

SWAC Advisory Committee Meeting

March. 13, 2026 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Hybrid Meeting (Zoom or King Street Center)

<u>SWAC Members Present</u>		<u>King County Staff</u>	
April Atwood, Marketing and Education		Ali Blum, SWD staff	
Jay Blazey, Manufacturer		Nori Catabay, SWD staff	
Cynthia Dampier, Community Representative		Shawn Carter, SWD staff	
Robin Freedman, Waste Industry		Theresa Curry Almuti, SWD staff	
Amy Lam, Local Elected Official		Kristin Elia, SWD staff	
Bill Louie, Citizen Representative		Aaron Evanson, SWD staff	
Laura Mork, Local Elected Official		Christine Kim, SWD staff	
Leah Tischler, Public Interest Group		Amy Ockerlander, SWD staff	
Heather Trim, Recycling Industry		Dave Pierce, SWD staff	
Wendy Weiker, Waste Industry		Keith Quinata, SWD staff	
		Caitlin Singer, SWD staff	
		Rebecca Singer, SWD Director	
		Chris Stubbs, SWD Deputy Director	
		Isabelle Trujillo, SWD staff	
		Julie West, Public Health – Seattle & King County	
<u>Guests</u>			
Laura Belmont, Sound Cities Association		Madison Rannow, Recology	
Zach Dugovich, Pacific Public Affairs		Genivieve Rubinelli, City of Sammamish	
Olivia Kirby, Recology		Josh Stecker, City of Gig Harbor	
Brad Lovaas, WA Refuse and Recycling Association		Katie Stickels, Dept. of Ecology	
Adam Olen, City of Duvall			

Call to Order and Introductions

After introductions, Chair Weiker called the meeting to order at 9:39 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Louie moved to approve the February SWAC minutes. Lam seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment

Stickels shared two items:

1. **Repair x Share Summit: Building a Care Economy**

The virtual 2026 Repair x Share Summit is free to attend and will be held Thursday, March 19 – Friday, March 20. The summit will include presentations on community repair and reuse spaces, repair education, Washington’s statewide impact calculator, Oregon Metro’s innovative grant program, and more. To register, please visit: [Repair x Share Summit 2026: Building a Care Economy](#).

2. **Compost Procurement Reports due March 31**

Annual compost procurement reports are due by March 31. Any jurisdiction required to have a compost procurement ordinance (CPO) must submit an annual report.

Not sure if your city or county needs to report? Check your county's tab in the [local government workbook](#). The workbook says which jurisdictions need to report and if last year's report is missing.

You can fill out and submit the report through [Secure Access Washington \(SAW\)](#). The report due on March 31 covers activities done in 2025. Head to [Ecology's webpage for frequently asked questions](#) or read the [CPO Reporting Walkthrough](#) for step-by-step instructions on submitting your report.

Organic Waste and Construction & Demolition Waste Briefing

Singer gave this briefing.

SWD presented this update to the Economy, Transportation, and Environment Committee in February; we are now bringing that same discussion to our members.

Ordinance 19861 established that a Construction and Demolition (C&D) proviso be put in place to evaluate C&D flow control and enforcement efforts.

The proviso requested an evaluation of overall flow control compliance for C&D material throughout our system, focusing on four specific elements:

- Flow control methods: An inventory and descriptions of existing flow control methods applicable to C&D materials
- Enforcement efforts: A summary of enforcement efforts undertaken by the county related to its flow control methods for C&D materials
- Key findings: From the evaluation of flow control compliance for C&D materials
- Policy direction: Recommended actions and policies the county could take to improve flow control compliance for C&D materials

King County mandates the recycling of specific C&D materials, including metal, cardboard, wood, concrete, asphalt paving, brick and new drywall scraps. Any C&D loads containing non-recyclable materials must be directed to a County-designated facility. Legally, the County may implement flow control to serve a legitimate public purpose, provided it does not unfairly favor in-state private entities over out-of-state competitors. This authority is supported by extensive case law and documentation included in this report.

While flow control authority exists at federal, state, and county levels, regional impact is maximized when participating cities adopt policies that align with the County's C&D flow control system. Issaquah and Redmond have already implemented such policies. These methods utilize legal authority to designate specific locations for waste consolidation, transfer, processing, treatment, or disposal. This study analyzes C&D flow control across federal, state, and local jurisdictions within King County's regional system. By evaluating current compliance data and diversion performance, the report provides a framework for future regional policy recommendations.

C&D Proviso – inventory of existing flow control methods: regulations

- Federal:
 - Commerce clause and federal court cases
 - Support local authority for flow control
- State
 - Revised code of Washington Chapters 36, 70A, 81
 - Dictate how specific waste must be handled

- County
 - King County Code Title 10
 - Specifies roles for facilities and haulers

King County has implemented enforcement measures to support its C&D flow control program, ensuring compliance with County ordinances and the achievement of waste diversion goals. Parties found in violation are subject to enforcement actions and civil penalties, while designated facilities that violate their agreements are subject to contractual repercussions. The County enforces flow control through the following six primary methods:

- C&D waste transfer station reporting and inspections
- Mixed C&D facility reporting and inspections
- Demolition site inspections using permit data
- Job site verification of adherence to C&D requirements for projects requesting direct haul to the landfill or an intermodal yard
- C&D residuals testing at mixed C&D facilities
- Special waste monitoring – an issuance of unacceptable waste reports

In 2024, SWD's C&D enforcement lead conducted 385 site inspections, all of which were related to demolition permits. Additionally, on-site walkthroughs were performed quarterly at all three active C&D facilities, and a residual testing session was conducted at each of the seven C&D material recovery facilities. No audits were performed and no citations were issued during this period. In addition to demolition sites, SWD conducted regular inspections of designated facilities and haulers.

Key findings

- The 2021 diversion rate for C&D materials generated at job sites in King County was 81%
 - This covers materials sent to designated C&D and single-commodity facilities
- 1,898,687 tons of C&D materials were diverted from disposal while 499,385 tons were sent for disposal

Due to reporting delays at the state level and with the Department of Commerce, 2021 remains our most recent complete data set. However, preliminary 2023 data from the Department of Ecology indicate a diversion rate of 53%, down from the previous 81%. This decline is attributed to operational and staffing challenges among industry processors. To address this, C&D rate increases approved in 2025 will be used to fund expanded outreach and compliance efforts.

