

**SWAC Advisory Committee Meeting**

Sept. 12, 2025 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Hybrid Meeting (Zoom or King Street Center)

<b><u>SWAC Members Present</u></b>		<b><u>King County Staff</u></b>	
April Atwood, Marketing and Education		Eberley Barragan, SWD staff	
Jay Blazey, Manufacturer		Ali Blum, SWD staff	
James Borsum, Labor Representative		Jerome Cruz, Public Health – Seattle & King County	
Jay Blazey, Manufacturer		Theresa Curry Almuti, SWD staff	
Alissa Campbell, Waste Industry		Brian Halverson, SWD staff	
Amy Lam, Local Elected Official		Christine Kim, SWD staff	
Bill Louie, Citizen Representative		Patty Liu, SWD staff	
Laura Mork, Local Elected Official		Casey Mellnik, SWD staff	
Leah Tischler, Public Interest Group		Mark Monteiro, SWD staff	
Heather Trim, Recycling Industry		Amy Ockerlander, SWD staff	
Wendy Weiker, Waste Industry		Nina Olivier, SWD staff	
		Elka Peterson Horner, PSB staff	
		Rebecca Singer, SWD Director	
		Chris Stubbs, SWD Deputy Director	
		Isabelle Trujillo, SWD staff	
		John Walsh, SWD staff	
<b><u>Guests</u></b>			
Laura Belmont, Sound Cities Association		Brad Lovaas, WA Refuse and Recycling Association	
Katie Jerauld, Dept. of Ecology		Genevieve Rubinelli, City of Sammamish	
Jeannette Jurgensen, Bin There Consulting		Rick Vahl, Waste Connections	
Alli Kingfisher, Dept. of Ecology			

**Call to Order and Introductions**

After introductions, Chair Weiker called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m.

**Meeting Minutes**

Borsum moved to approve the August minutes. Louie seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Public Comment**

Jerauld shared a couple items.

**1. Statewide color-code and labels for waste containers**

Starting in 2028, containers given to a customer to collect their garbage, recycling, and organic waste must be color-coded and have clear labels. The same is true for containers put in a public space by a city or county. Black or grey containers are for garbage, blue containers are for recycling, and green or brown containers are for organics. Containers larger than 101 gallons are exempt.

Leading up to 2028 and effective immediately, service providers that purchase new containers must buy ones that follow the color requirement. Functional containers purchased before August 1, 2025, are exempt until replacements are necessary. Cities and counties can request an exemption from Ecology for the color-code requirements for various reasons. They encourage cities, counties, and haulers to reach out to [Organics@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Organics@ecy.wa.gov) with their questions and concerns.

The law requires clear and obvious labels on both containers and lids. A container and its lid must be labeled by January 1, 2028, if it is given to a customer by their solid waste service provider; or provided by the city or county in a public space. There are no exemptions available for labeling requirements.

## 2. **Statewide food rescue map**

Washington Department of Ecology's Center for Sustainable Food Management created a statewide Food Rescue Map. This new interactive map makes it easy for you to find hunger relief organizations and potential food donors. The purpose of the map is to support statewide food waste reduction goals, increase the efficiency of food donation by connecting potential donors and receivers, reduce transportation costs and associated greenhouse gases of food rescue, and support data-informed decision-making for statewide resource allocation. Please visit [Washington Food Rescue Map Application](#).

### **SWD Updates**

Singer provided the SWD update.

### **Tonnage update**

Garbage tons through July are slightly below last year (487K tons in 2025 vs. 491K tons in 2024). The Black River (Republic) tons are included in the tonnage.

Recycling tonnage collected and diverted at transfer stations is at 17,000 tons through July. Apart from a peak of more than 21,000 tons through July of 2022, recycling tons brought to our Transfer Stations have been relatively stable over the last five years.

Transfer station recycling includes yard waste, clean wood, glass, cardboard, mixed paper, scrap metal, textiles, mattresses, appliances, bicycles, tires, mixed containers and plastic.

### **Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) Plant Acquisition**

SWD acquired the RNG plant and settled the pending federal litigation between King County and BEW on August 28, 2025.

On Sept. 2, King County Council passed legislation authorizing the sale of biomethane and environmental attributes to Puget Sound Energy. The contract is expected to be signed by Sept. 14, 2025.

