

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the Plan's purpose and planning authority, overall goals, format, history, relationship to other plans, and the planning process. Additional goals, policies, and recommendations specific to various components of the three waste management systems in the county are found in other chapters.

### 1.1 Purpose and Authority of the Plan

**Purpose:** This Solid Waste Management Plan is intended to be the planning tool for the management of solid waste activities in Pierce County for the next twenty (20) years. The Plan's goals, policies, and recommendations provide elected officials with guidelines for the development of programs, capital facilities, and annual budgets. The Plan provides a legal basis for Tacoma, Pierce County, the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, other jurisdictions, and government agencies to make permitting decisions on solid waste or recycling facilities. Private industry can use this Plan to coordinate with municipalities in the planning and delivery of collection, disposal, and recycling services.

This 1998 document updates and replaces the 1992 amended Plan. (Except for the waste reduction and recycling chapters, the 1992 Plan contained the same information as originally adopted in 1989.) This is not an entirely new plan because it builds upon the established solid waste management system developed from the goals and policies first adopted in 1989 and, since then, the actions

directed by the Pierce County Council, Tacoma, and Fort Lewis/McChord Air Force Base to implement the Plan and the State's goals. The emphasis of this document is on what is called "an integrated management system" which addresses all issues relating to the collection, processing, and disposal of solid waste, including waste reduction and recycling. It also emphasizes the public-private partnership developed in Pierce County for the delivery of services to residents and businesses.

**Plan participants:** The plan addresses solid waste management in all unincorporated and incorporated areas of Pierce County. The cities and towns have chosen to be in this plan and to continue the coordinated management system developed through interlocal agreements with the County. The Plan also incorporates by reference the solid waste management plan for Fort Lewis, which serves as the planning tool for disposal for the Fort and for McChord Air Force Base. It summarizes Tacoma's waste reduction and recycling programs.

**Three systems - Pierce County waste stream:** There are three separate collection and disposal systems in Pierce County. The areas served by each management system are illustrated on Map 1.1.

The unincorporated areas of the County and 19 cities and towns use Pierce County's disposal system. The Pierce County Department of Public Works and Utilities, Solid Waste Division, is the County government agency charged with planning for the unincorporated areas and those cities using the County's disposal system. Participating cities and towns in this disposal system are:

- Bonney Lake • Buckley • Carbonado
- DuPont • Eatonville • Edgewood
- Fife • Fircrest • Gig Harbor • Lakewood

- Milton • Orting • Puyallup • Roy
- Sumner • South Prairie • Steilacoom
- University Place • Wilkeson

*Tacoma/Ruston waste stream:* Tacoma has elected to prepare a joint plan with Pierce County and has its own collection utility and disposal system. The Town of Ruston operates its own collection utility but has an interlocal agreement with Tacoma for disposal and an interlocal agreement with the County to adopt and implement the Plan. The Tacoma Solid Waste Utility administers solid waste management services under the direction of the Tacoma City Council. Ruston’s collection system is directed by the Ruston Town Council.

*Fort Lewis/McChord Air Force Base waste stream:* Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base jointly use the Fort Lewis disposal system with separate but coordinated collection systems for solid waste and recycling. Fort Lewis has adopted the *Solid Waste Management Plan for the Fort Lewis Military Reservation*. This document describes the military system in more detail. This Plan summarizes the information about the military system in appropriate chapters.

(More detailed descriptions about the management components of each of the three systems are found in other plan chapters.)

**Legal requirements:** Responsibility for managing the Pierce County solid waste system is shared by individual residents and businesses, service providers, city and town governments, Pierce County government, Washington State government, and the Federal Government. In Washington, local governments have lead responsibility for solid waste management. However, they must manage and handle waste according to comprehensive state regulations which

include specific mandates for management handling, and disposal systems. Federal regulations provide “umbrella” authority for waste regulations which are ultimately implemented by local governments. The State is delegated the authority to implement the Federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). Subtitle F states that all federal, state, and interstate local requirements are applicable to federal facilities that have any jurisdiction over a solid waste management facility or disposal site or that engage in any activity that results in the disposal of solid or hazardous waste. This is important because it means Fort Lewis and McChord AFB must meet State facility requirements. Their activities are summarized in this plan.

*Washington Department of Ecology:* The State’s Solid Waste Management --- Reduction and Recycling Act, RCW 70.95, designates the Washington Department of Ecology (DOE or “Ecology”) as the State department responsible for overseeing solid waste regulations. The administrative codes which implement the law’s requirements are WAC 173-304 Minimum Functional Standards, WAC 173-351 Criteria for Municipal Solid Waste Landfills, and WAC 173-306 Special Incinerator Ash Management Standards. The State has obtained “approved status” from the Federal government to administer these regulations. These codes provide standards and criteria for the location, design, operation, and maintenance of solid waste facilities. The WACs require a solid waste facility to have a solid waste permit. The permit processes are administered by the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department with final review by Ecology.

