

**SWAC Advisory Committee Meeting**  
 May 18, 2023 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.  
 Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

<b>SWAC Members Present</b>		<b>King County Staff</b>	
Taylor Atkinson, Vice Chair, Citizen Representative		Kelsey Bailey, SWD staff	
April Atwood, Marketing and Education		Pat McLaughlin, SWD Director	
Jay Blazey, Manufacturer		Amy Ockerlander, SWD staff	
James Borsum, Labor Representative		Elka Peterson Horner, King County PSB staff	
Robin Freedman, Waste Industry		Andy Smith, SWD staff	
Phillippa Kassover, Local Elected Official		Isabelle Trujillo, SWD staff	
Brett Lohrman, Labor Representative		Dorian Waller, SWD staff	
Penny Sweet, Local Elected Official		John Walsh, SWD staff	
Heather Trim, Recycling Industry			
Wendy Weiker, Chair, Waste Industry			
<b>Guests</b>			
Jon Gire, City of Bellevue		Kazia Mermel, Sound Cities Association	
Jeanette Jurgensen, Bin There Consulting		Diana Wadley, Dept. of Ecology	
Brad Lovaas, WA Refuse and Recycling Association			

**Call to Order and Introductions**

Vice Chair Atkinson called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m.

**Meeting Minutes**

Sweet moved to approve the agenda. Kassover seconded. The agenda was approved unanimously. Sweet moved to approve the minutes. Kassover seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Public Comment**

Wadley shared several comments starting with thanking King County for the Juno Tour and that King County was part of the PreCycle Innovation Summit. First, the City of Seattle has submitted their final draft of their Solid Waste Management Plan to Ecology for approval. Second, Ecology has a new Recycle Right campaign that launched last month – Don’t Bag Your Recyclables Campaign. The bagging of recyclables is a big issue statewide. There is a [local toolkit](#) available if you’d like to amplify this locally. Next, the [State Department of Health of Environmental Justice Speaker Series](#) is ongoing and [recordings](#) will be available after the speaker series has finished. Fourth, the Washington State Public Works board is available. About 3% solid waste tax goes to help fund this pot of money and the funding cycle for the 2023-25 biennium opens on May 8, 2023, and closes on July 7, 2023. With the new Organics Management Law, the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) was revised to establish that identities composting and other organic management facilities as eligible projects. Workshops are planned in early May. You can subscribe to the Public Works Board newsletter at Washington State Department of Commerce (govdelivery.com) – Choose Board, Commissions and Councils, and then Public Works Board. Lastly, June 1 is when expanded polystyrene (EPS) packing peanuts and void fill be banned for sale and distribution in Washington. If there are any questions, reach out to Wadley at [diana.wadley@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:diana.wadley@ecy.wa.gov).

**SWD Updates**

McLaughlin provided the SWD update.

## **Re+ City Grant Programs**

As a reminder, SWD launched the new Re+ City Grants program (\$300k)—a competitive funding opportunity to support cities in delivering projects that further Re+ and create a more circular economy—on April 25. The application window closes on June 1, and we anticipate announcing awards in July. Cities in the King County waste system are eligible to apply if they will have signed the Re+ Pledge by June 30, 2023. We encourage cities to collaborate and submit joint proposals! SWD held an information session for potential applicants to learn more about the grant program on May 2. A recording of that info session is available, along with other grant resources, on the Re+ City Grant webpage. Please contact [circulargrants@kingcounty.gov](mailto:circulargrants@kingcounty.gov) with any questions.

## **SCRTS Groundbreaking**

The Division hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for SCRTS on May 18 at 10:30am. The Division was joined by Councilmember von Reichbauer and our partners, including nearby cities and the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, for the ceremony. The station is scheduled to open in 2026, replacing the 60-year-old Algona Transfer Station. To see the groundbreaking, [click here](#).

## **Tonnage Report**

In 2023, we expect to receive less tonnage compared to 2022. We expect about 850,000 tons for 2023 which would be a drop by about 2% compared to 2022. This is reflective of what we are seeing in the economy.

## **Special Legislative Session**

Gov. Jay Inslee announced a special session to begin May 16. It is now closed. Special sessions are 30 days, but Inslee says that if legislators come with an agreed-upon proposal, they should be able to finish within several days and adjourn promptly. The session focused on passing a new drug possession law to replace the current temporary policy expiring July 1. We did not expect any change or focus on any solid waste bills during the special session.

