

Sixty-five people attended the workshop, including representatives from 18 cities, the Solid Waste Advisory Committee, the Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee, Sound Cities Association, 3 collection companies operating in King County, and staff from the King County Council, Auditor, Executive Office, Department of Natural Resources and Parks and Solid Waste Division (SWD), and interested citizens.

Presentations, reference documents, and more information about the Transfer Plan Review project are available at <http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/about/plan-review.asp>. Web links to presentations and reference documents from Workshop 3 are provided in this meeting summary.

Welcome, Introductions, and Recap

SWD Director Pat McLaughlin provided an overview of the workshop process so far and the plan for the day. Participants were provided with index cards to record their thoughts and questions, either to share with the group at the end of each session or to turn in at the end of the day.

Questions

Q: Can we get a Gantt chart of the schedule?

A: Yes, we will provide a written schedule. [Note: The requested schedule was emailed on Oct. 2.]

Presentation – Regional Direct Rate

SWD Assistant Director Kevin Kiernan presented information about the regional direct rate and how it affects the transfer system.

Questions

Q: Can you clarify what is meant by “subsidized” versus “indifferent”?

A: In 2003, the \$23 price difference between the base rate and regional direct cost the division money. We could handle the additional tonnage for less than \$23. Now the rate paid for a ton that bypasses our transfer system doesn't cost us anything to process, and does cover our disposal cost. The tonnage that comes through our system supports the full cost.

Q: Now that tonnage is down, is there some capacity for haulers to go to Cedar Hills?

A: There is some capacity to serve additional trailers at Cedar Hills, but other concerns about service at Cedar Hills apply; namely traffic on Maple Valley roads and safety at the landfill.

Q: Is there a relationship between environmental considerations and the Brighton lawsuit?

A: There was a class action lawsuit with a \$16.5 million settlement that requires Cedar Hills to reduce noise and that limits operating hours. That does mean we can't expand capacity by extending hours. The current Cedar Hills EIS is based on forecasts that were developed after the drop in tonnage.

Q: If a community wants its own transfer station closer to home, could they do that?

A: Yes. Although the ILA's require the city waste to be sent through the King County system, nothing prevents a community or organization from building a transfer station providing they obtain appropriate permits and environmental review. Under such circumstances, the city waste would still be disposed at

Cedar Hills.

Presentation – Project Delivery

SWD Assistant Director Kevin Kiernan presented information about project delivery and financing methods available for capital projects.

Questions

Q: Are you going to consider low bid?

A: Yes. Low bid is the default approach, so it is always an option along with the other methods discussed.

Q: Will the public works process be in the EIS?

A: No, the procurement process does not affect the final outcome of the project. There is no environmental impact of spending time talking to contractors.

Q: There were two contracts at Bow Lake, did they use the same procurement method?

A: No. The first contract was just for moving earth. It was a simple, low-bid procurement in the midst of the financial crash, so we got a very good price. The second contract, for the actual construction of the new facility while the old one continued to operate, required real coordination between facility operations and the construction contractor. That's where the negotiated process proved helpful.

Presentation – Equity and Social Justice (ESJ)

SWD Assistant Director Kevin Kiernan presented information about King County's Equity and Social Justice Ordinance, and how it affects the Solid Waste Division.

Questions

Q: The ordinance talks about census tracts, but the dots on your map cover multiple tracts. The income spreads are too wide. Can you provide more specific data?

A: We will look into that. [Note: The income ranges are the ones used by the U.S. census. More specific data is not available. These maps are posted [online](#), where it is possible to zoom to a resolution that shows tract boundaries more clearly in relation to the dots.]

Q: Is the health of seniors considered?

A: All public health is considered as part of ESJ and through environmental review.

Q: Is ESJ part of the EIS scoping?

A: No, not specifically. The EIS process is governed by state law. Its purpose is to identify potential environmental impacts. ESJ is a county initiative, with a separate process. [Note: More information about the county's ESJ initiative is available at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/exec/equity.aspx>]

Q: Does King County mitigate for financial inequities through fees?

A: Ongoing mitigation, such as providing offsite litter cleanup, and mitigation incorporated into the design and construction of our facilities, in the past we have widened roads and built sidewalks and trails, are

funded through the solid waste fee. The ILAs we have with cities recognize mitigation as an appropriate use of fees.

Q: SEPA doesn't cover economic impacts. How do you address that?

A: This report talks about cost impacts. SEPA deals with environmental impacts. SEPA is only one of several tools used by policy makers to evaluate options.

Q: It is appropriate to talk about ESJ in relation to siting, but can you also talk about ESJ related to service? Have you considered who uses the stations?

