

MSWAC Advisory Committee Meeting

July 10, 2020 - 11:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.
King Street Center 8th Floor Conference Room

Meeting Minutes

<u>MSWMAC Members</u>	
Joan Nelson	Auburn
Emily Warnock	Bothell
Elizabeth Mountsier	Bellevue
Robin Tischnak	Burien
Chris Searcy	Enumclaw
Rob Van Orsow	Federal Way
Tony Donati	Kent
John MacGillivray	Kirkland
Toby Nixon	Kirkland
Phillippa Kassover	Lake Forest Park
Amy Shaw	Maple Valley
Jeff Brauns	Newcastle
Earnest Thompson	Normandy Park
Stacy Auer	Redmond
Linda Knight—Vice Chair	Renton
Anthony Rychkov	Sammamish
Mason Giem	SeaTac
Cameron Reed	Shoreline
Jason Rogers	Snoqualmie
Diana Hart	Woodinville

<u>King County Staff</u>
Pat McLaughlin, SWD Director
Lindy Honaker, SWD staff
Alexander Rist, SWD staff
John Walsh, SWD staff
Jeff Gaisford, SWD staff
Brian Halverson, SWD staff
Hilary Leonard, SWD staff
Dorian Waller, SWD staff
Joy Carpine-Cazzanti, SWD staff
Rory O'Rourke, King County
<u>Guests</u>
Quinn Apuzzo, Recology
Sarah Ogier, Parametrix
Natalie Caulkins, Republic Services
Wendy Weiker, Republic Services
Sharon Conroy, Green Solutions

Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting commenced with the Call to Order and Introductions.

Meeting Minutes

The June minutes were approved as written.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Updates

SWD Director Pat McLaughlin provided the SWD update:

COVID-19 Related Activities

Overall absenteeism rates have been low allowing us to continue to serve the public. We're phasing out ID checks by our consultants and transitioning to checks being conducted by SWD staff. Following the orders of the governor's statewide mask mandate, we're requiring all employees and customers to wear masks.

Tonnage and Transactions

We continue to track actual tons and transactions in 2020 compared to 2019. Year-to-date our tonnage is down almost 2 percent while transactions are up a little over 2 percent.

Houghton Landfill

We've made progress with the Houghton Landfill's gas system. We monitored gas levels daily and never detected elevated levels of gas offsite. Under Public Health's guidance we'll begin decreasing our checks later this month.

DNRP Permanent Teleworking

DNRP's GreenWhereWeWork (GWWW) project will transition 800 department employees to permanent teleworking by the end of 2020. DNRP will retain one floor in King Street Center for a collaboration hub. SWD employees traditionally in the downtown office will permanently telecommute, however, SWD is fully eliminating in-person gatherings. We expect the change will bring environmental and economic benefits. If this committee elects to convene in person in the future when it is safe, we're happy to support.

Haz Waste Management

Jeff Gaisford and Joy Carpine-Cazzanti presented an update on the Haz Waste Management program:

Last year the program prevented over 3 million pounds of Haz Waste from entering the waste system and the environment. Many of the city staff know our Haz Waste program from collaborating on collection events and activities. In 2019 collection events served more than 27,000 citizens. The events were going great, until COVID-19. Kent hosted a collection event in early March and June. All other collection events were cancelled or postponed.

In response to COVID-19, we coordinated with Public Health to keep our partners informed on the status of our operations, safety protocols and to provide communication tools. We created templates for posters, collection event flyers, and updated our safer cleaning messaging. Our leadership approved placeholder funding of up to \$400,00 to allow our cities and tribal partners to use unspent 2020 dollars in 21-22. We also have collaborated closely with cities around social media posting and cross-promotion.

We're in the middle of updating our management plan. We've used the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to our vision, to ensure race is not a determinant of hazardous materials exposure in households and businesses in King County. We recognize that currently race is a determinant as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color are more at risk. We've incorporated greater and more frequent input from community groups in the update process. We'll be working with Sound Cities Association (SCA) to connect with city and tribal staff and will keep you informed. We plan to transmit the plan to the Board of Health in December 2021. Krystal Marx, SCA rep couldn't join us today but will be invited back to speak at our next update.