State law requires counties, in coordination with their cities, to adopt comprehensive solid waste plans for the management,

*Insert Map 1.1*

handling, and disposal of solid waste for twenty (20) years and to update them every five years, if necessary. Cities may choose to be joint participants in the plan, delegate planning to the County, or choose to do their own plan. The cities and towns of Pierce County have signed an Interlocal Agreement with the County, which spells out the responsibilities of each jurisdiction. The County has responsibility for overall planning, disposal, and waste reduction and recycling education. Cities are responsible for refuse collection and the development of any recycling program specific to their jurisdiction. Tacoma has elected to be a joint plan participant --- planning, managing, and financing its own programs, which are summarized in this document.

Cities and towns may also reach interlocal agreements with other local jurisdictions to provide or contract for municipal services. Interlocal agreements have been implemented for these services in the past and will continue to be used in the future.

State regulations (RCW 70.95.090 and the DOE Guidelines for Local Solid Waste Management Plans) detail: what is required within comprehensive plans; priorities; criteria for an integrated handling system; programs that must be implemented; the criteria for siting, design, and operation of solid waste facilities; and the process for review and adoption of plans. State priorities for waste management are:

1. Waste reduction
2. Recycling, with source separation of recyclable materials as the preferred method;
3. Energy recovery, incineration, or landfilling of separated wastes; and
4. Energy recovery, incineration, or landfilling of mixed wastes.

Counties and cities must implement a number of waste reduction and recycling

(WRR) programs, which include: residential recycling collection for urban and rural areas and for single-family and multi-family residents; yardwaste collection; public information and educational programs on waste reduction and recycling; programs to monitor collection of recyclables from businesses and industries; procurement plans; and “in-house” recycling collection programs. Counties must also adopt urban/rural boundaries for recycling collection programs and implement special waste collection programs, if necessary.

In their solid waste management plans, counties must also maintain an inventory of all existing solid waste handling facilities; identify potential disposal and recycling facility needs; and assess disposal capacity needs based on twenty (20) years of population growth for all participating jurisdictions. Counties must also review potential areas that meet siting criteria for disposal facilities.

Also, counties must plan for financing capital and operation costs; have a six-year capital improvement program; and an assessment of the plan’s impact on the costs of solid waste collection prepared in conformance with guidelines from the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC). A discussion about a program for surveillance and control should be included within the plan. (These requirements are delineated in RCW 70.95.090.)

*Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC):* The WUTC grants certificates (franchises) authorizing solid waste collection in designated franchise districts for unincorporated areas. Solid waste collection certificates authorize the collection of garbage and refuse from all residential and non-residential generators and recyclable materials from residential

sources by private firms. Service in the unincorporated areas is provided to residents or businesses, upon request. Rates requested by collection companies must reflect the State's solid waste management priorities. The County does not control collection rates but does work with the WUTC to implement solid waste programs and minimum service levels for recycling. The WUTC does not govern the collection rates of city utilities or city contracts with private haulers. (Chapter 5 provides a more detailed discussion.)

### ***Tacoma-Pierce County Health***

***Department:*** The role of the Health Department, a separate agency from the County, is to implement programs to ensure solid waste handling complies with state and local solid waste codes and ordinances. This includes the permitting process and enforcement of the solid waste permit regulations in WAC 173-304 and WAC 173-351; monitoring; and coordination with the County and the cities on all aspects of special collections and public information programs. (A more detailed discussion about the Health Department's role is found within Chapter 10.)

***SWAC role:*** The State requires that counties establish a Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) "to assist in the development of programs and policies concerning solid waste handling and disposal..." By law, the SWAC is established to report to the Pierce County Council. The SWAC members must be representatives from "public interest groups, citizens, business, waste management industry, and local elected officials" (RCW 70.95). The Pierce County SWAC meets on a regular basis to review solid waste management programs sent to them by the Council. SWAC meetings provide regular opportunities for public comment. Some cities in the county and Fort Lewis have established their own SWACs to look at

issues particular to their jurisdiction and issues which they might want to bring to the attention of the County SWAC.

## **1.2 Plan Format**

***Approach---*** *how to interpret this document:* Goals, policies, and recommendations take precedence over the written text. The text is only intended to be descriptive of the three solid waste management systems as they exist when this document is written. It is also intended to provide sufficient information, although in summary form, about future needs and alternatives which the public and decision-makers may wish to consider to adopt and implement the goals and policies.

