

Seattle  
 Public  
Utilities

**2013**

**Recycling Rate Report**

**July 1, 2014**

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# I. INTRODUCTION

The report starts out by explaining the report’s scope, how the recycling rate is calculated, and our recycling program planning background. The second section presents overall 2013 results, as well as results for each solid waste “sector.” The third section, on waste prevention, talks about waste prevention activities that touch all sectors. Section 4 lays out recycling program actions for 2014 and 2015. The report concludes with references and links for further information. Comments on the report from the Seattle Solid Waste Advisory Committee are attached, as required by Resolution 30990.

## I.1 SCOPE OF THE REPORT

This is the seventh annual recycling report for the City of Seattle, as called for by the 2007 Seattle City Council Resolution 30990.

*“SPU will report to Council by July 1 of each year on the previous year’s progress toward recycling goals, as well as further steps to be taken to meet goals in the current and upcoming years.”*

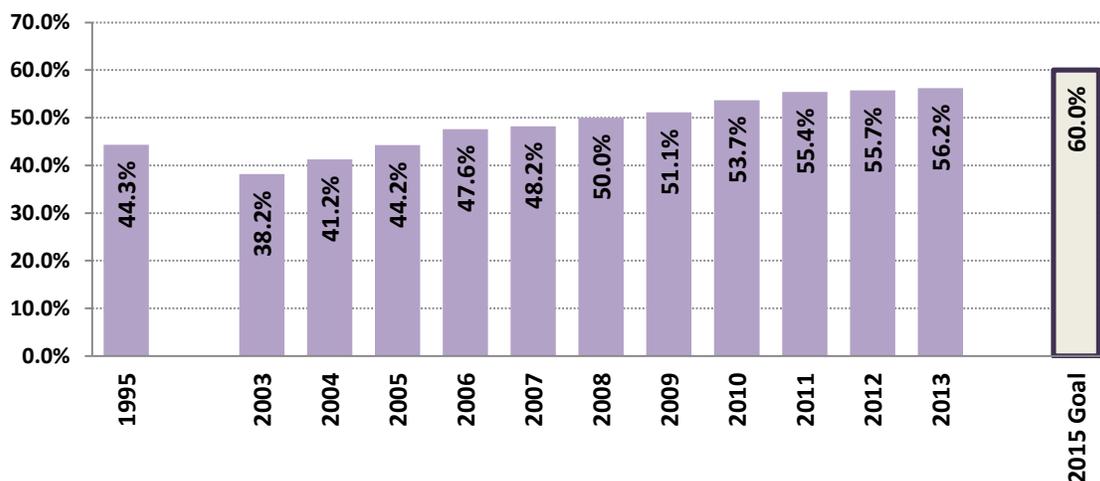
The Resolution set Seattle’s goal to reach 60% recycling of municipal solid waste (MSW) by the year 2012, and 70% by 2025.

In February 2013 the city council adopted revised recycling goals by adopting “Seattle’s Solid Waste Plan 2011 Revision.” The revised goals for MSW are to: recycle 60% by the year 2015, and to recycle 70% by 2022. Further, for the first time Seattle set a goal to recycle 70% of construction and demolition debris by the year 2020.

Four different sectors contribute to the overall MSW rate: single family residential, multi family residential, self haul, and commercial.

In 2013, Seattle recycled 56.2% of its MSW, an increase of 0.5 percentage points over 2012. The recycling rate has risen 18.0 percentage points since the 2003 low of 38.2%.

**Figure I MSW Overall Recycling Rate Progress**



## I.2 ABOUT THE RECYCLING RATE

Seattle's recycling rate is the percentage of municipal solid waste (MSW) diverted from the landfill by reuse, recycling and composting.

Seattle's MSW includes:

- Organics managed onsite by Seattle residents (yard debris and food scraps)
- All garbage, organics, and recyclables that businesses and residents set out for collection
- All garbage, organics, and recyclables hauled to the city's recycling and disposal stations for reuse, recycling or composting

**Seattle's 60% goal combines separate goals for each of the four primary MSW sectors:** single family residential, multi family residential, self haul, and commercial. The specific recycling goals for each sector are different since waste stream materials, opportunities to recycle, and likelihood of participation vary among the sectors.

**The MSW recycling goal excludes construction and demolition (C&D) material.** C&D disposed and recycled tons are counted separately in the C&D stream, and Seattle now has a separate recycling goal for C&D. Also, a large portion recycled metals (such as car bodies) never enter our MSW or C&D systems, and therefore aren't included in our recycling rate calculations (we do include metals collected at the curb and at our transfer stations).

**The MSW goal also excludes other special wastes.** Moderate Risk Waste (MRW) includes household hazardous waste (HHW) like garden pesticides, and small quantity generator waste (SQGW) like solvents used at a small business. The Local Hazardous Waste Management Program (LHWMP) manages Seattle's moderate risk waste. The LHWMP is a joint program supported and implemented by Seattle, King County, Public Health - Seattle & King County, and the Sound Cities Association. The Seattle Municipal Code prohibits disposal of HHW and SQGW in the garbage.

