Responsible Recycling Task Force Meeting #9

December 14, 2018 - 11:00 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.
King Street Center, 201 S. Jackson St, Seattle, WA

Members Present:

April	Atwood	Seattle University, SWAC Vice Chair
Stacey	Auer	City of Redmond
Sabrina	Combs	City of Bothell
Tony	Donati	City of Kent
Susan	Fife-Ferris	SPU
Cynthia	Foley	Sound Cities Association
Jeff	Gaisford	KCSWD
Mason	Giem	City of SeaTac
Sego	Jackson	SPU
Carla	Johnson	Republic Services
Phillippa	Kassover	City of Lake Forest Park, SWAC
Kevin	Kelly	Recology, SWAC Chair
John	MacGillivray	City of Kirkland
Michelle	Metzler	Waste Management
Meg	Moorehead	KCSWD
Joan	Nelson	City of Auburn
Sarah	Ogier	City of Bellevue
Yolanda	Pon	Public Health
Lisa	Sepanski	KCSWD
Penny	Sweet	Councilmember, MSWMAC Chair
Rob	Van Orsow	City of Federal Way

Consultants:
Julie Colehour, Facilitator, C+C
Colette Marien, Meeting Coordinator and Notetaker, C+C

Agenda Item #1: Welcome & Introduction *(called to order by Julie Colehour at 11:04)*

- *Julie Colehour* welcomes the room and reminds everyone that the major focus of the meeting today will be on the final RRTF Report and that the ultimate goal is to finalize the report by the beginning of January.
- *Julie Colehour* reviews the day's agenda:
    - Welcome & Introduction
    - Report Feedback
    - Top Priorities for Achieving Responsible Recycling (Group Activity)
    - Lunch break
    - Implementing Parties (Group Activity)

- o Transmittal Process
- o Wrap Up & Next Steps
- *Julie Colehour* reviews the task force goals, role and outcome:
  - o **Short Term Goal:** To help identify near-, mid- and long-term actions in response to reduction in export markets for mixed recyclable materials due to China National Sword policies.
  - o **Longer Term Goal:** To help establish commitment across the region to responsible recycling and domestic sorting/processing of curbside recyclables.
  - o **Outcomes:** Prepare a report with actionable items and recommendations for future action by all; if possible, develop interim tools for communications and other topics that are more immediately available.
  - o **Role of Task Force:** Not to make decisions, rather to learn about the problem, understand activities that are being implemented elsewhere and opportunities for change. They will provide guidance on next steps that will be brought back to county advisory committees and decision makers.
- *Julie Colehour* informs the room that there were no changes requested to the November 15 meeting minutes, therefore those have been approved.

Agenda Item #2: Report Feedback *(called to order by Julie Colehour at 11:08am)*

- *Julie Colehour* informs the room that the draft of the report was sent out last week and asks the room to share feedback on the overall flow of the report. *Julie* asks the room to hold any specific edits to words, punctuation, etc.
  - o *Penny Sweet* comments that the story of how the RRTF came to be isn't full there. *Penny* suggests adding a couple more sentences to the beginning of the report about the crisis that occurred and the committees in response to the China Sword issue and that it was this emerging problem that ultimately drove action that led to creation of the RRTF.
  - o *Sarah Ogier* adds that interest in creating a need for inspiration also drove the RRTF.
  - o *Penny Sweet* adds that some recognition of the huge variations that exist in the recycling system now should also be included in the backstory.
- *Julie Colehour* introduces the next topic for discussion/feedback, which is the formatting of the recommendations section of the report.
  - o *Lisa Sepanski* adds that, in the most recent version of the report, the recommendations have been ordered into a work program with specific details about how implementation will occur and who will be involved.
  - o *Rob Van Orsow* suggests reformatting the section so that the description of the action comes right after the statement of the action in the table. So that, rather than lumping the table of recommendations together and then describing the specific actions after, the text that supports the action is tied to the action listed in the chart.
  - o *Julie Colehour* clarifies that the table is intended as a summary of the recommendations and actions and that the written portion of the section is written as a work program that organizes the actions by timing.
  - o *Jeff Gaisford* comments that there is a different numbering system used in the table and the work program and suggests utilizing the same numbering system in both.

