

King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee

April 15, 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		Mai Bui, SWD staff	
Taylor Atkinson, Vice Chair, Citizen Representative		Brian Halverson, SWD staff	
Karen Dawson, Manufacturer		Kathy Hashagen, SWD staff	
Robin Freedman, Waste Industry		Pat McLaughlin, SWD Director	
Phillippa Kassover, Local Elected Official		Yolanda Pon, Public Health Seattle/King County	
Bill Louie, Citizen Representative		Hannah Scholes, SWD staff	
Brian Martin, Citizen Representative		Dorian Waller, SWD staff	
Ken Marshall, Bargaining Unit		John Walsh, SWD staff	
Heather Trim, Recycling Industry			
Wendy Weiker – Chair, Waste Industry			
<u>Guests</u>			
Phil Allen		Kazia Mermel, Sound Cities Association	
Albert Foster, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation			

Call to Order and Introductions

Chair called the meeting to order with introductions at 9:34 a.m.

Agenda and Minutes

Trim asked that the spelling of Ardagh Glass be corrected. Marshall moved to approve the February 2022 minutes. Martin seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment

Allen expressed his interest in the success of the Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station (NERTS) siting process. He’s attended SWAC as a guest for the past few months. At the last meeting he expressed concern that one of the sites under consideration did not meet the pre-determined siting criteria. McLaughlin disagreed in comments later in the meeting. After the meeting, Allen spoke with the Project Manager and heard that a site under consideration didn’t meet the criteria along with an explanation as to why the site was being considered. Allen doesn’t think the reason stated was complete and suggests that the best option would be to amend the siting criteria. He asked that SWAC, as representatives of various stakeholder groups further discuss the issue he raised.

SWD Updates

McLaughlin provided the SWD update:

MSWAC Update

The MSWAC agenda mirrored the SWAC meeting. The committee also spent time in ESJ training. The training was originally included in the SWAC agenda but was cancelled because the presenter is ill.

Tonnage Report

We received roughly 1,700 tons more last month than in March 2021, an increase of about 2.3% for the month and 1% for the year. Commercially collected tons are up by 9% compared to March 2021.

Top load transfer station safety improvements

We deployed a modified 20-yard roll-off container to create a physical barrier between customers and an identified fall hazard at top load stations on March 10, 2022. This configuration prevents customers from approaching the fall hazard area. However, using this strategy also means that we will need to increase

restrictions for longer vehicles at top load locations because new configuration leaves less space to maneuver within the station.

The sites will continue to service commercial haulers. However, self-haulers with trailers or large box trucks greater than 25 feet in length will be redirected to compactor stations.

We have reader boards in place at Algona, Renton, and Houghton so customers will know they could be impacted by the length restrictions. We also have a social media campaign and flyers. We are installing bollards/posts so it's easy to see how long a vehicle is. There will be a soft enforcement period. Only after that time will we turn people away.

Rate Restructure Legislation passage

The Council passed the Rate Restructure legislation on March 22nd. The rate restructure will take place beginning January 2023.

The City/Hauler contracts will need to be updated to account for the change in billing structure. SWD staff are available to support cities and haulers in this effort. To assist the cities in preparing for this effort, we are working with a consultant to develop a template contract amendment.

WRAP Program

The Solid Waste Division and the Department of Natural Resources joined the American Chemistry Council and Seattle Public Utilities to host a Zoom press event on March 18. The event highlighted a joint pilot plastics take-back program at 10 local independent grocery stores, mainly in the Seattle area. The pilot is managed by American Chemistry Council, and encourages people to return their plastic bags, film, and bubble mailers to they can be recycled at Merlin in BC.

It generated a lot of media interest. There were more than a dozen local TV, print and radio on the call. In response to Atwood's question Scholes confirmed that this is an expansion of a current program with some differences. The focus is on small, independent retailers as opposed to chains. And technical support is being provided to encourage collection of cleaner materials that can be recycled into bags rather than other products.

Call2Recycle Top 100 Leader in Sustainability award

King County Solid Waste Division is a recipient of the Call2Recycle Top 100 Leader in Sustainability award! The annual Leader in Sustainability award is given to top performing organizations and businesses who demonstrate a notable commitment to battery collection and recycling.

