - 2020-2021 Kittitas County & Central Region Waste Composition**

Overall, Kittitas County and the Central Region of the State have similar trends with organics making up the largest portion of the waste stream and glass making up the smallest portion (besides HHW). Where Kittitas County / the Central waste generation area (WGA) noticeably differs from the state average is with larger amounts of consumer products, glass, plastic packaging, paper products, and paper packaging. Compared to the rest of the State, the Kittitas County / Central WGA contributes less construction materials, wood debris, and organics. This is understandable because the Central WGA region has less agricultural land than many other parts of the State and its housing market is not growing as rapidly as other areas.

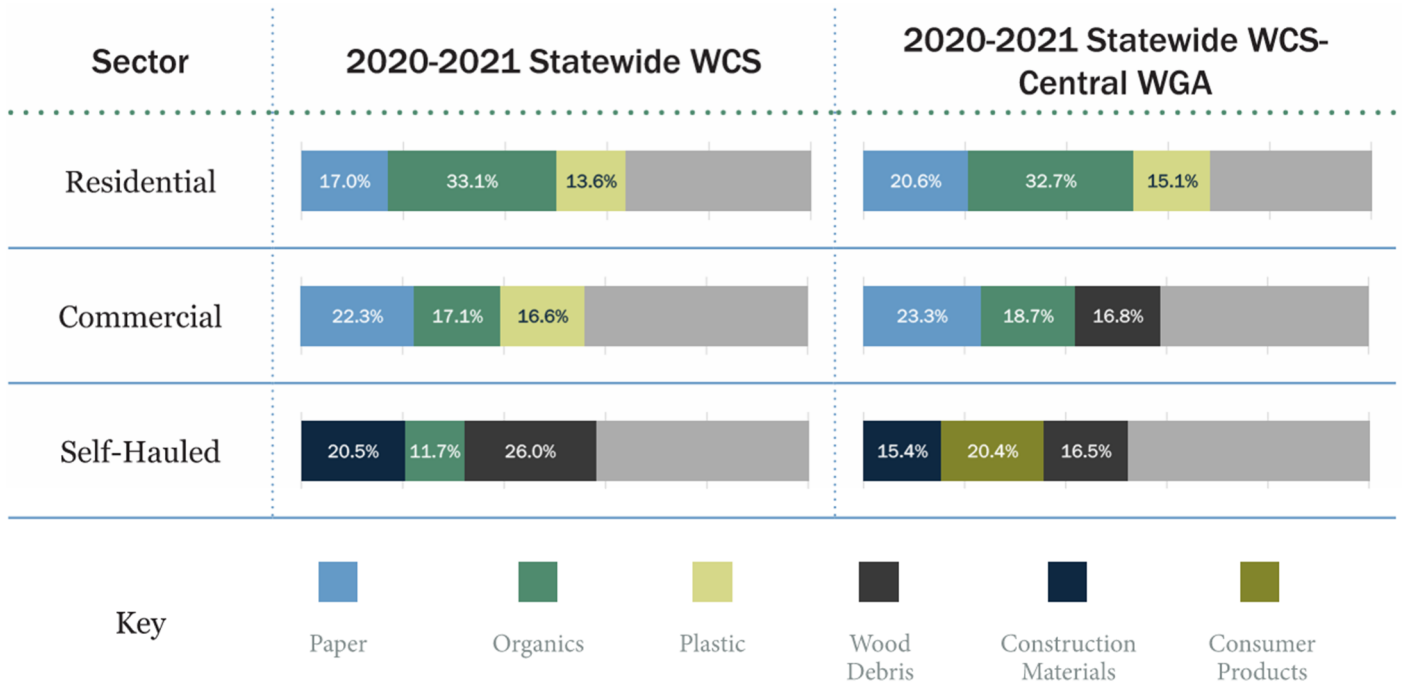
### Washington vs. Central WGA



The 2020-2021 Washington Statewide WCS broke the overall waste stream into 3 sectors:

- **Commercial:** waste hauled by contracted or municipally operated vehicles in which 80% or more of the waste is from institutional, commercial, or industrial sources.
- **Residential:** waste hauled by contracted or municipally operated vehicles in which 80% or more of the waste is from single-family and/or multi-family residential sources.
- **Self-Hauled:** waste hauled by vehicles not operated by a franchise or municipality, including waste that was generated as a result of construction or demolition activities.

A summary of the highest contributors in each waste sector for both the overall State and the Central WGA can be found in **Figure 11**.



**Figure 11 - Comparison of Waste Composition in Three Waste Sectors**

Both studies come to the same conclusion with regard to the largest component of the disposed waste stream (organics). Both studies also show that there is a large quantity of paper and plastics remaining in the disposed waste. Kittitas County has recycling/reuse programs for 3 of the top 5 waste products found in the Statewide WCS (organics, paper, and plastics). This is validation that the County has focused on providing the right types of recycling/reuse services.

Assuming the percentage of inedible food-vegetative and edible food-vegetative is similarly high in Kittitas County, this could present either a reuse or diversion opportunity as market conditions allow. The Ellensburg Compost Facility does not accept these products, and the new facility was planned with the expectation that food waste would remain excluded. A different processing option would need to be established in order to begin composting with food waste. Kittitas County plans to build out the Ellensburg Compost Facility in coming years to be able to accept food waste.

In 2023, when the Washington State waste generation rate was 11.9 lbs/person/day, the per capita generation rate in Kittitas County was just 9.5 lbs/person/day. There is a commonality in composition between the County and the surrounding communities. However, Kittitas County is a unique and separate community, with its own **economy, programs and services**, and **community ethos**. While there is some overlap and similarity within the region, Kittitas County manages its solid waste separately and in a distinct manner compared to its neighbors, tailoring the services offered to their residents' specific needs (refer to the following chapters for service descriptions) all within the constraints of county staffing availability and fiscal budgeting allowances.

### **2.1.2.1 Service Contracting**

Kittitas County owns their transfer stations and contracts out transfer station operations and waste collection services to a local hauler. The City of Ellensburg currently contracts with WM for nonmandatory collection

services. The City of Cle Elum contracts with WM for mandatory curbside collection of garbage in incorporated areas, as well as nonmandatory recycling services. All other incorporated cities are served by WM as well through voluntary service. More information regarding these services can be found in **Chapter 3.1**.

Contracting should be evaluated regularly, at least every five years. This ensures that the service provider continues to provide adequate services to Kittitas County residents. The City of Ellensburg's current contract amendment with WM expires September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2029 with the possibility of a five-year extension. The City of Cle Elum's contract with WM expires **MONTH DAY, YEAR**. Kittitas County also has a contract with WM for transfer station operations and collection and disposal of MSW, C&D waste, and recyclables which expires January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2028.

## 2.2 Recyclables

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According to RCW 70A.205.015, recycling refers to the process of transforming or remanufacturing waste materials into usable or marketable materials. Factors contributing to whether waste items are considered recyclable include local markets, resources, facilities, and legislation. Some readily recyclable materials include plastic bottles, office paper, metals such as aluminum and steel, and cardboard. Many other materials are *technically*, but not readily, recyclable. Recyclables are generated most everywhere MSW is generated, including households, retail/commercial spaces, and even public areas like parks and roads. More details on recycling, recyclable materials, and recycling as it pertains to Kittitas County are included in **Chapter 4.0** of this Plan.

## 2.3 Organics

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Organic waste, also referred to as compostables, refers to biodegradable materials that come from living organisms. It includes a variety of items that can decompose naturally through microbial action. Organic waste can create methane after being landfilled, contributing to greenhouse gas build up. It can also release odors and attract pests during decomposition.

There are three main types of organic waste; green waste, wood waste, and food waste (see the following sub-chapters).

### 2.3.1 Green Waste

Green waste is a type of organic waste that primarily consists of yard waste and other gardening waste including:



Grass Clippings



Bush and Tree Clippings



## Weeds



## Leaves

The amount of green waste varies by season and typically spikes during spring and fall when gardening efforts are most common. Composting green waste, whether residential or commercial, has significant benefits to soil health and can decrease methane emissions if handled properly.

### **2.3.2 Wood Waste**

Wood waste is any sort of waste from trees or shrubs with woody-material that is not coated or treated in any way. This includes tree trunks, tree limbs, logs, and other untreated wood. Typically, wood waste is chipped after being disposed of and can be used as “hog fuel”. Untreated wood can be recycled into several materials, including mulch, compost additives, and even new wood products. It can also be used as a biomass fuel in wood-burning stoves or even for energy production. Treated wood can pose challenges due to the presence of chemicals that can be harmful if released into the environment or incorporated into compost.

### **2.3.3 Food Waste**

Food waste is any item that is not eaten, whether it is leftover food, scraps (such as peels or cores), or spoiled food. This is generated in residential, industrial, and/or commercial instances such as schools, hospitals, or office buildings. Food waste occurs during agricultural production (overproduction, pests, weather conditions, etc.), processing and manufacturing (peels and other parts that are not used), in retail and food service (unsold products, food preparation), and in households (discarded leftovers, expired foods). Like other types of organic waste, food waste also undergoes anaerobic digestion during the decomposition process and produces methane. Washington has recently passed legislation to divert food waste from disposal to reduce the production of methane at landfills (see **Chapter 5.3**).

## **2.4 Inert Waste**

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Inert waste is defined as waste that will not burn, does not decompose, and creates no harmful leachate or gases. Because of these conditions, inert waste poses a minimal environmental risk. Some examples of inert waste include glass, stainless steel, aluminum, and, oftentimes, C&D waste.

### **2.4.1 Construction & Demolition (C&D) Waste**

A large portion of C&D wastes tend to be considered inert, in that they do not decompose. Inert C&D wastes include concrete, asphalt, brick, and ceramic tile. C&D wastes are defined simply as the wastes that are generated from construction and demolition activities. These wastes consist primarily of new and used building materials (wood, sheetrock, pipe and other metals, shingles, etc.), concrete, and asphalt. Land clearing wastes, including soil and large stumps, are also sometimes included in this category.

There is a large amount of C&D waste that is landfilled every year, but a significant portion of this has the potential to be reused or recycled. Items from demolition like doors, windows, or other various fixtures can be reused in new construction projects. Some materials including wood, metals, or concrete from demolition can be recycled and used as “new” products in new construction.

## 2.5 Biomedical Waste

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For the purpose of this Plan, biomedical waste is defined as and is limited to the following types of waste in accordance with Chapter 70A.228.010 RCW:

- **Animal Waste:** Waste animal carcasses, body parts, and bedding of animals that are known to be infected with or that have been inoculated with pathogenic microorganisms infectious to humans.
- **Biosafety Level 4 Disease Waste:** Waste contaminated with blood, excretions, exudates, or secretions from humans or animals. These wastes are isolated to protect others from highly communicable infectious diseases that are identified as pathogenic organisms assigned to biosafety Level 4 by the Centers of Disease Control, National Institute of Health, Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories, current edition.
- **Cultures & Stocks:** Wastes infectious to humans, including specimen cultures, cultures and stocks of etiologic agents, wastes from production of biologicals and serums, discarded live and attenuated vaccines, and laboratory waste that has come into contact with cultures and stocks of etiologic agents or blood specimens. Such waste includes but is not limited to culture dishes, blood specimen tubes, and devices used to transfer, inoculate, and mix cultures.
- **Human Blood & Blood Products:** Discarded waste human blood and blood components and materials containing free-flowing blood and blood products.
- **Pathological Waste:** Waste human source biopsy materials, tissues, and anatomical parts that emanate from surgery, obstetrical procedures, and autopsy. “Pathological waste” does not include teeth, human corpses, remains, and anatomical parts that are intended for interment or cremation.
- **Sharps Waste:** All hypodermic needles, syringes with needles attached, IV tubing with needles attached, scalpel blades, and lancets that have been removed from the original sterile package.

## 2.6 Asbestos

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Asbestos waste is any waste that contains more than 1% asbestos by weight (40 CFR Part 763, Appendix A, Subpart F). Airborne asbestos is extremely dangerous when its microscopic fibers are inhaled into the lungs. A Waste Shipment Record that meets Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines must accompany all asbestos-containing waste. In a November 1990 amendment, the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants established record-keeping and operational requirements for disposal facilities accepting asbestos waste.

## 2.7 Petroleum-Contaminated Soils

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Petroleum-contaminated soils (PCS) are soils that have been contaminated by a petroleum product through leaks from petroleum product storage tanks or spills. Some PCS can be contaminated with lead, benzene, solvents, and PCBs and therefore may be considered hazardous. This chapter discusses only nonhazardous PCS.

## 2.8 Hazardous Waste

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Hazardous waste is any solid, liquid, or gaseous waste that poses a substantial or potential risk to human health or the environment because it is toxic, ignitable, corrosive, reactive, or specifically listed in regulation. In Washington, hazardous waste is regulated under the Dangerous Waste Regulations (Chapter 173-303 WAC)

and applies to wastes generated by businesses, institutions, and governments regardless of quantity. Quantity does, however, determine generator quantity (see below).

## 2.9 Moderate Risk Waste

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Moderate risk wastes (MRWs) are hazardous wastes produced by households, as well as by businesses and institutions in small quantities. Common examples of MRW include paints, pesticides, cleaners, used oil, batteries, and fluorescent lights. Some commercial and institutional generators of hazardous waste are conditionally exempt from full regulation under the Hazardous Waste Management Act, provided that they do not produce or accumulate hazardous waste above specified quantities defined by Ecology (quantity exclusion limits). These “very small quantity generators” (VSQGs) produce hazardous wastes in quantities that do not exceed the following State regulatory limits.

- 220 pounds (100 kg) of dangerous waste per month or per batch.
- 2.2 pounds (1 kg) of acute or extremely hazardous waste per month or per batch.

In addition, to maintain its status as a VSQG, a business or institution may not accumulate more than 2,200 pounds of dangerous waste or more than 2.2 pounds of acute or extremely hazardous waste at one time. In 2025, there were 22 VSQGs that utilized the MRW program in Kittitas County (refer to **Table 11**).

## 2.10 Household Hazardous Waste

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Household hazardous waste (HHW) is a subset of MRW, consisting of hazardous waste generated by households. HHW includes common residential products that exhibit hazardous characteristics, such as oil-based paints, pesticides, cleaners, solvents, automotive fluids, batteries, and similar materials. HHW is exempt from full hazardous waste regulation solely because it is generated by households, but it still requires special handling and disposal (see **Chapter 3.3.9**).

## 2.11 Used Oil

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Used oil, in the context of solid waste, refers to any petroleum-based or synthetic oil that has been utilized for its intended purpose and, as a result of such use, has become contaminated by physical or chemical impurities. For this reason, it is considered an MRW. Common examples include motor oil, transmission fluid, hydraulic oil, and lubricating oils that are no longer suitable for their original use due to the presence of contaminants or loss of original properties. Proper management and recycling of used oil are essential to prevent environmental contamination and comply with solid waste regulations. Used oil recycling opportunities are outlined in **Chapter Moderate Risk Waste 3.3.9.1**.