- o *Phillippa Kassover* comments that it's important to think about the audience who is reviewing the report to help determine how to format. *Phillippa* suggests that the audiences who will be reviewing as policy makers and policy analysts. Policy makers will want short, easy to read bullet points, whereas policy analysts will need more detail on the actual steps to achieve the recommended actions.
- o *Julie Colehour* asks which audience *Phillippa* thinks the report is working for currently.
- o *Phillippa Kassover* replies that the transmittal piece may be the most important for policy makers and that the current version of the report, which does not include the executive summary or transmittal letter yet, is written more for policy analysts.
- o *Julie Colehour* asks if bullet pointed items for policy makers can be provided in the transmittal letter or if a one-page document for policy makers specifically should be created.
- o *Susan Fife-Ferris* notes that her understanding is that the overall report would be for staff and that the executive summary would include the high-level info for policy makers. *Susan* adds that the executive summary should be very concise and drafted specifically with policy makers in mind.
- o *April Atwood* agrees that the executive summary should be very concise, specifically in regards to the legislative pieces.
- o *Lisa Sepanski* asks if the executive summary should include an even more brief version of the recommendations table or if a short write-up is preferred.
- o *Susan Fife-Ferris* replies that simple bullets with the high-level goal and actions are preferred for the executive summary.
- o *April Atwood* comments on the order of the goals, noting that the first goal is about harmonizing messaging, which is not in line with the RRTF's goal to look at the big picture. *April* adds that her preference would be to put the big, hairy, audacious goals (BHAG) that look at the system as a whole before the smaller, easier to achieve goals like harmonized messaging.
- o *Sarah Ogier* agrees with *April* and suggests putting the goal to harmonize messaging at the end.
- o *Phillippa Kassover* agrees with the suggestions to put the big, overarching vision/goals first and suggests calling out the low-hanging fruit items in a separate section that specifically calls out the items as being easier to achieve.
- *Julie Colehour* introduces the next topic, which is to review the wording of "Responsible Recycling is Not Free." *Julie* notes that *April Atwood* made a comment at the last meeting about replacing the phrase with something that evokes more positivity than the current. *Julie* asks the room to weigh in on whether to replace "Responsible Recycling is Not Free" with "Responsible Recycling Requires Investment."
  - o *Michelle Metzler* highlights that, even if we don't make any of the recommendations posed so far, recycling will still not be free nor has it ever been free.
  - o *Julie Colehour* replies with the suggestion of "Responsible Recycling requires *additional* investment"
  - o *Rob Van Orsow* suggests "managing waste has a cost, even recycling"
  - o *Penny Sweet* doesn't believe "managing waste has a cost, even recycling" is as strong. *Penny* adds that city officials all know that recycling isn't free and that the decision to make constituents feel like recycling is free was a mistake in the first place.
  - o *Julie Colehour* suggests that "managing waste has a cost, even recycling" be used in the description of the phrase in the Responsible Recycling Framework section of the report.

- o *Rob Van Orsow* adds that *Penny's* comment about the mistake of having messaged to constituents that it is free to recycle should also be included in the explanation of the term.
- o *John MacGillivray* notes that business customers may not understand the intention/use of the word "investment" and suggests possibly saying "Responsible Recycling has a cost" instead.
- o *Penny Sweet* comments that she recently worked on a proposition that went back and forth between using cost or investment. They ultimately landed on investment since it connotes building, whereas cost indicates something that is done with a wallet.
- o *Sarah Ogier* adds that investment can also imply behavior change in the sense of an investment of time.
- o *Phillippa Kassover* comments that the difference between cost and investment, in her opinion, is that cost takes away and investment implies a future.
- o *Lisa Sepanski* asks the room if "Recycling is Not Free" should be changed to "Responsible Recycling Requires Additional Investment" in both the problem statement (pg. 3) as well as in the Responsible Recycling Framework (pg. 4).
- o *Jeff Gaisford* notes that "Recycling is Not Free" has been a part of the problem so it should remain as is in the problem statement (pg.3). The system of Responsible Recycling, on the other hand, does require investment, therefore should be updated to "Responsible Recycling Requires Additional Investment" (pg. 4).
- o *Julie Colehour* confirms with the room that the phrase will be updated to "Responsible Recycling Requires Additional Investment" in the Responsible Recycling Framework section of the report.

