



SAG Meeting #8 Summary

Siting Advisory Group

Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station

SAG Members in Attendance:

- Amrit Bhuie, AR Environmental Consulting
- Amy Tsai, City of Redmond
- Andreas Kolshorn, At-large
- Diana Hart, City of Woodinville
- James Randolph, At-large
- Jed Reynolds, Lake Washington School District
- John MacGillivray, City of Kirkland
- Julie Underwood, City of Kirkland
- Nick Harbert, Waste Management
- Paula Goelzer, At-large
- Rachel Best-Campbell, City of Woodinville (Councilmember)
- Sandy Cobb, Unincorporated King County
- Susan Vossler, At-large
- Troy Anderson, Woodinville Chamber of Commerce
- William Louie, Resident
- William Su, Resident

Staff Members in Attendance:

- Mary O'Hara, King County Solid Waste
- Annie Kolb-Nelson, King County Solid Waste
- Kalyn Brady, King County Solid Waste
- Isabelle Trujillo, King County Solid Waste
- Margaret Bay, King County Solid Waste
- Jimmy Mota, King County Solid Waste
- Penny Mabie, Definitely Mabie Consulting
- Dan Pitzler, Jacobs Engineering
- Melissa Wu, Jacobs Engineering
- Jordan Sanabria, EnviroIssues
- Tay Stone, EnviroIssues

Approximate number of audience attendees: 44

Welcome

Penny Mabie (Definitely Mabie Consulting, Facilitator) welcomed members of the Siting Advisory Group (SAG) and gave members a brief refresher on the available Zoom features. Penny also introduced new SAG members Amy Tsai and Julie Underwood. Penny reminded the group of the agreed-upon ground rules and reviewed the community criteria.

Project activity since the last SAG meeting

Mary O'Hara (King County Solid Waste) introduced herself as the new Project Manager for the Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station project. Mary provided an overview of project activity the County has done since the last SAG meeting on August 9, 2021, which included turning over all siting data to allow the Core Cities to conduct their own review. The County also honored the

Cities' request to further evaluate a parcel in Bothell, which includes a southern portion of the Brickyard Park & Ride, that was originally screened out earlier in the siting process. After further evaluation, the County decided not to move the site forward into consideration for environmental review.

Q: Why wasn't the SAG provided with the scoring analysis for the Brickyard Park & Ride parcel?

A: Because the County determined that it did not supersede the viability of any of the top four sites. Since the SAG's role is to make a recommendation of which of the top sites the County should move forward into environmental review, we did not bring it in front of the SAG. Due to the constraints inherent in small sites, we're only taking one small site into environmental review and chose the Houghton Park & Ride site over the Brickyard Park & Ride. Had we identified the Brickyard site as a potential site to bring into environmental review, we would have presented that information to the SAG.

Q: Why not include the SAG in that decision? Why was it decided that the second Woodinville site was able to move forward, and the Brickyard site is not without input from the SAG?

A: The scoring and recommendation of sites by the SAG was done for the top four sites that the County had identified after conducting the Focused Site Screening (FSS). When the Core Cities asked the County to further evaluate the Brickyard site, the County went back and applied the same criteria as used in the FSS phase of the siting process. The County found that the Brickyard site did score higher than both Woodinville sites. However, due to the presence of wetlands and WSDOT right of way, the useable area of the site would be approximately five acres. In comparing it with the Houghton Park and Ride site, which is of similar size, the County determined the Brickyard site has more constraints, including future transit plans. That is why it was not brought to the SAG.

Q: My understanding is that the Brickyard site scored higher than Woodinville 2, so why is Woodinville 2 being considered? I don't think it's useful to the SAG that King County made that decision.

A: It is important to remember that the SAG is not a decision-making body. The group has not been asked to decide which sites would be considered. The SAG is chartered to look at the information provided by the County, apply their community criteria to the top sites, and advise the County on which sites to progress to environmental review.

Q: Why did the County decide that they would only take one small site into environmental review?

A: Size was a factor decided by Solid Waste Division Director Pat McLaughlin (). Typically, for transfer stations we look for eight to 20 acres, but because Seattle has had success with building a station on a five-acre parcel, the County believed it was beneficial to include one smaller site in the environmental review. It is too high a risk to take two smaller sites into environmental review, so the County decided to bring forward only one of the Park & Ride sites.