## 2.12 E-Waste

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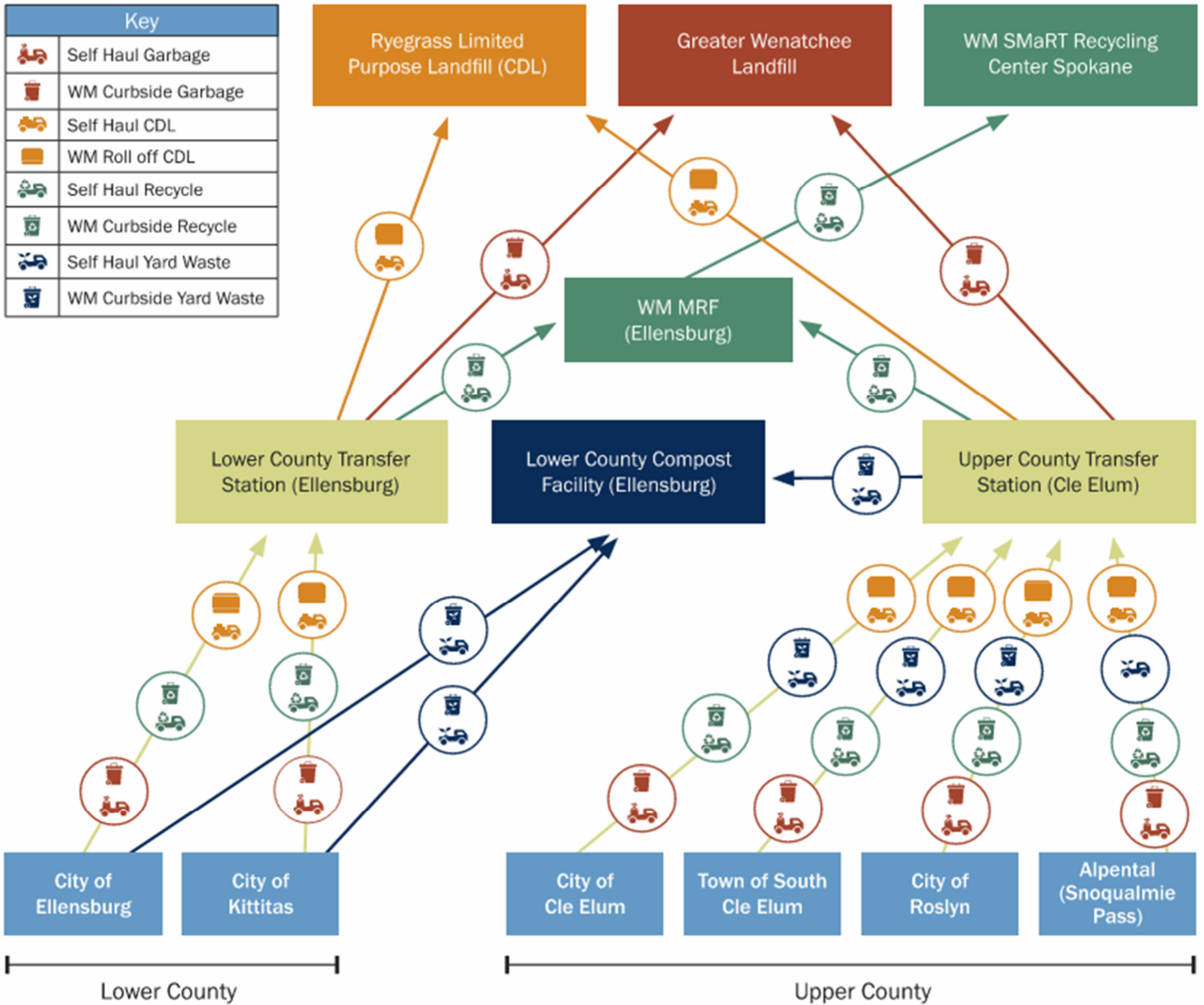
Electronic waste refers to discarded computers, monitors, printers, fax machines, cell phones, electronic cables, and other electronic products. In 2006, the Washington State Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6428, which established the Washington State Electronics Product Recycling Law. The law requires manufacturers of electronic products sold in Washington State to finance and implement electronics collection, transportation, and recycling programs in Washington State. This program is available to households, small governments, small businesses, and charities. Ecology oversees this program. Electronic products that are covered in the legislation include cathode ray tube (CRT) and flat panel computer monitors having a viewable area greater than 4 inches when measured diagonally, desktop computers, laptops, and portable computers.



## **3.0 Waste Collection, Transfer, Transport, & Disposal**

### 3.0 Waste Collection, Transfer, Transport, & Disposal

This chapter provides a discussion of garbage collection in Kittitas County, including background information on how solid waste collection is regulated, the legal authority that counties and municipalities have in managing collection services for garbage and recyclables, and existing conditions for these activities.



**Figure 12 - Existing Waste System Flow Schematic**

## 3.1 Collection

### 3.1.1 MSW Collection

All areas of the County are under a certificate granted by the Washington Utility Transportation Commission (WUTC). Rates for these areas are approved by the WUTC. One hauler is certificated by the WUTC for the County: Waste Management of Washington d.b.a. Waste Management of Ellensburg (G-237) (local address: 607 N. Railroad Ave. Ellensburg, WA 98926). See **Table 8** for the tonnages of MSW that WM collected from Kittitas County from 2018 to 2025.

**Table 8 - WM MSW Collection Tonnages 2018-2025**

Year	MSW Tonnages		
	Curbside/Residential	Multi-Family/Commercial	Roll-Off
2018	2,493.4	2,622.7	4,898.9
2019	2,542.7	2,577.8	8,425.8
2020	2,783.0	2,693.5	8,215.9
2021	3,036.2	3,073.2	7,186.1
2022	2,939.2	2,930.5	7,553.1
2023	2,987.7	3,033.6	5,565.7
2024	3,772.6	2,896.0	4,019.2
2025	4,064.8	3,292.9	4,538.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,619.5</b>	<b>23,120.3</b>	<b>50,403.3</b>

#### 3.1.1.1 Residential MSW Collection

Each municipality has the right to regulate its own solid waste collection services. The following arrangements are in place for the municipalities of Kittitas County:

- The City of Cle Elum contracts for mandatory curbside collection of garbage within its incorporated area. Commercial can and dumpster services also are provided.
- The City of Ellensburg contracts for collection services within its incorporated area, but collection is not mandatory. Curbside recycling is included in the service fee. Curbside yard waste collection is available for an additional fee.
- All other municipalities in the County are served by WM of Ellensburg with voluntary service under the WUTC certificate described in **Appendix I**. Private recyclers can only collect from within these areas.

Refer to the following websites for current collection fees: <http://cityofcleelum.com/city-services/utilities/rates/> and <http://wmnorthwest.com/ellensburg/service.html>.

#### 3.1.1.2 Commercial MSW Collection

WM offers commercial garbage collection in Kittitas County and allows businesses to tailor the collection services to their specific needs. Businesses can choose from various dumpster sizes as well as their pick-up frequency.

For more information on commercial MSW collection, refer to WM's website: <https://www.wmnorthwest.com/kittitascounty/commercial/>.

### **3.1.1.3 Self-Hauled MSW**

Many Kittitas County residents and businesses elect to self-haul their own waste, rather than participate in collection programs. Those that choose to self-haul their waste utilize either the Cle Elum Transfer Station or the Ellensburg Transfer Station.

### ***3.1.2 Recycling Collection***

State legislation allows counties to contract for the collection of source-separated recyclable materials from residences within unincorporated areas. Under this provision, counties can manage, regulate, and establish the price of curbside recycling collection services. However, this does not mean the counties are authorized to operate their own solid waste collection systems as municipalities may. If the counties do not elect to contract for the collection of source-separated recyclable materials from residences, the WUTC must be notified in writing no later than ninety days following the approval of the solid waste management plan's waste reduction and recycling element. Upon notification, the WUTC would have the responsibility for implementing any mandated curbside recycling or yard waste programs and determining their service levels, as addressed in the waste reduction and recycling element of the solid waste management plan.

Municipalities have the authority to provide or contract for residential curbside recycling services within their boundaries (Chapter 35.21.120 RCW). Additionally, they have the authority to manage, regulate, and fix the price of these services. Municipalities designated as urban are required to provide curbside collection of recyclables, or an equivalent program [Chapter 70.95.090(7)(b)(i) RCW]. Kittitas County provides drop-off recycling service as described in **Chapter 3.1.2.3**. Municipalities designated as rural may choose to meet minimum service level requirements either independently or in cooperation with the County. Counties have the authority to contract with private vendors to provide recycling services to residences, but this remains cost prohibitive. Counties that choose this option assign service areas, establish and enforce service standards, and set rates. The County can consider contracting for residential recycling collection in unincorporated areas where a hauler fails to provide residential recycling established by the minimum service level.

Recycling opportunities are available in Kittitas County through curbside collection service, drop-off locations, and other private recycling facilities. An updated list of city and County recycling programs is provided in brochures and the County website (<https://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/solid-waste/default.aspx>). The County promotes awareness of its recycling programs through education and outreach, as described in **Chapter 6.0**. In 2025, 281.20 tons of recyclables were picked up by WM's residential and commercial curbside recycling service in Kittitas County.




#### **3.1.2.1 Residential Recycling Collection**

The Waste Not Washington Act includes amendments to Chapter 70A.205 RCW with provisions to develop criteria for designating areas as urban or rural. In urban areas, recyclables must be collected from single and multi-family residences. Rural areas should have drop-off recycling or buy-back centers. The Act recommends considering several criteria including anticipated population growth, the presence of other urban services, and density of commercial and industrial properties as well as geographic boundaries and transportation corridors. To ensure that this SWMP is consistent with the Act as well as other planning documents within the County, the SWAC utilizes the urban/rural designations adopted in the County's Growth Management Plan contained in the County's 2021 *Comprehensive Plan*. This plan defines the only Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) within Kittitas County as the five incorporated cities of Ellensburg, Cle Elum, South Cle Elum, Kittitas, and Roslyn. Curbside recycling services are available within Kittitas County's UGA. The remaining, unincorporated areas within Kittitas County can utilize the County's transfer stations for recycling drop-off (see **Chapter 3.1.2.3**).

In Kittitas County, curbside recycling service is available through WM. See **Appendix I** for details on WM's collection services in Kittitas County in the required WUTC questionnaire. There is sufficient population for only one G-certificate. Recycling is collected in a single-stream system on a bi-weekly basis. In Ellensburg, every garbage subscriber may participate in the curbside recycling program at no extra charge. However, Cle Elum's residential recycling service is an extra charge for users. **Figure 13** shows the categories and types of materials

currently collected in the Ellensburg curbside collection program. Reduced markets and increased recycling costs may impact the material types that are collected per the curbside collection program, so this list should be considered dynamic and open to modification during the term of the SWMP. For updated accepted recyclables lists, refer to the city's websites:

- <https://www.wmnorthwest.com/cleelum/>
- <https://ci.ellensburg.wa.us/1242/Waste-Management>
- <https://www.wmnorthwest.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/faq-ellensburg.pdf>

Material Category	Material Type
 <b>Paper</b>	Newspaper
	Cardboard
	Magazines
 <b>Metal</b>	Tin Cans
	Aluminum Cans
 <b>Plastic</b>	PETE
	HDPE

**Figure 13 - Recyclable Materials Collected in Ellensburg Curbside Collection Program**

It is not currently cost-effective for private haulers to provide curbside recycling services to communities within Kittitas County that are not considered UGAs. According to the 2025 population estimate, the total population of the Kittitas County UGAs (Ellensburg, Kittitas, Cle Elum, South Cle Elum, and Roslyn) represents 54% of the total population in the County, but these areas make up less than 1% of the total County acreage. It is not economically feasible to provide curbside services to communities outside the County's UGAs because they have such a low population density. This would result in unreasonable cost impacts to the ratepayer. In addition, current recycling market conditions make it even more challenging to consider changes to the existing recycling programs. Therefore, the remaining parts of the County can utilize self-haul recycling options as opposed to curbside residential services (see **Chapter 3.1.2.3**).

### **3.1.2.2 Commercial Recycling Collection**

WM offers commercial and industrial recycling collection in the City of Ellensburg. Accepted materials in this program include paper, cardboard, plastic containers, aluminum cans, and tin cans. There is no commercial recycling collection service in the remaining areas of Kittitas County.

### **3.1.2.3 Self-Hauled Recycling**

Currently, the cost to collect recyclables through drop-box sites and haul them to the materials recovery facility (MRF) is higher than it is to collect MSW at the transfer stations and haul to the landfill from there. Several factors drive these higher recycling costs, including strict contamination limits that require additional processing, unstable commodity markets, and long transport distances to end markets. In the past, the County has used unmanned recycling drop-boxes, but contamination rates were so high that the recyclables were oftentimes not recoverable. Therefore, recycling drop-boxes exist only at the two County-owned transfer stations. The drop-boxes are monitored and serviced by WM. Accepted recyclable materials at these locations include:



Additionally, ferrous and nonferrous metals, tires, and appliances are accepted at the drop-boxes for a fee. Accepted appliances include clothes washers and dryers, dishwashers, ranges, refrigerators, freezers, and other similar large household appliances. The County may contract for the processing of refrigerators, freezers, and air conditioners. Refrigerant is recovered for recycling and compressor oil is recovered for secure disposal and/or treatment. The appliances are then processed with other non-refrigerant-containing white goods into bales and sold as scrap. Kittitas County also participates in E-Cycle Washington. See **Chapter 3.3.9.2** and **Chapter 4.4.5** for further discussion on E-Cycling in Kittitas County. There are also number of private recyclers that provide additional locations for County residents to recycle various materials. These are described further in **Chapter 3.1.2.4**.

Although the drop-off service is consistently utilized by County residents, the County does not have available data that could be used to track the number of customers that use the drop-boxes or the tons of recyclables collected at drop-boxes by each individual urban area. Drop-off services are located before the scale house and customers come and go as they please, without being specifically tracked. The County has data that shows the quantity of recyclables in each drop-box (e.g., cardboard drop-box), but it does not know what percentage of that particular drop-box is delivered from each of the urban areas.

The County currently owns a trailer for collection of recyclables at special events. This trailer is available to all cities and towns within the County at no charge.

### **3.1.2.4 Private Material-Specific Drop-Off Locations**

Several businesses in Kittitas County specialize in recycling select material types, as follows:



- **Electronics:** E-Cycle Washington provides free recycling of computers, monitors, laptops, and televisions to residents, charitable organizations, small businesses, and small governments. Goodwill and Kittitas Valley Recycling each accept computers, CPUs (towers), laptops, computer monitors, and

televisions for free. Participating E-Cycle Washington locations can be found at their website: <https://ecyclewa.org/>. There is only one participating location in the County: Goodwill Ellensburg (see Figure 19)

- **Household Battery, Ink Cartridge, & Cell Phone Collection:** Kittitas County Solid Waste Office and Cle Elum Transfer Station accept all household batteries, some ink cartridges, and cell phones.
- **Metal Recycling:** There are currently two companies that collect both ferrous and nonferrous metals for free, including aluminum, brass, and copper (Rio's Metals and WM Ellensburg Recycling). Aluminum, brass, and copper can be dropped-off for recycling, and iron can be collected for a fee or bought on a case-by-case basis.
- **Textiles:** The Goodwill recycles textiles that are not of high enough quality to be sold in stores.
- **Waste Vegetable Oil:** Kittitas County accepts waste cooking oil from households and restaurants at the Solid Waste Department Building and the Cle Elum Transfer Station where it is re-refined.

### **3.1.3 Organics Collection**

In Kittitas County, all yard and agricultural waste is brought to the Ellensburg Compost Facility where it is composted and sold to residents or businesses. Yard debris collection services are available in specific zip codes within Kittitas County (98926 and 98934). Residents that are not within these zip codes can self-haul yard waste to either transfer station, which then transports the waste to the compost facility. More details on the compost facility can be found in **Section 5.2**.

#### **3.1.3.1 Residential Organics Collection**

In Ellensburg, curbside yard waste collection is available through WM on a subscription basis. Yard waste is collected on a weekly basis from April to October, and a monthly basis from November through March. Curbside yard waste collection is available for a fee. At this time, no programs exist for the collection and composting of food waste as the Ellensburg Compost Facility is not built to take food waste at this time. Until the facility can accept food waste, residents should dispose of it in their garbage bins.