Further, the recycling goal does not include other special categories of waste such as: biomedical wastes, biosolids, asbestos, petroleum contaminated soils, and Dangerous Waste (generally industrial), which state regulations exclude from MSW.

## I.3 ACTION PLANNING BACKGROUND

In 1998, the Seattle City Council adopted Seattle's Solid Waste Plan *On the Path to Sustainability*. It set a policy framework for the city focused on sustainability and stewardship, and established the goal of eliminating the maximum possible amount of waste as a guiding principle. It also identified programmatic goals and programs to achieve these goals. The 2004 Plan Amendment renewed Seattle's commitment to these policies and goals. The Seattle City Council adopted the 2011 Revision to the Plan in February 2013, and the Plan was approved by Washington Department of Ecology in June 2013.

## 2. RECYCLING RATES

This section first presents recycling rates for MSW: overall, single and multifamily residential, self haul, and commercial. Following the MSW sectors, the section goes on to present the results for construction and demolition debris (C&D), which is tracked separately from MSW, and to discuss public space and parks outdoor open space recycling.

### 2.1 OVERALL MSW RECYCLING PERFORMANCE

In 2013, Seattle's MSW recycling increased from 55.7% to 56.2%, an increase of 0.5 percentage points. This marks the 10th straight year of continuous recycling rate growth since 2003.

**Table 1 Recycling Rates All MSW Sectors 2000-2013**

Year	Residential		Res Total	Self Haul	Commercial	Overall
	Single Family	Multi Family				
2000	58.0%	17.8%	47.8%	17.2%	41.6%	40.0%
2001	57.0%	22.0%	48.5%	17.8%	39.6%	39.3%
2002	57.5%	21.5%	48.3%	18.1%	40.7%	39.7%
2003	57.5%	22.2%	48.4%	18.1%	37.3%	38.2%
2004	58.9%	22.2%	49.4%	18.8%	42.5%	41.2%
2005	61.4%	25.2%	52.1%	19.2%	46.6%	44.2%
2006	64.0%	26.3%	54.3%	18.8%	51.7%	47.6%
2007	64.8%	27.6%	55.1%	19.2%	52.5%	48.2%
2008	65.4%	28.3%	55.9%	18.4%	54.7%	50.0%
2009	68.7%	27.0%	58.4%	16.7%	54.9%	51.1%
2010	70.3%	29.6%	60.3%	13.5%	58.9%	53.7%
2011	70.5%	28.7%	60.2%	13.1%	61.4%	55.4%
2012	71.1%	32.2%	61.0%	12.5%	61.4%	55.7%
2013	70.8%	34.3%	60.9%	12.2%	62.9%	56.2%
2015 Goal	75.4%	42.5%	66.9%	32.9%	63.4%	60.0%

Overall, Seattle generated 10,580 more total MSW tons in 2013 than in 2012. Recycling grew by 9,288 tons. Disposal grew at a lesser rate, up by 1,292 tons.

**Table 2 Tons MSW Overall 2000-2013**

Tons of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW)				
Year	Generated	Disposed	Recycled	Recycle Rate
2000	793,842	476,132	317,710	40.0%
2001	782,809	475,270	307,539	39.3%
2002	768,346	463,086	305,260	39.7%
2003	741,094	458,011	283,083	38.2%
2004	780,044	458,389	321,655	41.2%
2005	790,457	440,693	349,763	44.2%
2006	836,499	438,381	398,118	47.6%
2007	848,759	439,407	409,352	48.2%
2008	789,608	394,748	394,860	50.0%
2009	719,424	351,689	367,735	51.1%
2010	724,468	335,570	388,898	53.7%
2011	715,996	319,341	396,655	55.4%
2012	713,803	315,966	397,837	55.7%
2013	724,383	317,258	407,125	56.2%

## 2.2 TOTAL MSW DISPOSED

This section addresses the active Resolution 30990 (2007) goal for total MSW waste disposed (landfilled). Specifically:

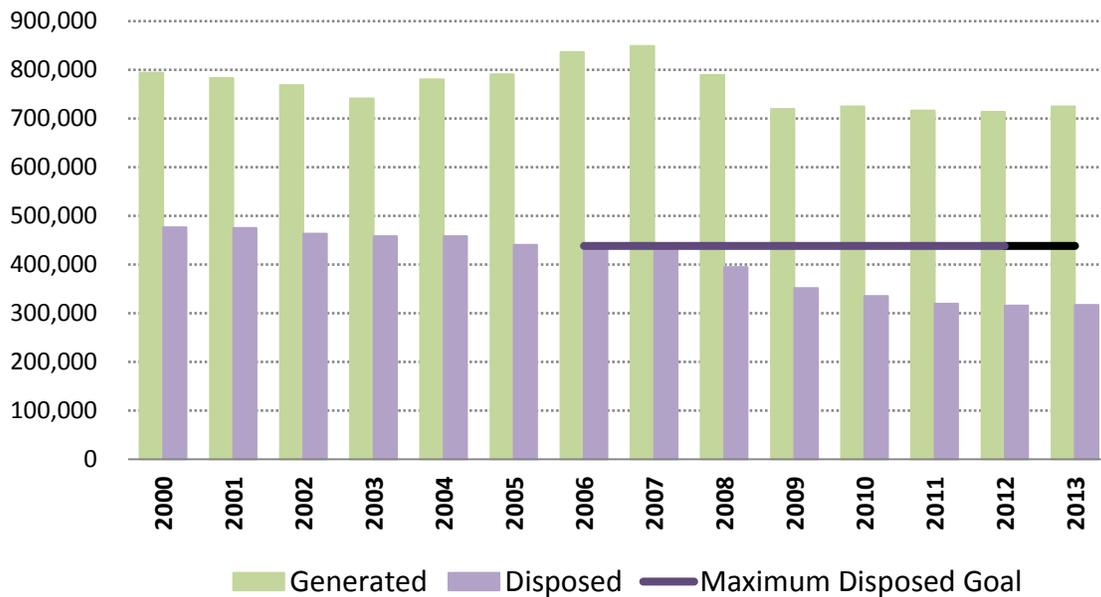
- The city will not dispose of any more total solid waste in future years than went to the landfill in 2006 (438,000 tons MSW)