SWD has selected a third-party operator, ESI. The company will retain most of the existing operators and is working with the division on recommissioning and restarting the plant.

It is expected that the plant will be producing renewable natural gas by the end of the month.

### **Green Schools Successes in 2024-25**

With the beginning of the new school year, I wanted to share successes of the Green Schools Program in the 2024-25. Last school year, 246 schools actively participated in the Green Schools Program to further reduce and divert waste.

SWD provided 32 assemblies, and 442 classroom workshops designed to foster awareness and practical action around resource conservation, waste sorting, and climate issues.

In King County school districts, the average recycling rate increased from 47% to 50% (outside of Seattle), which is great progress.

In the coming year, Green Schools will issue additional Re+ School Vouchers, focusing on reducing disposables and promoting additional waste reduction and diversion.

SWD piloted issuing over \$300k of vouchers in the 2023-24 school year to purchase supplies such as durable utensils, bulk condiment dispensers, energy/water efficient dishwashers, recycling/composting collection containers, and water refill stations. These vouchers eliminated an equivalent of 105 100-cubic yard trucks away from the landfill.

### **Green Workforce Development Training**

The SWD Construction and Demolition (C&D) Program launched their third cohort of the deconstruction training program.

Working with formally incarcerated individuals, the program helps the local construction industry transition from demolition to deconstruction while creating more equitable access to green jobs. Deconstruction is a modern approach that dramatically decreases the amount of material that ends up in the landfill.

The majority of participants in this cohort are women – this is exciting because we want to see more diversity in the industry.

Several participants mentioned that they would like to use this opportunity as a way to create their own business, stemming from their interests in construction, real estate, and interior renovation. It's very exciting to think about how graduates of this program could be the leaders of the C&D community in 5-10 years

The first week of training started September 2 and will last eight weeks. The first week focuses on safety on a work site, de-nailing wood boards, removing drywall, and removing hardwood flooring that will be salvaged for reuse.

This program also won the Innovation Award, a Best-Run Government Award, in the spring.

### **SWD in the Community**

SWD regularly engages with communities in King County to provide outreach and education on waste prevention, reuse, recycling, and key initiatives, like our major capital projects.

In September we'll be hosting two more outreach events on South County Recycling and Transfer Station (SCRTS) at the Farmer's Markets in Auburn and Federal Way.

- Auburn Farmers Market – 9/14
- Federal Way Farmers Market – 9/27

Singer toured this facility and believed that it is going to be a great facility.

Singer added that we did a long-term disposal (LTD) study that analyzed five LTD options. The study recommended that we move forward with two options: waste export by rail and mass burn. This recommendation to move forward meant that we need to study these two options more in-depth.

We recently held five city subgroup meetings and have had monthly conversations with both committees. We are still engaging in the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process and there will be opportunities for public input as we get further along in the process. There is still a lot of work that we need to do to get to a decision; nothing is solidified, and we will circle back to make sure that we allow time for people to provide additional feedback. We are also committed to engaging with city haulers. We have presented at the Sound Cities Association (SCA) and the Regional Policy Committee (RPC) and would be happy to present to any city's leadership.

Weiker commented that the haulers have been working with SWD to make a rate change as the haulers have been incurring additional costs. They are finalizing the language of the proposal to send to the King County Council. The haulers have been struggling with the inconsistent closures but are happy the partnership is working and hope the resolution will be passed next week.

Singer added that SWD is currently working through alternative figures. Weiker reminded everyone that this is a one-year rate, and the committees will be doing rate work again in January.

### **Operations Update**

Stubbs and Monteiro provided an overview of recent activity at the transfer stations.

Following challenging holidays earlier in the year, we saw Labor Day as an opportunity to apply what we'd learned. In preparation, we staffed as many drivers as possible in the week leading up to the holiday. We also realized that preparation can't just focus on the beginning of the holiday weekend; we must also plan for the post-holiday period. This change in mindset was a difficult lesson, but it helped us better understand our system's capabilities and limitations.

We prioritized maximizing available floor space on Sunday to prepare for Tuesday and Wednesday. Our goal was 90% available floor space, which we successfully achieved. A key factor was having our highest driver count for a holiday this year, with 35 drivers on the day of the holiday itself. The following Tuesday, we had 33 drivers, which helped us maintain stability and provide consistent service not just during the holiday weekend, but for the entire two-week period surrounding it. This shift in our planning from a three-day holiday period to a two-week window was crucial to our success.

