

**King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee**  
**August 20, 2021 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**  
**Virtual Meeting (Zoom)**

**Meeting Minutes**

<b><u>Members Present</u></b>
Taylor Atkinson, Interested Resident
Karen Dawson, Manufacturing Industry
Bill Louie, Interested Resident
Ken Marshall, Labor Industry
Leah Tischler, Public Interest Group
Heather Trim, Recycling Industry
Wendy Weiker – Vice Chair, Waste Industry

<b><u>King County Staff</u></b>
Joy Carpine-Cazzanti, SWD staff
Emily Coleman, SWD staff
Jenny Devlin, SWD staff
Jeff Gaisford, SWD staff
Brian Halverson, SWD staff
Andrea Lai, SWD staff
Pat McLaughlin, SWD Director
Rory O’Rourke, Public Health – Seattle & King County
Theresa Place Thurlow, SWD staff
Andy Smith, SWD staff
Srinidhi Srinivasan, SWD staff
Adrian Tan, SWD staff
Dorian Waller, SWD staff
John Walsh, SWD staff

<b><u>Guests</u></b>
Jackie Wheeler, Sound Cities Association

**Call to Order and Introductions**

Vice Chair Weiker called the meeting to order with introductions at 9:37.

**Minutes**

Due to lack of quorum, review and approval of the July meeting minutes was postponed.

**Public Comments**

There was no public comment.

**Updates**

McLaughlin provided the SWD update:

**Northeast Recycling & Transfer Station (NERTS)**

There was a NRTS Siting Advisory Group meeting on August 9th with about 80 attendees, not including staff. It was clear there was a lot of confusion as to how we got where we are. SWD is following recommendations to pause the siting process to address concerns and provide clarity. Meanwhile, SWD staff are preparing meetings with the staff from core cities and the Siting Advisory Group ahead of a technical forum to engage the public.

**Ardagh Glass**

The recycled glass processor leases a facility on King County property. The lease was set to expire this month but has been extended through March 1, 2022 to allow for complete contract discussions. SWD will provide updates to the advisory committees.

## **Customer Verification**

As discussed, the Solid Waste Division now requires customers to show proof of residence or business within King County's service area when disposing of their waste and recycling at King County recycling and transfer stations. This is to preserve critical waste disposal services and reduce time waiting in lines for King County service area customers. There has been a 25% increase in customer transactions this year, of which 6% is estimated to come from people outside the service area.

## **Tonnage**

Reflective of a more active economy, tonnage of waste disposed at our facilities remains strong running about 2% above the forecast and about 5% more than last year. The division would rather see an increase in tonnage of recycling.

## **South County Recycling & Transfer Station (SCRTS)**

The Algona Planning Commission convened last week to review the division's request for a special use permit which resulted in a recommendation to Algona's city council for approval at their next meeting on September 13th. SWD is hosting a virtual Open House to promote design elements of the station and receive public input on August 25th from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.

## **Bow Lake Intersection Improvement**

The division is nearing completion of the intersection marking project with Tukwila. New curbing and signage will be installed by end of the month.

## **Flow Control**

There will be no city representation during the arbitration process with the City of Seattle and the two hauling companies, Recology and Republic Services. The division will be seeking letters of support from our regional city partners.

## **King County Legislative Update**

The division's [2022 rate proposal](#) is scheduled to be reviewed by the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee on August 17th. It is on track for adoption in September allowing time for the cities and haulers to adjust their systems.

County Councilmembers Dunn and Lambert are proposing an ordinance to establish an advisory committee to make recommendations about how our regional solid waste system could transition to Waste to Energy. The matter has been referred to Regional Policy Committee for consideration. The division will provide updates to existing advisory committees.

Legislation to update existing [Construction and Demolition](#) (C&D) is at Council but has not yet been assigned to a Council committee for review. SWD staff continue to check-in with Council staff as to when this legislation will move forward. The [Green Building Ordinance](#) is with the Executive office with an anticipated review by Council on August 26th.

Discussion followed about the lack of attention toward potential community benefits of a modern multiuse recycling and transfer station at the NRTS Siting Advisory Group meeting. There was a request to invite a representative from Ardagh Glass to discuss their plans for facility upgrades, once the committee achieves a voting quorum. It was pointed out SWD's 2020 tonnage may have absorbed Covid-related losses due to

receiving the tonnage from MRF residuals. Regarding organics residuals, SWD staff are meeting with Cedar Grove to resolve data discrepancies and will schedule meetings with other organics processors this fall.

