



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



**Hazardous Waste  
Management Program**

GOVERNMENTS WORKING TOGETHER FOR  
A HEALTHIER AND CLEANER KING COUNTY

Dear Reader:

We are pleased to share our 2020 Annual Report. This report reflects the work of our staff and partners in fulfilling our mission: to reduce human and environmental exposures from hazardous materials. In a year of uncertainty and hardship, we remained committed to effective and equitable service of that mission.

For our Program, 2020 called for innovation and partnership. We continued our anti-racism focus, remaining proactive and responsive as an organization. In adapting to COVID-19 guidelines, we discovered new and effective strategies for delivering services that will continue post-pandemic. Collaboration with cities, towns, and tribes bolstered the Program's ability to meet the needs of ratepayers despite unprecedented circumstances.

In this report, we highlight some of the Program's accomplishments from 2020, including:

- Racial equity – continued implementation of our Racial Strategic Equity Plan to improve design, delivery, and evaluation of our services as well as how we operate as a Program. Designed and developed the Racial Equity Library to strengthen our collective learning about race, racism, and its impacts. The library is being shared with partners at the local, regional, and national level.
- Collection and disposal – safely disposed of nearly 3 million pounds of hazardous waste for residents and businesses. Provided \$432,535 in grants to our city and tribal partners for hazardous materials outreach and collection events.
- Residential services – provided technical assistance to more than 2,000 people through outreach and education, including 714 in-person and contact-free virtual visits. Held 12 workshops and events and supplied outreach and education in 19 languages.
- Business services – provided nearly 300 on-site consultations to improve management practices and use of safer products. Contributed \$380,000 in reimbursements by the Program; for every dollar we spent, businesses invested \$3.
- Research – identified new data sources to describe the communities we serve and developed new analysis and mapping strategies to ensure that the Program's work is grounded in equity and social justice. Identified safer chemicals and products to prevent harmful exposures to our most at-risk communities.
- Communication and marketing – over 185,000 people visited the Program's website and 5,190 people signed up for the newsletter. The Program launched the "Ojo con el cloro" (careful with bleach) campaign with over 4.8 million impressions, and the "Guilt Free KC" awareness campaign had 5.5 million impressions.

As our Program marks its 30th anniversary, we are updating our comprehensive Management Plan. This update will guide our services for the next ten years and build on knowledge and community insight gained over prior decades.

We acknowledge and thank all our staff, agency, and community partners for their dedication and admirable work to make our community and environment safer. With their partnership, we strive to support relevant, effective, and equitable services for our residential and business ratepayers now and in the years to come.



**Lynda Ransley**  
Program Director  
Hazardous Waste  
Management Program



**Dr. Darrell A. Rodgers**  
2020 Chair, Management Coordination Committee  
Public Health – Seattle & King County



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The Hazardous Waste Management Program's Management Coordination Committee (MCC) oversees the regional and multi-jurisdictional partnership of our Program.

## 2020 MCC MEMBERS

**Darrell Rodgers, Ph.D.**, Chair  
Public Health - Seattle & King County

**Jeff Gaisford**, Vice Chair  
King County Solid Waste Division

**Susan Fife-Ferris**  
Seattle Public Utilities

**Joan Lee**  
King County Water and Land Resources Division

**Deputy Mayor Krystal Marx**  
City of Burien  
Sound Cities Association

## OUR PROGRAM PARTNERS

The Hazardous Waste Management Program is a regional partnership for all jurisdictions in King County, which includes 38 cities, two tribes, and unincorporated areas.

King County Solid Waste Division

King County Water and Land Resources Division

Public Health - Seattle & King County

Seattle Public Utilities

Sound Cities Association

## INTRODUCTION

### THE HAZARDOUS WASTE PROBLEM

Many products we use every day – including cleaning supplies, varnish, motor oil, oil-based paints, and pesticides – contain ingredients that are toxic, corrosive, flammable, or reactive. These products are considered “hazardous” because they can threaten the environment and human health.

Though the amount of hazardous waste coming from a single house or business may be small, the total amount from 2.1 million residents and more than 60,000 small businesses in King County threatens public health and the environment. Exposure to some hazardous products presents a risk even when they are used and disposed of properly.

