



**KING COUNTY**

1200 King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

**Signature Report**

**September 18, 2018**

**Motion 15220**

**Proposed No. 2018-0298.1**

**Sponsors Dembowski**

1           A MOTION approving a plan for employee development  
2           activities and programs required by the 2017-2018 Biennial  
3           Budget Ordinance, Ordinance 18409, Section 107, as  
4           amended by Ordinance 18602, Section 66, Proviso P7.

5           WHEREAS, the King County council in adopting the 2017-2018 Biennial Budget  
6           Ordinance, Ordinance 18409, Section 107, as amended by Ordinance 18602, Section 66,  
7           Proviso P7, directs the executive to transmit, by June 29, 2018, a plan providing for  
8           employee development activities and programs, and

9           WHEREAS the plan is submitted by the department of natural resources and  
10          parks, to fulfill this requirement;

11          NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

12           The plan for employee development activities and programs, Attachment A to this  
13 motion, is hereby approved.  
14

Motion 15220 was introduced on 7/30/2018 and passed by the Metropolitan King  
County Council on 9/17/2018, by the following vote:

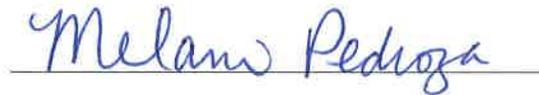
Yes: 8 - Mr. von Reichbauer, Ms. Lambert, Mr. Dunn, Mr.  
McDermott, Mr. Dembowski, Mr. Upthegrove, Ms. Kohl-Welles and  
Ms. Balducci  
No: 0  
Excused: 1 - Mr. Gossett

KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
J. Joseph McDermott, Chair



ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

**Attachments:** A. Solid Waste Division Plan for Employee Development Activities and Programs

**Solid Waste Division Plan for  
Employee Development Activities and Programs**

Prepared in Accordance With  
Ordinance 18602, Section 66, Proviso P7

**June 2018**



**King County**

Department of Natural Resources and Parks  
Solid Waste Division

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## **Introduction**

King County Ordinance 18602, Section 66, Proviso P7 requires the King County Executive to transmit a plan for employee development activities and programs in the Solid Waste Division (Division) of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks to the Council.

## **Executive Summary**

The King County Strategic Plan ensures that County government will operate efficiently and effectively through, among other things, the development of a highly engaged, diverse, culturally responsive and high-performing workforce. In support of the Strategic Plan, over the past four years the Division has made employee development and growth a top priority. The Division is already and will continue to experience a large amount of turnover due to retirements in the coming years. To help manage the risk to the business that the loss of significant institutional knowledge and experience has, the Division believes that the primary replacement source is from within. As a measurement of the Division's strategic goal of being Employer of Choice, the Division has set an aggressive goal of having an average of 60 percent of all promotional opportunities in the Division filled internally over the next ten years. This goal can only be achieved through dedicated activities and programs promoting development of and engagement within the Division workforce. This plan summarizes the numerous employee development and engagement activities and programs that are already in place in the Division which have contributed to a high internal promotion rate. These programs and activities include an Operations Supervisor Apprenticeship Program, a division-wide Succession Planning Framework, the expansion of Lead roles and Special Duty Assignments, individual development planning, employee engagement activities and specific agreements with labor focused on promoting development opportunities. These activities and programs have already experienced much success. Despite this success, the Division recognizes there remains room for improvement, particularly in the Operations Section of the Division.

This plan also identifies activities and programs planned for the future. These include further exploration of a formal partnership with labor, in particular Teamsters Local 174, to address real and perceived inequities in the workplace, creating in-training classifications allowing for job progression within the same labor union, adoption of an in-house Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training program and the creation of a policy that ensures that all employees receive approval for professional development training.

## Current Employee Development Activities and Programs

The following portion of this plan details the current activities and programs in the Division designed to drive employee growth and development.

