

JUST THE FACTS – 2020

Seattle Public Utilities
\$1.35 billion annual budget - 1,433 employees
Four lines of business

DRINKING WATER

Facts and Figures

- 1.5 million people live in areas receiving water from SPU.
- 118 million gallons used per day on average.
- 51 million gallons (43%) sold per day to retail customers.
- 60 million gallons (51%) sold per day to wholesale customers.
- 7 million gallons (6%) per day of non-revenue water.
- 1,823 miles of pipeline.
- 31 billion gallons of water supply storage at 2 mountain reservoirs.
- 325 million gallons of treated water storage.
- 3 groundwater wells.

Business Structure

- We sell water in Seattle (and areas to the north and south) directly to 171,078 residential accounts as well as 27,648 commercial and fire accounts. We call this Retail water.
- We also sell water to the Cascade Water Alliance and 17 other utilities who then distribute the water to their residential, commercial, and other customers. We call this Wholesale water.

Revenue

- Total 2020 revenue: \$300.3 million
- Direct service revenue: \$207.6 million
- Wholesale revenue: \$56.8 million
- Other revenue: \$35.9 million

Water in Seattle

From: Cedar River (60% of water supplied), South Fork Tolt River (40% of water supplied), and wells.

To: To Seattle city households and businesses, and to suburban cities and water districts.

Major Capital Projects

Total Water adopted budget: approx. \$116 million.

- Watermain replacement and rehabilitation.
- Transportation-related utility projects.
- Seismic upgrades of buried pipes and above-ground facilities.
- \$682.8 million in capital projects planned (2020-2025).

Major Regulators

- Washington State Department of Health, Washington State Department of Ecology, State and Federal fish and wildlife management agencies.

History

- In 1889, the Seattle Water Department was created.
- In 1901, Seattle began supplying water from Cedar River.
- In 1964, Seattle began supplying water from South Fork Tolt River.

Interesting Facts

- SPU owns 99.8% of the Cedar River watershed above the Landsburg diversion dam and 68.8% of the watershed above the South Fork Tolt Dam; the US Forest Service owns the rest.
- No agricultural, industrial, or recreational activities are allowed in the watersheds.
- Water treatment includes screening, ozonation, corrosion control, fluoridation, and chlorination at the Tolt and the Cedar treatment plants, plus filtration at the Tolt plant and ultraviolet light at the Cedar plant.
- SPU operates a large State-certified water quality laboratory.

SOLID WASTE

Facts and Figures

- 109,891 commercial garbage tons disposed.
- 119,903 residential garbage tons disposed.
- 97,320 self-haul garbage tons disposed.
- 54.4% citywide recycling rate (2019).
- 72% single family sector recycling rate (2019).
- 171,567 single-family households.
- 6,715 residential multifamily premises.
- 201,292 residential multifamily accounts.
- 154,305 residential single-family accounts.
- 8,314 commercial garbage accounts.
- 338,537 vehicle trips at city transfer stations.

Business Structure

- We contract with two private haulers to collect residential garbage, recycling and organics (food and yard waste). Independent private haulers compete for commercial recycling and food waste collection.
- We operate two household hazardous waste facilities and two garbage, recycling, and organics transfer stations. We contract with three private processors for recycling and organics.
- We contract with a private landfill for garbage disposal.

Revenue

- Total 2020 revenue: \$224.1 million
- Direct service revenue: \$145.9 million
- Commercial revenue: \$57.7 million
- Other revenue: \$20.4 million

Solid Waste in Seattle

From: Households and businesses via transfer stations and local recycling sorting facility.

To: Regional composting facilities, local and international recycling markets, and a landfill in Arlington, Oregon.

Major Capital Projects

Total Solid Waste adopted budget: \$30.8 million.

- South Transfer Station Phase 2.
- South Park Landfill Closure.
- Midway Waste Removal.
- Heavy equipment replacement.
- \$94.5 million in capital projects planned (2020-2025).

Major Regulators

- Washington State Department of Ecology, Oregon State Department of Environmental Quality, Public Health Seattle and King County, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

History

- In 1961, the Solid Waste Fund was established.
- In 1989, Seattle began curbside residential recycling and yard waste collection was started.
- In 2005, Seattle added food waste to curbside yard waste collection.
- In 1988, Seattle banned yard waste from the garbage; in 2005, recyclables from the garbage; in 2015, food waste from the garbage in 2015.