Key Findings: Non-compliance and System Leakage

- Failure to use designated facilities
 - Mixed C&D materials and waste continue to be diverted to unauthorized locations or to facilities designated for different waste streams.
- Noncompliance with waste diversion plans approved for landfill direct disposal
 - Projects utilizing the direct-to-landfill option don't always follow their diversion plans or provide the required C&D waste documentation.
- Inappropriate use of King County transfer station C&D exemption
 - Transfer stations are receiving significant volumes of C&D waste due to the misapplication of exemptions and the improper use of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) containers. For example, people will use smaller rental trucks (such as U-Hauls) to bypass restrictions on larger containers, disposing of C&D debris on the tipping floor as if it were standard waste.
- Improper on-site practices
 - Comingling and recyclable/non-recyclable C&D materials at jobsites
- Delays in access to permitting data

- o Our ability to inspect demolition sites is limited by significant data delays. Permit data is managed by a third-party provider with a 10–12 day reporting lag. Furthermore, several jurisdictions either do not require demolition permits or do not participate in the online database. This lack of real-time visibility means that by the time SWD is notified, the demolition has often already occurred, eliminating the opportunity for a pre-inspection.
- o To resolve these timing gaps, we recommend that permitting cities require contractors to use the Green Halo C&D tracking system. Provided by SWD at no cost, Green Halo integrates seamlessly with existing permitting software and provides automatic notifications the moment a permit is applied for. Additionally, adopting Washington State building codes for C&D will codify the requirement for contractors to report materials. Immediate access to this data would significantly increase our collection rate of C&D material.

Recommended policy direction

- Gather input from across the industry
 - o Work collaboratively with C&D industry representatives to better understand challenges to flow control and develop a plan to overcome challenges.
 - ♣ To address these challenges, our C&D team maintains ongoing dialogue with facility operators, regional public agencies, and green building certification entities. We host regular C&D stakeholder meetings to facilitate this collaboration; the next session is being held on March 17. This was a topic at the February haulers forum.
- Pursue actions and policies
 - o Propose language to Council to require salvage assessments and building deconstruction (rather than demolition) of County-owned structures.
 - ♣ We have updated our Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP) to require the deconstruction of all County-owned buildings. To implement this, we are developing specific contract language for 2026 and a comprehensive deconstruction code package for 2027.
- Pursue actions and policies
 - o Encourage and support King County cities (and unincorporated King County) in adopting C&D and deconstruction related policies. And providing SWD with timely deconstruction permitting notifications.
 - ♣ We are supporting the Department of Labor Services (DLS) in adopting state building codes that require salvage assessments and C&D reporting for all remodels and removals. Under these codes, residential structures over 90 years old would require full deconstruction. To streamline this, we are promoting the adoption of cloud-based C&D reporting software across more cities.
- Improve communications and refine incentives:
 - o Increase outreach, education, and incentives with contractors, haulers, and facility operators
 - ♣ The Q2 rollout will prioritize job-site compliance, specifically the separation of C&D recyclables from non-recyclable materials. This initiative aims to strengthen data oversight and ensure C&D waste remains within King County’s flow control system. By increasing coordination with cities on demolition permitting and reporting, we will gain more robust data and better insights into material flow. This transparency allows enforcement staff to identify non-compliant handling companies, monitor demolition projects directly, and conduct enforcement as needed.
 - ♣ Furthermore, intentional communication with industry stakeholders will inform regional discussions on material separation - a step essential for job sites to meet their diversion rate targets and tighten flow control. Collectively, these efforts will ensure more material is reused or recycled, directly supporting the County’s SCAP Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP) and our Zero Waste goals. We continue to conduct active outreach and education with all regional partners.

Blazey expressed skepticism regarding the reported 81% recovery rate, noting that internal reviews suggest actual figures may be as low as 30–40%. He referenced a UTC settlement that provides a roadmap for improving C&D recovery but noted a lack of clarity on how current numbers are being tracked.

A primary concern is the high volume of "residuals" leaving C&D facilities for landfills across the state. Blazey echoed Singer's point that source separation at the generator level is critical. He emphasized the need for a defined list of recyclables and dedicated waste containers at job sites to prevent contamination. Drawing a parallel to the organics market and "depackagers," he warned that without clear separation at the source, bin contamination leads to poor diversion outcomes. He views this as a vital opportunity to reset regional market standards.

Mork expressed strong support for the proposed policy improvements, emphasizing the urgency of reducing landfill waste and stating that the County should move as quickly as possible on these initiatives.

Weiker recommended expanding the scope of oversight to include self-haul and non-regulated haulers, noting they represent a significant portion of material volume. Singer highlighted operational challenges at the transfer stations, noting that current staffing is insufficient for the necessary level of oversight. With only one inspector managing all 385 inspections, there is a clear need for additional personnel to effectively identify and divert non-recyclable items from the waste stream.

Organics System Mapping and Policy Report Overview

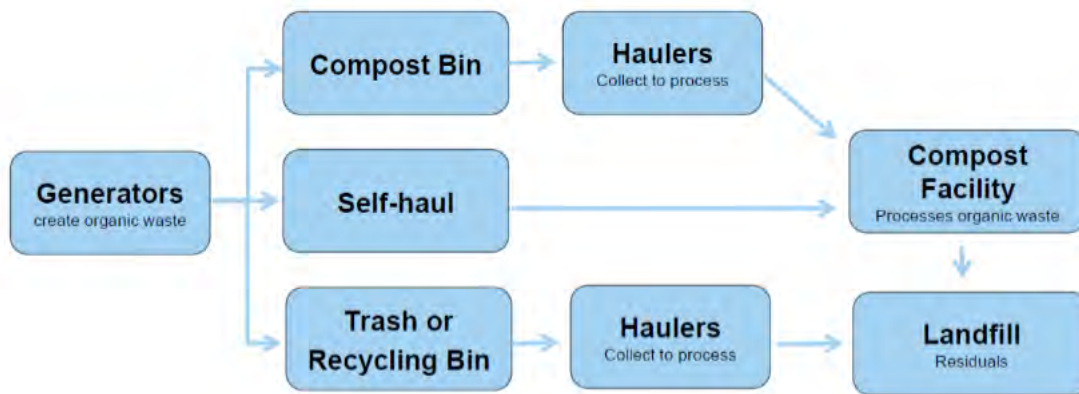
We worked with consultants to organize and research this information – we did not gather this by ourselves.

Ordinance 19861 included an Organic Proviso requiring a system mapping and policy report. This report was requested to enhance the Council's understanding of organic waste flow within King County's solid waste system, all in support of the region's zero-waste goals.