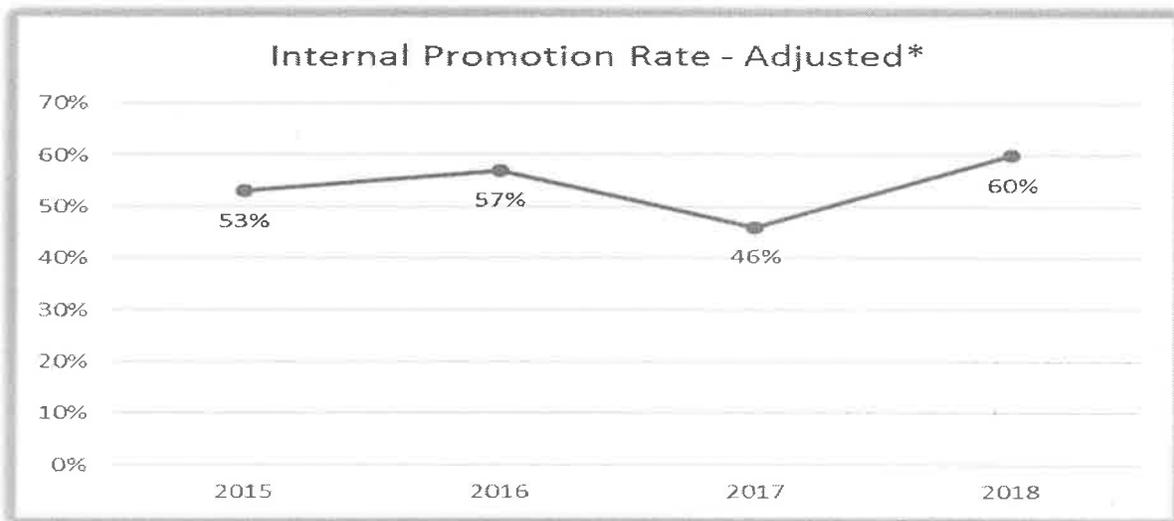
### **Division Establishes Strategic Goal to be Employer of Choice**

During the next five years, the Division will face dramatic turnover in the workforce as approximately 50 percent of employees retire. Although the Division has been making efforts to increase employee growth and development, more division-wide visibility and focus was needed to manage business risk while providing the remaining employees with opportunities for advancement.

Through King County's Line of Business Planning process, the Division identified five long term strategic goal areas, one of which is to be Employer of Choice. The Division has established two year change targets and priority actions that will help ensure continuous progress. The current two year change target is centered on improving the employee experience as measured in the recurring employee engagement survey which includes many questions on employee growth and development. Further, a long term target under Employer of Choice is to achieve and sustain a 60 percent internal promotion rate, meaning that at least 60 percent of all promotional opportunities are filled internally.

The focused programs and activities discussed in this plan have already had a positive impact on the Division's internal promotion rates. Table 1 describes the rates for promotional opportunities in the Division since 2015. Focused efforts such as the Division's Supervisor Apprenticeship Program, Succession Planning, special duties and lead roles, as well as an overall cultural shift within the Division which values growth from within, all contribute to the increasing rates

