

SWAC Advisory Committee Meeting
 Nov. 15, 2024 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
 Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

SWAC Members Present		King County Staff	
April Atwood, Marketing and Education		Ali Blum, SWD staff	
Jay Blazey, Manufacturer		Sylvaine Bucher, SWD staff	
Kasia Grzebyk, Citizen Representative		Theresa Curry Almuti, SWD staff	
Alissa Campbell, Waste Industry		Patty Liu, SWD staff	
Amy Lam, Local Elected Official		Wen Huang, SWD staff	
Brett Lohrman, Labor Representative		John Taylor, DNRP Director	
Bill Louie, Citizen Representative		Brian Halverson, SWD staff	
Laura Mork, Local Elected Official		Pat McLaughlin, SWD Director	
Leah Tischler, Public Interest Group		Andy Smith, SWD staff	
Heather Trim, Recycling Industry		David Pierce SWD staff	
Wendy Weiker, Chair, Waste Industry		Ryan Kellogg, Public Health – Seattle & King County	
Robin Freedman, WM		Hannah Scholes, SWD staff	
		Hilary Leonard, SWD staff	
		John Walsh, SWD staff	
		Adrian Tan, SWD staff	
		Nina Olivier, SWD staff	
		Jeromeo Cruz, Public Health – Seattle & King County	
		Fanny S-Gonzalez, Public Health – Seattle & King County	
Guests			
Caron Cargill, Insight Strategic Partners		Rich Vahl, Waste Connections	
Katie Jerauld, Dept. of Ecology		Jeanette Jurgensen	
Brad Lovaas, WA Refuse and Recycling Association		Andi Parnell, Sound Cities Association	

Call to Order and Introductions

After introductions, Chair Weiker called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Mork moved to approve the October minutes. Lohrman seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment

Jerauld shared two items beginning with the 2025-2027 open application for the Public Participation Grant (PPG) Program. The application is opening early from Jan. 7 until Feb. 4. PPG provides funding to individuals and nonprofit organizations to increase public understanding and involvement in cleaning up contaminated sites and improve Washington’s waste management practice. If you’d like more information, please [visit here](#).

Jerauld also shared that Ecology is developing a [new rule](#) (Chapter 173-905 WAC) for the Battery Stewardship Program. The new law creates an EPR program that will increase opportunity for people to recycle unwanted batteries. You can review the read-along document that summarizes rulemaking key concepts covered during the [Oct. 21, 2024, meeting](#). The [comment period](#) for this program will run Oct. 17, 2024 at 12 a.m. to Nov. 13, 2024 at 11:59 p.m.

SWD Updates

McLaughlin provided the SWD update.

Tonnage Update

Tonnage is up 1.23% through September (634K tons in 2024 vs. 626K tons in 2023) compared to last year at the same time. That's an additional 8,000 tons increase from last year at this time.

Transactions (573K through September) continue to rebound from a slow first quarter. September was busy at our transfer stations, and we are ahead of last year at this time by 10,457 transactions (an increase of 1.86%).

Yard waste tonnage (almost 13K through September) is still down from this time last year (-1,095 tons, a decrease of 7.83% over last year at this time). However, we are trending in a positive direction. At the end of March 2024, we were 30% behind March 2023. Now we are slightly less than 8% behind last year's pace.

Construction Update

The newly installed crane at the Algona Transfer Station experienced a failure with the grapple necessitating that we close the station to commercial haulers. The grapple was replaced with a spare, and the spare experienced an additional failure. We are making a temporary repair to get it back into use but will have to make a design change for a permanent correction.

We are working diligently to resume full service at the station. We anticipate that it will reopen to commercial haulers on Monday, November 18. There will also be some closures in late-November and early-December while we install and test the newly designed grapple.

We have made the decision to delay the new crane installation at the Houghton Transfer Station as we continue to work through challenges with the new packer at Algona. We want to ensure a resolution on this apparent design flaw and have follow up testing of the solution. Delaying construction will allow us to feel confident that the new design works and ensure that this next project runs more smoothly.

Ardagh Glass Closure

According to a notice filed with the state of Washington, Ardagh is permanently closing its Seattle glass production facility.

