

King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee
July 21, 2017 - 9:00 a.m. to 11:25 a.m.
King Street Center 8th Floor Conference Center

Meeting Minutes

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>King County Staff</u>	<u>Others</u>
Elly Bunzendahl	Jamey Barker	Vihn Luong, Zero Waste Vashon
Joe Casalini	Jenny Devlin	Dwight Miller, Parametrix
Gib Dammann	Jeff Gaisford	Clue Westmoreland, Cedar Grove
Jean Garber, Chair	Beth Humphreys	
David Hill	Morgan John	
Kevin Kelly, Vice Chair	Pat McLaughlin	
Ken Marshall	Meg Moorehead	
Barbara Ristau	Yolanda Pon	
	Olivia Robinson	
	Terra Rose	
	Eben Sutton	

Minutes:

SWAC reviewed the minutes from May and June meetings. The May minutes were approved by unanimous consent. Chair Garber submitted an amendment to her comments in the June minutes regarding a consultant hire. There were no objections to the June minutes as amended and they were approved.

Updates

SOLID WASTE DIVISION (SWD)

Half of King County schools enrolled in Green Schools Program

The Green Schools Program has served a growing number of schools each year – from 70 schools in 2008 to 251 schools this year, which is half of all K-12 schools in King County outside the City of Seattle. This month the program recognized 77 schools and two school districts for meeting program criteria related to recycling, composting, and other innovative waste disposal best practices.

SWD receives historic amount in rebates

In June, SWD saw a historic high (\$42,735) in the monthly amount paid by Republic Services as a rebate against hauling costs. SWD has received a total of \$206,792 in off-setting rebates the first half of this year which is \$90K higher for the same period last year. Scrap metal is not included in this analysis as metal is hauled by Metals Express not Republic Services.

South County Recycling and Transfer Station

On June 28, the Algona City Council approved Interlocal Agreements related to the new South County Recycling and Transfer Station. The agreements are now making their way to the King County Council. We appreciate the hard work from Algona as we moved through this process.

MSWMAC Update

There were no updates provided by MSWMAC although it was mentioned that the agenda was similar. SWD staff Meg Moorehead shared the news that the City of Bellevue and King County have co-signed a letter outlining a process by which Bellevue could sign the Amended and Restated Interlocal Agreement (ILA) to remain in the regional waste management system through 2040 contingent on the cancelation of the planned 2018-19 Demand Management pilot study and initiation of siting a new recycling and transfer station in northeast King County. Division staff have met with the mayors of the four point cities who also have not signed the extended ILA, all of whom are interested in further discussions regarding extension.

Discussion following the announcement:

Ken Marshall found a 2004 report in his office left behind by his predecessor. The report was a feasibility study for siting a new northeast county transfer station. Marshall expressed frustration that this conversation is fourteen years old.

SWD staff Meg Moorehead pointed out that since the 2004 report was drafted, a lot of situations have intervened such as the recession, which was correlated with a marked decrease of tonnage and transactions against previous forecasts. There was also the matter of five cities that did not sign the extended ILA and their leaving would have further decreased projected tons and transactions. Therefore, legitimate questions were raised about whether a northeast station was needed. With the economic recovery, and regional population growth, and all 37 cities with ILAs through 2040, the conversation has come full circle and now it makes sense to build a new station.

SWD Director Pat McLaughlin also pointed out that it is important not to overbuild a system, particularly when potential host cities need assurance that all options have been thoroughly examined before making such a long-term investment. The Demand Management pilot study was one of those options, and it may have been a viable option if there were 32 cities in the regional waste management system, but that is likely no longer the case and Demand Management would be unfeasible with 37 cities in the system.

Although a lot of groundwork went into producing the 2004 northeast station siting recommendation, much of that work is outdated and many of the potential sites identified in the report are likely no longer viable. Moorehead anticipates five to six years of work, including public engagement, before a new northeast station is available. The Houghton Transfer Station will remain open until replacement capacity is made available elsewhere.

Report Back on Small Group Discussion on WPR and Collection Actions

Moorehead [presented](#) a summary of responses from the small group discussions from the June joint meeting. The responses prioritized which waste prevention, recycling, and collection

actions the division ought to undertake. All of the actions received either “sooner” or “later” status; none received “zero” which indicates that all the actions listed represent what the division and advisory committees want to do or want to keep doing. Once the Comp Plan is under public review, there will be time to discuss some of the comments submitted about the actions.