**Table 1 – Internal Promotions are Trending Toward the 60 Percent Goal**



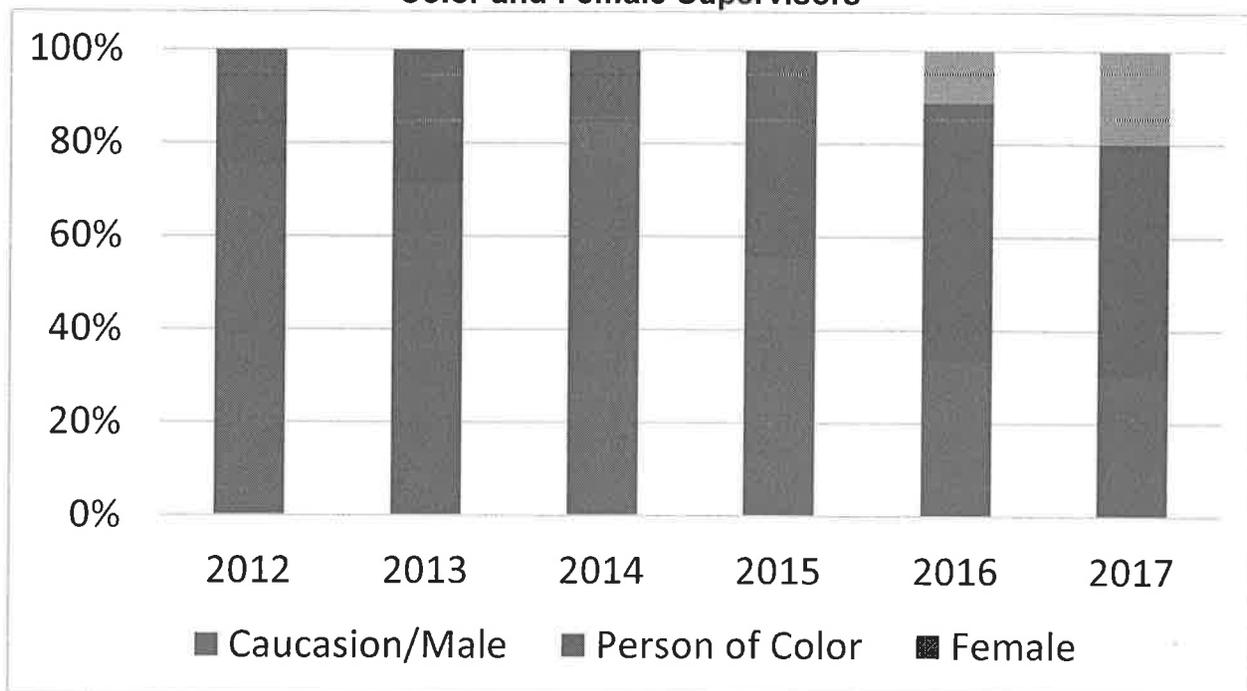
\*Adjusted means that positions that are entry level or have been traditionally non-promotional opportunities have been excluded

### Operations Supervisor Apprenticeship Program

Prior to 2013, the management structure within the Operations Section of the Division, the largest of the Division's sections, was flat, consisting of up to six Supervisor II's who reported directly to one Operations Manager. All but one supervisor was Caucasian and all but one were male.

To change these dynamics, the Operations Supervisor Apprenticeship Program, which offers entry level supervisor experience to internal front-line employees with the goal of making them competitive for career service supervisory work, was started in 2014. The outcome of the Supervisor Apprenticeship Program has been even better than expected. As detailed below, the purpose of providing internal front-line employees an entry level opportunity in supervision, to expose them to the responsibilities and help them become competitive for career service supervisor opportunities, has been fully realized. The Program has also opened up opportunities for the Division to increase diversity (of both race and gender) in a work unit that historically lacked much diversity.

**Table 2 – Operations Leadership Strengthened Through the Addition of People of Color and Female Supervisors<sup>1</sup>**



In addition to the benefit of added diversity depicted in Table 2, the Supervisor Apprenticeship Program has yielded incredible results for the participating employees:

- Ten Special Duty opportunities were earned by front line personnel through the Supervisor Apprenticeship Program.

<sup>1</sup> The category of "Person of Color" includes males and females. A woman of color would fall into both the "Person of Color" category and the "Female" category.

- Participating employees came from a wide variety of positions including Scale Operators, a Transfer Station Operator, Landfill Gas Technician, Inventory Purchasing Specialist, and most recently an Assistant Accountant.
- During the first four years of the program, four of the six participating employees in the program were successfully promoted into a career service Supervisor position.

### **Succession Planning With a Focus on Internal Succession**

The Division had been concerned that over 50 percent of the Division workforce will either be eligible for or would become eligible to retire in the next five years. Those employees will take decades of experience and institutional knowledge with them. Starting in 2016, the Division made the work of establishing a structured succession planning framework one of its top priorities identifying it as a “Priority Action”. The plan was required to satisfy two primary purposes: (1) it had to take a proactive approach to minimizing knowledge and experience gaps as employees retired; and (2) it had to have an emphasis on growing internal employees to be positioned to fill the gaps rather than only filling the gaps through external hiring.