The Washington State Department of Ecology sets stringent regulations for hazardous waste produced by “large quantity generating” businesses. It does not regulate similar wastes that are generated by small businesses or used in the home. This is the responsibility of local jurisdictions to manage.

## OUR REGIONAL RESPONSE

Washington state directed local governments to ensure proper management of hazardous materials and waste. As a result, local governments across King County established the Hazardous Waste Management Program in 1990. Over this past year of uncertainty, we have strengthened our commitment to delivering racially equitable services through innovation and connection, improving the quality of life for all people in King County.

### OUR MISSION

Our mission is to protect and enhance public health and environmental quality in King County by reducing the threat posed by the production, use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials.

### OUR VISION

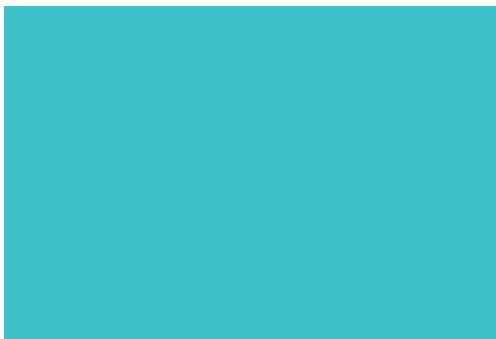
Our vision is that the Puget Sound region is the cleanest in the country – one free of hazardous chemical exposure.

## HOW WE ACHIEVE OUR MISSION



### COLLECTION

We provide convenient hazardous waste collection services for residents and businesses in King County. We operate four regular collection sites, mobile collection events, and in-home collection services for seniors and residents with disabilities.



### PREVENTION

We offer education, outreach, technical assistance, and financial incentives to reduce exposure to hazardous materials where people live and work. We use a research-based, community-centered approach to encourage the use of safer products and help residents and businesses manage their hazardous materials safely.



### POLICY

Through policy and product stewardship initiatives, we promote systematic changes in the production, use, and disposal of hazardous materials to help ensure that chemicals and products are safe for people and the environment.

# COLLECTION

## PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT FROM HAZARDOUS WASTE

Hazardous products damage our public solid waste and wastewater systems when they are put in the garbage or poured down sinks or storm drains. Ultimately, they can enter our groundwater and contaminate Puget Sound, rivers, and lakes.

**Our goal is to protect our waste systems and the environment by providing ratepayers with convenient ways to safely get rid of their hazardous waste.**

We provide our collection services through three fixed facilities, a Wastemobile collection event held every weekend in Auburn, and Wastemobile collection events in communities throughout King County. Our in-home collection services for seniors and residents with disabilities were paused in 2020 due to COVID-19. We do not charge a fee because our services are largely funded by ratepayers in King County.



In 2020, the Hazardous Waste Management Program's collection services kept

# 2,950,000 pounds

of hazardous waste out of our waste systems and the environment.



**65,880** visits by residents

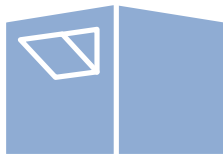


**779** visits by small businesses

## KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE IN A PANDEMIC

As the COVID-19 pandemic grew in early 2020, the Hazardous Waste Management Program reduced the capacity and hours of some collection sites and asked ratepayers to stay home unless a trip was necessary.

With safety measures in place in late summer, all collection facilities were able to return to full capacity. During this period, collection sites saw an 11% increase in residential customers compared to the same period in 2019. This increase in the second half of 2020 shows that ratepayers waited to dispose of their hazardous waste safely – a point of pride for our Program.



**167**

secure drop boxes



**60,000**  
pounds

of unwanted medicine collected and safely disposed

## SAFE DISPOSAL FOR HOUSEHOLD MEDICINE

King County's Secure Medicine Return Program is a drug industry-funded and operated stewardship program to collect and safely dispose of unwanted household medicines. Disposing of unwanted medicines at a Secure Medicine Return drop box helps protect families and communities from preventable poisonings, drug abuse, and overdose while keeping medicines out of the environment.

