

Seattle Public Utilities

Community Impact Report

Seattle Clean City | 2023





Our dedicated team is committed to **preserving** and **protecting** our **environmental** and **community health**. We work tirelessly to maintain the cleanliness and health of our environment while ensuring equitable access to public spaces for all of Seattle.



Keeping Seattle Clean and Healthy

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) Clean City Division is delighted to present our annual report, providing an overview of our work throughout 2023. This report serves as a testament to Clean City's commitment to realizing strategic objectives crafted in collaboration with our vibrant Seattle community while aligning with SPU's vision of fostering Community-Centered, One Water, Zero Waste initiatives.

Remaining driven by data and industry best practices has empowered us to be responsive to our neighbors, providing high-quality essential services to the community. Supported by consistent annual budget allocations and investments, including a **\$19M budget** in 2023, we have cultivated collaborations with our internal and external partners across the city. This collaborative spirit enables us to gain deeper insights into Seattle's prevalent challenges and develop innovative solutions to address them effectively.

Each of our programs presents an opportunity to respond to urgent community needs, and we diligently work daily to build long-term, sustainable solutions. I am proud to lead a group of dedicated public servants within the Clean City Division and look forward to what we can accomplish together in 2024 and beyond.

Thank you for your continued support as we strive to create a **cleaner, healthier**, and more sustainable **Seattle for all!**

Lee Momon
Clean City Director



A Glance at

Seattle Clean City's Impact in 2023

4.7 million or **470**
pounds of waste collected and removed
from the right-of-way



800,000

sharps (needles, syringes, lancets)
collected and properly disposed

↑ 76% increase

870,000
square feet of graffiti abated in public
and private property



42% increase in sq. ft. abated

or **16**
White Houses



23,873

hours volunteered with Seattle
Adopt a Street program,
contributing a substantial value of
\$759,161 as per the Value of
Volunteer Time report

↑ 48% increase

*percentage shown is compared to 2022 data



Clean City, who?

Seattle Clean City implements and administers programs that protect the environment, maintain access to public spaces, and promote community health and safety. With a range of services, we aim to swiftly and efficiently remove litter, graffiti, sharps, illegal dumping, and other hazards that risk the health and safety of residents and visitors. Our team's prompt and efficient resolution of these issues ensures that Seattle remains a clean, healthy, and safe environment for all.

Our programs' services meet the community's specific needs and encourage participation. For example, through our Public Place Litter and Recycling (PPLR) can program, cans are strategically placed in public spaces and serve as a convenient option for residents and visitors to dispose of waste properly. By making it convenient for people to dispose of their waste responsibly, we help to promote a cleaner and more sustainable city.

Seattle Adopt a Street, another notable program, offers volunteerism opportunities for those interested in positively affecting their community. These opportunities include cleaning public spaces, litter pick-up, and graffiti removal. By encouraging community involvement, our team helps to foster a sense of civic responsibility and pride in our community.

As a vital component of Seattle's efforts to maintain its cleanliness and safety, we are committed to managing various programs and initiatives for the well-being of the environment and the community.





Our Programs



Adopt a Street



Illegal Dumping



Graffiti Abatement & Enforcement



Litter Abatement



Public Place Litter & Recycling Cans



Sharps Collection



Unsheltered Services



Adopt a Street

Adopting Streets, why?

The Adopt a Street (AAS) program was established in the late 1980s to promote civic responsibility and community pride while enhancing the quality of life in Seattle through clean streets and beautiful neighborhoods. Since its inception, thousands of volunteers have dedicated their time to stewarding hundreds of miles of city streets in Seattle. AAS boasts over **1,400 active participants**, a testament to its enduring success and popularity.

We provide volunteers with the necessary tools and resources to keep their designated street segment free from litter and debris. By actively engaging residents in the upkeep of their streets, the AAS helps foster a sense of community and connectedness. Participants have the opportunity to meet their neighbors and work together towards the common goal of improving their neighborhood's environment. This collaboration and teamwork are key to the program's success, as it encourages a shared responsibility for the community's well-being.

The Adopt a Street program has been a resounding success, with thousands of dedicated volunteers working tirelessly to keep Seattle's streets clean and beautiful. Its enduring popularity and success are attributed to its ability to promote civic responsibility, community pride, and environmental stewardship while fostering a strong sense of community among Seattle residents.