Seattle disposed 1,292 more tons in 2013 compared to 2012, a 0.4% increase. Compared to 2006, disposed tons are down 27.6%, or 121,123 annual tons.

**Table 3 MSW Tons Change – Overall Generated & Disposed**

MSW Tons Change from Prior Year				
Year	Generated	Percent Change	Disposed	Percent Change
2000	793,842	NA	476,132	NA
2001	782,809	-1.4%	475,270	-0.2%
2002	768,346	-1.8%	463,086	-2.6%
2003	741,094	-3.5%	458,011	-1.1%
2004	780,044	5.3%	458,389	0.1%
2005	790,457	1.3%	440,693	-3.9%
2006	836,499	5.8%	438,381	-0.5%
2007	848,759	1.5%	439,407	0.2%
2008	789,608	-7.0%	394,748	-10.2%
2009	719,424	-8.9%	351,689	-10.9%
2010	724,468	0.7%	335,570	-4.6%
2011	715,996	-1.2%	319,341	-4.8%
2012	713,803	-0.3%	315,966	-1.1%
2013	724,838	1.5%	317,258	0.4%

**Figure 2 MSW Tons Disposed Compared to Goal**



We anticipate that further growth in our recycling and waste reduction programs will reduce MSW tons disposed. However, this effect can be muddled by factors in the overall economy that also drive MSW tons generated. We suspect that a good share of the sizable drop seen since 2007 is due to the economic downturn and slow recovery. For example, an analysis looking at the decline in commercial tons between 2004 and 2009 indicated that about half the decline in tons disposed was due to factors related to the economy and about half due to new recycling programs. Time will tell if or when generation will approach pre-recession levels again.

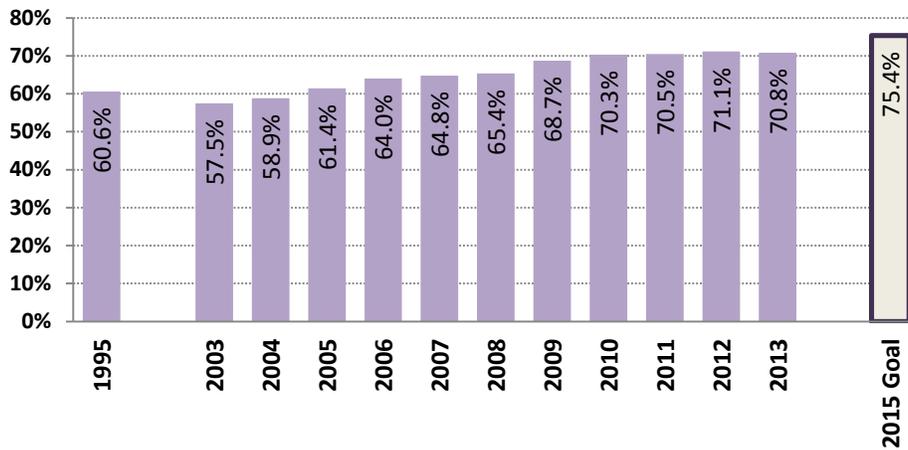
## 2.3 RESIDENTIAL: SINGLE FAMILY RECYCLING PERFORMANCE

The single family sector includes households on “can” (or cart) garbage service (as opposed to dumpsters). These are mostly single family, and duplex to 4-plex households. They set out garbage (disposal), recycling and organics (yard and food) for collection at the curb. They also compost some food and yard waste at their homes.

In 2013, recycling in the single family sector slightly decreased, by 0.3 percentage points, to 70.8%.

2013 also saw a 2.1% decrease in total generated tons. Recycled tons decreased by 3,823 (-2.5%), and disposed tons decreased by 615 (-1.0%).