Agenda Item #3: Top Priorities for Achieving Responsible Recycling *(called to order by Julie Colehour at 11:27am)*

- *Julie Colehour* introduces the next agenda item, which includes a group activity to identify the top priorities among the action items for achieving a system of responsible recycling. *Julie* explains that each person has sticky notes placed at their stations: one orange, one green and three yellows. Taped along the back wall are four large print outs of the recommendations table. Each person is to write their name on their stickies and place the orange sticky on the action item they see as the highest priority, green for second highest priority, and the yellows for the other three priorities.
- *Julie Colehour* adds that "priority" doesn't mean actions that have to happen right away, rather actions that must occur in order to achieve the long-term goal of responsible recycling.
- *Lisa Sepanski* adds that the top priority can also be seen as the action that should be up front and center, or the BHAG.
- *Julie Colehour* asks the room to take a few minutes to look through the table and then add their stickies to their top priorities.
- *The room participates in the group activity (11:31am – 11:41am)*
- *Julie Colehour* calls the group back together and reviews the action items that rose to the top as highest priority to achieve a system of responsible recycling by the group. The highest ranked actions include:
  - o 5D: Develop a comprehensive, statewide stewardship policy approach that helps achieve a funded, robust and harmonized curbside recycling system throughout Washington State.

- Study Recycle BC stewardship system to understand how elements could be applied to Washington state to address issues of financing, consistency of programming/messaging, and contamination.
  - o 5B: Support legislation that promotes the use of innovative technologies/processes to help develop and build local recycling infrastructure and market development.
  - o 3B: Conduct pilot projects to encourage the development of a domestic recycling infrastructure.
    - Pilot programs to test the feasibility of domestic (US and Canada) sorting and processing and support the development of domestic infrastructure. Pilots might include sending #3-7 plastics to viable, domestic sorter/processors and fiber to domestic pulp mills.
  - o 1C: Develop a process for adding/removing materials in the curbside recycling programs with criteria that is consistent with the responsible recycling framework.
    - Include a process to evaluate the benefits and costs of collecting/sorting/processing a recyclable material (example: #3-7 plastics).
    - Review market status and issues of commodities annually with SWAC, MSWMAC and Seattle.
    - Use the criteria to review the addition of new commodities or removal of commodities that become problematic.
- *Julie Colehour* notes that Goal 5: Establish Responsible Recycling Policies rose to the top as the most prioritized goal.
- *Julie Colehour* asks the room if anyone has feedback or concerns on the prioritization results.
- *Penny Sweet* notes that there are already many bills in the hopper and it will therefore be important to be specify in the report as to what legislation we want to push forward.
- *Sarah Ogier* comments that she likes many of the actions that rose to the top but would like to hear from the private sector folks in the room as a majority of the room is trending towards being a policy person.
- *Kevin Kelly* notes that he looked at the exercise as a question of economics and that some of his focus was to identify the demand side. *Kevin* adds that by doing something on the demand side, a pathway can be created for other things that stimulate market activity.
- *Phillippa Kassover* comments that all actions are important and that it's clear that policy pieces won't work unless there is creation and harmony on the demand side.
- *Michelle Metzler* notes that several of the actions she chose are related to helping create markets for materials and adds that, for Goal 1 (Harmonize Recycling Programs and Messaging), it's important to know what the materials are that have markets and what are the materials that feasibly have markets.
- *Julie Colehour* asks the room how they would like to see the priorities identified through this exercise bubble up on the report.
- *Penny Sweet* replies that Goal 5 (Establish Responsible Recycling Policies) should be prioritized as the top goal based on the number of votes it received.
- *Susan Fife-Ferris* comments that, along with reordering the location of the goals and the actions within them based on the exercise, it would make sense to describe in the transmittal letter the overall concern around the need to have a system that can increase demand. *Susan* adds that the actions that received low or no votes are also still important.