The basic succession planning framework consists of the following two distinct but complimentary parts, which are directly related to internal employee growth and development:

1. Skills Matrix and Gap Analysis of Current Employees
2. Career Mapping

### **Skills Matrix and Gap Analysis**

One prong of the succession planning framework is conducting skills matrix and gap analysis work within the sections in the Division. This work helps inform the plan, especially when identifying internal succession possibilities. The exercise is done in a section/unit retreat setting attended by all. All of the work categories and specific bodies of work, tasks, and skills needed across the entire section or unit are first identified prior to the retreat. Those are then listed and presented to the larger group at the retreat and the retreat attendees take some time to verify or correct the list. Through a gap analysis exercise, all employees identify their skill strengths and weaknesses and willing trainers and learners are identified. The information is then used to inform individual development and succession plans.

### **Career Mapping**

The final piece of the succession planning framework is career mapping. This work is planned to occur later in 2018. Career mapping is both a succession planning and employee growth and development tool for both management and the employee. It provides a range of information about classification tracks and how to move within and across them.

### Expansion of “Lead” Roles

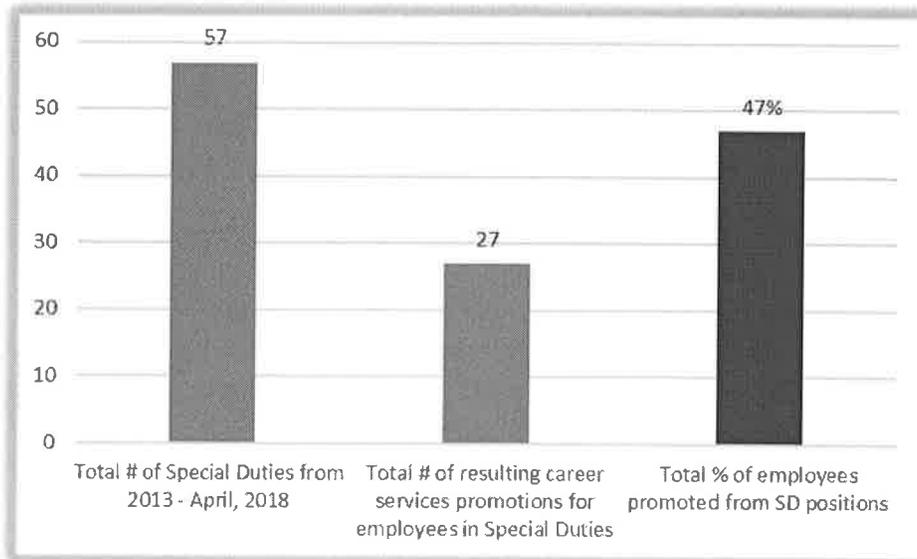
There is often a significant skill and experience gap between front-line positions and leadership and/or management roles. That gap can create a natural barrier for upward mobility from those front-line positions to management. One role, similar to the supervisor apprentice discussed above, that effectively bridges that gap is what is known as a “lead” role. Recognizing this, the Division has intentionally added to the number of “lead” roles offered.

### Open and Competitive Special Duty Assignments

Knowledge and skills gaps do not only occur between front-line positions and management, but can exist between any level role in the organization. Similar to the expansion of lead roles discussed above which helps bridge the gap in supervisory skills, special duty assignments are an effective tool to help bridge the gap in knowledge, skills, and experience in any higher level role. Recognizing this, the Division has also increased its use of special duty assignments and taken actions to ensure that assignments were made fairly and equitably.

Table 3 reflects the success of the special duty assignments showing that almost half of those employees who serve in a special duty assignment are then successful candidates when a career service position is recruited for.

