

APPENDIX F
THE TRANSFER STATION SITING PROCESS

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There are well-established processes for siting a new transfer station. King County's siting process represents a compilation of the best practices currently employed in siting solid waste facilities. These practices have been drawn from the experiences of private firms and public agencies that have conducted solid waste siting studies within recent years both in the Pacific Northwest and around the U.S.

The objective of the siting process is to recommend a site to decision makers that is environmentally acceptable, feasible from an engineering and operational perspective, and is acceptable to the public. There are seven steps in the process:

1. Site identification. Potential sites are identified.
2. Broad site screening. Sites are screened according to general criteria (regulatory, environmental, development, or other situational factors), and a prioritized list of sites is compiled.
3. Focused site screening. Sites are screened for site-specific criteria and then ranked. The highest ranked sites proceed to comparative site evaluation.
4. Comparative site evaluation. The highest ranked sites are examined from environmental, operational, and policy perspectives. Sites meeting these criteria are ranked again, and the top three or four sites proceed to environmental review.
5. Environmental review. Final candidate sites undergo environmental review (SEPA process) and EIS development (if required). A preferred site alternative is recommended to the County Executive.
6. County decision making. The County Executive reviews the recommendation and approves, modifies, or rejects the recommended site.
7. The Metropolitan King County Council reviews the recommendation and approves, modifies, or rejects the recommended site.

Site characteristics are rated numerically to compare alternative sites in relation to a single criterion. It is important to note that no site may meet all the criteria, in which case, each criterion's relative weight and importance must be considered. Criterion weight compares the importance of a given criterion in relation to other criteria.

Three categories or sets of criteria applied during various stages of the siting process are exclusionary, technical, and community-specific.

1. Exclusionary criteria:

Exclusionary criteria are often defined by federal, state, or local laws or regulations and might exclude areas such as:

- Wetlands and floodplains
- Endangered and protected flora and fauna habitats
- Protected sites of historical, archeological, or cultural significance
- Prime agricultural land
- Parks and preserves
- Proximity to airports

2. Technical Criteria:

Technical criteria are used to ensure that sites selected for evaluation meet required engineering, operational and transportation needs. These criteria address the following issues:

- Central location to collection routes
- Access to major transportation routes
- Site size requirements
- Sufficient space for onsite roadways, queuing, and parking
- Truck and traffic compatibility
- Ability for expansion
- Space for recycling, composting, and public education
- Buffer space
- Gently sloping topography
- Access to utilities
- Zoning designations and requirements

3. Community-Specific Criteria:

Community-specific criteria address impacts that the facility may have on the surrounding community. These criteria are typically less technical in nature and incorporate local, social, and cultural factors. Examples of these criteria include:

- Environmental justice considerations
- Impact on air quality
- Impact on the local infrastructure
- Adjacent land uses
- Proximity to schools, churches, recreation sites, and residences
- Prevailing winds
- Number of residences impacted
- Presence of natural buffers
- Impacts on existing businesses
- Expansion capability

- Buffer zones and screening measures
- Traffic compatibility
- Impact on historic or cultural features
- Impact on neighborhood character