King County
Auditor's Office

Capital Projects Oversight
2026 Biennial Report

IMPROVING CAPITAL PROJECTS PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Capital Projects Oversight Program within the King County Auditor's Office provides independent oversight of King County's capital construction efforts. The program promotes accountability and improved performance of capital projects and programs, with a focus on high-risk projects and provides timely and useful information to councilmembers and other county decision-makers. All program costs are funded through the Capital Improvement Program budget.

Capital Projects Oversight in 2024 and 2025

In 2024 and 2025, the Capital Projects Oversight program focused on ensuring the effective use of capital resources and reducing risks to county objectives. In 2024, we conducted an audit of the Fish Passage Restoration Program that identified ways to increase the program's impact in restoring salmon access to spawning habitat — access that is essential to restoring fish populations and honoring tribes' treaty-protected rights to harvest salmon. We also published a letter on county space planning with recommendations to help ensure decision-makers have the information needed to optimize use of existing office spaces and make informed long-term planning decisions. In 2025, we published a letter highlighting how the Solid Waste Division's per-ton garbage fees could more than double over the next decade and provided options to reduce rate impacts on customers.

Providing real-time feedback

As part of our ongoing oversight of the highest risk capital projects, we continued to monitor the Mouth of the Duwamish Wet Weather Facilities program, which is expected to prevent about 430 million gallons of polluted water from entering Elliott Bay and the Duwamish River annually, and the voter-backed effort to build a new medical tower and renovate spaces at Harborview Medical Center. Our team meets regularly with program staff and provides real-time feedback about project approaches and risk mitigation.

We also continued to collaborate with the Executive Budget Office (formerly called the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget) on the annual risk scoring of current capital projects to ensure high-risk projects are considered for additional oversight.

Key Results

Staff at Metro Transit are more effectively communicating and resolving issues with management

Rate payers and partner cities are aware of upcoming increases in garbage disposal fees and options for reducing costs

Local tribes are consulted more often on fish passage projects and program decisions

Space planners have more accurate information about the amount and use of office space

100%
CONCURRENCE

Concurrence Increases Impact

Concurrence with our recommendations is the first step in positive change for King County. In 2024 and 2025, we made 14 recommendations to improve capital projects and programs, and agencies concurred with all of these recommendations.

90%
TOOK ACTION

Action Toward Implementation

Following up on our recommendations increases transparency and accountability and creates momentum for positive change. In the past two years, we followed up on 29 audit recommendations. We track recommendations until they are complete.

Publications

During this two-year period, our office completed one capital projects audit and five oversight reports. We also initiated another capital projects audit and followed up on recommendations from four past projects. All reports are available on the on the King County Auditor's Office website.

Audit reports:

- *Fish Passage Restoration: Opportunities to Increase Impact, Transparency, and Collaboration*
- Stormwater Services (publication planned for mid-2026)

Oversight reports:

- 2024 Auditor Recommendations on Project Risk Monitoring
- 2025 Auditor Recommendations on Project Risk Monitoring
- Green Building Program: Opportunities for Green Building Program to Focus Reporting on Outputs Supporting Decision-Making
- Solid Waste Rates: Capital Projects Drive Rate Increases: Solid Waste Rates Could Double by 2034
- Space Planning: Closing Data Gaps Will Help Promote Efficient Use of Office Space

Follow-up reports:

- Cedar Hills Landfill and Permanent Support Facilities
- Courthouse Revitalization Audit
- Metro Transit Asset Management*
- Metro Transit Capital Project Planning and Delivery*

*Projects that include elements of Metro Transit oversight are also listed in our 2026 Metro Transit Biennial Report.

2024–2026 Capital Projects Team

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