As is the case with County's integrated waste management system, no one paragraph or chapter of this plan can be understood outside the context of the whole.

Federal and State regulations may change during the time this plan is in effect. For future interpretation, it is intended that descriptive text referencing a WAC be superseded by the new WAC when it is adopted by the appropriate agency. A question of priority should only arise when a specific goal or policy recommendation appears to directly conflict with the new, state-adopted regulations. The following terms have specific meanings in this Plan:

***Goal:*** A broad statement of what ought to exist or what is desired to be achieved in the future.

***Policy:*** A statement, more specific than a goal, which describes a particular course of action to accomplish the purposes of the plan.

***Policy recommendation:*** A new policy recommended by the SWAC to the County Council to be adopted by the Council.

**Implementation actions:** These are the detailed actions to implement the plan. They are in the form of specific programs adopted by ordinance, or are studies completed at the direction of plan policies. The ordinances are more detailed than the plan policies and may be amended outside the plan amendment process.

**Relationship to other plans:** The Plan must also be viewed in context of the overall planning process within all jurisdictions in Pierce County. As such it must function in conjunction with various other plans, policy documents, and studies. Included among these are the comprehensive land use plans of each jurisdiction, the *Tacoma-Pierce County Hazardous Waste Management Plan*, the development codes (zoning), Shoreline Management Regulations, and groundwater plans. Of specific importance are the groundwater or watershed management plans adopted by the County and other jurisdictions which contain specific recommendations for coordinated educational efforts about solid waste, groundwater pollution, and utility support systems.

The solid waste plan's goals and policies must be in compliance with and coordinated with the goals and policies of the *Pierce County Comprehensive Land Use Plan* and coordinated with the goals and policies of other jurisdictions. Pierce County's land use plan summarizes the solid waste plan in its utilities element and includes the County's six-year capital facilities plan, which is updated annually. The land use plans of other cities and towns either summarize the solid waste plan or reference it.

(Appropriate goals and policies from land use plans are included in the Appendix.)

**Chapter organization:** This Plan updates the 1989 / 1992 Plan documents and uses the same basic format and content as the earlier documents. The following explains any differences between the documents:

- Chapter 1: This chapter has been rewritten but it remains an introductory chapter summarizing legislative requirements, goals, plan participants, role of the SWAC, solid waste planning history, and the planning process established in Pierce County.
- Chapter 2: This chapter continues to describe the required background including environment, land use, and landfill siting considerations. As required by RCW 70.95.165, it has been updated to review potential areas that meet siting criteria for disposal facilities, by summarizing and incorporating *Pierce County's Phase I Landfill Siting Study*. This Phase I Study was based on the requirements of WAC 173-351 Criteria for Municipal Solid Waste Landfills.
- Chapter 3: The waste analysis section, which was in chapter 2, has been given its own chapter and substantially expanded. The chapter now presents new disposal projections based on twenty year population projections, describes the effects of waste reduction and recycling programs since 1990, and summarizes the results of the 1995 Waste Characterization Audit.
- Chapter 4: Waste reduction, formerly in chapter 3, has been combined with recycling in this chapter to recognize the inter-dependent nature of waste reduction and recycling activities. For the most part, this chapter is an updated version of the information provided in the 1992 Plan with the addition of a summary of Tacoma's programs and those of Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base.

- Chapter 5: Information on solid waste collection systems has been updated. The chapter remains much the same, with a description of the three waste management systems.
- Chapter 6: As in the previous document, this chapter describes processing technologies and facilities related to waste-to-energy and recycling. It is substantially updated with information about composting, includes an inventory of facilities, both public and private, and summarizes all the studies completed by the County since 1990.
- Chapter 7: Transfer facilities and systems are still the focus of this chapter but it has been rewritten to focus on long-term in-county transfer facility needs. The disposal discussion about long-haul (or “waste export”) which was in this chapter has been moved to chapter 8 and combined with the discussion of landfilling disposal options.
- Chapter 8: This chapter has been completely rewritten. It reviews the status of existing landfills and the in-county and out-of-county landfilling alternatives. It also summarizes the results of the County’s *Phase II Landfill Siting Study*.
- Chapter 9: In the 1989/92 documents, the discussion about special waste streams was in chapter 11. The discussion has been updated and moved to this chapter. The focus has shifted to acknowledge the substantial number of private businesses and other related planning studies or regulations, which provide collection and treatment systems for those special wastes which don’t, generally, enter the municipal solid waste stream management system.
- Chapter 10: Information about enforcement issues, permitting, administration, and financing has been updated. This information was originally in

chapter 9 but has been bumped to chapter 10. An expanded discussion about illegal dumping has been added.