SWAC

Kassover reported that the SWAC meeting included an extensive dialogue around the SWD business model. The new rate proposal renders most of that discussion moot, except for the emphasis on restructuring the rate and delving into the details of transitioning to a more regional approach. We've seen under COVID-19 how inharmonious operations between the jurisdictions can cause issues for customers.

2021-22 Rate Development

Lindy Honaker presented the 2021-2022 Rate Development:

Since transmitting our rate proposal to the Executive, subsequent developments allowed us to reduce the rate proposal amount. We're now looking at a 3% increase for 2021 followed by a 4% increase in 2022. These changes were made possible by a few developments. First, King County issued an additional economic forecast that resulted in a net positive change to the rate model. Secondly, the tonnage actuals reported at the end of June showed we're likely to outperform the tonnage forecasted under the medium impact scenario. We forecasted 768,000 tons for 2020 and, it's shaping up to be closer to 805,000 tons. Our rate model is sensitive to tonnage so the change had a large impact on the rate. Finally, we reduced our ending fund balance to \$3 million. We're working on these changes with the Executive and are hoping to finalize soon. We'll keep you updated.

Reed asked if the changes would have a service impact. Honaker responded that service cuts will not be involved, the changes only impact background financial information.

Mountsier asked if the proposal is still between the division and the Executive. Honaker answered that it is. SWD is in active dialog about the revised proposal with the Executive. Once finalized, the Executive will transmit to Council.

Kassover asked how the new rates will impact residents' bills. Honaker responded that the new rate will average out to less than a \$10 total increase for households over the 2 year period.

Knight asked if the decision to transition SWD employees to permanent teleworking will generate enough savings to impact the rate. If so, will it be included in the rate update? Honaker responded that there are not enough finalized details to predict the economic impact of the plan. There will be some upfront costs and timing is still a question.

Knight asked if the rate could be amended in 2022 once SWD knows the savings impact. McLaughlin responded that if we get into 2021 and feel confident projecting the cost savings, the rate could be adjusted in 2022. However, any changes must go through an update process. It's also possible for us to put savings towards the end fund balance.

Searcy commented that the difference between the original rate proposal and the update demonstrates the urgency of transitioning from a tonnage-based structure to something more stable. Honaker added that the Rate Restructure Task Force is currently working to create a less tonnage-dependent rate for the 2023-24 biennium.

Orsow asked if the new rate proposal will impact SWD's plans to charge for recycling services. Honaker responded that the charges associated with recycling remain the same from the previous proposal. There will be a new \$5 transaction fee at our stations and an increase in cost for disposing of yard waste and recyclables such as mattresses.

Mountsier asked if the schedule for transmittal remains the same. Honaker responded that originally SWD hoped to transmit to Council by July 9. That's been pushed back, but we still hope to present to the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee by next week. The proposal would go to the BFM Committee, then full Council.

Recycle Right Consortium

Matt Manguso and Amanda Godwin from the Recycle Right Communications Consortium presented:

Godwin reported that a recent qualitative study of organics contamination conducted by C+C Consulting provides insight into the belief, attitudes and behaviors that lead to curbside contamination. The study involved 14 in-home interviews with residents across the King County. Participants were asked to collect compost waste in a plastic bag in and to journal about their composting decisions leading up to the interview.

The study identified 7 main reasons for contamination. One of the top reasons is residents received mixed messaging on how to compost that lead to flawed decision making. Residents want to do the right thing but are confused on what “compostable” means. The divergence between business composting and home composting also creates confusion, as did product labeling. Additionally, residents don’t believe small mistakes make a big difference, there’s an “ick” factor around dirty containers and household members have divergent understanding of best practices.

People largely believe composting is a good thing, but they aren’t sure why. Most people think about materials according to which bin it belongs in, not whether something is compostable or not. Common deterrents to composting include the “ick” factor of spoiled food, hassle during inclement weather, and the extra time it takes to do the right thing. Bin labels and guides were not found to be effective for day-to-day sorting because people often don’t use them for individual decisions.

