



# SAG Meeting #5 Summary

Siting Advisory Group

Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station

## SAG Members in Attendance:

- Aaron Moldver, City of Redmond
- Amrit Bhuie, AR Environmental Consulting
- Andreas Kolshorn, At-large
- Dave Juarez, City of Redmond
- Diana Hart, City of Woodinville
- James Randolph, At-large
- Jed Reynolds, Lake Washington School District
- John MacGillivray, City of Kirkland
- Kent Kronenburg, Republic Services
- Nick Harbert, Waste Management
- Ronald Kim, At-large
- Susan Vossler, At-large
- Tehmina Ali, Resident
- Tracey Dunlap, City of Kirkland
- Troy Anderson, Woodinville Chamber of Commerce
- William Louie, At-large
- William Su, Resident

## Staff Members in Attendance:

- Margaret Bay, King County Solid Waste
- Mary O'Hara, King County Solid Waste
- Polly Young, King County Solid Waste
- Nori Catabay, King County Solid Waste
- Annie Kolb-Nelson, King County Solid Waste
- Penny Mabie, Definitely-Mabie Consulting
- Marilee Jolin, EnviroIssues
- Claire Wendle, EnviroIssues
- Jordan Sanabria, EnviroIssues
- Dan Pitzler, Jacobs Engineering
- Melissa Wu, Jacobs Engineering

## Welcome

**Penny Mabie** (Definitely-Mabie Consulting, Facilitator) welcomed members of the Siting Advisory Group (SAG), gave members a brief refresher on the available Zoom features, and asked that any remaining SAG members who have not submitted their disclosure forms do so soon. Penny then introduced **Mary O'Hara** (King County Solid Waste) as the new Deputy Project Manager for the Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station project. Penny also introduced new SAG member Troy Anderson, who would be filling the previously vacant seat for a Woodinville Chamber of Commerce representative.

Three SAG members, who were selected to give a report-out to the rest of the group in advance, shared values and concerns they'd heard from their community:

Aaron Moldver:

- City representatives from Bellevue and Redmond in opposition to possibility of taking away affordable housing.
- Redmond Parks and Trails Commission opposed selection of the Redmond site (SW corner of Willows Rd NE and NE 124<sup>th</sup> St) as they are interested in maintaining and enhancing trails in the area.
- Members of Metropolitan Solid Waste Advisory Committee (MSWAC) hadn't realized the siting process had reached the phase of identifying the top four sites and they were surprised by the announcement
- Dave Juarez added: Redmond City Council approved the Revised Interlocal Agreement with the City of Kirkland for the Willows Road Intertie at their March 16, 2021 meeting. Therefore, Redmond is committed to the water main extension to the Willows Rd NE and NE 124<sup>th</sup> St property in the upcoming few years, which will provide service to the planned development at the Redmond site.

John MacGillivray (& Tracey Dunlap):

- The Interlocal Agreement between Redmond and Kirkland for Willows Road Intertie includes a section for the possible event that King County selects the Willows Rd NE and NE 124<sup>th</sup> St site for the northeast recycling and transfer station.
- Kirkland expressed interest in modern design and full mitigation for whichever site is chosen as the final location.
- Kirkland recommends King County continue communication with Kirkland residents regarding past conversations about the current Houghton Transfer Station, as there seems to be a different understanding on the part of some community members regarding an agreement relating to the Houghton site.

Diana Hart:

- A letter was sent March 16, 2021 to King County Executive Dow Constantine and King County Solid Waste Division Director Pat McLaughlin that outlines the concerns regarding the Woodinville location (16111 Woodinville-Redmond Rd NE).
  - Mitigation for the Woodinville site would be too costly and it is not recommended to move it forward to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process.

Penny thanked the SAG members for their reporting and reminded the full group of the agreed upon ground rules to follow before continuing on with the meeting.

## **Public Comment Period #1**

Penny noted that this meeting would include two public comment periods, explaining that the decision was made based on a desire to hold public comments earlier in the meeting while also honoring the posted agenda for those who planned to join later in the evening to make public comment. Penny then opened the call for public comments. Audience members were asked to electronically raise their hand to indicate they would like to speak. With 10 minutes allotted and 6 audience members expressing interest in speaking for the first round of public comments, each speaker was given about one and a half minutes.