- Chapter 11: This chapter serves the same purposes as its original (chapter 10) to provide a coordinated, overall view of the management system and to focus on new goals and policies. It has been completely rewritten.

Each chapter follows a general format that includes an introduction; a summary review of definitions, past actions, and goals; the status of existing programs; identified needs and alternatives; criteria to evaluate the alternatives; and recommendations. In some chapters a section about issues that might arise has also been added.

### 1.3 Goals and Policies

The following are the main, overall goals for solid waste management in Pierce County. They follow in no particular priority. Additional, secondary goals and policies about specific components of the three waste management systems can be found in other chapters. These support and complement the main goals.

**Goal:** In recognition of the priorities set forth by the Washington State Legislature in RCW 70.95.010, it shall be the goal of Pierce County Solid Waste Management Plan to implement, to the fullest extent possible and in descending order of priority, solid waste management processes that reduce the waste stream, promote recycling, and provide for the separation of waste prior to incineration or landfilling.

**Goal:** To develop a solid waste program that promotes and maintains the highest practical level of public health and safety; and which protects the natural and human environment of Pierce County.

**Goal:** To promote input, ensure the representation of the public in the planning process, and address the concerns of all county citizens.

**Goal** To promote the conservation of energy.

**Goal:** To develop economically responsible means of solid waste management that recognizes the cost and need for environmental protection and service to the citizens of the County.

**Goal:** To promote the use of private industry expertise to carry out the components of the Solid Waste Management Plan. This does not mandate the use of private industry, nor does it preclude the involvement of Pierce County in implementing the Plan. The participants in this plan should competitively bid solid waste services when practical.

**Goal:** To coordinate and strive to be consistent with applicable resource management plans.

## 1.4 Solid Waste Planning History

The development of a solid waste management plan often takes a long time. In the case of Pierce County, it took seven years to complete the 1989 plan, another two years to complete waste reduction and recycling (WRR) amendments and another year to get final approval from the Washington Department of Ecology in 1993.

**1983-1989 period:** The Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department and the Solid Waste Advisory Committee began writing the plan in 1983. A first draft was published in 1987. It was intended to replace an older 1973 document, the *Multi-Jurisdictional Solid Management Planning Study*, which was never fully implemented.

During the public comment period on the 1987 draft, the County Council reappointed the SWAC with direction to make recommendations to the Council and also appointed four additional Solid Waste Advisory Groups (SWAGs) to assist the SWAC. The Public Works Department hired a Solid Waste Manager in 1987 to manage the public review process and develop programs. Between 1987 and adoption in 1989, fifty-six citizens on the SWAC and SWAGs held public meetings and drafted recommendations to the Council. The County Executive also appointed a 20-member Recycling Roundtable made up of members of the recycling business community and public works agencies to advise the Executive about recycling programs.

The SWAC's recommendations and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) were published in February and in March, 1989. The County Council and the SWAC then began a widely-publicized series of public meetings between February and June of 1989 to hear public comment on the draft

Solid Waste Plan, the Final EIS, and the SWAC's recommendations. Cities and towns were included in the review process. The Council adopted the Plan with amendments resulting from the public comments on August 2, 1989 (Ord. # 87-196). Cities and towns then began their formal review and adoption process and signed interlocal agreements with the County. After all cities and towns had adopted the Plan, the Department of Ecology gave final approval in August 1990 with the proviso that the County begin the amendment process to address new 1989 waste reduction and recycling legislation.

**1989-1992 period:** Fundamental changes occurred between 1989 and 1992 in Pierce County's solid waste management system. These changes resulted directly from the County's aggressive approach to implement the Plan's 120 goals and policies. During a short three year period, the County and its cities, with Fort Lewis/McChord AFB, completed or initiated action on 70% of the 1989 policy and action recommendations. By 1995, 95% had been completed.

While the 1989 Plan was in the public hearing stage, the State passed legislation amending the waste reduction and recycling requirements. Certain large counties (Pierce, King, Kitsap, Snohomish, and Spokane) were required to begin amending their waste reduction and recycling plan elements by July 1991. The County modified the 1989 Plan and the EIS during the final hearing process in 1989 to incorporate most of the State requirements in order to direct staff to begin the waste reduction and recycling programs and to complete studies on disposal options.

The County Council held extensive hearings on draft WRR amendments in 1991 and 1992, and adopted them in December 1992 (Ord. # 92-130). The cities and towns

adopted the plan amendments in early 1993 and signed new interlocal agreements with the County. In September 1993, Ecology approved the Plan as being "current."

