

**King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee
February 15, 2019 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.
King Street Center 8th Floor Conference Center**

Draft Meeting Minutes

Members Present	King County Staff	Others
April Atwood – Vice Chair		Janet Pritchard, Republic
Elly Bunzendahl	Jeff Gaisford	Lane Covington, Councilmember Kathy Lambert’s office
Gib Dammann	Pat McLaughlin	John MacGillivray, City of Kirkland
Karen Dawson	Hilary Leonard	
Phillippa Kassover	Dorian Waller	
Kevin Kelly - Chair		
Keith Livingston	John Walsh	
Ken Marshall		
Stephen Strader		
Penny Sweet		
Barbara Ristau		

Minutes

Minutes of the January SWAC meeting were unanimously approved.

Public Comments

Marshall reminded the room that snow has made working conditions for drivers precarious. They are doing their absolute best to ensure waste gets picked up, however, employee safety is a top concern. Patience and understanding is needed until road conditions improve.

Updates

Solid Waste Division (SWD)

SWD Director Pat McLaughlin provided SWD updates:

Emergency proclamation

Recognizing the snow’s impact on normal operations, the County Executive issued another emergency proclamation yesterday for service hour flexibility. The proclamation gives permission to extend hours in response to hauler needs and permission to waive fees for yard waste should there be a significant increase from storm debris.

SR-99 Viaduct Closure

Closure of the Viaduct did not have a significant impact on operations. Plans for adding extra drivers and extending hours at Houghton and Cedar Hills did not turn out to be necessary. Normal operations resumed after the first week.

Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan)

The Comp Plan is reaching a few milestones. On February 27th the Regional Policy Committee (RPC) will pick it back up and is expected to take action. On March 6th the Committee of the Whole (COW) intends to bring it forward and could take action. Once they do, it will go to full council. It's critical that the Comp Plan continue forward in a timely manner because Area 8 of the landfill will only last 5 to 6 years and we must be actively preparing for the next disposal option.

The Council's waste-to-energy proviso is supported by the Executive. The proviso calls for a study of the relative costs and environmental impact of waste-to-energy options. It will pick up where the 2018 waste-to-energy study left off and will be complete by October this year.

Livingston asked about the involvement of SWAC and MSWAC in reviewing the proviso. McLaughlin responded that both committees will have an opportunity to provide comments when the study is complete. The study will help inform what waste disposal option is pursued in the long term as even a new Area 9 of the landfill would have a finite capacity.

Sweet asked if the study will look at any additional technology. Moorehead responded that the proviso allows for a broad focus but given the extensive ground work done last year on mass burn it is likely to concentrate on that.

Local News Coverage

Regional news outlets including [KING 5](#) and [Seattle Weekly](#) have been covering waste options put from in the Comp Plan and recycling. Today Gaisford and Kelly are meeting with KIRO at Recology's materials recovery facility (MRF) to continue to tell our story.

Livingston asked for an update on the status of the South County Recycling and Transfer Station (SCRTS) meetings. McLaughlin responded that the open house and design advisory meeting already happened. They were well attended and provided broad feedback on service interests.

Dammann asked about the Request for Information (RFI) process. Moorehead responded that there were 15 proposals that covered a broad range of ideas. Any effort to operationalize specifics would need to go through a Request for Qualifications (RFQ). During the RFQ, plans would be advertised and those who submitted would be notified.

Dawson noted that there is currently a virtual SCRTS [open house](#) being promoted on the SWD's webpage.

MSWAC

Sweet noted that 21 people attended the MSWAC meeting via Skype given the snow.

City of Kirkland Cart Tagging Program

Kelly introduced John MacGillivray, Solid Waste Contract Manager with the City of Kirkland and MSWAC member. MacGillivray's presentation outlined Kirkland's residential and commercial organics cart tagging program.

In 2015, the Organics Contamination Reduction Workgroup was formed to find upstream solutions for eliminating contaminants from organic feed stocks. The workgroup, made up of 100+ stakeholders, produced a thorough report of their findings. The 2017 report is available online.

Kirkland has two different tagging programs, one for multifamily and commercial and one for single family residential. Kirkland collaborated with Waste Management on a pilot program before implementing at full scale in Sept 2017.

There are two different types of collection vehicles used in Kirkland. Front loading Curotto vehicles allow drivers to observe any contaminants as the waste is transferred into the hopper. When contaminants are observed, the driver logs it in a tablet and tags the cart. The following week the driver is alerted to visually inspect the cart before dumping contents. If contamination is found, it is logged, contaminants are photographed, and the cart is not serviced. The customer is given the option to remove contaminants and pay for a second pick-up or have contents removed as garbage. After three consecutive weeks of contamination, customers must contact city staff or their cart is removed.