Q: I read that Bothell was removed from the siting area map because it was too close to an existing transfer station, yet the Brickyard parcel is 10 miles from an existing station. Why was Bothell dropped? And how did the County get to the top 15 sites?

A: The original study area does include Bothell and Kenmore. During the original Geographic Information System (GIS) search we looked at approximately 70,000 parcels in that study area. There were sites in Bothell and Kenmore that went forward in the siting process, but none ended up in the top 15. Because of this, we decided to update the siting area map.

Q: The Brickyard site seemed to score very high. How did a parcel that when reevaluated scored well enough for consideration not originally pass to the top 15?

A: We have many criteria that were applied to the parcels in evaluating potential sites. Scoring serves as just one of the decision-making tools. It's not the ultimate decider, as scores can vary based on the criteria. For example, the Brickyard site scored well in the criterion of being over 18 acres, but when considering the site constraints such as the wetlands and the existing use of the Park & Ride, the best case scenario came out to about five acres. We have a spreadsheet available that we can share on the project website with data that helped identify the top 15 out of the top 205 sites.

Q: Our role as the SAG has very little input to the actual selecting of site, but we had input in the form of creating criteria. Were those criteria applied to the Brickyard site? If not, what were our community criteria used for? Can those criteria be applied to all parcels?

A: During the reevaluation between this and the last SAG meeting, the County looked back to the Broad Area Site Screening (BASS) as well as the Focused Site Screening (FSS) and applied the County's criteria. The SAG developed its community criteria for the purpose of applying to the top four sites. The Brickyard site was reevaluated as to whether it would pass the BASS and FSS phases using the County's criteria. Because the reevaluation concluded that the site would not have successfully been a part of the top four, the SAG's community criteria were not applied.

Q: Do we know at this point if the Park & Ride on the Brickyard site is going to continue to be active, or is that something to be discovered in the environmental review?

A: There are new facilities in the works as part of the East Link extension plan and we've learned that this Brickyard site is a key part of that plan, as well as the Sound Transit 3 plan. As for an environmental review on the Brickyard site, we were able to review the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) issued by WSDOT for the I-405 Brickyard to SR 527 Improvement Project to inform our decision to not bring the site forward.

Q: After reviewing the information on Brickyard from WSDOT, do you think it's feasible to build a parking garage on that site?

A: We do not know if WSDOT has plans to build a parking garage on that site.

Comments:

- I understand the SAG is not a decision-making body, but it's difficult to provide a recommendation without all the information. If there's a more viable site, then the SAG should consider it. If the County is ultimately making the decisions, then it feels to me like the SAG has been set up with a false choice and is not really providing anything

influential to the process. I'm hesitant to go forward with any recommendations because I don't believe we have adequate information. The County should prioritize doing things right over doing things quickly. I'm not satisfied with the answer that the County is the ultimate decision maker.

- The County has been following the process that was presented to the SAG when we first convened. When the Houghton Park & Ride advanced to the top four sites, the County explained its inclusion to the SAG and the SAG continued the work with that site as one of the top four. When the Core Cities asked the County to look again at the Brickyard parcel since it has the same useable size as the Houghton Park & Ride that had already moved forward, the County applied the same process. The County found that the Brickyard site did not meet the same level of viability of the top four sites that were brought to the SAG.
- I'm confused why some fellow SAG members are unsettled by the exclusion of the Brickyard site from the top four when the Redmond site that was previously considered for the top four was removed as it was spoken for by the housing project developer. This sounds like another case where the developers have upcoming plans for the parcel.

Penny then gave a recap of the public forum held on May 12, 2022. There were 232 people in attendance for the siting process presentation and question and answer, with 117 questions submitted to the panel of King County and Jacobs Engineering staff. Penny asked the SAG if they had any remaining questions for the County.

Q: I know a lot more information will come up during the environmental review phase, but are there any environmental impacts you know about and can talk about now?

A: Until we get into the environmental review, we can't do a deeper analysis for environmental impacts, so information available from desk research and driving by the sites was used to get an understanding.