A: Our surveys of self-haulers have focused on the source of waste, and the customer type (for example, is the customer a grocery store or a resident cleaning out their garage?). We do not have more specific demographic data.

Presentation – Cost and Rate Implications of the Alternatives

SWD Planning and Communications Manager Thea Severn examined the cost and rate implications of the nine alternatives.

Questions

Q: Is there no difference in collection costs for the starred alternatives because self-haul only facilities don't affect commercial haulers?

A: That's correct.

Q: How can operating costs be the same for starred alternatives?

A: They aren't exactly the same, but no matter how the stations are distributed, they are still processing the same total tonnage. Fewer facilities means that more equipment and staff will be working longer hours to process the total amount. The operating cost variance between alternatives is not significant compared to the other financial impacts.

Q: What is service like at the new stations?

A: New station service is substantially improved over what an older station can support. Shoreline is a good example. It is a fully enclosed facility to reduce noise, odors, and litter. It provides a wide range of recycling opportunities, including yard waste, clean wood, and scrap metal. The building is bigger, so the service is faster, which is especially important for commercial haulers, for whom time-on-site can impact costs.

Q: What will it cost to keep these new facilities in service?

A: There will be ongoing maintenance costs. Our current facilities have been in service for almost 50 years, and need significant upgrades. I don't have maintenance cost information for new facilities with me today.

Q: Are you factoring the sale of unused property in the various alternatives?

A: Not at this point. While we do own Eastgate and some of the property that the new Factoria would

be built on, we do not own the property that currently houses Factoria, Algona, Houghton, or Renton. Before the 1980s, the General Fund purchased properties.

Q: How will not building in South County raise rates in Redmond?

A: The division's cost is spread to everyone in the system through the tip fee. Collection costs will increase in service areas that do not have transfer service because the commercial haulers must drive farther to serve those areas.

Q: What about disposal after 2025?

A: Cedar Hills closure, estimated to be in 2025, was not a factor in this analysis.

Q: Does Alternative C assume that all Algona trips will go to Bow Lake?

A: No, based on customer surveys of where people are coming from about 11 percent will go to Enumclaw, so that's what SWD assumed in tonnage and capacity calculations. We do not know what the haulers assumed in the collection cost information they provided.

Q: Can you overlay capital costs? I'd like to see a graph to show build versus no build.

A: Where capital costs are higher, collection costs are lower, and vice versa.

Q: So the ordinance doesn't call for Algona to close?

A: No. We were asked to model what happens if we didn't build planned facilities. Stakeholders asked for the self-haul only alternatives to be added to the analysis.

Q: Self-haul means different things to different people. Self-haul is everyone but commercial haulers. Can you separate the data for self-haulers like me cleaning out my garage and self-haulers like the Bellevue School District?

A: As we moved through this process we determined that any possible limits to self-haul would not apply to charge account customers, which includes large self-haulers like the School District. About 10 percent of the self-haul customers are those non-residential customers who bring in about 15 percent of the self-haul tons.

Q: Regarding the level of precision of the hauler data, it looks like residents of a small area could end up paying more compared to the federated approach of the base plan where everyone pays equally. Are there franchise maps that might indicate what those areas would be?

A: Yes, the last page of today's handout has the collection company service area map.

Q: In the previous process, everyone agreed to a federated approach where we are all in it together. Is it fair to say that, for example, Shoreline is already well-served by a new station that everyone in the system is currently paying for, they could choose to keep their rates lower by selecting an alternative that has a negative impact on a less-well-served area of the county?

A: Yes, that is possible. There is also the possibility that some alternatives could have unintended impacts. For example, Lake Forest Park receives collection service from Republic, whose truck yard is in

Bellevue. It's our understanding that although some of garbage they collect is transferred at Shoreline, the last trip of the day goes to Houghton because it is closer to the hauler's yard. Alternatives that close Houghton would not seem to affect a city near Shoreline, but could actually increase costs for Lake Forest Park. Sometimes it is hard to tell who will be impacted by a change, and it is not always who we might expect.

Q: Are costs related to closure included in capital costs?

A: No, we estimate that it costs about \$15,000 to close a facility, which is too small to impact the capital costs of any of the alternatives.

Q: Who does own the transfer station properties?

A: Renton is owned by Roads. Algona, Factoria, and Houghton are owned by the General Fund.

Q: In the last graph, does the tan line represent Base Alternative capital costs?

A: Yes.

Q: Doesn't the base cost of collection go up too?

A: Yes, it would grow with inflation, but the haulers were only asked to provide the additional costs specifically related to each alternative and that is what is shown on the chart. The capital and collection costs on the chart reflect inflation.