Since the program became operational in 2017, the number of medicine drop boxes expanded to 167 locations throughout King County. The program also provides medicine mail-back envelopes for residents who are homebound or have limited mobility.

The Hazardous Waste Management Program oversaw the program to ensure regulatory compliance and safety. The program will transition to the statewide program in November 2021. We were proud to help our ratepayers safely dispose of unwanted medicines.

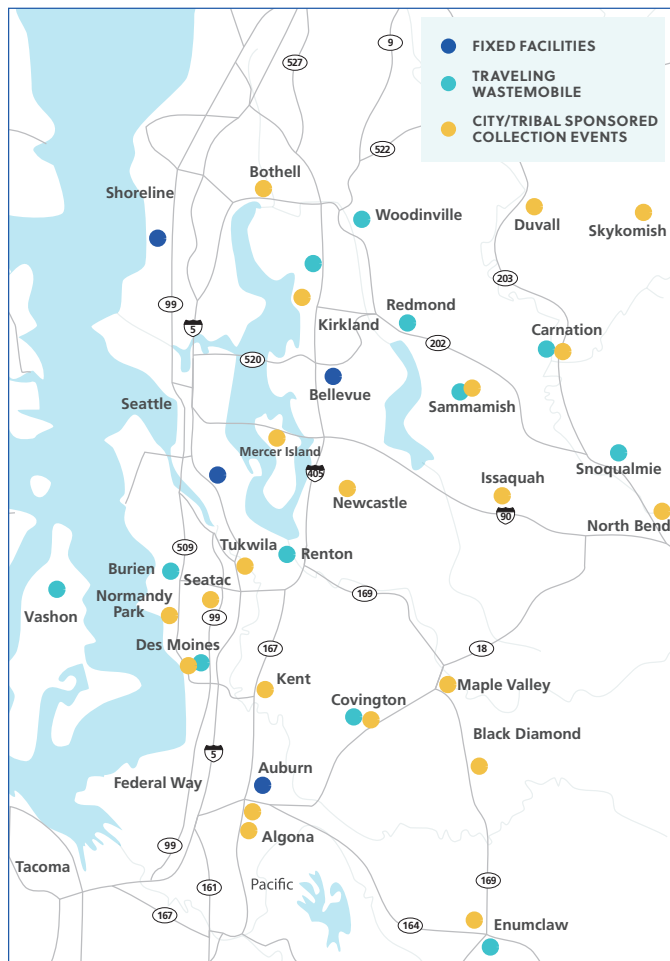
# COLLECTION

## PARTNERING WITH CITIES, TOWNS, AND TRIBES FOR SAFE AND CONVENIENT COLLECTION

The Hazardous Waste Management Program provides financial grants serving 36 cities and the Snoqualmie Tribe to help more residents safely manage their hazardous materials. Grants are combined with other funding sources to support education and collection events for limited types of household hazardous waste and recyclable solid waste.

In 2020, we continued our commitment to working alongside city, town, and tribal staff. With safety as top priority, city and tribe collection events paused in the spring. In the summer, we worked in close coordination with Public Health – Seattle & King County to adapt to COVID-19 guidance and resume safe collection.

### 2020 COLLECTION SITES



**\$432,535**

provided to city and tribal partners

**32** city-sponsored  
collection events



**24,018**

attendees at city-sponsored events

**114,500 pounds**

of hazardous waste collected  
at city-sponsored events



*Some city data is not submitted at the time annual reports are published. Customer counts and volume data includes what was received by the date of publication, plus any unreported data from the previous year.*





## INNOVATIVE TACTICS FOR OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

How do you reach people in a pandemic? The City of Bellevue had lots of ideas. With traditional outreach methods off the table for 2020, the City shifted strategies to meet people at distanced, outdoor events and offered virtual opportunities.

The Great Bellevue Scavenger Hunt included 17 missions related to household hazardous waste. At the Crossroads Farmers Market, City staff distributed informational materials on hazardous waste as people waited in line. New virtual classes reached more than 650 attendees. The City of Bellevue team also distributed 105 conservation kits in English and Spanish to families to encourage use of safer cleaning products, safe disposal, pollution prevention, and recycling.