Q: Would it be possible for the County to consider two small sites to fit the size needs instead of one large site?

A: At this point in the siting process we are not going to look for two sites. Finding one site is challenging so finding two would be even more so it would also be more expensive to find and develop two separate sites.

Comments:

- A lot of questions asked during the forum got a response that the answer would be found during the environmental review and that the County did not have the answer at this time. It seems then like we could end up discovering terrible sites that were moved forward to EIS. I think the community criteria the SAG came up with should be used to find the best sites.
 - The SAG scores are part of deciding which sites move forward into environmental review and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process. These deeper analyses are part of the purpose of that process and require a level of study that takes a lot of effort. For that reason, we don't want to go beyond three sites to move into that process.

- I'm concerned that the County wants to bring forward the Houghton Park & Ride site into the long and expensive environmental review process when it doesn't meet two of the initial criteria of size and avoiding parcels categorized as residential. I'm uncomfortable with the fact that this site is going into the environmental review when the original criteria did not change.
 - City of Kirkland informed us during the GIS phase that the Houghton Park & Ride site might be up for surplus, so we decided to look into that as a potential site since we've seen successful transfer stations built on smaller parcels. Bringing one small site into the EIS process will help provide a sense of what opportunities are possible with a smaller site.

Public Comment

Penny opened the call for public comments. Audience members were asked to electronically raise their hand to indicate they would like to speak. Each speaker was given approximately two minutes.

Comments:

- **Jerry Lutz**, a lawyer representing Winsome Trading, claimed that the Winsome site (Woodinville 1) is not a permissible site due to existing land use code language which states that uses such as a transfer station are only allowed in the north industrial area along Highway 522. Jerry claimed siting a transfer station on the Winsome site would be illegal and questioned why it was brought forward for consideration.
- **Scott Chow**, from Winsome Trading, appreciated Paula Goelzer's comments and expressed concern about bias in the site selection process. Scott also noted that the "Community Impact" criteria of the two Woodinville sites were weighted dissimilarly even though they are adjacent to one another.
- **Anita**, from Winsome Trading, expressed concern about bias in the site selection process, noting that the project team mentioned another site was dropped from the process due to a developer laying claim to it. Anita questioned why Winsome wasn't provided with a similar opportunity, claiming they're the only site in consideration that has an existing business on it.
- **Kristin Dickson** felt that there was bias and a lack of transparency in the site selection process. Kristin believed that the two Houghton sites had already been chosen as part of past plans and was concerned that the SAG's recommendations are not being fairly considered, expressing that SAG input seems more like a formality.
- **Tolga Tekin** appreciated SAG members' comments and expressed concern about bias in the site selection process and felt that the sites chosen to move into the environmental review phase were predetermined. Tolga is concerned that King County does not have the financial resources to explore other siting opportunities.
- **Phil Allen**, a Houghton resident, thanked the SAG and the King County Solid Waste Division for acknowledging that the Houghton Park and Ride was added later on in the process, noting that the purpose of the site selection process is to identify the best site for a new transfer station. Phil encouraged the project team to review the 254 sites and identify if there are any other potential sites between five and eight acres in size to align

with their review of similarly sized sites that were specifically identified by external stakeholders.