Comments

- I want to see the operating cost data for self-haul facilities.
- It is important that you provide operating costs for all stations for all the options.
- It would be useful to factor in any possible property sales, which could provide significant savings.
- SWD doesn't own the properties but King County does; that's the same thing.
- Different communities will be affected under different alternatives. That is significant because of ESJ. Lower collection costs will promote industry in a low-income area. I support an alternative that includes a South County transfer station.
- It would be helpful for the information on pages 20-21 to be collected with capital costs.
- I am concerned because all alternatives call for closure of Renton. This will lead to illegal dumping. Also, there should be an option to open a transfer facility at Cedar Hills after the landfill closes.
- It would be helpful to have context about aggregate costs. We are \$20 a ton lower than Seattle now and we want to stay competitive with regional rates.
- It is important to dispel the notion that if you don't build in one area, you are saving money. In fact you are simply shifting costs.
- Copies of a resolution related to this process by the Kirkland City Council are available at the sign-in table.

Facilitated Feedback

SWD Division Director Pat McLaughlin facilitated a discussion about the all of the information provided and the attendees' reactions. Pat recapped the distinguishing features of each alternative and

reviewed the schedule for completing the process: a draft report will be written for release on October 9, stakeholders will have until October 23 to submit written comments, and a final report will be submitted to the King County Council on November 27. Pat asked that after the workshop, everyone refrain from submitting comments before the draft report is completed on October 9, and that after October 9, all comments be submitted in writing by letter, email, or web comment form.

Questions

Q: What accounts for the difference in capital costs between the two starred D alternatives?

A: The upgrades required to retain Houghton as a self-haul facility.

Q: Have you looked at the private providers of recycling services in each service area?

A: Currently recycling at the transfer stations is provided through contracts with the private sector, and that is expected to continue. When we build a new station, we always prioritize materials that have a potential for increased diversion or revenue generation.

Q: What about the drop boxes?

A: The scope of this review is the urban transfer system. Under this review, the rural stations and drop boxes will remain as is.

Q: Can we get an update on the ILA?

A: The Executive has transmitted the ILA to Council, and it is my understanding that the Committee of the Whole has it on the agenda for Monday, Sep. 30.

Q: Why hasn't there been any conversation about impacts to host cities and plans to address adverse effects?

A: There is no project-level mitigation here. Identification of potential impacts is part of the EIS process. When specific impacts are identified, then we identify mitigation measures. For example, at Shoreline we expanded Meridian [the main access route to the transfer station] and built sidewalks. Everyone agrees that mitigation should be covered as part of the solid waste rate.

Q: What about property values and long-term maintenance?

A: We do provide litter pickup around facilities as part of our on-going maintenance. Under state law and the ILAs, there can also be mitigation for road impacts.

Q: How are you incorporating the recommendations of the recently completed transfer station recycling study to reduce self-haul and increase curbside recycling?

A: The study looked at both the old stations and new opportunities as we build. There is little we can do with the old stations. There are many opportunities with new stations. We have many programs to encourage curbside recycling, and they have been very successful. In terms of discouraging self-haul, what studies have shown is that most self-haulers do have curbside service. To achieve the 70 percent recycling goal, we have had great success thanks to the cities and haulers, but self-haulers only recycle about five percent. To reach 70 percent overall, we have to increase self-haul recycling, too, to about 35 percent. Resource recovery at transfer stations is one

of the greatest opportunities to improve our recycling rate. We need transfer stations with the new design to be able to do that.

Q: Remind me what the bonds King County secured this summer will go for?

A: I would have to check the exact rates, but the amount was about \$80 million.

Q: What flexibility is there to allow a change where commercial haulers are redirected from Maple Valley to Enumclaw or directed from Federal Way to Bow Lake?

A: There is no policy or authority; we do not direct the haulers' rates or routes. The haulers make their own business decisions.

Q: Ten percent of the waste at Algona is from Pierce County. Have you looked at how much waste could go to the Pierce County transfer station or City of Seattle's south transfer station? Bow Lake has new capacity, too. How will you integrate these changes?

A: The Pierce County and Seattle transfer stations are outside of our system and we don't allow for loss of waste; all waste in the King County system is required to go to Cedar Hills. Pierce County has a stated goal of preserving their landfill space as long as possible, so they don't want any outside waste. Some areas of Pierce County are in the King County system, so that waste should be coming to us. We are required by state law to plan for our own system. Seattle's new station is next door to their old station; it is not likely to cause significant change in traffic. Eighty percent of our tonnage is commercial. When we talk about leakage across borders, we're talking about a marginal quantity of waste resulting from the choices of individual self-haulers. Increased capacity at Bow Lake was considered in all alternatives.