Ardagh had previously said it would consider restarting production if market conditions improved, but cited an International Trade Commission ruling regarding glass wine bottle imports from China as a reason for its permanent closure. The ITC ruling determined that the US industry was not material injured or threatened by imports of glass wine bottles from China.

This closure will impact on local glass recycling in the region. King County and SPU will continue to facilitate Glass Recycling Roundtables to share updates and work on short and long-term actions to support glass recycling. The next meeting will be on Thursday, November 21.

5-day update

Beginning in January 2025, SWD will initiate a year-long pilot program to cease weekend hauling and disposal operations at the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill.

The pilot program will allow us to evaluate how we can reduce costs and adapt to new business practices as revenue we get from garbage tipping fees declines due to increased recycling and waste reduction efforts.

Moving to a five-day hauling and tipping operation will not alter any current transfer station operations or services, but will have important benefits to the communities we serve:

- Reducing operational expenditures that will help decrease the amount of future rate increases.
- Reduced weekend impacts to landfill neighbors: less truck traffic, less heavy equipment operations, and fewer associated risks of odors and bird nuisances.
- Faster removal of garbage from stations during the weekday reduces odors, and means the weekends begin with mostly empty stations.

The Solid Waste Division is keeping neighbors in mind with these changes and will prioritize removal of “wet waste” during the week, such as yard and food waste, which typically produces the most odors.

The operating changes will require the storage of waste in trailers at the stations and at the landfill over the weekend, but the amount of garbage that arrives on Saturdays and Sundays is about two-thirds less than weekday tonnage. Most weekend loads are “dry waste” brought in by residential customers, which is less likely to be a source of odors.

The Division will be evaluating the success of the pilot program and will evaluate the overall program at the end of 2025 to make a determination about the feasibility of the 5-day hauling and tipping as part of our normal business operations.

WUTC rate increase

In June, a notice of a general rate increase was submitted to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Committee (WUTC) that would impact unincorporated residents and WUTC cities in North King County. As written into RCW, the county legislative authority is responsible for providing periodic written feedback to the WUTC on the adequacy of services provided in unincorporated areas, including rates.

To be diligent on behalf of unincorporated customers, SWD expressed concerns about the proposed rate increase and worked closely with the WUTC on analyzing the rate proposal.

For the final decision, the approved rate increased by approximately 5% from the current monthly garbage service, while recycling and yard waste service remain unchanged. We consider this a significant win for unincorporated customers, given that the original rate proposal was higher.

Pat’s retirement!

McLaughlin announced that he is planning to retire on April 1, 2025. Weiker wished McLaughlin well and thanked him for his achievements during his career of public service.

Taylor recognized McLaughlin for his storied career and numerous accomplishments guiding the division. He also announced that DNRP is already working on a recruitment. We’re structuring the process to engage with customers, cities, and employees. Based on the recruitment plan, we plan to have someone onboard prior to Pat’s retirement to ensure a smooth transition.

MSWAC Update

No update.

Post Election Update

Caron Cargill provided this update.

We had four initiatives on the ballot and three of them failed:

- I-2066 (Natural Gas) - Passed
- I-2109 (Capital Gains Tax) - Failed
- I-2117 (Climate Commitment Act) - Failed
- I-2124 (Long Term Care) - Failed

These initiatives are connected to policies that were brought forward by the progressive democratic majority in recent years. There are some questions around the legality in how initiative I-2066 was written. This will bring an interesting shift in the way people think about using initiatives.

For the first time in twelve years we'll have a new governor. Governor-elect Bob Ferguson is leaving his office as the attorney general. We'll have a new attorney general with Nick Brown. We also have two other new faces: Dave Upthegrove as Commissioner of Public Lands and Patty Kuderer as Insurance Commissioner. This is a lot of change for one year.

The governor-elect announced his executive team last week with many familiar faces from the attorney general's office. They also announced their transition team of about 60 individuals from a broad array of backgrounds and professions. Their first meeting is next week and we'll have a better understanding of their 2025 priorities. They are not planning on doing a unique budget. Instead, they will identify policy and budget priorities within Inslee's budget plans, which will be released in mid-December.

The 2025 legislature will be made up of 58 democrats and 40 republicans. The senate will have 29 democrats and 20 republicans. These are not the final numbers as some races have not been called, but we do expect democrats will pick up one seat in each chamber. It's worth noting that Washington State and Utah are the only two states that moved further left during the most recent election. We have a unique political environment compared with the rest of the country.

