

King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee
March 18, 2022 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Meeting Minutes

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>King County Staff</u>
April Atwood – Marketing Industry	Eyasu Ayalew, Public Health Seattle/King County
Taylor Atkinson, Vice Chair, Citizen Representative	Mai Bui, SWD staff
James Borsum, Labor Representative	Emily Coleman, SWD staff
Karen Dawson, Manufacturer	Brian Halverson, SWD staff
Robin Freedman, Waste Industry	Kathy Hashagen, SWD staff
Phillippa Kassoover, Local Elected Official	Patty Liu, SWD staff
Bill Louie, Citizen Representative	Pat McLaughlin, SWD Director
Brian Martin, Citizen Representative	Zainab Nejati, King County
Stephen Schmidt, Citizen Representative	Yolanda Pon, Public Health Seattle/King County
Penny Sweet, Local Elected Official	Hannah Scholes, SWD staff
Leah Tischler, Public Interest Group	Andy Smith, SWD staff
Heather Trim, Recycling Industry	Adrian Tan, SWD staff
Wendy Weiker – Chair, Waste Industry	Dorian Waller, SWD staff
	John Walsh, SWD staff
<u>Guests</u>	
Phil Allen	Gib Dammann
Kazia Mermel, Sound Cities Association	Tyler Pichette, Pacific Public Affairs
Diana Wadley, Washington State Dept. of Ecology	

Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Weiker called the meeting to order with introductions at 9:31 a.m.

Agenda and Minutes

Sweet moved to approve the February 2022 minutes. Atkinson seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment

Wadley reported that the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) recently approved the Local Hazardous Waste Management Plan for Seattle and King County. The King County plan includes the 37 cities in the King County solid waste system. Ecology approved Local Solid Waste and Hazardous Waste Plans and Contamination Reduction Outreach Plans (CROPs) are now posted [here](#).

There is financial assistance to help with authorizing and implementing those plans. The [Local Solid Waste Financial Assistance 17-19 Biennial Report](#) is now available. This report details how and where LSWFA money was spent, and the local outcomes achieved.

Allen reminded members of the ideas he shared last month regarding new methods to collect data to show citizens the value of NERTS. He indicated that concerns with the siting process underway.

SWD Updates

McLaughlin provided the SWD update:

Tonnage Report

We received roughly 21,000 tons more last month than in February 2021 which is an increase of almost 2%. The increase was largely driven by commercially collected tons which increased by 11.6% compared to February 2021.

Pilot of Dock Demolition

SWD owns property at Harbor Island. Part of it is being used for grain transport but there are some unused portions. On one of those portions is a dock in poor repair. The creosote piles that it once stood on need to be removed.

We did a pilot of that removal in early February. The pilot was successful and last week we shared information with stakeholders. The contractor will get back to the site for pile removal after the fish window is over, in June.

Green Building Ordinance passage

The Council passed the Green Building Ordinance (GBO) on March 1st.

The updated GBO supports the implementation of multiple areas of the Strategic Climate Action Plan. In addition to influencing county owned projects, the GBO seeks to educate King County staff and the public around green building practices. It promotes and encourages green building through regional partnerships and code development efforts that support sustainable development.

The county is prepared to work with cities to help increase the development of green affordable housing, green building certifications, efficiency upgrades in existing buildings and stronger state and local standards for new and existing buildings.

NERTS

We are confident the short list of sites being considered meet the established criteria. There will be outreach to hear from the community. To that end, we are restarting the Siting Advisory Group. There will also be community outreach in the form of a public question and answer forum. Pending decisions, the EIS will begin mid-late summer 2022.

New Staff

Amy Ockerlander, the Mayor of Duvall has accepted a position to work alongside Dorian as Government Relations Administrator. She will be a great addition to the SWD team, and she will begin her work with us March 23.

Members have requested an update on Ardaugh Glass plant lease. While we prepare a more substantial presentation, this topic will be included as a “check-in” during this updates section.

There will be a Cedar Hills Community Meeting on April 27. Per Trim’s request, SWAC members will receive an invitation.

Members asked for an update at a future meeting on the impact of [HB 1663](#) Landfill methane gas reduction legislation. The short answer is we will do an assessment of our system and facilities to determine what additional changes would be needed. We will prepare a presentation for a future committee meeting.

MSWAC Update

The MSWAC agenda mirrored the SWAC meeting. The committee also spent time in a discussion around ESJ as it effects Re+.

Update – Recruitment

There are four vacant positions in SWAC representing agriculture, the waste industry, landfill neighbors, and citizens. The position representing education/marketing also needs replacement as April has reached the end of her second term. One application for the waste management industry representative is pending. If all goes well, we should have a new member in April.

Approve WTE committee position letter

Sweet moved that SWAC approve the WTE committee position letter. Kassover seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Martin said he could understand why politicians may want to have another committee. It further distributes the burden of decision making. Even so, he doesn't believe another committee would add value.