Organics system mapping and policy report

- System visibility
 - Build a strong understanding of the organics system & flow control framework
- Compliance & risk
 - Identified gaps and areas of noncompliance risk
- Key insights
 - Distilled system findings and relevant best practices
- Policy direction
 - Defined actionable policy options to strengthen organics flow control

Organic system & flow control flow chart



Organic waste is generated across a vast landscape, including households, farms, restaurants, and food processors. The complexity of the system is compounded by diverse disposal methods such as curbside collection, onsite composting, and self-hauling. Furthermore, an emerging industry of specialized companies—such as Mill, which focuses on food dehydration—is beginning to capture significant market share.

Organics Regulatory Framework

System visibility – requirements by generator type

Generator Type	State Requirements	King County Requirements	City Requirements
Single – Family (SF)	Organics collection must be offered in ORCA (Organics Recycling Collection Areas) areas	Yard/Organics service required in unincorporated areas (KCC 10.18)	Service requirements vary by city, including availability-only and mandatory participation
Multifamily (MF)	New solid waste plans must include source separated organics	Participation not required	Some cities require organics service
Commercial	Organic waste management required	No countywide requirement (open market)	Some cities only require to food service establishments

Current organic collection requirements remain inconsistent across King County and its cities, particularly following the approval of recent state legislation. While the goal is to expand composting access and simplify organic service options, significant policy gaps still exist.

**Additional information not pictured in the graphic*

- Single-Family (SF)
 - o State requirements:
 - ♣ By April 1, 2030, collection services must include food waste, and all single-family (SF) residents will be required to utilize source-separated organic waste collection.
 - o King County requirements:
 - ♣ County code (Chapter 10.1B) requires jurisdictions to provide yard waste collection services for both single-family and multi-family properties within Unincorporated King County (UKC). While

participation is not mandatory, yard waste is prohibited from single-family garbage containers. Consequently, residents must either subscribe to organic collection services, compost on-site, or self-haul materials to a transfer station.

- Multifamily:
 - State requirements:
 - ♣ Jurisdictions submitting a draft Solid Waste Management Plan after July 1, 2026, must include specific programs and timelines for the mandatory collection of source-separated organic waste from multi-family residents. These requirements will initially apply to newly constructed and substantially remodeled multi-family buildings.
- Commercial:
 - State requirements:
 - ♣ State law requires businesses to participate in an organic waste management program. Compliance can be achieved by subscribing to an organics collection service, managing waste on-site, self-hauling to a managed facility, or selling/donating food and fiber waste to another entity

System visibility – organics service delivery

Organic service entities

- County facilities with yard waste and clean wood collection programs (e.g. Bow Lake, Enumclaw, etc.)
- Commercial haulers (Recology, Waste Management, Republic Services, Divert, Cedar Grove, etc.)
- Enumclaw & Skykomish manages their own organics collections and don't use commercial hauling

Governance structure for Organics – compliance and risk

Regulations & enforcement

- Federal
 - Regulations - not organic specific
 - Enforcement – there is no federal law enforcement pertaining to organics
- State
 - Regulation – reviews and approves solid waste management plans; mandates municipal compost procurement ordinances; sets standards for composting facilities
 - Enforcement – prohibits penalties on individuals & authorizes jurisdictional health departments to enforce requirements for businesses
- County
 - Regulation – KCC 10.14 sets countywide goal to achieve zero waste by 2030 & 10.18 outlines yard waste/organic collection requirements.
 - Enforcement – there are currently no enforcement methods and enforcement best practices are under research. While KCC 10.08.100 authorizes the County Health Officer and Division Director to seek enforcement through the Prosecutor's Office, there is currently no formal policy or procedure for organic waste violations.

Significant enforcement gaps exist across all levels of government regarding organic waste collection. At the federal level, no mechanism exists to ensure jurisdictions provide organic collection services. Locally, King County Code lacks a defined enforcement method to guarantee yard waste collection within the Unincorporated King County (UKC) area.

While many cities have established mandates for separating recyclables and compostables, few have developed the formal policies necessary for implementation. For example, Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) prohibits garbage containers from containing more than 10% recyclable or compostable material. Non-compliant bins receive two warnings before a

\$50 fee is assessed. However, this fee structure is not explicitly documented in the city ordinance, a common issue where mandates lack concurrent, codified enforcement policies. Addressing these regulatory gaps at both the State and County levels is essential for ensuring full compliance.

Leakage pathway & compliance vulnerabilities

- Leakage refers to organic materials not being managed in accordance with existing applicable regulations
- 2022 waste characterization study – conducted to understand the number of compostable organics being disposed by generators in King County
 - Generators disposing of organic material into garbage or recycling bins become lost in the waste stream
- Organic materials transported by haulers to unknown or unauthorized facilities are classified as 'leakage' if they are not processed through approved facilities within the King County system
- Residual leakage—defined as garbage or recycling contaminants found within organic waste—remains a significant challenge. Because these residuals are not currently subject to King County’s flow control policy, the County lacks the regulatory authority to manage them. Consequently, residuals generated from King County organics is often processed inappropriately, such as being transported to facilities outside the County’s jurisdiction.
- Leakage identified in the 2022 waste characterization study
 - Compostable materials accounted for 29-35% of the waste from both commercial and residential waste generators
 - 35% of commercially collected residential waste generators and 6% of self-haul rate
 - Next waste characterization study will be completed in June 2027

Potential policy & regulatory enhancements: Key insights and policy direction – strategies to strengthen reporting, prevent bypass and fair cost recovery

- Currently, King County Title 10 flow control does not extend to organic materials; however, state organics laws are evolving rapidly. During the implementation of these new laws, we identified several potential policies and regulatory enhancements that could mitigate further system leakage. These concepts are currently in the preliminary stages and are rooted in rigorous research. Any future policy direction will only be advanced following comprehensive stakeholder engagement, additional technical analysis, and a formal equity impact review.
- Update definitions & Reporting
 - Clarify what constitutes as organics materials and require detailed data on tonnages and contamination
- Preventing Leakage
 - Prohibit actions that lead to organics being mismanaged or residuals bypassing the flow control framework
- Fair cost recovery
 - Require facilities disposing of residuals outside King County to remit the difference in tipping fees

Through these strategic changes, we anticipate several key outcomes: a significant reduction of organics in the landfill, the establishment of fair and transparent policies, enhanced data and reporting capabilities, and measurable progress toward our zero-waste goals. This information is derived from the proviso report recently presented to the Council Subcommittee, and we wanted to ensure these insights were shared with this group as well.