#### **3.1.3.2 Commercial Organics Program**

WM does not offer a commercial organics program in Kittitas County at this time. WM only accepts yard and agricultural waste from Kittitas County at this time (no food waste), and there are not enough businesses in the County that produce this for WM to offer a commercial organics collection program at this time. Businesses in the County that do produce yard and/or agricultural waste should self-haul their organic waste to the Ellensburg Compost Facility or the Cle Elum Transfer Station.

#### **3.1.3.3 Self-Hauled Organics**

Clean yard waste may be dropped off by County residents and businesses at the Cle Elum Transfer Station and at the Ellensburg Composting Facility. Self-haul customers that segregate clean yard waste qualify for a reduced disposal fee at the transfer station and composting facility.

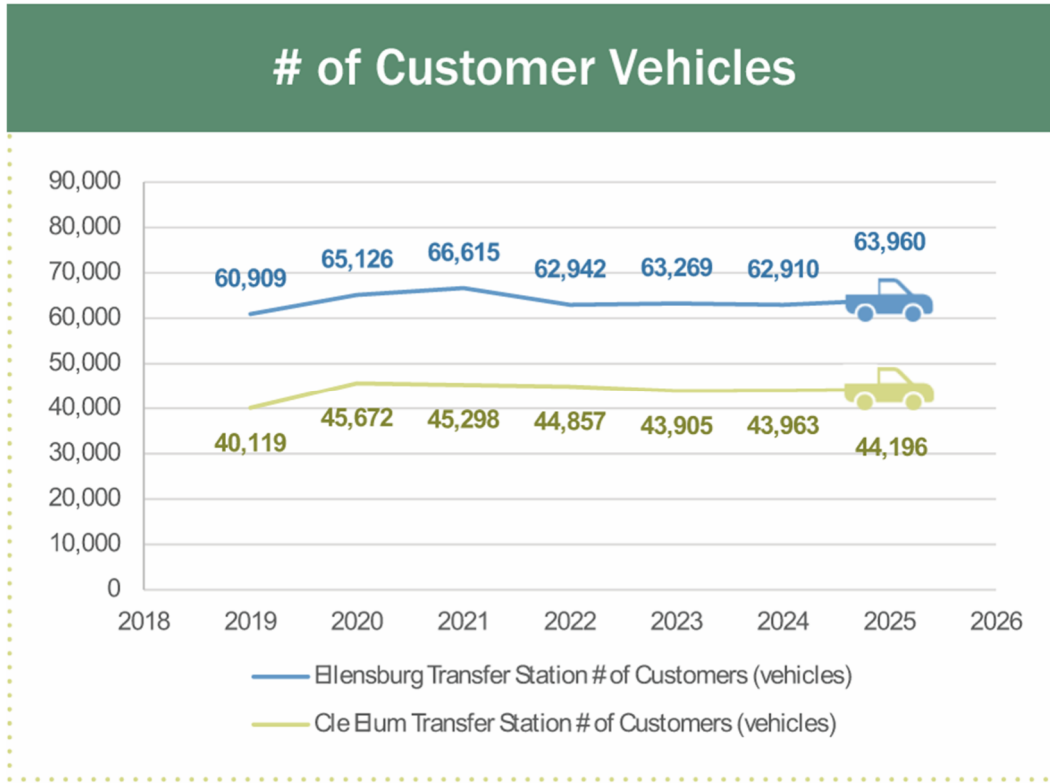
## **3.2 Transfer**

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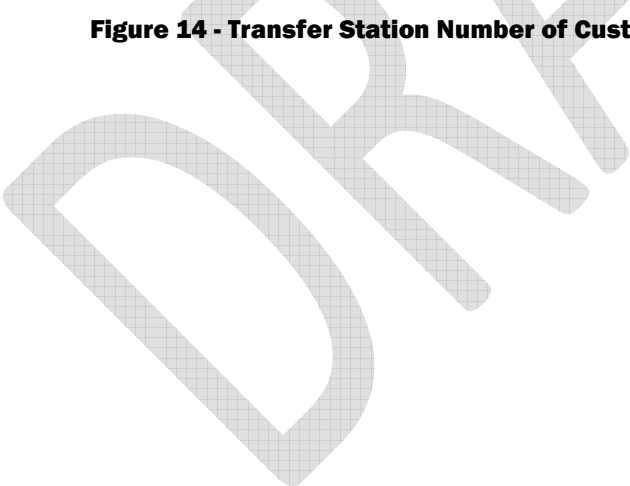
Waste transfer stations play an important role in a waste management system, serving as a link between local waste collection programs and the final disposal facility. The primary reason for using a transfer station is to reduce the cost of transporting waste to disposal facilities. Consolidating smaller loads from collection vehicles into larger transfer vehicles enables collection crews to spend less time traveling to and from distant disposal sites and more time collecting waste. Transfer stations reduce overall transportation costs, air emissions, energy use, truck traffic, and road wear and tear. The County is not currently siting for a new solid waste facility.

Solid waste from commercial accounts and households in Kittitas County is presently hauled to either of the two County-owned transfer stations. In 2025, a total of 44,000 tons of MSW were brought to the transfer

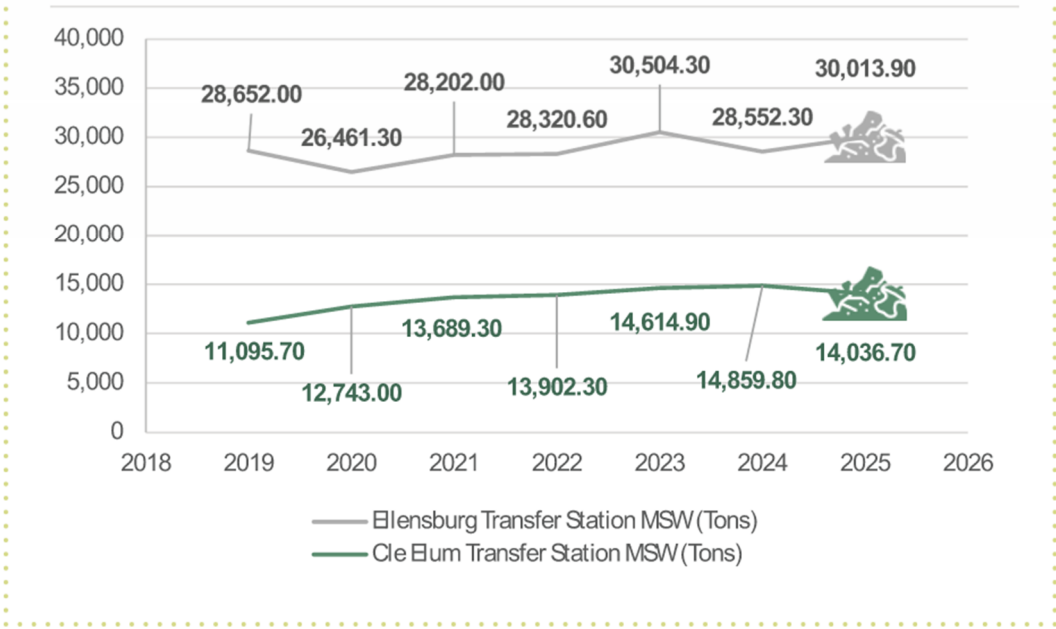
stations in Kittitas County. See **Figure 14** and **Figure 15** for comparisons of the number of customers and the total MSW tonnage, respectively, and **Figure 16** for the composition of haulers at each transfer station.



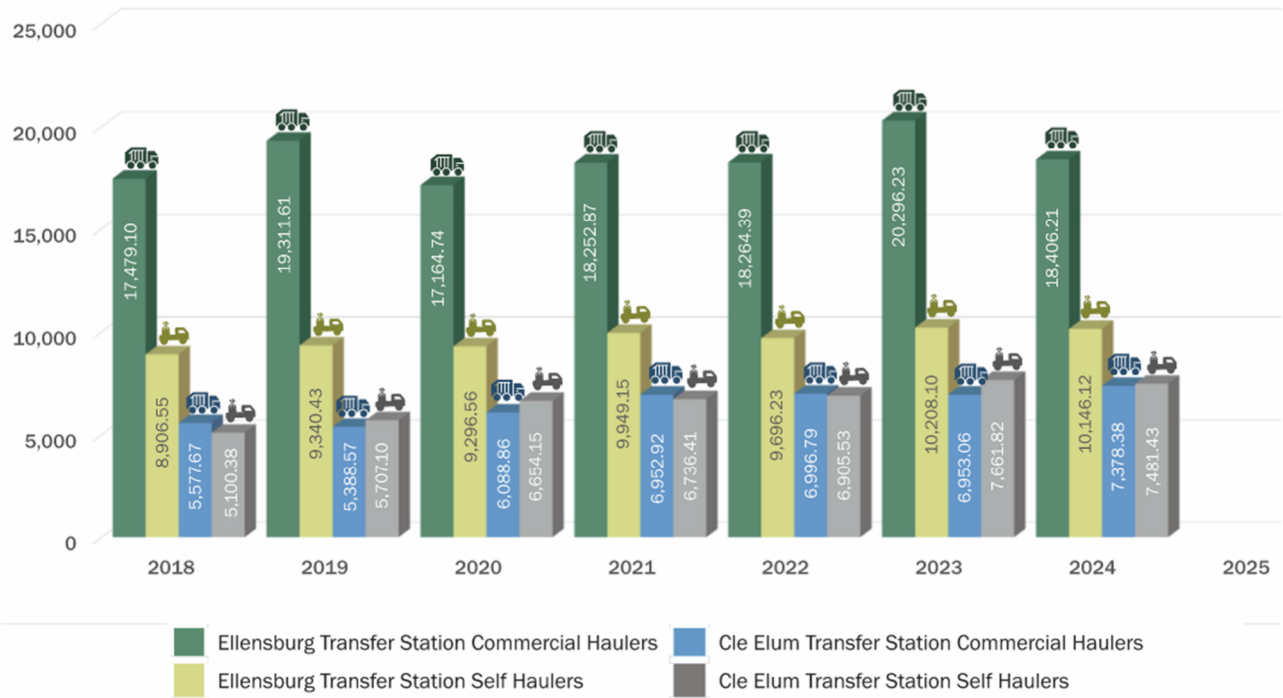
**Figure 14 - Transfer Station Number of Customers Comparison 2018-2025**



# MSW Comparison (Tons)



**Figure 15 - Transfer Station MSW Comparison 2018-2025**



**Figure 16 - Transfer Station Hauler Compositions 2018-2024**

### **3.2.1 Ellensburg Transfer Station**

The previous Ellensburg Transfer Station had location and size constraints. Located in a floodplain, the facility had to close during significant rainfall or spring runoff events. It was also undersized for the number of customers using the facility, resulting in long queuing times and potentially unsafe conditions. In order to address these safety, capacity, and flooding issues, operations moved to the new transfer station that opened in spring of 2026. The new site includes a waste transfer building, composting facility, MRW building, and recycling depot as well as various administrative, parking, and other required elements. The new property is also large enough to accommodate other functions or potential sale of a portion of the site. The new transfer station is on County-owned property. The transfer building itself is approximately 30,561 square feet with a tipping floor of approximately 27,859 square feet.

### **3.2.2 Cle Elum Transfer Station**

Located between the cities of Roslyn and Cle Elum in the western portion of the County, the Cle Elum Transfer Station was designed and built in 2003 and includes a 7,300 square foot tipping floor. The station is on 10 acres of County-owned property. The County operates the scale houses where loads are weighed, and fees are collected. Transfer station operations and hauling activities are provided by a private company under contract to the County.

## **3.3 Disposal**

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Landfilling is the disposal method whereby solid waste is permanently placed in or on land. Solid waste landfills in the State of Washington are regulated by local health departments and Ecology through minimum statewide standards for all municipal solid waste landfills (Chapter 173-351 WAC). This chapter provides information on landfill regulations, local facilities, and present capacity.

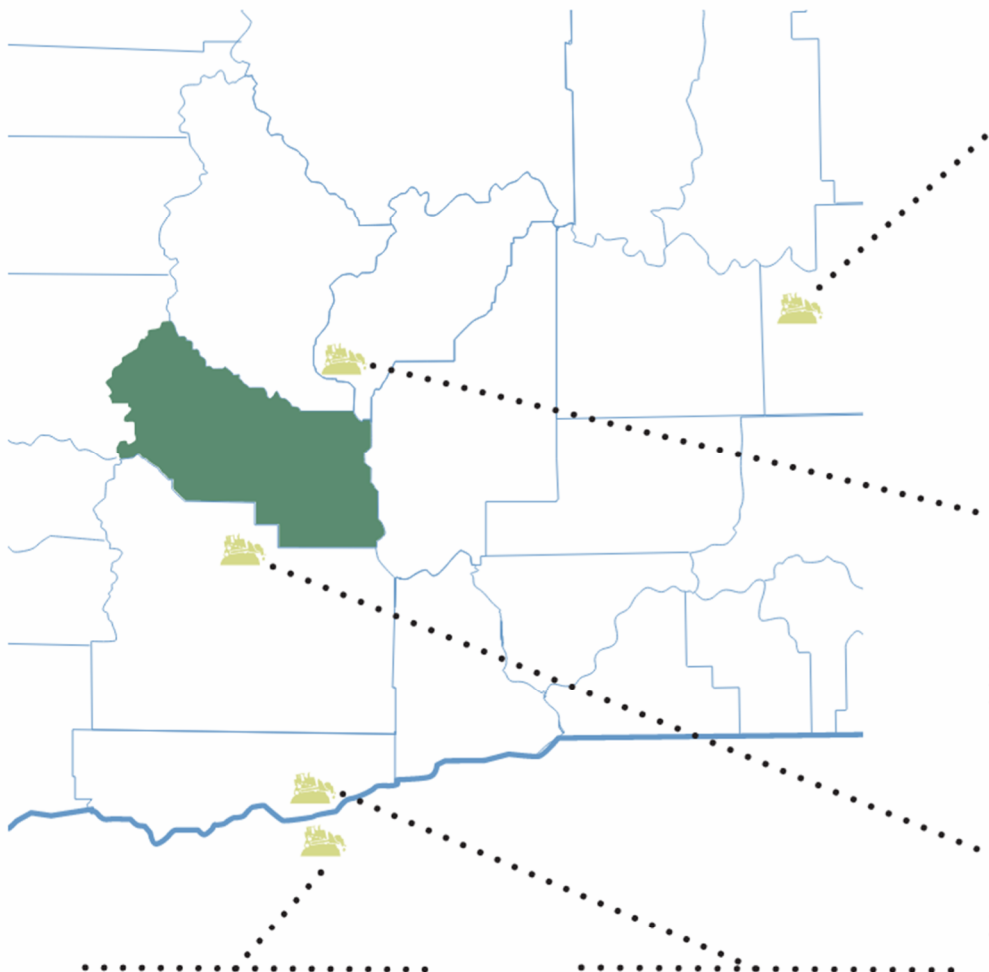
Because Kittitas County does not have an MSW landfill, the County's MSW is transferred from the Ellensburg Transfer Station and the Cle Elum Transfer Station to the Greater Wenatchee Landfill, in Douglas County, Washington.

### **3.3.1 Landfill Disposal Inventory for Kittitas County**

Kittitas County is in a quarantine area (as defined by the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), WAC 16-470, Quarantine - Agriculture Pests (i.e., apple maggot quarantine rules [RCW 17.24])). Solid waste and organic waste from this area cannot be transported out of the quarantine area without a special permit. WSDA amended WAC 16-470-124, Special Permits for Solid Waste and Organic Waste Transport and Disposition, effective January 1, 2017. WAC 16-470-124 now includes MSW, yard debris, organic feedstocks, organic materials, and agricultural wastes as regulated commodities.

