

King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee
April 19, 2019 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.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	Meg Moorehead	Janet Pritchard, Republic
Kevin Kelly—Chair	Pat McLaughlin	Lane Covington, KC Councilmember Lambert
Gib Dammann	Hilary Leonard	Jay Blazey, Cedar Grove
Karen Dawson	Dorian Waller	
Stephen Strader	Annie Kolb-Nelson	
Penny Sweet	John Walsh	
Elly Bunzendahl	Jamey Barker	
	Jeff Gaisford	

Minutes

Minutes of the March SWAC meeting were unanimously approved with the following clarifications:

Bunzendahl clarified that the comment on page four was in reference to larger construction sites, not residents, putting garbage into comingled bins rather than meeting the requirement for a two bin system onsite.

Dawson requested her comment on page four referencing “debris” be changed to “construction and demolition debris.”

Public Comments

There was no public comment.

Updates

Solid Waste Division (SWD)

SWD Director Pat McLaughlin provided SWD updates:

Organics Summit

The second and final day of the organic summit was well attended and attendees were engaged. At the next SWAC meeting we will share the action items that came out of from the second day of the summit, which was focused on planning and partnerships.

Comp Plan

The Comp Plan is close to a vote at Council. The Regional Policy Committee (RPC) unanimously approved the plan on April 17 with six new amendments which passed out of council on April 10.

The six [amendments](#) amplified our commitment to actions we are largely already addressing. All six amendments were adopted. The Amendments included:

- Reaffirmation of our commitment to the 1,000 foot buffer.
- Formalizing our bird management plan including the addition of tracking metrics and annual reporting.
- Engaging with subject matter experts on top lifts and landfill cover so SWD can continue to benefit from additional expertise.
- Honoring the height limits stated in the settlement agreement that apply to areas 5, 6 and 7. It's important to note the Settlement Agreement acknowledges circumstances where those height limitations may not be possible.
- Continuing to plan for long-term disposal and report back to Council. We need to develop a planning process to ensure there's adequate time to deliberate and implement a long-term solution before we meet the finite capacity of Cedar Hills.
- Explore with the Roads Division whether funding can be provided for wear and tear on local roads caused by SWD operations in unincorporated King County. Cities under the Interlocal Agreements currently can request provisions.

Two additional [amendments](#) were introduced by Councilmember Lambert at the RPC meeting. One passed that would increase reporting transparency of our regulatory annual reports. An annual landfill operations report is currently sent to the Department of Ecology that details how we manage the landfill's environmental aspects. The amendment asks we formally transmit the report to Council as well.

The Comp Plan will be back before Council on Wednesday, April 24. There is no indication there will be any additional amendments.

There has been a lot of media coverage of the Comp Plan: the New York Times, KIRO-7, KOMO-4, KING-5, KCPQ-13, KUOW, the Seattle Times, the Seattle Weekly, Renton Patch, and the Covington Reporter are among the outlets that have covered the topic. KIRO-TV aired a [story](#) on April 10th that promoted Recycle Right messaging. The segment did a great job summarizing the range of issues facing recycling and included the "Empty, Clean, and Dry" tagline.

Women in Trades

This year the annual Women in Trades Career Fair is at the Seattle Center on May 10th. The event celebrates and promotes women pursuing careers in skilled trades. SWD has a talented cadre of staff who have been involved in the event for many years. The event is free and open to the public. We will send out event information to the group. Please promote it to any school groups, elementary through high school that may be interested.

MSWAC

Sweet reported that there were many questions about the Comp Plan amendments, primarily around cost. The MSWAC agenda was the same except for the Cedar Grove presentation.

Cedar Grove Acceptance List

Karen Dawson and Jay Blazey from Cedar Grove presented on Cedar Grove's updated [list](#) of acceptable items.

Cedar Grove, spurred by advisory group discussions, the organics summit, and public questions, has been reviewing their list of accepted items over the past six months to ensure it aligns with city contracts. Every city has a different list of items based on their contract with the haulers. Plastic contamination is a common issue. Part of the cleanup effort involves communicating consistently which materials belong in compost bins across the cities.

The accepted list of items (refer to PowerPoint) is distributed to all the cities. In Seattle, residential food waste packaging is accepted because Cedar Grove has a contract with Seattle directly. One of the biggest issues is lack of consistency among the cities and what's accepted by the haulers. Cedar Grove has been meeting with many of the cities and haulers to get feedback on the list. New requirements will go into effect on June 1. Cedar Grove's goal is to generate clean compost.

The only new material added to the list of residentially unaccepted items is shredded paper. Many people, however, were not aware that certain items, such as food packaging, never has been approved from the compost bin at home. Packaging labeled as "compostable" poses a high risk for contamination because items commonly bought and disposed at home are not actually compostable at Cedar Grove facilities. Cedar Grove would like to get to a place where these items are acceptable, but it's going to take all the cities getting onboard with a regional approach. Shredded paper is a concern because it contains a lot of small plastics.