We are currently highly reliant on overtime, so we're hiring temporary-term limited (TLT) drivers. The recruitment process has started, and we anticipate they will begin working by mid-to-late October after all hiring requirements, such as CDL verification, are complete. We've received a high number of quality applications, which gives us the opportunity to be selective and find the best candidates.

Our truck drivers and transportation team have been relocated to land leased from Cedar Grove. This move was necessary to allow for the excavation of Area 9 at the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill. The relocation is a major logistical challenge because Area 9 housed all our facilities, including the shop, administrative buildings, break room, and a storage area for out-of-service equipment. We had to move the entire operation to two separate 10-acre lots at the bottom of Cedar Grove Road.

This move is particularly difficult because our operations are now split across multiple locations. Our operations used to be consolidated into one area, and now our entire operations are separated into several locations. This separation creates new logistical complexities, requires new processes, and demands changes in staffing; and is significant because it will once again separate our operations.

Updates at the stations:

- Bow Lake: The construction for the new commercial truck entrance is now ahead of schedule, with an estimated completion date of Tuesday, Sept. 16. This new entrance will help alleviate a major pain point at Bow Lake, which has been exacerbated by the heavy volume of trucks redirected from the Algona site due to a packer failure. At one point, we had three different construction projects happening at Bow Lake which impacted flow, available floor space and wait times.
  - Due to the new temporary traffic pattern for commercial haulers, our floor space has been reduced by 20%, which is a significant factor in the wait times at Bow Lake.
  - The good news is that we're ahead of schedule on the new entrance construction. We're currently targeting a Sept. 16 completion date, which should help with these issues. Please keep in mind that this date is an estimate and may change as we work with our contractors.
- Bow Lake: Work to rebuild one compactor estimated to start in November. No service disruptions anticipated, and we expect this process to take four to six weeks.
  - We plan to replace one compactor and rebuild another. This approach will save us both time and money, as the manufacturer recommended rebuilding one since it's in good condition.
  - We can still achieve our goal of 26-30 loads a day at Bow Lake by using one compactor and having more empty trucks during the swing shift. We're also seeing volumes start to decrease, particularly with yard waste.
  - During a recent MSWAC meeting, a question was raised about the lifespan of a compactor. The answer is 20 years, but we are rebuilding and replacing ours ahead of schedule. This is because we operate them 24/7 with highly corrosive materials, and the cycles are much higher than what the compactors are rated for. After bringing in the manufacturer to inspect them, they recommended one replacement and one rebuild, and we are proceeding with their recommendation.
- Algona: Vendor onsite week of 9/7 to repair packer
  - Both commercial packers are currently out of service.
    - ♣ The new packer, the Built-Rite packer, has been unreliable due to manufacturing issues. We are experiencing problems with its electrical system, and it sometimes stops working unexpectedly. For safety reasons, it will remain out of service until its reliability can be confirmed. The vendor, Built-Rite, has been on-site for over a week and believes the packer may be operational again next week.
    - ♣ The old packer is out of service due to structural issues with both the packer and its foundation. Our shop has been working on repairs for the past 7-10 days. We hope to have it back in service within the next 10 days, but we cannot confirm a specific date until the repairs have been fully verified.
- Renton: Normal operations – work was completed on the inbound scale.
  - Monteiro thanked everyone for their patience and knows it was extremely difficult. The number one goal was safety.
- SCRTS: Compactors arrived ahead of schedule, and we tested our trailers backing into the chute. Testing revealed that we need to move some overhead pipes and bollards and likely add guard rails.

- o Initial trailer testing revealed that the space was tighter than anticipated. We will need to relocate some overhead pipes and bollards and likely install new guardrails. Additionally, we discovered that the largest of our four trailer types was too tall to fit, as our initial measurements were based on the dimensions of our primary trailers. We believe we can resolve this by modifying our chutes.
- o It's better to find these issues now than during the anticipated startup in June 2026. We'll be conducting similar simulations with all major systems at the South County Recycling and Transfer Station (SCRTS) as they come online to ensure a smooth launch.