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**1990-1995 Actions to implement Solid Waste Plan policies:** Besides waste reduction and recycling chapters, the 1992 amendments included an *Annotated Summary* and a *WUTC Cost Assessment* appendix. Rather than rewrite the Plan to bring it up-to-date while the system was so rapidly evolving, the County prepared the *Annotated Summary*, in agreement with Ecology, to serve as an update of all other chapters of the 1989 Plan. The Summary contained a chronology of actions taken by the County and its cities and towns to implement the Plan. The cost assessment was based on the format of the WUTC Cost Assessment Guidelines.

The following are updated excerpts from the *Annotated Summary*. Activities have been grouped into five related subject areas. Individual programs are discussed in more detail in later chapters. All actions were completed at the direction of more than 120 specific plan policy recommendations.

**#1 Administration, coordination, and oversight:** In 1990, the County created a Solid Waste Division within the Pierce County Department of Public Works and Utilities charged with overseeing the planning, coordination, and management of a solid waste system in Pierce County. To expand "opportunities for cooperation and communication among all jurisdictions" as directed in the Plan, the Solid Waste Division: worked with the municipalities during 1990 and 1992 to assist them to adopt the Plan; signed interlocal agreements in 1991 with the municipalities designating

County/City responsibilities; developed model residential recycling programs with the haulers; and designed, paid for, and implemented a countywide public information / outreach program.

The County began coordinating a number of special waste collection programs with individual communities, private businesses, and fire districts such as the Christmas Treecycling program and household hazardous waste collection events. The County also worked with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department and Tacoma to develop used tire and oil collection, solve hazardous waste management issues, and to coordinate grant programs.

In the summer of **1992**, the County began to work with the municipalities on a long-term Interlocal Agreement for solid waste management and disposal. The County took steps to communicate regularly with the mayors and recycling coordinators of each community about recycling issues and available informational and educational services provided by the County.

Another management service the County fully implemented in **1990** was a Data Collection Program to track recycled tonnage and the countywide recycling rate. The County began issuing Annual Reports about the County's progress. To assist local businesses, the County filled out the State's yearly recycling report forms for those businesses who participated regularly in the County's surveys and the County coordinated this yearly reporting with the Department of Ecology.

The Solid Waste Division began staffing the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC), which advises the County Council on solid waste management issues, in **1987**. It also staffed the Recycling Roundtable, which was discontinued at the recommendation of

the membership who felt that, once the programs were up and running, SWAC public meeting review was sufficient. The County also established a process, as required in Ecology's planning guidelines, for the development, review, and adoption of waste reduction and recycling programs which includes annual review and yearly goal setting.

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**#2 Enforcement:** In **January 1990**, the County Council adopted a Solid Waste Handling Ordinance, providing for the designation of solid waste handling facilities and making unlawful the handling of solid waste at facilities other than those designated by the County (Ord. #90-4). The purpose of this ordinance was to provide the ability to make long-term and cost-effective disposal decisions and to coordinate with the Health Department's solid waste permit process. Designations are made annually after staff has reviewed solid waste permits to ensure they are up-to-date, and then the list is published for public comment.

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**#3 Studies, contracts, and RFP proposals about disposal alternatives:** In **1987** the County commissioned a Waste-To-Energy Report which included a review of current technologies, institutional and legal arrangements, and procurement and financial options. Based on the report's review, the County proceeded to consider the viability of incineration through a negotiated contract which identified disposal costs and annual average capital and operating costs. This negotiated contract was completed in early **1990** but not implemented.

In response to the 1989 Plan's policy that the County "pursue development of information gathering for alternative processing technologies in order to provide

performance and economic data roughly comparable to the waste-to-energy project," the Solid Waste Division commissioned a report in **1990** reviewing other energy recovery alternative technologies. Following up on that report in **1991**, the County began an RFP process for mixed municipal solid waste composting with landfilling of the remaining uncompostable waste and an RFP process for short- and /or long- term waste export. These studies were needed to answer both the short-range and long-range policy questions of the 1989 Plan.

In **January 1991**, the County renegotiated a five-year contract for landfill disposal at the Hidden Valley Landfill with Land Recovery Inc., which extended the contract to January 1996. Since then, the County has extended the disposal contract with LRI to 2011.

After completion of the RFP processes in the Spring of **1991** and with the results of the negotiated waste-to-energy contract, the Public Works and Utilities Department reported to the County Executive about the advantages, disadvantages, costs per ton, and environmental compliance issues of all options, which included: a) MSW composting combined with both waste export or with landfilling; b) waste export for the short and/or for the long term; c) waste-to-energy with in-county landfilling of the remaining waste; d) waste-to-energy combined with waste export; e) in-county landfilling; and f) in-county landfilling coupled with a County-owned yardwaste composting facility. The cost for adding the yardwaste composting facility to all alternatives were also identified.