- *Julie Colehour* confirms that the table will be reordered and agrees that the actions with low or no votes are still important.
- *Meg Moorehead* notes that often times an implementation strategy will build in the big and difficult items that have to happen right away first, along side the easier things that have to happen to build momentum. *Meg* adds that, if this were to be put in a calendar, we would want to start with the big things and a couple easy things on day one.
- *Jeff Gaisford* highlights the need to start with and continue with the policy stuff, while still implementing the smaller actions that are easy wins that were going to be implemented anyway.
- *Sabrina Combs* notes that she also took into account the actions that were going to happen anyways and voted for actions that would allow or drive change.
- *Phillippa Kassover* reiterates that there are a lot of bills that address some of these issues that are in session right now and that it will be important to have a mechanism to understand what those bills are so people can assist with local lobbying. Perhaps some kind of status update.
- *Jeff Gaisford* notes that a bulk of the topics for discussion in advisory meetings in January and February will be about policy.
- *Julie Colehour* thanks the room and announces a short break for lunch.

Agenda Item #4: Implementing Parties *(called to order by Julie Colehour at 12:15pm)*

- *Julie Colehour* introduces the next agenda item, which is another group activity to help get a sense of what each organization in the room thinks they could work on. For this activity, each person will write their name on five blue stickies and place those stickies on the efforts they think they could help move forward. *Julie* adds that the planning team made some initial indications of parties on the report but would like to get an idea from the room as well.
- *Phillipa Kassover* asks if, by 'organization' *Julie* means the city which they represent, to which *Julie* replies yes.
- *Julie Colehour* notes that the room will have 15 minutes to complete the activity.
- *The room participates in the group activity (12:18pm – 12:31pm)*
- *Julie Colehour* calls the room back together to review the results.
- *Julie Colehour* notes that there appears to be good distribution across the board and that only three action items did not have any implementing parties indicated. *Julie* asks the room how they think the information should be organized to ensure action.
- *Jeff Gaisford* replies that one way to organize is by having discussions with advisory committees to sort it out.
- *Susan Fife-Ferris* shares that Seattle will look at the recommendations coming out of the RRTF and will talk about what makes sense for Seattle to work on from a programmatic and policy standpoint, and what needs to be elevated to the Seattle executive and mayor's office.
- *Penny Sweet* notes that, as recommendations are taken back to advisory committees, some formal process for oversight will need to be established to ensure that they are building on work that Seattle and other recycling organizations are doing.

- *Lisa Sepanski* asks the room for thoughts on whether a Responsible Recycling committee should be created to track the process. *Lisa* also asks if some kind of policy committee should be created as a follow up to the RRTF.
- *Penny Sweet* agrees with *Lisa* that there should be some kind of oversight committee(s), the topic of which will have to depend on the responses received from the final report from SWAC and MSWMAC.
- *Susan Fife-Ferris* notes that she likes the idea that the group may morph and may end up as small working groups that meet intermittently.
- *Joan Nelson* asks whether there should be a recommendation that states that there is an ongoing question about best practices for implementation.
- *Penny Sweet* notes that, as the table is solidified, it will be helpful in plotting the direction of next steps and will allow the group to be somewhat nimble and committed.
- *Jeff Gaisford* comments that the Solid Waste Division will look at all the recommendations and resources available to help shape the work plan.
- *Julie Colehour* notes that, as a next step, the RRTF planning team will compile notes on who indicated that they would step forward for various actions.
- *Lisa Sepanski* notes that one of the things not yet addressed is that this activity only applies to the cities and service providers in the room and does not extend to other cities who will therefore not be included in the report and may miss out on items that they'd like to be included in.
- *Julie Colehour* replies that we could say "here are the types of organizations that want to work on this."
- *Susan Fife-Ferris* agrees with *Julie* and notes her concern that there are a lot of jurisdictions on the table and it would be preferable to have broad categories like "suburban cities." A footnote could be added to indicate the current cities participating who have shown interest.
- *Lisa Sepanski* notes that there will be an appendix in the report that lists the task force members.
- *Stacey Auer* comments that she would prefer that categories are used at a guidance level rather than calling out specific parties who indicated interest during the exercise, adding that there are a lot of other decision makers that would need to be involved.
- *Rob Van Orsow* adds that there may also be other stakeholders, like the UTC, that should be involved.
- *Phillippa Kassover* agrees with *Stacey Auer* that each individual represents an organization so the results of the exercise should only be an indication.
- *Julie Colehour* asks if the implementing parties should be included in the notes.
- *Phillippa Kassover* cautions that specific names should not be offered up in the meeting minutes.
- *Sego Jackson* notes that he would be interested to have an unofficial list of parties so that, in case something comes up in the next 45 days, he'll know who to call who may be interested in participating.