**Table 3 – Percentage of Special Duty Assignments lead to a Career Service Promotion**



### Employee Engagement Survey “One Thing” Actions Focused on Growth and Development

“One Thing” action planning ensures that at least one engagement area receives focused and tangible efforts towards improvement each survey period. Those efforts are specifically identified, tracked and the results measured.

“One Thing” actions focused on employee growth and development have been wide

ranging in the Division. For example, in response to low results from the Cedar Hills Landfill Shop Unit personnel in the 2015 survey around training opportunities and whether or not they had the tools to do their jobs, the Shop Unit decided to focus on training as their 2016 “One Thing” action. The Shop Supervisor recognized that one of the barriers to training was that most of the trainings were off-site, thereby adding to the time commitment and limiting the number of employees who could attend. To address this barrier, the Shop Supervisor had an entire office trailer at Cedar Hills cleared out and converted into a dedicated training classroom for the Shop personnel allowing for on-site training. This allowed more employees to attend and training could be offered more frequently because of the reduced impact on operations.

This “One Thing” action was viewed extremely positively by Shop Unit personnel and engagement survey scores significantly increased as a result as reflected in Table 4.

**Table 4 – Improvements to the Cedar Hills Shop Unit Growth and Development Engagement Survey Scores**

<b>Engagement Survey Question</b>	<b>2015*</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
“I have sufficient opportunities to attend trainings to improve my skills & knowledge”	42%	60%	56%
“I have full and equal access to staff advancement opportunities”	42%	60%	56%
“I have full and equal access to employee development opportunities”	42%	56%	61%
<b>Overall Growth &amp; Development Category Score</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>66%</b>

\*Scores reflect the percent of positive (Strongly Agree, Agree) responses to the survey question

Table 5 shows the Solid Waste Shop’s engagement survey scores in the growth and development area questions over the past three surveys. The increased scores in the 2016 and 2017 surveys over 2015 confirm that the specific actions related to training and development taken in the shop had a real and positive impact with the employees.

**Table 5 – Improved Division-wide Engagement Survey Results on Growth and Development Questions**

<b>Engagement Survey Question</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
“I have equal access to employee development opportunities”	50%	57%	58%
“My supervisor supports me in achieving my professional development goals”	65%	70%	69%
“I have tools and resources to do my job well”	62%	65%	65%
<b>Overall Growth &amp; Development Category Score</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>57%</b>

**Specific Agreements with Unions related to Growth and Development**

The Division has recently begun to partner with the labor unions on growth and development and has already reached several specific agreements with employee growth and development at the heart.

Most significantly to date, the Division and the Road Services Division of the Department of Transportation have reached a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with three unions related to succession planning and employee development. The MOU was entered into in 2017 between the County and Teamsters Local 174 (representing Truck Drivers), Teamsters Local 117 (representing Utility Workers) and the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 302 (representing Equipment Operators). The MOU creates a new Equipment Operator In-Training classification through which employees from other classifications, specifically Truck Drivers and Utility Workers can work across traditional jurisdictional lines as an Equipment Operator In-Training when there is a temporary vacancy in a regular Equipment Operator position.

The Division and the mechanics union, IAM Local 289, also entered into two agreements that are aimed at increasing internal growth and development. In 2016, the Division and IAM Local 289 reached an MOU which allowed for the expansion of “lead” opportunities across the Shop Unit. The Division and IAM Local 289 also reached an agreement in 2017, which was incorporated into the collective bargaining agreement, allowing for the creation of a mechanic apprenticeship program within the Cedar Hills Shop.

#### **Other Activities Focused on Employee Growth and Development**

The Division has also engaged in other activities to promote growth and development and become the Employer of Choice:

- Training on Interviewing Skills and Techniques - The Division Director has offered five training sessions to Division employees focused on interviewing skills and techniques at both the King Street Center for Division employees who work in Seattle and at the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill for employees who work in the field.
- Leadership Team Expanded - A new Leadership Team meets quarterly to communicate on strategic updates including priority actions within the Division, recognize great work, engage in team building and receive training.
- Position Approval Process Change - Division HR implemented a process change in the position approval process that mandates consideration of internal growth and development opportunities prior to considering an external hire.
- Modification of the Advertising Process for Recruitments – Division HR has modified its advertising process of recruitments and increased their visibility to internal employees. The day a job is posted, HR sends out an internal announcement of the posting with a hyper-link to the posting on the County’s job board. To ensure that field staff receive these announcements, both the daily and weekly announcements are printed out and faxed to remote facilities where employees do not regularly use their email.