Trim requested clarification on the policy recommendations, noting they were absent from the presentation slides. Singer confirmed that the full recommendations are included in the formal report.

Trim further inquired about the nature of the contracts held by processors and whether they are directly with King County. Catabay clarified that SWD maintains "designation agreements" rather than standard service contracts. She confirmed that the specific agreements are available and will be shared with the group.

Mork expressed support for SWD's pursuit of the recommended actions. She emphasized the importance of maximizing landfill diversion to avoid rising disposal costs and expressed appreciation for the team's ongoing efforts.

Lam requested further information on how food dehydration fits into the current waste diversion framework. Singer explained that a new company, Mill, offers a specialized bin that dehydrates organic food scraps within the home. While the resulting material can be composted, the organization is currently conducting pilot tests in Seattle and King County to determine how to manage the material for users who do not practice backyard composting.

Lam inquired whether large-scale adoption of these units would significantly decrease the volume of organic waste in traditional curbside bins. Singer acknowledged this as a potential outcome but noted a secondary concern: if the material is not used on-site, a collection and management system would still be required. She noted that the technology is in its early stages and that SWD staff are currently collaborating with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) to monitor ongoing trial runs and evaluate the long-term impact on the regional waste system.

Weiker noted that while haulers fully support diverting organics from landfills, the practical application of enforcement is increasingly complex. She highlighted that five years of outreach, billing, and tracking have created a significant administrative burden. Key challenges include determining "who does what at what cost" and addressing flow control issues regarding non-regulated haulers. Regarding processing, Weiker pointed out that contamination delivered to Cedar Grove becomes a "residual" that the facility must then manage, illustrating the need for both upstream and downstream intervention. She emphasized that the policy considerations presented by Singer will require extensive stakeholder engagement to succeed.

Singer agreed, suggesting that a SWAC site visit to Cedar Grove would be invaluable for understanding the difficulty of removing plastics and "garbage" from organic streams. She drew a parallel to the high contamination rates seen in glass recycling, noting that society must improve at source separation.

Weiker concluded that contamination is a universal issue across recycling, C&D, and organics, complicated by privacy concerns regarding bin inspections. She noted that once cardboard or organics enter the garbage stream, they are often too contaminated to recover, making "pre-bin" education and enforcement vital.

SWD Updates

Stubbs provided the SWD update.

Tonnage update

Garbage tonnage through February was slightly above tonnage from last year (132k tons in 2026 vs. 128k tons in 2025).

The recycling tonnage collected and diverted at transfer stations was just below 2,000 tons in January 2026.

Flood debris disposal and debris disposal

I want to reiterate my recognition for the incredible work that's gone into storm clean up from the December flooding events.

Across 10 satellite stations, weekend events at transfer stations, and 45 employees stepping up, we've collected and moved over 800 tons of debris out of communities.

SWD is continuing to provide resources to communities that are continuing to recover from the December flooding events. We've extended free weekend disposal of storm debris, weekends through March 22 at three transfer stations (Bow Lake, Shoreline, and Factoria). SWD will also hold a second weekend popup collection event in Duvall on March 21-22, specifically intended to serve farmers in the Snoqualmie Valley.

Built environment reuse ecosystem workshop

The King County Construction and Demolition (C&D) team collaborated with the Carbon Leadership Forum and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) on a 70-person workshop to map the regional circular economy for building materials on Feb. 12.

The workshop took place at BNBuilders on Elliott Avenue, a fitting example of adaptive reuse of the former Old Spaghetti Factory building.

The evening was an incredible network event attended by leaders from state and local government, deconstruction and salvage business, sustainability nonprofits, green building certifications, architects, engineers and builders.

This group put their minds together to give a physical depiction to the existing interconnections, opportunities and barriers to circularity in our built environment.

The facilitation team is currently processing data collected from this group of experts into a simplified visualization of the state of the network, available to all and editable in future efforts.

Originally planned for 50 attendees, we were amazed at the amazing turnout and enthusiasm. We plan to keep the momentum up through future "Reclaim the Grain" events focused on lumber salvage; supporting inauguration of the Carbon Leadership Forum Circularity Working Group; and network outreach about grant and contract opportunities related to circular lumber in 2026 - 2028.

There are several more meetings and we are excited to see the visual outcomes.

Methane detection and capture at Cedar Hills Regional Landfill

Air regulations require agencies to report and correct areas where landfill methane emissions exceed 500 parts per million (ppm). The Cedar Hills Regional Landfill (CHRLF) routinely uses equipment called Sniffer Drones to monitor methane levels at the site and ensure that the County is appropriately capturing the methane that is produced as trash decomposes.

During the February sniffer drone flights, CHRLF readings remained well below regulatory limits; in fact, the highest concentration detected was a negligible 11 ppm. This peak reading is remarkably low, underscoring the effectiveness of current containment measures.

These results indicate that landfill gas is being effectively captured and routed to the control system rather than escaping into the atmosphere, even at trace concentrations. This is a significant milestone that demonstrates the exceptional performance of the gas collection system. These outcomes are a direct result of the dedicated efforts of our in-house CHRLF staff, the successful closure of Phase 1 Area 8, and the ongoing, precise balancing of the collection network.

To meet regulatory requirements, we traverse the landfill surface in 25-foot intervals across the entire property to monitor for potential leaks—an effort that amounts to approximately 175–200 miles of manual monitoring every quarter. Over the last three quarters, our in-house compliance monitoring has shown no exceedances of the 500-ppm regulatory limit. Furthermore, recent drone flights have only identified limited detections within the active cell top deck, an area where foot access is restricted.

Ultimately, these results protect air quality, reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, ensure regulatory compliance, and reflect the strong coordination between operations, engineering — particularly the landfill gas (LFG) crew and their management of the gas collection system — as well as utilities (who assist with repairs) and the wastewater team at CHRLF. Together, these groups continuously balance all aspects that affect the gas collection performance with overall renewable natural gas (RNG) plant operations.

We are proud of these results, which validate our team's hard work and the system's overall effectiveness. This is a huge body of work, and we wanted to highlight the impact this work has on our landfill and the division.

Supporting organics management law implementation in schools

SWD staff met with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) earlier this month to discuss Organics Management Law implementation.

SWD staff shared communications to King County schools about the organics management law (OML) thus far, and how the Green Schools Voucher Program has helped many schools make improvements to their organics management infrastructure.

In King County, our school and organics teams have provided guidance, indoor collection bins, signs, and educational tools to help students learn and implement effective strategies for composting food scraps and reducing contamination – we have a lot of lessons learned and insights to share!

