

King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee
September 17, 2021 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Meeting Minutes

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>King County Staff</u>	<u>Guests</u>
Taylor Atkinson, Interested Resident	Jenny Devlin, SWD staff	Diana Wadley, Ecology
April Atwood – Chair, Marketing Industry	Jeff Gaisford, SWD staff	
Gib Dammann, Interested Resident	Brian Halverson, SWD staff	
Karen Dawson, Manufacturing Industry	Patty Lui, SWD staff	
Robin Freedman, Waste Industry	Pat McLaughlin, SWD Director	
Bill Louie, Interested Resident	Rory O’Rourke, Public Health Seattle & King County	
Ken Marshall, Labor Industry	Aleks Posielski, County Council staff	
Penny Sweet, Elected Representative	Andy Smith, SWD staff	
Leah Tischler, Public Interest Group	Dorian Waller, SWD staff	
Heather Trim, Recycling Industry	John Walsh, SWD staff	
Wendy Weiker – Vice Chair, Waste Industry		

Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Atwood called the meeting to order with introductions at 9:33 a.m.

SWAC Election

Sweet nominated Weiker for Chair and Atkinson for Vice Chair. Marshall seconded the nominations. With no other interested or nominated candidates, both Weiker and Atkinson were elected unanimously and will act in their new capacity at the next SWAC meeting.

Minutes

Sweet moved to pass the July SWAC minutes; Dammann seconded. The July minutes were approved unanimously. Louie moved to pass the August minutes; Atkinson seconded. The August minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comments

Wadley from Ecology shared news the second draft of the State Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan is available for comment through September 30th and provided a link in the Zoom chat:

<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2104040.html> and the E-comments link where comments are accepted: <https://swm.ecology.commentinput.com/?id=K67fG>.

O’Rourke from Public Health – Seattle & King County shared news the Environmental Health Services Division has received two completed solid waste handling permit applications with ongoing public comment periods. The materials for all applications can be accessed on the Public Health Seattle & King County Solid Waste Program website under “Public Notices.” The City of Bellevue is applying to permit their existing Eastgate Yard for storing and decanting piles of street waste. Strategic Materials Inc. is proposing to permit an existing warehouse to operate a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) for additional sorting and end market loading of glass. Please contact rory.o'rourke@kingcounty.gov if you have any difficulty accessing the permit application materials, would like to submit comments, or have questions. Public Health Seattle & King County Solid Waste

Program website link to public notices: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/environmental-health/toxins-air-quality.aspx>

SWD Updates

McLaughlin provided the SWD update:

Northeast Recycling & Transfer Station (NRTS)

SWD staff met with staff from the Core Cities to address questions and feedback from Core Cities, the Siting Advisory Group (SAG) and the public from the August community meeting. SWD staff are working closely with staff from the Core Cities and SAG members to ensure community concerns are addressed.

Tonnage Report

Both garbage tons and customer transactions are up 4% compared to this same time period last year. This increase continues to be driven by commercially hauled tonnage (+6% or almost 25,000 tons). The customer verification program is reducing use of our stations by out of area customers, according to a customer survey in 2019, 14% of self-haul customers were from outside our regional system. In 2020 our survey data determined this number dropped to 8% and currently it is estimated to be at 6%.

South County Recycling & Transfer Station (SCRTS)

The virtual open house on August 25th had over 50 attendees who shared feedback and questions about the latest project design and public amenities associated with the station. Algona City Council approved the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) on September 13th.

King County Legislation Update

The King County Council passed the 2022 rate increase proposal on September 7th with a 6-3 vote; voting no: Dunn, von Reichbauer, and Upthegrove. No reasons were provided for the no votes. Construction & Demolition (C&D) debris legislation is scheduled for October 6th Committee of the Whole Council meeting.

Vaccination Mandate

SWD has arranged for pop-up vaccination clinics to be held at various SWD facilities to make it easy for employees to get vaccinated as doing so is now a condition of employment. SWD is making contingency plans if staffing shortages affect services. These plans will be shared with hauling companies and the advisory committees once they are finalized.

Ardagh Glass

Chair Atwood has requested a briefing from King County's Facility Management Division about the Ardagh Glass lease agreement. SWD staff have contacted them and await a proposed time and date.

MSWAC Update

Sweet reported MSWAC discussed the rate restructure option, the Comp Plan update timeline, and the value of extending the Interlocal Agreements (ILAs) with the county, none of which are decided. She said a sub-group of some cities will meet to discuss the nuanced differences of how they manage their utilities.

SWAC Recruitment

Waller provided an update on committee vacancies and applications. There are three applications under review at the Executive's office. There is one vacancy each for an interested resident, a landfill neighbor, waste industry representative, and an agricultural representative. After October, there will be two vacancies for interested residents and a marketing/education representative.

Re+ Technology and Market Development

Smith began his presentation introducing new SWD staff Liu who'll be co-leading the Re+ effort. Smith also invited committee members to join the statewide organics management stakeholder group meeting to develop policies for collection and infrastructure support. Today's presentation is about unlocking feedstock for material processing, a proposed process for approaching tech and infrastructure decisions, and an overview of an innovation platform to inspire materials processing and market development.

In our region there are questions about our current and future capacity for processing materials such as food waste and fiber, particularly when policy and consumer behavior have implications on the volume and mix of materials. These implications will affect costs and economy, jobs, social justice and equity, and the environment. Haulers, processors and community representatives have important and valuable perspectives on these priorities and needs.