## **Planned Future Growth and Development Actions**

### **Exploration of a Formal Partnership with Teamsters Local 174 to Address Inequities**

Since January of 2018, the Division has been in discussions with representatives from its largest representative unions, including Teamsters Local 174 and the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 302, on establishing meaningful growth and development activities and programs within the Division.

Management has already begun regular sessions with representatives from the Scale Operator Unit about perceived inequities. Through these sessions, some long standing issues, such as scale house conditions, staffing levels and overall communication, have already been addressed and improved. While the early success in the Scale Operator Unit is notable, Management is committed to building on the success and strengthening the relationship long term as well as applying lessons learned to other units.

With this in mind, Management and Teamsters Local 174 Business Agent Michael Gonzales have met on multiple occasions and have discussed creating a Management and labor partnership to work to address the real or perceived inequities in the Division. The Division and Mr. Gonzales have obtained materials and researched the Partnership to Achieve Comprehensive Equity (PACE) Program created between King County Metro and the Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 587 which was formed to address similar issues. They have also met with representatives of PACE to learn more about that program and whether or not it would translate well to the Division.

### **Partnership with Labor on the Creation of Same Union Career Paths**

A historical disconnect between the Division Management and the labor unions on growth and development opportunities is the mistaken belief that growth and professional development for front-line employees means their eventual movement into supervision and/or management. The reality is that moving into supervision or management almost always means moving into a different union or becoming un-represented altogether. When this movement occurs the employee loses all of their earned union seniority. Union seniority is important to many employees and so the prospect of losing it all and starting from scratch is not desirable. Thus, some employees prefer finding upward mobility in their current union over the traditional movement into management.

The following are several same union career path ideas and programs that the Division management and labor are exploring to address this:

- **Creation of an In-House CDL Training Program** - Through discussions with the Division's largest union, Teamsters Local 174, as well as the International

Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE), Local 302, all parties have recognized that a targeted area of opportunity for front line employees is into jobs that currently require a CDL. In the Division, the truck driver position, which is the highest paid position represented by the Teamsters Local 174, requires that the employee hold a Class A CDL. Similarly, the Equipment Operator position, which is the highest paid position represented by IUOE Local 302, requires a Class B CDL.

- **Creation of a Transfer Station Operator In-Training Program** - Another option that the Division is exploring with Teamsters Local 174 is the creation of a Transfer Station Operator In-Training position. Local 174 represents Transfer Station Operators (TSO) who work at the King County transfer and recycling stations and accept waste from the public and commercial haulers and prepare that waste to be transported to the landfill by the truck drivers.

### **Additional Growth and Development Activities Planned in Accordance with the King County Strategic Plan**

The King County Strategic Plan ensures that County government will operate efficiently and effectively through, among other things, the development of a highly engaged, diverse, culturally responsive and high-performing workforce. Further, the King County Strategic Plan on Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) dives deeper, identifying many required actions to be taken over the next few years to improve the quality and equity within the King County workforce and the communities served.

The Division's Equity & Social Justice employee committee has identified the creation of a new Division-wide training policy mandating the approval of discretionary development training for all employees, which is non-mandatory training aimed at professional development rather than an employee's current job.

### **Conclusion**

In support of the King County Strategic Plan, the Division has established being Employer of Choice as one of its five strategic goal areas. Under this goal, the Division has made employee growth and development a priority and will continue to do so in the future. Over the past four years the Division has been trending upward toward having an average of 60 percent of all promotional opportunities filled internally and through the first two quarters of 2018, the Division is at the 60 percent mark. Numerous employee development and engagement activities and programs have positively contributed to this upward trend.