Staff also helped OSPI understand the finer details of implementation – such as how to determine which service ware products are compostable and how bin liners can make a big logistical difference for janitorial staff. OSPI was grateful for the insights, and open to collaborating on communications in the future.

Creating solid waste and recycling career pathways

SWD staff regularly seek opportunities to connect with students and other young professionals to promote career opportunities in sustainability, solid waste, recycling, and government.

We participate in career fairs, conferences, and other events to showcase the variety of careers and internships available within the Solid Waste Division. This is critical work as we need to recruit, train, and mentor the next generation of leaders.

This past month, staff attended the 2026 UW Environmental Career Fair and sponsored the Washington Oregon Higher Education Sustainability Conference. In January, we also attended the JBLM Job Fair. These connections help give students and other professionals an idea of what careers are possible working for King County and to raise awareness of our internship opportunities.

Trim inquired about the nature of SWD's recent interaction with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), specifically asking if any funding had been committed and what the ultimate outcome was.

Stubbs characterized the meeting as a productive discussion regarding the Organics Management Law (OML) and its anticipated impacts on school operations. The conversation also covered the Green Voucher Program and its role in helping schools divert materials from the waste stream. Stubbs noted that the meeting was primarily informational and did not involve any financial commitments or funding promises.

MSWAC Update

No update.

Operations Update

Carter provided an update of construction projects at the transfer stations.

Current Construction: Transfer Station Impacts

- Complete:
 - Vashon tipping floor resurfacing project - open to normal operations for commercial and self-haul
 - Factoria tipping floor repair resurfacing project - open to normal operations for commercial and self-haul
- Underway: Enumclaw tipping floor repair and resurfacing – Feb. 16 through the end of March
 - This is standard floor maintenance, not a full reconstruction like the Factoria project
 - The project is on schedule
 - Stage one: no significant impact to self-haul or commercial
 - ♣ Phase one construction is currently underway on half of the floor, though we maintain access to the compactor
 - Stage two: transition to top loading due to lack of access to compactor chutes (minor delays possible)
 - ♣ Phase two is expected to begin next week, shifting operations to top loading once the chute becomes inaccessible. To minimize the operational strain of top loading, we are delaying this transition until the necessary materials arrive from Ohio. Given potential transport delays across the mountain passes, we will not begin the swap until the materials are physically on-site.
 - Last week, the compactor was down for several days due to a mechanical issue. After receiving the necessary parts, we have resumed full service.
- Station impacts: any impacts to hauler operations
 - Zero diversion of commercial haulers
 - Minimal wait times during Factoria floor project
 - ♣ Staff efficiently reduced hauler wait times, streamlining their entry and exit at the station.

2026 Construction Projects: Look Ahead

- Houghton Chute Scales
 - The Houghton Transfer Station currently operates as a top-load site without built-in scales, requiring operators to estimate trailer capacity based on experience. This often leads to under-filled payloads and an increased number of trips. To address this, we are installing scales at the station to provide real-time weight data. This project will maximize payloads, reduce the total number of hauls, and allow us to reallocate driver hours to support other stations more effectively.
 - Scheduled: 3/23 - 3/29
 - Public traffic will be diverted during commercial chute repairs; commercial access remains open.
- SCRTS Access Road via Broadway

- o Scheduled: April 6 through the end of the month
- o Monday-Friday: Open to commercial; closed to self-haul
- o Saturday-Sunday: Closed to commercial; open to self-haul
- Generator Tie Ins for Compactor Sites
 - o During the October 2024 bomb cyclone, all our sites switched to generator power; however, compactors at the compactor sites could not operate on generator power. In response, we initiated a project to install tie-ins that allow mobile generators to be connected at those sites in the event of a power outage.
 - o Anticipated timing: 3/2026 - 6/2026
 - ♣ Bow Lake will be the first station addressed, starting March 23.
 - o No anticipated impact for haulers or the public
 - ♣ Bow Lake is equipped with two compactors, so we are experienced in maintaining operations using a single compactor when necessary.
- Bow Lake Compactor Rebuild
 - o Anticipated timing: Delayed to Q4 to accommodate for the upcoming busy season
 - o Minor impact anticipated
 - ♣ During this time, one compactor will be rebuilt while the other remains in operation. The operating compactor will be fully inspected and repaired as needed to ensure it remains functional throughout the project. We often run off one compactor and if needed, we can top load.

Operations Updates: Look Ahead

- Operations All-Staff Meeting: Sunday, March 22
 - o SWD facilities will have a delayed opening to allow all frontline Operations staff to meet with senior leadership. This session will include updates from Director Singer, as well as an opportunity for staff to provide feedback and ask questions.
 - o Majority of sites will open at 11:30 with some opening at 12:30 (like Vashon because it takes longer to get back)
- Bow Lake South Processing Area
 - o Timing TBD – contract currently out for bid
 - o Impact TBD – impacts will likely be contained to recycling area
 - ♣ Work will be divided into two halves; we will complete one side before transitioning to the other, following the same phased model as the floor resurfacing
- Hiring transfer station operators to transition from Algona Transfer Station to the South County and Recycling Transfer Station (SCRTS). We will need about double the staff for SCRTS.
- Hiring truck drivers to decrease reliance on overtime.

In February, we had zero service disruptions for commercial haulers at our transfer stations. We have had minor disruptions to service at the Houghton and Algona transfer stations for self-haul customers, but we continue to stay open for commercial haulers.

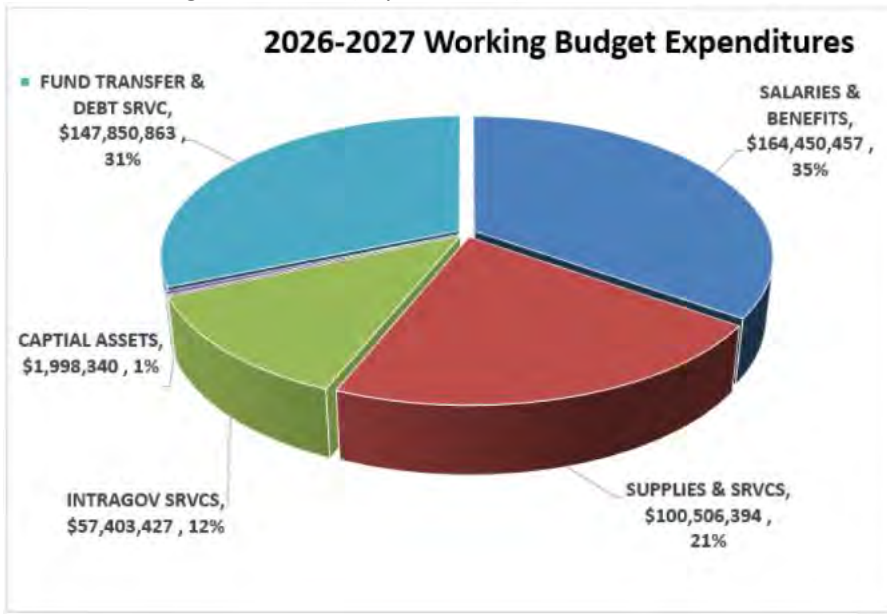
Weiker thanked Kim for the continued communication between the county and the haulers.