**Figure 3 Recycling Rate – Single Family**



**Table 4 Tons Single Family 2000-2013**

Tons - Single Family				
Year	Generated	Disposed	Recycled	Recycle Rate
2000	208,468	87,499	120,969	58.0%
2001	211,982	91,072	120,910	57.0%
2002	206,474	87,834	118,640	57.5%
2003	205,748	87,426	118,322	57.5%
2004	209,132	86,029	123,103	58.9%
2005	208,675	80,478	128,197	61.4%
2006	216,946	78,078	138,868	64.0%
2007	220,128	77,494	142,634	64.8%
2008	213,889	73,961	139,928	65.4%
2009	215,015	67,229	147,786	68.7%
2010	216,484	64,309	152,175	70.3%
2011	212,861	62,779	150,082	70.5%
2012	211,030	60,906	150,124	71.1%
2013	206,592	60,291	146,301	70.8%

The decrease can partly be explained to changing the calculation that allocates organics between single family and multi family. Also, organics generation tends to change year to year with varying weather.

The single family sector needs a 4.6 percentage point rise to achieve its 2015 recycling rate goal. In terms of 2013 tons, 9,469 more tons would have needed to be recycled.

### Program Highlights – Single Family

- Continuing from 2011 and 2012, another \$100,000 in grants awarded to neighborhoods and businesses through Waste Management and CleanScapes' Neighborhood Recycling Rewards programs
- Educated 3,000 residents and distributed 1,000 free kitchen compost containers at community events and promotions
- Distributed more than 100,000 bags of discounted compost during Compost Days and Compostival, plus 600 discounted kitchen compost containers purchased during Compost Days
- 8,000 kitchen compost containers distributed at Safeco Field in partnership with BASF and the Seattle Mariners
- Completed the solid waste education room at the South Transfer Station
- Partnered with the Burke Museum's exhibit "Plastics Unwrapped"

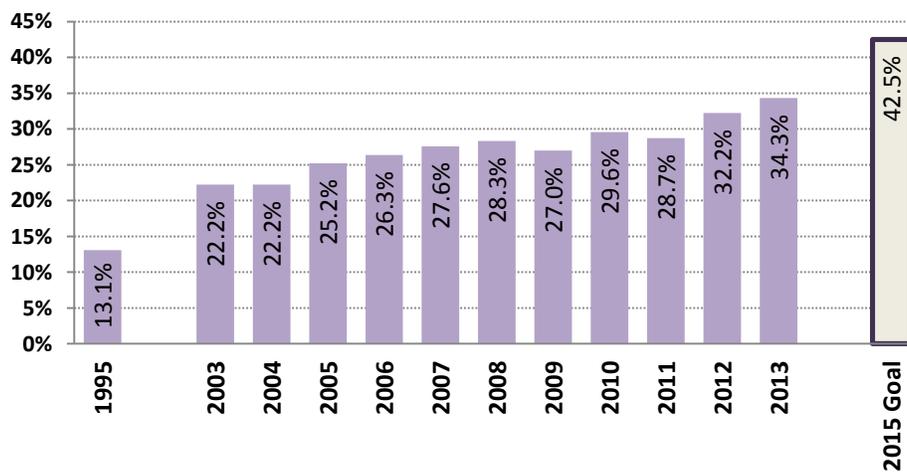
## 2.4 RESIDENTIAL: MULTI FAMILY RECYCLING PERFORMANCE

The multi family sector includes apartment and condominium buildings. These buildings contain five or more units and generally use dumpsters instead of tote carts for garbage. Material collected includes garbage, recycling, and food and yard waste.

In 2013, recycling in the multi family sector continued to build on 2012's gains by rising 2.1 percentage point to 34.3%, setting a new record high for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row.

Total generation increased 2,438 tons (3.3%), with most of those as recycling (2,388 tons, for a 9.9% rise).

**Figure 4 Recycling Rate – Multi Family**



**Table 5 Tons Multi Family 2000-2013**

Tons - Multi Family				
Year	Generated	Disposed	Recycled	Recycle Rate
2000	70,944	58,333	12,611	17.8%
2001	68,611	53,487	15,124	22.0%
2002	70,144	55,076	15,068	21.5%
2003	72,149	56,106	16,043	22.2%
2004	72,640	56,498	16,142	22.2%
2005	72,325	54,080	18,245	25.2%
2006	75,545	55,643	19,903	26.3%
2007	77,108	55,847	21,261	27.6%
2008	74,223	53,199	21,024	28.3%
2009	70,524	51,497	19,028	27.0%
2010	70,675	49,788	20,887	29.6%
2011	70,145	49,993	20,152	28.7%
2012	74,532	50,497	24,035	32.2%
2013	76,970	50,547	26,423	34.3%

The multi family sector needs an 8.2 percentage point rise to achieve its 2015 recycling rate goal. In terms of 2013 tons, 6,289 more tons would have needed to be recycled.

## Program Highlights – Multi Family

- By end of 2013 96% (or 5,003 properties) of multi family dumpster accounts signed up for organics service, and 3% exempt (usually from lack of space). Food waste service requirement expanded to all apartment buildings starting September 2011
- Delivered 4,253 free kitchen compost containers to multi family properties
- Trained 69 new Friends of Recycling and Composting (FORC) volunteers
- Conducted educational presentations to 24 properties, community groups, and SPU new employees
- Provided technical assistance to 148 properties

## 2.5 SELF HAUL

The self haul sector includes material brought (or “self hauled”) by residents, businesses and governmental agencies to the two city-owned recycling and disposal (transfer) stations. It does not include the material transferred by Seattle’s contracted collection haulers.

