



This summer, in an effort to use fewer chemicals, the division experimented with manual removal of noxious weeds from closed landfills. More than 1200 pounds of weeds were pulled at the Duvall and Puyallup-Kit closed landfills.

In August, the division conducted the first half of a recycling survey at seven division recycling and transfer stations. The survey focused on customer recycling habits and on customer satisfaction. Survey results, which will be available early in 2017, will be used to inform recycling service improvements at division facilities.

After 18 years with King County, 16 of them with the division, Diane Yates will be retiring at the end of February.

## **SWAC**

Joan Nelson gave an update on the June SWAC meeting, which included a presentation on the rate proposal and the division's LinkUp program. SWAC toured the Factoria Recycling and Transfer Station in August.

## **Demand Management**

Division Director Pat McLaughlin gave an update on demand management. In June, the division presented the preliminary rate proposal of \$140 per ton, which included MSWMAC's recommendation to implement a demand management pilot project at all stations. The rate proposal was refined after that presentation, resulting in transmittal to Council of a rate proposal at \$137.75 per ton. The lower rate was partly due to narrowing the pilot project to focus on the Northeast area of the county.

There are two components to demand management:

1. Early demand management – initiated in October 2016, this will include ongoing efforts to inform customers at all urban stations about wait times using web cameras and reader boards, as well as offering extra assistance to self-haul customers, where staffing allows, in order to help them get through the station more quickly.
2. Pilot project – a January-December 2018 project will test demand management techniques in order to discern the impact of extended hours and peak hour pricing on customer demand.

The NE-focused pilot project is essentially the same as that proposed in the Transfer Plan Part Two study and accounts for roughly 88 cents of the proposed \$137.75 per ton rate. Although it is less expensive than the initial proposal, a more narrowly focused study will provide more relevant data to inform long-term service decisions. The intent is to rebalance demand through incentivized pricing, a goal that isn't served when prices are raised everywhere.

The pilot project has been scoped only to the extent needed to estimate the rate revenue to support the project. Many significant factors – such as how results will be measured and the

status of Houghton during the project – have yet to be determined. The division is still looking for input on these factors and encourages cities to continue to engage in dialogue on this topic.

The division understands that equity is critical to all stakeholders, and especially to host cities, and is committed to ensuring that equity impacts are measured so that appropriate mitigation can be identified and incorporated into the final course of action.

Comments included:

- The northeast area focus of the demand management pilot project disregards the recommendations of MSWMAC and the subcommittee that put in many hours of work over several months to study the issue.
- Many members echoed the statement that the County is not hearing cities' concerns about equal treatment and/or equity. There was concern that a narrower focus in the study indicates the County is abandoning a commitment to uniform service throughout the system. The division responded that the pilot needs to answer two questions: 1. Does demand management work as modeled? and 2. If changes piloted at Factoria rebalance demand, do we want to implement those changes? The answer to the first question is one piece of information needed to answer the second, but the pilot project is only a tool to inform policy and does not constitute policy itself. It is only one of many elements that will inform overarching decisions.
- Several members reiterated the subcommittee's concerns that only a system wide pilot would provide valuable data.
- Several members stated that data would only be valid if Houghton were closed during the pilot project. The division responded that the pilot project has only been scoped to the point required to prepare the rate proposal. No decision has been made on closure of Houghton during the pilot, and cities still have the opportunity to provide input and advice on that decision.
- Citizens will not perceive peak pricing at a limited number of stations as equitable. Many, especially in cities near the county line, will prefer to drive to Snohomish County's transfer station if they feel it is less expensive. The County should work with Snohomish County to collect data on how much waste may be lost from the system during the pilot.
- By setting an unequal service precedent, a NE-focused pilot could impact interlocal agreements and cities' contracts with haulers, and may potentially lead to lawsuits.
- In response to a question, the division stated that no decisions have been made for Renton beyond those in the Comp Plan: Renton may close when replacement capacity becomes available.
- Several members commented with concerns about traffic – both in regard to potential impacts from the pilot study, and particularly ways that the study would exacerbate traffic issues for station users, forcing commercial haulers to develop new and potentially longer routes and self-haulers to spend more time on I-405. Cities must consider regional issues holistically and cannot support a solid waste solution that worsens transportation issues.