Comp Plan Presentation: Transfer Policies

Beth Humphreys, SWD, delivered a [presentation](#) on the Transfer chapter of the Comp Plan. Her presentation included a review of some of the key criteria used to determine the levels of service offered at transfer stations and a guided discussion on the policies regarding transfer stations and associated financial policies.

The decision to upgrade or relocate transfer stations depends on several factors, such as whether an existing transfer station is within a 30-minute drive for up to 90 percent of residents (not including traffic variables), if facility hours meet user demand, or if a station can compact waste to reduce transportation costs.

Currently, three transfer stations (Houghton, Algona, and Renton) were built in the 1960s and although they had recent roofing upgrades, they do not meet all levels of service standards, particularly the need for a station to have capacity to store waste for up to three days in the event of an emergency. Even under ordinary circumstances, Houghton and Algona stations also fall short of capacity for tonnage and transactions at times.

The first policy of the chapter is: *Provide solid waste services to commercial collection companies and self-haul customers at transfer stations, and to self-haul customers at drop boxes.* This portion of the presentation included slides of charts projecting tons of solid waste disposed and recycled from 2015 – 2040, as well as projections under the Demand Management pilot, and the system-wide benefits if Bellevue and the Point cities choose to remain in the system – including the elimination of the Demand Management pilot and a projected decrease in costs per ton.

A new recycling and transfer station in northeast King County is projected to manage 218,000 tons and 171,000 transactions annually by 2040 for the same area currently served by the Houghton station - cities of Kirkland, Kenmore, Lake Forest Park, Redmond, Woodinville, Bellevue, Bothell, and a portion of unincorporated area of King County. If a new northeast county station is similar to the Factoria station, it is estimated to cost \$160 million, a cost of \$0.55 per household per month. The Houghton and Renton stations will remain in operation until replacement capacity is available.

Discussion followed:

Marshall noted there are about 15 – 18 commercial trucks with full loads who visit the Bow Lake station from the Houghton service area because that station is open at 6:00 a.m. Kevin Kelly figured there are also usually 5 trucks from Issaquah that go to Bow Lake in the morning. Marshall mentioned many would prefer to go earlier as some haulers start collections at 2:00 a.m. He indicated that they would go to the Factoria station if it were open earlier. There was a question as to whether the Factoria station’s opening time was dictated by the division’s permit with the city and a noise ordinance

issue. SWAC Chair Jean Garber suggested the division keep the haulers' early morning delivery needs in mind when choosing a site for the new northeast station.

The second policy: *Provide solid waste transfer services in the urban and rural areas of the county based on local and facility conditions and interlocal agreements with King County cities.* An action proposed by the division to support this policy is: After the two new stations are sited, the division will conduct service level assessments to determine if additional capacity is needed in the rural areas and may consider siting needs to site facilities in these areas.

The third policy: *Work with cities and communities to develop mitigation measures for impacts related to the construction, operation, and maintenance of transfer facilities, as allowed by applicable local, state, and federal laws.*

The fourth policy: *Incorporate green building principles and practices in all new transfer facilities and seek a Platinum rating in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification process.* The division is proposing to update the language of this policy to read: *"Build, maintain and operate Solid Waste Division facilities with the highest green building and sustainable development practices."* The new language is in keeping with the County's Strategic Climate Action Plan and the County's Green Building Ordinance.

Discussion followed:

Gib Dammann asked if this policy meant the division was committed to taking potential reuse materials at transfer stations, citing that he knows contractors who haul construction and demolition waste (C&D) who feel uneducated, tied down, and have less choice as to where they drop off materials. Moorehead clarified this policy is about construction standards for the building of facilities owned by the division, and that there are separate policies regarding C&D, and there are dozens of private companies in King County that accept C&D materials. The new proposed policy language reflects the division's desire to follow the county's Green Building ordinance and potentially earn certification from LEED, the Living Building Challenge, Salmon Safe, and other green certification programs beyond transfer station facilities alone.

The fifth policy: *Provide for collection of recyclable materials at transfer facilities – recognizing resource limitations, availability of markets, and service area needs – focusing on maximum diversion of recyclables from the waste stream and on materials that are not easily recycled at the curb or through a readily available producer or retailer-provided program.*

Currently, eight of the ten stations and drop boxes collect recyclables and Factoria will do so in a couple of months. In support of this effort, the division incentivizes recycling by not charging for many recyclables and by having lower disposal fees for others (such as yard waste). To allow for more materials to be collected, the division is using compactors to increase capacity, and decrease associated storage and transportation costs. The division is also exploring adding equipment at stations to capture more high-value materials, such as sorting lines or screens to help divert materials, and anaerobic digestion to process organics and capture gas.