Recycling in the self haul sector includes organics (food and yard waste, clean wood), appliances and metals, and other recyclable material. Seattle’s self haul recycling count does not include recycling and organics self hauled by customers to other facilities.

In 2013, the self haul sector recycling rate fell 0.3 percentage points compared to 2012, continuing the trend in annual decreases since 2007. At the same time, total generation increased 3,773 tons (4.7%) compared to 2012. Disposed tons increased by 3,545 tons (5.0%), and recycling increased 228 tons (2.3%). Since 2007, total generation has dropped 36.4%.

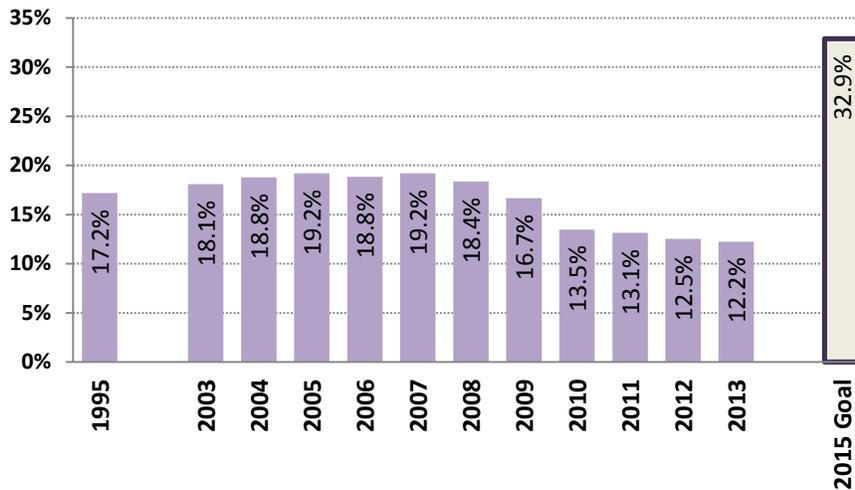
Looking deeper into the numbers offers some possible explanations for self haul recycling decreases.

- Commercial businesses and large institution (for example, Seattle Housing Authority, University of Washington) bring the bulk of material self hauled to the transfer stations. Their normal practice for recycling and compostables is to take them directly to processors. That recycling is credited to the residential or commercial sectors, not self haul, while their garbage is counted in self haul
- Since 2007, self haul yard waste (organics) has dropped by 55.8% (from 14,247 tons to 6,290 tons). This drop is likely due to three factors. First, because of the recession there may be less demand for landscape and yard care services. Second, residents and landscapers may be taking advantage of other yard waste drop-off locations in or near Seattle. Third, homeowners may be making greater use of their food and yard waste curbside collection service. In 2009 it became mandatory for all single family customers to sign up for food and yard waste collection, and in 2012 it became mandatory for multi family buildings. At the same time in 2009, single family food and yard waste collection increased from every other week to weekly service.

- Compared to 2007, recycling (not including organics) decreased by 64.0% (from 11,200 tons to 4,032 tons), whereas self haul garbage tons decreased by 30.9%. Since the bulk of drop-off recycling is metals, mostly appliances, the decrease in appliance tons may be a result of less purchasing in general, the overall drop in economic activity, delivery direct to metal processors, or some combination of these influences.

Self haul trips to the stations reversed the downward trend by increasing 2.9%, or 6,521 more trips, compared to 2012.

**Figure 5 Recycling Rate – Self Haul**



**Table 6 Tons Self Haul 2000-2013**

Year	Tons - Self Haul			Recycle Rate
	Generated	Disposed	Recycled	
2000	123,024	101,883	21,141	17.2%
2001	124,453	102,305	22,148	17.8%
2002	125,710	102,981	22,729	18.1%
2003	123,597	101,232	22,365	18.1%
2004	122,819	99,750	23,069	18.8%
2005	124,364	100,499	23,865	19.2%
2006	127,444	103,429	24,015	18.8%
2007	132,545	107,098	25,447	19.2%
2008	111,229	90,814	20,415	18.4%
2009	97,893	81,565	16,328	16.7%
2010	91,618	79,293	12,325	13.5%
2011	81,776	71,033	10,743	13.1%
2012	80,568	70,474	10,094	12.5%
2013	84,341	74,019	10,322	12.2%

The self haul sector needs a 20.7 percentage point rise in its recycling rate to achieve its 2015 recycling rate goal. In terms of 2013 tons, 17,426 more tons would have needed to be recycled.

### Program Highlights – Self Haul

SPU does not expect to see significant self haul recycling rate increases until the station rebuilds are complete. However, separate recycling drop off at the south facility won't be in place until the completion of South's Phase 2, expected in 2018. The new North Transfer Station is planned to be completed in 2016.

