



We each have a role in taking care of our community and our planet. Seattle is recognized as a global sustainability leader thanks to community members like you. As we face increasing environmental pressures, it is important that we continue reducing our collective footprint and creating a more resilient city for everyone. Waste prevention is the next natural step in shrinking our city's waste footprint.

What is Waste Prevention?

From repairing broken electronics to sharing surplus food with community members, many organizations and businesses have embraced waste prevention. Simply put, waste prevention means stopping waste. You might already be participating in waste prevention, even if you do not use the phrase. Repairing, reusing, and salvaging are examples of waste prevention.

SPU's Role in Waste Prevention

Instead of simply helping our customers dispose of waste, Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) wants to help our customers reduce the waste they produce. Over the next two years, SPU will be talking with diverse community members, businesses, and organizations across the city about waste prevention. We hope to learn how you are helping — or would like to help — our community prevent waste. We also want to better understand how to support you in these efforts. The information we gather will help shape our 2024 Waste Prevention Strategic Plan. This plan will define meaningful waste prevention goals, SPU's role in waste prevention, and metrics.

Why are We Prioritizing Waste Prevention?

Some waste prevention benefits include:

Saving our customers money

Buying only what you need, buying second hand, sharing, and repairing broken items are great ways to save money.

Creating new economic opportunities

Waste prevention stimulates innovation. From reuse to repair and remanufacturing to sharing, this industry offers many new business and employment opportunities.

Building healthier communities

By preventing waste, we use fewer natural resources, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and minimize pollution—paving the way for a healthier future.



Photo by Jeremy Dwyer-Lindgren/
Woodland Park Zoo.

How are leaders like you helping our community prevent waste?

- Repairing items so they are not thrown out
- Collecting used items to share or sell
- Creating reusable take-out container programs
- Educating communities on how they can prevent waste
- Distributing surplus food to community members
- Designing products that last longer
- Creating tool libraries
- Managing compost onsite

Roadmap



Key Deliverables

From 2022–2025, SPU will work with community members and partners to chart a strategic waste prevention path. Throughout the process we will engage key stakeholders, like you, who help your communities prevent waste. We will also collaborate with community organizations, businesses, waste prevention experts from other government agencies, and City of Seattle staff.

Stakeholder Engagement Process

SPU recognizes that solutions that do not directly address environmental injustice and racial inequity will not succeed. We commit to a race and social justice focus to establish equitable planning efforts and outcomes. We are prioritizing engagement with those who experience the most environmental injustice. This will allow us to produce solutions that meet the needs of everyone.

In 2023, our Stakeholder Engagement Team will gather information from Seattle businesses and organizations about how they engage or would like to engage their communities in waste prevention. During this time frame, SPU will also engage with a diverse array of residential and commercial customers to better understand waste prevention practices, words, barriers, and opportunities. These findings will help inform our Waste Prevention Strategic Plan.

This process will produce:

A Strategic Plan (2024)

Defines meaningful waste prevention goals, SPU’s role in waste prevention, and measurable metrics.

Criteria (2024)

Focuses SPU’s waste prevention priorities and resources.

An Implementation Plan (2025)

Identifies:

- Priority waste prevention programs
- Policies for implementation
- Models and tools for measuring progress towards achieving waste prevention goals and metrics

Questions? Contact Veronica Fincher at SPU_PreventWaste@seattle.gov or (206) 615-1405