In **August 1991**, after careful evaluation of the disadvantages, advantages, and costs of all alternatives, the Pierce County Council selected in-county landfilling as the disposal option combined with continuing development of waste reduction and source-

separation recycling programs. This option included the development of a County-owned yardwaste composting facility. In the implementing ordinance (Ord. #91-126), the Council directed annual evaluation of alternative technologies. Waste export to an out-of-county disposal site was identified as the back-up alternative if siting of an in-county landfill, either public or private, was not completed.

The Solid Waste Division commissioned a Compostable Waste Diversion Report that was issued in **1991**. The report evaluated existing conditions, needs and opportunities, and alternative public and /or private management methods for yardwaste, woodwaste, foodwaste, land clearing debris, sewage sludge and septage, and other selected compostable wastes.

In **August 1992**, in response to direction from the County Executive and the County Council, the Solid Waste Division began a three-phase landfill siting study to identify if an in-county landfill could be sited in Pierce County.

In **1992**, the Public Works and Utilities Department assigned staff to work with the County's Planning and Land Service Department (PALS) to coordinate with the development of comprehensive land use plans and ordinances in relationship to solid waste and other public works essential public facilities, as required by the State's Growth Management laws (RCW 36.70A).

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**#4 Waste reduction and recycling (WRR) programs:** Beginning in **1990**, the County began planning, development, and implementation of waste reduction and recycling programs. As directed by the Council and the Plan, this process required coordination of planning and service delivery with the solid waste collection

companies, private recycling processors, and the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, with the emphasis on a public / private partnership. These programs implement the State's requirements for source-separation and collection of recyclables. Annual Reports evaluate the programs.

*1995 50% goal:* The residents of Pierce County achieved their goal of a **50% waste reduction and recycling rate in 1995**. In recognition, Governor Lowry proclaimed **November 11, 1995** as **Pierce County Recycling Achievement Day**.

The following is an inventory of when waste reduction and recycling programs were first implemented:

• *Residential collection programs:*

- Minimum Services Levels ordinance for curbside recycling collection for single-family households (Ord. #90-14) in **March 1990**.

- Minimum Service Levels ordinance for recycling collection from multi-family complexes, condominiums, and mobile home parks (Ord. #91-86) in **August 1991**.

- Minimum Service Levels ordinance for yardwaste collection for single-family households (Ord. #92-22) in **April 1992**.

• *Yardwaste:*

- Pilot yardwaste collection program in **1990**.

- Yardwaste Composting Facility at the Purdy Transfer Station in **May 1992**.

• *Classroom education programs:* The County provides a full range of classroom presentations on solid waste, recycling, and clean water issues for all educational levels.

- The County began contracting with a teacher in **1988**.

- A full-time teacher was added to the staff in **1990** and a second teacher in **1991**.

- A third teacher was added in **1995** when the program was expanded to include water issues.

• *Public information and outreach:*

- Public opinion survey and newspaper tabloids in **1988**.

- In **1990**, the program was expanded with extensive public information campaign for curbside recycling and printed materials and newsletters about recycling, composting, and precycling.

- **Environmental Education Exhibit, 1991**.

- **BagHunger** program in **1992**.

- **GreenHouse Exhibit** in **1993**.

- Twenty-four hour **recorded information line** in October **1994**.

• *In-House and Procurement Policy programs:*

- Employee **deskside collection** in **1988**.

- **Procurement Policy** (Ord.#90-19s) in December **1990**.

• *Special waste collection programs:*

- In **1990** the County began coordinating with other cities, the Health Department, and private businesses on various yearly collection programs for special wastes, such as Christmas Treecycling, used-oil collection, and household hazardous waste collection events.

- In **1995**, joint agreements with Tacoma on use of the City's hazardous waste facility by all county residents.

• *Plastics drop-off sites:*

- In **November 1995**, Pierce County and the haulers initiated a drop-off collection program for the collection of PETE and HDPE.

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***#5 Activities related to other general plan recommendations or specific to other jurisdictions:***

- The Purdy Landfill was closed and the Purdy Transfer Station was built at the site in **1989** to continue to provide residents of the Peninsula with self-haul capabilities and recycling opportunities, as recommended in the Plan, and for the transfer of waste collected by the haulers on the Peninsula to the Hidden Valley Landfill.

- The McNeil Island Landfill was closed by the Department of Corrections in **1990**, and solid waste began to be transferred off-site to the Hidden Valley Landfill.