We support our volunteers by:



hosting a map of adopted streets



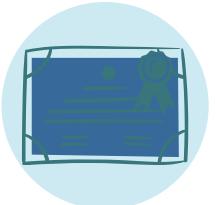
providing street cleanup supplies



collecting waste following cleanups



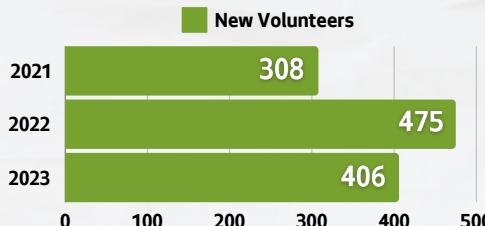
tracking volunteers' hours and cleanups



recognizing volunteers' efforts



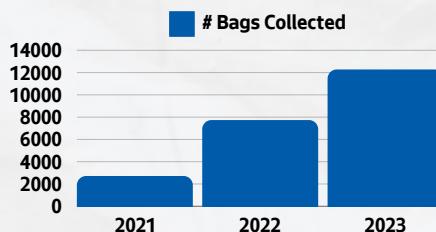
2023 Impact



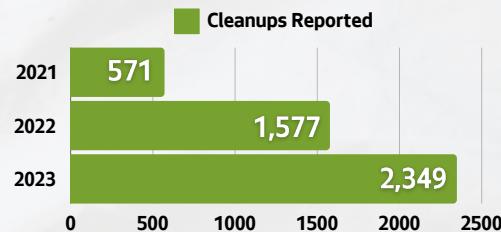
14% decrease



According to the Value of Volunteer Time Report, volunteers with the Seattle Adopt a Street program contributed an impressive \$759,161 worth of volunteer hours.



59% increase



56% increase

*percentage shown is compared to 2022 data

Outreach & Education

- continued our partnership with the Department of Neighborhoods Community Liaison Program, working with liaisons to help reach the Chinese, Spanish, Amharic, Tigrinya, Oromo, and Somali-speaking communities.
- tabled at 10 distinct community events to share information and register new volunteers. In-person outreach contributed to over 70 new sign-ups.

Launched a New Public Dashboard

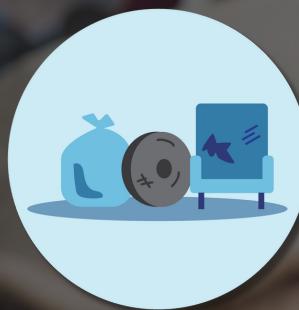
cleanup stats in real time and access to cleanups that have been reported since 2020!

One Seattle Day of Service

engaged over 3,500 volunteers in the 2nd Annual One Seattle Day of Service. Of the 159 different service projects, 135 included litter pick-up activities.



Saskia Porter / Seattle Seahawks

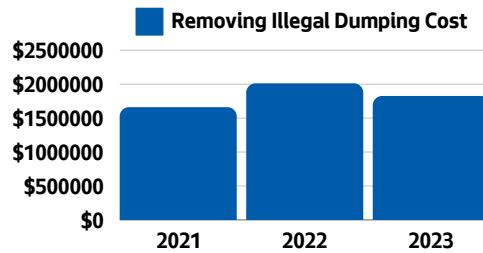


Illegal Dumping Education & Enforcement



What is its impact?

Illegal dumping poses severe health and safety risks and places a heavy financial burden on property owners and taxpayers due to cleanup costs. In 2023, the City of Seattle allocated over **\$1.8 million** to address illegal dumping. To tackle this issue, our Illegal Dumping program responds to complaints via the Find It, Fix It app and has established proactive daily routes to clean up hot spots throughout the city.



9% decrease

We take pride in educating businesses and the community about litter and illegal dumping prevention, reporting, and enforcement efforts. Most of our community is unaware of the negative impact of litter and illegal dumping on our environment and community health.

Outreach, Education, and Community Involvement

Reporting and prevention are key focus areas of our education and outreach efforts. For instance, leaving a piece of furniture on a planting strip with a "Free" sign on it can attract more illegal dumping. Not properly covering your trash and recycling containers can lead to windblown litter in your neighborhood.

We encourage the community to participate in cleanup programs like Adopt a Street. Coordinating neighborhood cleanups and reporting illegal dumping can help reduce the burden of litter and illegal dumping; promoting clean, healthy, and sustainable communities.

**percentage shown is compared to 2022 data*

Enforcement

Effective enforcement is crucial to deter illegal dumping behavior. Consistent enforcement sends the message to violators and the community that illegal dumping is unacceptable and carries environmental, health, and legal repercussions. In addition to our proactive Litter Abatement Routes, we receive illegal dumping complaints from the community and remove and dispose of the items safely. Through this inspection and investigation of complaints, the issuing of associated financial penalties to violators, and rapidly removing the waste, we are able to work with our community partners to deter illegal dumping.