Borsum asked what SWD defines as "TLT" and why they are temporary employees. Singer replied that SWD defines TLTs as "temporary-term limited" employees. We are hiring them on a temporary basis to test if adding staff will help us increase the volume of material moving through our system. We are seeing a consistent increase in incoming loads at our stations, and we are not keeping up at the rate we should be. We have an obligation to our haulers and the community to provide excellent customer service. By bringing in additional staff, we can test whether this helps us ease the burden and continue to provide the high-quality service they expect. This is a trial run. If it works, that's great. If it doesn't, we will not have lost anything and can explore other solutions, such as purchasing additional trucks or making operational adjustments.

Borsum asked if this was a pilot program and Singer clarified that she used the term loosely. Bringing in TLT employees is not a permanent change; it's a trial to see if it helps. A formal "pilot" would be structured differently. Instead, this is a direct attempt to solve a problem: a backlog of materials. We want to determine if the issue is a lack of staffing, which has been a historical problem in operations, or if there's another underlying cause.

Weiker said that historically, overtime has been used to fill staffing gaps. To her understanding, this effort aims to determine if temporary labor can more effectively address those gaps. For Singer, the core business of SWD is operations. She believes the facilities and the people who run them should have been the priority from the beginning. This temporary hiring initiative is a step toward making that a reality. It's a way to test if the long-standing problem of under-resourcing operations has been the root cause of the division's challenges.

Weiker added that from the haulers' perspective, the system's instability—specifically issues with labor and planning—is the reason they've had to request a rate increase. Weiker commended the proactive communication from SWD's Christine Kim, highlighting that communicating with haulers and cities simultaneously about both planned and unexpected disruptions has been a significant improvement. Although haulers don't like delay emails, receiving them allows them to plan accordingly and inform their cities, preventing last-minute surprises.

Weiker thanked SWD for their partnership and for working to resolve the operational challenges that began last year with the "bomb cyclone." Acknowledging and addressing these problems is crucial for all shared customers and ratepayers.

### **State legislation – 2026 forward look**

Ockerlander provided this section.

The 2026 legislative session will be a short session (60 days). A supplemental budget will be introduced, and all bills that did not pass last year are still active and will be considered in the 2026 session.

In King County, we will have some leadership changes with the new King County Executive coming on board in November.

SWD intends to take a defensive posture, particularly where related to budget. We will continue to monitor and support bills introduced last session, and take appropriate stance with new legislation. We will also take a strong interest in mattress and sharps EPR, with an eye towards 2027. With the new King County Executive and councilmembers coming on board by January, procedures and policy direction are subject to change.

Solid waste related bills expected in 2026:

- EPR for Textiles (building on HB 1420)
- EPR for Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) – incl. vapes
- Improving the End-of-Life Management of Electric Vehicle Batteries (building on HB 1550 / SB 5586)
- Amending Safe Medication Return (Agency Request building on JLARC legislative report)
- Amending the Litter Tax (Agency Request)
- Increasing Solid Waste Collection Tax (building on HB 2018)
- Deposit-Return System (DRS) for Beverage Containers
- EPR for Mattresses (building on HB 1901)
- EPR for Sharps (building on Safe Sharps Advisory Group)

Lam had a question regarding the DRS portion of the WRAP Act, a few years ago the component for cans was closely tied to the bill but was later decoupled. It appears to be a priority asked if Ockerlander can speak more about it.

Ockerlander stated that she has limited information on the issue at the moment, but many people are in favor of its passage. It had to be decoupled for EPR to be passed.

In addition to the bills already discussed, Trim mentioned two other pieces of legislation: the Better Bag Ban and the textile EPR bill.

Mork inquired about the solid waste collection tax increase, and Ockerlander said she would provide the details directly to Mork.

Weiker commented that due to the short session, it will be a "frenzy."

### **Cedar Hills Regional Landfill Construction Update**

Stubbs gave an update on the current and upcoming Cedar Hills Regional Landfill (CHRLF) Development projects. Many are interrelated and dependent on one another. These projects started earlier this year to maximize the life of the landfill.