There's a lot of change going into the 2025 legislative session. We've seen almost a 50% turnover since 2020. With so much turnover comes a lot of adjustments and likely a slow ramp up. With new faces in the senate and house, we expect to see new policy priorities. Governor-elect Ferguson will be announcing his priorities in the coming weeks.

The upcoming session is a long session, which is 105 days. The session will be used to draft the first version of our two-year budget. The budget is a contentious item right now. The revenue forecast suggests that the state is experiencing a flat revenue collection. This has triggered conversations around whether the legislature will seek additional revenue, but nothing has been put forward yet.

There is uncertainty around the future of the initiative process and how it'll be used going forward. We expect we'll continue to see initiatives used for policies that don't have strong bipartisan support.

The first day of the legislation session is scheduled for January 13th. The conclusion of session is scheduled to be in late April. There may be a special session, but it's too early to know. There will be an additional revenue forecast that is due out in March. Many legislators expect this will be a budget focused session, and a challenging year for new policy asks.

Weiker asked which items are likely to be the top policy priorities. Cargill responded that housing and behavioral health are likely to be significant.

Trim asked when the committees will be established. Cargill responded that we'll know what the senate makeup will be next week. The first house committee meeting is next Thursday, and it usually takes a few meetings to establish the committees, which means it'll likely be in early December.

Weiker asked about the budget shortfall. Cargill responded that the shortfall is \$10 billion on the operating side out of a \$70 billion budget.

2025 Work Plan and Meeting Schedule

Blum led this section.

Blum presented the draft 2025 workplan that was emailed out to members. If you have any feedback on the workplan or additional items you would like to be considered, please email Blum by November 30th. As drafted, January through March will be focused on the state legislature and a follow up on the waste acceptance rule. There's also a placeholder on the Comp Plan and long-term disposal each month. We'll share some program updates on the Schools Program, batteries recycling, and PFAS in the Spring. Towards the end of the year we mainly have placeholders.

Members have also been provided a brief description of each topic with the draft plan. Let Blum know if you have any questions or feedback on those.

SWAC will generally meet on the second Friday of every month from 9:30-11:30 a.m. Blum will send out calendar holds next week.

Meeting dates for 2025:

- January 10
- February 14
- March 14
- April 11
- May 9
- June 13
- July 11
- August 8
- September 12
- October 10
- November 14
- December 12

Trim commented she likes the workplan and is glad to see that there will be Re+ specific topics each meeting, as that was lacking in 2024.

Weiker requested that we include a couple field trips to facilities to see this work on the ground.

Trim requested that the old calendar invites be deleted before a new meeting invite is sent out. Blum answered that she recognizes that the multiple invites are confusing and will delete the Outlook invites, but any lingering Zoom links must be deleted through your own account.

Trim asked if the December 12 meeting is going to be a joint meeting, and if so, could that be established and scheduled now. Blum responded that she will check with the Chairs and try to establish the joint meeting ahead of time.

SWAC Recruitment

Blum led this.

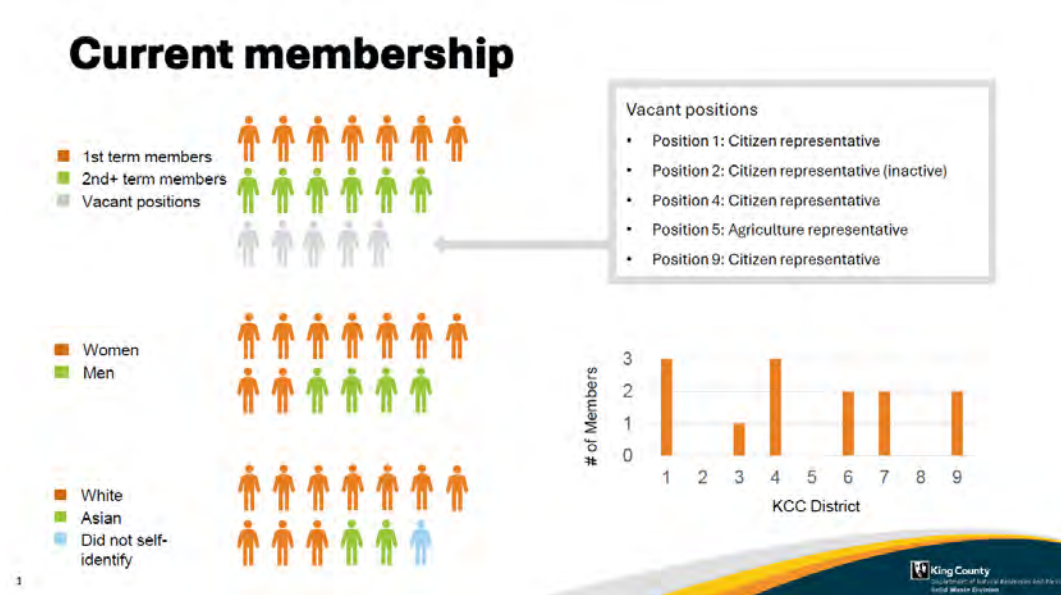
SWAC is an advisory body required under Washington State law (RCW 70.95.165) and King County Code 10.28.