RCW 70A.205 was amended in 2016 to reflect these requirements and to further prevent the spread of agricultural plant pathogens and pests. In addition to requiring Special Permits (as described above) for transporting regulated commodities, WSDA must now review the SWMP, the SWAC must include an agricultural representative, and solid waste permits must be submitted by local health departments to WSDA for compost facilities in a nonquarantine area, when they will receive organic waste from a quarantine area.

The Greater Wenatchee Landfill (owned by WM of Washington) has a Special Permit for transport issued to WM that allows municipal solid waste from quarantine areas to be transported to it. As of 2025, all MSW in the County requiring disposal goes to this landfill. **Figure 17** shows the location of the Greater Wenatchee Landfill, along with other landfills surrounding Kittitas County.



**Graham Road Limited Purpose Landfill:**  
*The Graham Road Facility is owned and operated by Waste Management of Washington, Inc., and is located in Spokane County.*

**Greater Wenatchee Regional Landfill:**  
*The majority of MSW from Kittitas County is currently sent to this landfill. This landfill is owned by Waste Management of Washington in Douglas County, Washington. It was opened in 1960 and has 96 years of remaining life projected. (Waste Management, 2019).*

**Caton Limited Purpose Landfill:**  
*The Caton Limited Purpose Landfill is a privately-owned facility in Naches, Washington.*

**Columbia Ridge Landfill:**  
*The Columbia Ridge Landfill is a regional landfill that is owned and operated by Waste Management, Inc. in Arlington, Oregon.*

**Roosevelt Regional Landfill:**  
*The Roosevelt Regional Landfill is owned by Republic and located in a remote area of Klickitat County in South Central Washington.*

**Figure 17 - Landfills Near the Planning Area**

**3.3.2 C&D Waste & Inert Waste**

C&D debris from both the northern part of Kittitas County and the Ellensburg area is handled in the same way. Residents of unincorporated Kittitas County and incorporated cities bring C&D waste directly to the Cle Elm or Ellensburg transfer stations. If the C&D debris contains no putrescible materials, the customer is charged a reduced fee. The “clean” C&D waste is then hauled by the transfer station operations contractor to Ryegrass Limited Purpose Landfill for final disposal.

Licensed contractors and other businesses with customer accounts haul C&D waste directly to Ryegrass Landfill. The landfill does not accept cash customers. The transfer station operations contractor and contracted/certificated haulers (such as WM) also haul C&D waste directly to Ryegrass. For a full list of the accepted materials and their respective tipping fees at the transfer stations and the Ryegrass Landfill, utilize the following link: <https://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/solid-waste/transfer-stations.aspx>.

In 2025, 2,830.57 tons of C&D waste was brought to the Kittitas County Transfer Stations, contributing to the 30,689 total cubic yards of C&D that was disposed of at the Ryegrass Landfill. **Table 9** shows the C&D disposal volumes at the Ryegrass Landfill from 2020 through 2025.

**Table 9 - Ryegrass Landfill C&D Disposal Volumes 2020-2025**

Year	Ryegrass Landfill (cubic yards)
2020	21,497.00
2021	30,209.75
2022	27,857.50
2023	21,993.00
2024	21,710.00
2025	30,689.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>276,980.08</b>

Anderson Rock and Demolition Pit is a privately-owned facility located in Yakima County northwest of the City of Yakima. Although the disposal site is located approximately 35 miles from the City of Ellensburg, low tipping fees provide an incentive for some commercial construction firms working within the County to travel that distance to dispose of waste at this facility and circumvent the County solid waste transfer system infrastructure. Beginning in 2006, this site has seen an increase in material delivered from County sources. Currently, no C&D processing or recycling facilities are located in Kittitas County.

### 3.3.3 Biomedical Waste

Medical treatment and research facilities generate a wide range of special wastes that require handling and disposal. Because of the variety of waste streams, several different regulatory agencies at the local, regional, state, and federal level have regulations pertaining to best management practices (BMPs) and apply their own definitions to waste types.



One franchise hauler, Stericycle, has a certificate granted by the WUTC (certificate G-244) to collect biomedical waste throughout the State. The collection service is provided on an on-call and regular basis. The State of Washington has developed a product stewardship program for pharmaceuticals. Currently there is a guidance document under development regarding syringe and used needle collection. The Health Department has authority to enforce this activity.

Veterinary wastes pose some of the same hazards in the waste stream as untreated medical wastes pose. Like medical offices, untreated surgical wastes, specimen cultures, syringes, and blades can enter the waste stream from veterinary offices. Such wastes, when incinerated or properly sterilized by autoclave or chemical methods, are considered treated wastes and do not fall within the definition of biomedical or biohazards wastes.

The large farming, cattle, bison, and sheep ranches within the County require more than the normal need of veterinarians. Because of this it is important to address this waste stream separately. Disposal practices for veterinary waste, including sharps and dead small animals, generally is similar to those of medical facilities. There is a need to support viable options for the proper handling of large animal carcasses, as there is currently no facility to handle them inside of the County. The County currently provides technical assistance to explain proper disposal of large animals; however, due to the high water table in much of the County, burial of large animals is difficult.

### 3.3.4 Asbestos

MSW landfills can accept nonfriable asbestos wastes if acceptance and disposal procedures comply with federal, state, and local regulations. Asbestos waste generators in Kittitas County are referred to the Greater Wenatchee Regional Landfill for asbestos waste disposal.

### ***3.3.5 Petroleum-Contaminated Soils (PCS)***

PCS generated in Kittitas County may be disposed of in several ways. One option is for the generator to remediate and dispose of the soil on site. Currently, the County refers residents to the Greater Wenatchee Regional Landfill in Douglas County for PCS disposal. The amount of PCS disposed annually varies widely, primarily dependent on the number of projects that include remediation of sites such as gasoline stations. Historically, the Ellensburg Transfer Station has taken in and managed some PCS generated by the County. This practice, however, ended when the transfer station moved to its new location in Spring of 2026.

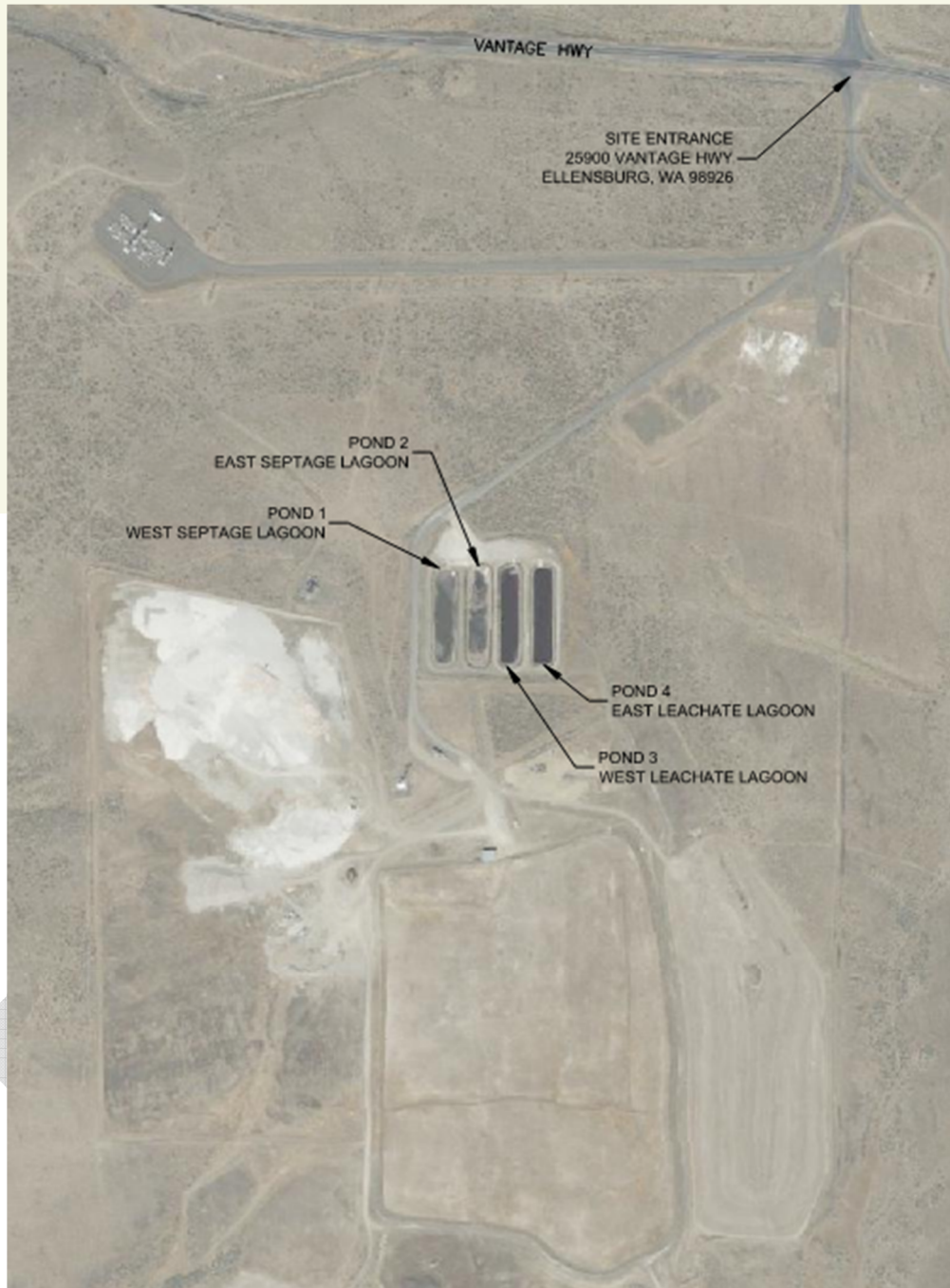
### ***3.3.6 Tires***

In 2018, the County collected and recycled just over 166 tons of tires (as reported in Ecology's Annual Washington State Recycling Survey). The County's transfer stations accept tires for a fee. The tires are shipped to a vendor and recycled. Additionally, passenger and various other tires may be taken to local participating tire retailers throughout the County for legal disposal. Most tire retailers contract with a tire collector for transport away from their site and legal disposal/recycling.

### ***3.3.7 Liquid Wastes***

There are four 500,000-gallon liquid waste evaporation lagoons (LWELs) on the Ryegrass Landfill property owned and operated by Kittitas County Solid Waste. See **Figure 18** for locations of the LWELs at Ryegrass.

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**Figure 18 - Ryegrass Site Plan (Lagoons)**

Kittitas County Solid Waste accepts liquid waste (septage) from permitted haulers within the County and received 2,174,525 gallons of septage in 2025.

The two septage LWELs (Ponds 1 & 2) are constructed in accordance with WAC 173-308-310 Biosolids Management Permit BT-9208. The lagoons, designed with a thirty-mil reinforced artificial liner, are designed to be used in tandem. When one lagoon reaches capacity, the contents evaporate while the second lagoon is put into use. According to the Operations Plan, sludge is dried to a semiliquid state, mixed with lime to stabilize the pH, and then land-applied at the Ryegrass facility in accordance with the permit.

Pond 3/West Leachate Lagoon operates under WAC 173-216 Wastewater Discharge Permit ST-9220. Under this permit, liquid wastes entering the LWEL from any possible source of moderate risk or hazardous wastes must be tested for such constituents prior to acceptance. Records, including source of the wastes, amount in gallons and date accepted are kept by Kittitas County Solid Waste. The West Leachate Lagoon currently accepts leachate from the transfer stations and Pautzke Bait Co.

Pond 4/East Leachate Lagoon operates under WAC 173-350, the Ryegrass landfill closure order. Pond 4 only handles leachate from the closed landfill.

### 3.3.8 Hazardous Waste

Businesses or institutions producing or accumulating hazardous waste above the quantity exclusion limits are required to meet a stringent set of regulations when storing, handling, and disposing of their hazardous wastes. In addition, these fully regulated hazardous waste generators must comply with extensive waste tracking and reporting requirements. Small- quantity generators must meet certain requirements for identifying and managing their hazardous wastes but are exempt from portions of the waste tracking and reporting requirements. Within the County’s jurisdictions, certain zones are eligible for the management of hazardous waste. See **Table 10**.

**Table 10 - Hazardous Waste Allowed Use**

	General Commercial	Light Industrial	General Industrial	Commercial Highway	Heavy Industrial
<i>Urban Use</i>					
Hazardous Waste Storage	Conditional Use (CU)	CU	CU <sup>(1)</sup>		
Hazardous Waste Treatment	CU	CU	CU <sup>(1)</sup>		
<i>Rural LAMIRD Use</i>					
Hazardous Waste Storage		CU			
<i>Nonresidential Permitted Use</i>					
Hazardous Waste Treatment (Off-Site)		CU			CU
Hazardous Waste Treatment (On-Site)		CU		CU	CU

Notes:

<sup>(1)</sup> Because of considerations of odor, dust, smoke, noise, fumes, vibration, or hazard, on-site and off-site hazardous waste storage and/or treatment shall not be permitted in industrial zones unless a conditional use permit authorizing such use has been granted by the Board. Off-site materials shall be accepted only from Kittitas County sourced sites.

Hazardous waste sites, generators, transporters, and disposal facilities within Kittitas County are listed in **Appendix J**.

### 3.3.9 Moderate Risk Waste

Drop-boxes located at the Cle Elum Transfer Station and at the Moderate Risk Waste Facility (MRWF) in Ellensburg are used to collect used motor oil, antifreeze, lead-acid vehicle batteries, and household batteries for recycling. MRWs and HHWs can be recycled at the MRWF by appointment only. Residents are instructed to collect all waste in a box, and to separate the wastes by categories as much as possible (for example, solvents, thinners, mineral spirits together in one box, paints in another box, and garden products in another). Residents are further instructed not to mix products, and to keep the products in their original containers or to label products that are not in their original containers. When residents arrive at the facility, a waste specialist directs them into the MRWF and unloads the waste from the resident's vehicle.



Latex paint is also considered to be an MRW when it is wet, but when it is dried out it can be thrown away with regular trash. Mixing the wet paint with cat litter, sawdust, dirt, or shredded paper can dry out the paint effectively. More information on this, as well as more details about MRW in Kittitas County, can be found at the following page: <https://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/solid-waste/moderate-risk.aspx>.

The Kittitas County MRWF offers an opportunity for local businesses to dispose of their hazardous wastes for a fee to cover disposal cost. This opportunity is offered to preregistered businesses that are classified under the SQG status. See **Table 11** for the number of participants in the VSQG program in the County from 2022 to 2025.

**Table 11 - VSQG Participants 2022-2025**

Year	# of VSQGs
2022	27
2023	22
2024	18
2025	22

Hazardous wastes generated from regulated businesses (businesses that exceed the above definition) cannot be accepted. Business owners classified as VSQGs must contact Solid Waste to schedule an appointment for the waste specialist to inventory the waste, estimate the disposal cost, and complete the requisite paperwork. Following the inventory, the business brings the waste to the MRW facility, where it is unloaded by a solid waste specialist. Non-VSQG usage information for the MRWF for 2022-2025 is provided in **Table 12**.

**Table 12 - Non-VSQG Moderate Risk Waste Facilities Usage 2022-2025**

Year	Number of Users	Material Collected					Total (lbs)
		Batteries (lbs)	Oil (lbs)	Antifreeze (lbs)	Paint (lbs) <sup>(1)</sup>	Pesticides / Poisons (lbs)	
2022	1,925	12,420	114,330	12,642	16,922	3,631	170,176
2023	1,069	44,380	130,610	11,508	40,785	4,589	251,082
2024	1,727	36,620	149,110	10,290	32,277	4,132	259,449
2025	1,954	33,563	164,650	19,656	34,434	3,579	283,569

Notes:

<sup>(1)</sup> Paint includes latex paint, oil-based paint, and paint-related materials.