2026-2027 Budget Overview

Pierce led this overview.

Following up on feedback from our last meeting, this update provides a breakdown of our adopted budget, including expenditures, revenues, and key focus areas. We will also review definitions and the rate development timeline for the 2027 proposed rates and projections through 2032

2026-2027 Budget Overview (Expenditures)



Our expenditures are primarily driven by two categories that account for 66% of the total budget:

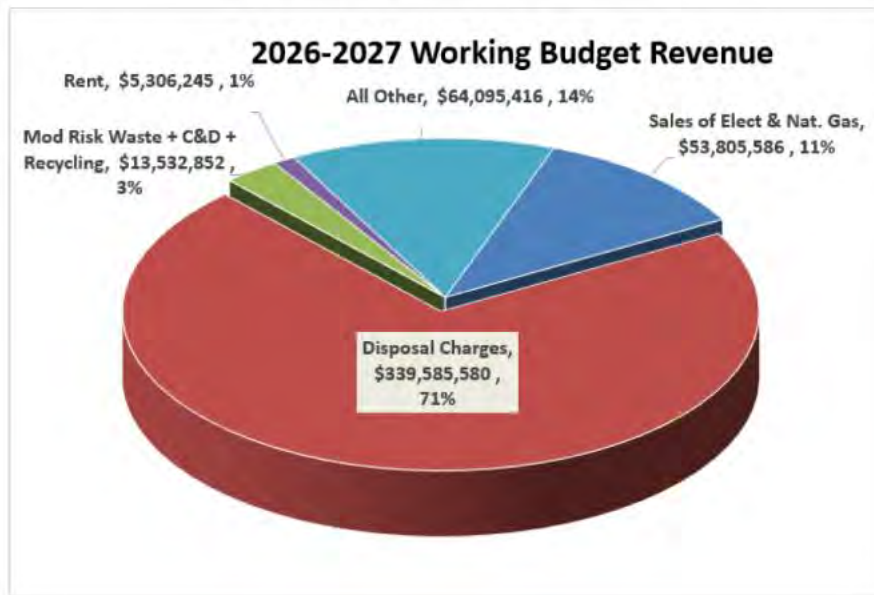
- Salaries and Benefits (35%): As a labor-intensive department, personnel remain our largest investment.
- Fund Transfers & Debt Service (31%): As an enterprise fund, our revenue supports several critical capital programs. This category includes debt service on bonds and cash transfers to four primary funds:
 - o SURP Fund: Capital Equipment Replacement Program for existing machinery.
 - o Capital Project Fund: For new infrastructure and facility development.
 - o Landfill Reserve Fund: Long-term capacity management.
 - o Post-Closure Maintenance Fund: Ongoing environmental stewardship.

Additional expenditures:

- Supplies and Services (21%): Covers the high cost of maintaining trucks, rolling stock, and heavy equipment, as well as consulting contracts.
- Intragovernmental Charges (12%): Costs for services provided by other county departments.
- New Capital Assets (1%): Dedicated funding for the purchase of new equipment (distinct from the SURP replacement fund).

We have worked diligently to align our actual spending with these adopted categories to ensure a balanced and transparent budget for the 2026–2027 biennium.

2026-2027 Budget Overview (Revenues)



Disposal charges currently account for 71% of our revenue, though this figure would be significantly higher if the Fixed Annual Charge (FAC) were moved from the "All Other" category to disposal. These two streams remain the primary drivers of our revenue and core business support. With the CHARGE plant now operational, we anticipate approximately 11%—or \$54M—in revenue from natural gas sales, while our Harbor Island property generates roughly \$5.3M in rent. Finally, specialized streams including Moderate Risk Waste (MRW), Construction and Demolition (C&D), and recycling collectively contribute the remaining 3% of our revenue.

Within the 'All Other' category, the Fixed Asset Charge (FAC) accounts for \$57M of the \$64M in adopted revenue. This category also includes interest income on fund balances and various grant revenues. In response to a MSWAC inquiry regarding 'Rent' - specifically for Harbor Island - we are currently negotiating a new lease with the tenant, Ramont. While the adopted figure may shift following these negotiations, the current working budget remains aligned with the adopted budget, providing a stable revenue distribution for the business.

Rate definitions

Rate Type	Definition
Commercial Fixed Annual Charge (FAC)	<p>Instead of all the revenue being generated by a single per-ton-fee, a portion of the revenue (20%) is recovered through the FAC, and the larger portion is still recovered through the per-ton-fee.</p> <p>Comprehensive explanation of the Fixed Annual Charge https://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/solid-waste/facilities/fixed-annual-charge-details-faq.pdf</p>
Commercial Per Ton	<p>For the purposes of K.C.C. 10.12.021, "solid waste collection" entity is limited to certificated haulers, contract haulers, and any city using its own employees.</p> <p>Calculated by using customer allocation % applied to the revenue requirement and associated estimated tonnage.</p>
Regional Direct	<p>Title 10 LLLL. "Regional direct" means any solid waste, except C&D waste, generated and collected in King County and transported to Cedar Hills regional landfill by conventional long haul transfer vehicles from privately owned solid waste transfer stations or intermediate handling facilities permitted by the health department as provided for in King County board of health regulations.</p> <p>Calculated as 85% of the Self Haul per ton fee.</p>
Cedar Hills Other excludes Reg. Direct	<p>Applies to waste brought directly to Cedar Hills by a "solid waste collection" entity.</p> <p>Rate is the same as Commercial Per Ton.</p>

The Fixed Annual Charge (FAC) was established to reduce a portion of our revenue from tonnage, creating a "base fee" that allows for a reduced per-ton rate for commercial haulers. A comprehensive explanation of the rationale and calculation methodology for this charge can be [found here](#). Please direct any outstanding questions to Pierce.

