



Northeast Recycling & Transfer Station (NERTS) Project Site Selection Process

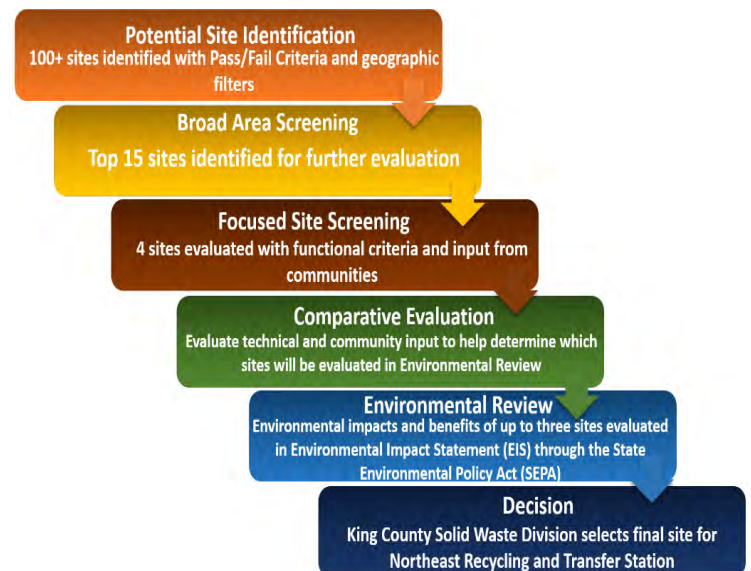
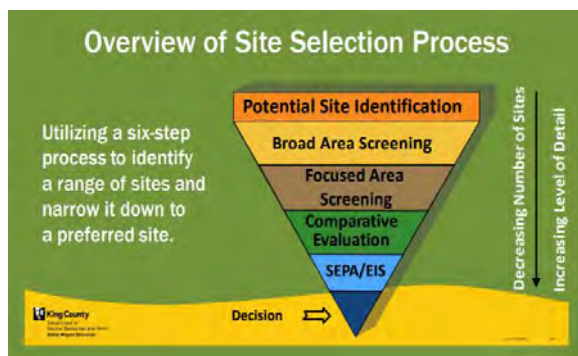
The purpose of this document is to describe the process led by the King County Solid Waste Division, in collaboration with the northeast King County community, to identify sites for a new recycling and transfer station to serve the needs of that community.

Background

The 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (Plan) proposes strategies for managing King County’s solid waste over the next six years, with consideration of the next 20 years. The Plan was approved by the King County Council, 24 of King County’s 37 partnering cities, and the Washington State Department of Ecology. The Plan recommends that the 1960s era Houghton station in Kirkland be replaced with a modern station so that equitable levels of service are available throughout the urban area including the fast-growing Northeast part of King County. In 2020, the County’s Solid Waste Division (SWD) began a robust public engagement process, including regular meetings with the northeast Core Cities of Kirkland, Redmond, Sammamish and Woodinville, forming a community-based Siting Advisory Group, online public surveys, and community briefings to engage community members in this facility siting process.

Six-step siting process to narrow list of potential sites

King County is using a six-step process to guide the site selection process. The following summarizes steps taken to narrow the list of sites from more than 100 down to 4.



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Potential Site Identification

In late 2019, the County's Solid Waste Division staff began a preliminary search for sites by broadly assessing the universe of potential sites in the study area.

- **Pass/Fail criteria** that established minimum standards that must be met for potential sites to qualify for further analysis were applied. The criteria included: site is outside the FEMA defined 100-year flood plain, free of known historical, archeological, or cultural designations, is not designated for farmland preservation, is within the contiguous Urban Growth Area and the study area depicted in the 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan.
- **Geographic Information System (GIS) filters** were then used to identify sites for further analysis. These GIS filters were not absolute criteria like the pass/fail criteria. Parcels of 8+ acres were identified using GIS criteria including size, zoning, proximity to major arterials, and property cost is within project budget. Clusters of 2+ acre parcels were also identified using the same GIS criteria. *After applying the Pass/Fail and GIS criteria, 127 possible sites remained.*

