

**King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee
May 18, 2018 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
King Street Center 8th Floor Conference Center**

Meeting Minutes

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>King County Staff</u>	<u>Others</u>
April Atwood - Vice Chair	Jennifer Devlin	Jessica Beanum-Zwick, Resident
Elly Bunzendahl	Jeff Gaisford	Cynthia Foley, Sound Cities Association
Karen Dawson	Beth Humphreys	Karl Hufnagel, Parametrix
Kim Kaminski	Kathy Lambert	Seth Little, 8DR
Phillippa Kassover	Ross Marzolf	Dwight Miller, Parametrix
Kevin Kelly - Chair	Meg Moorehead	Phillip Schmidt-Pathmann, NEOMER
Keith Livingston	Pat D. McLaughlin	Janet Prichard, Republic
Ken Marshall	Eben Sutton	Sue Sander
Barbara Ristau	Yolanda Pon	
Stephen Strader	Terra Rose	
Penny Sweet	Dorian Waller	
	John Walsh	

Minutes

The April SWAC minutes were approved as drafted following a motion made by Penny Sweet and seconded by Ken Marshall.

Updates

Solid Waste Division (SWD)

SWD Director Pat D. McLaughlin gave the following SWD updates:

8th Floor Conference Room

Staff from SWD met with an audio engineer this week to discuss possible wiring solutions to replace the frequently malfunctioning battery-operated tabletop microphones in the 8th Floor Conference Room at King Street Center.

Interlocal Agreements (ILAs)

The Town of Yarrow Point has signed the 37th and final ILA. All the ILAs have been extended to 2040.

Sound Cities Association (SCA)

McLaughlin participated in the Recycling Revisited forum at the Sound Cities Association. The focus of the forum was China’s “National Sword” policy and how stakeholders such as Solid Waste, haulers, and cities are and will work together to address the policy locally. In related news, King County Council staff Terra Rose gave a thorough report on the situation during the Committee on the Whole meeting this week where there was a little media attention as well.

Green Schools

The King County Green Schools Program, which helps K-12 schools and school districts engage students and employees in learning about and practicing resource conservation, recognized eight schools this month for increasing recycling, conserving energy and water, and reducing food waste and paper use.

Schools from 35 King County cities and unincorporated areas are reducing waste, increasing recycling, conserving resources, and cutting costs with help from the King County Green Schools Program. The program provides hand-on help and the tools that schools need, such as recycling containers, signs, and guidance for school teams to make improvements.

The program has served a growing number of schools each year – from 70 schools in 2008 to 270 schools currently, which is 54 percent of all K-12 schools in King County outside the City of Seattle. Contact Jeff Gaisford for additional information.

Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee (MSWMAC)

MSWMAC Chair Penny Sweet reported that so far today's meeting is parallel to last week's MSWMAC meeting which included a deep and engaged discussion. Phillippa Kassover, another SWAC representative member of MSWMAC, said it was a long and consequential meeting, which she clarified to say the topics discussed at that meeting will have consequences on the future of solid waste management.

China Sword (Responsible Recycling Task Force)

Jeff Gaisford, SWD's Recycling and Environmental Services section manager, reported on the progress of the Responsible Recycling Task Force, among whose members include SWAC members Ken Marshall, Phillippa Kassover, Penny Sweet, April Atwood, and Kevin Kelly. Other members include representatives from ten cities, the three major haulers in the region (Recology, Republic Services, Waste Management) and the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC).

The task force has two goals. The first is to help identify near, medium and long-term actions in response to reduction in export markets for mixed recyclable materials due to China's National Sword. The second is to help establish commitment across the region to responsible recycling and domestic sorting and/or processing of curbside recyclables. The outcome of the task force is expected to be a report with recommendations for future actions.

The task force will meet monthly through October. They will prioritize materials that have value and stable markets, discuss how to collect materials in ways that don't damage other valuable commodities, work with haulers and MRFs to make sure that materials can be sorted effectively before adding them to the list, and how discuss to aim for "market-ready" bales vs. "mixed" bales.

They will focus on quality vs. quantity, regional policy alignment, harmonized messaging, and how to pay for recycling. They will also discuss domestic processing and markets and the demand for recyclable materials. There will also be decisions about the need to measure "real recycling;" meaning measuring what gets sent to the end markets, not what gets put in the bin.

Additionally, they discussed communications and created a sub-group to create a tool kit and public information campaign. The City of Seattle and the Solid Waste Division said they would commit resources to the campaign. Copies of meeting notes have been distributed to SWAC members.