## Comments:

- **Emily Brown**, speaking on behalf of Friends of Taylor Fields, shared that a petition is circulating seeking closure of the Houghton station and relocation of the northeast recycling and transfer station, which was nearing 1,000 signatures. Emily referenced funding, creating, and maintaining an active sports park as part of the conditions for the Houghton station and believes King County to be dishonest and disingenuous in upholding the mitigation and previous communications regarding closure and relocation of the station now that the site (11724 NE 60th St, Kirkland) has been named one of the top four sites for the new transfer station. Emily also noted concern regarding proximity to the Factoria station, loss of park space, and potential health hazards relating to constructing a new station on the Houghton site.
- **GennZ**, stated disapproval with the final four sites, believing none of them are reasonable or meet the criteria for a new transfer station. GennZ expressed particular concern with the Houghton site (11724 NE 60th St, Kirkland), noting proximity of their home to the Houghton site and expressed concern regarding impacts from construction on the site, as well as King County's previous intention to not pursue eminent domain.
- **Ken Krivanec**, president of Tri Pointe Homes, referenced the letter sent to Pat McLaughlin asking for the site at the SW corner of Willows Rd NE and NE 124<sup>th</sup> St (Redmond) to be removed from consideration. Ken noted that \$28 million has been spent to create housing, including 35 affordable housing units, on the property and that moving the property forward into the EIS process would be damaging to the site. Ken noted the site was rezoned to NW Design District to support the planned mixed-use development.
- **Papp**, Winsome Trading, shared that their company is a family-owned business and expressed that they had no intention of moving from the 16111 Woodinville-Redmond Rd NE site (Woodinville), citing a recent \$1 million custom renovation to the operations building. Papp reiterated that due to the renovation, the cost of mitigation to move the company to a new site would be expensive.
- **Chris Lynch**, resident near Houghton station, shared that at the time of purchasing their home in 2014, they were under the impression that the Houghton station would soon close and be relocated to a different site. Chris expressed that the messaging was unclear and that there was misunderstanding between the County and Houghton community members. Chris also shared concern that a new station at the 11724 NE 60th St, Kirkland site would attract customers from Bellevue and result in the loss of a beautiful park space.
- **Deirdre Johnson**, South Rose Hill/Bridle Trails Association, expressed disappointment that while two of the top 4 sites are located in Houghton there were no SAG members representing the Houghton neighborhood. Deirdre referenced a promise from the County that the existing Houghton station would close, reading excerpts from a letter from the Solid Waste Division to the County Executive. Deirdre stated disapproval of the top 4 sites, believing that the County never planned to close and relocate the station at Houghton and has already decided to select the 11724 NE 60th St, Kirkland site for the new station.

Penny thanked the speakers for their comments and reminded attendees that there would be a second public comment period during which audience members who did not make public comment in the first period could do so.

## Community Criteria Process Review

Penny gave a brief overview of the community criteria process, which notes the purpose of the fifth SAG meeting to review weighting results and adjust as needed, then confirm ranking of the top four sites based on the community criteria.

## Community Survey Results

The SAG was presented with the final results of the community survey. The survey was live for over a month, totaling 2,431 responses from community members in English, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Spanish, Russian, and Farsi. Most responses came from community members in Kirkland, Redmond, Woodinville, and Sammamish.

Survey respondents were asked to rank the SAG's community criteria in order of importance and share information they knew about the top four sites. After reviewing the ranking and the common responses for each site in the survey, the SAG was given the opportunity to ask questions or add comment.

### Community Survey Criteria Ranking

1. Site has fewest potential local community impacts (e.g. traffic, noise, odor).
2. Site has fewest impacts to sensitive areas and avoids environmental red flags (e.g., landslide potential, wetlands, earthquake faults, aquifers that provide drinking water, etc).
3. Site acquisition has least impact on current or future residential or commercial use.
4. Location has best travel times at most times of the day within the service area.
5. Site best accommodates sustainable and innovative design.
6. Site has most reasonable cost.
7. Are there disproportionate impacts to historically and currently underserved and underrepresented communities? (includes immigrants, people of color, refugees and low-income populations).
8. Underserved and underrepresented community members and employees are able to conveniently access the site.
9. Location is within 10 miles from any point in the service area and no closer than 5 miles to any other county recycling and transfer station.