# PREVENTION *AT HOME*

## PREVENTING EXPOSURE TO HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AT HOME

We provide equitable outreach, education, and lead investigations to help residents safely manage the hazardous materials that are present in most homes and find safer alternatives.

We use a research-based, customer-focused approach to inform our planning, investments, and services.



**3,991 calls**

to the Hazardous Waste Help Line



**2,339 people**

reached through 12 workshops and events and 714 in-home and contact-free virtual visits



**19 languages**

available for outreach and education



**1,373 customers**

served through the Garden Hotline



**2,128 people**

reached at 56 Garden Hotline events that prioritized under-served communities

## PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR RESIDENTS

The Hazardous Waste Management Program provides phone consultations, education, and outreach to help residents safely manage the hazardous materials that are present in most homes.

Our Hazardous Waste Help Line connects residents to an expert who can answer their questions about product disposal and safer alternatives. We also host educational workshops to teach community members practical information about household hazardous products.

The Hazardous Waste Management Program partners with Seattle Public Utilities to fund the Garden Hotline, which provides phone and email advice on how to use less toxic chemicals for lawn and garden care. Garden Hotline staff also present at classes and events, prioritizing service delivery to under-served populations and King County residents living outside Seattle.

## VIRTUAL EXPOSURE PREVENTION AMID COVID-19

As families did their best to stay safe from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Residential Services team had to rethink how to reach them. In-home visits – often the most effective way to educate people, particularly immigrant and refugee families – were no longer an option. With more refugee families arriving with elevated blood lead levels and increasing use of cleaners to reduce the spread of COVID-19, pausing outreach was also not an option.

In response, Residential Services partnered with Sea Mar Community Health Center, Mother Africa, and the Afghan Health Initiative to reach families virtually. To foster trust and connection, the team included local caseworkers, community health advocates, and interpreters on virtual visits. With these partnerships, the Program was able to reach families and share strategies to reduce lead exposure and health impacts from cleaning chemicals.



# PREVENTION *AT HOME*

## REDUCING EXPOSURES TO LEAD

The Elevated Blood Lead Program works with several partners, including the Washington State Department of Health, local housing agencies, and health care providers, to prevent the risk of lead exposure and reduce the effects of lead poisoning for King County families. We facilitate blood lead testing and offer in-language resources, community events, individual case management, and in-home assessments.

One such story began in the fall of 2020. A doctor called to report a child with a blood lead level of 16.5 mcg/dL (micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood), more than three times higher than CDC's reference value of 5 mcg/dL.

Program staff visited the home and found lead-based paint everywhere: interior, garage, porch, soil. The family was about to move into a second home, and the parents requested an assessment there as well. At that house, staff again found paint extremely high in lead, with a screening test showing 130,000 PPM – 26 times the EPA's lead limit for renovation, repair, and painting.

Program staff sent an action plan to the family with steps to minimize exposure: washing the child's hands often, damp dusting and mopping, vacuuming with a HEPA filter, and ensuring a diet high in calcium, iron, and vitamin C. The plan also contained information about certified repair, renovation, and painting companies, who are trained to minimize exposure from lead-based paint.

Just a few months later, the child's blood lead level had plummeted to 5.5 mcg/dL. Although no safe blood lead level in children has been identified, this drop represents significant progress and is a testament to this Program's efforts. Children's futures are at stake, and we are proud to work toward a healthier King County.

### **174** closed cases

for children with lead levels maintained below 5 mcg/dL

### **137** environmental investigations

for children under 15 with elevated blood lead levels



# PREVENTION *AT WORK*

## REDUCING EXPOSURE TO HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AT WORK

We offer education, outreach, technical assistance, and incentives to help businesses make improvements that protect workers and the environment from exposure to hazardous materials.