- The point was made that traffic is a pain point for every stakeholder in the region, and should always be addressed proactively in communications about the pilot. The division agreed, noting that traffic impacts could be measured as part of the pilot.
- In response to a question, the division said that peak pricing is intended to redirect customers to Shoreline, which is underutilized, and to extended non-peak hours at Factoria. Third party consultants were used to develop and modify the model to minimize traffic impacts of the pilot. Any significant constraints revealed by the pilot will provide valuable data to inform decisions. The pilot is planned for a 12 month duration in order to reflect the seasonality of the business, but if it becomes apparent that the pilot is generating negative impacts to the system or adversely impacting any one community, the pilot may be halted.
- The division reiterated that the reason the pilot focus was narrowed to the Northeast area of the county is that population growth is forecast to result in constraints in that region. Between the new Bow Lake and the planned South County stations, there will be sufficient capacity to adequately serve population growth in the South County. Building a new NE Recycling and Transfer Station is the most obvious response to inadequate service levels in that area, but due to a King County budget proviso, the division is reconsidering options for providing service to that region.
- The City of Bellevue sent the County a letter as part of their comments on the Transfer Plan Review Part 2. The letter stated that the conditional use permit for the new Factoria Recycling and Transfer Station is dependent on a satisfactory environmental review. If system wide service changes negate the assumptions of Factoria's Determination of Nonsignificance determination, that permit could be revoked.
- The question was raised of how demand management findings in one area of the county would be adjusted for implementation in other parts of the county. The division stated that insights from this pilot could be used in other parts of the system as needed to consider solutions to similar constraints.
- There was some discussion of the County's rate and budget process. The division is an enterprise fund but is only authorized to spend the funding appropriated by Council in the budget process. The budget process is separate from the rate process, and takes place later in the year. Currently, the division's rate proposal is before Council. That rate incorporates the money needed to implement the Northeast-focused pilot. Approval of the current rate proposal ensures the division will generate enough money to operate but the Council must still approve the budget for the division to be able to spend money on the pilot. The division has communicated both the rate proposal and MSWMAC's recommendations to Council. The division encourages MSWMAC members to continue to engage in dialogue and participate in scoping the remaining elements of the pilot project, including determining data measures and the status of Houghton. The option to reconvene a subcommittee was identified.
- In response to a question, the division stated that tonnage rates must be changed by ordinance approved by Council. Longer term policies regarding differential pricing could be addressed in the next Comp Plan update.

Noting that the situation is frustrating to the committee, the chair suggested moving on to the next agenda item and renewing the demand management discussion at the next meeting.

The division agreed to expedite distribution of the meeting minutes to allow members more time to review the information before the next meeting.

### **Comp Plan Status and Timeline**

Strategy, Communications & Performance Manager Meg Moorehead introduced Matthew Hobson, the division's new Strategic Planning Manager. Hobson gave a [presentation](#) on the status of the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan update.

Comments included:

- The proposed Comp Plan schedule is far too ambitious. Too many substantial issues continue to be divisive for there to be any chance of reaching consensus on the proposed schedule.
- The proposed schedule does not allow members sufficient time to report back to their city councils and get feedback or approval.
- Members are accustomed to reviewing draft chapters as they are written.
- In response to a question, the division stated that the hope is to build upon the work that has already been done, and to only focus attention on the points where decisions still remain to be made.
- In response to a question, the division stated that MSWMAC was created by King County code and is identified in the interlocal agreements as an advisory committee that works with the division on development and review of programs and policies.
- Approval of an updated Comp Plan legally requires public review followed by revision with a responsiveness summary, then submission to the Department of Ecology and further revision. Public review is not the only opportunity for comment. City councils take action to approve the plan. Cities representing 75 percent of the population of those cities taking action must approve the plan for it to take effect.
- The division agreed that the schedule may be too ambitious, and suggested revising the schedule based on the rate of progress.
- Differences between the cities on contentious issues will not be solved in this committee or by the division alone. It would be better to talk directly to the cities about specific issues, rather than the full plan. Although MSWMAC members report back to their cities, it may be more advantageous to the County to offer direct outreach to cities early in the process, rather than waiting until a final plan needs approval. The division agreed.
- All of the MSWMAC member cities are also SCA members. SCA and the Regional Policy Committee are venues for further discussion of these issues.

### **Member and Public Comment**

There were no comments.