**Q:** What do the numbers on the rightmost column of this ranking graphic represent?

**A:** That is the number of times each criterion was ranked.

### 16111 Woodinville-Redmond Rd NE, Woodinville – Respondent Information

- Chrysalis High School is located across the street from the site.
- The Sammamish River Trail is nearby, which is popular for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Concerns over noise and increased traffic, especially for nearby schools and condominiums.

- Proposed site is close to Woodinville wine district, which is a large tourist destination for the city of Woodinville.
- Site access is constrained already and would impact family-owned businesses.

**SAG Comments**

- The Winsome Trading building is very large, I'm surprised that was not commonly expressed in the survey results.

SW Corner of Willows Rd NE and NE 124th St, Redmond – Respondent Information

- The site is very close to 60 Acres Park, which is a large and widely used soccer and athletic fields complex.
- Concerns about peak-hour traffic. Respondents are worried that trucks and haulers coming and going would increase traffic issues.
- The route is also used by commuting and non-commuting cyclists accessing the Sammamish River Trail.
- The proposed site poses environmental concerns due to its location on a hillside and proximity to a protected wetland area.

**SAG Comments**

- The site was described in the survey as vacant land and business park. The community may not have had all the information and if they had the results may have differed.

7024 116th Ave NE, Kirkland – Respondent Information

- Lake Washington High School, Holy Family Parish School and Ben Franklin Elementary nearby.
- Concerns over loss of the Park and Ride.
- It is a densely populated area and there are concerns about traffic, especially during rush hour.
- Site proximity to the freeway was considered a benefit.
- The area surrounding the site experiences high levels of pedestrian traffic with nearby schools and is a frequent cycling route.
- Site size is very small compared to other sites.

**SAG Comments:**

- With the site's proximity to residences and the potential increase in traffic due to a loss of Park and Ride and associated transit service, it seems this site does not align with the community's high-ranked criteria.

11724 NE 60th St, Kirkland – Respondent Information

- Ben Franklin Elementary is nearby.
- Borders Bridle Trails State Park and adjacent baseball fields are widely used.
- The Bridle Trails Shopping Center is nearby, but the area is otherwise largely residential.
- There is peak hour traffic, although the site has easy access to I-405.
- The site is located in a highly residential area with pedestrian and cyclist traffic.

- Concerns about the history of the station siting and previous King County transfer station development plans.

**SAG Comments:**

- I'm interested in having further discussion later in this meeting regarding the history of what was discussed between the County and Houghton neighbors.
- It's reassuring to see that the results of the community survey are consistent with what SAG members have previously shared.

## Review Weighting and Scoring

**Dan Pitzler** (Jacobs Engineering) led the review of the SAG scoring small group's scores as well as the weighting submitted by the full group. Dan noted a striking similarity between the SAG rankings and the rankings from the community survey. The SAG was then asked to share any questions they still had and to share any other thoughts about the sites.

**Q:** What do higher scores mean?

**A:** The higher the number the better the site scored. This table shows scores for each criterion for each site, as well as the total scores for each site.

**Q:** A few members have suggested revisiting previous potential sites for further consideration. What are our options?

**A:** King County convened the Siting Advisory Group to provide additional input to help determine which of the top four sites should move forward to the EIS process. This doesn't mean the possibility cannot be discussed in this group, but that is not the SAG's intended purpose.

**Q:** Will additional issues raised regarding the top sites be addressed in the environmental review?

**A:** The intent of environmental review is to look into the built and natural environment surrounding the sites being assessed. This is not the end of the siting process, there is much more time and work that will be going into selecting a final site to build the new transfer station.

**Comments:**

- It sounds like no one wants a new transfer station in their community, so just looking at the numbers it seems the site of the existing Houghton station is the best option, though perhaps there's still a fifth option that would be more appropriate.
- Because no one seems to be excited about the possibility of a new transfer station in their neighborhood, it's important for King County to acknowledge that a new transfer station can be made into an amenity for the surrounding community and commit to mitigation.
- I think it would be worthwhile to revisit sites that were not included in the top four.
  - I disagree, the team has already done extensive work to ensure the final sites are the best of what is available in the region, so going backwards in the process would not be beneficial.