Since last month, the Governor signed HB 1085 – Reducing Plastic Pollution. The bill requires bottle refill stations in new buildings; phases out mini toiletries in hotels; and bans the installation of the worse types of foam docks. He also signed SB 5144 – EPR for Batteries this week. We are still waiting for the Governor to sign:

- SB 5287 - Study on the Recycling of Wind Turbine Blades
- HB 1033 – Stakeholder Advisory Committee on Compostable Products

The governor has 20 days from the day it is delivered to his desk to sign or veto a bill. If he fails to act on a bill it may become law without a signature.

McLaughlin has been invited to participate on a hiring panel for Ecology to hire a new leadership position. This is expected to occur on May 31.

Blazey asked for an update on the flow control agreement with the County and the City of Seattle. McLaughlin replied that he participated in a ribbon cutting ceremony for Recology's new facility and was able to connect with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) leadership. He learned that their council has approved the agreement and it is now on our shoulders to get it across the finish line. Waller added that he is working with the Public Information Officer (PIO) to update some language in the final draft and will then push it up to the council.

Lohrman wanted to know if there were any updates on the Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station Project (NERTS). McLaughlin responded that he could not think of any significant updates. We are continuing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. One of the activities that is about to commence is a sound study where we will collect ambient noise to get a baseline of noise. This will take place over a couple days, and we will have property owner's consent. This study is an important part of understanding the environmental conditions and is not a requirement for property owner's but we are offering this to any of them. We will continue to let everyone know of updates.

Atkinson was curious how many panelists will be on the hiring committee. McLaughlin replied that he guessed there would be six.

Blazey asked if there was general timing with this Ecology hiring. Wadley replied that this position hire is for the long-time Solid Waste Program Division Manager who is retiring. The goal is to have someone by the end of June.

Bailey wanted to provide a reminder that an email invite has gone around to participate in tours of Cedar Grove. There are three dates in May for advisory committee members and staff - May 10, May 17, and May 31. These tours occur from 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Bailey will come to the June meeting to have debrief and see what folks have learned and to have conversation of organics as the Organics Management Law goes into effect.

### **MSWAC/SWAC Update**

No update.

### **SF Organics Survey Results**

Smith presented these results.

As a reminder, we are engaging with the public to understand current behaviors, potential barriers, and community perspectives. We first engaged the public via a survey that went live on Feb. 22 and closed on April 30 that specially targeted Single-Family households. We want to better understand how residents currently manage and dispose of food waste and better understand other factors that affect curbside service use:

- Understanding cost as a barrier and how to mitigate it
- Home composting and other management
- Knowledge of service availability.

This survey is also being used to get feedback on potential policy options and solicit any other ideas residents may have for promoting food waste diversion.

We are in the second phase of this public engagement approach and are conducting focus groups. The survey is helping us to frame the focus group questions. The next steps include hosting a public meeting in July and then sharing results and recommendations in Q3. The focus groups will include four groups with representatives from historically underrepresented communities, residents from rural areas, cities that have the greatest potential to divert more waste based on population and current subscription rates (Auburn, Federal Way, Des Moines, Covington, and/or Kenmore), and residents in King County cities who have already implemented food waste policies (City of Renton).

We want to also make sure we have a mix of residents who do and don't currently have organics service.

The focus groups will have three days of engagement. This will be virtual.

- Day one will consist of current habits and perceptions of food waste and collection services. This will set the understanding of food waste in the households and the systems in King County, and initiate discussions of challenges and barriers to separating food waste.
- Day two is where we will introduce policies like what's in the survey, with more groundwork discussion of details like cost and diversion benefits. This is where we will get initial reactions, such as dislike and confusion.
- Day three is where we will revisit policies after reflection, discuss specific effects/impacts to their own household and communities they identify with. When we represent these policies, we will discuss over all appeal to these households or communities they identify with.

We are currently in the recruitment phase, and these focus groups will begin in the next few weeks. About  $\frac{3}{4}$  of respondents have organics service and  $\frac{1}{4}$  don't have organics service.