King County Code directs SWAC has at least nine and no more than 20 members:

- Local elected officials (2)
- Waste industry reps (3)
- Public interest groups (3)
- Manufacturers located in King County (1)
- Marketing and education interests (1)
- Bargaining units representing SWD employees (2)
- Citizens (6, including 1 residing within 1 mile of CHRL)

These are three-year terms and Executive Policy states members should serve no more than two full terms.

King County strives to ensure that its boards and commissions are reflective of the community we serve.



We currently have 13 active members and 4 vacant positions. Many of our members are on their second full term. Recruitment is needed to diversify SWAC. It's important because:

- Diversity of viewpoint
 - Many vacancies with the citizen representative positions
- Geographic diversity
 - Lack of representation in South King County, unincorporated King County, and rural King County
- Racial diversity
 - SWAC is not currently representative of the communities SWD serves

We are launching a recruitment effort in 2025:

- Application and recruitment materials updated
- Sharing recruitment information via SWD's social media, website, e-newsletters

- Tapping into existing networks
 - MSWAC/SWAC
 - City Recycling Coordinators
 - Re+ Community Panel
 - SWD staff
 - Listservs, such as the Environmental Professionals of Color
 - Current and former Re+ Circular Economy Grantees
 - Non-profits, such as ECOSS, Latino Community Fund, South King Tool Library
 - King County Council newsletters
 - Unincorporated Area Councils and UIKC newsletters

If you have any questions or additional ideas for recruitment, please contact Blum.

Weiker noted that Heather is sitting in a seat for a recycling industry professional, which doesn't truly reflect her role and perspective. Trim noted she'd be happy to do a new term as a citizen representative if it's allowed.

Lam suggested that Blum reach out to the cities to connect with their climate commissions or sustainability commissions to reach interested citizens.

Long-Term Disposal Study: Draft report discussion

Liu and Walsh presented this information.

The draft report is available on the [long-term disposal extranet](#). Today is the last day to send in comments. If you don't have access, reach out to Blum or Ockerlander. Please apply as soon as possible as there is a lag between submitting the agreement and gaining access to the extranet.

Our goal is to review and add comments by Nov. 15. The next steps will include a 3-week comment period, followed by a 2-week consultant update where they will create the final report. The final report will be posted to the Extranet and the Comp Plan website, likely sometime in December.

There's an issue with how leachate has been analyzed. The Life Cycle Analysis models (LCA) that are available don't use leachate drying. They all assume wastewater treatment of the leachate. We've discovered that all three landfills included in this study use leachate drying, which means the results of the analysis are not accurate for the situation we're facing. Also, none of the landfill operators will disclose the impacts of leachate drying. There are several methods of leachate drying, which means we can't get details on what the impacts would look like, especially because it's not available in a model. This leachate drying impact would be reflected in water eutrophication.

We want feedback from you on whether we should eliminate water eutrophication in the criteria since the results are not accurate for our situation. We don't need a recommendation today but will need one by next month.

Trim asked if there was water eutrophication associated with the waste-to-energy facility. Liu responded that there are impacts due to the lime extraction process.

Trim recommended that we don't eliminate the criteria, just note a 0 in the case of the three landfills. Liu stated we can't assume that the impact would be 0 because we don't have data and there is no model. McLaughlin clarified that the modeled landfills are not connected to a wastewater system, and yet there is no information to indicate what is happening to the water that is discharged from the site.