- There has been reference to some sort of promise or perceived promise between the County and the community surrounding the existing Houghton station. I would like to hear some clarification about this.
  - The 2005 memorandum between the City of Kirkland and King County Solid Waste Division regarding the existing Houghton station had no promise to close the Houghton station. The commitment was in regard to mitigation relating to operations at the station, such as installing a sound wall, building a walking path, improving lighting, etc. It seems what tonight's commentors have interpreted as a promise to close and move the existing station is a statement from the 2006 Solid Waste Transfer and Waste Management Plan (Transfer plan). To clarify, the Transfer plan states that the closure and relocation of the Houghton station is to be determined. In Chapter 5 of the 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (Comp Plan), the County commits to following through with the work to be done that is stated in the 2006 Transfer Plan. The County should be sure to clarify this with the public.
- Happy to see SAG's criteria ranking aligns with the community's ranking.
- There is no easy choice regarding which site to select and there are a lot of challenges to consider. I appreciate the County's work to narrow down sites to these top four, and the SAG has done a great job evaluating these sites with the information presented by the County and the input heard from the community.
- I used to think the current Houghton site seemed to be a clear choice to place the new station on, but after learning more through the process of these meetings and doing the work to apply weights I no longer believe there is an obvious answer. I particularly would not feel comfortable displacing the Winsome Trading business to acquire the site in Woodinville.
- Colleagues at Lake Washington School District agreed with the SAG's criteria. There was some concern regarding traffic impacts near Franklin Elementary if either Kirkland site is selected, but there was greater concern about increased traffic near the Redmond site due to existing traffic congestion and high daily use of the roadways near the SW corner of Willows Rd NE and NE 124th St.
- This process highlights the lack of availability of sites. No one is going to be happy so it's important to make the station a community amenity.

➤ **Action item:** County to clarify the commitment made by King County Solid Waste Division to the Houghton residents regarding the existing station.

## Ranking the Top 4 Sites

Before turning conversation to ranking the top four sites, Penny reminded the SAG that whatever they decide is a recommendation in helping the County decide which sites will move forward to the environmental review. This recommendation will be presented to Pat McLaughlin, King County Solid Waste Division Director, as he contemplates which sites will move forward to the environmental review process. Penny then summarized the points the SAG made in the discussion earlier in the meeting and asked members to share their thoughts regarding what to recommend.

**Comments:**

- Because the weighted scores were grouped so similarly to another, ranking them on a 1-4 scale does not seem to be the best approach.
- Unsure how to rank these sites now that we've heard comments from the Houghton community regarding some sort of commitment they feel hasn't been honored.
- Since there seems to be agreement that sorting the sites into a ranking would be inappropriate, we should recommend moving all four sites to the environmental review.
  - Assessing a site in an environmental review is expensive. If the County has agreed to take up to three then we should stick to that plan.
- The 7024 116th Ave NE, Kirkland site is actually owned by WSDOT, not Metro. I believe they have been considering selling the site even before the announcement of the top four sites. They're still early in the process but it's something to consider.
- Concerned about taking away potential affordable housing if the site at the SW corner of Willows Rd NE and NE 124th St, Redmond is selected.
  - Additionally, as time goes on and that site develops, the cost of acquisition will increase.
- Concerned about possibility of removing a large existing building and viable business if the site at the 16111 Redmond-Woodinville Rd NE, Woodinville is selected.
- Haven't heard much mention of the eastside rail corridor – it's important to consider that as well.
- It's important to keep the community well-informed and provide as much detail as possible.

**Q:** Criterion #6 (limited community impact) was broken down to criteria 6.1 (regarding facility operations such as odor, noise, and visual impacts) and 6.2 (regarding impacts resulting from facility traffic) for the weighting process. I was surprised that these two sub-criteria were weighted so closely. Could this be a result from a flawed formula?

**A:** No, the two sub-criteria were weighted differently. Numbers differed between each SAG member, but on average traffic impacts were ranked slightly higher than operational impacts. Because they were so close, there isn't much of an effect to the end result.

**Q:** Is it appropriate for the SAG to recommend reallocating some of the funding planned for site acquisition to the EIS process?