**287**  
businesses  
received  
reimbursements



**\$1.2 million**  
total cost of  
improvements



**\$380,031**  
reimbursements  
by the Hazardous  
Waste Management  
Program

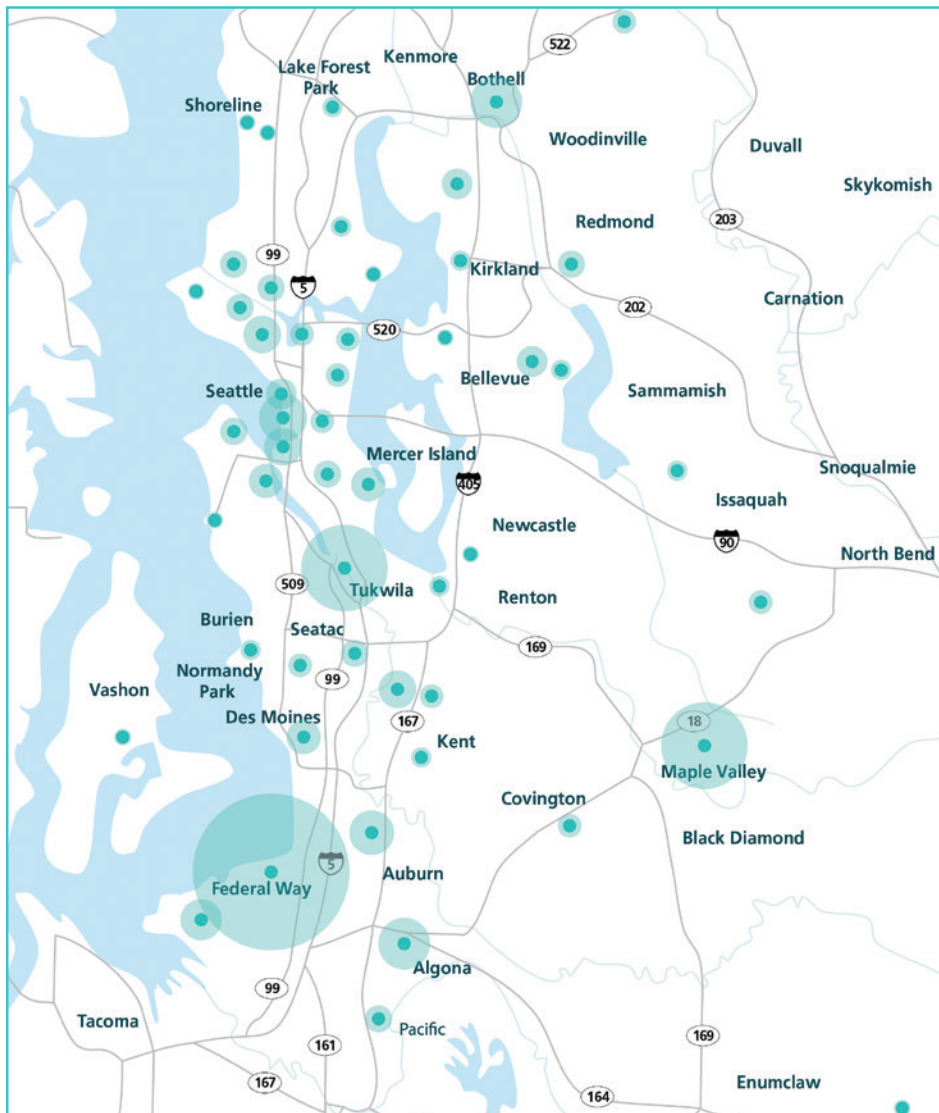


**300% return**  
For every \$1 we spent,  
small businesses  
invested \$3

## PROVIDING CUSTOMIZED ON-SITE SUPPORT

The Hazardous Waste Management Program helps businesses throughout King County manage their hazardous materials so that they do not harm workers, communities, or the environment. Our technical staff provide on-site consultations to help businesses find safer product alternatives, understand regulations, and reduce waste.

## 2020 BUSINESS VISITS



**304 consultations**  
in 27 cities in King County



**188,737 pounds**  
of hazardous materials safely  
stored or disposed

# PREVENTION *AT WORK*

## HELPING SMALL BUSINESSES WITH HAZARDOUS WASTE DURING UNCERTAIN TIMES

The pandemic strained many small businesses in 2020. To help them continue to manage their hazardous waste safely, our Business Services team acted quickly to shift to phone-only services while developing a plan for minimal-contact visits. Once permitted under COVID-19 guidelines, we resumed in-person visits that included virtual preparation beforehand, required personal protective equipment for field staff and business employees, and were limited to no more than two 20-minute visits per day.