Taylor noted that it's unlikely that owners of the landfills can't say where they're disposing of dried leachate. The Department of Ecology or state equivalent must be aware of their process. He requested that SWD connect with those landfills with the help of the committee or tell the consultant to investigate further.

Weiker stated that she hasn't heard from her landfill contact that King County's consultant requested information. We can get an answer to this question as there are robust regulations. Once we know which landfills, let's work together to get those three company representatives together and ensure the consultants have the right information.

Walsh clarified that even if we do get details from the landfills, there is no LCA model in existence that calculates the impact. We should try to get those details, but we can't compare between an LCA model and a non-LCA model in the report. We need to be consistent for data credibility.

Walsh presented on two areas of concern raised by the LTD subgroup. Participants are not ready to make a recommendation right now and there are some concerns around the analysis. We want to be clear that there's no need to come to a final decision anytime soon. We're meeting with cities in next year just to inform, we won't include an ask. The final EIS needs to be completed before we'll ask for a final recommendation and that will take all of 2025 and into 2026. However, we don't want to wait for that process to be complete to begin educating and engaging with people.

In terms of the analysis, there are some concerns which have largely been addressed in updates to the report. If you have specific concerns, please go into the report and add your feedback directly. Those comments are due by today. We don't yet have perfect information because we're looking many decades ahead, but we do have enough information to hold a reasonable discussion. We'll work with the cities on how to conduct the city briefings. The subgroup is working on the PowerPoint presentation. We're still figuring out to whom we'll be presenting, but it could be part of a public meeting.

Trim requested being a part of the subcommittee. Walsh said he'll discuss with SWD's Gov Relations team as it's a MSWAC specific committee.

When briefing our cities, our objectives are:

- Reach a high-level understanding of the LTD study
- Understand the benefits and drawbacks of waste export by rail and mass burn
- Gain clarity on when the LTD decision will be made, project timelines, previous engagement work, and future opportunities for involvement
- Opportunities for feedback and have questions answered

Past engagement:

- MSWAC/SWAC Updates
- 4 Subgroup Meetings:
 - Overview
 - Refuse-derived Fuel, Gasification, Pyrolysis
 - Waste Export by Rail, Mass Burn with WEBR
 - WEBR, Mass Burn with WEBR deeper dive
- 2 Open Houses

Next steps:

- Now: Schedule city presentations for Q1-Q3 2025
- November 15: Advisory Committee comments on Draft Report due

- December: Finalize Report and share with cities and Advisory Committees
- December 11: SCA PIC Presentation
- January 2025: Begin SEPA Process
 - Dates TBD: Scoping and Comment Period (4 in-person, 1 virtual)
 - Dates TBD: Draft EIS Comment Period (4 in-person, 1 virtual)
- 2025-2026: Regular EIS updates to Advisory Committees
- Q4 2026: Final EIS
- Early 2027: Seek Advisory Committee recommendations
- Early 2027: Exec Office decision

Reminders:

- LTD criteria surveys due by today, 11/15
- Today is the due date for comments on the draft report.
- Reach out to SWD Gov Relations team to schedule a LTD presentation with your City Council

Member Comment

Atwood asked the haulers what’s happening with glass right now given the situation with Ardagh. Weiker responded that they’re currently stockpiling and working with SPU on added capacity. We’re also using it in roadbed at Roosevelt. We’re staying in compliance with local and state law, which means we can’t hold it per public health rules. We’ve been trying to find different end markets. Freedman commented that they have a contract with SMI. Campbell noted that Recology is currently stockpiling and looking into different end markets. SMI has stated that they are looking to increase their rail space to make up for some of the lost ground with Ardagh. There are also stakeholder groups working towards bolstering local end markets. We’re all working together to find a solution.

Smith added that we must approach this issue from a systems perspective and regional perspective. There are three phases: short-term solutions that move glass from stockpiling to end markets; in the medium-term we’re exploring use market development and policy around material flows; and in the long-term we’re coordinating on policy change as a region. We can loop in Atwood into the work happening with the stakeholder meetings. Atwood expressed interest in being involved.

Trim requested an Re+ update at the December joint meeting.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 10:58 a.m.