**A:** That's not something this group has discussed much in detail, so that's difficult to answer right now. There has been conversation regarding a focus on mitigation relating to the station serving as an amenity to the community, which may address concerns of which sites move into the EIS phase.

**Q:** Why did we only apply scoring to the top four sites? Was there concern with doing the scoring work with the top fifteen sites? It's unclear how we went from fifteen to four.

**A:** The SAG was convened by the County to help advise on a recommendation for the top four sites; the SAG was not intended to do work with the top fifteen sites, but you were provided with the criteria the County used to understand how fifteen sites were narrowed to the top four.



**Q:** In the presentation during our meeting on October 28, 2020, the site at 7024 116th Ave NE, Kirkland was presented in two parts: the existing Houghton station (excluding the fields) and the Park & Ride. Is it correct that that has changed to just the Park & Ride site?

**A:** Yes, that proposed site was altered to just include the Park & Ride as a result of the technical process.

**Q:** Have we heard from Metro about their stance on the 7024 116th Ave NE, Kirkland site being considered for the new transfer station?

**A:** We have informed all property owners of the top four sites that their sites are under consideration for this project.

**Q:** What are the next steps of the environmental review process?

**A:** For each site that moves ahead to environmental review, we develop a conceptual plan that shows what building a new transfer station on the site would look like, as well as a plan in the case that no site is chosen. We will also look at alternatives for each site and assess potential hazards. Then we go into the Draft EIS phase, then a phase for public comment, and the Final EIS around the end of 2022. Because this is a tremendous amount of work, it can be very costly to bring a high number of sites into the review process. This process begins as soon as the decision of which sites will be reviewed is made.

**Q:** What is King County's position regarding previous commitments made to the Houghton community that has been referenced in this meeting?

**A:** King County has identified a need for a new transfer station with updated amenities to serve members of the community. The existing Houghton station is over 50 years old and needs replacing. We are looking for a site that has the capacity for a new station, and the site of the existing station is one of the sites being considered. If after further review we find a site that will address capacity needs better than the current site, then that will be the location for the new station and the existing station will be removed from the Houghton site. If after further review we find that the Houghton site best fits the needs of a new station, then we will select that site due to it being the best available site. King County will continue to listen to and work with the community throughout this process.

**Q:** Is mitigation limited to just environmental mitigation or does it also apply to impacts to people in the community?

**A:** King County wants to be a good neighbor to whichever community the new station will be located within, such as what potential amenities the community would like to see. We are committed to considering sustainability as well as equity and social justice. The Shoreline Recycling and Transfer Station was the first to receive LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) platinum certification and the South County Recycling and Transfer Station is seeking the highest level of environmental sustainability through the International Living Future Institute's Living Building Challenge. Our goal is to have the northeast station achieve similar sustainability certification. The design phase will begin after the EIS phase, likely in 2023, so we don't have the details yet. We will share and discuss them further with a Design Advisory Group once we reach that phase.

**Q:** Is there a definition of "affordable housing" regarding the Redmond site?

**A:** We can work with the City of Redmond to get that information and share it with the group.

- **Action item:** *Work with City of Redmond to share definition of “affordable housing” with the SAG*

## Public Comment Period #2

Penny opened the call for the second round of public comments. Audience members were asked to electronically raise their hand to indicate they would like to speak. With about 15 minutes allotted and 10 audience members expressing interest in speaking for the first round of public comments, each speaker was given about one and a half minutes.