- **Papp Sinteppadon**, speaking on behalf of Winsome Trading, mentioned that there is a University of Washington Garden District project that is set to break ground soon that will increase tourism in the area. Papp expressed pedestrian safety concerns stemming from existing traffic congestion that would presumably be exacerbated by the upcoming Garden District and further impacted by siting a transfer station in the area since the only access to the Woodinville sites is the State Route 522 corridor.
- **Lisa Singer**, a Kirkland resident, applauded the SAG members for being community advocates while also claiming that Kirkland doesn't have a representative on the SAG. Lisa also noted an understanding that the existing Houghton Transfer Station was promised to be closed. Lisa added that materials provided by the project team have framed the area around the Houghton Transfer station as a wasteland when residents use it as a community open space. Lisa requested that additional sites progress into the EIS phase of the project.
- **Deepa Garg** felt that neither of the Woodinville sites were viable, noting that one site was too small and the other is a minority-owned business. Deepa encouraged the SAG to abstain or otherwise not approve either site moving forward.
- **Xiaoling Song** felt that the site selection process was flawed. Xiaoling noted that a site in Redmond was removed from consideration due to it being claimed by a developer but that the Winsome Trading site is still being considered even though there is a minority-owned business sited there. Xiaoling was concerned that it did not seem that the County team visited the potential sites once they were narrowed to the top 15.
- **Lauren Owen**, a resident of King County, felt that the site selection process was not innovative enough and followed outdated methodologies. Lauren felt that none of the proposed sites are appropriate when forecasting for the next 50 years.
- **Karthik N** opposed a new station in Kirkland and proposed the closure of the existing Houghton Transfer Station. Karthik noted several community amenities nearby the site, including Bridle Trails Park, Taylor Fields, nearby schools, and housing and expressed pedestrian safety concerns due to traffic issues in the area.
- **Alyssa Chow**, from Winsome Trading, thanked the SAG for advocating for fairness in the site-selection process. Alyssa noted procedural concerns and questioned why additional small sites weren't assessed once the Houghton and Brickyard Park & Rides were identified by external stakeholders. Alyssa was uncertain what the County did during the break between SAG meetings, finding the team's narrative confusing. Alyssa reiterated the importance of the family legacy of Winsome Trading.
- **Beyster** expressed concern with the lack of transparency in the County's decision-making process and felt that site size and zoning considerations were dismissed. Beyster added that the site selection criteria did not seem appropriately applied across all sites and urged King County to reassess sites based on their concerns.

Penny thanked the speakers for their comments and closed the public comment period, noting that further comments can be submitted to the County via email, phone, or the project website.

Review additional Woodinville site

Penny reiterated that the SAG was not convened to be a decision-making body but one to advise King County Solid Waste Division Director Pat McLaughlin as one of multiple sources of input. Penny reminded the SAG that they do not need to feel like they must make a decision but can offer recommendations or feedback for the Director to consider when making the final decision about which sites to move forward into environmental review. Penny then asked the group to share their thoughts on which of the Woodinville sites they would recommend moving to environmental review or any other comments for the County.

Q: It seems Pat wants to make a decision on which sites move forward to environmental review in the next week or so. Will there be another meeting before that decision is made to go over more information?

A: There will not be another SAG meeting before the decision is made. Pat was waiting to hear from the SAG and from questions brought up in the public forum but is poised to make a decision on which sites to move forward into environmental review. The next SAG meeting is currently anticipated to be sometime in the fall.

Q: Do we have information on the number of employees at the Woodinville 2 site available from what was shared when the SAG was asked to score the top four sites?

A: Yes, there are about 70 to 80 employees among the businesses on the Woodinville 2 site.

Comments:

- I'm hesitant to offer a recommendation. There's a lot of information to think through and I would need some time to consider the Woodinville sites.
- We've discussed Winsome trading as a minority-owned family business, but I want to emphasize the public comments that shared it is a *woman-owned*, minority-owned family business.
- The Winsome building on the Woodinville 1 site is impressive and would be a lot of concrete to remove. Therefore, I would recommend the Woodinville 2 site be the one to move forward.
- With the expanded light rail plans from Sound Transit, I would urge the County to work with Sound Transit to relay the need for improved vehicle traffic in consideration of potential impacts of a new transfer station.
- It seems the criteria used in the siting process could be better explained. The points that have been brought up that are troubling to people seem to be factual, and I think those are clarifications that would be easy to make.
- It's not an easy decision. One site has a beloved family business and the other consists of four businesses, two vacant parcels, and wetlands, leaving a smaller site. I don't think either would make it through the EIS.
- One of the public commenters advocated for the County to be more innovative with their processes. It doesn't seem like innovation was considered for this project and I believe a lack of creativity is how we ended up in this situation.
- Further clarification on how the top 15 sites were identified from the list of 205 would be great information to share.