The survey officially closed on April 30 with over 3,200 survey respondents. To encourage participation, all demographics were optional. With the demographics that we were able to get, at least 80% identified as living in a single-family household and 22% said they lived with 4+ people. It is important that we hear from these folks, as they produce more waste and are more likely to face or perceive challenges changing waste management method. The largest group of respondents consists of 10% from the unincorporated King County areas compared to the other 41 cities/locations. The next highest was Shoreline at 7%. The cities of Kenmore, Renton and Federal Way were also high, which was of interest.

About 53% of respondents identified as white or Caucasian; and 13% identified as Black, Indigenous or People of Color. Of the respondents, about 34% declined to identify race, again this was a challenge with respondents preferring not to answer demographic questions. This was the same with household income (about half chose not to answer). We advertised this survey in Spanish as well, but many declined to answer. There were 7% that identified speaking another language at home besides English, with the top response being Spanish followed by German, Mandarin, and Russian. We will be making city specific data available for those who want it, but this will take some time as we are still going through the data.

While we are still going through all the data, initial results are showing that of the respondents that said they do not utilize curbside organics service already, the most common reason was because they already manage it on their own, such as composting in their backyard or using scraps as animal feed. Under our Re+ Strategic Plan, we've established that any policy changes must support current practices of residents such as these. We understand cost of service is a barrier for some, and this will also be focused on with the focus groups. Consistent policy across the county and continued education is also important. On a positive note, reasons why respondents are motivated to separate food and yard waste are led by very strong motivations to protect the environment and its systems we rely on. There were very few "not interested" at all in diverting waste. For some of these questions, we provided answers for respondents to choose from and some were open-ended questions. As we continue to move on, we need to remember those residents that do separate food and yard waste but manage it on their own. Another thing to note is that the people who chose to take this survey are already aware of food and yard waste collection services.

We will send out the full results and are interested in hearing people's thoughts. Please reach out to Eliza Kruszynski if there are any questions.

Blazey was curious about the 36% number of, "I manage food and yard waste on my own" and asked how SWD interpreted that number. Smith responded that we would need to dive further deeper into that question and answer. Blazey asked why only 52% of Unincorporated King County have organics service. Smith replied because they're already managing their own organics like lawn clippings and food scraps into home composting. We need to delve into that. Blazey followed up asking if that meant that residents who put their food into the trash counts. Smith replied that it is important that those that do not have service in food waste are able to provide feedback and this will be a discussion point in the public meeting.

Wadley commented that at MSWAC, there was the question of the garbage disposal being used to manage food waste for multi-families. Smith replied that he is interested to see if that is an answer. At MSWAC, a question came up of environmental benefits of composting vs. garbage disposal. Smith contacted colleagues at the Wastewater Division and based on initial contact, they did not have that information available on hand.

Trim commented that she and others are working on HB 1799 Pt. 2 for the 2024 Legislative session. Please email Trim if interested. This group will meet twice a month from July to Jan. 1. Trim had two questions: 1) how multi-family households will be incorporated into the work and 2) if the focus groups will be mixed and if they will be influencing each other or be separated. She added that we don't want to be encouraging people to use the garbage disposal like that because we are nutrient loading our wastewater system. Smith answered the first question saying that multi-family households are very important to think about from an equity standpoint and there is a lot more to be done. While we are focusing on single-family right now, we will be coming back to let people know what the future will look like. We will be looking at the distribution of multi-family households in the county – most of them are in the cities vs. Unincorporated King County. There is an opportunity to lean into the multi-family and we want to make sure we are responsive with this. To Trim's second question, the focus groups will be separate so that they do not influence each other but Smith will check with Kruszynski and the consultant to confirm. One of the benefits of the focus groups is that we can give people their own time to answer the questions and hopefully widen the participation poll.

Atkinson wanted to know if SWD plans to reach out directly to people who responded on the survey and how SWD is choosing the focus groups. Smith replied that we will not be reaching out to people but for those respondents that we do have contact information for, we will be pushing out the survey results. We want to know how folks are doing things, what they think about the policy options, and for those that are doing it on their own, policy options might not really help them, but we can support with education. For the focus groups, we gave the consultant the type of people we want, and the consultant creates the focus groups.

### **Rate Restructure Check-in**

Waller led this section.

At MSWAC, we checked in with the cities to see how the restructure is going for them. We want to do this for our haulers too.

Weiker said they are in the final section of the materials and Republic cities should be ready to receive them in the next few weeks. King County staff will probably be invited to help explain some sections.