In addition to the MRW facility, batteries are accepted at Jerrol's Book and Supply, 111 E. University Way and the main office of Kittitas County Solid Waste, 925 Industrial Way in Ellensburg. The Solid Waste Department is responsible for collecting the batteries from these collection sites, storing, and labeling them for shipment to a treatment storage and disposal firm contracted by the County.

### **3.3.9.1 Used Oil**

Waste oil can be recycled at one of the self-serve recycling tanks at either the Cle Elum Transfer Station or the Solid Waste Department building, located at 925 Industrial Way, Ellensburg, WA 98926. See **Figure 7** for locations of these facilities. All of the oil from these self-serve tanks is re-refined. Washington State law establishes a statewide goal to collect and re-refine household used oil, prioritizing re-refining over burning or disposal because used oil is a valuable, reusable resource. Re-refining is defined in statute as the reclaiming of base lubricating oil from used oil for reuse in producing new lubricants, and explicitly does not include combustion or landfilling. There are no plans at this time to expand the used oil recycling program in Kittitas County, as they are already meeting Ecology's goal of re-refining the oil. On the self-serve tanks, there is signage identifying what can and cannot go in the tanks. The County's Moderate Risk Waste webpage also describes proper waste oil disposal/recycling. In addition, the tank is tested for PCBs before they are pumped out for recycling.

### **3.3.9.2 Electronic Waste**

Implemented in January 2009, E-Cycle Washington provides free recycling of computers, monitors, laptops, and televisions to residents, charitable organizations, small businesses, and small governments.

Refer to **Chapter 4.4.5** for more information on E-Cycle Washington. Collection sites are required, at a minimum, in every County and every city with a population of 10,000 or more. Currently, Goodwill Ellensburg Store and Kittitas Valley Recycling Ellensburg each accept covered electronics for free. Although not covered by E-Cycle Washington, other electronics and peripherals [lead-acid vehicle batteries, household batteries, fluorescent tubes, and compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs, etc.] are collected at Kittitas Valley Recycling for a fee.

### **3.3.9.3 Anti-Freeze Recycling Policy**

As of March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026, businesses are not allowed to use the anti-freeze tank at the Cle Elum Transfer Station or at the Solid Waste Department building. Businesses can contact the department at (509) 962-7542 for proper disposal options. In addition, there is a daily limit of 20 gallons of anti-freeze per household. Customers also cannot dump used anti-freeze into the tank from containers larger than 5 gallons. This policy can be found on the Kittitas County Solid Waste website.



## **4.0 Waste Reduction, Reuse, & Recycling**

## 4.0 Waste Reduction, Reuse, & Recycling



**Ecology prioritizes the following solid waste handling strategies in order:**

- 1) Waste Reduction / Prevention
- 2) Reuse
- 3) Recycling
- 4) Safe Disposal

In addition to helping Kittitas County meet the State's recycling goal, waste reduction and recycling provides the following short and long-term benefits locally:

- Reduces the need for additional garbage processing facilities, thereby protecting local water, soil, and air quality, as well as preserving agricultural lands and forest resources within the County
- Lowers the volume and thus the cost of waste collection and long-haul/landfill operations providing economic benefits to the public and the County
- Provides recycling industry employment opportunities in the community

### 4.1 Waste Reduction

Waste reduction is the State's top priority for managing solid waste. Ecology defines it as reducing the amount or toxicity of waste generated or reusing materials. It involves reuse of materials, repair and restoration of broken items, elimination of excess packaging, use of durable products instead of disposable items, onsite waste management (e.g., composting), and other efficient uses of resources.

Waste reduction can be the most effective, economical, and environmentally sound way to manage waste. Kittitas County is distant from material recovery facilities (MRFs) and recycling end markets which, in conjunction with current low-market prices for many commodities, reduces or eliminates the potential for revenues from the sale of recyclables. Waste reduction also avoids the need to develop and finance systems to collect, process, market, manufacture, and/or dispose of recyclables and garbage. Because waste reduction is such an efficient and economical tool, the County would benefit from implementing broad-based waste reduction programs and encouraging city governments to plan complementary programs.

**There are four basic methods for waste reduction:**



**1.** Reduce consumption by using product alternatives that generate less waste



**2.** Reuse products for their original or compatible purposes



**3.** Increase the durability or lifetime of products



**4.** Decrease the amount of material used to produce each product or reduce product packaging

When developing a waste reduction program, the County should be aware that waste reduction is generally not as well documented or understood as recycling and requires extensive education. Additionally, some waste reduction tactics, especially those involving product and packaging waste, are controlled by economic, political, and educational forces beyond the County's control. Several outreach programs targeted at waste reduction have already been implemented in Kittitas County. Waste reduction is supported in Kittitas County through various programs and offerings. Many promotional materials and outreach programs exist to spread awareness of waste reduction and recycling. This chapter includes a listing of material reuse programs and current education and outreach efforts.

**Material donation and reuse opportunities currently available include:**

- Numerous private and nonprofit businesses operate secondhand material outlets throughout the County.
- Online platforms for goods and services and numerous social media platforms provide an internet-based forum to buy, sell, give-away, and exchange secondhand products locally.
- Kittitas County, CWU, and cities sponsor public surplus sales of materials and equipment that are no longer needed by those agencies but are still usable.
- The Solid Waste Department provides free, usable products, such as paint for the public as they are retrieved from the MRWF.



**Figure 19 - Reuse/Material Donation Locations**

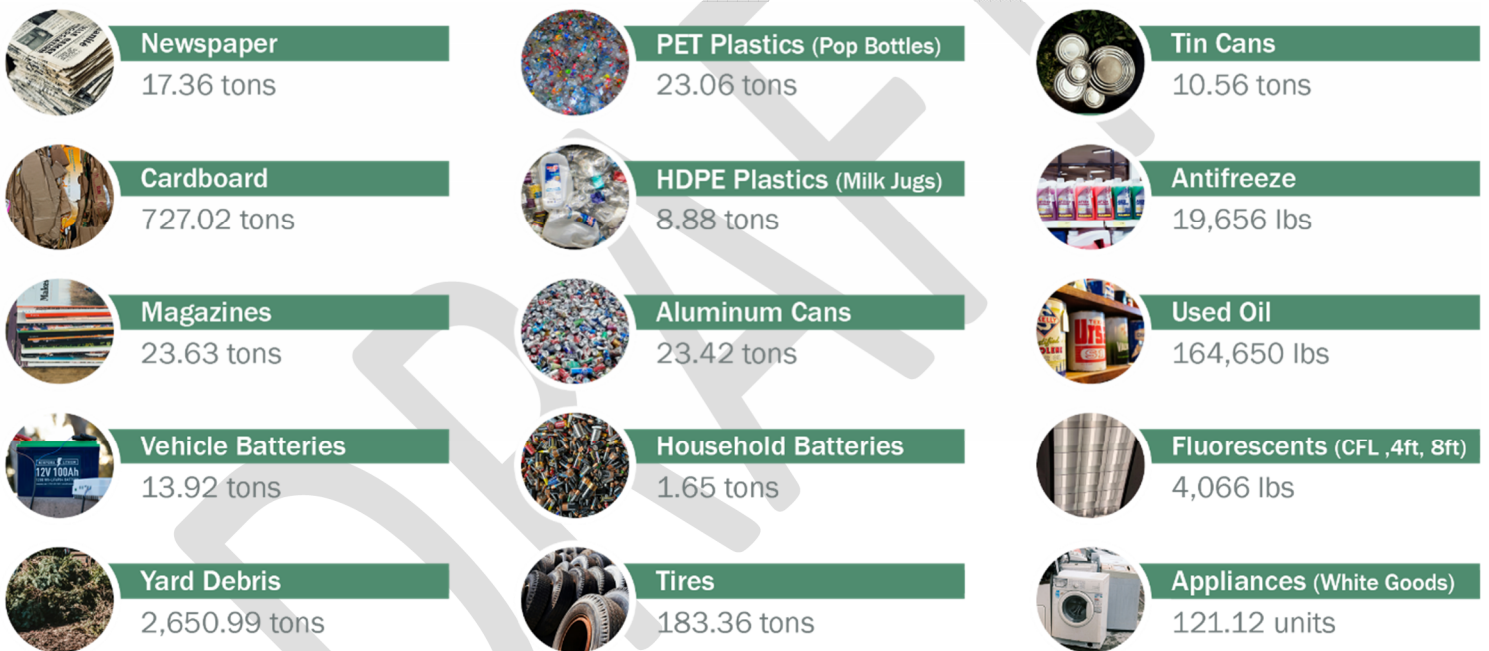
**Waste reduction could be further encouraged in Kittitas County by addressing the following needs:**

- Residents continue to request information regarding alternatives to toxic products, methods for proper disposal, and the implications of improper disposal
- Incentives are needed to boost food composting and lawn mulching because the cost of composting bins or mulching mowers are cost prohibitive. Organics make up 30% of the residential waste stream.
- Existing contacts and collaborators could be leveraged for more impact. For example, the Master Composter program (if brought back) could be expanded to cover composting, waste reduction, and other solid waste topics.
- Businesses need proactive outreach on waste reduction and proper hazardous waste handling because they are not reaching out to the Kittitas County Solid Waste Department directly.
- Numerous web-based materials exchange/reuse sites already exist, but they need promotion.
- Educational and promotional materials are not sufficiently linking the concepts of greenhouse gases and climate change to solid waste management.
- Consumers are not utilizing guidelines and calculators to estimate the required quantity of product to complete a task (e.g., painting a structure, fertilizing a yard).

## 4.2 Recycling

Recycling is Washington State's third highest priority in strategies to manage materials in the waste stream, falling behind waste reduction and reuse. Chapter 70A.205 RCW defines recycling as transforming or remanufacturing waste materials into usable or marketable materials for use other than landfill disposal or incineration. Recycling, then, can be any technique that turns waste materials into useful products. Kittitas County SWAC has set an overall recycling goal of 50% for the County. This goal aligns with the U.S. National Recycling Goal of reaching a 50% recycling rate by the year 2030. While the SWAC recognizes that Kittitas County may not reach this goal for some time due to its lower population density, the committee felt it was a goal the County should strive to meet in the long run.

In Kittitas County, recycling consists primarily of drop-off locations except curbside recycling and green waste collection in the Kittitas County UGA. Drop-off opportunities are offered at the two County transfer stations. As shown below, a total of 3,803.32 tons of recyclables were collected in 2025. In 2020, this value was 3,873.13 tons. These tonnages include only recyclables collected at the Cle Elum Transfer Station and Ellensburg Transfer Station in the designated recycling drop-boxes.



## 4.3 Designated Recyclables

According to Chapter 173-350 WAC, a list of designated recyclable materials must be included in the SWMP. Criteria used to determine recyclables include potential for significant waste stream diversion, state and local recycling goals, local market conditions, and continuity in materials collected. The materials designated on the following page are categorized into three tiers. Urban and rural residential recycling programs are then based on the collection of these designated recyclables. Each of these tiers are defined below.

- **Tier 1:** Materials feasible (i.e., current market, ease of collection, size of waste stream) for current regular recycling programs.

- **Tier 2:** Materials that can be recycled, but for which there are limitations in collecting or marketing on a regular basis. These materials may be collected for recycling on an irregular basis, seasonally, at special events, or at selected locations where feasible or necessary.
- **Tier 3:** Materials for which recycling may become feasible in the future.

**Figure 20** lists the materials currently in each of the three tiers of recyclables for Kittitas County. This list is used in this chapter to identify needs for collection, drop-off, and processing programs in the County.



**Figure 20 - Tiered Designation of Recyclable Materials**

New contamination standards and drastic changes in recycled materials markets have resulted in reduced markets and increased costs for recycled materials. As such, the County will continue to monitor market conditions and may shift items from one tier to another as a result.

New market opportunities may be created as new technologies develop, as virgin commodity prices fluctuate, and/or as new environmental concerns arise. For example, converting organic materials for biodiesel production may become an economically feasible recycling opportunity. As such, this list should be considered dynamic and open to modification during the term of the SWMP. Any proposed changes to the designated recyclables list must be made to the Solid Waste Director and presented to the SWAC for review. The SWAC will then make a recommendation to modify the list and the item brought forth to the County Commission for review and approval. If approved, the list will be updated and submitted to Ecology. This process should not be considered an amendment to the SWMP and does not require commission action.

### 4.3.1 Recycling Markets

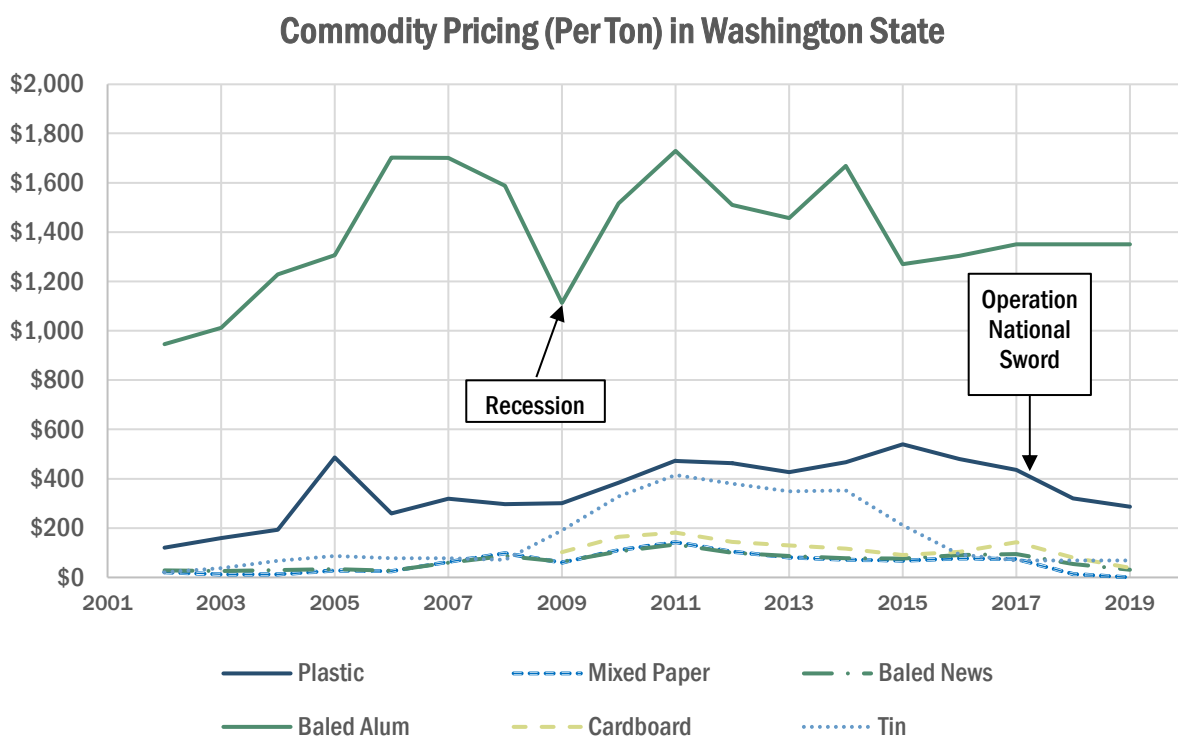
Recycling is primarily a market-driven industry. Curbside recycling began as part of urban waste management systems when communities and governments introduced waste reduction and recycling mandates to achieve state recycling/diversion goals. These early efforts laid the groundwork for the recycling industry by the early 1990s. At this time, curbside recycling programs were widely promoted as “free”, with costs embedded in general garbage service fees. However, while the public may have viewed recycling as an environmentally responsible

action, **recycling was never truly “free”** as there are trucks and fuel to buy, people to pay, infrastructure to maintain, etc. As a result, many customers were unaware that recycling carried real and ongoing expenses and is subject to constant economic pressures, including fluctuating commodity markets, rising labor and equipment costs, and broader economic shifts. At the same time, customers often expect stable or predictable rates, which creates tension when market conditions or operational costs change.