High level recommendations from the study are being used to inform future compost campaigns. Study recommendations include leveraging the positive halo around composting, focusing on helping people make decisions about where a specific material goes, communicating one specific behaviors at a time, giving people permission to throw materials in the trash, and emphasizing the benefits of composting right.

Manguso provided background on the Recycle Right Consortium and reminded the committee that materials and templates from past recycling campaigns are still available for use in the online toolkit.

COVID-19 hindered the plastic bag takeback campaign and interrupted the Consortium’s regular meetings. Local stores were worried about the risk posed by reusable bags and plastic bag returns. For now, the take back program is on hold.

Instead, the Consortium turned its attention to launching a Compost Right campaign at the end of Summer. The campaign will act as a partner to Recycle Right and aims to prevent contamination at home. The primary audience will be English and Spanish-speaking single-family households. Insights gathered from Cedar Grove, haulers and the C+C study show plastic is the largest contaminant. Messaging will center composting food scraps, keeping plastic out of the bin, following local guidelines, and throwing questionable materials out.

Currently, we’re developing campaign assets, especially social media content. The aim is to make use of the channels best for reaching people at home rather than large public displays on buses and billboards. We’re developing some radio ads for local broadcast and streaming services. Once templates are developed, we’ll share them with you for your city to customize and promote.

MacGillivray asked if the campaign will also provide materials for cart tagging as it can help reinforce educational efforts. Manguso answered that like the Recycle Right campaign, tag templates will be created for cities to incorporate into their existing efforts.

Kassover commented that Lake Forrest Park has had trouble getting managers of multifamily properties to provide compost carts. Gaisford noted that city contracts vary in compost cart requirements. For Unincorporated King County, SWD worked with Republic Services and Waste Management to provide compost services to multifamily complexes that have a proven track record with recycling. The work is very one-on-one with complexes. Knight added that unlike single-family residences, many city contracts do not have compost embedded within the disposal rate for multifamily. The technical assistance aspect is a key component for cities to increase composting.

Waste Characterization Study

Alexander Rist, Economist and SWD Project Manager presented:

Every 3-4 years, SWD commissions a waste characterization study to understand our waste stream. The latest study was conducted by Cascadia Consulting between March and December of 2019. The study found 56% of the waste collected came from residential households and 44% came from non-residential generators.

The study took 450 samples and divided the total waste into 105 unique products. Those products were categorized according to recyclability. 70% of our garbage was categorized as recyclable. Paper represents the biggest fraction of the materials. Food waste, wood and yard waste, and other organics are close behind. About 45% of the overall waste stream consists of organic materials. The top ten materials by weight represent almost half of the total waste stream. Significant progress towards zero waste of resources could be made by tackling those top ten materials.

Over time the waste characterization has changed dramatically. The report shows the changes between 2007-2019 by material group measured in tons. There were some declines in paper until 2019, a steady increase in plastics since 2011 and a decrease in food waste. The paper decline reflects the digitization of communication over the last decade. Some factors to consider is that the recession reduced disposal and banning C&D from our landfill decreased overall tons in 2019.

We'll provide a link to the online study. The report also includes customer profiles at each transfer station.

Searcy asked why the tons of material by class doesn't show a drop in C&D materials after the C&D Ban. Rist answered that C&D in the study is defined as some specific materials while what comes to the station is often a mix of materials. The ban created a drop in self-haul, but the overall results are not necessarily changed.

Kassover asked if wood, the top recyclable product disposed, is compostable if it has contaminants such as nails or glue. Rist answered that it's important that messaging be clear about nuances in how materials are recyclable. Contaminated wood does not necessarily belong in the compost, but it may be useful in other ways depending on how it's treated. Food waste products and organic products are treated as separate materials, but if combined, they represent a bigger percentage than wood.

Members Comment

Waller commented that he is working with the Chair and Vice Chair to find the online meeting format that'll best meet the committee's needs. He is considering feedback that allowing all members to have video capabilities makes for a more engaging experience and facilitates greater participation.

SWD sent out a survey to understand the type of ESJ training members have already had to help shape what ESJ coverage will best serve the group's needs.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 1:03pm.