- Area 9 - Demo & Excavation from May 2025 to Sept. 2027
  - This is the last cell to be developed at CHRLF. The project involves demolishing existing maintenance facilities and excavating Area 9. The contractor is currently on-site, processing soil from the Area 9 stockpile and clearing the site to prepare for excavation. Demolition of the existing facility is underway.
- Area 8 – Stage 1 closure from May 2025 to Nov. 2025
  - This is the active area where we are currently placing waste. We are implementing Stage 1 closure of Area 8, which includes installing a final closure liner, along with landfill gas and leachate collection systems.

- The contractor is already on-site, and the liner installation is underway on the west and south slopes of Area 8.
- Area 5 and 6 - Development from April 2026 to Dec. 2028.
  - These areas are currently under a temporary closure, as they have not yet reached their permanent capacity. The ongoing capital project will involve removing some of the temporary soil cap so the division can continue filling these areas with waste until it reaches its maximum permanent capacity.
  - Export of cover soil, installation and landfill gas collection, conveyance systems, and leachate collection infrastructure.
  - This project is currently in the procurement phase. King County is pursuing a rebid and new solicitations, which are expected to be advertised in the fourth quarter of 2025.
- Interim facilities relocation project (IFRP) from June 2025 to March 2026
  - The scope of this project is to reconfigure and demolish existing administrative and maintenance facilities. This work is necessary to begin the excavation of Area 9.
  - The contractor is on-site and working on an updated schedule. Temporary personnel moves are currently underway.

Lam inquired about Areas 5 and 6, recalling that they were not slated to be reopened. She asked about the capacity of these areas and whether the financial benefits of filling them would outweigh the costs, noting she remembered the comprehensive plan stating they would only be open for a few years. Stubbs responded that he doesn't have the specific capacity numbers but confirmed that the most recent comprehensive plan did evaluate the cost-benefit of maximizing these areas versus other alternatives. This analysis showed a financial benefit to maximizing the capacity of Areas 5 and 6. Stubbs will share the specific details with Lam.

Trim asked if SWD's new work provides a more updated projection for the landfill's lifespan.

Stubbs replied that SWD continuously evaluates the landfill's permanent capacity. We use both mathematical calculations and recent GPS drone readings to measure the landfill's height. By constantly updating our models with the volume of waste received, they can maintain an accurate projection. The current projection remains 2040, which is the assumption used for all operational models.

Weiker asked when the renewable gas plant (RNG) would begin operation and when operators would be on board. Stubbs replied that EIS has been selected to operate the plant on behalf of the counties. The contract with EIS is expected to be finalized by Sept. 14, and the plant is anticipated to be operational by the end of September. The agreement with PSE still needs to be signed, but they have been working together from the beginning.

### **SWAC Update**

No update.

### **Re+ Grants Update**

Barragan and Olivier gave this update.

The objective of this presentation is to share a high-level overview of the Re+ Circular Economy Grants program and its purpose. We are excited to announce NextCycle 2 awardees.

As a review, Re+ Grants invest in the circular economy by fueling zero waste-innovation close to home. Re+ grant programs fund city, small business and community partners to design, test and scale practical circular solutions with measurable, local impacts. The outcomes of these grants are the acceleration of greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions, development and implementation of solutions that address various aspects of circular economy, creation/expansion of markets for recycled and reused materials, investment in frontline and BIPOC-partners, and green jobs and career pathways.

There are currently three Re+ grants in the framework:

1. Re+ Circular Economy Grants
  - a. Awarded to non-profits, small businesses, eligible entities, fiscally-sponsored organizations, tribal governments, and higher education institutions
  - b. \$4.5M invested in 28 projects since 2022
2. Re+ City Grants
  - a. Awarded to King County partner cities (single and joint-city efforts)
  - b. \$391,000 invested in five projects co-led by 12 cities in Cycle 1 (2023-24)
  - c. Cycle 2 (2026-27) applicants to be informed at the end of September and awards to be announced by end of the year
3. Re+ Seed Grants Powered by NextCycle
  - a. Mini-grants up to \$10,000 for early-stage projects for businesses (start-ups, small and large), community-based organizations, tribal governments, and research institutions
  - b. Gives organizations access to mentors, consultants, and networking to support project execution and growth planning

One common theme across all the programs is that solutions are upstream and downstream, from reuse and waste prevention to recycling and composting.

There is a shared focus on making early investments in the research and pilot phases of projects, as well as in their launch and scaling. While impacts and progress during the grant period are important, these programs are future-focused, with expectations for accelerated impact beyond the grant period.

