

Memorandum

DATE: June 27, 2025

TO: Bristol S. Ellington, City Manager

FROM: Sarah Bruemmer, Environmental Sustainability Coordinator

RE: Solid Waste Collection Contract 2-Year Extension

CC: John Norris, Assistant City Manager
Mary Reidy, Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Director
Bethany Wolbrecht-Dunn, Community Services Manager
Paige Scheid, Environmental Sustainability Program Manager

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City's solid waste collection contract with Recology King County (Recology) has an initial 10-year term and is set to expire on May 31, 2027. The City may extend the contract up to one additional two-year extension. Any extension granted shall be under the original terms and conditions of the contract - along with any amendments that exist at the time of the extension.

Staff suggest extending the current Recology contract through May 2029 to:

- Keep current solid waste rates low
- Preserve staff time for current programs and projects
- Maintain excellent customer service
- Continue robust education and outreach programs to decrease contamination and increase recycling and composting

To extend the contract, the City must provide written notice to Recology 180 days before the current contract expires (December 2, 2026). However, staff recommend sending the official notification by Q1 2026.

If the City chooses to go out to bid for a new contract, doing so would:

- Likely raise solid waste rates
- Require significant staff time for RFP development and selection (12-18 months) and likely eliminate or pause some programs and projects in the current 2025-2026 biennium. RFP development would need to begin as soon as Q3 2025.

BACKGROUND

The City's solid waste collection contract with Recology King County (Recology) has an initial 10-year term and is set to expire on May 31, 2027. This memo asks the City Manager to consider if staff should provide written notice to Recology to extend the contract for two years through May 31, 2029. The contract extension has the potential to positively impact community members, businesses, and visitors by continuing garbage, recycling, and compost service through Recology.

In 2015, the City conducted a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process to select a solid waste collection contractor. On May 2, 2016, [City Council authorized](#) the City Manager to enter into a 10-year contract with Recology from 2017 to 2027. The initial term of the contract expires May 31, 2027.

Highlights of the current contract include:

- A dedicated customer service center that answers phone calls and emails
- A dedicated education and outreach team (Waste Zero team) that provides technical assistance, presentations, school programs, and materials to customers and community groups
- Specialized services for businesses to identify waste diversion opportunities and provide free educational resources such as signs, stickers, and staff training
- Routine audits of commercial and multifamily recycling and composting containers to address contamination issues
- Unlimited recycling service included in the cost of garbage service for all customer sectors; compost service included in the cost of garbage service for single-family accounts
- An extensive list of accepted recyclables through regular curbside service, as well as call-in and drop-off options for specialty items like fluorescent bulbs, batteries, and Styrofoam

The City may, at its sole option, extend the initial term up to one additional two-year extension. The extension shall be granted under the original terms and conditions of the contract—along with any amendments that exist at the time of the extension. Written notice is required by the City to Recology at least 180 days prior to contract expiration. (1. Term of Contract, p. 5)

Recology has provided high-quality service at a competitive rate for the past eight years. Residents have been satisfied with the service provided under this contract and, since 2018, have consistently ranked the quality of Recology's solid waste collection service the highest of all City maintenance services in the biennial citizen satisfaction survey conducted by the City. While residents experienced missed collection issues following Recology's cybersecurity incident in November 2023, staff administered corrective action and worked with Recology to resolve customer service issues and bring service back to a satisfactory level. By extending the contract, the City will continue to receive

current rates and service levels for an additional two years. With the recent changes in the recycling market and increased operational costs throughout the region, the City is unlikely to receive bids at the same or lower price than current rates.

CITY	2025 MONTHLY RATE FOR RESIDENTIAL 96-GALLON GARBAGE, 1 PICKUP/WEEK MONTH	2025 MONTHLY RATE FOR WEEKLY COMMERCIAL 4-YARD GARBAGE, 1 PICKUP/WEEK MONTH	HAULER
Maple Valley	\$38.01	\$395.07	Recology
Tukwila	\$41.51	\$440.56	Recology
Seatac	\$47.17*	\$331.01	Recology
Bellevue	\$48.83*	\$397.58*	Republic Services
Burien	\$56.63*	\$378.20	Recology
Federal Way	\$59.18	\$455.84	Waste Management
Des Moines	\$60.73	\$554.65	Recology
Shoreline	\$64.20*	\$456.46	Recology
Bothell	\$67.30*	\$460.18	Recology
Mercer Island	\$73.99*	\$540.43	Recology
Renton	\$78.20*^	\$444.22	Republic Services
Issaquah	\$80.80*	\$719.42*	Recology
Kent	\$84.88*	\$327.44	Republic Services
North Bend	\$99.34*	\$655.94	Recology
Seattle	\$135.05	\$729.61	Recology
Kirkland	\$136.28*	\$380.24*	Waste Management
AVERAGE	\$73.26	\$479.18	

*Includes compost service | ^Every other week garbage service

Additionally, Recology has met or exceeded most performance metrics during their initial contract term and has proven to be a valuable partner in the City's waste diversion and education programs, which are key elements of Shoreline's Climate Action Plan. Since 2019, the City's and Recology's collaborative efforts have resulted in an increase in compost accounts and tonnage diverted within the multifamily and commercial sectors.

SECTOR / COMMODITY	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
MULTIFAMILY						
Recycling Tonnage	958	918	895	824	730	836
Recycling Accounts	184	181	184	186	187	187
Compost Tonnage	53	57	50	54	68	76
Compost Accounts	55	55	61	64	80	92
COMMERCIAL						
Recycling Tonnage	2,438	2,233	2,151	1,959	1,744	1,855
Recycling Accounts	497	489	485	479	472	476
Compost Tonnage	328	541	596	462	652	676
Compost Accounts	106	112	122	133	135	142

Their Waste Zero team also regularly audits commercial and multifamily customers to reduce contamination. These audits have resulted in an 8% steady decrease in recycling contamination since 2020, and helped reach the City's goal to maintain a contamination level of no greater than 5% by volume for recyclables sent to Recology's sorting facility. A two-year extension would ensure these diversion and contamination reduction programs continue.

**YEAR RECYCLING
CONTAMINATION
(GOAL = ≤5%)**

2020	13%
2021	8%
2022	8%
2023	6%
2024	5%

Given the complexity of solid waste collection contracts—a long-term, 10-year commitment that impacts all individuals and businesses and is often a jurisdiction's largest single contract—the RFP process is incredibly time- and resource-consuming; in the current environment, the selection process can take 12-18 months. If the City does not extend the current contract, staff will need to initiate a new solid waste hauler selection process at the start of 2026, and current projects would likely need to be eliminated or paused to provide sufficient staff time.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends notifying Recology of an additional two-year contract extension. While the contract requires sending written notice to Recology by

December 2, 2026, staff recommend sending the official notification by Q1 2026. Staff would develop the written notice to be signed by the City Manager and then send it to Recology by the recommended timeline.