The team also continued offering tangible aid to businesses through vouchers for hazardous waste management improvements and personal protective gear to help with environmental, health, and safety improvements.



### DRY CLEANING SHOPS

We continue to provide financial and technical assistance to help King County dry cleaners eliminate the use of perchloroethylene (PERC), a cancer-causing solvent, by 2025. In 2020, we issued ten \$20,000 vouchers to help local dry cleaning shops switch from PERC to professional wet cleaning. A total of 30 dry cleaners have adopted this safer cleaning method since 2018, resulting in hundreds of gallons of PERC being taken out of our local environment. Eleven shops mentioned they have noticed improvements to their health since they switched from PERC.

Of the 30 dry cleaning shops to switch to wet cleaning, we found that 29 self-identify as a minority-owned business. Our efforts to switch dry cleaners from PERC to safer cleaning has helped reduce chemical exposures that disproportionately impact shop owners and staff, who are often people of color.



## **COST-SHARE PROGRAMS FOR BUSINESSES TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS**

The Hazardous Waste Management Program offers reimbursements on 75% of improvement costs (up to \$599) to businesses that make changes to protect workers or the environment from hazardous product use, storage, or disposal. By making a onetime financial investment, we help create lasting change.

## **THE POWER OF A VOUCHER**

The pandemic did not stop the essential work of American Abatement and Demo (AAD). For staff there, the pandemic meant learning new safety protocols, installing more onsite sanitation facilities, and searching for everyday personal protective equipment that became expensive and hard-to-find. Meanwhile, work continued: lead, mold, and asbestos abatement and testing, general demolition, boiler removal, and vermiculite removal – all of which put employees in contact with hazardous materials and wastes.

A Hazardous Waste Management Program consultant reached out to share information about hazardous waste. She answered questions from AAD staff, shared materials in English and Spanish, and even helped staff locate where to dispose of mercury thermostats recently removed from a school.

The consultant also recommended the voucher program. AAD quickly jumped on the opportunity, using the voucher to purchase Tyvek suits – which were suddenly scarce and increasingly expensive – to keep workers safe from hazardous materials exposures on job sites. The voucher was crucial to staying in business, the owner shared. As a small, minority- and women-owned business, AAD emphasized the importance of the voucher program and shared the information with all their minority contractors.



# POLICY

## SYSTEMATIC CHANGES

The Hazardous Waste Management Program supports systematic changes in the production, use, and disposal of hazardous materials to help ensure that chemicals and products are safe for people and the environment. We build partnerships at many levels of government, with organizations, and with the broader King County community to achieve change.

## OUR STATEWIDE POLICY EFFORTS

### BATTERY STEWARDSHIP

When batteries reach the landfill, they waste valuable resources and pose threats to human health and the environment. A battery stewardship program in Washington would improve these health and environmental concerns while increasing battery recycling rates and improving safety for workers at material recycling facilities.

Battery stewardship legislation (HB 2496) was introduced by Representative Jared Mead in the 2020 legislative session. Hazardous Waste Management Program staff testified in support of the bill, and it had two hearings before the House Committee on Environment & Energy. Representative Mead worked with the Northwest Product Stewardship Council policy committee, Zero Waste Washington, and other stakeholders to develop the bill.

The legislation would have required a statewide, producer-funded stewardship program for batteries, including collection, transportation, processing, and education. Although it did not pass, the policy is in a strong position for future legislative sessions.



## “SAFER PRODUCTS IN WASHINGTON” EVENT

A new law in 2020 authorized the Washington State Department of Ecology to regulate classes of chemicals in consumer products. To help gather feedback and engage the community about the regulations, the Hazardous Waste Management Program, Public Health – Seattle & King County’s Environmental Health Services Division, and Ecology worked together to arrange the “Safer Products in WA” event.