## Cycle 2 (2024-2025)

### Changes implemented in cycle 2 based upon lessons learned in cycle 1

1. Increase community participation in evaluation process
  - a. 50% community representation on evaluation panel to ensure that public funds are directed by the public
2. More expert analysis is needed to guide decision making
  - a. Technical review added to evaluation process to assess project feasibility and alignment with grant program goals
3. Improve the evaluation panel experience
  - a. Evaluator orientation & anti-bias training to help build capacity within the selection committee
4. Improve the grantee user experience
  - a. Increased engagement opportunities: technical assistance & application parties
  - b. Grantee orientation
  - c. Feedback to non-selected applicants – this is a best practice that comes out of our parks and recreation grants teams. We've received positive feedback that this information provided to non-selected applicants has helped them be more equipped to apply for future grants

There are 14 grantee partners – five of whom received funding in cycle one. There has been a strong organics representation in the materials, particularly around food rescue. There were two projects revolving around salvage and lumber, and other construction and demolition (C&D) reuse. There were four that focused on preventing paper, including milk cartons from school and single use items at events. And there were three organizations that focused on reuse of other materials including tools, creative reuse, arts and crafts supplies, and furniture.

In addition to these priority materials addressed, other notable trends this cycle 2 include:

- Increase in number of applications received – 63 applications (up from 42 in cycle 1)
  - Likely due to the targeted requirement and promotion that we did
- Increase in non-profit grant partners (from 40% in Cycle 1 to 67% in Cycle 2)
- Shift in project focus towards waste prevention and reuse (upstream benefits)
  - In Cycle 1, 35% of projects were focused on reuse and prevention. This rose to 86% in Cycle 2.
- Maintaining ERSJ focus across cycles (50% of projects)
- Projected impacts for Cycle 2:
  - 900+ tons diverted/prevented during grant period (11,000 tons over 5 years)
  - 72 jobs created during grant period: 246 jobs by 2029
  - 6 projects advanced to scale-up phase

#### Spotlight: Second Use

Second Use has established and is operating a reusable materials drop-off center outside the Shoreline Transfer Station – encouraging customers to donate salvageable materials and reduce waste that would otherwise go to Cedar Hills Regional Landfill.

- Expected annual diversion of 325 tons/est. 1,350 tons over 5 years
  - They have collected over 2,000 items so far like salvaged lumber, doors, kitchen cabinets, power tools and other items that are not so obvious like an EV charger and punching bag.
- Materials sold at Second Use locations at a significantly reduced price compared to new retail costs
- This project is proof of the concept to create a replicable model that could be expanded to other transfer stations
- Building a model for transfer stations as reuse hubs

#### Spotlight: Sustainable Renton

With the support of Re+ funding, Sustainable Renton purchased a commercial kitchen to serve as a central hub to prepare cooked meals, offer food waste prevention education, and provide reclaimed edible food to humanitarian relief organizations across the South Sound area. Additionally, they have expanded efforts to redirect non-edible food waste to local farms and composting facilities

- This space serves as a central location where up to 50,000 lbs. of food can be stored and redistributed per month, leaning towards an estimated 240 tons of food waste to be diverted from the landfill (5 years).
- In the meantime, the newly planted Food Forest and dedicated community garden plots serve as an additional food resource and educational opportunity.
- Developing local infrastructure for food security and waste prevention

#### Spotlight: Perennial Zero Waste

Perennial Zero Waste provides reusable food service ware at local events by utilizing on-site dishwashing trailers, as well as comprehensive composting and recycling infrastructure, sorting assistance, and educational services.

- The grant allowed them to scale up their operations and expand partnerships with cities
- Proving the feasibility of durable service ware to event organizers/sponsors

- o Purchasing more durable service-ware items and meeting a demand and fill a niche for zero-waste events under 10,000 attendees
- Assisting with food vendor area design to facilitate reuse, recycling and composting for the public
- Minimizing contamination through hands-on sorting assistance
- Replacement of 1 million items of single use service ware during grant period (est.)