The sixth and final proposed transfer station policy is new to the updated Comp Plan: *Maintain a public and private mix of solid waste transfer and processing facilities.* This language is from

the Transfer Plan and as this is how the solid waste system is currently managed and performing satisfactorily, there was no dispute or concerns raised.

No other questions or comments were put forward for discussion.

Comp Plan Presentation: Finance Policies

Moorehead [presented](#) a handout summarizing a proposed reorganization of the Comp Plan's finance policies. Beginning with the creation of four finance categories, the existing 17 policies are now either revised policies or were converted into actions.

The updated finance policies and actions support the division's Finance Goal: *Keep tipping fees as low as reasonable, while covering the cost of effectively managing the system, protecting the environment, encouraging recycling, and providing service to customers.*

The proposed finance policies and actions are divided into four categories:

- Setting Customer Fees
- Use of Solid Waste Funds
- Solid Waste Fund Structure and Management
- Operations and Capital Project Financing

There was only one comment during the presentation:

Kelly asked about the thinking behind maintaining a 30-day reserve fund. Moorehead explained it is a matter of resiliency, a cushion in the event of an earthquake or a situation when haulers and trucks cannot move easily around the county.

Discussion of Third Party Review

McLaughlin opened the discussion noting the updated Comp Plan comes at a time when the division is contemplating the long-term disposal needs of the region. The division itself has over 50 years of expert experience managing a landfill so there are very few gaps in the division's understanding of that system of waste management. While the division does not export waste, there is some familiarity with waste export systems because it has been studied in the past and other Puget Sound jurisdictions that export share their information. As for managing a Waste to Energy (WTE) system, such as mass incineration, the division's knowledge is limited to literature reviews, of which there are many and they have been poured over by division staff. Yet, there are gaps in the division's knowledge base. McLaughlin stated it is essential to the Comp Plan and the question of long-term disposal options that the division is absolutely confident in its selection.

Normandeu Associates was contracted in early June by the division through an existing Washington state contract to provide the division a report that will identify the best WTE system for King County's consideration. McLaughlin pointed out that Normandeu does not operate WTE plants. Their report is expected in early September and there will be earlier information about operational, environmental, and financial parameters for a range of options. Their recommendation will be compared against what the division knows about landfilling and waste export.

Comments followed:

Marshall asked if the Division was behind the curve, since one of the King County Council members is already giving a presentation on incineration. McLaughlin said the purpose of the third-party review is to add to the Division's knowledge of waste-to-energy.

Gib Damman said that waste-to-energy can mean many things, including composting, anaerobic digestion, etc., and recommended that we use the term incineration in the third-party review.

Kevin Kelly said what King County has at the Cedar Hills Landfill is waste to energy – what the third-party review is looking at is mass burn.

Damman asked about the nature of the feedstock to be incinerated, expressing hope that the material would not be organic or recyclable. McLaughlin affirmed that the county's priority is to preserve its values of waste prevention and resource recovery; therefore, Normandeau has been instructed to reflect these county values in the study.

Garber said that the poor writing in the third-party review scope of work, as well as errors such as saying there are 34 cities that partner with King County for solid waste services, calls into question the consultant's ability to do the required work.

Garber said the third-party review consultant wouldn't get accurate information on rail capacity by contacting the railroads. Only the owners of the large regional landfills in eastern WA and OR can get that information, because they have a special relationship with the railroads. Joe Casalini agreed.

Garber asked Pat McLaughlin if he had called his counterpart in Metro Vancouver, B.C. to find out why, after a 3-year politically divisive process to site an incinerator, Metro decided not to do so and some Metro solid waste is being transported by rail to an eastern WA landfill. McLaughlin said no he had not contacted Metro.

Several SWAC members expressed concern that what McLaughlin previously had characterized as a study of disposal options was primarily a study of waste-to-energy (i.e. incineration) options.

Several SWAC members questioned the high cost for the contract, which McLaughlin said was \$233,000. McLaughlin said drivers of the cost included the short notice, anticipated rigor, and the tight timeline driven by the Comp Plan update.

Ristau questioned why the third-party review couldn't be done in-house.

Garber said she thought the most important question for the Division Director is why SWAC had no opportunity to provide input into the scope of work for the third-party review.

Open Forum

Closing comments included a concern the long-term disposal discussion is not going to be truly objective given timeline and lack of transparency.