- Pilot project to evaluate feasibility of pulling recyclable material out of dumped waste on flat floor at new station started June 2014; will complete late 2014
- SPU decided late 2013 to proceed with feasibility study for a Material Recovery Facility on the old south transfer site. Study will complete July 2014
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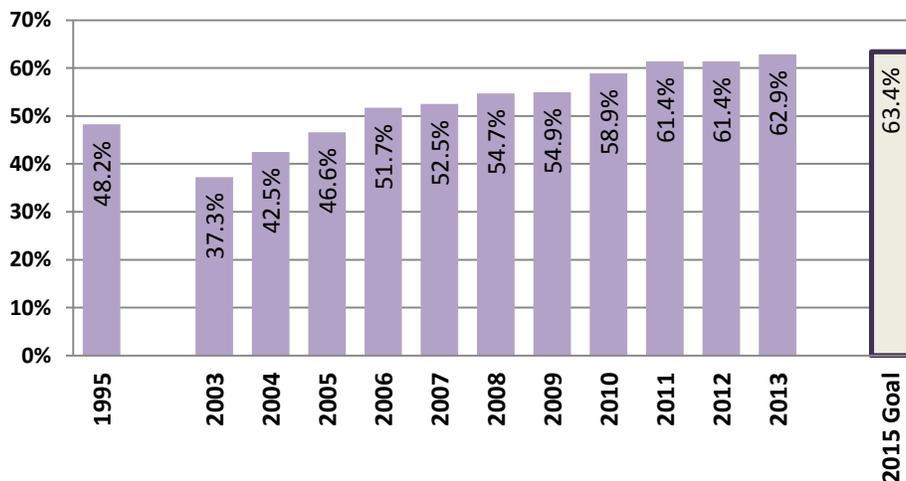
## 2.6 COMMERCIAL

The commercial sector includes garbage, recyclables and compostable materials collected from businesses.

The commercial sector's recycling rate rose to 62.9%, a gain of 1.4 1.5 percentage points. Like the multi family sector, the commercial sector set a new record high recycling rate in 2013.

Total commercial generation reversed the decrease seen in 2012, by increasing 8,807 tons in 2013. Recycling rose 10,495 tons and disposal dropped 1,688 tons. Compared to 2007, total generated tons are down by 15.0%

Figure 6 Recycling Rate – Commercial



**Table 7 Tons Commercial 2000-2013**

Tons - Commercial				
Year	Generated	Disposed	Recycled	Recycle Rate
2000	391,406	228,417	162,989	41.6%
2001	377,927	228,405	149,522	39.6%
2002	366,224	217,195	149,029	40.7%
2003	339,844	213,247	126,597	37.3%
2004	375,739	216,112	159,627	42.5%
2005	385,093	205,637	179,456	46.6%
2006	416,564	201,231	215,333	51.7%
2007	418,979	198,968	220,011	52.5%
2008	390,267	176,774	213,493	54.7%
2009	335,992	151,398	184,593	54.9%
2010	345,692	142,180	203,511	58.9%
2011	351,214	135,536	215,678	61.4%
2012	347,673	134,089	213,584	61.4%
2013	356,480	132,401	224,079	62.9%

The commercial sector needs a 0.5 percentage point rise to achieve its 2015 recycling rate goal. In terms of 2013 tons, 1,929 more tons would have needed to be recycled.

### Program Highlights – Commercial

- Conducted 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Golden Dumpster Awards green business recognition program in collaboration with CleanScapes and BOMA
- More than 228 businesses signed up for food waste collection
- Visited 413 businesses for the Get On The Map outreach and enrolled 127 businesses
- Conducted 282 business visits to support compostable food packaging implementation
- Performed 417 business visits to support plastic bag ban transition
- Conducted 153 recycling and composting program site visits to businesses
- Launched several restroom paper towel pilot composting programs

## 2.7 CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION DEBRIS (C&D)

The C&D sector is comprised of C&D materials (sometimes called “CDL”) – construction, demolition, and land clearing debris) which are not mixed with MSW. These materials are collected by a firm under contract with the city for C&D, or are self hauled to private facilities.

Smaller amounts of C&D materials mixed with MSW, and delivered to the SPU’s transfer stations, are counted as MSW and not included in the measure of C&D recycling and disposal. In general, C&D generation correlates closely with economic and building activity cycles.

The hierarchy of C&D materials that SPU tracks includes:

**Recycling.** Wastes separated for recycling or reuse.

**Beneficial Use** – not recycled or reused, but used for some other purpose like industrial boiler fuel. Counted as disposal in the recycling rate, and counted as diverted in the diversion rate.

**Alternative Daily Cover (ADC) and Industrial Waste Stabilizer (IWS)** – Counted as disposal (not beneficial use) in the recycling rate. ADC covers the active face of a landfill instead of using soil cover. IWS provides structure in specialized landfills.