Different recyclable materials have different economic profiles. Metals like aluminum and steel have typically remained profitable to recycle because of strong commodity markets and relatively efficient recycling processes. Paper and cardboard have also seen strong periods of time where the sale of baled cardboard covered the costs associated with the efforts of recycling (sorting, baling, and transport). However, plastics

profits have been cyclical and challenging due to the vast array of plastic types and material shapes, mixed materials in one product, fluctuations in oil prices, and the difficulties associated with sorting and cleaning different types of plastics.

Modern recycling economics continue to be dynamic. Local, regional, and even global challenges continue to influence the practicality and financial implications of recycling. As shown in **Figure 21**, disruptions such as economic recession and global demand have a direct effect on commodity value. This continuous evolution means that what was a valuable commodity in one era might become challenging in another, and vice versa. During these ebbs and flows, the costs associated with collecting and sorting recyclables are often not completely offset by the sale of materials.



**Figure 21 - Washington Recycling Commodity Pricing (Source: Mill Trade Journal Recycling Markets)**

Over the past decade, several key trends have emerged in the regional [Pacific Northwest (PNW)] recycling markets. Although they are just one piece of the recycling puzzle, these trends can be used to help inform decisions around recycling over the next few years.

The following trends have been observed in Washington State since 2020:

- #1 PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate, soft drink bottles) has consistently been in demand.
- #2 HDPE (High-Density Polyethylene, milk jugs), specifically natural HDPE, continues to be one of the few profitable commodities and is one of the more common plastics used, despite being volatile.
- #3-#7 plastics have shown no profitability over a long period of time.
- Cardboard and paper are unpredictable and, when the value swings low, it can be difficult to find a market for accumulated cardboard.

- Metals continue the historic trend of remaining profitable, especially aluminum.

Glass, especially mixed glass, although it is the consummate recyclable, is the least valuable commodity due to its heavy weight. There are limited processing facilities and the ones that do exist and often a long distance away, so the cost to transport glass is high. It tends to be cheaper to get raw materials than process glass waste. There are also some contamination issues when it comes to separating clear and colored glass.

### ***4.3.2 Kittitas County Secondary Recycling Market Feasibility Study & Preliminary Action Plan (2021)***

The *Kittitas County Secondary Recycling Market Feasibility Study & Preliminary Action Plan (2021)* was developed by the Kittitas County Solid Waste Department with support from the Washington State Recycling Development Center. Its purpose was to evaluate regional recycling practices, identify viable secondary markets, and establish a practical action plan for improving recycling infrastructure and material recovery. The study was built through a combination of historical system analysis, regional tonnage data review, statewide waste characterization findings, an assessment of commodity end-markets, and extensive stakeholder engagement involving County partners, CWU, and local economic development organizations.

Overall, the study found that the region continues to generate substantial recyclable material but still disposes of large amounts of recoverable organics, construction debris, paper, plastics, and glass. Key opportunities identified include developing local glass recycling options (for use in concrete, abrasives, or wine-bottle reuse), improving the quality and capacity of commingled recycling through a clean MRF, expanding C&D material diversion, scaling up organics composting, and exploring a resource recovery park to co-locate recycling and reuse activities. These strategies were evaluated for economic, environmental, and operational feasibility, resulting in recommendations focused on strengthening local processing capabilities, reducing contamination, expanding regional collaboration, and building a more resilient and sustainable recycling ecosystem.

### ***4.3.3 Recycling Contamination***

Recycling contamination is one of the biggest challenges in maintaining effective recycling programs. When non-recyclable or contaminated materials enter the recycling stream, they lower the quality and value of otherwise recyclable materials. In many cases, buyers reject contaminated loads entirely, sending them to landfills and increasing costs for sorting and disposal. Contamination most often results from placing non-recyclable items in the bin, failing to clean recyclables, incorrect sorting, or bundling materials that cannot be processed properly.

Contamination also creates operational problems at MRFs. Items like plastic bags, cords, or hoses can jam or damage equipment, causing downtime and expensive repairs. Hazardous items such as batteries or propane tanks introduce major safety risks including fires. In some cases, persistent contamination leads jurisdictions to remove certain items from their accepted recycling lists. Containers with liquid, bagged recyclables, or materials likely to soil other items may be excluded because they are too difficult or costly to process. This issue has grown more complex over time as tolerance for contamination has decreased, wish-cycling has increased, and MRF technology has improved at identifying improper materials. Kittitas County's recyclables are taken to WM's MRF, which reports an average contamination rate of 15%.

Some of the most common incorrectly recycled materials in Kittitas County are:

- Plastic bags and film
- Any plastic that is not a bottle or milk jug
- Expanded polystyrene (EPS) / Styrofoam

- Food-soiled pizza boxes, aluminum foil, and paper
- Shredded paper

These items, along with other non-recyclable materials, are listed on the Kittitas County Waste Prevention webpage which can be found at: <https://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/solid-waste/waste-prevention.aspx>. This webpage also describes programs that either the County or adjacent jurisdictions offer that can result in waste reduction, including the County’s free confidential document shredding.

Contamination creates several economic, environmental, and safety problems. It increases risks for workers, slows sorting efficiency, drives up processing costs, and reduces the amount of material recovered for recycling. It also requires more staff for manual sorting, increases the chance for equipment to get damaged, and demands additional monitoring at drop-off sites.

While some contamination results from carelessness, much of it comes from confusion or good intentions. Residents often misunderstand what is locally recyclable, assume that items “should” be recyclable, or are unaware that recycling rules vary by region. Another common issue occurs when people store their recyclables in plastic bags and place the entire bag in the bin, which cannot be processed. To address these challenges, Ecology’s BMPs recommend a multi-part strategy. Clear communication and outreach efforts help residents understand proper recycling practices. Operation improvements such as appropriate bin capacity or standardized colors support correct disposal. Policies can require new developments to plan for recycling. Regular measurement and reporting help track contamination sources and trends. Finally, incentive-based approaches, such as variable collection fees or rewards, can encourage better recycling behavior.

## 4.4 Product Stewardship Programs

Washington State has several recycling programs dedicated to product stewardship, and more legislation of this kind will likely come into effect in the coming years. Product stewardship, sometimes called Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), places the responsibility of managing the life-cycle impacts (including end-of-life management) of certain products. Several product stewardship programs include:

### 4.4.1 Paint Recycling: PaintCare

The PaintCare paint recycling stewardship program is a statewide initiative in Washington that provides convenient, environmentally responsible options for disposing of leftover household and commercial paint. Funded by a fee on new paint purchases, the program allows residents and businesses to drop off unused paint at participating retail locations – such as Sherwin-Williams, Ace Hardware, and other paint or hardware stores – as well as at the Ellensburg Transfer Station and the Cle Elum Transfer Station. Accepted items include most interior and exterior paints, primers, stains, and sealers, provided they are in original, sealed container with readable labels. Locations and more information can be found at PaintCare’s website: <https://www.paintcare.org/states/washington/>.



### 4.4.2 Mercury Lights: LightRecycle



The LightRecycle Washington program provides free recycling for mercury-containing lights, including compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), liner fluorescent tubes, and high-density discharge (HID) lamps. Funded by an environmental handling charge on new bulb purchases, the program helps prevent mercury pollution by ensuring safe collection and processing of these hazardous materials. In Kittitas County, residents and businesses can drop off eligible lights at designated collection sites such as the Cle Elum and Ellensburg Transfer Stations, as well as

participating retailers listed on LightRecycle.org. Limits apply (typically up to 15 fluorescent lights and 2 HID lamps per day), so users are encouraged to check with the site before visiting.

As of January 25, 2026, Kittitas County Solid Waste can no longer accept fluorescent tubes or bulbs as the organization that previously administered the LightRecycle Washington program ceased operations. When Ecology finds a new Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) to administer the program, Kittitas County will resume collection.

#### **4.4.3 Solar Panel Stewardship**

The Washington State Solar Panel Stewardship and Takeback Program requires manufacturers of photovoltaic (PV) modules to provide a free and environmentally responsible recycling option for their products. Beginning July 1, 2025, solar panels cannot be sold in Washington unless the manufacturer has an approved stewardship plan with Ecology. Specific drop-off locations in Kittitas County have not yet been designated as of the publication of this Plan.



**Solar Panel Stewardship**



**Battery Stewardship**

#### **4.4.4 Battery Stewardship**

Washington's Battery Stewardship Program requires battery producers to fund and implement a statewide collection and recycling system for portable batteries by January 1, 2027, and for medium-format batteries by 2029. In Kittitas County, residents can utilize

the OneDrum program at one of three locations throughout the County: the Kittitas County Solid Waste Office, Jerrol's in Ellensburg, and the Cle Elum Transfer Station. OneDrum is an all-in-one battery recycling program that allows consumers to drop off all of their batteries all together, rather than sorting and individually bagging them.

#### **4.4.5 E-Cycle Washington**

E-Cycle Washington is a statewide electronic product stewardship program that went into effect in January 2009, providing free and convenient recycling for TVs, computers, monitors, tablets, and similar devices. Its purpose is to ensure safe, environmentally-responsible recycling of electronic products, keeping hazardous materials out of landfills.



**E-CYCLE  
washington**

Because it is an EPR system, it is funded and managed by electronics manufacturers through the Washington Materials Management and Financing Authority (WMMFA). Ecology identifies E-Cycle Washington as one of its official product stewardship programs, and the Northwest Product Stewardship Council documents its long-standing role in recovering millions of pounds of electronic waste since launch. Refer to the E-Cycle Washington website for more information: <https://ecyclewa.org/>.



## **5.0 Organics**

## 5.0 Organics

As a waste reduction and recycling strategy, composting is one of the highest priorities for managing solid waste, as established by Chapter 70A.205 RCW. Composting transforms organic wastes into valuable products, such as soil amendments and mulch. From the 2008 WCS, almost 33% of overall MSW in Kittitas County is made up of organics, of which approximately 52% is food waste and approximately 22% is yard waste.

Kittitas County does not currently divert food waste, but it does compost yard waste (leaves, grass, prunings, and trimmings). When the new Organics Management Laws (OMLs) come into effect and require that parts of the County divert food waste, the Compost Facility at the Ellensburg Transfer Station will need to be permitted to accept food waste or the County will need to research alternative facilities that will accept it. The County does plan to build out the existing compost facility in the future once it receives funding for it.

### 5.1 Transfer Station Organics Program

Both the Ellensburg Transfer Station and the Cle Elum Transfer Station have organic waste diversion programs at their facilities. Because there is not currently a program for collection and composting of food waste (see **Chapter 3.1.3**), the organic waste at these facilities consists of just yard waste and agricultural waste. Contaminated yard waste was not tracked at the transfer stations until 2019. See **Table 13** for tonnages of both yard waste/agricultural waste and contaminated yard waste received at each transfer station from 2018-2025.

**Table 13 - Transfer Station Organics Tonnages 2018-2025**

Year	Yard Waste & Agricultural Waste		Contaminated Yard Waste	
	Ellensburg Transfer Station	Cle Elum Transfer Station	Ellensburg Transfer Station	Cle Elum Transfer Station
2018	2,245.78	412.10	N/A	N/A
2019	2,007.66	434.29	25.79	1.37
2020	2,339.46	454.86	20.20	2.68
2021	2,192.18	488.83	29.87	3.07
2022	1,941.18	603.28	50.26	1.47
2023	2,136.45	506.22	19.69	4.58
2024	2,151.34	422.16	74.92	2.49
2025	2,267.67	426.95	33.63	9.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,281.72</b>	<b>3,748.69</b>	<b>254.36</b>	<b>25.48</b>

### 5.2 Composting

In July 2009, the County began operations to convert yard waste, agricultural byproducts, and wood waste into compost at a facility. The purpose of this facility is to divert organic wastes from disposal and/or burning and to use these materials to produce high quality compost for sale as a soil amendment (Operations Plan for Kittitas County Composting Facility, 2008). The compost facility is co-located with the new Ellensburg Transfer Station as of the move in Spring 2026. The facility will process approximately 5,000 tons of organic waste annually. By 2046, it's expected to handle up to 7,145 tons per year, so future expansions will accommodate this volume, including food waste. At the time of this Plan's adoption, the new compost facility has not been open long enough to get a good idea of if this estimate is accurate. Approximate growth will be reevaluated when the County has more long-term data from the facility.

The facility produces compost that meets the Seal of Testing Assurance (STA) as established by the U.S. Composting Council. At this time, the facility is only permitted to process Type 1 (vegetative) & Type 2 (manures) feedstocks:

- Landscaping and yard trimmings.
- Wood wastes (natural woody debris including land clearing stumps less than 12” and brush, and clean, unpainted, and untreated dimensional wood).
- Straw and bedding with associated manures (primarily from nearby fairgrounds and small farmers).
- Residuals, in accordance with WAC 314-55-097.

In the future, there are plans to build out the Ellensburg Compost Facility to be able to handle food waste in addition to yard and agricultural wastes. The County needs to secure funding for this expansion first, but it has been identified as a future project in their long-term capital facilities planning efforts. It is anticipated that this expansion could occur sometime between 2030-2035.

Operations personnel visually inspect truck beds as they cross the scale, as well as during unloading activities, to ensure no unacceptable materials are unloaded. Haulers are directed to keep the unacceptable materials in their vehicles or to reload them and to remove them from the site for proper disposal. Feedstocks are inspected a final time as the material is being processed. In the event unacceptable materials are found in the feedstock areas, these materials are removed from the feedstock piles and disposed of in a dumpster onsite for proper transfer/disposal at the adjacent transfer facility.

Compost produced is sold to city/County residents at nominal fee of \$75/ton for residents and \$55/ton for commercial users only to offset the cost of production. Coarse compost is also sold to residents and contractors at a rate of \$35/ton.



The material handling stages include:



The new composting facility uses aerated static pile (ASP) composting, which has speed up the process and can utilize space more efficiently. The Operations Plan will be reviewed and revised if needed on a yearly basis in conjunction with the solid waste handling permit renewal to remain in compliance with the current permit. **Table 14** shows the tonnages of all compost sold by Kittitas County Solid Waste from 2019 to 2025, including fine and coarse compost, as well as the amount that is sold to nurseries, farms, and contractors.

**Table 14 - Tonnages of Compost Sold 2019-2025**

Year	Tons
2019	988.54
2020	1710.16
2021	1468.08
2022	1086.78
2023	1083.44
2024	787.89
2025	905.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>7124.89</b>

### 5.3 Organics Regulations

As described in the previous discussion of recent industry legislation changes (**Chapter 1.3**), the OML was passed and is now in effect in the State of Washington. These regulations include a staggered implementation plan with the full program including mandatory collection of organics (including food waste) from residents and businesses by 2030.

#### 5.3.1 ORCAs

As part of the new regulations, Ecology has designated Organics Recycling Collection Areas (ORCAs) where local governments must provide year-round curbside collection for organic waste. These areas are determined based on population density and waste management infrastructure. Kittitas County has not been designated as an ORCA and therefore does not need to adhere to the implementation timeline.

#### 5.3.2 BOMAs

Similar to ORCAs, Business Organics Management Areas (BOMAs) are Washington State’s formal, regulatory designations identifying where businesses must participate in organics collection under the Organics Management Law. Ecology designates an area as a BOMA only if year-round curbside organics collection for businesses is available, *and* there is sufficient processing capacity at the associated facility. Kittitas County has not been designated as a BOMA because the region does not meet both of these requirements.