We played a pivotal role in helping the Call2Recycle program hit a milestone of recycling more than 8 million pounds of consumer batteries in 2021.

Ardagh Glass lease status

Ardagh Glass is the primary recycler of glass in King County. Part of their organizational footprint was leased from King County which had concerns about the environmental impact of part of their operation. A King County expert will provide more detail to SWAC at your next meeting.

We are preparing an update in June regarding about what HB1663 means regarding compliance and operational practices at Cedar Hills. Also expect a most substantive update on co-digestion next month.

Flow Control status

We are continuing to work with Seattle Mayor's Office about the flow control issue regarding residuals from MRFs. SWD continues to hope to solve this through binding arbitration though the city is pursuing other options.

Flow control is a legal concept that allows a solid waste system to ensure solid waste created in the service area of the system is disposed in that system. Flow control applies to waste, but not to recycled materials. In addition to an environmental and greenhouse gas issue, flow control is economic. It means that customers in the area that paid for the system use the benefits of that system. And it ensures that income associated with the disposal of waste generated in that service area pays for the solid waste system in that area.

Even though recycled materials are not included in flow control, when the materials have been processed there is a residual that can't be effectively recycled. That residual is garbage and as garbage, is subject to flow control. King County says that residuals from recycling collected in the King County service area should be disposed in by King County regardless of where they are processed. The City of Seattle says that the materials collected in King County are recycling until they are changed in processing and since the processing happened in Seattle, the residuals should be disposed through the Seattle solid waste system.

Marshall said that in the past the City of Seattle agreed to split the residuals tonnage with King County and part of the current disagreement relates to recovering income from that tonnage.

Co-digestion is about converting food waste to gas. Despite current efforts, a significant amount of food waste is disposed. The first choice would be to prevent the food from becoming waste by redirecting it to where it could be used. But for what's left, we think there are better uses than putting it into a landfill. That's where co-digestion comes in. We would like to divert that food waste from disposal and create a slurry. Then, working with the Wastewater Treatment Division, add it to their digester system. They sell the gas from their digesters and the slurry would accelerate gas production which produces an economic advantage. Residuals from the process would be disposed at Cedar Hills.

Dawson had questions about flow control and residuals asking how they are being balanced since Waste Management is bringing most of their materials to Lens in Snohomish County. She also had questions about the materials taken to North Mason Fiber by Waste Management Eastmont. McLaughlin said that in both cases, the expectation is that the same amount of tonnage will be brought into the system that has been directed elsewhere. Though that is the expectation it has not been recently validated. McLaughlin will check with staff to confirm recent outreach on that topic.

Marshall said the compactors at Houghton have failed three times in three weeks. When they are not functioning, the station is not available to commercial haulers who are asked to take their loads to Factoria, consuming time and other resources. Additionally, Factoria closes earlier, and trucks are full overnight. The day after a Houghton closure, commercial drivers must go to Factoria to empty their trucks before starting their day. The closure of Houghton when the compactors are down results in overtime and longer days for commercial drivers.

Marshall asked what was being done about the failures. He suggested that Factoria be kept open longer when failure occurs. He also suggested that when the Houghton compactors go down, self-haulers be asked to take their loads to Factoria and that commercial haulers be able to use the Houghton spaces normally designated for self-haul use. McLaughlin said that despite replacing and modernizing equipment at Houghton, there are periodic failures. He acknowledged that failures impact haulers. He agreed to follow-up with the Operations team. While confident that they are urgently repairing after failures, it is less clear if they are considering keeping Factoria open longer on those days. Opening the self-haul area at Houghton to commercial haulers in those circumstances may be something else to consider.

Martin asked for an update on Styrofoam blocks saying there are no logical ways to recycle it curbside. SWD agrees saying we don't have a good curbside option – it's mostly drop off and that is limited. We need the market to expand to grow recycling capacity. SWD will promote current options for recycling Styrofoam blocks.

Recruitment

There are three vacant positions in SWAC representing agriculture, landfill neighbors, and citizens. The third Waste Industry position is being processed through the Executive's office. The position representing education/marketing also needs replacement as April has reached the end of her second term. Dawson and Marshall are also approaching the end of their second terms in September. Waller would like to talk with them about recommendations for those positions.