The next two task force meetings are scheduled for June 1 and June 18 where they expect to discuss communications and immediate issues.

Ken Marshall added that while he considers himself knowledgeable on waste management, he learned a lot at the task force meeting and found it enlightening. He thanks SWAC for allowing him to be part of the process. Sweet thanked Marshall for contributing his perspective and agreed it was a good discussion. Sweet also stated the task force needs to remain mission-focused and know when to leave some stuff at the door. She said this task force is an opportunity for everyone to work together toward

eliminating differences so there is the same process for responsible recycling in every city. Kim Kaminski gave kudos to the taker of the task force meeting notes, they were very detailed and easy to follow.

'19 – '20 rates

John Walsh, SWD staff, delivered a [presentation](#) about the preliminary rate proposal and shared the expectation the County Executive will transmit the rate proposal to the King County Council in June. To meet UTC and city billing system update deadlines, Council should act by end of September. If approved, the rate would take effect in January.

The current basic fee of \$134.59 per ton has been in place since 2017. The proposed rate of \$140.82 would go into effect in 2019. This 4.6% increase is lower than what was projected in the last rate proposal, lower than inflation, and in the middle of the range of fees for other local jurisdictions. It would be an increase of \$0.34 per month for a single-family curbside customer based on a \$22 monthly bill. Marshall asked for the size of the trash container used to figure the projected single-family rate impact. Walsh said 32-gallon.

Keith Livingston wanted more information about the rates charged in other jurisdictions; was the disparity due to some agencies being more efficient with their revenues than others or what was it about their overhead that was so uniquely different. Marshall noted there are more self-haulers in Snohomish and Pierce counties than in King County. Meg Moorehead said there are different costs associated with the different waste management systems: Seattle recoups some of their revenues in collection, SWD's tipping fees pay for everything, and Pierce County's system is largely privatized. She noted SWD has more transfer stations than Snohomish County but those stations make routes more efficient for haulers.

The proposed rate increase would pay for inflation and other increased costs of current services, comp plan driven projects, infrastructure, and meeting increased demand and County goals including piloting a \$12 low-income discount for transfer station self-haulers. Kassover asked how people would qualify for the low-income rate. Walsh said if customers show their ORCA Lift, EBT, or Medicare cards to the scale house operator when they pay for their loads, they will get the discount. Kaminski asked about the timing of getting both the draft Comp Plan and the proposed rate increase approved by Council. Moorehead said both proposals have significant overlap in Council; they will have the Comp Plan in late July and the rate proposal in late June.

Elly Bunzendahl asked if SWD anticipates any opposition to the rate proposal in Council. Moorehead said Council staff have been in attendance to these advisory committee meetings so they are aware of the proposals and most focus so far has been in regard to the Comp Plan driven decisions. Bunzendahl noted a \$0.34 a month increase is tiny compared to everything else so it does not seem like there would be much opposition. Moorehead said she thinks it is a good proposal and hopes there is support for it. Kassover asked if anyone considered the unintended consequences of people doing more self-hauling than participating in curbside collection in order to get the discount. Walsh noted they would not save very much money doing that, noting it is likely most of the recipients of the low income rate live in multi-family housing and are not likely to have curbside service. Kassover said she was thinking of rural customers. Walsh said the low income rate is a pilot project so the division will have to adapt if they see it becoming a problem.

Comp Plan

Disposal Beyond 2028

Moorehead [presented](#) an update on the draft Comp Plan. The draft plan had three options for disposal after built capacity at Cedar Hills is exhausted in approximately 2028: build additional capacity at Cedar Hills, export via rail (export) to an out of county landfill, and build a waste to energy facility (WTE) in King County. All three are viable. Since the draft plan was released additional cities have signed ILA. That

combined with a burgeoning economy and increasing population have resulted in a higher tonnage forecast. All three of the disposal options are affected by the updated forecast.

WTE is a viable technology. In addition to decreasing the volume of materials to be disposed it produces electricity to off-set some of its costs. However, it is more expensive per ton and has higher greenhouse gas impacts than other options. Though WTE is a proven technology, the updated forecast means a facility that handles up to an unprecedented 5000 ton per day would be needed. Facilities that large are being constructed in China and Dubai but are not yet in operation and there are risks associated with upsizing technologies. Siting a WTE facility in King County could also be challenging.

Export also has a higher cost per ton than landfilling. Although it is a viable option, there are risks associated with rail capacity.