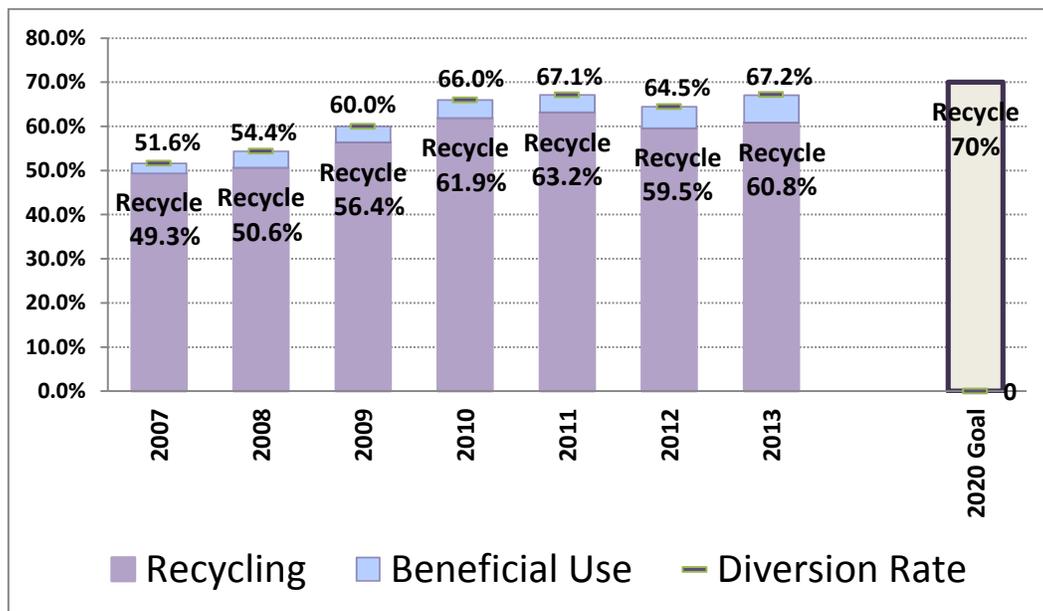
**Disposal** – material permanently placed in a landfill.

In addition to the recycling rate, for C&D we calculate the “**diversion**” rate, the sum of recycling and beneficial use.

Obtaining timely, accurate C&D recycling data continues to be a challenge. This report includes a preliminary estimate for C&D recycling. This estimate may be refined by the end of July 2014 if clarifying information is received. The new rate will be posted on the SPU construction waste pages.

In 2013, the C&D recycling rate rose 1.3 percentage points. The C&D beneficial use rate also increased, by 1.4 percentage points. These increases pushed the recycling rate to 60.8%, and the total diversion rate (including beneficial use) to 67.2%

**Figure 7 C&D Recycling and Diversion Rate**



**Table 8 Tons Construction & Demolition Debris 2007-2013**

Year	Total Generated	Disposed*	Recycled	Beneficial Use	Recycle Rate	Diversion Rate
2007	415,801	201,156	204,907	9,738	49.3%	51.6%
2008	397,052	181,241	200,851	14,961	50.6%	54.4%
2009	288,551	115,446	162,742	10,362	56.4%	60.0%
2010	288,957	97,241	178,794	11,864	61.9%	66.0%
2011	359,390	118,216	227,049	14,125	63.2%	67.1%
2012	376,328	129,383	224,060	18,519	59.9%	64.5%
2013	386,200	127,040	234,982	24,178	60.8%	67.2%

\*Includes ADC and IWS

Note: 2011 numbers are updated compared to last year's report.

## Program Highlights – C&D

- Designed new construction waste recycling website with information on disposal bans, recycling facilities and waste diversion reporting
- Created new waste diversion reporting form and database to be used by building permit holders once their projects are completed
- Conducted outreach on new C&D recycling requirements through presentations, newsletter articles and direct mailings to trade associations, property management companies, architectural firms and City engineers
- Wrote administrative rules for the Construction Materials Recycling Facility Certification program, and the process for submitting Waste Diversion Reports by building permit holders
- Wrote administrative rule modifying the implantation schedule for disposal bans on metal, cardboard, gypsum scrap (effective 2014); carpet, plastic film wrap wood and asphalt roofing shingles effective 2015

## 2.8 PUBLIC SPACE RECYCLING & PARKS OUTDOOR OPEN SPACE RECYCLING

In 2013, the Department of Parks and Recreation continued with recycling collection in open spaces in parks citywide. Collection cans are strategically sited based on lessons learned during a 2008 pilot project. Targeted materials include aluminum cans, and plastic and glass beverage containers.

State law requires recycling at large events. SPU works with event promoters to ensure that their food vendors comply with the regulation that single-use food ware and packaging are either compostable or recyclable and collected for proper processing.

The public place recycling program pairs street side litter cans with beverage container recycling cans in commercial areas throughout the city. About half of all street side litter cans are paired with a recycling can.

### 3. WASTE PREVENTION

SPU's waste prevention programs work to reduce waste volumes from households and businesses. They also seek to reduce toxics in goods purchased by people, institutions and businesses. Wherever possible, SPU seeks to quantify results, and takes credit in the MSW recycling rate.