2022 Legislative Update

Scholes briefed SWAC on the 69th session of the Washington State Legislature which ended March 10, 2022.

[HB 1799](#) Organic Materials Management has been signed. This bill was a significant achievement that supports organics management and Re+. There was good stakeholder engagement and collaboration both before and during the session. Other efforts did not move forward but legislators were made more aware of the topic areas which builds momentum for the next session.

However, it was a short session with many competing priorities like housing, mental health and COVID. And EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) is complex. We expected it would be a multi-year effort to move the RENEW Recycling Act forward. There was not enough time during this session.

During the next session we will continue to work on packaging and paper products (the RENEW Recycling Act) EPR for batteries, on organics and possibly other materials. HB1799 was a great first step but more work is needed.

SWAC members were asked for feedback about what legislative topics are priorities, how members would like to be engaged during or prior to the next legislative session and if members would be interested in forming a legislative sub-committee. They also asked how legislative briefings could be improved. Member comments included:

- Kassover said she was pleased with the reports SWAC has received. She would like to know more about opportunities for members of this committee to testify. She would also like to know more about EPR for batteries since to some degree, we're doing that already.
- Trim said that King County and Kitsap County are paying to recycle batteries. Other counties are not following suit. To some degree, EPR for batteries is about who is paying for recycling and how to make it work more effectively. Trim suggested that stakeholder input by topic is more effective than a group that is looking at all legislation. She said the organics stakeholder committee will reconvene even after passage of HB1799. Though it was a good step forward, a second phase is needed. When a sponsor is identified for the EPR bill, that legislator will determine which stakeholders to involve and how.
- Hannah also welcomes feedback by email.
- Consider broadening the speakers at this group to prepare members to be better testifiers.

Scholes welcomes feedback by email. hscholes@kingcounty.gov

2023-2024 Rate Proposal Update

We identified an entry error that inflated projected revenues needed. We've corrected the error, had it checked by others and updated cashflows for co-digestion and mixed waste processing, lowered future budget add assumptions, updated some bond rate assumptions, the Capital Equipment Replacement Program (CERP) transfer amount, and some landfill assumptions.

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.

Also, the CIP cashflow assumptions have been revised resulting in smoothed capital spending. Area 9 development has been pushed out and refilling the tops of area 5 and 6 has moved forward. This change in landfill sequencing was done for environmental and project timeline reasons.

The projected revenue requirement increase is 9.4% in 2022 and is projected to be 9.56% out through 2028. We are spending rate stabilization reserve to accomplish that.

We've been analyzing Early Call Bond and Bond Anticipation Notes finds and have received high level analysis and rate assumptions from the King County Finance and Budget Office (FBOD). Different ways to issue the debt would have different impacts. We're looking at details and expect to see a little movement.

Waller sent a draft letter of support for the rate with the materials for this meeting. Members are asked to review the draft over the next few weeks to see what changes may be needed to create something you may feel comfortable signing. Then we could create a revised letter in time to review at the next SWAC meeting. Ideally, it would be great to have a vote on the letter at that time. Kassover said she will make some suggested edits that include recovery from the pandemic and the impact of inflation.

In response to a question Halverson reminded the committee that Council has passed the new rate structure. This letter is about the amount of the 2023/2024 rate. MSWAC is also considering a letter of support for the new rate.

Weiker asked if SWAC can look at the model contract amendment language that the division is working on with the cities. She said that haulers will have a short window to complete all the paperwork in October and November and said it would be helpful to know which cities were involved. Halverson said SWD is not a party to the negotiations but hopes to work in partnership with three cities, one from each hauler, to create template language. The intent is to create models that would make it simpler for other cities. We will share what we can as efforts proceed.

Member Comment

The Statewide Recycling Coordinators meeting is scheduled for April 28. The meeting will include the unveiling of the results of the Residential Recycling Survey.

Atkinson suggested community drop off stations for recycling on a local or neighborhood scale. Then instead of going to each individual house the hauler can go to one place.

The concluding event in the PreCycle Challenge is virtual event from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on May 23, 2022. There will be presentations about innovative technologies from participants and attendees may offer questions for the judges to consider.

The meeting adjourned at 11:16.