## **6.0 Education & Outreach**

## 6.0 Education & Outreach

### 6.1 County Program

Kittitas County has numerous outreach and education programs. Information regarding all of the solid waste programs offered in the County, including reduction/recycling, composting, MRW, battery recycling, and more, can be found on their webpage: <https://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/solid-waste/default.aspx>. Table 15 shows the programs that are in place, including target sectors, and highlights of each program.

**Table 15 - Kittitas County Waste Reduction & Recycling Public Outreach**

Program	Target Sector	Highlights of the Program
Backyard Composting	Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worm composting classes for the community, including children's program.</li> <li>Pamphlets, books, videos, and displays are also available</li> </ul>
Website	Residential, Commercial	<p>Information provided on the County website includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SWMP Update and supporting documents</li> <li>Waste reduction tips</li> <li>Recycled-content purchasing websites</li> <li>Recycling options and information.</li> <li>Recycling contamination information.</li> <li>Hazardous and special waste services</li> <li>Secured load laws and flyers</li> <li>Calendar of Green Events</li> <li>Transfer station locations and fee schedule</li> <li>Coloring activities</li> </ul>
School Presentations	Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote waste reduction, recycling, and reduce contamination.</li> <li>Tours of solid waste facilities are provided upon request.</li> </ul>
Promotional Materials	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminate information via brochures, posters, flyers, and newspaper and radio ads and news interviews.</li> <li>Direct mail including annual Recycling Guide and notices in quarterly bills.</li> </ul>
Community Events	Residential	<p>Provide local waste reduction and recycling information and activities at events, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kittitas County Environmental Education Network</li> <li>Kittitas County Fair</li> <li>Earth Day/Arbor Day Celebration at CWU</li> <li>Farmer's Markets</li> <li>KXLE Home, Business &amp; Garden EXPO</li> <li>Master Composter and Gardener Classes</li> <li>Compost Class</li> </ul>

Advise and Assist	Government, Agencies, Institutions, Commercial, Nonprofit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Get Intimate with the Shrub Steppe Event</li> <li>▪ Yakima River Clean Up</li> <li>▪ Christmas Tree Recycling</li> <li>▪ Procurement options and alternatives</li> <li>▪ Reduce, Reuse, Recycle options</li> <li>▪ Disaster debris management</li> <li>▪ Hazardous Waste handling</li> </ul>
Household Hazardous Waste / Moderate Risk Waste	Residents and small-quantity generators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Customer interaction and brochures outlining the types of waste accepted by our MRW facility.</li> <li>▪ Assist generators in identifying opportunities to reduce waste, purchase recycled content products, locate appropriate recycling services through site visits, telephone contacts, and workshops as appropriate.</li> <li>▪ Provide “Reuse” cart at our office to offer unused products free for others to use.</li> </ul>

## 6.2 Suggested Education & Outreach Activities

In order to enhance Kittitas County residents’ knowledge on proper solid waste handling activities, more education and outreach programs can be put in place, including:

- Reinstating the master composter course.
- Leading more education efforts in local schools to teach the youth about recycling, composting, and more.
- Providing more MRW educational materials.



# **7.0 Implementation Plan**



# 7.0 Implementation Plan

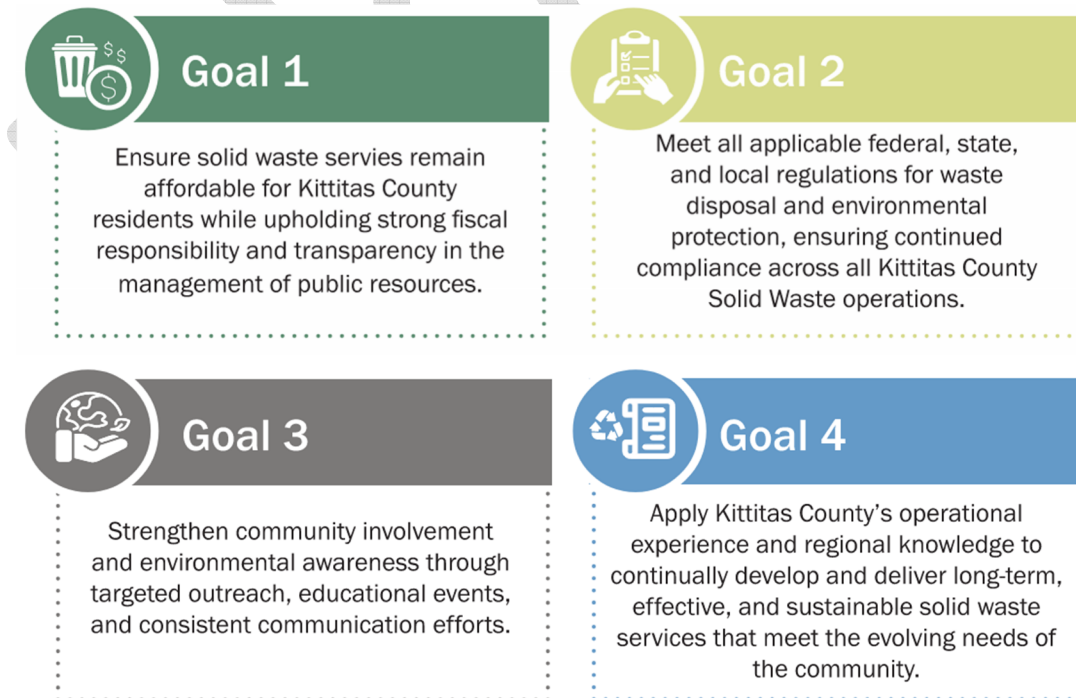
## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the proposed implementation strategy for the Plan. It includes: funding, the list of recommended actions, implementation schedule, and proposed expenditures for each action. Priorities, funding, and expenses for this Plan are intended as guidelines which will and can be reassessed and revisited as developments occur. With this in mind, recommendations throughout this Plan reflect yearly reviews of programs and recommendations by the SWAC.

Implementation of the recommendations made in this Plan will take place on a continuous basis. The time required to implement recommendations vary from a few weeks or months for single events, to ongoing programs that take place over many years. In order to implement the recommendations outlined within the Plan with the current staff, there will be a need to establish strong working relationships with CWU, the local waste haulers, recycling firms, nonprofit groups, and other organizations within the County. Funding available through grants should be fully utilized, most especially the Coordinated Prevention Grants (CPG) program. SWAC recommendations also reflect the need to maintain adequate funding for implementation of all solid waste programs.

## 7.2 Six-Year Implementation Schedule

Building off the four goals created to assist in achieving the County’s vision, recommended action items were then developed to help reach those goals. All action items were reviewed and approximate costs and implementation timelines were developed for each item. The recommended action items are presented in this chapter, organized by the goal each supports. For reference, the goals are recapped in **Figure 22** below.



**Figure 22 - 2026 SWMP Goals**

The implementation status of each of the recommended options from the previous 2020 SWMP can be found in **Chapter 1.5.1**.

**Table 16** presents a detailed accounting of the six-year capital and operational financing implementation budget.

**Table 16 - Six-Year Implementation Plan**

Action Item	Implementation Year(s)	Responsible Party / Partners	Cost
<i>Goal 1: Maintain Affordability &amp; Fiscal Stewardship</i>			
1) Review contracting every five years to ensure solid waste services remain reliable and affordable for County residents.	2028	Solid Waste Staff	\$25,000
2) Collaborate with local government agencies and solid waste providers to ensure best practices.	Continuous	Solid Waste Staff, WM	N/A
3) Ensure transparency in the advertisement of rate and/or billing changes.	Continuous	Solid Waste Staff, SWAC	N/A
4) Research and apply for grants to acquire alternative funding opportunities.	Continuous	Solid Waste Staff	\$15,000
5) Conduct yearly financial forecasts and, if feasible, a rate study once the new Lower County Transfer Station is operational and running.	Continuous, Rate Study in 2028	Solid Waste Staff, Consultant	\$150,000
<i>Goal 2: Ensure Full Regulatory Compliance</i>			
1) Complete an alternatives analysis on long-term solid waste and HHW disposal options and programs when possible.	2029	Solid Waste Staff, Consultant	\$75,000
2) Regularly assess legislation changes and/or updates to ensure full compliance.	Continuous	Solid Waste Staff	\$75,000
3) Collaborate with the Department of Ecology to meet solid waste regulations.	Continuous	Solid Waste Staff, Ecology	\$50,000
4) Monitor extender producer responsibility (EPR) legislation.	Continuous	Solid Waste Staff	\$2,500
5) Comply with upcoming RCW organics management rules.	2027/2030	Solid Waste Staff	\$1,750,000
<i>Goal 3: Enhance Community Engagement &amp; Education</i>			
1) Hold semi-annual SWAC meetings.	2026	Solid Waste Staff	\$2,500
2) Engage in several social media platforms to ensure community awareness of solid waste programs.	2027	Solid Waste Staff	\$15,000
3) Focus targeted educational efforts in local schools and universities.	2027	Solid Waste Staff	\$25,000
4) Ensure the website and County information remains relevant and updated.	Continuous	Solid Waste Staff	\$15,000
<i>Goal 4: Leverage Local Knowledge for Long-Term Solutions</i>			
1) Review capital projects and their feasibilities.	Yearly	Solid Waste Staff	N/A
2) Regularly review programs and services that are offered to ensure applicability.	Yearly	Solid Waste Staff, SWAC	\$5,000
3) Ensure proper environmental stewardship through solid waste services.	Continuous	Solid Waste Staff	N/A
4) Find potential new/additional SWAC members for more diverse representation.	Yearly	Solid Waste Staff, SWAC	\$1,000
5) Explore the feasibility of performing a waste and/or recycling characterization study.	2029	Consultant	\$150,000

## 7.3 20-Year Capital Facilities/Implementation Plan

The County's plan for solid waste handling facilities has estimated long-range needs. **Table 17** and **Table 18** below project needs and the equipment purchase schedule over a twenty-year period of time, respectively. Changes in disposal practices, population, and waste reduction and recycling levels will affect these needs. Adjustments are anticipated in the future through plan updates or amendments.

**Table 17 - Kittitas County Twenty-Year Capital Facilities Plan**

Project	A/E Year	A/E Fee (2026\$)	Construction Year	Construction Cost w/ Sales Tax (2026\$)	Total Project Cost (2026\$)
Relocate Ellensburg Transfer Station & Compost Facility	2022-2025	\$3,000,000	2025-2026	\$20,000,000	\$23,000,000
Cle Elum Transfer Station Entrance Improvements	2022-2026	\$300,000	2026-2027	\$1,350,000	\$1,650,000
Leachate Ponds	2027	–	2028	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Build Out Compost Facility to Accept Food Waste	2029-2034	–	2030-2035	\$1,750,000	\$1,750,000

**Table 18 - Kittitas County Twenty-Year Equipment Purchase Schedule**

Project	Purchase Year(s)	Total Cost per Unit (2026\$)
Compost Facility Grinder	2026, 2040	\$1,000,000
Compost Facility Turner	2026, 2040	\$100,000
Ryegrass Dump Truck	2027	\$125,000
Ryegrass Dozer	2027	\$500,000
Compost Facility Excavator	2027, 2037, 2046	\$250,000
Compost Facility Tractor	2028, 2040	\$250,000
Cle Elum MRW Forklift	2028	\$35,000
Compost Facility Loader	2032, 2039, 2046	\$300,000
Ellensburg MRW Forklift	2038	\$35,000
Compost Facility Screen	2034, 2045	\$350,000

### 7.3.1 Facility Capacities

The County's new compost facility has a capacity of 5,000 tons of yard waste per year initially and up to 10,000 tons per year once it is fully built out to accept food waste. Ryegrass Landfill currently has about 145,000 cubic yards of remaining air space, which it will likely use up in the next four years. The new Ellensburg Transfer Station was designed to handle 210 tons of waste per day through the year 2046. While the specific capacity of the Cle Elum Transfer Station is unknown, it has been noted that long lines and wait times arise when more than 400 vehicles come through in a day.

### 7.3.2 Facility Improvements

The minimum level of service for County services, including solid waste, is specified in Ordinance 1999-01 (**Appendix K**). To maintain the current level of service, the County will need to increase solid waste services to meet future waste stream projections. The population projections for Kittitas County predict a growth of over 10,082 people between 2020 and 2040, which is a lot of residents to plan for, but fewer than the estimated

16,000 people in the 2010 Plan. To maintain the adopted level of service, Kittitas County would need to provide waste management programs for an additional 15,551 tons generated annually by 2040.

### 7.3.3 Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Kittitas County adopted an updated Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for the years 2026-2031. In this plan, **Section 7** details the solid waste management program in Kittitas County, focusing on each facility that is part of this program. After careful consideration by the County, it was determined that the Ellensburg Transfer Station and Compost Facility had a need to be relocated (see **Figure 7** for location of the new facility & **Chapter 5.1** for further discussion on the new facility). In addition, the Cle Elum Transfer Station is planning to get a new entrance, as it creates a traffic hazard on Highway 903 when cars back up into the road while queuing at the scalehouse. Refer to **Table 17** for more details on each of these capital improvements.

## 7.4 Funding

Priorities and funding in this plan cover six years (2026-2031). Actual budgets to carry out the recommendations will vary from year to year as specific programs are defined and will depend on annual budgets approved by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). In Kittitas County there are two primary sources of funds for implementation of the solid waste programs: one source is derived from a portion of the tipping fees; the other source of funds is derived from grants obtained through Ecology. Error! Reference source not found. details current revenues and is consistent with **Table 7-4** of the Cost Assessment Questionnaire in **Appendix I**.

**Table 19 - Solid Waste Program Revenues (2025)**

Revenue Source	Total
<i>Tipping Fees</i>	
Garbage	\$7,338,096.93
C&D	\$566,555.05
Yard Waste	\$253,339.57
Liquid Waste Lagoons	\$606,866.98
<b>Tipping Fee Total</b>	<b>\$8,764,858.53</b>
<i>Other Sources</i>	
Grant Funding	\$121,457.11
Recycling	\$78,287.83
Other Incomes	\$192,613.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$9,157,216.77</b>

### 7.4.1 Grants

Chapter 70A.205 RCW outlines the intent and requirements for funding derived from the Solid Waste Management Account and established with the State Treasury. It is from this account that funding is administered and appropriated by the Washington State Department of Ecology in the form of the Local Solid Waste Financial Assistance (LSWFA) grant. This funding is allocated to the County after application is made to the Department of Ecology and requires a 25% match on the part of Solid Waste Programs.

Funding available from the LSWFA program has changed over the years, and will do so in the future depending on legislative requirements. In the event grant funding is reduced or eliminated, programs that are funded by these grants will need to be re-evaluated and either eliminated, curtailed, or, if continued, funded using alternative methods, such as an increase in tipping fees or other revenue sources.

### 7.4.2 Tipping Fees

Tipping fees are the fees charged for waste hauled to the transfer stations. A portion of these fees are set aside for the grant matches, administrative costs, operations, maintenance, recycling costs, testing, equipment, and fees to Environmental Health. Tipping fees for all facilities in Kittitas County can be found at their Transfer Station webpage: <https://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/solid-waste/transfer-stations.aspx>.

### 7.4.3 Other Funding Opportunities

Chapter 36.58A RCW provides for the creation of Solid Waste Collection Districts in counties and cities within the State of Washington. The establishment of such districts can also be used to finance all aspects of solid waste disposal and disposal activities and is deemed the only certain way to establish a solid base of fees from which to operate in the future. The only prerequisite for the establishment of Solid Waste Collection Districts in the County is an approved SWMP. Although the statute does not say that the Plan must refer to Districts, inclusion of Districts in the Plan as a recommendation would ensure that, should the County choose in the future to create Collection Districts, review of the ordinance by WUTC and others would be less costly and take place in a timelier fashion.