Agenda Item #5: Transmittal Process *(called to order by Julie Colehour at 12:45pm)*

- *Julie Colehour* announces that *Jeff Gaisford* will talk about the transmittal process for the report next.
- *Jeff Gaisford* notes that issues and recommendations from the RRTF will be brought to the two advisory committees strategically with policy recommendations being the first issues to be brought forward

(between January and March). Other topics that will be brought to advisory committees initially include the recommendation to remove plastic film and shredded paper as well as topics related to next steps.

- *Susan Fife-Ferris* notes that the plan for Seattle is to take the final report and go over it with Seattle SWAC, get their feedback, and then start to tease recommendations apart into items that can be worked on at a staff level and items that need to be elevated up.
- *Jeff Gaisford* adds that, when the report is done, a press release with key messages and perhaps some of the key recommendation will be shared with others in the region.
- *Phillippa Kassover* asks when the county executive and county council will get involved.
- *Meg Moorehead* replies that the council and executive have been kept up to date on the progress of the group and that advisory groups who were appointed are the ones that will refer the recommendations via an advisory note. If an advisory note comes out of the committees about plastic bags and shredded paper, that would be addressed to the executive, the cities that participate in the region, and to the council. The press release will also go to the executive and the council, and once the report is finalized, the elected officials will get a heads up that they can review. For cities, it will be discussed in advisory committees how to maintain an ongoing dialogue, one idea being to revive the quarterly newsletter to show progress on the recommendation implementation and keep communication in the region going.
- *Cynthia Foley* adds that another option is for the regional policy committee to put the recommendation in their work plan, if they so choose.
- *Penny Sweet* comments that working with the regional policy committee is a great idea and that perhaps it should be included in the recommendations who we would like to advise on the recommendations and garner support from.

Agenda Item #6: Wrap Up & Next Steps *(called to order by Julie Colehour at 12:53pm)*

- *Julie Colehour* reviews next steps following the meeting, which include:
    - o Email any additional feedback to Colette by December 22
    - o The RRTF planning team will revise and finalize the report based on feedback
    - o The final version of the report will be sent to task force members on January 3rd
- *Julie Colehour* notes that only minor adjustments and feedback will be expected on the bulk of the next draft of the report and that ideally elected officials will provide input on the transmittal letter and executive summary in order to minimize the amount of feedback received, as this will be the first time the group will see these pieces.
- *Jeff Gaisford* adds that he'd like to have the report published online by the next MSWMAC meeting that takes place January 11, and that the press release will be done by then or the week following.
- *Sego Jackson* adds that Seattle's SWAC is queued up for the first week of February.
- *Rob Van Orsow* asks if MSWMAC will need to go through any formal process to give the report a final blessing.
- *Penny Sweet* replies that it will need to be discussed but expects it will be fairly embraced.

- *Susan Fife-Ferris* adds that we are publishing recommendations that came out of the RRTF and that it is up to MSWMAC and other various bodies what pieces they want to pull from the report, but the report as a whole should stand alone and be recognized in that way.
- *Meg Moorehead* notes that it is up to MSWMAC and SWAC to decide what to follow and it is not anticipated that an endorsement of the full report is required, rather that when ready to move on specific actions, those might require an advisory note to get the word out to potential executers.
- *Phillippa Kassover* agrees with *Susan* that the report stands alone and that one strategy she may employ is to present the report to fellow council members and ask the council to adopt is. *Phillippa* encourages others who are similarly placed to consider this type of strategy.
- *Julie Colehour* thanks the room for nine months of hard work on the RRTF.
- *Jeff Gaisford* reiterates *Julie's* thanks and also thanks all the SWAC and MSWMAC members who have been doing double duty with their time commitment.