Stephen Strader asked in regards to greenhouse gasses (GHG), at what point do you stop considering measuring them, when they cross a border such as when it is exported, or after the lifetime of the waste. Moorehead said GHG is measured differently in the two models shown in the Comp Plan, but the lifecycle-oriented WARM models shows one base year's emissions after considering up to 100 years of a material's lifecycle. The WARM model considers offsets (such as displacement of fossil fuel-derived natural gas with renewable landfill-derived natural gas) and off-site transportation emissions, and that is how landfilling can be interpreted to have negative emissions. No models are perfect, but they do offer a comparison of the relative emissions from the disposal options. McLaughlin said SWD needs to use the EPA models since they are the main regulators of the industry but the division is also engaging with national experts in hopes of further understanding SWD's actual GHG footprint. Barbara Ristau asked why the wide range of projected GHG emissions from WTE (12,000 – 80,000 MTCO_{2e}). Moorehead said the figures came from the 2017 Normandeau WTE study, where the upper estimate was based on SWD's 2015 waste characterization study and the lower estimate based on a different mix of waste types.

Livingston said the division could have a remediation program such as planting a sufficient trees a year. Moorehead said the Department of Natural Resources and Parks has a goal to be carbon neutral and planting trees is a part of that effort. Livingston said the cost of remediation should be measured against the benefit to society. He asked why SWD would build a WTE facility to take in 5,000 tons a day. Moorehead said tonnage projections predict SWD will need capacity to handle that much waste in 20 years.

The division anticipates the Executive will recommend adding capacity to the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill as the disposal method for beyond 2028. The advantage of that choice includes the lowest cost per ton, most favorable GHG emissions, managing the waste locally and taking advantage of the division's experience in operating and managing landfills. This option garners as much value as possible from an existing local asset. Kassoer pointed out one of the risks of the landfill option is that it is only a short term solution whereas the other two options could provide a solution for longer term. Moorehead agreed but noted the WTE solution would need to be revisited in 20 years when tons in the regional system would exceed the capacity of the initial 5,000 ton per day facility. McLaughlin acknowledged the landfill option provides disposal for only about 12 additional years, with another method needed after that. Marshall said he knows of WTE facilities that have functioned for 50 years with maintenance; he also suggested the recycling rate associated with WTE could be higher if there was a recycling facility located nearby. He asked if the division considered a combination of the disposal methods such as WTE and landfill expansion. Moorehead said she did not mean to imply WTE would go away after 20 years, just that the capacity of the initial facility could be exceeded by then and either a new/expanded WTE facility or other option would be needed for the additional tons. The division evaluated parallel operation of multiple disposal methods (such as local landfill operation plus export) but considered the combination too costly.

With any option, 2028 is approaching quickly. A disposal decision must be in place when existing capacity is full. The proposed landfill expansion is expected to last until 2038 under the updated tonnage forecast. The expanded landfill could last longer if recycling rates improve, or fill up as much as 6 months sooner if more tons are disposed as a result of China's recent restrictions on import of recyclables. Marshall said by 2040 when there is no more option to landfill, SWD will be over a barrel in regards to contract negotiations with railroad owners; he suggested if SWD got a long-term contract with them earlier, costs might be better. Moorehead said there is initial indication that railroads might be moving to shorter term contracts for transport of materials such as garbage.

Transfer Services

The draft Comp Plan had three options for transfer station services in the northeast part of the county: Keep Houghton "As-Is," site and build a new facility, or use a combination of facilities.

In the 2007 Transfer Station Plan, regional partners agreed to a system design that included new stations at Shoreline, Bow Lake, Factoria, Algona and a new NE county station to replace Houghton. All those stations are completed or underway except Houghton. The public review draft comp plan reconsidered whether Houghton needed to be updated. As with long term disposal, the circumstances have changed. Now there are 37 cities in the system through 2040 and a projection of higher tonnage and increased population. The Northeast portion of King County is one of the fastest growing areas.

Each of the three options carries risks. Houghton "As Is" has limited recycling, little flexibility to accommodate future capacity, and host city opposition. The combo option would mean two siting processes, result in fewer recycling options, and may result in potential host city opposition. The cost for a new station would be less than a dollar a month on single family curbside bill, with both operating and capital costs included. Kirkland has offered to be a host city for a new station but under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) the door must stay open for other locations.