The commercial per-ton rate is determined by distributing our total revenue requirement after the FAC has been subtracted. This rate is calculated using customer allocation percentages within our cost model. While typically charged at the transfer stations, this same commercial rate applies if a vehicle tips at the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill (CHRLF).

To ensure billing accuracy, it is important to distinguish the Regional Direct rate from standard diversion to CHRLF Governed by Title 10, the Regional Direct rate applies exclusively to waste delivered by conventional long-haul transfer vehicles and is calculated at 85% of the self-haul per-ton fee - a figure slightly higher than the standard commercial rate. To ensure a fair distribution of the FAC, Regional Direct tonnage is excluded from FAC calculations and managed as a separate revenue stream. Conversely, when a hauler tips at CHRLF in standard commercial collection trucks, they are charged the "Cedar Hills Other" rate, which aligns with the standard commercial per-ton fee. While these represent our primary rates, additional definitions will be provided when the final 2027 rates are adopted. In the meantime, our respective teams continue to collaborate effectively with SWD Accounts Receivable to review invoices and resolve any discrepancies promptly.

Rate Development Next Steps

Timing	Process Milestone
Today	Early Rate Outlook (MSWAC/SWAC)
By 2/27/26	Rate Model and Forecast Development Complete
By 3/31/26	Rate Decision Making Complete
By 3/31/26	Preliminary Rate Briefings Complete
By 4/30/26	Final Rate Agency Proposal Complete
By 5/13/26	Draft Support Letter Shared at SWAC/MSWAC meetings (5/8 and 5/13)
By 6/12/26	Final Support Letter Approved at SWAC/MSWAC meetings (6/10 and 6/12)
By 6/15/26	Executive Proposed Legislation transmitted; Council deliberations begin
By 8/31/26	Fixed Annual Cost Allocation Transmittal Complete
By 9/30/26	Council Rate Adoption

Following the feedback received on our preliminary rates, we will submit a final rate proposal by the end of March for presentation to advisory groups in April. The support letters will be drafted and refined throughout May, with final versions completed in June to accompany the legislative package on June 15. Following the adoption of these rates, the FAC allocation transmittal will be communicated to haulers on August 31, with final Council adoption anticipated by September 30.

Following up on discussions from the previous SWAC and MSWAC meetings, Weiker requested clarification on whether haulers should receive a discount on the Regional Direct rate for bypassing transfer stations and delivering directly to CHRLF. Pierce clarified that rate eligibility is determined by vehicle type rather than the act of diversion alone. While diverted vehicles receive the standard commercial rate, the Regional Direct rate is specifically reserved for conventional long-haul transfer trucks and containers. This distinction underscores that the rate applies strictly to the specialized logistics of long-haul transport.

Weiker sought confirmation that the Regional Direct rate applies specifically to large-capacity transfer trailers rather than standard trash collection trucks. When asked what rate applies to standard trucks diverted to the CHRLF, Pierce identified it as the "Cedar Hills Other" rate.

Weiker questioned why this rate is identical to the standard transfer station rate. Pierce explained that because these haulers are also subject to the FAC, the resulting per-ton rate is already the discounted commercial fee. Pierce further noted that following guidance from the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, it was determined that the current structure—applying the same FAC-supported commercial rate regardless of whether waste is delivered to a transfer station or CHRLF—remains the appropriate approach.

Weiker noted that within the rate model, the FAC is handled separately from the tipping fee. She argued that the tipping fee for haulers going directly to CHRLF should be lower, as these loads bypass the transloading process at transfer stations. While haulers have already received DNRP Director approval for reducing rates when transfer stations are non-operational, Weiker maintained that a standard discount should apply to all haulers delivering directly to the landfill. She emphasized that this proposal has been part of ongoing discussions since last year and was previously raised during the February meeting.

Freedman clarified that this should not be viewed as a "discount," but rather as a necessary adjustment to reflect logistical realities. Haulers are contractually bound to cities to transload waste at specific transfer stations. When a station closes, haulers must bypass the station and deliver directly to the landfill, effectively taking on the county's transloading and transportation responsibilities.

This creates a significant financial and communication gap. These costs were never contemplated in city contracts or hauler budgets, and since haulers do not contract directly with the county, they have no mechanism to recoup these losses. Freedman noted that while the county was gracious enough to create a "stop-gap" rate last year, the Regional Direct rate must more accurately reflect the costs haulers internalize when the county cannot perform its contractually required role.

From a "math" perspective, the county saves money when haulers go directly to the landfill, but the haulers experience a cascade of negative impacts:

- Financial Loss: Unbudgeted operational costs totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars.
- Service Disruptions: Missed pickups and subsequent performance fees from cities.
- Driver Impact: Physical and mental strain on drivers due to long haul times and extended wait lines at the landfill.
- Regulatory Constraints: Challenges related to DMT (Driver Medical Treatment/Department of Motor Transport) limitations and routing predictability.

Freedman emphasized the importance of the county understanding the full story: haulers are an integral part of the supply chain, and when they pivot to cover for station closures, they take on an intricate logistical burden that carries a heavy financial and human cost.

Pierce commended the SWD operations team, noting that the division has not experienced the same closures and delays seen last year. He highlighted the significant effort made by SWD to maintain consistent operations and deliver the high level of customer service they strive for.

Freedman acknowledged the efforts of all parties but stated that facility closures and associated communications persist despite these efforts. She maintained that the Regional Direct rate should be structured to compensate haulers for these ongoing operational challenges. Pierce proposed continuing this discussion next month, emphasizing the need to refine the terminology used. Specifically, the conversation must distinguish between the Regional Direct rate defined in Title 10 and the proposed adjustments to the "Cedar Hills Other" rate for haulers diverted to CHRLF. Pierce stressed that using precise terminology is essential to ensuring a clear and productive dialogue moving forward.

Mork raised two primary questions regarding the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) renewals and project prioritization. First, she noted the direct correlation between ILA terms and the cost of debt, asking how the county plans to handle renewals to reduce expenditures that impact rates. Pierce explained that SWD is currently drafting the ILAs under the assumption they will be signed, which allows the county to secure long-term debt at lower interest rates. Without these signed agreements, the county would be forced into higher-interest, short-term debt, significantly increasing debt expenses and subsequent rate impacts. Mork then inquired about project re-prioritization, the risks associated with proposed delays, and how those delays might affect future rate increases. Pierce outlined a three-tiered prioritization strategy:

1. Landfill-Related Projects: Essential for ongoing operations.
2. Regulatory Compliance: Mandatory projects to meet legal standards.
3. "Nice-to-Have" Projects: Non-essential initiatives that can be deferred to mitigate immediate rate impacts.