- Both Woodinville sites have a lot of similarities, but Winsome being a minority-owned family business pushes me to recommend the Woodinville 2 site to move forward.
- As a representative for Waste Management, I would have preferred a more centrally located site but, I understand why there is not one. Choosing between the two Woodinville locations, I would recommend Woodinville 2.
- I don't believe these are the best sites available. The process applied by the County did not work to come up with viable sites. I find it disturbing that the County is considering moving forward with a site of a family-owned business when there are industrial sites that are the right size and for sale. I recommend the County go back to the beginning and look again using a better process to avoid litigation and wasting taxpayer money on studying sites that aren't the best available.
- The criteria and the application of the criteria to the siting process seems flawed. It is not fair for the County to claim that the SAG agreed to the choices they presented to us when we've expressed concerns on the process. It feels inappropriate to try to force a site forward, so I do not recommend either Woodinville site.
- Based on what I'm hearing from the community in these public comments, it is difficult for me to offer a recommendation.
- I don't have full clarity on the sentiment of some commenters about businesses being put out of business rather than being relocated and receiving compensation. I have also seen signs around Woodinville that say "no Woodinville dump" which I feel is misleading. I know it's difficult to find the best site, but I see a new transfer station as an asset to the community and wish people wouldn't call it a dump. Between the two Woodinville sites, I am leaning towards Woodinville 2.
- It seems the overwhelming consensus is that the process was flawed. I don't believe that being more innovative with utilizing two smaller sites as opposed to one larger site would be too expensive in comparison to mitigation costs of relocating businesses. I wouldn't recommend either Woodinville site, particularly considering its proximity to the tourist district.
- I agree that the criteria applied should be kept consistent and it doesn't make sense for a site that didn't meet the baseline criteria to move forward in the siting process. I want to clarify for some of the public commenters that the SAG first started meeting when the top 15 sites were already selected and we were only asked to offer input via community criteria to the top four, which I think makes sense to ask the SAG to review a smaller selection of sites. Considering the number of workers who would be displaced by their site being chosen for the new transfer station, I believe Winsome has more employees so I would recommend Woodinville 2. I also want to emphasize that Woodinville 2 came about as an option because it was recommended by a SAG member, which serves as an example of the County listening to SAG feedback.
- A letter from a lawyer was submitted to the County two weeks ago and was then sent to the SAG with Pat's rebuttal just two days before this meeting. It was unfair to ask SAG members to digest that information in such a short amount of time. I hope the County understands that the community is unhappy with how things have turned out.
- In response to a fellow SAG member's question on number of employees, I believe Winsome has about 100 and the combined businesses of Woodinville 2 have about 70 to 80 employees. I'm unsure how successful relocation efforts will be as there aren't a lot of large parcels available.

- A public commenter mentioned the legality of acquiring the Winsome site if that parcel is chosen for the new transfer station, but the code mentioned does not apply to utilities [essential public facilities].

In total, **no** SAG members recommended Woodinville 1 advance to environmental review, **six** SAG members recommended Woodinville 2 advance to environmental review, and **10** SAG members gave no recommendation of which Woodinville site to move forward to environmental review.

After each SAG member shared their thoughts, Penny reviewed the points SAG members made, naming the common themes shared, and asked if there was anything else anyone wanted to ensure was captured.

Comments:

- Reiterate the aspect of community and how it was applied to the process. The community criteria were only introduced toward the end of the siting process when reviewing the top four sites. I want to stress the importance of getting ideas from the community and I think there needs to be an overhaul of the process to better incorporate community input.
- Would like to see more clarity on the narrowing of potential sites from 205 to 15 to four shared publicly.
- The County should consider using multiple smaller sites, as it had previously in this process with proposing using the location of the existing Houghton Transfer Station with the Park & Ride as one site.
- Reiterate potential hypocrisy of discussing green space and environmental improvements when discussing the new transfer station if the Woodinville 1 site is selected and would mean knocking down a large concrete building.

Next Steps

Penny thanked SAG members for their feedback, stating that it would be shared with the County and that the SAG's input along with the technical evaluation and input from the Core Cities would inform Pat's decision on how to move forward. The County will provide on the project website the spreadsheet of how the criteria were applied in the BASS siting phase. The spreadsheet and BASS report already posted to the website will provide more information that will hopefully help clarify that process further. The next SAG meeting is anticipated sometime in the fall during the EIS scoping period.