Sweet asked about the list of Cedar Grove approved compostable bags. Dawson responded the list is available on the Cedar Grove [website](#).

Strader asked what the standard is for products listed as compostable. Blazey answered there are two different standards for approval. BPI is the accepted standard for product approval but does not necessarily capture what composts at the local level. Cedar Grove contracts with CMA to test what breaks down at their facilities.

Bunzendahl asked for clarity on why acceptable items are not the same for commercial versus residential disposal. Dawson responded that controlled environments such as Amazon or Green Schools work directly with Cedar Grove to purchase products that are known to be compostable at their facilities. It's also easier to identify and address the source of contamination with commercial than with comingled residential.

Sweet asked what the advised disposal option is for her "commercially compostable" fork. Blazey responded it can be composted here, which is considered commercial.

Gaisford commented that a workgroup from the Organics Summit will be joining the Recycle Right Communication Consortium to work out a regional approach to consistent messaging and acceptance of compostable materials.

Atwood noted that many people cross jurisdictional boundaries during their daily routine. The inconsistency in messaging between cities makes disposing materials confusing and difficult. If people get takeout containers in Seattle it's commercially compostable but you cannot compost them at your home in Kirkland, for example.

Blazey clarified that the City of Seattle hauls their compost direct to Cedar Grove making it easier to control for issues. Cedar Grove does not have direct contracts with other King County cities. Instead, the cities decide what the haulers can accept and collected materials are hauled to the private transfer stations for Cedar Grove to pick up. The material collected between cities is mixed together at the private transfer stations, making it difficult to address issues as they come up.

Atwood commented that Cedar Grove's concerns speak to the need for prioritizing a regional approach. Dawson responded the Organics Summit affirmed the importance of regional collaboration. Some products such as shredded paper were never on Cedar Grove's acceptable list, but they began showing up on some city lists because they were perceived to be compostable. Kirkland is an example of a city that proactively acknowledged shredded paper should not be on their list because it contains a lot of plastic.

McLaughlin commented it's like wishful recycling—cities want to be responsive to the public, but sometimes customer perception exceeds system capability.

Blazey added that the contract terms between cities and haulers are different than contract terms between haulers and Cedar Grove. Cedar Grove has the right to amend terms with haulers if materials do not work for the facilities.

Dammann asked if Cedar Grove can reject a load. Blazey responded yes, but it is difficult to track the source of residential loads. Dawson added that Cedar Grove has a building monitor, but contamination is not always discernable until the material is ground up.

Sweet commented that Kirkland hosts a 4th of July party each year for 35, 000 people and attendees are expected to separate their garbage. Dawson noted that the compost generated at such an event would be considered commercial.

Dammann noted that a state bill just passed that would require color coding on materials branded as compostable to reduce confusion.

Cleanup LIFT program

John Walsh presented an update on the Cleanup LIFT [program](#).

King County residents at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for the Cleanup LIFT \$12 discount by showing either an Orca LIFT, ProviderOne, or EBT card at any King County Transfer Station. Since the program launch in January, the discount has been used 936

times. Usage dropped off during the winter snow storms but started to rebound again in March. The program is an important step forward for SWD in modeling our equity and social justice values.

We're trying to broaden outreach to residents to increase awareness of the discount. We have a flyer translated into 9 different languages available online for you print out. We can also supply them to you on request. Last month there was an ethnic media campaign covering six different languages. We've also researched potential partnership opportunities with Metro Transit, Orca LIFT, Hopelink, Multi-Service Center, and King County Housing Repair Program.

Bunzendahl asked what the average fee is for a transaction. Walsh answered the minimum fee for garbage is about \$25 and the discount is used for garbage for most transactions.

Dawson proposed some ideas to increase outreach including having a presence at foodbanks, doorbelling, posting info in areas where dumping is common, and doing outreach to seniors who may be moving into new housing.

Bunzendahl asked if TSOs actively ask customers if they have one of the qualifying cards. Walsh answered no, but the information is on the signage at each scale house.

Walsh facilitated an activity where members were asked to brainstorm ways to help promote the Cleanup LIFT program. Ideas included:

- Give Hauler Call Center info on Cleanup LIFT
- Food banks, other non-profits
- Implement a discount curbside
- Doorbelling in areas high with eligible customers
- Advertise, write article in local newspapers – Vashon Beachcomber is part of a network of 30 other publications, for example
- Reuse Orgs – such as Restore in Ballard
- Promote on Be Neighborly, Next Door, Buy Nothing
- Schools / Colleges
- Billing inserts, City/Hauler websites
- Churches
- Post by frequent dumping sites
- Include in city recycling fliers
- Create a “City Challenge” with incentives for promoting the program
- Thrift shops, Goodwill, Value Village, St Vincent
- Radio ads
- Ask self haulers

Responsible Recycling Task Force Recommendations

Jeff Gaisford from SWD presented legislative updates and the Task Force Recommendations [Report](#).