As an example, Smith presented projections for additional organics processing capacity as the region pursues diversion and recovery goals. These projections highlighted the need to increase investment in building capacity and explore the variety of processing pathways and technologies such as depackaging, composting, codigestion, and anerobic digestion.

If policies, technical assistance, and communication efforts positively affect behavior change, then source separation could make codigestion and anerobic digestion more feasible. If those efforts are unsuccessful, the question becomes the feasibility of removing organics from mixed waste processing. With all these pathways on the table, there is a need to discuss the right way to approach infrastructure decisions which affects jobs, truck traffic, and residences near facilities. Infrastructure investment decisions are complicated.

To make it easier to decide about infrastructure investment, SWD wants to reduce risk by hiring a consultant to provide data to help participating jurisdictions decide focusing on organics, fiber, and plastic packaging. SWD is drafting a Request for Proposals (RFP) to be issued at the end of 2021. The timeline for 2022 includes analysis, policy development and discussion, gathering support from advisory committee members, and then providing technical assistance to support successful separation of materials at the source, preventing waste disposal.

Smith asked committee members for their views on the most important factors for county and private sector to weigh when making infrastructure investments. Discussion started with a question about the status of using the King County Wastewater Treatment Division's digesters at the South Treatment Plant in Renton for codigestion organics. While there was no answer to that question, it was noted there is a need to divert 50,000 tons of organic material a year so SWD needs to study existing public and private digestion systems, such as the one at the Microsoft campus in Redmond, to see where there is capacity. A point was made that the more local a source collection or processing system is, the greater likelihood of more local jobs and a purer stream of materials, such as at local farmers markets where visitors could bring organics waste from home and learn from on-site educators about contamination reduction.

Other factors mentioned include the need to consider costs to residents and lead with education and outreach to residents and haulers so it is understood why the results will be worth the extra funds. That information should be compared to the future costs of not doing anything now.

Smith then described how an innovation platform can drive market development as opposed to the current ad hoc system where disparate entities provide piecemeal resources when approached by an entrepreneur who needs funding, access to marketing expertise, or help creating a business plan. An innovation platform to advance a circular economy proactively attracts and supports entrepreneurs with technical support, mentoring, and funding. Components of an innovation platform could include: codesign to remove barriers of participation and ensure communities are involved, innovation challenges to incubate and identify ideas, and funding pathways such as grants or funds from government or private corporations. Innovation platforms could also include communication and recruitment to build networks and mentors, technical support for exchanging expertise, and data resources to fill gaps of knowledge.

SWD is exploring a multi-state innovation challenge called Nextcycle designed to identify and accelerate projects and business plans to create “shovel-ready” ventures for public and private investment. There is a strong potential for fruitful partnerships with national and commercial through this approach. SWD is working with to develop regional partners with the state departments of Ecology and Commerce and the recycling development center and will be working on developing partnerships with community-based organizations and small businesses who can benefit from the innovation platform approach. Smith asked cities to play a role in helping get word out about the innovation platform when launched early next year.

When the innovation platform is launched, there will be a competitive two-million-dollar grant program geared toward private sector and community groups, a different grant program partner cities currently access. Grant recipients will need to report how well their projects are delivering on materials processing, waste reduction, and repair and reuse efforts using an impact framework. SWD will be organizing platform development workshops with representatives from underserved communities to ensure this approach does not create barriers for participation. Smith asked committee members if they think the innovation platform is a good approach for market development.

Discussion followed with interest about the grant program. For now, grant beneficiaries must operate within King County but SWD staff are planning to work with other potential funding partners to expand the reach of this effort, possibly expanding it statewide via Ecology’s Recycling Development Center.

2023-2034 Rate Restructure

Halverson reminded the committee of the poll members took last month where all had voted for the fixed charge method to restructure the way SWD collects rates from partner cities. He offered those in attendance today an opportunity to voice support and consider signing the letter of support that will be included in the legislative package to the Executive Office. The draft letter of support was included with emailed meeting materials. The final content of the letter will be approved at the October meeting, so recommended changes need to be emailed to Waller before then. Both representatives from the waste industry said they were neutral on the restructure options. Republic Services is working through the details of how this change will affect IT, billing, and customer communications; they are interested in partnering with cities and receiving support from SWD. Halverson said SWD is drafting a briefing paper for how the true-up process will work, and he is available to participate in discussions.

SWAC Workplan for Next Year

With Waller offline due to internet connectivity troubles, Atwood opened the floor to committee members to share topics they would be interested in adding to the workplan for the upcoming new year. Members requested information about:

- Waste to energy (<https://kingcounty.gov/depts/dnrp/solid-waste/about/planning/documents-planning.aspx>)
- Cedar Grove Compost
- Composting innovations and solutions to decontaminating the stream of organic materials
- Metrics of Re+ targets
- Deep dive into recycled materials
- Yardwaste
- Cost implications of waste diversion
- Facility tours – including Cedar Grove Compost facilities, who has offered a standing invitation to the advisory committees for tours or as a meeting venue
- “Boutique Recyclers” such as Ridwell

Member Comments

No member comments beyond Atwood encouraging members to review meeting materials ahead of the meeting and send comments about the draft letter of support for the rate restructure option to Halverson and Waller.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:27.