### NextCycle WA

NextCycle Washington is a circular economy innovation platform designed to support the growth of businesses, community-based organizations, tribal nations, and institutions working within Washington’s waste prevention, reuse, repair, recycling and organics recovery industry. By nurturing projects, and the program helps reduce waste, keeps materials in use for longer and regenerates natural systems while solving equitable and local economies.

King County collaborates, leverages and helps fund NextCycle Washington’s three project tracks of circular economy innovation funding opportunities.

1. The mini-community centered pilot grant programs for early stage or deep systemic need projects that are community based.
2. Our early stages, or “Seed Grants”
3. Our more established staged projects and businesses known as the accelerator program

Supported project types include:

- Upstream businesses and projects that prevent waste or improve and expand reuse and repair.
- Downstream projects that improve, innovate, or expand material and organic recycling, recovery and end uses.

### NextCycle Accelerator Program

The NextCycle Circular Accelerator is a 6-month program designed to support and advance promising circular businesses and projects. The program includes workshops, business and technical assistance, pitch development, matchmaking, and identifying funding pathways. The coaching on the pitch development is presented to a panel of industry judges at the end of the program’s timeline.

Pitch Showcase Event for Cohort 3 was May 19, 2025. This event kicked off the WSRA conference and awarded \$33,000 across six different teams in organic and food waste reduction, technological innovations in recycling, and projects that reduce textile waste.

### Re+ Seed Grant Powered by NextCycle

The King County Solid Waste Division, in collaboration with NextCycle Washington, is excited to announce the launch of the [2025 Re+ Seed Grant Program](#), which leverages the NextCycle Washington framework.

This is the second iteration of a seed grant program that King County has been involved with and has helped fund. The grant program has approximately \$125,000 available funding for up to 15 projects, with up to \$10,000 for projects accelerating King County's circular economy and zero-waste goals. This program leverages NextCycle framework, evaluation criteria and design. We are excited for the partnerships.

The 2024-25 Re+ Circular Economy Grant projects will continue until the end of 2025.

The Re+ Seed Grants application period ends Sept. 19, 2025. The 2026-27 Re+ City Grant Award recommendations are under review. The Re+ City award announcements are anticipated for November 2025.

Louie asked what kind of follow-up King County does with groups that receive funding. Barragan explained that King County has a quarterly check-in requirement, and some groups report monthly. All grant deliverables are milestone-based, which allows for continuous monitoring of project progress. We are also following up with the first round of awardees to see how their projects have expanded or if they have received additional grants.

Lam praised the idea of second-use programs and expressed hope that they would expand to other transfer stations. She also highlighted Perennial Zero Waste and noted that while Sammamish hosts many events, they don't currently include composting or waste diversion. Lam expressed interest in contacting them to learn about best practices. Barragan offered to help connect the two parties.

### **Membership Update and SWAC Chair/Vice Chair election**

Blum led this discussion.

Blum is waiting for final confirmation but anticipates that SWAC will have new members joining soon to fill the agricultural representation and citizen representative positions. These have been historically hard positions to fill and once they are approved, SWD will introduce them to the committee.

Robin Freedman and James Borsum have both reached their two-term limit. All appointees to King County Boards and Commissions have two full-term limit.

On Sept. 30, the terms of SWAC members James Borsum, Robin Freedman, Leah Tischler and Jay Blazey will expire. Although Freedman and Borsum have reached their maximum term limit, they can stay as members until someone has filled their position, per Executive policy.

Tischler and Blazey have agreed to serve another term.

Blum thanked members for their continued service.

September is election month. She thanked Chair Weiker and Vice Chair Louie for their service and for their commitment to the committee.

Today, we will elect a new Chair and Vice Chair who will assume their roles in October. No written nominations have been submitted for these positions.

Trim nominated Louie for Chair.

Louie nominated Weiker for Chair.

Weiker nominated Louie for Vice Chair.

Blum asked for motion to reelect Weiker and Louie.

Louie motioned to reelect Weiker as SWAC Chair. Lam seconded. Reelection passed unanimously.

Borsum motioned to reelect Louie as Vice Chair. Mork seconded. Reelection passed unanimously.

Weiker thanked everyone and shared that she will continue to do the best work that she can.

**Member Comment**

Weiker said that the 2026 WRSA conference is at the Tulalip Casino, and it will be a great event for people to attend. We are looking forward to getting the rate approved and letting everyone know.

**Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 10:44 a.m.