- Land Recovery Inc. completed the Health Department's permit process for a new cell extension at the Hidden Valley Landfill, and began operation in the new cell in early **1992**.

- Land Recovery Inc. began the process to site a new, privately owned landfill late in **1988**. LRI obtained the Conditional Land Use Permit from the County and received approval from the Health Department and Ecology but did not obtain a Corps of Engineers Wetlands Permit. The need for a Corps wetland permit was appealed to the courts.

- At the County's request, Land Recovery Inc. placed multi-material recycling collection containers at all the transfer/drop-box stations. LRI sited a small, recycling processing facility at the Hidden Valley Landfill.

- The four solid waste haulers established more than 120 multi-material drop-off sites for the collection of recyclables around the County and at their respective business locations.

- The Health Department began coordinating programs with the State and within the County to divert used tires to the appropriate disposal/recycling system in **1989**; began tire collection events in **1990** and tire pile cleanups in **1991** and **1992**. The last and largest tire pile was removed in **1995**.

- The **City of Tacoma** proceeded with the renovation and permitting of the steam plant, which began full operation in **1991**, and with the landfill cleanup and closure according to the requirements of the Consent Decree. Tacoma began a number of recycling programs similar to the County's including: curbside recycling for single-family and multi-family households in **1990**; yardwaste collection, **1990**; used oil collection, **1991**; technical assistance program to commercial businesses and some curbside recycling service, **1991**; employee in-house collection program, **1991**; special collection programs from businesses including plate glass and cardboard, **1990**, and produce waste, **1991**; establishment of a recycling center at the landfill, **1990**; establishment of a household hazardous waste center at the landfill, **1991**; educational programs---TRASH, **1988**, and A Way with Waste, **1991**; and joint funding of the development of an Environmental Curriculum for the Tacoma School District, **1992**. Tacoma adopted a procurement ordinance in **1991**. In addition, Tacoma began separating a number of recyclable materials from the municipal waste stream at the RDF Plant, which resumed full operation in **1990**.

- **Fort Lewis** sited a new landfill designed to meet the State's Minimum Functional Standards in **1989/1990** and completed the Fort Lewis Incinerator in **1996**. The Fort adopted the Environmental Impact Statement for the incinerator and the *Fort Lewis Solid Waste Management Plan* in **1995**. The incinerator, however, could not

meet emission standards, never became fully operational, and will not be reopened. The Fort expanded its recycle center in **1996**. The Fort has expended considerable time, energy, and money to cleanup waste dumped illegally on the base's reservation with major cleanups occurring in early each year.

- In **1995, McChord AFB** began curbside recycling; exceeded its goal to reach 50% recycling; adopted a procurement program, and completed a new recycling center. It is pursuing further solid waste initiatives.

- During this five year period, a number of private businesses expanded their existing facilities to handle recyclable materials, yardwaste, woodwaste, land clearing debris, concrete and asphalt, roofing, sheetrock, and septage waste.

(Information about activities that have occurred since 1995 is found in the following chapters.)

## **1.5 Planning Process**

### ***Implementation --- Interlocal Agreements:***

Programs to implement plan policies are developed by solid waste staff under direction of the Pierce County Executive. Those that are ongoing, such as educational or public outreach, do not need annual approval from the County Council. The County's annual budget process, approved by the Council, provides for implementation of these programs. The Solid Waste Division publishes annual reports which evaluate the implementation of all programs and the countywide recycling rates. Through the annual budget process, the County establishes new goals and objectives for the next year.

New collection programs are adopted through ordinance by the County Council. Reports or studies completed in response to a plan policy or direction of the Council are sent to the Council for review. The Council sends all new programs, ordinances, or studies to the SWAC for review in their public meetings. If applicable, programs are sent to the cities and towns as a model for their programs.

Under the Interlocal Agreements, cities and towns who use the County's disposal system are responsible for collection within their jurisdiction, implementation of residential collection programs, and coordination with the County on public outreach programs. Cities and towns implement new programs by resolution, ordinance, or through their annual budgets. Except for Tacoma and the two military bases, the County provides support and technical assistance to cities and towns which establish recycling programs compatible with the County's. The County maintains a data collection system, develops educational materials suitable for countywide distribution, and provides educational services to all school districts.

Under state law, cities and towns may also reach interlocal agreements with other local jurisdictions to provide or contract for municipal services, including solid waste collection and other services identified in this plan. Interlocal agreements have been used for these services in past planning periods and will continue to be used in future planning periods.

Tacoma, Ruston, and the two military bases have their own programs, although the County coordinates educational activities and special collections with both.