### **SWAC Recruitment**

There are four vacant positions on SWAC. SWD is seeking representation from a neighbor of the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill, the waste industry, agriculture, and an interested resident. In October, there will be new vacant positions for two interested residents and a representative from the marketing/education sector. SWD forwarding four applicants for approval by County Council. Waller offered to share recruitment information to committee members as he asked members to supply him with names of potential candidates.

### **Re+**

Smith's presentation began with a list of seven specific actions needed from SWD's partners, particularly cities, if they were to support for Re+ efforts in 2021: get involved in statewide recycling conversations, provide comments on actions and briefing, get word out on the innovation platform, align city programs/grants to Re+ priorities, publicly support the Re+ launch, consider how to expand and deepen recycling subscription, participate in MSWAC discussions.

The Re+ plan includes "fast-start" action items which are priority topics to be discussed and resolved now because future decisions depend on these actions. Three fast-start action items will be discussed today: single family organics collection changes, a statewide food organics effort with stakeholders, and extended producer responsibility (EPR) for residential packaging and paper products (PPP). Next month's fast-start action item will be about processing infrastructure and accelerating market development.

Lai presented three reasons reducing food waste is a RE+ fast action. First, according to a recent waste characterization study, food waste is nearly 16% of the landfilled material by weight, about 1/5 of the reusable material with potential market value SWD wants to divert from the landfill. Second, food waste is already identified as a priority in other county efforts, as part of the Pacific Coast Collaborative's Food Waste Working Group and in King County's Sustainable Climate Action Plan, where there is a goal to eliminate landfilling of food waste by 2030. Finally, food waste reduction is a priority because there is collection and processing infrastructure already in place. King County residents and businesses can opt into services, and our regional composting system is well established.

This infrastructure exists on top of work have done to support food waste division such as curb-side collection, outreach programs, cart tagging, embedded services, and technical assistance to overcome barriers for multifamily residences and commercial customers.

All these existing efforts focus on driving voluntary behavior change which leaves room for improvement particularly with multifamily residences and commercial customers. Yard waste appears to be easier than food waste to divert, possibly due to the ban of yardwaste disposal at the landfill and haulers who tag yardwaste carts with garbage contamination. Single-family residences and commercial customers are the biggest contributors to food waste.

To increase food waste diversion, we have education and outreach programs, but success is limited to only to those who already subscribe. We need to reach those who are not currently brought in.

Based on hauler reports, there are over 50,000 single-family households with curbside service who do not subscribe to organics collection. While a portion of these households may be managing their food and yard

waste in other ways, such as backyard composting. These non-subscribers represent an opportunity for more diversion.

Based on SWD's analysis, we estimate there a potential to divert up to 50% of the 2019 baseline using strong policy actions such as embedding organic collection for all single-family residents, or a minimum service level, or ban residential food waste from disposal.

Coleman presented on the fast-start action about the statewide gathering of organics stakeholders who have met three times to discuss issues related to organics recycling, reducing greenhouse gasses (GHG), and mitigating climate change. They are looking at how to increase and improve collection and processing capacity, building markets, and financing. They will continue to meet every other Thursday afternoon through the end of the year with a plan for policy action in 2022. Information about the gathering and past meetings is at: <https://organicsworkgroup.org/>. There is plenty of time to participate and engage; including members of the public. The goal is to create action and policies at state level to offer regional harmonized approach. If these efforts are unsuccessful, efforts will focus on the local level.

The path at local level would include changing contracts for minimum service levels and possibly providing technical assistance programs to help people who aren't diverting food waste. At the county level, we would explore how separation requirements might work at transfer stations and how we can support implementation for cities. At the city level, food source-separation requirements would need to be considered to meet the Re+ goals.

Committee member comments about the presentation include: a reminder regarding the need for the stakeholder group to consider contractual changes, logistical development, cost sharing, and infrastructure across all the sectors – commercial, residential, and multi-family; a pilot program in California where residential food waste is bagged separately from garbage and recycling and placed in the same containers but retrieved before processing or disposal which may be an option for multi-family residences without yard waste collection.

Tan presented on the fast-start topic regarding residential packaging and paper products (PPP), 40% of which is landfilled, and 60% already collected for recycling. One-third of all waste is PPP. About a half of the PPP sent to the landfill is paper, 40% plastic and 10% metal and glass. Paper, glass & metal have decent recycling rates around 70% (all very recyclable material – paper & metal have significant value), but plastic is only 22% with varying value. There is potential for increasing recycling rates overall and specifically for all materials.

If we had an EPR program for PPP, the amount of potentially divertible material is estimated at 41,735 tons – or almost 50% of PPP that goes to landfill. EPR could set a foundation for better system. It would divert half of what goes to landfill and improve plastic and other categories recycling rates.