Broad Area Site Screening

Broad Area Site Screening was conducted on the 127 sites. These screening criteria were developed jointly by King County and representatives from the cities of Redmond, Kirkland, Sammamish, and Woodinville, and King County's Department of Local Services. The criteria included cost, site characteristics (size and shape), environmental constraints (large wetlands, steep slopes, etc.), nearby sensitive receptors and land uses (schools, parks, residences, hospitals), and considerations of potential impacts of business relocations. *After reviewing each site against these criteria, a total of 15 possible sites remained: five sites in Kirkland, eight sites in Redmond, and two in Woodinville.*

In summer 2020, King County and its consultant team presented the 15 possible sites to representatives of the cities of Redmond, Kirkland, Sammamish, and Woodinville, and to King County's Department of Local Services for review and evaluation. King County also engaged its siting advisory group (SAG) in reviewing the 15 candidate sites when the group was convened in October.

King County evaluated the 15 possible sites in more detail against the Broad Area Site Screening criteria. *After review, 4 possible sites were selected for Focused Site Screening.*

Focused Site Screening

Focused Site Screening was conducted on the 4 possible sites. That evaluation assessed the sites functional criteria and considered input from the Core Cities and the public. Functional criteria

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include site shape, size, and characteristics, city economic impact/zoning, few impacts to off-site sensitive receptors, equitable distribution of facilities, transportation, cost, and utilities.

Current Land Use and Zoning Compatibility for the Four Possible Sites

The four sites identified through the focused site screening process, and their zoning compatibility relative to a potential transfer station host site, are as follows:

- **An undeveloped (as of March 2021) property at 11811 Willows Rd NE (SW corner of Willows Road NE and NE 124th St.) in Redmond. 15.4 acres.** The site is currently zoned as Northwest Design District. The purpose of the Northwest Design District is to provide different types of housing mixed with neighborhood-scaled businesses and services for people who live and work in the Willows employment corridor. Regional Utilities are an allowed use on the site (with a Conditional Use Permit) but solid waste transfer stations are not identified in the Redmond Zoning Code as a typical regional utility.
- **The Winsome Trading property at 16111 Woodinville-Redmond Rd in Woodinville. 13.6 acres.** The current zoning is Industrial (Valley Industrial Zone) with Tourist District overlay. Transfer Stations are not allowed in the Valley Industrial Zone; only in North Industrial Zone (with Special Use Permit). The site could be potentially permitted through a Special Use/Essential Public Facilities process.
- **The current Houghton Transfer Station property at 11724 NE 60th St. in Kirkland. 25.4 acres.** The city's Comprehensive Plan Land Use designation is Park/Open Space with current city zoning as Park/Open Space. A recycling and transfer station use would be classified as a "Government Facility" and subject to land use review.
- **The Houghton Park-and-Ride property at 7024 116th in Kirkland. 5.1 acres.*** The parcel is currently zoned as Low Density Residential but allows Public Utility Use providing certain conditions are met in the city's zoning code and comprehensive plans. These include:
 - The facility will not be materially detrimental to the character of the neighborhood in which it is located.
 - The site and building design minimizes adverse impacts on surrounding residential neighborhoods.
 - The property is served by a collector or arterial street (does not apply to existing school sites).

*The Houghton Park-and-Ride property is smaller than the other three properties and smaller than the 8+ acre and clusters of 2+ acre parcels GIS criteria used to identify sites. However, the project team determined it warranted further consideration given it is minimally developed, and, based on information provided by Metro, it is underutilized in its current designated use.

Sites smaller than 8 acres were not included in the overall evaluation for three reasons:

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- Building a fully functioning modern transfer station with full services on a smaller site is extremely expensive compared to on a larger site.
- A smaller site makes it difficult to deliver all desired services and functionality.
- A smaller site does not provide the same flexibility for modifying processing and services. As recycling and material recovery advance, different configurations of flow and processing may be required; without room to reconfigure, station operations will be less adaptable.
- Safety for users and operations staff is more challenging in smaller space. More room means functions can be separated, with lower risk of accidents.

Comparative Evaluation

Technical input from the project team and community input from the Core Cities, siting advisory group, and community surveys will help inform King County's selection of sites to be evaluated in the environmental review process.

Next Steps

The King County Solid Waste Division will identify up to three sites for study in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to be conducted per State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requirements. The EIS process will begin in mid-2021 and will include several opportunities for the public engagement and comment. The King County Solid Waste Division is expected to select a location for the Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station in early 2023.