Schmidt suggested that particular effort be spent to solicit members from unincorporated areas as they are most likely to be affected if a waste-to-energy option is chosen. Martin agreed saying that perhaps engaging with other non-governmental organizations to ask for participation would be useful. Waller said that had been tried but there has been more success in asking through Council members. He reminded the committee that membership is influenced not only geographically but also by culture and race.

Atkinson suggested that the opportunity to serve on the committee be brought up at city council meetings. Citizens listening to those meetings may be more interested in the openings. Martin suggested handing out flyers at Cedar Grove. Wieker suggested members send additional ideas to Waller.

2022 Legislative Update

Tan and Scholes briefed MSWAC on the 69th session of the Washington State Legislature. The session ended March 10, 2022.

The following legislation did not move further forward during this legislative session

- SB 5697 - RENEW Act (includes EPR for packaging and paper products)
- SB5658 - Truth in labelling and recycled content
- HB 1810 - Right to repair
- HB 1801 - Repairability index
- SB5492 - EPR for wind turbine blades
- HB 1869 - EPR for batteries

Two bills did move forward.

HB 1663 Landfill methane gas reduction

It will:

- Require landfills to install a gas collection and control system and/or submit an annual report based on their size and amount of methane emissions.

It will be a good way to track how landfills contribute to GHG emissions. The deadline for surface emissions monitoring is January 1st of the year following when the rules have been adopted by the DOE.

It will likely require investment at Cedar Hills Regional Landfill and five closed landfills. Though there is an extensive landfill gas capture and preventative maintenance system at Cedar Hills, additional investments are likely necessary. We need to do a full assessment and expect both staffing and capital costs.

HB 1799 Organic materials management.

It will:

- Require changes to divert organic material from landfills and reduce methane emissions such as:
- Providing organics collection services to certain populations
- Local governments must buy back finished compost from processors
- Some businesses must separate organic waste
- Reducing legal liability for food donations
- Establishing the Washington Center for Sustainable Food Management

- Update compostable products labelling
- Creating a compost reimbursement program for farming operations

There's also a budget proviso ([SB 5693](#)) for the Governor to approve to provide funding for DOE to do a study of recycling rates of packaging and paper products as well as recommendation on legislative action to address problematic and unnecessary plastics.

HB 1799 complements King Counties existing composting work and assists commercial and business composting. The bill will provide more access for composting services in other counties across the state. However, the bill includes a requirement for cities to have an ordinance and a compost procurement plan to support certain markets of compost. We will be available provide technical assistance to the cities with those or related issues.

Re+ Update1

The Re+ Circular Economy Grants are intended to support business and community projects that prevent or divert materials going to the landfill. The application window will be open from the end of March through the beginning of May. There is \$1.8 million funding available. The competitive award process may result in up to \$300,000 in grant funding per project. Focus areas include Prevention and Reuse, and Recycling. Priority materials include paper, plastic, and organics and the project must show an impact on the King County waste stream. Committee members will receive the application announcement when it launches by email at the end of March and are encouraged to share it with their networks.

Examples of projects that could be considered include:

- A local company investing in infrastructure to support durable service was to move away from single use plastics at its restaurants
- A packaging manufacturer developing a new product line using recycled plastic
- A growing business receiving support to develop a new expanded compost site
- A local hauler requesting funds for marketing materials to grow recycling and food waste collection routes in underserved areas

In addition, SWAC members are asked to help NextCycle Washington build a distribution list of other organizations, jurisdictions, associations, and businesses on related journeys to expand the circular economy in Washington State. They can sign up directly on the [NextCycle Washington website](#) or contacts can be sent to ecoleman@kingcounty.gov. Please send any contacts to Coleman by March 23rd or forward the information yourself.

The Re+ Circular Economy Grant is geared toward "shovel ready" projects. There will be another grant process for businesses in the earlier stages later in the year. We're looking to include a bunch of community input. Grants through [NextCycle Washington](#) also provide support to new businesses.

Committee members are asked to spread the word about these grants. We are also working with other groups to get the word out. We need to walk a careful line in communicating the opportunity because awarding the grants is a competitive process.

Walsh asked for feedback on the Re+ Fast Start Action Overview document provided with the meeting materials. Please focus on content and identify anything not relevant to city decision making. Also, please identify anything not included that would be helpful. The deadline is March 25. Send further feedback to Liu at Pliu@kingcounty.gov.

*Trim requested a date and timeline for the co-digestion work. We are still working with the Wastewater Treatment Division on the specifics of that project which is why those dates are not included in the timeline. We will provide the dates when they are confirmed.