The division anticipates the Executive will recommend building a new Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station (NERTS.) Although it costs more than the other options, this option provides a better level of service, maximizes recycling, creates equity among urban services system wide, and is consistent with the long standing regional plan. Marshall asked why not consider a combination of keeping Houghton "as-is" for commercial haulers and direct self-haul customers to the transfer station in Factoria. Moorehead said pushing volume to Bellevue is not just a disservice to Bellevue, adding to their traffic woes, but also to the northeast customers who pay the same as everybody but are more inconvenienced.

Marshall thanked Sweet, as a council member of Kirkland, for being the host city of the Houghton transfer station all these years; he then asked since they are interested in being a host city for a new station, where would they put it. Sweet said at first, the community did not support continued hosting of the Houghton station, but acceptance has been growing and many appreciate the value of having a transfer station; some have recently toured the North Transfer Station in Seattle and were very impressed. Sweet said there are three sites under consideration, one being the location of the current facility, or in Totem Lake or the current location of the Houghton Park & Ride lot near the freeway where almost all the bus service has already been eliminated. Kassover shared that at last week's MSWMAC meeting she heard positive statements about transfer stations in communities; they become outdoor spaces and play areas. Kevin Kelly agreed the North Station is remarkable in how well it fits the neighborhood, although it cost a lot of money, it is a nice facility. Sweet noted it is also built on seven acres.

Draft EIS Responsiveness Summary

Beth Humphreys, SWD staff, [presented](#) on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Responsiveness Summary that went out for public review at the same time as the draft Comp Plan. Four of the total of five commenters also commented on the comp plan. There were over 220 Individual comments that fell into 4 categories:

- Request for further explanation, clarification or more information
- Statements/comments about subject matter
- Questions about accuracy of conclusions
- Margin notes for example underlines and circles around phrases. Unless the meaning was clear the division did not address those comments.

The Final EIS is expected to be completed in late June or early July and will be preceded by a notice of availability and a seven day appeal period. The final EIS will be part of the comp plan legislative package.

The State Department of Ecology (DOE) submitted their comments on the draft Comp Plan on May 7. The comments were largely positive and could be categorized as:

- Procedural items - for example, the need to include a letter from DOE and the UTC.
- Content items to address - for example, the need to update the section dealing with the former coordinated prevention grants which needs to change in response to legislative changes.
- Highly recommended changes - for example, updates to the UTC cost assessment, tonnage numbers, and recycling data.
- Things that would be nice - for example, suggestions for defining more terms.

DOE's positive response is a good signal they are pleased with the draft. Generally, their comments on the final Comp Plan are constrained to the areas where they provided comments on the draft. The division intends to incorporate the suggested changes from DOE in the final plan to facilitate a smooth final approval from DOE.

Kassover said DOE's recommended changes are very important. She asked if the draft Comp Plan really captures the costs of rail export; DOE wants more information about that and so does she. Kelly said SWAC specifically asked that rail costs be added to a future agenda. Bunzendahl asked if DOE will get to see the changes made to the rest of the Comp Plan. Humphreys said yes, they will get a whole copy of the revised comp plan. Moorehead said the advisory committees will also get a preliminary review of the final plan, although it won't be a perfect formal copy, by close of business Friday or on Monday; comments are due to SWD by next Friday. Livingston said he wants the Peak Democracy opinion poll scrapped. Kelly said SWC decided to transmit a formal letter to Council and the Executive with SWAC's shared opinion and call out those comments as a concern. Moorehead assured them the survey is not part of the published plan, and one of the most interesting things about it was the hundreds of ideas about recycling.

Moorehead said the Comp Plan will soon take up less space on the agenda, but coming up, advisory committee members will have options to comment on the draft Comp Plan while Council reviews it. Karen Dawson asked if the comments made between Monday and May 25 would be available to SWAC at the June meeting. Moorehead said comments and responses will be discussed at the next meeting but are not part of the responsiveness summary for formal comments made during the public comment period.

Member and Public Comment

Philipp Schmidt-Pathmann shared comments with the committee.

Steve Garrison, an interested citizen from Kirkland, said he appreciated the difficulty of modeling what with externalities and limits, as he had run models at the EPA for years. He had no dispute about the work needed to improve the waste management system. He had three points to make:

1. He thinks of the possibilities of source reduction and product stewardship to reduce the waste stream.
2. As chair of the Clean Tech Alliance, he looks at companies finding new ways to use old materials.
3. But there is no use for disposed diapers except as a high energy product that does not belong in the ground. We need to seriously consider WTE.

Respectfully submitted by: Jenny Devlin