

**King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee  
November 17, 2017 - 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.  
King Street Center 8th Floor Conference Center**

Draft Meeting Minutes

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>King County Staff</b>	<b>Others</b>
April Atwood – Vice Chair	Jamey Barker	Heather Trim, Zero Waste Washington
Elly Bunzendahl	William Chen	Sue Sander
Joe Casalini	Jeff Gaisford	Phillip Schmidt- Pathmann, NEOMER
Gib Dammann	Beth Humphreys	Ian Sutton, Parametrix
Karen Dawson	Morgan John	
Jean Garber	Pat McLaughlin	
Kevin Kelly – Chair	Meg Moorehead	
Phillippa Kassoover	Terra Rose	
Keith Livingston	Katherine Taylor	
Ken Marshall	Kim van Ekstrom	
Stephen Strader	Dorian Waller	
Penny Sweet		

**Introductions**

Pat McLaughlin introduced Dorian Waller, SWD’s new Government Relations Administrator.

**Minutes**

Jean Garber made a motion to make three edits to the October SWAC minutes. All edits were to comments made by Jean Garber. She handed out her suggested edits, listed here:

1. Page 2, last paragraph, second sentence. Replace that sentence with:  
Garber said the Green Fence issue a while ago didn’t seem to affect local haulers, because their recyclables were clean.
2. Page 5, third paragraph, sixth sentence. Replace that sentence and the rest of the paragraph with:  
Garber said sites cannot be limited to Kirkland, because SEPA requires that the county look at alternative sites. She said it would make sense to determine the centroid of waste generation in the NE area, which is probably Redmond, and find sites that reduce travel distances. She said the division may get pushback from Redmond and Woodinville, and may have to go through EIS appeals, including a Superior Court appeal. Garber said as project manager for numerous siting studies, she knows that by complying with the law and involving the public, you can get through the siting process.
3. Page 7, last paragraph, last full sentence (beginning with “Garber asked”), replace that sentence with:  
Garber asked if the consultant had asked owners of potential waste-export landfills about rail capacity and greenhouse gas emissions, because the landfill owners could provide site-specific answers.

MSWMAC Chair Penny Sweet didn't recall comments regarding the "centroid" of waste generation or a Redmond-focused assessment. Garber was certain that she made the comments; they were critical to the point she was making.

Pat McLaughlin noted that we all could be more eloquent in how we speak. It's OK to go back and capture what was said, but not how it was said. Garber agrees, and is seeking accuracy here. She also noted that in the minutes, SWD comments are written in great detail, while SWAC members' comments are not detailed.

McLaughlin wanted clarification on Page 7 of the October minutes regarding why there would be a difference if the Division asks questions versus consultants asking the questions – what's the difference? Garber stated that waste-to-energy proponents wrote the Disposal Options report, and she asked why the waste-export industry wasn't asked to write their portion. Sue Sanders (formerly of Normandeau Associates) identified herself as part of the disposal options research team, stated that the team did contact the waste export industry, and did include that input in the report. Garber stated her appreciation for that comment.

A motion to approve the October 2017 SWAC minutes with Garber's edits was made and seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Penny Sweet recommended recording advisory committee meetings rather than taking written minutes. She called it "unfair" to staff taking minutes. McLaughlin responded that there are pros and cons to audio recording, but SWD will look into it.

## **Updates**

### **SOLID WASTE DIVISION (SWD)**

#### **Bellevue Signed ILA**

Pat McLaughlin noted that the City of Bellevue signed the interlocal agreement (ILA) to remain in the King County solid waste system through 2040. Yarrow Point signed too. Clyde Hill, Hunts Point, and Medina also indicated their intent to sign.

#### **Demand Management**

McLaughlin noted that the Demand Management Pilot is cancelled.

#### **Weather Impacts**

A strong storm with wind and rain caused limited erosion at some newly-planted slopes at Cedar Hills. Erosion impacts were quickly corrected. In addition, the Houghton Transfer Station lost power and closed for about 1 hour.

#### **South County Recycling and Transfer Station Program**

The King County Council approved the 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2 interlocal agreements with the City of Algona regarding the new South County station. This moves us along toward the new station. The procurement process is well underway.

McLaughlin asked if there were any questions on the SWD update; there were none.

## Comp Plan Presentation

Moorehead provided a summary of SWAC and MSWMAC review comments of the draft Comp Plan. There were 187 substantive comments. Chapters are largely in the same format. Changes are relatively limited so it's not a wholly new document. Goals, policies, and actions are what we are focusing on today. SWD's hope today is to get to the point where committees can agree to, or at least not oppose, releasing a draft to the public for a broader review.