### Comments:

- **Jack McCullough**, who has been working with Tri Pointe Homes on development plans for the site at the SW corner of Willows Rd NE and NE 124th St, Redmond, noted the potential impacts to the development site if it were to move forward into EIS review. Jack expressed concern for a potential precondemnation blight to the property that could have a negative financial impact to the planned housing development.
- **Tolga Tekin**, resident near Bridle Trails, expressed frustration with the amount of communication and information shared between King County Solid Waste and the community. Tolga noted a school and daycare that are near the site at 11724 NE 60th St, Kirkland and shared that it was their understanding that the development planned for the site at the SW corner of Willows Rd NE and NE 124th St, Redmond was not a full development. Tolga expressed their belief that King County does not have enough money to afford any other option than locating the new transfer station on the site with the existing Houghton station and that King County is letting that drive their decision rather than listening to the community.
- **Kristin**, resident near Houghton station, shared their belief that none of the top four sites meet the initial criteria. Kristin stated that the 11724 NE 60th St, Kirkland property is a Superfund\* site and that nearly 1,000 people had signed a petition opposing the selection of the Houghton site for consideration. Kristin implored the County to remove the Houghton site from consideration, noting that the site is surrounded by residences while the other three sites are in non-residential areas.
- **Walt Green**, resident near the Houghton Park & Ride, shared having visited the other three sites and not seeing residences nearby, unlike the residential area that surrounds the site at 7024 116th Ave NE, Kirkland. Walt noted that the site shouldn't be considered for a new transfer station as it is smaller than the County's criterion and expressed concern for the potential traffic impacts that would result if the site were selected.
- **Sampada** asked the SAG to consider the impacts to current residents of the Houghton neighborhood before considering impacts to future tenants of a housing site that has not yet been built (at the SW corner of Willows Rd NE and NE 124th St, Redmond).
- **Deepa Garg** expressed appreciation that the ranking of criteria from the survey aligns with the SAG criteria ranking, but noted that those who completed the survey were not asked to score the sites, so it would not be fair to also say the community agrees with the SAG's ranking of sites. Deepa noted that the youth and the elderly communities are important groups of the community and wanted to ensure the interests of those groups

are being considered as well as how having a transfer station in the neighborhood affects daily life, such as children walking past the station's entrance on their walk to school.

- **SKOT**, representative for Winsome Trading (16111 Redmond-Woodinville Rd NE, Woodinville location), asked that the Woodinville site be dropped from further consideration, noting the significant difference in the SAG's weighting of that site compared to the two Kirkland sites. Skot also asked the County to consider the impact to the family business if the Woodinville site is selected for a new transfer station.
- **Mike**, Houghton resident, expressed concern that the SAG would recommend dropping the Redmond site from consideration, stating the SAG is prioritizing businesses over residents. Mike urged the County to protect existing residents and asked to see a fifth possible site that better fit the criteria.
- **Marie**, Houghton resident, asked the County to prioritize the safety of existing residents near the Houghton sites over potential future residents of the affordable housing units planned at the Redmond site. Marie expressed that it seems the County has already decided to select the 11724 NE 60th St site and is manipulating the site selection process to justify the decision. Marie also shared disappointment that there appeared to be no SAG members providing representation for Houghton neighborhood and urged the County to consider the impacts to residents when waste hauling vehicles pass their homes.
- **Stacy**, Houghton resident, stated that the 11724 NE 60th St, Kirkland site should be dropped from consideration as the new station would be built over a closed landfill, expressing concern for the safety of nearby residents during excavation. Stacy also urged the County to consider how much the community utilizes the field space at the site.

Penny thanked the speakers for their comments and confirmed they would be recorded in the meeting summary.

*\*Note for clarification (as no responses from the SAG or King County are given during the Public Comment period): For a site to be considered a Superfund means it has potentially dangerous releases of hazardous chemicals or materials and has been placed on the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) National Priority List. The County's closed Houghton Landfill is not on the National Priority List and is safely managed by the County in accordance with the pertinent federal and state regulations. Therefore, it is not accurate to refer to the closed Houghton landfill as a Superfund site.*

## Next Steps

Penny shared that the next step in the siting process would be an announcement from King County with the decision of which sites would be moving forward into the environmental review process. Penny announced April 28 as the scheduled date for the next SAG meeting, where the County will discuss the decision regarding the sites moving forward to environmental review and present next steps for the SAG and community involvement in the review process. **Margaret Bay** (King County Solid Waste) thanked the SAG and project team for their work so far, acknowledging the challenges of finding the best available sites for a new transfer station in the area. Penny closed by reminding the audience members that any further comments are accepted via email to [northeast@kingcounty.gov](mailto:northeast@kingcounty.gov).

- **Action item:** County to clarify the commitment made by King County Solid Waste Division to the Houghton residents regarding the existing station.
- **Action item:** Work with City of Redmond to share definition of “affordable housing” with the SAG
- **Action item:** Share the decision on which sites are moving forward to environmental review with the SAG ahead of the public announcement