### 7.4.4 MRW Program Funding

Kittitas County's MRW program (including the handling of used oil) is funded from several sources, including revenue from the recycling of some materials, and grant funding. Costs for the program include labor and operations. Costs far exceed funding. In 2025 alone, costs outweighed funding by nearly \$190,000. The County continues to attempt to identify additional revenue sources to offset the costs of the program, including funding from Ecology and EPA. The 2025 costs and revenue for the Kittitas County MRW program are presented in Table 20.

**Table 20 - MRW Program Costs & Revenue (2025)**

Activity	Total
<i>Costs</i>	
Disposal & Supplies	\$144,175.32
Labor & Education	\$99,355.61
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$243,530.93</b>
<i>Revenues</i>	
Recycling (Used Oil, Batteries, Electronics)	\$3,897.60
Compost	\$52,960.76
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$56,858.36</b>

The legal authority for decisions regarding the implementation of the MRW plan is the responsibility of the Kittitas County Solid Waste Department. The department is responsible for:

- Coordinating improved systems for MRW management with existing and planned systems for waste reduction, recycling, and other programs for solid waste management within Kittitas County.
- Encouraging cooperation and coordination among all levels of government, citizens and the private sector in managing MRW.
- Emphasizing local responsibility for solving problems associated with MRW, rather than relying upon the state or federal government to provide solutions.
- Complying with the requirement of the RCW and WAC requirements for MRW and hazardous waste.



# **8.0 Enforcement & Administration**



## 8.0 Enforcement & Administration

The Washington State Solid Waste Management Act, Chapter 70A.205 RCW, assigns local government the primary responsibility for managing solid waste, although State agencies have jurisdiction over solid waste issues as well. This chapter describes the administrative and enforcement structure for solid waste management in Kittitas County. Administration and enforcement responsibilities for solid waste management in Kittitas County are divided among several agencies and jurisdictions.

### 8.1 Kittitas County Solid Waste Department

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The Kittitas County Solid Waste Department carries out the County's solid waste responsibilities. Its duties include developing and implementing the SWMP, managing interlocal agreements, overseeing public education efforts, and providing staff support for the SWAC.

Chapter 36.58 RCW grants Kittitas County the authority to create, own, and operate solid waste facilities in unincorporated areas or, if preferred, to contract those services to private companies. The County is also responsible for preparing comprehensive solid waste management plans for unincorporated regions and for any cities or towns that choose to collaborate in the planning process. To ensure a unified approach to solid waste management, the County has established interlocal agreements with every incorporated city within its boundaries. These agreements are created under state statutes that allow local governments to partner on shared services, reducing costs and preventing duplicated effort. Each agreement outlines the services or facilities involved along with any payment arrangements between the participating jurisdictions. The County's primary solid waste interlocal agreement, established in 1979, is included in **Appendix L**.

County health regulations also require all solid waste to be screened to ensure that dangerous waste is not disposed of at facilities that are not authorized to accept it. Waste must be evaluated under state dangerous waste designated rules, and materials determined to be dangerous must be managed in accordance with those regulations. Screening may involve testing, disclosure of the waste's makeup and source, or any other information needed to determine whether it qualifies as dangerous. Based on the screening results, the Health Officer may set a compliance schedule and may require the waste generator or transporter to take the material to an approved facility capable of handling it safely.

#### 8.1.1 County Authority

The rights of the County, in terms of solid waste collection, includes the establishment of solid waste collection districts for the mandatory collection of solid waste (Chapter 36.58.100 RCW). However, solid waste collection districts cannot include incorporated areas without the consent of the legislative authority of the city or town. To form a solid waste collection district, public hearings must be held and the County legislative authority must determine that mandatory collection is in the public interest. County provision of collection services can be implemented only if the WUTC notifies the County that no qualified haulers are available for a district. Under mandatory collection, a hauler may request that the County collect fees from delinquent customers.

In Kittitas County, all unincorporated areas are covered by a single WUTC certificate holder; there are no solid waste collection districts. Although County authority to collect garbage in the unincorporated areas is limited, counties have the legal authority to assess fees on collection services provided in those areas. Chapter 36.58.045 RCW authorizes counties to assess such fees to fund administration and planning expenses associated with solid waste management.

#### 8.1.2 Municipal Authority

Under Chapter 35.21.152 RCW, cities are allowed to develop, own, and operate solid waste handling systems and to provide solid waste collection services within their jurisdictions. Cities and counties have the authority to

establish solid waste programs, pass ordinances, and provide resources to monitor compliance and take corrective action where necessary. The cities are also responsible for enforcing local ordinances covering zoning, land use, illegal dumping, and littering. There are five incorporated cities and towns in Kittitas County. All of the cities and towns contract with a hauler for solid waste collection or use the existing franchise.

Cities and towns have several options for managing solid waste collection under state law, including:

- The city may choose not to manage or regulate its own garbage collection services. Collection services may then be provided by the certificate hauler(s) with authority for that area under the regulation of WUTC.
- The city may require a private company to obtain a garbage collection license from the city and to conform to all city collection guidelines.
- The city may award contracts to private companies for garbage collection in all or part of the city. The contract hauler does not need to hold a WUTC certificate for that area. Usually, contracts are awarded on a competitive basis to the lowest bidder. All requirements contained in RCW 35.01.160 apply when contracting for solid waste collection services.
- The city may decide to manage and maintain its own municipal collection system for all or part of its jurisdiction.

The WUTC would not have jurisdiction over the last two options (Chapter 81.77.020 RCW). State law also allows municipalities to require residents and businesses to subscribe to designated garbage collection services.

In 2009, Ecology adopted rules (173-345 WAC) affecting transporters of recyclable materials and recycling facilities. The rule requires transporters of recyclable material to register with Ecology, transport recyclable materials to MRFs and locations where recycling occurs and keep records of all activities for two years. In addition, this new rule requires material recovery facilities and recycling facilities to notify Ecology 30 days before the facilities start operations.

## 8.2 SWAC

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The State requires that counties establish a SWAC to assist in the development of programs and policies concerning solid waste handling and disposal (Chapter 70A.205 RCW). The Kittitas County SWAC is an advisory board to the Kittitas County Board of Commissioners and makes recommendations to the Commissioners on matters relative to the development of solid waste handling programs and policies. One of its main functions is to provide a forum within the community for the expression of opinions regarding solid waste handling and disposal plans, ordinances, resolutions, and programs prior to adoption. The members of the SWAC represent citizens, public interest groups, businesses, the waste management industry, and local government. The SWAC has a significant role in developing and updating Kittitas County's Solid Waste Management Plan. A list of current members is provided in **Appendix E** and bylaws that will be adopted in 2026 are provided in **Appendix E**, as well. Each representative is appointed for an indefinite term. The SWAC met several times throughout the planning process and meeting minutes are kept at the Solid Waste Department office. Additional copies of meeting notes can be found in **Appendix E**. Additionally, representatives from the regulatory community attend SWAC meetings and provide guidance with respect to solid waste issues. Their roles are described in **Appendix E**.

## 8.3 Kittitas County Public Health Department

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The Kittitas County Health Department (KCHD) is a participant of the County's SWAC and serves as the lead local authority responsible for permitting solid waste handling facilities and enforcing solid waste regulations. Under RCW 70.95.160, local health departments are assigned responsibility for adopting and enforcing ordinances that govern all aspects of solid waste handling and ensuring that permitted facilities operate in ways that protect public health, prevent pollution, support statewide solid waste priorities, and avoid creating nuisances. Facilities considered "solid waste handling facilities" include landfills, transfer stations, composting sites, C&D debris sites, wood and tire piles, MRFs, and similar operations.

KCHD works with local jurisdictions, state agencies, and the public to plan and implement safe solid waste management systems. It ensures compliance with applicable RCWs, WAC 173-304 (Minimum Functional Standards for Solid Waste Facilities), and local Board of Health ordinances. Core responsibilities of the health department include:

- Permitting all new solid waste facilities in the County.
- Ensuring permits align with the County's SWMP and state/federal regulations.
- Providing oversight of existing permitted facilities, including the Ryegrass Landfill and the Ellensburg and Cle Elum transfer stations.
- Responding to complaints about improper waste storage or disposal.
- Investigating illegal dumping and non-permitted disposal sites.

For MRW management, KCHD ensures compliance with relevant RCWs (including hazardous waste provisions), WAC chapters 173-303, 173-304, 173-340, and the County's solid waste regulations. The department also permits MRWFs and MRFs, issues abatement orders for illegal dumping, and licenses private contractors who transport septic tank waste.

## 8.4 Washington State Agencies & Regulations

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### 8.4.1 Washington Department of Ecology

Ecology has the primary authority for solid waste at the state level and acts as an advisor to the SWAC. Ecology assists local governments in the planning process by reviewing, providing comments, and approving preliminary and final drafts of solid waste management plans. This review is to ensure that local plans conform to applicable state laws and regulations. In its *Guidelines for the Development of Local Solid Waste Management Plans and Plan Revisions*, Ecology offers recommendations on the preparation of SWMPs. Ecology also provides recommendations and comments on reviews of solid waste handling and disposal permits to ensure that the proposed site or facility follows all applicable laws and regulations.

Although primary enforcement for solid waste management is through jurisdictional health departments, Ecology has a range of enforcement authorities under various statutes to address existing or potential sources of pollution, including those which result from improper solid waste handling and management. For instance, Ecology has broad authority to take enforcement actions under the State Water Pollution Control Act, the Hazardous Waste Management Act, and the Model Toxics Control Act. Collectively, these laws allow Ecology to issue orders and impose penalties for noncompliance. Under some circumstances, Ecology may also take direct action to remedy threats to public health and the environment and seek to recover costs from potentially liable parties.

In some instances, Ecology may assume the duties and responsibilities of jurisdictional health departments. Chapter 70.95.163 RCW authorizes local health departments to enter into an agreement with Ecology to assume some, or all, of their solid waste regulatory responsibilities and authorities, such as biosolids and septage permitting and enforcement.

### **8.4.2 Washington Department of Agriculture (WSDA)**

WSDA does not directly regulate solid waste facilities in Kittitas County, but it does contribute to solid waste related functions throughout its statewide responsibilities in organic materials oversight. An agriculture representative of the KCHD currently serves on the SWAC. Chapter 70.95.095 states the WSDA is required to review the draft plan and shall advise the County during writing of the preliminary draft plan. Comments received by WSDA are to be incorporated into the Plan. Concerns have been raised recently by WSDA about transporting mixed organics and garbage to eastern Washington and the potential for these practices to introduce apple maggots from quarantine areas to apple-growing areas.

### **8.4.3 Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission (WUTC)**

The WUTC supervises and regulates private solid waste collection companies under Chapter 81.77 RCW and Chapter 480-70 WAC. Its authority applies exclusively to private haulers and does not extend to MSW collection performed by cities or their contractors. Core responsibilities include establishing rates, approving service areas, regulating safety practices, and requiring operational and financial reporting.

Private solid waste haulers must obtain a certificate of public convenience and necessity from the WUTC to operate in unincorporated areas of the County or in incorporated areas that do not regulate their own systems. Certificates are issued based on cost information, demonstrated need for service, and, if an existing holder is present, the WUTC's assessment of that company's ability to adequately provide service. Certificates may include specific conditions and may be amended or revoked following a WUTC hearing. Haulers must also submit annual reports documenting gross operating revenue. WUTC jurisdiction does not cover the collection or transport of recyclable materials from drop-boxes or buy-back centers, nor does it apply to the transport of recyclables generated by commercial or industrial entities for delivery directly to recyclers. These activities fall instead under Chapter 81.81 RCW, which governs motor freight carriers.

A WUTC representative also reviews the draft SWMP update. Under Chapter 81.77 RCW and RCW 70A.205.065, the WUTC evaluates how proposed plan recommendations may affect solid waste collection rates charged by regulated companies and provides input to both the County and Ecology. The WUTC remains the primary authority regulating private collection in unincorporated County areas and may enforce compliance through fines, certificate revocation, or actions against unauthorized collectors.

## **8.5 Permitting**

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Solid waste facility permits are required under Ordinance 1999-01, in accordance with Chapters 173-303, 173-350, and 173-351 WAC. Facilities are required to obtain solid waste handling permits from the Health Department. The County's covered load law is also included in Ordinance 1999-01. The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), Chapter 43.21C RCW, requires all governmental agencies to consider the environmental impacts of a proposal before making decisions. An environmental impact statement (EIS) must be prepared for all proposals with probable significant adverse impacts on the quality of the environment. To determine if an EIS is necessary, an environmental checklist must be completed. For this planning document, a SEPA checklist has been completed and is included as **Appendix H**. Applicants applying for new solid waste permits within Kittitas County will notify the KCHD. The applicant will submit a permit application (provided by KCHD) and a SEPA Application to KCHD, which in turn will forward such applications to the Kittitas County Solid Waste Department.

Solid Waste will request a meeting of the SWAC to review the permit application for conformance to the Kittitas County SWMP. SWAC will review the documents for thoroughness in conforming to the Kittitas County Solid Waste Management Plan. SWAC will return their findings to the Health Department who will consider and include those findings in their final decision. The Health Department will forward such findings and comments along with the SEPA and Application, on to the Kittitas County Board of Health.

Final approval or disapproval of the application shall rest with Kittitas County Health Department, which shall issue its approval/disapproval of the application within 90 days after its receipt pursuant to Chapter 70.95.180 RCW.

## 8.6 Illegal Dumping

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The Kittitas County Health Department is responsible for investigating reports of littering and illegal dumping throughout the County. Illegal waste dumping can be reported via the Kittitas County Litter Crew webpage (<https://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/solid-waste/litter-crew.aspx>). When members of the public submit complaints, Environmental Health staff first verify whether illegal dumping has occurred. If the investigation confirms a violation, the case is handed over to the Kittitas County Code Enforcement Officer for formal enforcement action.

Several sections of the Kittitas County Code (KCC) govern how illegal dumping is regulated. Under KCC 8.20.010, the Code establishes that discarded materials cannot be left on public or private property or in County waters unless the disposal occurs at a legally designated waste site operated or approved by a governmental entity, within an authorized litter receptacle, or on property owned or lawfully occupied by the person discarding the waste. KCC 8.20.020 sets the penalties for violating these rules, allowing the County to impose significant fines and potential jail time. Additional protections for natural resources appear in KCC 9.50.155, which prohibits dumping or depositing of any form of waste into rivers, lakes, streams, and other bodies of water located within or adjacent to County park areas to prevent pollution and safeguard public and environmental health.

### 8.6.1 Unsecured Load Laws

RCW 46.61.655 requires drivers to secure their load with tarps or other means to minimize the risk of littering or of causing damage to vehicles. Littering and driving with an unsecured load can cause fines of up to \$5,000 and even jail time. Kittitas County Solid Waste facilities charge customers with unsecured loads a \$10 fee. In 2025 alone, a total of 738 customers between the Cle Elum Transfer Station and the Ellensburg Transfer Station were fined for not securing their waste.

### 8.6.2 Litter Crew

Each summer, the Kittitas County Solid Waste Department hires a Supervisor and Litter Crew members to pick up litter along County roadsides from June until August. The Kittitas County Solid Waste Youth Litter Crew started in 2007. Litter Crew's goal every summer is to remove litter and illegally dumped material from public lands and roadways. Litter Crew also provides litter and illegal dump prevention education to citizens of Kittitas County. This program is funded by an Ecology grant. In the summer of 2022, the Litter Crew cleaned 130 road miles and 68 acres and addressed four illegal dumpsites. Over the course of 960 combined hours, they recovered 346 pounds of recyclable material, collected 5,880 pounds of litter, and removed an additional 5,640 pounds of debris from illegal dumping locations.

## 8.7 Ordinances

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Solid waste handling standards are regulated under WAC 173-350, adopted in January 2003. Ordinances and relevant local laws regarding solid waste can be found in **Appendix K**.