Chair Kelly reminded the group that the goal now is not to seek perfection but to agree that the draft Comp Plan is ready for public review. It doesn't need to be a perfect document at this point but it should be good enough to allow the public to weigh in.

Moorehead noted that if the committee agrees today that the draft plan is ready for public review, there may be no need for a December meeting. She explained that there will be numerous future opportunities for Comp Plan review and comments.

SWD staff Beth Humphreys continued the presentation on committee comments and responses. The "Responsiveness Summary" prepared by SWD includes the 187 comments, who made the comment, and the answer to the comment. The answer includes whether a change was made in response to the comment. In response to a concern that 2014 recycling data is too old, Humphreys explained that it's the latest available from Ecology. It takes time to assemble because it includes data from across the Washington waste industry including private processors state-wide. SWD will update the Plan with available data before the Plan goes to Council for adoption. Based on comments received from committee members, the following changes to the goals, policies and actions were made:

- New Policy FD-4 "Continue to monitor new and emerging technologies to identify opportunities for their use in managing solid waste and recyclables."
- Chapter 4 Goal: refined the hierarchy of approaches to put product stewardship above recycling and composting
- Policy S-7 changed efficient collection policy to say "promoting equitable service" instead of "creating equity"
- Removed Action 29-s RE: material recovery facilities (moved to New Action 8-t in Transfer chapter)
- Chapter 5: moved Material Recovery Facilities action from Sustainable chapter to Action 8-t
- Added Action 12-t "Provide transfer capacity in the Northeast service area to meet future needs"
- Chapter 7: Policy F-2 reverted back to original 2013 plan language about retaining the same fees at all facilities
- Added Action 16-f "When possible manage solid waste rates through smaller, more frequent increases which in combination with the rate stabilization reserve, smooths rate increases over time."

Karen Dawson inquired about criteria for including or not including comments in the Responsiveness Summary. Humphreys responded that if a comment warrants substantive

changes, it is included in the Responsiveness Summary. Text clarification comments may be reflected in the public review draft even if not listed in the Responsiveness Summary.

Moorehead continued with a discussion of Chapter 6, Disposal. There were no changes to policies or comments. Moorehead summarized the three long-term disposal options: additional capacity at Cedar Hills; Waste-to-Energy (WTE); and waste export. Costs, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and recycling rates were emphasized as criteria for comparing the options, but other criteria are used too. Reviewers proposed various logistical criteria including siting considerations. Regarding GHG emissions, two different models are used for estimating emissions: the Waste Reduction Model (WARM) and the Greenhouse Gas Mandatory Reporting Rule (MRR).

- WARM is used to look at lifecycle emissions and off-sets;
- MRR is used to measure annual emissions.

Why can each give different emissions forecasts? Because WARM considers off-sets from actions such as displacement of fossil fuels by landfill-derived natural gas, which can provide for a negative value. In addition, organics, when buried, hold the carbon, rather than releasing it (called carbon sequestration).

Garber commented that GHG modeling applies differently to different organics types. Also, she said it's primarily the petroleum-based plastics that have the largest impact on carbon-sequestration – and are also the most potent and desirable fuel for an incinerator.

Moorehead explained that the MRR model estimates yearly emissions from all waste disposed at Cedar Hills over the prior 50 years, not future emissions. It's an imperfect model for choosing future disposal options but is an accepted standard for reporting yearly emissions to regulators. While both GHG models have their faults, they give us a relative comparison of each disposal option: landfill has the lowest emissions while WTE has the highest.

Garber commented that of the three options, landfilling has obvious advantages, if additional disposal cells are available. When will a preferred alternative be offered? Moorehead responded that after public comment, the Executive Proposed Comp Plan will include a disposal recommendation. Garber noted that regional rail system will reach capacity around 2030. Given the importance of rail for both WTE and waste export, King County should look ahead and encourage added rail capacity in advance before there is a shortage. 2030 is close as far as building new capacity. Action is needed now. King County could convene other organizations to speak as part of a block of steady good customers.

Keith Livingston requested a review of how SWD plans to structure the upcoming public review. Kim van Ekstrom, SWD's Communications Supervisor, described the following digital, written, and face-to-face methods:

- Open-house style public meetings;
- Briefings with different jurisdictions as requested;
- Lots of information on SWD's website;
- Videos and online engagement through Peak Democracy;
- Prompting questions to encourage consistent conversations;

- Handouts;
- Postings on various social media;
- Presentations and information at unincorporated neighborhood meetings; and
- Outreach to cities (with request of them to help inform public of engagement opportunities).