Interesting Facts

- Residential customers receive bi-weekly recycling and weekly garbage and organics collection on the same day of the week.
- Garbage and organic waste container rates vary by container size.
- The fee for dumping garbage at City transfer stations: \$145/ton.
- Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) and Moderate Risk Waste (MRW) are managed through our Local Hazardous Waste Management Program with King County and two Seattle HHW collection/drop off sites.

WASTEWATER

Facts and Figures

- 368 miles of sanitary sewers.
- 1,052 miles of sewers that collect both stormwater and wastewater (“combined sewers”).
- 12,886 catch basins that convey stormwater into combined sewers.
- 67 Pump Stations.
- 10 miles of wastewater force mains.
- 82 combined sewer overflow (CSO) outfalls.
- 42 combined sewage detention tanks/pipes.

Business Structure

- We collect and convey sewage from 155,363 residential and 19,600 commercial properties in Seattle to King County’s wastewater treatment plant.
- We have a long-term contract with King County to treat Seattle’s wastewater.
- The City has a consent decree with the US Department of Justice (DOJ), US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) to reduce sewer overflows.

Revenue and Rates

- Wastewater Service Revenue in 2020: \$302.9 million
- Charges are based on actual water usage.
- Charges appear on SPU’s monthly and bi-monthly utility bills.

Wastewater in Seattle

From: Households and businesses.

To: Two of King County’s regional wastewater treatment plants and the Southwest Suburban Sewer District’s Salmon Creek wastewater treatment plant in Burien.

Major Capital Projects

Total Wastewater adopted budget: \$184.1 million.

- Ship Canal Water Quality Project.
- Pearl Street Sewer Overflow Improvements.
- Pump Station 22 Retrofit and Force Main Replacement.
- East Montlake Pump Station and Force Main Improvements.
- Wastewater Pipe Rehabilitation.
- \$816.8 million in Capital Projects planned (2020-2025).

Major Regulators

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- Washington State Department of Ecology.

History

- In 1955, the Sewer Utility was created.
- In 1958 voters created Metro, which took over operation of the City’s large trunk sewers. In 1994, King County assumed Metro’s responsibilities. Currently, King County has an additional 39 CSO outfalls in the City of Seattle and a Consent Decree with DOJ, EPA, and Ecology.

Interesting Facts

- Seattle is one of 34 jurisdictions using King County’s regional wastewater treatment plants.
- Most Seattle wastewater is treated at King County’s West Point Treatment Plant.

DRAINAGE

Facts and Figures

- 485 miles of storm drains, 307 storm drain outfalls.
- 20,437 catch basins that convey stormwater into storm drains.
- 39.8 miles of creeks within city limits.
- 56.4 miles of ditches, 53.3 miles of culverts.
- 10 acres of green stormwater infrastructure (1,073 rain gardens and bioretention swales).
- 233 flow control facilities, 17 detention/treatment ponds.
- 482 water quality structures.

Business Structure

- We operate, manage, maintain, and improve Seattle’s drainage system, which consists of pipes, catch basins, creeks, ponds, and natural drainage systems.
- We work to reduce pollution entering the drainage system through spill response, enforcement, and engagement.

Revenue and Rates

- Drainage Service Revenue in 2020: \$153.4 million
- Rates are based on the size of a property and the percent of the property’s surface that is impervious to drainage.
- Drainage charges appear as a Surface Water Management fee on King County property tax statements.

Drainage in Seattle

From: Stormwater runoff (rain and melted snow).

To: Creeks, lakes, the Duwamish Waterway, Puget Sound.

Major Capital Projects

Total Drainage adopted budget: \$85.9 million.

- South Park Flood Control Pump Station and Drainage Conveyance.
- 12th Avenue Sanitary Sewer Overflow & Drainage Improvements.
- Natural Drainage Systems Longfellow Creek.
- Natural Drainage Systems Thornton Creek.
- Lower Taylor Creek Culvert Replacement.
- Duwamish Waterway and Gasworks Park Sediment Remediation.
- \$634.2 million in Capital Projects planned (2020-2025).

Major Regulators

- Washington State Department of Ecology.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

History

- In 1986, Seattle City Council expanded the responsibilities of the existing Sewer Utility to include drainage, forming the Drainage and Wastewater Utility (DWU).

Interesting Facts

- 75% of Seattle’s 36 inches of annual precipitation falls between October and March.
- SPU pioneered the Natural Drainage Systems approach to sustainable drainage infrastructure.



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