

**King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee
August 16, 2019 - 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>
Ken Marshall	Glynda Steiner	Cynthia Foley, Sounds Cities Association
Kevin Kelly—Chair	Hilary Leonard	Terra Rose
Gib Dammann	Dorian Waller	Heather Trim, Zero Waste Washington
Phillipa Kassover	Jeff Gaisford	
Karen Dawson	John Walsh	
Stephen Strader	Andrew Smith	
Elly Bunzendahl	Emily Coleman	
Keith Livingston	Annie Kolb-Nelson	
	Jennifer Jessen	

Minutes

Minutes of the July SWAC meeting were reviewed but were not approved without a quorum present.

Public Comments

There was no public comment.

Updates

Solid Waste Division (SWD)

SWD Deputy Director Glynda Steiner provided SWD updates:

Comp Plan

SWD has presented the Comp Plan to 26 cities so far and has another 3 scheduled for briefings. Currently, 17 cities have decided to take action to approve the Plan and another 5 are pending approval.

EIS Public Scoping Meeting

On August 12th SWD held a public meeting and open house to receive public comment on the scope of an environmental review of proposed future development at the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill. Over 20 people showed up to learn about the project and provide comment. Comments received will be used by SWD to develop a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the public comment period closes on August 26th. The Enumclaw Courier-Herald published a story on August 12th discussing the 2019 Comp Plan as well as the ongoing public comment period for the scope of the environmental review.

September Elections

Elections for the SWAC Chair and Vice Chair will take place at the September meeting. If interesting in either role, members should notify Dorian Waller by September 12th.

SWAC Appointees

Three appointees to the committee will go before Council in October for recommended appointment. If approved, they would fill the 2 interested resident positions and the recycling industry position. There are 2 more applicants seeking appointments for the vacant Teamsters 117 position and the Waste Industry position. They are under review currently by the Exec's office.

MSWAC

MSWAC did not have a meeting in August.

Responsible Recycling Program Update

John Walsh presented on the Responsible Recycling Task Force's (RRTF) plan for Action 3A, harmonizing curbside materials.

The goal of Action 3A is to develop a process and criteria for adding/removing materials in the curbside recycling programs that is consistent with the responsible recycling framework. We hope to have a 3A implementation plan out by September. The process will function as a best practices list for what should be accepted in both the curbside recycling and organic bins. This list is important for creating consistency across the region as a means to reduce resident confusion, minimize contamination, and improve product marketability. The guiding principles being used to develop the process include taking the long-term view, increasing recycling and adding to the list when possible, striving for consistency across jurisdictions, and leveraging communication tools across the county.

Beginning in 2020, the process will be to gather information during the first quarter including a questionnaire sent to MRFs. During the second and third quarter, SWD will present the results and our recommendations to SWAC for deliberation and approval. Implementation will take place during the final quarter, then the process will repeat on an annual basis. SWD will assess materials based on the number of jurisdictions collecting the material, estimated tonnage, the greenhouse gas impact determined by the warm model, contamination, processing issues, and market viability.

During the implementation phase changes could be communicated out by sending an advisory letter from both MSWAC and SWAC to County Council, creating new stickers for bins, updating contracts with haulers, and banning materials at our transfer stations.

Steiner asked about communications to the public around not putting shredded paper and plastic bags in their curbside bins. Gaisford responded that one of the recommendations is to harmonize communications and Annie Kolb-Nelson, SWD Communications and Records Supervisor will present an update to SWAC in September on the Communications Consortium's work.

Marshall asked if King County and Seattle are collaborating on this. Walsh responded that Seattle has a representative present at the Consortium meetings and that joining efforts with Seattle is one of the stated goals.

Livingston asked about the market for small scrap metal and tetra paks. Kelly answered that there is a market for aseptic packaging if the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) commits the resources to sorting it out separately, which is dependent on material volume.

Gaisford added that part of creating the best practices list is deciding which materials should be put in curbside bins or if there's an alternative for recycling it somewhere else. Livingston emphasized that communication is key when it comes to educating the public on what can go in the bin. The more efficient the materials list the better to ensure the materials will be recycled. There must be a market for the items being suggested.

Dammann commented that by thinking about environmental economics and pushing the envelope the marketplace can be reshaped. Even if there isn't a market today for a material, there could be one in the future.

Gaisford noted that another part of the plan is upstream engagement with manufacturers to make products more recyclable.

Jessum commented that if a material has no value to the MRF then it becomes a residual for landfilling. Items move from one category of compliance to another depending on their value. Whether a facility is permit exempt is dictated by the Washington Administrative Code and depends on the weight of collected materials.

Kassover noted that the question of market viability is complex as there's a difference between current and future markets. There's potential to create new markets and the complexity of all this needs to be considered to truly come to the best decision. Gaisford responded that the process is structured to create a marketable product in a comingled system and if there are possible alternatives to curbside collection for certain products, those will be considered too.

Marshall added that if there is no current market value to a material some companies will ship it as a residual to their own transfer stations, which is a loss in revenue for King County. Larger haulers with their own landfills are taking materials such as mixed paper to their landfills. The haulers are the ones deciding if a material has value. When haulers sell their products, they can avoid calling it a residual in their monthly city reports. Walsh added that the cities are the ones with the contracts with haulers while the County's power is limited in this respect.

Dammann requested a presentation on alternatives to curbside collection and what has or might be successful under certain conditions.