Pierce emphasized that the current rate model focuses on "keeping the lights on"—prioritizing business continuity and customer service. While deferring "nice-to-have" projects and associated staffing reduces immediate costs, Mork cautioned that these delays often lead to higher costs in the future due to inflation and escalating construction expenses.

Lam inquired whether financial modeling would be provided for the period beyond 2028. Pierce confirmed that the current modeling extends through 2032.

Capital Project Update – NERTS and SCRTS

Evanson provided this section.

SCRTS project summary

As many of you know, the South County Recycling and Transfer Station (SCRTS) will replace the current transfer station in Algona. The new station will serve Algona, Auburn, Pacific, and Federal Way. Services will be expanded from those currently offered at the Algona Transfer Station, to include hazardous waste disposal and full spectrum recycling, as well as appliance and mattress disposal.

New station offers:

- Recycling services and moderate risk waste disposal for households and small businesses
- Sustainable building features
- Off-site improvements
- On-site creek enhancements
- Public art
- Other community benefits (community meeting space)

The project includes environmental enhancements to the site, realigning a small stream and improving the habitat through riparian plantings and making it a fish bearing stream. In addition, the SCRTS project improved a section of West Valley Highway South by realigning a dangerous curve and adding guardrails, reflective striping and new asphalt. We included concrete aprons in front of the facility to make sure it remained viable and more durable where the big trucks enter the facility.

The project greatly improves stormwater management in the area. It provides over 1.3 million gallons of stormwater capture, detention and treatment for the site and the culverts west of HWY 167.

The building is also built sustainably; we are on track to achieve the International Living Future Institute's Living Building Challenge Petal Certification. This is a sister certification to a LEEDS certification. We did this by including solar panels, sustainable construction materials, natural light and native plant life. The project provides some exciting public art by several artists.

SCRTS enhancements:

- Walled-in structure structure to control air flow, odors and noise
- Misters: suppress dust and odors
- Lighting: natural light through skylights and lots of windows
- Containing sound: reduce noise from equipment and vehicles with walled-in structure and sound absorbing landscaping
- Traffic mitigation: compacting equipment and additional drive lanes allow vehicles to move quickly through the site and reduces the number of trucks coming to and from the facility

Artwork is to be installed in the Administration Building.

- Sam Obrovac: wooden sculpture, paddle etchings and medallions
- Evan Blackwell: ceramic and carved alder pieces
- Cast ceramic hard hats

SCRTS project timeline



We are anticipating a soft opening in June 2026 with a full open in July 2026.

To ensure a smooth transition, we are splitting the soft opening into two stages:

- Early-mid June: SCRTS is open for commercial waste only. All self-haul customers should continue using the Algona facility.
- Late-June to early July: SCRTS expands service to include self-haul, MRW, recycling, and yard waste.

This two-week soft opening allows crews to swap from Algona to SCRTS to get comfortable with the new facility.

The Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station (NERTS)

Existing Houghton Transfer Station

- Built in 1962, beyond useful lifespan
- Vibrant and growing neighborhood
- Lacks the infrastructure or space for recycling or material reclamation
- Community concerns about odors, noise, traffic, views and vectors

Design expectations

- Sustainability
- Community engagement and space
- Public art
- Full-service recycling
- No household hazardous waste disposal
- Coordination with Kirkland for additional amenities and mitigations based on the settlement agreement

2026 Siting Decision

- King County made a siting decision in March 2025 for the new NERTS facility and the City of Kirkland filed a Notice of Appeal to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) citing:
 - Analysis of transportation impacts
 - Hazardous waste risks and mitigation resulting from the proposed facility's excavation into the undeveloped portions of the closed landfill
 - Procedural errors in the FEIS and addendum
- A pre-hearing conference is scheduled for March 24, 2026.

Settlement Agreement

- King County continues to work with the City of Kirkland to negotiate a settlement agreement for their appeal of the FEIS.
- A settlement agreement would enable the County to move into the preliminary design phase of the project.

Next Steps – Design Advisory Group (DAG)

- When a settlement agreement is reached, King County will develop a draft Design Advisory Group (DAG) workplan.
- The DAG workplan identifies key stakeholders such as Kirkland staff and other municipality representatives; hauling partners; nearby residential, commercial, and other affected groups.
- High level regulatory, technical and safety requirements are determined prior to convening the DAG.
- When convened, the DAG members will be active participants of the project throughout the entire design process.

Estimated timeline

1. Settlement Agreement with Kirkland (Q3 2026)
2. Design Advisory Group Convene (Q3 2026 – Q2 2027)
3. Preliminary & Final Design (Q2 2027 – Q4 2029)
4. Bidding, Construction & Closeout (2030 – 2035)

Mork expressed satisfaction with the recent certification of SCRTS. Evanson noted that SCRTS will generate approximately 30-40% of its own power, with the balance provided by PSE.

Trim requested additional information regarding the community room and its availability for public use. Evanson confirmed that the room will be accessible as part of the agreement with the City of Algona, though the specific scheduling process is still being finalized. The space has a capacity of approximately 40 people and is equipped with tables, chairs, and a sink. Additionally, it features a triple-glazed window, allowing visitors to observe facility operations safely from the conference area.

Trim inquired about the availability of a screen or projector for the community room. Evanson replied that these features have not yet been installed.

2026 State Legislation Update

Ockerlander gave this update.

The 2026 legislative session adjourned on March 12 after the longest debate in history. There will be an election this November and then we will start in January for a long session.

Solid waste related bills in process 2026:

- **PASSED:** Providing local governments tax resources and fund flexibility (HB 2442/SB6294)
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Textiles (building on HB 1420)
- Improving the end-of-life management of Electric Vehicle Batteries (building on HB 1550/SB 5586)
- Increasing Solid Waste Collection Tax (building on HB 2018)
- Deposit-Return System (DRS) for Beverage Containers (HB 1607)
- EPR for Mattresses (building on HB 1901)
- EPR for Sharps (building on Safe Sharps Advisory Group)
- Amending the single-use plastic bag ban (HB 2233)
- Post-consumer recycled content requirements (2271)
- Concerning naturally occurring fibrous silicate materials (HB2605/SB6213)

We will begin preparing for the next legislative session next month. Our primary focus will be on EPR, with sharps identified as a high-priority item. Additionally, we will begin coordinating with legislators and stakeholder groups to advance EPR initiatives for mattresses and textiles.

Member Comment

No comment.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.