Schmidt asked for more information about food waste. He asked how much is residential, multi-family, and restaurants. Walsh said the recent waste characterization study would provide the details. *The following information was provided for these notes after the meeting.*

King County's 2019 waste characterization study estimated that 64,000 tons of food waste and 26,000 tons of compostable paper were landfilled by non-residential generators. The same study estimates an additional 70,000 tons of food waste and 21,000 tons of compostable paper from residential generators (over 60% of which is single-family material)

Dawson said Cedar Grove is supportive of the digestion project but wants to be sure it doesn't impact current programs. The meeting materials said that the project would be based on businesses that don't currently subscribe to organics collection. She asked how the division collects data on how many and which businesses don't have organics collection. The division will need to compile that information for HB1799 implementation as well as for Re+. She said if rates for co-digestion will be subsidized, Cedar Grove should receive a similar subsidy. She questioned the value of digesting if the results still need to be composted. Cedar Grove has sufficient capacity and believes waste sorting would be a better investment than moving toward a slurry. She noted that Cedar Grove and the Solid Waste Division would meet on Monday to continue the conversation.

Kassover provided feedback on Re+ Fast Start Action Overview and said that it's not clear that cities are the audience. And it's not clear what the cities are expected to do with the information. She wonders if it is intended to provide background for policy work or information to be used in citizen education. Martin suggested that it would benefit from visuals and an executive summary that communicates the need. A strong sponsorship statement that garners the attention of readers is also needed. Also, include the date of the document and specify the intended audience.

Trim said the document doesn't include context which would be useful for new readers. However, context may not be needed in a briefing paper. Instead, she suggested a slide deck for each topic and that begins with the why.

The document talks about how many people could be fed with the food sent to disposal. We know that some of the food disposed is not edible. But Kassover suggested the document explain what fraction of the food waste is edible as opposed to food scraps.

2023-2024 Rate Proposal Update

The January preliminary rate would require an 8.94% increase in revenue requirement for both 2023 and 2024. The division is projecting to under expend in 2021-2022 by \$6 million.

The tonnage forecast shows that Re+ impacts are expected to begin in 2023 with more significant impacts beginning after 2027 in both the lower and higher diversion scenarios. The lower diversion forecast was used in the tonnage forecast for the preliminary rate. We will have a new forecast based on HB 1799 at the next meeting.

Budget discussions identified budget savings. However, they also identified needed organization investments such as staffing, investments in equipment such as trucks and packers, environmental investments including recycling at transfer stations, and investments in IT and asset management.

The budget also includes the continued implementation of the capital program which raises debt service to about \$43 million by 2030. The major costs for Area 9 development and NRTS have been pushed further in the future due to project delays.

Re+ spending is expected to exceed the existing \$7 million in our existing biennial budget by \$529,000. That budget includes Fast Start Action Support, additional staff to help with Re+ implementation and starting work toward Re+ 2.0, and other expenditures. Patty's work will shift to updating the comp plan.

The 2022 rate proposal projected annual increases of 9.4%. Current projections suggest we will be able to reduce those increases in 2023 and 2024 to 8.94%. Upward pressures on the rate include debt service, inflation, deferred spending, investments in recycling, etc. Downward pressures on the rates include efficiencies, budget cuts, higher than expected tonnage, and spending the rate stabilization reserve to lower the rate.

In response to a comment, staff said that part of the tonnage forecast is based on population numbers from the Washington State Office of Financial Management. Other factors are also considered for the forecast like the numbers of jobs (from the Puget Sound Regional Council), the tipping fee, and taxable retail sales. We've learned it takes time to see the changes from new programs because infrastructure and implementing policies take time. It's also difficult to determine what areas the proposals will impact or how quickly. Once we know more, including what the applicants suggest, we'll be able to reflect that in tonnage changes.

A member said that few capital projects meet the approved budget or schedule and expressed concern about the budgeted capital expenditures. Halverson responded that contingency funds are part of the capital budget. In SWD, we make sure that contingency is even higher and try to be conservative in our capital budget.

March 28th there will be rate briefings with DNRP and Executive offices. We expect to finalize the rate proposal in April and transmit the legislation to the Executive in May. We anticipate the Executive will transmit the legislation to Council in June. The target for passage is the first week of September and the deadline to communicate rate changes in time for implementation at the beginning of the year is October 1.

Member Comment

Mclaughlin said committee members would be invited to the Cedar Hills Community meeting 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday April 27. I will be very helpful to get this additional feedback and perspective.

There was an Equity and Social conversation at MSWAC. It highlighted the need to continually provide training and context so your advice as advisory group members can be filtered through an equity lens. Whether it's around the Re+ community panel or other topics it's important that you are equipped to provide advice through the lens of King County values. One of those values is equity. It's not an option. It's a commitment that our county has made. King County has prioritized the equities associated with race. We'll talk more about this going forward and will work with the chair to make additional investments in training and dialogue.

Atkinson asked to have someone at each of these meetings share what's happening at Re+ Committee meetings.

Trim invited everyone to become a judge coach or mentor for the PRECYCLE Innovation Challenge. There are two tracks: students and beginning start-ups that will receive technical support and mentoring.

<https://www.precyclewa.org/get-involved>

Weiker said tours of Cedar Hills and a Materials Recovery Facility would be very useful for the committee. She also suggested SWAC consider touring a – consider a Schmidt Wastewater Plant that converts methane to natural gas.

The meeting adjourned at 11:16.