Freedman said that all the Waste Management (WM) cities have the amendment and the template and there are two contract managers that are working one-on-one with each city. Each city has all the info they need, and WM is in good shape.

Kassover said they are waiting on hearing from Republic Services and Lake Forest Park will be ready to review them when they get them. Weiker replied that Lake Forest Park already has meetings set up for this.

Sweet stated that Kirkland is good to go, and the progress being made across the board is encouraging.

### **Juno Tours Debrief**

Walsh provided this debrief.

The tour of Juno facilities was in the first week of May. There were about 25 SWD staff and 10 external folks with representatives from the City of Renton, Dept. of Ecology, the Port of Seattle. There was a videographer there and interviews with Georgia Pacific (GP) people.

This project involved sending 1000 tons to GP to test out their process to see how it handles our waste and how effectively it is handling our waste. We did a waste characterization study of the Renton Transfer Station to see what is being sent down and what's coming out. At the facility, waste goes into shredder and is then wrapped in saran wrap so that they can keep the waste in a state where rats stay out and odors are contained until they are loaded. All the waste is cooked for several hours and then all of the water and paper products are sent to their facility to create cardboard.

This plant is focused on getting metals and paper out. In the future, they want to focus on adding anaerobic digestion and want to figure out how to get the plastics out. Statistics are showing a 50% diversion waste with our waste specifically. There was a pre-briefing, tour, and debriefing.

We are done sending waste down to the facility and are just waiting for residuals to come back. We are producing the video and hope that by end of July we can produce a report saying how the project went. We are close to signing a work order with a consultant to see what the best mixed waste processing (MSW) is for us to go with in the future. This is just one mixed waste processing option and was a good test for us.

Kassover wondered whether the water-based paper process can separate the plastic from the paper or if must be pure paper. Walsh replied that the glue from the plastic will melt, and the paper will melt into the water. It seems that this is a process that can separate some of these mixed materials.

Weiker commented that they call the instant pot stuff "glop" and thought it was interesting to see the cooking mechanism and the glop makes up about 80% of what it takes to make the cardboard boxes.

Trim wanted to know if there will be another opportunity for a tour, and what the inputs are and where the outputs go. Walsh responded that he is unsure of if there will be another tour, but the video will hopefully give more insight. The input is the mixed solid waste from the Renton Transfer Station. Trim wanted to know if recyclables have already been sorted and if things like cardboard boxes are less because the material being sent down is the landfill destined loads. Walsh replied that they are waiting to see what the outputs are from the facility and things aren't matching up. Trim asked for clarification on if they can pull out recyclables.

Atkinson asked what they do with the water. Walsh responded that it takes a lot of water and the water from the paper mill is used to fuel the instant pot. After the materials has been cooked, the water goes into the wastewater treatment system. We want to know how much water is being used and how much power is needed.

Wadley commented that the tour was a great opportunity. Georgia Pacific is a global company, and they had the area to have this facility and it was great to be able to experience it. Regarding the inputs and outputs, they ran through some HDPE bales with MSW, analyzed what came out and were not able to find the HDPE. Like Walsh said, this is still a beta facility, and they are still working on things. To Kassover's question, this technology shines with poly lined papers and the aseptic ones. The plastic ends up as glop and they are not able to do much with it now but hope that they can use it as waste derived fuel in the future and get them closer to a 65% diversion rate. As far as technology goes, the MSW gets tumbled around after being shredded which helps to separate the plastic. From this, they create dixie cups and paper cups for McDonalds. This helps close the loop. Here, we wouldn't count that as recycling, but other countries might consider this as closing the loop. Georgia Pacific is thinking that the next place they will site a facility in is the United Kingdom because they can charge a decent tip fee. As operators receive textile loads, they do not complain about them because textiles just ball up and that ball will capture paper. The lowest diversion rate sent to sent to Cedar Hills was 38% and had many textiles.

Trim wanted to know if the food waste is going to the paper mill and if they are ok with it. Walsh replied that they are ok with it because it is supposedly 99% water. McLaughlin added that they are planning to add a digester to their next facility to capture and process organic material.

**Member Comment**

Waller is looking to fill several resident slots on SWAC and if there is anyone you know that qualifies as interested residents, let Waller know.

**Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 10:47 a.m.