***Plan update, review and approval --- public participation:*** Through the Interlocal Agreements, Pierce County is responsible

for preparation of revisions to the Plan for both the unincorporated county and for the cities and towns. The Solid Waste Division is charged with managing this planning process. The County coordinates with Tacoma, which has elected to be a joint-participant, to include descriptions of Tacoma's and Ruston's programs and to reference any applicable plan adopted by Tacoma in the Plan. This document also summarizes the military programs and plans. A plan update is required every five years (RCW 70.95), if necessary. It may range from a complete rewrite of the document to more limited amendments.

The following summarizes the major steps for a plan update:

#1. Under the direction of the Pierce County Executive, staff prepares a **scope of work**, which is reviewed by the County Council, cities and towns, Ecology, the SWAC, and other interested parties. Depending upon the amount and type of work, a consultant may write some or all of the revisions.

#2. **Meetings and data collection** --- The staff collects information and meets informally with the SWAC, haulers, recyclers, and interested others about waste reduction and recycling. The topics of the SWAC meetings are publicized in advance, as are all of its public meetings. The staff reviews annual disposal and recycling data, and, if necessary, contracts for a waste audit. The staff meets with the Environmental Designate about SEPA documentation.

#3. The staff and consultants prepare a **discussion draft** for review by the SWAC and work with the SWAC on drafting some early recommendations. Informally, the staff works with Ecology on technical assistance. Revisions are made to the draft as necessary, and a preliminary draft is prepared along with SEPA documentation.

#4. The **Preliminary Draft** is used as the public review draft. It is distributed to the SWAC, to the public, cities and towns, other agencies, the two military bases, the Pierce County Planning Commission, and the County Council. At the same time, SEPA documents are submitted, and the SEPA public review process may occur simultaneously with public review of the draft. When they receive the Preliminary Draft, Ecology and the WUTC begin their agencies' maximum 120-day formal review. Cities and towns are asked to review the draft and to provide their comments directly to the SWAC in order to incorporate their comments with the SWAC's recommendations prior to the beginning of the County Council's public hearings. The Planning Commission is requested to review the draft for compliance with the Pierce County Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The SWAC reviews the document in public meetings, makes revisions as necessary; and develops or drafts new policy recommendations.

A minimum 30-day comment period is required, but, for all practical purposes, the comment period usually extends over many months.

#5. Upon completion of the review period, the Solid Waste staff prepares reports on the **SWAC recommendations** which are sent to Ecology / WUTC, the County Council, cities and towns, and other interested parties.

#6. After **Ecology and the WUTC complete their review**, the County Council establishes a schedule for public hearings. The Council reviews the SWAC's recommendations and Ecology's comments, and takes additional public testimony. The cities and towns and the public also have the opportunity to attend the public hearings or to send any additional comments to the Council. When the hearings are completed, the Council adopts, or amends and adopts,

the Plan, and directs the County Executive to sign new Interlocal Agreements with the cities and towns. Once adopted, the document becomes the Final Plan.

#7. The **Final Plan** is sent to the cities and towns for their formal adoption and signing of new **Interlocal Agreements**. The County and the cities have established a maximum 90-day adoption period in the interlocal agreement process for city adoptions of a full plan update.

#8. Once adopted by all municipalities, the Plan and required documents are sent to Ecology for its **final review and approval**. A plan is considered approved if Ecology does not disapprove it within 45 days upon receipt of all documents.

**Plan amendments:** From time-to-time amendments are needed which do not entail complete update of the Plan. Usually, these amendments are done to update technical information, correct citations to laws, update a policy recommendation, if a study completed by the Plan indicates a conflict exists with the policy, or in response to a state legislative change. Either the County Council or a city or town may propose an amendment. Proposed amendments are introduced at a County Council meeting. The Council then schedules a public hearing date and sends proposed amendments to the SWAC and the Planning Commission for review and comment. The proposed amendments are sent to each municipality and other agencies who are notified of the public hearing dates. The Council holds public hearings and then makes a decision. If adopted, such plan amendments only need to be approved by the affected jurisdictions, unless the adopting ordinance states otherwise. Plan amendments must be approved by the Department of Ecology.

## **1.6 Recommendations**

### *Non-economic concerns are important*

- #1-1** In order to be truly comprehensive in addressing the concerns of all county citizens, the Solid Waste Management Plan should specifically state that non-economic factors will be considered when the County deems it necessary and appropriate to make decisions concerning its solid waste management system.

### *Establish a long-range view*

- #1-2** Pierce County should articulate a vision of what condition Pierce County desires to be in 50 years from now regarding the waste management system inside the county, and its influence on the quality of life.