#### Program Highlights – Waste Prevention

- More than 26,000 Seattle residents and businesses opted out of more than 357,000 pieces of junk mail using the Stop Junk Mail program
- By the end of 2013, more than 75,000 residents and businesses opted out of nearly 440,000 individual phone books deliveries, saving more than 400 tons of paper. Also, one publisher withdrew from the Seattle market, and the State of Washington law now allows non-delivery of white pages, for another 600,000 fewer deliveries and 950 tons of paper saved
- SPU continued providing grant support to 30 schools, and awarded new grants to 14 schools. Altogether the grants supported more than 16,000 students at 22 public and 22 private schools to divert more than 430 tons of food waste from the garbage
- Conducted a food waste weighing study to gain information how much of the food in Seattle's residential waste stream is avoidable, and thus could be prevented from entering the waste stream. Data collected from 119 households over a 13-week period showed that about one-third of food waste was avoidable
- The Master Composter program trained 33 new volunteers and reached 9,000 residents at community events, workshops, and schools with information on waste prevention, composting and recycling
- The Garden Hotline service answered 29,000 questions from 7,000 residents via phone, email, social media, and at workshops for underserved populations
- The retail distribution of lightweight, single-use carryout bags has nearly disappeared, from about 290,000 bags in 2007, after the ban was implemented in 2012
- The amount of food-grade expanded polystyrene (EPS, sometimes called Styrofoam®) dropped from 516 tons in 2008 to 174 tons in 2012, the last year it was measured

### 4. RECYCLING & WASTE REDUCTION ACTIVITIES FOR 2014-15

The following lists the new 2014-15 waste reduction and recycling activities that are underway or planned, to close the gap between our recycling goals and performance.

Table 9 Recycling Activities 2014-15

Work Item	Deliverable or Planned Outcome
<b>1. Self Haul recycling at stations: floor sorting pilot and implementation</b>	
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20.7 percentage points short of 2015 goal</li> <li>• Recycling rate declined last 3 yrs</li> <li>• Need new approach to add to reliance on customer sorting</li> <li>• Solid Waste Plan calls for program to sort loads with 50% or more recyclable C&amp;D waste (17,330 recycle tons at maturity)</li> </ul>
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C&amp;D sorting pilot started June 2014 at new South Transfer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tracking costs and tons</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Also testing staff assignment to find and separate recyclable materials from general self haul waste stream</li> </ul>
SPU Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow through on pilot through 2014</li> <li>• Determine in early 2015 what program elements to keep or modify</li> </ul>
<b>2. Single use food service ware all compostable</b>	
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current recyclable or compostable single use food ware requirement not achieving goal to reduce garbage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1.9%, or 2,600 tons, of commercial waste stream is non-compostable single-use food service</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since 2010, single use food service ware in Seattle required to be either recyclable or compostable</li> <li>• Customer confusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Non-compostables troublesome in organics processing</li> <li>○ Food troublesome in recycling</li> <li>○ Food and packaging still going into garbage</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Compostable packaging now widely available</li> </ul>
SPU Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require all single use food service ware be compostable, effective July 2015. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Exception: recyclable cups and cup lids</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>3. Composting requirement all sectors</b>	
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food and compostable paper largest recoverable portions of waste stream in residential and commercial sectors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Even businesses with compost service have very high amounts of compostables in garbage</li> <li>○ Sampled businesses showed garbage was 45% food and compostable paper</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommended in Seattle's Solid Waste Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Projected to shift 38,000 tons of food and compostable paper from garbage to compost at maturity</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Builds on current yard waste bans</li> </ul>
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single and multi family accounts required to sign up for compost bin (yard and food waste)</li> <li>• Commercial sector not required to have compost service</li> </ul>
SPU Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institute an organics composting requirement for all sectors</li> </ul>

Work Item	Deliverable or Planned Outcome
	<p><i>Recommendation Elements</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include food and compostable paper (as well as yard waste)</li> <li>• Thresholds for non-compliance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Same as for current disposal bans – 10% of contents of can or dumpster</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Consequences for non-compliance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ \$1 fine for single family</li> <li>○ \$50 fine for dumpster accounts (multi family, commercial), after two warnings</li> <li>○ Commercial non-compliance trigger service requirement</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Exemptions for certain conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Where beyond business' control (e.g. customers bus own tables)</li> <li>○ Lack of space</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assistance and education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Food scrap bins</li> <li>○ Media saturation</li> <li>○ Special outreach assistance fund for historically underserved businesses (translations, signage, bins)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Schedule <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Adopt ordinance 3Q 2014</li> <li>○ Start education October 2014</li> <li>○ Separation requirement effective 1/1/15</li> <li>○ Start enforcement July 2015</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 5. CONCLUSION

We congratulate all of Seattle in again setting an all-time high recycling rate, a fitting accomplishment to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of city recycling services. This is a remarkable achievement and demonstrates Seattle's commitment to environmentally responsible solid waste management.

Please see [Seattle's Solid Waste Plan](#) for more background on recycling planning. More detailed sector and historical information may be found on SPU's web site at [Solid Waste Reports--Seattle Public Utilities](#), including:

- Prior annual recycling reports
- Composition studies by sector/garbage/recycling
- Quarterly and yearly tons for garbage, recycling, organics, C&D
- Recycling market and Seattle recycling value
- Surveys

Recycling continues to be a sound investment by the city as well as a key part of our climate action strategy.