2023 Impact

We removed and disposed of

728,104

pounds of illegally dumped material.

 33% decrease

100%

of verified illegal dumping complaints were responded to, and debris was removed within 10 days or less.

 1% increase

We received and processed

20,612

illegal dumping complaints. A decrease from the previous year due to our proactive and timely cleans performed by our programs, as well as efforts of the Unified Care Team (UCT) members from SDOT and Parks.

 23% decrease



Before



After

Yesler Wy & 6th Ave

*percentages shown are compared to 2022 data



2023 Highlight

Throughout 2023, we have been piloting a motion-activated camera in an industrial section of West Seattle. The pilot has thus far been effective at deterring illegal dumping in the pilot area, and we plan to activate two more camera sites in 2024.

2023 Illegal Dumping Camera Testing Outcomes:

69%

decrease in illegal dumping debris collected in the pilot area

40%

decrease in illegal dumping community complaints in the pilot area

90%

of vehicles that stopped to dump at the site drove away after the first automated verbal warning

Visit our site to learn more
seattle.gov/utilities/IllegalDumpingCameras





Graffiti Abatement & Enforcement

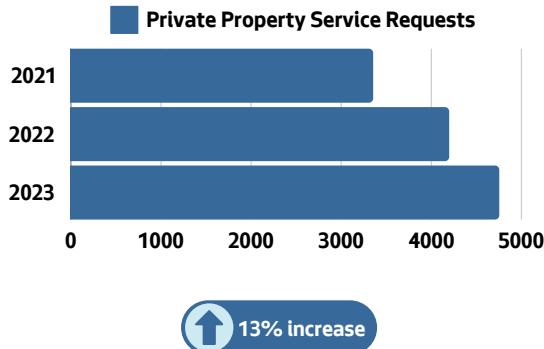
Who are the Graffiti Rangers?

Our Graffiti Rangers, who are part of Mayor Harrell's One Seattle Graffiti Plan, are in the community daily, responding to graffiti abatement requests and conducting proactive inspections to remove graffiti in the public right of way and city assets. The program is dedicated to maintaining clean, beautiful public spaces for all Seattle residents.

Our graffiti enforcement intake addresses city-wide graffiti reports on public property. The program promptly dispatches requests and complaints to the appropriate city departments and agencies within 48 hours of receiving a service request. Each department aims to clean up reported graffiti within 10 business days.

Private Property Graffiti Enforcement: We help enforce the Graffiti Nuisance Ordinance on private property, which was adopted in 1994. This ordinance requires property owners to address graffiti promptly. We encourage swift graffiti cleanup to prevent its spread throughout the community. Failure to comply may result in the property being considered a nuisance, which could initiate the enforcement process.

Additionally, we offer paint and other resources to property owners to assist in graffiti paint-out efforts, ensuring the prompt removal of graffiti and maintaining the city's cleanliness. Property owners can participate in our waiver program, allowing our SPU Graffiti Rangers or volunteers to paint out graffiti on private property.



*percentage shown is compared to 2022 data



2023 Impact

Our Graffiti Rangers removed graffiti covering

871,421

square feet of public property

42% increase



We received

21,629

reports of graffiti. A decrease from the previous year due to our proactive and timely abatement efforts.

2% decrease

Our private property abatement waiver program added

299

new properties. These waivers allowed our Graffiti Rangers to assist in painting out graffiti on 547 private properties.

482% increase

*percentages shown are compared to 2022 data



Litter Abatement

Keeping Seattle clean, how?

Our Litter Abatement Program (LAP) takes proactive measures to tackle litter and illegal dumping concerns in neighborhoods across Seattle. Through carefully planned routes, we target areas where litter, sharps, illegal dumping, and other debris accumulate in the public right-of-way. By doing so, we aim to maintain **clean** and **healthy neighborhoods** that residents can be proud of.

Our LAP services encompass a range of essential tasks:

- Cleaning up litter from streets and sidewalks.
- Addressing overflowing litter cans and collecting sharps.
- Removing bulky items and abandoned appliances from neighborhood cores and sidewalk areas.
- Providing outreach and education to retail and food service businesses and multifamily dwellings on proper food waste, recycling, composting, and garbage disposal practices.

By offering these services, LAP actively contributes to the upkeep and improvement of Seattle's neighborhoods, fostering a **cleaner** and **more sustainable environment** for **everyone**.



2023 Impact

We removed

1,893,068

pounds of debris from 1,549 blocks across the city's right-of-way

 10% increase

We operated

37

proactive routes

Since 2017, we collected

7,674,068

pounds of debris from Seattle's public areas.