The event saw tremendous success, with approximately 50 people and 20 different organizations in attendance – nearly all BIPOC- or women-led. The event was a useful opportunity for the Program to connect with organizations while demonstrating proactive community engagement to Ecology. Program staff were able to share information about the priority chemicals and why Ecology is regulating them. In turn, community members were able to ask questions about regulation and implementation and provide feedback on future engagement.



Photo Credit: Holly Davies



## PAINT PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP

The Hazardous Waste Management Program collaborated with PaintCare, Seattle Public Utilities, and the King County Solid Waste Division to prepare for the 2021 launch of the new Architectural Paint Stewardship Program in Washington state. The creation of a product stewardship program for paint, primers, stains, sealers, and clear coatings is a major win for public health and the environment.

These products present health and safety risks, especially to workers in the solid waste industry. They also leak into water sources when disposed of in landfills. The paint program will help minimize these risks by providing convenient and safe recycling, reuse, and disposal solutions for leftover paint. Leftover latex paint can also be recycled and made into new paint. This program requires paint manufacturers to assume responsibility for the development and implementation of a cost-effective paint stewardship program.

# LOOKING FORWARD

For 30 years, we have worked to protect human health and the environment in King County, and provide relevant, responsive, and effective services for our ratepayers. There is still much work to be done. King County continues to change and grow. Hazardous material exposure remains a significant problem for our residents and businesses. Easily available toxic products and chemicals continue to affect our communities – often inequitably. Our Management Plan Update will provide guidance for the next decade, incorporating current technical and community research and recommendations. Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to our mission, our ratepayers, and our commitment to racial equity.

## KEY PRIORITIES

### LEADING WITH RACIAL EQUITY

Race and hazardous material exposure are often correlated. To confront and dismantle this disparity, we prioritize racial equity in all our work. This means examining our services through an equity lens alongside community partners and revising – or building anew – where needed. Our internal and external work is informed by our Racial Equity Plan, which we will continue to put into practice in the months and years to come.

### 2020 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The decade ahead promises policy changes and technological innovation, and we want to be prepared for it. We are in the process of updating our state-required Management Plan, which will be completed in 2021. This research-informed update will guide the Program’s trajectory for the next ten years. In it we are prioritizing following through with racial equity commitments, advancing upstream change, and exploring collection facilities and needs.

### RATES

The Program will be developing a rate proposal for the next rate period, which starts in 2023. A proposal will be developed and shared for partner feedback in late 2021, and then taken to the King County Board of Health in early 2022.



# FINANCIALS

The Hazardous Waste Management Program received \$17,931,431 in revenue during 2020, primarily from fees on solid waste and sewer services. These fees, which apply throughout King County, are authorized by the King County Board of Health under Board of Health Code 11.04.060. Fees are collected by public and private utility providers (i.e., solid waste haulers, wastewater treatment plant operators, transfer station operators, and cities), who then pay into the Program.

<b>FUND BALANCE</b>		
2020 Beginning		<b>\$15,203,256</b>
	<b>2020 BUDGET</b>	<b>2020 ACTUAL</b>
<b>REVENUES</b>		
Wastewater Rate Revenue	\$3,800,960	\$3,844,001
Transfer Station Rate Revenue	\$3,234,374	\$2,681,239
Solid Waste Account Revenue	\$11,057,479	\$11,138,837
Interest Income	\$158,485	\$267,353
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$18,251,299</b>	<b>\$17,931,431</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		
Seattle Public Utilities	\$4,234,176	\$3,312,666
King County DNRP, Solid Waste	\$5,085,167	\$4,097,175
King County DNRP, Water & Land	\$6,875,346	\$6,342,293
Public Health – Seattle & King County	\$5,166,635	\$3,874,335
City and Tribal Contracts	\$546,146	\$408,660
City and Tribal Event Inspections	\$24,926	\$24,926
Disaster Debris Contingency	\$25,000	\$0
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$21,957,396</b>	<b>\$18,060,056</b>
<b>FUND BALANCE</b>		
Net Revenues Over (Under) Expenses		(\$128,625)
2020 End		<b>\$15,074,632</b>



## Hazardous Waste Management Program

GOVERNMENTS WORKING TOGETHER FOR  
A HEALTHIER AND CLEANER KING COUNTY

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