The process for multifamily and commercial is slightly different than single family residential. Drivers inspect the cart for contaminants prior to dumping since typically they have to walk over to the cart and pull it to the truck. There currently is not enough solid data on the multifamily/commercial program to demonstrate trends.

Since the start of the pilot in Sept 2017, 708 carts were tagged in week one. Only 13.4% of those were tagged during week two, demonstrating tagging does impact behavior. Drivers reported that the program does not slow down their routes, in fact, they feel the program's empowering. Additionally, the program does not cost a lot.

The tagging system was created in compliance with privacy issues. Each tag includes a disclaimer warning customers their cart will be inspected. City of Kirkland contact info is included for customers to reach out and ask questions. Leniency in the protocols is important to ensure customers receive and understand the messaging. To make a truly big impact and reach a critical mass, more cities and haulers will need to get onboard.

Kassover asked about the level of contamination prior to the tagging program and if any insights were gained from customer conversations during the pilot. MacGillivray responded they spent a few days at Waste Management's facility checking loads. They observed improvements with contamination were needed. He found customers were overwhelmingly receptive to feedback in conversation.

Livingston asked about the impact of the program on Kirkland's waste management expenses and the amount of waste going to the landfill. MacGillivray responded that there is not currently data on actual tonnage. The set up for solid waste collection encourages diversion, however, MFR/commercial is challenging because there are a lot of changing hands.

Livingston added that given the scope and scale of the problem there are still populations not being reached by the education protocols. MacGillivray acknowledged that it is a continuous challenge, especially with the MFR/commercial program.

Marshall noted that the current process uses Curotto trucks, which are not popular with other cities because of spatial limitations and the tendency for waste to fly out of the hopper.

Marshall also asked about why the City does not contact customers directly when contamination is observed and logged during week one. MacGillivray answered that the program is a partnership with Waste Management and the role of the drivers is critical in making the program possible. City staffing of the program does not allow for employees to photograph found contaminants, which is a critical piece for customer education. So far only positive feedback has been received from drivers.

Marshall commented on how a lot of the MFRs rely on dumpsters that are too big to roll out and that visibility can be low for drivers doing pickups outside of daylight hours. MacGillivray clarified that the program only includes carts, not dumpsters.

Dammann asked about the potential to mount cameras in order to standardize observation of contamination between collection trucks and send data to a centralized location for the City to process.

MacGillivray noted that there is currently a lag time with the data, but using cameras in the future could work.

Kelly asked for clarification on how the program distinguishes itself from the City of Seattle around privacy issues. John clarified that it is as simple as we do not cut into bags or sift through contents. Only loose materials are observed.

Kassover asked if the pilot had spurred any changes in education to residents around composting. MacGillivray responded that education had not so much changed, the program adds an enforcement component which is effective.

Sweet reemphasized that the program is a partnership and having experienced it she feels more cities will be interested in adopting it.

Bunzendahl asked about staff impacts and if the drivers had the tablets prior to the pilot. MacGillivray answered that there was not a significant impact on staff including drivers. The tablets were implemented a few years ago and had to be adapted for the contamination protocols.

Sweet noted that city residents consistently remark in surveys that garbage, compost, and recycling are among the most important issues to them. People want to do the right thing.

Responsible Recycling Task Force Recommendations

Gaisford briefly reviewed and proved updates on the Recycling Task Force goals presented during the previous SWAC meeting.

Goal 1: Action 1A

Gaisford asked if there is support for the Solid Waste Division to study in 2019 how a statewide stewardship policy approach for curbside recycling could be implemented.

Bunzendahl asked for clarification on whether the implementation would be specific to King County or statewide. Gaisford noted that it would be statewide, but we would be most interested in how it could work with our system.

Dammann noted uniformity should be included in the language.

Marshall commented that there are significant differences in the systems and incentives between west and east of the mountains. He expressed uncertainty if a statewide system would be beneficial.

Kelly noted that the West has more infrastructure to handle materials of different types and larger amounts. Given this, a statewide approach may be difficult to reconcile.

Gaisford noted that the study could find a statewide approach won't work.

Bunzendahl asked if it would be specific to curbside. Gaisford noted that it would be.

Ristau noted that funding could be a challenge. Gaisford clarified that packing producers, not the customers, would be responsible for funding under the same model used for manufacturers of electronics and florescent bulbs. If certain bills pass, the County might be working with the Department of Ecology on this.