Keith Livingston asked if SWD will share those materials with advisory committees before releasing to the public. Van Ekstrom responded that Meg Moorehead leads this project and will address that request if time allows. Karen Dawson asked where the 3 public meetings would be held. Van Ekstrom and Moorehead responded that meetings would likely be held in public libraries, one each in east, north, and south King County. Livingston commented that the timetable is important but it is most important to get information out to the public and all reviewers. We need to prepare for people who are opposed to anything. The presentation needs to reflect the idea of “objective neutrality”. People will react based on asking “what’s in it for me?” and “how will it impact me?”

Moorehead provided a quick review of Chapter 6 slides including the chapter structure, next steps, and other sections of the chapter including emerging technologies, closed landfills, illegal dumping, and emergency disposal.

Moorehead then explained the “Comp Plan Adoption Timeline” slide and next steps including additional opportunities for comments on the draft plan. The 60-day public review period and the 120-day Ecology review period begin on the same day in early January. Ecology reviews the document for consistency with state law and relevant state initiatives. The upcoming public and Ecology reviews help to shape the next draft for executive and council review.

Committee members may comment on the draft as individuals during the public review period, the committee may write a recommendation to the County after considering public comments, and may make comments during County Council and Regional Policy Committee (RPC) consideration of the plan, and during City review of the plan.

Moorehead initiated a discussion on whether the plan is ready for public review, and encouraged members to think in terms of the substantive fundamentals of the plan. There may be varying levels of support, but can the group approve the plan for the next phase of review? She asked committee leadership for guidance on a process for formal approval. Chair Kelly asked if there were any questions from the group.

Ken Marshall asked how we can approve the plan with so much uncertainty from world changes in the recyclables export market. Restrictions from China (called the China National Sword) in particular are impacting recycling collection already and may impact recycling rates and landfill disposal rates. Pat McLaughlin responded that it’s a valid point and the uncertainty is an absolute risk. There are unknowns regarding the China export policy. The two largest recycling processing companies claim to have markets for the recyclables, but regardless we need to be forward-thinking for our region. Over the last 5 years, there have been various uncertainties that postponed an updated Comp Plan. We’ve delayed in order to study and resolve unknowns, but then other unknowns arise. As long as our policy framework gives us flexibility to adapt to changes, we should proceed, and we can always amend if needed.

Marshall pointed out that this is on a significant, world-wide scale, not just on the local county level. Penny Sweet stated that she agrees with Marshall's concerns and the recycling situation needs attention on a world-wide scale. However every jurisdiction needs this kind of plan, it needs a guiding document to help respond to changes, technology, people, community, and new solutions. The Plan isn't perfect, but it isn't done either – it's time to share it with others who may be able to offer solutions. Marshall answered that if the committees can't predict the effects on global recycling markets, how can we expect the public to respond, when most have little awareness of international commodity situations?

Gib Dammann suggested that the Plan can be a path to seeking more information and more research. The region will build on this plan, and it will have a flexible, dynamic nature to it. Jeff Gaisford noted that the plan includes a recommendation to monitor materials and markets. We may even be able to update portions of the plan before the final version is issued. Marshall noted that local landfill capacity is limited now, even with the existing recycling rate. Additional materials returned to the landfill will further reduce that capacity. Garber stated her agreement with both Marshall and Sweet. We need to move the plan forward, and recognize that there may be waste challenges ahead.

Sweet stated the real goal here is to reduce material going to the landfill. So even if the recycling markets change, there are other strategies besides the 70% goal. We need to think about waste prevention including working with manufacturers, reducing or re-thinking packaging, and supporting product stewardship.

Karen Dawson noted that the Washington State Recycling Association is hosting a forum on China's National Sword policy in Federal Way on Dec 6<sup>th</sup>. The City of Seattle held a policy forum on measuring recycling goals on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. SWD needs to lead too. Increasing education is best, and it needs to be an ongoing process, not an endpoint.

Keith Livingston noted that plans are challenging for anyone to make. At its basic purpose, planning is a drive to behavioral change. Plans prod all to grow. We can accommodate change. It's time to release the Plan to the public, but acknowledge possible changing terms. Elly Bunzendahl commented that the plan is ready for public review but perhaps SWD needs "targeted asks" for various review groups to get the most meaningful contribution from each group. That may help focus each user groups' review. Moorehead answered that we will incorporate this type of approach.