A statewide EPR for PPP policy would have mandated reuse and recycling targets that producers would be obligated to achieve. British Columbia reported 85% recovery rate through their EPR program in 2020. A 75% recycling rate in Washington State by 2030 is feasible. We would more than halve the paper going to landfill, and more than double recycling rates for plastics.

The Responsible Recycling Task Force recommends a statewide EPR policy for recycling and this was also a primary recommendation of the Plastic Packaging Study performed for the WA Department of Ecology. EPR has succeeded starting 30 years ago in Germany and now common throughout the world. It can be

designed differently to suit context and will increase recycle rates dramatically, provide access to residence at no cost. It also shifts costs from rate payers to producers, providing sustainable funding for recycling programs. Last, it creates a link between end-of-life waste management to producers to design products to be more reusable and recyclable.

The task force studied impacts of an EPR model for local governments, haulers, processors, residents and other stakeholders, particularly to estimate and quantify the benefits and costs of different types of EPR including a deposit-return system like a bottle bill. They used data from waste characterization studies and MRF studies.

The study discovered households would save \$90 – 120 per year on recycling costs. There would be an increase of curbside access from 89% across the state to 100%; it would create between 650 - 950 local green jobs, and it would reduce GHG emissions. It would also increase revenue for waste management service providers/haulers processors.

A discussion began about the effects of Covid-related restrictions on using reusable bags for in-person shopping, while it is hoped Covid will no longer be an issue once an EPR program is in full swing, public health agencies are creating guidelines and requiring written workplans for reusable bags, containers, bulk scoops for use in stores, possibly as early as March 2022. While it is unknown which industry creates the most packaging, an EPR program would address packaging regardless of the industry source.

Tan suggested committee members to support the effort by engaging with stakeholders, participate in discussions, implement regional recycling services. The County will provide data and resources. The Northwest Product Stewardship Council is also a good resource. As an alternative to the statewide policy, efforts could be made to coordinate locally through a Regional Recycling Strategy where local governments and stakeholders would coordinate and plan at a regional ‘MRF shed’ level. There is a sense regional level action would have limited impact and would not provide sustainable funding, so the recommendation is to act at the state level.

It was noted the presentations centered on what city partners can do rather than the actions businesses and non-profits could take.

**2023-2034 Rate Restructure**

Halverson recapped the two rate restructure options ahead of launching a poll vote. He noted the target revenue is neutral and stays the same for both systems when fully implemented. About 18-20% of SWD’s Commercial Hauler revenue comes from this fee which is invoiced to billing agency. Some city/hauler contracts may need to be amended depending on how the fee is passed through to residences.

The difference between the two rate structures is the calculation of the share of the revenue requirement each billing entity pays. Under an Account Fee each billing entity is assigned a share based on number and type of customer accounts in their service area. The Fixed Charge is based on projected share of total tons using existing hauling data; it is reasonably stable and year-end balance reconciliation would not be difficult.

Polling results:

<b><u>Fixed Charge</u></b> Ken Marshall	<b><u>Account Fee</u></b> no votes	<b><u>No Preference</u></b> no votes	<b><u>Abstain</u></b> Karen Dawson
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Taylor Atkinson Bill Louie Leah Tischler Heather Trim			
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A draft report from the rate consultants is under review, with next steps for final proposal to be submitted for review in September, then the legislative package will go to Executive Office in October, ideally with letters of support from members of the advisory committees, then to County Council in November. A request was made to add a comment to the draft letter of support acknowledging this rate restructure is a disruption to the existing system.

**Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan Update**

Walsh said the objective of this presentation is to get member feedback on the timeline to update the Comp Plan by 2026. An amendment to the existing Comp Plan requires a plan for the updating of the Comp Plan, which Walsh is preparing to submit to Council before the end of the year. SWD shared a briefing paper outlining factors affecting the timeline to update the Comp Plan with committee members. Factors include the momentum of Re+ efforts which will affect which long-term disposal option is selected; Interlocal Agreements extensions which determines which cities are participating in the regional waste disposal system; and the time needed to conduct studies, draft the Comp Plan, receive input from stakeholders, and the legislative process of getting a Comp Plan approved.

Feedback about the timeline included an echo of a comment made during last month’s SWAC meeting to ensure the consultant hired to analyze the long-term disposal options are not predisposed to a certain outcome, and a request to ensure all of SWD’s partners are included in the process and not just cities. Apologies were made for the focus on cities for this presentation; since cities are the entities that vote to approve the Comp Plan and the policy-centric nature of the presentation. Feedback, expertise, and support from other SWD partners is essential as community stakeholders in a position to influence important decisions.

**Member Comments**

No member comments.

**Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 11:14.