*percentage shown is compared to 2022 data



Before & After



Licton Springs Neighborhood



Beacon Hill Neighborhood





Public Place Litter & Recycling Cans

Public Litter Cans, why? where?

Our Public Place Litter & Recycling (PPLR) Cans program plays a vital role in maintaining cleanliness and reducing litter on Seattle streets. By strategically placing litter and recycling receptacles within or near neighborhood business districts, the program aims to minimize litter accumulation on our streets. We have established partnerships with WM and Recology to service over **1,150 public litter and recycling cans**, with service levels ranging from 4 to 14 times a week. Nearly all public litter cans are accompanied by a recycling can in each location, promoting recycling and waste reduction efforts.

Key components of the program include inventory management, regular maintenance to ensure the functionality of the cans, routine cleaning, and timely pick-up services. Additionally, contract management ensures that appropriate service levels are consistently met. The program places high value on customer service and promptly addresses customer requests, complaints, and inquiries.

Our PPLR Cans program is essential for preserving the cleanliness of Seattle's streets and promoting sustainable waste management practices in our communities.



2023 Impact

# Active cans in Service:	1,160
# New Can Placements:	22
# of Total Collections:	156,052





2023 Improvements



Chinatown/International District



Pioneer Square



Standard graphics

Check out our new cans proudly placed in the **Chinatown/International District**! These cans feature a key-locked side opening to deter illegal dumping and vandalism, a design we carefully coordinated with Seattle Parks & Recreation (Parks). In the **Pioneer Square District**, we've installed over 60 new cans since May 2023, working closely with Parks for design and approval through the Pioneer Square Landmark Review Board. Additionally, we've introduced a newer style of cans with our default graphic, having replaced nearly 500 cans with this rectangular design. While certain neighborhoods have seen an uptick in graffiti issues, the benefits of these new cans far outweigh any drawbacks.



500 more cans awaiting replacement.



10 more cans awaiting replacement.



Our Graffiti Rangers in action!

We're addressing common issues with the **style one** can by replacing them with the newest models- about 500 more cans are left to replace! These styles have been prone to problems like missing liners and lids, increased weight due to rain, and instances of illegal dumping. We're actively working to upgrade **style two**, with 10 more of these styles set for replacement with the newer design.

Our Graffiti Rangers are hard at work abating graffiti on these public litter cans, leaving them looking brand new once finished.



Sharps Collection

How, where?

Our Sharps Collection Program is essential for maintaining the safety and health of the city by offering a secure disposal method for "sharps" such as needles, syringes, and lancets. The program ensures prompt removal of sharps from public property within 24 hours and provides accessible sharps disposal boxes throughout the city. Residents can safely and efficiently dispose of sharps, minimizing the risk of injury or illness for the public and sanitation workers.

- There are currently **23 sharps disposal boxes** located across the city.

Our team conducted a Sharps Survey to collect community feedback on the Sharps Collection Program. The findings indicate a significant increase in awareness of sharps disposal boxes compared to previous surveys. Respondents consistently expressed feeling safer due to the presence of sharps disposal boxes in their neighborhoods, with this sentiment progressively growing each year. **An overwhelming 84%** of respondents voiced their **support** for our initiatives in facilitating sharps disposal and cleanup, a figure that has steadily risen annually.





2023 Impact

We collected

802,983

sharps from disposal boxes.



76% increase

We received

1,306

requests for sharps pick ups
resulting in

6,100

sharps collected.

99%

of those service requests
received a response within a
24-hour timeframe

Additionally, we upgraded 3 sharps disposal boxes, developed new outreach materials, and participated in TV interviews to raise awareness. We conducted 14 outreach events, which **trained 251 people** in safe sharps disposal.

**percentage shown is compared to 2022 data*



Unsheltered Services

How do we help?

Our Unsheltered Services focuses on serving the unsheltered community with programs that prioritize public health and minimize the environmental impacts of RV and tent encampment living. Our RV Remediation and Encampment Trash Programs provide essential services that support the removal of garbage, debris, and spills generated by RV and tent encampments citywide. Program benefits include educating encampment residents on proper waste disposal, fostering sanitary living conditions, and promoting environmental sustainability.

We implement our programs and initiatives in partnership with the Seattle Unified Care Team (UCT), an interdepartmental team working to ensure Seattle's public spaces, sidewalks, and streets remain clean and accessible to all.

*The UCT comprises representatives from Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR), Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), Seattle Human Services Department (HSD), Seattle Police and Fire Departments, and Seattle Finance and Administrative Services (FAS).