Strader asked about the flexibility of a statewide approach in regard to technology changes. Gaisford acknowledged that the restrictiveness of a statewide approach is one of the challenges.

Bunzendahl asked whether the approach would extend to construction waste. Gaisford noted that it would not under this particular action.

Goal 1: Action 1B and 1C

A substitute bill has been introduced for SSB 5397 as the original mistakenly tasked the Department of Ecology with writing and introducing the stewardship plan. The intent of the stewardship bill is to require product/packaging producers to fund, plan, and implement. There's a good possibility an alternative bill will ask Ecology to do some work to study other systems for actions in 2020. If that happens, we would look to Ecology to see how we can support.

Kelly thanked Gaisford for sending out helpful weekly legislative updates.

Marshall commented that he doesn't disagree with the bills as far as the underlying sentiment but is unsure how a statewide bill would accommodate the East's material needs for their incinerators.

Goal 1: Action 1D

Gaisford noted Kassover's work to get her City Council to adopt responsible recycling policies. Kassover added that the weather has stalled her efforts. She encouraged everyone to act as citizens to let their Councils know they want action.

Goal 1: Action 1E

The task force's recommendation is to prioritize other work and come back in 2020.

Goal 5: Action 5C

Bills HB 1205 and SB 5323 are in the legislature right now. If passed, they would ban single-use plastic bags. Many cities have already done this, but this would be statewide. The bills seem to be headed to possible passage.

Proposed Action

2019 legislative Session is all happening right now. We recommend seeing what happens and then strategizing on where to spend our effort. Going forward how does the committee suggest we proactively prepare for the 2020 legislature?

Sweet noted that bills not passed this year will often show up slightly changed during the subsequent legislative session.

Kelly noted that he is a part of another workgroup focused on statewide initiatives. They are also working on proposals and best practices to share more broadly across the state.

Bunzendahl commented that HB 1795 seems too restrictive in terms of adjusting for developing markets.

Kelly noted that the County is not taking a position on the bills, only presenting the information for the committee to make recommendations.

Strader asked at what time the bills become effective if passed. Gaisford answered that HB 1795 includes the start date of January 2020.

McLaughlin noted that while the County isn't taking an official position at this stage, there are concerns the bill would put restrictions on materials that are part of the problem. The bill does not allow changes to the materials list until 2024. We need to be working with haulers and policy makers to keep the conversation going and make progress on these issues.

Gaisford asked if the committee is ready to send the advisory letter.

Bunzendahl questioned why the advisory letter does not extend to commercial recycling. Gaisford responded that the Task Force's scope of work was focused on the residential stream because local governments have more direct control.

Kelly added that all commercial recycling in Washington is through an open market and unregulated.

Marshall commented that curbside recycling is deregulated right now, but they are trying to change that.

Advisory Letter

Kelly noted that in the letter they took feedback and made adjustments. They called out that SWD will need more resources in order to be effective, including a revamped website.

Sweet asked about how the SWAC letter differs from the MSWAC version. Waller noted that they are essentially the same with only slight differences in how the point is made.

Atwood noted that the 3 bullets on the second page emphasize a system should be in place before people are asked to make changes to their sorting.

Kelly noted that they want the letter to go out next week.

April asked how efforts are being coordinated with Seattle.

Goal 2: Action Item 2A

We would go to our partners first and must allocate time and resources to conduct pilot projects. We'll come back to this next month.

Goal 2: Action Item 2B

Seattle is already working on expanding the WRAP program. We'll ask them to take the lead and we'd support them. We would begin work to ensure there's better local infrastructure for a take-back program.

Sweet asked about cost implications. Gaisford responded that internal discussion on a work program and finding budget started last November. If the committee supports action, SWD would be prepared to move forward.

Goal 2: Action Item 2C

King County has a market development program called LinkUp. It's focused on materials without existing markets. We recognize the need to ensure robust markets for paper and plastic and recommend that the program reprioritize their focus. We would start by going to materials recovery facility (MRF) operators and haulers to ask what's currently being done.

Member Comment

Kelly stated that it seems there's a lot of momentum behind these issues, which is exciting.

Atwood noted that there are a lot of conflicting messages about China Sword and evolving markets for recycling. It is a major problem for consumers trying to figure out the right thing to do. Additionally, messaging around what clean, dry, and empty means is not always consistent. These discrepancies are confusing and frustrating and add to problems of contamination.

Dammann expressed appreciation that members consistently used the microphones during the meeting.

Kelly thanked Marshall for his comments at the start of the meeting. Reiterating that drivers are doing tough work and doing it safely.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:30am.

Respectfully submitted by: Hilary Leonard