Q: What are the options for continued use of Renton?

A: The draft Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan calls for examining closure of Renton, considering its impact on the rural system and other possible uses. For the purpose of this analysis, we assumed closure of Renton as approved in the Transfer Plan.

Q: Will you receive input during the period between October 9 and November 27?

A: The draft will be released on October 9. For the two week period from October 9 to October 23, we will accept comments in writing. The final report will be transmitted to the King County Council on November 27.

Q: Will comments be posted on the website?

A: We will categorize the comments and provide a responsiveness summary in the final report. We will also append the comments received in full with the final report, which will be posted online.

Q: Everyone has commented that this is a difficult timeline. Will you be recommending more time?

A: No. This was challenging, but we set a lot of other business aside and dedicated our resources to this process and when all is said and done, I believe we will have successfully completed the task. Our thanks go to all of you for your participation here. I also want to thank Kevin Kiernan and Thea

Severn and many other staff, without whose hard work we could not have finished on time.

Q: Some people have asked for more cost information. Will we get that before October 9?

A: Additional cost information will be included in the report on October 9. [Note: Updated [operating cost information](#) was posted on Oct. 2.]

Comments

- We can't make decisions about infrastructure without reconsidering landfilling as an option for disposal. A more integrated approach could open up unforeseen opportunities.

Response: Cedar Hills does have a limit; right now we are forecasting that Cedar Hills will reach capacity and close around the end of 2025. After 2025, there are alternatives. In workshop 2, we discussed the relationship between the options and the transfer system and found that regardless of disposal method, a transfer system is necessary. We are designing facilities to be flexible because we don't know what kind of processing may be necessary in the future. We have commissioned a study that will help us learn more about disposal options for the future.

- It is amazing how many times we've gone over the same issues. Burien strongly supports the Base Alternative because I've seen all these arguments before. We decided early on that we would not consider disposal options because it is too soon to decide. We've been talking about waste-to-energy for five years and it's primarily another name for garbage burning. That's the most likely outcome of alternative disposal – burning garbage here in King County. It works in places where there is no room for landfilling and where electricity prices are high. Neither of those conditions is present here. For now, let's focus on transfer.
- Federal Way asked for this review because we had concerns about the right size for the system. After listening to the analysis, it seems the Base Alternative is the right size. No South County facility negatively affects our costs. It I think Federal Way is in tune with the base plan and the federated approach.
- I ran a small solid waste system that had significant capital needs. As a county, our cost is not as impacted as the ratepayer. I agree that we need to see the full cost to judge, but my sense is that it is not worth it to reduce the number of facilities to save initial costs. I want a system that actually works well. Don't short infrastructure.
- There is a direct relation between health, safety, and fairness. This decision affects real people. How can you mitigate property value? Social justice is important. I would like to submit these papers that I brought to be part of the record.
- I have a background in solid waste. Siting is a significant challenge, but I would rather see a robust system. It may decrease costs in the long run. Having fewer stations just transfers the cost and increases the carbon footprint of the system. We are far better off with a complete system that provides flexibility for the next fifty years. Yes, we have a responsibility to build the best facilities that mitigate impacts. These are public health amenities that provide a positive opportunity to serve the greater King County population.
- I appreciate all the work we have all done here and we spent a lot of time developing the Base Alternative. Some of these others have serious issues, especially the ones that limit self-haul. Bow

Lake is a nice facility now, but with no South County station you are looking at some queuing problems. Tukwila supports the Base Alternative.

- People are weighing in and providing perspectives on the options. It would behoove the division to consider a hybrid approach in light of the economy and dropped tonnage. We don't have to build it all today. We could build one station now and wait to decide if we move forward. Phasing keeps our options for the future open.
- King County should ban mattresses and box springs from the landfill. They already encourage private companies to recycle, but [British Columbia] Canada has a ban and we should too.
- Don't forget the human component. Algona has had a transfer station for 30 years without mitigation. It is a small community with high diversity. The property the division purchased last year is 58 percent of the city's remaining commercially zoned property.
- I would be interested to hear from the MSWMAC member cities what their solid waste policies are. I request King County submit a Gantt schedule for this process. [Note: The requested schedule was emailed on Oct. 2.]

Solid Waste Division Director Pat McLaughlin reminded everyone that SWD staff will be very busy completing the report between now and October 9. He asked that once the workshop ends, everyone hold their questions and comments until the draft report is posted on October 9. After that date and until close of business on October 23, the division welcomes all written comments by letter, email, and web comment form.

SWD Intergovernmental Liaison Diane Yates is available as a single point of contact at 206-477-5212 or by email diane.yates@kingcounty.gov.

Thank you for attending and participating in this process.