King County has begun a work plan in collaboration with Seattle Public Utilities to move forward with task force recommendations. The state legislative session is expected to end this month. We'll know the final status of each bill by the next SWAC meeting.

The Plastic Packaging Stewardship bill (HB 1204/ SSB 5397) is a study bill that requires Ecology to work with a consultant to develop options to reduce plastic packaging in the waste stream and present to the legislature in 2020. The bill has passed both chamber and seems likely to move forward. The bill relates to several task force recommendations. Should it pass, we'll be talking with Ecology about next steps.

The Reusable Bag Bill (HB 1205/SBB 5323) would ban plastic bags at retail establishments and impose an eight cent surcharge on reusable plastic film bags. It also mandates compostable bags be either brown or green. The bill has passed both chambers and seems to be heading toward passage.

The Recycling Development Center Bill (HB 1543/SB 5545) concerns creating a recycling development center to research, incentivize, and develop new markets and expand existing markets for recycled commodities and recycling facilities. It has passed both houses and may be headed to the governor for signature.

The Paint Stewardship Bill (HB 1652) seems to be stuck with the Senate. There has been no further discussion since hearings in March.

Dawson asked if there is anything SWAC members can do to push it through. Kelly replied that contacting the legislature can always help. Bunzendahl added that if you look up the house bill online, you can find the names of all the sponsors and email them directly.

Action Item 4A--increasing demand for recyclables by requiring certain products be made with a set amount of recycled material. Our recommendation it to put other priorities first and begin work on this in 2020.

Action Item 2A—Assess our own procurement ordinances and practices to require products be made from post-consumer recycled materials. We would investigate creating a training program for King County procurement staff that could turn into a training for other cities. Work on this will begin in 2020.

Action Item 4C—Work with the Association of Plastic Recycler's Demand Champions program to encourage our local companies to buy more products made from recycled plastics. Coca Cola, Target, Procter and Gamble are some of the national companies participating in the Demand Champions program. Seattle already has a relationship with the program and will take the lead on this.

Action Item 4D—Explore opportunities beyond Demand Champions to incentivize company buy backs of recycled materials.

Action Item 5A— Update our contracts and possibly our code to prioritize domestic sorting and documentation of chain of custody. SWD staff are already working on new contract language. Last year we updated our contract with new language on domestic sorting and processing and Recology is our new service provider for the comingled recyclables collected at our transfer stations. They are required to provide us quarterly reports on where our materials are sent. During the first three months, 76 percent of our materials went to domestic markets.

Action Item 5B— Remove plastic bags/film and shredded paper from the list of acceptable recyclables in King County and the City of Seattle. We're moving forward with this effort. The Recycle Right Communication Consortium will be developing messaging throughout 2019. We're also exploring takeback programs through the WRAP program. We contacted all retail locations listed on the WRAP site and 83 percent confirmed they are still doing takebacks.

Sweet asked if Kroger will continue doing bag takebacks given they are not using plastic bags any more. Gaisford responded all QFCs originally confirmed they are doing take backs, but we will follow up with them about changes from their new policy.

Action Item 5C—support legislation to reduce the number of plastic bags entering the waste stream.

Action Item 5D—Improve documentation of chain of custody for materials to ensure human health and safety standards are being met at all stages. SWD staff are working together with the City of Seattle on this.

Action Item 5E— Develop a consistent process for evaluating and granting surcharges on recycling rates and waivers. SWD staff is working on this and will bring back to this group for input.

Action Item 5F—Documenting real recycling by studying what materials are going into the Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs) and measuring contamination coming in versus going out to establish a baseline for future tracking. SWD is conducting a MRF study this year that will help inform this effort.

Action Item 5G—regularly tracking the market prices of recyclable materials. We've been discussing doing it quarterly and will be bring more info to the Advisory Committees soon.

Action Item 6A— Improving upstream label design in collaboration with the Sustainable Packaging Coalition's How2 Recycle Program, which is a conglomerate of national manufacturers.

Kelly commented that at a recent industry conference attended by large organizations such as Walmart showed that there is strong interest on behalf of manufacturers to improve the sustainability of packaging. Dawson added that Heinz and ClifBar were surprised by the hyperlocal landscape of recycling. The conference demonstrated that it is not enough to make a product recyclable, you also have to ensure the product is actively being recycled.

Sweet asked if there is similar effort with fast food restaurants. She met with a west coast government affairs rep for McDonalds and they want to get to full compostable by 2025. Gaisford responded that he is not certain fast food chains are part of the groups noted in the Task Force recommendations.

Atwood asked for clarification on whether the state bills currently under consideration address flimsy bags such as produce or newspaper bags. Gaisford responded it requires compostable bags be green or brown but does not address the other bags.

Member Comment

No member comment

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:25.