April Atwood requested more balanced discussion of the 3 disposal options. Chapter 6 is probably the most important chapter, with huge impacts. There is much emphasis on WTE, and little on waste export. Many challenges are listed for waste export, but few for WTE. The Plan needs more "fair and balanced" coverage of each; "equally robust" coverage for all options.

Chair Kelly stated that the National Sword policy is a big deal, and we need to take it seriously even though we don't understand the implications of what China is doing. The World Trade Organization is involved, and it will need continuing attention. The Comp Plan will guide us through this time, and help us respond to changes. The Plan is not perfect but worthy for public release. We should expect comments from the public, especially on WTE.

Keith Livingston wanted to follow on Atwood's last comment: The Plan suggests a strong bias for WTE, perhaps because we understand it the least. Perhaps there's so much written on WTE to reduce that uncertainty? We need to give the public equal emphasis on all options including information on WTE and the benefits of other options too. The Plan is a static description of a point in time. We should go forward knowing we will have to update information.

Sweet moved to approve the plan as ready for public review, and Dammann seconded. Livingston wished to clarify, and moved that we accept it as presented, not approve or recommend anything. Sweet seconded. Chair Kelly, for further clarification, asked if the group is accepting the current draft as presented for public review and an EIS.

Bunzendahl asked about the yellow box in Chapter 6. Moorehead responded that the yellow box is going away. Bunzendahl asked if there will be other changes before January. Moorehead stated that the plan will receive final editing to remove typos and ensure text consistency and clarity. Bunzendahl asked about "data refinements" that were indicated in the yellow boxes in Chapter 6. McLaughlin and Moorehead responded that all of the data refinements are completed.

Phillippa Kassover emphasized that the public needs a fair chance to weigh in during their review time. Subject matter experts need to stand back. Chair Kelly agreed. Moorehead clarified that we will still accept comments from committee members during the public review period, but any comments will be considered as public comments, not committee comments. Kassover continued that it's easy for the public to defer to experts. If so, the impact of their review time is diminished. All need to be reminded of that. Jean Garber followed that no one including committee members should use public meetings as a venue for advocacy.

April Atwood asked for clarification on next steps: When do the committees see the plan again? Moorehead responded that there will be many more chances for review; during the public review time, county council/RPC review, and during the city review time. Jean Garber asked who will be presenting at the public meetings. Moorehead responded that SWD staff will present in an un-intimidating format. Keith Livingston spoke regarding presentation materials: will there be paper copies of materials for the public review? Is it possible to create a brief executive summary? Can members get a hard copy of the review plan? SWD staff will have hard copies but members won't necessarily. Moorehead stated that hard copies will be available at libraries and at public meetings. McLaughlin noted that there is still lots in development: summary briefings, synopses of key issues, and frequently asked questions (FAQ) handouts. Karen Dawson asked if there will be multi-lingual options for engaging more of the public. Moorehead stated that SWD will follow county guidelines, will publish FAQs in Spanish, and will have a portal on the website for increased access of other languages.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the draft Comp Plan as presented for public review. Most voted in favor of the motion, none opposed, and one abstained.

Penny Sweet expressed her appreciation for the SWAC group, it's the heart and soul of the regional solid waste community, and she especially wanted to acknowledge Beth Humphreys and Meg Moorehead.

### **Open Forum**

Phillip Schmidt-Pathmann wished to comment on the preparation of the Disposal Options report, as he was a member of the consultant team.

Regarding the need for a rail point, Hamburg Germany has WTE, successful recycling programs, and strategies to integrate by-products. There is no need for any rail export there.

Regarding GHG emissions, Schmidt-Pathmann stated that WARM is not EPA-recommended and doesn't adequately address a lot of points. Many experts are supporting other international GHG models. In independent studies, he said that WTE comes out ahead of landfilling in GHG emissions. International experts state that the best model is a 60% recycling rate and 40% WTE. Schmidt-Pathmann clarified that he is not affiliated with or paid by the WTE industry – he simply wants the best solution for the region. Owing to a lack of accurate information regarding disposal options, he recommends waiting to release the plan, it should not move forward yet.

Jean Garber responded that Germany and the Netherlands import waste from the Balkan states to feed their incinerators: she questioned the recycling rates in the communities that provide this waste. She stated that rail is needed here, even if not in other places, for ash disposal and bypass waste.

Kevin Kelly adjourned the meeting.