It consists of three specific programs, which include:



Encampment
Trash Program



Geo Cleans



RV Remediation



Encampment Trash Program

Our Encampment Trash Removal Program (ETP), also known as the Purple Bag program, offers proactive weekly garbage service to 30 selected unauthorized encampments. The primary objective is to provide harm reduction services, manage garbage collection, and enhance encampment conditions while mitigating public health and safety risks associated with community trash accumulation.

We collaborate closely with the Unified Care Team (UCT), community stakeholders, and advocates to tackle encampment trash issues. As part of the program, we distribute purple garbage bags to encampment residents in partnership with contracted outreach partners. Our program activities include the distribution of designated purple garbage bags and the collection and disposal of garbage, bulky items, and hazardous materials.

Waste collection occurs on a regular weekly basis, situated at least 20 feet away from unauthorized encampments to avoid inadvertently collecting personal property. Additionally, the program involves site assessments, data collection, and outcome reporting to ensure effectiveness and accountability.

2023 Impact



We serviced **30** unauthorized encampments and collected **584,035** pounds of trash and debris. Our team engaged with over **1,900** encampment residents, distributing

9,521 purple bags.



Geo Cleans

We conduct Geo Cleans to address growing community concerns associated with public health and safety risks involving clusters of RVs. This initiative provides a swift and consistent response to mitigate ongoing trash and debris from RVs located throughout City neighborhoods. The identified sites for Geo Clean routes are addressed weekly. The main objectives include improved access to the right-of-way and minimizing public health and safety hazards associated with RV camping.

2023 Impact



We conducted **853** Geo Cleans, collecting **698,116** total pounds of trash and debris from RV sites along the right of way. As a result of increased staffing support and operational efficiencies stemming from data and GIS mapping, we increased the number of Geo Cleans by

450% from 2022 to 2023.



RV Remediation

Our RV Remediation Program addresses the environmental and community health impacts of waste and debris produced by recreational vehicles (RVs) and other vehicles occupying the public right-of-way. Launched in 2022, these efforts are implemented by SPU and performed in collaboration with Seattle's Unified Care Team (UCT).

Our objectives include improving public access to the right-of-way, protecting environmental health by preventing trash, debris, and pollutants from entering our waterways, minimizing public health and safety hazards associated with RV camping, and providing a clean space to our neighbors.

2023 Impact



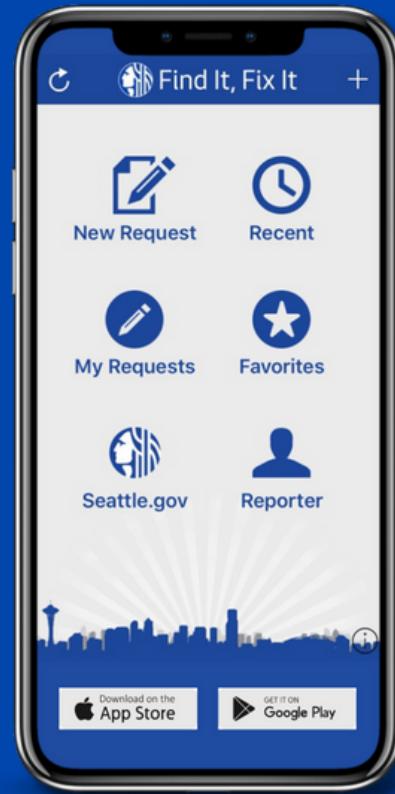
We conducted **86** RV Remediations, collecting **608,958** total pounds of trash and debris from RV sites along the right-of-way.

Seattle Public Utilities thanks the entire Clean City Division for their relentless commitment to our city and community. These individuals go above and beyond with their work while ensuring we put our community at the center of all we do. **Thank you!**

Help us keep Seattle clean and healthy!

Through Seattle's **Find It, Fix It (FIFI) app**, you can report needles, illegal dumping, graffiti, and much more. With Find It, Fix It, reporting an issue is as easy as snapping a photo with your smartphone, adding detailed information, and hitting submit. The map's "drag and drop" feature or the phone's own technology can be used to pinpoint the location. You can also report online at seattle.gov/customer-service-bureau and by phone at (206) 684-7587.

Download Find It, Fix It (FIFI)
on [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#)



Contact Us!

Call Seattle Clean City at (206) 684-7587
For language interpretation, call (206) 684-3000
For historic landmark graffiti removal, call (206) 684-0228



Seattle Clean City

Seattle.Gov/Utilities/SeattleCleanCity