Kassover asked about the state regulations on what materials are considered exempt vs. non-exempt at the MRF. The criteria may not account for the social and environmental benefits collection of certain items creates for communities. Gaisford responded that there are talks with the state and it's the Health Department that sets the criteria. SWD is doing a study at the MRF to assess incoming/outgoing material compositions to get a baseline understanding of what is occurring at the MRFs. There's also more regular reporting from the MRF that will help track progress.

Strader commented that trying to educate consumers to change their behavior is difficult and exceptions that add to the confusion may not ultimately be worth it.

Dawson noted that the room's discussion is missing the perspective of researchers and innovators who play an essential role in solving these issues. Companies like Microsoft are doing forward-thinking things around resource recovery. We need these voices present because their help is needed in creating future markets.

Bunzendahl asked if reporting is based on state regulation whether there is something that could be added to the contracts that could shift that. Gaisford responded that that question highlights that there isn't currently discussion across cities and manufacturers comparing each other's data.

Dawson commented that the cities can hold their hauler accountable for hauling contamination, yet the very act of collecting materials involves contamination.

Livingston noted that the residuals are a low priority for cities because their goal of having the materials taken away is being met. Dawson added that some cities have shown interest in this issue.

Organics

Andy Smith presented an update on the organics recycling program.

Organics, including yard waste, food waste, wood, and soiled paper make up the largest category of materials disposed at Cedar Hills. The biggest challenges to expanding the organics market are wasted resources, contamination, product quality at market, and processing capacity throughout the private sector. To make headway and reach the Zero Waste of Resources by 2030 goal, we need support from the private sector.

Last year Council created a budget proviso of \$500,000 to come up with a plan to expand and enhance the local market for compost. The first major part of the plan was holding two organic summits in March/April to gather stakeholder input and increase regional collaboration. The main takeaway from the summits was that contamination needs to be addressed at the curb for both commercial and residential. Secondly, we need to identify ways for local government to make use of compost in operations such as roads, parks, water resource projects, and development projects. Lastly, we need to continue to collaborate as a region.

In King County, 350,000 tons of organics were disposed in 2018 rather than processed. The capture rate for yard waste was relatively high at 86 percent, but food waste was only captured at a rate of 34 percent and other compostable, such as soiled paper and compostable products, were captured at a rate of 19 percent. We are currently at 85 percent of permitted capacity for processing organics and will need to expand capacity to meet organics recovery goals. Most organics material for composting is collected at the curbside. We have adequate capacity now, but over time we're nearing the permitted limit in the region. We've got to tackle this capacity issue by both reducing waste and creating markets.

By weight, contamination of collected organics is only about 4 percent, but volume and visibility are ongoing challenges. Plastic bags are a common contaminant. While they don't weigh a lot, it doesn't take much to create problems.

Part of that plan under the proviso is to use more compost throughout King County government in our own operations. We're working on a program to provide direct technical assistance to incorporate more compost and provide educational outreach. The first phase will be internal facing, then outreach will go to various cities, followed by outreach to the public and landscapers. There's a pilot program in the works to use compost to reduce methane emissions at the closed landfills.

Other recommendations for action under the proviso include implementing a sister educational campaign to the Recycle Right campaign for the green bin. We have been doing education for years, but there are more and different approaches we can take. We're calling the research the "why" research for assessing why contamination continues to occur. We're doing a product assessment qualitative study to demonstrate what contamination looks like today and understand if the public's perception is consistent with the currently state of the product. With Wastewater Treatment we're looking at co-digest to increase the amount of gas produced by food waste using the existing wastewater system to create energy that will reduce their need to buy electricity.

The Organics Plan is being transmitted to Council today. Next week the Organics Market Assessment Report will be finalized and next month we'll have a discussion at SWAC and MSWAC on harmonizing green bin materials. We'll also continue the organics summits on a biannual basis. There will be a regional stakeholder engagement meeting in December.

Bunzendahl asked if Seattle is the only city that mandates organics separation. Gaisford answered that they are for food waste, but other cities require yard waste to be sorted out.

Livingston asked what falls under the "other compostable" category shown on slide 11. Smith responded that the category includes containers and supplies, such as pizza boxes, that are compostable. Work is being done at the state level to improve labeling for compostable materials and we're working with the manufacturers across the region to ensure their packaging is processable here.

Livingston asked if there is enough capacity within the market currently to use the compost as a soil amendment. Smith responded that they are doing work to stimulate demand that will increase processing capacity.

Marshall commented that the facilities are already at capacity at certain points in the year. There are only three facilities in the region. Where will the additional product go? Dammann noted that the additional product could be used locally to the benefit of communities.

Kassover asked about the biggest barrier to increasing permitted capacity. Smith responded the key barriers are zoning, building a program of marketing and education for product use, and regional support for alternative processing techniques such as co-digestion.

Marshall commented that if cities elected for weekly, rather than bi-weekly, curbside organics pick-up residents would be likely to compost more food scraps. Most customers won't let it sit for two weeks and we need to understand how to have the greatest impact on Greenhouse Gas reduction. Smith added that it's a great point and one of the recommendations from the Proviso is studying consumer behavior to assess why contamination continues to occur.

Dawson added that if pick-up frequency was standardized it would benefit both the customer and the processor. Kassover added that Lake Forrest Park switched over to weekly pick-up and it's been very popular among households, even with a small increase in the rates.

Bunzendahl asked if SWD could provide a tip sheet for cities on how to change their specifications. Smith answered that SWD is working on that but is facing challenges in sorting out why specifications were chosen originally.

Member Comment

There was no member comment.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:05am